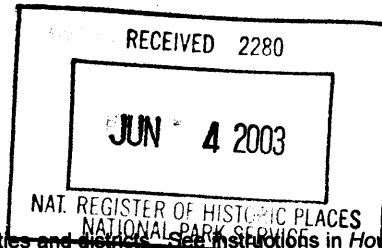


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

667



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 Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic District
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Commerce Street, West Market Street, McClure Street, Boone Street N/A not for publication
city or town Johnson City N/A vicinity
state Tennessee code TN county Washington code 179 zip code 37604

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.)

Robert L. Bryan 6/3/03
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee 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:)

for
Edson H. Beall Signature of the Keeper
7.17.03 Date of Action

**Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce
Historic District**

Name of Property

Washington County, Tennessee

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	
26	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
26	1	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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: warehouse

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE: professional

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: warehouse

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE: professional

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: One-Part and Two-Part

Commercial buildings and warehouses.

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Stone, Brick, Stucco, Wood

roof Asphalt

other Glass, Metal

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.)

- [x] 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Period of Significance

1900-1953

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.

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Multiple; unknown

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 #
[] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- [x] State Historic Preservation Office
[] Other State Agency
[] Federal Agency
[x] Local Government
[] University
[] Other

Name of repository:

City of Johnson City Planning Office

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic
District, Washington County, Tennessee

7. DESCRIPTION

The Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic District contains an intact collection of historical commercial buildings dating from circa 1900 to circa 1950. Buildings are typically one or two story brick buildings possessing a more utilitarian architecture with few stylistic embellishments. Although some of the storefronts have changed with time, the majority of the buildings retain a good degree of integrity. Of the 27 properties in the Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce District, 26 are contributing. The warehouses are located between Commerce Street and the Southern Railroad. Many of the warehouses were designed with platforms on the railroad to ease the loading and unloading of freight, which testifies to their dependence on and close relationship with the railroads. The commercial buildings are primarily located on the north side of West Market Street, with a few extra buildings on Montgomery, Boone, and McClure Streets. Due to the lack of stylistic embellishments, most of these commercial buildings are not associated with a particular architectural movement.

Contributing buildings were differentiated from the non-contributing building primarily on the basis of historical integrity. Contributing buildings have had relatively few permanent changes to their façade, while new materials had altered the non-contributing building too much. In the descriptions below, the warehouses had two entrances, one facing Commerce Street and one facing the railroad. Both sides are described under the Commerce Street address. To ease the reader's ability in finding the location of the property, map identification numbers have been placed in parentheses at the end of each street address.

Boone Street (North)

1. 107 North Boone Street (349), currently Essyx. Two-part commercial. 1923. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows (3 of them are covered), 2nd story 1:1 (most are shuttered), wood shingle awning possibly covering transom windows, brick storefront corbelling, brick lintels on 2nd story, brick pilasters, brick corbelling to cornice. (c)

Commerce Street

2. 113 Commerce Street (325), historically Boggs Distributing Company, Appalachian Beverage Company, and Swift & Company. One-part commercial warehouse. 1900. Brick, 1 story, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan. Railroad side: 12:9 windows, multi-paned transom windows. Commerce Street side: rear addition with shingled roof and vinyl siding. (c)
3. 133 Commerce Street (330), historically Clyce Distributing Company, Southern Apartments, Armour & Company and United States Works Progress Administration. Two-part commercial warehouse. 1920. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan. Railroad side: 1st story

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic
District, Washington County, Tennessee

- windows covered, transom windows, 2nd story 1:1 windows, brick pilasters, brick storefront corbelling, brick corbelling to cornice. Commerce Street side: covered transom windows, 2nd story 1:1 windows, garage entrance, brick pilasters, brick storefront corbelling, brick corbelling to cornice. (c)
4. 135 Commerce Street (335), historically Security Feed & Seed Company, currently Outer Limits Tumbling. One-part commercial warehouse. 1920. Brick painted red, 1 story, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan. Railroad side: storefront and windows filled with brick, railroad platform. Commerce Street side: fixed modern windows, garage entrance and storefront entrance, vinyl siding. (c)
 5. 137 Commerce Street (343), historically Security Feed & Seed Company, currently Scott's Heating and Air-Conditioning. One-part commercial warehouse. 1920. Brick painted red, 1 story, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan. Railroad side: windows covered with boards, modern doors, railroad platform. Commerce Street side: fixed display modern windows, garage entrance, modern door, metal covering painted yellow. (c)
 6. 139 Commerce Street (348), historically Security Feed & Seed Company and Lowry Fruit Company, currently B&B Produce Company. Two-part commercial warehouse. 1920-1930. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan. Railroad side: hopper windows, decorative brick paneling, metal awning, possible chimney, railroad platform. Commerce Street side: hopper windows, garage entrance, new brick on 1st story. (c)
 7. 139 Commerce Street (360), currently B&B Produce Company. Two-part commercial warehouse. 1945. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan. Railroad side: hopper windows, metal awning, railroad platform. Commerce Street side: hopper windows, garage entrance. (c)
 8. 139 Commerce Street (373), historically Lowry Fruit Company, currently B&B Produce Company. Two-part commercial warehouse. 1920-1930. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan. Railroad side: windows filled with brick, loading dock door, brick corbelling to cornice, railroad platform. Commerce Street side: 2nd story multi-paned hopper windows, garage entrance, 1940's brick façade. (c)
 9. 145 Commerce Street (386), historically Moneyhun Wholesale Company and Tri-State Fruit Company, currently Dosser Transfer. One-part commercial warehouse. 1920. Brick, 1 story, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan. Railroad side: windows and doors boarded, transom windows, brick pilasters, decorative brick paneling, railroad platform. Commerce Street side: 1:1 windows (some covered with boards), garage, brick pilasters, decorative brick paneling. (c)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic
District, Washington County, Tennessee

Market Street (West)

10. 100-2 West Market Street (405), historically Taylor Brothers Building, currently Albert's. Two-part commercial. 1910. Brick, 3 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 1:1 windows, 3rd story multi-paned hopper windows, wooden storefronts, belt course, rusticated pilasters, decorative brickwork with stone accents, brick corbelling cornice. (c)
11. 106 West Market Street (398), historically London Hardware. Two-part commercial. 1920. Brick, 3 stories, asphalt parapet roof, irregular plan (L-shaped with railroad platform), 1st story fixed display with transom windows, 2nd-3rd story 1:1 windows, brick pilasters, brick corbelling to storefront cornice, brick corbelling between 2nd and 3rd stories, decorative brick paneling. (c)
12. 118 West Market Street (392), currently Morrell Music. Two-part commercial. 1920. Yellow brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan with corner storefront, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 1:1 windows, metal paneling above metal awning covers transom windows, decorative brickwork and dental molding with brick corbelling to cornice. (c)
13. 124 West Market Street (389). Two-part commercial. 1920. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 1:1 windows (2:2 center window), brick pilasters painted white on storefront, decorative brickwork and dental molding with brick corbelling to cornice. (c)
14. 126 West Market Street (382A), historically Guy's Cafe. One-part commercial. 1940. Brick painted white, 1 story, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, fixed windows covered, wooden addition built on rear (facing Market Street). (c)
15. 128 West Market Street (382B), currently SPC Manufacturing. Two-part commercial. 1935. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display with transom windows, 2nd story 1:1 windows, brick stringcourse, 2nd story window lintels, brick corbelling to cornice, adjacent parking lot. (c)
16. 130-136 West Market Street (379, 380, 382C), currently SPC Manufacturing and others. Two-part commercial with 4 storefronts. 1920. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display with transom windows (1 storefront covered with boards), 2nd story 1:1 windows, brick pilasters, decorative brick panels, brick corbelling to cornice. (c)
17. 138 West Market Street (374 and 376). Two-part commercial. 1920. Brick painted white on lower 2/3, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic
District, Washington County, Tennessee

story 1:1 smaller than original windows, brick pilasters, brick corbelling above 2nd story windows. (nc)

18. 142 West Market Street (371). Two-part commercial. 1920. Brick, two stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan with corner storefront, 1st story fixed display with transom windows, 2nd story 1:1 windows, pediment around entrance, brick corbelling at storefront cornice, brick pilasters, brick corbelling to cornice. (c)
19. 200 West Market Street (375), historically Jones' Hospital, currently Black Tie Formalwear. Two-part commercial with Neoclassical influence. 1920. Yellow brick, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan with corner storefront, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 9:1 windows with a 12:1 window at corner, structural glass along storefront, stringcourse with decorative panels above storefront, white terra cotta stringcourse beneath 2nd story windows, flat arches above 2nd story windows, white terra cotta entablature with dental moldings, brick pilasters with terra cotta capitals. (c)
20. 204 West Market Street (352), historically Smith-Higgins Company. Two-part commercial. 1920. Brick, 2-½ stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story windows covered with boards, brick pilasters, metal awning, original Smith-Higgins sign, brick storefront corbelling, decorative brick paneling. (c)
21. 210 West Market Street (353), historically garages for auto-repair. Two-part commercial. 1920. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 2nd story windows covered, garage fronts covered with boards, brick pilasters, brick storefront corbelling, brick lintels over 2nd story windows, brick corbelling to cornice. (c)
22. 214 West Market Street (355), currently Uncle Bill's. Two-part commercial. 1920. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story windows filled with brick, storefront painted purple, brick storefront corbelling, brick lintels over 2nd story windows, brick corbelling to cornice. (c)

McClure Street

23. 111 McClure Street (358), currently Upper East Tennessee Boxing Club. One-part commercial. 1950. Brick, 1 story, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, fixed display windows. (c)
24. 116 McClure Street (328), historically an auto-garage. One part commercial. 1910. Brick, 1 story, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, fixed display multi-pane windows, two storefronts replaced, brick addition to northern side covered with metal. (c)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number

7

Page

5

Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic
District, Washington County, Tennessee

-
25. 119-121 McClure Street (337). Two-part commercial. 1920. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story display and transom windows covered, 2nd story 1:1 windows, brick corbelling to cornice. (c)

Montgomery Street

26. 100-102 Montgomery Street (357A), historically an auto-dealership. One-part commercial. 1920. Yellow brick, 1 story, asphalt flat roof, irregular plan (triangular), windows covered with boards containing modern inset windows, rustication on Market Street façade, quoins, 2 garages on northern end, string course and brick corbelling to cornice. (c)
27. 104 Montgomery Street (357B). One-part commercial. 1920. Brick, 1 story, asphalt flat roof, irregular plan, glass block windows, windows covered with boards on one storefront, brick pilasters, corner entrance filled with bricks, storefront on King Street filled with bricks, brick corbelling to cornice, one-part commercial addition on northeastern portion of lot - a garage door and windows covered with boards. (c)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic
District, Washington County, Tennessee

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic District is nominated under Criterion A to the National Register of Historic Places for its significance in the development of commerce in Johnson City. While the surrounding region is rich in pioneer history, Johnson City's development coincided with the expansion of the railroad system in the South. Johnson City, serving as a regional commercial and transportation center, used the railroads to export agricultural riches from Eastern Tennessee, which in turn necessitated the development of warehouses for the transfer of goods. The development and growth of Johnson City depended on the railroads and the commerce generated from them. The warehouses and commercial buildings in the proposed district reflect the history of Johnson City and its dependence on the railroads. The buildings in the district retain their historic and architectural integrity. The warehouses are the only surviving structures of their kind in Johnson City from this period.

In the late 1700's, settlers started to traverse the mountains and inhabit what is now upper East Tennessee. These pioneers, such as William Bean, Joseph Tipton (Tipton-Haynes House, NR 2/26/70), Robert Young, and John Sevier (Marble Spring, NR 5/6/71), established homes along Boones Creek and the Watauga, Holston, and Nolichucky Rivers, on what had been Native American hunting grounds. A local governing body was formed in present-day Elizabethton, known as the Watauga Association, to oversee the protection and development of the settlement. The area around present-day Johnson City became farmland known as the Brush Creek Settlements, controlled primarily by the Tipton and Jobe families.

Upper East Tennessee encountered significant development over the next century, though the Johnson City area remained agricultural. Neighboring Jonesborough became the county seat of the Washington District in 1775, when the state of North Carolina governed the territory. In 1780, the Wataugans mustered at nearby Sycamore Shoals (NHL 10/15/66, Carter County) and marched across the mountains to combat the British at the Battle of King's Mountain. After the war, North Carolina ceased their claim over the territory and for a short time the State of Franklin was formed in present-day Washington County. In 1788, the State of Franklin dissolved, and the territory returned to the control of North Carolina, only to be incorporated into the Territory of the United States South of the Ohio River two years later. The seat of this government was established at Rocky Mount (NR 2/16/70), the home of William Cobb, located within the city limits of present-day Johnson City. In 1796, the region was incorporated into the new State of Tennessee. Development grew in towns like Jonesborough and Knoxville, but Brush Creek retained its obscurity.

Transportation fundamentally transformed the farmland along Brush Creek, ushering in commerce and expanding agriculture. In 1849, the East Tennessee and Virginia Railroad was chartered with a route stretching from Bristol, VA to Knoxville, TN. 1849 was also the year that Landon Carter Haynes was speaker of the lower house of the State Legislator. His political influence helped steer

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic
District, Washington County, Tennessee

the rail line through what would become Johnson City. Henry Johnson, a Washington County resident, purchased land from Abraham Jobe at the intersection of the proposed East Tennessee and Virginia rail line and a stage line stretching from Jonesborough to Elizabethton (present-day Market Street). In 1856, Johnson constructed a brick storehouse, operating a general store, a depot, and a post office. He was named station agent and the area called Johnson's Tank for the water it supplied the steam engines. One year later, another early entrepreneur named Thomas Faw purchased land from Tipton Jobe along the stage line and developed a store and house to rival Johnson. Eventually, the growing town became known as Johnson's Depot, serving as a stopover for passengers and freight on the railroad. None of these early buildings are extant.

City development subsided during the Civil War. Throughout the war, the town was called Haynesville for Confederate Senator Landon Carter Haynes, despite the significant number of Union sympathizers and volunteers from the area. In the post-war period, other businesses followed the lead initially begun by Johnson and Faw. Development culminated in the incorporation of the first town charter in 1869, dubbed Johnson City for its founder Henry Johnson. For a short time, the city lost its charter, either because it failed to significantly expand or because it voluntarily revoked the charter to rid the town of liquor sales and saloons.¹

This brief lapse in development and incorporation was broken with the advent of the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad in 1880, which also passed through Johnson City. Now, the city was more than just a short stop on a single railway. The new rail line accessed deposits of iron ore in Cranberry, North Carolina, which in turn generated new industry for Johnson City. The new city, vying to establish itself as an iron-manufacturing center, purchased bonds from the Charleston, Cincinnati, and Chicago Railroad Company to draw a third railroad through the town. The proposed railway attracted investment from all over the United States and led to the development of the Carnegie Land and Improvement Company, the Carnegie Furnace Company, and the Carnegie Hotel. In 1892, the Johnson City Southern Railroad was built to reach industry at Embreeville, Tennessee.

The addition of these railroads brought economic prosperity and development to the city. The town population grew exponentially from 605 in 1880 to 4,645 citizens in 1890. Johnson City had become a lively New South boomtown. It was at this time that the present-day downtown district emerged as an important commercial and warehouse district. The first bank was established in 1886; churches planted their roots; clothing stores peddled fashions; produce warehouses exported livestock and goods; two newspapers competed for readership.

The boom period of the 1880's could not be sustained and an economic recession ensued. The Charleston, Cincinnati and Chicago Railroad folded when the banks that supported it failed. Likewise, the Carnegie Furnace Company, the Carnegie Land Company, and the Embreeville

¹ Ray Stahl, *Greater Johnson City: A Pictorial History* (Norfolk/Virginia Beach: Donning Company Publishing, 1983), 34.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic
District, Washington County, Tennessee

Freehold Company collapsed in the panic of 1893. Simultaneously, great deposits of easily accessible iron ore were discovered in Minnesota, thus extinguishing Johnson City's hopes of becoming an industrial center for iron.

Fortunately recovery followed the recession, and downtown Johnson City began to thrive once more. A rail line was extended from the Unaka Mountains into North Carolina, and, in 1905, the Southern and Western Railway Company expanded previous lines to Spartanburg, South Carolina and Elkhorn City, Kentucky. With the three major rail lines now fully operating in Johnson City, the downtown district became an even greater regional commercial center. The population rapidly climbed from 8,562 in 1910 to 25,080 in 1930. Most of the buildings located within the proposed Warehouse and Commerce District were constructed in the early 1900's.

The warehouses served as the union between agriculture, the railroad, and commerce in Johnson City and Washington County. The advent of the railroads in Johnson City brought shipments of modern agricultural technology to the area. Farmers, with the use of horse-drawn farm equipment introduced by the railroads, were now able to tend larger acreage, which produced a surplus of agricultural products that the county could export. In 1910, land values more than doubled and farmers began using the surplus field grains in the county to support more cattle and poultry farms. The exportation of grain, fruit, cattle, and poultry could not have taken place without access to Johnson City's railroads. The warehouses with their railroad platforms, located between Commerce Street and the Southern Railroad, were the meeting grounds for farmers, the sale of their products, and the transportation of their goods.

A review of the occupation of the warehouses suggests the strong connection to agricultural commerce. Most warehouses began primarily as storage for grocers and producers, such as Lowry Fruit Company (139 Commerce Street), Tri-State Fruit Company (145 Commerce Street), and Moneyhun Wholesale Company (139 and 145 Commerce Street). Apples, blackberries, peaches, strawberries, cherries, and huckleberries were grown on agricultural lands in upper East Tennessee and shipped from the warehouses in Johnson City. Among meats, upper East Tennessee was renowned for its poultry industry, including turkey, chickens, and ducks. On the Monday before Thanksgiving in 1908, five different poultry shipping houses loaded a train with twenty-one carloads of turkey. Tennessee was known as the second leading state in poultry shipping (Texas was first). A publication of the 1915 Johnson City Chamber of Commerce boasted that, "more than ten million dollars' worth of poultry and eggs are shipped from East Tennessee annually, the larger part being shipped from this and nearby towns."² Swift & Company (113 Commerce Street) and Armour & Company (133 Commerce Street) were both prominent meat wholesalers in Johnson City's warehouse district. Likewise, the railroads imported goods necessary to the agricultural industry in Johnson City. Lee Carter of Boones Creek shipped horses

² *Six Decades of Progress 1915-1975, Johnson City Area Chamber of Commerce* (Johnson City: Don & Mignon, 1976), 6.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic
District, Washington County, Tennessee

by rail from Nebraska, bringing in as many as 840 horses each year. The horses were then resold to local farmers for farm production. Horses were extremely important to increasing crop yields and used on most farms until the 1950's.³

The warehouses had other uses as well. During the 1930's, the United States Works Progress Administration (WPA), a New Deal program of President Franklin Roosevelt, owned one of the warehouses (133 Commerce Street). The WPA initiated a number of different projects in and around Johnson City that required ready access to the railroad. They built the outdoor amphitheater at the East Tennessee Teachers College campus (present-day East Tennessee State University), Roosevelt Stadium (present-day Memorial Stadium), and the Tri-Cities regional airport. All these facilities are still in use today. By the 1960's, a shift in the use of the warehouses occurred. Clyce Distributing Company (133 Commerce Street) and Boggs Distributing Company (113 Commerce Street) overtook two of the warehouses as beer distributorships. Beer distributors thus held just as many warehouses as any other industry. Despite the versatile use of the warehouses, a portion of them has always remained tied to the agricultural industry. For instance, B&B Produce Company continues to operate out of 139 Commerce Street and has been conducting business there since the 1940's.

The commerce section of the proposed Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic District are predominantly the buildings, which are situated along the northern side of West Market Street between the railroad and Montgomery Street. While they are not as unique as the warehouses, this section was an important commercial area in the first half of the 20th century because of its proximity to the railroads. Businesses conducted commerce in a number of different capacities: hardware stores, shoe shops, drug stores, grocery stores, furniture stores, jewelers, photography stores, restaurants, and many others. This area was the site of Johnson City's first modern grocery store, Piggly Wiggly (142 West Market Street), the local Masonic Lodge (102 West Market Street), and the Western Union Telegraph Company (100 West Market Street). Two examples of longstanding commercial buildings and local businesses include the Smith-Higgins Company (200 West Market Street) and the London Hardware Company (110 West Market Street).

The Smith-Higgins Company was established in 1921 as a wholesale distributor of drugs, supplying stores throughout the Southern Appalachian region. After initially settling in the 100 block of West Market Street, it moved to 204-206 West Market Street in 1924. The company sold confections, cigars/tobacco, drugs, chemicals, sundries, and notions. The store remained at this location for nearly fifty years. In 1971, the owners sold Smith-Higgins to the Gump Finance Corporation, which moved the store location to Princeton Road. After which time, the location at West Market Street changed ownership but continued to be used as a pharmacy. The Corner

³ *History of Washington County, Tennessee*, Compiled and edited by Joyce and W. Eugene Cox (Johnson City, Tennessee: The Overmountain Press, 2001), 287-9.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic
District, Washington County, Tennessee

Drug Store operated at 200 West Market Street through the 1980's. Currently, there is no business operating out of the 200 West Market Street location.

London Hardware Company was another business in the proposed Commerce and Warehouse District that had longevity. The company initially operated as London-Kirkpatrick Hardware Company in the 1910's on East Main Street with a focus on wholesale and retail hardware. By 1927 the company moved to 106-110 West Market Street. Shortly after, Kirkpatrick was dropped from the latter half of the company name, becoming solely London Hardware Company. The hardware store emphasized painting, boasting a large and complete stock of Pee Gee Paints. In the advertisements, they said "we can give you good advice on painting...whether it's regarding the repainting an old treasured toy or completely redecorating your home."⁴ The store could safely recommend the repainting of a toy because in the 1930's Robert London diversified the store products creating more than merely a hardware store. London dealt in toys, hardware, paint, farm supplies, housewares, and sporting goods (particularly guns and ammunition). In the 1940's, customers coming to the hardware store even found radios and electrical appliances for sale. The store's ability to expand over time into different markets allowed it to thrive for over fifty years, but like many of the stores in the downtown area it eventually faltered when commerce moved uptown. After a vacancy period, Johnson City Wood Working and Sales moved into 110 West Market Street, which operated out of the storefront throughout the 1980's and 1990's. The property is currently being redeveloped.

Despite the challenges faced by downtown districts in the 1960's with the decline of railroads, the warehouse district fared quite well. It has remained in continuous occupation since it was built, originally as the union of agriculture, commerce, and transportation. The commerce section of the district endured more difficult times with the decline of the railroads and subsequent loss of trade, but even today many of the ground floors of the buildings have been redeveloped and occupied by businesses. The upper floors remain somewhat neglected. However, a nomination to the National Register of Historical Places would encourage the preservation of the remaining floors of the buildings that have survived since the early 1900's.

⁴ Baldwin's *Johnson City, Tennessee City Directory*, vol. 2 (Charleston, South Carolina: Baldwin Directory Company, 1939), 55.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page - 11 -

Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic
District, Washington County, Tennessee

9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bailey, William Perry, Jr. *History of First United Methodist Church of Johnson City, Tennessee, 1865-1990*. Johnson City, Tennessee: The Overmountain Press, 1990.

Baldwin's Johnson City, Tennessee City Directory, vol. 3. Charleston, South Carolina: Baldwin Directory Company, 1948.

Cornwell, Ilene J. *Biographical Directory of the Tennessee General Assembly*, vol. 3, 1901-1931. Research by Verla S. Hodges. Nashville: The Tennessee Historical Commission, 1988.

Grant, Philip A., Jr. "Tennesseans in the 63rd Congress, 1913-1915." *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (fall 1970): 278-286.

Hill's Johnson City (Washington County, Tennessee) Directory, vol. I. Richmond: Hill Directory Company, Incorporated, 1935.

History of Washington County, Tennessee. Compiled and edited by Joyce and W. Eugene Cox. Contributed by Washington County Historical Association. Johnson City, Tennessee: The Overmountain Press, 2001.

Johnson City, Tennessee City Directory, vol. 5. Compiled by Ernest H. Miller. Asheville, North Carolina: Piedmont Directory Company, 1915.

Johnson City, Tennessee City Directory, vol. 6. Compiled by Ernest H. Miller. Asheville, North Carolina: Commercial Services Company, Incorporated, 1917.

Johnson City, Tennessee City Directory, vol. 8. Compiled by Ernest H. Miller. Asheville, North Carolina: Commercial Services Company, Incorporated, 1921.

Johnson City: The Way We Were. Compiled in 1909 by J.O. Lewis. Johnson City, Tennessee: The Overmountain Press, 1989.

Johnson's City Directory for Johnson City, Tennessee. n.p.: Johnson Publishing Company, Incorporated, 1979.

Lay, Elery A. *An Industrial and Commercial History of the Tri-Cities in Tennessee-Virginia*. Kingsport, Tennessee: Lay Publications, 1982.

McCown, Mary Hardin and Josephine Carpenter Owen. *100th Anniversary, History and Directory, 1871-1971, First Christian Church, Johnson City, Tennessee*. Johnson City, Tennessee: Tri-Cities Lithographing Company, Incorporated, 1971.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page - 12 -

Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic
District, Washington County, Tennessee

Miller's Johnson City, Tennessee City Directory, vol. 11. Compiled by Ernest H. Miller. Asheville, North Carolina: The Miller Press, 1928.

Miller's Official Johnson City, Tennessee City Directory, vol. 12. Compiled by Ernest H. Miller. Asheville, North Carolina: Commercial Services Company Publishers, 1929.

Miller's Official Johnson City, Tennessee City Directory, vol. 13. Compiled by Ernest H. Miller. Asheville, North Carolina: Commercial Services Company Publishers, 1931.

The Mullin-Kille and State Johnson City, Tennessee ConSurvey City Directory, vol. 4. Chillicothe, Ohio: Mullin-Kille ConSurvey Company; Maryville, Tennessee: State Directory Company, 1960.

The Mullin-Kille and State Johnson City, Tennessee ConSurvey City Directory, vol. 5. Chillicothe, Ohio: Mullin-Kille ConSurvey Company; Maryville, Tennessee: State Directory Company, 1961.

Nelson's Metropolitan Johnson City, Tennessee City Directory, vol. 40. Charleston, South Carolina: Nelson's Directory Company, Incorporated, 1962.

Six Decades of Progress 1915-1975, Johnson City Area Chamber of Commerce. Johnson City, Tennessee: Don & Mignon, 1976.

Stahl, Ray. *Greater Johnson City: A Pictorial History*. Norfolk/Virginia Beach, Virginia: Donning Company/Publishers, 1983.

State Journal of the Fifty-sixth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee. Nashville: McQuiddy Printing Company, 1909.

Thomas, Bernice L. *America's 5 & 10 Cent Stores: The Kress Legacy*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997.

Williams, Samuel Cole. *History of Johnson City and Its Environs*. Johnson City, Tennessee: The Watauga Press, 1940.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page - 13 -

Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic
District, Washington County, Tennessee

10. GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Boundary Description

The Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce District includes warehouses between Commerce Street and the Southern Railroad, beginning with 113 Commerce Street and ending with the intersection at West Market Street. The district includes commercial buildings on the north side of West Market Street from its beginning at the intersection of Buffalo Street to the intersection of Montgomery Street. The boundary of the district then runs east along West King Street from Montgomery Street to McClure Street. The buildings on either side of McClure Street from West King Street south to West Market Street are also incorporated in the district. For a clearer depiction of the proposed district, please refer to the attached map.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property contains the buildings with the highest degree of integrity representing the warehouse and commerce industry that flourished in early twentieth century Johnson City, as evidenced by the 26 out of 27 buildings contributed to the district. The district is bordered on the east by the Southern Railroad, creating a natural boundary. The other borders of the district contain buildings that are no longer intact, have been altered too much, or have been replaced by newer structures.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page - 14 -

Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic
District, Washington County, Tennessee

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographer: Claudette Stager
Date: January 31, 2003
Location of negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission

1. Warehouses on Southern Railroad Line and Buffalo Street from corner of Buffalo and East Market Street.
Facing west.
2. Warehouses on Southern Railroad Line and Buffalo Street from corner of Buffalo and East Market Street.
Facing northwest.
3. Corner of Warehouses/Southern Railroad/Buffalo Street and West Market Street.
Facing west.
4. West Market Street between Buffalo Street and Commerce Street.
Facing northwest.
5. Commerce Street side of warehouses.
Facing northeast.
6. West Market Street between Commerce Street and McClure Street.
Facing northwest.
7. West Market Street between South Boone Street and McClure Street.
Facing northeast.
8. West Market Street between South Boone Street and Montgomery Street.
Facing northwest.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

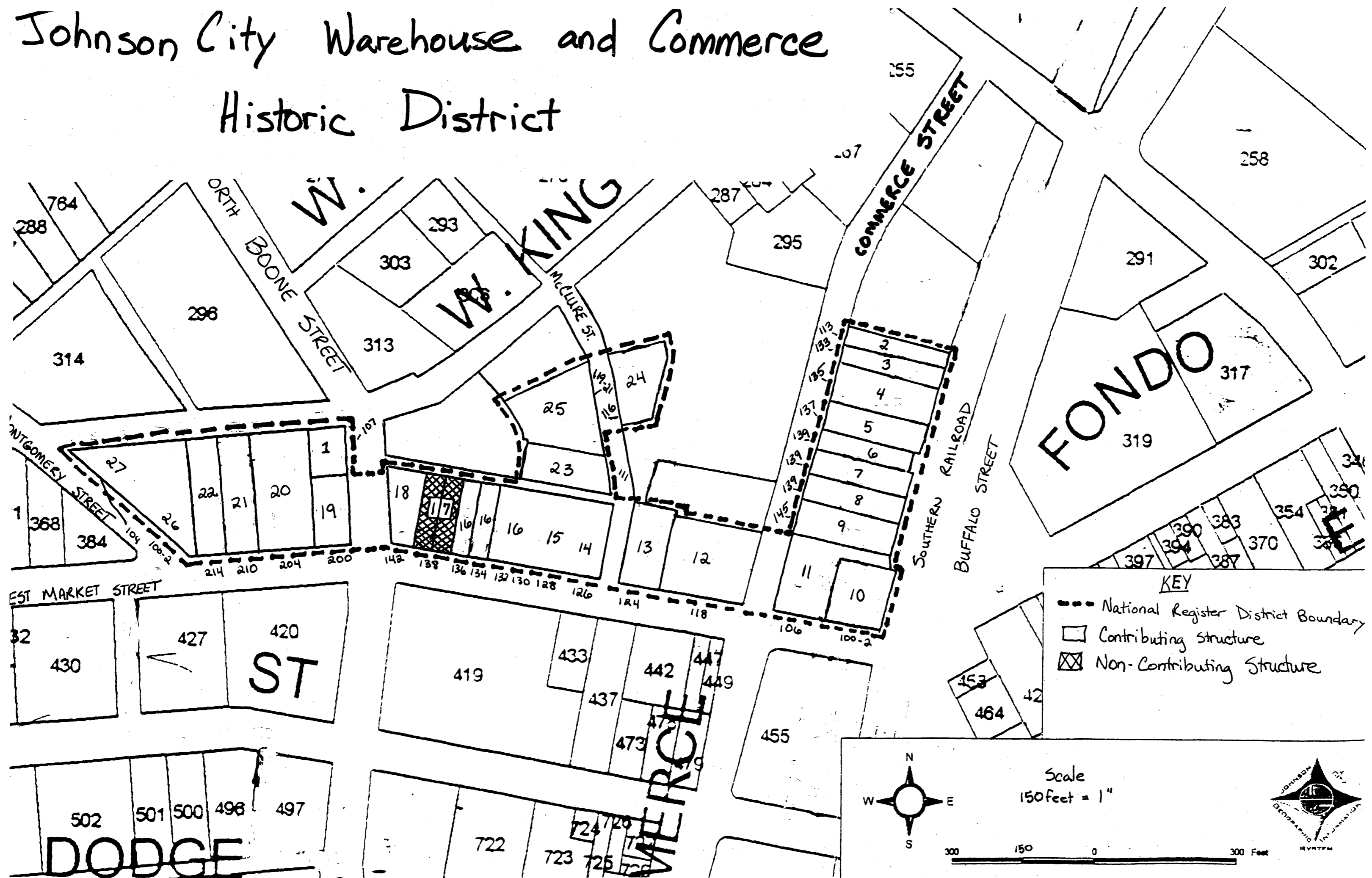
Section number Owners Page - 15 -

Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic
District, Washington County, Tennessee

OWNERSHIP INFORMATION

- Walter and Sharon Whaley
P.O. Box 2179
Johnson City, TN 37605
- Robert Patton
1117 College Heights Drive
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Fred and Evelyn Moore
700 Sharon Drive
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Kendred Young
1314 Virginia Street
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Mr. and Mrs. Odell
107 North Boone Street
Johnson City, TN 37604
- James and Jane Myron
200 West Market Street
Johnson City, TN 37604
- SPC Manufacturing Company
128 West Market Street
Johnson City, TN 37604
- James Neece
140 West Market Street
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Mr. and Mrs. Guinn
107 North Boone Street
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Ruth Fletcher
1015 West Market Street
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Sandra Williams
118 West Holston Avenue
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Stanley Keebler
P.O. Box 1222
Johnson City, TN 37605
- Donald Campbell
118 West Market Street
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Rufus and Harriet Luster
485 Carson Creek Road
Limestone, TN 37681
- Urban Development Alliance
P.O. Box 4086
Johnson City, TN 37605
- Clara Baker
2007A Sherwood Drive
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Dwight Scott
198 Lynn Lane
Johnson City, TN 37604
- B&B Williams Family LP
160 Claude Simmons Road
Johnson City, TN 37604
- James White
P.O. Box 3632
Johnson City, TN 37602
- Paul and Toni Abbott
1718 North Roan Street
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Kimberly Schneider
128 West Market Street
Johnson City, TN 37604
- James C. Neece
2809 McKinley Road
Johnson City, TN 37601

Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic District



Johnson City Warehouse and Commerce Historic District

