

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER/GEORGIA REGISTER NOMINATION

1. Name: Ball Ground Historic District.

2. Location: The district is located approximately 10 miles northeast of the county seat of Canton, Cherokee County, Georgia. Georgia Highway 5 (Canton Highway) lies immediately to the west. The district is centered on Old Canton Road and Gilmer Ferry Road (Georgia Highway 372), extending in four directions from that intersection.

USGS Quadrangles: Ball Ground West and Ball Ground East, GA.

3a. Description: The Ball Ground Historic District is a relatively intact railroad community located in northeastern Cherokee County. It includes both commercial and residential areas that roughly follow the main east-west and north-south streets. The partial gridiron pattern is not rigid due to the hilly terrain and the curvilinear path of the railroad. The railroad corridor parallels Old Canton Road in a generally north-south direction, separated by one large town block. Blocks are irregular. Most of the commercial buildings are located in a central three-block area along the east-west Gilmer Ferry Road, and date primarily from the 1900s to the 1930s. This area is characterized by one- and two-story brick buildings, some freestanding and some attached with party walls. Most abut the sidewalks. Marble and other stones are sometimes used as secondary materials or simple trim. Most commercial buildings once had flat roofs with parapets, but they have been topped with non-historic gable-front metal roof extensions. The original building form is usually still visible. Metal sheeting has also been placed on the upper facades of some stores, obscuring a few historic details. First-floor storefront areas generally remain intact, and maintain integrity. Residential areas fan outward from the central business district with no clear delineation. Houses do not follow a contiguous pattern of development, and one street could contain homes that fall within a span of 60 years. Most date from the 1880s to the 1950s in varied sizes and types, ranging from two-room workers' cottages to expansive hilltop landmarks. Few have a formal academic style. Residential lots range from one-quarter acre to one acre or larger in size, depending on whether they once supported agricultural plots. The Alfred W. Roberts House, listed in the National Register in 1985, is one of Ball Ground's largest houses, reflecting elements of several styles as it was expanded over time by its locally prominent owners. There are also a few large industrial and warehouse buildings related to the marble and monument industry, usually located near the railroad. Some undeveloped lots were used for monument storage. Community landmark buildings include an elementary school (c.1948 with later additions), a former downtown post office (c.1966), the Ball Ground Baptist Church (1916 with later alterations) and cemetery, the Old Methodist Church (1916), the former City Hall (c.1900), the Ball Ground Community Cemetery, Lion's Club Field, and the Masonic Hall (1923).

3b. Period of Significance: 1882-1966.

3c. Acreage: Approximately 185 acres.

3d. Boundary Explanation: The proposed boundaries include the intact and contiguous historic properties in the town of Ball Ground, roughly encompassing the major historic roads and part of the railroad corridor.

4a. National Register Criteria: A and C.

4b. National Register Areas of Significance: Architecture, Commerce, and Community Planning and Development.

4c. Statement of Significance: The name "Ball Ground" reputedly derives from the Cherokee Indian ball-playing game that may have occurred near the town site. Ball Ground owes its growth to the arrival of the Marietta and North Georgia (later L & N) Railroad in 1882, and the development of the marble industry in north Georgia in the late 19th century. Mined in nearby Pickens County, much of the marble was finished or turned into monumental pieces in Cherokee County. During the peak of its growth in the 1920s, Ball Ground had four marble finishing mills near the railroad line. The district is significant in architecture for its representative collection of the types of commercial buildings commonly found in small Georgia towns, as well as its good examples of residential types and styles popular between the 1880s and 1950s. House types represented include central hallway, side-gabled cottage, gabled front and wing, bungalow, ranch, I-house, and Georgian house, as defined in *Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in Their Landscaped Settings*. Stylistic influences include Queen Anne, Folk Victorian, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman. The district is also significant in commerce because its central business district was a primary location for the buying and selling of goods and services for northeastern Cherokee County, as well as adjacent counties. Much of this commerce was also related to the marble finishing industry, which brought banks, general merchandise stores, professional offices, and other establishments to the community. The mail-order monument business was a major catalyst for growth. The district is significant in community planning and development because its plan reflects a typical crossroads town with a railroad. In this case, major development did not occur until after the railroad arrived, making possible the marble finishing industry. The primary orientation of the town is not toward the railroad, but the corridor did influence subsequent street patterns and business locations.

4d. Suggested Level of Significance: The Ball Ground Historic District is being nominated at the local level of significance as for its role as one of the commercial centers in the surrounding area between the mid-19th and mid-20th centuries.

4e. National Register Status: The Alfred W. Roberts House was listed in the National Register in 1985.

5. Sponsor: The nomination is sponsored by the Cherokee County Historical Society. Nomination materials were prepared by a consultant.