

SURVEY AND RESEARCH REPORT
ON
The Yandell Hotel and Grocery Store



1. Name and location of the property: The property known as the Yandell Hotel and Grocery Store is located at 331 Main Street, Pineville, North Carolina.

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

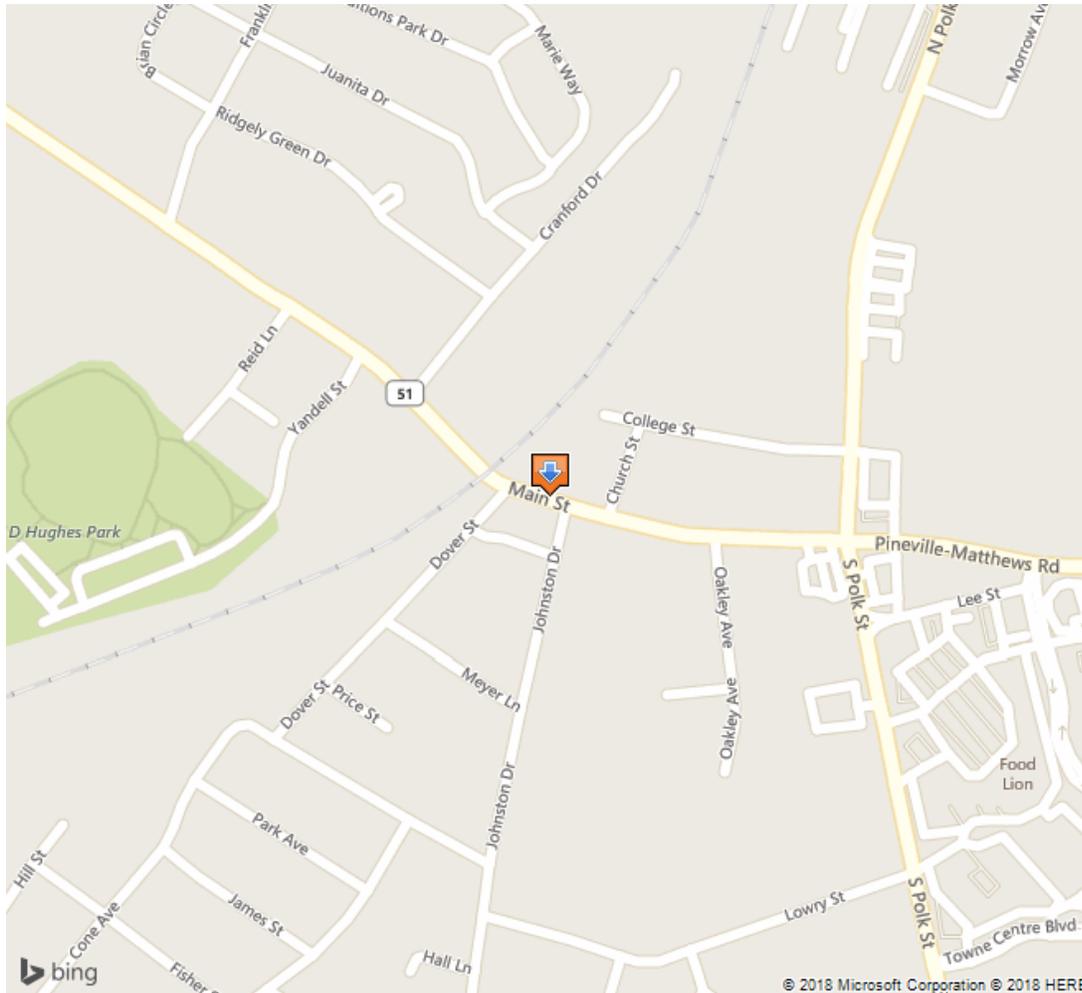
W. A. Yandell Rental and Investment Co.

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 Yandell Hotel and Grocery Store does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:

- 1) Built in 1925 by W.A. "Willie" Yandell, the Yandell Hotel and Grocery Store holds an important and prominent position in the Town of Pineville's commercial core.
- 2) The 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.
- 3) The Yandell Hotel and Grocery Store is closely associated with W.A. "Willie" Yandell. The businessman maintained an office, operated a hotel, and ran several other businesses in the building.

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 Yandell Hotel and Grocery Store 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. 331 Main Street occupies 9037 square feet of the 20,105 total square feet of improvements on the tax parcel.

10. Portion of property recommended for designation: The exterior of the building, the land on which it sits, and the sidewalk directly in front of the building are recommended for historic designation.

Date of preparation of this report: April 6, 2006

Prepared by: Stewart Gray and Hope Murphy

Historical Overview

Pineville

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 Charlotte and 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.^[1] 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 had reached 700, most of them 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.^[2]

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 in 1919. In that year he purchased one half acre from C .H. Griffin and his wife Rana^[3] During the next four years Yandell acquired additional Main Street frontage from the Wherry and Bailes families.^[4] 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. ^[5]

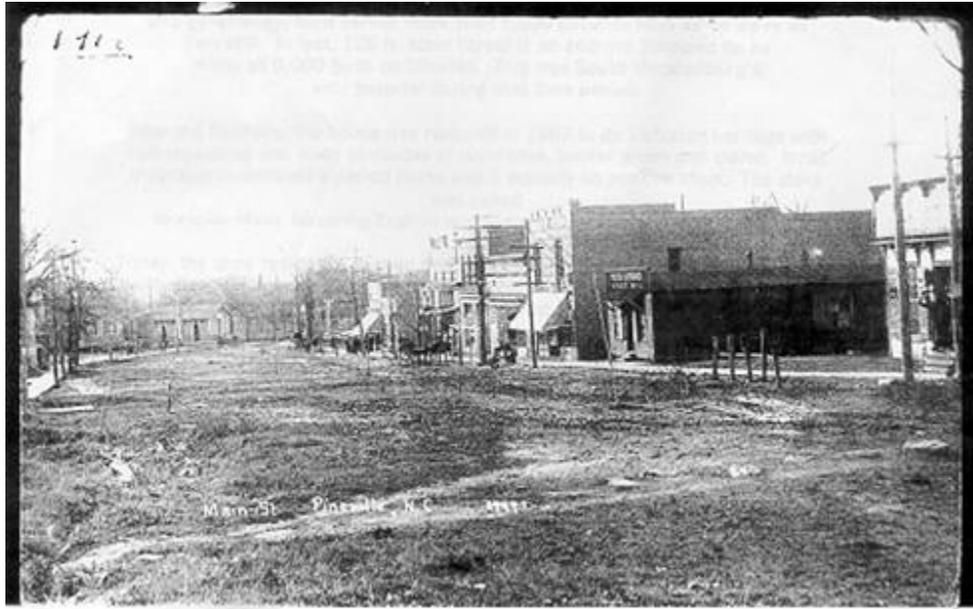
Main Street became more connected to the outside world beginning in 1927 when a bridge was built over the nearby Big Sugar Creek. With this bridge Main Street became part of

the main route between Charlotte and Columbia, South Carolina. W. A. Yandell realized a boom in his burgeoning business when work crews arrived in Pineville to begin labor on the project. Yandell recounted to newspaper reporter Joe Flanders in the 1960s that he remembered the day shortly before Christmas of 1927 when the road contractor arrived in Pineville. The contractor had with him 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. For the year that it took to build the bridge and attached road Yandell housed men at his hotel and found space to feed and keep the mules.^[6]

In June 1929 the business owners along the street petitioned the Mayor of the town and Board of Alderman to “grade and pave” the street. The property owners, Mr. Yandell being the largest with 250 feet of frontage, agreed to pay one-quarter of the cost of the project.^[7] Into the 1930s Main Street in Pineville remained only one of two paved streets in Pineville, the other being Polk Street.

By the 1930s 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.^[8] 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. Joe Griffin recounts local residents “could get a loan, cash a check, pay rent, or seek legal advice” there^[9] Such services would have been vital in the community that lost its only bank, Pineville Loan & Savings Company, in 1929 at the outset of the banking crisis that preceded the Depression.^[10] Griffin recounts that as a young boy in Pineville, during the 1930s, most people who lived in or near Pineville, shopped on Main Street.^[11] Trips to uptown Charlotte were rare and became more so during World War II when gas became rationed.^[12] Griffin recounts that the sidewalk on either side of Main Street was about four feet wide. Trees 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.^[13]



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 1960s, and changed most radically in the 1980s. Eubanks recalls that cotton-laden mule-drawn carts still often lined Main Street after he returned from the Korean War in 1954.^[15] As Charlotte grew from the north, 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.^[14]

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 antique shop. Within five years every address on the South side of Main Street, except two, would be occupied by antique stores.

In 1987 Eubanks, in an act that signaled the end of Pineville's rural character, helped a local farmer remove his cows from the land on which the Carolina Mall would be erected, and brought them to auction. The connection of Pineville to Charlotte and local towns by the completion of the I-485 connection with I-77, along with the widening of N.C. 51, the Main Street of Pineville, completed the transformation of Pineville from a rural cotton trading and production center to a thriving suburb.^[15]

Yandell Hotel and Grocery Store



During the 1930s the south side of Main Street in the 300 block was owned by Yandell. The building at 331-333 Main contained Yandell's Grocery Store and W. A. Yandell's business office where Griffin recounts local residents "could get a loan, cash a check, pay rent, or seek legal advice." Such services, as noted above, would have been vital in the community that lost its only bank.^[16] The only two-story building on the block was the Yandell Hotel and Grocery Store. The second story was a hotel. The hotel served some long-term residents, among these was the Childers family, who operated the nearby State Theater.^[17]

This building also held Yandell's general store. The store supplied groceries, hardware, notions, and shoes. Eubanks recalls that his mother Lila Eubanks would telephone the store and have groceries delivered by truck to their house, located just outside the business district of

Main Street.^[18] Faced with gas shortages during the Second World War, the enterprising Yandell began to have groceries delivered by a specially built bicycle. The bicycle outfitted with a large basket at the front replaced the delivery truck during the war years.

From his office at 333 Main Street Mr. Yandell built a business that lasts until today. In its early days his businesses included the general store, hotel, and rental company. Yandell additionally conducted a hog butchering operation from his backyard. Though Yandell's son Charles would serve on the Pineville Board of Alderman in the late 1940's, Yandell seems to have had little patience for bureaucracy. He appeared before the Board of Aldermen in December 1937. At that meeting Yandell explained that he was refusing to pay his taxes. It appears that Pineville policeman, O.I. Furr, owed him. \$145.00 for groceries and back rent, which Yandell felt should be deducted from the public coffer. The Board directed Yandell to pay his taxes and then collect the debt owed from Furr directly.

W.A. Yandell Rental and Investment Company remained at its location at 333 Main Street until 2002.^[19] Though it is not clear when Yandell ceased to operate his general store at 331 Main, beginning in the late 1960's the space was occupied by food establishments, including Marie's Restaurant.^[20] In 1984, as part of the shift in the types of stores on Main Street, George and Clarisse Morgan opened The Antique Cupboard^[21] at 331 Main, where it remains until now.

Architectural Description



The Yandell Hotel and Grocery Store was built in 1925. The two-story solid-masonry building faces north on an angled lot formed by Main and Dover Streets. The building follows the obtuse angle of the lot. The rear elevation is wider than the façade. The east elevation of the Yandell Hotel and Grocery Store abuts 329 Main, a one-story brick building. A steel lintel from 329 Main rests in a pocked cut into the brickwork of the Yandell Hotel and Grocery Store.

The façade of the Yandell Hotel and Grocery Store is composed of two nearly equal bays that are separated by a single unadorned brick pier. Hidden steel lintels support the upper brickwork. All of the brickwork on the façade is laid in running bond. Above the openings is a single recessed brick panel that is bordered on all sides by a single row of headers. The panel is composed of soldier bricks laid in an offset pattern. The east storefront opening has been infilled with later brickwork, and the glass and trim appear to have been replaced over the years. The west opening features wooden door and transom frames that may be original. Panels above the west opening may hide some original woodwork. The second floor is pierced by six evenly spaced boarded-over window openings with angled brick sills. The wall is topped with a stepped parapet that rises to a low peak. Vents or scuppers are located below the parapet's simple masonry cap. The angled brickwork on the building's northwest corner is rough, with voids between each row of bricks.



The west side elevation presents a variety of wall openings. Like the façade, the west elevation features running-bond brickwork. Coming from the front, the first bay holds a large store window supported with an angled corbelled sill. A short version of the brick panel found on the façade is located above the window. To the south of the first bay, five window openings with replacement windows and a simple door opening pierce the elevation. A substantial storefront-bay is located in the rearmost bay of the west elevation. Recessed partial-height walls with brick sills border a door opening that has been narrowed with an infilling of plywood. Wood framing in this bay may be original. Plywood also covers woodwork above the doorway. Another recessed brick panel tops this bay. The second story is pierced by numerous single and double window openings. Two stepped and peaked raised parapet sections accent the large window and storefront openings.



In contrast to the running-bond brickwork, decorative panels, and parapets of the front and west elevation, the building's rear elevation is strictly utilitarian. The brickwork is laid in common bond with seven rows of stretchers laid between the rows of headers. Conduit, rain gutters, and vent pipes run across the rear elevation. Several window openings on the first floor have been infilled with brick or covered with plywood, leaving just two unobstructed door openings. The second floor features six window openings, all of which have been covered with plywood. The east elevation is largely obscured by the adjoining building. However, the second story of the elevation is still exposed revealing eleven original metal-framed windows. Each window is composed of two six-light casements topped by a fixed eight-light sash. The parapet wall steps down three times toward the rear.



^[1] Paul Archambault and Dan Morrill, "Pineville Survey, Final Report," The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, November 2004.

^[2] Joe Howard Griffin, Sr. "My Hometown Pineville, History, Hearsay, Memories and Scrapbook of Pineville," Unpublished manuscript.

^[3] *Mecklenburg County Deed Book* 412, p. 377.

^[4] *Mecklenburg County Deed Book* 458, p. 445 and *Deed Book* 488, p.332.

^[5] Pat Borden Gubbins, "The Changing Face of Downtown Pineville," *The Charlotte Observer*, February 15, 1987, Mecklenburg Neighbors Section, p. 10.

^[6] Joe Flanders, "Mr. Will Remembers that Bridge," excerpted in "My Hometown", p. 19.

^[7] Town of Pineville, Board of Alderman Minutes, June 26, 1929.

^[8] Joe Howard Griffin, Sr. "My Hometown," p. 28.

^[9] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

[\[10\]](#) Ibid, pp. 23,28.

[\[11\]](#) Ibid., p. 28.

[\[12\]](#) Ibid.

[\[13\]](#) Ibid., p. 29.

[\[14\]](#) Tommy Denton, “Pineville Braces for an Era of Rapid Growth,” *Charlotte News*, October 12, 1972.

[\[15\]](#) Paul Archambault and Dan L. Morrill, “Pineville Survey, Final Report.”

[\[16\]](#) Griffin, p. 23.

[\[17\]](#) Interview with Lillie Dial, March 9, 2006.

[\[18\]](#) Interview with Tom Eubanks April 5, 2006

[\[19\]](#) *Cross Reference Directory, Greater Charlotte, 1964-2002*. The Public Library of Charlotte Mecklenburg County, Carolina Room.

[\[20\]](#) *Cross Reference Directory* – Marie’s Restaurant is listed from 1969-1972, Vivien’s Diner has a 1979 listing.

[\[21\]](#) Gubbins, “The Changing Face of Pineville.”