

# **SURVEY AND RESEARCH REPORT**

**ON**

**1928 Yandell Building,**

**325 - 329 Main Street Pineville**



**1. Name and location of the property:** The 1928 Yandell Building is located at 325-329 Main Street, Pineville, North Carolina.

**2. Name and address of the present owner of the property:** The present owner of the property is:

W. A. Yandell Rental and Investment Co.

PO Box 386

Pineville, NC 28134

**3. Representative photographs of the property:** This report contains representative photographs of the property. Photographs are available at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission office.

**4. Maps depicting the location of the property:** This report contains a map depicting the location of the property.



**5. Current deed book reference to the property:** The most recent deed to this property is recorded in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 02036 on page 293. The tax parcel number of the property is 22106102.

**6. A brief historical sketch of the property:** This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property.

**7. A brief architectural description of the property:** This report contains a brief architectural description of the property.

**8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets criteria for designation set forth in N. C. G. S. 160A-400.5:**

- a. **Special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and/or cultural importance:** The Commission judges that the property known as the 1928 Yandell Building does possess special

significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:

- 1) The 1928 Yandell Building is significant as it holds an important and prominent position in the town's historic commercial core.
- 2) The original site of McCoy's Barbershop and an early site of the office of W. A. Yandell, this building has strong association with the social and political history of the Town of Pineville.
- 3) The 1928 Yandell Building has a close association with W.A. "Willie" Yandell, a business man who was instrumental in the non-textile commercial development of the town of Pineville during the twentieth century, building and owning much of the town's commercial core.

**b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or association:** The Commission contends that the physical and architectural description which is included in this report demonstrates that the 1928 Yandell Building meets this criterion.

**9. Ad Valorem tax appraisal:** The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property which becomes a designated "historic landmark." The current total appraised tax value of the land and improvements is \$1,010,400. 325-329 Main Street occupies 4,700 square feet of the 20,105 total square feet of improvements on the tax parcel.

**10. Portion of property recommended for designation:** A portion of the exterior of the building including the westernmost two storefront, 327 South Main and 329 South Main, the land on which the building sits, and the sidewalk directly in front of the building as shown on the attached map are recommended for historic designation.

**Date of preparation of this report:** May 1, 2006

**Prepared by:** Stewart Gray and Hope Murphy

## 1928 Yandell Building

Pineville, North Carolina is located approximately eleven miles south of the city of Charlotte. The small town had its beginnings as a train stop when the South Carolina Railroad opened a depot in 1852. The town, incorporated in 1873, became a busy center for agricultural support and textiles in the next few decades.<sup>[1]</sup> In 1890 businessmen from Charlotte opened the Dover Yarn Mill in Pineville. By the time the Mill had added a weaving department in 1902 over two hundred people were employed at the Mill.

In 1903 the population of Pineville reached 700, most residents were involved in some way with the cotton industry. Those not employed by the mill labored as cotton farmers. Autumn would bring farmers to Main Street where they would form long lines in order to have their cotton ginned. Saturdays would also bring farmers to town shop, pay debts, or trade mules.<sup>[2]</sup>

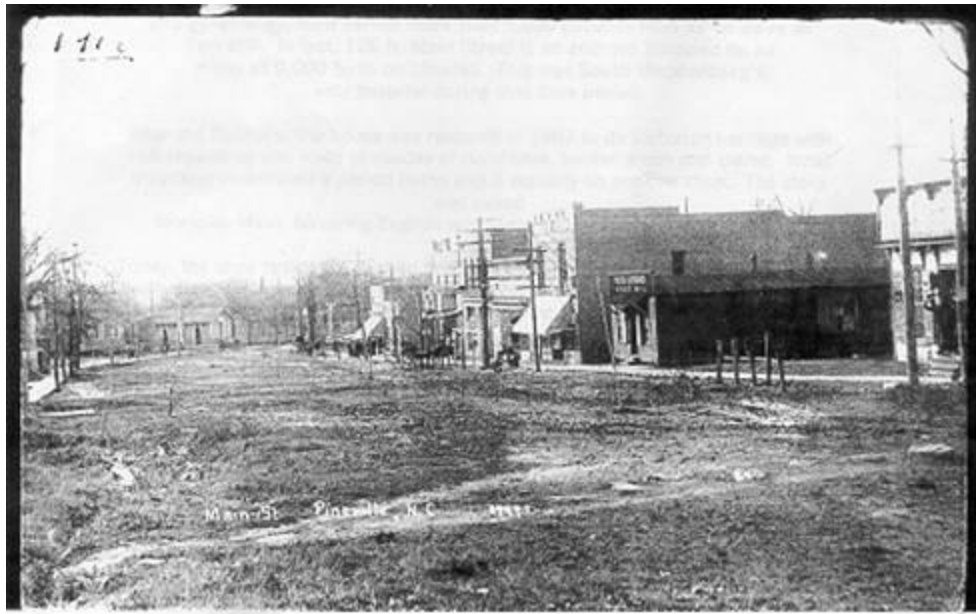
For most of its history the south side of Main Street has been owned by the Yandell family. W.A. “Willie” Yandell began acquiring land on the south side of Main Street beginning in 1919. In that year he purchased one half acre from C.H. Griffin and his wife Rana<sup>[3]</sup> During the next four years Yandell acquired additional Main Street frontage from the Wherry and Bailes families.<sup>[4]</sup> In a 1987 interview in the Charlotte Observer Willeen Yandell, W.A.’s daughter, recounted that when her father arrived in Pineville in 1912 Main Street was only a wagon path. The elder Yandell, recognized that the growing town needed services like grocery stores and began to develop them. <sup>[5]</sup>

Main Street was extended in 1927 when a bridge was built over the nearby Big Sugar Creek. The road became part of the primary route between Charlotte and Columbia, South Carolina. Yandell, realized a boom in his burgeoning business when work crews arrived in Pineville to begin work on the project. Yandell recounted to newspaper reporter Joe Flanders in the 1960's that he remembers the day shortly before Christmas of 1927 when the road contractor arrived in Pineville. He had 50 teams of mules and enough men to run them. Faced with no place to house his men, never mind the mules the contractor turned to Yandell, already one of Pineville's most prominent businessmen. For the year that it took to build the bridge and attached road Yandell housed men at his hotel on the corner of Main and Culp Street, and found space to feed and keep the mules.<sup>[6]</sup>

Into the 1930's Main Street remained only one of two paved streets in Pineville, the other being Polk Street. In June of 1929 the business owners along Main Street petitioned the Mayor of the town and Board of Alderman to "grade and pave" the street. The property owners, Mr. Yandell the largest with 250 feet of frontage, agreed to pay one-quarter of the cost of the project.<sup>[7]</sup> By the 1930's Pineville housed along its two block business district: five general stores, a dime store, a drug store, a doctor's office, hardware store, pool room, livery stable, blacksmith, post office, icehouse, movie theatre, and funeral home.<sup>[8]</sup>

Joe Griffin recounts that as a young boy in Pineville, during the 1930's, most people who lived in or near Pineville shopped on Main Street.<sup>[9]</sup> Trips to uptown Charlotte rare in the 1930's, became more so during World War II when gas became rationed.<sup>[10]</sup> Griffin recounts that the sidewalk on either side of Main Street was about four feet wide. Tress and grass were planted between the sidewalk and the road. This grassy strip served as a place for the stores to display items on nice days.<sup>[11]</sup>

During the 1930's the south side of Main Street, had a barbershop, a theater, and a post office. There was also a grocery store run by Yandell, over which there were hotel rooms, Yandell's business office was next door.



Main Street Pineville 1915

Tom Eubanks, who grew up in the residential section of Main Street recounts that the character of the business district remained intact until the 1960's, and changed most radically in the 1980's. Eubanks recalls that cotton-laden mule-drawn carts still often lined Main Street after he returned from the Korean War in 1954.<sup>[12]</sup> As Charlotte grew, some of Pineville's small town character began to wane. In 1972 Pineville was home to 2000 people within its one square mile corporate limits. The erection of apartment complexes, malls, and the Carowinds amusement park three miles west of the city brought traffic congestion to the sleepy business center.<sup>[13]</sup>

A 1987 Charlotte Observer article posits that the shift in the type of retail stores located along Main Street began in 1983. In that year the W.A. Yandell Rental and Investment Co. rented 329 Main Street to Betty Hiltz. She opened the China Connection, an antiques store. Within five years every address on the South side of Main Street, except two, was occupied by antique stores.

In an act that signaled the end of Pineville's rural character, Tom Eubanks helped a local farmer remove his cows from the land on which the Carolina Mall would be erected. The massive commercial development that followed along Highway 51 between Pineville and Matthews, the expansion of the City of Charlotte up to and around the boundaries of Pineville, and the completion of the nearby I-485 beltway connecting to Interstate 77, have transformed much of the area around Pineville into a largely suburban landscape.<sup>[14]</sup> Retaining a high degree of physical integrity, the buildings along Main Street are now rare and significant artifacts that can tell us much about the town of Pineville's history.

### **325 - 329 Main Street**

Beginning in the 1930's, 325-329 Main Street housed the local movie theater. Located at 325 Main Street, The State Theater was run by J.O. Childers and his wife. Mr. Childers, like many of the other business men in downtown Pineville, extended his business connections in the community into civic ones. In the 1940's Childers served on the Pineville Board of Commissioners. Along with other Main Street business leaders like C. H. McCoy and Gene Neal, Childers was part of the volunteer fire fighter department that was founded in April of 1942.<sup>[15]</sup>

Joe Griffin, who was born in 1933, recounts going to see movies there as a child. Westerns were always shown there on Saturdays. Tickets were purchased at a

window outside the theatre; to see a movie children under twelve paid nine cents, older children and adults paid a quarter.<sup>[16]</sup> The theatre was described with humor by Tom Eubanks as “extremely small.” The small Pineville population didn’t need a larger space to accommodate its movie going habits.<sup>[17]</sup> Keeping with traditions of that time, the building was segregated. Blacks sat in a balcony and whites down below.<sup>[18]</sup>

The Childers, along with their young son Jimmy, also lived on Main Street. They occupied rooms in the Yandell hotel a few doors down from the theatre<sup>[19]</sup> Mr. Robert Davis, a longtime resident of Pineville, remembers the theater operating at that location until the 1950’s. He posits that spreading television ownership may have put the theater out of business.<sup>[20]</sup>

327 Main Street was the home, for many years beginning in the 1930’s, of C. H “Bo” McCoy’s Barbershop. Tom Eubanks recalls making a trip to McCoy’s barbershop almost every two weeks as a young boy in the 1930’s. He would climb up on a board that McCoy placed across the arms of the chair, and receive a haircut for which he paid twenty-five cents.

Joe Griffin, also a boy in the 1930’s, recounts that McCoy’s shop offered a wide array of services when he was growing up. A man could receive a shave, haircut, shampoo, shoeshine, even a shower. The shop also served as a community gathering place for men. Griffin recounts that men came to catch up on local news, gossip and talk politics. “You never heard such arguments on politics,” Griffin recounts.<sup>[21]</sup>

The history of Main Street Pineville demonstrates how men of business, in the small rural towns, also served as political, civic, and religious leaders. McCoy served



as Pineville Mayor from the late 1930's until 1955. At that time he was defeated by druggist R. C. Hair, who owned a popular soda shop and drug store (as well as one of the town's first television sets on the side of Main Street opposite McCoy.) McCoy was appointed mayor again in 1966 to finish out a term vacated by then Mayor, Hoyt Wigonton. In spite of his very public life Tom Eubanks describes McCoy as a kind, religious, and very quiet man. Bo McCoy's barbershop moved in the early 1950's to 319 Main Street where it remained open until the early 1980's.

329 Main Street was originally occupied by W.A. Yandell's business office. It was from Yandell's office, Griffin recounts that local residents "could get a loan, cash a check, pay rent, or seek legal advice" there<sup>[23]</sup> Such services would have been vital in the community who lost its only bank, Pineville Loan & Savings Company, in 1929 at the outset of the banking crisis that preceded the Depression.<sup>[24]</sup> .

During the 1960s and 1970s the businesses at 325-329 Main Street varied. The wide variety and relatively short lived nature of these businesses may reflect Main Street Pineville's struggle for place in the rapidly changing and no longer rural landscape. The storefront at 325 Main, served for two years in the early 1970's as a magistrate court.<sup>[26]</sup> In 1965, 329 Main was occupied by the Triangle Finance Corporation, and then was unoccupied until 1970 when Clyde's Appliances, began its short lived occupation of the space.<sup>[27]</sup>

In 1983 Betty Hiltz rented the storefront at 329 Main Street, W.A. Yandell's original office. Her occupation of the space signaled a major shift in the character of Main Street. Ten months later the Antique Cupboard opened next door. By 1989 all of the storefronts in the building at 325-329 Main Street would be occupied by antique dealers, an occupant pattern that still exists.

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- <sup>[1]</sup> Paul Archambault and Dan Morrill, “Pineville Survey, Final Report,” The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, November 2004.
- <sup>[2]</sup> Joe Howard Griffin, Sr. “My Hometown Pineville, History, Hearsay, Memories and Scrapbook of Pineville,” Unpublished manuscript.
- <sup>[3]</sup> *Mecklenburg County Deed Book* 412, p. 377.
- <sup>[4]</sup> *Mecklenburg County Deed Book* 458, p. 445 and Deed Book 488, p.332.
- <sup>[5]</sup> Pat Borden Gubbins, “The Changing Face of Downtown Pineville,” *The Charlotte Observer*, February 15, 1987, Mecklenburg Neighbors Section, p. 10.
- <sup>[6]</sup> Joe Flanders, “Mr. Will Remembers that Bridge,” excerpted in “My Hometown” p. 19.
- <sup>[7]</sup> Town of Pineville, Board of Alderman Minutes, June 26, 1929.
- <sup>[8]</sup> Joe Howard Griffin, Sr. “My Hometown,” p. 28.
- <sup>[9]</sup> Ibid, p. 28.
- <sup>[10]</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>[11]</sup> Ibid., p. 29.
- <sup>[12]</sup> Interview with Tom Eubanks, April 5, 2006.
- <sup>[13]</sup> Tommy Denton, “Pineville Braces for an Era of Rapid Growth,” *Charlotte News*, October 12, 1972.
- <sup>[14]</sup> Paul Archambault and Dan L. Morrill, “Pineville Survey, Final Report.”
- <sup>[15]</sup> Town of Pineville, Board of Commissioners Minutes, April 23, 1942.
- <sup>[16]</sup> Griffin, p. 28.
- <sup>[17]</sup> Eubanks interview.
- <sup>[18]</sup> Griffin, p. 28.
- <sup>[19]</sup> Interview with Lillie Dial, March 9, 2006.

<sup>[20]</sup> Interview with Robert Davis, March 10, 2006.

<sup>[21]</sup> Griffin, p. 71.

<sup>[22]</sup> “Pineville Braces.”

<sup>[23]</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>[24]</sup> Ibid, pp. 23,28.

<sup>[25]</sup> Joe Howard Griffin, *My Hometown Pineville*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Cornelius, NC: Warren Publishing, 2004), p. 66.

<sup>[26]</sup> 325 and 327 Main Street often do not show listings in the Cross Reference Directory. It is believed that these spaces have often been incorporated or used by neighboring businesses. *Cross Reference Directory, Greater Charlotte, 1964-2002*. The Public Library of Charlotte Mecklenburg County, Carolina Room.

<sup>[27]</sup> Ibid.

### Architectural Description



The 1928 Yandell Building is a one-story brick commercial building composed of three storefronts. The building faces north and is sited adjacent to a wide

sidewalk. The two westernmost of the storefronts, 327 and 329, have retained a high degree of integrity. The third storefront, 325, has been radically altered.

The building is of solid masonry construction with wire-cut brick laid in a running bond on the facade. A single steel channel or I-beam runs across both 327 and 329 and serves as a continuous header for all of the wall openings. Both of the intact storefronts have a single vent formed by spaced soldier-bricks, set over the entrances. The top of the building is defined by a simple parapet with a corbbled cap composed of two courses of brick. The easternmost section of the cap is made out of tile, and may have been an original feature of the now altered facade.



327 Main is the narrower of the two original storefronts. The storefront has retained its original nine-light, single-panel door with original or early hardware. A single concrete step leads into the storefront. Original wooden trim surrounds two large plate-glass windows which rest on thick concrete sills. An original transom opening is covered with a sheet of plywood.



Very similar to 327, 329 Main Street is the wider of the two storefronts. An original single-light wooden door has retained its original trim and early hardware. The door is topped with a single-light fixed transom. Plate glass windows flank the entrance. The original wooden trim around the windows has been replaced with metal trim. The wire-cut brick has been painted.

Abutted on both sides by other store-front buildings, much of the side elevations are covered. The partially-exposed east elevation features a parapet that steps down five times following the slope of the composite roof as it slopes to the rear. The exposed section of the east elevation and the rear elevation demonstrate the common-bond brick construction of the building with six layers of stretchers between each layer of headers. Currently there are two doors opening into the rear of the building. Another door opening and a wide window opening on the rear elevation have been bricked-in.

