

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Lower Commerce Street Historic District

and/or common

2. Location Roughly bounded by RR tracks, N. Court, Commerce, and Bibb Sts.

street & number Roughly bounded on west by Commerce St., on north by Railroad tracks, on east by North Court St., and on south by Bibb St. not for publication
(see continuation sheet)

city, town Montgomery _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 2

state Alabama code 01 county Montgomery code 101

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name ~~See continuation sheet~~

street & number

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Courthouse

street & number 142 Washington Avenue

city, town Montgomery state Alabama

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Murphy House (NRHP: 3/24/72) Steiner-Lobman/Teague Hardware Bldg. (NRHP 1/31/79)
title Historic American Building Survey/ has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no
National Register of Historic Places

date 1936 ☒ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Library of Congress

city, town Washington state D. C.

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Lower Commerce District is a superb collection of late 19th and early 20th century warehouses and wholesale stores located near the bend of the river in downtown Montgomery. The majority of the buildings are concentrated on two blocks along the eastern side of Commerce Street and form a cohesive unit. The remainder of the structures are located in a 2 1/2 block area to the east, where two dissimilar grid patterns meet and create a series of oddly-shaped blocks. Just to the west of the district is the 1897 Union Station and Train Shed (NRHP 7/24/73, NHL 12/18/76), one of the city's major landmarks. The blocks in front of the station, on the west side of Commerce, once contained commercial buildings and warehouses, but they were removed to make way for a civic center.

Visual unity is achieved by similarity of setback, scale and height, and the fact that most buildings were constructed in a 20 year period. The majority of the buildings are simple rectangular blocks between two and four stories in height. Two buildings rise to a height of 10 stories and another to six, but these buildings are grouped in the southern portion of the district. Four buildings in the eastern section of the district are triangular or trapezoidal, a result of the irregularly shaped lots. Brick is the dominant material, although several buildings have been sheathed in pressed metal creating the impression of ornately carved stone. Buildings display a rich variety of decorative details in metal, brick, stone and terra-cotta; metal cornices and hoodmolds are used frequently, and the major stylistic influences are Renaissance or Neo-Classical Revival. A number of the buildings utilize cast iron for structural purposes on the lower facades and the interiors. Top floor, free-span wooden trusses are also common. Buildings range from the very severe and utilitarian Teague Warehouse (#18) to the elaborate Steiner-Lobman/Teague Hardware Store (#27 and 28, NRHP, 1/31/79) with its unusual tower that serves as a dominant feature in the district. Most reflect the period desire to impress and an occasional alley elevation (The Implement Store #24) or back street warehouse (Schloss and Kahn #16) show careful architectural treatment.

Of the 45 structures in the district, 42 are considered to be contributing elements. The non-contributing elements - an altered 1927 store (#23) and a 1950's office (#15) - retain the scale and setback of the adjacent buildings, and consequently, are not considered major intrusions.

One of the contributing structures, an attractive, 1930's Streamline gas station (#13), differs from the majority of the significant buildings in age, style and size, but represents a continuation of the interest in decorating functional structures. Additionally, it illustrates an evolution of transportation methods which was crucial to the development and history of the district. Another of the contributing elements, the c. 1900 Teague Warehouse (#18), is a low, severely plain structure which has been altered on the interior. Although the structure is of minimal importance, the spaces created by its exterior walls contribute to the district.

The Alabama National Bank Drive through Bank Facility (#39), however, is a reflective glass & metal drive through which detracts from the district.

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The district is roughly bounded on the west by Commerce Street, on the north by the railroad tracks which run parallel to the river, on the east by North Court Street and on the south by Bibb Street. The boundaries were drawn to encompass the concentration of period commercial structures and to omit vacant spaces and intrusions. To the east, vacant lots and a thoroughfare establish a natural boundary, while to the west, the blocks have been razed.

Two areas are being added to the original district.

Area I, to the north of the Western Railway of Alabama (#1), recently renovated to house the new Sheraton Hotel, contains three large-scale but modestly designed warehouses which were not included in the original nomination. Although these buildings lack the architectural distinction that characterized the majority of the buildings in the district, they are historically connected to the district by use and location. Additionally, the scale and material are compatible with the other buildings of the district. The properties belong to the owners of the Sheraton, who plan to develop them to complement the hotel.

Area II, along the south west side of Commerce Street contains three late 19th-early 20th century commercial structures and a modern drive-in bank building (#39). The southernmost structure (#42) is currently being renovated for use as the Chamber of Commerce building. It and the two smaller structures (#40 and #41) are separated from the remainder of the district by the Alabama National Bank Parking and Drive-through Banking Facility, a modern reflective glass and metal structure.

STRUCTURES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHARACTER OF THE DISTRICT

1. Western Railway of Alabama (Northeast corner Tallapoosa and Coosa streets): 1898; 2 story, light tan brick, round-arched first floor windows and doors, low hipped roof, bracketed cornice, paired wall chimneys; long U-shaped red brick warehouse in rear, loading platforms, shed roof supported with heavy wooden brackets.
2. Teague Warehouse (100 Tallapoosa Street): 1913; 3 story, brick, trapezoid-shaped structure, arched loading doors with keystones, twin windows between brick piers, spandrels have diamond-shaped decorations repeated above piers, brick cornice, low parapet raised as center pediment; new 1-story warehouse attached to western end.

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3. Warehouse (17 West Jefferson Street): c. 1900; 4 story, brick, cornered entrance, arched loading doors, dentiled entablature separates ground floor from upper 3, low parapet with corbled cornice (now Leon Supply Company).
4. Todd's Gun Shop (241 North Court Street): early 20th century; 3 story, brick, original ground floor display windows, entablature, segmental arched windows above, low corbled parapet.
5. Nathan Segal Ice Company (12 West Jefferson Street): c. 1910; 2 story brick, dentiled metal entablature above ground floor.
6. M. P. Wilcox Produce Building (244-248 North Court Street): c. 1900; 2 story, brick, original ground floor display windows, round-arched windows above, metal entablature with garlanded frieze, low parapet.
7. Lee Glass Company (226 North Court Street): early 20th century; 1 story, stucco over brick, stepped parapet, large loading door.
8. Harris Seed and Sundries (224 North Court Street): early 20th century; 1 story, brick, glass display windows.
9. Roemer Building (2 Bibb Street): 1907; 3 story, brick, narrow facade on Bibb, long side on North Court, arched windows and doors on first floor with metal entablature above, segmental arcade with keystones, dentiled and modillioned cornice above, parapet (now Honey for the Bears).
10. Schloss and Kahn (152 Coosa Street): 1907; 4 story, brick, triangular, entrance at apex of triangle, rusticated ground floor with voussoirs of round arched openings integrated with rustication, piers integrate upper 3 floors and carry segmental arcade, heavy metal cornice above, parapet, spandrels have diamond ornament (now Steiner-Lobman Manufacturing Company).
11. Alabama Machinery and Supply Company (116 Coosa Street): early 20th century; 4 story, brick, tin entablature above first floor, tin cornice at 4th, recently restored.

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12. Murphy House (22 Bibb Street): 1851; Greek Revival, 2 story, brick, stuccoed and scored, full-length portico with six corinthian columns; HABS, NRHP (now Montgomery Water and Sanitary Board).
13. Pan-Am Service Station (100 Bibb Street): 1930's; streamline-moderne; 1 story, brick, covered with stucco (now Pro Servie Center).
14. M. Sabel and Sons (108 Bibb Street): early 20th century; 2 story, brick, ground floor altered, windows with alternating voussoirs, modillioned cornice, low parapet with corner piers raised above (now Rattan Hut).
16. Schloss and Kahn (115 Coosa Street): 1895; 2 story, brick, roughly divided into three major bays, arched ground floor openings with archivolts, paired windows above, outer bays have flat-arched windows with exaggerated keystones, central bay has round-arched windows with shared archivolts, decorative terra cotta date panel and relief sculpture, projecting metal cornice, low parapet (now Bishop-Parker Warehouse).
17. Winter-Loeb Grocery Company (145 Coosa Street): early 20th century; 3 story, brick, three bays, rusticated foundation, quions and entrance, segmental pediment, entablature, windows have alternating voussoirs, central bay upper floor is slightly recessed and quined, paired windows for outer bays, projecting metal cornice with modillions and dentils (now Ben Goltsman and Company).
18. Teague Warehouse (105 Tallapoosa Street): c. 1900, additions c. 1950; rectangular, 1 story, brick, large loading door, bricked up windows, walls create a contributing space.
19. Old Forbes Liddell Building (272-270 Commerce Street): 1893; 3 story, brick, 3 bays, ground floor display windows with cast iron posts flank central arched entrance, upper floors unified with large round arches, terra cotta surrounds and spandrels, central bay has narrow rectangular windows, projecting metal cornice.
20. Hobbie Building (260 Commerce Street): 1906; 4 stories, brick, large central arched loading door with metal archivolt, few alterations on ground floor, string mold separates first and second, third and fourth, piers carried above height of parapet, oversize console brackets at each pier, central stepped parapet with date panel.

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21. Greenhouses, Sun Manufacturing Company (234 Commerce Street): early 20th century; 3 stories, light brown brick, ground floor altered, three bays with triple windows between piers, bracketed stone lintels for third floor, paired console brackets support cornice, parapet above.
22. Electronic Engineers (228 Commerce Street): c. 1898; 3 story, brick, some ground floor alterations, upper floors unified with corinthian pilasters supporting metal cornice (now removed), windows second floor are round-arched, third floor have entablatures.
23. Schloss and Kahn (218 Commerce Street): c. 1890; 3 story, brick, ground floor has round-arched entrance and windows separated by narrow segmental arched openings, second and third floors covered with elaborate pressed metal sheathing, projecting bracketed cornice.
24. Implement Store (210 Commerce Street): 1894-1895; 2 story, brick, five bays, arcaded ground floor with decorative brick work, repeated on second floor, corbelled brick parapet, diminutive towers, open brickwork, central triangular pediment (now Bragg Building).
25. McIntyre Building (Southeast corner Commerce and Tallapoosa streets): c. 1890; 3 story, brick, six bays, cast iron ground floor piers, pilaster arcade above, segmental windows on second, round-arched on third, heavy hoodmolds, projecting bracketed metal cornice (now Jackson-Thornton).
26. Steiner-Lobman (101 Tallapoosa Street): 1897; 4 story, tan brick, rusticated ground floor, arched windows and doors with voussoirs integrated with rustication, corinthian pilasters support entablature with projecting metal cornice at third floor, attic story above (now Stern Brothers Warehouse).
- 27 & 28. Steiner-Lobman/Teague Building (184 and 172 Commerce Street): 1891; 3 story, brick, ground floor has cast iron supports and original window treatment, modillioned entablature, upper stories covered with pressed metal sheathing, terminated in heavy cornice, roof ornament includes small mansard-roofed tower with metal coffin, 8' metal goddess has been removed, name and date panels on stepped parapets, one topped with metal anvil.

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- 30 & 31. Forbes-Wing Furniture Company/Mercantile Business Products (150 and 138 Commerce Street): c. 1903; 4 story, ground floor altered, upper floors unified with pilaster arcade, rusticated lintels on second and third floor windows, rusticated pilaster capitals, projecting metal cornice, low parapet is raised as attic story on northern half, windows with rusticated lintels.
33. Whitfield Buildings (122 Commerce Street): 1928; 2 story, brick, ground floors altered; north half-giant fluted corinthian pilasters at corners, brick and metal entablature, parapet with pedestals and urns, date panel, second floor arcade; southern half-corner piers, grouped window arcades, modillioned cornice, brick parapet (now Rhodes Furniture Company).
34. Graystone Hotel (100 Commerce Street): 1928; 10 story, steel-framed, rusticated base, classical entablature, floors 3-7 have simple twin windows, row of balustraded balconies on center bays of 5th floor, 7th and 8th floors separated by dentiled string courses, panels separate windows on 8th, bracketed cornice surmounted by low parapet (now First Federal Savings and Loan).
35. Old Western Union Building (80 Commerce Street): 1888; 3 story, brick, ground floor on Commerce altered, upper floors unified and divided into three bays by segmental arcade, paired windows in outer bays, blank central bay, bracketed tin cornice breaks into arch above central bay and contains date panel.
36. Haverty's Building (74 Commerce Street): 1915; 6 story, brick, altered ground floor, entablature above second floor level, pier arcade unifies upper stories, spandrels with panels, floral cartouches below imposts, archivolt, bracketed cornice, stepped parapet with escutcheon.
37. Yougurt King (71 Commerce Street): pre-1888; 3 story, brick, three bay, ground floor altered, upper floors have segmental arched windows with metal hoodmolds, brick string course above, tall parapet.
38. Gay-Teague Hotel (79 Commerce Street): 1907-1908; 10 story, steel framed, terra cotta decoration, quoins, pediments over ninth floor windows, escutcheons on east and north elevations, arched entrances with pilasters (now Frank Leu Building).

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INVENTORY

Contributing Structures:

40. Building (49 Commerce Street): mid 19th c., simple Italianate storefront, 2 story, brick, ground floor level altered, nicely detailed window lintels above (now Varsity Billard Parlor).
41. Building (45 Commerce Street): late 19th-early 20th century, 1910 Commercial Brick facade, 2 story, altered ground floor (now Dutch House and Pitts Tailoring).
42. Chamber of Commerce Building (41 Commerce Street): late 19th c., 1916 facade. 3 story, brick, arched windows, metal cornice, parapet, altered ground floor.
43. Alabama Warehouse Company (206 Coosa Street): c. 1899, 1 1/2 story office with two one story wings, loading platforms on W. & N. have been enclosed.
44. Forbes-Liddell Machine Shop (208 Coosa Street): 1899, 1 story, brick and corrugated metal, gabled parapet and round-arched entrance on west, round-arched windows.
45. Montgomery Fair Warehouse (212 Coosa): 1913; 2 story, brick warehouse with square-headed windows.

Non-Contributing:

15. Rhodes Furniture Warehouse (113 Coosa Street): mid-20th century; 2 story, brick, flat topped windows grouped in three's, wide service entrance.
32. Bishop-Parker Furniture Company (130 Commerce Street): 1927-1928; 2 story, brick; completely altered, glass display windows on ground floor, brick facing on second.
39. Alabama National Bank Drive-through Bank Facility (53-65 Commerce Street) late 1970s; 2 story, reflective glass and metal drive through.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Lower Commerce Street District contains the finest collection of late 19th and early 20th century commercial and warehouse buildings in Alabama and reflects the historical importance of Montgomery as a market place for the central and eastern portions of the state. In the late 19th century, it was one of the most impressive streets in the city, serving as the major trading center and providing access to the city wharf at its foot and the Union Passenger Station nearby. Additionally, in 1886 an electric trolley line was established on Commerce Street and inaugurated this method of inner-city travel.

The elaborate treatment of the buildings illustrates both the commercial wealth of the city during the decades just before and after the turn-of-the-century and the desire of individual merchants to create a magnificent impression of their clients and the public. Although the district contains examples of many late 19th century commercial styles, the majority of the structures are influenced by the Italian Renaissance. The buildings are virtually intact, with few major ground floor facade alterations and only one major upper level facade change.

* * * * *

Commerce Street, which extends from Court Square to the Alabama River, was the main avenue of the village of East Alabama founded in 1818. After the merger of East Alabama and its adjacent rival, New Philadelphia, to form Montgomery in 1819, Commerce Street provided direct access to the river landing for the new town. In the earliest days, the district housed a variety of merchants, homeowners, warehousemen and inn-keepers. By the late 1840's, however, the wholesale grocery trade had gravitated toward the area. The arrival of the railroad in 1851, with its terminus near the city wharf, intensified this trend. With the close proximity of the two major modes of shipping, the area rapidly developed as the wholesale district for central Alabama. During this period, larger brick warehouses and stores replaced the smaller houses and frame shops. Only one residence, the 1851 Greek Revival Murphy House (HABS, NRHP 3/24/72), still stands in the district. Its builder, John Murphy, was a cotton broker with warehouses in the vicinity.

In the reconstruction and post-reconstruction periods, the concentration of mercantile establishments increased and crested in the booming decades between 1890 and 1910. The majority of the buildings in the district date from those years.

9. Major Bibliographical References

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts. Spaces and Places: Some Views of Montgomery's Built Environment. Montgomery: 1978.

Sanborn Maps, 1894, 1900, 1963.

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 22.96

Quadrangle name Montgomery North

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

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5	6	4	9	0	0
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3	5	8	2	9	5	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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3	5	8	2	6	8	0
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Verbal boundary description and justification

See line on scale map

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ellen Mertins and Mary Ann Neeley (Landmarks Foundation of Montgomery)

organization Alabama Historical Commission

date December 1981

street & number 725 Monroe Street

telephone 832-6621

city or town Montgomery

state Alabama

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☒ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

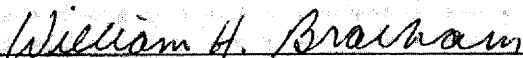
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 1/20/82

For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register



date 2-25-82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: 

date 2/25/82

Chief of Registration

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The last major period of construction occurred in 1927 when fire destroyed several buildings between Bibb and Tallapoosa streets. Only three (3) structures, the 1930's gas station (#13), a 1950's warehouse (#15) and a 1970's modern bank drive-through (#39) have been constructed in the district since that date.

This area retained its role as the wholesale and retail center of the city until the mid-20th century, when changes in transportation and trading patterns caused the merchants to leave the downtown area. In 1969, the district was zoned historic by the city of Montgomery.

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INCLUSIVE STREET NUMBERS

Commerce Street: 74-270 (even numbers only); 71, 79, 49, 45, 41, and 53-65 Tallapoosa Street: (northeast corner Tallapoosa and Coosa), 100, 101, and 105.

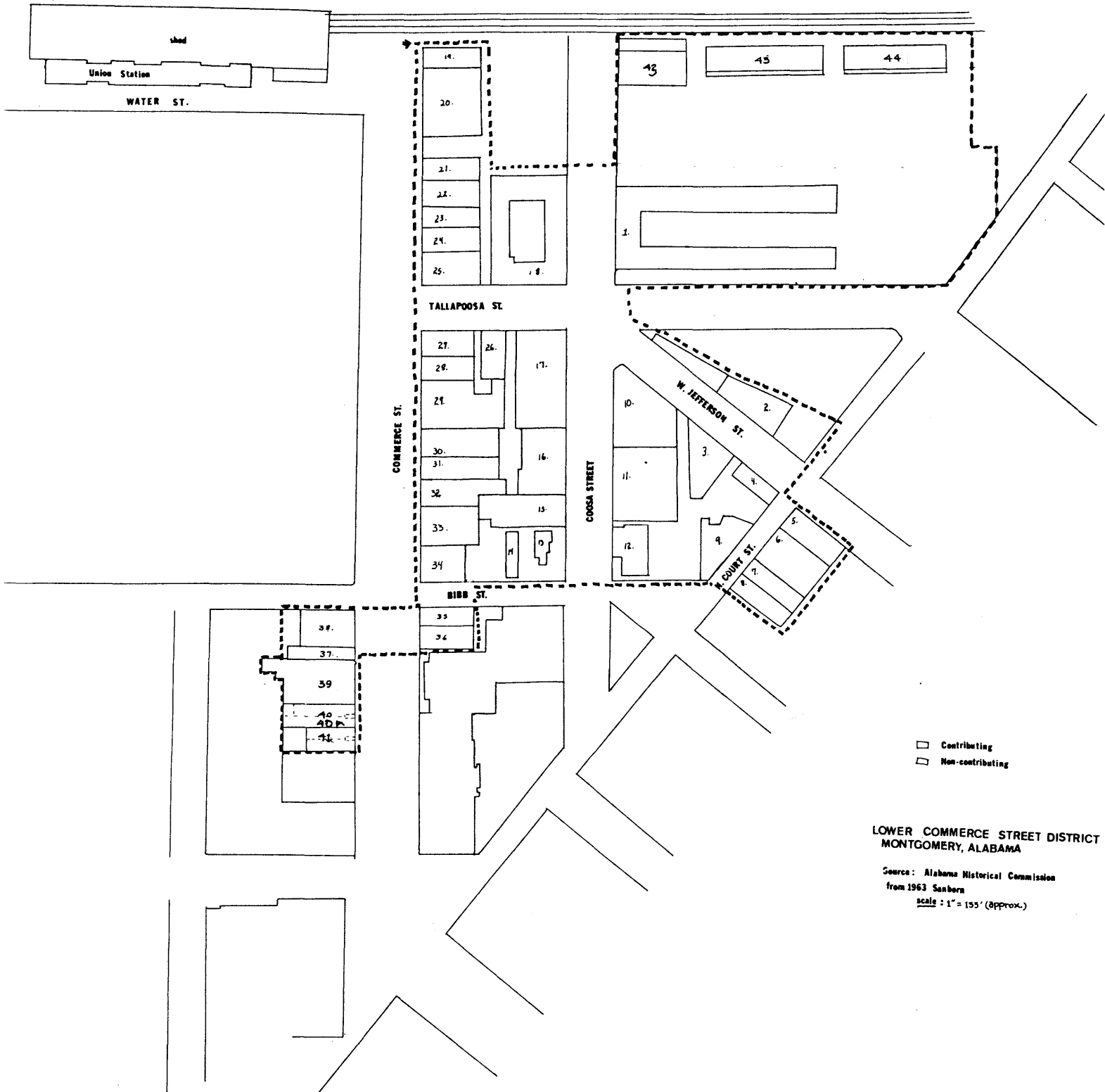
Bibb Street: 2, 22, and 108.

Coosa Street: 116, 113, 115, 145, 152, 206, 208, and 212.

West Jefferson Street: 12 and 17.

North Court Street: 224, 226, 241, and 244-248.

Alabama River



□ Contributing
□ Non-contributing

**LOWER COMMERCE STREET DISTRICT
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA**

Source: Alabama Historical Commission
from 1963 Sanborn
scale: 1" = 155' (approx.)