

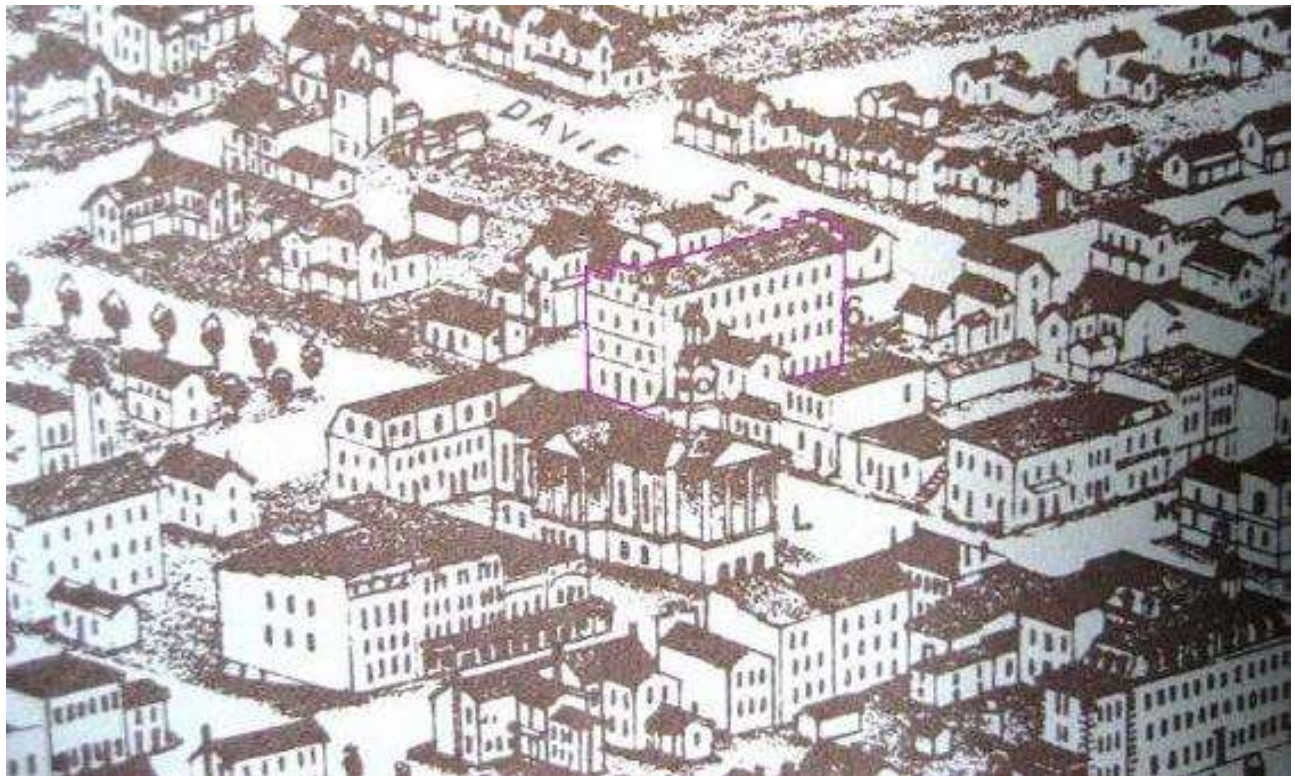


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Greensboro's Tobacco Heritage, Part 2



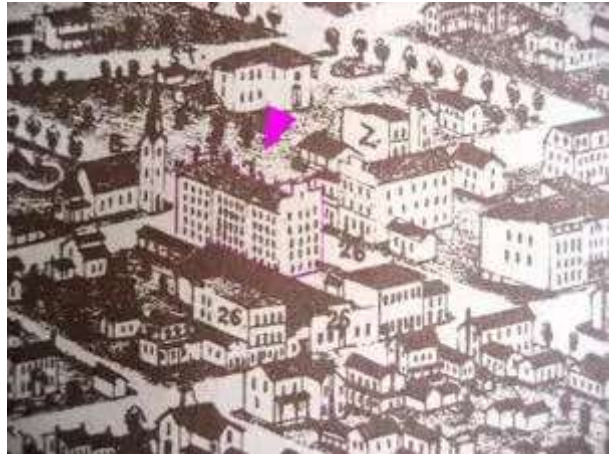
The 1890s was a time of change for Greensboro, as the sleepy county seat with a smattering of manufacturing facilities grew into a small city laden with industry. Shaded village lanes (such as

Elm shaded Elm Street) lined with ample Queen Anne-style residences gave way to hot dusty streets lined with brick tobacco warehouses, small-scale textile mills, and commercial establishments. Industrial expansion, enabled by a growing railroad network, was transforming villages across the state into burgeoning centers of trade and commerce, exemplified by massive industrial complexes on the outskirts of town such as Proximity, Revolution, and Pomona.



Illustrative of this growth and change was the H. W. Cobb and Company, a tobacco leaf dealer and a cross-town competitor of H. L. Scott reviewed in Tobacco Heritage, Part 2. Both Cobb and Scott were mentioned in an 1892 promotional brochure of Greensboro as “energetic, reliable and prosperous dealers.” The impressive brick building (pictured-right, and outlined in pink-below) that housed the business certainly illustrated its success, rising five full floors above the intersection of Greene and Gaston (today Friendly Avenue) streets.

Historian Ethel Stephens Arnett recalled this active period of change in her 1955 publication “Greensboro North Carolina, the County Seat of Guilford” by stating “In the industrial surge of the late nineteenth century, there were three factories and thirteen plants where leaf was prepared for further manufacturing [in Greensboro], with tobacco coming in from Virginia, Tennessee, and South Carolina. Wagons which brought the raw plant into the Greensboro market covered several blocks; and farmers came from such distances that tobacco warehouses provided stalls for horses overnight while men slept on quilts spread upon floors of the building.”



By 1907, the building was occupied by the American Cigar Company, which was later taken over by the Seidenburg & Company Cigar Factory. R. J. Seidenburg operated factories in Tampa, Greenville SC, and Petersburg VA, and manufactured a well-regarded brand of very mild coronas.

By 1925 the building had been destroyed, replaced by a series of storefronts and a five-story furniture store shortly thereafter. The classically inspired furniture building was, in turn, was re-clad in the 1980s with a reflective glass curtain, and stands as the Investors Title Insurance Company.

The image to the right was taken from the same approximate location as the first image.



Written by Benjamin Briggs

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place-making. With diverse initiatives that help you to restore, explore, and connect with your community, Preservation Greensboro provides a voice for revitalization, improved quality of life, and conservation of historic resources for future generations. Are you a member yet? Learn more about Greensboro's only member-supported preservation organization by exploring our [website](#) or joining our [Facebook](#) page. Please join us today!

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David Wharton

August 15, 2007 at 5:37 pm (Edit)

Great use of photos and the Sanborn maps, Benjamin. This is great stuff — please keep it up!



swedsnus

January 15, 2008 at 9:31 am (Edit)

It is very good writing!

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