

# City of Greer Historic Resources Survey

City of Greer, Greenville and Spartanburg Counties, South Carolina



August 2017



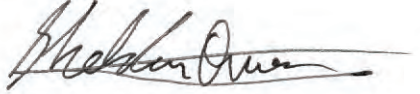
# City of Greer Historic Resources Survey

City of Greer, Greenville and Spartanburg Counties, South Carolina

Final Report

August 2017

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# Abstract

In 2017, Brockington and Associates, Inc., conducted an architectural resources survey of the City of Greer, South Carolina for the Planning and Zoning division of the Building and Development Standards Department and the South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH). The City of Greer was awarded a Federal Historic Preservation Grant to expand its historic properties survey. The objective of this survey was to add to the inventory of recorded historic architectural resources within the City limits (survey area) that retain sufficient integrity to be included in the South Carolina Statewide Survey of Historic Properties (SSHP) and to identify those properties and districts that are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The resources evaluated included buildings, structures, objects, districts, and landscapes that have architectural or historical significance. The resulting survey products will assist the City and SCDAH with their ongoing commitment to preservation planning, promotion of economic incentives for rehabilitation, heritage tourism development, education, and local compliance with state and federal preservation and environmental laws.

This project is part of the South Carolina SSHP, a program coordinated by the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The purpose of this statewide program is to identify all cultural resources in the state and to highlight those that are eligible for the NRHP and for local designation. The federal government has recommended this process of documentation through the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. The Statewide Survey of Historic Properties provides the SHPO with information that enables it to review the effect of projects with federal components on resources eligible for the NRHP. Federal projects require environmental and cultural review permits to proceed, which in turn requires review by the SHPO. In addition, some federal grants for cultural resources and certain federal tax incentives for rehabilitation of historic buildings require a determination of NRHP status. The information developed through the City of Greer Historic Resources Survey Update gives the SHPO a basis for making these determinations.

During the historic architectural survey within the city limits of Greer, we identified 856 historic architectural resources of which 11 are recommended individually eligible for listing in the NRHP. An additional two districts are recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP. These include the Arlington-Davenport-Mountain View Neighborhood and the Greer Mill and Village. The remaining resources within the survey area are recommended not eligible for listing.

The activity that is the subject of this publication has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service (NPS), US Department of the Interior, and administered by SCDAH. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of NPS or SCDAH.

This program receives Federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, the US Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability or age in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington DC, 20240.



# Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the City of Greer Planning and Zoning division of the Building and Development Standards Department and the City of Greer Board of Architectural Review for their support during the survey project. Also, we would like to thank Brad Sauls and Morgan Jones-King of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History for their guidance during the project. In addition, we would like to acknowledge the essential contribution of Joada Hiatt of the Greer Heritage Museum for providing a wealth of knowledge about the development of the City. We would also like to thank Rose Marie Jordan for sharing the products of her research on the City. Furthermore, we extend our sincere gratitude to all City of Greer residents who took interest in the project and shared their knowledge of the community and its built environment.



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# **1.0 Introduction**

## **1.1 Name of Project**

The name of the project is *City of Greer Historic Resources Survey, Greenville and Spartanburg Counties, South Carolina*.

## **1.2 Boundaries of Project**

The survey area is the city limits of Greer. Figure 1.1 presents the survey area depicted on a National Geographic map.

## **1.3 Number of Resources**

The survey recorded 856 historic architectural resources within the survey area that were built before 1977.

## **1.4 Geographical Area**

The survey area was comprised of the approximately 34.68 square miles within the city limits of Greer.

## **1.5 Project Team**

Brockington and Associates, Inc., employs all project team members who worked on the City of Greer Historic Resources Survey, Greenville and Spartanburg Counties, South Carolina. Sheldon Owens served as the project manager and surveyor and Michael Reynolds provided peer review. Charlie Philips conducted background research and wrote the historic context for the project. Inna Moore completed the GIS work and data post-processing for the project. Alicia Sullivan, Meagan Brady, and Michael Walsh contributed to the production of the project deliverables. The staff assigned to the survey effort meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards set forth in 36 CFR 61.

## **1.6 Beginning and End Dates of the Survey**

The project began with the initial planning meeting with the City of Greer planning and zoning staff, South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH) staff, members of the Greer Board of Architectural Review (BAR), and Brockington and Associates, Inc., held on November 29, 2016. Participants were Glenn Pace, Suzanne Lynn, and Justin Kirtz of the City of Greer Planning and Zoning Department; Joadia Hiatt and David Langley of the Greer BAR; Morgan Jones-King and Brad Sauls from SCDAH; and Sheldon Owens of Brockington and Associates, Inc.

Background research was conducted during January and February 2017, and the public introduction presentation took place on January 19, 2017. Fieldwork began on March 13, 2017 and was completed on April 26, 2017. Report writing and production took place in May 2017. A second public meeting to present results and recommendations of the project was held at the end of August 2017.

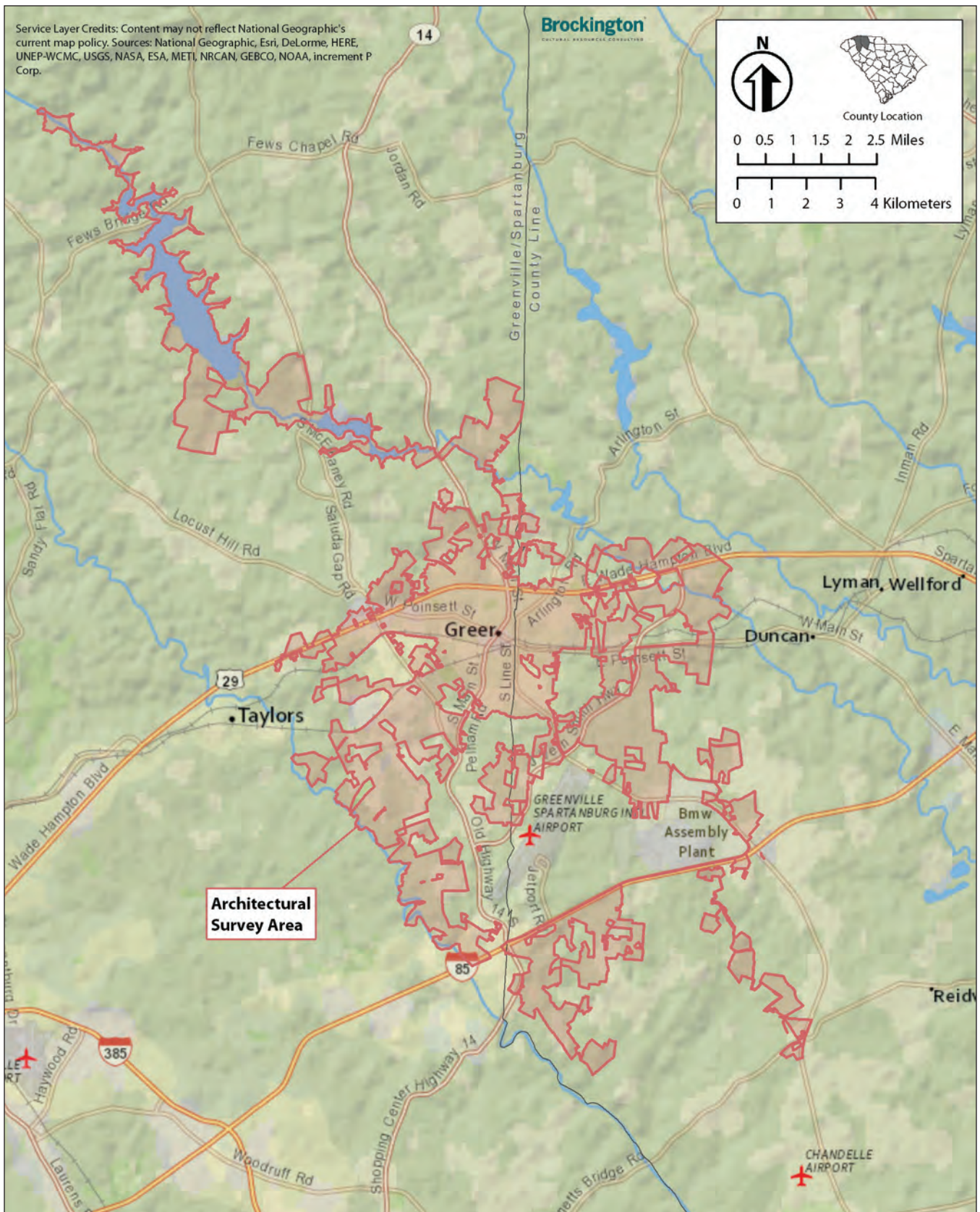


Figure 1.1 The survey area depicted on a National Geographic map.



## **1.7 Objective of the Survey**

The primary purpose of the project is to update the City of Greer's inventory of historic architectural resources and to identify those properties and districts that are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Those resources not previously recorded in the South Carolina Survey of Historic Properties (SSHHP) were given priority consideration for survey. Resources for consideration included buildings, structures, objects, districts, and landscapes that possess architecture of historical significance. The scope of the project estimated approximately 850 survey-eligible resources within the City limits. The research and fieldwork was conducted with several goals in mind. The project will provide information for public officials in the City to allow them to make informed decisions regarding the impact of development and other public activities on Greer's cultural resources and to set priorities for the protection and use of these resources. The historical overview contained in this report can provide an appreciation and understanding of these resources. The results of this project can serve as an archival record of the City of Greer's historic architectural resources at the time of the survey; Appendix A contains an inventory of every resource recorded during the fieldwork. Largely, the resulting survey products will assist the City and SCDAH with their ongoing commitment to preservation planning, promotion of economic incentives for rehabilitation, heritage tourism development, education, and local compliance with state and federal preservation and environmental laws.

This project is part of the South Carolina SSHHP, a program coordinated by the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The purpose of this statewide program is to identify all cultural resources in the state and to highlight those that are eligible for the NRHP and for local designation. The federal government has recommended this process of documentation through the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. The SSHHP provides the SHPO with information that enables it to review the effects of projects with federal components on resources eligible for the NRHP. Federal projects require environmental and cultural review permits to proceed, which in turn requires review by the SHPO. In addition, some federal grants for cultural resources and certain federal tax incentives for rehabilitation of historic buildings require a determination of NRHP status. The information developed through the City of Greer Historic Resources Survey Update gives the SHPO a basis for making these determinations.

## **1.8 Survey Methodology**

### **1.8.1 Historic Resources Survey**

The project began with background research regarding the historical development of the City of Greer. Background research consisted of a study of maps and historic aerial photographs and a literature search in the Greer Heritage Museum and local libraries for published sources of local and regional history. Research also included an examination of federal, state, and local records for the survey area in pertinent private and public repositories. This research helped to identify, assess, and interpret the aboveground historical resources within the survey area. The background research consisted mostly of archival research and led to completion of a historical overview that identified important themes and patterns in the City's historical development. The overview serves two important ends. First, it is an introduction to the City's and region's history for the general reader. Second, it provides a context within which to identify and assess the significance of Greer's historic architectural resources; eligibility for inclusion in the NRHP and for local designation rests to a large extent on the relations between a historic architectural resource and its historical context. This historical context also allowed the field surveyor to predict and to be alert to the presence of certain types of historic resources, and to understand their significance in the field.

The field survey began following the completion and review of the historic context and an initial meeting with representatives of the City and SCDAH. There was also a public outreach meeting on January 19, 2017 where the project manager and City representatives provided an overview of the survey criteria,

answered the public's questions about the survey effort, and provided a basis for identifying properties and individuals knowledgeable about these properties.

This architectural survey of the City of Greer was conducted in accordance with the SCDAH's *Survey Manual: South Carolina Statewide Survey (SCSS) of Historic Properties* (SCDAH, revised 2015), guidelines included in the Scope of Work and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Identification and Evaluation (36 CFR 61.3, 6; 36 CFR 61.4[b]). The principal fieldwork took place between March 13, 2017 and April 26, 2017. During the fieldwork stage, the historian recorded architecturally and historically significant buildings, structures, complexes, districts, designed landscapes, and/or sites with aboveground components that were at least 50 years old or that will become 50 years of age within ten (10) years of the survey and have integrity. Priority consideration for survey was given to those properties not previously recorded in the SCSS. Also, City of Greer planning and zoning staff asked that priority be given to the areas immediately surrounding the downtown district.

For a resource to be eligible for documentation, the architectural historian must determine that it retains some degree of integrity. According to SCDAH, a resource that has integrity retains its historic appearance and character... [and] conveys a strong feeling of the period in history during which it achieved significance. Integrity is the composite of seven qualities: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. To have a reasonable degree of integrity, a property must possess at least several of these qualities.

Integrity is also evaluated in the context of the local region. Some regions will exhibit resources that have retained a great deal of their integrity, while other regions exhibit resources whose integrity has been significantly compromised. The threshold for what is recorded changes depending on the state of the building stock in a particular area. In the case of the City of Greer, many of the historic resources we recorded had some impact to their integrity, through either insensitive additions or loss of historic fabric. Although many resources exhibited compromised architectural integrity, the surveyor elected to record the resources because they are representative of the historic building stock of the City or of a particular geographic area within the City.

Resources that met the parameters of the survey scope and retained sufficient integrity to be included in the SCSS were recorded on SCSS site forms in digital format using the survey database in Microsoft Access. At least one digital photograph, preferably showing the main elevation, was taken of each resource. The location of each surveyed property was plotted utilizing GIS technology. Access to properties was generally limited to public rights-of-way, but on-site inspections were conducted when permitted by property owners, and on-site interviews were conducted where possible.

The consultants documented 856 individual resources of historic, architectural, or cultural significance that are roughly 50 years old or older and located in the survey area. In addition to buildings, other types of resources recorded included a bridge, water towers, the Greer City Stadium, and cemeteries. Although some different types of resources were recorded, the focus of the survey was standing architectural resources. Whenever possible, the surveyor made an effort to record the names of the individuals, families, institutions, or businesses historically associated with the buildings documented. Deed research on individual resources was not conducted. Such in-depth research should be conducted in connection with the preparation of National Register nominations or local designation reports.

### 1.8.2 NRHP Assessment of Cultural Resources

We evaluated the historic architectural resources in the survey area for listing on the NRHP. Federal guidelines allow four broad evaluative criteria for determining the significance of a particular resource and its eligibility for the NRHP. Any resource (building, structure, site, object, or district) may be eligible for the NRHP if it:

- A. is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of history;
- B. is associated with the lives of persons significant in the past;
- C. embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, possesses high artistic value, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important to history or prehistory.

A resource may be eligible under one or more of these criteria. Criteria A, B, and C are most frequently applied to historic buildings, structures, objects, non-archaeological sites (e.g., battlefields, natural features, designed landscapes, or cemeteries), or districts. The eligibility of archaeological sites is most frequently considered with respect to Criterion D. Also, a general guide of 50 years of age is employed to define “historic” in the NRHP evaluation process. That is, all properties greater than 50 years of age may be considered. However, more recent properties may be considered if they display “exceptional” significance.

Following *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, evaluation of any resource requires a twofold process. First, the resource must be associated with an important historic context. If this association is demonstrated, the integrity of the resource must be evaluated to ensure that it conveys the significance of its context. The applications of both of these steps are discussed in more detail below.

Determining the association of a resource with a historic context involves five steps. First, the resource must be associated with a particular facet of local, regional (state), or national history. Secondly, one must determine the significance of the identified historical facet/context with respect to the resource under evaluation. Any particular historical facet/context becomes significant for the development of the project area only if the project area contains resources that were constructed or gained their significance during that time. For example, the antebellum-era historic context would be significant for the development of a project area only if the project area contained buildings that were either built or gained their significance during the early nineteenth century. Similarly, the use of contexts associated with the Pre-Contact Native American use of a region would require the presence of Pre-Contact archaeological sites within the survey universe.

The third step is to demonstrate the ability of a particular resource to illustrate the context. A resource should be a component of the locales and features created or used during the historical period in question. For example, early-nineteenth-century farmhouses, the ruins of African American slave settlements from the 1820s, and/or field systems associated with particular antebellum plantations in the region would illustrate various aspects of the agricultural development of the region prior to the Civil War. Conversely, contemporary churches or road networks used during this time period may not reflect the agricultural practices suggested by the other kinds of resources.

The fourth step involves determining the specific association of a resource with aspects of the significant historic context. The National Register has defined how one should consider a resource under each of the four criteria of significance. Under Criterion A, a resource must have existed at the time that a particular event or pattern of events occurred, and activities associated with the event(s) must have occurred at the site. In addition, this association must be of a significant nature, not just a casual occurrence. Under Criterion B, the resource must be associated with historically important individuals. Again, this association must relate to the period or events that convey historical significance to the individual, not just that this person was present at this locale. Under Criterion C, a resource must possess physical features or traits that reflect a

style, type, period, or method of construction; display high artistic value; or represent the work of a master (an individual whose work can be distinguished from others and possesses recognizable greatness). Under Criterion D, a resource must possess sources of information that can address specific important research questions. These questions must generate information that is important in reconstructing or interpreting the past. For archaeological sites, recoverable data must be able to address specific research questions.

After a resource is specifically associated with a significant historic context, one must determine what physical features of the resource are necessary to reflect its significance. One should consider the types of resources that may be associated with the context, how these resources represent the theme, and which aspects of integrity apply to the resource in question. As in the example given above, a variety of resources may reflect the antebellum context (farmhouses, ruins of slave settlements, field systems, etc.). One must demonstrate how these resources reflect the context. The farmhouses represent the residences of the landowners who implemented the agricultural practices during the antebellum era. The slave settlements housed the workers who did the daily tasks necessary to plant, harvest, process, and market crops.

Once the above steps are completed and association with a historically significant context is demonstrated, one must consider the aspects of integrity applicable to a resource. Integrity is defined in seven aspects of a resource; one or more may be applicable depending on the nature of the resource under evaluation. These aspects are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. If a resource does not possess integrity with respect to these aspects, it cannot adequately reflect or represent its associated historically significant context. Therefore, it cannot be eligible for the NRHP. To be considered eligible under Criteria A and B, a resource must retain its essential physical characteristics that were present during the event(s) with which it is associated. Under Criterion C, a resource must retain enough of its physical characteristics to reflect the style, type, etc., or work of the artisan that it represents. Under Criterion D, a resource must be able to generate data that can address specific research questions that are important in reconstructing or interpreting the past.



## 2.0 Historical Overview

### 2.1 Introduction

The City of Greer is located in both Greenville and Spartanburg counties on the northern Piedmont region, called the Upstate, of South Carolina. The city is 34.68 square miles and lies along two traditional trading routes to the Cherokee lands between what is today Buncombe County, North Carolina and the European settlement of Charleston on the coast of South Carolina. The city straddles the main trading route between the late eighteenth century communities of Pleasant Grove (later renamed Greenville) and a small community named after the Spartan Regiment (Spartanburg) formed during the American Revolution.<sup>1</sup> Figure 2.1 provides a map of South Carolina with the approximate location of City of Greer on the Greenville-Spartanburg line. Greenville and Spartanburg counties are in the upper northern portion of South Carolina, bounded to the north by the Blue Ridge Mountains and to the south by the lower Piedmont. Comprising a total of about 600 square miles of the northern portions of Oconee, Pickens, and Greenville counties, the Blue Ridge Mountains contain peaks ranging from 1,400 to 3,500 feet in elevation.

The City of Greer is in the drainage basin of the Tyger and Enoree rivers and the town is traversed by a number of small streams that drain into these larger rivers. These rivers were all utilized in the nineteenth century to power mills in both Greenville and Spartanburg counties.<sup>2</sup> In fact mills and the coming of the railroad led to the founding of Greer in the latter nineteenth century.

The City of Greer area was inhabited for several thousand years by Native Americans, including the Cherokee and Catawba Indians, before becoming the home of European settlers and their enslaved Africans who began colonizing the land now comprising the Upstate in the mid-eighteenth century. Over the last 200 years, the region has weathered major Indian Wars, the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, as well as a politically and socially turbulent Reconstruction era. Greer entered the twentieth century as a thriving textile center and railroad town of the New South and has successfully navigated a changing global economy. During these transformative events, the Greater Greenville-Spartanburg area has become a center of economic, social, and political progress. Greer has reflected the national architectural tradition in its homes, businesses, and industrial sites and has a strong interest in preserving the story of the local people, the challenges they have overcome, and the successful communities throughout the county that are still flourishing today. Today the city sits at the intersection of South Carolina Route 14, South Carolina Route 29, US Highway 29, and Interstate 85 halfway between Greenville and Spartanburg. The City is the site of the Greenville-Spartanburg Airport and the expansive BMW Zentrum automobile works.

### 2.2 Contact Era and the Colonial Period

By the sixteenth century, the Cherokee Nation had migrated south, pushing the Creek Indians to the west, and the Siouan-speaking Catawba to the east. The newly acquired lands came at a price, however, and battles ensued between the Cherokee and their neighbors. During one battle near Rock Hill, both nations sustained approximate losses of 1,600 warriors before agreeing to a treaty. The terms of the treaty limited the Catawba to the east side of the Catawba River, the Cherokees to the west of the Broad River, with the area in between to serve as a

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<sup>1</sup> There have been several studies of the history of Greenville and Greenville County. They include Archie Vernon Huff, Jr., *Greenville: The History of the City and County in the South Carolina Piedmont* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1995); James M. Richardson, *History of Greenville County, South Carolina: Narrative and Biographical* (Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company, Publishers, 1980); Mann Batson, *A History of the Upper Part of Greenville County, South Carolina* (Taylors, SC: Faith Printing Co., 1993); Nancy Vance Ashmore Cooper, *Greenville: Woven from the Past* (Sun Valley, CA: American Historical Press, 2001); Laura Smith Ebaugh, *Bridging the Gap: A Guide to Early Greenville, South Carolina* (Greenville, SC: Greenville County Events-S.C. Tricentennial, 1970); J. B. O. Landrum, *Colonial and Revolutionary History of Upper South Carolina* (Greenville, SC: Shannon and Co., 1897). These sources were viewed as part of the preparation of this context.

<sup>2</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 2.



Figure 2.1 Map of South Carolina with the approximate location of the City of Greer on the Greenville-Spartanburg County line (adapted from Kovacik and Winberry 1989:xviii).

common hunting ground. The alleged battle and subsequent treaty are thought to be the reason that there were no permanent Native American settlements in a vast swath of the upstate, including present-day Greer.<sup>3</sup>

European explorers entered the Piedmont of South Carolina during the 1540s, with continued incursions during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. A stone in the Spartanburg County museum marked “1567” was believed left by the Juan Pardo expedition in the region that year. By that time, the Cherokee Nation occupied a great expanse, inhabiting the mountains and foothills of South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee. In South Carolina, the Cherokee were the largest of the Iroquoian-speaking groups who lived in the Piedmont. The Cherokee settled west of the Saluda River in towns located along rivers or streams, with portions of the surrounding forests cleared for the cultivation of corn, beans, and squash; for game, the Cherokee utilized present-day Upstate region as vast hunting grounds. Figure 2.2 provides a map showing the approximate locations of Indian nations at contact.

The establishment of English colonies on the Atlantic Coast, first in Virginia in the early seventeenth century and then in Carolina in 1670, initiated contact between the English and the Cherokee. The earliest contact with the Cherokee by the English was conducted by traders, who had established trade with the Cherokee of the Lower Towns in modern-day Oconee and Pickens counties within 15 years of the settling of Charles Town. As early as 1714, English traders were known to be living amongst the Cherokee.<sup>4</sup> The English

<sup>3</sup> Richardson, *History of Greenville County*, 18; Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Milling, *Red Carolinians* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), 268.

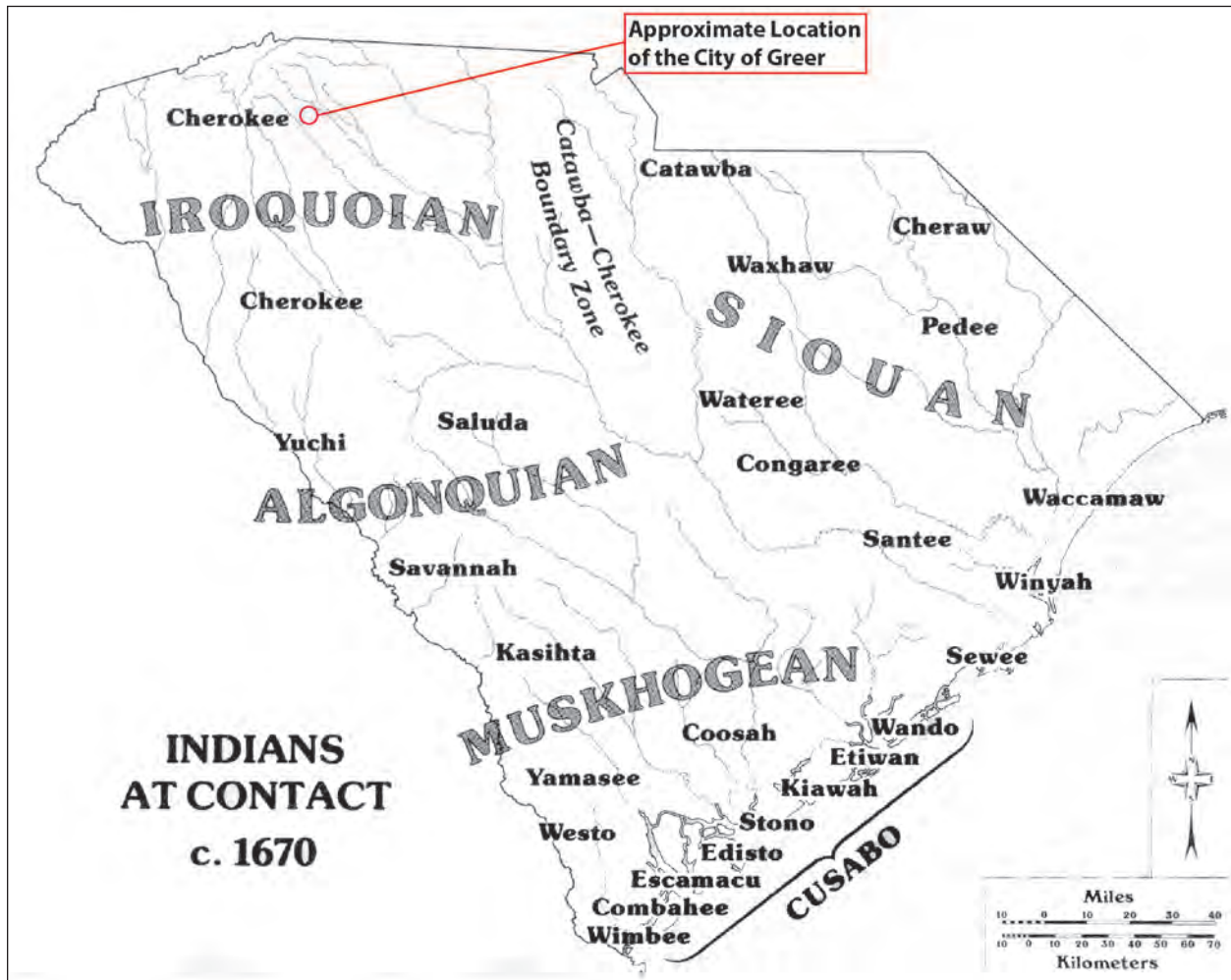


Figure 2.2 Map showing the location of Native Americans during contact, with the approximate location of Greer (adapted from Kovacik and Winberry 1989:60).

and Cherokee soon became major trade partners; the exchange between the English and Native Americans involved woolen cloths, glass, beads, various tools, knives, gunpowder, rum, and other manufactured goods in exchange for furs and skins. Deer hides became the most important product sent back to Britain in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. As late as 1731, there were reportedly as many as 225,000 deer skins collected in the Piedmont and sent to Charles Town. Over time, the hunting grounds of the Piedmont became depleted of wildlife, but as late as 1755, an estimated 25,000 skins still arrived annually in Charles Town from the Cherokee lands.<sup>5</sup>

Frequent abuses by these traders led the provincial government to abolish private trade with the Native Americans by 1719. European diseases also greatly affected the Cherokee population in the eighteenth century; in 1738, a smallpox epidemic decimated the Cherokee Nation. Thought to have originated with slaves in Charles Town, the epidemic reduced the Cherokee population by nearly 50 percent within a year.<sup>6</sup> Beginning in the 1740s, the first permanent settlers began arriving in the Piedmont down the Philadelphia Wagon Road<sup>7</sup>. These settlers principally came from Virginia and Pennsylvania, moving south through the valleys of the Appalachian Mountains. By 1759, there were several thousand inhabitants in the upcountry.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Richardson, *History of Greenville County*, 23.

<sup>6</sup> Milling, *Red Carolinians*, 280.

<sup>7</sup> Foster, Vernon and Walter S. Montgomery, Sr. *Spartanburg: Facts, Reminiscences, Folklore*. The Reprint Company, Spartanburg, pp. 25-36.

<sup>8</sup> Richardson, *History of Greenville County*, 27.



Ties between the Upcountry colonists and the Cherokee began to disintegrate during the middle 1700s due to continued encroachments by early settlers and frontiersmen, as well as continued trade abuses. In a treaty with the Cherokees, the English agreed to build forts in the Cherokee territory that would help maintain order and assist the Cherokee in defense against the nearby Creek. Fort Prince George, erected across the river from the Cherokee town of Keowee, was completed in 1755 and was the first of these forts constructed. The forts were unsuccessful in mollifying the Cherokee or in reducing abuses committed by traders and backcountry settlers; tensions escalated to war. In 1759, bands of Cherokee raided settlements and burned homesteads along the frontier in the Cherokee War segment of the ongoing French and Indian War that burned the full length of the British American colonies from 1754 to 1763. To defend themselves, settlers constructed small forts and block houses along the frontier where they could seek refuge.<sup>9</sup> Under the command of Colonel Montgomery, British troops joined by North Carolina and Virginia militias marched into Cherokee territory, inflicting heavy losses on the Native Americans. When Colonel Montgomery was later recalled, Colonel Grant was sent into Cherokee Territory with 2,600 men, there “destroying the homes, granaries, and growing crops of the Indians.”<sup>10</sup> The Treaty of Fort Prince George ended this portion of the larger war in 1761.

A direct result of the French and Indian War was King George’s proclamation not permitting colonial settlement west of a line running just east of the Appalachian Mountains. This “Proclamation of 1763” divided Cherokee lands with those of the Carolinians. The line went directly down the middle of modern-day Greer and the road along it is called “Line Road.”

Perhaps the most notorious of the early settlers in region was Richard Pearis, who took residence in the Cherokee Territory between 1766 and 1768. Pearis was a native Irishman, who first settled in Virginia prior to 1750 and then moved to western South Carolina after the French and Indian War. Although earlier treaties stated that the Cherokee were not allowed to sell their lands to individuals, Pearis purportedly acquired and claimed over ten square miles of land in the Cherokee Territory, including the present site of the City of Greenville.<sup>11</sup> Pearis established a trading post and mill near the present site of Reedy River Falls in the city of Greenville. Pearis ultimately sided with the Crown during the American Revolution, using his homestead as a meeting place and camp for Loyalists and Cherokee warriors. His property was burned during the Revolution, and at the conclusion of the war, his land was confiscated, though Paris Mountain on the west side of Greenville still bears his name.

During the 1770s, there was a temporary peace between the settlers and the surviving Cherokee. At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, the Cherokee remained loyal to the British; Loyalists and Cherokees roamed the backcountry fighting on behalf of the Crown. At the time of the Revolutionary War, the Upstate was inhabited by small subsistence farmers. Many of the issues being fought over had little economic bearing on the settlers, who remained largely apathetic to the conflict in the Lowcountry. A multitude of settlers in the region initially had Loyalist sentiments, but when the Cherokee began to raid their homesteads, many of the upcountry farmers felt abandoned by the British. When Charleston was captured in 1780, the backcountry of the colony became the site of several skirmishes and battles, notably Cowpens and Kings Mountain, in which the Patriots were victorious. The most direct result of the American Revolution for the Greenville District was the opening of Cherokee lands to the state of South Carolina. By the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, the Cherokee had ceded all of their lands in South Carolina with the exception of a small strip in the northwest corner of the state.

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<sup>9</sup> Richardson, *History of Greenville County*, 30.

<sup>10</sup> Richardson, *History of Greenville County*, 31.

<sup>11</sup> Richardson, *History of Greenville County*, 33.

## 2.3 Creation of Greenville and Spartanburg Counties

During the pioneer period of the Upcountry, from 1740 to 1800, the settlers went without representation in the Legislative Council, which was controlled by the wealthy planters of the Lowcountry. At this time, the backcountry of the colony had few roads and no schools or courts. With a lack of nearby courts the 1760s proved to be a lawlessness period with gangs of outlaws roaming the backcountry, squatting, poaching, and stealing private property. In response, Upcountry pioneers formed local resistance groups that ultimately united to form a system of militia units that called themselves the Regulators. The Regulators and law abiding citizens of the backcountry petitioned the Commons House in 1767, requesting much needed courts, courthouses, jails, and schools that could bring order and stability to the area. By April 1768, an act creating judicial districts with circuit courts and sheriffs was passed, with the Ninety Six District over much of the Upcountry.

For many years after the Treaty of DeWitt's Corner in 1777, Revolutionary War activities precluded the acquisition and settlement of the upstate. However, on May 21, 1784, the South Carolina General Assembly opened the ceded Cherokee land for settlement, establishing a land office in Pendleton. The land of the Ninety Six District filled up rapidly, with only circuit courts and sheriffs acting as local government. An act passed in 1785 dividing the existing Ninety Six District into six counties, including Abbeville, Edgefield, Newberry, Laurens, Union, and Spartanburg; the land comprising Greenville County was split between Spartanburg and Laurens counties. However, only a year later the General Assembly formally created Greenville county.<sup>12</sup>

Once open for settlement, Greenville and Spartanburg counties and adjoining backcountry territories filled up rapidly. Owing money to soldiers for their service during the Revolutionary War, South Carolina offered lands in the region for 10 dollars per hundred acres, payable in debt due from the state. According to Richardson, within two years, practically all desirable lands within present-day Greenville County had been taken up, largely by Revolutionary veterans.<sup>13</sup>

Lacking an urban center to focus economic and political life, early development was scattered throughout both counties. Farms and plantations were connected by old Native American footpaths and animal trails. Many of the old footpaths crossed Greenville and Spartanburg counties from east to west, with one running roughly along the route of present-day Highway 29. In the late 1700s, the north-south Old State Road connecting upper North Carolina with settlements further south with Columbia was constructed, though the trail existed long prior to that. By 1800 these early routes, in some places little more than cattle paths, were enlarged for heavier wagons and increased foot traffic.

Groups of early settlers soon began developing churches. In 1785, a Methodist society was formed in Greenville County and Nazareth Presbyterian Church was established in Spartanburg County just north of the Laurens County line. In 1786, the community gained admission to the Presbytery as Fairview Presbyterian Church. By the end of the eighteenth century the communities in the Upstate were still small and the region isolated.

Although the 1785 Act stipulated that each county should build a courthouse and other public buildings, Greenville County did not get a permanent courthouse and jail until 1797, Spartanburg only a few years earlier and that courthouse community called Spartanburg became the City of Spartanburg in 1831.<sup>14</sup> Although the City of Spartanburg was established as the county seat in 1785 Greenville's seat was not established until after 1793 when a committee selected land near the site of Richard Pearis' old mill along the Reedy River and called it Pleasantburg.

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<sup>12</sup> Richardson, *History of Greenville County*, 53; Huff, *Greenville: History of the City and County*, 47. Sources vary on the inclusion of an additional "e" in Greenville (i.e., Greeneville). Richardson includes a modernized spelling (Greenville), while Huff cites the alternate spelling (Greeneville).

<sup>13</sup> Richardson, *History of Greenville County*, 53.

<sup>14</sup> Foster and Montgomery, *Spartanburg*, 101-117.

## 2.4 Antebellum Period and the Civil War

At the beginning of the antebellum period, the Greenville and Spartanburg Districts were engaged in diversified agriculture. Wheat and corn were initially dominant, though farmers in the area also grew small grains and tobacco. According to the nineteenth-century research of Robert Mills, the upcountry was chiefly agricultural, with cotton dominating its agricultural pursuits; however, Greenville's Benjamin Perry later commented that only 275 bags of cotton were produced in the entire Greenville District in 1840.<sup>15</sup> The relative lack of slaves and slaveholding planters also differentiated the upstate from its cotton-producing neighbors in the lower Piedmont or the vast plantations in the Lowcountry. At the outset of the antebellum period, just 10 percent of householders owned slaves. As the antebellum period progressed; however, the number of slaveholders and the number of slaves each owner held increased. In 1790, only two farmers in the Greenville District held 20 or more slaves; by 1810, the number of farmers holding that many slaves had increased to seventeen.<sup>16</sup> In his *Statistics of South Carolina*, published in 1826, Mills states that according to the last census, Greenville County had a population of 14,530 people, with a considerable increase having occurred since 1820.<sup>17</sup> Spartanburg slightly larger with a population of 16,989. He also states the antebellum village of Greenville consisted of 70 houses, a handsome brick courthouse, a jail, two churches (a Baptist meeting house and an Episcopal church), three public houses, and two buildings housing the male and female academy.<sup>18</sup> By 1850, the population was as high as 20,156 but Spartanburg had grown to 26,400.<sup>19</sup>

Development was similar in Spartanburg County except that the area was part of the "Old Iron District" having pre-Revolutionary ironworks established there, Greenville County being closed to settlers by the Proclamation of 1763.<sup>20</sup> Although small manufacturing flourished in region, much of the manufacturing was dependent upon agriculture. To process the crops grown in the district, wheat and corn mills were built at the falls of the district's rivers and streams. Figure 2.3 presents Mills' 1825 map of the Greenville and Spartanburg Districts, illustrating the abundance of mills on either side of the line near the future site of Greer. Batesville was among one of the earliest of cotton mills in the Greenville District.

Greenville became a center of iron manufacturing, producing farm implements and other building materials. Benson's Iron Works was located on the Enoree River, while another foundry was in operation on the Reedy River, and a third was located on the north fork of the Saluda River. A musket factory, operated by Adam Carruth, began operation around 1816, and the Greenville Carriage Factory, constructed by Ebenezer Gower and Thomas Cox, began thriving in the antebellum period. The emergence of these industries led to the foundation of large mercantile stores in the Greenville District. Notably, Jeremiah Cleveland began with a small store in Pleasantburg, and would later develop his business into a large mercantile enterprise.<sup>21</sup>

Spartanburg entered the textile mill business in a large way with the development of several small mills along the river systems, the first of which were founded by the Weaver Brothers. Another mill was built along the Enoree River by Thomas Hutchings and William Bates in 1820 at today's Pelham. Hutchings then went on to help found the South Tyger Manufacturing plant at Cedar Hill, later known as Arlington and still later as Apalache Mill.<sup>22</sup> Bates would go on to found an early mill at Batesville in Greenville County and successfully develop it to Upcountry's largest pre-Civil War cotton mill. The mill would play an important role in development of the City of Greer after the war.

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<sup>15</sup> Robert Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina, Including a View of Its Natural, Civil, and Military History, General and Particular*, (Charleston: Hurlburg and Lloyd, 1826), 576; Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 62.

<sup>16</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 62.

<sup>17</sup> Mills, *Statistics*, 576.

<sup>18</sup> Mills, *Statistics*, 573.

<sup>19</sup> Richardson, *History of Greenville County*, 72; Foster and Montgomery, *Spartanburg*, 111.

<sup>20</sup> Jeffrey R. Willis, "Spartanburg County," in *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, ed. by Walter Edgar (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), 912.

<sup>21</sup> Cooper, *Greenville: Woven from the Past*, 39.

<sup>22</sup> Foster and Montgomery, *Spartanburg*, p. 163.



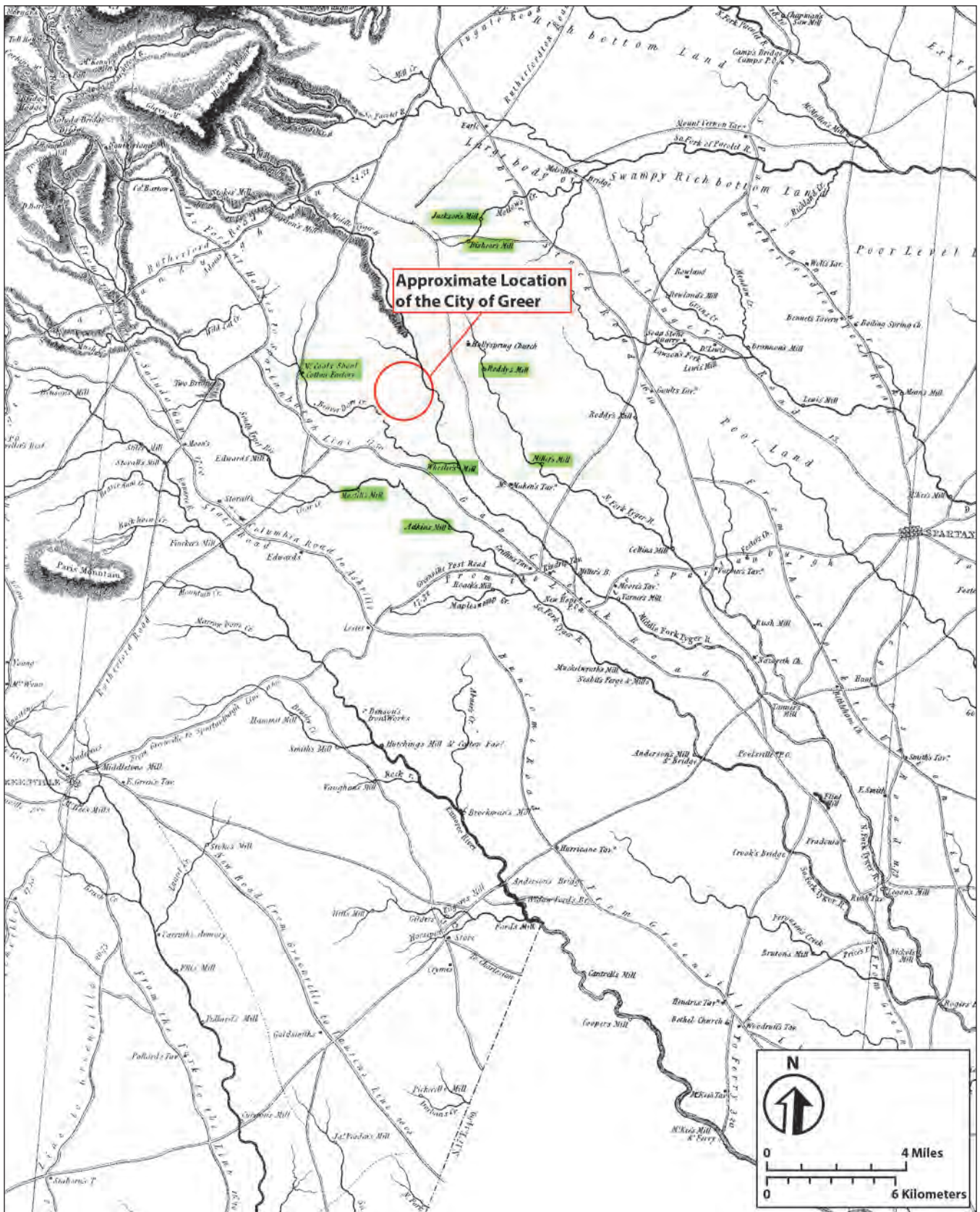


Figure 2.3. Mills' 1825 map of the Greenville and Spartanburg districts, illustrating the abundance of mills on the district's rivers and streams (Mills Atlas 1825).

Dramatic improvements to transportation systems in the antebellum period provided a boon to the burgeoning economy. In 1797, a wagon road connecting Greenville and Spartanburg to the mountains of western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee was constructed. The road began on the north fork of the Saluda River and traveled north through the mountains to the Buncombe County Courthouse in North Carolina before heading west to Knoxville, Tennessee. The road was heavily utilized by animal drovers, who led horses, mules, cattle, sheep, and hogs from the mountains into Greenville County before being transported further south. Taverns and stores developed along the route, as drovers frequently required lodgings and campsites as well as provisions and feed for their livestock. Requiring adequate land for the animals to rest, many travelers stopped just north of the city of Greenville in a town that came to be known as Travelers Rest.

By 1818, the Old State Road was developed that connected Charleston with western North Carolina and Tennessee; the state road traveled through the ridge that would eventually become the location of Greer. The most notable transportation improvement during the antebellum period was the coming of the railroad in 1853 to Greenville and in 1859 to Spartanburg, connecting the communities to Columbia, whereupon goods could be taken to other parts of the state.

Shortly after opening for permanent settlement in 1784, Greenville's mild climate marked the town as a desirable place to summer. Greenville became a popular summer and resort town for residents of Charleston and the Lowcountry, many of whom came to the Greenville area to escape the heat and health hazards of the coastal plantations. These visitors initially purchased their own plantations, or acted as "paying guests" of their friends, until inns, hotels, and boarding houses began to emerge to serve this purpose.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps the earliest of these establishments opened in 1815, when Edmund Waddell rented the Alston residence from Vardry McBee; Waddell opened the residence as a hotel and summer resort until McBee moved to Greenville in 1836. Several other hotels and boarding houses soon followed, and in 1824, Colonel William Toney purchased two lots in the village on which he constructed the Mansion House. Other resort communities existed throughout the county, including the popular Chick Springs area, near the site of the future City of Greer. Named for Dr. Burrell Chick, the springs had been rumored to heal several ailments, and a resort was soon opened at the site and remained a popular destination well into the twentieth century.

There was initially little formalized education in Greenville and Spartanburg counties prior to the Civil War. Private tutors often taught in the homes of the wealthy, and sons were frequently sent to northern colleges.<sup>24</sup> In 1818, local leaders began collecting money to build two academies, one for males and one for females. One year later, the money was secured, and the Greenville Male and Female Academies were established. In 1821, construction of the buildings was completed, and by the time of Robert Mills' visit, the academies were "not only well supported but have very able teachers." Both academies remained in operation until the early 1850s. The Male Academy closed just after the arrival of Furman University in 1851 in Greenville County, while the Female Academy closed in 1854, after the buildings and land were transferred to the State Baptist Convention for the establishment of a female college that opened as the Greenville Baptist Female College in 1855. In Spartanburg County Wofford College was chartered in 1851 and opened in 1852.<sup>25</sup> The Baptist Theological Seminary was the third Baptist institution of higher education to open in Greenville during the antebellum period; the seminary opened in 1859, with classes held in the old Baptist church.

Though several churches were established throughout Greenville County in the eighteenth century, the first four churches to be established in the town of Greenville were all on land donated by Vardry McBee beginning in 1825. St. James Mission was the first church established in the town; in 1825, McBee ceded four acres for the construction of the brick Episcopal church. St. James Mission later became Christ Church; a new church building was constructed in 1854. In 1826, the Greenville Baptist Church (later First Baptist) was organized. McBee ceded another lot on Avenue Street for the construction of a brick meeting house for the congregation. By 1860 other Baptist churches were flourishing in Greenville county with Spartanburg

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<sup>23</sup> Richardson, *History of Greenville County*, 60.

<sup>24</sup> Richardson, *History of Greenville County*, 63.

<sup>25</sup> Foster and Montgomery, *Spartanburg*, 177.



accounting for at least 15 more. Methodists accounted for five more churches and Episcopal and Presbyterian churches also were organized in the City of Spartanburg and Greenville.<sup>26</sup>

The passage of unpopular tariff laws in the 1820s planted the seeds of secession in South Carolina. By the 1830s, the issue of states' rights had been championed by John C. Calhoun of the Upstate Pendleton District. Espousing the ability of state government to nullify any or all portions of federal law with which they did not agree, the Nullification Theory found favor in the Lowcountry, though it was generally opposed in the Piedmont. Benjamin F. Perry emerged in Greenville as a leader in the fight against Nullification and the secessionists in the South Carolina General Assembly. While the states' rights faction drew an increasing majority, Greenville and Spartanburg counties continually sent delegates to the General Assembly that were strongly Unionist.

By 1850, secessionist fervor was increasing, though once again, Greenville and Spartanburg's members in the House of Representatives stood solidly against secession. At this time, Furman University moved to Greenville; President James C. Furman was strongly secessionist and quickly began to win over the people of Greenville to the secessionist cause. With the election of Republican Abraham Lincoln in the presidential election of 1860, even Benjamin Perry could not stem the tide of secession. Though he stood firmly against the passage of the Ordinance of Secession, Perry fought on the side of his state during the Civil War.

Ultimately, Greenville County furnished more than 2,000 soldiers to the Confederate armies, though the total voting population in 1860 was less than 2,200. Not all portions of Greenville County were so ardently committed to the Confederate cause. In the mountainous areas of upper Greenville County, particularly in the area called the Dark Corner, deserters and evaders of the war frequently hid from their Confederate trackers. Many of these deserters banded together, often building refuges and fortified camps, and then preyed upon local property owners. In 1863, Major John Ashmore requested the Confederate army supply a cannon in order to destroy one of these fortified encampments in the Dark Corner.<sup>27</sup>

Spartanburg supplied even more giving nearly 3,500 men for Confederate service out of 3,400 families enumerated in the 1860 US Census of the county.<sup>28</sup> Of the serving men, 608 were killed in battle or died in service and at least 500 more were crippled or disabled due to the fighting. The devastation to whole communities could be seen by Company B, 22nd South Carolina. Of 34 men who reported for duty, 31 were dead at the end of the Battle for the Crater in Virginia by July 30, 1864.

In addition to supplying troops, both counties became manufacturing centers for Confederate supplies. Gunpowder, rifles, carriages, iron, cloth, and other war materials were produced throughout the counties. The Confederate government maintained an arsenal in Greenville, where rifles for the army were manufactured. The Batesville Cotton Factory and three other small textile plants located in the county manufactured goods exclusively for the Confederate Army, and the Gower, Cox, & Gower carriage factory furnished its entire output of wagons to the Confederate Army.<sup>29</sup>

No military action took place in either county during the Civil War, though there was a brief period of occupation by Union troops. After General Robert E. Lee surrendered, Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy, began fleeing southward. Union General George Stoneman instructed his cavalry to pursue Davis; the cavalry rode into Greenville via the Buncombe Road. Recognizing the futility of resistance, the residents of Greenville obeyed orders to give up their weapons and deliver provisions to the Union troops. Greenville's compliance allowed the town to escape the destruction many other Southern towns endured; however, warehouses in the town were looted and many valuables were destroyed.<sup>30</sup> Though done several years after the Civil War, the 1873 Soils maps of Greenville and Spartanburg counties shows the area near where Greer will be laid out, including the Pleasant Grove post office, Chick Springs to the northwest and

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<sup>26</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 101, 122-123; Foster and Montgomery, *Spartanburg*, 129-135.

<sup>27</sup> Cooper, *Greenville: Woven from the Past*, 74.

<sup>28</sup> Foster and Montgomery, *Spartanburg*, 196.

<sup>29</sup> Richardson, *The History of Greenville County*, 85.

<sup>30</sup> Richardson, *History of Greenville County*, 86.

the South Tyger “cotton factory” on the South Tyger River to the northeast, and the route of the new Atlanta and Charlotte Air Line rail road (see Figure 2.4).

## 2.5 Establishment of the Town of Greer and early settlement to 1895

The most important railroad development in the post-Civil War Period in Greenville and Spartanburg Counties was the construction of the Atlanta and Charlotte Air Line Railway (A&CAL). The committee established to assure the rail line’s presence in Greenville County was composed of business leaders William K. Easley, Henry P. Hammett, Benjamin Perry, Alexander McBee, and importantly for Greer’s founding, William Terry Shumate.<sup>31</sup> After Greenville County passed a referendum in 1870, the stockholders in the line decided to build it through the cities of Greenville and Spartanburg, and within a year the line was under survey from Charlotte southwestward toward Greenville. Shumate was involved in working with the owners building the line and when he learned that engineers wanted the line to transverse the high land owned by Taylor and Greer at the point where it crossed the Old State Road, he purchased James Manning Greer’s 200-acre tract along the Spartanburg-Greenville county line, with the line being the eastern boundary.

Shumate quickly hired H.P. Johnson to survey the land, subdivided it into lots, and by late summer 1873, John W. Cunningham, William A. Hill, and Dr. Henry V. Westmoreland purchased sections.<sup>32</sup> Figure 2.5 shows a copy of this plat with Shumate’s lots. Despite the Panic of 1873 sowing financial discord among the stockholders of the A&CAL depot, what was soon called Greer’s Station was completed in October of that year. By 1874 Shumate had sold nine of his lots comprising about 1/4 of the area to William A. Hill (from whom Hill Street [now East Poinsett Street] derives its name), and was applying to the legislature to incorporate his development into a town. According to tradition, about this same time, local farmer David Cannon agreed to move to the community and buy a lot if others would join him in providing for a school. He moved his family there in February 1875.<sup>33</sup> The first railroad agent was William C. Bailey who lived in the former James Blakely farm north of the depot. The 1880 census indicates that he had a number of borders living in his home including, Samuel Cathcart, a guano (fertilizer) agent, William Cunningham, a clerk at the railroad depot, Sallie Dorroh, the school teacher, and an African American family, Emma and William Benson who were employed by Bailey.<sup>34</sup>

On March 25, 1876, the legislature incorporated the town calling it “Greer’s”. The name underwent several variations in local vernacular including Greer’s Station, Greer, and Greer’s. But by 1901 the post office created there dropped the “s” and the town became Greer.<sup>35</sup> Early town council members included Dr. Westmoreland, W. A. Hill, David Cannon, and A. J. Morgan.<sup>36</sup> Other notable early settlers included J. M. Littlefield, David D. Davenport, J. L. Carman, Harris C. Mark, Simeon Hughes and members of the Bomar family from Spartanburg.<sup>37</sup> The town limits underwent several variations along with the name. The legislation allowed for the limits to incorporate up to 0.5 miles from the A&CAL depot. Thus, it incorporated a portion of Spartanburg County. Two years later, the legislature restricted it to .25 miles from the intersection of Main Street and Emma (West Poinsett), keeping the limits inside Greenville County. However, by 1912, they extended it to a 0.- mile radius from Main and Emma. There it remained until the 1950s.<sup>38</sup> Figure 2.6 shows the growth of the town limits from 1876 until 1950.

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<sup>31</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 181.

<sup>32</sup> Ray Belcher and Joada P. Hiatt, *Greer, Then and Now* (Charleston: Arcadia Press, 2008), 25-26.

<sup>33</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 40.

<sup>34</sup> US Census Bureau, *US Census of 1880, Chick Springs Township, Greenville County, South Carolina*, 40.

<sup>35</sup> Older community members continued to refer to the town through the 1920s as Greers. Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 27.

<sup>36</sup> M.C. Campbell, *Greer Community Annual, January 1927* (Greer, South Carolina, 1927), 6.

<sup>37</sup> Campbell, *Greer Community Annual*, 6.

<sup>38</sup> City of Greer, Planning Department, GIS Division, Planning and GIS Presentation, January 18, 2012.





Figure 2.4 shows portions of 1873 maps of Greenville and Spartanburg counties with the area around where the City of Greer will soon be laid out (both maps: Stroeber, ca. 1873).





Figure 2.5 An 1880 plat of the lands of William T. Shumate and the subdivision of his tract into lots for sale at Greer's Station.<sup>39</sup>

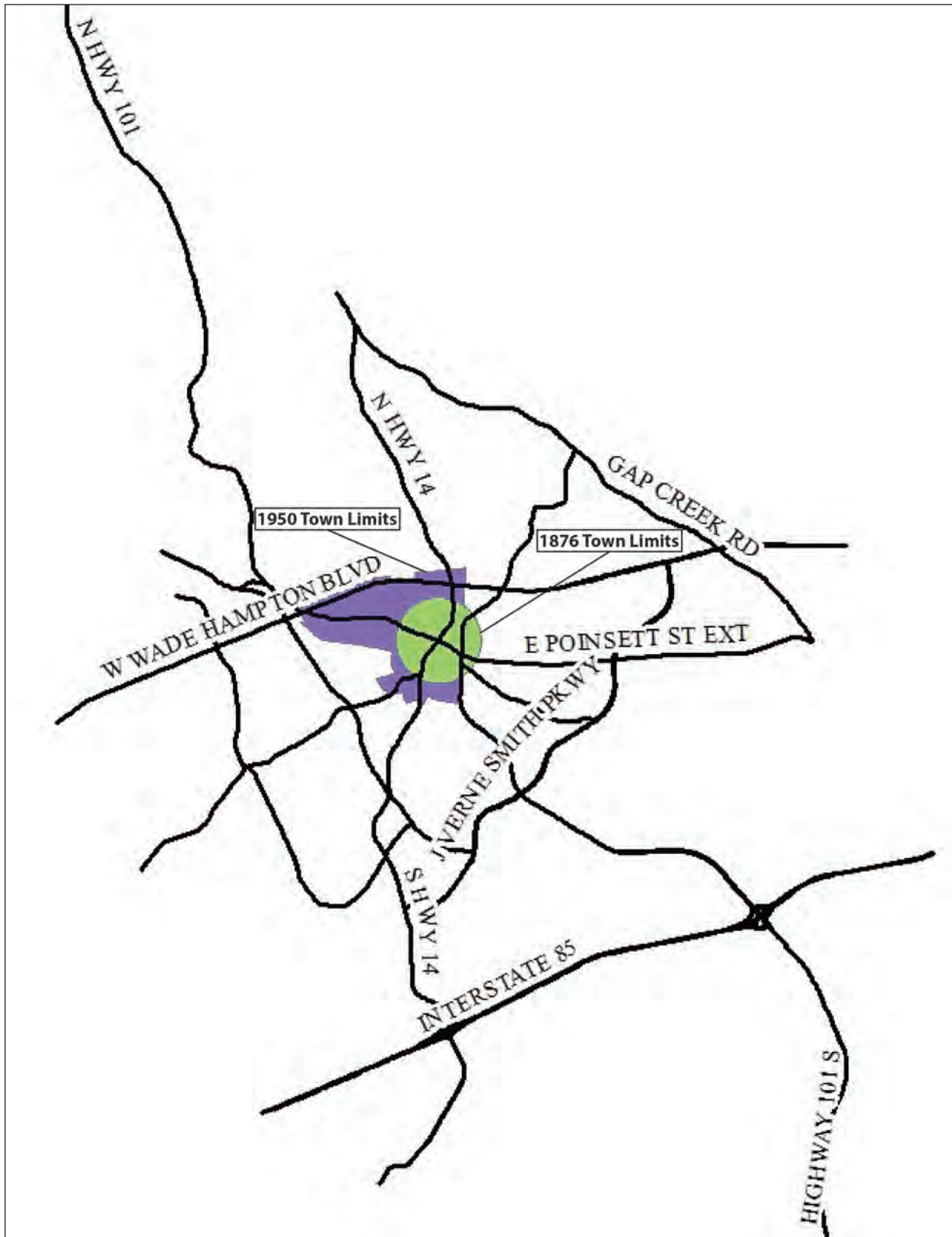


Figure 2.6 A map of the Greer area with the growth of town limits from 1876 until 1950.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Greenville County, South Carolina Plat Books (GCPB) (Originals located in the Greenville County Clerk of Court, Register of Deeds Office, Greenville), A:181.

<sup>40</sup> City of Greer, GIS Division, January 18, 2012.

The founders intended Main Street (which ran perpendicular to the railroad) to be the commercial hub of the town. However, commercial development concentrated around the depot as the town's principal service was to the local cotton farmers. Farmers needed supplies such as fertilizers and seed, and other goods for their families along with warehousing, ginning, and shipping services. Trade Street was a much closer route to the depot than Main Street and soon blossomed with grocery, fertilizer and seed stores, bars, a blacksmith, and other services. Main Street remained predominately residences. All the original storefronts and business establishments on the street were wooden structures, and in the early years of the twentieth century were replaced with brick ones. Figure 2.7 shows a view of some of the early storefronts along Main Street. None are extant today.<sup>41</sup> Some of the first store owners and grocers included William A. Hill and Simeon Hughes, who supplied fertilizers and general grocery items.<sup>42</sup> The early community had a feeling of the western frontier with bars and saloons active on weekends. That sparked a temperance movement to prohibit sales of alcohol inside the town limits. In 1879 the ban on alcoholic spirits was passed for Greer though sales took place outside of town limits and moonshine running continued to be a problem for Greer police for more than 80 years.

The first house built was the Blakely residence located on the northwest corner of North Main Street and West Pointsett, three city blocks northwest of the train depot. The homestead remained there until at least the 1920s.<sup>43</sup> On the northeast corner of the West Pointsett and North Main Street intersection stood the first school, a log building with simple wooden bench seats and an iron stove for heating in winter.<sup>44</sup> Early land sales included David Cannon's purchase of the 40-acre lot # 44, and William A. Hill's purchase of Lot #45 that contained 36.5 acres on the opposite side of Main Street (Figure 2.5). Most African Americans living in the area were located to the east on farm lands where they occupied tenant farms.<sup>45</sup> No structures remain today from the earliest period of settlement of Greer. Though growth was slow, by 1879, the town had increased to 250 inhabitants and contained a school, four stores, several bars, a Masonic Lodge, and a chapter of Templars. It had become the primary hub for cotton farmers for 10 miles in all directions to prepare and trade their cotton for shipment. Additionally, as it had for a century before, the town remained a stopping point for livestock drivers coming from the north down the Old State Road (Main Street).

By the 1880s, Shumate was encouraging churches to come to his town and offered land lots at little to no charge. The Mt. Tabor Presbyterian church moved their 1840 congregation near Bailey's Crossroads into Greer in 1880 and built their first building near the intersection of School Street and South Main on Lot #23 of Shumate's subdivision (Figure 2.5).<sup>46</sup> They called the new church First Presbyterian Church. In 1881 James Furman (of the College fame) led the town Baptists and built a wooden building on Cannon Street on a lot David Cannon made available south of the rail line. Today an Episcopal church is located there. The church became the First Baptist Church of Greer. The earliest African American Church in the area was Bethel Methodist Episcopal, founded in 1882 at the corner of East Arlington and Line Street. The original church is gone but the congregation still meets there.<sup>47</sup> The Southern Methodists (Memorial Methodist Church) organized in 1882 and used the Presbyterian Church structure until they moved into a more permanent home in 1890 at the corner of Church and Main Streets.

Also in 1881 the community built its first substantial public school for white children near the Presbyterian Church. Throughout the 1880s, the school served the community for primary grades for free but charged for high schooling (through current-day 8th grade). In 1889 the Greer Educational Association trustees turned the school over to the Graded School trustees who added two rooms onto the building

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<sup>41</sup> Rose Marie Jordan, *National Register of Historic Places, City of Greer Historic District Nomination* (Greer, South Carolina, 1997).

<sup>42</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 26-27.

<sup>43</sup> Anna Greene, *A Short Sketch of the Town of Greer, SC, 1896* (Greenville: Privately published, 1937), 1.

<sup>44</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 40.

<sup>45</sup> Joada Hiatt, personal correspondence, January 31, 2017.

<sup>46</sup> Campbell, *Greer Community Annual*.

<sup>47</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 38-39.





Figure 2.7 Early twentieth century photograph of commercial buildings described as Greer Main Street ([http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~scgreenv/greer\\_main\\_st.jpg](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~scgreenv/greer_main_st.jpg)).

and expanded to a high school that accommodated increasing enrollment. African American education is relatively unknown but most likely children were educated in churches. R. L. Garlington was a black teacher residing in Greer as early as 1884.<sup>48</sup>

Growth continued consistently in the 1880s. William A. Hill opened his grocery on Trade Street along with developing a cotton gin, livery stable, and opened the first drug store operated by Dr. D. C. Bennett in 1882.<sup>49</sup> W. E. Carver ran a steam-powered sawmill and cotton gin as did W. P. Taylor and Smith, Hughes and Company. Jesse Cannon had a brickworks and manufactured jar ware, and Hezekiah P. Moore first ran Hill's grocery, then opened his own general stores and by 1887 also opened Greer's first furniture dealer.<sup>50</sup> Simeon Hughes and J. D. Wood established Hughes & Wood large livery stable by 1890 on Randall Street. Dr. B. F. Few came to Greer to practice medicine and run his drug store and in 1889 Dr. W. E. Walker also moved to the growing town.<sup>51</sup>

Cunningham Pennington built a successful home business at the corner of Trade and Victoria Streets establishing his residence, a dry goods and grocery store, corrals and pens for flocks and herds, and renting out rooms in his home to mountain drovers. Prior to the coming of the mills in the late 1890s, Greer's most successful businessmen was William A. Hill who built one of the first large brick homes at the corner of Emma and Broad (South Main) Streets in the early 1880s. David D. Davenport established a cotton gin, a fertilizer mixing firm, a warehouse, an oil fertilizer factory, and a retail outlet along the rail line.<sup>52</sup> He also built a large home that served somewhat as a hotel for salesmen in the area. None of these buildings are extant today. Greer's population reached 1,200 by 1890, and development accelerated in the town, centering on the Shumate lands. By the end of the decade the land was completely bought out.

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<sup>48</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 44-45.

<sup>49</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 49.

<sup>50</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 51.

<sup>51</sup> Greene, *Short Sketch*, 2.

<sup>52</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 50.

A variety of individuals processing iron, corn, wheat, and cotton had established water-powered mills in the Piedmont area since the mid-1700s. In the 1820s, the first mill, named Arlington Mill, was erected on the South Tyger River, two miles north of Greer. By the 1890s, cotton gins were in every town and counties such as Greenville were becoming sites for water and the new electric-powered factories. The Panic of 1893 threw cotton prices into a downturn and at the same time, New England mill owners began looking at the Piedmont South as an ideal location for developing new factories with cheaper land, labor, and favorable laws. By 1895, Wesley W. Burgess, John Robinson, and Dr. Henry V. Westmoreland were preparing to raise \$200,000.00 to incorporate Greer's first cotton mill to serve the growing cotton market in Greer and process the more than 6,000 bales that arrived in town each year from the surrounding farms.

## 2.6 Mill Villages and Development to 1895-1919

**Victor Mill, 1895.** M. L. Marchant, Noah Cannon, J. H. Payne, David Cannon, Thadeus T. Westmoreland, W.M. Ballenger, W.E. Waldrop, Simeon Hughes, Henry V. Westmoreland, L. Jackson Green, William E. Burgess and E. P. Wyatt chartered Victor Manufacturing Company in the summer of 1895. Burgess was elected president and the mill was named for his son, Victor.<sup>53</sup> An African American contractor and local brick mason, Edward Mosely, did all the brickwork for the building. In 1897 when Marchant died and Burgess resigned as president, the directors gave the presidency to a local attorney, Lewis W. Parker. By the early 1900s, Parker would parlay this work into an extensive ownership of several mills and become one of the largest cotton mill owners in the United States.

By 1898, the mill was a vertically organized, steam-powered, three-story mill with 940 looms and more than 1,000 spindles. Figure 2.8 is a photograph of Victor Mill and some of the village houses circa 1915, and Figure 2.9 is a circa 1920 postcard featuring the mill. Construction of homes for the workers and managers began in 1897 but were not completed until 1917. Additionally, Victor management provided a YMCA, Victor Elementary School, baseball field, Victor Methodist and Baptist churches, as well as a company store. Although the plant was in Spartanburg County, its association with other mills in towns in Greenville County and later ownership after 1916 by the Monaghan Mill organization made it more closely associated with Greenville County.<sup>54</sup> Children were employed in the mills and although some owners took a strong paternalistic view of their workers and kept clean operations, workers still worked 12-hour days, inhaled cotton lint, and children in particular were subject to harsh punishments.<sup>55</sup>

Most mill workers took great pride in their work. One Victor Mill hand, Naomi Trammell, remembered how she had to crawl up on the frames as a young teenager since she was not tall enough, but that "it didn't take me long to learn. They'd put us with one of the spinners and they'd show us how. It was easy to learn--all we had to do was just put that bobbin in there and put it up".<sup>56</sup> Most male workers obtained between \$4.50 and 5.50 per for a 60-hour work week around 1900 with pay gradually increasing to as much as \$10.00 a week by the time of World War I. Women and children received less. Most employees purchased groceries and general merchandise from the company store though the company usually provided wood and coal for heating in the winter.

The mill homes at Victor followed the three- to four-room design set forth in Daniel Augustus Tompkins' book, *Cotton Mill, Commercial Features* published in 1899.<sup>57</sup> The Victor Mill village incorporated the southeast corner of the Greer area. It bounded on the north on the Southern rail line, to the west on the county line at Line Street, to the south on Snow Street and Victor Avenue Extension and on the east by 11th Street and 27th Street. Figure 2.10 shows a plat of the village. The mill was in the center of the subdivision with ballfield to the south and open land to the east.

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<sup>53</sup> Campbell, *Greer Community Annual*, 18; Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 59.

<sup>54</sup> Foster and Montgomery, *Spartanburg*, 259.

<sup>55</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 241.

<sup>56</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 241-242.

<sup>57</sup> Daniel Tompkins, *Cotton Mill, Commercial Features* (Charlotte: Privately published, 1899).





VIEW OF VICTOR MANUFACTURING COMPANY, GREER, S. C.

Figure 2.8 View of Victor Mill and village circa 1915 (Clemson University Libraries, Digital Collections [http://digitalcollections.clemson.edu/digital/image/content/ctm\\_287](http://digitalcollections.clemson.edu/digital/image/content/ctm_287)).



Figure 2.9 Circa 1920 postcard featuring Victor Mill (Spartanburg County Public Libraries, Digital Collections; <http://digital.infodepot.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/wlpc/id/95/rec/13>).





Figure 2.10 Plat of the Victor Mill at Greer and its mill Village (Original in possession of the City of Greer Planning Department).

Mill towns were nearly self-sufficient and families usually only left for movies, downtown shopping or high school attendance. Early on most streets were dirt and though mill homes had running water, they did not have indoor toilets. Not until well into the twentieth century did mill homes get electric power. The company provided teachers for the elementary schools; students desiring a higher education had to walk to the local high school in Greer. What the mills lacked in pay, they frequently made up for in provided activities. The YMCA sponsored a host of events including readings, Bible Studies, a drama club, basketball, pool tables, skating, volleyball, even a bowling alley. L. A. Parker and his cousin Thomas Parker, who formed the Monaghan Mills conglomerate, were progressives, hiring landscape architects to design their villages and funding the YMCA library and kindergarten program. Thomas in particular had as his aim to, “inspire each employee to do his best in a helpful environment”<sup>58</sup> Socials, potato roasts, and Married Men’s and Women’s clubs were other programs offered to the mill families. The director for these social programs was L. P. Hollis, who brought basketball to the mills after meeting Dr. James Naismith, its inventor, and one of the first Boy Scout troops to South Carolina after meeting its founder at Lake George, New York on a trip.<sup>59</sup> From 1916-1923 Hollis was the superintendent of the Victor Mill, by then absorbed into the Monaghan system, where he said he claimed he “got to know every man, woman, and child in the village.”<sup>60</sup>

Baseball was a particularly popular sport with each mill supplying its own team and home field. Joseph J. “Shoeless Joe” Jackson, a Pickens County native and considered one of the best baseball players of the early twentieth century, once played a season for the Victor Mill team in Greer. As a Chicago White Sox player in 1919, he gained everlasting notoriety for playing in the World Series known for the infamous “Black Sox Scandal.” Ever since, his involvement in the scandal has been heavily debated, as he led both teams in several statistical categories for the series. Figure 2.11 is the 1907 Victor Mill baseball team with Shoeless Joe in the top row, second from the left.



Figure 2.11 Victor Mill 1907 baseball team, with Shoeless Joe Jackson top row, second from left (Clemson University Libraries, Digital Collections; [http://digitalcollections.clemson.edu/digital/image/content/ctm\\_264](http://digitalcollections.clemson.edu/digital/image/content/ctm_264)).

<sup>58</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 245.

<sup>59</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 246.

<sup>60</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 246.



**Franklin and Greer Mills are established, 1900-1909.** Only three years after Victor began producing, William W. Burgess who had been forced to resign as president of Victor Mills initiated the second large mill in Greer. On September 17, 1900 Burgess, H.V. Westmoreland, J.D. Ashmore, J. H. Wyatt, E.C. Bailey, W. E. Waldrop, John Robinson, and L. A. Green charted Franklin Mill with an initial capital sum of \$45,000.00. The directors acquired the property of Dr. Westmoreland's Lot #46 of the Shumate subdivision from his widow and later purchased additional land on the west side for the mill village. The two-story mill was completed enough to be producing in February 1901. Thomas Keating, a Greer contractor and architect, built the first 25 mill houses in the same style as those at Victor Mill. Unlike Victor, the Franklin Mill produced only coarse yarns with 5,000 spindles. The owners capitalized an additional \$15,000.00 in 1902 and the operations proceeded efficiently without the difficulties Victor had experienced in its beginning.<sup>61</sup> The mill property borders on the north side of the P&N rail line, west of Main Street, South of Emma Street (West Pointsett) and east of Calvary Street. The Franklin Mill was in the southeast corner with the management housing to the north of the mill and east of South Street. The main mill village made up most of the balance of the land. Figure 2.12 shows the boundaries of the Franklin Mill property near Greer.

Greer Manufacturing Company, the third of the local cotton mills, was the brainchild of John Robinson, a Spartanburg County resident who arrived in Greer in 1881 as a young telegraph operator. In time, he served as postmaster and became associated with Lewis Parker when he was head of Victor Manufacturing and became supervisor at Parker's Apalachee Mill. He helped organize Franklin Mill in 1900 and in 1909, Robinson spearheaded the effort to build Greer Manufacturing Company. Within a year, the company was formed and another three-story red brick plant was in operation. The Greer Manufacturing plant soon was acquired in 1912 by the Monaghan Mills consolidation that Thomas and Lewis W. Parker were assembling. The plant came under the Victor-Monaghan branch. When the Parker cousins finished consolidation, they formed the Parker Cotton Mills Company in 1916.<sup>62</sup> The Parker organization gained, by merger or purchase control, one million spindles in South Carolina, and became the largest single cotton manufacturing business in the United States.

Greer Manufacturing Company, like its sister plants, had a school that ranked high among graded schools in the area. A 1919 report by the Commissioner of Agriculture, Commerce, and Industries stated that the public schools paid their teachers \$60.00 per month but Victor Mill and the Greer Manufacturing paid their teachers \$100.00 per month and that the "best school buildings in South Carolina are in the mill communities."<sup>63</sup> Greer Manufacturing was sandwiched between the north side of Southern line and the south side of the new Piedmont and Northern (P&N) electric line, a second railroad built by the Duke family that came through Greer in 1909. On the east, it was bounded on South Main Street and on the west on Jones Street. The main plant was in the center of the tract with the workers and management houses on all four sides. Figure 2.13 shows a 1956 aerial photograph of the Greer Mill and village. The Greenville, Spartanburg, and Anderson Railroad (later the Piedmont and Northern Line) came to Greer in 1909 largely to carry commuter traffic between Anderson and Spartanburg. The depot built on Trade Street in 1913 remains extant today. The Greer Manufacturing plant building is the only one of the three mills still extant today.

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<sup>61</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 79-80.

<sup>62</sup> Campbell, *Greer Community Annual*, 18; Richardson, *History of Greenville County*, 100.

<sup>63</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 78.

<sup>64</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *1922 Fire Insurance Map of Greer, South Carolina* (New York: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1922), 6.

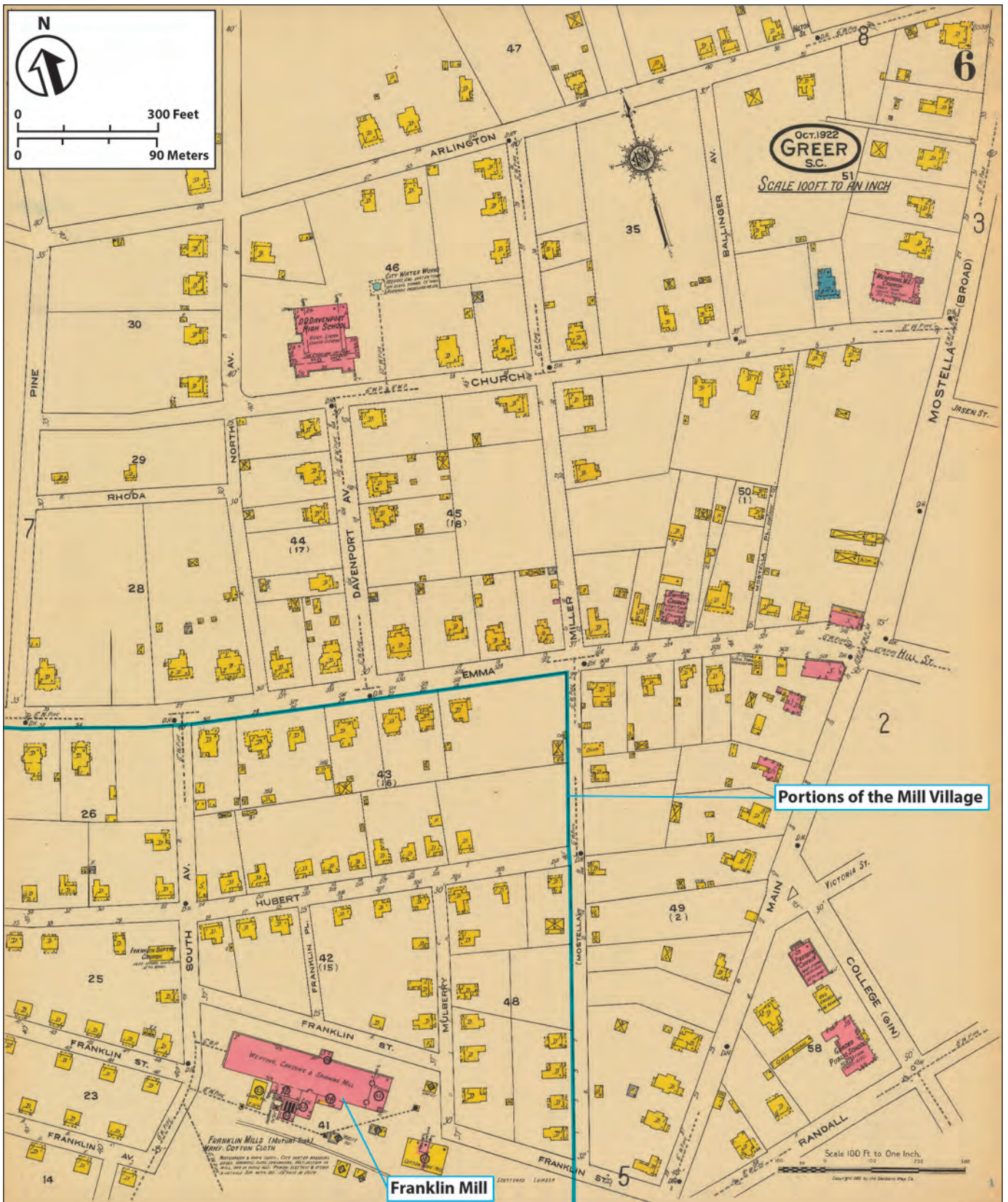


Figure 2.12 A map of a portion of the Town of Greer with the Franklin Mill and its mill houses.<sup>64</sup>



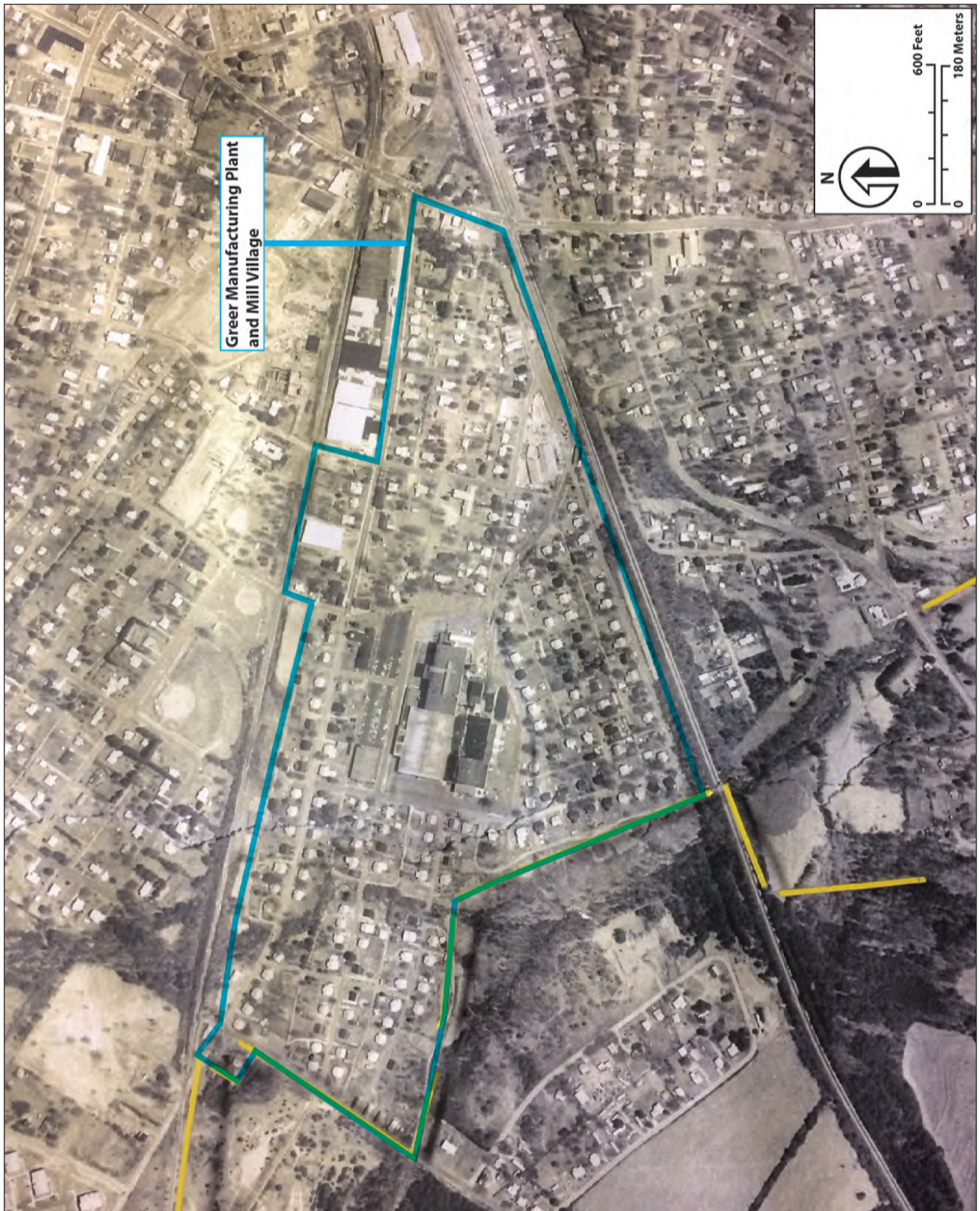


Figure 2.13 An aerial photograph of the Greer Manufacturing plant with some of the mill village taken about 1956 (Original in City of Greer Planning Office).



**Growth of Greer to 1919.** The establishment of the three mills inside or just outside of the Greer city limits caused a construction and commercial boom. Population that stood at 300 in 1890 leapt to 1,200 by 1898 and would more than double again in the city limits over the next 20 years, with thousands more outside.<sup>65</sup> In 1904, the citizens changed the town government to an elected mayor/aldermen form of government, established a full-time fire department in 1914 after a fire nearly destroyed the Franklin Mill, and added three banks and a savings and loan by the time of World War I. In 1912, the legislature redid the town limits back to 0.5 mile from the intersection of Main and Emma Streets, bringing in most of the developed areas. School population boomed. When the Greer Graded School was erected in 1904 on College Street near the Presbyterian Church it had three teachers and 75 students. By 1919 it had grown to 16 teachers and 794 students, and by 1921 the school system had 20 teachers and 1,591 school children of both races.<sup>66</sup> When David D. Davenport died in 1918 he left the town a portion of his fortune to erect a new high school, which was completed four years later and appropriately named Davenport High School. By the time of World War I, Trade Street had become a tree-lined boulevard, with commercial brick buildings from the depot to Hill Street and numerous other firms located along the rail line and the three mills surrounding much of the old center of town to the west, southwest and southeast. A map of Greer's business district in 1911 shows the thickening of commercial buildings along Trade, Victoria, Main, Depot and Randall Streets in Figure 2.14.

By 1919 real estate developers had platted much of the land inside the old Shumate tract and sold lots to the many new residents coming to the expanding community. In 1897, David Cannon divided off some of his father Noah's former holdings east of Cannon Street and west of the county line into 15 lots and recorded the plat, though little building took place there.<sup>67</sup> The northeast corner would be further subdivided in 1920 for Miller and Wills as Cannon Heights.<sup>68</sup> In 1907 the first section of land subdivided outside the old Shumate tract into residences was Mountain View Heights, north of Cannon's tract. Here Thomas Keating developed a small tract between East Arlington, Bearden, Line, and North Main Streets. Keating was a prominent architect and contractor in Greer for more than 40 years. In 1906 he moved into Greer to build the mill houses for Franklin Mill and the next year began developing Mountain View Heights (Hiatt 2007). Mountain View Heights had a restrictive clause in the deeds limiting African Americans from purchasing lots. Figure 2.15, a 1922 map of the area shows that several Keating homes had been built along Mostella Drive (North Main Street) and that Mountain View Heights was starting to fill out. Keating's projects expanded west of North Main where he built homes in the 1910s. He designed and built the Ponders home at 401 North Main in 1910 and his own home at 213 North Main in 1913. He is also attributed to building several the structures in the Greer Downtown Historic District including the Marchant building (1910), the Reese Building (1915), and the Belk-Kirkpatrick building at 104-106 Trade Street.

Four important developments occurred in the lands south of Hill Street at the end of World War I. In 1917 the executor for the estate of J. L. Keller subdivided two tracts of land south of the rail line. The first was a small parcel of five lots at the triangle formed by Trade and Mayfield Streets and the Southern Rail line.<sup>69</sup> The other parcel was much larger and represented one of the first extensions of subdivisions south of modern-day Snow Street. That same year the Keller heirs laid out a number of tracts in a triangular shape east of Poplar Street and west of Line Street where the two roads converge<sup>70</sup>. The tract would be subdivided further at a later date. In 1919, Mrs. R. V. Davis developed one of the last remaining sections of land along Depot Street from

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<sup>65</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 36-37; Campbell, *Greer Community Annual*, 1.

<sup>66</sup> Campbell, *Greer Community Annual*, 11.

<sup>67</sup> GCPB, E:007.

<sup>68</sup> GCPB, E:248.

<sup>69</sup> GCPB, E:027.

<sup>70</sup> GCPB, FF:231.

<sup>71</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *1911 Fire Insurance Map of Greer, South Carolina* (New York: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1911), 1.

<sup>72</sup> Sanborn, *1922 Map of Greer*, 8.

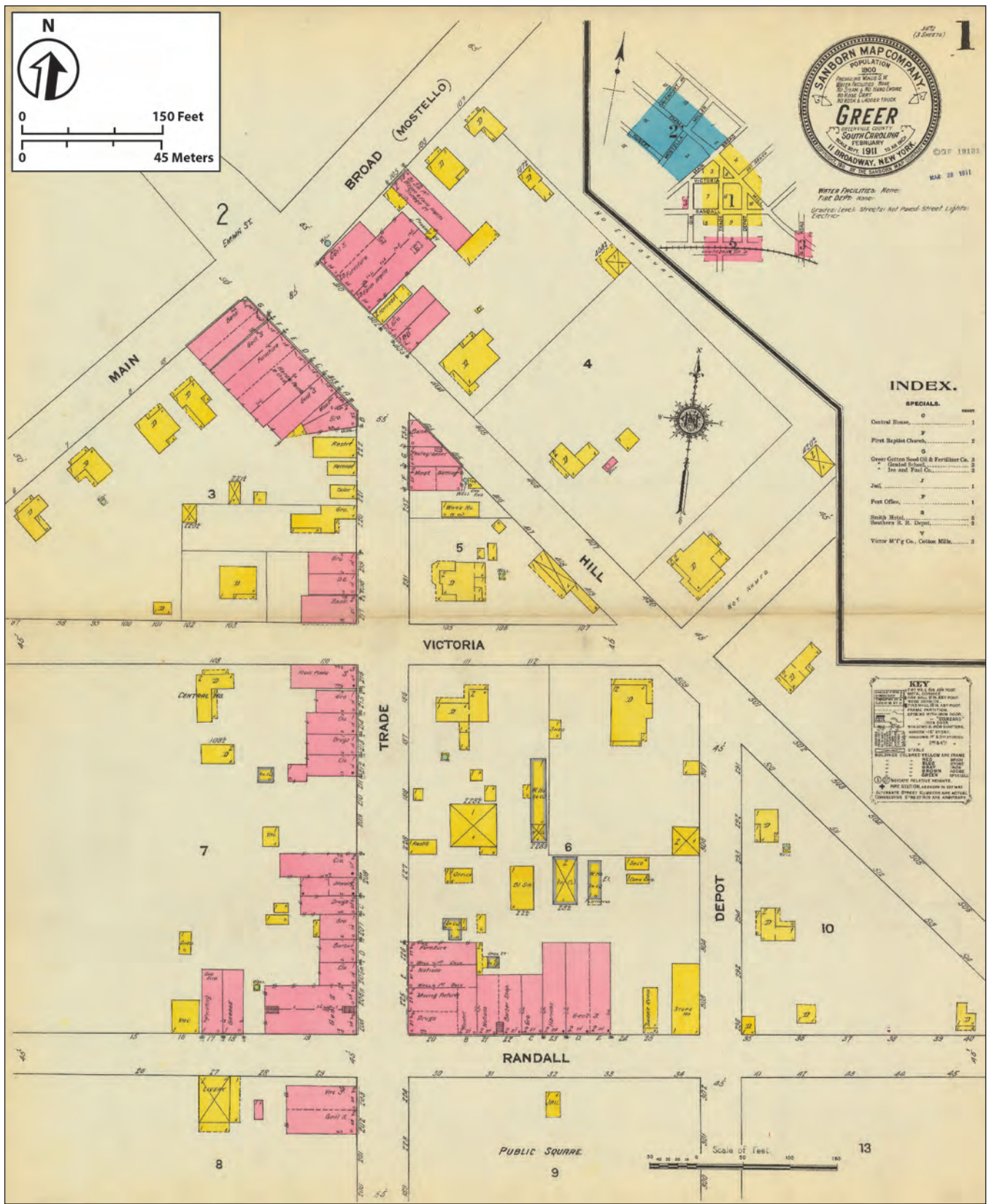


Figure 2.14 A map of the business district of Greer in 1911.<sup>71</sup>



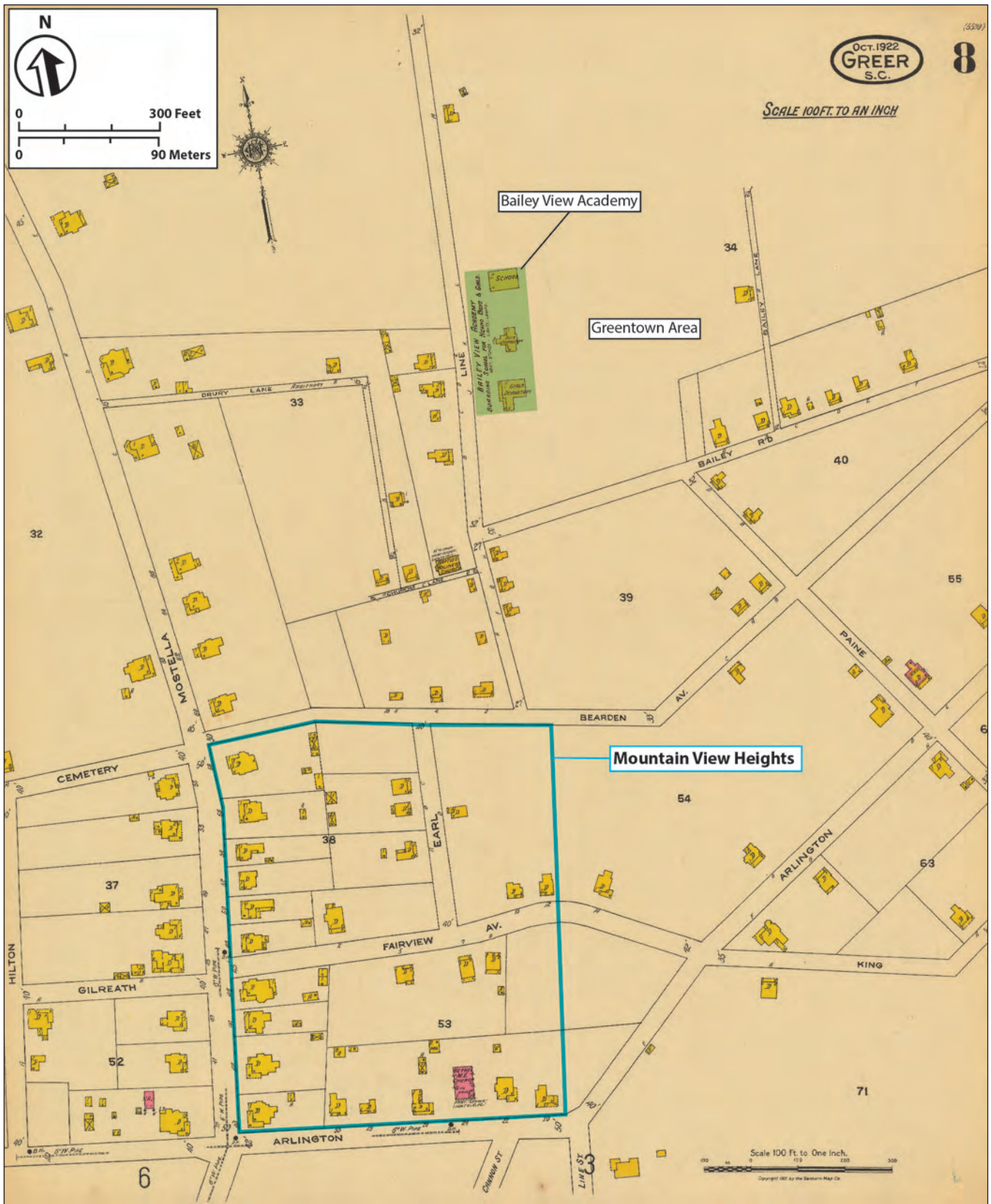


Figure 2.15 A map of the Mountain View Heights area of Greer in 1922 with a number of houses on lots in the subdivision.<sup>72</sup>



her husband's estate.<sup>73</sup> The triangular parcel that contained two buildings at the time of her survey in January 1919 was soon completely taken up. South of the tracks Samuel Zimmerman, B. F. Zimmerman, and T. M. Marchant platted "Marchant Place" along Daniel Street. The development covered most of the land bounded by Trade Street on the west, Park Street on the east, and Cannon Street to the south.<sup>74</sup> At the same time, Louise M. Cunningham and the estate of Nannie M. Zimmerman platted the lands south of Marchant Place down to Snow Street into residential lots.<sup>75</sup> This completed most of the land east of Trade and west of Line Street in Greenville County and represented a break with the commercial development on Trade Street north of the rail tracks. Most of the land had been developed into homes by the early 1930s.<sup>76</sup>

Typically, much of the early platting was not as sophisticated as Keating's. On the Greenville County side of Greer, David D. Davenport laid out a residential subdivision he had purchased from William A. Hill in 1900. The tract lay between Emma Street (West Poinsett Street), Church Street, Miller Street and the west side of Davenport Avenue.<sup>77</sup> The 1922 Sanborn map of Greer indicates that this area was built out by then. In the years after the mills were built, development increased in the old section of the Lot #s 44 and 45 as William A. Hill subdivided his lands and began selling them. Homes increased in the section west of Main, north of Church Street and east of Mountain View Cemetery that fronted along Drace Street. South of the rail lines, in 1919 Noah Cannon's heirs developed Cannon Park along the south of Cannon Street above Palmer Street, and just north of the Maple Creek Community. Residential development began to fill in the lots within three years.<sup>78</sup>

On the Spartanburg County side of the line, in 1907, developers platted the first large section just outside the city limits at Arlington Heights. White residents purchased lots along Arlington Drive but the inner lots were sold to African Americans.<sup>79</sup> In 1916 the Southern Land and Auction Company platted Dillworth Park, a tract of 128 lots bounding west on Line Street and began selling lots.<sup>80</sup> Figure 16 shows a plat of Dillworth Park. White residents again purchased lots along or near Arlington Road. Three years after the end of World War I, Noah Cannon's heirs subdivided another tract of his lands along Highland Avenue south of Ward's Creek, west of Mason Street and East of Wilson Street. They developed the lots along Highland for residential purposes but extended the size of lots along the creek. With post-World War I prosperity residents began closing many open areas along Highland Street, Hill Street and Line Street, but development on the Spartanburg side of town remained less intensive.

**African American settlements.** The mill villages were strictly segregated with a Whites Only policy. They generally lived in nearby subdivisions usually at Maple Creek, Greentown, Needmore Village, or Sunnyside. African American workers were permitted only the lower level, menial jobs at the mills such as heavy hauling, janitorial, and maintenance work. But in the community, they served as barbers, masons, painters, drivers, carpenters, boilermakers, farmers, railroad workers and day laborers. Professionally, they were generally limited to teachers, ministers, and morticians. African American women frequently worked outside their homes as domestic help, cooks, or laundresses.<sup>81</sup> The town had several small businesses owned by African Americans; two of which, the Star Pressing Club and Thompson's tailoring, were both located on Trade Street, indicating that they served both white and black families.

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<sup>73</sup> Greenville County, South Carolina Deed Books (GCDB) (Originals located in the Greenville County Clerk of Court, Register of Deeds Office, Greenville), E:238.

<sup>74</sup> GCPB, C:197.

<sup>75</sup> GCPB, E:135.

<sup>76</sup> US War Department, *US War Department Greer, South Carolina quadrangle* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1938).

<sup>77</sup> GCPB, A:399.

<sup>78</sup> Sanborn, *1922 Map of Greer*, 5.

<sup>79</sup> Spartanburg County, South Carolina Plat Books (SCPB) (Originals located in the Spartanburg County Clerk of Court, Register of Deeds Office, Spartanburg), 002:62.

<sup>80</sup> SCPB, 05:063.

<sup>81</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 76-77.

<sup>82</sup> SCPB, 05:063.



Figure 2.16 A plat of Dillworth Park on the Spartanburg County side of the line.<sup>82</sup>

**Maple Creek.** The 1915 directory of Greer gives the location of four African American communities in or near the town limits. The earliest may have been at Maple Creek. It was located south of Palmer Street, east of South Main Street and west of Poplar Drive. The area has long been known as Maple Creek for the branch of the Tyger River that flows there. The community was centered on a Baptist Church first founded in 1884 as St. Marcus African Methodist Church. The church was located at the point where South Main Street met Pelham Road. Later Maple Creek Baptist Church acquired the buildings and land where they remain today. The community stretched south of the church along Pelham Road and later may have expanded south of Cannon Park at Palmer Street with the Church anchoring the northwestern corner.

**Needmore Village.** West of Greer is the Needmore section that dates to at least the end of the nineteenth century on land once owned by W. E. Morrow. Morrow divided his tract off Emma Street (West Poinsett) and sold the 22.5-acre Lot # 3 to M. D. Littlefield on December 31, 1907.<sup>83</sup> Littlefield subdivided the lots into the Needmore Village. However, it seems evident that African Americans had already settled that section, probably as tenants of Morrow. The area includes the Needmore Cemetery to the west off Canteen Avenue. It appears the land laid out and sold by Littlefield was centered on Needmore Street (today Spring Street) and the original section was likely bounded by Piedmont Road to the east, the B. A. Bennett property to the north, Forest Street on the west and West Poinsett to the south. Today the area includes the cemetery on Canteen Avenue and the residential lots to the north up to Mountain View Avenue.<sup>84</sup> Figure 2.17 shows an early 1920s map of a portion of Needmore.

**Slabtown or Sunnyside.** Slabtown was listed in the 1915 directory of Greer as an African American community on the east side of the line in Spartanburg County, approximately one half mile from the city, and on the south side of Apalache Road (today Arlington Road). It is more properly known today as the Sunnyside area. Like the other two communities, it likely had its roots in families who lived on the surrounding farms and tenanted the land. At least some of the founders of Bethel Methodist Episcopal in 1882 came from the Sunnyside area. The area has expanded in more recent years but plats laying out subdivisions indicate that African Americans were purchasing lots in the south side of Arlington Heights almost as soon as the subdivision was platted in 1907. That same year the Dunbar School was relocated to the corner of Broadus and Morgan inside Arlington Heights. Generally, Sunnyside Road divided the two racially segregated communities. Arlington Heights was sandwiched between Hampton and Broadus Roads west of Elmer Street in the Spartanburg County side of Greer. White residents purchased lots along Hampton Road but the interior lots were eventually conveyed to African Americans. The lots sold for \$50 to \$300 and were generally 100' by 200'.<sup>85</sup> In laying out Arlington Heights, the developers platted Henry, Lawrence, Lorla, Broadus, and Morgan Streets and Hampton Avenue. In addition to Arlington Heights, east of Sunnyside lay the Beasley Addition, and other areas populated by African Americans. To the west lay vacant land until platted later in the century. By 1917, at least one other African American platted tract was located west of the Sunnyside line. In 1917, H. Olin Jones platted lots between Stokes Street on the west to Sunnyside on the east and Oak Street on the north south to the Collins property. This tract opened up some lots on the west side of Sunnyside to African Americans.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> GCDB, WWW:240.

<sup>84</sup> GCDB, WWW:240; GCPB, D:195, ZZZ:103A, 10E:37, FF:333.

<sup>85</sup> SCPB, 002:062.

<sup>86</sup> Sanborn, 1922 Map of Greer, 7.

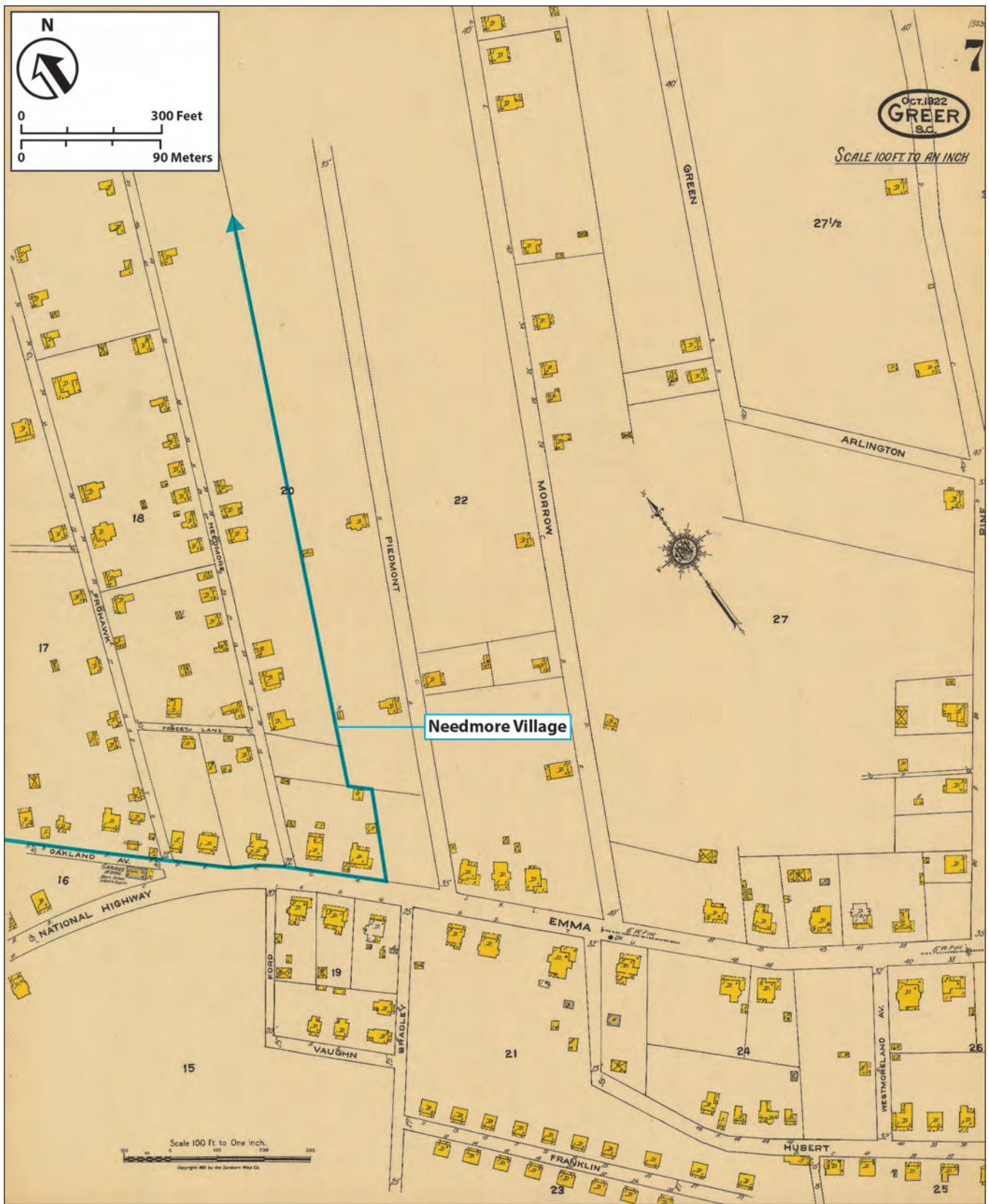


Figure 2.17 A 1922 map of the Needmore Village with many of the lots already occupied.<sup>86</sup>



**Greentown.** Greentown was the fourth African American section of Greer mentioned in the 1915 Directory. This section was originally established by L. Jackson Greene, a former Confederate soldier, investor in Victor Mills, and early owner of the Greer Lumber Company. In the late 1890s the Pentecostal Holiness movement came into the area and in 1906 Green sold to a small lot trustees Martin Beasley, Frank Burnett, Lee McMakin, W. T. Paden, B. B. Bomar, Corrie Burton, Essex Smith and Frank Ross for the use of the “Local Fire Baptized Holiness Church of Greer”.<sup>87</sup> It was one of the first fully integrated churches in the area. In time the church became the center of Greentown, an African American community located just northeast of the town. It stretched from modern-day Harris Street north to Wade Hampton and from the county line east to Victor Street. The area took its name from Green, who sold lots to the community, and remained an attending member of the church long after the denomination segregated due to political pressure.<sup>88</sup> The subdivision also contained the Bailey View School, a private school for African American children that served the Greer area for three years before closing in 1925.<sup>89</sup> The 1922 Sanborn map of Greer shows a portion of Greentown with the Bailey View School (see Figure 2.15).

In 1917, the US Army established two training camps for World War I soldiers bound for France near Greer; Camp Sevier in Greenville County and Camp Wadsworth in Spartanburg County. The town mobilized for the war with patriotic sentiment and like most American communities spent most of its extra time and effort helping soldiers passing through on the rail lines or entertaining troops from the two camps. The community organized a chapter of the Red Cross, which turned out to be a great advantage as hundreds of residents came down with flu from the Spanish Flu Epidemic that spread throughout the United States in 1918-1919. Some products were rationed such as wheat and fertilizer, but the mills ran full time providing extra spending money to the workers while owners profited with rising stock values. Farmers also prospered and produced the largest crop of cotton to date (12,000 bales) in the fall of 1918.<sup>90</sup> After the war, former militia units were converted into the new National Guard units and Greer had its own armory located between the two rail lines on School Street. The armistice in late 1918, the end of the epidemic in 1919, and President Wilson’s trip to Europe that year to negotiate the Peace in Paris seemed to end the decade on a high note for the United States and Greer. Citizens looked to a “return to normalcy,” as one political candidate called it, and a new wave of prosperity.<sup>91</sup>

## 2.7 Boom and Bust and Maturity 1920-1945

The end of World War I for the United States, with the end of rationing and the celebratory mood the country entered in 1920 seem to bode for an extended period of prosperity. Larger events, such as laying the blame for World War I on Germany and her allies, the Red Scare of 1919, the Women’s vote, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, and Prohibition, had little noticeable effect on Greer. Consequences of those actions would play out in the distant future. Of more importance to Greer was the future of cotton production, which had hit an all-time high in the war year of 1918 and prices remained high for a few more years. In 1920, Greenville County produced 48,000 bales as Greer’s three mills remained the second most important processing location.<sup>92</sup> In 1920, the population of the town limits passed 2,000 and thousands more lived within walking distance. More than 100 retailers lined Trade, Hill, Emma, Victoria, School and Depot Streets. Two rail lines served the community and the new paved National Highway (US 29) was completed in the summer of 1918.<sup>93</sup> The National Highway was a portion of the Bankhead Highway, the second transcontinental (first

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<sup>87</sup> Spartanburg County, South Carolina Deed Books (SCDB) (Originals located in the Spartanburg County Clerk of Court, Register of Deeds Office, Spartanburg), SSS:301.

<sup>88</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 77.

<sup>89</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 77.

<sup>90</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 94.

<sup>91</sup> The phrase is attributed to Warren G. Harding’s political campaign in 1920.

<sup>92</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 292.

<sup>93</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 98.

all-weather) highway across the United States, linking Washington D.C. and San Diego, California.<sup>94</sup> The town formed its first Chamber of Commerce in 1920 and the automobile was making itself a primary means of transportation as new “filling stations” and garages appeared along the roadways.

**Peaches, the new crop.** Despite the apparent optimism of the early 1920s, the decade would be a struggling time for farmers, a downturn that was a precursor to the 1930s Great Depression. High cotton prices in the last half of the 1910s created a wave of farming expansion. In 1920-21, the country entered a mild recession that saw prices of cotton fall to one half their value of the previous year. Banks struggled for two years and the advent of the boll weevil that came to Greenville County in 1917 pushed farmers to diversify. Prices continued a downward trend and hit bottom in 1923 at less than 20 percent of its 1919 level.<sup>95</sup> A mid-decade revival of the trade did little to change the overall trend away from cotton’s previous dominance of the region. By 1927, the trade peaked in Greer and by that year most local farmers were already experimenting with other crops such as corn, wheat, potatoes, creamery products, and peaches.

Peaches particularly became the replacement crop for cotton in the South Carolina Piedmont as the 1920s progressed. Long known to be a popular crop in the region due to plentiful rainfall, favorable soil, and moderate climate, it became the replacement crop to cotton by mid-century.<sup>96</sup> Early growers from Greer included J. Vernon Smith, W. W. Burgess, and James P. Taylor, who planted orchards north of the community. Supposedly Taylor shipped the first successful boxcar of the crop from nearby Burgess Stop in 1912.<sup>97</sup> However, it was Smith who became the largest marketer of the crop. In 1924, Smith helped form and lead the South Carolina Peach Growers Association, and two years later, he had 5,000 of Greenville County’s 60,000 trees in his orchard near Greer. The J. Vernon Smith Parkway (State Route 80) that bypasses Greer to the south is named for this innovative peach husbandman. By 1931 he claimed to have shipped 25 train boxcars full of peaches north from his Greer orchard. Figure 2.18 shows Smith’s Mt. Vernon Orchard packing house during the 1920s. Other important growers in the town were the Dobson Brothers and the Taylors. The Taylor peach orchard shed and sales facility still exists on North Buncombe (County Route 101) and Taylor Roads where they have grown peaches for nearly a century. Peach production grew, and by the 1930s, South Carolina challenged Georgia for the title of “Peach State”.<sup>98</sup>

A major change in this agricultural business was the labor. Tenant or sharecroppers were a major source of cotton bales for the mills through the 1920s. Declining prices, the cost of fertilizer, low productivity of the soil, and the presence of the boll weevil drove many small growers out of the business and off the land. Though cotton would be grown well into mid-century only larger cotton farmers could afford to plant. Peach farmers also tended to be wealthier since the cost of fertilizer and pesticides prohibited smaller tenant and share croppers from growing the fruit. Even before the advent of the Great Depression in 1929, thousands of Southern sharecroppers and tenant farmers were in economic recession. During this period hundreds of thousands of poor Southern farmers moved into Northern cities seeking a better future with industrial jobs.

**Community Growth in the 1920s.** The 1920s saw a growth in schools, community health services, as well as police and fire departments. The opening of the new Davenport High School in Moore’s Heights on West Church Street removed some of the overcrowding from the Greer Graded School. The school superintendent moved to implement a more updated study style, called the Gary method, and included night classes at the high school. The Bailey View Academy opened in 1922 but closed in 1925, it being the only private high school for African Americans. The Dunbar School opened and moved to Arlington Heights during the decade. Previously, the only African American school in the area was Maple Swamp School in Spartanburg

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<sup>94</sup> Ernest Everett Blevins, “The Bankhead Highway in South Carolina” (paper presented at the South Carolina Historic Preservation Conference, Columbia, 2015).

<sup>95</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 293.

<sup>96</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 102.

<sup>97</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 102.

<sup>98</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 106.



Figure 2.18 Mt. Vernon Peach Orchard Packing House c. 1920s (Belcher and Hiatt 2003:103).

County. The Dunbar School is no longer extant and the Davenport High School burned in 1970. During these years, the town had other civic improvements. In 1925, the city opened a public library in the former Chamber of Commerce building on Emma Street. Although some banks in Greer struggled during the decade, none closed.<sup>99</sup>

A community annual that survives for 1927 gives a snapshot of Greer in the mid-1920s. The greater-Greer area contained about 9,800 individuals, most outside the limits. The town owned its own artesian wells from which it supplied water to the community. Greer contained nine churches including white Presbyterian, black and white Methodist, Baptist, and Pentecostal denominations. The 125,270 spindles in the mills were turning out 28 million yards of cloth. The town was served by the two railroads with freight receipts exceeding \$727,000 and 4,000 riders on the lines per month. A bus line and a trucking firm also served the town. The city had four miles of paved roads, 16 miles of paved sidewalks, and electric power. Farmers brought 9,000 bales of cotton per year to sell, process, or ship. The Davenport High School had opened its doors in 1922 and there were 1,575 students in city or mill schools. The town possessed an ice plant, two weekly newspapers, three banks and a Building and Loan Association with assets of more than \$3,000,000.00. Dozens of local stores produced baked goods, and sold everything from vegetables, meats, shoes, men and women's garments, auto repairs and tires, pneumatic pumps, and nearly every kind of elec-

<sup>99</sup> A new savings and loan, Greer Agricultural Loan Association, was established in 1927 but never opened its doors, cancelling its charter in 1928.



trical device. The annual budget recorded a modern police department with automobiles and motorcycles and a fire department with its own engine.<sup>100</sup>

**New developments in Greer in the 1920s.** There were several subdivisions platted and sold immediately after the end of World War I. The trend toward development inside and outside the town limits continued throughout the decade, particularly on the Greenville side of town. In 1921 Mrs. L. W. Cunningham subdivided a tract of her land on Emma that represented one of the last undeveloped sections of the original Shumate tract. Her land was south of Mountain View Cemetery between North and Pine Streets.<sup>101</sup> In 1924 N. M. Cannon developed more of the Cannon lands on the south side of the rail lines, near Cannon Park and Maple Creek Baptist Church. He platted 88 lots and tracts west of South Main and between the north side of Buncombe Street and the south side of Spring Street (today Springdale Avenue).<sup>102</sup> However, sales did not appear to be good. A 1935 US War Department map of the area shows no roads construction and only a scattering of houses outside the subdivision. In 1926, the heirs of W. H. Brockman platted 165 lots along the National Highway (Emma Street extension) about .75 of a mile west of the town limits.<sup>103</sup> It was the farthest subdivision yet for the town. The same 1935 map shows that Brockman's heirs encountered only moderate success with a scattering of houses in the area. Though automobiles were making long-distance commutes possible for more people, Greer residents had not yet decided to move to the suburbs in large numbers.

In 1927, W. M. Morrow's heirs platted part of his lands on the northwest side of Greer into 50 lots of a subdivision they called "Morrow Heights." The tract was located east of Needmore Village less than a quarter-mile from the town limits. It stretched from the west side of Piedmont Avenue east to Morrow Avenue.<sup>104</sup> Developers replatted the 1918 design in 1927. Apparently, they had more success in their subdivision for by 1935, there were a number of houses on the land. By the end of the decade development had reached Mountain View Cemetery off Drace Street. In 1928 Mrs. L. W. Cunningham developed a row of lots west of the cemetery on Pine Street.<sup>105</sup> The lateness of the time relative to the Depression seems to have prevented buyers from moving there and no lot was developed by 1935.

On the Spartanburg County side of Greer development was slower but nonetheless several tracts were laid out in the 1920s. Property in the area east of Line Street between East Church Street on the north and south of Oak Street was developed and built out by the mid-1930s.<sup>106</sup> In 1923, surveyor H. S. Brockman laid out a tract known as Academy View Subdivision for African Americans southeast of the Dunbar School on Broadus Street and east of Gilbert Street. However, by the mid-1930s most lots remained unoccupied. East of Line Street in Spartanburg County between Line and Collins (later Highland Street), and in the Stokes section south of East Church Street, between Sunnyside and Line Street houses had appeared by 1930 suggesting a 1920's building time frame.<sup>107</sup> Three houses appear on a tract owned by Phoebia Sullivan on the west side of Elmer Street. Sullivan subdivided her tract near Elmer Street into several larger lots in 1923.<sup>108</sup> Houses and small businesses filled in most of East Poinsett from the County Line eastward to the area of current day Sunnyside Subdivision. Spartanburg side of Greer remained the least developed area at the end of the 1920s.

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<sup>100</sup> Campbell, *Greer Community Annual*.

<sup>101</sup> GCPB, F:017.

<sup>102</sup> GCPB, F:199.

<sup>103</sup> GCPB, H:132.

<sup>104</sup> GCPB, D:196, E:91A, H:85.

<sup>105</sup> GCPB, G:212A.

<sup>106</sup> US War Department, *Greer quadrangle*.

<sup>107</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, *1930 Fire Insurance Map of Greer, South Carolina* (New York: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1930), 7.

<sup>108</sup> US War Department, *Greer quadrangle*; SCPB, 10:0130.



**Community changes in the 1930s.** With few exceptions, the period of 1929-1940 was the weakest economic period in United States history. Known as the Great Depression, it began with the crash of the US Stock Market in October 1929 and rolled into more than 10 years of economic decline, gradual improvements, and periods of stagnation. The collapse gave rise to the Democratic Party led after 1932 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and marked by his “New Deal” program of economic stimulus and “alphabet soup” of abbreviated Federal agencies, to provide relief to a distressed country.<sup>109</sup> The collapse of the US economy between fall 1929 and summer 1932 forebode dire straits for most Americans. By fall 1932 a full one quarter of the working population were unemployed and that many more were underemployed. Nearly seventy-five percent of the pre-crash assets had “evaporated” and the Gross Domestic Product in 1933 had fallen to half of that of 1929.<sup>110</sup>

The underlying causes of the Great Depression have been debated for decades, but the severity of the downturn undoubtedly caught most Americans by surprise. The stock market had been soaring to new heights and more Americans by 1929 had gotten wealthy than any other time. Before 1930, factories were expanding, electricity was gradually coming to the more rural areas, and new appliances were being purchased by American homes every day on easy credit. Cotton had a poor performing decade but on January 1, 1929, *The [Greenville] News* assured its readers that “We have reason to hail the New Year with cheer and satisfaction” with “no disastrous occurrences to check the general march of progress.”<sup>111</sup>

None the less, difficulties were on the horizon provoked by events far beyond South Carolina. Marginal buying in the US Stock Market, excessively high stock prices, the easy credit policy of the Federal Reserve Banks, stagnation in agriculture (which Greer residents would feel acutely), failed banks, and flattening sales of high ticket items like autos and homes all contributed to the downturn of 1929-1931. High US tariffs prevented sales of US goods overseas and collapsing European economic systems brought on by World War I extended a recession into the Great Depression.<sup>112</sup> By 1931, South Carolina counties were running out of money as tax and sales revenues fell. In 1932, Greenville County shortened its school year to eight months and still struggled to meet salaries as owners cut rents to keep tenants and commodity prices fell.<sup>113</sup>

In Greer between 1929 and 1930 business actually continued growing though the textile mills were experiencing “wage cuts, curtailed production, and new labor-saving technology to deal with the situation.”<sup>114</sup> But slackening business and increasing demand for funds to offset pay cuts caused Greer banks to suffer a shortage of funds and began closing. When the last of the four financial institutions in town closed its doors in January 1932, Greer found itself without a bank for the first time in 25 years. Not until June 1933 would a bank open again on Trade Street.<sup>115</sup> Franklin Mill increased its capitalization in 1930 but in less than two years was in receivership. The Greer School system had its own struggles to stay open, closing after eight months in the 1931-1932 session. Interestingly, though white student attendance fell 25 percent during the Depression years the population of African American children attending school increased during that same time.<sup>116</sup>

Some local businesses managed to survive. Those with cash reserves retrenched, cut hours and wages, and waited out the storm. C&D Chevrolet, the first General Motors dealership in town, and Greer Drug Company, which had been in operation more than 35 years, decreased their capitalization and remained in business. J. P. Dobson, who established a sizable farm on the Spartanburg side of town, managed to purchase the Bonded Farmers Warehouse, continued to acquire cotton and survived. Others, like Lloyd Hunt and Vernon Duncan began the Tire Exchange. Hunt invested in real estate in the area purchasing properties at the height of the Depression and selling them many years later at great gain.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Foster and Montgomery, *Spartanburg*, 488; David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945 (The Oxford History of the United States)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 131-159.

<sup>110</sup> Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 162-163.

<sup>111</sup> Quoted in Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 333

<sup>112</sup> Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 9, 36, 68-41, 69-71.

<sup>113</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 335-336.

<sup>114</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 116.

<sup>115</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 118.

<sup>116</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 126.

<sup>117</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 119-120.

Roosevelt's New Deal brought stability but more regulation. Cotton was regulated from gin to factory while terms and conditions of minimum wages and maximum hours for the mills came into effect. The mills gradually recovered as demand for cotton-based goods did not completely diminish. New Deal funds came in the form of construction projects such as maintenance of school buildings, road work and bridges, and a new post office. The Works Progress Administration provided jobs with a paycheck and the Red Cross distributed food, goods, and medical aid in relief of the poorest families in the area. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) provided farm labor, forest reclamation, and other duties such as surveying, road work, and state park building. Figure 2.19 shows an example of new irrigation systems at a farm in 1934, possibly the work of the CCC. However, most areas of the country did not see major improvement until World War II began in the summer of 1939. After the war began factories saw increased orders and jobs in nearly all sectors appeared. In the summer of 1940, the US moved to a war footing that initiated the World War II economic boom and the country began to emerge from the Great Depression.



Figure 2.19 New irrigation system on a farm near Greer in 1934, meant to improve efficiency (University of South Carolina University Libraries, Digital Collection; <http://digital.tcl.sc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/wpaplp/id/624/rec/143>).

As might be expected, few new areas of Greer opened for development in the 1930s, but a few owners did subdivide their tracts for new homes especially in the latter Depression years. On the Greenville County side, R. D. Dobson replatted Morrow Heights and sold some lots in the summer of 1935 as the economy slowly improved.<sup>118</sup> As the long economic downturn slowly changed, individuals built on lots they owned. For example, Thomas Keating, who managed to outlast the Depression, was still designing homes and built the James Hannah house in 1939 on West Arlington Drive.

During this period, most new development of the town occurred south of the railroad tracts. In Greenville County in 1936, W.C. Smith subdivided a tract east of Cannon Park and north of Snow Street into residential lots and put them up for sale.<sup>119</sup> Much of the developable land south of Victor Mill in Spartanburg County belonged to the David D. Davenport estate. Though he died in 1918, Davenport's heirs did not develop his land for many years. Between 1938 and 1939 they began subdividing some small lots between Park and Trade Streets in the old town.<sup>120</sup> In October 1940, they subdivided his holdings south of the mill on the Spartanburg County side of the line into 176 residential lots, Blocks D-G.<sup>121</sup> They also subdivided one remaining parcel west of the line in Greenville County that included a large open space.<sup>122</sup>

During the 1930s, owners subdivided several smaller lots north of the rail tracks on the Spartanburg County side of Greer. In 1931, J. M. Fortner obtained a parcel in the southeast portion of Phoebia Sullivan's lands along Elmer and Broadus Streets and subdivided it into several parcels. He sold it to the Cedar Grove Baptist Church, who made it the location of their church and cemetery. In 1937, Frank Duncan subdivided his brother Perry's land south of the Dilworth tract. "Perry Duncan Estates" stretched from the county line to Will Street and between Oak and Fairview.<sup>123</sup> In 1939, J. H. Payne subdivided a section of his land east of Elmer Street and south of Hampton but did not begin sales until after World War II.<sup>124</sup>

By 1936, the Town of Greer had endured the worst of the Depression. Banks reopened and businesses increased sales. The county was running a full school year and employees were getting paid regularly as tax revenues grew. That year the Town published a map of the area. The town limits had remained the same since 1912 showing a 0.5-mile radius from the corner of Emma Street and Main Street. The map shows both public and private structures including the Victor and Franklin mills, the Davenport High School, the Greer and Dobson lumber companies, the Davenport facilities near the railroad depots, the post office, library and numerous other churches and buildings. In 1938, the US War Department published its Greer South Carolina quadrangle, based on 1935 survey data, that showed developed areas both in the town and outside the limits. The map (Figure 2.20) shows the inner portion of the older section nearly fully developed and subdivisions like Mountain View, Needmore, Victor Mill, Greer Mill and Sunnyside as well populated portions of town. By 1940, the area seemed on the cusp of a rebirth when once again events far away in Europe and the Pacific changed everything.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> GCPB, D:196.

<sup>119</sup> GCPB, T:10.

<sup>120</sup> GCPB, K:21, 30.

<sup>121</sup> SCPB, 16:7, 8, 129.

<sup>122</sup> GCPB, K:69.

<sup>123</sup> SCPB, 059:044.

<sup>124</sup> SCPB, 27:0169.

<sup>125</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 128.

<sup>126</sup> US War Department, *Greer quadrangle*.



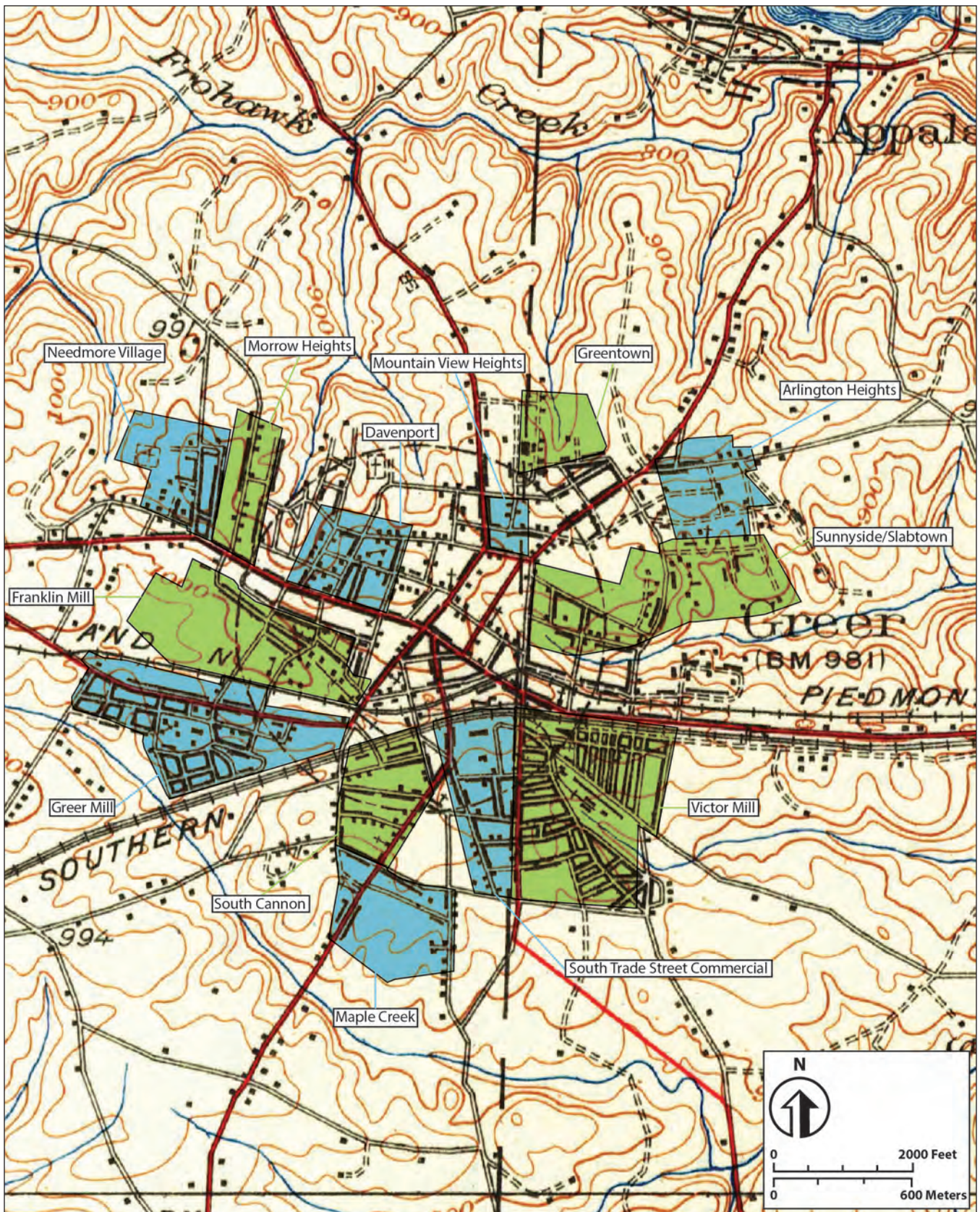


Figure 2.20 A portion of a 1938 map of the Greer area.<sup>126</sup>



**World War II in Greer, 1941-45.** As it did across the United States, World War II disrupted life in Greer. The small town was “caught up in a cauldron of change” as great as that caused by the Civil War and much more than World War I.<sup>127</sup> Men and women served in every branch of the Armed Services, the mills became defense plants complete with armed guards, local citizens formed a Citizens Defense Guard, and even the school superintendent went into service. Citizens organized War Bond rallies; the basement of the Davenport Library became a United States Organization (USO) hall and entertained troops traveling through town. When it closed in early 1946 they had entertained 6,000 service men and women.<sup>128</sup> Men from the town served in every branch of service, and suffered the inevitable consequences. The long Depression and then cataclysmic World War II had a general democratizing effect on society, even more so in small towns like Greer.

The direct impact on the town was to bring the community out of the Great Depression and into war-time prosperity. The mills ran full, with workers earning overtime and jobs available everywhere as more local men left for service. During these years, the middle class expanded as savings increased due to war-time rationing and increased income. The impact of thousands of soldiers coming through town or visiting on leave and staying with local families made the downtown a lively business center.

For the most part Greer had changed little over the years, continuing being dependent on cotton and later peach trade. However, a subtle change had occurred even in the midst of economic depression. The economy of the town mirrored the Carolina Piedmont counties in moving away from a farm-based to factory-based economy.<sup>129</sup> The US industrial movement was a critical factor in winning a two-front war, and its importance pushed the region towards more factory dependence and away from its rural roots. Increased wealth in a growing middle class, educational opportunities for both Whites and African Americans that increased especially through the military, and a spirit of unity that bound men and women of all creeds and races together to win the worst war in history broke down old ways and traditions that would have a lasting impact on the country, the Carolina Piedmont, and Greer.<sup>130</sup> The war produced shortages of every kind, particularly essentials such as gasoline, tires, metals, timber, sugar, and other commodities. When the Davenport heirs completed their subdivisions in June 1941, only one small subdivision opened on either side of Greer until 1946, when a small parcel south of current-day Oakdale in Spartanburg was recorded.<sup>131</sup> Dobson Lumber Company did subdivide 22 lots in the Needmore Village area for new homes in late 1944 in Greenville County.<sup>132</sup>

## **2.8 Post-World War II expansion, 1946-1977**

Greer entered a post-war economic boom in the fall of 1945 that lasted 30 years. Not until the Arab Oil Embargo sparked the recession of 1973-1975 did the US economy substantially weaken. In Greer, like the US in general, new savings accounts built up over four years of war helped to fuel a resurgence of commercial, industrial, and construction activity when the war ended. The most obvious outward change was development and growth of residential homes and new subdivisions. Returning servicemen and women were eligible for low-interest loans through the new Veterans Administration (VA) and at the same time, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) helped finance millions of homes for non-veterans with other federally backed funds requiring small down payments and insisting on good quality construction. In 1946, bank assets had doubled from those of 1929 and confidence in the banking system was high, despite the failures in the early 1930s. Many returning veterans and their wives looked to starting families and regaining jobs in the mills,

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<sup>127</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 374.

<sup>128</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 134.

<sup>129</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 136.

<sup>130</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 385; Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear*, 857-858.

<sup>131</sup> SCPB, 044:0150.

<sup>132</sup> GCPB, K:299.

returning to a way of life similar to their parents and grandparents before them.<sup>133</sup> The mills of Greer, along with the entire former Parker-built Monaghan system were acquired by J. P. Stevens and Company in 1946. This gave the Stevens firm 18 mills in the Greenville-Spartanburg County area.<sup>134</sup>

**The immediate post-War to 1960.** Most remarkable was the rapid decline of the importance of agriculture to the community in the 1940s to 1960s. As early as 1946 the *Greenville News* was reporting that in the Piedmont of South Carolina, farm tenants were a “thing of the past”.<sup>135</sup> By 1967, the *News* was pointing that agriculture had taken “a back seat” to factory work.<sup>136</sup> Peach farming remained strong but farmers were dedicating more land to grasslands for dairy cows, beef cows, and pork production than to cotton or peaches. Even the textile mills were no longer strictly “cotton mills” but were also producing cotton and synthetic blend fabrics.<sup>137</sup> The town still maintained its connection to the rural community around it as late as the 1950s; farmers hauled by wagon or truck bales of cotton for processing into town. Yet by then, the town from the pre-World War I era was nearly gone. The town report by the Mayor in 1955 shows some of the changes. The police department included 18 officers dealing with more than 1,200 cases. The Greer fire department included four full-time regular officers and 15 volunteers with two vehicles that responded to 52 fire alarms in 1955. The town had street cleaning equipment, garbage pickup, and most paved streets had curbing and gutters. Up at the north end of town a dam was being constructed for the new water works Lake Robinson Reservoir. The *Greer Citizen* published on Victoria Street, Southern Bell and Telephone had a new office on Poinsett Street. Out on the former Super Highway, now renamed Wade Hampton Boulevard, were the beginnings of suburbia with the Holiday Motel, the Mayfair Restaurant and other businesses.<sup>138</sup> One author described Greer in the 1950s:

Business in Greer continued to be conducted primarily on Saturdays. On a typical Saturday, farmers and mill hands gathered at the bank to discuss world affairs, while women and children shopped until lunch. Families had several options for meals ranging from Tony Taleff’s Sanitary Café just north of the P&N tracks, to the Elite on the 200 block of Trade, or Creight Taylors’ (later Lewis Drive In). Food was available at the Wayside Inn and later at the Dixie Lunch and the Coffee Pot Restaurant. ‘Meat and three’ (vegetables) with refills of iced sweet tea ran in the neighborhood of \$.75. Before the era of day care facility, the movies served to confine and monitor children during Saturday afternoon when the playbill included favorites such as Roy Rogers western and Ma and Pa Kettle comedies... Often a family completed their day in town with a visit to Ponder’s Ice Cream Parlor for a ‘cream’ or cup of orange ice. After the war the Drive-in Theatre became popular and two were built in Greer, one on each end of the newly rerouted National Highway [US 29], called the “Super Highway” because it divided four lanes. In 1949, Greer refined its cultural identity further when a local radio station, WEAB, an enterprise of E.A. Burch, owner of the *Greer Citizen*, went on air in mid-year... Two theatres operated on a two-day schedule, Friday and Saturday in the years before Television became popular with double features, cartoons, news reels.<sup>139</sup>

The Depression and even more World War II with its high ideals created deep structural changes in society. Though the mills continued to produce for more than 30 years after the war, the redevelopment of Japan and Germany and the resurgence of Western Europe in the 1960s created international competition spurred by the global leadership sought by the US through the United Nations—a dramatic change from

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<sup>133</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 136.

<sup>134</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 389.

<sup>135</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 389.

<sup>136</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 389.

<sup>137</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 144.

<sup>138</sup> Wilma Gosnell, *City of Greer Reports to The Citizens* (Greer: Smith Printing Company, 1956).

<sup>139</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 136-137.



the isolationism at the close of World War I. In time this would have a dramatic impact on small towns like Greer, highly dependent on a single locally-owned industry like cotton mills. A foretaste of this came as early as 1959, when the cities of Spartanburg and Greenville together planned to build a new modern Airport just outside of Greer, chosen because of its unique position of being halfway between the two municipalities. No less a town-changing event was the building of Interstate 85 [I-85] that crossed the area east to west just south of Greer. Eventually I-85 exits became points of commercial and industrial development and nearby mill towns like Greer were easily bypassed.<sup>140</sup> In 1952, the city opened its first fully-staffed hospital and a year later its first public housing project. The Allen Bennett Hospital was a 27-bed hospital. Greer had been without a hospital since the closing of the Chick Springs Hospital during the early years of the Depression. It was located the intersection of Memorial Drive and National Highway [US 29]. The City Housing project was in the southwest side of town on South Main Street south of the W. C. Smith tract.<sup>141</sup>

Other structural changes played out in the cultural life of the town such as the Civil Rights movements in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1954 the US Supreme Court struck down the “separate but equal” theory in public services under which the South had operated for more than 60 years. Although segregation was outlawed, it would take more than 15 years for the public schools to become fully integrated. Briefly in the early 1960s, the Ku Klux Klan revived but made no overt efforts to stop integration in the schools or other public facilities. In 1963, the City of Greenville quietly repealed its segregation laws, and restaurants agreed to service African American customers. Especially after the passing of the Civil Rights acts of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, legal matters regarding segregation were essentially solved. Desegregating the schools took more time. Though Greer integrated without violence, it was not without incident. When the former African American Dunbar School opened to whites as the East Greer Elementary, white parents converged on the school days before it was due to open to scrub and mop it before they permitted their children to attend.<sup>142</sup> In February 1970, the old Davenport High that had been renamed Davenport Junior High was burned in a suspicious fire. The high school had been replaced by the new Greer High School in 1953. Although local residents of both races thought violence inevitable it did not materialize and the schools integrated peacefully in 1970 and 1971.<sup>143</sup> Integration in public places proceeded “without difficulty in many ways; in others, the transition never occurred.”<sup>144</sup> By the early 1970s in the factories and work places black and whites worked side by side. However, in churches and social functions, even with larger mixed gatherings such as football or baseball games or festivals, the mixture was minimal by choice.<sup>145</sup> Only by the late 1970s, were most legal impediments to segregation gone; real social equity was an accomplishment for the future.

**Real Estate subdivision in the 1940s and 1950s.** Residential subdivision took place at an increasingly rapid pace in the years after World War II. Almost immediately after the war, owners began subdividing their lands around the town. The town would expand several times between 1945 and 1977, particularly in the 1950s. The mill villages would all be separated from the mill and sold as individual houses to the workers. The completion of the Super Highway and later of the I-85 opened up former cotton fields, peach orchards, and cattle lands to commercial and residential development. The city incorporated two lakes along the South Tyger River for a new more dependable source of freshwater for the community and annexed these bodies into its limits.

The first move toward real estate change and perhaps the most dramatic at the time came from the mill owner of J. P. Stevens, Robert Stevens who became convinced to sell the mill village homes to his employees. The villages approaching 40 years old or older included the Victor Monaghan Mill, the Franklin Mill, and the Greer Manufacturing mill towns. In 1947, Victor mill’s village was subdivided into lots and sold. The Franklin

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<sup>140</sup> Huff, *Greenville: The History of the City and County*, 394.

<sup>141</sup> GCDB, 477:353.

<sup>142</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 146.

<sup>143</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 146.

<sup>144</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 147.

<sup>145</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 147.

Mill and Greer Manufacturing followed suit and by the end of the 1950s the mills in town had disposed of their villages.<sup>146</sup> Victor Mill subdivided more of the mills' open land adding a number of lots to the east and south of the main facility. The Stevens called this section "Victory Heights Subdivision" and sold those with the rest of the village in the 1940s. Franklin Mill Village was in the original town of Greer though the Victor Mill and Greer Manufacturing would be absorbed in the annexations of 1957 and 1958 respectively.<sup>147</sup>

On the northeast side of Greer in Spartanburg County in 1946, Sue Payne Bishop obtained land from a relative, J. H. Payne, and platted the northwest corner of Payne's subdivision east of Elmer Street and south of Hampton Road.<sup>148</sup> At the same time, Viola Leech platted a section on the southeast side of town south of the Davenport lands along Maple Creek, between Line Street and Perry Avenue that may have been her residence. At the end of Harvey Street, that divided the tract, was a small farmstead.<sup>149</sup> In 1947, Annie West Wilson platted a tract of land off Highland (then Collins Street) between Wilson and Dobson Streets, bounding north on Ward's Creek.<sup>150</sup> Meanwhile, infilling occurred as older, vacant lots were taken up and built on.

On the Greenville County side of Greer several individuals recorded subdivisions of their land for residential lots, the first subdivisions platted north of the Super Highway (US 29). In 1947 Nancy Finley platted a tract off Center Street near Finley Avenue for 36 lots.<sup>151</sup> Finley's subdivision was just east of a small parcel that J. O. Burnett had platted just prior to the World War II.<sup>152</sup> Also in 1947, Margaret Green platted a tract directly east of Finley's and north of the Super Highway that included the Wilson Cemetery.<sup>153</sup> Also north of the Super Highway in 1949, Hughes Auction Company platted a tract of Geanie Caldwell's land containing 76 lots between the highway and Memorial Drive.<sup>154</sup> Caldwell also platted several additional lots in the Needmore area as did Ella Rector in 1947.<sup>155</sup> Rector's land apparently included a number of individuals with whom she had already negotiated a sale.

The 1950s represented a time of annexation for the Town of Greer. Annexations began in 1950 and nearly every year thereafter the town was annexing subdivisions including the mills and parcels of land. Although the town could continue to annex property through the 1970s, most of the annexations were previously developed sections that were simply incorporated into the town. Large tract annexations would wait until the 1980s and 1990s when Greer would become the center of a burgeoning new auto industry in the South. The map identifies the six wards of the City of Greer and each council member. One annexation that was crucial to the development needs of Greenville was the South Tyger River annexation in 1955. The Greer Commission of Public Works, seeking for a more reliable source of fresh water for public services, annexed the high-water line of the South Tyger River from North Main Street Extension (South Carolina Route 14) to North Buncombe Road (US Highway 101). The river annex included the parts of 43 adjoining tracts that would be flooded when a new reservoir, Lake Robinson, was created.<sup>156</sup>

During the 1950s a few new development projects took place despite the town's preoccupation with consolidating schools and annexing the surrounding tracts. One notable subdivision north of the Super Highway was Burgess Hills, platted in 1951 by the purchasers of part of the farm of town leader William W. Burgess.<sup>157</sup> Burgess Hills was the foundation for two other subdivisions in the area, Mt. Vernon Estates and Brookwood. These three, particularly Burgess Hills, were premier upscale communities that attracted

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<sup>146</sup> GCPB, S:076; GCPB, P:119.

<sup>147</sup> City of Greer, GIS Division, January 18, 2012.

<sup>148</sup> SCPB, 020:0268.

<sup>149</sup> SCPB, 026:0154.

<sup>150</sup> SCPB, 22:0221.

<sup>151</sup> GCPB, T:215.

<sup>152</sup> GCPB, WW:280.

<sup>153</sup> GCPB, B:108.

<sup>154</sup> GCPB, X:01.

<sup>155</sup> GCPB, T:09.

<sup>156</sup> GCPB, GG:109.

<sup>157</sup> GCPB, Y:097.

wealthier individuals desiring to live a short distance from town.<sup>158</sup> Brookwood was developed in 1958 and Mt. Vernon was not platted until the early 1970s.<sup>159</sup> The tracts were located west of Brookwood Road and east of Sheffield Street. There were a few other tracts initiated in the 1950s. J.F. and E.G Ballenger subdivided a small parcel on the west side of Greer between Calvary and South Howell Streets, south of Heyward Street in 1950.<sup>160</sup> Further southeast in Spartanburg County the first subdivisions more than a mile and a half from town were platted as Miles Deshields subdivided land south of the Davenport tracts along Old Woodruff Road (SC Highway 101) and H. H. Cox subdivided a small tract off Pleasant Road near Bailey's Crossroads just inside the Greenville County side in 1957.<sup>161</sup> Burgess Hills, Cox's tract, the Deshields, and Ballenger developments all were precursors of larger, more extensive subdivisions to come as Greer citizens, following examples all over the US, began to abandon town and city centers for tracts in rural areas within a short automobile drive of town.

**The 1960s and Greer development.** For the US, the 1960s was a time of unparalleled change. The Civil Rights Movement saw great success in desegregating public places though it would be the 1970s before schools were fully integrated. The US would fight an 11-year war in Vietnam, losing the war to the Vietnamese Communists in 1975. The war provoked numerous protests, for and against it, and led to a serious division in the county. Numerous other minority groups and women also organized, using the non-violent Civil Rights activity of the 1950s and 1960s as their playbook for a greater role in civil and social decision making. Many young people adopted new ways of thinking with regard to music, illegal drugs, military service, and public morality.

Greer experienced less of an impact on the community from national trends. Men and women served in the military and Greer sent its quotient for the Cold War (1948-1989) and more during the War in Korea (1950-53) and the Vietnam War (1964-1975). However, the impact was felt largely within families. Though Greer experienced little in the way of protests, those were mostly felt in the larger cities outside the South. Instead, the community continued growing by annexing some additional parcels during the decade and adjusting to a new world of opportunities. Interstate 85 was completed giving rapid access to Spartanburg, Greenville, Atlanta, Charlotte, and beyond. The founding of Greenville Technical College gave increased college opportunities for town citizens. New industries appeared during the decade and in the early 1960s when Bowers Battery Company and Homelite Corporation located to Greer. They paid better and offered more advantages to families than the old textile mills that were beginning to age. It was the first of several outside-the-region industries who were expanding into the South to take advantage of the low costs of living, wages, and real estate.<sup>162</sup> At the same time, Greer businessmen were expanding their businesses on either side of the Super Highway, now called Wade Hampton Boulevard (US 29).

New residential development in Greer was somewhat limited in the 1960s. A few new areas grew as older ones witnessed in-fill. Some of the last remaining open tracts in northeast Greer opened at the end of the decade in 1969 and 1970. S&W Company subdivided a section east of Dunbar Court and West of Gilbert Street along Ward's Creek and put lots up for sale. The next year the Sunnydale Subdivision off Highland Street east of Wilson Street and south of Ward's Creek was also platted.<sup>163</sup> Both tracts were on the eastern fringe of development on the Spartanburg side of town. South of town in 1961 T.W. Smith platted a small parcel in Greenville County on the west side of South Main below the Cannon's subdivision.<sup>164</sup> Two other developments further solidified the movement away from the center of Greer to the outskirts, especially for new families working at new industries. In 1963 J.A. Woods heirs developed a tract of his lands between Pelham Road (SC Route 14)

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<sup>158</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 139.

<sup>159</sup> GCPB, QQ:021; GCPB, 4X:013.

<sup>160</sup> GCPB, QQ:021.

<sup>161</sup> SCPB, 031:0321; GCPB, KK:149A.

<sup>162</sup> Belcher and Hiatt, *Greer*, 145.

<sup>163</sup> SCPG, 054:0562; SCPB, 62:007.

<sup>164</sup> GCPB, WW:085.



and Wood Drive on old cotton lands south of town with direct access to an I-85 interchange.<sup>165</sup> That same year, King Acres Incorporated platted 85 lots along Chick Springs Road and the Southern Railroad line. The tract was adjacent to the new General Battery and Ceramic Corporation plant site.<sup>166</sup>

**Adjustment and decline 1970-1977.** The 1970s saw a dramatic decrease in the US involvement in Vietnam, and with the fall of the former Indochina to the Communists, an apparent end to the American involvement there as well. The country, tired of war and protests, settled into a time of introspection and adjustment. African Americans and other minorities began to consolidate their hard-fought gains in public accommodations and schools. The US grappled with political refugees' settlement from Southeast Asia and struggled to extract itself from the economically crippling effects of the Arab Oil Embargo of 1973-74. The advent of high oil and gas prices had an inflationary effect on the economy. Combined with the military drawdown from Vietnam, the decade was marked by a period of "stagflation," that is a period marked by high inflation, relatively high unemployment, and slow economic growth. This would peak in the Recession of 1979-1981. The auto industry particularly was beset with challenges especially by the well-built, durable, and low gasoline consuming Japanese cars that overtook the American automakers by the middle of the decade. They set new standards and levels of performance for the next 20 years.

In 1976 the country experienced a birth of patriotic spirit with the Bicentennial, the 200th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. And for the first time since long before the Civil War, the US elected a Deep South Southerner, Jimmy Carter, for President that November. To underscore the fundamental changes going on in the Piedmont and in South Carolina, it would be the last time for more than 40 years the state would vote for a Democrat for President. While the US was celebrating its Bicentennial, Greer residents celebrated the town's Centennial with celebrations and festivities. As part of the celebration local high school students published a history magazine between the years 1974 and 1977. In it they photographed and interviewed the elder members the community to record their memories of earlier Greer.<sup>167</sup>

The Greenville-Spartanburg region focused on bringing new industries to the South. The regional leadership recognized the declining importance of their textile mills in relationship to the growing industrial climate and sought remedies in other industries. Meanwhile, Greer grappled with safety and zoning issues. The public reluctance to zone business development more carefully to take advantage of changes in movement and development trends created traffic congestion problems, and an increasing tendency of local business to locate along busier highways, particularly Wade Hampton Highway. In 1971, the community got its first shopping center, Grant Plaza, complete with a department store and Winn-Dixie grocery as anchor businesses along with numerous other shops and services. The new shopping area marked the beginning of serious decline for the Trade Street-Poinsett Street district.

In the entire decade, only one new residential subdivision was created. Maplewood Subdivision was created in 1972, in Spartanburg County on the southeast side below the Victor Mill. Under contract to simple extensive development, Maplewood developers Phillips Development Corporation out of Spartanburg designed in quiet cul-de-sacs, gently turning roads, and more open space to give the subdivision curb appeal.<sup>168</sup> Next to Burgess Hills, Mt. Vernon Estates was platted and began selling in 1973.<sup>169</sup> Meanwhile the town purchased a 25-acre parcel on the southwest side of town along Brushy Creek Road and the Southern Railroad line for a new city park, the first outside the immediate town center.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> GCPB, DDD:021.

<sup>166</sup> GCPB, YY:153.

<sup>167</sup> Joda Hiatt, personal communication, February 9, 2017.

<sup>168</sup> SCPB, 072:034-039.

<sup>169</sup> GCPB, 4X:012-020.

<sup>170</sup> GCPB, 5J:026.



## 3.0 Previously Identified Historic Architectural Resources

### 3.1 National Register Listed Historic Properties

The City of Greer architectural survey area currently contains six individual historic properties and one historic district listed on the NRHP. Per the Scope of Work, these resources were not included as part of the survey and, therefore, were not revisited during the field work. Table 3.1 provides a list of these properties.

### 3.2 Previously Recorded NRHP-Eligible Historic Properties

Based on data obtained from South Carolina ArchSite there are no NRHP eligible or potentially eligible architectural resources within the survey area.

### 3.3 Previous Architectural Surveys within the Survey Area

Many of the previously recorded historic architectural resources within the survey area were recorded through cultural resource compliance projects as required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and its implementing regulations. In addition to the cultural resource compliance surveys, two other significant documentation efforts have been conducted for the City of Greer; one in 1978 and another in 1996:

- *City of Greer Historic Preservation Planning Project*. Pendleton Design Group, 1996.
- *Untitled City of Greer Architectural Survey*. Schader and Ward, 1979.

**Table 3.1 National Register Listed Historic Properties within the Survey Area.**

Name of Property	Address/Location	Date Listed	NRIS Number	Site Number
Greer Depot	311 Trade St.	March 6, 1987	87000409	0021
Louie James House	401 W. Poinsett St.	September 19, 1996	96000985	0958
Robert G. Turner House	305 N. Main St.	February 1, 1999	98001625	1187
R. Perry Turner House	211 N. Main St.	February 1, 1999	98001624	0961
Davenport House	100 Randall St.	February 1, 1999	98001623	0960
Greer Post Office	106 S. Main St.	January 31, 2011	10001184	2507
Greer Downtown Historic District	Roughly bounded by Trade, E. Poinsett, Randall, Victoria, and N. Main Sts.	June 18, 2004	97001156	





## 4.0 Survey Results

Brockington and Associates, Inc., identified 856 historic architectural resources in the survey area. These resources included buildings, structures, and sites. The identified historic architectural resources are predominately focused around the City's downtown historic district, the mill villages, and historic transportation routes. These resources are presented on aerial photographic maps in Appendix B. We assessed all the historic architectural resources included in this City of Greer survey for NRHP eligibility.

The City of Greer's architectural resources can be divided into several different categories. Residences, both grand and modest, are among the many types of historic buildings found within the survey area. Other resources include commercial buildings, government/public buildings, churches, cemeteries, a stadium, an industrial building, and a bridge. Within these types, variations in function, material, and style account for varying visual qualities. An examination of Greer's historic resources in reference to these types will provide the best basis for understanding the significance of the resources that remain. A majority of the buildings identified in this survey could not be clearly assigned a stylistic label such as Colonial Revival, Craftsman, or Queen Anne. These "folk" buildings have no academic high style; however, they often utilize elements of certain styles and can still be usefully categorized according to plan and the external clues as to how the interior space is organized.

Many of the houses defy the nomenclature of style. This survey uses the descriptive terminology recommended by McAlester<sup>171</sup> to include these buildings in an analysis of the historic architectural resources in the City of Greer. These types include front-gable, gable-front and wing, massed-plan side-gable, hall-and-parlor, I-house, and pyramidal. This approach, which relies principally on plan rather than style, permits organization, categorization, and thus comparison, which is not possible with a reliance on academic styles. An analysis based primarily on style would result in most of these buildings being excluded from study. The principal differences among the buildings are in plan and form, not in style. The comparisons this approach allows will make possible future inquiries in the search for meaning of these differences.

The remainder of this section discusses the range of aboveground historic resources that we identified in the City of Greer survey. It is organized by building type or function. Within the types, the discussion is organized both chronologically and, where applicable, by style or plan.

### 4.1 Residential Resources

Of the 856 resources identified in the survey area, the majority are domestic buildings. Most of these are single-family houses. The survey includes houses that date from the late-nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century. Many houses surveyed in Greer could not be assigned to a particular academic style. However, the buildings that were given stylistic designations are important in showing the City's uses and adaptations of national styles. The different styles represented in the City of Greer will be discussed in this section. A discussion of the houses for which no stylistic designation could be given, broken down by house type, follows this section.

#### 4.1.1 National Styles

**Queen Anne.** The Queen Anne style is often associated with the term *Victorian*. It is perhaps the most picturesque of the styles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and can be the most irregular in plan. The surfaces of these houses were enlivened through a variety of means, including projecting bay windows, patterned shingles, spindles, and half-timbering. Queen Anne houses are most notable for their architectural details, where decorative work can appear at nearly any juncture or on nearly any surface. Roof lines of Queen Anne houses can be very complex, with multiple cross-gables often creating a jumbled appearance, while towers of various shapes rise above the roofs. One-story porches tend to appear on Queen

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<sup>171</sup> Virginia McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013).

Anne houses and often wrap around several sides of the house. The porches offer additional avenues for decoration, including elaborate turned work, decorative brackets, and single or grouped columns of varying sizes. The Queen Anne style was most prominent between 1880 and 1910. Buildings with elements of the Queen Anne style are common throughout the older parts of Greer, but few retain a high level of architectural integrity. Resource 4059 (Figure 4.1) is an example of this style.

**Folk Victorian.** This is a style that is applied to simpler folk form houses generally built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that feature some of the decorative elements of the Queen Anne, Italianate, or Gothic Revival styles. Most examples of this style are folk house types that have been embellished with spindle-work or jigsaw details around the porch and cornice lines. There are a few surviving examples of Folk Victorian architecture in the City of Greer. Resource 4421, the Marchant House (Figure 4.2) is an example of this style.

**Colonial Revival.** Popular from 1880 to 1955, the Colonial Revival style grew out of the Queen Anne style. By the turn of the twentieth century, however, Colonial Revival had moved from more rustic examples to draw inspiration from the higher Georgian style of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This is a ubiquitous house style that is associated with a wide range of meanings. In the late nineteenth century, for a variety of reasons, architects and homeowners began to look to America's colonial past for inspiration. This was part of a wider cultural movement that sought to find meaning and value in the specifically American past. This style, which included both decorative arts and architecture, emerged in the face of sweeping changes in American society that included increasing urbanization, industrialization, and immigration, as well as a greater interest in both sentimental and scientific study of history. Several examples of Colonial Revival style houses were identified during the survey; notable examples are Resources 4060 and 4343 (Figures 4.3 and 4.4).



Figure 4.1 View of Resource 4059, example of a Queen Anne style house.





Figure 4.2 View of Resource 4421, example of a Folk Victorian style house.



Figure 4.3 View of Resource 4060, example of a Colonial Revival house.





Figure 4.4 View of Resource 4343, example of a Colonial Revival house.

**Neoclassical Revival.** This style is clearly related in inspiration and motivation to the Colonial Revival style. It, too, was popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Whereas the Colonial Revival style drew on eighteenth-century styles, especially Georgian, the Neoclassical style of the turn of the century drew on houses of the early and middle nineteenth century, particularly the early Classical Revival and Greek Revival styles. There are few examples of this style in Greer. Resource 4636 (Figure 4.5) is a relatively unique one-story example of the style.

**Tudor Revival.** This style draws on images of medieval England for its inspiration. The period of predominance for the Tudor Revival as a more or less accurate medieval style was relatively brief, lasting from the turn of the century to the early 1940s. However, elements from the Tudor Revival style are incorporated into the design of many houses in Greer's building stock through the 1950s. Houses in this style tend to be one or one-and-a-half stories with cross-gabled roofs. They often have false half-timbering on the exterior walls, generally on the second half-story. Occasionally these houses will have multi-pane casement windows and relatively large chimney piles. There are several Tudor Revival style houses spread throughout Greer. One example is Resource 4046 (Figure 4.6).

**Craftsman.** Craftsman-style houses drew inspiration from the Arts and Crafts movement of the late nineteenth century. Occasionally they are mistaken for simple front- or side-gable folk houses. The difference is the presence of visible architectural details. These houses feature such elements as low-pitched roofs, often with overhanging eaves and exposed rafters and occasionally with decorative brackets or beams. Generally, these houses have projecting porches supported by battered wooden posts on brick or masonry piers. Most Craftsman houses are surmounted by side- or front-gabled roofs; occasionally, there are hip or cross-gable roofs. This style was prominent from about 1890 to the early 1930s. Several examples of this type resource were identified throughout the City, such as Resources 4008 and 4159 (Figures 4.7 and 4.8).





Figure 4.5 View of Resource 4636, example of a Neoclassical style house.



Figure 4.6 View of Resource 4046, example of a Tudor Revival style house.





Figure 4.7 View of Resource 4008, example of a Craftsman style house.



Figure 4.8 View of Resource 4159, example of a Craftsman style house.



**Minimal Traditional.** Particularly in the years after World War II, most American houses tended to lose the formal and recognized stylistic associations that characterized houses through the early twentieth century. McAlester, however, defines a national style under which many of the new suburban houses built between the 1930s and after World War II can be categorized. The name for this group of houses is Minimal Traditional. These tend to be one-story houses with the use of only one exterior wall material and minimal architectural detail. Often with a low or intermediate pitched gabled roof, occasionally Minimal Traditional houses have a prominent off-center gable on the front. Given the tight time frame within which they were built, they tended to be constructed in readily identifiable tracts or subdivisions. Not so much an urban style as many of the earlier national styles, Minimal Traditional houses are predominantly suburban structures. Several examples of this style of architecture were identified during the survey and are distributed throughout the survey area. Resource 4106 (Figure 4.9) is a representative example.

**Ranch.** The Ranch style originated in the 1930s and gained popularity during the next decade, becoming the dominant style of dwelling across the country until the 1970s. The popularity of Ranch homes coincided with the county's dependence on automobiles. The car culture made it possible for suburban development that consisted of large lots to use Ranch houses that maximized facade width. The Ranch was also a popular and economic style for rural areas. The style was based loosely on earlier Spanish Colonial precedents and Prairie-style modernism. The Ranch style has several subtypes based on building form and utilizes a wide variety of architectural features and materials. Generally, the Ranch house is one-story, has a low-pitched roof with no dormers, and is built low to the ground. An asymmetrical facade and focal windows are common. Ranch-style houses appear throughout the City of Greer both in planned Ranch neighborhoods and as in-fill within earlier established areas. Resources 4058 and 4469 (Figure 4.10 and 4.11) are typical Ranch style houses.



Figure 4.9 View of Resource 4106, example of a Minimal Traditional style house.





Figure 4.10 View of Resource 4058, example of a Ranch style house.



Figure 4.11 View of Resource 4469, example of a Ranch style house.



#### 4.1.2 Folk House Types

The above discussion of national styles represented in Greer is useful in understanding the impact of broader cultural and artistic trends in the City. However, the majority of the houses in the survey area could not be given any stylistic designation. Thus, most of the dwellings in the City are left out of a stylistic analysis. In order to bring these houses into the analysis of the area's historic architecture, the project team drew on folk housing types elaborated by McAlester<sup>173</sup>. A discussion of folk types is presented below.

**Front-Gable.** These houses can have one or two stories with one to three bays across the facade. Craftsman and bungalow-influenced houses are the most prominent twentieth-century examples of this pervasive type. Unlike the buildings described in the Craftsman section above, however, many of these buildings lack architectural details and therefore are included in this folk section. Based on the survey findings, front-gable houses were a popular form of folk housing throughout the City of Greer. Resource 1218 (Figure 4.12) is a typical front-gable style house.

**Massed-Plan Side-Gable.** These houses, which are at least two rooms wide and two rooms deep, became popular as a folk form after the Civil War. The house plan gained popularity after lightweight roof framing could span houses more than two rooms deep. Historically, this form is very popular and appears throughout the City. Resource 4516 (Figure 4.13) is a notable massed-plan side-gable style house.



Figure 4.12 View of Resource 1218, example of a front-gable house.

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<sup>172</sup> McAlester, *Field Guide*.





Figure 4.13 View of Resource 4516, example of a massed-plan side-gable house.

**Gable-Front and Wing.** These houses feature a front-gable section with a side-gabled wing at a right angle. A shed or hip-roof porch often was added to the junction of the two wings. While these houses appear to have been altered over the years, the cross-gable sections often were built as a unit. A number of these houses were recorded during the survey. Both one- and two-story examples were common. Resource 4356 (Figure 4.14) is a typical gable-front and wing house style house.

**I-House.** This house type also was a popular folk form throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These side-gable houses were two rooms wide with a central hallway and one room deep. Houses of this sort were quite popular throughout the South, and drew on notions of balance and symmetry from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. A number of I-Houses were recorded during the survey throughout the City. Resource 4040 (Figure 4.15) is a typical I-House.

**Hall-and-Parlor.** This type includes houses that have a simple side-gabled roof covering a plan that is two rooms wide and one room deep. This was a traditional British form that was an early implant in the American colonies. This plan remained the basic housing form throughout the Southeast into the early twentieth century. Based on the survey findings, hall-and-parlor folk houses are relatively common throughout the City. Resource 4492 (Figure 4.16) is a typical hall-and-parlor style house.

**Pyramidal.** This house type is square in plan and features four-sided hip or pyramidal roofs. This plan and form became popular in the South in the early twentieth century. Based on a review of the survey findings, this type house is abundant throughout City. Resource 4094 (Figure 4.17) is a typical pyramidal style house.





Figure 4.14 View of Resource 4356, example of a gable-front and wing house.



Figure 4.15 View of Resource 4040, example of an I-House.





Figure 4.16 View of Resource 4492, example of a hall-and-parlor house.



Figure 4.17 View of Resource 4094, example of a pyramidal house.



## 4.2 Commercial Resources

The founders of the City of Greer intended Main Street to be the commercial hub of the town. However, commercial development concentrated around the depot and Trade Street. The earliest storefronts and business establishments were wooden buildings, and in the early years of the twentieth century were replaced with brick buildings. The oldest surviving commercial buildings are all located within the Greer Downtown Historic District, and therefore are not included in this survey. Commercial buildings included in this survey are generally from the mid-twentieth century.

Like houses, most commercial buildings adhere to a few particular forms. Some of the commercial buildings surveyed in Greer were part of commercial blocks. These commercial blocks were made up of connected masonry or frame buildings with little architectural detailing. While most commercial buildings surveyed have little architectural ornamentation, simplified classical details such as door surrounds, lintels over windows, and decorative cornices were present. The commercial buildings observed during the survey effort were generally one-story, and frequently featured traditional storefront configurations with plate-glass windows and central doors. A commercial block on Randall Street (Resources 4002 and 4003; Figure 4.18) adheres to the common characteristics of typical early- to mid-twentieth-century commercial buildings. Other commercial resources within the survey area were freestanding buildings that usually fell outside of the major commercial district, such as Resource 1316 (Figure 4.19). Once the Greer Bottling Company, today Resource 1316 is a car wash.



Figure 4.18 View of Resources 4002 and 4003, examples of a block of commercial buildings.



Figure 4.19 View of Resource 1316, example of a freestanding commercial building.

### 4.3 Institutional Resources

Institutional buildings are vital to the health of a community and represent the various systems that cement a civilization. The City of Greer's institutional buildings surveyed in this project included churches, government buildings, and libraries. Architecturally, institutional resources often represent the closest approximation to national academic styles in some areas; more money and effort is put into their design and construction than into other buildings.

Churches are usually the center of a community, and sometimes can be its most architecturally elaborate buildings. Several churches were recorded for the historic resources survey, and Greer's churches exhibit elements of national styles such as Neoclassical, Colonial Revival, Gothic Revival, and one case of Richardsonian Romanesque. Bethel Methodist Episcopal Church (Resource 4624; Figure 4.20) is an example with Richardsonian Romanesque-style elements. A typical example of the Neoclassical style is that of the First Presbyterian Church (Resource 4006; Figure 4.21).

Recreational resources represent an effort by many government and private entities to provide opportunities for community or social development. The historic resources inventory includes the Greer City Stadium (Resource 4632; Figure 4.22), a Work Projects Administration (WPA) project built in 1938. The stadium is a structure built into the surrounding topography and is used by the local high school.

Government buildings are symbolic of a community's civic and economic pride and aspirations. The Davenport Memorial Library building (Resource 4010; Figure 4.23) was another WPA project constructed in 1938 and exhibits Colonial Revival style elements. A circa 1960 Post Office (Resource 4063; Figure 4.24) is now owned by the Greer First Baptist Church, and is a good example of the Mid-century Modern style building.





Figure 4.20 View of Resource 4624, the Bethel Methodist Episcopal Church, example of Richardsonian Romanesque style.



Figure 4.21 View of Resource 4006, the First Presbyterian Church, example of Neoclassical style.





Figure 4.22 View of Resource 4632, Greer City Stadium, example of a recreational structure.



Figure 4.23 View of Resource 4010, example of a Colonial Revival style government building.





Figure 4.24 View of Resource 4063, example of a Mid-century Modern government building.

#### 4.4 Transportation Resources

Transportation resources located within the survey area are associated with the twentieth-century car culture, including service and gas stations. Resource 4065 is a circa 1930 gas station; although the tanks have been removed (Figure 4.25), it is a notable example of a Tudor Revival style transportation building. Another circa 1930 gas station (Resource 4130; Figure 4.26) provides an example of a common folk form used for transportation building.

#### 4.5 Manufacturing Resources

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, Greer experienced the same forces of industrialization as the rest of the South Carolina Piedmont. Cheap labor and low tax rates brought Northern cotton mills to the South, encouraging an unparalleled economic boom in the region. Victor Mill opened in 1895 and was the first of several textile mills in the area. The Victor mill buildings are now gone, but many residential buildings associated with the mill village remain. The Greer Mill buildings (Resource 4365; Figure 4.27) constructed in 1909 are still extant. The Greer Mill complex consists of the relatively small original three-story brick building overshadowed by the massive, multi-stage, four-story building started circa 1920.





Figure 4.25 A view of Resource 4065, example of a Tudor Revival style transportation building.



Figure 4.26 View of Resource 4130, example of a folk form transportation building.





Figure 4.27 View of Resource 4365, Greer Mill complex, example of a manufacturing resource.





## 5.0 Recommendations

### 5.1 NRHP Eligible Properties Identified During the Survey

During the architectural survey, 856 historic architectural resources were recorded. Of these, we recommend 13 as eligible for listing in the NRHP. The eligible resources include three individual residential houses, two churches, one library, two service stations, one commercial building, one U.S. Post Office, and the Greer Armory. In addition, we recommend two districts eligible for listing in the NRHP: one residential neighborhood and one mill village. Summary descriptions and photographs of each NRHP-eligible property and district are provided below.

### 5.2 Individual Properties

#### Resource 1270, Unidentified Service Station

##### 420 East Poinsett Street

Resource 1270 (Figure 5.1) is a circa 1940 service station with a few Art Deco style architectural elements. The masonry building is one story in height and is a flat roof commercial building with stuccoed exterior. The porte cochere is a defining feature of the service station with stuccoed masonry supports and flared brackets. Art Deco elements include the smooth wall surfaces, flat roof, and a diamond pattern motif around the parapet. There are two storefront display windows and two entries, one with a wood frame and glass door. Several window ports have been boarded or filled with masonry. There is a flat roof addition on the west end with two garage bays and overhead doors. The filling pumps are no longer present. The service station retains excellent architectural integrity. The building is recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A, for its association with the development of automotive transportation in Greer, and under Criterion C as an intact example of an early-twentieth century Art Deco style service station.



Figure 5.1 View of Resource 1270, northeast oblique.

## Resource 1315, Victor Baptist Church

### 105 South Line Street

Resource 1315 (Figure 5.2) is a circa 1942 church with Neoclassical style architectural elements. The masonry building has a cross gable roof and brick veneer siding. There is an entry stoop with decorative metal railing and full height Doric engaged columns. There are three entries with simple surrounds and wood panel doors. Other Neoclassical elements include a symmetrically balanced façade with windows and doors and the pedimented front with decorative entablature details. The building has a copper domed bell tower with finial on the ridge. There are stained glass double-hung sash windows in six-over-six and twenty-over-twenty configurations. There are also unstained glass windows, some of which are paired. There are side entries with wood frame and stained -glass doors topped with transom lights. There are decorative brick and concrete pilasters. There is one brick chimney in the rear slope. There is a historic ancillary, flat roofed building joined by a covered walkway off the rear of the building. Based on data from this survey, the Neoclassical style is relatively rare in the City. Recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C, the church exhibits excellent architectural integrity and is considered a good example of an mid-twentieth-century Neoclassical style building.



Figure 5.2 View of Resource 1315, northwest elevation.

## Resource 4006, First Presbyterian Church

### 100 School Street

Resource 4006 (Figure 5.3) is a 1922 church with Neoclassical style architectural elements. The masonry building is two stories in height and has a flat roof with parapet. The façade is dominated by the full-height pedimented gable entry porch. The porch supports are grouped, fluted, Ionic columns. Other Neoclassical elements include decorative cornice molding with faux brackets, a balanced symmetrical façade with central entry, and a large fan transom above the door. The building's brick veneer incorporates stylized classic architectural features with concrete keystones and window entablatures. The windows are stained glass and several have arched transom lights. The church building has a historic rear addition that is connected to multiple other additions. Based on data from this survey, the Neoclassical style is relatively rare in the City. Recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C, the church exhibits excellent architectural integrity and is considered a good example of an early-twentieth-century Neoclassical style building.



Figure 5.3 View of Resource 4006, north elevation.



**Resource 4008, J.H. Walker House**

**105 Randall Street**

Resource 4008 (Figure 5.4) is a 1926 house with Craftsman style architectural elements. The house was designed by architect Legrand for the local pharmacist, J.H. Walker. The frame house is one story in height and is a side-gable building clad with wood shingles. The porch is engaged and has paired wood supports atop brick piers. Other Craftsman elements include exposed rafters, decorative stick work in gable ends, vertical stick vents in gable ends, a large shed roof dormer with a ribbon of windows, six-over-one double hung sash windows, and a wood panel door with fixed lights. There are transom lights over the door, and a portion of the porch is screened. The house has one hip projection and one gable projection and rear shed additions. There are two brick chimneys: one within the rear slope of the roof, and one on the side exterior of the historic addition. There is one outbuilding (Resource 4008.01; Figure 5.5): a front-gable garage with similar architectural details to the house and a wood panel overhead hinged door. There is also one greenhouse structure (Resource 4008.02; Figure 5.6) on the property with a concrete block knee wall for foundation and a metal frame and glass upper section. Recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C, the house exhibits excellent architectural integrity and is considered a good example of an early-twentieth-century Craftsman style bungalow.



Figure 5.4 View of Resource 4008, south elevation.





Figure 5.5 View of Resource 4008.01, south elevation.



Figure 5.6 View of Resource 4008.02, northwest oblique.



## Resource 4010, Davenport Memorial Library

### 113 School Street

Resource 4010 (Figure 5.7) is the 1938 WPA built Davenport Memorial Library (now owned by the First Presbyterian Church and renamed Kirk Hall), and has Colonial Revival style architectural elements. The masonry building is two stories in height and has a flat roof with parapet. The entry porch has a pedimented gable roof with Ionic columns for support. The entry is flanked by squared pilasters and has a decorative transom light. The door is wood panel. Other Colonial Revival elements include decorative cornice molding with dentils, a balanced symmetrical façade with central entry. The library was built on a slope so that the second story is street level and a flight of brick stairs leads down to the first story, which is visible on both sides and rear. The building has brick walls and incorporates stylized classic architectural features, such as window entablatures, and has concrete keystones. The windows are twelve-over-twelve and six-over-six double hung sash. The building is recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A for its association with the New Deal era programs created nationally to bring the country out of the Great Depression. It was also the first branch of the Greenville County Public Library system, and so is also associated with the development of the public library system in the county. It is also recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C, as the building exhibits excellent architectural integrity and is considered a good example of an early-twentieth-century Colonial Revival style building.



Figure 5.7 View of Resource 4010, west elevation.



## Resource 4065, Pure Oil Company Service Station

### 120 West Poinsett Street

Resource 4065 (Figure 5.8) is the circa 1928 Pure Oil Company service station (now City Tire) with Tudor style architectural elements. The masonry building is one story in height with brick walls and a side-gable primary core with a front-gable wing. Tudor style elements include a steeply pitched roof, half-timbering details, round arch entry and windows, and a large brick chimney on the gable end exterior. The front door is wood panel with a round fixed light and the side door is wood panel with vertical fixed lights. There is a large store-front display window. The hyphen and wing serve as the garage ports and have historic wood frame overhead garage doors. The filling pumps are no longer present. There are multiple large rear warehouse additions, some of which are historic. The service station retains excellent architectural integrity. The building is recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A, for its association with the development of automotive transportation in Greer, and under Criterion C as an intact example of an early-twentieth century Tudor style service station.



Figure 5.8 View of Resource 4065, south elevation.

**Resource 4084, Greenville Federal Credit Union**

**107 West Church Street**

Resource 4084 (Figure 5.9) is a circa 1960 bank building with Mid-century Modern style architectural elements. The masonry building is two stories in height with a flat roof and brick veneer cladding. There is an entry wing with walls of metal frame and glass that exposes the flight of stairs and elevator. The opposite side has a teller porte cochere. Modern style elements include the minimal decorative details, use of modern windows in a linear pattern and set flush with outer walls, metal sun control panels in vertical alignment over windows, and an asymmetrical façade. Recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C, the building exhibits excellent architectural integrity and is considered a great example of the unique Mid-century Modern style building.



Figure 5.9 View of Resource 4084, southeast elevation.



## Resource 4085, Unidentified House

### 102 West Church Street

Resource 4085 (Figure 5.10) is a circa 1920 house with Prairie style architectural elements. The masonry house is two stories in height, built with quarry face stone walls, and resembles the American Four-Square form, but has a central hall. The porch is full façade and extends around both elevations with massive square supports. The porch is a porte cochere along one of the elevations. Other Prairie elements include a low-pitch hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves, and the rows of windows and other details emphasize horizontal lines. The house has hipped dormers with vents. The windows are historic one-over-one double hung sash and casement. The house has a large stone chimney built into a front corner. The door is wood frame with glass and has a transom light above. There is one hipped rear projection that might be original. Recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C, the house exhibits excellent architectural integrity and is considered a good example of the early-twentieth-century Prairie style house.



Figure 5.10 View of Resource 4085, southwest elevation..

**Resource 4344, U.S. Post Office**  
**301 North Main Street**

Resource 4344 (Figure 5.11) is the 1964 U.S. Post Office building with Mid-century Modern style architectural elements. The masonry building is one story in height with a flat roof and brick veneer cladding. There is an entry bay with a wall of metal and glass and double metal frame glass doors. The entry bay is covered by a formed concrete roof with round metal supports. Modern style elements include the minimal decorative details, use of modern windows in a linear pattern, decorative portions of façade with stucco and patterned tiles, and an asymmetrical façade. There is a side entry similar to the primary entry and a covered loading dock on the rear, west side of the building. Recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C, the building exhibits excellent architectural integrity and is considered a great example of the unique Mid-century Modern style building.



Figure 5.11 View of Resource 4344, southeast oblique.



## Resource 4421, Marchant House

### 104 Marchant Street

Resource 4421 (Figure 5.12) is the 1890 house of the co-founder of the Victor Mill, M.L. Marchant Sr. The house exhibits architectural elements of the Folk Victorian style. The frame house is two stories in height, clad in weatherboard, and is a side-gable massed plan with cross-gable roof. Folk Victorian architectural elements include the decorative jig-sawn detailing on the porch, chamfered supports and spindle balustrade, Gothic diamond vent in gable end of wall dormer, and symmetrical façade. There is also pilaster molding on the corners and cornice returns. The door is wood frame and glass with a transom light. The windows are six-over-six double hung sash with simple surrounds. There are two large brick chimneys on the ridge. The house has a historic rear gable, one-story addition with a brick chimney on the ridge. Recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C, the house exhibits excellent architectural integrity and is considered a good example of the late-nineteenth-century Folk Victorian style house.



Figure 5.12 View of Resource 4421, north elevation.

## Resource 4634, Greer Armory

### 204 Cannon Street

Resource 4634 (Figure 5.13) is the 1936 Greer Armory, now the Cannon Center. The masonry building is one story in height and has a brick exterior. The building was built into the slope of a hill so that a portion of the basement level is above ground. There are two entries with flat metal awnings and metal double doors. Defining features include decorative brick and concrete detailing of faux buttresses and diamond patterns. The building has a rounded roof with stepped parapets. There are large window ports with modern windows and a modern deck along its southwest side. The building has several additional entries, some with overhead garage doors. The building is recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A, for its association with the military history of Greer, and under Criterion C as an intact example of an early-twentieth century military building.



Figure 5.13 View of Resource 4634, northwest elevation.



## 5.3 Historic Districts

Using a combination of background research and field investigation, the project team identified two districts that appear to meet the eligibility criteria for listing in the NRHP.

### 5.3.1 Arlington-Davenport-Mountain View

The Arlington-Davenport-Mountain View district (Figure 5.14) represents a neighborhood that organically grew up around a core of early, small subdivided tracts that were in close proximity to the City's downtown district. The tract of 20 lots platted in 1900 by local investor David D. Davenport was laid out around Davenport Avenue, just north of West Poinsett Street, and became the nucleus of what is the neighborhood today. Another early planned neighborhood development was designed by a prominent local architect and contractor, Thomas Keating, who moved to Greer in 1906 to build the first of the Franklin Mill village cottages. By 1907, Keating and investor D.O. Leonard had platted 45 lots in the new Mountain View Heights subdivision. Figure 5.15 is a copy of the original plat of Mountain View Heights. From the early developments, many small subdivisions were platted throughout the years in a pattern radiating north, west, and east. Even before Davenport's subdivision, lots along established thoroughfares, like West Poinsett (once Emma Street), contained buildings, but the division into small lots on side streets marked the beginning of what became Arlington-Davenport-Mountain View. Nearly all of the neighborhood has been within the Greer City limits since the 1912 configuration. Development in the area picked up in the 1910s and 1920s, especially when Davenport High School was built on Church Street in 1925. The school building is gone, but the Greer City Stadium and a portion of Springwood Park, both built as WPA projects, remain. The neighborhood includes house types and styles that span the entire twentieth century, with varying lot sizes and historic infill. The architectural historian recorded 193 resources within the recommended boundary of Arlington-Davenport-Mountain View, including residential houses, commercial buildings, church buildings, a recreational structure, and a government building. Figures 5.16-5.21 provide sample photographs of resources within the district. There are two NRHP-listed resources (Perry R. Turner House and Robert G. Turner House). The period of 1900 to 1940 is recommended as the district's period of significance because the stock of architectural resources within the neighborhood best reflect that timeframe. The Arlington-Davenport-Mountain View neighborhood is recommended eligible as a NRHP district under Criterion C for architecture, as it retains a relatively high level of integrity compared to other neighborhoods in the City of Greer.

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Figure 5.14 Aerial map of Arlington-Davenport-Mountain View neighborhood and contributing resources.



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Figure 5.16 View of Resource 4042, southeast elevation.



Figure 5.17 Resource 4046, southeast elevation.





Figure 5.18 View of Resource 4050, northeast elevation.



Figure 5.19 View of Resource 4060, southwest elevation.





Figure 5.20 View of Resource 4061, southwest elevation.



Figure 5.21 View of Resource 4343, southeast elevation.

### **5.3.2 Greer Mill and Village**

The Greer Mill and Village district (Figure 5.22) represents an early textile mill and the company-built housing around it. The district reflects the importance of the textile manufacturing in the City of Greer throughout the twentieth century. The founding of the Greer Manufacturing Company (Greer Mill) was spearheaded by John Robinson in 1909, and the mill building was completed in 1910. Like other textile mills in the region, the Greer Mill was an important part of the City's economy, providing jobs for hundreds of people. The textile company would have begun constructing housing for its workers soon after the mill was completed. Figure 5.23 provides a view of the mill from the surrounding village. The Greer Mill and Village is bounded to the north and south by rail lines, to the east by South Main Street, and to the west by wooded lots and Jones Avenue. Mill houses were often built using only a few designs, with the majority being extremely modest in form with no decoration. Somewhat larger houses were reserved for the managers of the mill. The cotton textile industry in Greer increased exponentially in the early 1920s, and that is when a large portion of the mill housing was likely built. Common themes in alterations among the mill houses can be identified since the company owned the buildings and would have made additions or changed materials throughout the village. Figure 2.13 is a 1956 aerial photograph of the Greer Mill and Village. The architectural historian recorded 116 resources within the Greer Mill Village, including residential houses, the mill buildings, two church buildings, a commercial building, and a water tower. Figures 5.24-5.26 provide sample photographs of resources within the district. The Greer Mill and Village is recommended eligible as a NRHP district under Criterion A for industry and under Criterion C for architecture, as it retains a relatively high level of integrity compared to other mill villages in the City of Greer.



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Figure 5.22 Aerial map of Greer Mill and Village and contributing resources.



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Figure 5.23 View of Greer Mill facing northwest along Stewart Avenue.



Figure 5.24 View of Greer Mill facing west, the smaller three-story building on the left (under the water tower) is the original mill building.





Figure 5.25 View of Resource 4155, superintendent house, northeast oblique.



Figure 5.26 View of Resource 4239, mill house, northeast elevation.

## **5.4 Recommendations for Future Consideration**

### **5.4.1 Threats to City of Greer's Historic Resources**

When considering dangers to the historic character of a neighborhood or area, three basic threats must be considered. The most obvious is demolition of existing historic architectural resources. Destruction of historic buildings or their removal from an area harms the historic character of a community and is detrimental to its overall sense of place and identity. The second threat is construction of new buildings that are visually incompatible with existing resources. These intrusions stand out in stark contrast to the historic character of the streets on which they are built and do harm to a community's sense of place. The third threat comes from historically-inappropriate alterations and additions to historic architectural resources. Although they are often small and incremental, changes such as conspicuous additions or replacement of historic building fabric will eventually obscure a building's historic qualities to the extent that it is almost unrecognizable as a historic resource. This loss of an individual building's character is also detrimental to the overall historic character of a community.

The burgeoning population and associated development of the Upstate pose a threat to historic resources throughout the region. The economic growth being experienced by Greer along the I-85 corridor is of particular concern in terms of its potential impact on historic resources. The development pressure associated with such growth can lead to the razing of historic buildings as well as the construction of new buildings that are visually incompatible with the existing character of the built environment. We recommend that the City of Greer pay particular attention to the historic resources in the areas that are facing more significant development pressures, although areas in other parts of the City should not be neglected.

### **5.4.2 Areas That May Be Eligible in the Future**

In this report, we identified resources as eligible that possess the quality of significance in terms of architecture or historical association and retain sufficient integrity to convey this significance. Some resources in the survey area have the potential to be eligible in the future, but they were not identified as eligible during the survey because they had been adversely affected by alterations to their character-defining features or had not reached a sufficient age to be eligible for listing on the National Register. Although they may not have been deemed eligible at the time of this survey, these resources may be eligible in the future. For instance, many alterations to a historic resource that have obscured or damaged its integrity can be reversed. Enclosed porches can be opened, synthetic siding can be removed, and buildings can be otherwise sensitively rehabilitated to restore their integrity. The passage of time can also have an effect on the eligibility of an individual resource or neighborhood.

An area that currently lacks sufficient historic character to be considered eligible could become eligible in the future simply because of its age. This can be a function of a growing appreciation for the resource type that develops over time, or it can be a function of its increasing rarity as similar resources lose their integrity or are demolished. The preponderance of resources in the survey area was built later in the twentieth century, and although they are not currently eligible, their significance is likely to increase over time.

### **5.4.3 Areas That May Warrant Protection or Special Attention**

The 11 individual resources and two districts identified as eligible warrant protection and special attention. The integrity of much of the historic building stock in the City of Greer has been compromised with incompatible additions or alterations that resulted in a loss of integrity. These eligible resources are valuable physical records of the past, and they should be protected wherever possible.



## 5.5 Recommendations for Preservation Planning and Public Education

### 5.5.1 Areas for Future Preservation Planning Efforts

The City of Greer has an abundance of historic architectural resources that should be identified and preserved so that future generations enjoy the sense of heritage identity that the built environment plays such a key role in maintaining. Projects such as this survey show the City's ongoing commitment to preservation planning, and the social, economic, and educational benefits associated with well-planned preservation efforts. The Scope of this project estimated approximately 850 survey-eligible historic architectural resources within the City limits. The data produced by this survey and field observations of the architectural historian suggest that the number is likely double the initial estimate. The survey effort of this project was directed to focus on the neighborhoods and areas immediately surrounding the Greer Downtown Historic District. This meant that survey-eligible historic architectural resources were left unrecorded in several areas due to time and budget constraints. After completing the survey, Brockington and Associates, Inc., recommends that the future expansion of Greer's historic preservation efforts specifically include:

- The historic agricultural complexes and associated resources that remain farther away from the center of City development pressure. Although many agricultural complexes have only been within the City's limits for a relatively short time, the agricultural economy played a key role throughout Greer's history. These may be the resources most susceptible to imminent economic and suburban development.
- A more focused investigation into the history of African American communities within the City. These communities are often underrepresented areas in the account of a city's past. Further, the built environment of these communities may not retain its architectural integrity, and are therefore often underrepresented in the architectural survey portion of preservation planning projects. A focused investigation into the communities of Sunnyside, Greentown, Maple Creek, and Needmore Village may find that one or all of them are eligible as NRHP districts under Criterion A in the area of community planning and development and/or black heritage. This effort would undoubtedly benefit from the participation of community members.
- There were several areas farther from the City center, in all directions, that contain survey-eligible resources. Mid-twentieth century planned developments are one example of areas for future survey. There is reportedly a Cold War era bomb shelter with good integrity at the house at 240 Old Woodruff Road. These resources are a continuation of the history of Greer's built environment and will add to the City's inventory.

Other general preservation effort activities include:

- Invest in preservation training for City staff dedicated to preservation work;
- Provide guidance to Greer citizens on federal and local historic preservation tax incentives for sensitive rehabilitation of historic resources;
- Meet with community organizations on the uses of historic preservation in community planning;
- Deliver written and oral presentations to professionals and lay organizations on historic preservation efforts conducted by the City;
- Promote rehabilitation of historic properties, which is a labor intensive (rather than materials intensive) activity that creates well-paying jobs;
- Promote heritage tourism to the City of Greer through programs such as the National Register's Online Travel Itinerary, which creates self-guided tours to historic places listed on the NRHP, based on text and photographs supplied by the City.

### **5.5.2 Recommendations for Public Education**

There are countless ways to present history to the public; below are some suggestions that focus on the City's historic resources and public accessibility to historical information.

#### **Architectural History Publication**

The City of Greer's historic architecture conveys the story of the City's development and contributes to its aesthetic value and unique sense of place. The ongoing public and private efforts to preserve Greer's historic built environment could be enhanced by a public history book that chronicles the City's architectural history, complete with historic and contemporary photographs of its historic resources.

#### **Electronic Availability of Historical Resources**

In our electronic age, the Internet is the first place many people look when they begin a search for information. The City could create an online portal for history documents where it can publish electronic versions of National Register nominations for Greer's resources, as well as other narrative histories, historic contexts, maps, and historic photographs.

#### **Historic Markers and Plaques**

Historic markers and plaques are a simple way to recognize and raise awareness of locally important historic resources. An inventory of existing markers in and around the City would be a good foundation for determining what sites to mark in the future.

## **5.6 Survey Summary**

During the course of the historic architectural survey of the City of Greer, we identified 856 historic architectural resources, of which 11 individual resources and two districts are considered eligible for the NRHP. Brockington and Associates, Inc., recommends that the City take steps to preserve these eligible resources by making the property owners aware of (1) the historic value of their property, (2) ways they can protect the integrity of their property, and (3) the tax incentives that are available for sensitive rehabilitations.





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