

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

LISTED:
VLR
03/21/2013
NRHP
05/28/2013

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Gretna Commercial Historic District
Other names/site number: DHR File No. 227-5002
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: North and South Main Street, Henry Street
City or town: Gretna State: VA County: Pittsylvania
Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets
the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic
Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I
recommend that this property be considered significant at the following
level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local
Applicable National Register Criteria:
 X A B X C D

William A. ... Deputy Director 4/4/2013
Signature of certifying official/Title: Date
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: Date

Title : State or Federal agency/bureau
 or Tribal Government

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

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

Number of Resources within Property

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>26</u>	<u>5</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>26</u>	<u>6</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business
COMMERCE/TRADE: financial institution
COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE: department store
COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant
COMMERCE/TRADE: warehouse
SOCIAL: meeting hall
GOVERNMENT: fire station
GOVERNMENT: post office

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business
COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant
SOCIAL: meeting hall
HEALTH CARE: clinic

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH CENTURY AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS:

Commercial Style

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS: Classical Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK, CONCRETE, STUCCO, GLASS,
OTHER: Simulated Stone

Narrative Description

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

Summary Paragraph

The Gretna Commercial Historic District encompasses approximately 6.5 acres at the core of the commercial area in the Town of Gretna, which is located in the north central section of Pittsylvania County, Virginia, and lies about 10 miles north of Chatham, the county seat. The town (population approximately 1,300) is located at the intersection of State Route 40, which runs east-west through the southern end of town, and U.S. Route 29 (Main Street, Seminole Trail), the main north-south route in the region. The historic district incorporates two blocks on the east and west sides of Main Street and one block on the north and south sides of Henry Street. The town is laid out in a general grid pattern with the still active Norfolk-Southern Railway lines running parallel to Main Street on the east side of the historic district.

Nearly all of the resources located within the historic district are commercial in nature, although former governmental and social (meeting hall) resources also are present and a couple of resources are mixed-use (commercial/residential). The district contains 26 contributing

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

buildings, 5 non-contributing buildings, and 1 non-contributing structure. Non-contributing elements in the district either are resources constructed after the identified period of significance (1881-1963) or are historical buildings that have been significantly altered. The architectural character of the resources reflects the town's early-to-mid-twentieth century historic appearance. Early-twentieth century commercial buildings tend to be one-to-two-story masonry (brick or concrete block) examples with one- and two-part façades detailed with decorative brickwork and plate glass storefronts. Awnings and hanging signage also are common features of the district. Mid-twentieth-century commercial examples also are of masonry construction with flat or sloped roofs, and tend to reflect a freestanding commercial design with paved parking located around the building. Most buildings are executed in a Commercial style, but there are also examples of Art Deco, Classical Revival, and Colonial Revival buildings in the district. Gretna's residential neighborhoods surround the central downtown commercial area and beyond the town limits, the land turns quickly to agricultural use. The boundaries of the historic district encompass the concentration of historic commercial buildings that comprise the extant core of Gretna's commercial downtown. The boundaries were drawn to exclude adjacent non-contributing (post-1963) development.

Narrative Description

Setting

Pittsylvania County, the largest county in the Commonwealth of Virginia, is bounded on the north by the Roanoke River, on the south by the North Carolina State line, on the east by Halifax County, and on the west by Franklin County. The county lies within the Piedmont Plateau province and its topography is that of a high plateau dissected by numerous streams that have resulted in gently rolling hills. Numerous significant mountains and ridges standing several hundred feet in height also are located within the county including White Oak Mountain, Brushy Mountain, and Smith Mountain.¹ The Town of Gretna lies at the intersection of State Route 40 (east-to-west) and U.S. Route 29 (north-to-south) in the north central portion of the county. The topography in the town is hilly with some high areas of flat land. In the late 1960s, the U.S. Route 29 Bypass was constructed that skirts the town limits on the west side. Gretna initially encompassed approximately 408.5 acres; on December 31, 1984, an additional 153.08 acres on the west side of town was annexed into the town limits.² Smith Mountain Lake, created in 1963 by the impoundment of the Roanoke and Blackwater rivers, lies west of Gretna.

Historic District Boundaries and Resources

The Gretna Commercial Historic District encompasses the commercial core of this early-twentieth-century town. Commercial development in Gretna always has been focused along U.S. Route 29 (Main Street), which is a major north-to-south arterial route through the region. Railroad tracks laid through the area in the late nineteenth century paralleled the roadway, which spurred commercial development in the town. Although Gretna's initial (ca. 1880) commercial development occurred north of the historic district boundaries, by the first decade of the twentieth century, such development, which included tobacco warehouses, liveries, and general merchandise stores, had moved into the area between present-day Center and School streets (within the historic district boundaries).

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

The historic district includes two irregularly sized blocks on Main Street and one block on Henry Street. All streets are paved with concrete curbs and sidewalks. Few street trees or vegetation is present within the historic district, although the Franklin Junction Historic Railroad Park is located just north of the district near the site of the former railroad depot. Buildings abut the sidewalk on the front and many extend the depth of the property lot. The west side of Main Street also features an unpaved alleyway, which facilitates local traffic to Main Street stores.

The resources within the historic district boundaries, constructed between about 1881 and 1963, represent the predominant architectural styles of their time. Most of the early buildings are of brick construction, one to two stories in height, and with metal-clad sloping roofs obscured by parapet walls. Stylistically, the buildings are characterized as “commercial,” meaning that they feature broad, plate glass storefronts along the first-floor levels and may be ornamented with decorative brickwork, cornices, or other details. Some of the buildings have been reclad with manufactured stone (e.g., Permastone) or vinyl sheathing. The mid-twentieth-century buildings, most of which are located on Henry Street, reflect a more austere architectural character with little to no applied ornamentation. In general, these buildings also are of masonry construction (concrete block with or without brick facing) with flat or shed roofs and with large expanses of glass on the façade.

Detailed Description

Gretna was first known as Franklin Junction, so named for the railroad stop near the intersection of present-day North Main Street and Northside Drive. When a post office was established there in 1879, the name was changed to Elba to avoid confusion with an existing Franklin post office. In 1901, when the town of Elba was incorporated, it consisted of five stores, two livery stables, one hotel (the Hotel Elba, also called the Virginia Hotel), one drug store, and about 150 residents who lived in the neighborhoods west and east of present-day Main Street. A.H. Tardy built the town’s first store in 1878 near the railroad at the southwest corner of the intersection of present-day Music and Main streets (north of the historic district). Tardy, who built his home behind his store, also served as Elba’s first postmaster from 1879 to 1882 and likely operated the post office from his store. Later, C.C. Shelton purchased Tardy’s house (227-5022) and his store.⁴

The railroad had a significant influence on the commercial growth in Elba and within a decade, commercial enterprises developed further south along Main Street (referred to as “the county road” in early deeds), which is the central organizing feature of the historic district. Much of the land along Main Street was owned by a few families, including the Creasys, the Feageans, the Mayhews, the Sheltons, and the Talbotts, who established businesses there, but also sold lots to others interested in commercial pursuits. Descendants of these families still live in Gretna. No churches or schools were constructed along Main Street; these institutions were located west and east of downtown, which was reserved primarily for commerce.

Through the first decade of the twentieth century, many of Gretna’s commercial buildings were of frame construction. Historical photographs indicate that livery stables, tobacco warehouses, store buildings, the Masonic hall, and the Franklin Junction depot were of frame construction. A few frame residences also lined Main Street, but were later moved or demolished to make room

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

for commercial development. One exception was the storehouse built by Thomas C. and Robert H. Creasy (227-5002-0017) on property they purchased from Jeremiah Talbott in 1881. This large, three-story, brick building fronted on the east side South Main Street with the railroad tracks located behind it. A wooden ramp extended from the second floor of the store to the railroad to facilitate loading and unloading of freight. Although predominantly used as a storehouse, the building later held apartments and public meeting space.⁵ This building is located at the north end of the historic district and is the oldest resource in the district.

The first two decades of the twentieth century were a vibrant period in the growth of Gretna's downtown commercial area. Business licenses for 1915 indicate that there were nine general merchandise stores, two meat markets, two restaurants, three barbershops, two jewelry stores, one drugstore, two banks, and two physicians' offices. In addition, there were still three active livery stables, two blacksmith shops, three tobacco auction warehouses, two hotels, three boarding houses, two motion picture theaters, and two automobile dealerships.⁶ Railroad patrons, as well as local residents, supported these businesses, which helped the area to flourish.

The early frame commercial buildings in Gretna faced onto Main Street (then unpaved), and were of one and two stories. A photograph from 1909 looking north from about the center of the historic district shows the Elba [tobacco] Warehouse, a storage warehouse for Export Tobacco Co., the Adams & McGhee livery stable, a few vacant lots on the west side of the street, and the frame Masonic hall. These buildings lined the west side of the street, while only one or two frame buildings, including Little's blacksmith shop, were located on the east side. Of these buildings, only the Masonic hall survives (227-5002-0013). Another photograph, taken around 1913 from the east side of Main Street and looking west at the northern section of the historic district, shows the buildings lining the west side of Main Street. These buildings are identified (south to north) as the Adams & McGhee livery stable; a two-story frame office building built by Dr. O. L. Ramsey; the one-story People's Bank of Elba; the frame Masonic hall with a drugstore on the first floor; the Gretna Hardware store; Smith Dickerson's barbershop; Dalton's livery stable (later, Level Run Livery Stable); a two-story store, which served as the town's first liquor dispensary; and a few residences.⁷

Of these buildings, the bank (227-5002-0011), Masonic hall (227-5002-0013), Dalton building (227-5002-0015), and store (227-5002-0016) are extant. The Bank of Elba received its charter in 1907 and constructed a building at 104 S. Main Street (227-5002-0011). In 1912, when the Bank of Elba terminated operations, the Peoples Bank of Elba occupied the building. In 1922, the bank became the Peoples Bank of Gretna, reflecting the town's change of name. The original building, as shown in historical photographs, was a one-story structure with a flat roof and parapet and flanking Ionic columns set in antis with a full entablature on the façade. In the 1920s, the building was raised to two stories, given a pedimented front, and paired Corinthian columns on the façade. The bank remained in this location until 1955, when it moved to a new building further north along Main Street. The building was remodeled for use as a clothing store and at present is vacant.⁸ The classical front has been removed and part of the façade is now covered with vinyl siding.

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

The Masonic hall, likewise, has undergone architectural transformation from its original 1902 appearance. At that time, the building, located at 102 S. Main Street (227-5002-0013), reflected a domestic appearance as a two-story, gable-front, frame structure. Around 1920, a brick front with stepped pediment was added to the building and in 1930, the building was completely remodeled to its present Classical Revival-style appearance. The Anderson Lodge #258 A.M. & A.F. is a two-story brick-clad building with an arched parapet front, brick quoins, and cast stone urns located atop the building corners. Since 1902, the building has housed commercial space on the first floor and meeting space on the second floor. The Lodge is the district's most architecturally distinguished building.⁹

In 1904, H.B. and Pomp Dalton purchased land and a livery stable on Main Street from G.W. Feageans. The livery stable may have been the one built in 1895 by William J. Matherson & Co. In 1910, Pomp purchased the property from his father and operated it as the Level Run livery stable and around 1914, Dalton built a two-story brick building in front of the livery stable, operating it as the Gretna Garage, reflecting the change in transportation modes. The building, located at 105 N. Main Street (227-5002-0015), later housed the Crowell Auto Co. (1917), the Tompkins Motor Co. (1930), and the Pitt Motor Company (1940).¹⁰ The brick building retains much of its original character, distinguished by a large central opening for cars to drive through and flanking side bays and a corbelled cornice. The building now houses a restaurant.

By 1914, a two-story brick store was built north of the Dalton building at 103 N. Main Street (227-5002-0016), and it served as a "dispensary," which was licensed to sell liquor. The dispensary closed in 1918 when Prohibition passed. From 1925 to 1939, Lewis J. Allen operated a general merchandise business in the building. A photograph of the building from about 1930 shows the building as a store, but the remnants of a painted sign on the top half of the façade indicate that Crowell Auto also occupied the building for a time. From 1939 to 1942, a theater operated in the building, then in 1946, the use reverted back to a general store. During the late twentieth century, the building housed an appliance and furniture store.¹¹ The building has been little altered from its original appearance and retains a large storefront and brick corbelled frame around the façade.

Another district resource construction during the 1910s is the former drug store and office building located at 308-312 S. Main Street (227-5002-0004), which was the site of Thomas Talbott's wheelwright shop (before 1891). In 1893, Dr. Calvin Acuff purchased a lot from Talbott and constructed a one-story brick drugstore and office building (the two northern storefronts). In the 1920s, a small office section was added to the south end of the building. The building has housed a meat market, clothing store, restaurant, and offices of the Hunt Oil Co.¹² This one-story, Commercial style building retains its historical appearance and architectural character that includes handsome decorative brickwork with open joints, soldier courses, enframed and recessed sign tablets, and a sloping front parapet with a half-round centerpiece that is reflective of Mission-style architecture.

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

Between 1920 and 1930, most of the frame buildings along Main Street in the historic district were replaced with more substantial brick buildings. This period also saw the rise of the automobile in American culture and automobile dealerships, garages, and gas stations soon joined general stores and offices along Main Street. Among these resources is the former Texaco Service Station, located on the east side of Main Street (227-5002-0005), which was built around 1920 and operated by S.H. and Maude Creasy. The building originally was an example of a “house with canopy”-style gasoline station that became popular during the 1910s and 1920s.¹³ The one-story, brick station was covered by a hipped roof that extended west into the street and projected over the gasoline pumps. In the 1950s when Main Street was widened, the projecting canopy was removed from the building. The truncated building then served as a restaurant and at present is vacant. Despite the removal of its canopy, the building retains much of its architectural character.

Around 1919, the Right Motor Company opened in Gretna on the west side of S. Main Street just north of the Hunt Oil Co. building (227-5002-0004). The one-story, brick showroom and garage was leased to the Central Motor Co. (later Doss Ford) in 1936, which operated in the building until the 1980s. The building was demolished in the late twentieth century and the lot remains vacant.

In 1919, F.I. Graber, G.B. Creasy, and W.T. Spencer, partners in the Graber & Creasy Co. that owned the storehouse on the east side of S. Main Street (227-5002-0017), purchased a lot on the west side of Main Street and built a two-story, brick store. The building, located at 118 S. Main Street (227-5002-0007) held a grocery section on the north, a furniture department at the rear, and a dry goods area on the south side of the store. Further to the back of the store was a flue shop that manufactured flues for local tobacco barns. Graber & Creasy operated in this location until about 1960.¹⁴ Although a subsequent owner remodeled the building and divided it into two store spaces, the building retains much of its original exterior architectural character as a typical early-twentieth-century two-part commercial style appearance with storefronts dominating the first floor level. The facade is embellished with decorative brickwork that features vertical rows of brick at the stringcourse, recessed and framed sign tablets, rowlock courses, and a distinctive cornice line with alternating recessed vertical bricks with projecting bands of brick above and below.

Another significant addition to Gretna’s commercial core during the early 1920s was the W.D. Love and Co. grocery store located at 110 S. Main Street (227-5002-0010). The building, constructed around 1921, was located on a lot between Dr. Ramsey’s office on the north and the Adams & McGhee livery stable on the south. Love’s store was originally one-story, but in 1928, a second story was added. Love’s later opened a modern supermarket on Henry Street (227-5002-0024) and the Main Street store was used entirely for furniture, appliances, and hardware. In 1986, Adrian Barbour opened Adrian’s Electric, Plumbing and Heating in the Main Street Building, which was the last business to operate in the building.¹⁵ This building reflects a typical early-twentieth-century two-part commercial style appearance and features a full-width storefront consisting of a splayed and recessed centrally located entrance with paired wood and glass doors and a wide transom above. Paired plate glass windows flank the entrance bay. The

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

panels below the windows appear to be Vitrolite that has been painted. A span of vertically installed profiled-metal siding extends across the top of the storefront, possibly obscuring original details, and a wooden cornice separates the first and second floor levels. At present, the building is being remodeled.¹⁶

Around 1925, a narrow, but highly ornamented brick building was added to the west side of Main Street. Located at 104 S. Main Street (227-5002-0012) and adjacent to the Anderson Lodge (227-5002-0013), this one-story, two-bay wide building is one of the more elaborately detailed buildings in the historic district and retains its fine brickwork and intact upper facade that includes a machiolated cornice with corbelling and mousetooth elements, and soldier and row lock courses of brick. The building is an example of an early twentieth century, one-part commercial structure and its facade reads as a single, vertical element. Some alteration has occurred to the front of the building, but it retains its overall historical appearance.

Although the Great Depression in the 1930s slowed commercial construction locally, two buildings were built in the historic district at that time. The buildings, which are adjacent to one another at 112-116 S. Main Street were built between Graber & Creasy's store (227-5002-0007) on the south and W.D. Love's store (227-5002-0010) on the north. The building at 114-116 S. Main Street (227-5002-0008) was constructed in two phases between 1930 and 1945. This building has housed a jewelry store and restaurant and at present, a specialty store and church occupy the building. The building at 112 S. Main Street was constructed as Mayhew's Hardware Store (227-5002-009). The original brick façade of the building was reclad in the late 1940s or early 1950s with simulated masonry (Permastone). Such remodeling to existing buildings was common and another example is seen at 103-109 S. Main Street (227-5002-0018 and 227-5002-0019). The cementitious material was advertised as an inexpensive way to "update" an older building and was touted as maintenance free, fireproof, and energy efficient.¹⁷ This modification has over time become a historic element of the building. The building currently holds offices of a development company.

Many of the district's 1940s-era resources were built as part of the expanding automobile industry. In 1940, S.V. Berger constructed a tall, one-story concrete block building at 318 S. Main Street (227-5002-0002). Berger operated a filling station and garage in the building and a restaurant occupied another portion. By the mid-1940s, the Berger Motor Co. was the local dealer for Plymouth-DeSoto cars and International Trucks. At present, Tyler's Florist—a 50-year-old Gretna business, occupies the building.¹⁸ The building is an example of a freestanding commercial building with paved parking surrounding the building; the concrete block building lacks overt architectural detail and is largely utilitarian in appearance. In 1949, the Pitt Motor Co., which specialized in Chevrolet products, moved from its location on N. Main Street (227-5002-0015) to its new building at 320 S. Main Street (227-5002-0001). The southernmost building in the historic district, this one-story, masonry building housed a showroom and a body shop. The building now houses an electrical lighting company and is another example of a mid-twentieth-century freestanding commercial building.

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

The Doss & Dalton Co.'s store, located at 103-105 S. Main Street, was built in 1946 and was the dealership for Kaiser-Frazer vehicles, as well as Dodge and Rambler vehicles, Case and Massey-Harris tractors and machinery. Doss also constructed the 5 & 10 store adjacent on the south of the dealership at 107-109 S. Main Street (227-5002-0019).¹⁹ In the 1950s, both of these one-story, concrete block buildings were reclad with simulated masonry (Permastone).

The Amoco Service Station, located at 101 N. Main Street (227-5002-0014), also built in 1940, is notable as the district's only example of Art Deco-style design. The style is reflected in the building's curvilinear corner entrance tower and rounded canopy that projects over the entrance door. Many of the Amoco Oil Co's stations were later remodeled, so this example is notable for its intact form.²⁰

In addition to Doss's 5 & 10, the Mick-or-Mack grocery store located at 201 S. Main Street (227-5002-0006) also was built in the 1950s. This two-story, mixed-use building is of masonry construction with a brick façade and holds a full-width storefront on the first floor and apartments on the second floor.

Commercial development along the 100 block of Henry Street began in the early twentieth century, but its present appearance reflects development that occurred in the 1950s and 1960s. The former Gretna Fire Station and Town Hall, located at 116-118 Henry Street (227-5002-0022), is the sole example of Colonial Revival-style in the district. Residential in nature, the fire station has the appearance of a one-and-a-half-story, brick Cape Cod dwelling and is covered by a side-facing gable roof with front-facing gable dormers. The west end bay that served as a garage for the fire truck has been modified for use as an office.

The other resources located along Henry Street were built between 1952 and 1963. These buildings are one story in height, of masonry construction, and most are covered by flat or low-sloping roofs with parapet walls. Several buildings have brick veneer facades and include the use of Roman bricks. Love's Supermarket (227-5002-0024), located at 101 Henry Street and now a physician's office, was built in 1957 and is notable as the second location for this Gretna business that started on Main Street (227-5002-0010). The former Gretna Post Office, located at 111 Henry Street (227-5002-0025), was constructed in 1955; this building was used until the new post office was built in 1967 on Watts Street.

Integrity

The resources in the Gretna Commercial Historic District reflect commercial development in this small Virginia town from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. The majority of buildings were built between 1910 and 1940 and reflect Commercial-style architecture that was popular during those periods. Several resources are associated with the automobile industry and often are characterized by overhead doors or large showroom windows. Several general mercantile, grocery, and specialty stores were constructed in the district and typically feature full-width glass storefronts with display windows.

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
 Virginia
 County and State

Name of Property

The majority of the resources in the historic district retain good overall integrity. Some buildings have been altered by the inclusion of new storefronts, windows, or signage, but in general, these alterations have been in keeping with the historic character and appearance of the buildings and have not significantly diminished the integrity of the buildings or the district. Overall, the resources retain their original forms, building materials, and character-defining features even as uses have changed over the years. Viewed collectively, these buildings create a cohesive, linear commercial area that is united by visual and physical continuity. There are only two vacant lots in the district.

GRETNA COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT INVENTORY

The following is a list of resources located within the Gretna Commercial Historic District boundaries. The resources are listed alphabetically by road and chronologically by address number. VDHR ID numbers also are listed. In the following inventory all resources, both primary and secondary, have been considered either contributing or non-contributing based upon the areas of significance identified under Criteria A and C as: Architecture and Commerce, and based upon the period of significance identified as 1881 to 1960. All non-contributing resources therefore have been so noted for being less than fifty years old or for having been significantly altered so that they no longer reflect their historical appearance or character.

MAIN STREET, South

101 Main Street, South	227-5002-0017			
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Mixed Use: Commercial/Domestic, Stories 3, Style: Commercial, ca. 1881				
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Mixed Use: Commercial/Domestic Building Contributing Total: 1				
102 Main Street, South	227-5002-0013			
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Meeting Hall, Stories 2, Style: Classical Revival, 1902				
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building Contributing Total: 1				
103-105 Main Street, South	227-5002-0018			
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Commercial Building, Stories 1, Style: Commercial, 1946				
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building Contributing Total: 1				
104 Main Street, South	227-5002-0012			
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Commercial Building, Stories 1, Style: Commercial, ca. 1925				
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building Contributing Total: 1				
106 Main Street, South	227-5002-0011			
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Commercial Building, Stories 2, Style: Commercial, post 1921				
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building Contributing Total: 1				
107-109 Main Street, South	227-5002-0019			
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Commercial Building, Stories 1, Style: Commercial, post 1950				
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building Contributing Total: 1				
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Shed Non-Contributing Total: 2				
110 Main Street, South	227-5002-0010			
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Commercial Building, Stories 2, Style: Commercial, ca. 1930				
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building Contributing Total: 1				
112 Main Street, South	227-5002-0009			
<i>Other DHR No:</i> 227-5001				

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Commercial Building, Stories 2, Style: Commercial, ca. 1930			
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building	Contributing		Total: 1
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Shed	Contributing		Total: 1
114-116 Main Street, South	227-5002-0008		
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Commercial Building, Stories 1, Style: Commercial, ca. 1930			
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building	Contributing		Total: 1
118 Main Street, South	227-5002-0007		
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Commercial Building, Stories 2, Style: Commercial, ca. 1930			
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building	Contributing		Total: 1
201 Main Street, South	227-5002-0006		
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Mixed Use: Commercial/Domestic, Stories 2, Style: Commercial, ca. 1950			
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Mixed Use: Commercial/Domestic	Contributing		Total: 1
308-312 Main Street, South	227-5002-0004		
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Commercial Building, Stories 1, Style: Commercial, ca. 1920			
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building	Contributing		Total: 1
314 Main Street, South	227-5002-0003		
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Commercial Building, Stories 2, Style: Commercial, ca. 1930			
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building	Contributing		Total: 1
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Other [Gas Pump Canopy]	Non-Contributing		Total: 1
318 Main Street, South	227-5002-0002		
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Commercial Building, Stories 1, Style: Commercial, ca. 1920			
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building	Contributing		Total: 1
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Shelter	Non-Contributing		Total: 1
320 Main Street, South	227-5002-0001		
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Commercial Building, Stories 1, Style: Commercial, ca. 1950			
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building	Contributing		Total: 1
East Side, Main Street, South	227-5002-0005		
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Service Station, Stories 1, Style: Commercial, ca. 1920			
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Service Station	Contributing		Total: 1
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Other [Gas Tank Support]	Non-Contributing		Total: 1

MAIN STREET, North

101 Main Street, North	227-5002-0014		
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Service Station, Stories 1, Style: Art Deco, ca. 1940			
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Service Station	Contributing		Total: 1
103 Main Street, North	227-5002-0016		
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Commercial Building, Stories 2, Style: Commercial, ca. 1914			
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building	Contributing		Total: 1
105 Main Street, North	227-5002-0015		
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Commercial Building, Stories 2, Style: Commercial, ca. 1915			
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building	Contributing		Total: 1

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

HENRY STREET

101 Henry Street	227-5002-0024		
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Commercial Building, Stories 1, Style: Commercial, ca. 1957			
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building		Contributing	Total: 1
106-108 Henry Street	227-5002-0020		
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Commercial Building, Stories 1, Style: Commercial, 1963			
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building		Contributing	Total: 1
111 Henry Street	227-5002-0025		
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Post Office, Stories 1, Style: Commercial, 1955			
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Post Office		Contributing	Total: 1
114 Henry Street	227-5002-0021		
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Commercial Building, Stories 1, Style: Commercial, ca. 1952			
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building		Contributing	Total: 1
116-118 Henry Street	227-5002-0022		
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Fire Station, Stories 1.5, Style: Colonial Revival, 1949			
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Fire Station		Contributing	Total: 1
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building		Non-Contributing	Total: 1
120 Henry Street	227-5002-0023		
<i>Primary Resource Information:</i> Commercial Building, Stories 1, Style: Commercial, ca. 1960			
<i>Individual Resource Status:</i> Commercial Building		Contributing	Total: 1

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

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

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1881-1963

Significant Dates

1901

1916

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Gretna Commercial Historic District encompasses approximately 6.5 acres in the core of the commercial area in the Town of Gretna, Pittsylvania County, Virginia. The construction of the Lynchburg and Danville Railroad through the area between 1872-1874 gave impetus to a growing settlement first known as Franklin Junction. In 1901, the town's name was changed to Elba and in 1916, the name was changed to Gretna. The historic district contains 26 contributing buildings, 5 non-contributing buildings, and 1 non-contributing structure. The district is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C with a period of significance from 1881 to 1963, which extends from the construction date of the earliest building in the historic district (227-5002-0017) to the most recent construction date of a contributing resource (227-5002-0020). The district is eligible under Criterion A in the area of Commerce as representative of the historic commercial core of the Town of Gretna. The district, which is centered on Main Street, contains many resources dating to the early period of Gretna's development. The district also is eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture and as a significant and intact concentration of historic commercial, governmental, and social architectural resources that are examples of distinctive commercial buildings that in construction and architectural style are representative of their period. Exceptions to the Commercial style include the single governmental building in the district, the former Gretna Fire Station and Town Hall (227-5002-0022), executed in the Colonial Revival style; the Anderson Lodge #258 A.M. & A.F. (227-5002-0013), executed in the Classical Revival style; and the former Amoco Oil Co. Service Station (227-5002-0017), executed in the Art Deco style. The historic district is eligible on a local level of significance as a concentration of historic buildings comprising the extant core of Gretna's commercial downtown.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Historical Development

Although Pittsylvania County was formed in 1767, the Town of Gretna, which was first established as Elba (and formerly known as Franklin Junction) in 1901, is a relatively new town compared to others in the area and in the state. By comparison, the county seat of Chatham was established in 1777 and the City of Danville, located in the southern part of the county, was established in 1793 (as a city in 1893). Only the Town of Hurt incorporated as a town in 1966, is younger than Gretna.

Because the county was and remains predominantly rural in character, small crossroad towns and railroad stops developed into commercial centers that served the surrounding populace. Gretna followed a typical pattern seen in other areas of Virginia where a passenger and freight stop along the railroad led to the establishment of a settlement, a post office, and eventually a thriving town. As a regional commercial center, Gretna consisted of a variety of governmental offices, post offices, stores, and workshops that supported local commerce. Although numerous crops were grown on county farms, the number one cash crop in Pittsylvania from the mid-nineteenth

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

century to present has been bright-leaf tobacco. Gretna, like other county commercial areas, supported this market through the establishment of warehouses and as a railroad shipping point to larger markets. Wheat and corn also were grown on nearly every farm, often for home use, and could be brought into Gretna to one of several grist mills. Tobacco and wheat remained the number one crops on Pittsylvania farms through the late twentieth century.²¹

Origins and the Coming of the Railroad

Gretna's origins can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century and the period of the American Civil War. Local legend holds that at that time, Edward N. Dillard deeded to Jeremiah Talbott 408 acres of land as payment for Talbott's service as a substitute for Dillard in the Confederate Army.²² This land later became the area on which Gretna was founded. Talbott returned from the war, built a dwelling on his land—the first in the area that became Gretna—and in 1872, deeded to the Lynchburg and Danville Railroad an 80-foot-wide right-of-way running north-to-south through his property.²³ About the time that the Lynchburg and Danville line was completed in 1874, the Franklin & Pittsylvania Railroad (F&P) began construction of an east-to-west line that connected the two counties and hauled ore and minerals, including iron, baratese, and manganese, from the mines at Pittsville (west of Gretna).²⁴ In 1879, a depot was built at the junction of the two rail lines, which led to the area being named "The Junction" and later "Franklin Junction." Once the line was completed to Rocky Mount, it also hauled lumber, fertilizer, and tobacco.²⁵

The F&P, known locally as "Old Fast & Perfect," was built with the purpose of providing a narrow gauge connection between Franklin Junction to Rocky Mount, Franklin County. The sardonic nickname stemmed from the line's notoriously slow pace. Part of the line, chartered earlier in 1876, ran from Franklin Junction to Pittsville and consisted of about eight miles of track connecting the mines of Pittsville with the Virginia Midland Railroad's depot near Ward's Mill. In spring 1880, the first F&P locomotive completed the full 39-mile run from Rocky Mount to Franklin Junction; the trip took four hours.²⁶ Because the line was built on narrow gauge, freight cars coming into Gretna had to change to a wider trunk (wheels) to connect with outgoing Virginia Midland standard lines there. After six years of operation, the F&P came under the control of the Richmond and Danville (R&D) Railroad (later, a part of Southern Railway), which upgraded the line to standard gauge. The R&D also provided upgraded depots and built ten new buildings at existing stops, including Gretna. The F&P continued to operate until 1932.²⁷

In 1890, Thomas Creasy deeded land to the Virginia Midland Railroad Co. to build a turntable at Franklin Junction.²⁸ Additional railroad construction in town included a coal chute, a sand shed, section worker houses, a maintenance equipment shed, and two water towers, all constructed on the east side of the railroad tracks and north of the depot. Both freight and passenger service was available through Elba. Restaurants were established near the tracks that provided quick meals for crew and passengers, as well as the large Hotel Elba, which was torn down in 1967.²⁹

Although the railroad had served as a significant transportation mode in the county for several decades, in the late nineteenth century, the eastern and western sections of the county were not served by a railroad. Many farmers who used the railroad as a means to ship their products were

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

nearly 10 to 20 miles away from a depot. In 1894, the Southern Railway, which ran a main north-to-south line (from Washington, D.C. to Atlanta) through the center of Pittsylvania County, absorbed the Lynchburg and Danville Railroad. At Danville, the Southern branched eastward to Richmond and Norfolk and the Danville & Western extended westward.³⁰

The train tracks through Gretna are still active; however, most of the historical resources associated with the railroad are no longer extant. As transportation modes shifted towards automobiles and trucks, fewer trains stopped at the Gretna Depot. Passenger service stopped by the 1950s. The water tanks were torn down in the mid-1950s and in 1976, the depot was closed and was demolished a few years later. A marker was placed at the foundation remains of the depot chimney. When Elba was founded, the chimney served as the geographical center of the town, which radiated one-half-mile from that point. Part of this land is now included in the Franklin Junction Historic Railroad Park, just north of the historic district.

Completion of the F&P brought additional growth to the area. The same year that the F&P was completed, a post office was established at Franklin Junction. The name was changed to Elba to avoid confusion with an existing Franklin post office. A. Hunt Tardy served as the first postmaster and operated the post office from his store, which he built at the corner of present-day Music and Main streets, just across from the Lynchburg and Danville line on land that he purchased from Talbott.³¹

The establishment of the railroad and the presence of the main county road (i.e., U.S. Route 29) provided incentive for growth in the area. The Lynchburg and Danville depot formerly located at Wards Spring was moved to Franklin Junction and the small settlement at Galveston and the mill located there (near Whitehorn Creek) diminished as Franklin Junction grew. In 1925, the Galveston Mill, producers of flour and feeds, relocated to Gretna's Main Street. The mill remained the town's main industry (employing 35-40) until the complex burned in 1953. In 1901, the town was incorporated as Elba and consisted of five stores, two livery stables, one hotel, one drug store, and about 150 residents. J. Lee Hunter served as the first mayor. The charter of Elba was renewed and amended in 1912. In 1916, the year that the town name was changed to Gretna, the town received special permission from the General Assembly to operate a "dispensary" for the sale of alcoholic beverages (227-5002-0016).³² Proceeds from the sales funded construction of sidewalks in town, the first high school auditorium, and an early sewage system. The store was operated until 1916 when Prohibition was passed. The building later housed an automotive shop, general store, and appliance and furniture stores.

In 1880, Robert H. Creasy and his brother Thomas C. Creasy purchased adjoining lots from Talbott and constructed another store and warehouse building on the east side of present-day Main Street (227-5002-0017). The Creasys operated a store from this building, the oldest in the historic district, until about 1920, when they moved to another building on the east of Main Street (227-5002-0007). Talbott sold other parcels to several of Gretna's early settlers and businessmen. No plat map for a planned development of downtown has been located, and it appears that Talbott generally sold off lots as demand required, resulting in irregular lot sizes and properties.

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

The Anderson Lodge #258 was organized in 1894 under the leadership of E.B. Fitzgerald. The lodge members first met in the old Hotel Elba, as well as in the Creasy warehouse. In 1902, Thomas C. Creasy donated the land upon which a new lodge was erected at 102 S. Main Street. R.I. Anderson furnished the lumber for the frame building. Around 1920, a brick stepped façade was added to the frame building and in the 1930s, the building was remodeled to its present appearance. For over 100 years, this building has provided commercial space on the first floor level and meeting space for the lodge on the second floor. It is the sole social institution located within the historic district.

Twentieth Century Prosperity

Pittsylvania County lies in the Commonwealth's bright-leaf tobacco belt and for nearly 100 years the region has been the leading market in the world for this highly desirable product. Danville was the center of the region's industry, but Gretna also played an important role in the marketing of tobacco.³³ Initially, local tobacco warehouses in Gretna served as distributors for tobacco grown in the region. The one-story, frame warehouses lined Main Street and were conveniently located near the railroad. In quick succession, four warehouses were built in the downtown area. S.H. Creasy's warehouse was the first built for the sale of flue-cured (bright leaf) tobacco and it was operated by Reaves, Chambers, and Co. C. E. Shelton built the next warehouse, which was operated by Reaves & Worley. Dennis Dalton and Jake Berger built another warehouse, which was moved to a lot on Main Street, and S.H. Creasy's brick warehouse operated only a short time before fire destroyed it.³⁴ During the first decades of the twentieth century, Danville annually handled 20 to 30 million pounds of tobacco. At the same time, Gretna handled two million pounds annually. Other major agricultural products in the county included beef, pork, poultry, dairy, and truck produce. These products were shipped to Richmond, Norfolk, Washington, D.C., and Baltimore via the railroad.³⁵

In addition to being an important industrial site and tobacco center, Gretna also served as an important commercial area that served the surrounding rural population. In 1920, Gretna's population was 420.³⁶ However, on weekends and holidays that population ballooned as farmers came to town for supplies and socializing. General mercantile stores, grocery stores, hardware stores, drugstores, and doctor's offices were part of the early development of the commercial core. Notable groceries located in the historic district during this period include Graber & Creasy Co. (227-5002-0017 and 227-5002-0007) and W.D. Love and Co. (227-5002-0010). A drugstore was located in a building constructed by Dr. Calvin Acuff (227-5002-0004) and Shelton's Barbershop (227-5002-0012) and Smith Dickerson's Barbershop (not extant) were also located along Main Street. These trades were soon joined by several establishments that served the growing automobile industry and included the Dalton garage (227-5002-0015) and Crowell Auto Co. (224-5002-0016), as well as service stations such as the Texaco station (227-5002-0005). Additional automobile-related businesses were built in the historic district during the 1940s, including the Pitt Motor Co. (227-5002-0001), the Berger Motor Co. (227-5002-0002), the Central Motor Co. (not extant), and the Amoco Oil Co. service station (227-5002-0014).

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

The prosperity of the region and the growing population also resulted in modern amenities in the town. By the early 1930s, Gretna boasted a water and sewage plant, concrete street sidewalks, electricity, and telephone service. The latter was begun in 1904 by the Elba Telephone Company and later by the Peoples Mutual Telephone Co., which was chartered in 1920.³⁷

Like much of Virginia, Gretna remained largely segregated through the mid-twentieth century. Although local Gretna's train depot and schools were segregated through the 1950s, residents recall that African-American residents purchased in many of the commercial stores along Main Street. As noted, black businessmen also operated businesses along Main Street, including Smith Dickerson who ran a barbershop through the 1930s. Many of Gretna's black residents lived on the east side of the railroad tracks, and stores and restaurants operated by African Americans, as well as schools and churches, were established in the neighborhood in that area.³⁸

Architecturally, the majority of the resources in the district are examples of typical one- and two-part Commercial style buildings that are one to two stories in height. These buildings are detailed with strong horizontal cornices and stringcourses that visually divide the façade. Architectural detailing, which is seen predominantly in decorative brickwork rather than in applied ornamentation, is focused on the front of the buildings since many share party walls on the sides. The majority of these buildings were constructed prior to 1950, were built abutting the public sidewalk, and feature large storefronts or plate glass windows on the first-floor level with a separate treatment (generally, standardized double-hung fenestration or casement windows) above.³⁹

Because the lots on Main Street were built out, commercial development in the 1950s and 1960s began to spread to adjacent side streets, such as Henry Street. Although some commercial buildings were built on the side streets earlier in the century, at present these areas reflect their mid-twentieth century appearance. As with the businesses on Main Street, there was a wide variety of uses among the shops. A couple of former governmental offices located on Henry Street are the Fire Station and Town Hall (1949, 227-5002-0022) and the post office (1955, 227-5002-0025). In 1952, Rowland's Barbershop opened at 114 Henry Street (227-5002-0021) and in 1957, Love's Supermarket opened a modern store at 101 Henry Street (227-5002-0024). Automotive stores and specialty shops also were built along the street. Although the Fire Station was executed in a Colonial Revival-style of architecture, the other buildings reflected a mid-century modern Commercial style that featured wide expanses of glass on the façade, flat windows, and limited ornamentation. In addition, these buildings are generally "freestanding," that is they sit apart from surrounding buildings, whereas the buildings along Main Street were often built with an adjoining wall.

By the mid-twentieth century, tobacco was being transported to the market in Danville via trucks. Tobacco warehouses were no longer needed in Gretna and rail services slowly diminished. In recent years, downtown Gretna has suffered waning prosperity as older businesses have closed. Some longtime Gretna businesses, such as Tyler's Florist and Western Auto Hardware, remain as links to Gretna's vibrant commercial past. No service stations remain, but restaurants, barbershops, and specialty stores are still active. At present, the non-profit Gretna

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

Little Theatre owns the old Graber & Creasy warehouse (227-5002-0017), and the group has undertaken significant rehabilitation and renovation projects on this historic building. Renovations of other downtown buildings also are imminent. There is great potential in the area for mixed-use development, which would replicate a pattern of use that was prevalent in downtown during the early decades of the town's existence. It is notable that non-historic age infill is not present within the historic district and the early twentieth century character of the district is due in large part to the preservation, enhancement, and reuse of the existing historic structures.

Although Gretna, like other Southside small towns, suffered significant loss of jobs at the end of the twentieth century, new jobs are being created through service industries and businesses in the Gretna Industrial Park (located on the south end of the town limits).

Gretna residents retain a pride in their local community and since 2005, the non-profit organization Revitalization for a Greater Gretna (RGG) has been active in planning for town improvements and pursuing grants. Accomplishments of this group include erection of attractive and historical signage in town, organizing clean ups, partnering with the Chamber of Commerce to attract local businesses, and fundraising. In the future, RGG hopes to complete streetscape improvements and to create bike and pedestrian enhancement that will attract businesses and visitors to town.⁴⁰ The establishment of the commercial historic district, which has been endorsed by the Town Council, will provide historical recognition of this regional hub and could result in additional historic rehabilitation projects within the district boundaries.

The resources located within the historic district boundaries reflect the late-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century period of Gretna's commercial prosperity and are significant as a collection of buildings representing popular commercial styles of the time. Only a few vacant lots are present on Main Street (victims of fire) and no recent construction has occurred since the end of the period of significance.

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

---. "Businesses in Greta 95 Years Ago" in *Pittsylvania County, Virginia—Heritage, 1767-2006*. Volume 2. [Danville, VA]: Pittsylvania County Heritage Book Committee and County Heritage, Inc., 2006.

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Personal Communication

A.G. Lovelace, October 19, 2012

Marie Young, December 5, 2012

Sammy Shelton, August 1, 2012 and October 19, 2012

Joel Shelton, August 1, 2012

Dell Tyler, December 3, 2012

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR File No. 227-5002

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property approx. 6.5 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

2. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

3. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

4. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1. Zone: 17 Easting: 645818 Northing: 4090860

2. Zone: 17 Easting: 645959 Northing: 4090844

3. Zone: 17 Easting: 645971 Northing: 4090788

4. Zone: 17 Easting: 645950 Northing: 4090701

5. Zone: 17 Easting: 645859 Northing: 4090557

6. Zone: 17 Easting: 645808 Northing: 4090558

7. Zone: 17 Easting: 645862 Northing: 4090722

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

8. Zone: 17

Easting: 645844

Northing: 4090762

9. Zone: 17

Easting: 645807

Northing: 4090822

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

The boundaries of the approximately 6.5-acre area nominated are shown on the 1:200-scale map that accompanies the nomination. N.B.: Map prepared by Terry Whitt, GIS Coordinator, Pittsylvania County.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the district encompass the concentration of historic commercial buildings that comprise the extant core of Gretna's commercial downtown. The boundaries were drawn to exclude adjacent non-contributing (post-1963) development.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Debra A. McClane, Architectural Historian
street & number: 4711 Devonshire Road
city or town: Richmond state: VA zip code: 23225
e-mail dmcclane1@verizon.net
telephone: 804/233-3890
date: December 7, 2012

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

All photographs are common to:

Name of Property: Gretna Commercial Historic District

City or Vicinity: Gretna

County: Pittsylvania **State:** Virginia

Photographer: Debra A. McClane

Date Photographed: July 2012

Location of Digital Images: Department of Historic Resource, Richmond, VA

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1 of 15: VA_Pittsylvania County_Gretna Commercial Historic District_0001
View: View of historic district, looking southwest down Main Street

Photo 2 of 15: VA_Pittsylvania County_Gretna Commercial Historic District_0002
View: View of historic district from Henry Street to School Street, looking south down Main Street

Photo 3 of 15: VA_Pittsylvania County_Gretna Commercial Historic District_0003
View: Detail of buildings in historic district on west side of South Main Street, looking south

Photo 4 of 15: VA_Pittsylvania County_Gretna Commercial Historic District_0004
View: Detail of buildings in historic district on east side of South Main Street, looking northeast

Photo 5 of 15: VA_Pittsylvania County_Gretna Commercial Historic District_0005
View: View of former Pitt Motor Co. auto garage at southern end of historic district (227-5002-0001), looking southwest

Photo 6 of 15: VA_Pittsylvania County_Gretna Commercial Historic District_0006
View: View of former Berger Motor Co. auto garage near south end of historic district (227-5002-0002), looking west

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

- Photo 7 of 15 VA_Pittsylvania County_Gretna Commercial Historic District_0007
View: View of former drugstore and restaurant near center of historic district
(227-5002-0004), looking west
- Photo 8 of 15 VA_Pittsylvania County_Gretna Commercial Historic District_0008
View: Detail of buildings on west side of South Main Street, former bank
building, barbershop, and Masonic lodge (227-5002-0011 through 227-
5002-0013), looking west
- Photo 9 of 15 VA_Pittsylvania County_Gretna Commercial Historic District_0009
View: Former Amoco Oil Co. service station located at corner of North Main
Street and Henry Street (227-5002-0014), looking northwest. This is the
sole example of Art Deco-style architecture in the historic district.
- Photo 10 of 15 VA_Pittsylvania County_Gretna Commercial Historic District_0010
View: Former Dalton auto garage and general store buildings at north end of
historic district (227-5002-0015 and 227-5002-0017), looking west
- Photo 11 of 15 VA_Pittsylvania County_Gretna Commercial Historic District_0011
View: Former Gretna Fire Station and Town Hall (227-5002-0022) on Henry
Street, view looking north. This is the sole example of Colonial Revival-
style architecture in the historic district.
- Photo 12 of 15 VA_Pittsylvania County_Gretna Commercial Historic District_0012
View: Former Love's Supermarket on Henry Street (227-5002-0024), view
looking southwest
- Photo 13 of 15 VA_Pittsylvania County_Gretna Commercial Historic District_0013
View: Detail of brickwork in historic district (227-5002-0016)
- Photo 14 of 15 VA_Pittsylvania County_Gretna Commercial Historic District_0014
View: Detail of brickwork in historic district (227-5002-0013)
- Photo 15 of 15 VA_Pittsylvania County_Gretna Commercial Historic District_0015
View: Detail of brickwork and signage in historic district (227-5002-0007)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

Endnotes

(Section 7)

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Soil Survey of Pittsylvania County, Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1922), 5.
2. Estelle Ironmonger Tyler, *The Junction—Elba—Gretna, Virginia* (Gretna, VA: By the author, 1990), 188.
3. Production of bright-leaf tobacco (also called gold-leaf, flue-cured, or Virginia tobacco) in the county began just prior to the Civil War when the technique was developed. Prior to that, tobacco produced in the region was of a dark, heavy leaf variety. The bright-leaf tobacco became popular during the late nineteenth century and was particularly valued for use in manufactured cigarettes. See U.S. Department of Agriculture, 10.
4. E. I. Tyler, 13.
5. E. I. Tyler, 34-35, 83.
6. Dell Midkiff Tyler, "Businesses in Greta 95 Years Ago" in *Pittsylvania County, Virginia—Heritage, 1767-2006*. Volume 2. ([Danville, VA]: Pittsylvania County Heritage Book Committee and County Heritage, Inc., 2006), 1.
7. These photographs are reproduced in E.I. Tyler, viii and 28 and are included as additional material with this nomination.
8. E.I. Tyler, 55-57.
9. Observation by Michael Pulice, Architectural Historian, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Preliminary Information Form for Gretna Commercial Historic District, 2010. Copy on file, Department of Historic Resources Archives, Richmond, VA (227-5002).
10. E.I. Tyler, 23-25.
11. E.I. Tyler, 23-25.
12. E.I. Tyler, 85-86.
13. E.I. Tyler, 33; John A. Jakle, "The American Gasoline Station, 1920-1970" in *Journal of American Culture*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Fall 1978), 523, 526-527.
14. E.I. Tyler, 83-84.
15. E.I. Tyler, 82-83.
16. Marie Young, owner. Personal communication. Telephone conversation with Debra McClane, December 5, 2012.
17. Ann Milkovich McKee, "Simulated Masonry" in *Twentieth-Century Building Materials: History and Conservation*, Thomas C. Jester, ed., (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995), 175, 177, 179.
18. Sammy Shelton, Gretna Resident. Personal Communication. Conversation with Debra McClane, October 19, 2012; Dell Tyler, Gretna Resident. Personal Communication. Telephone conversation with Debra McClane, December 3, 2012.
19. Sammy Shelton, Personal Communication.
20. Alison Blanton, National Register Nomination, Historic Gas Stations of Roanoke, Virginia (DHR #128-6361), 2012. Copy on file, Department of Historic Resources Archives, Richmond, VA.

(Section 8)

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

21. Virginia Department of Agriculture, Division of Statistics, Virginia Cooperative Crop Reporting Service, *Pittsylvania County Farm Statistics*. (Richmond, VA: Department of Agriculture, 1962), 1.
22. A deed between Dillard and Talbott is recorded in the Pittsylvania County Deed Books (Deed Book 61:10), but there is no indication in the deed that the transaction was in payment for Talbott's services. See E.I. Tyler, 1.
23. E.I. Tyler, 8 (Deed Book 65:77).
24. E.I. Tyler, 8; Herman Melton, *Picks, Tracks and Bateaux: Industry in Pittsylvania County, 1780-1950* (Chatham, VA: H.E. Howard, Inc., 1993), see Chapter X (202-250) for additional information on mining history in Pittsylvania County.
25. Dell Midkiff Tyler, "The Old F&P Railroad" in *Pittsylvania County, Virginia—Heritage, 1767-2004*. Volume 1. ([Danville, VA]: Pittsylvania County Heritage Book Committee and County Heritage, Inc., 2004), 48.
26. A.D. Ramsey, *The Legendary Franklin and Pittsylvania Railroad*. (Berryville, VA: The Virginia Book Company, 1978), 4.
27. *Railroadin': Rocky Mount, VA*. (S.I.: Franklin County Historical Publications; Franklin County Retail Merchants Association, ca. 2000), 7; Melton 194-195, 198; Ramsey, 4; *Old "Fast & Perfect": Sketches from the 54 Year Life of the Franklin and Pittsylvania R.R., 1878-1932* (Chatham, VA: Pittsylvania Historical Society, 1996), 5. The initial eight miles from Franklin Junction to Pittsville was undertaken by the Washington City, Virginia Midland, and Great Southern railroads and connected with the Lynchburg & Danville Division of the Great Southern at Franklin Junction. Great Southern, which became part of the R&D, leased the F&P beginning in 1880.
28. E.I. Tyler, 8.
29. Melton, Chapter IX; "Hotel Elba' Brings Back Fond Memories," *The Gretna-Hurt Gazette*, June 10, 1976:16.
30. U.S. Department of Agriculture, 7-8.
31. E.I. Tyler, 13.
32. Melba Dalton, *"It's For You": History of the Peoples Mutual Telephone Co.* ([Gretna, VA]: [Peoples Mutual Telephone Co.], 1977), 19. Copy provided by Ed Fitzgerald. This book and other local histories indicate that the Town Council selected the name "Gretna" from a list provided by the U.S. Post Office. Dalton's book credits Councilman Jim Moon as suggesting "Gretna" after Gretna Green, a village in the south of Scotland.
33. See Melton, Chapter VIII for additional information on Pittsylvania's bright leaf industry.
34. Robert C. Vaden, Jr., "Gretna History," typed manuscript, 1955, n.p. Copy provided by Ed Fitzgerald.
35. U.S. Department of Agriculture, 7-8.
36. U.S. Department of Agriculture, 7.
37. Vaden; Dalton, 18-19.
38. Sammy Shelton and Joel Shelton, Gretna residents. Personal Communication. Conversation with Debra McClane, August 1, 2012. A.G. Lovelace, Gretna resident. Personal Communication. Conversation with Debra McClane, October 19, 2012.
39. Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, National Trust for Historic

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Pittsylvania County,
Virginia
County and State

Name of Property

Preservation, 1987), 24-54, passim. The characterization of the commercial buildings in the historic district relies on the typology as described by Longstreth.

40. Town of Gretna, Virginia, "Revitalization." Accessed at Town website, December 6, 2012, http://townofgretna.org/get_page.pl?page=2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Gretna Commercial Historic District
Name of Property
Pittsylvania County, Virginia
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 1

INDEX OF FIGURES

1. 1906 Image Showing Franklin Junction Depot Building, View Looking North. Courtesy of Joel Shelton.
2. Postcard Image of Southern Railway Depot at Gretna and Water Tower Beyond, View Looking North, ca. 1916. The depot was torn down in 1976. Courtesy Joel Shelton.
3. Elba Main Street ca. 1909. At left are frame tobacco warehouses, livery stables, the Masonic Lodge (tall gable roof), and residences beyond. View is looking north from approximately the location of the present-day 308-312 S. Main Street. Source: E.I. Tyler, viii.
4. Ca. 1915 View of North Main Street Showing former Ramsey office building at left, frame Masonic lodge building, former Gretna Hardware Building, and Level Run Livery Stable (later Dalton Auto Garage and now Napoli's Restaurant). Source: E.I. Tyler, 28.
5. Tyler identifies this photograph as July 4, 1920, on Main Street. View is standing near the former depot looking south along Main Street. The Masonic lodge has been modified by the construction of a stepped brick parapet front, and the Peoples Bank of Gretna is located south of the lodge. Source: Joel Shelton.
6. This ca. 1931 photograph shows a view looking north along South Main Street. The Acuff drugstore building (227-5002-0004) is located at the left and the Texaco Service Station (227-5002-0005) is located at the right. Other contributing resources within the historic district can be seen in the background. Source: E.I. Tyler, 33.
7. View looking north up South Main Street at buildings along west side of street. This view encompasses many of the contributing resources in the district from 227-5002-0007 through 227-5002-0016. Source: Joel Shelton.
8. View looking north up South Main Street. Note Doss Ford dealership at left, which is no longer extant and former Texaco Service Station at right, which has been truncated by the removal of its front canopy. Source: Joel Shelton.
9. Receipts from two of Gretna's early tobacco warehouses, 1911. Courtesy: Sue Wood.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Gretna Commercial Historic District
Name of Property
Pittsylvania County, Virginia
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 2

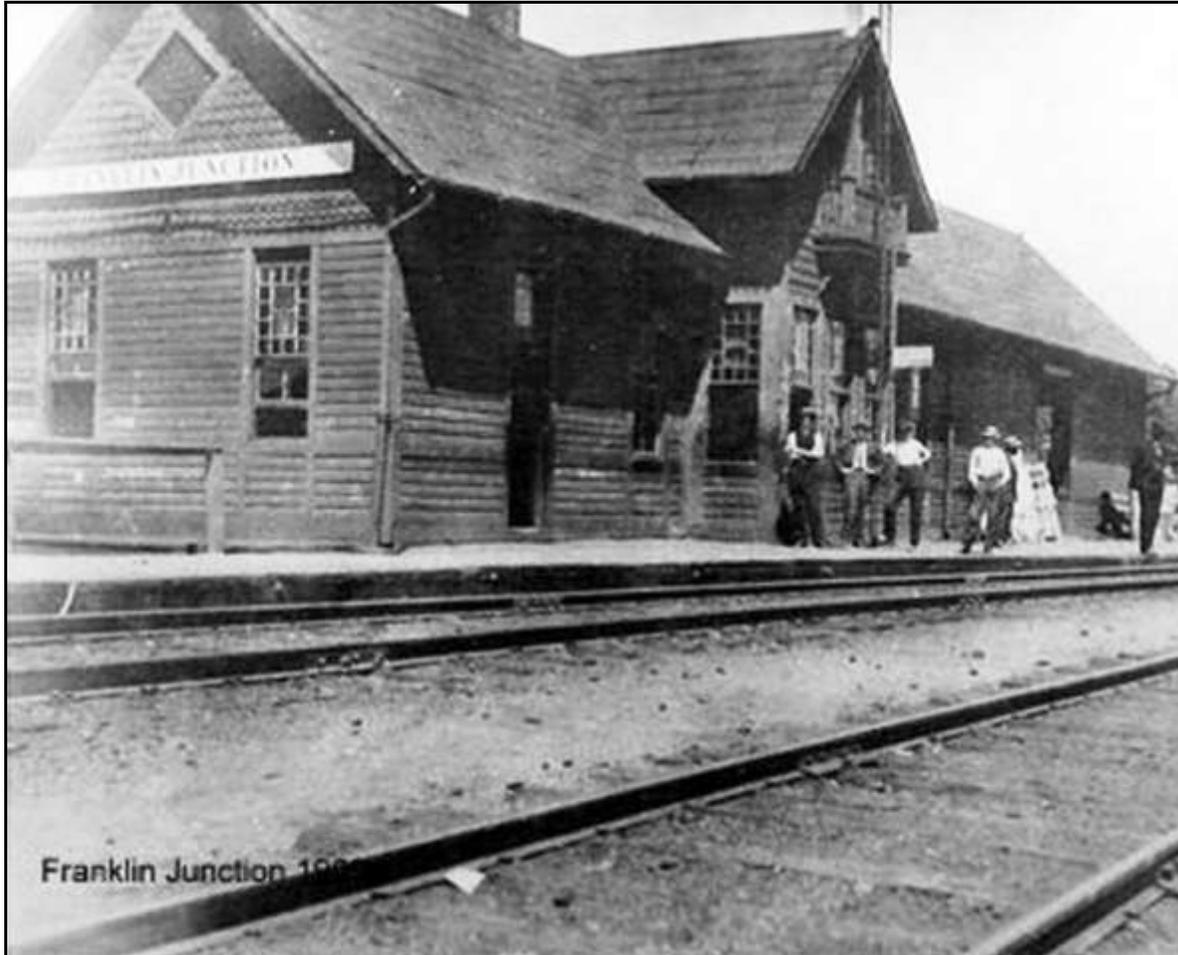


Figure 1. 1906 Image Showing Franklin Junction Depot Building, View Looking North.
Courtesy of Joel Shelton.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Name of Property

Pittsylvania County, Virginia

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 3



Figure 2. Postcard Image of Southern Railway Depot at Gretna and Water Tower Beyond, View Looking North, ca. 1916. The depot was torn down in 1976. Courtesy Joel Shelton.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Gretna Commercial Historic District
Name of Property
Pittsylvania County, Virginia
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 4

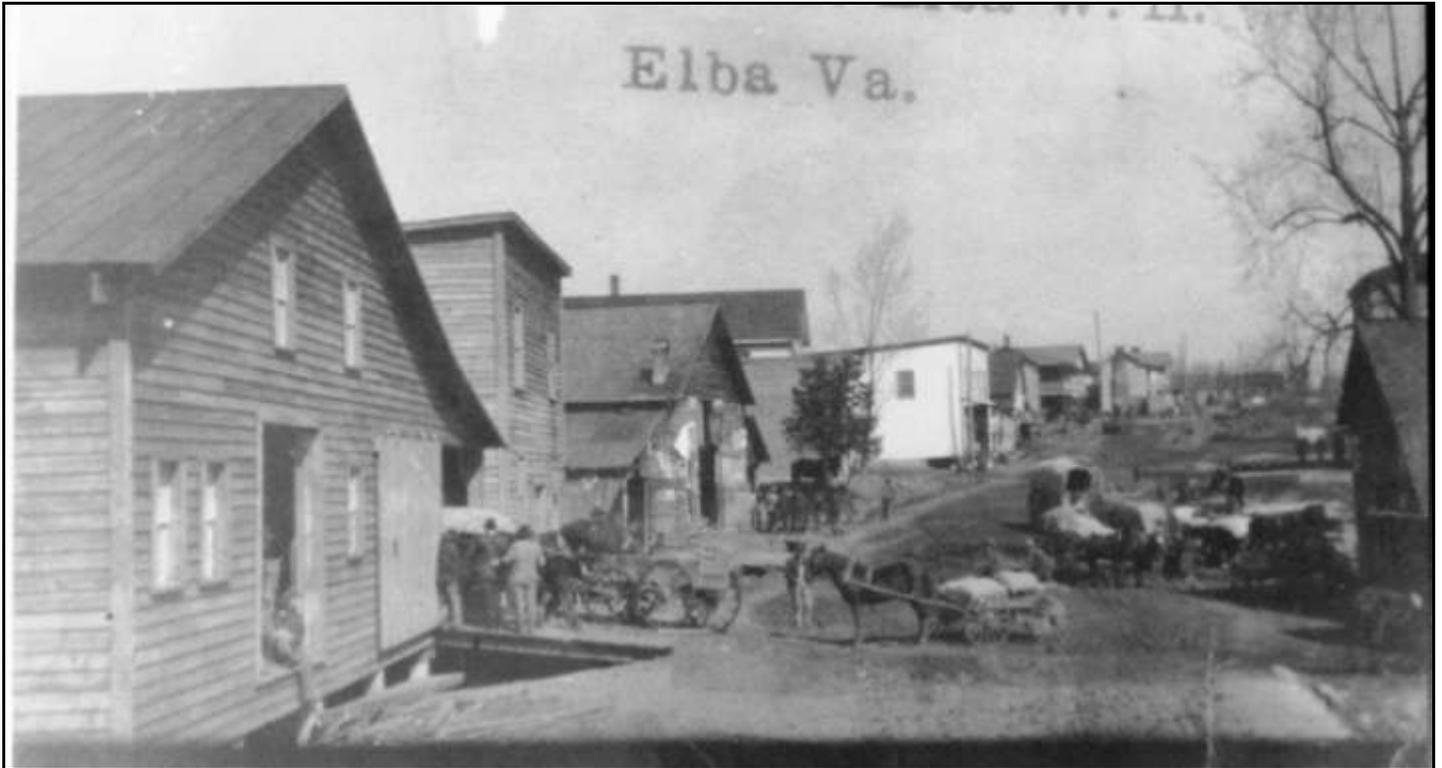


Figure 3. Elba Main Street ca. 1909. At left are frame tobacco warehouses, livery stables, the Masonic Lodge (tall gable roof), and residences beyond. View is looking north from approximately the location of the present-day 308-312 S. Main Street. Source: E.I. Tyler, viii.



Figure 4. Ca. 1915 View of North Main Street Showing former Ramsey office building at left, frame Masonic lodge building, former Gretna Hardware Building, and Level Run Livery Stable (later Dalton Auto Garage and now Napoli's Restaurant). Source: E.I. Tyler, 28

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Gretna Commercial Historic District
Name of Property
Pittsylvania County, Virginia
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 5



Figure 5. Tyler identifies this photograph as July 4, 1920, on Main Street. View is standing near the former depot looking south along Main Street. The Masonic lodge has been modified by the construction of a stepped brick parapet front, and the Peoples Bank of Gretna is located south of the lodge. Source: Joel Shelton.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Gretna Commercial Historic District

Name of Property

Pittsylvania County, Virginia

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 6



Figure 6. This ca. 1931 photograph shows a view looking north along South Main Street. The Acuff drugstore building (227-5002-0004) is located at the left and the Texaco Service Station (227-5002-0005) is located at the right. Other contributing resources within the historic district can be seen in the background.

Source: E.I. Tyler, 33.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Gretna Commercial Historic District
Name of Property
Pittsylvania County, Virginia
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 7

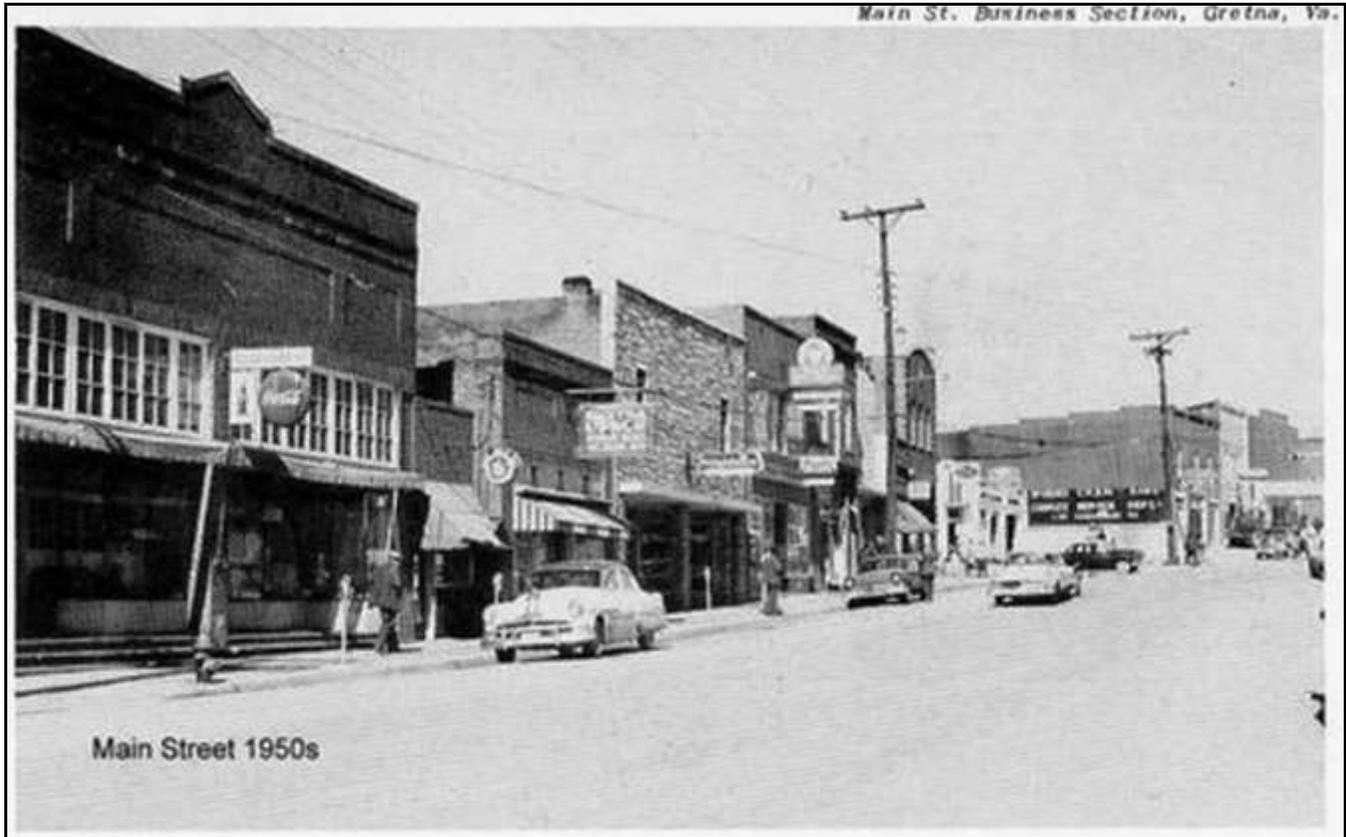


Figure 7. View looking north up South Main Street at buildings along west side of street. This view encompasses many of the contributing resources in the district from 227-5002-0007 through 227-5002-0016. Source: Joel Shelton.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Gretna Commercial Historic District
Name of Property
Pittsylvania County, Virginia
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 8



Figure 8. View looking north up South Main Street. Note Doss Ford dealership at left, which is no longer extant and former Texaco Service Station at right, which has been truncated by the removal of its front canopy. Source: Joel Shelton.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Gretna Commercial Historic District
Name of Property
Pittsylvania County, Virginia
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Additional Documentation Page 9

E. J. CHAMBERS & CO
PROPRIETORS OF
SHELTON'S WAREHOUSE

REFERENCES: Hard Work, Highest Prices, Honest Treatment

ALL ERRORS Promptly Corrected Should Any Occur

Franklin Junction, Va. 2/15 1911

Sales of Tobacco made for *Scotty Bidout*

NO.	POUNDS	PRICE	TOTAL
65	350	8 7	3032
6	400	12 2	4800
8	76	8 2	646
8	92	7	644
69	350	10	2500
	1688		

LESS:

Weighting Fees 167 16642

Auction Fee 85

Commission, 2 1/2 per cent. 416 578

Freight and Drayage 15764

Address:

Net Proceeds

CLOSE WORK HIGHEST PRICES PROMPT RETURNS

T. F. REEVES, Bookkeeper
J. S. HALL, Auctioneer

W. M. WURLEY, Salesman
J. L. ABBOTT, Salesman

Elba Warehouse
FOR THE SALE OF
LEAF TOBACCO

All Errors Promptly Corrected Should Any Occur

Elba, Va. 7/11 1911

Sales of tobacco made for *Scotty Bidout*

W. H. No	POUNDS	PRICE	TOTAL
	55	6	330
	325	10	3250
	365	14	5110
	580	9 4	5570
	1284		

W. H. Charges - - - - 122 12626

Auction Fee - - - - 80

Commission, 2 1/2 Per cent. - - - - 220 557

Advances - - - - -

Net Proceeds - - - - - 12063

Figure 9. Receipts from two of Gretna's early tobacco warehouses, 1911. Courtesy: Sue Wood.



Gretna Commercial Historic District
Pitsylvania County, 227-5002

Created by D. Bascone December 10, 2012 Sources: VDHHR 2012, ESRI 2012, VBMP 2011
 Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered
 over many years and the representation depicted is based on the field observation date
 and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general illustration
 purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses.
 The map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". Contact DHR for the most recent
 information as data is updated continually.



1 in = 500 ft



DHR
 Department of Historic Resources