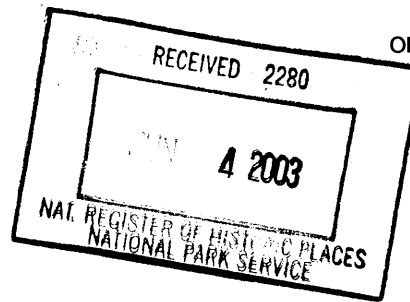


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



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 Commercial Historic District
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number East Market Street, East Main Street, Tipton Street, Buffalo Street, Spring Street, South Roan Street, and Colonial Way N/A not for publication
city or town Johnson City N/A vicinity
state Tennessee code TN county Washington code 179 zip code 37601

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.)
Herbert L. Boyer 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:)
Edson H. Beall 7.17.03
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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	
52	25	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
52	25	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: department store
- COMMERCE/TRADE: financial institution
- COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
- COMMERCE/TRADE: professional
- DOMESTIC: hotel
- GOVERNMENT: post office
- RELIGION: religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- COMMERCE/TRADE: professional
- COMMERCE/TRADE: business
- COMMERCE/TRADE: financial institution
- COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
- DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling
- RELIGION: religious facility
- RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

- OTHER: One-Part, Two-Part, and Three-Part
- Commercial buildings
- Classical Revival
- Art Deco

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation Stone, Brick
- walls Stone, Brick, Concrete, Stucco, Wood
- roof Asphalt, Metal
- 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.)

- 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

1887-1953

Criteria Considerations

(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

Unknown; multiple

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:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:
City of Johnson City Planning Office

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approximately 20 acres Johnson City

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>378485</u>	<u>4019763</u>	3	<u>17</u>	<u>378948</u>	<u>4019784</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>17</u>	<u>378861</u>	<u>4019951</u>	4	<u>17</u>	<u>378541</u>	<u>4019509</u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James B. Williams/ Administrative Services Assistant 3
organization Tennessee Historical Commission date 03/01/2003
street & number 2941 Lebanon Road telephone 615-532-1550
city or town Nashville state TN zip code 37143-0442

Additional Documentation

submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 Or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name (multiple owners, see attached)
street & number _____ Telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ Zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Johnson City Commercial Historic District,
Washington County, Tennessee

7. DESCRIPTION

The Johnson City Commercial Historic District is composed of an intact collection of historic commercial buildings dating from circa 1887 to 1953. Generally, buildings are one and two story brick structures with minimal embellishments. When ornamentation does appear on the buildings, it is usually found around windows or on the upper stories. Although many storefronts have been altered, overall the streetscapes retain a good degree of integrity. Consisting of 78 commercial buildings, the district is primarily situated east of Buffalo Street, south of East Market Street, north of State of Franklin Street, and west of Colonial Way. Appropriately, the district is bordered by the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad and the Southern Railroad. The development of these railroads brought an influx of population and increased commerce in Johnson City, which in turn produced many of the buildings that dominate the current downtown landscape. Similar to many downtowns, the buildings in the Johnson City Commercial Historic District reflect the changing popularity in architectural styles from the late 19th to the mid-20th century. The district includes examples of Victorian era (201-203 East Main Street), Classical Revival (106-108 East Main Street), and Art Deco (309 East Main Street).

Contributing buildings were differentiated from non-contributing buildings on the basis of historical integrity. Contributing buildings have had relatively few permanent changes to their façade, while new materials or neglect altered the non-contributing buildings too much. Non-contributing buildings may also have been less than fifty years old, which disqualifies them for the National Register. There is one exception to the age restriction, 202 East Main Street built in 1957. This building was designed as an addition to 200 East Main Street, continuing its architectural style and adjoining the buildings with a door on the second floor. Most of the buildings situated between East Main Street and East Market Street have parallel facades that front on both streets, though consist of only one building. Each individual façade is chronicled below, but a building is only numbered and evaluated for contribution once. The address affixed to the parallel façade is notated in parentheses at the end of a building's description. Parcel identification numbers have also been placed in parentheses at the end of each address.

Buffalo Street

1. 75, 83, & 85 Buffalo Street (464 and 458), currently Mel's Stamps and Coins. Two-part commercial with Victorian Romanesque influence. 1890. Brick and stucco, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed modern display windows, 2nd story 2:2 horizontal modern windows, stucco over 1st story, buff-colored arches over 2nd story windows, bricked over vents or windows above 2nd story windows, pilasters, brick corbelling to cornice. (c)
2. 101 Buffalo Street (524), currently Rick's Hair and Hole in the Wall. Two-part commercial. 1890. Brick painted gray, 2 stories, asphalt hipped roof, irregular plan, 1st story fixed display

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Johnson City Commercial Historic District
Washington County, Tennessee

3. 107 Buffalo Street (532), historically the New York Bargain House, currently vacant. Two-part commercial with Victorian era influence. 1888. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, irregular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 2:2 arched windows, painted over transom windows, decorative string course, brick corbelling to pressed metal cornice. (c)
4. 109 Buffalo Street (540), currently Pugs Subs. One-part commercial. 1915. Brick with vinyl siding façade, 1 story, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, fixed display windows. (nc)
- 111-3 Buffalo Street (549). Park.
5. 115 Buffalo Street (568), historically a jewelry store, currently vacant. One-part commercial. 1915. Brick, 1 story, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, fixed display windows, metal covering over transom windows. (c)
6. 117 Buffalo Street (574), currently vacant. One-part commercial. 1915. Brick painted white, 1 story, asphalt flat roof, irregular plan, fixed display windows. (c)
7. 119 Buffalo Street (588), currently Bargain Center. One-part commercial. 1915. Brick painted white, 1 story, asphalt flat, rectangular plan, fixed display window. (c)
8. 121 Buffalo Street (589), currently Downtown Army Navy Surplus. One-part commercial. 1915. Brick painted white on lower half, 1 story, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, fixed display window. (c)

Colonial Way

- Parking Lot (372).
- Parking Lot (391).

Main Street (East)

9. 100 East Main Street (521), historically Snyder-Jones Pharmacy, currently Main Street Tile. 1922. Two-part commercial. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, irregular plan, 1st story modern 3-panel fixed windows, 2nd story modern 3-panel fixed windows. (nc)
10. 102 East Main Street (519), historically Calfee & Swann Photography Store, currently Herndon, Coleman, Brading, & McKee Law Offices. 1922. Two-part commercial. Brick painted white, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story modern 3-panel fixed windows, 2nd story modern 3-panel fixed windows. (nc)

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Johnson City Commercial Historic District
Washington County, Tennessee

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11. 104 East Main Street (514), historically Fields "The Working Mom's Store," currently Herndon, Coleman, Brading, & McKee Law Office. 1900/1953. One-part commercial. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 2nd story 2-panel modern fixed windows. Modern renovation in 1953 presumably covered original storefront. (nc)
 12. 106-108 East Main Street (510), historically Tennessee National Bank. 1914. One-part commercial with Stripped Classical influences. Stone, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 2-panel fixed windows, 3rd story 1:1 windows, two-story Doric pilasters, simple cornice. (c)
 13. 200 East Main Street (498), historically Unaka National Bank and Hamilton Bank, currently Downtown Towers, Inc. 1921. Three-part commercial with Italian Renaissance influences. Yellow brick, 6 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story arched fixed windows divided into two parts, 2nd – 5th stories 1:1 paired windows, 6th story 1:1 windows, rustication along 1st story, flat arches on 5th story, dental moldings on cornice. (c)
 14. 201-203 East Main Street (484), historically First National Bank. Three-part commercial with Victorian Romanesque influence. 1887/1933. Brick, 3 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular building with corner entrance, 1st story fixed modern display with window hoods and transom windows, 2nd-3rd story paired 1:1 bay windows, rustication on side entrance, northwestern side has lost bay windows and has new brick on the façade, pressed metal cornice. (c)
 15. 202 East Main Street (494), currently People's Community Bank. 1957. One-part commercial. Yellow brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 1:1 paired windows, designed as an addition to Unaka Bank with continued rustication from 200 East Main Street and an interior connecting door to 200 East Main Street on the 2nd story. (counted as an addition to number 13)
 16. 207 East Main Street (429A). Two-part commercial. 1916. Brick painted off-white, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed modern windows, 2nd story fixed modern windows, rustication. (nc)
 17. 207 East Main Street (429B), historically Parks-Belk Department Store. Modern commercial. 1955. Concrete, 3 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed windows, 2nd-3rd story 1:1 windows (same building as 104 East Market Street). (nc)
 - 208-210 East Main Street (488, 485). Earth Day Park.

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Johnson City Commercial Historic District
Washington County, Tennessee

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18. 211 East Main Street (425), currently Halo Bar. One-part commercial. 1975. Wood and stucco, 1 story, corrugated metal flat roof, rectangular plan, fixed windows, storefront somewhat residential in appearance. (nc)
 19. 212 East Main Street (481), currently vacant. 1916. Two-part commercial with Colonial Revival influences. Concrete block and brick painted white, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed windows, 2nd story 1:1 windows, storefront cornice, quoins, large-scale keystones over 2nd story windows, cornice. (c)
 20. 213 East Main Street (418), historically Hannah Building, currently Atomik Comics. Two-part commercial with Victorian era influence. 1910/1933. Brick painted blue-gray, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 6:1 windows, structural glass over storefront, decorative dental and saw tooth brickwork beneath pressed metal cornice (same building as 108 East Market Street). (c)
 21. 214 East Main Street (475), currently Signature Gallery. Two-part commercial. 1916. Yellow brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 1:1 with transom windows, four recessed decorative brick panels, brick corbelling above storefront and above 2nd story windows. (c)
 22. 215 East Main Street (417), currently Highland Theatrical Company. Two-part commercial with Victorian era influence. 1910/1933. Brick painted off-white, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 1:1 windows, rusticated storefront piers, decorative panels above storefront, dental and saw tooth brickwork beneath pressed metal cornice (same building as 110 East Market Street). (c)
 23. 216 East Main Street (469), historically the Miller Building. Two-part commercial with late Victorian era influence. 1916. Buff-colored brick and stone, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 1:1 windows, stone rustication on storefront piers, storefront cornice, stone or concrete lintel on 2nd story windows, stone banding beneath cornice, triangular parapet. (c)
 24. 217 East Main Street (412), historically JE Crouch Bookstore, currently the Rustic Attic. Two-part commercial with Neoclassical influence. 1910/1933. Buff-colored brick, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 1:1 modern windows, 2nd story window surround with keystone, cornice with dental moldings (same building as 112 East Market Street). (c)
 25. 219 East Main Street (409). Two-part commercial with Victorian era influence. 1910. Brick covered with Dryvit or stucco, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st

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Johnson City Commercial Historic District
Washington County, Tennessee

story fixed windows, 2nd story fixed windows, modern arched windows, original Victorian era cornice (same building as 114 East Market Street). (c)

26. 221 East Main Street (403). Two-part commercial. 1916. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, currently just a shell, building under construction (same building as 116 East Market Street). (nc)
27. 222 East Main Street (453), historically J.G. Sterchi Furniture Store, currently ETSU Physicians & Associates. Two-part commercial. 1908. Brick painted cream, 3 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story windows boarded over with plywood, brick corbelling to cornice, dental moldings. (c)
28. 225 East Main Street (397), historically McLellan Stores, currently Chucky Trading Company. Two-part commercial department store. 1916/1930. Brick painted yellow, 3 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd-3rd story 3-part hopper windows, possible covered over transom windows (same building as 118-122 East Market Street). (c)
- Alleyway. (395)
29. 227 East Main Street (402A), currently Gatsby's. Two-part commercial with Victorian era influence. 1901. Brick with stone foundation, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, irregular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 1:1 windows, center window has a rounded arch containing stained glass, rounded pilasters, stone string course. (c)
30. 228-230 East Main Street (443), currently Antique Village. Two-part commercial with simplified Neoclassical influence and Art Deco influenced storefront. 1908. Brick, 3 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story glass block windows, Art Deco metal awning, simplified Doric pilasters, flat arches with stone keystones over 2nd story windows, recessed brick panel, brick corbelling above each window bay. (c)
31. 231 East Main Street (402B), currently Gatsby's. Two-part commercial with Classical influence. 1916. Brick, 3 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd-3rd story modern 1:1 windows, pilasters, brick corbelling to a projecting dental cornice. (c)
32. 232 East Main Street (436), historically Beckners. Two-part commercial. 1910. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 1:1 modern windows, storefront remodeling in 1933 (Art Deco influenced), brick corbelling at roofline. (c)

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Johnson City Commercial Historic District
Washington County, Tennessee

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33. 233 East Main Street (387). One-part commercial. 1916/1970. Brick, 1 story, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed modern windows, residential door, paneling covers original storefront (same building as 128 East Market Street). (nc)
34. 234 East Main Street (431). Two-part commercial. 1904. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st and 2nd story 1:1 windows, modifications to storefront include modern doors and windows, flat arches above 2nd story windows, brick cornice. (c)
35. 235 East Main Street (396), currently The Hyper Link. One-part commercial. 1916/1960. Brick, 1 story, asphalt parapet roof, 1st story 1:1 modern windows, residential door, modern brick covers original storefront. (nc)
36. 236 East Main Street (428), currently Main Street Fabric. Two-part commercial. 1904. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed windows, 2nd story 1:1 modern windows, residential door on eastern side of building, flat arches over 2nd story windows, brick corbelling to cornice. (c)
37. 238 East Main Street (424), currently Old Towne Sweet Shop. One-part commercial. 1904. Brick painted white, 1 story, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, fixed display windows. (c)
- 239 East Main Street (370). Majestic Park (same lot as 132-134 East Market Street).
38. 240-2 East Main Street (416), currently Atlantis. Two-part commercial with International influence. 1940. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story fixed and 1:1 windows. (c)
39. 244 East Main Street (406), currently Massengill's. Two-part commercial. 1900. Brick, 3 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd and 3rd story modern 1:1 with one older 2:2 windows, brick pilasters, possible original metal awning with minor floral decorations, suggestive arch over 3rd story windows. (c)
40. 243 East Main Street (354), historically Kress Store, currently Main Street Antiques. Two-part commercial department store. 1910. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display with transom windows, 2nd story 2:2 windows, cast iron storefront columns, 2nd story brick pilasters with stone capitals and bases, flat arches over 2nd story windows (same building as 136-140 East Market Street). (c)
41. 247-249 East Main Street (384 and 385), currently an attorney's office. One-part commercial. 1915. Brick, 1 story, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story residential windows, storefront replaced with residential front. (nc)

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Johnson City Commercial Historic District
Washington County, Tennessee

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42. 251-253 East Main Street (350), currently Tennessee Public Defender's Office. Two-part commercial. 1916/1933. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story covered over windows (same building as 142 East Market Street). (nc)
43. 257 East Main Street (346A), historically Wofford Bros. Insurance, currently JC Security and Finance. Two-part commercial with Victorian era influence. 1907/1927. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 6:6 modern windows, structural glass, buff-colored brick storefront and street cornice, stone lintels on 2nd story windows, decorative brickwork beneath brick corbelling to cornice. (c)
44. 300 East Main Street (388), historically King Department Store, currently King Center. Two-part commercial with vernacular Neoclassical influence. 1928. Brick, 4 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd-4th story 1:1 modern windows, brick pilasters, triple sash bordering on upper floor windows, classical pedimented window surround on 4th story center window, decorative brickwork along roofline, roof-top finials, elevator. (c)
45. 301 East Main Street (351), historically People's Bank. Two-part commercial with Stripped Classical influence. 1939. Brick painted white with marble base, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 3-part hopper windows, brick pilasters, frieze dividing 1st and 2nd story, simplified cornice. (c)
46. 308 East Main Street (378), currently MC Design Studio. Two-part commercial. 1915. Brick painted white, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 1:1 paired windows, recessed brick panels above 2nd story windows, crenellated roofline. (c)
47. 309 East Main Street (331), historically JC Penney's. Art Deco Department Store. 1920. Concrete and brick, 3 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows covered, transom window over entrance (same building as 204 East Market Street). (c)
48. 312 East Main Street (362), currently Tennessee Flag. Commercial. 1967. Brick, 3 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd and 3rd story 8:8 windows, modern façade, shutters on 2nd and 3rd story windows, balcony, pilasters and pediment surrounding 2nd and 3rd story windows. (nc)
49. 313-5 East Main Street (326), currently Hands On! Regional Museum. Two-part commercial. 1949. Brick painted white, 3 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st

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Johnson City Commercial Historic District
Washington County, Tennessee

story fixed display windows, 2nd-3rd story windows covered (same building as 206 East Market Street). (nc)

50. 316-322 East Main Street (347), currently Miller Arts and Quad City. Two-part commercial with Art Deco influence. 1942. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 3-part hopper windows, structural glass beneath storefront, decorative brickwork beneath 2nd story. (c)
51. 319 East Main Street (321), currently Hands On! Regional Museum. Two-part commercial. 1946. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story brick filled windows, possible cover over transom windows (same building as 208 East Market Street). (nc)
52. 323-5 East Main Street (318), currently Christian Science Reading Room and Tracy's Neck Wear. One-part commercial. 1951. Buff-colored brick, 1 story, asphalt hipped roof, rectangular plan, fixed display with transom windows. (c)
53. 324 East Main Street (344), currently Nelson Fine Art. One-part commercial. 1940. Brick, 1 story, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, fixed display windows, brick façade covered. (nc)
54. 331-3 East Main Street (312), currently Johnson City Federal Credit Union. One-part commercial addition to a two-part commercial (East Market Street side). 1910/1949. Concrete block and stucco, 1 story, asphalt flat roof, irregular plan, fixed windows (same building as 212 East Market Street). (nc)
55. 334 East Main Street (342), currently vacant. One-part commercial. 1970. Stucco and concrete block, 1 story, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan. (nc)
56. 335 East Main Street (292), historically and currently Downtown Christian Church. Romanesque. 1906/1923. Brick and stucco, 1 story, asphalt gabled roof, irregular plan, fixed stained glass windows, stone lintels and brick arches, two later additions on southwestern and northwestern sides. (c)
57. 338 East Main Street (324), historically United States Post Office, currently WJHL TV-11. Art Deco/PWA Modern." 1933. Stone, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story 6:6 windows, 2nd story 4:4 windows, metal balcony on 2nd story. (c)

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Johnson City Commercial Historic District
Washington County, Tennessee

Market Street (East)

- 104 East Market Street (429). Modern commercial. 1955. Concrete, 3 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed windows, 2nd-3rd story 1:1 windows (same building as 207 East Main Street). (nc)
- 106 East Market Street (425). Vacant lot.
- 108 East Market Street (418), historically Hannah Building, currently Atomik Comics. Two-part commercial. 1910/1933. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story windows covered (same building as 213 East Main Street). (c)
- 110 East Market Street (417), currently Highland Theatrical Company. Two-part commercial. 1910/1933. Brick painted white, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed modern display windows, 2nd story 1:1 windows, storefront replaced with plywood and residential door (same building as 215 East Main Street). (c)
- 112 East Market Street (412), , historically JE Crouch Bookstore, currently the Rustic Attic. Two-part commercial. 1910/1933. Brick painted off-white, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 2nd story windows 1:1, brick corbelling to 2nd story windows, brick corbelling to roofline, visible water meter (same building as 217 East Main Street). (c)
- 114 East Market Street (409), currently law offices of Anderson, Fugate, and Givens. Two-part commercial. 1910. Brick painted blue, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed modern windows, 2nd story 2:2 windows, cast iron storefront columns, raised stairway entrance, pressed metal window hoods, pressed metal cornice (same building as 219 East Main Street). (c)
- 116 East Market Street (403). Two-part commercial. 1916. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, currently just a shell, building under construction (same building as 221 East Main Street). (nc)
- 118-122 East Market Street (397), historically McLellan Stores, currently Chucky Trading Company. Two-part commercial department store. 1916/1930. Brick, 3 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story fixed multi-pane windows, 3rd story fixed multi-pane and 2:1 windows (same building as 225 East Main Street). (c)
- Alleyway. (395).

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58. 124 East Market Street (394). One-part commercial. 1918. Brick, 1-½ stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed modern windows, storefront covered by corrugated metal, simple brick cornice. (c)
59. 126 East Market Street (390). Two-part commercial. 1915. Brick and stucco, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed modern windows, 2nd story fixed modern windows. (c)
- 128 East Market Street (387). One-part commercial. 1916/1970. Stucco over brick painted blue-gray, 1 story, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, paired fixed modern windows, suggestive flat arches over windows and doors (same building as 233 East Main Street). (nc)
60. 130 East Market Street (383). One-part commercial. 1925/1970. Brick covered by paneling, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed modern windows, 2nd story fixed windows. (nc)
- 132-134 East Market Street (370). Majestic Park (same lot as 239 East Main Street).
- 136-140 East Market Street (354), historically Kress Store, currently Main Street Antiques. Two-part commercial department store. 1910. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 2:2 windows, storefront paneling original to addition (same building as 243 East Main Street). (c)
61. 141 East Market Street (317), historically the John Sevier Hotel, currently the John Sevier Center. Three-part commercial with Classical influence. 1929/1943. Brick, 10 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1:1 modern windows, flat arches on 2nd story windows, large cornice with classical details above 3rd story, cornice above 9th story, arches over 10th story windows, large cornice at roofline. (c)
- 142 East Market Street (350), currently Tennessee Public Defender's Office. Two-part commercial. 1916/1933. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, brick filled windows, dental molding to cornice (same building as 251-253 East Main Street). (nc)
62. 202 East Market Street (340), currently Service Loan Company. Two-part commercial. 1920. Brick and stucco painted blue-gray, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display modern windows, 2nd story 8:8 modern windows (same building as 301 South Roan Street). (nc)

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- 204 East Market Street (331), historically JC Penney's. Art Deco Department Store. 1920. Brick, 3 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, ribbon windows (same building as 309 East Main Street). (c)
 - 206 East Market Street (326), currently Hands On! Regional Museum. One-part commercial addition. 1949. Brick, 1 story, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, fixed display windows (same building as 315 East Main Street). (nc)
 - 208 East Market Street (321), currently Hands On! Regional Museum. Two-part commercial. 1946. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display with transom windows, 2nd story brick filled windows, brick pilasters (same building as 319 East Main Street). (nc)
 - 210 East Market Street (318). Parking Lot (same as 325 East Main Street).
 - 212 East Market Street (312), currently Johnson City Federal Credit Union. Two-part commercial. 1910/1949. Brick and wood, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 2nd story fixed modern windows, storefront removed and replaced with a wood exterior (same building as 333 East Main Street). (nc)

Roan Street (South)

- 301 South Roan Street (340), currently Service Loan Company. Two-part commercial. 1920. Brick and stucco painted blue-gray, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display modern windows, 2nd story 8:8 modern windows (same building as 202 East Market Street). (nc)
- 63. 306 South Roan Street (346B), currently Downtown Deli. Modern Hut. 1980. 1 story, rectangular plan, fixed windows. (nc)
- 64. 403 South Roan Street (422), currently Olde Towne Lofts. One-part commercial. 1918. Brick, 1 story, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, fixed windows, storefront has been replaced with modern brick façade and residential door. (nc)
- 65. 405 South Roan Street (438). One-part commercial. 1918. Brick, 1 story, asphalt flat roof, fixed display windows, transom windows covered, metal awning. (c)
- 66. 407 South Roan Street (450), currently Plasma Services. One-part commercial. 1918. Brick covered by paneling, 1 story, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, fixed windows. (nc)

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67. 414 South Roan Street (444), historically Brading-Sells Lumber Company, currently Bridal Boutique and Two-Wheel Transit. Two-part commercial. 1916. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, multiple storefronts, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 6:6 modern windows, transom windows above metal awning with minor floral decorations, brick pilasters with corbelled base, brick corbelling to cornice, dental molding. (c)

Spring Street

68. 111 Spring Street (517), currently Spring Street Apartments. Two-part commercial. 1920. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed windows, 2nd story 9:9 flanked by 6:6 modern windows, modern brick façade placed over old façade. (nc)
69. 117 Spring Street (522), currently Roddy's Flowers. One-part commercial. 1940. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed windows, modern brick façade placed over old façade. (nc)
70. 119-121 Spring Street (531), currently Plumbers and Steamfitters Local Union, #538. Two-part commercial. 1915. Brick painted white, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 2:2 modern windows, possible transom windows covered, brick corbelling to cornice, lintels over 2nd story windows. (c)
- 122-124 Spring Street (573). Two-part commercial. 1925. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan with corner entrance, 1st story fixed windows, 2nd story 1:1 modern windows, yellow vinyl siding covers top of windows, stone lintels over windows, decorative brickwork beneath roofline (same building as 116-120 Tipton Street). (c)
71. 123 Spring Street (551), currently B&J Sales. Two-part commercial. 1915. Brick painted white, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 2:2 modern windows, possible transom windows covered by pink stone, lintels over 2nd story windows. (c)
72. 126 Spring Street (581). Two-part commercial with Victorian Romanesque influence. 1895. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story multi-paned modern windows, 2nd story 1:1 modern windows, modern Tudor-influenced storefront, brick corbelling to storefront cornice, buff-colored rounded arches over 2nd story windows. (c)
73. 125-127 Spring Street (563). Two-part commercial. 1908. Concrete block, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 1:1 windows, transom windows covered by wood, rusticated stone. (c)

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74. 128-30 Spring Street (587), historically JC Radio and TV Service. Two-part commercial. 1925. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd story 5-part hoppers paired with one fixed window, brick corbelling to storefront cornice and rooftop cornice. (c)

Tipton Street

- 104 Tipton Street (613). Parking Lot.
75. 106 Tipton Street (608), currently Twin ACS. Two-part commercial. 1925. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt flat roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed windows, 2nd story 1:1 modern windows, possible transom windows covered, three course brick arches over 2nd story windows, heavy brick corbelling to cornice. (c)
76. 108-110 Tipton Street (599 and 603). Two-part commercial. 1925. Brick, 3 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story fixed display windows, 2nd-3rd story modern multi-paned 3-part windows, stone lintels above 2nd and 3rd story windows, brick corbelling and dental molding above 2nd story windows, brick corbelling to parapet with recessed rectangular panels. (c)
77. 112 Tipton Street (593), historically Hannah-Dosser Dry Goods. Stacked Vertical Block. 1923. Brick, 4 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan, 1st story windows fixed display with transom windows, 2nd-4th story multi-paned industrial, stone accents, brick corbelling to cornice, elevator. (c)
78. 116-120 Tipton Street (573). Two-part commercial. 1925. Brick, 2 stories, asphalt parapet roof, rectangular plan with corner entrance, 1st story fixed windows, 2nd story 1:1 modern windows, yellow vinyl siding covers top of windows, stone lintels over windows, decorative brickwork beneath roofline (same building as 122-124 Spring Street). (c)

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Johnson City Commercial Historic District is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its significance in the development of commerce in Johnson City. While the surrounding region is rich in early pioneer history, Johnson City's development coincided with the expansion of the railroad system in the South. From the beginning of the first general store in the downtown district, commerce was the driving force behind the birth and growth of the city. As railroad traffic increasingly passed through the city in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, commerce swiftly blossomed, necessitating the construction of many of the adjacent buildings in the Johnson City Commercial Historic District. The buildings in the district retain their historic and architectural integrity.

Background

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 Springs, 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 2/26/70), 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. 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 Legislature. It was his political influence that helped to steer the rail

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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. These initial commercial endeavors occurred on the land that would later become Johnson City's downtown commercial district. None of these early buildings are extant.

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

Birth of the Commercial District

This brief lapse in development and incorporation was broken with the advent of the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad in 1880, which 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 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 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.

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

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The boom period of the 1880's could not be sustained and an economic downturn 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 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 retail center than before the downturn. The population rapidly climbed from 8,562 in 1910 to 25,080 in 1930. It was in the downtown intersection of the railroads in the early 1900's that developers erected the commercial buildings, which dominate the downtown landscape today. Primary examples are J.G. Sterchi Furniture Store (222 East Main Street), the Kress Building (243 East Main Street), Brading-Sells Lumber Company (414 South Roan Street), the John Sevier Hotel (141 East Market Street), and King's Department Store (300 East Main Street).

James G. Sterchi, a businessman from Knoxville, opened the J.G. Sterchi furniture store in Johnson City on May 21, 1908. The store began on the north side of Main Street, but sometime between 1908 and 1914, the company moved to 222-226 East Main Street where it remained for seventy-three years. Sterchi Furniture marketed a number of different products, including furniture, pianos, carpets, rugs, and sewing machines. By 1921, Sterchi Furniture sold Victrolas and Edison talking machines to Johnson City residents. In addition to the store in Johnson City, the Sterchi company had stores in Knoxville and eventually throughout the South.

Sterchi also diversified into funeral services, with a separate Sterchi Undertaking Company forming at 226 East Main Street. For a brief time, the funeral company even offered a private ambulance service, but by 1930 and the Great Depression, Sterchi Furniture withdrew from the funeral business. The store was renamed Sterchi Brothers Furniture and focused primarily on the furniture business until 1987, when it was sold to another furniture company, Helig-Meyers. The building no longer serves as a furniture retailer but is currently used as an office building for medical billing.

Just down the road from Sterchi Brothers Furniture was another early commercial establishment, the Kress Building. In 1910, S.H. Kress & Company constructed one of their many five, ten, and twenty-five stores at 241-245 (now 243) East Main Street. The S.H. Kress & Company, famous for their distinctive architectural designs, had already opened stores throughout Tennessee in Memphis, Nashville, Knoxville, Chattanooga, Jackson, Clarksville, and Bristol. In Johnson City, the Kress store occupied the lower floor of the building, while offices on the upper floor were leased to professionals such as physicians, chiropractors, wholesalers, and architects. The five and dime

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stores were a popular phenomenon in early 20th century American commercialism. The front window displays of S.H. Kress & Co., renowned for their arrangements of a single product, enticed shoppers to enter and peruse the aisles for toys, house wares, inexpensive jewelry, or candies. The Kress Store also promoted the social aspect of shopping as friends arrived at the stores, especially on weekends, to gather, to shop, or to eat. The company adopted the slogan "Meet your friends at Kress."² Customers from Johnson City and the surrounding region continued to meet and shop at Kress until its closure, presumably in the early 1970's. A computer business tried to locate in the building in 1997 but was unsuccessful at establishing itself. In 1998 Main Street Antiques opened and operates out of the building to the present.

Unlike the Sterchi building and the Kress building on East Main Street, the building that began as the Brading-Sells Lumber Company has held many different businesses. Brading-Sells Lumber Company at the corner of South Roan Street and Jobe Street was a wholesale and retail supplier of lumber, building materials and supplies. The lumber business was a prominent industry in Johnson City because the railroads served as a regional depot and distribution center. A publication by the Johnson City Chamber of Commerce in 1915 described the timber industry as "the leading factor in the development and growth of the city."³ Brading-Sells was one of a number of local businesses that seized on the Southern Appalachian timber boom. However, by 1916, the industry had already boomed for a couple of decades. Lumber businesses in the 1920's witnessed a rapid decline as timber resources were exhausted.⁴ Brading-Sells Lumber Company closed around this time.

In the 1920's control of the Brading-Sells property transferred to Samuel B. White, who was known as the local tinner. The S.B. White Company provided sheet metal work, roofing, stoves, ranges, furnaces, etc. The company focused particularly on roofing, including Barrett roofing, Barber asphalt roofing, Johns-Manville roofing, slate roofing, and tile roofing. Kings Incorporated purchased the property and used it as an annex to store furniture in the late 1930's. The King Department Store was one the largest and best-equipped department stores in Johnson City at the time, and the annexation of the extra property on South Roan Street denoted the sheer volume of their business. The property remained at their disposal until sometime before 1960 when control passed to General Shale Products Company, a brick and cinder block manufacturer. General Shale used the property as a showroom for their products.

In the early 1960's, it appears that the former Brading-Sells property was divided. Two businesses lived in the address at 412 South Roan Street, one being the General Shale showroom and the other the Lynn Sheeley Company. This firm was a piano dealership operated by William Woods,

² Bernice L. Thomas, *America's 5 & 10 Cent Stores: The Kress Legacy* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997), 10.

³ *Six Decades of Progress 1915-1975: Johnson City Area Chamber of Commerce* (Johnson City: Don & Mignon, 1976), 18.

⁴ *History of Washington County, Tennessee*, comp. and ed. Joyce and W. Eugene Cox, contributed by Washington County Historical Association (Johnson City: The Overmountain Press, 2001), 376-7.

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who later bought the business and renamed it Woods Piano and Organ Company. They housed a wide selection of pianos including Steinway, Sohmer, Everett, and Cable-Nelson. By 1979, the property was officially split with one side designated as 414 South Roan Street and the other designated 412 South Roan Street. 412 remained under the control of Woods Piano. 414, on the other hand, changed control once again. Instead of the General Shale Products showroom, the property was transformed into a restaurant called The Soup Kitchen, which conducted its business here until 1984 when it moved across town.

In 1986, 414 South Roan Street, once the site of Brading-Sells Lumber Company, was home to the All-American, a tee-shirt company. This business survived only a couple of years. The building remained vacant for a few years, until Futons, Etc occupied it in the 1990's. As is apparent by the name, the company sold a variety of futons to Johnson City residents, but like many downtown businesses in the eighties and nineties, it had difficulty sustaining its business. By 1998, it had closed. Since then, the building has been renovated for use as a bridal shop with the upstairs serving as condominiums. While the property at the corner of South Roan Street is not distinguished for having retained a business for a long period of time, it is an important representative of the fleeting nature of commerce that many of the other buildings experienced.

The John Sevier Hotel is another building in the downtown area rich in history. This large complex constructed in 1924, with an addition in 1928, served as the largest hotel in the city and the center of city life. Suffering from the Great Depression, a proposed third section was never constructed. The hotel was built atop a spring to provide guests with pure water and boasted 225 rooms. Samuel Cole Williams (Aquone NR 11/4/93), a contemporary historian of Johnson City, characterized the hotel as "one of the largest and best-equipped hostelries between Chattanooga and Roanoke."⁵ The hotel advertised itself as "Johnson City's million dollar hotel."⁶ The success of the hotel can be attributed to two main factors: tourism and the ballroom.

⁵ Samuel Cole Williams, *History of Johnson City and its Environs* (Johnson City: Watauga Press, 1940), 32.

⁶ *Johnson City, Tennessee City Directory*, vol. XI, comp. Ernest H. Miller (Asheville: The Miller Press, 1928), 105.

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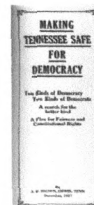
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Brown, A.R., House
Unicoi County, Tennessee



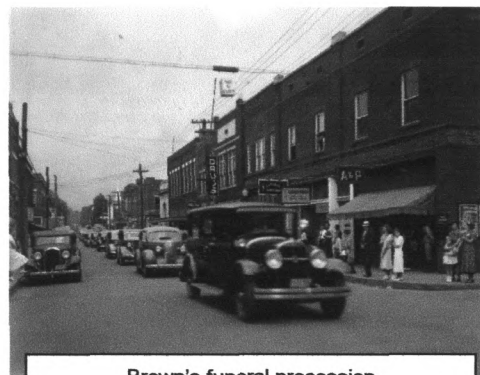
Brown around 1934

While in the legislature, in 1929 he served on the first Free Textbook Commission, arguing the case for free books for Tennessee's public school children. He was also a founding member of the local YMCA and Masonic Lodge, as well as a member of the board of directors for the area Kiwanis Club. In addition to his other public services, he left a bequest of \$5,000 to be used in support of the poor in the community. A lifelong Republican, Brown authored a pamphlet *Making Tennessee Safe for Democracy: Two Kinds of Democracy, Two Kinds of Democrats* in 1927. In it he discusses the apportionment of the legislature. In 1928 he attended the Republican National Convention where he was to place the name of John Q. Tilson, another Unicoi County native, into nomination as the running mate for Herbert Hoover. At the last minute, another candidate was selected and Mr. Brown's speech was cancelled.



Mr. Brown was a life-long supporter of education. He was a founder and president of the Unaka Academy, which provided education for boarding and day students until the establishment of Erwin's public schools. The Academy building became the high school for the city in 1916 and served until a new high school was built in 1929. The Academy's dormitory later became the home of Erwin's hospital. Because of his love for his church, Mr. Brown donated the land he owned across South Main Avenue from his home for the new brick building for the First Baptist Church in 1915. He also served as a deacon for more than thirty years. His interest in education and religion merged in his service as a Trustee of Carson Newman College, where he later sent all five of his surviving children for their college training.

Brown died in a car accident in June 1937. In his will he established a scholarship fund for Carson-Newman, as well as an endowment fund for the construction of a new building on campus. Brown left other bequests to his church and to aid the poor of Unicoi County. The local paper, *The Erwin Observer*, headlined a page on June 10, 1937 with "Thousands Mourn Passing of Town's Leading Citizen" and above a photo of him quoted "A Prince Has Fallen in Israel---". The page was filled with tributes and resolutions for Brown. *The Erwin Record* had a similar tribute to him.



Brown's funeral procession

Tuppy Brown lived in the house until her death in 1959. Daughter, Jodie Helen Brown, lived in the house until her death in 2006. Family members still own the house.

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for his charming looks in such films as *Camille* opposite Greta Garbo, stayed overnight in the hotel. The Hoover dinner and Taylor's visit attested to the rising prominence of both Johnson City and its new hotel, the John Sevier.

Sometime between 1962 and 1979, the John Sevier Hotel ceased operating as a hotel, presumably because it could not compete with the newer hotels erected in North Johnson City. Use of the building continued as the John Sevier Center, an apartment complex devoted primarily to the elderly. To this day, the John Sevier Center is still an apartment building, though not without its scars. On December 24, 1989, there was a terrible fire at the site that engulfed the two lower floors. Rescue workers from throughout the region responded to the emergency to combat the fire. They stopped the fire from spreading further and saved a number of residents, but only after a nightlong struggle. Unfortunately, sixteen people were killed in the incident and approximately fifty people were injured. After the incident, the bottom floors were quickly renovated, and the building returned to operation.

For shopping, many customers from Johnson City and the surrounding communities visited the King Department Store at 300 East Main Street. Built in 1928, the King Department Store was one of the largest department stores in the region; advertisements bragged of "five full floors of fine wares and fashions for all the people."⁹ The store offered a wide selection of goods: men's wear, women's wear, children's wear, millinery, dry goods, shoes, furniture, floor coverings, house furnishings, and GE electric appliances. Samuel Williams described it as "the finest mercantile building between Knoxville and Roanoke."¹⁰ The King family, which sponsored the Johnson City store, was involved in numerous commercial and industrial enterprises in upper East Tennessee. The establishment of a major retail operation by this regional company helped give status to Johnson City as an important commercial center.

King Department Store was constructed by its owner and operator, Samuel R. Sells, a man of local, state, and national importance. Sam Sells was an entrepreneur in the development of Johnson City, serving as President of Brading-Sells Lumber Company (the South Roan Street property described previously), Sells Lumber and Manufacturing Company, King Department Store, General Shale Products Corporation, and the Johnson City Chamber of Commerce. He also served as Vice-President of Peoples Bank in Johnson City.

The people of Johnson City and the surrounding region elected Sam Sells to the State Senate from 1909-1911. As a member of the Fifty-sixth General Assembly, Sells was appointed to the Banks Committee and chairman to a special committee investigating the Department of Game, Fish, and Forestry. He was a prominent proponent of the prohibition movement in Tennessee, introducing legislation that prevented the drinking of intoxicating liquors on railroad passenger trains and streetcars and another bill that prohibited the soliciting of orders for the purchase of

⁹ Hill's *Johnson City (Washington County, Tennessee) Directory*, vol. I (Richmond: Hill Directory Co, 1935), 21.

¹⁰ Williams, 32.

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alcoholic liquors. He also presented petitions from the Johnson City district requesting the passage of statewide prohibition.

In 1911, he was elected as a Republican to the United States House of Representatives and served for four successive Congresses. In 1912 and 1916, he was a delegate to the Republican National Conventions. He ended his political career in 1921 as chairman to the Committee on Pensions of the Sixty-sixth Congress. After losing a bid for reelection to Carroll Reece, he returned to Johnson City, endeavoring in new businesses such as the King Department Store. For fifty-five years, the King Department Store served the people of Johnson City.

Eventually, ownership of the store passed from Sam R. Sells to Sam R. Sells, II, who operated it until its closure in 1983. By this time, the commercial attraction of such downtown businesses had faded; new development chose locations uptown. Despite its former popularity, the King Department Store remained vacant for a number of years. In the 1990's it was renovated and now houses several businesses including a coffeehouse, a beauty salon, and a doctor's office.

Though representative of the growth and commercialism of Johnson City, the Sterchi Furniture Store, the Kress Building, the Brading-Sells Lumber Company, the John Sevier Hotel, and the King Department Store are only samples of the historical buildings found throughout the proposed National Register historic district. Hundreds of other businesses flourished and perished in the area: drug stores, clothing stores, grocers, jewelers, hardware stores, theaters, insurance agencies, beauty shops, shoe stores, dentists, and others. As Johnson City has expanded, the downtown commercial district has dwindled. Like numerous other American Main Streets, its former appeal has faded. Yet, the beginnings of revitalization are stirring in the downtown commercial district. Many of the buildings have been converted into law offices to serve the expanded county courthouse situated in downtown Johnson City. Other buildings have been refurbished for residential occupancy, as inhabitants slowly return. The buildings and streets in the downtown district that serve as a reminder of the town's beginning and commercial foundation will benefit greatly from a National Register designation, accelerating the rejuvenation that is now occurring.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Boundary Description

The district primarily consists of the buildings constructed on either side of East Main Street from its beginning at the intersection of Buffalo Street east to the buildings on the east side of the intersection at Colonial Way (335 and 338 East Main Street). The district incorporates the buildings along the southeast side of East Market Street from its beginning at Buffalo Street east to the building on the east side of the intersection with Colonial Way (335 East Main Street). Also included are buildings along the east side of Buffalo Street south from East Market to State of Franklin Road, the buildings on either side of Tipton Street, and the buildings along either side of Spring Street from the intersection at East Main Street south to the intersection with State of Franklin Road. Finally, the district includes buildings on either side of South Roan Street north from the intersection of State of Franklin Road to the intersection of East Market Street, as well as the John Sevier Center (141 East Market Street). For a clearer depiction of the proposed district, please refer to the attached map.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property contains the buildings most relevant to late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercialism in Johnson City. The district is bordered on the south and on the west by rail lines, creating a natural boundary. Additionally, interstate 181 runs not far from the eastern border of the district. On the east side and the north side of the district, the buildings are no longer intact, have been altered too much, or have been replaced by new structures.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

Johnson City Commercial Historic District
Washington County, Tennessee

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

1. Old United States Post Office, corner of East Main Street and Colonial Way.
Facing southeast.
2. East Main Street between Colonial Way and South Roan Street.
Facing southwest.
3. King Building, corner of East Main Street and South Roan Street
Facing southwest.
4. South Roan Street between East Main Street and State of Franklin Road.
Facing southwest.
5. East Main Street between South Roan Street and Spring Street.
Facing southwest.
6. Old Unaka National Bank and Tennessee National Bank, corner of East Main Street and
Spring Street.
Facing south.
7. East Main Street between Spring Street and South Roan Street.
Facing east.
8. Tipton Street from corner of Buffalo Street.
Facing east.
9. Spring Street from corner of Tipton Street.
Facing east.
10. East Main Street between Buffalo Street and South Roan Street.
Facing north.

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11. Buffalo Street between East Market Street and East Main Street.
Facing northeast.
 12. East Market Street from the corner of Buffalo Street.
Facing east.
 13. East Market Street between Buffalo Street and South Roan Street.
Facing east.
 14. Intersection of South Roan Street and East Market Street.
Facing southwest.
 15. Downtown Christian Church, corner of Colonial Way and East Main Street.
Facing northeast.

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Johnson City Commercial Historic District, Washington
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OWNERSHIP INFORMATION

- Art and Vivian Eckerson
706 West Pine Street
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Thomas A. Salvati
100 Spring Street
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Carriger Building LLC
124 ½ Spring Street
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Bernard H. Cantor
126 Spring Street
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Ray and Violet McCrary
1103 Cedar Place
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Martha Miller
P.O. Box 761
Johnson City, TN 37605
- Johnson City Dental
106 Tipton Street
Johnson City, TN 37605
- John and Angela Vachon
1207 South Roan Street
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Storie Land Partnership LP
P.O. Box 727
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Sherrod Howell, Jr.
249 East Main Street
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Malcolm E. Blowers
4867 North Roan Street
Johnson City, TN 37615
- John B. McKinnon
130 East Market Street
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Appalachian Real Estate
P.O. Box 941
Johnson City, TN 37605
- Daniel and Janis Numan
202 Wesley Street
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Market Street Law Group
114 E. Market Street
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Adams Family Partnership
P.O. Box 122
Johnson City, TN 37605
- Charles D. Bailey, III
215 East Main Street
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Shawn Samier
213 East Main Street
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Gary and Sandra Jobe
211 East Main Street
Johnson City, TN 37601
- The Downtown Partners
P.O. Box 1909
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Melvin and Anna Broyles
132 Broyles Drive
Jonesborough, TN 37659
- Johnson City Housing Authority
500 Washington Avenue
Johnson City, TN 37659

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Johnson City Commercial Historic District, Washington
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- East Tennessee Limit Partnership
1400 E. Millard Street
Johnson City, TN 37605
- Mary J. Edmonds
414 South Roan Street #201
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Stephen and Debra Jones
414 South Roan Street #202
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Mitchual Tate and Janice Perry
414 South Roan Street #414
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Christina Brumby
4161 Old Jonesborough Road
Johnson City, TN 37659
- Thomas McCurry
412 South Roan Street
Johnson City, TN 37659
- 300 East Main Street LLC
4161 Old Jonesborough Road
Johnson City, TN 37659
- Richard and Louisa Clemmer
P.O. Box 4207
Johnson City, TN 37602
- Ben and Marlene Dunavent
1707 Seminole Drive
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Plumbers and Steam Fitters
119-121 Spring Street
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Mr. and Mrs. McCrary
1103 Cedar Place
Johnson City, TN 37601
- TBD LLC
200 East Main Street 6th Floor
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Host Engineering Inc.
200 East Main Street
Johnson City, TN 37659
- Mr. and Mrs. Torbett
200 East Main Street Suite 106
Johnson City, TN 37604
- David Taylor
200 East Main Street Suite 201
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Craig and Lisa Torbett
200 East Main Street Suite 500
Johnson City, TN 37605
- James R. Miller II
1702 Cherokee Road
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Earl and Betty Gouge
806 Hiwassee Heights Drive
Johnson City, TN 37601
- John and Meridith Hart
3211 Peoples Street #74
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Delano J. Carroll
228 East Main Street
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Danny Hunt
P.O. Box 1084
Bristol, TN 37621
- Janice Perry
113 Wellington Court
Gray, TN 37615
- Edwin Lindamood
1605 Enterprise Road
Piney Flats, TN 37686

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Johnson City Commercial Historic District, Washington
County, Tennessee

- Pat Yong
123 East Unaka Avenue
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Thomas Alfred
1205 Ridgeway Road
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Thomas Wilson
P.O. Box 87
Johnson City, TN 37605
- 300 East Main Street LLC
P.O. Box 4316
Johnson City, TN 37602
- Hands On! Regional Museum
816 Lacy Street
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Johnson City Federal Credit Union
331 East Main Street
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Downtown Christian Church
200 Mountcastle Drive
Johnson City, TN 37601
- WJHL-TV
333 East Franklin Street
Richmond, VA 23219
- G&W Properties
P.O. Box 3644
Johnson City, TN 37602
- Patrick O. Paduch
P.O. Box 3612
Johnson City, TN 37602
- Jack and Linda Pittman
P.O. Box 3612
Johnson City, TN 37605
- Lisa Rolen, MC Design
308 East Main Street
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Dorian Jones
112 Tipton Street
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Marvin Carter
300 East Main Street
King Center
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Mary Palmer
200 East Main Street Suite 401
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Medical Education Association Corporation
DBA ETSU
P.O. Box 699
Mountain View, TN 37684
- Courthouse Square, LLC
128 East Market Street
Johnson City, TN 37604
- Terry Revette
c/o Gatsby's
227 East Main Street
Johnson City, TN 37604
- N&B Properties
P.O. Box 118
Johnson City, TN 37605
- City of Johnson City
P. O. Box 2150
Johnson City, TN 37605
- 200 East Main Street Corp.
c/o Marvin Carter
4161 Old Jonesborough Road
Jonesborough, TN 37659
- Fred W. Moore
700 Sharon Drive
Johnson City, TN 37601

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Johnson City Commercial Historic District, Washington
County, Tennessee

- Gemma Velasquez & Murray Cruickshank
8706 Burr Street
Oakland, CA 94605
- Arthur and Margaret Roupas
2200 Indian Ridge Road
Johnson City, TN 37604
- James Brading, Thomas McKee, etal
P. O. Box 1160
Johnson City, TN 37601
- Charles T. Herndon, III, etal
P. O. Box 1160
Johnson City, TN 37601

Johnson City Commercial Historic District



Johnson City Commercial Historic District

