City of Commerce, GA
“A City on the Right Track”
Self-Guided Historic Walking Tour

Regan Everett and LynDee Winterton
The Town Then:

- Originally founded as Harmony Grove in 1808, renamed Commerce in 1904
- Industry through 1900s: agricultural activities (corn, wheat, potatoes, apples, peaches, and cotton).
- Railroad came in 1876
- Lamartine Griffin Hardman, Governor of Georgia from 1927-1931

Location: North Georgia foothills, Jackson County
Background Information

The Town Now:
- Historic downtown: collection of 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} century commercial and residential buildings adapted for reuse
- The historic district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988.
- The people of the town are excited about preserving their history and sharing it with others through a historic downtown tour.
The Project: Original Material

Original walking tour developed c. 1980s

Partial update within last 5 years (left unfinished)
- Editing
- Photos Missing
- History vs. Architecture
- Walking vs. Driving
- Level of Significance
#27 - 19 Homer St. - Luke Davis House
Built circa 1884 as the Presbyterian Church of Harmony Grove, this structure was traded in 1910 to Mr. Luke Davis for the construction of a newer and larger church. Mr. Davis, who received $1,500 for the difference, added porches and dormers to the building when he converted it into a house. This house is currently a private residence.

#28 - 2280 N. Broad St - Harber House
This Colonial Revival style was built circa 1900. The house was owned by Dr. John Castalaw and later by J. Harber, a local merchant. Two Harber families owned the home for over 50 years. The Richard family purchased the home in 1990 and operated the home as a bed and breakfast for 10 years. The home is now a private residence. The home still has all the original windows. There are 12-foot ceilings in the house and hardwood floors throughout the interior.

#29 - 192 Washington Street - Nix-Massey House
Built in 1902 by John Morgan Nix, this Queen Anne Victorian style house has wrap-around porch and Gingerbread Trim. Wood for the original construction of this house was cut from the Nix farm in Apple Valley, which was only four miles from Commerce. The Ed Massey family later bought the home and members of the family lived there for over 70 years until Mrs. Lydia Nix Massey died in 1978 at age 88. Jonathan and Cindy Ponce purchased the house in 2002 and renovated it for a year before moving into the home where they presently reside. The home is currently a private residence. Is she part of both families?

#30 - 1851 N. Elm St - Community Bank & Trust
Originally the Andrew Jackson Hotel, this building was constructed in 1948 by contractor Ralph Pardue. The hotel originally had 40 rooms, each with a private bath, coffee room, kitchen, banquet hall and spacious lobby and cost $250,000 to construct. On Aug 27, 1957 WJJC disc jockey, Bill Anderson, later a member of the Country Music Hall of Fame, wrote his first hit "City Lights" from atop the Andrew Jackson Hotel where he rented a room.
The Project: A Day in Commerce

Our day in Commerce:
- Took the current walking tour
- Interacted with local residents with long-standing ties to community
- Library Genealogy Room – researched local history and prominent names

Some observations:
- Condition of Buildings
- Attitude of People
- Location of Town
- Heritage Tourism Potential
The Project: Next Steps

Long-term Plan:
- Re-structure – walking downtown tour and extended/architecture driving tour
- Editing
- Content development – find the stories
  - Interviews with local business owners
- Pictures
- A finished product...
Thank You

- Natalie Thomas, City of Commerce CCA/Mainstreet Manager
- Sandra Haggard, City Clerk
- Jennifer and Katherine Sanders, Sanders Furniture
- Susan Rice, Commerce Public Library
- Angel Tuggle, Commerce Public Library