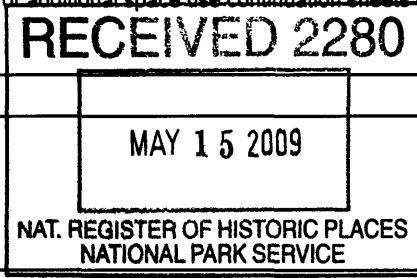


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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.



1. Name of Property

historic name Rockmart Downtown Historic District
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by Water, Beauregard, Marble, and Elm streets
city, town Rockmart () **vicinity of**
county Polk **code** GA 233
state Georgia **code** GA **zip code** 30153

() **not for publication**

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

Category of Property:

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

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

buildings	36	9
sites	0	0
structures	2	1
objects	0	1
total	38	11

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 meets the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Richard Luce
Signature of certifying official

5-4-09
Date

for W. Ray Luce
Historic Preservation Division Director
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

Edson H. Beall 6-24-09

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, explain:

see continuation sheet

for

Keeper of the National Register

Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

COMMERCE/TRADE: office building
COMMERCE/TRADE: professional
COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE: department store
GOVERNMENT: city hall
GOVERNMENT: government office
RELIGION: religious facility
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: processing
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: storage
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: waterworks
TRANSPORTATION: rail-related
TRANSPORTATION: auto-related

Current Functions:

COMMERCE/TRADE: office building
COMMERCE/TRADE: professional
COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
GOVERNMENT: city hall
GOVERNMENT: government office
RELIGION: religious facility
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: waterworks
TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

Materials:

foundation	BRICK
walls	BRICK
	STONE: slate
roof	ASPHALT
other	N/A

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Rockmart Downtown Historic District is located in Polk County in northwest Georgia approximately 12 miles from Cedartown, the county seat. The district encompasses the contiguous, intact, historic resources associated with the development of downtown Rockmart and includes historic commercial, community landmark, and agricultural-related industrial buildings. The historic commercial buildings in Rockmart are generally one-, two-, or three-story, attached or freestanding, brick commercial buildings. Many of the buildings retain their historic storefronts and/or decorative brickwork. A unique feature of Rockmart is the presence of slate used as a building and roof material as seen in commercial buildings and in the 1882 Rockmart Presbyterian Church. In the 1850s, Welsh miners from the Northeast settled in the area to mine slate, and slate mining continued in the area after the Civil War until 1913. Community landmark buildings in the district include the Presbyterian church, the 1914 Romanesque-style Rockmart Methodist Episcopal Church South, the 1921 Colonial Revival-style city hall (now the police department), and the 1951 Polk County office building. Historic auto-related buildings and a 1929 water treatment plant and tank are also within the historic district. There are also a number of agricultural-related industrial buildings in the district including the 1915 Rockmart Warehouse and Transfer Company building, a 1940s cotton and fertilizer gin and warehouse, and the c.1900 J.M. Cochran Cotton Warehouse.

FULL DESCRIPTION

NOTE: The following full description was written by John Kissane, consultant, and edited by Gretchen Brock, National Register Coordinator, Historic Preservation Division, "Rockmart Downtown Historic District," Draft *Historic District Information Form*, April 10, 2006 . On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

Rockmart is located in northwest Georgia in eastern Polk County. The city is located along a rail line that enters Polk County southeast of Rockmart from Dallas, the county seat of Paulding County, and continues on to Cedartown, the largest town and county seat of Polk County. Rockmart is located

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

approximately 12 miles east of Cedartown. The two municipalities are connected by U.S. Highway 278/Georgia State Route 6.

The Rockmart Downtown Historic District is the historic central business district of Rockmart and comprises the intact portion of the city's historic commercial area. The district has a grid-type street system, and streets are oriented northeast/southwest and northwest/southeast. The commercial area is primarily confined to lots fronting Marble Street, beginning a block northeast of Elm Street and extending southwest to Beauregard Street, approximately four blocks. There are commercial properties along side streets running northwest from Marble Street, the principal commercial street running through the district.

Commercial buildings in Rockmart are typical of downtown commercial buildings in Georgia's small towns during this period. The character of the Rockmart Downtown Historic District is that of a small town commercial area, with most buildings one or two stories in height. Nearly all of these buildings are brick and date from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Some of the buildings are constructed of local slate, a building material that is rare in Georgia. Most buildings in the Rockmart Downtown Historic District are situated on their lots with no setback beyond a sidewalk, and a majority of buildings are attached with party walls (photographs 14 and 15). The earliest commercial buildings in Rockmart date from the 1880s and 1890s and are built in the late 19th-century Commercial Style with recessed storefronts on the first floor and corbeled brick window surrounds and corbeled brick cornice detailing on the top floors. The building at 106 East Church Street, for example, has segmental arched windows on the second floor and a cornice with brick corbeling and terra cotta detailing (photograph 33, center).

A good example of a one-story, brick commercial building is the property at 107 West Church Street (photograph 1, center). The building retains its recessed storefront, marble trim, display windows, and brick corbeling. A good example of a two-story, brick commercial building in the district is the building at 113 North Marble Street (photographs 16 and 28). The large, corner commercial block retains its row of large display windows with arched transoms on the first floor along its primary facades and triple two-over-two windows on the second floor. Prior to its recent rehabilitation, the building was covered by a false façade. A three-story, brick, commercial building is located on the other side of city hall at the corner of South Marble and West Church streets (photograph 17). The building has two storefronts facing West Church Street with an entrance in the center that leads to the second and third floor spaces. The building retains its historic fenestration, although most of the windows are boarded up, and its historic design with recessed storefronts, corbeled brickwork, and brick pilasters.

The commercial building located at 111 West Church Street is an excellent example of the use of locally produced slate (photograph 1, right). The two-story building was constructed in the 1880s as a general merchandise store. The building has a clipped front gable roof and segmental-arched windows on the second floor. The building retains its historic storefront with a recessed central entrance, large display windows, and transoms.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

Located at 100 Maple Street is a two-story, granitoid block, commercial building (photograph 3). The building has a recessed store entrance with large display windows and a smaller entrance that leads to the second floor office or living space. Granitoid is a trademarked version of molded concrete block and is most often seen in buildings as rock-faced hollow blocks. Although Georgia had a granitoid block manufacturing plant in Fitzgerald, Ben Hill County, in the center of the state, surviving granitoid buildings, mostly built between 1905 and 1930, are relatively rare.

Community landmark buildings in the district sit in the middle of larger lots, such as the Rockmart City Hall (now the Rockmart Police Department) and the Rockmart Presbyterian Church, both of which are set back from the sidewalk and occupy grassed lawns. City hall sits in the middle of a small green space between South Marble Street and the CSX rail line (formerly the Cherokee Railroad and later the East and West Railroad of Alabama). The 1921 Rockmart City Hall is a one-story, brick Colonial Revival-style building (photographs 20 and 27). The T-shaped building has a central entrance portico supported by four Doric columns. There are three entrances with double doors topped by fanlights. Segmental arched windows on the front façade, elaborated by stone lintels and keystones, are now 12-light fixed windows, replacing the original six-over-six double-hung sash windows. The building now houses the Rockmart Police Department.

The Rockmart Presbyterian Church was built in 1882 and is constructed of locally produced slate (photograph 22). The load-bearing stone walls are 28 inches thick. The rectangular building has a front-gable roof with flared eaves, exposed rafters, and deeply recessed eight-over-eight sash windows, each topped by a triangular wood vent. The front façade has a central wood entrance door also topped by a triangular wood vent and there is a small triangular wood vent in the gable. The church has a square bell tower that is covered with fish-scale slate and is topped by an open wood belfry with decorative jigsaw trim and a pyramidal roof. Two later educational wings have been added at the rear of the church.

Located on West Church Street, the Rockmart Methodist Episcopal Church South was constructed in 1914. The brick, Romanesque-style church has asymmetrical, crenellated, square brick towers, round-arched windows, and a round-arched arcade (photograph 9, right). The cornerstone states that Reverend G.M. Lipham was the pastor, architect, and builder. Next to the church is a two-story, brick, Colonial Revival-style educational building (photograph 9, left).

Historically, a small park was located directly on the opposite side of the railroad tracks from city hall. In 1951, the Polk County Building (presently the Rockmart Senior Center) was constructed on the park property and the remaining green space was named the Seaborn Jones Memorial Park in 2002. The 1951 building is a low, nearly square, brick building with a shallow-pitched hip roof and modern large, horizontal-paned windows (photograph 10). There is a nonhistoric war memorial in front of the building.

At the southwestern end of the Rockmart Downtown Historic District are several agricultural-related industrial buildings. Located on Water Street is a 1940s cotton gin and warehouse (photographs 4-6). The frame, metal-clad buildings have gable roofs and steel casement windows. Another cotton-related building is the c.1900 former J.M. Cochran cotton warehouse located at 121 West Church

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

Street (photograph 2, foreground). The brick building has modern windows, doors, and gable roof, but still retains its historic long, rectangular form and utilitarian design. Located at the corner of South Marble and Beauregard streets is a large cotton warehouse partially constructed of granitoid block (photograph 24). The long low building built for the Rockmart Warehouse and Transfer Company underwent several additions throughout the years. The oldest portion of the building is the southern end constructed c.1915, and the northern end dates from c.1940.

As in most Georgia towns, the railroad was vital to the development and growth of downtown Rockmart by transporting passengers and freight. The rail line runs parallel one block behind the commercial buildings lining Marble Street and is a contributing structure in the district (photographs 25 and 26).

Another type of industrial building in the district is the city's historic 1929 water filtration plant. The oldest part of the complex is a one-story, brick office and treatment building. The office area was designed to resemble commercial buildings from the time period with its symmetrical façade and corbeled brickwork (photograph 12). The front façade faces Euharlee Creek and has a central arched entrance flanked by sash windows. The rear portion of the building that housed the treatment facilities was expanded or partially rebuilt at a later date to add a second story (photographs 11 and 12). An additional two-story, brick building was added to the complex in 1969 (photograph 12, background). The complex also contains a historic below ground water storage tank.

The district also has historic auto-related buildings along North Marble Street, the main street through the commercial area. There are two historic gas stations in the district. The gas station on the corner of North Marble and West Elm streets (103 North Marble Street) was constructed in the mid-20th century (photograph 29, left). The building retains its two garage bays on the left side with office area on the right as well as its original windows and canopy. Another mid-20th-century gas station is located just east of the corner gas station. The building has been subdivided into two businesses but retains its overall form, a canopy and garage bays (photograph 13). Between the two gas stations is a historic auto dealership or auto repair building (photograph 29, right). The rectangular, brick building retains its stepped parapet roof, central entrance, and large display windows.

Noncontributing buildings in the district are generally historic commercial buildings that have false facades or that have had alterations that compromised their historic integrity. There are also a few buildings that were constructed after the period of significance. An example of a building that lost its historic integrity is located at 108 East Church Street (photograph 33, left). The second floor of the building was greatly remodeled by extending out over the sidewalk. Another example is the one-story, brick commercial building located at 230 South Marble Street that has a modern half-story gabled roof addition (photograph 21, right). The Rockmart Municipal Building was altered with the removal of its historic front façade that was replaced with a Brutalist-style front façade (photograph 18). The building does retain its historic design along its secondary (side) façade. Two nonhistoric community buildings in the district built after the period of significance are the Rockmart Health Clinic (photograph 8) and the Rockmart Library on West Elm Street. Along Euharlee Creek, there is a noncontributing modern pathway (photograph 7). A number of historic commercial buildings on the south side of North and South Marble streets and on the south end of East Elm Street were left out of

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

the district due to nonhistoric alterations, such as false facades and large pent roofs, that compromised their historic integrity. A historic and eligible United States Post Office is located outside of the district on East Elm Street (photograph 30).

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

ARCHITECTURE
COMMERCE
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance:

1871-1959

Significant Dates:

1871—founding of Rockmart and town plan laid out

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

N/A

Statement of significance (areas of significance)

In 1871, in anticipation of a railroad from Cartersville to Cedartown running through his property, Colonel Seaborn Jones laid out lots for the city of "Rock Market". The city of Rockmart was chartered in 1872 and a number of merchants and citizens from nearby Van Wert moved to be near the newly built railroad, which was not completed until 1879. Rockmart remained a small town of about 500 people until 1910 when the population doubled with the construction of a cotton mill

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

outside of town. The city's population increased again in 1929, when Goodyear built a large mill and mill village in Rockmart (outside of the district). The economy and population of the city has largely been centered on manufacturing plants in Rockmart and the surrounding area since the 1930s, and the population of Rockmart has remained at approximately 3,800 from 1950 to the present.

The Rockmart Downtown Historic District is significant in the area of architecture for its collection of intact historic commercial, community landmark, and agricultural-related industrial buildings that represent common types and styles of buildings built in small Georgia towns from the late 19th through the early 20th centuries. A unique aspect of Rockmart's architecture is the use of slate as building and roofing material, which is reminiscent of early Northeastern architecture.

Commercial buildings in the district are generally late 19th- and early 20th-century, one- and two-story, attached or freestanding, rectangular, brick buildings with common setbacks along the sidewalks. The commercial buildings in the Rockmart Downtown Historic District possess the character-defining features of the Commercial Style, including recessed entrances in the storefronts, large display windows, wood or brick bulkheads, transoms, decorative brick parapets and pilasters, second-story segmental- and arched-windows, and decorative brickwork on the cornices.

The district is also significant for its collection of community landmark buildings that are good examples of the types and styles of public buildings in small towns throughout Georgia. Extant historic community landmark buildings in Rockmart were built from the late 19th century through the mid-20th century and include the 1882 Rockmart Presbyterian Church (also notable for the use of slate for its construction), the 1914 Romanesque-style Rockmart Methodist Episcopal Church South, the 1921 Colonial Revival-style city hall (now the police department), and the 1951 Polk County office building.

The industrial buildings in Rockmart include the 1929 water treatment plant and the cotton-related warehouses and gin, which are good, representative examples of industrial buildings that historically would be found in small towns throughout Georgia.

The district is significant in the area of commerce as the center of commercial enterprises in this area from the late 19th through the mid-20th centuries. The historic central business district represents Rockmart as a center of commerce in Polk County during the 19th and 20th centuries. The downtown was historically the primary location for the trading, buying and selling of goods, services, and commodities on a local and countywide basis. The historic intact commercial buildings within the historic district are representative of all types of commerce that contributed to the town's economy throughout its history. The one- and two-story, brick, commercial buildings in the district are typical of small Georgia towns and represent the mercantile, professional, and banking businesses commonly found in downtowns. Downtown buildings consisted primarily of downtown commercial spaces with upstairs professional offices. The majority of these buildings were built during the late 1800s and early 1900s and contained groceries, jewelers, drug stores, and other merchants. In the early to mid-20th century, businesses centering on the use of the automobile such as the auto dealership/repair shop and the two gas stations were built in Rockmart.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

The Rockmart Downtown Historic District is significant in the area of community planning and development as a good example of a railroad strip-type town as defined by the statewide context *Georgia Community Development and Morphology of Community Types*. In a railroad strip-type town, the main street is parallel to the railroad instead of crossing the tracks at a right angle and the commercial development also parallels the railroad. The Rockmart Downtown Historic District is being nominated at the local level of significance as a good example of a railroad strip-type town in northwest Georgia.

National Register Criteria

The Rockmart Downtown Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of commerce as the center of commerce for Rockmart and the surrounding area from 1871 to the end of the historic period. Also, the district is eligible for listing under Criterion A in the area of community planning and development as a good example of a railroad strip-type town in Georgia. The district is eligible for listing under Criterion C for its good collection of commercial buildings dating from the late 19th century through the early 20th century, which represent the common types and styles of commercial building constructed in Georgia.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

N/A

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance begins with 1871, when Rockmart was founded and the town plan laid out in anticipation of the construction of the Cartersville and Van Wert Railroad. The alignment of the railroad is directly associated with the development of Rockmart as a railroad strip-type town. The period of significance ends with 1959, the end of the historic period, for the district's continued use as the center of commerce in Rockmart and the surrounding area.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The contributing buildings within the historic district date from the district's period of significance and retain their historic integrity. The noncontributing buildings were constructed after the period of significance or have lost their historic integrity from nonhistoric alterations. All buildings were evaluated by members of the Georgia Historic Preservation Division's Survey and National Register staff in November 2006, and contributing or noncontributing status was determined according to the criteria of the Georgia Historic Preservation Division.

The contributing structures are the railroad, which retains its historic alignment and relationship to Rockmart, and the historic reservoir tank at the water treatment plant.

The one noncontributing structure is the modern pathway along the Euharlee Creek. The one noncontributing object is the nonhistoric war memorial in front of the Polk County Building.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

NOTE: The following developmental history was written by John Kissane, consultant, "Rockmart Downtown Historic District," Draft *Historic District Information Form*, April 10, 2006. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

The city of Rockmart is located in east central Polk County in northwest Georgia approximately 12 miles from Cedartown, the county seat. Polk County was created by an act of the Georgia General Assembly on December 20, 1851 (effective April 1, 1852). Land from Floyd and Paulding counties was taken to form Polk County in 1851. Rockmart is less than a mile north of the former village of Van Wert, the original governmental seat of Paulding County in the 1840s. Included in the Paulding County portion was the town of Van Wert, which had a population of 100 people in the 1849 *Statistics of Georgia* by George White. Also of note is White's description of Van Wert and the comment that "(t)he water is bad, and the village is said to be unhealthy". Apparently these conditions combined with Van Wert's loss of function as a county seat led to the demise of the town. In fact, the very act that created Polk County also stated that citizens residing within the corporate limits of Van Wert would be paid for damages sustained to their property as a result of the removal of the county seat from their town. In 1854 Cedartown, the more centrally located town in the new county, was made the county seat of Polk County.

But Van Wert did not cease to exist immediately, and on December 13, 1866 the Cartersville and Van Wert Railroad Company was chartered. It was intended that the new rail line would run from Cartersville (located approximately 20 miles northeast of Rockmart in Bartow County) southwest to a point a short distance northwest of Van Wert, and continue west to Cedartown and then link up with the Selma, Rome and Dalton Railroad further west in Alabama. Financial difficulties and possibly corrupt activities on the part of some railroad entrepreneurs slowed progress of the new line, and by 1870 only 14 miles of track, from Cartersville to Taylorsville (in Bartow County, on the Bartow County-Polk County line) were built.

In 1871 Seaborn Jones, who owned land north of Van Wert through which the Cartersville and Van Wert Railroad was projected to run, had the property along the right-of-way surveyed and the new town of Rockmart was subsequently laid out. The name "Rockmart" was selected as a shortened version of "Rock Market", since the slate industry had already shown promise and was expected to develop significantly in the area. The Georgia Legislature passed a resolution incorporating Rockmart on August 26, 1872, during its session of July and August of that year. The town's first mayor, C. T. Parker, was appointed and W. Ferguson, Thomas Moon, T. G. Ingraham, W. H. Hines and S. K. Hogue were appointed the first aldermen. Three years later, the Rockmart City Council was given power to levy taxes of one-half of one percent on all real and personal property as well as other taxation powers.

The troubled Cartersville and Van Wert Railroad was reorganized in 1871 as the Cherokee Railroad, and over the next several years, work continued on extending track to Rockmart. The railroad

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

reached Rockmart in 1876. In 1879, the Cherokee Railroad was acquired by the Cherokee Iron Company, which built an iron furnace in Cedartown in 1874, and the rail line was completed as far as Cedartown. The Cherokee Railroad was leased by the East and West Railroad (E & W) of Alabama in the early 1880s and acquired outright by the E & W in 1886. By that time, the original Cartersville and Van Wert line extended from Cartersville to Esom Hill in southwestern Polk County, a distance of 46 miles. The E & W had earlier completed a line from Esom Hill to Broken Arrow (now known as Wattsville), Alabama, 64 miles in distance. The E & W had plans to extend its line eastward from Cartersville in Bartow County to Gainesville in Hall County, where it was proposed to connect with the Atlanta and Charlotte Air Line Railway. The line was also planned for expansion west from Broken Arrow to Birmingham. But financial difficulties prevented most of this work, and in 1902 the line was purchased by the Seaboard Air Line Railway and made a part of Seaboard's subsidiary, the Atlanta and Birmingham Air Line Railway. The original Rockmart depot was located on the present site of Rockmart City Hall (now the Rockmart Police Department). The original depot was demolished for the city hall building in 1921 and another depot was constructed further south along South Marble Street, several blocks southwest of the historic district.

Rockmart grew fairly rapidly during its first decade, recording a population of 450 in 1880. By that year, the town had churches, schools, and four sawmills. The Presbyterian congregation was organized at a meeting in nearby Van Wert in 1871, and the Romanesque-style Rockmart Presbyterian Church was completed in 1882 on South Marble Street. The First Baptist Church was organized on December 22, 1875, and the present church building, located outside the National Register district, was completed in 1891.

Slate quarrying had begun in the area prior to the Civil War but production was not significant during the early years. Little slate was extracted during the Civil War and for several years thereafter, but by 1880 the industry improved and 1,000 squares of roofing slate were produced in the Rockmart area. Seaborn Jones headed most of the quarrying being done in the 1870s and 1880s. Some of the men who worked in the slate quarries came to the United States from northern Wales, where slate quarrying had been practiced for centuries. The first to arrive in Polk County came via Vermont, where slate is also quarried in certain areas. But eventually a number of Welsh miners immigrated directly to the Rockmart area.

Rockmart's population dropped during the 1880s, to 411 in 1890. The slate industry grew markedly during the 1890s, and the Georgia Slate Company acquired the quarries originally owned by Seaborn Jones in 1893. The company went out of business three years later and the quarries were leased to other operators. The Rockmart area was known throughout Georgia and even nationally for the quality of slate produced in the area. Nevertheless, the town remained small and even though the corporate boundaries were expanded in 1897, and the population stood at only 575 in 1900. The slate industry declined rapidly after 1900, ending completely in 1913.

The early decades of the 20th century brought an increase in Rockmart's population with an increase from 575 in 1900 to 1,043 in 1910. In 1917, the city's corporate limits were expanded again and by 1920 Rockmart's population had increased to 1,400. The August 22, 1929 edition of the Cedartown *Standard* contains a story profiling Rockmart as "the fastest growing city in Georgia" that was "on the

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

eve of the greatest expansion in its history.” The article describes the town as a “bustling municipality” with “two banks, two hotels, a theatre, a municipal park and playground and other institutions beneficial to the progress of a community.” The article also mentions nearby industries in the area, including Monarch Brick Company (later reorganized as Rockmart Shale, Brick and Slate Company), Aragon Mills, Southern States Portland Cement Company and the Georgia Cement and Stone Products Company. The article’s key point, however, was that Goodyear Clearwater Mill No. 2 was about to open in Rockmart, perhaps the most significant event in the town’s history.

In early 1929, Goodyear selected the town as the location of a textile operation to supply fabric to its Gadsden, Alabama, tire plant. By 1930, a large mill and mill village had been constructed northeast of downtown Rockmart (outside of the district). The city’s population grew significantly, as another annexation and the new mill village combined to give Rockmart a population of 3,264 in 1930, which would be the most significant increase in the town’s history. In 1950, Rockmart’s population stood at 3,821.

The Depression years were perhaps less severe in Rockmart than in many similar-sized Georgia towns due to the presence of several industries that continued operations and provided employment during the early 1930s. The town enjoyed prosperous times from the late 1930s through the 1950s, although population growth was not substantial. In 1939, contracts were let for more than \$100,000 in new buildings and improvements, including 31 new residences ranging in sale price from \$300 to \$10,000. The *Rockmart Journal* also reported that many downtown businesses carried out repair work and remodeling in 1939. The following is a section of the *Journal* article:

After a record-breaking year in construction activities and in municipal improvements, Rockmart businessmen and residents are looking forward to a 1940 of prosperity and progress.

Among the major projects to be started and completed within the past year are sidewalks, curbing and guttering, sanitary sewerage lines in every section of the city, which places Rockmart among the top ten in the state in municipal advantages.

Water and sanitary toilet facilities are available to almost 100% of the residents, and in addition, sidewalks and hard surfaced streets in excess of five miles have been built in the past year. (*Rockmart Journal*, January 5, 1940.)

An important step for improvements downtown, and also citywide, was organization of the Rockmart Chamber of Commerce in the spring of 1948. Although not all local businesses joined the newly established chamber during its first several years, the organization was able to move things forward. A goal of having a \$5,000 budget by the spring of 1949 was not met and the chamber had to make due with a \$3,000 budget that first full year. Nevertheless, the second annual membership meeting attracted 120 attendants and most in the community believed the organization would prove worthwhile in attracting new business to town and providing a medium to speak for the needs of merchants and businessmen. (*Rockmart Journal*, August 25, 1950.)

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Rockmart celebrated the 78th anniversary of its incorporation in 1950, and at that time some in the community believed the town was poised to experience significant growth in the second half of the 20th century. Plans were revealed in July of 1950 for a new "White Way" lighting system in the downtown area, with 10,000 lumen globes that were considered among the latest in design. This was a project given consideration for several years before finally being implemented in 1950, and the *Rockmart Journal* editorial page mentioned it among other improvements in August of 1950 when commenting on the city's 78th birthday:

We in Rockmart are on the threshold of a new era of growth and progress. Plans are under consideration to carry out projects here that will mean a lot in making our community a better place in which to live. A sewage disposal plant is in the advanced planning stage; new street lights are on hand ready to put up; more traffic signals are ready to be installed; a concerted and sincere effort is being made to delve into parking and traffic problems; the Elm Street overpass [outside the National Register district but nearby, over Euharlee Creek] is said to be a reality and only a matter of a little time; the Chamber of Commerce is active in seeking new industry for this section; new homes are constantly under construction and new businesses opening; older businesses have been remodeled and renovated at an amazing rate during the past four years.
(*Rockmart Journal*, August 25, 1950.)

Since the mid-20th century growth has been slight, with Rockmart's 2000 population of 3,875 virtually the same as its 1950 total of 3,821.

Rockmart's downtown area has withstood economic struggles and in recent years has benefited from more prosperous times, partly a result of development of the Silver Comet Trail, a Rails-To-Trails project that brings many recreational cyclists through Polk County and into historic downtown Rockmart throughout the year. In 2002, the original Wayside Park was renamed "Seaborn Jones Memorial Park" in memory of the generosity of Seaborn Jones, who donated the land on which the town square and city park were established.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division. *Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in Their Landscaped Settings*. 1991.

Kissane, John. "Rockmart Downtown Historic District." Draft *Historic District Information Form*, April 10, 2006. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

Polk County Comprehensive Plan.

"Rockmart Portrayed as Fast-Growing Community in 1929." *Cedartown Standard*, August 22, 1929.

Rockmart Journal, various issues.

Rockmart Presbyterian Church. Unpublished church history, 2001.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (Rockmart, Georgia). Broadway, New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1923.

Sargent, Gordon D. and Olin Jackson. "The Town That Stone Built." *North Georgia Journal*, Summer 1996.

Storey, Steve. *Georgia Railroad History and Heritage*. 2001.

Vanishing Georgia photograph collection. Georgia Department of Archives and History, Morrow, Georgia.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (X) N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested**
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued**
date issued:
- 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, Specify Repository:**

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approximately 26 acres.

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A)	16	679956	3763546
B)	16	680091	3763449
C)	16	678869	3762955
D)	16	679643	3763184

Verbal Boundary Description

The National Register boundary is indicated on the attached district map drawn with a heavy black line, drawn to scale.

Boundary Justification

The proposed boundary encompasses the intact, contiguous, and historic resources associated with the development of downtown Rockmart.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Gretchen A. Brock/National Register Coordinator
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
mailing address 34 Peachtree Street, Suite 1600
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** April 15, 2009
e-mail gretchen.brock@dnr.state.ga.us

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) () not applicable

name/title John Kissane/consultant
organization N/A
mailing address 526 Highland Avenue
city or town Athens **state** Georgia **zip code** 30606
telephone (706) 613-7307
e-mail N/A

- () **property owner**
(X) **consultant**
() **regional development center preservation planner**
() **other:**

Property Owner or Contact Information

name (property owner or contact person) Jeff Ellis/City Manager
organization (if applicable) City of Rockmart
mailing address PO Box 231
city or town Rockmart **state** Georgia **zip code** 30153
e-mail (optional) N/A

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Name of Property: Rockmart Downtown Historic District
City or Vicinity: Rockmart
County: Polk
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: April 2007

Description of Photograph(s):

Number of photographs: 33

1. 101-111 Church Street; photographer facing south.
2. 121-137 Church Street; photographer facing northwest.
3. 100 Maple Street; photographer facing north.
4. View of warehouse and gin; photographer facing west.
5. View of warehouse and gin; photographer facing northeast.
6. View of gin; photographer facing northeast.
7. View of walk along Euharlee Creek; photographer facing southwest.
8. Rockmart Health Clinic (noncontributing); photographer facing southwest.
9. First United Methodist Church, 133-137 Church Street; photographer facing northwest.
10. War memorial (noncontributing) and Polk County Building; photographer facing west.
11. Rockmart Water Filtration Plant; photographer facing west.
12. Rockmart Water Filtration Plant; photographer facing west.
13. Gas station, North Marble Street; photographer facing southwest.
14. 101-113 South Marble Street; photographer facing southwest.
15. View of South Marble Street; photographer facing northeast.
16. View of 113 South Marble Street and Rockmart City Hall; photographer facing southwest.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

17. 101-111 Church Street; photographer facing southwest.
18. View of South Marble Street; photographer facing southwest.
19. View of 200 block of South Marble Street; photographer facing southwest.
20. Rockmart City Hall, South Marble Street; photographer facing northwest.
21. 224-230 South Marble Street; photographer facing southwest.
22. First Presbyterian Church, corner of South Marble and Maple streets; photographer facing south.
23. View of Maple Street; photographer facing northwest.
24. Warehouse, South Marble Street; photographer facing north.
25. View of rail line; photographer facing northeast.
26. View of rail line and rear of commercial buildings; photographer facing northeast.
27. View of Rockmart City Hall; photographer facing north.
28. View of 113 South Marble Street (right) and 106-108 East Church Street; photographer facing north.
29. View of gas station, intersection of North Marble and East Elm streets; photographer facing north.
30. Outside of district, Rockmart Post Office, East Elm Street; photographer facing northwest.
31. Outside of district, East Elm Street; photographer facing northwest.
32. Outside of district, overlooking buildings on south side of South Marble Street; photographer facing north.
33. 106 (center) and 108 (left, noncontributing) East Church Street; photographer facing north.

(HPD WORD form version 11-03-01)