1. NAME AND LOCATION OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: F. W. Woolworth Company Building

Other Name/Site Number: Whelan Building, International Civil Rights Center & Museum

Street and Number (if applicable)**:** 134 S. Elm Street

City/Town: Greensboro **County:** Guilford **State:** North Carolina

Designated a National Historic Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior, December 13, 2024.

2. SIGNIFICANCE DATA

NHL Criteria: 1

NHL Criteria Exceptions: none

NHL Theme(s):
II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements
2. Reform Movements
VII. Shaping the Political Landscape
3. Parties, Protests, and Movements

Period(s) of Significance: February 1, 1960 – July 25, 1960

Significant Person(s) (only Criterion 2)**:** n/a

Cultural Affiliation (only Criterion 6)**:** n/a

Designer/Creator/Architect/Builder: Charles Hartmann; Phil Freelon (2005-2009 rehabilitation)

Historic Contexts: *Civil Rights in America: Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations*
XXXI. Social and Humanitarian Movement, M. Civil Rights Movements

3. WITHHOLDING SENSITIVE INFORMATION

Does this nomination contain sensitive information that should be withheld under Section 304 of the National Historic Preservation Act?

___ Yes

_X_ No

4. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

1. Acreage of Property: .37 acre

2. Use either Latitude/Longitude Coordinates or the UTM system: (see map)

Northwest corner (A on map): 36.071922, -79.790958
Northeast corner (B on map): 36.071893, -79.790410
Southwest corner (C on map): 36.071610, -79.790979
Southeast corner (D on map): 36.071573, -79.790432

3. Verbal Boundary Description:

Same as parcel boundaries for Guilford County Parcel Identification Number 7864-65-3924, plus the city sidewalks along the lot's east and south borders.

Parcel information retrieved November 9, 2023, from Guilford County Real Property Data: https://lrcpwa.ncptscloud.com/guilford/PropertySummary.aspx?PARCELPK=2&pageIndex=0.

4. Boundary Justification

The boundaries include the building which contained the F. W. Woolworth Company Building and its lot, which match the lot boundaries of 1960. Also included are the city sidewalks along the lot's east and south borders, where picketers marched in 1960 during the Greensboro sit-ins.

5. SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT AND DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION: SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The F. W. Woolworth Company Building in Greensboro, North Carolina, is eligible for National Historic Landmark (NHL) designation under Criterion 1. Based on the National Park Service's National Historic Landmarks Program's thematic analysis, *Civil Rights in America: A Framework for Identifying Significant Sites*, its four subsequent additional theme studies on the movement, especially *Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations*, and other existing scholarship, it is evident that the F. W. Woolworth Company Building qualifies as a National Historic Landmark because of the nonviolent protest that occurred at its lunch counter in 1960 and the subsequent pickets that took place on its sidewalks out front. Indeed, the NHL theme study identifies the Greensboro Woolworth as a property "recommended for further study for National Historic Landmark consideration." On February 1, 1960, when four young Black men—David Richmond, Franklin McCain, Ezell Blair Jr. (now Jibreel Khazan), and Joseph McNeil—sat down on stools at the counter and requested service thereby violating the local segregation ordinance that limited access to White customers only, they sparked a nationwide direct-action protest, the sit-ins, which by the end of the year had attracted participation by more than 70,000 people across the United States demanding racial equality in public accommodations. Not only did the sit-ins reinvigorate the modern civil rights movement, but its youthful leadership shifted the tactics used in future protests towards direct-action confrontation. The aggressive

insistence by Black and White youth that the United States fulfill its ideals of freedom and equality inspired others to protest, from those of oppressed groups such as women and Native Americans, to the student-led Free Speech and anti-war campaigns of the 1960s. By targeting public accommodations, the Greensboro sit-ins initiated a constitutional debate over equal access to the American system for all persons regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or ability as established in law through the Civil Rights Act of 1964.[1]

PROVIDE RELEVANT PROPERTY-SPECIFIC HISTORY, HISTORICAL CONTEXT, AND THEMES, JUSTIFY CRITERIA, EXCEPTIONS, AND PERIODS OF SIGNIFICANCE LISTED IN SECTION 2:

Introduction

The revolutionary actions of the four African American young men who sat down at the "whites only" lunch counter in the F. W. Woolworth variety store in Greensboro, North Carolina, did not occur in isolation from the larger community's history. Located in the agriculturally rich Piedmont region, the area had been a major contributor to the plantation economy using enslaved labor although an early Quaker settlement introduced racial liberalism. As the location of several colleges, including two Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Greensboro attracted young people tired of the slow pace of race reform who embraced change in the post-World War II period as a way to achieve equal access to the economic, political, and social systems. Consequently, the city appeared as something of an anomaly in the state, just as the state at times seemed somewhat different from the region, while both nevertheless conformed largely to the norms of the southern way of life. The sit-in campaign that began here and that students sustained for a week before it spread to other communities in North Carolina and then across the South and nation succeeded in part because of its having occurred in Greensboro. Yet while the Greensboro Four independently initiated their demonstration at the F. W. Woolworth Company Building on February 1, 1960, the conditions under which they acted appeared throughout the region in communities with HBCUs. Consequently, within days of the Greensboro protest reaching the national news, dozens of similar sit-ins took place in cities across the South. The Greensboro sit-ins galvanized a generation of young African Americans, along with some White students aware of the emerging civil rights movement and the power of nonviolence, to seize an opportunity to make racial change.

History of Greensboro and the U.S. Civil Rights Movement Prior to the Sit-Ins

With origins as a colony of the British Caribbean colony of Barbados, Carolina had used enslaved African labor from the outset, a practice that extended throughout the area by the time of its division into North and South Carolina in 1712. Yet within this slave society lived religious dissenters who became early abolitionists, including a settlement of Quakers in the area of Guilford County that became Greensboro. During the Southern Campaign of the American Revolution, the British General Lord Cornwallis deflected an attack at Guilford Courthouse by American General Nathanael Greene and the Continental Army in March 1781. The British suffered so many losses that its subsequent fateful turn towards the coast sealed the course of war. By 1808, residents incorporated the area as Greensborough to honor the American general. Cotton joined tobacco and other crops cultivated in the area as the plantation system took root in Guilford County, which listed 4,000 enslaved African Americans by 1860. Yet a substantial number of free Blacks—some six hundred—resided there as well, suggesting a more tolerant environment. With a sizable Quaker population, Greensboro became a

[1] Susan Cianci Salvatore, *Civil Rights in America: Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations: A National Historic Landmarks Theme Study* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Historic Landmarks Program, 2004, revised 2009).

center of abolitionist sentiment in the South with some members of the community engaging in antislavery activities. Such Quakers as Addison Coffin assisted runaway enslaved people escaping to the North on the Underground Railroad. No doubt other Black freedom seekers escaped bondage in the area, too, or perhaps engaged in freedom suits to achieve self-emancipation. The New Garden Boarding School, established in 1837 by the Religious Society of Friends and later expanded into Guilford College, the only Quaker institution of higher education in the Southeast, provided a safe haven for enslaved people seeking freedom.[2]

When the state government proposed the North Carolina Railroad in 1840, the route ran through Greensboro with the depot opening there in 1856, transforming the trading center into a regional hub. The Piedmont Railroad linked up in Greensboro in 1864. During the Civil War, representatives of Guilford County opposed secession although, once the majority of the state voted to leave the Union, they joined in the new Confederacy and sent units off to fight. A census taken in 1862 identified 16,000 White people, 3,625 enslaved African Americans, and nearly 700 "colored" people living in Guilford County with over a thousand of them living in Greensboro. In 1862 a peace candidate ran for the state house with strong Quaker support from Guilford County, which had a reputation as being a hotbed of disloyalty to the Confederacy. Not until the final month of the conflict did the Civil War come to Greensboro, first with the evacuating Confederate government fleeing the fall of Richmond, then the state government on the run from Raleigh, and finally the arrival of the two remaining armies shortly before the Confederate surrender at nearby Bennett Place.[3]

Emancipation of the enslaved led to the formation of the planned African American community of Warnersville. Quaker Yardley Warner donated funds to purchase thirty-five acres south of downtown Greensboro along Elm Street for subdivision into one-acre house lots he made available to the formerly enslaved. Here the freedpeople built Black Greensboro, concentrating their schools and churches in the area. The American Missionary Society sent teachers for the freedpeople to early institutions such as the Ashe Street School on the corner of McCullogh Street. Later the Graded School Number 2 for Colored Children opened, followed by the Jacksonville School and the J. C. Price School. Many Black residents left White-led churches, and in 1866, organized Providence Baptist, St. Phillip AME Zion, St. Mathews Methodist, and St. James Presbyterian Churches, all of which joined together to support a new segregated Union Cemetery. A branch of the Freedmen's Bureau opened in Greensboro and provided much needed assistance to freedpeople, while northern Quakers sent relief to the southern Quaker population. Although no African American man won election to state office from Guilford County during Reconstruction, freedman Harmon Unthank, one of the founders of Warnersville, received appointment to the Guilford County Board of Education and served as a director of People's Five Cent Savings Bank. Greensboro became a center of the Republican Party and attracted northern Albion W. Tourgee, a White man and self-proclaimed "carpetbagger." In 1867, Tourgee ran for the North Carolina Constitutional Convention from Guilford County on a platform warning of oligarchy. After helping to write a more democratic state constitution, Tourgee won election to the Seventh District Superior Court and served as a judge until 1874. From the bench he witnessed the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and attributed to it 1,000 "outrages" by 1870, which included twelve murders, nine rapes, eleven arsons, and seven mutilations, all within his jurisdiction, with 4,000 of 5,000 houses entered into by Klan members. One historian estimated that in Guilford County, the Klan claimed eight hundred members. As a Radical Republican abolitionist, Tourgee supported the freedpeople. He helped organize Bennett College, and later served as attorney for Homer Plessy, who unsuccessfully challenged racial segregation in the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson*

[2] Carol Moore, *Guilford County and the Civil War* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2015), 9-11, 19-20; J. G. De Roulhac Hamilton, *Reconstruction in North Carolina* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1914), 44. The best history that provides an analysis of the sit-in movement against the backdrop of local, state, and regional history is William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980).
[3] Moore, *Guilford County*, 10, and passim.

case. With an incorporated area of one mile square plus such suburban areas as Warnersville, Greensboro claimed 2,000 residents by 1870. By then African American workers made up nearly fifty percent of all skilled labor in the city with the rest of the Black population employed in semi-skilled and unskilled jobs. At that time, furniture factories, tobacco warehouses, other local industries, and even the railroad generally paid laborers of both races the same wages for the same job. While social equality remained a distant dream, Black and White lived together interspersed across Greensboro's neighborhoods throughout the latter nineteenth century. During this period, both Black and White churchwomen, clubwomen, and suffragettes supported segregated chapters of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union with its fight for prohibition as well as the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs and the League of Women Voters.[4]

During the 1890s, political upheaval and a severe economic downturn altered everything. The uneasy control of state government exerted by Conservatives—later called Bourbon Democrats—after seizing power from Republicans in 1872, led to grassroots challenges by biracial Populists who joined with Republicans to elect White and Black candidates to office. The stock market crash of 1890 and the onset of a recession followed by the run on banks during the Panic of 1893 created economic hardship throughout the land. The biracial Populists won control of North Carolina's state legislature in 1894 and the governor's seat in 1896. Bourbon Democrats responded by waging a white supremacy campaign in 1898 that toppled the statewide biracial Fusion government and led to a race massacre and notoriously violent coup in the coastal city of Wilmington. Once in power, virulent white supremacists disenfranchised Black voters and instituted racial segregation. In *The Crucible of Race*, Joel Williamson describes the triumph of racial radicalism that resulted in a new political, economic, and social system buttressed by the legal structure of Jim Crow. Having forced Populists and Independents out of office, Bourbon Democrats disenfranchised Black men and poor White men. Employers across the region fired Black workers, replacing them with newly arriving White farmers moving to town looking for work. Greensboro's population steadily increased from 2,000 persons in 1870 to 10,000 by 1900. Much of the state's business traveled on trains passing through Greensboro; by 1894, the rail lines through the city had been consolidated into the Southern Railroad. By the dawn of the twentieth century, Greensboro's civic leadership embraced New South calls for industrial development pitched within a framework of southern Progressivism, a conservative mix of business efficiency and white supremacy. In his seminal study, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom*, Duke University historian William H. Chafe describes the dominant ideology of the ruling class as "a pervasive commitment to civility" that updated old-fashioned paternalism into a progressive trope designed to maintain conservative social order. Across the southern Piedmont, local leaders invited northern investors to build industries to employ the area's non-union "Anglo-Saxon" laborers. In Greensboro, the arrival of textile mills that employed only White workers—first the Cone brothers' factories starting in 1895 followed by Burlington Industries during the 1920s—along with the banks and insurance companies that serviced them, transformed the political economy. By 1910 no Black persons held positions in factories, and the African American skilled labor force fell from thirty percent in 1870 to eight percent. As the population continued to grow, doubling from 15,000 in 1910 to 53,000 people living in Greensboro by 1930, the textile mills employed twenty percent of these workers, all of whom were White as the local economy limited most Black workers to manual labor. The bifurcated race wage that identified White workers as "skilled" and "semi-skilled" and paid them more than Black workers limited to "unskilled" and "semi-skilled" jobs, had both earning below half the national wage average for the same job. To maintain this discrimination in pay, state and local communities adopted ordinances and laws that required the

[4]Moore, *Guilford County*, 9-22, 93-100; Brooks D. Simpson, ed., *Reconstruction: Voices from America's First Great Struggle for Racial Equality* (New York: Library of America, 2018), 315-17, 385; Hamilton, *Reconstruction in North Carolina*, 464; Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 430-31; Albion Winegar Tourgee, *Fool's Errand: By One of the Fools* (New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert, 1879); and Albion Winegar Tourgee, *Bricks Without Straw* (New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert, 1880); Milton Ready, *The Tar Heel State: A History of North Carolina* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 311-13.

separation of the races. Henceforth White people had an economic reason to enforce white supremacy. The customary racial segregation of churches and schools that had evolved after emancipation became enforced racial discrimination across the social and economic spectrum of commercial establishments. By 1914, the Greensboro City Council had passed an ordinance segregating public accommodations and residential neighborhoods.[5]

One of the great ironies of racial segregation is how the enforced separation contributed to an expanding Black community of businesses and social institutions such as churches and schools. Despite virulent white supremacy, a growing Black middle class thrived in the last decades of the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth centuries. In Greensboro, in addition to establishing churches, Black residents devoted years of effort to creating a strong school system that ranked among the nation's best for African Americans. Bennett College stood foremost among them. Founded in 1873 by formerly enslaved Greensboro Methodists who wanted to train teachers, the Freedmen's Aid and Southern Education Society school received funding from a northern White benefactor Lyman Bennett whose donation secured the land to the southeast of downtown and thus the name for the college. In 1889 the state chartered Bennett College, which hired Dr. Charles N. Grandison as its first Black president. Originally coeducational, Bennett offered a high school curriculum in addition to its two-year college program. Following a Phelps-Stokes Foundation report in 1926, Bennett College transitioned into a four-year women's college led by its new president, Dr. David Dallas Jones, who served from 1927 to 1955. Opposing racial segregation and white supremacy, Jones promoted social activism among students, encouraging them not to patronize businesses that engaged in racial discrimination. When his administration welcomed First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt to campus, he invited all of Greensboro's students—White and Black—to join Bennett women in the audience, and they did so, to the consternation of white supremacists.[6]

Northeast of downtown Greensboro, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College (N.C. A&T) developed into a leading African American educational institution. Originally set up by the North Carolina legislature under the Second Morrill Act of 1890 as a branch campus of the private Shaw University in Raleigh, the Agricultural and Mechanical College for the Colored Race moved to Greensboro as an independent state-supported institution in 1893, adopting its current descriptor of "Agricultural and Technical" in 1915. The school's enrollment and academic standing grew steadily, notably shown with the campus expansion by nearly one hundred acres in 1946. By 1955 three thousand students matriculated at the coeducational N.C. A&T. Yet as college president, Dr. F. D. Bluford understood only too well, state funding came with strings attached that demanded deference to the dictates of "civility" and discouraged active protest against white supremacy. In his study *Civilities and Civil Rights*, Chafe contrasts the conservative leadership style of Bluford, who accommodated racial segregation to advance the Black community with its students and faculty at A&T, with the more radical activism of Randolph Blackwell, a native of Greensboro whose father had introduced him to Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association with its Pan-Africanism. Upon attending a recruitment session by Ella Baker in 1943, Blackwell volunteered to organize an NAACP Youth chapter in Greensboro to press for racial change.[7]

On the surface, conservatives seemed to exert state and local control, but moderating undercurrents swelled during the Great Depression to challenge conservative control as North Carolina gained a reputation for being

[5] Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*; Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender & Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Ready, *The Tar Heel State*, 273.
[6] Linda Beatrice Brown, *Belles of Liberty: Gender, Bennett College, and the Civil Rights Movement in Greensboro, North Carolina* (Greensboro, NC: Women and Wisdom Press, 2013).
[7] Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 20-22.

among the most liberal of southern states. The collapse in land values that followed two hurricanes that hit Palm Beach, Florida, in 1926, burst a regional bubble of speculation that stretched up to Asheville, North Carolina, and announced the onset of the economic downturn made all the more evident by the stock market crash of 1929. With more than a quarter of the U.S. population unemployed by 1932, southerners voted for Franklin D. Roosevelt and his promise of a New Deal achieved through industrial democracy marked by biracial unions and an extension of the franchise. Yet owners and managers of Greensboro's textile mills used the veneer of civility and paternalism to fight unionization. Like former slaveowners on their plantations, mill owners Moses and Caesar Cone strictly oversaw the men, women, and children who lived in their mill village, which provided racially segregated housing and health care, schools and playgrounds, even churches. The Cone brothers responded to the economic downturn by instituting the "stretch-out," which demanded more work for less pay. Employees rebelled but the Cones fired and evicted workers for trying to organize their mill, then replaced them with desperate rural White laborers seeking jobs in the city. During the United Textile Workers strike in 1932, some 4,000 operatives responded to the flying squadrons of labor organizers and walked out of Greensboro's mills in an unsuccessful effort to join the union. With Roosevelt's election, they found a friend whose National Industrial Recovery Act with its National Recovery Administration ostensibly supported labor.[8]

Statewide, the leadership of President Frank Porter Graham at the Whites-only University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and members of the faculty such as sociologist Howard Odum, promoted the New Deal with its vision of industrial democracy to reform a state politically dominated by fiscal conservatives such as Governor J. C. B. Ehringhaus. While remaining deferential to business interests, these cautious racial progressives advocated moderation in race relations as a way to promote a national reputation conducive to economic growth. By the postwar era—with Cold War red-baiting against people calling for industrial democracy—reform shifted to racial liberalism on civil rights. Such moderation found expression in Greensboro through the Guilford County Interracial Commission which, like the regional Commission on Interracial Co-operation (CIC), promoted biracial communication to deflect racial tensions. The Greensboro Intercollegiate Fellowship encouraged faculty and students from the city's two HBCUs to meet with their counterparts at the city's three White schools: the private Quaker Guilford College, private Methodist Greensboro College, and the state-supported Woman's College of the University of North Carolina (later to become the coed University of North Carolina at Greensboro). Such efforts coincided with the 1947 founding of the United States National Student Association (NSA), which promoted biracial activities across campuses. Other national organizations with affiliates in Greensboro that were committed to racial equality included the American Friends Service Committee, the United Church Women, and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). Upper- and middle-class White women participated in these groups that entertained ideas about racial integration. Black women had organized a separate local chapter of the YWCA named after Susie B. Dudley in 1946 that pressed the need for a new facility. Despite the national policy to integrate and local calls to follow it by many White and Black women, racial liberalism went only so far in Greensboro. The effort to integrate the separate YWCAs failed when textile leaders stepped in to build racially segregated recreational facilities for women that they added in 1954 to the separate existing facilities for men managed by the Young Men's Christian Association in Greensboro.[9]

In the wake of the collapse of sharecropping and industrial paternalism during the Great Depression and mobilization into a modern economy during World War II, African Americans challenged the dehumanizing and discriminatory social system of racial segregation. Black men and women supported both the war effort and

[8] See Bryant Simon, "Choosing between Ham and the Union: Paternalism in the Cone Mills of Greensboro, 1925-1930," in Jeffrey Leiter, Michael D. Schulman, and Rhonda Zingraff, eds., *Hanging by a Thread: Social Change in Southern Textiles* (Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 1991), 81–100; Ready, *The Tar Heel State,* 327-30.
[9] Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 29-34.

the Double V Campaign promoted by the *Pittsburgh Courier* that called for victories over fascism and the ideology of white supremacy abroad and racial segregation at home. To supplement the efforts of the CIC and the NAACP, new organizations emerged nationally during this period. The Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) pioneered the strategy of sit-ins. Initially organized by ecumenical Christians (including Quakers) in Europe to promote pacifism as the First World War loomed and incorporated in Cambridge, England, FOR had by 1915 formed a branch in the United States. American pacifists Abraham John Muste, Protestant Episcopal Church Bishop Paul Jones, and Jane Addams of Hull House led the effort which opposed entry of the United States into the global conflict. By the 1920s, FOR expanded its focus to include pioneering interracial activities led by James Weldon Johnson of the NAACP and Dr. Will W. Alexander of the CIC. Their efforts attracted younger members to the organization by the 1940s, some of whom, like Black activist Bayard Rustin and White minister George Houser, suffered arrest and imprisonment during the Second World War for being conscientious objectors.[10]

With the Reverend James Farmer, Reverend George Houser and labor organizer Bernice Fisher formed the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in Chicago in 1942 to concentrate on ending racial discrimination. A native Texan and graduate of HBCU Howard University, Farmer had become convinced that Mahatma Gandhi's strategies of satyagraha—which included nonviolent protest and refusal to submit to unjust rules—would succeed in ending racial discrimination in the United States. Adapting the nonviolent techniques outlined in *War Without Violence* by Krishnalal Shridharani who, as a colleague and disciple of Gandhi's, had participated in the 1930 Salt March to protest British colonial policies in India, CORE advanced the tactic of sit-ins at restaurants to force change. Following an afternoon meeting, CORE members led by James Farmer entered Jack Spratt's Coffee House near the University of Chicago to continue their discussion. When the waitress refused to serve Farmer, White CORE member Jimmy Robinson explained that her refusal violated Illinois's civil rights law, and management relented and served the two men. To test the desegregation, the two returned days later and again confronted opposition. They decided Jack Spratt's would make a good target for implementing CORE's new nonviolent sit-in strategy. On May 15, 1943, members of the Chicago CORE chapter staged a sit-in at Jack Spratt's. Entering in small groups, they occupied all the seats at the counter and tables. While staff at first served the White patrons, they denied service to the Black ones. Again, speaking with Robinson while ignoring Farmer, management tried to work out a solution that maintained racial segregation but ultimately realized the protesters would not accept anything short of equality in service. When police arrived on the scene, they found no laws had been broken and encouraged management to desegregate, and it did. Follow-up tests over subsequent weeks by CORE members demonstrated the success of the sit-in strategy as implemented at Jack Spratt's in Chicago.[11]

During the Second World War, demonstrations over Whites-only service in restaurants erupted in Washington, D.C., when Howard University students protested racial discrimination at businesses near the campus. A group of coeds led by Ruth Powell occupied the seats in the Whites-only Little Palace Cafeteria at 14th and U Streets on April 17, 1943, and a year later on April 22, 1944, at Thompson's Cafeteria on 14th Street and New York Avenue. Familiar with the sit-in strategy as a member of FOR, Howard law school student Pauli Murray participated in the protests and represented the students in court. Not until the federal courts ruled in *District of Columbia v. John R. Thompson* in 1953 did Washington begin to desegregate its lunch counters, although it did not fully comply until the enforcement of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

[10] The National Park Service theme study on racial desegregation in public accommodations describes the postwar period as the "Birth of the Civil Rights Movement." See Salvatore, *Civil Rights in America: Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations*, 34.
[11] August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942-1968* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973). The descriptions of the protest at Jack Spratt's and of sit-ins that took place elsewhere in the paragraphs that follow come from Meier and Rudwick's *CORE*. See also James Farmer, *Lay Bare the Heart: An Autobiography of The Civil Rights Movement* (New York: New American Library, 1984).

By 1947, CORE locals appeared in other midwestern cities such as Detroit, Oberlin, and Columbus, as well as New York and Syracuse in the Northeast. Then new chapters radiated out from these hubs to cities such as Evanston and Peoria, Illinois, and Cleveland and Cincinnati, Ohio. Chapters formed in Minneapolis, Kansas City, and Lincoln as well as Philadelphia, Denver, and Los Angeles. Usually a small group of Black and White integrationists—often linked to churches through their ministers and colleges through their faculties and students—formed to challenge racial discrimination in their communities using the tactics developed by CORE in Chicago. In Peoria, a CORE affiliate attracted a young African American community organizer, C. T. Vivian, who joined in the interracial protests at Bishop's Cafeteria that, using the CORE strategy, succeeded in desegregating the facility in 1947.[12]

In April 1947, CORE conducted the Journey of Reconciliation which involved sixteen members—eight Black and eight White men—on an evaluation of the Upper South's enforcement of *Morgan v. Virginia* (1946) regarding the desegregation of interstate transit. Rustin of FOR and Houser of FOR and CORE joined others on this "first" Freedom Ride that involved sit-ins at bus station cafeterias. While traveling from Chapel Hill to Greensboro, White vigilantes attacked the riders, including Rustin and Houser, in Hillsborough County. Local authorities arrested and convicted the civil rights activists, and following the denial of their appeals, Rustin and Houser surrendered to serve their sentences on segregated chain gangs in Roxboro.[13]

New CORE locals formed in such communities as Baltimore where in 1953 a mix of middle-class Black and White integrationists joined by Black trade unionists and college students from HBCU Morgan State College targeted lunch counters across the city, coordinating pressure with CORE pickets outside New York stores and the corporate headquarters of the national chain, Grants, to successfully desegregate the Baltimore affiliate in May 1954. Then efforts concentrated on the local Baltimore chain, Read's Drug Store, convincing management to desegregate it in 1955.

An active chapter of the NAACP steadily worked to register Black voters in Greensboro. In 1933 the Black community fielded its first candidate for Greensboro's City Council since Reconstruction, with additional candidates following until the election of Dr. William Hampton in 1951. His success derived in part from "Operation Doorknock," a voter registration campaign encouraged by Bennett College President David Dallas Jones and led by "Bennett Belles." As a city councilman, Hampton recommended the appointment of Bennett College President Jones to the Greensboro Board of Education in 1953. Meeting the day after the U.S. Supreme Court issued its *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in May 1954 that called for the desegregation of public schools, the Greensboro Board of Education passed a resolution to implement the court's ruling, becoming the first southern city to say it would comply with the decision. The racially liberal position voiced by Chairman of the Board D. Edward Hudgins who urged citizens not to "fight or attempt to circumvent it"—a position echoed by Greensboro Superintendent Benjamin Smith and supported by board member and Bennett President Jones—reinforced the restrictions of civility. And while token school desegregation occurred in Greensboro as well as Winston-Salem and Charlotte in 1957, segregationists employed the strategy of Massive Resistance. Intended to thwart the U.S. Supreme Court's school desegregation ruling, Massive Resistance in North Carolina succeeded in making the impact of these token measures negligible. Three years after the *Brown* decision and the vetting of African American applicants for transfer into the White schools, the board approved only six Black students for admission into the formerly Whites-only institutions, one to the high school and the other five to the elementary school. Not only did the students suffer harassment but their parents faced retribution from White

[12] C. T. Vivian with Steve Fiffer, *It's in the Action: Memories of a Nonviolent Warrior* (Montgomery, AL: NewSouth Books, 2021, 20-21.
[13] Meier and Rudwick, *CORE*, 33-39.

opponents. While eighteen African Americans applied for transfer into White schools in 1958, the board approved only two as the total number of Black students in Greensboro's formerly White schools dropped to five. In 1959 Black parents, assisted by the NAACP Legal and Educational Defense Fund, Inc., filed suit against the Greensboro Board of Education for failing to transfer their children into White schools. State subterfuge with its local option Pearsall Plan that allowed districts to close schools rather than integrate them and the Pupil Assignment Act that used token desegregation to avoid significant shifts in the racial balance of the public schools enabled Greensboro's White elite to deflect the legal challenge while maintaining "civility." Meanwhile Black parents worked through the African American Dudley High and Lincoln Junior High School Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) to petition the school board for improvements to those segregated facilities.[14]

An active NAACP chapter continued filing lawsuits that pressed for social change in Greensboro. With dynamic leadership by local chapter president Edward Edmonds and his successor Dr. George Simkins, the organization conducted a membership drive in 1959, doubling its numbers to 2,300 members. A sociology professor at Bennett College who had attended A. Phillip Randolph's March on Washington in 1941, Edmonds led an effort in 1955 to desegregate the city's Whites-only public swimming pool in Lindley Park. Through the NAACP, he petitioned the city to open the facility to all its citizens. In response, the Greensboro City Council voted 7-to-1 to sell both the White pool in question and the segregated Black pool to private investors. To maintain racial segregation in Greensboro, the founder of Burlington Industries, J. Spencer Love, purchased the Black pool and handed it over to be managed by the African American Hayes-Taylor YMCA and its Executive Secretary David Morehead. Also in 1955, Simkins led a foursome of African American duffers who attempted to play on the city's Whites-only public golf course, only to be arrested, convicted, sentenced and fined for violating Greensboro's segregation ordinance. In response to his lawsuit against the city, the Greensboro City Council closed the golf course rather than integrate the facility. By the end of the decade, Simkins and his friends secured the right to play on the course and had their sentences commuted. Undeterred by the delays, Simkins turned to other segregated public recreational facilities including tennis courts. A similar challenge occurred in Greensboro's health care system. While St. Leo's Hospital had accepted Black patients since its opening in 1906, its closure in 1954 left the options for Greensboro's Black patients limited. The segregated Greensboro Negro Hospital underwent a transformation in 1927 becoming the L. Richardson Memorial Hospital with the donation of funds from the founder of Vicks VapoRub. Black doctors such as Simkins could only practice in hospitals that accepted Black patients, who could only receive treatment at the segregated Richardson Hospital. Beginning in 1962, Simkins led a campaign to gain privileges for Black doctors and Black patients at Greensboro's Whites-only hospitals, targeting for desegregation the recently constructed Cone Hospital. Another member of the NAACP, high school teacher Ezell Blair, Sr., headed efforts to pressure storeowners to hire African Americans for sales and other non-manual labor positions. Some White business owners such as haberdasher Ralph Johns supported desegregation.[15]

Nevertheless, Greensboro—like the rest of North Carolina and much of the South—remained stubbornly racially segregated. As an urban center connected by rail to other southern cities, Greensboro's population had steadily increased, doubling over twenty years, from nearly 60,000 people in 1940 to almost 75,000 in 1950 to 120,000 people in 1960. Much of the growth occurred through annexation and expansion of the suburbs with new businesses opening outside the downtown corridor to cater to the mostly White suburbanites. While some small businesses hired employees regardless of color, the city's leading industries, from the textile mills of Cone Brothers and Burlington Industries to the Carolina Steel and Iron Company and Jefferson Standard

[14] Seen as a "middle way," the Pearsall Plan offered a moderate solution that maintained civility, although Chafe would conclude his study by observing that "civility" and "civil rights" are incompatible. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 72-82.
[15] Ibid.

Insurance Company, relied on the bifurcated race wage to maximize exploitation of workers. To maintain this economic system, they called upon government officials to enforce the separation of the races across the public sphere. While Greensboro appeared racially liberal with Black representation on the City Council and Board of Education, the token desegregation of the public schools, and talk of biracial cooperation among civic organizations, the reality demonstrated a persistent resistance by White people to any meaningful racial change. Thus by the end of the decade, a frustrated Black community fumed over the failure of school desegregation and the inability to gain equal access to public accommodations such as hospitals, theatres, and lunch counters.[16]

Bennett College inaugurated its first female president, Dr. Willa B. Player, in 1955, and she supported social activism on the campus according to Linda Beatrice Brown, *Belles of Liberty: Gender, Bennett College, and the Civil Rights Movement in Greensboro, North Carolina*. When in 1958, the local NAACP chapter invited the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to speak in Greensboro, Black institutions at first hesitated to provide auditorium space fearing reprisals from White authorities. President Bluford of N.C. A&T worried about what associating with King and the Montgomery Bus Boycott might do to the state funding for the school. President Player stepped in, offering Dr. King the pulpit of Annie Merner Pfeiffer Chapel. As she noted, "this is a liberal arts college where freedom rings—so Martin Luther King can speak here." On February 11, 1958, Bennett College hosted Dr. King's inspirational Greensboro speech variously titled "A Realistic Look at Race Relations" but also "Room in the Inn." In the audience sat students who took his message to heart.[17]

Once the Montgomery Bus Boycott mobilized in response to the arrest of Rosa Parks in December 1955, the modern civil rights movement as an indigenous protest by African Americans, combined with the lawsuits behind the previous year's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision mandating desegregation of public schools, informed the American consciousness. While African Americans in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 1953 had initiated the first bus boycott of the modern civil rights era, the lack of national attention it received as well as its advocacy for a racially segregated solution limited its significance. Nevertheless, King discussed the Baton Rouge boycott with its leader, the Reverend T. J. Jemison, a native Alabamian who had attended the HBCU Alabama State College in Montgomery before accepting a pastorate in Baton Rouge. King also met with Rustin whom FOR sent to Montgomery, while CORE sent its new field secretary LeRoy Carter, as both men promoted nonviolence among the Black participants. CORE capitalized on the bus boycott by printing and distributing 40,000 copies of a pamphlet extolling what it claimed as a "CORE-type protest in Montgomery." Following the example of Montgomery, bus boycotts took place elsewhere in 1956, with a successful protest led by the Reverend C. K. Steele in Tallahassee, Florida, and an unsuccessful one led by the Reverend Fred L. Shuttlesworth in Birmingham, Alabama. Encouraged by Rustin and others to continue the work accomplished in Montgomery, Dr. King formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1957 with such fellow charismatic ministers leading local civil rights movements as Jemison, Steele, Shuttlesworth, and in Montgomery, the Reverend Ralph David Abernathy.[18]

Across the South, African Americans filed suit to force compliance with the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling as local NAACP chapters worked with boards of education to desegregate public schools. Having been

[16] Donald B. Dodd and Wynelle S. Dodd, *Historical Statistics of the South 1790-1970* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1973), 74-75. For an analysis of postwar suburbia and civil rights protest see Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003), especially the chapter "Rebellion: Forcing Open the Doors of Public Accommodations," 166-191, that explores the African American paradoxical relationship between citizenship and consumption.
[17] Brown, *Belles of Liberty*, 158-60, includes in the appendix a copy of the program.
[18] David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: Vintage Press, 1987).

first admitted to the school in 1952, African American Autherine Lucy desegregated the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa on February 1, 1956, but the mob violence that greeted her on her third day of classes led the university administration to expel her from campus, thus maintaining a "whites only" student body until forced to desegregate in 1963. On August 26, 1956, a dozen African American students enrolled in the Whites-only high school in Clinton, Tennessee, making it the first secondary school to be racially desegregated following the *Brown* decision. When the "Clinton 12" returned to attend classes the next day, they confronted an angry White mob of Ku Klux Klansmen and members of the Citizens Council whose violence forced Governor Frank G. Clement to call out Tennessee's National Guard to restore an uneasy order. For three months the Black students attended the school before withdrawing in December. In 1958 White vigilantes destroyed Clinton High with dynamite. In Arkansas, Daisy Bates led the local NAACP chapter in negotiations with the Little Rock Board of Education over integrating Central High School. Despite the careful planning, White mob violence led Governor Orval Faubus to call out the National Guard to keep the Black students out of the school. Determined to uphold the ruling, President Dwight Eisenhower federalized the guard and ordered the 101st Airborne Division to escort the students to class. As Tuscaloosa, Clinton, and Little Rock made clear, securing compliance with *Brown* required the effort of the local Black community which could expect violent White resistance. State governments contributed to the Massive Resistance campaign by targeting the NAACP. Alabama's attorney general filed suit against the civil rights organization in 1956, accusing it of failing to register as a foreign corporation and demanding its membership list. Rather than comply and face harassment of its members, the NAACP confronted contempt of court charges, ordered its chapters closed, and withdrew staff from Alabama, including its Southeast Regional Director Ruby Hurley from Birmingham. Louisiana and Texas pursued similar strategies to have the NAACP "outlawed" in their states while Georgia and Tennessee investigated such possibilities. The shutting down of chapters and withdrawal of staff left the NAACP in a state of disarray while feuding among leaders in the national headquarters created dysfunction.[19]

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference proved little better. Since its organization in 1957, the group had floundered without clear purpose. At its organizational meeting in Atlanta, the nascent ministerial leadership adopted several position papers that sketched out an agenda focused on bus boycotts in other southern cities, but the reality of trying to apply from the top down a strategy that was designed for grassroots activism proved impractical. Behind the charismatic leadership of King and the other ministers stood the three members of In Friendship—Bayard Rustin, Ella Baker, and Stanley Levison—who provided much of the thinking for the SCLC during its early years. Indeed the SCLC hired Baker away from the NAACP, where she had worked as director of branches, to become its first executive director. As its first activity, the SCLC through In Friendship coordinated the May 1957 Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom which gathered civil rights leaders in Washington in a show of support for President Eisenhower's Civil Rights Act of 1957. During the speeches on the National Mall, while Shuttlesworth called for direct action against racial segregation, King advocated for voting rights. In the weeks that followed, Baker defaulted to the NAACP's old playbook as the SCLC conducted voter registration drives by planning the Crusade for Citizenship in 1958. As important as Black political empowerment might be, by the end of the decade, the SCLC came off like the NAACP, a moribund organization, with leaders in search of a movement.[20]

Yet the pace of grassroots protests grew faster. One of King's classmates at Boston University, the Reverend Douglas E. Moore, pastored Asbury Temple United Methodist Church in Durham, North Carolina, where he encouraged its youth group to join him in protests at the segregated Royal Ice Cream Parlor. On June 23, 1957,

[19] Patricia Sullivan, *Lift Every Voice: The NAACP and the Making of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: The New Press, 2009); Numan V. Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance; Race and Politics in the South During the 1950's* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), 146, 148, 251-69, 15-16, 220-21, and passim.
[20] Garrow, *Bearing the Cross,* 83-87.

Moore and others entered the establishment and sat in the White section, initiating a series of demonstrations involving other Black leaders such as Floyd McKissick. The protests would last until 1963 when the business finally desegregated. Inspired by the emerging civil rights movement, members of the NAACP Youth Council in Wichita, Kansas, launched a sit-in campaign against the Dockum Drug Store. The protest began on July 19, 1958, when African American students entered the store one-by-one and sat at the Whites-only lunch counter. Denied service, the activists returned and sustained the demonstration for several weeks, attracting support from White students attending Wichita State University. After twenty-three days, management desegregated the lunch counter. The next month a similar protest occurred in Oklahoma City. There on August 19, 1958, the NAACP Youth Council led by Clara Shepard Luper targeted Katz Drug Store where the protest succeeded in convincing management to desegregate its facilities across Oklahoma and Missouri. By 1959 the NAACP Youth Council in Louisville as well as CORE chapters in Lexington sponsored protests at lunch counters in Kentucky. Other demonstrations took place in Miami, Florida, and elsewhere.[21]

As the episodes of civil disobedience steadily increased across the nation, both FOR, featuring Rustin, and CORE, featuring Carter, arranged speaking tours at HBCUs designed to teach students nonviolence and promote the emerging civil rights movement. Through lectures on college campuses, they helped popularize Gandhi's teachings while priming a new generation of demonstrators in the southern region.

At the end of 1959, an activist group tested the enforcement of segregation at lunch counters in Nashville, Tennessee. The Reverend Dr. Kelly Miller Smith and the Reverend James Lawson, both of whom had been influenced by the teachings of Gandhi, led the Nashville Movement. Reverend Smith was the pastor of Nashville's First Baptist Colored church and a graduate of Howard University, where he studied under the Black theologian Howard Thurman who had met Gandhi. Reverend Lawson, a former Methodist missionary to India who had studied satyagraha, joined CORE and matriculated as one of the only Black students at Vanderbilt University. To their workshops on nonviolence, they attracted numerous African American students from the city's HBCUs, including John Lewis, Diane Nash, Marion Barry, Bernard Lafayette, James Bevel, Curtis Murphy, Catherine Burke, and C. T. Vivian, as well as a handful of White students, all of whom went on to play leading roles in the civil rights movement. Picking November 28, 1959—the busy Saturday after Thanksgiving and the start of the Christmas shopping season—the students, including Lewis, Nash, and Barry, entered Harveys Department Store and sat down at the lunch counter only to be refused service, after which they departed. A second test occurred on December 5, 1959 in which the Black and White activists participated in the sit-in at Cain-Sloan Department Store. Both practice runs prepared the students for sustained protests planned for 1960. But before the Nashville students could act, the N.C. A&T Four initiated their protest in Greensboro.[22]

The Greensboro Sit-Ins

On Monday afternoon, February 1, 1960, N.C. A&T students David Richmond, Franklin McCain, Ezell Blair Jr. (now Jibreel Khazan), and Joseph McNeil sat down at the Whites-only lunch counter in the F. W. Woolworth Company Building in downtown Greensboro and asked to be served in the same manner as White customers. Before sitting down and joining the others, two of the four had purchased sundry items and kept the

[21] Ibid., 127-28; Meier & Rudwick, *CORE*, 56, 59; Tracy E. K'Meyer, *Civil Rights in the Gateway to the South: Louisville, Kentucky, 1945-1980* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 81 and passim; Chanelle N. Rose, *The Struggle for Black Freedom in Miami: Civil Rights in America's Tourist Paradise 1896-1968* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2015), 193-201.
[22] Benjamin Houston, *The Nashville Way: Racial Etiquette and the Struggle for Social Justice in a Southern City* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2012), 84-91; John Lewis with Michael D'Orso, *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998), 67-117.

school supplies with receipts out. A White waitress walked up and Blair said, "I'd like a cup of coffee, please." She responded, "I'm sorry. We don't serve Negroes here." Rather than get up and depart, the four remained seated, and Blair countered, "I beg to disagree with you. You just finished serving me at a counter only two feet away from here." She referred them to the segregated hotdog stand: "Negroes eat at the other end." Once the waitress departed, a Black kitchen worker approached and said "You're acting stupid, ignorant! That's why we can't get anywhere today." Other people in the store provided mixed reactions. Two elderly White women stopped by to say, "Ah, you should have done it ten years ago. It's a good thing I think you are doing," while other White men and women cursed them: "Nasty, dirty niggers, you know you don't belong here at the lunch counter." The four remained seated despite threats by store manager Clarence L. Harris to call the police and have them arrested. In previous conversations, the nonviolent activists had informed clothing store owner Ralph Johns about their plans and he had arranged for Jo Spivey, a reporter for the afternoon *Greensboro Record,* to document their actions. She continued to follow the events throughout the subsequent months of protest. On February 1, Spivey also sent the newspaper's Jack Moebes to photograph the students once they exited Woolworth's side door after Harris closed the store early. The paper later published the picture of the four men standing outside the plate glass windows of the shops just down West Sycamore Street (now called February One Place). News of the demonstration against racial discrimination quickly spread in Greensboro. As fate had it, Constance Curry—a White student activist with the National Student Association (NSA) whose family lived in Greensboro—happened to be home driving downtown the afternoon of February 1 and heard announced over the radio the incorrect information that the four Black students had been arrested for sitting in at the nearby Woolworth lunch counter. Returning to Georgia and her job as director of the NSA Southern Student Human Relations Project, Curry joined in the Atlanta sit-ins and helped organize the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Back at N.C. A&T, the four students met with campus and community leaders and began organizing the Student Executive Committee for Justice to continue the protest. They sought the advice of Dr. George Simkins, Greensboro NAACP chapter president, to gain support from the organization. Although Simkins notified NAACP headquarters, he believed that in this situation, the support of CORE would be of greater service to the students than the NAACP New York staff. He had read CORE's literature advocating direct action and so Simkins called up CORE's New York office and asked for help.[23]

While in some ways a local rebuke of white supremacy planned independently of any civil rights organization, the actions of the four young N.C. A&T students, soon dubbed alternately the "A&T Four" or the "Greensboro Four," acted out of a protest culture cultivated in Black Greensboro. Three of them—Richmond, McCain, and Blair—grew up in the city while McNeil hailed from Wilmington. The three from Greensboro attended Dudley High School, where Ezell Blair Jr.'s, father, Ezell Blair Sr., and such teachers as Nell Coley taught the students to stand up for their constitutional rights as citizens. Through the Greensboro NAACP, several of the teachers promoted race reform. A number of students, including two members of the Greensboro Four, participated in the NAACP youth chapter where they heard presentations by participants in the Montgomery Bus Boycott and from among the Little Rock Nine. Two members attended Shiloh Baptist Church whose pastor, the Reverend Otis Hairston, had led the NAACP membership drive in 1959. In short, they had grown up in an environment of social activism. When King spoke at Bennett College on February 11, 1958, three of the four future protesters

[23] The narrative of the Greensboro sit-ins in this and following paragraphs relies primarily on Miles Wolff's account in Miles Wolff, *Lunch at the 5 & 10* (Chicago, IL: Elephant Paperbacks, I.R. Dee, 1990; first published 1970), which is the best day-by-day account of the Greensboro sit-ins. Wolff adds that Blair asked, "This is a public place, isn't it? If it isn't, then why don't you sell membership cards? If you do that, then I'll understand that this is a private concern." The waitress rebuked them, "Well, you won't get any service here!" Civil rights activist and comedian Dick Gregory turned the White waitress's comment, "We don't serve colored people here," into a joke by retorting, "That's all right, I don't eat colored people. Bring me a whole fried chicken." See also Franklin McCain's interview in Howell Raines, *My Soul Is Rested: Movement Days in the Deep South Remembered* (New York: Putnam, 1977), 75-82 with White people quoted on 77; Constance Curry, et al., *Deep in Our Hearts: Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 14.

then in Greensboro joined in the overflow crowd packing Pfeiffer Chapel and filling side rooms where they listened through loudspeakers. In his talk, King sketched out the civil rights movement's progress while pointing to challenges ahead. As president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, King called for love and action to triumph over racism. Blair found King's oratory "so strong that I could feel my heart palpitating. It brought tears to my eyes."[24]

In the fall of 1959, the Greensboro Four arrived as freshmen at N.C. A&T and became fast friends. On the historically Black college campus, they tapped into a support network that promoted resistance to white supremacy. Coursework included seminal texts by such Black leaders as W. E. B. DuBois, Ralph Bunche, and Langston Hughes and classes on African American history. The campus librarian, Eula Hudgens, had participated in the original Freedom Ride, the Journey of Reconciliation, which FOR conducted in 1947 across North Carolina and the upper South to test the desegregation of interstate transit. As a student worker in the library, McNeil befriended Hudgens and talked with her about social activism. Recent interviews with Bennett alumnae as reported in Linda Brown's *Belles of Liberty* and confirmed by Greensboro Four member Jibreel Khazan, claim that over the fall of 1959, meetings occurred at Bennett that included students from N.C. A&T to discuss the nascent civil rights movement and plan possible protests. Fellow Greensboro Four member Franklin McCain rejects the assertion that the idea of the sit-ins developed during these meetings at Bennett. Nevertheless, even otherwise contradictory oral interviews insist that Bennett's President Willa Player supported student activism. One account suggests she encouraged them to develop a direct-action campaign rather than a protest march, waiting until after the new year so that the Christmas break might not disrupt any momentum.[25]

The Greensboro Four knew Ralph Johns to be one of the only White Greensboro merchants to support N.C. A&T and the NAACP, and they found in him, a Christian descendant of Syrian immigrants, an ally for racial desegregation. After gathering at the campus library on their way to the Woolworth that Monday, the four stopped by the clothing store to inform Johns of their pending plans. He promised to provide bail money if needed.

While their mentors showed encouragement, the most important discovery made by the four young Black men proved to be themselves. Meeting in a dorm room after classes in W. Kerr Scott Hall—perhaps room 2128 that Blair and McNeil shared—they debated the issues of the day and the need for action. As Richmond recalled, "We challenged each other, really. We constantly heard about all the evils that are occurring and how Blacks are mistreated and nobody was doing anything about it. We used to question, 'Why is it that you have to sit in the balcony? Why do you have to ride in the back of the bus?'" As McCain put it, "The thing that precipitated the sit-ins was that little bit of incentive and that little bit of courage that each of us instilled within each other." At one such session, McNeil declared, "It's time we take some action now. We've been . . . people who talk a lot, but . . . very little action." With resolve, the Greensboro Four agreed to stage the sit-in. As Richmond remembered, "All of us were afraid, but we went and did it." And others took note as the protests continued.[26]

At 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday morning, February 2, 1960, the original Greensboro Four from the previous day, accompanied by twenty-three classmates from N.C. A&T—some dressed in their ROTC uniforms and others in their Sunday best—and four Black women arrived at the F. W. Woolworth Company Building and resumed their protest at the lunch counter. On the second day the students remained until 12:30 p.m. then departed,

[24] Ezell Blair, Jr., quoted in Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 113.
[25] Ibid., 81-82; Brown, *Belles of Liberty*, 18-19, 73-79.
[26] The quotations come from Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 113-15 and passim; for similar quotations, see also the interview with McCain in Raines, *My Soul Is Rested*, 75-82.

promising to return. That evening's *Greensboro Record* published the first newspaper article on the sit-ins with the famous accompanying photograph of Joseph McNeil and Frank McCain from the Greensboro Four, along

with Billy Smith and Clarence Henderson, sitting at the lunch counter on the second day. The headline read, "A&T Students Launch 'Sit-Down' Demand for Service at Downtown Lunch Counter."[27]

On Wednesday morning, the Greensboro Four first went to Shiloh Baptist Church to copy handouts for distribution among activists with directions on nonviolent protest prepared by the Student Executive Committee. The arrival of Len Holt and others from CORE provided pedagogical materials with which to train student activists in nonviolent protest. The African American journalist Louis Lomax witnessed the evolving protest in Greensboro and in his account described the training process: "The students were seated at a long table resembling a lunch counter. Holt, or one of his assistants, would play the part of the white man. The white man walked along the counter blowing smoke in the students' faces; he called them names: "nigger," "coon," "black bastard." When they failed to provoke any reaction, the white man would push and shove, and finally in desperation, hit. The Negro student who fought back or got angry flunked the course. The only way to pass—and thus be allowed to participate in a real-life lunch counter sit-in—was to bear it all without a whimper, without anger." A few days into the protest, the national NAACP youth secretary Herbert Wright appeared in Greensboro to assist the students. While he personally supported direct action, the national organization did not endorse the strategy.[28]

The first students arrived at the Woolworth lunch counter on Wednesday at 11:00 a.m. and soon occupied all of the sixty-six seats but three which waitresses retained for themselves. Others from N.C. A&T, Bennett Belles, and even a few African Americans from the community stood by waiting to be seated. In the afternoon, three White male students from Greensboro College arrived to show their support for the protest. The Student Executive Committee set up a carpool and coordinated hour-long stints by the protesters so that the seats at the lunch counter remained occupied by students. Editors statewide picked up the story, and on Thursday morning it appeared on the front page of the morning *Greensboro Daily News*. Three hundred students from N.C. A&T, Bennett, and Dudley High School gathered at the Woolworth on Thursday, February 4, 1960, but discovered a counter-protest organized by young white supremacists who blocked the aisles and occupied seats at the lunch counter. Around noon, some of the Black students walked down South Elm Street to the S. H. Kress & Co. store at 212 South Elm Street and entered it, extending the sit-ins to a second location. Henceforth while the sit-ins expanded to other locations in Greensboro, print media continued its focus on the Woolworth, and unlike later in the movement, television coverage of the sit-ins remained virtually nonexistent. By 1:00 p.m., three White students from North Carolina Woman's College entered the Woolworth and sat at the lunch counter in support of the protesting Black students. The actions of the White coeds propelled Woman's College Chancellor Gordon Blackwell to intervene.

On Friday morning, February 5, 1960, detectives and other law enforcement officers appeared on the scene shortly after the stores opened at 10:00 a.m. Roughly fifty young White truant students from the county high schools also arrived to occupy seats in a counter protest. Known Klansmen joined them. By 10:30 a.m. Black college students entered to take what seats remained and to wait for others to open up. The White vigilantes verbally harassed the Black activists, occasionally turning violent as when police arrested three White men after one of them was accused of extinguishing a cigarette on the coat of a Black protester sitting at the lunch counter. When KKK member and minister George Dorsett got up to give his seat at the lunch counter to a young White woman who had arrived, only then did he discover that she came to protest as she then gave her

[27] Wolff, *Lunch at the 5 & 10*, 35.
[28] Louis E. Lomax, *The Negro Revolt* (New York: Signet Book, 1962), 135.

seat to a Black activist. Other White coeds from North Carolina Woman's College joined in the demonstrations as did a White student who attended Bennett and White students from Guilford College. More than three hundred students joined in the Greensboro sit-ins on Friday as racial tensions steadily increased with jockeying between the Black activists and White counter-protesters.

Friday night, Chancellor Blackwell convened a biracial meeting at the YWCA with administrators from Greensboro's other colleges to discuss how to defuse the situation. Representatives from Woolworth attended, encouraging the college authorities to stop the students only to hear them complain that despite *in loco parentis* (in place of the parent) responsibilities they had no control over the protests. Meanwhile administrators at N.C. A&T convinced the Student Executive Committee to propose a "two-week cooling-off period" to the students. Holding their own meeting Friday night, some 1,400 Black students voted down the moratorium pitched by their peers on behalf of the administrators. Instead they voted to continue the demonstrations the next morning. By this point stories about the sit-ins had run in the state's newspapers while *The New York Times* and other national publications sent reporters to cover the event.

Before the 8:30 a.m. opening of the Woolworth on Saturday, February 6, 1960, dozens of Black students waited to enter and occupy the seats at the lunch counter. As the morning wore on, a larger group of African Americans walked from campus downtown to support the sit-ins on what became known as Black Saturday. White vigilantes waving Confederate battle flags and shouting obscenities milled about protesters who reflected a cross-section of Greensboro's Black campus life from the Bennett Belles to the N.C. A&T football team. Students occupied the seats at the Greensboro Woolworth and Kress lunch counters. The absence of White students suggested the success of the college administrators in dissuading their involvement.

At 1:00 p.m. the Woolworth received what it said was a bomb scare leading store manager Harris to evacuate the building and shut it down. Forced out, the protesting Black students descended on Kress which cited the growing threat of violence and also closed, thus ending the demonstrations that day. With shouts of "We Whipped Woolworth!," the students declared victory and returned to campus. Gathered at a mass meeting that Saturday night, February 6, 1960, some 1,600 students debated what to do next. Black and White civic leaders addressed the crowd, encouraging the students to suspend the sit-ins and allow time for "negotiation and study." This time the students relented. On Sunday, a relieved Greensboro citizenry awoke to the *Daily News* front page headline: "A&T Students Call Two-Week Recess in Protest Here." The text described a statement by Mayor George Roach calling on the community to find a "peaceful solution."

In the days that followed, White civic leaders from the Merchants Association, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Greensboro City Council under the leadership of an administrator from Burlington Industries, the largest employer in the city, convinced sit-in leaders to announce on February 20, 1960, that they would pursue their goal of desegregation through "peaceful channels of negotiations." In the interim, the lunch counters remained segregated once they reopened on February 23 as the civic committee worked to promote acceptance for desegregation among the White public. Six weeks later on March 31, the White civic leaders met with the Black students and admitted their inability to find a path towards the integration of public accommodations.[29]

The next day, April 1, 1960, protests resumed as 1,200 Black students returned to Greensboro's lunch counters. The N.C. A&T Student Executive Committee and Bennett Belles coordinated a series of pickets on the sidewalks outside the stores with periodic sit-ins at the lunch counters. This pattern persisted until they achieved integration in July, thereby underscoring the significance of the sidewalk pickets in addition to the lunch counter sit-ins. First Woolworth and then Kress closed their lunch counters rather than deal with the ongoing

[29] Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 127.

sit-ins. White vigilantes counter-protested outside the stores as the students kept up the pressure. The boycott leaders appealed to all of Greensboro's Black community which joined in support of the demonstrations by withdrawing their trade from not just the national chains but also from the local Meyers Department Store at 200 South Elm Street, which the Black students had targeted for maintaining segregated eating facilities. At first White store managers believed the pickets would stop once spring semester ended and the college students returned home for the summer, but the NAACP youth chapter took up the challenge, training Dudley High School students who stepped in to picket the stores.

Hemorrhaging money, the regional Woolworth office in Atlanta notified Greensboro store manager Harris in May that it would accept desegregation if the other lunch counters did likewise. In June, Harris complained to Greensboro's mayor, saying "business is going to pot," and asked him to do something. By July the manager at Kress joined Harris in talks with Black leaders to prepare for the desegregation of the lunch counters. They convinced Meyers Department Store to go along. Without fanfare they started with token desegregation at the Woolworth. On Monday, July 25, 1960, Harris sat four of his Black wait staff on the stools so that they became the first African Americans to order food and receive service at the Woolworth lunch counter. By the end of the week, Greensboro's variety stores had served three hundred Black people in a fashion equal to that experienced by White people.[30]

The independent Greensboro sit-ins that students had sustained the entire first week of February 1960 captured the country's attention—unlike previous protests in Chicago, Washington, Baltimore, Nashville, and elsewhere—and as such inspired others to take action, with sit-ins breaking out across the state, region, and nation in the weeks that followed.

The Spread of the Sit-in Movement

Over the second week of February 1960, as the Greensboro effort paused to engage in negotiations, sit-ins began at locations across North Carolina. Students conducted protests in Durham and Winston-Salem on Monday, February 8, 1960; adding Charlotte on Tuesday, February 9; Raleigh on Wednesday, February 10; and High Point on Thursday, February 11. By chance in North Carolina at this time, the Reverend Fred L. Shuttlesworth, the civil rights leader of Bethel Baptist Church in Birmingham who served as secretary for SCLC, witnessed the sit-ins in High Point and notified Ella Baker, executive director of the SCLC, saying that "this is the thing. You must tell Martin [Luther King, Jr.] that we have to get with this right away. This can really shake up the world!" Immediately, Shuttlesworth understood the impact of the sit-ins on the civil rights movement.[31]

By February 11, 1960, the Thursday of the second week, the sit-ins had spread beyond North Carolina into Virginia, first at Hampton, then by Friday to Concord, North Carolina, and to the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth in Virginia, as well as Rock Hill, South Carolina. Most of these towns housed HBCUs where previously Rustin and Carter might have lectured on nonviolence and civil rights protest. Under the direction of CORE and FOR, northern supporters of the sit-ins began picketing outside Woolworth stores in New York City, Chicago, and other cities where management already allowed integrated seating, to emphasize the discrimination that the F. W. Woolworth Company tolerated at its locations elsewhere.

The Nashville Movement launched its previously planned sit-in campaign on Saturday, February 13, 1960. Film

[30] Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 136.
[31] Andrew M. Manis, *A Fire You Can't Put Out: The Civil Rights Life of Birmingham's Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 231.

footage of the Nashville sit-in at Woolworth shows the Black activists seated at the lunch counter along with one White exchange student from Fisk College, attracting the initial violent response from white supremacists gathered around who then attacked all the activists, pulling them off the stools, pouring ketchup in their hair, and putting cigarettes out on their heads. The police stepped in to arrest the nonviolent students. As John Lewis recalled, "That was the first time many of us had been arrested. And I just felt that it was like being involved in a holy crusade. I really felt that what we were doing was in keeping with the Christian faith. It was sort of a moving spirit, something that just came over you and consumed you." The sit-in protest in 1960, followed by a racist bombing, silent march through town, and Diane Nash's challenge to the mayor resulted in Nashville becoming the first southern city to voluntarily desegregate its lunch counters.[32]

Students at HBCU Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), joined by local Black high school students, called for a sit-in to show support for Greensboro and, on February 13, staged a protest at the Woolworth lunch counter on Monroe Street in Tallahassee. Support from the local CORE affiliate helped the students sustain the demonstrations against opposition by municipal authorities determined to maintain racial segregation. Police arrested the activists and, when others arrived to demonstrate, dispersed them with tear gas. The minister who had led the 1956 Tallahassee Bus Boycott, C. K. Steele, provided bail money, and his sixteen-year-old son, Henry Steele, participated in the sit-ins. The protests continued into March, attracting White students from Florida State University and spreading to the nearby McCrory's. Following the strategy of Gandhi, the students adopted a strategy of "Jail-No-Bail" in an effort to "fill the jail" with demonstrators and thereby force Tallahassee to desegregate.[33]

Having returned to Alabama, Shuttlesworth consulted with students at HBCUs Miles College and Daniel Payne College in Birmingham who wanted to show support for the Greensboro sit-ins by staging their own, only to be convinced by college administrators to hold a "Prayer Vigil for Freedom" in the city's Kelly Ingram Park instead. It nevertheless garnered a violent response from City Commissioner T. Eugene "Bull" Connor. In Montgomery, thirty-five students from Alabama State College led by Bernard Lee entered the cafeteria in the Montgomery County Courthouse and asked for service. Threats by the state governor to cut off funding to the school convinced its president to expel nine student leaders for the sit-in.[34]

As students at Atlanta's HBCUs led by Lonnie C. King Jr. and Julian Bond debated their own sit-in campaign, college administrators encouraged them to explain to the community in a manifesto the reasons for their actions. Published as "An Appeal for Human Rights," the document written by Spelman College students Roslyn Pope and Herschelle Sullivan along with Morehouse College students King, Bond, and others, described their determination to gain "full citizenship rights as members of this great Democracy." On March 5, 1960, some two hundred students entered ten establishments with segregated lunch counters in the commercial sector and others in government buildings to stage their first sit-in. The protest continued into May, after which the

[32] John Lewis with Michael D'Orso, *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998). The bombing of NAACP leader Z. Alexander Looby's home on April 19, 1960, led to the silent march of 3,000 civil rights activists through Nashville streets and the confrontation with Mayor Ben West. In response to Vivian's question "is segregation moral," West responded, "it is wrong and immoral to discriminate." When pressed by Nash, West added, "I stopped segregation seven years ago at the airport when I first took office and there has been no trouble there since." Nash then asked, "do you recommend the lunch counters be desegregated?," to which West responded "yes." See Houston, *The Nashville Way*, 115-16.

[33] The first scholarly work on the sit-ins contains a wealth of information about the protest movement as it spread outside of North Carolina. Written as a dissertation by a sociologist, it studies the "dynamics of inter-group community conflict." See Martin Oppenheimer, "The Sit-In Movement of 1960" published under that title in the *Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Civil Rights Movement Series* edited by David Garrow (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1989). On Tallahassee, see pages 157-62.

[34] Glenn T. Eskew, *But For Birmingham: The Local and National Movements in the Civil Rights Struggle* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 1997), 148; J. Mills Thornton III, *Dividing Lines: Municipal Politics and the Struggle for Civil Rights in Montgomery, Birmingham, and Selma* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2002), 113-18.

summer recess stalled the demonstrations. Protests resumed in the fall with the students recruiting Dr. King to join them in a sit-in at Rich's Department Store. His arrest there resulted in an outpouring of support by some 2,000 people who occupied sixteen restaurants across Atlanta the next day. Sit-ins continued in Atlanta into 1963 with several businesses resisting desegregation until they were forced to comply with the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Some, most notably the future Georgia Governor Lester Maddox's Pickrick Restaurant, opted to close their businesses rather than follow the new law and racially integrate.[35]

Within the first sixty days of the initial Greensboro sit-ins, more than eighty sit-in demonstrations occurred across the South, with the arrest of more than 1,000 Black and White participants. A network of civil rights leaders affiliated with the SCLC and the NAACP and joined by members of FOR and CORE, assisted the student-led sit-ins, building on work previously undertaken in the years preceding February 1, 1960. Ten weeks into the Greensboro Four's initial action, NAACP veteran and SCLC executive director Ella Baker arranged through the SCLC for representatives of the sit-ins to gather in Raleigh at her alma mater, Shaw University, for a conference held April 15–17, 1960. While 126 student delegates representing fifty-six HBCUs—including two delegates from N.C. A&T—located in fifty-eight communities across twelve southern states participated, the total audience exceeded two hundred people. The students in the Nashville Movement dominated the proceedings. Lawson delivered the keynote address, and although Dr. King spoke at the meeting, the SCLC had difficulty following Shuttlesworth's advice to capitalize on the sit-ins, in view of the fact that the students acted independently. Instead, the young people, following Baker's advice, engaged in participatory democracy and decided to remain independent from the other civil rights organizations by forming their own Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee to facilitate sit-ins and other student-led demonstrations against racial discrimination. They elected Marion Barry as the first chairman of SNCC. In 1961 once the Freedom Ride eclipsed the sit-ins as the new methodology of nonviolent civil rights protest, members of SNCC—principally from the Nashville Movement—picked up the demonstration in Birmingham when CORE withdrew following violence in Anniston, Alabama.[36]

At various times from 1960 until 1964, southern cities experienced the sit-in protests differently. Some witnessed sit-ins in the wake of Greensboro, such as Charleston, South Carolina, where students began a protest on April 1, 1960. Store managers removed the seats rather than have the Black students occupy them. After an initial sit-in on February 12, 1960, in upstate Rock Hill, South Carolina, by nine students attending Friendship Junior College (the Friendship Nine), intermittent demonstrations occurred, culminating in the February 6, 1961, arrests and jailing of SNCC members Diane Nash, Ruby Doris Smith-Robinson, Charles Sherrod, and Charles Jones, who adopted the "jail, no bail" strategy of resistance. Three months later, Klansmen in Rock Hill roughed up the Freedom Riders. In Knoxville, Tennessee, a White faculty member teaching at HBCU Knoxville College encouraged his Black students to negotiate with White business owners to achieve desegregated lunch counters only to join in the sit-ins in June 1960 once the discussions proved fruitless. In Savannah, Georgia, the sit-ins began in October 1960 and continued until October 1963 when the city agreed to desegregate a few months before the passage of the Civil Rights Act. Seven students attending the HBCU Southern University staged a sit-in at the Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Woolworth on March 28, 1960. With their arrests, additional students expanded the protests from Woolworth to Sitman's Drug Store and the Greyhound Bus Station. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the rights of peaceful protests in the *Garner v. Louisiana* lawsuit challenging the student arrests. Students from HBCU Xavier University affiliated with CORE staged sit-ins along Canal Street

[35] Tomiko Brown-Nagin, *Courage to Dissent: Atlanta and the Long History of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 133-174.
[36] Clayborn Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Boston University Press, 1981). In 1961, CORE conducted the Freedom Ride to test desegregation of interstate transit modeled on the 1947 Journey of Reconciliation but targeting the Deep South states. See Raymond Arsenault, *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

in New Orleans at the Woolworth on the corner with Rampart and the nearby McCrory's. Police arrested the demonstrators charging the "CORE Four" from McCrory's with "criminal anarchy" in a case appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which overturned the convictions. The students sustained the protests in New Orleans for two years.[37]

Sit-ins at downtown lunch counters announced the onset of the Birmingham Campaign in April 1963, followed by pickets outside the stores demanding Black service and employment. The protests culminated in the Children's Crusade in May 1963, with the demonstrations forcing the federal government to intervene and begin the process of ending legal white supremacy in America through the adoption of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. No sooner had the Birmingham protests ended than sit-ins began in Jackson, Mississippi. On May 28, 1963, students from HBCUs Tougaloo and Jackson State Colleges staged protests at the downtown Woolworth in a demonstration supported by CORE. African American attorney Medgar Evers defended the arrested demonstrators. For such civil rights activities, he suffered assassination, murdered outside his home by a white supremacist. Once the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the new Civil Rights Act of 1964, businesses either complied or closed, often after additional protests occurred, especially in rural areas such as Crawfordville, Georgia, where sit-ins led by SCLC's Hosea Williams at Bonner's Café took place in 1965. In some places lunch counters quietly desegregated immediately while in others it proved a slow process.[38]

National Significance of the Greensboro Sit-Ins

For several years after the Greensboro sit-ins, African American youth, joined by a few White students, stood at the vanguard of the modern civil rights movement. They not only breathed new life into bureaucratic and cumbersome organizations such as the NAACP and SCLC, but they laid the groundwork for the movement successes that followed the Birmingham Campaign in the spring of 1963. The partisan observer Howard Zinn—a professor at Spelman College who advised the students writing "An Appeal for Human Rights" during the sit-ins in Atlanta—called the young civil rights activists "The New Abolitionists" because of their willingness to drop everything else and commit totally to racial equality achieved through direct action. With SNCC they shunned executive leadership as in SCLC and the NAACP in favor of participatory democracy. Taking on the Freedom Rides when CORE bowed out, the students pushed for race reforms throughout the South. The arrival of Freedom Rider Charles Sherrod in Georgia triggered the Albany Movement as SNCC mobilized Black youth in a protest that ultimately attracted King and SCLC and left in its wake the Southwest Georgia Project, a grassroots organizational attempt by SNCC to achieve Black political empowerment in the majority Black area. At the same time, SNCC oversaw similar organizing and protests in McComb, Mississippi, and Cambridge, Maryland. With time, SNCC activists created Mississippi Freedom Summer in 1964 and extended movement organizing throughout the Alabama Black Belt, culminating in the Selma to Montgomery March and the beating at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in 1965. Beginning with the sit-ins in Greensboro, the young Black and White activists became a force to be reckoned with regarding race reform.[39]

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[37] According to Howard Zinn, *SNCC: The New Abolitionists* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1964), 38, "When ten students were arrested in Rock Hill, South Carolina, in February 1961, the SNCC steering committee, meeting in Atlanta, made its boldest organizational decision up to that date. Four people, it was agreed, would go to Rock Hill to sit in, would be arrested, and would refuse bail, as the first ten students had done, in order to dramatize the injustice to the nation. The Rock Hill action was the start of the jail-no bail policy." Merrill Proudfoot, *Diary of a Sit-In*, Second Edition, with an introduction by Michael S. Mayer (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990, first published 1962); Adam Fairclough, *Race & Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915-1972* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 267-290.

[38] Eskew, *But For Birmingham*, 217 and passim; M. J. O'Brien, *We Shall Not Be Moved: The Jackson Woolworth's Sit-In and the Movement It Inspired* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2013); Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 449-50.

[39] Zinn, *SNCC: The New Abolitionists*; Stephen G. N. Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta: The Struggle for Racial Equality in Georgia, 1940-1980* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2001); John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana,

In his contemporaneous account of the civil rights movement, insider African American journalist Louis E. Lomax clearly differentiated the 1960s sit-ins from previous protests in what he called in his 1962 study, *The Negro Revolt*. In explaining the title, Lomax suggested, "the Negro revolt involves a drastic change in our methods and ideas concerning segregation and established Negro leadership organizations." He then articulated the distinctions between the "first Negro revolt" of the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the second, the direct action of the sit-ins. Unlike a boycott, sit-ins required active engagement challenging racial discrimination and the people who were enforcing racial segregation. As an example of nonviolent direct action, sit-ins gave the protesters a tactical advantage that left business owners few options. Forcible removal generated negative publicity. Closing the lunch counter resulted in a loss of revenue, as did the occupying of the seats by unserved customers. During the modern civil rights movement, the sit-in strategy proved easily adaptable as activists staged kneel-ins at White churches that refused Black worshipers, wade-ins at Whites-only beaches, swim-ins at Whites-only pools, and read-ins at Whites-only libraries. By sitting down on seats at the Woolworth lunch counter on February 1, 1960, the Greensboro Four shifted attention away from voter registration drives and boycotts and towards direct-action confrontation in civil rights protest. As King recognized, what happened at the F. W. Woolworth Company Building in Greensboro injected new life into the larger civil rights struggle.[40]

Since the first studies of the modern civil rights movement, scholars have pointed to the Greensboro sit-ins as the turning point in protest strategy. In his seminal work, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*, sociologist Aldon Morris explains the "organized and collective form of black protest" based in local movement centers across the South. Morris defines the period as the "modern civil rights movement," by referring to "the black movement that emerged in the South during the 1950s, when large masses of black people became directly involved in economic boycotts, street marches, mass meetings, and going to jail by the thousands, and a whole range of disruptive tactics commonly referred to as nonviolent direct action. The word that best expresses the spirit of this period is confrontation." For Morris, the key to understanding the rapid spread of the sit-in movement is the prior existence of "local movement centers," such as NAACP youth councils, CORE chapters, and SCLC affiliates in the communities where the protests occurred. Morris concludes that because of these movement centers, the "student sit-ins of 1960 rapidly evolved into a mass protest that strengthened the civil rights movement and its organizational base; gave rise to the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a major student civil rights organization; and gave rise to the modern white student movement of the early 1960s." In his seminal study, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*," Clayborne Carson argues that with the sit-ins in Greensboro, "four black college students ignited one of the largest of all Afro-American protest movements." He observes, "the initial sit-in contained the seeds of radicalism that would flower in SNCC, the principal organization to emerge from the black student sit-ins of 1960." Not only did the sit-ins bring to the "surface interracial tensions" long "dormant," but they also "stimulated a process of self-realization among blacks that would continue through the decade." Carson notes that "nonviolent direct action was a starting point for the emergence of a new political consciousness among oppressed people. For southern black students in the spring of 1960, it offered an almost irresistible model for social action." Carson then provides the telling statistic: that with virtually unanimous support, "Never again during the decade would the proportion of students active in protest equal the level reached at southern black colleges during the period from February to June 1960." According to Carson, participation in SNCC protests enabled it to "become a training ground for activists who would participate in the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley, the Vietnam War Protests, and the women's struggle."[41]

IL: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

[40] Lomax, *The Negro Revolt, xiii;* Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 128-29.

[41] Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York: The Free Press, 1984), 40, 188-89, 196-97; Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 1-19.

The claims of the Greensboro sit-ins' widespread influence by Carson and Morris are borne out in *The Politics of Protest*, a 1969 report prepared by Jerome H. Skolnick for the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, chaired by Milton S. Eisenhower. Finding in 1960s student activism, "unprecedented qualities," Skolnick argued that "compared to earlier activism, that of the 1960's involves more students and engages them more continuously, is more widely distributed on campuses throughout the country, is more militant, is more hostile to established authority and institutions (including radical political organizations), and has been more sustained. Such activism seems better considered as part of a student movement, something largely unknown before in the United States, rather than as a collection of similar but unconnected events." And as with the foreshadowing of pre-1960 sit-ins protesting racial discrimination, previous student protests at the University of California had "little impact beyond the Berkeley campus" until the Greensboro sit-ins. "In February of 1960, however, Negro students began to attack segregation in public facilities by 'sitting-in' at segregated Southern dime-store lunch counters. Northern students supported these demands by picketing and boycotting Northern branches of Woolworth's and Kresge's. The success of the Southern sit-ins led to the formation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Northern white student groups formalized their organizations to support the Southern movement." Emphasizing not only the inspirational role of the civil rights movement but also the direct links between civil rights activists and student protest movements outside the South, Skolnick argues, "By late 1961, students consciously began to use civil rights techniques of nonviolent direct action—marches, vigils, and pickets—to protest aspects of American foreign policy. Student concern over the nuclear arms race, nuclear testing, and civil defense prompted the first national student demonstration in several decades—the Washington Peace March of February, 1962." By the end of the decade, students joined Coretta Scott King and a quarter of a million others in Washington, D.C. to participate in the 1969 Moratorium March to End the War in Vietnam.[42]

The 1950s marked an era of conformity on Black and White college campuses characterized by activities such as sporting events, dances, and parades designed to consume student energy in a climate of political apathy. In 1956, sociologist E. Franklin Frazier criticized the social strivings and materialism of Black middle-class students in his *Black Bourgeoise*, an eponymous study of the class. Analyzing southern college campuses, Jeffrey A. Turner marks the fundamental shift that occurred on Black and White college campuses in the 1960s with the Greensboro sit-ins. Turner argues, "this episode was different. In contrast to similar demonstrations, this one ignited a movement driven by students and unleashed a host of forces that affected southern politics, culture, and education throughout the decade." Turner adds, "The sit-in movement introduced college students as independent political actors capable of altering the region's political landscape and provided a vocabulary and a cache of tactics that drove the movement for years." Turner stresses the "tremendous impact" the sit-ins had on the colleges. "The sit-in movement drew a national spotlight to the college and university campuses that served as the staging grounds for the student assault on segregation, highlighting these institutions as breeding grounds for idealistic young people seeking to nudge the South toward living up to national ideals of freedom and equality. On individual campuses, the sit-in movement was often a galvanizing event that was at times even celebrated in school yearbooks and alumni publications." Students routinely experienced activism first with civil rights protests, such as Mario Savio who participated in SNCC's Mississippi Summer Project before organizing the Berkeley Free Speech Movement in response to university administrative attempts to prevent campus protests over civil rights. The ongoing efforts of the United States National Student Association (USNSA) to bring Black and White college students together in shared activities further integrated the civil rights struggle with the emerging student movement. As a student at the University of Texas, Austin, in early 1960, Sandra "Casey" Cason attended a presentation of the NSA led by Constance "Connie" Curry regarding the sit-in movement. Already active in the campus YWCA where she had heard lectures about the civil rights

[42] Jerome H. Skolnick, *The Politics of Protest* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1969), 87-89, 129-131.

movement, Cason joined Curry in attending the NSA Congress where she prompted support for SNCC and met her future husband, Tom Hayden, then a University of Michigan student. Invited to participate in the October 1960 meeting at which the sit-in veterans formalized the organization of SNCC the previous April, Cason attended along with Tom Hayden. She continued to work in civil rights with Curry and Ella Baker as well as with SNCC as a Freedom Rider in Albany, Georgia, and with Mississippi Freedom Summer. She joined Tom Hayden in the formation of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and helped to draft the Port Huron Statement and oversee its adoption by SDS in 1962. As internal dissention tore SNCC apart in 1965, Casey Hayden joined Mary King and four other female members in writing "SNCC Position Paper: Women in the Movement." Working with King to revise the paper to show parallel oppression regarding race and gender under the heading "Sex and Caste," Hayden shared it with women in SDS who embraced the idea of organizing themselves and contributed to the development of second-wave feminism. According to Hayden, "this response by women of SDS is widely credited with being the root of the women's liberation movement, the radical wing of white feminism."[43]

Other movements found inspiration in the Greensboro sit-ins. Native Americans began to mobilize during World War II with the formation of such organizations as the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) in 1944. Like the NAACP, NCAI spoke on behalf of the minority population. With the advent of the student movement, college-aged Native Americans formed in 1961 the National Indian Youth Council (NIYC). Native Americans adapted the tactics of the Greensboro sit-ins with a series of fish-ins held from 1964 to 1970, demanding that treaty rights be upheld. Leaders from NCAI and NIYC joined with SCLC in the Poor People's Campaign, occupying Washington and demanding reform in 1968. Thomas J. Sugrue finds similar inspiration for northern activists in his study *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*. Sugrue argues that, "Nothing was more important in the revitalization of CORE chapters than the lunch counter sit-ins in the South." He then quotes Lerone Bennett, Jr. writing in *Ebony* magazine that the sit-ins "unleased waves of dammed-up energy that flowed to every section of the country." As Sugrue notes, "Inspired by the southern sit-ins, northern activists planned sympathy protests and launched regional boycotts of the chain stores that had refused service to blacks at southern lunch counters." Recognizing the significance, Sugrue argues "northern activists shared their experiences with their southern counterparts, and by turn, they were moved to action by the example of the southern civil rights movement. Many veterans of the battles against segregated facilities in the North participated in the well-known southern sit-ins of the 1950s and 1960s."[44]

The King biographers all acknowledge the shift that occurred with the Greensboro sit-ins. They tend to follow the lead of Pulitzer Prize winner David Garrow whose 1986 biography, *Bearing the Cross,* contrasts the "old" of King with the "new" of the students. In his sweeping *Parting the Waters*, Pulitzer Prize winner Taylor Branch follows Garrow's lead then argues, "No one had time to wonder why the Greensboro sit-in was so different. In the previous three years, similar demonstrations had occurred in at least sixteen other cities. Few of them made the news, all faded quickly from public notice, and none had the slightest catalytic effect anywhere else. By contrast, Greensboro helped define the new decade." Branch goes on to suggest why: "The spontaneity and open-endedness of the first Greensboro sit-in flashed through the network of activists who had been groping toward the same goal." King readily joined in the protest when contacted by SCLC affiliate member the

[43] E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie* (New York: The Free Press, 1956); Jeffrey A. Turner, *Sitting In and Speaking Out: Student Movements in the American South, 1960-1970* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 45; Casey Hayden, "Fields of Blue," in Curry, et al., *Deep in Our Hearts*, 339-373; Dick Cluster, ed., *They Should Have Served That Cup of Coffee: 7 Radicals Remember the 60s* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1979), for interviews and essays by the students inspired by the civil rights movement to launch the student movement, the anti-war movement, the women's movement and other protests.

[44] Daniel M. Cobb, *Native Activism in Cold War America: The Struggle for Sovereignty* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 8-13, 30-31, 59-60; Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008), xviii, 280-81.

Reverend Douglas E. Moore of Durham on February 8, with King arriving in North Carolina on February 16 to speak at White Rock Baptist Church in support of the sit-ins. In his account, *To Redeem the Soul of America*, Adam Fairclough recognizes "the student sit-in movement of 1960 solved none of SCLC's organizational problems. But it did infuse SCLC with new blood, new dynamism, new sources of financial support, and new tactical concepts." And as Fairclough notes, "SCLC soon learned that the surest way to mobilize the adults was first to involve their children. Young people made up the initial phalanx, the entering wedge." In his biography of King, Peter Ling identifies the move to Atlanta as King's decision to be a national leader but one who through the SCLC had yet to "organize a single successful protest campaign." Rather, "through the sit-ins of 1960 and the Freedom Rides of 1961, students established a repertoire of nonviolent direct action that changed the political agenda, and they did so without King's active leadership. Instead, they drew King into campaigns that he had not planned." King biographer Harvard Sitkoff also acknowledges the sit-ins' significance: "The sit-in tactic had been used before—by labor unions in the 1930s, CORE in the 1940s, NAACP youth groups in the 1950s—but not until 1960 did those tentative, sporadic forerunners become a cohesive regionwide movement.[45]

Scholars have long held to a consensus view on the centrality of the Greensboro sit-ins as a watershed moment in the civil rights movement and the broader protest era of the 1960s. None makes the case stronger than Manning Marable in his landmark study, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond in Black America, 1945-2006*. Marable prefaces the book with the chapter, "Prologue: The Legacy of the First Reconstruction" that set the stage for the civil rights movement. He then argues, "The Second Reconstruction actually began in earnest on the afternoon of 1 February 1960." In the eleventh volume of the prestigious *A History of the South* series published by the Louisiana State University Press and the Littlefield Fund for Southern History of the University of Texas, Numan V. Bartley's *The New South: 1945-1980* begins the chapter on the civil rights movement with the statement "The revolt against segregation began on February 1, 1960." This "overt defiance of segregation" by the Black students marked the liberation of the generation and a race. As participants later explained, "It was like a fever. Everyone wanted to go. We were so happy." In his history of the United States in the 1960s and the breakdown of national ideology, Kevin Boyle argues that "in the standard history the shattering started with the idealism of a new generation unwilling to accept the compromises the consensus required," suggesting it began "in a wave of sit-ins inspired by four college freshmen, the oldest of them barely nineteen. . . . In the rush of events that followed, they swept away the measured politics their elders had embraced." Perhaps the most popular history of the nation read by hundreds of thousands of college students, *America: A Narrative History* by George Brown Tindall and David Emory Shi, reiterates the consensus view of scholars and the significance of the site: "The Greensboro sit-ins in 1960 not only launched a decade of civil rights activism but also signaled an end to the carefree complacency that had characterized the fifties."[46]

In his 2018 study, *The Sit-Ins,* Christopher W. Schmidt summarizes the argument. "What happened in Greensboro during the first week of February 1960 was remarkable. The American South in 1960 was a world in which Jim Crow still reigned, the prerogatives of white supremacy maintained by law, custom, and violence. Racial inequities defined life for blacks in the south, ranging from the most fundamental aspects of American

[45] Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*, 127-29; Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 272-73; Adam Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 55; Peter J. Ling, *Martin Luther King, Jr.*, Second Edition (New York: Routledge, 2015), 64-67; Harvard Sitkoff, *King: Pilgrimage to the Mountaintop* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2008), 68.
[46] Manning Marable: *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond in Black America, 1945-2006*, Third Edition (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2007, first published 1984), 3, 59; Numan V. Bartley, *The New South: 1945-1980* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 298; Kevin Boyle, *The Shattering: America in the 1960s* (New York: Norton, 2021), xii; David Emory Shi and George Brown Tindall, *America: A Narrative History, Tenth Edition* (NY: Norton, 2016), 1,364.

citizenship—disfranchisement, separate and unequal education, a racially oppressive criminal justice system—to the corrosive day-to-day reminders of how the Whites who held the levers of power viewed their black fellow citizens: separate water fountains, the casual use of first names or 'boy' when addressing black men, whites-only lunch counters." Schmidt then contrasts, "against this backdrop for young black men and women to demand service at these lunch counters was a leap into uncharted and potentially dangerous territory. 'Sure we were scared, I suppose,' Blair told a reporter. 'We didn't know what to expect.' They thought they might be arrested, they feared worse. The Greensboro sit-in campaign was a bold—some said reckless—act of concerted defiance against racial injustice." Schmidt explains the significance of the Greensboro sit-ins: "Four unknown students in Greensboro had set in motion events that would move a nation. Their quiet, bold act ignited the pent-up hopes and frustrations of young African Americans. A new chapter in the struggle for racial equality began, one that was more openly defiant, more participatory, and, in many ways, more successful than any that had come before." Schmidt claims that the Greensboro sit-ins challenged "the capacity of legal institutions to remedy different forms of injustice" and raised legal questions about "the relationship between legal reform and social change. . . [that] remained at the center of debates over the sit-ins in the years immediately following, as the courts faced waves of appeals of protester convictions and as Congress considered a federal prohibition on racial discrimination by businesses that serve the public, including lunch counters and other eating establishments." Schmidt also argues the Greensboro sit-ins initiated a national debate "about the constitutionality of racial discrimination in 'public accommodations'—the legal term for privately owned and operated businesses that serve the general public—[and] provides an illuminating case study of constitutional development in modern America. Although the students initiated the sit-ins with little conscious intention of making a formal claim of constitutional reconstruction, their actions sparked a debate on the scope of constitutional meaning of equality that took place in the streets, in newspapers, in the offices of mayors, governors, and businessmen, in the courts, and in Congress." According to Schmidt, prior to the Greensboro sit-ins, the courts had taken the lead in race reform in America but after the sit-ins, with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Congress took the lead for the first time since Reconstruction.[47]

Thus the actions of the four brave N.C. A&T African Americans who sat down at the Woolworth lunch counter in Greensboro on February 1, 1960—David Richmond, Franklin McCain, Ezell Blair Jr. (now Jibreel Khazan), and Joseph McNeil—sparked a revolution that transformed the civil rights movement, unleashed the youthful protests of the 1960s, inspired other minorities to stand up for their rights, and forced a constitutional debate on access to public accommodations that would be resolved after the Birmingham sit-ins and street protests of 1963 with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. As the great African American scholar, author and editor of *Ebony*, Lerone Bennett Jr., explained, "The bastille of the Negro rebellion—a five-and-dime Bastille so peculiarly American—was about to fall. It was Monday, February 1, 1960."[48]

History of the Greensboro Woolworth Company Building after 1960

In the years following the 1960 sit-ins as the Greensboro Woolworth remained open selling necessities and novelties, awareness of its significance as a civil rights site steadily grew. After the retail establishment closed its lunch counter in 1993 and ceased all operations in 1994, the building sat empty and deteriorating. Recognizing its importance, municipal and civic leaders and members of the public debated its fate. The threat of demolition by Woolworth corporate headquarters loomed as local citizens led by radio station JAMZ (WJMH 102.1) signed petitions calling for the building to be saved. The grassroots effort convinced the First Citizens Bank, which had acquired the property from the Woolworth Company, to look for a buyer. Guilford

[47] Christopher W. Schmidt, *The Sit-Ins: Protest and Legal Change in the Civil Rights Era* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 2-5, 179.
[48] Lerone Bennett, Jr., *Confrontation: Black and White* (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1965), 213.

County Commissioner Melvin "Skip" Alston and Greensboro City Councilman Earl Jones, along with businessman Hurley Derrickson, incorporated Sit-In Movement, Inc. to purchase and rehabilitate the structure into the International Civil Rights Center & Museum (ICRCM). They later discovered that through a holding company, Museum Landlord, LLC, they could use private funds and other amounts raised by the non-profit, along with several types of tax credits (federal, state, and new market) totaling about $42 million, for this purpose. Along with attorney Doug Harris, they planned the ICRCM as a comprehensive museum of the Civil Rights Movement and as an innovative educational organization devoted to understanding and advancing civil and human rights in the United States and around the world. It would thus serve as a monument to the bravery of the visionary young advocates of full American citizenship and social justice who conducted the sit-ins.

The initial exterior work began in 2005 and the full rehabilitation project was completed in 2009, in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* and under the review and approval of the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service. In 2009, Sit-In Movement, Inc., arranged to purchase the building from the holding company overseeing its restoration and, having successfully complied with the obligations of all of the various tax credits by 2016, ownership of the property transferred to Sit-In Movement, Inc. The adaptive reuse resulted in the Woolworth becoming the ICRCM, with permanent exhibits of fourteen galleries that include the restored lunch counter. The museum opened to the public on February 1, 2010, the 50th anniversary of the sit-in. Phil Freelon (1953–2019) first of the Freelon Group and then the design director of the Perkins+Will's North Carolina practice, led the architectural team that oversaw the restoration and rehabilitation of the Greensboro Woolworth. Victor Vines, later president and principal of Vines Architecture, worked with Freelon on the Greensboro Woolworth as the managing architect. The ICRCM project received the American Institute of Architects Tower Award for Historic Preservation the year it opened. In anticipation of future needs and to protect its urban context, the Sit-In Movement, Inc., acquired in March 2022 the five-story Southern Trust Building (formerly the First Citizens Bank), constructed in 1983, along with the remainder of the full city block on which the Woolworth stands. Contributions towards the purchase, provided by both the City of Greensboro and Guilford County, come with the restriction that the property must be developed for ICRCM purposes only.

Comparative Analysis

Only a handful of business locations targeted by protests over racial discrimination in public accommodations during the modern civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s remain extant today in the United States, and none rises to the same level of national significance or integrity as the F. W. Woolworth Company Building in Greensboro, North Carolina. The sit-ins at the Greensboro Woolworth sparked the national sit-in movement, and with its historic lunch counter and intact façade and sidewalks, the building retains a high degree of integrity when compared to other 1960s sit-in locations. No sit-in sites, including the Greensboro Woolworth and variety stores like it, continue to display the tables and shelves of inexpensive merchandise that once outfitted their commercial spaces. The national chains of variety stores with lunch counters have not survived, and in closing they liquidated their shelving and stock. The rare exception is the Greensboro Woolworth, which retains its lunch counter. Through public commitment, the lunch counter is preserved in situ where the sit-ins occurred.

No other variety store lunch counter in the United States that was a target of the sit-in movement of 1960 has the same national significance as the Greensboro Woolworth, where the sit-in movement began. As such, there are no truly comparable sites to the Greensboro Woolworth available for consideration to represent the civil rights movement sit-in protests as a potential National Historic Landmark.

Comparable Sites in Greensboro

- North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, Greensboro, North Carolina
  The campus of N.C. A&T was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1988 and is associated with the Greensboro sit-ins because four of its students planned and launched the sit-in movement on February 1, 1960. However, there remains no particular building recognized of key significance to the protest on the campus today. The Greensboro Four—Blair, Jr. (now Khazan) and McNeil (who shared Room 2128), McCain, and Richmond—once lived and discussed the sit-ins in W. Kerr Scott Hall, which is the campus building most directly associated with the sit-ins. However, the administration demolished the dormitory in 2004.[49]

- Bennett College, Greensboro, North Carolina
  Students at Bennett College played an important role in the sit-in movement, and Annie Merner Pfeiffer Chapel, constructed in 1941, served as the location where King spoke in 1958 and inspired civil rights activism in Greensboro. Certainly, the female students who sat-in—estimated to be some forty percent of the enrollment—with the support of Bennett president Willa B. Player deserve recognition for their activism, but as the site of the sit-ins, the Greensboro Woolworth has a stronger association with this nationally significant event.

- S. H. Kress Building, 212 South Elm Street
  The Kress was also a sit-in location in Greensboro, North Carolina, but it was not the location of the initial sit-in that sparked the broader sit-in movement. The Kress building closed as a variety store and has since been renovated into a restaurant that is currently vacant. The exterior is intact but deteriorating; the interior condition is unknown.

- Meyers Department Store, 200 South Elm Street
  The Meyers Department Store was also a sit-in location in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1960 but it was not the location of the initial sit-in that sparked the broader sit-in movement. No longer a department store, the Meyers Building has been rehabilitated into a Downtown Professional Class A Office Space.

Comparable Sit-In Sites in Nashville

- Harveys Department Store, Church Street at Sixth Avenue North in Nashville, Tennessee. Closed in 1984 and demolished for a parking lot.

- Cain-Sloan. Co. Inc, Church Street at Fifth Avenue North in Nashville, Tennessee. The company merged with Dillard's in 1988 and the downtown store closed and was later demolished.

- F. W. Woolworth Company on Fifth, Nashville, Tennessee. Renovated into a theatre with the lunch counter removed.[50]

- S. H. Kress & Co., 238 Rep. John Lewis Way North, Nashville, Tennessee. Renovated into an art gallery on the first floor with residential "Kress Lofts" on the upper floors.[51]

- McLellan's Variety Store, 231 Fifth Avenue North, Nashville, Tennessee. Closed in the 1980s and

[49] "W. Kerr Scott Hall Residence Hall," History, North Carolina A&T State University, https://www.ncat.edu/125/landmarks/scott-hall.html, accessed March 19, 2024.
[50] "Woolworth Theatre," United States Civil Rights Trail, https://civilrightstrail.com/attraction/fifth-avenue-historic-district/, accessed March 15, 2024.
[51] Clio Admin and Alexia Lilly, "S.H. Kress Department Store and the 1960 Nashville Sit-Ins," Clio: Your Guide to History (December 4, 2018). https://theclio.com/entry/67681, accessed March 19, 2024.

renovated into other commercial space.

- Walgreens Drugstore, Fifth Avenue and Arcade, Nashville, Tennessee. Closed and renovated into other commercial space along with other establishments in the historic "Arcade" shopping center.

Other Sites Linked to Nonviolence and the Nationwide Sit-In Movement

Once the sit-ins began at the Woolworth, national civil rights organizations sent young staffers to Greensboro to train volunteers in techniques of nonviolent protest. From CORE came Len Holt who provided the Black activists with pedagogical materials and led workshops. By week's end, the NAACP youth secretary, Herbert Wright, appeared to offer encouragement as the national organization did not endorse direct action. Already in Nashville, the Reverend James Lawson had been preparing Black students for sit-ins, training them in nonviolence. Indeed, once the Greensboro sit-ins took off, movement centers such as churches as well as buildings on college campuses became laboratories of nonviolent instruction.

- Highlander Folk School, Monteagle, Tennessee. Founded by labor organizer Myles Horton in 1932, the Highlander Folk School had by the postwar period shifted its focus to holding training sessions for civil rights leaders such as Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King. While significant to the larger civil rights movement, Highlander Folk School had no direct connection with the Greensboro sit-ins.
- Clark Memorial United Methodist Church, Nashville, Tennessee. At this church, Reverend James Lawson trained such activists as John Lewis, Diane Nash, James Bevel, and others in nonviolence. In 2009, the NPS concluded that due to construction of "a modern addition that obscures the building where the training was held," the property no longer retains a high degree of integrity.[52]
- Nashville HBCUs including American Baptist Theological Seminary, Tennessee State University, Fisk University, as well as Vanderbilt University. Black college students in Nashville attending the city's HBCUs participated in training sessions on nonviolence conducted by Lawson, who matriculated in divinity at Vanderbilt. A veteran of CORE's earlier sit-ins in Peoria, Illinois, the Reverend C. T. Vivian had enrolled at American Baptist Theological Seminary (where John Lewis also matriculated) and assisted Lawson in conducting the workshops. While significant to the larger civil rights movement for training many of its young leaders, the Nashville workshops in nonviolence had no direct bearing on the Greensboro sit-ins.
- The Memorial Auditorium at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, is also associated with the emergence of youth leadership in the civil rights movement in 1960 as the site of the founding of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) on April 15, 1960. Southern Christian Leadership Conference executive director Ella Baker arranged with her alma mater to host the gathering of sit-in veterans who then followed her recommendation to form an independent Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee which met in Memorial Auditorium at Shaw University. In its theme study on racial discrimination in public accommodations, the NHL program concluded that Memorial Auditorium no longer retains integrity and "removed [it] from further study" as a potential National Historic Landmark.[53]

[52] Susan Cianci Salvatore, *Civil Rights in America: Racial Desegregation of Public Accommodations: A National Historic Landmarks Theme Study* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Historic Landmarks Program, 2004, revised 2009), 142.

[53] Ibid.

Other Lunch Counters Targeted for Sit-Ins Prior to February 1, 1960

Lunch counters that became targets of sit-ins prior to February 1, 1960, belong to an earlier moment in the civil rights struggle and therefore do not possess the same national significance as the Greensboro Woolworth. Indeed, few if any of these sites remain extant today.

- Jack Spratt's Coffee House, Chicago, Illinois. Demolished.
- Little Palace Cafeteria, 14th and U Streets, Washington, D.C. No longer extant.
- Thompson's Cafeteria, 14th Street and New York Avenue, Washington, D.C. No longer extant.
- Bishop's Cafeteria, Peoria, Illinois. Demolished.
- Grants Department Store, Baltimore, Maryland. No longer extant.
- Read's Drug Store, Baltimore, Maryland. No longer extant.
- Royal Ice Cream Parlor, Durham, North Carolina. Demolished.
- Dockum Drug Store, Wichita, Kansas. No longer extant.
- Katz Drug Store, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Demolished.

Other Lunch Counters Targeted for Sit-Ins After February 1, 1960

Most of the lunch counters that became targets of sit-ins after February 1, 1960, that would compare with the Greensboro Woolworth are no longer extant, although a few such sites still exist in altered states. Some examples are listed below.

- F. W. Woolworth Company, Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida. Demolished.
- Rich's Department Store, Whitehall Street, Atlanta, Georgia. Converted into a federal courthouse.
- S. H. Kress Department Store, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Vacant.
- Sitman's Drug Store, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Demolished.
- Greyhound Bus Terminal, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Demolished.
- F. W. Woolworth Company, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Demolished.
- F. W. Woolworth Company, Corner of Canal and Rampart Streets, New Orleans, Louisiana. Demolished.
- McCrory's Department Store, Corner of Canal at Rampart Streets, New Orleans, Louisiana. Demolished.
- McCrory's 5-10-25 Cent Variety Store Lunch Counter, 135 East Main Street, Rock Hill, South Carolina. Renovated into a restaurant.
- F. W. Woolworth Company, Capitol Street, Jackson, Mississippi. Demolished.

6. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION AND STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

Ownership of Property	Category of Property
Private: X	Building(s): X
Public-Local:	District:
Public-State:	Site:
Public-Federal:	Structure:
	Object:

Number of Resources within Boundary of Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing
Buildings: 1	Buildings:
Sites: 1	Sites:
Structures:	Structures:
Objects:	Objects: 1
Total: 2	Total: 1

PROVIDE PRESENT AND PAST PHYSICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF PROPERTY
(Please see specific guidance for type of resource[s] being nominated)

Summary

The F. W. Woolworth Company Building is located in downtown Greensboro, North Carolina, on South Elm Street, one of the city's major thoroughfares and historically the center of its retail district. The setting consists mostly of two- and three-story commercial storefront building dating from 1900 to 1950, with some taller anchor buildings and a few younger, non-contributing buildings. The Woolworth is two stories plus a full basement and fills most of its 0.37-acre lot. Its Art Deco styling is most realized on its second story, as the street-level story is mostly glass-and-aluminum. The southeast corner bay has some new modern elements. The exterior sidewalks along its two public facades were the location of regular picketing during the period of significance and are part of the nominated site. Inside, the most significant feature is the L-shaped lunch counter where the 1960 sit-ins took place, which has been carefully restored along the west wall, and along the north, rebuilt using historic materials. The grand public staircase and remaining historic fabric add to the interior's historic character. The building is now the International Civil Rights Center & Museum, so most of the interior is exhibits, office and meeting spaces, and lobby/reception space.

PRESENT APPEARANCE

Setting

The F. W. Woolworth Company Building is located in the city of Greensboro, in north central North Carolina. Greensboro is the county seat for Guilford County and is the third-largest city in the state, with a 2020 Census population count of 299,035. The Woolworth is a key component of the Downtown Greensboro Historic District which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. The city's major downtown thoroughfare is Elm Street, which runs north-south through Greensboro's center. The area near the Woolworth retains much of its historic character, as most of South Elm Street between West Friendly Avenue and West

McGee Street is lined with commercial buildings that predate 1960. Some are wrapped and/or altered, but the majority feature their original fabric.

The earlier buildings in the district date to the 1880s and are mostly three stories in height and built in commercial vernacular Italianate style with masonry facades. The following decade brought more ornamentation on what were still relatively modest buildings. After 1910, some commercial structures became simpler with fewer stylistic references, while others made use of elaborate classicism. In the 1920s, Art Deco was embraced as a new modern style, and Greensboro was not immune to is popularity.[54] The most prominent Art Deco buildings downtown were both built in 1929 on South Elm Street, namely the S. H. Kress Building at 208–210 and the F. W. Woolworth Company Building at 122–134. The former, another site for the Greensboro sit-ins, is vacant and for sale but retains its elaborate exterior green, yellow, and orange terra cotta decorative scheme. Across the street, the substantial Elm Street Center (203), built in 1949–1950 as the Ellis Store and later operating as Thalhimer's Department Store, helped to keep downtown retail alive in Greensboro well into the 1970s. Today it is being redeveloped as part of a 180-room hotel, with a taller structure planned behind the historic structure.[55] The tallest building in the district, designed by the same architect as the F. W. Woolworth Company Building, is the 1922–1923 Jefferson Standard Building at 101 North Elm Street. Derived from Louis Sullivan's modern skyscrapers, the eighteen-story building is one block north of the Woolworth.

The block across South Elm Street facing the east (main) façade of the F. W. Woolworth Company Building is mostly intact, with half of the buildings dating from ca. 1904 and the rest constructed between 1928 and 1949. However, most of the street-level entrances have been modified. The dominant structure, the brick Richardsonian Romanesque 1904 Dixie Building (125), stands six stories high at the south end of the block and is embellished with terra cotta decorations and tiles. On the north end stands the most altered structure at 101 South Elm Street, whose 1939 streamlined Moderne façade is now wrapped in a mid-1980s concrete and glass west (front) and north (side) façade. The mid-block, three-story Center Theatre (117) retains Moderne elements, although its colorful façade is now covered with grey paint. The smaller buildings vary in style. The two south of the theatre reflect Italianate (123) and Italian Renaissance (121) influences, the latter building more elaborate with its terra cotta and wrought iron flourishes. The other pair of two-story storefronts, north of the theater, are more restrained; the older of the two (113) was once five stories.

The south façade of the F. W. Woolworth Company Building faces One February Place (formerly West Sycamore Street). Immediately to Woolworth's south, at 200 South Elm Street, is the 1924 four-story Meyers Building, which features brick and terra cotta ornamentation similar to its neighboring Dixie Building. Attached to its west (back) end is a modern, four-story, glass-and-cement addition that stretches down February One Place to Greene Street, the road running parallel to South Elm Street to its east.

When built, the F. W. Woolworth Company Building was part of a continuous block of attached two- and three-story commercial structures with storefronts at street level. The rest of the block was a mix of small retail stores, restaurants, and offices. Vacancies on the block began to appear in the mid-1970s, soon followed by demolitions. In 1983, most of the block was redeveloped. First Citizens Bank, a five-story glass-and-brick office building at 100 South Elm Street, was designed with an angled front entrance oriented toward the corner of South Elm and Market Streets. The rest of the block, with the exception of the Woolworth and the storefront to its north, was filled with surface parking lots. The other remaining building, a 1929 two-story limestone-faced storefront in a similar restrained Art Deco style, was demolished in 1989.

[54] Ray Manieri, "National Register of Historic Places Nomination Downtown Greensboro," Greensboro, Guilford County, North Carolina (Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1984), https://catalog.archives.gov/id/47720556.
[55] The project has been delayed and specific plans are not yet available.

In front of the Woolworth is a waist-high, concrete monument, installed in 1990, with a bronze plaque commemorating the 1960 sit-in. Its inscription is inaccurate, and ICRCM plans to remove it.[56]

Exterior

Completed in 1929 at the corner of South Elm Street and February One Place (West Sycamore Street), the F. W. Woolworth Company Building was designed by prominent local architect Charles Hartmann**.** Originally from New York City, Hartmann lived in Greensboro, and his other works include the impressive high-rise Standard Building (now Lincoln Financial) one block north, which is listed separately in the National Register of Historic Places (1976). The Woolworth was extensively remodeled in 1938–1939 (architect unknown) to accommodate its new tenant, the F. W. Woolworth Company, which occupied ⅞ of the building. Its current appearance reflects its 2005–2009 rehabilitation for use as the International Civil Rights Center & Museum (ICRCM).

The F. W. Woolworth Company Building's primary façade is its east, and its secondary is its south. The building sits on a slight slope running upward from east to west. According to the 1925 (updated 1950) Sanborn map, most of the structure has a concrete frame, floors, and roof, with brick curtain walls. Its roof is flat, now covered by an asphalt membrane. Much of the building is faced in limestone, some carved and incised. Current and historic photographs reveal that the building today appears much as it did in 1960, as well as when the Woolworth store opened in 1939.

The Woolworth occupied all of the building but the southeast corner, which two smaller retailers shared in 1960.[57] The exterior of the Woolworth has been carefully restored to its historic appearance; only the first floor of the corner retail shops has been somewhat modified. The building's first story is dominated by glass storefront windows and doors. Its original bay configuration and Art Deco styling are more realized on the second story. The east (front) façade is six bays wide, each 14.5 feet wide except for the southeast corner bay which measures 25 feet. The south (secondary) façade is wider, with seven 15-foot-wide bays, one narrower 7-foot-wide bay, and a 25-foot-wide bay on the southeast corner**.** The focal point of the building is the southeast corner, where the widest bays meet. The back (west) and north facades are common bond brick.

First Story

The first-story aluminum-framed storefronts have been reconfigured several times since 1929 but the current appearance matches that of 1960, with three recessed entries on the east façade and two on the south. The exception is the new double-door secondary entrance, constructed in the fourth bay from the east end in what was the Jewel Box portion of the building; it was added during the 2005–2009 rehabilitation. On the east (front) and south (secondary) facades, mounted on the Woolworth portions of the building, large red porcelain enamel panels read "F. W. WOOLWORTH CO." in uppercase gold lettering, with a red-and-white striped awning underneath. The current sign is historic, and the new awning resembles that used in 1959.

Originally the two public façades were embellished with fluted, one-story, limestone pilasters running three-fourths of the way down the wall with dark green marble bases.[58] Many of their lower portions were removed or

[56] Another monument to the Greensboro Four by artist Charles Jenkins and titled "The Cup of Freedom" stands on a white granite base located on the February One Place sidewalk near the Woolworth's southeast corner. This memorial stands on an expanded section of the sidewalk that did not exist in 1960 and therefore, it is not within the site boundaries.

[57] Ned Cohen's Jewel Box occupied the more prominent corner space; Lee's Millinery was located between the Jewel Box and the Woolworth. Lee's moved out ca. 1964, and the Jewel Box expanded into the vacated space.

[58] This configuration is shown in Charles Hartmann's 1928 façade elevations, held by the North Carolina State University Libraries

altered in 1939 when Woolworth became the major tenant. As in 1960, there are no pilasters under the Woolworth sign on either the east or south façades, with the exception of two half-pilasters on the south façade on either side of the seven-foot bay (which was incorporated into the variety store). At that time, black granite sheathing was installed on the walls below the Woolworth display windows on both facades, on the entire northernmost pilaster, and about halfway up the pilasters on either side of the seven-foot-wide bay on the south façade. (The pilaster on the east side of that narrower bay, which originally flanked an exterior entrance, is not under the Woolworth sign but is treated to match that on the other side of the bay.) All of this black sheathing, which was extant in 1960, remains today, with one exception. In 1960 on the east façade, the second pilaster from the southern end was split vertically: ½ full-length black granite on the Woolworth's side and ½ full-length white stone on the Lee's Millinery side. That pilaster, as well as the two-faced column on the southeast corner, were reconstructed in the 2005–2009 rehabilitation to match the original (1929) appearance, as mentioned below. On the south façade, the ¾ pilasters along the side of the Jewel Box had dark green marble bases, all present in 1960 and preserved today. The shorter pilasters under the south façade Woolworth sign have black granite bases, as they did in 1960.[59] All of the pilasters were topped with copper palmette panels at the base of the second story. However, the four pilasters on the wider southeast bay were topped with rectangular decorative copper panels located just below the palmette panels and the stringcourse. Three of these were removed when the Woolworth was installed in 1939 and therefore were not present during the period of significance, but the three were replicated in the 2005–2009 rehabilitation.

As the focal point of the building, the first floor of the southeast corner was always distinguished architecturally from the rest of the building (it had the widest bays and tallest parapet) and was never part of the Woolworth store. Its exterior finishes were also different. The 2005–2009 rehabilitation treated this portion differently by not replicating all of the first-floor finishes of 1960 and adding some new elements to allow the International Civil Rights Center & Museum (ICRCM) to identify itself more visibly. On the east façade, the corner column (east and south faces) is now covered with two replicated limestone pilasters to match the 1929 appearance. Their rectangular decorative copper panels have also been replicated, as mentioned above. The corner bay's storefront fenestration now matches the rest of the building more closely, with a recessed entry on the right side of the bay.[60] On the east façade, the corner storefront windows include new frosted blue glass panels below the clear portion, and on the south façade, the glass panels surround the clear portions of the windows entirely. A new brushed-metal canopy projects from the east façade, and new brushed-metal sheathing runs halfway up the restored limestone wall between the windows and the copper stringcourse. Mounted on the canopy are brushed-aluminum letters reading "INTERNATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS CENTER & MUSEUM," and behind them on the outer (south) edge is a brushed-metal, open-grid globe that is the Museum's logo. Separating the corner bay from the rest of the east façade is a new, two-sided, vertical back-lit sign mounted into the wall, running from the top of the first-story windows to the top of the parapet. On the south façade, a similar canopy tops the new entrance, this time with the words "FEBRUARY ONE ENTRANCE." On both facades, new limestone, scored to resemble block and replicating the original wall surface, covers the wall above the brushed-metal sheathing.

Second Story

The second story has retained virtually all of its historic appearance and most of what is seen today is restored original material, with missing components replicated in kind.[61] The simple copper stringcourse between the

Special Collections Research Center.

[59] The south façade's westernmost end of the building is not visible in any of the historic photographs, but what is there today—the shorter pilaster with the granite base—is historic.

[60] This is where the entrance to Lee's Millinery was located.

[61] According to architect Victor Vines, president and principal of Vines Architecture, who worked with Freelon on the Greensboro Woolworth renovation as the managing architect, the terra cotta urns and decorative copper elements were the most damaged. He

two stories is not original but was in place by the period of significance. The second story's fenestration is intact, with Chicago-style windows arrayed across the entirety of the street-facing façades. The five smaller bays on the east (front) façade and the seven on the south (secondary) contain triple steel windows, with the fixed middle unit wider than the casement units flanking it. The side units also have operable transoms. The larger southeast corner bays have two extra flanking windows. All of the second-story windows have a horizontal muntin dividing them ¼ down. During the 1939 Woolworth conversion, all of the second-story windows were frosted with a fret-corner border, the only exception was the eight-over-sixteen window in the smallest bay on the south façade. Today only the side units are frosted, and the wider, central panes are clear. The limestone parapet running along the east (front) and south (secondary) façades is punctuated by dark, recessed, terra cotta urns which align with copper palmettes that, with the pilasters directly below, demarcated the separate retail spaces prior to the 1939 renovation for the Woolworth Company. On the southeast corner, the adjoining parapets peak over the wider bays and are heavily decorated with inverted palmettes and medallions. The corners of the parapet in that section and those on either end of the building are topped with limestone palmette acroteria, with those over the peaked parapet sections the more elaborate. Beneath the acroteria, the wall is decorated with vertical recessed parallel lines, evoking a triglyph, topped by a curled design evoking ionic volutes. Below the parapet runs a decorative limestone frieze in a vignette design punctuated by recessed circular elements. The second-story walls are limestone blocks. The windows have scalloped lintel caps except for those at the ends of the wider corner bays, which feature a stepped arch design.

Interior

In 1960, the F. W. Woolworth Company Building store consisted of three open floors. The basement and first floors were mostly open and filled with changing merchandise displays. On the first floor, an L-shaped lunch counter ran near and parallel to the north and west walls. The kitchen for the lunch counter was located on the second floor, along with storage, work rooms, offices, and a locker room. Today the building functions as a museum, and consequently, the historic Woolworth floor plan has been significantly altered. The open retail areas on the basement and first floors are gone, filled with exhibits, meeting spaces, a spacious lobby, and a gift shop. The second floor is subdivided into offices and meeting spaces, an archives room, and more. Restrooms were relocated and are more spacious, staircases have been expanded, and an elevator added. However, two important character-defining elements have been carefully restored: the grand public stairwell and, most importantly, the lunch counter where the Greensboro sit-ins occurred that had a significant impact on our nation's history.

First (Main) Floor

The east (front) entrances open into a spacious lobby expanding across most of the building's width. All of the first-floor plaster walls and coffered ceilings are original, but in the former Woolworth area, flat suspended panels hang below the ceilings, allowing the original coffered bay ceilings to be seen but providing space for the lighting and sound systems, and HVAC diffusers. To the north of the lobby is a gift shop, separated from the larger space by a glass wall. The west (back) wall of the lobby area and the partial wall behind the reception desk are finished in black thin-set slate tile. These new materials—the slate wall, suspended ceiling panels—are reversible. While the 2005–2009 rehabilitation removed the interior walls that once defined the southeast corner tenants' smaller stores, the location of the historic two retail spaces is indicated by changes in finishes. In that smaller space, the new crown molding is more ornate and classical; furthermore, the two colors used for the terrazzo floor tiles are reversed. All of the terrazzo in the Woolworth space is historic but the reversed section in the southeast corner, like the crown molding, was installed in the 2005–2009 renovation.

recalled having to replicate one of the copper urns and portions of some of the palmettes.

An east-west corridor extends the length of the building along its south side, with historic terrazzo flooring. Along the right of corridors are the new elevator and small exhibit space and the public stairwell with exhibits around it. The corridor turns to the north near the western end of the building, and behind a (new) double door at the north end of the corridor is the historic lunch counter. Exhibits occupy the interior portion of the floor, accessed from the lunch counter room and gift shop. The exhibit walls are not permanent—they are not fixed to the ceiling—so they can be reconfigured in the future, and in the exhibit area, the terrazzo is intact but covered by carpet, wood, and tile flooring.

Lunch Counter Area

As the site of the 1960 sit-in, the lunch counter is the most significant historic interior feature in the building. First installed in 1939, it currently displays its 1939–1962 L-shaped appearance, running along the west and north perimeter walls. Historic fabric and elements were carefully restored, and missing materials have been replicated. The circular incandescent ceiling lights, set between the beams and mounted on square panels, are replicated from period photographs and are supplemented with track lighting. The terrazzo floor and coffered ceilings, installed in 1939 and in place in 1960, have been preserved. The counter is faced with flush wood panels with stainless steel accents. The thin-grained wood veneer is blond, probably maple, and bonded to a thick plywood. The wood is lighter in color on the west portion of the counter and marred in places where feet knocked into it. The black footrest is cast composite concrete. The countertops are cast ceramic with an opaque black glass appearance (especially evident in the few places where it has cracked), mostly matte but buffed along edges, forming a 2½-inch shiny border.

The entire west lunch counter is historic, intact, restored, and minimally altered. The exception is the southwest end, straight today, which angled back toward, but did not touch, the west wall, as seen in the ca. 1963 plan and physical evidence including the angled terrazzo floor and "ghosts" showing the stool and counter location. The current west counter extends further south beyond where it angled previously. The extended blunt end was built using historic materials, including its stainless end panel. The cracked countertop in this area was probably caused by the removal of the angled portion, which according to the floor plans, occurred after 1994 and probably during the 2005–2009 rehabilitation.

Approximately ⅔ of the north counter was reconfigured ca. 1963, when the building was renovated. At that time, the straight counter along that wall was redesigned to accommodate an increase in customers after desegregation with the addition of four U-shaped bays. Their "ghosts," and those of their stools, are still visible in the terrazzo floor. Three of the four bays were brought in from another Woolworth store; the fourth was built to match in 1963. A gap was left just east of the right-angle counter juncture to improve access, its ends finished in matching wood veneer, and the northeast angled corner was extended to the wall. Two more gaps in the north counter were added before 1994 but do not appear in the 1963 construction plans. When the 2005–2009 rehabilitation reconstructed the straight north counter, using historic materials salvaged from the straight sides of the U-shaped bays, it left two of the three gaps and the northeast end piece attaching the counter to the north wall in place.

The wall mirrors behind the lunch counter are grouped, with a large horizontal unit flanked by narrower vertical mirrors; they are historic. Five projection panels, which appear as mirrors when not in use, were added during the 2005–2009 rehabilitation and are used to show a film reenacting the sit-ins as if they are reflections of the protestors, staff, and police officers involved.[62]

[62] Historic photographs reveal that there was another group of three windows on the north wall, roughly where the projection screens

Today the lunch counter has fifty-three stools: twenty-nine along the north counter and twenty-four along the west. The missing stools include six at the angled corners, two along the two remaining gaps, and the rest along the northeast counter near its east end.[63] "Ghost" outlines of the missing stools are visible on the floor. Woolworth Company stools were interchanged freely within a location and between stores, as they all matched, and extra stools were stored in the building, so it is not possible to determine the provenance of each stool. However, the age of the stool base can be determined to some extent. The stool bases seen in 1960 photographs had large hooks for purses and shopping bags mounted on their backs below the seat. Others (probably installed in the ca. 1963 renovations) do not. By examining the bases and looking for the screws (or holes) that held the hooks, it can be determined that all but one stool base (the northernmost) along the west counter had hooks, as well as nineteen of the twenty-nine stools along the north counter. In 1960 the stool seat covers were black. Some of the current turquoise and orange stool covers—they are treated cloth with a dull finish—likely date to the ca. 1963 renovation; the others are vinyl and shinier and may have been installed later.

The exact location where the four protestors sat on the first day of the sit-ins, February 1, is not agreed upon. Store manager Clarence Harris later indicated on the undated ca. 1963 floor plan where he remembered the four protesters sitting on the first day, "about midway on the north wall."[64] This is close to where the cash register was in 1960. More recent accounts by members of the Greensboro Four indicate that they sat in pairs on the different wings close to the right-angle juncture of the counter. Harris recalled that, on the second day of the sit-ins, the north counter was closed, and all twenty-seven seats along the west counter were occupied by protestors**.**

The equipment behind the counter was left behind when the lunch counter closed in 1993, so its pieces vary in age. The pink wall sink at the southwest end is historic and original. The floor behind the counter is ceramic tile, in two patterns and also patched in places. The oldest tile is the darkest shades-of-brown geometric pattern that runs along the wall. Under several pieces of equipment, it is patched with white-and black tile (with many pieces missing). Another geometric shades-of-brown pattern, lighter and using smaller tiles, runs just behind the counter, abutting the terrazzo under the counter itself. It may have replaced the older, darker tile that was worn from foot traffic. Two stainless dumbwaiters and an electrical panel, as well as the button panels between them, are located on the north wall near the west end. They are historic and restored but not operational. On the counters, the cash register near the right-angle juncture was found in the building and matches one seen behind the counter on the north wall in 1960 photographs. The two glass-top cake stands and the two-tier glass and stainless display case match those used in 1960.

Everything else is difficult to date, as stainless service restaurant equipment did not change much between 1960 and 1993. Most of the items that can be observed in sit-in photographs, such as Coca-Cola and Pepsi machines, tall stainless urns, and a milkshake machine, are no longer in place. The walls are lined with stainless workspaces with open shelves below, sinks, warming drawers, sinks, drop-warmers, etc. Some of this—especially the non-mechanical equipment—could be historic. On top of the equipment are smaller elements such as toasters, iced tea urns, and coffee makers, all of which appear relatively new. On and behind the counters are plates, glasses, cups and saucers, and shakers for salt, pepper and sugar. Most appear similar to those found in the historic photographs but their age is undetermined.

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are now located.

[63] The two stools currently on display in a separate case on the south wall of the building will be returned to the lunchroom, probably to the northeast end, in the coming year.

[64] Clarence Lee Harris, Manuscripts, 1970-1990, undated, MSS 0141- Series 3, Clarence Lee Harris Papers, MSS 0141, Martha Blakeney Hodges Special Collections and University Archives, University of North Carolina Greensboro.

The tile walls are historic. Cream subway tile is punctuated by six bands of one-inch brown tile, laid in two groups of three bands. The brown cove base tiles match the one-inch accent tiles. A panel of stainless steel runs along the top of the wall tile, lipped on the top and bottom to allow small signs to be inserted along it. A stainless steel canopy extends from the top of the stainless panel, projecting about 18 inches and trimmed with a red metal cornice. The wall materials are all historic except in the area where the Smithsonian removed a portion of the counter, along with the corresponding section of the wall and canopy. The signs inserted into the stainless panel over the tile are replicas. The walls over the canopy are blank; in 1960 signage was hung on the upper portions of both the north and south walls.

Behind the north counter seats where merchandise displays once stood, there are a few "ghosts" visible in the terrazzo floor near the east end. Several outlines are visible, although somewhat obscured by a partition wall that runs diagonally from the northeast counter end towards the southwest, near the location of the formerly segregated snack bar. Its 1960 appearance can only be partially glimpsed in one historic photograph. It is seen in the ca. 1963 renovation plans and it is outlined on the 1994 plans, as described below. Photographs from the 1994 Smithsonian accession do not show the snack bar in full, but its location matches that illustrated in the 1994 plans.

With the modifications to the design and floor plan of the interior spaces beyond the lunch counter, the larger context for the lunch counter—namely, the crowded variety store floor—is lost, but the lunch counter portion of the room is intact and offers a sense of this distinctive eating experience. The remaining open space around the lunch counter sets it apart as an artifact of great significance. The present-day diagonal partition wall near its northeast end stops approximately 8–10 inches from the ceiling and provides the entrance to the floor's other exhibits. Other changes have been made to the space to add interpretation for visitors. Approximately ten feet west of the north counter stands a waist-high round kiosk that contains an interactive display illustrating the geographical spread of the sit-in movement. Nearby is a small wall exhibit.

Public Stairwell

The 8-foot-wide public stairwell is not a historically significant feature, but it has been carefully restored to help convey the historic character of the building. Art Moderne in style, its first-floor opening is surrounded by a polished steel railing with a rectilinear design and rounded corners. The decorative steel railing extends the length of the stairs. The handrails are historic but their material is unidentified. The walls of the stairwell are finished in mahogany veneer paneling inlaid with light maple and stained walnut banding that runs horizontally below the handrail and vertically above. Mirrors etched with a border design alternate with the maple and walnut panels. The terrazzo treads are patterned near their edges.

Second Floor

On the second floor, the 2005–2009 renovation created new offices, conference rooms, archival storage, classrooms, and a large central lobby with wall space for exhibits. The new hallway along the north end includes a nook for groups to watch films. The original wood floor was removed and replaced with carpet over the original concrete. All of the original exterior steel-frame windows are restored along with their original hardware. All of the window glass is that found in the building in 1995.

Basement

Early in the 2005–2009 rehabilitation, a major water issue was discovered in the basement that threatened the integrity of the building. The terrazzo basement floor was removed and replaced with a concrete slab. The

renovated lower floor houses a gallery, exhibit space, and an auditorium, with ceiling baffles to control sound, carpeted floors, sheetrock walls, and a ceiling predominantly of painted, exposed concrete deck.

Multi-level Elements

Two new escalators connect the basement and first floors. The downward unit runs north-south, parallel to and behind the black slate wall in the reception area. The upward unit is located closer to the southwest end of the building and runs south-north to empty into the lunch counter area. Both are perpendicular to those found in the ca. 1963 and the 1994 plans. It is not known if escalators were in the building 1960. They can be seen in the ca. 1963 plans, labeled "No. 1" and "No. 2" and both labeled as "new." They may have been installed at that time, but it is also possible that they were replacements. Historic photographs and footage show a black sign, suspended from the ceiling on the main floor, that reads "Basement and "Sales Room" (with a down arrow); either stairs or escalators were below it but cannot be seen.

In 1960, the Woolworth had one elevator**,** a freight elevator located near the southwest corner of the building. It has been restored and is operational. A non-historic elevator that runs to all three floors is located directly behind the lobby along the east-west hallway.

Besides the grand public staircase, the Woolworth had two more sets of stairs. A small set in the northeast corner connected all three floors; they were replaced in the 2005-2009 rehabilitation with a larger set. The second set of stairs near the southwest corner runs from the basement to the roof. Primarily used for deliveries, these stairs had a delivery entrance on the first floor whose entryway connected to the freight elevator. Today the stairs are new and the masonry delivery entrance has been removed, leaving a recessed area at the western-most end of the south façade. The three-story portion of the west wall houses these stairs. It seems likely that all of these changes—adding the delivery entrance, freight elevator, and basement-to-roof stairs—happened during the 1939 Woolworth conversion. Windows were bricked in to accommodate the lunch counter. The masonry on the façade is congruent, with the exception of where the delivery entrance was removed in 2005–2009.

All of the restrooms in the building are new as of the 2005–2009 rehabilitation and they are in different locations than the previous facilities. The basement restrooms are near the north-south escalator, and the first- and second-floor facilities are on the east-west corridor on the south side of the building.

PHYSICAL EVOLUTION

Exterior

The F. W. Woolworth Company Building was originally called the Whelan Building in reference to its largest tenant, the Whelan Drug Store. The original plans show an L-shaped building with an open yard in the northwest corner of its lot. By 1925, the open yard area was built out as retail space. In Hartmann's original design, each of the six east-facing bays on the primary facade contained a separate retail establishment, including the broader bay at the southeast corner of the building. [65] Along the south (secondary) façade, the eastern four bays all belong to the corner retail establishment, and the western four bays each contained an individual retailer. The Whelan Drug Store originally occupied the entire 25-foot-wide bay on the southeast end. Most of the storefront shops (five on the east side and four on the south) had centered recessed entrances with canted windows. The southeast corner retail space had four entrances, two double-paneled doors at each

[65] Hartmann's 1928 east and west elevations and the first-level floor plan are at North Carolina State University Libraries Special Collections Research Center, but the school does not have any information on the source of the drawings.

corner, and single-panel wood doors at the right end of its east façade and a back entrance on the south (secondary) façade.[66] The small 7-foot bay on the south façade had an entry that led to a flight of stairs that connected the first and second floors.

When most of the building was converted for the F. W. Woolworth Company in 1938–1939, the renovations were extensive. The southeast corner remained as separate retail space but was divided into two retail spaces. Ned Cohen's Jewel Box occupied the southernmost corner space, and Lee's Millinery was in the adjacent space to the north. Each had an entrance on the east façade, and the Jewel Box had another on the south. The corner store featured polished black marble first-floor walls which also covered the two corner pilasters and sheathed the walls under all of the windows. The window in the westernmost bay of the south façade was stenciled with signage. The east (front) recessed entrance featured curved windows at the inner corners. Next door, Lee's Millinery covered the upper façade of its first story in white stone panels and also had curved storefront windows. The pilaster it shared with the Woolworth store was covered half in the white stone to match Lee's walls, half in black granite to match Woolworth.

The rest of the building was converted to a single retail space for the Woolworth. The renovation changed the first-story door and window arrangement; the individual storefronts were modified into a glass-and-metal system with three entrances on the east façade and two on the south. On the south façade, the small entrance door in the 7-foot bay was glassed in to add a display window for Woolworth and the stairs removed. This is the fenestration seen today; it was rebuilt during the 2005–2009 rehabilitation.

By 1959, the Woolworth looked unchanged but the corner retailer, the Jewel Box, had been modified. The black stone wall sheathing had been replaced by scored concrete or stone. A large, vertical neon sign with a clock near its base projected from the corner. The recessed entrance was more open, with square boxed windows atop recessed black bases partially covered with sheets of paper. The corner pilaster was replaced with a smaller square column running through the recessed window base. The decorative copper panels below the decorative copper palmettes were gone. Lee's storefront configuration appeared unchanged. By 1976, the southeast window bases would be covered in small ceramic tiles, matching large square planters on the sidewalk. These changes may have been made ca. 1993. The draft 1995 National Historic Landmark nomination mentions construction documents from ca. 1963 that "indicate that a new storefront system was installed, which included new glass and frames and a mosaic-tiled floor and flanking pilasters in the recessed entries. Precast panels of exposed aggregate concrete were also installed at each end of the storefront."[67] Photographs from the 1970s and 1980s show these features and one centered, double entry on both the east (front) and south (secondary) façades.

Interior

The original interior plan consisted of ten separate retail spaces. In the 1938–1939 renovation, all but the one corner store (then divided in two) was gutted, leaving large open spaces on all three floors. The first and basement floors were filled with merchandise displays, periodically redesigned and reconfigured. The second floor was office space, kitchen facilities for the lunch counter, and storage.

On the first floor, the L-shaped lunch counter remained intact until the ca. 1963 renovations. The west counter remained untouched, including the equipment behind the counter. The north counter was renovated to include

[66] The door panels may have been glass; Hartmann's drawing does not indicate.
[67] The plans referenced here have not been found. The first-floor plan included in the Floor Plans (7.a and 7.b) is probably from a fuller set of plans that also detailed exterior work.

four U-shaped bays to increase seating. Three of the four bays were brought in from another store and the fourth built to match. A gap was cut into the counter near the right-angle juncture. The northeast end was extended to touch the north wall. The snack bar, located behind the stools at the northeast end, was partly reworked. Located just west of the bakery display, the snack bar had ice storage, a double sink, and equipment for warming rolls and serving hot dogs, hamburgers, and "Bar B Q." Also shown in the 1963 drawings are plans for new spiral stairs in the northeast corner connecting the main floor to the basement and two "new" escalators which may have been new to the building or replacements.

Floor plans from 1994 are less detailed than the ca. 1963 documents. By that time, there were two additional gaps in the north counter, one between the second and third bay, and the third after the fourth bay. The basement, open to the public and filled with merchandise, also contained electrical equipment rooms, a small office and work room, a boiler room, men's and women's restrooms, and two storage rooms. In the southwest corner, next to the freight elevator, a set of interior stairs connected all three floors. The northeast corner stairs, mentioned above, also connected all three floors. The grand public stairwell connected the first floor and basement, and a fourth set of stairs connected the first and second floors and was entered from a single street-level doorway on the south façade between the Jewel Box and the Woolworth. Besides storage, the second-floor plan shows a kitchen, pantry, and dishwashing room servicing the lunch counter below (via two dumbwaiters),

lockers, workrooms and four restrooms, identified as "Men's," "Women's," "Porter's Toilet," and "Cook's Toilet." The latter two were likely facilities for African Americans prior to desegregation.

In the early 1990s, when the building was closed and its fate threatened, the F. W. Woolworth Company donated two sections of the historic north counter to museums. The Greensboro History Museum removed four stools in 1990 and the angled section of the counter's northeast corner in early 1994. Also in 1994, the Smithsonian Institution removed an 8-foot section of the lunch counter and miscellaneous items including the concrete footrests, the soda fountain, the ceramic tile back wall behind the counter section, three wall mirrors, two 10-foot sections of cornice, four stools, and smaller items such as signs, a waitress uniform, pie case, and napkin holder, for use by the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. Later, in 2016, the ICRCM donated two more lunch counter seats, from storage, to the new National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC).

STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

The F. W. Woolworth Company Building became the International Civil Rights Center & Museum in 2010, after an adaptive reuse rehabilitation that converted much of the former retail space into museum galleries, meeting space, and offices. Great care was taken to conserve the essential physical features of the building that convey its national significance, namely the historic lunch counter where the Greensboro sit-ins took place and its exterior appearance, which preserves the context of the picketing that occurred outside. In both cases, the extant original and historic fabric was restored and missing elements replicated.

The F. W. Woolworth Company Building is in its original and historic **location** where four young men from the North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State College walked downtown on February 1, 1960, to begin a sit-in that ignited a movement across the country. The lunch counter stands within the same building in the same position where the protest took place more than sixty years ago.

The Woolworth's **setting** is remarkably intact in the midst of the downtown commercial shopping district of Greensboro. Many of the storefronts appear as they did at the time of historical significance. Some have

maintained their original late nineteenth- or early twentieth-century appearance, and others have been altered before and after 1960, typically with changes to the street-level entrance and/or first-story façade wraps. Many of the altered structures have been rehabilitated in the past few decades, and post-1960 buildings are relatively few along the relevant stretch of South Elm Street, between West Friendly Avenue and West McGee Street. The area retains its pedestrian character today because many of the storefronts contain restaurants and specialty retail shops. In its block, the F. W. Woolworth Company Building is now partly surrounded by more open space than in 1960, and the brick building on its block northeast corner is visually non-compatible. The Woolworth's Art Deco styling and lower horizontal profile still make it stand out in a historic district of taller storefronts.

Immediately upon approach, the F. W. Woolworth Company Building conveys a **feeling** of its history. Its Art Deco architectural elements evoke the late 1920s, the prosperous time before the beginning of the Great Depression. Its distinctive Woolworth signage and awning convey the sense of the well-known variety store. This was backdrop for the days of persistent picketing by African American students in 1960, protests easily imagined today and replicated recently by Black Lives Matter and other demonstrations over episodes of racial injustice. Inside, upon entering the lunch counter area, the visitor enters a large room with the imposing artifact sitting in a large open space but cordoned off. Standing in front of the lunch counter today is an emotional experience. Tour guides report that many visitors break into tears. The setting imparts the physical reality of what happened during the sit-ins. The careful restoration of the 1960 L-shaped appearance with its workspaces, chrome-trimmed counter, and footrest and stools, as well as the additional period and replicated materials such as signage, dishes and glassware, all contribute to the feeling of a typical downtown variety store lunch counter of the era. But of course this is no ordinary lunch counter. The restored and curated resource is authentic and thus offers a compelling witness to the actual sit-in that transformed the civil rights movement and nation.

Outside, the name F. W. WOOLWORTH CO. emblazoned in gold letters on a red background across the main and secondary façades, coupled with the streamlined design of the lunch counter within, produce a strong **association** with the sit-in that sparked a national non-violent, direct-action sit-in movement and inaugurated a decade of sustained student-led civil rights protests in America. The image of young African American men and women sitting stoically at the lunch counter while angry protestors insult and threaten them is an indelible image of the modern civil rights movement. The Greensboro Woolworth is the single building most closely associated with those events. Generations of Americans who came of age in the aftermath of the five-and-dime lunch-counter popularity still inextricably link this building with the African American struggle for racial equality.

Most of the building's exterior historic **design** has been preserved through restoration and replication in kind. The liberties taken with the exterior design—signage, use of different but compatible materials—were confined to the first floor of the southeast corner, the portion of the building that did not contain the Woolworth and, historically, appeared distinct from the larger retail establishment. The most notable exterior design change to the Woolworth portion of the building is the addition of an entrance on the secondary façade. These changes are observable as interventions but do not significantly detract from the overall historic sense of the exterior. The entire second story has been completely preserved to its 1960 appearance which showcases the structure's Art Deco design.

As detailed above, the interior's design underwent modification by architect Phil Freelon (1953–2019) so that the building might function as a museum to accommodate exhibits, meeting rooms, and office spaces, all of which are specifically geared toward interpreting the historical events that took place in the building and presenting the larger context of the civil rights movement of the 1960s in which they occurred. The second floor is now gallery space and offices, with no evidence of its original use as storage and ancillary facilities for Woolworth staff. Like the basement, it is not directly associated with the sit-ins, so maintaining its integrity of

design was less important. The two public floors, the first and the basement, no longer appear as a retail establishment with expansive open spaces with arrays of ever-changing merchandise. These floors are now filled with exhibits and reception and meeting areas. However, special attention was paid to preserving the most significant interior design element: the lunch counter. Although the lunch counter is now a museum artifact rather than an eating area rimming a large commercially cluttered room, it has been carefully returned to its full historic configuration and appearance. The west counter remained mostly intact and has been restored. The north counter, redesigned ca. 1963, was returned to its historic appearance and layout, using historic and replicated materials. The expanse of restored floors and ceiling in the room help to evoke the original space. The newly interposed, diagonal partition wall cutting off the east end of the lunch counter replicates the arched "Colored Only" entrance to the Greensboro train station. Although this wall is inconsistent with the interior design of the Greensboro Woolworth in 1960, it is a reminder to visitors of the larger context in which the sit-ins occurred. All of the exhibit fabrications that interrupt the historically open design of the floor plan are reversible. The design of the snack bar to which African Americans were confined prior to 1960 is unknown, as well as whether the escalators were in place in 1960. But one of the interior's main character-defining features, the grand public staircase, retains its integrity of design and suggests the elegance of the original building.

Given that the Greensboro Woolworth is significant for its association with a historical event rather than for its architecture, its integrity of materials is less important to its ability to convey its significance than integrity of design and feeling. However, the integrity of the building's **materials** is present and preserved in the areas most strongly associated with its historic significance. The façade makes varied use of molded and incised limestone, black and green granite, decorative copper elements, porcelain enamel, glass, aluminum, and brick, all carefully cleaned and repaired whenever possible, and only replicated when missing. The glass-and-aluminum storefront system is a replica of the 1960 design. However, the first-floor southeast corner of the building does introduce some new materials, most notably the frosted blue glass window surrounds and museum signage. Inside, some of the original and historic materials are intact and restored: the first-floor terrazzo floors (in the Woolworth portion of the building), plaster coffered ceilings, plaster perimeter walls, and the original steel windows and their hardware on the second floor. More importantly, the historic materials of the lunch counter that were intact have been preserved: the flush wood panels, stainless detailing, concrete footrests, wall tile, terrazzo and tile flooring, have all been retained and restored. Portions of the north counter were rebuilt using historic materials. About half of the stools are historic; the others are a little younger, probably from ca. 1963. Missing elements such as the overhead incandescent lighting fixtures and signage have been replicated. Similarly, the historic materials of the public stairwell—the brushed and rounded metal upper railing, maple panels with inlaid walnut accents, etched mirrored panels, and contrasting terrazzo treads—are intact and restored. Materials in other areas not directly involved in the historically significant events have been changed to accommodate the functions of a museum committed to educating the public about the ideas and events surrounding the historic events. Exhibits, meeting and office spaces are all clearly new.

Given that the Greensboro Woolworth is significant for its association with a historical event rather than for its architecture, its integrity of workmanship is also less important to its ability to convey its significance that integrity of design and feeling. However, the refined **workmanship** of the building's second-story exterior is obvious and celebrated in its preservation. Much of the conservation of the exterior focused on the restoration of the decorative elements that display considerable artistry: the first-floor fluted pilasters with decorative copper palmettes above, the detailed carved parapet with its limestone vignette frieze, and the acroteria rising above the parapet with stylized carving below. This artisanship remains intact and preserved. Inside, the workmanship of the extant historic features is preserved, from the coffered ceilings and terrazzo floors, the second-floor steel windows, the public staircase, and the restored west lunch counter.

In conclusion, the building's stewards took great care to preserve the physical elements of the F. W. Woolworth Company Building in Greensboro that are most important to its ability to convey its national significance as a central component of the modern civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. The exterior façade, sidewalks, and the interior "Whites Only" lunch counter with its stools are all intact, preserved, and in excellent condition. Changes to the overall function of the building necessary to transform it from a downtown retail store into a museum left intact the historic elements that attest to the exceptional significance of the Greensboro Woolworth building in the African American freedom struggle, and specifically, in the youth-led sit-in movement. These elements are preserved and interpreted. The F. W. Woolworth variety store in Greensboro, North Carolina, fulfills the National Historic Landmark standards through its outstanding significance, scarcity, and integrity of its nationally significant historic features.

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_X_ Previously listed in the National Register (fill in 1 through 6 below) **(contributing building in a district)**
__ Not previously listed in the National Register (fill in **only** 4, 5, and 6 below)

1. NR #: 82003458 (Downtown Greensboro Historic District and Amended)
2. Date of listing: June 17, 1982, amended 2004
3. Level of significance: Local
4. Applicable National Register Criteria: A_X_ B_X_ C_X_ D__
5. Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A__ B__ C__ D__ E__ F__ G__
6. Areas of Significance: architecture, commerce, theater, transportation

__ Previously Determined Eligible for the National Register: Date of determination:
__ Designated a National Historic Landmark: Date of designation:
__ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: HABS No.
__ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: HAER No.
__ Recorded by Historic American Landscapes Survey: HALS No.

Location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office: North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency:

Federal Agency:

Local Government: Guilford County Historic Landmark Program

University: Walter Clinton Jackson Library, University of North Carolina Greensboro

Other (Specify Repository): Greensboro History Museum Archives

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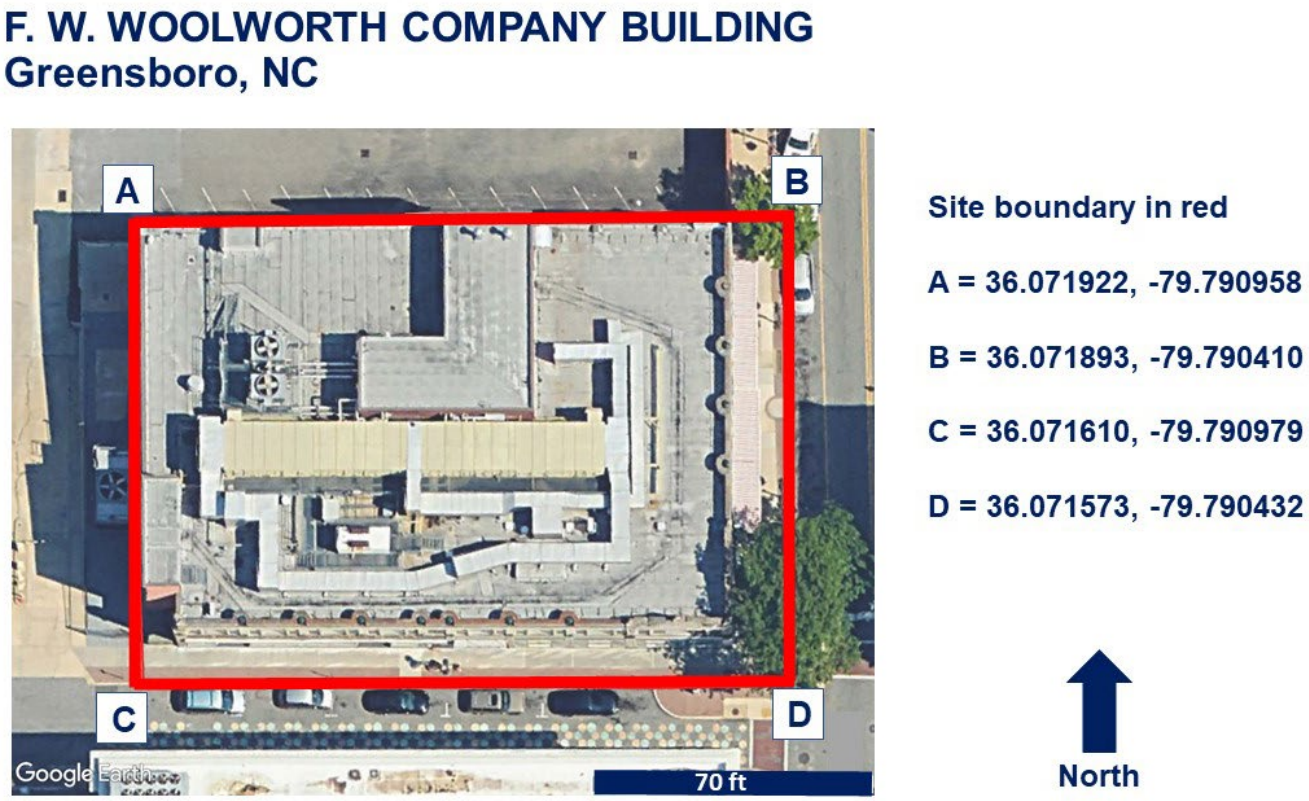
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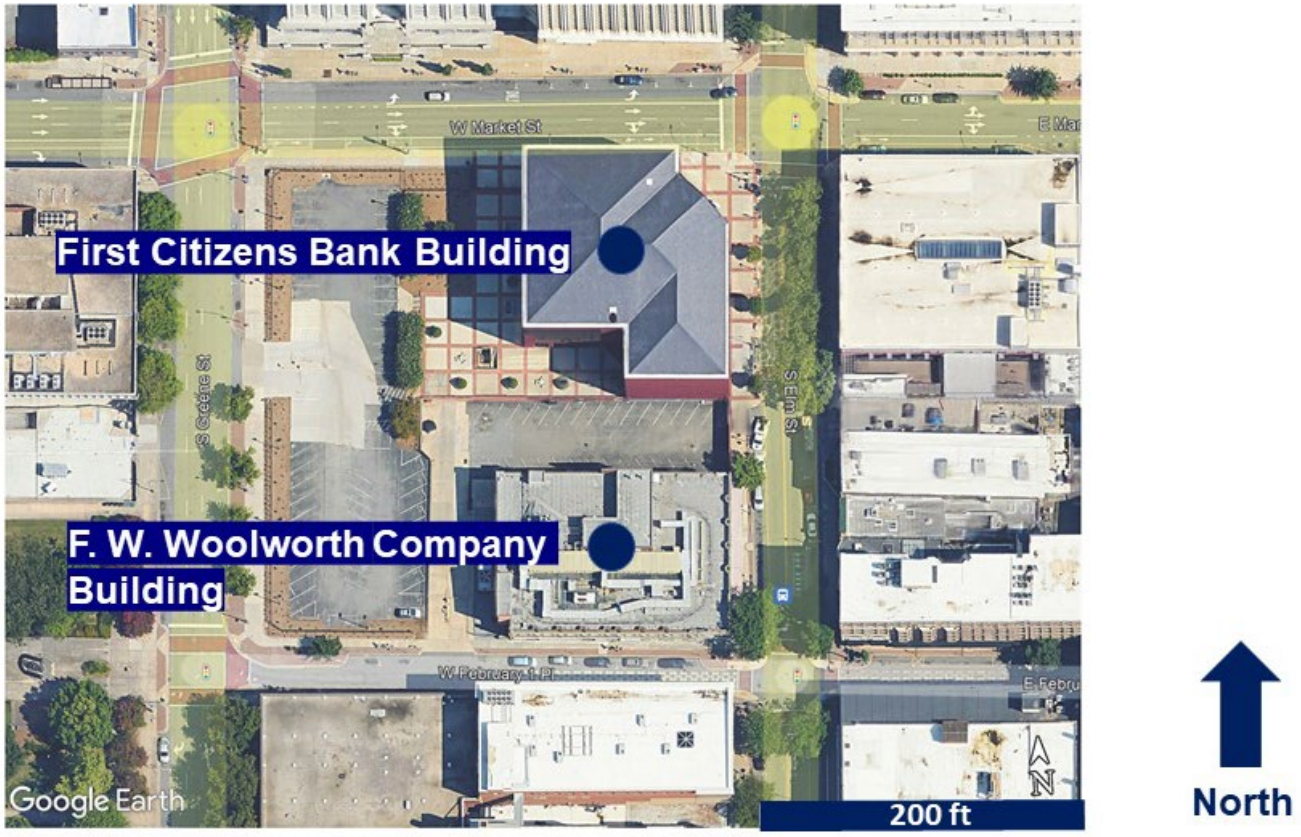
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MAPS

Map 1. NHL boundary and coordinates.



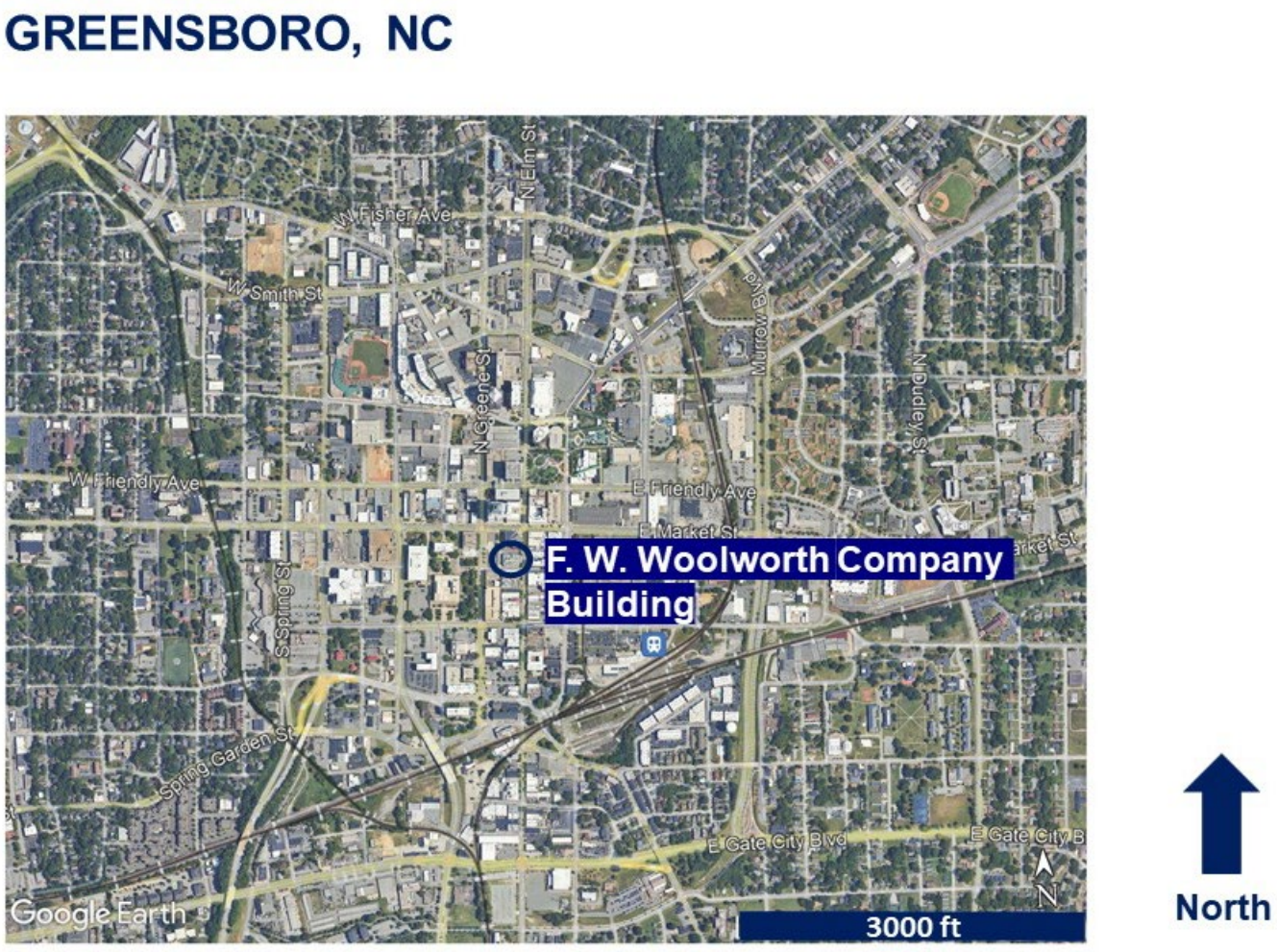
Map 2. Site and block.



Map 3. Major buildings near F. W. Woolworth Company Building.



Map 4. City of Greensboro, NC, showing location of F.W. Woolworth Company Building NHL.



CURRENT PHOTOGRAPHS

Name of Property:	**F. W. Woolworth Company Building**
City or Vicinity:	Greensboro
County:	Guilford
State:	NC
Name of Photographers	International Civil Rights Center & Museum (photos 30, 38, 39) Anne Farrisee (all others)
Location of Original Digital Files	International Civil Rights Center and Museum 134 S. Elm Street, Greensboro, NC 27401

Photo 1
F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing northwest.

Photo 2
S. Elm Street looking north, June 2023.

Photo 3
1904 Dixie Building, December 2023. Camera facing northeast.

Photo 4
East side of S. Elm Street across from the Woolworth block, December 2023. Camera facing northeast.

Photo 5
1924 Meyers Building, December 2023. Camera facing southwest.

Photo 6
February One Place, December 2023. Camera facing southwest.

Photo 7
F. W. Woolworth Company Building block, December 2023. Camera facing northeast.

Photo 8
F. W. Woolworth Company Building, Southern Trust building, and the Jefferson Standard Building, December 2023. Camera facing northwest.

Photo 9
East (front) façade, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing west.

Photo 10
South (secondary) façade of the F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing northwest.

Photo 11
North and east (front) façades, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing southwest.

Photo 12
West (back) façade, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing east.

Photo 13
West (back) façade, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing east.

Photo 14
F. W. Woolworth Company Building east façade (partial), December 2023. Camera facing southwest.

Photo 15
New entrance on south (secondary) façade, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing northwest.

Photo 16
Southeast end of the east (front) façade, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing west.

Photo 17
Upper portion of south (secondary) façade, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing north.

Photo 18
East (front) façade detail, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing west.

Photo 19
East (front) façade, south end parapet, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing southwest.

Photo 20
Lunch counter of the F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing west.

Photo 21
Lunch counter of the F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing north.

Photo 22
West lunch counter of the F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing southwest.

Photo 23
North lunch counter of the F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing east.

Photo 24
.North lunch counter of the F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing northeast.

Photo 25
Lunch counter detail of the F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing north.

Photo 26
Behind the southwest end of the lunch counter, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing northwest.

Photo 27
"Ghost" of U-shaped bay on the north lunch counter, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing east.

Photo 28
Southwest end of the lunch counter, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing west.

Photo 29
Interactive kiosk and exhibit entrance near north lunch counter, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing northeast.

Photo 30
Main-level lobby, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, January 2024. Camera facing northwest.

Photo 31
Top of public stairwell, main floor, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing northeast.

Photo 32
Treads of public stairwell, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing north.

Photo 33
Public stairwell, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing southwest.

Photo 34
Second-floor interior, lobby/exhibit area, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, April 2023. Camera facing north.

Photo 35
Second-floor interior, film and exhibit nook, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, April 2023. Camera facing east.

Photo 36
Second-floor interior, administrative area, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing south.

Photo 37
Second-story window from the interior, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing east.

Photo 38
Basement-level lobby and exhibit space, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, June 2023. Camera facing west.

Photo 39
Basement-level auditorium, F. W. Woolworth Company Building. June 2023. Camera facing west

Photo Key 1. Exterior

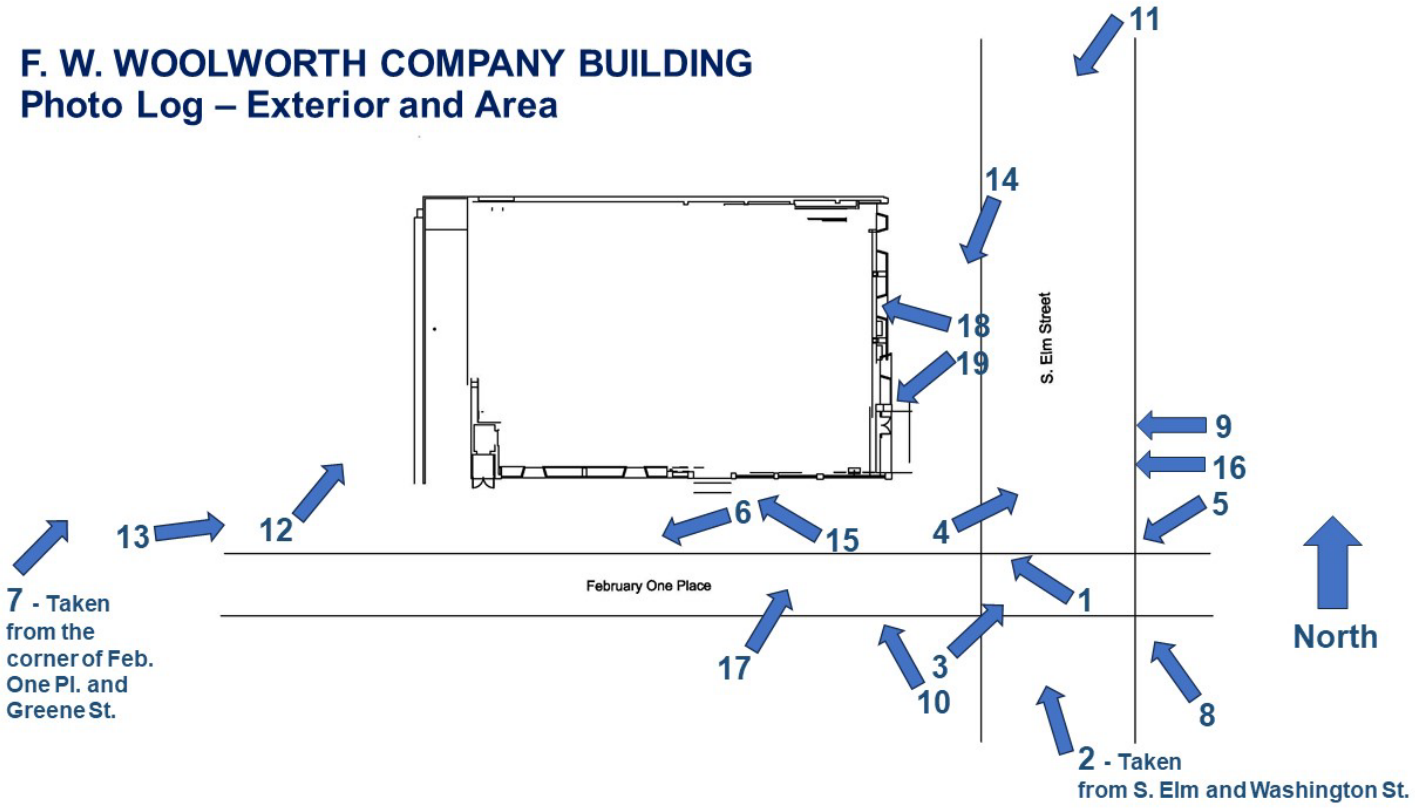


Photo Key 2. Interior, First Floor

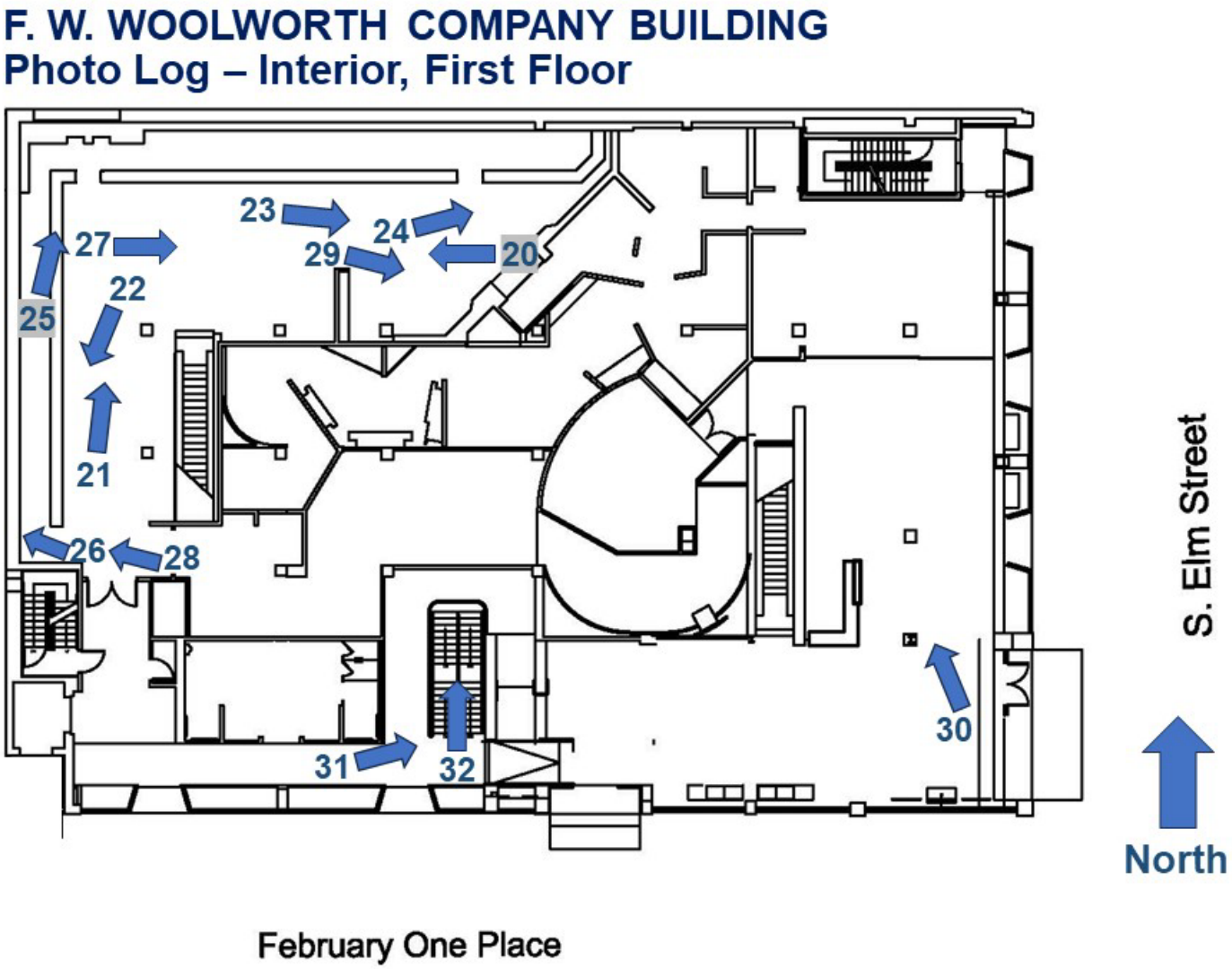


Photo Key 3. Basement

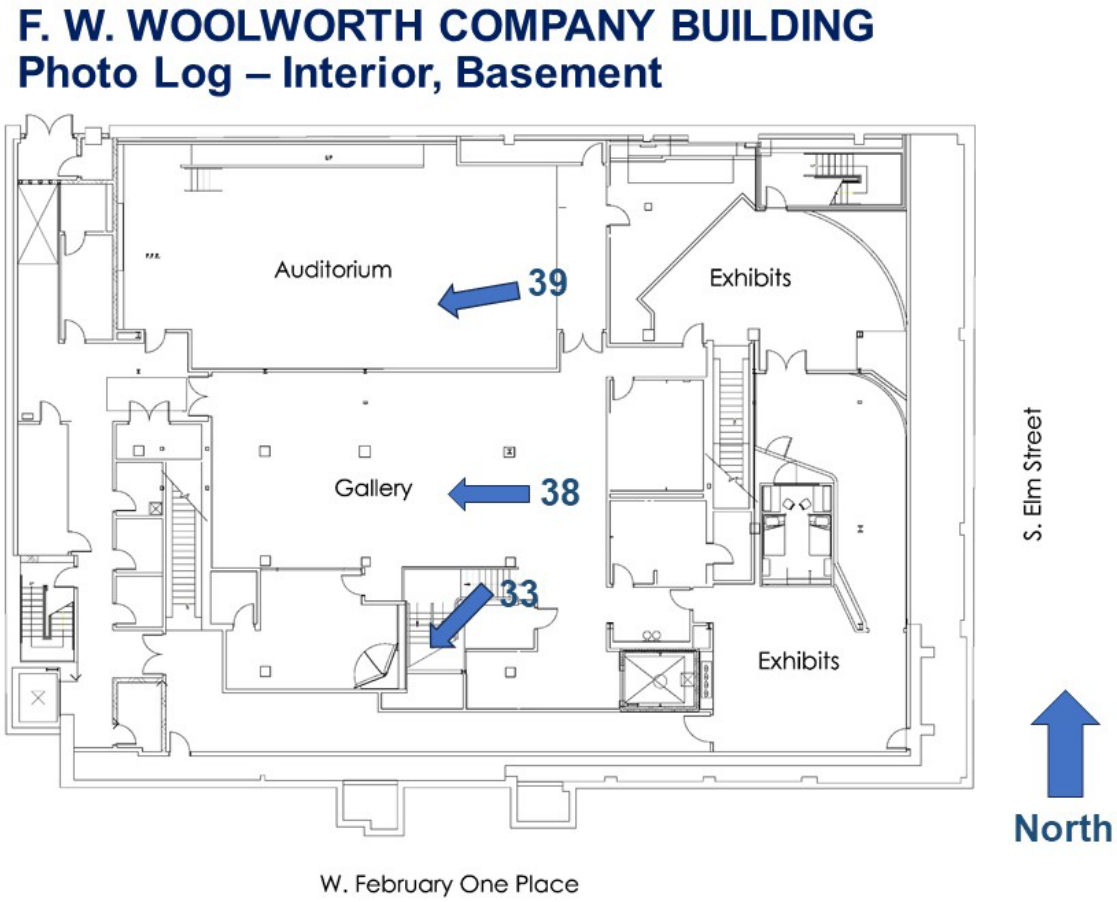


Photo Key 4. Interior, Second Floor

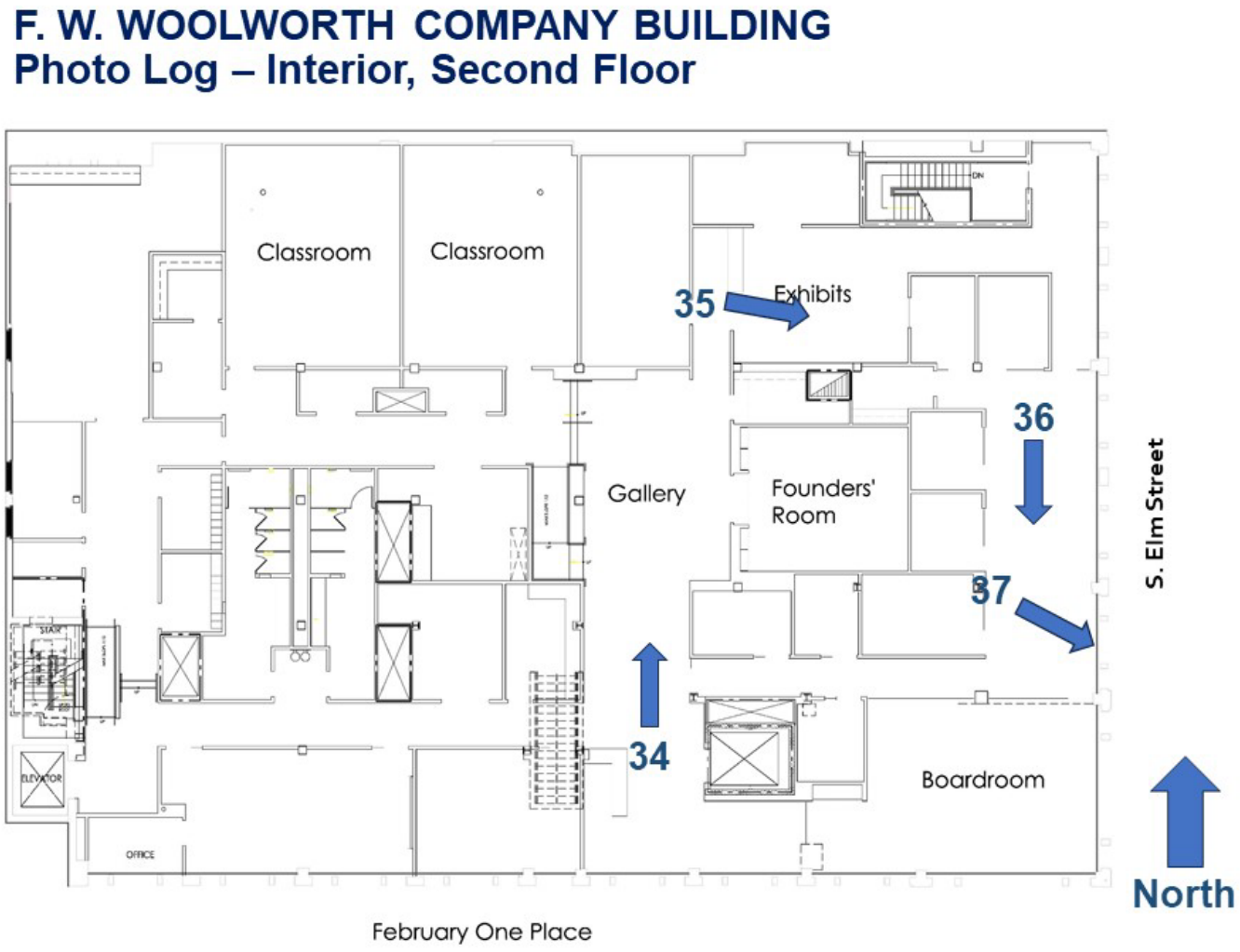




Photo 1. F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing northwest.



Photo 2. S. Elm Street looking north, June 2023.

Compare to Figure 10. Although trees obscure the view of many buildings, the historic streetscape of S. Elm Street near the F. W. Woolworth Company Building is mostly intact. The red-brick structure on the right is the Elm Street Center, built in 1950 and to be rehabilitated to serve as the front portion of a 180-room hotel.



Photo 3. 1904 Dixie Building, December 2023. Camera facing northeast.

Located directly across S. Elm Street from the F. W. Woolworth Company Building, the Dixie Building anchored its block.



Photo 4. East side of S. Elm Street across from the Woolworth block, December 2023. Camera facing northeast.

The rest of the block facing the main façade of the F. W. Woolworth Company Building consists of two-and-three story brick structures dating between 1904 and 1939.



Photo 5. 1924 Meyers Building, December 2023. Camera facing southwest.

Downtown Greensboro was a flourishing retail shopping district through the 1960s. Large stores such as the Meyers Department store directly south of the Woolworth, the Kress Building a few doors down, and the Elm Street Center across the street anchored the area. Smaller buildings in the area were filled with smaller retailers at ground level and professional services in the stories above.



Photo 6. February One Place, December 2023. Camera facing southwest.

The block facing the south (secondary) façade of the Woolworth is dominated by the side of the Meyers Building, which has a modern addition behind it that stretches to Greene Street, a road that is parallel to and one block west of S. Elm Street.



Photo 7. F. W. Woolworth Company Building block, December 2023. Camera facing northeast.

The west elevation of the F. W. Woolworth Company Building, seen on the right, is the only historic building remaining on its block, as buildings were gradually demolished over the last 50 years. The entire block is now owned by the International Civil Rights Center & Museum, including the 1983 red brick Southern Trust building adjacent to the Woolworth and seen on the left. Part of that building will be renovated to include exhibits and the rest will be leased. The rest of the block is surface parking.



Photo 8. F. W. Woolworth Company Building, Southern Trust Building, and the Jefferson Standard Building, December 2023. Camera facing northwest.

Compare to Figures 12 and 13. Directly right of the Woolworth is the red brick Southern Trust building, now owned by the International Civil Rights Center & Museum. North of the bank is the white stone Jefferson Standard Building, architect Charles Hartmann's most visible landmark in Greensboro.



Photo 9. East (front) façade, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing west.

Note the replicated three entrances under the awning and Woolworth's distinctive red sign over the awning. The monument under the "H" contains a bronze relief plaque commemorating the Greensboro Four.



Photo 10. South (secondary) façade of the F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing northwest.

The blue-frosted window surrounds identify the portion of the building that was occupied by two smaller retailers in 1960. The distinctive red-and-gold Woolworth sign and red-and-white awning are visible on the left, as the Woolworth store was L-shaped and had entrances on both its east and west facades. The stone monument near the southeast corner is topped with a small bronze statue, “The Cup of Freedom” by Charles Jenkins. It is not within the NHL boundary.



Photo 11. North and east (front) façades, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing southwest.

Until the late 1980s, the Woolworth had a similar but smaller building directly to its north that contained storefronts. Behind the brick wall extending north of the Woolworth is surface parking.



Photo 12. West (back) façade, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing east.

Prior to the 2005–2009 rehabilitation, a small masonry delivery entrance was located at the southwest corner of the building. Its vestibule connected to the freight elevator. The “bump-up” (the three-story portion in the middle of the west wall) houses a stairwell and the historic freight elevator. The bricked-in windows on the left (north) side of the façade are where the lunch counter is located. All of these modifications—bricking in the windows, the addition of the delivery entrance, freight elevator and basement-to-roof stairs—were likely made during the 1939 Woolworth conversion.



Photo 13. West (back) façade, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing east.

Compare to Figure 1. The storefronts along One February Place (W. Sycamore Street in 1960) are gone, but the historic sewer covers indicate where the February 1, 1960, photograph of the Greensboro Four was taken.



Photo 14. F. W. Woolworth Company Building east façade (partial), December 2023. Camera facing southwest.

Compare to Figure 6. Woolworth's sidewalks are an important element of its significance, as picketers marched along them, with the east façade as their backdrop, until the sit-in was settled in July 1960. The Meyers Building is visible to the left. The concrete monument in front of the glass store window, installed in 1990, has a bronze plaque commemorating the sit-in. Its inscription is inaccurate and ICRCM plans to remove it.



Photo 15. New entrance on south (secondary) façade, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing northwest.

The new entrance is located in the westernmost bay of the space that contained the Jewel Box in 1960.



Photo 16. Southeast end of the east (front) façade, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing west.

Originally this wider bay on the south end of the buildings was used by a single retailer, Whelan Drugs. When the building was converted to accommodate the Woolworth, this section was divided into two smaller retail shops. The rehabilitation that converted the structure into the International Civil Rights Center & Museum used that portion of the exterior, always distinct from the Woolworth, for signage.



Photo 17. Upper portion of south (secondary) façade, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing north.

The second story is more ornate than the first and uses numerous Art Deco flourishes. The Chicago-style windows have frosted side lights and scalloped lintel caps. Note the alignment of the copper urns and palmettes above the pilasters. The larger southeast bay is further delineated by decorative copper panels below the palmettes and vertical fluting in the wall above.



Photo 18. East (front) façade detail, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing west.

The relatively simple copper stringcourse is not original but was in place during the period of significance.



Photo 19. East (front) façade, south end parapet, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing southwest.

Note the carving details, including the acroterium's palmette design, the inverted palmettes below flanked by medallions, and the vignette design frieze below the parapet.



Photo 20. Lunch counter of the F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing west.

Compare to Figure 4. The north counter is seen on the right; the west counter runs across the back.



Photo 21. Lunch counter of the F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing north.

The west counter appears on the left; the north runs along the back. The escalator and the wall on the far right are new.



Photo 22. West lunch counter of the F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing southwest.

Compare to Figure 3. The west counter, looking toward its southwest end. In 1960, the area beyond the end was open to the south façade windows and a set of stairs were located just beyond the counter.



Photo 23. North lunch counter of the F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing east.

Compare to Figure 5. The north counter appears along the left side. On the right is an entrance to exhibits with the interactive kiosk in front of it.



Photo 24. North lunch counter of the F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing northeast.

Compare to Figure 2. Note the end of the counter as it angles diagonally and then back to the north wall. The gap in the counter was added after 1963 and before 1994.



Photo 25. Lunch counter detail of the F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing north.

The dumbwaiters and electrical panel are historic. The cash register was found in the building and resembles the one as seen in historic (1960) photographs, where it is located behind the counter roughly midway down the north wall. The gap by the corner was added ca. 1963.



Photo 26. Behind the southwest end of the lunch counter, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing northwest.

Note the historic sink and patched ceramic floor tile behind the counter.



Photo 27. “Ghost” of U-shaped bay on the north lunch counter, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing east.

The locations of the four U-shaped bays, constructed ca. 1963 to add additional seating to the north counter, are easily seen today.



Photo 28. Southwest end of the lunch counter, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing west.

The southwest end angled back toward the west wall historically, as evidenced by the stool base “ghosts” and the angled terrazzo flooring. Note the stainless steel panel at the end of the counter, which is different than the wood panels found at the counter ends at the two gaps.



Photo 29. Interactive kiosk and exhibit entrance near north lunch counter, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing northeast.



Photo 30. Main-level lobby, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, January 2024. Camera facing northwest.

Note the suspended ceiling panels and the difference in color of the terrazzo floor. A gift shop is behind the glass wall. The partition behind the desk is black slate.



Photo 31. Top of public stairwell, main floor, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing northeast.



Photo 32. Treads of public stairwell, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing north.



Photo 33. Public stairwell, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing southwest.



Photo 34. Second-floor interior, lobby/exhibit area, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, April 2023. Camera facing north.

The second-floor lobby is lined with wall exhibits which continue around the corner and along the corridor running toward the front (east) side of the building.



Photo 35. Second-floor interior, film and exhibit nook, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, April 2023. Camera facing east.

The east-west corridor with exhibits also includes a space for showing films to small groups.



Photo 36. Second-floor interior, administrative area, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, August 2022. Camera facing south.

The second floor contains offices, meeting rooms, the Founders Library, and an archives room.



Photo 37. Second-story window from the interior, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, December 2023. Camera facing east.

Note the original hardware.



Photo 38. Basement-level lobby and exhibit space, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, June 2023. Camera facing west.

This space is used for receptions and exhibits.

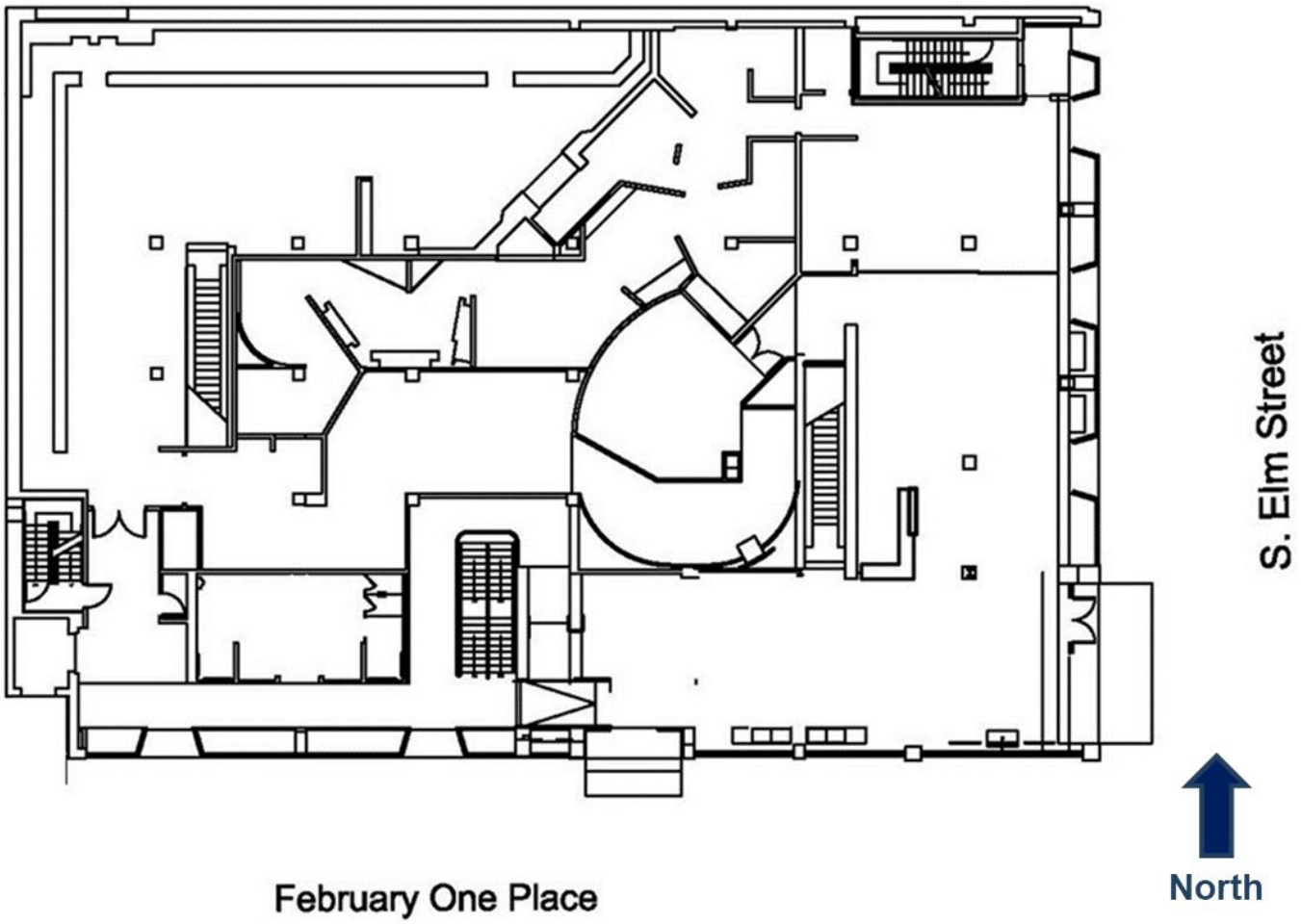


Photo 39. Basement-level auditorium, F. W. Woolworth Company Building. June 2023. Camera facing west.

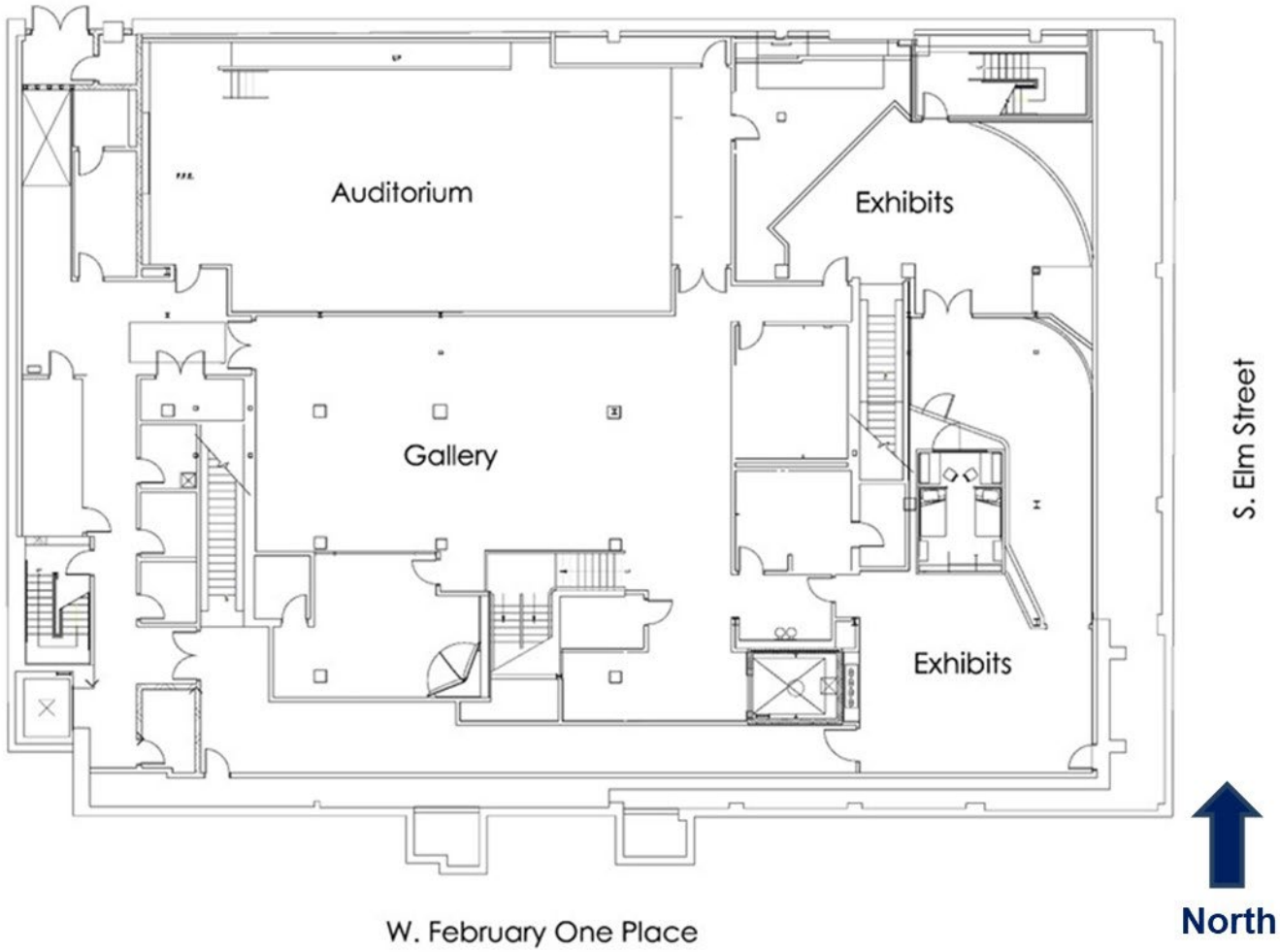
Visitors are offered the option of watching a filmed tour in this space, which is also used for community meetings, presentations, and programs.

FLOOR PLANS

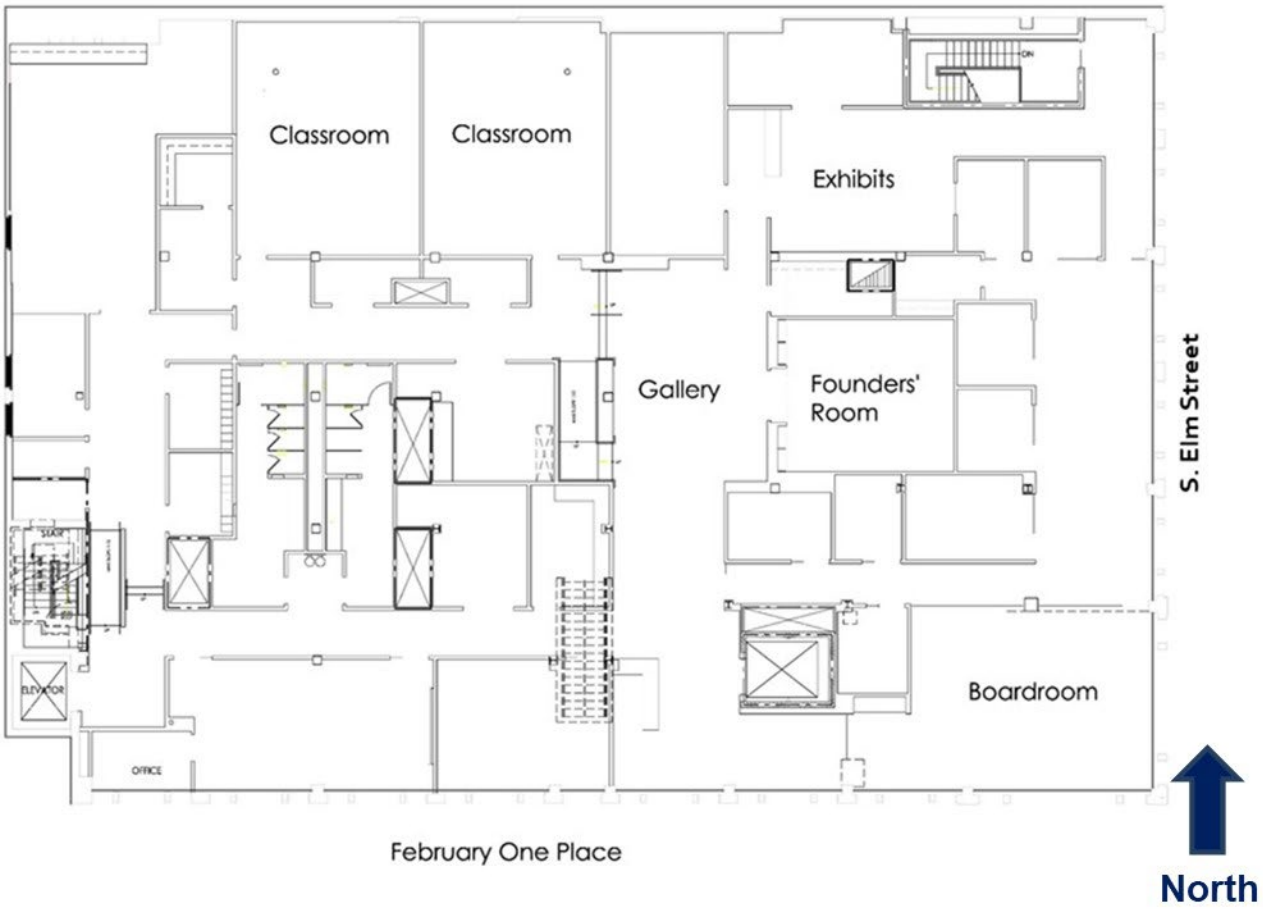
Floor Plan 1. First-Floor (Street-Level) Plan, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, 2023



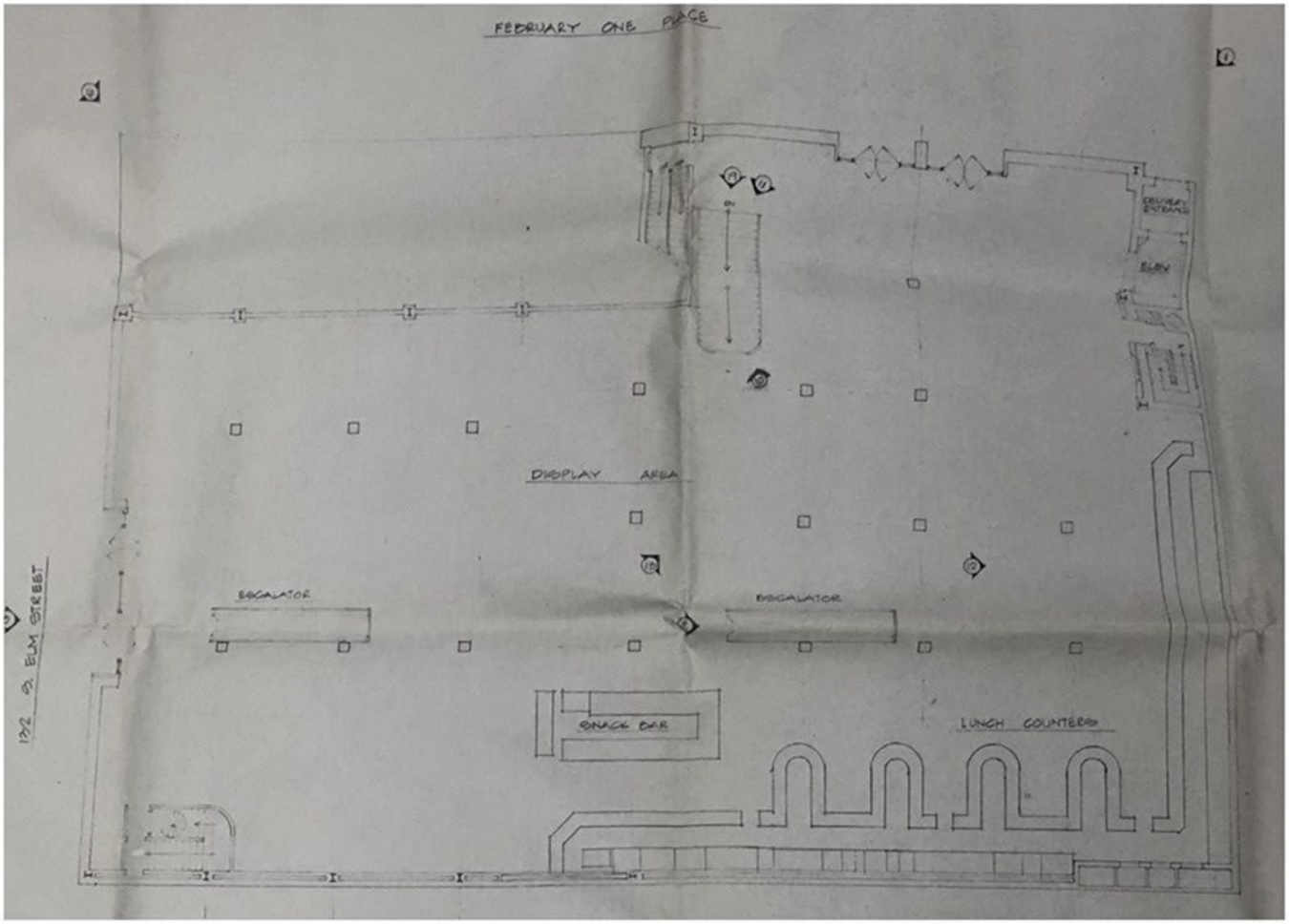
Floor Plan 2. Basement-Level Plan, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, 2023



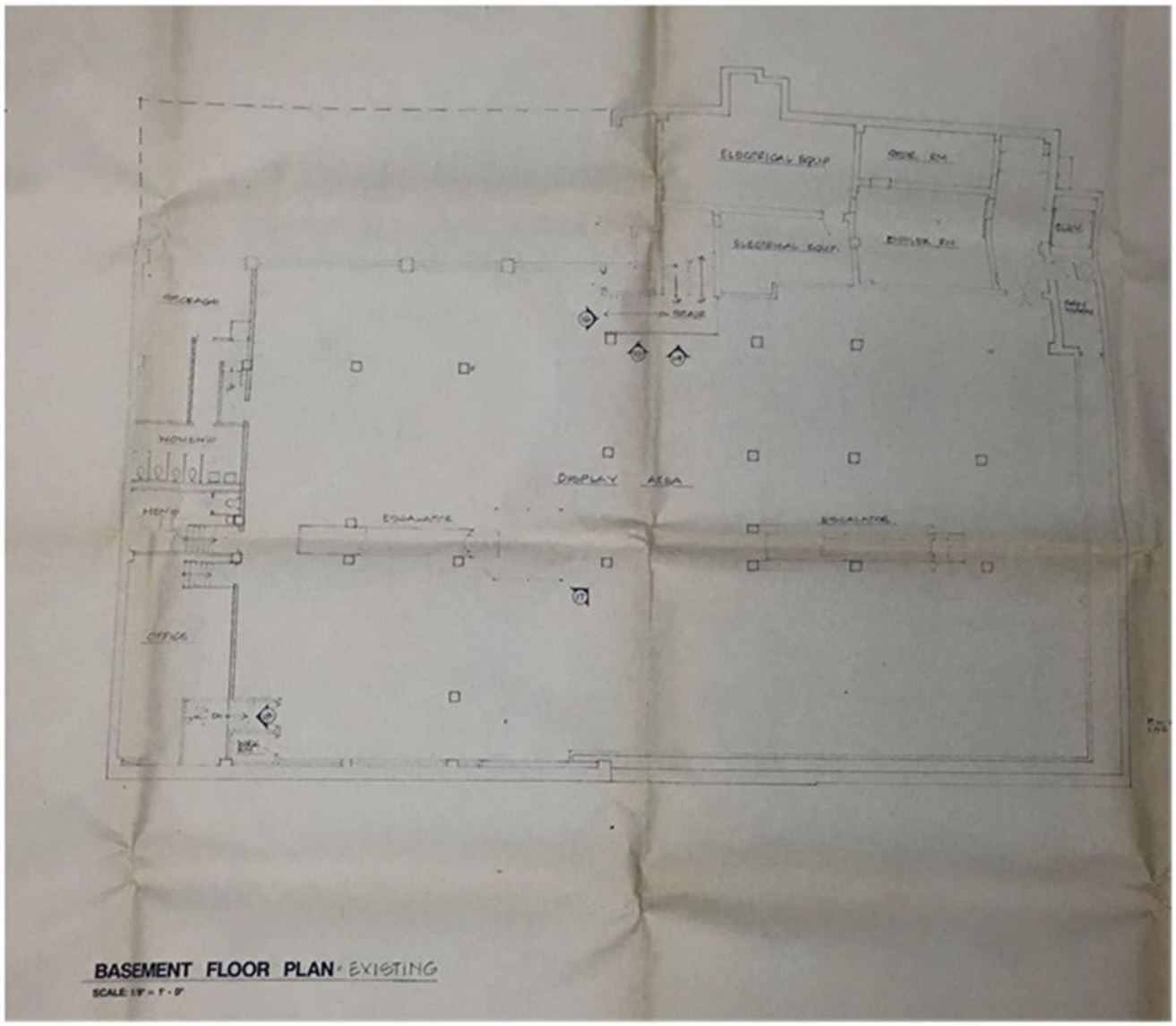
Floor Plan 3. Second-Level Plan, F. W. Woolworth Company Building, 2023



Floor Plan 4. First-Level Plan, 1994, Clinton E. Gravely, AIA

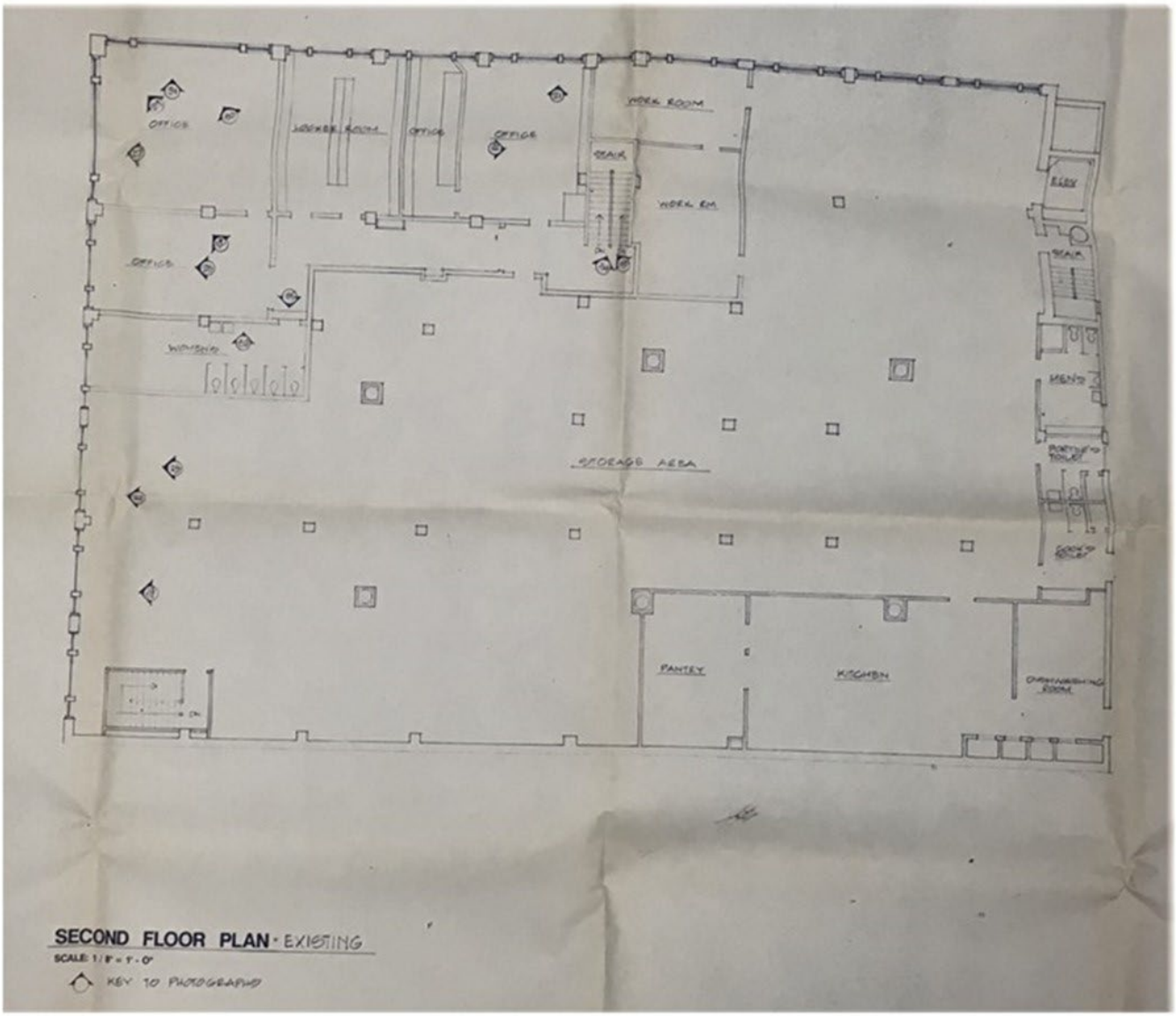


Floor Plan 5. Basement-Level Plan, 1994, Clinton E. Gravely, AIA



South

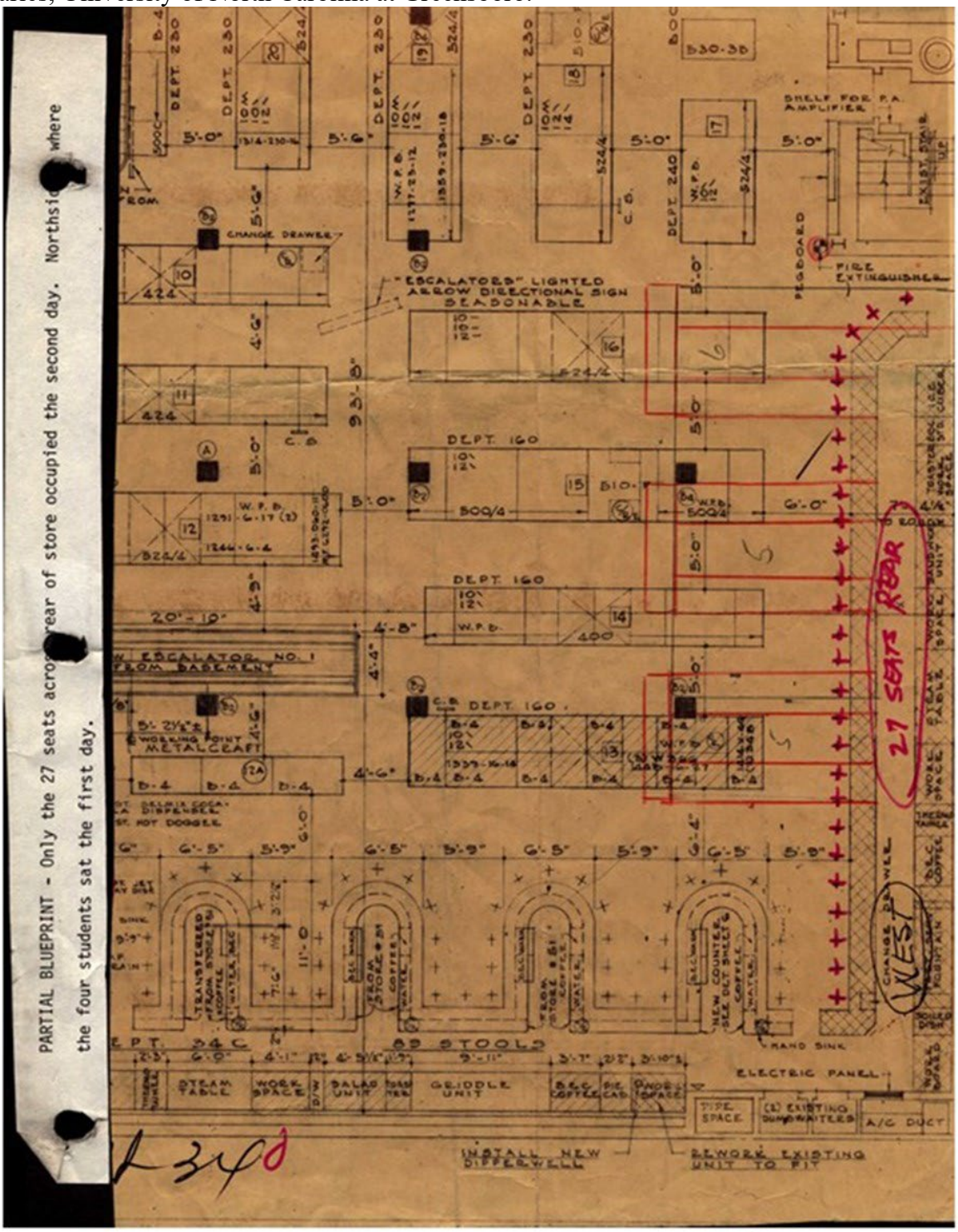
Floor Plan 6. Second-Level Plan, 1994, Clinton E. Gravely, AIA



South

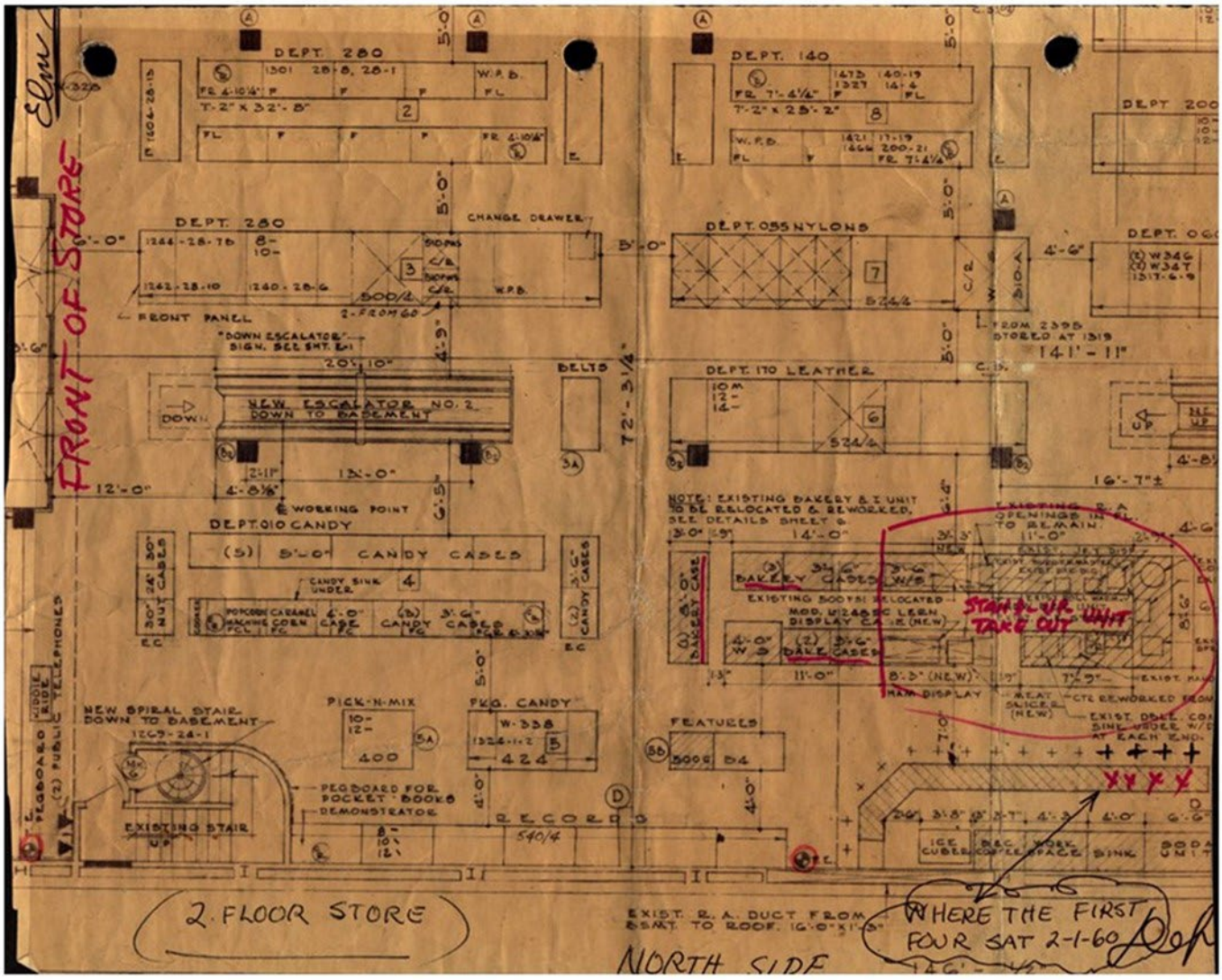
Note the kitchen, pantry, and dishwashing room located directly over the north portion of the lunch counter below. The small "cook's toilet" and "porter's toilet" were likely the segregated restrooms for African Americans.

Floor Plan 7.A. First-Level (partial) Plan, ca. 1963, annotated, F. W. Woolworth Building. Clarence Lee Harris Papers, MSS 0141, Martha Blakeney Hodges Special Collections and University Archives, University Libraries, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.



See caption to Floor Plan 7.B on next page.

Floor Plan 7.B. First Level (partial) Plan, ca. 1963, annotated, F. W. Woolworth Building. Clarence Lee Harris Papers, MSS 0141, Martha Blakeney Hodges Special Collections and University Archives, University Libraries, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.



South

These two sheets are the surviving remnants of the ca. 1963 renovation plan for the F. W. Woolworth Company. They do not exactly align–there is a small gap–and some of the south portion of the floor plan is missing. The annotations in red were made later by Clarence Harris. The specs indicate that three of the four new U-shaped bays were “transferred from Store No. 51” and the fourth was constructed to match. Other changes to the north section of the lunch counter were that the angled northwest end was extended to the wall, and a gap was left near the corner intersection. Also shown are two new escalators, a spiral staircase to the basement in the northeast corner, and a reconfiguration of the snack bar area. Notations show that before these changes, the snack bar sold hamburgers, hot dogs and barbeque, as well as cold drinks.

FIGURES

NOTE: The historic photographs depicted in this document may be subject to copyright and other restrictions. It is the user's responsibility to obtain all necessary permissions from the applicable rightsholder(s) if you wish to use the photographs for any other purpose than is permitted in connection with this document.



Figure 1. The Greensboro Four walking away from the F. W. Woolworth Building, February 1, 1960, camera facing northwest. Photo by Jack Moebes. Courtesy of Jack Moebes Photo Archive. All rights reserved.

Compare to Photo 13. From left to right: David Richmond, Franklin McCain, Ezell A. Blair, Jr. (now Jibreel Khazan), and Joseph McNeil. A portion of the F. W. Woolworth Company sign on the south façade is visible in the upper right corner. The men are passing Walton's Shoe Shop, which was located four doors west of the Woolworth.



Figure 2. Four protestors at F. W. Woolworth Building, February 2, 1960, camera facing northeast. Photo by Jack Moebes. Courtesy of Jack Moebes Photo Archive. All rights reserved.

Compare to Photo 24. Perhaps the most famous picture taken of the Greensboro sit-ins, this image was taken on the second day of the protests. Two of the four men pictured participated in the first day of the sit-in. They are sitting at the north counter. From left to right: Joseph McNeil, Franklin McCain, Billy Smith, and Clarence Henderson



Figure 3. Protestors at F. W. Woolworth Building, 1960, camera facing southwest. Photo by Jack Moebes. Courtesy of Jack Moebes Photo Archive. All rights reserved.

Compare to Photo 22. The two protestors are sitting at the west counter.



Figure 4. Policemen in empty F. W. Woolworth Building, February 6, 1960, camera facing west. *Greensboro News & Record*. Used with permission.

Compare to Photo 20. After a bomb threat on February 6, the F. W. Woolworth Building was evacuated for an afternoon.



Figure 5. Protestors at F. W. Woolworth Building, 1960, camera facing east. Photo by Jack Moebes. Courtesy of Jack Moebes Photo Archive. All rights reserved.

Compare to Photo 23. The protestors are sitting at the north counter. The wall mirror group in the foreground is where five projector screens are mounted today. Note the white-on-black sign on the upper right, reading (although cut off) “Base”(ment) and “Sales” (Room) with a downward arrow; this is likely a wayfinder to the stairs or elevator to the lower shopping area.



fa

Figure 6. Protestors picketing outside the F. W. Woolworth Building, 1960, camera facing south. Photo by Jack Moebes. Courtesy of Jack Moebes Photo Archive. All rights reserved.

Compare to Photo 14.



Figure 7. S. Elm Street looking north, 1965. Greensboro History Museum. Used with permission.

Compare to Photo 2. The F. W. Woolworth Building is not visible in this image, but it is on the east (left) side of the street beyond the Kress and Meyer stores and behind them, the Jefferson Standard Building. Most of these structures still exist today.



Figure 8. F. W. Woolworth Building, 1939, south (secondary) and east (front) facades, camera facing northwest. Greensboro History Museum. Used with permission.

Compare to Figures 9 and 11, and Photo 8. Taken soon after the building was renovated to accommodate the Woolworth store. Commercial storefront buildings are visible at both ends of the Woolworth, with those to the north seeming to be sharing a common wall. Two smaller retailers, Ned Cohen's Jewel Box and Lee's Millinery, occupy the space at the southeast corner, so the Woolworth store is actually L-shaped. This image confirms that the original exterior of the Woolworth closely resembles that found during the period of significance, as seen in the next figure, and that seen today.



Figure 9. F. W. Woolworth Building, August 26, 1959, south (secondary) and east (front) facades, camera facing northwest. © Carol W. Martin/Greensboro History Museum Collection. Used with permission.

Compare to Figures 8 and 11, and Photo 8. By the period of significance, the corner retailer has modified its entrance and added a large vertical corner sign featuring a clock and neon lighting. The Woolworth portion appears unchanged from its installation in 1939.



Figure 10. Lunch counter, F. W. Woolworth Building, 1994, camera facing northeast. Greensboro Lunch Counter research files, Division of Political History, National Museum of American History, Washington D.C. Used with permission.

Taken during the Smithsonian Institution's acquisition of a portion of the lunch counter, this image shows the U-shaped configuration installed along part of the north counter ca. 1963. On the right is the "snack bar," a later redesign of the stand-up counter that was the only eating option for African Americans prior to Woolworth's desegregation.



Figure 11. F. W. Woolworth Company Building, 1976, camera facing northwest. Courtesy of the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, a division of the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Used with permission.

Compare to Figures 8 and 9, and Photo 8. Sometime after 1959 and before the mid-1970s, Woolworth changed its storefront configuration of the main (east) and secondary (south) facades to have a single double-door entry centered under its portions of the facades. The changes were likely part of the ca.1963 renovations.



Figure 12. First floor interior, F. W. Woolworth Building, 1952, camera facing north. © Carol W. Martin/Greensboro History Museum Collection. Used with permission.

The basement and first floors of the Woolworth were mostly open, with large floor spaces filled with merchandise displays. Here on the first floor, the displays come quite close to the lunch counter, visible on the right side of this photograph, creating a narrow walkway between the two.