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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name Courtland Historic District (Boundary Increase)

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Jackson St. @ Courtland/North Courtland Border; 61 College; 400 Madison; 110 & 560 Monroe; se corner of Water & Alabama Sts.; 132, 140, 151, 165, Alabama St.; 655 Water St.; 2932 & 2958 Jefferson; 859 Hamilton not for publication N/A  
city or town Courtland vicinity N/A  
state Alabama code AL county Lawrence code 079 zip code 35618

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination      request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant      nationally      statewide X locally. (     See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 5/22/98  
Signature of certifying official Date

Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property      meets      does not meet the National Register criteria.  
(     See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that this property is:
- entered in the National Register  
     See continuation sheet.
  - determined eligible for the National Register  
     See continuation sheet.
  - determined not eligible for the National Register
  - removed from the National Register
  - other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper [Signature] Date of Action 6/26/98

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check only one box.)

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>12</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>12</u>	<u>2</u> Total

**Number of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

101

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: _____	Sub: _____
<u>Domestic</u>	<u>Single Dwelling</u>
<u>Domestic</u>	<u>Motel</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: _____	Sub: _____
<u>Domestic</u>	<u>Single Dwelling</u>
<u>Domestic</u>	<u>Motel</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

- Craftsman/Bungalow
- Modern Movement
- Other: minimal traditional
- Other: massed plan

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation brick, concrete
- roof asphalt, metal
- walls wood, stucco, concrete, brick
- other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition on continuation sheet/s.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.) N/A

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

community planning/development      architecture

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance** c. 1820 to c. 1946

**Significant Dates** N/A

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

**Cultural Affiliation** N/A

**Architect/Builder** N/A

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Explain significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other state agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**  
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Acreage of Property approximately 4

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	16 471530	3836300	3	16 471820	3836250
2	16 471660	3836380	4	16 472040	3836110

5 16 471760 3835820 7 16 471480 3835740  
6 16 471820 3835690  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====  
**11. Form Prepared By**  
=====

name/title Gene A. Ford and Trina Binkley, AHC Reviewer  
organization private consultant date 1-26-98  
street & number #10 Lakeview telephone 205-752-4599  
city or town Tuscaloosa state Alabama zip code 35401

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**Additional Documentation**  
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====  
**Property Owner**  
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name multiple  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section 7 Page 1 Courtland Historic District (Boundary Increase)  
Lawrence County, Alabama

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**Section VII. Narrative Description**  
**Original Nomination**

The Courtland Historic District embraces the boundaries of the town as laid out in 1818-19, with minor extensions to the north in order to take in the old town cemetery, and to the east and south so as to include historically significant contiguous structures linked with the community's past. The core area extends just over half a mile from east to west and just under half a mile from north to south. Six main streets in either direction, each originally projected to be 66 feet wide, form the typical grid pattern that was virtually universal in 19th-century America. The railroad bisecting Courtland from east to west is one of the earliest rail routes in eastern America, and follows the thoroughfare designated as Main Street in the original town plat. Incorporated as the Tuscumbia, Courtland, and Decatur line in 1832, the railroad was absorbed into the Memphis and Charleston system in the 1850s, and still later into the Southern network.

One block east of the square, Jackson Street runs due south to become the cedar-lined "South Pike" leading past several historic home sites on the outskirts of Courtland. Winding up into the hills beyond, the road descends eventually into the Moulton Valley and the county seat 15 miles away. Northward, the same road passes through the modern community of North Courtland and across Highway 20/72 toward Wheeler Dam on the Tennessee River, some ten miles distant. Jefferson Street (running east-west near the northern boundary of the historic area) is the old Decatur-Tuscumbia highway, now supplanted by the 20/72 bypass.

The terrain throughout the historic area is level, rising only to the north where the town cemetery (#1) is situated. Tall old cedars planted along Courtland's streets in the last century were, until recent years, one of the striking features of the townscape (in fact, visitors even in the Civil War period commented on "the beautiful cedar groves"). Unfortunately, the municipality has removed many of these trees over the past decade. Regularly laid-out rows of cedars still exist near the intersection of Van Buren and Madison streets and along stretches of the South Pike. Isolated cedars here and there throughout the historic area are the lone survivors of other rows that once extended along several main thoroughfares.

A novel relic of the pre-automobile age in Courtland are several stone mounting blocks (#63A, B & C) anchored in the sidewalks around the town square. In each case, three narrow stone steps are hewn out of a single monolith, now badly weathered. The blocks were also reputedly used for slave auctions.

Of the one- and two-story structures scattered about the blocks of the historic area, at least 70—or approximately 1/3 the buildings in the entire town—appear to predate 1939. Although some have been remodeled virtually beyond recognition, 13 of the buildings in the district predate 1850, along with two very significant open-space sites: the town square (established in 1819) and the old town cemetery which holds burials predating Alabama's statehood. Another 13 date from c. 1860 to 1900—including most of the commercial structures around the square; 22 survive from the period between the turn of the century and the end of the First World War (i.e., 1900-1920); and 22—mostly modest bungalows—date from between 1920 and 1939.

At least one residence, the George Gilchrist house (#39) is built around a two-story log dwelling which was weatherboarded at an early date and then drastically remodeled in 1918. The most significant of the early structures, the frame Shackelford house (#25), the brick Trotter/McMahon house (#22) and the Tweedy house (#81) are restrained expressions of Federal-period architecture.

The tall, narrow "I" house form with end chimneys and a one-room rear ell appears to have been the dominant house type throughout most of the 19th century. Examples range from the 1820s to as late as the 1870s, the form remaining essentially constant while the detailing (doors, mantelpieces, trim, etc.) varies from Adamesque to simple Greek Revival to stock Victorian trim. One and one-and-a-half story "Tidewater-type cottages" were also scattered throughout the town during the antebellum

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Courtland Historic District (Boundary Increase)  
Lawrence County, Alabama

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period, the most notable frame example surviving today being the Torian house (#82) on Water Street. Until the 1920s when it was drastically altered and enlarged, the James Blythe house (#38) was a one-and-a-half story brick Tidewater type cottage that probably resembled Albemarle (located east of boundaries of historic district). Sunnybrook or Brides Hill (National Register, 1986), four miles northeast of town, and a now ruinous cottage in the northwest 1/4 of Section 24 (Township 4 S, Range 8 W) northwest of Courtland, are frame versions of the Tidewater cottage and suggest that such residences may have once been scattered throughout the surrounding countryside. Later, modified examples of the same type are the Gilchrist (#30) and Greene houses (#31), dating from around 1845-50. Both the 2-story "I" houses and the cottages confirm Courtland's strong ties to the architectural and cultural traditions of the upper South—more particularly to Virginia and northeastern North Carolina, from whence came the economically and socially dominant portion of the population: the planters, and the mercantile and professional classes.

Extant woodwork in several of these houses, along with other mantelpieces, trim and stairways rescued from other structures now destroyed, attest to an unusually high quality of cabinetmaking in early Courtland. For example, the 1829 door surround, or "frontispiece," of the J. A. Ussery house (#12) is among the most elegant examples of Federal-period craftsmanship left anywhere in Alabama.

Structures erected between the end of the Civil War, in 1865, and the turn of the century apparently include most of the present 2-story brick commercial buildings facing the north and east sides of the square (#50-56). In their present form, these seem to date from around 1875-1890, though portions of the walls may be earlier. Southern Railroad archives in Washington document the present frame depot (#62) on the south side of the square at about 1887, replacing at least two earlier stations—one of which was destroyed during the Civil War. Residences from this period are relatively modest: the Charles Shackelford House (#11), a belated "I" type dwelling with double porch and gingerbread trim; also the Chardavoyne house (#77), a single-story Victorian cottage with a canopied bay window.

Houses dating from the 1900-1915 period reflect waning Victorianism, the new vogue for neoclassicism and—just about the time of the First World War—the advent of the Craftsman-type bungalow. Most extant houses from this era were erected for the traditional merchant planter elite—replacing older houses in some cases, and also declaring the preference of more affluent planting families for the amenities of small town life over rural isolation on their tenant-run farms. Two-story dwellings of this period are the Rebman house (#68), as well as #3, 5, 24, 66 and 90 (Arcadia). The finest among these is the Bynum house (#24)—Courtland's preeminent example of the popular "Colonial" (neoclassical revival) style of the early 1900s. The Grove (#83), dating from 1917, also belongs to this group. A less ambitiously scaled dwelling of the same period is the Garth Gilchrist residence (#20).

Until around 1920, a domestic spatial arrangement established during the town's earliest days seemed to predominate: namely, placement of the dwelling at one corner of a lot that occupied much, if not all, of an entire block. The cluster of large houses (#24, #25, #27, and #28) at the intersection of Clinton and Hamilton streets typifies this arrangement; likewise, the positioning of #2, #3, #4, and #5. Increasingly since the 1920s, however, this pattern has been diluted by parcelization of larger lots into smaller ones accommodating modestly-scaled bungalows.

A few members of the local squirearchy erected or renovated older houses into spacious Craftsman-style bungalows (see #67, 87 and 89) between 1905 and 1915. Most of the bungalows which today compose the largest single house type in the historic area date from 1925-35. While a majority are of brick (#23, 73) and frame (#71) construction, a local variant on the bungalow theme employs native light brown fieldstone construction (#10, #17, 78-79, and 85). The former town fire station (#74), dating from c. 1938, also employs fieldstone construction. The former Colonial Hotel (#49), built about 1930 and now the headquarters of the Albemarle Corporation, is a plain, two-story brick structure which housed many of the workers employed for the construction of TVA's Wheeler Dam in 1933.

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Lawrence County, Alabama

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Despite gradual encroachment of mobile home and apartment construction, and some newer permanent domestic construction, Courtland's overall character is still predominantly that of a small 19th- and early 20th-century local trade center rooted in the surrounding plantation economy.

**Original Nomination Archaeological Component:**

Although no formal archaeological survey has been made in the Courtland area, the potential for significant subsurface cultural remains is high. Many of the properties within the district were sited within a constellation of dependencies and activity areas such as kitchens, privies, wells, etc. Although many of these structures are no longer standing, the buried portions may contain significant information that may be important in interpreting the entire property.

**Narrative Description  
Boundary Expansion**

Early in 1997, the area surrounding the existing boundaries of the Courtland Historic District (NRHP 5-13-91) in Lawrence County, Alabama was surveyed with the proposal (initiated by local citizens) of expansion. The current expansion includes all eligible resources along the periphery of the original district boundaries. There are a couple reasons for the exclusion of the fourteen resources from the initial establishment of the Courtland Historic District. Five of the properties (97 CR, 104 CR, 107 CR, 108 CR, and 110 CR) were less than fifty years old at the time of the nomination. Also, working class cottages (103 CR, 104 CR, and 105 CR) and bungalows (98 CR, 99 CR, 100 CR, 106 CR, and 109 CR) were generally overlooked, as emphasis was placed on Courtland's more stately buildings.

The proposed expansion area of the Courtland Historic District is comprised of a total of fourteen resources, with twelve (97-100, 103-110) being considered contributing (CR) and two (101, 102) noncontributing (NCR). Of the fourteen resources, twelve are residences, one a motel (97 CR), and one a church (101 NCR). Bungalows (98 CR, 99 CR, 100 CR, 106 CR, and 109 CR) are the predominant type of residential resources. There are four minimal traditional cottages (104 CR, 107 CR, 108 CR, and 110 CR) a massed plan cottage (104 CR), and a motel reflecting Courtland's war-time and immediate postwar growth. The two noncontributing resources include a modern ranch house (101 NCR) and an African American church (101 NCR). Several of the resources are associated with African American history/occupancy (99 CR, 102 NCR, 103 CR, and 106 CR).

**Boundary Expansion Archaeological Component**

Although no formal archaeological survey has been made in the Courtland area, the potential for significant subsurface cultural remains is high. Some properties within the district expansion area were sited within a constellation of dependencies and activity areas such as kitchens, privies, wells, etc. Although many of these structures are no longer standing, the buried portions may contain significant information that may be important in interpreting an entire property or the general area.

**Inventory**

**Original Nomination  
CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES**

1) Courtland Cemetery (c. 1820-present) North end of Van Buren Street  
170-year-old town cemetery containing varied examples of funerary sculpture from simple early 19th-century slab markers and box tombs to Greek Revival-style obelisks and later, more ornate Victorian grave monuments with crosses, floral motifs and sentimental eulogies. Graves of many notable early settlers here, including Benjamin Sherrod (1776-1847) planter-baron and

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chief promoter of Tusculumbia, Courtland, and Decatur Railroad, and Dr. Jack Shackelford (1790-1857), organizer of ill-fated Red Rovers who fought for Texas independence. Notable landscaping of cemetery includes many old cedars, oaks and English boxwood. Also graves of Confederate soldiers who died at hospital in Courtland.

- 2) Mortlock (Sanderson) House (c. 1870) SW corner College and Madison Streets  
Frame with synthetic siding, two-story "I" house with rear ell; gable roof, exterior end chimneys, 3-bay front with bay windows flanking central door, center-hall plan. A modern, one-story garage is located on the property (noncontributing).
- 3) Pippin, Edward H., House (c. 1905) NW corner Jefferson Street (Hwy. 20) and Alabama Streets  
Frame, 2-stories, basically square, hipped roof, with full-length, 1-story neoclassical porch. Built by E.H. (Ed) Phippen who lived there until the 1960s. A one-story frame garage is located on the property (contributing).
- 4) Cunningham/Bynum House (c. 1830 and later) NW corner College and Jefferson Streets  
Frame, 2-story "I" house with hipped roof and long, 1-story rear wing (gabled); originally had 9/9 sash windows (now partially replaced) and central porch or portico; exterior end chimneys (north chimney removed). Remodeled c. 1910 including present 1-story full length front porch. One of the oldest residences in Courtland, reputedly built by the Cunningham family. Now unoccupied.
- 5) Moore (Rebman) House (c. 1905) NE corner Jefferson Street (Hwy. 20) and College Street  
Frame, 2-stories, basically rectangular with irregular 1-story rear wing; hipped roof; wraparound single-story neoclassical porch across the front (south) and west sides; 1/1 sash windows. Semi-detached, 1-story hipped-roof kitchen (contributing), which is typical of larger, early 20th-century Courtland homes. A one-story frame carriage house is also located on the property (contributing).
- 6) Clark (Rebman) House, (c. 1859) NW corner Jackson and Jefferson Streets  
Frame, one-story, house with 3-bay, rectangular main block and ell at south rear; shallow gable roof and overhanging eaves, porches at front and formerly along the north side of ell; interior end chimneys. Center hall plan with single room to either side in main section; tall narrow 6/6 sash windows. Fred Rebman owned the residence in the 1880s.
- 7) Ballentine, Edgar, House (c. 1830, 1910) NE corner Jackson and Jefferson Streets  
Frame, 1-story, L-shaped front with L-shaped porch along inset, intersecting gabled roofs, large exterior chimney at South end. North portion of house reputedly was moved c. 1910 and joined to earlier south portion c. 1910. Extensive alterations, including porch.
- 8) Horton, Mary Kyle, House (c. 1895) NE corner Jefferson and Monroe Streets  
Frame (now covered with asbestos siding), 1-story L-shaped facade with gabled projecting east pavilion flanking front porch (original porch elements replaced), some Eastlake-style trim; 2/2 sash windows. Site of the demolished Harvey Gilchrist house.
- 10) Horton, Clarence, House (1935) North side Jefferson Street  
Fieldstone bungalow with L-shaped front, shallow gabled roof with wide eaves; intersecting gable with projecting east pavilion flaring to cover arched entrance stoop; originally open terrace to side; 6/1 sash windows.
- 11) Shackelford, Garth, House (c. 1880) NW corner Jefferson Street (Hwy. 20) and Van Buren  
Frame "I" house, 2 stories, gable roof, rectangular, 3-bay front; 1-story side wing with Eastlake-style porch, galleried 1-story wing at rear, central two-tiered gabled porch flanked by bay windows; round vent with design in tympanum. Center hall plan with straight-run reverse (rear-to-front) stair on west side; stock Victorian trim, mantel-pieces. Deteriorated, unoccupied. Built for Mrs. George Martin Garth after she moved into town from "Bonnie Doon" plantation house (burned 1935, originally located



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Courtland Historic District (Boundary Increase)  
Lawrence County, Alabama

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in south Courtland).

12) Ussery, Dr. J.A., House and Outbuildings (1935-36) NE corner Jefferson (Hwy. 20 and Van Buren Streets, Lot 295) Brick (gray-painted with white trim), "Colonial" style, 2-stories, gable roof, central pedimented portico of modified Corinthian order flanked by 9/9 sash windows. Double-leaf fanlight door framed by frontispiece. Center hall plan with reverse-flight stair. Erected by Dr. and Mrs. James A. Ussery (nee Catherine Crenshaw) to replace c. 1829 2-story brick residence built for Mrs. Ussery's ancestor, Courtland merchant, John M. Swoope from Staunton, Virginia. Features from Swoope house were reincorporated into the Ussery residence including the fanlight door with Adamesque frontispiece (1 of 3 known examples in the state), one of the original two stairways, mantelpieces, doors and trim. The property was originally enclosed by a picket fence (replaced by rail fence c. 1983), cedar-bordered brick walkway to portico. Antebellum, rectangular, brick outbuilding (contributing) located northeast of the house. Five additional contributing out-buildings (possibly dating from the 1930s) also located on the property as well as the Swoope Family cemetery (see site #12A).

12A) Swoope Family Cemetery (Ussery Cemetery) Approx. 225' off the Ussery House (site #12) Funerary sculpture from the mid-19th to the late 20th centuries scattered among tall cedars. Burial place of John M. Swoope (died 1861) and his wife Cynthia Early (daughter of post-Revolutionary Georgia Gov. Peter Early); also the burial place of Richard and Lucy (Early) Jones, parents-in-law of Gen. Joseph Wheeler. At least 8 burials altogether, the last Swoope descendant Catherine Crenshaw Ussery (1891-1984) and her husband, Dr. James A. Ussery (1888-1976), original owners of the adjacent Ussery House. The cemetery is now closed, and, since 1988, sealed off by a metal privacy fence.

13) Upshaw, W.P. (c. 1930) SW corner of Jefferson Street (Hwy. 20) and Alabama Street  
Frame, 1-story bungalow with porch and shallow, overhanging roof porch. Built for W. P. Upshaw.

14) House (c. 1905) SE corner Jefferson St. (Hwy. 20) and Alabama  
Frame, 1-story, L-shaped front, cross-gabled roof, wraparound neo-classical porch across the front (north) and side facades. One-story frame garage located to the rear (noncontributing).

15) Lile, Thomas, House (c. 1850 and later) SW corner Jackson and Jefferson Streets  
Frame, 2-stories with 1-story wing at the north side; a 2-tiered porch across the main block with a flat, pierced work balustrade. Side hall plan, 2/2 sash windows (original windows possibly 9/6 sash). Believed to have been erected for Thomas Lile.

16) House, (c. 1900) SW corner Monroe Street and Jefferson Street (Hwy. 20)  
Frame (synthetic siding), 1-story; L-shaped front, intersecting gable roof; 2/2 sash windows.

17) House (c. 1930) West side of Monroe St., approx. 90' south of Jefferson (Hwy.20) intersection  
Fieldstone, 1-story, gabled front with pier porch. Built for Mrs. R.E. Coburn, Mayor's wife, as a rental house.

20) Gilchrist, Frank, House (c. 1915) South side Jefferson Street (Hwy. 20) approx. 80' west of Van Buren St. intersection  
Frame, 1-1/2 story, gable roof with overhanging eaves, large central gabled dormer, gabled porch with tapered wooden piers; small porte cochere. The house was built for Frank Gilchrist, son of planter, George Gilchrist. Mrs. Garth Gilchrist (nee Louise Winchester Clark of Greenville, Mississippi) lived in the house after she became a widow. She moved there in 1943.

21) House (c. 1900) SW corner Jefferson St. (Hwy. 20) and Van Buren  
Frame, 1-story, L-shaped front with inset shed porch flanking gabled projecting east pavilion; second porch along east (Van Buren Street) side; 2/2 sash windows; some simple jigsaw-work trim. Longtime residence of the Merrill sisters, "Miss Lula" and "Miss Carrie."

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22) Trotter (McMahon) House (c. 1830-31) NRHP 1987. South side Jefferson Street (Hwy. 20), east of Van Buren Two-story, brick (common bond), rectangular (5-bay original south front) with slightly later 1-story brick ell at rear (north). Frame kitchen wing (c. 1900) at east side; Gable roof, 2 interior end chimneys; 9/9 sash windows; House originally oriented toward the south (Hamilton Street); reoriented toward the North (Jefferson Street) in the 19th-century. The center hall plan with 2-run balustraded stair having turned balusters and paneled understair. Federal-period woodwork throughout including molded chairrail, Adamesque mantelpieces and large paneled chimney cupboards in the east upper and lower rooms as well as ell. The house was built for John Trotter, merchant and cotton broker who, in 1838, moved to Louisiana. Subsequently residence of another cotton factor, John McMahon, and his wife (nee Harriet Shackelford). Dr. Jack Shackelford (see site #25) lived here with his daughter, Mrs. McMahon, in the 1850s. The home of her son, Dr. W.J. McMahon, in the late 19th century (his name plate is still on the north door). The house is one of the most notable Federal period houses left in northern Alabama. It was donated to the Alabama Historical Commission by the McMahon heirs in 1987.

23) Gilchrist, James A., House (1927) South side Jefferson St. (Hwy. 20) between Van Buren (west) and Ussery Streets (Lot 292)  
Brick, 1-story, gabled front bungalow with half-hipped pier porch. Built for planter James A. Gilchrist with materials from Lock A on Muscle Shoals canal of the Tennessee River.

24) Bynum House (1912) - NW corner of Clinton and Hamilton Streets  
Frame house with clapboarding, 2-stories, Neoclassical style with central pedimented portico composed of two pairs of Corinthian columns; full-length 1-story Corinthian (composite) order veranda with balustraded second-floor deck across the facade behind the portico. Corinthian porte cochere at the north side; sunroom on the south. Truncated hipped roof surmounted by deck enclosed with metal balustrade; also secondary pedimented gables to either side. Elaborate interior includes Renaissance Revival brick fireplace in the living hall, U-shaped 4-run stair with turned balusters, and paneled newels; lawn enclosed by rusticated coping topped by metal fence. Although no formal archeological study has been undertaken on the property, evidence of Civil War earth-works (contributing site) are located to the rear of the house. An early garage (contributing) and a coal house (contributing) are also located on the property.

25) Shackelford House (c. 1820-30) SW corner Hamilton and Clinton Streets  
"I" house (frame with beaded clapboard), 2-stories, rectangular (5-bay front) with c. 1900 one-story ell and porch addition at rear. Brick exterior end chimneys. Center hall plan. Notable Federal-period interior trim including Adamesque mantelpieces, stair with turned balusters and paneled understair area; also 6-panel (Cross and Bible) doors with unusual double-fielded panels. Remodeled c. 1900 including replacement of most 9/9 sash with 1/1 sash; further exterior changes c. 1930 including present neoclassical door surround and brick terrace. One of the oldest extant houses in the area. Reportedly built for an "Irishman." The resident in the mid-1800s was Dr. Jack Shackelford, an organizer of the Courtland "Red Rovers" who fought in the Mexican War. The building was used as a hospital during the Civil War. One-story frame 19th-century outbuilding (contributing) located to the rear.

26) Mariah's House (c. 1895) West side of Clinton Street at the West end of Tennessee Street  
Small frame 1-story cottage with single main room and shed room across rear, gable roof, shed front porch, end chimney. Built as cook's house for Shackelford House (#25). Currently (1990) abandoned and deteriorated. Excellent example of turn-of-the century servant house typical of small town Deep South.

27) Phippen, E.H., House (c. 1860) NE corner Hamilton and Clinton Streets  
Frame, 2-story, rectangular 3-bay main block with 2-story rear wing. Hipped roof with projecting half hip roof over 2-tiered central porch; (now removed). Exterior brick end chimneys; 6/6 sash windows; painted stenciling in sidelights and transom of the front doors. Balustraded front stair with enclosed service stair in ell. Wooden mantelpieces. Some 19th-century grained woodwork and wallpaper. Later 1-story wing added to the rear (razed 1987).

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Courtland Historic District (Boundary Increase)  
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28) Phippen/Wells House (c. 1830) SE Corner Hamilton and Clinton Streets  
Frame, 2-story, "I" house with 1-story rear ell, main block rectangular (3-bays). Gable roof, brick exterior end chimneys. Center hall plan. Original two rooms downstairs and two upstairs with no central hall. Outside stair to upper floor. Subsequently remodeled by W.L. Hall, carpenter, 1904, for E.V. Chadavoyne, with replacement of original sash and front door. Present battered brick porch piers ("bungalow-type") at the front and sides dating from the early 20th century. Early 20th century frame barn (contributing) with gable roof located to the rear.

30) House (c. 1850) North side Hamilton Street (East side of Lots 11-13)  
Frame, 1-story, rectangular (3-bay front) with ell, originally gable (now partially hipped), exterior end chimneys; central double-leaf door with sidelights and transom flanked by 12/12 sash windows. Central-hall plan. Plain Greek Revival-style woodwork. Later additions at the rear, some interior modifications. Originally almost identical to neighboring house to the east (site #31).

31) Campbell House (c. 1850) NW corner Hamilton and Jackson Streets (Lots 14-15)  
Frame, 1-story, rectangular (3-bay front) with ell, gable roof, exterior end chimneys; central double-leaf door with sidelights and transom flanked by 12/12 sash windows. Center-hall plan. Plain Greek Revival style woodwork. Rear additions c.1900. Originally almost identical to neighboring house to west (site #30). Longtime residence of Oren Campbell.

32) House (c. 1830, 1900, 1970) SW corner Jackson and Hamilton Streets  
Frame (now brick veneered), 1-story, originally rectangular (5-bay front along north or Hamilton Street side) with exterior end chimneys and rear ell; center-hall plan. Addition built c. 1900 in reentrant angle between ell and main block facing SE and reorienting house toward Jackson Street. Addition included porch with truncated or clipped corner bay to new front entrance. Entire house brick veneered c. 1970.

33) House (c. 1900 and possibly earlier) SE corner Hamilton and Jackson Streets  
Frame, 1-story, L-shaped, pyramidal roof over main (north) portion with pedimented gable wing extending south along Jackson Street; 2/2 sash windows. Much earlier structure (c. 1830) reputedly incorporated into present structure c. 1900; Federal-period mantel from house now in present Dwight Crow residence.

34) Presbyterian Manse (c. 1870) NE corner Hamilton and Jackson Streets (Lot 280)  
Frame, 1-story, rectangular (5-bay front) with ell, steeply pitched gable roof, interior end chimneys, trellis porch across front, floor-length windows. Center hall plan. Built on the site of the original Presbyterian meetinghouse (Nazareth Church) replaced by present structure (1859-68).

35) Courtland Presbyterian Church (1859-68) NW corner Hamilton and Monroe Streets  
Brick (rusticated basement). Piano mobile arrangement with sanctuary occupying main floor over ground floor Sunday School area. Pedimented front with 3-bay narthex advanced from main body of building. 3-stage spire. Square-headed windows capped by cast-iron lintels. Twin stairways inside leading from ground floor entrance to vestibule. Bracketed gallery at rear (resting on slender cast-iron supports) with flatwork balustrade. Second building for congregation established in 1821. According to church records, was established as the "Church of Nazareth Courtland" in 1821; identified as Presbyterian congregation in 1822. Used as Civil War hospital. Interior and roof severely damaged by fire in 1957 that destroyed all but two stained glass windows; other windows were replaced. Spire subsequently rebuilt. 1-story brick educational building added c. 1960 at west rear.

36) Bungalow (c. 1930) South side Hamilton Street approx. 65' west of Monroe Street intersection  
(opposite Presbyterian Church)  
Frame, one-story, gabled front.

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- 39) Gilchrist, George, House (c. 1830, c. 1912) NE corner Monroe and Hamilton Streets  
Frame (in part over logs), two-stories, rectangular (3-bay front), shallow hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves, tall central pedimented portico composed of paired masonry columns of modified Doric design, second floor balcony, columned porte cochere at south side. Double windows at front (each 4/1 sash). Nucleus of structure is 2-story hewn log dwelling later weatherboarded. Extensively altered c. 1912 for George Gilchrist, President of Bank of Courtland. A one-story frame garage is located on the property (contributing).
- 42) Blythe House (1919) and 42A) Dependency (c. 1825) South side Hamilton Street (entire block bounded by Hamilton, Van Buren, Tennessee and Ussery Streets, Lot 291).  
Brick covered with stucco, 2-stories (3-bay front), hipped roof with 1-story extension across the rear. Originally single-pile 1-1/2 story brick Tidewater-type cottage with 5-bay front and center-hall plan, double doors at front and rear, hall stair; also ell at SE rear; possibly dormer windows; brick-paved court at rear. Alterations include addition of second story, complete change of fenestration, removal of all original trim and woodwork and partition between hall and west room. Frame, gabled roof dependency (contributing) located on east side of the house. Dependency still retains much original fabric including 2 rooms with central chimney, integral porch across front, grained Cross-and-Bible doors inside. House believed to have been once occupied by U.S. Senator and Confederate statesman David Hubbard (1792-1874) and family c. 1829-40 prior to removal to "Kinlock" plantation in southwest part of Lawrence County. Hubbard's daughter married the son of Col. George H. Young of the famous "Waverly" plantation near Columbus, Mississippi. Single grave on ground (Hubbard). Two additional frame outbuildings (contributing) also located on the property.
- 43) House (c. 1930) SE corner Tennessee and Clinton Streets  
Frame, 1-story bungalow, gabled front with porch.
- 44) House (c. 1930) South side Tennessee Street about 70' east of Clinton (next to site #43)  
One-story frame bungalow.
- 45) House (c. 1930) Northeast corner Tennessee and Clinton  
One-story frame bungalow.
- 46) House (c. 1930) North side Tennessee Street just East of Clinton (east portion Lot 117)  
Frame, 1-story bungalow, gabled front with porch. Built for Mr. B.H. Collins.
- 48) House (c.1890 and earlier) North side Tennessee Street between Clinton and Alabama (Lots 102-104)  
Frame, 1-story, apparently 2 parallel rectangular gabled structures joined as one by central wing, exterior end chimneys. Rear portion may be in part mid-19th century or earlier. Drastically altered and enlarged c.1890-1900. Site of c.1825 Aaron B. Owens House. Longtime residence of Mrs. Mary Sherrod (nee Harris, of Rosemont Plantation)
- 49) Old Sherrod Hotel (c. 1930) Northwest corner Tennessee and Alabama Streets  
Brick, 2-stories, rectangular, 6/6 sash windows, roof concealed by brick parapet. Housed many TVA workers during construction of Wheeler Dam in the mid-1930s. Now office of Albermarle Corporation. Built by Morgan Sherrod, great-grandson of Col. Benjamin Sherrod.
- 50) Commercial (c. 1900) Northeast corner Tennessee and Alabama Streets (opposite town square)  
Brick, 2-stories, rectangular, 2-bay front, extending back to alley; single store unit. Full basement beneath. Facade composed of transomed storefront at 1st floor level with inset brick panels accentuating upper portion of facade. In early 1900s, basement housed saloon entered via outside stairwell along west elevation opposite old hotel. Built by Mr. D.B. Campbell, cabinetmaker.

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52) Commercial Building (c.1900) North side Tennessee Street, approx. 76' west of College Street and immediately adjacent to #53 (opposite town square)

Brick, 2-stories, rectangular (6-bay front) extending back to alley at middle of the block, 2 store units of 3 bays each; rectangular vents at the attic level with pressed metal cornice.

53) A.F. Rebman and Company Building (c. 1890) North side Tennessee Street approx. 45' west of College Street and adjacent to site #54 (opposite town square)

Brick, 2-stories, rectangular (3-bay front) extending back to alley at the middle of block; single store unit. Rusticated facade with inset 3-bay cast-iron storefront at the first-floor level; segmentally arched parapet with rectangular vents and metal coping at attic level. Original raised metal lettering ("A.F. Rebman and Company") beneath the cornice.

54) Commercial Building (c. 1880) Northwest corner Tennessee and College Streets (facing south toward town square)

Brick, 2-stories, rectangular (5-bay front) extending back to alley at middle of block; 2 store units with central stair bay leading to second floor; cast-iron storefronts (3 bays each) to either side of stair door. 1/1 sash segmentally arched windows with metal hood molds at second-floor front with grilled rondels at attic level above. Upstairs offices still largely intact (including original trim) though deteriorated and abandoned. East unit housed drugstore in early 20th century.

55) Commercial Structure (possible mid-19th century and later) SE corner College and Tennessee Streets (east side town square)

Brick, 2-stories, rectangular (50' X 75'), 4-bay front with c. 1900 glazed storefronts at the street level, second-floor windows have brick jack arches; brick coping at cornice level is stepped back along north street-side elevation; outside stair to upper level on north facade. Basic structure possibly as early as c. 1850; extensively altered c. 1900. General merchandise store owned by Daniel Gilchrist in 1938. Believed to have been built originally for Swoope brothers, local merchants.

56) Commercial Structure (c. 1900) East side College Street approx. 75' south of Tennessee intersection

Brick, 2-stories, rectangular (3-bay facade) with storefronts 1st level.

57) Commercial Structure (c. 1900, 1940) East side College Street, just north of Southern Railroad

Brick, 2-stories, rectangular (5-bay) with glazed and transomed storefront at street level.

58) Tennessee Valley Bank (c. 1900) Northeast corner College Street and Main (Southern Railroad right-of-way)

Brick, 2-stories with articulated raised attic, rectangular, 3-bay street level storefront. Interior retains original safe with ornamental cast-iron trim, pressed tin ceiling, marble floor and other features. Formerly Tennessee Valley Bank (closed with Depression in 1929). Now the office of James Blythe, Jr.

59-61) Three Commercial Buildings (before 1938) South side Tennessee Street approx. 75' east of College Street intersection

Three, 1-story brick commercial units with glazed fronts.

62) Old Southern Railroad Depot (c. 1887) West side College Street south of railroad track (southeast side of public square)

Frame (clapboarding), rectangular with projecting ticket bay on north side, shallow gable roof with wide overhanging eaves, 6/6 sash windows; originally open freight platform to west along tracks (destroyed). Used as town library since c. 1980. Apparently fourth building on site which has served as railroad depot since mid-1830s (Tuscumbia, Courtland, and Decatur Railroad one of first in U.S., later part of Memphis and Charleston line). Railroad facilities destroyed during Civil War. Southern Railroad Corp. archives document present structure as c. 1887.

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63) Town Square Entire block bounded by Tennessee St. (north), College (east), Alabama (west) & Southern Railroad (south) Town square probably set aside in original 1819 town plat for site of courthouse which went to Moulton. Traditional town center. Site from which famous "Red Rovers" volunteer military company left for Texas War for Independence on TC&D Railroad. Modern bandstand and street furnishings. Three stone mounting blocks (contributing) located near town square (sites 63A, 63B, 63C) were reputedly used as slave auction blocks.

66) Pippen, Sam, House (c. 1905) Southeast corner Tennessee and Jackson Streets  
Frame (synthetic siding), 2-stories, irregular shape with truncated hipped roof and projecting secondary gables, wraparound porch across front (north) and west sides. Cast-iron fence encloses street sides of lot. Built for Sam Pippen. Later home of Kate Garth (Mrs. George Garth, Jr.) after her former residence "Boonie Doon" burned in 1935.

67) Eggleston House (c. 1915) South side Tennessee between Monroe and Jackson Street intersections  
Frame, 1-1/2 stories, basically square with wide overhanging gabled roof pitched from front to rear; integral Craftsman-type front porch. Reputedly incorporates early clapboard-over-log structure built originally on mountain south of town as planter's summer residence.

68) Rebman House (c. 1905) Northeast corner Tennessee and Monroe Streets  
Frame, 2-stories, irregularly shaped, combination hip-and-gable roof, 1-story balustraded neoclassical porch. Transitional Queen Anne and neoclassical detailing. Built for A.F. Rebman, Sr.  
One-story frame carriage house (contributing) located on the property.

69) Rebman Schoolhouse (c. 1905) Northwest corner of Lot 239-240 (at rear of site #68)  
Frame, 1-story 1-room, gabled roof, small shed porch with stock spoolwork detail. Built as private school.

71) McKnight House (c. 1929) Southwest corner Tennessee and Van Buren Streets  
Frame, 1-story, rectangular bungalow, gabled front with secondary gable over brick pier porch.

73) House (1929) South side Tennessee St., approx. 450' east of Van Buren St. intersection  
Brick, 1-story, lateral gable roof bungalow with gabled offset pier porch, 6/1 sash double windows. Built for John Lindsay.

74) Old Firehouse (before 1938) West side of Alabama St. midway between railroad (north) & Water Street (south)  
Irregular laid brown fieldstone, 1-story, rectangular, shallow hipped roof; water tower extends from building.

77) Chardovoyne, E.V., House (c. 1885) Southwest corner Water and College Streets  
Frame, 1-story, L-shaped facade with inset porch (west) flanked by projected pavilion having unusual canopy-roof triple bay; main roof a shallow gable with overhanging eaves. Built by Mr. E.V. Chardovoyne, a longtime depot agent.

78 & 79) Twin Stone Bungalows (c. 1930) Northeast corner Jackson and Water Streets  
One-story, fieldstone, gable roof with gabled pier Craftsman porch; Good and relatively unaltered examples of fieldstone bungalows characteristic of Courtland c. 1925-35.  
Large frame garage located behind site #79 (noncontributing).

80) House (c. 1930) North side Water Street, 84' west of Monroe St. intersection  
Frame, 1-story, gable roof with porch.

81) Tweedy House (c. 1825, 1910, 1988) Southeast corner Jackson and Water Streets  
Brick (facade Flemish bond) with rare corbeled and molded brick cornice, 2-story main block (5-bay facade) with 1910 rear ell

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and 1988 shed across rear; center hall plan. Full-length 1-story pier porch at front. Some Federal-period woodwork including reverse flight stair with landing. Adamesque mantelpieces. First-floor north room (parlor) and dining room to rear remodeled c. 1910 with neoclassical revival stock millwork, mantels, etc. One of earliest brick houses in Alabama. Tweedy residence during the early 19th century. House remodeled during the early 20th century. Square, pyramiddally roof detached kitchen (contributing) of precast concrete block located to the rear. At one time, property occupied entire block.

82) Torian, Peter, House (c.1830) North side Water Street east of Van Buren (Lot 004)  
Frame covered with synthetic siding, 1-1/2 stories, rectangular, 3-bay front, gabled roof with end chimneys, later shed extension across rear. Center-hall plan with enclosed stair on west, single large room to either side. Notable fanlight door flanked by 3-part 9/9 sash windows. Brick cellar. Unusually sophisticated example (-despite alterations-) of Federal-period cottage. Original mantelpieces removed; original double-leaf 3-panel front doors also removed and destroyed c. 1982. Modern porch. In mid-19th century, home of Peter Torian family, originally from Halifax County, Virginia.

83) The Grove (1917) Property bounded on north by Tennessee St. and west by Water Street where road turns north toward Southern Railroad right-of-way. House sits at the end of long private lane leading off Tennessee Street. Brick, 2-stories with 1-story rear wing, hipped roof. Central 1-story porch with in antis columns between brick piers, balustraded second floor deck. Open terraces to either side, French doors across front. Known as "the house the dog built." Now has long entrance drive from pierced gateposts; notable grounds. Erected for William Gilchrist and his wife (nee Agnes Dourette of Como, Miss., and Memphis) with proceeds from renowned field trial dog, "Louis C. Morris." Gilchrist was noted field trial dog trainer. Present house replaced earlier dwelling located to the southeast and formally owned by Susan Garth Sykes, daughter of Dr. A.J. Sykes. Miss Sykes sold to William Gilchrist on March 13, 1912. Land originally patented September 10, 1818 by Mirna Currie. House passed from Mr. and Mrs. Gilchrist to daughter, Mamie. Subsequently inherited by kinswoman Jean DuBose Weaver (Mrs. William Weaver) of Selma for her lifetime. Present owner (son of builder's cousin) inherited the house in 1965.

84) House (c. 1940) Northeast corner Jackson and Academy Streets  
One-story rectangular brick veneer residence; rafters beneath eaves of clipped gable roof; 9/1 windows; side porch.

85) House (c. 1935) East side Monroe Street opposite and just south of Academy Street intersection  
Irregularly-laid sandstone construction bungalow, 1-story, gabled front with pier porch.

86) House (c. 1935) East side Monroe Street immediately south of site #85  
Frame, 1-story bungalow, gabled front with porch.

87) Tweedy, Robert, House (c. 1915) Southeast corner Jackson and Academy Streets  
Brick, 1-story Craftsman-style bungalow with clipped gable roof, pier porch. Robert Tweedy original owner.

88) Moore, Lennie, House (c. 1915) Northwest corner Madison and Jackson Streets (Lots 159-160)  
Frame, 1-story, shallow gable roof with secondary gables, wide overhanging eaves, wraparound Craftsman type porch on south (front) and east sides. Reputedly portions of early 19th-century brick cottage built by "Dr. Coons" incorporated into extant dwelling erected by Lennie Moore, son of local Jewish merchant Simon Moore.

89) Wayside (c. 1915) East side of South Pike  
Frame, 1-story Craftsman-style bungalow with broad overhanging gabled roof, front porch. Dr. Charles Tweedy original owner; next Sam Pippen, then Hector Lane.  
A contributing building and a noncontributing structure are also located on the property.

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90) Arcadia (1913-14) East side of South Pike  
Frame, 2-story "four square" with hipped roof and 1-story neoclassical porch. Colonial Revival trim throughout. One of plantation homes of dynastic Gilchrist family, whose founder in Courtland was Daniel Gilchrist (1786-1851). Original plantation dwelling (destroyed) located about 2 miles from Arcadia (was 2-story, probably 4-room wooden house). Contributing structures on the property include: a carriage house, 2 barns, and two outbuildings. A noncontributing trailer house is also located on the property.

**Original Nomination**  
**NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCES**

9) Horton, Clyde, House (c. 1938) North side Jefferson Street (Hwy. 20), approx. 160' east of Monroe Street, intersection.  
One-story frame residence with asbestos siding.

18) Trailer (c.1970s) Northeast corner Monroe and Jefferson (Hwy. 20)  
One-story trailer.

19) House (c. 1960s?) South side Jefferson Street (Hwy. 20) approx. 120' east of Monroe Street intersection  
One-story frame residence with aluminum and brick veneer siding.

29) House (c. 1970s?) Northeast corner of College and Hamilton Streets  
One-story frame residence.

37) House (c. 1970s?) Northwest corner of Hamilton and Monroe Streets  
One-story frame residence.

38) House (c. 1960s?) West side of Monroe approx. 120' south of Hamilton St. intersection  
One-story residence.

40) House (c. 1950s?) NW corner Hamilton and Van Buren  
One-and-one-half-story residence with asbestos siding  
One-story garage on property (noncontributing).

41) House (c. 1950s?) SW corner Hamilton and Van Buren  
One-story residence with asbestos siding.

47) House (c. 1960s-70s) North side Tennessee  
One-story rectangular residence with aluminum siding.

51) Commercial Building (c. 1950s?) North side of Tennessee between site #51 and #53  
One-story brick veneer commercial building with two storefronts.

64) Commercial Building (c. 1940s-50s) South side Tennessee Street between College and Jackson  
One-story concrete commercial building with a centrally located entrance flanked by two rectangular windows.

65) Office Building (c. 1980s?) 560 Tennessee  
One-story brick office building used by the Champion Paper Co.



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- 70) House (c. 1960) Northwest corner Tennessee and Van Buren  
One-story frame ranch-style residence. Adamesque mantelpiece from now demolished c. 1830 Tidewater-type house in the living room of this house.
- 72) House (c. 1960s-70s) South side Tennessee between site #71 and site #73; near Van Buren St. intersection  
One-story brick veneer residence with a gable roof.
- 75) Structure (c. 1970s?) Northeast corner Water and Alabama  
Small one-story rectangular structure with brick veneer.
- 76) Structure (c. 1950s?) Northwest corner Water and College  
United Paper Workers Union AFLCIO Local 1137. One-story rectangular concrete block structure.
- 91) Courtland Baptist Church (c. 1960s?) Northeast corner Tennessee and Jackson  
Brick church with front portico.
- 92) Residence (c. 1960s) East side Jackson, north of Church (site #91)  
One-story brick residence.
- 93) Commercial Building (c. 1950s?) South side Tennessee  
One-story concrete block commercial building.
- 94) Trailer (c. 1970s?) South side Tennessee, located rear of site #93
- 95) House (c. 1950s?) East side of Clinton Street, south of site #28  
One-story rectangular residence.
- 96) House (c. 1950s?) East side of South Pike  
One-story brick ranch-style residence.

**Boundary Expansion Inventory**

**CONTRIBUTING AND NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCES**

97) Terry's Motorcourt, Contributing Resource, (ca. 1945)

Jackson Street at Courtland/North Courtland Border

Concrete block, one story, u-shaped motel with 4 units; each unit with standing seam metal roof, steel casement windows, 2 single leaf entry doors with three stepped lights (one door per room), the doors are doubled on the corner units, stoop with gable roof and decorative iron supports.

98) Bungalow, Contributing Resource, (ca. 1925)

61 College

One story, wood frame bungalow with front gable roof, interior chimney, weatherboard siding, three bay facade, wood door, 4/4 lights, partial width porch with gable roof, tapered posts on piers.

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99) Bungalow, Contributing Resource, (ca. 1925)

400 Madison

One story, wood frame bungalow with gable roof of standing seam metal, interior chimney, weatherboard siding, three bay facade, wood door, 4/1 & 5/1 double hung sash windows, full width porch with shed roof and posts, rear shed carport addition.

100) Coffey Bungalow, Contributing Resource, (ca. 1925)

560 Monroe

One story, wood frame bungalow with side gable roof, brackets, interior chimney, weatherboard cladding, three bay facade, central wood door, flanking 4/1 double hung sash window, full width porch with engaged roof, tapered posts on brick piers, brick balustrade.

101) Coffey Ranch, Noncontributing Resource, (ca. 1960)

715 Monroe

One story, brick veneer ranch, hip roof, three bay facade, off centered wood door with three stepped light, plate glass picture window with flanking three and four light casements, twelve light casement window.

102) Jackson Chapel CME, Noncontributing Resource, (ca. 1974)

Southeast corner of Water and Alabama Streets

Brick veneer, front gable roof, steeple, one bay facade, central double leaf entry, ell addition.

103) Double Pen Dwelling, Contributing Resource, (ca. 1900)

140 Alabama Street

Wood frame, aluminum clad, one story, side gable roof, four bay facade, three exterior single leaf entry doors, 4/4 double hung sash window, partial width porch with shed roof and posts.

104) Tolbert House, Contributing Resource, (ca. 1942)

132 Alabama Street

Wood frame, one story, massed plan, side gable roof, vinyl siding, four bay facade, wood door, three 6/6 double hung sash windows, partial width porch with shed roof and posts.

105) Central Hall Plan House, Contributing Resource, (ca. 1880)

151 Alabama Street

Wood frame, one story, side gable roof, double exterior chimneys, aluminum siding, three bay facade, wood and glass panel door, 4/4 double hung sash windows, rear shed addition.

106) Fieldstone Bungalow, Contributing Resource, (ca. 1920)

110 Monroe

Fieldstone veneered, one story bungalow, side gable roof, four bay facade, wood door with six lights, 6/6 double hung sash windows, full width porch with shed roof, tapered posts, side and rear additions.

107) Wence House, Contributing Resource, (ca. 1946)

655 Water Street

Stucco over frame, one story, minimal traditional, side gable roof, end chimney, four bay facade, wood door, three 6/6 double hung sash windows, side carport, rock retaining wall.

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108) Smith House, Contributing Resource, (ca. 1946)

2932 Jefferson

Wood frame, one story, minimal traditional with side gable roof, interior chimney, asbestos shingle siding, four bay facade, wood door, paired 6/6 double hung sash windows, partial width porch with shed and gable roof.

109) Cross House, Contributing Resource, (ca. 1920)

2958 Jefferson

Fieldstone veneered, one story bungalow with cross gable roof, interior chimney, three bay facade, wood door, paired 2/2 double hung sash windows, partial width porch with gable roof, fieldstone columns.

110) McGowan House, Contributing Resource, (ca. 1946)

859 Hamilton

Stucco covered, one story minimal traditional with side gable roof, three bay facade, central six panel wood door, 3/1 and 6/6 double hung sash windows, partial width porch with gable roof and posts.

**Section VIII. Statement of Significance**  
**Original Nomination Statements**

**CRITERION A (COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT):**

The Courtland Historic District is significant under Criterion A, Community Planning and Development, because it provides an exceptional illustration of how a plantation community has evolved physically, socially, and economically over 170 years. Together with the village of Mooresville (NRHP 1972), Courtland is the only town left in the Tennessee Valley which physically conveys a sense of the region's small plantation communities of the 19th century.

**CRITERION C (ARCHITECTURE):**

The Courtland Historic District contains fine and intact representations of architectural styles dating from the early 19th century (c. 1820) to the late 1930s (c. 1938). These styles include Federal and Greek Revival buildings, Tidewater cottages, "I" houses with end chimneys, late 19th-century commercial and residential architecture, Colonial Revival mansions and Craftsman-inspired bungalows.

**CRITERION EXCEPTION A:**

The Courtland Presbyterian Church (site #35) and Manse (site #34) derive their primary significance from their architecture.

**CRITERION EXCEPTION D:**

The Courtland Cemetery (site #1) derives its primary significance from its fine examples of funerary sculpture. This town cemetery contains the graves of Courtland's earliest residents. The Swoope/Ussery Family Cemetery is also an integral part of the Courtland Historic District. This cemetery contains early graves of the Swoope and Ussery families and is located on the property of the Dr. J.A. Ussery House complex (site #12).

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**Original Nomination Historical Summary**

In *The Ruling Race*, his ground breaking 1982 study of the southern slave holding class, Professor James Oakes addresses the significance to plantation society of the hundreds of villages and small towns that dotted the old cotton belt. From them "emanated the only sense of community most slave holders could ever know," writes Oakes. He observes that "with its merchants, shippers, and country stores, the town served primarily as the nucleus of a vast and decentralized marketing system that tied the products of slave labor into the international market."<sup>1</sup>

As one of the first such nodes of Alabama's former plantation economy, Courtland provides an exceptional illustration of how this form of community has evolved--physically, socially and economically--over some 170 years. Together with the village of Mooresville (National Register, 1972), it is the only town left in the Tennessee Valley which physically conveys a sense of the region's small plantation communities of the 19th century. Comparable antebellum settings--Decatur, Athens, Tusculumbia--long ago outstripped Courtland and evolved in a radically different direction. Only a scattering of buildings survive in "readable" condition from Courtland's earliest years. Yet the overall layout and spatial patterns established in the 1820s still control, to a large degree, the ongoing metamorphosis of the town in the closing years of the 20th century. Its gridiron street pattern has existed since 1818, while its boundaries have until very recently remained the same since Courtland was incorporated by the territorial legislature on 14th December 1819, eight days before Alabama itself became a state. Until the 1960s and the construction of the nearby Champion paper mill, Courtland's economy likewise remained almost exclusively tied to cotton production and its attendant activities. Moreover, Courtland's 20th century development--first a wave of rebuilding between 1900 and 1920 confined chiefly to the merchant/ planter class, then the gradual alteration of earlier domestic building patterns by an infilling of modest bungalows--is a graphic sociological as well as architectural statement. Now on the threshold of further change as it is drawn into the larger matrix of an industrializing and increasingly high-tech economy, Courtland still retains a coherence in which can be read nearly two centuries of agrarian history.

Although most of the earliest buildings (c. 1818 - 1835) have disappeared, those remaining are part of an ensemble of structures that mirror in architecture the alternating periods of economic torpor and prosperity over a 150-year history. Woodwork from a handful of the oldest houses ranks among the finest specimens of Federal-period cabinetwork in the state (see nos. 11, 12 and 25). The architecture of these and other structures also suggests the strong link between Courtland and the building traditions of the upper South (Virginia, upper North Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky) from which came the majority of the town's first settlers.

From the late 18th century on, the surpassing fertility of the land lying in the "Great Bend" of the Tennessee River--where the river crooks like an elbow to within 300 miles of the Gulf of Mexico and then meanders northward to the Ohio--was remarked alike by trappers, explorers and occasional squatters. It was a gently undulating region of dense hardwood forests and rich red soil, broken by numerous smaller streams that flowed into the Tennessee. Now and then a low mountain, a stranded bit of the Appalachian chain, broke the rhythm of the swelling landscape. Although as early as 1805 Huntsville became the first Anglo-American settlement in this region, it was not until 1816 that the lands a few miles away on the south side of the river, encompassing the site of Courtland, were ceded by the Indians to the Federal government.

About that time, Major Lewis Dillahunty and his wife became the first white settlers in the vicinity of the future town. Although his precise role is unclear, Dillahunty--a Tennessean and distinguished veteran of the Battle of New Orleans--is reputed to have

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<sup>1</sup>Oakes, *Ruling Race*, 91-92.

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played a key role in negotiating the cession of this choice territory from the beleaguered Cherokees and Chickasaws.<sup>2</sup>

In any event, the alluvial lands enveloping the future town site and stretching across what is now northern Lawrence County were eagerly snapped up by speculators and expansion-minded planters when auctioned off at Huntsville in September of 1818. Lawrence County itself came into existence on February 4th of that year and the county tractbook reveals that most of the land about Courtland was taken up in quarter-section parcels (160 acres) or more, with a few individuals like Robert Watkins and Benjamin Sherrod--men destined to become planter barons in early Alabama--acquiring much larger tracts.

Anticipating the necessity of a market town for this nascent planter society--one within a few miles of river transportation yet still convenient to outlying farms--a consortium of speculators headed by William H. Whitaker, James M. Camp, William F. Broadnax, John M. Tifford, Benjamin Thomas, and Bernard McKernon--quickly banded together as "the Courtland Land Company." On September 10, 1818, they entered a patent for the site of the town at the Federal land office in Huntsville.<sup>3</sup> Consisting of 160 acres, the site lay to the east of Big Nance Creek and described an almost perfect square extending for half a mile on each side. Within a few months the site had been laid off into 56 blocks, divided into nearly 300 lots and crisscrossed by seven streets from east to west, six from north to south. A little south of center, a large tract was set aside as a public square in expectation that the blossoming town would be the county seat. While the origin of the name Courtland is uncertain, the role envisioned for it as the seat of Lawrence County is a likely explanation.

Courtland was indeed serving as temporary seat of government for the county when town lots were first offered for purchase on May 3, 1819. Advertising the sale in the Huntsville newspaper, Courtland's promoters boasted that the fledgling settlement was situated "at the center of a fine body of land, settling with unparalleled [sic] rapidity, by industrious wealthy & intelligent gentlemen, determined to promote its prosperity." The announcement went on to add that \$5,000 already had been set aside for public buildings.<sup>4</sup> As if to underscore Courtland's promise, ginmaker Williams Gains of Meridianville on the Tennessee state line north of Huntsville advertised in the columns of the same paper that he would deliver his ginning machines to Courtland free of charge.<sup>5</sup>

On December 13th, the territorial legislature--then meeting at Huntsville--approved articles of incorporation for Courtland, which provided for the election by local residents of five "trustees," who would then select one of their number to be "President"--the equivalent of mayor. But the town's aspirations were dealt a blow when, soon afterward, Lawrence County voters selected the rival town of Moulton as seat of justice because of its more central location. This marked the beginning of a rivalry that ran deeper than politics. For if Courtland symbolized the extension of planter culture onto the Alabama frontier, Moulton represented the plain folk, the yeomanry: the smaller farmers who would always compose the bulk of Lawrence County's population and who were at the same time opening the less fertile--and less expensive--land in the lower part of the county, closer to the hill country and more remote from river transportation. The early rivalry between the two towns prefigured two distinct if unavoidably intertwined tracks of development that stamp the character of the county to the present day.

When the peripatetic, letter-writing Mrs. Anne Royall stopped briefly at Courtland in June of 1821, she reported "a considerable

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<sup>2</sup>Saunders, *Early Settlers of Alabama*, 197.

<sup>3</sup>*Lawrence County Tractbook*, 72.

<sup>4</sup>*Alabama Republican*, 11 April 1819.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 1 May 1819.

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town, consisting of fine brick houses," where eighteen months before there had been a cornfield—"the furrows of which were here and there still visible." She went on to note that "all the citizens...are much disappointed that they did not obtain the seat of justice here," adding that her unnamed friend "the Colonel" especially "takes it much to heart, as he purchased lots under that view."<sup>6</sup> But Anne Royall was prone to hyperbole, and her breezy reference to "fine brick houses" must be taken with caution. None of the handful of early brick structures extant today can with certainty be traced as far back as 1821—although the present Norton residence (#81) is a possible candidate.

Some of the most affluent settlers in and about Courtland would continue to occupy hewn log houses for several years to come, according to the county chronicler, James Saunders. As Saunders observed sixty years later, the settlers "brought with them all the means and appliances of civilized life—their ministers, their physicians, their merchants, their lawyers, and mechanics" (an archaic reference to any craftsman, be he blacksmith, tinner or housewright). "But their houses they could not bring. For many years, these (even in the richest families) consisted of two log cabins divided by a hall, and low attics above, in one of which the girls performed the mystery of the toilet. They could stand straight only when in the middle of the room, and in spite of these drawbacks, when the girls would descend in full dress they would look as lovely as Venus stepping from a rosy cloud."<sup>7</sup> If there was both brick and frame construction from the earliest days, it must by most accounts have remained the exception rather than the rule.

Still, sustained by the nascent agrarian society around it, Courtland thrived. "The merchants came in as fast as their wares were wanted," reports Saunders, "and as soon as the people commenced making and selling their cotton crop an active demand sprung up... Within five years after its incorporation Courtland attained its full dimensions; its mechanics were skillful... its lawyers and doctors eminent and its merchants prosperous, selling from three to four hundred thousand dollars worth of goods annually."<sup>8</sup> Among the earliest merchants Saunders notes Robert B. Cary, a Virginian "descended from a wealthy family but... reduced in his circumstances;" Ira Carlton; Noble R. Ladd; Charles McClung and Nathan Gregg from East Tennessee; William H. Whitaker from Nashville; Joseph Trotter, who in 1830-31 built the Trotter/McMahon house, (#22); the brothers John, Jacob and Edgar Swoope from Staunton, Virginia—"three of the best merchants Courtland ever had" wrote Saunders; and another Virginian from the Shenandoah, John MacMahon, who in 1828 settled at Courtland as representative of the Huntsville firm of Andrew Bierne and Company.<sup>9</sup>

William Whitaker, of course, was among the group of investors to whom Courtland owed its existence, while Cary and Carlton were among the original town officers of 1819. Many—perhaps most—of these men, including Whitaker, Cary and Carlton, eventually moved elsewhere in the restive spirit of Jacksonian America. The Swoopes and John McMahon, however, remained—eventually acquiring large tracts of surrounding land themselves, and melding into the planter gentry. As cotton brokers or "factors"—the vital middle link between the planter and the international market—as well as drygoods merchants, such men played a key role in plantation-based trade centers like Courtland. Their tall, dignified brick houses (John Swoope's 1829 residence stood until 1935, McMahon's was purchased from another merchant, Joseph Trotter, in 1838 and still remains) attest to their affluence.

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<sup>6</sup>Royall, *Letters*, 219-20.

<sup>7</sup>Saunders, *Early Settlers*, 43, 47.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 43, 198.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 198-99, 205, 213.

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In the cotton kingdom of the Old Southwest, as in any new country, the hotel was a very prominent feature of the village landscape—even when nothing more than a crude log building. It was the place where hopeful newcomers surveyed their prospects and where deals were struck over whiskey and cards about some choice piece of land or some likely slave. Thomas Smith is remembered by Saunders as one of Courtland's first hotel-keepers. Early issues of the Courtland Herald, established in the late 1820s by Willie (pronounced "Wiley") Connor, carry advertisements for other hostelrys, such as the "Planters' Hotel," which readers were told was "At the Sign of the Cotton Press." Here, in January 1830, a year's lodging could be obtained for a hundred dollars, or a week's bed and board for two dollars and a half.<sup>10</sup>

The columns of the Herald also supplemented James Saunders' recollection of early physicians and lawyers: Dr. Gideon G. Williams from Tennessee—"a good physician and very popular;" Dr. Young A. Gray—who with 35 bondsmen in 1820 was one of the larger slave holders in the area; and Dr. Jack Shackelford—another Virginian who settled permanently in Courtland in 1829 after having lived a decade in Bibb County,<sup>11</sup> and whose residence still stands (#25). Attorneys included Saunders himself; David Hubbard, who in time retired to his plantation "Kinlock" in the southwestern part of the county, Matthew Clay—a cousin of Henry—and others who flourished in the litigious atmosphere of rapid-fire land purchases, foreclosures and sellouts.

Writing half a century later of Courtland's early artisans and "mechanics," Saunders pronounced them "men of a high order," attracted from the East to the "El Dorado" of the Tennessee Valley. Surviving examples of their craftsmanship—including some of the most elegant Federal-period mantels and doorways in the state—certainly attest to an exceptional level of woodworking skill. Likewise, those few houses from the 1820-1835 period still standing in and about Courtland suggest builders who were well acquainted with the building traditions of the mid-Atlantic region and the upper South—the birthplace of most of the town's early settlers. Preeminent among housewrights was Daniel Wade, who came to Courtland with his planter kinsmen; the Booths, Fitzgeralds, and Wards, from the lower Virginia Piedmont in 1819. He employed a number of carpenters, some of whom may have been among the 20 slaves he owned in 1820.<sup>12</sup> The pronounced "Virginia" character of some of the 1 ½ and 2 story dwellings still standing in the Courtland area—the Trotter-McMahon house, Albemarle, Brides Hill (Sunnybrook), the John Johnson house and others may point to Wade as their builder.

In addition to Wade, Saunders also notes a certain "Mr. Kouck"—a house builder from Philadelphia—and a "modest, gentlemanly" carpenter named Maurice Morris, who in time married Kouck's widow. There was also one Peter Puryear, "a carpenter," according to Saunders, and his brother William, a brick mason. Peter Puryear's status as the owner of 19 slaves in 1820 attests to his economic position in the community.<sup>13</sup>

Westwood Wallace James (1795-1866), a native of Prince William County, Virginia, who had come to Courtland around 1820 by way of Richmond, was for forty years the preeminent town cabinetmaker. He defies the stereotype of the craftsman of the Old South as inferior in background to the planter class. Descended from some of the Tidewater's most respected families, James inherited his industrious nature from his grandmother, Elizabeth Westwood Wallace, of whom Bishop William Meade wrote in his chronicle of the Old Dominion: "She was one of those old-fashioned Virginia ladies who, like Mrs. General

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<sup>10</sup>Herald, 8 January 1830.

<sup>11</sup>Saunders, 208.

<sup>12</sup>Lawrence County manuscript census, Archives and History.

<sup>13</sup>1820 MS Census; Saunders, 224, 226.

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Washington...not only superintended the labors of her servants but worked with her own hands."<sup>14</sup> Saunders remembered James and his wife, Catherine Conway Owens, as "intelligent and respectable, pillars in the Presbyterian Church . . . and . . . people of refinement."<sup>15</sup> As a cabinetmaker, Wallace himself was exceptionally skilled. "From his shop," observed Saunders in the 1880s "were turned out samples which would be esteemed respectable, even now, after so many improvements in that line." Because of the high cost of transporting heavy furniture in the 1820s and 1830s, James enjoyed a flourishing local business and expanded his shop, employing a number of workmen, for—as Saunders again notes, "the planters were rich, and the demand was great . . ."

We can reasonably assume that James is responsible for the graceful Federal-period mantelpieces still to be seen in the Courtland area, as well as for the door surrounds of the now-destroyed Campbell and John M. Swoope houses—the latter reincorporated into the 1935 Ussery house (#12).

Other town artisans included Samuel Mudd, a saddle maker from Kentucky who in 1831 moved to Elyton in Jefferson County, where his son, Judge William Mudd, would become a founder of Birmingham. There was also Leonard H. Sims, foremost among the town's manufacturers of plantation cotton gins, and Jacob Points—a tinner who manufactured roofing, gutters, and other metal objects for domestic consumption and who, like the Swoope brothers, was from Staunton, Virginia. Like Westwood Wallace James, Points again defies the stereotype of the artisan class as sharply differentiated from the planter gentry. Indeed, his nephew was married to a niece of President John Tyler.<sup>16</sup>

Dominated by a merchant/planter oligarchy from the beginning, Courtland was in the 1820s and early 1830s one of the state's chief focal points of agrarian development. Some of the first-planter barons of Alabama resided in the vicinity—Colonel Benjamin Sherrod (who with over 300 bondsmen in 1830 may have been the state's largest slave holder), Turner Saunders, and the prolific and powerful Watkins family among others. Most had come originally from south central Virginia and the corresponding area in neighboring North Carolina, but via different routes of immigration. Some, such as the Saunders and de Graffenrieds—lived for a few years in Middle Tennessee; others—the Clays, Fitzgeralds, Dandridges, Byrds, Pointers, Lightfoots, Booths, Joneses, Bynums and HARRISES—apparently came directly from the Atlantic seaboard; and still others—the Sherrods, Watkinsons and Taliaferros—were part of that famous diaspora of Virginians who had first moved to the "Broad River settlement" (c. 1780-1810) in eastern Georgia, where they were allied with the McGehees, Gilmers, Meriwethers, Popes, Bibbs, and other families who eventually scattered throughout the Deep South to establish other powerful planter nodes elsewhere from Montgomery to Natchez and over into Louisiana. Anomalous in this group was the Gilchrist family, third-generation Scots from Moore County, in the lower North Carolina Piedmont. Through the shrewd foresight of Malcolm Gilchrist, a surveyor of Federal lands in the Tennessee Valley, the family acquired some of the most productive cotton acreage in the Courtland area at a very early date, soon establishing themselves as among the first citizens of the county.<sup>17</sup>

By 1830, Courtland had reached a high-water mark in its early development. While even then some families were beginning to emigrate to the newer cotton lands in Mississippi and the western Alabama Black Belt, others were coalescing their power and wealth. In 1832, Benjamin Sherrod spearheaded a coalition of economic potentates in the area to organize one of the first

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<sup>14</sup>Meade, *Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia*, II, 230.

<sup>15</sup>Saunders, 225.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 230-31.

<sup>17</sup>Robert Gamble Papers (private). Transcript of interview with Miss Cary Randolph Hotchkiss, 28 December 1966.



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railroads west of the Appalachians--the Tuscumbia, Courtland and Decatur line--so that cotton could be shipped to the New Orleans market around the treacherous Muscle Shoals of the Tennessee River. Opened in 1834 with a single Stephenson steam locomotive imported from England, the line was later absorbed into the Memphis and Charleston company and, after the Civil War, became part of the Southern system. Courtland's present (c. 1887) depot occupies the site of the original station--one of the first railroad stations in the Old Southwest.

The sobering consequences of the Panic of 1837, coupled with the continued lure of fresh and more extensive cotton lands elsewhere, brought a leveling off of Courtland's first phase of growth. From that time until after the Civil War the population would remain more or less stable--even declining slightly in the late antebellum period. Rather than decay, this probably signifies the quasi-feudal consolidation of the local sources of wealth into the hands of a few dominant families, leaving little advancement opportunity for those of lesser circumstance.

During the period from 1835 to 1860, a few leading families in and around Courtland actually expanded and strengthened the base of their economic power--sometimes adding to their expanding local holdings and slave work force absentee plantations in Mississippi, eastern Arkansas and Louisiana. The replacement of humbler early domiciles--the log dogtrots Saunders describes or modest wooden cottages--by commodious rural seats like John Harris' "Rosemont," Robert Watkins' "Oak Grove," Captain Charles Swoope's "Dixie," and just before the Civil War James Saunders' palatial "Rocky Hill" (all now destroyed) are architectural testaments to the comfortable ascendancy of a few. Within the town of Courtland itself no comparable houses seem to have been erected to augment the restrained brick and frame dwellings that had gone up in the late twenties and early thirties.

During the 1840s, the local planter-merchant oligarchy was augmented by the arrival from Albemarle County, Virginia, of George Martin Garth and William Stuart Bankhead, the latter a great-grandson of Thomas Jefferson. With both the capital to invest in planting and genteel credentials, these gentlemen were immediately absorbed into the privileged circle. Bankhead purchased the old Littleberry Jones House, "Southdale"--renaming it "Albemarle"--and Garth settled just south of town on a plantation which he called "Bonnie Doon."<sup>18</sup>

The 1850 and 1860 censuses provide the first opportunity, other than Saunders' reminiscences of the 1820s and 30s, to obtain a comprehensive sociological profile of Courtland. If most of those identified by Saunders had died or moved away, others had supplanted them and the town's population was still composed essentially of those in service occupations to the surrounding plantation economy. Among the newcomers was the town druggist, Joseph Curtis Baker--originally from North Yarmouth, Maine--who had married a daughter of Westwood Wallace James. There was also the German-born confectioner Joseph Rebman and his wife, Elizabeth, who settled in Courtland in 1856 after a short residence in Charleston, South Carolina. By the end of the century, the Rebmans--capable and industrious German Protestants--would emerge as one of the leading families, with large landholding and marital connections among the old plantocracy.

The most ambitious building undertaken in Courtland during the 1850s was probably the tall, spired Presbyterian church--a brick structure replacing an earlier house of worship destroyed by fire. Both Presbyterian and Methodist congregations had been established in Courtland during the 1820s, the Presbyterian group being organized as "Nazareth Church" as early as 1823 under the leadership of the Reverend Hugh Barr. In fact, a Tuscumbia newspaper advertisement of April 1824, signed by several prominent Presbyterians and asking builders to submit proposals for "a brick meetinghouse" in Courtland, apparently refers to the congregation's first permanent house of worship--that which burned in the 1850s. The structure was to be 50 x 34 feet by 20 feet high, and was located on the site of the existing manse (c. 1875). Construction on the successor structure, which began in 1858 or 1859, was halted by the Civil War. Nevertheless, when the edifice was completed in 1868, it was--and

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<sup>18</sup>ibid.

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today remains—one of the most impressive churches anywhere in small town Alabama.<sup>19</sup>

The Methodist society evidently had a building in Courtland by 1830 or soon thereafter, although most Methodist planter families—the Watkinses, Harrises, Saunderses, Fosters and others—evidently attended the long-gone Ebenezer Church some three miles northwest of town, established by the Reverend Turner Saunders. In Courtland, a brick Victorian Gothic-style structure replaced the antebellum meetinghouse in 1891, and was in turn replaced by another edifice in 1964, after structural failure of the foundation.

No other denominations gained a firm footing in Courtland until the 20th century. An Episcopal clergyman who for a short time came from Tuscumbia to hold monthly services in the town reported in 1856 the presence of "one or two zealous members of the Church," but noted that while the "community is wealthy and intelligent..the [religious] ground is almost entirely preoccupied just now." Indeed, the town has never had an Episcopal congregation, while the Baptists did not gain a firm footing until this century. A small Church of Christ congregation dates from the 1920s.

Education beyond the rudiments of simple reading, writing, and arithmetic remained the prerogative of the elite. Courtland-area planters, especially Turner Saunders, figured prominently in the establishment of LaGrange College, one the state's first academic centers, under the auspices of the Methodist Episcopal church in 1830. The graceful brick buildings, situated fifteen miles southwest of Courtland on LaGrange Mountain, were destroyed during the Civil War. Until that time, however, the school offered higher learning for the sons of the planter and professional classes. The Lafayette Female Academy, also at LaGrange, and after 1850 the Baptist female academy at Moulton, were the principal local schools available to young women. The only educational effort of record in early Courtland itself, beyond the ubiquitous small private schools maintained in homes or churches, was a short-lived "Courtland Female Academy" advertised in the pages of the *Courtland Herald* in 1830.<sup>20</sup>

Those who chose to send their offspring out of Alabama tended to favor institutions in the states from which they had come—primarily Virginia and North Carolina. The prestigious Salem College, a Moravian girls' school in Salem (now Winston-Salem), North Carolina, educated several daughters of the Watkins, Sherrod, and Saunders families. At the same time, some of the more academically ambitious young men matriculated from the state universities of Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia.

As elsewhere in the Tennessee Valley, Courtland and the surrounding countryside suffered from repeated Civil War skirmishes between 1862 and 1865. The railroad tracks and depot were destroyed, and postwar accounts note "burnt-up ginhouses" and devastated fields. Most residences and non-strategic buildings, however, seem to have been spared.

From 1865 until the First World War, the cotton economy upon which Courtland depended reasserted itself. The 1870 census gave the Courtland Beat, including the town and surrounding countryside, a total population of 2,553—with a black population nearly double that of the white. This ratio was an anomaly in Lawrence County as a whole, where blacks composed less than 40 percent of the inhabitants. The black tenant population, like the cotton plantations they worked, were concentrated in the northern third of the county—the immensely fertile lands stretching some eight or ten miles back from the Tennessee River and enveloping Courtland. The town of Courtland itself, however, remained predominantly white. Then, as now, most of the community's black population lived outside the town limits, especially to the north—except for those who resided with white households as domestics.

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<sup>19</sup>Eunice Eggleston, Manuscript history of Courtland Presbyterian Church, c. 1955.

<sup>20</sup>*Herald*, 8 January 1830.

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As in most small Alabama towns, the commercial area—concentrated about the town square—was largely rebuilt between 1880 and 1900, with hooded windows, metal cornices and cast-iron storefronts. Though partially abandoned now, these structures still remain in 1989 to form the nucleus of the historic sector. A town-supported public school was also established during this period in a now destroyed two-story frame structure on the eastern edge of town.

The establishment of this school may well be one of the factors that sparked the scions of some of the old planter families to move into Courtland from their outlying farms during this period. Some of the older houses were supplanted by (or remodeled into) Victorian cottages in the 1880s and 1890s (see #8, 21, 32 and 33). But not until after the turn of the century does there seem to have been any pronounced residential rebuilding.

Between 1900 and 1920 the town rode a crest of cotton prosperity and a number of imposing two-story residences were erected by the merchant/planter oligarchy. Among the most notable of these are the Henry Bynum (Simpson) house (#24); "Arcadia," the Gilchrist house (#90); and "The Grove" (#83)—known as "the house the dog built" since its owner William Gilchrist, a noted field trial trainer, reputedly built the house with proceeds from a prize canine. The large Gilchrist gin company dating from this period (and now supplanted by a metal structure which was in turn abandoned about 1980) reveals cotton's all-pervasive importance to Courtland in the early 20th century.

After 1920, especially with the growth of a small, white middle class, larger residential lots began to be broken into smaller parcels. This departed from the residential pattern established during the 19th century, where even a modest dwelling might be situated on a lot that occupied most of a full block. The surprising number of brick, frame, and native stone bungalows dating from the 1920-1940 period suggest not only an architectural shift but a sociological one as well—a shift further encouraged by the impact of the Tennessee Valley Authority beginning in 1933, with the construction of nearby Wheeler Dam. Today, the town itself continues to evolve physically. The influx of newcomers attracted by the giant Champion Paper Company complex a few miles north of Courtland has brought fringe development as well as both new construction and mobile home installations within the historic area itself. The open spaces and visual linkages which were traditionally such an important part of Courtland's physiognomy as an agrarian village are now seriously threatened, along with a number of the more than 80 contributing sites and structures within the historic area.

**Boundary Expansion Statement:**

The expansion to the Courtland Historic District is the result of a reevaluation and survey of the resources that surrounded the existing district boundaries conducted in the Spring of 1997. The buildings included in the expansion fit nicely into the criteria and areas of significance for which the district was originally listed in 1991. The period of significance was increased to end at circa 1946, reflecting the impact of World War II and the postwar building boom in Courtland.

The initial period of significance for the Courtland Historic District was established as circa 1820 to circa 1938. Many of the fourteen resources proposed for addition to the district fall within this period of significance; however, five resources, three minimal traditional cottages, one massed plan house, and one motorcourt/motel, were built between 1942 and 1946. This four year interval is generally associated with World War II and postwar developments. The resources from this period reflect the way Courtland developed during this historic period within its original plan.

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**Boundary Expansion Additional Historic Summary:**

Although Courtland was thousands of miles from both the Pacific and European theaters, the small northern Alabama town played an important role in war time occupation. In 1942, the people of Courtland learned that their nation had called upon them to serve in a special capacity. Courtland was selected as a site for an air force training base. Over night the sleepy farming community turned into a bustling military town.

A complex of buildings was erected on the air base, which was located west of town and the National Register historic district. The base included a house for the acting colonel, offices, pilot trainee barracks, hospital, PX, entertainment hall, officers' club, administration building, and guardhouse (McNeese 1996). Despite efforts to accommodate personnel assigned to the air filed on base, a number had to rent rooms in Courtland. Service men utilized the town's picture show, pool hall, and bowling alley during off hours (Simpson 1976).

The main business of the base was to prepare pilots for service in the European and Pacific theaters. Initially, the base was utilized for training with the BT-13 single engine aircraft; but eventually the mission was changed to operational final training of B29 bomber units as the approaches to the runways of the Courtland Air base were judged to be extremely safe and were some of the very few that could accommodate the weight of the Super Fortresses as the B29s were dubbed (Simpson 1976). The B29 heavy bomber was a late arrival in World War II. It was principally deployed in the Central Pacific in the destruction of Japanese industrial sites (Angelucci 1990).

After the end of World II, thoughts turned to developments on the home front. Hungry for necessities and luxuries after a decade and a half of deprivation due to the Great Depression and World War II, Americans sought to liberate their collective 100 billion dollars of savings accumulated during the war. They bought such consumer goods as televisions, radios, vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, homes, and automobiles that began to flood the market place once the war industry was retooled (Diggins 1988). Homes, and often entire subdivisions, sprang up over night. By the late 1940s, the automobile had become king of the American scene: "freeways, multilevel parking lots, shopping centers, drive-in theaters, restaurants, and motels were developed to serve the person behind the wheel" (Diggins 1988).

Although the period from 1820 to 1938 is overwhelmingly responsible for the imprint on the developments within the town limits of Courtland, the interval from 1938 to 1946 left a noticeable mark. Resources 97 (Terry's Motel) and 104 (Tolbert House) are attributable to the war years when Courtland became a bustling military town. The two buildings were built in response to a need for short- and long-term housing for military personnel and civilians who worked in conjunction with the Courtland Air Force Base. Terry's Motel additionally served decades of motorists and tourists associated with America's automobile culture that sprang to the forefront after World War II. Resources 107, 108, and 110, all of which are minimal traditional cottages, were built during one of the largest residential construction booms in the history of the nation.

In the years following the war, the Courtland Air Base was closed. The buildings were eventually razed. Since its closure, the base has been used for sporting events and drag races, and in 1975 the land was rented for farming (Simpson 1976). In recent years, part of the base has been converted into an industrial park. There are plans to place historic markers around the Courtland Air Base to commemorate its vital role in World War II.

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Courtland Historic District (Boundary Increase)  
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**Section IX. Bibliography**  
**Original Nomination**

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National Park Service

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**X. Geographical Data**  
**Original Nomination**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The Courtland Historic District embraces the boundaries of the town as laid out in 1818-19 with minor extensions to the north in order to take in the old town cemetery, and to the east and south to include historically significant contiguous structures linked with the community's past. The street names include Academy, Clinton, College, Alabama, Jackson, Monroe, Van Buren, Jefferson, Hamilton, Tennessee, and South Pike. For exact boundaries, please refer to the historic district map and the County Assessor's map. Although most city and town maps are 1" = 200', the only available scaled map that the Lawrence County Tax Assessor has for the Town of Courtland is 1" = 800'. This map does, however, accurately reflect the boundaries of the Courtland Historic District.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries for the district were delineated to include the greatest concentration of intact historic resources in the town of Courtland.

**Boundary Expansion**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundaries of the proposed expansion to the Courtland Historic District are outlined on the attached base map based on the tax accessors map of the area at approximately 1"=800' (a scaled map of 1"=200' or less was not available).

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries of the Courtland Historic District Expansion were drawn to include the greatest number of extant historical resources surrounding the original 1991 district boundaries within the city limits of Courtland.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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Lawrence County, Alabama

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**Photograph Log**

The following information is the same for each photograph:

Name of Photographer: Gene A. Ford

Date of Photograph: July 10, 1996.

Location of Original Negatives: Alabama Historical Commission, 468 South Perry Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900

Photograph 1. Terry's Motel (97 CR) facing northwest.

Photograph 2. Terry's Motel (97 CR) facing west.

Photograph 3. Terry's Motel (97 CR) facing southwest.

Photograph 4. Bungalow (98 CR) facing northeast.

Photograph 5. Bungalow (99 CR) facing northeast.

Photograph 6. Bungalow (100 CR) facing southeast.

Photograph 7. Ranch (101 NCR) facing southeast.

Photograph 8. Double Pen (103 CR) facing southeast.

Photograph 9. Tolbert House (104 CR) facing southeast.

Photograph 10. Parker House (106 CR) facing southeast.

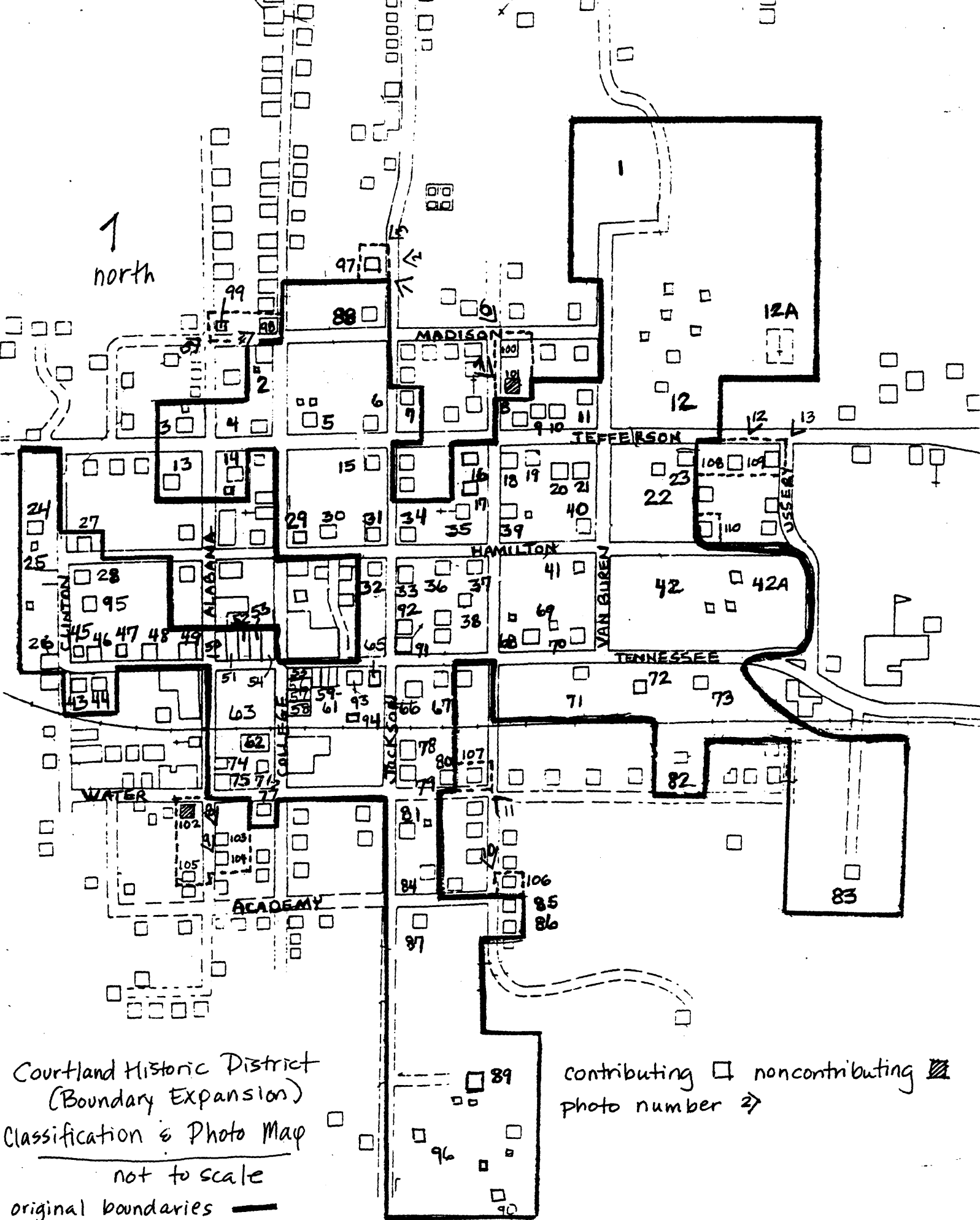
Photograph 11. Wence House (107 CR) facing northwest.

Photograph 12. Smith House (108 CR) facing southwest.

Photograph 13. Cross House (109 CR) facing southwest.

Photograph 14. McGowan House (110 CR) facing north.

↑  
north

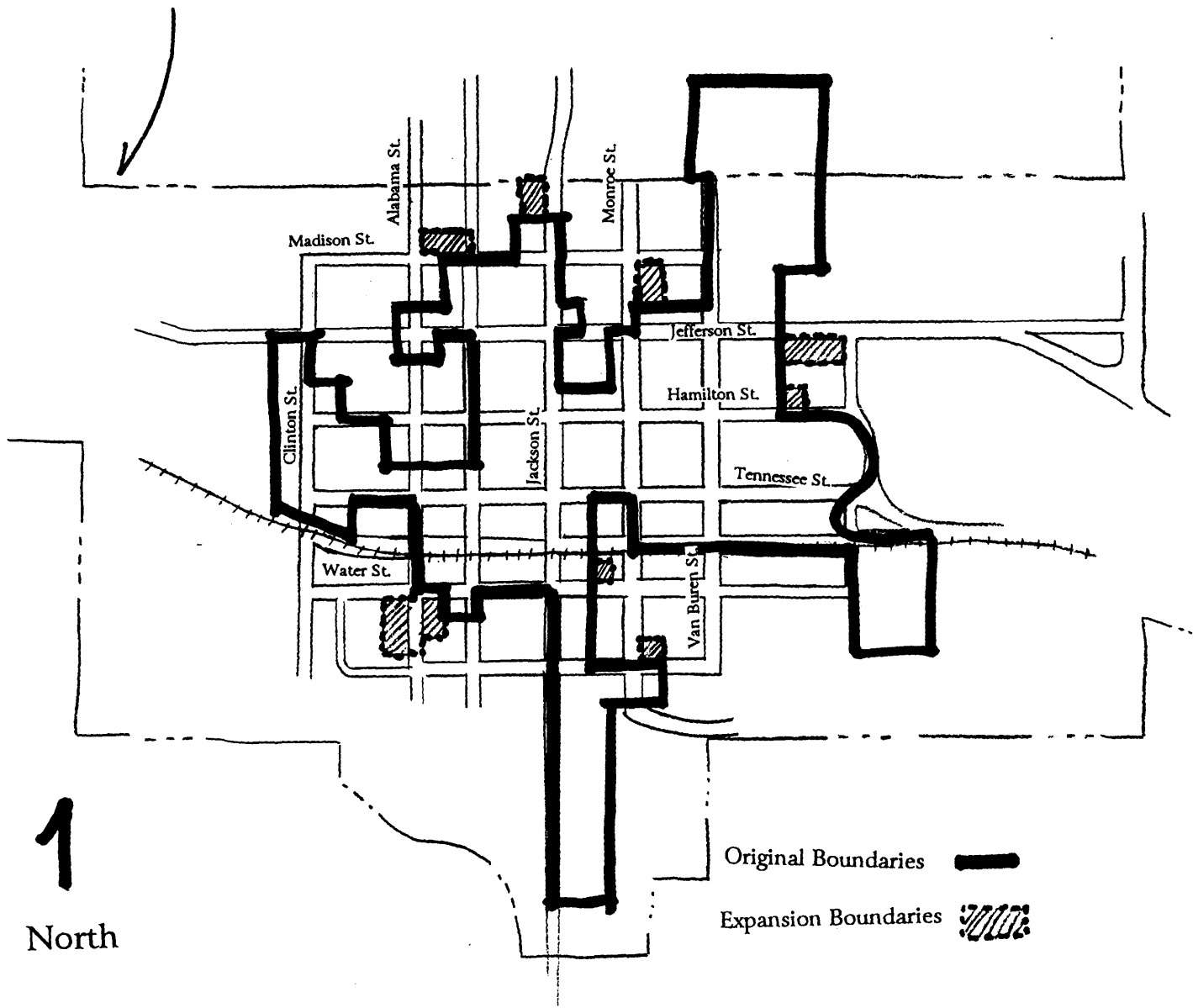


Courtland Historic District  
(Boundary Expansion)  
Classification & Photo Map  
not to scale  
original boundaries ———  
expansion boundaries - - - -

contributing □ noncontributing ▨  
photo number 27



Courtland City Limits



Courtland Historic District Boundary Map (Boundary Expansion)

Courtland, Lawrence County, Alabama

Boundary Map taken from tax accessor's map at approximately 1"=800'