NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NAT REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

103

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

Resub

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

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORY & EDUCATION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1. Name of Property

historic name Seaboard Air Line Railway Depot
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number W. Pine Ave. (S.C. Hwy 151) not for publication __
city or town McBee vicinity _____
state South Carolina code 25 county Chesterfield zip code 29101

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide __x__ locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mary W. Edmonds
Signature of certifying official

12/30/98
Date

_____
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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4. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this property is:

__X__ entered in the National Register 9/2/99
___ See continuation sheet.

____ determined eligible for the National Register _____ _____
___ See continuation sheet.

____ determined not eligible for the National Register _____ _____

____ removed from the National Register _____ _____

____ other (explain): _____

for _____ _____
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

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Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

___ private
__X__ public-local
___ public-State
___ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

__X__ building(s)
___ district
___ site
___ structure
___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
__1__	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
__1__	__0__	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register __0__

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

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
Transportation	Rail-related

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
Education	Library
Recreation and Culture	Museum

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
roof Asbestos
walls Brick
other

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

See continuation sheets, pp. 7-8.

8. Statement of Significance

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

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

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

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

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

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

_____ a owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
_____ b removed from its original location.
_____ c a birthplace or a grave.
_____ d a cemetery.
_____ e a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
_____ f a commemorative property.
_____ g less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation
Architecture

Period of Significance 1914 Significant Dates 1914

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder J.D. Grandy, Charlotte, N.C.

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

See continuation sheets, pp. 9-14.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

See continuation sheets, pp. 15-16.

Previous documentation on file (NPS)
___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data
___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
_X_ University
___ Other
Name of repository: South Caroliniana Library, USC, Columbia, SC

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	568180	3814240	3	__	_____	_____
2	__	_____	_____	4	__	_____	_____

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property a continuation sheet.)

See continuation sheet, p. 16.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

See continuation sheet, p. 16.

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11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Daniel J. Vivian, Research Associate
organization National Center for Preservation Technology and Training
National Park Service
United States Department of the Interior
date 5/18/98
street & number NSU Box 5682 telephone (318) 357-6464
city or town Natchitoches state LA zip code 71497

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Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:
Continuation Sheets
Maps
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs
Representative black and white photographs of the property.
Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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Property Owner

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)
name Town of McBee
street & number P.O. Box 248 telephone
city or town McBee state SC zip code 29101-0248

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Property Description

The Seaboard Air Line Railway depot in McBee, South Carolina, is a one-story red brick building that stands on West Pine Avenue (S.C. 151) approximately 500 feet northwest of its intersection with U.S. Highway 1. The depot is located within the town's central commercial district and was built on a modified rectangular plan. Its wooden window frames and trimwork are painted white; each of its several doors is a deep forest green. Three brick chimney stacks protrude from the peak of the sharply-pitched hipped roof, which is covered with pale green asphalt shingles. A single dormer with two casement windows projects from the roof on the west facade. The depot retains its historical integrity and has undergone no significant alterations since its construction in the spring of 1914.

The South Carolina Railroad Commission ordered construction of the depot in the fall of 1913 with the intention that it would serve as the union passenger station for the Seaboard Air Line Railway and the South Carolina Western Railway, which at the time were the two largest and most significant of the three railroads providing service to McBee. But soon after work on the building began in March 1914, a merger made the South Carolina Western part of the Seaboard system. Thus, by the time the depot became operational, it was used exclusively by Seaboard trains. It has therefore been known throughout its history as the "Seaboard depot."

The aesthetic features of the depot do not fall within the defining characteristics of any major architectural style. Rather, it is typical of small-town railroad stations of the period, which were uniformly designed to serve their intended purposes as efficiently as possible.[1] Such structures exemplified the "form follows function" maxim; in many cases, features that seemed purely decorative in fact played an essential practical role in day-to-day railroad operations. The dramatically flared eaves of the McBee depot's hipped roof are an

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[1]On the architecture of turn-of-the-century small-town depots, see especially John R. Stilgoe, *Metropolitan Corridor: Railroads and the American Scene* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 195-203.

excellent example: at first glance they appear entirely ornamental, but in fact their primary function was to provide shelter for passengers awaiting trains and baggage carts during inclement weather.

Functional considerations also constituted the basis for the floorplan of the depot, which is essentially a three-part composition: a large passenger waiting room on each side of a narrow central section, which historically housed the offices of the station keeper and staff. Ticket windows on three sides of this central bay allowed railroad personnel to serve passengers standing at trackside and in both waiting rooms. Dual waiting rooms were of course mandatory in the Jim Crow South since railroad companies were required by law to provide separate accommodations for the races.

The depot was restored to its original condition in the mid-1980s, following its purchase by the town of McBee in November 1976. It serves today as the McBee Library and Railroad Museum. A variety of railroad equipment and photographs of early twentieth-century Seaboard trains are displayed in the museum, which occupies the waiting room at the northern end of the structure. The waiting room at the opposite end of the depot houses the town library.

In addition, the surrounding property has changed little in the more than nine decades since the depot's construction. Running directly alongside the depot is a rail line that was historically part of Seaboard's north-south mainline between Tampa and Richmond; this line is still in use today as part of the CSX Transportation system. Moreover, since the grounds of the building are presently used for displaying a variety of early twentieth-century railroad equipment, they reflect the historic role of the depot. Among the items exhibited are two baggage carts and a rail tie dolly once used by maintenance crews, which stand on the side of the depot fronting Pine Avenue; in the rear is a decommissioned caboose.

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Statement of Significance

The Seaboard Air Line Railway Depot in McBee, S.C. is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A on the basis of its significance as a structure associated with the railroad transportation industry, and under Criterion C as an excellent intact example of a typical small-town passenger station of the early twentieth-century. Built in 1914, the depot was literally the keystone of McBee, the most successful of the several towns that arose along the Seaboard line between Columbia and Cheraw soon after its completion in 1900. It is thus locally significant for the prominent role it played in the town's early history and commercial development, and as a tangible reminder of that period which retains its historic architectural integrity and has undergone no significant alterations since its construction.

The general outlines of the community began to take shape immediately after the Columbia-Cheraw line opened in the summer of 1900. A set of modest facilities--"two sets of standard section-houses . . . a 55,000-gallon capacity [water] tank . . . [and] a cotton platform"--built by Seaboard at a remote site deep in the pine forests of Chesterfield County established the nucleus of the town.[2] By the fall of 1901, it boasted a total population of 151 and was an incorporated municipality.[3] In gratitude to the railroad, citizens named the community after Greenville native

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[2] *The State* (Columbia, S.C.), 1 June 1910, p. 4, col. 1 (first quotation); *First Annual Report of the Seaboard Air Line Railway for the Year Ending June 30th, 1901* (Norfolk, Va.: Burke & Gregory, n.d.), p. 11 (second quotation).

[3] Petition for Municipal Commission, Proposed Town of McBee, S.C., 18 September 1901, Municipal Commissions, II, p. 33; Certificate of Incorporation, McBee, S.C., 8 October 1901, Municipal Commissions, III, both in Records of the Secretary of State of South Carolina, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C. (hereafter SCDAH).

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Vardry McBee, popular superintendent of the Seaboard system.[4]

McBee might well have remained merely a small, isolated flagstop town had it not been for the high volume of traffic that passed daily along the Seaboard line. The ninety-one-mile section of track between Columbia and Cheraw, built during the period of rapid expansion that made Seaboard the third-largest rail system in the Southeast by the turn of the century, formed part of its north-south mainline between Tampa and Richmond.[5] Thus, from its outset, the mercantile community that arose in McBee held close ties to larger urban markets throughout the southeastern states. The economic life of the town was almost entirely dependent on rail=related commerce, particularly those activities associated with its expanding role as a shipping center for local agricultural products. Later, tourism also became a factor, although its impact on the local economy remained relatively modest until the teens and twenties. But largely by virtue of Seaboard's promotion of winter resorts in Florida and on the Gulf Coast, McBee, like many communities in the Carolinas, hosted considerable numbers of visitors from northern states en route to vacation destinations further South, providing local merchants with substantial patronage. In all, the constant flow of rail traffic through McBee did much to foster and shape the growth of the community in the years after 1900.

In addition, the access to regional and national markets

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[4] On McBee's career with Seaboard, see Daniel J. Vivian, "Railroad Development and Community Change in the New South: A Social History of the Seaboard Air Line Railway in the South Carolina Midlands, 1898-1915," M.A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1997, pp. 100-111.

[5] On Seaboard's corporate development during this era and the construction of the Columbia-Cheraw line, see especially Edward Sherwood Meade, "The Seaboard Air Line," *Railway World*, 10 November 1905, pp. 895-896; James A. Ward, "Seaboard Air Line Railroad," in Keith L. Bryant, ed., *Railroads in the Age of Regulation, 1900-1980* (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1988), pp. 394-395; Vivian, "Railroad Development and Community Change," pp. 24-57.

afforded by Seaboard's mainline made possible the development of large scale commercial activity in the area immediately surrounding McBee, which in turn served as an impetus for further growth within the community. Two corporations, the Chesterfield Development Company and the Mellitta Land Company, took the lead by commencing timbering operations near McBee as soon as the railroad was open. Their combined landholdings totaled roughly 40,000 acres. After the latter company had stripped bare most of the lands in its possession, it refurbished its logging railroad for passenger and freight service, thereby establishing the Charlotte, Monroe & Columbia Railroad. By 1905, it was operating an eighteen-mile line between McBee and Jefferson, a small community to the north. As a result of McBee's newly acquired status as a junction town, landvalues in the area skyrocketed and the population jumped sharply, increasing from less than 200 to over 700 in less than a year.[6]

Rapid growth within the town's commercial sector and a commensurate expansion of its municipal infrastructure accompanied the population boom. The most important enterprises to emerge during the era were the State Bank of McBee, the Highlands Telephone Company, the McBee Drug Company, and the 22-room Hotel Hampton, which counted tourists, traveling salesmen, and railroad officials among its regular patrons. Municipal authorities erected a $10,000 school building to meet the "modern educational needs" of the burgeoning community, built a waterworks that was reputed to be a model of purity and efficiency, and installed a street lighting system. So impressive was the community's growth that in April 1912, *The State* reporter William P. Etchinson labeled McBee "[a] town truly favored of fortune."[7]

As McBee entered its second decade in existence, it was clear to many citizens that the dizzying pace of development had

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[6]*The State*, 24 May 1910, p. 17, cols. 1-5; 17 April 1912, p. 10, cols. 1-7; H.V. and H.W. Poor, *Poor's Manual of the Railroads of the United States, 1906* (New York: American Bank Note Co., 1906), p. 262; *Railroad Gazette* XXXIV, no. 17 (25 April 1902), p. 315.

[7]*The State*, 17 April 1912, p. 10, cols. 1-7.

begun to strain the town's limited transportation facilities. Yet despite frequent calls for construction of a new, more modern depot, no action was taken until conditions grew markedly worse as a result of further railroad development in the Sandhills. In March 1911, a new company, the South Carolina Western Railway, began operating a forty-mile line running from McBee to Florence. According to one report, the event marked the beginning of "a new era" for Sandhills residents since the "[t]erritory that is opened by this new road has long been suffering for want of proper railroad facilities."[8] But for McBee, the immediate consequence was increased congestion on the streets of the town. Wagon traffic reached unprecedented levels as local couriers attempted to accommodate the volume of shipments requiring transfer between Seaboard's trains and those of the two other railroads serving the town. Not infrequently, traveling salesmen, tourists, and other passengers entered the fray as they rushed to make connections. For many townspeople, the entire spectacle raised troubling questions about the deleterious effects of "progress."

Indeed, it was not long before the state railroad commission stepped in and took decisive action to improve the town's transportation facilities. On October 23, 1913, the commission issued orders instructing Seaboard and the South Carolina Western Railway to decide upon a site for a new passenger depot within thirty days.[9] The management of each company complied and in short order, plans were underway to begin construction early the following spring.

Not surprisingly, when work on the new depot commenced on March 2, 1914, the undertaking captivated the attention of almost all residents of the community. The March 5 *Cheraw Chronicle*

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[8]*Cheraw Chronicle* (Cheraw, S.C.), 23 March 1911, p. 1, col. 2 (quotations); *The State*, 17 April 1912, p. 10, col. 3. The South Carolina and Western Railway was absorbed by the Seaboard system three years later. See Agreement of Merger or Consolidation, 3 April 1914, File 157, Corporation Charter Division, Office of the Secretary of State of South Carolina, SCDAH.

[9]*Cheraw Chronicle*, 23 October 1913, p. 8, col. 1.

announced, "McBee has received a new impetus. The much talked of and long hoped for union station has at last become a reality."[10] The news also received attention in Columbia, the state capitol, where the *Columbia Record* reported, "The citizens of McBee are enthused over the prospect of a bigger, broader and better McBee."[11] J.D. Grandy of Charlotte, North Carolina, was the contractor for the building, which was reputed to "be fitted out with all the modern conveniences and . . . the equal in every respect to stations in towns many times the size of McBee." The facility entered use in early June. The structure that had previously served as Seaboard's passenger depot, situated along the railroad about 100 yards south of the new building, was subsequently used for freight.[12]

Today, with the hindsight gained from the passage of nearly a century, its is clear that construction of the Seaboard depot stood among the crowning achievements of the era that marked McBee's heyday. In the years leading up to the onset of the Great Depression, the community enjoyed steady economic growth and a well-deserved status as one of the up-and-coming towns in midlands South Carolina. Thereafter, profound changes wrought by a combination of forces—the rise of the automobile, structural change in southern agriculture, and the centralization of commercial activity in major urban areas—began to transform McBee, much as was the case in countless other small towns across the rural landscape of the South. No longer was the railroad a guarantee of prosperity. As a result, McBee began a slow decline that saw the town's population start to dwindle, many downtown merchants close their doors for good, and scores of farmers in the surrounding area abandon agriculture and sell their lands off to timber companies.

While McBee today remains a community of modest scale, its citizens take great pride in its heritage as a railroad town. Visitors are greeted by signs displaying an image of a steam

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[10]*Cheraw Chronicle*, 5 March 1914, p. 3, col. 2.

[11]*Columbia Record* (Columbia, S.C.), 5 March 1914, p. 3, col. 2.

[12]*Cheraw Chronicle*, 5 March 1914, p. 4, col. 2.

locomotive above the obligatory "Welcome to McBee" as they enter by automobile from the north or south on U.S. Highway 1. A bold, colorful mural of a train traveling at high speed adorns the side of a commercial building on Pine Avenue, the town's main thoroughfare, less than a block from the old Seaboard depot. In all, evidence of McBee's origins as a stop on the mainline of the Seaboard system is as apparent today as it was in the early years of the community.

Yet nowhere are the depths of the town's ties to the railroad more clearly evident than in the current use of the Seaboard depot. After Seaboard discontinued passenger service in the 1960s, the building stood virtually unused for several years. Eventually, it was purchased by the town in November 1976 for $1,100.[13] Municipal authorities took no action until the mid-1980s, when they decided to restore the building to its original condition and to make it the home of the McBee Library and Railroad Museum. It continues to be used for these purposes today. Thus, in this fitting role, the depot serves an important function in community life while at the same time providing residents with a powerful reminder of the town's heritage.

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[13]Commercial Building Record for Old Railroad Station, McBee, S.C., Tax Assessor's Office, Chesterfield County Courthouse, Chesterfield, S.C.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Agreement of Merger or Consolidation, 3 April 1914. File 157, Corporation Charter Division, Office of the Secretary of State of South Carolina, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

Certificate of Incorporation, McBee, S.C., 8 October 1901. Municipal Commissions, III. Records of the Secretary of State of South Carolina, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C.

Cheraw Chronicle (Cheraw, S.C.), 23 March 1911; 23 October 1913; 5 March 1914.

Columbia Record (Columbia, S.C.), 5 March 1914.

Commercial Building Record for Old Railroad Station, McBee, S.C. Tax Assessor's Office, Chesterfield County Courthouse, Chesterfield, S.C.

First Annual Report of the Seaboard Air Line Railway for the Year Ending June 30th, 1901. Norfolk, Va.: Burke & Gregory, n.d.

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Poor, H.V. and H.W. Poor. *Poor's Manual of the Railroads of the United States, 1906*. New York: American Bank Note Co., 1906.

Railroad Gazette XXXIV, no. 17 (25 April 1902).

The State (Columbia, S.C.), 24 May 1910; 1 June 1910; 17 April 1912.

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Secondary Sources

Meade, Edward Sherwood. "The Seaboard Air Line." *Railway World,* 10 November 1905, pp. 895-897.

Stilgoe, John R. *Metropolitan Corridor: Railroads and the American Scene*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983.

Vivian, Daniel J. "Railroad Development and Community Change in the New South: A Social History of the Seaboard Air Line Railway in the South Carolina Midlands, 1898-1915." M.A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1997.

Ward, James A. "Seaboard Air Line Railroad." In *Railroads in the Age of Regulation, 1900-1980,* ed. Keith L. Bryant. New York: Facts on File Publications, 1988, pp. 394-395.

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary is restricted to the former Seaboard Air Line Railway passenger depot in McBee, South Carolina, which stands immediately adjacent to the railroad crossing on West Pine Avenue, approximately 500 feet northwest of the intersection of Pine Avenue (S.C. Hwy. 151) and U.S. Highway 1. See attached property tax map for detail.

Verbal Boundary Justification: The boundary includes the building built in 1914 for use as the Seaboard Air Line Railway passenger depot in the town of McBee, South Carolina.

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Additional Documentation

Photographs
The following information is the same for all photographs.

Location: Seaboard Air Line Railway Depot, McBee, S.C.
County: Chesterfield
Name of Photographer: Daniel J. Vivian
Location of Original Negatives: S.C. Department of Archives & History
Date of Photographs: January 22, 1998

1. West elevation
2. South elevation
3. South elevation
4. North elevation
5. East elevation
6. West elevation
7. West elevation
8. West elevation, detail
9. South elevation oblique
10. South elevation detail
11. West elevation, oblique
12. Ticket window
13. Passenger waiting room, fireplace and mantel
14. Passenger waiting room, benches
15. Passenger waiting room, "S.A.L." (Seaboard Air Line) benches
16. Passenger waiting room, "S.A.L." (Seaboard Air Line) benches, detail