

**'THE RAILROAD CORNER' ORANGEBURG, S.C.
A CENTURY OLD FORMER BLACK BUSINESS DISTRICT**

'The Railroad Corner' for more than 100 years was the center of Black owned Businesses in Orangeburg, South Carolina. The once thriving hub is found at the intersection of East Russell Street and Boulevard Avenue, and diagonal across from S.C. State College and Claflin University. Beginning at Russell Street is Treadwell Street, consisting of several blocks of black owned homes (now (Treadwell Street Historic District). A block away, Upper Treadwell Street runs parallel to Boulevard and directly behind 'The Railroad Corner.' Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church (now Trinity United Methodist Church) is within the same block of the business district. In front of the businesses on Boulevard was the Southern Railway Train Station, serving passenger and freight trains.

In the early 1940s 'The Railroad Corner' ws probably at its zenith with many occupations represented in the area. ***Barber and Beauty Shops, Shoe Repair Shops, Grocers, Cafes, Theater, Offices for Lawyers, Doctors, Dentists, Meat Markets, USO, Laundry and Dry Cleaners, Lunch Room, Soda Shop, Candy Store, Five and Dime Store, Drug Store and many others.***

In those days, transportation was limited. Many citizens walked to work, school, church and town. Therefore, parking was not a problem. Students at the colleges could take a ten minute walk to the 'Railroad Corner' for services available, see a movie, fraternize at the College Soda Shop, drop clothes at the Dry Cleaners, or frequent the Barber and Beauty Shops.

If going home by bus, the station was just a few blocks away; Trains going north and south. The Southern Railway station was in front of the 'Railroad Corner.' Students traveling east and west, could reach the Atlantic Coast Line Train Station, about 6-8 blocks away.

During the 1940s, the war and post war years, 'The Railroad Corner.'/ was limited in providing Clothing stores. Blacks citizens secured clothing several ways: sewed their own garments, used dressmakers and tailors. Those fortunate to go 'North' for summer or had regular jobs in the city bought clothes there.

Growth and Change

'The Railroad Corner slowly changed in the late 1960s - 1980s. As more funds became available, blacks bought cars, parking at 'The Railroad Corner' was limited. Black Business Owners expanded their physical businesses by building and /or purchasing buildings elsewhere in town. Airlines were growing and citizens began using that convenient mode of travel. Eventually, the Train Station was no longer there. Very few black businesses remained on 'The Railroad Corner.' Growth, changes in occupation requirements, and the aforementioned played major decision factors in moving elsewhere in town.

The Civil Rights Movements, access to all local Businesses, provision of College 'Student Centers,' growth of Student Car Ownerships signaled additional major changes causing shifts of patronage at 'The Railroad Corner.'

Black Owned Businesses in Other Sections of Orangeburg

During those early decades, other sections of Orangeburg Black Owned Businesses were: Corners of Amelia and Middleton Streets - Bythewood Funeral Home and Jacob Moorer Law Office, etc. On Lower West Russell Street, Dantzler Drug Store and office of Dr., William Daniel Moorer, Medical Doctor, etc. were found there. Through the decades Black businesses utilized these buildings, however, Bythewood Funeral Home remains Bythewood Funeral Home, a century old Black Business.

Summary

'The Railroad Corner' was the Mecca for Black owned Businesses for many decades. Information about the owners through the years/decades may be found in Orangeburg City Directories, Advertisements, Orangeburg Black History Publications(Books, Brochures, Booklets), Biographies, Obituaries, Newspapers, Journal Articles, Yearbooks, Photographs, Dissertations, Theses, Family Histories, South Carolina/Black History Books, Deeds, Church Souvenir Journals, Church Publications, Claflin University and S.C. State University Histories, etc.*

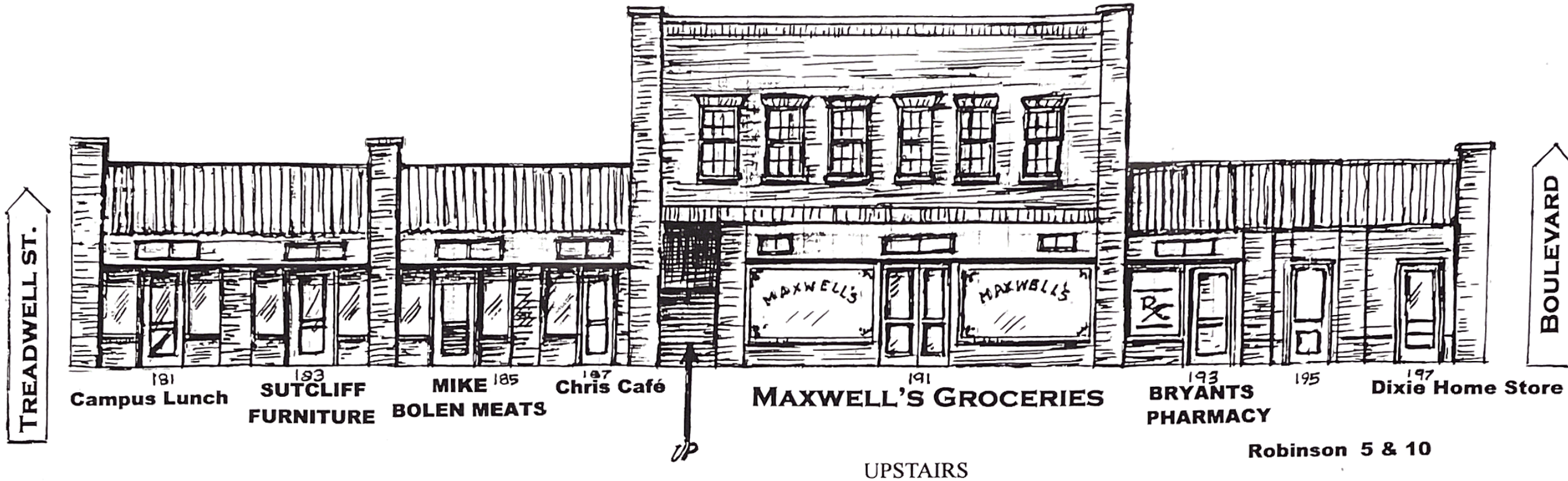
Many prominent blacks in Orangeburg owned businesses in this two-block area. These leaders served the community of Orangeburg with distinction and pride.

'He Who Hath a Trade, Hath an Estate'

S.C. Area Trade School
(Now Denmark Technical College)
Denmark, South Carolina

By Barbara Williams Jenkins
(April 29, 2020)

THE RAILROAD CORNER



Ms. Cassandra Maxwell, Attorney at Law

Dr. Seibels Green MD

Johnson's Beauty Shop

Dr. E. Benjamin McTeer, Dentist

Robinson 5 & 10

RUSSELL STREET

1947

CLEMMIE EMBLY WEBBER

THE COLLEGE SODA SHOP



*"An Education
For Life"*