

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only **SEP 13 1984**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received
date entered

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

1. Name

historic ~~(former)~~ United States Post Office

and/or common Federal Building

2. Location

street & number 215 South Evans Street

not for publication

city, town Greenville

vicinity of

state N. C.

code 037

county Pitt

code 147

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name General Services Administration

street & number Room 222, Federal Building, 310 New Bern Avenue

city, town Raleigh

vicinity of

state N. C.

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Pitt County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Greenville

state N. C.

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Tar-Neuse River Basin
title has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1977 federal state county local

depository for survey records Survey and Planning Branch, N. C. Division of Archives and History

city, town Raleigh state N. C.

1/27/86 Rec'd

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The former United States Post Office in downtown Greenville (now the Federal Building), located adjacent to the Pitt County Courthouse and early twentieth century commercial buildings, is a reflection of the city's booming economy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The completion to Greenville of the Scotland Neck and Kinston Railroad in 1889 and the subsequent development of the tobacco market fostered Greenville's prosperity during this period and the concomitant construction of impressive governmental and commercial structures in the central business district.

The post office is a handsome example of the Florentine Renaissance Revival style. Greenville's post office is far more flamboyant than those contemporary post offices in neighboring towns. Most of the early twentieth century post offices in adjoining counties were built of stone, in a restrained Neo-classical Revival style so popular for public buildings during that period.

Buildings in the Florentine Renaissance Revival style are rare in eastern North Carolina. The Morehead City Municipal Building, constructed in 1926, is the only other building of this type represented in Historic and Architectural Resources of the Tar-Neuse River Basin. Although different architects designed the U.S. Post Office in Greenville and the Morehead City Municipal Building, the two structures have striking similarities. Both are two-story stucco-over-brick buildings covered with low hip roofs with overhanging eaves.

The main section of the former United States Post Office was constructed in 1913-1914 and occupied in January, 1915. It stands two stories high and rests on a limestone base. The five-bay front elevation and five-bay side elevations are framed by limestone corners. The low hip roof of terra cotta tile has overhanging eaves with alternating plain coffered panels and panel-and-drop decorations in the soffit. A flat frieze, surmounted by a handsome egg-and-dart and dentil cornice, is located below the eaves. Exterior walls are constructed of stucco-over-brick and have extensive limestone dressings, including window and door surrounds, corners, and cornices.

The front (Evans Street) elevation boasts a three-bay loggia formed by arches with voluted keystones, springing from Tuscan columns. A decorative Gothic lantern hangs in this recess. On the facade, engaged pilasters and arches echo the arcade. They frame arched windows at the upper level and a central entrance and large flanking windows. The entrance has sidelights, a transom, slim pilasters, and a pediment. A second entrance door gives access to the lobby from East Third Street. This handsome entrance consists of a three-part surround; large square Doric pilasters; and an entablature upon which rests a small balustrade. The fenestration of the elevations is distinctive and highly Italianate. There is pronounced diminution from first to second levels--six-over-six at the first level, double three-light casements above. The first level windows have entablatures and rest on consoles; the upper ones have plain frames and lower blocks, and they abut the frieze.

The interior of this structure reflects many changes, although the lobby retains its terrazzo floor with marble wainscoting. Originally, patrons entering the lobby from Evans Street faced the east wall, which contained the post office boxes. The general postal business window and the door to the postmaster's office were located on the same wall, to the right of the boxes. A window for money orders, registered mail, and postal savings certificates was located on the north end of the lobby. The staircase to the second floor

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remains on the south lobby wall. Behind the wall of post office boxes was the work area, which had a high ceiling that extended the full two stories of the building. A narrow enclosed observation gallery, entered by a ladder, flanked the upper part of the work area at its middle point. The observation gallery was used to monitor the work of employees and only the postmaster and postal inspector were authorized to use it. It was removed when the building was remodelled for federal offices.⁵

In 1936-37 a one-story addition to the rear of the post office expanded the work area and provided a new mailing platform. The new section was mainly used for parcel post and by the Rural Free Delivery carriers. The addition has stucco-over-brick exterior walls and is compatible in style with the earlier section.⁴

At the same time, changes were made to the floorplan of the original building. The postmaster's office was moved and the old one opened for public use, thus creating an "L"-shaped lobby. The general postal business window was moved from the front lobby to the new side lobby. This allowed space for new post office boxes in the older front lobby.

This building served as the main post office for Greenville until 1969, when the present post office was finished. The old building was then remodelled for use by offices of the United States government. Although the exterior remains as it was built in 1913-14, the interior has been partitioned.⁵

¹Kate Ohno, "Architectural Survey of the City of Greenville" (unpublished report, City of Greenville, 1982), site #135, hereinafter cited as Ohno, "Architectural Survey of Greenville."

²Historic and Architectural Resources of the Tar-Neuse River Basin: A Preliminary Inventory and Analysis (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1977), 30.

³The construction dates of the original section and the addition and other architectural information was obtained from the original building plans located in the basement of the former U. S. Post Office, now the Federal Building. Hereinafter, this source will be cited as Post Office Plans.

⁴Ohno, "Architectural Survey of Greenville," site #135.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)	

Specific dates 1913-1914 **Builder/Architect** Oscar Wenderoth

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Greenville's former United States Post Office, now the Federal Building, is an impressive, well preserved example of Florentine Renaissance Revival architecture-- a rare style in eastern North Carolina. Built in 1913-1914 from plans by Oscar Wenderoth, supervising architect, of the United States Treasury Department, the building is a reflection of the city's prosperity and vigorous growth during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The post office, which is adjacent to the Pitt County Courthouse and a few early twentieth century commercial buildings, stands as an important reminder of the past in a city that has undergone extensive urban renewal.

Criteria Assessment

- A. Associated with the development of Greenville during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the increasing prosperity of the county resulting from railroad construction and the development of an important tobacco market.
- C. Embodies distinctive characteristics of the Florentine Renaissance Revival style used in public buildings of the early twentieth century, although rarely in eastern North Carolina.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Daily Reflector (Greenville, N.C.).
 Ohno, Kate, "Architectural Survey of the City of Greenville" (unpublished report, City of Greenville, 1982).
 Pitt County Deeds. Pitt County Courthouse, Greenville, North Carolina.
 Williams, Thomas A. (ed.). A Greenville Album: The Bicentennial Book. Greenville: ERA Press, 1974.
 Worthington, S.O. (ed.-in-chief). Pitt County Economic and Social. Greenville: Greenville Publishing Company, 1921.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than 1 acre.
 Quadrangle name Greenville SE Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>8</u>	<u>2</u> <u>8</u> <u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>39</u> <u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Situated on the East side of Evans Street and the North side of Third Street, fronting 129 feet on the north side of Third Street & extending Northwardly of that width along the East side of Evans Street 120 feet (Pitt County Deed Book K9, Page 467). See enclosed tax card & tax map.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	<u>N/A</u>	code
state		code	county		code

11. Form Prepared By

Description prepared by Stanley Little, Archives and History Assistant; significance prepared by name/title Stanley Little and Maurice C. York, Historic Sites Specialist
Eastern Office
 organization Division of Archives and History date December 8, 1983
 street & number 117 West 5th Street telephone (919) 752-7778
 city or town Greenville state N. C. 27834

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature William S. King, Jr. Paul J. Overton, Jr. 1/22/84
SA HISTORIC PRES. OFFICER
 title State Historic Preservation Officer date January 12, 1984

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

John A. Brown date 2/6/86
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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The former United States Post Office in Greenville is a reflection of the city's booming economy during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The city's expansive growth and favorable economic climate, which contributed to the need for such a substantial post office, resulted from several factors. Beginning in the late 1880s, railroad construction, enthusiastic local interest in commercial investment, and the rise of tobacco as a significant cash crop contributed to Greenville's rapid development.

Pivotal changes in the local economy occurred during and after the 1880s. The economy of Greenville and Pitt County had been largely based on the cultivation and marketing of cotton, the price of which declined during the decade. Farmers had depended heavily on steamboats plying the Tar River to take their cotton to markets in Greenville and elsewhere.¹ Greenville's development had lagged behind that of such neighboring towns as Wilson, Tarboro, and New Bern, primarily because it lacked adequate transportation.² The county's citizens in 1885 had rejected³ an opportunity to participate in a proposed Goldsboro, Snow Hill, and Greenville Railroad. Four years later, however, a branch of the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad fostered dramatic changes in the area's soporific economy.

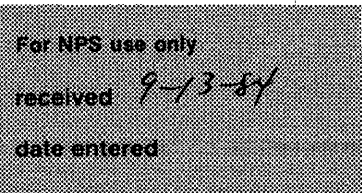
In the late 1880s the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad proposed the construction of a branch from Halifax to Kinston via Scotland Neck and Greenville. The Scotland Neck and Greenville Branch reached Greenville in August, 1889, and the railroad was completed to Kinston by May, 1890. The heavy freight and passenger traffic along this railroad had a revolutionary impact on Greenville, which for the first time had an adequate avenue for commerce.⁴

Progressive local leaders led by Daily Reflector editor David J. Whichard recognized the potential of the railroad. Editor Whichard clamored for capital investment in the city. He spurred the organization in April, 1889, of a Business Association, which was chaired by former Governor Thomas Jordan Jarvis. The association established committees to attract such assets as a new hotel, a clothing factory, a cotton seed oil mill, and increased investment in tobacco.

The ascendancy in Pitt County of tobacco as a cash crop--a response to the growing demand for tobacco caused by the development of the American Tobacco Company and the cigarette industry--dramatically affected Greenville. Several Pitt County farmers had experimented with tobacco as early as 1885.⁶ In 1889 farmers grew 39,369 acres of cotton and 70 acres of tobacco. Within ten years, tobacco grew on 12,931 acres; cotton on only 25,497.⁷ By 1910 the county's farmers produced 10,973,000 pounds of tobacco, probably the largest quantity of any county in the state.⁸ Partly because of the presence of the new railroad, Greenville developed an important tobacco market. The first warehouse, Greenville Tobacco Warehouse, opened in 1891. A buyer for the American Tobacco Company soon located in Greenville. Other concerns, including additional warehouses and the Farmers' Consolidated Tobacco Company (1903), were organized before and after the turn of the century.⁹

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All of these factors stimulated Greenville's growth, By 1903 the city contained forty stores, six warehouses, six tobacco "factories," a knitting mill, a grist mill, and a blind, door and sash factory. The latter enterprise supplied materials for the many handsome residences and public commercial buildings being constructed at the time.¹⁰ In 1907 the city and county provided \$100,000 in tax money with which to supplement the state appropriation for construction of East Carolina Teachers Training School, which was subsequently built on the outskirts of Greenville.¹¹ By 1911 the population, which had been 2,200 in 1885, had reached 5,000. That year the Daily Reflector boasted of the city's three hotels, five drugstores, major buggy factory, twenty retail groceries, paved streets, and a host of other amenities.¹² The former United States Post Office was built in 1913-14, during this prosperous period. It was the first building specifically constructed to house Greenville's postal facilities.¹³

Prior to this time, Greenville's post office had been in rented buildings in several locations.¹⁴ The post office destroyed by a fire in 1899 had been located on the south side of Fourth Street, between Evans and Cotanche Streets, approximately in the center of the block, since at least 1891.¹⁵ After the fire, the post office was moved to a building on the southeast corner of East Third and Evans Streets. James J. Perkins was postmaster there for a number of years.¹⁶ In 1904, while the office was located at that site, Roy Flanagan was appointed postmaster.¹⁷ In 1909, the post office moved to a building that stood on the east side of Evans Street, approximately in the middle of the block between East Fourth and East Fifth Streets. It remained in that location until the first permanent post office was built.¹⁸ Postmaster Flanagan resigned in 1913.¹⁹

The lot for the new post office was acquired five years before construction began. Local citizens strongly supported an appropriation for a new facility. The Chamber of Commerce of Greenville and the Pitt County Commissioners sent a committee to Washington to appear before the House Appropriations Committee to present a proposal for a new building. Congressman John H. Small and Senator Lee S. Overman also supported the appropriation. In 1908 Congress appropriated \$10,000 for the purchase of a lot.²⁰ A parcel of land known as the Harrington lot was purchased in September, 1909, from Hannah E. Daniel for \$9,500.²¹

Raleigh News and Observer editor Josephus Daniels, who had recently delivered an address at the commencement of East Carolina Teachers Training School, noted in 1911 the plans for the new post office: "It [Greenville] grows day and night and seems to work overtime. No town in the state has grown more in the past ten years, and much building is now going on Just opposite the beautiful new court house the Federal government has purchased a most desirable and spacious lot and will shortly build a handsome post office building on it."²²

However, it was not until 1912 that Congress, based on a Treasury Department recommendation, appropriated \$29,000 to build the new post office. Congressman Small in March, 1912, informed the local citizenry of the appropriation in a letter to the editor of the Daily

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Rellector. In his commentary concerning the letter, the editor noted that ". . . probably about the middle of 1913 the Greenville post office will be constructed and as it is more than likely that the new Proctor hotel will be already in operation 2 Court House Square will present an aspect of prosperity and solidarity of which all Greenvillians should feel proud."²³

Ground was broken in the fall of 1913 for the beginning of construction.²⁴ Oscar Wenderoth of the U.S. Treasury Department was the supervising architect, and W. J. Brent Construction Company of Norfolk, Virginia, was the general contractor. Sedley Chaplin served as superintendent of construction.²⁵ David Jordan Whichard, who was postmaster at that time, had succeeded Roy Flanagan in 1913. When Whichard began his work, his annual salary was \$2,400. Early in his administration, Whichard put into effect city carrier service. Prior to that time, patrons had to go to the post office every day to pick up their mail, either by general delivery or in a post office box.²⁶

During Whichard's tenure as postmaster, mail arrived in Greenville by train. There were six trains on the Norfolk-Southern Railroad and four trains on the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad. A clerk from the post office was sent to the respective stations to pick up the mail every time a train arrived each day.²⁷ By the 1930s, this work was performed by a contractor.²⁸ Whichard remained postmaster until March, 1921.²⁹

Since David J. Whichard, five postmasters have served the Greenville post office: Heber R. Munford, Thomas T. Hollingsworth, J. Knott Proctor, Joseph C. Dudley, and H. Lloyd Mills. Mills, the present postmaster, was appointed in March, 1971.³⁰

By the mid-1930s, additional space was needed. A one-story wing was added to the rear of the building in 1936-1937. The expanded work area and the larger mailing platform gave additional space for parcel post and the RFD carriers.³¹

In the early 1960s, the post office underwent minor remodeling. Changes included replacement of the hardwood floors in the work area with resilient tile flooring, removal of ceiling fans, installation of air conditioning, the retrofitting of the coal-fired boiler for oil, and replacement of the well-worn terrazzo marble in the lobby with new terrazzo.³²

By the late 1960s, Greenville had outgrown its post office. A new building was constructed in 1969. The move from the old post office to the new building was made August 24, 1969. The new structure is a leased facility located on West Second Street, between Pitt and Greene Streets.³³

First District Congressman Walter B. Jones urged that the old post office be remodelled for use by federal agencies.³⁴ Today it houses the local office of Senator John East, the Small Business Administration, the Food and Drug Administration, the Wage and Hour Division

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of the Department of Labor, the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, and the Soil Conservation Service.

¹Mary Hollis Barnes, "A Brief History of Greenville" (unpublished report, City of Greenville, 1982), hereinafter cited as Barnes, "History of Greenville"; Historical and Descriptive Review of the State of North Carolina, Including the Manufacturing and Mercantile Industries of the Towns of Denton, Elizabeth City, Goldsboro, Greenville, Kinston, Newbern, Tarboro, Washington and Wilson, and Sketches of Their Leading Men and Business Houses. 2d Volume of N.C. The Eastern Section (Charleston, S.C.: Empire Publishing Company, 1885), 204, hereinafter cited as Historical and Descriptive Review.

²Charles Price, "The Railroad Comes to Greenville," in Thomas A. Williams (ed.), A Greenville Album: The Bicentennial Book (Greenville: ERA Press, 1974), 69, hereinafter cited as Price, "The Railroad Comes to Greenville." Hereinafter, this book will be cited as Williams, A Greenville Album.

³Price, "The Railroad Comes to Greenville," 69.

⁴Price, "The Railroad Comes to Greenville," 70-72.

⁵Price, "The Railroad Comes to Greenville," 72-73.

⁶Williams, A Greenville Album, 14.

⁷Barnes, "History of Greenville," 12-13.

⁸S. O. Worthington (ed.-in-chief), Pitt County Economic and Social: A Laboratory Study at the University of North Carolina, Department of Rural Science of the Pitt County Club (Greenville: Greenville Publishing Company, 1921), 16.

⁹Williams, A Greenville Album, 14.

¹⁰Daily Reflector (Greenville), April 14, 27, 1903; September 1, 1903; November 2, 9, 11, 1903, hereinafter cited as Daily Reflector.

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¹¹Elizabeth H. Copeland (ed.), Chronicles of Pitt County, North Carolina (Greenville: Pitt County Historical Society, 1982), 33-34.

¹²Historical and Descriptive Review, 204; Daily Reflector, December 19, 1911.

¹³Ohno, "Architectural Survey of Greenville, site #135.

¹⁴Interview with David Julian Whichard, former assistant postmaster, Greenville, N.C., October 26, 1983 (notes on interview in files of Survey and Planning Branch, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh), hereinafter cited as Whichard interview. David Julian Whichard is the son of David Jordan Whichard, who served as postmaster in Greenville from 1913 until 1921.

¹⁵Sanborn-Perris Map Co., Greenville, Pitt Co., N.C., June 1891 (New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Co., 1891), hereinafter cited as Sanborn Map of Greenville, with appropriate date; Sanborn Map of Greenville, 1896, 1898.

¹⁶Sanborn Map of Greenville, 1900; Whichard interview.

¹⁷Henry T. King, Sketches of Pitt County: A Brief History of the County, 1704-1910 (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1911), 229, hereinafter cited as King, Sketches of Pitt County.

¹⁸Daily Reflector, October 16, 1909; Sanborn Map of Greenville, 1905, 1911.

¹⁹Whichard interview.

²⁰Daily Reflector, May 25, 1908.

²¹Hannah E. Daniel to the United States of America, September 17, 1909, Pitt County Deeds, Office of the Register of Deeds, Pitt County Courthouse, Greenville, Book K-9, 467; King, Sketches of Pitt County, 203.

²²Daily Reflector, May 26, 1911.

²³Daily Reflector, March 20, 1912.

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²⁴Ohno, "Architectural Survey of Greenville," site #135.

²⁵Interview with H. Lloyd Mills, postmaster, Greenville, N.C., November 3, 1983 (notes on interview in files of the Survey and Planning Branch, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh), hereinafter cited as Mills interview.

²⁶Whichard interview. When the building opened, the second floor contained several small offices. At one time, the United States Civil Service used them as examination rooms. Later they were used by the United States Army recruiter.

²⁷Whichard interview.

²⁸Interview with Jake Dixon, retired postal employee, Greenville, N.C., November 3, 1983 (notes on interview in files of the Survey and Planning Branch, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh), hereinafter cited as Dixon interview.

²⁹Whichard interview.

³⁰Whichard interview; Mills interview.

³¹Dixon interview; Post Office Plans.

³²Dixon interview; Post Office Plans.

³³Mills interview.

³⁴Ohno, "Architectural Survey of Greenville," site #135.