National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms Type all entries—complete applicable sections

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		1 Uistanis District		
historic Sev	/lerville Commercia	l Historic District		
and or common		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	W	
<u>2. Loc</u>	ation			
م street & number	Along sections of B r	ruce Street, Court A	venue and Commerce S N /	treet A not for publication
city, town Sev	vierville	_{N/A} vicinity of	х. 	
state Tenne	essee co	de 047 county	Sevier	code 155
3. Clas	sification		-	
Category _X_ district buildIng(s) structure site object	Ownership public private X both Public Acquisition N/A in process being considered	Status occupied unoccupied work in progress Accessible yes: restricted yes: unrestricted no	Present Use agriculture X commercial educational entertainment X government industrial military	<pre> museum park private residence religious scientific transportation other:</pre>
4. Owr	ner of Prope	erty	÷	
name Multi	ple ownership – se	e continuation sheet	S	
street & number	N/A			
city, town	I/A	N∕A vicinity of	state _{N/}	9
5. Loca	ation of Leg	al Description	on	
courthouse, regi	istry of deeds, etc. Sev	ier County Courthous	e	
	Court Avenue	<u>201 (00010) (00010.000</u>	<u> </u>	a ana _{na a} n _a ang
	······································			
	Sevierville	• • • • • • • • •		ennessee
6. Rep	resentation	in Existing	burveys	
title N/A		has this pro	perty been determined eligi	ible? yes _X no
date N/A			N∕A federal state	county local

N/A

.N/A

city, town

state N/A

OMB	No.	1024-0018
Expi	res	10-31-87

For NPS use only

received SEP 2 6 1986 date entered OCT 23 1986

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
excellent good fair	<pre> deteriorated ruins unexposed</pre>	unaitered _X_ altered	_X_ original s	ite date

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Sevierville Commercial Historic District contains twenty-four structures in downtown Sevierville, Tennessee (pop. 4,600). The district is centered along the court square and is bounded by Court Avenue, Commerce Street and Bruce Street. The majority of the buildings in the district were constructed between 1900 and 1936 and are one to three stories in height. All but two of the twenty-four buildings contribute to the character of the district. The district is the historic commercial center of Sevierville and all of the buildings are occupied as offices, restaurants and retail businesses. All of the contributing commercial buildings are of brick construction and are vernacular designs of the early 20th century. Although most storefronts have been altered, the buildings retain many of their original architectural features.

The Sevierville Commercial Historic District has been the traditional center of the town's retail trade since 1900. Prior to 1896, most businesses were located one block north along Main Street and the original town square. The town square on Main Street was the first commercial center of the community and the Sevier County Courthouse was located in the middle of the square during most of the 19th century. In 1895, a site was selected one block south of the original town square for the erection of the present Sevier County Courthouse. Businessmen in the community constructed new buildings adjacent to the courthouse along Court Avenue and Bruce Street. All of the buildings in the district were constructed after the 1896 courthouse relocation and have been continually occupied by a variety of businesses.

All contributing commercial buildings in the district are vernacular styles of the early 20th century. Historic views of the district show most original storefronts were utilitarian with decoration confined to Luxfer glass transoms and glazed brickwork. On the upper facades several buildings display classical decoration of the period such as pilasters, Doric and Ionic capitals and cornices with modillion blocks. Windows are either rectangular or slightly arched with one-over-one sash predominating. Decoration is also found in corbelled brickwork and a few buildings along Bruce Street show the influence of the Art Deco period in zig zag brick panels. The district also includes the courthouse which is a Victorian Romanesque design with a highly detailed tower.

The district includes all of the east side of the square and sections of the south and north sides. Building construction on the court square took place primarily along the east side of the square. This was due to the constant flooding of the Little Pigeon River which inhibited development on the south and west sides of the square. An early 20th century mill was built on the south side of the square and was a landmark for many years until its destruction by fire in 1980. Very little demolition has occurred elsewhere in the district and it retains its early 20th century character.

The buildings are categorized into contributing and non-contributing structures. Contributing buildings were built in or prior to 1936 and are significant in the historic and architectural development of the district, possess compatible design elements, and maintain the scale, use and texture of the district.

8. Significance



Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Sevierville Commercial Historic District is being nominated under criteria A and C. The district is significant through its role in local commerce, government and architecture. In 1896 the present courthouse was constructed which has since been the seat of judicial, legislative and administrative offices of county government. Following its construction, the area around the courthouse became the commercial center of Sevierville. The town grew rapidly in the early 20th century with the rise of the logging and tourism industries and the commercial area expanded to meet these needs. The majority of buildings in the district were constructed between 1900 and 1925 and are good examples of vernacular commercial architecture. They represent the most significant commercial architecture remaining in Sevier County.

Sevierville is the county seat of Sevier County which was one of the original counties formed in Tennessee in 1796. The county was named for Colonel John Sevier, a noted Revolutionary War soldier and the first governor of Tennessee. The county was originally part of the lost State of Franklin and court was held in 1785 at Newell's Station, north of Sevierville. After the dissolution of Franklin in 1788, Sevier County settlers governed themselves as part of territorial government until the formation of the county in 1796. The first court for the county was held on July 4, 1796 at a small settlement located at the forks of the Little Pigeon River which became known as Sevierville.

The first commissioners of the court acquired twenty-five acres of land from the State of Tennessee which had been set aside by James McMahon to build the "courthouse, prison and stocks." The first courthouse was a log building which was replaced about 1820. During its early years Sevierville had two major streets, Main Street and Cross Street which is today called Court Avenue. Most buildings were of frame and log and were located at the junction of these two streets on the town square. Near the town square Nancy Academy, the first school in the county, opened in 1806.

During the first half of the 19th century Sevierville remained a quiet settlement of less than one hundred residents and served as a trading center for the region. Land in Sevier County is rugged and mountainous and its population remained sparse during much of the early 19th century, with Sevierville's stores providing goods and supplies for settlers in the area. In 1850 Sevierville incorporated and a new brick courthouse was built on the town square. This courthouse stood until March, 1856 when it burned, destroying almost all court records. Much of the town square was also burned, but new buildings were erected and a new brick courthouse was rebuilt on the square. Several stores and a blacksmith shop were located on the square during these years with a grist mill located on the east fork of the Little Pigeon River.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

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	Attest: Chief of Registration		date

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For MPS case only received Sale entered

Continuation sheet Sevierville Commercial Historic District Item number 4

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Property Owners - Sevierville Commercial Historic District

1.136 E. Bruce Street	Cora McCarter 220 Bruce St. Sevierville, TN 37862
2.132 E. Bruce Street	John Christopher Main Street Sevierville, TN 37862
3. 120 E. Bruce Street and adjacent driveway	Dwight Wade c/o Sevierville Corp. of Park Road Sevierville, TN 37862
4.118 E. Bruce Street	Dwight Wade Wades Dept. Store 136 Court Street Sevierville, TN 37862
5. 110-114 E. Bruce Street	Ray Henry Henrys Shoe Store Sevierville, TN 37862
6.158 Court Avenue	Herbert Lawson etal. Sevierville, TN 37862
7.150 Court Avenue	Mattie Carr 338A Hicks Dr. Sevierville, TN 37862
8.138-142 Court Avenue	Anna McClure c/o Joe Carr Court Ave. Sevierville, TN 37862
9.134 Court Avenue	Draper Inc. P.O. Box 310 Lebanon, TN 37087
10.128 Court Avenue	Alfred Schmutzer 220 Prince Street Sevierville, TN 37862
11.120 Court Avenue	Stewarts Drugs Inc. Sevierville, TN 37862

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12. 112-	-118 Court Avenue	James B. Parton c/o Parton's Dry Goods Sevierville, TN 37862	
		Ralph Conner Rte # 4 Sevierville, TN 37862	
13. 110	Court Avenue	K. Rawlings etal. 110 Court Avenue Sevierville, TN 37862	
14. 115-	-117 Court Avenue	William Atchley etal. Sevierville, TN 37862	
15.119	Court Avenue	Same as above	
16.121	Court Avenue	Same as above	
17.111	Commerce Street	Charles R. Edwards Rte # 6 Sevierville, TN 37862	
18. Sevi	er County Courthouse	Sevier County Courthouse Sevierville, TN 37862	
19.102	W. Bruce Street	James Temple Court Avenue Sevierville, TN 37862	
20.101	E. Bruce Street	Rex Henry Ogle etal. P.O. Box 165 Sevierville, TN 37862	
21. 105	E. Bruce Street	Fashion House Inc. Bruce Street Sevierville, TN 37862	
22. 123-	-125 E. Bruce Street	J.B. Waters est. c/o John B. Waters P.O. Box 530 Sevierville, TN 37862	
23. 129	E. Bruce Street	Same as above	
24. 131	E. Bruce Street	Same as above	

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Non-contributing buildings were constructed after 1936 or have been significantly altered.

Sevierville Commercial Historic District Inventory:

East Bruce Street

1. 101 E. Bruce Street: This three story brick building was erected in 1923 as the home of the First National Bank. On the upper facade is arched brickwork with a central arched window on the third floor. At the roofline is a stepped parapet and decorative brick panels. (C)

2. 105-111 E. Bruce Street: This one-story brick building was constructed in 1923. It was the home of the Sevierville Post Office for a number of years and the local bus station. The building has altered storefronts, glazed brickwork and a stepped parapet. (C)

3. 110-114 E. Bruce Street: This two-story building was constructed ca. 1915 by Ed Shepard. The storefront was replaced ca. 1935 with black Carrara glass panels and a structural glass transom. The storefront also retains its original recessed entrance. On the upper facade are three one-over-one sash windows in each bay. At the roofline is a sheet metal cornice with brackets. The interior has not been greatly altered and retains an original pressed metal ceiling. (C)

4. 118 E. Bruce Street: Ca. 1925 one-story brick building. The exterior has a glazed brick finish with soldier and sailor decorative coursing. The building has original display windows with lower panels of black Cararra glass. Over the storefront is an added canvas awning. (C)

5. 120 E. Bruce Street: One-story brick building constructed ca. 1970. (NC)

6. 123-125 E. Bruce Street: One-story brick building constructed ca. 1925. One section of the building has an original storefront and transom. On the upper facade are enclosed vent windows. (C)

7. 129 E. Bruce Street: This one-story building was constructed ca. 1925. It has an altered storefront with small arched vent windows on the upper facade. (C)

8. 131 E. Bruce Street: Built ca. 1925, this one-story brick building has an altered storefront and decorative corbelled brick on the upper facade. (C)

9. 132 E. Bruce Street: Two-story building of hollow core concrete block construction, built ca. 1930. The concrete block exterior has a rusticated surface. The storefront has its original display windows although the main entrance has been altered. The upper floor has three-over-one vertical sash windows. (C)

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10. 136 E. Bruce Street: One-story building of hollow core concrete block construction, constructed ca. 1930. The concrete block exterior has a rusticated surface. The building retains its original central door and flanking display windows. (C)

West Bruce Street

11. 102 W. Bruce Street: Constructed in 1906, this two-story brick building was built by M. Yett and Son as a wholesale house for their merchandise company. The building was constructed diagonally across from the Yett store at 158 Court Avenue. The building has not been altered and retains its original doors, arched windows and corbelled brick cornice. (C)

Commerce Street

12. 111 Commerce Street: This two-story building was constructed ca. 1930 and has an altered storefront. On the upper facade is a second story balcony and stepped parapet. (C)

Court Avenue

13. 110 Court Avenue: The Rawlings Furniture Company was organized in 1902 and was originally located on Main Street. In 1936 they constructed this two-story building and continue to operate at this location. The building retains its original storefront with modern windows added on the second floor. (C)

14. 112-118 Court Avenue: This two-story brick building was constructed ca. 1925. On the first floor is a ca. 1970 storefront. On the upper facade are rectangular windows and decorative brick panels. (C)

15. 115-117 Court Avenue: Built ca. 1925, this two-story brick building has an altered storefront and original paired windows on the upper facade. (C)

16. 119 Court Avenue: Two-story brick building constructed ca. 1925. On the first floor is an altered storefront while original one-over-one sash windows are extant on the second story. (C)

17. 120 Court Avenue: Presently under restoration, this three-story brick building was constructed in 1911 as the home of the Sevier County Bank which occupied the building until 1969. The upper facade has arched windows on the second story with rectangular windows on the third story. At the roofline is a stepped parapet. (C)

18. 121 Court Avenue: One-story brick building altered ca. 1970. Formerly a two-story building which housed the Park Theatre. (NC)

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Sevierville Commercial Continuation sheet Historic District

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19. 128 Court Avenue: Originally constructed in 1914, this two-story building was remodeled in 1986 with a new storefront. The building originally was the home of the Sevierville Hardware Company which operated here for much of the 20th century. At the roofline is a corbelled brick cornice. (C)

20. 134 Court Avenue: This two-story brick building was constructed ca. 1914 and housed several department stores. The storefront and upper facade were remodeled in 1985. On the upper facade are arched windows, decorative brickwork and a corbelled brick cornice. (C)

21. 138-142 Court Avenue: Constructed ca. 1905, this two-story building housed the Carr Clothing Company for many years. The building has an altered ca. 1970 storefront. On the upper facade each bay has three windows with transoms. Dividing the window bays are decorative brick piers with terra cotta Ionic capitals. At the roofline is a sheet metal cornice with large modillion blocks. (C)

22. 150 Court Avenue: Originally built ca. 1901 as the Bank of Sevierville. The first floor of the building features a recessed storefront which was altered ca. 1970. The original brick piers on the storefront feature stone Doric capitals and the two central piers have indented brickwork. The doors and windows on the building have been altered. Above the storefront is a sheet metal cornice with large modillion blocks. On the second story are modern single pane windows. At the roofline is another sheet metal cornice with paired brackets and modillion blocks. (C)

23. 158 Court Avenue: Constructed in 1906, this two-story brick building housed the Yett Merchandise Company for many years. Much of the storefront level was altered ca. 1960 but it does retain a ca. 1930 structural glass transom with black Carrara glass borders. On the upper facade are belt courses of glazed brick and one-over-one sash windows. Above the windows are narrow decorative attic vent windows with concrete sills. At the roofline is a small stone cornice with stone brackets. (C)

24. Sevier County Courthouse: The Sevier County Courthouse was constructed in 1896. Designed in the Victorian Romanesque style, the building has an intricate stepped central tower. The building was restored in 1975 and continues to serve as the county courthouse. A rear addition sympathetic to the original building was added at this time. The building was individually listed on the National Register in 1971. (C)

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Continuation sheet Sevierville Commercial Item number 8



During the Civil War, Sevierville was dominantly Union in sentiment and sent a number of soldiers into the Federal Army. Both Confederate and Union troops occupied Sevierville during the war but no major engagements were fought near the community. After the war the town continued to grow slowly with a population of 159 in 1870. It was not until 1882 that a newspaper, the <u>Sevierville Enterprise</u>, began publication. This paper was later absorbed into the The Republican in 1883.

In 1887, the <u>Goodspeed History</u> listed Sevierville as containing four general stores, two grocery stores and clothing, hardware and furniture stores. A saw mill was operated by the Sevierville Lumber Company and a grist mill was also in operation. In addition to these businesses two hotels also served travelers to the community. A two-story brick Masonic Temple (NR 1980) was constructed in 1893 on Main Street. This building is the only unaltered historic structure located adjacent to the original town square. During the late 19th century Sevierville continued to be a small trading and governmental center of several hundred residents with farming the mainstay of the surrounding area.

The appearance of the commercial area of Sevierville changed radically after 1896 when a new courthouse was constructed two blocks from the town square. Construction was completed in 1896 for \$22,000 and it is one of Tennessee's most distinctive courthouses. Since its construction the courthouse has been the center of judicial, administrative and legislative activities of county government. After the completion of the building most new commercial development moved to Court Avenue and Bruce Street and away from the old town square.

Construction of commercial buildings took place primarily along the south and east side of the new court square. On the north side of the courthouse an open lawn ran down to the river, and on the west side were warehouses and a mill. All of the court square area was subject to frequent flooding by the Little Pigeon River. The north and west sides of the square were especially vulnerable.

Sevierville grew rapidly after 1900 as logging increased in the Smoky Mountain area. Sevierville elected its first mayor in 1901 as city government expanded. A second bank, the Sevier County Bank, was founded by A.M. Paine in 1909 who constructed a three-story brick building facing the courthouse in 1911. As the lumber industry grew, demands increased to provide rail transportation to the area and on January 9, 1909, the Knoxville, Sevierville and Eastern Railroad began operation. Between 1890 and 1910 Sevierville's population doubled from 283 to 675.

All of the contributing buildings in the historic district along Court Avenue were constructed between 1900 and 1920. The earliest of these was the Bank of Sevierville which was built ca. 1900. A 1901 newspaper photograph shows the bank building which may have been taken soon after it opened. Several other

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buildings were constructed over the next few years along the street. In 1914 the Sevierville Hardware Company built their building on Court Avenue and by 1920 historic photographs show the buildings in the district stretching from Bruce Street to the Public Square.

All of the buildings along Court Avenue are vernacular brick buildings. Several exhibit classical detailing of the period. All are two to three stories in height, of brick construction and are oriented towards Court Avenue. While some businesses remained on the old public square, this section of Sevierville became its main mercantile area. Located on the street were clothing stores, banks, hardware companies and dry goods stores. On the upper floors of the buildings were offices for attorneys, insurance salesmen and other businesses. Most of the town's important businesses had their start or were located here in the early 20th century.

Logging flourished in these years and Sevierville became a major transportation center for the industry. In 1920 the population stood at 776, a library was opened and funds were raised for the construction of the Sevier County High School built in 1921. Along Court Avenue was a continuous row of buildings and after 1920 this commercial area had begun to expand down Bruce Street. The buildings constructed along Bruce were more simple utilitarian structures with limited detailing. All were one or two stories in height with decoration confined to intricate brickwork on the upper facades. This row of buildings also contained shops such as clothing stores, restaurants and dry goods companies. An early bus station and Ford dealership were also located on Bruce Street by 1930.

By the late 1920s the logging industry had peaked and there was a rising sentiment to create an Appalachian Mountain park. In 1926, Congress passed legislation to create a park in the Smoky Mountains and a year later the Tennessee Legislature appropriated \$1.5 million dollars for land purchase. The small community of Gatlinburg located south of Sevierville became the entrance to the park area, and in 1930 a road from Gatlinburg to Newfound Gap was completed. The park officially came into existence in 1934. Dedication of the park in September of 1940 was attended by President Roosevelt and 10,000 people. Because of its proximity to the park, Sevierville became an important tourism center.

Since 1940 the downtown area of Sevierville has not been significantly changed. While many of the storefronts of the buildings have been altered, their upper floor details remain extant. The most important event during past decades was the flood control project of the Little Pigeon River completed by the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1967. This project controlled flooding along the river and opened up a new area for development south of the town square. Since 1967 the River Bypass has become an important commercial area of the city.

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The economy of Sevierville expanded in 1955 with the opening of the Cherokee Textile Mills and other small industries have also located in the community. The population has risen from 2,890 in 1960 to 4,600 in 1980. Interest in the town's heritage has increased in recent years and in 1975 the courthouse was restored at a cost of one million dollars. Restoration of several buildings on the court square has also occurred. The buildings in the district continue to be an important business center in the community.

The Sevierville Commercial Historic District remains an active business center and it contains the community's best historic commercial architecture. Most buildings continue to be occupied, and restoration has increased in the area. Few intrusions are in the district and it contains a cohesive grouping of early 20th century buildings. The Sevierville Commercial Historic District is an important architectural, historical and commercial resource which reflects the development of downtown Sevierville.

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Sevierville Commercial

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