

# LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK PROGRAM

Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission

## Winston-Salem Southbound Railway Freight Warehouse and Office

**Local Historic Landmark #82**

**300 S. Liberty St., Winston-Salem**

**Construction Date: 1913**

**Adaptive Rehabilitation: 1990**

**Landmark Designation Date: 11/04/1991**

Improved transportation facilities were of tremendous importance to North Carolina's economic development during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In Winston and Salem, local businessmen and industrialists realized that establishing rail arteries in and out of the community was key to economic success, particularly in light of the tobacco industry. Thus, city and town leaders devoted much attention to rail line development.

In 1910, Edward Rondthaler, pastor of the Salem Congregation of the Moravian Church, recorded in his annual Memorabilia that the great feature of the year was:

"...the completion of the Southbound Railroad, under the presidency of Mr. Henry E. Fries. This road connects Winston-Salem with Wadesboro. It is eight-nine miles long, and was built in the most substantial manner, during a period of fourteen months, at an expense of four million dollars. It is the joint enterprise of the Norfolk and Western and the Atlantic Coast Line Railways. It will have the practical effect of putting our community on the main line instead of its being on branch lines as hitherto. Being operated under the control of the Atlantic Coast Line, the Southbound will give the community direct connection with all the large railroad systems of the State."

A mere three years later, Rondthaler wrote that:

"The greatest industrial feature of the year was the opening of the extensive Southbound Railway Station for freight traffic. The railroad spur up the Tar Branch has been most substantially built, and will prove of very great value to the community."



Photographs courtesy of Heather Fearnbach

Over the ensuing years, additional freight facilities were constructed. In 1916, the Norfolk and Western built a new freight station, and in 1926, both Union Station and a new freight depot for South Railroad were completed. In 1927 and 1928, Southern Railroad and Norfolk and Western built new yards at an expense of three million dollars.

Since freight transport was so important, on February 7, 1913, the Winston-Salem Southbound Railway Company purchased a lot from the Salem Board of Commissioners

on the west side of S. Liberty Street, directly across the street from the Salem Town Hall (Local Historic Landmark #65). The lot was to be the site of the Southbound's freight warehouse and office.

The Winston-Salem Southbound Railway Freight Warehouse and Office was designed by Wilmington architect, Joseph F. Leitner. The New Bern firm of Rhodes and Underwood was awarded the contract to construct the facility. The building was completed in July 1913. Over time, the building's basement and first story were leased to companies for storage. However, the second floor continued to serve as the railroad's general offices until the building was sold in 1985.

The Winston-Salem Southbound Railway Freight Warehouse and Office remains as an outstanding example of early 20th century industrial architecture, incorporating elements of the Italianate style. This style was typically used during the early 20th century for industrial and commercial buildings. The building



*Southbound Railway Freight Station on South Liberty Street, c. 1920*

Courtesy of Forsyth County Public Library Photograph Collection

remains as the only surviving railroad building constructed prior to 1925 in Winston-Salem.

In 1990, the building was sensitively rehabilitated as office and restaurant space, as it remains today.

## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Winston-Salem Southbound Railway  
Freight Warehouse and Office  
National Register Nomination  
<http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/FY1339.pdf>

[http://www2.journalnow.com/list/  
railroad-turns-100-november-24-2010/gallery/](http://www2.journalnow.com/list/railroad-turns-100-november-24-2010/gallery/)

[http://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/?query=winston-  
salem&facet.workLocation=Forsyth+County&page=2](http://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/?query=winston-salem&facet.workLocation=Forsyth+County&page=2)



This information is also available  
at the Forsyth County  
Historic Resources Commission's web site:  
<http://www.ForsythCountyHRC.org>