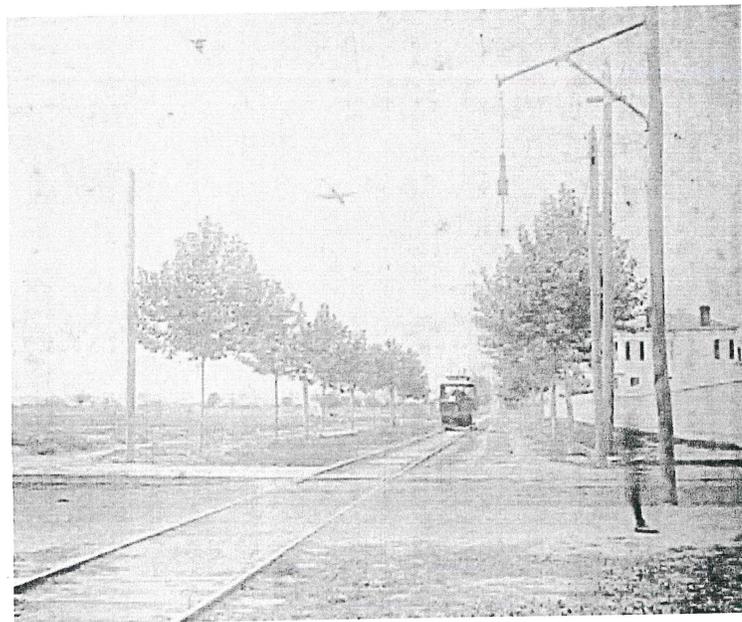


WHEN THE MEADOWS BECAME VAN CLARK

Historic Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood  
*Trolleys to Today*



Luciana M. Spracher



2004









Prepared by:  
Luciana M. Spracher  
Bricks & Bones Historical Research  
109 West Broughton Street #202A  
Savannah, Georgia 31401  
912.239.9720

Prepared for:  
City of Savannah  
Department of Cultural Affairs  
Savannah, Georgia  
912.651.6417

*THIS DOCUMENT NOT INTENDED FOR LEGAL PURPOSES.*  
© 2004 Luciana M. Spracher



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements .....	ii
Introduction .....	1
Before Development .....	2
Transportation .....	13
Influential Companies & Individuals	
Development of Streetcars	
Development of Streetcar Suburbs: Collinsville & the Meadows	
Area Development .....	71
Neighborhoods & Ethnic Groups	
Government Services & Parks	
Educational Institutions	
Hospitals & Orphanages	
Churches	
Business Districts	
Architectural Styles	
Desegregation .....	160
Savannah's Civil Rights Movement	
Local Leaders & Neighborhood Involvement	
Impact on Schools & Students	
Impact on the Community & Resulting Demographics	
Revitalization .....	178
HOPE VI/HAS Efforts	
City of Savannah Programs	
Architectural Surveys	
Neighborhood Association	
Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood Documentation Project Cultural	
Appendices	
A. City Directory Survey Analysis .....	195
B. Oral Histories Inventory .....	198
C. Streets in Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood .....	199
D. Wards in Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood .....	203
Bibliography .....	204



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to thank the following individuals and organizations for their help, valuable time, knowledge, and patience:

Past and Present Residents of the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood  
Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood Association  
Library and archives staff, Georgia Historical Society  
Glenda Anderson, City of Savannah Municipal Research Library  
Gillian Brown, Diocese of Savannah Archives  
Leah Colby, Massie Heritage Center  
Mary Davis Brown, Savannah-Chatham County Board of Education  
Staff, Georgia Room, Bull Street Public Library  
Staff, Savannah Jewish Archives  
Sandy Glicken & Rosalyn Truitt, Housing Authority of Savannah  
Staff, Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum  
Staff, City of Savannah City Clerk's Office  
Daryl Dase, City of Savannah Department of Housing  
Staff, Chatham County Tax Assessor's Office  
Staff, Chatham County Superior Court Record Room  
Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood Documentation Project Staff,  
City of Savannah Department of Cultural Affairs



## INTRODUCTION

The Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood as it has been considered in this work is bounded on the north by Wheaton Street, on the east by Bee Road, on the south by Anderson Street, and on the west by Harmon Street. These boundaries incorporate much of what used to be the suburban neighborhoods of Collinsville, the Meadows, and Eastville. It has a unique history greatly impacted by the introduction of mass transportation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and by the desegregation of Savannah and subsequent segregation of the neighborhood during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. As Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood enters the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a new period of revitalization, spearheaded by the City of Savannah and the Housing Authority of Savannah, has already begun.

In addition, the areas immediately north of Wheaton Street, including Wagner Heights and present-day Blackshear Homes, have been included. These small pockets of communities are isolated by the topography of the land and man-made structures. Though their history varies greatly from that of the streetcar suburbs, they share the common commercial corridor of Wheaton Street.



## Chapter 1

### BEFORE DEVELOPMENT

The Colony of Georgia and the Town of Savannah were established in 1733 when General James Edward Oglethorpe and a group of colonists, sailing from England, landed on the bluff above the Savannah River. One of Oglethorpe's first tasks was to lay out the new settlement.

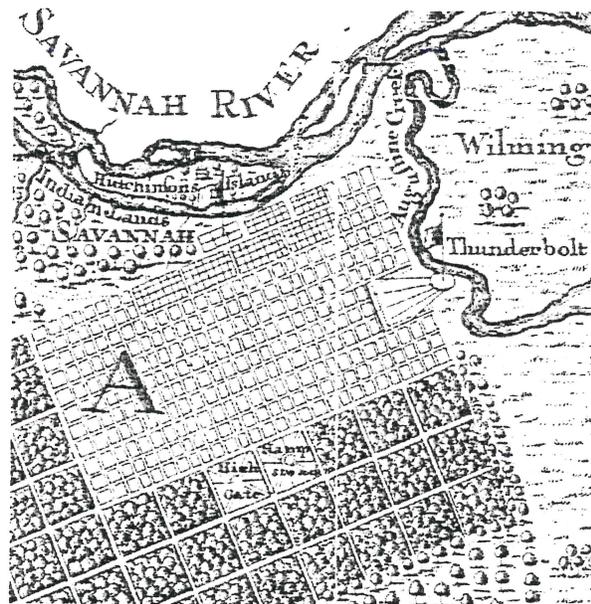


Figure 1 Plan of Savannah & Vicinity, 1735<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> "Ursperger Map," (1735), MS 1018 Waring Map Collection, Vol. 1, Plate 7, GHS.



Prior to use by the colonists, Wheaton Street was an Indian trail. It is the oldest street within present day Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood and follows its own path, not restricted by the perpendicular lines of mass subdivision.<sup>4</sup>



Figure 3 Wheaton Street, to Thunderbolt & Skidaway, 1805<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Charles J. Elmore, "Progress Report: The Ben Van Clark Neighborhood Initiative," (28 May 2003), 1, DCA

<sup>5</sup> "City of Savannah," (1805), MS 1018 Waring Map Collection, Vol. 2, Plate 10, GHS.

The importance of Wheaton Street in the history of Savannah was stressed in 1952 when its very existence as a route was threatened by construction of the new Fred Wessels public housing project. In a letter to the Savannah and Chatham County Historic Sites & Monument Committee, Dr. Antonio J. Waring, Jr. outlined its value, "Indian Street, Wheaton Street and Skidaway Road were all that remained of the main Indian path leading [to] the south bank of [the] Savannah River and giving access to the sea islands."<sup>6</sup>

The western end of Wheaton Street, near Liberty, was originally part of the town common. Lands south and east of Wheaton were farm lots. A map of the farm lots around 1800 indicates that much of the farm lots within Jekyll Tything, and what would make up a large part of the neighborhood, were held by men named Russell and Wylly.<sup>7</sup>

Almost eighty years after the settlement of Savannah, the farm lands east of the town were still undeveloped. In an 1812 map of the area, the land is open and swampy in several areas. Only a sprinkling of names and homes appear on the map, one of which was Water's for whom Waters Avenue was most likely named. As the city grew and the population bloomed, the town slowly moved into the town common lands, continuing the system of wards and squares until about 1854.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Charles J. Elmore, "Historical Analysis and Summary of the Ben Van Clark Neighborhood Project," (Jun 2003), 1, DCA

<sup>7</sup> "Map of Savannah," (c.1800), MS 1018 Waring Map Collection, Vol. 2, Plate 4, GHS.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Gamble, Jr., *A History of the City Government of Savannah, Georgia, from 1790 to 1901*, (Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1900), 29; "City of Savannah," (1812), MS 1018 Waring Map Collection, Vol. 2, Plate 12, GHS.

In 1838, the city limits were extended on the east as far as Paulsen Street. These limits took in the land purchased around 1847 by the Savannah & Albany Railway, including Farm Lots 3 and 4, Derby Ward, Tyrconnel Tything. The yards included a depot and roundhouse facilities built during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Around the railroad yards, clusters of small, wooden laborers' housing sprang up, first along East Broad Street, and then further to the east. This small neighborhood was always mixed, ethnically and racially, with immigrants, working-class whites and African-American laborers living side by side. In 1854, the City of Savannah extended its boundary on the southeast to incorporate all of the land east to Waters Avenue and south to Anderson Street, suggesting that enough development had occurred within these bounds to warrant a change of the city map.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Gamble, 29; "National Endowment for the Humanities Grant," 9, DCA; "Eastside National Register Nomination," 5, MPC; J. W. Howard, "Map of the City of Savannah, Georgia, 1906, City Boundaries," MS 5600EN-90 City of Savannah Engineering Department Records, Vol. 1, GHS.

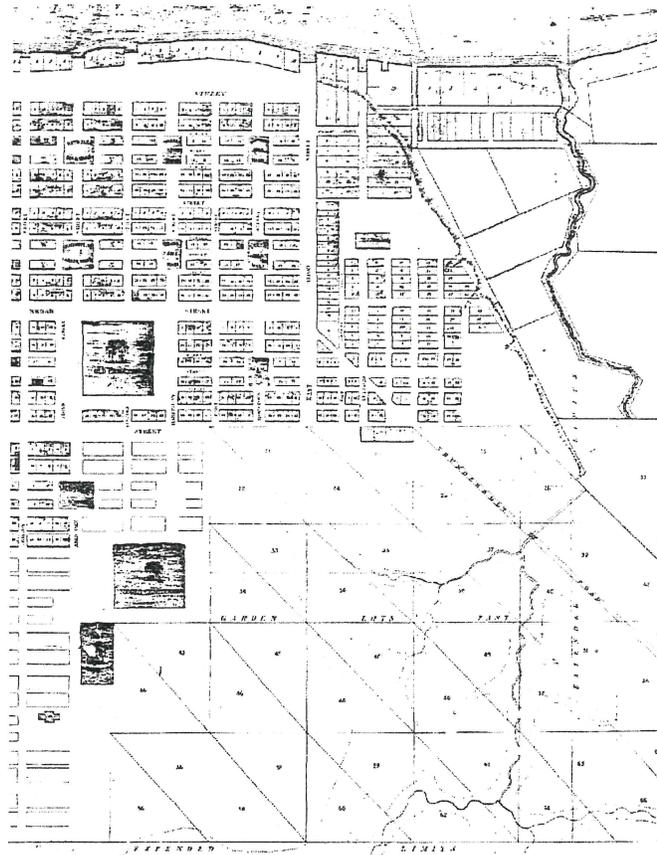


Figure 4 Savannah's Extended City Limits into Garden Lots, 1840<sup>10</sup>

An 1868 map of Savannah indicated that lands east of the Atlantic & Gulf Railroad (this property fell under several different names over the following century) were still primarily maintained as large tracts by single owners. Lands east of Waters Avenue (labeled Waters Road at this time), what had originally been Farm Lots in Jekyll Tything were now held by N. Geil, Brooker, and Meinhard. The areas along the northern edge, of Wheaton Street going east out of town (previously Garden

<sup>10</sup> C. Stephens, "Map of the City of Savannah with the Extended Limits," (1840), MS 1018 Waring Map Collection, Vol. 2, Plate 23, GHS.

Lots #79/80, 93/94, 107/108, etc.), were owned by Reeves, Riordan, Spears, and Werms.<sup>11</sup>

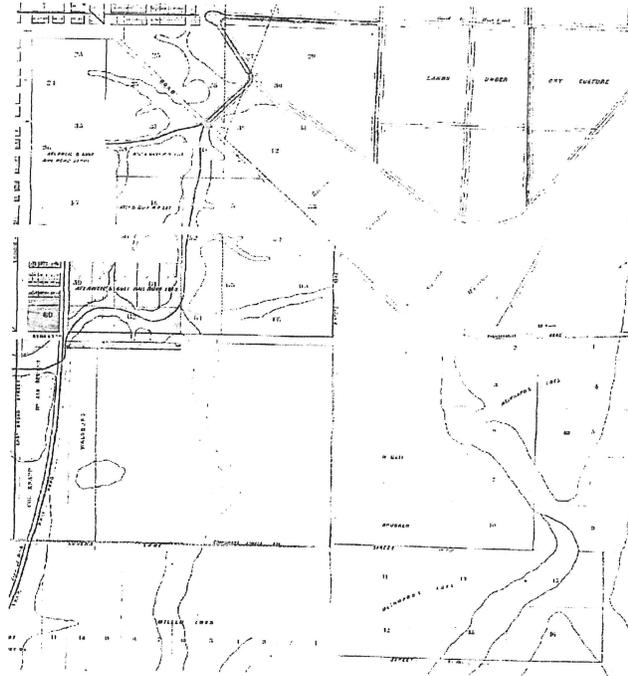


Figure 5 Large Property Owners & Low Lying Land, 1868<sup>12</sup>

By 1869, as the *Savannah Morning News* reported, the development of the street railroads (discussed in Chapter 2) had opened communication between the northern and southern sections of Savannah. This further encouraged new construction in what was once open land. However, a canal system did not drain the eastern

<sup>11</sup> "Map of Savannah," (c.1800), MS 1018 Waring Map Collection, Vol. 2, Plate 4, GHS; "Map of Savannah," (1868), MS 1018 Waring Map Collection, Vol. 2, Plate 30, GHS.

<sup>12</sup> "City of Savannah," (1868), MS 1018 Waring Map Collection, Vol. 2, Plate 30, GHS.

area until 1876, prohibiting development of much of the land east of East Broad Street.<sup>13</sup>

The Sanborn Insurance Map & Publishing Company of New York, NY prepared and published detailed maps of cities all over the United States for use by insurance agents in determining rates and levels of fire risk. The Sanborn Company produced several maps of the City of Savannah over a period of almost one-hundred years. The first available map of the city dates from 1884 and shows the downtown area of Savannah from the Savannah River south to Liberty Street. On the eastern boundary of town, the map shows only the nearest commercial interests, including the Savannah, Florida & Western Railway yards and several planing mills on the north side of Wheaton Street. The map does not show the area now known as the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood since it was still well outside of the city limits at this time.<sup>14</sup>

In 1885, the *Savannah Morning News* reported that the ". . . greatest number of recent improvements in south and southeast section of the city as that seemingly is the most desirable location . . ." indicating that the city was already progressing towards the southeast, closer to the current western boundary of Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood at Harmon Street.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Mary Morrison Ward Books: *Southern Expansion* (citation SMN 20 Feb 1869 3:2), GHS; "Eastside National Register Nomination," 11, MPC.

<sup>14</sup> "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1884," (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing, Company, Ltd., 1884), index map.

<sup>15</sup> Mary Morrison Ward Books: *Southern Expansion* (citation SMN 10 May 1885 8:3), GHS.

The 1888 Sanborn Insurance Map reveals even less about the area than the 1884 version. In this map we see the large Savannah, Florida & Western Railway yards extending from East Broad Street eastward until the Bilbo Canal. Nothing east of the canal is shown.<sup>16</sup>

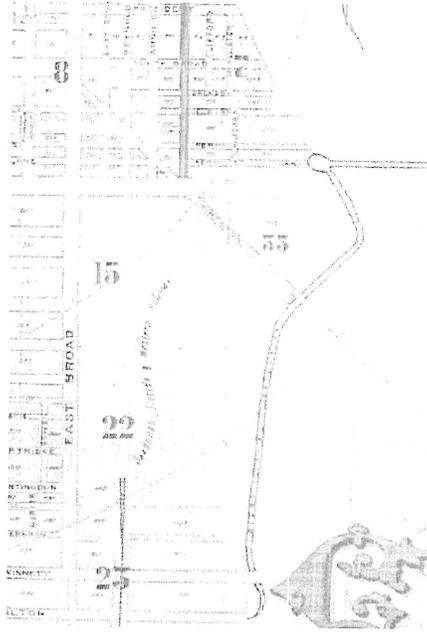


Figure 6 Sanborn Insurance Map of Savannah, 1888<sup>17</sup>

However, the local newspaper's September building report of 1888 indicated that building activity was about to bust out on all sides, including in the southeast areas:

*The city spreading out in all directions. . . . The City wants room . . . the suburbs are building up and people are moving out from the heart of the city to where they can get more room. Room is what Savannah wants, and the*

---

<sup>16</sup> "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1888," index map.

<sup>17</sup> "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1888," index map.

*suburbs, where five years ago there was hardly a single house, are dotted all over with comfortable homes.*<sup>18</sup>

One map of the area, also dating from 1888, clearly shows that land in the northern sections of Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood, that falling into Johnston and Kelly Wards, had already been subdivided to create Eastville. Large tracts in the area were still owned by the Geil, Brooker, Riordan, Spears, and Werms family, representing steady ownership of the land before mass subdivision by J. S. Collins. Just south of Lovers Lane (now Anderson Street), Eastland had been subdivided between Waters and Ash streets.<sup>19</sup>

Development would occur quickly in this area of Savannah, and by the early 1900s Eastville, Collinsville, and the Meadows would all have made their mark on the community.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Mary Morrison Ward Books: Southern Expansion (citation SMN Sep 1888), GHS.

<sup>19</sup> "Map of Savannah," (1888), MS 1018 Waring Map Collection, Vol. 2, Plate 35, GHS.

<sup>20</sup> "Map of Savannah," (1900), MS 1018 Waring Map Collection, Vol. 3, Plate 41, GHS.

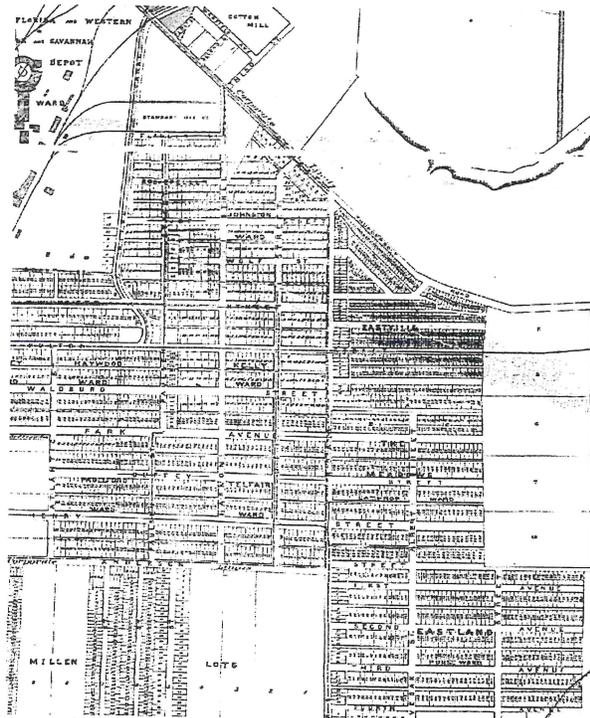


Figure 7 Southeast Suburbs of Savannah, 1900<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> "Map of Savannah," (1900), MS 1018 Waring Map Collection, Vol. 3, Plate 41, GHS.



## *Chapter 2*

### TRANSPORTATION

The combined development of real estate interests and public transportation lines along the eastern boundaries of the City of Savannah led to what we now recognize as the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood. Before the introduction of the streetcar system in Savannah, real estate development was confined to areas in close proximity to businesses, churches, government and schools. With the development of new technology, first the electric streetcars and then widespread use of the automobile, people could afford to move further out on the outskirts of town, while still being able to access the services they needed within the city.

The man that would prove to be the foremost developer of the eastern edges of town was Jacob S. Collin. Collins, like many prominent businessmen at that time, had his hand in many businesses and ventures, ranging from real estate and transportation interests to banking establishments. During this period of immense growth for Savannah, men like Collins influenced the development of one thing to further promote their interests and investments in another area. Today we can cite Collins for running a streetcar line out to what would become Collinsville and the Meadows on Savannah's eastside. However, he was not trying to help people already in the outlying areas, rather he was trying to draw people out there to invest in his property holdings.

Collins real estate investment companies would join a long list of ventures aimed at cashing in on the building boom and suburban

development of Savannah around 1890. J. S. Collins, J. Randolph Anderson, W. K. Wilkinson, and others would join the ranks of the Home Building Company, Chatham Real Estate, Southern Mutual, Title Guarantee & Loan Company, Excelsior Loan & Savings Company, German-American Loan & Building Company, Merchants & Mechanics' Loan Association, Chatham Loan, and Workman's & Trader's among many others.<sup>22</sup>

The inter-related nature of business relationships and commercial interests at this time in Savannah's history can be confusing. What seems like numerous businesses at first glance, often boils down to real estate, banking, and transportation interests and power in the control of only a handful of businessmen. The following is an attempt to present the companies and individuals who would play a part in the development of this section of Savannah. Many of these men would also be the first to build their own residences in Collinsville and the Meadows. The information should not be considered complete; an intensive investigation into the operations of the companies and their parent companies is necessary to fully understand the intricacies of the Savannah business community at this time.

---

<sup>22</sup> Mary Morrison Ward Books: Southern Expansion (citation SMN 1890), GHS.

## INFLUENTIAL COMPANIES

*Note: See following section on Influential Individuals for more information on the men mentioned in conjunction with the following businesses.*

### REAL ESTATE VENTURES

#### *Equitable Building & Loan Association*

The Equitable Building and Loan Association was organized in 1887 with J. S. Collins president, W. K. Wilkinson treasurer, and J. L. Whatley secretary. Their first offices were located at 118 Bryan Street. At the second annual meeting, held in October 1888, Collins and Wilkinson were re-elected and the Board of Directors included R. M. Hicks and Hugh Logan.<sup>23</sup>

#### *Home Seekers Mutual Loan Association*

On August 21, 1890, S. W. Branch, G. A. Hudson, W. D. Dearing, J. S. Collins, et. al. (and others) submitted a petition to the Clerk of Superior Court of Chatham County for the incorporation of a new loan association. In October of that year, Judge Falligant granted the charter with a capital stock of \$15,000 and the privilege to increase stock up to \$50,000. The purpose of the association was to accumulate money through monthly subscriptions which could then be loaned to its own members for use in business enterprises and the purchase of real estate.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> "Savannah City Directory, 1889," (Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1889), 15; "Savannah Newspaper Digests, 1888," (citation SMN 4 Oct 1888 8:4), 40.

<sup>24</sup> "Savannah Newspaper Digests, 1890," (citation MN 22 Aug 1890 8:2, MN 19 Oct 1890 7:1-2).

By 1895, the organization, then known as the Home Seekers Mutual Loan Association, had offices at 144 St. Julian Street and an authorized capital of \$500,000. J. S. Collins was not an active board member at the time but W. K. Wilkinson was serving as treasurer.<sup>25</sup>

#### *Savannah Real Estate, Loan & Building Company*

Shortly before formation of the Home Seekers Mutual Loan Association, the Savannah Real Estate, Loan & Building Company was also incorporated with J. S. Collins serving as president. The Board of Directors included many prominent members of Savannah society as well as people whose names and influence can be seen within the eastside communities, including Jacob Paulsen, Robert M. Hicks, Thomas Nugent, W. D. Simkins, W. J. Lindsay, Hugh Logan, J. Randolph Anderson, H. H. Hull, William W. Mackall, and secretary and treasurer W. K. Wilkinson.<sup>26</sup>

We will shortly see how this company went on to develop Collinsville and the Meadows. Even more important than its real estate dealings, was the company's expansion into the street railroad business. The Chatham County Superior Court granted the company a charter on July 3, 1890 which gave them the additional power to build, equip and operate railroads and street railroads in the City of Savannah. This move directly led to the organization of the Electric Railway Company by the same gentlemen (discussed later).<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> "Savannah City Directory, 1895," (Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1895) 40.

<sup>26</sup> "Another New Company," (MN 8 Jul 1890), 8:1; "Savannah City Directory, 1895," (Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1895) 40.

<sup>27</sup> "Another One in the Field," (MN 4 Jul 1890), 8:1.

## POWER & ELECTRICITY

### *People's Electric Light & Power Company*

The People's Electric Light & Power Company was chartered in January of 1893 to establish an electric and power business. The company ran the Electric Railway Company, already in operation for over one and half years by this time, using the power plant to operate the electric streetcars, as well as to provide power to area businesses. As with the Electric Railway Company and the Savannah Real Estate, Loan & Building Company, the president was J. S. Collins. The first vice-president was W. J. Lindsay, and the organizing Board of Directors included Jacob Paulsen, H. Logan, H. H. Hull, Robert M. Hicks, W. K. Wilkinson, W. F. McCauley, J. Randolph Anderson, W. D. Simkins, Thomas Nugent and T. G. Reid.<sup>28</sup>

### *Brush Electric Light & Power Company*

W. K. Wilkinson would serve as secretary of this company in 1895, while simultaneously sitting on the board of the People's Electric Light & Power Company.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> "People's Electric Light and Power Company," (MN 29 Jan 1893), adv 6:2-3.

<sup>29</sup> "People's Electric Light and Power Company," (MN 29 Jan 1893), adv 6:2-3; (MN 1 Jan 1895), adv. 2:5.

## BANKING INTERESTS

### *Oglethorpe Savings & Trust Company*

The Oglethorpe Savings & Trust Company was organized in 1877 and by 1921 when they published *A Souvenir Booklet of Savannah . . .*, the close relationship between the company and the National Bank of Savannah was clearly evident. The booklet's purpose was promotional to encourage potential homeowners to seek mortgages through the two companies. Many of the directors were shared by both companies, including Jacob S. Collins who served as president of both concurrently. Additional directors of the Oglethorpe Savings & Trust Company included Jacob Paulsen, John R. Paulsen, Grover C. Paulsen, and J. E. Jaudon.<sup>30</sup>

### *National Bank of Savannah*

The National Bank of Savannah was incorporated on October 31, 1885, with J. S. Collins serving as one of the first directors. Collins had a long history with this bank, continually on the board, joined by people such as his vice-president at People's Electric Light & Power Company, W. J. Lindsay in the 1890s. In 1921, the bank's directors included Jacob S. Collins, as president, and Jacob Paulsen, Robert M. Hicks, and Carl Mendel. George H. Dieter was then serving as Assistant Cashier<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> "Savannah City Directory, 1895," (Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1895) 39; *A Souvenir Booklet of Savannah, Georgia & Plan for Profitable Investment*, (Savannah: Oglethorpe Savings & Trust Company, 1921), Rare Books, GHS; "People's Electric Light and Power Company," (MN 29 Jan 1893), adv 6:2-3; (MN 11 Jan 1893), 8:5; (MN 9 Jan 1895), 3:1.

<sup>31</sup> "Savannah City Directory, 1895," (Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1895) 39; *A Souvenir Booklet of Savannah . . .*



## The National Bank of Savannah

TOTAL RESOURCES \$5,500,000.00

### OFFICERS

JACOB S. COLLINS President.	ROBERT M. HICKS Vice-President.	R. R. WITHINGTON Cashier.
SIGO MYERS Chairman of the Board.	JOHN E. FOY Vice-President.	GEORGE H. DIETER Assistant Cashier.
WM. W. WILLIAMSON Vice-President.	GROVER C. PAULSEN Vice-President.	WM. F. LYNTS Assistant Cashier.
	EDWARD S. ELLIOTT Attorney.	

### DIRECTORS

JACOB S. COLLINS President.	H. L. KAYTON Garson Naval Stores Co.	GEORGE M. BRINSON Capitalist.
SIGO MYERS Chairman of the Board.	CARL J. HERMAN Herman Coal & Wood Co.	CARL MENDEL Mendel Real Estate & Investment Co.
WM. W. WILLIAMSON Of Williamson & Rogers	CARL ESPY Espey Cotton Co.	GROVER C. PAULSEN Vice-President.
WM. KEHOE President Kehoe Iron Works.	ROBT. M. HICKS Hicks Hotel.	W. M. DAVIDSON Capitalist.
JACOB PAULSEN President Taps Propeller Tactical Co.	THOMAS NUGENT Nugent's Bakery.	P. A. WARING Real Estate.
B. H. LEVY Of B. H. Levy, Poo & Co.	J. A. LOGAN Cotton.	J. K. LIVINGSTON Of J. K. Livingston & Co., Cotton Exporters.
WM. J. HARTY Insurance.	JOHN E. FOY President Foy Lumber Co.	

Figure 8 National Bank Officers, 1921<sup>32</sup>

### Savannah Savings Bank

The Savannah Savings Bank was incorporated in 1891 with a capital stock of \$62,500. By 1895, W. K. Wilkinson was serving as president of the bank.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *A Souvenir Booklet of Savannah . . .*

<sup>33</sup> "Savannah City Directory, 1895," (Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1895) 39.

## INFLUENTIAL INDIVIDUALS

*(alphabetical)*

### *J. Randolph Anderson*

Jefferson Randolph Anderson (1861-1950) was one of the most prominent Savannah lawyers and civic leaders of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. He was born in Savannah on September 4, 1861 to Col. Edward Clifford Anderson, Jr. and Jane Margaret Randolph. His father served as commander of the Seventh Georgia Calvary of the Confederate Army during the American Civil War. After a public education in Savannah, the younger Anderson attended Hanover Academy in Virginia from 1877 to 1879. He studied for two years at the University of Goettingen in Germany, before graduating from the University of Virginia in 1883, followed by a Bachelor of Law degree from the same school in 1885.<sup>34</sup>

In 1885, he returned to Savannah and was admitted to the bar by Judge Pratt Adams of the Superior Court. In 1890, he became junior member of the firm of Charlton & Mackall, which later became Charlton, Mackall & Anderson. During the 1890s, Charlton & Mackall served as legal representation for the Savannah Real Estate, Loan & Building Company and for the Electric Railway Company. Between 1902 and 1908, when he partnered with Judge Cann, Anderson represented the Seaboard Air Line Railway and several other large corporations. His business responsibilities included serving as director of the Atlantic Compress Company, the Savannah Bank & Trust

---

<sup>34</sup> Biography File (BF): Anderson, GHS.

Company, the Savannah Electric & Power Company for over fifty-five years, the Savannah Union Station Company, and the Chatham Real Estate & Improvement Company. In the political arena, he served as county representative (1905-1906, 1909-1910), vice-chairman of the rules committee, state senator from the First District, and he sponsored the Georgia law which led to the state-wide child labor law.<sup>35</sup>



Figure 9 Presentation of Service Award Emblem to J. Randolph Anderson for 55 years of service by Claude C. Curtis, 1947.<sup>36</sup>

In 1947, Anderson was awarded a 55-year service emblem and silver bowl by President C. C. Curtis of the Savannah Electric & Power Company (SEPCO). His involvement with SEPCO can be traced back to the 1890 incorporation of the Electric Railway Company, which was eventually absorbed into what would become SEPCO in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>37</sup>

Anderson died in 1950 after a year long illness at the age of eighty-eight. At the time of his death he was an active partner in the law firm

---

<sup>35</sup> BF: Anderson, GHS; "His Fitness for the High Office, Mr. J. Randolph Anderson for President of Georgia Senate," (SEP 2 May 1913), BF: Anderson, GHS.

<sup>36</sup> VM 846 Wayne-Stites-Anderson Collection, Folder 3, Box 1, GHS.

<sup>37</sup> "J. Randolph Anderson Honored by Power Co. for Length Service," (SMN 31 May 1947), BF: Anderson, GHS.

of Anderson, Connerat, Dunn & Hunter, a firm he formed in 1908 with Judge George T. Cann. Anderson was a practicing member of the Savannah bar for over fifty years. His civic activities included serving as president of both the Georgia Historical Society and the State Commission for the erection of the Oglethorpe Monument in Chippewa Square. An active member of Christ Episcopal Church, he was a vestryman, senior warden, and delegate to the convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church.<sup>38</sup>

On November 27, 1895, Anderson married Anne Page Wilder (1873-1956). Mrs. Anderson served as a board member for the Episcopal Home for Girls located in the former home of Jacob S. Collins at 1010 East Duffy Street (see Chapter 3 for more on this orphanage).<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> BF: Anderson, GHS.

<sup>39</sup> "Mrs. J. Randolph Anderson Dies After Long Illness," (SEP 30 Jan. 1956). BF: Anderson, GHS.

*Jacob S. Collins*



Figure 10 Jacob S. Collins  
Obituary, 1925<sup>40</sup>

Jacob Samuel Collins was born on May 3, 1854 in Weedowie, Alabama. At a young age he moved to Savannah where he established a small produce stand in the City Market building on Ellis Square. As his small business grew, he opened a store on the northeast corner of City Market and within a few years took on a partner, John A. Henges. Though Henges only remained with the firm of J. S. Collins & Company for two years, Collins continued to prosper on his own branching out into the poultry business. Several changes of location, including 138 (or 183) Congress Street in the market district in 1888, brought Collins' firm to Bay Street near City Hall.<sup>41</sup>

By 1892, the firm was known as Collins-Grayson Company to reflect the partnership between Collins and William L. Grayson (Collins married Henrietta Belle Grayson, possibly William L.'s daughter or sister). The business expanded to include fruit, hay and grain, with shipments of fruit coming from Cuba and points in South America. In 1900, the company moved to the southeast corner of East Broad and Liberty

---

<sup>40</sup> "Jacob S. Collins Has Passed Away," (SMN 19 May 1925), 14:1-2.

<sup>41</sup> "Jacob S. Collins Has Passed Away"; "Savannah Newspaper Digests, 1888," (citation SMN 7 Jan 1888 adv 2:5; SMN 27 May 1888 adv 2:5), 13, 290.

streets, where they expanded into the candy business starting the Savannah Candy Factory.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to his successful grocery business, Collins was very active in several banking and investment firms most notably Oglethorpe Savings and Trust Company (organized 1877) and the National Bank of Savannah (incorporated 1885), of which he served as president for both. These two institutions had absorbed an earlier entity begun by Collins, the Real Estate Bank.<sup>43</sup>

*A Souvenir Booklet of Savannah . . .*, published by the Oglethorpe Savings & Trust Company in 1921 displayed even more of Collins' business interests, with a picture of Collins Hotel and views of Collinsville. Though the name Collinsville is largely forgotten today, at this time and in this publication, the neighborhood was considered in the same league as Chatham Crescent and Ardsley Park, Savannah's premiere automobile suburbs of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the booklet, Collins is described as follows:

*The President of these institutions has resided in Savannah for nearly fifty years and is therefore familiar with local real estate values and in a position to invest your surplus funds, safely.*<sup>44</sup>

This institution's pleas to carry the homeowner's mortgage, hinted at Collins real estate interests. He was one of the main organizers of the Savannah Real Estate, Loan & Building Company which developed

---

<sup>42</sup> "Jacob S. Collins Has Passed Away"; "Savannah City Directory, 1895," (Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1895) 177.

<sup>43</sup> "Jacob S. Collins Has Passed Away"; *A Souvenir Booklet of Savannah . . .*

<sup>44</sup> *A Souvenir Booklet of Savannah . . .*

the area that became known as Collinsville. His own home, on the corner of Duffy and Ott streets, was one of the first built in the new development. Prior to building on the eastside, the Collins family resided on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue (later renamed) on the northwest corner of Lincoln Street. On July 6, 1891, the Savannah Morning News announced that Collins had sold his 2<sup>nd</sup> Street residence to P. J. O'Conner, Esq., in order to build a new residence east of the city, near the terminus of the Electric Railway Company's lines.<sup>45</sup>

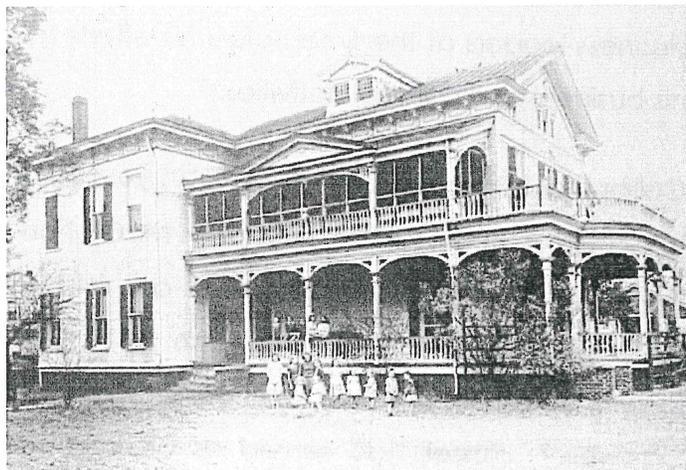


Figure 11 Collins House, 1010 East Duffy Street, Collinsville, 1943<sup>46</sup>

Collins, a member and senior warden of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, was also involved with the B.P.O. Elks, the DeKalb Lodge of Odd Fellows, and the Zerubbabel Lodge of F. & A. Masons. At the age of seventy-one, Collins died during his sleep. At 8:55pm on May 18, 1925, at his current home on Bonaventure Road, he succumbed to a lengthy illness. Collins' poor health had been reported in the paper prior to his

---

<sup>45</sup> "Jacob S. Collins Has Passed Away"; "Savannah City Directory, 1889," (Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1889) 161; "Savannah Newspaper Digests, 1891," (citation SMN 6 Jul 1891 8:3).

<sup>46</sup> VM 1360, Box 4, Folder 18, Item 08, GHS.

death, indicating his prominence in the community at that time and their interest in his condition. He left behind a widow, Mrs. Henrietta Belle Grayson Collins, one son, Walter M. Collins, and three daughters: Mrs. J. E. Jaudon (whose husband was one of the directors of the Oglethorpe Savings & Trust Company in 1921)<sup>47</sup>; Mrs. J. Saxton Wolfe; and Mrs. J. M. McAndrews. Two of his sisters were still alive at the time of his death, Mrs. Henrietta Henges and Mrs. Mary Evans, both of Savannah. At the time of his death, the *Savannah Morning News* ran an obituary that described Collins as "constructive." Finance and business leaders at the time noted his efforts towards progress through his business and political activities.<sup>48</sup>

Collins was laid to rest on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1925 in Laurel Grove Cemetery. The funeral was officiated by Rev. S. B. McGlohon of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Graveside services were administered by the Zerubbabel Lodge. Pallbearers included John E. Foy, W. L. Grayson, Warring Russell, Jr., Alexander A. Lawrence, E. B. Izler, J. C. Lewis, and John D. Carswell.<sup>49</sup> Russell had served as clerk of the City Court following Collins' own term in the same position.<sup>50</sup>

Buried in the same Laurel Grove Cemetery plot as Jacob S. Collins, Lot #1893, can be found many members of his family including several children that Jacob and Henrietta lost at a young age. While living on the corner of East Duffy and Ott streets, Bertha G. (age 4 months, died

---

<sup>47</sup> *A Souvenir Booklet of Savannah . . .*

<sup>48</sup> "No Change Noted in Jacob Collins," (SMN 17 May 1925 10:5); "Jacob S. Collins Has Passed Away"; "Mortuary-Collins," (SMN 19 May 1925 2:1); "Mortuary-Collins," (SMN 20 May 1925 2:1).

<sup>49</sup> "Jacob S. Collins To Be Buried Today," (SMN 20 May 1925 14:3).

<sup>50</sup> "Jacob S. Collins Has Passed Away."

in 1892), Herman Bell (aged 1 year, died 1904), an unnamed infant (died 1893), and Jacob S., Jr. (aged 1 year, died 1897) all passed away. An earlier Jacob S., Jr. died while they were living at their previous home on 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Lincoln Street in 1889 at the age of 1 year and 3 months. The plot also holds one of Collins grandchildren, Edward Grayson Jaudon, who died in 1906 while residing in Collinsville at 1010 East Gwinnett Street.<sup>51</sup>

*James F. Collins & Edward F. R. Grayson*

Both James F. Collins (relationship to Jacob S. Collins unclear) and Edward F. R. Grayson, W. L. Grayson's son, were involved in the Electric Railway Company during the mid 1890s. Collins served as a conductor, while Grayson was an engineer.<sup>52</sup>

*George Dieter*

George Dieter owned the large tract of land adjacent to the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood just south of Anderson Street. Dieter's property neighbored with that of Lester & Meinhard which would become Garden Homes. Dieter Street, which cuts through the old Dieter Tract, is named for him. In 1888, Dieter was listed in the *Savannah Morning News* as operating a truck farm where he grew

---

<sup>51</sup> Works Progress Administration, *Laurel Grove Cemetery, Savannah, Georgia: General Index to Keepers' Record Books, 1852-1938, Vol. I and Vol. II* (Savannah: Savannah Writers' Project, Works Progress Administration, 1939).

<sup>52</sup> "Savannah City Directory, 1895," (Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1895) 177, 233.

vegetables . Dieter purchased the first Collinsville lot put up for auction (discussed later in chapter).<sup>53</sup>

In 1921, George H. Dieter (unclear whether this is the same George Dieter or his son) was the Assistant Cashier for the National Bank of Savannah.<sup>54</sup>

#### *William L. Grayson*

William L. Grayson was partner with J. S. Collins in what was originally J. S. Collins & Company. By 1895 the company had evolved into Collins, Grayson & Company. By this time the firm was located at 130 Bay Street and was primarily importing fruit and selling produce wholesale. In February 1893, Grayson married Miss Lillian Turned.<sup>55</sup>

#### *Robert M. Hicks*

Robert M. Hicks is best known as the former owner of Hicks Hotel (demolished) on Johnson Square, and former director of the National Bank of Savannah.<sup>56</sup>

#### *Hugh Logan*

Along with Collins, Hugh Logan served as a board member for the Equitable Loan & Building Association.<sup>57</sup> At the time, Logan had his

---

<sup>53</sup> John W. Howard, "Map of the City of Savannah and Vicinity, 1910," (Savannah: City of Savannah, 1910), found in *The Playground of America*, Rare Book, GHS; Savannah Newspaper Digests, 1888 (citation SMN 13 May 1888 p8 c3), 17.

<sup>54</sup> *A Souvenir Booklet of Savannah . . .*

<sup>55</sup> "Savannah City Directory, 1895," (Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1895) 177, 234; (MN 8 Feb 1893), 8:2.

<sup>56</sup> *A Souvenir Booklet of Savannah . . . .*

own business as a butcher and dealt in wholesale and retail fish, game and vegetables.<sup>58</sup>

*William Whann Mackall*

William Whann Mackall, a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point (1837), rose to the rank of Brigadier General during the Civil War, when he served as Chief of Staff to General Joseph E. Johnston. Following the war, he formed the Savannah law firm of Charlton & Mackall which would later take in J. Randolph Anderson as partner. Mackall was one of the organizing directors of the Savannah Real Estate, Loan & Building Company before his death on August 19, 1891 in Fairfax County, Virginia.<sup>59</sup>

*Carl Mendel*

Carl Mendel was owner of Mendel Real Estate & Investment Company, and a former director of the National Bank of Savannah. Mendel Real Estate & Improvement Company became involved with real estate in the southeastern suburbs of Savannah in the 1910s and 1920s.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> "Savannah Newspaper Digests, 1888," (citation SMN 4 Oct 1888 p8 c4), 40.

<sup>58</sup> "Savannah Newspaper Digests, 1888," (citation SMN 15 Jan 1888 adv p3 c5), 290.

<sup>59</sup> Gordon B. Smith Notebooks: Mackall, GHS.

<sup>60</sup> *A Souvenir Booklet of Savannah . . . .*

---

*Thomas Nugent*

Nugent served as director of the Savannah Savings Bank in 1891, along with W. K. Wilkinson, and C. V. Snedeker.<sup>61</sup>

*Captain John Jacob Paulsen*

John Jacob Paulsen was born on August 1, 1837 in Blankenmon, Denmark. In July of 1868 he married Henrietta Meinken in Bremen, Germany. In 1880, at the young age of 43, he gave up his business, valued at \$40,000. The Paulsens had ten children, including five who survived to adulthood, Sophie, John, Jacob, Emma and Grover.<sup>62</sup>

Despite retirement, Paulsen was a very active presence in Savannah during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. He served as Chatham County commissioner for eight years, during which time the commission improved the road building program. He was involved with the Savannah Electric Company, serving on the Board of Directors. Paulsen supplied the financial backing for the Savannah Electric Company to build the West End railway line.<sup>63</sup>

In addition, he was involved in the development of several suburbs, most notably West Savannah, but also to a lesser degree Collinsville.

---

<sup>61</sup> "Savannah Newspaper Digests, 1891," 36.

<sup>62</sup> "The Life of Captain John Jacob Paulsen as told to...Mattie Marshcher Paulsen..." BF: Paulsen, GHS.

<sup>63</sup> "The Life of Captain John Jacob Paulsen. . .

Paulsen Street, which runs north-south just west of Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood is named in his honor.<sup>64</sup>

In 1921, three members of the Paulsen family were on the board of directors for the Oglethorpe Savings & Trust Company: Jacob Paulsen, vice-president; John F. Paulsen; and Grover C. Paulsen. At the same time Jacob, president of the Propeller Towboat Company, was on the board of directors for the National Bank of Savannah, an organization closely affiliated with Oglethorpe Savings & Trust Company.<sup>65</sup>

*W. K. Wilkinson*

Of all the businessmen involved in the development of Collinsville, Walter K. Wilkinson was the most active in the business of real estate as an agent and auctioneer. His personal real estate ventures included the Southside Land & Improvement Company formed in March of 1888 for the purpose of general real estate business, the Equitable Building & Loan Association, the Home Seekers Mutual Loan Association, and the Savannah Real Estate, Loan & Building Company. Like Collins, Wilkinson was involved in the banking community of Savannah, serving as president of the Savannah Savings Bank in 1895. A member of Wesley Monumental Church, Wilkinson served as secretary of the Union Society, overseers of the Bethesda Orphanage, in 1888 and 1889<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> "The Life of Captain John Jacob Paulsen. . .

<sup>65</sup> *A Souvenir Booklet of Savannah . . .*

<sup>66</sup> "Savannah Newspaper Digests, 1888," (citation SMN 18 May 1888 8:3; SMN 27 Mar 1888 adv 2:6, citation SMN 25 Apr 1888 8:1,4), 100, 374, 482; "Savannah City Directory, 1895," (Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1895) 39-40; Savannah City Directory, 1889 (Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1889) 29.

## DEVELOPMENT OF STREETCARS

The street railway system began in Savannah on December 20, 1866 when the Savannah, Skidaway & Seaboard Railroad Company was granted a charter for twenty years by the state legislature and provided with a stamp of approval from the Governor of Georgia.<sup>67</sup>

Savannah, Skidaway & Seaboard Railroad finally put two cars on its tracks on January 27, 1869, each drawn by one horse with room for twelve passengers:

*The cars rested on four small wheels. They were heated by wood or coal stoves and kerosene lamps were set in boxes on the front, which cast a dim gleam into the coach. The horses were adorned with bells to warn approaching traffic and the cars were equipped with bells to signal destinations.*<sup>68</sup>

Their subsequent success encouraged many entrepreneurs to enter the suburban railway business. One of which was the Wilmington Railroad Company, incorporated in October of 1868. In 1872, this company changed its name to Coast Line Railroad. At first complementing each other with different routes, the two systems were in direct competition for right-of-ways by the winter of 1873.<sup>69</sup>

In April 1882, the City & Suburban Railway Company was organized, taking control of the Savannah, Skidaway & Seaboard Railroad. Under

---

<sup>67</sup> "Trolley History in Savannah is Tale of Competitive Strife," (1 May 1921), VF-Railroads-Streetcar Lines, GHS; Henry Eason, *The Savannah Electric and Power Company, 1866-1971*, (Savannah: Historic Services, Inc., 1971), 11.

<sup>68</sup> Eason, 14.

<sup>69</sup> Eason, 13-14, 16.

new management, the company continued to spread out to the resort areas south of the city.<sup>70</sup>

In September 1883, the Savannah Street & Rural Resort Railway was incorporated by M. J. Desverges, J. J. McGowan, F. J. Ruckert, and George Dieter. Their plans included building a city and suburban railway which would go out Wheaton Street as well as to the Central Railroad wharves and around town. The new railroad was not up and running until 1888.<sup>71</sup>

#### *The Introduction of Electric Streetcars*

*Most authorities in urban history attribute the coming of electrified urban transportation as being a fundamental factor in the growth and development of the very metropolis upon which present-day American culture was erected in the post-Civil War decades and the early twentieth century. Savannah businessmen were aware of the immediate and long range attributes of the electric railway and were quick in implementing the new system in Chatham County; their plans were made with foresight and dispatch.<sup>72</sup>*

In 1886, the first electric street car line in the United States was opened in Montgomery, Alabama.<sup>73</sup>

Frank Sprague brought twenty-two streetcars up a hill in Richmond, Virginia at the same time, on the same track, each on its own power in

---

<sup>70</sup> Eason, 20-21.

<sup>71</sup> Eason, 22-23.

<sup>72</sup> Eason, 24.

<sup>73</sup> "Trolley Car History Traced By Cammack at Rotary Meeting," (SMN 26 Nov 1946), 14:6.

1888. From here on electric cars began to replace horse and steam power.<sup>74</sup>

Electricity had many advantages over old-fashioned horse power: electric cars were almost half the price per fare to operate; they could reach up to fifteen miles per hour; and their power enabled streetcar companies to attach trailers to the cars and accommodate more travelers.<sup>75</sup>

As electricity gained popularity:

*New cars were built, others refitted, with a motor, pole and trolley, or grooved wheel at the end of the pole. The car's trolley ran along a system of cables poised 19 feet above ground and suspended across by on either side of the street. The first car traveled at 12 miles per hour.<sup>76</sup>*

In November 1890, the Belt Line ran the first electric car in Savannah. The occasion was treated like a holiday or great event with people lining the streets and a guns salute, followed by fireworks. The local paper followed the event with excitement describing the early electric cars as making "a noise like a boiler shop in full tilt, and the sparks flew in every direction."<sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> Ray D. Applegate, *Trolleys and Streetcars on American Picture Postcards*, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1979), vi.

<sup>75</sup> "Electric Railway Lines: The United States has the Lion's Share of Them," (MN 7 Jul. 1890), 8:3.

<sup>76</sup> Erin Rossiter, "Getting the Streetcar They Desire," (SMN 31 Jul 2000), VF-Railroads-Streetcar Lines, GHS.

<sup>77</sup> "Trolley History in Savannah is Tale of Competitive Strife," (1 May 1921), VF-Railroads-Streetcar Lines, GHS; "Savannah's First Electric Car," (SMN 27 Nov 1946), 6:3; D'Alonzo, 62.

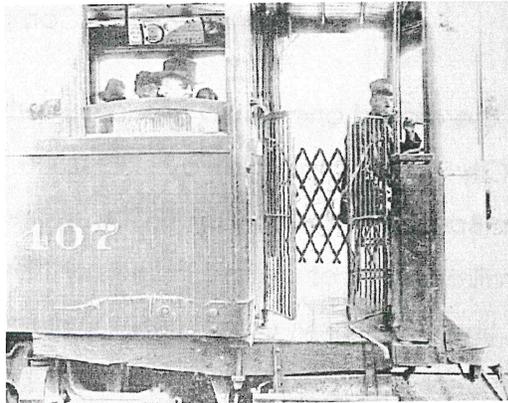


Figure 12 Electric Streetcars, n.d.<sup>78</sup>

*The trolleys would have a big arm going up to a wire in the back and we'd run behind them and pull it off and that would shut the trolley down in the middle of the night and it'd get dark and couldn't go anywhere. That didn't make the conductor too happy.<sup>79</sup>*

---

<sup>78</sup> VM 1361PH, Box 29, Folder 1-?, Item 5954, GHS.

<sup>79</sup> Julius Edel, JAOH #35, SJA.

### *Electric Railway Company*

In 1889, the closest one could get to our subject area via streetcar was on the City & Suburban Railway's 3<sup>rd</sup> route which ran from City Market south on Barnard Street to Liberty Street, and then east on Liberty Street to the railroad depot on the corner of Liberty and East Broad streets. At this time the only other street railway companies in operation besides were the Coast Line Railway, the Savannah Street & Rural Resort Railroad, and the Belt Line Route.<sup>80</sup>

On July 24, 1890, a petition signed by W.K. Wilkinson, J. Randolph Anderson, Thomas Nugent, H. Logan, Walter G. Charlton, Jacob S. Collins, Robert M. Hicks, Jacob Paulsen, W. F. McCauley and W. W. Mackall, Jr. was presented to the Savannah City Council requesting certain rights of way through several city streets in which to construct a new street railway. At the time of the petition, the railway company was still unnamed, but the petitioners stated that they were applying to the upcoming legislature for an act to incorporate, build, equip and operate either a horse or electric railway in Savannah. All of the gentlemen presenting the petition represented the interests of the Savannah Real Estate, Loan & Building Company (SRELB) which was organized less than a month before the petition. The petitioners laid out a route from City Market southeast to Gwinnett and Ott streets. This was smack in the middle of the SRELB's new lands in the southeastern section of the city. They clearly outlined the fact that their interests were in real estate and the street railways would be the means to "rapid and substantial development in that section." They

---

<sup>80</sup> "Savannah City Directory, 1889," (Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1889) 29.

stressed that at present this area brought in little revenue to the city. Development, and therefore increased tax revenue, would benefit both the petitioners and the city.<sup>81</sup>

Due to the increasing demands by several companies for rights-of-ways, the City Council established a special committee on street railways to consider the various applications and determine the best method of distributing rights-of-ways so as not to hurt the city as a whole. The committee consisted of Aldermen Harmon, Cann, Carson and Bailey, with Aldermen Myers serving as chairman.<sup>82</sup>

The City Council Minutes of August 14, 1890 reflect the special committee's endorsement of the petition with several conditions attached: the company must donate to the city lands necessary for streets to be laid off according to the city plan in the southeast section of the city; construction on the railway lines would begin within six months and be operating within twelve months; and the company "shall enter into an agreement to be bound by all the terms, conditions and stipulations of the ordinance entitled 'An Ordinance to Authorize the Savannah Street and Rural Resort Railway Company, the City and Suburban Railway Company and the Coast Line Railroad corporations located in the City of Savannah, to use electricity as a motive power

---

<sup>81</sup> "After All the Streets: Two More Railways Seeking Rights of Way," (MN 24 Jul 1890), 8:5.

<sup>82</sup> "Savannah Newspaper Digests, 1890," (citation MN 15 Aug 1890 8:1-2), 517; "The Street Railway Franchises," (MN 16 Oct 1890), 8:5; City Council Minute Book, January 1890-August 1891, 209, SCC.

for their cars in the streets of the City of Savannah upon the terms and conditions herein expressed and for other purposes."<sup>83</sup>

Several weeks later, the special committee amended the conditions placed on the Savannah Real Estate, Loan & Building Company's street railway deal, by stating that the developers shall put into future sales of land the right of the city to open the streets according to the city plan when necessary.<sup>84</sup>

The prospective developers had some concerns about the conditions laid out and on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, the City Council passed the following amendment:

*That the company which it is proposed to charter, and the Savannah Real Estate, Loan and Building Company, for whose benefit the street railway is desired, shall lay off such lands as they may now own, or control, according to the plan of the city.*

*That whenever any sale of such property is made, it shall be subject to said plan.*

*That in deeds to purchaser from the said companies, or either of them, the right of the city to streets through the said land shall be fully secured as herein set forth.*

*That whenever the city shall have opened streets, according to its said plan, up to the property now owned by said companies, then the said companies each agree to deed to the city free of charge, such land as may be*

---

<sup>83</sup> City Council Minute Book, January 1890-August 1891, 213, SCC; "Fixing Rights of Way: The City's Offer to Street Railway Companies," (MN 15 Aug 1890), 8:1-2; City Council Minute Book, January 1890-August 1891, 213-214, SCC.

<sup>84</sup> "Our Solons in Session: Two Street Railway Companies Dissatisfied," (MN 4 Sep 1890), 8:1-2.

necessary for the extension of the said plan of the city over the said property of the said companies.<sup>85</sup>

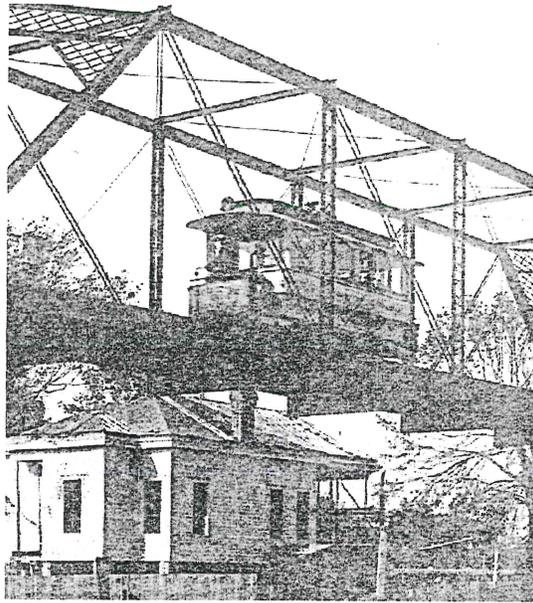


Figure 13 Electric Railway Company Streetcar n.d.<sup>86</sup>

Once the arrangements were settled with City Council, the newly formed Electric Railway Company (ERC) began work on its new tracks. Collins brought in J. W. McFarlane as superintendent. McFarlane came from Winston-Salem, North Carolina where he had been superintendent of the Winston & Salem line. He was known as an expert electrician, valuable knowledge in such a new business.<sup>87</sup>

On August 6, 1891, a trial run of the cars and machinery went smoothly if a little stiffly. The new cars, received by the company in early July,

---

<sup>85</sup> City Council Minute Book, January 1890-August 1891, 224, SCC.

<sup>86</sup> VM 1378 Walter Kramer Collection, Item 1, Folder 15, Box 1, GHS.

<sup>87</sup> (SMN 6 Jul 1891), 8:1.

were noted in the local newspaper as weighing about 9,000 pounds each, compared to the Belt Line's 14,000 pound cars. The cars were described as similar to the ones used in Augusta, Georgia and "are painted a beautiful deep black with gold lettering on the sides and make a very handsome appearance." At this time, there was no permanent track connecting the ERC's lines to the temporary shed erected by Collins to house the cars on Gwinnett and Ott streets. The company was given permission by the Savannah, Florida & Western Railroad to rig up a temporary track over their tracks running northeast to enable them to move four cars to the storage facility.<sup>88</sup>

On August 8, 1891 the ERC opened for business with six streetcars running on three miles of rail. The plant system included two small generators, 200 horsepower in engines, and 250 horsepower in boilers.<sup>89</sup>

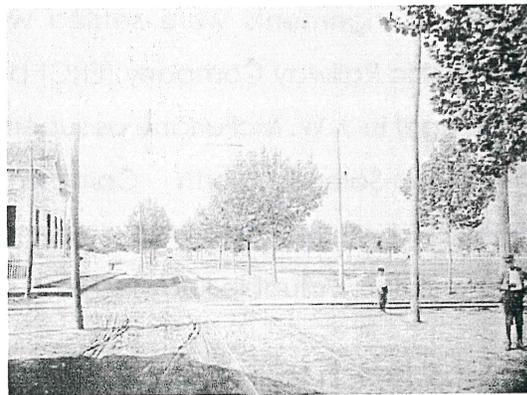


Figure 14 Spectators along the new ERC line in Collinsville, n.d.<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> (SMN 6 Jul 1891), 8:1; (SMN 6 Aug 1891), 8:3.

<sup>89</sup> "People's Electric Light & Power Company," (MN 29 Jan 1893), adv 6:2-3.

<sup>90</sup> VM 1361PH, Box 17, Folder 4, Item 3501, GHS.

The *Savannah Morning News* kept the public well updated on the progress of the new streetcars. On its very first day open to the public the paper ran a lengthy article describing the first run:

*The Electric Railway Company ran its first car to the city market last night. The car left the shed on Gwinnett Street shortly before 7 o'clock. . . . The car was given a regular ovation along Price Street. . . . On the car were President J. S. Collins, Treasurer W. K. Wilkinson, Supt. McFarlane, Electrician Dull and about twenty others including a number of boys who had swarmed in for a ride on the first car down town. . . . The trip back to the shed was made in about twenty minutes. . . . They [the cars] are of the Edison system and are very easily controlled.*<sup>91</sup>

The initial schedule included four cars running the western part of the line from the market to the Gwinnett Street crossing of the Savannah, Florida & Western Railroad tracks, and one car running the part of the line east of the crossing, with cars running every ten minutes. At the railroad crossing passengers were transferred between the two sides.<sup>92</sup>

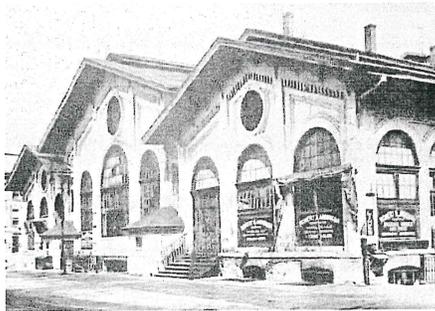


Figure 15 City Market, n.d.<sup>93</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup> "The New Electric Road," (SMN 8 Aug 1891), 8:1.

<sup>92</sup> "The New Electric Road."

<sup>93</sup> VM 1361PH, Box 7, Folder 8, Item 1276, GHS.

On its first Sunday, the ERC reported carrying over 1,500 passengers during just one day. The new power house was thrown open for the public to visit, and the company took the opportunity to show off their lands to prospective buyers. Robert M. Hicks, director of the ERC, served "Hicks' Electric Punch." Those present at the opening included Savannah's most powerful men of the time, aldermen, lawyers, bankers, and real estate investors. The crowd not only enjoyed the tour of the new facility but "a splendid view of the city and the adjacent lands . . . this being one of the highest points near the city."<sup>94</sup>

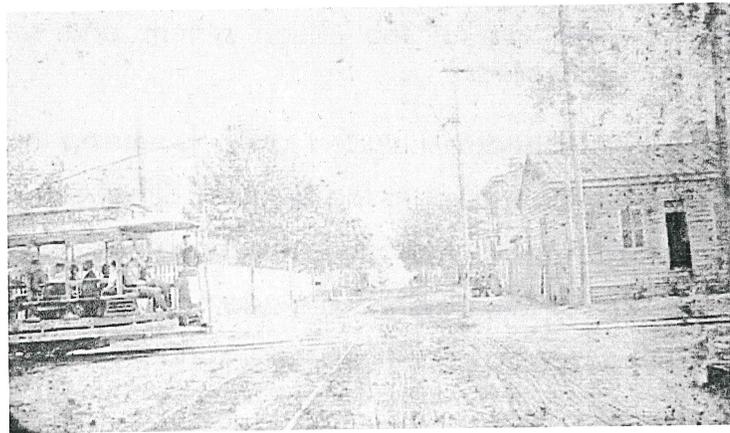


Figure 16 The ERC Streetcar in Collinsville, n.d.<sup>95</sup>

Six badges (#50-55) were issued by the City Clerk's office to the ERC on September 8, 1891 at the price of \$13.50 each. The badges served as licenses for the company to operate the cars, and each conductor wore their badge number on their caps. Records from the same month show that ERC's competition included the Savannah Street & Rural Resort Railroad Company with 12 badges, the City & Suburban

---

<sup>94</sup> "Sunday on the New Line," (SMN 10 Aug 1891), 8:3; "The New Line's Opening," (SMN 11 Aug 1891), 8:2.

<sup>95</sup> VM 1361PH, Box 17, Folder 3, Item 3496, GHS.

Railway with 27 badges, and the Coast Line Railroad Company with only eight badges.<sup>96</sup>

Almost immediately, the ERC's South Broad Street (Oglethorpe Avenue) line was opened with two cars, on a ten minute schedule, running from Price to Montgomery and then around to the City Market.<sup>97</sup>

Over the next few years, the ERC submitted several petitions to City Council for the extension of their lines. For the most part, these requests were granted, often with conditions that the company make improvements when building new tracks, including installing street lighting and repaving sidewalks with Belgian blocks.<sup>98</sup>

In early 1892, the ERC completed a belt around the city, by connecting its Price Street line with new track out West Broad Street to Laurel Grove Cemetery, and back east on Duffy Street. In April of 1894, the company began lines in West Savannah.<sup>99</sup>

However, in May of 1893, upon the petition of the company to extend its lines again, a counter petition was submitted against its extension citing that it would not provide street car access to anyone who doesn't already have it and that the owners of the abutting property were all against the line's proposed extension route. In the end, the

---

<sup>96</sup> MS 5600CL-290 City of Savannah Records-Clerk of Council Records, Vol. 3, 1891, GHS.

<sup>97</sup> "Sunday on the New Line," (SMN 10 Aug 1891), 8:3.

<sup>98</sup> City Council Minute Book, September 1891-June 1893, 174, 217, 245, 313, 435, 471, 483, 492, SCC.

<sup>99</sup> (MN 22 Jan 1892), 8:3; "Savannah's First Electric Car," (SMN 27 Nov 1946), 6:3.

ERC withdrew this petition and abandoned the proposed extension along this route.<sup>100</sup>

October 6, 1891 saw one of the largest merger's in the history of Savannah business when the ERC and the Savannah Street Railway both came under the ownership of the ERC, creating the largest urban and suburban system in Savannah. This merger brought about increased competition between the ERC and the City & Suburban.<sup>101</sup>

The ERC eventually leased the Savannah & Isle of Hope Railway running out to Isle of Hope, Thunderbolt, White Bluff and Rose Dhu. The Savannah & Isle of Hope had been reorganized previously from the old Coast Line Railroad<sup>102</sup>



Figure 17 Conductor C. E. Dix, near Price and Gwinnett Streets, n.d.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>100</sup> City Council Minute Book, September 1891-June 1893, 509-510, 533, SCC.

<sup>101</sup> Eason, 26-27.

<sup>102</sup> D'Alonzo, 58.

<sup>103</sup> "Savannah Album," (SEP 15 Oct 1965), VF-Savannah-Transportation, CELB.

The ERC replaced the temporary shed on Gwinnett and Ott streets with a complex of buildings including a large brick building and several sub-buildings used for the housing and repairing of the streetcars. These structures would commonly become known as the car barns and many people still refer to the site by this name. Taking up a whole block, the car barns were a defining element in the southeast suburbs.

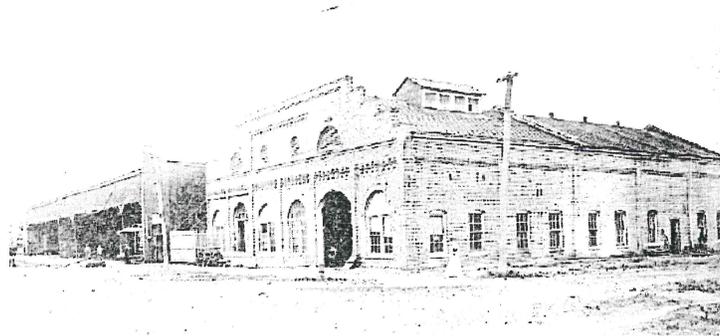


Figure 18 Car Barns, 1912<sup>104</sup>

The large main building was one story with a gabled roof disguised by a stepped parapet wall. Though an utilitarian building, the bricks were laid in an attractive pattern, creating arched windows and vents, and a subtle corbelled cornice detail.<sup>105</sup>

---

<sup>104</sup> VM 1381, Savannah Electric & Power Company Albums, Album 1, GHS

<sup>105</sup> VM 1381 Savannah Electric & Power Company Albums, Album 1, GHS.

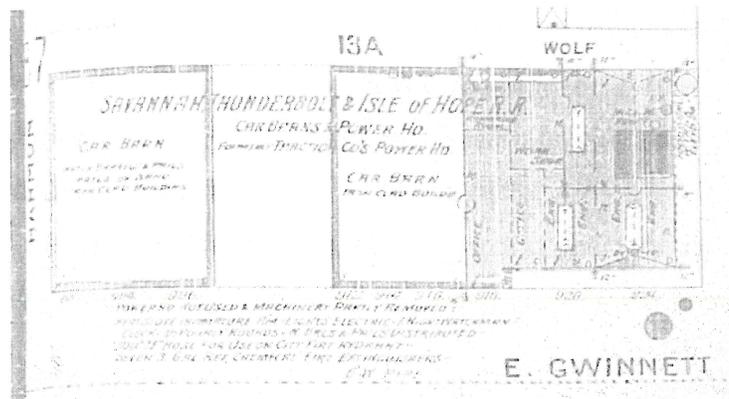


Figure 19 Car Barns, 1898<sup>106</sup>

From her family's store on the corner of Harmon and Wolf streets, Suzanne Kantziper could see the tall brick wall surrounding the site. "There was an office where at times, when my parents were busy and they needed to make change they would give us some cash, and we would go there and they would give us change and that was a help."<sup>107</sup>

Despite the ERC's success and reported value of \$66,300 in 1893, Collins still had to compete against Captain Johnston's City & Suburban Railway.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>106</sup> "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1898," GHS.

<sup>107</sup> Suzanne Kantziper, BVC OH #17.

<sup>108</sup> (MN 9 Jan 1895), 8:4-6

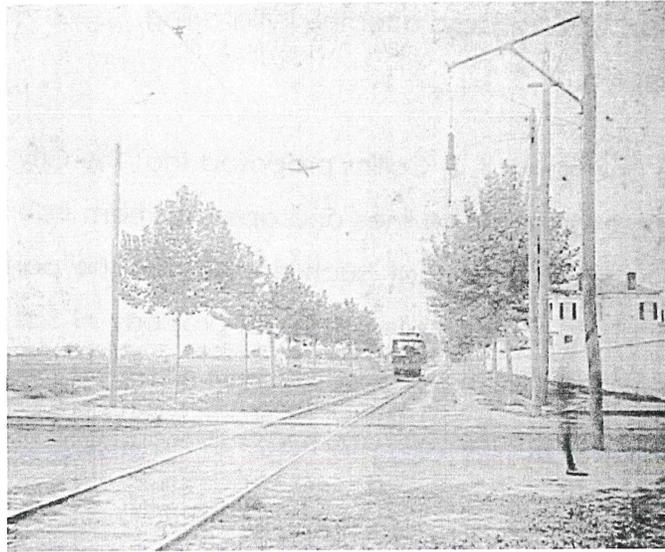


Figure 20 ERC Streetcar in Collinsville, n.d.<sup>109</sup>

1894 saw the great fare war between Savannah's streetcar companies, led by Collins and Johnston. Following the failed consolidation of several lines, the two companies began aggressively cutting their fares, first down to three cents, and then as low as one cent. In October 1894, the *Morning News* reported:

*To-day will be a big day with the street railroads. The travel on Saturday is unusually large and with one-cent fares on nearly all lines, the travel is likely to be something immense.*<sup>110</sup>

In January 1895, Judge Speer of the United States Court placed ERC in a receivership and appointed John R. Young as temporary receiver. The court returned fares to five cents with three cent fare on suburban

---

<sup>109</sup> VM 1361PH, Box 17, Folder 3, Item 3495, GHS.

<sup>110</sup> "Tale of Competitive Strife."

lines. Several days after the initial ruling, Speer appointed Collins as co-receiver.<sup>111</sup>

At one point, J. S. Collins proposed that the City of Savannah buy and consolidate all the lines and operate them free of charge as a public service claiming that "such a policy on the part of the city would do much to develop the suburban property of Savannah." This seems to indicate that the real estate end of his business was more important than the streetcars.<sup>112</sup>

The 1895 Sholes' Directory of the City of Savannah published the streetcar schedules for all the routes in Savannah, including those of the Savannah, Thunderbolt & Isle of Hope Railroad, the City & Suburban Railway of Savannah, the Suburban & West End Railway, and the Electric Railway Company. The schedule of the ERC included four routes at this time, as follows:

*Routes: 1<sup>st</sup>. From market, east on St. Julian to Price, south on Price to Gwinnett, east on Gwinnett to Ott, south on Ott to Anderson, east on Anderson to Waters road, south on Waters road to Estill Avenue [now Victory Drive], connecting with the Isle of Hope R. R.*

*2d. From market west on St. Julian to Montgomery, south on Montgomery to South Broad to West Broad, south on West Broad to Roberts, southwest on Roberts to Laurel Grove, from cemetery east on Duffy to Price, north on Price to Gwinnett.*

*3d. From Ogeechee canal, east on Indian to West Broad, across West Broad to Bay, east on Bay to East*

---

<sup>111</sup> (MN 9 Jan 1895), 8:4-6; (MN 11 Jan 1895), 8:2; "Tale of Competitive Strife."

<sup>112</sup> "Tale of Competitive Strife."

*Broad, south on East Broad to Gwinnett, west on Gwinnett to Habersham, south on Habersham to Estill avenue, west on Estill avenues to Montgomery, north on Montgomery to Liberty, west on Liberty to West Broad, north on West Broad to Indian, west on Indian to Ogeechee canal.*

*4<sup>th</sup>. From Drayton west on Bay to Barnard, south on Barnard to Anderson, east on Anderson to East Broad, north on East Broad to Bay, and west on Bay to Drayton.*<sup>113</sup>

It is clear that less than five years after its organization, Collins' streetcar lines were not only providing access to and from Collinsville, but were traversing the whole city. In addition to the storage and repair facility on Gwinnett and Ott streets, the company had offices on Gwinnett and Price streets. The officers of the company in 1895 included J. S. Collins, president; T. G. Reid, secretary and treasurer; and J. W. McFarland, superintendent.<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>113</sup> "Savannah City Directory, 1895," (Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1895) 57.

<sup>114</sup> "Savannah City Directory, 1895," (Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1895) 57.

## *The People's Line*

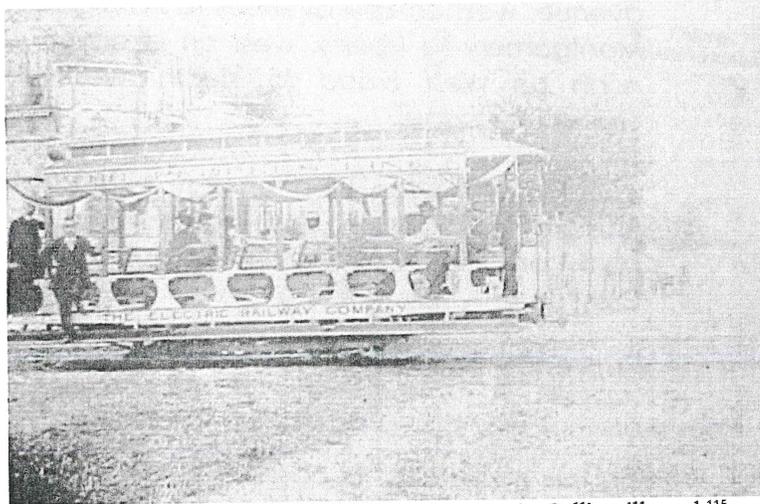


Figure 21 Electric Railway Company Streetcar in Collinsville, n.d.<sup>115</sup>

The system of the Electric Railway Company eventually became commonly known as the People's Line for their parent company. The streetcars were labeled with both names, but ownership never changed hands.<sup>116</sup>

In January of 1893, with the charter of the People's Electric Light and Power Company, the Electric Railway fell under the ownership of this new company, owned by the same people with J. S. Collins serving as president. At the time of the organization of the People's Company, the Electric Railway had grown from six cars to twenty-six cars, running on ten miles of rail. The "magnificently equipped Plant and Machine Shops. The most complete in the south," now included four generators, four lighting machines, 700 horsepower in engines, and 1,000

---

<sup>115</sup> VM 1361PH, Box 17, Folder 4, Item 3506, GHS.

<sup>116</sup> VF-Railroads-Streetcar Lines (portion of VM 1381), GHS.

horsepower in boilers. Representing tremendous growth in a little over one and half years.<sup>117</sup>

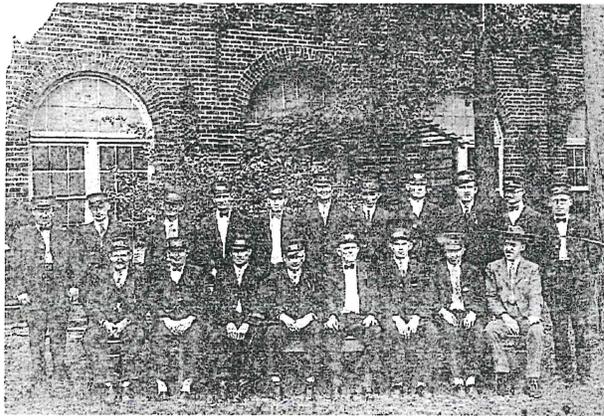


Figure 22 Streetcar Conductors in front of car barns, n.d.<sup>118</sup>

On January 5, 1897, Collins sold the ERC to future Savannah Mayor and one-time special committee on street railways member, Herman Myers and J. H. Fall. Myers and Fall almost immediately turned the assets around, selling the line to George Parsons, owner of the Savannah, Thunderbolt & Isle of Hope Railway, on May 29, 1897. In 1901, Parsons purchased the Suburban & West End Line, completing his system which became known as the Parsons System.<sup>119</sup>

On January 17, 1902, the Savannah, Thunderbolt & Isle of Hope Railway Company, the Savannah & Isle of Hope Railway Company, the City & Suburban Railway Company, and the Edison Electric & Illuminating Company, were consolidated under the Savannah Electric Company, not to be confused with the Electric Railway Company. By

---

<sup>117</sup> "People's Electric Light & Power Company," (MN 29 Jan 1893), adv 6:2-3.

<sup>118</sup> MS 1349 Walter C. Hartridge Collection, Folder 3128, Box 185, GHS.

<sup>119</sup> D'Alonzo, 74.

1918, the Savannah Electric Company operated fifty-nine miles of track and ran seventy-five cars, in addition to providing the electric light and power to Savannah's commercial and residential areas.<sup>120</sup>

In 1928, The Savannah Electric Company and the Chatham County Traction Company were sold to Savannah Electric & Power Company (SEPCO), putting this larger company in control of all electric streetcar lines and electric companies in Savannah. SEPCO would continue to use the ERC's old car barns to house the streetcars, and in the future their buses.<sup>121</sup>

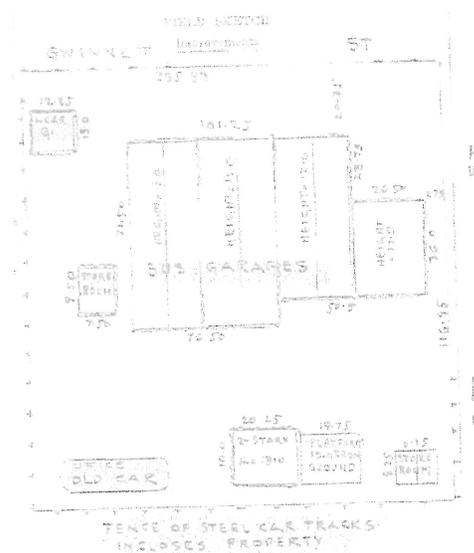


Figure 23 SEPCO Car Barns, 1937<sup>122</sup>

SEPCO's takeover was indicative of the industry around the country. Streetcars reached their zenith in the 1910s when large conglomerates

<sup>120</sup> "Tale of Competitive Strife."; Applegate, 16.

<sup>121</sup> D'Alonzo, 107, 118.

<sup>122</sup> Cadastral Survey: Johnston Ward, 1937, CCHH.

began to takeover any remaining independent companies and the automobile began its ascent as the most popular means of transportation.<sup>123</sup>

By the 1940s, buses had largely replaced the old streetcars. The buses simply took the place of the streetcars on the roads and even in the car barns. The last streetcar, an open summer model, made its final run south along Habersham Street and back downtown in 1946. Stopping to let passengers off at Broughton and Abercorn streets, the streetcar was last seen at 1:10 am on August 25, 1946 as it made its way back to the car barns one last time.<sup>124</sup>

On a side note, the period of the streetcar wasn't all glamorous. Like any new technology, there were accidents and disasters. In 1895, the *Morning News* reported an accident involving Early Ward. Ward, a young African American boy of eight or nine years old, was run over by one of the Electric Railway Company's cars at the intersection of Price and Gaston Streets on a Saturday evening. As a result, Ward who lived on the corner and had been sent on an errand, had one foot amputated. The boy's uncle, Drew Ward, claimed the streetcar was running too fast, between twelve and fifteen miles per hour, and the conductor was not ringing his bell to warn pedestrians. J. S. Collins stated to the newspaper that "it was unavoidable so far as the

---

<sup>123</sup> Applegate, vi.

<sup>124</sup> Kenneth E. Palmer, "Streetcars Gone 12 Years Now But Memories Remain," (SEP 9 Aug 1958), VF-Railroads-Streetcar Lines, GHS; Joe Lansdell, "City's Picturesque Trolley Era Closes with Final Run on Sunday," (SMN 26 Aug 1946), VF-Railroads-Streetcar Lines, GHS.

company was concerned, as the boy ran directly across the track in front of the car."<sup>125</sup>

---

<sup>125</sup> "Says it was Fast Running," (MN 9 Jul 1895), 8:2.

## DEVELOPMENT OF STREETCAR SUBURBS

### Collinsville



Figure 24 Collinsville, n.d.<sup>126</sup>

Development of the suburban areas surrounding the city proper of Savannah varied dramatically from the planned city and even from each other. Property owners and developers had the liberty of laying out streets and blocks however they wished in lands outside of the incorporated city limits.<sup>127</sup>

By 1890, development was creeping towards the future Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood, with Eastville on the north and Eastland on the south. However, it wasn't until Collins' People's Investment Company

---

<sup>126</sup> VM 1361PH, Box 17, Folder 3, Item 3493, GHS.

<sup>127</sup> G. A. Gregory, "Savannah and Its Surroundings," (Savannah: Press of the Morning News, 1890), 19.

acquired a large tract of land southeast of the city that large scale residential growth occurred.<sup>128</sup>

The SRELB laid out the first neighborhood of Collinsville in the new land, bounded by Gwinnett Street on the north, Anderson Street on the south, Paulsen Street on the west, and Waters Avenue on the east in 1890.<sup>129</sup>

*A city was pushing out from within itself into the countryside. Where people and business went, the electric trolley followed, linking the units into a functional whole.*<sup>130</sup>

Or in Collinsville's case, the people and business followed the trolley. At the same time the ERC was opening its new streetcar line, the SRELB was advertising a public auction of the lots in the newly subdivided Collinsville. A large half page advertisement was placed in the *Savannah Morning News* on August 9, 1891 announcing the sale planned for August 12<sup>th</sup> at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The ad, appearing only one day after the ERC's line opened to the public, mentioned that the streetcar ran directly through the property and was "built for the purpose of developing the lands in that vicinity; and no part of the portion of the property offered is farther than 300 feet [from it]."<sup>131</sup>

The ad stressed the fresh landscape and open space, trying to lure people away from the crowded and dirty city:

---

<sup>128</sup> "Eastside National Register Nomination," 12, MPC.

<sup>129</sup> Deed 6Z-324, CCCH.

<sup>130</sup> Eason, 27.

<sup>131</sup> "Auction Sale of Desirable Lots," (SMN 9 Aug 1891), adv. 5:1-7.

*These are all wide streets giving plenty of room for sunshine and the circulation of air.*

*Lots are situated on a high plateau in the eastern and southeastern portions of the city. . .*<sup>132</sup>

The auction was handled by W. K. Wilkinson, realtor and auctioneer. Wilkinson demanded a minimum of \$100 cash down on all bids, with the balance due in one, two, or three years at 7% interest.<sup>133</sup>

As with the electric streetcars, the local newspaper followed the progress of the new subdivision closely. The day after the auction, a long article appeared listing almost all the owners from that first auction. The writer expressed surprise at the high prices the lots fetched, "a large number of lots sold at good prices--prices much higher than expected for the location." Of those offered, about 100 lots sold, with an average price of \$500 per lot. No lot was parted with for less than \$400 and corner lots went for as much as \$1,000. The purchasers were made up of "moneyed men, real estate agents, stockholders of the company and home seekers." George Dieter bought the first lot up, on the corner of Lovers Lane (Anderson Street) and Waters Avenue for \$1,000. The rest of this block quickly sold, and despite being, or perhaps because of, the farthest from the city, the whole block brought in \$5,040.<sup>134</sup>

J. S. Collins purchased one whole north block of Duffy Street for \$4,500; "Mr. Collins has already completed plans for a handsome residence in this block, and he expects to have it ready for occupancy by

---

<sup>132</sup> "Auction Sale of Desirable Lots."

<sup>133</sup> "Auction Sale of Desirable Lots."

<sup>134</sup> (SMN 13 Aug 1891 8:2).

December 1.” This was not news, since the paper had already announced on July 6<sup>th</sup> his intentions to build near the terminus of the street railway. In September the paper announced his house would cost an estimated \$10,000 when finished.<sup>135</sup>

The owners of the property sold on that first day included several men involved with the SRELB and the ERC: George Dieter, William L. Grayson, Jacob Paulsen, J. Randolph Anderson, as well as, P. B. Springer, F. S. Lathrop, and lumberman C. V. Snedeker. The remaining lots were then “disposed of at private sale.”<sup>136</sup>



Figure 25 924 East Henry Street, 2003<sup>137</sup>

Every September, the local newspaper published a report on the construction business and expanding neighborhoods in Savannah. In 1892, the *Savannah Morning News* commented on the suburban boom:

---

<sup>135</sup> (SMN 13 Aug 1891 8:2); “City Brevities,” (SMN 6 Jul 1891 8:3); “Seven Hundred Houses,” (SMN 4 Sep 1891 13:1-4).

<sup>136</sup> (SMN 13 Aug 1891), 8:2.

<sup>137</sup> Photograph by Andy Young, 2003, DCA.

*The extended limits of the city south, east and west are building up at a remarkable pace and the places known only a short time since as the suburban commons are becoming young towns. The extensiveness of the street railways is what has brought about these gratifying results.<sup>138</sup>*

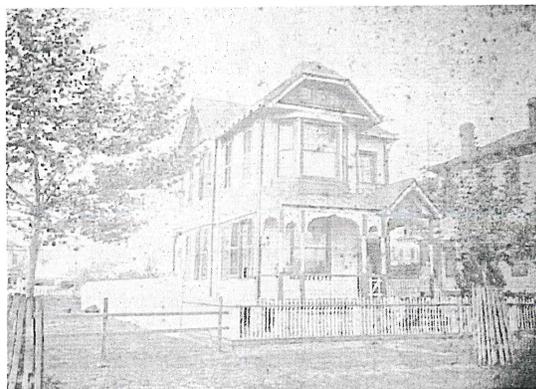


Figure 26 House owned by W.K. Wilkinson, n.d.<sup>139</sup>

The first homes built in Collinsville were predominantly Victorian architecture, mostly two-story frame single family homes. The corner lots were developed first, and early property owners had to fence in the yards to prevent free range cows grazing in the open fields from coming into their yards. Very quickly the rural landscape would be full of homes and newly planted trees.<sup>140</sup>

---

<sup>138</sup> Mary Morrison Ward Books: Southern Expansion (citation SMN 3 Sep 1892 10:1-4), GHS

<sup>139</sup> VM 1361PH, Box 17, Folder 4, Item 3504, GHS.

<sup>140</sup> "Eastside National Register Nomination," 7, MPC; "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1898."



Figure 27 House owned by Mr. Collins, n.d.<sup>141</sup>

The concentration of elaborate homes began on Henry Street east of Waters Avenue where some of the first lots were sold. By the late 1890s, several two-story frame homes lined the street with elaborate footprints containing bays, turrets, and numerous porches.<sup>142</sup>

The developers placed only a few restrictions on the property when they sold the individual lots including: all buildings must face north or south; no building could back up against an adjacent lot; and the company reserved the title to the soil of the streets and lanes.<sup>143</sup>

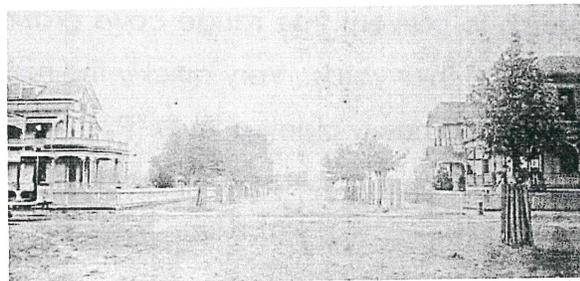


Figure 28 Looking east on Duffy Street from Ott Street, n.d.<sup>144</sup>

---

<sup>141</sup> VM 1361PH, Box 17, Folder 4, Item 3502, GHS.

<sup>142</sup> "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1898."

<sup>143</sup> Deed 6Z-324, CCCH.

<sup>144</sup> VM 1361PH, Box 17, Folder 4, Item 3499, GHS.

Jacob S. Collins was one of the first to build in the new neighborhood, on the corner of East Duffy and Ott streets. The Collins House was a two-story frame Victorian residence in an unusual U-shaped floor plan with one and two-story wrap-around porches on three sides. Collins' house, very large on a whole block of property, testified to his success with the ERC and SRELB. Early pictures of the neighborhood are labeled as houses of Collins and several of Wilkinson's. It seems likely that they built several of the earliest homes and then resold them, wanting to get several houses thrown up early to encourage property buyers.<sup>145</sup>

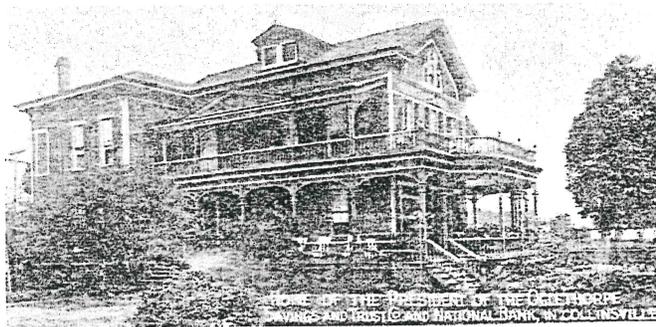


Figure 29 J. S. Collins House, 1010 East Duffy Street, c1921<sup>146</sup>

---

<sup>145</sup> "Eastside National Register Nomination," 7, MPC; "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1898."

<sup>146</sup> *A Souvenir Booklet of Savannah...*

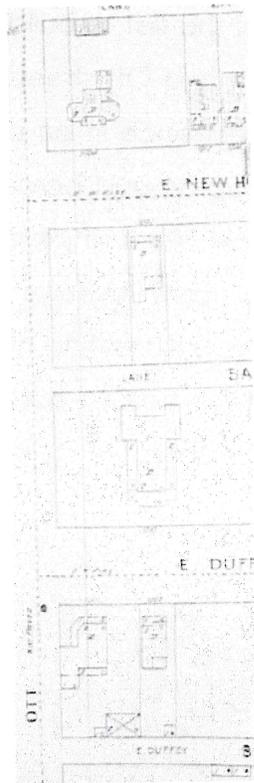


Figure 30 Early Collinsville Houses  
Collins House with Unusual  
U-Shape Floorplan, 1898<sup>147</sup>

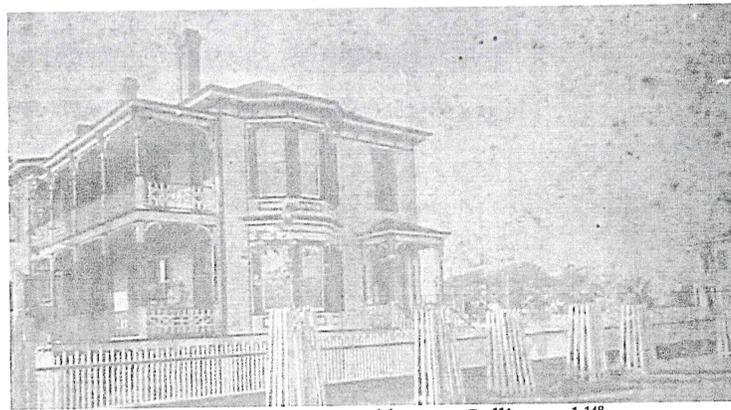


Figure 31 House owned by Mr. Collins, n.d.<sup>148</sup>

<sup>147</sup> "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1898."

<sup>148</sup> VM 1361PH, Box 17, Folder 3, Item 3491, GHS.

Little changed in Collinsville once the houses were built, a large number prior to the turn of the century. In 1916, the Sanborn maps indicated that many people in the area were owners of automobiles, with garages popping up all around. This transition to the auto again testified to the wealth of the neighborhood in the early part of the twentieth century.<sup>149</sup>

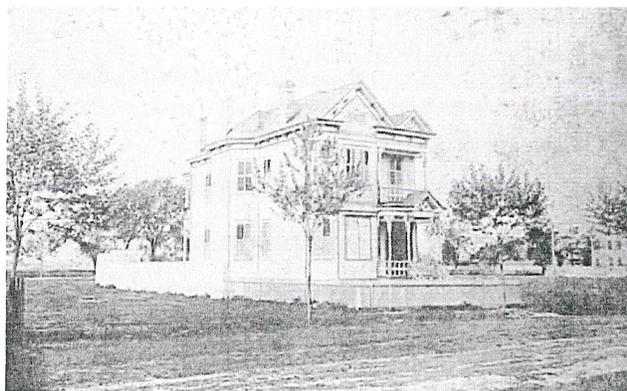


Figure 32 House owned by Mr. Collins, n.d.<sup>150</sup>



Figure 33 913 East Henry Street, 2003<sup>151</sup>

---

<sup>149</sup> "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1916."

<sup>150</sup> VM 1361PH, Box 17, Folder 3, Item 3498, GHS.

<sup>151</sup> Photograph by Andy Young, 2003, DCA.

## The Meadows

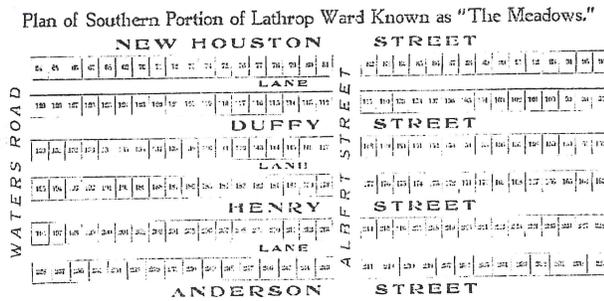


Figure 34 Plan of the Meadows, c1900<sup>152</sup>

Collins' next real estate project was the Meadows, just east of Collinsville on the opposite side of Waters Avenue. The Meadows was a fairly small development composed of the southern portion of Lathrop Ward from New Houston Street (now Park Avenue) south to Anderson Street, from Waters Road (now Avenue) east past Albert Street (now Live Oak) to Cedar Street.<sup>153</sup>



Figure 35 Looking west on Henry Street into Collinsville, c1900<sup>154</sup>

<sup>152</sup> "Some Views of the Meadows," (Savannah: F. E. Purse, Printer, 1900), Rare Pamphlets, GHS.

<sup>153</sup> "Some Views of the Meadows."

<sup>154</sup> "Some Views of the Meadows."

The Meadows property sat on what was once part of Cuyler Swamp, previously drained to allow for suburban expansion. Plans to develop this area appear to have begun as early as 1893, when SRELB had the land subdivided into building lots under the name Cleveland Park. Cleveland Park had the exact same layout as the Meadows would in 1900, but the names of the streets on the northern and southern borders were intended to be North and South streets, with north-south access closed on either end. By the time city engineer J. W. Howard drafted a map of the Meadows in 1906, North Street was renamed Collins Street and South Street was labeled properly as Anderson Street. On the Cleveland Park plan, Live Oak, running north-south down the center of the Meadows would have been called Cleveland Park.<sup>155</sup>

The Meadows was simply an expansion of Collinsville. However, a new name and advertising helped increase interest in the area. The opening of the Meadows lands indicated the Collins had sold the majority if not all of the Collinsville lots.<sup>156</sup>

---

<sup>155</sup> Percy Sugden, "Plan of Cleveland Park," (1893), City Engineer Map Collection, EW/E-118, MRL; J. W. Howard, "Meadows in Ballantyne Ward," (1906), City Engineer Map Collection, Property Map Book 8, page 9, MRL.

<sup>156</sup> "Eastside," National Register Nomination, MPC files, p5.



Figure 36 John Screven House, East Henry Street,  
two doors east of Waters Avenue, c1900<sup>157</sup>

In 1900 the promotional pamphlet "Some Views of the Meadows" was printed for the developers by F. E. Purse. The small paper booklet included images of the grandest homes already built in the Meadows with the comment "it would be really worth your while to go and look at these beautiful residences. Some of the prettiest houses in Savannah are located in the Meadows." The homes pictured were mostly two-story, frame, Queen Anne homes, many with corner turrets and expansive front and side porches.<sup>158</sup>

The pamphlet stressed that though residents enjoyed the same conveniences found in other parts of Savannah including artesian water, electric lights, gas, and street cars, they avoided having to pay city taxes, being outside of the city limits. On April 9, 1900 at 4 o'clock in the afternoon an auction was held to dispose of the remaining lots on New Houston, Duffy and Henry streets, at terms of \$25 cash down, \$5 per month at 5% interest. The terms for the Meadows lots were more

---

<sup>157</sup> "Some Views of the Meadows."

<sup>158</sup> "Some Views of the Meadows."

reasonable than those sold eight years earlier in Collinsville's first auction (\$100 down, balance at 7% interest), indicating a more favorable real estate market for the buyer.<sup>159</sup>

SALE OF LOTS     A     AT 11 O'CLOCK

**The Meadows**

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, FEBRUARY 11, 1903  
AT FOUR O'CLOCK     A     A

\$25.00 Cash     A     \$5.00 per Month     A     7% interest

Figure 37 Meadows Promotional Pamphlet, Auction Details, c1900<sup>160</sup>

As with the southern portion of Collinsville, many of the Meadows' grand homes remain standing today, providing a glimpse of the once upper-class, Victorian residents. The Meadows pamphlet provides a rare opportunity to see these houses as they were originally built, before renovation and sometimes demolition touched them.



Figure 38 Charles H. Gibbes House (demolished 1961)

---

<sup>159</sup> "Some Views of the Meadows."

<sup>160</sup> "Some Views of the Meadows."

East Henry Street, c1900<sup>161</sup>



Figure 39 Joseph Copps House, East Henry Street, four doors east of Waters Avenue on the north curb, c1900<sup>162</sup>

At the time of the auction, travel time to the City Exchange (replaced in 1905 by City Hall), the heart of Savannah's downtown, was only seventeen minutes by streetcar. The streetcar lines continued to be the lifeline connecting the suburbs to the city.<sup>163</sup>

The Meadows is first listed in the Savannah City Directories as a neighborhood in 1901. However, few mentions of either the Meadows, and especially Collinsville, occur in the century following their initial development. The 1925 mention of the two neighborhoods in Maude Heyward's "Illustrated Guide to Savannah, Georgia" is one of the latest references to the once distinctive neighborhoods. At the time the streetcar line to Daffin Park, which started at Bay and Whitaker streets,

---

<sup>161</sup> "Some Views of the Meadows."

<sup>162</sup> "Some Views of the Meadows."

<sup>163</sup> "Some Views of the Meadows."

passed through the grand communities on its way out to Victory Drive.<sup>164</sup>

The Victorian streetcar suburbs of the turn of the century would soon be surpassed by the auto suburbs of Chatham Crescent and Ardsley Park in the 1910s and 1920s.



Figure 40 Horace Rivers Residence, c1900<sup>165</sup>

---

<sup>164</sup> Maude Heyward, "Illustrated Guide to Savannah, Georgia," (c1925), 19, Vol. 1, Georgia Pamphlets, Thomas Gamble Collection, CELB; "Savannah City Directory, 1901," GHS.

<sup>165</sup> "Some Views of the Meadows."

## IMPACT OF MASS TRANSIT

The importance of the streetcars in the development of Collinsville and the Meadows suburbs cannot be stressed enough. The electric trolleys were the most powerful sales tool the real estate developers had to attract potential buyers and affluent investors in Savannah. The sections of the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood not directly on the streetcar lines took longer to develop, filling in over a period of roughly forty years with smaller, more modest homes.

## Chapter 3

### AREA DEVELOPMENT

In 1901, the City of Savannah extended its corporate limits to include the majority of present day Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood. The extension took the southern boundary from Anderson Street south to Dale Avenue (Victory Drive) and the eastern boundary from Waters Avenue east to Ash Street. At this time, the portion of Wheaton Street from Waters Avenue to Ash Street was called Moore Avenue.<sup>166</sup>

Though Collinsville and the Meadows make up a large part of Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood, there were several neighborhood pockets which developed at a different pace and in a different manner than the streetcar suburbs.

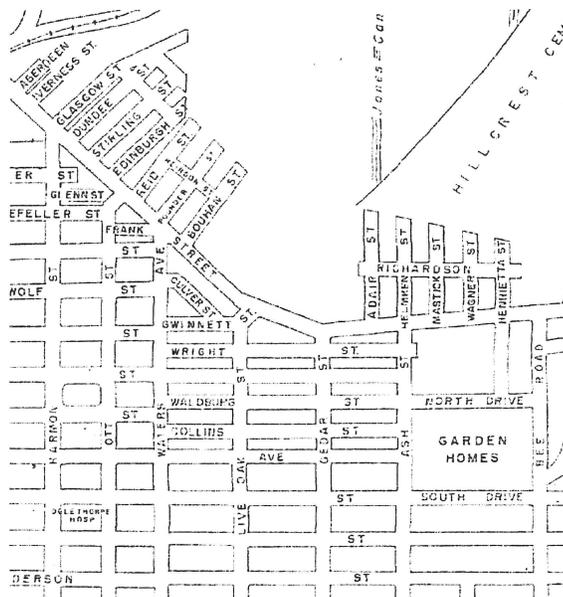


Figure 41 Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood, 1956<sup>167</sup>

<sup>166</sup> J. W. Howard, "Map of the City of Savannah, Georgia, 1906 City Boundaries" Vol. 1, MS 5600EN-90 City of Savannah Engineering Department Records, GHS.

<sup>167</sup> "Savannah, 1956," GHS Map Collection, #443 SAV, GHS.

## NEIGHBORHOODS & ETHNIC GROUPS

### *Eastville*

Eastville is actually the oldest named neighborhood in the community. This name refers to the area bounded by Wheaton Street on the north, Gwinnett Street on the south, Waters Avenue on the west, and Cedar Street on the east. Today this name is completely extinct, probably due to the fact that the whole area is commonly referred to as the eastside, and the immediate neighbor to the west is specifically called the Eastside Neighborhood. By the time John W. Howard drew his 1910 map of Savannah, even Eastland, south of the Meadows, was referred to as Villa Heights. With so many names including the word "East" it is no wonder that boundaries and names would often become confused.<sup>168</sup>

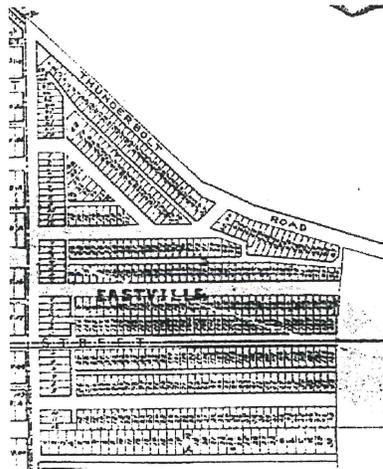


Figure 42 Eastville, 1900<sup>169</sup>

The streets and lots in Eastville were not laid out in a uniform pattern as in Collinsville and the Meadows. This was due in part to the irregular line of Wheaton Street bounding it on the north and the holdout out of several individual property owners, including a triangular piece of property on the corner of Harmon and Wheaton

<sup>168</sup> John W. Howard, "Map of the City of Savannah and Vicinity, 1910," (Savannah: City of Savannah, 1910), found in *The Playground of America*, Rare Book, GHS.

<sup>169</sup> "Map of Savannah," (1900), MS Waring Map Collection, Vol. 3, Plate 41, GHS.

streets, at one time owned by the Rowlands. This neighborhood has always had a higher concentration of African Americans. However, once you crossed Gwinnett Street into the Meadows, the residents were all white. The dwellings north of Gwinnett were modest, small, one-story frame buildings, often scattered several to a lot.<sup>170</sup>

When the Ginsberg family lived above their Georgia Market on the corner of Harmon and Wolf streets in the 1940s, the surrounding blocks were predominantly wooden houses, with only a few brick buildings scattered in.

*Wolf Street at that time was not paved and there were a lot of small houses that black people lived in. Just above, I guess north of Gwinnett Street there were some nicer homes that were two story homes. But really the block we lived in there was just the store, which was two story because we lived above it, and just a few small houses, mostly one story.*<sup>171</sup>

---

<sup>170</sup> Cadastral Survey: Hull Ward, (1937), CCCH; "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1898," GHS; "Plan Showing Sewer Right-of-way thru Rowland Property, 1916," City Engineer Map Collection, Property Map Book 08, Page 12, MRL.

<sup>171</sup> Suzanne Kantziper, BVC OH #17.

## Wagner Heights

Wagner Heights is along the northeast edge of the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood, now tucked in the curve of the Truman Parkway. It is the only neighborhood north of Wheaton Street untouched by public housing projects.

Much of the land north of Wheaton Street remained undeveloped until the 1910s, held as several large, private tracts. Period maps labeled with the landholders names hinted at the names of future streets to be laid out in this area including, Pounder, Mastick and Wagner. One of the largest owners in this area, once owning land both north and south of Wheaton Street, was the Werm family, adjacent to one of their tracts was the property of Grimm. The German names are the first indication that this area would develop as a small cluster of German families.<sup>172</sup>

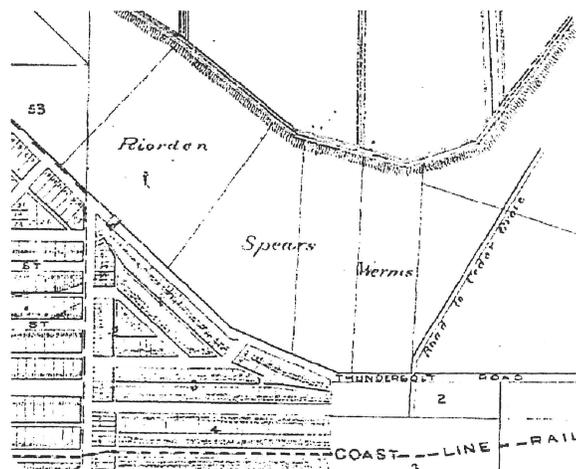


Figure 43 Large Property Owners before Wagner Heights, 1868<sup>173</sup>

<sup>172</sup> John W. Howard, "Map of the City of Savannah and Vicinity, 1910," (Savannah: City of Savannah, 1910), found in *The Playground of America*, Rare Book, GHS.

<sup>173</sup> "City of Savannah," (1868), MS 1018 Waring Map Collection, Vol. 2, Plate 30, GHS.

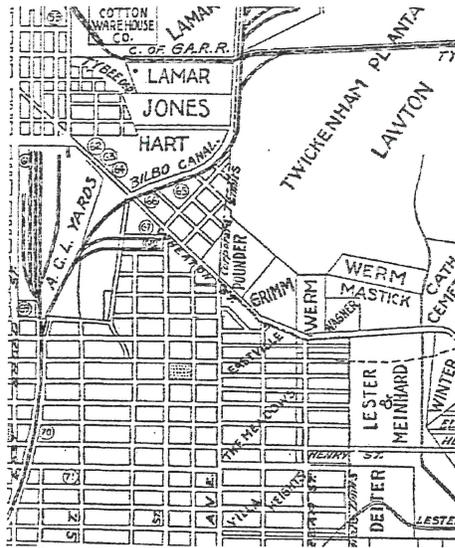


Figure 44 Savannah's Eastern Suburbs, 1910<sup>174</sup>

In the 1916 Sanborn Insurance Map, the new neighborhood of Wagner Heights was depicted for the first time. Though all the streets were laid out, only a scattering of mostly one-story residences appeared.<sup>175</sup>



Figure 45 114 Adair Street, 1934<sup>176</sup>

<sup>174</sup> John W. Howard, "Map of the City of Savannah, 1910," from *The Playground of America . . . Chatham Crescent*, (Savannah: Chatham Land & Hotel Company, 1911), Rare Books, GHS >

<sup>175</sup> "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1916," GHS.

<sup>176</sup> VM 1360, Box 9, Folder 4, item 01, GHS.

Wagner Heights takes up the land known on the city's map as Brinkman Ward. In 1937, the Works Progress Administration of Chatham County documented the neighborhood through the Cadastral Survey. The results of this survey, which include ward maps, lot layout, and footprints of all improvements, can be found at the Chatham County Courthouse.<sup>177</sup>

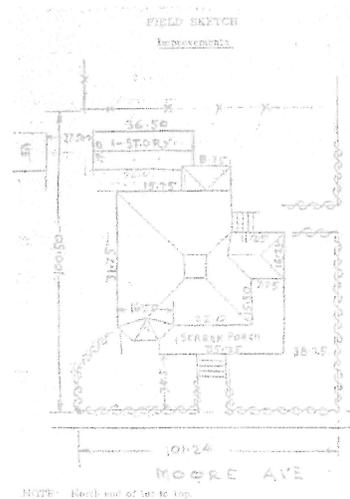


Figure 46 224 Moore Avenue, A. W. Richardson Residence, 1937<sup>178</sup>

By the mid-1930s, Wagner Heights was about half developed with lots closer to Wheaton Street built up more than those on the north side bordering Hillcrest Cemetery. The neighborhood was buffered from the cemetery on the north by one large tract, and on the east by a second large tract, both owned by the Werm family. On the east, Innecken Florist & Greenhouses was located. On the south, the neighborhood was bounded by Moore Avenue (Wheaton Street). The names of the streets within the community reflect the strong German character of its original owners and residents: Richardson, Adair, Helmken, Mastick, Wagner, and Henrietta.<sup>179</sup>

<sup>177</sup> Cadastral Survey: Brinkman Ward, (1937), CCCH.

<sup>178</sup> Cadastral Survey: Brinkman Ward (1937), CCCH.

<sup>179</sup> Cadastral Survey: Brinkman Ward, (1937), CCCH.



Figure 47 Streets in Wagner Heights, 1937<sup>180</sup>

The cluster of German families extended east across Bee Road and Casey Canal to include the Oelshigs, the Winter property, and the German Golf Club.<sup>181</sup>

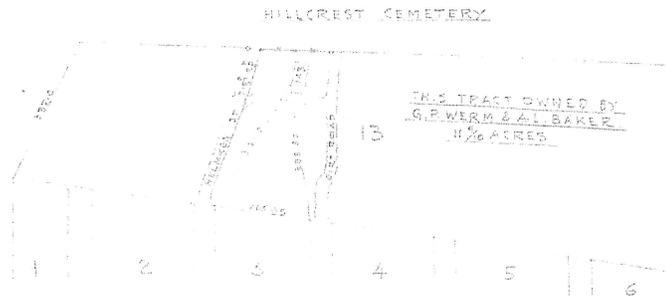


Figure 48 Werm Tract, 1937<sup>182</sup>

The Werm land on the north side, along Hillcrest Cemetery, had a two-story frame house with two barns on the property, suggesting that at one time most of this land was a farm. Past the initial development, only two blocks deep, remained open fields and pasture lands, often referred to as "The Bottom," where people let their cows graze as late as the 1940s and 1950s. The current plat map of the Tax Assessor's Office of Chatham County shows Wagner Heights now tightly wrapped in

<sup>180</sup> Cadastral Survey: Brinkman Ward, (1937), CCCH.

<sup>181</sup> John W. Howard, "Map of the City of Savannah and Vicinity, 1910," (Savannah: City of Savannah, 1910), found in *The Playground of America*, Rare Book, GHS.

<sup>182</sup> Cadastral Survey: Brinkman Ward, (1937), CCCH.

by the Harry Truman Parkway, curling from the northwest to the southeast. Access to Hillcrest has been completely cut off.<sup>183</sup>



Figure 49 Wagner Heights, 2003<sup>184</sup>

The only major businesses in Wagner Heights during the 20<sup>th</sup> century were florists of the German families of Richardson and Innecken. Mrs. Gottliebe L. Walz owned a small confectionary facing Wheaton Street.<sup>185</sup>

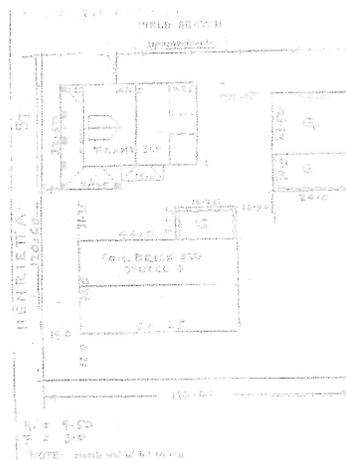


Figure 50 Walz Confectionary, 1937<sup>186</sup>

<sup>183</sup> Cadastral Survey: Brinkman Ward, (1937), CCCH; "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1898," GHS; Wagner Heights, Plat Map, 2003, Tax Assessor's Office, CCCH.

<sup>184</sup> Wagner Heights, Plat Map, 2003, Tax Assessor's Office, CCCH.

<sup>185</sup> Cadastral Survey: Brinkman Ward, (1937), CCCH.

<sup>186</sup> Cadastral Survey: Brinkman Ward, (1937), CCCH.

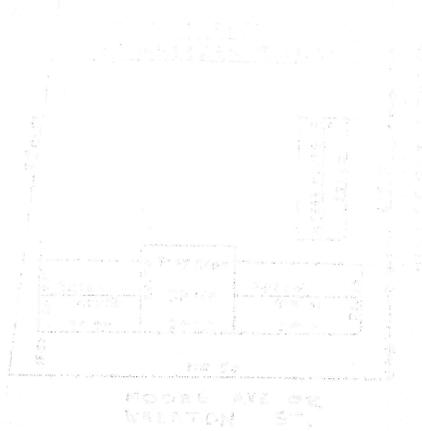


Figure 51 Innecken Florist, Wheaton Street, Brinkman Ward, 1937<sup>187</sup>

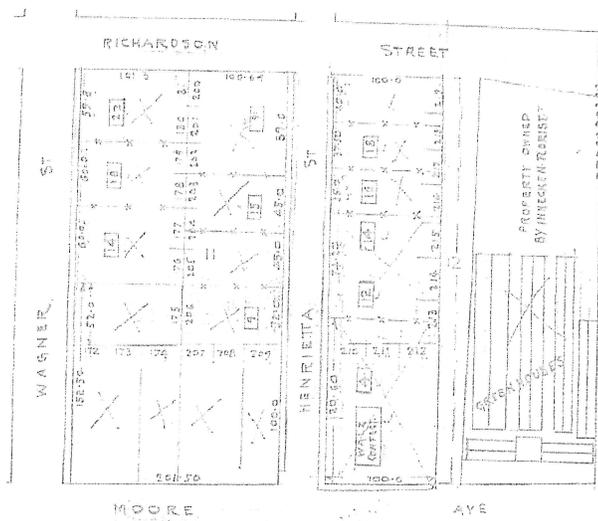


Figure 52 Walz Confectionary & Innecken Florist, 1937<sup>188</sup>

<sup>187</sup> Cadastral Survey: Brinkman Ward, (1937), CCCH.

<sup>188</sup> Cadastral Survey: Brinkman Ward, (1937), CCCH.

### Edgar Blackshear Homes

In 1898, the north edge of Wheaton Street between Harmon and Waters was built up with stretches of one and two-story row houses. The greatest development clustered around the intersection of Wheaton and Waters Avenue, where small dwellings were near several corner stores.<sup>189</sup>

Just north of Wheaton Street, west of Wagner Heights, was a small neighborhood tucked between Harmon Street and Pounder Avenue. The streets, named 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> streets, contained modest homes of wooden and concrete block construction.

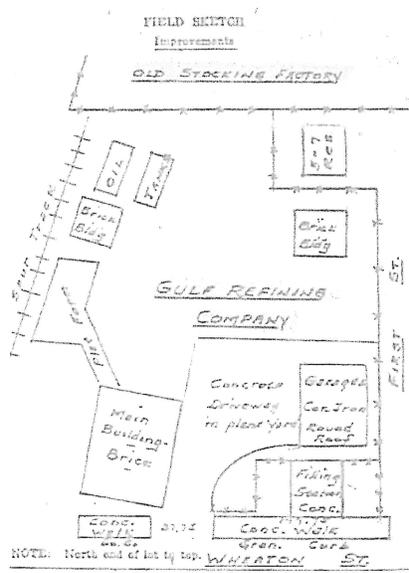


Figure 53 Gulf Refining Company, Wheaton Street, 1937<sup>190</sup>

The area was bounded on the north by low lying land and on the west by two large industries, the Gulf Refining Company and the Old Stocking Factory. Growth was further constricted by railroad tracks on the west. Like Hoynes Ward (discussed later in the chapter), this small neighborhood was primarily residential with a few businesses along Wheaton Street, including a drugstore. The neighborhood also

<sup>189</sup> "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1898," GHS.

<sup>190</sup> Cadastral Survey: Rivers Ward, 1937, CCCH.

had two churches, both with African American congregations: the one-story, frame 1<sup>st</sup> Friendship Baptist Church (on Second Street Lane); and 5<sup>th</sup> Street Baptist Church, also one-story, frame.<sup>191</sup>

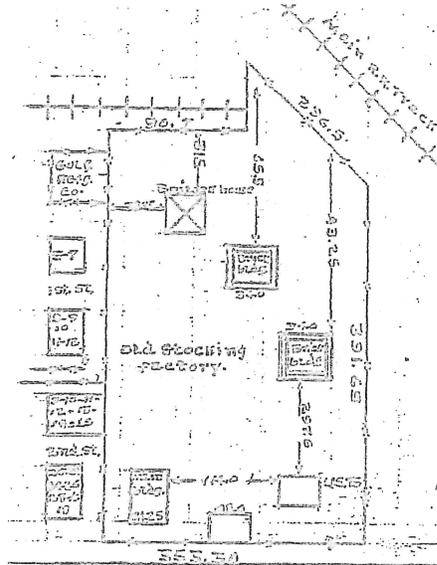


Figure 54 Old Stocking Factory, Rivers Ward, 1937<sup>192</sup>

When the Housing Authority of Savannah's (HAS)<sup>193</sup> Edgar Blackshear Homes was located in Rivers Ward in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, a complete reconfiguration of streets occurred and the majority of the homes were condemned and removed to make way for the public housing project.

The map below depicts the change in names, as well as path, of the streets: First Street to Aberdeen; Second Street to Inverness; Third Street to Glasgow; Fourth Street to Dundee; Fifth Street to Stirling; and Sixth Street to Edinburgh. The layout is now drastically different with limited access in and out. The use of cul-de-sacs,

<sup>191</sup> Cadastral Survey: Rivers Ward, 1937, CCCH.

<sup>192</sup> Cadastral Survey: Rivers Ward, 1937, CCCH.

<sup>193</sup> The Housing Authority of Savannah (HAS) was founded in 1938 as an autonomous government agency, not affiliated with the City of Savannah or Chatham County. HAS operates on rental income and federal subsidies. The Mayor of Savannah appoints a five-member Board of Commissioners, which governs HAS. Two residents act as advisors. All serve without pay.

imposed on the neighborhood by the Housing Authority's development is seen nowhere else in the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood.<sup>194</sup>

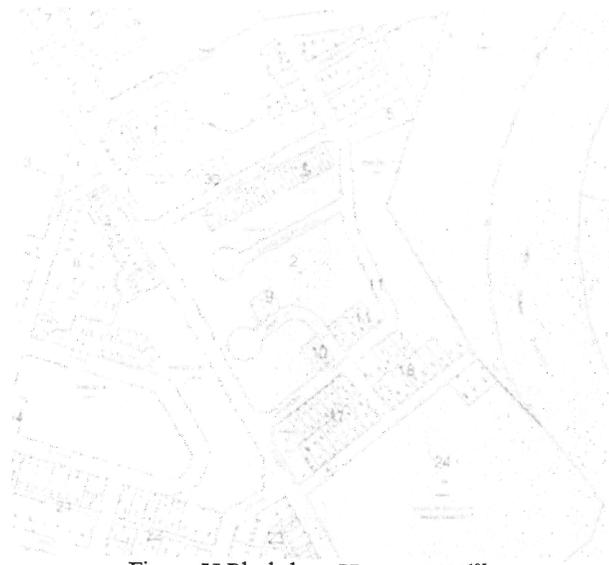


Figure 55 Blackshear Homes, 2003<sup>195</sup>

When it opened in 1984, Blackshear Homes was the first infill housing project in Savannah. The concept left older homes scattered throughout the site to give the public housing the feel of home ownership. It has been one of the HAS' quieter neighborhoods, credited to the allowances for "defensible space," individual yards, and driveways, etc., that instill pride in the residents.<sup>196</sup>

---

<sup>194</sup> Blackshear Homes, Plat Map, 2003, Tax Assessor's Office, CCCH.

<sup>195</sup> Blackshear Homes, Plat Map, 2003, Tax Assessor's Office, CCCH.

<sup>196</sup> Conversation with Sandy Glicker, HAS.



Figure 56 Johnstone Ward, 1898<sup>197</sup>

South of Wheaton Street, Blackshear Homes displaced another community. The public housing project was also unique in the fact that it straddled a major thoroughfare. The majority of the new housing was north of Wheaton Street. However, additional homes were located South of Wheaton Street between Harmon and Waters streets.

One resident who grew up on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street is still hurt by the loss of an entire neighborhood:

*It made me sick, because I was born over here. . . . and we lived over there when I first got married. . . . Quite naturally, it will cut your heart to see something that you know all your life coming down. . . . Even my church [1<sup>st</sup> Friendship Missionary Baptist Church] was over there and we had to move when they come in.<sup>198</sup>*

---

<sup>197</sup> "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1898," GHS.

<sup>198</sup> Marie Green, BVC OH #18.

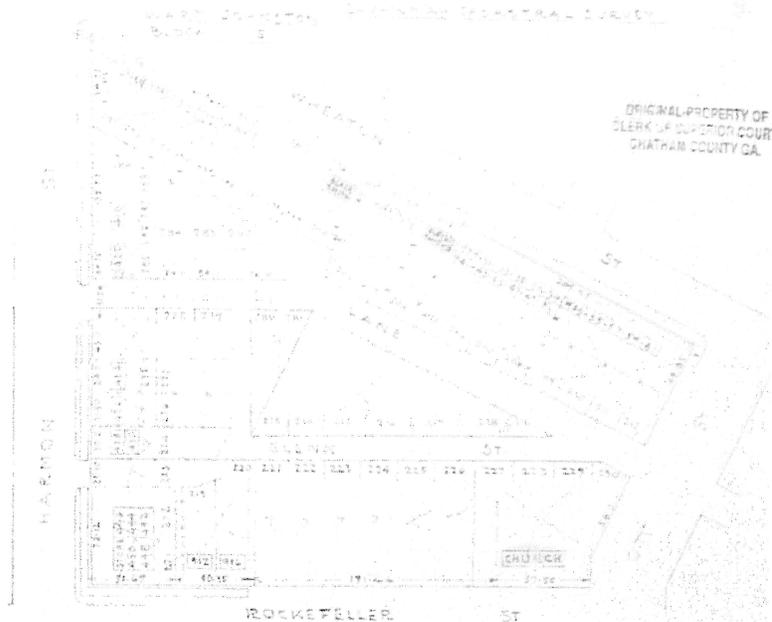


Figure 57 Johnston Ward, 1937<sup>199</sup>

As with the public housing north of Wheaton, Blackshear Homes changed the configuration and population south of Wheaton Street. The path of Harmon Street was altered, bending to the east at the northern end.

Rosemary McBride Banks grew up in the home once at 529 Ott Street, on the corner of Joe Street. Banks fondly remembers the large one-story home with a large yard and several fruit trees. The immediate neighborhood was especially tight with a lot of friends and family, Banks grandfather had bought three homes on Joe and Ott streets for his children. The area was very diverse with African Americans, whites, Jewish, and Irish families.

*It was like a family neighborhood. Everybody knew each other and persons, older persons, looked out for the younger ones. . . . There were about three or four what you call mom and pop grocery stores in the area. And then it was really an integrated neighborhood. There were various ethnic groups living in that particular area.*<sup>200</sup>

<sup>199</sup> Cadastral Survey: Johnston Ward, 1937, CCCH.

<sup>200</sup> Rosemary McBride Banks, BVC OH #26.

During the planning and construction of Blackshear Homes, many families and individuals were uprooted from the only home they had ever known.

*Everybody was very upset, because there were quite a few persons who actually owned their homes in that area. And they were concerned if they would get the value in order to purchase a home somewhere else. And just relocating from the atmosphere that we had. The family-like atmosphere in that neighborhood.<sup>201</sup>*

The process of selling your house to the government was also difficult, in addition to moving and finding a new home. Banks helped her mother move and remembers the whole process as very long and dragged out. Several families' homes were not chosen by HAS and were left as in-fill housing to create the atmosphere the Housing Authority was trying to achieve of home ownership and pride in the public housing residents. Many of the original homeowners left behind when their neighbors moved out felt cheated:

*So that was another process with those persons wanting to sell and move because every person they knew were going to be moving, and they [would] be living right next to the housing projects coming in, which was rental property. That was a problem for a lot of the people.<sup>202</sup>*

Many nice residences were lost to make way for Blackshear Homes. However, the housing project was held up for several years by controversy regarding the historical significance of several of the structures. Specifically six homes were identified as potential for National Register of Historic Places listing. As a result, the King-Tisdell Cottage, a unique example of a vernacular cottage with intricate Victorian gingerbread ornamentation, was relocated to the Beach Institute Neighborhood west of East Broad Street. The cottage was moved and restored in a joint effort by the City of Savannah and the Yamacraw Branch of the Association for Afro

---

<sup>201</sup> Rosemary McBride Banks, BVC OH #26.

<sup>202</sup> Rosemary McBride Banks, BVC OH #26.

American Studies. The relocation of the cottage was the first step in the development of the King-Tisdell Cottage Foundation which now operates the cottage and the Beach Institute school building, and helps form a cultural and historical foundation for the Beach Institute Neighborhood.

## Hoynes Ward

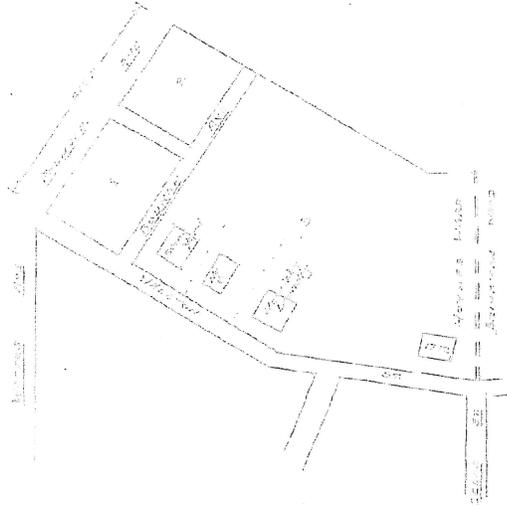


Figure 58 Hoynes Ward, 1937<sup>203</sup>

Frank W. Spencer Elementary School now takes up the majority of Hoynes Ward, which was part of the Spears farm for many years. Never fully developed, this ward only had residences along Ponder and Bouhan streets and a few businesses along the north curb of Wheaton Street.

From Bouhan Street east was predominantly white residences and businesses. Bouhan Street had a mixture of families including John A. White, an African American police officer, Captain Bill Gunn, a Swedish sailor, Mr. Hill, white owner of Hill Electrical Company. Bouhan acted as the boundary between white Wagner Heights on the east and the predominantly African American neighborhood from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> streets on the west. However, there was always some mixing. Former mayor John Rousakis' family owned a store on 4<sup>th</sup> Street run by his father "Nick the Greek."<sup>204</sup>

---

<sup>203</sup> Cadastral Survey: Hoynes Ward, (1937), CCCH.

<sup>204</sup> Elmore, "Historical Analysis and Summary of the Ben Van Clark Neighborhood Project," (2003), 4.

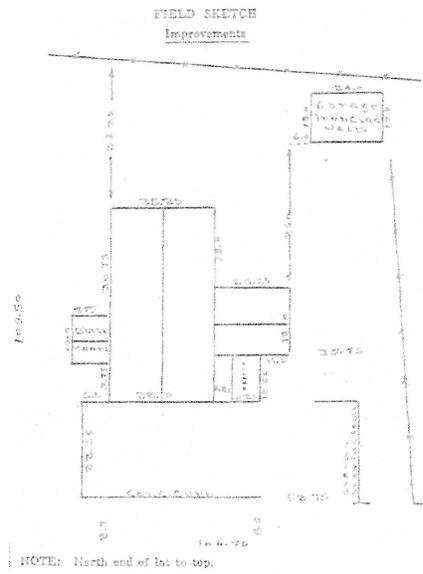


Figure 59 Stone-yard, 1937<sup>205</sup>

During the early part of the twentieth century, the businesses in this ward included a marble and granite stone-yard, and the New Way Laundry Company.<sup>206</sup>

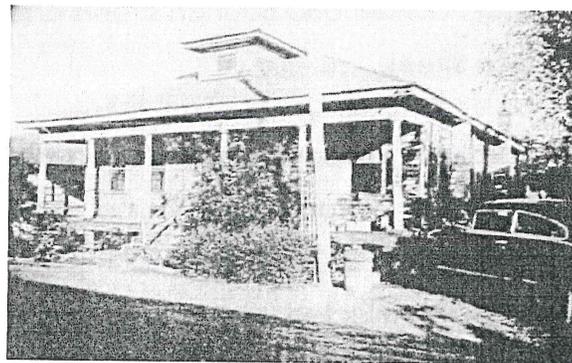


Figure 60 Bouhan Street, c1954<sup>207</sup>

<sup>205</sup> Cadastral Survey: Hoynes Ward, (1937), CCCH.

<sup>206</sup> Cadastral Survey: Hoynes Ward, 1937, CCCH.

<sup>207</sup> "Certificate of Appraisal of the Savannah Real Estate Board of Properties in Hoynes Ward, Savannah, Georgia, for the Board of Public Education . . . , May 31, 1954," Paulsen Street School-Wheaton Site Files, SCC Board of Education.

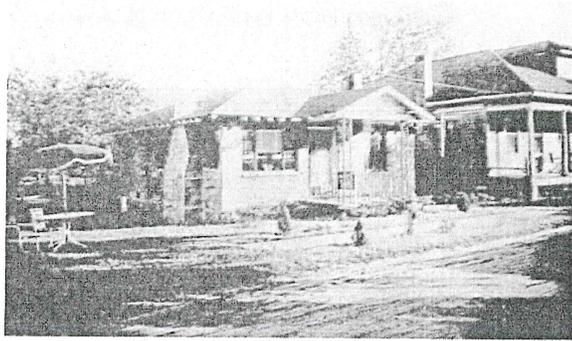


Figure 61 Bouhan Street, c1954<sup>208</sup>

In the mid-1950s, the Savannah-Chatham County Public School Board purchased large property tracts owned by Mrs. May Wilberg and Dixie Auto Parts Company. In addition, they purchased the property of most of the homes on the east side of Bouhan Street to make way for a new school (see *Educational Institutions* later in this chapter for more information on the Frank W. Spencer School). The result was an isolated strip of homes between Pounder and Bouhan streets, confined on the west by the injection of Blackshear Homes in the 1980s and on the east by the elementary school. The homes purchased by the Board were razed and several one-story structures seen above were lost.<sup>209</sup>

---

<sup>208</sup> "Certificate of Appraisal of the Savannah Real Estate Board of Properties in Hoynes Ward, Savannah, Georgia, for the Board of Public Education . . . , May 31, 1954," Paulsen Street School-Wheaton Site Files, SCC Board of Education.

<sup>209</sup> Cadastral Survey: Hoynes Ward, 1937, CCCH.

## Garden Homes Estate & Annex



Figure 62 Aerial View of Garden Homes, Looking Southwest, 1953<sup>210</sup>

Garden Homes was constructed on a large tract of land identified on the city plan as Myrick Ward, owned by Lester & Meinhard. Until Garden Homes was built, little to no development of this tract occurred. Only a couple of houses were built along the fringe on Ash Street, and a right-of-way had been granted to the Savannah & Thunderbolt Railroad Company to cut through the northern section to head out towards Thunderbolt and Isle of Hope. Located just north of the tracks was Camp Fraser, Liberty Company Cavalry. A 1917 map of Savannah, depicted the camp with an engineers' artillery.<sup>211</sup>

---

<sup>210</sup> Garden Homes Files, HAS.

<sup>211</sup> John W. Howard, "Map of the City of Savannah and Vicinity, 1910," (Savannah: City of Savannah, 1910), found in *The Playground of America*, Rare Book, GHS; Jacob Gardner, "Map of the City of Savannah & Vicinity," (1917), GHS Map Collection #23 SAV (3-H-4), GHS.

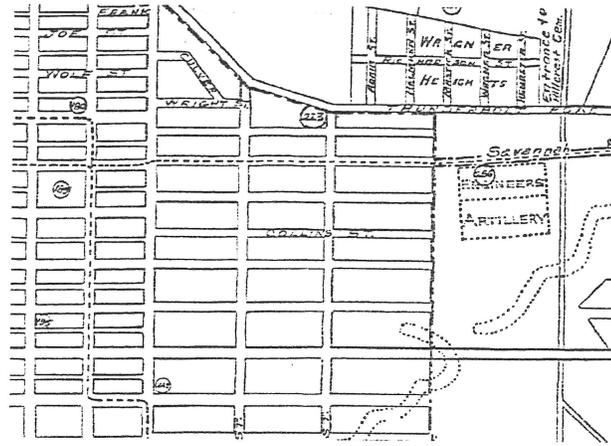


Figure 63 Camp Fraser, Myrick Ward, 1917<sup>212</sup>

By 1937, most of this land was owned by HAS, with clusters of four lots on each block along the edge of Ash Street privately owned. At the time the Cadastral Survey was completed by the Works Progress Administration of Chatham County in 1937, only four homes had been constructed on these lots.<sup>213</sup>

The four homes, all inhabited by white residents, torn down when Garden Homes was built included:

1402 Henry Street was owned by E. J. Wilson. In 1940, the two story frame house, facing Ash Street, was assessed at \$5,350.<sup>214</sup>

1403 Waldburg Street was purchased in 1939 by HAS. The small one-story residence was previously owned by Mary E. Young and Edith Mae Kennedy.<sup>215</sup>

1402-1404 Collins Street, formerly owned by Rufus L. Proctor, was also bought out by HAS in 1939. Proctor's property included a pair of one-story wooden frame residences with garages in the rear.<sup>216</sup>

<sup>212</sup> Jacob Gardner, "Map of the City of Savannah & Vicinity," (1917), GHS Map Collection #23 SAV (3-H-4), GHS.

<sup>213</sup> Cadastral Survey: Myrick Ward, (1937), CCCH.

<sup>214</sup> Cadastral Survey: Myrick Ward, (1937), CCCH.

<sup>215</sup> Cadastral Survey: Myrick Ward, (1937), CCCH.

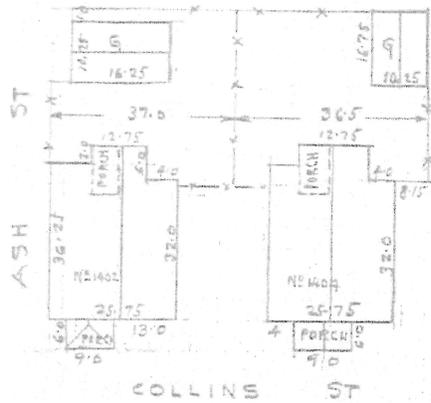


Figure 64 1402-1404 Collins Street, Myrick Ward, 1937<sup>217</sup>

Adjacent to the streetcar tracks was the residence of Dr. Case. Dr. Case's improvements consisted of a two-story wood frame house, a two-story garage, and three small garages. The Case family remained with the property until at least 1953.<sup>218</sup>

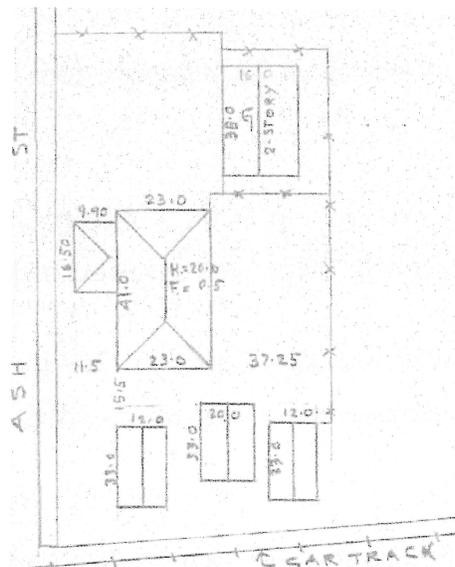


Figure 65 Dr. Case's, Ash Street, Myrick Ward, 1937<sup>219</sup>

<sup>216</sup> Cadastral Survey: Myrick Ward, (1937), CCCH.

<sup>217</sup> Cadastral Survey: Myrick Ward, (1937), CCCH.

<sup>218</sup> Cadastral Survey: Myrick Ward, (1937), CCCH.

<sup>219</sup> Cadastral Survey: Myrick Ward, (1937), CCCH.

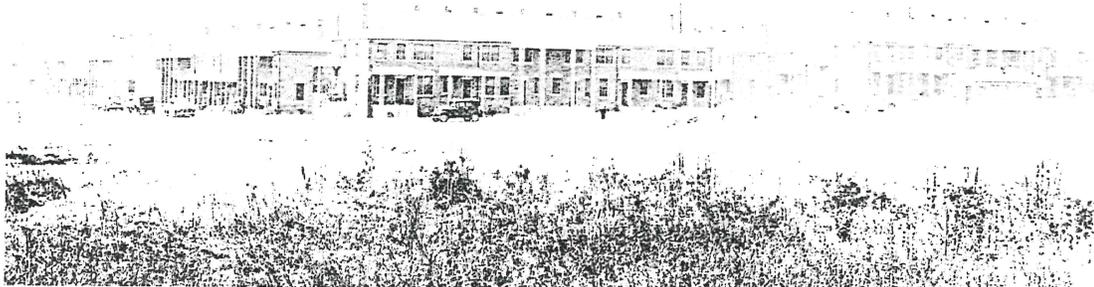


Figure 66 Garden Homes Estates Construction, 194<sup>220</sup>

Garden Homes Estate was built in 1940 with 314 units. It was the first white housing project in Savannah. When completed, the housing first accommodated war workers and soldiers getting ready to ship out, before opening to low income families.<sup>221</sup>



Figure 67 Garden Homes' Kitchen, n.d.<sup>222</sup>

---

<sup>220</sup> Garden Homes Files, HAS.

<sup>221</sup> "Bus & Street Car Routes, Savannah Electric & Power Company, Savannah, Georgia," (1944), GHS Map Collection #459 SAV (3-G-1), GHS; Conversation with Sandy Glicken, HAS.

<sup>222</sup> Garden Homes Files, HAS.



Figure 68 Garden Homes Estates Facade, n.d.<sup>223</sup>

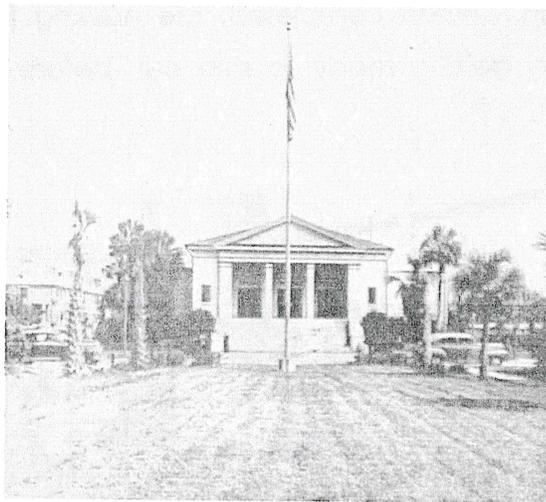


Figure 69 Community Building, n.d.<sup>224</sup>

Amenities of the project included a kindergarten, community center, residential association, and a golden age club.<sup>225</sup>

---

<sup>223</sup> Garden Homes Files, HAS.

<sup>224</sup> Garden Homes Files, HAS.

<sup>225</sup> Conversation with Sandy Glicker, HAS.



Figure 70 Garden Homes Playground, n.d.<sup>226</sup>

During the 1940s, when it was new, Garden Homes "was a very nice place. The homes were small and we knew people who lived there. They were modest, but everything was nice. It looked very good."<sup>227</sup>

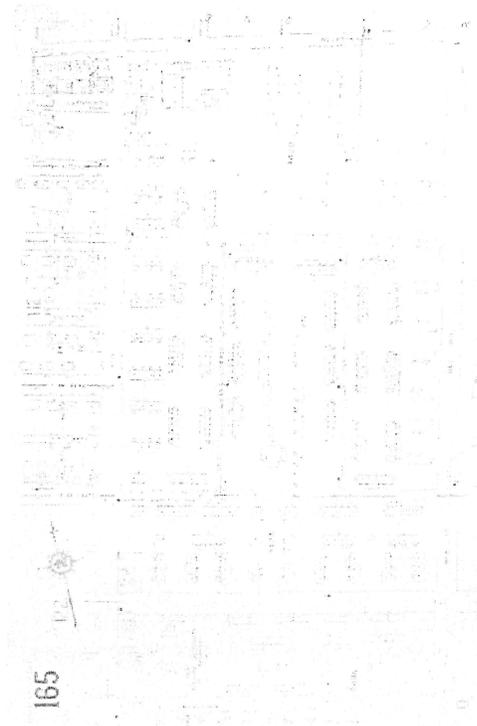


Figure 71 Garden Homes Estate & Annex, 1954<sup>228</sup>

---

<sup>226</sup> Garden Homes Files, HAS.

<sup>227</sup> BVC OH #17, Suzanne Kantziper, 10.

In 1953, Garden Homes Annex, an addition to the original Garden Homes, was completed on land just north of Garden Homes Estate. The newest units surrounded the government property in the northeast corner of the ward, but did not displace it.<sup>229</sup>



Figure 72 Garden Homes Annex Construction, 1951<sup>230</sup>

In 1972, HAS desegregated its housing projects after fighting integration for years, urged by picketing of the NAACP.<sup>231</sup>



Figure 73 Garden Homes Activities, n.d.<sup>232</sup>

---

<sup>228</sup> "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1954," GHS.

<sup>229</sup> Garden Homes Files, HAS; Conversation with Sandy Glicken, HAS.

<sup>230</sup> Garden Homes Files, HAS.

<sup>231</sup> Conversation with Sandy Glicken, HAS.

Over the years, the public housing site went through periods of neglect and renewed interest. There was a major renovation attempt in the early-mid 1980s with new doors, windows, and conversion of some units to three bedrooms. Nineteen units were taken out to accommodate the construction of the Truman Parkway. In the end, Garden Homes fell into disrepair and the porches were separating from the buildings. Some blame the rapid deterioration of the homes on Truman Parkway's construction which may have affected their stability. In the end, Garden Homes had such a bad reputation for drugs and crime, that it had the highest rejection rate with HAS residents not wanting to be placed there, even though it had the capacity to hold over 300 families. By the 1990s, the crime situation was nearly unbearable for Garden Homes residents, and those in the surrounding community. Garden Homes housing project was razed as part of the HOPE VII project currently underway (see *Chapter 5 Revitalization* for more information).<sup>233</sup>

Many blame the decline of the surrounding residential neighborhood starting in the 1970s on the decline of Garden Homes. Those same residents were glad to see the neglected housing projects go away:

*They did a great thing when they tore it down.*<sup>234</sup>

---

<sup>232</sup> Garden Homes Files, HAS.

<sup>233</sup> Conversation with Sandy Glicken, HAS.

<sup>234</sup> Gladys Turner, BVC OH #19; Marie Green, BVC OH #18

### *Late Development*

Several of the smaller properties on the eastern edge of the neighborhood, near Garden Homes, were not fully developed until as late as the 1960s. Nancy Johnson was the first to live in her house, built on a lot formerly used as a garden by a farmer they referred to as the "mule man," since he used a mule to tend his fields, scattered in the area on vacant lots.<sup>235</sup>

### *Ethnic Groups*

As previously discussed there was a variety of races and nationalities represented among the business owners and residents in the northern section of the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood. In addition, there was a fairly large population of Jewish merchants who owned stores along the area's business districts. On Harmon Street and Gwinnett Street there were about five Jewish businesses including those of Harry Ginsberg, Sonny Bryant, Louis Wexler, the Udinskys, Sanford Reuben, and Joseph Rosenthal.<sup>236</sup>

For the most part, the Jewish families were scattered in with the Caucasian families, though they were separated from their Christian neighbors by customs and small instances of anti-Semitism. There were no Kosher restaurants in the area, so many of the Jewish residents did not eat out.<sup>237</sup>

One former resident of the Jewish faith moved out of the neighborhood in 1949 because, "my mother thought we needed to be in a neighborhood where we would find social opportunities with people our age and our religion. That's why we moved."<sup>238</sup>

---

<sup>235</sup> BVC OH #20, Nancy Johnson, 25 Sep 2003, p1-2.

<sup>236</sup> Suzanne Kantziper, 2002, JAOH #84, Oral History Collection, SJA.

<sup>237</sup> BVC OH #17, Suzanne Kantziper, 7, 9.

<sup>238</sup> BVC OH #17, Suzanne Kantziper, 11.

Instances of anti-Semitism were mostly isolated to the schools and children who were probably repeating things they had heard without really knowing what the words meant. Former resident Lewis Kooden remembers that he ran into problems with anti-Semitism starting with grammar school, when he started at Waters Avenue School in 1938. Most of the anti-Semitism he encountered came from other children, not the adult teachers:

*I do remember a lot of times I had to go down the alleys to get home because they would always want to fight me. . . . I managed to cope with it and I made a lot of non-Jewish friends. I guess I was pretty smart because I got this boy, Johnny Groover who was the biggest boy in the class, he became my best friend so nobody would mess with me or Johnny Groover would take care of them.<sup>239</sup>*

*The only time we experienced anti-Semitism was the children when we went to school. If the kids were angry with us, they'd say something like 'dirty Jew' or something like that. But in business we didn't see much. I guess there was such a variety, that you could go to so many stores, that if you didn't want to patronize a Jewish business, you didn't have to.<sup>240</sup>*

However, for the most part the neighborhoods lived harmoniously together, whether it be racially mixed pockets in the northern areas or African American pockets right next to Caucasian pockets along Gwinnett Street. As a child, one Jewish resident recalled playing with the neighborhood African American children at Christmas and Hanukah time when they would all get skates as presents and play in the street together.<sup>241</sup>

---

<sup>239</sup> Lewis Kooden, 2003, JAOH #91, Oral History Collection, SJA.

<sup>240</sup> Suzanne Kantziper, 2002, JAOH #84, Oral History Collection, SJA.

<sup>241</sup> Suzanne Kantziper, BVC OH #17.

## GOVERNMENT SERVICES & PARKS

### *Police Stations*

No permanent police station was ever located within the bounds of the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood. For a brief time, a small police post was located in Grayson Park on the eastern side.<sup>242</sup>

### *Fire Stations*

The closest fire station to the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood was Engine House #7 located on Paulsen Street. Built in 1908, the building was designed by architect Hyman Witcover.<sup>243</sup>

During World War II, Harry Ginsberg, owner of Georgia Market at 701 Harmon Street, served as a neighborhood air raid warden:

*When the air attack sirens went off, he had to put on his helmet and gas mask and report to the fire station around the corner on Gwinnett Street. We had to stay inside our home with the window shades tightly closed and the lights turned off.*<sup>244</sup>

### *Post Offices*

Many current residents remember a small post office, in use as late as the 1960s, on the corner of Anderson Street and Waters Avenue.<sup>245</sup>

---

<sup>242</sup> "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1916," GHS.

<sup>243</sup> "Eastside National Register Nomination," MPC.

<sup>244</sup> Jane Rosenblum, "The Ginsberg Girls," (unpublished manuscript, 2002), unprocessed accession #2003-13, SJA.

<sup>245</sup> Nancy Johnson, BVC OH #20.

## Grayson Park

Grayson Park, 1.75 acres, is the only planned green space within the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood, laid out as part of Collinsville. Bounded by Waldburg, Ott, Harmon and Bolton streets, at one time the park had a fountain in it. In 1921, the Park Commission described their work in the park, including the planting of grass and trees, and the erection of a fountain. A list of plantings found in the records of the Park Commission included seventy-one Azaleas, sixteen Camellia Japonicas, ten Forsythias, and thirty other plant varieties. In the Commission's report, the park was highlighted:

*When Dogwood trees are in blossom there is no more attractive sight anywhere.*<sup>246</sup>



Figure 74 Grayson Park, 1937<sup>247</sup>

<sup>246</sup> "1921 Annual Report," MS 5600PC Park and Tree Commission Records, Box 1, Folder 6, GHS.

<sup>247</sup> Cadastral Survey: Kelly Ward (1937), CCCH.

However, area residents remember it only as an open green space:

*There was a square with trees that now has a building on it; there was no playground equipment.<sup>248</sup>*

*We would go there on Sunday when we were younger and go walk through the park.<sup>249</sup>*

Today it accommodates a community building, the W. W. Law Center, and swimming pool.<sup>250</sup>

### *Live Oak Park*

Live Oak Park, 1.5 acres bounded by Collins Street, Cedar Street, Park Avenue, and Live Oak Street, does not appear to have been originally set aside as a park. Rather the lots on this block remained empty, except on the very eastern corners. By 1916, the remaining lots were being utilized as a children's playground.<sup>251</sup>

Over the years many area children met in the park to play:

*We had friends by Live Oak Park and we would go over there, otherwise they played in each other's houses and yards.<sup>252</sup>*

In December of 1980, a petition with four-hundred names was presented to City Council asking them to rename Live Oak Park for former Civil Rights leader Benjamin Van Clark (see *Chapter 4 Desegregation* for more information on Clark and the Civil Rights movement). The idea was originated by Leroy Pace, Jr. of the Savannah Area Minority Contractors' Association. At the time, the park was undergoing an extensive renovation project. New playground equipment, lights, benches, sidewalks, and landscaping were installed at a cost of roughly \$90,000, partially

---

<sup>248</sup> Suzanne Kantziper, BVC OH #17.

<sup>249</sup> Barbara Gore, BVC OH #24.

<sup>250</sup> "Eastside National Register Nomination," 8, MPC.

<sup>251</sup> Jane Fishman, "Park Name is Reminder of Civil Rights Leader," (SMN 28 Jun 1994, 1B), BF-Clark, GHS; "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1916", GHS.

<sup>252</sup> Suzanne Kantziper, BVC OH #17.

funded by a grant to the City. Clark himself was working for the City's Department of Parks and Recreation at this time.<sup>253</sup>

*It's an honor and it's nice to know that people still think about you in that fashion.-Benjamin Van Clark<sup>254</sup>*

City Council did not act on the petition for two years, it wasn't until December 9, 1982 that the change was approved:

*Pet. #16809: Leroy Pace, Jr. requesting to name Live Oak Park in honor of Benjamin Van Clarke [sic]. Approved-Mr. Pace was present in Council and thanked Council for their approval of this request.<sup>255</sup>*

Today, Benjamin Van Clark Park has become a neighborhood landmark, lending its name to the entire community and providing an identity to several smaller neighborhoods which had been neglected for many years.

---

<sup>253</sup> John Goyer, "Name Change? Petition Urges New Title for Live Oak Park," (SMN 16 Dec 1980), 1B, Clark Personnel File, SPD.

<sup>254</sup> "Name Change? Petition. . . "; SPD.

<sup>255</sup> City Council Minute Book, 9 Dec 1982, 334, SCC.

## EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

### *Waters Avenue/Romana Riley School*

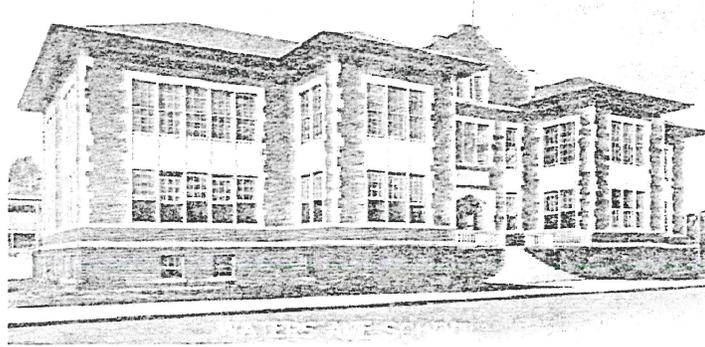


Figure 75 Waters Avenue School, c.1921<sup>256</sup>

*Remember the tea kettle, though up to its neck in hot water, will  
always continue to sing - Romana Riley<sup>257</sup>*

In 1915, Waters Avenue School was built to accommodate white students in the local neighborhood. The new school was largely due to the aggressive building campaign of school superintendent Carlton B. Gibson, as was 35<sup>th</sup> Street Junior High School.<sup>258</sup>

The original plot of land, located in Ballantyne Ward, was acquired by the Board of Education through the Chatham Real Estate & Improvement Company from N. J. Gillespie and Mrs. B. D. Perkins for a total purchase price of \$3,000.<sup>259</sup>

The main building was constructed at a final cost of \$54,000 and provided sixteen classrooms. The faculty and students, grade K-6, first occupied the building on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1915. In the spring of 1928, a nearby lot, measuring 60 feet by 105 feet was purchased for \$3,000 from James R. Sheldon for use as a playground. The

---

<sup>256</sup> *A Souvenir Booklet of Savannah . . .*

<sup>257</sup> "Romana Riley," (n.d.) Romana Riley Files, SCCBE.

<sup>258</sup> Haygood S. Bowden, *Two-Hundred Years of Education, Bicentennial 1733-1933, Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia*, (Richmond: Dietz Printing Company, 1932), 304; Suzanne Kantziper, BVC OH #17.

<sup>259</sup> "Payments by Board of Education on Waters Ave. Lots Were," n.d., Romana Riley Files, SCCBE.

first principal was Hugh A. C. Walker (1915-1922), followed briefly by E. J. Ijams (1922-1923) before Miss Romana Riley joined the faculty on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1924.<sup>260</sup>

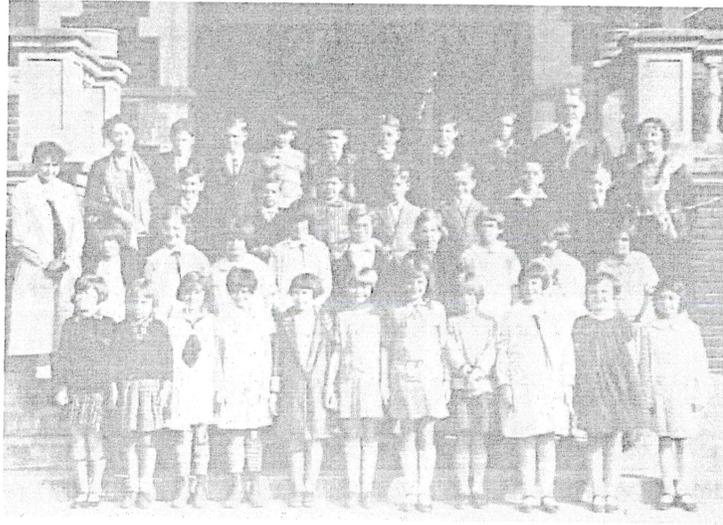


Figure 76 Blue-Ribbon Winners for School Medical Examinations, c.1929  
Romana Riley, principal (second from left, back row, with scarf)  
Dr. Victor Bassett, Savannah City Health Officer (far right, back row)<sup>261</sup>

Romana Riley was born on July 14, 1873 in Augusta, Georgia. After moving to Savannah as a child, she attended Massie School and the old Chatham Academy. In 1892, she completed the Georgia State Department of Education's examination and began her teaching career as an assistant at the Barnard Street School. She then taught at Chatham School, Anderson Street School, and Chatham Junior High School, where she headed the Mathematics department, before settling at Waters Avenue School. Coming on as principal of the elementary school in 1924, Riley would spend the next twenty-three years fostering the institution that would later bear her name.<sup>262</sup>

---

<sup>260</sup> Albert S. Otto, *The Public School System of Savannah and Chatham County* (n.d.), found in Georgia Room, CELB.

<sup>261</sup> "Savannah Album," (SEP 14 Apr 1979 22), Romana Riley Files, SCCBE.

<sup>262</sup> "Romana Riley."

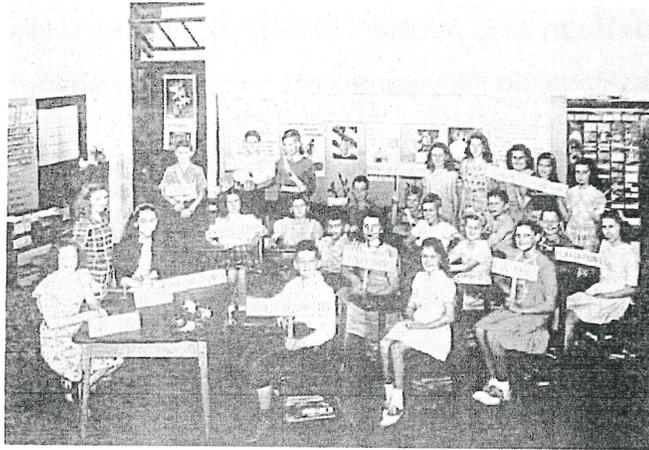


Figure 77 Midget Savannah City Council, 1946<sup>263</sup>

In 1928, Riley instituted the "Midget Savannah" program, which organized the entire school as a city government. The young students choose the name themselves to represent the program that stressed citizenship and character. In 1939, the faculty published *School Life in Midget Savannah*, which described the program and its benefits. Copies were sent across the United States, as the unique program became a model for elementary schools nationwide. "Midget Savannah" was all encompassing, emphasizing all duties of citizenship through student government, school projects, clubs, and extracurricular activities along with the normal course of study.<sup>264</sup>

---

<sup>263</sup> VM 1360, Box 3, Folder 20, Item 05, GHS.

<sup>264</sup> "Romana Riley."; "School Life in Midget Savannah," (Savannah: Waters Avenue School, 1939), CELB; Bowden, 309.



Figure 78 Mock Car Accident in Midget Savannah, 1946<sup>265</sup>

Riley's contributions to the institution included the first school bank, starting the first school paper, drum and bugle corps, Bicycle Club, Safety Patrol, and one of the first lunchrooms in all of Savannah's elementary schools.<sup>266</sup>

In 1947, Miss Riley retired from the public school system and became a founding teacher at the Independent Church Day School along with Dr. Charles J. Woodbridge.<sup>267</sup>

On July 12, 1947, a petition supported by 3,815 signatures was submitted to school superintendent, O. B. Strong, requesting the school be renamed to Romana Riley School. The petition spoke for many local residents and alumni:

*She has won the whole-hearted praise, love and esteem of all who have crossed the threshold of Waters Avenue School. She possessed the rare faculty of making each child in her school feel that she was personally interested in every detail of the little things close to his or her heart through a kindly and sympathetic spirit.*<sup>268</sup>

---

<sup>265</sup> VM 1360, Box 3, Folder 20, Item 08, GHS.

<sup>266</sup> "Romana Riley."; Bowden, 309.

<sup>267</sup> "Romana Riley."

<sup>268</sup> Citizens of Savannah to O. B. Strong, Superintendent of Schools, 12 Jul 1947, "Romana Riley," Romana Riley Files, SCCBE.

At a regular board meeting of the Board of Education held on May 16, 1949, Captain Frank W. Spencer made a motion, at the request of the Romana Riley School Parent Teacher Association, to carve the name "Romana Riley School" on the front of the Waters Avenue School.<sup>269</sup>

Additionally, in 1955 a bronze plaque was placed on the school "in appreciation of her vision, leadership, and courage in pioneering many of the city's modern educational practices." (This plaque is now part of the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood Documentation Project Collection at the City of Savannah, Municipal Research Library).<sup>270</sup>

Apparently, Miss Riley was not the only teacher to leave a lasting memory as one past student recalled:

*I went to grammar school at what was then called Waters Avenue . . . I loved Waters Avenue, had great teachers. . . . I had Marvin Rosenzweig in school with me and we went pretty much through it.*

*When we were in the third grade we had a teacher named Frankie Wynn who was a great teacher. The class loved her so much that at the end of the year we petitioned the principal to allow her to be promoted with us to the fourth grade and the principal did that. Miss Riley did that. But two students were not allowed to go forward with that class. We were kicked out of that class, Marvin Rosenzweig and [me,] Ernie Friedman. . . . Talk about heroes in your life, some of those grammar school teachers I always remember. They inspired me to learn.<sup>271</sup>*

Over the years several changes occurred on the property of Romana Riley School. Originally, the library and lunchroom were located in the basement with only a small outdoor playground. An annex was constructed in 1928 on the western portion of the grounds.<sup>272</sup>

---

<sup>269</sup> Miscellaneous notes, Romana Riley Files, SCCBE.

<sup>270</sup> "Romana Riley."

<sup>271</sup> Erwin "Ernie" Friedman, JAOH #71, SJA.

<sup>272</sup> Suzanne Kantziper, BVC OH #17.



Figure 79 Basement Lunchroom, 1946<sup>273</sup>



Figure 80 School Basement Kitchen, 1946<sup>274</sup>

In 1963, a cafetorium, combination cafeteria and auditorium, was added to the rear of the site and named in honor of the late William Greene Sutlive. Sutlive, a native of Clayton, Alabama, joined the *Savannah Times* newspaper in 1888 in the subscription department. When the *Times* ceased operation in 1891 he went to work for the *Savannah Press*. In 1935 he was named editor, a position he held until his death on June 6, 1940. Sutlive served on the Board of Education for twenty years, in the Georgia Legislature, as commandant of the Francis S. Bartow Camp, and as a director of the Savannah Kiwanis Club. He was originally appointed to the

---

<sup>273</sup> VM 1360, Box 3, Folder 20, Item 09, GHS.

<sup>274</sup> VM 1360, Box 3, Folder 20, Item 10, GHS.

Board of Education by Mayor Pierpoint and in 1937 was elected vice-president of the board.<sup>275</sup>

Local architect Henry Levy designed the cafetorium to seat four-hundred students connected to the main school by a covered walkway.<sup>276</sup>

The cafetorium was constructed on the site of the former residence of I. C. Helmly and Lots 199-203, Ballantyne Ward (purchased on March 3, 1961 from the I. C. Helmly Real Estate Company for \$20,000) razed in August of 1961 by the board. The caption for the *Savannah Evening Press* photograph below described the old home as "regarded as an excellent example of master carpenters' work."<sup>277</sup>



Figure 81 "Down with the Old," Razing of the Former I. C. Helmly Residence East Henry Street, two doors east of Waters Avenue, August 14, 1961.<sup>278</sup>

The properties at 1101-1103 and 1105-1105A East Henry Street were all acquired by the board for future expansion of the school. In January 1965, they hired Metro

---

<sup>275</sup> "John L. Sutlive to Mrs. Louise desV. Schroeder, secretary Savannah-Chatham County Board of Public Education, 25 Sep 1963," Romana Riley Files, SCCBE; "William Greene Sutlive," Romana Riley Files, SCCBE.

<sup>276</sup> "Romana Riley Bids Received," (15 Nov 1962), Romana Riley Files, SCCBE.

<sup>277</sup> "Down with the Old," (SEP 14 Aug 1961, 17), Romana Riley Files, SCCBE; "The Board of Public Education for the City of Savannah and the County of Chatham: Real Estate Transactions, 14 Mar 1961," Romana Riley Files, SCCBE.

<sup>278</sup> "Down with the Old."

Developers to raze the multi-family dwelling known as 1101-1103 East Henry Street, directly behind Romana Riley School.<sup>279</sup>

Disaster hit the school a couple of times over the years. A pair of greenhouses, measuring 15 by 19 feet and installed in 1976, were destroyed by fire in late June of 1977. In 1986, the building was hit by lightening requiring repairs to the structure.<sup>280</sup>

The board closed the elementary school in 1990 after school let out for the summer, due to the building's age and deteriorating condition. It was then used as an administration building for the Board of Education. In 1996, the Riley Center opened up in the building with eleven students. The annex has also been used to house the Youth Service Corps, the Adult Education Center, and Savannah Technical Institute programs.<sup>281</sup>

Today the building serves as a landmark at the boundary between the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood and the Live Oak Neighborhood immediately south.<sup>282</sup>

---

<sup>279</sup> "Edwin J. Feiler, president Metro Developers, Inc. to Basil Morris, attorney for the Board of Public Education for the City of Savannah and County of Chatham, 20 Jan 1965," Romana Riley Files, SCCBE.

<sup>280</sup> "Fire Destroys Riley Buidlings," (SEP 1 Jul 1977), Romana Riley Files, SCCBE.; "A View from the Bottom," (SMN 22 Feb 1986), Romana Riley Files, SCCBE.

<sup>281</sup> "Untitled Summary of School Conditions," n.d., Romana Riley Files, SCCBE; "Media Statement, Date: 03-22-96," Romana Riley Files, SCCBE; "Memorandum of Understanding," n.d., Romana Riley Files, SCCBE.

<sup>282</sup> Historic Preservation Graduate Students, Savannah College of Art & Design, "Life Assurance: A Housing and Neighborhood Preservation Study," (Savannah: Savannah College of Art & Design, 1990), 35.

### *Paulsen Street School*

Before the integration of the public school system, white and African American children attended separate schools. As previously discussed, white children in the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood attended Romana Riley School on the corner of Anderson Street and Waters Avenue, the only school physically located within the current bounds of the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood.

One alumni who attended Waters Avenue School in the 1940s commented that as a child she knew that the African American children had their own school but "we really didn't speak about it."<sup>283</sup>

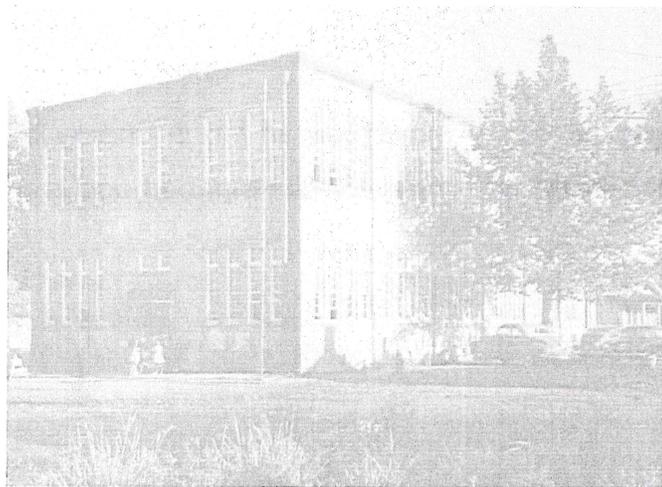


Figure 82 Paulsen Street School, 1954<sup>284</sup>

African American children in the area attended Paulsen Street School on the corner of Paulsen and Joe streets, one block east of Harmon Street, the eastern boundary of the current neighborhood. Even though Paulsen Street School was basically equi-distance to most of the neighborhood as Romana Riley was, it was a substandard building compared to its white counterpart. While Romana Riley

---

<sup>283</sup> Suzanne Kantziper, BVC OH #17.

<sup>284</sup> Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE.

School was built in 1915 specifically for use as an elementary school, Paulsen Street School was housed in a converted shirt factory built in 1924.<sup>285</sup>

In a 1949 survey of public schools, Paulsen's classrooms held an average of forty-eight students, while Romana Riley students were in classes of forty pupils. The study cited Paulsen as inadequate, with a small site, unsafe stairs and exits, and an overloaded building with two grades running in double sessions.<sup>286</sup>

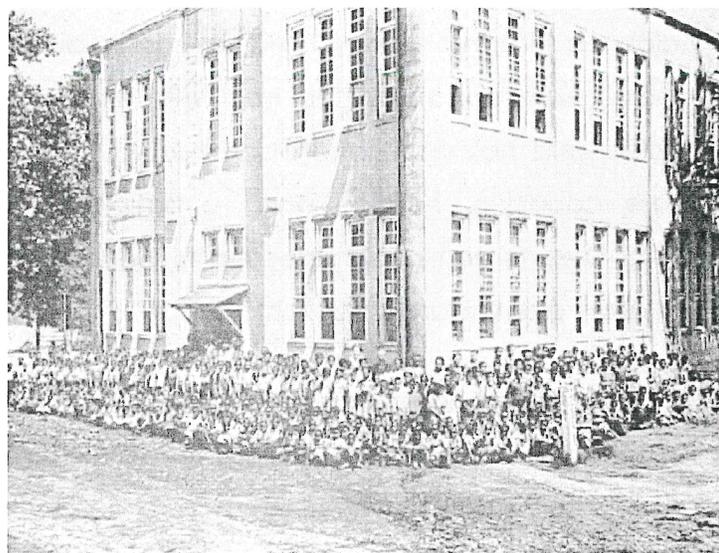


Figure 83 Paulsen Street School & Students, 1946<sup>287</sup>

By 1955, parents had grown completely fed up and their pleas were finally acknowledged with board plans to build a new school. In June of 1955, during construction of Frank W. Spencer School (see next section in chapter) on Wheaton Street, meant to replace Paulsen, the board announced that the old Paulsen Street School would continue to be used as an elementary school. This move was an effort to alleviate overcrowding and eliminate double sessions in Florance Street, East Broad Street, and Harris Street schools. Eight Florance Street classes, two East

---

<sup>285</sup> "Construction Dates-Public School Buildings," VF-Schools-Savannah & Chatham County-Public Schools-Collective, GHS.

<sup>286</sup> "Public Schools in Chatham County, Georgia: A Survey Report," (Nashville: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1949), 153, 167.

<sup>287</sup> VM 1360, Box 3, Folder 19, Item 07, GHS.

Broad classes, and one Harris Street class were to be relocated to the building just declared unsuitable for the education of children.<sup>288</sup>

When classes started the following September, parents of the Florance Street School students who were reassigned staged a strike. They argued that there was no reason their children should commute two to three miles when they lived so close to Florance, and they could not understand why the building was going to be used when Spencer School had just been built to replace it. Filing a petition with the board, they claimed that the Paulsen building was "so dilapidated and in such poor condition that it was found unsuited and unfit for further use and a new building was needed and has since been constructed." They worried that the schools inadequate condition, heating and ventilation "might cause sickness among the children." Despite continued objection to the structure, the building was used by the board as an elementary school until 1961.<sup>289</sup>

In March of 1961, the Board of Education purchased a tract of land, adjacent to the Paulsen Street School, from Richard A. Belford for about \$500 in preparation to replace the old shirt factory building with a new school on the same site. Plans to raze the factory building and several wooden houses on the Belford land were underway. The new school would still be an elementary school, while the recently completed John Hubert Elementary School at Soldiers Field would become a junior high school for African Americans (this school was originally referred to as Soldiers Field School).<sup>290</sup>

By 1962, the shirt factory building had been razed and plans to rebuild on the same lot abandoned apparently due to low lying land. After a request from the Eastside Community Improvement Council, the Board of Education agreed to let the land be used as a playground. In March of 1963, the Eastside Community Improvement

---

<sup>288</sup> "Names Chosen for Two New Negro Schools," (SMN 15 Jun 1955), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE.

<sup>289</sup> Harold Wollstein, "School 'Strike' is Staged by Negro Parents," (SEP 6 Sep 1955), Paulsen Street School Files-Wheaton Site, SCCBE.

<sup>290</sup> "School Board Acquires Two Land Parcels," (SMN 10 Mar 1961, 10B), Paulsen Street School Files, SCCBE; "Board Buys Site for New School," (SEP 9 Mar 1961, 35), Paulsen Street School Files, SCCBE.

Council dedicated the Eastside Community Playground at the corner of Paulsen and Joe streets.<sup>291</sup>

---

<sup>291</sup> "New Negro Playground Dedicated," (SMN 23 Mar 1963), Paulsen Street School Files, SCCBE; "Basil Morris, attorney for the Board of Education, to Rev. Raleigh A. Bryant, Sr., Eastside Committee, 18 Jul 1962," Paulsen Street School Files, SCCBE.

### *Frank W. Spencer Elementary School*

In 1955, in response to pleas from the community for suitable educational facilities for African Americans, plans to build a new elementary school in Hoynes Ward, along the northern edge of Wheaton Street were made. This effort was slow considering that as early as 1951 the community was demanding a new school to replace the Paulsen Street School. In a petition submitted by the Paulsen P.T.A., parents asked for "a spacious, well equipped, well ventilated, modern building with fluorescent lights and other conveniences" to replace the old school which is "inadequate to serve the present and growing needs of our children." Among the conveniences desired by the P.T.A., all of which are taken for granted today, were drinking fountains and a library. The petition cover letter ended with "WE WANT A NEW SCHOOL."<sup>292</sup>

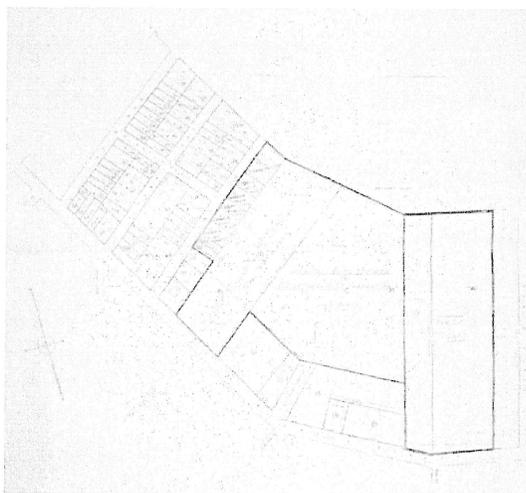


Figure 84 Wiberg & Dixie Auto Parts Property, 1951<sup>293</sup>

By 1954 the board was actively trying to acquire land adjoining their lands north of Wheaton Street in Hoynes Ward. In March, the board succeeded in buying a

---

<sup>292</sup> "Madeline Hunt, president Paulsen Street School P.T.A., to A. T. Vick, Superintendent Board of Education, 17 May 1951," Paulsen Street School-Wheaton Site Files, SCCBE.

<sup>293</sup> Paulsen Street School-Wheaton Site School Files, SCCBE.

portion of the old Werm Tract along Wheaton Street from Richardson Florist (approximately 6 7/10 acres of land) for \$15,000 through Dotson Realty Company.<sup>294</sup>

The Savannah Real Estate Board appraised the additional land needed so the board could attempt to purchase the lots from the current owners. The two largest tracts desired were 6.46 acres owned by Dixie Auto Parts Company (appraised at \$9,690), and 3.75 acres May L. Wiberg (appraised at \$19,966). The Dixie Auto Parts property had no improvements and was used only as storage for discarded auto parts. The board also desired Lots 106-120, Hoynes Ward, which ran along the eastern side of Bouhan Street. The Real Estate Board appraised the Bouhan Street lots and their improvements at a total of \$27,300. These individual lots were owned primarily by members of the Jenkins, Evans, Simmons, Champion, and Jackson families.<sup>295</sup>



Figure 85 May L. Wiberg Residence, 1132 Wheaton Street, c1954<sup>296</sup>

The only real hold out to the deal was May Wiberg whose property included a one-story frame house with six rooms and six outbuildings, including a barn and two small chicken houses and runs. A *Savannah News Press* article from July 3, 1954 noted that Mrs. Wiberg "had registered strong objection to selling the property." At this

---

<sup>294</sup> Board Minutes Notes, 16 Mar 1954, Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE.

<sup>295</sup> "Certificate of Appraisal of the Savannah Real Estate Board of Properties in Hoynes Ward, Savannah, Georgia, for the Board of Public Education . . . , May 31, 1954," Paulsen Street School-Wheaton Site Files, SCCBE.

<sup>296</sup> "Certificate of Appraisal of the Savannah Real Estate Board of Properties in Hoynes Ward, Savannah, Georgia, for the Board of Public Education . . . , May 31, 1954," Paulsen Street School-Wheaton Site Files, SCC Board of Education.

point the Board of Education threatened to use condemnation proceedings to acquire the land if the offer of \$19,966 was not accepted by the Wiberg party.<sup>297</sup>

At the time of the initial appraisal the Real Estate Board described this area of town as follows:

*Bouhan Street is a short dirt street extending in a northeastwardly direction off Wheaton Street a distance of about two blocks where it comes to a dead end.*

*Properties on Bouhan Street and the entire neighborhood surrounding the parcels under consideration in this appraisal are principally negro residences and small commercial establishments.*

*The property fronting on Wheaton Street has the possibility of development for commercial use.*

*There is a large undeveloped area in Heyward Ward northeast of the subject properties. This land is very low and is drained by the Jones Canal to the east. There are no means of ingress and egress to this undeveloped area.<sup>298</sup>*

From the photographs and descriptions provided in the appraisal of the Bouhan Street lots, it appears that those houses along the eastern side of the street were similar to those that remain today along the western edge of Bouhan Street. The majority of the structures were small, frame or concrete block, one-story homes. The four homes that were later demolished ranged in age from about 35 years old to only two years old.<sup>299</sup>

---

<sup>297</sup> "Certificate of Appraisal of the Savannah Real Estate Board of Properties in Hoynes Ward, Savannah, Georgia, for the Board of Public Education . . . , May 31, 1954," Paulsen Street School-Wheaton Site Files, SCCBE; "May Condemn Land to Obtain New School Site," (SNP 3 Jul 1954), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE

<sup>298</sup> "Certificate of Appraisal of the Savannah Real Estate Board of Properties in Hoynes Ward, Savannah, Georgia, for the Board of Public Education . . . , May 31, 1954," Paulsen Street School-Wheaton Site Files, SCCBE.

<sup>299</sup> "Certificate of Appraisal of the Savannah Real Estate Board of Properties in Hoynes Ward, Savannah, Georgia, for the Board of Public Education . . . , May 31, 1954," Paulsen Street School-Wheaton Site Files, SCCBE; "Construction of New Negro School Begins Today," (SEP 28 Feb 1955), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE; "Decent Schools, Housing for All Is Hope of Mayor," (SEP 2 Mar 1955), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE.

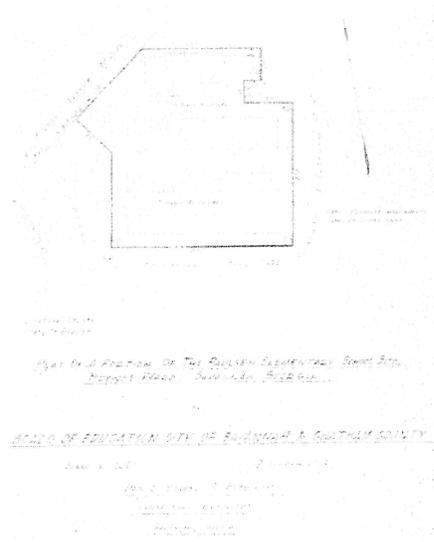


Figure 86 New Elementary School Site, 1955<sup>300</sup>

Construction of the new school facility finally began on February 28, 1955 by the Whalley-Strong Construction Company . On March 2, 1955, Mayor Mingledorff presided over the groundbreaking of the new elementary school facing Wheaton Street. At this time, the school was referred to as Paulsen School for the facility it was meant to replace. The *Savannah Evening Press* published the following photograph of the ceremony and indicated that Mingledorff's presence stressed his promise to work towards equal educational institutions for all. Mingledorff, the chief speaker at the ceremony, stated:

*I don't think Savannah will be a great city, really great city, until we can give our people all the way through the benefits of an adequate education. Then the next task is to achieve decent housing for all.*<sup>301</sup>

<sup>300</sup> "Plat of a Portion of the Paulsen Elementary School Site, Hoynes Ward, Savannah, Georgia," (1955), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE.

<sup>301</sup> "Certificate of Appraisal of the Savannah Real Estate Board of Properties in Hoynes Ward, Savannah, Georgia, for the Board of Public Education . . . , May 31, 1954," Paulsen Street School-Wheaton Site Files, SCCBE; "Construction of New Negro School Begins Today," (SEP 28 Feb 1955), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE; "Decent Schools, Housing for All Is Hope of Mayor," (SEP 2 Mar 1955), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE.

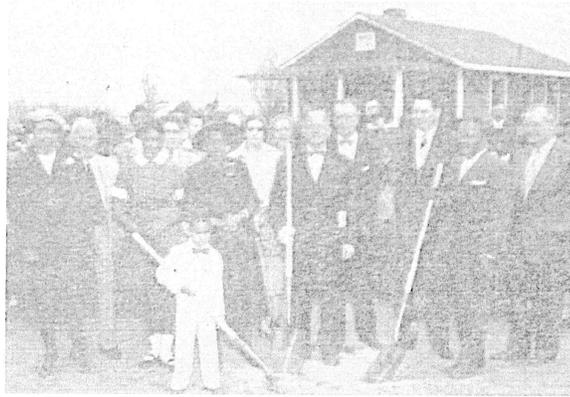


Figure 87 Paulsen School Groundbreaking, 1955<sup>302</sup>

Captain Frank W. Spencer, long time school board member, provided the blessing of the ground:

*Blue skies above, send down, send down,  
God's blessing on this hallowed ground.*<sup>303</sup>

Among those attending the groundbreaking were Alma Porter Bryant, president of the Paulsen P.T.A.; Dr. W. K. Payne, president of Savannah State College; R. W. Gadsden, former Paulsen School principal; Herman Brown, one of the first students of the old Paulsen School; and Ronald Tryon Hightower, one of the first students planning to attend the new school.<sup>304</sup>



Figure 88 Groundbreaking Invitation, 1955<sup>305</sup>

---

<sup>302</sup> "Decent Schools, Housing for All Is Hope of Mayor," (SEP 2 Mar 1955), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE.

<sup>303</sup> "Decent Schools, Housing for All Is Hope of Mayor," (SEP 2 Mar 1955), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE.

<sup>304</sup> "Decent Schools, Housing for All Is Hope of Mayor," (SEP 2 Mar 1955), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE.

<sup>305</sup> Groundbreaking Invitation (1955), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE.

The school building was designed by local architect Oscar M. Hansen out of concrete block and brick with twenty-two classrooms. The facility was completed at a cost of roughly \$400,000.<sup>306</sup>

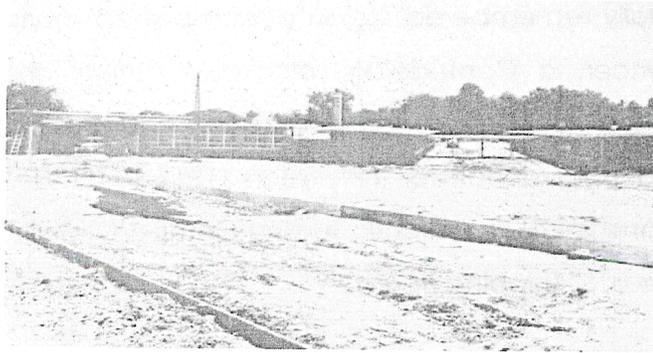


Figure 89 Construction of New Paulsen School, n.d.<sup>307</sup>

Until June 14, 1955, the new school at Wheaton and Bouhan streets was still referred to as Paulsen School. On this day, the Board of Education approved the naming of the new school in honor of Captain Frank Wilson Spencer (c1880-1979). After three six-year terms on the board, he had been given the title of honorary board president in December, 1953. Spencer is remembered for continuously working for improved schooling for African American children. Long before integration of schools was a national or local law, Spencer was a proponent of equal education in Savannah. He began a unique harbor study project which became part of the regular curriculum for all 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> graders. In 1953 alone, over 10,000 students, teachers, and parents participated in the project which taught children about Savannah's port, industry, and shipping activity, from the river.<sup>308</sup>

Spencer also began project "Ahoy," providing children with shoes because he "did not want any boy or girl at Spencer absent because of no shoes." "Ahoy" later branched out into clothing items. Spencer's personal charitable causes in

---

<sup>306</sup> "Decent Schools, Housing for All Is Hope of Mayor," (SEP 2 Mar 1955), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE; "Frank W. Spencer School Nears Completion," (SMN 28 Aug 1955), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE.

<sup>307</sup> Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE.

<sup>308</sup> "Schools Named for Spencer, Gadsden," (SMN 15 Jun 1955), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE.

Savannah included starting a college fund through Carver Bank for needy and deserving African American students. By 1971, he had contributed to the college education of five students.<sup>309</sup>

Spencer is equally remembered for an accomplished marine career. The son of William H. Spencer, a Confederate blockade runner and river pilot, Spencer followed in his father's footsteps to become the country's youngest master pilot, a position he held in Savannah for thirty years (1917-1947). From 1920 until 1967, he was general manager of the Atlantic Towing Company, and he also served as local manager for the U. S. Shipping Board.<sup>310</sup>

At the New York Nautical College Spencer studied navigation and seamanship. He spent seventeen years at sea before returning to Savannah. Among his notable achievements are piloting a ship carrying American soldiers and their new German wives home from World War I; serving as a U.S. Coast Guard commander in World War II; and leading the development of the port of Savannah further north by opening the channel.<sup>311</sup>

In 1915, Spencer conducted a survey of the Savannah River channel to determine if a deep draft vessel could reach the Port Wentworth area of the river. Encouraged by his findings, the Savannah Sugar Refinery established the first large industry in Port Wentworth. On July 26, 1917, Spencer piloted the first deep draft vessel, the 3,000 ton Norwegian steamship *Skulda*, up to the facility. His actions and the establishment of the sugar refinery encouraged industry to locate in the area and he is cited as being "directly responsible for the development of the deep water channel above the Seaboard bridge to Port Wentworth."<sup>312</sup>

---

<sup>309</sup> "Social Slants," (SH 23 Oct 1971, 13), SCCBE; "Dedication: Frank W. Spencer School, 20 Nov 1955" (program), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE.

<sup>310</sup> "Frank W. Spencer Left Memorials for Future Generations," (Jul 1979), BF-Spencer, GHS.

<sup>311</sup> "Frank W. Spencer Dead at 96," (SMN 27 Jul 1979, 1A), BF-Spencer, GHS; "Frank W. Spencer Left Memorials for Future Generations," (Jul 1979), BF-Spencer, GHS; "Schools Named for Spencer, Gadsden," (SMN 15 Jun 1955), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE.

<sup>312</sup> J. R. Roseberry, "Sixty Years' Service to Savannah," (SMN 18 Nov 1962), BF-Spencer, GHS.

His professional career was complemented by an active civic life in which he served three terms as head of the Chatham Area Boy Scout Council; organized Sea Scouting in Savannah; served as a board member of Greenbriar Children's Center and the West Broad Street YMCA.<sup>313</sup>

Spencer explained his strong beliefs regarding the equality of man when he recalled a story from his seafaring days:

*It was on a particularly wild night off the cape--the wind was blowing about 65 miles an hour--when we sighted a German sailing vessel with her ensign inverted. The ship was in distress--sinking.*

*Since I had four years experience in small boats, the ship's captain called me up from the engine room to line up with the deck hands. Then he called for volunteers. There were 17 different races, religions, and nationalities represented in the crew. Every man on board volunteered to make the rescue in small boats.*

*It was at that moment that I realized that a man's color, or country or what he believes does not prove his courage and ability. I found out then that it is the man himself who counts.<sup>314</sup>*

On November 20, 1955 the Frank W. Spencer School, known as "The Pupil Centered School," was dedicated. Robert Paul Jordan, Sr. served as the first principal, and Mrs. Alma P. Bryant as the first president of the Spencer P.T.A. Spencer's faculty was loaded with Savannah State College graduates.<sup>315</sup>

---

<sup>313</sup> "Spencer's Efforts Expanded Harbor," (SMN 27 Jul 1979, 3A), BF-Spencer, GHS.

<sup>314</sup> "Captain Spencer Launched Career at Sea in 1899," (SMN 27 Mar 1949), BF-Spencer, GHS.

<sup>315</sup> "Dedication: Frank W. Spencer School, 20 Nov 1955" (program), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE.

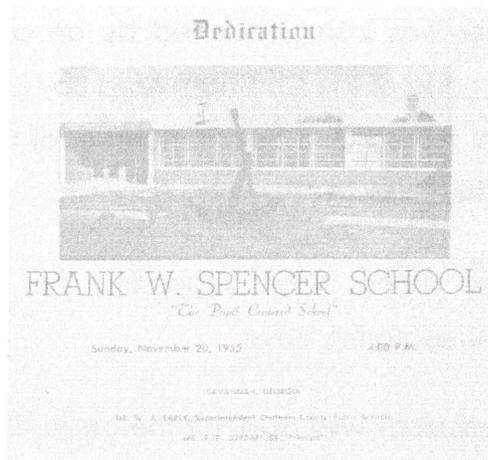


Figure 90 Dedication Program, Frank W. Spencer School, 1955<sup>316</sup>

The school's motto was that of Captain Spencer, and hung in all of the classrooms, as did his symbol, the anchor:

*Anchor the fine things in life in the heart and in the mind, then set a course over the sea of life with a consecrated and resolute purpose to strive for the common good of all mankind.*<sup>317</sup>

---

<sup>316</sup> "Dedication: Frank W. Spencer School, 20 Nov 1955" (program), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE.

<sup>317</sup> "Dedication: Frank W. Spencer School, 20 Nov 1955" (program), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE.

### *Saint Pius X High School*

In April of 1952, the Diocese of Savannah announced plans to build a Catholic high school for Savannah African American students. The school was the first such parochial high school for African Americans in Chatham County and was needed to accommodate the graduates of the African American Catholic elementary schools. A six-acre tract of land at the corner of Anderson Street and Atlantic Avenue was donated by the St. Benedict the Moor Church. Most of the money for the new school building was collected by Lucius "Kelly" Bryant, a member of St. Benedict's. Initially, the new school was to be named for its main benefactor, St. Benedict's High School.<sup>318</sup>

News of the new school was immediately met with approval from the African American community. The *Savannah Tribune* editorial page included the following commentary:

*The building of a high school for Negroes could not have come at a better time for both Catholics and Negroes. There is nothing surprising about this. It is in line with what Catholics have been doing all over the country. Catholic universities and colleges have opened their classes to Negroes without a great deal of fanfare, Negroes have been provided schools of equal rank with those for white youth. In this latest evidence of interest in the welfare of Negroes, the Catholic community has done something of which it should be justly proud. The implication that the school will be similar in courses to those offered at the Catholic school for white youth is gratifying. . . . The Tribune salutes the Roman Catholics for this very significant move."<sup>319</sup>*

By May of 1952, the school was being referred to in Diocesan correspondence as Pope Pius X High School. Pius was the turn of the century Italian pope whose efforts towards the renewal of the Catholic Church led to the Second Vatican Council. The school officially opened, as Blessed Pius X, on September 8, 1952 with sixty

---

<sup>318</sup> "Welcome to St. Pius X High School," Box 1 (of 1), St. Pius X High School, Schools Group, CDA; "Announce Plans for Catholic Negro High School in Savannah," (*The Bulletin* 26 Apr 1952, 20), Box 1 (of 1), St. Pius X High School, Schools Group, CDA.

<sup>319</sup> "Negro Weekly in Savannah Praises High School Plans," (*The Bulletin* 26 Apr 1952, 20), Box 1 (of 1), St. Pius X High School, Schools Group, CDA.

students enrolled in the brick building, designed by Savannah architect Carl E. Helfrich.<sup>320</sup>

In 1954, the school became known as St. Pius X after Pius' canonization by the Vatican. The first graduating class of fourteen students passed through St. Pius' doors in 1955. A new wing was added to the school in 1962, causing a reconfiguration of the entire school's plan.<sup>321</sup>

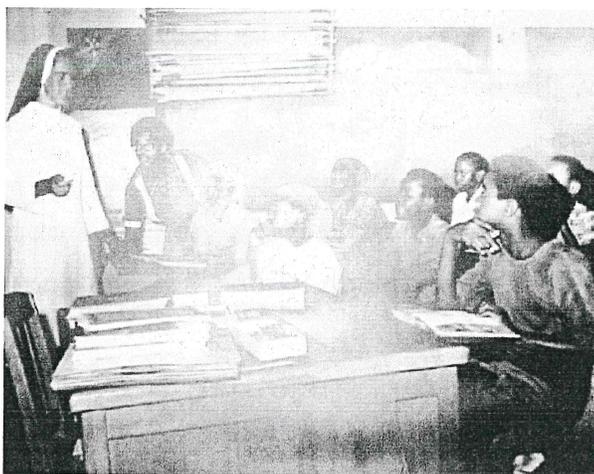


Figure 91 Sister M. Jeanette Goudet & Class, n.d.<sup>322</sup>

---

<sup>320</sup> "Welcome to St. Pius X . . ."; "High School for Colored Catholics Opens in Savannah," (*The Bulletin* 29 Sep 1952), Box 1 (of 1), St. Pius X High School, Schools Group, CDA; Miscellaneous correspondence, Box 1 (of 1), St. Pius X High School, Schools Group, CDA.

<sup>321</sup> Rita H. DeLorme, "Saint Pius X High School: Source of Nostalgia and Pride," (*The Southern Cross* 2 Mar 2000, 3), Box 1 (of 1), St. Pius X High School, Schools Group, Archives CDA; "Welcome to St. Pius X . . ."

<sup>322</sup> Photographs, St. Pius X High School, CDA.

In the fall semester of 1968, St. Pius was opened to white students as well, with the parochial schools beginning integration long before the public schools. School Administrative Coordinator, Father W. V. Coleman, wrote Bishop Frey of the school's steps towards integration:

*I am happy to inform you of the increased enrollment (from 152 to 173) at St. Pius X and of its integration. Although integration is token, it is a beginning.*<sup>323</sup>

In addition, St. Pius was not limited to Catholic students, by 1970 about forty percent of the student body was not Catholic. In 1968, St. Pius was accredited by the Southern Association of Schools. Unfortunately, in June 1969 the Diocese announced plans to close the school and ninth graders were not enrolled for the 1970-1971 school year.<sup>324</sup>

In the Diocese's efforts to promote integration locally, they decided to close St. Pius X and send the students to the two white Catholic high schools, St. Vincent's Academy for girls, and Benedictine Military School for boys. In a preliminary report it was stressed that "with the other Catholic high schools in the area, there must be something distinctive about St. Pius X, other than a Negro enrollment, or it has no reason for existence." The Franciscan Sisters, who staffed the school, argued that keeping St. Pius open perpetuated segregation.<sup>325</sup>

The final decision on St. Pius came in February 1970 when the Diocese announced it would consolidate the three Catholic high schools, phasing out St. Pius over two years. The faculty and student body would be absorbed into St. Vincent's and Benedictine. In a public statement Father Ralph E. Seikel, Diocesan Superintendent of Schools, stated:

---

<sup>323</sup> "W. V. Coleman to Gerard L. Frey, Bishop of Savannah, 4 Sep 1968," Box 1 (of 1), St. Pius X High School, Schools Group, CDA.

<sup>324</sup> "Welcome to St. Pius X . . ."; "Saint Pius X Accredited," (*The Southern Cross* 18 Dec 1969, 2), Box 1 (of 1), St. Pius X High School, Schools Group, CDA; Notes, Box 1 (of 1), St. Pius X High School, Schools Group, CDA.

<sup>325</sup> "Preliminary Report on Saint Pius X High School," n.d., Box 1 (of 1), St. Pius X High School, Schools Group, CDA.

*In order to effect more meaningful integration within the Savannah Catholic Schools, we feel it imperative to set forth a master plan of amalgamation whereby our integration process will be accelerated so that the results demanded by social justice and the tenor of the time will be soon affected and realized. Such a plan would also be in accord with the policy of the Sisters of St. Francis to continue staffing only those schools which are meaningfully integrated.*<sup>326</sup>

Before closing, St. Pius produced many leaders of the African American community including former Savannah Mayor Floyd Adams, Jr., Judge Orion Douglas, and Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas (attended St. Pius during his freshman year).<sup>327</sup>



Figure 92 St. Pius X High School Basketball Team, 1964<sup>328</sup>

Following the school's closure, the St. Pius building was used in a variety of ways as a community center. In 1993, the Catholic Diocese of Savannah donated the buildings to the Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority as a Family Resource Center to provide a variety of services such as health, education, job counseling, and activities for at-risk youth.<sup>329</sup>

---

<sup>326</sup> "Consolidation for Catholic High Schools," (*The Southern Cross*, 12 Feb 1970), Box 1 (of 1), St. Pius X High School, Schools Group, CDA.

<sup>327</sup> Jan Skutch, "St. Pius Grad Recalls Fond Memories," (SMN 10 Mar 1998, C1), Box 1 (of 1), St. Pius X High School, Schools Group, CDA.

<sup>328</sup> Photographs, St. Pius X High School, CDA.

<sup>329</sup> "Press Release 1/19/93: The Family Resource Center," Box 1 (of 1), St. Pius X High School, Schools Group, CDA.

Otis Johnson, director of the Youth Futures Authority, accepted the Diocese's donation of the buildings and the Authority paid an additional \$10,000 for the land, then identified as "Located in Area C, the city's most economically depressed area."<sup>330</sup>

---

<sup>330</sup> David Donald, "Youth Authority Gets New Center," (SMN 20 Jan 1993), Box 1 (of 1), St. Pius X High School, Schools Group, CDA.

## HOSPITALS

### *Oglethorpe Sanitarium*



Figure 93 Oglethorpe Sanitarium, 905-925 East Duffy Street, 1940<sup>331</sup>

By 1947, Oglethorpe Sanitarium was one of five hospitals for white Savannahians, though it was the smallest in the city with only fifty beds. There were two hospitals for African American residents in Savannah, Charity Hospital and Georgia Infirmary. If an African American resident, living in the boundaries of the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood, needed medical attention they would need to go to one of these hospitals. There was no medical facility in or near the eastside neighborhoods for them.<sup>332</sup>



<sup>331</sup> VM 1360, Box 4, Folder 15, Item 11, GHS.

<sup>332</sup> "Savannah, Georgia . . . Now," (Savannah: Chamber of Commerce of Savannah and Industrial Committee of Savannah, Inc., 1947), 64.

Figure 94 Oglethorpe Sanitarium, n.d.<sup>333</sup>

The sanitarium was a two-story shingled residence that had been converted into a hospital, therefore it blended in well with the residential area and architecture. The property actually consisted of two separate shingled buildings (one two stories, one three stories), connected by a walkway or porch. Sometime between 1916 and 1950 a two-story nurses' home was erected on the east side of the property. Several past residents remember the building and its staff, both now long gone.<sup>334</sup>

*It was built by a group of doctors and operated 'til after World War II and a little bit thereafter, but it was outdated. I remember it being a wooden structure, which I always thought was a terrible fire hazard. . . . That's where I was born, Dr. Carson [delivered me] . . . Dr. Henry Levington, his wife . . . she was in training . . . when I was born she passed out.<sup>335</sup>*



Figure 95 Oglethorpe Sanitarium, 1921<sup>336</sup>

*Had some real top doctors involved in that. In fact, there was Dr. Crawford, Dr. Waring, Dr. Levington, at that time. And Dr. Kandel, Harry Kandel, he was one of the main drivers of that particular institute. I think I was delivered by Dr. Waring.<sup>337</sup>*

*I was born in Savannah, 1929, I was born in September and the market crashed in October. I was born at the old Oglethorpe Sanitarium.<sup>338</sup>*

---

<sup>333</sup> VM 1361PC, Box 6, GHS.

<sup>334</sup> Suzanne Kantziper, BVC OH #17; "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1916, 1950," GHS.

<sup>335</sup> Julius Edel, JAOH #35, SJA.

<sup>336</sup> *A Souvenir Booklet of Savannah* . . .

<sup>337</sup> Herbert Blumenthal, JAOH #35, SJA.

<sup>338</sup> Julius Edel, JAOH #35, SJA.

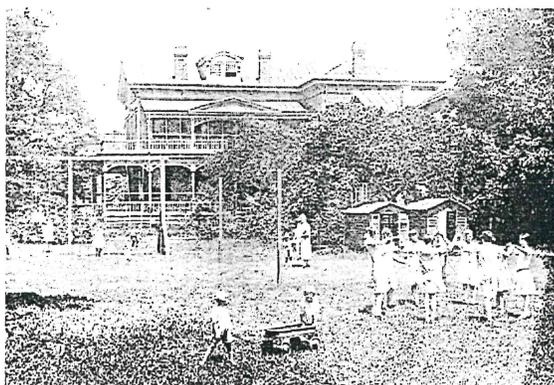
## ORPHANAGES

### *Episcopal Orphans' Home for Girls*



Figure 96 Episcopal Orphans' Home, 1933<sup>339</sup>

The Episcopal Orphans' Home for Girls was organized in 1852 and incorporated in 1857.<sup>340</sup> The orphanage was originally located in a residence (demolished) on West Liberty Street near the intersection of Montgomery Street. On January 2, 1920, Mrs. Henrietta B. Collins, J. S. Collins' widow, sold the family property on East Duffy Street for \$25,000 to the Orphans Home of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Chatham County.<sup>341</sup>



<sup>339</sup> VM 1617 Episcopal Diocese of Georgia Records, Box 2, Folder 16, GHS.

<sup>340</sup> "Certified Statement for Annual Registration of a Corporation, 1953," EYCS, Episcopal Home for Girls, Insurance, Box 50, MS 1617 Episcopal Diocese of Georgia Records, GHS.

<sup>341</sup> "Collins to Orphan's Home . . . , 1920," EYCS, Episcopal Home for Girls, Deeds & Trusts, Box 50, MS 1617 Episcopal Diocese of Georgia Records, GHS.

Figure 97 Episcopal Orphans' Home, 1933<sup>342</sup>

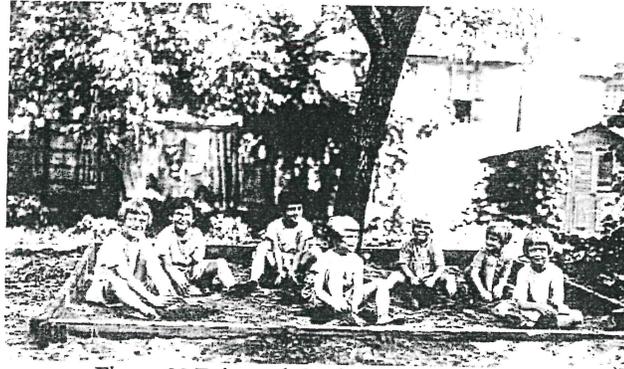


Figure 98 Episcopal Orphans' Home, 1933<sup>343</sup>

Commonly referred to as the Episcopal Orphan's Home, the orphanage operated at this site for many years in the two-story wooden house built by J. S. Collins in 1891. By 1954, the Collins' home had been demolished and the Orphans' Home had a new one-story brick structure, a small chapel and a one-story brick veneer dormitory on the large piece of property.<sup>344</sup>

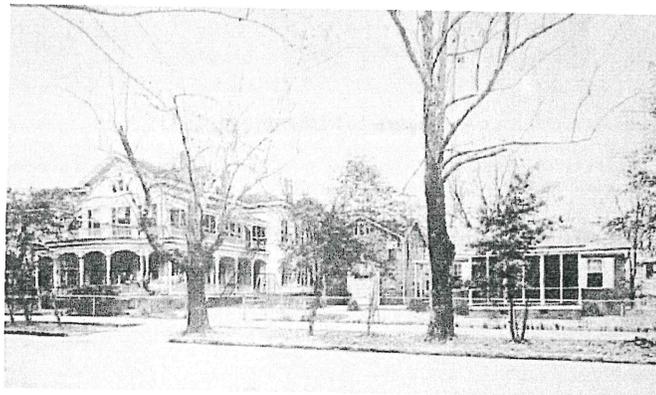


Figure 99 Old Collins' House, Chapel, and Dormitory, 1943<sup>345</sup>

<sup>342</sup> VM 1617 Episcopal Diocese of Georgia Records, Box 2, Folder 16, GHS.

<sup>343</sup> VM 1617 Episcopal Diocese of Georgia Records, Box 2, Folder 16, GHS.

<sup>344</sup> VM 1617 Episcopal Diocese of Georgia Records, Box 2, Folder 16, GHS; "Westchester Fire Insurance Company Policy, No. 86961, 1954," EYCS, Episcopal Home for Girls, Insurance, Box 50, MS 1617 Episcopal Diocese of Georgia Records, GHS.

<sup>345</sup> VM 1360, Box 4, Folder 18, Item 10, GHS.

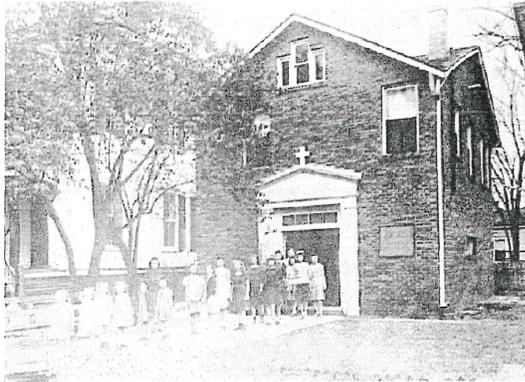


Figure 100 Chapel, 1943<sup>346</sup>

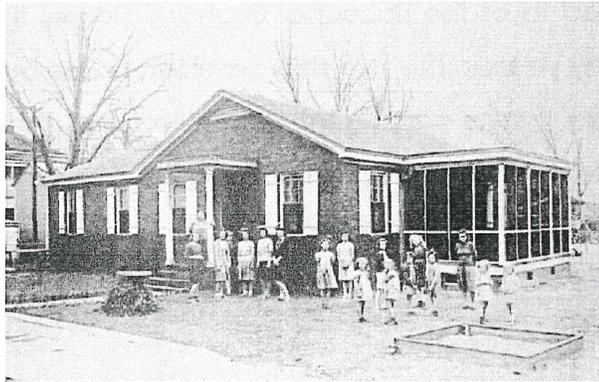


Figure 101 Dormitory, 1943<sup>347</sup>

Those who grew up in the neighborhood remember being fascinated as a child by the playground equipment in the fenced-in yard; "what caught our eye would be that playground."<sup>348</sup>

---

<sup>346</sup> VM 1360, Box 4, Folder 18, Item 07, GHS.

<sup>347</sup> VM 1360, Box 4, Folder 18, Item 08, GHS.

<sup>348</sup> Suzanne Kantziper, BVC OH #17.



Figure 102 Episcopal Orphans' Home, 1933<sup>349</sup>



Figure 103 Episcopal Orphans' Home, 1933<sup>350</sup>

---

<sup>349</sup> VM 1617 Episcopal Diocese of Georgia Records, Box 2, Folder 16, GHS.

<sup>350</sup> VM 1617 Episcopal Diocese of Georgia Records, Box 2, Folder 16, GHS.

### *Chatham Colored Orphans' Home*

Little is known about the Chatham Colored Orphans' Home beyond its location on Wheaton Street (#1119) at the corner of Cedar Street. Maps and the City Directory indicate that the home was a two-story frame residence, in use as late as 1925. In the early 1900s, the home asked the Savannah City Council for donations of \$125.00 more than once.<sup>351</sup>

There were several orphanages for African American children along the northern edge of Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, including the Colored Orphans' Home & Industrial School, operated by the U. S. Union Association, at 601 Harmon Street (1910), and the Savannah Orphan Home at 606 Waters Avenue (1905).<sup>352</sup>

---

<sup>351</sup> "Pocket Map & Guide of the City of Savannah, Georgia & Vicinity," (Savannah: Lamas Bros. News Co., 1925); City Council Minutes, 19 Feb 1902, p300, SCC;" Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1916," GHS.

<sup>352</sup> "Savannah City Directory, 1905, 1910," (Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1905, 1910), 39, 46.

## CHURCHES

### *Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church*



Figure 104 Original Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church, n.d.<sup>353</sup>



Figure 105 Services at Asbury United Methodist Church, n.d.<sup>354</sup>

Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church was organized by Rev. J. H. Orran and David R. McWilliams on March 7, 1909. Dr. W. C. Lovett, Presiding Elder of the Savannah District of the United Methodist Church, appointed Rev. McWilliams as pastor, assisted by Rev. Gustavus J. Orr, principal of the Massie School. The first church sanctuary was a one-room, wooden building at the corner of Henry Street and Waters Avenue erected at a cost of \$2,100. The first Sunday service was held

---

<sup>353</sup> VM 1629 Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church, South Records, Box 1, Folder 1, Item 70, GHS.

<sup>354</sup> VM 1629 Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church, South Records, Box 1, Folder 1, Item 37, GHS.

on July 4, 1909. In 1922, the original sanctuary was replaced by the current brick church, which was dedicated on January 14, 1940 by Bishop J. Lloyd Decell. In 1954, the adjacent educational building was finished.<sup>355</sup>

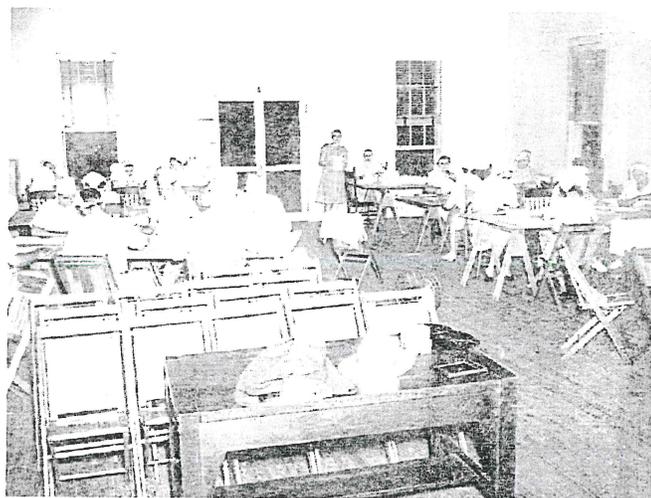


Figure 106 World War I Workers, n.d.<sup>356</sup>

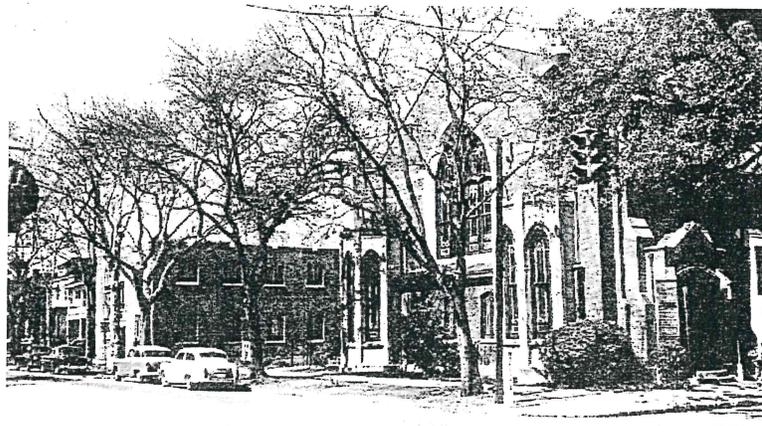


Figure 107 Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church, 50th Anniversary, 1959<sup>357</sup>

---

<sup>355</sup> VM 1629 Asbury Memorial United Church, South Records, Finding Aid, GHS.

<sup>356</sup> VM 1629 Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church, South Records, Box 1, Folder 1, Item 110, GHS.

<sup>357</sup> VM 1629 Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church, South Records, Box 1, Folder 2, Item 22, GHS.



Figure 108 Educational Building Groundbreaking, n.d.<sup>358</sup>



Figure 109 Ladies of Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church, n.d.<sup>359</sup>

---

<sup>358</sup> VM 1629, Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church, South Records, Box 1, Folder 2, Item 107, GHS.

<sup>359</sup> VM 1629, Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church, South Records, Box 1, Folder 5, Item 17, GHS.

## Area Churches

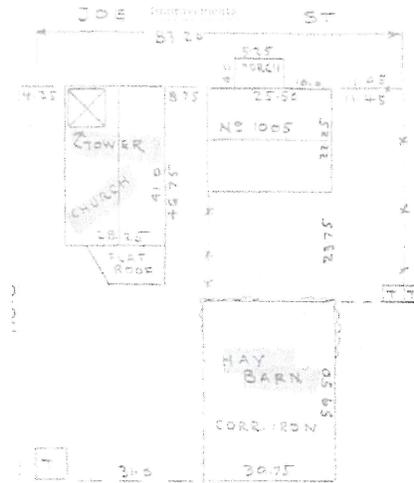


Figure 110 1005 Joe Street, Residence & Church, 1937<sup>360</sup>

The following is a partial list of churches that fall within the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood boundaries, some are no longer active and some have relocated:<sup>361</sup>

Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church, 1008 East Henry Street

Bunn Memorial Baptist Church, 620 Harmon Street

Church of God, 712 Harmon Street

Daniel Holiness Baptist Church, 1143 East Gwinnett Street

Emmanuel Tabernacle Apostolic Faith, 1001 East Henry Street

1<sup>st</sup> African Baptist Church, 1202 East Waldburg Street

1<sup>st</sup> Church of Living God, 1008 East Gwinnett Street

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthian Missionary Baptist Church, 801 Ash Street

1<sup>st</sup> Mount Calvary Baptist Church, 924 Rockefeller Street

Fifth Street Baptist Church, 19 Stirling Street

Happy Home Baptist Church, 1015 East Gwinnett Street

<sup>360</sup> Cadastral Survey: Johnston Ward (1937), CCCH.

<sup>361</sup> Field survey by author, July 2003; "Savannah City Directory," (Savannah: The Morning News Print), GHS.

Harmon Street Baptist Church, Harmon and Joe streets  
Immanuel Baptist Church, 1009 East Henry Street  
Little Prayer Mission Church of God in Christ, 1335 Wheaton Street  
St. Luke's A. M. E. Church, 1007 Joe Street  
St. Mary's Baptist Church, Rockefeller and Ott streets  
St. Paul's Missionary Baptist Church, 624 Waters Street  
St. Thomas Missionary Baptist Church, 1100 East Park Avenue  
2<sup>nd</sup> St. Luke Baptist Church, 931 Wheaton Street  
True Light Pentecoastal Church, 1010 East Duffy Street  
Young Zion Baptist Church, 932 Rockefeller Street

## BUSINESS DISTRICTS



Figure 111 Waters Avenue, looking north towards Wheaton Street, c1935<sup>362</sup>

The Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood was once very active economically with a variety of privately owned businesses clustered along the major north-south and east-west thoroughfares of Harmon, Waters, and Wheaton streets. There was a balance of ownership between the African American and white populations, and many of the business catered to the immediate neighborhoods with small groceries, bakeries, and five and dime stores. Unfortunately, the 1960s and 1970s began a shift in the not only the population but in the viability of the small business owner. Many of the groceries were slowly phased out by large supermarkets, and shopping centers began attracting business away from the local stores. The once booming streets became strips of vacant store fronts, and the small businesses disappeared.<sup>363</sup>

---

<sup>362</sup> VM 1360, Box 13, Folder 14, Item 10, GHS.

<sup>363</sup> Nancy Johnson, BVC OH #20.



Figure 112 Daniel & Son Filling Station, 901 Wheaton Street (corner of Harmon Street), c1930<sup>364</sup>

### *Wheaton Street*

Just west of Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood, and north of Gwinnett Street, the area is low lying. As a result, this land was developed commercially and industrially rather than for residential use. Large companies once located in this area included the Standard Oil Company, the Electric Railway Company's carbarns, and the Savannah Cotton Mill. The 1937 Cadastral Survey also depicted a mattress factory on Culver Street.<sup>365</sup>

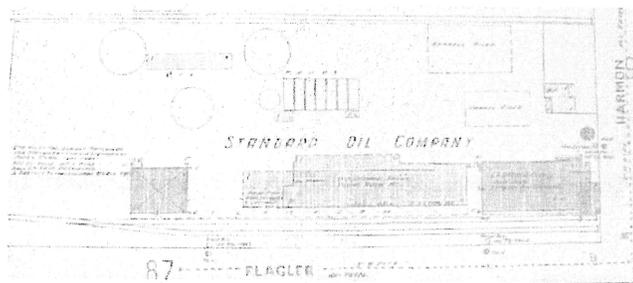


Figure 113 Standard Oil Company<sup>366</sup>

The Standard Oil Company was a large facility; the grounds were dotted with oil tanks, a filling room, and a cooper shop.<sup>367</sup>

<sup>364</sup> VM 1360, Box 13, Folder 15, Item 09, GHS.

<sup>365</sup> "Eastside National Register Nomination," 8, MPC; Cadastral Survey: Hull Ward, (1937), CCCH; "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1898," GHS.

<sup>366</sup> "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1898."



Figure 114 Filling Station, corner Wheaton & Waters Streets, 1937<sup>368</sup>

Moving east along Wheaton Street were several businesses owned by African Americans including Philander Moore's blacksmith shop and Susie Collins' grocery. Significant businesses on Wheaton Street included the A & P Supermarket and several confectionaries and filling stations.<sup>369</sup>

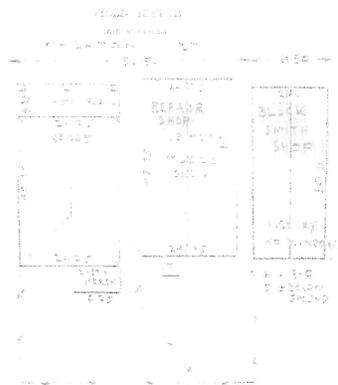


Figure 115 Philander Moore's Property, 929 Wheaton Street, 1937<sup>370</sup>

<sup>367</sup> "Sanborn Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1898," GHS.

<sup>368</sup> Cadastral Survey: Johnston Ward (1937), CCCH.

<sup>369</sup> Elmore, "Historical Analysis and Summary of the Ben Van Clark Neighborhood Project," (2003).

<sup>370</sup> Cadastral Survey: Johnston Ward (1937), CCCH.

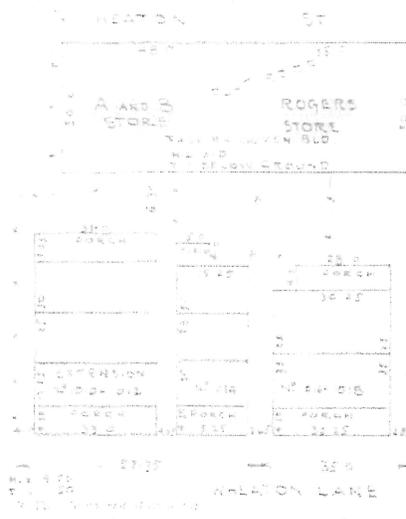


Figure 116 1010-1012 Wheaton Street, A&P and Rogers Stores, 1937<sup>371</sup>

This area is the most active of the three business corridors today due to the high traffic flow of Savannahians traveling along Wheaton Street to reach Gordonston, Skidaway Road, Thunderbolt and the islands.



Figure 117 Corner Wheaton & Harmon Streets, Filling Station, Store & Ice House, 1937<sup>372</sup>

<sup>371</sup> Cadastral Survey: Johnston Ward (1937), CCCH.

<sup>372</sup> Cadastral Survey: Johnston Ward (1937), CCCH.

## Waters Avenue

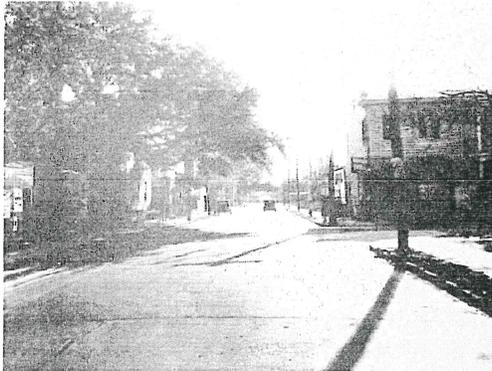


Figure 118 Waters Avenue at Bolton Street, 1931<sup>373</sup>

Unlike Wheaton Street, businesses along Waters Avenue and Harmon Street were a little smaller in nature. Of particular interest was the WSOK radio station on Waters Avenue, Savannah's first African American owned and operated station in the 1950s. Williams and Williams Funeral Home is one of the longest continually operating African American businesses in Savannah, located just off of Waters Avenue. Many current residents remember the Chinaman store on Waters. This was not the name of the store, but it was easily identified by its Chinese owner. On the corner of Waters and Park avenues was Pearson's Bakery. Just south of that on the corner of Anderson Street was Fox's five and dime store.<sup>374</sup>



Figure 119 Williams and Williams Funeral Home, c1998<sup>375</sup>

---

<sup>373</sup> VM 1360, Box 13, Folder 14, Item 12, GHS.

<sup>374</sup> Barbara Gore, BVC OH #24; Suzanne Kantziper, JAOH #84, SJA.

<sup>375</sup> Project YESS, "Waters Avenue Corridor Business Directory, 1998-99," (Savannah: Project YESS, 1998).

Adolphus Allen, a current resident of the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood, ran Allen's Confectionary on the corner of Waters and Park Avenue with his brother, Luke, for seventeen years until around 1995. They sold a variety of items and food products, and operated like a small general store.<sup>376</sup>

Mrs. Alma Porter Bryant, proponent for better educational facilities for neighborhood African American children and first president of the Spencer Parent-Teacher Association, had a beauty parlor at 806A Waters Avenue in 1955.<sup>377</sup>

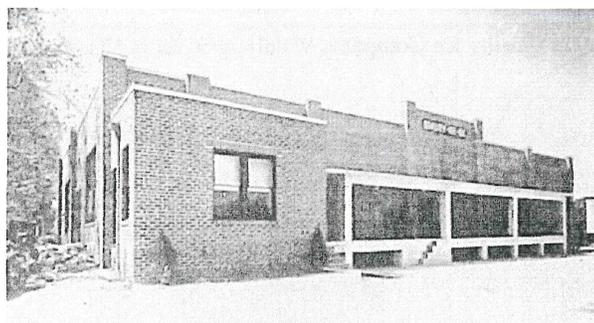


Figure 120 Quality Ice Company, 1018 East Waldburg Street, 1934<sup>378</sup>

In 1934, an ice manufacturing plant opened at the corner of Waters and Waldburg Street. Quality Ice Company was owned by Anthony Monella and was a one-story, brick veneer building. The facility included freezing tanks and cold storage. The ice business was big in the area during the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century with Savannah Ice Delivering Company and Georgia Ice Company, built in 1947 on Harmon Street. By 1973, Georgia Ice Company had grown to two buildings connected by a conveyor. Today these buildings are owned by Rick's Glass Company.<sup>379</sup>

---

<sup>376</sup> Adolphus Allen, BVC OH #21.

<sup>377</sup> "Dedication: Frank W. Spencer School, 20 Nov 1955" (program), Frank W. Spencer School Files, SCCBE.

<sup>378</sup> VM 1360, Box 13, Folder 10, Item 06, GHS.

<sup>379</sup> "Eastside National Register Nomination," 8, MPC; "Sanborn Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1950."

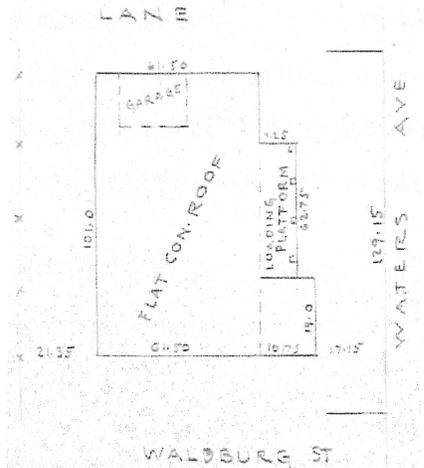


Figure 121 Quality Ice Company, Waldburg Street & Waters Avenue, 1937<sup>380</sup>



Figure 122 Waters Avenue Corridor Business Directory 1998-99<sup>381</sup>

Rosemary Banks was very active in the Waters Avenue Business Association organized in 1987 in an effort to revitalize the lagging Waters Avenue corridor. She remembers several of the businesses once active on the avenue:

*We had a bakery, a fish market, shoe shop. As a matter of fact Mr. Cutter just closed his shoe shop, and he's been there as long as I can remember. And I think he was the oldest continuous business in Afro-*

<sup>380</sup> Cadastral Survey: Kelly Ward (1937), CCCH.

<sup>381</sup> Project YESS, "Waters Avenue Corridor Business Directory, 1998-99," (Savannah: Project YESS, 1998).

*American shoe making. . . The you had grocery stores, package stores . . . maybe one or two lounges, nursery schools.*<sup>382</sup>

*Harmon Street*



Figure 123 Corner-store, 1001 East Gwinnett Street, 2003<sup>383</sup>

Harmon Street was scattered with small grocers, package shops, and businesses, many of them owned by Jewish families, as well as African Americans and Asians. One such business was the Georgia Market, owned and operated by Harry and Irma Ginsberg. Like many shop owners at the time, the Ginsberg family lived above their store. Harry Ginsberg first rented a two-story brick building in the 400 block of Harmon Street, across the street from the ice company.<sup>384</sup>

In 1939, the Ginsberg family bought a piece of property further south on Harmon Street in the 700 block. Here they built a new two-story brick building, which still stands, to house their small grocery and family of three children. The store serviced both black and white customers, with a delivery boy making home deliveries via bicycle. The Ginsbergs catered to both the white and black residents. They

---

<sup>382</sup> Rosemary McBride Banks, BVC OH #26.

<sup>383</sup> Photograph by Andy Young, 2003, DCA.

<sup>384</sup> BVC OH #17, Suzanne Kantziper, 2-3.

specifically carried chitlins and tripe, items more popular with the area's African American residents than the Caucasians.<sup>385</sup>

The Ginsbergs always employed African Americans in the position of butcher, however, the clerks in the store were always white employees. Daughter Suzanne Kantziper remembers two of the butchers, Fat who worked at the first location, and Luther. Harry Ginsberg would go to City Market every morning to purchase fresh vegetables for Georgia Market described as follows:<sup>386</sup>

*They had transoms up high where the air could circulate, go across, but it was pretty hot. The floors were concrete. In the area where they sold the meat, behind the showcases were sawdust on the floor and there were wooden counters where they cut the meat. So there was an interesting array of knives and saws and machinery to cut things. They did cut things for cold cuts, so they had to have a slicing machine.<sup>387</sup>*

At the time Georgia Market was operating, there were few if any large grocery stores in Savannah, allowing numerous small markets to operate in close proximity to each other. Harmon Street was littered with such stores.<sup>388</sup>

*I think there was a lot of friendship between the owners and the buyers because the customers, a lot of times the customers would invite us to come over, like on a Sunday afternoon to fish at their place or we went once to the country to the man who used to deliver the greens. So there was an interesting camaraderie between the owners and the sellers and the buyers. . . . It's been over maybe forty years since I've seen these people in the neighborhoods where my parents had the store, and they still remember. It must have been a good memory or they wouldn't stop me and speak to me.<sup>389</sup>*

---

<sup>385</sup> BVC OH #17, Suzanne Kantziper, 3-4.

<sup>386</sup> BVC OH #17, Suzanne Kantziper, 4.

<sup>387</sup> Suzanne Kantziper, 2002, JAOH #84, Oral History Collection, SJA.

<sup>388</sup> BVC OH #17, Suzanne Kantziper, 3.

<sup>389</sup> Suzanne Kantziper, 2002, JAOH #84, Oral History Collection, SJA.

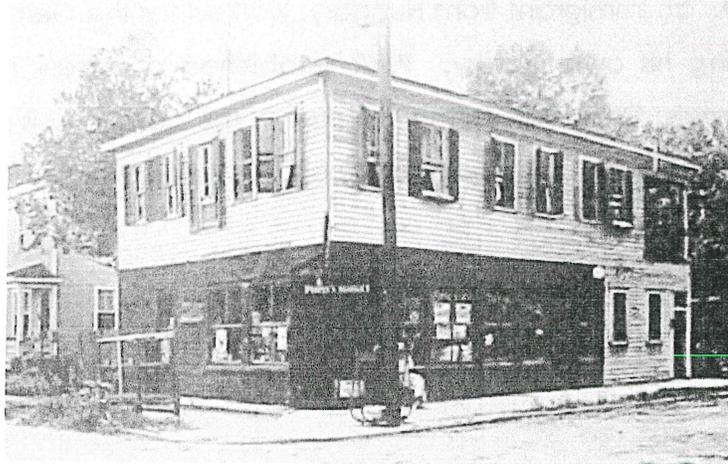


Figure 124 People's Market, 1001 East Bolton, 1934<sup>390</sup>

### *Florists*

Besides groceries and confectionaries, there was a large concentration of florists and nurseries in the area, predominantly owned and operated by German families. Innecken Florist replaced A. W. Richardson's nursery business in Wagner Heights. Today this property is still operated as a nursery by John Hall Nursery, Inc., touted as one of the largest camellia growers in the southeast. John Hall started his business in the area around the 1940s.<sup>391</sup>

August C. Oelschig, established Oelschig's Nursery on Lovers Lane (Anderson Street) and Ott Street around 1884. In the late 1880s, he moved to Thunderbolt Road, just east of the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood across from the Catholic Cemetery. In 1891, August's reputation and success of his nurseries was reported in a newspaper advertisement, "His gardens are a thing of beauty." Oelshig's business, would go on through the generations, and is still run by his descendants. They have since moved from the Thunderbolt Road property, which at its height included numerous greenhouses and two large residences for the family.<sup>392</sup>

---

<sup>390</sup> VM 1360, Box 9, Folder 15, Item 05, GHS.

<sup>391</sup> Conversation with George Oelschig, September 2003, Savannah, Georgia.

<sup>392</sup> (*Savannah Morning News* 4 sep 1891), 6:6; Sanborn Insurance Map of Savannah, 1916, GHS; Conversation with George Oelschig, September 2003, Savannah, Georgia.

John Wolf, Sr., an immigrant from Hungary, worked for the German Oelschig family before starting his own nursery. Wolf established a nursery in 1895 at Ott and Anderson Streets, Oelschig's former property. This company is still active today at another location south of the neighborhood on Waters Avenue.<sup>393</sup>

---

<sup>393</sup> Conversation with George Oelschig, September 2003, Savannah, Georgia; J. Dean Enslow, *Savannah Illustrated, A Sketch of Its Early History*, (Savannah: J. Dean Enslow Press of the Morning News, 1899), 93, Rare Book, GHS.

## ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

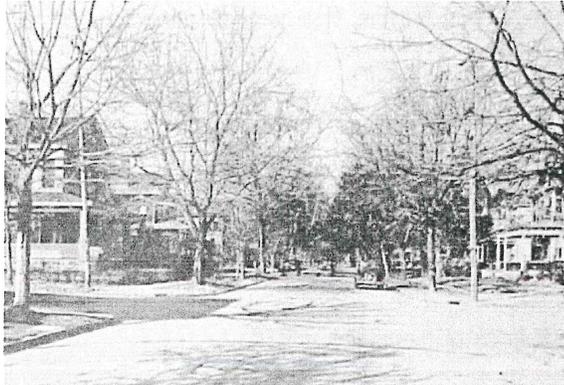


Figure 125 1100 Block of East Henry at Live Oak Street, 1933<sup>394</sup>

The architectural landscape of the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood differs drastically as you move north to south, and west to east. Looking at the neighborhood in segments as they were developed there is a clear distinction between the small, modest working class homes on the northwest boundaries and the grander, Victorian and Neo-Classical homes in the southwest areas of Collinsville and the Meadows. The central, eastern of the area filled in during the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century with modest, one-story homes, usually of no specific architectural style.<sup>395</sup>



Figure 126 Bolton Street at Waters Avenue, 1931<sup>396</sup>

---

<sup>394</sup> VM 1360, Box 12, Folder 4, Item 17, GHS.

<sup>395</sup> "Eastside," National Register Nomination, MPC files, 7, 9.

<sup>396</sup> VM 1360, Box 13, Folder 14, Item 13, GHS.

## *Vernacular Architecture*

When used in architectural terms, the word vernacular refers to the architecture of the people or the common man. Vernacular architecture can include structures with no architectural style at all or those that are based on set styles or a unique combination of architectural styles. Many of the small cottages and rowhouses that were in the northern sections of the neighborhood fall into this category. Unfortunately, many were lost due to public housing projects, road changes, construction of schools and neglect.

A large majority of the homes in this section were one-story frame dwellings with gabled or hipped roofs. Almost all of the homes had front porches, as do many of the homes remaining today.

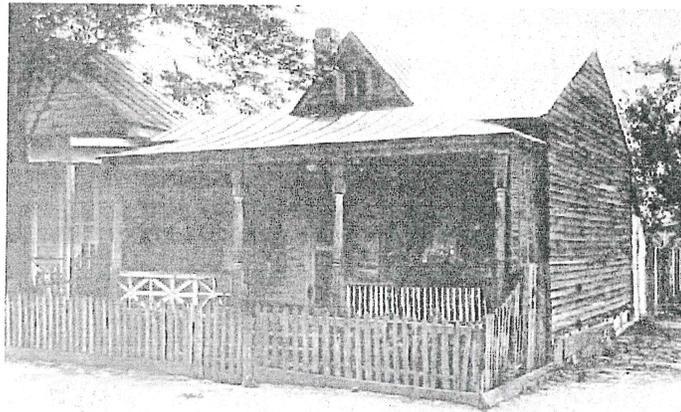


Figure 127 1201 East Bolton Street, 1934<sup>397</sup>

---

<sup>397</sup> VM 1360, Box 9, Folder 15, Item 06, GHS.



Figure 128 One-story Cottage, 708 Ott Street, 2003<sup>398</sup>

At one-time there were clusters of two-story rowhouses in the vicinity of Wheaton Street. Though they are gone now, they were probably similar to this one still standing on Ott Street.



Figure 129 Rowhouses, 814-816 Ott Street, 2003<sup>399</sup>

---

<sup>398</sup> Photograph by Andy Young, 2003, DCA.

<sup>399</sup> Photograph by Andy Young, 2003, DCA.

### *Queen Anne & Italianate*

The majority of the structures in Collinsville and the Meadows were constructed between 1891 and 1940, and many of the buildings were built by the Standard Investment Company, the People's Investment Company (Jacob S. Collins), and the Spaulding Construction Company.<sup>400</sup>

There are some examples of the Queen Anne style, for instance 1004 East Park Avenue, which was built around 1895, with onion domes, projecting bays, and stained glass. 1108 and 1110 East Henry Street are good examples of elaborate porches. "905 East Henry Street, c. 1908 illustrates the transition from the decorative Victorian spindle work to the incorporation of neoclassical detailing in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century."<sup>401</sup>

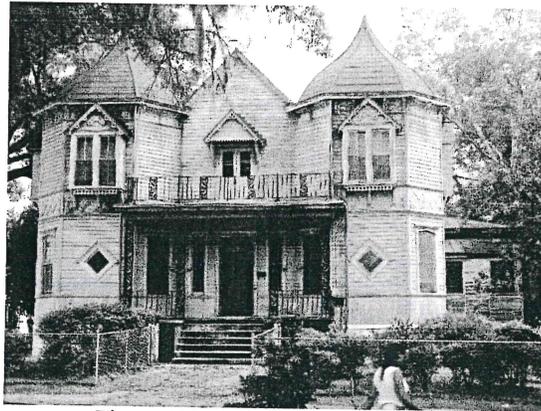


Figure 130 1004 East Park Avenue<sup>402</sup>

---

<sup>400</sup> "Eastside," National Register Nomination, MPC files, 10.

<sup>401</sup> "Eastside," National Register Nomination, MPC files, 5.

<sup>402</sup> Photograph by Andy Young, 2003, DCA.

## Colonial & Neoclassical Revival



Figure 131 901-905 East Waldburg Street, 1937<sup>403</sup>

Colonial and Neoclassical Revival are popular architectural styles in Collinsville, while Craftsman and Prairie are popular in the Meadows, which dates a little later than Collinsville.<sup>404</sup>

Many of the Colonial Revival structures were built on a four square plan, with low pitched roof, central dormer, and full front porch. "Columned temple form porches decorate the Neoclassical Revival style structures and can be found on residences, apartment buildings and even filling stations. Good examples are the Hamilton Apartment building ca. 1913 and 1018 East Anderson Street and the filling station at 1102 East Henry Street."<sup>405</sup>



Figure 132 1002 East Henry Street, 2003<sup>406</sup>

<sup>403</sup> VM 1360, Box 13, Folder 10, Item 08, GHS.

<sup>404</sup> "Eastside," National Register Nomination, MPC files, 5.

<sup>405</sup> "Eastside," National Register Nomination, MPC files, 6.

<sup>406</sup> Photograph by Andy Young, 2003, DCA.

## Craftsman Bungalow

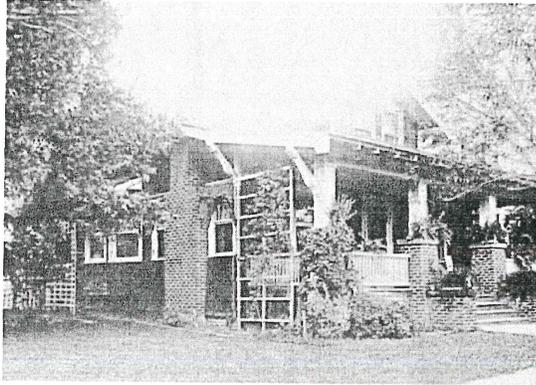


Figure 133 1124 East Duffy Street, 1932<sup>407</sup>

This Craftsman Bungalow is a good example of the style, whose characteristics included wide, bracketed eaves, prominent porch supports, and the use of stone, shingles, and other natural materials.

---

<sup>407</sup> VM 1360, Box 11, Folder 14, Item 11, GHS.

The neighborhood is scattered with many multi-family units, most with two front entrances, one to a downstairs unit, and one to an upstairs unit. As years went by, many of the larger homes, originally one-family, were subdivided into multiple apartments.



Figure 134 1133 East Henry Street, 1933<sup>408</sup>

*Back when we lived on Duffy Street and these were my pre-teen and teen years, the way conditions were: We lived in an upstairs apartment with two bedrooms, very small. Our heat, our only heat was a coal stove. The coal was downstairs and you had to go downstairs and bring the coal up. You'd go to sleep at night and the house would be a little warm . . . in the morning, you'd wake up . . . we'd be so cold, we'd wrap blankets around us . . . we'd all stand there and shiver. I do remember our refrigerator was an icebox. It wasn't a refrigerator, it was an icebox. You'd have to put a slab of ice up in the top of it and that's how it was kept cold. You kept the windows open. Outside of our house we had pecan trees which you don't see today. When the pecans were ready and fell off the tree we could go up there and eat pecans.<sup>409</sup>*

---

<sup>408</sup> VM 1360, Box 12, Folder 4, Item 16, GHS.

<sup>409</sup> Lewis Kooden, JAOH #91, SJA.



## Chapter 4

### DESEGREGATION

#### *Savannah's Civil Rights Movement*

The City of Savannah has a history of “relative racial liberality” credited primarily to its position as an Atlantic seaport, with a steady stream of nationalities and people coming in. As a result, the greater community was less closed-minded than many southern towns and the Civil Rights movement here is remembered as one of the most successful.<sup>410</sup>

Savannah’s Civil Rights movement began in 1942 with the reorganization of the Savannah Branch National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)<sup>411</sup> by Dr. Ralph Mark Gilbert, former pastor of Savannah's First African Baptist Church. Gilbert, served as branch president for eight years before being replaced by W. W. Law, and is credited with organizing the first state NAACP conference.<sup>412</sup>

The first major win for the state and local Civil Rights movement came with the 1946 Primus King case. King was an African American, Baptist preacher and barber, from Columbus, Georgia. With the support of Dr. B. T. Brewer, of Columbus, and Gilbert, King effectively sued the Muscogee County registrar for denying him the right to vote in the 1944 Democratic primary. On appeal, King and African Americans throughout the state won when the Federal court forced the state to end all-white primaries.

---

<sup>410</sup> Stephen G. N. Tuck, *Beyond Atlanta: The Struggle for Racial Equality in Georgia, 1940-1980*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 45, 127.

<sup>411</sup> The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, founded in 1909, has grown into the oldest, largest, and most effective civil rights organization in the world.

<sup>412</sup> “You Have Not Experienced the South Until You Visit Georgia’s Best New History Museum,” (brochure), RMG.

Locally, Gilbert helped secure the first African American police force in Savannah and the State of Georgia. The "First Nine," as the original black officers are now referred, were hired and sworn in to the Savannah Police Department in 1947.<sup>413</sup>

The nine officers, eight of whom were veterans of World War II, included: John A. White, Sr. (life-time resident of the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood), Leroy Wilson, William N. Malone, Frank B. Mullino, Howard J. Davis, Milton Hall, James Neally, Alexander Grant, and Stepney Houston.<sup>414</sup>

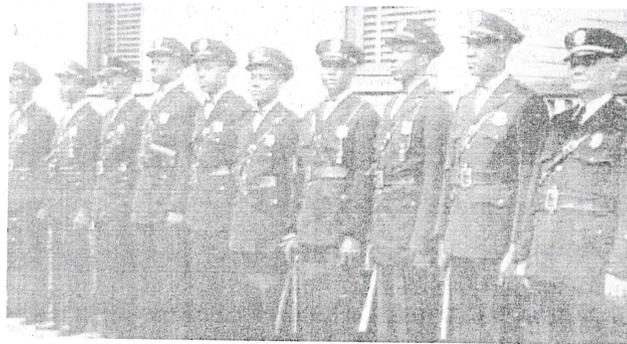


Figure 135 Savannah's "First Nine" African American Police Officers<sup>415</sup>

When Gilbert passed away in 1956, he left behind a strong foundation for Savannah's movement. W. W. Law picked up where Gilbert left off and carried the local NAACP branch through the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>416</sup>

In 1960, Savannah was a city segregated along educational, recreational, and economic lines. The city's parks, swimming pools, and playgrounds were predominantly set aside for whites-only.<sup>417</sup>

Racial tensions came to a head in Savannah in the spring of 1960 when African American citizens decided to force the white community to address the problems

---

<sup>413</sup> "You Have Not Experienced the South Until . . ."

<sup>414</sup> Museum exhibits, June 2003, RMG.

<sup>415</sup> Charles J. Elmore, *Black America Series: Savannah, Georgia*, (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2000), 120.

<sup>416</sup> "You Have Not Experienced the South Until . . ."

<sup>417</sup> "Quest for Equality, Chapter One," (SMN n.d.), VF-Black History-Savannah, CELB.

of segregation through carefully planned economic boycotts, sit-ins, and peaceful protests led by the NAACP and its local youth group.

Through a sixteen-month boycott of white businesses (March 1960-June 1961), the main demands included, bus seating, lunch counter segregation, employment discrimination, and courtesy titles for black customers. The titles represented to many the respect for the African American community that was lacking in Savannah at the time. The boycott focused on Broughton Street's large department stores, especially Levy's and Fine's. This boycott would later be called the "most successful boycott in all America," by participant and leader Hosea Williams.<sup>418</sup>

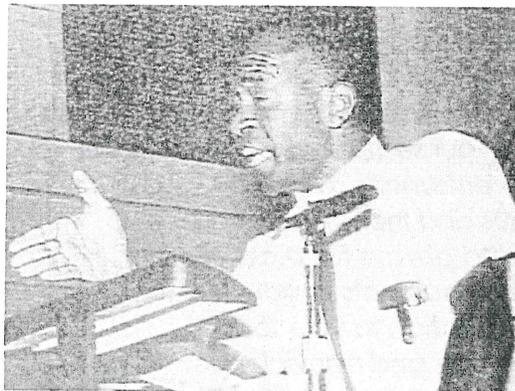


Figure 136 W. W. Law Speaks at St. Philip A.M.E. Church, n.d.<sup>419</sup>

Savannah's two-part boycott forced stores to change their policies regarding African American customers by honoring picket lines and withholding purchases. By the time the white community relinquished to their demands, five small stores had gone bankrupt and several supermarkets had closed.<sup>420</sup>

The boycott was complemented by a series of sit-ins at local lunch counters and restaurants that refused to serve African American patrons. Savannahians were encouraged locally by "a wave of sit-ins led by black college students" across the

---

<sup>418</sup> Museum exhibits, June 2003, RMG.

<sup>419</sup> "Forty Years of Struggle," (SMN 2 Dec 2001 6E), VF-Afro-Americans-Civil Rights, GHS.

<sup>420</sup> Museum exhibits, June 2003, RMG; *Savannah Newspaper Digest*, 1960, 66; *Savannah Newspaper Digest*, 1961, 59, GHS; (ST 2 Apr 1960), 1:1.

south, the first major one occurring in Greensboro, North Carolina on February 1, 1960.<sup>421</sup>

On Wednesday March 16, 1960, the sit-downs in Savannah started with the arrest of three students at Levy's Department Store. The youth had already tried to enter the lunch counters at Silver's Variety Store, Kress', McCrory's, Livingston's Drugstore, Woolworth's, W. T. Grant's, and Walgreen's, only to find the counters closed at each one.<sup>422</sup>

Savannah's youth provided the man-power and enthusiasm for the sit-ins and protesters were carefully instructed on how to peacefully, but effectively, protest:

*Sit-In Rules*

1. *Don't strike back if cursed or abused.*
2. *Don't laugh aloud.*
3. *Don't hold conversations with fellow sit-inners.*
4. *Don't leave your seats until leaders instruct you to.*
5. *Don't block entrances to store or aisles.*
6. *Be courteous and friendly at all times.*
7. *Sit straight and always face counter.*
8. *Report serious incidents to your leader.*
9. *Refer all information to your leader.*
10. *Remember love and nonviolence.*<sup>423</sup>

In order to organize and achieve successful boycotts and sit-ins, the NAACP began hosting mass meetings every Sunday afternoon at 4 o'clock. The first meeting was held on March 20, 1960, four days after the first sit-in, at the Bolton Street Baptist Church with a crowd of almost 3,000 people. The meetings served to inform the community about protest activities and organize upcoming events. Each week the meeting moved to a different church so that a greater percentage of the population would have the opportunity to attend and participate. The Civil Rights movement and the mass meetings served as a unifying force between previously isolated pockets and neighborhoods of African American residents around

---

<sup>421</sup> "Quest for Equality, Chapter One," (SMN n.d.), VF-Black History-Savannah, CELB.

<sup>422</sup> (ST 19 Mar 1960), 1:6.

<sup>423</sup> Museum exhibits, June 2003, RMG; (ST 26 Mar 1960), 1:1-2.

Savannah. For the first time the east side communities were communicating and working with the west side neighborhoods.<sup>424</sup>

*We didn't look at it as a leadership that was being handled from the Eastside or the Westside, it was just a total leadership.*<sup>425</sup>

The sit-ins were complemented by several forms of demonstrations, including wade-ins at Tybee Beach, kneel-ins at area churches, and ride-ins on Savannah Transit Company buses. By 1963, Savannah's city buses, golf courses, parks, libraries, airport and bus cafes, and fire department were desegregated.<sup>426</sup>

To see people [African Americans] working in Woolworth and Kress, being able to go to the lunch counters and sit . . . [Woolworth's] used to have a little downstairs thing . . . and we didn't have to go down there anymore. And the restrooms were opened up. It made you feel good when you had African Americans working in these places.<sup>427</sup>

By the time Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke at Savannah's Municipal Auditorium, on Orleans Square, in January of 1964 he declared Savannah the "most desegregated city south of the Mason-Dixon line."<sup>428</sup>

The city's integration also served as "a training ground for NAACP leadership, out of which came Hosea Williams, James Brown, Jr., Mercedes Arnold, Carolyn Quilloin Coleman, and Earl T. Shinholster." These young leaders would spread out over the

---

<sup>424</sup> Museum exhibits, June 2003, RMG.

<sup>425</sup> Edna Branch Jackson, BVC OH #25.

<sup>426</sup> *Savannah Newspaper Digest*, 1960, 51; *Savannah Newspaper Digest*, 1961, 77; *Savannah Newspaper Digest*, 1965, 78, GHS; Tuck, 128.

<sup>427</sup> Edna Branch Jackson, BVC OH #25.

<sup>428</sup> Museum exhibits, June 2003, RMG; Tuck, 45, 127.

south, helping other communities reach the goals of full integration and desegregation.<sup>429</sup>

*Youth were regularly placed in positions of responsibility and often led mass meetings. This early responsibility was a major reason why the Savannah branch [NAACP] produced such an extraordinary crop of young leaders in the early 1960s.*<sup>430</sup>

*Benjamin Van Clark (1943-1989)*

*Clark is an unsung hero, . . . he was the most influential teen-age Civil Rights leader in Savannah during the 1960s era of sit-ins, swim-ins, marches and demonstrations.*<sup>431</sup>

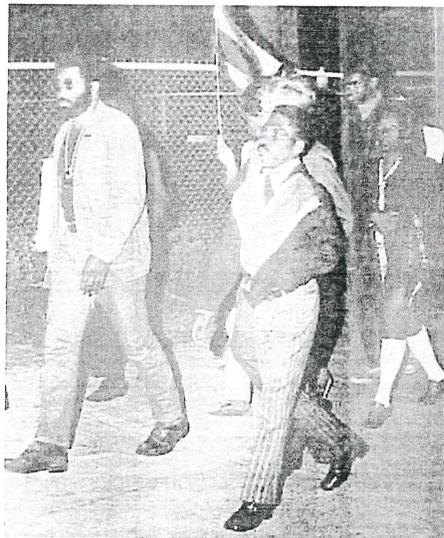


Figure 137 Benjamin Van Clark Leads a March, 1970<sup>432</sup>

One of the most active of all youth leaders in Savannah was Benjamin Van Clark for whom the subject neighborhood is now named. Clark originally active in the NAACP Youth group worked closely with Hosea Williams, chairman and leader of

---

<sup>429</sup> "You Have Not Experienced the South Until . . ."

<sup>430</sup> Tuck, 134.

<sup>431</sup> Debra Ellington, "Abernathy to Speak at Ben Clark Rally," (SMN 18 Dec 1982), BF-Clark, GHS.

<sup>432</sup> Photo by Don Hardigree, "Black is Beautiful," (SMN 24 Feb 2002 4E), VF-Afro-Americans-Civil Rights, GHS.

the Chatham County Crusade of Voters (CCCV), who prepared students and youth for non-violent protests.<sup>433</sup>

The CCCV was originally an arm of the NAACP aimed at increasing voter registration in the African American community. Williams and the CCCV split off in 1963 after disagreeing with W. W. Law and the local branch regarding protest methods. The NAACP did not approve of the night marches Williams was organizing. Clark stayed with Williams and continued to work with the CCCV. Hosea and his forces would leave Savannah after the success of the boycott and sit-ins, to join Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Southern Christian Leadership Conference as field directors in cities around the south.<sup>434</sup>

Ben is remembered as Hosea's right-hand man "who recruited the student leaders from the various high schools. Together, they routinely galvanized hundreds of students to invade the downtown lunch counters and other establishments."<sup>435</sup>

Clark first became well-known in the movement in 1961 when at seventeen years of age he led Sol. Johnson High School students in a six day boycott protesting the firing of the school's principal. Alflorene Cheatham, principal of Johnson High School, started an ROTC unit after the school board refused to. The board fired him for defiance. About 2,500 students from Johnson, Thompkins and Beach High Schools boycotted school for five days. Cheatham was not re-hired, and the 1,400 Johnson students were punished with two days added to the end of the school year; the Beach and Thompkins students had to stay after school an extra hour for five days. All the students were on probation for the 1961-62 school-year. Clark's involvement in the boycott led to a transfer to Beach High School. He was then

---

<sup>433</sup> Mark Kreuzwieser, "Former Civil Rights Leader Benjamin Clark Dies in Savannah," (SMN 23 Dec 1989), 1C, BF-Clark, GHS.

<sup>434</sup> Museum exhibits, June 2003, RMG.

<sup>435</sup> Deric A. Gillard, *Living in the Shadows of a Legend: Unsung Heroes and Sheroes Who Marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, (Decatur: Gillard Communications, 2002), 79.

involved in a wave-in at Tybee Beach where sixteen kids were arrested for trespassing, including Clark.<sup>436</sup>

Clark, who served as chairman of the Youth Crusade of Voters, continually popped up in the movement's protests. Following a peaceful rally in Johnson Square, Clark was arrested after refusing to leave the nearby Morrison's Cafeteria. This wasn't Clark's first arrest or last, he had also been brought in after a sit-in at Anton's Restaurant on West Broughton Street.<sup>437</sup>

*The other weapon I had a good young boy down there, young boy, Ben Clark, which was my right arm, and I had a lotta young people who would really think. . . . Ben would march the kids downtown every day. . . . He had a voice like a lion. Really, that voice could damn near shatter glasses, and bein' his size, he always tried to act and show up as a big man. Ben was very popular, very popular. . . . The kids was carryin' me faster than I could think and go. To me, this was really revolution. They was taking over Savannah then.*

*-Hosea Williams<sup>438</sup>*

Clark graduated in 1960 from Alfred E. Beach High School, he then attended Savannah State College (now University) for three years, studying Social Science. From 1965 until 1967 he worked as a field organizer for Hosea Williams and left Savannah in 1967 to move to Atlanta to work for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, once again as a field organizer, serving on "the front lines of the battle for equal rights for black people" all over the south.<sup>439</sup>

---

<sup>436</sup> Debra Ellington, "Unsung Hero' Clark is Facing Hard Times," (SMN 14 Nov 1982), BF-Clark, GHS; Museum exhibits, June 2003, RMG; *Savannah Newspaper Digest*, 1961, 77, GHS; "People Who Made a Difference," (SMN, n.d.), VF-Black History-Savannah, CELB.

<sup>437</sup> Museum exhibits, June 2003, RMG.

<sup>438</sup> Howell Raines, *My Soul is Rested: The Story of the Civil Rights Movement in the Deep South*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 435-445.

<sup>439</sup> Application-Benjamin Van Clark (2 Nov 1978), Personnel File-Clark, SPD; Mark Kreuzwieser, "Former Civil Rights Leader Benjamin Clark Dies in Savannah," (SMN 23 Dec 1989), 1C, BF-Clark, GHS.

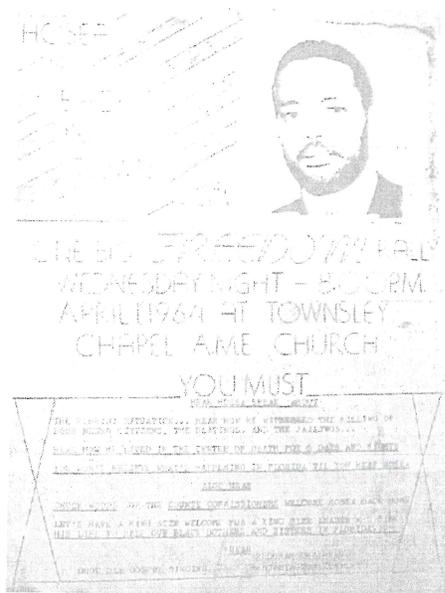


Figure 138 Meeting Flyer, 1964<sup>440</sup>

Clark was quoted in 1980 regarding his experiences and interest in the Civil Rights movement:

*It was more of an educational thing than a demonstration out of anger. Malice and hate did not play a constructive role in solving problems.<sup>441</sup>*

After leaving active participation in the national movement, Clark worked for the City of Savannah's Department of Parks and Recreation. In 1982, Savannah's City Council voted to rename Live Oak Park in his honor of his work in the Civil Rights movement (see Chapter 3 for more information on the park). He died in Savannah in 1989, at the young age of forty-six.<sup>442</sup>

*He was a little guy, but very tall. He was a little giant. Most people on the east and west side would remember him.*

*-Joe Murray Rivers<sup>443</sup>*

<sup>440</sup> VF-Afro-Americans-Civil Rights, GHS.

<sup>441</sup> Mark Kreuzwieser, "Former Civil Rights Leader Benjamin Clark Dies in Savannah," (SMN 23 Dec 1989), 1C, BF-Clark, GHS.

<sup>442</sup> "Former Civil Rights Leader Benjamin Clark Dies . . ."

<sup>443</sup> Jane Fishman, "Park Name is Reminder of Civil Rights Leader," (SMN 28 Jun 1994, 1B), BF-Clark, GHS.

## LOCAL LEADERS & NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVEMENT

Though the community now bears his name, Benjamin Van Clark never actually lived within the bounds of the current neighborhood, but rather in the 500 block of East Liberty Street, further west. However, there were leaders who came directly from this community.

*Everybody talks about King, but there were so many local heroes in our community that did so many things. And Savannah's Civil Rights movement was unique in as much as you didn't have outsiders that came in to do the actual demonstrations, and what have you. It was all done by the residents of the City of Savannah. And that's unique.<sup>444</sup>*

*Otis Johnson*

In 1963, Otis Samuel Johnson, who grew up in the area now Blackshear Homes, became the first African American student enrolled at Savannah's all-white Armstrong Junior College, then located in the old Armstrong Mansion at Bull and Gaston streets. When Johnson made the Dean's List at Armstrong, it made the papers, as did his 1964 graduation. Johnson went on to earn a bachelor's degree at the University of Georgia, a master's degree at Atlanta University, and a PhD from Brandeis University, before becoming a professor and dean at Savannah State University. In January 2004, he was inaugurated as Savannah's second African American mayor.<sup>445</sup>

---

<sup>444</sup> Edna Branch Jackson, BVC OH #25.

<sup>445</sup> Museum exhibits, June 2003, RMG; *Savannah Newspaper Digest*, 1963, 86; *Savannah Newspaper Digest*, 1964, 110, GHS.

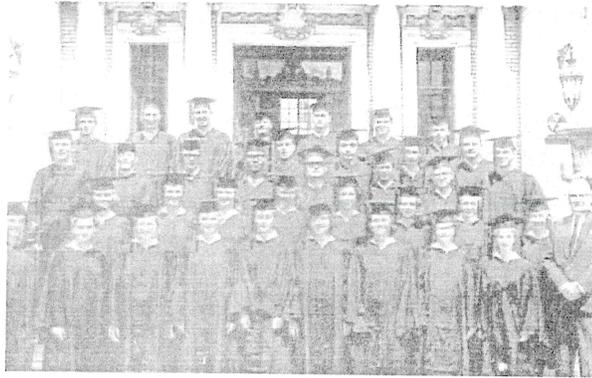


Figure 139 Otis Johnson, Armstrong Junior College Graduation, 1964<sup>446</sup>

Johnson was just one of numerous students who worked with the NAACP Youth Council. He would later describe Savannah's movement:<sup>447</sup>

*It was a time we had more unity in this community before and ever since.*<sup>448</sup>

Several neighborhood residents and/or their children marched in the movement:

*Wherever there was a march, I would go there.*<sup>449</sup>

Adolphus Allen participated in the movement helping with the Crusade for Voters, and sitting-in at Livingston Drugstore and Kress Department Store.<sup>450</sup>

#### *Local Mass Meetings*

During the Civil Rights movement, the gymnasium of St. Pius X High School on the corner of Anderson and Atlantic streets was used as a meeting point for area residents to organize and plan protests against unfair segregation laws and practices.

---

<sup>446</sup> Elmore, *Black America Series: Savannah, Georgia*, 122.

<sup>447</sup> Elmore, *Black America Series: Savannah, Georgia*, 122.

<sup>448</sup> Lee R. Haven, "Savannah Activists Recall the '60s: Sit-ins, Broughton Street Boycotts," (SNP, 22 Feb 1993), 3, VF-Black History-Savannah, CELB.

<sup>449</sup> Nancy Johnson, BVC OH #20; Marie Green, BVC OH #18.

<sup>450</sup> Adolphus Allen, BVC OH #21.

In May of 1960, the *Savannah Tribune's* headlines read:



Figure 140 Headline Savannah Tribune, 7 May 1960<sup>451</sup>

Over 2,500 spectators packed the auditorium and the program included the St. Pius X Glee Club singing "Christ the King."<sup>452</sup>

*In order to involve more people in the community, the meetings moved from church to church, and St. Pius was one of the locations. And these were huge gatherings of mass meetings. During that time we needed the support of the people and they needed to know what we were doing and what the NAACP was doing, and what progress was being made.*<sup>453</sup>

For the most part, the Catholic community was supportive of the African Americans' attempts to integrate Savannah. However, some white congregants disapproved of using church facilities for such activities. In June of 1963, one local member of the Diocese of Savannah wrote Bishop Thomas J. McDonough protesting the use of Catholic institutional facilities as meeting places for "militant Negro protest groups." The man went on to say that he thought integration could come only with mutual racial respect and the Catholic Church should not ally themselves with "militant" parties. Bishop McDonough's reply stated that he granted the use of St. Pius X's gymnasium "solely in interest of preventing any outburst of violence."<sup>454</sup>

---

<sup>451</sup> (ST 7 May 1960 1).

<sup>452</sup> "7th NAACP Mass Meeting Held Sunday in St. Pius X Catholic Gym," (ST 7 May 1960 1:3).

<sup>453</sup> Edna Branch Jackson, BVC OH #25.

<sup>454</sup> Correspondence, 1963, Box 1 (of 1), St. Pius X High School, Schools Group, CDA.

## IMPACT OF DESEGREGATION

### *Impact on Schools*

After the 1946 Primus King case, the next major legal victory in the movement did not come until 1963 when the Savannah Branch NAACP finally won *Stell v. Savannah-Chatham County Board of Education*. On January 18, 1962, thirty-six Savannah African-Americans had filed suit to force the integration of the Savannah-Chatham County school system. This victory led to the integration of Savannah's high schools, with the enrollment of nineteen African American seniors at previously white Savannah High School and Groves High School for the fall 1963 semester.<sup>455</sup>

However, it would take nearly ten years for the educational integration process to be completed in the county, mainly due to the slow integration plan adopted by the board of only one grade per year and the reluctance of many in the white community. School segregation in Savannah finally ended in 1972 when a court decision forced full integration. Romana Riley and Frank W. Spencer Schools were fully integrated at this time in theory. However, Spencer remained primarily an African American elementary school due to the high concentration of African Americans in the community surrounding it at that time.<sup>456</sup>

*When all the desegregation of the schools came about they closed a lot of the predominantly black schools and they integrated some of the other ones. . . . Spencer was the most segregated school, only a few whites students were enrolled there, but then Romana Riley became one of the desegregated schools.<sup>457</sup>*

The private parochial schools led by the Catholic Diocese of Savannah voluntarily began integration long before the public schools. In February 1961, the *Savannah Morning News* announced that Bishop T. J. McDonough was preparing to integrate

---

<sup>455</sup> "Quest for Equality, Chapter One," (SMN n.d.), VF-Black History-Savannah, CELB; Museum exhibits, June 2003, RMG; *Savannah Newspaper Digest*, 1961, 68, GHS.

<sup>456</sup> Museum exhibits, June 2003, RMG.

<sup>457</sup> Edna Branch Jackson, BVC OH #25.

the Roman Catholic parochial schools. The integration of the schools would eventually lead to the phasing out of St. Pius X High School as discussed earlier.<sup>458</sup>

Frank W. Spencer, for whom Spencer School was named for, was the first white Savannahian to become a life member of the Savannah branch NAACP. His efforts in the local school board to achieve equal education for all children, and equal pay and benefits for all teachers, was reflected in his own business actions, he insisted on equal pay for equal work for all of his employees at the Atlantic Towing Company and Savannah River Tugboats.<sup>459</sup>

### *Impact on Students*

Integration was a difficult process for many of the students, especially the older they were. A special program called the Emergency School Assistance Program was established to help students with the transition into an integrated environment. Edna Branch Jackson, one of the most active local youth leaders in the Civil Rights movement, later helped students during integration as a counselor:

*The transition into the elementary schools was much easier, of course, than into the high schools and middle schools. . . . But in the high schools of course you are going to have the resistance to change. . . . You had to find the students that were willing to make that transition and go into the predominantly white schools.*<sup>460</sup>

One life-time resident of the neighborhood, Ronald Battle, was just one of the many local high school students who had to switch schools because of integration. He recalls the last year of his high school education as a very difficult period, one in which he went from a happy, safe environment, of an all-black school, to a lonely life as one of only a few African Americans in a previously all-white school.<sup>461</sup>

---

<sup>458</sup> *Savannah Newspaper Digest*, 1961, 59, GHS.

<sup>459</sup> Museum exhibits, June 2003, RMG.

<sup>460</sup> Edna Branch Jackson, BVC OH #25.

<sup>461</sup> Ronald Battle, BVC OH #23.

While a large majority of parents wanted their kids to receive all of the advantages of their white counterparts, some were still hesitant to remove them from the segregated system.

*There was some concern, because a lot of parents felt that their kids would do better in an all-black school, in which I disagree. I believe that all kids, if they're going to get along in the world, that they should start out at a young age.<sup>462</sup>*

---

<sup>462</sup> Adolphus Allen, BVC OH #21.

### *Impact on the Community & Resulting Demographics*

The Civil Rights movement in Savannah was preceded by a gradual shift in the white population from the downtown area to the suburbs. Those that first moved into areas like Collinsville and the Meadows when they became accessible by streetcar, now had the means and automobiles to move even further south of the downtown into newer residential communities. Following World War I, residents began moving closer to the islands, into communities like Gordonston, and into the neighborhoods of Chatham Crescent, including Baldwin Park and Ardsley Park.

*Housing conditions [in Savannah before the Civil Rights movement] also reflected a massive racial divide. Only one-half of the housing units in the black community were classified as sound, and nearly one in five were dilapidated.<sup>463</sup>*

The full impact of the Civil Rights movement on the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood is unclear. However, the success of the Civil Rights movement coincided with a mass movement of the upper class white residents from the downtown suburbs towards the south side and island suburbs, creating a segregated community that for the most part had been a very integrated area.

*It [the African American residential area] seemed to stop more at Gwinnett and then it turned into more of a white neighborhood going towards Henry. . . . That must have taken over twenty years to change, across Gwinnett, from Gwinnett to Henry has turned into a black neighborhood. My husband and I were gone from '53 to '64, so I didn't have a chance to really observe it until the sixties. It started to become all black in that area. . . . People were moving south when probably the white residents were more affluent they would move to a more southerly neighborhood.<sup>464</sup>*

There seems to be no clear consensus on whether African Americans moved in as whites moved out, or whether whites moved out because African Americans were moving in.

---

<sup>463</sup> Tuck, 129.

<sup>464</sup> Suzanne Kantziper, BVC OH #17.

When many of the current African American residents moved into their homes in the 1960s and 1970s, the area was still predominantly white. Many were the first African American on their block. While some noticed an immediate shift in the population, with whites starting to move out as soon as they moved in, several said it was more gradual.<sup>465</sup>

Some families felt very welcomed by their white neighbors. One resident of the 1300 block of East Park Avenue moved into her home in the late 1960s and felt very comfortable living amongst white families, "they were very nice people." The white families moved out slowly on her block over the next decade until the last white resident moved out when his health failed him:

*He said that he wouldn't have moved because he was satisfied with his neighbors. The neighbors would help him. And the man across the street, a black fellow, had a regular job of keeping his yard up. 'Cause he liked a nice, neat yard.<sup>466</sup>*

Whatever caused the shift in population, be it because African Americans began to move into previously all-white sections and whites fled or that many white families simply wanted to move to a new area, the shift in population brought with it a lower economic base combined with a shift in the businesses and services that had once supported the neighborhood. What was left behind was a community neglected socially, economically, and politically.

*A lot of the people moved away, because of the buildings, they were run down.<sup>467</sup>*

The shift in population began an uncontrollable spiral down where more and more formerly owner-occupied properties became rentals, and as more renters came in

---

<sup>465</sup> Nancy Johnson, BVC OH #20.

<sup>466</sup> Bernice Grimes, BVC OH #22.

<sup>467</sup> Gladys Turner, BVC OH #19.

and properties around them declined, more owner occupants moved away. By the late 1980s what was left behind was the elderly who did not want to leave and those who couldn't afford to leave.

*The ones that didn't move out, they were old. So they, you know died in the area. And the ones that didn't die, they moved different places.<sup>468</sup>*

---

<sup>468</sup> Nancy Johnson, BVC OH #20.

## Chapter 5

### REVITALIZATION

The effects of white flight and the full segregation of the neighborhood led to a community riddled with crime, low rental units, and once grand homes split up into multiple family dwellings.<sup>469</sup>

Sometimes tears come down our eyes when we see how bad it [Georgia Market building] looks. But the whole neighborhood has changed, and they built projects where people lived in private homes. Its changed so much, they even changed the street itself. The street used to go straight all the way from where the store is to Wheaton, and now the street is curved. . . . It's just changed the whole configuration of the end of that block [Harmon Street at Wheaton Street].<sup>470</sup>



Figure 140 1021 East Bolton Street, 2003<sup>471</sup>

---

<sup>469</sup> "National Endowment for the Humanities Grant," 10 (DCA).

<sup>470</sup> Suzanne Kantziper, BVC OH #17.

<sup>471</sup> Photograph by Andy Young, 2003, DCA.



Figure 141 1012-1012 1/2 East Park Avenue, 2003<sup>472</sup>

During the 1990s, a change began to occur in the neighborhood and a slow rebirth began in part due to new programs of the city targeted at low-income areas in downtown Savannah and the immediate suburbs and in part due to the persistence and pride of the residents of the community. A unique combination of efforts would help to bring the area out of a slump and promises continued growth and revival.

---

<sup>472</sup> Photograph by Andy Young, 2003, DCA.

## HOPE VI/HAS EFFORTS

*When we came back to Savannah in the '60s, it [Garden Homes] had gone down a lot. It was not the same place anymore. . . . It was run down . . . it was a project the whole time, but you didn't feel that way [before].<sup>473</sup>*



Figure 142 Garden Homes, n.d.<sup>474</sup>

*HOPE VI Program is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to revitalize distressed public housing communities and stimulate re-investment in neighborhoods and communities.<sup>475</sup>*

*The purpose of the HOPE VI program is to promote public-private partnerships and create mixed income communities that blend public, assisted and market-rate housing with home-ownership opportunities.<sup>476</sup>*

---

<sup>473</sup> Suzanne Kantziper, BVC OH #17.

<sup>474</sup> Garden Homes Files, HAS.

<sup>475</sup> "Housing Authority of Savannah Hope VI Revitalization Program Fact Sheet," (n.d.), HAS.

<sup>476</sup> "Housing Authority of Savannah Hope VI Revitalization Program Fact Sheet," (n.d.), HAS.

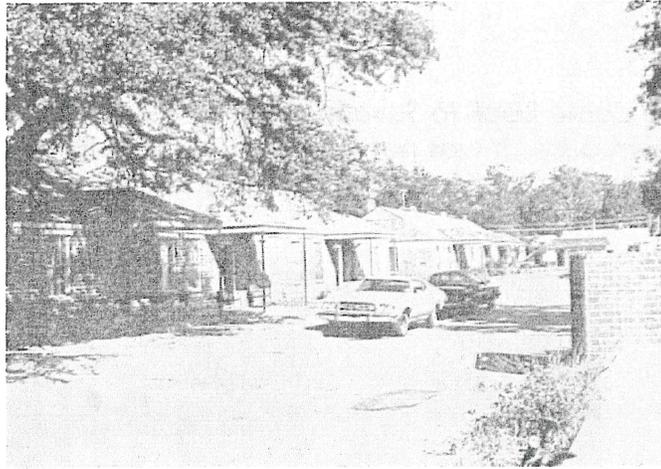


Figure 143 Garden Homes, n.d.<sup>477</sup>

Atlanta was the first city to utilize the HOPE VI program, and has been the most successful with its Centennial Place. Following that, they have since complete ten new housing projects.<sup>478</sup>

In 2000, the Housing Authority of Savannah (HAS) received a grant for \$16.3 million through the HOPE VI program for the Garden Homes housing in the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood. The federal funds will be used “as leverage to generate private financing,” since the total cost of the full project is estimated at \$60 million. Savannah’s application was one of eighteen selected from an initial pool of 74. Grants were awarded by HUD based on the effectiveness of the proposed revitalization plans. Each HOPE VI program is different.<sup>479</sup>

HOPE VI grants have five objectives:

*Demolish severely distressed public housing and replace it with styles that blend into the surrounding community.*

*Reduce concentrations of poverty by encouraging a mix of incomes in revitalized areas.*

---

<sup>477</sup> Garden Homes Files, HAS.

<sup>478</sup> Conversation with Sandy Glicker, HAS.

<sup>479</sup> “Housing Authority of Savannah Hope VI Revitalization Program Fact Sheet,” (n.d.), HAS; “HOPE for Garden Homes,” (n.d.), HAS; “Formerly Known as Garden Homes,” (HOPE VI News, Jun 2001), 1.

*Provide support services, such as education, training, childcare, transportation and counseling to help residents get and keep jobs.*

*Establish and enforce high standards of personal and community responsibility.*

*Forge partnerships between public housing residents, state and local government, the private sector, non-profit groups and the community-at-large.<sup>480</sup>*

In February of 2001, representatives of HUD made a two-day site visit to Savannah to discuss the redevelopment plans. One goal established by HAS is to increase the quality of affordable housing in Savannah and "move away from the stigma of public housing toward a market driven community inclusive of affordable rental and owned housing."<sup>481</sup>

The federally funded HOPE VI program only lasted about ten years, and 2003 was the last year HUD granted funds. There will be no new HOPE VI projects.<sup>482</sup>

One of the unique features of the HOPE VI program is the encouragement of local and private investment. The Federal funds are not meant to pay for the project, but rather to encourage investors and the community to invest in themselves for the betterment of all, not just the potential residents. To this end, the City of Savannah pledged to contribute \$6 million to aid infrastructure funding, homebuyer assistance and rehabilitation funding.

The first phase of the Savannah project, utilizing the Federal funds was demolition of the 315 unit Garden Homes and clearing of the whole site. This has been accomplished.<sup>483</sup>

Construction is underway to construct new homes on the southern end of the property and a 13,000 square foot Neighborhood Resource Center which will serve

---

<sup>2480</sup> "What's It All About, Alfie?" (HOPE VI News, Jun 2001), 1, HAS.

<sup>481</sup> "Formerly Known as Garden Homes," (HOPE VI News, Jun 2001), 1, HAS.

<sup>482</sup> Conversation with Sandy Glicken, HAS.

<sup>483</sup> "Housing Authority of Savannah Hope VI Revitalization Program Fact Sheet," (n.d.), HAS.

as a community foundation with job training through Savannah Tech, childcare, Head Start, meals-on-wheels and computer classes.<sup>484</sup>

The new mixed-use housing will be built around central green spaces fashioned after the city's downtown system of wards and squares. It is expected that the green space and improved layout of streets and squares, compared to Garden Homes' isolated position, will improve the quality of life for residents and encourage pride in the community.<sup>485</sup>

It is believed that the improvement over the old Garden Homes will immediately be a catalyst for revitalization in the surrounding neighborhood. Parts of the project are geared specifically at Benjamin Van Clark residents in the hope that this new development will become an integrated part of the neighborhood and the two will be able to work together and grow together.<sup>486</sup>

Phase two of the project includes continued construction of homes at the north end of the property and a new 15,000 square foot retail center, with hopes for a grocery store to relocate to the neighborhood. Phases three and four will include off-site construction, including in-fill housing on vacant lots and renovation of existing structures in the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood. Phases one, three and four are already running simultaneously, and phase two will begun as soon as phase one is complete.<sup>487</sup>

*This will not be a traditional public housing community. The Housing Authority will not be involved in the management or maintenance of the neighborhood.*<sup>488</sup>

---

<sup>484</sup> "Formerly Known as Garden Homes," (HOPE VI News, Jun 2001), 1, HAS; "HOPE for Garden Homes," (n.d.), HAS; Conversation with Sandy Glicker, HAS.

<sup>485</sup> "Behind the Scenes," (HOPE VI News, Jun 2001), 2, HAS.

<sup>486</sup> "HOPE for Garden Homes," (n.d.), HAS.

<sup>487</sup> "The Work Plan," (HOPE VI News, Jun 2001), 2, HAS; "HOPE for Garden Homes," (n.d.), HAS.

<sup>488</sup> "Tough Criteria for Real Life," (HOPE VI News, Apr 2003), 1, HAS.

Integral Properties, LLC of Atlanta, who has participated in several of Atlanta's HOPE VI projects, will be responsible for building the new units, 168 duplexes and townhouses, and 30 to 40 single-family homes. HAS will screen public housing families to live in several of the rental units and single-family homes, placed along side families of all income levels.<sup>489</sup>

In December 2002, HAS and Integral Properties held public design meetings so that area residents could see floor plans and elevation drawings. At least 40% of each building will be brick; each residence will have two off-street parking spaces. Amenities include two parks, a gazebo, playgrounds, and a swimming pool. The design of the new housing will serve to reconnect the area with the surrounding community by widening the streets to match up with those in Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood.<sup>490</sup>

HAS also plans to demolish adjacent Marcus Stubbs Tower, a 210 unit building for the elderly and disabled, and build a two or three-story, 100 unit Senior Citizen Home. HAS is currently accepting no new residents in Stubbs, and are only at about 50% capacity, with hopes to have everyone relocated within the next two years.<sup>491</sup>

The HOPE VI Resident Revitalization Association was formed in April of 2001 to help former Garden Homes residents keep up with the developments of the new housing. 158 families were relocated from the old Garden Homes. Some were transferred to other public housing, and a small group issued Section 8 vouchers<sup>492</sup>

---

<sup>489</sup> "Project's Complexity Slows Progress," (HOPE VI News, Jun 2003), 1 HAS.

<sup>490</sup> "I Can See Clearly Now," (HOPE VI News, Dec 2002), 1, HAS.

<sup>491</sup> Conversation with Sandy Glicken, HAS.

<sup>492</sup> "The Revitalization Association," (HOPE VI News, Jun 2001), 1, HAS; "Our Clients," (HOPE VI News, Jun 2001), 2, HAS.

Integral Properties, the developer, will also maintain the property and new residents or returning Garden Homes residents will have to meet certain criteria and maintain certain standards to be allowed to live in the new units.<sup>493</sup>

Re-occupancy requirements set up by Integral and the Resident Advisory Council include:

Standard HOPE VI Screening:

1. *Completion of Individual Service Plan (personal and family goals).*
2. *Verification of Income*
3. *Criminal History Check for all residents over age 15, no crimes committed in the last five years.*
4. *Credit History Review for the past three years. Must receive a Beacon Score of 400.*
5. *Rental History-Contact landlords for the past three years.*
6. *Utility Payment History*
7. *Home Inspection*
8. *Review of Debts with the HAS*

HOPE VI Preferences on the General Waiting List:

1. *Completion of ISP*
2. *Working at least 20 hours per week or in qualified job training program.*
3. *Verification of disability and inability to work.*

Continued Leasing Conditions:

1. *Must be employed at least six months out of a twelve month period.*
2. *Being out of work for more than 90 days and not participating in a qualified training program is grounds for eviction.<sup>494</sup>*

In an effort to let the community and residents have a voice in the housing project, the involved agencies held several public meetings to inform area residents and allow them a chance to voice their opinions. The meetings resulted in an increased

---

<sup>493</sup> "Tough Criteria for Real Life," (HOPE VI News, Apr 2003), 1, HAS.

<sup>494</sup> "Don't Panic, Get Busy: Return Criteria Announced," (HOPE VI News, Apr 2003), 1, HAS.

desire to "protect the history and the residential character of the . . . neighborhood."<sup>495</sup>

In 2002, HAS began a five-year (2002-2006) study of the effects of the Hope VI program on the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood. Residents of the neighborhood administered the survey, and the Armstrong Atlantic State University Public Service Center assessed the data for the Housing Authority. The first assessment of the 2002 survey was completed in January 2003, and looks at three key questions: the impact of the HOPE VI program on relocated residents; the impact on small area economy; and the impact on the surrounding community.<sup>496</sup>

Part of the survey resulted in the compilation of "Results of the Benjamin Van Clark Park Neighborhood Survey of Resident Satisfaction," taken from 182 random responses of neighborhood residents. Of those surveyed and/or interviewed, 64.8% have a negative view of the old Garden Homes and 72.1% were in favor of its demolition. Since its razing, over 64% feel safer in their community. On the other hand, few were familiar with what the HOPE VI project entailed (only 43.6%), and the majority had not noticed a marked improvement in the area economy, availability of goods and services, or increase in jobs, job training, and education. A little over half of the residents spoken with were satisfied with the quality of life and thought that the neighborhood was changing for the better.<sup>497</sup>

---

<sup>495</sup> "National Endowment for the Humanities Grant," 10, DCA.

<sup>496</sup> "Annual Summary Report of Evaluation Measures for the Housing Authority of Savannah Garden Homes Hope VI Redevelopment Program," (Savannah: AASU Public Service Center, 2003), HAS.

<sup>497</sup> Ned Rinalducci and K. Lee Williams, "Results of the Benjamin Van Clark Park Neighborhood Survey of Resident Satisfaction," (Savannah: AASU, 2003), Hope VI Files, HAS.

There are a lot of mixed emotions among current Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood residents regarding the new housing development. Most were definitely glad to see Garden Homes go, but seem to wish nothing else was coming in its place. However, the proposed plan met with those residents who were familiar with the project, though many still seem to feel uninformed.

*I was against public housing when you set aside a group of people with everything designated alike. But I think I've met some very good people that live in housing. Some very good students that went through college and high school that lived in housing. But, people have a habit of identifying you with where you live, where you work, what car you drive. . . . So I am still for the idea of HOPE. There will be home ownership and everything will not look alike. You know, I think it's a good idea.<sup>498</sup>*

*I like the concept, and I really believe it can make a big difference. . . . More pride in the home they're living in, and if they would take more pride in their neighborhood, the residents who live there, quite naturally it would make a better place for everyone.<sup>499</sup>*

---

<sup>498</sup> Rosemary McBride Banks, BVC OH #26.

<sup>499</sup> Adolphus Allen, BVC OH #21.

## CITY OF SAVANNAH PROGRAMS

The City of Savannah has several financial assistance programs available to Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood residents to improve their property. Loans and grants have been set up to encourage homeowners to make repairs and improvements that can then filter through the community by encouraging more work and new investment.

The Department of Housing sponsors the Revitalization Area Home Repair Program “intended to help qualified homeowners make major improvements to their homes as part of a neighborhood, block and/or street revitalization initiative. Priority will be given. . . to building envelope and site improvements that both protect the house from decay and help make a positive impact on the neighborhood.” The program was designed specifically for homeowners in neighborhoods undergoing “targeted revitalization,” like Cuyler-Brownsville on the west side and Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood on the east side.<sup>500</sup>

Not all residents are eligible, requirements include:

*The homeowner must be 60 years old or have lived in house for at least ten years.*

*The household income must be less than 80% the area median.*

*The house must be located in area undergoing comprehensive revitalization sponsored and/or supported by the Department of Housing.<sup>501</sup>*

The Department of Housing offers CDBG (Community Development Block Grants) for repairs up to \$10,000 for one-story houses, or up to \$15,000 for 1 ½ or two-story houses. Loans include CDBG loans of \$15,000 and HOME loans of up to \$50,000.<sup>502</sup>

---

<sup>500</sup> “Revitalization Area Home Repair Program, Fact Sheet,” (City of Savannah Department of Housing, revised 20 Feb 2003).

<sup>501</sup> “Revitalization Area Home Repair Program, Fact Sheet.”

<sup>502</sup> “Revitalization Area Home Repair Program, Fact Sheet.”

In addition, the city administers the DreamMaker program with three levels of assistance based on the property's location:

1. *City-wide-loans and grants up to \$4,000.*
2. *Targeted Neighborhoods-CDBG grants in certain neighborhoods, most north of Victory Drive.*
3. *Infill Housing-in target neighborhoods part of planned Department of Housing revitalization initiatives.<sup>503</sup>*

Several residents have already taken advantage of these programs. Nancy Johnson on the 1600 block of Collins Street, received money enabling her to have a new roof put on, and installation installed. Johnson was very pleased with the work, "They did a beautiful job!"<sup>504</sup>

---

<sup>503</sup> City of Savannah, Department of Housing website, 2003.

<sup>504</sup> Nancy Johnson, BVC OH #20.

## ARCHITECTURAL SURVEYS

### *Eastside Historic District*

Between 1997 and 2000, the Metropolitan Planning Commission of Savannah (MPC) prepared and submitted a National Register nomination for the Eastside Neighborhood. The bounds they presented included the historic neighborhoods of Collinsville and the Meadows, parts of which fall into both the Eastside and the Benjamin Van Clark neighborhoods.<sup>505</sup>

The Eastside Historic District, approved by the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and the National Park Service in November 2002, is bounded as follows: at the intersection of Gwinnett Street and East Broad Street, east to Waters Avenue, south to Collins Street, east to Cedar Street, south to Anderson Street, west to East Broad Street and north back to Gwinnett Street. These boundaries take in Collinsville, the Meadows, and the area developed immediately near the Atlantic and Gulf Railroad.<sup>506</sup>

The nomination process included an architectural survey of the buildings within the proposed district and preparation of a brief narrative description of area development and history.

### *Live Oak Neighborhood*

On the south side of Anderson Street, begins Live Oak Neighborhood, named for the street running through both it and Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood. This neighborhood takes in the historic suburb of Eastland. Recently this area has attracted the interest of local architectural historians and students. Within the past year, it has been the subject of an architectural survey administered by Savannah College of Art and Design students.

---

<sup>505</sup> Conversation with Beith Reiter, city historic preservation officer, 27 May 2003, MPC.

<sup>506</sup> "Eastside National Register Nomination," 17, MPC .

### *Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood*

Pockets of preservation and revitalization are opening in Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood along East Park, Henry and Anderson streets, where some of the grander homes of the Meadows and Collinsville are located.<sup>507</sup>



Figure 144 901-905 East Waldburg Street, 1937<sup>508</sup>

With increased awareness of the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood and its strong, intact architectural fabric, restoration and renovation will continue, especially in areas adjacent to the Eastside Historic District and Live Oak Neighborhood, both receiving increased attention in the past few years.

A full architectural survey of Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood has yet to be completed. While the streets laid out as part of Collinsville and the Meadows were surveyed for the Eastside Historic District National Register Nomination, the remaining areas north and east are not as strongly identified with an historic neighborhood nor are the houses as grand as those that often inspire full scale surveys. The best way to survey these houses will be to divide the larger neighborhood of Benjamin Van Clark into smaller sections, to include Wagner Heights, Wheaton Street, Eastville, and the eastern half near Garden Homes.

---

<sup>507</sup> "Eastside National Register Nomination," 8, MPC.

<sup>508</sup> VM 1360, Box 13, Folder 10, Item 07, GHS.

## NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

When pipelines for the Casey Canal were put in, many homes were damaged and one Henry Street house had to be torn down and rebuilt as a result. This prompted many area residents to join together to create a more powerful voice in the local government to get their needs addressed.<sup>509</sup>

*The drainage system that went down here, and it was taken out, it was wrecking people's houses. . . . I have some cracks in there now. . . . That house [on Henry and Cedar streets] was completely torn down. . . it was so messed up. They had to rebuild her.<sup>510</sup>*

*When they did that Casey Canal, '93, '94, '96, we got plenty of problems around here from that. I've had these walls redone, see all that was cracked.<sup>511</sup>*

The current Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood Association was reorganized in 2000, previous community groups having become defunct. Current priorities, as outlined by group president Barbara Oglesby, include youth enrichment, home safety, and elderly programs. The group sponsors various park events, an annual resource fair held in April, and field trips for neighborhood children.

Involvement in the neighborhood association has increased with better attended meetings and a higher visibility of concerns in the political and police areas. The group relies on the neighborhood's strongest aspects: good residents, nice homes and quality architecture.<sup>512</sup>

---

<sup>509</sup> Conversation with Barbara Oglesby, president of the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood Association, 29 Jul 2003, Savannah, GA.

<sup>510</sup> Nancy Johnson, BVC OH #20.

<sup>511</sup> Barbara Gore, BVC OH #24.

<sup>512</sup> Conversation with Barbara Oglesby.

## GOVERNMENT/PUBLIC ATTENTION

### *Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood Documentation Project*

With the Housing Authority of Savannah's HOPE VI project and the City of Savannah's efforts to revitalize the community, the Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood is on the "cusp of a tremendous change." An improvement in the housing stock and restoration of the historic homes will greatly increase possible gentrification and displacement of current residents. The City of Savannah, through the Department of Cultural Affairs has set out to "capture the voice of the community before the shift" in population.<sup>513</sup>

Several city and community agencies, led by the Department of Cultural Affairs, are working together to produce a visual and written presentation of the neighborhood's unique history, *Uncommon Knowledge: When the Meadows Became Van Clark*. The project is combining traditional history sources, an oral history collection project, and vintage and current images utilizing the sources of private and public institutions, and past and present residents. The material gathered will produce a written history of the neighborhood's development (this work), an oral history collection, a permanent collection of all source material at the Municipal Research Library in Savannah's City Hall, and culminate in 2004 with a temporary exhibit of approximately fifty images displayed at the Department of Cultural Affairs' art gallery. In addition, a permanent digital exhibition of the images will be posted on-line. Plans for the opening of the exhibit include a series of lectures by both local historians and area residents discussing the history and development of the area.<sup>514</sup>

HOPE VI has served as a catalyst not only for revitalization of the neighborhood but for a renewed interest and new appreciation for the area's unique history. Hopefully, this effort is only the beginning for the community.

---

<sup>513</sup> "National Endowment for the Humanities Grant," 11, DCA.

<sup>514</sup> "Grant request to National Endowment of the Humanities," 8, DCA.

Appendices



## CITY DIRECTORY SURVEY ANALYSIS

*Prepared by:  
Kate Ellen Ryan  
Project Intern  
Bricks and Bones Historical Research  
Savannah, Georgia  
October 2003*

In researching the Benjamin Van Clark neighborhood it is near impossible not to question who the residents are or were. City directories are valuable resources for researching past residents of an area. According to the Polk City Directory webpage, such directories have existed of thousands of cities since the eighteenth-century. These directories provide a list of street addresses as well as corresponding information on individual residents and businesses. The individual listings provide varying amounts of information from a name and occupant's race to an individual's occupation, spouse's name, business location, and other residents of the house.

City directories provided an opportunity to track the names of the residents within the Benjamin Van Clark neighborhood by reviewing the street listings. These listings also denote the race of the resident, important information for using resources that date through times of segregation. Knowing the name and race of the resident allows for further investigation into who the resident was.

Reviewing Savannah's city directories of three chosen years, 1900, 1925, and 1950, the listings of the residents of the Benjamin Van Clark neighborhood told the story of the neighborhood's demographics, growth, and change. We were able to determine that the majority of the neighborhood was residential. There were a few areas, for example Wheaton St. during 1950, where small businesses seemed to cluster, but the majority of the makeup of the neighborhood remained residential. Common small businesses of the area included groceries, barber shops, beauty parlors, shoe repair, seamstresses and tailors, florists, and blacksmiths.

An example of large industry within the area is the Georgia Ice Co at 407 Harmon St. It is evident that this business provided many residents of the neighborhood with jobs over many years. Other companies that provided a number of residents with work over the years include The Central of Georgia Railway Co., the Atlantic Coast Line, the Seaboard Air line Railroad Co, the Atlantic Coast Line, the Union Bag and Paper and Corporation, and the Savannah Electric and Power Co.

Research also revealed the racial ratio of the defined neighborhood. This proved that the neighborhood in 1900 was approximately 54% African American. By 1925 the percentage had decreased to approximately 37% African American. This percentage rose slightly to approximately 41% African American by the year 1950.

The information found within the directories was applied to three different maps, one for 1900, 1925, and 1950. This visual presentation of the information allows one to see the changing makeup of the Benjamin Van Clark neighborhood. The maps focus on the presentation of three important features of the research, race, businesses, and religious buildings.

From this we can see that though statistically the racial makeup of the neighborhood changed from 54% to 37% to 41%, the distribution of race remained in specific areas. The northern areas of the neighborhood, generally Wheaton Street in the north, south to Collins Street remained primarily African American. Likewise, the southern areas of the neighborhood, Collins south to Anderson Street, remained primarily Caucasian. Wheaton St., which developed into a commercial area and expanded eastward, appeared to be African American to the north side and Caucasian to the south side.

Along with Wheaton Street remaining a commercial area, a common distribution of businesses is seen along the north/south streets. These streets, such as Harmon, Ott, and Waters, appear to host a number of small businesses. The number of these small businesses appears to increase significantly between 1900 and 1950. The blocks running east to west mainly consist of residential buildings. The northern and

eastern area of the neighborhood remained mostly residential and Caucasian throughout the half century.

Religious buildings are also seen dispersed through the neighborhood. These buildings more commonly appear on the corners of blocks, though a few are scattered within blocks. Keeping with the racial makeup of the neighborhood, religious buildings remained within the racial areas they were associated with.

The research presented in list and map form shows the growth of the Benjamin Van Clark neighborhood. Though the population of the neighborhood grew as a whole, the growth of separate areas, African America, Caucasian, commercial, remained within themselves. The distribution of these areas did not experience a major shift or change, though each experienced their own growth and expansion.



BENJAMIN VAN CLARK NEIGHBORHOOD DOCUMENTATION PROJECT  
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT INVENTORY



## Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood Documentation Project

OH#	Name, Last	First	Middle	Maiden	Title, etc	Address	Birth Date	Birthplace	Interview	Photo	Tape	Transcript	Video	Add'l Donations	OH#
01	White	John	A.		Sr.	23 Bouhan Street	27 Oct 1924	Savannah, GA	12-May-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	01
02	Howard	Raymond							12-May-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	02
03	Thornton	Harriet	Ann	Walker			10 Apr 1923	Savannah, GA	15-May-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	03
03	Spaulding	Johnnie	Mae	Thompson			25 Mar 1936	Savannah, GA	15-May-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	03
04	Cutter	Jason	S.		Jr.		27 Jan 1917	Sylvania, GA	15-May-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	04
05	Hannah	Bingley						Savannah, GA	16-May-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	05
05	Hannah	Bessie					1925	Savannah, GA	16-May-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	05
06	Johnson	Charles			Jr.			Savannah, GA	16-May-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	06
07	Elmore	Juanita	S.	W.			30 Jul 1945	Savannah, GA	18-May-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	07
08	Luke	Earl	L.						19-May-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	08
09	Hohnerlein	Otto					1919	Savannah, GA	20-May-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	09
09	Hohnerlein	Mrs. Otto							20-May-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	09
10	Hester	William			Rev.		13 Jul 1959	Savannah, GA	28-May-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10
10	Hagins	Nell		Shearouse			31 Jan 1923	Port Wentworth, GA	28-May-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10
10	Wiley	Harold					7 Feb 1922	GA	28-May-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10
10	Holliday	Hazel	Virginia				16 Dec 1923	Savannah, GA	28-May-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10
11	Dixon	Devereaux					18 Dec 1927	Savannah, GA	01-Jun-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11
12	Trudell	Rosa	T.				16 Dec 1925	Varnsville, SC	02-Jun-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	12
13	Flagg	Eloise		Wilson			15 Dec 1914	Sylvania, GA	05-Jun-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	13
14	Washington	Richard	K.						06-Jun-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14
14	Washington	Helen							06-Jun-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14
15	Jackson	Prince	A.		Jr., Dr.		17 Mar 1925	Savannah, GA	23-Jun-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	15
16	Williams	Sallie	Kate	Moore			1935	Savannah, GA	26-Jun-03	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Abstract	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	16
17	Kantziper	Suzanne		Ginsberg		120 Andover St.	8 Feb 1936	Savannah, GA	06-Aug-03	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Full	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	17
18	Green	Marie		Lewis		829 Anderson St.	8 Aug 1927	Savannah, GA	27-Aug-03	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Full	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	18
19	Turner	Gladys				Collins St.	2 Jul 1933	Burke County, GA	27-Aug-03	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Full	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	19
20	Johnson	Nancy				1302 Collins St.	22 Feb 1937	Hilton Head Is, SC	25-Sep-03	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Full	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	20
21	Allen	Adolphus				1206 Collins St.	8 Sep 1931	Alexander City, AL	25-Sep-03	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Full	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	21
22	Grimes	Bernice				1311 Park Ave.		Millen, GA	25-Sep-03	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Full	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	22
23	Battle	Ronald	L.			1219 E. Duffy St.			25-Sep-03	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	23
23	Jackson	Marilyn				1217 E. Duffy St.			25-Sep-03	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	23
23	Martin	Cyrus				1221 E. Duffy St.			25-Sep-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Restricted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	23
24	Gore	Barbara				1306 E. Park Ave.	29 Jun 1940	Johnson Co., GA	26-Sep-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Full	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	24
25	Jackson	Edna		Branch		2227 Fernwood Ct.	18 Sep 1944	Savannah, GA	29-Sep-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Full	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	25
26	Banks	Rosemary		McBride		1110 E. Henry St.	10 Apr 1941	Savannah, GA	03-Oct-03	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Full	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	26
27	Spencer	Lillian				1510 E. 32nd St.			09-Oct-03	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Full	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	27
28	Williams	Harold							07-Nov-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Full	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	28
28	Grover	Verda	Mae						07-Nov-03	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Full	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	28



## STREETS IN BENJAMIN VAN CLARK NEIGHBORHOOD

*Note: Efforts to trace the origin of the names of streets within Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood resulted in the following list. Where no information was found, simply the name is listed. Most of the east-west streets are extensions of streets within Savannah historic district, and their names do not reflect the immediate neighborhood.*

**3<sup>rd</sup> Street-** a small street north of Wheaton Street, renamed after the building of the public housing referred to as Blackshear Homes.

**4<sup>th</sup> Street-**a small street north of Wheaton Street, renamed Dundee Street after the building of the public housing referred to as Blackshear Homes.

**5<sup>th</sup> Street-** a small street north of Wheaton Street, renamed Stirling Street after the building of the public housing referred to as Blackshear Homes.

**6<sup>th</sup> Street-** a small street north of Wheaton Street, renamed Edinburgh Street after the building of the public housing referred to as Blackshear Homes.

**Adair Street-**in Wagner Heights, first appears in City Directories in 1915.

**Albert Street-**renamed Live Oak Street.

**Anderson Street-**believed to be named for Edward Clifford Anderson, Mayor of Savannah (1854-56, 1865-69, 1873-77) and father of prominent lawyer and Electric Railway Company incorporator J. Randolph Anderson.<sup>515</sup>

**Ash Street-**several streets in the Meadows were named for trees, including Ash, Cedar and Live Oak streets.

**Bee Road-**

**Bolton Street-**named for Robert Bolton, colonial merchant, city alderman, and Savannah's first postmaster, appointed 1764.<sup>516</sup>

**Bouhan Street-** named for John Joseph Bouhan, lawyer, native Savannahian and legendary figure in Chatham County politics, known as a "kingmaker" and political

---

<sup>515</sup> "The names of the wards and streets...", (SMN 7 Oct. 1889), 8:1-3, VF-Streets-Savannah, Ga.-Naming of, GHS; "Report of Honorable Herman Myers, Mayor of the City of Savannah, Georgia for the Year Ending December 31, 1900," 38, VF- Streets-Savannah, Ga.-Naming of, GHS.

<sup>516</sup> "The names of the wards and streets...", (SMN 7 Oct. 1889), 8:1-3, VF- Streets-Savannah, Ga.-Naming of, GHS; "Report of Honorable Herman Myers, Mayor of the City of Savannah, Georgia for the Year Ending December 31, 1900," 38, VF-Streets-Savannah, Ga.-Naming of, GHS.

boos. At one time, Bouhan owned a house on Bouhan Street where Frank W. Spencer School is now located.<sup>517</sup>

**Cedar Street-** several streets in the Meadows were named for trees, including Ash, Cedar and Live Oak streets.

**Collins Street-**named for Jacob S. Collins, entrepreneur and founder of Electric Railway Company and the developer of Collinsville.

**Culver Street-**

**Duffy Street-**named for Patrick Duffy, once prominent Irish-American resident of Savannah.<sup>518</sup>

**Dundee Street-**formerly 4<sup>th</sup> Street, located in Blackshear Homes.

**Edinburgh Street-**formerly 6<sup>th</sup> Street, located in Blackshear Homes.

**Flagler Street-**

**Frank Street-**

**Gwinnett Street-**named for Governor Button Gwinnett, signer of the Declaration of Independence, President of the Georgia Council, and commander-in-chief of the state's military forces during the American Revolutionary War.<sup>519</sup>

**Hall Street-**named for Lyman Hall, early Governor of the State of Georgia, signer of the Declaration of Independence, leading Georgia physician.<sup>520</sup>

**Harmon Street-**probably named for alderman Harmon who served on the street railroad special committee as a City of Savannah alderman in the early 1890s.

**Helmken Street-**in Wagner Heights, first appeared in City Directory in 1915.

**Henrietta Street-**in Wagner Heights, named by 1925.

---

<sup>517</sup> "Editorials: John J. Bouhan," (SEP 12 Jan 1971), VF-Blacks-Savannah-Biography, CELB.

<sup>518</sup> "The names of the wards and streets...", (SMN 7 Oct. 1889), 8:1-3, VF-Streets-Savannah, Ga.-Naming of, GHS.

<sup>519</sup> "The names of the wards and streets...", (SMN 7 Oct. 1889), 8:1-3, VF- Streets-Savannah, Ga.-Naming of, GHS; "Some Important Streets of Savannah and How They Got their Names," (SMN 13 Aug. 1923), VF- Streets-Savannah, Ga.-Naming of, GHS; "Report of Honorable Herman Myers, Mayor of the City of Savannah, Georgia for the Year Ending December 31, 1900," 39, VF-Streets-Savannah, Ga.-Naming of, GHS.

<sup>520</sup> "The names of the wards and streets...", (SMN 7 Oct. 1889), 8:1-3, VF- Streets-Savannah, Ga.-Naming of, GHS; "Some Important Streets of Savannah and How They Got their Names," (SMN 13 Aug. 1923), VF-Streets-Savannah, Ga.-Naming of, GHS.

**Henry Street**-named for Jacob P. Henry, prominent business man and city alderman (1816, 1819-22, 1827-28).<sup>521</sup>

**Joe Street**-

**Live Oak Street**-formerly Albert Street; several streets in the Meadows were named for trees, including Ash, Cedar and Live Oak streets.

**Mastick Street**-in Wagner Heights, named by 1925.

**Moore Avenue**-section of Wheaton Street between Waters Avenue and Catholic Cemetery.

**New Houston Street**-named for the Houston family, later renamed Park Avenue since there was an early Houston Street in downtown Savannah. At the time of its renaming Colonel Mercer complained, "The street does not in the least resemble a park, nor does it touch or pass through any park, nor is it entitled to be known as an avenue."<sup>522</sup>

**Ott Street**-named for George Ott, prominent Savannah citizen and former property owner in area that became Eastville.<sup>523</sup>

**Park Avenue**-formerly New Houston Street.

**Pounder Street** (aka Avenue)-a small street north of Wheaton Street.

**Reidon Court**-a small street north of Wheaton Street, located in Blackshear Homes; possibly a misspelling of Reirdon, a former property owner.

**Reirdon Street** (aka Avenue)-a small street north of Wheaton Street; probably named for Reirdon who owned large plot of land here before subdivision of the area.

**Richardson Street**-in Wagner Heights, named by 1925; named for area property owner and proprietor of the Richardson Florist greenhouses located on the eastern edge of Wagner Heights.

**Rockefeller Street**-

---

<sup>521</sup> "Report of Honorable Herman Myers, Mayor of the City of Savannah, Georgia for the Year Ending December 31, 1900," 39, VF- Streets-Savannah, Ga.-Naming of, GHS.

<sup>522</sup> "The names of the wards and streets...," (SMN 7 Oct. 1889), 8:1-3, VF-Streets-Savannah, Ga.-Naming of, GHS; "The Suggestion for Renaming Streets Indorsed," VF-Streets-Savannah, Ga.-Naming of, GHS.

<sup>523</sup> "The names of the wards and streets...," (SMN 7 Oct. 1889), 8:1-3, VF-Streets-Savannah, Ga.-Naming of, GHS.

**Stirling Street**-formerly 5<sup>th</sup> Street, located in Blackshear Homes.

**Wagner Street**-named for property owner George Wagner, this street is located in the neighborhood of Wagner Heights and was listed in the City Directory with this name by 1925.

**Waldburg Street**-named for Jacob Waldburg, prominent Savannah citizen.<sup>524</sup>

**Waters Avenue**-probably named for former property owner Water's, who held farm lots in this area in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>525</sup>

**Wheaton Street**-named for Captain John F. Wheaton, former Mayor of the City of Savannah (1877-1883), Collector of the Port of Customs, and captain of the Chatham Artillery. Wheaton Street eventually curves towards the south and becomes Thunderbolt Road, before connecting with Skidaway.<sup>526</sup>

**Wolf Street**-renamed Hall Street before 1925.

**Wright Street**-also called Forsyth (circa 1925).

---

<sup>524</sup> "The names of the wards and streets...", (SMN 7 Oct. 1889), 8:1-3, VF-Streets-Savannah, Ga.-Naming of, GHS.

<sup>525</sup> "City of Savannah," (1812), MS 1018 Waring Map Collection, Vol. 2, Plate 12, GHS.

<sup>526</sup> "The names of the wards and streets...", (SMN 7 Oct. 1889), 8:1-3, VF-Streets-Savannah, Ga.-Naming of, GHS; "Some Important Streets of Savannah and How They Got their Names," (SMN 13 Aug. 1923), VF-Streets-Savannah, Ga.-Naming of, GHS.

## WARDS IN BENJAMIN VAN CLARK NEIGHBORHOOD

South of Gwinnett Street, wards carry the names of men who have served as city aldermen, mayors, or civic leaders, or those who were large land owners and from whom property of wards in question were split from.<sup>527</sup>

***Ballantyne Ward***  
***Brinkman Ward***  
***Hoynes Ward***  
***Hull Ward***  
***Johnston Ward***  
***Kelly Ward***  
***Myrick Ward***  
***Rivers Ward***  
***Telfair Ward***

---

<sup>527</sup> "Report of Honorable Herman Myers, Mayor of the City of Savannah, Georgia for the Year Ending December 31, 1900," 38, VF-Streets-Savannah, Ga.-Naming of, GHS.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### ABBREVIATIONS

- BVC Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood Documentation Project  
Files housed at MRL
- BVC OH Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood Oral History Collection Project  
Files housed at MRL
- CCCH Chatham County Courthouse, Savannah, Georgia
- CDA Catholic Diocese Archives of Savannah, Savannah, Georgia
- CELB Chatham-Effingham-Liberty County Public Library System  
Bull Street Branch, Georgia Room, Savannah, Georgia
- GHS Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia
- HAS Housing Authority of Savannah, Savannah, Georgia
- MRL City of Savannah Municipal Research Library, Savannah, Georgia
- RMG Ralph Mark Gilbert Civil Rights Museum, Savannah, Georgia
- SCC City of Savannah Clerk of Council, Savannah, Georgia
- SCCBE Savannah-Chatham County Board of Public Education  
Savannah, Georgia
- SJA Savannah Jewish Archives, Savannah, Georgia
- SPD City of Savannah Personnel Department, Savannah, Georgia
- MN *The Morning News* (Savannah, Georgia)
- SEP *Savannah Evening Press* (Savannah, Georgia)
- SH *Savannah Herald* (Savannah, Georgia)
- SMN *Savannah Morning News* (Savannah, Georgia)
- SNP *Savannah News Press* (Savannah, Georgia)
- ST *Savannah Tribune* (Savannah, Georgia)
- n.d. no date

## PRIMARY SOURCES

A. Pratt Papers Collection, MS 2165, Folders 1-5, GHS.

Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church Records Collection, MS 1629, GHS.

Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church Visual Materials Collection, VM 1629, Box 1, GHS.

Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood Documentation Project: Oral History Collection Project (see Appendix for Finding Aid), MRL.

Catholic Diocese of Savannah Manuscript Collections, Schools & Institutions, Saint Pius X High School, Box 1, CDA.

Catholic Diocese of Savannah Photograph Collections, Schools & Institutions, Saint Pius X High School, Folders 1-2, CDA.

City Council Records, Indexes to Minutes of Council, January 1890-June 1893, SCC.

City Council Records, Minutes of Council, January 1890-June 1893, SCC.

City of Savannah Municipal Reports, 1890, 1891, 1892, GHS.

City of Savannah Records Collection, MS 5600, GHS.

Cordray-Foltz Photograph Collection, VM 1360, Boxes 3-9, 11-13, 21, 28, GHS.

Enslow, J. Dean. *Savannah Illustrated, A Sketch of Its Early History*. Savannah: J. Dean Enslow Press of the Morning News, 1899. Rare Book Collection, GHS.

Episcopal Diocese of Georgia Records Collection, MS 1617, Box 50, GHS.

Episcopal Diocese of Georgia Visual Materials Collection, VM 1617, Boxes 1-2, GHS.

Friedman, Erwin, n.d., Savannah, Georgia. SJA Oral History Collection JAOH #71, SJA.

Gamble, Thomas, Jr. *Savannah, A City of Opportunities*. Savannah: Savannah Morning News, 1904. Rare Book Collection, GHS.

Georgia Historical Society Biography Files (BF): Anderson, Clark, Collins, Johnson, Mackall, McIntire, Paulson, Williams, GHS.

Georgia Historical Society Photograph Collection, VM 1361PH, Boxes 3, 6 -13, 20, 27, 29, GHS.

Georgia Historical Society Postcard Collection, VM 1361PC, Boxes 6-7, GHS.

Georgia Historical Society Vertical Files (VF): Afro-Americans-Civil Rights; Railroads-Streetcar Lines; Schools-Savannah & Chatham County-Public Schools-Collective, GHS.

Georgia Historical Society Ward Notebooks: Savannah Expansion, GHS.

Georgia Room Vertical Files: Savannah-Transportation, Black History-Savannah, Blacks-Savannah-Biography, CELB.

*Gordon B. Smith Notebooks*, Volumes 1-3, GHS.

Gray, Joseph F. *Savannah: Founded 1733, Municipal, Financial, Commercial, Industrial, Agricultural, Residential and Historical*. Savannah: Savannah Chamber of Commerce, 1911. Rare Book Collection, GHS

Gregory, G. A. *Savannah and Its Surroundings*. Savannah: Press of the Morning News, 1890. Rare Book Collection, GHS.

Hartridge, Walter C. *Savannah*. Columbia: Bostick & Thornley, 1947. Rare Book Collection, GHS.

Heyward, Maude. *Illustrated Guide to Savannah, Georgia*. Savannah: c. 1925. Thomas Gamble Collection, Georgia Pamphlets, Georgia Room, CELB.

Kantziper, Suzanne, 7 July 2002, Savannah, Georgia. SJA Oral History Collection JAOH #84, SJA

Kooden, Lewis, 14 July 2003, Savannah, Georgia. SJA Oral History Collection JAOH #91, SJA.

*Mercantile and Industrial Review of Savannah*. Portsmouth: Industrial Department Seaboard Air Line Railway, 1909. Rare Book Collection, GHS.

*Pictures of Old Savannah*. Savannah: Review Printing Company, 1900. Rare Book Collection, GHS.

*The Playground of America...Chatham Crescent*. Savannah: Chatham Land and Hotel Company, 1911. Rare Book Collection, GHS.

*Pocket Map and Guide of the City of Savannah, Georgia and Vicinity.* Savannah: Lamas Brothers News Company, 1925. Rare Pamphlet Collection, GHS.

"Revitalization Area Home Repair Program, Fact Sheet." City of Savannah Department of Housing, revised 20 Feb 2003.

Savannah-Chatham County Board of Public Education, School Files: Romana Riley School, Paulsen Street School, Paulsen Street School-Wheaton Site, Frank W. Spencer School, Board Office, Bull Street Administration Building, SCCBE.

*Savannah City Directories*, 1889, 1895, 1900, 1925, 1950, 1975, 2000, GHS.

Savannah Electric & Power Company Visual Materials Collection, VM 1381, Album 1, GHS.

*Savannah, Georgia. . . Now.* Savannah: Savannah Chamber of Commerce, 1947. Rare Book Collection, GHS.

Savannah Jewish Archives General Photograph Collection, JAPH #2130A-B, SJA.

Savannah Jewish Archives Oral History Collection, JAOH, SJA.

*Savannah Newspaper Digests*, 1888, 1889, 1890, 1891, 1892, 1893, 1895, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, GHS.

Smalls, Kermit O., ed. *Year Book of Colored Savannah.* Savannah: Savannah Tribune, 1934. Rare Book Collection, CELB.

*Some Views of the Meadows.* Savannah: F. E. Purse, 1900. Rare Pamphlet Collection, GHS.

*A Souvenir Booklet of Savannah, Georgia and Plan for Profitable Investment.* Savannah: Oglethorpe Savings and Trust Company, 1921. Rare Book Collection, GHS.

*Souvenir of Savannah.* Savannah: F. M. Kirby & Company, 1906. Rare Book Collection, GHS.

Thomas Gamble Collection, Georgia Pamphlets, Volume 1, CELB.

Walter C. Hartridge Papers Collection, MS 1349, Boxes 82, 185, GHS.

Walter Kramer Visual Materials Collection, VM 1378, Box 1, GHS.

Waring Map Collection, MS 1018, Volumes 1-3, GHS.

Wayne-Stites-Anderson Visual Materials Collection VM 846, Box 1, GHS.

W. W. Law Paper Collection, MS 1670, Folders 2-3, GHS.

## SECONDARY SOURCES

Appelgate, Ray D. *Trolleys and Streetcars on American Picture Postcards*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1979.

Bowden, Haygood S. *Two-Hundred Years of Education, Bicentennial 1733-1933, Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia*. Richmond: Dietz Printing Company, 1932.

D'Alonzo, Mary Beth. *Streetcars of Chatham County*. Charleston: Arcadia Publishing Company, 1999.

Eason, Henry. *The Savannah Electric and Power Company, 1866-1971*. Savannah: Historic Services, Inc., 1971.

Elmore, Charles J. *Black America Series: Savannah, Georgia*. Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2000.

-----"Historical Analysis and Summary of the Ben Van Clark Neighborhood Project." (June 2003), DCA.

-----"Progress Report: The Ben Van Clark Neighborhood Initiative." (28 May 2003), DCA.

Gamble, Thomas, Jr. *A History of the City Government of Savannah, Georgia, from 1790 to 1901*. Savannah: City Council, 1900.

Gilliard, Deric A. *Living in the Shadows of A Legend: Unsung Heroes and Sheroes Who Marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* Decatur: Gilliard Communications, 2002.

Grant, Donald L. *The Way it was in the South: The Black Experience in Georgia*. New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1993.

Harris, J. William. *Deep Souths: Delta, Piedmont and Sea Island Society in the Age of Segregation*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

Historic Preservation Graduate Students, Savannah College of Art & Design. "Life Assurance: A Housing and Neighborhood Preservation Study." Savannah: Savannah College of Art & Design, 1990.

Hoskins, Charles Lwanga. *Out of Yamacraw and Beyond: Discovering Black Savannah*. Savannah: The Gullah Press, 2002.

Inscoe, John C., ed. *Georgia in Black and White: Exploration in the Race Relations of a Southern State, 1865-1950*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994.

Jest, Melissa. "Ben Van Clark Historical Overview for the Ben Van Clark Planning Committee" (unpublished material obtained from the author).

King, Coretta Scott. *My Life with Martin Luther King, Jr.* London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., 1970.

Olmstead, Florence. "Old City and Suburban Car Lines," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* Volume 28, Number 3 (September 1944), pp 138-142.

Otto, Albert S. "The Public School System of Savannah and Chatham County." (unpublished manuscript, n.d.), CELB.

Project YESS. "Waters Avenue Corridor Business Directory, 1998-1999." Savannah: Project YESS, 1998.

*Public Schools in Chatham County, Georgia: A Survey Report*. Nashville: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1949.

Raines, Howell. *My Soul is Rested: The Story of the Civil Rights Movement in the Deep South*. New York: Penguin Books, 1977.

Rosenblum, Jane G. "The Ginsberg Girls" (unpublished manuscript). Jane G. Rosenblum, 2002.

Ryan, Kate Ellen. "Benjamin Van Clark Neighborhood Documentation Project: City Directory Survey Analysis" (unpublished manuscript). Savannah: Bricks and Bones Historical Research, 2003.

*Savannah Evening Press* (Savannah, Georgia).

*Savannah Herald* (Savannah, Georgia).

*Savannah Morning News* (Savannah, Georgia).

*Savannah News Press* (Savannah, Georgia).

*Savannah Tribune* (Savannah, Georgia).

Savannah Unit, Federal Writers' Project in Georgia, Works Progress Administration. *Laurel Grove Cemetery, Savannah, Georgia: General Index to Keepers' Record Books, 1852-1938*. Savannah: 1939.

Savannah Unit, Federal Writers' Project in Georgia, Works Progress Administration. *Savannah*. Savannah: Review Printing Company, 1937.

Tuck, Stephen G. N. *Beyond Atlanta: The Struggle for Racial Equality in Georgia, 1940-1980*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001.



