

LAVILLA HERITAGE TRAIL & GATEWAYS COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Hybrid Virtual In-Person Workshop
Friday, March 1, 2024, at 1:00 PM

MEMBERS:

Shawana Brooks, Chair

Carol Alexander

Ayesha Covington

Mamie Davis

Dr. Tim Gilmore

Allen Marshal/George Greenhill

Mitch Hemann

Rodney Hurst

Marsha Phelts

Suzanne Pickett

Adrian Swanigan

Adonnica Toler

Thomas Waters

Genaro Urso

Lloyd Washington

- I. CALL TO ORDER**
- II. PUBLIC COMMENTS**
- III. LAVILLA HERITAGE TRAIL PRESENTATION**
- IV. OTHER MATTERS TO BE ADDED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIR**
- V. ADJOURN**

TAB III

LAVILLA HERITAGE TRAIL PRESENTATION



LAVILLA HERITAGE TRAIL & GATEWAYS COMMITTEE MEETING

MARCH 1, 2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Background
2. Updated Route Map & Points of Interest
3. Review of Draft Narratives
4. Recommended Vision & Strategy
5. Recommended Marker & Wall Concepts
6. Recommended Technical Specifications
7. Next Steps



James Weldon Johnson & family in Jacksonville



BACKGROUND



1. BACKGROUND

Jul. 2023 - Launch of Heritage Trail design project

Aug. 2023- LHT Committee Kick-off Meeting

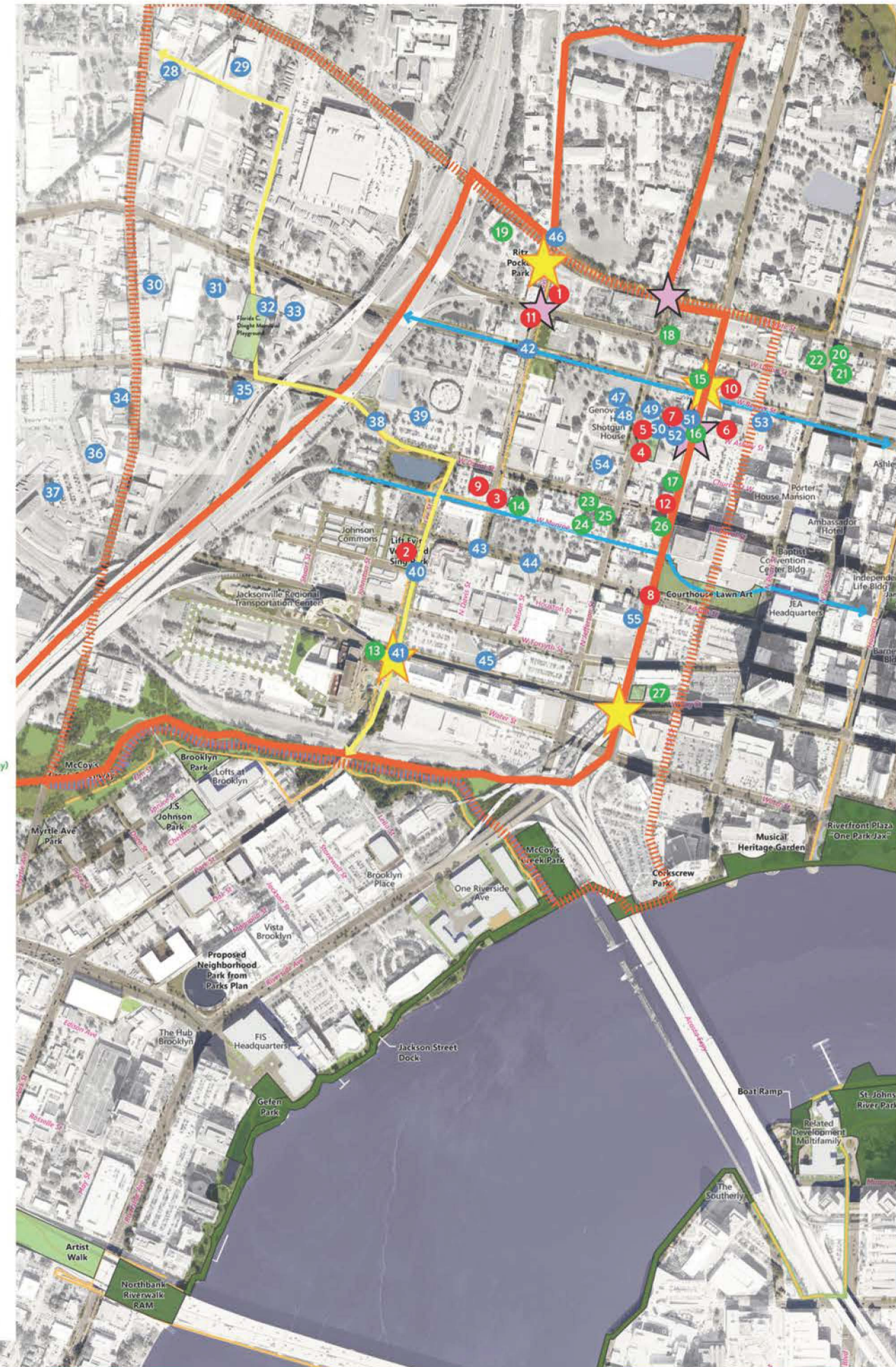
Sep. 2023 - LHT Committee Meeting #2

Dec. 2023 - Public Meeting / Draft marker designs

Jan. 2024 - Selected final marker and wall concepts

Feb. 2024 - Review Draft Narratives / Images

- LEGEND**
- Original LaVilla Boundary
 - DIA LaVilla Overlay District
 - Emerald Trail Model Mile
 - Future Bike Facility
 - Interior Parks
 - Riverfront Parks
 - First Priority:** Sites Identified by 2018 Civil Rights Taskforce
 - Second Priority:** Significant Sites Identified by Committee that still exist (within Downtown Boundary)
 - Remaining Sites:** Remaining Sites Identified by Committee
 - LaVilla Neighborhood Development Strategy Gateway Entry Sites
 - Additional Gateway Entry Sites Recommended by Committee Members
1. Ritz Theatre & Museum
 2. Lift Ev'ry Voice & Sing Park (Birthplace of Johnson Brothers)*
 3. Brewster Hospital
 4. Historic Shotgun Houses*
 5. Genovars Hall/Lenape Bar/Wynn Hotel
 6. Old Stanton School
 7. Clara White Mission/Globe Theatre
 8. Broad Street/Colored Man's Railroad/J. Douglas Wetmore
 9. Boylan Industrial Training School for Girls
 10. Lawton Pratt Funeral Home
 11. Start of the Great Fire of 1901
 12. Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge (Masonic Temple)
 13. Jacksonville Terminal*
 14. Faith United Church of the Living God
 15. Central Hotel
 16. Broad and Ashley
 17. Richmond Hotel
 18. Whetstonian (Stardust Club)
 19. Second Missionary Baptist Church
 20. Odd Fellows Lodge
 21. St. Philip's Episcopal Church
 22. Jenkins Quality Barbecue
 23. Young Men's Hebrew Association (Maceo Elks Lodge)
 24. Pedro Mendez House
 25. 316-318 & 320-322 Jefferson St. Residences (early Jewish immigrant community)
 26. 324 N. Broad (built by Edward D. Mixson - Gullah developer)
 27. El Madelo Cigar Factory (early Cuban immigrant community)
 28. Jacksonville Belt Railroad
 29. USNR Warehouses
 30. Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company
 31. A.L. Lewis Elementary School Site
 32. Florida C. Dwight Memorial Playground (LaVilla Park)
 33. Shiloh Metropolitan Baptist Church
 34. Brick Church Cemetery
 35. Anointed Church of God
 36. Duval Market & Association
 37. Railway Express Agency
 38. LaVilla Grammar Public School
 39. Patrick Chappelle's Residence
 40. The Line (Red Light District)
 41. Railroad Row Business District (early Greek immigrant community)
 42. Davis Street Neighborhood Business District
 43. Fort Hatch (USCT Civil War History)
 44. West Adams Street (early Chinese immigrant community)
 45. Atlantic & East Coast Terminal Company Freight Depot
 46. Blodgett Homes Public Housing Complex
 47. Site of Strand Theater
 48. Hotel de Dream
 49. James "Charlie Edd" Craddock/Charlie Edd Hotel
 50. Haynes Luncheonette
 51. Colored Airdome/Hollywood Music Store
 52. Manuel's Tap Room
 53. E.L. Weems Residence and Studio
 54. Ray Charles Residence
 55. Excelsior Hall (first Black-owned theater)
- *Sites linked to Groundwork Jacksonville and Jessie Ball DuPont Fund projects





UPDATED ROUTE MAP & POINTS OF INTEREST



2. UPDATED ROUTE MAP & POINTS OF INTEREST

- **Emerald Trail/Lee Street**

(West Bay Street to West Monroe Street) - **14-foot-wide** multi use path on west side of street

- **West Monroe Street**

(Emerald Trail/Lee Street to Broad Street) - **12-foot-wide** minimum sidewalk on north side of street

- **North Broad Street**

(West Bay Street to West Beaver Street) - **14-foot-wide** minimum sidewalk on east side of street

- **North Jefferson Street**

(West Monroe Street to West Beaver Street) - **14-foot-wide** minimum sidewalk on west side of street

- **North Davis Street**

(West Monroe Street to West State Street) - **11-foot-wide** minimum sidewalk on east side of street

- **West Beaver Street**

(North Davis Street to North Broad Street) - **14-foot-wide** minimum sidewalk on south side of street

- **West Bay Street**

(North Lee Street to North Broad Street) - **12-foot-wide** minimum sidewalk on north side of street



2. POINTS OF INTEREST (COMBINED TO 22 SITES)

1. Ritz Theatre & Museum

2. Great Fire of 1901

3. Davis Street Business District

4. The Black Church

5. Brewster Hospital

6. Boylan School for Girls

7. LaVilla Timeline (LEVS Park)

8. Jacksonville Terminal

9. Union Occupation of 1863

10. El Modelo Block

11. Civil Rights Timeline

12. Broad Street

13. Residential LaVilla

14. Maceo Elks Lodge

15. Masonic Temple

16. Richmond Hotel

17. Ray Charles

18. Chitlin' Circuit (Wynn Hotel)

19. Clara White Mission (Front)

19. Dining in LaVilla (Jenkins BBQ) (Back)

20. Old Stanton School (Front)

20. West Ashley Street (Back)

21. Lawton Pratt Funeral Home (Front)

21. Central Hotel (Back)

22. Hansontown (The Whetstonian/Odd Fellows Lodge)

Black = Trail Marker Location (12 Markers)

Red = Trail Wall Location (10 Walls)





REVIEW OF DRAFT NARRATIVES



3. REVIEW OF DRAFT NARRATIVES

NARRATIVE CHARACTERISTICS:

- Historic Quote
- Text (max 300 words)
- Not intended to tell the full history
- Intended to encourage reader to seek more information





RECOMMENDED VISION & STRATEGY



4. RECOMMENDED VISION & STRATEGY

RECOMMENDED TRAIL NAME

- LaVilla: Lift Every Voice District
- LaVilla: Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing District
- LaVilla: Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing Trail
- **Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing Heritage Trail**
- Lift Every Voice and Sing Heritage Trail



4. RECOMMENDED VISION & STRATEGY

1. Lift Ev'ry Voice

The phrase, "Lift Ev'ry Voice," speaks to inclusion, unity, aiding another. It speaks to the idea that every person has a voice, no matter their socio-economic status, gender, or ethnicity.

The Lift Ev'ry Voice theme comprises locations that represent the following categories:

Education, Equality, Inclusion (Multicultural), Women, Humanitarianism

2. A Steady Beat

The phrase, "A Steady Beat," speaks to the pace of upward mobility in LaVilla. The town/neighborhood was called "Uptown" among its people for this reason. This theme will live along the Broad Street Corridor, which was a thriving commercial district.

The A Steady Beat theme comprises locations that represent the following categories:

Business, Commercial District, Banking, Hotel Ownership

MARKER THEMES



The Ritz Theatre



4. RECOMMENDED VISION & STRATEGY

3. Let Our Rejoicing Rise

The phrase, "Let Our Rejoicing Rise," speaks to the faith-based locations across the neighborhood. Beyond religion, this theme takes into account how LaVilla's residents transformed their plight into praise.

The Let Our Rejoicing Rise theme comprises locations that represent the following categories:

Faith

4. Out From the Gloomy Past

The phrase, "Out From the Gloomy Past," speaks to any tragedies, death, or destruction that occurred in the neighborhood. This theme can also incorporate additional locations with stories regarding Jim Crow laws, lynchings, and other injustices. This theme speaks to moving forward from the attacks meant to hold the LaVilla community back.

The Out From the Gloomy Past theme comprises locations that represent the following categories:

Tragedy, Injustice, Racism

MARKER THEMES



The El Modelo Block



4. RECOMMENDED VISION & STRATEGY

5. True to our Native Land

The phrase, "True to our Native Land," speaks to culture, traditions, and heritage passed down from African ancestors that the people held on to.

The True to our Native Land theme comprises locations that represent the following categories:

Food, African Diaspora culture (Gullah Geechee)

6. Sing A Song

The phrase, "Sing A Song," speaks to the entertainment that existed in LaVilla. As a national cultural hub, LaVilla was a major stop on the Chitlin Circuit, attracting the most famous black celebrity entertainers of the time.

The Sing A Song theme comprises locations that represent the following categories:

Entertainment, Hotels, Performance, Celebrities, Chitlin Circuit, Red Light District

MARKER THEMES



The Ritz Theatre



4. RECOMMENDED VISION & STRATEGY

7. Treading Our Path

The phrase, "Treading Our Path," speaks to pioneering a way forward. This theme represents LaVilla's influence on transportation, national Black travel, and the Great Migration. It also speaks to progress made through organizing labor unions.

The Treading Our Path theme comprises locations that represent the following categories:

Transportation, Migration, Labor Unions, Civil Rights, Working Class

8. Til Now We Stand

The phrase, "Til Now We Stand," speaks to architecture that is still standing in LaVilla. Sites along the heritage trail belonging to this theme display the distinctive architectural design of the time and have withstood the test of time.

The Til Now We Stand theme comprises locations that represent the following categories:

Architecture

MARKER THEMES



Inside the Richmond Hotel





RECOMMENDED MARKER & WALL CONCEPTS



5. RECOMMENDED MARKER & WALL CONCEPTS

SIGN TREATMENT GUIDANCE

Marker design should follow styles that reflect the aesthetic of LaVilla's heyday. The style can represent an evolution of the motifs from the time.

The color schemes to be considered would include the LaVilla brand guidelines developed by the DIA and others authentically derived from the stories and pictures of people, architecture, and textures of LaVilla Then. The design overall aesthetic should reflect a continuation of LaVilla Then to LaVilla Now. Ideas include the emergence from black and white to color. In addition to the stories passed down, music of the time and architecture still standing, consideration of fonts, clothing, spirit, recreation and design patterns should provide signage design direction.

THEMES:

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| LIFT EVERY VOICE EDUCATION, EQUALITY, INCLUSION, WOMEN, HUMANITARIANISM | 5, 6, 14, 16, 19A |
| A STEADY BEAT BUSINESS, COMMERCIAL DISTRICT, HOTEL OWNERSHIP | 3, 12, 20B |
| LET OUR REJOICING RISE FAITH | 4, 11 |
| OUT OF OUR GLOOMY PAST GREAT FIRE OF 1901 | 2, 9, 22 |
| TRUE TO OUR NATIVE LAND FOOD | 7, 10, 13, 19B |
| SING A SONG ENTERTAINMENT, HOTELS, PERFORMANCE, CELEBRITIES, CHITLIN CIRCUIT | 1, 17, 18, 20A |
| TREADING OUR PATH TRANSPORTATION, MIGRATION, LABOR UNION, WORKING CLASS | 8, 21B |
| TIL NOW WE STAND ARCHITECTURE | 15, 21A |



5. RECOMMENDED MARKER & WALL CONCEPTS

DESIGN ELEMENTS

INSPIRATION:

Modern trail markers with red accents and nostalgic black & white imagery beautifully merges contemporary aesthetics with timeless symbols of the LaVilla’s history, inviting visitors to reflect on the past while embracing the present.

ALL MARKERS INCLUDE:

- Image(s)
- Text (max 300 words)
- LHT logo
- Historic Quote

COLOR SCHEME:



FONTS:

HEADER

BOGART

Bogart

BOGART

Bogart

TEXT

AVENIR

Avenir

AVENIR

Avenir



5. RECOMMENDED MARKER & WALL CONCEPTS

COLOR SCHEME



5. RECOMMENDED MARKER & WALL CONCEPTS

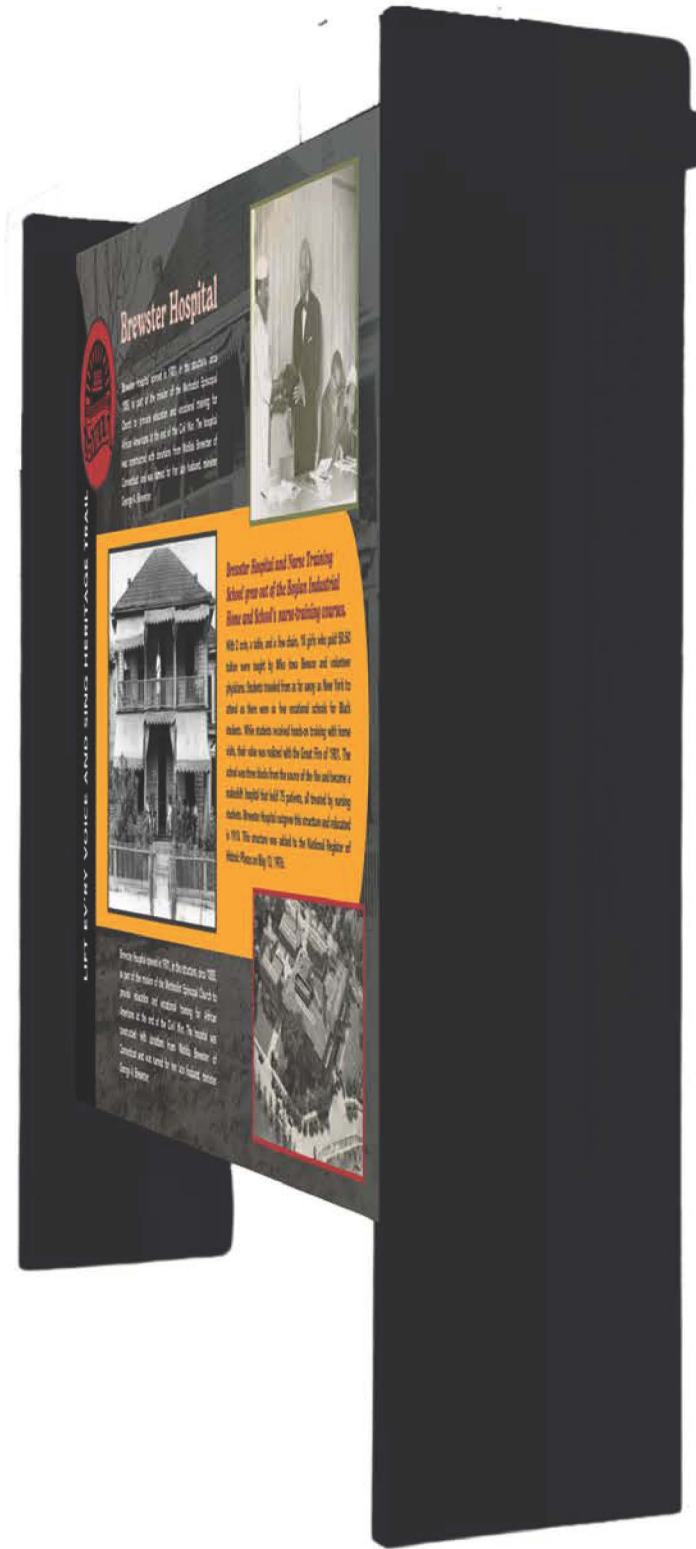
RECOMMENDED MARKER CONCEPT

Trail Markers (12 LOCATIONS):

- 80"H x 36"W x 12"D in. (overall sign dimension), 80"H x 28"W (graphic area)



5. RECOMMENDED MARKER & WALL CONCEPTS



RECOMMENDED WALL CONCEPT

Trail Walls (10 LOCATIONS):

- 84"H x 72"W x 15"D in. (overall wall dimension) and 56"H x 72"W (graphic area)
- Includes 24" transparent area between ground elevation and wall as safety feature



RECOMMENDED TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS



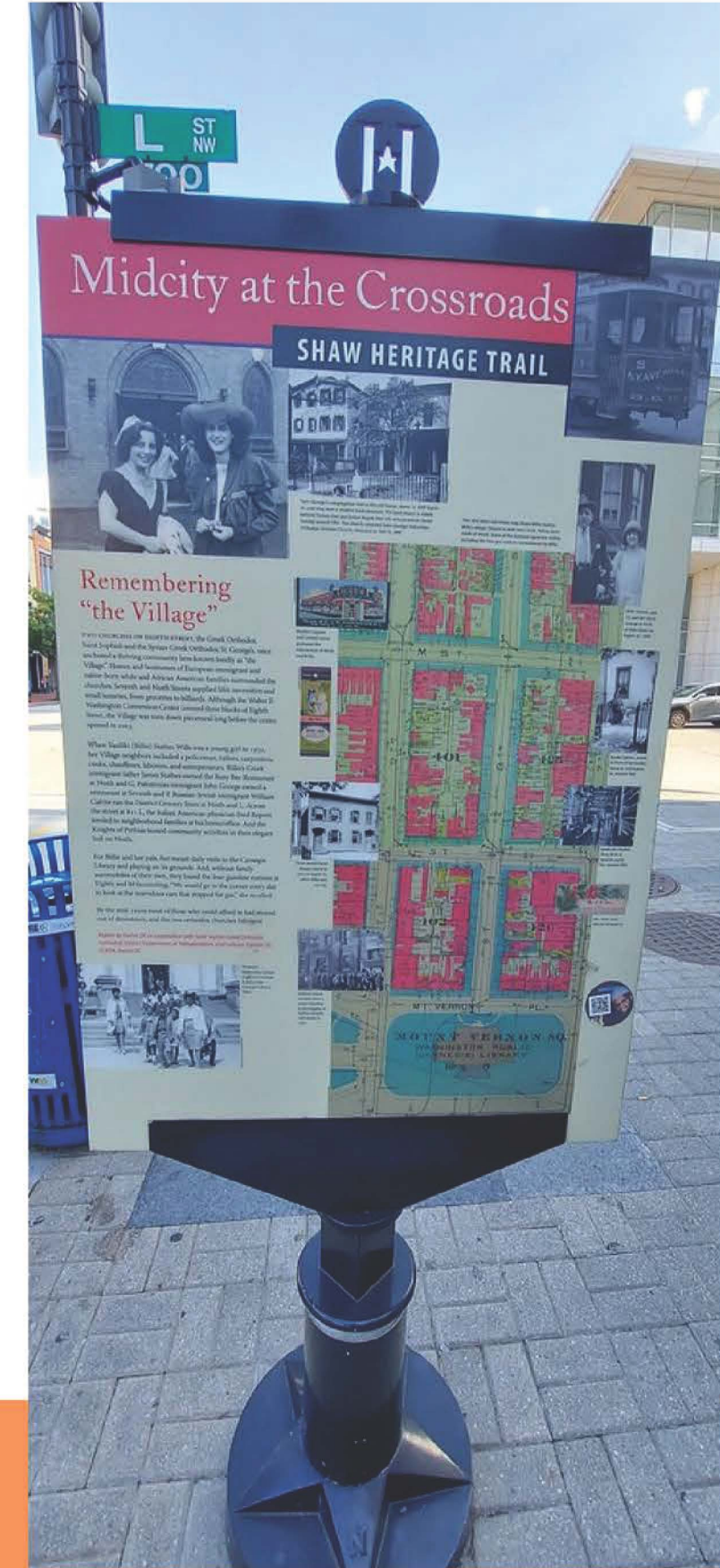
6. RECOMMENDED TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

MATERIALS

- Fiberglass Embedment (Recommended)
- Optimum graphics quality, minimal maintenance to clean, repair, replace, etc.

COLORS

- Pastel and light colors (Recommended)
- Warm colors (red, orange, yellow) are more likely to fade from UV exposure



6. RECOMMENDED TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

WARRANTY

- 10 to 20 years (Fiberglass Embedment)

LIGHTING

- Trail route is currently well lit
- Locate markers near existing street light infrastructure (Recommended)



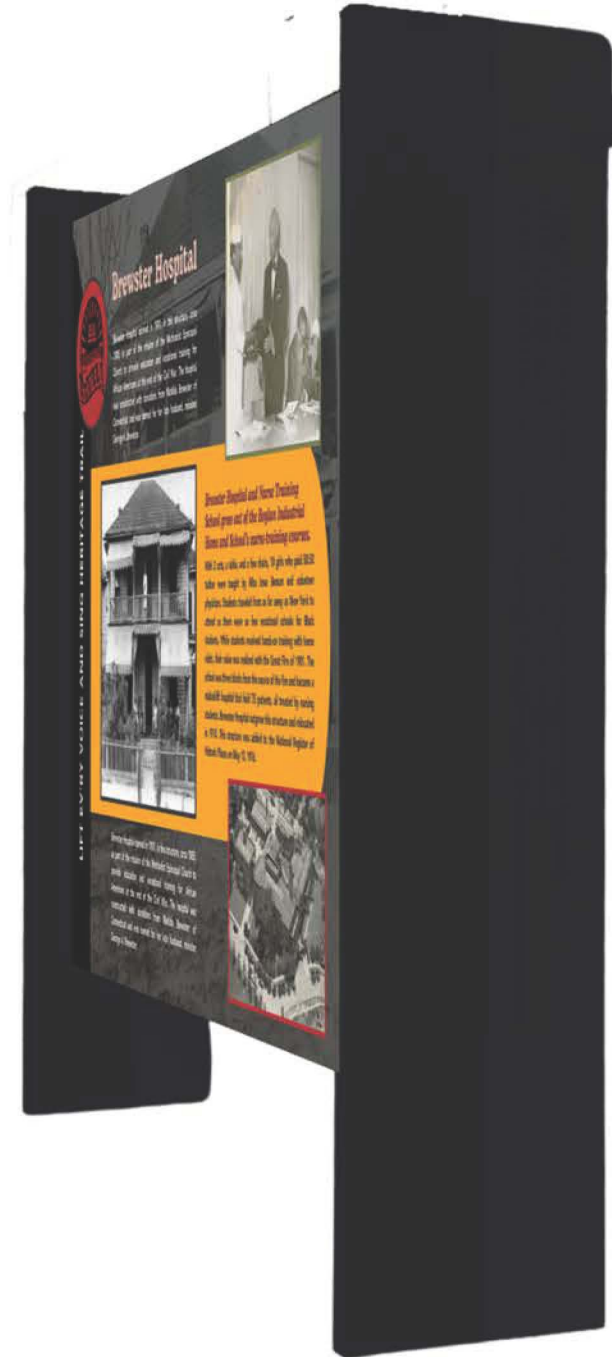
6. RECOMMENDED TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

CONCEPTUAL COST ESTIMATES

- \$10,000 to \$15,000 per marker/wall
- \$220,000 to \$330,000 cost estimate

PRODUCTION TIMELINE (9 MONTHS)

- Graphic Design (Part of Production Process)
- Production (Fabrication)
- Installation





NEXT STEPS



7. NEXT STEPS

Jul. 2023 - Launch of Heritage Trail design project

Aug. 2023- LHT Committee Kick-off Meeting

Sep. 2023 - LHT Committee Meeting #2

Dec. 2023 - Public Meeting / Draft marker designs

Jan. 2024 - Selected final marker and wall concepts

Feb. 2024 - Review Draft Narratives / Images

Mar. 2024 - Finalize Narratives / Marker Designs / Cost Estimates /LHT Committee Meeting #3

Apr. 2024 - Final Designs / LHT Committee Meeting #4 (Design Complete)



Duke Ellington playing baseball in LaVilla in 1955





THANK YOU!

LAVILLA HERITAGE TRAIL TEAM

SUPPORTING DOCUMENT
LAVILLA HERITAGE TRAIL MARKER NARRATIVES

1. RITZ THEATRE

"I'll never forget that day. People were excited. Happy. There was a line all away around the block, down Davis Street, on Union to Madison, folks waiting to get into the "talk of the town." We had people making special trips from far and near. To look at the area's first neon sign. To figure out how it worked. To go to the movie."

-Ritz Usher Theodore Sherman, 1987

The Ritz Theatre opened to a massive crowd in September 1929. It was built by Neil Witchen, Sr. for a group of local theater investors: Lionel D. Joel, Joseph Hackel, Raymond Yockey, Sr. and Dave P. Myerson.

It was designed by architect Jefferson Powell with a blend of Art Deco, Mediterranean Revival, and Egyptian Revival architectural styles and sat 970 patrons. From 1929 to 1954, Joseph Hackel was the sole owner-operator.

Closed in 1971, the theater was partially demolished and renovated into an African American cultural center as a part of the River City Renaissance urban renewal plan. The \$4.2 million project included a 426-seat theater and museum that housed both a permanent exhibit dedicated to African American history and life in Northeast Florida and a series of traveling exhibits.

The 32,000-square-foot Ritz Theatre and Museum opened on September 30, 1999. Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, a 1984 Nobel Peace Prize winner and icon of civil rights and freedom for Africans the world over, led a blessing ceremony on the grand opening day. Today, the Ritz Theater is LaVilla's primary performance venue.

[254 words]

2. GREAT FIRE OF 1901

“The breeze increases to a high wind – the fire is now beyond control – Jacksonville is doomed.”
-James Weldon Johnson, 1901 (1933)

Around noon on May 3, 1901, a spark from a kitchen fire ignited piles of moss that lay drying outside of the Cleveland Fibre Company. The fire spread throughout the densely-populated area, starting at Davis and Beaver Streets and, within hours, had destroyed most of the buildings in LaVilla and Downtown. The fire was contained after about eight hours, and caused over \$15 million in property damage, spanning 148 city blocks. Around 90% of Jacksonville burned; that's 2,300 buildings, including the original Stanton School, 23 churches, 10 hotels, including the St. James and Windsor, and almost all public buildings, including the Duval County Courthouse. Seven people died and 8,677 people were left homeless. The Great Fire of 1901 is the third largest urban fire in American history behind the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and Chicago Fire of 1871. The fire started 3 blocks away from the Nurse Training School, which eventually became Brewster Hospital, where nursing students cared for the wounded. It only took the city two years to rebuild Downtown, ushering in a new era of growth and opportunity.

[201 words]

3. DAVIS STREET

"That was these people's homes. The next thing I knew, it was all gone."

-Robert Graham, 2008

Known as Second Street prior to LaVilla's 1887 annexation into Jacksonville, Davis Street developed into an important corridor lined with hotels, restaurants, theaters, and retail businesses following the Great Fire of 1901.

In 1902, the North Jacksonville Street Company began operating a streetcar line on Davis Street. The Black-owned streetcar line became known as "The Colored Man's Railroad." Connected by streetcar, the African American neighborhoods of Sugar Hill, Moncrief Park, and Durkeeville were established along the Davis Street corridor. Today, this early 20th century expansion of LaVilla is now recognized as the neighborhoods of Northwest Jacksonville.

Businesses and institutions operating on Davis Street included: Nick's Pool Parlor, Flagler Hotel, Boston Chop House, Ritz Theatre, and the Cookman Institute. In 1923, the Cookman Institute merged with Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune's Daytona Literary and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls to become Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach. After 1950, Davis Street declined as it became a central target of local urban renewal efforts, including the construction of Interstate 95 and the urban renewal of the nearby Sugar Hill and Hansontown neighborhoods during the 1960s and 1970s.

In 1993, the City of Jacksonville approved the River City Renaissance urban renewal program, which resulted in the wholesale demolition of a 50-block area of LaVilla bounded by Interstate 95 and State, Broad and Forsyth Streets. Most current structures located on this stretch of Davis Street, including the LaVilla School of the Arts, were built because of the River City Renaissance project.

[263 WORDS]

4. THE BLACK CHURCH

“One can see in the Negro church today, reproduced in microcosm, all the great world from which the Negro is cut off by color-prejudice and social condition.... Practically, a proscribed people must have a social Centre, and that Centre for this people is the Negro church.”

-W. E. B. Du Bois, 1903

The Black Church is the longstanding institutional backbone of the African American community and represents the collectivistic culture interwoven into the fabric of Black life. Black churches were the first institutions built by Black people that ran independent of white society and served as the foundation for community, education, and culture. The Civil Rights Movement, music genres gospel, blues, jazz, and R&B, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were influenced by the Black church.

As the largest city in the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, the Jacksonville we know today has been greatly impacted by the Black church. LaVilla's churches played a critical role in the establishment of Edward Waters University (Florida's first HBCU), Brewster Hospital (Florida's first Black hospital), and the Afro-American Life Insurance Company (Florida's first insurance company).

Many places of worship in LaVilla, like St. Matthews Methodist Episcopal Church, Second Missionary Baptist Church, and Zion Hope Church, were designed and built by James Edward Hutchins (1890-1970). Born in Blakely, GA, Hutchins was employed as a carpenter several years before establishing his own construction company in the 1930s. Hutchins was one of the few local African American contractors who also designed their buildings. He also worked with the Veterans Administration to train African Americans as carpenters, brick masons, and architects after World War II.

[270 WORDS]

5. BREWSTER HOSPITAL

*“O Brewster House of Healing
Where love doth conquer ill
We yield our hearts devotion
Thy vision to fulfill
Wherever duty calls us
If need be far or near
To Brewster lessons loyal
We'll comfort, heal, and cheer.*

*Brewster, Brewster, be a cheering light,
Glowing, gleaming, beautiful, and bright
Like a beacon burning in the night
Glowing, gleaming, beautiful and bright.”
-Brewster and Community Nurses Alumni Association*

Brewster Hospital opened in 1901, in this structure, circa 1885, as part of the mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church to provide education and vocational training for African Americans at the end of the Civil War. The hospital was constructed with donations from Matilda Brewster of Connecticut and was named for her late husband, minister George A. Brewster.

Brewster Hospital and Nurse Training School grew out of the Boylan Industrial Home and School's nurse-training courses. With 2 cots, a table, and a few chairs, 18 girls who paid \$0.50 tuition were taught by Miss Iowa Benson and volunteer physicians. Students traveled from as far away as New York to attend as there were so few vocational schools for Black students. While students received hands-on training with home visits, their value was realized with the Great Fire of 1901. The school was three blocks from the source of the fire and became a makeshift hospital that held 75 patients, all treated by nursing students. Brewster Hospital outgrew this structure and relocated in 1910. This structure was added to the National Register of Historic Places on May 13, 1976.

Brewster Hospital was Florida's first all-Black hospital where Black physicians treated Black patients and was the only hospital in Jacksonville that treated African Americans until the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Brewster Hospital closed in September of 1966 due to rising costs of medical care and patients seeking more modern care from integrated hospitals.

[308 words]

6. BOYLAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL AND HOME FOR NEGRO GIRLS

“Boylan-Haven throughout the years has provided a place, and the necessary atmosphere, for the meeting of the minds and the sharing of ideals and ideas among the concerned people of both Negro and the white groups of the city of Jacksonville.”

-Boylan-Haven superintendent-principal Mrs. Edith M. Carter, 1959

The Boylan Industrial School and Home for Negro Girls opened in April 1886 as part of the mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church in order to provide education and vocational training for newly freed African Americans after the end of the Civil War. The School and Home began as a six-room cottage at the corner of Davis and Duval Streets. Missionary Hattie E. Emerson of Manchester, New York was the school principal. The school housed 7 women the first year and then expanded the following year, housing 18. Young women were taught needlework, dressmaking, housekeeping, and cooking. While some women lived in the home, many attended during the day and, eventually, night classes were added. The school was expanded to include nurse training and, in 1901, the Nurse Training School opened. The Nurse Training School eventually became the Brewster Hospital and Nurse Training School. In 1910 the School and Home moved to Jacksonville's Eastside and in 1932 it merged with Haven Home, becoming the Boylan-Haven School. It remained in the Eastside until 1959 when it merged with Mather Academy and relocated to Camden, South Carolina.

[233 words]

7. LAVILLA: LIFT EV'RY VOICE AND SING HERITAGE TRAIL

"I got my first line: Lift ev'ry voice and sing."

-James Weldon Johnson, 1900

Historically, the land we refer to today as Jacksonville is on the traditional homeland and territories of the Timucua people. After forced removal of the Indigenous people, the land was portioned off by the Spanish government to various plantation owners through a series of land grants in the early nineteenth century.

Named after the LaVilla Plantation, LaVilla was platted in 1866 by Francis F. L'Engle and settled by United States Colored Troops, Gullah Geechee, freedmen, and freedwomen. It was incorporated as a town of its own in 1869. L'Engle served as LaVilla's first mayor and by the time the community was annexed into Jacksonville in 1887, its population had increased to 3,000.

Anchored by Henry Flagler's Jacksonville Terminal railroad station, LaVilla became a transportation hub and emerged as a major epicenter for ragtime, jazz, and blues during the early twentieth century. Ma Rainey, Ray Charles, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, and Cab Calloway performed in various concert halls in LaVilla.

LaVilla played a transformative role in what would become known as the Great Migration and became one of several southern communities recognized as a Harlem of the South during the 1940s and 50s. An influential community in the fight for Civil Rights, LaVilla was negatively impacted by the construction of Interstate 95 and urban renewal during the late 20th century. Today, LaVilla is in a period of rebirth and revitalization.

On this site in 1900, the poem, "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing," was written and set to music by LaVilla natives and brothers, James Weldon and John Rosamond Johnson. The song has been nationally recognized as the Negro National Anthem for more than a century.

The **LaVilla: Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing Trail** highlights the legacy of this culturally significant community and pays homage to the instrumental role it has contributed to the physical, cultural, and social development of Jacksonville and the nation as a whole.

[331 words]

LAVILLA TIMELINE

Note: timeline will be scaled down for marker

- 1801 - John Jones obtained a 350-acre Spanish land grant.
- 1804 - Spanish governor re-ceded Jones tract to Isaac Hendricks.

- 1842 - Rev. James McDonald acquired a plantation on the north side of the St. Johns River, beginning at the mouth of McCoys Creek and lying north of it.
- 1850 - 1850 U.S. Census Slave Schedule identified 13 people enslaved by Rev. James McDonald.
- 1851 - Rev. Joseph S. Baker acquires the McDonald plantation. Son, J. McRobert Baker renamed the plantation LaVilla.
- 1857 - Jacksonville's first railroad, the Florida Atlantic & Gulf Central, is built between LaVilla and Alligator Town (now Lake City).
- 1861 - Confederate troops fired on Fort Sumter in South Carolina, marking the beginning of the American Civil War on April 12, 1861.
- 1862 - The Skirmish of the Brick Church, the first land engagement in Northeast Florida between the Union Army and Confederate Army of the American Civil War takes place in LaVilla.
- 1863 - In March 1863, the 33rd U.S. Colored Troops regiment was assigned to the occupation of Jacksonville. This expedition was intended to secure Unionist sentiment in the area and attract escaped enslaved, who could then be recruited as soldiers. Renowned abolitionist Harriet Tubman and Susie King Taylor, the country's first Black Army nurse, arrive in LaVilla with the 33rd U.S. Colored Troops regiment.
- 1864 - Union Army constructs Fort Hatch in LaVilla.
- 1865 - Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrenders, effectively ending the American Civil War on April 9, 1865.
- 1865 - Emancipation proclaimed in Tallahassee on May 20, 1865.
- 1866 - Attorney Francis F. L'Engle plats the community of LaVilla.
- 1868 - Stanton, Florida's first official school for African Americans opens.
- 1869 - The Town of LaVilla is incorporated. L'Engle becomes LaVilla's first mayor.
- 1870 - Seventy percent of LaVilla's population was African American, many of whom worked in the city's booming hotel, lumber, port, building, and railroad industries.
- 1871 - James Weldon Johnson is born in Jacksonville on June 17, 1871.

- 1872 - Cookman Institute established and supported by the Freedmen's Aid and Southern Education Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church.
- 1873 - John Rosamond Johnson was born in Jacksonville on August 11, 1873.
- 1876 - Eartha M.M. White born in Jacksonville on November 8, 1876.
- 1879 - Railroad tycoon Henry B. Plant formed the Jacksonville Street Railway Company, Jacksonville's first streetcar line connecting downtown with LaVilla. Jacksonville's streetcar system grew to become the largest in Florida before being replaced by bus service in 1936.
- 1881 - Henry B. Plant opens the "Waycross Short Line" making direct rail travel from the North possible.
- Ward Street develops into a red light district called "The Line."
- 1887 - LaVilla, then Jacksonville's largest suburb with 3,000 residents, is annexed by the City of Jacksonville.
- 1896 - Plessy v. Ferguson, a landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision, legitimized racial segregation (Jim Crow laws).
- 1897 - Henry Flagler, a partner of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company, opens the Jacksonville Terminal passenger railroad depot in LaVilla.
- 1892 - Ida Bell Wells-Barnett highlights Jacksonville as a progressive Black community in her published research on lynching in a pamphlet titled Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases.
- 1899 - Patrick Chappelle opens the Excelsior Hall on Bridge Street (now Broad). The 50-seat Excelsior Hall is the first Black-owned theater in the South.
- 1900 - James Weldon and John Rosamond Johnson write and compose "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing. The Song becomes unofficially known as the "Black National Anthem."
- 1900 - Patrick Chappelle establishes the Rabbit's Foot Company, a traveling performance troupe.
- 1901 - Brewster Hospital opens, becoming the first African American hospital in Jacksonville.
- 1901 - The Afro-American Life Insurance Company, formerly the Afro-American Industrial and Benefits Association, is established. "The Afro" is Florida's first insurance company.

- 1901 - The Great Fire of 1901 originates in LaVilla. Fire destroys Jacksonville, leaving 10,000 homeless.
- 1902 - A consortium of Black and white businessmen organizes the North Jacksonville Street Company. The Black-owned streetcar company becomes known as "The Colored Man's Railroad."
- 1904 - The Clara White Mission is formally founded.
- 1908 - American temperance leader Carrie A. Nation visits LaVilla's red light district. She declared the city a 'Demonocracy.'
- 1908 – Film companies build production facilities in the region to take advantage of its sunshine, tropical location, and cheap labor. Early theaters in LaVilla, including the Globe Theater, are constructed as a result.
- 1910 - The first published account of blues singing on a public stage in the United States, occurs at LaVilla's Colored Airdome on April 16, 1910.
- 1912 - Booker T. Washington visits Jacksonville to address the subject of education and to speak out against lynching and other crimes against African Americans.
- 1916 - Written by Jacksonville's Matthew Ward, the poem "Bound for the Promised Land," is originally published in the Chicago Defender. Poem influences a significant movement of the African American southern population to northern cities. Movement became known as the Great Migration, leading to the development of neighborhoods like Harlem (New York City), Bronzeville (Chicago), Black Bottom (Detroit) in northern and midwestern cities. More than 16,000 African Americans left Jacksonville between 1916 and 1917 due to economic conditions, white militancy, and Jim Crow laws.
- 1919 - The Jacksonville Terminal opens. Modeled after NYC's Penn Station, the train station is the largest south of Washington, DC.
- 1920s – Motion picture theaters and live performance venues, including the Knights of Pythias Hall, Strand, Ritz, and Roosevelt theatres open.
- 1934 - Clara White Mission purchases the closed Globe Theatre.
- 1935 - Musician Walter Barnes toured the American South. Establishing his southern headquarters in LaVilla, Barnes used his position at the Chicago Defender to advertise and promote his own tours and other entertainers on the same touring trail. Barnes is later credited as an early originator of the "Chitlin' Circuit."

- 1942 - The 654-unit Blodgett Homes public housing complex was constructed.
- 1944 - Annual rail traffic at the Jacksonville Terminal peaks with 38,345 trains and 10 million passengers. Over 2,000 are employed at the LaVilla railroad station making it the second largest employer in the city.
- 1945 - Ray Charles moves to LaVilla, where he began his professional career at age fifteen.
- 1958 - The Jacksonville Expressway (Interstate 95) is completed through the heart of the LaVilla community.
- 1960 - Ax Handle Saturday takes place on August 27, 1960, as a result of a Civil Rights sit-in demonstration at the lunch counter of downtown's Woolworths at Hemming Park. A White mob attacks the teenage demonstrators with ax handles. Riot ends once police jump in after a group of LaVilla youth, known as the Boomerangs, fit back to protect demonstrators.
- 1964 - The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, ending Segregation.
- 1966 - Brewster Hospital closes after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- 1974 - The last Amtrak train leaves LaVilla's Jacksonville Terminal on its way to St. Petersburg on January 3, 1974.
- 1986 - The Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center opens in the former Jacksonville Terminal.
- 1989 - Jacksonville Skyway automated people mover system began operations in LaVilla.
- 1990 - The Afro-American Life Insurance Company closed
- 1990 - 394 families were relocated, and the crime-riddled Blodgett Homes public housing complex was demolished. Today, the site is home to the 159-unit Blodgett Villas complex and a \$42 million state office complex.
- 1993 - The \$235 million River City Renaissance urban renewal plan destroys significant portions of LaVilla, east of Interstate 95.
- 1999 - The new Ritz Theatre and Museum opens.
- 2019 - DIA completes the LaVilla Neighborhood Development Strategy plan.

- 2020 - JTA opens the Jacksonville Regional Transportation Center at LaVilla.
- 2024 - Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing Park is completed
- 2024 - The LaVilla Heritage Trail is completed.

DRAFT

8. JACKSONVILLE TERMINAL

“The terminal was a show place in the early days. It was the biggest railroad station in the state.”

“During the day, short trains would come in from Fernandina and from Cedar Key. They’d make a couple of roundtrips. Then there were excursion trains on Sundays going to Jacksonville Beach. Extra cars would be put on the regular trains to take people to Silver Springs.”

“It took three trains to carry the President anywhere. There was a short train which went ahead, then the president’s train, then another train to follow along behind.”

“President Truman always came into the trainmaster’s office and shook hands all around. Then there was John D. Rockefeller. He passed out dimes to everyone in the terminal.”

- Jacksonville Terminal Company railroad employee Thomas Bidby, 1974

The Jacksonville Terminal, which opened on November 17, 1919, was organized by Henry Flagler in the 1890s to accommodate the volume of visitors brought to Florida through Jacksonville. The terminal was designed by New York architect Kenneth M. Murchison, whose Neoclassical Revival-style design featured a 180-foot long façade of 42-foot tall Doric columns. [The main waiting room contained 75-foot cathedral-like vaulted ceilings and the black waiting room had a lower, more detailed coffered ceiling.] Over 2,000 people were employed to operate the large facility, making it the city’s second-largest employer at the time. On opening day, the terminal handled more than 110 trains and 20,000 passengers. Traffic peaked in 1944 when 40,000 trains passed through the terminal, carrying nearly 10 million passengers. The subway became the “Gateway to Florida” for millions of passengers, including the Duke and Duchess of Windsor in 1941 and every US president from 1921 until the terminal’s closure in 1974. The terminal was closed in 1974 due to high maintenance costs, low rail travel, and in 1976, it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. On November 23, 1983, the Jacksonville City Council approved \$37.2 million to convert the terminal into the Prime F. Osborn III Convention Center, named for the former CSX chairman who worked to rescue the terminal from demolition.

[349 words]

9. 1863 UNION OCCUPATION OF JACKSONVILLE

"Relying upon your military skill and judgment. I shall give you no special directions as to your procedure after you leave Fernandina. I expect, however, that you will occupy Jacksonville, Florida, and intrench yourselves there."

- Union Army brigadier general Rufus Saxton, 1863

Jacksonville was under Union control four times during the Civil War. In March 1863, Jacksonville was placed under Union control for the third time. The occupation included two of the first Black regiments organized in the Union Army.

Described by a New York Tribune reporter as comparable with the best fortifications of that kind, he had seen erected anywhere by the Union Army, two earthwork forts were built for protection in present day LaVilla.

Fort Higginson, named for Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, commander of the First South Carolina Volunteers, was near the intersection of what is now Broad and Bay Streets. Fort Montgomery, named for Colonel James Montgomery, Second South Carolina Volunteers, was farther northwest.

Harriet Tubman participated in the expedition as a guide. Often called the "Moses of Her People," for her work as a conductor on the Underground Railroad, Tubman led a team of African American scouts and spies that provided key intelligence for the Union's capture of Jacksonville. During Jacksonville's occupation, the Union raided several St. Johns River plantations in Mandarin, Orange Mills, Palatka, and Doctors Lake.

The March 1863 occupation convinced the Union that the use of Black soldiers and other extensive guerilla operations were feasible. Later, Tubman became the first woman to lead a major military operation in the United States when she conducted the Raid on Combahee Ferry in South Carolina on June 2, 1863.

Susie King Taylor also participated in the 1863 occupation of Jacksonville. Taylor was the first Black nurse during the Civil War and later became the first Black woman to self-publish her memoirs. During off duty hours, Taylor taught many Union soldiers how to read and write.

In 1864, the First and Second South Carolina regiments were re-designated as the 33rd and 34th United States Colored Infantry Regiments. Several veterans that served with Tubman and Taylor became the original settlers of LaVilla.

In 2016, the President Obama administration selected Tubman to replace Andrew Jackson, the nation's seventh president, on the \$20 bill.

[375 WORDS]

10. THE EL MODELO BLOCK (CUBAN HISTORY)

“...the Cubans from ‘El Modelo’, Gato’s cigar factory, rewarded with applause of an unaccustomed warmth, the delegate who spoke to them about those things that irritate selfish men but please generous souls.”

- Cuban Revolutionary Party founder José Martí, 1893

Built in 1886, the El Modelo Block contains the largest buildings in the city that survived the Great Fire of 1901 and is significant for its link to Jacksonville's early Cuban immigrant community.

Seeking to market authentic Cuban cigars in America, while avoiding high tariffs from Havana and Spanish trade restrictions, Cuban cigar makers found Jacksonville as an attractive location to process Havana tobacco following the American Civil War.

Considered the American gateway to Florida, Cuba and the Bahamas, most cigar factories were located along or near Bay Street. By 1895, cigar manufacturing was the second largest industry in the city. In addition, Jacksonville had become home to fifteen cigar manufacturing companies and thousands of Cuban immigrants.

Local factory wages ranged from \$9.00 to \$35.00 per week, depending on the skill of the worker. Local cigar factories included J. Dzialynski, El Perfecto, M. Fritot, I. Hernandez, M. Hirschman, and H.R. Lohmeyer. The El Modelo Cigar Manufacturing Company was the largest of these factories. Owned by Gabriel Hidalgo-Gato, El Modelo employed 225 and produced more than six million hand rolled cigars annually, with such brand names as El Modelo, La Tropica, Hamlet, La Capitolio, El Deleite and Florida Alligator.

With the assistance of José Alejandro Huau, owner of the El Esmero Cigar Manufacturing Company, Cuban Revolutionary Party founder José Martí visited Jacksonville eight times between 1891 and 1898, including a December 23, 1898 speech at El Modelo to encourage support for Cuba's freedom movement.

LaVilla's days as a cigar making community declined after Cuba obtained its independence in 1898, when many Cuban immigrants living in Jacksonville returned to the island. The El Modelo Block was added to the National Register of Historic Places on October 16, 1980.

[326 WORDS]

11. BROAD STREET DISTRICT

"sell goods that won't come back, to customers that will"
-Broad Street business owner Charles H. Anderson, 1905

At its height, Broad Street's Black-owned banks, insurance companies, restaurants, theaters, mutual aid societies, boarding houses, seafood markets, grocery stores, hotels, furniture stores, and professional offices were a major focal point of African American life, culture, and Civil Rights resistance in Florida.

Originally named Bridge Street, it was renamed Broad Street during the 1920s. At 132 Broad Street in 1898, Patrick Henry Chappelle opened the south's first Black-owned theater, Excelsior Concert Hall. In 1900, he launched the Rabbit's Foot Company. The Rabbit's Foot Company, also known as "The Foots," was a long-running minstrel and variety troupe that toured as a tent show in the American South between 1900 and the late 1950s. Headquartered in LaVilla prior to World War I, it was the leading traveling vaudeville show with Chappelle being called "the Black P.T. Barnum and one of the biggest employers of African Americans in the entertainment industry." Entertainers who started their careers through "The Foots" include: Ma Rainey, Ida Cox, Bessie Smith, Louis Jordan, and comedians Tim Moore and Butterbeans and Susie.

South of Adams Street, businesses catered to LaVilla's red light district and the Greek and Syrian communities. Along the corridor, Jacksonville's Orthodox Jewish community established kosher meat markets, clothing trades, and dry goods businesses. At a time when African Americans were not allowed in Downtown Jacksonville, many businesses catered to the Black community. Black restaurant operators along Ashley and Davis Streets were the principal customers for many markets on Broad Street.

Long-time businesses included: Pierce-Wall Furniture Company, Worman's Bakery & Delicatessen, Pedro Mendez Cuban Tailor, The Florida Star, DeLoach Furniture Company, the Blue Chip Hotel, Imperial Pharmacy, Atlanta Life Insurance Company, Central Life Insurance Company, Duck Inn Restaurant, Walker's Business College, Imperial Pharmacy, Ellie Weems Photography, New Deal Cab Company, Broadway Department Store, Progress Furniture, and Singleton's Superior Bar-B-Q.

Now in a period of revitalization, Broad Street is home to the highest concentration of LaVilla buildings that survived the 1993 River City Renaissance urban renewal program.

[357 WORDS]

13. JACKSONVILLE CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY TIMELINE

The Jacksonville Civil Rights Movement Timeline (JCRMT) is a narrative chronology of organized civil rights efforts led by Blacks and Whites in Jacksonville to significantly end racism, racial discrimination based on skin color, and gain equal rights under the law for Jacksonville's Black citizens. Although the reactions to these efforts were both tumultuous and violent, the JCRMT was nonviolent and resulted in noteworthy accomplishments. The JCRMT also includes significant racial milestones. The narrative begins in the 1830s and continues to this day.

The struggle for civil rights include 1) a reckoning of endurance under and resistance against those crimes against and infringements upon Black people's civil rights; 2) efforts to fight racism; 3) efforts to end racial discrimination; 4) the fight for equal rights; 5) beyond the legal struggle, a battle for cultural fairness; and 6) the struggle against white supremacy and racism expressed culturally, either implicit or explicit.

It was the decision of the Civil Rights History Inventory Subcommittee not to include every instance of racial violence and overt racism that did not include a particular response in the progress of Black people's civil rights. Such instances as lynchings and Klan rallies, in and of themselves, without corresponding civil rights advances, were deemed "injustices too many to name."

NOTE: TIMELINE BELOW WILL BE EDITED AND SCALED DOWN FOR MARKER

1838 Bethel Baptist Institutional Church founded.

1865 Mother Midway Church in East Jacksonville was established as the first African Methodist Episcopal Church in Florida.

1865 Abraham Lincoln Lewis is born.

1866 Bethel Baptist Institutional Church splinters into a black church and a white church. Whites leave Bethel with intent to take the name. Courts rule in favor of Bethel's Black members, determining the rightful owners of the church name and property. White members leave Bethel and form Tabernacle Baptist Church which later becomes First Baptist Church.

1866 The African Methodist Episcopal Church founded Edward Waters College, the oldest historically Black college in Florida. The college is named Edward Waters after the Third Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. <https://www.ewc.edu/about/our-history/>

1869 Stanton Normal School, named for Edward McMasters Stanton, second Secretary of War under Lincoln, opens its doors. It's the first public school for Black children in Florida..

1869 William T. Garvin and Cataline B. Simmons become the first Black city council members for Jacksonville. Between 1869 and 1907, 110 African American men served in public office, 54 of

them in the Town of LaVilla, 23 in the City of Jacksonville, and 33 for Duval County. Positions include registrar, clerk of the circuit court, tax assessor, tax collector, county commissioner, justice of the peace, constable, municipal judge, clerk, marshal, council member, mayor, and treasurer.

1870 Reverend James W.C. Pennington organizes and becomes the first minister of Laura Street Presbyterian Church, the first Black Presbyterian church in Jacksonville. Pennington, born in 1807, had escaped slavery at age 19 to become a leading abolitionist in the North, even using his home and churches as stops on the Underground Railroad. Pennington died the same year he organized the church.

1871 Noted educator, lawyer, journalist, writer, and civil rights leader, James Weldon Johnson, is born in LaVilla. His brother John Rosamond Johnson, songwriter and composer, was born in 1873.

1872 Reverend S.B Darnell founded the Cookman Institute and named it after Reverend Alfred Cookman, who helped fund the school's initial construction. The Cookman Institute is the first school of higher education devoted to the religious and academic preparation of Black teachers in Florida.

Finishing his law degree at Howard University, Philadelphia-native Joseph E. Lee moves to Jacksonville, where he's admitted to the Florida Bar to become the first Black attorney in Jacksonville. Lee served in the Florida House of Representatives from 1875 to 1879 and the Florida Senate from 1881 to 1882.

1886 Sponsored by the Women's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, Harriet Emerson founded Boylan Industrial Training School for Girls in LaVilla. After relocating in 1910 to a new facility in the Oakland section of East Jacksonville, the Boylan Industrial Home and School merges with the Haven Home School in Savannah, Georgia to become Boylan-Haven School in 1932. In 1959, the school moves to Camden, South Carolina after merging with the Mather.

1886 James Weldon Johnson hears Frederick Douglass speak at Jacksonville's Sub-Tropical Exposition. He had read *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* after winning it as an academic award at Stanton.

1888 Joseph E. Lee was elected the first Black municipal judge in Jacksonville.

1888 Dr. Alexander H. Darnes, the first Black physician in Jacksonville, helps treat patients in Jacksonville's largest Yellow Fever epidemic. Since many white doctors refuse to work with Darnes, he's titled "general convenience physician" and assigned work in locations where he'd have less interaction with white doctors. Darnes, a former slave who served as valet to Confederate General Kirby Smith, practices medicine from his home on Ocean Street.

1891 Asa Philip Randolph, age two, moves with his family to Jacksonville from Crescent City, Florida. Randolph grows up to earn the moniker "Father of the Modern Civil Rights Movement."

1892 Rev. Matthew William Gilbert leaves as pastor of Bethel Baptist Institutional Church and become president of Florida Baptist Academy, which eventually evolves into Florida Memorial University.

1895 Bethel Baptist Institutional Church, under the leadership of Rev. John Milton Waldron, constructs the first church building to be erected South by a “colored” congregation in the South.

1897 James Weldon Johnson becomes the first Black person admitted to the Florida Bar since Reconstruction.

1899-1901 Black businessmen Charles Manigault, John Wetmore, and George Ross are elected as the last Black Jacksonville City Council members until the 1960s.

1900 James Weldon Johnson writes “Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing,” which his brother John Rosamond Johnson sets to music. The song later becomes known, informally, as the “Negro National Anthem.”

1900 Jacksonville businessman Abraham Lincoln Lewis and humanitarian Eartha White are present at Booker T. Washington’s founding of the National Negro Business League in Boston. By 1902, Jacksonville league members include A.L. Lewis, Joseph Blodgett, and George Whetmore.

1900 Lawton Pratt forms what’s now the oldest funeral home in Florida, initially the Lawton Pratt, then Hillman-Pratt, and now Hillman-Pratt and Walton Funeral Home on West Beaver Street in LaVilla.

1900 Manhattan Beach opens to Black beachgoers.

1901 Brewster Hospital opens its doors to Black patients and incorporates Black nursing training for the nearby Boylan Industrial Training School for Girls.

1901 Abraham Lincoln Lewis, Reverend John Milton Waldron and others found the Afro-American Life Insurance Company (“the Afro”), one of the most important Black owned businesses in the Southeast in the first half of the 20th century, to provide burial benefits for the “colored” community. The Afro also opens a savings department through which individuals can deposit 10, 15, or 25 cents per week.

1901 After the Great Fire of 1901, the Duval County School Board hires Richard Lewis Brown, the city’s first Black architect, as its chief builder and repairman, and in the next decade, he constructs several new schools for which no architect is recorded. One such school was Public School No. 8, later named J. Allen Axson, near East 17th and Franklin Streets. Brown is likely the school’s architect. He later works with white architects on Centennial Hall at Edward Waters College and designs Mt. Olive African Methodist Episcopal Church on Franklin Street.

1902 Eartha White builds what she first calls the “Colored Old Folks’ Home” at 1627 Milnor Street in the Oakland neighborhood of East Jacksonville.

1902 A group of prominent Black businessmen who charter the North Jacksonville Street Railway, Town and Improvement Company receive a franchise from Jacksonville City Council to construct, operate, and maintain a streetcar line starting at Clay Street and West Bay Street, northwest to Moncrief Springs. Founding members include D.W. Eschidge, R.R. Robinson, J.C. Myatt, William Young, George H. Ross, S.P. Pratt, D.G. Adgers, and F.D. Robbs. Walter P. Mucklow, H. Mason, F.C. Eleve, and Frank H. McDermott.

1903 The Jacksonville Electric Company opens Lincoln Park, the first Black amusement park at the end of Highway Avenue.

1903 Bethel Baptist Institutional Church builds a new sanctuary, now historic, designed by architect M.H. Hubbard of Utica, New York. Bethel’s members take pride in the fact that “the church was erected by Colored workers, under the direction of Colored contractors.”

1904 Eartha White officially founds the Clara White Mission, which offers services to Black residents the city itself would not offer. The Mission’s work will soon include an orphanage, child placement services, a tuberculosis hospital, a boys’ recreational organization, prison ministries, feeding and clothing services.

1905 Black Jacksonville attorney J. Douglas Wetmore challenges the city’s ordinance mandating racial separation on streetcars. The Florida Supreme Court upholds Wetmore’s legal victory, but the city soon modifies the ordinance to overcome the legal basis for Wetmore’s suit and reimplements streetcar segregation.

1905 Rev. John Milton Waldron, pastor of Bethel Baptist Institutional Church (1892) becomes the Treasurer of the Niagara Movement and later becomes one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

1908 Samuel Decatur McGill, later famous for defending the Scottsboro Boys in Alabama in 1931, establishes his law practice in Jacksonville..

1912 Durkee Field, named for Union soldier Joseph H. Durkee, opens as Jacksonville’s baseball stadium. The park becomes home to the Jacksonville Red Caps of the Negro Leagues and the Minor League Jacksonville Braves, racially integrated by Hank Aaron, Horace Garner and Felix Mantilla in 1953.

1912 David Dwight became one of the founders of the National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees. He was also a founder of the Duval County Democratic Alliance which was designed to increase voting among Black people in this city.

1914 Charles H. Anderson founds Anderson and Company banking institution for Black people.

1914 Zora Neale Hurston, acclaimed novelist, folklorist and anthropologist, lived in Jacksonville for a short time with her brother and family. She is recorded in the 1914 Directory of Bethel Baptist Institutional Church at 1663 Evergreen Avenue. Her essay, "How It Feels to Be Colored Me," provides a personal view of survival in a segregated society.

1915 In response to Duval County School Board's plan to eliminate Stanton School and replace it with smaller schools in different locations, the Stanton Board of Trustees files an injunction and the parties settle out-of-court. In September, the school board agrees to construct a new Stanton High School on the site of the earlier three school buildings. The second Stanton School was destroyed in the Great Fire and the inferior construction of its replacement reflected the low priority for Black education during Jim Crow. The Board's injunction is considered an early civil rights case victory. The new building opens its doors in 1917.

1915 May Lofton Kennedy becomes the first Black public librarian in Jacksonville. She works in the "Colored section" of the Jacksonville Free Public Library. In 1918, Kennedy becomes the first Black librarian in the Library of Congress.

1916 The Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge completes the five-story brick Masonic Temple building, which headquarters many Black business owners and professionals, including Anderson, Tucker & Co. Bank, Pedro Mendez Tailoring Shop and the law offices of Daniel W. Perkins.

1917 Under the leadership of Eartha M.M. White, Oakland Playground, the first city park opened specifically for Black citizens, opens at the northeast corner of East Union Street and Ionia Street adjacent to the Old City Cemetery.

1918 Florida Dwight is appointed the city's Supervisor of Recreation for Negroes. Dwight organizes a parade from Stanton School at Broad and Ashley Streets to the new Oakland Playground on East Union Street. Dwight remains a champion of youth guidance with after-school sports, crafts, literature, physical and intellectual competitions and community service.

1920 Eartha White leads voter registration drives to register Black women. She leads the resistance to the Ku Klux Klan, which stages an election day parade to intimidate black voters. Eartha White and other activists make election-day counts and estimate that between 3,000 and 4,000 Black voters have been turned away from their chance to vote.

1920 James Weldon Johnson becomes the National NAACP's first Black executive secretary.

1922 Norman Studios begins operation, making feature-length films and shorts in which black actors star in non-minstrel roles, roles comparable to those played by white actors in other movies.

1922 Eartha White becomes the Florida director of the National Anti-Lynching Committee and pushes for anti-lynching legislation.

1922 Douglas Anderson leads the effort to convince the Duval County School Board to build a public school for Black children on the Southside of Jacksonville. It opens as South Jacksonville Grammar School, and Anderson leads the school's free bus transportation service. In 1945, the school board renames it the Douglas Anderson School.

1923 Cookman Institute merges with the Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute, which had been founded in 1904 by Dr. Mary Bethune. Losing its Jacksonville presence, the school becomes the Daytona-Cookman Collegiate Institute. In 1931, the school becomes Bethune-Cookman College.

1924 James E. Whittington of Jacksonville, Lawton Pratt of Jacksonville, Charles Chestnut of Gainesville, and other Black funeral directors from across the state form the Florida Negro Embalmers' and Morticians' Association, today's Florida Mortician's Association.

1924 Joe Higdon opens the Hollywood Music Store, which functions as a popular hub of activity for both professional and amateur Black musicians.

1925 A. Phillip Randolph organizes the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the first Black labor union, and seeks a labor contract with the Pullman Company.

1926 During a practice run at Jacksonville's Paxon Field for a May Day "barn storming" performance, Bessie Coleman's plane crashes, killing Coleman, the first Black woman to hold a pilot's license.

1926 Princess Laura Adorkor Kofi establishes her headquarters in Jacksonville and, after breaking with Marcus Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association, founds her organization, the African Universal Church and Commercial League.

1926 A. L. Lewis builds Lincoln Golf and Country Club in Northwest Jacksonville for Blacks.

1927 Wilder Park Branch Library, Jacksonville's first branch library for Black patrons, opens.

1927 Mary White Blocker founds the Florida Conference of Colored Parents and Teachers.

1929 E. L. Weems, first licensed Black photographer in Jacksonville, opens his first studio, designing his own method of colorization before color film was invented. In business for nearly 50 years, Weems becomes the primary photographic chronicler of Black life in Jacksonville. Mason, Herman. African American Life in Jacksonville.

1930 Jacksonville's Rosenwald School #143 called West Jacksonville Elementary School opens. Jewish philanthropist Julius Rosenwald funded construction for 5,000 schools for Black children throughout the South between 1917 and mid 1940s.

1935 The Jacksonville Negro Welfare League, among whose leaders are Eartha White and Richard P. Daniel, first occupies space in the Richmond Hotel building at 420 Broad Street. Its goal is to “provide advice and help in meeting the needs of African-Americans educationally, economically, socially, and politically.

1935 A. L. Lewis develops American Beach, in Nassau County, the only beach for Black people in the Jacksonville area.

1936 Boy Scout pioneer David H. Dwight, Sr. becomes the first Black Scout leader to receive the Silver Beaver, scouting’s highest award. Dwight receives the honor after he successfully leads a campaign for Blackboys to join the organization opens a Boy Scout camp at New Berlin.

1937 The Durkeeville Housing Project opens. It’s the first public housing project for Black residents in Jacksonville.

1937 A. Philip Randolph wins labor contract for the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters against the Pullman Company.

1937 Augusta Savage was selected to make the sculpture for the Community Arts Building at the World’s Fair. Although she was a Green Cove Springs native, her most famous piece, “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” was inspired by the song written by the Johnson brothers. She used her art as a form of activism as evidenced in another piece entitled Gamin where she depicts a Black youth in a humane manner instead of a caricature. This piece is a part of the permanent collection at the Cummer Museum and Gardens.

1937 James Edward Hutchins designs and builds a number of single family dwellings in the Durkeeville and College Gardens subdivisions. He coordinates with the Veterans Affairs department to train Black carpenters, brick masons and architects.

1941 In his magazine Black Worker, A. Philip Randolph issues his “Call to Negro America to March on Washington” after meetings with several Civil Rights leaders, including Jacksonville’s Eartha White, in Chicago in 1940. Randolph’s call for a march results in his meeting with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the end of legal racial discrimination in defense industries and the federal government and establishes Fair Employment Practices Commission.

1941 Mary White Blocker files suit against the Duval County Board of Public Instruction for equal salaries for Black teachers. The court’s 1942 ruling reads “The defendants, the Board of Public Instruction of Duval County Florida and W. Daniel Boyd as the superintendent shall apply a single salary schedule without discrimination because of race or color.”

1942 Blodgett Homes, Jacksonville’s third public housing project for Black residents, is built, named fothe r wealthy Black contractor, Joseph Haygood Blodgett.

1944 Eli B'usabe Nyombolo founds Adorkaville, named for Princess Laura Adorkor Kofi, on the Northside. The 11+ acre property was to include homes for members of the community and a school with the intent to establish business connections between Africa and America.

1944 Jacksonville's William Surcey, a "Tuskegee Airman," along with his crew, repair P-40 Warhawks during World War II.

1945 Reverend Dallas Graham attempts to register as a Democrat, though the Democratic Party in Jacksonville accepts only white voters. Black attorney D.W. Perkins challenges the party, and U.S. Circuit Judge Bayard B. Shields rules that in Graham's favor. The Democratic Party files an appeal, but the decision is upheld by Judge Mites W. Lewis.

1946 Jacksonville's Stetson Kennedy visits the House Un-American Activities Committee asking them to investigate the Ku Klux Klan. The HUAAC refuses.

1946 The Council of Social Agencies, including Eartha White and Richard P. Daniel, publishes Jacksonville Looks at its Negro Community: A Survey of Conditions Affecting the Negro Population in Jacksonville in Duval County, Florida, which leads to the founding, in 1947, of the Jacksonville Urban League.

1946 City officials refuse to allow the Montreal Royals, a farm team of the Brooklyn Dodgers, to play at Durkee Field (James P. Small Stadium) due to the presence of Jackie Robinson on the roster, who integrates the Major Leagues the following year.

1947 The Jacksonville Urban League forms from a merger between the Jacksonville Negro Welfare League and a new Jacksonville branch of the National Urban League.

1947 A. Philip Randolph petitions President Truman to integrate the U.S. Military 1948 Wilson Armstrong, a black mortar mixer, loses a City Council race to Claude Smith, 353-278. Smith thanks black voters and organizes the building of the so-called Jefferson Street Pool at Jefferson and Fourth. Armstrong would have been the first black City Council member since Reconstruction.

1951 Eric O. Simpson founds The Florida Star by Eric O. Simpson, now Northeast Florida's oldest Black newspaper, since mainstream news of the period was hardly reliable for minority populations.

1951 Jacksonville Civil Rights activist and writer Stetson Kennedy, amongst several other writers, releases We Charge Genocide: The Crime of Government against the Negro People at U.N. meetings in Paris on behalf of an American organization calling itself the Civil Rights Congress.

1951 Two Black candidates, Porcher Taylor and Elcee Lucas, enter the City Council race for Ward Five against three white candidates. Since ward elections are done at-large, Taylor and Lucas have to garner a certain number of white votes to win. Though losing the election, Taylor and Lucas help establish a solid foundation for future candidates.

1952 The TV variety program The Billy Daniels Show first airs. Daniels was born in Jacksonville. His show is the first TV program with a Black host.

1952 Porcher Taylor, editor of The Florida Tattler, seeks office as justice of the peace. His attempt is part of a political strategy to seek more minor offices that would receive less attention from whites and thus hopefully prevail in Black majority wards.

1952 Marian Anderson sings to an racially integrated audience at the Old Duval County Armory after refusing to sing if black and white audience members could not be together. Anderson's Jacksonville and Miami shows are the first integrated concerts in Florida since Reconstruction.

1953 Henry "Hank" Aaron, Horace Gamer, and Felix Mantilla integrate baseball's Minor Leagues when signed to the Jacksonville Braves, who play at Durkee Field. Withstanding verbal abuse and racism, forced to seek accommodations in private homes, including that of Lucille and Manuel Rivera, nineteen-year old Aaron hits 22 home runs, achieves a batting average of .362, and is named the leagues' Most Valuable Player.

1954 Jacksonville activist and writer Stetson Kennedy publishes the later named I Rode with the Ku Klux Klan, later named The Klan Unmasked. The book refers to Kennedy's informing the FBI of his infiltration of the Klan, though it fictionalizes himself as its protagonist. In later years, the Klan periodically sends Kennedy death threats at his St. Johns County home, Beluthahatchee, once setting the woods on fire around it.

1955 Norma Ruth Solomon becomes the first Black female director in Jacksonville, and corresponding the first female public school band director, Jacksonville Hurst, Rodney.

1955 Porcher Taylor runs again for a seat on the City Council representing Ward Five. Taylor and his two black opponents, Isadore Singleton and Ernest Jackson, lost due to not obtaining enough white votes required by the at-large voting system.

1956 Postal clerk Rudolph Daniels initiates a United States Postal Service inspection of Jacksonville's segregated facilities and orders all US Postal facilities desegregated.

1957 Rudolph Daniels challenges his personnel assignment to the segregated Black "Army Reserve Unit," which leads to Jacksonville's receiving its first racially integrated Army Reserve Unit.

1960 Members of the Jacksonville Youth Council NAACP "sit-in" at segregated White lunch counters in downtown. Jacksonville Youth Council NAACP members led by Rodney L. Hurst, Alton Yates, and Marjorie Meeks and more than 80 mostly high school students, conducted non-violent sit-in demonstrations protesting segregated Downtown Jacksonville White lunch counters. After "sitting-in" for two weeks, on August 27, 1960 more than 200 White males attacked the demonstrators with ax handles and baseball bats. At a Mass Meeting, the next day at St. Paul's

A.M.E. Church, The NAACP and those in attendance approved a Youth Council resolution calling for the boycott of downtown Jacksonville stores. The adviser of the Youth Council is Rutledge Pearson, an 8th-grade American history school teacher who would later become president of the Jacksonville Branch NAACP, the President of the Florida State Conference of Branches of the NAACP, and a member of the NAACP'S National Board of Directors.

1960 Jacksonville NAACP Legal Counsel Earl Johnson, file suits on behalf of seven Black parents and fourteen children, charging the Duval County School Board with operating a system of racially segregated schools. The case is known as Braxton Case.

1960 Black business owner Frank Hampton files suit with a group of Black citizens demanding the City of Jacksonville desegregates municipal golf courses. The suit is amended to include the Gator Bowl, Civic Auditorium, Wolfson Park, the Jacksonville Zoo and swimming pools along with other parks and playgrounds. The initial response by the City is to close down or sell these facilities to private parties. Another suit is filed requiring desegregation of the Duval County Courthouse, Duval Hospital, beaches and county jail and prison farm. To avoid the lawsuit, the County Commissioners agree to the desegregation of those facilities.

1960 A biracial committee to address civil rights issues is appointed by the NAACP, the White Jacksonville Ministerial Alliance, the Black Jacksonville Ministerial Alliance and the white business community after Mayor Haydon Burns refuse to officially appoint the committee. The committee meets at the Snyder Memorial Methodist Church.

1961 Adrian Kenneth "Ken" Knight hosts the Ken Knight Show, the Blackhosted television show in Jacksonville, to broadcast, in Knight's words, "the talents of our people in music and other forms of entertainment, but, also, present to the viewing public other fields of achievement by Negroes."

1961 As a result of the biracial committee meetings, an agreement is made to integrate downtown lunch counters. Youth Council NAACP President Rodney Hurst and Youth Council Secretary Marjorie Meeks ate at Woolworth White lunch counters for one week. After that week, all White Lunch counters in downtown Jacksonville downtown department stores are integrated. White lunch counters in Jacksonville downtown department stores.

1962 Federal Judge Bryan Simpson rules that the Duval County School Board must develop a plan for ending public school segregation. The School Board plan approved by Judge Simpson allows for the integration of first and second grades in 1963 with a different grade level added each year until in full compliance with the court order.

1963 Because of residential segregation, only thirteen black students enroll in five white schools in September of 1963. The schools included Fishweir, Hyde Grove, Oak Hill, Lackawanna and Venetia Elementary Schools.

1963 For two hours after his victory, NASCAR, the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing, refuses to recognize Wendell Scott as the winner of the Jacksonville 200, a "Grand

National Series" race, at Jacksonville's Speedway Park. Scott's victory is the first NASCAR "top level" win for a Black driver, but NASCAR initially flags white driver Buck Baker as the winner. NASCAR delays the correct announcement to avoid having 5,000 white fans see a black driver hold the trophy and perform the victory ritual of kissing the beauty queen, who is white.

1963 A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin organize the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, where Martin Luther King delivers his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

1963 Sollie Mitchell, works as an attendant with Atlantic Coastline Railroads on the "Freedom Train," the long ride to Washington D.C. of Black attendees to the historic March on Washington. Rash-Sawyer, Donna.

1964 The Ku Klux Klan bombs the home of Inoa Godfrey, mother of Donal Godfrey, a Black first grader, for attending previously all-white Lackawanna Elementary School. Godfrey has been escorted to school by police detectives, due to white demonstrators heckling and threatening Godfrey and his mother Ionia. The bomb causes no injuries because it was placed on the opposite side of the house from the bedrooms. One Klansman is sentenced to seven years, one acquitted, and four other Klansmen released due to a mistrial.

1964 Frustrated with the School Board's slow pace in following the desegregation order, the NAACP requests Black students to strike for three days, beginning on December 7, 1964. On the first day, 17,000 black students stayed home from school. Within three days, 31,000 students participated in the strike.

1964 Four white men driving the Northside, looking for a Black person to shoot, murder Johnnie Mae Chappel, a mother of 10, as she walks along New Kings Road. Of the four men in the car, only J.W. Rich is charged. He serves three years.

1964 Five days before the Beatles are to play Jacksonville, they release a statement, protesting segregation in the city's municipal facilities and refusing to play unless Black people can attend without being segregated. John Lennon says, "I'd sooner lose our appearance money" than play to a segregated audience. The City relents and opens the concert to all.

1964 Dr. Robert Hayling, St. Augustine dentist and Civil Rights activist, is taken by Leo Chase, a Black funeral director in St. Augustine, to Brewster Hospital in Jacksonville, after he is beaten by the Ku Klux Klan. The family of the Civil Rights Leader did not trust the doctors in St. Augustine to administer emergency medical treatment. They look after Hayling until he is healthy enough to return home, while Dr. Arnett Girardeau provides extensive oral surgery, all at no cost.

1964 Jacksonville native Robert Lee "Bullet Bob" Hayes wins two gold medals, one in the 100 meters and another as the anchor in the US 400 meter relay team at the Tokyo Olympics. Bob Hayes is called the "World's Fastest Human." In 1972, playing for the Dallas Cowboys of the NFL, he receives the Super Bowl ring and becomes the first person to win both a Super Bowl ring and Olympic gold medals.

1964 Dr. Andrew A. Robinson becomes founding principal of William Marion Raines High School. Though Duval County School System has been discredited, Raines, under Robinson's leadership, becomes the first school in Duval County to be accredited in 1968.

1964 Rutledge Pearson elected president of Florida State Conference of Branches of NAACP. Pearson was also the advisor of Jax Youth Council during 1960 sit-ins and Ax Handle Saturday. He tragically died in an auto accident on May 1, 1967.

1965 Prominent Black physician W.W. Schell, Jr. is accepted on the staff of St. Luke's hospital. The fact that Black physicians received less respect than their white counterparts inspired Schell to become involved in community affairs with the NAACP, the Jacksonville Urban League, etc..

1966 After the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Brewster Hospital closes in 1966 and is incorporated into the new Methodist Hospital, now part of UF Health Jacksonville. A large number of Black doctors lose their positions with the merger.

1967 Attorney Earl Johnson, Sallye Mathis, Mary Singleton and Oscar Taylor are the first Black City Council members since 1907. Sallye Mathis and Mary Singleton are also the first women ever elected to City Council. Charles E. Simmons, Jr. is elected to the City Civil Service Board after having been appointed to the position in 1966.

1969 A white cigarette salesman shoots at a group of young Black men in proximity to his truck on Florida Avenue, hitting Buck Riley in the leg. The incident leads to riots along eight blocks of Florida Avenue. In response to what's called the Halloween Riot of 1969, Dr. Arnett E. Girardeau, Chairman of the Community Urban Development Council requests Mayor Hans Tanzler have the Jacksonville Community Relations Commission investigate the cause of the riot and actions by local police officers. A special committee, the "Task Force on Civil Disorder," is formed with five subcommittees. Suggestions from the special committee's report are never implemented.

1969 Wendell P. Holmes, Jr. is elected to the Duval County School Board, becoming the first Black school board member in Florida.

1971 Desegregation implementation of Duval County public schools transfer to U.S. District Judge Gerald Bard Tjoflat, who orders mass busing to integrate Duval County schools, which proves to be a greater burden on Black students bussed out of their neighborhoods.

1971 In June of 1971, a police officer shot and killed a Black teenager, Donnie Ray Hall, on suspicion of being part of a group that had stolen an automobile. 300 black demonstrators under the local NAACP chapter picketed the Duval County Court House. After the demonstrators dispersed, small groups started looting and burning buildings along Florida Avenue that continued for several days and escalated to other parts of the city. The Community Urban Development Council under Dr. Girardeau began documenting cases of police brutality and harassment and provided this information to Governor Reuben Askew. After a police officer was shot and killed

with another one wounded, a grand jury investigated the recent incidents concluding that the actions by the Sheriff's Office demonstrated proper restraint, but recommended better communication between the police and the black communities.

1971 Jacksonville Urban League Director Clanzel Brown and Jacksonville Black Community Coalition Coordinator Dr. Arnett E. Girardeau brought together more than 50 Black and White Community leaders to form the biracial Council of Leadership for Community Advancement (COLCA). COLCA forms five task forces addressing education, employment, housing, media and law enforcement. The recommendations of COLCA task forces are never significantly implemented.

1971 Eddie Mae Steward, on behalf of her daughter, Alta Oveta Mims, successfully sues the Duval County School Board over continued segregation. *Mims v. Duval County School Board* alleges the county maintains 113 totally segregated schools—89 white and 24 Black—and that the white schools are staffed by white personnel and Black schools are staffed by Black personnel. Steward becomes president of the Jacksonville NAACP in 1972.

1972 Mary L. Singleton, one of the first Black City Council members since Reconstruction is elected to the Florida House of Representatives, becoming the first Black legislator from North Florida since Reconstruction.

1972 Florida's first racially integrated private law firm -- Sheppard, Fletcher, Hand & Adams -- was founded at 215 N. Washington Street in Downtown Jacksonville. The firm consisted of attorneys Bill Sheppard, Lyman Fletcher, Jack G. Hand, Jr., Henry Adams, and later Hugh Carithers. Adams went on to become the first African-American judge in Florida's Fourth Judicial Circuit and the first African-American federal judge in the Middle District of Florida. In 2012, the Jacksonville City Council and Jacksonville Bar Association honored Sheppard, Fletcher, Hand, Adams & Carithers on the 40th anniversary of the firm's founding.

1973 Reverend C.B. Dailey established the First Baptist Church of Oakland Outreach Center which provided all manner of resources for the needy. Rev, Dailey himself was a past vice president of the NAACP where he organized, led and was ultimately arrested for participating in demonstrations for public accommodations, equal opportunity for jobs and education, and equal representation in government.

1974 Dr. Ezekiel W. Bryant becomes the first Black president/provost in the Florida community college system at Florida Junior College's North Campus in Jacksonville.

1976 Mary L. Singleton is appointed Florida's first Black Supervisor of Elections.

1976 Dr. Arnett Girardeau, a local dentist, is elected to the Florida House of Representatives where he advocates for prison reform and social service issues and leads the State of Florida to withdraw investments from South Africa as a protest against Apartheid.

1976 Lawyer and Civil Rights activist Earl Johnson becomes the first Black City Council President.

1977 The Jacksonville Urban League, under President Clanzel Brown, publishes its First Annual Status of Blacks in Jacksonville, which shows the same racial issues confronting the city as in the 1950s and 1960s.

1978 Mary Singleton becomes the first Black candidate for lieutenant governor, with gubernatorial candidate Claude Kirk. Jones, Maxine D. African Americans in Florida.

1982 Dr. Arnett Girardeau is the first Black to serve in the Florida Senate from Northeast Florida since Reconstruction.

1989 Jacksonville Black History Calendar is created under the leadership of Dr. Brenda Robinson Simmons and Ms. Clovia Russell. The calendar chronicles Black life, history, culture and contributions. The publication wins the Jacksonville Historic Commission's Historic Preservation Award and in 2016 and all of the editions are digitized in the Jacksonville Public Library.

1990 Black Jacksonville attorney Leander Shaw becomes the first Black chief justice of the Florida Supreme Court. Shaw had been appointed a judge of the Florida Industrial Relations Commission in 1972 and appointed to the First District Court of Appeal in 1979.

1991 Warren Jones is the first Black candidate to qualify by petition and then win a seat on the City Council. He serves as president for two consecutive fiscal years.

2000 Johnnie Mae Chappel is recognized as a "Civil Rights Martyr" and added to the Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama.

2012 Dr. Brenda R. Simmons-Hutchins is elected first African American Chair of the Board of Library Trustees. During her tenure, severe reductions in the library's operating budget continue the threat of library closures, especially those serving predominately African-American citizens. Through strong collaboration and advocacy with legislative entities and the increased creation of library "Friends" groups, the closures are abated and the literacy lifeline for many vulnerable citizens is restored.

2013 The Duval County School Board votes to support the renaming of Nathan Bedford Forrest High School, named in 1959 for a Confederate general and first Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. After Forrest students voted to change the name, the students selected to rename Forrest High School to Westside High School and select the Wolverine as the mascot. The school board ratified their choice.

2014 James Weldon Johnson and A. Philip Randolph inducted into the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame

2015 Sallye B. Mathis inducted into the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame

2016 Rutledge Pearson and Earl M Johnson inducted into the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame

2017 Arnett Girardeau inducted into the Florida Civil Rights Hall of Fame

2018 Main postal facility renamed after Rutledge Pearson

2018 Development of the Hope and History Mural which memorializes Ax Handle Saturday. The mural is an attempt to inspire Jacksonville, FL schools and the community to properly reflect on the past in order to inform and encourage a more just future. The mural will be displayed at the Eastside Brotherhood Building on A. P Randolph Blvd

DRAFT

13. RESIDENTIAL LAVILLA

"My father worked and he paid for that house with every stitch that he made. They might want it, but I want it more."

- *Padrica Mendez, 1995*

LaVilla was once home to many of Jacksonville's old families and most distinguished citizens. Many stately residences were built for and occupied by African American professionals, doctors, attorneys, business owners, and community leaders. Once characterized by elaborate two-story dwellings, West Monroe Street was an area of the neighborhood where affluent homeowners lived. The houses on this block are representative of LaVilla's original residential density, scale, and architectural character.

725 West Monroe Street is a seven-bedroom house that was built for liquor company owner Solomon Shad in 1909. Shad was known as "The Whiskey Man."

The Neo-Classical Revival house was restored by Pedro Mendez, Sr. in 1946. Mendez was a Cuban-born tailor who opened P. Mendez Cuban Tailor at 408 Broad Street in 1927. To protect it from demolition, his daughter Padrica Mendez successfully worked to have the residence designated as a local historic landmark in 1995.

The Queen Anne dwellings on Jefferson Street were built between 1901 and 1903. They were once home to the family of Benjamin Safer. Safer arrived in Jacksonville around the turn of the century and was the first to open a kosher meat market in the city. Safer was also very instrumental in establishing the Orthodox Congregation B'nai Israel and LaVilla's Jewish enclave that developed around it.

[240 WORDS]

14. YOUNG MEN'S HEBREW ASSOCIATION / MACEO ELKS LODGE #8

“LaVilla ... became the central area for the Orthodox community. Merchants, tailors, shoe repair shops, stores and markets sprang up on Broad Street, and in 1901 they formed the nucleus for an Orthodox congregation, B’Nai Israel.”

- Natalie H. Glickstein

The Maceo Elks Lodge #8 at 712 West Duval Street, is the last surviving institutional building in LaVilla associated with its early Jewish community. During the 1880s, Yiddish speaking Jewish immigrants from Russia and Romania arrived in Jacksonville, primarily living and working in this area of LaVilla. In 1901 they established an Orthodox temple named B’nai Israel at the intersection of Duval and Jefferson Streets.

In 1910, the Young Men’s Hebrew Association was proposed to perpetuate Judaism as a positive aspect in community life through health, education, recreation, democratic training, and information education in the Jewish tradition. Building plans were drafted by local architects J.H.W. Hawkins, Talley and Summer, and Benjamin and Ball.

The YMHA held a bazaar to open its doors to the public on February 8, 1915. Jacksonville mayor, Jac Swearingen, addressed the large gathering on the opening night. By 1928, the Jewish population of LaVilla began moving into suburban neighborhoods. The YMHA relocated to Springfield in 1932.

In 1945, the building was sold to Maceo Elk Lodge #8. Approved on December 7, 1898, Maceo Elks Lodge #8 is the seventh oldest Improved Benevolent Protective Order of Elks of the World (IBPOEW) lodge in the country. Incorporated in 1898, the IBPOEW is the largest Black fraternal organization in the world. African American fraternal organizations have played a vital role in the African American lives by providing financial, spiritual, and emotional aid to the members and communities they serve. Locally, the Elks assisted the Jacksonville community in hosting workshops, feeding the elderly, hosting community dances, talent shows, and other positive activities. The YMHA / Maceo Elks Lodge #8 building was added to the National Register of Historic Places on October 29, 1992.

[323 WORDS]

15. MASONIC TEMPLE

"one of the finest buildings owned by Negroes in the world."

- *Negro Blue Book, 1926*

Completed in 1916, the Masonic Temple has served as the focal point for Jacksonville's Black community's commercial and fraternal activities for decades. The building was designed by local architects Victor E. Mark, and Leeroy Sheftall with John Anderson Lankford consulting. Known as the "Dean of Black architecture," Lankford was the first professionally-licensed Black architect in Washington, D.C. who specialized in church, fraternal, and school designs along with residential commissions in Black communities throughout the country and South Africa.

Designed as a mix of Prairie and Chicago School architectural styles, the Masonic Temple was partially financed by the National Negro Businessmen League to provide office space for Black insurance agents, dentists, doctors, attorneys, newspapers, and other businesses in the city.

The building featured retail at street level, office space on the second and third floors, and the top floors were occupied by the Grand Lodge.

Ground floor tenants included: Anderson Tucker & Company, Jacksonville's second Black-owned bank in 1914, Pedro Mendez Cuban Tailor Shop, and the law office of Leander Shaw, Jr. Shaw became the first Black chief justice of the Florida Supreme Court in 1990. Second floor tenants included Daniel Webster Perkins, Esq. and Viola Muse. D.W. Perkins, also known as "The Colonel," successfully argued the landmark case before the Florida Supreme Court that allowed African Americans to serve on juries. His nephew, Paul C. Perkins, Sr. Esq., served as co-counsel with Thurgood Marshall and Jack Greenberg of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, representing the Groveland Four case in Lake County in 1951. A hairdresser, Viola Muse also worked with Zora Neale Hurston for the Negro Writers Unit of the Federal Writers Project in 1936 and 1937. Tenants on the third floor included the Jacksonville branch offices of the Atlanta Life and North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance companies prior to World War II.

The third, fourth, and fifth floors housed the most important Masonic offices and Grand East, a 900-seat auditorium where the community met for events and to discuss various business and political issues. This included nightly sermons during the 1920s by Princess Laura Adorkor Kofi, then associated with Marcus Garvey's pan-African movement, Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porter (BSCP) meetings led by labor union leader Asa Philip Randolph, and Civil Rights organizational meetings by the NAACP during the 1960s.

Still owned and operated by The Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge, Most Ancient and Honorable Fraternity, Free and Accepted Masons, Prince Hall Affiliation, Florida and Belize, Central America Jurisdiction, Incorporated, the building was designated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

[439 WORDS]

16. RICHMOND HOTEL

“There will be a day sometime in the near future when this guide will not have to be published. That is when we as a race will have equal rights and privileges in the United States.”

- Victor Green, 1936

First published in 1936 by Victor Green, the *Negro Motorist Green Book* was a compilation of restaurants, over-night accommodations, gas stations, and other public services for people of color traversing a white-only landscape during segregation. LaVilla was a major Florida destination featured in the document.

Owned and operated by Alice Kilpatrick, the Richmond Hotel was Jacksonville's finest Green Book hotel. Built in 1909, the Richmond featured 48 upper floor rooms and a 65-seat restaurant. James "Charlie Edd" Craddock's Little Blue Chip Club operated on the first floor. Craddock's clubs, bars, and taverns were said to be protected by the local police and were hotbeds for bolita. Bolita (Spanish for "little ball") was a type of illegal lottery popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Cuba and among Florida's working-class Hispanic, Italian, and black populations.

Many musicians would stand on the hotel's balcony to woo the crowds that came to see their performances. Famous guests included Chitlin Circuit-era musicians: Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Ella Fitzgerald, and Billie Holiday.

Other surviving LaVilla Green Book sites include: the Fiesta Hotel, Sunrise Restaurant (Odd Fellows Hall), and Hotel Sanders (Wynn Hotel).

[230 WORDS]

17. RAY CHARLES – THE GENIUS OF SOUL

"It was the first big city I ever lived in. I was pretty close to the center of things, staying with Fred and Lena Mae Thompson at 752 West Church Street, right near downtown."

- Ray Charles, 1978

American musical icon Ray Charles launched his career as a pianist, singer, composer, and bandleader, while residing on this block of West Church Street.

Ray Charles Robinson was born in Albany, Georgia on September 23, 1930. His parents were Bailey Robinson and Aretha (or Reatha) Robinson. Known by his friends as R.C., he lost his sight by the age of seven, while growing up in Greenville, Florida. He attended the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind in St. Augustine from 1937 to 1945.

Following his mother's death in spring 1945, he quit school and moved to Jacksonville at the age of 15 with the intent to gain professional music experience in the big city. Living in LaVilla with Alfred and Lena Mae Thompson, R.C. memorized his way around town without using a cane or guide dog and would jam at any gig he could get.

His reputation as a talented musician grew after he began visiting the office of the Jacksonville Local 632 of the American Federation of Musicians daily, which was in the Clara White Mission. Occasionally playing with bands at the Lenape and famous Two Spot club, he eventually changed his name to Ray Charles to avoid confusion with boxing champion "Sugar Ray" Robinson. In 1945, Charles left Jacksonville to continue his career. By the time of his death at age 73 in 2004, Charles had become known as "The Genius of Soul" and one of the world's most loved entertainers.

[283 WORDS]

18. THE CHITLIN CIRCUIT

(WILL INCLUDE LENAPE HISTORY IN PICTURE CAPTION)

“The telephone lines started buzzing, taxis started running, the tailors, the restaurants, and in fact, the whole stroll turned out on West Ashley Street in this city’s young Harlem... All in all, Jacksonville is a very fly town.”

-bandleader Walter Barnes, 1938

A major center of focus during the formative years of vaudeville, ragtime, jazz, and blues, LaVilla emerged as Florida’s premier Chitlin’ Circuit destination during the early 20th century. The Chitlin’ Circuit was the collective name given to a series of Black-owned nightclubs, dance halls, juke joints, and theaters that were safe and acceptable for Black entertainers to perform in during segregation. Notable Jacksonville venues on the Chitlin’ Circuit were the Lenape Bar, Manuel’s Tap Room, Knights of Pythias Hall, Strand Theatre, Duval County Armory, and the Two Spot.

Chitlins are a dish made from pig intestines that date back to slavery, when the enslaved were forced to nurture themselves with the less desirable parts of animals. What was originally provided in a demeaning manner was turned into a soul food delicacy that remains popular in African American communities throughout the country today. Like chitlins, the circuit was established to nurture African American performers during a time when they were not allowed in most white-owned venues.

Walter Barnes, a Chicago jazz musician born in Vicksburg, Mississippi, is credited as being an early originator of the Chitlin’ Circuit. Following the collapse of the Theatre Owners Booking Association (T.O.B.A.), a vaudeville circuit for African American performers, Barnes successfully established a network of venues across the American South during the 1930s where it was safe, acceptable, and successful for African American entertainers to perform. Establishing a winter headquarters in LaVilla to conduct annual late-fall-to-spring Southern tours, contracts, and routes created and promoted through Barnes’ position at the Chicago Defender soon became the Chitlin’ Circuit. Despite his death in 1940, his success in touring across the South encouraged numerous acts to follow the Circuit during segregation.

[323 WORDS]

19. CLARA WHITE MISSION / GLOBE THEATRE

*"I was hungered and ye gave me meat
I was thirsty and ye gave me drink
I was a stranger and ye took me in
Naked and ye clothed me
I was sick and ye visited me
I was in prison and ye came unto me."
- Clara White Mission, 1971*

Frank Crowd opened the Black-owned Bijou Theatre on July 19, 1908. The 218-seat theater featured silent films and vaudeville shows as its primary attraction. In 1910, it became the Globe Theatre. An "anchor to southern road shows," its Russell-Owens stock company was one of the most influential pioneering African American theatrical stock companies in the country. Here, Gertrude Pridgett Rainey received three or four encores every night. By the end of her career, Ma Rainey had become billed as "The Mother of the Blues."

In 1932, the building became the permanent home to the Clara White Mission, the oldest Black nonprofit in the state of Florida. The Mission was founded in 1904 by nationally-recognized humanitarian, philanthropist, and businesswoman Dr. Eartha Mary Magdalene White (1876-1974). Dedicated to the memory of her mother, Clara White, and to serving the needs of the less fortunate in the community, Eartha directed her many activities from the Mission. The Mission also served as a headquarters for the Works Progress Administration's arts and sewing projects. Renowned architect Henry Klutho ventured briefly from retirement to direct the renovation of the Mission as a personal favor to Eartha White.

In addition to her charitable work, Eartha had careers as an opera singer, a schoolteacher, and an entrepreneur. She operated a laundry company, a mercantile, a restaurant, a janitorial service, a taxi service, and an employment bureau. She was Jacksonville's first female realtor, the first professional social worker hired by the city, the first black census taker in Florida, and the first female employee of the Afro American Life Insurance Company. Eartha White's charter memberships included the National Business League, the Community Chest (United Way), the Jacksonville Historical Society, and the Jacksonville Humane Society.

Eartha White had many well-known and influential friends who were visitors to the Mission, including Mr. and Mrs. Booker T. Washington, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, James Weldon Johnson and his brother John Rosamond Johnson, first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, Zora Neale Hurston, and Ray Charles. Eartha White lived on the second floor of the Mission for 42 years. Dr. Eartha M.M. White Historical Museum is a continuing memorial to both Clara White and her daughter, Dr. Eartha White. The Clara White Mission building was designated as a local historic landmark in 1993.

[427 WORDS]

19. DINING IN LAVILLA (JENKINS QUALITY BBQ)

"On Saturdays, concerts were held across the street from Stanton High School. On Fridays, musicians strolled the streets, playing guitars. The aromas of barbecue, fish, and crab were in the air."

- Richard McKissick, 1986

[Jacksonville's unique history has given the city a richly varied – if often slept-on – food scene. LaVilla's commercial districts, Ashley, Broad, and Davis Streets, have contributed significantly to the city's distinctive and authentic cuisine from Gullah Geechee specialties like garlic crabs to Arab American camel rider sandwich to a homegrown style of barbecue.

The origins of American barbecue can be traced to the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, which stretches along the Eastern coastline from North Florida to North Carolina. Barbecue has its roots in Native American, Spanish, and African culinary heritage. The word "barbecue" comes from "barbakoa," a term for open-fire grilling used by the Taino people of the Caribbean. Southeastern Native Americans also used the technique, with Mocama Timucua among the first people whose barbecue traditions entered the written record. Later, Spanish colonists and enslaved West Africans brought Old World animals, sauces, and flavors into the mix.]

Prior to desegregation, West Ashley Street was a bustling African American nightlife district. Many businesses featured barbecue on their menu.

A popular menu item just after World War II was the rib sandwich, which consisted of three or four ribs served between slices of bread with slaw and a little barbecue sauce. Served with the bones in, the sandwich was meant to be pulled apart with the fingers and eaten.

The rib sandwich is a popular menu item at legacy African American barbecue restaurants, including Jenkins Quality Barbecue, which was established by Melton Jenkins, Jr. in 1957. Known for its savory mustard-based barbecue sauce, the 830 North Pearl Street restaurant was located on West Ashley Street during the 1960s. Surviving urban renewal, it was crowned the best barbecue restaurant in Florida by the Food Network in 2023.

[320 WORDS]

20. "OLD STANTON" SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

"At the close of my first year, twenty-six were ready to be graduated from the eighth grade. This was all the education the city of Jacksonville gave me, and it was all it was giving them. I had been thinking about them for some time ... They are entitled to as much as others ... Why shouldn't they get it? ... But how? ... Well, that sounds like a feasible plan ... Can I carry it through? ... I think I can ... I'll try it ... I'll do it. I did do it; I made Stanton a high school."

- James Weldon Johnson, 1933

An academically renowned public high school, Stanton is consistently rated as one of the top high schools in the nation. Financed through the aid of the Freedmen's Bureau and constructed on property once owned by Governor Ossian B. Hart, Stanton was the first school of education for Black children in the State of Florida when it opened on April 10, 1869. The school was named in honor of General Edwin McMasters Stanton, President Abraham Lincoln's Secretary of War. Stanton was an ardent champion of human rights and an advocate of free formal education for African American children.

In 1877, President Ulysses Grant visited the school during a tour of Florida. During the visit a six-year-old student named James Weldon Johnson raised his hand from the crowd and Grant shook it. Johnson would go on to become the school's principal in 1894, expanding it to become the only high school for African Americans in the city.

On February 12, 1900, "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing" was first performed at five hundred children at Stanton for Booker T. Washington in celebration of President Abraham Lincoln's Birthday. Written as a poem by James Weldon Johnson and composed by John Rosamond Johnson, the song was later adopted by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People as the Black National Anthem.

The original Stanton school was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1901 and its replacement was very shoddy. In 1915 the Duval County School Board planned to destroy the Stanton school and replace it with smaller schools throughout the city. The Stanton Board of Trustees filed an injunction which resulted in one of the first civil-rights litigation cases in Jacksonville. The Stanton school was rebuilt and opened its doors in 1917.

This structure was used as a junior high school in 1953-1954. In August 1954, it was converted into Stanton Vocational High School and functioned as a vocational center until 1971. Civil Rights leaders Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, Miss Eartha M.M. White, Rutledge Pearson, and Sallye Brooks Mathis are a few of the many important individuals associated with the building.

[453 WORDS]

20. WEST ASHLEY STREET

"Ashley Street was once the hub of Black business activity. You could come here for everything. There were hotels, boarding houses and cafes. All types of activity went on. You put on your Sunday-go-to-meeting best to come out here."

- Richard McKissick, 1986

Locally known as Uptown, West Ashley Street between Broad and Davis Streets was the major entertainment mecca for Florida's Black community prior to desegregation. Built on the northwest corner of this intersection in 1909, the Colored Airdome was said to have been the largest theater exclusively for Black people in the South. The first published account of blues on a public stage occurred at the Airdome on April 16, 1910 by John W. F. Woods, a ventriloquist comedian-turned-singer. The Indianapolis Freeman wrote of Woods's ventriloquism performance where his dummy, "Little Henry," sang the blues in a drunken act.

New venues opened during the 1920s and '30s: the Knights of Pythias Hall, Frolic, Roosevelt, and Strand Theatres. National touring acts Walter Barnes, Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and Erskine Hawkins performed at the Knights of Pythias during the 1930s.

By the 1940s, West Ashley Street was one of the most developed Black entertainment districts in the country, leading to its nickname, "Harlem of the South." Popular destinations included: the Lenape Bar, Wynn Hotel, Manual's Tap Room, El Chico, and Hollywood Music Store. West Ashley Street played a significant role in the careers of many jazz and blues musicians, including: Ma Rainey, Jelly Roll Morton, Blind Blake, Walter Barnes, Ray Charles, James Brown, Charlie Hoss Singleton, and Teddy Washington.

Even after the Civil Rights Act in 1964, Ashley Street continued to remain a popular entertainment destination until the mid-1970s. A target of the City of Jacksonville's River City Renaissance urban renewal program, most buildings on West Ashley Street were razed during the 1990s. However, West Ashley Street's musical and cultural contributions survive.

[314 words]

21. CENTRAL HOTEL (SIDE ONE)

"We still have a long way to go, but we have come a long way too."

- Earl M. Johnson, 1971

605 West Beaver Street is a space with a rich multicultural and Civil Rights Movement past. It was designed by architect Mellen C. Greeley and built for the Ames Realty Company in 1912.

In 1919, the storefronts were filled with a variety of businesses, including a dressmaker, grocery store, and two confectioneries. By 1921, the Central Hotel was open and a variety of businesses catered to the black population who was prevented from shopping in Downtown Jacksonville during segregation.

During the 1920s Cuban immigrants Julio C. Pulgaron and Carlos Ortega operated the Lolita Cigar Company and Charles "Charley" Jacob Hazouri (1897-1969) ran a market. Hazouri, a Lebanese immigrant, originally settled in LaVilla with his father, Jacob Nadir Hazouri, in 1904 and is an ancestor of Jacksonville mayors Donna Deegan and Tommy Hazouri.

The building's longest operating business, the Central Hotel, provided lodging for African American visitors during segregation. In 1947, the Central Hotel came under the ownership of Julius and Vandora Jackson. The Jacksons also operated the Vandoria Waldorf Cafeteria, a restaurant and bakery, on the ground floor.

Another tenant, the Jacksonville Negro Welfare League, provided counseling and referrals for African American veterans returning from World War II for employment, housing, education, and training benefits. The Negro Welfare League merged with a new Jacksonville branch of the National Urban League to create the Jacksonville Urban League in August 1947.

NAACP attorney Earl M. Johnson, Sr. (1928-1988) had space in the building during the 1960s. The first Black person to be elected to an at-large seat on the Jacksonville City Council, Johnson represented numerous civil rights activists during his tenure, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rutledge Pearson, and the St. Augustine Four to desegregate public places in Florida. The Central Hotel was designated as a local historic landmark in 1995.

[321 WORDS]

21. HILLMAN-PRATT FUNERAL HOME (SIDE TWO)

"If having a dollar was so vitally essential to keeping my liberty, and 'remaining at large,' if having something in the world was so necessary in getting the respect of one's fellows, I made up my mind that if it was the dollar that makes Americans recognize your manhood, shake your hand, and call you 'Brother,' then said I to myself, 'I will get some dollars!'"

- *Joseph H. Blodgett, 1913*

The Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home is considered the oldest extant African American funeral home in Jacksonville. Completed in 1916, the building may be one of the last surviving commercial structures designed and built by noted early 20th century Black architect Joseph Haygood Blodgett (1858-1934).

Born into slavery in 1858 in Augusta, GA, Blodgett moved to Jacksonville during the 1890s with one paper dollar and one thin dime. Initially working for the railroad for a dollar a day, Blodgett went on to launch various businesses before becoming a building contractor around 1898. Following the Great Fire of 1901, Blodgett built 258 houses, keeping 199 to rent, eventually becoming one of the first Black millionaires in Florida. Blodgett Villa, his own residence in Sugar Hill where famed guests such as Booker T. Washington visited, was said to be one of the finest owned by an African American anywhere. Most of Blodgett's work was situated in the Sugar Hill neighborhood and largely lost to urban renewal efforts that included the creation of Interstate 95 and the expansion of UF Health Jacksonville's medical campus.

The Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home serves as an early example of a purpose-built mortuary building in the early 20th century, built in the Gothic Revival and Richardsonian Romanesque styles. Lawton Leroy Pratt (1886-1943) was the second licensed Black mortician in Florida and founding member of the Florida Negro Funeral Directors & Embalmer's Association, which worked to open the field of funeral services to women. Pratt's slogan was "the funeral home of the community." Here he restored renowned African American aviator and stunt pilot Bessie Coleman, after she died in a Jacksonville plane crash in 1926.

After Pratt's death, the business was operated by Oscar Irving (1908-1978) and Evelyn J. Hillman as the Hillman-Pratt Funeral Home until 2002. The business then became known as Hillman-Pratt & Walton following its acquisition by Anthony Walton. In 2023, the property was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2023.

[396 WORDS]

22. HANSONTOWN (WHETSTONIAN / ODD FELLOWS / ST. PHILIPS EPISCOPAL CHURCH)

"There were houses over there, buildings over there. They demolished it in order to resell it. They wanted to "upgrade" the entire area to make it more compatible to downtown."

- *Walter Whetstone, 2005*

The original settlement of Hansontown was the brainchild of Daniel Dustin Hanson, a surgeon with the 34th Regiment, U.S. Colored Infantry. Hanson acquired a large tract of land northwest of Jacksonville in 1866 where he intended to develop a communal farming community for Black Civil War veterans and the formerly enslaved. Here, they would grow and sell crops, allowing them to

pool their earnings towards land purchases. Hanson's dream never materialized but a community was born.

A working-class African American community characterized by small frame shotgun-style housing and unpaved streets, Hansontown quickly became an easy target for the city's early urban renewal programs. The neighborhood largely met its demise in 1974, when plans were approved to replace 21 acres of the community acquired with local and federal urban renewal funds, with the present-day downtown campus of Florida State College of Jacksonville. The \$11 million campus was officially dedicated on August 15, 1977.

Historic buildings north of Union Street, including the Whetstonian, Fraternal Order of Odd Fellows Hall, and St. Philips Episcopal Church are remnants of one of Jacksonville's earliest Gullah Geechee communities.

Located at 801 North Jefferson Street, the Whetstonian was built in 1927. Featuring two upstairs apartment units, the ground level storefronts were occupied by a variety of businesses, including The Apothecary Shop by Theo M. Christopher and Chitlin' Circuit era juke joints such as Bill's Bar-B-Q and the Stardust Club. It was later owned by Walter Whetstone. Whetstone spent a lifetime collecting and storing artifacts from LaVilla's past on the property. According to Whetstone, "If Smithson can have his Smithsonian, then Whetstone can have the Whetstonian."

According to James Weldon Johnson, Odd Fellows lodges were made up of white-collar workers, in contrast to the local Masonic lodges, which recruited largely from stevedores, hod carriers, lumber mill workers, and brickyard hands. In Hansontown, the Odd Fellows Hall was located on the southeast corner of State and Pearl Streets. At Odd Fellows, a young Cookman Institute class valedictorian, A. Philip Randolph, gave a speech he called "The Man of the Hour" in 1907. Randolph would later organize the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the first predominantly African American labor union, as well as the March on Washington in 1963.

In March 1912, the Odd Fellows Hall hosted a banquet for Booker T. Washing, co-founder of the National Negro Business League and Tuskegee Institute. Noted anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston also performed at the Fraternal Order of Odd Fellows during her time in Jacksonville. Nearby, St. Philips Episcopal Church was organized in 1882 to accommodate the growth of Black Episcopalians in the area. The mission was named for Saint Philip. According to the Acts of the Apostles, Saint Philip was a Black man called by Jesus to follow him.

The sanctuary at the intersection of Union and Pearl Streets, was designed by Henrietta Cuttino Dozier (1872-1947). Dozier is recognized as the first woman architect in Florida and Georgia. To overcome discrimination, she was known to disguise her gender with various male-sounding or gender-neutral names such as Cousin Harry and H.C. Dozier. Under the supervision of William S. Sumter and Dennis Taylor, church members provided free construction labor to complete the church building in 1914.

[566 WORDS]