DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. OUTDOOR LEARNING TRAIL

COLUMBUS CITY COUNCIL PRESENTATION, September 2020

This brief overview is a companion to a PDF document that contains 11 interpretive panels along the DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. OUTDOOR LEARNING TRAIL. This 3-slide presentation provides:

- a example of what the panels will look like including logos for the three organizations sponsoring the project;
- the size of each panel; and
- how it will be mounted for display.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. OUTDOOR LEARNING TRAIL

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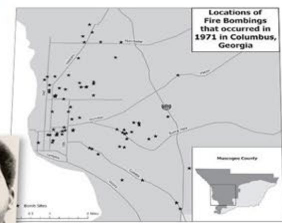
A CITY IN FLAMES

Columbus Civil Rights struggles came to a head in 1971 after the death of a young black man combined with systemic racial discrimination in the city's police force.

Joseph Hammonds and Robert T. Leonard at Columbus African American police protests press conference (1971). *Courtesy Columbus Museum.*

Though the city's police department had integrated in 1954, African American policemen were routinely given the most unpleasant tasks, few black police officers were promoted, and pay was less than their white counterparts. Early in 1971, police representatives called for change. This call for change was complicated by the death of 17-year old black youth Willie J. Osborne, shot by a white officer.



Location of Fire Bombings that Occurred in 1971 in Columbus, GA. From research conducted by Dr. Gary Sprayberry. *Courtesy of Dr. Brad Huff, Department of History & Geography, Columbus State University.*

In response to racism, harassment, and brutality, in May 1971 members of the recently formed Afro-American Police League (AAPL) called for a strike. In protest, they tore the American flag patches from their uniforms saying, "there is no liberty or justice in the police department."

Seven black officers were fired immediately and hundreds of black residents through Columbus. The police department did not respond. By the end of that summer, Columbus had born witness to 140 fire-bombings of white-owned businesses, 88 of those sites have since been mapped.

In some ways this was surprising. The city had managed to escape much of the turmoil of the Civil Rights era (1954–1968) seen in cities such as Selma and Birmingham. When African Americans used direct action in protest of civil rights violations in Columbus, white city officials had acted quickly and decisively. By 1965, many Columbus businesses and public facilities had been integrated.

Interior of dental exam room c.a. mid-1970s. *Courtesy of Dr. Henry L. Cook Sr.*

However, by the 1970's, the pace of advancement for African Americans was stalled. Black unemployment rate was twice that of white unemployment. African Americans were limited to substandard housing located along unpaved and poorly lit streets, schools remained segregated, and there was little decent health care for black residents.

Black middle class professionals like the dentist Dr. Henry Cook Sr. (who's office lies across Martin Luther King Boulevard), sought to address these broader concerns by working in partnership with U.S. Representative Sanford Bishop to attract other African American professionals to meet the medical needs of the community

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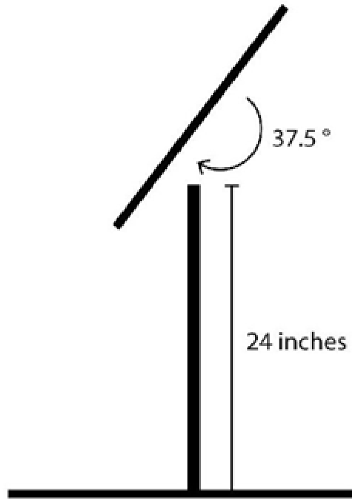
10.25.19
1 inch = 1 foot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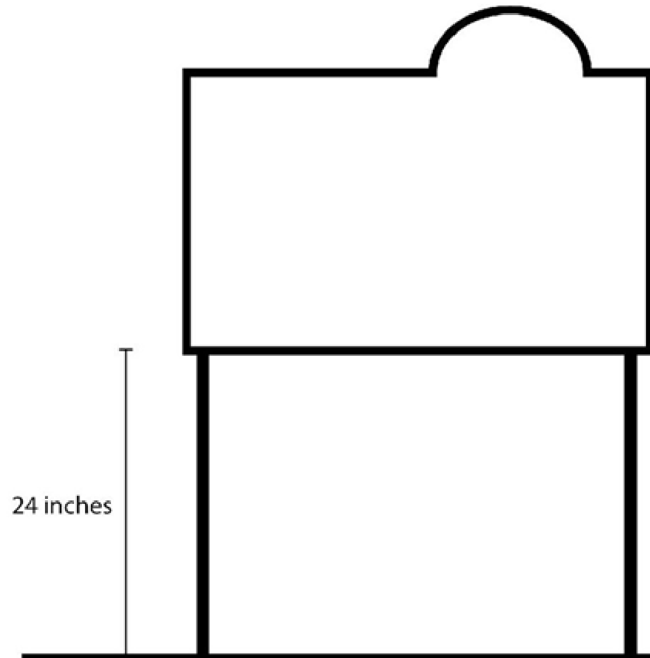
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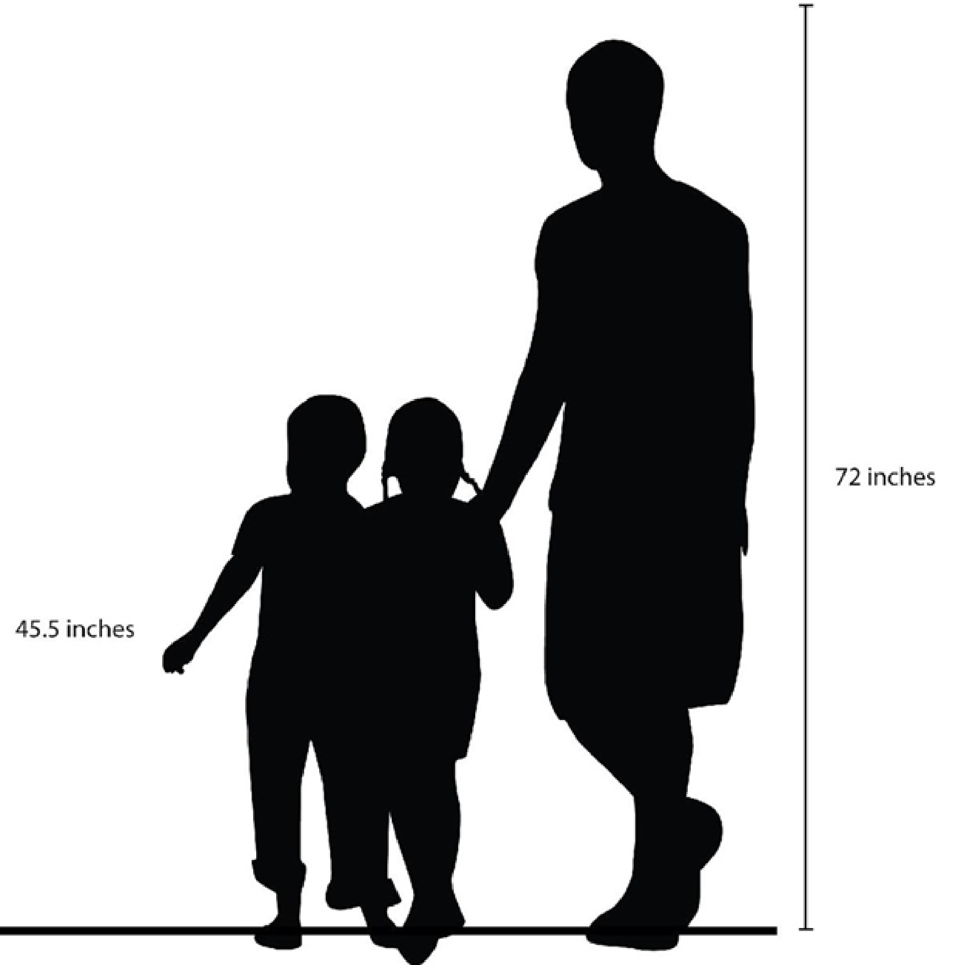
45.5 inches
72 inches

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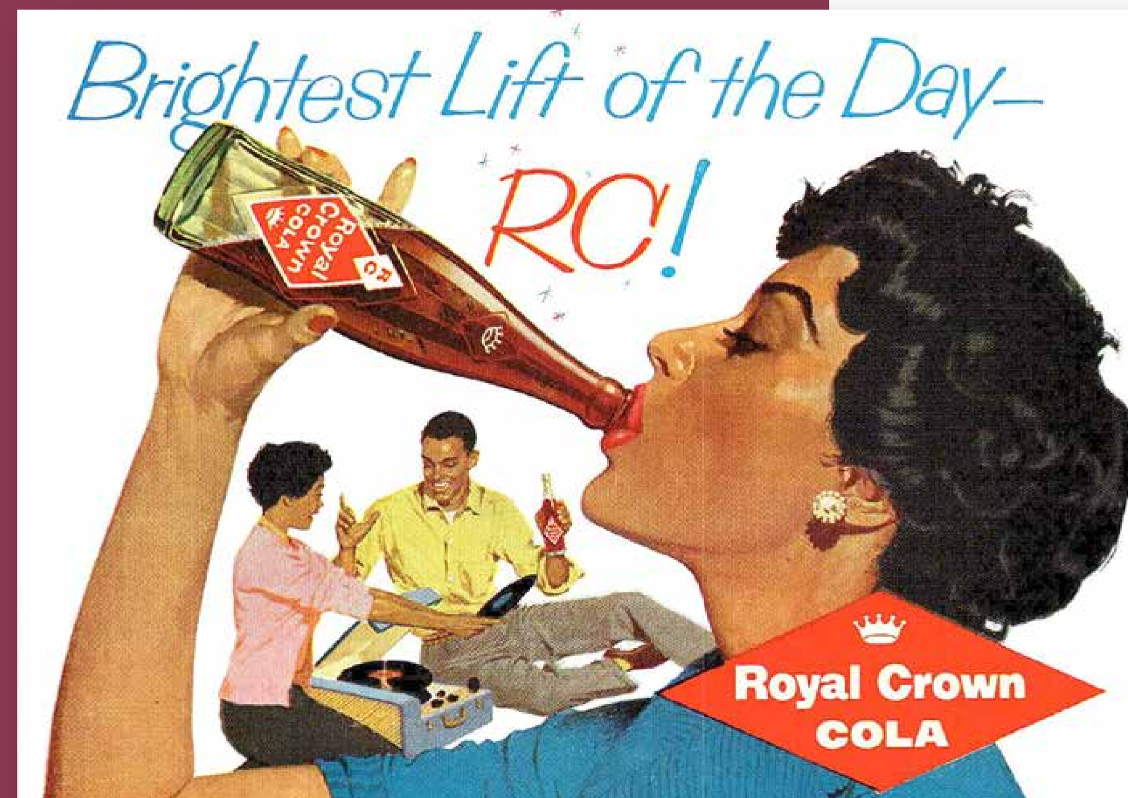
A BOTTLE CAP— MORE THAN A LID

Claud Hatcher moved production of RC Cola from the basement of his pharmacy (est. 1905) to this factory in 1911. *Courtesy of The Columbus Museum.*

This large brick building housed the soft drinks manufacturer RC Cola. In the mid-20th century, six RC bottle caps allowed African American children free access to the movies at the Liberty Theatre a few blocks south.



This image was developed for display in stores selling RC Cola (ca. mid-1950s). From Royal Crown Cola Company Records (MC 204). *Courtesy of Columbus State University Archives.*

During the Jim Crow era, this northeastern corner of the Liberty District was home to residences and a vibrant Black commercial district of doctors, lawyers, restaurants and stores. Like RC Cola, the district's Liberty Theatre was a white-owned institution. Hosting entertainers such as "Ma" Rainey, a Columbus native known as the "Mother of the Blues," and blues singer Bessie Smith, it also regularly showed movies.

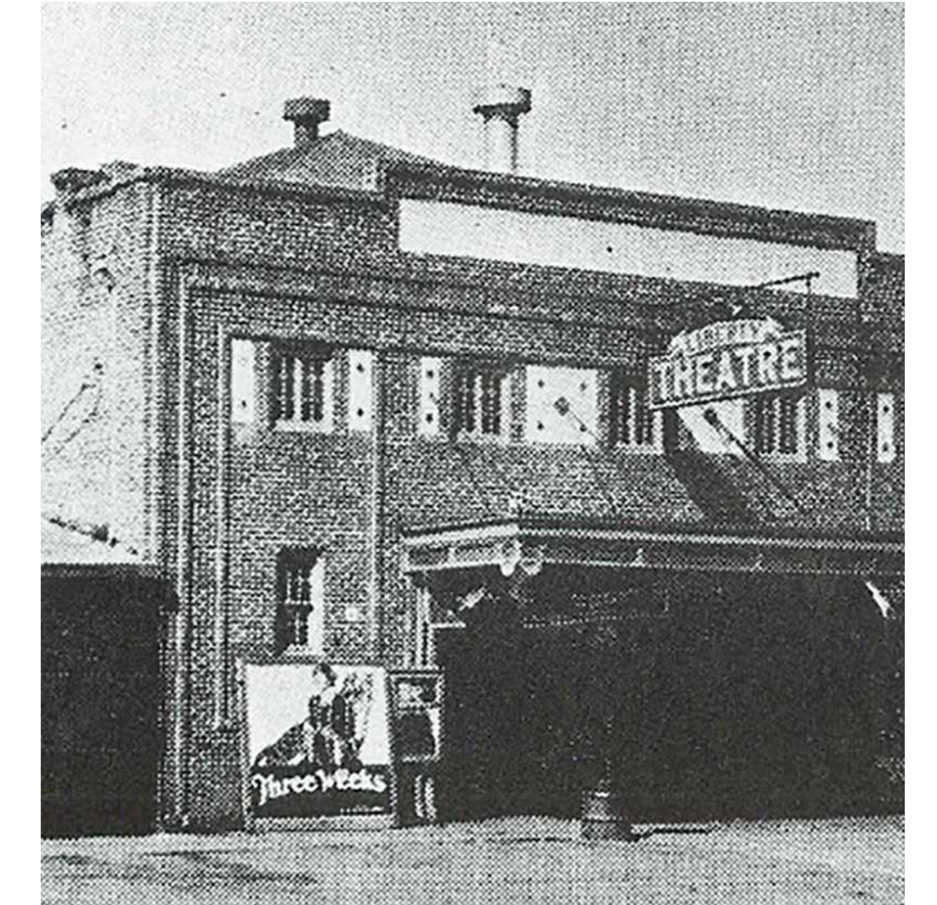
During the 1950s and '60s, RC Cola and the Liberty Theatre developed a fondly remembered promotion. RC sold its bottles of soda in six-packs. The Liberty Theatre agreed to give free admission for patrons who presented six RC bottle caps at the ticket booth. When money was short, African American boys and girls saw many movies through this agreement.

RC Cola bottle cap. Six of these gained admission for movie-goers to see a film at the Liberty Theatre. *Courtesy of The Columbus Museum.*

This bottle cap promotion had its roots in a 1946 Black customer preference survey in Baltimore which revealed that RC Cola ranked lowest (16%), after Pepsi (45%) and Coca Cola (25%). Just as the post-war sugar rationing lifted in 1947, RC Cola began a national campaign. Marketing directly to Black audiences, it asked celebrities to taste test RC versus other colas. One such ad included the African American jazz trumpeter Oren Thaddeus "Hot Lips" Page. Page, who had played with the likes of Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, Count Basie and Charlie Parker, was quoted in the advertisement:

"My blues just blew away," he said, "when I found RC! I took the famous taste-test—tried leading colas in paper cups. RC won in a breeze."

Subsequently, Royal Crown used images of both blue-collar and young Black models, sending the message that RC Cola was for everyone.



Built in 1924 by white business owner Roy E. Martin, this 600-seat theater, at the time the largest in Columbus, was built to cater to the African American community. It is now one of only a handful of its type still standing in Georgia. *Courtesy of The Columbus Museum.*

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ENGAGEMENT, EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT AT THE Y

The YMCA offered African Americans a place to call home and a facility to train the city's young civil rights activists.

A.J. McClung at his desk in the USO office ca. early 1940s. From A.J. McClung Papers and Collection MC 200. *Courtesy of Columbus State University Archives.*

Built in 1965, this brick-faced YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) was named in honor of Arthur Joseph "A.J." McClung (1912–2002). The first Black YMCA in the US was established in Columbus, located on 9th Street, several blocks west of this site. There, the young McClung led efforts to ensure that African American residents were engaged, educated, enriched, and empowered through the YMCA and its sister association the USO (United Services Organization).

McClung, Executive Director of the YMCA. Date unknown. A.J. McClung Papers and Collection MC 200. *Courtesy of Columbus State University Archives.*

A graduate of the Tuskegee Institute, McClung trained to become a program director for the USO center in Columbus. Established in 1941, USOs supported military members often far away from home. USOs created a welcoming space for African American service members, offering talent shows, musical programs, and movies. USOs in the South were segregated and were often located within Black YMCAs.

As USO director, McClung took on more leadership roles in the community and in Columbus's civil rights movement. He was able to maintain his role in those efforts in part because he was employed by a national organization and was less likely to be intimidated by local segregationist pressures. In 1954, McClung took on the role of Executive Director of the 9th Street YMCA, now demolished.

Six Arrested in Attempt To Integrate City Buses

In the summer of 1961, the basement of the Y hosted training for college students where they learned nonviolent resistance tactics from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). The training prepared six young men and women who led the city's bus sit-in during the summer of 1961. The group included McClung's daughter, Bunky McClung. Now Bunky McClung Clark, she would eventual serve in Jimmy Carter's presidential administration.

The city's newspaper reported the arrest of six college students who staged the first effort to desegregate the city bus system. From Bill Levy, "Six Arrested in Attempt to Integrate Buses." *Ledger-Enquirer,* July 18, 1961. *Courtesy of the Ledger-Enquirer.*

Six—

(Continued from Page 1)

police directed the four into a police car.

Broughman said Driver Stanvell Hughes told police he picked up the Negroes at Fifth Avenue and 10th Street, drove one block and stopped to call police.

As a group on the sidewalk near the bus looked on, officers, along with Detective Lt. B. F. McGuffey, asked the group to take rear seats. After they refused, they were directed off the bus and driven to police headquarters.

All six of those arrested were released by 6:30 Monday evening. Each posted a $100 bond.

Hearings Set Today

All seven are scheduled to receive hearings in Recorder's Court this morning. The group could be bound over to a higher court.

Police listed those arrested at 12th and Fourth as Jimmie Morgan Jr., 20, of 820 Seventh Ave.; Curtis Adkins, 19, of 512-E Booker T. Washington Apts.; Lillie Claudette McClung, 20, of 1461 Brazil Ave., and Elaine LaVoyne Greene, 18, of 3215 Morehouse St.

Officers quoted Adkins as saying he is a student at Savannah State College. McClung told police she attends Williams College in Chicago and Greene said she is a student at Hampton Institute in Virginia.

Arrested at Broadway and 12th, police said, were Mary Ogletree, 19, of 3623 O'Neal St., and Lonnie Lloyd, 19, of 209-F Elizabeth Canty Apts.

A.J. McClung. Photographer Joe Maher, *Ledger-Enquirer*, 1975. *Courtesy of the Ledger-Enquirer.*

In the post-civil rights period, McClung became the first African American to serve on the Public Safety Board. After the death of Mayor J.R. Allen (1930–1973) in a plane crash, McClung would lead this city as mayor for 52 ½ days, making him the first Black mayor of a major Southern city.

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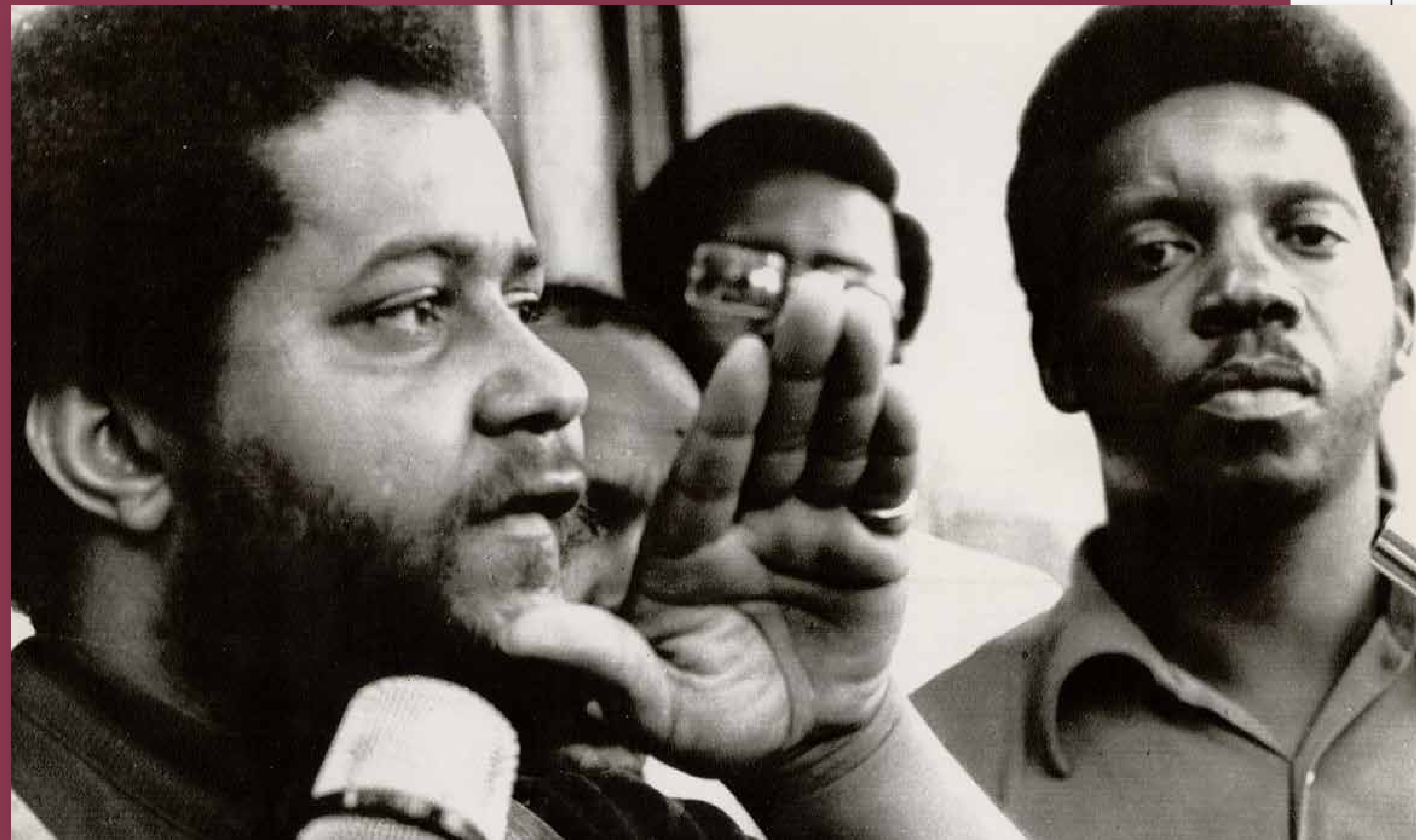
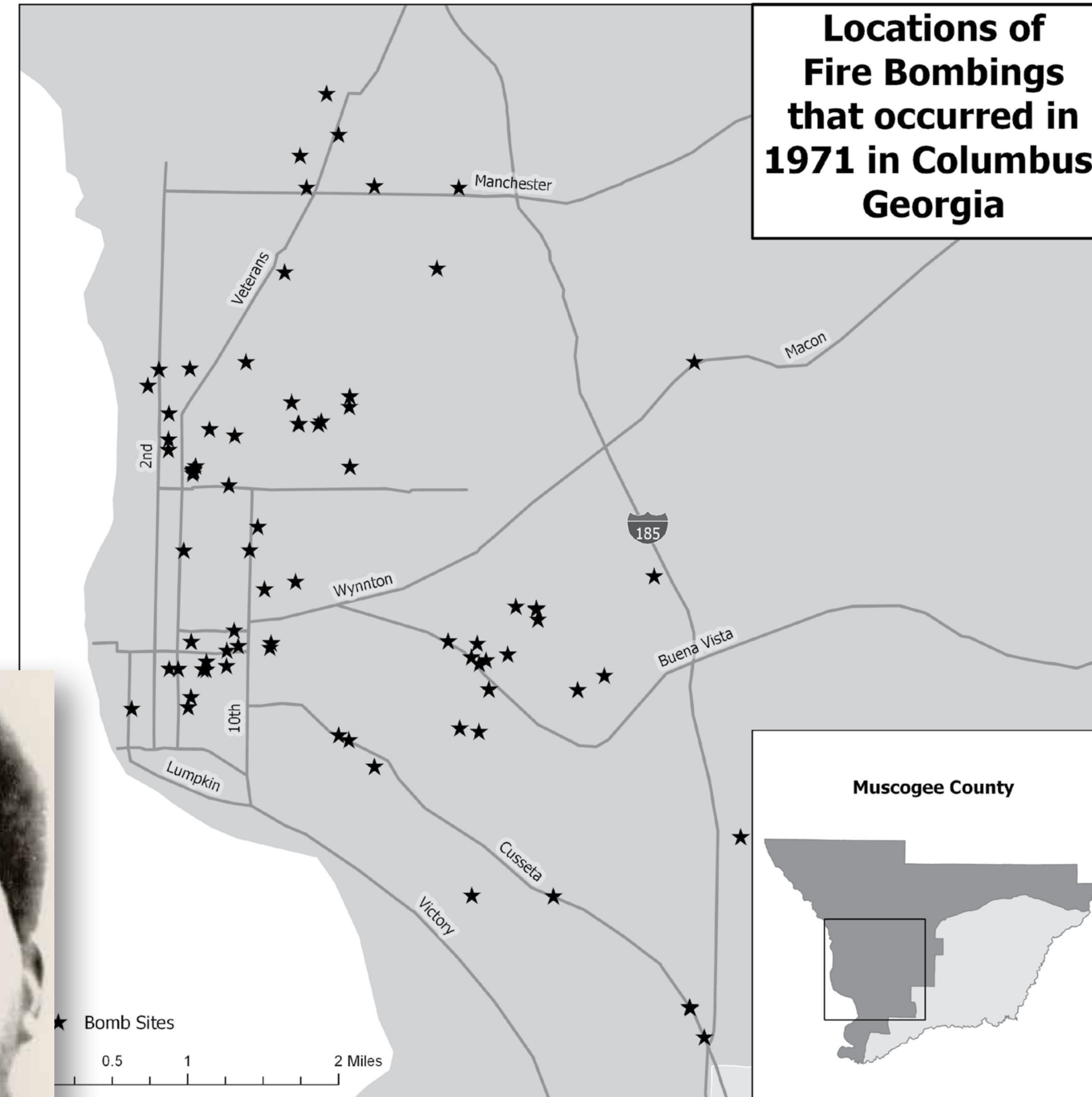
Columbus' civil rights struggles came to a head in 1971 after the death of a young Black man combined with systemic racial discrimination in the city's police force.



Columbus police protesters Joseph Hammonds and Robert T. Leonard at a press conference. *Courtesy of The Columbus Museum.*

Though the city's police department had integrated in 1954, African American policemen were routinely given the most unpleasant tasks, few Black police officers were promoted, and pay was less than that of their white counterparts. Early in 1971, police representatives called for meaningful changes in department policy. Those negotiations were complicated by the death of a 17-year-old Black youth, Willie J. Osborne, shot by a white officer.



The firebombing of white-owned properties occurred throughout the community. From research conducted by Dr. Gary Sprayberry. *Courtesy of Dr. Brad Huff, Department of History & Geography, Columbus State University.*

In response to racism, harassment, and brutality, in May 1971, members of the recently formed Afro-American Police League (AAPL) called for a strike. In protest, they tore the American flag patches from their uniforms, saying, "There is no liberty or justice in the police department."

Seven Black officers were fired immediately, and hundreds of Black residents marched through Columbus. The police department did not respond. By the end of that summer, Columbus had witnessed 140 firebombings of white-owned business. Eighty-eight of those sites have since been mapped.

In some ways, this was surprising. The city had managed to escape much of the turmoil of the civil rights era (1954–1968) seen in cities such as Selma and Birmingham. When African Americans used direct action to protest civil rights violations in Columbus, white officials acted quickly and decisively to change policies. By 1965, many Columbus businesses and public facilities had been integrated.

Interior of dental exam room circa mid-1970s. *Courtesy of Dr. Henry L. Cook, Sr.*

However, by the 1970s, the pace of advancement for African Americans was stalled. The unemployment rate among Black workers was twice that among whites. African Americans were limited to substandard housing located along unpaved and poorly lit streets, schools remained segregated, and there was little decent health care for Black residents.

Black middle class professionals like the dentist Dr. Henry Cook, Sr. (whose family office lies directly across Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard from this marker), sought to address these broader concerns by working in partnership with U.S. Representative Sanford Bishop to attract other African American professionals to meet the medical needs of the community.

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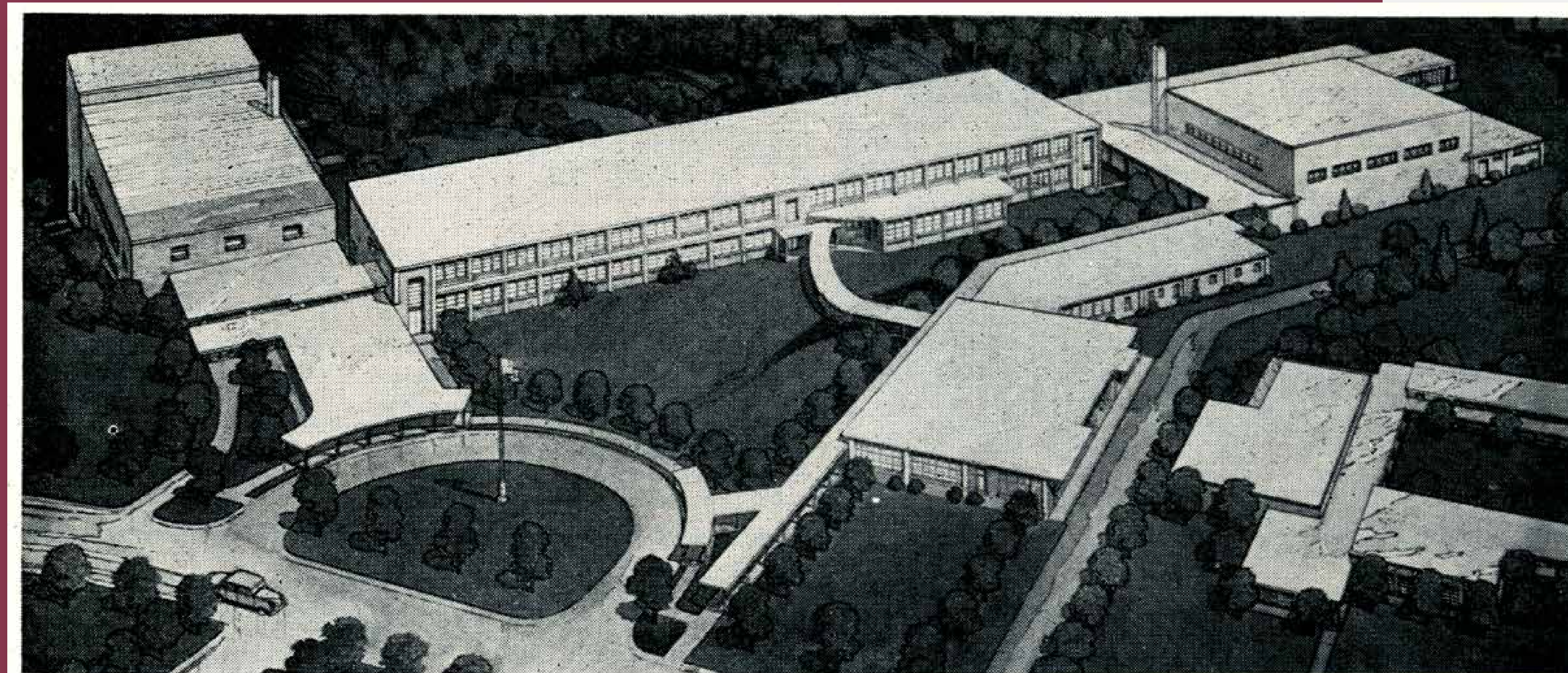
ACCESSING EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT

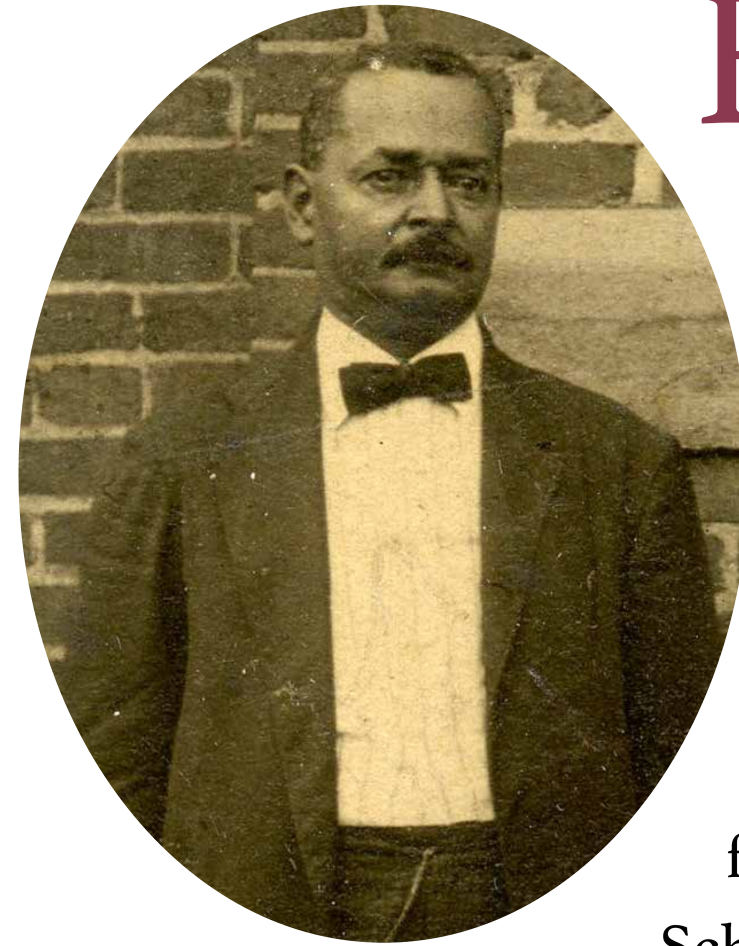
By naming schools after them, Columbus celebrated two pioneers in education whose careers illustrate both the struggles and successes of education reform during the Jim Crow era.



Architect's drawing of new Negro High school, Shepherd Dr., Columbus. The drawing also shows a portion of the adjoining Shepherd Dr. elementary school. The new High school will contain 41 classrooms, auditorium, cafeteria, gymnasium, shops, administrative offices, physical education building and auxiliary rooms. Jordan Contracting Co. recently submitted low bid of $914,975 for constructing the new High school. This school, designed by E. Oren Smith, Columbus architect, won one of the six citations awarded for outstanding designs of educational buildings in a recent competition in Atlanta, held under the auspices of the American Institute of Architects, and attended by about 400 architects. Fifty-one architects from Georgia, Florida, North Carolina and South Carolina participated in this competition, with 115 mounts.

Architectural drawings of the new segregated school which later became William Henry Spencer High school and subsequently Marshall Middle School. Industrial Index. xlvii (21), 1952, p.10. *Courtesy of Columbus State University Archives.*

Far Right: Shadrack Marshall, drawing by Antonio Mani, 1960, *Courtesy of The Columbus Museum.*



Above: William H Spencer. *Courtesy of The Columbus Museum.*

Born in Columbus, on the eve of the Civil War, William Henry Spencer (1857–1925) became a leading Black educator in the city's public school system. Spencer's professional life mirrored the story of African American education in the city and across the American South.

During Reconstruction (1865–1877), freed slaves (adults and children) sought education. The Federal Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, commonly known as the Freedmen's Bureau, supported that effort. An agency of the U.S. Department of War, The Bureau helped freed men and women reconnect with their families after slavery, and educated formerly enslaved citizens. In 1868, the Freedmen's Bureau established Claflin School in Columbus, where Spencer became a student.

Having graduated and taught in counties around Columbus, Spencer returned to teach in the city in 1875 and became the principal of Claflin School. He continued to rise in his profession, becoming superintendent of the county's "colored schools" in 1885. Spencer died five years before he could witness the establishment of the first high school for African American students named in his honor.

WILLIAM HENRY SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL LOCATIONS

1930 - 10th Ave & 8th St. at the edge of the city's vibrant Black commercial and residential Liberty District

1953 - Shepherd Drive *(where you now stand is the back of that school)*

1978 - Victory Drive, near Fort Benning

2018 - Fort Benning Road

Marshall Middle School, which was closed in 2014, was named for Shadrack R. Marshall (1867–1946). Born in Talbot County, GA, and educated at Tuskegee Institute, he paid for his education by working in the Birmingham mines and the farm fields of Alabama. His career included teaching at two different Columbus schools (Sixth Avenue and Twenty-Eighth Street schools). He also edited a local newspaper, *The Columbus Rifle*. In 1908, he became principal of Claflin School and served as both teacher and principal in the public schools of Columbus and Muscogee County for 50 years.

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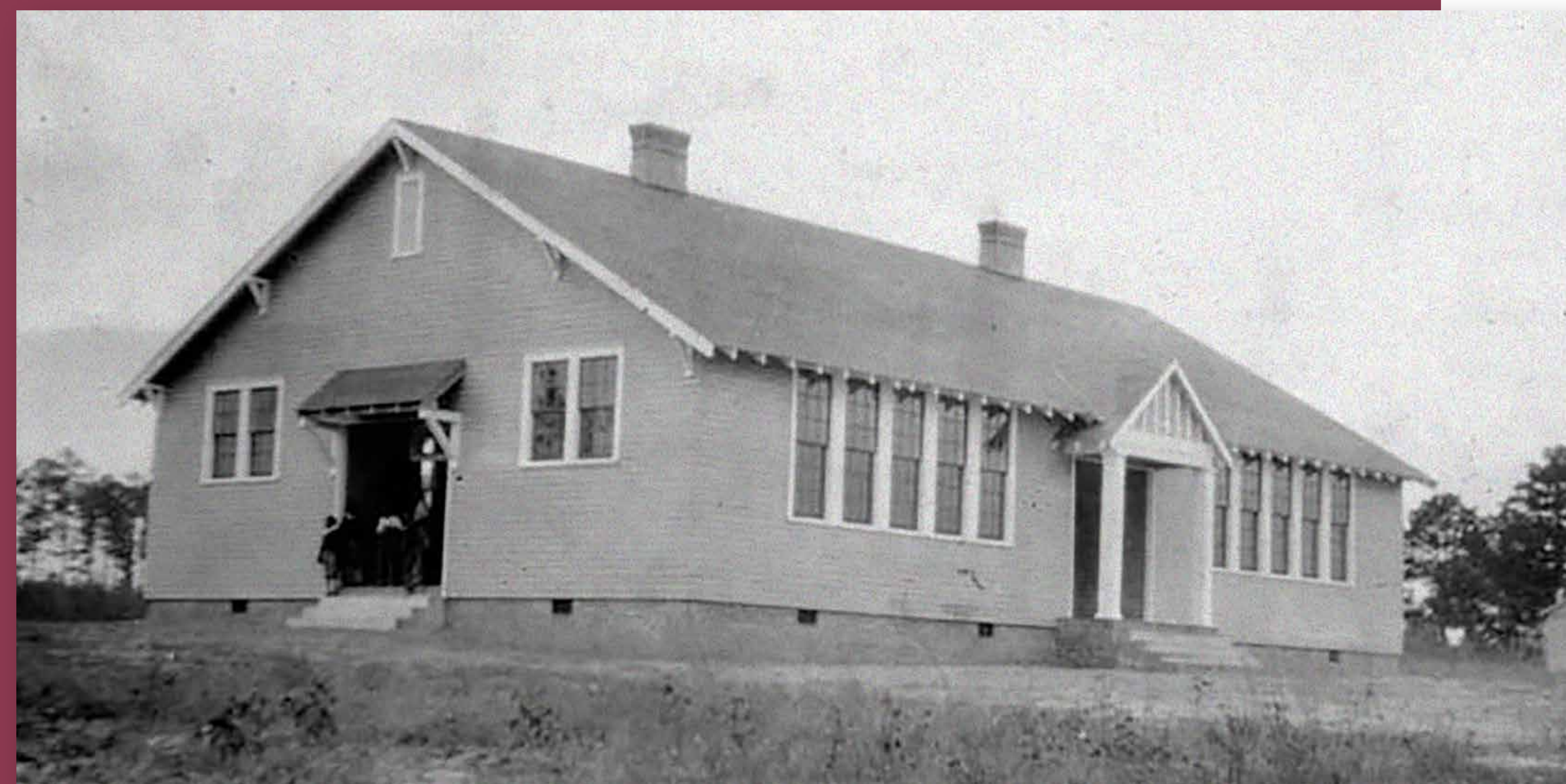
RADCLIFF: EDUCATING A COMMUNITY

Looking uphill along Radcliff Avenue reveals the southern boundary of the Radcliff neighborhood. Made up of churches, a cemetery, and residences built between the 1920s and 1940s, it was also home to a remarkable school — the Wynnton Hill "Rosenwald" School.

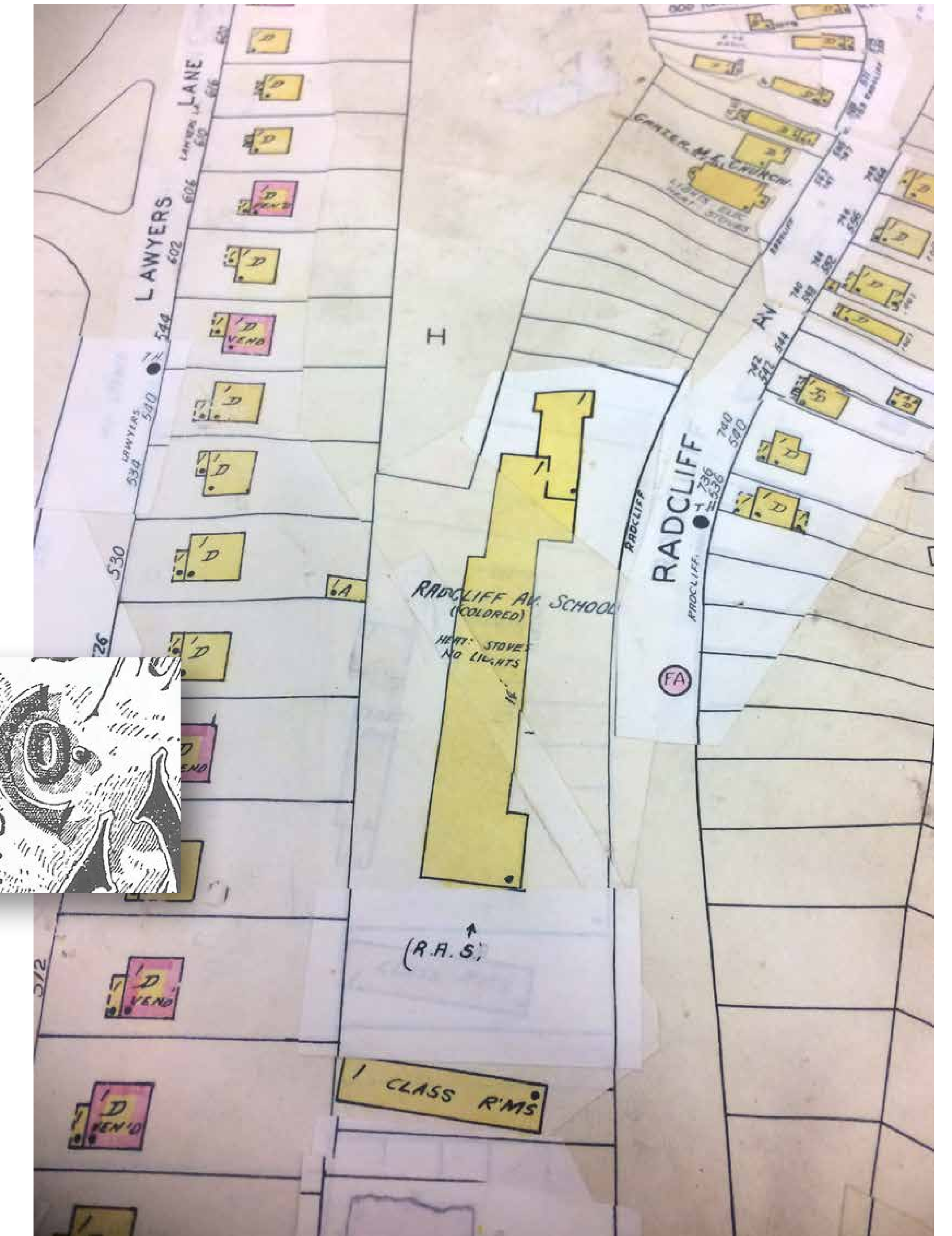
In the post Civil War era, African Americans sought education. However, children were routinely denied education in the public school system. Black religious institutions often stepped in to provide it for their community.



Wynnton Hill School ca. 1929. *With permission from Fisk University, John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library, Special Collections, Rosenwald Collection.*

Southern African American religious institutions often partnered with northern charities to build schools. One such charity was the Rosenwald Fund. Between 1913 and 1937, Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck and Co., partnered with local communities to fund more than 5,000 schools across the South. By 1928, one in five southern rural schools for Black students was a Rosenwald School.

Sears Roebuck & Co. 1897. *Sears Roebuck & Co Catalog. Courtesy of Amanda Rees.*



Location of Radcliff School at the southern end of the Radcliff neighborhood. Sanborn Map Company. Columbus, Muscogee County, 1955. New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co. *Courtesy of Columbus State University Archives.*

In 1929, the Radcliff neighborhood received some funding from the Rosenwald Foundation to construct an elementary school. They built a one story wooden building with three classrooms. The building included the Foundation's distinctive tall windows, placed close together to eliminate shadows in the classrooms. The classrooms were kept warm in the winter with a brick fireplace, and windows could also be opened in the summer to provide much-needed cross ventilation.

On the eve of World War II, Wynnton Hill School became a junior high and was renamed the Radcliff School. By 1944, it had become the city's second high school for African Americans. It also welcomed returning World War II veterans as they sought to finish their education and receive a high school diploma, a requirement for well-paying jobs. Radcliff School was destroyed by fire in 1971.

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A COURAGEOUS CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER

Brewer Elementary School was named in honor of one of the city's most influential civil rights leaders, Dr. Thomas Brewer (1893–1957).

Thomas Brewer. *Ledger-Enquirer*, February 19, 1956. *Courtesy of the Ledger-Enquirer.*

Born in Alabama, Brewer graduated from Selma University and obtained his medical degree from Meharry Medical College in Nashville, TN. After service in the U.S. Army during World War I, he arrived in Columbus in 1920 and established a general practice for the city's Black residents on First Avenue. Not satisfied with the pace of change in the city, Brewer helped establish the Columbus chapter of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) in 1939.

Throughout Brewer's life, racial segregation shaped all aspects of Black life. African Americans could not drink from the same water fountains as whites, eat in the same restaurants, be born in the same hospital, attend the same schools and colleges, swim in the same public pools, borrow books from the same library, sit together on the same bus, or be buried in the same cemetery.

Voting was also shaped by segregation. During the Jim Crow era (1870s–1965), the majority of the South's elected offices were held by Democrats. There were few Republicans in the region, in no small part because of the party's most famous president, Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln had led the North's fight to end slavery in the Civil War, and most Southern states did not welcome Republican candidates. African Americans were barred from voting in all-white state Democratic primary elections.

King Case Lawyer Sees White Primary Hopelessly Lost

MACON, Ga., May 18—(AP)—The lawyer who fought the Primus King case says preserving the white primary in Georgia is hopeless and adds:

"There's no way in the world Gene Talmadge or anyone else can preserve the white primary in Georgia without stirring up more snakes than they'd kill."

Primus King's case successfully challenged Georgia Governor and white supremacist Eugene Talmadge's efforts to retain white-only primary elections. From "In Case Lawyer Sees White Primary Hopelessly Lost." *Courtesy of Ledger-Enquirer,* June 19th, 1946.

Votes for Negroes

Since we have felt for some time that qualified Georgia Negroes have every moral right to participate in Democratic primaries, we are neither surprised nor alarmed at the unanimous opinion of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in the case of PRIMUS E. KING.

PRIMUS KING is a Columbus Negro who was denied the right to vote in a Muscogee County primary. He took the matter to the Federal Court for the Middle District of Georgia, where Judge HOYT DAVIS ruled emphatically that the exclusion was unlawful.

"Votes for Negroes." *Ledger-Enquirer,* March 10, 1946. *Courtesy of the Ledger-Enquirer.*

Brewer was one of several local leaders providing financial support for the 1945 Primus King case. Primus King, a Columbus resident, challenged racial exclusion in Democratic primary elections in the state. A victory in the King case resulted in African Americans gaining the right to vote in Georgia's Democratic primaries. Following the ruling, 100,000 Black voters registered for state elections in Georgia. In 1956, Thomas Brewer was killed by gunshot in Columbus. A police officer was one of several witnesses. The man who shot Brewer was never arrested. 2,500 mourners attended his funeral.

While Brewer died in a society segregated by race, as a civil rights leader he worked to end segregation and achieve true democracy through the right to vote.

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DESEGREGATING CARVER HIGH

Located at the southern edge of the Carver Heights neighborhood, George Washington Carver High School tells a complex story of school desegregation.

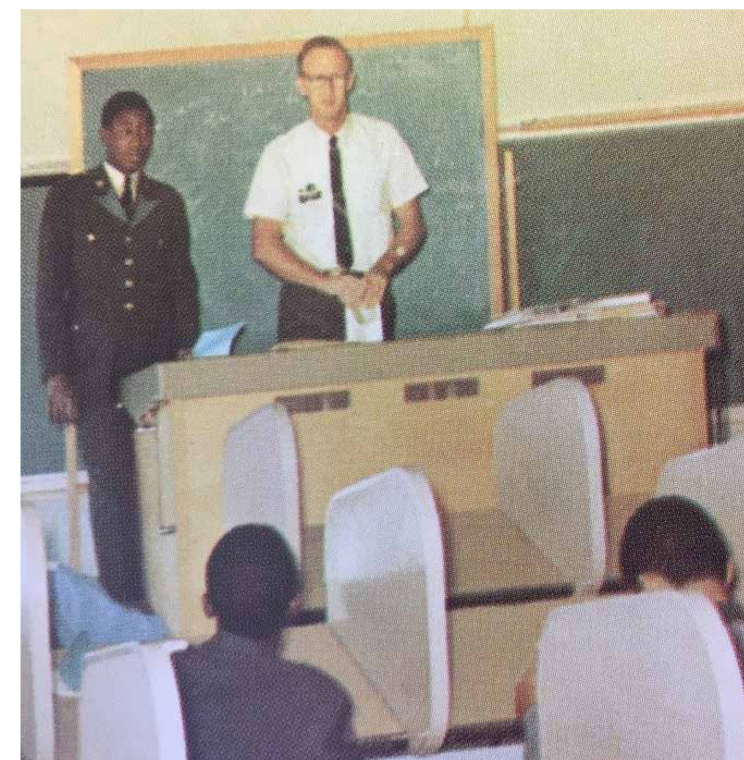
New addition (1960) added to the original school. Source: Carver High School, Columbus Section 1960, Vol. LV, pg. 19, Folder 11. Industrial Index Collection, Box 5. *Courtesy of Columbus State University Archives.*

Named after esteemed African American agricultural scientist George Washington Carver (ca. 1864–1943), Carver High School was built on the former site of an elementary school (est. 1952), which subsequently became a junior high school in 1954. It added a grade each year until it evolved into a high school. The school you see today opened in 2012 and is home to the largest CTAE (Career Technical Agricultural Education) program in the Muscogee County School system.

Though the landmark case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* declared racially segregated schools unconstitutional in 1954, the city's school board did not act immediately. Instead, it continued to separate students into schools based solely on race. The inequalities that Carver students experienced prior to integration included being provided with used books and hand-me-down ROTC uniforms discarded by white schools.

Applications Filed at White Schools by 31 Negroes Entering First Grade

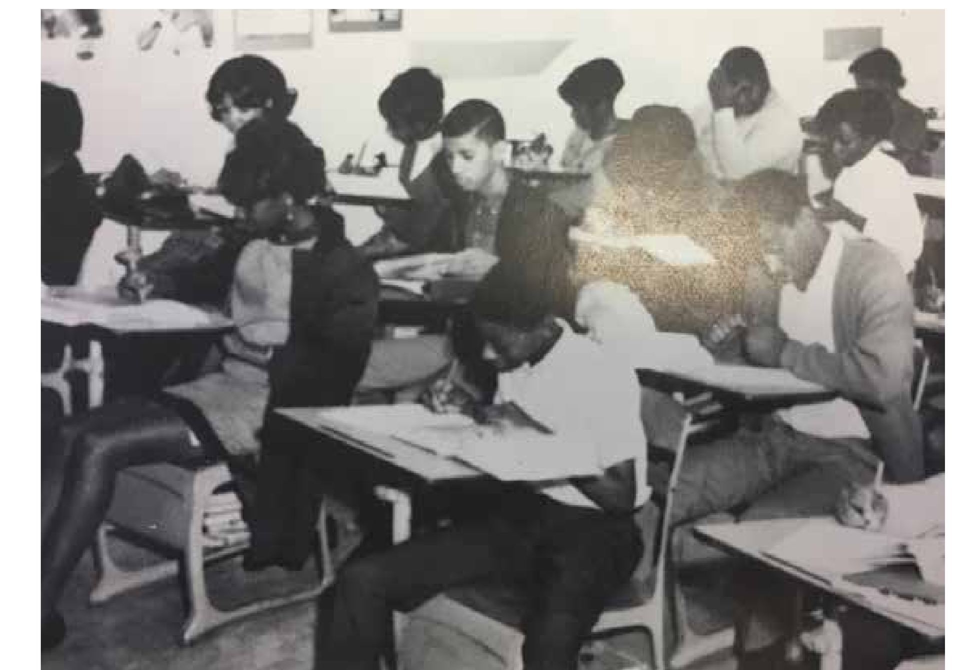
As this headline from the local newspaper demonstrates, African Americans persistently challenged the racial segregation of the city's public schools. *Ledger-Enquirer,* June 10, 1965, *Courtesy of the Ledger-Enquirer.*



The early desegregation of Carver's classrooms began with teachers in 1968. *From The Tigonian, 1969.*

Carver's first encounter with desegregation involved teachers, not students. In 1968, some white teachers were transferred to Black schools, some Black teachers to white ones. For Carver, this not only meant the loss of beloved, highly qualified and experienced teachers, but the beginning of many misunderstandings. Because incoming white teachers had never taught Black students, they often faced difficulties in the classroom. Some were less credentialed than their Black counterparts.

Finally, following a federal court order, the Columbus school board finally desegregated the city's schools in 1970, sixteen years after the *Brown* decision. Each of the city's schools readjusted its student body to a ratio of 30 percent black to 70 percent white students. At Carver, these sudden changes were followed by an increase in behavioral issues and suspensions. Some students feared their school would lose its cultural identity. These tensions were paired with complaints from white students. After the peak of desegregation efforts in the 1970s and 1980s, students soon began relocating to different schools through permissive transfers. As these requests increased, Carver's student body began to resemble the years before integration. In 2018, the school reported an average of 99 percent minority students.



Segregation continued in the school district until 1970. *From The Tigonian, 1969.*

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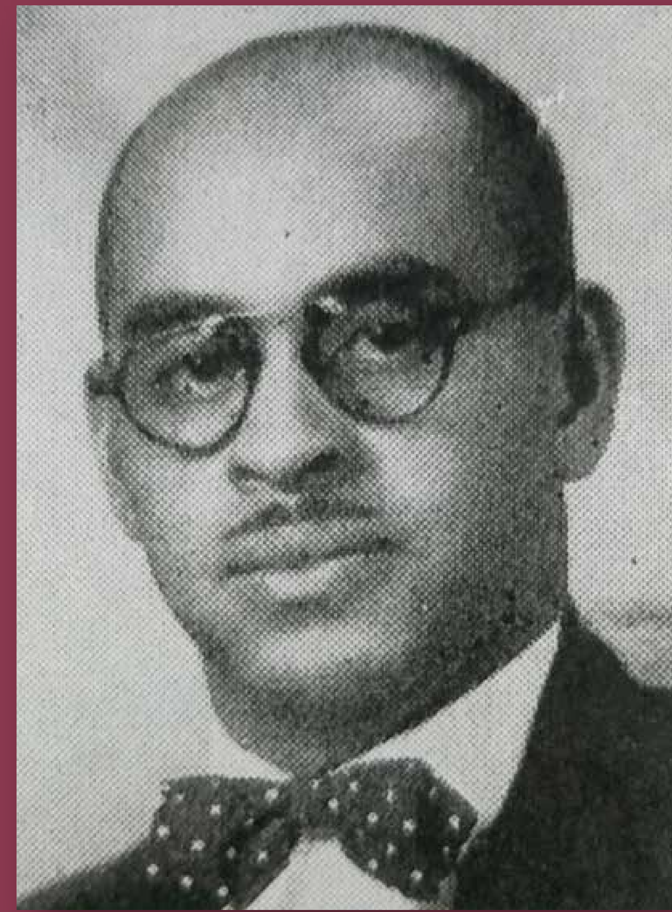
BUILDER OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

E.E. Farley was a business, civic, and civil rights leader who helped establish the city's first segregated, post-World War II suburb.

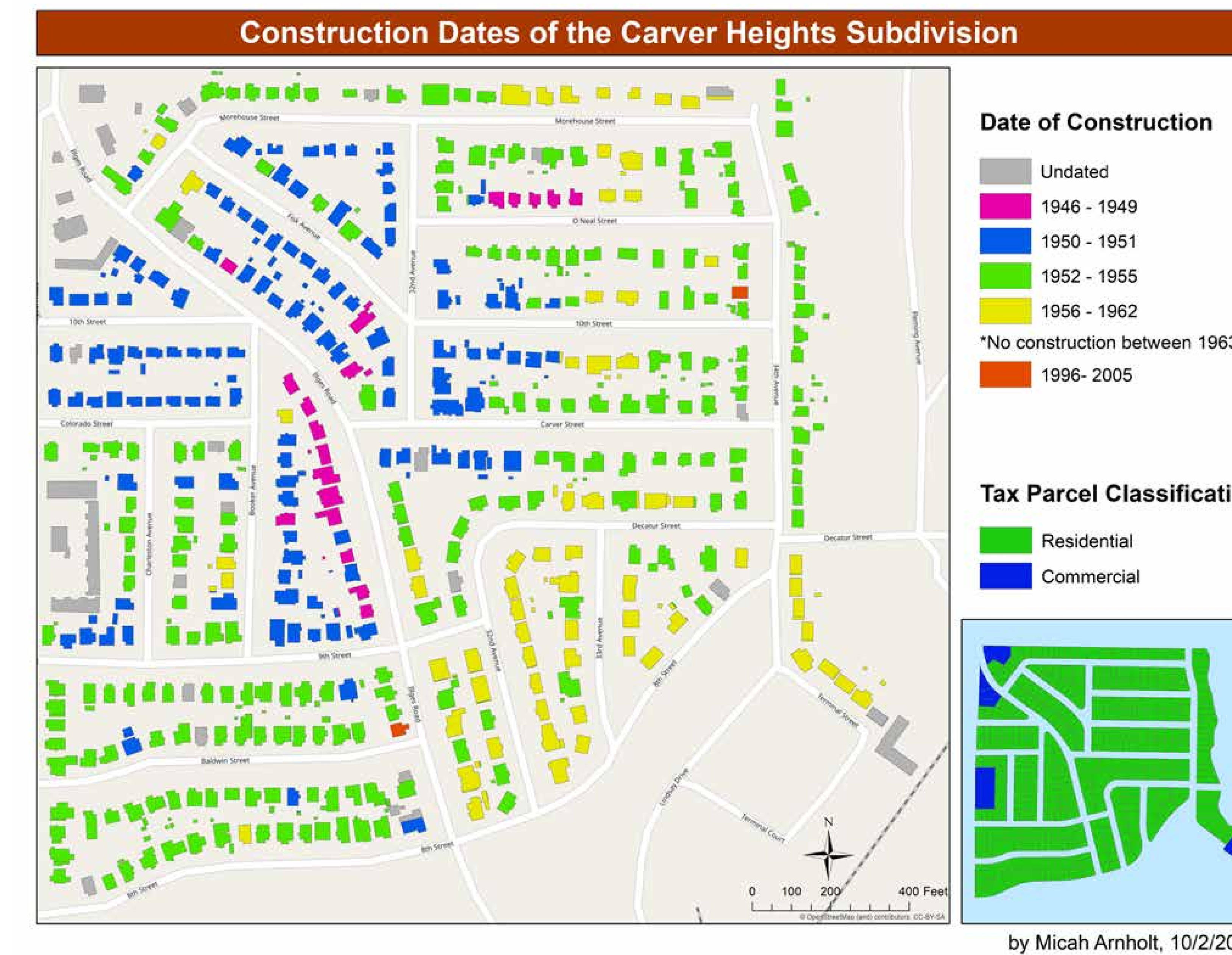


Edward Edwin Farley. First African Baptist Church, 1949. *One Hundred and Nine Years of Soul Saving and Character Building*. Columbus, GA. First African Baptist Church.

Edward Edwin Farley (ca. 1902–1956) and his wife, Ella, moved into their new Carver Heights home in 1954. Located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Illges Road and 8th Street, this large brick home reflects the financial success of this business couple. Owners of the Farley Realty Company, the Farleys sold homes to African Americans in Columbus, including in Carver Heights. A Morehouse College graduate, Farley was active within the local community, working alongside other influential civic and civil rights leaders.

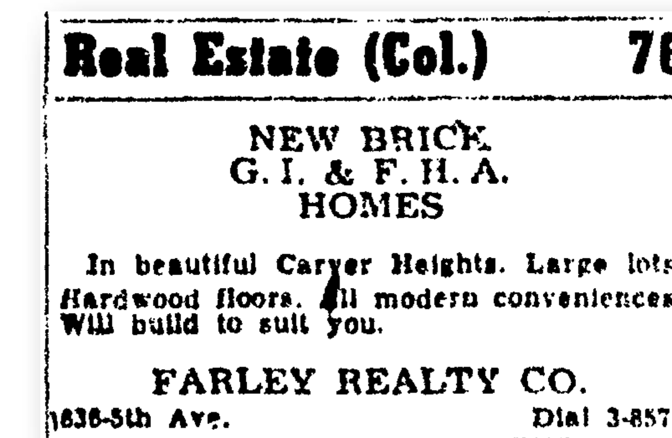
The Carver Heights subdivision offered Black veterans and active duty service members the opportunity to use their earned military benefits under the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (also known as the GI Bill), to purchase and/or build a home. At least eight additional segregated subdivisions were subsequently constructed in Columbus prior to the Fair Housing Act (1968). This act finally prohibited discrimination in the financing, rental and sale of housing.

Sign advertising lots and homes in the developing Carver Heights subdivision available through Farley Realty Co. *Courtesy Columbus State University archives.*



Construction Dates of the Carver Heights Subdivision. Cartographer: Micah Arnholt, 2018.

It was a challenge for new residents of the Black middle class to find places to live in the post-war period. Like many of their neighbors, the Farleys regularly rented rooms in their house to recently graduated school teachers from Tuskegee Institute. These professional women regularly relocated to the city for their first teaching position. This trend extended across the neighborhood as homeowners rented rooms to African American military families, who, unlike their white counterparts, found very little housing at Fort Benning.



Real Estate (Col.) 76

NEW BRICK
G. I. & F. H. A.
HOMES

In beautiful Carver Heights. Large lots. Hardwood floors. All modern conveniences. Will build to suit you.

FARLEY REALTY CO.
836-5th Ave. Dial 3-8576

Farley Realty Company's ad in the "Colored Real Estate Section" of the *Columbus-Enquirer* March 3, 1950. *Courtesy of the Ledger-Enquirer.*

Students standing in front of the EE Farley Home n.d. *Courtesy Columbus State University archives.*

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DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
OUTDOOR LEARNING TRAIL

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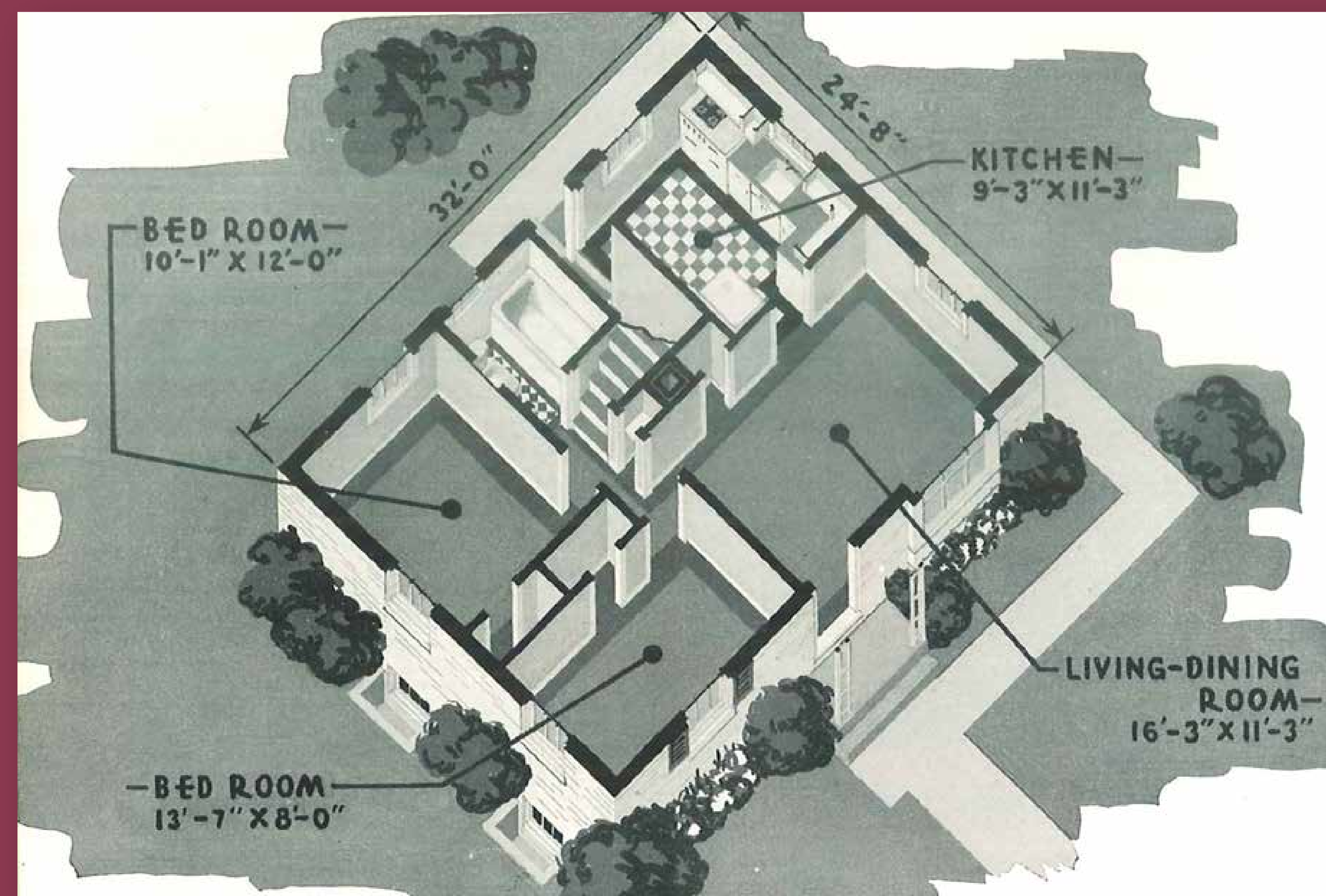
BUILDING THE AMERICAN DREAM

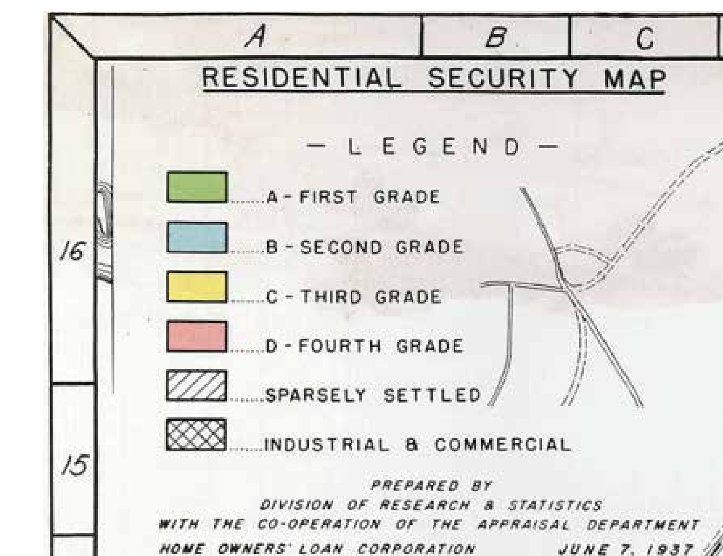
At a time of institutional segregation, the Carver Heights neighborhood gave African Americans access to a dream realized through home ownership, and a new architectural style: the American Small House.

Built on farmland just outside the city's boundaries, Carver Heights saw the construction of over 430 homes between the late 1940s and early 1960s.

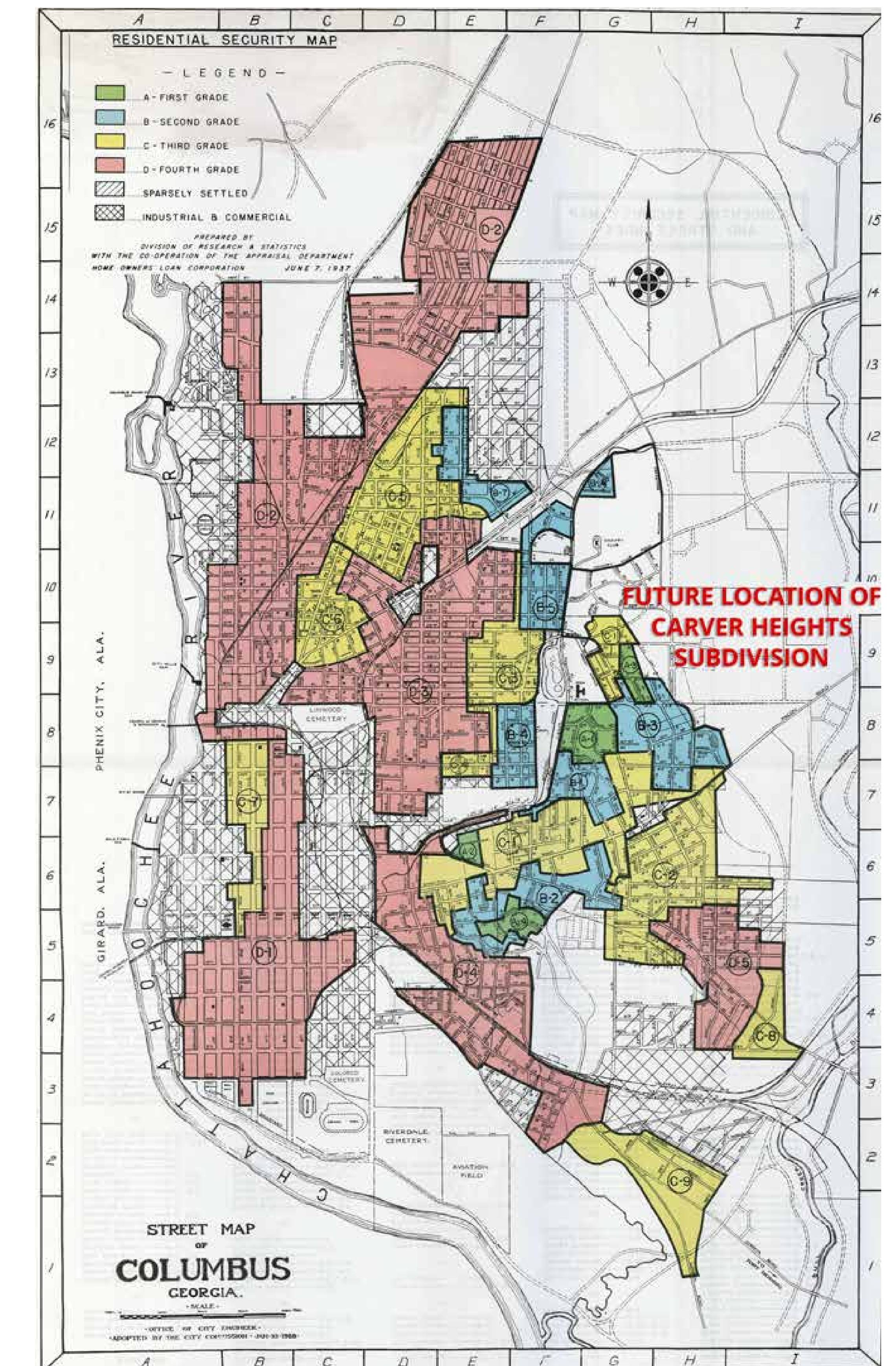


Two-bedroom brick home floor plan "A," one example of an American Small House. *From National Plan Service, Inc., 1949 National homes of moderate cost. Chicago, IL: National Plan Service, p.18.*

Using the American Small House design, these single-story, box floor plans included small rooms situated around a core. With brick facades and modest porches, often decorated with iron porch columns, this architectural style emerged during the Great Depression and reached its climax during the nationwide housing shortage after World War II. With resources and labor in short supply, the American Small House met a clear national need for well-designed, well-built, affordable, single-family homes. The two-bedroom version was most common because it was the smallest house that could qualify for a mortgage. At the end of World War II, some of the 100,000 African Americans who had trained at Fort Benning were ready to settle down. In serving their country, these veterans qualified for home loans guaranteed under the 1949 GI Bill (Servicemen's Readjustment Act).



The Columbus Residential Security Map shows areas of the city where banks would not provide loans to those seeking to buy a home. Areas in red, "D," were deemed "hazardous," green "A" areas as "best," "B" as "still desirable," "C" as "definitely declining." *From Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) Map, June 7, 1937.*



However, there were two barriers. First, bank managers and insurance agents routinely denied services to parts of the city considered to be a poor financial risk, a process known as "redlining." Banks would only issue mortgages for new homes. So would-be homeowners could only buy property in new suburbs. City maps show supposed "high-risk" areas that saw little to no reinvestment. Second, until the Fair Housing Act of 1968, suburb developers could legally discriminate against African Americans and Jewish persons. Thus, many suburbs were only open to white, Christian homeowners. Between 1945 and 1968, segregated suburbs like Carver Heights offered the only way for members of the Black middle class (teachers, nurses, ministers, realtors, soldiers, and employees of local businesses and factories) to access a mortgage to purchase a home. Carver Heights is one of the first such suburbs in Columbus, and remains a remarkable example of the growing Black middle class during the mid-twentieth century.

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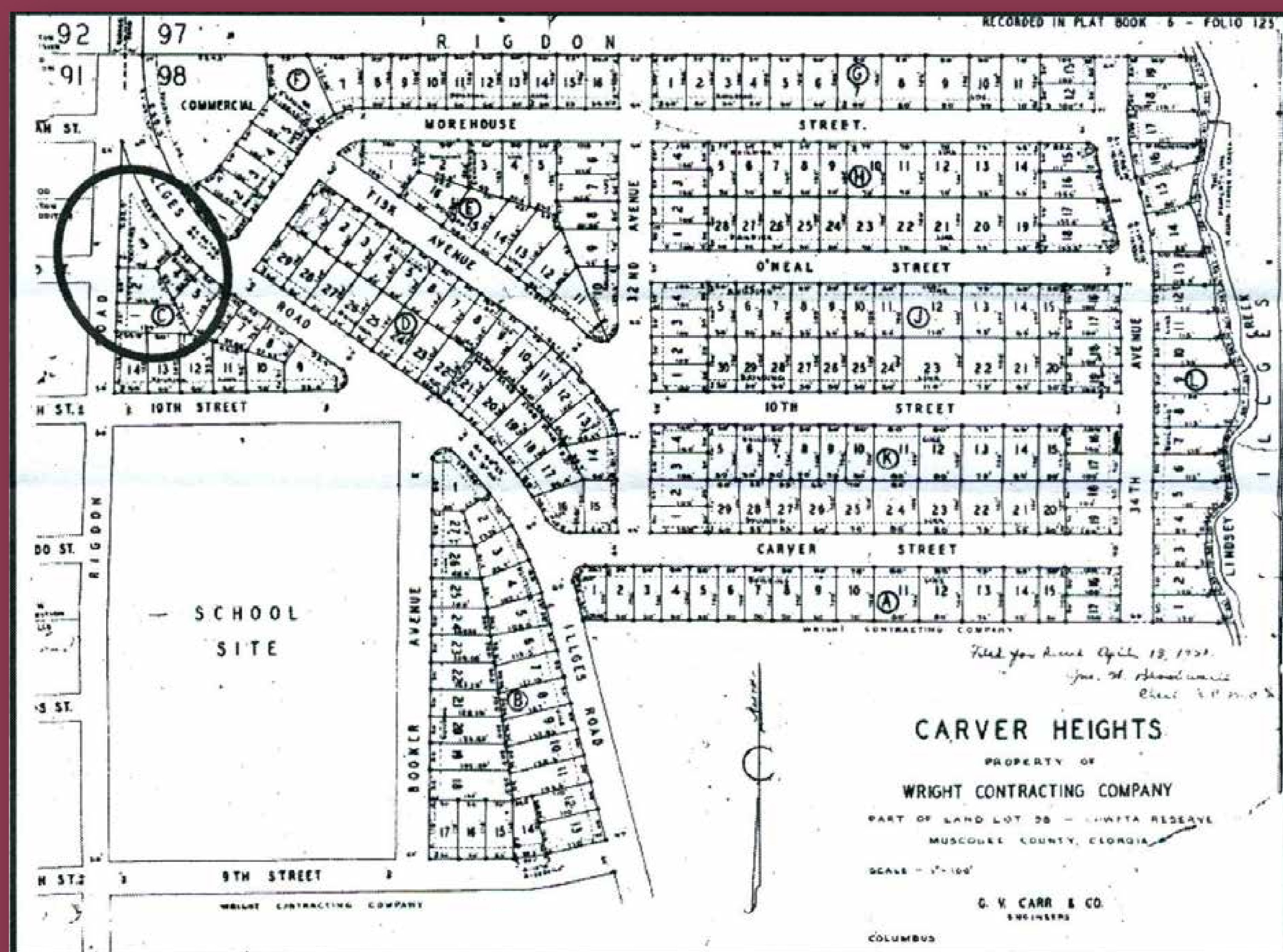
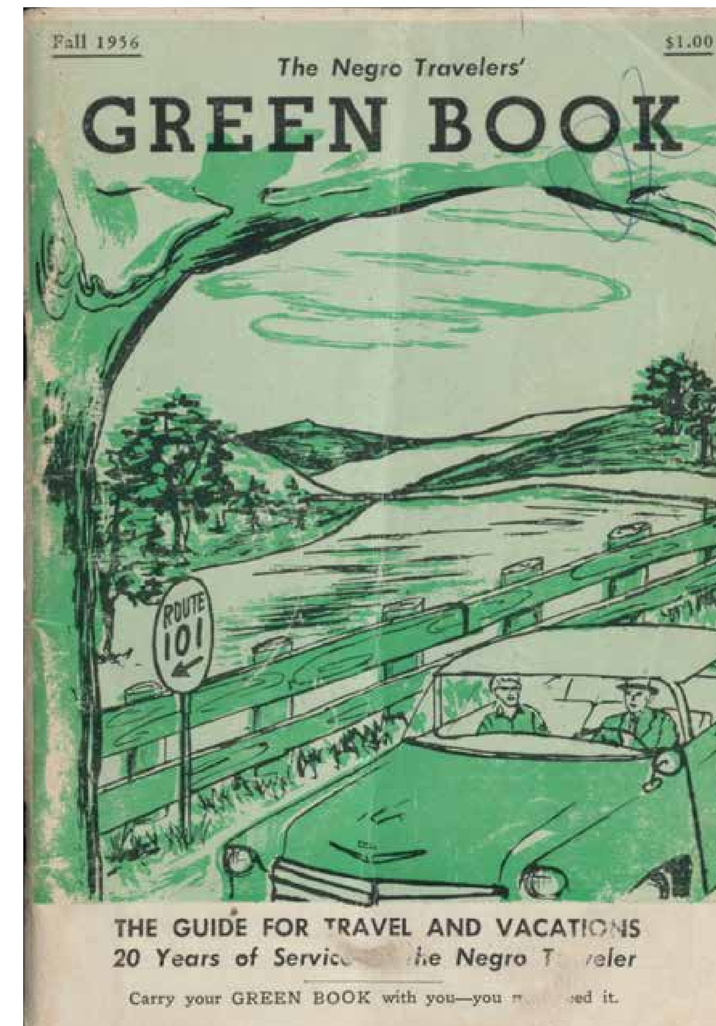
HOME AWAY FROM HOME

In segregated Jim Crow America, the Carver Heights Motel welcomed African American travelers and offered a central location to recruit young civil rights activists.



Original plat of Carver Heights. Carver Heights Plat Map drawn to scale showing each residential lot of sale. **Note:** The subdivision was subsequently extended to the south along with the location of the school. From Plat Book 6, Folio 125. Grover V. Carr Papers (MC 101). *Courtesy of Columbus State University Archives.*

Built in 1950 using a V-shape design with 12 ensuite rooms, the Carver Heights Motel anchored this mid-century commercial district. This shopping area included a grocery store, drive-through restaurant, gas station, liquor store, the Wash House Laundry, and Becky's Beauty Parlor.

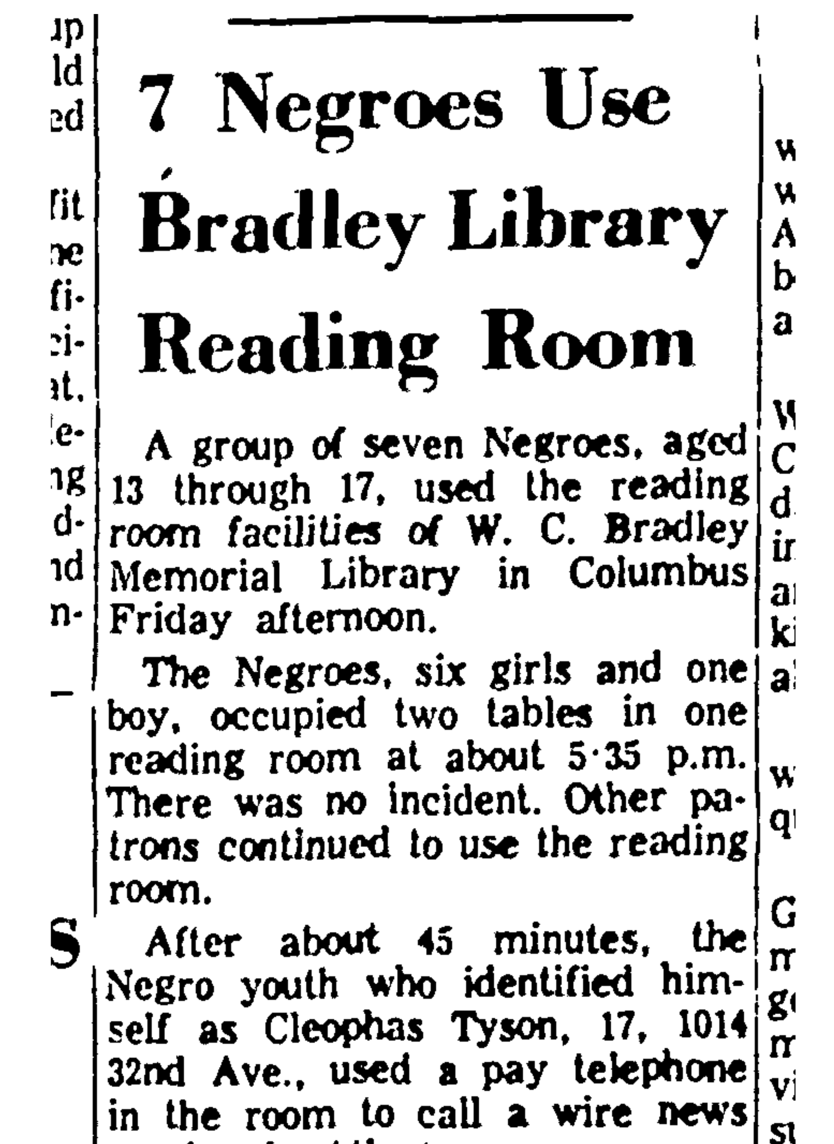


Jim Crow laws across the nation meant that African American travelers could never be confident they could find welcoming places to eat and sleep. This situation, coupled with an emerging and more mobile Black middle class, led Victor Hugo Green to publish the *Negro Travelers' Green Book* in 1936. Organized by state and city, Green's guide was sold primarily at Esso gas stations, which both welcomed Black customers and often franchised gas stations to Black entrepreneurs. These guides let travelers know which businesses would offer them lodging, food, and other necessary services.

Published between 1936 and 1967, The *Negro Travelers' Green Book* helped African Americans travel across the nation. *Green, V.H., 1956. The Negro Travelers' Green Book.* New York: Victor H. Green & Company.

Recognizing the importance of Green's guide, the *Ledger-Enquirer* noted in 1950 that the new Carver Heights Motel was featured in the publication. It was one of three Columbus establishments providing accommodations for African Americans — the others being Lowe's Hotel and the YMCA. Today, the Carver Heights Motel is the only lodging house in Columbus mentioned in the *Green Book* that is still standing.

In 1963 the Carver Heights Motel played a remarkable role in the city's civil rights history. Representatives from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) arrived that summer and rented rooms in the motel. Their goal was to recruit and train students to lead efforts to desegregate the city's public libraries. The recruiters did not have to go far. The motel was part of a vibrant commercial district, and teenagers regularly visited its local stores to buy a soda or run family errands. Many of these high school students were the daughters and sons of military families. They made excellent recruits as their parents were somewhat protected from the anger of local white employers. Still, at least one local company employee lost his job because his son took part in nonviolent civil disobedience that desegregated the city's libraries.



7 Negroes Use Bradley Library Reading Room

A group of seven Negroes, aged 13 through 17, used the reading room facilities of W. C. Bradley Memorial Library in Columbus Friday afternoon.

The Negroes, six girls and one boy, occupied two tables in one reading room at about 5:35 p.m. There was no incident. Other patrons continued to use the reading room.

After about 45 minutes, the Negro youth who identified himself as Cleophas Tyson, 17, 1014 32nd Ave., used a pay telephone in the room to call a wire news

"7 Negroes Use Bradley Library Reading Room." *Courtesy of Columbus Daily Enquirer.* July 7, 1963.

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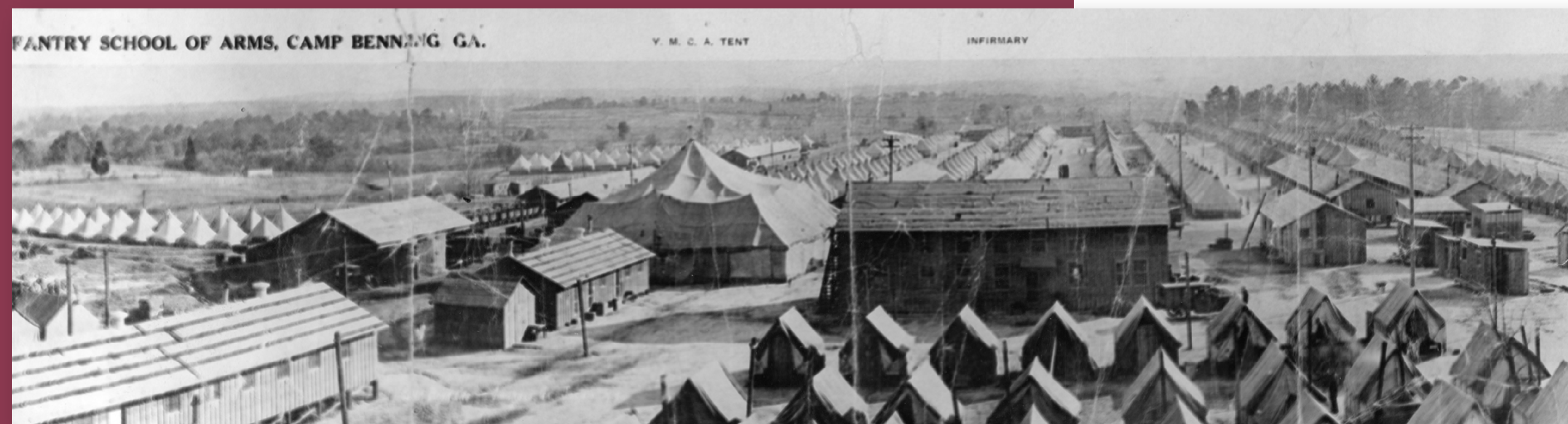
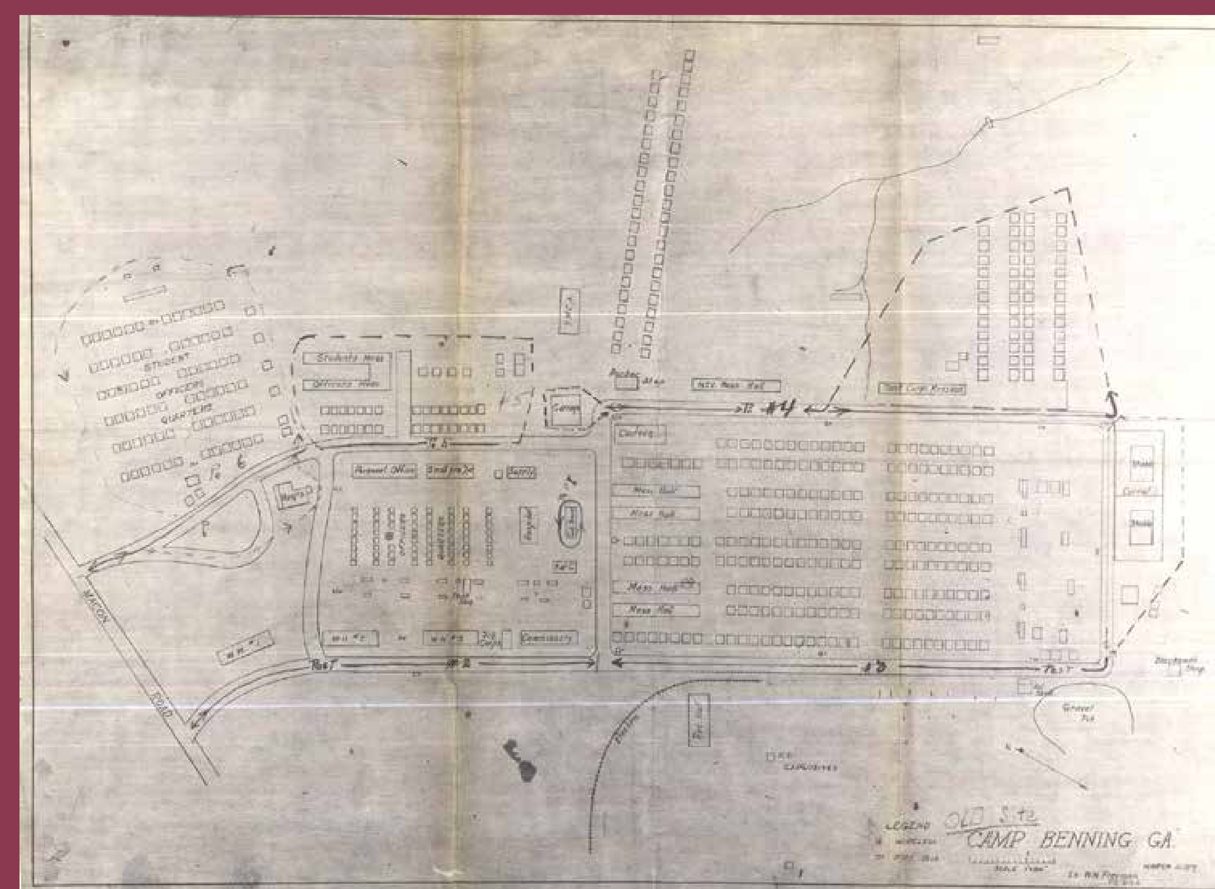
ATTEN-SHUN!



Panorama of Camp Benning. *Courtesy of the National Infantry Museum.*

Looking uphill: this tree-filled subdivision, built in the mid-20th century, was the first location of Camp Benning. Named for Confederate Brigadier General Henry L. Benning, Camp Benning opened in 1918 to train soldiers for World War I. Relocated in 1920, Camp Benning was renamed Fort Benning and housed its first Black soldiers.



Left: Location of Camp Benning along Macon Road. *Courtesy of Department of Public Works, Fort Benning, GA*

The 24th Infantry "Buffalo Soldiers" played a central role in Fort Benning's long tradition of training African American soldiers and leaders. One of the first all-Black infantry regiments in the post-Civil War Army, its soldiers won distinction in the West, the Philippines, and Cuba. However, after the end of World War I, the regiment was re-designated as "school troops" at Fort Benning. Soldiers chiefly worked as cooks and laborers, not line infantry. School troops built the base's infrastructure of roads, housing, and firing ranges, as well as the gymnasium and PX (Post Exchange), Gowdy Field (baseball) and Doughboy Stadium (football).

One such "school troop" soldier was Pvt. Felix Hall (1922–1941). Hall worked in the post's wood mill. Born in Alabama, he and several of his brothers joined the Army just prior to World War II. A jovial, talkative young man, Hall was a prankster. Although racial violence exploded on several installations during the war, only one lynching was recorded on a military base. According to a 1941 FBI report, the body of 19-year old Hall was found hanging from a tree close to the barracks at Fort Benning. The murder was never solved.

On December 30, 1943, an all-Black company, including officers, was activated and began airborne training at Fort Benning. Later designated A Company in the 555th Parachute Infantry Battalion, the unit never served overseas during World War II.

Just as the military reflected contemporary social relations, it also worked to change them. In 1948, President Harry S. Truman issued an executive order to abolish racial discrimination in the armed forces. But it took the Korean War, and a desperate need for manpower, to bring any real integration. The 24th Infantry again led the way with distinction, as African American troops were moved from supply and support roles into combat. In 2018, a century after its founding, Fort Benning welcomed its first Black commanding general—Major General Gary Brito.

Top: 124th Infantry soldiers polishing saddles. *Courtesy of the National Infantry Museum.*

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