

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Abingdon Historic District (Additional Documentation)Other names/site number: VDHR Architectural Inventory Number: 140-0037Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. LocationStreet & number: Court Street, Main StreetCity or town: Abingdon State: VA County: WashingtonNot For Publication: Vicinity: **3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national X statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A X B X C D_____
Signature of certifying official/Title:_____
DateVirginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria._____
Signature of commenting official:_____
Date_____
Title:_____
State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

- Private: ☒
- Public – Local ☒
- Public – State ☐
- Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

- Building(s) ☐
- District ☒
- Site ☐
- Structure ☐
- Object ☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing <u>66</u>	Noncontributing <u>29</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>7</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>16</u> objects
<u>66</u>	<u>52</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1
Abingdon Bank (DHR ID# 140-0037-0053; NRHP 69000285) – 1 building

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

DOMESTIC: single dwelling, multiple dwelling, secondary structure, hotel,
institutional housing
COMMERCE/TRADE: business, professional, financial institution, specialty store,
department store, restaurant
SOCIAL: meeting hall
GOVERNMENT: city hall, government office, courthouse
EDUCATION: school, college, education-related
RELIGION: religious facility
FUNERARY: mortuary
RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION
TRANSPORTATION/rail-related/railroad, train depot

Current Functions

DOMESTIC: single dwelling, multiple dwelling, secondary structure, hotel,
institutional housing
COMMERCE/TRADE: business, professional, financial institution, specialty store,
department store, restaurant
GOVERNMENT: city hall, government office, courthouse
EDUCATION: school, college, education-related
RELIGION/religious facility
RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION
TRANSPORTATION/rail-related/railroad, train depot

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EARLY REPUBLIC: Federal

MID-19TH CENTURY: Greek Revival; Gothic Revival

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate; Queen Anne; Romanesque

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival; Classical Revival;

Late Gothic Revival

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS:

Commercial Style; Bungalow/Craftsman

OTHER: Log House; Neo-Eclectic

MIXED

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

WOOD: Weatherboard, Log; BRICK; STONE: Sandstone, Limestone, Slate; ASPHALT;

CONCRETE; SYNTHETICS: Vinyl; METAL: Iron, Copper, Steel, Aluminum; STUCCO;

ASBESTOS

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The 31.2-acre Abingdon Historic District encompasses the town's northeast-southwest oriented historic core along Main Street. Unlike many of Virginia's county seats that remained small villages—mainly serving county court and administration functions—Abingdon's location along major historic transportation corridors led to its early development as a regional commercial center that continued to thrive through the twentieth century. Although Interstate 81 has dominated road transportation through the Great Valley of Virginia since the 1960s, it parallels U.S. Route 11, which traces the path of the settlement migration route into Tennessee known variously since the mid-eighteenth century as The Great Wagon Road, The Great Road, and the Valley Pike. In turn, the colonial-period roadway had followed an even earlier Native American trade route. Through the length of the historic district, U.S. Route 11 combines with Main Street. The district's town setting contrasts with the surroundings of largely rural Washington County. The town lies within the northeast-southwest trending Great Valley of Virginia, with the Blue Ridge Mountains to the east and southeast and the Alleghany Highlands to the west and northwest. As a regional commercial and transportation hub, Abingdon attracted artisans, professionals, prominent political

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figures, small industries, prosperous families with large farms or industries in the surrounding area, and travelers seeking accommodation. As a result of the early growth and wealth of the community, the district contains a diverse array of domestic, commercial, religious, and government buildings, as well as two playhouses adapted from earlier church buildings. Completion of the U.S. District Courthouse for the Western District of Virginia in Abingdon (outside the historic district) in 1856 further spurred residential and commercial growth. The town also offered a variety of educational options for the surrounding region by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Within the district, Martha Washington College provided higher education for women (1860–1932) in a building that originated as a private dwelling completed in 1836 and now houses a luxury inn and spa. Despite three major town fires in the nineteenth century, there is consistent representation of contributing resources by construction date—starting with a tavern built in 1779, a year after the town was established—and a wide variety of architectural styles. There are 66 contributing resources (all buildings). Of the 52 non-contributing resources, 29 are buildings. Seven non-contributing structures include a carport, four pergolas, a swimming pool, and a playing field. The 16 non-contributing objects include a fountain, a sculpture, signs, and markers that postdate the period of significance.

One contributing resource within the district was listed individually on the NRHP prior to the 1970 nomination: the Abingdon Bank (140-0037-0053; NRHP 69000285). Constructed in 1858, the three-story Greek Revival building combined a bank with a residence; original outbuildings enumerated as part of this additional documentation include quarters for the enslaved. One additional property – the ca. 1854 Dr. William Pitts House (140-0037-0062; NRHP 02000322) – was listed individually in 2002 as a significant example of the Greek Revival style. Surrounding and adjacent to the Abingdon Historic District is the 1986 Boundary Increase area (140-0039, NRHP 86002193), a 128.4-acre area of downtown characterized by a larger proportion of dwellings and later building dates compared to the initial district (with only ten of more than two hundred properties predating 1850). Finally, less than 1,400 feet southwest of the Abingdon Historic District is the 3.5-acre Depot Square Historic District (140-0038, NRHP SG100005802), listed in 2020. This district comprises historic resources associated with the railroad (the 1856 Virginia and Tennessee Railroad and its successors) that range in date from 1857 to 1922.

Narrative Description

Setting

The Abingdon Historic District extends for three-quarters of a mile northeast-southwest along either side of Main Street, and a short section runs to the northwest along one block of Court Street. The location, orientation, and shape of the district and town derive from historic transportation corridors, which in turn were shaped by the area's topography. Abingdon and the frontier fortification called Black's Fort (possibly once located on the lot where the Martha Washington Inn now stands at the southwest end of the district) were located along the main southwestward land route to Tennessee. Currently, U.S. Route 11 and Main Street trace the alignment of this historic road. The historic Virginia and Tennessee Railroad (completed in 1856 and currently part of the Norfolk Southern line) runs parallel two to three blocks southeast of Main Street. Interstate

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81 runs parallel less than a mile to the southeast but converges to within less than a thousand feet of U.S. Route 11 at the southwest end of town, about three miles southwest of the district.¹

Located within the Ridge and Valley physiographic province, Abingdon is at an elevation of 2,087 feet within the northeast-southwest trending Great Valley of Virginia. In this portion of the valley, streams drain into the Holston River to the Tennessee River and eventually to the Mississippi River. Across western Virginia, the Great Valley lies between the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Alleghany Highlands. Peaks near Abingdon reach up to 4,000 feet at Brumley Mountain 12 miles to the northwest, and about 3,100 feet in the Iron Mountains (a spur of the Blue Ridge) 15 miles to the southeast. Although Abingdon has a developed town core, the open countryside is close by. The townscape transitions to open pastures less than half a mile from the historic district to the southeast and within three-quarters of a mile to the northwest.

Architectural Development

The Abingdon Historic District is a linear district extending along both sides of a three-quarter-mile stretch of Main Street and composed almost exclusively of buildings that front along that arterial road. From northeast to southwest within the district, Main Street covers approximately five unevenly sized blocks interspersed with alleys. Main Street crosses Tanner Street, Court Street, Brewers Alley, Pecan Street, Chincapin Alley, Church Street, Park Place, and College Street. Nearly all properties in the district have Main Street addresses, divided between West Main Street and East Main Street at Church Street. The only exceptions are six properties along North Court Street where the otherwise rectangular district juts out slightly to the northwest. The district also widens in its south corner to take in the entirety of the large lot containing the Martha Washington Inn (140-0037-0052), which extends 250 feet beyond the typical lot depth. The district's development is moderately dense, with setbacks varying from little to none in the vicinity of the Court Street intersection to small lawns fronting some residential properties and churches. Larger open spaces are found along the southeast side of Main Street at the western end of the district, including the large, landscaped spaces in front of the Martha Washington Inn and the open park in the large lot containing the Barter Theatre Stage II. Sidewalks are generally brick laid in a herringbone pattern. In most cases where parcels do not have zero lot lines, the sidewalk edge is edged with fencing, masonry retaining walls, and/or landscaping. Commercial and government buildings tend to be concentrated near the intersection of Main and Court Streets, with residential buildings found more frequently toward the eastern and western ends of the district. Churches are interspersed throughout. The western end of the district is anchored on the south and north sides by major architectural landmarks.

The Martha Washington Inn and Spa (140-0037-0052) at 150 West Main Street is an evolved building, originally constructed as a large private home for Gen. Francis Preston and his family in 1833–1836. The building has been enlarged and expanded to serve different functions. The Methodist Church purchased the property from the Preston family in 1858 and converted the building for use as a college for women. Mary Washington College first welcomed students for the 1860–1861 academic year and operated until 1932. A historic photograph taken ca. 1860 shows

¹ James William Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865* (Missoula, Montana: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 2013), 41.

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the original configuration as a two-story brick house with a hipped roof, three dormers on the façade, and flanking canted wings to the east and west.² A partial-width porch on the central portion of the building was supported by four columns. A covered passage supported by cast metal supports extended from the porch across the façade. According to Sanborn fire insurance maps, by 1891 there was a large outer eastern wing used as a dining hall for the college. By 1902, there was a three-story tower centered on the eastern wing's façade (Figures 1a, 1b, 1c).

The three-bay front porch was replaced ca. 1905 with a full-width veranda with 13 columns.³ In 1906 a full story was added to the central block, executed as a mansard roof with dormer windows. Contractor W. H. Musser made these modifications with designs by Charles Mitchell of Johnson City, Tennessee, while he worked concurrently across the street at what is now the Barter Theatre.⁴ The east wing was expanded at the rear in 1907 with a four-story addition housing an art studio and a kitchen, built by Hiram Ramsey (see Figure 1c, d, e).⁵

In 1912 the college built an outer west wing to serve as a dormitory named Maria Cooper Hall, funded for a West Virginia alumna who donated \$5,000 toward the \$35,00 project. Philanthropist Andrew Carnegie also contributed \$12,000. The contract for architectural design went to Baumann Brothers and construction to L. A. Galyon, both firms based in Knoxville, Tennessee. Soon after the wing was completed, improvements began on the east wing. The college must have been pleased with the west wing as the design for the adapting the east wing was awarded to Baumann Brothers with the construction contract to local builders W. H. Musser & Son. The scope was reported to include demolition and redesign of the façade and enlargement with additional stories.⁶

Though designed by multiple parties, the building is not incongruous in appearance. The central core of the original building is dominant. While differing subtly, the flanking wings have similar form, scale, and massing. The common use of brick with white trim and classically inspired columns combine to create a unified appearance. Set back from the street on a rise in an ample lot, the former Martha Washington College, now an inn and spa, is an iconic resource for both the town and the district.

² Ca. 1860 photograph in survey files, Archives, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.

³ "Changes at Old College" *Chattanooga Daily Times*, August 25, 1905.

⁴ Untitled, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 24, 1906; "Much Building in Abingdon," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, September 30, 1906.

⁵ Untitled, *Virginia Republican* July 5, 1907

⁶ Work Will Begin on College Building at Emory, Va., April 1. *Bristol Herald Courier*, Jan 10, 1912, p. 8; Democrats to Meet in Abingdon, *The Roanoke Times*, May 5, 1912, p. 11; Knoxville Firm Is Given Contract To Erect Dormitory Annex at Martha Washington College, *The Journal and Tribune*, Apr 28, 1912, p. 9; Abingdon, *Bristol Herald Courier*, Jul 9, 1913, p. 5.

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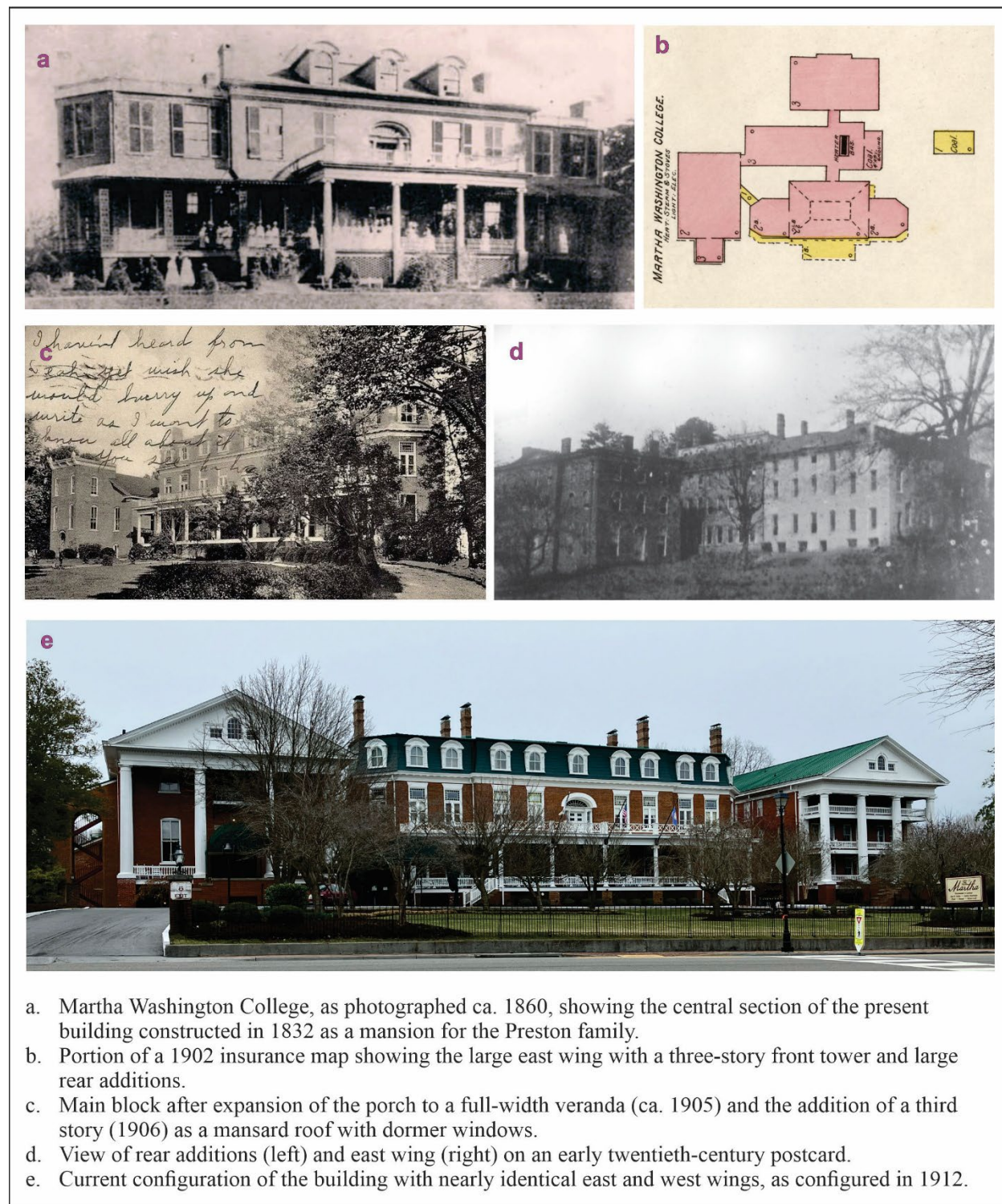


Figure 1. Evolution of the Preston House/Martha Washington College/Martha Washington Inn and Spa (140-0037-0052; 150 West Main Street).

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In the 100 block of East Main Street are three churches representing mainline Protestant denominations. Abingdon United Methodist Church (140-0037-0004, ca. 1883), Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church (140-0037-0013, ca. 1883), and St. Thomas Episcopal Church (140-0037-0010, 1925), all built within a 50-year span, are three distinct expressions of the Gothic Revival style. The nineteenth-century Methodist and Presbyterian churches are similar. Both are brick with prominent gables facing Main Street and corner entrance towers that are square in footprint. Both feature corbelling along the gables, brick buttresses with stone detailing, lancet windows, and multiphase entrance towers with pinnacles. Though not twins, the two churches are similar enough to suggest they may have been designed by the same person, yet unidentified. St. Thomas Episcopal Church, designed by the Roanoke, Virginia, firm of Smithey & Tardy 42 years later, is a more academic, crenelated Gothic Revival-style building, rendered in stone. The front-gabled sanctuary has an applied central crenellated entrance tower with a pyramidal slate roof. Rough-faced stone exterior walls feature buttresses with finished stone accents. Masonry openings on the facade have finished stone hoodmolds with label stops. An earlier and more modest church found in the 300 block of East Main Street is Charles Wesley United Methodist Church (140-0037-0035, ca. 1877), which houses a traditionally African American congregation. The front-gabled frame church rests on a raised brick foundation. The exterior staircase ascends to a double-leaf entrance centered on a slightly projecting entrance tower with a pyramidal hipped roof. Flanking the tower are Queen Anne-style windows, and the double-leaf entrance has a similar Queen Anne-style transom above it.

When constructed in 1831–1833, the building now known as the Barter Theatre (140-0036) served the as the third building of the Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church.⁷ When the congregation moved in 1865, the Sons of Temperance used the building for meetings and theatrical performances until 1890 when its membership had dwindled and conveyed the building to the town. The building then served as a town hall, jail, and fire department, while the auditorium, known as the “Opera House,” continued to serve as a venue for theater and cinema (Figure 2). In 1905, architect Charles G. Mitchell expanded the footprint and applied the Romanesque Revival facade. Though partially obscured by a modern-day marquee, Mitchell’s facade still creates a bold impression. The pedimented gable is framed by corbelling and features corbelled applied pendants that descend from the raking slopes. Centered under the gable is a round window with rough-faced keystones. Below that window is a stone tablet inscribed CITY HALL surrounded by rough-faced stone blocks. The lower portion of the facade is divided into three parts by brick pilasters. The central two pilasters are capped within the pediment by rough-faced flat stone pinnacles; the terminal pilasters extend above the eaves and are topped by square panels with pyramidal, rough-faced stone pinnacles. The east and west bays of the facade have three windows with dressed stone sills and rough-faced stone lintels on both their first and second floors. The central bay has paired windows with similar surrounds on its second floor and a rough-faced stone arched opening to a

⁷ Mattie Rountree Stephenson (compiler), *Historical Sketch of Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church, of Abingdon, Virginia, 1773-1948* (Abingdon, Va.: Committee of the Session of Sinking Spring Church, 1948). 16.

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recessed entrance with a double-leaf door on its first floor. The facade is laid in a running bond red brick, with buff-colored brick and gray stones providing structural polychrome.



Figure 2. Barter Theatre (140-0037-0071; 110 West Main Street) facade, looking north.

The Washington County Courthouse (140-0037-0064), constructed ca. 1869, is a three-story brick building with later additions, including alterations by local architect Clarence Baker Kearfott (1884–1977) in 1917 and a 2024 expansion to the west along Main Street (Figure 3). Above the entrance is a three-part stained-glass window by Louis Comfort Tiffany (1919) honoring Washington County residents who served in World War I. The monumental portico with three-story Doric columns on a stone-faced plinth dominates the east end of the district. The portico and primary entrance, with its sidelights and transom, indicate a Greek Revival influence. The building is an amalgam, however, displaying strong Italianate characteristics such as window hood moldings supported by console brackets and bracketed cornices, and the two-phased frame cupola. The unidentified architect created a distinguished design, drawing from classical and contemporary stylistic vocabularies.

The individually listed Abingdon Bank (140-0037-0053, ca.1858), now a private residence, resembles a fashionable Greek Revival town house (Figure 4). The domestic appearance of small, early banks was quite common because the building also served as the cashier's residence. The three-story brick building has a belt course above the first floor with projecting headers in a checkerboard pattern and a broad corbelled cornice. Reflecting its dual purposes, the building is divided into two parts. On the west, the original bank is three narrow bays wide. Its first floor has a double-leaf door with a transom above. The entrance is flanked by six-over-six windows, and the second and third floors have similar windows aligned above those on the first floor. The eastern, residential section of the building is likewise divided into three bays. Its westernmost bay has a double-leaf door with six-light sidelights and a multi-light transom above the door and

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Figure 3. Washington County Courthouse (140-0037-0064; 189-191 East Main Street) (clockwise from top: Facade [V-CRIS 2020]; Detail of facade showing location of 1919 stained glass memorial window by Louis Comfort Tiffany above main entrance [V-CRIS 1978]; memorial window [Garrett Jackson 2025]; Detail of cornice and cupola [David Lewes 2025]).

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Figure 4. Abingdon Bank (140-0037-0053; 225 East Main Street), clockwise from top: facade in 2005; cornice and window detail in 2023; quarter in 2023; layout of bank/house, ell, quarter, and yard; window lintel detail in 2023 (all photographs by Michael Pulice, VDHR).

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sidelights. On the second and third floors, aligned above the entrance, are three-part windows featuring a six-over-six sash window flanked on either side by narrow two-over-two windows. The two eastern bays of the residence have six-over-six sash windows on all three floors. All the masonry openings except for those on the first floor of the bank are topped by a three-part Greek Revival-style lintel.

The property is also noteworthy as a reminder that slavery, though not as prominent as in other parts of Virginia, nevertheless was a part of Abingdon's history prior to 1865. A two-story brick quarter for enslaved servants, built ca. 1858 as a freestanding building, is now attached to the main building's rear ell with a one-story brick hyphen.

Across the street from the Abingdon Bank, the slightly earlier ca. 1846 Virginia House/Dunn's Motel (140-0037-0058) frames Main Street with a building of similar size, scale, massing, and materials. Stepped parapets on the gable ends are discreet. The late Federal styling is more restrained than its neighbor's, with attenuated mortar joints and window muntins, flat parged jack arches above window openings, twelve-over-twelve sash windows, and a simple wooden cornice.

Built in 1886 by contractor F. B. Brownlow, the Minter Jackson Store (140-0037-0020) is a fine example of a late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century commercial building.⁸ The three-story brick store is three bays wide. While the upper floors each have three evenly spaced two-over-two wooden sash windows, the first floor has a cast-iron storefront with a recessed central entrance flanked by large display windows. The metal window lintels and upper cornice feature Victorian-era abstractions of classical motifs such as brackets, fluting, dentils, and recessed panels. A corbelled cornice extends across the facade between the third story windows and the metal cornice above. The store possesses several distinctive features of the Commercial style in Abingdon—a short, rectangular footprint and flat roof, location along Main Street with no setback, and generous display windows on the first floor.

Stylistic similarities between the Greenway Brothers Building (140-0037-0023, ca. 1878) and the Samuel G. Keller Storehouse (140-0037-0068, ca. 1883) suggest their design by the same person, although the architect and/or builder have not been identified. Both brick buildings employ striking white Italianate trim at the cornice and upper-level window surrounds. The first-floor facade of the two-story storehouse is divided into four arched bays, one of which houses a double-leaf door with a semicircular transom. A projecting cornice rests on the first-floor arcade. Above, the second floor has two round-headed six-over-six windows with arched carved window molds supported by brackets. The roof cornice is supported by brackets and has a central gabled element flanked by brackets and topped with a stylized anthemion element.

The Greenway Brothers building consists of two three-story units. The outer edges of each unit have projecting brick pilasters, between which the facades are slightly recessed. Each has a first-story storefront with a recessed entrance, display windows, and transom windows above. The western unit has three evenly spaced, two-over-two wooden sash windows on each floor. The windows have an arched upper sash differentiated by floor with the second-story windows having

⁸ Nanci C. King, *Places in Time, Vol. 2: Abingdon, Meadowview & Glade Spring, Virginia* (Abingdon, Virginia: Privately published; printed by Abingdon Printing Services, 1994), 14.

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a tighter radius. All are topped by arched label molds with pendant drops. Above, the western unit has a brick cornice with corbelled drops. The eastern unit also has three windows on both the second and third floors. However, they are grouped together and centered on the facade. Both groupings have a conjoined set of curved lintels with pendant drop trim like its neighbor's. The third-floor windows are topped by a cartouche with the letters GB for Greenway Brothers.

Clarence Baker Kearfott's First National Bank (140-0037-0022, 1923) is an outstanding example of the Neoclassical Revival style (Figure 5). The dressed-stone bank is two stories tall with a stepped parapet roof. Two-story stone pilasters divide the facade into three parts. The central entrance is via a Doric portico in antis with its freestanding monumental columns adjacent to the pilasters. The portico leads to a recessed entrance with a double-leaf door topped by a transom within a Classical surround. An entablature above the entrance supports an arched window opening that shares applied starburst trim with the door and transom. The flanking bays have graduated fenestration with replacement windows. The first-floor window surrounds have projecting stone sills and a full entablature at the lintel, while the upper story windows are smaller and encased in simple stone frames. The pilasters and columns support a formal entablature bearing the inscription FIRST NATIONAL BANK above which are a pediment and the stepped parapet, topped by a central anthemion.



Figure 5. First National Bank (140-0037-0022, 174 East Main Street), west corner and entrance detail (David Lewes 2025; GoogleEarth).

The John J. Stuart Law Office (140-0037-0028, 1886) is a commercial building on a residential scale. Indeed, the building has vacillated between commercial, professional, and domestic uses throughout its history. After Major James Fields built the office for Stuart, a later owner, Madge White, converted the building into a house in 1920. Beginning in 1960, it served again as an office

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for the Hortenstine Land Company, and since then has also housed an antiques shop.⁹ The narrow, one-story, front-gabled facade is three bays wide with an Eastlake-inspired bargeboard with stickwork and a drop finial. Spanning the facade, a hipped-roof porch has elaborately turned posts, decorative brackets, and a low balustrade with turned spindles.

Although many of the earliest residential buildings in the district have been altered and expanded over time, the James K. Gibson House (140-0037-0056, 1790–1791) exhibits some aspects of Federal-style architecture despite later changes. This frame building consists of two houses, built in 1790 and 1791, respectively, that a subsequent owner joined together sometime between 1798 and 1817.¹⁰ The earlier portion is on the west side. The five-part symmetrical facade, side-gabled form, multi-light sash windows and transoms with narrow muntins are all typical Federal characteristics. Despite the property's expansive rear and side yards, the house has no front setback defining the sidewalk edge. It stands as an early unpretentious domestic building within the district.

The Duff House (140-0037- 0069) was moved to its current site around 1930. Although its original provenance is unknown, the two-story, side-gabled log house exhibits characteristics of nineteenth century construction with saddled V-notch joinery.

Other buildings with some portions of log construction survive in the town, though now disguised with siding. The western part of the Valentine Baugh House (140-0037-0011) at 129 East Main Street consists of a log building constructed by Robert Dukes in 1798. Valentine Baugh purchased the house in 1805; two years later, he built an eastern addition and covered the entire building with wood siding. The Folk Victorian trim dates to 1891, when Valentine's granddaughter built an apothecary shop as a western addition. The front porch contains columns salvaged from the Presbyterian Church during its conversion into a town hall in the early twentieth century.¹¹

The front portion of the house at 159 East Main Street (140-0037-0018) also began as a log building in 1815, when it served as the law office of Francis Preston. His son-in-law, Gov. John B. Floyd, also operated his law practice there from 1830 to 1863. Dr. John A. Barrow added onto the original log building after he purchased it for his practice in 1915. Asbestos siding has covered the entire building since the early twentieth century.¹²

The Col. James White House (140-0037-0021) consists of an 1866 restoration of a brick house and adjacent store/office that burned during an 1864 fire that also destroyed the courthouse. The stone foundation supports exterior walls laid in Flemish bond brick. White built the house (west side) in 1819 and the smaller store/office (east side) in 1828. A major change to the building's Federal style appearance came with reconstruction of the entrances and application of trim during the 1866 restoration, displaying an amalgam of the Greek Revival and Italianate styles.¹³ The Greek Revival influence is particularly evident in the west recessed entrance, which features a

⁹ Nanci C. King, *Places in Time, Vol. 2: Abingdon, Meadowview & Glade Spring, Virginia* (Abingdon, Virginia: Privately published; printed by Abingdon Printing Services, 1994), 7.

¹⁰ Nanci C. King, *Places in Time, Vol. 1: Abingdon, Virginia 1778-1880* (Abingdon, Virginia: Privately published; printed by Abingdon Printing Services, 1989), 1.

¹¹ King, *Places in Time, Vol. 1: Abingdon, Virginia 1778-1880*, 12.

¹² *Ibid.*, 10.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 8.

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double-leaf door with a multi-light transom and sidelights within a classical surround that has a console bracket and dentil course supporting a pediment. The Italianate style is displayed by the building's broad cornice with paired curved brackets.

The Cave House (140-0037-0031, 1857) is a robust example of a Gothic Revival/Carpenter Gothic style residence (Figure 6). The property's name derives from its location atop the entrance to a cave system underneath the town; however, the cave's alleged association with wolves attacking Daniel Boone and his dogs has been refuted.¹⁴ The house is the work of local builder and entrepreneur Adam Hickman, who also built the individually listed Greek Revival stuccoed masonry dwelling (140-0037-0052) next door. The asymmetrical facade features a projecting cross-gabled wing at the west end with two smaller cross gables to the east. The gables project in front of the wall plane and have carved vergeboards with a drop pendant motif. Extending east from the projecting wing is a wraparound porch with a jig sawn balustrade and quatrefoil columns. Centered on the wing is a projecting, one-story canted bay with traceried sash windows, each side topped by a stepped pediment. The asymmetrical plan and exuberance of the trim contrast with the more restrained ornament of earlier houses and provide a stylistic bridge to additional Victorian-era dwellings.



Figure 6. Cave House (140-0037-0031, 279 East Main Street), facade and marker associating the cave entrance on the property with a refuted story about Daniel Boone.

The Letty Floyd Johnston House (140-0037-0043, 1879) is a double house. The two-story, side-gabled brick house has a projecting, cross-gabled wing on the facade. The masonry window openings on the facade are all arched, with segmental arches on the first floor and semi-circular arches on the second. The front gable has a round window with a label mold in the attic. The

¹⁴ James William Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865* (Missoula, Montana: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 2013, 25–27.

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facade's projecting wing is flanked by fanciful twin double porches with larger hipped-roofed porches on the first floor supporting smaller second-story porches that have pyramidal roofs with flared eaves, topped by decorative finials. The visual impact of the twin porches flanking the central wing obscures a lack of symmetry in the underlying form. The facade has an architectural emphasis that the other elevations lack with their rectangular masonry openings and restrained trim.

A second double house, the Greenway-Trigg House (140-0037-0016, 1884) is symmetrical yet still hints at its double occupancy with mirrored treatments on the facade. The two-story brick house is rectangular in footprint with a substantial rear wing that appears to be an addition, or if contemporary with the northern section of the house, built with far greater economy and less stylistic complexity. The house has a dual-pitched, hipped slate roof. The main block of the house has substantial pedimented gables in the roof at the northern ends of the east and west elevations that mirror two found on the east and west ends of the facade. Each of them has a slate pent at its base and a second slate pent near the peak of the gable, with louvered vents and stickwork trim above. Between the dual pents in each of these gables is a semicircular window assemblage with paired sash windows containing multi-light arched upper sashes, flanked by curved, fixed, multi-light windows. Between the gables on the facade are two dormers with slate cheek walls and pyramidal slate roofs topped by metal cresting. The projecting gables on the east and west elevations are located above two-story canted brick bays that terminate at the bracketed cornice that wraps the main block of the building. The gables on the facade are aligned above two bays that project slightly from the central two bays of the six-bay facade. The second floor of the facade has six sash windows with brick jack arches, spaced evenly along the elevation. Each window has a plain lower sash and an upper sash with small stained-glass square lights at the perimeter of a single larger light. This fenestration pattern is continued on the exterior four bays at the east and west ends of the first floor of the facade. Each central bay of the first floor contains a double-leaf door with a full-width transom. Spanning the facade is a one-story, shed-roofed porch with chamfered posts, brackets, and a jig sawn balustrade. The balustrade extends across the exterior four bays, breaks at each of the entrances, and continues for a small section between them. The exuberance of the form is reinforced the texture and treatment of materials, namely the colorful stained glass, the brick treatments at the jack arches, the brick surrounds in the semicircular masonry openings in the gables, and the decorative fishtail treatment found throughout the slate roof and dormers.

The R. J. Summers House (140-0037-0033, 1909) is a more modest expression of Folk Victorian and Queen Anne style influences. The one-story, cross-gabled frame house with a later hipped-roofed rear addition, features a central side-gabled portion with projecting cross-gabled wings to the north and south. The south wing, roughly centered on the facade, terminates with a canted, three-part bay topped by a pedimented gable. The gable has a standing seam metal pent at its base and a spindle-work finial. The tympanum houses a three-part window with three single-light windows in a single casing. The bay beneath the gable has one-over-one sash windows flanking a central window with a honeycomb-style light above a large single light. West of the projecting wing on the facade is a single one-over-one window. East of the wing is a one-bay, hipped-roofed porch with turned posts and pilasters, modest brackets, and a turned balustrade along its east side. The porch shelters a single-leaf entrance to the house on the east wall of the projecting wing. The

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east elevation mirrors the facade with the same triple window in the gable, but this gable is not pedimented. Below is a three-part window incorporating the three elements found in the facade's canted bay.

The Fred and Margaret Davis House (140-0037-0036, ca. 1920) is a Craftsman-style one-story front-gabled frame house with broad bracketed eaves and exposed rafter tails. The west elevation has a shed-roofed porch, and the east elevation has a cross-gabled porte cochère. The primary entrance is located on the east side of the facade and features a single-leaf door flanked by six-light sidelights set above tall wooden panels, all within a pedimented hood supported by brackets. West of the entrance is a bank of four fifteen-light windows. In the attic of the facade are a series of five diamond-light, casement windows. The house is clad in weatherboard with shingling in the gables.

Integrity Analysis

The setting of the Abingdon Historic District retains a high degree of integrity. Although development of the town has continued outside the district, with some interchange sprawl near the Interstate 81 exits, the integrity of the district's later adjacent expansion area has created a protected zone around the original core area. The district's physical relationship to railways and its viewshed to the ridgeline to the north have been maintained without significant visual obstruction. The integrity of design is strong. Only a few scattered buildings, such as the addition to the county courthouse, postdate the period of significance. Historic development patterns including zero lot lines for most commercial properties, and the sparsity of surface parking along Main Street upholds the urban planning principles of the town. Design features of individual buildings have been maintained, particularly decorative exterior trim, which reinforces the high integrity of design. Likewise, the retention of original material and extremely limited use of replacement materials gives the district strong integrity of materials and workmanship. The district retains the linear quality of a mountain town organized along a principal thoroughfare, centered at the county courthouse and anchored by significant institutions such as churches, banks, sensitively adapted educational institutions, and the landmark Barter Theatre. Retention of these historical spatial relationships gives the district an extremely high integrity of feeling and association.

Inventory of Resources

Properties in the Abingdon Historic District inventory are organized alphabetically by street (under centered street name headings) and numerically by street number. Under the street headings the street numbers are grouped by the street segment (East or West), with the direction preceding the number (e.g., East 120 Main Street). The eleven-digit Department of Historic Resources (DHR) identification number within parentheses follows the property's street address. The first seven digits of this number identify the town and district (140-0037), and the last four-digits are that property's assigned number within the district. In cases of previously individually recorded properties, an originally assigned seven-digit identification number appears, following "Other DHR ID#:" to the right on the same line as the address and the eleven-digit number. Each resource (or multiple representatives of one resource type) within a property appears on a separate line. Information for the primary resource includes the description or resource type (e.g., Dwelling, Church, Cemetery, etc.); the National Register resource type in parentheses (Building, Structure,

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Site, or Object); the number of stories (if the primary resource is a building); architectural style; date of construction; status, i.e., whether contributing or non-contributing to the district; and the quantity of resources of that description. Below the primary resource entry, less detailed information appears for the property's secondary resources.

Contributing resources date to sometime within the district's period of significance (1779–1938) and have retained a sufficient degree of integrity to contribute under Criteria A, B, or C. Dates are from field observation, tax or court records, or secondary sources. Resources identified as non-contributing either do not date to the period of significance or lack the minimum integrity requirement because of moving, alteration, or deterioration.

Information in the inventory is also accessible through DHR's architectural survey archives in Richmond and the Virginia Cultural Resource Information System (V-CRIS) online subscription database. Resources are keyed to the historic district Sketch Map by the last four digits (in bold type) of the resource's eleven-digit DHR number (e.g., **0001** for the resource assigned inventory number 140-0037-0001).

COURT STREET

NE 100-104 Court Street (140-0037-**0001**)

Primary Resource: Commercial Building (Building), Stories 3, Style: Commercial Style, 1908

Contributing *Total:* 1

NE 108 Court Street (140-0037-**0061**); *Other DHR Id#:* 140-0017

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Federal/Adamesque, 1803

Contributing *Total:* 1

NE 112-114 Court Street (140-0037-**0002**)

Primary Resource: Commercial Building (Building), Stories 2, Style: Commercial Style, ca. 1908

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Spring House (Building)

Contributing *Total:* 1

NE 120 Court Street (140-0037-**0067**); *Other DHR Id#:* 140-0029

Primary Resource: Office/Office Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: Classical Revival, ca. 1872

Contributing *Total:* 1

NE 138 Court Street (140-0037-**0003**)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Vernacular, ca. 1840

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Shed (Building)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

SE 120 Court Street (140-0037-**0074**)

Primary Resource: Commercial Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: No discernible style, ca. 1974

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Non-contributing *Total:* 1

MAIN STREET

East Main Street (140-0037-0075)

Primary Resource: Garage (Building), Stories 1, Style: No discernible style, ca. 1940

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 101 Main Street (140-0037-0004)

Primary Resource: Church/Chapel (Building), Stories 1.5, Style: Gothic Revival, 1883

Contributing *Total:* 1

East 102 Main Street (140-0037-0005)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Mixed, 1871

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Garage (Building)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 108 Main Street (140-0037-0006)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Folk Victorian,
ca. 1893

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Garage (Building)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 112 Main Street (140-0037-0007)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Folk Victorian, ca. 1901

Contributing *Total:* 1

East 115 Main Street (140-0037-0008)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Greek Revival, ca. 1830

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Garage (Building)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 116 Main Street (140-0037-0009)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Vernacular,
ca. 1875

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Garage (Building)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Shed (Building)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 124 Main Street (140-0037-0010)

Primary Resource: Church/Chapel (Building), Stories 1, Style: Gothic Revival, ca. 1925

Contributing *Total:* 1

East 127 Main Street (140-0037-0068)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0030

Primary Resource: Commercial Building (Building), Stories 2, Style: Italianate, ca. 1883

Contributing *Total:* 1

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East 129 Main Street (140-0037-**0011**)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Folk Victorian, ca. 1798

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Pergola (Structure)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Secondary Dwelling (Building)

Contributing *Total:* 2

East 131 Main Street (140-0037-**0012**)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Colonial Revival, ca. 1906

Contributing *Total:* 1

East 133 Main Street (140-0037-**0057**)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0013

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Greek Revival, ca. 1845

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Shed (Building)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 136 Main Street (140-0037-**0013**)

Primary Resource: Church/Chapel (Building), Stories 1, Style: Gothic Revival, ca. 1889

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Playing Field (Structure)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 142 Main Street (140-0037-**0066**)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0028

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Italianate, ca. 1836

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Outbuilding, Domestic (Building)

Contributing *Total:* 1

East 145 Main Street (140-0037-**0014**)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Colonial Revival, ca. 1909

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Garage (Building)

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: [Swimming Pool] (Structure)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Shed (Building)

Contributing *Total:* 1

East 146 Main Street (140-0037-**0015**)

Primary Resource: Parsonage/Glebe (Building), Stories 2, Style: Folk Victorian, ca. 1906

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Garage (Building)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 152 Main Street (140-0037-**0016**)

Primary Resource: Multiple Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Queen Anne, 1884

Contributing *Total:* 1

East 155 Main Street (140-0037-**0017**)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Queen Anne, ca. 1893

Contributing *Total:* 1

East 158 Main Street (140-0037-**0045**)

Primary Resource: Commercial Building (Building), Stories 1, Style: No discernible style,
ca. 1962

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

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East 159 Main Street (140-0037-**0018**)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 1, Style: Folk Victorian, ca. 1815

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Shed (Building)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 161 Main Street (140-0037-**0019**)

Primary Resource: Mixed: Commerce/Domestic (Building), Stories , Style: No discernible style, ca. 1887

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Sign (Object)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 165-169 Main Street (140-0037-**0063**)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0025

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Italianate, 1798

Contributing *Total:* 1

East 170 Main Street (140-0037-**0020**)

Primary Resource: Commercial Building (Building), Stories 3, Style: Commercial Style, ca. 1886

Contributing *Total:* 1

East 171-173 Main Street (140-0037-**0021**)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0027

Primary Resource: Store/Market (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Greek Revival, ca. 1866

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Shed (Building)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 174 Main Street (140-0037-**0022**)

Primary Resource: Bank (Building), Stories 2, Style: Neo-Classical Revival, ca. 1923

Contributing *Total:* 1

East 180-182 Main Street (140-0037-**0023**)

Primary Resource: Commercial Building (Building), Stories 3, Style: Italianate, ca. 1878

Contributing *Total:* 1

East 188-190 Main Street (140-0037-**0024**)

Primary Resource: Hotel/Inn (Building), Stories 3, Style: Commercial Style, ca. 1910

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 189-191 Main Street (140-0037-**0064**); *Other DHR Id#:* 140-0026

Primary Resource: Courthouse (Building), Stories 3, Style: Greek Revival, ca. 1869

Contributing *Total:* 1

East 200 Main Street (140-0037-**0025**)

Primary Resource: Commercial Building (Building), Stories 3, Style: Italianate, ca. 1870

Contributing *Total:* 1

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East 206 Main Street (140-0037-**0072**)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0032

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 3, Style: Greek Revival, ca. 1859

Contributing *Total:* 1

East 208-212 Main Street (140-0037-**0058**)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0014

Primary Resource: Hotel/Inn (Building), Stories 3, Style: Federal/Adamesque, ca. 1846

Contributing *Total:* 1

East 222 Main Street (140-0037-**0054**)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0002

Primary Resource: Tavern/Ordinary (Building), Stories 2, Style: No discernible style, 1779

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Sign (Object)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 225 Main Street (140-0037-**0053**)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0001

Abingdon Bank

Primary Resource: Bank (Building), Stories 3, Style: Greek Revival, ca. 1858

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Carport (Structure)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Garage (Building)

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Slave/Servant Quarters (Building)

Contributing *Total:* 1

East 226-232 Main Street (140-0037-**0027**)

Primary Resource: Hotel/Inn (Building), Stories 2, Style: Federal, 1835

Contributing *Total:* 1

East 227 Main Street (140-0037-**0026**)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 1, Style: Vernacular, ca. 1924

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Shed (Building)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 239 Main Street (140-0037-**0028**)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 1, Style: Folk Victorian, 1886

Contributing *Total:* 1

East 247 Main Street (140-0037-**0062**)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0022

Dr. William Pitts House

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Greek Revival, 1854

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Garage (Building)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 250 Main Street (140-0037-**0029**)

Primary Resource: Funeral Home/Mortuary (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Colonial Revival, ca. 1925

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 266 Main Street (140-0037-**0030**)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: No discernible style, ca. 1870

Contributing *Total:* 1

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East 279 Main Street (140-0037-0031)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Gothic Revival, ca. 1857
Contributing *Total:* 1
Secondary Resource: Monument/Marker (Object) Non-contributing *Total:* 1
Secondary Resource: Outbuilding, Domestic (Building) Contributing *Total:* 1
Secondary Resource: Secondary Dwelling (Building) Contributing *Total:* 1
Secondary Resource: Sign (Object) Non-contributing *Total:* 2

East 281 Main Street (140-0037-0056)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0009

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Federal, 1790–1791
Contributing *Total:* 1
Secondary Resource: Garage (Building) Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 283 Main Street (140-0037-0073)

Primary Resource: Commercial Building (Building), Stories 1.5, Style: Neo-Eclectic,
ca. 2008
Non-contributing *Total:* 1
Secondary Resource: Shed (Building) Non-contributing *Total:* 2

East 301 Main Street (140-0037-0032)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0100

Primary Resource: Commercial Building (Building), Stories 2, Style: Commercial Style,
ca. 1901
Contributing *Total:* 1

East 303 Main Street (140-0037-0069)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0031

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Vernacular, ca. 1930
Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 304 Main Street (140-0037-0059)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0015

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Mixed, ca. 1832
Contributing *Total:* 1
Secondary Resource: Greenhouse/Conservatory (Building) Non-contributing *Total:* 1
Secondary Resource: Pergola (Structure) Non-contributing *Total:* 1
Secondary Resource: Secondary Dwelling (Building) Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 309 Main Street (140-0037-0033)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0099

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 1, Style: Folk Victorian, 1909
Non-contributing *Total:* 1
Secondary Resource: Garage (Building) Non-contributing *Total:* 1

East 314 Main Street (140-0037-0034)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Folk Victorian, ca. 1879
Contributing *Total:* 1
Secondary Resource: Shed (Building) Non-contributing *Total:* 1
Secondary Resource: Sign (Object) Non-contributing *Total:* 1

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East 322 Main Street (140-0037-**0035**)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0098

Primary Resource: Church/Chapel (Building), Stories 1, Style: Queen Anne, 1877

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Sign (Object)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

West 103 Main Street (140-0037-**0036**)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 1, Style: Craftsman, ca. 1920

Contributing *Total:* 1

West 107 Main Street (140-0037-**0037**)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Colonial Revival, ca. 1938

Contributing *Total:* 1

West 110 Main Street (140-0037-**0071**)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0036

Primary Resource: Theater (Building), Stories 2, Style: Federal/Adamesque, ca. 1831

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Sculpture/Statue (Object)

Non-contributing *Total:* 4

West 111 Main Street (140-0037-**0038**)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Greek Revival, ca. 1847

Contributing *Total:* 1

West 117 Main Street (140-0037-**0039**)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 1.5, Style: Craftsman, ca. 1933

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Garage (Building)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

West 123 Main Street (140-0037-**0060**)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0016

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Greek Revival, ca. 1840

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Pergola (Structure)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

West 127 Main Street (140-0037-**0055**)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0005

Primary Resource: Theater (Building), Stories 2, Style: Romanesque
Revival/Richardsonian, ca. 1831

Contributing *Total:* 1

West 133 Main Street (140-0037-**0050**)

Primary Resource: Office/Office Building (Building), Stories 1.5, Style: Colonial Revival,
ca. 1940

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: [Flagpole] (Object)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: [Clock] (Object)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: [Stone Marker] (Object)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Sign (Object)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

West 143 Main Street (140-0037-**0042**)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Queen Anne, ca. 1900

Contributing *Total:* 1

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West 150 Main Street (140-0037-**0052**)

Other DHR Id#: 140-0023

Primary Resource: Hotel/Inn (Building), Stories 2.5, Style: Mixed, 1836

Contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Fountain (Object)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

Secondary Resource: Pergola (Structure)

Non-contributing *Total:* 1

West 151-153 Main Street (140-0037-**0043**)

Primary Resource: Single Dwelling (Building), Stories 2, Style: Italianate, 1879

Contributing *Total:* 1

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

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

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

INDUSTRY

PERFORMING ARTS

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1779-1938

Significant Dates

1779

1856

1933

Significant Person

Floyd, John B.

King, William

Porterfield, Robert

Preston, Francis

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Baumann Brothers

Brownlow, F. B.

Gaylon, A. L.

Hickman, Adam

Kearfott, Clarence Baker

Kizer, A. G.

Mitchell, Charles G.

Mitchell, Johnson

Musser, W. H.

Musser, W. H., & Son

Ramsey, Hiram

Smithey & Tardy

Musser, W. H.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Abingdon Historic District consists of the linear 31.2-acre historic core of downtown lots running northeast to southwest along both sides of the town's Main Street. Abingdon is the county seat of Washington County in southwest Virginia but throughout its history has exceeded the importance and vitality of a typical Virginia courthouse community. Located along important transportation routes leading through the Great Valley in southwest Virginia toward Tennessee, Kentucky, and the wider colonial frontier, Abingdon became a regional hub for artisans, small industries, and merchants supplying the surrounding countryside and the settlers headed farther southwest. The town continued to thrive throughout its history with transportation improvements such as the Virginia & Tennessee Railroad in 1856 and transformation of the Great Road into the Valley Turnpike (current U.S. Route 11, which runs along Main Street) by 1857. Completion of the U.S. District Courthouse for the Western District of Virginia in 1856 further spurred residential and commercial growth. The town's steady growth and prosperity resulted in a remarkable array of domestic, commercial, religious, and government architecture, with contributing resources ranging in date from 1779 to 1938. The town's importance meant that it could support a succession of educational institutions, culminating in Martha Washington College for women (1860–1932) in a building adapted and expanded from an 1836 mansion. Abingdon also had the vitality needed to support the establishment of the Barter Theatre in 1933. Since then, the theater has attracted the involvement of internationally acclaimed playwrights and actors. Moreover, the Barter received recognition as the State Theatre of Virginia in 1946 and is now the oldest repertory theater in the nation. The Abingdon Historic District's period of significance begins in 1779, the construction date of a tavern representing the early development of the town as a county seat and transportation node. The period ends in 1938, marking the latest date of construction of a contributing building. Only five primary resources within the district boundaries postdate 1938, of which only four are over 50 years old. Of these, only two could arguably fall within an area of significance, and both have lost the requisite integrity for contributing status: the building at 150 East Main Street has a gable roof that was added to its flat roof after 1984, and the town hall was massively expanded in 1995. The district is significant under Criterion A at the statewide level in the area of Performing Arts; under Criterion B at the statewide level in the area of Politics/Government for association with John B. Floyd, at the local level in the areas of Commerce and Industry for association with William King, at the statewide level in the area of Performing Arts for association with Robert Porterfield, and at the local level in the area of Politics/Government for association with Francis Preston; and under Criterion C at the statewide level in the area of Architecture.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Criterion A: Performing Arts

The district is significant under Criterion A at the statewide level in the area of Performing Arts for role of the Barter Theatre in contributing to the ongoing vitality of Abingdon's downtown since its establishment by Washington County actor/director Robert Porterfield in 1933. The theater

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continues to thrive with an annual attendance of 160,000. Since its founding, numerous internationally renowned and award-winning directors and actors have taken part in its productions. Many actors found early opportunities to showcase their talents before they became famous. In addition to accepting livestock, produce, dairy, and other items as barter for admission during the Great Depression, the theater is also famous for paying royalties in Virginia hams to playwrights such as Noel Coward and Thornton Wilder. The Barter Theatre is the second oldest continuously operating theater in the United States (the oldest being Philadelphia's Walnut Street Theatre founded in 1809).¹⁵

The main venue of the Barter Theatre is represented within the historic district by a contributing building that dates more than a hundred years earlier than the establishment of the theater company. The core of the Barter Theatre (140-0037-0055) building at 127 West Main Street is a church built by the Sinking Spring Presbyterian congregation in 1831–1833.¹⁶ By 1837, a schism over theology and views on slavery split the congregation into Old School and New School branches. The New School branch no longer worshipped in this building and eventually erected their own church at 136 East Main Street in 1851 (the present church on that lot is a replacement built in 1889–1890). The two sects reconciled during the Civil War. In 1865, the Old School members sold the 1830s building to the Sons of Temperance and moved to the new church.¹⁷

The Sons of Temperance was a fraternal organization that focused on abstinence from alcohol to help improve society. Interestingly, the members used theatrical performances as one of the vehicles to advance their mission. Therefore, the first performance in what is now the Barter Theatre took place in January 1876. By the late nineteenth century, the organization was no longer active, and the few surviving members sold the building to the town in 1890.¹⁸

The building then served as the town hall, jail (in the basement), offices, and a fire hall. The auditorium served as a venue for theatrical performances and, during an eleven-year interim, for movies. The municipal government function of the building remained until a new town hall was built at 133 West Main Street in 1940. The theater portion was known as the Opera House.¹⁹ In 1905, architect Charles G. Mitchell designed an expansion of the building's footprint. He also created the striking Romanesque Revival façade with corbelling and corbelled pendants framing the pediment, brick pilasters capped with pinnacles, and two terminal pilasters topped with pyramidal pinnacles reaching above the eaves. The stone tablet inscribed CITY HALL placed below the circular window within the pediment is also part of Mitchell's modifications.

In 1932 Robert Porterfield, a young actor from the local area, was struggling to stay employed in the depressed New York theater business. His decision to return homeward and start a repertory

¹⁵ Walnut Street Theatre, "History of the Theatre," Walnut Street Theatre, 1889, <https://www.walnutstreettheatre.org/about/theatre-history.php>.

¹⁶ Mattie Rountree Stephenson (compiler), *Historical Sketch of Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church, of Abingdon, Virginia, 1773-1948* (s.n., 1948), 16.

¹⁷ King, *Places in Time, Vol. 2: Abingdon, Meadowview & Glade Spring, Virginia*, 80.

¹⁸ Dawidziak, *The Barter Theater Story*, 8; Barter Theatre, "History of the Barter Theatre - The State Theatre of Virginia," Barter Theatre, accessed July 12, 2025, <https://bartertheatre.com/history/>.

¹⁹ King, *Places in Time, Vol. 1: Abingdon, Virginia 1778-1880*, 16.

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theater in Abingdon led to the establishment the Barter Theatre—Abingdon’s greatest contribution to American history and culture. Over the previous five years, Porterfield’s acting career had been on the rise but ended abruptly as many New York theaters closed their doors or reduced performances due to lack of demand from financially pinched audiences during the Great Depression.²⁰

Porterfield returned to Washington County in 1932 and arranged to stage a play the following summer in Abingdon’s Opera House (part of the same building as the town hall). Gathering twenty-two fellow unemployed actors from New York, he formed the Barter repertory company with the innovative marketing idea of charging only 35 cents for tickets or the equivalent in barter of produce or other items. In an area with an abundance of agricultural production but a shortage of cash due to the Depression, the offer had widespread appeal. A good show could also attract audiences from a handful of small cities within driving distance, such as Bristol, which straddles the Virginia/Tennessee state line, and Johnson City, Tennessee. High-quality entertainment at an affordable price quickly established the Barter Theatre as a successful endeavor.²¹ Produce, eggs, dairy, livestock, hams, and other items were accepted. Photographs appeared in the national press documenting the unusual forms of payment (Figure 7).²²



Figure 7. Robert Porterfield accepting a goose as payment for theater tickets to *Harvey* (left) and a collection of bartered goods on the steps of the ticket office from a performance in 1939 (right).

In the first years of the Barter, the buildings of Martha Washington College (140-0037-0052) across Main Street provided the necessary accommodation for visiting actors over the summer

²⁰ Dawidziak, *The Barter Theater Story*, 29.

²¹ Carrie O’Brien, “Barter Theatre,” in *Encyclopedia Virginia*, 2020, <https://encyclopediaofvirginia.org/entries/barter-theatre>.

²² Barter Theatre; Life Magazine Editors, “Barter Theater Trades Drama for Ham and Eggs (in Summer Theater Photo Essay),” *Life*, no. July 31 (July 1939): 54.

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season. The timing for the influx of actors with little means to pay for lodging was good because the women's college had closed due to the financial stress of the Depression after being in operation since 1860.

In 1935, the theater company was flourishing with a newly added actor apprentice program and a six-day drama festival. Just as this further growth occurred, the housing and theater venues both became unavailable. In this same year, a movie distribution firm acquired a lease on the Opera House, and owners of the old college buildings transformed the campus into a hotel. Fortunately for the theater company, another abandoned educational campus, the women's school called the Stonewall Jackson Institute (formerly located in town just north of the historic district) had suitable spaces for both an actor dormitory and theatrical performances. After the move, the company did not return to the old Main Street Opera House until after World War II.²³

Over the course of the Barter Theatre's history, Gregory Peck, Helen Hayes, Patricia Neal, Hume Cronyn, and Ned Beatty were among numerous accomplished actors and actresses who performed in Abingdon before they gained greater exposure on Broadway and in Hollywood. All of them eventually earned Academy Awards, Emmy Awards, and/or Tony Awards. Ernest Borgnine performed at the Barter for five years after his discharge from the Navy in 1946. Only six years after leaving the Barter, he received the Best Actor Academy Award for his performance in *Marty*. In 1956, the Barter began offering the Ernest Borgnine Award to each season's best new actor. In more recent years, Wayne Knight, Frances Fisher, and Jim Varney performed at the Barter early in their careers. James Burrows also brought his directing talent to the theater early in his career. Highlights of his achievements include creating the television situational comedy *Cheers* and directing numerous others, including *The Bob Newhart Show*, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *Taxi*, *Frasier*, *Friends*, *Will & Grace*, and *3rd Rock from the Sun*.²⁴

For a small regional theater, the Barter received outsized attention from the New York theater scene and from the national press. Porterfield's enduring friendships with colleagues in New York helped cultivate widespread interest in the Barter. In 1936, the company went on a press tour, performing two different plays in New York City at the same 35-cent admission price as charged in Abingdon. In 1939, the annual Barter Theatre Award Luncheon began in New York. The actor or actress credited with the most memorable performance during the previous year received a Virginia ham, "a silver platter to eat it off of, and an acre of Southwest Virginia mountainside."²⁵ These awards continued through 1969.²⁶ It is perhaps not surprising that coverage of the Barter appeared in both *Time* and *Life* magazines that year. The *Life* piece was part of a photo essay on summer theater across the country. Among the photos of Barter activities was a large attention-grabbing shot captioned, "How to make love is taught at Barter Theatre in Virginia." Porterfield

²³ Dawidziak, *The Barter Theater Story*, 26.

²⁴ Barter Theatre, "History of the Barter Theatre - The State Theatre of Virginia"; Barter Theatre, "Famous Alumni," Barter Theatre, 2025b, <https://bartertheatre.com/history/>; Internet Movie Database, IMDb, 2025, <https://www.imdb.com/>.

²⁵ Dawidziak, *The Barter Theater Story*, 26.

²⁶ Teresa Diane Keller, "A Survey of the Attitudes of the Abingdon Community toward Barter Theatre of Abingdon, Virginia" (Master's thesis, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1977), 86.

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was shown teaching a suitable theater embrace to thirteen young couples spread upon a lawn in each other's arms (Figure 8).²⁷

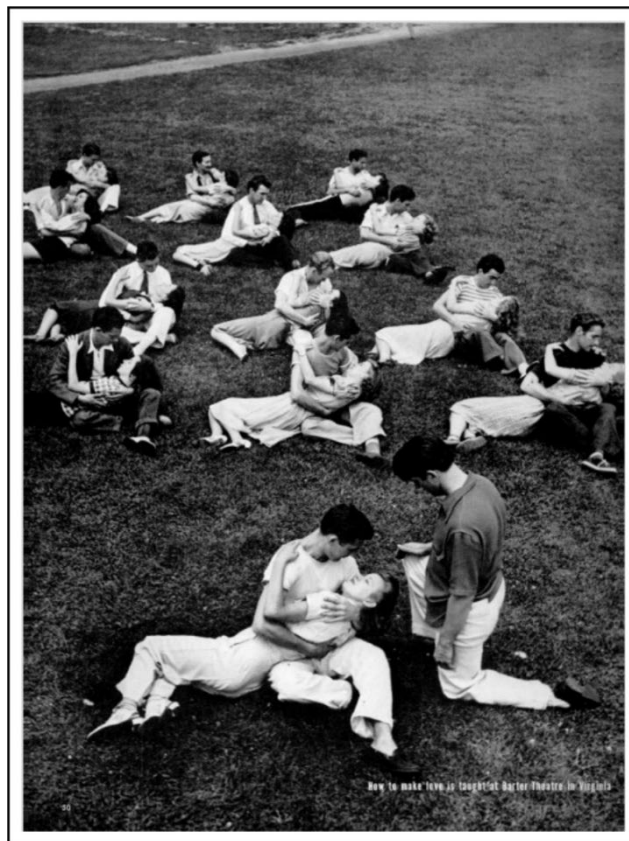


Figure 8. Couples of Barter Theatre actors learning about embraces for romantic scenes.

Before the pre-Civil Rights reform era of the 1960s, the Barter Theatre was segregated like other entertainment venues across the South. Although African Americans were admitted, a 1939 *Life* magazine photographic caption noted that, “Negroes sit in the balcony” rather than in the more desirable floor seats.²⁸

Beginning in 1942, the theater closed for four years while Robert Porterfield and many other Barter performers served in the armed forces during World War II.²⁹ Porterfield was posted to California, where he made training films. After playing some uncredited movie roles in Hollywood, he

²⁷ Time Magazine staff, “The Theatre: Actors and Hams,” *Time Magazine*, no. October 2 (October 1939); Life Magazine Editors, “How to make love is taught at Barter Theatre in Virginia. (in Summer Theater Photo Essay),” *Life*, no. July 31 (July 1939): 50.

²⁸ Life Magazine Editors, “Barter Theater Trades Drama for Ham and Eggs (in Summer Theater Photo Essay),” *Life*, July 31, 1939, 54.

²⁹ Mark Dawidziak, *The Barter Theater Story: Love Made Visible* (Chapel Hill. Reissued. Originally published in 1982 by Appalachian Consortium Press: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 34.

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decided to return to Abingdon after considering advice from his friend James Hilton, the English novelist who was working as a screenwriter in Hollywood.³⁰

When the Barter reopened in 1946, the General Assembly honored the theater with the designation State Theatre of Virginia and provided some state funding. This was not a matter of chance, however, but instead can be traced to the imagination and persuasive skills of Porterfield. In 1940, he had pitched the idea of state theaters to legislators in Richmond after federal relief administrators had rejected a proposal he had made to them in 1935. The incentive for state funding came from Porterfield's plan to tour and test performances at colleges and high schools during the school year. In her "My Day" newspaper column, Eleanor Roosevelt praised Virginia's government for recognizing "the importance of theater in the life of the people."³¹ In 1948, the Barter Theatre received an Antoinette Perry Award (commonly known as a Tony) for Regional Theatre.³²

Another of the district's contributing properties associated with the Barter Theatre is the Cave House (140-0037-0031) at 279 East Main Street, purchased in 1949 by Alice Brown Hilton (James Hilton's widow) and then deeded from her to Robert Porterfield. Beginning in 1953, Porterfield hosted after-theater parties and receptions in the Cave House. Hilton also volunteered at the theater as the business manager and provided funding for the air conditioning system and the marquee.³³

In 1961, the Barter acquired a second venue, first known as the Barter Playhouse, then Barter Stage II, and currently Barter's Smith Theatre (140-0037-0071) at 110 West Main Street on the lot east of the Martha Washington Inn. The building was originally a Methodist Protestant Church constructed in 1831. The congregation had vacated the main building in the late nineteenth century, and a fire destroyed auxiliary buildings in 1914. Martha Washington College used the church building as a gymnasium until the college closed in 1932. Since acquiring the property, the venue has been used for children's plays and small avant-garde productions. Additions and improvements were made in 1973 and 1985.³⁴

After the passing of Porterfield in 1971, the theater has continued to thrive and receive accolades. These include a 1979 Virginia Governor's Award for Excellence in Art and one of three challenge grants offered by the National Endowment for the Arts in 1996.³⁵ Plays are now performed year-round.

³⁰ Robert McKinney, "The Brit Who Persuaded Robert Porterfield To Follow His Dream," *Bristol Herald Courier*, 2008, June 6 edition, update December 12, 2012.

³¹ Quote from Eleanor Roosevelt's "My Day" newspaper column in Dawidziak, *The Barter Theater Story*, 34.

³² Barter Theatre, "History of the Barter Theatre - The State Theatre of Virginia."

³³ Dawidziak, *The Barter Theater Story*, 78; King, *Places in Time, Vol. 1: Abingdon, Virginia 1778-1880*, 2.

³⁴ King, *Places in Time, Vol. 1: Abingdon, Virginia 1778-1880*, 33; Barter Theatre, "History of the Barter Theatre - The State Theatre of Virginia"; Dawidziak, *The Barter Theater Story*, 85.

³⁵ Barter Theatre, "History of the Barter Theatre - The State Theatre of Virginia."

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Criterion B – Politics/Government: John B. Floyd

The district is significant under Criterion B at the statewide level in the area of Politics/Government for its association with John B. Floyd, who served as a state legislator (1847–1849, 1855–1856), Governor of Virginia (1849–1852), United States Secretary of War (1857–1860), and brigadier-general in the Confederate States Army (1861–1863). Born in Montgomery County, Virginia, Floyd graduated from South Carolina College (now University of South Carolina) in 1829. The following year he married Sarah Buchanan Preston (a member of the prominent local Preston and Campbell families) in Abingdon and in 1834 he opened a law practice.³⁶ For the next 28 years, with periodic absences for service in politics and the Confederate military, Floyd ran his law practice from the log building at 159 East Main Street (140-0037-0018), which had also served as the law office of his father-in-law, Francis Preston, since its construction in 1815. Although later owners expanded the building in the late nineteenth century, the log law office remains as the front portion, now covered with asbestos siding.³⁷

As a state legislator and governor, Floyd contributed significantly toward advancing the Virginia economy, expanding suffrage, and advocating for his western section of the state. Floyd's gubernatorial election platform called for making internal improvements to Virginia's transportation infrastructure. To achieve reforms, he called a state constitutional convention in 1850–1851. Major statewide reforms achieved from the convention included direct popular election of governors (replacing a vote by legislators of the General Assembly). Election reforms brought more equitable representation for the western counties, which had previously been underrepresented in the General Assembly. Most significantly for Floyd's own section of the state was elimination of property ownership restrictions on suffrage. This eliminated the advantages held by Piedmont and Tidewater voters, who tended to own more valuable real estate.³⁸

Three years after returning from the governor's mansion to his Abingdon law practice, Floyd resumed political activity on behalf of the Democratic party by campaigning against the Know Nothing party, which had stepped into a void left by the demise of the Whigs. President James Buchanan rewarded Floyd for this service to his party with an appointment as Secretary of War. At this point, Floyd's thus far excellent reputation began to suffer as he drew suspicion for kickbacks on War Department contracts. His choice of Joseph E. Johnston for the position of quartermaster general appeared to be biased by nepotism (Johnston was related to him by marriage) as he passed over more experienced candidates such as Robert E. Lee.³⁹ At least one reassessment of Floyd's career presents the argument that detractors exaggerated Floyd's failings as secretary, leading to his generally poor reputation despite his earlier achievements as governor.⁴⁰

³⁶ Peter C. Luebke, "John B. Floyd (1806-1863)," in *Encyclopedia Virginia*, 2020, <https://encyclopediaivirginia.org/entries/floyd-john-b-1806-1863>.

³⁷ King, *Places in Time, Vol. 1: Abingdon, Virginia 1778-1880*, 10.

³⁸ Luebke, "John B. Floyd (1806-1863)."

³⁹ Luebke, "John B. Floyd (1806-1863)."

⁴⁰ Charles Pinnegar, *Brand of Infamy: A Biography of John Buchanan Floyd* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2002).

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Floyd cut short his national role by resigning over a disagreement with Buchanan in December 1860. Returning to Abingdon, he sided with the Confederacy in the spring of 1861 and raised a brigade of troops in southwestern Virginia. Upon secession of Virginia from the Union, he received a Confederate Army commission as a brigadier general. His poor reputation as Secretary of War soured his relationship with many in the high command. Floyd headed the Army of the Kanawha, comprising 3,500 troops. After the loss of West Virginia to the Union, he served as the commander of Fort Donelson in Tennessee. Besieged by forces under the Union's ablest commander, Ulysses S. Grant, Floyd performed poorly in attempting to break through the siege in February 1861. Rather than surrender with his army, however, he escaped with a contingent of 1,500 Virginians to Nashville. He aided in the evacuation of that city when it fell to Union forces and then Jefferson Davis, a critic who had preceded him as Secretary of War, relieved him of his command in February 1862. Returning to Abingdon, he served as a major general of the local militia and engaged in guerilla warfare along the Kentucky-West Virginia border. Stress from this latest stint of military service may have led to his death at Abingdon on August 23, 1863.⁴¹

Criterion B – Commerce and Industry: William King (1769–1808)

The district is significant under Criterion B at the local level in the areas of Commerce and Industry for its association with William King, a first generation Irish immigrant who arrived in the United States in 1784 and settled in Abingdon in 1791. King was a successful merchant and saltworks owner and grew extremely wealthy from these enterprises. In 1803, King built Abingdon's earliest extant brick house (140-0037-0061) at 108 Court Street. When he died in 1808, he was one of the wealthiest men in Virginia and left a bequest of \$10,000 to the town's boys' school, used to erect a brick schoolhouse (located just west of the historic district). King is also the namesake of Kingsport, Tennessee, where he owned a boat landing.

King settled in Abingdon in 1791, living with his father, Thomas, who had a house in the vicinity of 171 East Main Street. With a legacy of £100 inherited from his grandmother, Elizabeth Davis, William established a general store. Reinvesting his profits from this initial business, he eventually owned and operated a series of stores along the Great Valley.⁴² He became a naturalized citizen in 1794 when he took an oath of loyalty to the Commonwealth of Virginia in the Washington County court at Abingdon.⁴³

In 1795, King purchased 150 acres from Arthur Campbell, the first settler to produce salt at that location. Whereas Campbell had produced salt on a small scale, King had a more ambitious approach. In 1799 he sank shafts intending to mine rock salt buried 200 feet below the ground surface. When the shafts filled with briny water, however, he adopted an approach that would increase production to the point of starting a profitable industry. A system of pumps and wooden pipes conveyed the brine from the wells to large iron kettles in heating sheds. A long fire box in each shed heated the kettles of brine, gradually evaporated the water, and left behind piles of salt.

⁴¹ Luebke, "John B. Floyd (1806-1863)."

⁴² Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia, 1746-1786, Washington County, 1777-1870*, 793–794.

⁴³ Lewis Preston Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia, 1746-1786, Washington County, 1777-1870*. (J. L. Hill printing company, 1903), 443.

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By 1805, King's heating sheds were yielding 200 bushels of salt per day.⁴⁴ King matched his successful salt production methods with efficient access to distant markets. His enslaved laborers floated the product down the North Fork of the Holston River on rafts to "King's Port," a landing he purchased in what is now Kingsport, Tennessee—a city that is named after him. From there, flatboats transported the salt along the Holston to the Tennessee River and markets throughout the South.⁴⁵

In 1799, King married Mary Trigg. As the couple established a family, they built the fine two-story, five-bay Federal-style brick house (140-0037-0061) at 108 Court Street in Abingdon. Built in 1803, the house is a lasting marker of William King's prosperity.

When William King died at 39 years old in 1808, he was one of Virginia's wealthiest men. His saltworks and mercantile businesses had helped build an estate worth \$1 million (equivalent to more than \$25 million in 2025). Local citizens benefited from King's bequest of \$10,000 to the Abingdon Male Academy, which had been established in 1803. The school's board used the funds to build a large brick school building that opened in 1820 (after a long estate settlement) just west of the district.⁴⁶

Criterion B – Performing Arts: Robert Porterfield

The district is significant under Criterion B at the statewide level in the area of Performing Arts for its association with Robert Porterfield, who established the Barter Theatre in 1933. Though located in a small, remote town in Southwest Virginia, the theater gained national renown. The theater's longstanding success can be attributed in large part to Porterfield's imaginative approach to ensuring financial viability, his charisma and personal qualities that enabled him to attract actors of the highest caliber and gain nationwide interest, and his creativity and high professional standards.

Born in Austinville in nearby Wythe County, Virginia, Porterfield grew up in a family of modest means in Saltville. Contrary to his father's wishes, at age 10 he announced his determination to pursue a career in acting. After graduating from Saltville High School in 1924, he studied for the ministry at Hampden-Sydney College in Farmville, Virginia, for two years but left to study at the New York Academy for Dramatic Arts. From 1927 through 1932, he acted on the New York stage, culminating in a supporting role on Broadway in *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

Just as Porterfield achieved his greatest success as an actor, theaters in New York and nationwide plummeted in attendance as fewer spectators could afford to spend money on entertainment during the Great Depression. Porterfield was among hundreds of actors chasing very few opportunities,

⁴⁴ Ella Lonn, *Salt as a Factor in the Confederacy*, Southern Historical Publications No. 4 (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1965). 37; Robert Whisonant, "Geology and the Civil War in Southwestern Virginia: The Smyth County Salt Works 42, No. 3 (1996)," *Virginia Minerals* 42, no. 3 (1996): 25.

⁴⁵ Roger A. Allison, *A Brief History of Saltville* (Saltville, Virginia: Saltville Centennial Committee, 1996), 7.

⁴⁶ William King Museum of Art, "History & Vision," WMKA [William King Museum of Art], 2025, <https://williamkingmuseum.org/history-vision/>; Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865*, 128.

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and he decided to return home to Washington County. With 22 other actors from New York who were struggling financially, he made plans to stage plays at the opera house in Abingdon in the summer of 1933. Since the local population was just as cash-strapped as New Yorkers, he offered theatergoers a novel way of paying admission. They could either pay the modest price of 35 cents to attend a performance or they could offer an equivalent in bartered goods—usually produce, meat, dairy, or other edible items that the cast would welcome as a supplement to their meager earnings. Hence the Barter Theatre was formed, with its opening performance on June 10, 1933.

The theater would quickly gain popularity locally, but also became known nationwide thanks to Porterfield's New York connections, outgoing and affable personality, and talent for innovative promotion. On a trip to Richmond in the 1930s, he lobbied legislators for state support. The results were not immediate but would eventually bear fruit after World War II. One ingenious initiative was to establish an annual Barter Theatre awards luncheon in New York in 1939. The event attracted widespread interest from the theater community and the press because the awards went to actors who had given the most memorable performance on the New York stage the previous season. That same year, the Barter was highlighted in a photo essay in *Life* magazine and a short article in *Time* magazine.

In addition to acting on stage, Porterfield played uncredited film roles in *They Won't Forget* (1937), *Ditch and Live* (1941), *The Yearling* (1946), and *Thunder Road* (1958). His only credited role was for playing Zeb Andrews, a soldier in *Sergeant York* (1941).⁴⁷

The Barter Theatre closed for four years beginning in 1942 when Robert Porterfield was drafted into the Air Force. Numerous Barter performers also served in the armed forces during World War II.⁴⁸ Porterfield was posted to California, where he used his theatrical talent to create military training films. While in California, Porterfield considered pursuing a career as a film actor. The Barter Theatre might have remained shut indefinitely but for the advice of his close friend, James Hilton, the English author of *Lost Horizon* and *Goodbye, Mr. Chips*. Hilton had a fondness for Abingdon and admired the Barter and the important contribution of repertory theater to the community. He advised Porterfield that managing his unique, remote little theater would be more fulfilling than film acting:

If you stay in Hollywood, you will most certainly be successful. You may become a star of sorts, perhaps even a big star, and you will surely become rich, but it's your little theater back in Virginia that really needs you. The people back there need you. And you know as well as I do that that's where your heart is and will always be.⁴⁹

Porterfield heeded the advice and James Hilton's words appear to have been prophetic. At a 25th anniversary celebration of the Barter in 1958, Porterfield expressed his satisfaction with continuing

⁴⁷ Internet Movie Database, "Robert Porterfield (1905-1971)," IMDb, 2025, <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0692351/>.

⁴⁸ Mark Dawidziak, *The Barter Theater Story: Love Made Visible* (Chapel Hill. Reissued. Originally published in 1982 by Appalachian Consortium Press: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 34.

⁴⁹ Robert McKinney, "The Brit Who Persuaded Robert Porterfield To Follow His Dream," *Bristol Herald Courier*, 2008, June 6 Edition, Update December 12, 2012 Edition.

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to direct the theater. “A lot has happened in 25 years—lots of happy things, and a lot of unhappy things; but, all in all, I’ve lived and, boy! have I had a good time.”⁵⁰

Accolades of the Barter under Porterfield’s direction since 1946 had included its designation as the State Theatre of Virginia, compliments from former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt in her newspaper column, and a Tony award for regional theater. Porterfield continued to be as resourceful in the 1950s as when he conjured up the idea of accepting barter in exchange for tickets in the financially desperate days of the early 1930s. In 1953, upon hearing of the closure of the Empire Theater, in New York City, he asked the owner, Lady Astor, for permission to salvage the ornate seating, fixtures, lighting, and curtains from the building. In the four days remaining before the demolition, Porterfield marshalled the help of Barter actors, various volunteers, and New York friends to complete the task. After transporting the haul to Abingdon in a parade of moving vans, the result was a much-needed upgrade to the old Opera House interior.⁵¹

On the next milestone anniversary in 1963, the theater caught the attention of President John F. Kennedy, who sent a complimentary note to Porterfield:

Thirty years is a long time in the life of a man and even in the life of an institution. Yet thirty years of productive existence are now marked by the Barter Theatre, and thirty years of effort and success by its founder and guiding spirit, Robert Porterfield. I send my sincere congratulations. I am confident the Barter Theatre in the years ahead will grow even further in stature and influence.⁵²

Porterfield remained active as the director of the theater until his passing in 1971. The theater he established in 1933 is a legacy that continues to thrive as a year-round repertory theater.

Porterfield has strong associations with three contributing buildings within the historic district. The most enduring and important association was with the theater (140-0037-0055) at 127 West Main Street. For most of the years when he served as the director of the Barter, this building was the venue, except for the period from 1935 to 1946. In 1949 he received title to the historic Cave House (140-0037-0031) at 279 East Main Street as a gift from Alice Brown Hilton, widow of English author James Hilton. Although he leased the building out to a craft shop, he began hosting after-theater parties and receptions there in 1953. He also had a strong association with the buildings that are now the Martha Washington Inn (140-0037-0052) at 150 West Main Street. Porterfield arranged for visiting actors to use it as a dormitory, as it stood vacant after the closure of Martha Washington College in 1932, while he established the Barter in 1932–1933. The buildings remained available until 1935 when the next owners opened the Martha Washington Inn.

Criterion B – Politics/Government: Francis Preston

The district is significant under Criterion B at the local level in the area of Politics/Government for its association with Francis Preston (1765–1835), a lawyer and saltworks owner who lived and worked for much of his life in Abingdon while serving terms in both houses of the Virginia

⁵⁰ Dawidziak, Mark. *The Barter Theater Story: Love Made Visible*, 80.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 77–78.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 80–81.

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legislature and in the United States House of Representatives, and as a colonel of Virginia Volunteers in the War of 1812. Both his law office (140-0037-0018) at 159 East Main Street and his third home in Abingdon (140-0037-0052) at 150 West Main Street survive as contributing resources in the Abingdon Historic District.

Born in 1765 at Greenfield Plantation (011-0026) in Botetourt County, Francis Preston moved to Montgomery County in 1774 and lived there until he left for college in the early 1780s. His father, William Preston, was southwest Virginia's most prominent military commander in the French and Indian War and during the American Revolution. By the time William Preston died in 1783, he was the wealthiest man in Montgomery County.⁵³

At William & Mary, Francis Preston studied under the nation's first law professor, George Wythe, who had taught towering figures of early American politics and law such as Thomas Jefferson, St. George Tucker, and John Marshall. After Preston graduated from William & Mary, he was accepted by the bar and returned to southwest Virginia to practice law. In 1787, he won election to the Virginia House of Delegates and represented Montgomery County for the following two years.⁵⁴

In 1793, Preston married 15-year-old Sarah Cambell, the daughter of Elizabeth Henry (Patrick Henry's sister) and Revolutionary War commander William Campbell, who led the Overmountain Men in the American victory at King's Mountain, and for whom Campbell County, Virginia, is named. As the heiress of her grandfather Charles Campbell, Elizabeth owned 330 acres and a small saltworks in Saltville. The newlywed couple lived briefly in a log house on the property.⁵⁵

In the same year as Francis Preston's marriage, he was elected to the United States House of Representatives but not without controversy. His opponent, Abram Trigg of Montgomery County, claimed election irregularities such as late poll closings in Lee County, Tennessee residents voting in this Virginia race, and most egregiously Francis's brother, William Preston, had marched troops around the Montgomery courthouse to suppress the Trigg vote. Francis Preston served for two consecutive terms, and his son William was born in the nation's capital, then in Philadelphia.⁵⁶ In his first term, Preston was part of the Anti-Administration Faction with Thomas Jefferson and James Madison in opposition to Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton's advocacy of a large, powerful federal government during the George Washington presidency. In Preston's second term,

⁵³ Michael J. Pulice and John R. Kern, "Greenfield/VDHR ID 011-0026 [Delisted] National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form" (Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Roanoke Regional Office; copy on file VDHR Archives, 2011).Section 8:6-7.

⁵⁴ Wolf Law Library at William & Mary, "George Wythe," Wythepedia, W&M Law Library, 2024, https://lawlibrary.wm.edu/wythepedia/index.php/George_Wythe; Wolf Law Library at William & Mary, "Francis Preston," Wythepedia, W&M Law Library, 2023, https://lawlibrary.wm.edu/wythepedia/index.php/Francis_Preston.

⁵⁵ Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff, "Preston House/VDHR ID 086-0006 [Delisted/Demolished] National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form" (copy on file DHR Archives, 1976); Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865*, 126.

⁵⁶ Roger A. Allison, *A Brief History of Saltville* (Saltville, Virginia: Saltville Centennial Committee, 1996), 5.

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he continued with the same faction, which by then had organized more formally as the Democratic-Republican Party.⁵⁷

In 1795, Preston replaced the log dwelling in Saltville with a more imposing frame house. After the second term in Congress, the Prestons returned to Saltville but also purchased Lots 3, 4, and 14 in Abingdon in 1797–1798. In 1810, they moved into a frame house on Lot 14 along Main Street across from the courthouse.⁵⁸ Only two years later, an arsonist set fire to the new brick house the Prestons were building on the same lot. This was the start of one of the worst town fires in Abingdon's history. The fire destroyed all the buildings on Lot 14, seventeen other houses, and several stores and outbuildings.⁵⁹

During the same year as the fire, Preston returned to the House of Delegates, this time representing Washington County in 1812 and 1813.⁶⁰ During these sessions of the General Assembly, the United States was at war with Great Britain and in 1813 the British had naval supremacy in the Chesapeake Bay and were raiding shoreside communities with impunity. After completing his term as delegate, Francis Preston served as colonel of the 70th regiment, one of two militia regiments from Washington County that operated in eastern Virginia. After the war, he received the honorary rank of brigadier general.⁶¹

Returning to Abingdon in 1815, Francis Preston built a frame house on Lot 3 (155 East Main Street) and moved there with his family in 1815. That year, he also built a simple log office (140-0037-0018) for his law practice next door on Lot 4 (159 East Main Street). Although late nineteenth century property owners replaced the Preston House with a new frame dwelling, the law office remains as the front portion of a building that was expanded with a side wing ca. 1915 and covered with asbestos siding.⁶²

Preston capped his political career by serving in the Virginia Senate from 1816 through 1820 and then returned to Abingdon. Overlapping his senate terms, Francis's brother, James Patton Preston, held the Virginia's governor office from December 1816 through 1819.⁶³

With some interruptions for political and military service, Francis Preston earned income from his law practice. He and his wife had both inherited substantial wealth and continued to prosper. The saltworks produced a substantial amount of income with the use of enslaved laborers held by the Prestons and managed by a succession of their sons.⁶⁴

⁵⁷ Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865*, 72.

⁵⁸ King, *Places in Time, Vol. 2: Abingdon, Meadowview & Glade Spring, Virginia*, 2.

⁵⁹ Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865*, 212–213.

⁶⁰ United States Congress, "PRESTON, Francis, 1765 – 1835."

⁶¹ Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865*, 232.

⁶² King, *Places in Time, Vol. 1: Abingdon, Virginia 1778-1880*, 10; King, *Places in Time, Vol. 2: Abingdon, Meadowview & Glade Spring, Virginia*, 2.

⁶³ United States Congress, "PRESTON, Francis, 1765 – 1835."

⁶⁴ Roger A. Allison, *A Brief History of Saltville* (Saltville, Virginia: Saltville Centennial Committee, 1996), 4–5.

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A clear sign of the wealth accumulated by the Prestons was the house they began to build in 1833 at 150 West Main Street (140-0037-0052). At the time, it was considered the most expensive house built in the Abingdon area.⁶⁵ The two-and-a-half-story, five-bay brick Federal-style building on a raised English basement featured canted-bay wings at either end, a three-bay front porch, and three dormers in the hipped roof. Although the previously accepted date of construction was 1832, evidence discovered by historian James Hagy points to construction beginning in 1833. Another primary source cited by Hagy indicates that the house may not have been completed until the Preston family occupied it in 1836, a year after Francis Preston died while visiting one of his sons in South Carolina.⁶⁶

Criterion C: Architecture

The Abingdon Historic District is significant under Criterion C for Architecture at the statewide level. A remarkably broad range of building types and styles are condensed in a relatively small area along a linear path that allows for a singular viewing experience for a pedestrian or motorist as the buildings are no more than four stories, almost all oriented towards Main Street and most with a minimal setback. Construction dates for contributing resources range from the late eighteenth century to the 1940s and reflect a corresponding diversity in styles and modes of construction. The variety of uses also contributes to the rich array of typologies and architectural expression.

Highlights include a vernacular log house, as well as expressions of styles that include Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, Neoclassical Revival, Romanesque Revival, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman. Despite the panoply of styles, the district is visually cohesive. Although some designers are yet unknown, the buildings represent the work of regionally significant architects including Charles Mitchell, Baumann Brothers, Smithy & Tardy, and Clarence Baker Kearfott.

A Virginia native, Charles G. Mitchell (1862-1940) had an architectural practice in Johnson City, Tennessee, and at one time was associated with prominent Chattanooga architect Reuben Hunt. A few Virginia buildings are credited to Mitchell in addition to the Barter Theatre and his work at Mary Washington College, although additional Tennessee examples probably also survive.

Baumann Brothers was a Knoxville, Tennessee, firm that consisted of Joseph F. Baumann (1844–1920), his brother Albert (1860–1920), and later Albert's son, Albert Jr. (1897–1952). The firm, described by some as a “dynasty,” designed more than fifty buildings in Knoxville, dominating the architectural landscape of that city and its environs. Among his Virginia commissions, J. F. Baumann designed the Wythe B. Graham House (098-5350) in Max Meadows, Wythe County, Virginia, in 1885. In Abingdon, a Baumann Brothers design figures prominently in the outer wings of Martha Washington College (now an inn and spa). Baumann's design of a new west wing (1912), followed by modification of an earlier east wing (1913), achieved the building's present nearly symmetrical appearance with classically inspired pedimented porticos.

⁶⁵ King, *Places in Time, Vol. 1: Abingdon, Virginia 1778-1880*, 34.

⁶⁶ Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865*, 150.

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Smithey & Tardy was an association of Louis Phillipe Smithey (1890–1966) and Matthews H. Tardy (1888–1967) that lasted from 1922 to 1927 in Roanoke, after which they continued to practice architecture and through different associations. Despite the brevity of their partnership, they worked on several significant buildings predominantly in Roanoke, Virginia, including Jefferson High School, Roanoke Country Club, the Colonial National Bank Building, and the American Theatre. They worked in association with New York architect Raymond Hood for the Shriners Kazim Temple. They also designed a few churches including Saint Paul's Reformed Church in Roanoke and Bedford Baptist Church in Bedford, Virginia. In Abingdon, their design for St. Thomas Episcopal Church (140-0037-0010, 1925) is a fine example of the Gothic Revival style, rendered in rough-faced stone with a crenellated entrance tower, buttresses with finished stone accents, and masonry openings with finished stone hoodmolds with label stops.

Clarence Baker Kearfott (1884–1977) was a native of Martinsville, Virginia, who established an architectural practice in Bristol, Virginia, in 1907. A prolific architect, he is well represented with a variety of buildings in Bristol, including Virginia High School (built in 1914, individually listed on the National Register) with a tall central, Classical Revival pedimented portico on a raised basement. He secured numerous academic designs, including buildings at Virginia Intermont College, Emory and Henry College, and secondary schools throughout the region. Kearfott's architectural legacy in Abingdon includes the 1923 First National Bank (140-0037-0022), with a Neoclassical Revival design as well as alterations to the 1869 courthouse (140-0037-0064) for which he received \$4,000 in 1917.⁶⁷ Kearfott is thought to have designed at least three other buildings in Abingdon outside of the boundary of the historic district.

Adam Hickman (1791–1862) was a local builder who constructed at least four buildings within the district, of which three survive and contribute to its significance. Hickman's business ventures also included a tannery, harness shop/saddlery, and a gristmill. He also served on Abingdon's town council. In 1854, he built a house (140-0037-0052, individually listed in 2002) at 247 East Main Street on speculation and sold it to Dr. William H. Pitts. The two-story, five-bay Greek Revival masonry building is the town's only example rendered in stucco. Three years later Hickman applied the Carpenter Gothic style to heavy timber frame construction in building the Cave House (140-0037-0031, 279 East Main Street). Located immediately east of the Pitts House, this two-and-a-half-story, three-bay dwelling was built for Hickman's widowed daughter, Anna Eliza Campbell. The Cave House property also contains another example of Hickman's work, a ca. 1856 two-story brick vernacular dwelling located behind the Cave House. To construct this building, Hickman may have used brick and other material recycled from a house and storage building that stood on the lot in the 1830s. In the eastern corner of the same lot, close to Main Street, a small church for the town's Swedenborgian congregation stood from 1857 to 1910. It is not clear whether

⁶⁷ John E. Wells and Robert E. Dalton, *The Virginia Architects 1835-1955: A Biographical Dictionary* (Richmond: New South Architectural Press, 1997), 234-235; King, *Places in Time, Vol. 2: Abingdon, Meadowview & Glade Spring, Virginia*, 12–13.

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Hickman built the church himself or simply allowed the church to build on a small footprint within his property.⁶⁸

Developmental History

The earliest written accounts of the Abingdon area date to the mid-eighteenth century, when English traders sought an alternative route into Cherokee territory in what is now Tennessee and North Carolina. Previously, traders from Virginia had traveled south to the Roanoke River and along the Yadkin River in North Carolina. Circa 1740 an English trader named Vaughan was the first to follow the ancient Native American trail southwest through the Valley of Virginia into Cherokee lands. During the 1740s, traders/hunters Samuel Stalnaker, Stephen Holstein (Holston), James McCall, and John Davis built cabins and established a permanent foothold within the Holston River system in southwest Virginia. By 1748, Virginians began claiming ownership of the local area under the system of land grants issued by the crown through the governor of Virginia. In 1748, the Loyal Land Company received the area's initial land grant of 800,000 acres. The vast tract, extending into modern Kentucky and West Virginia, became known as the Walker Grant, named after the company's land agent, Thomas Walker. Other speculative investors in the company included Peter Jefferson (Thomas Jefferson's father), Joshua Fry, and the Rev. James Maury—all among or connected to the upper political, social, and economic class in Virginia.⁶⁹ By 1754, some two hundred families had purchased lands and settled within the Walker Grant.⁷⁰

Over the course of the 1750s to 1770s, major improvements were made to the Indian Trail, and it became known as the Great Road. Whereas it had originally been a trail for travel on foot or on horseback, military needs during the French and Indian War required a road that could serve wagons traveling to establish and supply forts in Tennessee.⁷¹

To ensure peace with western Indian tribes and end the French and Indian War, the Crown established a Proclamation Line in 1763 that forbade settlement west of the crest of the Appalachian Highlands, thus prohibiting settlement in much of the Walker Grant and much of present Washington County. The situation changed by the end of the decade, however, with the signing of the Treaty of Lochaber in South Carolina in 1770. The terms agreed between the Cherokee and the English included extension of the westward limits of settlement beyond present Washington County but keeping Kentucky closed to settlement.⁷²

⁶⁸ King, *Places in Time, Vol. 1: Abingdon, Virginia 1778-1880*, 2–4; King, *Places in Time, Vol. 2: Abingdon, Meadowview & Glade Spring, Virginia*, 8; Ashley L. Robbins and Susan G. Deihl, ““Dr. William H. Pitts House/VDHR 140-0022 [140-0037-0062]” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form” (Galax, Va: Kapp & Robbins Architects, 2002; copy on file DHR Archives, 2006); V-CRIS record for 140 0037 0031).

⁶⁹ Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865*, 21–24.

⁷⁰ Archibald Henderson, *Dr. Thomas Walker and the Loyal Company of Virginia* (Worcester, Massachusetts: American Antiquarian Society, 1931), 93.

⁷¹ Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865*, .

⁷² Jay Donis, “Imagining and Reimagining Kentucky: Turning Frontier and Borderland Concepts into a Frontier-Borderland,” *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 114, no. 3/4 (2016): 466.

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By 1772, the population of settlements along the Clinch and Holston Rivers in southwestern Virginia led to the creation of Fincastle County, carved out of Botetourt County—a vast territory that until then had encompassed the far southwestern portion of what is now Virginia, the southwestern part of West Virginia, and all of Kentucky. The governor designated the Lead Mines (now Austinville in Wythe County, Virginia) as the center of Fincastle County’s government.⁷³

Despite the establishment of the Lochaber Line, William Russell and Daniel Boone chose to lead three groups of settlers from Castle’s Woods in modern Russell County, Virginia, across the line to take hold of land farther inside Kentucky. The expedition quickly ended in disaster in the far southwest tip of present Virginia (now Lee County) near Wallen’s Creek.⁷⁴ A group of Shawnees and Cherokees attacked the group headed by James Boone and Henry Russell, the sons of the expedition leaders. Both men suffered a debilitating gunshot in the hip and then were slowly tortured to death with multiple stab wounds. Three other white settlers and an enslaved man also were killed. The brutality of the killings prompted local settlers to build frontier forts where they could take refuge from Indian attacks. In addition, the Virginia government undertook a series of harsh retaliatory raids known as Dunmore’s War, named after John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore, the last colonial governor of Virginia. Retribution included the massacre of the entire family of Chief John Logan of the Mingo. In turn, Logan led a series of attacks on English settlements. The war came to an end when eight hundred Virginia militia defeated a thousand Shawnee and Mingo warriors at the Battle of Point Pleasant in present West Virginia on October 10, 1774.⁷⁵

In May 1774, after the House of Burgesses in Williamsburg expressed solidarity with the Massachusetts colonists’ grievances against Parliament, Governor Dunmore disbanded Virginia’s legislative body. Reconvening in a tavern, the representatives formed an alternative government and forced the royal governor to flee Williamsburg.⁷⁶ Like other jurisdictions, Fincastle County formed its own Committee of Safety in January 1775 and in the Fincastle Declaration vowed “never to surrender their privileges to any power on earth except at the expense of their lives”. The local area remained beyond the reaches of direct combat, although many southwest Virginia residents joined the Patriot forces.⁷⁷ Late in the war, on September 22, 1780, William Campbell assembled 400 militia men from Washington County at Craig’s Meadow, now known as the Mustering Ground, just over a mile southwest of the Abingdon Historic District. From there, they marched 330 miles to take part in the October 7 victory over Loyalist forces at the Battle of King’s Mountain in South Carolina.⁷⁸ Campbell, who had moved to the Abingdon area in 1768, was in command of additional militia from Tennessee, with the combined force of 900 known as the

⁷³ Michael F. Doran, *Atlas of County Boundary Changes in Virginia, 1634-1895* (Athens, Georgia: Iberian Publishing Company, 1987), 28,

⁷⁴ Lawrence J. Fleenor Jr., “The Location of the Massacre of James Boone and Henry Russell” (Daniel Boone Wilderness Trail Association, 2006), <https://danielboonetraill.com/history-perspectives/the-location-of-the-massacre-of-james-boone-and-henry-russell/>.

⁷⁵ James William Hagy, “Castle’s Woods: Frontier Virginia Settlement, 1769-1799” (Master’s thesis, Johnson City, East Tennessee State University, 1966), 50–54.

⁷⁶ Matthew Gottlieb, “House of Burgesses,” in *Encyclopedia Virginia*, 2020, <https://encyclopediaofvirginia.org/entries/house-of-burgesses>.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865*, 38.

⁷⁸ Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865*, 50.

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Overmountain Men. King's Mountain was one of the key American victories in the Southern Campaign.⁷⁹

Despite the onset of the Revolution, the peace with the Indians from the Treaty of Lochaber led to accelerated settlement in southwest Virginia. Conflict with nearby Cherokee groups resumed, however, in the summer of 1776. When the Overhill Cherokees made plans to attack frontier settlements, the local militia fought against a war party at the Battle of Long Island Flats on July 20, 1776, about 40 miles southwest of Abingdon in what is now Kingsport, Tennessee. The militia only suffered four lightly wounded, but four of the Cherokees were killed. Despite the Indians' withdrawal from the battlefield, settlers feared further conflict and fled the Tennessee settlements along the Great Road into Virginia. Approximately five hundred of those fleeing stopped at the farm of Joseph Black in what is now Abingdon and built a wooden stockade they called Black's Fort. The fortification may have stood on the grounds of the Martha Washington Inn (140-0037-0052), at the southwest end of the historic district.⁸⁰

A harsh retaliatory expedition by two battalions of militia included establishing Fort Henry in the Johnson City area and destroying Cherokee towns. By July 1, 1777, the Overhill Cherokees ceded all claims to land east of the Blue Ridge and to the routes that brought settlers into Kentucky. This ended any danger of Cherokee raids on settlements in the Abingdon area and the increased flow of settlers heading southwest along the Great Road.⁸¹

By 1776, the county of Fincastle had sufficient settlement to require its division into Washington, Montgomery, and Kentucky Counties (the latter became a district in 1780 and a state in 1792). As originally created by an Act of the General Assembly, Washington County included most of Southwest Virginia. It eventually achieved its current size of 566 square miles after seven counties and parts of three others had been created from its original extent.⁸² In January 1777, the first session of the Washington County court took place at Black's Fort, which remained a defensive refuge until William Campbell had devastated the Cherokees' villages and imposed another treaty in July 1781.⁸³

Formation of the town of Abingdon soon followed. On April 29, 1777, the county court appointed seven trustees to lay out streets and town lots on 120 acres of land donated by Thomas Walker, Samuel Briggs, and Joseph Black.⁸⁴ The historic district is at the core of this initial grid. In 1778, the General Assembly passed an act to establish a town called Abingdon around the county courthouse. The following year, the county court called for construction of a purpose-built log

⁷⁹ Paul David Nelson and Dictionary of Virginia Biography, "William Campbell (September 1, 1745–August 22, 1781). (2024, October 16)," in *Encyclopedia Virginia*, 2024, <https://encyclopediaofvirginia.org/entries/william-campbell-september-1-1745-august-22-1781>.

⁸⁰ Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865*, 38–40.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁸² Michael F. Doran, *Atlas of County Boundary Changes in Virginia, 1634-1895* (Athens, Georgia: Iberian Publishing Company, 1987), 28–31, 36–37, 40–41, 44–45; Arthur P. Wilmer, ed., *Abingdon, Virginia: A Sketch of Its History and Attractions* (Lynchburg, Virginia: J. P. Bell Company, Printers, 1889), 1.

⁸³ Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865*, 53–54.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 79.

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courthouse on the lot at 225 East Main Street, where the Abingdon Bank (140-0037-0053) now stands, two lots to the east of the current courthouse.

The town's trustees sold lots on the condition that buyers would erect a dwelling measuring a minimum 16 by 20 feet within five years. The location was attractive, at the intersection of the Great Road and a trail leading north through Little Moccasin Gap to the Great Wilderness Road, which extended through the Cumberland Gap to the Kentucky frontier. Due to the disruption of the Revolutionary war, however, the General Assembly allowed lot buyers a further grace period of five years beginning in 1792 if they had not yet built the minimum required dwelling on the property.

Although the deadline for building was extended in 1792 due to lower than expected development, the town included several buildings by then besides the log courthouse. By 1782, as one resident later recalled, buildings included the 20-foot-square log courthouse, a log jail, and three taverns. The following year one of the taverns was sold for use as a dwelling, and one of its rooms housed the town's first store, run by two Irish merchants. Another tavern was built across from the courthouse. Three years later there were two hotels along the south side of Main Street near the courthouse and five houses nearby. As an indication of the town's size in 1798, twenty property owners voted in an election for the seat of a trustee who had resigned.⁸⁵ With family members, servants, and enslaved workers added to the twenty property owners, the town may have had a population of a hundred or more.

Three buildings within the district survive from this earliest period. An essential resource for a court town and for travelers headed to the frontier was the tavern (140-0037-0054) at 222 East Main Street, which dates to 1779 or possibly as late as 1788. The James K. Gibson House (140-0037-0056) at 281 East Main Street originally consisted of two houses, built in 1790 and 1791, respectively (later joined as one building in 1798). The original western part of the Andrew Russell House (140-0037-0063) at 165–169 East Main Street dates to 1792.⁸⁶

Until 1803, the trustees appointed to sell lots were the only form of town government, but they had no other official duties. An act in 1803 called for the county sheriff to hold elections for eight trustees every two years. The trustees would appoint a town clerk to collect taxes. By 1808, a by-law called for the trustees to choose a president among themselves annually to lead their meetings.⁸⁷

The year 1803 also marked the establishment of a school for boys called the Abingdon Male Academy. For the first seventeen years, students attended classes in a Masonic Hall along what is now Park Street, just outside the district. Thanks to a bequest in 1808 from wealthy merchant and saltworks owner William King, a brick school building was erected in 1820 on a lot just west of the district that would in 1913 become the site of the public high school, now the William King Museum of Art (140-5034). This was the first among several institutions that made the small town stand out for offering excellent educational opportunities to male and female students. Institutions

⁸⁵ Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia, 1746-1786, Washington County, 1777-1870*, 627–632.

⁸⁶ King, *Places in Time, Vol. 1: Abingdon, Virginia 1778-1880*, 1, 9, 25–26.

⁸⁷ Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865*, 79–82.

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for female education would not open for another two decades, but collections of private papers document the presence of private tutors for girls whose families who could afford them.⁸⁸

Between 1800 and 1810, the county erected a brick courthouse at the corner of Main and Court Streets on the lot where the current courthouse stands.⁸⁹ By 1806, the town had grown to the point that it could support its first newspaper, *The Holston Intelligencer and Abingdon Advertiser*.⁹⁰

On September 10, 1812, a town fire started at the construction site of a new brick house being built for Francis Preston and spread quickly to destroy seventeen houses, outbuildings, a store, and a saddle shop. The fire was no accident but instead the work of an arsonist. In addition to setting fire to the Preston property, Abingdon's *Political Prospect* reported that the same "fiend of hell" had started a fire in the new courthouse. Destruction of the building was narrowly averted when a man named Joe, enslaved by William Trigg, rushed inside and dragged out a stack of burning material.⁹¹

The trustee form of government lasted until 1834, when the legislature responded to a petition to incorporate Abingdon. With this act, passed on March 11, 1834, an elected mayor and town council would henceforth govern the town. Appointed town staff included a clerk, a treasurer, town sergeant, surveyor, and superintendent of streets.⁹²

According to Joseph Martin's description of Abingdon in his 1835 *Gazetteer*, the town had a population of approximately 1,000. There were about 150 to 200 houses, "many of them handsome brick buildings." The town included two Presbyterian and two Methodist churches, all built of brick. There was also a Swedenborgian congregation that occasionally would meet in one of the Methodist churches. The town boasted an academy for male students [Abingdon Male Academy, established in 1803] and another for female students [this was an unincorporated school]. With a large amount of traffic along the Great Road, an important part of the town's economy consisted of services for travelers, including two hotels, three taverns "principally used for the accommodation of wagoners." The town also included artisans' shops, small manufacturing concerns, and "mercantile houses."⁹³ Two years earlier the town had macadamized Main Street and built brick sidewalks with stone curbs.⁹⁴ An engraving from the period captures a view of the substantial built landscape within a relatively small area mostly contained within roughly one block north and one block south of Main Street (Figure 9).⁹⁵

Major developments occurred in Abingdon in the 1850s. The county replaced the brick courthouse with a larger one on the same site in 1850. This building rested on a stone foundation and had a

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 128, 132–133.

⁸⁹ King, *Places in Time, Vol. 1: Abingdon, Virginia 1778-1880*, 7.

⁹⁰ Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia, 1746-1786, Washington County, 1777-1870*, 684.

⁹¹ Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865*, 208, 212–213; *History of Southwest Virginia, 1746-1786, Washington County, 1777-1870*, 635.

⁹² Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865*, 82.

⁹³ Joseph Martin, *A New and Comprehensive Gazetteer of Virginia, and the District of Columbia* (Joseph Martin, 1835), .

⁹⁴ Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia, 1746-1786, Washington County, 1777-1870*, 638.

⁹⁵ Howe Historical Collections in Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865*, 82.

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tin roof.⁹⁶ In 1856, the courthouse for the Western Virginia U.S. District Court was built in Abingdon. This added to the town's status as a regional judicial center and contributed to residential and commercial growth in service of lawyers, court staff, and individuals attending court sessions. The Virginia and Tennessee Railroad extended from Lynchburg through Abingdon by 1856. Two years earlier, the town council had passed an ordinance allowing the railroad to pass over the town's streets. Property owner Thomas L. Preston donated three acres to the railroad company for the train depot (located 1,600 feet southeast of the southeast end of the district).⁹⁷

A third town fire in the early hours of March 31, 1856, started in Henry Simon's coach factory and eventually destroyed all the buildings on his property, including his house. The fire spread to a neighboring house. Although firefighters destroyed another adjacent house as a firebreak, high winds spread the fire to several other houses on Main Street as well as a small schoolhouse at 115 East Main Street. Total costs of property damage amounted to \$40,000.⁹⁸

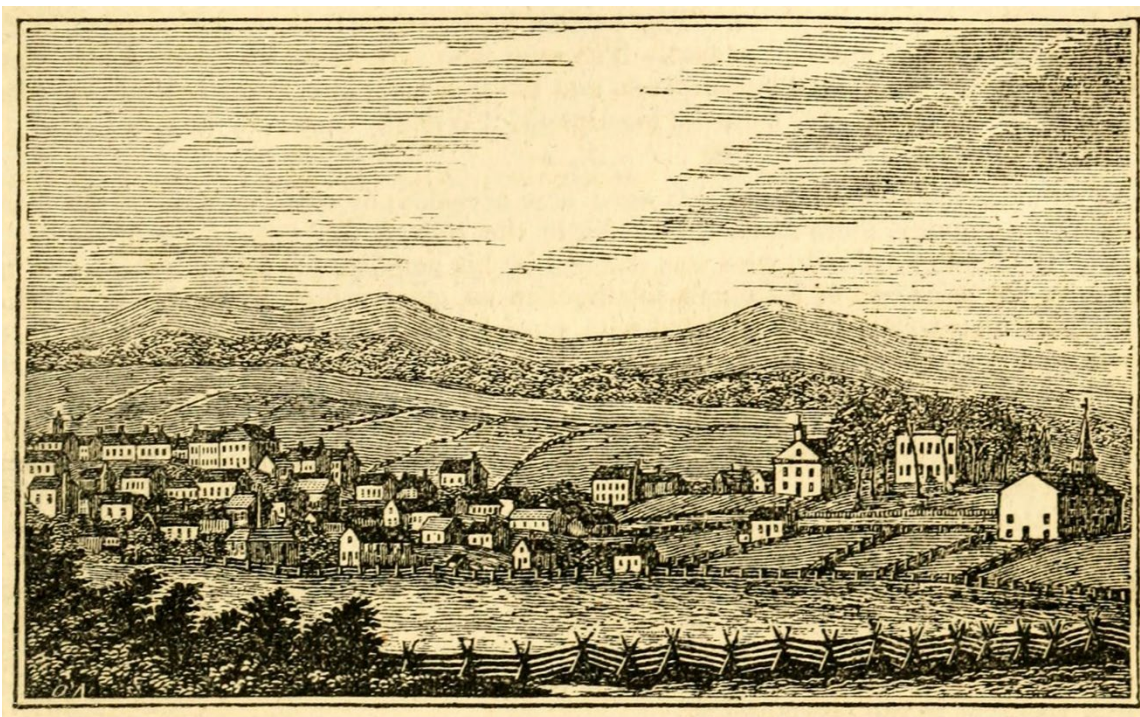


Figure 9. Engraving of Abingdon in 1835.

Although enslaved people composed a smaller portion of the population in southwestern Virginia than other parts of the Commonwealth, Washington County was “the largest slave holding community in Western Virginia.” Some residents with artisan or small manufacturing business

⁹⁶ King, *Places in Time, Vol. 1: Abingdon, Virginia 1778-1880*, 7.

⁹⁷ Lewis Preston Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia, 1746-1786, Washington County, 1777-1870*. (J. L. Hill printing company, 1903), 653.

⁹⁸ Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865*, 213; King, *Places in Time, Vol. 1: Abingdon, Virginia 1778-1880*, 13.

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had a substantial number of enslaved workers. Adam Hickman, for example, held 17 people in bondage in 1840, and 26 in 1860.⁹⁹

Establishment of a women's institution of higher education in 1858 emphasizes the prosperity of Abingdon in the mid-nineteenth century and its appeal as a suitably run town where parents would feel comfortable sending their daughters. In 1838, the Methodist Church had established Emory and Henry as a college for men in the Washington County countryside, with additional support from local county governments.¹⁰⁰ In 1858, the Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church purchased the mansion that the Preston family had completed in 1836. In the fall of 1860, Marth Washington College opened its door for classes. The college was successful and expanded its campus with additions to the original mansion and other buildings on the large lot at the southwest end of the historic district. The college remained a separate institution until it merged with Emory and Henry in 1919. Female students remained on the campus in Abingdon, however, until the women's college finally closed in 1932.¹⁰¹

In the spring of 1861, amid sectional strife over slavery and states' rights, residents of Abingdon and surrounding Washington County favored remaining in the Union. When the Secession Convention in Richmond came to a vote on April 17, however, county representative John Arthur Campbell reflected changing sentiment and sided with the majority to choose secession.¹⁰² During the Civil War, Abingdon was an important asset with its depot along the Virginia and Tennessee and as a hub where important land routes intersected. Confederate officers stayed in the town's hotels. Two years into the war, one Kentucky officer described a general malaise tinged with his own personal cynicism about years of wartime hardship. "Things look (as usual) gloomy enough about Abingdon."¹⁰³

Direct, destructive effects of the war on Abingdon occurred in December 1864. Major General George Stoneman, commander of the Department of the Ohio, led 5,700 Union cavalry and mounted infantry from Knoxville on a raid across western North Carolina and into southwest Virginia. His objective was to destroy mineral and transportation assets that were crucial to the Confederate war effort, including the saltworks at Saltville and lead mines in Wythe County. Before reaching these objectives, he focused on making the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad unusable by destroying stations and support buildings. Arriving in Abingdon on December 15, Stoneman's pickets marched eastward along Main Street and quickly scattered elements of a Confederate brigade. Stoneman directed his men to burn a handful of specific resources used by the Confederate military—the railroad depot, Hurt's Store (used as a commissary), Simon & Company's carriage factory (issuing department of the Confederate quartermaster), and Musser & Company's carriage factory (used as the quartermaster's storehouse), the county jail, and a barracks building across from the jail. Most of these buildings were just outside the historic district.

⁹⁹ Shaffer, *Washington County, Virginia in the Civil War*, 75.

¹⁰⁰ Hagy, *History of Washington County, Virginia to 1865*, 141–144.

¹⁰¹ King, *Places in Time, Vol. 1: Abingdon, Virginia 1778-1880*, 34.

¹⁰² Michael K. Shaffer, *Washington County, Virginia in the Civil War* (The History Press, 2012).14-21

¹⁰³ Edward O. Guerrant, *Bluegrass Confederate: The Headquarters Diary of Edward O. Guerrant*, ed. William C. Davis and Meredith Swentor (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1999), 384

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The rest of the town's buildings were left unscathed as Stoneman's force moved on toward the saltworks and lead mines.¹⁰⁴

Ironically, a rogue Union officer acting on his own in the rear guard caused far more extensive damage to civilian and local government properties within the boundary of the historic district. Captain James Tites Wyatt was a former Abingdon resident who had joined the 13th Tennessee Volunteer Cavalry. He bore a grudge against Noble McGinnis, a member of the county court whom he considered to have punished him unfairly before the war. In retribution, Wyatt first destroyed the county courthouse by climbing into its cupola and setting it alight. He then rode his horse westward torching other buildings. Once the fire spread, it destroyed all the buildings on both sides of Main Street between Court Street and Brewer's Alley. Before Wyatt could rejoin Stoneman's force, a company of Confederate soldiers shot and killed him near the corner of Main and Court Streets.¹⁰⁵

Following the war, despite economic hardships and the challenges of economic recovery, Abingdon acquired two new schools for young women up through high school age. In 1867, the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Wheeling West Virginia answered an appeal from Robert E. Lee to establish a school for girls whose families had been devastated financially by the Civil War. An order of nuns opened the Villa Maria Academy just east of the district. The following year, the Stonewall Jackson Institute opened as a private girls' school in another Preston family mansion immediately east of Martha Washington College.

As Abingdon and the rest of Virginia recovered from the war over the following decades, the town expanded largely through new construction outside the district in the adjacent extension district. In the old core, little changed except for destruction due to fire or by changes in commercial building uses. A detailed map of Abingdon in 1880 shows the last industrial land use within the district—the tannery of J. G. Kreger at the south corner of the Main Street/Tanner Street intersection (Figure 10).¹⁰⁶ Otherwise, development consisted mostly of residential and commercial buildings, along with churches, two campuses of educational institutions, and some government buildings such as the courthouse and town hall. Professionals such as doctors and especially lawyers occupied several of the buildings as offices and service businesses such as an undertaker and a printing shop were also located within the district. The tannery appeared again on an 1885 insurance map showing the eastern two-thirds of the district, but by 1891 the remaining buildings on the tannery lot were used for storage and other purposes (Figures 11 and 12). With the arrival of the railroad in the late 1850s, industries and warehouses had shifted to the south of the district near the tracks.

¹⁰⁴ Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia, 1746-1786, Washington County, 1777-1870*, 541.

¹⁰⁵ Lewis Preston Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia, 1746-1786, Washington County, 1777-1870*. (Richmond, Va: J. L. Hill printing company, 1903), 541–542; Michael K. Shaffer, *Washington County, Virginia in the Civil War* (Charleston, South Carolina: The History Press, 2012), 81–82.

¹⁰⁶ O. W. Gray & Son, *Gray's New Map of Abingdon, Washington County, Virginia*, Philadelphia, 1880.

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Figure 13. Birdseye view of Abingdon in 1915.

A comparison of insurance maps from 1891, 1897, 1902, and 1928 shows development stability, with most of the same buildings shown on all four maps (see Figure 12). A photograph taken above the town in 1915 shows the compact town surrounded by countryside and mountains. A major exception to the stability of the built landscape was the loss within the district that occurred due to a fire in 1914. The Stonewall Jackson College (established in 1868 as the Jackson Female Institute on the lot east of Martha Washington College) was destroyed by fire. A photograph taken for an advertisement the previous year shows the main school building, adapted from another Preston family mansion, and a small former Methodist Church building (Figure 13). The girls' school moved from that campus to a property north of the district, where new buildings were erected from 1916 to 1921. The old Methodist Church on the school's property survived the fire and after 1961 would serve as a second venue for the Barter Theatre. Between 1914 and 1932, adjacent Martha Washington College took advantage of the proximity of the large indoor space to use the old church as a gymnasium.

One imposing new building was the First National Bank (140-0037-0022), built of stone in the Neoclassical Revival style at 174 East Main Street in 1923 (see Figure 5, above). After the bank's failure in 1938, Washington County used the building as office space. A sign of a new age in personal rapid transportation in the 1920s was the presence of a filling station and an automobile repair shop at the far east end of the district across from the old tannery on the 1928 insurance map. That lot (283 East Main Street) is currently occupied by a restaurant built in 2008.

Martha Washington College finally closed its doors due to the financial pressures of the Great Depression in 1932. Robert Porterfield took advantage of the unused buildings to house visiting actors across the street from the Barter Theatre, which started performing on June 10, 1933. Three years later, however, the Methodist Church leased the old college buildings to George Barnhill, who transformed the property into a hotel.¹⁰⁷ The Martha Washington Inn continues to operate as a luxury hotel with a spa.

The Barter Theatre has been a major attraction in Abingdon for 92 years, except for a brief hiatus from 1942 to 1942 due to World War II. Except for a period from 1935 to 1946 when a motion picture chain leased the auditorium, the theater has occupied that venue for most of its history. building that began as a church.

¹⁰⁷ King, *Places in Time, Vol. 1: Abingdon, Virginia 1778-1880*, 34.

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Other than expansions to some buildings like the Barter and Barter's Smith Theatre, little has changed since the 1930s, with only a half dozen primary resources postdating that decade within the district.

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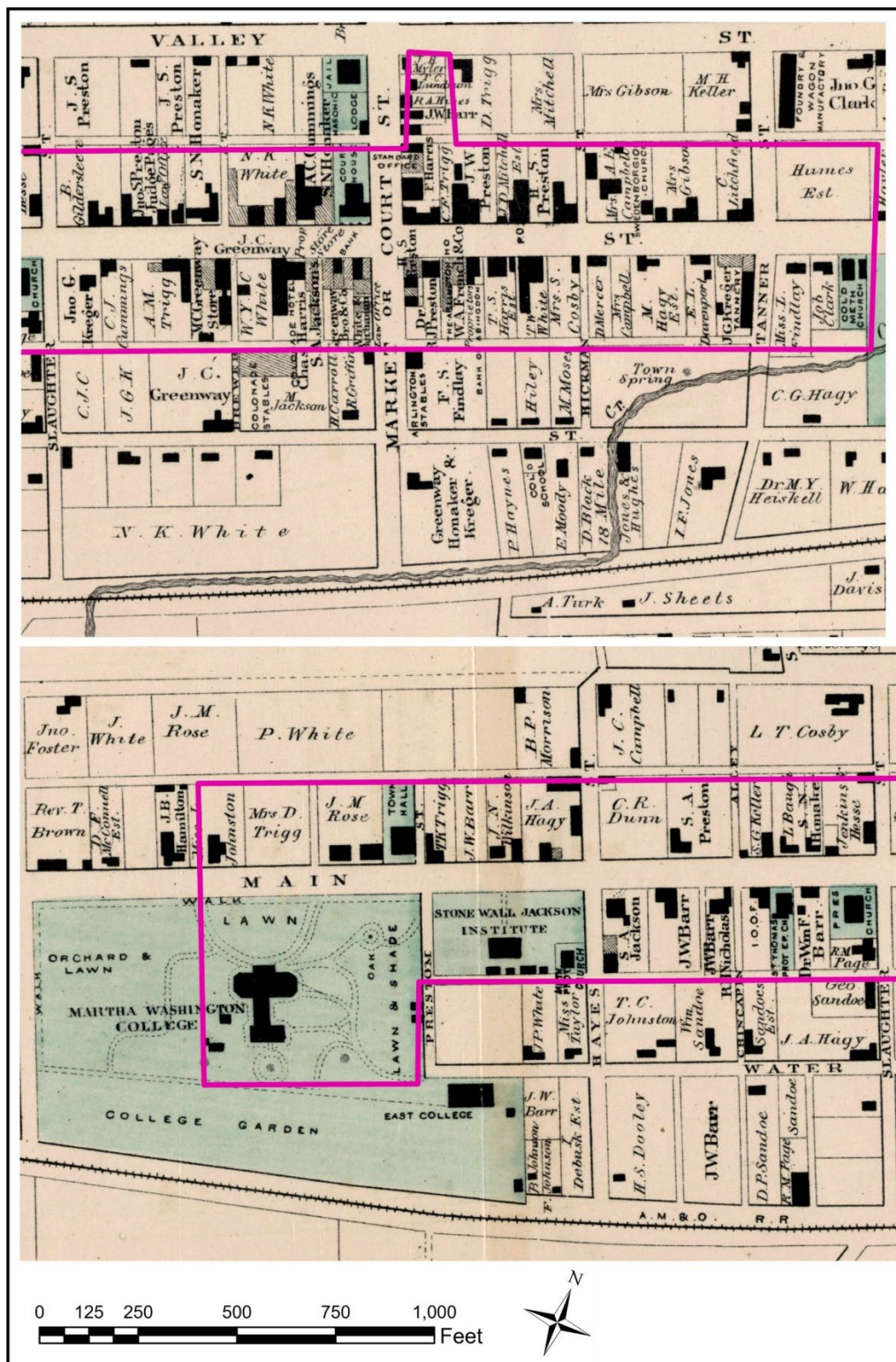


Figure 10. Portion of a map of Abingdon showing the area within the historic district in 1880 (top - east half; bottom - west half).

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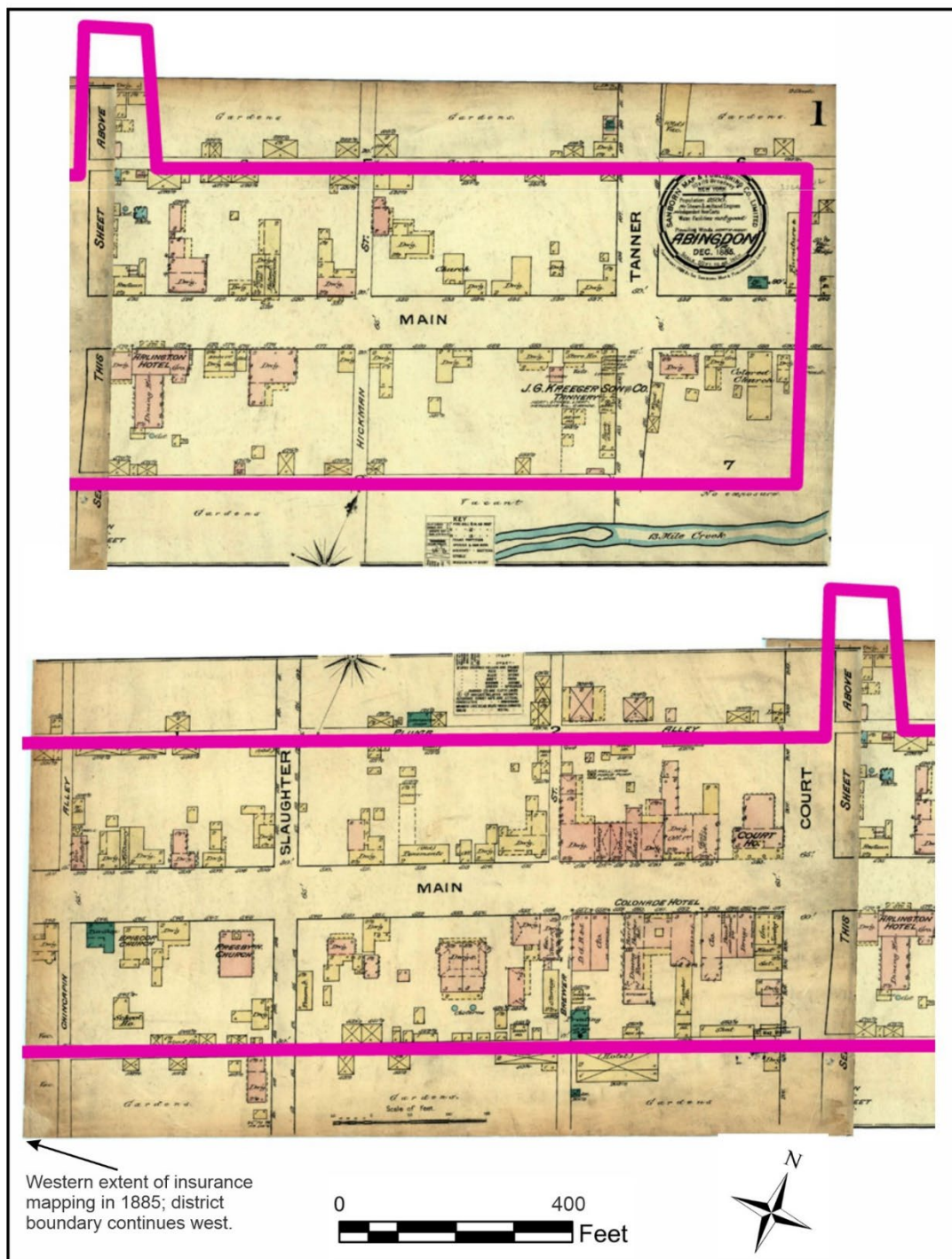


Figure 11. Insurance map showing buildings within the eastern two-thirds of historic district in 1885.

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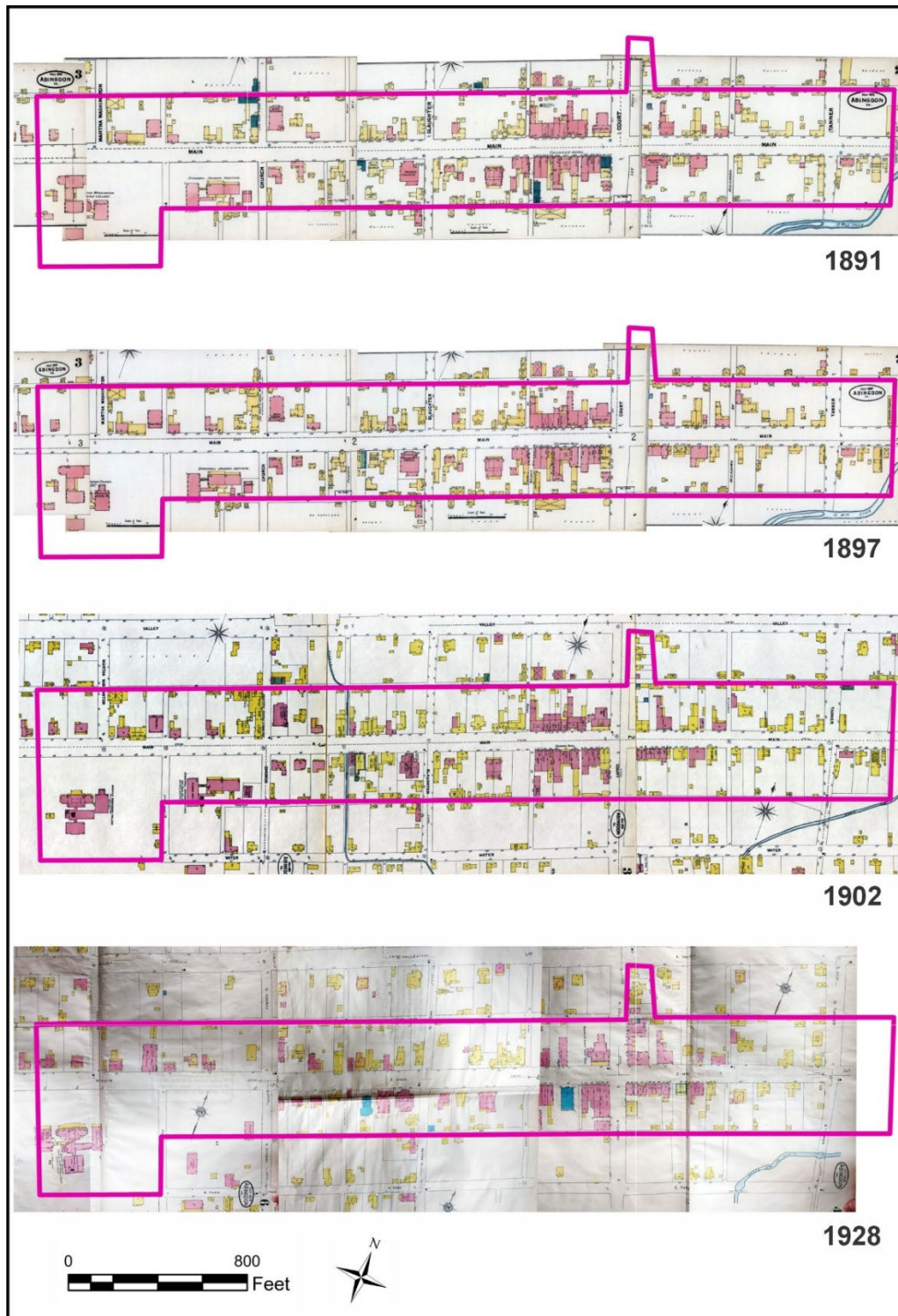


Figure 12. Comparison of insurance maps showing generally unchanged development from the late nineteenth through early twentieth century.

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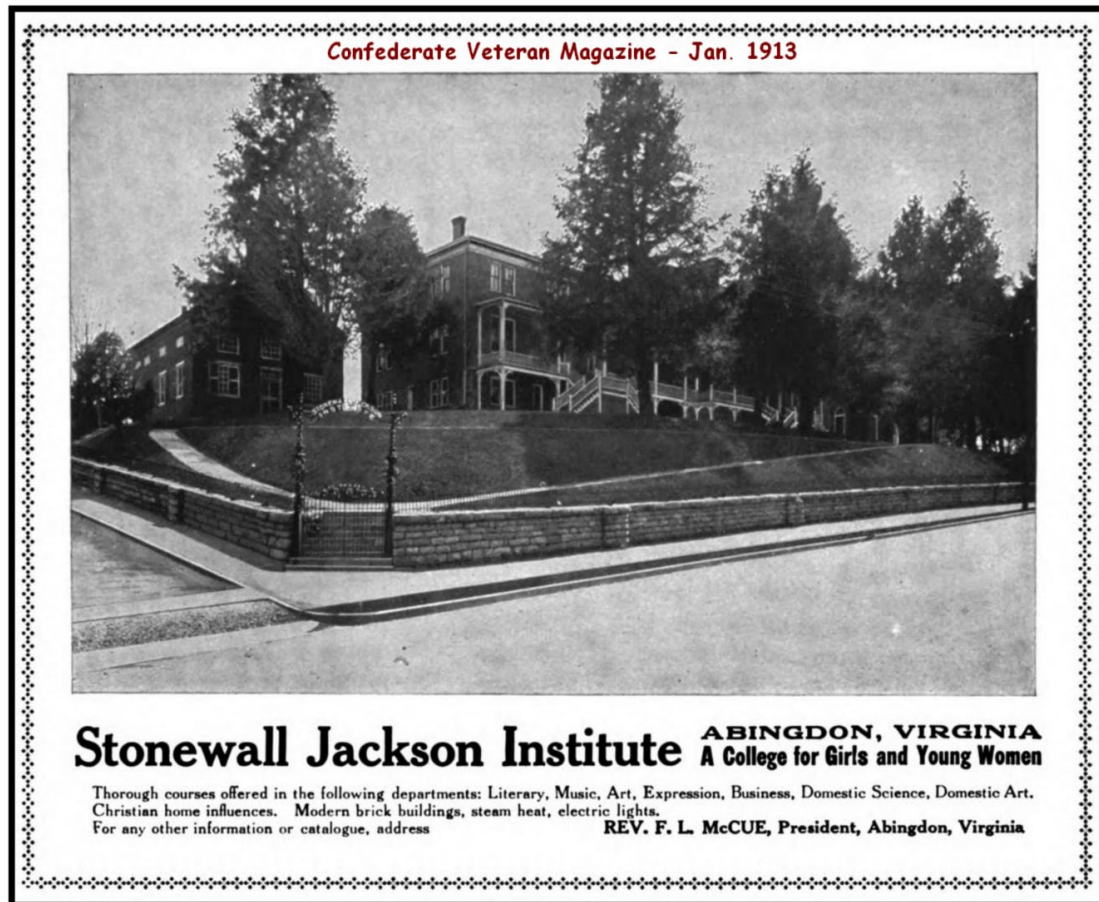


Figure 13. Advertisement for the Stonewall Jackson Institute for grades through high school a year before all of the buildings on the property burned down except for the former Methodist Church (left), now used as a second performance venue by the Barter Theatre.

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Wolf Law Library at William & Mary. "George Wythe." Wythepedia, W&M Law Library, 2024. https://lawlibrary.wm.edu/wythepedia/index.php/George_Wythe.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☒ previously listed in the National Register (NRHP Ref. No. 70000831)
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 140-0037

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 31.25 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Abingdon Historic District (Additional Documentation)

Name of Property

Washington County, VA

County and State

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 36.710660 | Longitude: -81.976543 |
| 2. Latitude: 36.712886 | Longitude: -81.969863 |
| 3. Latitude: 36.713358 | Longitude: -81.970095 |
| 4. Latitude: 36.713443 | Longitude: -81.969831 |
| 5. Latitude: 36.712983 | Longitude: -81.969593 |
| 6. Latitude: 36.713872 | Longitude: -81.966845 |
| 7. Latitude: 36.712803 | Longitude: -81.966358 |
| 8. Latitude: 36.710094 | Longitude: -81.974625 |
| 9. Latitude: 36.709571 | Longitude: -81.974352 |
| 10. Latitude: 36.709121 | Longitude: -81.975923 |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The true and correct boundary of the district is depicted on the attached Location Map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the district remain the same as originally listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1970, encompassing the significant concentration of nineteenth-century domestic and commercial buildings along Abingdon's Main Street.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: David Lewes, Historian; Mary Ruffin Hanbury, Architectural Historian

organizations: William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research;

Hanbury Preservation Consulting;

street & number: _____

city or town: Raleigh state: NC zip code: _____

e-mail: dwlewe@wm.edu; maryruffin@hanburypreservation.com

telephone: (757) 221-2579; (919) 828-1905

date: July 16, 2024

Abingdon Historic District (Additional Documentation)
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Washington County, VA
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photo Log

Name of Property: Abingdon Historic District

City or Vicinity: Abingdon

County: Washington State: VA

Date: February-March 2025

Photographer: Mary Ruffin Hanbury

- 1 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0001.jpg
View: South side of the 200 block of East Main Street between Court Street and Whites Alley, looking east.
- 2 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0002.jpg
View: South side of the 200 block of East Main Street between Court Street and Whites Alley, looking west.
- 3 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0003.jpg
View: Abingdon Bank, looking north.
- 4 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0004.jpg
View: Washington County Courthouse, looking northwest.
- 5 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0005.jpg
View: East side of the 100 block of North Court Street between Main Street and Plumb Alley, looking northeast.
- 6 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0006.jpg
View: South side the 100 block of East Main Street between Court Street and Brewers Alley, looking southeast.

Abingdon Historic District (Additional Documentation)
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- 7 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0007.jpg
View: South side of the 100 block of East Main Street between Court Street and
Brewers Alley, looking southeast.
- 8 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0008.jpg
View: South side of the 100 block of East Main Street between Court Street and
Brewers Alley, looking southeast.
- 9 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0009.jpg
View: Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church, looking south.
- 10 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0010.jpg
View: St. Thomas Episcopal Church, looking south.
- 11 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0011.jpg
View: South side of the 100 block of East Main Street between Church and Pecan
Streets, looking southwest.
- 12 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0012.jpg
View: Martha Washington Inn, looking south.
- 13 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0013.jpg
View: North side of the 100 block of West Main Street between College and Church
Streets, looking northeast.
- 14 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0014.jpg
View: Barter Theatre, looking north.
- 15 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0015.jpg
View: Abingdon United Methodist Church, looking northeast.
- 16 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0016.jpg
View: South side of the 100 Block East Main Street between Church and Pecan
Streets, looking east.
- 17 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0017.jpg
View: Samuel G. Keller Storehouse, looking northeast.
- 18 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0018.jpg
View: Andrew Gibson House 142 East Main Street, looking Southeast.
- 19 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0019.jpg
View: Greenway-Trigg House, looking Southeast.

Abingdon Historic District (Additional Documentation)
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- 20 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0020.jpg
View: north side 100 block East Main Street between Brewers Alley and Court Street, looking northeast.
- 21 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0021.jpg
View: north side 200 block East Main Street between Court Street and Whites Alley, looking northeast.
- 22 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0022.jpg
View: east side 100 block North Court Street between Main Street and Plumb Alley, looking South.
- 23 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0023.jpg
View: (former) Martha Washington College, looking South.
- 24 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0024.jpg
View: Barter's Smith Theatre, looking Southeast.
- 25 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0025.jpg
View: (former) Martha Washington College, looking Southeast.
- 26 of 26. VA_WashingtonCounty_AbingdonHistoricDistrict_0026.jpg
View: south side 100 block East Main Street between Church and Pecan Streets, looking Southeast

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

LOCATION MAP

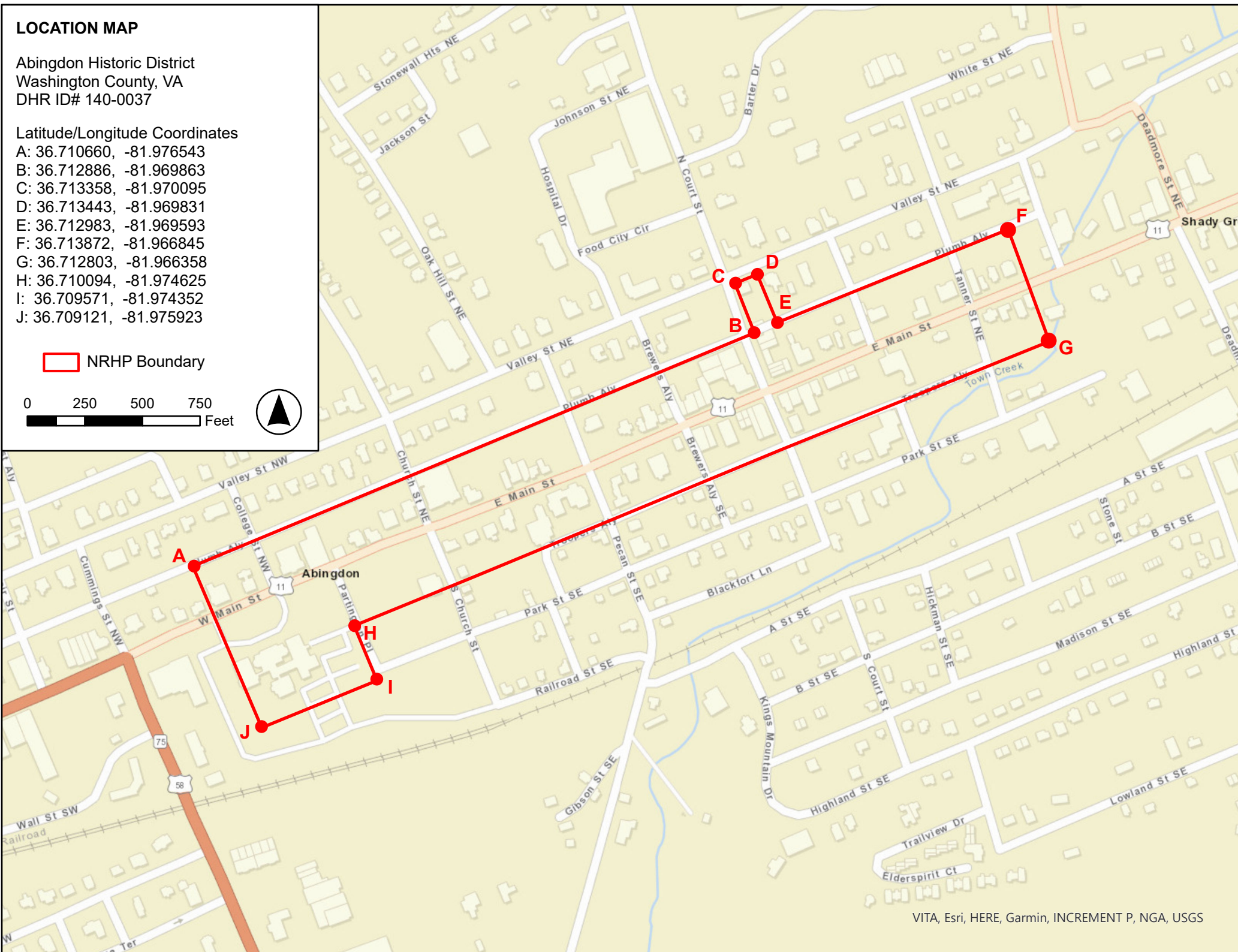
Abingdon Historic District
Washington County, VA
DHR ID# 140-0037

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

A: 36.710660, -81.976543
B: 36.712886, -81.969863
C: 36.713358, -81.970095
D: 36.713443, -81.969831
E: 36.712983, -81.969593
F: 36.713872, -81.966845
G: 36.712803, -81.966358
H: 36.710094, -81.974625
I: 36.709571, -81.974352
J: 36.709121, -81.975923

 NRHP Boundary

0 250 500 750
 Feet



AERIAL MAP

Abingdon Historic District
Washington County, VA
DHR ID# 140-0037

 NRHP Boundary

0 600
 Feet



STREET MAP

Abingdon Historic District
Washington County, VA
DHR ID# 140-0037

 NRHP Boundary

0 600 Feet







































SITE OF BLACK'S FORT
THE FORT BUILT IN 1776, STOOD
A SHORT DISTANCE TO THE
SOUTH. HERE THE FIRST COURT
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY WAS
HELD, JANUARY 28, 1777.















