

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District

Mount Gilead, Montgomery County, MG0037, Listed 12/23/2005

Nomination by Edward F. Turberg

Photographs by Janet Seapker, August 2004

See photo at the end of the nomination

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of property

historic name Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Both sides of North and South Main Street from First Avenue on the north to 106 and 117 South Main Street on the south, and the north and south sides of the 100 block of West Allenton Street. not for publication N/A

city or town Mt. Gilead

vicinity N/A

state North Carolina

code NC

county Montgomery

code 123

zip code 27306

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

| | | |
|---|-------------------------|----------------|
| I, hereby certify that this property is: | Signature of the Keeper | Date of Action |
| <u> </u> entered in the National Register <u> </u> See continuation sheet. | _____ | _____ |
| <u> </u> determined eligible for the National Register | _____ | _____ |
| <u> </u> See continuation sheet. | | |
| <u> </u> determined not eligible for the National Register | _____ | _____ |
| <u> </u> removed from the National Register | _____ | _____ |
| <u> </u> other (explain): _____ | _____ | _____ |

Mt. Gilead Downtown Historic District
Name of Property

Montgomery County, NC
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| <u>25</u> | <u>4</u> | buildings |
| <u>0</u> | <u>1</u> | sites |
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | structures |
| <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | objects |
| <u>25</u> | <u>5</u> | Total |

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
Cat:

- DOMESTIC
- COMMERCE
- GOVERNMENT
- TRANSPORTATION
- RECREATION AND CULTURE

- Sub:
- single dwelling
 - specialty store
 - town hall
 - livery stable
 - theater

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
Cat:

- DOMESTIC
- COMMERCE
- EDUCATION
- GOVERNMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRY

- Sub:
- single dwelling
 - specialty store
 - Library
 - rescue squad
 - town hall
 - manufacturing facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style, Romanesque Revival, Gothic, Queen Anne, Mediterranean Revival, Art Moderne

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation brick, stone
- roof slate, metal, asphalt
- walls brick, wood, stucco
- other slate, terra cotta

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

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

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

Commerce
Architecture

Period of Significance

1900-1955

Significant Dates

1900, 1910

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Haywood, W.T. - architect/contractor;
Holt, Dewitt - builder

Mt. Gilead Downtown Historic District
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Montgomery County, NC
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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approx. 8

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | Zone | Easting | Northing | |
|---|------|---------|----------|------|---------|----------|---------|
| A | 17 | 590820 | 3897280 | C | 17 | 590800 | 3897000 |
| B | 17 | 590920 | 3896040 | D | 17 | 590660 | 3897200 |

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Edward F. Turberg, Architectural Historian

organization Consultant to Town of Mt. Gilead date July 15, 2005

street & number 307 North 15th Street telephone 910-762-6301

city or town Wilmington state NC zip code 28401-3813

12. Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Multiple owners

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

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Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District
Montgomery County, North Carolina

Narrative Description

Mount Gilead, a rural Piedmont town with a population of just under 1,400, is situated three and a half miles northeast of the Pee Dee River in the southwestern sector of Montgomery County, North Carolina. The Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District, laid out in a grid pattern, comprises two blocks along North and South Main streets, one block along West Allenton Street, containing a total of twenty-nine buildings. Of these, twenty-five (86%) are commercial buildings; three (10%) are public buildings including the Town Hall (originally a theater), Town Hall Annex (originally the Jail), and Library (originally the post office); and one is a church. There is a small pocket park on West Allenton Street adjacent to the Library.

All of the contributing resources in the Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District exhibit high levels of integrity because they preserve almost totally intact the historic architectural character of a small, turn-of-the-century Piedmont town, high standards of brick and stone work; maintenance of intact storefronts with their original recessed entrances, double-leaf doors, and leaded-glass transoms; and decorative pressed metal cornices terminating in ornamental end brackets. In addition to its buildings, open public areas in the Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District attract residents and visitors with lush expanses of lawns and landscaping around the Methodist church, flowers in urns spaced neatly along the sidewalks and a Veterans' Memorial Park across from the Town Hall on West Allenton Street. A vacant lot near the northwest end of North Main Street has always been an open space, where cotton bales and other produce once were collected and sold. Main Street occupies a high elevation of the town, the terrain sloping down to the east and west so that many of the stores are accessible by one to three steps above the sidewalk at the front, and are a full story above the ground at the rear. Allenton Street has a level grade to the west of Main Street, but descends on the east into a low dale through which runs Little Hamer Creek.

Outside the Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District boundaries stand modern, noncontributing buildings dating to the 1970s and later: police headquarters, fire department, two banks, fast food and service stations, two industrial plants, and a water works all close to but not encroaching on the historic and architectural ambience of the old section of town. School Street, parallel to and west of Main Street is the site of the 1928 Mt. Gilead Elementary and High schools, designed by Leslie N. Boney Architects of Wilmington, North Carolina. Only the auditorium survives from the triumvirate of brick structures, although an extremely rare example of a gymnasium faced with wide courses of slate, a W.P.A. project dating to 1935, stands behind the auditorium. The railroad tracks, which run from Charlotte to Raleigh through the middle of Montgomery County, are located three blocks north of the intersection of North Main and Allenton streets and roughly parallel Highway NC-731 on the southwest and Highway NC-109 on the northeast. The 1926

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Sanborn map (the only insurance map of the town) depicts a large lumber mill, ice plant, and three cotton warehouses adjacent to the passenger and freight depot. By 1938 the Union Mills hosiery plant was constructed by the Richter family south of the railroad tracks, but by 1960 all of the earlier buildings had been razed.

Beyond Mount Gilead's commercial core the picturesque and undulating topography extends in all directions reaching areas of great geologic, archaeological, and historical interest. West toward the Pee Dee Valley and Lake Tillery, populated by sportsmen and bordered by modern residential subdivisions, is the ancient Yadkin/Pee Dee River Basin. To the north and east is the Uwharrie National Forest, a 50,000-acre wilderness with hills rising 1000 feet from the river bank, purchased by the U.S. Government in 1931 and proclaimed a National Forest by President John F. Kennedy in 1961—the most recent of four National Forests in the state. The county seat of Troy is twelve miles to the northeast; and Town Creek Indian Mound State Historic Site is about the same distance to the southeast.

All of the commercial and church buildings in the Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District are of brick construction. Several structures incorporate local sandstone used in door and window sills and lintels, and the predominant material for the coping atop the flat parapets is terra-cotta tile. Both of the churches and four of the residences are covered with gray slate roofs. One building was refaced on its side elevation by a rough cement finish, but the principal facade preserves its original narrow joint brick veneer facing. Thirteen commercial and public buildings (38%) are one story high, twelve (26%) are two stories tall, and three (10%) rise to two-and-a-half or three stories. The church is two-stories in height with asymmetrical towers reaching two and three levels surmounted by steeples. The stores form handsome rows of interrelated fenestration, recessed entrances, pressed metal cornices, and a unity of design in the repetition of corbelled brick cornices, suggesting that one contractor may have built the entire business district. Although the name of the architect/builder of these structures is not certain, an important local builder was William Thaddeus (Will) Haywood, an engineer who listed himself as an architect in the 1910 census, who is credited with erecting both the Methodist and Baptist churches, and several private residences in and around the town. Other regional builders were Dewitt Holt and Vernon L. Shankle who constructed both commercial and residential structures in the county seat of Troy, and worked in Mount Gilead and other towns in the region as well.

The architectural resources of Mount Gilead can be categorized as late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century designs, styles that were widely popular during a period of rapid adoption of architectural fashions. The trend was motivated by the railroad which brought building products to cities, towns, and rural areas; delivered design books and mail-order catalogues to prospective

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customers; and conveyed tradesmen with expertise in building into the region. In addition to materials brought in from other railroad-serviced areas, Montgomery County and Mt. Gilead had an abundance of timber, clay, stone, and slate to provide for any sort of construction that was needed or desired by owners and builders. Two commercial buildings, at 101 North Main Street and 100 South Main Street incorporate Romanesque-arched windows, the remaining resources having trabeated openings with brick or stone sills and lintels. The principal facades of all the buildings are faced with running bond pressed brick with narrow mortar joints, the side and rear elevations containing one-to-five common bond brick coursing. In addition, pilasters dividing window bays, corbelled cornices, and brick or stone window and door trim, are features of the early twentieth-century buildings. Of particular note are the numerous examples of storefronts that retain their original plate glass display windows, patterned glass transoms, and decorative pressed metal cornices. Of the latter, thirteen commercial structures retain all or most of their early twentieth century storefronts: 104 West Allenton Street; 101, 103, 105-107, 106-110, 109, 111-115, 114, 116, and 118 North Main Street; and 100, 101, and 104 South Main Street. The center city church exhibits a high level of architectural design that testifies to the knowledge of and ability to execute fine craftsmanship by the builder, W.T. Haywood. Four buildings are noncontributing resources in the Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District: 112 North Main Street, which replaced a building that burned in the 1960s; 120 North Main Street, a remodeling of an earlier structure; 105-107 West Allenton Street, and 109 West Allenton Street.

Inventory List

The inventory list provides basic information about each resource located within the Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District, including the following: numerical address, historic or common name, construction date, contributing or noncontributing status, and brief description of the physical appearance and history. The descriptions are based upon on-site observation, investigation of Sanborn Map Company insurance maps (only one set was produced: in July 1926), study of historic photographs, research into historical publications and interview tapes, and discussions with local residents familiar with the town's history and architecture. Two publications were especially informative: Mable S. Lassiter's *Patterns of Timeless Moments: A History of Montgomery County* (1976) and Catherine Watkins McKinnon's *History of Mt. Gilead, North Carolina* (1971). Where no certain date of construction is known an approximation is given depending on whether the resource is shown in a dated photograph, appears on the 1926 insurance map, or is remembered as being extant at a certain time in the life of a person being interviewed.

The Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District inventory is listed in a street by street progression, beginning on the north side of West Allenton Street and running east to west through the 100

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block; then continuing on the south side of the same street, running in the same direction, east-west; then along the east side of North Main Street, moving from south to north in the 100 block; continuing in the same direction on the west side of the 100 block of North Main Street; then on the west side of South Main Street and running south through the 100 block; then south through the east side of the 100 block of South Main Street. The buildings, listed according to their street addresses, are keyed to the town plan containing the marked boundaries of the Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District.

Contributing resources are defined as buildings or sites that were present during the period of significance, relates to the historic significance of the district, and possess historic integrity. Noncontributing resources are defined as buildings or sites that were constructed after the period of significance or due to alterations or additions no longer possess sufficient historic integrity.

North side 100 block of West Allenton Street

102 **J.A. McAulay Store Annex** 1910 Contributing building

One-story, brick, with later stucco facing, recessed storefront contains original double-leaf glazed door; transom glass covered; aluminum awning; flat roof and parapet. The building is an annex to the two-story main structure at 101 North Main Street.

104-106 **Ingram-McAulay Appliances** 1910 Contributing building

One-story, brick, running bond red brick, four bays wide with recessed entrances in second and fourth bays. Second-bay preserves original double-leaf glazed and panel doors, fourth bay has later metal door; original small-pane, ribbed transom glass intact across facade (fourth bay transom covered); upper wall is divided into three sections by brick pilasters, flat roof and parapet. The building is a furniture store annex to the two-story main structure at 103 North Main Street where hardware, fertilizer, plants, and farm supplies were sold.

108 **Harris Building** 1916 Contributing building

One-story, painted brick, running bond pattern, three bays wide with modern storefront and entrances in left bay; Upper wall contains six, recessed, square panels, flat roof and parapet. In 1916 the building became the first Ford franchise in Mt. Gilead, operated by

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Ratio Harris. Later it served as the Town Hall. It is currently a NAPA Auto Parts business.

110-112 **Mt. Gilead Town Hall and Annex** 1939; 1955; 1960 Contributing building

Two-story, red brick with running bond courses at front and 1:5 common bond in side elevations. One bay wide with recessed entrance incorporating modern aluminum-clad door and windows framed by wide surround of white stucco containing legend MT. GILEAD TOWN HALL and two small octagonal side windows. Upper wall contains a small multi-light window and cement parapet coping. The original building on the site, Moore's Livery, was built by L.P. Byrd. In 1934 it was altered for use as a motion picture theater and burned in the 1930s. Rebuilt as the Gilmont Theater, this structure, too, was renovated, in 1955, to become the Mt. Gilead Town Hall, retaining the theater entrance surround. Adjacent to the Town Hall is a one-story, one-bay, red brick structure with running bond courses. The 1960 building was originally an addition to the town hall and served as the jail with a single cell at the rear. It later became a beauty shop, and currently is used as an annex to the Town Hall.

South side 100 block of West Allenton Street

105-107 **S&S Auto Company** 1979 Noncontributing building

One-story, concrete block, three projecting sections contain four overhead garage doors and entrance in left flank of the right unit. Flat roofs with metal coping. Built as an automobile service and repair garage.

109 **Haywood's Grocery** 1920; 1960 Noncontributing building

One-story, red tapestry brick, two bays wide. Double storefront altered in the 1960s when Town of Mt. Gilead acquired building for ambulance and rescue squad use, adding garage doors to the front of the building. Upper front wall is enhanced by soldier course lintels and paired panels highlighted by square and diamond shaped designs in white masonry.

111 **Parking Lot**

113 **Mt. Gilead Post Office** 1910 Contributing building

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One-story, red brick with running bond courses at front and common bond brickwork in remaining elevations. Three bays wide and four bays deep. Modern, metal frame center entrance and single-pane windows with cement sills and lintels. The side elevations have one-over-one sash. An unusual design feature of the front elevation is the extension of the end walls beyond the line of the side elevations with the gabled parapet turning horizontally across the projections and at the wall peak. The parapet is capped by a cement coping. The building was originally constructed to house the Mt. Gilead Post Office and became the library in the 1960s.

115 **Veterans' Memorial Park** 1970 Noncontributing site

East of the Library, the park has a low granite marker honoring servicemen engaged in all wars. The landscaped site is enclosed by chains looped through short metal stanchions.

119 **Mt. Gilead Telephone Company** 1933 Contributing building

One-story, red brick, three bays wide and three bays deep with single and paired windows containing six-over-six sash. Recessed entrance porch in northwest corner shelters glazed upper-panel doors in each wall flank, and two six-light windows. Hip roof punctuated by two interior chimney stacks and peak vents. The building was originally built for the telephone company and became an insurance agency in the 1960s.

East side 100 block of North Main Street

100 **First United Methodist Church** 1910; 1960 Contributing building

Organized in 1790 as Scarborough and then Providence Church, meetings were held in log structures until 1873 when a frame building was erected on the crossroads site. In 1910 the current edifice was constructed, an imposing design combining elements of Romanesque and Gothic architecture. Designed by Will T. Haywood, who also built First Baptist Church nearby, the church has a square plan, projecting corner towers, and a polygonal bay in the north elevation. Walls are faced with one-to-five common bond brickwork, punctuated by shallow pilasters with stone caps, pointed-arch windows and doors surmounted by hoods of rowlock and soldier courses, and cross

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gables highlighted by stepped gable cornices. The two-stage northwest tower contains double-leaf stained glass doors and a transom at the first level, paired, rectangular louvers and recessed panels in the upper section, and an octagonal spire with corner parapets rising above a metal cornice. The taller southwest tower has similar entrances in its west and south faces, elongated, paired, stained glass windows above twin belt courses in the upper level, and a triple louvered belfry terminating in an octagonal spire encompassed by corner pinnacles. Both towers are covered with slate shingles. The sanctuary has later asbestos roof shingles. A two-story, four bay by four bay multi-purpose wing with arched windows extends across the south, east and north sides of the sanctuary, sheltered beneath the main hip roof. The contractors for the church were Will Haywood and Walter Barnes, both of Mt. Gilead, and their deftness in producing delicate patterns in the masonry is noteworthy. An Education Building attached to the north side of the church was built in 1960. The L-plan, gable front structure is seven bays wide and seven bays deep, is two stories high across the west front, and three stories high along the north side because of a sloping terrain. The windows and projecting entrance vestibule doors in the front elevation reflect the pointed-arch effect of the church, while those in the other elevations contain multi-light sliding sash. The church buildings are set back 115 feet from North Main Street and 100 feet from Allenton Street creating a beautiful prospect of green lawns, trees and shrubs dominated by the towering red brick eminence of the architecture.

104 **Dr. Rankin Office** 1923 Contributing building

One-story, tapestry brick structure, two bays wide and eight bays deep, with an arched front entrance incorporating a granite stoop, double-leaf paneled doors, and a sunburst transom in the left bay. The entrance arch springs from cement impostes and contains a double course of rowlock bricks. A tripartite display window occupies the right bay, set above a continuous marble apron. A belt course of soldier bricks extends across the upper wall above the storefront and wraps around the south side of the building. Two elongated cement panels are inset in the front parapet, while small cement squares in the belt course on the south elevation are centered over the eight windows. Dr. Rankin was one of Mt. Gilead's most prominent physicians and shared the building with other doctors. The interior of the building was originally divided into four rooms enclosed by non-bearing walls between square posts supporting the roof. Dr. Rankin used the two back rooms for his office and Dr. Olive, a dentist, had the two front rooms.

106-110 **Stanback Building** 1910 Contributing building

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One-story, brick commercial building with a tall parapet across the three-bay front elevation, accentuated by four shallow pilasters framing corbeled cornices. The side elevation of the building forms half gables which angle down to the flat roof from the upper termination of the parapet. The facade incorporates three storefronts, each with a recessed entrance and large plate glass show windows, surmounted by a high transom composed of small, square panes of ribbed glass set in leaded muntins. This is a repetitive design feature that binds together most of the commercial structures lining North Main Street. J. W. Stanback operated his grocery business in one of the units, while Calvin Rushing had a jewelry store in one of the other sections.

112 **Ashley-Leigh Building** 1962 Noncontributing building

One-story, brick structure, three bays wide, with a central bay containing a double-leaf aluminum frame door flanked by tall, single-pane windows. The upper wall is faced with metal panels rising to a flat parapet, and a fixed flat awning extends above the central bay sheltering the entrance. The two-story building that formerly stood on the site burned and was replaced by the current structure. Among the tenants of the older building were Montgomery Hardware, City Dry Cleaners, and Mt. Gilead Florist.

114, 116, 118 **Commercial Row** 1900 Contributing building

Three-stories, three contiguous brick units, each three bays wide, with storefronts consisting of recessed central bays sheltering double-leaf doors, and plate-glass show windows resting on gridded aprons which provide ventilation to the basement storage areas. The wide transoms contained single and double panes of glass. Pressed metal cornices with boxed ends extend across the facade above the stores forming bases of pilasters that frame segmentally-arched, one-over-one and two-over-two sash windows in the second story, and small, single-pane attic windows. The pilasters and parapets terminate in corbelled cornices. The rear elevation of the row forms an unusual pattern of projecting end walls since each unit from left to right extends out further than its neighbor. The stores are three full stories high at this end, with segmentally-arched, six-over-six sash windows and solid, double service doors at the basement level. A. S. and Rae McRae's store, which sold a variety of items including clothing and farm equipment and supplies, occupied numbers 114 and 116, and Sox Hosiery, owned by D.A. Bruton and Lee Johnson, was located in number 118. At one time the Cox and McKinnon Furniture Store, was in the center unit, number 116.

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120 **Factory** 1907; 1960 Noncontributing building

Two-stories, brick, three bays wide with smooth running bond brickwork, terra cotta coping, and multi-light metal casement windows replacing the original façade in 1960. The original double-leaf entrance doors survive in the left front bay, and the two-bay by two-bay rear elevation preserves the original two-over-two sash windows. This is one of two commercial buildings in Mt. Gilead with an elevator, the upper housing being visible at the northeast corner of the main block. The building has always been used for sewing operations.

122-124 **Randolph Knitting Company** 1910 Contributing building

Two-stories, brick, six bays wide and eight bays deep. The north and west elevations are divided into bays by shallow pilasters that rise to corbelled cornices. The first story contains two altered storefronts that originally formed twin, recessed entrances and plate-glass show windows similar to other examples along the street. A pressed metal cornice with decorative end boxes extends above the storefronts. Windows in the upper story have segmental arches containing one-over-one sash. The rear elevation, three stories high, has six-over-six sash, and double-leaf service doors at the basement level. A local landmark, Stalder's Café, was located at number 122. A German, Mr. Stalder was known far and wide for his cooking and his hot dogs were especially sought after. He later moved across Ingram Street where he ran the café in a renovated building formerly the Chevrolet dealership. The upper story of the building contained the knitting mill.

West side 100 block of North Main Street

101 **J.A. McAulay Building** 1902 Contributing building

Two-stories, tan brick laid in a running bond pattern, six bays wide. The current aluminum clad double storefronts originally matched others in the block, consisting of double-leaf glazed doors with molded lower panels, angled plate-glass display windows, and ribbed-glass transoms. A pressed metal cornice and end blocks featuring curvilinear caps containing three spheres extends across the facade above the storefronts. The second story, divided into two bays by brick pilasters, contains six single-pane arched windows framed by double rowlock hoods and intersecting impost, and

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and rough-hewn granite sills. The upper wall terminates in a two-part corbelled cornice. The building was erected for James Aulay McAulay for his mercantile business, later became Cochrane-Ridenhour Drug Store, and then occupied by an independent church group.

103 **Ingram-McAulay Hardware Company** 1910 Contributing building

Two-stories, tan brick laid in a running bond pattern, four bays wide, modern recessed storefront, original pressed metal cornice with decorative end blocks highlighted by three spheres. The upper story is divided into four bays by brick pilasters, windows have rough-hewn stone sills, replacement sash contains two-over-two horizontal panes, corbeled cornice and terra cotta coping. The hardware business established in the building in 1910 was the joint effort of James Ingram and James McAulay and was succeeded by Brown's Hardware.

105-107 **Building** 1910 Contributing building

Two-and-a-half stories, smooth brick walls with narrow mortar joints, nine bays wide with two recessed storefronts. The left unit (number 105) has modern metal doors and show windows, and aprons and transoms covered with vertical ribbed siding. The right unit (number 107) retains its original double-leaf entrance doors with glazed upper sections and molded lower panels. The metal-clad display windows, set above black Carrara glass aprons, and four-part transom, are modern replacements of original fabric. A pressed metal cornice with end blocks incorporating raised fleur-de-lis patterns extends across the wall above the storefronts. The upper stories, separated into bays by brick pilasters, contain segmentally-arched windows with eight, one-over-one sash (the central bay is bricked in) and double rowlock hoods. The attic level consists of square, single pane lights in the four right bays, the remaining fenestration being bricked in. Above and below the attic windows are corbelled brick cornices, and the building terminates in a flat parapet covered with terra cotta coping.

109 **Blake's Hardware Building** 1910 Contributing building

Two-stories, beige brick laid in running bond, four bays wide, recessed storefront entrance preserves its original double-leaf glazed and paneled doors. The multi-pane transom is covered by solid panels but the right-bay entrance to the upper story exhibits its original transom, and the solid door contains six horizontal, molded panels. A

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pressed metal cornice terminating in decorative end brackets extends above the storefront. The second level, forming two bays by brick pilasters, features trabeated window openings with rough-hewn granite sills and lintels. The sashes are currently covered over with panels. Corbelled cornices and a pressed metal entablature with decorative end brackets crown the facade.

111-115 **Piedmont Grocery and Market Building** 1910 Contributing building

Two-stories, beige brick laid in running bond pattern, nine bays wide with three intact storefronts across the main facade. The recessed entrances retain their original double-leaf, glazed and paneled doors, and are flanked by angled show windows and molded brick aprons. The well-preserved ribbed glass transoms and pressed metal cornice with decorative end blocks enhance the lower section of the facade, while the upper story features two-over-one sash windows arranged in triplets between brick pilasters and framed by rough-hewn sills and lintels, corbelled cornices, and a high parapet capped by a terra cotta coping. A sloping parapet and one-to-five bond red brick walls highlighted by darker hued header courses adds interest to the north elevation of the building.

117 **Parking Lot**

Historically this vacant lot was used as an open-air market for buying and selling cotton. The site is currently used as a parking lot with the street border enhanced by attractive low brick planters and iron fencing. The Sanborn maps indicate that no buildings ever occupied the grounds.

119 **The Sundry Center** 1951 Contributing building

One-story, tapestry brick walls laid in running bond, three bays wide with glazed doors flanking a wide display window, all surmounted by transoms. The one-to-five bond upper wall displays a picturesque pattern of five courses of projecting header bricks that splay outward between the storefront and the parapet. The structure was built by Charles Haywood and leased to Wilder and MacRae as a soda and gift shop.

West side 100 block of South Main Street

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100 **McAulay Brothers Building** 1900 Contributing building

Two-stories with attic, red brick, seven bays wide and four bays deep, wide, recessed central entrance with original glazed and paneled double-leaf doors, modern vertical ribbed aprons and metal frame display windows, and panels covering transoms. The second story contains one-over-one and two-over-one sash windows framed by brick pilasters and rough-hewn stone sills and lintels. The attic contains arched louvered vents in the second and sixth bays, and square vents in the remaining bays. The square openings have rough-hewn sills and lintels, while the arches display stone keystones and imposts of the same material. A pressed metal cornice and end blocks extends across the facade above the storefront, and the upper termination of the building incorporates corbeled brick cornices. An arched metal panel with the legend Mc AULAY BROS. in raised letters originally crowned the front façade, but fell during a storm. It has been preserved in the building pending restoration. Belk-Cline Department Store moved into the building in 1942, succeeded by Currie and Andrews in the late 1940s, Pickett's in the 1960s, and most recently Gilead Home Supply carpet and wallpaper store.

102 **Haithcock's Barber Shop** 1925 Contributing building

One-story, red brick, one bay wide with glazed entrance in left portion of fenestration. Stepped cornice, and flat parapet capped by terra cotta coping. The building, nestled between the McAulay Brothers store on the north and the Haywood Motor Company on the south incorporates their exterior walls as part of its structure. Front and rear walls, floor, and roof were installed across a former alley between the two large buildings to create the barber shop. It contained two barber chairs, a shoeshine stand, and showers for customers. Old-time male residents well recall getting their first haircut at the hands of Mr. Haithcock.

104 **Haywood Motor Company** 1922 Contributing building

Two-stories, red brick laid in running bond pattern, four bays wide and four bays deep. Original three section storefront and access to upper in right front bay preserve original features including double-leaf glazed doors, plate glass show windows, and ribbed-glass transoms with operable vents in some sections. The second story contains clustered windows with one-over-one sash and cement sills. The upper portion of the

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wall features rectangular panels above the windows, a corbelled brick cornice and flat parapet capped by terra cotta coping. Attached to the rear of the building is a one-story, brick, automotive repair shop with multi-light metal-frame industrial type windows, wide overhead garage doors, and stepped parapets at the north and south ends of the building.

106 **Batton's Oldsmobile Dealership and Service Station** 1937
Contributing building

Mediterranean Revival style with stucco walls and red tile hip roofs; tripartite form: one-story left unit contains three individual display windows; center portion has glazed entrance flanked by single-pane windows, and two-bay by four-bay upper story containing modern window sash; right unit has paired, overhead garage doors. The structure was built for Harold Batton who formerly operated a livery stable on the site. The Mt. Gilead Brick Company, owned by W.J. Batton, had offices upstairs. A large, wooden livery stable formerly stood behind the main building. The building is currently used as a variety store called the Town Creek Shopping Center.

East side 100 block of South Main Street

101 **Kennedy's Taxi Stand** 1920s Contributing building

Miniscule, one-bay by three-bay brick building with glazed upper-panel doors in north and east elevations, one-over-one sash windows, and flat roof. Originally Kennedy's Taxi Stand, the building was for many years used as a newspaper and magazine stand.

103-105 **Richter Building** 1912 Contributing building

Two-stories, red brick, two bays wide and seven bays deep, recessed storefronts consist of double store in left bay with green tile aprons and a square, mirrored center post; the right bay contains an original recessed storefront with recessed entrance incorporating a double-leaf glazed door and angled display windows set on brick aprons. The high second story, accentuated by brick pilasters and two levels of stepped brick cornices, has four windows in each of the two bays, those at the left being paired above the twin stores. Windows in the front and side elevations contain one-over-one sash and feature rough-cut stone sills and lintels. A corbelled cornice along the north side of the building continues the line of the lower front cornice unifying the masonry pattern on

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the two street facades. The eastern section of the north wall is painted with a mural depicting a Native American in the foreground and a scene of Town Creek Indian Mound in the background. The mural was painted in 1997 by Franz J. Grebner, an itinerant artist. The building was constructed to house Moses Richter's mercantile business. Richter, a Russian Jew, immigrated to North Carolina as a young man and opened his first store in Mt. Gilead at the age of seventeen. In addition to his growing dry goods business, he was also successful in peach orchards and marketing, as well as organizing, in 1938, Union Mill Corporation, that became, according to the factory owners, the largest manufacturers of women's lingerie in the world. A dry cleaning establishment was located in the basement of the Richter Building, accessible from the rear down a flight of six wide stone steps.

107-111 **Vacant Lot**

113-115 **Skinner's Garage** 1907

Contributing building

Two-stories, painted brick, three bays wide with garage entrance in center bay and office entrance on left. Metal cornice terminating in end brackets extends across lower facade. Six, square, blind windows occupy the upper level. The parapet is capped by terra cotta coping. The building was erected by the Lowdermilks and rented for many years to Wade Skinner who operated the Dodge dealership and was one of Mt. Gilead's best mechanics. Gilead Automotive Care and Repair currently occupies the building.

117-119 **Kirk Building** 1926

Contributing building

One-story, red brick with running bond courses in front facade and basket weave panels in upper wall. The building features a prominent stepped parapet, and a gable roof to the rear. Two storefronts contain two replacement six-panel doors flanked by original, square display windows. The building was constructed for Baxter Kirk who operated a dry cleaners in one unit and a bakery in the other. The building is currently occupied by the Kiddy Playville Christian Learning Center.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

Mt. Gilead, North Carolina, is a picturesque Piedmont town of about 1,400 residents, situated within the Yadkin/Pee Dee River Basin, three-and-a-half miles east of the Pee Dee River, at a point where the headwaters of Little Hamer Creek and Wolf Branch merge and flow south into neighboring Richmond County. Historically the town was a crossroads settlement since the early nineteenth century and the central business district is still marked by the intersection of three state routes: highways 73, 109, and 731. The first road runs east-west from Southern Pines to Lincolnton, a distance of about 100 miles; the second extends north-south from Winston-Salem near the Virginia border to Cheraw in Chesterfield County, South Carolina, approximately 100 miles in length; the third connects Mt. Gilead with the small industrial town of Norwood, six miles away across the Pee Dee River. The first settlement of the vicinity occurred in the 1790s when a small group of Methodists built a log church on land granted to William Scarborough. At first called Scarborough Meeting House, the name changed to Providence, and finally to Mt. Gilead, in 1830, when a post office was opened there (McKinnon, 1). In 1834 the Fayetteville to Salisbury plank road had been completed linking the important Cape Fear River upland port with the Yadkin River trading center in the Piedmont, passing through the heart of what is now Mt. Gilead. The road also served as an important overland route for farmers, tradesmen, and gold prospectors moving into the Uwharrie Mountains during the first American gold rush in the first quarter of the nineteenth century (Lassiter, 68; 119).

Farm produce in the area consisted of naval stores: tar, pitch, turpentine, and rosin. Also cotton, wheat, flour, dried fruit, cured ham, and tobacco were traded at the larger markets for cloth, leather goods, salt, and other staples not produced at home (Lassiter, 68). In 1830, John Dumas built the first store in town, but the community remained a quiet crossroads for several decades thereafter. D.C. McAulay opened a second store in 1859, transporting his merchandise up from Wilmington to Fayetteville and Mt. Gilead—a distance of about 170 miles (McKinnon, 5). In 1868 a northerner, J.H. Davis, surveyed the town by commencing at a point where Main Street crossed Allen's Ferry Road in the center of the village and radiating out in a one-mile circle. Commercial lots were platted along Main and Allenton and larger residential plots along surrounding streets (McKinnon, 1). From that period until the mid twentieth century the community experienced steady growth, and by the 1890s when railroad tracks were constructed through the county the population reached 180. Six years later it had almost doubled, reaching a census of 250 people (Lassiter, 275-276). The combined road and rail service gave Mt. Gilead a boost in its economic and population growth making the town an important regional industrial and produce market and attaining a high point in its number of residents, merchants, and traveling salesmen. Because of its important role in regional commercial development extending through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District

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qualifies under Criterion A.

The Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District additionally qualifies under Criterion C for its significant architectural character, combining contiguous blocks of handsome brick stores, and a church that characterize the stylistic development of early twentieth century construction techniques and tastes. Since most of the buildings were erected between 1900 and 1955, the oldest being the 1900 McAulay Brothers Building at 100 South Main Street and the 1900 Commercial Row at 114, 116 and 118 North Main Street, the district displays a well-integrated physical appearance. The uniformity of shop fronts, recessed entrances, and patterned-glass transoms relieved above street level by a variety of metal cornices and brackets, brick colors and textures, building heights, and overall scale adds distinction to the commercial blocks. The district also contains buildings of individual character such as the 1902 J. A. McAulay Building at 101 North Main Street which features arched windows across the second story; the 1900 Commercial Row at 114-118 North Main Street displaying tight, geometric symmetry and a balance of restrained detail relating to Greek Revival architecture of an earlier generation; and the 1900 McAulay Brothers Building at 200 South Main Street, a late Queen Anne arrangement of various window shapes and sizes, and the only structure in town crowned by a pressed metal arched parapet. First United Methodist Church, literally the centerpiece of the town, exhibits late Gothic elements including asymmetrical towers, pointed arches, and large areas of stained glass.

The period of significance for the Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District spans the years from 1900, when the earliest extant commercial buildings were erected, to 1955, with the renovation of the former Gilmont movie theater for use as the town hall. During that time local industries established plants along the railroad line north of town and produced building lumber, bricks, stone, slate, and other materials used in construction not only in Montgomery County but also across the mid-Piedmont region. Jordan Lumber Company just north of town was one of the largest timber and mill operations in the state, greatly expanding the output of smaller sawmills; Mt. Gilead Brick Company developed out of a brick mill in nearby Norwood that was in business during the mid-1800s; and stone and slate quarries along the Pee Dee River grew into large enterprises. The number of masons and carpenters listed in the census between 1880 and 1930 remained fairly steady—up to three masons and between eleven and thirteen carpenters resided in Mt. Gilead alone, and others were found in Troy, Biscoe, Wadeville, and across the river in the Stanly County seat of Albemarle (Montgomery County censuses). In other industries, Union Mills built a lingerie factory in 1938 along North Main Street, and replaced it with an imposing air conditioned facility in 1949 (Sharpe, 1468). The Southern Aluminum Company commenced operations across the Pee Dee river and built both Badin and Tillery lakes and dams to generate electrical power for their operations as well as offering recreational facilities for area residents (Powell, 19; 270). In the 1950s Mt. Gilead continued to be an important Piedmont center of commerce and its downtown commercial district remained the heart of the surrounding community. By the late twentieth century development began to spread out into

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neighboring areas, building lakeside homes and new shopping centers that left the old town free from encroachment or urban renewal projects.

Historical Background and Commercial Context

Montgomery County, named for Richard Montgomery (1736-1775), a Revolutionary War general who lost his life at the Battle of Quebec, was formed in 1779 from the northeastern section of Anson County, a territory bisected north to south by the great Yadkin/Pee Dee River Basin. Among the earliest settlements was Mt. Gilead above the eastern bank of the river (Bishir, 280). About 1787 John Andrews Sr. with four of his children left Brunswick County, Virginia, to join his father-in-law, John Scarborough, in Montgomery County. Both men, together with William Scarborough, built a log Methodist church on land acquired by them and called the place Scarborough's Meeting House. William Scarborough acquired additional land in 1797, and in 1820 the settlement was renamed Providence when another meeting house was built where the newly completed Fayetteville plank road crossed the Allenton Ferry road in the center of the Scarborough grant (Beaulieu, D-8). A post office was established in the crossroads community in 1830, the same year John Dumas (1793-1834) opened a store there (McKinnon, 5). The village began to prosper because the new road enabled farmers to take their produce, flour, wheat, tobacco, dried fruit, and ham to trade at the Fayetteville market for salt, cloth, and leather goods. By 1835 a postmaster, Samuel Scarborough, was installed and a private school was opened. (McKinnon, 1). Edinborough Academy was one of three early schools in the county, and attracted students from as far as sixty miles away (McKinnon, 9). In 1852 mail service was in such demand, especially after gold was discovered in the Uwharrie Mountains, that Samuel Scarborough's son, Henry Scarborough, carried the post between Swift Creek to Fayetteville on a weekly schedule along the plank road (Lassiter, 119). By 1855, the town was renamed Mt. Gilead for the Biblical mountain occupying a highland region east of the Jordan River, and property was given by Sallie Andrews Clark, granddaughter of John Scarborough, to build a frame Methodist church (McKinnon, 1). Four years later, in 1859, D. C. McAulay (1828-1882) built a general store across from the church and sold a variety of merchandise which he purchased in Wilmington and Fayetteville, traveling a total distance of about 290 miles round trip. By covering forty miles per day, the trip took a week to complete—discounting the time needed for negotiating his purchases (McKinnon, 9).

The antebellum period in Montgomery County was one that experienced growth in many areas. Although the population decreased from 10,780 to 6,872 between 1840 and 1850, by 1860 it had risen to 7,649. Part of the reason for the rally was the increased activity of gold mining that yielded a total of \$50 million across the state by 1860 (Lefler, 23). In Montgomery County, generally a cotton-producing region, gold mines were in operation in two areas, northwest and southeast of Mt. Gilead and continued operations through World War I (Lefler, 375, 551).

In the mid-nineteenth century, two new schools joined the old Edinborough Academy in

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providing tutorial education to students of the southeastern Piedmont. In 1860 Peter Cornelius Shaw (1826-1900) opened a four-month tuition-free school in Mt. Gilead, with additional classes offered for a sum ranging from one to three dollars. An impressive array of subjects taught at the Shaw school included grammar, reading, spelling, arithmetic, and geography. Also, advanced lessons covered algebra, history, Latin, and French (MSL, 88). After the Civil War, Ransom Harris Skeen (1836-1905) established the Mount Gilead Academy on the east side of South Main Street and was in operation from its opening in 1871 until the Mt. Gilead High School was built in 1916. Headmaster Skeen was a most revered scholar who continued a high level of instruction until his death at the age of seventy. The two-story, frame, Academy was graced by a projecting front tower and entrance porch. Classrooms occupied the first level, while the upper rooms contained the Masonic Lodge. Another important addition to the town was the establishment of the Baptist Church, on Christmas day 1875, led by scions of the community: Byrds, Cookes, Greenes, Haywoods, Lillys, and Moores. The frame structure, located just south of the Academy, continued in use for the next forty-four years until it was replaced, in 1919, by the current brick edifice, designed and built by William Thaddeus Haywood (1880-1945), a local architect and contractor who, with his son, erected many of the commercial buildings and private residences in the town. The 1880 census lists several businesses in Mt. Gilead, including four blacksmiths, eleven carpenters, a shingle maker, two millers, two livery stable operators, and a doctor. In 1881 W. S. Ingram built a frame store at the southwest corner of Main and Allenton streets diagonally across from the Methodist church, and the following year brothers James A. McAulay (1831-1903) and Frank McAulay (1836-1890), built a frame store at the northwest corner of the intersection; the business continued until the stock market crash of 1929. The first brick structure in Mt. Gilead was M. B. Lassiter's store on South Main Street, dating to 1889, which set the trend for masonry construction in the commercial district of Mt. Gilead thereafter.

Events were on the horizon in the last decade of the nineteenth century that would have a tremendous impact on the future economic and cultural development of Montgomery County and Mt. Gilead. In 1893 the Durham and Charlotte Railroad began construction of a line into the Piedmont, reaching Troy by the first year of the new century. There it met another system, the Sanford and Troy Railroad. In 1897 the Aberdeen and Asheboro Railroad built a spur line to Mt. Gilead and obtained the contract to carry the mail by rail instead of by road. About the same time, citizens of Mt. Gilead proposed the incorporation of their town and petitioned the state legislature for approval. The request was granted, and in December of 1898 William S. Ingram became mayor, with L. P. Byrd, William F. McAulay, and R. H. Skeen serving as town commissioners. Frank Hunsucker became the first chief of police. One of the requirements for incorporation was that there be a cotton weigher in town, and the position was immediately filled

By 1904 there were twenty-four brick and four frame store buildings in the town, a roller mill, two cotton warehouses, a large cotton seed oil mill, a large lumber plant, two livery stables, a trade stable, two garages, two blacksmith shops, three churches, "and many good residences" (Beaulieu, D-1). The 1910 census indicates distinct improvements along the commercial streets

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of Mt. Gilead, with two barbers, seven blacksmiths, five carpenters, ten department stores entrepreneurs, mine general store salesmen, five dry goods merchants, four hardware men, five grocers, three druggists, a cotton weigher, and two telephone operators occupying the shops and offices. In the following year the Norfolk and Southern Railway acquired the Durham and Charlotte and the Sanford and Troy railroads, as well as the spur to Mt. Gilead. These additions allowed the parent company to complete the link between their Raleigh and Charlotte route. Since Mt. Gilead stood in the direct path of expansion, two-thirds of the way from the capital city, train service was especially advantageous to the crossroads community. This, too, was the year *The Southerner* newspaper began publication in Mt. Gilead. Although it lasted only a year, the paper broadcast the importance of the small community and popularized the town's progressive achievements. Other towns that felt the impetus of the railroad were Troy, a textile town and county seat of Montgomery; Biscoe, producing turpentine and timber; Candor, amidst rich peach orchards; Ophir, a gold mining site dating to the early 1830s; Star, a center for corn and flour mills, cattle and dairy farming; and Wadeville, specializing in sawmills and lumber yards which "...seems to listen to the clickety-clack of rails as the Norfolk Southern inches its way through the area." (Lassiter, 300).

Improvements in the economy and quality of life in Mt. Gilead and Montgomery County were manifest as the twentieth century progressed. In 1916 a new brick school and auditorium were built just west of the Main Street commercial blocks (McKinnon, 9). The next year saw the completion of a hydroelectric plant in Badin drawing energy from Badin Dam on the Pee Dee River. The dam and 9.3-square mile lake were named for a French industrialist, Adrien Badin, who established an aluminum reduction plant there in 1913 (Powell, 19). In 1928 a second dam was built upstream near the confluence of the Yadkin and Pee Dee rivers. Lake Tillery, above the dam built by Carolina Power and Light Company, had a shoreline extending 104 miles in circumference and offered, like Lake Badin, hydroelectric power as well as recreational activities for the public. The advances in electric power soon swept across the region and electricity became another step forward in the modernization of life in the county. Troy, Biscoe, and Mt. Gilead had a two-wire system with forty-watt bulbs supplying the light. Later the power was strengthened allowing the use of larger bulbs, but reportedly caused some farmers to complain of headaches from the increased illumination (taped interview, Mt. Gilead Museum collection).

By the early 1920s motorized vehicles were becoming familiar sights along the town streets and country lanes. The poor conditions of roads—dusty in dry weather and muddy in wet seasons—led to the institution of a "Good Roads" movement throughout the state. In Mt. Gilead, the streets and sidewalks were paved using local materials and generally improving traffic conditions considerably. Two of the five livery stables in town took on the business of providing gas, oil, and mechanical repairs for their customers, and by 1926 there were three automobile dealerships, Ford, Chevrolet, and Oldsmobile, operating along North and South Main streets.

In life as in industry, the old axiom that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction became manifest during the final year of the 1920s with the economic collapse that brought on

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the Great Depression. Cotton prices fell to five cents a pound, and the important lumber and building supply operations stalled because construction had virtually halted (Beaulieu, D-10). Nevertheless, federal assistance provided economic support in a variety of projects including the construction of new water and sewer systems, and a new gymnasium at Mt. Gilead (McKinnon, 7). Slowly commerce in the 1930s improved and existing automobile services, brick, lumber and other construction material plants, and railroad improvements were buttressed by clothing mills, diversified industries, and small businesses to keep Mt. Gilead and other Piedmont towns progressing through the next half century (Beaulieu, D-1).

Although many men of prominence were born and reared in Montgomery County, Mt. Gilead has the distinction of claiming important leaders in the fields of business, education, religion, medicine, and industry. Lemuel P. Byrd (1854-1935) was a merchant, tradesman, bank officer, seed oil manufacturer, and owner of the Mt. Gilead Brick Company which he established north of town in 1925. James Ingram (1839-1936) operated a sawmill, planer, and grist and cotton mills. W. S. Ingram (1839-1920) was one of the county's most prosperous cotton farmers. John A. McAulay, Jr. (1860-1929), a merchant, president of the first bank in Mt. Gilead, and a member of the town's first school board and his brother, William Aulay McAulay (1872-1943), were partners in Mt. Gilead's largest mercantile store, McAulay Brothers, located at 100 South Main Street. A.S. McRae (1859-1921) was not only a successful businessman but also served for seventeen years on the Montgomery County school board. His son, Rae Alexander McRae (1892-1972), continued to operate the family store at 114-116 North Main Street after his father's death (MSL, 252-253). Moses Richter (1907-1996), a Russian immigrant who began a mercantile business at the age of seventeen, expanded his interests in dry goods, built a large store at 103-105 South Main Street in Mt. Gilead, and became the region's first peach broker, becoming known far and wide as "The Peach King." Frank Stanback (1897-1972) and his brother, Thomas M. Stanback (1884-1982), natives of Mt. Gilead, were sons of Charles Stanback (1856-1927) and Della Ingram (1859-1956), and nephews of Dr. Charles Ingram. They worked in their father's drug store—the first in Mt. Gilead—and developed a specially-formulated headache powder made by their firm, the Stanback Company.

From a list of more than thirty doctors who were born or practiced in Mt. Gilead, notable individuals are Dr. Jiles Christian (1844-1887), Mt. Gilead's first physician; Dr. Benjamin Brookshire, a country doctor whose intact medical office is preserved on the grounds of the Mt. Gilead Museum at 202 West Allenton Street; Dr. Charles B. Ingram (1858-1942), whose horses, Mach and Daisy, drew his carriage through storms, cold, and heat so he could administer to suffering patients of the area; Dr. Presley Robinson Rankin (1885-1958), for forty years a local practitioner and co-founder of the first medical clinic in Mt. Gilead located at 104 North Main Street. Col. John A. Lisk (1840-1931), a Civil War veteran who was pallbearer at General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson's funeral, later became Mt. Gilead's undertaker—as well as mayor and parade marshal.

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Those who physically built the commercial, educational, religious, and residential properties that contribute to the historic and architectural preeminence of Mt. Gilead were Will T. Haywood (1880-1945), a local architect and contractor who built the 1910 First United Methodist Church, designed and built the 1919 First Baptist church, remodeled the mid-nineteenth century Haywood family home five miles east of town above the Little River, and planned and constructed Mt. Gilead's first five-and-ten cent store, at 111 North Main Street, in 1910 and the Moses Richter Building, at 101 South Main Street, in 1912. In addition many of the fine homes in the region were erected by Haywood, as well as Dewitt Holt (1882-1971), a local builder whose work is represented in both the Mt. Gilead churches as well as in several buildings in the Montgomery County seat of Troy, the 1914 Baptist Church, the 1927 Troy Theater, and several stores along Main Street; and Victor Shankle (1875-1945), a building contractor (Bishir, 281-282; Richter, 231-232; Lassiter, 245-246).

In the early twenty-first century Mt. Gilead preserves an ambience of a small town that has been untouched by modern intrusions such as urban renewal plans, replacement of old structures by new construction, or the alteration of historic architectural details. Although small and large shopping centers have added to the commercial activity of the region, they have been relegated to other sites, leaving old commercial districts unaffected except for some economic downturns. Despite these trends, Mt. Gilead retains an active commercial life and community leaders are pursuing an upswing in the downtown's economic viability. Listing of the Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places is perceived as a primary method for enhancing the long-term preservation and revitalization of Mt. Gilead's significant and irreplaceable architectural resources.

Architectural Context

The Mt. Gilead Downtown Historic District represents the culmination of a century of construction activities that began in the early nineteenth century with a frame store standing at the crossroads of the Fayetteville plank road and the path leading down and west across the Pee Dee River at Allenton's Ferry. The improvement of roads prior to the Civil War made it possible for farmers and merchants to reach markets and exchange goods that included naval stores, cotton, field and orchard produce, and lumber for textiles, leather goods, salt, and other imported staples. Despite the war's need for fighting personnel which drew farmers away from their lands and hindered tradesmen from obtaining merchandise, the post-war era brought with it a renewed prosperity in the form of railroad freight and passenger services across the state. In Montgomery County it meant the reopening of older businesses and new commercial enterprises linked more effectively to important market centers such as Fayetteville, Greensboro, Salisbury, and Charlotte by rail.

Mt. Gilead attained incorporation in 1898 and two years later a building boom swept through the crossroads community. Handsome stores of brick construction sprang up along Main Street

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while the surrounding blocks became sites for a variety of frame residences. Building activity continued steadily through the following quarter century with the result that the town took on a unified aspect where the street-level rhythm of recessed shop entrances surmounted by ribbons of multi-light transoms and decorative metal cornices contrasted with the solidity of upper story bays formed by projecting pilasters and corbelled cornices framing large-pane sash windows set within rowlock brick arches or flat stone lintels. The use of textured and variegated bricks ranging from red to buff and pale yellow, and generally set with narrow mortar joints, added visual variety to the contiguous rows of stores. In contrast, their rear elevations displayed a repetition of segmentally-arched bays and six-over-six sash windows relieved only by the occasional outward projection of walls. The center of the district is greatly enhanced by the presence of the Gothic-inspired First United Methodist Church, constructed in 1910 by local architect-contractor W. T. Haywood from the design of an undocumented architect, and builders Dewitt Holt and Victor L. Shankle. The church occupies a dominant place in the center of town, set back from the street on a wide green that affords a dramatic perspective of the wealth of architectural detail. The edifice features pointed-arch doors and windows, asymmetrical corner towers, stepped gables, and a high hipped roof.

The names of the builders of other structures in the Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District are not recorded, but the repetitive use of standard commercial designs popular in the early twentieth century suggests that construction may have been conducted or supervised by a single contractor or by a team of builders familiar with architectural trends of the period, not just in Mt. Gilead, but also in Biscoe, Candor, Norwood, and the Montgomery County seat of Troy; in the Anson County seat of Wadesboro; and in the Stanly County seat of Albemarle. Examples of fine brick craftsmanship are visible in one- and two-story buildings along the main streets of all the towns as well as in the 1902, one-story, Bank of Albemarle with its twin rowlock-course circular arches, which inspired the triple-arch Bank of Mt. Gilead two years later (destroyed in 1960) at the northeast corner of North Main and Allenton streets in the Mount Gilead Historic Downtown District. The repetition of form, massing and architectural detail is especially noteworthy in a number of churches built during the first quarter of the twentieth century, the 1908 Presbyterian Church in Wadesboro, the 1908-1913 Central United Methodist Church in Wadesboro, and the 1923-1924 First Presbyterian Church in Norwood (Victor Shankle's home town) which are strikingly similar to the Methodist and Baptist churches in Mt. Gilead.

Fourteen (50%) of the thirty resources in the Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District were erected between 1900 and 1910, nine (30%) date from the period 1910 to 1935, three (10%) are from 1935 to 1955, and four (10%) were built after 1955. The architectural styles in of the period 1900 to 1910 parallel building fashions in large cities and small towns across the nation and include Romanesque Revival, Queen Anne and Commercial Style designs. The former, represented by the use of arched windows, textured stone or light-colored brick appears in the 1902 J. A. McAulay Building. The 1900 McAulay Brothers Building across the street exhibits

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the elaboration of ornamentation favored by the Queen Anne style in its variety of upper-story window dimensions and attic vent shapes, as well as in the central, pressed metal cornice containing brackets, rondels, and floral features. The Commercial Style that prevailed from 1910 through the 1920s and 1930s is manifest in the majority of one- and two-story structures which are more restrained in their decorative detail yet are distinguished by smooth-faced brickwork, single and grouped windows, brick panels in the upper walls, and plain cornices, best illustrated by the 1912 Richter Building and the 1922 Haywood Motor Company Building.

In addition to the traditional architectural forms, three distinct styles emerged during the middle of the twentieth century. The one-story brick building at 119 West Allenton Street was built in 1933 for the telephone company and exhibits architectural features such as single and paired windows containing six-over-six sash, a recessed entrance porch, and a hip roof punctuated by two interior chimney stacks and peak vents, popularized in both residential and public work in the late 1920s and early 1930s, including Works Progress Administration projects. The style was a particular favorite for large and small telephone building designs. One example of the Mediterranean Revival style is exhibited in the 1937 Batton car showroom and station at 106 South Main Street, influenced by Florida and Southwestern boom period architecture of the era, and used widely not only in domestic designs but also in structures that denoted travel and movement: railroad depots, filling stations, automobile showrooms, and motels. A third style represented in the district is the Art Moderne example of the Mt. Gilead Town Hall. Originally built for the Gilmont Movie Theater in 1939, and immediately recognizable for its stage-set linear simplicity, the exterior retains its composition of textured brick and smooth stone punctuated by rectangular and octagonal fenestration.

Individually and as a group, the buildings in the Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District embody a significant collection of twentieth century commercial and religious architecture that survives almost completely intact where other towns of similar size and character have lost or greatly altered their built environment. Modern expansion has not swept into the old section of the city, but commercial development has centered on the railroad and highways north of town and residential growth has drifted out into subdivisions along the river and lakefronts, sparing the old crossroads settlement from the often-destructive tides of change.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District is shown by a heavy black line drawn on the accompanying Montgomery County Tax Map Number 7503-13, reduced to a scale of 1" = 200.'

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District is drawn to include the cohesive group of historic commercial buildings and church built in downtown Mt. Gilead during its period of significance, 1900-1955, that contribute to the architectural and historical significance of the district and characterize the importance of its architectural and commercial development.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Mount Gilead Downtown Historic District
Mt. Gilead, Montgomery County, North Carolina
Photographs taken by Janet K. Seapker, August 2004
State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, North Carolina

- A: N side of W Allenton St., view to NE
 - B: W side of N Main Street, view to NW
 - C: E side of N Main St., view to SE
 - D: W side of S Main St., view to SW
 - E: E side of S Main St., view to SE
 - F: Commercial Row, 114-116-118 N Main St., view SE
 - G: First United Methodist Church, 100 N Main St., view NE
 - H: Richter Building, 103-105 S Main St., view SE
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