

WASHINGTON HOTEL
(Southern Hotel)
Corner of Main &
Telegraph Streets
Clarksville
Montgomery County
Tennessee

HABS NO. TN-6

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TENN,
63-CLKSV,
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WASHINGTON HOTEL (Southern Hotel)

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Location Corner of Main and Telegraph Streets in Clarksville, Tennessee. USGS Clarksville, Tennessee Quadrangle. Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates 16 4042425 467600.

Present Owner City of Clarksville, City Hall, Public Square, Clarksville, Tennessee, 37040.

Present Occupant None

Present use Vacant

Significance The Washington Hotel is an extensively altered structure dating from the mid-1820s. It has association with Clarksville's mid-19th century prominence as a port on the Cumberland River. The hotel served travelers for many years until its conversion into offices for a tobacco warehouse in 1884. From 1884 to the mid-20th century the building has been a part of Clarksville's prominent tobacco industry. Although altered in the 20th century it still displays aspects of its original architectural character.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: ca. 1825. County historian Ursula Beech describes in her book Along the Warioto that the Washington Hotel was built ca. 1825 to serve the riverboat trade. At the time of its construction it was three stories in height and of Federal style construction. This description is confirmed through its appearance on an 1870 lithograph of the city. The building at this time was known as the Southern Hotel.

2. Architect: Unknown.

3. Original and subsequent owners: The early records of ownership of the lot are incomplete and ownership can only be traced after the Civil War. Reference is to the Clerk's office in the Montgomery County Courthouse in Clarksville, Tennessee.

1884 An 1887 publication refers to the building as being acquired in 1884 by Charles R. Hallums. This transaction has not been located.

1888 Deed, April 12, 1888, Book 23, page 56.
C.R. Hallum
to
W.B. Anderson.

- 1918 Deed, January 13, 1918, Book 56, page 559.
W.B. Anderson
to
Ruddolph Hach and Company (later known as the
Southwestern Tobacco Company).
- 1978 Deed, August 5, 1977, Book 61, Vol 2, page 156.
From Southwestern Tobacco Company
to
City of Clarksville

4. Builder: Unknown.

5. Original plans and construction: No early plans of the building have been located. Views of the building in the 1870s show that it was originally a three-story rectangular masonry structure with a masonry three-story ell addition. It was of Federal style construction and had a gable roof and end chimneys. Because of extensive remodeling the original interior plan is not discernible.

6. Alterations and additions: The Washington Hotel was originally a three-story brick ell shaped Federal style structure. In 1884 the building was altered with the Main Street facade redesigned in the Italianate style with arched windows and doorways with cast iron hood molding. The gable roof was also removed and replaced with a flat roof and sheet metal cornice. The rear ell was removed and replaced with a brick warehouse . Further alterations occurred in the 1920s when the top two floors of the building were removed and a stepped parapet was added to the roofline.

B. Historical Context:

The Washington Hotel was constructed in the mid-1820s and was originally a three-story masonry Federal style structure. Later known as the Southern Hotel, this building was one of Clarksville's major hotels of the 19th century and it served steamboat and overland travelers for many years. With the rise of the railroads and decline of steamboat travel the hotel's prominence began to wane and in the early 1880s the building was converted into offices for a tobacco company which altered the appearance of the structure. The gable roof was removed and the Main Street facade was changed through the introduction of Italianate windows and extended bays for the entrances. A rear brick ell was demolished and a brick tobacco warehouse was added.

An 1887 illustration describes the building as being operated by a tobacco company known as the "People's Warehouse" and occupying the old Southern Hotel site with the front of the building used for offices and storage. This illustration shows the changes to the original structure with the architectural character altered in the Italianate style. The building continued to be used as a tobacco warehouse office into the 20th century and was part of Clarksville's prosperous tobacco industry. In the 1920s the top two floors of the structure were removed and a stepped parapet was added to the roofline. The building has been utilized as offices and storage in recent years and tenants have extensively remodeled the interior.

PART II ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General statement:

1. Architectural character: The Washington Hotel is an extensively altered structure dating from the mid-1820s. Originally designed in the Federal style the building was altered in the 1880s to reflect the Commercial Italianate style with arched windows and hood molding. Further alterations occurred in the 1920s when the top two floors were removed and replaced with a stepped parapet. It is the only remaining structure on the north side of the public square.

2. Condition of the fabric: The exterior masonry of the hotel is in fair condition with some deterioration evident. The interior is in poor condition with areas of water and fire damage resulting in fallen plaster and rotted frame members. The interior has also been altered several times during this century. The warehouse behind the hotel is in fair condition with the masonry and frame truss ceiling system in good condition.

B. Description of exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The Washington Hotel building is rectangular in shape and measures approximately 110' across and 45' deep. The warehouse at the rear of the building is also rectangular in shape and measures 100' across and 270' deep.

2. Foundations: Both buildings rest on a foundation of rusticated limestone blocks.

3. Walls: The walls of both buildings are of brick with the Washington Hotel displaying stretcher bond while the warehouse is constructed of common bond. The brick on the hotel building has been painted white.

4. Structural system, framing: Exterior walls and major partition walls of the hotel building are of load bearing brick.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: Both entrances on the main facade of the hotel building have had the original doors removed and replaced with modern aluminum and glass doors. Above the modern door elements are the ca. 1884 wooden transom bars and arched transom. The fenestration on this facade has been altered with the west bay entrance enclosed for a window and two original window openings have been lengthened to accommodate new doors. Above the doors and windows on the facade is both wooden and cast iron hood molding. The doorways on the warehouse are single panel wooden doors above which is a stone lintel.

b. Windows: Windows on the Main Street facade are double paired one-over-one sash with a wooden transom bar and arched transom. Some of the windows have been altered into doorway openings. Above the windows are both cast iron or wooden hood molding. The hotel building also displays windows on the east and west elevations. These appear to date from the original ca. 1825 structure and are six-over-six sash with wooden sills and lintels. All of the frame elements on

the windows are in poor condition. Windows on the warehouse building are both two-over-two and nine-over-nine wooden sash with wood sills and lintels. Near the roof is a large clerestory window running the length of the warehouse containing twelve light casement windows.

6. Roof:

Shape, covering: The roof of the hotel building is flat with a covering of roofing tar. The warehouse has a gable and shed standing seam metal roof.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

The first floor of the hotel building consists of five rooms separated by brick and frame walls. Only one wall is of load bearing masonry dating to the original building. The frame walls were added both during the 1884 remodeling and the recent alterations. The frame walls have a finish of lathe and plaster. The central rear room is in very poor condition due to a recent fire which destroyed most of this area. All rooms are rectangular in shape. The warehouse building consists of open floor space supported by a frame post and lintel system with few added partition walls.

2. Flooring: The flooring in the hotel building consists of 3" wide hardwood tongue in groove planks which appear to date to the 1884 remodeling. Many areas of the floor are in poor condition and part of the floor on the eastern two rooms consists of poured concrete. The floor in the warehouse also consists partly of 3" wide wooden boards and a poured concrete slab.

3. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls in the hotel building consist of plaster and lathe over non-load bearing frame and gypsum board on the recently added partition walls. Only one load bearing masonry wall is extant from the original building. This wall also has a coating of plaster. The majority of the plaster in the building is in poor condition. The warehouse building walls are of load bearing exposed masonry. The ceiling in the hotel building consists both of plaster and dropped acoustical tiles. The warehouse building has an exposed frame truss ceiling.

4. Doorways and doors: Only two doors remain in the hotel building which date from the 1884 remodeling. These are typical stock doors of frame construction with two-over-two recessed panels. The door surround displays incised molding and bull's eye corner blocks. Other door openings in the building are recent additions. There are no interior doors in the warehouse building.

5. Decorative features: Few features from the original building or the 1884 remodeling have been retained on the interior. The two rooms on the west end of the building still display 2" wide tongue and groove wainscoting which extends to a height of four feet. On the west wall there are rectangular moldings panels beneath the windows. The east interior wall contains a fireplace opening but the mantel is missing. The distinctive feature of the warehouse building interior is the large expanse of light allowed by the clerestory window.

6. Lighting fixtures: All lighting fixtures are of mid-20th century origin in both buildings.

7. Heating: The hotel building still retains steam radiators dating from the early 20th century but these are non-functional and have not been used in recent years. A central heating system was installed in the 1950s but it too is no longer functional. A 20th century gas system is used in the warehouse building.

D. Site:

General setting: The hotel building fronts 110' on Main Street and faces towards the public square. On the west facade the hotel building and warehouse front 315' on Telegraph Street. Surrounding the building on the north and east elevations are vacant lots which are either unused or utilized for parking. There are no outbuildings.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Early views: The Washington Hotel (listed as the Southern Hotel) is shown in an 1870 lithograph of the city of Clarksville, dated 1870. This lithograph is on file at the Clarksville Public Library. The building is also designated on a D.G. Beers map dated 1877 which is also on file at the public library. An engraving of the building after it was altered is shown in Picturesque Clarksville dated 1887.

A. Interviews:

Beech, Mrs. Ursula. Clarksville, Tennessee. May 25, 1983.

B. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Montgomery County Deed Records. Clarksville, Tennessee.

2. Secondary and published sources:

Beech, Ursula Smith. Along the Warioto. Nashville, Tennessee: McQuiddy Press, 1964.

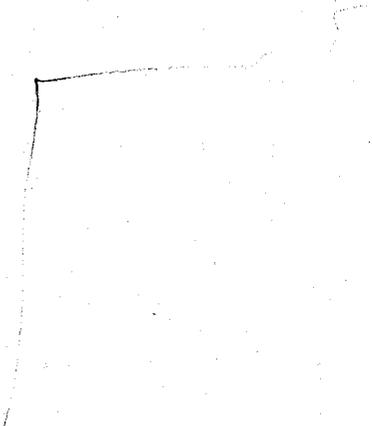
Titus, W.P. Picturesque Clarksville. Clarksville, Tennessee: Private Printing, 1887.

Reviewed and transmitted by: Paul Hawke SERO 11/85

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PHOTOGRAPHS

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Southeast Region
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Atlanta, Georgia