

Lourie's

1601 Main Street

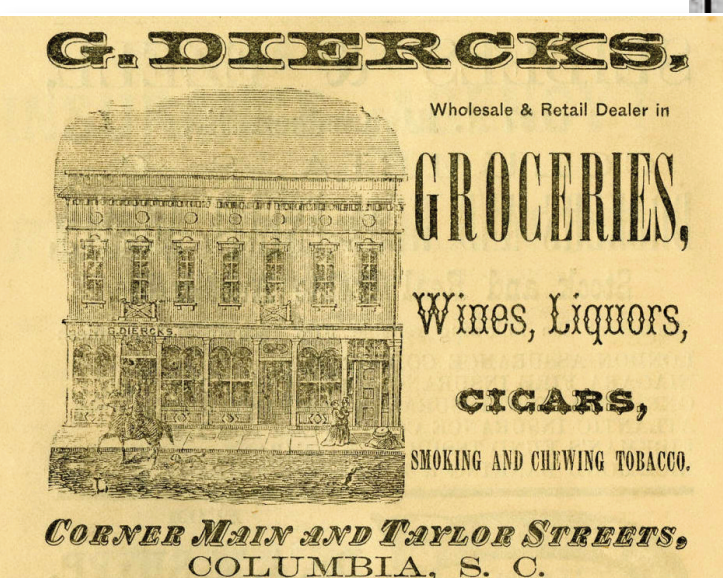
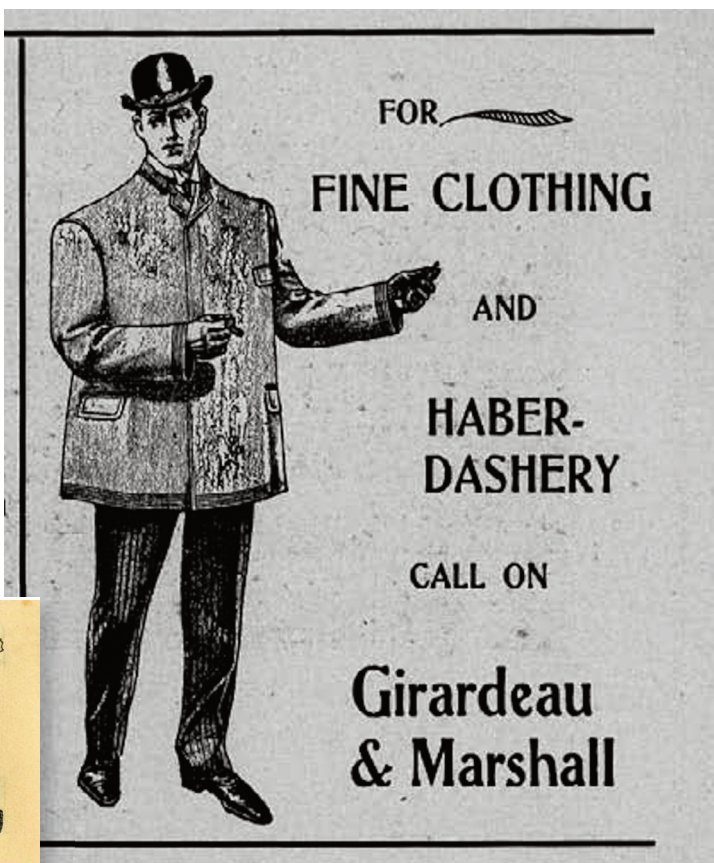


▲ Retailers past and present. The Mast General Store sign now marks the building's façade, while the Efird's name plate has been preserved.
Image courtesy of Mast General Store.



▲ The 1600 Block of Main Street, photographed in the early twentieth century. At the time, the building housed several businesses, including a clothing shop and grocery store.
Image courtesy of Walker Local History Room at the Richland County Public Library.

▶ Girardeau & Marshall Clothing inhabited a storefront in the building during the first decade of the twentieth century.
Image courtesy of South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.



▲ An advertisement from one of the earliest tenants, G. Diercks operated a grocery store on the first floor of the building between 1875 and 1876.
Image courtesy of South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.



▲ C. H. Baldwin & Son grocery, photographed in 1897, occupied the building for several years in the late nineteenth century. Standing in front of the doorway, left to right: C.H. Baldwin's father, Fritz Cronenberg, C.H. Baldwin and Jake Eberhardt.
Image courtesy of South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.



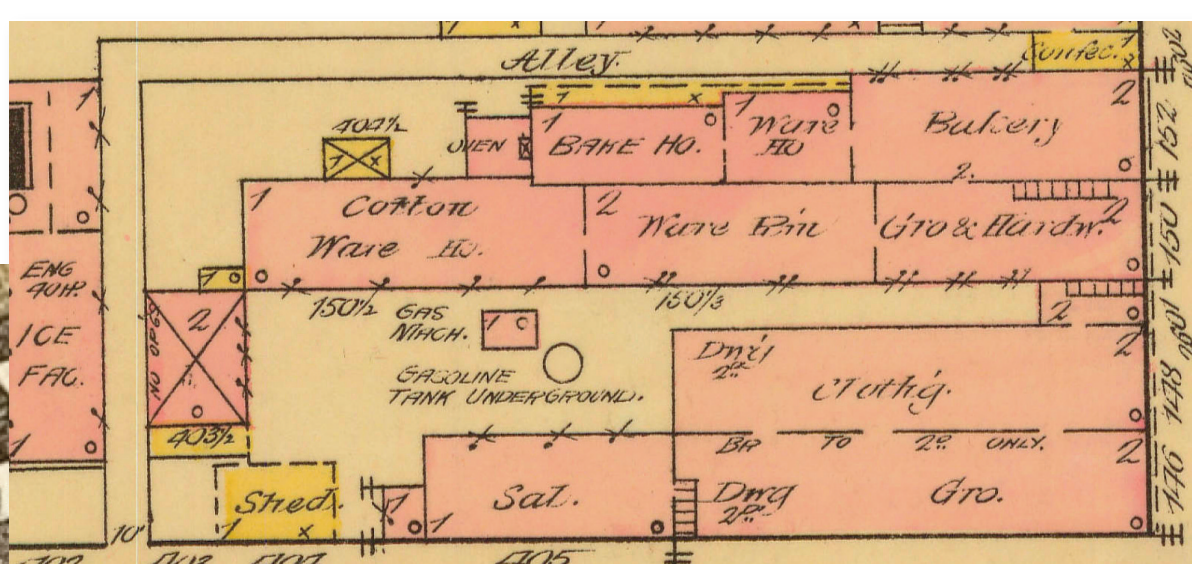
▲ An 1872 bird's eye map of Columbia shows one of the earliest renderings of the building.
Image courtesy of Library of Congress.



◀ The 1600 Block of Main Street, photographed between 1904 and 1909. The building is featured on the left.
Image courtesy of Walker Local History Room at the Richland County Public



▲ The Efird's Department Store featured in the background of a parade down Main Street in 1930.
Image courtesy of Walker Local History Room at the Richland County Public Library.



▲ The 1884 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the original footprint of the building and its then tenants, including a drug store, grocers, and clothing shop.
Image courtesy of South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

Sitting at the corner of Main (then Richardson) and Taylor Streets since 1872, 1601 Main Street is one of the oldest structures in downtown Columbia. Originally constructed as a two-story masonry building, it featured split storefronts with a variety of commercial tenants on the main floor. The second story served as residential space.

Between the 1870s-1915, the structure anchored one of the key corners in downtown Columbia with grocers, clothiers, saloons, furniture makers, and a meat market as tenants. With a retractable awning and cast iron decorative elements, the building was an attractive and stable presence on the ever-changing downtown thoroughfare.

In 1915, Efird Department Store opened at 1601 Main Street, bringing with it a renovation of the historic building and a change in focus from various tenants to one, impressive store. The North Carolina-based chain thrived amid Columbia's appetite for retail goods in the years following World War I. It was one of the earliest and most successful department stores in the capital city. Seeking to expand space for more merchandise, a 100-foot rear addition and a third floor were added to the building in 1919, bringing the structure to its current appearance.

Efird's was a fixture on Main Street until 1958. Facing dwindling sales and increased competition from other retailers, Efird's Company sold its stores to Belk Department Store. The building became an annex for the Belk branch on Main Street for one year before Sol and Mick Lourie purchased the structure in 1960.

Lourie's was already a successful clothier on Main Street and in need of a larger space to meet its growing clientele. Founded by the Lourie brothers' Jewish immigrant father Louis Lourie in St. George, South Carolina in 1914, Lourie's had been a Columbia staple since moving to Main Street in 1948. It was one of the few stores on Main Street that welcomed African Americans. The building was extensively renovated during this period. Lourie's covered the entire exterior with solid panels, hiding the nearly 90-year old façade. When the store reopened in 1960, Lourie's featured a look similar to Berry's on Main across the street.

Lourie's kept the longest hold at the corner of Main and Taylor, serving everyone from young people to politicians. Yet with the continued flight of shopping to suburban malls through the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Lourie's closed its doors in 2008, after serving loyal customers for forty-eight years.

After purchasing the property and doing significant renovation and restoration to the interior and exterior, bringing the building back to its 1920s era style, Mast General Store has re-opened retail on the first floor as an old time general store. Capitol Places, Mashburn Construction and Mast General combined in a joint venture to bring twenty-eight apartments to the space above. This duplicated 2nd and 3rd floor residential from the building's earliest history. 1601 Main Street was a significant contributor to early growth on Columbia's primary shopping street. The building is now part of the revitalization of Columbia's downtown and is once again a key fixture at the corner of Main and Taylor Streets.



▲ Many historic elements of the building were carefully preserved, like this tiled Efird's sign. Image courtesy of Mast General Store



▲ The Lourie's building before the start of renovation in 2010.
Image courtesy of Mashburn Construction.

▶ The building during its renovation and restoration in late 2010.
Image courtesy of Mashburn Construction.



◀ Interior of Lourie's during its renovation in 2011.
Image courtesy of Mashburn Construction.

▼ The building was greatly modified in the 1960s and 1970s, as the original brick was covered up.
Image courtesy of Russell Maxey.



▶ One of the entrances to Mast General Store, with a reconstructed awning to recreate 1920s building details.
Image courtesy of Mast General Store.



▲ A 1940s advertisement for Efird's. The department store introduced the one-price cash store concept to Columbia, a novel idea in a city where most general stores still utilized credit policies.
Image courtesy of South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.



▲ Efird's Department Store, photographed in 1949. The flat awning was recreated by Capitol Places during the renovation of the building.
Main Street, Columbia - Efirds and State Theater; John Hensel Collection
Image courtesy of South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.