

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Nineteenth Century Greensboro

Guilford County was formed in 1771 from sections of Orange and Rowan counties and was largely agricultural, producing cotton, tobacco, pine resin and turpentine, wheat, oats, corn, and various fruits and vegetables. The county was originally much larger, but parts were carved away to form Randolph County in 1779 and Rockingham County in 1785, leaving the approximately 650 square miles that remain today. Greensboro was established in 1808 and replaced Guilford Courthouse, now Martinsville, as the county seat. The town was only about forty-two acres at the time of its establishment, located at the geographic center of Guilford County.¹ By 1870, it had grown to include fourteen blocks that encompassed about 160 acres. Commercial and residential buildings often sat alongside one another, while other groupings of homes were clustered around the courthouse, churches, or the Greensboro Female College, now Greensboro College.²

The North Carolina Railroad, which ran from Goldsboro to Charlotte, was built through Greensboro in the 1850s, and when the first train arrived in 1856 it was greeted by much fanfare among the city's residents. It was joined by the Piedmont Railroad in 1864, the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad in 1888, and the Northwestern North Carolina Railroad in 1890, resulting in a network of six sets of tracks converging on Greensboro by 1891. Sixty trains stopped in the city each day, and Greensboro became known as "The Gate City."³

In 1891, the city expanded its boundaries, encompassing a total of four square miles and a population of just over 3,300 people. Industry came to Greensboro in the late nineteenth century, with the arrival of textile mills. Proximity Mills opened in 1896, Revolution Mills opened in 1898, and White Oak Mills opened in 1905, and each built mill villages that attracted new residents and resulted in even more population growth. By 1900, the population had jumped to just over 10,000 people, and trolleys began service to the edges of the city in 1902, which also fueled growth. The population continued to increase at a rapid pace, reaching nearly 16,000 people by 1910, and almost 20,000 people by 1920. In 1923, the city limits expanded outward again, encompassing eighteen miles that included the mill villages. During the 1920s, the population more than doubled, reaching over 53,000 people by 1930, and by 1938, the city limits expanded again to include fifty-two square miles and twenty-four neighborhoods.⁴

Warnersville and Early Neighborhood Development

As with cities throughout the South in the first half of the twentieth century, Greensboro practiced strict segregation. The separation of races took place not only in churches, schools, businesses and other public places, but also extended to neighborhoods – and not just the relatively common practice of excluding people of color through restrictive covenants in

¹ Ruth Little-Stokes, *An Inventory of Historic Architecture, Greensboro, NC* (Greensboro, NC: City of Greensboro and North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1976), 3; Alexander R. Stoesen, *Guilford County: A Brief History* (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1993), 73.

² Gayle Hicks Fripp, *Greensboro Volume II: Neighborhoods* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 1998), 1-2.

³ Marvin Brown, *Greensboro: An Architectural Record: A Survey of the Historic and Architecturally Significant Structures of Greensboro, North Carolina* (Greensboro, NC: Preservation Greensboro Inc., The Junior League of Greensboro, The City of Greensboro, 1995), 60; Fripp, *Greensboro Volume II*, 1-2.

⁴ Brown, *Greensboro: An Architectural Record*, 60; Fripp, *Greensboro, Volume II*, 1-2.

exclusive white neighborhoods, but a clear pattern of racially-based neighborhood development that remains visible on the city's landscape even today.

Upper- and middle-class white neighborhoods formed west of the city near the State Normal & Industrial College, now the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, which opened in 1892. These neighborhoods often included parks or manmade lakes, as their names reflect: College Hill, College Park, Lindley Park, Lake Daniel, and Hamilton Lakes, to name a few.⁵ North of the city became an affluent white area, with Fisher Park, Irving Park, and Latham Park forming around parks and country clubs. Working class white neighborhoods formed northeast of downtown near the city's industries, including Bessemer, Rankin, Edgeville, and Hamtown, as well as the textile mill villages for Proximity, Revolution, and White Oak, which also included the Black mill village of East White Oak by 1925. South of town was a white neighborhood known simply as South Greensboro.⁶

Warnersville was the first planned neighborhood for African Americans in Greensboro and was anchored by schools and churches. The neighborhood was first established by Yardley Warner, a Quaker from Pennsylvania who traveled the South after the Civil War, erecting schools for freedmen. In 1867, he established a school for Black children south of downtown Greensboro known as the Ashe Street School. He then purchased over thirty-five acres around the school, which was divided into lots and sold to African American families between 1868 and 1888, forming a community roughly bounded by present-day West Gate City Boulevard, Freeman Mill Road, West Florida Street, and South Elm Street.⁷ In 1922, the J.C. Price School replaced the Old Ashe Street School, serving students in first through ninth grades until its closure in 1983 and demolition in 2014.⁸

St. Matthew's Methodist Church, originally known as Warnersville Methodist Episcopal Church, was founded in 1866, making it the oldest African American congregation in Greensboro.⁹ In 1868, thirty African American members of the First Presbyterian Church separated and formed St. James Presbyterian Church, holding services in a house on North Forbis Street before constructing a sanctuary in the Warnersville neighborhood in 1910.¹⁰ Shiloh Church was founded in 1892 by a group who split from Providence Baptist Church, founded on East Market Street twenty-five years previously. The first sanctuary was built on Austin Street, and replaced with a new building in 1925, which was added onto several times by the 1940s.¹¹

⁵ Brown, *Greensboro: An Architectural Record*, 86-88; Fripp, *Greensboro Volume II*, 1-2.

⁶ Brown, *Greensboro: An Architectural Record*, 83-85.

⁷ Blackwell P. Robinson and Alexander R. Stoesen, "The History of Guilford County, North Carolina, USA, to 1980, A.D.," Sydney M. Cone, Jr., ed. (Greensboro, NC: The Guilford County Bicentennial Commission, 1971), 119-121, Greensboro Public Library; Otis L. Hairston, Jr., *Black America Series: Greensboro, North Carolina* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2003), 93.

⁸ Hairston, *Black America Series*, 34; TriadHistory.org, "J.C. Price School," <https://triadhistory.org/projects-and-resources/j-c-price-school> (accessed August 2020).

⁹ H.A. Sieber, *White Water, Colored Water: The Historicity of the African-American Community of Greensboro, North Carolina* (Greensboro, NC: Project Homestead, Inc., 1993), North Carolina Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 16; St. Matthew's United Methodist Church, "History," <http://www.stmatthurch.com/history> (accessed August 2020); Greensboro Public Library, "Profiles of Prominent African-Americans in Greensboro," <https://library.greensboro-nc.gov/home/showdocument?id=33341> (accessed August 2020).

¹⁰ Fripp, *Greensboro Volume II*, 46.

¹¹ Shiloh Baptist Church, "About Us," <http://eugeneshilohbaptistchurch.com/about-us> (accessed August 2020).

These three churches together established Union Cemetery at East Whittington and South Elm streets, listed to the National Register of Historic Places in 1993. The earliest burials took place in the 1880s. The city closed the cemetery in 1917 citing health concerns, however the closure was likely racially motivated, as the Warnersville community was immediately adjacent to the white South Greensboro neighborhood. Burials continued by permit only until 1940.¹²

Percy Street School opened around 1875, the first public graded school for African American children in the state to be supported by taxes. The school first met in the St. James Presbyterian Church, but by 1878 there were over 150 students and five teachers utilizing the same room simultaneously, so the three-room, one-story Percy Street School was built in 1880. It was later expanded to a two-story, four-room building, and it remained in use until 1937.¹³ The Warnersville Graded School, also known as Graded School Number 2 for Colored Children, opened in 1898 and remained in use until 1922. Jacksonville School also served children in this neighborhood from 1909 to 1954.¹⁴

By 1914, the social practice of segregating neighborhoods became legal mandate when the city passed an ordinance that prohibited African Americans from buying property on any block where the majority of property owners were white. The ordinance was passed in response to William B. Windsor, the principal of the Warnersville Graded School, who purchased a home in a nearby all-white neighborhood. Eventually, under threats to his life and livelihood, he was forced into selling the house at a loss to white investors, while city leaders quickly enacted the ordinance to prevent such mixing of the races. In addition to ensuring neighborhood segregation, the ordinance also prevented any gathering place for African Americans, such as theaters, on white-dominated blocks. This law remained on the books until 1929, though restrictive deeds helped reinforce residential segregation both before its passage and after its repeal.¹⁵

Urban renewal in the 1950s and 1960s resulted in the demolition and subsequent reconstruction of most of Warnersville. By 1940, the Works Progress Administration found that while only 3% of white-occupied homes were “in need of major repairs or unfit for use,” this was true for more than 28% of homes occupied by African Americans.¹⁶ The Housing Act of

¹² Hairston, *Black America Series*, 52; Kaye Graybeal, “Union Cemetery,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1993, Section 8, 2-3.

¹³ Sieber, *White Water, Colored Water*, 16; Ethel Stephens Arnett, *Greensboro, North Carolina: The County Seat of Guilford* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1955), 87-89; Fripp, *Greensboro Volume II*, 46; Nadine Sherri Lockwood, “Bennett College for Women 1926-1966” (PhD diss., State University of New York at Buffalo, 2004), 84, North Carolina Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

¹⁴ City of Greensboro Planning Department, “Heritage Communities: Warnersville,” <https://www.greensboro-nc.gov/departments/planning/learn-more-about/historic-preservation/heritage-communities/warnersville> (accessed August 2020).

¹⁵ Samuel M. Kipp, “Urban Growth and Social Change in the South, 1870-1920: Greensboro, North Carolina as a Case Study” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1971), 322-323, University of North Carolina at Greensboro Digital Collections, <http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/ref/collection/ttt/id/18757> (accessed August 2020); Greensboro Public Library, “Profiles of Prominent African Americans in Greensboro,” <https://library.greensboro-nc.gov/home/showdocument?id=33341> (accessed August 2020); Brown, *Greensboro: An Architectural Record*, 80-81.

¹⁶ Works Progress Administration, “Report of the Real Property Survey, Greensboro, North Carolina,” 20, Guilford Vertical Files, Greensboro Public Library, via University of North Carolina at Greensboro Digital

1949 authorized federal assistance to acquire and clear properties that were deemed blighted. The Redevelopment Commission of Greensboro was established in 1951, and renewal projects began in earnest in 1958, focused on the African American neighborhoods south and east of the city.¹⁷ St. James Presbyterian Church relocated to its present location at 820 Ross Avenue in 1958, the building designed by prominent African American architect, W. Edward Jenkins.¹⁸ The Shiloh Baptist Church relocated to Eugene Street during urban renewal and the current building, designed by African American architect Clinton Gravely, was built in 1974.¹⁹



Figure 2: St. James Presbyterian Church (GF2037) 820 Ross Avenue

Urban renewal also had a devastating effect on African American businesses in Warnersville that were forced to relocate and, as a result, became separated from their community and customers. Only three of these businesses relocated successfully and remain in operation today. Hargett Funeral Home, which had operated on South Street since 1922, relocated to its present location on East Market Street, northwest of the study area. Smith Funeral Home, originally located on Ashe Street, now operates as Smith-Hinnant Funeral Services on Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive, west of the study area. Thomas and Theresia Fairley's The Little Spot, a nightclub and café established on Ashe Street in the 1940s, was reopened on Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive as Tom's Take Home Restaurant, although it too is now closed.²⁰

Historically Black Colleges and Universities and the Development of East Greensboro

African Americans settled primarily in east Greensboro, drawn to this part of town by the establishment of the Agricultural and Mechanical College for the Colored Race, now North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NC A&T), in 1893. The school was established by the state two years earlier and first operated in Raleigh, but was moved to Greensboro after the successful advocacy of Charles Moore, Dr. D.W.C. Benbow, and other African American leaders, supported by the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce.²¹ In 1928, the college began admitting female students. A school of engineering was added in the 1930s, and by the end of the decade, degree offerings included graduate study in agriculture, education, and engineering. The college was accredited in 1939. During World War II, an Army ROTC unit was added, followed by an Air Force ROTC unit in 1952. The School of Nursing opened in 1957. The college was reclassified as a university in 1967.²²

Collections, <http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/UrbanDevGSO/id/7668/rec/13> (accessed August 2020).

¹⁷ City of Greensboro, "Redevelopment History in Greensboro," www.greensboro-nc.gov/home/showdocument?id=34234 (accessed August 2020).

¹⁸ Fripp, *Greensboro Volume II*, 46.

¹⁹ Hairston, *Black America Series*, 54.

²⁰ Hairston, *Black America Series*, 60.

²¹ Hairston, *Black America Series*, 46; Sieber, *White Water, Colored Water*, 18-19; Stoesen, *Guilford County*, 31.

²² Stoesen, *Guilford County*, 49; Otis L. Hairston, Jr., *Picturing Greensboro: Four Decades of African American Community* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2007), 104.

The first president of the college was Dr. James B. Dudley, who served from 1896 until 1925, and the neighborhood surrounding the college is known as the Dudley Street neighborhood (north of the study area). Meanwhile, Scott Park and College Heights formed east of the college (northeast of the study area), and East Side Park and Lincoln Grove formed southeast of the college (east of the study area).²³

Bennett Seminary, now Bennett College, also attracted African Americans to settle on the east side of town. In 1873, the Freedmen's Aid Society first organized the Bennett Seminary in the basement of St. Matthew's United Methodist Church. By 1875, the Society had purchased the first twenty acres for a new campus east of downtown Greensboro (near present-day NC A&T), and had started a fundraising campaign to pay for construction costs. With additional assistance from the church's Women's Home Mission Society, the seminary was dedicated in 1878.²⁴ It initially functioned as a junior college and also offered a college preparatory program with a high school curriculum, as there was no high school for African Americans until the late 1920s.²⁵ The city provided financial assistance for students to enroll in the high school program.²⁶ In 1926, the school eliminated male enrollment, then phased out the high school, which had its last graduating class in 1932.²⁷ Bennett College has remained a four-year women's college since that time, and was accredited in 1957.²⁸

In addition to schools, churches were another important foundational institution in the development of East Greensboro, and several early congregations built churches on East Market Street, just north of the study area. The Providence Baptist Church was organized on East Market Street in 1866 and first met under a brush arbor. It was the first Baptist church for African Americans in Greensboro. In 1871 the congregation built a frame church that housed worship services and a school. This building was replaced by a brick church in 1876, reputedly the first brick church for Black congregants in North Carolina.²⁹ The Bethel AME Church congregation formed in 1869 under the name Boon's Chapel and built a brick church at 200 North Regan Street, just north of East Market Street. The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer was organized in 1909 when a mission was established on East Market Street.³⁰

In the early twentieth century, a Black business district began to form along East Market Street near the colleges, as restaurants and entertainment venues in particular relied on business from students. Chef Eddie's restaurant served chitterlings, fried chicken, collard greens, yams, and other soul food to students, and the Half Moon Café served students until 1939 when it was demolished for construction of the Hayes Taylor YMCA. The Palace Theater offered movies for a dime during the week and booked comedians, dancers, and other acts on the weekends. Leon Hardy opened a photography studio and became well-known for capturing African American community and college events. McRae Taxi, Daniel Taxi (later known as Daniel-Keck Taxi), and Royal Taxi provided transportation services. The Carolina Peacemaker

²³ Brown, *Greensboro: An Architectural Record*, 197-198, 211-212; Hairston, *Black America Series*, 46; Stoesen, *Guilford County*, 31.

²⁴ Stoesen, *Guilford County*, 32; Lockwood, "Bennett College for Women," 85.

²⁵ Stoesen, *Guilford County*, 50.

²⁶ Arnett, *Greensboro*, 89-90.

²⁷ Brown, *Greensboro: An Architectural Record*, 73; Hairston, *Black America Series*, 36.

²⁸ Stoesen, *Guilford County*, 50.

²⁹ Hairston, *Black America Series*, 50; Fripp, *Greensboro Volume II*, 46.

³⁰ Fripp, *Greensboro Volume II*, 50, 123.

newspaper was founded by John Kilamanjaro in 1967 to focus on African American community life.³¹

Like Warnersville, urban renewal had a devastating effect on the more than seventy Black-owned businesses on East Market Street, the commercial area that served as a center for African American community life during the first half of the twentieth century. Black residents went to East Market Street to visit restaurants, shop, attend church, obtain health care, and enjoy entertainment venues. Urban renewal widened East Market Street from two lanes to six lanes, creating a thoroughfare into and out of downtown and demolishing the African American resources in this area. Although Vance Chavis, an African American educator and politician, advocated for partially widening the road while leaving the businesses on the south side of the street intact, the city rejected the idea. Once removed from this network, most businesses failed. Only a few successfully relocated, including Wilkins Beauty Nook, Bowman Chapel Church, Shaw's Curb Market, Carolina Peacemaker, King's Barbeque, Elite Clothing Company, and Carl's Famous Foods. Even fewer black-owned businesses remained on East Market Street, including Carolina Florist, Hayes Beauty Shop, and Gate City Seafood.³²

The churches were also affected by urban renewal. Providence Baptist Church relocated to its present location at 1106 Tuscaloosa Street, in the study area, in 1964.³³ The Episcopal Church of the Redeemer was condemned in 1954, and the current church was built at 901 East Friendly Avenue, west of the study area, in 1967.³⁴ Bethel AME Church was demolished in 1964, but the congregation remained in this location, west of the study area, completing an education building in 1967 and the current church in 1975.³⁵

Nocho Park, Clinton Hills, and the Growth of Southeast Greensboro

In the early twentieth century, residential neighborhoods in East Greensboro, like those throughout the city, began to expand. This growth was facilitated in part by the popularity of the automobile, as well as the efforts of realtors and speculative builders who carefully targeted and recruited specific socio-economic groups to specific areas of the city. The city limits were expanded in 1923, bringing the city's area from four square miles to eighteen square miles. On the east side of the city, the boundaries were extended beyond the concentration of development around Bennett College and NC A&T. New growth firmly followed the previously established patterns of racial division, and this area remained predominantly African American.³⁶

Nocho Park is one of the African American developments that followed annexation and makes up the northern section of the survey area. The Nocho Park neighborhood was platted in three stages from 1924 to 1926. Like many of Greensboro's planned neighborhoods, it featured

³¹ Hairston, *Black America Series*, 62-67, 101.

³² Hairston, *Black America Series*, 68-69, 94.

³³ Hairston, *Black America Series*, 50; Fripp, *Greensboro Volume II*, 46.

³⁴ Fripp, *Greensboro Volume II*, 50.

³⁵ Fripp, *Greensboro Volume II*, 123.

³⁶ Jonathan F. Baylin, "An Historical Study of Residential Development in Greensboro, 1808-1965" (master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1968), 70-73, 80, North Carolina Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

green space and baseball fields that remain extant.³⁷ The neighborhood was planned by white developers, but named for prominent African American Jacob R. “Jim” Nocho, who had died in 1914.³⁸ Nocho came to Greensboro from Pennsylvania following the Civil War to serve as a teacher for the Freedman’s Bureau. He later also worked as a railroad postal clerk and was active in the community as a member of St. James Presbyterian Church.³⁹

Clinton Hills is located south of Nocho Park and was also platted by white developers. Centered on Benbow Road, it is roughly bounded by Julian Street to the north, Oxford Street to the west, Curry Street to the south, and East Side Drive and Broad Street to the east. The two sections of Clinton Hills were platted in 1926, followed by a re-plat of the south section of the neighborhood in 1956 that accommodated alterations to the path of Midland (now E. Florida) Street and reconfigured the southwestern edge of the neighborhood. The Clinton Hills development includes curvilinear street patterns and may be the first African American neighborhood in Greensboro to do so.⁴⁰ Clinton Hills also includes several green spaces, including Clinton Hill Natural Area on South Side Boulevard and the East Side Drive Natural Area, which divides the street and forms a boulevard. Benbow Park, located at the south end of Clinton Hills, is a small neighborhood park with a playground, picnic tables, and a paved walking trail.

Both Nocho Park and Clinton Hills benefitted from close proximity to Bennett College to the west and NC A&T to the north, and they developed as a result of the growth of both schools. The neighborhoods also benefit from the proximity of the Washington Street School, located at 1110 East Washington Street, west of Nocho Park and Dudley High School, east of Nocho Park and Clinton Hills. The former served elementary age students until 1926 when a high school curriculum was added. Dudley High School opened in 1929 as the first African American

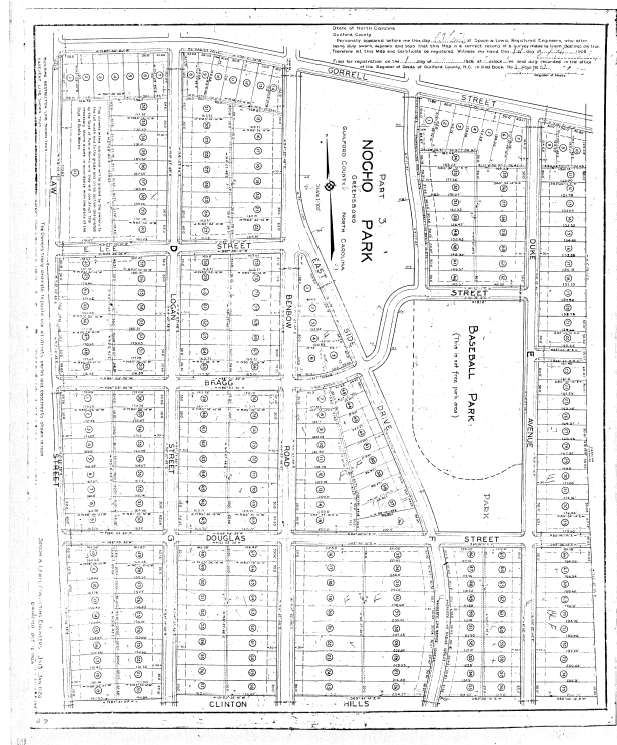


Figure 3: Plat of the south end of Nocho Park



Figure 4: Washington Street School (GF2109) 1110 East Washington Street

³⁷ “Part of Nocho Park Subdivision,” 1924, Plat Book 5, Page 395, Guilford County Register of Deeds, Greensboro, North Carolina (hereafter referred to as GCRD); “Part of Nocho Park Subdivision,” 1924, Plat Book 6, Page 31, GCRD; “Part 3, Nocho Park,” 1926, Plat Book 8, Page 63, GCRD.

³⁸ Fripp, *Greensboro, Volume II*, 93.

³⁹ Greensboro Public Library, “Profiles of Prominent African-Americans in Greensboro.”

⁴⁰ “Clinton Hills, Part 1,” January 1926, Plat Book 9, Page 90, GCRD; “Clinton Hills, Part 2,” January 1926, Plat Book 8, Page 136, GCRD; A Resubdivision of Clinton Hills, Section 3,” January 1956, Plat Book 23, Page 53, GCRD.

high school in Greensboro. It was designed by Charles C. Hartmann and named for James B. Dudley, the second president of NC A&T. Upon its construction, the high school program at the Washington Street School was relocated to the new school, and the first high school class graduated from Dudley in 1930.⁴¹ The current 1951 Washington Street School building replaced the earlier campus, and the school currently operates as the Washington Street Montessori School.

As with Greensboro's other African American neighborhoods, churches were important to the cultural fabric, with the city's oldest African American congregations located in Nocho Park. The first congregation of Lutherans in Greensboro formed in Warnersville in 1894 and built the Evangelical Lutheran Grace Church in 1897, although it was destroyed by fire in the late 1920s. The congregation merged with that of the Luther Memorial Church, which had been formed in 1924. The merged congregations built their current church, Grace Lutheran Church, in 1927 at 1315 East Washington Street, the oldest African American church remaining extant in Greensboro.⁴² The church served the students and staff of nearby Immanuel Lutheran College, which moved from Concord, North Carolina, to Greensboro's East Market Street 1905, closed in 1961.⁴³ St. Mary's Catholic Church built a mission church and school at Gorrell and Duke streets in 1928. In 1948, the name was changed to Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. In 1972, the parish school was closed due to low enrollment, and the name was changed again to St. Mary's. The historic chapel remains extant, but the school was demolished in 2003 for a new parish center.⁴⁴



Figure 5: Grace Lutheran Church (GF9142) 1315 East Washington Street

Another institution that drew residents to these neighborhoods was the Greensboro Negro Hospital Association in Nocho Park, which was the first modern hospital in Greensboro that treated African American patients. Designed by Charles C. Hartmann, the hospital opened at Benbow and McConnell roads in 1927. It was funded through a \$100,000 fundraising campaign by the Association and a \$50,000 donation by the Richardson family, founders of the Vick Chemical Company. In 1937, the hospital was renamed L. Richardson Memorial Hospital (GF1137). In the 1940s, a prenatal clinic was opened at the hospital to address the nearly 28% infant mortality rate in the city. The hospital facilities were soon inadequate to support the community needs, so a new larger facility was constructed on Southside Boulevard in 1966.

⁴¹ Fripp, *Greensboro Volume II*, 93; Greensboro Public Library, "Profiles of Prominent African-Americans in Greensboro."

⁴² Fripp, *Greensboro Volume II*, 50; Hairston, *Black America Series*, 46; Benjamin Briggs, "The Secrets of Nocho Park, Clinton Hills, and Benbow Park," *Preservation Greensboro*, <https://preservationgreensboro.org/the-secrets-of-nocho-park-clinton-hills-and-benbow-park> (accessed August 2020).

⁴³ Brown, *Greensboro: An Architectural Record*, 197-198, 211-212; Hairston, *Black America Series*, 46; Stoesen, *Guilford County*, 31; Briggs, "The Secrets of Nocho Park, Clinton Hills, and Benbow Park."

⁴⁴ St. Mary's Catholic Church, "Our History," <https://stmarysgreensboro.org/about/history> (accessed August 2020); Hairston, *Black America Series*, 40.

The original building was converted for use as a nursing home facility, which operated at least into the 1990s, and the building is currently an affordable housing complex.⁴⁵

The presence of the schools, churches, and hospital made these especially desirable neighborhoods, and the residents included teachers, bricklayers, barbers, and other laborers and professionals.⁴⁶ The neighborhoods were also served by the Windsor Community Center, built in Nocho Park in 1937 and named for William B. Windsor, the principal of Warnersville Graded School, superintendent of African American schools in Greensboro, and president of Bennett College, as well as the target of a 1914 campaign to prevent interracial neighborhoods. Windsor was also involved in the establishment of Greensboro's Carnegie Negro Library and edited an African American newspaper called the *Greensboro Herald*. The community center included a bathhouse, Olympic-sized swimming pool, tennis courts, and playground. The original building was replaced by the current building in 1968.⁴⁷ The Vance Chavis Library is also located in Nocho Park and was constructed around 1965. The library is named in honor of Greensboro educator Vance Chavis, who taught at Dudley High School in the 1930s, then served as principal of Lincoln Junior High School, and after retirement was elected to the Greensboro City Council.⁴⁸



Figure 6: Vance Chavis Library (GF9127)
900 South Benbow Road

In the 1950s, Greensboro was selected for the convergence point of Interstate 40 and Interstate 85, and O'Henry Boulevard was constructed and dedicated in 1957. In 1970, U.S. Route 220 was rerouted to align with U.S. Route 29/O'Henry Boulevard.⁴⁹ The construction of these thoroughfares, with on- and off-ramps that cut into the Nocho Park neighborhood, fractured the Nocho Park and Clinton Hills neighborhoods, separating Dudley High School from the community on one side, while the Windsor Community Center and Chavis Library were on the other side.

Benbow Park and Mid-Twentieth Century Residential Growth

In 1936, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) utilized data provided by developers, real estate appraisers, and lending institutions to evaluate residential neighborhoods. The group assigned one of four colored grades to indicate mortgage security in that neighborhood: green for high security and red for low security. The colors used in the coded system led the practice to be termed "redlining." Racial identity was a significant factor in grade assignments, and a red grade resulted in refusal by banks to offer home loans in these areas. Nearly all of

⁴⁵ Marvin Brown, "(Former) L. Richardson Memorial Hospital," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1992, Section 8, 3-4; Hairston, *Black America Series*, 104; Sieber, *White Water, Colored Water*, 23.

⁴⁶ Brown, *Greensboro: An Architectural Record*, 86, 211-212.

⁴⁷ Briggs, "The Secrets of Nocho Park, Clinton Hills, and Benbow Park"; Hairston, *Black America Series*, 99; Greensboro Public Library, "Profiles of Prominent African-Americans in Greensboro."

⁴⁸ Hairston, *Black America Series*, 47.

⁴⁹ Stoeson, *Guilford County*, 62; Briggs, "The Secrets of Nocho Park, Clinton Hills, and Benbow Park."

the survey area was graded yellow, identified as “definitely declining,” or red, identified as “hazardous.”⁵⁰

American Federal Savings and Loan Association had a significant impact on the development of mid-twentieth-century African American neighborhoods. Founded in 1959, the bank offered home loans to African Americans who were unable to receive loans from other banks due to loan limits and redlining practices. It was located on East Market Street, northwest of the study area, though closed in 1990.⁵¹ The Greensboro National Bank, established by African American businessmen in 1971, was also an important lender for those affected by lingering discriminatory practices in housing. The bank was built in 1972 at 100 South Murrow Boulevard, designed by architect and bank founder Edward Jenkins, and today serves as a branch of Mechanics & Farmers Bank.⁵²

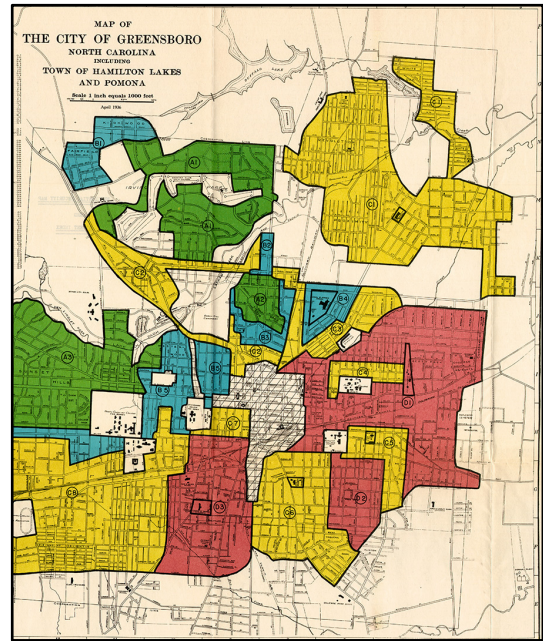


Figure 7: Portion of the 1936 HOLC map

The Benbow Park neighborhood, at the south end of the study area, benefitted from new lending opportunities. Developed in five plats between 1959 and 1962, the neighborhood is located southeast of Clinton Hills and is roughly bounded by East Florida Street to the north, South Benbow Road to the west, Lakeland Road and South Side Boulevard to the south, and O’Henry Boulevard to the east. The western part of the neighborhood was originally platted as part of Clinton Hills in the 1920s, but when those lots remained undeveloped by the late 1950s, they were instead incorporated into Benbow Park. Following nineteenth-century Olmstedian principles, the neighborhood is characterized by curvilinear streets, large lots, and a mature tree canopy. The Benbow Park neighborhood green space within the Clinton Hills boundary is adjacent to the southwestern part of the Benbow Park neighborhood.⁵³

Although most of east and southeast Greensboro is made up of carefully planned and platted neighborhoods, there are pockets of organic residential development as well. The Neighbors United neighborhood is a small area that includes the few blocks formed where Benbow Road, Marlboro Road, and Ellis Street intersect with the eastern sections of Ross Avenue and Tuscaloosa Street, adjacent to South O’Henry Boulevard. The area was covered in woods until it was cleared for the housing constructed in the 1950s and 1960s. Since the neighborhood was not built speculatively like others in this area, new residents had to find their own

⁵⁰ The University of Richmond, Virginia Tech, and the University of Maryland, “Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America,” <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=5/39.1/-94.58> (accessed August 2020).

⁵¹ Hairston, *Black America Series*, 66.

⁵² Hariston, *Black America Series*, 70; Personal Interview with Miltrene Jenkins Barden (community resident) by Eric Woodard (project volunteer), via telephone, July 2020.

⁵³ “Benbow Park Subdivision, Section I,” February 20, 1959, Plat Book 27, Page 75, GCRD; “Benbow Park Subdivision, Section 2,” October 9, 1959, Plat Book 28, Page 42, GCRD; “Benbow Park Subdivision, Section 3,” November 30, 1960, Plat Book 29, Page 81, GCRD; “Benbow Park Subdivision, Revision Section 4, Section 5,” February 7, 1962, Plat Book 31, Page 89, GCRD.

surveyors, architects, builders, and financing, and so they too benefitted from newly-established African American lending institutions. Architects Edward Jenkins and William Streat both lived in the neighborhood and designed their own homes, as well as those of several neighbors. Other residents included William Goldsboro, the principal at David Caldwell School, and his wife Juanita, a counselor at Dudley High School; William Hampton, the first African American elected to the Greensboro City Council; E.E. Smith, who owned and operated a funeral home serving African Americans in Warnersville; and nearby on East Side Drive lived Dr. Alvin Blount, who sued Moses Cone Hospital with Dr. George Simkins and helped achieve integration in hospitals nationwide. Residents of this neighborhood, and the surrounding streets, included doctors, teachers and principals, funeral home directors, post office workers, day care givers, NC A&T professors and staff, lawyers, and police officers and chiefs.⁵⁴



Figure 8: 1600-1602 Tuscaloosa Street

West of Nocho Park on East Gate City Boulevard, a 1930s residential area deemed by the HOLC to be “largely consisting of cheap type negro cottages” and therefore demonstrating “hazardous” mortgage security was leveled in the 1950s for public housing. Ray Warren Homes, the city’s third public housing project and first integrated housing development, is a complex of seventy buildings, including apartments, gathering spaces, playgrounds, basketball courts, and a childcare center. The street patterns were realigned to reflect the popular curvilinear principles of the time, and the complex is roughly bounded by East Gate City Boulevard to the north, Benjamin Benson Street to the west, Julian Street to the south, and Logan Street to the east. The complex was named for Ray Warren, the first director of the Greensboro Housing Authority, who served from 1941 until 1956.⁵⁵ It was the third public housing development after the 1951 construction of Smith Homes (for whites) and Morningside Homes (for blacks).

The City of Greensboro also redeveloped a residential area west of Nocho Park between East Washington Street and East Gate City Boulevard in the mid-twentieth century. While the Clinton Hills and Benbow Park neighborhoods to the south were growing, this area was designated “definitely declining” by the HOLC, although the HOLC noted it was a “good residential section” helped by its proximity to Bennett College and NC A&T.⁵⁶ The area was selected by the Redevelopment Commission of Greensboro for an urban renewal



Figure 9: 500 block High Street (GF9145)

⁵⁴ Personal Interview with Miltrene Jenkins Barden, July 2020.

⁵⁵ Greensboro Housing Authority, “Our History,” <http://www.gha-nc.org/about-us/our-history/expansion.aspx> (accessed August 2020); Sanborn Map Company, “Greensboro North Carolina,” 1950, www.nclive.org (accessed August 2020); The University of Richmond, Virginia Tech, and the University of Maryland, “Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America.”

⁵⁶ The University of Richmond, Virginia Tech, and the University of Maryland, “Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America.”

project in the 1960s, known as the Washington Street Redevelopment, which was carried out in the 1970s. Similar to the Ray Warren Homes project, nearly all of the existing homes in the Washington Street Redevelopment area were demolished and the roads were realigned.

Residents of East and Southeast Greensboro and the Civil Rights Movement

African Americans were relegated to their own neighborhoods, businesses, churches, schools, cemeteries, and recreation on the east side of town, while whites occupied the remainder of the city. Segregation was enforced not only by social practices, but by local ordinances and neighborhood covenants. The closest the races came to mixing was when white audiences attended concerts at African American venues on East Market Street, where white and Black concertgoers were physically separated by ropes and supervised by the city police department.⁵⁷

Following *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 and the Supreme Court's mandate that schools be integrated, Greensboro adopted the 1963 Freedom of Choice Plan, which permitted students to enroll at the school of their choosing regardless of race. Not surprisingly, this plan was unsuccessful at achieving integration because although African American students enrolled at formerly all-white schools, the reverse did not occur.⁵⁸ Community task forces formed, including the Concerned Citizens for Schools, with the goal of facilitating school integration, and the Chamber of Commerce's Community Unity Division, with the goal to "improve community support and acceptance of interracial activity, including school desegregation."⁵⁹ However, many of Greensboro's white residents fought to maintain the status quo while the city's African American residents grew increasingly frustrated with racist policies and practices.

Residents recall that the protesting began in 1960 with the lunch counter sit-in at the F. W. Woolworth Company store (132 South Main Street, GF0142). The sit-in was led by NC A&T students David Richmond, Franklin McCain, Ezell Blair, Jr., and Joe McNeil, known as the Greensboro Four, and from that point NC A&T students largely led protesting efforts in the city. Jesse Jackson led numerous protests while a student at NC A&T in the early 1960s. He and his wife, Jackie, often took refuge at 1500 Marboro Drive in the Neighbors United neighborhood. Residents also recall that when the college students went home for the summer, the protesting did not stop, but rather it was the Dudley High School students who continued the effort.⁶⁰



Figure 10: 1500 Marboro Drive (GF9144)

Community resident Miltrene Jenkins Barden recalls protesting in the 1960s while a student at Dudley High School and later NC A&T. "My generation [was] out there pounding the streets, that's what we did in the sixties," she recalls. "We were integrating Greensboro." Barden also

⁵⁷ Stoesen, *Guilford County*, 58.

⁵⁸ Stoesen, *Guilford County*, 61.

⁵⁹ Hairston, *Picturing Greensboro*, 11; Stoesen, *Guilford County*, 62.

⁶⁰ Personal Interview with Miltrene Jenkins Barden, July 2020.

recalls that her father, architect W. Edward Jenkins, always stayed home when she went to protest so he could bail her out of jail if she was arrested. “They put us in jail. They put the dogs and fire hoses on us,” she recalls. More than a thousand protestors were held in the former polio hospital at 710 Huffine Mill Road – nearly two miles east of the NC A&T campus. According to Barden, it was relatively common for residents in the neighborhood to mortgage their houses to raise funds for protestors’ bail. Civil Rights attorney Kenneth Lee, who resided at 1021 Broad Street in the survey area, frequently represented jailed protestors pro bono.⁶¹

Although protests, counter-protests, and racially-motivated violence got worse before it got better, by about 1970 both white and Black residents in the city were ready to find neutral ground and move forward. As historian William Chafe explains, “new forums for interracial communication were established, long-standing black grievances were addressed, and a framework was created for middle-class cooperation across racial lines.”⁶² The February One Society formed to support the city’s efforts to achieve one community and sponsored annual events honoring the Greensboro Four in the 1980s and 1990s.⁶³ After F.W. Woolworth Corporation announced the downtown Greensboro store would be closing, Sit-In Movement, Inc., was formed in 1993 to purchase the building and establish the International Civil Rights Museum, which opened in 2010.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Personal Interview with Miltrene Jenkins Barden, July 2020.

⁶² William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 234-236.

⁶³ Hairston, *Picturing Greensboro*, 65.

⁶⁴ Hairston, *Picturing Greensboro*, 93.