

MULTIPLE RESOURCES OF GREENVILLE

BUTLER COUNTY, ALABAMA

Historic name: West Commerce Street District

Address: W. Commerce St. - 224-336; Bolling St. - 116.

Acreage: 2

Verbal Boundary: See enclosed scaled map.

UTM:	A-16/535/300-3521/460	E-16/535/200-3521/280
	B-16/535/300-3521/420	F-16/535/180-3521/340
	C-16/535/270-3521/380	G-16/535/220-3521/440
	D-16/535/220/3521/260	

Statement of Significance:

Criterion A - Commerce and Transportation:

The West Commerce St. Historic District is significant for its association with the railroad and represents the role that the transportation system played in making Greenville a major regional trade center in the years following the Civil War. The area within the district developed rapidly during the late 1850's as the Mobile and Montgomery Railroad was completed through Greenville. Following a period of depressed economy caused by the War, the district grew into a major trade center on the railroad line between Montgomery and Mobile as the town provided the only shipping point for a six county region of south central Alabama. The influx of capital created by this trade allowed the construction of new commercial buildings to replace the original late 1850's frame building in the area. By the early 1890's the districts importance as a regional trade center and diminished as other railroads began to extend into the areas that had depended solely on Greenville's rail service.

Criterion C - Architecture:

The West Commerce Street Historic District is significant for its good collection of late 19 and early 20th century commercial buildings (c 1880-1920) associated with or dependent on the nearby railroad. The predominant architectural style is very simple vernacular although at least one building 218-222 W. Commerce (c 1890) is a good example of the late Victorian commercial style with a cast iron cornice topped with finials and original wooden framed first floor doors and windows. The railroad depot is a fine example of the Spanish Revival style.

Description:

The West Commerce Street Historic District consists of eight commercial buildings and a railroad depot all of which are located near the intersection of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad and Commerce St. in downtown Greenville. The railroad tracks cross street on an overpass supported by concrete piers. The depot is situated on a high bank on a large lot on the corner of W. Commerce and Bolling Streets. The depot is a good example of the Spanish Revival architectural style with a red tile roof, wide overhanging eaves and stuccoed walls. The commercial buildings were all built at the turn-of-the-century and are primarily very simple vernacular storefronts with the

exception of 218-222 W. Commerce (c 1890) which is a good example of late Victorian commercial style.

Historical Summary:

The development of the commercial area within the West Commerce St. Historic District was spurred by the introduction of rail service by the Mobile and Montgomery Railroad into Greenville during the late 1850's. The introduction sparked a rapid commercial development eastward along Commerce Street. The early commercial buildings constructed during this period of rapid expansion were all wood frame. The first brick commercial buildings were constructed in the district shortly after the Civil War and 1880.

These buildings were the Perry Building (#8); the Perry House Hotel, torn down in the late 1970's and the McMullan Wholesale building (#10). The Perry Building was constructed during the mid 1870's by J. T. Perry and was occupied at various times by an auction house, a hotel, offices, a packing house, J. S. Kern's General Store and Dunklin and Blackwell's Drugstore. The McMullan Building is believed to have been constructed around 1870 by J. J. McMullan for use on a Wholesale house.

The buildings that occupied the north side of this block of Commerce past the Perry House prior to the early 1890's were all one story frame construction. By 1893 the Zeigler Building (#6) with its scored facade, press metal cornice and metal finishes had been added to this block. The building housed various commercial establishments including a grocery store, a drugstore, a battling works, as well as a saloon and liquor store and a lodge room on the second floor.

The small one story brick buildings (#1 & #2) located west of the Perry House site were constructed shortly after the turn of the century and replaced two small frame buildings that were occupied by A. W. Smith's general store and Baker's Dress Shop. The two brick buildings housed a shoe shop, a barber shop and later during the 1920's W. W. Black's Grocery and the Western Union Office.

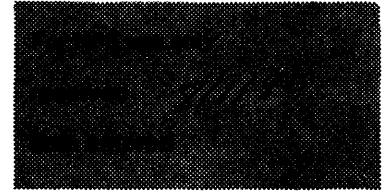
During the first decade of the 20th century three one story brick commercial buildings (#3, #4, & #5) were added between the Perry House and the Zeigler Building with the last one (#5) constructed adjacent to the Zeigler Building around 1909.

Prior to the turn of the century the L & N Railroad had provided freight service to Greenville with a large frame building located on the east side of the railroad track. This freight house was replaced in 1902 by a new passenger depot (#9) that was constructed near the old McMullan Wholesale house and cotton warehouse (#11).

In 1928 the area around the depot was landscaped and the present concrete steps and fencing were added along with asphalt paving that covered the brick streets.

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

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



Continuation sheet

MRN #28

Item number 7

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BUILDINGS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHARACTER OF THE WEST COMMERCE STREET DISTRICT

3. 226 W. Commerce St.: c 1900; one story brick commercial, double leaf front entry flanked on either side by display windows, top of facade has decorative recessed panel w/ corbeled brick dentils. Roll 11, Neg. 16.
5. 218-222 W. Commerce St.: c 1890; two story brick, flat roof w/ cast iron bracketed cornice topped w/ finials, first floor doors and windows appear to be original as are transom windows above entry level, modern aluminum canopy across entire first floor facade. Roll 11, Neg. 18 and 19.
7. 301 W. Commerce St. (Railroad Depot): c 1910; Spanish Revival, one story stucco, hipped tile roof w/ wide overhanging eaves and large paired wooden brackets. Roll 5, Neg. 21, 22 and 23.
8. 116A Bolling St. (John S. McMullan Grocery Co.): c 1900; two story brick commercial, flat roof, building divided into warehouse and office space on first floor, shed roofed porch across entire facade, original entry doors and windows. Roll 20, Neg. 10 and Roll 18, Neg. 15.
9. 116B Bolling St.: c 1900; one story brick warehouse, gable roof, facade in gable end. Roll 20, Neg. 8 and 9, Roll 18, Neg. 16.

BUILDINGS WHICH CONDITIONALLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHARACTER OF THE WEST COMMERCE STREET DISTRICT

1. 334-336 W. Commerce St.: c 1900; one story brick, flat roof, two market stalls, #334 appears to be original, #336 is altered w/ modern door, and windows w/ plywood infill. Roll 11, Neg. 13 and 14.
4. 224 W. Commerce St.: c 1900; one story stucco, flat roof, modern double entry and display windows, aluminum canopy spans entire width of facade above entry. Roll 11, Neg. 17.
6. 233 W. Commerce St. (Master Market): c 1900; one story stucco, flat roof, modern plate glass display windows and entry, metal canopy across facade above entry level. Roll 11, Neg. 20.

BUILDINGS WHICH DO NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHARACTER OF THE WEST COMMERCE STREET DISTRICT

2. 228 W. Commerce St. (Parker Waller Agency): c 1880; one story modern brick facade, flat roof. Roll 11, Neg. 15.