

Historic Commercial Street: Timeline

Pre-1868

The people of Springfield had been looking forward with bright anticipations to the dawning of a new era of prosperity with the RR from 1850 until 1870 when it was completed. "Still, though not realizing their fondest anticipations, the citizens of Springfield hailed with joy the day when the road was completed to a point so near their borders."

However, this caused a rift between "Old Town" and "New Town" because there had been a lot of work done to have the railroad go directly into "Old Town." When the railroad was placed in North Springfield, the citizens of Springfield proper felt they had been cheated out of a significant revenue producing entity. Only when the two towns were combined in 1867, did the animosity subside. It did not eliminate the hard feelings though.

1868

In 1868, a company of NY and Boston capitalists, with the assistance and cooperation of a few of the citizens of Springfield, purchased the Atlantic and Pacific RR from the State of MO, after Gen. Fremont failed to make the second payment on his purchase. The citizens who were actively engaged in the enterprise were Dr. Robberson, Eli Parrish, Chas. Harwood, Thomas Whitlock, S.H. Boyd, and Wm. Massey.

1869

In 1869 the city's first newspaper was formed under the name of The Southwest. The newspaper was opened and then shortly thereafter moved to Commercial Street under the name of The Springfield Republican. In 1871 it was dissolved and reverted back to The Southwest. In 1875, it changed its name to The Southwester.

1870

1870 was a busy time on Historic Commercial Street. North Springfield incorporated on July 4th, but the two-thirds majority of petitioners was found to be illegal as most of the signers had not been in the State long enough to become citizens, so in May of 1871, the town was reincorporated legally.

In April, 1870, the first construction train from the South Pacific Railroad pulled into the recently built station at Commercial and Benton Ave. and the boom began.

The Ozark Land Co. erected one of the first buildings in North Springfield opposite the passenger depot as a first class hotel named the Ozark House, which was destroyed by fire in 1874.

J.C. Jackson erected a two-story brick building on the south side of Commercial Street, near the corner of the Jefferson Ave. intersection.

H.H. Kautholz erected a two-story brick building on the corner of Commercial Street and Robberson for a General Store. The building was destroyed by fire in 1872, which was caused by the burning of the famous Fellows elevator across the street, the heat being so great as to ignite the General Store 100' away.

1871

In 1871, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers was chartered with 44 members and met in the Masonic Hall. A disabled member could receive \$10 per week for the time they were unable to work.

1872

In 1872, a brick public school was built on the north part of town at a cost of \$17,000, which is now Central High School.

1873

In 1873, Drury College was founded just a short distance away from the business district of North Springfield.

H.H. Kautholz constructed another building on the site of the burned general store and added another store room that was rented by H.H. Haynes for millinery and fancy goods.

In 1873, the Railroad moved its car and engine repair shops to the corner of Summit & Sherman.

1874

In 1874, Parce and Gray wagon builders constructed a manufacturing complex at 211 – 215 E. Commercial. The building was still standing in 1884 at the time Holcombe wrote the historical archive of North Springfield.

A bill was introduced in the State Legislature to extend the limits of Springfield to include North Springfield should both towns agree. The first vote was taken in North Springfield, and the results were 72 against and 1 in favor, the lone vote cast as a joke. Learning of the result, Springfield did not consider it necessary to take a vote.

1875

In 1875, the first train arrives at the Main Street station.

Dr. Hansford erected a three-story brick hotel on the site of his burned frame boarding house on the South side of Commercial Street called the Lyon House.

1876

In 1876, feeling encouraged by the prosperity of the booming town, J. C. Jackson erected a second brick building adjoining the first one on the east near Jefferson Avenue.

1878

In 1878, J.C. Jackson raised his building one story higher. One room of this block was used for grocery, and the remainder was fitted for a hotel, which operated under the name of North Springfield House.

1879

In 1879, the Ozark Hotel rebuilt after a fire destroyed a portion of it.

1880

In 1880, the town of North Springfield issued a franchise to the Spkt. Railway Company for horse drawn cars.

1881

In 1881, rails linking Springfield and North Springfield were laid.

1884

In 1884, after ten years of prosperity, serious construction continued on Commercial Street.

1887

In 1887, the two towns merged, and construction continued on Commercial Street.

1889

In 1889, an electric trolley system was created to move people around the heavily trafficked town.

1891

In 1891, St. John's built a hospital at the corner of Washington and Chestnut Avenues and a new Jail was built at the corner of Robberson and Central.

1899

In 1899, Frisco Hospital was built at the corner of Atlantic and Broadway to serve railroad workers.

1902

In 1902, Citizens bank opened at 220 E. Commercial with capital assets of \$25,000. Principal founders were the McDan the bank as a cashier and was the bank's president.