



1992

Understanding Business District Revitalization and Design in Small Communities: A Revitalization and Design Study of Galax, Virginia

Paul Hardin Kapp
University of Pennsylvania

Follow this and additional works at: http://repository.upenn.edu/hp_theses

 Part of the [Historic Preservation and Conservation Commons](#)

Kapp, Paul Hardin, "Understanding Business District Revitalization and Design in Small Communities: A Revitalization and Design Study of Galax, Virginia" (1992). *Theses (Historic Preservation)*. 446.
http://repository.upenn.edu/hp_theses/446

Copyright note: Penn School of Design permits distribution and display of this student work by University of Pennsylvania Libraries.

Suggested Citation:

Kapp, Paul Hardin (1992). *Understanding Business District Revitalization and Design in Small Communities: A Revitalization and Design Study of Galax, Virginia*. (Masters Thesis). University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. http://repository.upenn.edu/hp_theses/446
For more information, please contact libraryrepository@pobox.upenn.edu.

Understanding Business District Revitalization and Design in Small Communities: A Revitalization and Design Study of Galax, Virginia

Disciplines

Historic Preservation and Conservation

Comments

Copyright note: Penn School of Design permits distribution and display of this student work by University of Pennsylvania Libraries.

Suggested Citation:

Kapp, Paul Hardin (1992). *Understanding Business District Revitalization and Design in Small Communities: A Revitalization and Design Study of Galax, Virginia*. (Masters Thesis). University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.

UNIVERSITY
PENNSYLVANIA
LIBRARIES



UNDERSTANDING BUSINESS DISTRICT REVITALIZATION AND
DESIGN IN SMALL COMMUNITIES: A REVITALIZATION AND DESIGN
STUDY OF GALAX, VIRGINIA

Paul Hardin Kapp

A THESIS

in

The Graduate Program in Historic Preservation

Presented to the faculties of the University of Pennsylvania
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

1992

Christa Wilmanns-Wells

Christa Wilmanns-Wells, Lecturer, Historic Preservation, Advisor

David G. De Long

David G. De Long, Professor of Architecture
Graduate Group Chairman and Reader

UNIVERSITY
OF
PENNSYLVANIA
LIBRARIES

This Thesis is Dedicated to the Memory of My Grandparents,
Dr. Paul Homer Kapp and Katherine Vass Kapp.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	v
List of Illustrations	vi
Preface	ix
Part I Background and Methodology	1
Chapter 1 Context	4
Chapter 2 What is wrong with Downtown Galax	11
Chapter 3 Historical Background	15
Chapter 4 The Role of the Gridiron and the Articulation of Institutions in Galax	78
Chapter 5 Genius Loci and Role of Local Architecture	126
Part II The Downtown Revitalization Plan	143
Chapter 1 Existing Conditions in Downtown Galax, Virginia	144
Chapter 2 Design Study of Downtown Galax, Virginia	155
Conclusion	164
Bibliography	169
Appendix 1	175
Appendix 2	179
Appendix 3	185

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the following resources which were vital to the success of this thesis. I would like to acknowledge the Downtown Revitalization Plan of Galax, Virginia by K.W. Poore & Associates, Consultants, Richmond, Virginia. I would like to thank Mr. Troy Clark, downtown manager, 1988-1989, and the current downtown manager, Ms. Tobie Davis, for their help and support. I would also like to thank the municipal government of Galax, Virginia, for their help and assistance as well. I would like to thank John and Linda Cock for their aid and advice on this thesis.

On a personal level I would like to thank my parents, John P. Kapp and Lureese E. Kapp, for their generous and unflinching support on this project. I also would like to thank my sister, Camille. I am most grateful to Ms. Ashley Robbins for her interest and loyal support through this long endeavor. Most importantly, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Christa Wilmanns-Wells, for her time, given unstintingly, and her dedication and also feeding me on various occasions.

List of Illustrations

Maps

Map 1: Galax, Virginia, ca. 1910	p.2
Map 2: Galax, Virginia, 1991	p.2

Figures

Figure 1: Galax, Virginia, ca.1910	p.3
Figure 2: State Map of Virginia	p.5
Figure 3: Map of Twin Counties	p.5
Figure 4: Elevation Chart	p.5
Figure 5: Current Map of Downtown Galax, Virginia	p.7
Figure 6: Topographic and Geologic Map of Southwest, Virginia	p.8
Figure 7: The Galax Leaf	p.9
Figure 8: Galax, Virginia, 1991	p.10
Figure 9: Early Map of Southwest Virginia	p.19
Figure 11: View of Grayson County	p.21
Figure 12: Grayson County Courthouse, Oldtown, VA, ca.1976	p.22
Figure 13: Grayson Co. Courthouse, Independence, VA, ca.1850	p.22
Figure 14: Grayson County Courthouse, Oldtown, VA, ca.1991	p.22
Figure 15: View of Blair, Virginia	p.23
Figure 16: Capt. John Waugh	p.25
Figure 17: Montplan by C.L. Lemot	p.28
Figure 18: Early View of Main and Grayson Streets	p. 29
Figure 19: Early View of Main and Grayson Streets	p. 31
Figure 20: Early Galax-Main Street, ca. 1910	p. 32
Figure 21: West Part of Main Street, ca. 1906	p. 32
Figure 22: Early Downtown Galax	p. 39
Figure 23: Early View of Galax	p. 40
Figure 24: Early View of Galax	p. 41
Figure 25: Peoples State Bank	p. 42
Figure 26: First National Bank (Later Town Hall)	p. 42
Figure 27: The Waugh Hotel	p. 43
Figure 28: Central Hotel	p. 43

Figure 29: Wedding on the Front Porch, Waugh Hotel	p.44
Figure 30: Waugh Hotel and First National Bank	p.44
Figure 31: View of Main Street , ca. 1935	p.45
Figure 32: First Presbyterian Church, ca. 1910	p.46
Figure 33: First Methodist Church, ca 1906	p.46
Figures 34, 35: Early View of Grayson Street	p.47
Figure 36: Early View of North Main Street	p.48
Figure 37: Early View of South Main Street	p.48
Figure 38: J.B. Waugh and Son Dept.-1908	p.49
Figure 39: Mathews Hardware (later Vass-Kapp)	p.49
Figure 40,41: Great Galax Fair	p.52
Figure 42: Galax Old Time Fiddlers' Convention	p.53
Figure 43: The Waugh Cannery	p.56
Figures 44, 45: Vaughan Furniture	p.57
Figure 46: Vaughan-Bassett Furniture	p.57
Figures 47, 48, 49: Messer Industries	p.59
Figure 50: Harris-Marshall Hoisery	p.60
Figure 51: Messer Industries	p.62
Figures 53, 54, 55: Timber Industries in Galax	p.64
Figures 56, 57, 58: Industries of Galax	p.65
Figure 59: View of Main Street	p.74
Figures 60, 61: Views of Galax	p.75
Figures 62, 63: Views of Galax	p.76
Figure 64: Parade on Main Street	p.77
Figure 65: Newcourt Plan of London	p.90
Figure 66: Penn Plan of Philadelphia	p.90
Figures 67, 68: Cairo, Illinois	p.96
Figure 69: Galax, Virginia	p.100
Figure 70: Illinois Central Standard Town Plat	p.113
Figure 71: Montplan Plan of Galax	p.114
Figure 72: Examples of Local Idiom Brick Cornices	p.137
Figure 73: Motif Example: Archway of Blue Ridge Bus Lines	p.138
Figure 74: Farmers and Merchant Bank, Louis Sullivan	p.140
Figure 75: Ownership Map	p.149
Figure 76: Conditions Map	p.150

Figure 77: Examples of Inappropriate Remodelings	p. 153
Figure 78: Examples of Inappropriate Use	p. 154

Plates

All plates are designed and drawn by Paul Hardin Kapp.

Plate 1: Monochronic Diagram I	p. 115
Plate 2: Monochronic Diagram II	p. 116
Plate 3: Institutional Diagram-Gridiron	p. 117
Plate 4: Institutional Diagram-Churches	p. 118
Plate 5: Institutional Diagram-Banks	p. 119
Plate 6: Institutional Diagram-Government Buildings	p. 120
Plate 7: Institutional Diagram-Movie Theaters	p. 121
Plate 8: Institutional Diagram-Businesses	p. 122
Plate 9: Institutional Diagram-Residences	p. 123
Plate 10: Institutional Diagram- Galax Complete	p. 124
Plate 11: Design Study-Movie Theaters	p. 156
Plate 12: Design Study- First Presbyterian Church	p. 157
Plate 13: Design Study-Main Street & Center Street	p. 158
Plate 14: Design Study-Main Street & Center Street	p. 159
Plate 15: Design Study-Main Street & Center Street	p. 160
Plate 16: Design Study- Local Idiom Study	p. 161
Plate 17: Design Study-Motif Study	p. 162
Plate 18: Design Study- Idiom and Motif Example	p. 163

Preface

What is it that makes Galax so special to me?

Well, it is the fact that the names on the mailboxes in this town are the same names that are on the tombstones in the Cemetery up the road.

- Mrs. Kenetta Pless, October 14, 1991 ,Galax, Virginia.

This thesis proposes a main street revitalization program for Galax, Virginia, a town located in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. For the last ten years in Virginia, and throughout the United States, much attention has been given to the future of the downtown business districts of small towns. After the Second World War small town business districts suffered when Americans relocated from small towns to larger cities and suburban communities. In reaction to diminishing commerce small town business people and civic leaders tried to conform their business districts to the image of commercial shopping centers of the rival suburban communities. This move only drained these small town business districts of their vitality and hid or destroyed their history and heritage.

Through the work of the National Trust Main Street Center and other organizations on the state and local level , business districts in small towns have experienced a rebirth in the last ten years. More people have returned to the small town business district finding its historical character an attractive alternative to the often faceless suburban commercial strip.

The National Trust Main Street Center and statewide Historic Preservation offices have partially succeeded in revitalizing downtown business districts. Due to

limited budgets and time restraints, however, professionals have only been able to react to the symptoms of the ailing business districts. Facade rehabilitations and streetscape improvements have dramatically upgraded the appearance of Main Street. Yet the challenge remains to recapture the community's Genius Loci which may be unarticulated but reused and shared by business owners, the local institutions and the inhabitants of a particular town.

What has been the case on the national level has been the same for Galax where Main Street improvements are currently underway. This thesis will hopefully go further than placing a band-aid on the problems of business district decay in Galax. I will attempt to employ a new Main Street design methodology that will answer the following questions:

What was the original purpose of the Business District in a small town?

What activities took and take place downtown?

What defines the perimeters of a Business District in the past and the present?

What makes a business district in one town different from another one?

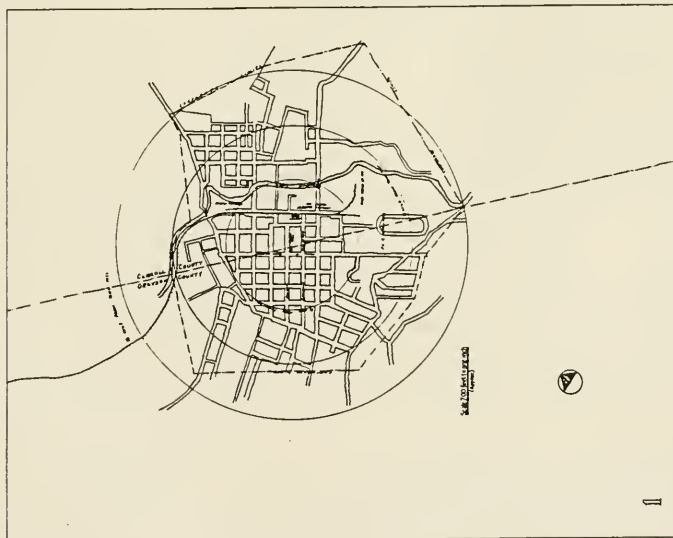
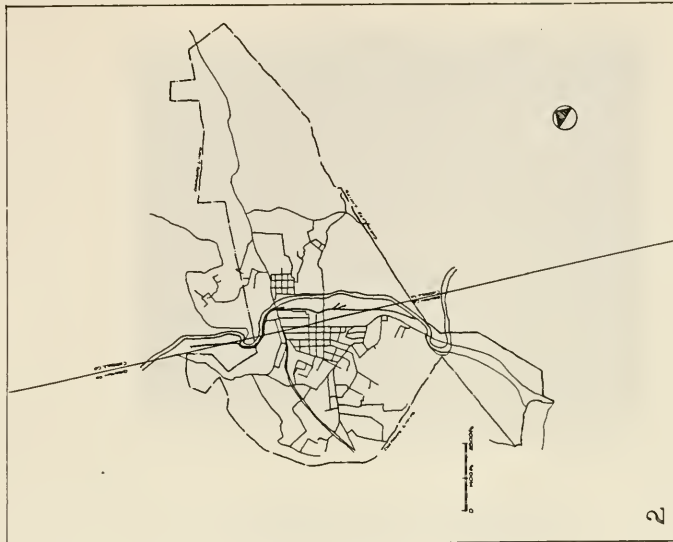
How does one design for a Historic Business District?

I will attempt to answer these questions by developing a methodology that will examine the oral and written history of Galax.

I will also examine the role of the public and civic institutions (churches, government offices, banks and buildings and entertainment) that have played in the development of the Business District of Galax, Virginia. This examination will develop a design strategy that can be employed on several levels; the broad scale of main street and the architectural scale of a single building (Plate 14, see also: chapter on the Design Study of Downtown Galax).

From the examination of the historical and architectural record, the remnants from a specific time and place are obtained. These remnants left by chance and/or design will become the elements or motifs for a revitalization plan for Galax (Plate 16,17). These motifs, humble, unpretentious and, perhaps ugly to some, are recognized and shared by the people in town. "[They] are the same names that are on the tombstones in the Cemetery up the road." These motifs make up the local idiom of downtown Galax.

Part I
Background and Methodology



Map 1: Galax, Virginia, 1933

(Based on the Sanborn Insurance Company Map of Galax, VA., 1928, 1933, 1941)

Map 2: Galax, Virginia, 1991

(United Telephone Systems, *Galax-Hillsville-Independence, VA. Telephone Directory*, 1991, p 12-15.)

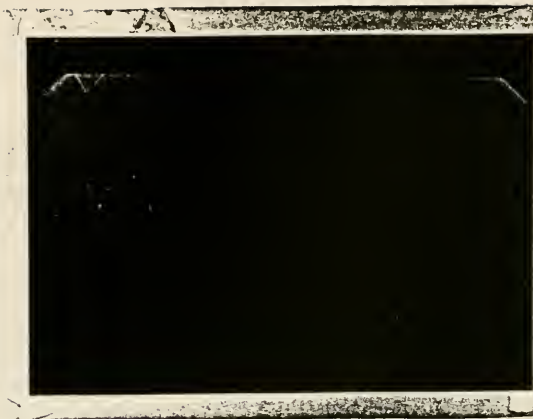


Figure 1: Galax, Virginia, ca 1910
(Jeff Mathews Museum)

Part I Chapter 1 Context

Galax, Virginia, is a small independent second class city located in the southwestern region of Virginia with a population of over six thousand people. The city is nestled in the peaks of the Blue Ridge Mountains and touches the western edge of the Eastern Continental Divide. Virginia's highest mountain, Mount Rogers, elevation at almost 6000 feet, is situated closeby , west of the city. Galax shares the mild climate of the Eastern Seaboard, however, it is always under the dominating presence of the mountain range.¹

Other than the Blue Ridge Mountains, the second most dominating feature in the region is the New River which flows three miles west of the city. The New River, one of only three rivers in the United States that flows in a northerly direction (the other two, the St. Johns in Florida and the Columbia in Washington State), is actually one of the earth's oldest rivers. Ironically, the New River was established in Paleozoic times.² Chestnut Creek, a tributary of the New River, flows through Galax and serves as the city's primary water source.

The geographical makeup of the region surrounding Galax consists of Ashe and Alligator Black gneiss, iron ore, maganesse, pyrhotite and quartzite. In the west there is a large vein of Cranberry Granite and Gray Granite is located to the south in North Carolina.³

¹ Galax Chamber of Commerce, *Statistical Abstract*,1.

Cities in Virginia are classified according to population. First class cities have populations over ten thousand people , second class cities are cities with populations between one thousand and ten thousand people. Communities with populations below one thousand are considered towns.

² Joseph Kent Roberts and Robert Bloomer, *Catalogue of Topographic and Geologic Maps of Virginia*, (Richmond, VA.: Dietz Press, 1939), 134.

³ *Ibid*, 137.

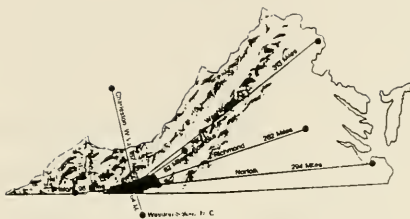


Figure 2:

Galax Chamber of Commerce

Donna Dunay, *Blacksburg, Understanding a Virginia Town, Town Architecture*, Blacksburg, VA.: V.P.I & S.U. Press, 1986), 7.

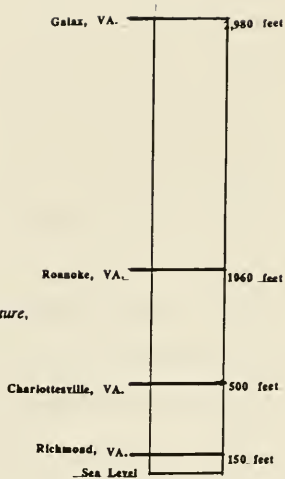


Figure 3:

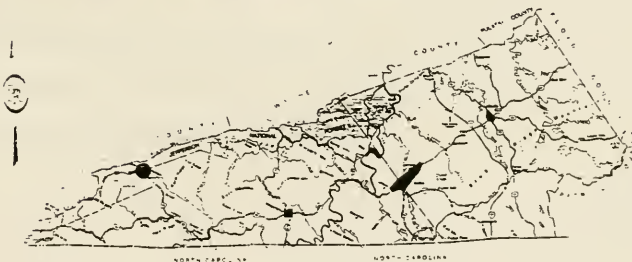


Figure 4:

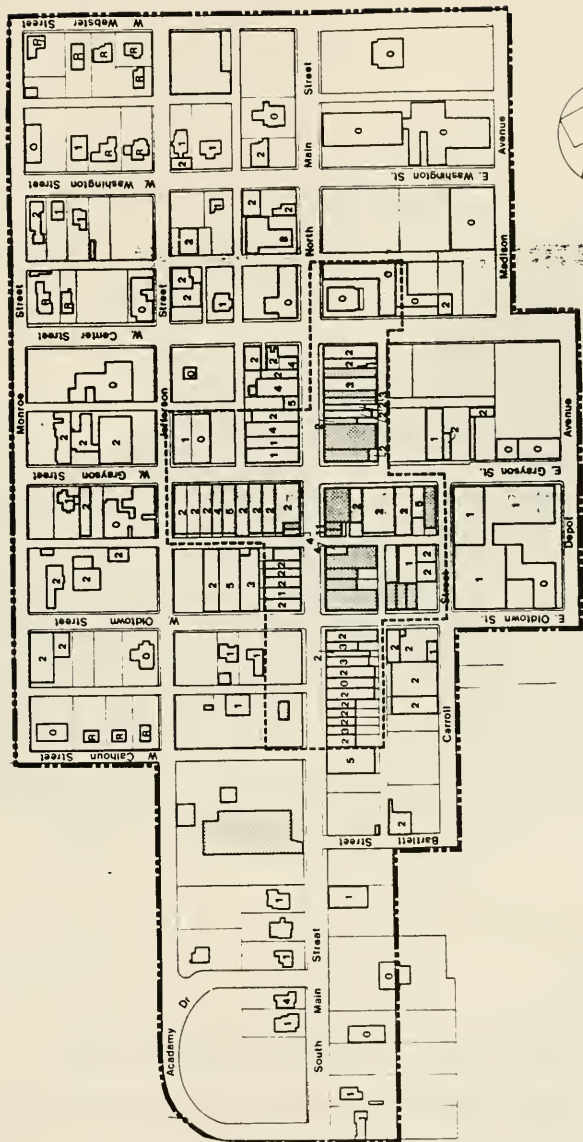
Galax is a unique city (without a county affiliation) because it lies on the county line that separates Carroll County from Grayson County. With similar economic, political, and social conditions, the two counties and the independent city of Galax have through the years come to be known as the Twin Counties region.

Since its incorporation in 1906, Galax has always been a renowned furniture manufacturing and timber town. Galax also has a strong textile industry which includes the nationally known company, Haines. Despite the fact that Galax has an entire population of over six thousand people, it furnishes over seven thousand jobs, four thousand of these jobs in manufacturing. The average income per person in Galax is over seven thousand dollars per person.⁴

The name Galax derives from the name of a heartshaped, singular leaf plant known as Galax. The name stems from the Greek word gala meaning milk. The plant is grown only in the southwest region of Virginia and the northwest region of North Carolina and is popularly used by florists throughout the nation as a "filler" or decorative greens for bouquets and arrangements. Local legend has it that a train conductor from the Norfolk and Western Railroad suggested that the town be named after the mountain plant because "so much of this leaf is being shipped out of this place." No one knows if this is actually the way Galax got its name, nevertheless, the name stuck.⁵

⁴ City of Galax and Mount Rogers District Planning Commission Promotional Brochure, 1991.

⁵ Mike Cabrill, "Why is Galax?" in the *Virginia and the Virginia County*, July, 1950 (Richmond, VA. : Virginia Press, 1950), 13.



GRAPHIC SCALE IN FEET
EXHIBIT E

Figure 5 Map of Downtown Galax, Virginia
(K.W. Poore & Associates Inc., Richmond, Virginia)

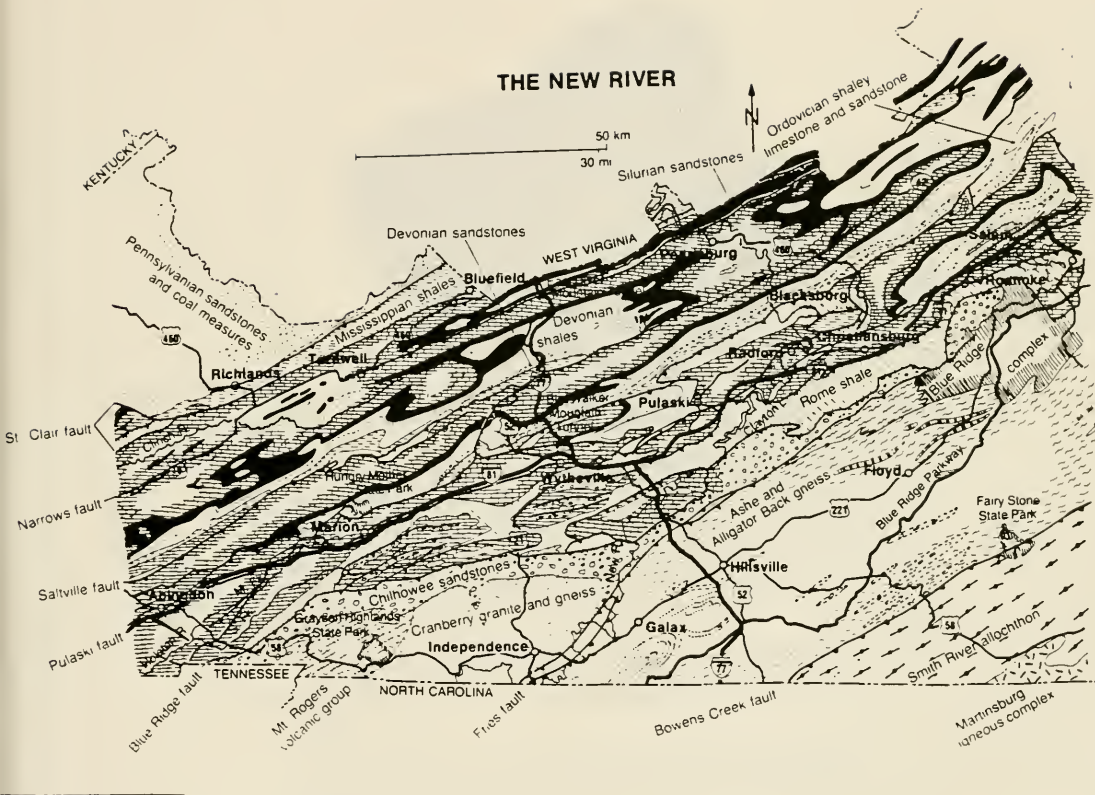
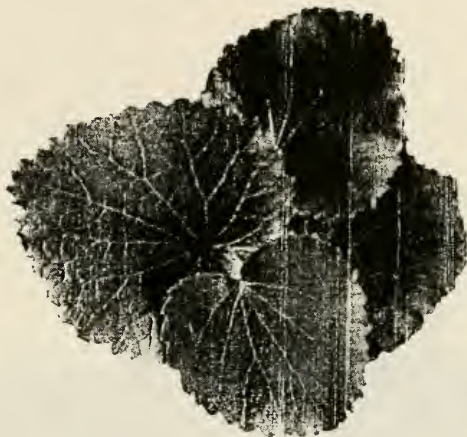


Figure 6: Topographic and Geologic Map of Southwest Virginia

(Joseph Kent Roberts, *Topographic and Geologic Maps of Virginia*, (Richmond VA:

Dietz Press, 1942), 146)

THE GALAX LEAF



The galax (gā'lăx) leaf, for which the City of Galax, Virginia was named, grows in the mountainous regions around Galax near the Blue Ridge Parkway. The heart-shaped leaf, growing from its own stem, each root sending up from five to eight leaves, forms a carpet of waxy green in summer and a rich bronze in winter.

The word galax is derived from the Greek word, gala, meaning milk and the bloom of the plant resembles a stream of milk.

These leaves are a favorite foliage in fresh and dried arrangements and are used extensively by florists all over the country.

This native plant has played an important part in the economy of the Galax area.

Figure 7: The Galax Leaf

(Galax-Carroll County Library)



Figure 8 : Galax, Virginia, 1991

(P.H.K)

Part I Chapter 2 What is wrong with Downtown Galax?...

Community Entropy

Neglected and abandoned buildings, fewer businesses and a loss of vitality are only the symptoms of a much greater problem facing downtown Galax. This ailment is Community Entropy, which is the break down and abandonment of the downtown of Galax and the destruction of the clear boundary which separated the town from the country. This community entropy is caused by three factors that have taken their toll on the downtown of Galax for the past twenty years: institutional breakdown, loss of civic identity and lack of human interaction.

Community Entropy occurs when the breakdown of the institutional infrastructure causes the building, which housed those institutions, to be either altered or torn down. The institutional breakdown in Galax or other towns often results in the loss of identity between the people of Galax and the physical town itself and brings with it a lack of human interaction. While the advent of the automobile did not weaken institutions, it created the emergence of another business district, the highway commercial district, and many traditional downtown businesses relocated there.

The automobile had affected the downtown of Galax in other ways as well by raising the speed of perception from five miles per hour (the speed of a walking human being) to thirty-five miles per hour (the automobile speed limit of the downtown). Driving rapidly in a car without stopping prevents people from seeing buildings and features of the downtown. The enjoyment of crafted, detailed buildings that embody the spirit of the place is lost. This naturally leads the building owners to erect signage that will attract the attention of the motorist first and the

pedestrian second. Discouraged by the popularity of the new 'strip' stores, downtown merchants also cover up or take down the rich building details in trying to mimic the modern storefronts. Moreover, the automobile isolates people from other people. As more people perceive their world from the cocoon of the interior of the automobile, they begin to lose the intimate contact and face to face conversations that have been one of the traditional virtues of downtown Galax. This lack of intimate interaction breaks down the idea of Galax being a real and living community.

What to Do?

Outlawing the automobile or the commercial business strip that is on the highway linking Galax to nearby Hillsville, Virginia, is not a viable solution. Instead, the way to solve the problems of downtown Galax is to rebuild and reaffirm the commitment between the city and the people who live and work in Galax.

I will argue in this study that the first and most important solution is to rebuild the institutions, the church, the bank, the City and Federal government buildings. These institutions were formed when a covenant or contract between the people and the respective institution was made forming an agreement and understanding in which the citizen or institution member served the institution and, reciprocally, the institution served the citizen or institution member.

Reaffirming the community covenants would give the people a more active role in the government. The citizens need to participate in the church of their choice and use the bank in the downtown again instead of leaving the church and using the

drive-thru on the highway as their principal institutions of savings and investment. These institutions need not only to be reaffirmed in a spiritual or community manner but also in their physical presence and imagery as well. Steeples of churches need to be rebuilt. The "stone temple of business", the bank, has to be built and must maintain a character that embodies the sound banking practice and ethics that people expect from their banking institution. The institution of government needs to, once again, physically embody the ideals of democracy and citizenship that is vital for a community.

Each of these institutions needs ample parking because it is the institution that shapes the downtown and brings people to it. Therefore, it is here where people need to get out of their automobile and become involved with each other on the Main Street of Galax.

Furthermore, the problem of rebuilding downtown Galax necessitates a complete examination and informed and sensitive restoration of the commercial architecture and building stock of the downtown. The true spirit or *Genius Loci* has to be rediscovered, articulated, presented and relearned. Once people are out of their automobiles and walking on the sidewalk to use the major communal facilities, that is the institutions of Galax, the architectural expression of the institutions and businesses can once again be enjoyed and, moreover, the cultural identity of the city of Galax can be fully rediscovered. Once again professionals, such as lawyers, accountants, and yes, architects need to reoccupy the upper levels of these downtown brick buildings and, once again, they need to add activity and richness to the downtown. This is not an impossible dream, since Galax is fortunate to have retained an eighty-two percent occupancy rate of stores and offices in the downtown. This is an important factor in the feasibility of revitalization of any

downtown in a small city.

This thesis obviously does not attempt to completely redesign the entire downtown of Galax. This would prove to be a very arduous and fruitless endeavour. Not only would it "kill off" the author of this thesis but it would kill the spirit and vitality of downtown Galax as well. However, I would bring back historically documented, essential and characteristic motifs. In this thesis, I will attempt to examine the history and evolution of the downtown of Galax as well as the Twin County region. I will then document and analyze the local idiom and motifs of the downtown and then explore ways in which they can reinforce the downtown and, especially, institutions.

I will further explain my ideas of institutional reinvolvement in the downtown of Galax in a section specifically devoted to the subject. The same will be done in my examination of what Genius Loci is and how it works in Galax. But first, it is now necessary to familiarize and convey to the reader the history of Galax, and how this history has influenced and manifested itself in the downtown of Galax

Part I Chapter 3 Historical Background

Early History of the Region

In this section I will attempt to explain the evolution of settlement in the Twin Counties region. Although Galax was settled rather late in the history of the region, it is important to have, at the least, a broad understanding of the people who settled this land, how they were influenced by the land, and how they eventually influenced the character of Galax. From its dialect to its music to its built motifs, the roots of the spirit of Galax grow from the early history of the region.

The first settlers in the region, known now as the Twin Counties, were the native American tribes beginning with the Xualan Tribe. These aboriginal people were believed to have been a hardy but poor tribe who lived in caves or log houses daubed with clay in the winter and who roamed randomly, hunting wild game for food. It is generally believed that when the first white explorers, the party led by Hernando Desoto, arrived in the region, they were the first to encounter the Xualan tribe. The Xualans who were fond of the art of war challenged, or so it is believed, the larger Cherokee Nation and were subsequently conquered by them.⁶

The Cherokees shared the land with the rest of the tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy to whom the Cherokees belonged. Throughout the pre-white settlement, tribes of the Confederacy, the Chickasaw, Creek and Shawnee, frequently used the region as a hunting ground while the Cherokee Nation settled in the lower hollows of the region⁷.

⁶ James Stamper, "The Indians of the Grayson County Area", in *the Grayson Journal*, 1930, 53.

In these hollows⁸, the Cherokee cultivated large irregular gardens defined by the general configuration of the field that was cleared by burning, slashing or overgrazing. In the summer months, the Cherokee would often overgraze the highland meadows leaving them to become what was referred to as "balds."

As previously mentioned, Desoto was the first white man in the region. In his party's journal the region was described as being a "pristine landscape of beautiful valleys covered with woods pastures, and savannas which were inhabited by plentiful game."⁹

In 1642, the Colonial Assembly of Virginia ordered Major Abraham Wood to explore the western territory to find out how the colony could "enjoy all profits and benefits that such land might bring." It is believed that in this expedition Wood discovered the New River which he named Wood's River.¹⁰ By the end of the seventeenth century the name "New" was given to this river in an expedition led by William Byrd.¹¹

The information from these expeditions encouraged the Scotch and Irish to settle in the region. They settled in isolated family units and inhabited the Highlands of the area adopting the Native American methods of land cultivation. Like the Native Tribes, the Scotch/ Irish were nomadic searching for land suitable

⁷ Ibid, 53.

⁸ A hollow is a small valley or basin. - *Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary*, (Springfield, Mass.: Webster, 1989).

⁹ Richard Smardon and Timothy R. Day, "Historical Overview along the Blue Ridge Parkway" in *Visual Preferences of Travelers along the Blue Ridge Parkway*, (Asheville, N.C.: Western Appalachian Press, 1983), 105.

¹⁰ Betty-Lou Fields, *Grayson County: A History in Words and Pictures*, (Independence, VA.: Grayson County Historical Society, 1976), 18.

¹¹ Ibid, 18.

for raising their livestock, corn and wheat.¹²

By the mid eighteenth century Germans settled in the low areas of the region. Unlike the nomadic Scotch/Irish, the Germans wished to own and manage the land. They chose land heavily timbered with hardwood and composed of limestone enriched soils. Their farms were organized to define their land units in a clustering of outbuildings and houses. Following the Scotch/ Irish and Native Tribes, the Germans settled in the balds, land that had been overgrazed by the prior two groups. The Germans settled permanently in the Highlands which are the Twin Counties.¹³

In 1748, Peter Jefferson , father of Thomas Jefferson and High Commissioner of the Colony of Virginia, surveyed the Twin County Region when the region was breaking off from Fincastle County to become part of Augusta County. Twenty years later, this land area became part of the newly formed Montgomery County. It was at this time that the direct predecessor of Galax, Blair's Forge village, was settled.¹⁴

In 1770 an early settler, John Blair, built a forge on Chestnut Creek for the purpose of smelting the local iron ore. This iron was fashioned into shape through the use of a trip-hammer which was powered by a dam built across the creek. During the eighteenth and nineteenth century this small hamlet emerged as a prominent trading center. It was later on that the village became known as simply, Blair.

¹² Richard Smardon and Timothy R. Day, "Historical Overview along the Blue Ridge Parkway" in *Visual Preferences of Travelers along the Blue Ridge Parkway* , (Asheville, N.C.: Western Applachian Press, 1983), 106.

¹³ Ibid, 106.

¹⁴ Angela Funk, "Mud Holes, Ghosts and Nancy Hanks", in *the Gazette*, August, 1983 Supplement Section, 39.

According to local oral tradition the mother of Abraham Lincoln, Nancy Hanks, was born in Blair or very close by. Her parents were apparently staying for only a short period of time visiting her father's brother, Joshua Hanks, before migrating west where Nancy Hanks meet Thomas Lincoln and had their famous son. Although it is documented that Thomas Lincoln, Lincoln's father, was born in Rockcastle County, Virginia, the birthplace of Nancy Hanks is not clearly known. Lincoln himself acknowledges in his brief biography that his mother was born in Virginia but he does not exactly specify where she was born.¹⁵ Ed Cox, a local historian of Galax in the 1950's elaborates:

This tradition had been handed down through three generations when it was told to me and I have talked to others who have passed on now, and asked if they had been told the same story. After checking all the circumstances and dates, I find nothing that would prevent this story from being possible and probably as authentic as any told and written through the years. ¹⁶

By 1792, Grayson County was formed from the southern part of Wythe County. The county was named after William Grayson of Prince William County, who was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and member of the Constitutional Convention. The population of the Galax area grew enough to support the development of a county seat. Before Grayson County developed, its people had to travel over two-hundred miles to conduct any type of county business. As was customary in eighteenth century Virginia, the new courthouse square complex was comprised of a courthouse, clerk's office and tavern situated at the geographical center of the county and completed by 1811. The land was

¹⁵ Ed Cox, "Blair's Forge on Chestnut Creek" in the *Golden Anniversary of Galax, Virginia, 1906-1956*, Frank M. Hearster, ed(1956)5.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 6.

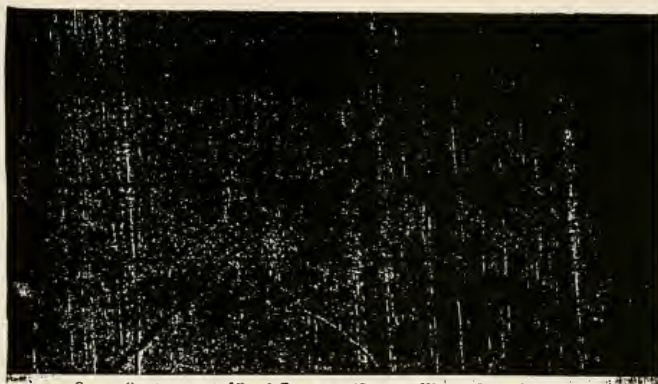


Figure 9: (Betty-Lou Fields, *Grayson County: A History in Words and Pictures*,
(Independence, VA.: Grayson County Historical Society, 1976), 18.)

donated by a man named Flower Swift and the Clerk's Office was built by the first clerk of the county, Martin Dickerson.¹⁷ By the mid-nineteenth century the courthouse complex was known as Grayson Courthouse, and later as simply Grayson. By the late nineteenth century it became known as Greenville. In 1842, Carroll County broke off from Grayson County and relocated its county seat in the center of its land naming it named Hillsville. Eight years later, the county government of Grayson County relocated at the new geographical center of the county at a place now known as Independence. The former county seat, Greenville, became known as Oldtown. The two counties saw no action in the Civil War and by the turn of the century all four hamlet-like towns, Blair, Oldtown, Independence, and Hillsville remained unchanged in size and activity. The two counties remained rural¹⁸

¹⁷ Betty-Lou Fields, *Grayson County: A History in Words and Pictures*, (Independence, VA. : Grayson County Historical Society, 1976), 32.

¹⁸*Ibid*, 47.



One of the many beautiful scenes along New River in Grayson County, which also
ords good bass fishing.

Figure 10: View of Grayson County
(Jeff Mathews Museum)

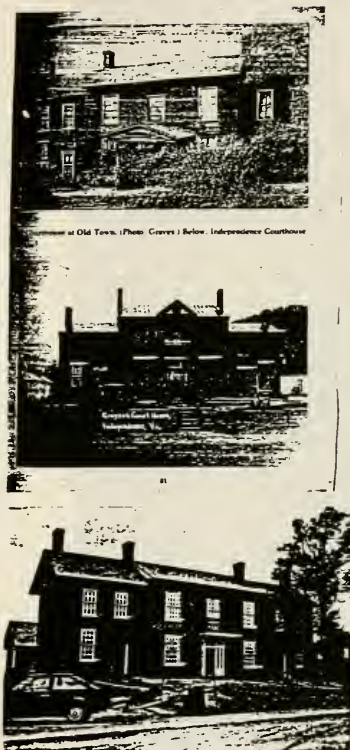


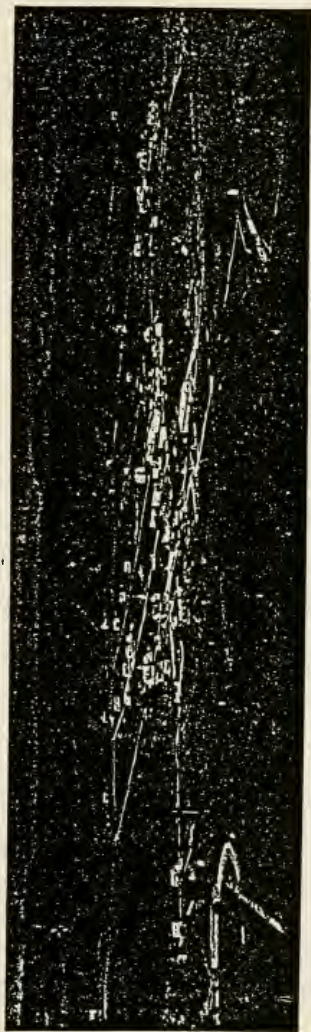
Figure 11: Grayson County Courthouse, Oldtown, VA ca. 1976.

(Betty-Lou Fields, *Grayson County: A History in Words and Pictures*,
 (Independence, VA.: Grayson County Historical Society, 1976), 81.)

Figure 12: Grayson County Courthouse, Independence, VA ca. 1976.

(Betty-Lou Fields, *Grayson County: A History in Words and Pictures*,
 (Independence, VA.: Grayson County Historical Society, 1976), 81.)

Figure 13: Grayson County Courthouse, Oldtown, VA., 1992 (P.H.K.)



This is Galax as it looked in 1905 from the southeast . . .

Figure 14: (Golden Anniversary of Galax, 1956)

The Early Settlement of Galax

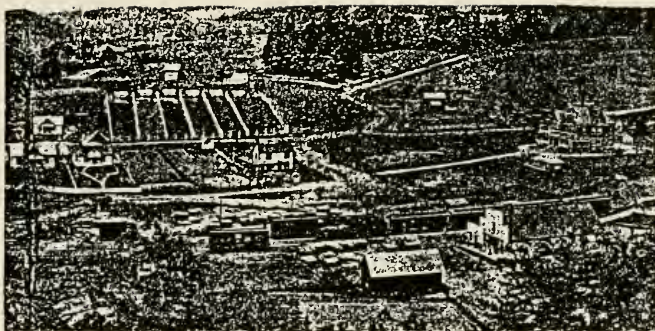
The founding and development of Galax was largely the accomplishment of one shrewd, persuasive Grayson County man by the name of James P. Cairco. From the outset of his venture to establish Galax, he had one goal- to make money. Just before the turn of the century, Cairco had persuaded the textile company, Washington Mills, to build a company town on the New River in Grayson County. The town was named Fries (pronounced Freeze) after the founder and then president, Colonel John Fries. Thus the Industrial Revolution arrived at the Twin Counties¹⁹.

By the turn of the century, Blair had evolved into a prosperous but small mercantile village which was serviced by the Norfolk and Western Railroad. Although economically, Blair's potential for growth looked promising, its limited terrain restricted expansion. In 1902, Thomas L. Felts, a state senator, entrepreneur and head of the Felts Detective Agency (he handled the Allen tragedy in Hillsville in 1913 and the coal strike in Matewan, West Virginia in 1923), settled in Blair and built his showplace estate, "Cliffside." In 1902, Felts changed the name of Blair to Ethel Felts in honor of his wife Ethel Houseman Felts.²⁰

In early 1903, Cairco started a real estate company to recruit several prominent citizens of the region as investors. He recruited Thomas Felts, Captain John B. Waugh, a Confederate War Veteran and businessman in Ethel Felts, Oldtown, and Hillsville and R.E. Jones, another prominent businessman of the

¹⁹ Committee for the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA, *the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA*, (1976), 5.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 6.



Blair, Virginia, looking west about 1903-04 — Felts Home and J B Waugh Store

Figure 15 (Golden Anniversary of Galax,1956)

region. Together, they bought three hundred and seventy-five acres of land south of Ethelfelts situated right on the Grayson-Carroll line. The land was mainly bottom and meadow land of Chestnut Creek, which was owned by a William Anderson whose family had owned the land since the end of the eighteenth century. Hence the first name of the town that would become Galax was Anderson's Bottom.²¹

The developers hired two civil engineers, C.L. DeMot and a man whose last name was Arnold, both from Lynchburg, Virginia, to design and survey the new town. They designed a rigid gridiron of twenty-six blocks, each block consisting of ten to to sixteen lots. There was no public square designed in the plan because the town did not serve as a county seat since Galax lies between Carroll and Grayson County. Galax went through an assortment of names before it was named Galax. In sequential order the names were: Anderson's Bottom, Montplan, Cairo, Bonaparte, and Galax. The eastern third of the new town occupied the bottomlands along Chestnut Creek and contained manufacturing sites and the depot for the Norfolk and Western Railroad (Page 28). By the fall of 1903, the Norfolk and Western Railroad assured the real estate company that it would build a new depot in the area.²²

On December 17, 1903, a public sale for lots in the new town, now called Cairo, was held. Lot prices varied from \$25.00 for a lot on a side street to \$250.00 for a corner lot on Main Street (Page 28). People complained about the expensive lot prices and the overly wide streets. Nevertheless, they bought the lots realizing that the new town had ample space for growth, especially, with the new depot from

²¹ Glenn Pless, interview with author, October 14, 1991, Galax, Virginia.

²² Ed Cox, the *Golden Anniversary of Galax, Virginia, 1906-1956*, (1956), 10.

the Norfolk and Western Railroad. The opportunity was great for retailing and manufacturing (Page 29).²³

As people settled in the new town, it was realized that some of the initial planning decisions would not conform with the changing conditions of Galax. Perhaps the biggest change was Main Street. Initially, the DeMott plan had Main Street running east to west linking Hillsville with Independence (where Center street is now located). This plan never worked because Galax expanded toward the new towns and villages to the south in North Carolina which picked, processed and shipped Galax leaves via the Norfolk and Western Railroad. According to local tradition, a railroad official named J. W. Cook, suggested the name Galax to the people of the new town. Another story says that a woman named Mrs. Kirsley, who sold insurance in the Twin Counties, suggested the name because she thought the leaves were so beautiful. At any rate, by 1905 the town adopted the name Galax and was granted its town charter by the General Assembly of Virginia in 1906.²⁴

The Building of Early Galax

Galax literally sprang up over night. The businesses of nearby Ethelfelts left the small village at once to move to Galax. This was the era of small business in

²³ Committee for the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA, *the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA*, (1976), 7.

²⁴ *Ibid*,7.

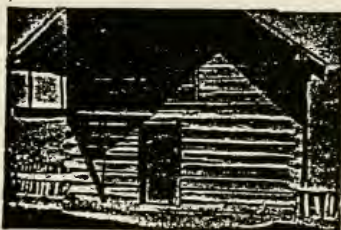


Figure 16: Montplan by C.L. LeMot (*The Bicentennial of Galax*, 1976)

LOT SALE IN C A I R O

The prices named below are good only for Thursday,
December 17th, 1903.

BLOCK 1. Lot 1	\$250	BLOCK 11	Lot 1	\$125	lot 2	\$ 150
lots 2-9	200	lot 2	lot 2	90	lots 3-9	140
BLOCK 2. lots 1-4	\$100	lot 3-5	lot 3-5	100	lot 10	150



Original Anderson Home, early 1800's — located where Galax City School Board office is now.



Corner Main and Grayson Streets — 1904

Lot 1	\$ 75	lot 10	175	lot 12-15	150	
lots 2-6	100	lot 9	150	lot 16	175	
lot 7	125	lots 10-12	125	BLOCK 19	Lot 1	\$225
lot 8	100	BLOCK 17	Lot 1	lot 2	200	
lots 9-11	75	lots 2-5	\$200	lots 3-4	180	
lot 12	75	lot 6	175	lots 5-9	175	
BLOCK 9	lot 1	lot 7	200	lots 10-11	200	
lot 2	\$175	lots 8-10	150	lot 12	175	
lots 3-4	250	lot 12	125	lots 13-14	160	
lot 5	150	BLOCK 16	Lot	lots 15-19	150	
lot 6	125	lot 1	\$175	lot 20	175	

J. P. Carrico, Gen. Manager
Grayson Real Estate Company

Figure 17: List of Lots for Sale (The Bicentennial of Galax, 1976)

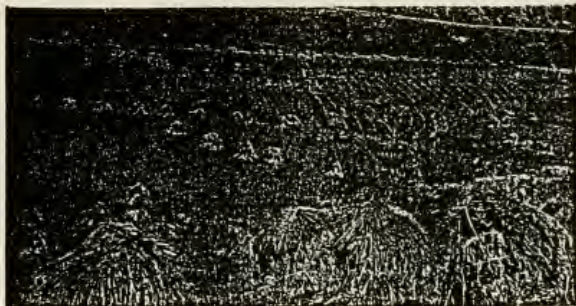
Galax as merchants and farmers, from the surrounding villages and countryside, came to Galax to try their luck in business and with the new railroad.

In the early days Galax was known for having extremely muddy streets. One great problem the developers gave to the fledgling community was their initial decision to build Galax in the swampy bottom land of Chestnut Creek. For the first forty years of the town's existence, Galax had to contend with being in the drainage basin of the small valley. This led to major flooding problems from Chestnut Creek. There have been many tall tales about the muddy streets of Galax. One of Galax's most prominent citizens, H. K. Early, is credited with this story: one day as he was walking down the Main Street he noticed a nice man's hat lying in the middle of the street. When he picked up the hat he found a man underneath it. Early asked the man in earnest if he could help him, the man replied, "Oh, I'm all right, I'm on horseback." ²⁵

The terrain in around Galax was so rough that early automobiles could not get in or around Galax. Money for road improvement was exiguous in the Twin Counties and, especially in Galax where money for road improvement was not existent. In 1907, a civil engineer named R.E. Cox persuaded the Norfolk and Western Railway to donate one of their light trestle bridges to cross over Chestnut Creek at the southside of town. He convinced the N&W that if more timber and raw supplies could be carried into Galax, more profit would be made in freight revenues for the Railroad company. Consequently, in the following year the N&W built a light trestle bridge on the southside of Galax²⁶.

²⁵ Glenn Pless, interview with author, October 14, 1991, Galax, Virginia.

²⁶ R.E. Cox to N.D. Mather, Roanoke, VA, 17, February 1907, The Records of the Norfolk and Western Railroad, Presidential Collection, Special Collections, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State Univ.



Wheat field growing north of Galax in 1905 — This photograph was made on Fries Hill and, judging from the shadows, was made in the late afternoon.

with the camera looking southeast toward what is now Galax.



Main Street Scene in Galax in 1905 shows a muddy thoroughfare that was the city's "main drag". Note, looking south, large building on left which was the J. B. Waugh & Son department store, and on

right, south of the covered wagons, the old Hotel Central. Buildings on right are Galax Drug Company and R. E. Jones.

Figure 18: Early View of Main and Grayson Street Galax ca. 1904
(*The Bicentennial of Galax*, 1976)

Figure 19: Early View of Main and Grayson Street, Galax ca. ca. 1925
(*The Bicentennial of Galax*, 1976)

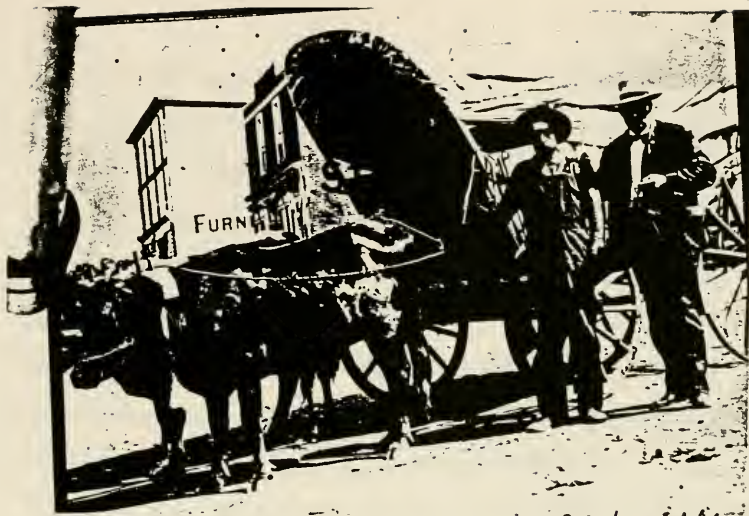


Figure 20: Early Galax- Main Street, ca. 1910.

(Jeff Mathews Museum)

Figure 21: West Part of Main Street Galax, ca. 1906

(Jeff Mathews Museum)

Regardless of the improvement, horses and oxen were still the primary means of travel. One time a manager from the Appalachian Power Company identified Galax as a place " where fellers who didn't know a town could be built in a mud-hole at the branch line of a railroad did exactly that, a place completely isolated from the rest of the world by fifty miles of mud roads in all directions."²⁷ In 1920 town manager, I. G. Vass, issued a bond to pave and install sidewalks on Main Street, Grayson Street and Center Street; this was done at the same time Carroll County benefited from the Robertson Road Improvement Act of 1920 which enabled the County to build a hard surface road from Galax to Hillsville.²⁸

Galax in those early days was a town made up of one bank and one church; it was primarily a town for small businessmen who served the agricultural community of the Twin Counties. Farmers and husbandmen would bring lumber, produce, chestnuts, chinquapins and Galax leaves to the depot at Galax. Cattlemen and Shepherds would drive their herds down Main Street and Grayson Street to the depot. There are even legends of farmers driving wild turkeys to market.²⁹

The first building erected in the town was the Land Office in December of 1903. It was managed by J.P. Carico and later served as the Town Hall . The first residence built in Galax was built by Billy Gallimore, also in 1903, located on the corner of Virginia Street and North Main Street. The first business to move into Galax was the drug store and doctor's office of Dr. John W. Bolen. Bolen moved

²⁷ Mike Cabrill, "Why is Galax?" in the *Virginia and the Virginia County*, July, 1950 (Richmond, VA. : Virginia Press, 1950), 40.

²⁸ Ed Cox, the *Golden Anniversary of Galax, Virginia, 1906-1956*, Frank M. Hearster, ed. (1956), 12.

²⁹ Judge Jack Mathews, interview with author, January 8, 1992, Galax, Virginia.

his entire little store from Ethelfelts by oxen. It took three days to widen and repair the roads for his voyage. Bolen first located on the corner of North Main and what is now the Hillsville Highway. Other people such as F. H. Martin came from Ethelfelts and started the Galax Hardware Company on the corner of Main and Grayson, and the Blair Grocery Company also moved from Ethelfelts to sell their merchandise in Galax.³⁰

The developers of Galax also helped to build part of the town. J.P. Carico served as mayor of the town in 1922 and was instrumental in the development of the town government. R.E. Jones moved his furniture and funeral business to Main Street from Ethelfelts. In the lot sale, J.B. Waugh bought two prime corner lots for his two businesses. Waugh's Department Store, one of the earliest brick structures in Downtown Galax, was located on the corner of Main and Grayson Street, as was the Waugh Hotel which was located on Main and Center. By owning two of the four most prominent lots in the downtown, Waugh proved to the rest of the people of Galax that he stood behind his venture.

T. L. Felts, the last of the original investors set out to establish the First National Bank on the corner of Center and Main where the Municipal Building is now located. Felts, Waugh and several others were also on the Board of Directors of the Peoples State Bank which was moved from Ethelfelts to East Grayson Street in Galax.³¹

Other small businesses such as Ward Brothers came to Galax. They built a

³⁰ Charles Bolt, "Charles Bolt's Galax" in the *Golden Anniversary of Galax, Virginia, 1906-1956*, 1956, 8.

³¹ Ed Cox, *The Golden Anniversary of Galax, Virginia, 1906-1956*, Frank M. Hearster, ed., (1956), 14.

two-story frame building which they used as both a men's store and as the town's first motion-picture theater. Later J.C. Mathews, J. F. Vass and J.H. Kapp established the J.C. Mathews and Co. Hardware, the third brick structure built in Galax. The arched windows of the second floor mark the meeting spot of the Oldtown Chapter of Freemasons. Many important decisions for the development of Galax were made in this second floor meeting hall. In 1919, the hardware store was renamed the Vass-Kapp Hardware Store.³²

The first church was a Missionary Baptist Church, started by W. I. Harp, who moved to Galax from nearby Sparta, North Carolina. Harp led a group of citizens to build a small, white framed, one room church which still stands on the corner of Oldtown and Jefferson Street. For a short time, the building served the needs of the Methodists and the Church of Christ. In 1927, the First Baptist Church moved to North Main Street, and the building was purchased by the Friends who have occupied it ever since.

Other religious denominations soon built their structures that defined their covenant with the town, the Methodists built a brick structure on Center Street in 1906. At the same time the Presbyterian Church moved their congregation down from Oldtown and built a brick structure on Center Street. The Disciples of Christ organized and built a wood structure on the corner of Washington and Main Street³³.

During this period of development, traveling salesmen and farmers from the

³² Mike Cabrill, Why is Galax?, in the *Virginia and the Virginia County*, July, 1950 (Richmond, VA. : Virginia Press, 1950), 10.

³³ Munsey M. Poole, Where Churches Count, Religion... a Well of Community Activites and Interests, in the *Virginia and the Virginia County*, July, 1950 (Richmond, VA. : Virginia Press, 1950), 27.

surrounding countryside would stay in town for a few days at a time. This justified the three hotels in downtown Galax. As mentioned before J.B. Waugh's Hotel on Center and Main was regarded as the finest hotel in the town. Its restaurant, a popular meetingplace, is said to have employed an old black man greeting guests at the door, asking them if they preferred Grayson County gravy or Carroll County gravy (the county line ran through the building: it was all the same gravy). The second most prominent hotel was built by C. H. South . South had first built a row of flats to accommodate the journeymen but later built a house-like-hotel named the Central Hotel. Both hotel projects were located on the corner of Main and Oldtown Streets. The third and last hotel built in this early period was built by W. I. Harp on East Grayson Street; painted bright red it was known as the Red Star Hotel. ³⁴

Unfortunately for these aspiring businessmen, all of the timber buildings on East Main Street were destroyed by fire in 1907. A bucket brigade was started from both the Central and Waugh Hotels but, nevertheless, the businesses on this block were burned to the ground.³⁵

By 1914, Galax developed into a coherent ,well defined town. It is important to understand how Galax people perceived themselves and their town. In a promotional brochure written by the Galax Land Development Company, a very interesting point of view is expressed. Wightman D. Roberts in his Foreword for the article, Galax, Largest Ten Year Old Town in Virginia, explains Galax:

³⁴ Judge Jack Mathews,interview with author, January 8, 1992, Galax,Virginia.

³⁵ Ed Cox, *The Golden Anniversary of Galax, Virginia, 1906-1956*, Frank M. Hearster, ed.(1956), 15.

Like yourself there are thousands seeking homes where they can make a living; where there are sunshine and rain, health and social companionship, security of property and opportunities for a reasonable investment. To you, and them, the western railroads have for years been appealing.

They want you. They have millions of acres of worthless desert land to sell; they have hundreds of miles of trackage barren of traffic whose maintenance eats up profits, and you are wanted to fill the breach-to fill their passenger coaches: to be a consumer of the supplies you would need there and which that country of desolation the West can not furnish, water. Water brought in by irrigation for crops and transportation of those crops back to the east where they could be sold, would only absorb all the profits which you deserve to keep.

But listen, your way toward home does not point West but to the South; not to the setting, but to the rising sun- toward the hills and vales and fruitful slopes of Old Virginia, deserted by many of her sons after the war, but now welcoming many of them "back home", where there is no worthless land but only vacant; where water is not bought or brought upon the land at great cost but falls as rain; where transporting products of farm or factory, orchard or garden, poultry pens or pastures to great cities and populous industrial districts is only a small item, and where churches and schools and a high minded, open, clean-living people will welcome you in a better balanced climate than anything the Golden West can justly claim. Will you not now examine the pictures and read of Galax, and its two fine Virginia counties?³⁶

In the 1914 brochure, Galax claimed to have had a population of 775 with two solid banking institutions, a prosperous train depot, and several churches which promoted "solid Christian values" to the aspiring merchant class.³⁷

In 1906, after the town's charter was approved by the General Assembly of Virginia, citizens elected the mayor-council to govern. Ben F. Calloway was selected mayor and the first council consisted of: Elbert F. Wright, a carpenter and

³⁶ Wightman D. Roberts, Forword to Galax, Largest Ten Year Old Town in Virginia, n.p., Galax-Carroll Regional Library, Galax, VA.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 2.

builder; Dr. J. K. Caldwell; E.C. Williams; Jeweler; M.L. Bishop, livery stable proprietor; J.H. Kapp, hardware merchant; and Dr. J.W. Bolen, physician and druggist. Callaway, who came to Galax from nearby Independence, was Carico's right hand man and secretary for the land development company. Moreover, Callaway, one of the first attorneys to reside in Galax, also served as a minister for the Missionary Baptist Church which later became the First Baptist Church.³⁸ Although the original town plan set aside land for a public school for Galax, to be known as the Piney Grove or Woods, it was not until 1905 that this school was built south of Main Street. Before then, school was held on the second floor of the R.E. Jones furniture store and funeral parlor. In 1908, a new brick school building would be built for the lower, middle and high schools of Galax.³⁹

At this time Galax had a strong and stable foundation of institutions and small businesses which attracted and fostered the establishment of a solid manufacturing base. As the twentieth century began to unfold people in the Twin Counties and Galax area realized the benefits of working in factories. They earned high wages and were able to purchase goods without the strenuous farmwork their parents and grandparents had done years before. The manufacturing base of Galax consisted of individualistic, self-made men from the region as well as from national companies. These men built Galax. A major benefit of living in this new town was the existence of the first public gathering of any magnitude in the Twin Counties; the Great Galax Fair.

38 Frank M. Hearster, the Golden Anniversary of Galax, Virginia, 1906-1956, Frank M. Hearster, ed., (1956), 14.

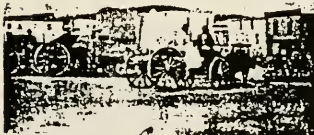
39 Committee for the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA, *the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA*, (1976), 22.



West side of Main Street looking north about 1905 — The buildings are Galax Drug Company, R. E. Jones Galax Hardware, a millinery store, old land office and Crystal Drug Store

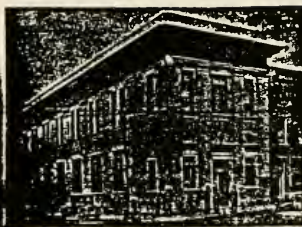


East Grayson Street about 1905 (The Blessing Store is where Blue Ridge Office Supply is now located).



East side of South Main Street about 1908

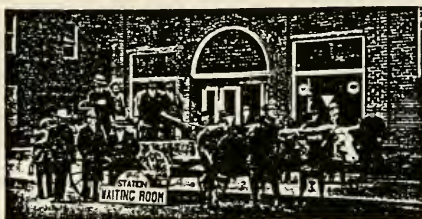
Figure 22: (*The Bicentennial of Galax, 1976*)



First National Bank in the late '20's



Main Street looking south in the late '20's



Local citizens "making fun" of muddy streets and highways which hindered transportation.



L. E. Ligan, nicknamed "Charlie" for his imitation of Charlie Chaplin. He installed "joke" boxes and pinball machines.



Tire trouble in the old days



Main Street in the early '30's



Galax Anniversary 1956—Officers Bully Williams and Sanford Hurd. Desperadoes Ben Cochran and John Faddie

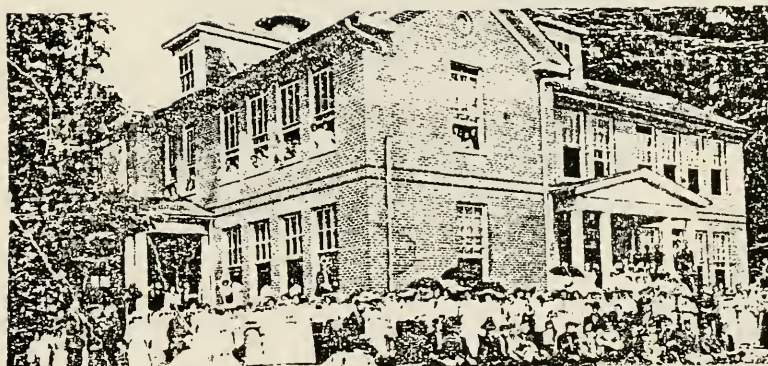


Parade in the '30's

Figure 23: (*The Bicentennial of Galax, 1976*)



GALAX HIGH SCHOOL — 1906



GALAX HIGH SCHOOL — 1908

Figure 24: (*The Bicentennial of Galax, 1976*)



Figure 25: Peoples State Bank , East Grayson Street ca. 1910
(Galax Board of Trade, 1910, Galax- Carroll County Library)

Figure 26: First National Bank (later the Town Hall)
(Jeff Mathews Museum)

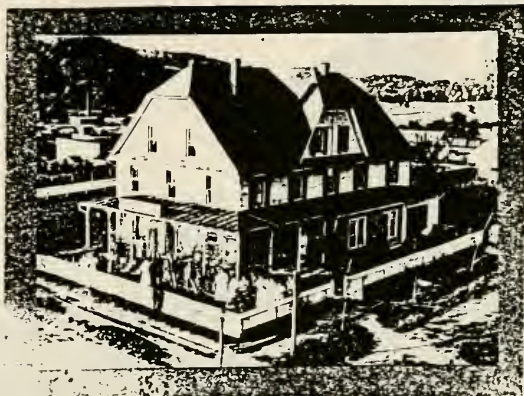


Figure 27 The Waugh Hotel, Northeast Corner of Main and Center Street
(Jeff Mathews Museum)

Figure 28: Central Hotel, Southeast Corner of Main and Oldtown Street
(Jeff Mathews Museum)



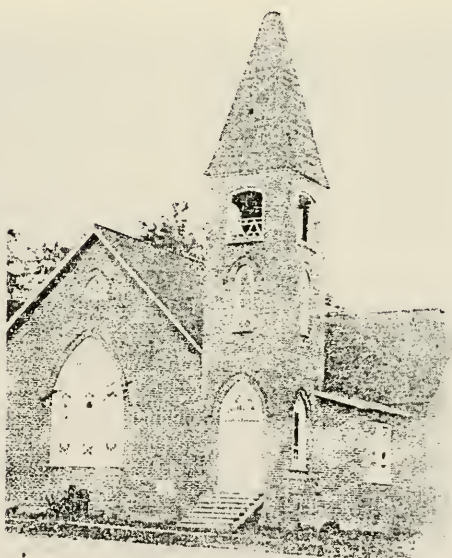
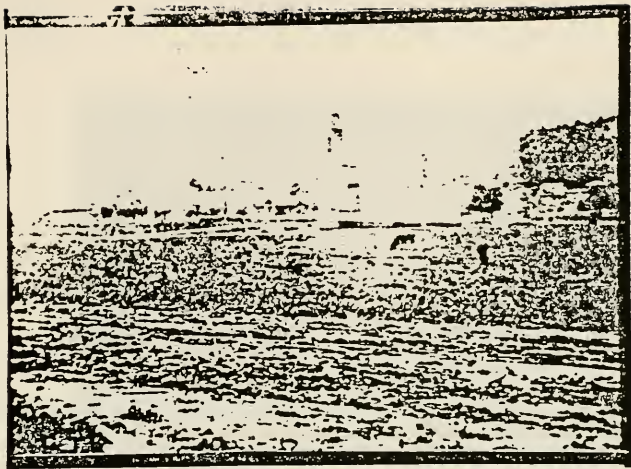
Figure 29: Wedding on the Front Porch of the Waugh Hotel
(Jeff Mathews Museum)

Figure 30: Waugh Hotel and First National Bank
(Jeff Mathews Museum)



Figure 31: View of Main Street, ca. 1935.

(John and Lynda Cock Private Collection)



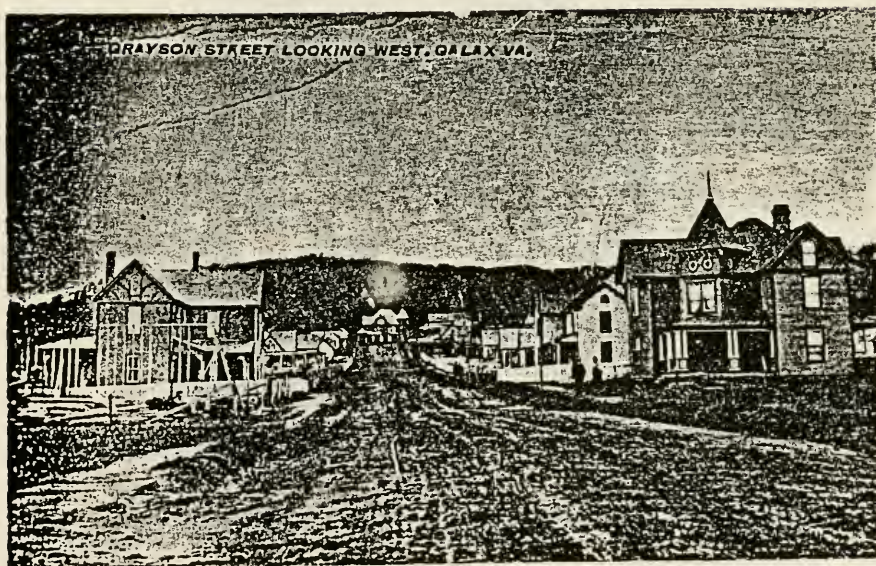
METHODIST CHURCH IN 1906

Figure 32: First Presbyterian Church ca. 1910
(Jeff Mathews Museum)

Figure 33: First Methodist Church
(*The Bicentennial of Galax*, 1976)



Grayson Street — 1915

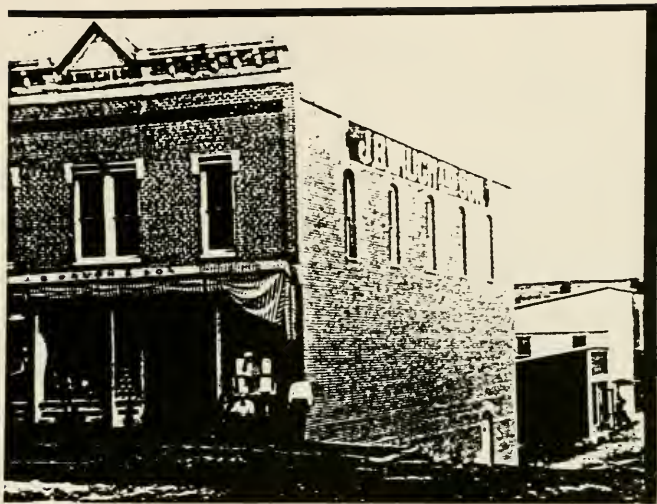


Figures 34,35: Early Views of Grayson Street
(*The Bicentennial of Galax*, 1976)



Figure 36: Early View of North Main Street
(Jeff Mathews Museum)

Figure 37: Early View of South Main Street
(Jeff Mathews Museum)



Mathews Hardware - 1910 - Local News - Paul Kapp

Figure 38: J.B. Waugh and Son, Department Store-1908

(Jeff Mathews Museum)

Figure 39 Mathews Hardware (Later to become Vass-Kapp Hardware)

(Jeff Mathews Museum)

The Galax Fairgrounds
The Great Galax Fair and The Galax Fiddlers' Convention

Coinciding with Carico's and Felt's development of Galax was their creation of the "Great Regional Fair" which would bring Galax to the attention of the people in the Twin County region. Twenty-acres of land, just south of town, was given over to the Galax Fair Association which required each of its members to purchase a share of stock costing one hundred dollars. Ninety citizens bought into the association. In 1905, a race track, grandstand and exhibit building was built for the first "Great Galax Fair."⁴⁰

The great horse trotting races were the Fair's main attraction. T.L. Felts, an avid horseman, who bred champion horses at his farm at Cliffside, wanted to have horse races to show off his private stable of prize winning trotters. Besides his horses, his prized team of mules always participated in the Fair's opening parade.⁴¹

Many other activities occurred during the fair. Circus animals, midway shows and rides at the depot excited the townspeople. These animals, rides and shows were paraded through the town and into the Fairgrounds.

Visitors would pour into the town as families came in covered wagons and camped in the bottomland or stayed in the houses of kin or friends. The Fair was a time when proud farmers could exhibit their livestock. Housewives and homemakers displayed their articles of sewing, knitting and quilting. There was the usual pie, cake and jelly contests and a great firework show every night. But what

⁴⁰ Ibid , 10.

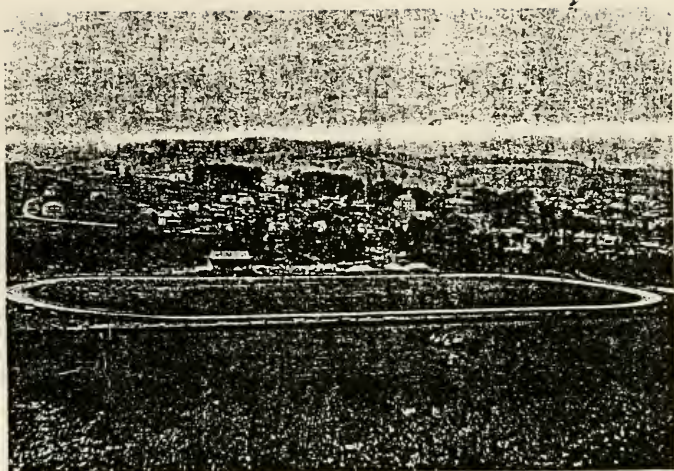
⁴¹ Judge Jack Mathews, interview with author, January 8, 1992, Galax, Virginia.

made the Fair so successful was the fact that people from all over the counties would get together and visit friends whom they had not heard from since the previous year. Unfortunately, the "Great Fair" lost its momentum during the Great Depression .

During the Great Depression, two events enabled Oldtime Bluegrass Music to emerge out of the hills of the Twin Counties and helped it enter into the mainstream of the culture. The first event was the building of the Blue Ridge Parkway in the mid 1930's, directing national attention to the region, and the second event was the beginning of the Galax Old Fiddlers' Convention. Nationwide, Appalachian Culture was discovered. Mayor DaCosta Woltz and other businessmen in the region began promoting local talent while major record companies signed bluegrass contracts. In 1935, the Galax Moose Lodge started the Fiddlers' Convention. The first convention was held in the auditorium of the Galax High School and the first prize was seventy-dollars and fifty cents. Many notable names were "discovered" during the convention like Kilby Snow of Independence, Virginia, who is now considered a bluegrass legend.⁴²

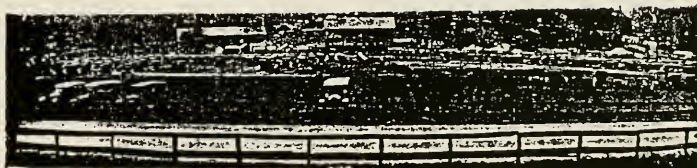
As the convention grew the event moved from the gym to Felts Park Fairgrounds in the following year. In 1991, over fifty thousand people came to the Fiddler's Convention which is held annually in the second week of August. People came worldwide to join in this event. This annual event helps storekeepers in the downtown as tourist shop by day and attend the convention at night. But the convention has benefited from downtown Galax as well. Main Street has been the backdrop of countless parades for the convention, the circus and the rodeo, all of

⁴² Committee for the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA, *the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA*, (1976),24.



Race Day at Galax in 1905. This old photograph is looking west across what is now known as Felts

Park. Note the covered wagons along the fence



Galax Fairgrounds in "the old days"

Figure 40, 41: Great Galax Fair
(*The Bicentennial of Galax, 1976*)



Figure 42: The Galax Old Time Bluegrass Fiddlers' Convention

(A. Aubrey Boone, *The Face of Virginia*, (Baltimore: Bodine & Associates, 1967), 148)

which happen in Felts Park Fairgrounds.

The History of Manufacturing and Industry in Galax

After a manufacturer has secured a suitable location, the great question—the greatest of all items in the debit column is the cost of production and this item, to a great extent resolves itself into the cost of labor.

As to the location, don't let that worry you. The citizens of the Galax have bought sites for two industries...If you are seeking a location for a sound manufacturing proposition and will come to Galax, you can omit the building site from your estimated cost of plant and equipment. This will be donated by the citizens. There are acres and acres of perfectly level building sites fronting the Norfolk and Western Railway in the town of Galax.

As for the second item, the cost of labor: I do not believe that there is another section in the United States that can compete with us in this item. Naturally you will enquire, Is the labor of an inferior grade? No!, Galax is composed of people from the two surrounding counties of Carroll and Grayson, you won't find a sturdier and straighter people.⁴³

From the outset manufacturing has been the primary concern for the people of Galax. When the city's plan was laid out, space was reserved for the placement of factories and manufacturers. These sites supported the American dream of private enterprise. Self-made men built plants, produced goods, and made Galax notable in the world of furniture, mirror production, and textile manufacturing. Through the evolving process of industrialization Galax has enjoyed a tradition of home ownership and, to this day, several factories are still operated by the original owners. These families attend the same church, shop at the same shops and bank at the same banks as their employees.⁴⁴

⁴³ Galax Board of Trade, *The Ideal Manufacturing Conditions of Galax, Virginia*, 1914, Galax-Carroll Regional Library, Galax, VA.

⁴⁴ Glenn Pless, interview with author, October 14, 1992, Galax, Virginia.

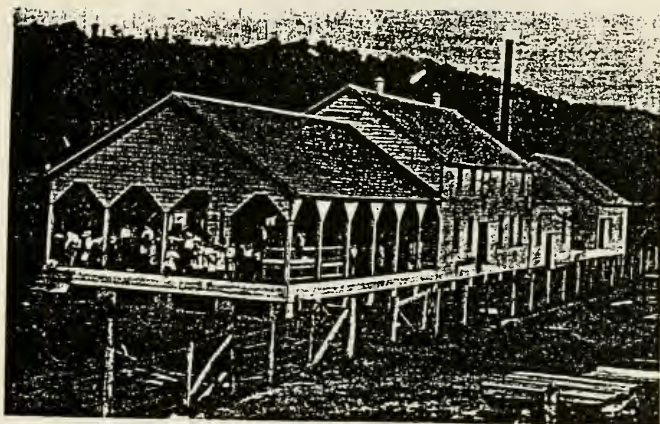
This close relationship between labor and management has always been a source of pride in Galax, and, consequently, labor grievances have been few. In some cases laborers have ascended into the upper level of factory ownership and management.

Galax has always been mainly a furniture making and textile town because of the superior grade of coniferous timber in the surrounding Blue Ridge Highlands. Furniture factories specialize in furniture ranging from bedroom suites to church pews.

Soon after Galax was established, Captain John Waugh and several other investors started the Galax Furniture Company which specialized in the production of chairs and dressers and also started a cannery for the growing of vegetable crops. Unfortunately for Waugh and his investors, the factory and the cannery were both timber structures which were burned to the ground around 1914.⁴⁵

Because of this disaster the furniture industry in Galax did not really get started until 1919 when Galax Mayor John F. Vass brought in John D. Bassett, organizer of the largest furniture conglomerate in the world and B.C. Vaughan, a young furniture maker, both were from nearby Henry County. The two men met with a group of citizens in the Masonic Hall above the Vass-Kapp Hardware Store and formulated the initial plans for the Vaughan-Bassett Furniture Company in Galax. Initially, employment was three hundred and thirty-five people, but over the years Vaughan-Bassett grew to employ over one thousand people. Vaughan-Bassett later opened factories in neighboring North Carolina and Tennessee. Vaughan-Bassett has permanent exhibits in the American Furniture Mart in Chicago, the New York Furniture Exhibit and the High Point, North Carolina Showroom.⁴⁶

⁴⁵Ed Cox, the *Golden Anniversary of Galax, Virginia, 1906-1956*, Frank M. Hearster, ed., (1956), 18.



One of First Factories . . . Cannery at Present Site of Vaughan-Bassett .

Figure 43: The Waugh Cannery
(The Golden Anniversary of Galax, Virginia)

⁴⁶ Galax Gazette, Rotogravure Section, March, 1937, 5.



E. C. VAUGHAN



VAUGHAN-BASSETT FURNITURE COMPANY

Figures 44,45 : Vaughan Furniture
(*The Bicentennial of Galax*, 1976)

Figure 46 Vaughan- Bassett Furniture Company
(*The Bicentennial of Galax*, 1976)

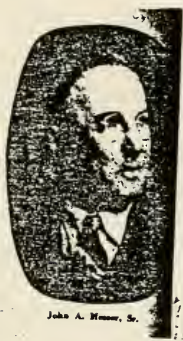
When B.C. Vaughan's brother, Taylor G. Vaughan, returned from the First World War he came to Galax to work with his brother at Vaughan-Bassett. In 1925, after generating enough local capital, Taylor Vaughan established the Vaughan Furniture Company which specialized in bedroom and dining room furniture which was featured in all the important showrooms in the country. Initially it employed two hundred and seventy-five people but the company grew to support over five hundred people. Taylor Vaughan also served the community as senator for the fourteenth district of the General Assembly of Virginia serving Galax and the Twin Counties, a post his brother previously held until his death in 1940.⁴⁷

Perhaps the embodiment of the self made man in Galax was John Messer, Sr.. Messer has been called the "Horatio Alger of Galax," getting his start in the mirror manufacturing business at the age of eleven in High Point, North Carolina. In 1927, Messer came to Galax and started a mirror silvering company in a shed behind the Vaughan-Bassett factory with nothing more than a small workforce and a pickup truck. From this start came the Galax Mirror Company which, by 1950, had silvered more mirrors than any other mirror company in the United States. Messer later bought the Mt. Airy Mirror Company in nearby Mount Airy, North Carolina (Page 59).⁴⁸

Messer added to his list of plants the Webb Furniture Company (established in 1925) in 1933. Twelve years later, Messer would buy the old Galax Furniture Company and in 1948 he would buy the Carroll Furniture Company. All of these

⁴⁷ Committee for the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA, *the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA*, (1976), 11.

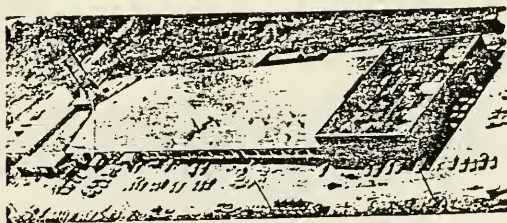
⁴⁸ Mike Cabrill, "Success Story" in the *Virginia and the Virginia County*, July, 1950 (Richmond, VA. : Virginia Press, 1950), 30.



John A. Messer, Sr.



John A. Messer, Jr.



WEBB FURNITURE COMPANY #2



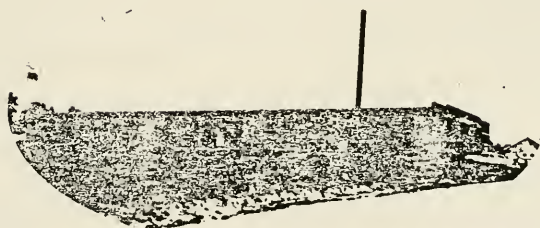
SAWYERS FURNITURE COMPANY

Figures 47,48,49: Messer Industries
(*Virginia and the Virginia County*, July, 1950, p. 47)

HARRIS-MARSHALL HOSIERY MILLS, INC.

MANUFACTURERS

GALAX, VIRGINIA



H. L. HARRIS, *President and Treasurer*

CHARLES W. MARSHALL, *Vice-President*

J. H. KEGLEY, *Secretary*

Figure 50: Harris-Marshall Hosiery Mills

(*Virginia and the Virginia County*, July, 1950, p. 51)

factories combine to form the conglomerate known as Messer Industries which in its heyday employed over eight hundred people. Today Messer industries only has the mirror division.⁴⁹

In 1937, a group of citizens from Galax and Col. T. Gilbert Wood of the N&W Railroad persuaded the Carnation Milk Company of Wisconsin to open a condensed milk plant in Galax. By 1956, Carnation Milk would have an annual payroll of over two hundred and forty thousand dollars which generated over two million dollars revenue for the local dairy economy. Unfortunately, Carnation closed its plants in the 1960s.⁵⁰

The textile industry has been another strong contributor to the Galax Economy. The Galax Knitting Company established in 1924 employed both men and women. Galax Knitting was established by J.T. Pollard who came from the Robbins Corporation of High Point, North Carolina.⁵¹

Burlington Mills of Burlington, North Carolina, in the spring of 1937, established the Galax Weaving Plant which produces upholstery, drapery, cloth and slip covers. It has grown to become one of the large factories in Galax.⁵²

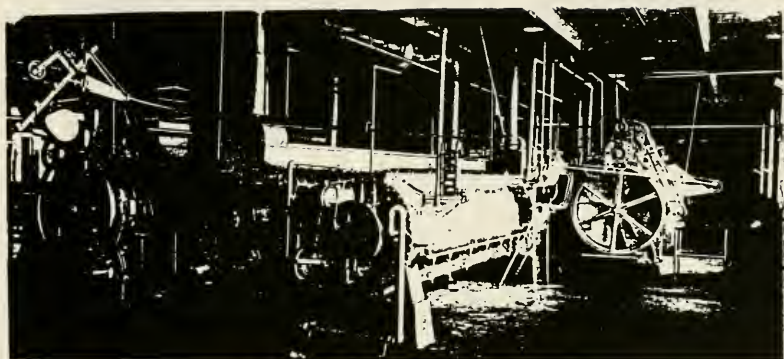
Harris-Marshall Hosiery Mills, Inc., was begun in 1945 by H. L. Harris. Its assets are worth over one million dollars. In 1955, The Haines Company came to Galax and opened a plant in an older factory on South Main Street. In 1960, the company asked the city to help raise one million dollars to match privately raised

⁴⁹ Ibid, 31.

⁵⁰ Committee for the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA, *the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA*, (1976),13.

⁵¹ Ibid, 14.

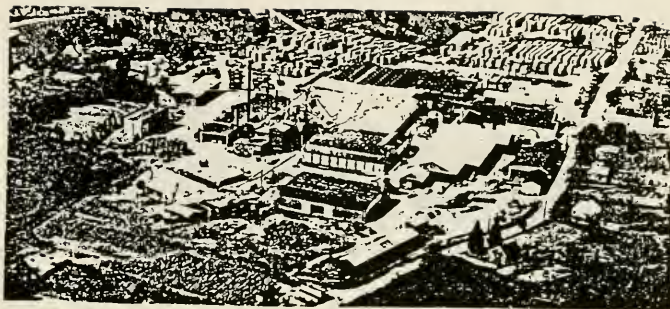
⁵² Munsey M. Poole, "When Industry Takes the Lead" in *the Virginia and the Virginia County*, July, 1950 (Richmond, VA. : Virginia Press, 1950), 29.



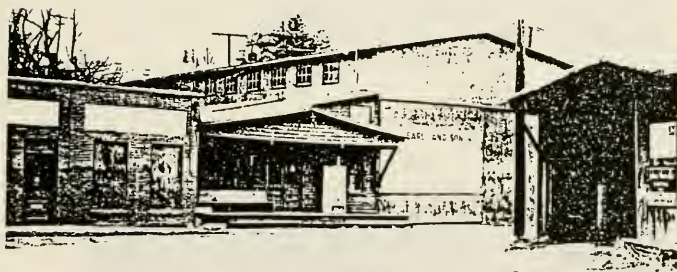
One room in the condenser plant at Galax.

Figure 52: Carnation Plant at Galax

(*Virginia and the Virginia County*, July, 1950, p. 42)

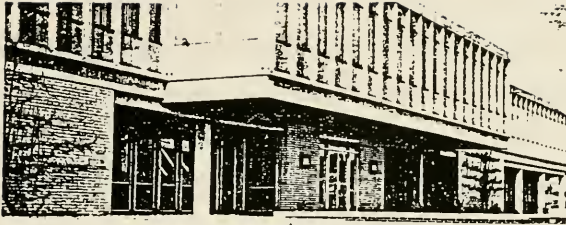


DIXON LUMBER COMPANY, INC.

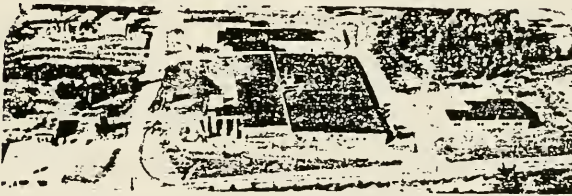


W. K. EARLY AND COMPANY, INC.

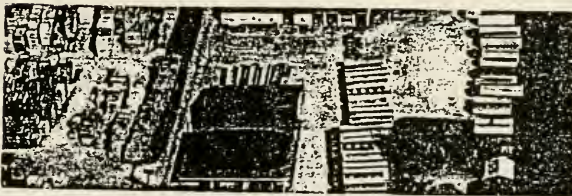
Figures 53,54,55: Timber Industries in Galax
(*Bicentennial of Galax, Virginia*)



HANES KNITTING COMPANY



AMERICAN MIRROR COMPANY, INC.



BLUE RIDGE TRANSFER CO., INC

Figures 56,57,58: Industries of Galax

(Bicentennial of Galax, Virginia)

funds to help finance a larger plant in Galax. The Carroll- Grayson Development Corporation agreed to help and the new Haines site marked the beginning of the Galax Industrial Park.⁵³

In 1957, the Galax Development Corporation was founded by A.G. Pless, a large scale appliance dealer and store owner, who acted as president. Besides helping the Haines Corporation, Galax Development assisted in the development of the Bluefield Church Furniture Company, the Sawyers Furniture Company, and the Wonderknot Corporation which replaced the old Galax Knitting Company.⁵⁴

As a result of large amounts of furniture production, the Blue Ridge Transfer Company was founded in 1932 to transfer furniture, textile products and raw material in and out of Galax. Jack Stanley was founder and president. Today, the Blue Ridge Transfer is one of the most visible companies in Galax.⁵⁵

In the 1970s, several of these factories either closed down or merged with competitors. The Galax Development Corporation disbanded and was replaced by a broader development corporation, called the Southwestern Virginia Development Corporation, which worked as an umbrella company comprised of several counties and communities pooled together to lure business to the region. Also, Galax belongs to the Certified Business Location Program in which the state works in connecting business with interested communities.

These programs help Galax's economy, however, for Galax to really prosper it needs local, dedicated people like John Messer or Jack Stanley to use vision and drive to start a business and help it grow and flourish. Galax also needs more men

⁵³ Committee for the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA, *the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA*, (1976), 18.

⁵⁴ Glenn Pless, interview with author, October 14, 1991, Galax, Virginia.

⁵⁵ Galax Gazette, Rotogravure Section, March, 1937, 8.

like John Vass or Glenn Pless to take responsible risks, recruit new industry, and continue the legacy of private enterprise.

The Galax Downtown, 1928-1992

As Galax grew the businesses in the downtown became more and more established and the timber framed store structures were gradually replaced by the more permanent edifices built of brick. This change of building materials reflected the new prosperity that the new furniture industry had brought in. This can be seen in the brick stores that were erected in the twenties on South Main Street and on West Grayson Street.

The key buildings that were built or altered and which began to define the structure of the entire downtown of Galax were the banking institutions. In 1922, the First National Bank sold their original building which had been built in 1908, to the City of Galax. Instead, they built a neoclassical edifice on the corner of Main Street and Grayson Street while the City of Galax used the prior bank building as the Town Hall.

In 1930, the Peoples State Bank collapsed due to financial troubles caused by the Great Depression. In 1937, a group of investors bought the Farmers and Merchants Bank of nearby Sylvatus, Virginia, and relocated in Galax. The bank occupied the old Peoples State Bank Building on East Grayson Street. In 1949, the Bank sold its building to one of its directors, Joe W. Parsons, who remodeled the bank building's facade. In 1964, the Farmers and Merchants moved to a new building on the corner of Center Street and Main Street. Ten years later this bank would be taken over by the Bank of Virginia which would later become Signet Bank.⁵⁶

Today, there are four banking institutions in downtown Galax, all of which are owned and operated by out of town banking corporations reflecting the theory that locally run banks are a thing of the past. These banks are: Dominion Bank which occupies the old First National Building, Patrick Henry National Bank on the corner of Center and Main Street, Signet National Bank also on the corner of Center and Main, and Sovran National Bank on North Main Street.

During the twenties, department stores came to Galax and located in the Downtown. In 1925 the regional department store chain, Belk's, moved into three buildings, each of them connected to form a large store on West Grayson. Globman's, a chain of stores based in Martinsville, Virginia, moved in 1929 around the block from Belk's on Main Street.⁵⁷ In the early fifties, Belk's relocated to the motorway strip, and shortly afterwards, went out of business. Globman's went out of business last summer, a casualty of the current recession.

Also during the 1920's, the small old hotels gradually disappeared and a grander hotel was built which reflected the town's new prosperity. The new large hotel was the Bluemont Hotel, a three story brick building with large arched windows. It was located on the corner of Main and Center Street. The old Central Hotel gave way to a Texaco Filling Station which just recently became a Citco station, and the old Waugh Hotel was replaced by a Post Office in 1937.⁵⁸

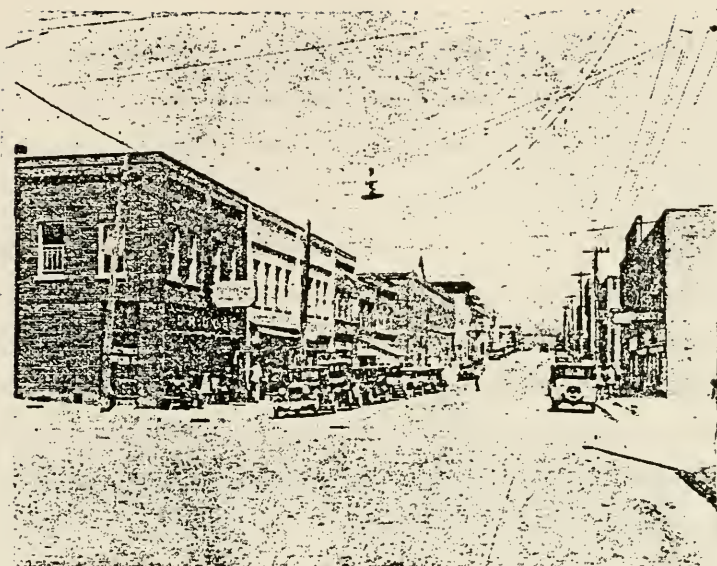
On July 1, 1925, Doctor John Caldwell, along with Dr. R. H. Edwards among others, opened the first Galax Hospital and Clinic.⁵⁹ This hospital was

⁵⁶ Glenn Pless, interview with author, March 11, 1992, Galax, Virginia.

⁵⁷ Advertisement, the *Golden Anniversary of Galax, Virginia, 1906-1956*, Frank M. Hearster, ed., (1956), 23, 24.

⁵⁸ Glenn Pless, interview with author, March 11, 1992, Galax, Virginia.

⁵⁹Galax Gazette, Rotogravure Section, March, 1937, 13.



YESTERDAY AND TODAY - These two pictures show the progress made in the downtown Galax area over the years. The top photo was made in the thirties. The bottom photo was made last month from approximately the same spot.

Figure 58: View of Main Street

(Galax Gazette)

located on West Center Street a block up from Main Street. It later closed down due to competition from two other hospitals, one owned by Dr. Virgil Cox and the other one by Dr. Robert Waddell. In 1974, a modern four story, one hundred and four bed Twin County Hospital was built on the edge of town thus ending an era of small private medical care in the downtown⁶⁰.

Movie houses are usually not deemed an institution but the movie functioned as such in Galax. During the 1930s and 1940s Galax had two movie palaces which were the main gathering place of the downtown at night. The first of these small town palaces was the Colonial Theatre located on Main Street near Center Street. This theatre, managed by Frank Holdren, enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the downtown for ten years.⁶¹ In the 1940s, the Rex Theatre opened on East Grayson Street to compete with the older Colonial Theatre. Both theatres went out of business in the 1960s. They were replaced by motion picture theaters on the highway strip which are able to show several movies at one time making them more profitable.

Another change was the solution to the flooding problems of Chestnut Creek, a problem finally resolved during the 1940s. After a flood destroyed much of the town a group of citizens led by Glenn Pless went to Washington for Creek channeling assistance money.

Focusing on the war effort, Galax saw little growth during the Second World War. Many of Galax's men and women participated both on the front line and at home. The city raised over fifteen million dollars in "E" class war bonds.⁶²

⁶⁰ Committee for the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA, *the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA*, (1976), 25, 26.

⁶¹ Galax Gazette, August, 1936- March, 1948, Galax-Carroll Regional Library, Galax, VA.

Parallel to the nations growth, Galax experienced a boom as industry, population, and productivity blossomed.

By 1954, Galax qualified as a second class city in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Swelled with optimistic pride, townfolk predicted the city would grow to twenty-five thousand by 1971. This did not happen, but Galax's population has remained stable since then. Since most of the town's fabric was built in the 1920s, the first wave of renovation and remodeling occurred in the 1950s.⁶³

During the 1970s and 80s the business strip along the Hillsville Highway (U.S.58/221) prospered, usurping the long taken-for-granted relationship between the downtown city and its people. Civic, institutional, secular, and residential components all developed on this strip. The downtown banks, churches, and businesses attempted to compete with their counterparts on the strip by erecting large signs and drive-through windows but this had little effect on the public who still fled to the strip for its "newness" and convenience.

In 1988, a group of concerned downtown merchants and citizens formed the Galax Downtown Association. This association was created to help reverse the continual decline of the downtown of Galax. This group sought state assistance by consulting with the National Trust For Historic Preservation. Mr. Troy Clark was appointed as the Downtown Manager for the Main Street Approach, a program created by The National Trust for Historic Preservation, to organize the restructuring of downtowns by analyzing design, organization, promotion and economic restructuring.⁶⁴

⁶² Munsey M. Poole, Capital Galax, in *the Virginia and the Virginia County*, July, 1950 (Richmond, VA. : Virginia Press, 1950), 15.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 16.

⁶⁴ K.W.Poore & Associates, Inc. Community Development Consultants,

Besides supporting these committees, the state donated a grant used to hire a consulting firm. The consulting firm, K. W. Poore of Richmond, evaluated the condition of the downtown. Their findings concluded that despite the disrepair of most buildings, the entire downtown qualified as a National Historic District. Furthermore, they found that the downtown possessed only forty-seven parking places compared to the seemingly unlimited (approximately 500) parking spaces on the strip. While resolving the downtown parking situation, the firm decided that all new spots should be within two-hundred feet from the main stores and civic buildings (this is the typical walking distance of a downtown).⁶⁵

With the evaluation complete, the City of Galax applied for a Block Improvement Grant from the Commonwealth of Virginia which they were awarded in the second round of submission. Despite the political delay, street and streetscape improvement started with the design and supervision conducted by Mattern and Craig, Engineers and Landscape Architects from Roanoke, Virginia.

While the street improvement project was coming to an end in 1991, a second phase of street improvements began under the direction of the Hill Landscape Studio and Dewberry and Davis both from Roanoke, Virginia. The Hill Studio designed a pocket park on Grayson Street and a Farmer's Market on North Main Street.

During this year of downtown renovation a new Wal-mart opened on the Hillsville Highway Strip. As in most other American cities, Wal-mart was an instant success with its "homespun" selling approach that mimics the mythical Main Street attentive salesman combined with their discount prices and department

Richmond, VA & Mattern & Craig Consulting Engineers, Roanoke, VA, *Downtown Galax Revitalization Plan*, March 1989, 17.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 28.

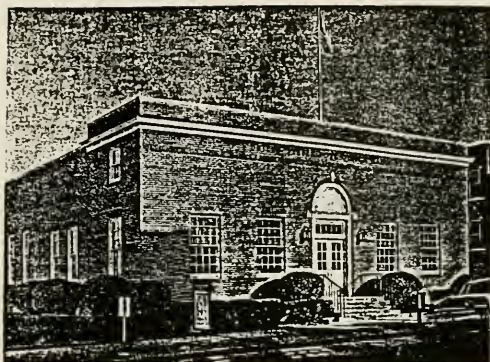
store selection. Even today, sales are ever increasing despite the current economic history. Wal-mart's philosophy has severely undermined not only America's downtown stores but, interestingly, Wal-mart's competitors sharing the same strip. In any case, small downtown stores just do not have the resources to compete. They must think of their assets in the past and of new original approaches in the future.⁶⁶

In conclusion, Galax presents a new type of town in Virginia. Not founded on religious principle such as found in New England town planning nor founded to establish governmental authority as in an old Virginia courthouse town, Galax was established for the common person and manufacturies. The city offered a democratic setting for common people to start new businesses and to succeed. Historically the town has sought economic opportunity and holds perhaps higher esteem for the private entrepreneur than for the Revolutionary or Confederate hero. At the same time, the town's climate has nurtured a strict code of decency and fair play that has been extolled by the four dominant churches in the city. I believe this is Galax's strongest asset; its true essence. In the following sections I will explore the evolution of this spirit and how it can be preserved and furthermore, how it can preserve the downtown of Galax.

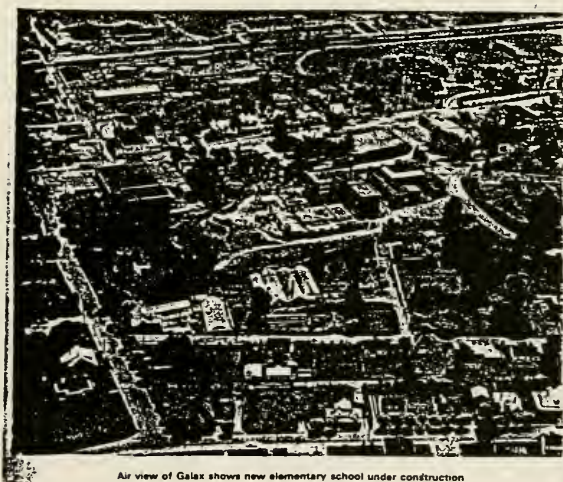
Galax is now and probably for all time will be the business center, and let us convince you that your home instinct will be fully satisfied in our community. ⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Hugh Sidney, "The Two Sides of the Sam Walton Legacy", in *Time*, April 20, 1992, 51-52.

⁶⁷ Galax Board of Trade, *The Ideal Manufacturing Conditions of Galax, Virginia*, 1914, Galax-Carroll Regional Library, Galax, VA.

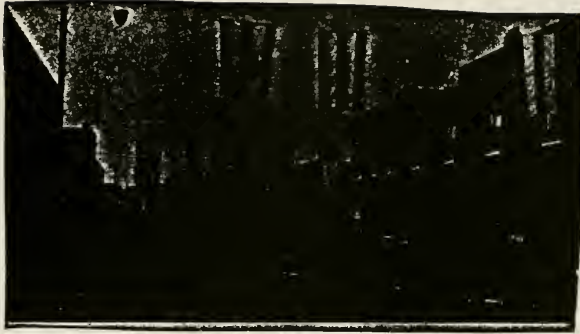


Post Office — 1937

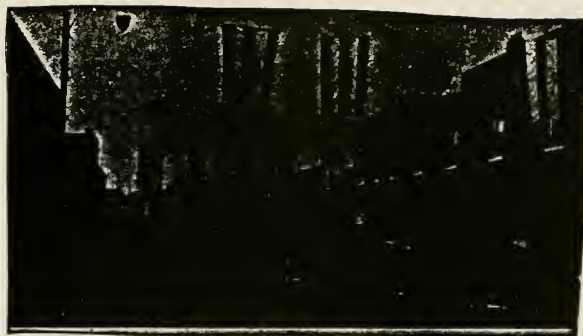


Air view of Galax shows new elementary school under construction

Figure 59: Views of Galax
(*Bicentennial of Galax*)



Figures 60,61: Views of Galax
(Jeff Mathews Museum)



Figures 60,61: Views of Galax
(Jeff Mathews Museum)



Figures 62,63: Views of Galax
(Jeff Mathews Museum)



Figure 64: Parade on Main Street

(Jeff Mathews Museum)

Part I Chapter 4 The Role of the Gridiron and the Articulation of Institutions in Galax

It is necessary to define precisely how three terms are used in this chapter in order to clarify understanding. "Gridiron" is a network of uniformly spaced horizontal and perpendicular lines usually used in the layout of roads. "Institution" defines a significant practice, relationship, or organization in a society which carries some form of contract or agreement. It is an established organization or corporation, especially, of public character. "Covenant" is a formal, solemn and binding agreement between two or more parties.⁶⁸

The City is the form and symbol of an integrated social relationship: it is the seat of the Temple, the market, the hall of justice, the academy of learning. Here in the city the goods of civilization are multiplied and manifolded; here is where human experience is transformed into viable signs, symbols, patterns of conduct, systems of order. Here is where the issues of civilization are focused: here, too, ritual passes on occasion into the active drama of a fully differentiated and self conscious society.⁶⁹

-Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities*,

Lewis Mumford's eloquent definition of city truly describes how cities in terms of institutions celebrate our existence and bond us into a community. Whether it is New York City or Galax, the primary purpose of a city is to serve as a device for human interaction. Institutions are the major components of the city that sponsor

⁶⁸ Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, (Springfield, Mass: Merriam Webster, 1983).

⁶⁹ Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities*, (New York: Harvest Press, 1938),3.

interaction. Through the institution people gather together and agree to a contract or covenant which binds the people to the institution and vice-versa. Through this institutional covenant a "system of order" is produced. The beliefs and values articulated in these contracts and covenants express the beliefs and values of their culture. Thus it is the study, understanding, and revitalization of the role of key institutions which determine the survival of a downtown. Humans develop relationships and share in the responsibility and benefits of an institution. Tax paying citizens in a governmental structure, tithing members of a church, or shareholders in a bank or other financial institution, all serve as foundations for the institution and the entire community. Their support confirms or negates the vitality of a community. Institutions are the armature.

Throughout the history of Urban Planning in North America, the hierarchy and structure of the town has reflected the role our institutions have in our towns and also the value we place on the covenant that we have made with them. The earliest, and perhaps most defined, example of this structure was the Law of the Indies and the Pueblo Town form in New Spain during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁷⁰

A set of drafted guidelines, The Law of the Indies described in detail how a town in the colony of New Spain should be laid out and built. Influenced by the writings of Vitruvius, these guidelines specified that all towns should have a central plaza set within a gridiron of residential streets. The plaza would contain only two institutions placed in clear and prominent view, the office of the royal colonial government and the church. The two primary influences upon the citizens of New Spain were clearly expressed in their institutions, the king and the church.⁷¹

⁷⁰ A.E.J. Morris, *History of Urban Form, Before the Industrial Revolutions*, Second Edition, (New York: John Wiley & Sons) 68-75.

In the sixteenth century on the Eastern Seaboard of what now is the United States, two distinct groups of English settlers built towns reflecting their hierarchical view of institutions. In what was to become New England, Puritan settlers formed clustered villages surrounding an open space or common where the meetinghouse would stand, singled out and dominant. The meetinghouse, simple in form, rich in meaning, symbolized the Puritan view of community and the superior, unquestionable role of God.⁷²

In Virginia, however, the institution that gathered the most people was the courthouse, which was the seat of local government in the colony. Situated in the center of the county, the courthouse complex was comprised of the court building, the clerk's office, the tavern, and perhaps, the law offices. The courthouse complex in colonial Virginia symbolized the role of the civil law under the crown over the citizens of Virginia.⁷³

All three examples, the Pueblo of old New Spain, the New England village and the Virginia Courthouse complex, reflect a culture that was made up of people who shared similar cultural values and beliefs. These values and beliefs were expressed in design upon the land which John Stilgoe refers to as the *Landschaft*.⁷⁴ It reflected the old world ideas of land use and community involvement. Not until

⁷¹ John Reys, *The Making of Urban America, A History of City Planning in the United States*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965), 26-43.

⁷² John R. Stilgoe, *Common American Landscape of America, 1580-1845*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1982), 46-49.

⁷³ Edward T. Price, *The Central Courthouse Square in the American County Seat* in *The Geographical Review*, Vol. LVIII, 1968 (New York: The American Geographical Society, 1968), 37,38.

⁷⁴ John R. Stilgoe, *Common American Landscape of America, 1580-1845*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1982),12-20.

the latter part of the seventeenth century did a new type of town, based on Old World precedent, emerge from this continent. This was a plan that celebrated the gridiron form and intergrated public space. The town was the "Holy Experiment" of William Penn in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.⁷⁵

This form of urban structure, the gridiron, responded well to the new culture of America. This culture consisted of diverse people who viewed God and Christianity in a variety of ways. In theory, this culture showed no preference to any one group or individual; Ideally, it was seen as a culture of tolerance. In Philadelphia, no street corner was any better than another and no square was held in higher esteem than another. Here the idea and legend of the "self made" man was born. Accordingly, Philadelphia is where Benjamin Franklin bought his three pennyworth of bread and proceeded to become one of the most prominent self-made men this country has ever produced.⁷⁶

Embraced by the people, this model of town planning eventually spread to the West. Land developers and later on railroad companies used the gridiron for its economic abilities, its low cost of laying out and its higher yield in land profits. In light of these material values, the gridiron plan was deemed superior to the Baroque plan of Washington D. C., by L'Enfant or the curvilinear plans of Olmstead. Despite the different agendas that called for the use of the gridiron in the later part of the eighteenth century and early part of the nineteenth century, the modern gridiron town model was the most prevalent and most used town form in the United States by the late nineteenth century. This town plan and design defined and structured

65 A.E.J. Morris, *History of Urban Form, Before the Industrial Revolutions*, Second Edition, (New York: John Wiley & Sons) 216-19.

⁷⁶ John R. Stilgoe, *Common American Landscape of America, 1580-1845*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1982), 96.

the city of Galax.

Why was the use of the gridiron town form chosen for Galax? I believe that the founders of the City of Galax were conscious of their decision to make a truly independent city. The founders were men of the twentieth century and they aimed to create a city that differed from the classic old Southern tradition of a community dominated by the county government. Instead, a city like Galax emerged placed on the county line dividing Carroll and Grayson County in such a way that the division balanced its assets and needs with both counties. Therefore, the town form differed from the traditional Virginia town. A courthouse square or a civil public space never developed because, firstly, Galax was not a county seat, and secondly, because Galax used the gridiron plan typical of many of the small Southern manufacturing towns. Its hall of government occupied a corner lot much in the same manner as the bank or the Post Office. Here in Galax, the primary objective for bringing people together was to do business and to make profits in order to live a richer life than their parents.

This urge to manufacture is reflected in the town form of Galax as well as countless other towns. The gridiron and business ethic reflect new priorities. In the nineteenth century, Americans became what Daniel Walker Howe calls:

...a people with a high valuation of rational order which could be traced to the Enlightenment and the Newtonian cosmology that went with it. This rigorous restructure of order that occurred during this period could be seen in not only their view of classical physics but also in the rigid breakdown of governmental authority and the rigid self imposed time schedules which governed the way they spent the hours of the day. ⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Daniel Walker Howe, "Victorian Culture in America" in *Victorian America*, Daniel Walker Howe, ed. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977) 18-20.

This rigid scheduling of time, which emerged in the nineteenth century in America, developed a new perception of time which Edward T. Hall described as "monochronic time."⁷⁸ According to Hall, monochronic people compartmentalize time and tasks in separate blocks, instead of dealing with time and tasks simultaneously which is the prevalent way in some other countries.⁷⁹

I believe that the preference of laying out gridirons of towns without public squares or plazas and the perception of monochronic time formed new perception of public space in which people would congregate and conduct business. This new space, the main street, functioned in and reflected the linear structure of monochronic time.

On Main Street, businesses compartmentalized in a planned, processional, linear fashion instead of being grouped in a cluster or market setting which is found in squares or plazas. On Main Street a person could go to the baker for bread, the druggist for medicine, and the hardware store for a bag of common, one penny nails in a processional, systematic way.

The processional structure of merchants and residences on the gridiron of a downtown helps to determine the unique character of a town. I believe the particular structure is determined by the placement and treatment of the downtown's institutions. Since the gridiron of cities like Galax is designed in such a way that one institution does not receive spatial preference in the form of green spaces or squares over another institution, the placement of institutions such as the bank, city hall and the churches becomes crucial in the determination of the city's character and essence.

⁷⁸ Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension*, (Garden City, NY. : Doubleday Books, 1966), 163.

⁷⁹*Ibid*, 163.

These ideas and their influences on the gridiron will be further explored in the section on institutions. I will explore the evolution of the gridiron in the United States and examine briefly how William Penn used it to design Philadelphia, and how his plan was perhaps exploited by the town developer. Discussion of the later railroad company ventures in the gridiron towns of the West will also clarify the rationale behind the development of Galax. I will then discuss how this gridiron was defined by the contrived placement of each institution in the downtown of Galax and how the architectural expression of particular institutions reflected and reinforced the meaning and the civic covenant behind its placement. In conclusion, I will discuss the removal, alteration and/or decline of specific institutions which have added further to the deterioration of Galax's downtown. The understanding behind the preservation of key institutions in Galax is vital and of utmost importance in revitalization. The physical presence of the institutions reflects the covenant between the institutions and the people of Galax. Once the physical presence of these institutions has decayed or is removed, it clearly indicates that the vitality of that institution is waxing. More importantly, it symbolizes a decline in the vitality and well being of the entire community.

The "Classic" Gridiron of Galax

To understand the history and evolution of built form in Galax, one must understand the history of the gridiron. Lewis Mumford pointed out in his *Culture of Cities* that the origins of the gridiron literally derived from transforming the farming culture of plowing ordered fields into the layout of streets on the orthogonal.⁸⁰ This is ironic and particularly interesting because, according to local

oral history, the streets of Galax were actually carved out by a mule and plow.⁸¹

As mentioned before, William Penn's plan of Philadelphia, designed and laid out in 1681, can be seen as the prototype for Galax. Penn's Philadelphia plan was revolutionary in the English settlement of the New World. In Philadelphia, the ideas of religious toleration and different nationalities led to the formation of a city that differed greatly from its counterparts in New England and Virginia which were composed of one type of person with restricted religious and moral viewpoints. Philadelphia, a city of many peoples, English, Irish, German, Swiss and Moravian to name a few, encouraged its people to develop various trades and life styles from building construction to husbandry. Moreover, with the formation of the Liberties land by Penn, Philadelphia achieved a clear distinction of town and country. This condition had not emerged completely in the strictly agricultural New England villages. New Haven was the only exception since its village was based on a grid differing from the landschaft traditions of the Old World.⁸²

Meanwhile, the Colony of Virginia had no urban centers to compare with Philadelphia. The navigable rivers and the booming cash crop temporarily stalled the pressing need to form a large urban city.⁸³ In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Thomas Jefferson summarized the reasons why there were so few urban

⁸⁰ Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities*, (New York: Harvest Press, 1938), 52.

⁸¹ Glenn Pless, interview with author, October 14, 1991, Galax, Virginia.

⁸² John Reys, *The Making of Urban America, A History of City Planning in the United States*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965), 126-129. also John R. Stilgoe, *Common American Landscape of America, 1580-1845*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1982), 17- 30.

⁸³ John R. Stilgoe, *Common American Landscape of America, 1580-1845*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1982), 70-73.

centers:

Our Country being much intersected with navigable waters, and trade brought generally to our doors instead of our being obliged to go in quest of it has probably been one of the causes why we have no towns of any consequence.⁸⁴

There were attempts, however, to make urban centers in Virginia and Maryland. Both of these colonies had capitals designed by an English nobleman named Francis Nicholson . Nicholson served as royal governor of both Maryland and Virginia in the late sixteenth century to early seventeenth century. During his tenure as governor he designed both Annapolis, Maryland, 1695, and Williamsburg, Virginia, 1699. Both of these city plans reflected Nicholson's preference for the Baroque style which was the popular English style of the era. Each of these town plans celebrated the importance of the royal and religious institutions by placing them in advantageous sites. Annapolis accomplished this with circles and Williamsburg accomplished this with long axial vistas. However, these grand statements of urban design did not reflect the values and aspirations of the people of Maryland and Virginia. For example, one Virginian, Robert Beverly, laughed at Nicholson, criticizing his design that incorporated the letters "W" and "M" into the city plan in memory of King William and Queen Mary. Since these experiments in urban design did not reflect the beliefs of their inhabitants, these towns would never experience the success or impact of Philadelphia.⁸⁵

The New England villages and Nicholson's efforts at Annapolis and

⁸⁴ Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia [1785] , Thomas Perkins Abernathy, ed.(New York: Harper, 1964),103.

⁸³ John Reys, *the Making of Urban America, A History of City Planning in the United States*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965), 105-111.

Williamsburg demonstrate towns that embody Old World feudal structure locking the communities into agrarian life and worship of both god and royal authority. Penn's ambitious goals and plans of Philadelphia reflected the cultural realizations of the time. Society was changing from a static social structure, restricted by a dictating nobility, to a more opportunist setting. Pennsylvania boasted a new rising middle class built on the solid social foundation of mercantile capitalism.⁸⁶

One European event (actually English) allowed men to express their urban ideals for new city types, the design competition for the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire of 1666. Two of the resulting designs reflected the English nobility's preference for the Baroque style which was prevalent during that particular period of English history. Plans submitted by Sir Christopher Wren and John Evelyn incorporated a spiderweb network of diagonal boulevards intersecting at circles and ovals. Yet, there were also submissions that reflected the middle class ideals of economic and political equality.⁸⁷

Two submissions illustrated this emerging equality in sixteenth century England, the plans submitted by Robert Hooke and Richard Newcourt. Hooke, a physics and astronomy professor at Gresham College, proposed a simple, undeviating grid with four square greenspaces. Each of these squares served as market places and parks for the general public not for the nobility.

Newcourt's similiar plan elaborated on Hooke's main ideas. Comprised of a simple undeviated grid, the plan had five open squares with four of them centered in the four quadrants of the new section of London, and the fifth square was

⁸⁶ John R. Stilgoe, *Common American Landscape of America, 1580-1845*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1982), 92.

⁸⁷ John Reys, *The Making of Urban America, A History of City Planning in the United States*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965), 15.

centered in the middle of the four squares. Each of these four quadrants squares would served as the foci of activity for that particular quadrant, while the center square, designed to be the size of all four squares combined, served as the focus of activity for the entire district. The Newcourt plan also designed a garden for each block of the city. It is thought that this particular plan served as Penn's model for the design of Philadelphia.⁸⁸

It is important to note that Penn's plan was almost bilaterally symmetrical. Philadelphia was not a city with one dominate focus; it was a city of several equal foci. This equal distribution of open civic places made the city, at least, in theory open to diversity to a people and tasks. Not entirely a port or an agricultural center, as most New England towns and not acting as the capital of a colony like Annapolis or Williamsburg, Philadelphia encompassed multi-faceted characteristics as it emerged as being one of the first modern cities. John Stilgoe in his book the *Common American Landscape of America, 1580-1845*, explains:

It [Philadelphia] is engineered to accept and order change, and especially to order growth... Far more importantly it recognized the changing nature of society as mercantile capitalism was slowly destroying the order of hierarchy objectified in so many *landschaften*.⁸⁹

In theory, Penn's plan enabled a more democratic use of land since the lots had no hierarchical order. Although Philadelphia's proximity to natural features such as rivers and harbors greatly influenced the value of the property, the property owner still had some influence in increasing the value of his lot in the city. This was noted

⁸⁸ A.E.J. Morris, *History of Urban Form, Before the Industrial Revolutions*, Second Edition, (New York: John Wiley & Sons), 221.

⁸⁹ John R. Stilgoe, *Common American Landscape of America, 1580-1845*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1982), 94.

by Benjamin Franklin when he first arrived in Philadelphia from Boston and found that "one street corner with its tavern was no better than another street corner with its tavern."⁹⁰ This equality allowed men like Franklin to raise their status and wealth through hard work, knowledge and good fortune. It was said that in Philadelphia the most esteemed American virtue was born, the power and ability of the individual.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, [1758], Russel B. Nye, ed. (Boston: Houghton Press, 1958), 40.

⁹¹ John R. Stilgoe, *Common American Landscape of America, 1580-1845*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1982),

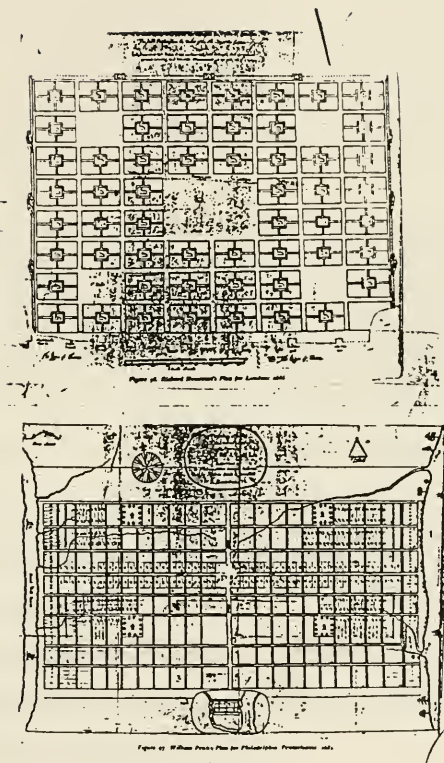


Figure 65: Newcourt Plan of London

(John Reps, *The Making of Urban America, A History of City Planning in the United States*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965),15,115.)

Figure 66: Penn Plan of Philadelphia

(John Reps, *The Making of Urban America, A History of City Planning in the United States*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965),15,115.)

The most prominent model for grid town planning in America was established in Philadelphia. This model reflected both the mercantile and middle class aspirations and fulfilled the American desire for expediency of equality in both application and occupation. Moreover, Philadelphia served as a model city for encompassing the scale of human beings. John Reps explains this point in his book, *The Making of Urban America, A History of City Planning in the United States*:

The Philadelphia of Penn and Holme while large by colonial standards, was a city in which the human figure was never dwarfed by either the plan or the buildings. All parts of the city could be reached by foot, and even the chief buildings remained almost domestic in size. They clearly intended a compact yet uncrowded settlement with sharp distinction between the urban core and the rural region.⁹²

This combination of the gridiron's uniform distribution of land and the importance of the human scale led to what Wilbur Zelinsky considers "the most dominant value in the cultural cosmos of the American, the value of the individual worth and achievement."⁹³

As the nineteenth century progressed, American westward migration was well underway. Most of these settlement expeditions made common use of the gridiron in their new western towns. Reps explains:

the overwhelming majority of American towns were begun and extended on the gridiron plan. Much of the early impetus to the grid plan, aside from its intrinsic ease in surveying, its adaptability to speculative activities, and its simple appeal to unsophisticated minds, stemmed from the position and

⁹² John Reps, *The Making of Urban America, A History of City Planning in the United States*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965), 120.

⁹³ Wilbur Zelinsky, *The Cultural Geography of the United States*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1973), 38.

influence of Philadelphia. As the most important city on the continent and as a much used point of departure for westward migrations to the interior, Philadelphia lent its plan as well as capital to aid in the establishment of new towns beyond the Appalachians.⁹⁴

By the mid nineteenth century, the Philadelphia gridiron model had become the dominant town form used in America. Reading, Allentown, Lancaster, York and Pittsburgh were all based on the Philadelphia plan.⁹⁵ As settlement west of the Appalachians increased, the use of the Philadelphia gridiron plan became widely distributed by a new kind of town builder in the United States, the land developer. These town developers, realizing the ease of laying out the gridiron and also the satisfaction it left with the people, used the grid plan form exclusively. For example, Philadelphia directly influenced the town development ventures in Cairo, Illinois.

Cairo, located at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, was founded by Darius B. Holbrook in 1835. Holbrook realized the financial opportunity of building a port town at the strategic juncture of two vital shipping lanes. With much foresight, Holbrook reinforced the security of this town venture by obtaining a guarantee from the Illinois Central Railroad to build a depot in this unbuilt town of Cairo (page 96).

Once securing ownership of the land, Holbrook commissioned the most renown architect in America, William Strickland of Philadelphia, to design the new city. Strickland's design clearly reflected the Philadelphia plan as well as its

⁹⁴ John Reys, *The Making of Urban America, A History of City Planning in the United States*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965), 294.

⁹⁵ Edward T. Price, *The Central Courthouse Square in the American County Seat* in *The Geographical Review*, Vol. LVIII, 1968 (New York: The American Geographical Society, 1968), 43.

precedent, the London plan. Gambling, Holbrook hoped that Strickland's name and influence would lure wealthy Philadelphia investors to invest in the new city by financing the construction of levies, piers and streets. Holbrook was able to obtain the needed capital to build Cairo and work commenced. However, the funds soon dried up with the 1837 Depression. Several years later, construction resumed but cost-cutting developers deleted the five public squares and four quadrants from Strickland's design.⁹⁶

Towns, developed without public squares (which would have served as the center of activity), occurred frequently on the American landscape because the majority of land developers had neither the talent nor the vision of William Penn. Many developers viewed public squares as an unnecessary luxury of a town, an expensive feature that yielded no financial return.⁹⁷ Most developers failed to understand enlightened town structuring. John Reys cites the rationale of most land developers, citing a land developer on town building:

a storekeeper builds a little framed store, and sends for a case of goods; and then a tavern starts up, later on houses are built which become the residence of a doctor or a lawyer, and the boarding-house of the storekeeper is soon built, as well the resort of a weary, wealthy traveller. Soon follows the blacksmith and other handcraftsmen in useful succession: a schoolmaster, who is also the minister of religion becomes an important accession to this rising community. Thus the town proceeds, if it at all with accumulating force, until it becomes the metropolis of the neighborhood. Hundreds of these speculations may have failed, but nevertheless hundreds prosper; and thus trades begin and thrive, as population grows around these lucky spots; imports and exports maintaining their just proportion. One year ago this very town of Princeton, was clad in "buckskin"; now the men in church appear in blue cloth and the ladies wear fine calicoes and colorful bonnets.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ John Reys, *The Making of Urban America, A History of City Planning in the United States*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965), 383-384.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 404-410.

This passage clearly shows the shift from designing towns with public spaces to designing towns without public squares. Repts pointed out that land developers and, later on, the railroad companies viewed the deletion of public squares as a way to cut costs in building towns and also as a way to maximize profits in town development ventures. It became accepted practice. This could have easily been the situation for Galax. But Galax's layout is interesting because the developers did, indeed, design a public green space. However, it wasn't located in the town's center. It was built at the southern perimeter of the town and evolved into the Galax Fairgrounds. The separation of public greenspace from the business center does not reflect the thinking of unsophisticated, frugal developers, on the contrary, I believe it is a response to the new perception of the structure of time and way of conducting business. The developers of Galax expressed their viewpoints with promotional brochures:

Two strong banks take care of the finances of the community. The numerous retail stores of the town carry large, attractive merchandise and there are good hotels, a moving picture theatre, and perhaps the finest fair grounds in Virginia. ⁹⁹

It is noteworthy that Galax is described above by mentioning its institutions and stores first (banks, movie theatre and stores) and its public spaces second. Howe referred to this change in thinking as the new rational order of the people of the nineteenth century. It also marks the beginning of modern, industrial, monochronic

⁹⁸ Ibid, 411.

⁹⁹ Galax Board of Trade, *Galax, The Largest Ten Year Old Town in Virginia*, 1914, Galax-Carroll Regional Library, Galax, VA.

time which shifted the architectural structure from the square to Main Street. This shift is evident in towns like Galax which have a new form of public space and also in towns which have traditional public squares but their center of activity has shifted from the square to Main Street. Edward T. Price discussed this shift with Charlottesville, Virginia:

The public square of Charlottesville, Virginia (1762), is described as having been originally outside the community and conceived as an English green with houses facing directly on it. By the 1820's it had been surrounded by streets, and business was collecting on its sides, but fifty years later business had concentrated on Main Street (a block removed from the square), where it is today.¹⁰⁰

This new Main Street reflected the Victorian rational order and the advent of structured time based on the emergence of specialized labor. Edward T. Hall refers to this new way of perceiving time as monochronic time.¹⁰¹ According to Hall, monochronic time is a characteristic of low involvement people, who compartmentalize time for tasks and goals in a list-like-fashion similar to the way people specialize tasks in a factory like setting. Hall further elaborates this perception of time in his book, *The Silent Language* :

¹⁰⁰ Edward T. Price, The Central Courthouse Square in the American County Seat in *The Geographical Review*, Vol. LVIII, 1968 (New York: The American Geographical Society, 1968), 46.

¹⁰¹ Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension*, (Garden City, NY. : Doubleday Books, 1966), 163.

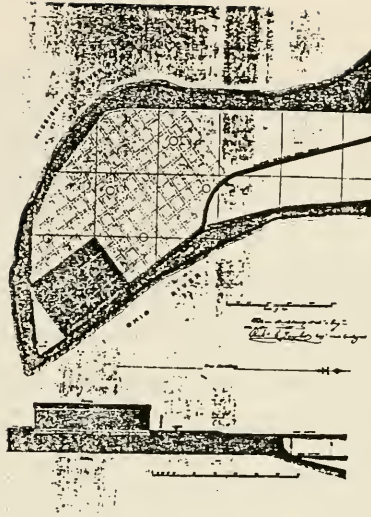


Figure 232. William Strickland's Plan for Cairo, Illinois, 1838

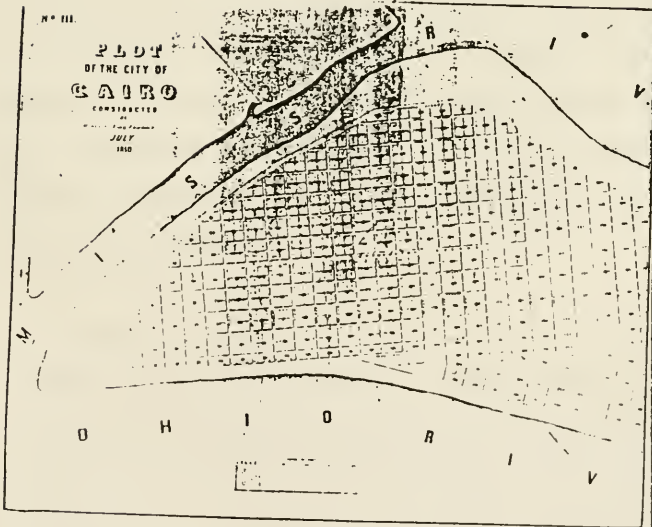


Figure 233. Henry Long's Plan for Cairo, Illinois, 1840

Figures 67,68 : Cairo, Illinois

(John Reys, *The Making of Urban America, A History of City Planning in the United States*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965),15,115.)

As a rule, Americans think of time as a road or a ribbon stretching into the future, along which one progresses. The road has segments which are to be kept discrete ("one thing at a time")... Our ideal is to center the attention first on one thing and then move on to something else.¹⁰²

This is reflected in stores and businesses which are separated from each other and then juxtaposed together. According to Hall, this kind of spatial structure differs greatly from the way Europeans perceive time and how they build mercantile space. Tending to be "polychronic", Europeans juggle several tasks at once. This is perceived spatially in the use of Piazzas and Plazas which enable merchants and shoppers to conduct business simultaneously.¹⁰³

Main Streets evolved spatially. Storefronts responded to the new monochronic structure of time. Storeowners designed their facade with the sidewalk and the street in mind because more people "windowshopped" as their primary way to judge merchandise. This was a new way to participate with the community. Donna Dunay, in her book about Blacksburg, VA., discussed this new structuring of Main Street:

The downtown buildings have a greater complexity than the facade connotes. The combination of thirty foot building heights with forty foot street width creates an outdoor room, partially protected while open to the sky. From windows above street level, residents and office workers enjoy a view of the street level residents and office workers enjoy a view of the street life below. At ground level, the building facades give way to undulating alcoves creating a rhythm and scale

¹⁰² Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language*, (Garden City, NY. : Doubleday Books, 1973), 9.

¹⁰³ Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension*, (Garden City, NY. : Doubleday Books, 1966), 168.

attuned to that of the pedestrian. This modulation of the building wall occurs with such frequency that it becomes the archetype for Blacksburg. The niches formed by inserting the doors and windows not only make a shaded place for pedestrians to window shop, but also provide the merchant with increased window and sidewalk area to display his wares. This transitional zone, being both inside and outside, is the place of society unique to downtown; it is a place to step out of traffic to renew acquaintances, contemplate a purchase or observe fellow passerby.¹⁰⁴

Dunay brings up two complex points about the architecture of Main Streets like Blacksburg and Galax. Firstly, the rich spatial expression of scale and differing levels of interaction and secondly, the rich undulation of the storefront wall that captures space in the monochronic structure of Main Street.

On the upper levels of downtown buildings there exists a completely different level of activity than on the street level. Here, on the upper level, exists a passive use of Main Street since the people observe rather than participate in the activity. These second and third levels are the merchant's residences which are occupied when the stores are closed. Also, professional offices occupy the second floor and third floors because more privacy can be attained. How do these removed offices participate with the activity of Main Street? They add to the visual richness of the Main Street by placing flower boxes or colorful awnings on their upper floor windows. Furthermore, signage on the professional offices add personal identification to the offices allowing these more passive uses of Main Street a more active role. The use of the upper stories gives the town a sense of verticality which John Stilgoe refers to as "the businessmen's desire to imitate the dynamic

¹⁰⁴ Donna Dunay, *Blacksburg, Understanding a Virginia Town, Town Architecture*, (Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Polytechnic Institute Press, 1986), 27.

enclosure of city streets, of course, and many entrepreneurs built two story facades on one story shops to make their places of business seem significant."¹⁰⁵

The street level is where the activity of the downtown Main Street reaches its zenith because social interaction and shopping occurs. On the sidewalk, the outside room of Main Street, people observe and participate in the Main Street ritual.

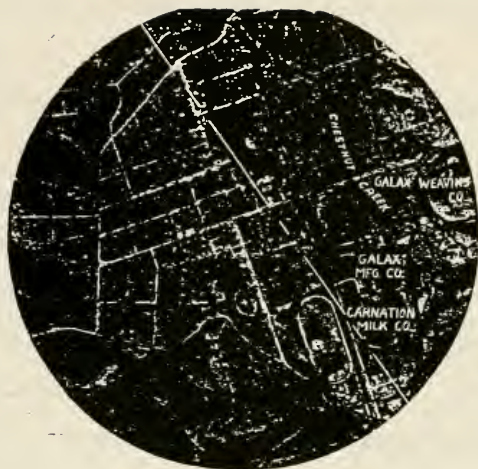
As previously discussed, Philadelphia's gridiron plan evolved into the dominant town form in the United States. Certainly this plan affected the modern American structure of time management and perception. Towns in the second half of the nineteenth century were built with consistent patterns throughout the United States, adhering to the same type of layout, morphology and architecture. This consistent structure developed links that connect one town to another allowing visitors to sense an orientation through association with their own town. J.B. Jackson discussed this condition in his book, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*:

[These towns] consciously conform to what is a distinctive American style. Classical is the word for it, I think, and rhythmic repetition (not to say occasional monotony) is a classical trait, the consequence of devotion to clarity and order. But the style also possesses spaciousness and dignity.¹⁰⁶

This classical trait in town building becomes a rich and unique experience if the town understands it and enriches it to form their own identity and character. If towns and shopping strips are built without this understanding, they become monotonous and unappealing. A "Classical Gridiron" town like Galax is unique from other towns not

¹⁰⁵ John R. Stilgoe, *Common American Landscape of America, 1580-1845*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1982), 260.

¹⁰⁶ John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1979), 67.

GRAYSON
CountyCarroll
County

Why Is GALAX?

... Mike Crabill
Gives the Story

GALAX is probably unique in its location as it is in its progress. The Norfolk and Western Railway built the North Carolina Branch from Cascade Creek to Blair (now Cliff) to service the Gosport Mines. J. P. J. B. Waugh, and a couple of others decided the present location would be a good place for a town. They made a deal for the real estate and propositioned the Railroad on extending its line the necessary two miles to the site in the swamp that is now the industrial heart of Galax. The railroad had to put up part of the cost but they got the railroad.

An aerial view of Galax, showing the county line bisecting the town. Lower left is the town recreation area. (Photo by Beas)

Policy Set

This first transaction set up the policy for the new town. As folks moved in, employment grew increasingly important. All business had till then been transacted on cross-tickets, tan bark tickets, and lumber tickets, but folks began to feel the need of cash money. They pooled the local resources and built a furniture factory. It had a tough

By MIKE CRABILL

time and finally burned down. The folks rebuilt in another location, using brick.

By 1920 the town had grown to about 1,000 people, and the boys had come back from the war demanding just a little more in the way of opportunities than had been previously necessary.

The brick furniture plant was not running. The handle factory had moved out and the little Edwards Chair Company was about the only industrial payroll in the town. J. D. Bassett and B. C. Vaughan of Bassett came into town one day and made a proposition under which they would operate the furniture factory on a guaranteed employment basis. They had themselves a furniture

AND THE VIRGINIA COUNTY, JULY 1950

PAGE THIRTIETH

Figure 69: Galax, Virginia
(Virginia and the Virginia County, July 1950, 13)

because of its common grid but because of the placement and articulation of institutions in Galax and because of the development of a local idiom and motif in the downtown .

Instead of towns serving and revolving *around* the institutions like the towns designed in old New Spain, New England and the Virginia courthouse towns, the modern town of Galax places its institutions "*along* a Classical Gridiron" in such a manner, that the institutions serve and revolve around the town. In Galax, the placement of institutions, in turn, define and structure the gridiron. They define the beginning and end of the downtown Main Street. These institutions initiate the monochronic shopping sequence of the downtown.

Furthermore, this gridiron placement of institutions accents the pluralism that exists in Galax and that William Penn first allowed to emerge in Philadelphia. The role of identity and character of the institutions in Galax will be examined in the following section. The use of idiom and motif in Galax will be explored in the following chapter.

The Hierarchical Order and Role of Institutions in Downtown Galax

Galax, unlike the town forms of New Spain and New England, is a town of many institutions. Each institution serves two roles, one fulfills the covenant and the other is the manifestation of that covenant.

As I have discussed earlier, downtown Galax obtained its hierarchical structure and order through institutions. Merchants choose where to place their shops based on their particular relationship with different institutions. The churches, the banks, the civic buildings and the quasi-institutional, movie theatre served a particular role

in the community through their spatial and architectural articulation. Institutional delineation derives from a tradition of iconography for the institution which stems from stylistic trends and their actual placement in earlier town structures such as the meetinghouse in New England villages. I will first examine the structure of order of each type of institution and then examine its architectural expression and iconography in the following subsections.

Spatial Order :

Churches:

The most important institutions that define the structure and hierarchy of the Galax gridiron are the churches. It is through the framework of the churches that diversity is possible in Galax. The pluralism and diversity in Galax is not the same as the pluralism of the nation which comprises many diverse ethnic groups and cultures. Compared to the ethnic makeup of the Nation, Galax is quite homogeneous. The city is comprised of Scotch/Irish and German people with a much smaller than average Afro-American Community and a very small migrant Mexican population which came to Galax to work in the factories. Other ethnic groups are not as prevalent. Diversity in Galax is expressed through religious practices of the people, the city has five major denominations to which people belong: Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Quaker (Friends) and Christian (Fundamentalist).

Galax is almost entirely Protestant. There is a small Catholic Church in Carroll County between Galax and Hillsville, yet its influence is not felt in Galax. People

claim which church they belong to with immense pride. This is explained in the opening of Ed Cox's article for the *Golden Anniversary of Galax Program*, "The Churches of Galax... From Whence Comes Our Strength":

The history of a city's churches indicates well the trends of that city's development towards a well-rounded life for its citizens. The moral and spiritual growth of its people are of even greater importance than its physical and mental growth.

Galax points with pride to the zealous growth and expansion of its churches, this nation, under God, was founded upon religious principles of love for God and respect for the rights of one's fellow man; hence our city gratefully acknowledges this dependence upon God's merciful care and leadership.¹⁰⁷

The placement of churches in Galax reflects a major cultural reshuffling, which occurred long before the actual building of Galax, as Old World institutions transformed into the American religious institutions which we understand and recognize today.¹⁰⁸ The spatial juxtaposition and arrangement of churches in Galax defines not only the downtown but the entire town as well. The placement of the five denominations reflect the cultural heritage and evolution of religious life in Galax and the Twin Counties.

One enters Galax from the South on Virginia Route 89 which becomes Main Street, after passing several scattered businesses and a clustered set of stores. After the intersection of Oldtown Street and Main Street (see map) a sharp change occurs in density of buildings, this becomes downtown. The shift happens at this intersection and not any others because the Friends Meetinghouse, which sits on the

¹⁰⁷ Ed Cox, the *Golden Anniversary of Galax, Virginia, 1906-1956*, Frank M. Hearster, ed. (1956), 16.

¹⁰⁸ Wilbur Zelinsky, *The Cultural Geography of the United States*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1973), 8.

nearby corner of Jefferson and Oldtown Street, becomes the visual gateway to the downtown. Before 1927, when the Quakers had purchased it, this church was the home of the First Missionary Baptist Church which was built in 1905. In 1927, the Baptists moved to the North end of Main Street, one block north of Center Street, and it is here that we notice a sharp end to downtown activity and the beginning of residential living.¹⁰⁹ Thus the Baptists defined the north and south axis of the city.

As discussed earlier, the eastern edge of Galax toward Hillsville is clearly defined by the factories in the bottomland (Map 1 page 1). The western edge of town was not defined until 1957 when the Disciples of Christ (Christian Church) built on a high lot on West Stuart Drive. They moved here from the corner of North Main Street and Washington Street next to the Baptist Church. By moving to the western edge of town the Christian Church became a clear link and gateway between downtown and the residential district. While the Baptists and Christian Churches determined the north, south and west perimeters of the city, the Methodists and Presbyterians defined the center of the city. Both denominations are located on the corners on Center Street at Jefferson and Monroe Streets, respectively. These two churches visually mark and define the center of the city and help separate the residential district from the downtown.

The balance of the town's perimeter churches with the in town, centrally located churches reflect a new order of religious institutions that responds to several views of God instead of simply one. At the same time, respect for the traditional spatial expression of churches of the old order, specifically, the villages of New England is expressed. The placement of two churches, the Methodist and the Presbyterian Churches, illustrates the breakdown of the singular view of God by one church,

¹⁰⁹ Committee for the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA, *the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA*, (1976), 25.

which was prevalent in the New England village common, into a street of a plurality of churches which occupy the city's center.¹¹⁰

In analyzing religion in the New England town, Page Smith discusses the social structure of the churches and their influence on the town:

The dominant church was often that of the first settlers, although in some cases, when this denomination was and remained on the "fringe" of orthodox Protestantism, another sect—frequently the Methodists—replaced it as the leading church of the community.¹¹¹

Smith realizes the importance of structuring the placement of denominations. In Galax, the Baptist Church is the dominant church in the Twin County region. However, the Baptist Church has always been located on the outer periphery of the city (the Baptists have moved to the Hillsville Highway), while the Methodists and the Presbyterians have always occupied the town's center.

It would be mistaken for me to assume that this spatial placement of churches states that the Baptists are more radical and the Methodists and the Presbyterians are more moderate. More likely, the preference reveals that the Baptists wish to retain their rural roots while at the same time being a part of the community. The Methodists and the Presbyterians, on the other hand, want to capture the same kind of physical presence with the Galax community as the meetinghouses in New England enjoyed in their villages two hundred years earlier. Furthermore, the

¹¹⁰ D.W. Meinig, "Symbolic Landscapes" in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes, Geographical Essays*, D.W. Meinig, ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979), 171.

¹¹¹ Page Smith, *As A City Upon a Hill, The Town in American History*, (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1966), 73.

placement of churches reflect the changing social structure of the town as Smith discusses:

The social development of the town can be traced through the changes in the character of the churches themselves... As a town developed, social stratification increased, individuals sought churches which offered them a covenant relationship with others of similar status and overlook.¹¹²

The steeples of the different churches in Galax also marked and delineated the downtown. The radical alterations and razing of steeples affect the image of a town profoundly. Steeples are exclamation points in the idiom of a place. They help define the town picture or Stadtbild.¹¹³

Banks and Government Buildings

The Bank is considered the true seat of authority in Galax. Compared to towns of the same size, Galax, with its six banks has a considerable number. In fact, the original Town Hall (on the corner of Center and Main Street) was originally the first "First National Bank." In a city created primarily for capital gain, the bank which D.W. Meinig refers to as the "Stone Temple of Business" has always enjoyed a prominent position of authority. In Galax, the bank has been very influential in building the town's character. The City Municipal Office and the Post Office also enjoy a prominent place in the downtown but their role reflect their secondary status to the bank. Galax revolves around a space created by the old First National Bank

¹¹² Ibid, 74.

¹¹³ Lecture, Professor Christa Wilmanns-Wells, University of Pennsylvania.

(Dominion) on the corner of Grayson Street and Main Street and also around the opening of the corners of the adjacent buildings, the Vass-Kapp Hardware Store and the old Bolen's Drug Store. These "open up" corners begin to form a "semi-public" space or opening, a type of square, which leads pedestrians away from monochronic into polychronic activity.

While the Methodists and the Presbyterians designated the spiritual core of Galax, First National Bank established the mercantile core of Galax. The placement of other banking institutions in Galax established the boundaries of this mercantile core; that is, the Peoples' State Bank, (later to become the Farmer's and Merchant's Bank) and the Mountain Building and Loan bookend the activity out from the center of the downtown.

The clustering of governmental buildings, the City Municipal Building and Post Office, (built on the site of the old Waugh Hotel) add another level of activity to the downtown. In one block there are two different activities occurring simultaneously as people go to the bank on Main and Grayson or run errands or pick up mail at the Municipal Building or the Post Office on Main and Center. By placing together these two different institutions on opposite blocks, both engaging in similar levels of activity, an activity loop is created which enables a monochronic structure to flourish.

Even though men funded and built the downtown and its monochronic structure, women predominantly occupied the downtown and used its institutions. Page Smith discusses this condition in *A City Upon a Hill*:

The Town, built by the man, and so often the tomb of his ambitions, was the perfect setting for the woman who emerged in time as the indomitable forerunner of today's mom. ¹¹⁴

As the downtown institutions matured, the women's role as users dominated in the downtown. However, organizations such as the Business and Professional Women's Club and the Woman's Club which was instrumental in the founding of the Public Library and the Woman's Club met frequently downtown. Since the men in Galax mostly worked in the factories, women worked and performed tasks downtown. However, it should be noted that Galax has always had a strong women's workforce also in the manufacturing.¹¹⁵

Movie Theatres, Friday and Saturday Nights in Galax

During weekend and summer nights the downtown transformed from a business center to a backdrop for cruising and socializing as the teenagers from Galax and the Twin Counties got together and dragged Main Street. Here in the downtown parking lots and street intersections, people came and to see and be seen. The quasi-institutional movie theatres emerged and also helped in defining the structure of Main Street and downtown in Galax.

These institutions are considered "quasi" institutions because they are businesses that don't form a covenant with the public, but they behave like institutions spatially and functionally. The theatre works in a similar fashion to the church, bank or government business by spatially structuring the business district. During the theatres' heyday, its brightly lit marquee spatially defined the structure of the downtown at night and on the weekends, giving the area teenagers a

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 172.

¹¹⁵ Munsey M. Poole, "Capital Galax", in the *Virginia and the Virginia County*, July, 1950 (Richmond, VA. : Virginia Press, 1950), 15.

destination to cruise to. Today, the downtown town movie theatres, the Colonial and the Rex, still convey the fantasy motifs that were popular in the 1930s and 1940s with their festive Hollywood marquees.

The Architecture of Institutions in Galax

In a densely packed gridiron that does not have any public spaces in its center to delineate or set off the existence of a particular institution; the manner of detailing and embellishing institutions becomes extremely important. The ornamentation and detailing of the building conveys the function of the institution, and moreover, it conveys the significance of the covenant made between the people and the institution through the extra effort and cost expended. The key institutions in Galax were built in the early part of the twentieth century by a group of people who belonged to the same economic class.¹¹⁶ They designed their institutions to convey particular images of the past which they believed embodied their institution's beliefs and covenant. Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown discuss the function of this ornament in articulating institutions in their book, *Learning from Las Vegas* :

The stylistic eclecticism of the nineteenth century was essentially a symbolism of function, although sometimes a symbolism of nationalism - Henri IV Renaissance in France, Tudor in England, for example. But quite consistently styles correspond to building types. Banks were classical basilicas to suggest civic responsibility and tradition; commercial buildings looked like burgher's houses... and a choice between Perpendicular and decorated for mid-centuried English churches reflected theological differences between the Oxford and Cambridge movements.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Glenn Pless, interview with author, March 18, 1992, Galax, Virginia.

¹¹⁷ Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form*, (Cambridge, Mass.:

This symbolic ornamentation that Venturi and Scott Brown mentioned holds true for Galax as well. For instance, the First National Bank, the old Farmers and Merchants Bank as well as the old Mountain Building and Loan all convey the classical symbolism discussed by Venturi and Scott Brown. Furthermore, the First National Bank is the tallest buildings in the downtown, thus further reinforcing its image and presence on Main Street.

William J. R. Curtis in his book , *Modern Architecture after 1900*, discusses how the extensive use of the dignified, traditional English Gothic Style for the embellishment of churches stems from a desire in the second half of the nineteenth century to return to the authentic architecture of the English Culture which would give the direct expression of moral virtues.¹¹⁸ I believe that the use of the dignified, traditional English Gothic Style in the Methodist and Baptist Churches was based on these congregations civic pride and identification with their denomination on a national level as well as Galax's awareness of the predominant mode of church architecture in America.¹¹⁹

A more explicit linkage with the American past can be found in the expression of the Presbyterian and Quaker Meeting Houses (formerly the Missionary Baptist Church). Both of these buildings mimic old meetinghouses in New England. D.W. Meinig elaborates on this association with New England iconography: "To the entire world, a steepled church set in its frame of white wooden houses around

The MIT Press, 1977), 114 .

¹¹⁸ William J. R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice- Hall, Inc., 1983),48.

¹¹⁹ Galax Board of Trade, *The Ideal Manufacturing Conditions of Galax, Virginia*, 1914, Galax-Carroll Regional Library, Galax, VA. In this brochure, the majority of people in Galax and the Twin Counties was used as one of Galax's prime assets.

a manicured common, remains a scene which says New England."¹²⁰

The Baptists and the Presbyterians used the imagery of the steeple to convey different messages to the community. The Baptist viewed themselves as the true religious pioneers of Galax when they built their church in 1905; they wanted to convey to the entire community that their beliefs and covenant embraced the ideals of their New England forefathers. Later in 1922, when they moved to North Main Street, they adopted the English Gothic motif in order to convey another message. A different message, again, was presented when they adopted the Neo-Georgian Style for their latest church built on the highway in 1968.¹²¹ I believe that the Presbyterians in turn, used this New England iconography as a way to further reinforce the idea that their Calvinist beliefs were aligned with the religious views of the New Englanders of the seventeenth century. They placed their church centrally and in the same manner by occupying the center of Galax on Center Street.

Governmental buildings attempted to convey the same type of civil authority that the banks embraced. As previously noted the old Municipal Building was the First National Bank. Unfortunately, the Municipal Building went through an extensive refacing in the 1940's and lost its imagery. The Post Office conveyed its Federal authority by abstracting colonial Virginia motifs of early courthouses such as the Hanover County Courthouse in Ashland, Virginia, with its simple brick volume and jack arched windows. The consistent charm and use of this abstracted motif used for Virginia's Post Offices in the 1930's have made this type of Post Office cherished state wide.

¹²⁰ D.W. Meinig, "Symbolic Landscapes" in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes, Geographical Essays*, D.W. Meinig, ed. (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979), 179.

¹²¹ Glenn Pless, interview with author, March 18, 1992, Galax, Virginia.

By studying the evolution of the common gridiron-- how it was used and how it functioned in Galax -- I concluded that it was the institutions which brought order and, especially, meaning to the Galax gridiron making it particular and unique. It should be pointed out here that some of the institutions in Galax have been under the directorship or ownership of the third generation of townspeople. It should also be remarked that there has been the trend from the locally owned banks to state and national banking corporations. Consequently, when an institution is altered or removed from its place within a given downtown, the delicate balance of the downtown is disrupted. The monochronic structure of shopping and experiencing loses its definition and meaning, and its sequence soon unravels around the absence of the institution. This has occurred on the northern side of the downtown because the Municipal Building, in its forms, has no clear definition anymore declaring its purpose. Also, the Baptist Church has moved from its North Main Street location, instead, a state run craft business occupies the building. The inappropriate change of building and function worsens the condition of this end of Main Street. Furthermore, the Presbyterian Church with its deteriorating 1960s vintage steeple shows, visually, a breakdown of the people's covenant. All of this has an impact on the vitality of downtown Galax. These problems will be further studied in the conditions and design study.

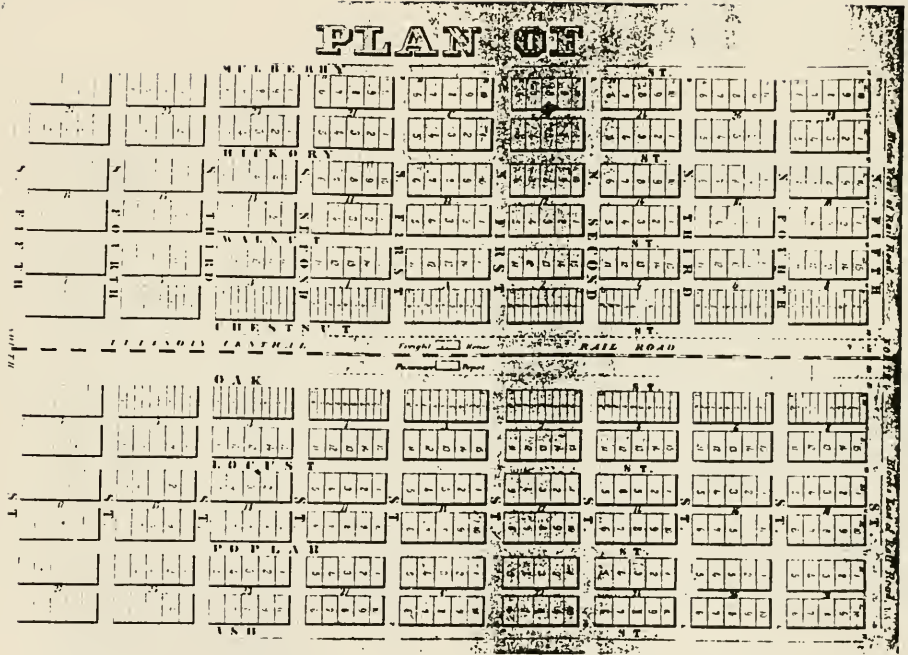


Figure 70. The Illinois Central Associates Standard Town Plat

Figure 70: Illinois Central Standard Town Plat

(John Reys, *The Making of Urban America, A History of City Planning in the United States*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965), 294.)

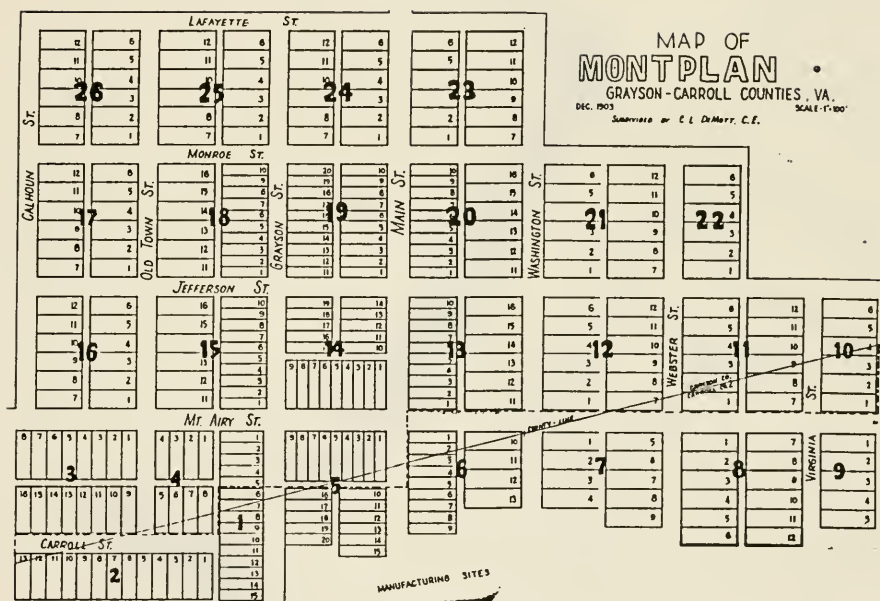


Figure 71: Montplan Plan of Galax

(Committee for the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA, *the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA*, (1976), 11.)

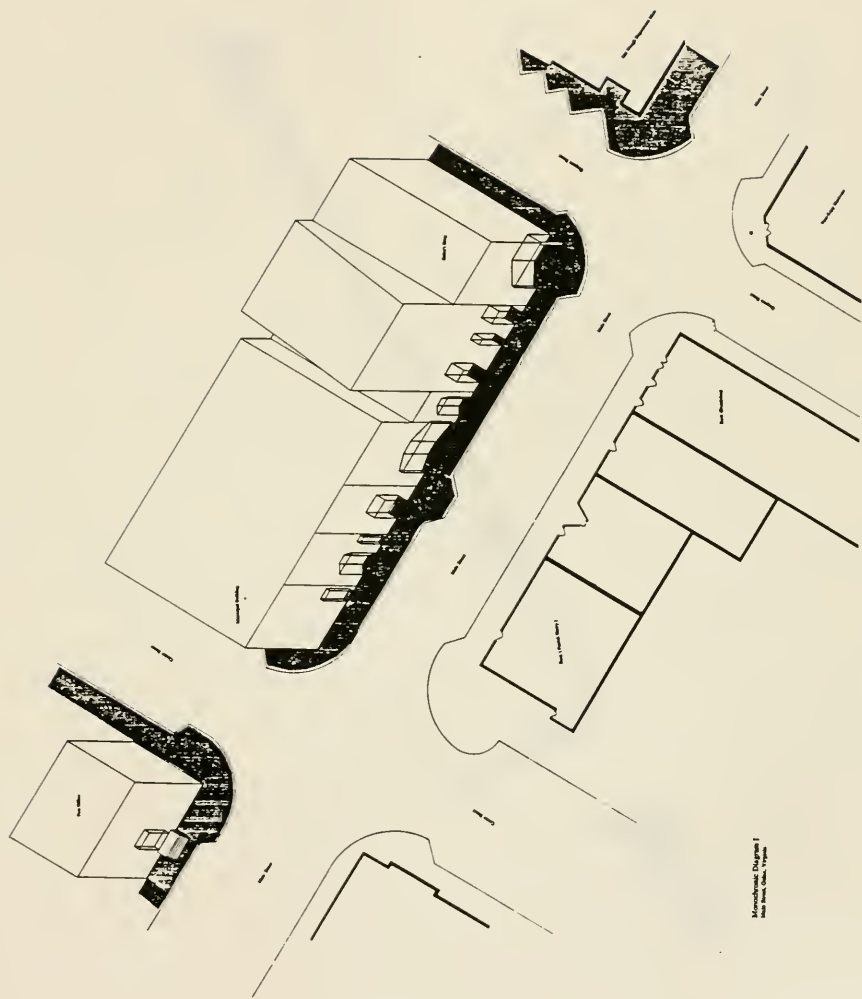
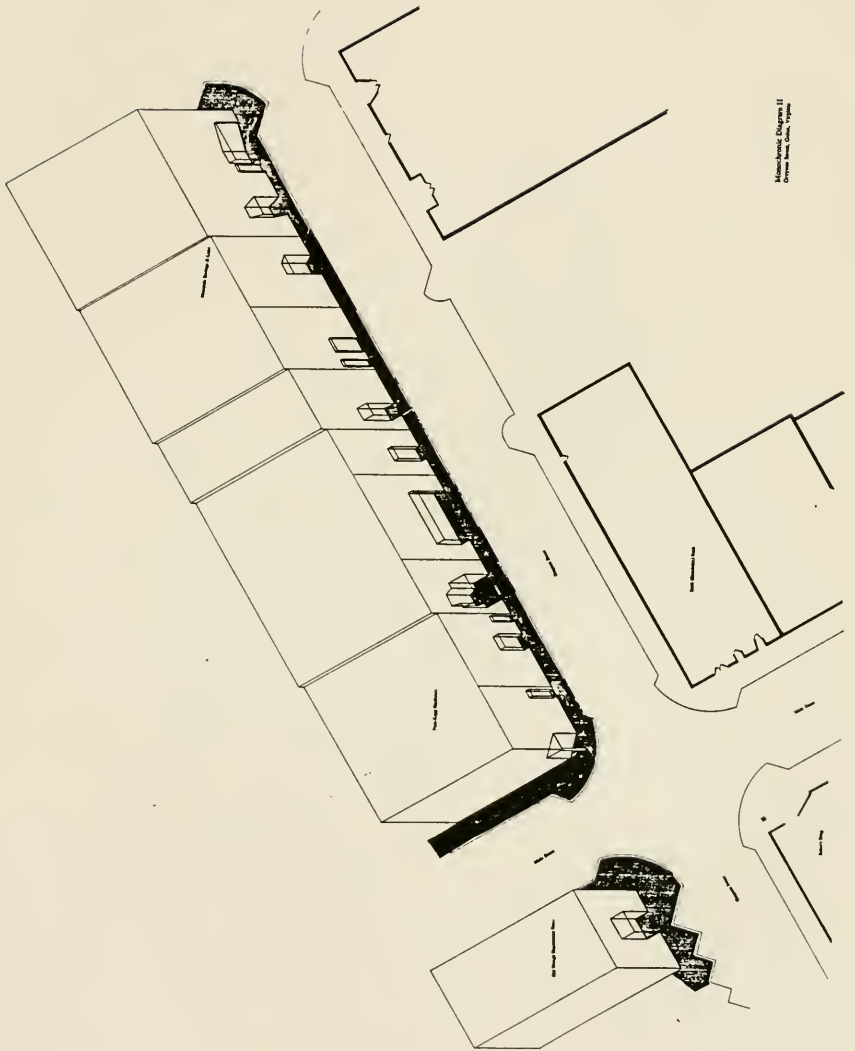


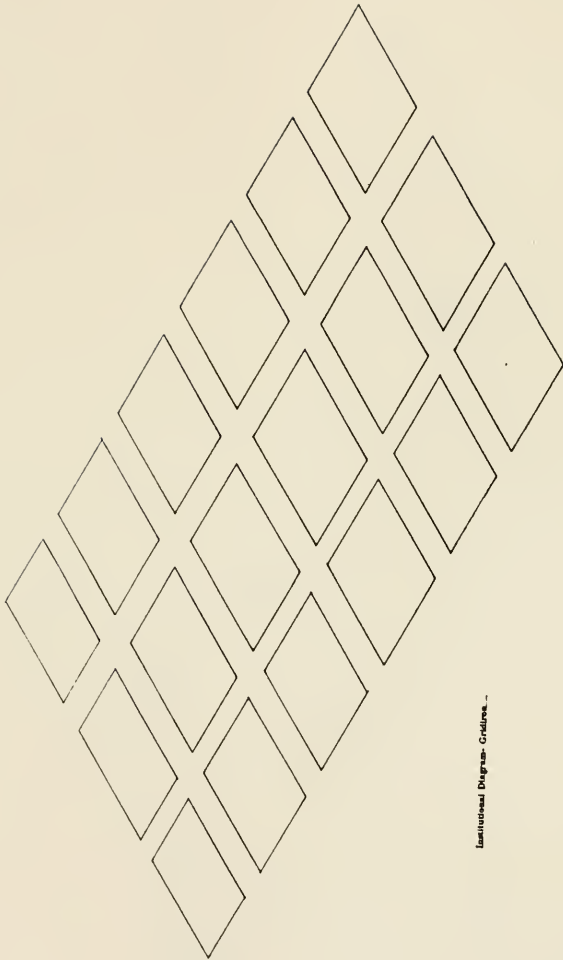
Plate 1

Architectural Drawing 1
Floor Plan, 1/4" = 1'-0"



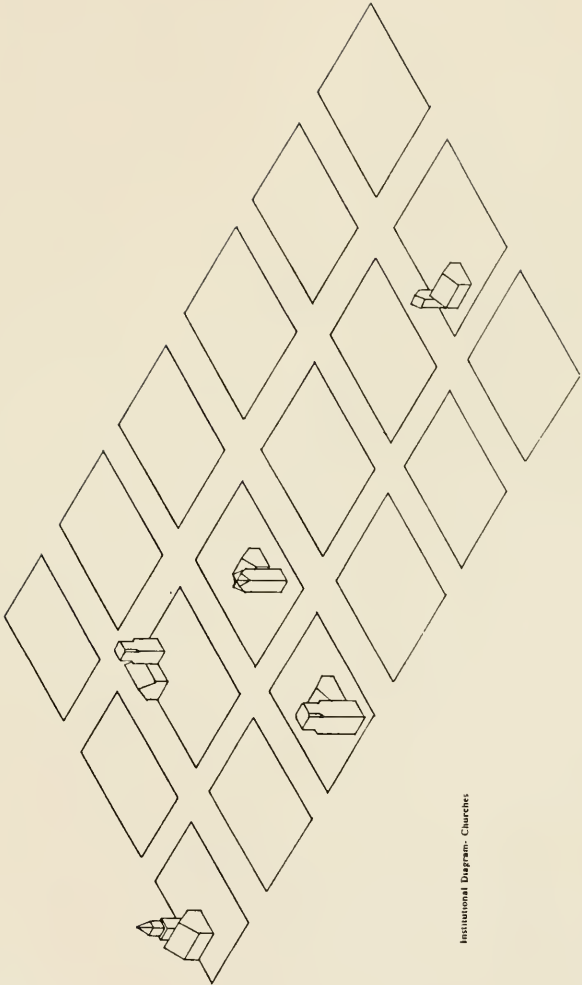
Architectural Department
University of California, Berkeley

Plate 2



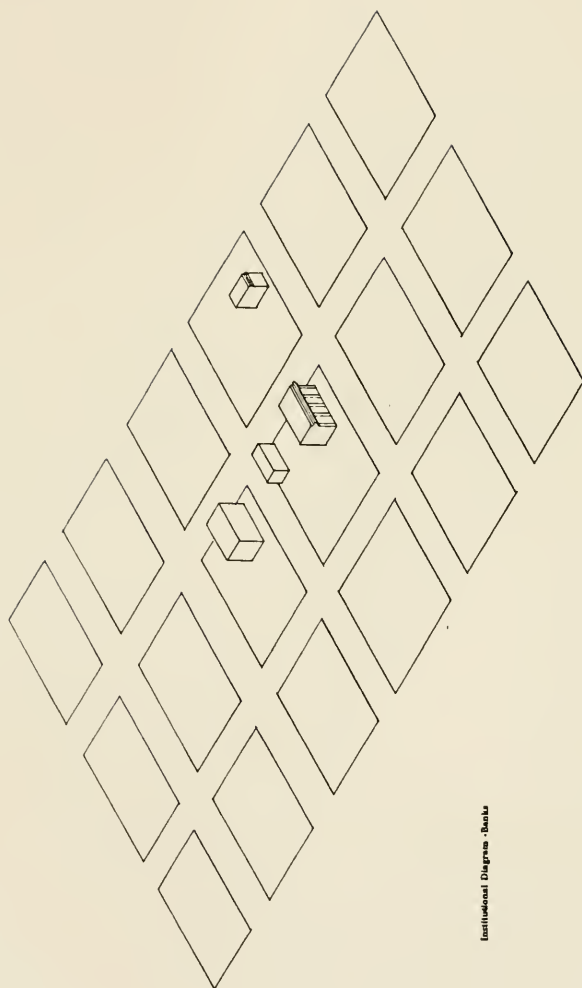
Geometric Design - Circles -

Plate 3



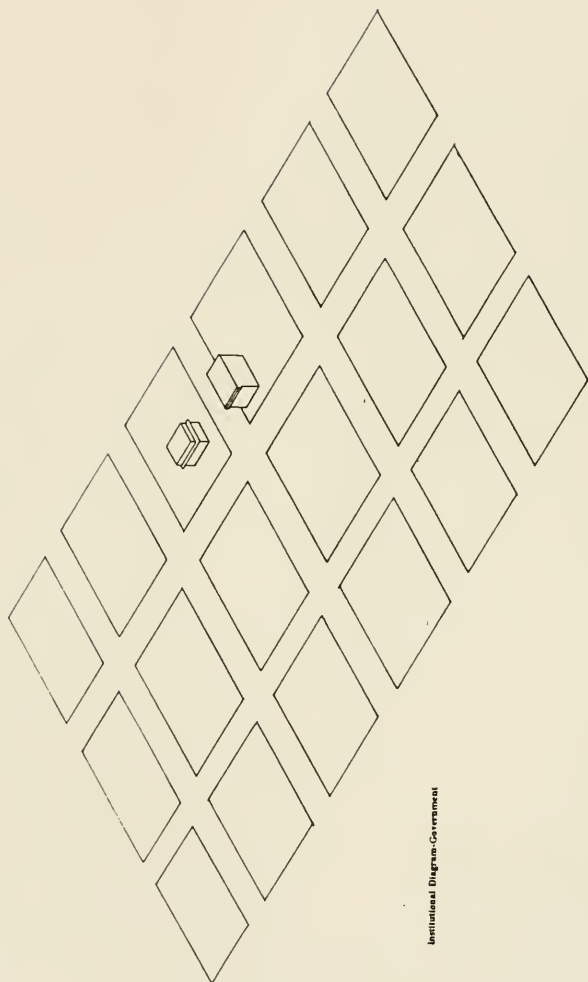
Institutional Diagram: Churches

Plate 4



Enrichment Diagram - Books

Plate 5



Institutional Diagram-Government

Plate 6

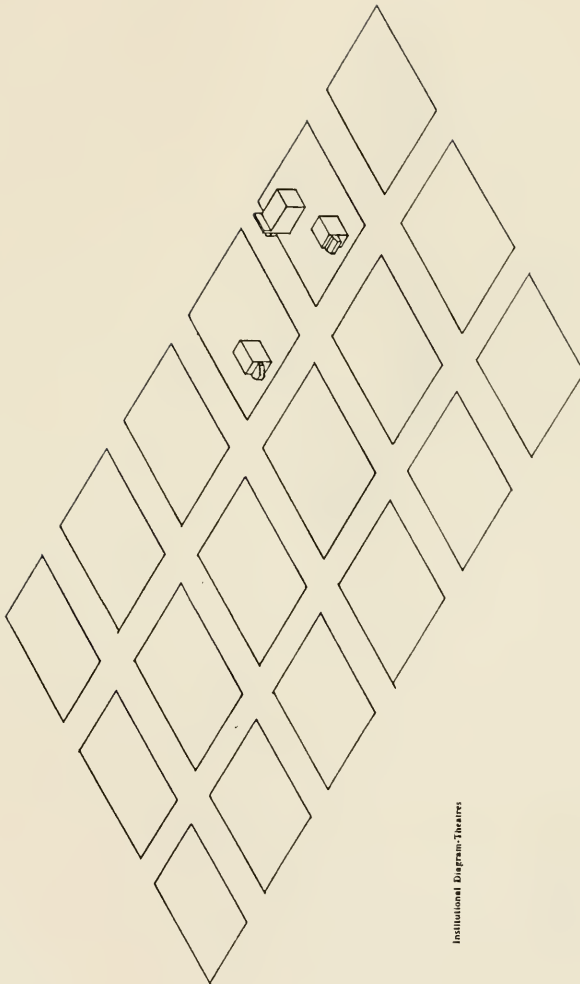
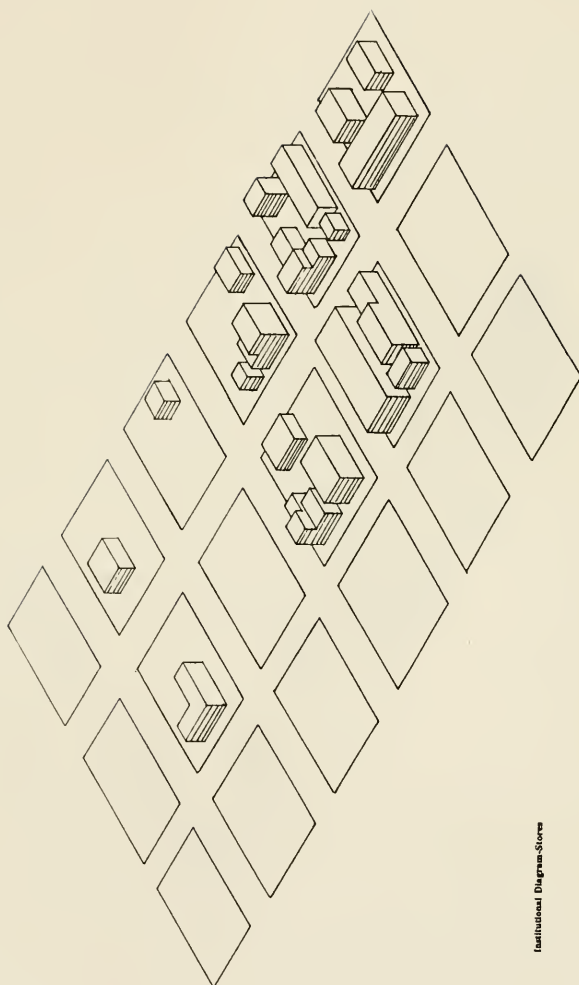


Plate 7



Institutional Diagram-Store

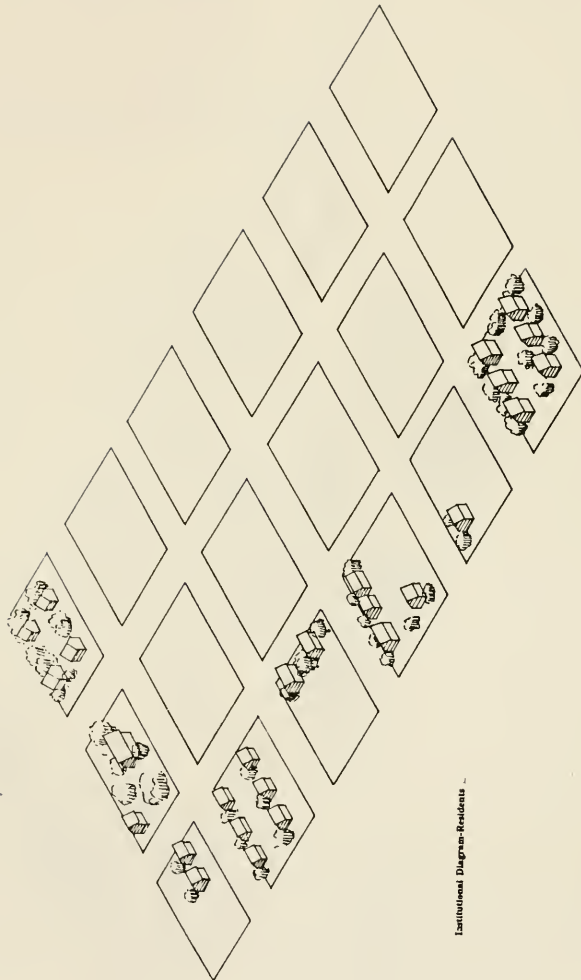


Plate 9

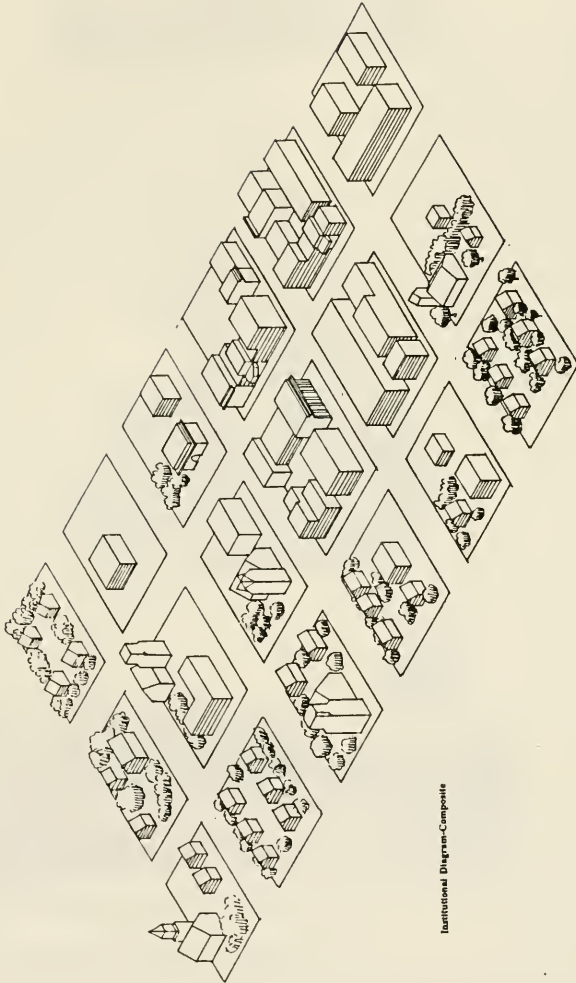
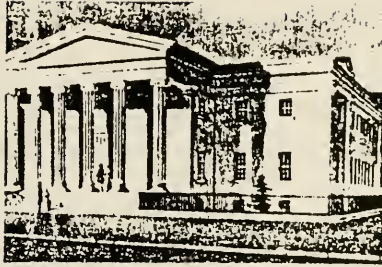


Plate 10



97. Eclectic bank



98. Eclectic church



99. Hamburger stand, Dallas, Texas

Figure 71: Examples of Building Types

(Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, Steven Izenour, *Learning from Los Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form*, (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1977), 114.)

At the outset of this chapter some key definitions are given. The following terms are indispensable to an understanding of the material:

"Genius Loci" is defined as the essence or spirit of a place. In the built environment Genius Loci may present an overall ensemble of styles, motifs and idioms of the built landscape which manifest the reality a specific group of people face, and with which they come to terms in their daily lives. Genius Loci is a Roman Concept, an ancient belief that every independent being has its *genius*, its guardian spirit. This spirit gives life to the people and places, accompanies them from birth to death, and determines their character and essence.¹²²

"Character" is the essential nature of a group of objects, motifs and idioms that helps define *how things are*. Character reflects the most basic functions a society incorporates into their daily life. It exists in accordance with the cultural traditions and the environment which a society faces and embraces.¹²³

Motif is a principal element of ornamental design on a building that when used in a varied or repeated manner contributes to the overall character of a place.

"Idiom" is variation of stylistic elements and motifs which is unique to the particular place from which it comes. When idiom is expressed in architecture it also manifests the Genius Loci of place.

"Identity" is the relationship of a person to his or her environment; it is *how* he or she is in a certain place. By the means of character of the built and natural

¹²² Christian Norberg-Shultz, *Genius Loci, Toward a Phenomenology of Architecture*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1984), 18.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 8.

landscape of the place, identity gives a person a sense of belonging to a certain place.

"Local Architecture" presents an architecture that incorporates motifs and other elements that are reflective of the idiom of the particular place. Hence local architecture is suggested by the specific local conditions of the particular place; but it is located also within the framework of an overall style.

*"Since ancient times the Genius Loci, or Spirit of Place, has been recognized as the concrete reality man has to face and comes to terms with in his daily life. Architecture means to visualize the Genius Loci, and the task of the architect is to create meaningful places, whereby he helps man to dwell."*¹²⁴

-Christian Norberg-Schultz, *Genius Loci*

During the course of the last two centuries, we faithfully believed that science and technology have freed society from direct dependency on places. We were convinced that our dependency on the place we were brought up in was provincial and limited. In the twentieth century, architects and social planners tried to create places that would be part of a larger, higher culture which was in tune with a universal community that was free from the bias and prejudices that a local or regional place possessed.¹²⁵ As Le Corbusier proclaimed, architecture of place and culture was stifled with custom, a "new" architecture of place should be designed in terms of the machine age in which mass production of building elements would replace the follies of peasant art, which in his mind and the minds of others were nothing more than "the intolerable witness to a dead spirit."¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Ibid, 5.

¹²⁵ Paraphrasing my opinion of architecture today, this statement is based on seven years of architectural history and theory.

This belief has been proven to be a false illusion, as we, society, have lost our relationship to the immediate environment which lies just beyond our climate controlled, high tech, anonymous architecture. As we travel in our automobiles from one place to another, we lose the sensation of the crackling of snow under our feet in the North or the steaming heat we encounter on some summer nights in the South. We have also lost the expressions of dwelling that people, living in these climates, have made which give form to the reality of a particular place in which they exist.

This reality contributes to our identity. As Martin Heidegger said, "Human identity presupposes the identity of place".¹²⁷ This particular type of identity is not only vital but the basis of our sense of belonging. As Norberg-Schultz discusses in his book, *Genius Loci*:

When a person wants to tell who he is, it is in fact usual to say: I am a New Yorker, or I am a Roman. This means something much more concrete than to say: I am an architect or I am an optimist. We understand that human identity is to high extent a function of places and things.¹²⁸

I have noticed that when I speak to people who live in places where cultural and environmental identities have either been ignored or destroyed, they either associate their identity to a place that they previously lived in at an earlier time or to a place where they grew up or to the place in which they live now. A professor once told

¹²⁶ Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*, (New York: Dover Press, 1931), 91.

¹²⁷ Christian Norberg-Schultz, *Genius Loci, Toward a Phenomenology of Architecture*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1984), 22.

¹²⁸ Christian Norberg-Schultz, *Genius Loci, Toward a Phenomenology of Architecture*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1984), 21.

me, " I was from Palestine, Texas, until they tore down the old movie palace, now I consider myself a New Yorker."¹²⁹ Once I asked a woman who was living in Fairfax, Virginia, if she considered Fairfax her home. Despite the fact that she lived there for over sixteen years, she replied , "Oh no, Hannibal, Missouri, will always be home to me."¹³⁰

These two examples show how the Genius Loci of a place and the loss of it have a profound influence on our being. But what is this spirit of place and how does our built landscape determine it ? What makes a native Texan identify himself as a New Yorker despite the fact that Texas, and not New York, had the most influence on his being. What makes the Virginia woman long for the day when she can return to her childhood home in Missouri and leave one of the nation's most affluent areas? It is the Genius Loci that strengthens the "image making" which profoundly influences our sense of self. When the Genius Loci becomes weak, due to neglect or change, we tend to feel lost and we begin to search for another place to associate with our identity.

This section of my study will attempt to understand what makes the Genius Loci of a place and investigate the components that make up Genius Loci, character, identity, motif, idiom, and local architecture. This section will also investigate the use of symbolism, and how it is used to influence the reality of a place.¹³¹ I will also examine how the history of place and how history of a people may be used in

¹²⁹ Professor Jerry Wells, Cornell University, Conversation with the author, 1988.

¹³⁰ Mrs Rebecca Smith, Conversation with the author, 1988.

¹³¹ Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas: The Forgotten Symbolism of Architectural Form*, (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1977), 65-114 .

the process of revitalization.

Character

"*What does a building want to be?*"¹³²

-Louis I. Kahn

The Genius Loci of a place is actually its character and physical manifestation. Character is a comprehensive expression of symbolism and space that has consistency and shows us the purpose of the place. Character tells us through symbolic embellishment that dwellings are protective, that stores with busy storefronts windows are open, that movie palaces are festive and that churches are solemn .

Spatial character tells us in a direct and indirect way how the space should be used. Christian churches consciously adapted the Roman basilica form because this particular spatial configuration allowed them among other things, to practice the ceremonial processions through which the Christian Church expressed its beliefs. This is a clear example of how spatial character is directly defined. However, spatial character can also define a space's purpose in a more subtle and indirect manner. It can define the transition of space by the way one type of building form stops, and another one forms beginnings or gates. For example, the types of businesses make a clean distinction of where the business district of Galax begins and the residential areas end. Spatially, we see the beginnings and endings of a certain building type as a boundary, a key spatial component, which delineates on a large scale how the place is defined (Plates 4, 5, 6).

Moreover, spatial character not only defines the building, place, or boundary; it

¹³² Alessandra Latour, *Louis I. Kahn, the Man and the Teacher*, (Rome: Edizioni Kappa, 1986), 55.

can also define the center of activity where people congregate and where the essence of a place is at its strongest and most recognizable level. This space is usually the town green or a courthouse square. But in towns like Galax, which does not have a public square in the center of downtown, it is indirectly defined by the subtle spatial differences and changes from one building or one street corner from another. For example, there might be a wide area of the street or a crossroad intersection of two important highways. There may also be the setback of a major building or in the case of downtown Galax, the corner openings of the buildings of two of Galax's best known businesses, the Vass-Kapp Hardware and the old Bolen's Drugstore (Plate 2). These two store openings are the only two stores in which entry is at the corner! This fact focuses attention on these street corners and transforms them into a center of activity. A feeling of place is achieved by the opening surface of brick and by replacing the corner of the building with a column, enabling a diagonal cross axis to define the center of activity in Galax (Plates 1, 2). These subtle differences and changes may not be of significance to the outsider but they are significant to habitual users of the space.

Character also defines an essence and totality of a place in the formal and symbolic ornamentation of a place. As mentioned earlier, a place can be defined through our understanding of the boundary of built forms, but how do we define place through built forms? Norberg-Schultz best defines formal character in this passage:

When a town pleases us because of its distinct character, it is usually because a majority of its building are related to the earth and sky in the same way; they seem to express a common form of life, a common way of being on the earth. Thus they constitute a *genius loci* which allows for identification.¹³³

can also define the center of activity where people congregate and where the essence of a place is at its strongest and most recognizable level. This space is usually the town green or a courthouse square. But in towns like Galax, which does not have a public square in the center of downtown, it is indirectly defined by the subtle spatial differences and changes from one building or one street corner from another. For example, there might be a wide area of the street or a crossroad intersection of two important highways. There may also be the setback of a major building or in the case of downtown Galax, the corner openings of the buildings of two of Galax's best known businesses, the Vass-Kapp Hardware and the old Bolen's Drugstore (Plate 2). These two store openings are the only two stores in which entry is at the corner! This fact focuses attention on these street corners and transforms them into a center of activity. A feeling of place is achieved by the opening surface of brick and by replacing the corner of the building with a column, enabling a diagonal cross axis to define the center of activity in Galax (Plates 1, 2). These subtle differences and changes may not be of significance to the outsider but they are significant to habitual users of the space.

Character also defines an essence and totality of a place in the formal and symbolic ornamentation of a place. As mentioned earlier, a place can be defined through our understanding of the boundary of built forms, but how do we define place through built forms? Norberg-Schultz best defines formal character in this passage:

When a town pleases us because of its distinct character, it is usually because a majority of its building are related to the earth and sky in the same way; they seem to express a common form of life, a common way of being on the earth. Thus they constitute a *genius loci* which allows for identification.¹³³

Norberg-Schultz gives us the minimum framework in which business districts can be defined to preserve the Genius Loci without freezing the business district in time. This helps us determine whether a metal facade is appropriate for an older business district or destructive to its essence. Moreover, by respecting this condition of built character, new architecture can achieve what Vincent Scully refers to when he states that Urban Architecture is most of all a " continuing dialogue between the generations which creates an environment developing across time."¹³⁴

Symbolism is the final way character can express Genius Loci as Norberg-Schultz states in his book, *Genius Loci* : "The Symbolism is to free the meaning from the immediate situation whereby it becomes a cultural object."¹³⁵ This is achieved by the use of architectural motifs and ornamentation.

Motifs are elements or integral parts of the structure not applied decoration. Through their use and placement on a building a *motif stands for something* more than just a mere element. For example, in Galax arched openings were placed sparingly on the buildings in the downtown, thus adding a hierarchical importance to them and giving them symbolic meaning. For instance, arriving in Galax by bus, the depot with its arched opening, will greet the traveler functioning as a gateway into the town.

Applied ornamentation on a building helps further articulate the character and the intended function of a building. Ornamental treatment of windows, and the lights of the windows themselves, further define the character of a place when they

¹³³ Christian Norberg-Schultz, *Genius Loci, Toward a Phenomenology of Architecture*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1984) ,65.

¹³⁴ Vincent Scully, *American Architecture and Urbanism, New Revised Edition*, (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1988), 203.

¹³⁵ Christian Norberg-Schultz, *Genius Loci, Toward a Phenomenology of Architecture*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1984),17.

are treated in a consistent manner. Ornamentation complies with a set of standards or rules that is recognized not only by the people who live and exist in a place but also by the outside population as well. This is what we call style.

When style conforms to the aspirations and conditions of a particular place, it becomes something additional, something that further emphasizes the Genius Loci of a place. When this occurs style becomes idiom.

Idiom can also be developed through the treatment of motifs. For instance, transoms over storefronts are considered stylistic traits of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. If the treatment of opaque or translucent glass set in lead comes is done in a different and unique manner which is consistent throughout a certain street or even a town, style becomes accentuated and is, in fact, part of the spirit of the place in which it was developed. The stylistic trait is transformed into idiom and becomes a vital part of the Genius Loci of a place. Such is the case in Galax (Plate 16).

Identity

*"Could but thy flagstones, curbs, facades, tell their inimitables."*¹³⁶

- Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

Identity is a very important part of the Genius Loci of a place. It also plays a very integral part in the way we see ourselves. But what makes up the identity of place? What are the components of it? According to Norberg-Schultz, the identity of a place is determined by the location, general spatial configuration and detailing.

¹³⁶ Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1990), 45.

These components determine a person's world. When one describes his or her world, he or she describes it in the terms that show their personal relationship to the place. For example, I rarely describe Galax to a stranger as a furniture making town of six thousand people. Instead, I almost always describe Galax as being a small town in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Southwest Virginia which has a busy Main Street with the Post Office on one end and our community park on the other.

The reason why we perceive our town in a particular way is related to the objects and built forms which were prevalent in our personal development. My perceptions of Galax and the built forms which were the backdrop of my development are certainly different from other members of the Galax community. It is plausible to say that a person who worked in a furniture factory his entire career might identify with the "Bottoms" instead of the downtown, while a storekeeper on Main Street might identify with certain buildings and features of the downtown. In short, each resident identifies with his or her town differently. Furthermore, as Tony Hiss states in his book, *The Experience of Place*, in order for us to identify with a place we have to feel a "connectedness" to it.¹³⁷ This is accomplished "when it provides a richness of information reaching all the senses, and whether there is an absence of alarm signals."¹³⁸ When a place incorporates these two factors into its actual experience the essence and spirit of a place is developed with which a person can identify. It is the preservationist's role to figure out as best as he or she can, the subtle and often small elements which give a place this unique sense of connectedness.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Tony Hiss, *Experience of Place*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 28-29.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, 29.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, 43.

Norberg-Schultz eloquently illustrated this kind of relationship between self and place when he tells the story of how a German-born American architect, Gerhard Kallmann, after many years of being absent from his native Berlin wanted to visit his childhood home. When he returned to see it after the Second World War, as expected, it had disappeared and Mr.Kallmann felt lost. Then he suddenly recognized the paving pattern of the sidewalk, the curbs along the street and the ground floor on which he played as a child. It was at this moment in which he experienced a strong feeling of having returned home.¹⁴⁰

This sense of personal identity tied to a place illustrates the point that we are an integral part of the environment in which we live.¹⁴¹ When a place with which we are familiar has been either disrupted or destroyed, we develop a sense of alienation and a feeling of loss. We then are likely to, perhaps, behave in the manner mentioned earlier in Fairfax, Virginia, or we abandon the place in which we grew up, like the professor who considered himself a New Yorker after the movie palace, in his hometown in Texas, was torn down.

Local Architecture

*"Urban Architecture really is a creation of interior and exterior spaces and most of all a continuing dialogue between the generations which creates an environment developing across time."*¹⁴²-Vincent Scully

¹⁴⁰ Christian Norberg-Shultz, *Genius Loci, Toward a Phenomenology of Architecture*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1984), 21.

¹⁴¹ Tony Hiss, *Experience of Place*, (New York: Alfred a Knopf, 1990), 5-10.

¹⁴² Vincent Scully, *American Architecture and Urbanism, New Revised Edition*, (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1988), 203.

Once Genius Loci is understood and appreciated and, also, a certain kind of sensitivity has been developed about the identity of the place, one can then see the totality of the Genius Loci of the place. It is at that point that we can define the Local Architecture of a place. In understanding Local Architecture we take the place's existing and past, cultural and spatial conditions and attempt to bring a cohesive order to them. In this way an architect can deal with the relentless forces of change with a compassion for the present state of the place and the memory of what it was.

A well known example of how this was done is eloquently discussed by Vincent Scully as he examined the banks Louis Sullivan designed in the latter part of his career in the Midwest:

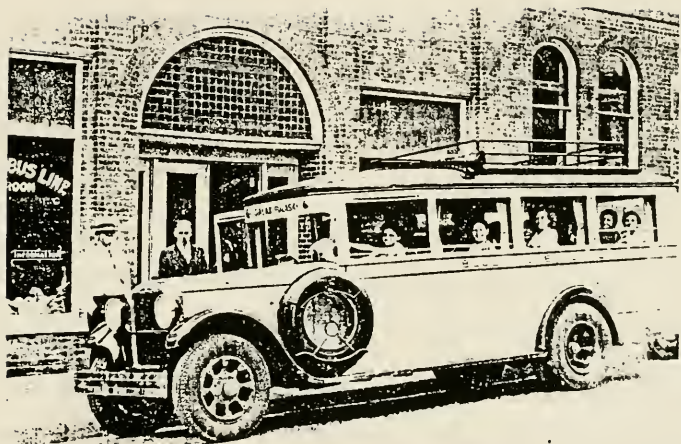
Sullivan's banks were uniquely solid and permanent. The best of Main Street, perhaps what it would have liked to be, was interpreted and monumentalized by them. In contrast to most of the design of the Beaux-Arts...they were local architecture, suggested by local conditions and adapted to them. The Beaux-Arts, on the other hand, like the so-called International Style of the next generation, was in truth internationally based, and its forms employing ideal models of total order, which like the Ionic bank in New Haven, often (though not always) resisted adaptation to local realities. Insistence upon another ideal model, that of the International Style, was to sack and denature scores of city centers later in the century. Sullivan's urbanism exploited the particular and respected, even loved, existing conditions."¹⁴³

Local Architecture examines a place and not only asks the question what does the place

¹⁴³ Ibid, 129.



Figure 72: Examples of Local Idiom, Brick Cornices, Grayson Street and Main Street
(P.H.K.)



Modern Transportation, early 1920's — Mr. R. A. Anderson, owner of the bus lines, is standing in front of the bus. Inside the bus are Petsy Phipps,

Connie Schooley, Frances James, Virginia Witherow, Mary Ruth Bishop and Rubye Vass

Figure 73: Motif example: Archway of Blue Ridge Bus Lines Station
(*The Gazette*, Galax, Virginia)

want to be? But it also addresses what it is now and what it was in the past. Through this we see an architecture that is unique to the Genius Loci it exists in, an architecture that can understand and manage the demands a place goes through as times changes the conditions which formed the essence of the place, it can help to and control them. To understand local architecture one needs comprehension of conditions and changes through the past and the present which then may help control insensitive and incorrect (against the Genius Loci) measures.

"I am checkin out my grandfather! I want to know everything there is know about that ol'dude.

Who he is, where he came from, what he used to eat for breakfast- the whole number, dig?

Why don't you just call him up and ask him?

Cause its something I have to do on my own man." 144

-Garry B. Trudeau

I will now summarize all the components that form the essence of a place, its Genius Loci. Genius Loci is made up of two components, Character and Identity. Character is a consistent, expressive form of symbolism which is prevalent throughout the downtown. Character is found, both, in the spatial orientation of a place and in its ornamental embellishment of the built form in the place.¹⁴⁵ [Plates 2-10]

Spatial Character is the spatial layout of a group of buildings within an overall system. In the case of Galax, it is the gridiron and how it functioned for Galax. Ornamental Character of a place comes from a conformity of a particular style to the

¹⁴⁴ Garry B. Trudeau, "Doodlesbury", IHT, 10 , March 1977.

¹⁴⁵ Christian Norberg-Shultz, *Genius Loci, Toward a Phenomenology of Architecture*, (New York: Rizzoli, 1984),65.

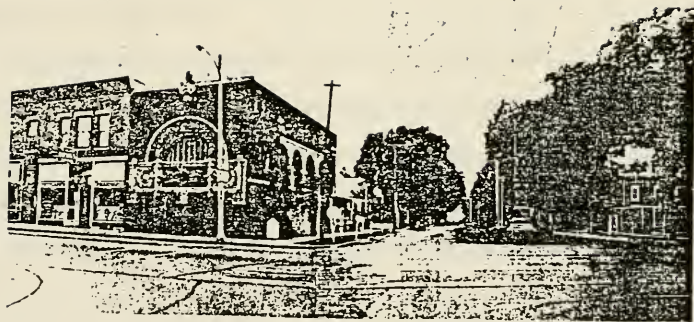


Figure 74: Farmers' and Merchants Union Bank 1919, Louis Sullivan, Columbus, WI.
(Vincent Scully, *American Architecture and Urbanism, New Revised Edition*, (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1988), 203.)

necessities and abilities of a place. This is called idiom.

In the idiom of a place, integral parts of a building's structure which are detailed in a certain manner in which they have a certain symbolic meaning, are known as motifs. These motifs communicate function and order to the building and the place it is set in.

Identity is a particular impression or feeling people have toward the character of themselves and the place in which they live and work. Through this bond certain built forms take preference over others in each of the community member's perception of the place.¹⁴⁶

In the previous section I discussed how the placement of institutions and storebuildings on the gridiron determined the structure of the downtown. Moreover, I discussed how this structure is based on the community's collective idea of order and structure (See Part I). In this section I discuss how building construction of certain structures, storebuildings and institutions in the downtown and their ornamental embellishment of the buildings form the essence of the structure of the downtown through character and identity.

In the revitalization of an early twentieth century downtown, the preservationist needs to examine all of the elements that form the structure or armature and the Genius Loci of the specific downtown. The preservationist should always remember that the downtown with all of these elements, no matter what condition they are in, is a complete entity that in the past has been successful as a business district. Despite all of the challenges facing a downtown, both internally and externally, the preservationist should always take into consideration the immense potential a turn of the century downtown has for growth and development,

¹⁴⁶ *ibid*, 17.

especially, when its citizens believe in it.

Before a downtown undergoes a revitalization and restoration, the institutional structure and the Genius Loci have to be experienced, researched and studied by the preservationist firsthand and they have to be documented. Institutions and the space which they influence have to be examined. Through this examination decisions should be made determining whether the condition of the structure is adequate or in a state of decay and/or disruptive alteration.

In understanding the Genius Loci of the store and business buildings of a downtown, the preservationist needs to make an inventory of the downtown buildings in order to find patterns of consistent idiom and motifs. The preservationist has to find and understand the dominant period in which the current buildings in the downtown were built. Moreover, he or she should understand the particular embellishments of the building and how they effected the monochronic sequence of the downtown and whether there were any polychronic instances, such as the "open corners" (Plates 14, 15).

It is important for the preservationist to study the history and evolution of the downtown. Through this study which should encompass any written history of the specific downtown, the photographic record of the downtown, and any oral interviews with the active and retired members of the downtown, the preservationists can obtain a clear understanding of how all the elements of the downtown perform now and during the downtown's most successful era.

In the final part of this thesis I will employ this methodology in the design for a revitalization plan for Galax. This methodology will also briefly touch on and be compared to other methodologies used by the National Main Street Center of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Part II

The Downtown Revitalization Plan of Galax, Virginia

Part II Chapter 1 Existing Conditions in Downtown Galax, Virginia

The vitality and health of a downtown is reflected in the appearance and overall conditions of the building stock. The impression of neglect in a downtown can come from the actual state of decay in which a group of downtown buildings are, but it can also be the result of several inappropriate remodeling campaigns which tend to disrupt the visual clarity and hierarchy of the downtown mercantile buildings and the downtown institutions. This disruption of relationships gives the pedestrian a sense of disrepair and disorientation as he or she experiences the downtown .

In downtown Galax, inappropriate remodeling campaigns and inappropriate building use has been more of a threat to the well being of the downtown than actual building decay and vacancy. In fact, downtown Galax has a relatively low vacancy rate and its buildings are in a fair to good condition. The building components that are actually in a state of disrepair are the building components of earlier "modernizing" campaigns which occurred in the forties and fifties.

In this section I will examine the building conditions of the downtown and the building periods in which the downtown was built. I will also identify the local idiom and the use and or disregard of motifs. Several sites, institutions and the intersections of major streets in which they are placed, will be examined and graphically explained in order to see if their current building state is helping the downtown or hurting it and, if so, how (Plate 14) ? Mercantile businesses will be examined through photographs and a chart will be constructed in order to study the following criteria: ownership, location, approximate year of erection, whether the

building is being appropriately used, physical condition, and appropriate embellishment.

The physical conditions of the buildings will be rated on a system of soundness:

1= sound structure with no obvious defects or slight correctable defects which can be corrected by general maintenance. Slight defects consist of lack of paint, slight brick decay etc.

2= deteriorating structures which require more repair than would be provided in the course of regular maintenance. These building material and component failures consist of holes, open cracks, rotted, loose, or missing or damaged roofing. These building problems would have to be addressed if the building is to be used in a safe manner.

3= dilapidated structures which have to be rebuilt or torn down.¹⁴⁷ Buildings' embellishments with inappropriate detailing will be judged visually as well as being based on the impression one has when experiencing the building and the downtown as a unit.

In this section I shall rely on the Downtown Galax Revitalization Plan compiled by K.W. Poore and Associates, Inc., Community Development Consultants, Richmond, VA., and Mattern and Craig Consulting Engineers, Roanoke, VA., presented to the City of Galax in March, 1989. Many of their suggestions, such as more long term parking and street improvements were implemented. Some of the buildings that they commented upon have improved while some have gotten worse. The following tables presents an updated report of the state of the buildings based on my own visual inspections:

¹⁴⁷ Lyall Anderson, *Building Failures, A Guide to Diagnosis, Remedy and Prevention*, (London: Butterworth Architecture, 1989), 22.

Institutions

<u>Institution/Location</u>	<u>Year Erected</u>	<u>App. Use</u>	<u>Condition</u>	<u>App. Embellishment</u>	<u>Parking</u>
Sovran Nat. Bank B-3	1979	Yes	1	No	Yes
Old 1st Bapt Ch. E-5	1922	No	2	No	No
Municipal Build. I-1	1908,1945	Yes	2	No	Yes
P.H.N.B H-3	1925	No	1	No	Yes
Signet Nat. Bank E-6	1964	Yes	1	Yes	Yes
U.S. Post Office F-8	1937	Yes	1	Yes	Yes
D.N.B. H-9,10	1922	Yes	1	Yes	Yes
Old Col. Th. I-19	1930	No	2	No	---
Old Rex Th. L-6,7	1938	No	2	Yes	---
First Pres. (Center St)	1906	Yes	1	No	Yes
First Meth. (Center St)	1906	Yes	1	Yes	Yes
Friends M.H. N-5	1904	Yes	1	Yes	No
First Christ. (Monroe St.)	1957	Yes	1	Yes	Yes

148

Businesses

<u>Owner/ Occupant</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Year Erected</u>	<u>App. Use</u>	<u>Condition</u>	<u>App. Embellishment</u>
Travel Host Inn	C-2	1970	Yes	1	No
United Telephone	F-6	1940	Yes	1	Yes
Landmark Baptist Church	F-5	1930	No	2	No
James Ballard	I-21-20	1920	Vacant	1	No
Colonial Th	I-19	1925	Vacant	2	No
Framer's Daughter	I-18	1925	Yes	1	Yes
Lemons Jewelry	I-17	1925	Yes	1	Yes
Blue Ridge Grill	I-16	1925	Yes	1	No
Vaughan Shoes	I-17	1925	Yes	1	Yes
John Phipps Estate	I-14	1920	Vacant	2	No
105 Inc.- Ward Bros.	I-13	1908	Vacant	1	No
Charles Morris- Bolen Drugs	I-12	1904,1950	Yes and No	1	No

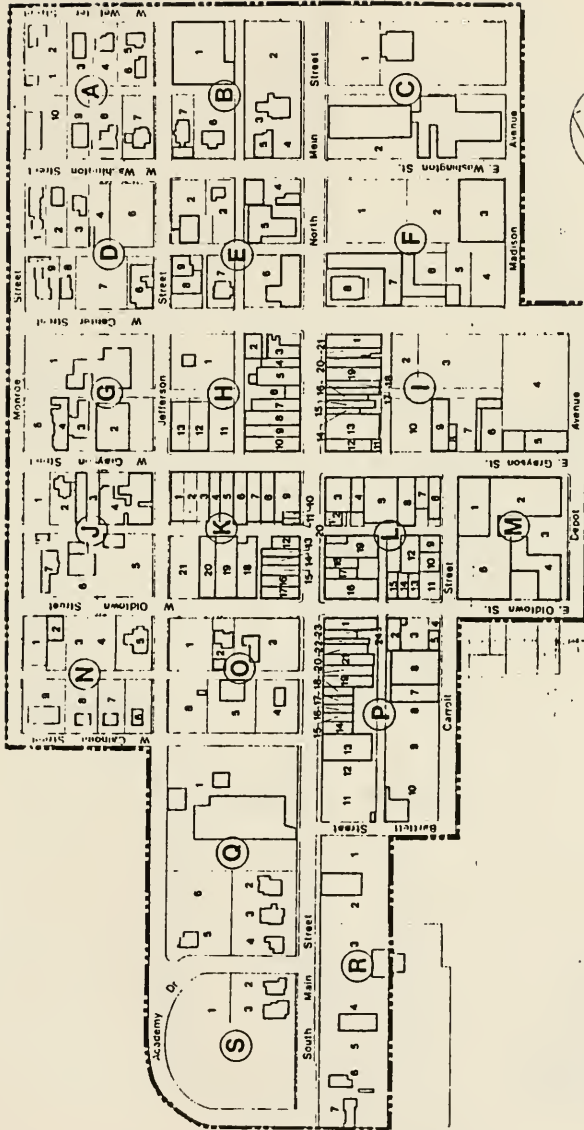
Owner/Occupany	Location	Date Erected	App. Use	Cond.	Appr. Embellishment
Joe Parsons	I-11	1910, 1940	Yes and No	1	Yes
Vass Kapp Hardware-Galax Ins.	I-8	1930	Yes	1	No
Vass Kapp Hardware	I-7	1930	Yes	1	No
Vass Kapp Hardware	I-6	1930	Yes	1	No
Vass Kapp Hardware	I-5	1930	Yes	1	No
Dotte Cock-Fashion Shoppe	L-3	1904	Yes	1	No
H&R Tax, His and Hers	L-4	1920	Yes	2	No
Heilig Meyers Furniture	L-5	1945	Yes	1	No
City Amusement, Rex Th.	L-6	1935	No	2	No
City Amusement	L-7	1935	No	2	No
Lorene Sage	L-8	1920	Vacant	2	No
Lee Kegley	L-20	1925	Yes	1	No
Home Health Care	L-19	1925	Yes	1	No
Dotte Cock- Men's Shop		1925	Yes	1	No
Hepsie Vaughan Estate	L-17	1920	Yes	1	No
Globman's	L-16	1920	Vacant	1	No
Herman Stamper	L-15	1925	Yes	1	No
Ethel Morris-Apartments		1925	Yes	1	No
Auto Clean Up	L-9, 10	1925	Yes	1	No
Ralph Patton	P-1	1947	Yes	1	No
Roy & Ella South	P-24	1930	No	2	No
R. Patton	P-23	1910	No	1	Yes
Forest Nuckols	P-22	1930	Vacant	2	No
Mathews Hardware	P-19-20	1930	Yes	1	Yes and No
Porter Furniture	P-18	1945	Yes	1	Yes
E. Morton	P-17	1920	Yes	2	No
D. Bond	P-16	1920	No	2	No
C.S Alderman	P13	1945	Vacant	2	No
Sovran Nat. Bank	B-2	1970	No	1	No
S. Rose	B-4	1945	Yes	1	No
Southwestern Glass	B-1	1925	Yes	1	Yes
B&G Paints	H-2	1930	Yes	1	No
Computer Concepts	H-8	1910	Yes	1	Yes
Modernette	H-7	1925	Yes	1	Yes

<u>Owner/Occupany</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date Erected</u>	<u>App. Use</u>	<u>Cond.</u>	<u>Appr. Embellishment</u>
State Farm Ins	H-6	1920	Yes	2	No
Patrick Henry Nat. Bank	H-5	1920	Vacant	3	No
I. Holt/ Cato's	H-12	1945	Yes	1	No
H. Wilson/Galax Florist	H-13	1945	Yes	1	No
V. G. Funeral Home	G-1	1935	Yes	1	Yes
F. Vass	K-1	1925	Yes	1	No
F. Vass	K-2,3	1925	Yes	1	No
D. Vaught	K-5	1925	Yes	2	No
W. Jones	K-6	1925	Yes	2	No
E.R. Chick	K-7	1925	Yes	1	No
Vass-Kapp Hard.	K-8,9	1910	Yes	1	No
C.H. Henderson t	K-12	1925	Yes	2	No
L. Hylton	K-13	1925	Vacant	2	No
J. Steffen	K-14,15	1925	Yes	1	No
Truitts Dress Shop	K-16	1925	Yes	1	No
D. Bullins	K-17	1925	Vacant	1	No
City Body Shop	K-18,19	1945	Yes	1	No
Larry Peak	K-19	1945	Yes	2	No
Jack's Citco	O-3	1935	Yes	1	No
Frost Ins.	O-4	1935	No	1	No

149,150

¹⁴⁹ Table based on information submitted by K.W. Poore and Associates, Community Development Consultants, Richmond, VA., Downtown Galax Revitalization Plan, March 1989. p.1-3 Appendix.

¹⁵⁰ Approximate Dates of Buildings based on Sanborn Insurance Map of Galax, VA., 1928, updated 1941. Committee for the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA, *the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, VA*, (1976). Glenn Pless and Visual Inspection. Conditions of Buildings based on author's walking inspection, October, 1991; January, 1992; March, 1992.



**PROPERTY OWNERSHIP
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION AREA
CITY OF GALAX, VIRGINIA**
K.W. POORE & ASSOCIATES, INC. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS

Figure 75: Ownership Map
(K.W. Poore and Associates, Community Development Consultants)

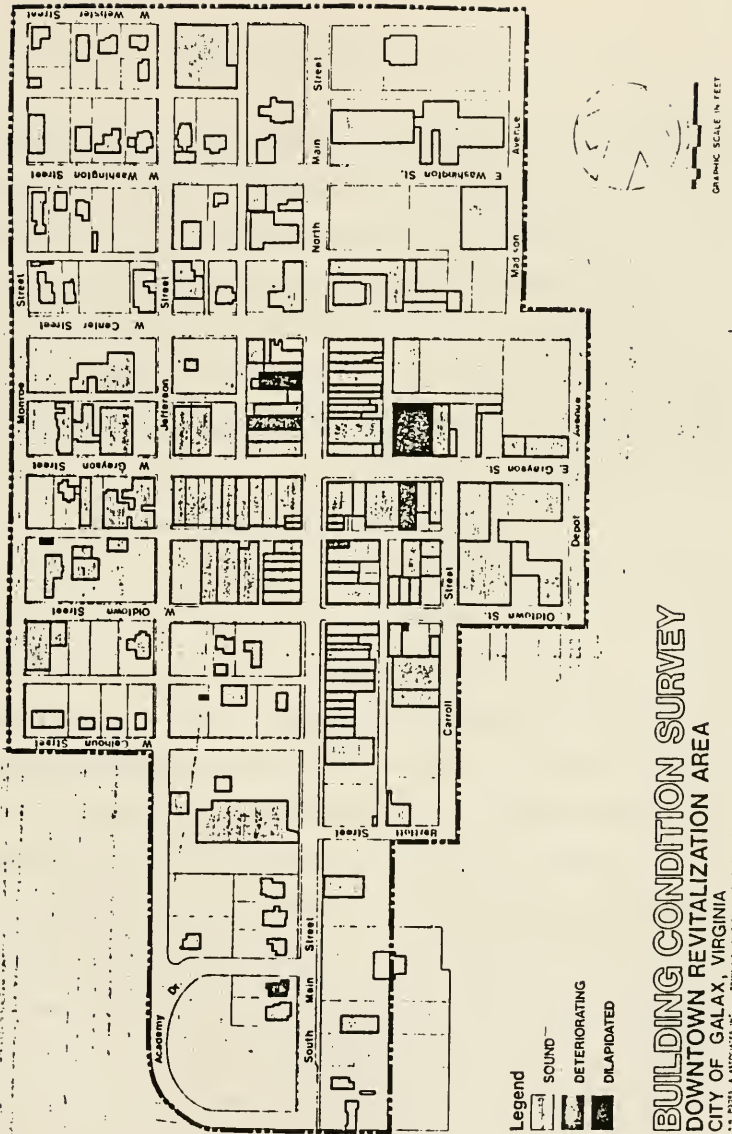


Figure 76: Conditions Map

(K.W. Poore and Associates, Community Development Consultants)

Summary of Building Conditions

In my observations of the downtown of Galax, I believe that the inappropriate detailing and embellishment of the mercantile and institutional buildings give the impression that the downtown building stock is in worse condition than it actually is. Even in the current recession (1992) the vacancy rate is only 18 1/2% which is below the statewide average rate of 28 1/2%.¹⁵¹ The overall building stock does not show any serious material failure such as roof leakage, rot or brick spalling. The average age of a building in the downtown is fifty-one years, relatively young for a downtown. There is only one building in the downtown that can be considered as being decayed beyond any practical restoration.

At present, the metal awnings, weather beaten bulkheads and inappropriate signage give the pedestrian an impression of harshness and decay. Moreover, the inappropriate building use in the downtown can be confusing to the pedestrian. Only 28% of the downtown buildings today are detailed with some kind of sensitivity to the building's particular type and idiom. The number of buildings which are not being used in the manner for and in which they were constructed originally is low, only 17% of the entire building stock. However, these few problem buildings tend to have a high visibility in the downtown. They are such buildings as the two theatres, the Rex and the Colonial; the old First Baptist Church- now the Rooftop of Virginia, a mountain craft store- and the Patrick Henry National Bank. I am certain that appropriate design and restoration of these few buildings could have great visual impact on the negative perceptions of inhabitants and visitors who tend to see Galax as yet another small community on its way to

¹⁵¹ Inquiry, Virginia Dept. of Commerce, 25, March 1992.

inevitable decay. Rather, as suggested in the design study of this thesis, the effect of restoration of these few key buildings will go beyond the individual buildings and will have a far greater and wider impact on the total, overall impression which downtown Galax presents. I believe that the restorations of the buildings cited above, including the church steeples, as presented in the drawings of the thesis will restore the overall cohesiveness of the institutional structure or armature to the town image (Stadtbild). Hopefully, it is obvious that the design study is based on the intimate experience and the intensive study of the past and present in Galax, Virginia.



Figure 77: Examples of Inappropriate Remodeling

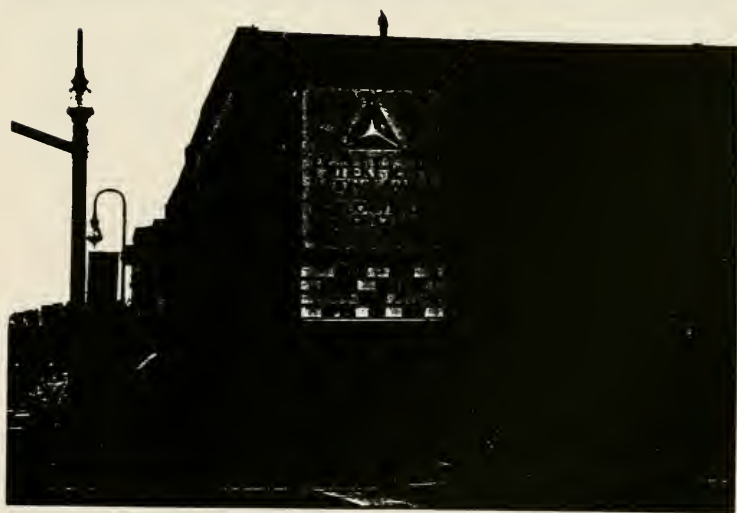
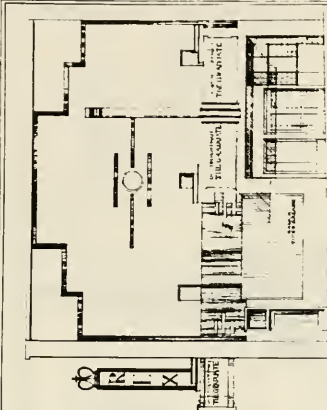


Figure 78: Examples of Inappropriate Use of Downtown Buildings


Part II

Chapter 2 Design Study of Downtown Galax, Virginia

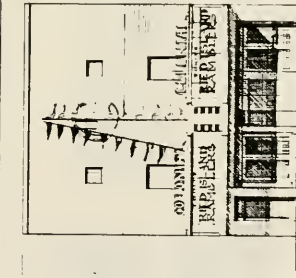
The following chapter consists of a series of drawings (Plate 11-18) presenting a design study of Galax, Virginia.




KEN THEATER
EAST BRANSON, MISSOURI



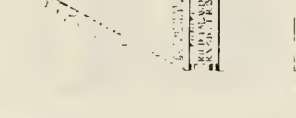
EXTERIOR SCENIC VIEW
EAST BRANSON, MISSOURI




KEN THEATER
EAST BRANSON, MISSOURI



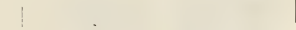
REPRESENTATIVE
EAST BRANSON, MISSOURI




FEDERAL THEATER
WEST MAIN STREET



REAR ENTRY
WEST MAIN STREET



FEDERAL THEATER
WEST MAIN STREET




REAR ENTRY
WEST MAIN STREET

DOWNTOWN GALAX REVITALIZATION PLAN

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI ARCHITECTURAL RECORDS

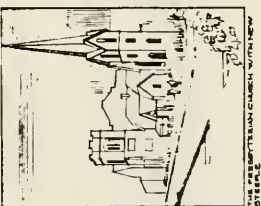
Plate 11



THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

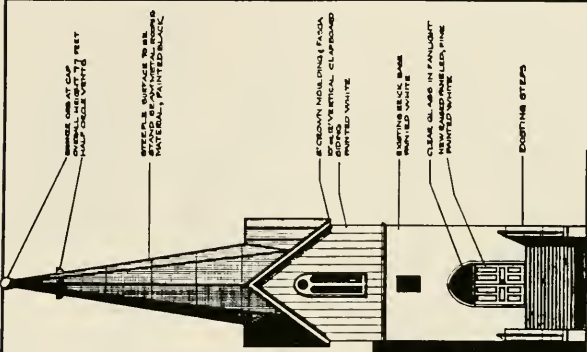
214 N. 73RD

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HAS BEEN IN THIS LOCATION SINCE 1852. THE CHURCH WAS BUILT BY THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH IN 1852. THE CHURCH WAS BUILT BY THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH IN 1852. THE CHURCH WAS BUILT BY THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH IN 1852.



THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WITH NEW STEEPLE

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HAS BEEN IN THIS LOCATION SINCE 1852. THE CHURCH WAS BUILT BY THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH IN 1852. THE CHURCH WAS BUILT BY THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH IN 1852. THE CHURCH WAS BUILT BY THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH IN 1852.



- BRASS COPING OF CHURCH STEEPLE (BRASS) PAINTED WHITE
- STEEPLE SURFACE TO BE PAINTED, PAINTED WHITE
- ROOFING MATERIALS (FASMA) SQUARE METRIC, CLAYBOARD PAINTED WHITE
- ROOFING BLACK, BARK PAINTED WHITE
- CLEAR GLASS IN PANORAMA NEW-COLORED PANELS, PINE PAINTED WHITE
- EXISTING STEPS

1000 N. CENTER STREET

DOWNTOWN GALAX REVITALIZATION PLAN

THESE ARE PARTIAL PLANNING OF THE REVITALIZATION OF THE DOWNTOWN GALAX AREA.

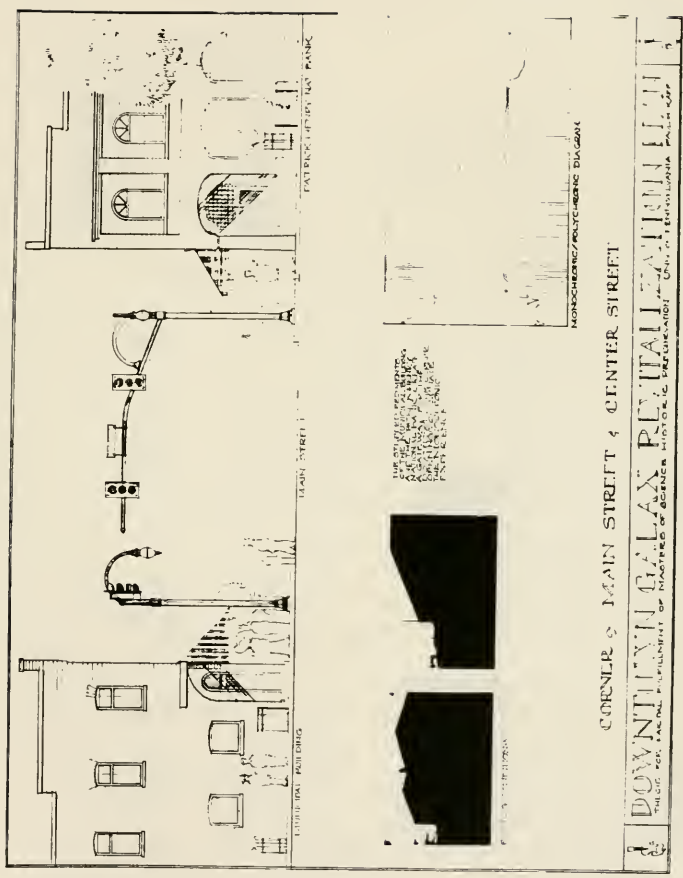
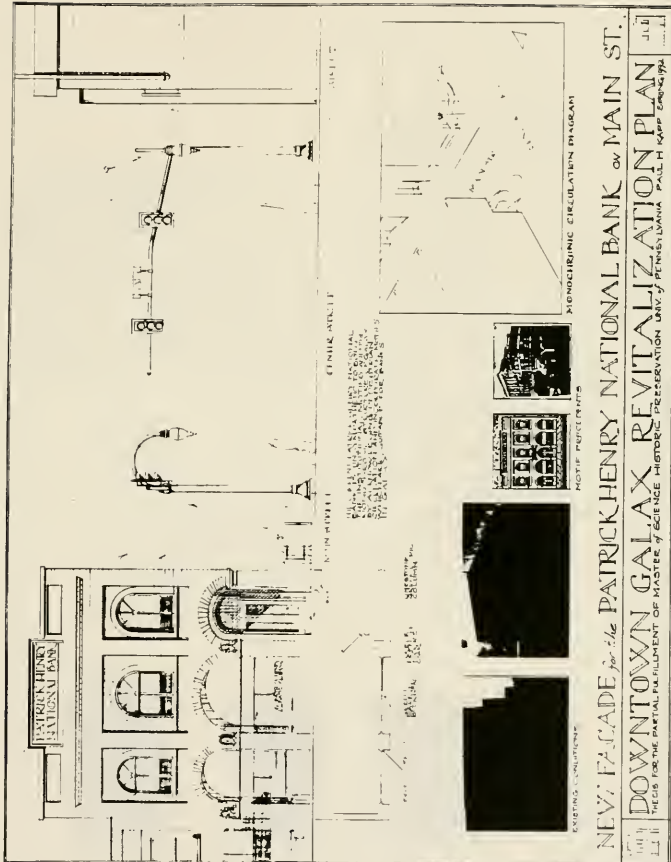


Plate 13



NEW FACADE FOR THE PATRICK HENRY NATIONAL BANK ON MAIN ST.
 DOWNTOWN GALAX REVITALIZATION PLAN
 JULY 1911
 L. H. H. ARCHT. PHILA.
 UNDER THE PATRONS OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIV. OF PENNSYLVANIA

Plate 15

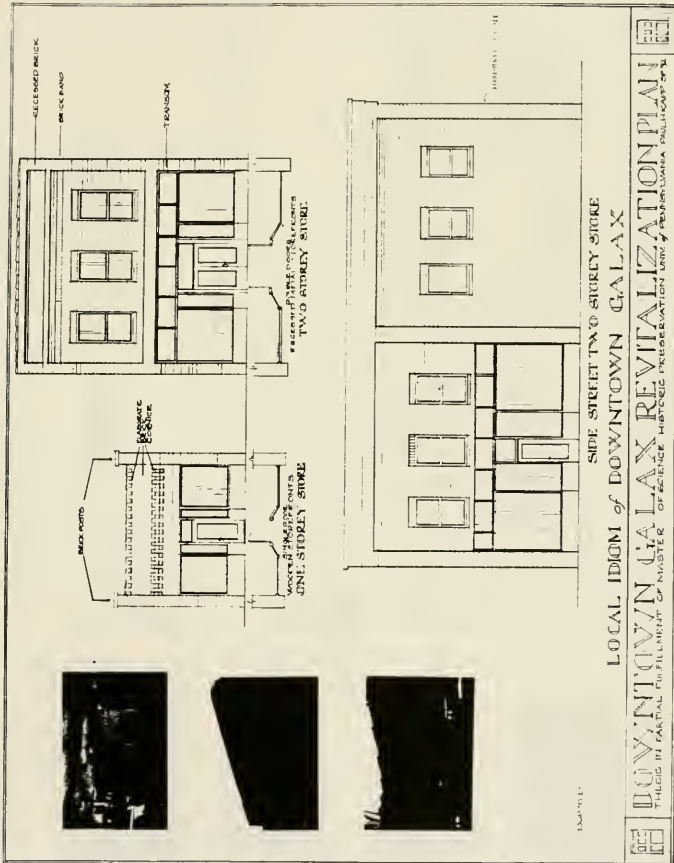


Plate 16

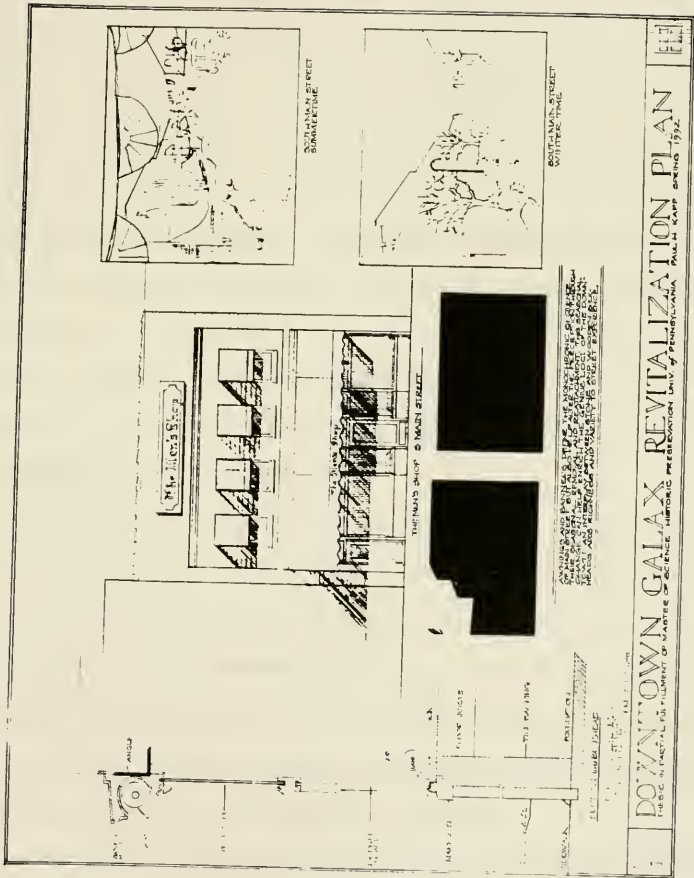


Plate 18

Conclusion

In the summer of 1989, the city of Galax invested over two hundred thousand dollars in a downtown revitalization program based on the National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street Approach. The objective was the upgrading of the image of the downtown and the reversal of the prevailing trend of migration of people from the downtown to the highway shopping district on U.S. 58. Their program employed new street furniture, greenery and more parking spaces in their strategy. Three years later, in 1992, neglect and decay is still the prevailing impression felt by many in the downtown of Galax. The disappointing result of the considerable effort expended made me realize that this approach to "Downtown Revitalization" is somewhat flawed. It was from these personal impressions as an insider to the condition of downtown Galax that I attempted to develop a new methodology to revitalize the downtown of Galax, Virginia, as well as other downtowns of the same vintage in the South.

It is important to understand at the outset of this conclusion that I do believe that the effort of the National Trust's Main Street Center has been successful in reviving interest in the well being of downtowns of small cities and towns, giving new life and meaning to countless downtowns throughout America. However, due to the broad based nature of their plan and the era in which it was written- the late 1970s and early 80s- the National Main Street Program tends to be rather even handed and generalizing in its approach to revitalization for a downtown.

The difficulties of the National Main Street Center approach stem partly from the nature of the organization itself and also from their perception of what downtown revitalization means. Based in Washington, D.C., with a limited budget

and personnel, the Main Street Center has undertaken the mission of revitalizing downtowns throughout all of America. This forces the organization to become centralized, and thus it is unable to take in consideration all the specific conditions which affect or are given in its own region. Moreover, the National Trust approach tends to be focused on their concept and idea that building preservation should work within a particular *image* which seems solely based on the existence of the storefront. Thereby, the truly vital element in defining a downtown is neglected, namely the *institutions*.

The methodology which I have developed does not come from a "symbolic image" which is to be applied to *any* downtown. Instead, my methodology attempts to revitalize a downtown based on the principle that, although almost all downtowns are built upon a universal gridiron, the placement of institutions and the monochronic sequence it creates with its store buildings, determines an individual character in each town thus making one town different from another. My methodology attempts to understand this character and develop an essential *Stadtbild*- or town picture- which could be implemented in the downtown based on the restoration of key institutions and the informed use of the spatial and ornamental character of the downtown rather than randomly restoring storefronts, based on a collective idea of embellishment.

I believe that the negative impression most people have about their downtown comes from the poor state of key institutions. Due to the nature of the institutions' function, the placement in the overall structure of the downtown, and the size of the buildings themselves, institutions dominate the image of downtown. It has been my objective to concentrate on the restoration of key institutions in downtown

Galax and upon the reuse of their original motifs and embellishments which are autochthonous to the community. I have the hope of reviving the civic pride and the sense of identity and "connectedness to place"¹⁵² once felt for these institutions and the downtown itself.

My methodology also goes further than previous programs in the restoration of storefronts by acknowledging, within my designs, the spatial sequence of monochronic progression and polychronic respite, which provides a sense of both movement and efficiency but also of intimacy and interaction which is desired by the pedestrian. Jay Appleton has talked of the human preference for spaces which provide movement, adventure, prospect and, at the same time, provide for respite, safety and refuge.¹⁵³ The very individual sequence of "in and out", of eddies in the flow of traffic are known to insiders of a town.

Throughout downtown Galax the storefronts exhibit certain motifs, an idiom is used in the embellishment of the storefronts. These embellishments not only show rich detail, which define the nature of the building, but also these can help direct the monochronic/ polychronic sequence of the downtown by defining and working as a terminus of the sequence or by allowing the flow to take place (Plate 14). Through document research and visual inspection my methodology attempts to bring these motifs back to be used on the existing or damaged building stock. These motifs serve as a language of sorts, they even can signal where the downtown begins and ends (Plate 17). It is these motifs that work within the existing idiom which will aid in returning the true essence of the place.

¹⁵² Tony Hiss, *Experience of Place*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 5-10.

¹⁵³ J. H. Appleton, *The Experience of Landscape*, (London, New York: Wiley Press, 1974), passim.

As I conclude this thesis, it is my firm belief that a downtown has to retain some of its structure and essence in order to be worthy of being preserved and revitalized. Its institutions have to still exist in some form and to be in working order to be even considered as a viable downtown and not a crossroads or worse. I believe that a successful revitalization campaign should not merely apply a band-aid to the problems. It should be a clearly focused effort which understands the past and the people, identifies key problems detracting from the positive perception of the downtown and applies its resources meaningfully and efficiently in solving them. This should be achieved on a local level through historical research, open discussion in the community and, especially, through the actual experience of the place, the downtown.

To summarize, it is my thesis that institutions provide the armature along the grid. Institutions define beginnings and endings and subtly influence the common grid to become a "place", which obviously doesn't look like the New England commons or the Virginia courthouse square, but which functions as such in the perceptions of the insiders (Plate 1 & 2). Variety is given by the sequence of monochronic and polychronic actions of the pedestrians. Institutions exist also in the beliefs and the values of the inhabitants, especially, where institutions have been associated for three generations with local families. These values have to be recalled in the memories of the people and through the physical, visual reinforcement of the architectural language, through the motifs and the idiom, in short, through the local architecture of Galax, Virginia.

Finally, one knows that change is inevitable. Small towns throughout America are changing due to economic and social forces' on the national and international

level. What one hopes for is controlled change which is meaningful and positive on the local scale.

Selected Bibliography

PRIMARY SOURCES

CITY OF GALAX

Mount Rogers Development. *Promotional Brochure*. Galax, Virginia. 1991

Mount Rogers Planning Commission. Comprehensive Plan.
Galax, Virginia. 1985.

CITY OF GALAX DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION, GALAX, VIRGINIA

National Trust Main Street Format Building Catalog ,1988.

Downtown Revitalization Plan , City of Galax, Virginia.

Prepared by Mattern and Craig , Landscape Architecture and Engineering
Roanoke, Virginia,1988 and K.W. Poore and Associates , Planning
Consultants Richmond, Virginia,1988.

LOCAL ARCHIVES IN GALAX, VIRGINIA

THE GAZETTE, GALAX, VIRGINIA

News Archives, 1904-1991.

GALAX CARROLL COUNTY REGIONAL LIBRARY

Galax, Virginia, Historical File.

Galax Herald Archive.

Galax Gazette Archive.

J.C . MATHEWS MEMORIAL MUSEUM, GALAX, VIRGINIA

Photo Collection, 1904-1988.

Sanborn Map (1923, 1946).

HERITAGE ROOM COLLECTIONS

- First Christian Church, Galax, Virginia, Archives.
- First Baptist Church, Galax, Virginia, Archives.
- First Methodist Church, Galax, Virginia, Archives.

PERSONAL PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTIONS

- Dr. Paul H. Kapp, Scrapbook and Photograph Album.
- Vass- Kapp Hardware Store, Files.
- Mr. and Mrs. John Cock, Scrapbook and Photograph Album.
- Mrs. John Early, Scrapbook and Photograph Album.
- Mr. and Mrs. John Vaughan, Scrapbook and Photograph Album.

ARCHIVE AND DEPOSITORY

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

- Special Collections. Presidential Records of the Norfolk and Western Railroad.

INTERVIEWS

- Campbell, Dan. Interview with author. Galax, Virginia. 15 February 1992.
- Cock, John. Interview with author. Galax, Virginia. 14 October 1991.
- Kapp, John P. Interview with author. Galax, Virginia. 14 October 1991. 23 November 1991. 20 December 1991. 2 January 1992. 15 March 1992.
- Mathews, Jack. Interview with author. Galax, Virginia. 8 January 1992
- Pless, Glen. Interview with author. Galax, Virginia. 14 October 1991. 11 March 1992. 23 March 1992.
- Smith, Rebecca. Interview with author. Fairfax, Virginia. June 1988.
- Wells, Jerry. Interview with author. Ithaca, N.Y. September 1986.

STATE AGENCIES AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

National Main Street Center, Washington, D.C.

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Office of New Jersey Heritage, Main Street New Jersey Program.

Trenton, New Jersey.

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Oklahoma Main Street Program. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Division of Vital Statistics. Richmond, Virginia.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

Virginia Main Street Program. Richmond, Virginia.

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Anderson, Lyall. *Building Failures, A Guide to Diagnosis, Remedy and Prevention*. London: Butterworth Architecture, 1989.
- Appleton, J.H. *The Experience of Place*. London, New York: Wiley Press, 1974.
- Bolt, Charles. "Charles Bolt's Galax" in *the Golden Anniversary of Galax, Virginia, 1906-1956*. Frank M. Hearster, ed. N.p. 1956.
- Byrd, William. *Histories of the Dividing Line Between North Carolina and Virginia*. New York: Dover Publications, 1967.
- Cabrill, Mike. "Why is Galax?" in *the Virginia and the Virginia County*, July, 1950. Richmond, Va.: Virginia Publications Inc., 1950.
- Cabrill, Mike. "Success Story" in *the Virginia and the Virginia County*, July, 1950. Richmond, Va.: Virginia Publications Inc., 1950.
- Committee for the Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, Va. *The Bicentennial Celebration of Galax, Virginia*. N.p. 1976.
- Cox, Ed. *The Golden Anniversary of Galax, Virginia, 1906-1956*. Frank M. Hearster, ed. N.p. 1956.
- Curtis, William J.R. *Modern Architecture Since 1900*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall Inc., 1983.
- Dane, Suzanne G. *New Directions for Urban Main Streets*. National Main Street Center, Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation Press, 1988.
- Davies, Stephen and Kathleen Love, Susan Ziegler, Fred I. Kent III, Barbara Delaney. *What do People Do Downtown: How to look at Main Street Activity*. Washington, D.C: National Trust for Hist. Pres. Press, 1981.

- Dunay, Donna. *Town Architecture, Blacksburg, Virginia , Understanding a Virginia Town*. Blacksburg, Va.: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State Univ. Press, 1986.
- Franklin, Benjamin. *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, [1758]*. Russell B. Nye, ed. Boston: Houghton Press, 1982.
- Funk, Angela. "Mud Holes, Ghosts and Nancy Hanks" in *The Gazette*, Supplement Section. August 1983.
- Fields, Betty-Lou. *Grayson County: A History in Words and Pictures*. Independence, Va: Grayson County Historical Society, 1976.
- Glisson, Lisa S. *Main Street: Open for Business*. Washington, D.C: National Trust for Historic Preservation Press, 1984.
- Hall , Edward T. *The Hidden Dimension*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Books, 1966.
- Hall , Edward T. *The Silent Language*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Books, 1966
- Heineman, Ronald Lynton. *Depression and New Deal in Virginia , Thesis-University of Virginia* . Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Microfilms, 1967.
- Hearster, Frank M. *The Golden Anniversary of Galax, Virginia, 1906-1956*. Frank M. Hearster, ed. N.p. 1956.
- Hiss, Tony. *The Experience of Place*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990.
- Howe, Daniel Walker. "Victorian Culture in America" in *Victorian America*. Daniel Walker Howe, ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press: 1977.
- Isaac, Rhys. *The Transformation of Virginia 1740-1790*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982.

- Jackson, John Brinckerhoff. *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1979.
- Jefferson ,Thomas. *Notes on the State of Virginia [1785]*. Thomas Perkins Abernathy,ed. New York: Harper, 1964.
- Krier, Leon. *Houses, Palaces and Cities*. New York: Rizzoli Press, 1984.
- Le Corbusier. *Towards a New Architecture*. New York: Dover, 1931.
- Link, William A. *A Hard Country and a Lonely Place: Schooling, Society, and Reform in Rural Virginia, 1870 - 1920* .Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1986.
- Mumford, Lewis. *The Culture of Cities*. London: Harvest Press, 1966.
- Meinig, D.W. "Symbolic Landscape" in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes, Geographical Essays*. D.W. Meinig, ed. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979.
- Morris, A.E.J. *History of Urban Form, Before the Industrial Revolutions*, Second Edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1979.
- Norberg-Schultz, Christian. *Genius Loci, Toward a Phenomenology of Architecture*. New York: Rizzoli, 1984.
- Nutting,Wallace. *Virginia Beautiful*. Garden City, N.Y: Old America, 1935.
- Poole, Munsey M. "Capital Galax" in the *Virginia and Virginia County , July, 1950*. Richmond,Va.: Virginia Press, 1950.
- Poole, Munsey M. "Where Churches Count... A Well of Community Activities and Interests" in the *Virginia and Virginia County , July, 1950*. Richmond,Va.: Virginia Press, 1950.
- Poole, Munsey M. "When Industry Takes the Lead" in the *Virginia and Virginia County , July, 1950*. Richmond,Va.: Virginia Press, 1950.

- Price, Edward T. "The Central Courthouse Square in the American County Seat" in *The Geographical Review*, Vol. LVIII, 1968. New York: The American Geographical Society, 1968.
- Reps, John. *The Making of Urban America, A History of City Planning in the United States*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1965.
- Roberts, Joseph Kent and Robert Bloomer. *Catalogue of Topographic and Geologic Maps of Virginia*. Richmond, Va: Dietz Press, 1939.
- Ross, Charlotte Tankley. *Bibliography of Southern Appalachia*. Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tenn. Press, 1976.
- Rubin, Louis Decimus. *Virginia: A History*. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1984.
- Salmon, John S. *A Guide to State Records in the Archives Branch, Virginia State Library*. Richmond, Va.: Virginia State Press: 1985.
- Scott Brown, Denise. *Urban Concepts, Architectural Design Profile*. New York: St. Martins Press, 1990.
- Schretter, Howard A. *A New Look For Downtown, Ideas and Examples of Central Business District Improvement*. Athens, Ga.: Institute of Community and Area Development, University of Georgia Press, 1968.
- Schretter, Howard A. *Downtown Revitalization, A Collection of Selected Writings from Professional Journals*. Athens, Ga.: Institute of Community and Area Development, University of Georgia Press, 1967.
- Scully, Vincent. *American Architecture and Urbanism*. New Revised Edition. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1988.
- Society of Virginia Antiquities. *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*. Richmond, Va.: Society of Virginia Antiquities Publications, 1893 -1991.

- Smardon, Richard and Timothy R. Day. "Historical Overview of the Blue Ridge Parkway" in *Visual Preferences of Travellers along the Blue Ridge Parkway*. Asheville, N.C.: Western Appalachian Press, 1983.
- Smith, Page. *As a City Upon a Hill, The Town in History*. New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1966.
- Stamper, James. "The Indians of the Grayson County Area" in *The Grayson Journal*, 1930. Independence, VA: Grayson County Historical Society, 1930.
- Stilgoe, John R. *Common American Landscape of America, 1580-1845*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1982.
- Trudeau, Garry B. "Doonesbury". IHT, 10 March 1977.
- Urban Land Institute. *Beaumont, Texas, An Assessment of Opportunities, Plans, and Programs for the Revitalization of Downtown Beaumont*. Washington, D.C.: U.L.I. Press, 1979.
- Venturi, Robert and Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour. *Learning From Las Vegas*, Revised Edition. Cambridge, Mass, London, England: MIT Press, 1977.
- Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission. *Notes on Virginia*. Richmond, Va.: Virginia State Press, 1938- 1991.
- Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Writer's Program, Virginia. *Virginia: A Guide to the Old Dominion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1941.
- Zelinsky, Wilbur. *The Cultural Geography of the United States*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1973.

Ziegler, Arthur P. and Walter C. Kidney. *Historic Preservation in Small Towns, A Manual of Practice*. Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1986.

Appendix 1

Galax Fair Association

Galax, Virginia, February 17 1907.

H D Maher, General Manager,
Norfolk and Western Ry Co.,
Roanoke, Va.

Dear Sir:--

The matter of regrading the road leading from this town to the Piper's Gap in the Blue Ridge is now being considered by both the people of the town and the county. The County (Carroll) is unable to do very much--the right of way being about as much and possibly more than it will give to the enterprise.

A steel bridge across Chestnut Creek, three-fourths of a mile from town will be necessary, and when this with the road is all considered, the people will not be able to raise the funds necessary by private subscription.

A representative of the Roanoke Bridge Co., who has examined the situation says the best thing he can give us is a bridge costing all told near \$1000.00.

Now I am taking the matter on myself to see who are interested and how much, as I am one of the "viewers" and the one on whom these people will somewhat depend for this thing. I am a Railway civil engineer and will also make the survey for the road.

Perhaps more than half the ties and lumber handled from Galax comes in over the road in question, and on its present location not more than 50 to 75% of a full load can be handled. The track is only wide enough for one wagon in many places, while the grade is something awful.

With this recital of existing conditions can you see reason for considering the matter of assisting with a subscription from your Company to the proposed bridge. We propose placing the road on a water grade such as would be best for a permanent macadam, and in doing so meet some rather heavy construction.

I will offer the opinion that this proposed road will bring a greater increase in the tie and lumber business here than a 15% advance in price.

The merchants here claim that they lost (upon an estimate) twenty thousand dollars worth of business last year during the rainy season, on account of the going over better roads to points on the Southern Ry.

I will be glad to hear at your earliest convenience, and will say that we will not suggest any amount to you; only will say, however, that we can get ample work subscribed to do the grading on the road, and can get some sixty or seventy per cent of the price of the bridge, all in private subscription here.

Should you see cause to send a special representative here to investigate conditions and will write me one day in advance of his coming, I will meet him and show him the situation. Previous notice would be necessary, as I live four miles out from town.

Trusting you may see cause to consider this matter, I am,

Yours truly,

(Sgd) R E Cox

Subject: Request of R. I. Cox, Galax, Va., for contribution toward improvement of county road etc.

NORFOLK AND WESTERN RAILWAY CO.

N. D. MAHER,
GENERAL MANAGER

AT NORFOLK - February 21st 1907.

Mr. R. M. Johnson,
President, Roanoke.

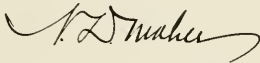
Dear Sir:--

I beg to refer herewith letter from Mr. R. F. Cox, of Galax, Virginia, asking us if we cannot contribute toward a bridge and improvement of road into Galax, which he claims will largely increase our lumber business and assist us in moving business to Galax, which now goes to the Southern Railway.

My recommendation would be, that we see if we cannot find an old light truss span that might answer for this highway bridge, and if we can, donate it on the part of the Company for this purpose. I am having Mr. Churchill send an engineer out to look at the location of the bridge and to find out what kind of a span is needed and then see what we have.

If you approve of this I will go ahead with it.

Yours truly,



Enclosure

General Manager.

2/24

Request of R F Cox, Galax, Va., for contribution toward im-
proving county road, etc 216

February 22nd 1907

Mr. H. D. Maher,
General Manager.

Dear Sir:-

Replying to your letter of 21st instant and returning enclosure:

You may arrange for this improvement in county road at Galax,
as outlined in your letter.

Yours truly,

President

No
Enclosure

AMERICAN SCENE

The Two Sides of the



BETHANY, MO. Friday night live at Wal-Mart draws many shoppers for lowdown prices

"Stack it deep, sell it cheap, stack it high and watch it fly!"

By HUGH SIDNEY

JAMES MCCONKEY, OF ALBANY, MO. (pop. 2,100), never cried. But he felt a sadness the nights before Christmas 1985, standing in his tiny hardware store on the west side of his town square. He remembers it vividly today. A dream smashed.

Shiny new bicycles were lined up, prices cut to the core. Appliances filled the counters. Holiday decorations festooned the windows. Everything there . . . except customers. Some evenings when McConkey looked beyond the twinkling lights out over the square, he could not see a single car. He knew where they were.

Two months earlier a Wal-Mart store had opened in Maryville (pop. 9,500), 34 miles west, and one month earlier another had opened in Bethany (pop. 3,100), 18

miles east. Their parking lots were full of McConkey's neighbors and friends, lured there through the winter's cold by the powerful Wal-Mart merchandising mystique and retail prices often below his wholesale cost. He thought then, and thinks today, that he and his partner and brother Richard did everything right to withstand the normal merchandising revolution of the past 40 years brought by good roads, city malls and the early discounters like K Mart.

Back in 1982, James, 25, and Richard, 31, decided they wanted their own business in a community where the McCook family had farmed and worked more than a century. They borrowed money and bought out the Gamble hardware store, tore out 100-year-old wood shelves, spruced it up, offered long shopping hours and personal service. For three years the

McConkey brothers prospered. Sometimes when the square was filled and bustling, friends trading with friends, families greeting families, James thought "it looked like an old postcard." This was a life he cherished. Nobody got really rich. Their wealth was in the closeness and vitality of the community. Then came Wal-Mart.

In January 1989, after another dismal Christmas, the McConkeys gave up. So did four other merchants around the Albany town square. For a while the McConkey store stood empty; then the town bulldozed it with others to make way for a Place's store, a regional general merchandiser that was already on the Albany square. The old Place's is empty. James McConkey is now teaching school and driving a school bus. His brother has a job with a paper-products firm.

SAM WALTON Legacy



ALBANY, MO. Deserted downtown 15 miles away, this sunny Saturday afternoon

Hear those downtown merchants cry!" *Wal-Mart employee chant*

When Sam Moore Walton died a week ago after a long battle with cancer, he was eulogized—and rightly so—as a man who had transformed American merchandising and perfected a hands-on management that instilled a sense of team enthusiasm among the 380,000 employees he liked to refer to as "associates." In the process, he became America's richest person, his family's wealth estimated at \$23 billion. But he also became the pious saint of a down-home style of megawealth, eschewing the fancy trappings of power. "Mr. Sam" drove an '88 Ford pickup truck and hopped around the country to visit stores, take the pulse of consumers and inspire his workers. His passion, his joy, was fine-tuning his vast merchandising network by insisting on such things as brighter smiles and cheerier "Good mornings" to customers from store workers, as well as offering

the latest products gathered and stocked through the most sophisticated and efficient inventory technology available.

Wal-Mart merchandising, the brilliantly simple concept of "everyday low price" retailing, has become such a pervasive force (2,000 stores of various kinds, 160 built each year) that it is redesigning the social structure of rural and small-town America more than any other force besides nature. Wal-Mart is beginning to nibble at the edges of large cities and giant shopping malls, many of which are weakened by the general economic malaise.

To millions, the down-home Bentonville, Ark., genius was a hero who brought decent merchandise at low prices to areas scorned by more glitzy entrepreneurs. On Wall Street, Walton was a billionaire god who made countless millionaires of oth-

ers. Last month President Bush awarded the Medal of Freedom, the country's highest civil tribute, to the ailing Walton. "This is not a visit about Sam Walton's wealth," said Bush. "It's about leadership. It's about decency. As he became more and more successful he never turned his back on his roots."

But even as he was honored, some of Walton's roots were wondering about just what he had wrought. Writer Tim Larimer grew up in Salem, Ill. (pop. 7,800), which ended up in the middle of a Wal-Mart nest. On visits home he watched the storefronts go dark one by one, places where he had met and laughed with friends as a kid. One Saturday afternoon he counted four empty stores on one side of the business block and two on the other. Two cars were parked downtown. The Wal-Mart on the west edge of Salem was

humming. Not long ago, Larimer wrote in the Washington Post about driving east from St. Louis and rarely being far from the sight of a Wal-Mart. He felt engulfed in a new culture reaching from horizon to horizon. "If I had kept driving on Highway 50, the same road that eventually runs through Maryland to Easton, I would have passed more Wal-Marts. In Illinois towns like Flora, Olney and Lawrenceville. Each its own town, not so long ago, now they scarcely seem distinguishable. All Wal-Mart towns now."

Steve Bishop, a Church of Christ minister who grew up in Hearne, Texas (pop. 5,400), and served a church there for sev-

in the United States," says Stone, and that includes Exxon and General Motors.

Wal-Mart is already the largest retailer, smothering Sears and K Mart. "The impact of a corporation of that size and that involvement in the life of this country is immense," declares Stone, who recently held meetings with the merchants of St. James (pop. 4,300) and Madeira (pop. 2,100), Minn., two small communities gasping in a web of Wal-Marts. He advised them, as he has countless other small-town merchants, on how to deal with the arrival of a Wal-Mart in their region. "I don't fight Wal-Mart," Stone insists. "If you believe in the free-market system as I do, then you cannot keep them out of your community. Much of what I tell you will be to emulate them."

Stone talks about finding special merchandising niches not occupied by Wal-Mart, about improving service, extending store hours. Within the growing network of frightened storekeepers, the town of Viroqua, Wis., is held high as the David that successfully fought Goliath with community promotion, searches for new businesses and government help. In Sanford, N.C., Richard Lawrence took Stone's counsel and began to cruise the Wal-Mart that opened in January, comparing prices and merchandise in his store. Mann's Hardware, a town fixture since 1927. He became more competitive in gifts, paint and hardware and reopened an industrial-supply line. "We felt the Wal-Mart impact at first," says Lawrence. "But business is coming back. With a little more time it should swing back to normal."

Yet, for all the delicacy of Stone's presentations and the litany of stores and communities that have survived Wal-Mart, there is a brooding inevitability about the data in Stone's studies. Small communities of static population sooner or later lose business from their downtowns to Wal-Mart, which sinks its roots at their edges. Surrounding communities with no Wal-Mart are devastated. Independent stores in growing areas generally rise with the tide even with Wal-Mart scooping up a big share.

Some of this was surely inevitable in our molting capitalism; Wal-Mart, perhaps, has done no more than finish off had shopkeepers and lazy combines. Its bright, clinic-clean stores are the bookends miracle that Walton wrought. But few of any American enterprises, no matter how huge and momentarily suc-

cessful, have enjoyed uninterrupted bliss. The betting in dozens of tiny store around the country is that Wal-Mart will reach its own plateau. Despite the super management team Walton left in place, his death will inevitably mean that the soul of his corporation will change. Community irritation at secretive and stand-offish ways of Wal-Mart managers, the "us" (Wal-Mart) against "them" (down town merchants) attitude, and the modes involvement in public affairs and charity by store officers are building resentment.

Then there is the matter of basic economics. James McConkey can't scientifically prove it, but his hunch is that people who drive 20 miles to a Wal-Mart, and contribute to the decline of their town, end up paying higher taxes, which is a premium for the merchandise they get. Eventually, the pendulum will swing, the marketplace will adjust. That is what American capitalism is all about, as Mr. Sam knew as well as any merchant of the modern age. ■

WALTON'S AMERICA

1,347 Wal-Marts and Sam's Clubs



en years, fired off an essay a couple of months ago to the Dallas Morning News, declaring "Wal-Mart killed Hearne, Texas—twice. . . . The first death was the end of a downtown that held much more than stores, it held memories, values and people who stayed long enough to make a difference in our lives. Wal-Mart's arrival ended all that. The second killing occurred in December 1990, when Wal-Mart closed its doors in Hearne. It closed because it couldn't turn a profit. Wal-Mart leaves an empty building as testimony to the '80s' greed, and it leaves a downtown of vacated shops as testimony to our rush to save a little money—maybe not a very different kind of greed."

Kenneth Stone, professor of economics at Iowa State University, began five years ago to study the Wal-Mart phenomenon in his state after he noted the commercial life of many towns being hollowed out by the huge intruder. Few scholars had paid any attention. Now Stone is in demand all over the U.S., lecturing on the nature of Wal-Mart and how to deal with it. Stone estimates that Wal-Mart's stores—a combination of general merchandise, groceries and wholesale clubs—could, if growth in the 1990s equals that of the 1980s, gross \$200 billion annually by the end of the decade. "It could be the biggest corporation

LOW PRICES, HIGH SALES

1962
The first Wal-Mart discount store opens in Rogers, Ark.

1971
Sales \$44.2 million
Number of stores 38 in eight states. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. goes public with its first stock offering.

1992
Sales \$43.9 billion
Today, Sam Walton's legacy includes 1,735 Wal-Marts, 212 Sam's and 13 SuperCenters and hypermarkets in 43 states, and 380,000 employees.

1991
Sales \$32.6 billion
Wal-Mart becomes nation's top retailer. Locations in 35 states include 1,573 Wal-Marts and 143 Sam's Clubs.

Net income per share of static stock
\$1.14
Be
1981 1991

1988
Sales \$15.9 billion
The company debuts its Wal-Mart SuperCenter in Washington, Mo. Total number of stores 1,114.

1987
Sales \$11.9 billion
The first hypermarket USA opens in Garland, Texas.

1984
Sales \$4.6 billion
Sam's Wholesale Clubs open in Cranview, Mo., Midwest City, Okla. and Dallas. By this time Wal-Mart is in 19 states.

Appendix 3



National Trust for Historic Preservation

Design Session Part 2 -- 3:15-4:30
Doug Loescher 11/90

EFFECTIVE STOREFRONT DESIGN FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS

- THIS IS NOT A SESSION TO DEVELOP TECHNICAL DESIGN SKILLS
&
IT IS NOT INTENDED TO TEACH ARCHITECTURAL BUILDING STYLES
- INSTEAD, WE WILL BE THINKING ABOUT A FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM
ALL DOWNTOWN PROGRAMS FACE REGARDING DESIGN ISSUES WITH
INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSES & HOW TO MOTIVATE THEM TO IMPROVE

Anyone who has taken more than a passing glance at the appearance of a downtown district knows.....

.....MOST OF DOWNTOWN'S PHYSICAL APPEARANCE
-- & THUS IT'S IMAGE -
IS CREATED BY THE STOREFRONTS OF INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSES.

To be successful in creating effective design improvements, which we KNOW to be essential in successful downtown revitalization, we will have to influence the decisions of private, independent business people regarding positive improvements to their buildings. To do that, we must provide something positive for the merchant on the street..... we must help them create facades that are effective "selling machines" as well as "good neighbors".

PRINCIPLE #1..... SUCCESSFUL STOREFRONTS PROJECT THE STORE'S PERSONALITY

- Regardless of location, size, or marketing medium, the most successful companies that I know of around the country, are capturing the attention and loyalty of their customers by projecting a clear and compelling image & personality..... through corporate identification, signage, logos, advertising, store design and display.

PRINCIPLE #2..... SUCCESSFUL STORES REFLECT THEIR CUSTOMER'S PERSONALITY

Just as we know that we are drawn to, and instantly like, people who are like us, as customers we are drawn to businesses that present an image that is like us. This principle actually works two ways:

- People are drawn to images that reflect what they are,
6/or

785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
202-638-4600

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES Elements of a Storefront

The traditional commercial storefront can be considered the cornerstone of Main Street. Dating from the 19th and early 20th centuries, these buildings share a remarkable similarity—a consistency that creates a strong visual image for the downtown.

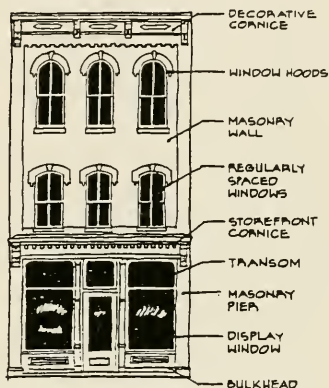
Because they were composed of similar parts, the blocks have a consistent, organized and coordinated appearance. Any one facade is visually related to its neighbors.

The parts of the facade were often compatible enough to be interchangeable. A commercial building from the mid 1800s could be easily modernized by inserting a new 1900s storefront. Although the styles and details changed, the proportions remained the same.

Technological developments, coupled with changing tenants and merchandising trends, encouraged frequent storefront changes, while the upper facade stayed the same, deteriorated or was covered over.

The storefront became increasingly transparent, but it still fit into the framed opening provided by the original building. When a storefront is not contained within this frame, it looks out of proportion with the upper facade.

The basic commercial facade consists of three parts: the storefront with an entrance and display windows, the upper facade usually with regularly spaced windows and the cornice that caps the building. These components appear in many shapes, sizes and styles but result in essentially the same facade.



TYPICAL UPPER FACADES



Early to Mid 1800s

- SIMPLE CORNICE
- LINTELS OVER WINDOWS
- SMALL WINDOW PANES



Mid to Late 1800s

- BOLDLY DECORATED CORNICE
- WINDOW HOODS
- 2 OVER 2 WINDOWS



Late 1800s to Early 1900s

- COPPELLED BACK CORNICE
- LARGE, ARCHED WINDOWS



Early 1900s to 1930s

- SIMPLE BACK CORNICE
- LARGE WINDOW OPENINGS WITH MULTIPLE UNITS

TYPICAL STOREFRONTS



Early to Mid 1800s

- POST AND BEAM FRAME
- DIVIDED DISPLAY WINDOWS
- SIMPLE DECORATION



Mid to Late 1800s

- BOLDLY DECORATED CORNICE
- CAST IRON COLUMNS
- LARGE DISPLAY WINDOWS



Late 1800s to Early 1900s

- SIMPLE CORNICE
- TRANSOM WINDOWS
- RECESSED ENTRANCE

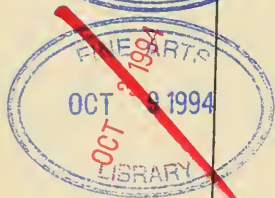


Early 1900s to 1930s

- METAL WINDOW FRAMES
- STRUCTURAL GLASS
- RECESSED ENTRANCE

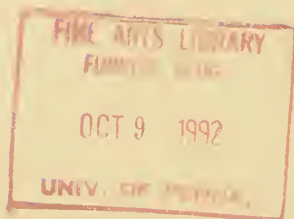
Fine Arts Library
University of Pennsylvania

Please return this book as soon as you
have finished with it. It must be re-
turned by the latest date stamped below.



W

M-608





N/1198/04977/2184X

3 1198 04977 2184



N/1198/04977/2184X