

MULTIPLE RESOURCES OF GREENVILLE

Butler County, Alabama

Historic name: Commerce Street Residential Historic District

Address: E. Commerce St. - 206, 212, 218 & 301

Acreage: 1.75

Verbal Boundary: See enclosed scaled map.

UTM:	A-16/535/840-3521/450	D-16/535/700-3521/340
	B-16/535/840-3521/420	E-16/535/700-3521/410
	C-16/535/810-3521/350	

Statement of Significance:

Criterion B - Commerce/Industry/Politics and Government/Medicine:

The Commerce Street Residential Historic District is significant for its association with several members of the professional community of Greenville who were significant in Commerce, Industry, Politics and Government as well as medicine. These include J. M. Steiner (#1) who operated various commercial establishments in Greenville during the late 19th century; Judge John K. Henry (#1) who operated a general mercantile establishment during the mid and late 19th century as well as served as Circuit Judge of Greenville during the mid 19th century; Mr. W. R. and Porter Martin (#2) who owned and operated the Greenville Ice factory as well as providing electrical power for a small area around their factory on Commerce Street during the late 19th and early 20th century; Dr. H. G. Perry (#3) who served as a practicing physician in Greenville during the late 19th and early 20th century; and H. L. Wilkinson (#3) and W. J. Beeland (#1) who operated mercantile business in Greenville during the late 19th and early 20th century.

Criterion C - Architecture:

East Commerce Street was once one of Greenville's most fashionable residential areas. The Commerce Street Residential District includes some of the city's best early housing (1846-1895) and is the last surviving remnant of the former affluent neighborhood facing onto the main commercial street in downtown Greenville. Also included is one small commercial building which has close historic ties with one of the residences in the district. The Steiner-Kendrick House (1846) is the oldest home represented and originally was built in the Greek Revival style. The interior still retains a few Greek Revival details, although the house was heavily refurbished inside and out in the Queen Anne fashion at the turn-of-the-century. The Henry House (c 1857) is one of Greenville's best surviving examples of Greek Revival architecture. The rear portion of the Martin House was constructed in 1853 as a small cottage, and the large Italianate part of the house was added in 1895. The Perry House is likewise a fine Victorian house also completed in 1895.

Description:

The Commerce Street Residential District consists of the four surviving examples of residential architecture in Greenville's downtown area dating from 1846 to 1895. In addition, there is a single, small, one-story brick commercial building (c 1890) on the

lawn in front of one of the houses. The four houses facing onto Commerce St. represent some of Greenville's finest 19th century architecture. The Steiner-Kendrick House was originally constructed in 1846 in the Greek Revival style but was remodeled at the turn of the century in the Queen Anne fashion. The Henry House (c 1857) is a good example of the Greek Revival style, and the remaining two adjacent houses are both good 1890's high style Victorian homes.

Historical Summary:

The Commerce Street Residential Historic District represents the last remaining residential housing as well as the final residential development on Commerce Street. The first house of the four houses in this district was constructed around 1857 by Judge John K. Henry, who, at this time, operated a general mercantile business and was serving as Circuit Judge in Greenville. The house was later owned by Robert E. Steiner and occupied by L. M. Steiner who operated various commercial establishments in Greenville as well as W. J. Beeland.

Also located on the block was a small home cottage which was built around 1853 by Francis W. Moodie and variously occupied by Mrs. J. F. Drake and Mrs. I. M. P. Ockenden as well as a dwelling occupied by Rev. J. W. Jordan and called the "Father" Jordan House.

In March 1893 the Drake cottage was sold by the Harrison family to W. R. Martin. Mr. Martin, who was the owner of the Greenville Ice Factory which was located directly across Commerce Street and began operation in 1893, started work on his new house in 1894. The original Francis Moodie House was utilized in the construction as part of the rear of the house. The Martin House was completed in February 1895 and was described by the Greenville Advocate at the time of its completion as "a commodius and well appointed structure." The house has been the residence for the Martin family since its completion and is today occupied by the widow of Porter Martin, who operated the Ice Factory, and her sister.

In July 1895 Dr. H. G. Perry purchased the "Father" Jordan house and as the Advocate reported "will erect a two story residence on it as soon as he takes possession." On August 14, 1895 the Advocate reported, "Another old landmark has disappeared in the demolition of the old Jordan residence. Already Dr. Perry has the foundation laid for his new and handsome two story residence. In a very short time this new building will be one of the attractions of Commerce Street." The house, completed in late 1895, was constructed by contractor Sam Morris. Also located on the lot was a brick store building (#4) which had been erected around 1890 by J. W. Jordan for use as a grocery store. This building was later occupied by Dr. Perry as an office and later by H. Z. Wilkinson as an office after he purchased the property.

Dr. Perry occupied the house until 1901 when it was sold to Greenville merchant H. Z. Wilkinson. Around 1926 Edward A. Wilkinson purchased the house for other members of the Wilkinson family.

The fourth house in this district is the Steiner-Kendrick House believed to have been constructed in 1846 by Fletcher Johnson. The house was basically block shaped with an ell at the northwest rear and with an outbuilding away from the rear of the house. The house was later owned by Robert E. Steiner during the 1890's. Steiner then sold the house in 1904 to James Drury Flowers of Dothan for twenty-five hundred dollars. Flowers, in turn, gave the house to his daughter and son-in-law, James Erasmus Kendrick, as a wedding gift. Mr. Kendrick made alterations to the house such as new mantles and moldings, attaching the out building to the northeast corner of the rear of the house and the addition of classical columns to the porch. The house has remained in Kendrick family possession since 1904 and is now the residence of Mr. Kendrick's daughter Mary Kendrick Brackin.

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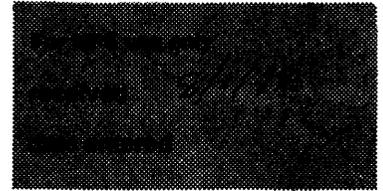
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

MRN #29

Item number 7

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BUILDINGS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COMMERCE STREET RESIDENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

1. 218 E. Commerce St. (Henry House): 1857; Greek Revival, two story frame, truncated hipped roof w/flat platform on top, three interior chimneys, a full height recessed porch with four fluted columns with Choragic Corinthian capitals, the second floor balcony across the entire facade incorporates a Chinese trellis balustrade taken from another early Greenville house now demolished, first floor windows have 1/1 sash and second floor has 2/2. Roll 4, Neg. 34.
2. 212 E. Commerce St. (Martin House): 1895; two story frame, clipped gable roof w/projecting cross gabled center octagonal bay, low hip roofed porch across entire facade and wrapping around right corner of the house, porch has slender turned porch columns with spindle work spandrels, a small second floor balcony projects from the center projecting bay, house has two front entries, one on either side of projecting center gable roof and has spindle sunburst design. Roll 4, Neg. 35.
3. 206 E. Commerce St. (Perry House): 1895; Italianate, two story frame, gable roof w/projecting cross gable end bay, end projection has a semicircular first floor bay window. A three story belvedere is built into the angle formed by the main block and the projecting end bay. A flat roofed front porch wraps around the base of the belvedere and across the main block. The porch is supported by turned columns w/spindle work spandrels. Gabled roof ends have matching spindle work sunburst patterns. Second floor windows have 2/2 sash and first floor windows have 1/1 sash. Roll 4, Neg. 36.
4. 206 E. Commerce St.: c. 1890; one story rectangular brick commercial w/flat roof, original center entry flanked on either side by display windows, corbeled denticulated brick cornice just below roofline. Roll 12, Neg. 25.
5. 301 E. Commerce St. (Steiner-Kendrick House): c. 1845; one-and-a-half story frame, truncated pyramidal roof w/large center cross gable dormer featuring a Palladian style window, low hip roofed porch wrapping around two sides of house supported by clustered, fluted, tapered wooden columns on brick piers, back of house has several additions including one semi-detached outbuilding reportedly moved and connected to main house. Roll 24, Neg. 1-4.