

Fairhope Pharmacy Building 1916

"You go to the corner where Fairhope Pharmacy is ..." is how locals have been giving directions in downtown Fairhope for over a century. Located on the corner of Fairhope Avenue and Section Street, a two-story wooden structure was first built in 1900 by Dr. Clarence L. Mershon, Sr. to house a dispensing pharmacy on the street floor and doctors' offices above. The wooden structure was replaced by Dr. Mershon in 1916 with a building constructed of white sand cement blocks. Later sundries and a soda fountain were added. Fairhope Pharmacy bears the second oldest commercial name in Fairhope. The current owners, the Barnhill family, have owned the business since 1959. Today it is a pharmacy and gift shop.

Alabama Centennial Retailer Award

A framed citation, on display near the prescription counter, was presented in 2017 by the Alabama Retail Association to honor this landmark business for over a century of service to the community. Fairhope Pharmacy is one of the oldest continuously operating drug stores in Alabama.

Dr. Clarence L. Mershon Sr. (1870-1925)

Dr. Clarence L. Mershon Sr. was in medical school when his parents joined the original 28 founders of Fairhope. In 1898, as soon as he finished his degree, he joined them in Fairhope and opened his practice on Fairhope Avenue. It was a small two-room wooden building where he treated patients in one room and dispensed medicines in the other. As the city and his practice grew, he hired a pharmacist and opened the Fairhope Pharmacy in 1900. He assumed the responsibilities of the physician in charge when he, along with three other doctors, opened

the Fairhope Sanitarium for the treatment of acute and chronic diseases in 1908. He married Bertha Maye Bowers and had three children. When he died in 1925, he was buried in the Colony Cemetery.

Structural Description

This structure is a two-story commercial building about 40' frontage by 50' deep and is a combination of scored, smooth stucco and concrete block all painted white. The distinctive curved parapet has been rebuilt. The windows have been replaced with anodized aluminum reproductions of the earlier multi-pane sash and storefront window with overlights. The Section Street sidewall painting was retained. The building is a fine example of early 20th century commercial architecture build by Marmaduke Dyson. The business established by Dr. C. L. Mershon, Sr. was originally housed in a frame building which no longer exists. Although some changes to the upstairs windows are non-historic, the restored masonry makes this building a historic contributing property.