

B. S. & R.L. SMITH STABLES MURAL

Bert Smith here to tell you about the B.S. and R.S. Smith Stables

Originally built in 1902 as the B.S. Smith Stables, this was one of Farmville's first entrepreneurial enterprises. This historic building was built in the edge of the Farmville commercial district and remained a vibrant business throughout the first half of the 1900's.

The building initially had 24 numbered stalls for prime horses and mules and a large common stall for the remainder of more ordinary horses. The stable also provided horses and buggies to traveling salesmen and drummers whom reached town by the railway. During its' prime, they had a fulltime veterinarian and blacksmith on staff along with a number of other stable hands. The grass area behind the building was a corral where animals spent the mornings as their stalls were cleaned each day.

The first structure was a wooden building but fire partially destroyed it in 1905 and façade was replaced with brickwork in 1908.

Smith Stables represented the Chattanooga Stockyard. They were one of the largest stockyards in the South and Tennessee was acknowledged as the center of mule trading. Representing the Chattanooga Stockyards was the equivalent to having a Ford or General Motors dealership.

The livery stable was a necessary institution of every American town, but it has been generally ignored by historians. In addition to providing vital transportation service, the livery was the source of hay, grain, coal, and wood. Because of the stench and noise that surrounded the livery, towns attempted to control their locations and activities to the edge of the towns. Often the scene of gambling and drinking, they were condemned as sources of vice. With the advent of the automobile the livery stables quietly disappeared.