



STATE OF ALABAMA
ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
468 SOUTH PERRY STREET
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-0900

November 6, 2012

FRANK W. WHITE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TEL: 334-242-3184
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Ms. Carol Shull
Keeper of the National Register
U. S. Department of the Interior, NPS
Cultural Resources
National Register, History & Education Programs
1201 "I" Street NW (2280)
Washington, D. C. 20005

Dear ~~Ms. Shull~~ *Carol*:

Enclosed please find the nomination and supporting documentation to be considered for listing the following Alabama resource in the National Register of Historic Places:

East Old Town Historic District
Decatur, Morgan County, Alabama

Your consideration of the enclosed National Register of Historic Places nomination is appreciated.

Truly Yours,

Elizabeth Ann Brown
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

EAB/sme/nw

Enclosures

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name East Old Town Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number See Continuation sheet Section 2, Page 1 for full list of addresses. ☒ not for publication N/A

city or town Decatur ☒ vicinity N/A

stat Alabama code AL county Morgan code 103 zip code 35601

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Elizabeth Ann Brown DSHPO
Signature of certifying official/Title

6 November 2012
Date

Alabama Historical Commission

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 certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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

Date of Action

East Old Town Historic District
Name of Property

Morgan County, Alabama
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
37	15	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
38	15	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

3

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

RELIGION/religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

RELIGION/religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19TH CENTURY: Greek Revival

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY

AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE, BRICK

walls BRICK, WOOD

roof ASPHALT, METAL

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 N/A

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☒ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** moved from its original location.
- ☐ **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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- ☐ 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
AL-364
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black
ARCHAEOLOGY: Historic—Non-Aboriginal

Period of Significance

Ca. 1829-1962

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

African American

Architect/Builder

Multiple

East Old Town Historic District
Name of Property

Morgan County, Alabama
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approx. 30 acres

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

A 16 501507 3830447
Zone Easting Northing
B 16 501235 3830152

C 16 501090 3830275
Zone Easting Northing
D 16 501131 3830227

☒ 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 Andra Kowalczyk Martens (Consultant) & Susan Enzweiler (AHC NR Coordinator)
organization Thomason and Associates, Thomason@bellsouth.net date January, 2012
street & number 1907 21st Avenue South telephone 615-385-4960
city or town Nashville state TN zip code 37212

Additional Documentation

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Multiple ?
street & number telephone
city or town state zip code

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

East Old Town Historic District
Decatur, Morgan County, Alabama

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LOCATION:

108, 111, 112, 114, 116 & 117 NW Church Street
202 & 204 NW Church Street
302, 304, 310, 315 & 317 NW Church Street
407, 409, 414, 416, 420, 421, 423 & 425 NW Church Street
710 & 813 NW Grove Street
211, 213 & 216 NW Lafayette Street
103, 111 & 205 NW Market Street
701 & 901 NW Railroad Street
701, 702, 703, 707 & 709 NW Sycamore Street
803, 807, 815 & 818 NW Sycamore Street
905 & 906 NW Sycamore Street
1004 & 1105 NW Sycamore Street
223 NW Vine Street
102, 113, 118, 125 & 126 NW Wilson Street
202, 204, 211, 213 & 224 NW Wilson Street

The area encompassed within the district boundaries comprises one contributing archaeological site.

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Description

Decatur is located on the south bank of the Tennessee River in north-central Alabama, approximately 25 miles west of Huntsville and 170 miles north of the state capitol, Montgomery. The river influenced the establishment of Decatur as a center of commerce. In 1891, it became the county seat of Morgan County, which was originally established in 1818 as Cotaco County. Decatur had a population of 55,778 in 2006.

The East Old Town Historic District encompasses a historic working class and African-American community in the Northwest, or Old Town, neighborhood of Decatur. Its approximate boundaries are NW Railroad Street on the southeast, NW Vine Street on the southwest, NW Grove Street on the northwest, and NW Market Street on the northeast. Within the district, antebellum dwellings of high style architecture are intermingled with vernacular forms dating from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. This collection of residences, churches and a depot illustrates the evolution of one of Decatur's earliest working class neighborhoods following the Civil War, which had obliterated most of the town's antebellum buildings. The district was (and is) part of a larger Northwest neighborhood that began as a white, working class neighborhood, with residents building houses in the blocks immediately west of the railroad tracks. As African Americans began to populate blocks further west, the eastern portion of the Old Town neighborhood evolved into first a racially-mixed, then a predominantly African-American, neighborhood by the 1960s and 1970s. The buildings of the East Old Town Historic District represent that demographic evolution.

Two buildings within the district - Rhea-McIntire House [inv. #44, photo 10] and the Dancy-Polk House [inv. # 31, photo 9] - were spared destruction during Federal occupation of Decatur. They were used as headquarters or to house supplies and some of the 3,000-5,000 Union soldiers. Most of the soldiers were quartered in small, gable-roofed houses constructed in the blocks to the south of the Rhea-McIntire House and the west of the Dancy-Polk House. These camps remained following Federal occupation and represent the earliest development within the district, (though none of the soldiers' houses are extant today). Within two decades, most blocks along NW Sycamore, NW Grove, NW Market, NW Wilson, NW Church, and NW Vine Streets in the district were filled with permanent dwellings and businesses. The railroad from Montgomery to Nashville stimulated redevelopment across the city. The Dancy-Polk House became a hotel on the rail line. There was also the Hotel Bismarck two blocks south of the Polk

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Hotel, and St. Ann's Catholic Church was on NW Vine Street. Dwellings filled in the blocks of the district.

Over time, the district evolved as former slaves gravitated to the city. Decatur's robust industry and river port offered employment opportunities, drawing freedmen from rural settings. There was a large brick plant along the river, and the railroad also created urban jobs that drew workers from farms. The railroad, on the east end of the district served as a dividing line with working class citizens residing to its west. Many railroad and brick plant workers, white and black, resided in the blocks south of the river and west of the railroad.

The eastern section of the neighborhood became increasingly racially mixed. Originally, St. Paul's Church housed the predominately white Northside Baptist Church on NW Wilson Street until 1971. Another such congregation worshipped until ca. 1900 at St. Ann's Catholic Church on NW Vine Street, the location of First Missionary Baptist Church [inv. # 45, photo 11] since 1919. The presence of these congregations and their relocation outside the district indicate an evolution from a neighborhood that was predominantly white to racially diverse to predominantly African American. Within the neighborhood were many of the original African American commercial businesses and the homes of prominent citizens as well as working- and middle-class residents.

Businesses such as corner markets, small groceries, and diners could be found throughout the district from the 1920s into the 1960s. By that time, however, all of Decatur experienced out-migration, and businesses closed, leaving many vacant buildings, both commercial and residential. After years of deterioration, dilapidated buildings have since been cleared, leaving vacant lots. In 1951, the Cashin Homes federal housing development was constructed; 105 of these units were demolished in 2005. In this open space, single family dwellings were built.

The East Old Town Historic District is situated along the Southern Railway railroad tracks and includes three individually listed buildings (Rhea-McIntire House [inv. #44, photo 10], Dancy-Polk House [inv. #31, photo 9], and Southern Railway Depot [inv. #30, photo 12]). The district includes buildings in the 100-200 blocks of NW Market, NW Wilson, NW Lafayette, and NW Vine Streets, the 100-400 blocks of Church Street, and along the length of NW Sycamore Street. The First Missionary Baptist Church [inv. # 45, photo 11] at 223 NW Vine Street is at the district's southwestern edge. The Rhea-McIntire House marks the district's northeastern

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boundary. The northwestern boundary line follows NW Grove Street, and then forms a "T" to the northwest to include the properties on NW Church Street between NW Grove and NW McCartney Streets, then continues along NW Grove Street towards NW Vine Street. NW Railroad Street is the southeastern boundary. These boundaries include examples of late-nineteenth century architecture with Victorian milled wood details, ca. 1920 modest gable-front bungalows of frame construction, more elaborate Craftsman Bungalows, as well as three churches: the 1907 Wayman Chapel [inv. # 17], the 1921 First Missionary Baptist Church, and the mid-20th century St. Paul's Church [inv. # 53]. In the district, there are 56 buildings of which 38 (67%) are contributing, 3 (6%) are individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and 15 (27%) are non-contributing. There is also one contributing archaeological site which is comprised of the area encompassed by the district boundaries. Historically, some of the vacant lots in the district once had dwellings, while others had never been developed. The vacant lots are grass-covered, and some have trees. These lots are noted in the inventory. Other lots are attached to adjacent dwellings by ownership and are not noted separately.

Property Types

One of the earliest architectural styles found within the district is the Greek Revival style. Prominent features of the style include central entrance porticos, often two-story, with classical columns, plain window lintels, and entrances with sidelights and transoms. All of these elements can be found at the Rhea-McIntire House [inv. # 44, photo 10] at 1105 NW Sycamore Street, one of only three antebellum structures to survive the Civil War in Decatur. Another survivor is the Dancy-Polk House [inv. # 31, photo 9] at 901 NW Railroad Street. Both of these antebellum properties were built in the Greek Revival style and are listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places.

With the notable exceptions of the above two dwellings, most of the residential architecture in the neighborhood can be classified as vernacular. The houses constructed in Decatur reflected vernacular forms popular nationwide, including the gable front, gabled ell, pyramid square, and shotgun forms.

Gable-front plans are dwellings with a gabled roof facing the street, as at 906 NW Sycamore Street [inv. # 42] and 112 NW Church Street [inv. # 2]. As its name suggests, the Gabled Ell plan is an "L" shape, with a gable-front projecting bay and a recessed side gable wing. Typically,

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these structures are of frame construction, and the gable front bay usually has a wood sash window, and the recessed bay, a shed roof porch. It is not uncommon for the porches to have been updated ca. 1920, evidenced by their wood posts on brick piers, a popular style borrowed from that period's Bungalow form. Examples of the Gabled Ell form are at 126 NW Wilson Street [inv. # 50] and 425 NW Church Street [inv. #21].

The Pyramid Square plan is another popular form of the late nineteenth century. These frame structures are one-story, have an interior central chimney, hipped roof and are typically of frame construction. They generally have one-story porches across the main façade with milled, square, or classical columns. An example of a pyramid square plan dwelling is at 315 NW Church Street [inv. #12].

The Shotgun house is another vernacular plan that became popular beginning in the late nineteenth century. The form invariably has a gable-front façade, is one room wide, and is of frame construction. Examples in the district are at 423 NW Church Street [inv. # 20] and 108 NW Church Street [inv. # 1].

Bungalows initially became popular on the west coast in the early twentieth century, ultimately reaching into small towns across America. They can be of brick or frame construction. The more elaborate designs often have complex roofs; in the survey area, there are a couple of detailed examples. However, most are simpler plans with front gable roofs and a central façade entrance flanked by windows and having a full-width porch. Two Bungalow examples are at 202 NW Church Street [inv. # 7] and 112 NW Church Street [inv. #2].

The majority of the residential architecture of the East Old Town Historic District reflects its working-class and middle-class character. Almost all of the dwellings are of frame construction and represent vernacular house forms of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The district is a notable collection of these forms and it continues to have a particular sense of time and place.

There are three churches within the district. The First Missionary Baptist Church [inv. # 45, photo 11] at 223 NW Vine Street Church is one of the neighborhood's most architecturally significant buildings. It was designed by Wallace A. Rayfield (1874-1941). The church, originally named the First Baptist Colored Church, was constructed at a cost of \$1250 in 1921. It

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was built on the lot that was originally home to St. Ann's Catholic Church. The Wayman A.M.E. Church [inv. # 14] at 416 NW Church Street takes its name from Bishop Alexander Walker Wayman (1821-1895). The Wayman Chapel was built in 1907 and at that time, the pastor was Reverend R.A. Mahoney. St. Paul's Church [inv. # 53] at 211 NW Wilson Street was originally Northside Baptist Church. Serving a predominantly white congregation, it was constructed ca. 1948-1953. The Northside congregation remained here until 1971, when the property was sold to an African-American church group.

Integrity

Since 1962, only a few new houses have been built in the district, and overall the district retains a high degree of its original character and integrity. Most properties evaluated as non-contributing are those that have been altered in recent decades through the enclosures of original porches, addition of replacement siding, and replacement of original doors and windows. Properties with such extensive alterations and no visible historic fabric were considered to no longer retain integrity. Overall, the district retains integrity via the following seven aspects: 1.) location – the district encompasses a residential area that represents both Decatur's extant antebellum architecture and its historic African-American neighborhood in the area known as Old Town, west of the Southern Railway line. It is distinctly differentiated from the commercial/public area to the east; 2.) design – overall the district retains many aspects of the original design elements that define architectural styles and forms; 3.) setting – the district remains a cohesive residential neighborhood with very few buildings post-dating its period of significance; 4.) materials – if the overall form, plan and architectural detailing of a house was evident then the application of modern siding and windows did not render the property non-contributing. Properties considered non-contributing were those where no historic fabric was visible as well as compromises to the overall form and plan; 5.) workmanship – architectural craftsmanship is expressed in both high style examples and vernacular forms, in stylistic elements and architectural details such as porticos, wooden eave brackets, cut stone foundations, milled wood spindling and balusters, six-course common bond brick walls, and many other examples of skilled masons and carpenters; 6.) feeling – the district retains a unique sense of time and place conveying the impression of a neighborhood that began its development in the late-nineteenth century. This concentration of properties is one of two of the most representative historic African-American neighborhoods in Decatur (the other being the West Old Town Historic District); the three antebellum structures tie the neighborhood to a pre-war history,

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within a wider context of redevelopment following the war; 7.) association – the surviving buildings collectively reflect an association with Decatur's growth and development.

Inventory

Where noted, dwellings are named for their earliest known owner/occupant. This information was derived from City Directories from 1940 and 1961.

100 block NW Church Street. Vacant lot, south side of street. Parcel number 0304181026001000.

100 block NW Church Street. Vacant lot, south side of street. Parcel number 03041810260011000.

1. 108 NW Church Street. O.L. Born House. This one-story, ca. 1900, frame shotgun-style dwelling has a gable roof of metal, weatherboard siding, a brick foundation, and a 3-bay porch with a shed roof and wood posts. (C)
2. 112 NW Church Street. Corman House. This ca. 1920, one-story, frame bungalow has asbestos siding, a front gable roof, a concrete block foundation, and a three-bay façade. The porch has square, wood posts and closed railing and a shed roof with an added metal awning. (C)
3. 114 NW Church Street. W.E. Johnson. This one-story, frame bungalow has vinyl siding, a front gable roof, a concrete block foundation, and a three-bay façade. The rebuilt porch has metal poles and a shed roof. The façade has a central entrance flanked by 1/1 windows. (C)
4. 111 NW Church Street. Leo and Patty Cashin Sykes House. This one-story, frame dwelling has asbestos siding, a brick porch, a brick foundation, and a full-width, 3-bay porch with square, brick columns and perforated, brick railing. The hip roof has gabled dormer with vents on the façade and both side elevations. The dwelling has an interior, brick chimney. (C)
5. 116 NW Church Street. W.M. Gobble House. This ca. 1920, one-story, frame dwelling has a front gable roof, vinyl siding, a brick foundation, and an exterior end, brick chimney. The 3-bay

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façade has a central entrance flanked by paired 6/6 sash windows. The partial-width porch shelters the entrance and one pair of windows and has a front gable roof and wood posts. (NC)

6. 117 NW Church Street. Oscar Roberts and H.M. Mitchell House. This two-story frame dwelling has a main block with a hipped roof, a brick foundation, a projecting gable front bay, and a recessed bay with a side gable roof. The first floor has horizontal 2/2 windows and a large picture window. The second floor has original 2/2 double hung wood sash windows. The exterior has asbestos siding. The wrap-around re-built porch has ca. 1990 milled posts. Above the porch's roof, the façade retains an original row of decorative, rounded wood shingles. (C)

100 block NW Church Street. Vacant lot, south side of street. Parcel number 0304181026008000.

7. 202 NW Church Street. Kenneth Reedus House. This ca. 1920 one-story, brick bungalow dwelling has a porte-cochere with tapered posts on brick piers. The central, 1-bay porch is a gable front projecting bay and has tapered posts on brick piers and pierced, brick railing. Windows are original 3/1. The roof is complex with many gabled sections. The foundation is brick. (C)

200 block NW Church Street. Vacant lot, south side of street. Parcel number 0304181025001000.

8. 204 NW Church Street. M.G. Wimberly House. This is ca. 1890, one-story frame dwelling has weatherboard siding, a brick foundation, and a central projecting gable front bay. The porch is 3-bay and wraps around to one of the two side recessed bays. The porch has original turned posts and arched, pierced vergeboard. The porch foundation has brick piers with brick infill. (C)

200 block NW Church Street. Vacant lot, south side of street. Parcel number 0304181025009000.

200 block NW Church Street. Vacant lot, south side of street. Parcel number 0304181025008000.

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200 block NW Church Street. Vacant lot, north side of street. Parcel number 0304181018004000.

200 block NW Church Street. Vacant lot, north side of street. Parcel number 0304181018005000.

200 block NW Church Street. Vacant lot, south side of street. Parcel number 0304181025007001.

9. 302 NW Church Street. Dwelling has been demolished; garage stands on otherwise vacant lot. Parcel number 0304181019004000. (NC)

10. 304 NW Church Street. C. R. Terry House. This ca. 1920, one-story, frame, gable front dwelling has original windows, a brick foundation, and vinyl siding. The full-width, 3-bay porch has been rebuilt and its bays are asymmetrical. It has a hip roof and Square wood posts. There is a central, interior, brick chimney. Windows are 6/6 and 4/4. (C)

11. 310 NW Church Street. This ca. 1920, one-story, frame, gable front dwelling has original windows, a brick foundation, and vinyl siding. The full-width, 3-bay porch has been rebuilt and its bays are symmetrical. It has a hip roof and Square wood posts. There is a central, interior, brick chimney. Windows are 4/4. (C)

12. 315 NW Church Street. R.W. Sanders House. This ca. 1920, one-story, original pyramid square dwelling has vinyl siding, a hip roof, concrete foundation, and a three-bay façade. The rebuilt porch has wrought iron posts and railing and a flat roof. The façade has a central entrance flanked by 1/1 windows. (C)

13. 317 NW Church Street. J.A. Maxwell House. This ca. 1960, one-story, front gable dwelling has an exterior of vinyl siding, a brick foundation, and a brick skirt wall. The façade has an off-set, one-bay porch with wrought iron posts and a front gable roof and an integral carport with wrought iron posts on square, brick piers. Windows are single-light, fixed. (NC)

300 block NW Church Street. Vacant lot, south side of street. Parcel number 0304181024001000.

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300 block NW Church Street. Vacant lot, north side of street. Parcel number 0304181019005000.

300 block NW Church Street. Vacant lot, south side of street. Parcel number 0304181024012000.

300 block NW Church Street. Vacant lot, north side of street. Parcel number 0304181019006000.

300 block NW Church Street. Vacant lot, south side of street. Parcel number 0304181024011000.

400 block NW Church Street. Vacant lot, north side of street. Parcel number 030418102003000.

400 block NW Church Street. Vacant lot, south side of street. Parcel number 0304181023001000.

14. 407 NW Church Street. Aaron Orr House. This ca. 1900, one-story, frame dwelling has an exterior of aluminum siding, a concrete block foundation, and a 3-bay façade a central entrance flanked by paired 2/2 ca. 1960 horizontal sash windows. The front door is a replacement. The ca. 1960 rebuilt 3-bay porch has wood posts. (NC)

15. 409 NW Church Street. Edward Houston House. This ca. 1890, one-story, frame, gable-and-wing dwelling has an exterior of aluminum siding, a concrete block foundation and a 2-bay façade with a front gable projecting bay with a 1/1 sash window and a recessed, side gable entrance bay with a fixed picture window. The attached porch is has metal posts. There is a central, interior, brick chimney. (C)

16. 414 NW Church Street. Wayman Chapel AME Church, built in 1907. The building is of brick construction with a brick foundation. The main façade is divided by brick pilasters. (Originally, the façade had a central projecting bay flanked by two recessed bays. This was removed some time after 1952.) The facade has a one-bay, central, front gable porch with

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original 3-light, 3-panel wood double doors. The porch is flanked by a pair of fixed windows. The side elevation has a central projecting bay with a gable roof. (C)

17. 416 NW Church Street. W. Kindred House. This one-story, frame bungalow has asbestos siding, a brick foundation, and a full-width, 3-bay porch with tapered posts on brick piers and a pierced brick railing. The dwelling has an interior central, brick chimney and a second, interior, brick chimney. (C)

400 block NW Church Street. Vacant lot, south side of street. Parcel number 0304181023013000.

400 block NW Church Street. Vacant lot, south side of street. Parcel number 0304181023012000.

18. 420 NW Church Street. This ca. 1950, one-story, frame, gable front dwelling has an exterior of brick and vinyl siding and a concrete block foundation. The façade has a front gable main block with an offset front gable porch. There is also an incised carport on the side elevation of the main block. It has a side gable roof. The façade has a picture window, not covered by the porch and a pair of 1/1 windows under the entrance porch. The porch has wrought iron posts and railing and an awning. (C)

19. 421 NW Church Street. William Brown and A. L. Mason House. This ca. 1920, one-story, frame, gable front dwelling has an exterior of aluminum siding. The original brick pier foundation has been infilled with concrete block. The 3-bay façade has an off-center entrance flanked by a single and a pair of 6/6 vinyl sash windows. The entrance has a 9-light replacement door. The porch has wrought iron posts and added wooden steps. (C)

20. 423 NW Church Street. Nancy Skillern House. This ca. 1900, one-story, frame, original shotgun-style dwelling has a brick foundation and a shed-roof side addition, which was originally a porch and was then enclosed. It has an exterior of vinyl siding. The 3-bay façade consists of the original 2-bay shotgun section with a door and window and the added section with a single 4/4 window. A new porch was added to the façade and has wrought iron posts and a shed roof. (C)

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21. 425 NW Church Street. W.A. Mills House. This ca. 1900, one-story, frame, original gable-and-wing dwelling has had its façade altered with the enclosing of the gabled ell. A porch was added across the new façade. It has wrought iron posts and a metal awning. The dwelling has a brick foundation and an interior, central brick chimney. (C)

22. 710 NW Grove Street, ca. 1990 dwelling. (NC)

800 block NW Grove Street. Vacant lot on east side of street. Parcel number 0304181025007000.

800 block NW Grove Street. Vacant lot on east side of street. Parcel number 0304181025007001.

23. 813 NW Grove Street, ca. 2000 dwelling. (NC)

24. 211 NW Lafayette Street. This is a one-story ca. 1970 dwelling with a side gable roof of asphalt shingles, an exterior of vinyl siding, and a foundation of concrete block. The façade has a full-width porch with a shed roof and square wood posts. Windows are 2/2 horizontal sash. (NC)

25. 213 NW Lafayette Street. Cleveland Bonner House. This ca. 1930, one-story, frame dwelling has a front gable roof, a concrete block foundation, and a 3-bay façade with an off-center entrance flanked by altered window openings (one is covered by plywood, the other has a retro-fitted 1/1 vinyl sash window). The partial-width, off-center porch has a front gable roof and replacement wood posts. (NC)

26. 216 NW Lafayette Street. Clara Lyle House. This ca. 1920, one-story, frame bungalow has a front gable roof, a concrete block foundation, and a 3-bay façade with a central entrance flanked by windows. The attached porch has a front gable roof, original wood posts and added wrought iron posts and an added concrete block railing. Windows are original, 4/4 wood sash. (C)

200 block Lafayette Street. Vacant lot on south side of street. Parcel number 0304181035012000.

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200 block Lafayette Street. Vacant lot on south side of street. Parcel number 0304181035011000.

200 block Lafayette Street. Vacant lot on south side of street. Parcel number 0304181035010000.

200 block Lafayette Street. Vacant lot on north side of street. Parcel number 0304181025006000.

27. 103 NW Market Street. Herman Hawkins House. This one-story, ca. 1900, frame dwelling has vinyl siding, a complex roof, a 1/2-width, integral porch with replacement milled posts. The entrance has a two-light, wood panel door. The edge of the porch is rounded. Windows are 4/1, 9/1, & horizontal 2/2. (C)

100 block of NW Market Street. Vacant lot on south side of street. Parcel number 0304181009010000.

28. 111 NW Market Street. Nesbit-Hood House. This ca. 1920 gable front dwelling has vinyl siding, an off-center entrance flanked by single windows, and a concrete block foundation. The 3-bay replacement porch mimics the original porch's length, but the roof form differs. The exterior has vinyl siding added. (C)

100 block of NW Market at NW Sycamore Street, southeast corner. This is a ca. 1980 metal warehouse. (NC)

200 block of NW Market street. Vacant lot on south side of street. Parcel number 0304181008001000.

29. 205 NW Market Street. Sam Sapp House. This is a ca. 1900, one-story frame dwelling with wood siding, a gable front projecting bay, a recessed porch bay, and a further recessed, side gable bay. There is a shed roof addition on the rear elevation. The gable field on the façade has rounded wood shingles. There is a brick, interior chimney and the foundation is both stone and concrete. Windows are 1/1 and 4/4. (C)

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30. 701 NW Railroad Street. The ca. 1905 Southern Railway Depot has a symmetrical plan with a hip roof central section flanked by side gable wings. The wings are slightly recessed. At elevation corners there is quoin-like brick corbelling. There is a central, projecting, entrance bay of brick construction that has arched openings and a flat roof. There is a central hip roof dormer on the façade. The eaves have exposed rafter tails all the way around. There are 3 interior, brick chimneys. Side elevations have brackets at the eaves. The building's brick foundation sits on poured concrete slab. (IL)

31. 901 NW Railroad Street. The ca. 1829 Greek Revival Dancy-Polk House is a two-story, frame dwelling with a five-bay façade, a hip roof with wood shingles, and a brick foundation. The center 3 bays are the 2-story main body of the house. Its central bay has a two-story portico with a front gable pediment roof and Tuscan columns on both floors. The wood panel double doors have a five-light transom and 4-light sidelights. To each side of the portico are two 9/9 wood sash windows. The wings are one-story, and each has two 9/9 wood sash windows. The dwelling has a basement level with 6/6 wood sash windows. There is an exterior end, brick chimney at each end of the house and flanking the 2-story block, as well. (IL)

32. 702 NW Sycamore Street. Turner-Surles Community Resource Center. This is a ca. 2000, brick and metal conference building. (NC)

33. 701 NW Sycamore Street. This is a ca. 1980 one-story, brick commercial building. (NC)

34. 703 NW Sycamore Street. Doyle Roberts House. Built between 1952 and 1960, this one-story, brick dwelling has a 3-bay facade with a central entrance flanked by paired one-over-one sash windows and a one-bay porch with a hip roof and wrought iron posts. The foundation is concrete. (NC)

35. 707 NW Sycamore Street. John Ellis House. This ca. 1910 dwelling has a 3-bay façade with a central entrance flanked by paired 6/6 wood sash windows and a ca. 1960, one-bay porch with wrought iron posts. The original porch was full-width. There is a shed-roof rear addition. The exterior has weatherboard siding and the foundation is concrete. (NC)

36. 709 NW Sycamore Street. Gobble House. This ca. 1890, vinyl-sided dwelling has a hip roof on its main section; in front of this is a cross gable section consisting of a front gable and wing.

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The side gable portion has the primary entrance and a 1/1 window. Attached to this portion is a shed roof porch. The projecting front gable bay has a pair of 9/9 windows. In its side wall is a secondary entrance. There are 2 interior, brick chimneys. The foundation is brick. (C)

700 block NW Sycamore Street. Vacant lot on west side of street. Parcel number 0304181035001000.

800 block NW Sycamore Street. Vacant lot on east side of street. Parcel number 0304181026005000.

37. 803 NW Sycamore Street. Frank Roberts House. This ca. 1910, gable front dwelling has a full-width 3-bay porch with a shed roof and wrought iron posts, and a concrete block foundation. The exterior has vinyl siding. The entrance is off-center. It is flanked by paired 1/1 windows with decorative shutters. The door and windows have iron security bars. (C)

38. 807 NW Sycamore Street. F. L. Thomas House. This ca. 1920, one-story dwelling has weatherboard siding, a concrete block foundation, and a full-width, 3-bay porch with wrought iron posts and a shed roof. The entrance is off-center and has a two-light wooden replacement door. It is flanked by paired 1/1 windows. There are exposed rafter tails at the eaves. There is an interior, central, brick chimney. The house was vacant in 1940. (C)

39. 815 NW Sycamore Street. O. D. Campbell House. The ca. 1920, one-story dwelling has aluminum siding, a concrete block foundation, and a full-width 3-bay porch with wrought iron posts and a shed roof. The façade has an off-center entrance flanked a pair of original 4/1 windows and an added multi-light picture window. In the gable peak is a vent. (C)

40. 818 NW Sycamore Street. Mrs. Clercie Worley House. This ca. 1920, two-story, brick dwelling has a full-width, 3-bay porch with square, wood posts and square newel posts and a hip roof. Most windows are 6/6 vinyl, replacements of original 1/1 wood sash, a few of which remain. There is a brick interior chimney and a brick foundation. The entrance has a ca. 1960 6-panel wood door. The porch also dates to this period. (C)

800 block NW Sycamore Street. Vacant lot on west side of street. Parcel number 0304181025002000.

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41. 905 NW Sycamore Street. Mrs. Brenda K. Corbett House. The ca. 1945 dwelling has a central, partial-width, wooden entry stoop. The exterior is shiplap wood siding. The entrance is off-center and has a gable pediment of frame construction over the door. It is flanked by paired 3/1 windows. The foundation is concrete block. On the side elevation is an exterior, brick chimney. The façade has minimal wood trim. (C)

42. 906 NW Sycamore Street. Brown House. The ca. 1952 dwelling has vinyl siding, a brick foundation, and a full-width 3-bay porch with wrought iron posts and a shed roof. The entrance is off-center and is flanked by paired 3/1 windows. (C)

1000 block NW Sycamore Street. Vacant lot on west side of street. Parcel number 0304181008002000.

43. 1004 NW Sycamore Street. Robert Charvadyne-Samuel Schaudies House. This is a ca. 1860, one-story, side gable frame dwelling that has a brick foundation and a central, one-bay shed roof entrance porch with wrought iron posts. On the façade, a projecting bay has an offset gable-front roof. Aluminum siding has been added to the exterior. Windows are 4/1. (C)

44. 1105 NW Sycamore Street. Rhea-McIntire House, ca. 1836. This two-story Greek Revival dwelling is individually listed on the NR. Its façade has a central entrance flanked by two pairs of 1/1 wood sash windows. Each pair of windows has a lintel with bullseye accents at each end. The entrance has original sidelights and transom. This scheme is repeated on the second floor. The full-height, 3-bay porch has massive, square, wood pillars. The dwelling has an interior brick chimney and a brick foundation. The exterior brick walls have been stuccoed. (IL)

45. 223 NW Vine Street. First Missionary Baptist Church, built in 1921. This church's façade consists of a hexagonal one-story tower with a conical roof, a central 3-bay loggia with broad arched openings, and a 2-story, square tower with a pyramidal roof. The entrance is in the side wall of this tower, within the loggia. The back wall of the loggia has 4 arched windows. Above the one-story loggia, in the main body of the church is a clerestory of arched windows. The hexagonal tower has a multi-light arched window in each of its walls. Some of these have a circular insert above. The foundation is poured concrete. (C)

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200 block NW Vine Street. Vacant lot on north side of street. Parcel number 0304181035015000.

46. 102 NW Wilson Street. Reagins-Cramer House. This ca. 1910 one-story dwelling has aluminum siding, a brick foundation, an interior, brick chimney, a multi-gabled roof, and an exterior, façade, wall chimney, and 1/1 windows. The façade has a central, front gable bay flanked by side gable bays. One of these is recessed and has a rebuilt wood porch with a shed roof. The opposite bay has a small entrance porch with wrought iron posts and a shed roof. (C)

100 block of NW Wilson Street. Vacant lot, north side of street. Parcel number 0304180009006000.

100 block of NW Wilson Street. Vacant lot, south side of street. Parcel number 030418101701000.

47. 113 NW Wilson Street. Brown- Baugh House. This ca. 1890, one-story dwelling is a cross gable plan and has vinyl siding, a concrete block foundation, and a full-width, three-bay porch with arched openings and detailed wood trim. The porch has added wrought iron railing. There is a secondary entrance in a side bay towards the rear of the dwelling. Windows are 1/1 & 2/2 horizontal sash. (C)

48. 118 NW Wilson Street. Henry Jackson House. This ca. 1900, one-story, frame dwelling has aluminum siding, a brick foundation, and a cross gable roof; the gable front façade bay has a full-width, 2-bay porch with a shed roof and tapered wood posts on brick piers and pierced, brick railing. The façade's entrance bay is slightly recessed. Windows are original. (C)

100 block of NW Wilson Street. Vacant lot, south side of street. Parcel number 0304181017009001.

49. 125 NW Wilson Street. Dr. Willis Woods House. This ca. 1890, one-story frame dwelling has asbestos siding and an irregular floor plan. The façade's foremost bay has a front gable roof. To one side is a recessed bay with a partial-width porch, to the other is a second porch bay with 2 recessed elevations. Each porch has an entrance. The porches have original wood posts and spindling of high detail. The projecting front gable bay has an added picture window flanked by

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two-over-two horizontal wood sash windows. The dwelling has a cross gable roof and a brick foundation. (C)

50. 126 NW Wilson Street. Abbie Robertson Schaudies- Ida Mosely Bower House. This ca. 1890 one-story, frame, gabled ell dwelling has synthetic siding, a brick foundation, and original windows. The partial-width, 2-bay porch has a shed roof and square posts on brick piers. Windows are 2/2, 6/6, 3/1. The foundation has concrete block. (C)

51. 202 NW Wilson Street. Bennie Malone House. This ca. 1900, vinyl-sided dwelling was originally a cross gable plan with a central gable front bay in front of a wider side gable section. The 3-bay façade has been altered and consists of a central front gable bay with a large added picture window flanked by 2/2 horizontal sash windows; on the east: an enclosed porch bay in front of the recessed side gable bay; and on the west: a small shed roof bay that was added to fill in the open area created by the original cross gable. The foundation is brick. (NC)

52. 204 NW Wilson Street. G. S. Wallace House. This ca. 1930 dwelling has an exterior of vinyl siding, a replacement metal roof, and a 2-bay porch with wood posts and a shed roof. The foundation was originally concrete block piers, infilled with addition block that has been stuccoed. (NC)

53. 211 NW Wilson Street. St Paul's Church. The brick church building has a projecting gable front, enclosed entry bay on the façade. Side elevations have paired windows. There is a full basement level with six-over-six windows. The two stories have different colored brick as the first story was completed in c. 1948 and the second story in 1953. The foundation is concrete block. (C)

200 block of NW Wilson Street. Vacant lot, north side of street. Parcel number 0304181008006 5000.

200 block of NW Wilson Street. Vacant lot, north side of street. Parcel number 0304181008006000.

54. 213 NW Wilson Street. Winton-Grant House. This ca. 1900 dwelling has an exterior of vinyl siding, 1/1 wood sash windows, a concrete block foundation, and a front gable on a hipped roof.

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The porch on the façade has been enclosed and has a central entrance stoop flanked by windows.
(NC)

55. 224 NW Wilson Street. John Hannah House. This ca. 1900 two-story, frame dwelling has an interior, brick chimney, a brick foundation, an exterior of vinyl siding, and a one-story, 2-bay, shed roof porch with square posts covered with vinyl. The façade has a full-height projecting bay with a gable front roof. Windows are 1/1. The foundation is concrete. On the rear elevation, a one-story shed roof wing was added before 1913. To this wing, a shed roof garage bay was added after 1952. (C)

56. All the vacant lots where buildings have been razed compose one archaeological site for their potential to yield information about the growth and development of the neighborhood. (C)

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The district's period of significance extends from ca. 1829, which is the date of the oldest remaining dwelling in the neighborhood to 1962 in keeping with the 50 year cut-off date.

Decatur's East Old Town Historic District is locally significant for the National Register under Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage/Black, Criterion C: Architecture and Criterion D: Archaeology. The district contains 55 buildings and one archaeological site, of which 41 (73%) are considered contributing to the character of the district. The district represents the largest intact collection of contiguous early-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century dwellings in Decatur's Northwest neighborhood. These dwellings have not been significantly altered, and the district retains a strong sense of time and place.

Under criterion A: Ethnic Heritage/Black, this proposed district is a part of Decatur's historic African-American neighborhood. The area developed as a white working-class neighborhood in the mid-nineteenth century. Freed slaves were drawn to the area by railroad and industrial jobs after the Civil War. The integrated neighborhood evolved into a predominantly black one in the twentieth century. African-Americans from all socioeconomic groups lived, worked and attended church in this community. The institutions and businesses they founded and owned were located here also. This was a common development pattern in Alabama where segregation forced blacks to live in certain areas of town.

Under criterion C: Architecture, the district encompasses a locally significant collection of residential architecture including the high style Greek Revival Dancy-Polk [inv. # 31, photo 9] (c. 1829) and Rhea-McIntire [inv. # 44, photo 10] (c. 1836) Houses, as well as popular vernacular house types from the late-19th through mid-20th century period such as gabled ell, gable-front, and pyramid square plans. The former two houses are the earliest intact examples of Greek Revival residences in Decatur. Another Greek Revival dwelling in Decatur is the Burleson House ("Westview") just south of town. This frame, ca. 1841 structure is a more modest example of the style, with a simple entry of paired wood columns. A post-war example is Shadowlawn at 504 Line Street, built 1874. The district also includes the Southern Railway Depot [inv. #30, photo 12], with Craftsman influence. There are also significant examples of church buildings, the most important being the First Missionary Baptist Church [inv. # 45, photo 11] (1921) which was designed by African-American architect Wallace A. Rayfield. There are 359 known Rayfield structures - churches, schools, residences, and commercial buildings - located in nineteen states and even in South Africa. Many of Rayfield's designs are found in Birmingham and other north Alabama cities. The First Missionary Baptist Church is his only known design in Decatur.

The East Old Town Historic District also has local significance under Criterion D: Archaeology. Although no formal archaeological survey has been made of this neighborhood, the potential for subsurface remains is high. The ground level remains, Sanborn maps and oral tradition indicate that buried remains in the district may yield useful information on the historic buildings that once stood here and the history of the people who inhabited this neighborhood.

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History and Context of the Northwest Neighborhood

Located south of the Tennessee River in north Alabama, Decatur is a town that had a population of 55,778 in 2006. It is the county seat of Morgan County, which was originally established in 1818 as Cotaco County. The river influenced the establishment of Decatur as a center of commerce. Within the district, dwellings of high style architecture are intermingled with vernacular forms ranging from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century.

Cotaco County was carved out of land obtained from the Cherokees in the Treaty of Turkeytown. The county was named after a creek running through the area. Its county seat was Somerville. Pioneers arrived from southeastern states, settling on the Cotaco and other tributaries. Early settlers engaged in cotton farming, both large and small scale, in the fertile river valley. Lumber and cattle were among the other agricultural products shipped out of Morgan County via steamboats and ferries. Decatur was one of the earliest towns in the new county.¹

Following the 1819 granting of statehood to Alabama, Major John Hutchings, nephew of General Andrew Jackson, surveyed the area of present-day Decatur at the request of President Monroe. Briefly referred to as Hutchings Bluffs, Decatur was officially named on June 2, 1820 for Stephen Decatur, a naval war hero in the War of 1812. Patents were issued to the Decatur Land Company, and the town became incorporated in 1826.²

While the convenience of river transportation and the fertile soil of this river valley attracted settlers, low water levels and shoals hindered travel on this particular stretch of the river. The cotton cultivated in Morgan County had to be stored in warehouses on the riverbank until the water level was high enough to navigate the shoals and ship it to New Orleans. An 1830 survey estimated the cost of a canal around the shoals at \$1.4 million. The United States government gave the state of Alabama 400,000 acres to sell in order to raise the money for the canal. Work began in 1831 and was completed in 1836. Unfortunately, the project was doomed: during low water levels, boats could not reach the canal; during high levels, the canal was unnecessary.³

In 1836, however, Decatur's prosperity took a turn for the better with the construction of the Tuscumbia, Courtland and Decatur Railroad. This rail line, believed to be the first west of the Appalachians, provided incentives for growth and Decatur became an industrial center. The prosperity influenced the establishment of a Bank of Alabama branch in Decatur in 1833. However, the state banking system failed in the Depression

¹ Donna J. Siebenthaler "Morgan County," at the Encyclopedia of Alabama,
<http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article>.

² "Albany Heritage Commercial Historic District," National Register form, Section 8, Page 19;
Sarah Lawless, "Decatur," Encyclopedia of Alabama at <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org>;
Philip Wirey, Decatur, Alabama, Historic Walking Tour.

³ *A Brief History of Decatur, Alabama*, (Decatur: River City Kiwanis Club, 2004), 3.

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of 1837.⁴ In 1855, the Tuscumbia, Courtland and Decatur Railroad was purchased by the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, which built a rail bridge across the Tennessee River. Also in 1853, the Tennessee-Alabama Central Railroad connected Decatur to Nashville. The two railroads intersected at Decatur, making the city a major hub for the north-south and east-west lines.⁵

As a rail center, Decatur became a strategic location during the Civil War. Most residents of Decatur and north Alabama were opposed to leaving the Union. Though Morgan County's representative voted against secession, the state as a whole voted to secede. During the war, Decatur was occupied at various times by both armies. Decatur fell to the Union Army without a fight, some residents even voluntarily enlisting. In 1862, Union troops abandoned the city, destroying much of the railroad and the rail bridge across the river. Locals managed to salvage some of the rail line between Decatur and Tuscumbia. The area was revisited in 1864 by Union troops under General Grenville Dodge, who took Decatur and built a pontoon bridge across the river. He ordered residents to leave the city and destroyed all its buildings that were not serving as headquarters or housing supplies. Remaining buildings included the Old State Bank, the Burleson-McEntire House [inv. # 44, photo 10], the Dancy-Polk House [inv. # 31, photo 9], and the McCartney Hotel.⁶

On October 26, 1864, General Robert Granger received news that Confederate General John Bell Hood was approaching Decatur from the east. Granger moved 300 soldiers to the fortifications at Decatur, preparing to defend it. Hood's troops numbered approximately 30,000 men, far more than the 3,000-5,000 Union troops in Decatur. Over the course of two days, the two combatants engaged in skirmishes that resulted in nominal casualties and captures. One of these skirmishes took place in the Northwest Neighborhood near the intersection of Vine and Washington Streets. Hood finally abandoned his goal to take Decatur and cross the river into Tennessee. He circumvented Decatur, instead crossing at Florence, Alabama.⁷ This delay helped to concentrate sufficient Union troops in Tennessee to defeat Hood and force his retreat.

Year	Free white males	Free white females	Free black males	Free black females	Slave males	Slave females
1820	2243	1251	6	5	432	426
1830	3130	2996	19	23	1442	1452
1840	3383	3242	25	20	1576	1640
1850	3319	3318	28	23	1724	1713
1860	3781	3811	18	19	1817	1889

Table with population of Morgan County between 1820 and 1860

Decatur's population prior to the war had been in the 600s. Following the war, Decatur was devastated, but rebuilding efforts commenced. The reconstruction of rail lines in 1871 and their incorporation into the Louisville & Nashville Railroad network greatly influenced Decatur's return to its position as a commercial

⁴ "Albany Heritage Commercial Historic District," Lawless; "Decatur Then," at http://www.decaturalabamaua.com/livework/decatur_then.html.

⁵ *A Brief History of Decatur, Alabama*, 4.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷ *Ibid.*

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center. A post-war economic boom helped Decatur's population to grow to 1,140 by 1873 and to between 1500 and 2000 by 1877. Still, Decatur experienced further losses with a devastating fire in 1877 and a yellow fever outbreak in 1878. The epidemic claimed fifty-eight lives and sent hundreds of residents fleeing the city. No trains stopped in Decatur for sixty days.⁸ By 1880, Decatur's population had fallen to 1,063.

As freedmen assimilated into American society after Emancipation, some remained in rural settings working in agriculture while others gravitated to cities. They contributed to the rise in Decatur's population, settling in an area that became known as Northwest Decatur, or Old Town. Decatur's industrial base was booming, and employment opportunities could be had along the river at various industrial sites. Also, the urban environment offered the opportunity for advancement in education and professional trades among African Americans. The railroad through Decatur served as a dividing line between the middle and upper class neighborhoods on the east side of the tracks and the working class Old Town neighborhood on the west side. In the Old Town neighborhood, blocks near the railroad track already had white, working-class households; the migration of African Americans to the western blocks of the Old Town neighborhood began a process of integration across the entire neighborhood.

When former slaves migrated to Northwest Decatur, many retained their former owner's surnames, as evident in the similar family names among prominent African American and white Decatur residents. One example is the Sykes name. Based on Census records, Francis Sykes was a successful farmer and slave holder in Lawrence County, Alabama. In ca. 1855, he fathered a son with one of his slaves, Laura, who was approximately 35 years old then. According to the 1870 Census, Laura, her son Solomon, and four other younger children of Laura's, all had the surname of Sykes. At the time, her youngest child was five years old (i.e., would have been born in 1865), so it is likely that all five children were fathered by slaveholder Sykes. Laura Sykes in 1870 was employed in housekeeping and is not listed as married.⁹

The 1880 Census does, in fact, list Solomon Sykes, by then the head of his own household, as "MU," or mulatto, acknowledging his mixed-race ancestry. In that year, he was listed as being 24 years old and married to Ada (Garth) Sykes. With the couple lived his brothers Melvin, Charles, and James. The couple had their first child in 1887. Based on the 1910 Census, Solomon and Ada had in their household seven offspring aged from three to twenty-three years old. Solomon S. Sykes' occupation is not indicated; however, it is known that in the early twentieth century, S.S. Sykes operated an undertaking and furniture store in Decatur.¹⁰

The Sykes family illustrates the advancement of freed slaves, and later generations, in the Decatur area. One of Solomon and Ada's sons, Franklin, born in 1892, attended Atlanta Baptist College (now Morehouse) and Howard University. He played for five years as a pitcher in the Negro Baseball League for five different teams. He later became a dentist, operating a successful practice in his hometown of Decatur. Another son, Melvin, born in 1901, attended Meharry Medical College in Nashville, which was founded in 1876 as the

⁸ Ibid., 8-9.

⁹ Alice Sykes, genealogical research notes, 2004.

¹⁰ Ibid.

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Medical Department of Central Tennessee College of Nashville under the Freedman's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Sykes family home was located at the southeast corner of Lafayette and Newcomb Streets (no longer extant).

Another prominent family name in Decatur's African-American community was Garth, which also originated from a planter. Jesse W. Garth owned large land tracts in northern Alabama and Mississippi. Several branches of the Garth family were recorded in Morgan County in the 1870 Census. Some household heads were women, as was the case with Laura Sykes. These women were employed as housekeepers. Other Garth household heads were men, listed as farmers.¹¹

The career of another prominent African-American patriarch is representative of the social and political climate of the Reconstruction South. Herschel V. Cashin was the son of a Georgia slaveholder. During the Civil War, his father sent his mother, Lucinda Bowdre and their seven children north. The 1860 Census shows Lucinda as head of household in Philadelphia. At the time, Herschel Cashin was six years old. In 1864, he was enrolled in the Institute for Colored Youth. After the war, Cashin returned to his hometown of Augusta, remaining there at least until 1870, when that year's census records him as a bookkeeper. Shortly thereafter, Cashin moved to Montgomery, Alabama. There, he launched his political career under the Congressional Reconstruction Acts, which took power away from the Democrats and attempted to enfranchise freed slaves.¹²

Running as a radical Republican for a seat in the Alabama legislature, Cashin served for two terms. His next bid for office failed, as Democrats were regaining political control in Alabama and other southern states. He then enrolled in law school, determining that with a license to practice law he could assist fellow African Americans in gaining power and respect. In 1881, Cashin accepted an appointment by President James Garfield as railway mail clerk, taking him to Decatur. He purchased property near Lafayette and Madison Streets for \$250. Cashin continued practicing law and became a high profile representative of Decatur's African-American community. In 1893, he petitioned the Decatur City Council for a "free colored school" and was a trustee of the Cherry Street School. He continued his service to the community as Decatur's fourth black city councilman, enjoying bipartisan support. In 1897, he accepted an appointment by President William McKinley as receiver of public monies for the U.S. Land Office. Though the position was in Huntsville, Cashin remained a resident of Decatur until his death in 1924.¹³

Another important family in the African American community of Decatur was the Banks family. Matthew Hewlett Banks was born a slave in 1844. His father was Lawrence Slaughter Banks and the Banks were a prominent white family of Decatur. L.S. Banks was a Colonel in the Alabama State Militia, serving in Decatur during the Civil War. Dr. William Banks, son of L.S. Banks, served as a doctor in the Confederate

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Richard Bailey, *Neither Carpetbaggers Nor Scalawags: Black Officeholders During the Reconstruction of Alabama, 1867-78*, (Montgomery, Louisville: New South, Inc., 2010), 114, 332-333; Deangelo McDaniel, "Chronicle of a Special Decatur Family," *Decatur Daily Newspaper*, July 14, 2008.

¹³ Ibid.

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Army, with Matthew Banks serving beside him as an orderly. The 1913 and 1917 Decatur City Directories show Matthew residing at 216 McCartney Street (outside the district's boundaries). His son, Hewlett J. Banks raised his family in Decatur, stressing to his children the importance of education. He sent his daughter Athelyne Celeste Banks to Pearl High School in Nashville. She then graduated from Alabama A & M University, returning to Decatur for a life-long career in teaching and school administration.

During the 1880s, Decatur began its renaissance as a commercial and cultural center. Attention to infrastructure included electricity, sanitation, and road improvements. Sheffield, Alabama developer Major E.C. Gordon foresaw the success and prosperity that Decatur promised, acquiring 5,600 acres of land under the Decatur Land Improvement and Furnace Company. Advertising nationally, Gordon proceeded with the development of New Decatur to the southeast of the original town. His company hired expert architects and designers to plat a community with wide avenues, landscaping, parks and distinct districts for commercial businesses and residential neighborhoods. The promotion of New Decatur's 500 new homes and businesses attracted new residents to the development, evidenced in a jump in that town's 1887 population from 1,200 to 5,000. The building of two opulent hotels, the Tavern and the Casa Grande, also indicated the wealth arriving in Decatur. Additionally, the three-story Cotaco Opera House, built from the sale of public stocks, was completed in 1890.¹⁴ By that year, (Old) Decatur's population had risen dramatically over the previous decade from 1,063 to 2,765 (a gain of 160%).

Morgan County officials clearly recognized the growing prominence of Decatur and moved the county seat there from Somerville in 1891.¹⁵ Thus, Decatur had by this time taken its place as a commercial and public center on the river. Its prosperity was challenged by a financial panic in 1892-94. However, its prominence as both a rail hub and a river port helped lure new industry especially during the last five years of the century. The business center on New Decatur's Second Avenue flourished.¹⁶ At the turn of the twentieth century, Decatur's population was between 7,000 and 8,000.¹⁷

As Old and New Decatur entered the new century, they had developed a distinct rivalry. While the old town on the river was the gateway for the transportation of goods, New Decatur enjoyed more modern planning and architecture. In 1907, New Decatur officially changed its name to Albany, favored by the town's large northern population. The two cities, despite their rivalry, cooperated in enticing new business to the Albany-Decatur-Upper Muscle Shoals region. The area boasted a wealth of natural minerals, river access, and truck-rail lines, collectively attractive to factories. A promotional brochure named three dozen industries and noted additional available lots for new businesses.¹⁸

One example of Decatur's industry in this period was the Alabama Brick and Tile Company. This plant was in operation by the early twentieth century. Clay was shipped in by barge from pits around Garnersville and

¹⁴ "Albany Heritage Commercial Historic District," Lawless.

¹⁵ Siebenthaler.

¹⁶ "Albany Heritage Commercial Historic District," National Register form, Section 8, Page 20.

¹⁷ "Decatur Then."

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

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Lacy Springs. The plant's brick kiln could fire around 200,000 individual bricks at a time.¹⁹ Located next to the Tennessee River, this large plant employed numerous workers in the northwest section of the city. Most of these buildings are no longer extant and have been replaced with more modern industries.

The economic progress of the city was reflected in the expansion of the residential area known as the Old Town neighborhood, south of the Tennessee River and west of the railroad. Development of these blocks had already begun after the Civil War, when soldiers' tents were replaced with more permanent frame structures. Further development continued through the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. The blocks immediately west of the railroad evolved over time from a predominantly white neighborhood into a predominantly African-American community. In addition to the dwellings, several churches and commercial buildings were constructed during these years to serve the area's residents.

One significant church built during the early twentieth century was the Wayman Chapel [inv. # 17], built in 1907. The church takes its name from Bishop Alexander Walker Wayman (1821-1895). Wayman was born in Caroline County, Maryland, and grew up helping his parents farm their land. In 1837 he joined the M.E. Church and then joined with the AME Church in 1840. In 1864, he was elected seventh Bishop of the AME Church. His connection to the Decatur church was through its pastor Winfield Henri Mixon. Wayman ordained Mixon as a deacon in 1881 at Greensboro and as an elder in 1882 at Selma. Born in Dallas County, Alabama ca. 1860, Mixon joined the A.M.E. Church in 1876. He attended Selma University and Wilberforce University. Mixon was the pastor of the AME Church congregation beginning around 1880 and also served as principal at Decatur High School.²⁰

During this period, north Alabama cities benefited from hydroelectric developments on the Tennessee River. In Congress, General Joe Wheeler advanced the goal of a hydroelectric dam at Muscle Shoals in 1898. The bill passed but the project was never undertaken. During World War I, however, the federal government built Wilson Dam and two explosives-manufacturing plants at Muscle Shoals.²¹ Dependable river levels resulted in the building of several new industries in the Decatur area. This period was one of prosperity and growth for Decatur. The total population of cities and suburbs by the 1920s was 20,000 residents - triple the number from two decades prior. The city of Decatur had a population of 4,752 in 1920, followed by a dramatic spike to 15,593 in 1930.

Within the historic district, there was further development as the neighborhood gained more residents. In 1921, the First Missionary Baptist Church [inv. # 45, photo 11] was constructed on NW Vine Street. It was designed by Wallace A. Rayfield (1874-1941). Born in Macon, Georgia, Rayfield was one of the earliest African Americans to earn a formal education in architecture and practice in the field in the United States. After graduating from the Pratt Institute at Columbia University in 1899, he was recruited by Booker T.

¹⁹ Roy Johnston, phone interviews, February 4 & 5, 2010.

²⁰ Alexander Walker Wayman, *Cyclopaedia of African Methodism* (Baltimore: Methodist Episcopal Book Depository, 1882), 6. Electronic edition, available at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/waymancyc/wayman.html>;

²¹ *A Brief History of Decatur, Alabama*, 11.

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Washington to be the Director of the Architectural and Mechanical Drawing Department at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. The church, originally named the First Baptist Colored Church, was constructed at a cost of \$1250 in 1921. It was built on the lot that was originally home to St. Ann's Catholic Church. The St. Ann's congregation, around 1900, had relocated outside the district to a site on Johnston Street purchased from the Decatur Land Company. The NW Vine Street property was purchased with a \$1460 loan secured by Dr. Willis Sterrs, Solomon Sykes, and G.F. Oliver.²² The purchase price was for the lot only, as the 1913 Sanborn map indicates the Catholic Church was by then removed.

The success of this northern Alabama region prompted the construction of a new highway bridge across the Tennessee River during the Good Roads movement of the 1920s. In 1923, an attempt was made to consolidate Albany and Decatur, in order for both municipalities to contribute to the infrastructure project. However, higher taxes in Albany and a discrepancy in respective debts resulted in an Alabama Supreme Court ruling that such a merger was unconstitutional. By 1927, however, financial issues were resolved, and Albany and Decatur worked as a collective municipality to complete the Keller Bridge across the river.²³

Other notable events of the decade included a fire in 1926 (another occurred in 1938) at the Morgan County courthouse in Decatur. The damage resulted in the loss of most county records that had not already been destroyed during the Civil War. In 1929, the city enjoyed the installation of its first traffic lights, indicative of the growth of automobile traffic through the region. On the eve of the Great Depression, Decatur was not only a center of commerce and government, but also of social life with movies, restaurants, theaters, and musical venues.²⁴

As across America, the decade following the 1929 stock market crash derailed progress and prosperity in Decatur. Exacerbating life in Morgan County during the 1930s was a notorious court case that drew international attention to racial conditions in the post-Reconstruction period in the South. Decatur was the scene of the famous Scottsboro Trials involving the accusation of rape by two single, white women against nine African-American males. The trials commenced in 1931 and garnered international attention. The event that launched the notorious legal proceedings occurred on March 25, 1931 when a fight between white and black youths erupted on a train en route through Jackson County, Alabama. The two women, traveling unaccompanied, were questioned as witnesses. They falsely accused the young black men of rape in order to avoid charges of vagrancy against themselves. Their actions resulted in several years of court proceedings, indictments, appeals, and the eventual incarceration of some of the accused men.²⁵

²² Alabama Historical Commission historical marker in front of church.

²³ Lawless.

²⁴ Ibid.; Siebenthaler; "Decatur Then."

²⁵ Daren Salter, "The Scottsboro Trials," at the Encyclopedia of Alabama, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article>

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The original trials occurred in Scottsboro, the county seat of Jackson County. The all-white juries returned a guilty verdict in just four days in early April 1931. Eight of the nine African-American men were sentenced to death; the judge scheduled their executions for July of that year.²⁶

If not for outside attention, the sentences would have been carried out. It was the International Labor Defense (ILD) that intervened. Sponsored by the Communist Party USA, the ILD astutely recognized the Scottsboro trials as a propaganda tool for conflating racial injustice and economic discontent. The ILD obtained a stay of execution for the defendants while the case was reviewed by the Alabama Supreme Court. Despite evidence of the defendants' innocence, including the recanting of one of the two women's original accusations, the court upheld the verdicts. The ILD mounted an enormous publicity campaign as it took the matter to the U.S. Supreme Court. There, *Powell vs. Alabama* invoked the Fourteenth Amendment to enforce equal rights to adequate council for the African American defendants.²⁷

Legal proceedings returned to Alabama, with a change of venue to Morgan County. Another all-white jury returned guilty verdicts, but Judge James Horton over-ruled, based on a medical examiner's statement who found no evidence of rape. The prosecutors were unrelenting, however, and gained guilty verdicts against two of the defendants. The ILD resorted to bribing the second accuser, resulting in a turn-over of the lead defense attorney in the trials. The U.S. Supreme Court in 1935 reviewed the latest cases, turning them over on the basis of systematic exclusion of African Americans from any of the juries. Again, legal proceedings returned to Alabama where verdicts and sentencing, all based on the same evidence, varied from acquittal for four defendants to incarceration until 1976 for the last to be paroled.²⁸

The Scottsboro Trials set several precedents. They first enforced equal rights to adequate legal representation. Additionally, the trials called for integration of juries. Several prominent African-American residents of the Northwest Neighborhood were interviewed to serve on the jury for the Scottsboro Boys. However, the prosecution always found fault and refused to admit any African Americans on the jury no matter their qualifications. Most notably, the trials cast an international light on racial inequities, foreshadowing the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. The case also reached a wide audience as the inspirational basis of Harper Lee's Pulitzer prize-winning novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Despite this negative attention on Decatur and northern Alabama during the 1930s, the region was also the beneficiary of a major project via Roosevelt's New Deal program. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) was created in 1933 as part of FDR's "First One Hundred Days." While today TVA is mainly viewed as a producer of power, its original purpose aimed to improve quality of life across a rural, often impoverished, region. This goal was multi-pronged and included flood control, conservation of natural resources, instruction in modern farming practices, fertilizer production and improved navigation of the river, in addition to providing electricity. Thus, TVA was a vehicle of reform.²⁹

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*; Siebenthaler.

²⁹ Carol Van West, *Tennessee's New Deal Landscape*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), 9.

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The river had long determined growth in Decatur and the whole Tennessee Valley. It allowed for transportation of agricultural and industrial products, and it also penetrated life in a cultural realm, as religious affiliations used the river for group baptizing.³⁰ Yet, the river presented negative impacts, as evidenced in problematic navigation during low water. In the summer, the river was the source of malaria, transmitted by mosquitoes. In other areas, flooding wiped out crops and caused detrimental conditions for good health. In Decatur, the presence of the World War I munitions plant drew attention to Muscle Shoals for the implementation of a far-reaching federal project.

The multi-faceted program of TVA evolved from Nebraska Senator George Norris' idea to use the federal munitions base at Muscle Shoals as the foundation of a regional development plan. Since the end of WWI, the Muscle Shoals facility had sat idle, and Norris had attempted to push through legislation in 1928 and 1930 for the government to purchase and redevelop the site. Presidents Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover, respectively, had vetoed the bills. However, as Roosevelt developed new programs to revitalize the nation's economy the north Alabama site found new purpose.³¹

President Roosevelt described the ambitious project as a social experiment, coupling improvement of both the land and the lives of the people working it. By the 1930s, it was clear that much of the nation's farmland had not been properly managed. A report from the USDA noted that 75-100% of topsoil had eroded from some 11 million acres due to flooding and agricultural use. TVA's goal was improvement of quality of life through progressive management of natural resources. The flood control afforded by TVA's series of dams along the river brought stability to the lives of thousands of families. Farmers were then able consistently to apply modern farming methods aimed at soil improvement, thus improving crops. TVA worked with the CCC in planting 50 million trees across the TVA region by 1939, further assisting in soil conservation. TVA's hydroelectric power plants brought electricity to 668,000 households by 1946.³²

Simultaneously, Decatur further developed its industrial base. With TVA's improvements to navigation on the Tennessee River, as well as the abundant and inexpensive electricity it provided, Morgan County experienced a shift from an agricultural economy to one of industry and manufacturing. By 1940, Decatur had forty-one industrial plants manufacturing cotton textiles, fertilizer, brick, boats and steel barges and six wholesale warehouses. The city also offered residents and visitors several retail stores, three hotels and other inns, and the Princess Theatre, remodeled in the popular Art Deco style.³³

These years also witnessed new construction in the Northwest area of Decatur. Many of the area's African-American residents found employment in the nearby industries along the river. New dwellings built in the Bungalow style and vernacular designs such as pyramid square and gable front were built during the 1930s and 1940s in the Old Town neighborhood. The neighborhood also included a number of white residents as

³⁰ Roy Johnston, phone interviews.

³¹ *A Brief History of Decatur, Alabama*, 11.

³² West, 9-11, 212-214.

³³ "Albany Heritage Commercial Historic District," National Register form, Section 8, Page 21; Siebenthaler.

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well especially in the block between the railroad and NW Sycamore Street and along Church Street. In the 1940s, several dwellings were built in the 100 block of NW Sycamore Street by the Gobble-Fite Lumber Company, which opened in 1934 on NW Market Street. In the late 1940s, Northside Baptist Church, which later became St. Paul's Church [inv. # 53], began construction at 211 NW Wilson Street.

According to Roy Johnston, a current member of the relocated Northside church, now named Parkview Baptist Church, the building on NW Wilson Street was constructed during the mid-twentieth century in two phases, as is apparent in the building's exterior. Johnston stated that the congregation was formed in 1947 and in 1948 the congregation purchased the lot at 211 NW Wilson Street for \$1,800 and raised \$10,000 to build the basement of a new church. Members met in the basement portion of the church, furnished with a pot-belly stove. By 1953, the congregation was able to construct atop the basement level a traditional, gabled sanctuary. Membership grew to 235 people, many of whom assisted with the carpentry in the upper level. The Northside congregation remained here until 1971, when the property was sold to an African-American church group. This congregation remained in the building for eight or nine years, and the present St. Paul's congregation moved into the building around 1980.³⁴

During the 1940s, two major industrial employers in Decatur were Ingalls Ship Building Company and the Decatur Iron and Steel Company. They manufactured a variety of barges, ferries, and tow boats. These were used in the transportation of grain, coal and iron ore. Both companies contributed significantly to the war effort. Decatur Iron and Steel supplied the U.S. Army with thirty-three tow boats and thirty-three landing craft for tank transport. Eleven more of the latter went to ally Great Britain. Some of these were converted into armored landing craft for the Normandy invasion. Many other landing craft from Decatur were used as well at Normandy and throughout the Pacific. Ingalls Ship Building, located on NW Market Street, employed 1500 workers at this time and built over 100 barges and twenty small (176-foot) freighters during the war.³⁵

For the most part, residents of the Northwest Decatur neighborhood in the twentieth century held middle-class and working-class occupations such as teacher, laborer, and merchant. Because of Decatur's transportation heritage a number of residents were employed by the rail lines. The dwelling at 118 NW Wilson Street [inv. # 48] was the home of railroad worker Henry Jackson, while the dwelling at 315 NW Wilson Street (just outside the district's boundaries) was home to William Matthews, who worked for the L&N Railroad for over fifty years. The house at 117 NW Church Street [inv. # 6] was home to Rev. Frank Moore who was the pastor of Macedonia Cumberland Presbyterian Church, located outside the district on Old Moulton Road.

By the mid-twentieth century the neighborhood also contained several commercial buildings and gas stations in addition to the dwellings. At 213 NW Church Street was Campbell's Service Station and around the corner at 502 NW Sycamore (two blocks outside the district's boundaries) was the Busy Bee Market. The one-story building at 226-232 NW Vine Street contained several businesses including the Green Frog Café.

³⁴ Roy Johnston, phone interviews.

³⁵ *A Brief History of Decatur, Alabama*, 12.

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A cluster of brick commercial buildings were also located near the train depot and contained businesses such as coal companies and grocery stores. These commercial buildings are no longer extant.

Following World War II, Decatur continued to expand. As occurred across the country during this period of national prosperity, residents and businesses relocated from inner city neighborhoods and commercial districts to suburban developments, strip shopping centers, and retail malls. Beginning around this time, the East Old Town Historic District became increasingly African American.³⁶ In Decatur, Second Avenue, the historic business district, suffered from out-migration, and historic buildings became vacant and neglected. Residential neighborhoods also experienced deterioration of older buildings. Many homes in the Northwest neighborhood were razed, resulting in vacant lots. As part of urban renewal efforts, a large area of the neighborhood was cleared to make way for new federally subsidized housing known as the Cashin Homes. This area contains both modern dwellings as well as vacant lots.

Over the past several decades almost all of the buildings of Cashin Homes have been razed, and few businesses remain to illustrate the commercial heritage of the neighborhood. The late-twentieth century witnessed the loss of many older dwellings in the neighborhood as a result of fire or neglect. Despite these losses there remains a strong sense of community, and efforts are underway to preserve the existing housing stock, as well as revitalize the overall neighborhood.

³⁶ 1940 U.S. Census records at <http://www.archives.gov/research/census/1940/index.html>; Roy Johnston, Telephone interviews; Peggy Allen Towns, Personal Interview, 18 February 2010.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point where NW Railroad Street and NW Market Street intersect, proceed southwest along NW Railroad Street approximately 1000', cross the railroad at Lafayette Street and proceed southwest approximately 300' to NW Vine Street. Proceed northwest along NW Vine Street approximately 615' and turn southwest along the property line of First Missionary Baptist Church (223 NW Vine Street), turn northwest along the rear property line of the church, then turn northeast and proceed along NW Grove Street for approximately 680'. Turn northwest and proceed along the rear property lines of the NW Church Street addresses (odd numbers) for two blocks (approximately 745') to NW McCartney Street. Turn northeast and proceed along NW McCartney Street for approximately 340' then turn southeast and proceed along the rear property lines of the NW Church Street addresses (even numbers) for two blocks (approximately 745') to NW Grove Street. Turn and proceed northeast along NW Grove Street approximately 180' to NW Wilson Street. Turn and proceed southeast approximately 120' on NW Wilson Street, then turn and proceed northeast along the property of 224 NW Wilson Street. Turn and proceed southeast along the rear property line of 224 NW Wilson Street. Turn and proceed northeast approximately 150' to NW Market Street, cross NW Market Street and proceed approximately 200' along the rear elevation of the Rhea-McIntire House. Turn and proceed southeast approximately 200' to NW Sycamore Street and turn southwest on NW Sycamore Street and proceed Street approximately 200' to NW Market Street. Turn and proceed southeast on NW Market Street approximately 385' to the point of origin.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Historically, Decatur's African-American neighborhood first began development following the Civil War. Since then, this area west of the Southern Railway line became increasingly populated into the mid-twentieth century. The general neighborhood extended to Market Street on the northeast, where residents found employment in the industrial sector, NW Railroad Street on the southeast, NW Vine Street on the southwest, and Cashin Street on the northwest. During the mid-twentieth century, however, a federal housing project was erected and later razed within the central portion of this large area, leaving a void for late-twentieth century development. Additionally, some buildings, both residential and commercial, were abandoned and demolished during this period.

The two largest concentrations of properties retaining integrity in the neighborhood are designated as the West Old Town Historic District and the East Old Town Historic District. These two areas are separated by blocks of post-1962 dwellings. Because of the large number of modern dwellings in the central section of the neighborhood, two districts are eligible rather than one larger one. The boundaries for the East Old Town Historic District are drawn to encompass one of the two largest contiguous collections of residential architecture relating to the city's historic African- American neighborhood.

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UTM REFERENCES CONTINUED

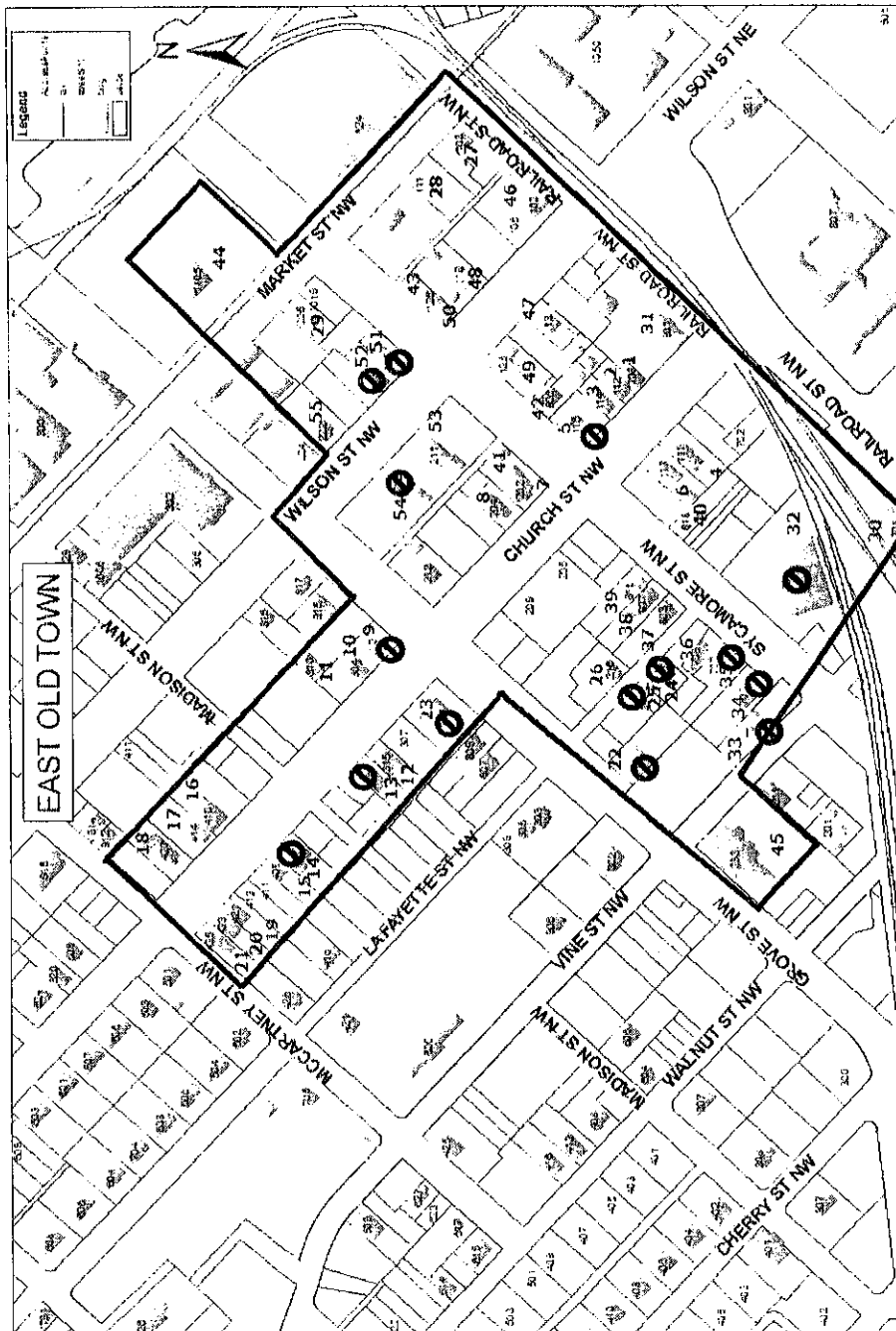
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N.) 16 E 501422 N 3830526

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Resources are numbered according to the inventory list above. NC resources are marked with over the building footprint. Contributing resources are not marked.

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Photos by: Thomason and Associates
Date: February & March, 2010

- Photo No. 1: Streetscape 100 block of NW Church Street, view to NE
- Photo No. 2: Streetscape 100 block of NW Church Street, view to NW
- Photo No. 3: Streetscape 100 block of NW Church Street, view to SW
- Photo No. 4: Streetscape 200 block of NW Church Street, view to NE
- Photo No. 5: Streetscape, 400 block of NW Church Street, view to NE
- Photo No. 6: Streetscape, 400 block of NW Church Street, view to SW
- Photo No. 7: Streetscape, 700-800 blocks of NW Sycamore Street, view to SW
- Photo No. 8: Streetscape, 800 block of NW Sycamore Street, view to N
- Photo No. 9: Dancy-Polk House, 901 NW Railroad Street, view to N
- Photo No. 10: Rhea-McIntire House, 1105 NW Sycamore Street, view to N
- Photo No. 11: First Missionary Baptist Church, 223 NW Vine Street, view to SW
- Photo No. 12: Southern Railway Depot, 701 NW Railroad Street, view to W

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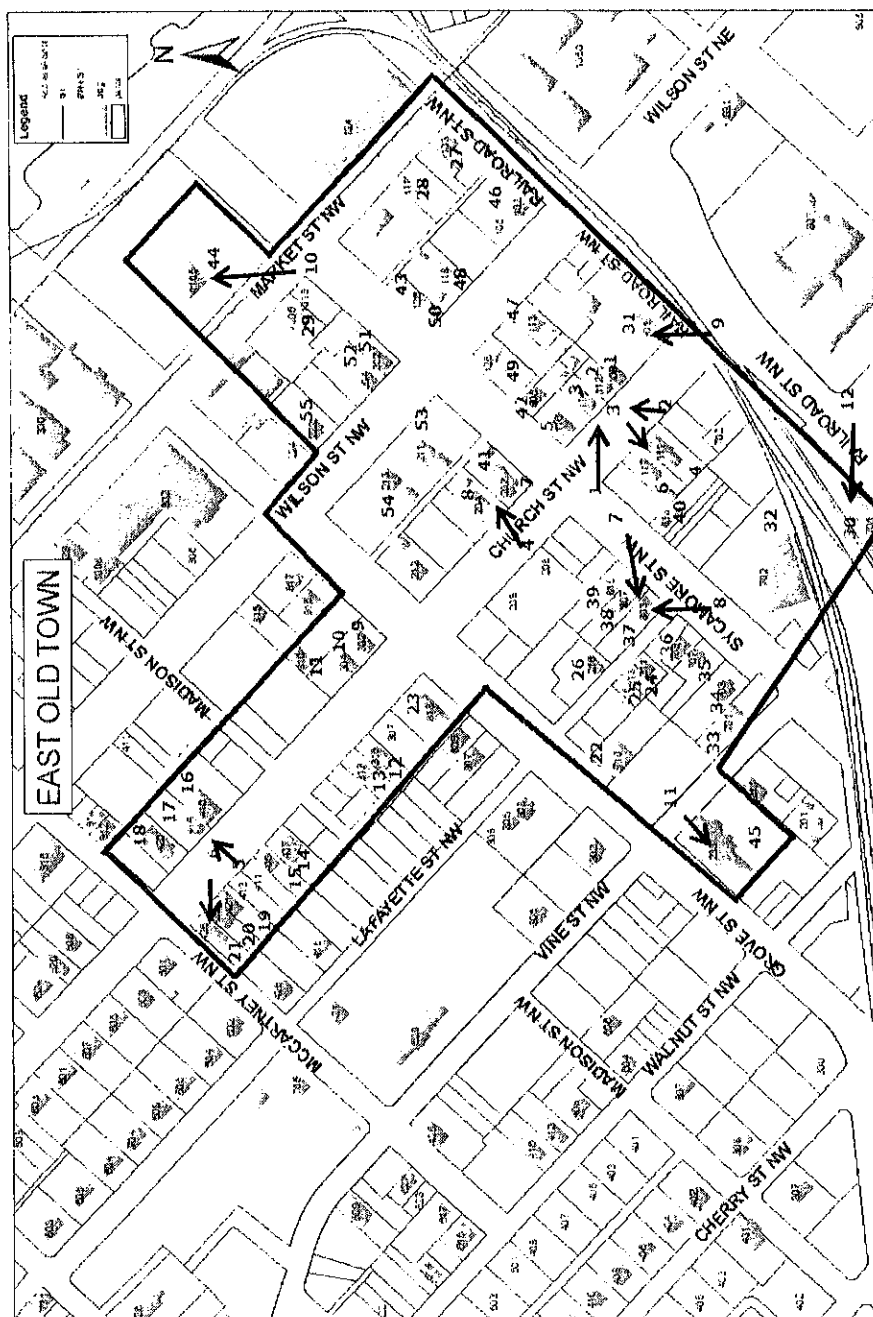


Photo key depicting point of view

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	Location/resource	C/NC	Owner and address (if different)
1.	108 NW Church Street. O.L. Born House.	(C)	c/o 901 NW Railroad Street
2.	112 NW Church Street. Corman House.	(C)	Phil Birgans
3.	114 NW Church Street. W.E. Johnson.	(C)	Nickia Leigh Emerson 208 Memorial Dr. NW Decatur, AL 35601
4.	111 NW Church Street. Leo and Patty Cashin Sykes House.	(C)	Brandon Orr 414 Georgia Street Hartselle, AL 35640
5.	116 NW Church Street. W.M. Gobble House.	(NC)	Sharon Whitfield
6.	117 NW Church Street. Oscar Roberts and H.M. Mitchell House.	(C)	Donald and Melanie Simpson 2524 Modaus Road SW Decatur, AL 35603
7.	202 NW Church Street. Kenneth Reedus House.	(C)	Kenneth Reedus
8.	204 NW Church Street. M.G. Wimberly House.	(C)	Dottie Mae Swopes
9.	302 NW Church Street.	(NC)	Eddie Cannon 404 13 th Ave. NW Decatur, AL 35601
10.	304 NW Church Street. C.R. Terry House.	(C)	Eddie Cannon 404 13 th Ave. NW Decatur, AL 35601
11.	310 NW Church Street.	(C)	Eddie Cannon 404 13 th Ave. NW Decatur, AL 35601
12.	315 NW Church Street. R.W. Sanders House.	(C)	Herman Coleman
13.	317 NW Church Street.	(NC)	Tonya Davis

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	J.A. Maxwell House.		8840 Madison Blvd. Suite 200-G Madison, AL 35758
14.	407 NW Church Street. Aaron Orr House.	(NC)	Tyra Burgess Coleman
15.	409 NW Church Street. Edward Houston House.	(C)	Wayman Chapel 420 Church Street NW
16.	414 NW Church Street. W. Kindred House.	(C)	Wayman Chapel 420 Church Street NW
17.	416 NW Church Street. Wayman Chapel AME Church.	(C)	Wayman Chapel 420 Church Street NW
18.	420 NW Church Street.	(C)	Gwendolyn Woods
19.	421 NW Church Street. William Brown and A.L. Mason House.	(C)	Sharon Nicole Boykin
20.	423 NW Church Street. Nancy Skillern House.	(C)	Shondra Comile Fuller
21.	425 NW Church Street. W.A. Mills House.	(C)	Tony Townsend
22.	710 NW Grove Street.	(NC)	Gaynell McLemore
23.	813 NW Grove Street.	(NC)	Larry Cannon
24.	211 NW Lafayette Street.	(NC)	Brandon Orr Or 414 Georgia Street Hartselle, AL 35640
25.	213 NW Lafayette Street. Cleveland Bonner House.	(NC)	Warren Purvis 146 Hamaker Street Decatur, Al 35603
26.	216 NW Lafayette Street. Clara Lyle House.	(C)	Sanford Townsend
27.	103 NW Market Street. Herman Hawkins House.	(C)	John & Deborah Hawkins 1410 Sheraton Street SE
28.	111 NW Market Street. Nesbit-Hood House.	(C)	Grover & Rachel Wilson
29.	205 NW Market Street. Sam Sapp House.	(C)	Berval & Sandra Bennett 1105 Sycamore Street NE
30.	701 NW Railroad Street.	(IL)	R.W. Inscho Jr.

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	Southern Railway Depot.		P.O. Box 1190
31.	901 NW Railroad Street. Dancy-Polk House.	(IL)	Janet Garber
32.	702 Sycamore. Turner- Surles Community Resource Center.	(NC)	City of Decatur P.O. Box 488
33.	701 NW Sycamore Street.	(NC)	John Joseph III 2305 Fleetwood Dr. SE
34.	703 NW Sycamore Street. Doyle Roberts House.	(NC)	Sandra Morris Coleman
35.	707 NW Sycamore Street. John Ellis House.	(NC)	Sharon Denise Elliott 806 Canterbury Ave. SW
36.	709 NW Sycamore Street. Gobble House.	(C)	David K. Ford 1708 Camden Cir. SW
37.	803 NW Sycamore Street. Frank Roberts House.	(C)	Mattie & Calvin Edward Miller
38.	807 NW Sycamore Street. F.L. Thomas House.	(C)	Mose & Bernice Ayers 717 Cashin Street NW
39.	815 NW Sycamore Street. O.D. Campbell House.	(C)	Willie & Carmella Ward 2005 Lancaster Ave. SW
40.	818 NW Sycamore Street. Mrs. Clercie Worley House.	(C)	City of Decatur P.O. Box 488
41.	905 NW Sycamore Street. Mrs. Brenda K. Corbett House.	(C)	
42.	906 NW Sycamore Street. Brown House.	(C)	Johnnie Mae Knight
43.	1004 NW Sycamore Street. Robert Charvadyne-Samuel Schaudies House.	(C)	c/o King's Memorial United Methodist Church 702 McCartney Street NW
44.	1105 NW Sycamore Street. Rhea-McIntire House.	(IL)	Berval & Sandra Bennett
45.	223 NW Vine Street. First	(C)	First Missionary Baptist Church.

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	Missionary Baptist Church.		NW Vine Street
46.	102 NW Wilson Street. Reagins-Cramer House.	(C)	John & Deborah Hawkins 1410 Sheraton Street SE
47.	113 NW Wilson Street. Brown- Baugh House.	(C)	James Carl Baugh 724 Chapel Creek Lane
48.	118 NW Wilson Street. Henry Jackson House.	(C)	Florzelle Pope & Hazel Littleton 3912 Rouse Ridge Crt.
49.	125 NW Wilson Street. Dr. Willis Woods House.	(C)	Quintlan & Helen Cook
50.	126 NW Wilson Street. Abbie Robertson Schaudies- Ida Mosely Bower House.	(C)	c/o King's Memorial United Methodist Church 702 McCartney Street NW
51.	202 NW Wilson Street. Bennie Malone House.	(NC)	Terry & Connie White
52.	204 NW Wilson Street. G.S. Wallace House.	(NC)	Stacy Purvis 146 Hamaker Street SW
53.	211 NW Wilson Street. St Paul's Church.	(C)	St Paul's Church.
54.	213 NW Wilson Street. Winton-Grant House.	(NC)	St Paul's Church.
55.	224 NW Wilson Street. John Hannah House.	(C)	Paul Ray Finchum