

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1104



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 Greenville Downtown Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Lafayette between Montcalm and Benton and adjacent not for publication
block of Montcalm, Grove, Cass, and Washington on either side
city or town Greenville vicinity N/A
state Michigan code MI county Montcalm code 117
zip code 48838

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Brian O'Malley
Signature of certifying official

10/3/08
Date

Michigan SHPO
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

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

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

☒ entered in the National Register _____

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the
National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the
National Register

removed from the National Register _____

other (explain): _____

Patricia Andrews

11/19/2008

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private

☒ public-local

public-State

☒ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

building(s)

☒ district

site

structure

object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>60</u>	<u>18</u> buildings
<u>1</u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u>61</u>	<u> </u> objects
	<u>18</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Category	Sub-category
<u>Commerce/Trade</u>	<u>Specialty Store</u>
<u> </u>	<u>Financial Institution</u>
<u> </u>	<u>Department Store</u>
<u> </u>	<u>Restaurant</u>
<u> </u>	<u>Business</u>
<u>Social</u>	<u>Meeting Hall</u>
<u>Religion</u>	<u>Religious Facility</u>
<u>Government</u>	<u>Post Office</u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Category	Sub-category
<u>Commerce/Trade</u>	<u>Specialty Store</u>
<u> </u>	<u>Financial Institution</u>
<u> </u>	<u>Restaurant</u>
<u> </u>	<u>Business</u>
<u>Social</u>	<u>Meeting Hall</u>
<u>Religion</u>	<u>Religious Facility</u>
<u>Government</u>	<u>Post Office</u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate, Late Victorian, Commercial Style, Gothic, Colonial Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	<u>Stone</u>
roof	<u>Asphalt</u>
walls	<u>Brick</u>
	<u>Stone</u>
other	<u>N/A</u>

Cultural Affiliation N/A ;

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	7	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	1	Montcalm Co., MI

Description

The Greenville Downtown Historic District comprises the historic core of Greenville's central business district. It extends along much of four blocks of Lafayette, Greenville's main street, and also includes adjacent parts of cross streets – Montcalm, Grove, Cass, and Washington – that contain related historic properties. The district contains seventy-eight buildings. Later nineteenth and early twentieth-century commercial buildings predominate, but the district also contains three nineteenth-century churches, two early twentieth-century lodge halls, the post office, and several houses.

Greenville's historic downtown is aligned north-south along Lafayette Street, which forms a segment of state highway M-91, running north from Belding, just south of Montcalm County's southern edge, through Greenville up to Lakeview, at the county's northern edge. Greenville's other primary road, Washington Street, state highway M-57, intersects Lafayette at a right angle near the district's south edge. Cass Street crosses Lafayette one short block north, Grove Street a much longer block farther north, and Montcalm crosses a short distance north of Grove, the street in part forming the district's north edge. The topography is generally level within the district itself, but begins to slope downward toward the Flat River just beyond the district's east and north edges. Old residential neighborhoods flank the business district on the east and west, separated from it by fringes of parking lots behind the buildings fronting on Lafayette. To the immediate north newer commercial development extends along Lafayette the short distance to the Flat River bridge and beyond. Greenville's modern city hall and Catholic church and school complex stand directly to the district's south, with the old neighborhood beyond.

Lafayette Street today presents an architecturally highly diverse streetscape of one, two, and three-story commercial buildings that stand side by side and directly on the sidewalk line. Brick Italianate and Late Victorian blocks form the largest single component of the district's building stock, comprising about one-third of the total number of buildings. Two and three-story Italianate and Late Victorian commercial buildings preside over all four corners of the intersection of Lafayette and Cass and dominate the nearby streetscape along Lafayette in both directions. Italianate and Late Victorian buildings also occupy two corners at the Washington and Grove intersections with Lafayette.

One and two-story early twentieth-century buildings, especially Commercial Brick ones, are also present along Lafayette, particularly in the mid-section of the long block between Cass and Grove streets. The district also contains six former garage/car dealership buildings dating from the 1910s to the 1940s, four of them located at the district's north and south edges. There is a small number of post World War II one and two-story commercial buildings interspersed throughout the district, and also a small number of buildings whose facades were completely modernized in the 1960s-80s, some with a stucco-and-half-timber look that was intended to celebrate Greenville's Danish heritage. West Cass Street contains several early post World War II medical office buildings, along with a few surviving older homes that housed several doctors and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Greenville Downtown Historic District

Page 2 Montcalm Co., MI

dentists, and the city's 1930s post office. Two nineteenth-century churches stand along East Cass Street just off Lafayette, and a third is located on West Cass at the district's west edge. The district also contains early twentieth-century lodge halls – a Grange hall on Montcalm Street at the district's northeast corner and the Danish Brotherhood Society Hall on Montcalm at the district's northwest corner – and one of the city's most architecturally and historically significant homes, the Ranney House on East Washington just off Lafayette.

The district retains a high degree of integrity overall, but the following types of changes have taken place. Several older buildings along Lafayette have been demolished, some because of fires, to create pedestrian walkways connecting Lafayette Street with the parking lots behind the buildings. The walkways have been attractively landscaped, but the scars where once-solid building rows have been cut remain all too evident. Several older buildings along Lafayette were remodeled, mostly during the 1970s, with cheap-looking wood façade treatments designed to impart a stucco-and-half-timber "Danish" look. This remodeling detracts from the genuine Danish heritage often present in the downtown's historic buildings. Through one tax credit project, the facades of three historic buildings have been restored to something more like their historic appearance.

A primary purpose of this national register nomination is to facilitate one proposed tax credit-driven historic rehabilitation project and to encourage more in the future. Several downtown merchants made note of how much downtown Greenville's business climate suffered in recent years because of the development of the shopping area at the west edge of the city, but expressed the feeling that the downtown is now taking on new life.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	7	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	3	Montcalm Co., MI

INVENTORY

The Greenville Downtown Historic District contains the following buildings:

Lafayette Street, East Side, from the North

114 N. Swanson Bros. Service Station (1939)

1-story garage building with arched timber lattice truss roof and EIFS exterior finish above concrete block foundation; stepped parapet in front above center entry flanked by broad window on either side. Elsie McNeil notes.

108-112 N. Stryker Ford (c. 1944)

Large 1-story garage building with concrete block and EIFS-finish exterior; deeper and broader main part on south with very low gambrel roof; narrow flat-roof section on north side; broad brick (with EIFS trim) front with low stepped parapet across south 2/3 of façade in front of gambrel-roof garage.

The Charles W. Smith Ford dealership was in operation at 108 by 1923. An advertisement for Smith's dealership in the 2/7/1923 *Independent* shows a broad-fronted 1-story building with garage entrance in narrow S bay, broad storefront with low arched parapet in center, and windowed narrow bay at N. The building reportedly suffered a devastating fire in 1944, and it's not clear whether the present south 2/3 of the building, which occupies the old site, uses the old walls or was all new construction after the fire. Stryker Ford and a succession of Ford dealerships occupied the building until the late 1950s. Elsie McNeil notes.

100 N. Winter Inn (1901-02; 1902-03)

3-story painted red brick Late Victorian with angled corner; bracketed metal cornice along front and side elevation (along Grove St.); brownish-pink rock-face Ionia sandstone beltcourses above 2nd and 3rd-story windows; 2-story wing behind front section along Grove has detailing similar to front but line in masonry reveals it to be an addition; 1st floor front, much modernized over the years, rebuilt in something close to original form (though without Tuscan-column veranda) in 1979.

The last of a series of hotels built on this site beginning in the 1850s, the Winter Inn was built for owner Thomas B. Winter to replace the previous hotel, the Webster House (known its last two years as the Northern Hotel), which suffered a severe fire 3/26/1900. Construction of the new building, built by Crookshank, Somers & Co., builders, of Ionia, apparently began in October 1901, and the hotel opened 7/21/1902 with D. S. Seaman as proprietor. Not part of the original building, the rear wing, containing "sample rooms, barber shop, quarters for help," and a hall upstairs, was built in 1902-03. *Independent*, 3/26/1900; 10/2 and 12/11/1901; 5/28, 7/23 and 9/17/1902; 2/18/1903.

100 S. T. B. Winter Block (1903)

2-story 1-storefront brick Late Victorian with angled corner; metal cornice with modillions and non-original plaque above corner containing "T. B. Winter" name and "1903" date; rock-face stone window caps and beltcourse above 2nd-story windows; central entry in slant-sided recess. Historic photos show a rock-face stone arch capping the corner entry and a gabled plaque containing the "1903. T. B. Winter" information above the corner entry.

Construction of this building began in August 1903, and Dr. J. H. C. vanDeinse's drug store moved in during the latter part of November. *Independent*, 8/5 and 11/25/1903.

102-04 S. Walker & Clough Block (1873)

3-story 2-storefront brick Italianate with central entry to upper stories; projecting piers at ends and flanking central bay of façade rise to low stepped parapet without cornice; arched roof; segmental-arch-head 2nd/3rd-story windows with pedimented iron caps. N storefront c. 1950 with structural glass and aluminum-trim storefront and recessed central entry with broadly curving sides; low triple-arch treatment, with arches infilled with brick, spanning storefront between the piers; S storefront c. 1970s. A photograph

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Greenville Downtown Historic District

Page 4 Montcalm Co., MI

probably from the 1910s shows the building with a bracketed cornice topped by a large central name plaque with finial-crowned segmental-arch cap. The stepped parapets at either end had not yet been built, and the photo makes clear that the side walls have been raised in height several feet.

Under construction in May 1873, the building housed the Chapin Bros. Grocery by October. The Knights of Pythias bought the building in 1927 and used the two upper stories as their meeting place until 1972. The K of P's renovations included raising the exterior walls several feet and constructing the arched roof and front and rear stepped parapets. *Independent*, 5/21 and 10/8/1873. Elsie McNeil notes.

106-08 S. E. B. Edwards Block (1875)

2-story 2-storefront brick Italianate with bracketed iron cornice and corbelled brickwork band beneath; raised piers marking ends of façade and flanking central window bay in 5-window upper façade; pedimental iron window caps identical to those in 102-04; modern storefront.

The 4/8/1875 *Independent* reported that local builder L. H. Colwell had taken the contract to construct this building. The building was probably completed late in the year, but it is not clear if the reference in the 11/11/1875 paper to Connell & Hansen moving their furniture store into the new Edwards block is to this or another 3-store building at the northwest corner of Lafayette and Montcalm that Colwell was also building for Edwards at the same time.

110 S. Gleason Building (1913)

1-story 1-storefront red Commercial Brick with low concrete-capped stepped parapet; concrete cap of central section displays inscription, "1905 Gleason 1913"; simple pressed metal ceiling inside. Now forms part of Huckleberry's Restaurant/Bar to S. Construction of this building, built to replace one badly damaged by fire early in March, began in late May, and F. A. Gleason's real estate and insurance office moved into the new building by mid-September. E. J. Morse's cigar store, burned out in the same fire, also occupied part of the space. *Independent*, 3/5, 5/28, and 9/10/1913.

112 S. Hopkins Building (1922)

Broad-fronted 1-story red Commercial Brick with raised and gabled central parapet containing plaque, "Hopkins." Modern storefront with large canopy for Huckleberry's Restaurant/Bar. Interior contains pressed metal ceiling elaborately detailed with egg-and-dart bands edging the square panels, alternating garlands and Aladdin's lamps in the coved edges outlining the areas of square panels, and bands of lens-shaped patterns surrounding classical torches (similar to that shown on the reverse of a dime) on the undersides of the beams between the areas of square panels.

A *Grand Rapids Herald* article of 6/25/1922 lists plans for a Hopkins Building in Greenville, presumably this one, by Grand Rapids architect Pierre Lindhout. The building's original occupant was the Fowler & Hopkins Coal Co. offices.

116 S. Hansen's Music (possibly pre-1870; c. 1950)

1-storefront width building, reportedly reduced from 2 to 1 story following a long ago fire; brick and aluminum panel facade with corner entry; concrete block and T-111 clad side wall.

There was a two-story wooden building that housed a flour and feed store on this site as of 1884. The present building *may* be the same one, much renovated in the mid-20th-C. It has housed Hansen's Music House since the late 1940s. Elsie McNeil notes.

Pedestrian Walkway

118-20 S. Vaughn Department Store (1962)

1-story 2-storefront wide with buff brick front and concrete block side walls; nearly full height and width storefront windows and projecting metal canopy/sign panel.

NON-CONTRIBUTING only because less than 50 years old.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Greenville Downtown Historic District

Page 5 Montcalm Co., MI

122 S. Commercial building (c. 1905)

1-story 1-storefront yellow Commercial Brick with recessed central entry leading to separate doors to a store on each side; recessed brick panels in frieze outlined with stretcher bricks; low Mesker Bros. pressed metal cornice with fleur-de-lis decorated bracket at each end.

This may be the Tower Building that R. J. Tower had built between November 1905 and January 1906. John Wagner's barbershop moved into the Tower Building from the nearby Central Hotel at the end of January 1906 (*Independent*, 11/11/1905; 1/31/1906).

124 S. Rich Block (1870)

2-story 1-storefront brick Italianate; bracketed iron cornice and segmental-arch-head windows with pedimental iron window caps identical to those in 102-108 S. Lafayette; c. 1930s metal storefront with recessed, slant-sided central entry; modern concrete bulkheads and piers and wood panel transom in storefront.

In 1887 the building housed a billiard parlor and smoke shop. By 1908 and until the early 1990s it housed a succession of hardware stores. The present storefront, shared with no. 126, may have been installed about 1931 when the Reliable Hardware expanded into 126 or in 1939 when Harry and Anna Christensen bought the business.

126 S. J. Gault Block (1886)

2-story 1-storefront Late Victorian with rock-face cut stone façade; segmental-arch-head windows with slab caps decorated with circle and slot indents; iron cornice with "modillions," brackets decorated with Christopher Dresser motifs, and "J. Gault" name in central panel in frieze; c. 1930s metal trim storefront, with recessed entry at left, displaying same finishes and modernizations as 124.

The 5/13/1886 *Independent* noted that tailor J. E. Zank had sold his store lot to James Gault, "who talks of putting up a brick store thereon." A separate story in the same day's paper reported Gault, a saloon keeper, being fined for Sunday liquor sales (over the next few years Gault receives additional mention for liquor-law violations). The *Independent* made no further mention of Gault's new building. The 1887 and 1900 Sanborn maps show it in use as a saloon.

128-32 S. Rasmussen Building (1917)

Broad-fronted 2-story red Commercial Brick with simply detailed corbelled brick cornice; 6 broad windows at 2nd-story level, now boarded in; long cast concrete plaque in center of frieze, with no inscription now present; modern wood/metal storefront with shingled pent roof; tile rear walls.

Oscar A. Rasmussen had this building constructed to house his O. A. Rasmussen Ford dealership and garage plus rental commercial space at the south end of the first floor, initially occupied by Miller & Harris, furniture and undertaking. *Independent*, 3/7, 10/13, and 11/14/1917.

200-202 S. Shearer Block (1869-70)

2-story 2-storefront brick Italianate with panels in frieze and dentil-like brickwork band below the cornice-less parapet; modern square-head windows set beneath round-arch brickwork caps in 2nd story; storefronts – no. 200's 1920s copper-trim one with deep square-plan recess containing slant-sided recessed entry at back and display case projecting into the space at one side and 202's c. 1950s one with aluminum trim and recessed entry at left – both framed in 1950s pinkish random ashlar stonework that clads 1st story.

Construction of J. J. Shearer's building began in October 1869 and the building's brickwork was completed by mid-July 1870. *Independent*, 11/2/1860 and 5/3 and 7/12/1870.

204 S. Shearer Block (1870-71)

3-story 1-storefront brick Italianate with round-arch 2nd/3rd-story windows with caps built of double rows of headers on end and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Greenville Downtown Historic District

Page 6 Montcalm Co., MI

rising from corbelled brick spring blocks; paneled brick frieze below simple parapet; 1950s storefront with horizontal canopy; metal sheeting covering S side wall where formerly adjoining building is now gone. The building initially housed owner J. J. Shearer's hardware store. From the early 1930s to the early 1950s the Gibson Theater was located here. Elsie McNeil notes.

[206-208 S.] Pedestrian Walkway (in place of two buildings)

210 S. Partlow Block (1874)

3-story 1-storefront brick Italianate; tall 4/4 round-arch windows in 2nd/3rd stories with brick caps rising from corbelled brick spring blocks; paneled brick frieze below parapet; modern storefront.

Construction of George Partlow's building began in mid-July 1874 and the L. Hansen grocery and flour and feed store moved in early in November. A third-floor hall was being used for services of the Christian denomination beginning in December.

Independent, 7/15, 7/22, 11/4, and 12/9/1874.

212-14 S. Kemp-Gilmour Block (1906)

2-story 2-storefront brick Georgian Revival with metal cornice with swag detail in frieze; 2 metal slant-sided bay windows, single window between them with splayed brick cap, in 2nd story; 1950s storefronts with random ashlar bulkheads and piers and aluminum trim, including horizontal canopy.

Plans of E. A. Kemp and C. L. Gilmour to build this building were noticed in the 6/27/1906 *Independent*. Completed and fully occupied by early December, the building initially housed C. L. Gilmour's jewelry store in the north storefront and D. L. Hyde's grocery in the south. The second story contained front and rear office space above each storefront. *Independent*, 6/27, 11/14, and 12/5/1906.

216 S. E. B. Edwards Block (1890)

2-story 1-storefront highly ornamental Late Victorian with artificial stone façade and metal cornice/roofline trim; center section of upper façade slightly projecting from wall plane to either side and capped by finial-topped metal gable containing sunburst design; large square-head windows in 2nd story; artificial stone piers edging façade finished with intricate details, including vermiculated work edging storefront; c. 1950s aluminum-trim storefront but with modern brick bulkheads; aluminum canopy.

The façade of this building is virtually identical to those of six of the facades (all now demolished) in the large block at 310-26 S. Lafayette built in 1887. Construction of this building began in late April, and the John Avery & Son drug store moved in at the beginning of October. *Independent*, 3/13, 4/24, and 10/2/1890.

218-20 S. H. N. Anderson Block (1890; 1974)

2-story 2-storefront with 1974 "Danish" stucco and half-timber front, but with remnants visible of the original Late Victorian front in stone-trimmed brick end piers and in frieze; 1983 brick storefront with arches over windows. Historic photographs show a highly distinctive Late Victorian façade dominated by a large square-plan 2nd-story bay window toward either end of the facade, each topped by a lower "attic" section containing an oculus window in each face and capped above the building parapet with a tall hip roof. NON-CONTRIBUTING because of extent of façade alterations.

Plans to construct this building was reported in the *Independent* at the same time as Edwards' block to the north. The building was built to house Anderson's meat-packing business and L. H. Wright's meat market. The Anderson Meat Packing Company occupied the building 10/23/1890. Only 1 1/2 years later Anderson sold the building to O. C. Kemp, who planned to remodel it with two stores. E. D. Bradley's grocery and Merritt & Stevenson's dry goods stores were soon located there. *Independent*, 3/13, 4/24, and 10/23/1890; 3/24, 4/14, and 5/26/1892.

222 S. Harris Block (1892)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Greenville Downtown Historic District

Page 7 Montcalm Co., MI

3-story 1-storefront red Panel Brick Late Victorian with metal cornice and pedestals at corners; large square-head windows, with rock-face sills and caps, separated by piers in 2nd/3rd stories; panels between 2nd/3rd-floor windows and corbelled brickwork supporting paneled frieze; modern storefront outlined by brick piers and simple metal storefront cornice.

H. Harris had this building constructed to house his Harris Bazar, which offered home furnishings, furniture, and "bazar goods" in its four stories (including the basement). Work began in the latter half of May, and the Harris Bazar was established in the building by early September. *Independent*, 5/12, 6/2, 9/8, and 12/8/1892.

224 S. H. N. Anderson Block (1893)

2-story 1-storefront Late Victorian, Richardsonian Romanesque in inspiration, brick with stone trim; finial-topped gable feature, with top rising above a hollow square-molding-decorated parapet, atop 2nd story in upper façade, the arched transoms of the 3 large 2nd-story central windows rising into gable's lower edge; the triple windows flanked either side by an elongated Romanesque colonette that, rising through the gable and above the parapet, terminates in acorn finial; c. 1930s/50s recessed aluminum-trim storefront.

This building was constructed between June and October. J. H. Edsall's restaurant and bakery moved in about October 20. *Independent*, 5/11, 6/1, 9/6, and 10/18/1893.

226 S. E. F. Grabill Block (1884)

2-story 1-storefront brick Late Victorian with angled corner facing intersection with Cass St.; bracketed iron main and storefront cornices; massy iron window caps, with incised Christopher Dresser-like designs, over 2nd-story front windows (plain iron caps on side-elevation windows) and stone slab window sills; modern board storefront.

Elliott F. Grabill, editor and proprietor of the *Greenville Independent*, had this building constructed to house the post office and the *Independent*'s plant shortly after his appointment as Greenville postmaster. Ionia contractors Allen & Van Tassel began work on the building in late May and the building was occupied during November. The post office moved from the middle store of the Post Office Block (330 S. Lafayette) to the east end of this building 11/8/1884, and, except for a brief period, occupied that space until late July 1907. The First National Bank initially occupied the streetcorner location, and the *Independent* shared the second story with offices. *Independent*, 3/20, 4/24, 5/22 and 29, 6/19, 7/31, 8/28, 9/18, and 11/6, 13, and 20/1884; 7/8/1886; 4/17/1890; 7/31/1907.

300-302 S. Slawson Block (1887)

2-story 2-storefront brick and artificial stone Late Victorian with short square-plan pyramid-roof tower, with round window each face, at corner of Cass St.; metal cornices; central arched window flanked by square-head windows in 2nd story above each storefront; artificial stone beltcourses and window caps; artificial stone slab containing building's name and date below tower's round window on Lafayette side; modern wood storefronts.

Slawson's old wooden drug store building was moved into the adjacent street in late May 1887 to make way for the new building, and the G. R. Slawson & Co. drug store moved into the largely completed building's corner storefront in mid-October. The D. S. Seaman grocery initially occupied the south storefront and the Ganton & Pasco meat market the rear store facing Cass. *Greenville Independent*, 4/28, 5/26, 7/14, 9/22, and 10/20/1887.

304 S. Stevens Block (1873)

2-story 1-storefront brick Italianate; cornice removed and square-head 2nd-story windows in place of original round-head ones; c. 1959 recessed aluminum storefront (store combined with 306). Historic photos show a massive bracketed cornice with large half-round central pediment. The central window was wider and taller than the one to either side and divided in two by a central mullion.

S. R. Stevens had this building constructed to house his boot and shoe business. Work began in May 1873 and Stevens moved in during September. *Independent*, 5/21, 8/20, and 9/17/1873.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Greenville Downtown Historic District

Page 8 Montcalm Co., MI

306-08 S. Brothers (Hayden) Block (1869-70)

2-story 2-storefront red brick Italianate; 2nd story divided into 7 bays – the central one narrower than the rest – with arches springing from piers forming shallow recesses that contained round-head windows, 306's now reduced to small square-head windows and 308's infilled with brick; low blind arcade treatment in the frieze; 306 storefront a continuation of 304's c. 1959 one; 308's storefront, combined with 310 and 312 in 1950 for the McLennan's Store, has recessed double-door entries in 308 and 312, low brick bulkheads, aluminum trim, and aluminum panel signboard.

In 1884 and 1900 a harness shop occupied the north storefront and jewelry shop the south.

310 S. Lewis Block (1887-88; current upper façade c. 1960-61)

2-story 1 broad storefront; unfenestrated red brick upper façade matching 312-18 to south; storefront is part (with 308 and 312) of the McLellan's storefront, rebuilt in 1950 following disastrous fire in 310-12). NON-CONTRIBUTING because current façade not yet fifty years old. *The Daily News*, 4/17, 9/12 and 9/16/1950.

312-16 S. Jacobson & Netzorg Building (1887-88; current upper façade c. 1960-61)

2-story 3-storefront building, with original Late Victorian façade replaced c. 1960-61 with current unfenestrated red brick upper façade complementing rest of 310-18 row; N (312) storefront is S end of 1950 McLellan's Store front that also includes 308 and 310; nos. 314-16 storefront, with broad recessed entry toward right and aluminum panel signboard area across the façade, dates from 1950 renovation of the J. C. Penney store that then occupied that space. NON-CONTRIBUTING because current façade not yet fifty years old. *The Daily News*, 12/8/1949; 7/15/1950.

318 S. E. Rutan Block (1887-88; current façade c. 1960-61)

2-story 1-storefront building, its original Late Victorian front also replaced with unfenestrated red brick upper façade c. 1960-61; modern brick/aluminum storefront. NON-CONTRIBUTING because current façade not yet fifty years old.

320 S. John Passage Block (1887-88; current façade c. 1960-61)

2-story 1-storefront building, original Late Victorian front replaced c. 1960-61 with current unfenestrated red brick upper façade; modern storefront matching 318. NON-CONTRIBUTING because current façade not yet fifty years old.

322-26 S. W. T. Grant Building (1954-55; façade redone 1987)

1-story 3-storefront wide with modern brick façade. NON-CONTRIBUTING because 1955 appearance entirely gone.

328-32 S. Post Office Block (1869; 1871-72)

3-story 3-storefront red brick Italianate; upper façade divided into 9 equal bays edged by projecting piers that support flat "capitals" that in turn support rounded-corner lower edges of a paneled brick frieze, with plain coping, that spans most of the facade; round-arch brick window caps in 2nd/3rd stories; original 2/2 sash retained in 2nd-story front windows in 330 and 332, rest of front now containing square-head windows. No. 328 retains c. 1920s storefront with slant-sided, recessed central entry and wood trim (though with add-on half-timber "Danish" bulkhead accents), while 330 and 332 have modern wood-finish storefronts with large overhanging pent roof. Large ghost sign with painted letters, "Fargo & Belknap," across south side of building, facing Washington St., between 2nd and 3rd floors.

H. B. Fargo and J. W. Belknap broke ground for the southern building (no. 332, at the corner of Washington) 4/19/1869. It was the downtown's first brick building. The *Independent* noted the use of Greenville brick and iron columns from Greenville Foundry & Machine in the new building's construction. The Fargo & Belknap grocery, dry goods, and books and stationary store commenced business in the new building in mid-November. The Greenville Masonic lodge was soon using the third floor as their meeting place. *Independent*, 4/20, 6/29, 8/3, 8/24, 9/7, 9/14, and 11/16/1869; 1/11/1870.

The 10/25/1871 *Independent* noted the beginning of work on two brick stores, the ones forming the north two-thirds of the three-

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	7	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	9	Montcalm Co., MI

store block, directly north of the Fargo & Belknap store. What is now no. 330, the central store in the block, was, like the store to the south, owned by Fargo & Belknap. In mid-September 1872 the post office moved into this storefront. Cole & Bennett owned the northerly building (no. 328). In early October 1872 the Cole & Taylor drug store moved into this space. The Howe Sewing Machine Co. had a salesroom in the second story, and the third contained the IOOF hall. In an article describing the new "Cole Block," in the 11/27/1872 *Independent*, the paper explained that the building is "Joined to the Fargo & Belknap block and of the same style and finish...." *Independent*, 10/25/1871; 4/24, 5/29, 7/17, 8/14, 9/18, 10/2, and 11/27/1872.

400-404 S. Rutan Block (1873-74)

3-story 2-storefront brick Italianate; rounded-corner 2nd/3rd-story windows with elaborate iron caps with incised detailing; bracketed iron main cornice; c. 1950s copper-trimmed storefront projecting out, with recessed central entry, beyond building's front wall plane, capped by broad horizontal roof forming a color band that extends across façade of adjacent building to south, once part of the Greenville Furniture store that occupied both buildings; original fluted iron storefront columns, two in either storefront, remaining in place inside; granite-look enameled metal panel band across lower 2nd-story level – it also extends across façade of building to south – bearing "Greenville Furniture" name in large raised letters.

The Rutan Block was built for owner Manning Rutan primarily to house the E. Rutan & Co. hardware business, which occupied the building's north half, with the first and second stories planned for salesroom space, the third for workshops, and basement for a storeroom. Begun during the spring of 1873, the building was occupied by E. Rutan & Co. in February 1874. The Montcalm and Eureka Grange was soon renting the third floor in the building's south half. *Independent*, 5/21, 8/20, and 10/1/1873; 2/11, 2/18, 4/8, and 5/6/1874.

During the early 20th C. the building housed a succession of clothing manufacturers, including the Canada Mills Company, which specialized in mail-order clothing sales but also had a retail outlet here, until 1915. Canada Mills was owned by Francis G. Lindquist, who served as a U. S. Congressman in 1913-14. From 1927 until 1990 the building housed the Greenville Furniture Company. *Independent*, 8/21/1912; 8/2/1922. McNeil, "The Historic Rutan Block."

406-08 S. Kemp's Garage/Greenville Furniture (1912; 1960)

1-story broad-fronted building with flat roof with central clerestory; brownish-tan brick upper facade with anodized bronze-finish window trim and enameled metal panel band above display windows matching 400-404; east end of clerestory faced in paving brick and metal siding; 1-story concrete block rear extension containing loading dock.

A photo in the 4/2/1913 *Independent* shows the garage, which housed J. Sterling Kemp's garage and the E. A. Kemp & Son dealership, with an assortment of newly delivered Fords parked in front. E. A. Kemp & Son was then the agent for Ford, Cadillac, Buick, Studebaker, and Oakland. An advertisement in the 11/1/1922 *Independent* for Sharpe's Garage, which then occupied the building, more clearly shows the front. The building had a 3-bay front, with low window-fronted side bays and taller and broader central garage door bay, its upper façade the front of a front-to-back "clerestory" containing large windows on the sides. The clerestory's upper parapet corresponds to the top of the higher part of present parapet. A large advertisement in *The Daily News* of 4/28/1960 announced the grand opening of Greenville Furniture's Warehouse Furniture Outlet. The existing façade and storefront likely dates from this time.

410 S. Meyers Brothers Chevrolet (c. 1930)

1-story broad-fronted garage building with stepped parapet brick front and concrete block side and rear walls; storefront S end and garage door N in façade and steel sash windows in side wall; arched roof.

The building was built for Meyers Brothers Chevrolet and then housed Oscar A. Rasmussen's Chevrolet dealership between about 1935 and 1945. It subsequently held a Pontiac dealership until its purchase by Greenville Furniture in 1973. Elsie McNeil notes.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	7	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	10	Montcalm Co., MI

Lafayette Street, West Side, from the North

101 N. First Savings & Loan of Saginaw/now Commercial Bank (1972)

1-story white brick New Formalist bank office with broad slab flat roof extending over front portico of square brick columns. NON-CONTRIBUTING only because less than 50 years old.

101-105 S. Rasmussen Building (1937)

1-story white-painted red brick commercial; slant-sided center entry in 101; remodeled recessed square-plan center entry for 103-05.

Built for Oscar A. Rasmussen, the building initially housed a dry cleaners, auto parts store, and A & P grocery in 101, 103, and 107, respectively. Elsie McNeil notes.

107 S. Rasmussen Auto Sales Building (1945)

1-story broad-fronted with modern mauve-finish brick and vertical metal sheeting over modern storefront. NON-CONTRIBUTING because none of the current façade appears to be original.

Built for Oscar A. Rasmussen, the building initially housed O. A. Rasmussen Chevrolet Sales until about 1954 and additional auto dealers until about 1962. Elsie McNeil notes.

111 S. Commercial building (c. 1912 and c. 1950; c. 1952)

1-story 1-storefront with vinyl siding and tall asphalt-shingled pent roof. Built as two narrow-fronted buildings, 109 c. 1950 and 111 c. 1912, and combined into one about 1952 for the Palmer & Price law office. NON-CONTRIBUTING because no historic finishes are visible.

113-15 S. Church/Callaghan & Miller Block (1893)

2-story (plus attic) 2-storefront brick Late Victorian; square-head 2nd-story window openings, windows infilled with brick or block (one small window opening left); low attic windows; decorative brickwork frieze; large entry for upstairs Masonic Temple at S end of façade and projecting vertical Masonic sign at midpoint of building's 2nd-story level displays emblems and light set in metal pipe frame; modern storefronts with entry at N end of 113.

The 2/16/1893 *Independent* reported plans by C. J. Church and Callaghan & Miller to build the building and the 4/27 and 5/4/1893 papers reported excavation for the "two new brick store buildings" under way and that Paul Willey and R. W. Vandever will do the mason work and James B. Taylor the carpentry work, the project under charge of L. E. Backus. Callaghan & Miller, dealers in agricultural implements, dissolved their partnership in June 1894, but James Callaghan and the Callaghan & Son agricultural implements store occupied the building's north storefront until the mid-1920s. *Independent*, 6/13/1894; Elsie McNeil notes.

117 S. Stevens Hardware Block (1893)

2-story 1-storefront Late Victorian with red brick front and yellow brick sides; band of angled, vertical bricks forming frieze below plain brick parapet; rosette-decorated I-beams spanning storefront and 2nd story of façade, where a broad square-plan bay window that shows in an old post card view has been removed and the opening infilled with metal sheeting; wood-trimmed early 20th-C. storefront with recessed, slant-sided central entry and low brick bulkheads.

The G. W. Stevens & Son hardware occupied their new store by early October 1893. Stevens Hardware failed in 1910, and the Greenville Hardware occupied the space from 1912 until 1974. *Independent*, 10/4/1893; Elsie McNeil notes.

119-21 S. Commercial Building (c. 1956)

1-story 2-storefront with very shallow, slant-sided recessed storefront, with aluminum trim and brick piers and bulkheads,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	7	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	11	Montcalm Co., MI

extending from end to end of building and containing paired entries in center.
This building housed a Sears and later a Montgomery Ward Catalog Store. Elsie McNeil notes.

123-25 S. Jimos Bros. Block (1948-49)

2-story 2-storefront orangish Commercial Brick with low stepped parapet and concrete window sills and corner blocks; concrete block side walls; aluminum-trim storefronts with recessed, slant-sided central double entry.
Construction of the building for brothers Gust and George Jimos began in July 1948 and was completed early in the following February. Harold Carter of Greenville was the contractor. The building initially housed the Gambles department store, which opened March 22, 1949, in the ground story and basement and four office suites upstairs. *Daily News*, 3/18, 3/19, and 3/21/1949.

127 S. Greenville National Bank (1930)

2-story 1-storefront former bank with original Neoclassical elements – anta at either end of the façade supporting a modillion-decorated entablature topped by a low gabled parapet – of cream-color terra cotta outlining a 1975 “Danish” stucco-and-half-timber-look wood façade with shingled pent roof sheltering the 1st story; door and window openings occupy historic locations. Plans to construct a new building were announced in May 1930 and work apparently began in mid-July. “Oltman of Grand Rapids” was listed as architect and Sandy Copeland as general contractor. The *Daily News* of March 14, 1931, in announcing the bank’s formal opening, to be held the next day, stated that the building was “completed last fall.” *Daily News*, 5/17 and 7/16/1930; 3/14/1931.

129 S. Backus Block (c. 1907)

2-story 1-storefront red brick Late Victorian with bracketed iron main and storefront cornices, main one with pine cone finials atop the ends; Gothic arch storefront entry with arch outlined in alternating rock-face sandstone and smooth limestone voussoirs; square-head 2nd-story windows with limestone “Tudor” hoods.
Advertisements for the Mourer & Thompson Music Co., featuring pianos and phonographs, at this address appear beginning in the 1/1/1908 *Independent* (the paper’s October-December 1907 issues have been lost). By April the firm had acquired the name Thompson’s Music House.

131-35 S. Hansen Building (1917)

2-story 4-storefront tan Commercial Brick with simple pressed metal cornice and concrete blocks outlining upper façade windows and ornamenting the frieze; concrete plaque, below raised section of parapet near center of the asymmetrical façade, containing a large swag motif; storefronts mostly capped by large modern canopy. No. 131, the narrow N storefront, is a separate 1-story wood building that, possibly dating back to before 1884 and long serving as a barber shop, has a 2-story brick false front that forms part of the Hansen Block (its rear façade is now faced in concrete block). It has served as a barber shop for nearly all of its history; one of the shop’s chairs is on display at the city historical museum.
Dr. John R. Hansen had this building constructed between March and October 1917. The new building initially housed Bohrer’s Department Store (Z. C. Bohrer) and John De Vlieger & Son’s Celrite Grocery in the street level. George Baldwin’s barber shop was moved out of the way to permit construction of the new building, then repositioned at the building’s north end near its former location. Dr. Hansen had his residence and office upstairs. *Independent*, 2/28, 3/14, 8/22, 9/26, and 10/13/1917.

201 S. Oleson Grocery (pre-1884?)

2-story 1-storefront brick Late Victorian; segmental arch-head 2nd-story windows with brick caps; corbelled and angled brick frieze below plain parapet; c. 1957 Reno’s Bar neon sign projecting from 2nd-story façade above “Danish” wooden half-timber-look storefront.
The 1884 Sanborn shows what appears to be a wood building with brick front at this site housing a clothing store. The Oleson Grocery occupied the store in 1908. Elsie McNeil notes.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	7	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	12	Montcalm Co., MI

203-09 S. Huntington Banks (1984)

Large modern style 1 and 2-story brick and EIFS-finished bank building that incorporates the 1906-07 Gibson Block at 203 and 1902 Backus Block at 205 and includes a new structure at 207-09 built in 1984 following a fire that destroyed the 1870 Clark-Lovell Block that stood there. Nothing of the Gibson and Backus Blocks is visible. NON-CONTRIBUTING because nothing evident of historic buildings and building as it presently exists is much less than 50 years old. Elsie McNeil notes.

[211 S.] Pedestrian Walkway

213 S. Miller Block (1874-75)

2-story 1-storefront brick Late Victorian with bracketed cornice and elaborate caps above segmental-arch 2nd-story windows that appear to be metal; 1950s aluminum-trim storefront with deep asymmetrical center recessed entry; modern slanting canopy; metal sheeting on blank N side façade.

Construction of this building began in September 1874, and the R. C. Miller & Sons boot and shoe store opened in late April 1875. *Independent*, 9/16/1874; 3/18 and 4/29/1875.

215-17 S. Cole & Bennett/Briggs & Gibbs Block (1872-73)

2-story 2-storefront brick Italianate, with façade separated by paneled piers into 3 two-bay sections with entry to 2nd story in center of middle section; round-arch 2nd-story windows with metal caps; 215 – 1950s aluminum-trim storefront, slanting inward toward entry at N end, with shingled pent roof and signboard area; 217 – modern cobblestone-faced storefront.

Originally three stories in height with a massive bracketed cornice, the building lost its third story to a fire in 1974. The 7/17/1872 *Independent* reported that the post office building was to be removed from the site by 9/1 to make way for the new building. The Cole & Bennett store moved into their part of the building during mid-January 1873. *Independent*, 7/17 and 10/23/1872; 1/22/1873.

219-21 S. Nichols Block (1873)

1-story 2-storefront, N with modern board and shingled front, S modern storefront with shingled pent roof. Non-contributing. Built for Mrs. M. H. Nichols, this building, originally a two-story red brick Italianate building with façade identical to 223, at first housed L. G. McVean's book and stationary and O. W. Greene's jewelry shops in one storefront and the Gray, Tyler & Co. boot and shoe shop in the other. The building suffered a fire in 1981, after which the second story was removed. NON-CONTRIBUTING because of severe loss of integrity. *Independent*, 4/9, 7/16, 8/20, 8/27, and 10/8/1873.

223 S. Lawton Block (1873)

2-story 1-storefront brick Italianate with paneled piers edging façade and arcaded brickwork above supported on brick corbels (a paneled brick frieze and low cornice removed); round-arch 2nd-story window openings, now containing shorter square-head windows, set in raised brick surrounds; modern storefront.

The 11/19/1873 *Independent* notes C. L. & W. F. Lawton's dry goods, grocery, and crockery store in the Nichols Block, but the reference may be to this building since it and the larger Nichols Block next door once had a uniform façade.

225-27 S. Norton & Ecker Block (1874)

3-story 2-storefront brick Italianate with angled corner at the Cass intersection; bracketed iron main and storefront cornices; single and paired segmental-arch-head windows in 2nd and 3rd stories with iron pedimental caps like those in 102-04, 106-08, and 124 S. Lafayette; 225 – 1920s storefront with broad slant-sided, recessed central entry and stuccoed transom area; large 1-story concrete block rear extension.

Construction of the building began in April and was largely completed during September. The building initially housed the M. H. Norton & Co. bank in the corner space, James Mills' clothing store in the remainder of the first floor and part of the second, and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Greenville Downtown Historic District

Page 13 Montcalm Co., MI

the law offices of Ellsworth & Lewis and Dexter T. Sapp in the second story as well. *Independent*, 4/8, 6/16, 7/22, 8/12, 9/23, and 11/4/1874.

301 S. Rider & Potter Block (1870)

3-story 1-storefront (31 ft. wide) brick Italianate with bracketed iron cornice and piers containing narrow vertical sunken panels rising, with rounded transitions, to support slightly projecting frieze; segmental-arch-head 2nd-story and round-arch 3rd-story windows, with cut stone caps; beltcourse with round windows above in upper part of tall 3rd story, which once contained a hall with balcony; 2004 wood storefront modeled after early 20th-C. Neoclassical one that was replaced 1974; Neoclassical limestone side entrance with piers and flat entablature.

The Rider & Potter Block (sometimes also referred to as the Rider or the Potter Block) was built for Greenville businessmen Myron Rider and Thomas J. Potter. Plans to construct the building were reported in the 3/15 *Independent*. The building's brick walls were completed by late September and the building reported to be nearly finished in late November. It housed commercial space downstairs, with offices upstairs, and the large Potter's Hall, a popular meeting and entertainment venue in the building's early days, in the 3rd story. Attorneys Ellsworth & Lewis and W. M. Crane & Bro., insurance agents, were occupying second-story spaces in January 1871. Rooke & Wright's clothing store occupied the first and part of the second floor beginning in September 1874. A succession of movie theaters operated in the building in the 1907-14 period, and the Greenville State Bank and its successors, the First State Bank of Greenville, Old Kent Bank, and Fifth Third Bank, operated here between 1914 and 2002. *Independent*, 3/15, 7/19, 10/4, and 11/22/1870; 1/24/1871; 12/31/1873; 4/1, 8/12, 9/23, and 12/9/1874.

305 S. Church Block (between 1892 and 1900)

2-story 1-storefront brick Late Victorian with square-head windows, rock-face limestone beltcourses and window caps and panel brick frieze and parapet; 2004 wood-trim storefront.

307 S. Faber Block (1885)

2-story 1-storefront brick Late Victorian with piers subdividing upper façade into 3 bays; plain brick frieze without any cornice; tall and narrow square-head windows with iron caps displaying incised Christopher Dresser-like detailing; 2004 wood-trim storefront.

This building replaced George Faber's previous building, one of several adjacent buildings that burned in 1884. Like the old, the new building housed Faber's boot, shoe, and rubber goods shop. A Faber advertisement, first appearing in the September 17, 1885, *Independent*, began, "Home Again! Removed into the New Brick Store...."

309-311 S. Carter Building (1947)

2-story 2-storefront with "Danish" stucco-and-half-timber look and tall shingled pent roof; concrete block side and brick rear walls. NON-CONTRIBUTING due to present "Danish" façade. Built for Harold Carter, the building had as its primary tenant the Kroger grocery. The front displayed large square windows in the 2nd story. The building was all but gutted by fire 3/2/1951. The reconstructed façade contained a long strip window across most of the front above a storefront with large windows above high bulkheads. Replacing Kroger's, which built a new store elsewhere, the Michigan Consolidated Gas Company became the rebuilt building's main tenant, formally opening their doors 1/4/1952. *The Daily News*, 3/3/1951, 1/2/1952.

E. Cass St.

122-28. First Congregational Church Complex (Church, 1879-80; Christian Education Building, 1963-64, expansion 2001-2002) Designed by Detroit architect Elijah E. Myers, architect of the Michigan and several other state capitols, First Congo is Greenville's premiere historic church building. The contract for construction of the church was awarded to Peale & Miller of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	7	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	14	Montcalm Co., MI

Grand Rapids 4/23/1879, the cornerstone set in place 6/14/1879, and the completed building dedicated 6/6/1880. First Congregational is a 100 X 75-foot yellow-buff ("white") brick Gothic Revival building with a tall gable roof, with shallow gabled transept on either side, and a 100-foot tall spired tower at one front corner. The church has beltcourses of Ionia sandstone and gable copings, hood moldings for the Gothic windows, and square-plan pinnacles of metal. The square-plan tower is topped by a square-plan wood belfry, with Gothic arch opening in each face, and a four-sided spire, each side fronted by a very pointed gable containing a blind oculus. There are pointed arch windows, and a large twelve-sided rose window, set into a Gothic arch motif, in the front façade. The church's 2nd-story auditorium is a broad rectangular space with low gabled ceiling, with false wood trusses, and a large gallery in the rear. The floor slopes gently toward the chancel. The interior retains much of its original finish, mostly in walnut, including the pews. The church's original Aesthetic-period grisaille windows were made by W. H. Wells & Bros. of Chicago, who also created about the same time the windows in the Charlotte (MI) First Congregational Church. Exterior changes to the building include replacement of the original tall and highly ornamental pinnacles that crowned the buttresses at the ends of the front and transept facades with ones of lower and more simple design in 1890 following wind damage, and refacing of the basement and entry vestibule exterior walls with darker brick in 1948.

The Christian Education Building is a flat-roofed 2-story building (with smaller 1-story front section facing Cass Street) attached to the west side of the south-facing church. Finished in red-orange brick, it displays paired and triple Gothic windows set in a grid of vertical concrete ribs. The building contains church school and meeting rooms, office space, a large narthex with adjacent library space, and restrooms and elevator. *Independent*, 6/10/1879; 8/14/1890. Church history.

123. Office Building (1970s)

1-story vinyl-sided with projecting mansard roof. NON-CONTRIBUTING.

125. House/now Office Building (c. 1886-87)

2-story Foursquare; no historic finishes visible. NON-CONTRIBUTING due to loss of historic exterior finish.

A 5/27/1886 note in the *Independent* that Mrs. Addie F. Conover was building a house next west of the Episcopal church or a 10/20/1887 report in the paper that C. J. Clark was beginning construction of a house west of the Episcopal church may (either of them) refer to this building.

129/and 305 S. Clay St. St. Paul the Apostle Episcopal Church Complex (Church, 1855-56; Guild Hall, 1903)

Built as the original home of the First Congregational Church, the church was moved from the site of the present Congregational church across the street to its current site during April 1879 and continued to serve as the Congregational church until the new building was dedicated in June 1880. The 1855-56 building was soon sold to the Episcopalians and, refurbished, formally opened as St. Paul's July 25, 1880.

The church is a simply detailed, gable-roof building with clapboarded walls and a square-plan central front tower that projects about half its depth from the front wall plane with its front corners supported on square posts that form an entry porch. A cross-topped square-plan belfry crowns the tower. The roof's very steep pitch, pointed-arch windows, and triangular caps above the doorways, tower, and belfry openings impart a Gothic appearance.

The Guild Hall, a hip-roof, one-story, wooden building, stands directly behind (south of) the church.

Independent, 2/4, 2/11, 6/16, 8/26/1874; 4/3 and 4/17/1879. St. Paul's Church working file, MI SHPO. Congregational Church history.

W. Cass St.

116. Rarden Building (1913)

Small 1-story flat-roof rock-face concrete block with simple metal cornice; door and single window in front.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	7	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	15	Montcalm Co., MI

Plans by Dr. W. L. Rarden, a dentist who lived next door to the west at 118, to build a new office for his practice were reported in the *Independent* in early August 1913 and the August 20 paper noted that it would be a one-story "cement" block building with fireproof roof. Dr. Rarden's dental office still occupied the building in 1930. *Independent*, 8/6 and 8/20/1913.

117. Sorenson Building (1950)

2-story steel-frame, concrete block International Style; smooth-finished block front with shallowly recessed center-entry storefront displaying black and white pigmented structural glass piers and bulkheads and aluminum trim; bronze plaques by 2nd-story entry at left end of façade display names of Drs. N. P. Sorensen and H. O. Steele, dentists. Construction of this building, owned by Dr. Nels P. Sorensen, was reported in the 5/13/1950 *News*. Donald Sullivan of Alma was the general contractor. Schneider Brothers Floor Coverings, which occupied the 1st-floor store space, opened 7/28/1950. The 5/13/1950 article stated that Dr. Sorensen's office would occupy the rear of three office suites in the second story. *The Daily News*, 5/13 and 7/27/1950.

118. House (late 19th-C.)

2-story gable-front house with large shed-roof additions; gabled entry porch with arched entry and grouped windows, with wrought-iron balconets, in 1st and 2nd stories of front – both features appearing to date c. 1920s. The house served during the early 20th C. as the home of dentist Dr. W. L. Rarden, whose office was in 116, and of attorney C. L. Rarden.

119. Post Office (1938-39)

1-story limestone-trim red brick Classical/Art Deco-influenced building; symmetrical front with broad granite staircase leading up to 3 deep square-head central recesses trimmed in limestone, central one containing the entrance; limestone beltcourses at window sill level and at the level of the top of the entry recesses. The lobby contains Charles W. Thwaites' mural, "Lumbering." The building was dedicated 6/16/1939 and opened to the public 7/8/1939.

120. House (c. 1880s)

2-story frame narrow gable-front with shed-roof front porch and slant-sided bay window. Home of city attorney C. B. Rarden in the 1930s.

122. Smith Building (1950; c. 1990)

1-story cinder block office building, 25 feet wide in front by 60 deep, its west wall directly adjoining the Ostrander Building's east wall; red brick front containing two bay windows, fronted by shallow porch with hewn timber posts that also fronts 124; flat roof except for tall, steeply sloping red clay tile roof over front section, with broad arch-top central dormer in front. Visually interesting and appealing, but NON-CONTRIBUTING because major renovation is less than fifty years old. Dr. Karl Smith had this building constructed to house his and Dr. Earl H. Faber's offices. Dr. Faber eventually acquired this building and c. 1981-82 Dr. Faber's son, Dr. Kirkwood E. Faber, D.D.S., also acquired no. 124 from Dr. Ostrander. C. 1990 Dr. Kirkwood Faber combined the two buildings into a single dental office building and remodeled them in their present form, with part red tile and part thatched roof modeled after the roofs of Denmark. He designed the remodeling himself. Romke Hekstra, a roofer from the Netherlands whose brother is a roofing contractor in Grand Rapids, did the thatching. *The Daily News*, 4/29 and 6/10/1950; personal communication with Dr. Kirkwood Faber 4/17/2008.

124. Ostrander Building (1950; c. 1990)

1-story concrete block building with later horizontal limestone slab front, with shallow hewn timber-post front porch matching 122, and stone and stucco and half-timber west façade and a side-gable thatched roof with twin eyebrow dormers. Visually interesting and appealing, but NON-CONTRIBUTING because major renovation is less than fifty years old. Dr. D. O. Ostrander had this 24 X 30-foot building constructed to house his dentist office. Dr. Ostrander moved in 8/5/1950. The

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Greenville Downtown Historic District

Page 16 Montcalm Co., MI

building, as shown in a photograph in the 8/12/1950 *Daily News*, originally had a flat roof and brick front. Dr. Kirkwood Faber combined this building with no. 122 and remodeled it in its present Danish form c. 1990. *The Daily News*, 4/29, 6/10, and 8/12/1950.

128. Episcopal/Adventist Church (1874)

Simply detailed steeple-less frame building with steeply pitched gable roof and a small gabled entry porch. Vinyl siding now covers the clapboarding, and the current square-head modern windows are much shorter than the original pointed arch ones. The Episcopalians constructed this building in the fall of 1874. In February 1874 they had bought the old Congregational church (the present St. Paul's), which the Congregationalists were planning to replace with a new building, but returned it to the Congregationalists by late August when it became clear they would not be able to build their new church that year. The Episcopalians raised money for their own church building during September and probably occupied this new church in January 1875. Within a few years St. Paul's encountered financial difficulties and closed and then sold the building in the late 1870s. It served as the Seventh-Day Adventist church from then until the late 1980s. *Independent*, 2/4, 2/11, 8/26, 9/23, 10/21, 11/18, and 12/30/1874.

W. Grove St.

114. Kroger's Grocery Building (1952)

1-story 60 X 150-foot flat-roof with brick facades facing north on Grove and west on parking lot and concrete block east and south facades; entry at NW corner off shallow porch cut out of the building's rectangle; large window along west part of street front adjacent to entry; adjacent parking lot to west.

The previous Kroger store at 309 S. Lafayette burned 3/2/1951. In mid-July 1952 Kroger's announced plans for a new supermarket at this site, which then contained the 1905 R. D. Tower house. The store opened January 27, 1953. It offered "Free Parking in Big Paved Lot" (the city was about to introduce parking meters along Lafayette) and several features that were new then but have since become standard: "automatic opening electronic doors," shopping carts with seats for small children, and "Speedy Check-Out Stands." The building currently houses a Family Dollar store. *Daily News*, 3/5/1951; 7/15/1952; 1/23 and 1/26/1953.

126. Danish Brotherhood Hall (1930)

1-story reddish-brown vitrified tile building, with projecting piers along side walls, on tall poured concrete foundation; arched roof masked by low stepped gable; asymmetrical façade with at grade double-door entry at right balanced by triple window toward left; concrete plaque in gable containing inscription:

D. B. S. HALL
Lodge No. 70

A stair hall at the southeast corner leads to the main lodge room on the main floor. In front of it, flanking the entry, is a smaller Sisterhood Room on one side and small ticket office/bar space on the other. The lower level contains another meeting/dining room and kitchen.

The hall was built for Danish Brotherhood Lodge No. 70 (Det Dankse Brodersomfund), established in 1893. It replaced the previous hall on the site, known as the Coliseum, which burned down two years before. Work on the new building began July 9. Greenville's Danish Brotherhood and Sisterhood lodges continue to use the building, but their numbers have declined. *Daily News*, 7/9/1930.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	7	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	17	Montcalm Co., MI

E. Montcalm St.

117. Montcalm Grange Hall (1916-17)

1-story plus basement gable-front rock-face concrete block with gambrel roof and shingled gable; single doorway and window in front; half-height glass block side windows in basement level; later shed-roof cinder block addition at rear.

The Montcalm Grange dedicated this hall in mid-February 1917. It was constructed using concrete block made at the Belknap cement plant in Greenville. William Rushton was the mason, Fred Amidon the head carpenter. Established in March 1874, the Montcalm Grange had previously met at the Coliseum, located on the present site of the Danish Brotherhood Hall. *Independent*, 2/14/1917.

E. Washington St.

109. Frederick E. Ranney House (pre-1884; 1905)

2-story side-gable clapboarded Georgian-Colonial Revival with broad, symmetrical front dominated by 4-column pedimented Ionic portico and projecting center section of house behind it; low hip-roof Tuscan-column front porch in angle either side of center portico; Ionic pilasters at corners and broken pediment details; large apparently early 20th-C. rear ell. The house's former back yard is now a paved parking area.

- Garage: A 2-bay concrete block garage with low gabled front stands at the property's southwest corner.
- Wall: A tall rock-face concrete block wall with taller and broader concrete block posts at regular intervals runs along the property's west edge. There is a drive-through opening directly in front of the garage.

The 1884 Sanborn shows a house at this site having the same footprint as the center and east front sections of the present house. Later Sanborn maps through 1900 show the same footprint, but in the next map, from 1908, the house has been expanded to the present footprint. The December 13, 1905, *Independent*, noted that Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Johnson now reside in a house on East Washington "which has been reconstructed and furnished in modern style with all comforts and conveniences." The house, one of the city's most architecturally distinguished early twentieth-century homes, was enlarged and remodeled in the same year, 1905, in which R. J. Tower built his large house (demolished) in the same Georgian-Classical style. The November 5, 1913, *Independent* reported that F. E. Ranney "has bought the C. W. Johnson home on E. Washington, which he will occupy shortly." Frederick E. Ranney (1853-1922) was one of Greenville's leading residents and businessmen, the founder and long-time president of the Ranney Refrigerator Company, the city's largest industry and employer in the very early twentieth century, and mayor of Greenville in 1915-16. The Ranneys occupied this home until after F. E. Ranney's death in October 1922.

Property Name/County/State Greenville Downtown Historic District, Montcalm Co., MI

Architect/Builder Elijah E. Myers; Pierre Lindhout;

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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: Flat River Historical Society and Museum

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property About 15

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	16	641870	4782200	3	16	642070 4781740
2	16	642070	4782270	4	16	641880 4781850

☐ See continuation sheet.

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.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	1	Montcalm Co., MI

Significance

The Greenville Downtown Historic District meets national register criterion A for comprising an area that has served as Greenville's central business district and community focal point since its establishment during Greenville's founding years in the early 1850s. The district contains commercial buildings dating back as far as 1869 and from the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries that reflect that long history and that collectively have housed much of the city's commercial activity and many of the city's leading commercial institutions over the years. The downtown's business blocks, housing various meeting spaces in their upper stories during past years, hosted much of the city's social, cultural, and entertainment activity. Many commercial buildings and, especially, the city's Danish Brotherhood Hall, possess historical associations with a Danish community that has existed in the city since the 1860s. Downtown Greenville's commercial buildings meet criterion C for collectively representing a broad range of later nineteenth and early and mid-twentieth-century commercial architecture forms and styles, and several of the Italianate and Late Victorian buildings possess significance in the local context of their architectural styles as outstanding examples. Two nineteenth-century church buildings and one early twentieth-century house meet criterion C individually for their architectural distinction. The district also possesses significance under criterion B for containing at least two buildings, the Rutan Block and the Ranney House, that possess direct historical associations with Manning Rutan and Frederick E. Ranney, persons of special significance in the early history of the downtown and city in general.

Greenville began in 1844 with the arrival of the first settler, John Green, and his family from Fulton County, New York. The site was described as being at the time of settlement "an unbroken plain dotted here and there with clumps of underbrush, while north of the bridge [i.e. Flat River] only a dense forest met the eye" ("Greenville - By Gone Days"). That year Green and Samuel Demorest built the first of a number of sawmills at what became known as Green's Mills along the Flat River at the north edge of the new settlement. A year later a second sawmill was built at the settlement's south end. That year, 1845, the location became part of Montcalm Township, which then encompassed the whole of Montcalm County. The county was created as a geographical unit in 1831, when the territory was still an unbroken wilderness, but was not established as a political unit until 1850. Before that Montcalm Township was attached to Ionia County, its neighbor to the south. Eureka Township, which contained the new settlement, was one of several townships separated from Montcalm at the same time the county became a legal entity.

In 1850 newly established Eureka Township had a population of 461. In 1853 John Green and Manning Rutan platted adjacent areas in what is now Greenville centered on Lafayette Street. As of 1860 the settlement contained about 400 persons out of the township's population of nearly 1000. The 1850 act incorporating Montcalm County established Greenville as the temporary county seat until 1860. In 1860 the county voters approved moving the county seat to a location more central in the county that subsequently

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	2	Montcalm Co., MI

became the village of Stanton, the present county seat.

Lumbering and wood products manufacturing soon became Greenville's economic mainstays. In the community's earliest days the mills cut mostly for the local market, with the surplus being rafted down the Flat and Grand rivers to where it could be sold, but soon the local lumbermen were looking for a larger market. An 1869 *Greenville Independent* article on "The Lumbering Region of Flat River" stated that the white pine region along the Flat and its tributaries extended twenty-one miles north and seven east from Greenville and that logging activities thus far had barely begun to tap this resource. Cutting the pine north of town along the Flat River and tributaries began in earnest in the winter of 1865-66, with a first log drive on the Flat River in 1866 bringing 35,000,000 feet of logs successfully down that and the Grand River to Grand Haven (Schenk, p. 374). The lumber boom peaked in 1881, when 165 million feet of logs were shipped downriver, and ended by about 1890.

In October 1870 the community's first railroad, the Lansing & Ionia (it soon became the Detroit, Lansing & Lake Michigan), was completed as far northwest as Greenville from Ionia, making it possible to ship forest products to market by rail. Service to Greenville began September 6, 1870, and the 9/13 *Independent* noted that the first cargo brought for shipment south on the 7th was a load of shingles. The railroad (the line was extended northwest to connect with the Grand Rapids & Indiana line at Howard City during the coming year) resulted in a rapid expansion of lumbering activities and rapid development of Greenville itself. A sketch of "Greenville in 1872," prepared by local druggist W. H. Conover for the *Michigan State Gazetteer and Business Directory*, noted that, while 75,000,000 feet of logs were being floated annually down the Flat and Grand rivers to sawmills, nearly as many more were being sawn by mills along the Flat and its tributaries and the products shipped out by rail. Local mills turned out lumber, shingles, lath, window sash, and other building products. The 1881 county history states that the local mills had markets in Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Connecticut, New York, and elsewhere (Schenk, p. 381). By 1875 ten lumber, lath, and shingle mills lined the Flat in Greenville, with more upstream to the north. The 1884 Sanborn maps, the first for Greenville, show, in addition to sawmills, planing and shingle mills, a sash, door and blind factory, and a barrel factory.

The Flat River logging boom and the opening of the railroad connection in September 1870 were key factors in Greenville's rapid growth and development. Greenville was incorporated as a village in March 1867, and the 1870 census recorded a population of 1807. City government was established in 1871, and the population rose to 3144 in 1880. A second railroad line, the Toledo, Saginaw & Muskegon, reached Greenville in 1887. By then, with the depletion of the supply of pine, the lumber boom was near its end.

Farming began to assume a substantial importance even before the railroad's opening facilitated shipping agricultural products to market. In addition to Manning Rutan's load of shingles, the first freight shipped from Greenville on September 7, 1870, included locally milled flour bound for New York (*Independent*,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Greenville Downtown Historic
District

Page 3 Montcalm Co., MI

9/13/1870). Conover's "Greenville in 1872" states that three flour mills and a woolen mill were then operating in the city. Grist and flour mills, present since the community's early years, along with cider and wool carding mills, assumed greater prominence along the Flat as the sawmills disappeared.

Potatoes became a key crop in the 1880s, and beginning in the 1890s Greenville was a leading potato shipping point in Michigan. Long-time potato buyer and shipper George C. Bower stated that the first shipments of potatoes from Greenville were made in the 1870s and that by the early 1900s seven to ten local dealers were shipping quantities of "potatoes, apples, onions, beans, hay, wheat, rye, etc.," with potato shipments growing the fastest. In the 1900-01 season, he reported, 3000 cars of potatoes were shipped, in 1903-04 about 5000 cars, and, in the six seasons from August 1900 to August 1906, 25-30,000 carloads of potatoes were shipped. The crop came to Greenville dealers from an area from Cedar Springs on the west to Sheridan on the east and from Big Rapids on the north to Ionia on the south ("Potato Business in Greenville"). In 1910, when Michigan ranked second only to New York among the states in acreage planted in potatoes and in production, Greenville and nearby Stanton were the state's leading shipping points. Shipping warehouses for potatoes, beans, hay, and other agricultural produce formed a substantial presence near the railroad tracks north of downtown across the river.

A foundry/machine shop and a wagon and a furniture shop all existed in Greenville as early as the mid-1850s and other industries came and went, but potatoes led indirectly to what became the city's leading industry in the twentieth century. A plan in the early 1890s to establish a potato starch factory proved unsuccessful and left the city with an unfinished and unneeded factory building. In 1892 local businessmen approached Frederick E. Ranney (1853-1922), a businessman from nearby Belding, about using the building as a refrigerator factory that would manufacture wooden iceboxes utilizing the area's still abundant hardwoods. At the time Ranney was manager of a refrigerator plant at nearby Belding that was one of the enterprises of Belding Brothers, whose silk mills formed that community's industrial base. Greenville businessmen and residents were to subscribe to at least \$10,000 worth of stock. The factory went into operation early in 1893 (*Independent*, 10/6/1892, 1/12/1893). By 1896 Ranney's company was offering three lines of wooden refrigerators, the Lapland, Monitor, and Mascot, and reportedly doing \$500,000 worth of business a year (*Headlight Flashes*). By 1900 the company was operating two factories in Greenville.

A second firm, the Gibson Refrigerator Company, was founded in 1908 by Greenville men's clothier and banker, Frank S. Gibson. The 1918 Sanborn map shows Gibson's as by far the largest factory complex in town. Switching over to metal by the 1930s, the company became one of the nation's largest manufacturers of refrigerators and Greenville's largest employer during the rest of the twentieth century. A third firm, the Consolidated Soda Fountain Corporation, manufactured ice boxes for soda fountains beginning in the 1910s. The Gibson Refrigerator Company's closing in the early 2000s ended over a century of refrigerator manufacturing in Greenville.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	4	Montcalm Co., MI

In the early twentieth century important industries in Greenville also included the Greenville Implement Company and the Moore Plow and Implement Company, manufacturers of agricultural implements, and the R. J. Tower foundry and machine shop. The Federal-Mogul Corporation, manufacturers of marine parts, opened its substantial plant during the 1930s.

Greenville forms a part of a substantial Danish settlement that occupies much of Montcalm and adjacent counties. Danish migration to the United States, virtually nonexistent before the 1840s, grew rapidly in subsequent decades due to urban growth and unemployment and rural impoverishment and lack of land. The loss of the southern province of Holstein to the Prussians in the mid-nineteenth century and the additional loss of south Schlesswig, north of Holstein, in the wake of the 1864 Danish defeat by the Prussians and Austrians resulted in increased migration of ethnic Danes from those areas. The Montcalm County Danish settlement began with the arrival of a few Danes in the Gowen area, north-northwest of Greenville, in 1853. It expanded rapidly by word of mouth. By 1857 forty Danes were living at the "Big Dane Settlement" around Gowen. In the late 1850s a "Little Dane Settlement" began to coalesce just north of Greenville. Colonies as well as individuals continued to settle in the 1880s and 90s, and Greenville itself contained a substantial Danish population by the end of the nineteenth century. In Greenville Danish Lutherans established a predecessor to the present St. Paul's Lutheran Church in the 1870s and founded Danish Brotherhood Lodge No. 70 in 1893.

Greenville calls itself Michigan's Danish Festival City today. The city has held an annual Danish Festival since 1965.

The Greenville Business District

Lafayette Street, Greenville's main street, and Washington, Cass, and the other streets that cross it at right angles were among the original streets platted by John Green and Manning Rutan in 1853. Prior to Greenville's incorporation as a village in 1867, Eureka Township built the first Lafayette Street bridge across the Flat River at the north edge of the village in 1856-57. Another wooden bridge replaced this first one in 1868 and an iron bridge replaced that one in 1885.

A business district began to develop along Lafayette in the 1850s and 60s, with stores concentrated in the block between Washington and Cass streets and intermixed with houses farther north and south. Lots along Lafayette varied in width from block to block as different owners subdivided larger lots, but averaged twenty to twenty-four feet in street frontage. As originally platted, a public square twelve rods (198 feet) square marked the Lafayette/Washington intersection, with the streets crossing in the center, thus leaving a four-rod square space at each corner. Public squares of this configuration are common in some other states, including Indiana, but in Michigan they are rare – Marshall, Coldwater, and Vermontville are examples – and the other Michigan examples noted all have substantially larger dimensions. If Greenville's, platted

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	5	Montcalm Co., MI

when the town was the county seat, was intended as a courthouse square, it is difficult to see how it could have served that purpose. In any event, this very small square came to be viewed as serving no purpose – the *Independent* said it was called a public square only “by way of compliment” (3/9/1869). In March 1869 the village vacated it, turning the property back to private ownership.

The oldest surviving photograph of downtown Greenville, a c. 1867 photo looking across the square, shows wooden gable and falsefront stores, primarily of two-story height. Other old photographs and post card views show a variety of one and two-story wooden buildings standing cheek by jowl with the later brick ones. The last two intact examples of the early wood buildings survived side-by-side until the early 1960s along Lafayette’s east side at nos. 118-20.

The growing logging boom, rapid settlement and agricultural development of the country, and, especially, it seems, the anticipated completion of the railroad into Greenville set off a building boom in the late 1860s. The Lafayette Street business district, previously a patchwork of one and two-story wooden buildings, was radically transformed in character beginning about the time of the village’s incorporation in 1867. Three developments helped spur this redevelopment.

The first was the opening of a local brickyard in July 1867. Before this brick had to be hauled to Greenville by wagon from Ionia, the location of the nearest brickyard and railroad connection. The *Independent* (7/30/1867) reported that brick from the local Westover & Clement yard cost little more than the cost of transporting brick from elsewhere.

The second was the village’s establishment in November 1868 of a fire district along Lafayette between Benton Street (south of the district) and the Flat River (to its north) and including the first block of the side streets to either side that prohibited the construction, enlarging, or moving in of wooden buildings without prior approval by the village trustees (*Independent*, 12/1/1868). Unlike many other communities of sizes ranging from Chicago down to Portland, Michigan, which adopted fire districts following catastrophic fires, Greenville had suffered no such disaster. No mention is made in the local newspaper of the circumstances that led to enactment of Greenville’s ordinance. In the wake of the new ordinance the local brickyard, by now owned by Clement & George and R. H. Thompson, planned improvements for the coming year so that they could make 8,000 brick per day (*Independent*, 12/29/1867).

A third was the opening of the railroad line to Greenville late in 1870. This development would have greatly reduced the cost of shipping brick and other building materials to the city from Ionia and other places in west Michigan.

The post Civil War logging – and population – boom resulted in a construction boom in the business district, and the developments noted above ensured that the new buildings would be of brick. The downtown’s first

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Greenville Downtown Historic District

Page 6 Montcalm Co., MI

brick commercial building, the three-story single-storefront Fargo & Belknap Block at 332 S. Lafayette, was built in 1869 by Hiram B. Fargo and James W. Belknap, whose grocery and dry goods store occupied the first floor. Standing at the northeast corner of Lafayette and Washington, it occupied a prime location in one of the four vacated sections of the former public square. In 1871-72 the two store buildings of the same exterior design next door to the north at 328 and 330 S. Lafayette were built, the three together forming what was soon being called the Post Office Block because the post office occupied one of the storefronts (the middle, no. 330).

Another of the earliest brick blocks is the 1870-71 Rider & Potter Block at 301 S. Lafayette (southwest corner of Cass) built for Myron Rider and Thomas J. Potter. The building has a commanding presence because of its large footprint, fifty-foot height that makes it still the tallest building along Lafayette in the business district, and special features that include oculus windows above the regular third-story windows (a unique feature among downtown buildings) and a large wooden main cornice.

By 1875 about twenty substantial brick "blocks," often of three-story height and two storefronts in frontage width, stood along Lafayette in the core commercial area between Washington on the south and Montcalm on the north. The largest, the 1872-73 Eureka Block, extended for five storefronts, or 110 feet, along Lafayette's west side north of Washington, and another three-story three-storefront block, built in 1875, stood at Lafayette and Montcalm's northwest corner. These buildings have not survived, but fifteen of the brick blocks built in those years do still stand, including the Post Office and Rider & Potter blocks mentioned above and the three-story two-storefront Walker & Clough (1873), Norton & Ecker (1874), and Rutan (1875) blocks at 102-104, 225-27, and 400-404 S. Lafayette, respectively.

The national economic downturn that began in 1873 caught Greenville in the middle of the building boom. Two large buildings were constructed in 1874 and one single-storefront block in 1875. Thereafter no new downtown building seems to have taken place until the mid-1880s.

A new era of building took place in the downtown from the mid-1880s into the early 1890s. During this time period at least a dozen buildings were constructed, including the 1887 two-storefront Slawson Block at 300-302 S. Lafayette and the Edwards, Anderson, and Harris Blocks at 216-224 S. Lafayette, built in the 1890-93 period.

The Grabill Block at 226 S. Lafayette seems to have been the first built of this new Late Victorian generation of downtown brick blocks. Elliott F. Grabill, editor and proprietor of the *Greenville Independent*, had this building constructed shortly after his appointment as the Greenville postmaster to house the post office, a bank, his newspaper plant, and rental office space. The post office occupied the building in November 1884. A postmaster's salary was based on the business volume of the office, and the postmaster was expected to defray all office costs, for space, equipment, and personnel, out of the salary. Thus there

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	7	Montcalm Co., MI

was every incentive for the postmaster to use his own building rather than rent quarters.

Grabill's building is important through the association with the man and because of its interesting early history. E. F. Grabill did several years' service in the Civil War, ending the war as a major. He fought at Gettysburg, Wilmington, North Carolina, and in other key battles. Marrying a Greenville woman in 1865, he settled there after the war and took charge of the *Independent* in 1866. He was an outspokenly partisan Republican who used the paper to regale his readers with a steady diet of party politics and news of soldiers' reunions and other events dominated by the Republican faithful. Grabill was appointed postmaster in March 1883 under the Republicans, but in 1885 Grover Cleveland, a Democrat, came into office as President. A victim of the political "spoils system" – to the victor belong the spoils – Grabill was removed from office in November 1885, and a Democrat appointed in his place. During 1886 the post office moved out of his building. The 1889 election returned the Republicans to power. In April 1890, following an advisory election by Greenville's Republican voters that selected him over another Republican candidate, C. L. Rardon, by a vote of 269 to 224, Grabill was reappointed postmaster. Moved back into the Grabill Block, the post office remained there until it outgrew the space in 1907. E. F. Grabill ran the *Independent* from this building into the twentieth century (*Independent*, 11/6, 11/13, and 11/20/1884; 11/4/1885; 7/8/1886; 3/13, 3/27, and 4/17/1890; 1/30, 7/17, and 7/31/1907).

Part of the impetus for the 1880s-90s new wave of building begun with Grabill's block was a series of fires. Large-scale fires along Lafayette in 1884, 1887, and 1888 destroyed substantial segments of the older wooden commercial building stock (the 1884 fire burned five buildings and the 1887 eight).

The largest of these fires took place on the evening of March 31, 1887, and destroyed the seven or eight frame buildings on Lafayette's east side where 310-324 S. Lafayette are located along with the Exchange Hotel located across the street. Only two weeks after the fire the *Independent* was reporting that all but two of the property owners had already made plans to rebuild. Excavation work began early in June and the local brickyard burned its first kiln of 100,000 bricks later in the month. The owners worked together to provide a uniform façade to what was really a row of seven separately owned buildings. A contract to erect the block was awarded to H. G. Wright & Co. early in July and the buildings completed at about the end of the year.

The gradual process of more intensive development along Lafayette, replacing wooden buildings one by one with masonry ones, was ongoing in the 1890s and into the twentieth century, but seemingly without the construction spurts that took place during the 1870s to early 1890s. The Callaghan, Smith Hardware, and Church Blocks at 113-15, 117, and 305 S. Lafayette were all built in the 1892-1900 period; the Winter Inn in 1901-03 (replacing the previous hotel on the site, which burned in 1900); the Winter Block, 100 S. Lafayette, in 1903; the Kemp-Gilmour Block, 212-14 S. Lafayette, in 1906; the Backus Block, 129 S. Lafayette, c. 1907; Gleason Building, 110 S. Lafayette, in 1913; Hansen Building, 131-35 S. Lafayette, in

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Greenville Downtown Historic District

Page 8 Montcalm Co., MI

1917; Hopkins Building, 112 S. Lafayette, in 1922; and Greenville National Bank, 127 S. Lafayette, in 1930. The early twentieth-century development included a number of garage and car dealership buildings, most of them located along Lafayette at the district's north and south edges. A major exception is the 1917 Rasmussen Building. Located in the heart of the downtown at 128-32 S. Lafayette, it housed a large rental commercial space in addition to a garage and Ford dealership. The Greenville National Bank seems to have been the last downtown commercial building constructed before the 1930s depression brought further building activities to a halt.

Although there was considerable new development in the years after World War II, that development seemed to continue the early twentieth-century pattern. There was no single large-scale new development downtown, but rather a slow, spotty process of replacing older buildings here and there, especially the remaining old wooden buildings, and filling the few previously vacant sites. By the early 1960s nine new commercial and office buildings had been built along Lafayette and West Cass streets and many additional buildings modernized.

Since the early 1960s few new buildings have gone up along Lafayette within the old core area of the downtown. In 1982 the former Phelps Hotel, one of the buildings constructed following the March 1887 fire, also burned. The ruins remained standing until 1988 when, with state assistance, they along with the early 1870s five-storefront long Eureka Block to its south, at the northwest corner of Lafayette and Washington, and the nearby Silvers Theater were all torn down, leaving a large open space at the south end of the business district on Lafayette's west side that has remained a parking lot since then. The downtown has suffered from the development of a shopping center area out Washington Street at the city's west edge. New development in the 1980s and 90s has tended to involve renovation – most of it unsympathetic to the underlying historic character. The rehabilitation of the former Greenville State Bank complex a few years ago represented the first use of the federal historic preservation tax credits in Greenville. It will hopefully lead to additional future projects that will result in economic development along with protection of the downtown's historic character.

Commerce

By the late 1860s Greenville's commercial district supported a broad variety of businesses, including groceries and dry-goods stores; bakeries; hardwares and agricultural implements dealers; clothing, millinery, and boot and shoe stores; watch and jewelry shops; harness shops; and book and stationary stores. There was at least one restaurant separate from those in the hotels and a number of saloons, most of them apparently located around the fringes of the business district to the north and south of the historic district area. A few barber and tailor shops and other small businesses, including at least one photographic studio, were present. Blacksmith shops, livery stables, and at least one monument works were also located mostly around the business district's edges. The core area of Greenville's downtown along Lafayette between

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	9	Montcalm Co., MI

Montcalm on the north and Washington on the south contained the largest part of the city's commercial activity and most of the early city's leading businesses. The ongoing redevelopment of the business district, with larger brick buildings placed side by side replacing mostly smaller wooden ones, supported a growing number and variety of stores in the 1880s, 90s, and later, but the core business district area remained largely within the boundaries encompassed by the historic district until well into the twentieth century. The following is a sampling of businesses housed in the surviving nineteenth-century commercial buildings in their early years:

Chapin Bros. grocery, 102-104 S. Lafayette (1873)
Connell & Hansen furniture store, 106-108 S. Lafayette (1875)
Lars Hansen grocery and flour and feed store, 210 S. Lafayette (1874)
John Avery & Son drug store, 216 S. Lafayette (1890)
L. H. Wright meat market/Anderson Meat Packing Co., 218-20 S. Lafayette (1890)
Harris Bazar (home furnishings, furniture, bazaar goods), 222 S. Lafayette (1892)
J. H. Edsall restaurant, 224 S. Lafayette (1893)
G. R. Slawson Co. drug store, 300 S. Lafayette (1887)
D. S. Seaman grocery, 302 S. Lafayette (1887)
S. R. Stephens, boots and shoes, 304 S. Lafayette (1873)
Cole & Taylor drug store, 328 S. Lafayette (1872)
Fargo & Belknap grocery, dry goods and books and stationary, 332 S. Lafayette (1869)
E. Rutan & Co., hardware and stoves, 400 S. Lafayette (1874)
Stevens Hardware, 117 S. Lafayette (1890s)
James Miller clothing, 225 S. Lafayette (1874)
George Faber, boots, shoes, and rubber goods, 307 S. Lafayette (1885)

One of Greenville's leading early commercial institutions was the Jacobson's dry-goods establishment founded by David Jacobson in 1873. Jacobson, a Polish Jew born in 1850, came to the United States in 1866 and made his way to Detroit and then to Greenville (*Headlight Flashes*). A brief notice in the 9/11/1884 *Independent* stated that Jacobson had been in business in Greenville over thirteen years; thus he must have moved here by at least 1871. The store gave its founding date as August 1873 (*Greater Greenville*). Advertisements in 1877 list a Jacobson & Clegman dry-goods, fancy goods, and millinery store, but in 1879 Jacobson and Jacob Netzorg established Jacobson & Netzorg, the "New York Store" (*Independent*, 5/17/1877 and 4/17/1879). Prior to the fire of March 31, 1887, that destroyed the row of buildings where 310-20 S. Lafayette now stand, the J & N store occupied the Potter Block, 301 S. Lafayette, for a time, but in the wake of the fire they occupied a double storefront building at 312-16 S. Lafayette in January 1888. In 1893 Jacobson & Netzorg dissolved their partnership. Jacobson kept the old store, while Netzorg moved back into the Potter Block (*Independent*, 10/11/1893; 1/17 and 3/21/1894). By the early 1900s Jacobson's, calling itself "The Big Store," expanded into the adjoining buildings, ultimately

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	10	Montcalm Co., MI

occupying 310-18 S. Lafayette. By 1912 David Jacobson had dropped out and Joseph J. and Henry S. Jacobson, probably David's son and grandson, ran the business. Henry Jacobson closed the store in April 1921 and moved to Detroit (*Independent*, 3/30 and 3/31/1920). The former Jacobson Block at 312-16 and the other buildings that also housed the business still stand, but were re-faced c. 1960-61 so that nothing of their historic appearance is now visible.

Another building that housed several commercial enterprises of special historic significance to Greenville is the Rutan Block at 400-404 S. Lafayette. It was built for Manning Rutan, who arrived in Greenville in 1851 the owner of lands that included much of the site of the future town. Rutan platted the area that included the part of the business district on the east side of Lafayette Street in 1853 and, establishing one of the first stores, became a successful merchant. Rutan had this building constructed in 1873-74 on a part of the former public square deeded back to him when the city abandoned it. It initially housed the E. Rutan & Co. hardware and stove business in which his son, Eugene, was a partner.

For a period in the early twentieth century the building housed Francis O. Lindquist's Canada Mills Company. The company, established by Lindquist about 1906, sold suits, coats, and other clothing by mail order under the "The Man from Michigan" label, the building serving as the company's original headquarters, factory, and shipping point for merchandise and also containing a large retail store (*Greater Greenville*). Lindquist, who reportedly began his career in clothing as a clerk at the Star Clothing Company in Grand Rapids, parlayed his success into a term in the U. S. Congress in 1913-14 (*Independent*, 4/16/1913). In 1915 the growing business moved to Grand Rapids, but the Rutan Block continued to house a store. Two other clothing manufacturers followed Canada Mills in using the building during the 1920s. From 1927 until 1990 the building housed another long-term and large-scale business, the Greenville Furniture Company (Elsie McNeil notes).

The business district continued to expand in the number and variety of stores in the early years of the twentieth century as the city itself grew with the city and area's industrial and agricultural development. In addition to a growing number of stores of the standard types already present for decades such as groceries and drug, dry-goods, clothing and millinery, shoe, furniture, and jewelry stores, the downtown area also attracted new businesses such as music stores and fruit and candy stores. Restaurants, smoke shops, and billiard parlors also assumed more of a presence in the central part of the business district in the early twentieth century than previously.

In addition to locally owned stores, the early twentieth century saw the coming of the first chain stores. The grocery chains seem to have been the first, with an A & P store in operation in the 1920s at 202 S. Lafayette and at 135 S. Lafayette between 1930 (*Daily News*, 11/25/1939) and 1937. A & P opened one of the community's first two super markets in 1937 at 101-103 S. Lafayette (a Meijer super market on N. Lafayette north of the district opened a few days before A & P). Kroger's had their store at 318 S. Lafayette from the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	11	Montcalm Co., MI

late 1920s to about 1936 and then occupied 135 S. Lafayette until moving to the then new Carter Building at 309-11 in 1947. In the late 1920s Fidelity Stores ran a short-lived department store at 332 S. Lafayette, perhaps the first non-grocery chain store in Greenville. In 1930 McLellan's Variety and the J. C. Penney Co. opened side-by-side large stores at 310-12 and 314-16 S. Lafayette, respectively, that served as mainstays of the business district until the late twentieth century. The Gambles department store, Western Auto, and Ben Franklin Stores also opened stores on Lafayette in the 1930s or early 1940s.

Banks

Banks formed a part of Greenville's commercial life beginning in the 1860s. The first bank established was the Charles J. Church & Co. private bank, founded in 1861. Greenville's banks, like banks everywhere, took up highly visible quarters in some of the city's most substantial buildings, generally sited overlooking key intersections in the business district. M. H. Norton & Co., another of these early private banks, is one example. The Norton & Ecker Block, at the northwest corner of Lafayette and Cass, was built with the bank's requirements in mind, and M. H. Norton occupied the corner storefront when that building was constructed in 1874.

The First National Bank, organized in 1872, occupied quarters in the Eureka Block when that building, Greenville's largest, with five storefronts extending northward from Washington on Lafayette's west side, was completed in 1873. In 1884 the bank moved into quarters designed for them in the new Grabill Block at Lafayette and Cass's northeast corner, opposite the old M. H. Norton & Co. location in the Norton & Ecker Block. The same Grabill Block quarters were later occupied by the C. J. Church & Co. Bank and its successor, the Greenville State Bank, until 1914. Established around 1895, the State Bank (renamed the First State Bank of Greenville in 1914) bought the Rider & Potter Block, 301 S. Lafayette, in 1913 and occupied it as their quarters – in more recent years under the Old Kent and then Fifth/Third names – from 1914 until 2002, expanding into 303-305 S. Lafayette in 1951 and into 307 S. Lafayette in 1974.

The small terra-cotta-clad building at 127 S. Lafayette is another old bank, constructed in 1930 to house the Greenville National Bank, and the present large Huntington Banks building at 203-209 S. Lafayette, constructed in 1984, incorporates another, the former Backus Block, built in 1902 to house the then newly established Commercial State Savings Bank (*Independent*, 2/23, 5/7, and 9/10/1902).

Offices

The professional directories published in the weekly newspaper and occasional newspaper notices show that various attorneys, real estate and insurance agents, doctors and dentists, and other professionals had their offices in downtown Greenville in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and generally occupied the upper stories of commercial buildings. The few who paid for listings and who received mention in the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	12	Montcalm Co., MI

paper were likely among the leading firms and may represent the tip of a much larger "iceberg" of professionals. For example, Ellsworth & Lewis, attorneys, and Crane Bros., insurance agents, occupied office space in the second story of the Rider & Potter (Potter) Block at 301 S. Lafayette early in 1871 when that building was completed. This must have been some of the most exclusive office space in the city then. Less than four years later, when the Norton & Ecker Block was built directly across Cass Street from their current quarters, Ellsworth & Lewis with another attorney, Dexter T. Sapp, moved into new quarters in that building's second story designed especially for them (*Independent*, 1/24/1871; 8/12, and 11/4/1874). In May 1873 the E. H. Jones & Co. real estate and abstract office was about to move into the nearly finished Eureka Block (*Independent*, 5/7/1873). In late 1884 the newly completed Grabill Block contained second-floor offices for Dr. C. M. Martin and Hall & Gracey, insurance agents, and in late 1906 the newly finished Kemp & Gilmour Block contained offices for C. L. and C. B. Rarden, attorneys, and Dr. M. G. Hillman, dentist, and Dr. F. J. Fralich (*Independent*, 11/13/1884, 12/5/1906).

Unlike most of the city's professional people at the time, realtor and insurance agent F. A. Gleason built his own building. In 1913, following a fire, Gleason built the one-story building at 110 S. Lafayette that now forms the north end of the Huckleberry's restaurant and bar. Gleason, most atypically, had a ground-floor office (*Independent*, 3/5, 5/28, and 9/10/1913).

"Professional Row"

The early 1950s saw the development of the block of West Cass Street between Lafayette and Franklin as "Professional Row." The *Daily News* of June 10, 1950, coined that term in response to the growing concentration of doctors and dentists establishing offices there. In an earlier day most doctors and dentists may have practiced out of their homes. At least there is little evidence that any of them had downtown offices.

In the early twentieth century the house at 118 West Cass served as the residence of dentist Dr. W. L. Rarden and attorney C. L. Rarden. Dr. Rarden built the small concrete block building next door east of the house at 116 West Cass to serve as his dentist office in 1913 and was still in practice there into the 1930s. Dr. Harold B. Juhlin, an osteopathic physician, had his office in the former house at 120 West Cass by 1949.

During 1950 the street underwent the building boom that led to the *Daily News*' "Professional Row" sobriquet. First to build was Dr. D. O. Ostrander, a dentist, who occupied his small building at 124 West Cass – minus the thatched "Danish" roof added later – in August 1950. Dr. Karl Smith's plans for building next door to the east at 122 were announced in April 1950 at the same time as Dr. Ostrander's. His building housed his and dentist Dr. Earl H. Faber's offices. Construction of Dr. N. P. Sorensen's large building across the street at 117 West Cass also began in the spring of 1950. Above first-floor commercial space, the new building housed his suite along with two other offices (*Daily News*, 4/29, 5/13, 6/10, and 8/12/1950).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	13	Montcalm Co., MI

Hotels

Hotels were an important institution in a growing community such as Greenville. Visitors and other transients, prospective and new residents, and salesmen and other businesspeople constantly arriving in town needed places to stay. The hotels contained dining rooms that served visitors and locals as well. In addition, some of the hotels had meeting rooms or ballrooms that served as gathering places for dances and other entertainments and meetings. Greenville's first hotel, built by Morton Shearer shortly after his arrival in 1848, was Shearer's Hotel, later known as the Exchange Hotel and then as Keith's Exchange. This three-story wooden Greek Revival building, with its gable-front and side-gable sections, was located on Lafayette's west side in mid-block between Washington and Cass. Destroyed by fire in 1887, it was replaced on the same site with a large brick building known as the Phelps Hotel that, in turn, burned in 1982. Another hotel, the Sanders (later the Central) Hotel, stood on Lafayette's east side on the site of the Rasmussen Building by 1869.

The lone survivor of downtown Greenville's hotels is the Winter Inn. Located at the northeast corner of Lafayette and Montcalm, the hotel stands on the site of older hotels dating back to 1850 that included two successive Rossman House hotels, the especially short-lived Merritt House, built in 1868-69 and burned in 1870 (*Independent*, 9/15/1868, 5/11/1869, 3/15/1870), and the Webster House (renamed the Northern Hotel, presumably for its location on the north side of the business district, in its last days). The Northern suffered a devastating fire in March 1900. Thomas B. Winter had the Winter Inn built on the site in 1901-02 and expanded it with a rear wing – containing "sample rooms" for salesmen and a hall for meetings and dances – in 1902-03. Damaged by fire in the late 1970s, the building was restored to something close to its original appearance and continues in business today.

Garages/Car Dealerships

The August 28, 1901, *Independent*, in noticing R. J. Tower's new automobile, stated that it was the first "owned in Greenville." By the 1910s autos were becoming common sights on Greenville's streets, and substantial service garages and auto dealership buildings, mostly located at the edges of the downtown, were becoming a part of the downtown scene in Greenville as they were across the country. Of the six garage/dealership buildings in the district, Kemp's Garage, 406-08 S. Lafayette, is the oldest, having been built in 1912. The garage did repair work and also housed E. A. Kemp & Son, dealers as of 1913 for Ford, Cadillac, Buick, Studebaker, and Oakland (*Independent*, 4/2/1913). By 1922 the building became Sharpe's Garage, a service/repair garage (advertisement, *Independent*, 11/1/1922). Like most of these buildings that have been so modernized over the years that only the basic roof form and remnants of concrete block side or rear facades remain visible, Kemp's was much renovated in 1961 to become the Greenville Furniture Company's Warehouse Furniture Outlet and nothing original can now be seen from the front (*Daily News*, 5/25/1961).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	14	Montcalm Co., MI

Most of these buildings were located at the downtown's north and south edges, but Oscar A. Rasmussen, a long-time, highly successful Ford and later Chevrolet dealer, built his building in a highly visible location in the very center of town. Replacing the old Central Hotel in 1917, his broad-fronted Rasmussen Building, 128-32 S. Lafayette, housed his garage, office, and showroom in the ground story's north end until the early 1930s (there was a smaller commercial space at the building's south end).

Rasmussen remained in business as a new and used car dealer longer than anyone else among the early dealers. In the early 1940s his dealership operated out of a garage at 410 S. Lafayette that he may have had built during the 1930s. In 1945 he built a new garage/dealership building at 105-107 S. Lafayette. It housed his O. A. Rasmussen Chevrolet-Cadillac Sales and Service until about 1954 and later was occupied by Bill Berger Chevrolet.

The Post-World War II Years

The end of the war years brought new prosperity to Greenville. Locally owned businesses continued to form a major component of the downtown business scene. Many of the downtown commercial buildings during the late 1940s, 50s, 60s, and 70s housed long-established Greenville stores or successions of businesses of the same types, such as hardwares or drug stores. The following are buildings within the district that housed a single business or a succession of businesses of the same type for at least fifty years:

- 100 S. Lafayette: Drug stores, beginning with Van Deinse's in 1903, occupied the building until 1970.
- 106-08 S. Lafayette: Grocery stores from 1884 until the early 1940s.
- 124 S. Lafayette: Hardware stores from at least 1908 to c. 1990.
- 218 S. Lafayette: Clothing from before 1900 to the 1990s.
- 226 S. Lafayette: *Greenville Independent* newspaper, 1884 to 1949.
- 300 S. Lafayette: Slawson & Co., Zank's Pharmacy, and other drug stores from completion of building down to 1980s (drug stores at this site almost all the time between 1852 and 1887).
- 328 S. Lafayette: Paint stores from early 1930s to 1990s.
- 400-404 S. Lafayette: Greenville Furniture from 1927 to 1990.
- 117 S. Lafayette: Hardware stores from 1890s to 1974.
- 131 S. Lafayette: Barber shop probably beginning before 1884 to present.
- 201 S. Lafayette: Reno's Bar since 1957.
- 221 S. Lafayette: Drug stores, 1870-1960s.
- 225 S. Lafayette: Drug stores, late 1880s to 1974.
- 301 S. Lafayette: First State Bank, 1914-2002.

The late 1940s saw a building boom in the downtown similar to those experienced in many Michigan towns and elsewhere across the nation as wartime controls on the economy and building materials were lifted and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	15	Montcalm Co., MI

peacetime production resumed. The 1945 Rasmussen Building, 105-07 S. Lafayette, 1947-48 Carter Building, 309-11 S. Lafayette, and the 1948-49 Jimos Brothers Building at 123-25 S. Lafayette were the first post-war commercial buildings constructed. Owned and built by local building contractor Harold Carter, the Carter Building initially had as its primary tenant the Kroger grocery formerly located in a much smaller store at 318 S. Lafayette. Greenville restaurant proprietors Gust and George Jimos had the Jimos Brothers Building built to house Gambles Department Store, which, like Kroger's, was looking for more space.

Most of the downtown's new building seems to have been done at the behest of the non-local chain stores, which began mounting aggressive expansion programs in the late 1940s and 50s. During the early post-war period national chains often continued their early twentieth-century practice of locating new stores along major streets in downtown areas. The building of the new Gambles store in 1949 and the 1954-55 W. T. Grant department store at 322-26 S. Lafayette reflect that pattern. McLellan's and J. C. Penney had been fixtures of the downtown since 1930, located side by side at 310-12 and 314-16 S. Lafayette. In 1950 both companies invested heavily in completely remodeling their stores at these locations, McLellan's expanding following a fire that destroyed their previous quarters at the same location.

In March 1951 a fire in the Carter Building, built only a few years earlier, destroyed the Kroger's grocery. Carter began reconstruction of his building almost immediately, but, rather than reopen with a conventional downtown store at that location, Kroger located a larger site off Lafayette Street at the corner of Grove and Franklin and built a "super-market" with adjacent large parking lot for customers. Offering features that would soon become standard in supermarket planning such as "automatic opening electronic doors," shopping carts with seats for children, a drug counter, and "Speedy Check-Out Stands," the new store opened in January 1953 (*Daily News*, 1/23 and 1/26/1953). (Meijer, the hometown grocery chain, founded in Greenville, and then with only a few stores in the nearby area, took out a full-page advertisement offering "Our Sincere Congratulations" to the Kroger Company "of Cincinnati, Ohio" (*Daily News*, 1/26/1953)).

The Commercial District Today

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	16	Montcalm Co., MI

Even in the early post-World War II period when Kroger's built its new store, much of the new commercial development was taking place around the city's edges, particularly along West Washington. This evolution took place slowly, but new commercial construction in the downtown since the 1960s has been confined to bank buildings – the First Savings & Loan of Saginaw (now Comerica) Bank office at 101 N. Lafayette in 1972 and the Huntington Banks building, a combination of remodeled old building and new construction, at 203-09 S. Lafayette built in 1984. Today's business climate is very different from what it was in the 1970s, when most of the community's leading stores were still located downtown. The downtown today seems to be the home mostly of single-storefront locally owned businesses.

Ethnic Heritage – Danish

During the 1970s downtown Greenville buildings began to sprout stucco and half-timber “Danish” affectations made of cheap materials. What was done to these buildings in the name of Danishness should be an embarrassment to all true Danes and all who value the Danish heritage. Downtown Greenville wears its true Danish heritage in the many buildings that were built by members of the Danish community or that housed businesses owned by them and in the Danish Brotherhood Hall that stands a block off Lafayette Street within the district.

Downtown Greenville's first businessman of Danish heritage may have been Lars Hansen, who in partnership with D. S. Moore ran Hansen & Co., a dry-goods, groceries, and provisions store, in 1867. Late in 1867 Moore took over the business when Hansen went back to Denmark. He returned in May 1868 with a large party of immigrants and soon resumed running the store (*Independent*, 12/3/1867, 5/12 and 6/2/1868). A few months later Hansen sold a half-interest in the business to N. E. Stoughton, and it became Hansen & Stoughton. The store was located in a no longer standing building owned by Hansen along with Myron Ryder. An 1870 “Sketch of Greenville” by C. C. Ellsworth then listed the store as one of the leading dry-goods shops out of the ten or twelve in Greenville and termed Hansen a “young man, but a few years from Denmark” (*Independent*, 4/5/1870). The still standing Partlow Block, 210 S. Lafayette, housed Lars Hansen's grocery and flour and feed store when it was completed in late 1874. The newspaper referred to the business as Hansen & Partlow, “family groceries,” a few months later (*Independent*, 11/4/1874, 2/4/1875).

Two large landmark commercial buildings built by members of the Danish community in downtown Greenville are the Hansen and Rasmussen Buildings that face one another across Lafayette Street. Both were built in 1917. The Hansen Block, 131-35 S. Lafayette, was built for Dr. John R. Hansen, whose residence and doctor's office was upstairs. Dr. Hansen reportedly officiated at the births of a great many Greenville babies over several decades. The building contained income-producing commercial space downstairs.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	17	Montcalm Co., MI

The Rasmussen Block, 128-32 S. Lafayette, was the property of Oscar A. Rasmussen. A newcomer to Greenville itself when the building went up, O. A. Rasmussen had the strongest of connections to the area's Danish settlement, being one of six sons of August Rasmussen, who, one of the founders of the settlement, arrived in 1856. Reportedly a "natural salesman" with a knack for closing the deal, Rasmussen was highly successful both in real estate and as a new and used automobile dealer (Flat River Historical Society, p. 123). His new building in downtown Greenville housed his Ford agency and showroom and garage as well as a furniture and undertaking establishment that leased the first floor's south end. Rasmussen initially sold Ford products but switched to Dodge and Oakland and then to Buick by 1926. This building housed his business until the early 1930s.

Three other buildings in downtown Greenville are also associated with Oscar Rasmussen. By 1940 Rasmussen was a Chevrolet dealer, and the garage building at 410 S. Lafayette housed his dealership during the early 1940s. He built the building at 105-107 S. Lafayette in 1945 to replace it. His Oscar A Rasmussen Chevrolet-Cadillac Sales remained in business there until about 1954. Rasmussen had previously built the building next door to the north at 101-103 S. Lafayette in 1937 as income property. In part it initially housed the A & P supermarket.

Another long-term Greenville "Danish" commercial institution was Christiansen's Reliable Hardware at 124-26 S. Lafayette. The hardware store was established as the W. J. Fowler & Co. Hardware around 1900 in no. 124 and expanded into 126 by 1932. Harry and Anna Christiansen purchased the business in 1939 and ran it until 1984 (Flat River Historical Society, pp. 52-53; Elsie McNeil notes).

Other buildings in the district that housed businesses owned by members of the Danish community for significant periods of time include:

- 104 S. Lafayette: H. Peter Hansen's Copenhagen or Hansen's Grocery, 1910s to 1930s.
- 106 S. Lafayette: D. P. Madsen and H. J. Rasmussen groceries, early 1900s and later 1920s.
- 116 S. Lafayette: Frank Hansen restaurant, 1940s; Hansen's Music House, late 1940s to present.
- 111 S. Lafayette: H. C. Hansen barber shop, 1910s to c. 1936.
- 115 S. Lafayette: Clifford Carlsen's Carlsen's Wallpaper & Paint, early 1940s to c. 1966.
- 129 S. Lafayette: Senius Neilsen, tailor and cleaners (and residence), early 1920s to later 1940s.

Greenville Lodge No. 70 of the Danish Brotherhood Society (Det Dankse Brodersomfund) was established in 1893. The society held dances – they seemed to specialize in masquerade dances – often at the Coliseum, located where the present Danish Brotherhood Hall is located. The building was owned by the local Grange after 1908, but in 1917, when the Grange built a new building, the Danish Brotherhood bought it (10/25/1916, 2/14/1917).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	18	Montcalm Co., MI

The Danish Brotherhood held their meetings there, but also continued to rent the building out for entertainments, most often dances. One special occasion was a showing of two "moving pictures," "A Trip to Denmark and Schleswig" and "A Nation in Celebration," to celebrate the reunion of south Schleswig – taken from Denmark by the Prussians in 1864 – with Denmark the previous year (the 1921 calendar of the national Danish Brotherhood featured "1864-1920, Denmark and Slesvig Reunited," illustrated with a photograph showing King Christian X crossing the border between Denmark and Schlesvig July 10, 1920). The Coliseum burned down in the late 1920s and the Danish Brotherhood replaced it on the same site with the present hall in 1930 (*Daily News*, 7/9/1930). The building, as it has been since its construction, is used by both the Danish Brotherhood and Danish Sisterhood.

Since 1965 the city of Greenville has hosted an annual Danish Festival. Perhaps because of its growing awareness of the historical importance of the area's Danish community, the city soon began to encourage businesses to build and modernize using a "Danish" theme. The result was an infestation during the 1970s of renovations in mostly cheap materials that cheat residents and visitors alike of the full experience of Greenville's outstanding downtown architecture with its Danish historical associations.

In resounding contrast to the visual poverty of most of the "Danish" renovations is the c. 1990 transformation of two small and very ordinary 1950 medical office buildings into a visually stunning expression of Danishness. When Dr. Kirkwood Faber, D.D.S., after long years' service on the Danish Festival Committee, decided to renovate his combined building, he felt constrained to follow the Danish theme. Instead of the usual stucco-and-half-timber-look plywood storefront job, however, Dr. Kirkwood redesigned his building with roofs modeled after what he saw in picture books, a red tile roof over one part modeled after the ubiquitous red tile roofs of Copenhagen and other large and small Danish towns and the thatched roofs still evident in the countryside. His extraordinary building stands on a busy side street directly across the street from the post office. One such building may be enough for Greenville, but Dr. Faber's is a worthy homage to the city's and region's Danish heritage.

Social History/Entertainment and Recreation

The pages of the *Greenville Independent* make it clear that Greenville's brick blocks contained numerous meeting halls in their upper stories and that these spaces housed a surprisingly rich variety of social, cultural, entertainment, and other activities and events throughout the later nineteenth and early twentieth-century years. Most of the three-story blocks had meeting halls in their third stories and a few of the two-story ones, as well, had upstairs halls. Building owners included these halls in their buildings as income-producing investments.

Some of the halls were rented out to fraternal or other organizations and became the exclusive meeting places of those organizations for the duration of their leases. Fraternal and social organizations formed an

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	19	Montcalm Co., MI

important component of the community's early social life. Greenville's earliest fraternal organization was its Masonic lodge, organized in 1857. The Odd Fellows (IOOF) established a lodge in 1865, the Knights of Pythias (K of P) about 1873, the Grange in 1874, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and Woman's Relief Corps (WRC) by the early 1880s, and the Danish Brotherhood in 1893.

Other halls were built with the expectation of using them for events. In the latter case the building owner or a lessee would hold events that would generate revenue from the admissions. Eureka Hall, in the third floor of the now-demolished Eureka Block, for example, was a leading event venue in the first years after its completion in early July 1873. Among the many events held there was Civil War general Judson Kilpatrick's program on "Sherman's March to the Sea" in March 1874; a performance of the Peak Family, "vocalists, harpists, and Swiss bell ringers," a few weeks later; a Free Love lecture by Victoria Woodhull in February 1875; and a band concert in May 1879 (*Independent*, 6/11/1873, 3/18 and 4/1/1874, 2/18/1875, and 5/1/1879). The Eureka Block's public hall seems to have had a longer life as a place for events and entertainment than most of these halls, serving as the community's leading events place until the opening of the Phelps Opera House on West Cass in the mid-1880s superceded it. Others, as public event and meeting places, seem to have had remarkably short lives before being converted to other uses or becoming lodge halls.

The district's brick blocks contained at least the following meeting halls:

- Hall, 3rd floor, Fargo & Belknap Block, 332 S. Lafayette. Served as Masonic temple from early 1870 probably until 1890 (*Independent*, 1/11/1870, 5/1/1890).
- Hall, 3rd floor, Shearer Block, probably 204 S. Lafayette. Used as Knight of Pythias lodge hall c. 1873-75 before moving to the Potter Block (*Independent*, 4/1/1875).
- Rider's Hall (soon renamed Potter's Hall), 3rd floor, Rider & Potter Block, 301 S. Lafayette. Described as having dimensions of 100 x 33 feet, with a 17 foot ceiling, and with a platform and 500 seats available. Frederick Douglas spoke there in January 1872, and various "hops" are noted. Soon superceded by Eureka Hall, it served as the Knights of Pythias hall from 1875 to 1890 and then became the Masonic temple (*Independent*, 8/2/1871, 1/3/1872, 12/31/1873, 12/9/1874, 4/1/1875, 2/6 and 5/1/1890).
- Grange Hall, 3rd floor, Rutan Block's south half, 404 S. Lafayette. The Montcalm and Eureka Grange occupied this hall upon the building's completion in 1874. By 1884 they had moved to 330 (*Independent*, 5/6/1874).
- Hall, 2nd floor, Partlow Block, 210 S. Lafayette. This hall was being used for services by the Christian Church shortly after the building's 1874 completion (*Independent*, 12/9/1874). The 1884 Sanborn lists the hall as vacant.
- Norton Hall, 3rd floor, Norton & Ecker Block, 225-27 S. Lafayette. Rented by the Good Templars upon

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Greenville Downtown Historic
District

Page 20 Montcalm Co., MI

the building's completion early in 1875 (*Independent*, 3/18/1875).

- Grange Hall, 3rd floor, Fargo & Belknap Block, 330 S. Lafayette. The 1884 Sanborn indicates the third floor at 330 was being used as the Grange Hall, with the third floor of 332 serving as the Masonic temple.
- GAR Hall, 2nd floor, Fargo & Belknap Block, 330-32 S. Lafayette. The GAR and WRC occupied rooms in the building's 2nd story, with a lodge hall across the front, beginning in 1890 (*Independent*, 2/6, 2/27, and 3/6/1890).

The local Grange seems to have been the first Greenville lodge to own its hall. In 1908 they bought a building, located where the Danish Brotherhood Hall is now, and made it into the Coliseum, a meeting place also used for dances and other entertainments. In 1916-17 the Grange built a new hall at 117 E. Montcalm. The Coliseum then became the first hall owned by the Danish Brotherhood.

The Knights of Pythias also looked toward moving out of rented quarters into a building of their own during the 1910s. In 1913 the *Independent* reported apparently firmed-up plans for a new building, with the temple on the third floor and stores and offices beneath. The site seems to have been then vacant ground between 117 and 127 S. Lafayette. Funds were to be raised through the sale of stock, with much of the money supposedly in-hand. Despite this rosy report, this plan came to naught (*Independent*, 6/11/1913). In 1927 the Knights were able to purchase the Walker & Clough Block, 102-04 S. Lafayette, and converted the building's second and third stories into their lodge quarters.

The Masons established their lodge hall in the upstairs of the Callaghan (Church/Callaghan & Miller) Block, 113-15 S. Lafayette, during the middle or late 1910s. In 1920, during a period of rapid growth, the Masons bought the building (*Independent*, 12/8/1920). It still serves as their meeting place.

In addition to the halls in the various commercial blocks, several of Greenville's downtown hotels also offered ballrooms that saw use for dances, dinners, parties, and other events. The one surviving historic hotel, the 1901-02 Winter Inn, had a hall in its rear wing, added in 1902-03. It opened with a dance February 20, 1903 (*Independent*, 9/17/1902, 2/18/1903).

The leading venue for events in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Greenville was Phelps Opera House, located on the south side of West Cass Street just west of the Potter Block. Established by T. I. Phelps, whose livery stable had previously occupied the same site, the large frame building opened in the mid-1880s and hosted serious and comic musical and dramatic performances and other events into the 1910s.

Roller skating was another popular form of entertainment – if not a craze – across the nation in the 1880s. In Greenville the Princess Skating Rink was built during the period between 1884 and 1887 at the northeast

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	21	Montcalm Co., MI

corner of Montcalm and Franklin. Newspaper advertisements for events suggest that it was designed to function both as a skating rink and as a performance space. The same building seems to have gone through a rapid evolution in the coming years, serving both as a recreational place and for other purposes. The 1892 Sanborn map shows it as a "fruit evaporator (closed)" while in late 1894 a new lessee, Percy D. Edsall, made it into the "Academy of Music" (*Independent*, 10/24/1894). The 1900 Sanborn map shows it as housing the Greenville Planter Company, but in 1908 the local Grange bought it to use for their meetings and for events. The name it acquired, the Coliseum, stuck with it when the Danish Brotherhood bought the building from the Grange in 1917 when they built their new Grange Hall on East Grove Street (*Independent*, 2/14/1917). During the Grange and Danish Brotherhood eras the building saw continued recreational use, for dances, roller skating (including masquerade skating parties), and other events until the large building burned in 1928. They built the present Danish Brotherhood Hall on the site in 1930.

A new form of entertainment, motion pictures, came on the scene at the beginning of the twentieth century. Greenville's first "vaudettes," small movie theaters, appeared about 1907. The Marguerite (soon renamed the Lyric) was in operation in the Potter Block in 1907, and another, the Ideal, in the Slawson Block by the next year (*Independent*, 5/1/1907; 2/12 and 3/4/1908). The old Phelps Opera House also became a movie house, the Silver Family Theatre, by 1916. In 1920 and again probably in the late 1930s the old building with its iron-sheathed wood exterior was modernized (*Independent*, 3/3 and 5/19/1920). By the 1940s it was encased in a concrete block Art Deco facade. While the Silver Theater has been demolished, the Potter and Slawson Blocks that contained Greenville's first movie theaters still stand.

In addition to musical and theatrical shows that were an ongoing feature of the cultural/entertainment life of towns like Greenville that were located along railroad lines and were large enough to drum up a paying audience, exhibits of curiosities hawked from town to town sometimes found their way to Greenville's main street. One such was the "Cardiff Giant," a reputed petrified human of larger-than-life dimensions "found" buried on a farm near Cardiff, New York, in 1869. Although the true facts regarding its surreptitious carving and burial emerged before 1869 was over, the figure went on tour for years afterwards. A famous hoax, it survives and is now on permanent display at the New York State Historical Association in Cooperstown, New York. Previously on display in Ionia and Grand Rapids, the Cardiff Giant was brought to Greenville in mid-December 1875. "The Cardiff Giant is on exhibition in the Brothers building, and many people visit it daily, finding it a curiosity well worthy of their attention. School children will be admitted on Saturday for 5 cents each" (*Independent*, 12/9 and 12/16/1875). Presumably the figure was displayed in a vacant storefront on the ground floor of the building, located at 306-08 S. Lafayette.

Churches

The outer edges of the business district became the sites of most of Greenville's churches in the nineteenth century. By the 1870s and 80s central Greenville contained Congregational, Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Greenville Downtown Historic District

Page 22 Montcalm Co., MI

Adventist, and Catholic churches. Greenville's churches tended to locate one block off Lafayette to either side, and the city's three oldest church buildings stand within the district.

The oldest standing church building was constructed in 1855-56 by the Congregationalists and originally stood on the site of the present First Congregational Church building at the northwest corner of Cass and Clay streets one block east of Lafayette. Early in 1874, when the Congregationalists were planning a new church, they sold this building to the Episcopalians, who occupied it as their church from February until August. Whatever the reasons – the suddenly harsh economic times probably played a role – the Congregationalists had to drop their building plans, and the Episcopalians turned the building back to them. In 1879, when the Congregationalists were finally able to build, they moved their old church – the present St. Paul's – across the street to the current site. When the present 1879-80 Congregational church was built, the older building became St. Paul's Episcopal Church a second time. With renovations to give it a more "churchly" interior, it remains in use today.

Another standing church building located two blocks west, at W. Cass and Franklin's northeast corner, also once served as St. Paul's. Following the August 1874 abandonment of the former Congregational church building, the Episcopalians raised funds and, in the fall of 1874, built this small and simple chapel, opened probably in January 1875. Like the former Congregational church, this building also served only a short time as an Episcopal church. The building was sold and the parish for a time became dormant. From around 1880 until the late 1980s the building served as the Seventh Day Adventist church.

Architecture

The Greenville Downtown Historic District is notable in architectural terms for its commercial buildings, churches, the post office building, and one house. The district contains commercial buildings that, dating from 1869 to the 1950s and early 1960s, exhibit a stylishness and diversity in design and materials that seem unusual for what was still a small city.

Greenville's three surviving nineteenth-century church buildings all stand within the district. The present First Congregational Church is a highly polished and intact auditorium church in the Gothic Revival designed by an important Michigan architect, Elijah E. Myers, who planned five state capitols, numerous Midwestern county courthouses, and fine churches and other buildings in Michigan. The former Congregational church building, serving as St. Paul's Episcopal Church for all but about twenty-five years of its 150 years, dates back to Greenville's pioneer years. Combining vestigial Greek Revival features, such as the square belfry and square piers supporting the tower, with pointed-arch windows and a steeply sloping roof suggestive of the Gothic Revival, it reflects a pragmatic, non-doctrinaire approach to church design that, characteristic of the times for non-liturgical Protestant churches, adopted Gothic as a "Christian" style but within a budget. The 1874 Episcopal/Adventist church was originally similar to the present St. Paul's,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Greenville Downtown Historic District

Page 23 Montcalm Co., MI

but without the tower and belfry. It is clad in synthetic siding and the Gothic side windows now have square heads. Something better should be done.

The Greenville Post Office building, constructed in 1938-39, is a fine example of the solid and substantial post office buildings the government was building in great numbers across the nation during the 1930s. The building follows one of a number of standard designs the post office was using at the time for new buildings in smaller cities such as Greenville. Its reserved exterior exemplifies a simplified Art Deco-influenced classicism that in relation to post offices of this period has been called "Starved-Classicism," in which ornament is eliminated or reduced to a minimum to reduce costs and speed construction. Notwithstanding the less than flattering term, Greenville's building, like most others of its type, is an ornament to its street.

Greenville's commercial architecture exemplifies a broad variety of architectural styles and features characteristic of the later nineteenth and early and mid-twentieth centuries in Michigan's small-city commercial districts. The downtown's oldest buildings are brick Italianate blocks built in the 1869-75 period.

Italianate as an architectural style for commercial buildings harkens back to the city palazzos of Renaissance Italy built in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries with their connotations of power, security, and prosperity. Tastemakers in Britain and the Continent began to see Italianate as an alternative to the prevalent architectural vocabularies of Roman and Greek classicism and the Gothic Revival and as a particularly appropriate style for certain types of buildings, including banks and commercial buildings that represented capital and sought to look solid and substantial. The first of these Italianate commercial buildings began to appear in the United States in the 1840s.

Greenville's Italianate commercial buildings, broadly speaking, are similar to Italianate commercial buildings throughout southern Michigan and beyond. They are narrow-fronted along Lafayette, usually a single storefront – generally twenty to twenty-four feet – in width, although there are a number of double-storefront buildings, and deep. They have load-bearing brick exterior walls and timber structural systems, although there may be some use of iron interior support columns.

The exteriors display typically Italianate decorative features such as bracketed cornices, corbelled brickwork detailing below the frieze, and round-arch, segmental-arch, and rounded-corner windows with boldly projecting caps. By the time Greenville's Italianate commercial buildings were being built in the 1869-75 period, iron was becoming an increasingly popular material for cornices in place of wood, presumably because of fire concerns, and almost all of the downtown Greenville Italianate buildings' cornices appear to be of that material. The upper facades' decorative window caps are also of fire-resistant materials, brick, iron, and, less commonly, cut stone. Many if not most of these buildings had iron storefront columns supporting the upper facades, but of them all only the ones in 400-404 S. Lafayette have survived successive

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	24	Montcalm Co., MI

modernizations.

The Greenville district contains fifteen Italianate commercial buildings, six of them double storefronts and one a triple-storefront building. They are:

102-04 S. Lafayette. Walker & Clough Block, 1873
106-08 S. Lafayette. Edwards Block, 1875
124 S. Lafayette. Rich Block, 1870
200-02 S. Lafayette. Shearer Block, 1869-70
204 S. Lafayette. Shearer Block, 1870-71
210 S. Lafayette. Partlow Block, 1874
304 S. Lafayette. Stevens Block, 1873
306-08 S. Lafayette. Brothers Block, 1869-70
328-32 S. Lafayette. Post Office Block, 1869, 1871-72
400-04 S. Lafayette. Rutan Block, 1873-74
213 S. Lafayette. Pre-1884
215-17 S. Lafayette. Cole & Bennett/Briggs & Gibbs Block, 1872-73
223 S. Lafayette. Lawton Block, 1873
225-27 S. Lafayette. Norton & Ecker Block, 1874
301 S. Lafayette. Rider & Potter Block, 1870

These buildings possess a collective importance in illustrating Italianate commercial architecture, in all its broad variety of materials and decorative features, in one west Michigan town. Six of the buildings retain original cornices (some buildings had brickwork detailing along the roofline and no wood or iron cornices), with only two of the surviving cornices alike. The Rider & Potter Block, one of the first of the brick Italianate blocks to be built, is the only one having a wooden cornice. It displays large paired brackets, detailed with sawn appliqué on the sides of the brackets, and smaller modillion-like brackets between the widely separated pairs and below the broadly overhanging eaves. The same variety is present in the buildings' window cap designs. Several buildings have brick caps in rows that conform to the arch of the window heads. In the Post Office Block, Rider & Potter Block, and a few other buildings, the caps are formed of two or three rows of slightly raised headers placed upright within the rows, with "triangles" or rectangles of corbelled brick forming the impost on either side of the window from which the arched cap springs.

The 1884 Grabill and 1886 Gault Block at 226 and 126 S. Lafayette form parts of the next, Late Victorian generation of commercial blocks in downtown Greenville dating from the 1880s to the very early 1900s. By the mid-1880s Italianate was passing out of favor in the face of other more recent design influences across the nation, and, while decorative iron cornices and window caps were still commonly used, new buildings

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Greenville Downtown Historic District

Page 25 Montcalm Co., MI

were less likely to display specifically Italianate features. In these newer buildings the boldly projecting, elaborately decorative cornices tended to be much reduced in depth and, often, simplified in detail, often with fewer brackets and those more widely spaced. The windows tended to be square-headed in form rather than round or segmental-arch-headed. The Gault Block façade harkens back to Italianate in its segmental-arch windows and bracketed cornice but the façade playfully turns the tables aesthetically with a rock-face rather than “finished” facade treatment and smooth-slab window caps rather than the typical boldly projecting ones found in Italianate buildings. The Grabill Block’s front window caps and the Gault Block’s modillion-like cornice brackets display incised detailing of plant forms that seem to be derived from English Aesthetic Movement sources such as Christopher Dresser designs.

The Grabill Block’s owner, Elliott C. Grabill, retained Ionia contractors Allen & Van Tassel to build his new building (*Independent*, 5/22/1884). Van Tassel was previously associated with G. W. Badger in another Ionia building firm, Badger & Van Tassel. The March 9, 1882, *Ionia Sentinel* reported that Badger “has completed the drawings of a handsome new front” for the building at 340 W. Main in Ionia. Badger & Van Tassel soon received the contract for renovation of the building, which included the new front (*Sentinel*, 3/23/1882).

Allen was Claire Allen, practicing as an architect in Jackson by about 1890 and later a leading figure in the profession in southern Michigan. Allen & Van Tassel were the contractors for the Ionia County Courthouse in Ionia, built in 1883-85, and for the Lenawee County Courthouse, begun in April 1884 (the firm withdrew from this project in October 1884, reportedly leaving \$7000 in unpaid debts – *Adrian Times & Expositor*, 10/21/1884, 9/30/1885). Could Allen & Van Tassel have designed Grabill’s building? Unfortunately little research (beyond that on 340 W. Main) has been done on building activities at the time in Ionia’s business district, where Allen & Van Tassel might have done substantial work, and nothing else is known about their careers prior to 1883.

The Harris Block, 222 S. Lafayette, exemplifies another architectural mode of the 1880s sometimes called “Panel Brick.” This is characterized by the extensive use of raised and corbelled brickwork and panels of decorative brickwork such as the sawtooth brickwork between the second and third-story windows. With its intricate brickwork, highly sculptural pedestals crowning the projecting upper ends of the piers, paneled frieze, and rock-face stone window trim, the Harris is a particularly fine example of the Panel Brick mode. The Callaghan Building, 113-15 S. Lafayette, displays some of the same Panel Brick features.

From the later 1880s into the very early twentieth century buildings often reflected the influence of what came to be called Richardsonian Romanesque. This was a stylistic vocabulary inspired by the work of architect H. H. Richardson during the 1870s and early 80s. Richardson’s trademark massive masonry buildings inspired a generation of American buildings displaying large, broad, round-arch “Romanesque” windows, rock-face stonework, and decorative work such as clusters of diminutive Romanesque colonettes

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Greenville Downtown Historic District

Page 26 Montcalm Co., MI

and pine cone finials atop piers and the ends of cornices. No. 224 S. Lafayette, with its triple round-arch windows, gabled treatment, tall colonettes, finials, and "checkerboard" parapet – the district's foremost example – is a remarkable architectural achievement for a single-storefront wide façade in a town the size of Greenville. The Winter Inn and no. 305 S. Lafayette also both show the influence of Richardsonian Romanesque in the rock-face stone beltcourses that form such visually important components of their facades.

Perhaps the most innovative Late Victorian facades along Greenville's main street are those of the 1887 Slawson Block and 1890 E. B. Edwards Block, 300-302 and 216 S. Lafayette, respectively. These buildings' upper facades display wonderfully intricate detailing in beltcourses at window sill, meeting rail, and head level; the window caps (and arches over the Slawson's middle windows above the two storefronts); and in the piers that frame the facades. What is especially noteworthy about these upper facades is that they are faced in what was called at the time "artificial stone" – *i.e.* concrete block. Concrete block as a building material was beginning to come into greater use for ornamental details such as window caps by the 1880s, but its use for entire facades at this early date was all but unknown.

The Slawson Block was the first of a number of downtown Greenville buildings constructed during 1887 that used artificial stone in their facades. Its upper façade on the Lafayette side was faced in it, and the artificial stone treatment extended a short distance around the corner facing East Cass, the rest of the Cass façade being finished in locally made brick. In addition to the Slawson Block, the row of new buildings at 210-224 S. Lafayette built in the wake of the March 31, 1887, fire was also faced in artificial stone, and the brick façade of the Phelps Hotel, replacing another building burned at the same time, also used artificial stone trim pieces. The *Independent* on June 9, 1887, reported that, "Mr. Stevens of Lansing will move his plant here for the manufacture of the sills, belts, caps, flints [plinths?], coping and front pieces for the new hotel." A month later, the July 14 edition noted that, "The artificial stone in Phelps' new hotel and in the wall of Geo. Slawson's new building are made in Greenville" – presumably by Stevens.

The row or block of stores at 210-24 S. Lafayette was by far Greenville's largest artificial stone project. Although separately owned, the buildings were given a uniform façade. The newspaper reported that excavation for the new block began about the beginning of June and that a contract to build the stores was let to H. G. Wright & Co. early in July (*Independent*, 6/2 and 7/7/1887). In the completed block, each building's facade was capped by a low metal pent roof and had a slightly projecting center section capped by a finial-topped metal gable treatment. The third store from the north, Jacobson & Netzorg's double store, displayed a broader projecting center section with taller gable than the rest, two buildings to the north and four to the south. This block with its picturesque gabled roofline must have been a prominent landmark in the business district. The two buildings at the south end of the row have been demolished and replaced with a lower building and the rest of the row was refaced c. 1960-61, so that all that remains visible today are the vermiculated piers at ground level flanking the second-story entry between 312 and 314.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Greenville Downtown Historic District

Page 27 Montcalm Co., MI

The 210-224 facades are gone except for the one detail, but the single-storefront building at 216 S. Lafayette, built in 1890, is virtually identical in overall design and detailing to the row's single-storefront buildings. It and the Slawson Block are highly important architectural landmarks both for their Late Victorian design and their construction with "artificial stone" facades at this early date.

No. 129 S. Lafayette, built probably c.1907, is one of the most fanciful of these Late Victorian blocks. Unlike the more typical turn-of-the-century commercial buildings that present simplified classical detailing to the street, this is light-heartedly Gothic, with a pointed arch of bi-chromatic stonework – whitish limestone voussoirs alternating with brown sandstone ones – over the storefront entry and stylized Tudor hoods atop the square-head second-story windows. Corbelled brickwork in the frieze and bracketed metal storefront and façade cornices, the latter with pine-cone finials at the ends, add to the decorative interest.

One of downtown Greenville's largest early twentieth-century buildings, the broad-fronted Hansen Building at 135 S. Lafayette, and a few smaller ones, including the single-storefront building at 122 S. Lafayette, are fine examples of a characteristic architectural "style" of the early twentieth-century in Michigan's downtowns known as "Commercial Brick." Commercial Brick seems to be an outgrowth of the Arts-and-Crafts movement. It is an architecture in which the patterns formed by the brickwork provide the styling, with few or no references to historic architectural styles such as Georgian, Neoclassical, or Gothic. Horizontal bands or rectangular panels formed by bricks placed on edge and bands of bricks on edge outlining window areas – all of these often accented with blocks of stone, terra cotta, or concrete placed at the corners or other prominent locations – are fundamental features. The Hansen Building's façade is typically Commercial Brick in its banks of upright stretcher bricks punctuated by decorative blocks, and displays a modicum of historicism in the classical swag-decorated plaque below its stepped parapet.

Built at the same time as the Hansen Block, the 1917 Rasmussen Building, 128-32 S. Lafayette, contrasts strongly with that building in its no-nonsense lack of detailing. It seems a precursor to the district's post World War II commercial architecture in the austere simplicity of its broad paving brick front with its large windows forming an almost continuous band across the facade. This building is one of the prime landmarks of Greenville's Danish heritage, but the plaque that bore the Rasmussen name has been replaced or covered over. The building's appearance would be much improved by restoring both the Rasmussen name plaque and the building's cornice.

The district contains nine commercial buildings dating from the early post World War II era from 1945 to the early 1960s, and many additional older buildings were also renovated with new storefronts then. In addition, the rebuilding of the upper facades of the row of buildings at 310-20 S. Lafayette, dramatically changing those buildings' appearance from elaborately detailed Late Victorian to a single broad, streamlined façade similar to that seen at suburban malls, also took place in this time period, c. 1960-61. Thus these years appear to represent an important era in the downtown's development.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	8	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	28	Montcalm Co., MI

Five of the nine buildings built in the 1945-62 period have subsequently had their facades so significantly renovated that they no longer can be viewed as contributing to the district's historic character, and some of the buildings modernized during those years have also been renovated again since then leaving little or nothing behind of the 1945-62 work. The most visually interesting and best preserved commercial buildings of the period in downtown Greenville are the 1948-49 Jimos Bros. Building, 123-25 S. Lafayette, with its orange brick upper façade that pays only understated deference to modernism, and the 1950 Sorenson Building, 117 W. Cass, a straightforward two-story example of the International Style with bare white cinder block walls and black and white structural glass tile accents in the first-floor storefront.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	9	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	1	Montcalm Co., MI

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State and National Register Files, MI SHPO

- Winter Inn
- St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Newspapers:

Specific buildings and history presented in significance statement: See citations in text.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	9	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	2	Montcalm Co., MI

General Historical Background:

Greenville Independent

- "Charles H. Gibson Dies at His Home." 1/22/1916.
- "City Improvements." 5/21/1873.
- "Fred E. Ranney Dies." 10/11/1922.
- "Greater Greenville – 'The City of Opportunities'" – Supplement, 8/21/1912.
- "Greenville Fire." 4/7/1887.
- "Greenville in 1872" by W. H. Conover. 7/23/1873.
- "Greenville – By Gone Days – Something About the Suburbs." 11/11/1875.
- "The Lumber Region of Flat River." 7/20/1869.
- "Potato Business at Greenville" by Geo. C. Bower. 2/20/1907.
- "Sketch of Greenville" by Maj. C. C. Ellsworth. 4/5/1870.

Greenville Record

- "Frank S. Gibson, Head of Gibson Refrigerator Company Expires Suddenly in Detroit, Saturday." 5/8/1926.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	10	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	1	Montcalm Co., MI

Boundary Description

Beginning in center of intersection of N. Lafayette and Montcalm Sts; thence E in center of Montcalm to E line of 117 E. Montcalm; th S and W along S and W lines of 117 E. Montcalm to E line of properties fronting on E side of Lafayette; th generally along E line of properties on N and S Lafayette's E side from 114 N. Lafayette S to NW cr of 1st Cong. Church property; th E along N side of 1st Cong. property to center of N. Clay; th S along centerline of N. and S. Clay to point in line with S line of Episcopal Church property; th generally W along S line of Episcopal church property to E line of properties facing W on S. Lafayette; th S along E lines of properties facing W on Lafayette to centerline of Washington St.; th E on sd centerline to point in line with E line of 109 E. Washington property; th S and W along S and W lines of 109 E. Washington property and in same course to centerline of S. Lafayette; th N in sd centerline to S line of property at 309-311 S. Lafayette; th generally W along S line of 309-311 S. Lafayette and S lines of properties fronting on S side of W. Cass to centerline of S. Franklin St.; th N along centerline of S. and N. Franklin to point in line with N lines of properties fronting on N side of W. Cass E of Franklin; th E along sd N lines to W rear lot lines of properties fronting on N. Lafayette's W side; th generally N along sd W rear lot lines from 217 S. Lafayette N to SE cr of 114 W. Grove St. property; th W along S line of 114 W. Grove to centerline of S. Franklin St.; th N along centerline of S. and N. Franklin to point in line with N line of 117 W. Grove property; th E and S along N and E lines of 117 W. Grove to centerline of W. Grove St.; th E along sd centerline to W line of 101 N. Lafayette; th N and E along W and N lines of 101 N. Lafayette to centerline of N. Lafayette; th N along sd centerline to point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

These boundaries outline the surviving historic downtown business district area. To the north and south only a scattering of historic commercial buildings have survived. Parking lots edge the district along the east and southwest sides, and older homes ring the district in other areas. A parking lot has replaced the southern half of the former row of historic commercial buildings that once extended along Lafayette's west side north of Washington, and the city's contemporary city hall now occupies the east half of the next block south.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert O. Christensen, National Register Coordinator

organization MI SHPO date April 2008

street & number 702 W. Kalamazoo telephone 517/335-2719

city or town Lansing state MI zip code 48909-8240

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

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.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

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 Keeper, National Register of Historic Places, 1849 "C" Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	Photos	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	1	Montcalm Co., MI

Photographs

Photographer: Robert O. Christensen

Date: April 2008

Printing: Hewlett-Packard Viverra inks on HP Premium Plus Photo Paper

Views:

Danish Brotherhood Hall, south and east facades

MI_Montcalm_Greenville_01.tif

131-123 S. Lafayette from southeast

MI_Montcalm_Greenville_02.tif

309-213 S. Lafayette from southeast

MI_Montcalm_Greenville_03.tif

227-213 S. Lafayette from southeast

MI_Montcalm_Greenville_04.tif

209-101 S. Lafayette from southeast

MI_Montcalm_Greenville_05.tif

Cass/Lafayette intersection looking west

MI_Montcalm_Greenville_06.tif

Guild Hall, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1st Congregational Church from southeast

MI_Montcalm_Greenville_07.tif

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, east and north facades

MI_Montcalm_Greenville_08.tif

118-116 W. Cass, south and east facades

MI_Montcalm_Greenville_09.tif

117-119 W. Cass, east and north facades

MI_Montcalm_Greenville_10.tif

Ranney House, 109 E. Washington, north and west facades

MI_Montcalm_Greenville_11.tif

322-410 S. Lafayette from northwest

MI_Montcalm_Greenville_12.tif

200 and 300 blocks S. Lafayette, east side, from southwest

MI_Montcalm_Greenville_13.tif

300-302 S. Lafayette, west facade

MI_Montcalm_Greenville_14.tif

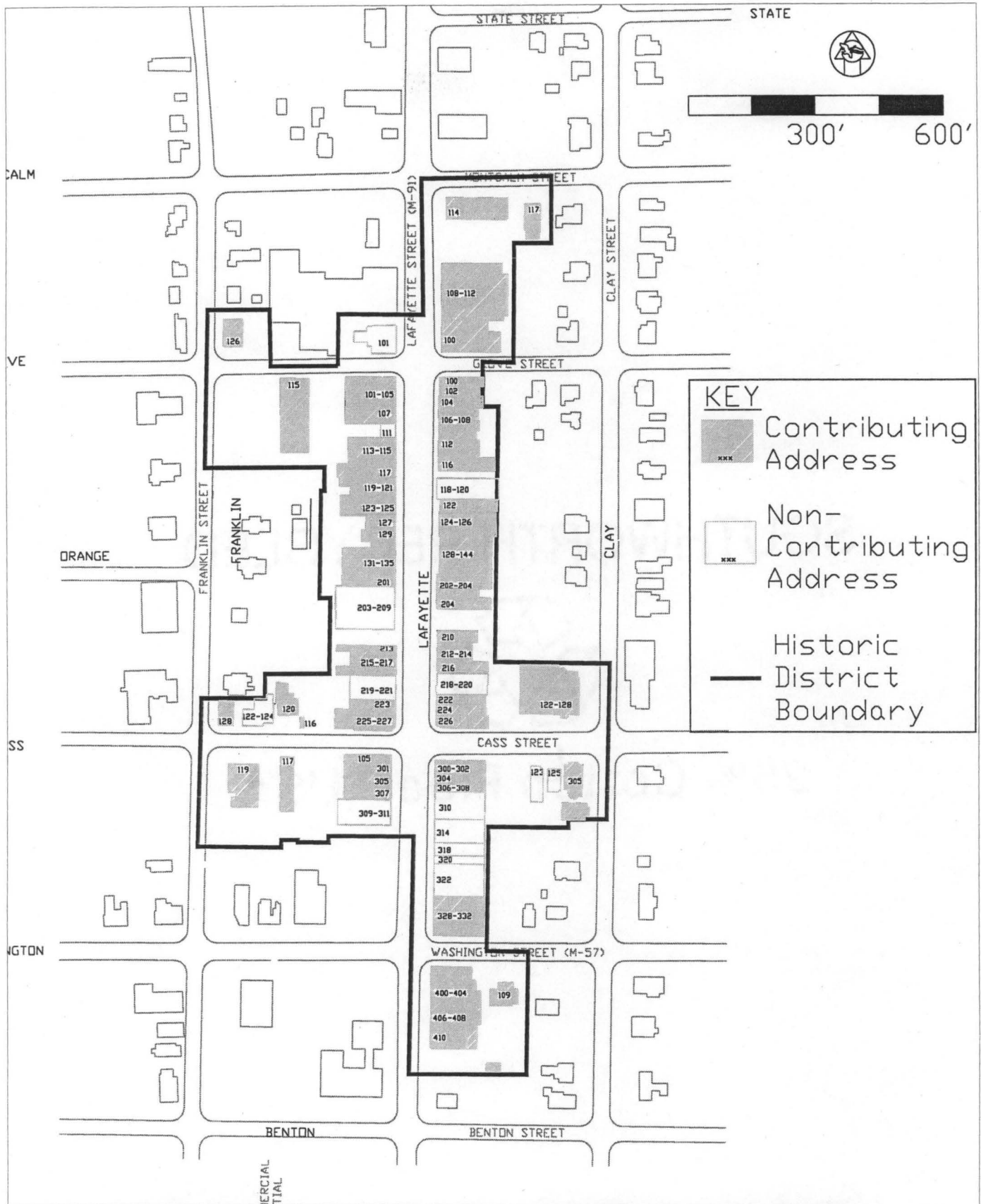
222-226 S. Lafayette, west and south facades

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section	Photos	Greenville Downtown Historic District
Page	2	Montcalm Co., MI

MI_Montcalm_Greenville_15.tif
112 N. Lafayette-110 S. Lafayette from southwest
MI_Montcalm_Greenville_16.tif
114-100 N. Lafayette from southwest
MI_Montcalm_Greenville_17.tif
122-300 block S. Lafayette from northwest
MI_Montcalm_Greenville_18.tif
214-316 S. Lafayette from northwest
MI_Montcalm_Greenville_19.tif
308-410 S. Lafayette from northwest
MI_Montcalm_Greenville_20.tif
410 S. Lafayette, west and south facades
MI_Montcalm_Greenville_21.tif
328-332 S. Lafayette, west and south facades
MI_Montcalm_Greenville_22.tif



GREENVILLE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT **MONTCALM COUNTY, MICHIGAN**



CITY OF GREENVILLE
ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

411 S. LAFAYETTE, GREENVILLE, MI 48838
 TELEPHONE (616) 754-5645

HORIZ SCALE: As Shown

VERT SCALE: None

FILE: DDA\Historic Prop

JOB #:

DRAWN BY: dwh

DATE: 10/20/05

REVISED: 8/12/08

SHEET 1 OF 1

Recommendation: SLR Return

Action: SLR Return None

Documentation Issues-Discussion Sheet

State Name: Mt County Name Montcalm Resource Name Greenville Duntz HD

Reference No. 08-1104 Multiple Name _____

Solution:

Problem: Req expedited review. Fed property, probably PO no notification
letter included

Resolution:

SLR: Yes No

Database Change: _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property

County and State

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 08001104

Date Listed: 11/19/2008

Property Name: Greenville Downtown Historic District (Montcalm County, MI)

Multiple Name:

County:

State:

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patrick Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

11/19/2008
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

This SLR is issued to clarify a discrepancy in the resource count for non-contributing properties between Section 5 of form, the inventory, and the district site map. The State has confirmed that there are 17 non-contributing buildings in the district. 107 South Lafayette Street is mistakenly shown on the map as contributing; as noted in the inventory (Section 7, p. 10) it is non-contributing.

The non-contributing buildings are: South Lafayette: 118-20, 218-20, 310, 312-16, 318, 320, 322-26, 107, 111, 203-09, 219-21, 309-11; North Lafayette: 101; East Cass: 122, 123, 124 and 125. The form is amended to correct the resource count.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Greenville Downtown Historic District
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MICHIGAN, Montcalm

DATE RECEIVED: 10/17/08 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/03/08
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/18/08 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/30/08
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 08001104

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 11/19/2008 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA

Accept A, B & C

REVIEWER

Patrick Andrews

DISCIPLINE

Historian

TELEPHONE

DATE

11/19/2008

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Greenville Downtown HD Montcalm Co. MI



Greenville Downtown HD Montcalm Ca. MI



Greenville Downtown HD Montcalm Co MT



Greenville Downtown HD Montcalm Co. MI



Greenville Downtown HD Montcalm Co., MI



Greenville Downtown HD Montcalm Co. MI



Greenville Downtown HD Montcalm Co. MI





Greenville Downtown HD Montcalm Co. MI



Greenville Downtown HD Montcalm Co MI



Greenville Downtown HD Montcalm Co. MI



Greenville Downtown HD Montcalm Co. MI



Greenville Downtown HD Montcalm Co MI



Greenville Downtown HD Montcalm Co MI



Greenville Downtown HD Montcalm Co MI



Greenville Downtown HD Montcalm Co MI



Greenville Downtown HD Montcalm Co MI



Greenville Downtown RD Montcalm Co MI



Greenville Downtown HD Montcalm Co. MI



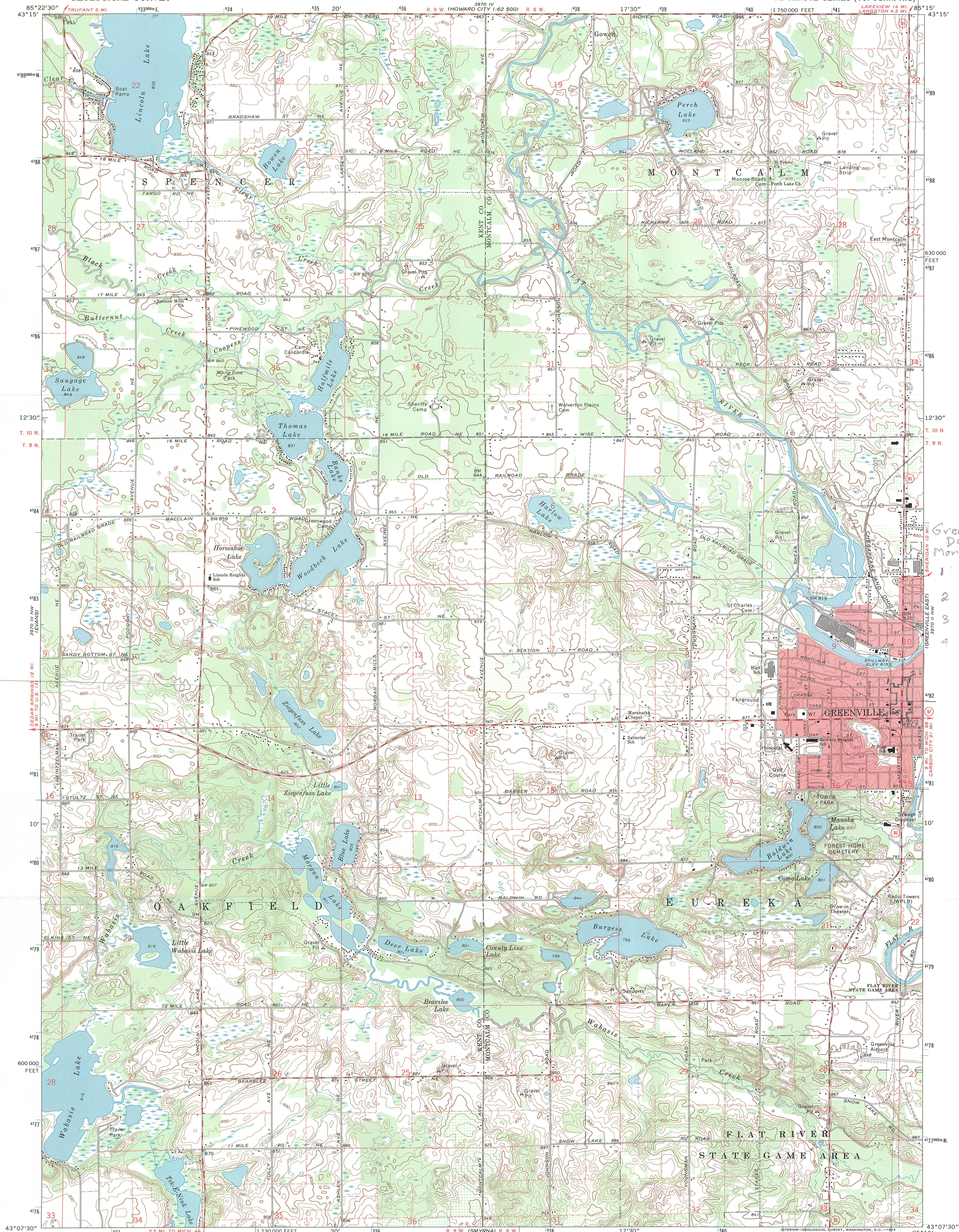
Greenville Downtown HD Montcalm Co MI



Greenville Downtown HD Montcalm Co MI



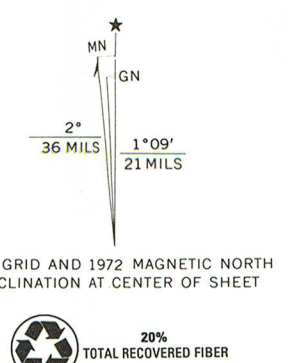
Greenville Downtown AD Montcalm Co MI



Greenville
Downtown HD
Montcalm Co., MI

1	16	641870
		4782200
2	16	642070
		4782270
3	16	642070
		4781740
4	16	641880
		4781850

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
in cooperation with State of Michigan agencies
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1972
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Michigan coordinate system, south zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 16, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



SCALE 1:24,000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road

Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route



GREENVILLE WEST, MICH.
N4307.5-W8515.7.5
1972
AMS 3970 III NE-SERIES V862





JENNIFER GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, ARTS AND LIBRARIES
LANSING

DR. WILLIAM ANDERSON
DIRECTOR

August 11, 2008

Mr. Dallan C. Wordekemper, FPO
CPM, Real Estate Specialist, Facilities
U. S. Postal Service
4301 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22203-1861

Dear Mr. Wordekemper:

We are in the process of nominating the Greenville, Michigan, post office building to the National Register of Historic Places as part of a Greenville Downtown Historic District. As per our email exchange a few days ago, I am enclosing just the parts of the nomination's description and significance statements that discuss the post office building. If you should require additional information, please contact me by phone at 517/335-2719 or e-mail me at christensenro@michigan.gov.

Sincerely yours,

Robert O. Christensen
National Register Coordinator



JENNIFER GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, ARTS AND LIBRARIES
LANSING



October 3, 2008

Ms. Janet Matthews, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Matthews:

Enclosed are National Register nomination materials for the Greenville Downtown Historic District in Montcalm County, Michigan. This property is being submitted for listing in the National Register. No written comments concerning this nomination were submitted to us prior to the submission of the nomination to you.

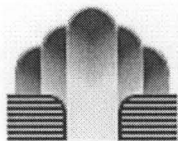
**BECAUSE OF PROPOSED TAX CREDIT PROJECTS THAT ARE ON HOLD
PENDING APPROVAL OF THIS NOMINATION, WE REQUEST EXPEDITED
REVIEW.**

Questions concerning this nomination should be addressed to Robert O. Christensen, National Register coordinator, by phone at 517/335-2719 or by e-mail at Christensenro@michigan.gov.

Sincerely yours,

Brian D. Conway
State Historic Preservation Officer

BDC:roc



Patrick Andrus/WASO/NPS

11/12/2008 12:55 PM

To Robert Christensen

cc

bcc

Subject Greenville Downtown Historic District

Hi Bob: the nomination for the Greenville Downtown Historic District lists "Federal" ownership (for, I assume, the post office mentioned in Section 7, p. 8), but we do not have a copy of a notification letter to the Federal Preservation Officer. Can you please check your file to confirm that the FPO was notified? If you find the notification letter, please fax it to me at 202-371-2229. If the notice was not sent, we will have to return the nomination.

Thanks for you assistance.

Patrick

Patrick W. Andrus
Historian
National Register of Historic Places
Patrick_Andrus@nps.gov



"Bob Christensen"
<ChristensenRO@michigan.gov>

11/12/2008 01:43 PM

To <Patrick_Andrus@nps.gov>

cc

bcc

Subject Re: Greenville Downtown Historic District

Attached is the letter we sent after an email exchange asking what he'd like to see for a review. We got no response to the letter.

>>> <Patrick_Andrus@nps.gov> 11/12/2008 1:02 PM >>>

Hi Bob: the nomination for the Greenville Downtown Historic District lists "Federal" ownership (for, I assume, the post office mentioned in Section 7, p. 8), but we do not have a copy of a notification letter to the Federal Preservation Officer. Can you please check your file to confirm that the FPO was notified? If you find the notification letter, please fax it to me at 202-371-2229. If the notice was not sent, we will have to return the nomination.

Thanks for you assistance.

Patrick

Patrick W. Andrus
Historian
National Register of Historic Places
Patrick_Andrus@nps.gov



Wordekemper Greenville PO.doc