

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection 8 Page 51Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

While the population of Nacogdoches County grew from 27,406 in 1910 to 28,457 in 1920, growth in the decade of the 1930s was at a standstill. In 1938 was estimated at 30,290 – the same number as was reported in the 1930 Census. The county remained rural, with an estimated 24,600 living rurally and the majority of these, in 1930, on farms. The urban population was limited to around 5,000, with most of these residing in Nacogdoches, whose population had grown to between 5,687 and 6,000 by 1939. The county population was comprised primarily of residents who identified themselves as white, with the Negro population reported at 7,456. To note how mobile – or immobile – this population was, there were only 5,600 registered vehicles in county in 1938 (up from 3,304 in 1925 and 2,236 in 1923).¹⁹⁶

Nacogdoches in the post-World War II period (to 1957)

Between 1940 and 1960, the population of Nacogdoches County declined from 35,392 to 28,046. But the population of Nacogdoches nearly doubled, from 7,538 in 1940 to 12,327 in 1950. Between 1950 and 1960, however, the town remained stable, adding only another 347 people, totaling 12,674. For the first time in its history, the town made up nearly half the population of the county. This was in large part due to the gradual and continued decline of agriculture in the region. In 1950, census statistics indicated that Nacogdoches County had 65-70% of its population employed in manufacturing, with 15-20% employed by the lumber industry. Wages were stagnant and the area of northeast Texas was identified as one of "deep poverty."¹⁹⁷ The town of Nacogdoches had the lowest median income of any in the region at \$1,599 per year per household and 57.7% of town residents earning less than \$2,000 per year.¹⁹⁸

The poverty of the area's workers was a stimulus for labor agitation and a rise of interest in unionization. The Frost-Johnson lumber mill was the focus of AFL and CIO unionization agitators in 1947. With approximately 300 employees, 75% of whom were African-American, the organizers hoped to secure higher wages and better job security for blacks, who were the lowest paid workers at the mill.¹⁹⁹ C. W. Rice, editor of the Negro Labor News published in Houston, came to Nacogdoches to speak out against unionization, stating that "Negroes are still the first to be fired and the last to be hired all over the country. This is not true in Nacogdoches County."²⁰⁰ The push to unionize, vigorously opposed by Nacogdoches' business community, failed, but not without Rice himself being arrested and falsely accused of assaulting a labor organizer.²⁰¹ The *Daily Sentinel* in denouncing the injustice declared: "Yes, he's a Negro but we resent any citizen being treated in that manner."²⁰²

After the war, the economy of Nacogdoches was stimulated by the return of servicemen who began to establish a series of new businesses. New car dealerships, hardware stores, dress shops, restaurants, and cafes populated the streets of the commercial district. NIBCO, the only war-time industry to start-up in Nacogdoches, chose to remain. NIBCO in fact enlarged its facilities and increased its production capacity by 50% in 1947.²⁰³ In this same year, a new and larger canning facility moved to Nacogdoches from Carthage. Growth continued into the 1950s, with the Texas Farm Products Company

¹⁹⁶ *Texas Almanac* 1926.

¹⁹⁷ Ruth A. Allen, *East Texas Lumber Workers: An Economic and Social Picture. 1870-1950* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), 3-7.

¹⁹⁸ Allen, *East Texas Lumber Workers*, 14.

¹⁹⁹ "Frost Mill Not Worried Over Union's Agitation," *Daily Sentinel* 21 August 1947, 1.

²⁰⁰ "Colored Citizens Told to 'Wake Up and Think'," *Daily Sentinel* 20 August 1947, 1.

²⁰¹ "Charges Against Editor Dismissed," *Daily Sentinel*, 1 September 1947, 1.

²⁰² "An Injustice Done," *Daily Sentinel*, 1 September 1947, 4.

²⁰³ "NIBCO to Enlarge," *Daily Sentinel*, 16 December 1947, 1. Original building dated to 1942.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 52

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

building a new feed warehouse in 1952, the opening of a new plant for the Lone Star Phosphate Company, and the formation of the Dr. Pepper Bottling Company on South Street.²⁰⁴ Nacogdoches was set to receive a huge boon in 1956 when Bassons Industries Corporation agreed to open plastic factory – requiring \$150,000 local investment; unfortunately, they defaulted and the city forfeited their invested money.²⁰⁵

As the flat population figures between 1950 and 1960 indicated, there was still a concern about the economic health of the town. The last cotton gins closed around 1950, and in 1952, Frost-Johnson was sold to the Olin Company which then quickly re-sold to the International Paper Company (IPC). In 1956, IPC shut the mill down, resulting in the loss of 300 jobs.²⁰⁶ With such a major employer gone, the search was on again for a stimulus to the town's economy.²⁰⁷ Various portions of the old Frost-Johnson complex and cotton facilities were repurposed to serve other businesses, such as Gay Products, who in 1966 began manufacturing aluminum furniture in the M. A. Anderson Grain building on the southeast portion of the Frost-Johnson complex.²⁰⁸

With a bit of a recovery, a great deal of new building occurred to the north of the historic town center, nearer to Stephen F. Austin State University. A "hometown boy," visiting from his new home in New York, commented to the *Daily Sentinel* in 1947 that he was impressed with the town's, and especially the college area's, post-war growth.²⁰⁹ In order to compete with these newer, more "modern" facilities on the north side of town, businesses in the historic center updated their quarters. The first order of business was to updated parking facilities. With automobiles becoming increasingly common, the commercial district struggled to accommodate vehicles on the narrow and winding streets. Parking meters were installed in 1947 both to generate revenue and to keep people from parking their cars and leaving them for long periods of time, clogging up potential spots for shoppers. On their first day of operation in August 1947, the *Daily Sentinel* reported that "many housewives heaved sighs of gratitude today as they drove into town and easily found plenty of parking spaces just ready and willing to be occupied at small price."²¹⁰ In this same year, a city parking lot was created the same year on West Main, bounded by Taylor Avenue and Hospital Street.²¹¹

Several large construction projects marked downtown Nacogdoches's growth in the 1950s and into the early 1960s. The most significant of these was the creation of the Fredonia Hotel by a coalition of community investors led by the Chamber of Commerce. Since the late 1940s, Nacogdoches boosters had been investigating the possibility of building a community-owned hotel and conference center as a draw for regional tourism and business meetings.²¹² The Chamber of Commerce had organized places for visitors to stay when large groups came to town in the early 1930s: in 1934, for example, a meeting of 500 Methodist ministers converged on Nacogdoches. Rooms in all hotels and boarding houses were reserved and bedrooms in private homes were reserved for the visitors as well.²¹³ A "Great Confederate Reunion"

²⁰⁴ Partin, *Nacogdoches*, 197.

²⁰⁵ Partin, *Nacogdoches*, 199.

²⁰⁶ Maxwell and Baker, *Sawdust Empire*, 120.

²⁰⁷ Partin, *Nacogdoches*, 199.

²⁰⁸ Partin, *Nacogdoches*, 210.

²⁰⁹ "Visitor Impressed With Growth," *Daily Sentinel*, 22 July 1947.

²¹⁰ "Parking Meters in Operation Monday," *Daily Sentinel* 4 August 1947, 1.

²¹¹ "Parking Project Near Completion," *Daily Sentinel*, 25 July 1947, 1.

²¹² "Mize Heads Hotel Committee," *Daily Sentinel*, 3 September 1947, 1; "Plan for Hotel Is Studied," *Daily Sentinel*, 28 August 1947,

1. "Community Hotel Idea Is Dimmed," *Daily Sentinel*, 16 September 1947, 1.

²¹³ "Plans for Conference Here Going Forward More Rooms Needed," *Weekly Sentinel*, 11 October 1934, 8.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection 8 Page 53Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

for Texas veterans, sons of veterans, and grandsons of veterans was held in Nacogdoches in September 1929, necessitating a similar network of hotel rooms and rooms in private houses. The meetings of the group were held in the county courthouse.²¹⁴ And, on a smaller scale the East Texas Division of the Texas Motor Bus Owners Association met in Nacogdoches in 1929, having their meetings in the Chamber of Commerce's rooms and their banquet at the Liberty Hotel.²¹⁵ A new facility would provide hotel rooms for all and a meeting and banquet facility all in one place. With a clear need, in 1952, a group of businessmen formed the New Hotel Campaign for Nacogdoches, also the called Community Hotel Company. Led by Jack McKinney (McKinney Drilling Company), J. Elbert Reese, and R.G. Muckleroy, they began to sell stock to citizens in order to finance the project. Approximately 1100 local businessmen invested,²¹⁶ including Carl Monk who was also on the executive committee, with one bid of much as \$10,000.²¹⁷ The total amount pledged for the construction of the hotel was \$500,000.²¹⁸ Land was acquired along Hospital Street between Fredonia and Mound, and J. N. McCammon (the architect of the present-day Nacogdoches County Courthouse) began to design plans for the Fredonia. After a number of older buildings were demolished to make way, the groundbreaking was held in 1954. WS Bellows Construction Company of Houston, led by Frank Bellow, constructed the six-story building of reinforced concrete, accented with "New Orleans" cast iron grillwork across the plate glass façade of the tower slab. The Hotel Fredonia was designed as a "modern contemporary-styled hotel building,"²¹⁹ entirely air-conditioned, and featuring 100 rooms, conference facilities for 600, a patio and a kidney-shaped heated pool surround by semi-circle of cabana suites. With a coffee shop and guest parking for 100, the hotel covered entire city block. The interiors were designed by Titcher-Goettinger of Dallas.²²⁰ The Fredonia opened with much fanfare April 1, 1955. For over a decade, between 1955 and 1967, this was reputedly the most successful community-owned hotel in the nation.²²¹ So successful was the venture that they were able to expand, constructing the 30-unit Oak Terrace in 1960.²²² However, by 1968, the hotel faced financial difficulties and the possibility of foreclosure with a debt of nearly \$250,000. The Fredonia began looking for a buyer. It was eventually sold to Arthur Temple of Diboll, Texas for \$325,000, "a near total loss" on the initial investment made by the community.²²³ Sheraton Hotels purchased the facility in 1970, and it was sold again in 1976.

While many businesses began to remodel their older properties, many built new facilities, often demolishing older properties in the process. New additions to the downtown area in the 1950s included the Main Theater of 1951 (Property #47). The new City Hall-Fire Station (Property #9) was constructed in 1953, replacing the Rulfs-built building which in 1947 was described as "falling apart" with sagging floors and ceilings.²²⁴ The new fire department was set to attend to a

²¹⁴ "Great Confederate Reunion Is to Be Held Here in September," and "General Summers Receives Information Concerning Reunion," *Weekly Sentinel*, 27 June 1929, 1 and 18 July 1929, 8. The latter article instructed attendees to write to the Nacogdoches Chamber of Commerce for a place to stay in "hotels, boarding houses, dormitories, and private homes."

²¹⁵ "Motor Bus Operators Had Fine Program 'Doches - Tuesday,'" *Weekly Sentinel*, 21 March 1929, 8.

²¹⁶ *Houston Chronicle* 3/29/1955

²¹⁷ *Texas Hotel Review*, June 1955: 18.

²¹⁸ "A Big Night for all at Hotel Victory Dinner." *Daily Sentinel*, Dec 9, 1952

²¹⁹ *Texas Hotel Review*, June 1955: 18.

²²⁰ *Texas Hotel Review*, June 1955: 18.

²²¹ *Daily Sentinel* September 5, 1969.

²²² *Daily Sentinel* April 29, 1960

²²³ Partin, *Nacogdoches*, 211.

²²⁴ "Fire Department's Face Is Really Red," *Daily Sentinel*, 15 September 1947, 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 54

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

series of fires that occurred in 1953, in which the Sanitary Laundry and Western Auto Store on East Main were heavily damaged, and the First Baptist Church on North Street was destroyed.²²⁵

Businesses that did not demolish and rebuild found other ways to modernize. Neon signs were installed at several locations in the late 1940s, including the Commercial National Bank, Branch-Patton Hardware, Turner's Pharmacy (318 Main St.), and Pool-Perkins Pharmacy (116 Main St.). These signs appear to have been purchased from a vendor in Lufkin.²²⁶ The Liberty Hotel remodeled in 1947 with a "newly redecorated lobby, banquet hall; coffee shop and kitchen."²²⁷

In light of all of these improvements, in 1948, a new school building campaign commenced. Not only did Nacogdoches need to replace the aging high school (the old Nacogdoches High School Building at Washington Square was torn down in 1956), the town required a series of facilities to serve a segregated school district, even after *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. Despite this historic ruling, desegregation did not occur in Nacogdoches until 1970.

With all of these changes occurring rapidly, Nacogdoches for the first time began to implement a systematic county-wide effort to improve roads and infrastructure, led by the newly established city planning commission, which formed in 1947 at the urging of *Daily Sentinel* editor Victor Fain. The county, by a narrow vote, approved a unit system for managing the long-neglected county roads. A county engineer, responsible for managing the entire road system was hired in 1948.²²⁸ In 1947, the process began that would eventually lead to the widening of North Street in 1949.

Other improvements to the civic infrastructure included a renewed water system, prompted by a series of water shortages in the late 1940s. Recreation venues also received attention, with the construction of Memorial Park in 1947, including a pool, football, tennis, and conference rooms.²²⁹ In 1955, Nacogdoches voters approved a \$600,000 bond package to provide for the building of a new courthouse and jail. The 1911 courthouse was demolished to make way for the new complex and during construction a series of errors occurred that caused the old courthouse's wall to collapse on top of part of the new building. (FIG. 22). It took quite some time for the repairs to be made and the complex, the fifth courthouse in county history, was completed in 1958 and fully occupied in 1960.²³⁰ J.N. McCammon was the architect, and the building has been described by some as modern or "early motel style."²³¹

A great deal of building activity occurred in the 1960s, not the least of which was the completion of the new Mize Department Store on Hospital in 1961 (Property #89). In that same year, the "city's old hitching lot" became the Farmer's market, and thirteen brick and steel retail stalls were installed along banks of Banita Creek at West Main.²³²

Perhaps the greatest change to the fabric of downtown Nacogdoches was the construction of two new banking facilities. Two historic buildings, home to banking houses for over half a century, were replaced between 1965 and 1972. The Stone

²²⁵ Partin, *Nacogdoches*, 203.

²²⁶ "Another Neon Sign for Downtown Area," *Daily Sentinel* 9 August 1947.

²²⁷ "Public to View Remodeled Hotel," *Daily Sentinel*, 26 September 1947, 1.

²²⁸ Partin, *Nacogdoches*, 189.

²²⁹ "Memorial Project Near Completion," *Daily Sentinel*, 3 October 1947, 1.

²³⁰ Partin, *Nacogdoches*, 190.

²³¹ Kelsey, Mavis P. and Donald Dyal, *The Courthouses of Texas*, 1993:204.

²³² Partin, *Nacogdoches*, 210.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 55

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

Fort National Bank, for example, extended its facilities on the southeast corner of the square to Pilar Street in 1956, retaining the corner building until it was demolished and replaced in 1965 (Property #7). The Commercial National Bank abandoned its historic location for new quarters, demolishing a large portion of the 200 block along Main Street, including the EA Blount Building, to make way for their new home in 1972 (Property #6).

Despite a gradual decline in population between 1940 and 1950 (as the war effort attracted families elsewhere or military duty called), Nacogdoches rebounded dramatically beginning in 1947. Concerted efforts on the part of the local government and citizen groups spurred economic growth, and encouraged building improvements in the commercial center. While Nacogdoches had always been the economic hub and governmental center of the county, its shift away from agriculture and timber in the 1930s encouraged a diversification that renewed its prosperity. From the mid-1950s, particularly after the installation of Ralph W. Steen as President in 1958, Stephen F. Austin State University proved a valuable asset to the community, and to this day contributes a great deal to the local economy. After 1960, Nacogdoches had permanently shifted away from an agricultural economy, and relied less on its educational institutions and industrial and medical facilities began to dominate.

Summary

The Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District represents the core of commercial activity and economic development in Nacogdoches since the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The initial platting of the town site in 1779, the subsequent development of the first business houses, and the completion of the first rail line in 1883 were decisive events in the town's initial development. The Houston, East & West Texas Railroad (HE & WT) immediately transformed Nacogdoches into a regional trade center and shipping point; the arrival of the Texas & New Orleans line (an affiliate of the Southern Pacific) in 1902 and the Nacogdoches & Southeastern in 1905 solidified the town's stature as an important transportation hub that linked the economies of the town and outlying rural areas. Nacogdoches not only became a center for processing and transportation of cotton and lumber in Nacogdoches County, but hosted numerous commercial endeavors including banking houses, retail establishments, small scale industry, manufacturing facilities, and educational institutions. The Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District played a significant and varied role as a commercial and economic center of the region, as well as the seat of county government, and is therefore eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under a number of Criteria. The Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District is eligible for listing under Criterion A at the state level of significance in the area of Commerce for its role in cotton production and distribution in the county, a center of East Texas Lumber industry, and as a host to numerous influential wholesale, retail and industrial establishments. The district is also eligible for listing under Criterion C at the state level of significance in the area of Architecture as an intact sampling of late 19th and 20th century commercial buildings that are reflective of local and national architectural trends during the period of significance (1835-1957).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 56

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

Representative Properties



**United States Post Office and
Federal Building (1917-1918)**
200 E. Main
Property #1
Central Block with Wings
Contributing
National Register (1992)
Photo #1

Designed by the United States Treasury Department architect James Wetmore, this building was completed in 1917 to house the Nacogdoches United States Post Office and Federal Building.²³³ Since its official opening in February 1918, this building has served as a backbone of civic activity, a function which continued during its life as a public library,

through its current function as the Nacogdoches Visitor's Center. This property not only represents one of the few local examples of Classical Revival architecture, reflecting a nationwide trend in the design of government buildings, but signals the presence of the federal government in Nacogdoches beginning in 1914 (at the encouragement of local citizen groups).

The United States Post Office and Federal Building is a 1-story building, executed in red brick with a cast sandstone base and entablature. The building is composed as a central block with wings, with a modified rectangular plan. The primary façade faces onto Main Street, symmetrically arranged to read as a three-part composition with a slightly inset central bay flanked by subordinate wings on the east and west. The center bay contains three minor divisions, consisting of central entry way flanked by two symmetrical Paladianesque filled arches. The entrance doorway, set within the center division of the central bay, features a multi-light wood frame door with side lights and a triple transom window. The arches above the central doorway and each of the flanking windows compositionally recall fanlight windows, but are filled with cast stone relief in varying patterns. Each of the subordinate wings contain one multi-light sash window, accented by a limestone panel set just above the opening. The property exhibits typical if simplified Classical Revival details that include inset panels, roundels, and a corbelled cornice. A two-story addition to the south façade was executed in the same materials and form language as the original portion of the building. With the exception of this addition, and many interior renovations, the building remains virtually intact.

²³³ *Daily Sentinel* 14 May 1999. ETRC Clippings File.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 57

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

Erected at perhaps the most prominent location within the downtown district, the former United States Post Office and Federal Building occupies the previously vacant *plaza principal* at the juncture of Main, Fredonia, Pilar, and Pecan Streets. Citizens of Nacogdoches had been lobbying for the construction of a federal building since 1905, but it took nearly a decade for their efforts to come to fruition. Though many had opposed building in the square in the past, the lure of federal funding overcame ideals that had been in place since perhaps the formation of the town plan in 1779. In April 1914, voters elected to sell the site to the Federal Government, in exchange for \$5,000.²³⁴ The actual purchase of the property was delayed by title disputes and negotiations with the federal government, but the transaction was finalized by August 1915. Letting of the building contract was delayed until 1916, and construction did not commence until January 1917. Graeme McDonald Company of California (with Kenneth McDonald as the foreman) was awarded the contract, and given a completion deadline of only one year.²³⁵ James Wetmore, Acting Supervising Architect for the United States Treasury from 1915 to 1933, provided the design and specifications for the building. He called for a small Classical Revival building of brick and sandstone (with some granite detailing) to be erected at an approximate cost of \$46,000.²³⁶ In February 1917, McDonald arrived in Nacogdoches to begin construction.²³⁷ Rains delayed work further, as did the filling of the old Spanish well in the center of the plaza (with eight feet of concrete), but by April basement was excavated and foundations completed. The federal building, which would also house the post office, was completed on schedule, and opened in February 1918.²³⁸ Though local citizens were not immediately impressed with the façade, they clearly felt that building would serve its function. An editorial from the *Daily Sentinel* in 1918 declared that "while the building is not so imposing in its appearance from the outside as was expected, the interior is...a model of perfection in its appointments and workmanship, designed especially for the convenience of the enterprise that will occupy it."²³⁹ This building served as the main post office in Nacogdoches until 1964, when a new facility was constructed on West Main Street.²⁴⁰ The building was sold the City of Nacogdoches in 1973, and served as the public library until 1997 when it became the Tourist Information Center and now, the Visitor's Center.

The Nacogdoches United States Post Office and Federal Building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (1992) under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a rare and unaltered local example of the Classical Revival. The building also is indicative of community wide development during the early 20th century as argued in the context statement "Community Planning and Development in Nacogdoches: 1830-1940." The building is also a Register Texas Historic Landmark (1999).

²³⁴ Partin, *Nacogdoches*, 129.

²³⁵ Partin, *Nacogdoches*, 130.

²³⁶ Partin, *Nacogdoches*, 130.

²³⁷ *Daily Sentinel* 14 May 1999. ETRC Clippings File.

²³⁸ Partin, *Nacogdoches*, 130.

²³⁹ *Daily Sentinel*, 13 February 1918, quoted in Partin, *Nacogdoches*, 130.

²⁴⁰ Murchison, Bill. *Nacogdoches: Past and Present, A Legacy of Texas Pride*.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 58

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas



Roberts Building (1904)
216 E. Pilar
Property #8
Contributing
National Register (1992)

Photo #2

Constructed in 1904, the Roberts Building represents an intact example of a modest one-part commercial block. The one-story, red brick building is sited on the south side of the *plaza principal*, on a corner lot that slopes southward toward Banita Creek. The primary entrance on Pilar Street is accessed by a raised sidewalk. The building

features a rectangular plan, with a partial basement beneath the south end of the building. The primary façade faces Pilar Street and the former Post Office, and is divided on the ground floor into three principle bays. Each bay contains a double-door entry with two-light transoms set within a segmental arch. A corbelled cornice separates the lower portion from the parapet area. The parapet repeats the three bay configuration, and is marked by inset panels. There are few decorative details on this building. The east elevation, facing Fredonia Street, has long been painted with murals or advertisements. Historically, this building bore an advertisement for Firestone tires. This elevation of the building allows access to the basement through small wooden doors set in segmental archways. This side also features several wood-sash windows set in segmental arch-top openings. On the ground floor (or store-level), the east elevation features two single double-hung wood sash windows set in segmental arch-topped openings. A small addition above the basement level has been framed in and clad in sheet metal.

As Nacogdoches grew, desirable lots around the *plaza principal* came to be used primarily for commercial purposes. The Roberts building was erected around 1904 by the Roberts family on the former homestead site of John S. Roberts. Roberts, who moved to Nacogdoches in 1820s, was a prominent citizen, a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence, and took part in the Fredonia Rebellion. Although a residence stood on the lot until at least 1900, by about 1904 it had been demolished to make way for this commercial property. The building was leased by the Roberts family to a variety of businesses, including: a grocery store and warehouse (Sanborn 1906); a restaurant (Sanborn 1912); a grocer and plumber (Sanborn 1921); a grocer, cobbler, barber and auto repair shop (Sanborn 1922); a furniture repair shop (Sanborn 1926); and a key shop and the City Café. It was in this coffee shop where local legend says that Bonnie Parker (of "Bonnie and Clyde" fame) worked as a waitress before meeting Clyde Barrow and turning to a life of crime in 1930.²⁴¹

²⁴¹ Murchison 81. Bonnie and Clyde, the core of the famed Barrow Gang, were caught, shot and killed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Louisiana in May 1934, after a crime spree that had lasted several years (intermittently from their meeting in 1930) and was reported to include 13 murders, numerous bank and store robberies, kidnappings, and a prison break. The FBI received a break in the Bonnie and Clyde case when they discovered two stolen Fords abandoned in Michigan and Oklahoma. A search of the car in Oklahoma yielded a drug prescription which had been filled for Clyde Barrow by his aunt in Nacogdoches. See "FBI Famous Cases" <http://www.fbi.gov/libref/historic/famcases/clyde/clyde.html>. Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow were both raised near Dallas.

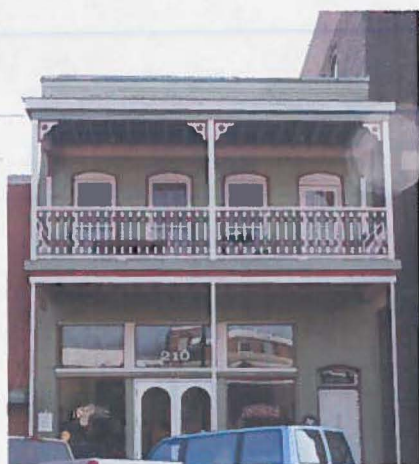
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 59

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

Currently the location of The General Mercantile and Old Time String Shop, the building won a beautification award in 1979 for restoration efforts completed by owner Steve Hartz.²⁴² The Roberts Building, as one of the "least altered historic buildings fronting on the old Principal Square" is listed on the National Register (1992) under Criterion C as a noteworthy example of early twentieth-century commercial architecture.



Ingraham Building (1897)

210 E. Pilar Street

Property #10

Two-part Commercial

Contributing

Registered Texas Historic Landmark (1998); Nacogdoches Historic Landmark

Photo #3

The Ingraham Building at 210 East Pilar Street represents an intact local example of late nineteenth-century commercial architecture with simplified Victorian details. It is the only building within the district to retain its double-height gallery (and only four other buildings have a balcony off the second floor), a feature not uncommon in Nacogdoches and commercial districts

across the state during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Constructed of brick, this two-story building is characterized by its simple composition and prominent double-height gallery. The primary façade faces onto Pilar Street and the *plaza principal*, and is divided into two bays. The ground floor is asymmetrically arranged to accommodate separate doorway to upper floor. Storefront consists of double-door entry flanked by plate glass window and surmounted by a three part transom. The second floor, which housed Ingraham's professional offices, displays a symmetrical placement of fenestration. These consist of three evenly spaced wood sash windows and one doorway of similar design, all surmounted by segmented arch fill and brickwork. Architectural details were minimal, limited to corbelled brickwork at the cornice line, and corner brackets and turned wood posts on the upper gallery, and a carved sum or flower motif on the transom woodwork. The restoration project, completed in 1997, replaced the original storefront that had been removed in 1922. Other restored features include: original windows; rough-hewn interior roof supports; square nails in the ceiling; and original doors on second floor interior.

The Ingraham Building was commissioned by George Francis Ingraham, a local attorney, judge and civic leader. Ingraham was born in New York in 1842, and was raised in Alazan (seven miles west of Nacogdoches). His family had settled in Nacogdoches by 1860. After his return from service as a Confederate soldier in the Civil War, he married Martha Thompson Cooper (in 1866), and had nine children.²⁴³ Ingraham became attorney in 1873, and also served as the

²⁴² "Old Time String Shop wins C.C. beautification award," *Daily Sentinel* 2/4/79

²⁴³ The Ingraham's children were: Francis Lafayette, George Cornelius, Eva Alma (m. Smith), Fritz Hoya, Elcee Rosina (m. Tucker), Martha P. (m. Staber), Payton S. Wilton Porter (m. Willie Blount Ingraham), and Jessie N. see <http://libweb.sfasu.edu/ETRC/COLLECT/manuscript/PERSONAL/Ingraham>

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 60

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

Nacogdoches county treasurer, a county judge, and a Texas State Representative. He also served as the executive vice president of the Farmers and Merchants State Bank (Founded 1908) from 1910 until its merger with Stone Fort National Bank in 1919.²⁴⁴

In 1896, he acquired the title to the lot on Pilar, which Sanborn maps indicate was between the court house and Bullock House.²⁴⁵ The two-story brick building was completed in 1897, and the second floor served as Ingraham's law office. The first floor was leased to retail businesses, including G.N. Bright, who ran a grocery and feed store between 1918 and 1937. Upon Ingraham's death in 1920, ownership of the building was divided between his nine children.²⁴⁶ F.J. Tucker, one of Ingraham's grandsons, purchased the property from his family members. He, like his grandfather was an attorney and civic leader, and used second floor of the building as an office for his law practice. Sally Tucker Thompson inherited the building upon his death, and leased it to number of retail establishments. In 1996, Charles R. Bright (the son of G.N. Bright) purchased the building and restored it to its original appearance, including the replacement of the storefront that had been removed in 1922.

Believed to be the oldest intact building on the south side of the public square, the Ingraham building is a Registered Texas Historic Landmark (1998), and a Nacogdoches Historic Landmark.



**Cox Building / Tausig Tobacco Company
(1909)**

West side, North Pecan Street
Property #31
Two-part Commercial (Industrial / Warehouse)
Contributing

Photo #4 to #6

The Cox Building on the west side of North Pecan Street was constructed by John Cox for William Tausig and the Tausig Tobacco Company in 1909. Constructed of red brick, this building not only represents an intact example of modest industrial and warehouse construction, but demonstrates the viability of the small yet promising tobacco

industry present in Nacogdoches between 1897 and approximately 1914.

This two-story red brick building exhibits a façade that is roughly symmetrical, divided into three bays. The central bay is much wider than the outer two, and contains all entrances and fenestration on both the ground and upper levels. All vertical bays are slightly inset, delineated by pilasters that extend from the ground floor upward to just below the cornice

²⁴⁴ Partin, *Nacogdoches*, 116.

²⁴⁵ Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1891

²⁴⁶ <http://libweb.sfasu.edu/ETRC/COLLECT/manscrip/PERSONAL/Ingraham/Ing3main.htm#inventory>

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 61

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

line. Decorative details are limited to brick dentils attached beneath the cornice and at the parapet. The ground floor is composed of two large industrial-sized openings, now framed in allowing access to the interior by two sets of man-doors. The ground and upper floors are separated by a full-façade balcony that is shared with the neighboring Cox Building built in 1888 (Property #30). The balcony is accessed on the upper floor by a single door positioned on the south end of the faced. Only one window is positioned on the upper floor, and is a 6/6 wood sash in a segmental arch-top frame (to match the doorway on the same level). The north elevation is characterized by its regular fenestration pattern, with nine single wood sash windows on the ground floor level, and five single wood-sash windows piercing the elevation at the upper level. The building, industrial in nature, is characterized by its modest detailing and functional character. Original construction specifications called for a steam heating system, and external and interior hand-operated elevators, still visible and still in working order on the south elevation.



Building at Main and South Pecan (Property #19). By 1909, William Tausig of Tausig Cigar Company (originally from Chicago) had started to make

The first cigar company in Nacogdoches was established in 1897 by H.S. Edler.²⁴⁷ Edler's endeavor was housed in a two or three story frame building on North Fredonia, between Hospital and Commerce streets (no longer extant). By 1906, a cigar company was operation at 106 N. Church Street, likely the home of Nacogdoches Cigar Company. Founded in about 1905 by Louis de Mouche (a famed cigar maker from Belgium who had also overseen operations in Fort Worth and Victoria), Dr. J.E. Mayfield, and Wilton Ratcliff, the Nacogdoches Cigar Company was reported to produce 50,000 "high grade cigars" every month.²⁴⁸ Their brands included Senate Chamber, Challenge, Dictator, Morse-all-Texas, Red Field, Little Jap, and Old Stone Fort. Tobacco for many of these lines, including the Red Field, was grown and processed in Redfield, about 4 miles north of Nacogdoches on North Street (Highway 59), and produced in the Nacogdoches Factory #216. The Redfield area and the nearby tobacco fields were accessed by a spur of the Houston, East and West Texas Railroad. Harry F. Wilson, one of the original shareholders of the Nacogdoches Cigar Company, later founded his own company and began producing Bonita cigars, which may have been manufactured just one-half block south of the Tausig Company, on the second floor of the Wettermark Bank



²⁴⁷ For more on the tobacco industry in Nacogdoches, see "The Cigar Companies of Nacogdoches" in the Old Town Printing Press, August 1995.

²⁴⁸ See "Nacogdoches Cigar Co." in the *Daily Sentinel* 1906, clipping ETRC vertical files; also "The Cigar Companies of Nacogdoches" in the Old Town Printing Press, August 1995.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 62

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

Spanish Maid Cigars out of the Cox Building / Tausig Factory on North Pecan. This business was in operation until at least 1914, and the building was used as a cigar factory and for tobacco storage.

After tobacco industry folded, the tobacco factory building was re-purposed, but changed very little. In 1921, Tucker-Sitton Hardware used the building as a warehouse. By 1928, the building was leased to Branch-Patton Hardware. For the next sixty years, still in the possession of the Cox family, the facility was used as a warehouse. In 1988, the building was purchased by Robert Gruebel. The Cox Building also served as Nacogdoches's first John Deere Dealership, a place for buggies, plows, building supplies, ambulance garage and caskets.



Mahdeen (Blount-Baker) / Wyatt Building (1918)

204 E. Pilar Street

Property #11

Two-part commercial block

Contributing

Photo #7

The Mahdeen-Wyatt Building at 204 East Pilar Street was designed by Dietrich Rulfs in 1918. Constructed of locally-made brick on the original site of the Nacogdoches County Courthouse (demolished 1916), this building not only represents an outstanding example of Rulfs' architectural skill but also the ambitions of local businessmen who operated the enormously successful Mahdeen Company. Mahdeen was recognized in 1945 as an "industry which has built the city of Nacogdoches and added to its financial wealth and prestige."²⁴⁹

This three-story building is constructed of brown brick, made locally on banks of Banita Creek. The symmetrical façade is divided into three bays; the central bay is slightly wider than the outer two, and features a stepped parapet. The vertical bays are delineated by pilasters, which extend from the second floor upward to the parapet. This building is given horizontal accent by a band of buff-colored stone (or concrete)

that externally demarcates the interior floor division. These bands are broken at each pilaster, but otherwise run the length of the bay. Decorative details are limited to triangulated, corbelled brickwork beneath the banks of windows, the same brickwork at the parapet, and a single decorative medallion adorning the cornice. The ground floor storefront is composed of an off-set double entry, flanked by plate-glass display windows framed in aluminum. The upper windows are equally sized, 1/1 wood sash. In the east and west bays, fenestration patterns are symmetrical, with three evenly-spaced sash windows per bay. The pattern of the central bay is slightly different, consisting of a paired sash window flanked by single windows (For a pattern of 1/2/1). The composition of this building is simple and straightforward, contributing to its sense

²⁴⁹ "The Mahdeen Co.", pamphlet ca June 1945, published by Commercial National Bank. Vertical files, ETRC, Steen Library. No. 10 in the series.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 63

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

of mass and repose. Original, intact interior details include: woodwork; doors; office cabinets; large oak vats in which Mahdeen tonic was mixed on the third floor (which has high ceilings to accommodate the machinery); and a ramp that was used to transport automobiles from the first to the second floor.

The Mahdeen Company, which operated from 1912 to 1985, originated from John Lewis Needham's bathtub. Needham, a local barber, had developed a hair tonic and dandruff remedy for use his shop at corner of Main and Pecan (the later home of Pool Pharmacy). Around 1907, he began to mix and bottle the liquid from his home, with the intention of selling the concoction throughout East Texas and Louisiana.²⁵⁰ Soon after, he met Frank Aikman, a traveling salesman out of New York who sold Dodson's Livertone.²⁵¹ Aikman was often in Nacogdoches and the surrounding region (he stayed at the Redland Hotel) for sales calls, and upon learning of Needham's formula quickly recognized the potential for its sale. Aikman and Needham formed a partnership, and founded the Mahdeen Company (Needham spelled backwards) on 12 September 1912. By January 1913, with Aikman supplying funding for expansion, they were in business. When Needham died in 1918,²⁵² Aiken acquired control of the company. Shortly thereafter, he took up residence in a new brick building designed by Rulfs on the south side of the square. The building had been commissioned by Eugene H. Blount and Thomas E. Baker, and though Mahdeen was the tenant for years, it was known as the Blount-Baker Building into early 1900s.

The Mahdeen Company occupied the basement and the third floor, which housed the vats for mixing and bottling the tonic. The first and second floor of this building were used by auto dealerships such as Duke H. Herbert Ford Co, and Ben T. Wilson Chevrolet. In its new facility, the company was quite successful, earning over a million dollars in this era. Mahdeen's profits allowed Aikman to make various philanthropic gifts to city of Nacogdoches:²⁵³ he contributed a great deal of funding for the construction of the Westminster Presbyterian Church on North Street; and in 1924 donated \$12,000 for the erection of the Aikman Gymnasium on the Stephen F. Austin College campus.²⁵⁴ Aikman died in 1939, and the Mize Brothers (with partners E.C. Best and R.G. Muckleroy, Sr.) acquired Mahdeen in late 1939 or early January 1940. Muckleroy was bought out in 1941, leaving Mahdeen in the hands of the Mize partnership. World War II threatened materials and supplies – Mahdeen's secret recipe included several ingredients imported from Europe – but the company continued to grow. Shortly after the acquisition, the Mize Brothers and Best introduced a new product, the Mahdeen Shampoo, which outsold the tonic. After 1940, Mahdeen products were distributed nationwide to wholesale establishments and to the armed forces overseas. It never had an extensive marketing campaign, but still sold rather well, particularly in California and to the United States Army and Navy.²⁵⁵ The packaging remained remarkable consistent over the long life of the tonic and shampoo; the bottle changed only once, and the label was slightly altered due to legal complications stemming from Aikman's use of an unauthorized photo of the daughter of an original employee. Because the images was used without a release, the label was modified to show a generic drawing of a woman).²⁵⁶ In October 1965, the *Daily Sentinel* announced that the "city's oldest industry" was sold to Owen Laboratories and would be moved to Dallas. EC Best, the partner in Mize Department store, remarked that he and Mize were "getting old," and received a

²⁵⁰ "City's oldest industry sold" DS 21 Oct 1965. The date of his first bathtub mixture was given by his daughter, who reported helping him stir the tonic in the bathtub.

²⁵¹ "City's oldest industry sold" DS 21 Oct 1965.

²⁵² The DS article puts this date at 1917. "City's oldest industry sold" DS 21 Oct 1965.

²⁵³ "The Mahdeen Co.", pamphlet ca June 1945, published by Commercial National Bank. Vertical files, ETRC, Steen Library. No. 10 in the series.

²⁵⁴ Partin, Nacogdoches, 150. Aikman Gym was in use until 1961, when the Shelton Gym on Raguet Street replaced it.

²⁵⁵ "City's oldest industry sold" DS 21 Oct 1965.

²⁵⁶ "City's oldest industry sold" DS 21 Oct 1965.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 64

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

lucrative offer from Owen. The building on Pilar Street was vacated, making way for the Village Furniture Store of Lufkin in the 1960s. In 1971, John S. Wyatt purchased the property from the Baker and Blount heirs to house Wyatt's Office City. The building is currently home to Story-Wright Office Supply.



Maria Davidson Apartments (1928)

214 S. Fredonia

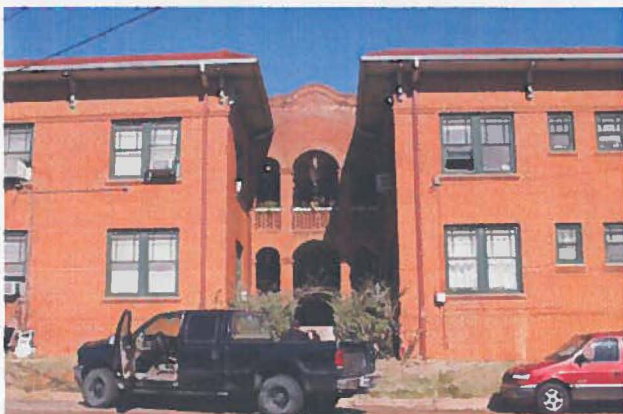
Property #96

Domestic

Contributing

Photo #8 and #9

The Maria A. Davidson Apartments, designed by Dietrich Rulfs in 1928, is the only historic apartment building in Nacogdoches originally constructed for the purpose that it retains today.²⁵⁷ It also represents an intact example of a simplified Mission or Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style, which despite the Spanish heritage of Nacogdoches, is rarely seen in the extant building stock.



The Apartments are located one block south of the *plaza principal*, and face east onto South Fredonia Street. The facility occupies two lots that slope south toward Banita Creek. This is a 2-story, red brick building with an U-shaped plan. Designed by Dietrich Rulfs in 1928, this building stylistically recalls Mission Revival and Spanish Colonial Revivals popular in the United States in the from about 1890 into the 1920s. While this is a simplified version of revival style, it retains significant identifying features such as a red tile-clad hipped (or pent) roof cantilevered from the wall surface, and a roofline broken by a protruding Alamo parapet.

The primary façade of the apartment building faces east onto South Fredonia Street, with a secondary entrance through the courtyard on the south elevation. The east façade is composed of three bays. The central bay is slightly recessed, and the parapet above this bay projects beyond the roofline. The primary entry is positioned within this central bay, and is accessed by set of steps that culminate in small stoop, and

²⁵⁷ Note that one survey on file with the Texas Historical Commission indicates the construction date of the building is 1910; however, it did not appear on Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps until 1929.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 65

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

the side rails have cast-stone coping. The double door entry is positioned at the top of the stairs, and is articulated by a brick archway. The door itself is a multi-light wood door, surmounted by a double row of transom windows and a filled arch (which may have been arched transom window, now filled over). The entry arch is flanked on each side by a 1/1 wood sash window, and second floor displays a centered set of paired sash windows (placed directly about the entryway), and flanked on each side by a 1/1 wood sash window. The central bay is flanked by identical and symmetrical wings to the north and south. The ground and second floors of each contain one set of paired 1/1 wood sash windows, with brick sills. The overall façade has little adornment, limited to a double row of soldier bricks that form a string course just below the cornice line. Other ornamental detail is displayed at parapet, in the inset panel displaying building name, and in the decorative brackets under the eaves, very typical of Mission and Spanish Revival styles.

A second entry sequence is located on south elevation of building, which is marked by a small inset courtyard. Here, the building reads as two wings separated by the courtyard, which contains a double-height arcade allowing exterior access to the interior rooms. The arcade is placed at the rear (north end) of the courtyard, and is formed by a string of three connected arches, the center of which is wider and narrower than the outer two arches. All three are supported by square brick piers, embellished with corbelled brickwork at the spring of the arches. The arcade element is capped with an Alamo parapet, similar to the east façade. Like front of the building, the south doorway is reached by ascending a set of steps; here, one must first pass beneath the arcade to reach the entry. Windows on both ground floor and second floor of this elevation show less regularity than on the east facade, with sets of paired sash windows and adjacent smaller single windows that likely view to bathroom facility. Sash windows also overlook the courtyard on both the ground and second floors.

Facilities for car parking include a paved lot to the south of the building (just off the courtyard), a 9-bay carport to the south which is contemporaneous with the apartment building, and a second non-original carport to the south.

John P. Davidson, who had a part in the formation of the First National Bank²⁵⁸ and commissioned Rulfs to design the Liberty Hotel in 1891 (which he owned until at least 1933) acquired lots on South Fredonia in 1927. Davidson had apparently been aware in statewide trends in apartment building – particularly the creation of smaller buildings consisting of four to twelve units meant to house middle-class occupants – and created his own version for Nacogdoches based on this prevalent model. The building was named for Davidson's wife, Maria. The structure originally housed single women who worked downtown as clerks, telephone operators, and in similar occupations.

The Maria Davidson Apartment building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (1992) under Criterion C in the area of Architecture, and is associated with the context statement "Community Planning and Development in Nacogdoches: 1830-1940."

²⁵⁸ *Daily Sentinel* ca. 1906. Vertical Files, ETFC, Steen Library.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 66

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas



Old Mize Factory (1938)
412 North Street
Property #102
One-Part Commercial
Contributing
Photo #10

Erected in 1938 to house Mize Manufacturing, this industrial building served as a factory for women's dresses and suiting, which were sold locally and nationwide by the Mize Brothers. The Old Mize Factory was not only one of the most successful and long-lived local industries, but represents a rare local example of Streamline Moderne architecture.

This 1 ½ story industrial building is characterized by its horizontal disposition, simple brick cladding and stylistic reference to Streamline Moderne. The primary façade faces west onto North Street, and is divided into three bays. The central bay projects both upward and forward from the elevation plane, and is flanked by two symmetrical bays. The flanking bays each contain two horizontal bands of four windows, each separated by vertical brick pilasters. Windows are multi-light metal casement, though glass block is also used on the north and south elevations. The public entrance to this building is on the West façade. This small double-door flanked on each side by a single window is located in the central bay. The entry is articulated by 4 columns of vertical brick banding, which extends from the parapet downward to the top of the entryway. The entrance is further marked by a simple, horizontal canopy hung on metal rods, a feature that is repeated at entrances placed on the north elevation of the building. The corner bays of building are edged with fluted pattern executed in brick. The water table and cornice areas are likewise ornamented with simple brickwork. The dominant banding pattern is created by alternating three rows of bricks in stringer position and one row in the ender position.

The Old Mize Factory was home to the Mize Manufacturing Company from 1938 to about 1992. The company was founded by Byron H. and W. Allan Mize, originally from Rose Pine, Louisiana. The Mize brothers moved to Nacogdoches in January 1925, after running general merchandise stores in both Huntsville and Crockett. After relocating to Nacogdoches, the brothers opened a variety store at the northwest corner of Main and Church, just west of Opera House.²⁵⁹ Their variety store did well, and as Lucy McBee reported in the *Daily Sentinel*, gave birth to a women's apparel factory. The venture began in 1927 when Allen Mize had a large quantity of dress ruffle on hand. In order to sell the excess material, Mize designed a dress made wholly of row after row of ruffle; merchants found this design so intriguing

²⁵⁹ Dempsey, Kristi. Landmarks Celebrate 70 years of business, history this year." *Daily Sentinel* 23 April 1995

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 67

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

that they wanted not the trim, but the whole dress.²⁶⁰ The success of the garment, first stitched by Emma Watson (who in 1944 was still employed at the factory), encouraged the opening of the first Mize dress factory in 1928 over Golub's Shoe Shop on Church Street.²⁶¹ With only three second-hand sewing machines, the employees focused on the manufacture of dress trimmings. Despite the onset of the Depression, the Mize Brothers did well, and in 1930 relocated their business to Elks building and began to manufacture women's dresses. The brothers designed all of the dresses sewn at their factory. Their garments met with almost immediate approval, in both the domestic and foreign markets. In order to stay abreast of recent trends, the Mizes made frequent trips to New York and other markets. Continued success led them to expand again, and to lease the Woodmen of the World Building (WOW, Property #55) in 1931. With a growing business, the brothers, with their partner E.C. Best, were encouraged to hire L.D. Pate as bookkeeper in 1937; Pate, and his daughter after him, would go on to be a partner in the venture. An increase in sales and the need for more floor space for both the Mize Brothers retail store and Mize Manufacturing led to the design and construction of a new facility in 1938. The new factory at 412 North Street contained 300,000 square feet of floor space, and was both heated and air-conditioned. Unlike the tight quarters available in the downtown commercial district, this new plant offered plentiful parking and a "beautifully landscaped," park-like lawn.²⁶² Using their past experience as tenants turn-of-the-century buildings, the Mizes designed the new factory on one level, with efficient access for delivering raw materials and loading the finished product. The layout of the assembly line complimented a process in which materials entered at one door, fed into a U-shaped line, from which the completed dress would emerge at the opposite end.

Not only did the Mize Brothers business support nearly 100 families during the Depression, but it was considered the "only enterprise which contributes to the welfare of the community by furnishing employment on a considerable scale for women. Thus it affords a livelihood to many families who otherwise would lack the means of self support."²⁶³ By 1944, what began as one ruffled dress had grown to a company of over 200 employees.²⁶⁴ In a 1943-44 promotional pamphlet titled "Mize Bros. Manufacturing Co., Makers of Ladies Coat Suits, Dresses, and Trimmings," the company was ranked among the local leaders in "industry which has built the city of Nacogdoches and added to its financial wealth."²⁶⁵

In an effort to diversify, the Mize brothers and Best purchased the Mahdeen Company in 1941. In 1954, the brothers decided to split their assets, with Allen continuing to operate the Mize Dress Factory, and Byron retaining the department store and the Mahdeen Company (which he maintained until 1965 when he sold it to a drug firm in Dallas).²⁶⁶ Pate continued to work as the manager of the newly-named Mize Department Store, later becoming full partner. Jack Matthews was hired during this time, and was instrumental in later developments within the retail division. The department store eventually moved to the corner of Church and Main, and remained there until 1961, when the business relocated to its newly designed "modern" facility (and its present location) on Hospital Street.

²⁶⁰ Lucy McBeem "Now Thriving Industry Started with a Ruffle," *Daily Sentinel* 3 June 1959

²⁶¹ This building was later home to JJ Syndicutt's.

²⁶² Mize Bros. Manufacturing Co., Makers of Ladies Coat Suits, Dresses, and Trimmings. Pamphlet, 1943 or early 1944. Vertical Files, ETRC, Steen Library.

²⁶³ Mize Bros. Manufacturing Co., Makers of Ladies Coat Suits, Dresses, and Trimmings. Pamphlet, 1943 or early 1944. Vertical Files, ETRC, Steen Library.

²⁶⁴ Lucy McBeem "Now Thriving Industry Started with a Ruffle," *Daily Sentinel* 3 June 1959

²⁶⁵ Lucy McBeem "Now Thriving Industry Started with a Ruffle," *Daily Sentinel* 3 June 1959

²⁶⁶ Mahdeen Article, Old Town Printing Press, Nov 1995

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 68

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

The Mizes were known for their involvement in the community – they were active in both religious and civic affairs – and their commitment to customer service. They offered extensive training to their employees, and often retained them for long periods of time. The Mize Factory was in operation until the 1980s; after the company closed, the factory building remained empty until the Social Security Administration took up residence in 1994.²⁶⁷



²⁶⁷ McDonald 99.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 69

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas



Hotel Fredonia (1954-55)

200 N. Fredonia

Property #83

Two-Part / International Style

Contributing

Photo #11 and #12

Architect: J. N. McCammon

Builder: W. S. Bellows Construction Company

Interior Design: Titcher-Goettinger (Dallas)

Original Furniture: Phoenix Chair Company
(Sheboygan, Wis.)

Formal opening: April 1, 1955

Oak Terrace Addition: 1960, McCammon

The six-story Hotel Fredonia is characterized by its slab-like tower surrounded by a one-story semi-circular wing that houses cabana suites, and wraps around an interior courtyard and swimming pool. Later additions include a 30-unit two-story Oak Terrace addition to the northeast end of the property, and one to one-and-a-half story conference facility to the rear of the main hotel complex. The primary façade of the original hotel diagonally faces southeast onto Hospital Street.

The ground floor is clad in brick, and is marked by a porte-cochere. It is surmounted by five floors, each comprised of horizontal ribbon windows divided vertically into eight asymmetrically arranged bays. This southeast façade, and each unit within the overall composition, is framed with elaborate green-tinged ironwork, often described as "New Orleans style." With the exception of large expanses of glass and ironwork details, the exterior is clad in red brick, left unpainted and generally unadorned. The primary entrance on the ground level is indicated by the porte-cochere which shelters the entry to the main lobby; other entrances penetrate the semicircular one-story wing, and these lead to the interior courtyard. The Oak Terrace is accessed from the northeast side of the property, off of Church Street. Despite its smaller scale and "motel" configuration, materials and details mirror that of the original building. The conference facility toward the north end of the property is a windowless monolith clad in red brick, and although large, has been skillfully tucked behind the hotel tower and does not visually compete. This hotel remains the tallest building in the downtown district.

The Hotel Fredonia not only represents the success of a community-supported economic development effort, but is a rare local example of a modified and small-scale International Style building. The main tower, slab-like in its massing, recalls work by many notable world-renowned modernists architects in this same period, such as the United Nations Secretariat Building in New York (1952).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 70

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

The Hotel Fredonia was constructed in 1954-55 at 200 North Fredonia, between Hospital and Arnold Streets. Built on the site of the former First Christian Church, a rooming house and several private residences, The Hotel Fredonia was positioned at the north end of the commercial district, directly across from the passenger bus depot. The hotel vied for tenants with nearby hotels such as the Liberty (on the plaza principal). The name for this impressive six-story, one-hundred room hotel was taken from the Fredonia Rebellion of 1826 in which Haden Edwards and a group of settlers declared Nacogdoches independent from Mexico. Although the insurgency failed, it represented the vast ambitions of the small town and the character of its citizens, as the hotel was meant to do a century later.

Since the late 1940s, Nacogdoches boosters had been investigating the possibility of building a community-owned hotel and conference center as a draw for regional tourism and business meetings.²⁶⁸ The local Chamber of Commerce had long believed that the town was losing thousands of dollars per year in potential tourist income, and blamed the lack of accommodations in the region that could service both leisure travelers and pass-through business travelers. In 1952, the need for improved guest facilities in the area had become clear. In an effort to boost the economy while simultaneously adding prestige to the city,²⁶⁹ a group of businessmen formed the New Hotel Campaign for Nacogdoches, later re-named the Nacogdoches Community Hotel Corporation. Led by Jack McKinney (McKinney Drilling Company), J. Elbert Reese, and R.G. Muckleroy, they began to sell stock to citizens in order to finance the project. They employed Hockenbury System, Inc., from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, who were specialists in hotel fund-raising. This group surveyed the need for a hotel, and recommended a fund-raising campaign that would include the sale of stock was sold in units of \$100, "consisting of one share of common stock valued at \$50 and one \$50 bond yielding 4 per cent interest yearly."²⁷⁰ The Hockenbury company believed that "big investors" would contribute the vast majority of the funding, but in the end, it was the "little men" of Nacogdoches who made over half of the stock purchases in \$100 units.²⁷¹ Approximately 1100 local businessmen invested,²⁷² including figures such as Carl Monk who was also on the executive committee, with one individual contribution equaling \$10,000.²⁷³



²⁶⁸ "Mize Heads Hotel Committee," *Daily Sentinel*, 3 September 1947, 1; "Plan for Hotel Is Studied," *Daily Sentinel*, 28 August 1947, 1. "Community Hotel Idea Is Dimmed," *Daily Sentinel*, 16 September 1947, 1.

²⁶⁹ Sigman Byrd, "New Hotel Will Add Prestige to City, Famed Writer Says," *Daily Sentinel* January 12, 1955.

²⁷⁰ Charlotte Burrows, "Swank Nacogdoches Hotel Financed by Townspeople," *Shreveport Times* October 1959, reprinted in *Daily Sentinel* 19 October 1959.

²⁷¹ Charlotte Burrows, "Swank Nacogdoches Hotel Financed by Townspeople," *Shreveport Times* October 1959, reprinted in *Daily Sentinel* 19 October 1959.

²⁷² *Houston Chronicle* Mar 29, 1955

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection 8 Page 71Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

The total amount set aside for the construction of the hotel was \$500,000.²⁷⁴ Land was acquired along Hospital Street between Fredonia and Mound, and plans were quickly developed. After a number of older buildings were demolished to make way for the new facility, the groundbreaking was held in 1954. Dallas architect J. N. McCammon – who later designed the Nacogdoches County Courthouse -- was commissioned as the principal architect. The interiors were designed by Titcher-Goettinger of Dallas,²⁷⁵ and murals were painted by the local artist Janet Turner.²⁷⁶ As with the architect and the interior design firm, a great deal of other design talent was recruited from Dallas: the swimming pool was designed by Paddock, and the kitchen equipped by Juey & Philip, also of Dallas.²⁷⁷ Tile for bathrooms, however, were imported from France.²⁷⁸ W.S. Bellows Construction Company of Houston, led by Frank Bellow, constructed the six-story building of reinforced concrete and brick cladding, accented with “New Orleans” cast iron grillwork across the plate glass façade of the tower slab. The Hotel Fredonia was designed as a “modern contemporary-styled hotel building,”²⁷⁹ entirely air-conditioned, and featured 100 rooms, conference facilities for 600, a patio and a kidney-shaped heated pool surround by semi-circle of cabana suites. With a coffee shop and guest parking for 100, the hotel covered an entire city block.

The Fredonia opened with much fanfare on 1 April 1955. An estimated 6,000 people attended the grand opening, and press coverage of the event extended as far as both Dallas and Houston.²⁸⁰ The new building was held in high regard, both by its investors and the general public. Not only did it appear “as modern as an atomic submarine,”²⁸¹ but was viewed as “a hotel that would add prestige to any city in the world. To old Nacogdoches, standing waist deep in the glorious history of Texas, this great patio circled by smart-looking cabanas, is almost, yet not quite, incredible. It’s a little like having the Taj Mahal moved, stone by stone, from Agra to Lufkin.”²⁸² Though the brick building was clearly viewed as both modern and functional – with clear reference to contemporary nationwide trends such as the International Style, yet McCammon added “enough traditional architecture in it to give the hotel a southern flavor and atmosphere along with its distinctive modern touch.”²⁸³

For over a decade, between 1955 and 1967, The Hotel Fredonia was believed to be the most successful community-owned hotel in the nation.²⁸⁴ In its first year alone, twenty-six conventions were scheduled.²⁸⁵ The achievement was recognized by Senate Resolution 212, sponsored by Senator Ottis E. Lock of Lufkin, which commended the citizens of Nacogdoches for uniting to build such a “fine” community hotel.²⁸⁶ By 1959, the hotel employed 92 people,²⁸⁷ and operated at 95.6%

²⁷³ *Texas Hotel Review*, June 1955: 18. A 1959 article puts the largest single investment at \$13,000 rather than \$10,000. see Charlotte Burrows, “Swank Nacogdoches Hotel Financed by Townspeople,” *Shreveport Times* October 1959, reprinted in *Daily Sentinel* 19 October 1959.

²⁷⁴ “A Big Night for all at Hotel Victory Dinner,” *Daily Sentinel*, Dec 9, 1952

²⁷⁵ *Texas Hotel Review*, June 1955: 18.

²⁷⁶ Sigman Byrd, “New Hotel Will Add Prestige to City, Famed Writer Says,” *Daily Sentinel* January 12, 1955.

²⁷⁷ “Nacogdoches Opens Luxurious New Hotel,” *Dallas Morning News*, Apr 2 1955

²⁷⁸ “Nacogdoches Opens Luxurious New Hotel,” *Dallas Morning News*, Apr 2 1955

²⁷⁹ *Texas Hotel Review*, June 1955: 18.

²⁸⁰ “6,000 Attend Hotel Opening,” *Daily Sentinel* Apr 2 1955

²⁸¹ “Nacogdoches Opens Luxurious New Hotel,” *Dallas Morning News*, Apr 2 1955

²⁸² Sigman Byrd, “New Hotel Will Add Prestige to City, Famed Writer Says,” *Daily Sentinel* January 12, 1955.

²⁸³ “Nacogdoches’ Club Style Hotel opened” *Houston Post*, April 2, 1955

²⁸⁴ *Daily Sentinel* September 5, 1969.

²⁸⁵ “New Nacogdoches Hotel Will Open Doors Today,” *Houston Post* April 1, 1955

²⁸⁶ “Senate Resolution Lauds Community on New Hotel,” *Daily Sentinel*, 19 April 1955.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 72

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

occupancy throughout the spring and fall months, with an average yearly income from rooms and food reaching \$5,000,000.²⁸⁸

So successful was the venture that they were able to expand, constructing the 30-unit Oak Terrace in 1960.²⁸⁹ The expansion program was estimated at \$300,000, of which \$50,000 was allocated for purchasing the lot to the north of the original facility. As with the original project, local citizens fronted the money for the real estate, and a bank loan was approved for the new building. In addition to providing new thirty new cabana units in a two-story motel configuration, the plans called for the addition of approximately 5,000 square feet of parking or space for 50 cars. J. N. McCammon of Dallas was again commissioned to design the hotel expansion.²⁹⁰



The success of the Fredonia as a community hotel inspired the formation of Community Inns of America, Inc., led by Herbert Wilson, the manager of the Fredonia.²⁹¹ The fledgling corporation hoped to provide consulting and planning services to communities nationwide who sought to create the same sort of facility that had been so successful in Nacogdoches. Along with the eight projects and twenty-three potential clients they advised in 1962, one of the most notable products to come of this new corporation was the film strip "The Hotel Fredonia Story," which was filmed in color and shown throughout the United States and Canada to community groups interested in building their own community hotels.²⁹²

Despite a tremendous first decade, the fortunes of the Fredonia began to decline in 1965, in part due to the influx of hotels both in Nacogdoches and in nearby Lufkin. Though 1963 proved to be a record year,²⁹³ and the hotel produced decent revenue in the

following season, occupancy dropped to 88.9% in 1965.²⁹⁴ By 1968, the hotel faced financial difficulties and possibility of foreclosure with a debt of nearly \$250,000. The Fredonia began looking for a buyer. It was eventually sold to Arthur Temple of Diboll, Texas for \$325,000, "a near total loss" on the initial investment made by the community.²⁹⁵ Sheraton Hotels purchased the facility in 1970, and it was sold again in 1976.²⁹⁶ Troubles continued, and the hotel closed its door

²⁸⁷ "It Takes Real People to Make Hotel 'Click'", *Daily Sentinel* 29 April 1960

²⁸⁸ Charlotte Burrows, "Swank Nacogdoches Hotel Financed by Townspeople," *Shreveport Times* October 1959, reprinted in *Daily Sentinel* 19 October 1959.

²⁸⁹ *Daily Sentinel* April 29, 1960

²⁹⁰ Charlotte Burrows, "Swank Nacogdoches Hotel Financed by Townspeople," *Shreveport Times* October 1959, reprinted in *Daily Sentinel* 19 October 1959.

²⁹¹ "New Industry Inspired By Hotel Has Ambitious Plans" *Daily Sentinel* 16 May 1962.

²⁹² "New Industry Inspired By Hotel Has Ambitious Plans" *Daily Sentinel* 16 May 1962.

²⁹³ "Best Yet . . . Another Milestone for Hotel Fredonia" *Daily Sentinel* 12 May 1964

²⁹⁴ "Hotel Facing Crucial Years" *Daily Sentinel* May 1965

²⁹⁵ *Palma, Nacogdoches*, 211.

²⁹⁶ "Nacogdoches Sheraton Crest Inn New Name for Hotel," *Daily Sentinel* 22 October 1970.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 73

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

for four years beginning in 1985. In 1989, the Fredonia Corporation formed with the intent of funding a \$4.2 million renovation, an estimate that was soon to expand to \$7.5 million. Funds were raised by a combination of local stockholders – just as with the original construction project – with additional assistance from the Department of Urban Development Administration Grant program. The newly-remodeled Fredonia reopened in May 1989.

Banita Creek Bridge (1938-40)

Pecan Street and Banita Creek

Property #131

Structure

Contributing

Photo #13 and Photo #14

The Banita Creek Bridge, constructed under the auspices of the Works Projects Administration between 1938 and 1940, is one of several bridges erected to connect the south parts of Nacogdoches to areas north of Banita Creek. Not only does this bridge represent an intact example of small-scale engineering, but represents relief efforts undertaken in Nacogdoches during the final years of the Depression.



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 74

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas



Hoya Building (1900)
112 South Pecan Street
Property #13
Two-Part Commercial Block
Contributing

Photo #15 and #16

The Hoya Building at 112 South Pecan Street was designed by Dietrich Rulfs in 1900. Although now extensively altered on its primary façade, this red and buff brick building at one time represented an outstanding example of Rulfs' architectural abilities, and reflected the ambitions of local land surveyor, banker and businessman Charles Hoya.

as an anchor for plaza principal, and from its corner lot, faces onto South Pecan Street. Because of its siting at the corner of the main square, and because of the gentle sloping of South Pecan that begins just to the south of this building, it maintains a rather imposing character. Constructed primarily of buff brick, this building is accented by simple red brick details. The primary façade is divided into two horizontal segments, marked by a simple string course (the original brick feature is retained on the south elevation, but the primary façade has been covered with stucco). The façade is divided into three vertical bays, delineated on the ground floor by a series of cast-iron pilasters, and on the upper floor by the fenestration pattern. The ground floor storefront is framed in cast iron forged in 1900 by Tyler Foundry & Machine, Tyler Texas. Within the cast iron frame lies a three-part wooden façade, consisting of 16-light display windows (4x4) flanking a



central entryway. The primary entrance is wood-frame, 6-light, single door with transoms above. The original configuration, including the flat awning suspended on rods, appears to be intact, although it is doubtful that the original materials have been retained. The 3-part, horizontally disposed transom windows remain intact about the awning. The region above the transoms, comprising the second floor, has been altered extensively. Although the three window fenestration pattern and indications of the edge pilasters and parapet line remain intact, the façade has been covered in a layer of tan stucco. This treatment renders all brick surfaces and detailing invisible. Still, the windows retain their original form of a round top arched opening flanked by two segmented arch-top windows, the lower of which

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection 8 Page 75Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

correspond to the fenestration on the Pilar Street façade. The once-remarkable façade of this building is indicated by the Pilar Street elevation, which retains its original surface treatment and details. Decorative brickwork is skillfully executed in a combination of buff and red brick. Here, a stringcourse (aligned with that on the primary façade) marks the internal dispensation of floors, and a series of pilasters divide the elevation into three bays. At the ground floor level, the surface remains undecorated. A corbelled string course is placed just above this area. The upper level of the building features three distinct bays, of which the center bay is characterized by an arched parapet with roundel. The center bay houses three segmented-arch window openings, visually connected by a stringcourse which runs the length of the façade (interrupted only by the bay-defining pilasters). Corbelled dentils likewise stretch along the façade at cornice line, again, pausing at each pilaster. These run just above series of inset panels (Four in each bay), and just below the parapet cap. The outer bays are identical to one another, each featuring two segmented-arch top windows. All windows on this façade trimmed with a brick hood and are united by the continuous stringcourse that extends from the lower (spring) of the hood. Historic photos indicate that this brick detailing was also present on the primary façade.

Although the Pilar Street elevation reflects the quality of this Rulfs-designed building and the alterations at the second floor on the primary façade impact the character of this building, the surface treatment appears reversible. Many historic photographs as well as the intact Pilar Street elevation would provide ample evidence for any restoration effort.

Commissioned by Charles Hoya in 1900, this building was still under construction in October as the Sanborn Map of that year was completed. The impressive two-story brick building and its one-story contemporary counterpart to the north served as permanent replacements for several wood-frame buildings that had formerly occupied this prominent location on the plaza principal. The lots for this property, the neighbor the north, and the Hoya Land Office to the south (Property #95, NR 1992, RTHL 1974, Nacogdoches City Landmark), had long been in the Hoya family. The patriarch of the family, Joseph T. von der Hoya, came to Nacogdoches with his family and three brothers from Damme, Germany in 1836. Although they lived on farm property south of town, the Hoyas purchased the southwest corner of *plaza principal* sometime just after 1836, as a number of town lots were sold to pay a debt to the Mexican government. Joseph Hoya purchased Adolphus Sterne's home on South Lanana Street in 1866, bringing his young family, including his son Charles (1848-1926), into Nacogdoches at this time. Charles was trained as a land surveyor by Captain A. A. Nelson, who had surveyed this part of east Texas both during the Republic and afterward. The enterprising young Charles – who had since married Frances Meisenheimer in 1887, and built a house around 1888 at 210 S. Lanana Street directly across from the Sterne-Hoya home, soon recognized the county's need to provide protective services for land surveys and ownership documents, as well as finance the purchase of property. To meet these needs, Hoya formed the Hoya Land Office in 1897, charging Houston architect Frank E. Rue to design the first fireproof building in town. Hoya selected this site near the downtown square, not only because his family owned the property, but because it was the heart of the town's commercial activity. Hoya worked as a surveyor for Nacogdoches County from 1897 until his death in 1926. In addition to his survey work and loan services, in 1903 he, along with Jeff Hayter, I. L. Sturdevant, and W. U. Perkins, organized the Stone Fort National Bank. Hoya served as the bank's first president and assumed a prominent role in the town's business circles. In 1900, shortly before the formation of the bank, Hoya commissioned Dietrich Rulfs to replace the one-story wood building at the corner of Pilar and South Pecan with the two more permanent – and fire-proof – brick structures. Rulfs probably designed the two buildings in tandem, and they were likely constructed at nearly the same time. The one-story bldg to the north and the two-story bldg to the south shared many of the same characteristics and materials, including cast-iron store fronts manufactured by Tyler Foundry in 1900 (both marked "Chas. Hoya 1900"). Hoya leased the ground floor of the south building to various mercantile firms, some times with access to the neighboring building, sometimes independently. Property #13 housed numerous businesses over the years, including the Milam Lodge who leased the second floor until

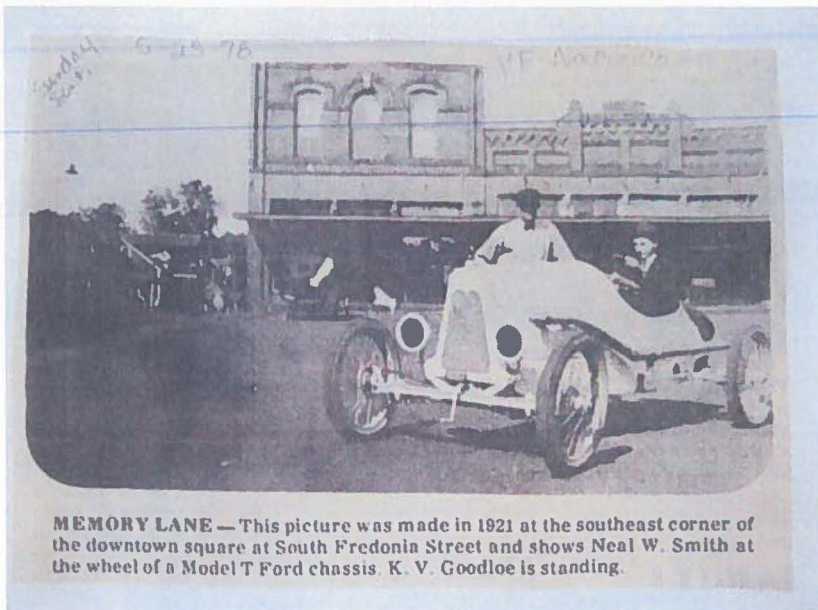
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 76

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

their own building was completed.²⁹⁷ In 1906, the building to the south housed a store for music, pianos, organs; in 1912 it was home to a grocer, with the Masonic hall on second floor. In 1921, a tin shop was in residence, with Masonic hall remaining on second floor. In 1922, the tin shop branched out to deal in plumbing services and supplies. By 1929, a furniture store (likely Jasper Furniture) had moved in, and from 1947 to 1952, Montgomery Ward was the tenant.²⁹⁸



MEMORY LANE — This picture was made in 1921 at the southeast corner of the downtown square at South Fredonia Street and shows Neal W. Smith at the wheel of a Model T Ford chassis. K. V. Goodloe is standing.

²⁹⁷ See Sanborn Maps after 1900.

²⁹⁸ Nacogdoches City Directories, 1947-1952.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 77

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas



House of Traditions

312 E. Main

Property #66 and Property #67

One-part Commercial

Non-Contributing

Photo #17

Constructed in 1900, these two neighboring buildings represent a typical example of modest one-part commercial blocks, significantly altered. Both buildings are constructed and clad in brick, though the original surface material and architectural details have been obscured by a man-made stone cladding at the storefront level, and a layer of stucco applied to the area above the transom windows. The storefronts of both

buildings have been modernized, and now feature aluminum-framed plate glass windows and off-set single door entrances. Although the mass and form of both of these buildings are recognizable as historic, the application of non-historic materials and the obliteration of any existing architectural embellishments have rendered these non-contributing elements to the historic district.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 78

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas



Commercial National Bank (1972)
215 E. Main Street
Property #6
One-part commercial
Non-contributing
Photo #18

In 1901, the Commercial National Bank of Nacogdoches opened at the corner of East Main and Church Streets, in a brick building designed by Dietrich Rulfs. The bank was founded by a diverse group of "out of town" investors, including T. J. Williams of Beaumont, Pete and H. H. Youree of Shreveport, W. B. Chew and James A. Baker of Houston, and R. S. Lovett, the president of the Southern Pacific Railroad.²⁹⁹ In 1902, a prominent Nacogdoches citizen named Eugene A. Blount purchased the controlling interest from the founders.

Only five years later, following the fire of 1907, Blount relocated the bank into the E.A. Blount Building at 215 East Main. In 1910, the Commercial National Bank re-organized under the State Guaranty System (precursor of the Federal Deposit Insurance Company, 1933), changing its name to Commercial Guaranty State Bank. With F. Hal Tucker as cashier, Blount ran the bank until his death in 1914. He was succeeded as president of the bank by his son, Eugene H. Blount.³⁰⁰ Later bank presidents included Thomas E. Baker (1928-1945) and Thomas W. Baker (1945). As late as 1951, the Commercial National Bank was still located in the Blount Building, and in fact celebrated their golden anniversary at this location with a open house.³⁰¹

The growth of the bank over time clearly reflected the fortunes of Nacogdoches as a whole.³⁰² For example, in October 1901, the original amount of deposits totaled \$15,580. In only one year, this amount reached \$104,620. By 1921, the bank held eight times as much money, with 815,630. The Depression had an effect on the deposits, and the bank showed a loss in the 1930s. However, the war effort and subsequent recovered allowed the bank to prosper, reaching almost \$2 million by 1941 (\$1,812,940). As Nacogdoches reached the decade of the 1950s, the bank yet again exponential expansion, and by 1950, deposits totaled \$6,774,005.

²⁹⁹ Joe E. Ericson, "Nacogdoches Banks and Bankers," in *Commemorative History of Nacogdoches*, 192-93.

³⁰⁰ McDonald, *Nacogdoches*, 87.

³⁰¹ Daily Sentinel ca 1951.

³⁰² *Commercial National Bank, 1901-1951. 50th Anniversary Booklet*. Nacogdoches, 1951.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection 8 Page 79Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

In 1961, after such an intense period of growth, the bank was in dire need of improved facilities. For a short while, it was moved into a temporary home in the Old Herald Building on North Fredonia.³⁰³ Improvements were made to the original building, including the addition of 1,074 feet of floor space to the building lobby (which had originally covered only 884 feet, and was thus expanded to 1,696 feet). In an effort to create a distinctive and luxurious interior, the new building was installed with Swedish green Cippolino marble, walnut paneling, colonial walnut furniture, and heavy piled wool



BANK'S PRESENT HOME — The modern home of Commercial National bank is located in the S. A. Blount building, at 215 East Main street. The bank recently celebrated its golden anniversary with formal open house.
Daily Sentinel - 1952

carpeting, and antique-brass chandeliers. Other new features included: an increased supply of lock boxes, coupon booths, customer parking, private offices, a coffee bar, and background music by Magnatronics of New York.³⁰⁴ Part of the new bank building was a crypt, or time capsule, in which various pieces of Nacogdoches history and memorabilia were to be placed for "prosperity." These took the form of newspaper articles, pictures and recorded radio programs.³⁰⁵ When the new bank opened in April 1961, it was to great fanfare and large audiences (at least 4,000 people attended the grand opening).³⁰⁶ The concept behind the 1961 building, decorated by Mrs. Jean Baker and George Keith of Houston, was a return to the "atmosphere of colonial times, when Nacogdoches was a dominant center of culture, education, statesmanship, and leadership in the state. In the architectural style and interior décor, the bank has followed a pattern which fits the atmosphere of the town and (sic) emphasizes the beauty and simple grace which evolved as civilization was carved from the wilderness. The bank has, in effect, taken the Nacogdoches University Building, as the epitome of constructive thinking in the days of Nacogdoches' great period of growth and used that era for its inspiration."³⁰⁷

In 1971, about one-half of a square block at East Main and North Fredonia was set for demolition to make room for a new banking facility, patio and garden space.³⁰⁸ The vast expansion effort included the neighboring lots, once the site of the Swift Brothers and Smith Drug Store, and E.C. Bass Department Store.³⁰⁹ The demolition of the required area was a massive undertaking expected to take five months. The construction of the new bank was one of largest construction projects ever to take place in the downtown area. In 1972, the bank occupied its new building, part of which had been the original site of the Old Stone Fort.³¹⁰ After a fire in 1984, the bank further expanded to include the property that had been Stripling's Drug Store. A "modern" drive-through motor bank was also built at 805 South Street.

³⁰³ DS 24 June 1960.

³⁰⁴ "Commercial National Bank Opening Sunday," DS 29 April 1961

³⁰⁵ "In Crypt at Bank: Nacogdoches Leaves Word for Posterity" DS 3 March 1961

³⁰⁶ "4,000 Attend Bank Opening," DS 1 May 1961

³⁰⁷ "Faith in Our Future," DS 29 April 1961

³⁰⁸ DS 8 May 1971.

³⁰⁹ Vertical Files, Commercial National Bank. ETRC Archives.

³¹⁰ Daily Sentinel 27 June 1972

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 80

Nacogdoches Downtown Historic District
Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, Texas

The current building, located on the north side of the *plaza principal*, remains true to the 1971 design. With classical massing and inflections, the Commercial National Bank references the Post Office and Federal building, which is located directly across Main Street. The exterior façade of the bank, faced in red brick, is divided into nine bays. Three of these

bays are marked by expansive arched windows (non-operable), with alternating blank bays. The overall rhythm reads as a-b-aa-b-aa-b-a, with "b" representing a window bay and "a" representing a blank bay. Each bay is demarcated by abstracted, squared, white pilaster. The blank bays are adorned only with a single-course brick ornament suggesting an outline of an arched window with a lantern mounted within. The building is capped by simplified entablature.



1901, 401 E. Main



1907, 215 E. Main



1972, 215 E. Main



Present, 215 E. Main