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Thomas B. Klingman. THE CHARACTER AND EVOLUTION OF BLACK URBAN COMMERCIAL LAND USE IN GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA 1917 - 1978. (Under the direction of Ennis L. Chestang) Department of Geography, January, 1980.

The purpose of this study is to examine the sequential development of black urban commercial land use in Greenville, North Carolina. The objectives of the study are to determine the distinguishing characteristics of this type of land use in Greenville, to trace the evolution of its spatial pattern and to gain some insight into the factors which have influenced its development. In order to accomplish the goal and objectives of this study, it was necessary to obtain information on the nature and location of black-owned business in the past. This information was acquired through use of city directories and field investigation.

Black-owned business in Greenville can be characterized by the small retail or service type establishment. Sometimes more than one land use function can be found occupying the same parcel. Most of the black-owned firms were and still are located in or adjacent to the city's black residential areas. Black business has gone through three periods of growth, a period of gradual growth, a period of rapid growth and a period of decline. During the peak year, black business accounted for 17.5% of the total number

of businesses in the city. Although the most recent period has been one of decline, a land title investigation revealed that black land ownership has increased since 1917.

The evolution of the spatial pattern of black urban commercial land use in Greenville followed Hoyt's Sector Theory. Three sectors were discernible. A western sector, a southern sector, and a northern sector. Black-owned business initially developed near the central city, then spread outward toward the periphery.

A number of factors have influenced the character and development of black urban commercial land use in Greenville. The black businessman, until quite recently, has had trouble obtaining credit. This has limited him to those types of business requiring little capital. Black-owned business is dependent on the black population as a source of customers. Fluctuation of black population affects black business. The limited buying power of this group limits the types of goods and services that can be provided. Decentralization of the economic activity located near the central city disrupted walk-to-work patterns. This caused black firms located there to go out of business. With the advent of a new public transportation system, the black neighborhood merchant must now compete with merchants on the other side of town. Urban renewal has had a major impact on black business in Greenville. Whole neighborhoods have been razed and their residents uprooted and relocated

to the new housing projects. Although some of the black businesses chose to relocate, many simply disappeared. The new market created by the projects is captured by the white-owned convenience store.

THE CHARACTER AND EVOLUTION
OF BLACK URBAN COMMERCIAL LAND USE
IN GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA
1917 - 1978

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Geography
East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Geography

by
Thomas B. Klingman
January, 1980

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OF BLACK URBAN COMMERCIAL LAND USE
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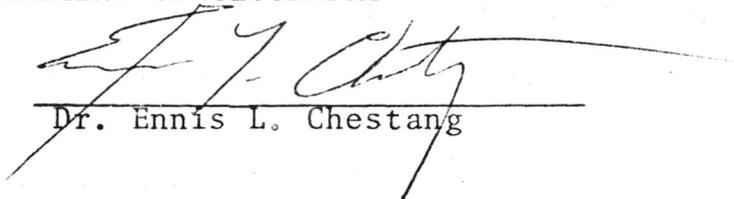
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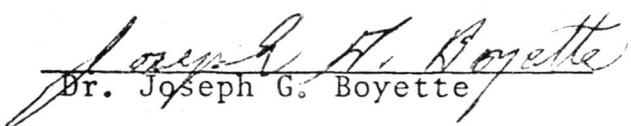
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Preface

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter includes an introduction, background and statement of problem, literature, discussion of the study area, and methodology.

The second chapter is concerned with the character of black urban commercial land use in Greenville. The first part of the chapter discusses the structure of black-owned business based on the standard land use activity coding system. The second part of the chapter examines the locational characteristics of black-owned business, the growth characteristics, and the change in land ownership patterns.

Chapter three deals with the evolution of the spatial pattern of the particular kind of land use under study and how it relates to the classical models of urban growth.

The fourth chapter examines some of the important factors that have had an impact on the character and evolution of black urban commercial land use in Greenville, particularly economic characteristics, population, decentralization and urban renewal.

The final chapter reviews the findings of the other chapters and offers suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One facet of urban geography deals with the study of the spatial variation of man's activity within the city. This spatial variation is reflected in the way he assigns different uses to various parcels of land. Every urban resident requires certain goods and services. These are provided by different retail and service establishments. Parcels of land which have such establishments on them serve a commercial land use function.

This study is concerned with a specific type of land use: black urban commercial land use which is characterized by the provision of a good or service by a black proprietor.

Black urban commercial land use is a spatial phenomenon in many cities. Most of the geographical literature to date has neglected this aspect of the urban landscape. The purpose of this paper is to examine this phenomenon in Greenville, North Carolina.

There are three main objectives for this study. The first objective is to determine the distinguishing characteristics of black urban commercial land use in Greenville. The second objective is to trace the evolution of the spatial pattern of that particular type of land use in Greenville

from 1917 to 1978. The third is to gain some insight into the factors which have influenced its development.

Literature

Although much material has been written about the black community, little work has been done concerning the spatial variation of black enterprise within the city. In a survey of the literature, I found only a few references on this topic.

Allen Pred published an article, "Business Thoroughfares as Expressions of Urban Negro Culture", in Economic Geography in 1963. In his study, Pred examines land use patterns on three business thoroughfares in Chicago. Each was located in a different part of the city. One was in a black area, one in a low income area, and one in a middle income, white area. He then tried to distinguish those land use patterns characteristic of the black business thoroughfare.

Gail Marge wrote a master's thesis in 1968 entitled "A Functional Analysis of Negro Shopping Areas in Raleigh and Charlotte, North Carolina". Marge identified and compared the distinguishing characteristics of Negro shopping areas in the two cities.¹

¹Marge, Gail B., "A Functional Analysis of Negro Shopping Areas in Raleigh and Charlotte, North Carolina", (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of North Carolina, 1968).

A recent study was made by Paul Seman in his master's thesis entitled "Structure and Spatial Distribution of Black-Owned Business in Columbia, South Carolina, 1900 - 1976". Seman examined the characteristics and development of black-owned business in Columbia. He also attempted to determine the underlying factors which have influenced them. Seman's paper is similar in some respects to my study and thus offers an opportunity for comparison. The objectives of both studies and some aspects of the methodology are similar, most notably the use of city directories. Seman has done an excellent job in summarizing what has been written in the literature on Black America. His findings concur with those of this author: few articles have been written on black urban commercial land use.²

Study Area

This study deals with black-owned business in a small southern city. Greenville is the county seat of Pitt County, North Carolina, with a population of 29,063.³ Greenville is located in the coastal plain of Eastern North Carolina. It is in the heart of the Eastern Flue-Cured

²Seman, Paul F., "Structure and Spatial Distribution of Black-Owned Business in Columbia, South Carolina, 1900-1976", (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of South Carolina, 1977), p. 3.

³United States Census of Population, 1970.

Tobacco Belt and serves as a tobacco marketing center for the surrounding area. This is important for two reasons. First, the tobacco industry plays a key role in Greenville's economy, a point made by Haywood Denard Harris in his study of the Greenville CBD.⁴ Second, it has had an impact on the black population in Eastern N.C., a factor mentioned in a recent study by John Fraser Hart and Ennis L. Chestang.⁵ They explained that the need for labor in the tobacco production process was responsible for keeping blacks of Eastern North Carolina on the land until 1960, when the production process started to become mechanized. "Eastern North Carolina probably is the only part of the United States where a large native black population has been integrated in situ; blacks native to other areas in the South were not integrated until after they had been uprooted by migration to cities either within or without the region."⁶ Columbia was such a city.⁷ The tobacco industry undoubtedly

⁴Harris, H. D., "Central Business District (CBD) of Greenville, North Carolina", (Unpublished Master's Thesis, East Carolina University, 1975), p. 4.

⁵John Fraser Hart and Ennis L. Chestang, "Rural Revolution in East Carolina", Geographical Review, Vol. 68, October, 1978.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Seman, Paul F., "Structure and Spatial Distribution of Black-Owned Business in Columbia, South Carolina 1900-1976", (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of South Carolina, 1977), p. 11.

was a source of employment for the black population in the tobacco marketing centers such as Greenville. The fact that the black population remained in place means that the development of black urban commercial land use in Greenville could have taken place with less possibility of interference due to migration.

Methodology

The methodology for this paper included the use of city directories to determine past patterns of black urban commercial land use. The city directory had an interesting method of listing black persons or business firms which involved the placement of an asterisk before the name of a black person or black business firm. This practice of denoting blacks continued until 1965 when it was discontinued. The set of directories for Greenville begins with volume one for the year 1917 and continues through the present. To determine the pattern of black urban commercial land use since 1965, later directories were utilized in conjunction with field investigations. It was also possible to determine the location of the black population and to determine which black businesses also served a residential function. The street directory section of the city directory gives names of the householders, the number of occupants in each dwelling, and denotes business places. Air photo interpreta-

tion aided in the study of previous land use patterns. A land title investigation was conducted to see what changes in land ownership have taken place over the years. Finally, a series of maps and graphs was compiled and analyzed.

CHAPTER II

THE CHARACTER OF BLACK URBAN COMMERCIAL LAND USE IN GREENVILLE

One objective of this study is to determine the distinguishing characteristics of black urban commercial land use in Greenville. This chapter will examine several aspects of that type of commercial land use which contribute to its character.

Types of Land Use

An important characteristic of black urban commercial land use in Greenville is evidenced by the variety of types found. The Standard Land Use Coding Manual was chosen as the method to categorize the different types of land use activities because it is commonly used in land use inventories of urban areas. The Standard Identification and Coding System outlined in the manual involves four levels of generalization. The categories become more and more specific as the user goes from the one digit level to the four digit level. The two digit level was used to classify black urban commercial land use in Greenville. (Table 1) It combined the right amount of detail and generality for the purposes of this study.

If one were to pick a representative black-owned business in Greenville, it would probably be the small

Table 1

TYPES OF BLACK URBAN COMMERCIAL LAND USE
 OCCURRING BETWEEN 1917 AND 1978 BASED ON THE
 STANDARD LAND USE ACTIVITY CODING SYSTEM - TWO-DIGIT LEVEL

<u>Code</u>	<u>Category</u>
15	Transient Lodging
42	Motor Vehicle Transportation
53	Retail Trade - general merchandise
54	Retail Trade - grocery
55	Automotive and Accessories
56	Retail Trade - apparel and accessories
57	Retail Trade - furniture
58	Retail Trade - eating and drinking
59	Other Retail
61	Finance, Insurance and Real Estate
62	Personal Services
64	Repair Services
65	Professional Services
73	Amusements

Source: Standard Land Use Coding Manual

retail or service type business. Three categories of business types predominate during the study period. (Table 2) The retail-trade grocery category (code 54) is first, accounting for an average 31% of the black-owned firms during the study period. This is most often a small "convenience" type grocery known as a "pop shop". It generally carries a limited number of items such as soft drinks, milk, bread, eggs, beer, wine, and an assortment of canned goods. (Figure 1) The personal service category (code 62) is a close second, accounting for an average of 29% of the firms. A typical black-owned service type business is a barber shop or beauty parlor. (Figure 2) The eating and drinking category (code 58) was next, accounting for an average of 15%. (Figure 3) The three together accounted for an average of 75% of the number of black firms covered by the study.

In order to make it easier to present the data graphically, the different categories were combined to make a modified version of the one digit level of generalization. (Figure 4) At this level of generalization, the service land use category is dominant, followed by retail, leisure, and office categories.

The structure of black urban commercial land use is changing. It had a retail-services orientation during the early stages of development, but the trend since 1941 has been toward service orientation (Figure 5), with some increase

TABLE 2

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF BLACK OWNED BUSINESSES BY MAJOR GROUP CODE 1917-1978

CODE	CATEGORY	1917		1926		1937		1941		1945		1950		1955		1961		1965		1969		1973		1978	
		NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%								
15	Transient Lodging	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	2.4	2	1.6	1	1.0	2	1.8	3	3.3	3	3.4	3	3.9	1	1.3
42	Motor Vehicle Transportation	--	--	1	2.1	--	--	--	--	--	--	3	2.4	3	3.0	4	3.6	3	3.3	5	5.7	3	3.9	4	5.3
53	Retail Trade-general merchandise	--	--	1	2.1	1	2.1	1	1.4	--	--	--	--	1	1.0	--	--	--	--	1	1.1	--	--	--	--
54	Retail Trade-grocery	14	37.8	17	36.2	13	27.7	30	40.5	27	32.1	45	36.0	35	35.4	30	27.3	25	27.5	27	31.0	20	26.0	15	20.0
55	Automotive and accessories	--	--	--	--	2	4.3	1	1.4	1	1.2	1	0.8	--	--	1	0.9	2	2.2	5	5.7	3	3.9	4	5.3
56	Retail Trade-apparel and accessories	1	2.7	1	2.1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1.3
57	Retail Trade-furniture	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	0.9	1	1.1	1	1.1	1	1.3	1	1.3
58	Retail Trade-eating and drinking	6	16.2	8	17.0	13	27.7	13	17.6	10	11.9	17	13.6	11	11.1	17	15.5	15	16.5	8	9.2	6	7.8	8	10.7
59	Other Retail	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3	3.6	2	1.6	2	2.0	2	1.8	--	--	1	1.1	1	1.3	2	2.7
61	Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	1	2.7	--	--	--	--	2	2.7	2	2.4	4	3.2	4	4.0	5	5.5	5	5.5	5	5.7	4	5.2	3	4.0
62	Personal Services	11	29.7	13	27.7	14	29.8	16	21.6	30	35.7	34	27.2	29	29.3	32	29.1	23	25.3	19	21.8	26	33.8	27	36.0
64	Repair Services	--	--	3	6.4	1	2.1	4	5.4	4	4.8	9	7.2	8	8.1	9	8.2	5	5.5	4	4.6	4	5.2	2	2.7
65	Professional Services	2	5.4	2	4.3	--	--	3	4.1	3	3.6	3	2.4	2	2.0	3	2.7	3	3.3	2	2.3	3	3.9	3	4.0
73	Amusements	2	5.4	1	2.1	3	6.4	4	5.4	2	2.4	5	4.0	3	3.0	4	3.6	6	6.6	6	6.9	3	3.9	4	5.3
TOTAL		37	100.0	47	100.0	47	100.0	74	100.0	84	100.0	125	100.0	99	100.0	110	100.0	91	100.0	87	100.0	77	100.0	75	100.0

Source: Compiled by the author from Greenville City Directories



Figure 1 - A neighborhood "pop shop" is most representative of the retail trade grocery category (code 54).



Figure 2 - A typical black-owned service type business is a barber shop or beauty parlor. (Bullock's Barber Shop)



Figure 3 - The eating and drinking category (code 58) accounted for an average 15% of the firms. (Virgo Lounge)

**Percentage Of The Total Number
Of Black Firms In Four
General Categories Of Land Use
1917 - 1978**

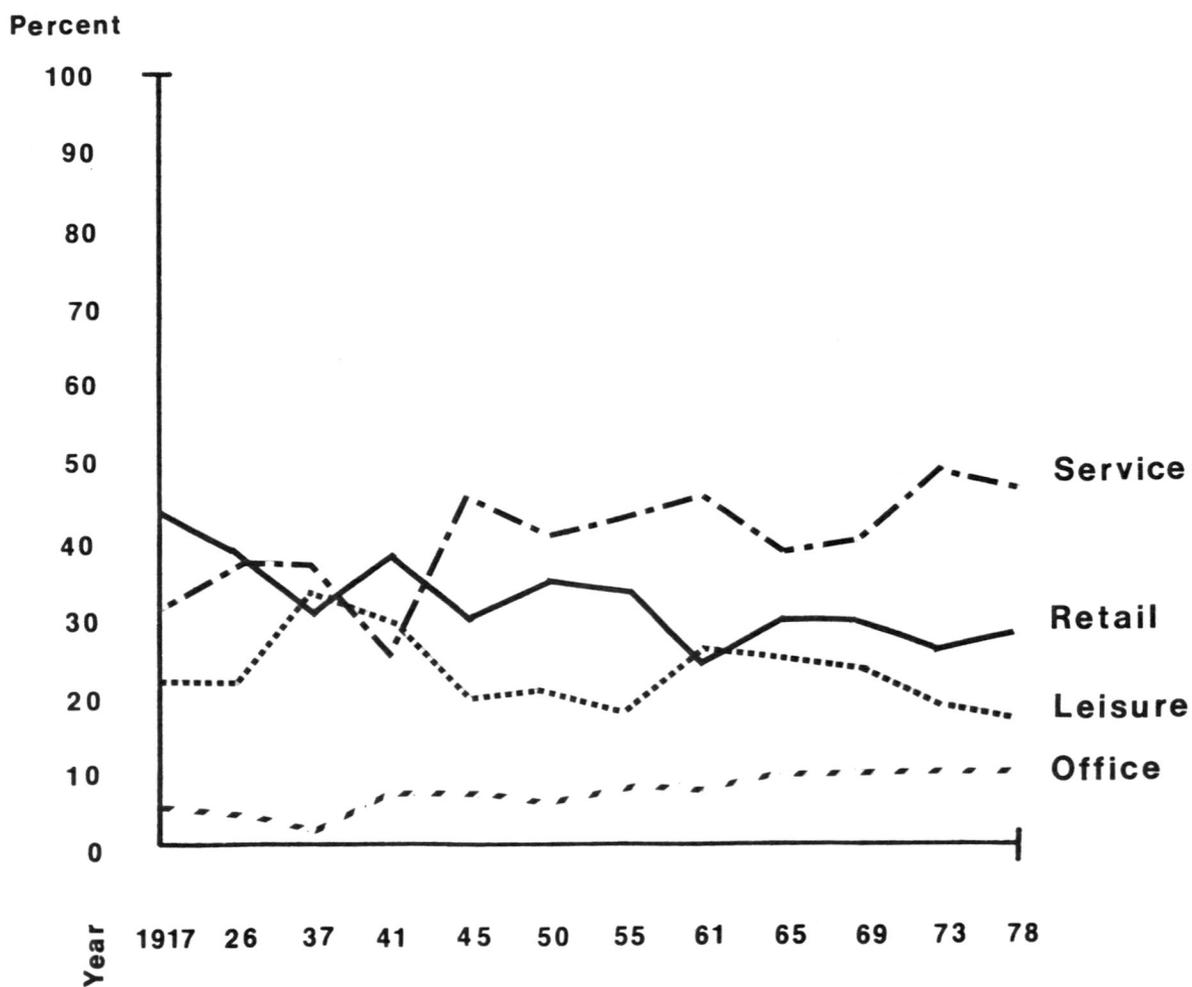


Figure 4



Figure 5 - Black business has become more service oriented since 1940.

in the office category. Seman finds the same change in the structure of black business in Columbia, South Carolina. He notes an increase in different types of black-owned business although the majority of the businesses were in the personal service and retail trade category of land use.⁸

Commercial-Residential Land Use

The combination of more than one land use function at a given location is an important characteristic of black urban commercial land use in Greenville. This usually is a combination of commercial-residential land use. The typical type is the small grocery-residence combination, or "pop shop". (Figure 6) The grocery is usually squeezed onto the same lot, next to the residence, or it may be part of a duplex structure. (Figure 7)

Another type is the small cafe-residence combination. (Figure 8) They accounted for all of the restaurants in 1917 and were called "Eating Houses". Brewington's Luncheonette is an example of such a business. Customers are served right in the kitchen, with a counter separating the eating area (two tables) and the grill. This combination of commercial-residential land use accounts for an average of 20% of the black firms during the study period. This

⁸Seman, Paul F., "Structure and Spatial Distribution of Black-Owned Business in Columbia, South Carolina 1900-1976", (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of South Carolina, 1977), p. 37.



Figure 6 - Battle's Grocery is a relic feature on the urban landscape. It has been out of business since 1964 and is due to be torn down.



Figure 7 - Tyson's Grocery, a "pop shop" located in a duplex structure, has been out of business since 1971. The family still resides there.



Figure 8 - The small cafe-residence combination accounted for all of the restaurants in 1917. They were called "eating houses". Brewington's Luncheonette is an example of such a business.

type of land use is declining in Greenville with only 14% of the firms in 1978 in this category, as compared to 30% in 1917. (Figure 9)

This is not the only type combination of land use functions characteristic of black urban commercial land use in Greenville. The different types of combinations range from the barber shop-funeral parlor-garage combination to more rational doctor-dentist combinations. By sharing the same store, black businessmen could also share some of the cost of doing business. An example of two commercial land use functions sharing the same location in Greenville today is the grocery-cab stand combination. (Figure 10)

Section of the City

Most black urban commercial land use is located in West Greenville. Albemarle Avenue and West Fifth Street are the major black business thoroughfares in Greenville. The two together account for 40% of black-owned business in Greenville. If one includes all those businesses located within one block of the two, 50% of black urban commercial land use in Greenville will be accounted for. (Figure 11)

Albermarle Avenue is important as a social gathering place. It has occupied that position for over 50 years. The black people traditionally call it simply "the block" because, "if you want to find a particular person in the community, they say you can find him on the block". They

**Percentage Of Black Business Firms
Located In Combination Business-Residential
Structures 1917-1978**

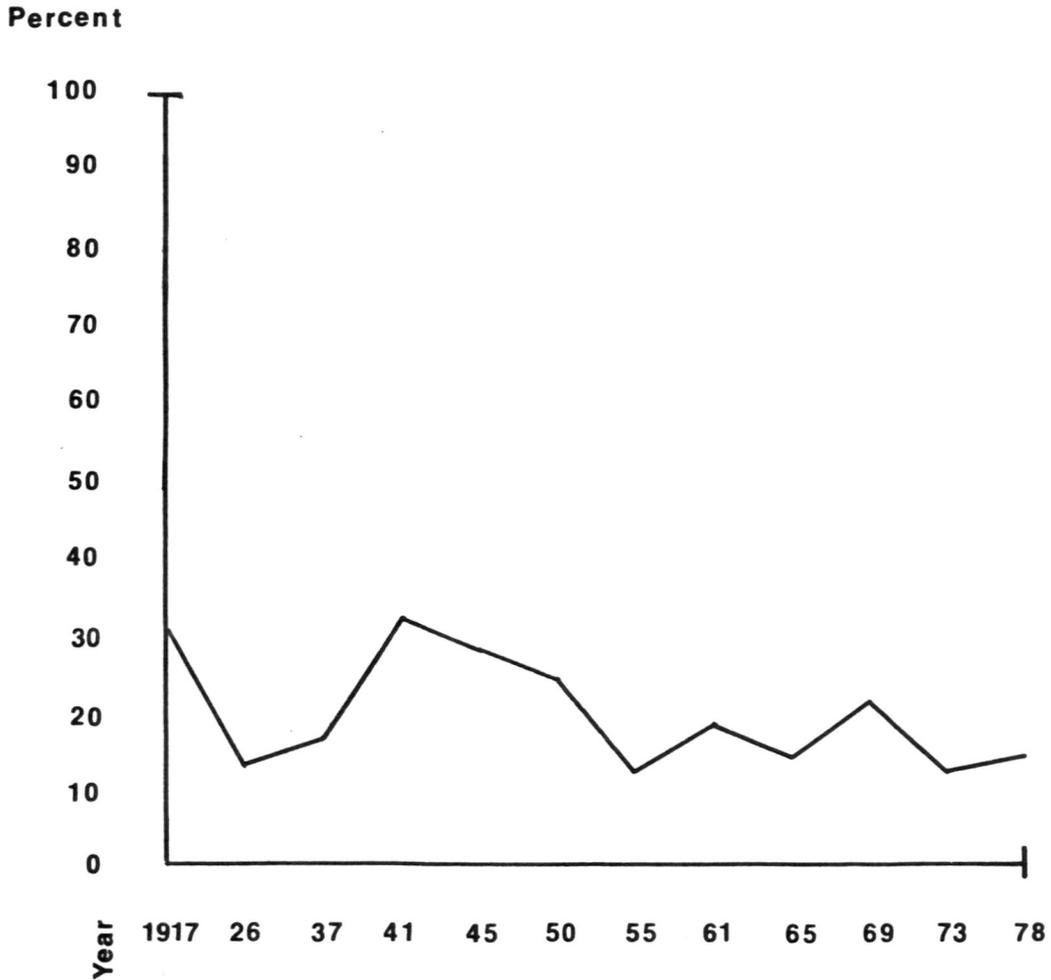


Figure 9



Figure 10 - Early's Grocery and the Radio Cab Co. is an example of two commercial land use functions sharing the same location.

Black Business Establishments In Greenville 1978

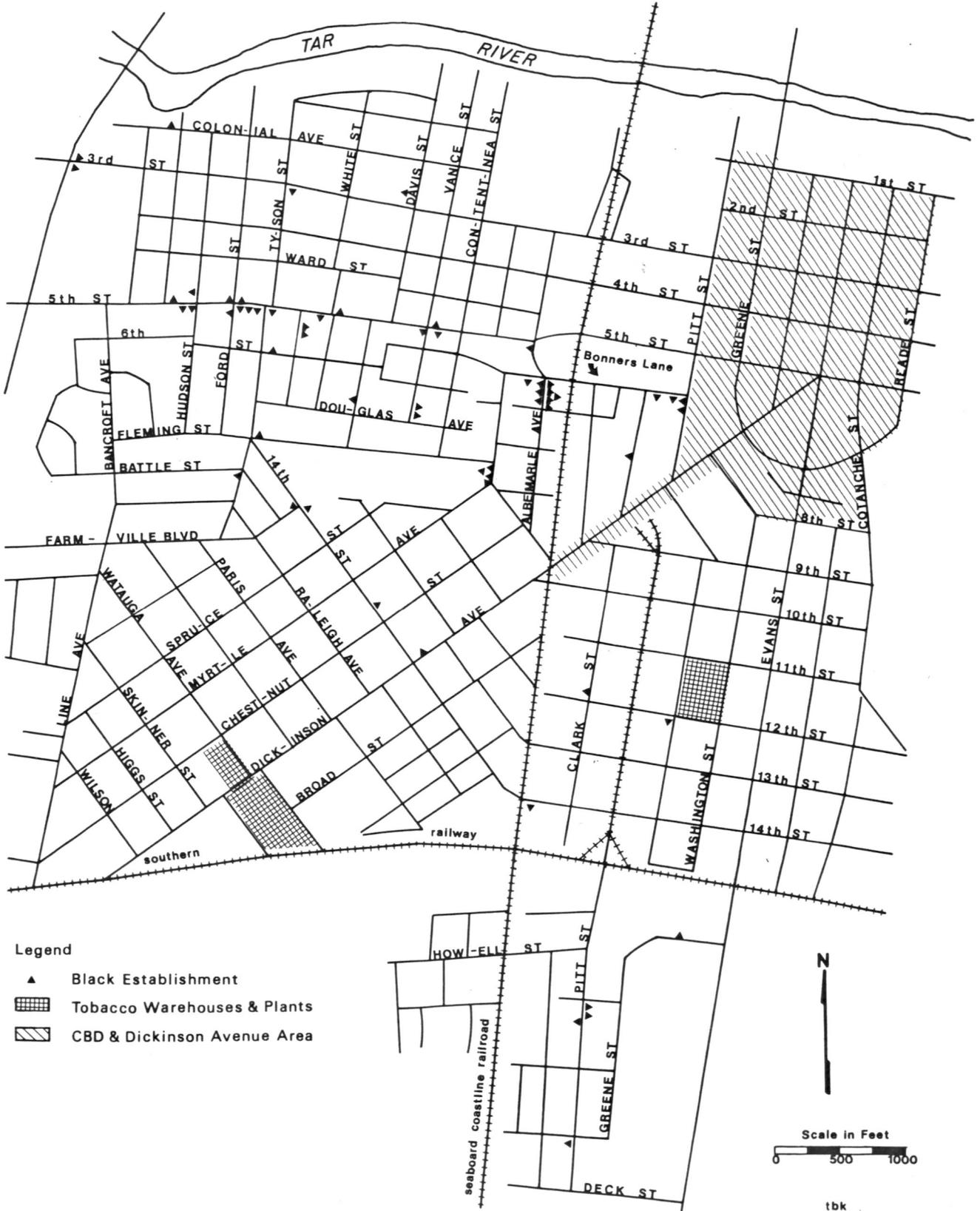


Figure 11

either stroll or cruise by eventually. Greenville's "for colored only" movie theaters were located on this street. (Figures 12 and 13)

Other streets and areas have been important nodes of black business in Greenville. (Figure 14) These areas were: 1) the intersection of Pitt and Twelfth Streets, which has been the location of black business for 60 years, 2) the corner of Evans and Second Streets (50 years), and 3) the corner of Bonners Lane and Pitt Street (50 years). These areas all have one thing in common in that they are all located in the black residential areas.

Growth Characteristics

During the time span, 1917 to 1978, three distinct periods of change are discernible. A period of gradual growth (1917 to 1937) saw an increase of 27% from 37 black firms in 1917 to 47 firms in 1937. An increase of 166% took place during the period of rapid growth (1937 to 1950). There were 47 firms in 1937 compared to 125 by 1950. The period from 1950 to 1978 can best be described as a period of more or less steady decline. A decrease of 40% has occurred during this thirty-eight year time span from 125 firms in 1950 to 75 firms in 1978. There were a number of factors responsible for



Figure 12 - The Roxy Theater, one of two "for colored only" movie theaters located on Albemarle Avenue, has been out of business since 1967.



Figure 13 - Bell's Cafe, a traditional social gathering place on "the block".



Figure 14 - Thomas White's Barber Shop has been located on the corner of Pitt Street and Bonners Lane since 1936.

the fluctuation in the number of black firms. These will be discussed later in chapter four. (Figure 15)

During this time, the percentage of the total number of businesses in Greenville which were black-owned has also changed. (Table 3) The percentage of businesses which were black-owned ranged from 9% in 1917 to 6% in 1978. Black-owned firms accounted for 18% of the businesses in Greenville in 1945. Seman notes that "black-owned business never accounted for as much as 10% of the total number of businesses in Columbia, South Carolina."⁹ Black enterprise appears to have been more important in the smaller city, such as Greenville, than in Columbia.

Another characteristic of black commercial land use is the ownership pattern. The hypothesis developed for this study was that the percentage of black firms on black-owned land would increase during the study period. A random sample of 1/3 of the 946 businesses located in Greenville between 1917 and 1978 was taken. A land title investigation was then made to determine the owners of the land the businesses were located on. A definite increase during the time span was revealed. Only 20% of the firms

⁹Seman, Paul F., "Structure and Spatial Distribution of Black-Owned Business in Columbia, South Carolina 1900 - 1976", (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of South Carolina, 1977), p. 26.

Number Of Black Business Firms 1917 - 1978

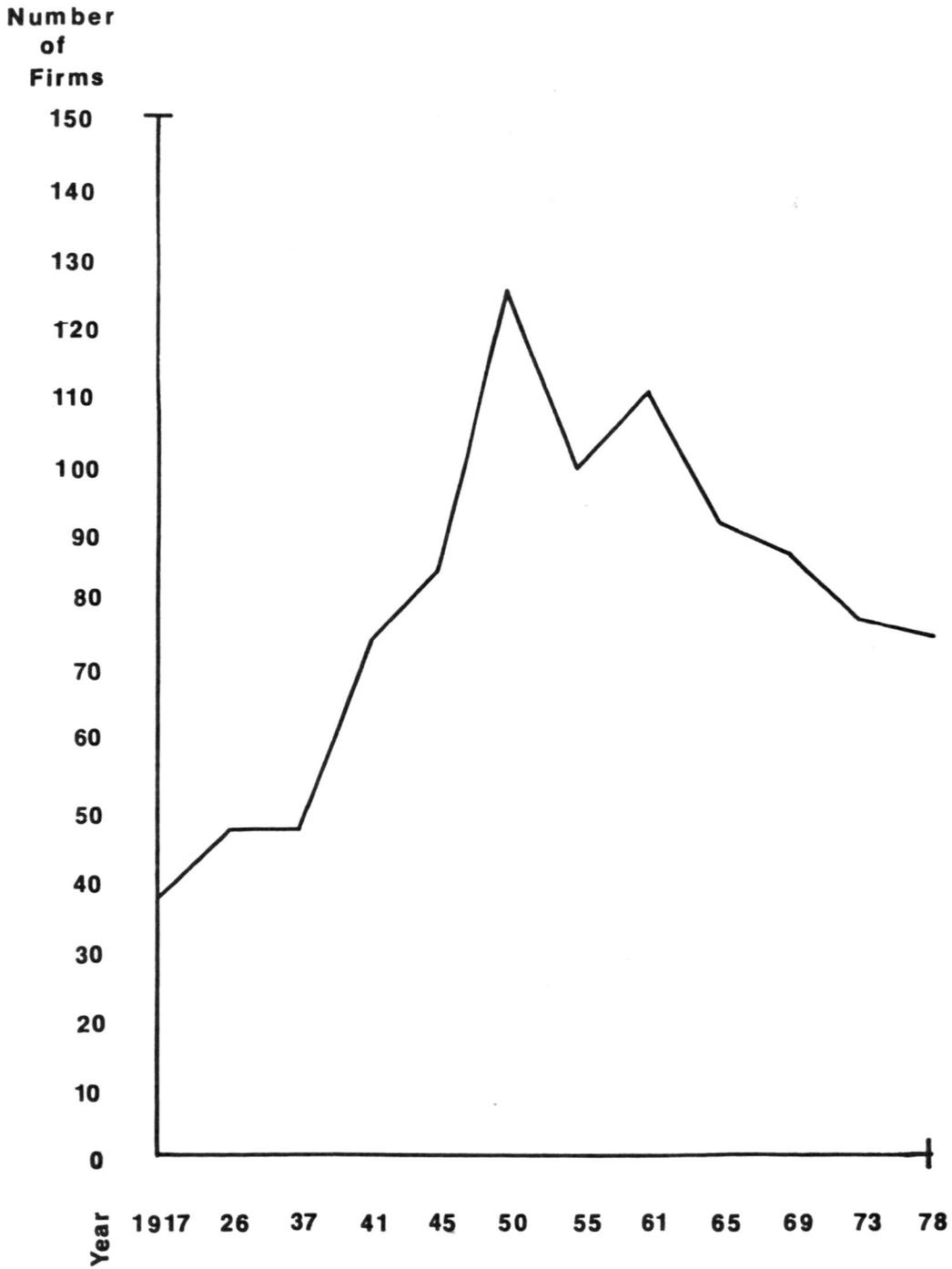


Figure 15

TABLE 3
 BLACK-OWNED BUSINESS AS PERCENT
 OF TOTAL BUSINESSES

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total No. of Businesses</u>	<u>No. Black-Owned Businesses</u>	<u>Percent Black</u>
1917	400	37	9.2
1926	458	47	10.3
1937	410	47	11.5
1941	509	74	14.5
1945	480	84	17.5
1950	742	125	16.8
1955	756	99	13.1
1961	752	110	14.6
1965	829	91	11.0
1969	945	87	9.2
1973	1,077	77	7.1
1978	1,264	75	5.9

Source: Compiled by author from Greenville City Directories

were located on black-owned land in 1917 as compared to 78% in 1978. (Figure 16)

Summary

In this chapter, various aspects of the character of black urban commercial land use were examined. It was noted that black urban commercial land use in Greenville is dominated by the small retail, or service type establishment. Many black business firms have multiple land use functions as evidenced by the commercial-residential function. Black commercial land use in Greenville is found, for the most part, in or adjacent to black residential areas. The Western section of Greenville is the area of greatest black business concentration.

Black urban commercial land use has exhibited changing growth characteristics. Three discernible periods of growth were discovered: 1) a period of gradual growth, 2) a period of dynamic growth, and 3) a period of decline. In conjunction with this growth, it was noted that black urban commercial land use accounted for 17.5% of the total number of businesses in Greenville in 1945. It was also noted that, although there has been a decline in the absolute number and percentage of black business firms in Greenville in recent years, there has been an increase in the number of black-owned establishments located on black-owned property.

**Percentage Of Black Firms
Located On Black-Owned Land
1917 - 1978**

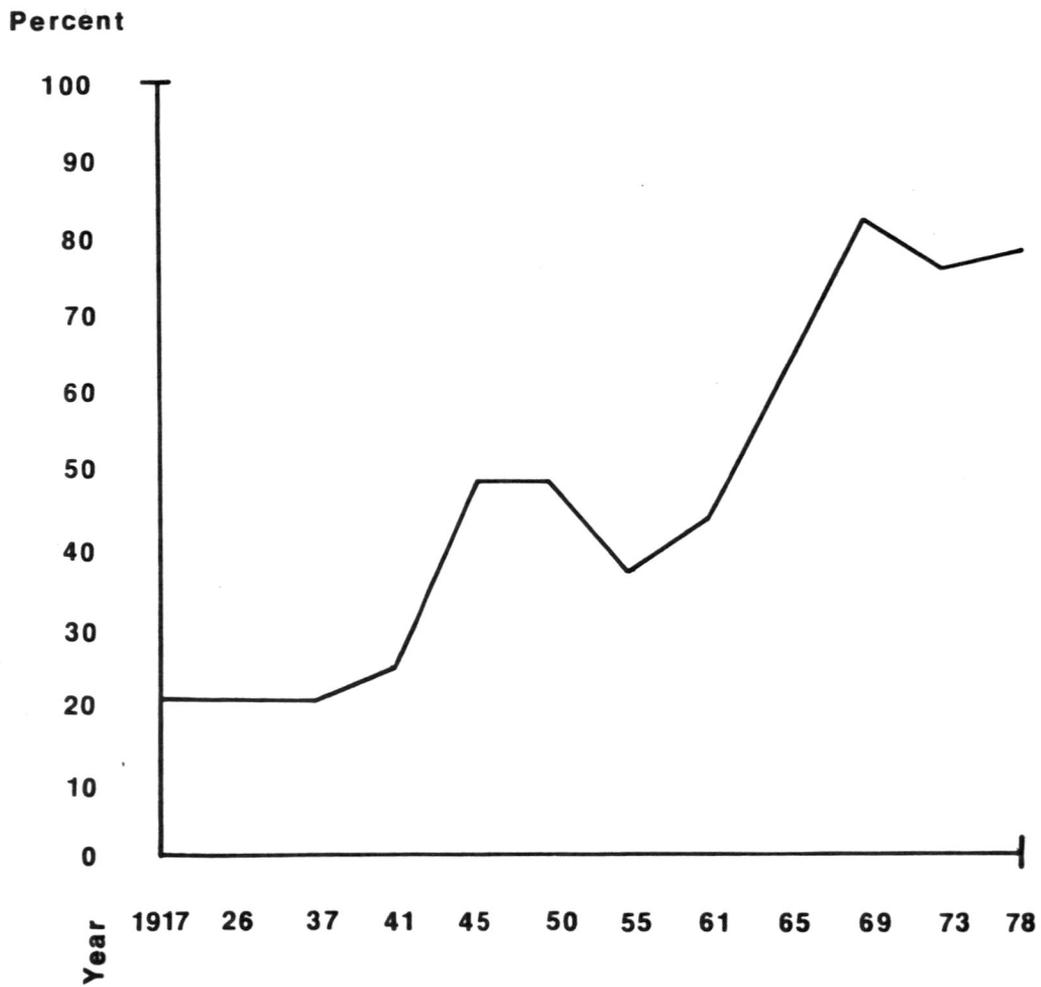


Figure 16

CHAPTER III

EVOLUTION OF THE SPATIAL PATTERN OF BLACK URBAN COMMERCIAL LAND USE

In the last chapter, some of the important characteristics of black enterprise in Greenville were examined. It was noted that quite a few changes in these characteristics have occurred during the period 1917 - 1978. This chapter is concerned with the changing spatial pattern of black-owned business in Greenville during this time.

Urban Structure Models

There are three classical models of urban structure, Burgess' Concentric Zone Theory, Hoyt's Sector Theory, and Harris and Ullman's Multiple Nuclei Theory. Burgess suggested that the pattern of land use in the city could be explained by means of five concentric zones. His contention was that city growth occurs around a single nucleus, with a zone-in-transition followed by successive zones of newer housing from the core outward. Competition for land in the zone-in-transition sets in motion the process of invasion and succession which involves the outward movement of the different residential rings.

Hoyt's Sector Theory was designed to explain the growth of residential areas, but it also has a more general application. Hoyt suggests that wedge-shaped sectors of

different types of land use would develop along transportation routes leading out of the city. A particular type of land use would spread from its point of origin near the CBD outward along a transportation artery.

Harris and Ulman's Multiple Nuclei Theory operates under the assumption that city growth occurs around several nuclei rather than just one nucleus, the CBD. The development of these nuclei is based on four principles of geographic association: location of special facilities, the attraction of complementary activities, the repulsion of dissimilar activities, and the ability of some activities to pay higher rents for more accessible locations.¹⁰

The evolution of the spatial pattern of black urban commercial land use in Greenville exhibits a remarkable similarity to Hoyt's Sector Theory. This is illustrated by two maps. One showing the expansion of black neighborhoods and the other showing the growth of black business in Greenville during the study period. (Figures 17 and 18) It has already been noted that black commercial land use in Greenville is associated with the city's black residential areas. These maps document this conclusion.

¹⁰Rugg, Dean S., Spatial Foundations of Urbanism, (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1972), p. 213.

Expansion Of Black Neighborhoods In Greenville 1917 - 1978

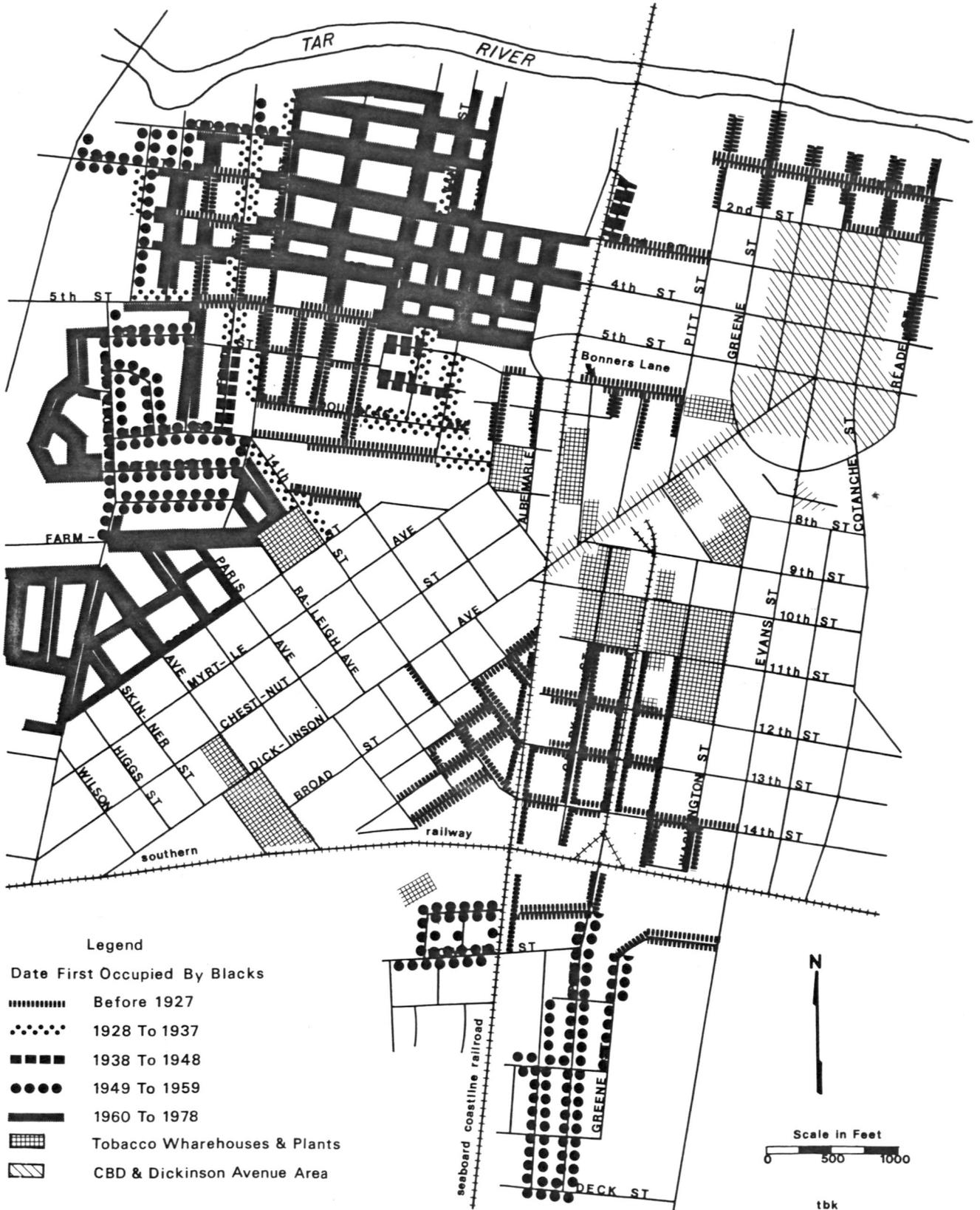


Figure 17

Growth Of Black Enterprise In Greenville 1917-1978



Figure 18

What is particularly interesting, however, is the spatial pattern of the two types of land use. Two sectors of black residential and commercial land use are discernible. One sector extends westward from the Dickinson Avenue area along West Fifth Street. The other extends South from the same area along South Pitt Street. This leaves out the area North of the CBD known as the Shore Drive area. This area could possibly be considered a third sector. Its expansion was halted by the Tar River located to the North of it.

The map shows that black residential land use spread from its point of origin near the Dickinson Avenue area, West and South in the previously mentioned sectors. Black commercial land use exhibits a similar growth pattern with a majority of the earlier businesses occupying locations near the Dickinson Avenue area. Later businesses occupied locations farther from the core. This is better illustrated by looking at maps of black-owned business in Greenville at two points in time.

The development of black enterprise in Greenville can be divided into three stages as indicated previously. The stages are: 1) an early period of gradual growth, 2) a period of dynamic growth, and 3) a period of decline. Development of black commercial land use during the first two periods best illustrates sector development. The map

of black commercial land use for 1937 was chosen as being representative of the early period, and the 1950 map for the dynamic growth period. (Figures 19 and 20)

Black-owned business in 1937 was, for the most part, located adjacent to the CBD in the Shore Drive area and to the West and South of the Dickinson Avenue area. A few businesses are located farther West along West Fifth Street and some are located as far South as Fourteenth Street.

The year 1950 was the peak year of black commercial land use in Greenville with a total of 125 firms and constituting almost 17% of all the total number of businesses, both black and white.

The relationship of the spatial pattern of black-owned businesses to Hoyt's Sector Theory is clearly evident. Three sectors of black firms are discernible. In the western sector, a great many more black-owned firms are located on West Fifth Street and other streets nearby. In the southern sector, a few more businesses have sprung up on Fourteenth Street, and black business in this sector has spread down Pitt Street, South of the railroad tracks. The northern Shore Drive sector also shows an increase in the number of firms.

During the latest period, the period of gradual decline, changes have taken place which alter this pattern

Black Business Establishments In Greenville 1937

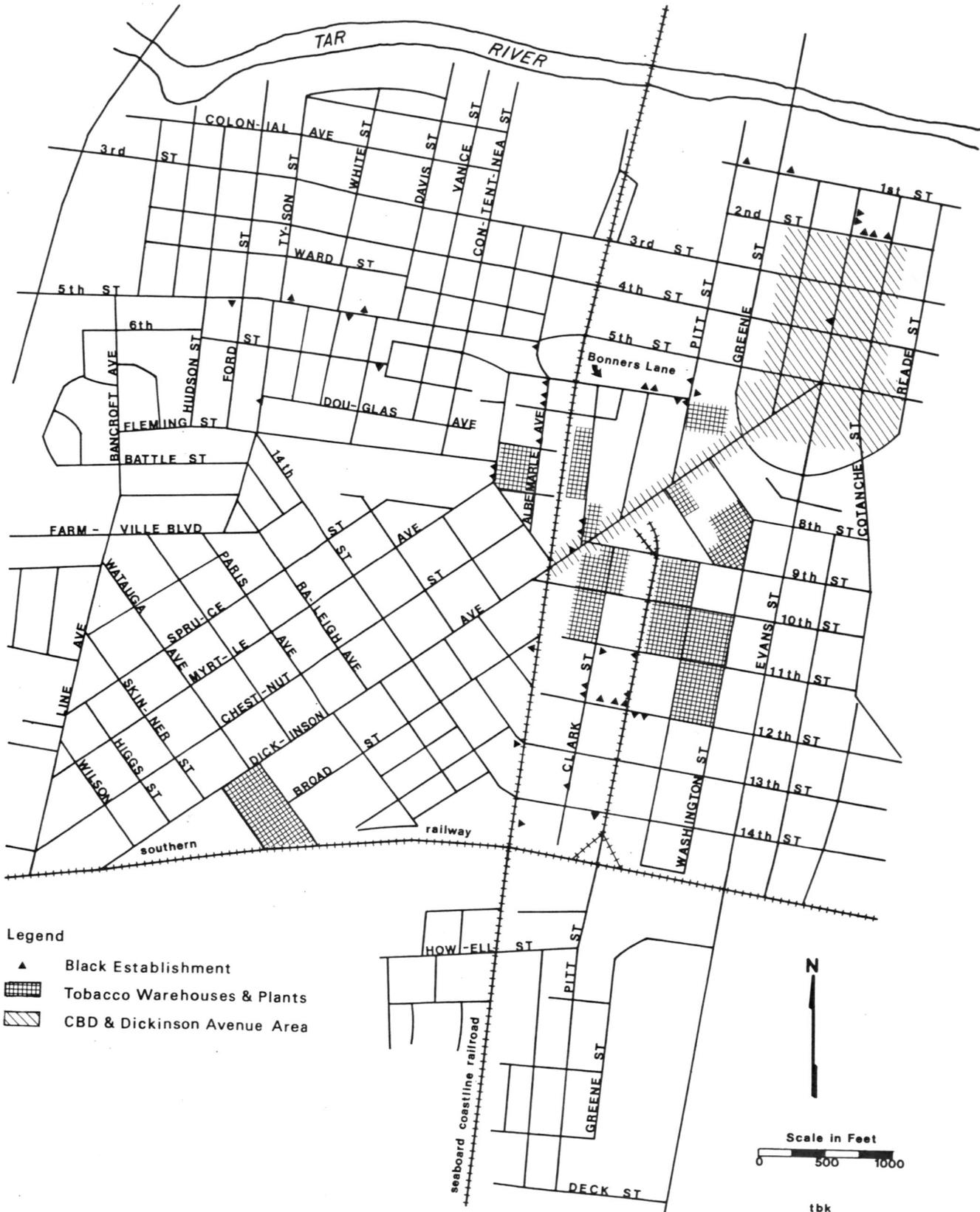


Figure 19

Black Business Establishments In Greenville 1950

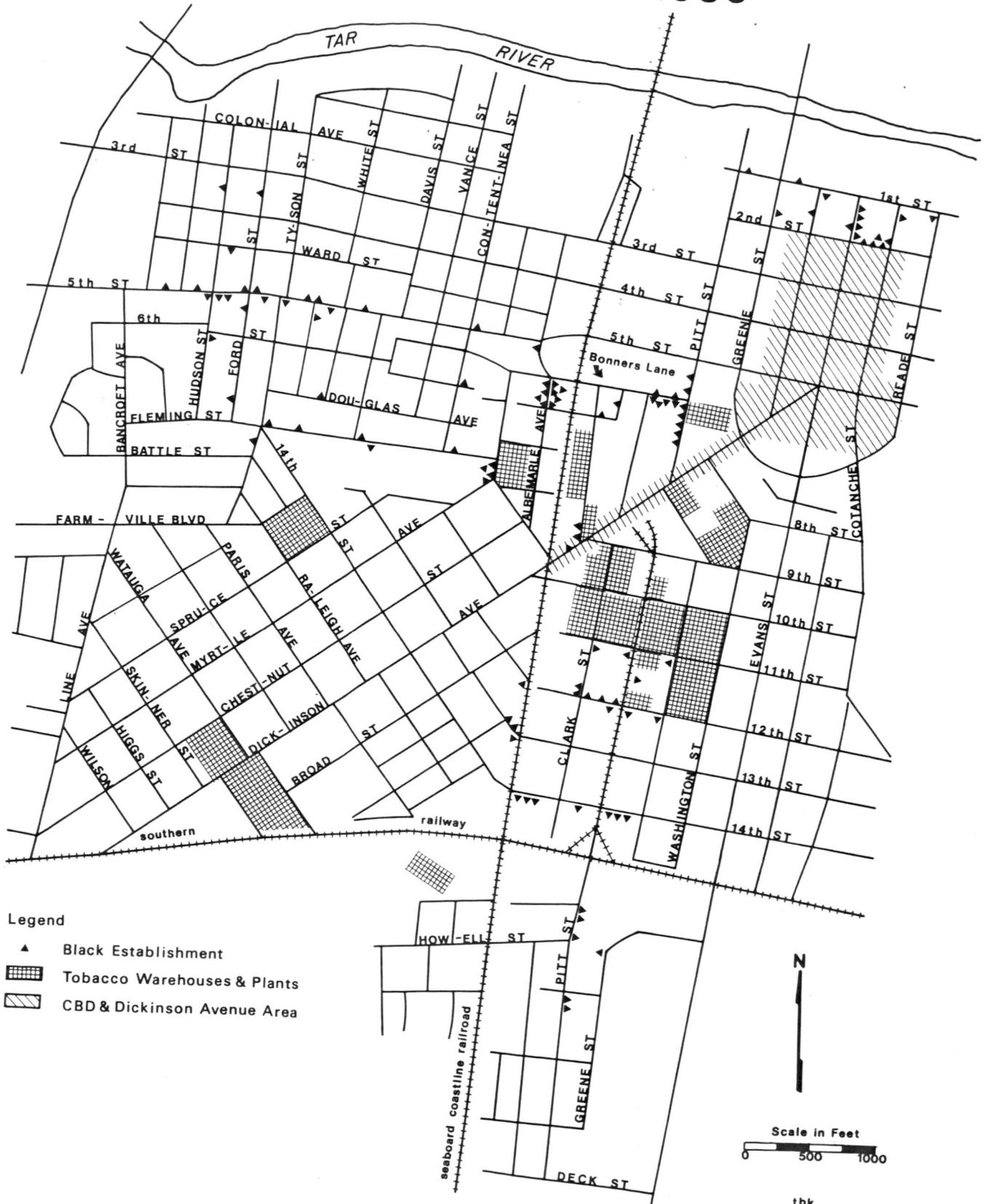


Figure 20

tbk

to some extent. (Figure 11) Black commercial land use is missing from the northern Shore Drive sector. The southern sector has lost a great many of the businesses that were located near its point of origin. The western sector has retained its pattern. It is the main area of black business in Greenville today.

Summary

The evolution of the spatial pattern of black urban commercial land use in Greenville followed Hoyt's Sector Theory. From the overall pattern of black commercial and residential land use, it was possible to discern two or possibly three sectors: 1) a western sector originating near the Dickinson Avenue area and continuing westward, more or less, along West Fifth Street, 2) a southern sector beginning South of the Dickinson Avenue area and continuing southward, more or less, along South Pitt Street, and 3) a northern sector, the Shore Drive area which is North of the CBD proper. The spread of this sector was hindered by the fact that it was sandwiched between the Tar River, to the North, and the CBD, to the South.

The pattern of black urban commercial land use during the three periods of growth was examined. During the early period of gradual growth, the location of black commercial

land use was near the central city. The period of dynamic growth witnessed a spread of black commercial land use toward the periphery in the western and southern sectors. The recent period has seen the disappearance of the northern sector and decline in the southern sector, particularly near the point of origin, near the central city. The western sector has not experienced a great loss in number of black-owned businesses and is relatively unchanged.

This is not the only instance in which Hoyt's Theory has been observed in regard to the location pattern of blacks in southern cities. Donald Deskin in a recent study entitled "Race as an Element in Intra-City Regionalization of Atlanta's Population", notes that the black population of Atlanta is located in two sectors. One sector is oriented to the East and another is oriented to the West.¹¹

¹¹Deskin, Donald R., "Race as an Element in Intra-City Regionalization of Atlanta's Population", Southeastern Geographer, 11 (November, 1971), p. 98.

CHAPTER IV

FACTORS THAT HAVE INFLUENCED THE DEVELOPMENT AND SPATIAL STRUCTURE OF BLACK URBAN COMMERCIAL LAND USE

Chapters two and three dealt with the characteristics of black urban commercial land use and the evolution of its spatial structure, which was related to Hoyt. There are a number of factors which have influenced the characteristics and spatial structure of black urban commercial land use in Greenville. A full understanding of the kind of land use under consideration here necessitates a discussion of these factors.

Economic Factors

There are a number of economic factors that have been important in influencing the development of black-owned business in Greenville. Many of these factors have been important in changing the development of black enterprise in other cities in the United States as well.

One important economic factor that is important to any commercial enterprise is its market. This factor influences both the structure and location of black urban commercial land use. Black enterprise serves a predominantly black clientele. This fact is brought out by

several authors.¹² Black enterprise in Greenville also serves mostly black customers. This can be implied by the fact that very few black-owned businesses are, or have in the past, been located outside the black residential areas in Greenville.

This leads to another related factor. The buying power of the black customer is important. The black population is generally more economically disadvantaged than the population as a whole. This means a limited source of income for the black businessman. It also dictates what type of goods and services that black-owned businesses supply. In spite of the black consumer's limited buying power, it would appear that the black business would have the corner on the market in the black community. This is not the case. The black businessman must compete with the white merchant for the market. Although the black merchant is restricted in his choice of locations, the white competition is free to locate anywhere it pleases.¹³ The black merchant is limited in

¹²Seman, Paul F., "Structure and Spatial Distribution of Black-Owned Business in Columbia, South Carolina 1900 - 1976", p. 56; Rose, Harold, The Black Ghetto: A Spatial Behavioral Perspective, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1971), p. 76; Bailey, Ronald W., Black Business Enterprise: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives, (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1971) p. 34.

¹³Ibid., Seman, p. 36.

his choice of locations because of racial prejudices and the cost of renting property outside of the area.

Another factor related to those mentioned above has to do with capital, the funds to initiate a business or to make improvements. A main disadvantage of the black businessman has been his lack of capital and a means of obtaining it. The small businessman, whether black or white, experiences great difficulties when he tries to obtain a loan. This is due to the high risk involved in granting such loans.¹⁴ The effect of such factors has limited the type of business operated by blacks to those which require little or no capital investment. It must be noted that since 1965, blacks have had more access to loans as a result of civil rights legislation. This has enabled blacks to obtain both federally assisted and nonfederally assisted loans with greater ease. (Figure 21) The impact of more readily available loans may be reflected in the change in landownership patterns since 1965. (Figure 16) The percentage of black firms located on black-owned land increased from 40% in 1961 to 82% in 1969. In spite of this, the character of black urban commercial land use in Greenville has not changed that much since 1965. It has already been noted that there is a

¹⁴Foley, Eugene P., "Limitations of the Black Businessman", in The Economics of Black America, eds., Harold G. Vatter, and Thomas Palm, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc., 1972), p. 136.



Figure 21 - Improvements to this property were made possible by greater access to loans.

retail-service orientation of black commercial land use in Greenville. These are, for the most part, small operations.

Although there hasn't been a great many instances of white businesses located in the black community of Greenville, there have been a few. (Figure 22) More recently, there has been competition from the white-owned convenience store. Redevelopment and low income housing projects have been responsible for the relocation of many black families. Associated with the development of these housing projects have been the opening of chain convenience stores nearby. (Figure 23) These businesses were able to take advantage of readily available capital and other expertise to open as soon as they did and at the best locations.

Improved transportation has also contributed to the competition with which black firms have to contend. In 1976, GREAT, or Greenville Area Transit bus system was put into operation. This bus system enabled the black residents of West Greenville better access to the stores in other parts of town. This has undoubtedly had some impact on business in West Greenville. It prompted one merchant to complain in the newspaper. (Figure 24) Also, it prompted one merchant located in a white neighborhood to advertise on the bus. (Figure 25)



Figure 22 - Grand Avenue Grocery (white-owned) serves the black community.



Figure 23 - More recently, there has been competition from the white-owned convenience store. (Fast Fare on Hooker Road)

Public Forum

Letters submitted for Public Forum must be limited to 300 words.

To the editor:

1. The Great System sees increases and should have at 25 cents a ride, when Raleigh and Charlotte both get 75 cents a ride. How can Greenville be compared with the cities mentioned on the front page of The Daily Reflector when the city limits of Greenville are less than seven miles apart? They do not dare tell you, the taxpayer, what this Great System is costing us.

2. The City Council last spring passed a tax increase and allocated \$63,000 of your tax dollars to keep the Great running another year.

3. Let me explain the facts — we the taxpayers have lost over \$200,000 valuable tax dollars to keep this Great System going.

At 25 cents a ride times 186,114 rides — \$46,528.50

This does not pay the drivers' salaries.

Federal matching money — \$63,000

City tax money — \$63,000

Bus money \$46,528.50

Total to operate the Great System — \$172,528.50, plus.

Total bus miles, 174,319 — total operating expense, over \$1 per mile.

We, the people should have the right to vote on this issue and others when it comes to waste of our tax dollars.

Inflation has its grip on all of us. We cannot afford to waste any more valuable tax dollars.

4. Over 75 percent of the rides come from the western part of town. We, the merchants in this area, have lost over \$1 million in business.

Why haven't we been shown the true expense of this Great System?

Tommy Anthony
Anthony's Food Mart
W. Fifth St.

Figure 24 - Anthony's Food Mart letter to the editor clipping.



Figure 25 - It prompted one merchant located in a white neighborhood to advertise on the bus.
"Follow me to Overton's, home of the best meats in town."

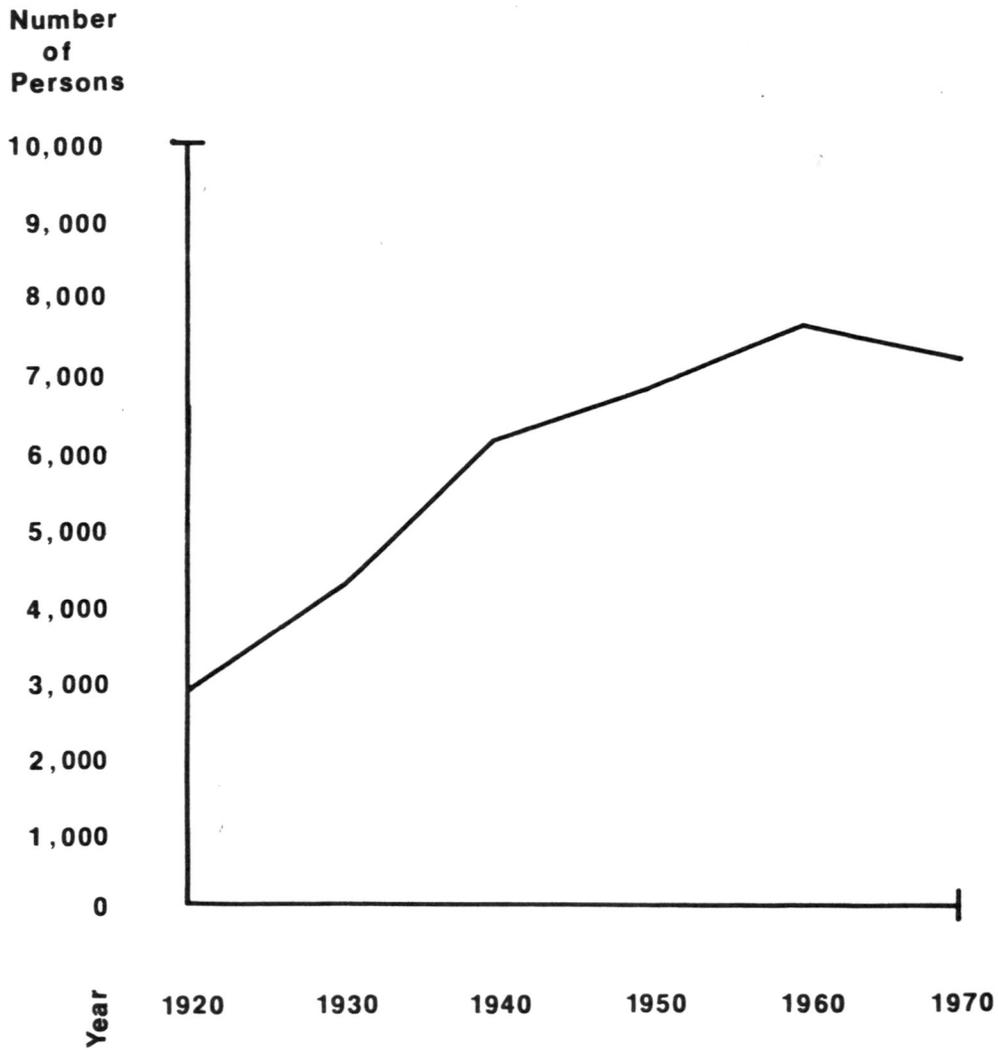
Population

There is a relationship between black population and black urban commercial land use. It has been previously mentioned that black commercial land use is located in black residential areas and serves a predominantly black clientele. The growth of black population in Greenville has been an important factor affecting the fluctuation in the number of black-owned businesses. This is illustrated by the graphs showing the growth of black population and black-owned business. (Figures 26 and 15)

As noted previously, the development of black business in Greenville can be divided into three periods. In the first two periods, the period of gradual growth (1917 to 1937) and the period of rapid growth (1937 to 1950), the number of black businesses increased from 37 in 1917 to 125 in 1950. In the most recent period, the period of gradual decline (1950 to 1978) there has been a decrease from 125 businesses in 1950 to 75 in 1978.

The growth of black population in Greenville can also be divided into three periods, a period of rapid growth (1920 to 1940) shows an increase from 2,700 black persons in 1917 to 6,100 persons in 1940. This is followed by a period of gradual growth (1940 to 1960) with an increase from 6,100 persons in 1940 to 7,600 in 1960. The third period is one of decline (1960 to 1970) with a

**Black Population
Greenville, N.C.
1920 - 1970**



Source : U.S. Bureau of the Census

Figure 26

decrease in black population from 7,600 in 1960 to 7,200 in 1970.

The overall similarity of the two graphs is quite evident with both indicating an increase during their first two periods followed by a decrease in the third. They both peak at about the same time. Black business peaks in 1950 at 125 firms. The peak year for black population was 1960 at 7,600. This corresponds to the secondary peak of 110 business firms in 1961.

It must be noted that other factors have contributed to the fluctuation in the number of black firms as well. One factor was the great depression which is reflected in the graph. (Figure 15) It shows no change in the number of black firms from 1926 to 1937. Two other factors have played an important role in the decline of black business since 1950 in addition to the decrease in population. These factors, decentralization and urban renewal, will now be discussed.

Decentralization

As Greenville and its black population have grown, the black residential areas have spread. The relationship between black residential growth and the spread of black urban commercial land use was mentioned in the last chapter. It was noted that the growth of black commercial land use exhibited a pattern similar to the pattern

proposed by Hoyt in his Sector Theory. This leads to another factor which has been important in Greenville in affecting the development of black urban commercial land use. This factor has to do with the location of other activity and its effect on the development and location of black urban commercial land use.

It was mentioned in the last chapter that black urban commercial land use developed in three sectors which had the CBD, or Dickinson Avenue area, as a focus. The reason for this focus was due to the fact that Greenville was initially a pedestrian city. Most economic activity was located in or adjacent to the CBD. Black enterprise in Greenville developed initially in or adjacent to black neighborhoods, but, more than this, they developed between the bulk of the black residential areas and the core area.

The core area was an important attraction. It has been noted that railroad transportation and freight services were important activities and that the area served as a receiving and distribution focus.¹⁵ "Greenville developed a tobacco marketing area concentrated on Dickinson Avenue, and Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Streets near where they

¹⁵Harris, H. D., "Central Business District (CBD) of Greenville, North Carolina", (Unpublished Master's Thesis, East Carolina University, 1975), pp. 62-64.

intersect Dickinson Avenue."¹⁶ "Tobacco warehouses, soft drink manufacturers, tobacco processors, and grocery and dry goods wholesaling have been the trademark of commerce in this area."¹⁷ A great majority of the black population consists of unskilled or semi-skilled workers. Undoubtedly, blacks made up part of the work force of the above-mentioned activities.

Blacks were attracted to the Dickinson Avenue area for another reason, "Dickinson Avenue has traditionally functioned as a poorman's CBD."¹⁸

The black residential areas spread outward in the sectors to the West and South of this core area. Associated with this spread of residential areas was a corresponding expansion of black commercial land use away from the core.

Decentralization of the activities that served as a focus has had an impact on the pattern of black urban commercial land use in Greenville. This has led to the disappearance of black commercial land use in the parts

¹⁶Austin, T. E., "Tobacco Marketing Warehouses and Their Location in the Urban Landscape of the Eastern Tobacco Belt of North Carolina", (Unpublished Master's Thesis, East Carolina University, 1975), p. 47.

¹⁷Harris, H. D., "Central Business District (CBD) of Greenville, North Carolina", (Unpublished Master's Thesis, East Carolina University, 1975), p. 62.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 44.

of the sectors adjacent to the core. This is particularly true for the southern sector which at one time had many black-owned businesses. The intersection of Twelfth and Pitt Streets was the location of a cluster of black-owned businesses in the southern sector. Today, the businesses are closed and boarded up. Many black males congregate around these storefronts to pass the time of day. (Figure 27)

The western sector has also lost some businesses adjacent to the core. Because of the initial establishment of the greater number of businesses in this sector however, the impact of decentralization is less obvious.

Urban Renewal

Urban renewal has had a great impact on black urban commercial land use in Greenville. Nowhere is this more evident than in the northern sector, the area now referred to as Shore Drive. From the early period to the present this has been a black residential area and a prime zone of black-owned businesses. The intersection of Evans and Second Streets on the northern end of Greenville's main street (Evans) has been a concentration of black-owned businesses. It was noted that this author feels that this area could be considered a sector with the CBD as a focus.

In 1965, the process of buying the land in this area was begun, followed by the razing of all the buildings in the project. Many of the black businesses which were



Figure 27 - The Twelfth and Pitt Street Intersection. Although the store is closed and boarded up, many black males congregate outside to pass the time of day.

operated by old persons sold out completely, while a few others were relocated to other parts of the city.

Figures 28 and 29 are two such businesses. The grocery store was moved to the southern sector and the funeral home was moved to the western sector. The owner of the grocery said his business was better before the move, which is understandable when one considers his former location at the corner of Evans and Second Streets. Because of its close proximity to the CBD, it would generate more customers from around the city, not just the local neighborhood. The owners of the funeral home are most pleased with its location on West Fifth Street, which puts it in the center of Black West Greenville. The Shore Drive area is now devoted to office and public land use functions. (Figure 30)

Another area that was razed was the Newtown project area. It is adjacent to the southern sector forming its western boundary. There were only a couple of black-owned businesses in this project area, none of which chose to relocate. A low income housing project was put in place of the residences that were located there. No new black businesses have located near this project. In addition to the main redevelopment projects, the city has condemned and torn down individual structures throughout Greenville that have been deemed unfit for habitation. The residents



Figure 28 - Adam's Grocery, relocated to South Pitt Street from its original location on the corner of Evans and Second Streets



Figure 29 - Flanagan Funeral Home, originally located on East Second Street, was relocated to West Fifth Street.



Figure 30 - The corner of Evans and Second Street, once a node of black urban commercial land use, now serves an office land use function.

of these dwellings in most cases have been moved to other areas in the city, such as the projects. This may have the effect of shrinking the market for the black-owned businesses which depended on these persons as customers.

Summary

There have been a great many factors which, individually or combined, shaped the growth of black urban commercial land use in Greenville. The economic factors, in part, could be those which influence any type of small business such as the difficulty in finding credit. Other factors are unique to black commercial land use. The fact that black business is dependent, to a great extent, on the black community for its market can be implied by its proximity to the black residential areas and by the similar fluctuations in black population and the number of black businesses. The decentralization of industry, particularly the tobacco industry, has disrupted the walk to work pattern of the black population and lead to the disappearance of many black businesses adjacent to the city's industrial core. Urban renewal has also had a major impact on the pattern of black urban commercial land use in Greenville. One whole residential sector, the northern sector, was removed

and the residents and businesses relocated. The area is now for office and public land use functions. The potential market provided by the new housing projects is being tapped by the white-owned chain convenience store, which pop up at the nearest corner, even before the residents have time to settle in. The market is being depleted in other sections of black Greenville with individual houses and blocks being condemned and torn down. The former residents are then relocated to other areas. Finally, the black population of Greenville has become more mobile with the with the advent of the new public transportation system. Together, all these factors, and possibly others, have shaped the character and spatial pattern of black commercial land use in Greenville.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This thesis has been concerned with the sequential development of black urban commercial land use in Greenville, North Carolina.

The three main objectives were: 1) to determine the distinguishing characteristics of black urban commercial land use in Greenville, 2) to trace the evolution of the spatial pattern of this type of land use in Greenville from 1917 to 1978, and 3) to gain some insights into the factors which have influenced the development of this type of land use in Greenville.

There are a number of distinguishing characteristics that combined together contribute to the character of black urban commercial land use in Greenville. The standard land use activity coding system was used to classify black-owned business in Greenville from 1917 to 1978. It was found that the structure of black-owned business in Greenville has a retail service orientation and the trend has favored the service type business since 1940.

Black-owned business firms are typically small operations. This is evidenced by the phenomenon of multifunction land use, in which a given location serves

two or more land use functions. An example would be a small business which serves as a residence as well.

Black-owned business was and still is primarily located in or adjacent to Greenville's black residential areas. The great majority of black-owned business in Greenville today is located in the black neighborhoods of West Greenville. Most of these are located on the main thoroughfares of Albemarle Avenue and West Fifth Street. There have been other parts of the city which have been nodes of black urban commercial land use in the past. These nodes were 1) the intersection of Pitt Street and Bonners Lane, 2) the corner of Evans and Second Streets, and 3) the intersection of Twelfth and Pitt Streets.

There are three recognizable periods in the development of black urban commercial land use in Greenville, 1) a period of gradual growth from 1917 to 1937, 2) a period of rapid growth from 1937 to 1950, and 3) a period of more or less steady decline from 1950 to 1978. It is important to note that the percentage of the total number of business firms in Greenville which were black-owned was 17 percent in 1945. As previously mentioned, Seman found that black-owned business never accounted for more than 10 percent of the total number of business firms

in Columbia, South Carolina, which may indicate a greater importance of black-owned firms in the smaller city.

The evolution of the spatial pattern of black urban commercial land use in Greenville follows Hoyt's Sector Theory of Urban Growth. Three sectors are evident, one to the North of the CBD, one to the South and one to the West. Expansion of black urban commercial land use in these sectors corresponds to the three periods of development. During the early period, black-owned business was located adjacent to the central city. Black urban commercial land use spread out toward the periphery during the period of dynamic growth. During the period of decline, there has been a loss in the number of black-owned firms in the areas of the sectors adjacent to the central city.

There have been a number of factors that have had an impact on the development of black urban commercial land use in Greenville. Some of these have influenced the development of black-owned business in other cities as well.

One factor that has influenced the development of black-owned business has been the difficulty the black businessman has had in trying to obtain credit. This has had the effect of limiting black-owned business to those types of business which require little or no capital

investment. It was noted, however, that the black businessman has enjoyed a greater availability of federally assisted and nonfederally assisted loans since the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The change in land ownership patterns of black-owned business may reflect this improved access to credit. It was noted that there has been an increase in the number of black-owned business firms located on black-owned land during the study period. Only 20 percent of the black-owned firms were located on black-owned land in 1917 as compared to 80 percent in 1978 with the greatest increase occurring between 1965 and 1969.

There is a relationship between the black population and black urban commercial land use. This is indicated by the fact that most black-owned firms were and still are located in or adjacent to the black residential areas. It is also indicated by the similarity between the growth and decline of black-owned business and black population.

Related to this is the income and buying power of the black population. It was noted that blacks tend to have lower incomes than the population as a whole and are economically disadvantaged. The resulting lack of income and buying power would restrict the types of business that serve this population.

It was noted that many black businesses located near the core area of the city disappeared during the period of gradual decline. The main reason for this was the decentralization of the tobacco industry and the other activities which served as a focus for this area.

Urban renewal has also had an impact on black urban commercial land use in Greenville. The northern sector was completely razed and the residents and some of the businesses were relocated to other parts of the city. Many of these residents were relocated in the government low income housing projects. It was noted that the white-owned convenience store was taking advantage of the new market by locating near the projects, sometimes opening for business before the new residents in the projects had moved in. Individual substandard residential structures in black neighborhoods throughout the city have been condemned and their residents relocated. This has had the effect of limiting the market for the remaining black-owned businesses.

Another factor that has affected black-owned business in Greenville has been the increased mobility of the black population provided by the new bus system. It has had the effect of increasing the competition for the black businessman. The low income black consumer now has the opportunity to shop in other parts of the city.

Conclusion

Black urban commercial land use is a spatial phenomenon of many cities. It is a topic that has for the most part been neglected in the geographic literature. Most of the existing studies have been concerned with larger urban areas outside the South. The city directory is a valuable tool which can be used to trace the development of black urban commercial land use in the smaller urban area.

The recent trend toward urban renewal that has taken place in our cities is threatening to erase from the urban landscape one entire period of urban growth. More studies of black-owned business are needed before the remaining traces of the earlier period disappear completely.

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