

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

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

1. Name of property

historic name The Capitol

other names/site number The Capitol Department Store

2. Location

street & number 126 Hay Street not for publication N/A

city or town Fayetteville vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Cumberland code 051 zip code 28301

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey Crow SHPD 3/15/05  
Signature of certifying official Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is: Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The Capitol  
Name of Property

Cumberland Co., N. C.  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

private  
 public-local  
 public-State  
 public-Federal

building(s)  
 district  
 site  
 structure  
 object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
-0-

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Commerce/Trade:

Sub: department store

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**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Work in progress

Sub: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick  
roof asphalt  
walls brick  
marble  
other ceramic tile  
aluminum

**Narrative Description**

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

The Capitol  
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### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

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

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

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

#### Criteria Considerations

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

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

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

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

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

#### Period of Significance

1949-1955

1955

#### Significant Dates

1949

1955

#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

#### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

#### Architect/Builder

Litwack, Herman C., architect

Reineke, E. W., contractor

Peter Copeland Associates, architect

Loewenstein, Edward, architect

#### Narrative Statement of Significance

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

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

#### Bibliography

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

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS)

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

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

The Capitol  
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### 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** less than one acre

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

Zone Easting Northing  
1 17 693425 3881000  
2 \_\_\_\_\_

Zone Easting Northing  
3 \_\_\_\_\_  
4 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ 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.)

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title M. Ruth Little

organization Longleaf Historic Resources date November 20, 2004

street & number 2709 Bedford Avenue telephone 919-836-1885

city or town Raleigh state NC zip code 27607

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### 12. Additional Documentation

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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)

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### Property Owner

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

name Dr. Melvin Henderson

street & number 132 Great Oaks telephone 910-487-9785

city or town Fayetteville state NC zip code 28303

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

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

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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**Section 7 Page 1**

**The Capitol**

**Cumberland County, N. C.**

**Section 7: Description**

The Capitol Department Store, 126 Hay Street, is a large, sprawling brick building in the middle of the south side of the 100 block of Hay Street. Hay Street, Fayetteville's main commercial avenue, begins at Market Square, in the center of which stands the Market House, an 1832 town hall and market building that is a National Historic Landmark. Surrounding The Capitol are two and three-story commercial buildings constructed in the early to mid-twentieth century. On the west side is Horne's Drug Store, a ca. 1915 two-story building that received an Art Moderne façade in the 1940s. The elegant maroon opaque glass façade has a flat metal awning that supports large aluminum letters that spell out the name "Horne's." On the east side is the Pittman Building, a two-story yellow brick commercial building with Moderne details built in 1953. Hay Street is included in the Fayetteville Downtown Historic District, listed in the National Register in 1999. The district's period of significance is 1786 to 1949. The Capitol is a non-contributing building in the district because it was constructed after the end of the period of significance. This nomination seeks the building's individual listing for its architectural significance in 1955, when the storefront was constructed, as well as for its commercial significance.

The Capitol is two stories on the Hay Street (south) side, and shares party walls with the flanking buildings. The Capitol extends 300 feet through the block to Old Street at the rear (north), where it has a main floor and a mezzanine level that is lower than the front section. Along the east and west sides of the rear one-story section are narrow alleys. The building's form is actually L-shaped, because the rear section is much wider than the front section. The front section of the building has load-bearing brick walls, the rear section has concrete block walls. Throughout the structure, steel framing supports the floors and ceilings and the flat roof has tar-and-gravel composition.

The present 50,457 square foot building is the result of three expansions to the original store, established at this site in a building purchased in 1921. In 1936 the two-story store at 128 Hay Street was incorporated into The Capitol. A new brick façade with a recessed storefront and tripartite upper façade windows was constructed at this time. In 1949 the store expanded to the rear with a huge irregular-shaped addition. In 1955 the existing two-story store at 130 Hay Street was incorporated into the front section, and a new storefront added.

The 1955 storefront of The Capitol, sixty feet wide, is a mid-century Modernist design with marble facing, a recessed storefront, and a large convex full-height window in the second story. The convex window, composed of twelve aluminum-framed sheets of glass, has balcony spaces on each side. The wall behind each balcony is faced with yellow mosaic tiles flecked with gold leaf "to provide a glittering effect," as described in the article announcing its unveiling in the local newspaper. The store's name, cast out of large aluminum script lettering, is centered on the marble facing between the two stories. Usage of the name as an essential decorative feature of the architecture is a characteristic of the Moderne style. A plain stuccoed cornice tops the building. This was originally covered with marble, like

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the rest of the façade, but about twenty years ago these marble panels became deteriorated and were removed.

The recessed storefront provides a large protected foyer area, supported by delicately molded marble columns. The foyer floor is gray terrazzo, walls are white marble, and the large glass display windows have aluminum borders. The original double glass entrances with aluminum surrounds are still in place. The ceiling of the foyer has its original recessed lighting.

The only other elevation of The Capitol that is easily visible is the rear elevation, a 173-foot-wide expanse of plain brick wall with four delivery doors and a few small sash windows with iron bars. Wide horizontal green and white stripes of paint decorate this elevation. The paint, quite faded, probably dates to the 1960s or 1970s. The side elevations of the rear section are visible along the narrow alleys that flank this section. The west elevation is a plain brick wall interrupted only by two first story doors. The east elevation is similar to the west.

The interior has been stripped of its carpeting, store display shelving, and ceiling lighting system, allowing the bare surfaces of the interior to show. It has a concrete slab floor, steel interior structural beams enclosed by wood framing, and exposed brick and concrete block walls. The front two-story section has patterned tin ceilings on both the first and second floors that survive from the early twentieth century stores that predated the creation of The Capitol. The linoleum flooring and dropped plastic grid ceiling panels have been removed.

The large rear section of the store, constructed in 1949, added 25,000 square feet to the store. The space is open to the ceiling, with twenty-one foot tall steel beams boxed with wood, and a mezzanine that extends around the west, north and east sides. Some of the boxed beams have mirrored surfaces. The mezzanine is accessed by two grand staircases, each with wide, splayed steps, ash walnut railings, and half-inch thick clear glass panels. The mezzanine railing has the same design. A luncheonette, the "Bird Cage," built in 1949, was located on the mezzanine in the southwest corner of the store. Its light frame with sheetrock partition walls, divided into a dining area with a kitchen at the rear, are still in place. A ladies rest room is located in the northwest rear corner. The men's rest room is located on the first floor, in the northeast corner. Groups of dressing rooms are located in the rear corners and in several locations in the area between the front and rear sections.

The second story of the front section, accessed by a staircase in the northeast corner of the east section of this space, was always office space. This space was created out of three narrow commercial buildings. The area contained the print shop and areas where employees worked on mannequins. Office partitions were removed in recent years, creating a large space, with the wooden posts that provide support indicating where the original side walls of the smaller buildings were located. Side walls are stuccoed brick and the rear wall is brick. The large façade window is separated from the office space by

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a sheetrock partition wall, creating a display space approximately ten feet deep.

The Capitol retains basic integrity from its 1949 construction era on the interior. The main façade is basically unaltered from its construction in 1955. The building has been mothballed since 1995, when the present owner acquired it. Some water damage occurred due to a leaking roof during this period. The floor and wall coverings and store fixtures were damaged by water and have been removed. Water damage also resulted in the removal of much of the flooring of the mezzanine level. However the most important interior features, the wood and glass stairways to the mezzanine, remain in place. The interior retains its overall floor plan and the elegant spaces of the 1949 addition.

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**Statement of Significance**

The Capitol Department Store, 126-130 Hay Street, Fayetteville, is the most significant historic department store in Fayetteville, and one of the most significant in southeast North Carolina because of its striking Modernist façade of marble and mosaic, with a second story balcony and immense convex window. Owner Bernard Stein, inspired by a department store in Vienna, Austria, hired architect Herman C. Littwack, of New Jersey, to design the storefront in 1955. The store evolved over a period of thirty-four years on this site on Fayetteville's main street through the efforts of brothers Kalman and Jacob Stein and Kalman's son, J. Bernard Stein. Created out of three older commercial buildings, the building received a complete interior remodeling and a large addition in 1949 and a new façade in 1955. The Capitol meets Criterion C for its architectural significance as a well-preserved mid-twentieth century downtown department store. Its periods of significance are 1949, when the interior reached its current appearance, and 1955, when the façade was added. The Capitol meets Criterion A for its commercial significance from 1949 to 1955, when it was the principal shopping destination in Fayetteville's commercial district.

**Historical Background**

Fayetteville's primary newspaper, *The Fayetteville Observer*, followed the expansion of The Capitol closely over the years, for its growth symbolized the vitality of the commercial district. The following history is drawn from a series of newspaper articles: August 27, 1949; April 12, 1954; December 12, 1955; October 14, 1962; and October 8, 1982.

The second largest town in North Carolina in the late nineteenth century, Fayetteville had a significant settlement of Jewish, Greek, and Lebanese immigrants who played a large role in the development of the central business district in the early twentieth century. Jewish immigrants tended to open clothing and jewelry stores, while Greek and Lebanese families excelled as restaurateurs. The story of the Stein family's retailing businesses is representative of the fortunes of a number of Jewish families in Fayetteville. Brothers Kalman H. Stein and Jacob Stein immigrated to the United States from Lithuania, by way of South Africa, in the early 1900s. They worked in mercantiling and manufacturing in Baltimore, then moved to Fayetteville about 1904, where they established The Capitol department store, an 800-square-foot store on the northwest corner of Market Square. By 1914 they were operating three stores in Fayetteville and three in surrounding towns. They built large new Victorian houses for their growing families. Among Jacob and his wife Fannie's many civic activities were involvement in the establishment of the Young Men's Christian Association, Fayetteville's first Jewish synagogue, and fund raising for public schools and libraries. Kalman Stein concentrated on developing the mercantile business. In 1915 the brothers moved The Capitol store to the Kennedy Building in the 100 block of Hay Street, adjacent to the Market House, an 1832 town hall and market building that is a National Historic Landmark. In 1917 the brothers built another building, the Lawyers Building, at 101 Gillespie



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Street, at the southeast corner of Market Square. The handsome Renaissance Revival-style five-story brick building, with a civic meeting room on the top floor and a red tile roof, was the tallest structure in town at that time. The brothers operated another department store on the first floor and rented offices in the upper floors.

The four-phase evolution of The Capitol store at 126 Hay Street is described below:

*The Capitol Phase One:* In 1921 The Capitol moved to its current site at 126 Hay Street. The two-story building had been constructed in the early twentieth century, and the brothers moved in and reused the existing building. In 1930 Kalman and Jacob Stein dissolved their partnership, with Kalman Stein retaining ownership of The Capitol and Jacob Stein becoming sole owner of Stein Brothers Store. Jacob died in 1942.

*The Capitol Phase Two:* In 1936 Kalman Stein acquired the adjacent building to the west and constructed a new, Moderne-style façade to cover the entire Hay Street storefront. The renovation was designed by E. C. Derby. The new store size of 18,000 square feet made it the largest department store in Fayetteville and the second largest in the state, according to the newspaper article. A documentary photo from the 1930s shows a recessed storefront with large glass display windows, a glass brick transom with the name in large metal letters, and tripartite windows in the upper façade. Kalman Stein retired in 1940, and died in 1951. In 1946 the store was incorporated, with Kalman's son Bernard becoming the first president. Bernard, born in 1910 at Sanford, where his father had a store, moved in 1912 with his family to Fayetteville. He earned an undergraduate degree at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1930, and studied law there for one year following. He entered his father's business in the early 1930s.

*The Capitol Phase Three:* Following the end of World War II, Fayetteville experienced rapid growth and The Capitol's business boomed. In the summer of 1946 Bernard Stein announced that he would build a new store when materials were available.<sup>1</sup> In 1948 the Steins purchased the old Highsmith Memorial Hospital nurses' home, located on Old Street, and demolished it so that the store could expand to the rear. In 1949 a large rear addition extended the store back to Old Street and brought the square footage to 43,000. The store continued to retain its 1936 façade because the frontage on Hay Street did not change. The renovated interior and addition was designed by Peter Copeland Associates of New York and Edward Loewenstein of Greensboro. Copeland Associates were the designers of such stores as Saks Fifth Avenue and Bloomingdale's in New York, and stores in Houston and Cleveland. Loewenstein was a noted Modernist architect who probably worked as the local consulting architect. The store, the first building in Fayetteville to be fully air-conditioned, was considered to be one of the most beautiful and modern department stores in the South. A special destination for Fayetteville's ladies was a luncheonette called The Bird Cage on the mezzanine level.

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<sup>1</sup> Roy Parker, Jr. interview with author, Jan. 19, 2004.

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*The Capitol Phase Four:* In 1955 the adjoining building, the Singer Sewing Machine Building, 130 Hay Street, was incorporated into The Capitol. A 1954 photo of Fayetteville's bicentennial parade shows The Capitol and the Singer stores in the background. The Singer Building's 7,000 square feet of space was converted into a children's wear and home furnishings departments for The Capitol. The newly-enlarged store had 50,000 square feet. *The Fayetteville Observer's* announcement of the opening of the remodeled store, during the Christmas shopping season, is titled "New Capitol Store Front Adds Glamor To Downtown Section."<sup>2</sup> The article includes a large photograph of the storefront, with Christmas ornaments hung in the second story window. The writer called the façade "unique in an age of startlingly new concepts" because of the

breath-taking sweep of glass in panorama, 14-ft. high, curved smoothly in perfect symmetry to form an accentuated convex pattern. The upper story...is winged with hand-set mosaic tile and bordered by white marble. The mosaic is flecked generously with gold leaf to provide a glittering effect.<sup>3</sup>

The newspaper article quotes J. Bernard Stein's story of his inspiration for the new façade. While traveling in Vienna, Austria, Stein and his wife were attracted by a department store. They sketched the building and hired the firm of Herman C. Litwack, of Newark, New Jersey, to convert their inspiration into reality.<sup>4</sup> Litwack was a younger cousin of Peter Copeland, and had worked in his office in the late 1940s, where Bernard Stein no doubt met him. In fact, Litwack may have assisted in the planning of the 1949 expansion. According to Litwack's younger partner, Blasé J. Weimer, "He was so proud of that building. He talked about it a lot."<sup>5</sup> Local contractor E. W. Reinecke constructed the new building.

Bernard Stein served as president and general manager of The Capitol from 1936 until 1978. Stein, like the previous generation of his family, had extensive civic interests in Fayetteville. He served as president of the Chamber of Commerce at various periods in the 1940s and 1950s, as a director of the First Citizens Bank, and as first president of Cape Fear Industries. He was a member of the North Carolina Board of Conservation and Development.

In 1978 Bernard Stein's son-in-law, Joel Schur, succeeded him as president. Bernard died in 1986, leaving his wife, Herlyn and two daughters, Marcia Schur and Janet Morel. In 1979 the store was the largest retail outlet in downtown Fayetteville, and continued to draw shoppers downtown. During the

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<sup>2</sup> *The Fayetteville Observer*, Dec. 12, 1955, p. 14. The article incorrectly identifies the architect as Norman C. Litwack. The correct first name is Herman.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> The article, December 12, 1955, *The Fayetteville Observer*, identifies the architect's name as Norman C. Litwack. However Bernard Stein's daughter Janet provided the name of Herman C. Litwack as the architect of Bernard Stein's house on Dobbin Avenue in Fayetteville. With this guidance, the author contacted Litwack's architectural firm in Newark, New Jersey and confirmed that Herman Litwack designed The Capitol façade.

<sup>5</sup> Blasé J. Weimer, Newark, N. J., telephone interview, June 1, 2004.

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1980s, however, downtown Fayetteville went into economic decline as the Cross Creek Mall in suburban Fayetteville drained away shoppers from downtown. The Capitol, the last department store remaining downtown, closed in March 1990. In 1995 the owners sold it to Dr. Melvin and Cassandra Henderson. Dr. Henderson, a retired physician, intends to develop The Capitol building into a festive retail center with shopping, restaurant, office, and entertainment activities.

**Commerce/Architecture Context: Historic Department Stores in North Carolina**

The Capitol department store meets National Register of Historic Places criterion C for its local architectural significance as a well-preserved mid-twentieth century department store. The Capitol also meets criterion A for its commercial significance as the principal department store in Fayetteville and the Sandhills region of North Carolina from 1949, when it reached its current size, to 1955. Department stores evolved out of dry goods stores in the post-Civil War era, when stores began to grow and departmentalize so that customers would have more choices and ease of shopping. Early famous department stores in New York City were Macy's, Wanamaker's, B. Altman's, Lord and Taylor and others. Such stores were centrally located, strictly departmentalized, appealed to the masses, offered many services, and were big advertisers. Department stores were the catalyst for the creation of new architectural styles and new technology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From the earliest department stores in Manhattan, constructed of cast-iron, to large free-standing steel-frame buildings with stylish design in Chicago, top architects combined the latest technology, including large display windows and elevators, with attention-getting designs in department stores. One of the most famous American department stores was Louis Sullivan's Marshall Field Department Store built in Chicago in 1900 (demolished).

The historic department store as a building type has not been studied in North Carolina. In the South, Rich's in Atlanta and Miller and Rhoads in Richmond were the best known. In North Carolina, the best-known department store is Belk's, founded in Monroe in 1888. The Belk brothers, through partnerships with the Hudsons and the Leggetts, developed their stores into a multi-state chain of department stores in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup>

One group that excelled in the creation of department stores that expanded through several generations were Jewish merchants, such as the Rosenwalds in Chicago and the Filenes in Boston. In the South a number of grand department stores were created by Jewish families, including Thalhimers in Virginia and the Weil family's department store in Goldsboro, North Carolina. In Fayetteville, North Carolina, brothers Kalman and Jacob Stein founded The Capitol department store ca. 1904. Kalman's son J. Bernard Stein enlarged The Capitol into one of the largest department stores in North Carolina

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<sup>6</sup>Hendrickson, *The Grand Emporiums: The Illustrated History of America's Great Department Stores*, 40,41,43; Covington, *Belk: A Century of Retail Leadership*.

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from the 1930s to the 1950s. His son-in-law Joel Shurr was president in the last years of the store's existence, from 1978 to 1990.

The historic department store, whether created at one time or built in phases, is a rare building type in North Carolina. The economics of central business districts in North Carolina towns in the first half of the twentieth century only rarely allowed the construction of a new department store from the ground up. Merchants typically began their enterprise in a small store that was part of a commercial building, and then acquired adjacent stores as their business grew, sometimes remodeling the façade to give the impression of a unified building when in fact it was an amalgam of smaller buildings. Such pieced-together stores were typical elsewhere as well. When the Belk-Leggett Store in Danville, Virginia expanded in the late 1950s, the manager bought an adjacent building, put a door through the walls, and moved in. At one time the Danville store was spread through nineteen adjacent buildings.<sup>7</sup> Most North Carolina department stores only achieved sufficient prosperity to construct a new building in the post-World War II era. By then the suburban commercial shopping center movement had begun, and the first all-new stores were built in shopping centers rather than on main streets.

Most of the great downtown department stores in North Carolina towns are gone. In Charlotte, the shell of Ivey's Department Store at 127 N. Tryon Street has been preserved. Built in 1924 from a design by architect William Peeps, the five-story building has terra-cotta Gothic Revival-influenced facades.<sup>8</sup> Another historic main street department store is the Ellis-Stone Department Store at 203 S. Elm Street, Greensboro. The Modernist-style store was designed in 1949 by the New York City firm of Vorhees, Walker, Foley & Smith. The two-story brick building has clean rectilinear lines, with a horizontal expanse of plain brickwork across the upper floor and two recessed vertical windows with metal railings at the sides of the façade. The refined entrance level has plain marble panels and brass detailing. A sweeping circular stair with a brass handrail is the architectural focus of the interior. From 1957 to the mid-1970s this was Thalheimer's Department Store.<sup>9</sup>

The Capitol falls into the category of department stores that grew in a densely developed Main Street environment in phases, by purchasing adjacent stores and expanding into them, then giving a unified appearance by constructing a new façade. The Capitol occupied one small store in 1921, then doubled its size by expanding into an adjacent store in 1936, and nearly tripled its size in 1949 with a large rear addition. The store finally reached completion in 1955 with the expansion into a third adjacent store and the construction of a new mid-century Modern façade. Evidence of The Capitol's importance to regional commerce can be seen in the coverage devoted to the store in *The Fayetteville Observer*. The newspaper covered the frequent expansions of the store because The Capitol was a mecca for shoppers from the surrounding counties of southeastern North Carolina. People who grew up in the region fondly

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<sup>7</sup> Covington, *Belk: A Century of Retail Leadership*, 166.

<sup>8</sup> Bishir and Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Piedmont North Carolina*, 508-509.

<sup>9</sup> Phillips, "Amendment to the Greensboro Commercial Historic District," 2004.

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recall all-day Saturday shopping expeditions to Fayetteville, where they explored the latest seasonal fashions at The Capitol and dined in "The Bird Cage." In the 1950s, the store represented the height of clothing fashion in the region.

The Capitol and Ellis-Stone/Thalhimer's department stores are the two of the foremost examples of Modern-style downtown stores in North Carolina. The Modern style flourished in the state during the 1950s when the booming economy and public openness to new architectural trends created a climate of experimentation in architecture. Both stores were designed by architects from the New York City area.

Modern design of the mid-twentieth century evolved from the Art Deco, Art Moderne, and International Style architectural movements of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. In commercial buildings, it is characterized by large open interior spaces made possible by steel frames, and by dramatic facades with glass curtain walls and luxurious materials such as marble, stainless steel, and brass. The incorporation of signage into the design of the façade that was characteristic of the Art Deco and Moderne continues in Modern commercial buildings.

Herman C. Litwack, designer of The Capitol's storefront, was born in 1910 in Newark, New Jersey, and practiced architecture there from 1940 to his death in 1995. Influenced by an older cousin, architect Peter Copeland of New York City, he earned an architecture degree at New York University in the mid-1930s. He served in the Air Force during World War II. From 1946 to 1948 he worked in the New York City architectural firm of Peter Copeland. He opened an architecture office in Newark in 1948, and classmate Jacob Shteir was his partner throughout most of his career. Some of their earliest projects were store designs. Among the principal buildings designed by the firm in the 1950s and 1960s are a classroom building at Trenton State College, Ironbound Recreational Center, Newark; Architects Display Building, Springfield, New Jersey; and Frisch Motors, Newark. The firm's work included public schools, retail stores, and banks. Frisch Motors, an auto sales and showroom built soon after World War II on a main thoroughfare in Newark, is a bold Bauhaus-influenced building with huge metal letters spelling out "FRISCH" that serve as a Moderne style architectural feature. Litwack's style is a blend of the steel and glass functionality of the International Style and the rich materials and use of graphic design elements of the Moderne style.

In his later career Litwack concentrated on urban renewal plans and on nurturing educational opportunities for architecture students. He helped found the School of Architecture at New Jersey Institute of Technology in the 1950s, and endowed a number of scholarships for promising students at the school. In the 1960s and 1970s he was president and director of the New Jersey State Board of Architects. Litwack received many awards and honors for his outstanding service to the architecture

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profession prior to his death in 1995.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Herman Carle Litwick nomination as Fellow in the New Jersey Society of Architects, 1988; vertical file of newspaper articles about Herman Litwick and photographs of buildings that he designed. Documentation provided by Blasé Weimer, The Architects Alliance, Newark, N. J. Mr. Weimer worked in the Litwick firm from 1988 to 1995. (copy in nomination file, SHPO)

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**Section 9: Bibliography**

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**Section 10: Boundaries**

**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The nominated tract of approximately .75 acre is shown on Cumberland County Tax Map, Parcel 0437-64-2401. The building footprint takes up the entire parcel.

**Boundary Justification:**

The boundaries constitute the entire tract associated with The Capitol department store from 1948 to the present.



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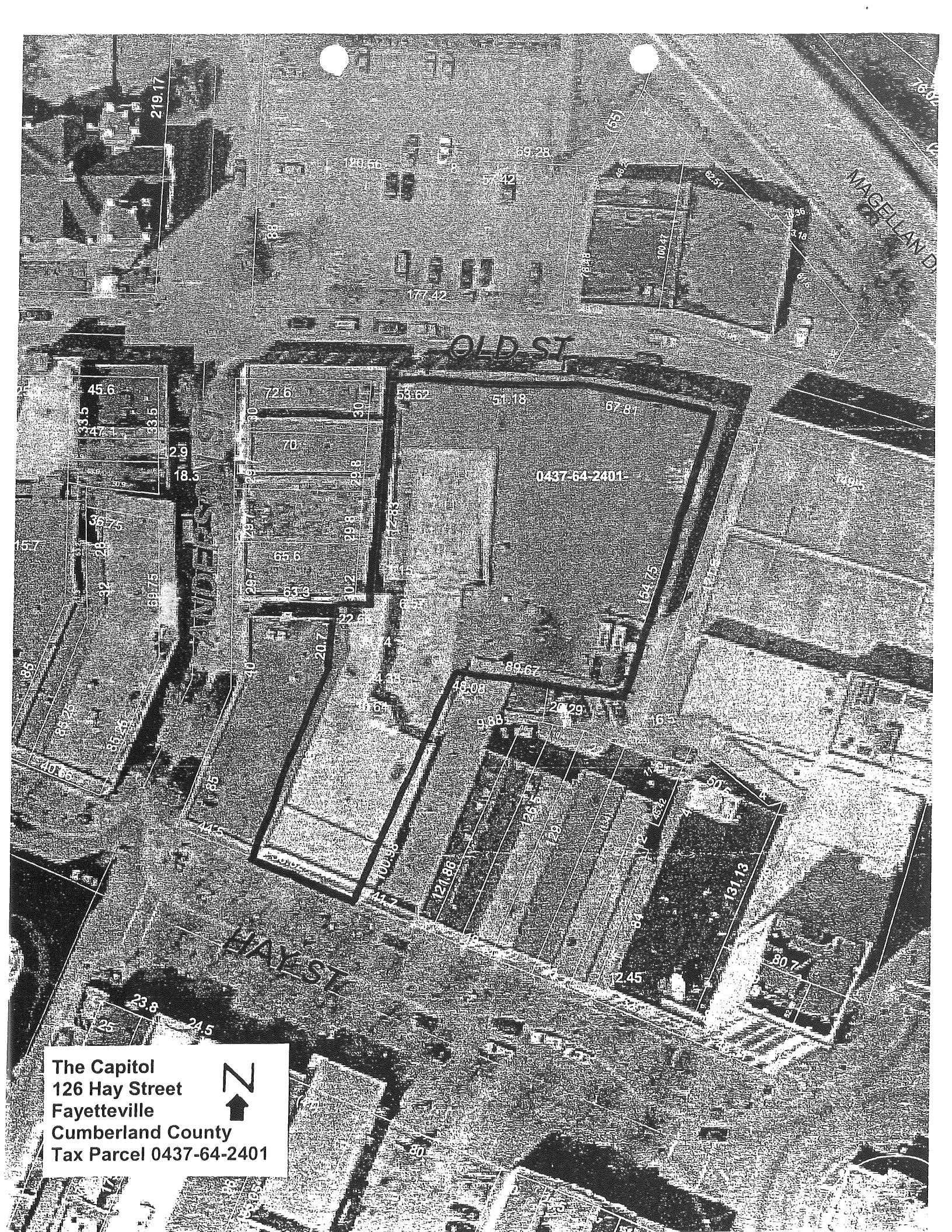
All photos have the following:

Photographer: M. Ruth Little

Date: November 2004

Location of Negatives: North Carolina Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh

- A. Main facade from south
- B. Streetscape of 100 block Hay Street, from southwest, looking toward Market House
- C. Main facade, detail, from southwest
- D. Rear elevation from northwest
- E. West elevation from north
- F. East elevation from northwest
- G. Main floor showing stair to mezzanine
- H. Main floor with view of "Bird Cage" luncheonette
- I. View of second floor looking toward rear of store



OLD ST

MAGELLAN DR

HAY ST

0437-64-2401

The Capitol  
126 Hay Street  
Fayetteville  
Cumberland County  
Tax Parcel 0437-64-2401



