

## SUMMARY OF PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER/GEORGIA REGISTER NOMINATION

1. Name: Chickamauga Coal and Iron Company Coke Ovens.

2. Location: Georgia State Highway 341, Chickamauga, Walker County, Georgia 30707.  
*USGS Quadrangle: Fort Oglethorpe, Ga. – Tenn.*

3a. Description: The Chickamauga Coal and Iron Company Coke Ovens are a battery of 36 beehive ovens located in a small city park on the north side of Chickamauga in northwest Georgia. The domed ovens are built of brick, reinforced with an outer wall of limestone blocks, and covered with earth for insulation. Coal tenders ran on tracks on top of the two parallel rows of ovens, which were charged from small holes in the tops of the ovens. Rail beds are located on the north and south sides of the battery. Finished coke was emptied from the front of each oven and hauled away in rail cars. The earth covering many of the ovens has eroded exposing the brick domes and some ovens have collapsed. More than half of the coke ovens have been demolished since the 1950s, many when an adjacent carpet factory was constructed. The surviving 36 coke ovens are located in a park that includes a grass lawn, trees, a pond, picnic tables, and a dozen interpretive signs that explain the history of the coking operation in Chickamauga.

3b. Period of Significance: 1897-c.1929.

3c. Acreage: 1.82 acres.

3d. Boundary Explanation: The historic district boundary includes a small public park set aside to interpret the history of the coke ovens.

4a. National Register Criteria: A.

4b. National Register Areas of Significance: Engineering and Industry.

4c. Statement of Significance: In 1891, the Chickamauga Coal and Iron Company was chartered and the next year began to mine coal at its Durham mine on Lookout Mountain. By 1894, the company supplied coal throughout the region. In September 1897, the company constructed 50 coke ovens in Chickamauga. Coke is a byproduct of coal that is produced by heating coal at high temperatures in controlled conditions. It is the main fuel in the iron-smelting process and it is used to make steel in blast furnaces because it burns longer, hotter, and more evenly than coal. In 1899, the company purchased a railroad to transport the Durham coal to the coke ovens in Chickamauga. The coke was then sent north to fuel the iron industry in Chattanooga. As business increased at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the company built 50 more coke ovens in Chickamauga. In the 1920s, as the Durham mine was playing out, the company ceased coking operations in Chickamauga.

The Chickamauga Coal and Iron Company Coke Ovens are significant in the areas of engineering and industry because they are associated with the iron and steel industry in north Georgia, northern Alabama, and southeast Tennessee during the New South period between 1870 and 1929. The battery of 36 beehive coke ovens in Chickamauga is typical of the coke ovens that were built throughout the southern Appalachians. These coke ovens incorporated factory-like efficiency and railroad transportation to process vast amounts of coke and ship it to the iron and steel foundries of Chattanooga. Similar coke ovens are located in southeast Tennessee and northern Alabama.

4d. Suggested Level of Significance: The Chickamauga Coal and Iron Company Coke Ovens are significant at the state level because they are the only documented coke ovens in Georgia.

5. Sponsor: The nomination is sponsored by the city of Chickamauga. Nomination materials were prepared by the preservation planner of the Southeast Tennessee Development District.