EBB *and* FLOW

Life & Community in Eastern Savannah

Martha L. Keber

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a documentary, and an exhibition, sharing the same name, organized by the Telfair Museum of Art.

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Cover:
This detail of a rare panoramic photograph, ca. 1910, shows the Oelschig family homes and greenhouses. A.C. Oelschig bought the property at the intersection of Wheaton Street and Skidaway Road about 1890.
Courtesy of George Oelschig.

Coast Line Railway, ca. 1887-1892.
William E. Wilson Photographs, MS 1375, Box 2, Folder 2, #280.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

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FOREWORD

A mere glance at the physical expanse comprising eastern Savannah would not suggest that it was once so remote and green as to invite comparisons to the Garden of Eden. *Ebb and Flow: Life and Community in Eastern Savannah* combines this fact, along with others, into a remarkable history, vast in its scope and in its complexity. *Ebb and Flow* is the third in a series of projects, initiated by the City of Savannah several years ago. With a historian's discerning gaze, Martha Keber, the book's author, reveals an eastern Savannah defined by the force of economic realities and re-shaped by the daily social transactions of its residents.

Pore over the book's pages, visit the project's website at www.savannahneighborhoods.org, or drop by the temporary exhibition at the Telfair, and you will see these residents' very obvious pride in East Savannah, Hillcrest, Pine Gardens, Savannah Gardens, and Twickenham neighborhoods. Full partners in this project, residents contributed their time, their images, and their recollections, allowing the City to enter their homes and capture voices burnished by age. Apparent in the telling of this tale is the fact that a neighborhood is not defined by its buildings, its geography, or its businesses, but instead, by the residents who have, and continue to, live there.

Many individuals and institutions helped make this project a reality. The City is indebted to our financial partners; namely the Georgia Council for the Arts, the Georgia Humanities Council, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and the Savannah Foundation. The City is especially grateful to All Walks of Life (AWOL) for producing *My Block*, a media arts project that had Savannah's teenagers crafting mini-documentaries exploring these neighborhoods' history. A debt of gratitude is also owed to the Telfair Museum of Art for producing a May 2011 exhibition as a complement to this publication. Acknowledged elsewhere in this publication is the generosity of the many repositories, among them the Georgia Historical Society, Live Oak Public Libraries, and *Savannah Morning News*, that graciously permitted reproduction of images. None of this would be possible without the contribution of the 100 or so citizens who shared tips, provided introductions, and graciously rifled through their papers in the search for answers sought by team members.

Particular thanks also goes to the project team – Martha Keber, Kelly Applegate, Charles Elmore, Linda Evans, Reginald Franklin, Geoff L. Johnson, DaVena Jordan, Jan Kramer, and Janet Stone – working under the supervision of Michelle Hunter, the project manager. Space does not permit a full recounting of their immense contribution to this project.

Long ago, this administration and City staff realized that the divide between intention and deed is a short one, bridged through innovation and citizen engagement. This project, along with the physical redevelopment of Savannah Gardens, demonstrates the City's commitment to realizing a brighter future for this community. With great pleasure, I present *Ebb and Flow* as a small reminder that empowered citizens continue to shape Savannah's narrative, participating as they do in the mundane and in the extraordinary.

Otis S. Johnson, Ph.D.

Mayor, City of Savannah

CROSSROADS

CROSSROADS

UNUSUAL VISITORS ARRIVED AT LEPAGEVILLE on September 7, 1939. The black families of this railroad workers' village, established by the Savannah, Florida & Western Railway more than fifty years earlier, were accustomed to employees from the fertilizer plant or even Standard Oil men at work within sight of their homes but this group was unlike any work crew they had seen. Seventeen people in all, with gear in tow, went past the small gray houses off President Street, beyond the cemetery, and into the woods on the bluff overlooking the Savannah River. This archaeological team from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) hoped to find the traces of Native Americans who had settled on the bluff hundreds of years before.[1]

As serene as the area may have appeared on that sultry September day, the archaeologists knew that there were rich layers of history below ground level of eastern Savannah. The intersection of Indian trails, villages, and the river highway made the area a crossroads. Even after the Native Americans gave way to the Europeans, the area played an important role in agricultural, industrial, and military developments that shaped Savannah. In the same way that the archaeologists found the remnants of another time beneath the bluff at LePageville, the early history of Savannah's eastside was formative but often hidden from view.

THE NATIVE AMERICAN PRESENCE

The archaeologists who worked near LePageville initially in 1939 and later for a few months in 1941 and 1942 excavated what they called the "Deptford village site." The native people who lived there, between the years 500 and 1000 A.D., left abundant evidence of their lives. Arrowheads and knives suggest that they were hunters and the numerous midden pits, or garbage heaps, full of oyster and mussel shells, show that their diet was rich in seafood. The villagers had stone tools for grinding and pounding, as well as deer bone awls used to punch holes. If much of their lives revolved around the search for food, they also appreciated ornaments to wear, such as ear pins crafted from a conch shell or a necklace with a stone bar. Even a trace of their fears remained deep in the sand. A ninety foot trail of dark sand intermingled with shell fragments marked a trench where the villagers erected a palisade, or protective wall. It seems concern for safety prompted the inhabitants to construct defenses.[2] If the Deptford site has been overshadowed by the larger and more thoroughly excavated Irene Mound near Garden City, it nonetheless confirms a well-established presence of these Indians in eastern Chatham County a thousand years ago.

More than a century before Oglethorpe landed in 1733, the Indians who lived along the banks of the Savannah River were aware of the arrival of Europeans nearby. The Frenchman Jean Ribault sailed up the river a short distance in 1562, doubtlessly under the eyes of native observers.[3] The Spanish, however, established a more permanent presence with fourteen missions on the Georgia coast, as well

Fig. 1: *Hauling Rice by Oxcart at Deptford Plantation, ca. 1883-1893.*
William Ernest Wilson Photo Archive, MS 993, Box 1, Folder 48.
Courtesy of Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.

as others built in coastal South Carolina and Florida. The missions closest to the future site of Savannah were Santa Elena on Parris Island, and Santa Catalina de Guale on St. Catherines Island, established in the late sixteenth century.[4] Traveling by boat, the friars may have made contact with the villages located along the river. In any event, word of mouth certainly alerted Native Americans to the activities of their new neighbors.

For Indians in the Southeast, the contact with Europeans was devastating. Having no resistance to European diseases such as smallpox, measles, typhus, and influenza, Native Americans died in large numbers. By 1657, the governor of Spain's la Florida colony noted that the coastal Indians were few in number "because they have been wiped out with the sickness of the plague and smallpox which have overtaken them in the past years."[5] Only a remnant survived to greet Oglethorpe on Yamacraw Bluff in 1733.

RICE PLANTATIONS

Creeks and rivers ten to twenty miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean were subject to the rhythm of the tides that rose and fell twice a day. These fresh water tides made the cultivation of rice possible. But it was the legalization of slavery in the Georgia colony in 1750 that made rice culture a practical venture. Draining swamps, clearing and leveling land, building and maintaining floodgates, ditches, and dikes required a substantial work force as did planting, hoeing, harvesting, and threshing the rice.[6]

Fig. 2: The meticulous work of excavation at the Deptford village site took place over a seven month period in 1940-1941 under the direction of Catherine J. McCann.
W.P.A. Archaeological Excavations in Chatham County, Georgia: 1937-1942, University of Georgia Archaeology Series, Report No. 29.
Courtesy of the University of Georgia, with the assistance of Prof. David Hally.

Fig. 3: A complex system of canals and gates allowed rice fields to be periodically flooded and drained over the course of the growing season.
Rice Field, ca. 1883-1893, William Ernest Wilson Photo Archive, MS 993, Box 1, Folder 49.
Courtesy of Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.

Jonathan Bryan was the first to seize the opportunity when in 1751 he established Walnut Hill plantation on 500 acres that included land from, what is today, Hillcrest and Twickenham neighborhoods. The sixty-six enslaved people Bryan settled at Walnut Hill made this rice plantation the first along the Savannah River to be worked by slave labor. Bryan was already an experienced planter with three sizable plantations in his native South Carolina. The purchase of Walnut Hill, however, signaled his shifting allegiance to Georgia as he moved his wife and nine children into their new home shortly after Christmas in 1752.[7] In the eleven years he lived at Walnut Hill, Bryan increased his land holdings and his fortune, while emerging as an influential public figure in Savannah. In 1765, he sold Walnut Hill to wealthy Miles Brewton of Charleston.[8]

Unlike Bryan, Miles Brewton was an absentee landlord, preferring his elegant mansion in Charleston to the plantation house in Georgia. After all, one French visitor remembered the plantations around Savannah best for their "noxious air full of disease" when the floodgates allowed the waters in the ditches to recede.[9] Brewton was a canny investor who understood the profit potential of his new Georgia property. In fact, the 500 acres purchased in 1765 gave him the incentive to expand eastward along the river to St. Augustine Creek near Causton Bluff. He called the 2,500 acres of new acquisitions "Turckenham" although the core property of Walnut Hill was simply referred to as "Mr. Brewton's plantation."[10]

Fig. 4: This 1825 map shows many features of the plantation landscape. Brewton Hill, at that time under the ownership of Dr. Maham Haig, and Turnbull's Deptford are represented by the planters' homes. The ferry service is indicated on the South Carolina riverbank opposite Brewton Hill's rice fields.

Charles E. Waring and Elizabeth E. Waring, Detail, *Savannah and its Environs, Album II (1773-1897)*, 19.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

Brewton supplemented the revenue he earned from rice by establishing a ferry service across the Savannah River to the Rochester plantation in South Carolina in 1766. The fees he charged were dictated by colonial authorities – one shilling per person; one shilling sixpence per horse; for a carriage, nine pence per wheel; and four pence each for sheep, calves, and hogs. In return, Brewton was obliged to maintain a road through his rice fields for passengers and livestock to access the ferry. For the next century, the ferry was a major transit point across the river, popularly called the Rochester Ferry at first and then Screven's Ferry.[11]

The years prior to the American Revolution proved Miles Brewton's shrewd investment instincts correct – his Georgia rice plantations, especially the original 500 acre tract purchased from Jonathan Bryan, prospered. As conflict with Britain intensified, both Brewton and Bryan joined with the patriots and each paid dearly for that choice. Brewton drowned while voyaging to Philadelphia where he intended to represent South Carolina at the Second Continental Congress. Bryan took up arms against the British and was captured at age seventy and released only after enduring more than two years of imprisonment.[12]

If Miles Brewton did not live to see the revolution succeed, his name lived on at the Georgia properties he so seldom visited. The most striking physical feature of his lower Savannah River holdings was a ridge, perhaps thirty feet high, that Jonathan Bryan dubbed Walnut Hill. Set back from the rice fields reclaimed from the swamp, the ridge became known over time as "Brewton Hill." When the surrounding property was sold after the revolution by Miles Brewton's family, the plantation itself took on the name Brewton Hill. The Turckenham portion of the estate also underwent an inadvertent name change thanks to an unknown mapmaker who identified the lands as "Twick-enham."[13]

Another plantation carved out of the Brewton estate was Deptford Hill. Nichol Turnbull, who purchased the land east of Brewton Hill in 1792, was among the more enterprising of Savannah River planters. He expanded agricultural production to include both rice and cotton and sold wharf lots for commercial use in an area he designated as "New Deptford." In 1808, the United States government bought one of Turnbull's deep-water wharf lots in order to build a defensive fortification on the river. With the outbreak of the War of 1812, the new stronghold of Fort Jackson took on strategic significance. Over thirty years of thoughtful management and diversification at Deptford Hill ended with Turnbull's death in 1823, but his aspiration for the plantation's future was clearly evident in his will. He counseled his son to re-invest profits to sustain the agricultural and the commercial enterprises. By 1830, however, Deptford Hill was on the auction block to satisfy creditors.[14] A succession of owners took their turn

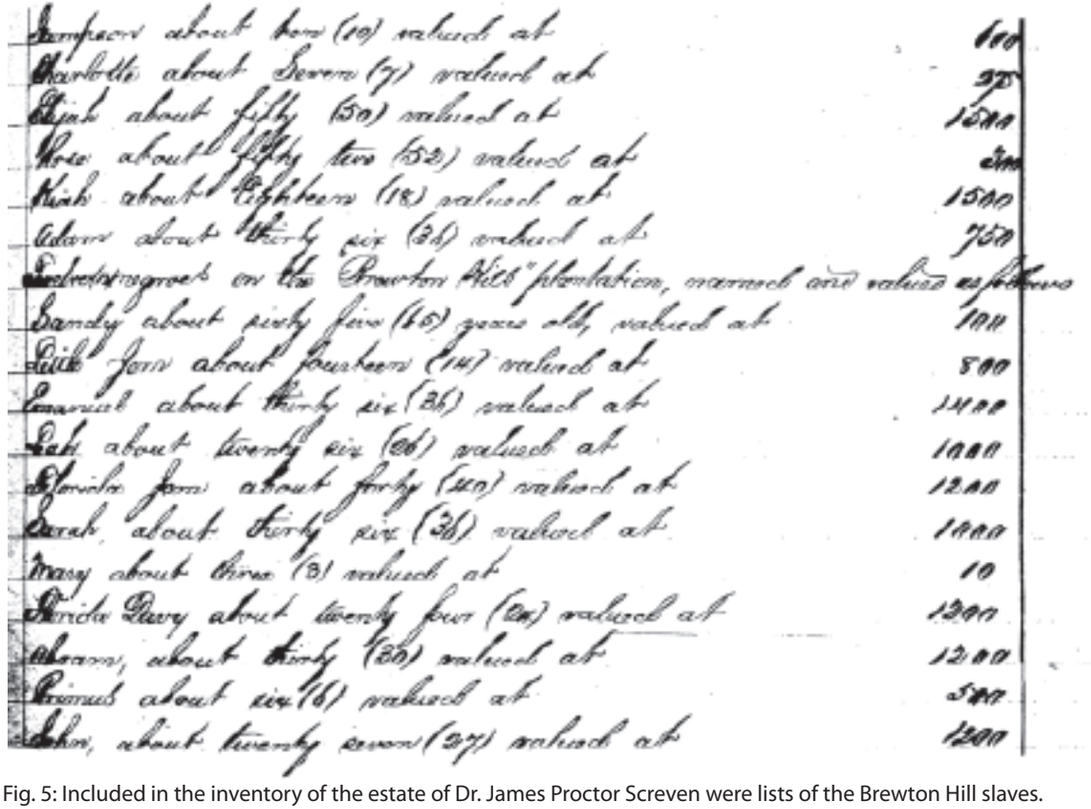


Fig. 5: Included in the inventory of the estate of Dr. James Proctor Screven were lists of the Brewton Hill slaves.
Indenture between Thomas F. Screven, George P. Screven and John Screven, 24 May 1860, Deed Book 3T 514, rec. 11 October 1860, Superior Court Records, CCCH.
Courtesy of the Chatham County Court House.

Fig. 6: Women as well as men worked in the rice fields, especially during the critical harvest time. Workers used sickles, called rice hooks, to cut the stalks. Leah and Sarah, enslaved females at Brewton Hill, in all likelihood wielded the rice hooks in harvesting Dr. Screven's crop.

"Reaping," *Harper's Weekly,* cph 3b24156.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

at Deptford, as it came to be known, but none left their mark so clearly on the development of the plantation before the Civil War as Turnbull.

The family with the longest tenure at Brewton Hill was the Screven clan. The patriarch, Dr. James Proctor Screven, had wide-ranging interests in politics and business that extended beyond his medical practice. In Savannah, he was an alderman and pioneering founder of the Savannah, Albany & Gulf Railroad, as well as serving as Georgia state senator from Chatham County.[15] When he purchased Brewton Hill in 1843 for the bargain price of $14,000, Georgia was entering its most productive period of rice cultivation. Property values and rice profits peaked during the 1840s and 1850s before the outbreak of the Civil War caused the market to decline. Dr. Screven died in 1859 before the bubble burst and an inventory of his assets at Brewton Hill showed how lucrative the plantation had become. The land itself, 200 acres of rice land and 165 acres of high ground, had appreciated in value to $46,600.[16] The forty-one slaves at the plantation were appraised at more than $28,000. Six men, aged twenty-four to forty, Florida Jem, Abram, John, Swamp Jemmy, Jacob, and Florida Davy, were valued at $1,200 each, while thirty-year-old Emanuel commanded $1,400. The steam threshing rice mill on the premises as well as livestock, boats, and tools boosted the total worth of Brewton Hill to over $54,000.[17]

Dr. Screven's world died with him. His three sons, John, Thomas, and George, inherited Brewton Hill but after the Civil War they were to find in their Savannah River property new economic opportunities unimagined by their father.

At Deptford, rice production continued by fits and starts from 1865 until the turn of the century. A hopeful William Carmichael built a fine home for himself there when he bought the property shortly after the war. The frame house he constructed was a statement of his commitment to improve Deptford and make a comfortable living from rice. A rice mill, stables, large barn, and other outbuildings confirmed his intent. For the black men who worked his fields there was a settlement comprised of twenty two-room cabins. Free in the eyes of the law, the African American laborers still lived and worked in substandard conditions. Each cabin housed seven or eight men, a total of 146 in the settlement. Carmichael wagered his plantation on a comeback of the rice market and he lost. Hurricanes in 1893 and 1898 persuaded subsequent owners of Deptford to abandon rice cultivation altogether.[18]

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR

As predictable as the river and its tidal flow appeared to rice planters, the river highway made Savannah vulnerable to invasion. The enemy, whether Spanish, British or Yankee, real or perceived, was expected to arrive from the east by way of the river. For that reason, the lands east of Savannah had a military significance that cannot be overshadowed by their plantation beginnings.

Fig. 7: Even the photographer who took this picture of Carmichael's Deptford settlement mistakenly identified these buildings as slave cabins.
Slave Cabins, ca. 1883-1893, William Ernest Wilson Photo Archive, MS 993, Box 1, Folder 65.
Courtesy of Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.

The colonists' war with Britain was more than three years old when a new Southern strategy was implemented by the British in hopes of tapping into the Loyalist base in South Carolina and Georgia. Savannah was the first target of the new offensive. On December 29, 1778, the 71st Regiment of Scots Highlanders, under the command of Lt. Col. Archibald Campbell, came ashore at the ferry landing at Brewton Hill. They marched unopposed on the road intended for ferry passengers and made their way just east of what is now the intersection of Wheaton Street and Waters Avenue. Gen. Robert Howe with about 600 men stood ready to defend Savannah about 1,000 yards to the west, roughly at the intersection of Randolph and Wheaton Streets. Campbell manipulated Howe to think the British would attack the American left, while in fact sending his light infantry by a secret path through the swamp to outflank the Americans on the right. The British, greatly outnumbering the patriots, seized the advantage and Howe retreated. In the pursuit that followed at least 100

American soldiers died and 450 Savannahians (including Jonathan Bryan) were captured. Savannah came under British occupation.[19]

Such a blow could not be ignored by the Americans. Not only was Savannah a valuable port but the presence of the British in Georgia posed an ever present threat to the patriot cause in South Carolina and Charleston. By the fall of 1779, an international force of Americans, French, and Haitians assembled to liberate Savannah. The French squadron, under the command of Charles-Henri, count d'Estaing, contributed the most firepower to the effort – twenty-two ships of the line, ten frigates and 4,000 French and Haitian soldiers on board. The naval assault of Savannah that d'Estaing envisioned failed to materialize owing to the ships sunk in the river to block their passage. But the advantage still lay with the allies, possessing overwhelming numbers of soldiers especially after the arrival of the American force led by Gen. Benjamin Lincoln. On September 16, d'Estaing demanded the British Gen. Augustin Prevost to surrender. Prevost asked for time to consider his options; in fact, he stalled in hopes that reinforcements from Beaufort – 800 soldiers from the 71st Regiment of Scots Highlanders – would arrive.[20]

The French took advantage of the high ground of Brewton Hill to establish a lookout post on September 16. That very evening, boats filled with Highlanders were spotted coming upriver through the rain to Savannah. The next morning, d'Estaing and Lincoln came to Brewton Hill to see for themselves. They witnessed the last of the Scots disembarking in Savannah. D'Estaing was appalled at this unexpected turn of events; he could not believe that Lincoln fell asleep in his arm chair watching.[21]

A siege of the city seemed to be the only honorable course left to d'Estaing. One French ship managed to come within range to bombard Savannah but the British stubbornly did not budge. Finally, d'Estaing ordered an attack for the early morning of October 9. The battle that unfolded was the bloodiest since Bunker Hill in 1775. In less than an hour, the French lost more than 500 wounded and killed, the Americans in excess of 200. It was a crushing defeat for the allied forces and Savannah remained in British hands for the remainder of the war.[22]

French soldiers retreated to Thunderbolt and Causton Bluff where they boarded ships to depart. The French, however, would not be the last men in uniform who passed by the Savannah River plantations. Throughout the Civil War, both the ridge and the plantation of Brewton Hill played an integral part in the defense of Savannah.

THE CIVIL WAR

Standing vigilant against all invaders from the east was Fort Pulaski. Its brick walls, seven-and-one-half feet thick, had been built in the 1830s to repel cannon of whatever size. A Union bombardment in April 1862 breached those walls with the new technology of rifled cannon, forcing a Confederate surrender. Only twelve miles separated Savannah from the enemy now that "impregnable" Pulaski flew the stars and stripes.[23]

Even before the fall of Pulaski, engineer William R. Boggs designed an interior line of defensive fortifications for the city. From the river east of Savannah to Laurel Grove Cemetery in the west, Boggs envisioned a line of forts linked by gun emplacements to guard the doorstep of the city. Construction of this arc of fortifications began shortly after the outbreak of war in 1861 and was completed by 1864. Anchoring the east side was a large earthen stronghold with fourteen guns on the ridge of Brewton Hill, fittingly named in honor of Boggs. To the south of Fort Boggs stood Fort Brown at the Catholic Cemetery, near the intersection of Skidaway Road and East Gwinnett Street.

As a smaller fortification mounting only eleven guns, Fort Brown was nonetheless strategically placed to safeguard the road between Savannah and Thunderbolt. Linking Fort Boggs and Fort Brown were seven lunettes, or crescent-shaped mounds of earth, equipped with a total of eight guns.[24]

Confederate engineers in Savannah preferred forts constructed of earth and sand after seeing the devastating results of rifled cannon fire on the brick of Fort Pulaski. Earthworks withstood the impact of direct hits far better than brick and were easily repaired. However, moving tons of sandy soil to form gun emplacements required a large labor force. Although state troops were put to work on construction at first, by 1862 loaned slaves became the principal source of labor. Some planters refused to give up their workers so the forcible seizure of slaves, known as "impressment," allowed the state government to draft the laborers. More than 2,000 enslaved men were at work building Savannah fortifications by 1863, with or without the consent of their masters.[25]

Misery was the lot of the men assigned to Fort Boggs. Black men with picks and shovels or men in gray with rifles suffered from malaria, typhoid,

Fig. 8: The dotted lines on this 1917 map indicate the location of Fort Boggs and the Confederate lunettes in the context of modern Savannah. Although Fort Brown is not labeled, its presence is suggested by lines crossing the Golf Club, the Catholic Cemetery and Thunderbolt Road.

Detail, Gardner's Map of the City of Savannah and Vicinity, 1917, G3.
Courtesy of Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries.

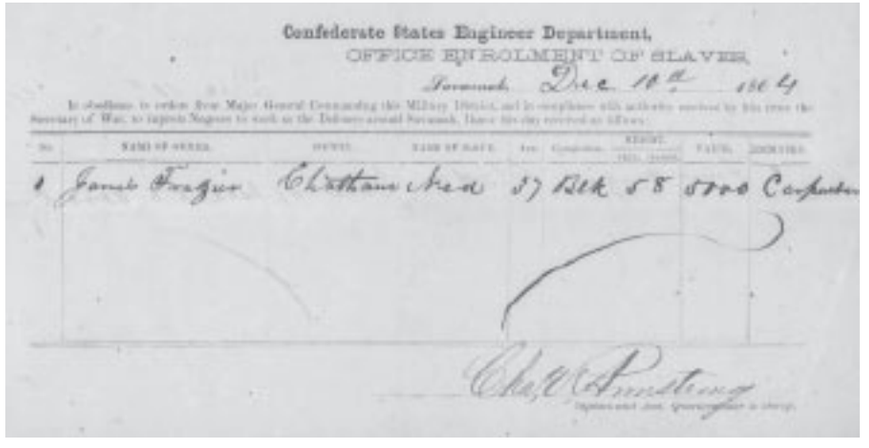

Confederate States Engineer Department,
OFFICE ENROLMENT OF SLAVES,
Savannah Dec 10th 1864
1 James Frazier Chatham Ned 37 Blk 5 8 5000 Confeder

Fig. 9: In 1864, the Confederate Engineer Department impressed Ned, a thirty-seven-year-old slave, belonging to James Frazer, who worked with the Central of Georgia Railway in Savannah. The receipt given to Frazer was dated December 10, 1864, only days before Gen. William T. Sherman entered the city.

Papot Family Papers, MS 1792, Folder 1.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

and what was called "river cholera" or dysentery. Maj. William Starr Basinger of the Savannah Volunteer Guards tried to ward off malaria at Fort Boggs by giving his sentries a belt of whiskey laced with chopped garlic every night. His remedy had no effect; every man in his battalion came down with malaria except himself.[26] Unaware that swarms of hungry mosquitoes carried disease, many blamed their sickness on the miasma, the heavy air of the swamp. Another concern was an outbreak of measles in 1862. Gen. G.A. Mercer feared that construction progress on the forts might be jeopardized when slaves contracted measles in August of that year.[27]

Despite all the hardships of building Fort Boggs, Major Basinger took pride in the fort on Brewton Hill. It was, in his words, "one of the finest field works constructed on either side during the war."[28] Ironically, neither Fort Boggs nor Fort Brown saw any action. In fact, as Gen. William T. Sherman approached Savannah from the *west*, many guns from the eastern fortifications were transferred to the defensive line on the west side of the city.[29] Even if no combat occurred on the eastside, the granite headstones

Fig. 10: Frank Vizetelly, the artist/special correspondent from The Illustrated London News, portrayed slaves building the earthen defensive works of Fort Boggs in this drawing published in 1863. The high ground of Brewton Hill is evident as the fort commands the view over the low-lying marsh.

The Illustrated London News, 18 April 1863, 432.

Courtesy of Robert McAlister.

at Catholic Cemetery that mark the resting places of the more than 500 Confederate veterans are silent witnesses to the conflict.[30]

CONCLUSION

Fort Boggs and Fort Brown are among the forgotten guardians of Civil War Savannah. Although some remnants of Fort Brown and the breastworks are still visible at the Savannah Golf Course, Hillcrest Memorial Park, and the Shuman Elementary School campus, traces of Fort Boggs have largely disappeared. In much the same way, underbrush or pavement obscure the artifacts of the Revolutionary War or Native Americans. George Oelschig, whose family home was situated on part of the Fort Brown site, found a cannon ball as a boy. He carried his trophy home, only to have it slip through his fingers and drop on the floor. Fortunately, there was a thud, not an explosion.[31] Buttons, coins and other Civil War artifacts have come to light. A boy playing baseball at the diamond at Savannah Gardens in the 1950s idly dug his toe in the dirt, only to discover a ring embossed with the Confederate battle flag on its side. More ancient reminders of the earliest inhabitants have also been unearthed. Arrowheads and pottery shards have also been found near the Savannah Golf Club and in Pine Gardens.[32] The sandy soil gives up some of its secrets, all part of the rich history of eastside neighborhoods.

HOUSING

HOUSING

READERS OF THE *SAVANNAH TRIBUNE* in April 1914 were bound to notice the Atlantic Coast Realty Company's eye-catching headline advertising an auction for "ideal residential" lots for African American homebuyers. A hard-hitting sales pitch followed: "These two things we should all remember …there is no more land being made and the 'Early Bird catches the worm.'" Lawton Terrace lots in eastern Savannah were on the auction block with affordable terms. "High dollar talks" to claim "the best property ever offered to the colored people of Savannah."[1]

For whatever reasons, the black working men and professional men targeted by the advertisement did not act on what the realty company touted as a "golden opportunity." Lawton Terrace, however, had much to commend it. Located just north of Wheaton Street and west of the Catholic Cemetery, this area was prime for development as Savannah expanded east. Workers commuting downtown would have only a short walk to the Base Ball Park stop on the Thunderbolt streetcar line.[2] The area south of Wheaton Street was already built up with homes and shops, and, on the north side of Wheaton, white families were beginning to move into a new subdivision, Wagner Heights. However, portions of Lawton Terrace were low-lying and flood prone, a serious drawback for potential homeowners to consider.

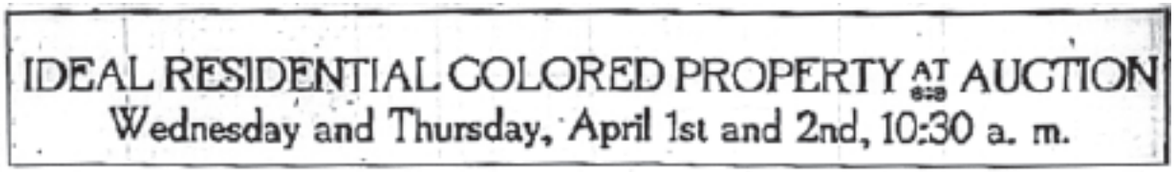

IDEAL RESIDENTIAL COLORED PROPERTY AT AUCTION
Wednesday and Thursday, April 1st and 2nd, 10:30 a. m.

Fig. 2: Headline.

Savannah Tribune, 21 March 1914, 8.
Courtesy of the *Savannah Tribune*, with the assistance of Savannah State University.

Even if the anticipated sales at Lawton Terrace did not materialize, the Atlantic Coast Realty Company demonstrated it understood the underlying premise of Savannah residential property. Defining characteristics of home sites were not only economic but racial as well.

EARLY NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

The potential for African American neighborhood development on the eastside was first recognized by Charles J. Hull of Chicago. He invested heavily in outlying property near Savannah during the 1870s, both to the west at Woodville and to the east. He purchased Farm Lot No. 6 in Reynolds Ward which became the core of the East Savannah neighborhood, from Iowa Street south to East Gwinnett Street. During the late1880s and 1890s, a number of individuals purchased home sites from Hull or his heir Helen Culver, including July Robinson, Adam Morrell, and Anna Etta Robinson.[3]

Fig. 1: The Savannah, Thunderbolt, & Isle of Hope streetcar line served eastern Savannah from 1892 to 1902.

Georgia Historical Society Photograph Collection, MS 1361-PH, Box 17, Folder 3.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

Charles Baker, an emerging African American entrepreneur, bought a sizable portion of Hull's subdivision. Between 1874 and 1890, he acquired thirty-eight lots scattered on Iowa, Auburn, Gable, and Mosley Streets.[4] In addition to his monetary investment in East Savannah, Baker became a leader in the community, serving as one of the charter deacons of First African Baptist Church of East Savannah when it was founded in 1897.[5] He kept his real estate holdings largely intact till the end of his days. In his will, he described his wealth as "the property [with] which a kind providence has blessed me." His daughters, Carrie Baker and Susan Baker Robinson, inherited the bulk of his estate after his death around 1904.[6] As the surviving sister, Susan Robinson sold the legacy from her father in 1918 to David Stedman for "five dollars and valuable services rendered."[7]

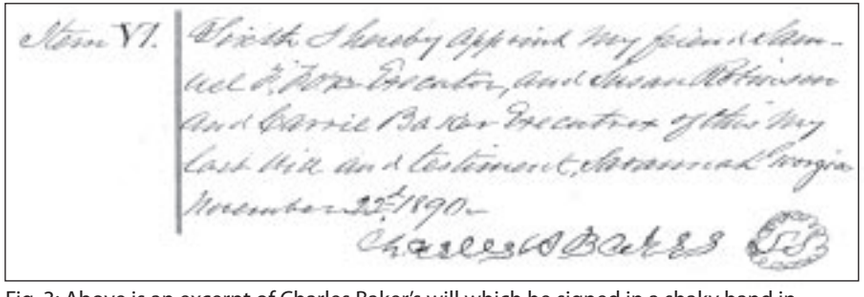


Fig. 3: Above is an excerpt of Charles Baker's will which he signed in a shaky hand in November, 1890.

Probate Court, #1149.
Courtesy of the Probate Court, Chatham County Court House.

Instead of large-scale development, the East Savannah neighborhood grew one house at a time. Elizabeth and Peter Bennett's home on Hanson Street was built about the turn of the twentieth century by her father, Joseph Heyward of Johns Island, South Carolina. It was the same wooden house that Heyward constructed for his wife and children years before. With the passing of his wife, Joseph Heyward decided to give the house to his daughter Elizabeth in Savannah. Moving a house seventy-five miles he thought was only a small inconvenience. So, he dismantled the house, built a raft, floated the lumber to Savannah, and reassembled the house on Hanson Street. For decades, the house stood at 2243 Hanson Street and was torn down in the 1990s.[8]

As East Savannah began to establish itself as a neighborhood in the 1880s and 1890s, another black community was built near what is today

Fig. 4: 2243 Hanson Street.
Courtesy of Victoria Bryant.

President Street under the auspices of the Savannah, Florida & Western (SF&W) Railway. African Americans hired as stevedores stowing cargo and as laborers hauling lumber at the SF&W wharf on the Savannah River lacked inexpensive lodgings within walking distance. In 1885, Robert LePage, the wharf manager, took it upon himself to build a workers' village to meet these needs. Clearing a ten-acre tract east of the wharf provided ample space for what LePage envisioned as 108 two-room houses with garden plots, plus seven large garden tracts to be rented out to interested residents. By 1888, thirty-five houses had been built and occupied, with five more under construction. The village echoed its company origins, with its eight streets named after railroad executives and employees. Plant Street was the east-west road fronting just north of the Tybee Railroad, while Haines Street, named after the general manager, was the major north-south road and the site of the Methodist church. The village was known as LePageville in honor of its founder.[9]

In the 1880s and 1890s, the workers' village at LePageville hummed with the activity of everyday life. Men worked at the railroad wharf while the women tended to the children and perhaps worked outside the home as cooks or laundresses. Gardens near the houses provided fresh vegetables for families and some extra money when the produce was sold. However, in 1893, the survival of the village was threatened by a hurricane that ravaged Savannah on August 27. The wind and the storm surge wreaked havoc from Tybee to Savannah, uprooting trees, ripping away wharves, blowing in windows, and carrying off roofs and chimneys. The *Savannah Morning News* reported, "all the lands adjacent to the river for miles above and below the city are under water." In the midst of this devastation, LePageville was spared, thanks to its elevation on the bluff.[10]

Fig. 5: This street map, ca. 1956, shows Wagner Heights wedged between Wheaton Street and Hillcrest Cemetery. Although street names in Wagner Heights did not change over the years, many streets further east were renamed in the late 1950s.

Georgia Historical Society Map Collection, Detail, MS 1361-MP, #443 SAV.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

In contrast to the housing erected at LePageville for railroad workers, perhaps a mile away, stood an antebellum farmhouse, a remnant of the area's rural past. In the fields north of Wheaton Street, German immigrants Ann and Rudolph Reinhard built the two-story farmhouse by hand in the 1840s, using heart pine, forged nails, and wooden pegs. Practical in design, somewhat larger than comparable farmhouses at 1,900 square feet, the house opened to a porch on each floor to catch the breeze.[11]

The sixteen acres the Reinhards cleared, planted, and improved with barns and outbuildings diminished in size over time. Half of the property was purchased by the Rt. Rev. Francis X. Gartland, Bishop of Savannah, in 1853 for the new Catholic Cemetery.[12] By 1912, the subdivision of Wagner Heights wedged into the space between the Reinhard farm and Wheaton Street, cementing ties between the farm and the subdivision that lasted for eighty years.

Wagner Heights grew out of the flurry of neighborhood planning and development in eastern Savannah early in the twentieth century. The Carl Mendel Real Estate and Investment Company began selling lots in Wagner Heights to white families, mounting an advertising campaign to draw attention to the small subdivision six blocks long and two blocks deep.[13] Directly across Wheaton Street from Wagner Heights was the Base Ball Park and the Mendel Company capitalized on that fact to advertise on the outfield fence, "After the game, Visit Wagner Heights."[14]

In spite of advertising and a convenient location near the streetcar line, home construction in Wagner Heights was sporadic in the early years. Even by the mid-1930s, almost half of the lots were vacant, especially those on the eastern end further from town. Despite its small population, Wagner Heights became, to some degree, an enclave of families of German descent. Streets named Helmken, Mastick, and Wagner honored prominent German families in Savannah and neighborhood residents included the Hohnerlein, Innecken, and Walz families. The children of the neighborhood loved to stop at the Walz confectionary at the corner of Henrietta and Wheaton Streets in the 1930s. Paul Aimar still remembers the 3¢ sodas he bought from Mrs. Gottliebe Walz.[15]

In the spring of 1914, the Twickenham Development Company announced to investors and white homebuyers, "Savannah is growing eastward." Select homesites were available at Twickenham Terrace, a new

Fig. 6: 114 Adair Street, Wagner Heights, ca. 1934.
Cordray-Foltz Collection, MS 1360, Box 9, Folder 4.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

Fig. 7: James Robert Fulcher and his family moved to Lawton Avenue in 1919. He poses with his children, John, Ralth, Sarah, Demmond, baby James Rollo, and Robert, in their new back yard.
Courtesy of Larry Jenkins.

subdivision adjacent to the Savannah Golf Club on Garrard Avenue, now Goebel Street. The pitch was carefully crafted. Twickenham Terrace was close to downtown, less than fifteen minutes by streetcar to Broughton Street, but far enough away to escape "the heat of the city." Homes had urban conveniences such as city water and a half-mile of paved streets, but the area was "swept by refreshing salt breezes." To clinch the deal, there would be no interest or taxes for four years. The customer could choose to purchase a lot or a newly-constructed house.[16]

Mary and Luther Fountain were among the early residents of Twickenham Terrace, settling into their new home on Lawton Avenue in 1917. Luther Fountain had worked for Standard Oil since 1912 and the new subdivision was much more convenient to his job near the river than his former residence on West Gaston Street. A growing family also figured into the couple's decision to move into more spacious quarters. Twins, their eleventh and twelfth children, were born in the living room of the new house in 1918, although only one of the infants, a son James, survived. The tragedy was all too familiar to the Fountains, who had lost five other children during their early years. The house on Lawton Avenue remained in the family for nearly seven decades. A reminder of those first Fountain children surfaced when Terry Tindol, Luther Fountain's granddaughter, found childish scrawl on the walls of the Lawton Avenue home while stripping paint.[17]

STREETS AND ROADS

The colonial-era highways that linked Savannah to points eastward were Thunderbolt Road and Causton Bluff Road. Thunderbolt Road, also called the Sea Island Road during colonial times, connected Savannah to desirable access on the Wilmington River. In the Civil War, the Thunderbolt Battery had the responsibility of defending against an enemy landing that could approach the city by way of the road. Time obscured the road's identity as it assumed different names over time. Briefly known as Moore Avenue in the 1940s, today's Wheaton Street and Skidaway Road remained Savannah's primary highway to the east until well into the twentieth century.

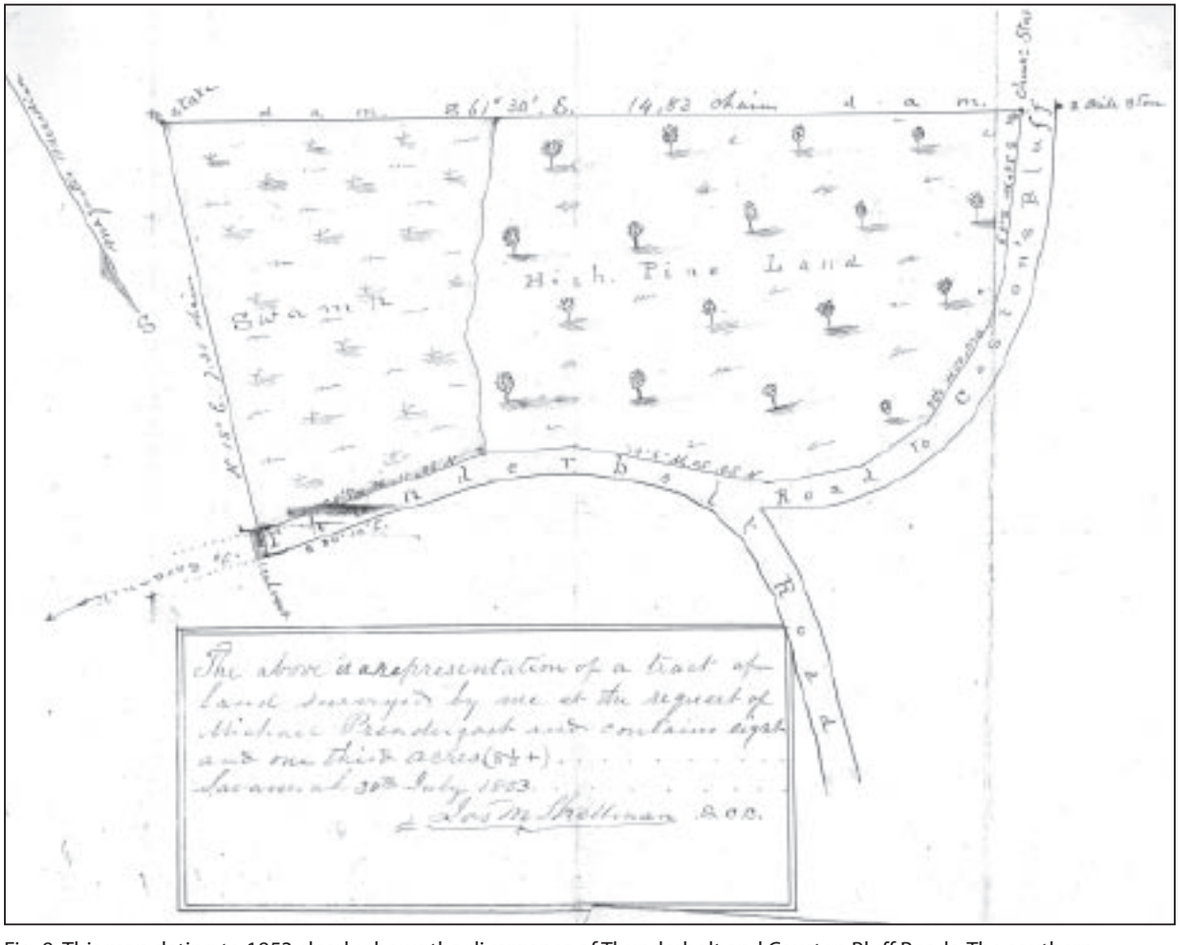


Fig. 8: This map dating to 1853 clearly shows the divergence of Thunderbolt and Causton Bluff Roads. The southern segment of Thunderbolt Road corresponds to Skidaway Road today, while the portion of Causton Bluff Road on this map today is Goebel Avenue.

Catholic Cemetery Deeds File.
Courtesy of the Catholic Diocese of Savannah Archives.

At Home

Single-family residences were the norm in East Savannah, Twickenham, and Wagner Heights neighborhoods before 1940. Some homeowners served as their own contractors and built homes to their specifications.

Fig. 9: This home at 509 Treat Avenue in East Savannah is distinctive for the ironwork that decorates its exterior.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

Fig. 10: A bungalow-type home, 101 Helmken Street in Wagner Heights, dates from the 1920s.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

Fig. 11: Two-story homes, like this American Foursquare-type house at 1806 East Gwinnett Street, were more common in Twickenham than either East Savannah or Wagner Heights.
Courtesy of Doris Blessington.

Causton Bluff Road originally forked off of Thunderbolt Road, roughly following Goebel Avenue north until it turned east towards Causton Bluff. Originally a plantation owned by Thomas Causton, the bluff also had military significance during the Civil War where Fort Bartow stood watch over the river. Whether the current Causton Bluff Road lies in the original roadbed is uncertain, but it follows the general path of the colonial highway.

Two other major thoroughfares emerged in the twentieth century, Pennsylvania Avenue and President Street Extension. Pennsylvania Avenue was nothing more than a "two-rut road" in the 1930s with little development. During World War II, Pennsylvania Avenue became a major north-south artery between President Street Extension and East Gwinnett Street. Strategically located in or near Pine Gardens, Twickenham, Savannah Gardens, and East Savannah neighborhoods, Pennsylvania Avenue became a small business corridor for adjacent residential areas.

In the 1930s, President Street Extension was built with funding from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Georgia Highway Department. As a result of the new construction, two houses in LePageville in the path of the new road were designated for relocation. President Street funneled traffic to Southeastern Shipyard during the war and divided the manufacturing and industrial corridor from residential areas in Pine Gardens.[18]

Although oyster shell pavement surfaced a few roadbeds in eastern Savannah, any kind of paved roads was the exception until well into the twentieth century. In the 1930s, there was a "tar road" on what is today Goebel Avenue, pock-marked by holes at regular intervals caused by truck traffic en route to the city dump on President Street. Paving was still unusual on the eastside at that time, so that residents marveled at the asphalting and widening of Wheaton Street, between Waters Avenue to Skidaway Road, in 1939. Pennsylvania Avenue remained a dirt road even after the opening of Josiah Tattnall Homes in 1942. Sister Lillian Quadrella, a toddler who lived at Tattnall Homes on a corner of Pennsylvania Avenue, was terrified when the grading equipment rumbled and scraped its way down the dirt street on a regular basis.[19]

Although the major thoroughfares were paved by 1950, residential streets remained dusty when the sun shone or muddy when it rained. What stalled

Fig. 12: Mary and Willie Roberson, residents of East Savannah since 1957, enjoy a laugh after an interview at Treat Park in June 2010.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

paving in many cases was the fact that homeowners had to agree to pay a share of the cost. In Wagner Heights, mothers of the neighborhood lobbied for street paving and succeeded in persuading homeowners to invest in better streets during the late 1950s and early 1960s. In Twickenham and Pine Gardens, streets were paved by the mid-1960s, although the neighborhoods at times resembled a patchwork quilt of paved and sandy streets as homeowners on one block agreed to pay the assessment but the next block refused.[20] In East Savannah, Mary Roberson remembers when streets resembled sandpits and cars sometimes got stuck, with spinning wheels digging deeper into the sand. Willie Roberson, the President of the East Savannah Community Association in the 1990s, made paving the neighborhood streets his mission. "When it rained," said Mr. Roberson, "we couldn't hardly travel on the dirt streets." He collaborated with his alderman, Ellis Cook, not only to pave the streets but to construct sidewalks on Treat Avenue.[21]

STREETCARS

One advantage eastside neighborhoods enjoyed from the beginning was streetcar service. The Coast Line Rail Road, in operation by 1875, initially ran to Thunderbolt and included stops at Catholic and Bonaventure Cemeteries. Once the Savannah Golf Club opened in 1900, Coast Line added it as one of its scheduled stops. The line paralleled Wheaton and Gwinnett Streets, then diverted southeast towards Thunderbolt through the Gordonston and Avondale neighborhoods.[22] For much of its existence, Coast Line used horses and mules to draw its open-air passenger cars as a cost-saving measure. By 1887, steam locomotives powered Coast Line Streetcars.

After Coast Line succumbed to financial difficulties in 1892, the Thunderbolt route became part of the Savannah, Thunderbolt, & Isle of Hope Railroad, then the Savannah Electric Company system ten years later. In 1928, the Savannah Electric and Power Company acquired the streetcar line.[23] What did not change, however, was the value that eastside residents derived from relatively cheap and easy access to the city. In East Savannah, Coast Line provided churchgoers transportation to First African Baptist Church at Franklin Square, an especially important function considering the neighborhood had no church of its own until 1897. Until the last streetcar run in 1946, trolleys carried students to school, employees to downtown jobs, and shoppers to Broughton Street. Quick connections to downtown were stressed by the Twickenham Development Company to lure homebuyers eastward, noting that the new neighborhood was served by "fast cars all day and half the night."[24] With the opening of the Savannah Golf Club and the Forest City Gun Club in the Hillcrest and Twickenham neighborhoods between 1900 and 1906, trolleys also brought sportsmen to the eastside, giving the area added visibility.

SHIPYARD HOUSING

With the outbreak of World War II in Europe in 1939, it was evident that large numbers of ships would be needed for the merchant marine. Savannah was selected as a shipbuilding center and, at the peak of its production, more than 15,000 employees reported to the shipyard every day. Even before Savannah Shipbuilding Inc. (SSI) began construction on the shipyard in 1941, the challenge of housing its workforce was under discussion. Originally, plans called for five- to six-room frame houses to be built in Twickenham Annex east of Screven Avenue between East Gwinnett and Elgin Streets with another tract between Capitol and Elgin Streets east of Pennsylvania Avenue. But, like many of SSI's plans, this project never materialized. In 1942, however, the Federal Works Administration authorized the construction of 1,750 housing units for defense workers when Southeastern Shipyard took control of the yard. Clearing the land and construction for the first project, Josiah Tattnall Homes, began in August.[25] According to the schedule established by the Daniel Construction Company, framing the exterior walls of each structure, housing one or more families, required only one hour and fifteen minutes. Pre-fabricated units made this amazing assembly speed possible. It was also understood that these homes were for wartime use only; once peace returned, Josiah Tattnall Homes would be torn down.[26]

Located between Twickenham and East Savannah neighborhoods, bisected by Pennsylvania Avenue, the design hallmark of Tattnall Homes was the use of curving streets. Crescent Drive, for example, loops in a horseshoe shape across Pennsylvania Avenue, while 3rd, 4th, and 5th Streets gently curved off Nevada Street. Shipyard workers had their choice of one-, two-, three-, or four-bedroom duplexes, complete with plastered walls, hardwood floors, kitchen and bath linoleum, gas stoves and hot water heaters, and coal-fired circulating heaters. With a critical shortage of housing in Savannah, families snapped up the 750 units immediately when they became available early in 1943. Rent per month, including utilities, ranged from $32 for a one-bedroom duplex to $40.50 for the largest unit with four bedrooms.[27]

Although the apartments at Josiah Tattnall and later shipyard housing developments were reserved for defense workers at Southeastern, African American employees were excluded. White and black Americans had been hired to help win the war, but their collaboration did not extend beyond quitting time.[28]

Among the first white residents to move into Josiah Tattnall Homes in January 1943 was the Page family from Soperton. William Page gave up farming for a job as a security guard at the shipyard. He and his wife, Madie, and their seven children were thrilled with their spacious four-bedroom duplex on 1st Street that seemed palatial in comparison to their tenant cottage in Treutlen County. For the first time, the family had running water, indoor plumbing, and electricity. The family shared their accommodations with Mr. Page's three brothers who also found work at

Riding the Rails

Streetcars provided affordable transportation and plenty of fresh air at no extra charge. Mrs. A.C. Oelschig also had a convenient delivery service with streetcars in the 1890s. Vendors from City Market put Mrs. Oelschig's order on the streetcar and she met the car promptly to retrieve her groceries.

Fig. 13: Streetcar tokens issued by Savannah Electric and Power Company were sold three for 25¢ in 1930. For children, the price was 24 tickets for $1.00.

Courtesy of Doris Blessington.

Fig. 14: Trolley passengers watch the Savannah streetscape unfold.

Georgia Historical Society Photograph Collection, MS 1361-PH, Box 29, Folder 1.

Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

the shipyard. As soon as one brother got up to go to work on the morning shift, his brother coming home from the night shift found a warm bed waiting for him.[29]

Housing at Tattnall Homes was a godsend for Southeastern's white workers. Not only were workers close enough to the shipyard to walk to work but the homes were designed with families in mind. Large unfenced areas in the rear of homes created a common back yard that the children claimed as their own. Sister Lillian Quadrella remembers "crowds of children in the neighborhood," so there was no shortage of playmates. Because both of her parents worked at the shipyard, she attended the Children's Center at Tattnall Homes for day care. Her mother dropped her off at 6:15 a.m., in time to report for the first shift, and the little girl was soon fast asleep on her own cot covered by a brown blanket. After breakfast, the children spent the rest of the day playing outdoors, listening to stories, singing songs, and napping. The only moment the children dreaded was the daily dose of cod liver oil, followed by a glass of tomato juice or orange juice to cut the taste. The association of cod liver oil with orange juice was so strong in her memory that Sister Lillian could not eat oranges for years afterwards. Parents picked up their children about 5:45 p.m. after shift change. The weekly charge for day care was $3 for each child, the cost subsidized by federal funds.[30]

Although families occupied most of the units at Tattnall Homes, the housing shortage in Savannah necessitated some creative space-sharing arrangements. Welder Chester White and his wife took in J.B. Patterson as a boarder in their new Tattnall Homes residence in 1943. Patterson knew how lucky he was to find a place, especially one so close to the yard. All three residents seemed satisfied with their lodgings. Chester White said of Tattnall Homes, "one of the most comfortable places I've ever lived in."[31]

Moses Rogers Grove, located at the intersection of President Street and Wahlstrom Road, was the smallest of the new housing projects for Southeastern's white workers.

Fig. 15: In September 1942, this sketch gave the public the first glimpse of the plan for Josiah Tattnall Homes.
Savannah Evening Press, 30 September 1942, 10.
Courtesy of the *Savannah Evening Press*, with the assistance of Armstrong Atlantic State University.

Fig. 16: Construction of the frame structures at Tattnall Homes was largely completed in four months.
Courtesy of Charles Varner.

Daily Life at Josiah Tattnall

Families flourished at Josiah Tattnall Homes where the rhythm of everyday life revolved around work inside and outside the home, children at play, and a chance to relax at the end of the day.

Fig. 17: By 1950, residences on 5th Street were well established.

Georgia Historical Society Photograph Collection, MS 1361-PH, Box 6, Folder 21.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

Fig. 19: In her small but well-equipped kitchen, Mrs. White had all the tools she needed to prepare meals.

Georgia Historical Society Photograph Collection, MS 1361-PH, Box 6, Folder 23.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

Fig. 18: The playground and Children's Center were located in the Josiah Tattnall Administration Building.

The Sou'Easter, 15 August 1944, Vol. 2, No. 11, 5.
Courtesy of Live Oak Public Libraries.

Fig. 20: Chester White, left, and J.B. Patterson relaxed on the porch of their duplex with Mr. White's bird dogs.

Cordray-Foltz Collection, MS 1360, Box 8, Folder 3.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

Fig. 21: At the Children's Center playground, Sister Lillian Quadrella enjoyed the swings.

Courtesy of Sister Lillian Quadrella, RSM.

Fig. 22: Housing laid out in a horseshoe design bordered an inviting green space in the center of Moses Rogers Grove.

Savannah Evening Press, 30 September 1942, 10.
Courtesy of the *Savannah Evening Press*, with the assistance of Armstrong Atlantic State University.

Fig. 23: Less than three weeks into the construction process, the site of Moses Rogers was organized for the most efficient use of time and materials. Workers were careful to conserve the beautiful trees on the property.

Courtesy of Charles Varner.

Approximately 150 families moved into the two-story frame buildings in February, 1943.[32] With the new housing development literally next door to the shipyard, it was only steps away from the Time Keeper's Gate. Its desirable location no doubt prompted this advertisement in the *The Sou'Easter*: "WANTED: Room and board in the Moses Rogers Grove by a young lady on the second shift."[33]

The last and largest of the housing developments was Deptford Place, located one quarter mile from the shipyard, just south of President Street. The first of 850 white families moved into Deptford Place in June 1943, almost three months before the project was completely finished. Unlike the frame structures of Josiah Tattnall and Moses Rogers, Deptford Place consisted of one-story row houses built of cinderblocks because the availability of lumber became limited. Smaller in size and lacking in amenities, Deptford Place provided less comfortable quarters than either Josiah Tattnall Homes or Moses Rogers Grove. Better-off tenants at Deptford might try to cover the concrete floors with linoleum, but nothing could be done to soften the cinderblock walls. The only way to hang a picture was to drive a nail into the mortar.[34]

Charlotte Serners, one of the first residents of Josiah Tattnall Homes, recalls, "we enjoyed this neighborhood…as everyone was so friendly."[35] A sense of community grew quickly in all three housing projects because residents shared the experience of working for the shipyard. Children helped to widen their parents' circle of friends since playmates' parents quickly became acquainted. There were also a number of leisure activities that served to introduce neighbors to each other. At Tattnall Homes, for example, women signed up for courses offered by the Red Cross in first aid and home nursing. They also volunteered as part of the war effort to make surgical dressings to be used at the front. Tuesday night was movie night at Deptford Place, a welcome treat because it was not always easy for families to juggle working schedules and to find transportation to downtown theaters. There were also community sings, family games, and women's craft lessons at Deptford. Church attendance suffered when the shipyard operated seven days a week, so services were sometimes held at the Administration Buildings at Moses Rogers and Deptford. One Southeastern employee, G.A. Strickland, hosted nondenominational prayer meetings at his home on Greenwood Street in Pine Gardens.[36]

Fig. 24: In 1952, Union Mission held Sunday School at the Administration Building at Deptford Place and the response of families with young children was overwhelming.

Courtesy of Larry Usry.

During the first summer that the new housing developments were open, Tattnall Homes residents reported teenagers vandalizing cars and loitering in the streets after dark. What they needed was a "talking to" and something to do. A.D. Sharp, a boilermaker at the shipyard, became scoutmaster for a new troop for boys aged twelve to sixteen who lived in the area. With weekly meetings at the Tattnall Administration Building, the boys had structured activities close to home. Moses Rogers Grove, Deptford, and Tattnall all sponsored their own teenage recreation clubs featuring dances and song fests to attract the younger crowd.[37]

In August 1942, private developers incorporated to build a new housing development named Pine Gardens. The seventy-five acres purchased consisted of the 1900 and 2000 blocks from Beech to Liberty, essentially the western part of the current neighborhood. Construction of the first 100 single-family homes began immediately, with another 300 houses projected.[38]

Houses went up quickly as pre-fabricated sections of the house were nailed together and secured to the foundation. Although the homes were basically square in shape, builders used three different floor plans calling for three different entrances. Such design options avoided the monotonous, "cookie-cutter" homes characteristic of some mid-century subdivisions. Amenities included hardwood floors, fireplaces, attics, and asbestos siding for fire protection. The homes in Pine Gardens are representative of the Minimal Traditional type, also called the American Small House type. More important, as neighborhood historian Charles Varner points out, is the fact that Pine Gardens is the only intact housing development left from the shipyard era.[39]

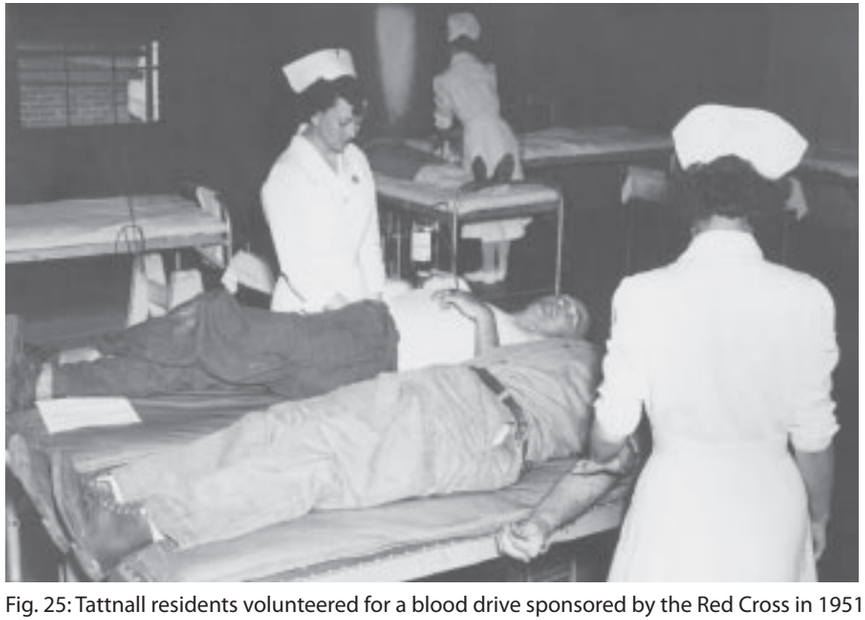


Fig. 25: Tattnall residents volunteered for a blood drive sponsored by the Red Cross in 1951.
Georgia Historical Society Photograph Collection, MS 1361-PH, Box 6, Folder 21.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

Rental fees for Pine Gardens homes ranged from $47.50 to $52.50 monthly, more expensive than any of the housing projects, but the cost did not deter the better-paid white Southeastern employees.[40] Henry C. Smith Jr. held one of the most responsible jobs at the yard as shipwright foreman and he appreciated Pine Gardens' convenient location to his work. He and his wife, Florence, moved into a new home on New Mexico Street. Dorothy Brown, known as "Dot" to her co-workers in the Layout Department, lived on Greenwood Street. She served on the yard's "Committee of Girls" that dealt with issues affecting women employees. Audrey Sanders, a nurse at Southeastern's infirmary, chose a new home on Liberty Street. As single women, Dot Brown and Audrey Sanders were the exception in Pine Gardens where families predominated.[41] After the end of the war, Pine Gardens residents were given the option of purchasing their homes and many did so, planting permanent roots in the neighborhood. Among the new homeowners were veterans, brought into the housing market thanks to the G.I. Bill. For a few hundred dollars down at closing, a house and a mortgage were within reach for little more than rental payments.[42]

The construction of new housing at Pine Gardens, Deptford Place, Moses Rogers Grove, and Josiah Tattnall Homes transformed the eastside because defense worker developments became permanent residences. The "temporary" housing at Josiah Tattnall Homes was given an indefinite lease on life because of the crushing shortage of housing after the war. In September 1945, Tattnall Homes, as well as Deptford Place and Moses Rogers Grove, were opened to veterans.[43] Wartime housing brought not only people to the eastside but created neighborhoods with businesses, schools, even a fire station. These conveniences benefited not only new residents but also the residents of older established neighborhoods in East Savannah and Twickenham.

Fig. 26: These Pine Garden homes, as they appeared in 1946, looked out over sandy streets.

Cordray-Foltz Collection, MS 1360, Box 8, Folder 3.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

Fig. 27: Rufus Hatfield, a Southeastern Shipyard welder until he was drafted into the army in 1943, stood with his brothers in 1946 on the front lawn of his new home on Hawthorne Street in Pine Gardens. From left to right, the veterans were Rufus, Joel, George, and Tyndal Hatfield.

Courtesy of Ray Hatfield.

Fig. 28: Built in 1943, this fire station at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Capital Street protected homes and property in new and old eastside neighborhoods.

Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT

The East Savannah neighborhood bordered on Josiah Tattnall Homes and the contrast between the housing in each area was dramatic. The new construction in the defense housing included modern conveniences such as electricity and indoor plumbing. Next door in East Savannah, kerosene lanterns and outhouses were still the norm in the 1940s.

At that time, East Savannah still lay outside of the city limits and the African American neighborhood had no electrical power, no running water, no indoor plumbing, and no home mail delivery. Maggie Baker moved to East Savannah from Thunderbolt in 1940 and she remembers getting water for her family from a pump in the back yard. Washing clothes was an ordeal – hauling buckets of water, heating it in big pots, scrubbing away stains on a washboard, and pressing the clothes with a "smoothing iron." Mrs. Baker took in laundry from Southeastern employees because, as her daughter Janie notes proudly, "my mother could wash and iron anything."[44] People managed without electricity by cooking on a wood stove, heating an iron by placing it on the charcoal in the fireplace, and lighting their homes with kerosene purchased at Mrs. Ladson's confectionary on East Gwinnett Street or from Mrs. Rivers' store on Hanson Street. Even getting household mail was difficult. Mary Roberson recalls walking to the corner of Pennsylvania

Avenue and Louisiana Street where individual mail boxes were attached to a large wagon wheel.[45]

LePageville, the property of Atlantic Coast Line Railroad (ACL) since 1902, had far more serious housing problems. Accommodations at this African American community in the 1940s had scarcely changed since the time it was founded sixty years before. The houses were small, although families sometimes added on a bedroom just big enough for the bed. One pump provided the water for perhaps fifty houses, but catching rain water in whatever containers were handy meant fewer buckets to haul from the pump. Brick fireplaces were the source of heating; in some homes, meals were cooked in the hearth. Only a short distance away stood Moses Rogers Grove and the disparity between the housing for shipyard workers and railroad workers was obvious, especially to the children who crossed racial and economic lines to play together. As the private property of ACL, LePageville was beyond the reach of county officials and housing codes. Despite the poor conditions, black families who could afford only the few dollars of rent charged by the railroad continued to live there.[46]

INFILL HOUSING AND SUBDIVISION EXPANSION

Many of the eastside neighborhoods experienced development in fits and starts, creating pockets of new homes. The first wave of home building in Twickenham ended in the early 1920s, with new homes clustered on Goebel Avenue and East Gwinnett Street and scattered on Lawton Avenue. The Forest City Gun Club occupied a sizable portion of Forrest Avenue between Hale and Foster Streets until about 1925 and that land remained sparsely settled for the next two decades.[47] The rest of the interior streets in Twickenham filled in on a sporadic basis. Dora and George Bishop moved into their new home on Lawton Avenue on Thanksgiving 1934 with their fourteen-year-old daughter, Fannie Mae. With the addition of the new Bishop home, there were then four homes standing on the west side of the 500 block but across the street there was still plenty of room for their neighbor, Mr. Walker, to grow "collard greens as big as baskets" in his garden. The last house built in the 500 block was not constructed until the mid-1960s.[48] As new construction occupied vacant lots, Twickenham streets lost their gap-toothed appearance.

In nearby Pine Gardens, the homes built for white shipyard workers clustered on the neighborhood's western side while Deptford Place

Fig. 29: A house in LePageville in 1967.
Photograph by Charles Henry.
Courtesy of Patricia Jenkins.

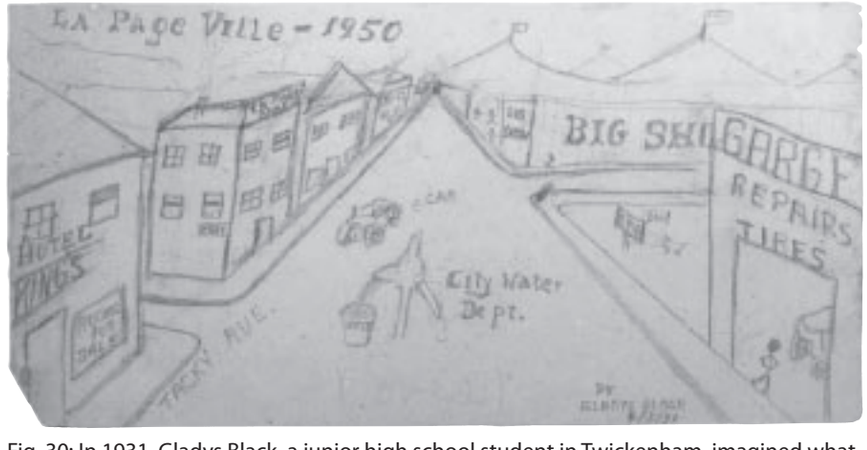


Fig. 30: In 1931, Gladys Black, a junior high school student in Twickenham, imagined what LePageville might become in that distant year of 1950. If she could dream of big tops and multi-storied buildings there, what she could not imagine changing was the LePageville water pump.
Courtesy of Doris Blessington.

anchored the eastern edge of the neighborhood. In 1951, Pine Gardens Annex, a new subdivision developed by William H. Whitehead, offered new homes for sale in the middle ground between these two settled areas. Located on land formerly used as a rosin yard, Pine Gardens Annex consisted of homes of a size similar to the homes rented to Southeastern's white employees during the war. Described by the builder as "four-room-and-bath bungalows," the new houses had two bedrooms. Because these homes qualified for 100 percent G.I. loans, Pine Gardens Annex attracted white veterans.[49] Many families who moved into the annex reconfigured the original floor plan by adding on an extra bedroom and absorbing the pantry space to create a larger kitchen.[50]

In East Savannah, older black residents remember when only three houses stood on Iowa Street, and Hanson Street resembled fields nearby more than a residential area. East Savannah remained so rural that Henry Robinson as a boy worked in the fields that his father, Henry Robinson Sr., plowed with an ox in the 1930s, not far from the family home on Gable Street. For other children, the open space of the neighborhood was an invitation to play and explore; even thirty years later, Lynette Ward Bridges and her friends used a "big sandy field" behind Hanson Street as a playground.[51] It seemed as though East Savannah was immune from the development occurring along its perimeter. Mary Roberson captures the mindset of the time:

> *I remember in the early '50s. The property out here in East Savannah was so cheap because it was dirt street and…a lot of it was undeveloped and nobody was buying it. And they sold the lots for $250 a lot.… I was eighteen [and] my grandmother told me, 'You need to buy a lot.' I said, 'I don't want no property out here. I'm not going to live in East Savannah.'*[52]

In the mid-1950s, contractors took notice of the inexpensive lots available in the neighborhood and new homes began to spring up. John Wesley Jenkins purchased one of the first new homes in 1957 on Mosely Street; at about the same time, the Abraham Bryan family moved into a new house a few doors away. Booker T. Moye, at age ninety-nine in 2008, still lived in the Mosely Street home that he bought for his family in 1956. In the 2200 block of Hanson Street, contractor Clifford Bowers built a custom ranch-style home for his family in 1958. Across the street Mary and Willie Roberson moved in about the same time, although with eight children,

Fig. 31: Built in 1949, the realtor advertised this Twickenham home with these words: "Lovely new frame bungalow … on corner of Gaston St. and Lawton Ave… Has a living room, dining room, kitchen with pantry, laundry room, two big bedrooms and bathroom with tiled floor. Heated with a gas floor furnace. Priced very reasonably."[53] Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

their home underwent some expansion over the years. Mary Roberson, who never imagined staying in East Savannah as a teenager, has lived with her husband on Hanson Street for over fifty years. Their neighbors, the Bowers, share the distinction of residing on the same block for more than a half century.[54]

As the eastside neighborhoods expanded housing options by the mid-twentieth century, many residents recall that era with nostalgia. The baby boom seemed to be the best of times and housing grew with that demographic bulge. Charles Varner remembers that Pine Gardens "was a neighborhood where the families in the community looked out for each other and the welfare of the neighborhood's children."[55] That statement applied equally well to all the neighborhoods on the eastside.

PUBLIC HOUSING IN TRANSITION

David Durden's family felt very lucky to find a home at Moses Rogers Grove in June 1945. Housing in Savannah was in short supply in the waning months of the war; the "two bedroom shanty" his father found on Strickland Island near Avondale was vetoed by his mother who refused to "raise her kids in the woods." The three-bedroom home on North Drive at Moses Rogers was ideal for this family of four – plenty of playmates for the children and only a short walk for Mr. Durden to the wet dock where newly fitted-out ships awaited him and other members of the crew for sea trials. Residents at Moses Rogers Grove took pride in their homes and, in short order, Mrs. Durden saw to it that flowers lined the walkway to the front door.[56]

When the shipyard closed, Moses Rogers Grove, as well as Josiah Tattnall Homes and Deptford Place, came under the management of the Housing Authority of Savannah. In November 1949, however, Milton Gordon of New York purchased Moses Rogers Grove for just over $200,000 and the property went into private hands for the first time. From the outset, Mr. Gordon made it clear that residents' interests would not be compromised. Rents would not increase in the short term. Modernization plans included landscaping and playgrounds, updating kitchens and baths, and even adding a rack for reading material in the bathroom. Veterans would continue to receive preference in leasing units until January 1951.[57]

Fig. 32: This 1951 advertisement makes it clear that Riverside Gardens welcomed young families.

Savannah Morning News, 13 November 1951, 14.
Courtesy of the *Savannah Morning News*, with the assistance of Armstrong Atlantic State University.

Symbolic of the change was the new name of "Riverside Gardens." Moses Rogers, as captain of the *S.S. Savannah*, guided the first steam-powered vessel across the Atlantic in 1819 and it was fitting that homes for shipyard workers bore his name. The new name, however, left behind maritime tradition in favor of a geographical reference. For residents, the transition was seamless. The children still ran through the spray pool in the summer and the boys played football in an open lot near the administration building in the fall. The women still scrubbed their front porches to keep their homes tidy outside as well as inside, and the bedrooms upstairs were still cold in the winter because the coal-fired heater was never quite strong enough.[58]

Efforts to sell Josiah Tattnall Homes also surfaced in 1949, bringing out a contentious debate between competing interests. The Real Estate Board hoped to sell Tattnall Homes into private hands in order to auction off the property unit by unit. The current manager of the property, the Housing Authority of Savannah, then proposed buying Tattnall Homes and two other defense housing projects, Nathanael Greene Villa and Francis Bartow Place, from the federal government. Veterans feared that any sale might compromise their priority status as renters.[59] The issue came before the Savannah City Council on March 16, 1949 with veterans packing the chamber. City Council defused the debate for the short term by appointing a committee to investigate how to facilitate a purchase by the Housing Authority "if and when" the federal government was willing to sell the properties. The committee's report was due in January 1953.[60]

In 1954, the sale of Tattnall Homes came under discussion once again. The Housing Authority had no interest in pursuing purchase of the property, so the issue quickly became a standoff between the City of Savannah and the federal government. Although federal authorities were open to a sale to private parties, the city opposed it. Tattnall Homes required a substantial modernization in sewer lines, an expense that would be borne by the taxpayers. City Council balked at investing so much capital in what was intended to be temporary housing and preferred demolition. Ultimately the federal district court confirmed the federal government's right to sell Tattnall Homes and the city acquiesced.[61] Globe Building Material Company from Aurora, Illinois purchased Tattnall Homes in October 1954, creating a subsidiary company, Savannah Gardens Inc., to operate the housing development.[62]

Fig. 33: Loy Tindol Smith spent her childhood at 11 A Court in Savannah Gardens.
Courtesy of Roger Smith.

Savannah Gardens took pains to continue many of the family-oriented programs that had been the trademark of Tattnall Homes. The kindergarten welcomed residents' five-year-olds and children of all ages took advantage of the playground facilities. By 1971, Savannah Gardens employed three full-time playground directors, who supervised baseball games and tournaments at the diamond, the basketball courts, and outdoor activities. In the 1960s, Doris Martin, a well-trained dance instructor fresh from Chicago, introduced girls to ballet, tap, and floor exercises at the Savannah Gardens Dancing School, housed at the Administration Building. As advertisements pointed out, Savannah Gardens was "a better place for children."[63]

Although Savannah Gardens defined itself as a haven for young families, there were some tenants who found a lifelong home there. In the mid-1950s, Arthur Kirk watched his children grow up in the 1950s and 1960s at his home on Crescent Drive and he remained there for more than fifty years. Mary Hilton moved into Tattnall Homes in 1950 and, sixty years later, hopes to never leave. Older tenants bring different needs to the community but also contribute special talents. Arthur Kirk, for example, delivered food collected by the fire and police departments to the needy at Thanksgiving and, during the Christmas season, distributed gifts. His truck could have been mistaken for Santa's sleigh with all the presents stowed in the truck bed.[64]

Over the years, Savannah Gardens' residents became diverse in terms of age, household size, and race. African American families moved in during the late 1960s and a sizable Vietnamese population settled there in the early 1980s. Integration of different races and ethnic groups represented a major policy change at Savannah Gardens because only whites had been eligible to live in the housing development when it opened in 1943. However, by the year 2000, Savannah Gardens had become an interracial neighborhood with a mix of whites, Asians, and Hispanics in a predominantly African American population.[65]

At Deptford Place, the shipyard workers of the 1940s were often replaced by newcomers to Savannah. Janie and Talmadge Herrington moved into Deptford Place with their boys in the mid-1950s where they found hard-working families like themselves. The Herringtons were originally from Baxley but the uncertainties of farming caused Mr. Herrington to take a job with Union Camp. Many of their neighbors at Deptford Place had similar stories; they moved to Savannah from Vidalia or Lyons or other small towns of southeast Georgia looking for a better life. Friendships grew quickly among neighbors who were at the same place in their lives. They helped each other out with babysitting and rides to the grocery. Most of them moved on after a time; for the Herringtons, it was only a short

Fig. 34: Even by September 1946, some units of Deptford Place had been vacated and the weeds grew tall in the back yard.
Cordray-Foltz Collection, MS 1360, Box 8, Folder 3.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

Fig. 35: Because many veterans were not yet financially able to purchase a home, they were determined to defend their rights to preferential renter status in public housing at this City Council meeting in March 1949.

Georgia Historical Society Photograph Collection, MS 1361-PH, Box 6, Folder 23.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

distance to a home in Pine Gardens on New Mexico Street where they lived for twenty-five years.[66]

Like its residents, Deptford Place underwent many changes in a relatively short period of time. In 1952, private interests purchased a sizable portion of its acreage and razed 308 units. The following year, the port management, known officially at that time as the Savannah District Authority, agreed to purchase the rest of Deptford Place. Although the port's long range plan was to build an industrial park on the site, in the short term, Deptford's value in generating income took precedence. The housing development continued to operate while profitable, but by the mid-1960s there were fewer and fewer tenants. The last units of Deptford Homes were demolished in 1968.[67]

The Savannah District Authority also had its eye on Riverside Gardens, suggesting that it should be razed like Deptford Place for industrial development. However, the Citizens and Southern Community Development Corporation saw the need for affordable housing in the Savannah area and purchased the property in 1969. With landscaping and renovations that included a laundromat and recreation hall, Riverside Gardens' facilities and grounds were much improved. Moreover, the escalating crime rate in the complex dropped by 70 percent by 1970.[68]

Unfortunately, the expectations held by the corporation to create "a model neighborhood" did not materialize. Riverside Gardens' low rent attracted transient tenants, often the unemployed or the underemployed who could not afford better accommodations at nearby Presidential Plaza. Parents appreciated the park-like setting where children could play, but they worried about the rebounding rash of crime at the complex. Sold yet again in 1981, Riverside Gardens emerged as Oaktree Townhomes.[69]

Since World War II, the residents of this complex lived in close proximity to industry, whether it was Southeastern Shipyard or Standard Oil. If the hazards of living cheek-by-jowl to manufacturing plants seemed remote for five decades, a horrendous explosion of a chemical tank at Powell-Duffryn in 1995 brought a grim reassessment, especially for families at Oaktree Townhomes. On the evening of April 10, vapors of crude sulfide turpentine seeping from a Powell-Duffryn storage tank ignited. The 400,000 gallon tank, located directly behind Oaktree, exploded into a fireball that set other nearby tanks on fire. Resident Dwight Guyette opened his door to investigate and the heat from the flames brought him to his knees. All Oaktree residents and those Pine Gardens families who lived within a half-mile radius of the tank farm were evacuated, about 2,000 in all, because the fumes could bring about respiratory distress. The Red Cross designated nearby Eli Whitney School as a temporary shelter; the start of spring vacation conveniently left the school vacant that week.[70]

A black pall hung over the eastside until firemen extinguished the blaze three days later and the smell of rotten eggs lasted even longer. Although windows at many Oaktree apartments had been blown out by the explosion, only two units had dangerous levels of contamination. After each building had been scrubbed and the playground soil tested for toxins, the two hundred residents were allowed to return from the hotels where they had been relocated for nearly a month.[71]

Fig. 36: Ida Rogers caught the breeze to dry her clothes at Riverside Gardens.
Photograph by Robert Morris.
Savannah Morning News, 2 May 1977, 1B.
Courtesy of the *Savannah Morning News*.

The trauma of the Powell-Duffryn fire was a harbinger of the end for Oaktree. As early as 1987, the owners contemplated razing the housing and building a shopping center in its place. With that plan under consideration, there was little incentive for management to keep up maintenance on the existing units. By 2000, only half the blighted townhomes were occupied, the remainder boarded up to keep out squatters and vandals. Sold in December 2000, the homes, relics of a bygone era, were demolished the next year. Today the property is still undeveloped.[72]

Fig. 37: The basketball court at Riverside Gardens and the other recreational facilities were some of the best features of the complex.
Photograph by Robert Morris.
Savannah Morning News, 2 May 1977, 1B.
Courtesy of the *Savannah Morning News*.

CONCLUSION

Before World War II, home ownership was the norm in eastside neighborhoods. The opening of Southeastern Shipyard brought men and women by the hundreds to live in rental housing and, even after the shipyard closed, homeowners and renters lived side by side. This status quo remained in force for decades.

In the past thirty years, traditional housing patterns shifted. Pine Gardens experienced some of the most dramatic changes during the 1990s. The mix of homeowners and renters reversed. In 2000, 55 percent of Pine Gardens housing units were rentals when only ten years before 62 percent had been owner-occupied.[73] The explanation of this turn of events involves several ongoing trends. As lifelong residents became infirm or died, their heirs became absentee landlords, leasing the family home instead of selling it. Other homeowners in need of more space moved away. Some of them also joined the ranks of absentee landlords. Another factor that figured into the process was "white flight" as the neighborhood became integrated. Parallel to the decline of owner-occupied homes was an expansion in the number of new apartments at Presidential Plaza, a modern complex constructed in the mid-1970s and later expanded. Although the number of housing units grew substantially in Pine Gardens from 1990 to 2000, almost all of the additional units were rental properties.[74]

Pine Gardens is a neighborhood in transition and, to some degree, Twickenham and Wagner Heights have replicated this pattern of decreasing numbers of homeowners and rising numbers of renters. In East Savannah, however, the tradition of home ownership remains strong. Matilda Bryan Martin remembers in the 1950s and 1960s when "almost 100 percent of the families in East Savannah owned their homes." Granted, there are currently more rental properties in the neighborhood than there were fifty years ago, but the majority of East Savannah residents still are homeowners.[75] As eastside residents look towards the future, one challenge facing them is to create cohesive neighborhoods that address the needs of renters and property owners but put the common good at the forefront.

WORK

WORK

Fig. 1: Southeastern Shipyard workers in 1945.
Courtesy of Sister Lillian Quadrella, RSM.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1943 had already been an eventful morning at Southeastern Shipyard. At 8:30, the yard launched its twenty-fourth Liberty Ship, the *S.S. William Black Yates* but work never stopped for the launch ceremony. The hammering and clanging and shouting continued even as the ship slipped down the way to the Savannah River. By 11:30, many workers with brown bag lunches in hand gathered to celebrate a milestone in the shipyard's productivity – the "M" Award for merit. The U.S. Maritime Commission presented to Southeastern Shipyard the "M" pennant with one gold star for "outstanding production achievement in merchant ship construction." Each of the more than 14,000 workers received Maritime merit badges to recognize their effort.[1] Shipyard worker L.E. Osborne explained what the badge and pennant really meant to the women and men at Southeastern:

> *Last winter we froze and this past summer we sweated and cussed and fussed at Management and each other, but the ships went down the ways right on. That must be the American way of working and it must be OK or else the 'M' wouldn't be flying up there under 'Old Glory.'*[2]

The river brought jobs to eastern Savannah during World War II, but hard work along its banks or on the open water nearby was nothing new to the area. From enslaved people toiling in the rice fields to railroad men laying track, from stevedores at the rosin yards to oystermen in bateaus, from shipfitters to welders at the shipyard, work defined eastern Savannah.

RAILROADS

The transition from agriculture to industry in eastern Savannah began at Brewton Hill Plantation after the Civil War. The Screven brothers, John, Thomas, and George, inherited the land beside the river as part of their father's estate but saw beyond the plantation's agricultural potential. The Atlantic & Gulf Rail Road Company needed wharf property on the Savannah River. The brothers quickly realized that a gift of 500 feet of prime riverfront property to the company, as well as another five acres for railroad spurs and a depot, stood to make their remaining acreage attractive commercial real estate. For the nominal sum of ten dollars, the Screven brothers deeded the property to the railroad in 1869.[3] Five years later, they sold to the railroad excavation rights at or near the site of Fort Boggs for $50,000. It was agreed that the company could remove 100,000 cubic yards of earth and build a railroad track, providing the ridge itself was not "disfigured" and kept a "natural slope."[4] If the ridge of Brewton Hill still retained some dignity, it was nonetheless maimed in the name of progress. Plantation land retained its importance and value for rice cultivation but riverside property became the cradle for industrial development in eastern Savannah.

Further development came when Henry Plant purchased the financially distressed Atlantic & Gulf Rail Road Company in 1879 and reorganized it under the name of the Savannah, Florida, & Western Railway. In time, steamships and hotels were added to an extensive network of railroads to form the "Plant System," but the SF&W was the first and largest rail line owned by Plant.[5] The Screven family

Fig. 2: In addition to developing his business interests, John Screven served as Mayor of Savannah from 1869 to 1873.

Georgia Historical Society Photograph Collection, MS 1361-PH, Box 25, Folder 11.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

profited from the expansion of the SF&W, selling two more plots of plantation land to Plant during the 1880s for nearly $100,000.[6]

The emergence of the SF&W coincided with the growth of the naval stores industry in Savannah. The vast expanse of virgin pine forests in southeast Georgia and northern Florida became abundant sources of turpentine and rosin, distilled from pine resin. By 1883, Savannah was recognized as the global center for the naval stores market. Mayor Thomas Gamble of Savannah claimed that yards packed with fifty-gallon casks of turpentine and barrels of rosin weighing as much as 500 pounds "[stretched]… almost as far as the eye could see." It was no exaggeration. In a twelve-month period in 1896 and 1897, the port of Savannah shipped over 1.6 million casks and barrels when exports peaked. Georgia turpentine found its way into paint, soap, and even perfume while the rosin was made into varnish and rubbed on violin bows. Railroad companies such as the SF&W invested heavily in new tracks, storage sheds at their riverfront wharves, and rosin yards to handle the freight but their expenses were offset by handsome profits.[7]

The economic importance of the rosin and turpentine market for Savannah cannot be overestimated. In the 1901-1902 season, for example, 46 percent of the total production of turpentine and 48 percent of the total production of rosin in the southeastern states passed through the port of Savannah.

Henry Plant died in 1899 and the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad (ACL) acquired the Plant System three years later. The railroad built new general offices in 1926 at the intersection of East Broad and Liberty Streets, now the Pastoral Center of the Catholic Diocese of Savannah, an imposing structure that reflected the stability and prosperity enjoyed by the company.[8] ACL even weathered the declining production of naval stores in the early twentieth century. Tapping pine trees for their resin decimated the forest, inevitably paring production. However, Dr. Charles Herty of the University of Georgia pioneered more environmentally-sensitive harvesting methods that reversed the decline by the 1920s. The naval stores industry

Fig. 3: African American stevedores provided the indispensable labor source in handling cargo.

Vanishing Georgia Collection, CTM-280.
Courtesy of the Georgia Archives.

rebounded and Savannah remained the premier port for the shipment of turpentine and rosin until after World War II.

Both railroads, SF&W and ACL, created employment opportunities that drew many new residents to the eastside. African Americans hired on as stevedores at the wharf or as laborers at the railyard. One of the benefits some enjoyed was the convenient and affordable lodgings at LePageville, maintained by ACL after its 1902 takeover of SF&W. Among the new ACL employees who found a home at LePageville was Alvin Ponder from Sylvania. He invited his widowed mother Mary, three brothers, and a sister to join him at LePageville in 1924. Soon, Mary Ponder started a job cooking for the railroad superintendent. In turn, she helped her teenage son, George, find employment at ACL, where he worked until he joined the army in World War II.[9] Another new arrival to LePageville was David Bowman. The railroad transferred him to Savannah from his job at Orangeburg, South Carolina. To ease the transition, the company found rental housing for him and his family at the workers' village. His granddaughter, Minnie Lou Robinson, remembers that she and her grandmother were not allowed to rent the house at LePageville after her grandfather died in the late 1930s because they were not employees of the railroad.[10]

Twickenham, a white residential area developed thirty years after LePageville, was also closely tied to the railroad because employees lived close enough to walk to the ACL wharf. James Robert Fulcher worked twelve hour days, seven days a week for the railroad police in the 1920s, a demanding schedule made easier only by living nearby on Lawton Avenue.[11] Three sons, John, Robert, and James, followed in their father's footsteps at ACL. The long hours John Fulcher worked at the wharf made for a special family tradition. On Sunday afternoons, his children brought him lunch at the wharf because he never had a Sunday off.[12]

The imprint of Atlantic Coast Line was clearly seen in eastern Savannah. Its tracks skirted the area on the west, crossing President Street, in order to link the wharf with the railroad yard at East Broad Street and its outbound lines. The houses at LePageville, painted gray with burgundy trim, wore the company colors of ACL. The company attracted workers to Savannah and brought goods to the river to be shipped to far off places.[13]

The Central of Georgia Railway also maintained a presence in the area after it took over the Savannah & Tybee Railroad in 1890. For twenty years, George Anderson Bishop operated the drawbridge where the railroad crossed the Intracoastal Waterway, living with his family in company housing near the bridge. When the drawbridge was replaced by a conventional bridge, the Central of Georgia gave him a new job as a painter. A new home was required, too, so Bishop built a house on Lawton Avenue in Twickenham for his wife and daughter in 1934. He had little training on the job for his new assignment, but his supervisor gave him one bit of advice: "if it don't [*sic*] show, don't paint it."[14] Bishop painted his way to another twenty years with the railroad. Other Central of Georgia men lived near the Bishop household in Twickenham, including Charles B. Burnett and Frank Fleming Black, both with homes on East Gwinnett Street. Frank Black was a bridge foreman for the railroad during the 1940s and 1950s although he had started his career with ACL in the 1920s.[15]

Fig. 4: James Robert Fulcher, right, wears the badge of the ACL Railroad Police in this photograph dating from the 1920s.

Courtesy of Kay Adams.

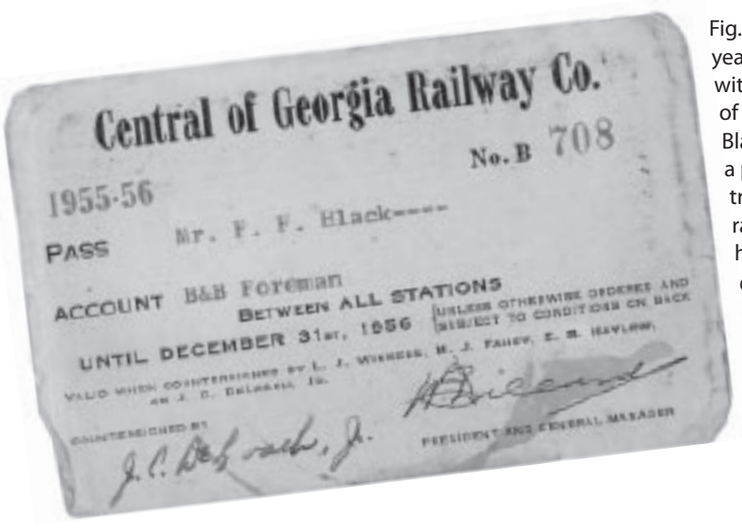


Fig. 5: After many years of service with the Central of Georgia, Frank Black received a pass for free travel on the railroad during his retirement. Courtesy of Doris Blessington.

SOUTHEASTERN SHIPYARD

By 1920, industrial development along the Savannah River had wiped away the memory of rice plantations that had once flourished there. Atlantic Coast Line leased property west of LePageville to Southern States Phosphate and Fertilizer Company and, in short order, adjacent parcels of riverfront land were purchased for commercial use.

In the waning months of World War I, the Savannah Dry Dock and Repair Company, under the direction of the Terry and Brittain firm, belatedly went into the production of freighters. The Texas Oil Company and Standard Oil Company both established a presence on the riverfront by the end of 1918, each with several petroleum storage tanks and a wharf on their properties. By the next year, the City of Savannah saw the potential of further expansion on the riverfront and bought much of what remained of the Deptford Plantation. These 1,600 acres, called the Deptford Tract, were intended as factory sites and terminals to spur economic development along the river.[16]

Fig. 6: Foreman Frank Black, on the far left, and his crew kept the bridges in good repair for the railroad. Courtesy of Doris Blessington.

The promise of the Deptford Tract remained unfulfilled, as no new manufacturing concerns showed interest in locating there during the 1920s and 1930s. However, the situation changed drastically when war broke out in Europe in 1939. Although the United States stayed out of the conflict at first, the U.S. Maritime Commission saw the compelling need to build cargo ships to expand the American merchant marine. The British, too, were eager to purchase American ships. With a ready-made market but no contract from the Maritime Commission in hand, the Savannah Shipyards, Inc. (SSI) was chartered in March 1941 in the confidence that a new shipyard was bound to get business. The company chose the old Savannah Dry Dock tract as the site of the new shipyard and drove the first sixty-foot pine piling into the marsh in May.[17]

Fig. 7: In 1933, the Deptford Tract remained largely undeveloped. In the view looking westward towards the city, convict laborers work to raise the rail bed.

Cordray-Foltz Collection, MS 1360, Box 17, Folder 9.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

Another 28,000 pilings were sunk into the sand while 800 men worked on a double shift adding a mountain of fill dirt to create solid footing. The first 500 foot way, the framework where a ship was built and launched, was almost complete by July. The Atlantic Coast Line already had a spur track to the shipyard site operational. The long-awaited contract from the Maritime Commission was not awarded until October, calling for the construction of twelve Liberty Ships.[18]

The name of "Liberty Ship" gave these hard-working freighters more popular appeal and patriotic flourish than its given classification of EC2-S-C1, or emergency cargo ship, steam-powered. At 441 feet 6 inches in length and a nearly 57 foot beam, she could stow as much cargo as 300 railroad freight cars. President Franklin Roosevelt said of the Liberty Ship, "I think this ship will do us very well; she'll carry a good load. She isn't much to look at though, is she? A real ugly duckling."[19]

The task of building Liberty Ships did not materialize for Savannah Shipyards, Inc. after all. The contract was cancelled because of the company's inability to finish construction of the yard in the allotted time or hire workers in sufficient numbers. By February 1942, the Maritime Commission designated the new Southeastern Shipyard Corporation to complete the building begun by SSI and then awarded the new firm a contract to construct thirty-six Liberty Ships by the end of 1943.[20]

Keels for the first two ships were laid out on the ways on May 22, 1942. It was a day that invoked all the best in Savannah's seafaring tradition as it marked the 123rd anniversary of the *S.S. Savannah* casting off for the first transatlantic crossing of a ship powered by steam.[21] Men and women worked round the clock to meet the contract deadline and the first Liberty Ship, the *S.S. James Oglethorpe*, was launched to great fanfare on November 20, 1942. Fitting out the ship at the wet dock and completing the sea trials required almost three months more so the *Oglethorpe* was nearly two months late in delivery.[22]

The tardiness of delivery was in part owing to the fact that Southeastern also had the overwhelming job of simultaneously constructing a functioning shipyard. Three of the planned six ways were essentially finished when the company took charge in February 1942 but so much more was left to be done. In a year's time, there were sixty-five buildings on

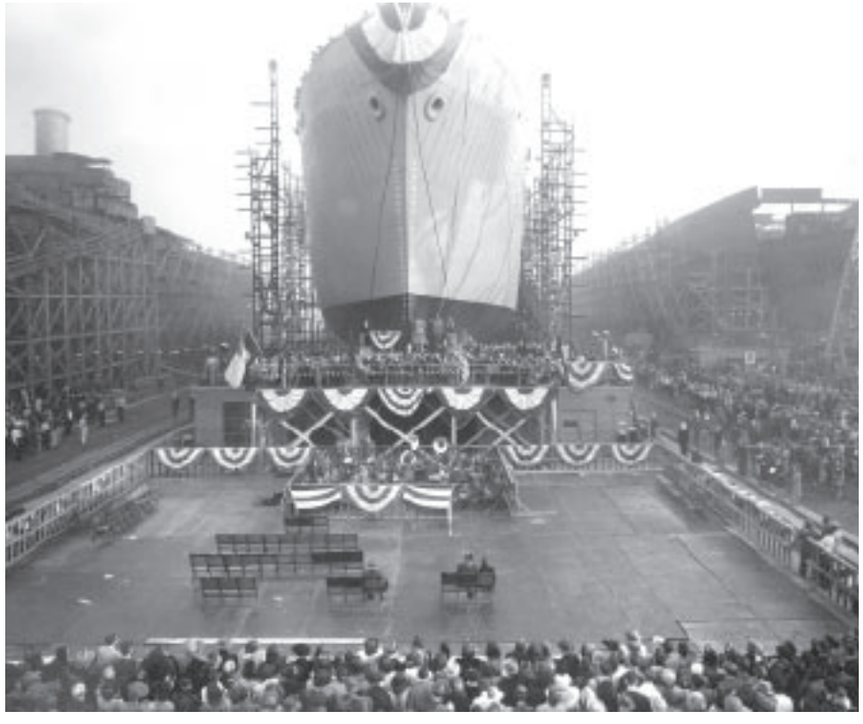


Fig. 8: Bunting draped the bow of the *Oglethorpe* as dignitaries and workers celebrated the launch of the first Liberty Ship built in Georgia.

Georgia Historical Society Photograph Collection, MS 1361-PH, Box 30, Folder 8.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

site providing working space, cafeterias, first aid stations, and offices. Eight miles of train track crisscrossed the 116 acre yard and carried the 30,000 parts needed for each ship. Like a small town, the shipyard generated its own power, operated its own switchboard, and kept firemen on duty at all times. The largest manufacturing company in Savannah sprang up on the river seemingly overnight.[23]

Locomotives and cranes and typewriters were necessary tools, but the most important resource needed for the job was labor. There were far too few skilled workers available in Savannah, with or without shipyard experience, so people of many walks of life came to Southeastern. There were stonecutters from Elberton, college students from Statesboro, a band director from Savannah High School, a seventy-seven-year-old former Savannah alderman, and a player from the Savannah Indians baseball team. They came from Texas, Arkansas, California, New York, and points in between.[24]

In 1942, James Blackburn Sr. came to Savannah from Screven County at age sixteen after he had graduated from high school. He started working full-time at Southeastern, that is, sixty-six hours a week. He had no days off but nonetheless attended the shipyard's vocational school in the evenings after ten hours on the job. After he mastered the skill of reading blueprints, he became an inspector, "riding ships" during a launch to check for leaks. He earned top pay at Southeastern – $1.20 per hour – but left the shipyard at age seventeen to join the navy. Later on during the war, on board a Navy vessel, he saw one of the Liberty Ships he had "ridden" at anchor in Manila Bay.[25]

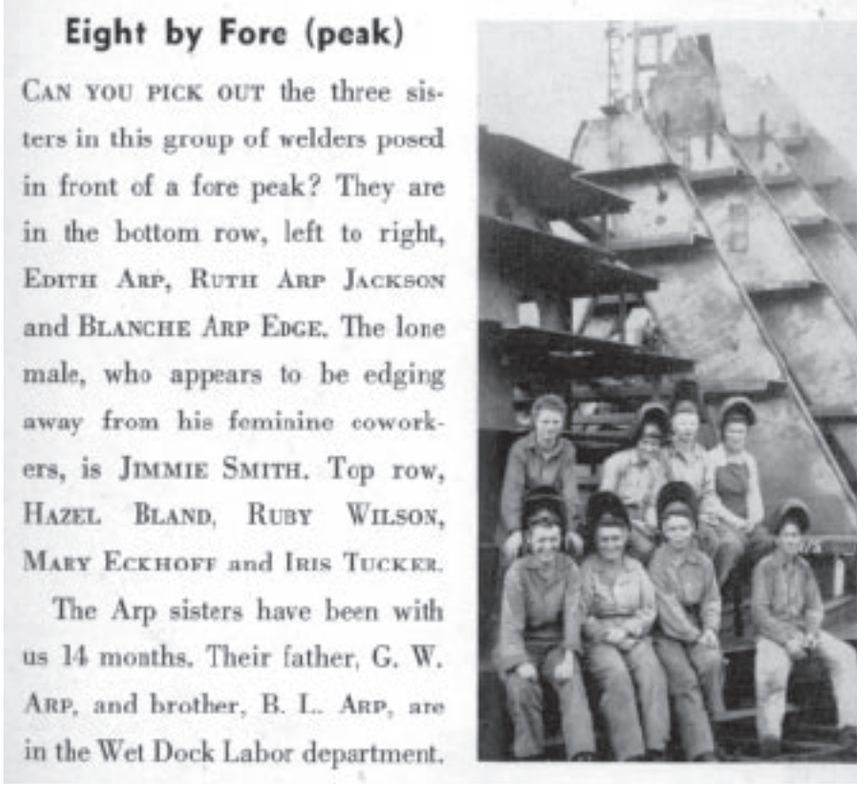
With so many men like Blackburn going off to war, the call for women to work at Southeastern became more and more urgent. Thelma Welch of Wilmington Island knew more about the shipyard than many women because her husband, Thad, worked there in the fabrication shop. Although she had not held a job since working for Western Union during high school, she decided to enroll in a vocational school on Bay Street to learn how to use an acetylene torch. Hired in October 1942 as a "burner," she was so skillful at acetylene welding that she earned the rating of first class burner in a year's time.[26]

Joseph Quadrella returned from California to his boyhood home of Savannah when he took a job with Southeastern in 1943. Assigned as a loftsman on the Master Slab, he also served as staff artist for the shipyard magazine, *The Sou'Easter*, drawing caricatures of employees. In the 1930s, he had trained as an animator with the Disney Studios in Los Angeles and worked as a cartoonist for the *Oakland Post-Inquirer*.[27] At the shipyard, he found an unexpected outlet for his artistic talents.

Good money at a steady job was more than enough incentive to come to the shipyard. Family men appreciated the military deferment that came with defense worker standing and women took advantage of the opportunity to work competitively with men while contributing to the war effort. For African Americans there was the promise of a job free of racial discrimination, thanks to President Franklin Roosevelt's 1941 executive order that explicitly banned discriminatory practices at defense plants. But black employees left any hope for equality at Southeastern at the "Colored

The Sou'Easter: Working at The Yard

Every two weeks, Southeastern employees received a copy of *The Sou'Easter*, a newsy company newsletter about twelve pages long with stories and photographs about life in the yard. If workers were reminded that it was their patriotic duty to improve production and cut down on absenteeism, there was also space in *The Sou'Easter* for marriage and birth announcements, want ads, and caricatures of the foremen and well known characters at the yard.



Eight by Fore (peak)

CAN YOU PICK OUT the three sisters in this group of welders posed in front of a fore peak? They are in the bottom row, left to right, EDITH ARP, RUTH ARP JACKSON and BLANCHE ARP EDGE. The lone male, who appears to be edging away from his feminine coworkers, is JIMMIE SMITH. Top row, HAZEL BLAND, RUBY WILSON, MARY ECKHOFF and IRIS TUCKER.

The Arp sisters have been with us 14 months. Their father, G. W. ARP, and brother, B. L. ARP, are in the Wet Dock Labor department.

Fig. 9: Sisters and veteran welders Edith Arp, Ruth Arp Jackson, and Blanche Arp Edge lived on Causton Bluff Road in Deptford Place.

The Sou'Easter, 15 July 1944, Vol. 2, No. 9, 3.
Courtesy of Live Oak Public Libraries.

"Don't Get Your Gloves Dirty, Mom"

MRS. THELMA WELCH looks out-of-place holding a dirty burner's torch with those pretty white gloves. But Mrs. Welch is as much at home with a burner's torch as she is with her pets and pans at home for she has been a Burner here since October 1942. On vacation when this picture was taken, Mrs. Welch, 84-094, attended the launching of hull 61 with her son, Thad B. Welch, Jr., age 11. Here she explains to Thad how she held the torch when she burned the plate on hull 9, the *Crawford W. Long*. MRS. WELCH, 73-060, also works in the Yard.

Fig. 10 (above): During the launch of *S.S. Alexander R. Shepherd* in August 1944, Thelma Welch shows her acetylene torch to her son, Thad Jr. She is wearing her "Sunday best" instead of regulation trousers because it was her day off.

The Sou'Easter, 1 September 1944, Vol. 2, No. 12, 2.
Courtesy of Live Oak Public Libraries.

Fig. 11 (right): Pencil in hand, Joseph Quadrella was ready to draw yet another shipyard caricature.

Courtesy of Sister Lillian Quadrella, RSM.

Fig. 12: In 1944, acetylene welders pause from their work long enough to pose for a group portrait. Bottom row: F.H. Howard, Mary Barefield, Hilda Hall, W.H. Poythress, A.T. Kalman, Sue Thomas, Kathryn Skinner, S.L. Morely, and W.D. Dean. Second row: P.W. Grizzly, B.O. Moore, D.A. Norman, J.H. Mitchell, W.T. Moore, W.W. Tubb, J.M. Fowler, C.A. Caldwell, J.L. Fowler, J.S. O'Neal. Third row: T.A. Cox, F.E. Thornton, H.M. Giles, G. Langston, W.M. Lee, F.W. Thomas, W.D. Reagin, T.A. Jarrell, J.H. Crawford. Top row: S.W. Wilson, R.A. Bell, B. Garrett, E.J. Davis, W. Peebler, C.W. Patrick, H.W. Hutson, J.J. Dillon, J.L. Clanton.

Courtesy of Larry Jenkins.

Fig. 13: The *S.S. Check Knot*, an AV-1 vessel, sails down the Savannah River, bound for the Pacific in June 1945.
Courtesy of Sister Lillian Quadrella, RSM.

Time Gate" where they reported for work. Racism was as prevalent at the shipyard as it was in the rest of the Jim Crow south.[28]

The only jobs open to African Americans were those of laborer, porter, or helper, menial positions with lower wages and no hope of advancement. Unions did not allow blacks to join so their voice was muted on labor issues, despite the fact that elected black members sat on the Labor-Management Committee. Sam Williams, an African American who worked at the yard for two years, led his fellow laborers in a one-hour strike demanding a pay raise and skilled jobs but they won no concessions. The subordinate place assigned to black workers was reinforced daily in large and small ways. Seats in the cafeteria were reserved for whites only. Ice chilled the water in coolers designated for whites but not for blacks. *The Sou'Easter* parodied black workers for their dialect but made no mention of the Southern drawl.[29] The pay, however, was far better for African Americans at Southeastern than any other workplace in Savannah. Sam Williams remembered that blacks "were making more money than they had ever made in their lives."[30]

If working relationships reflected the racial prejudice of the day, there were notable exceptions. Sam Cohen was a helper who worked with burner Thelma Welch and saved her life three times. When her coveralls caught fire, for example, he pushed her to the ground and rolled her over and over to extinguish the blaze. Some time later, an angry mob of white workers came after Sam Cohen, believing that he was the black man who had crossed the lines of racial propriety by giving candy to a white woman. Thelma Welch defended the black man at her side, saying that he had been working with her when the incident occurred. As the crowd pushed menacingly towards her and Sam Cohen, she flamed her torch and threatened to burn any man who laid a hand on Cohen. The mob melted away. As Cohen thanked her, she said, "you are my friend and you were there three times when I needed you – now it was my turn to help you."[31]

Management's expectations for Sam Cohen and all African Americans at the shipyard were defined by the color of their skin; for Thelma Welch, her gender presented similar preconceptions. A 1944 bulletin from the U.S. Department of Labor acknowledged that at first female workers in the "dirt, sweat, and rough and tumble" setting of shipyards would have been

Fig. 14: In 1944, machine shop helpers pictured were, seated from left to right, Garfield Wells, W.H. Stephens, Robert Frederick, J.E. Zealey; standing, Otis Bradley, Elbert Jenkins, B. Jones, and James Vest.
The Sou'Easter, 1 March 1944, Vol. 1, No. 24, 11.
Courtesy of Live Oak Public Libraries.

Fig. 15: Five chauffeurs modeled new burgundy uniforms in 1943. The women are, from left to right, Edna Holland, Anne Vainas, Margaret Murphy, Bertha O'Hayer, and Bessie Mae DeLoach.

The Sou'Easter, 15 July 1943, Vol. 1, No. 9, 7.
Courtesy of Live Oak Public Libraries.

as "fanciful a tale [as] the Arabian nights…. The need to employ women was not realized and accepted till the very last moment." Women were not hired at Southeastern in significant numbers until 1943 when 2,000 of the more than 13,000 workers were female.[32]

Among the first women to sign on at the shipyard were residents of Twickenham and Wagner Heights neighborhoods. Twickenham's Dolores Fulcher of East Gwinnett Street started as a trainee in ship fitting school on October 26, 1942 and achieved the rank of first class ship fitter by November 1943. "You gotta know your onions," she said, to earn the top rank and draw the best wages of $1.20 per hour.[33] At the beginning of 1943, Vivian Eden of Helmken Street in Wagner Heights started work at the shipyard as the first female Union Melt Operator. Twenty-nine months later, she was the only woman still working in the department. She was doing her part in the war effort while her husband was serving in the army.[34]

Not all production jobs at Southeastern were open to women, but most commonly women worked as welders, burners, material checkers, rivet catchers, and ship fitters. Despite the skepticism of some male co-workers, women were often found to be more patient and reliable, and they met or exceeded the standards required of the production line. According to supervisor Red Pitts,

> *My best welder was a girl. She came out there to work, too. Some of the boys would mess with her a little bit, but she'd buck the devil out of them if they fooled around too much. There were several [girls] that were good workers, but she beat anything.*[35]

Some jobs were assigned exclusively to females, such as secretaries, cafeteria counter servers, switchboard operators, and increasingly chauffeurs. Bertha O'Hayer, for example, of Forrest Street in Twickenham was one of thirteen chauffeurs, all women.[36]

"Rosie the Riveter" worked like a man and dressed like him, too. She wore coveralls or heavy work pants, high-topped shoes, and a kerchief over her hair. In the name of safety, she was asked to take the pledge:

> I, _____, promise
> To have no loose ends on my clothing.
> To leave all jewelry at home or in my bag.
> To keep my pockets buttoned.
> To keep my ankle and wrist cuffs securely closed.
> To keep my hair completely covered and to keep my fingernails short.[37]

Rosie was young and single, or by turns a mother with young children, or a grandmother. She moved to the newly opened housing projects built in eastside neighborhoods for shipyard workers and called Josiah Tattnall, Moses Rogers Grove, and Deptford Place home. When the shipyard was at its busiest, Rosie had 3,500 sisters at Southeastern out of 15,000 employees.[38]

For female and male workers at the shipyard, the risk of accident and serious injury was high because of the inherent dangers of the tools they used. Approximately 7,000 fires broke out at the shipyard in just over three

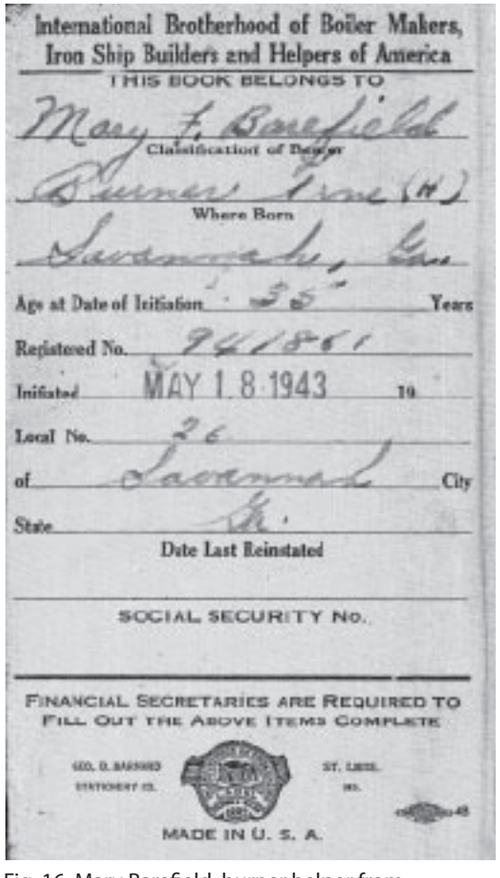

International Brotherhood of Boiler Makers,
Iron Ship Builders and Helpers of America
THIS BOOK BELONGS TO
Mary F. Barefield
Classification of Member
Burner Iron (H)
Where Born
Savannah, Ga.
Age at Date of Initiation 35 Years
Registered No. 241861
Initiated MAY 18 1943 19
Local No. 26
of Savannah City
State Ga.
Date Last Reinstated
SOCIAL SECURITY No.
FINANCIAL SECRETARIES ARE REQUIRED TO
FILL OUT THE ABOVE ITEMS COMPLETE
MADE IN U. S. A.

Fig. 16: Mary Barefield, burner helper from Twickenham, was initiated into the International Brotherhood of Boiler Makers, Iron Ship Builders and Helpers in May 1943.
Courtesy of Larry Jenkins.

years' time, a statistic not too surprising given the number of welders and burners at work. Welders, for example, made it a point to spread sand on the floor where they were working to prevent sparks from igniting. There were over 1,367 accidents relating to the gantry cranes that hoisted huge fabricated metal panels high in the air. On occasion workers were injured as panels swung out of control. One eighty-five foot crane fell over in April 1943, amazingly with no fatalities. With miles of cables and wires, electrocution was also an ever present risk. Just as insidious was the danger posed by asbestos, although decades could pass before employees fell ill. Fatalities at Southeastern probably numbered five or six while the shipyard was in operation, but there was a concerted effort on the part of management to smother any news about shipyard accidents.[39] In fairness to Southeastern, however, there was tremendous pressure to produce ships in all possible haste and accidents inevitably happened.

The Maritime Commission's 1942 contract with Southeastern provided for the construction of three dozen Liberty Ships by the end of 1943. The thirty-sixth hull, the *S.S. Louis M. Godey*, went down the way on December 20 only thirty-eight days after its keel was laid, a construction

Fig. 17: After the launch, Audrey Dunn, Merilyn Milton, and an unidentified male (first row, left to right) celebrate the christening of the *Crawford Long* with Henry C. Smith Jr., shipwright foreman, Thelma Welch, and Mrs. Litchfield (second row, left to right).
Courtesy of Audrey Dunn Platt.

Fig. 18: Hamilton Mitchell poses with his staff at the Administration Building in 1944. They are, kneeling from left to right, Hamilton Mitchell, Maxie Ryals, Lara Williams, B. Garvin, and Albert P. Walker; standing, Chrenthia Shellman, Marie Burns, Eva Mae Moultrie, Martha Capes, Elizabeth Hart, Rebecca Barnes, and Eleanor Green.
The Sou'Easter, 15 June 1944, Vol. 2, No. 7, 15.
Courtesy of Live Oak Public Libraries.

Launching Victory

For 106 times, ships slid down the way at Southeastern. Although the ritual varied little, each launch was an event to be savored.

Fig. 19 (right): Mrs. George A. Renschler, wife of the Southeastern's chairman of the board, swung the champagne bottle with impressive results to christen the *S.S. Lyman Hall* on February 6, 1943.

Georgia Historical Society Photograph Collection, MS 1360, Box 30, Folder 6.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

Fig. 20-22 (below): This sequence of photographs taken by brothers Will Bond and Stephen Bond shows how quickly *S.S. John Milledge* slides down the way. According to the clock, only two minutes pass until the launched ship moves well into the river.

Figs. 20-21: Georgia Historical Society Photograph Collection, MS 1360, Box 30, Folder 3.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

Fig. 22: Courtesy of the Coastal Heritage Society.

record that was equaled but never surpassed at Southeastern. Ten days later, the ship was delivered to the British Ministry of War Transport, meeting the contract deadline with twenty-four hours to spare.[40] By war's end, Southeastern built a total of eighty-eight Liberty Ships, as well as eighteen coastal cargo vessels, dubbed the AV-1. The AV-1, considerably smaller than the Liberty Ship at 338 feet 8 inches in length and half the deadweight tonnage, was especially useful for the Pacific theater.[41]

No matter how many ships went down the ways, the launch played out like a drama for the guests and for the employees who made it possible. Bunting of red, white, and blue draped the bow of the ship and the Southeastern Shipyard Band played patriotic songs and popular dance tunes. All eyes were on the woman chosen to be sponsor, who held a bouquet of roses, and her maid of honor, the understudy for the sponsor's role. At the precise moment when the tides were most favorable, the sponsor smashed a bottle of champagne across the bow of the ship as she announced, "I christen thee…" The ship slipped down the way when unseen burners released her by cutting through the sole plates that had held her fast.[42]

The cast for the launching of the *S.S. Crawford Long* on April 10, 1943 was especially memorable. The daughters of Southeastern directors, twelve-year-old Merilyn Milton of New York and nine-year-old Audrey Dunn from Savannah, stood on the platform in front of the No. 5 Way as sponsor and maid of honor respectively. Although Miss Milton appeared a bit nervous at first, she swung the bottle into the bow and christened the *Crawford Long* with champagne spray. The burners who cut the ship loose from the sole plates were Thelma Welch and Mrs. W.M. Litchfield, the first and only women to have that honor. Audrey Dunn Platt still remembers that day as exhilarating and filled with "huge excitement."[43]

Occasionally employees stood on the platform in the coveted role of sponsor or maid of honor. Such recognition was commonly reserved for women such as Nonie Skinner in the tabulating department for five months of perfect attendance or sisters Josephine and Julia Baker who had left the shipyard to join the WAVES, an acronym for "Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service," part of the U.S. Naval Reserve. Sometimes the honor was extended to the wives or sisters of employees, such as Florence Smith of New Mexico Street in Pine Gardens whose husband was the shipwright foreman. Without a doubt, however, the employee who enjoyed "the best seat in the house" at launch ceremonies was Hamilton Mitchell of East Gwinnett Street in East Savannah. As head porter at the Administration Building, he was "custodian" of the champagne bottle, delivering the bubbly, corsages, and a bouquet of roses to the sponsor and maid of honor.[44]

The last ship launched was the AV-1 *S.S. Half Knot* that glided into the river on September 14, 1945. The war with Germany and Japan was already over and, with the end of the fighting, the end of Southeastern was in sight. Two days after the Japanese surrender in August, many jobs were terminated; only enough workers to finish the AV-1 vessels already under construction remained at the yard. As the *Half Knot* slipped down the ways amid the usual festivities, a reporter from the *Savannah Morning News* noted, "it was the final launching, the end of a job well done. You could see the tinge of sadness in the faces of the workmen who flocked around."[45]

If few physical vestiges of Southeastern Shipyard remain today, its legacy is nonetheless secure. The "ugly duckling" Liberty Ship acquitted herself well. The expectation at the time was that she would be scrapped after the war but she was sturdier than she looked. The productive life of many Liberty Ships extended beyond the war and well into the 1960s or beyond.[46] Many workers had a stake in Southeastern; a total of more than 46,000 men and women had been employed at the shipyard at one time or other in its four years of operation. A job in the yard could be exhausting, dangerous, boring, stressful, noisy, but always well-paid. There was also the satisfaction of working with purpose at a critical time in history. As *The Sou'Easter* explained in its last issue, "it was a perfectly geared teamwork that brought us the victory… . The men and women of Southeastern are proud of the part they took in the war effort."[47]

Nonetheless, the toll on the work force was traumatic when jobs disappeared. Although layoffs, especially among women, began months before the end of the war, the sudden job loss after VJ Day stunned thousands of workers. Some employees left Savannah and returned to former lives; others stayed and started over. For Savannah's eastside, Southeastern was the catalyst in building the residential areas of Pine Gardens and Savannah Gardens. The housing crunch of the war years brought an influx of young families to public developments convenient to the shipyard. Some of those families stayed after the war and became the core of new communities.

WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

Despite the visibility of "Rosie the Riveter", women who chose to work outside the home had been earning a living long before Rosie reported for work at the shipyard and continued with their jobs long after she left. Women from East Savannah, for example, found work as housekeepers, laundresses, and caregivers. Anna Robinson of Treat Avenue remembers washing, ironing, and tending children for families at Josiah Tattnall Homes during World War II. She received $3.50 per week. A number of the women at LePageville found similar jobs at Moses Rogers Grove.[48] Hanson Cooper of East Savannah provided child care for several Twickenham families after the war. She was "tall and slim, beautiful and ageless" and had a natural rapport with children.[49]

Fig. 23: For more than thirteen years, Gertrude from LePageville cared for the children of the John Fulcher family on Lawton Avenue in Twickenham. In 1934, she holds infant John Clifton Fulcher.

Courtesy of Larry Jenkins.

East Savannah is remarkable for the number of women who became educators and that fact underscores the importance that education held for neighborhood families.

Rebecca Cooper had her heart set on becoming a teacher when she was in the first grade at Powell Laboratory School. For Lynette Bowers Ward Bridges and Andrea Bowers Williams, teaching must have been a birthright. Their mother, Janie Baker Bowers, began her career at a one-room schoolhouse near Metter and later taught for the Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools for twenty-seven years. The daughters recall their home being very much like a school with an abundance of books and pictures. Another pair of sisters, Matilda Bryan Martin and Ola B. Lewis, shared a passion for teaching on the secondary level. For Vicky Bryant, the desire to become a teacher grew out of her experience as a substitute teacher when she "fell in love with the children." The combined teaching and administrative experience of these women amounts to well over 150 years, and five women – Lynette Bowers Ward Bridges, Vicky Bryant, Rebecca Cooper, Ola B. Lewis, and Andrea Bowers Williams – served as principals in the Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools.[50]

Other eastside women found employment after World War II in traditional and non-traditional fields. Women became hairdressers, nurses, shopkeepers, bank tellers, and administrative assistants. Some women opted for jobs in industrial firms such as Union Camp.

OYSTERING AND SHRIMPING

Southeastern Shipyard's short but dynamic presence on the river caused many newcomers to the eastside to define the river's impact in purely industrial terms. However, earning a livelihood on the river or nearby waterways was as old as human memory. Managing the river traffic, for example, provided jobs for a number of eastside residents over the years. Arthur Kirk of Crescent Drive in Savannah Gardens has spent most of his working life – over fifty years – as a docking pilot with the Atlantic Towing

Fig. 24: The *Cynthia No. 2* of the Atlantic Towing Company plies the Savannah River in the 1930s.

Cordray-Foltz Collection, MS 1360, Box 30, Folder 1.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

Fig. 25: Bateaus were the workhorse craft for independent fishermen and oystermen because of their shallow draft and maneuverability.

Ambos Photograph Collection, Thunderbolt Museum.
Courtesy of Lena Ambos Meeks and the Thunderbolt Museum Society.

Company. Abraham Bryan of Mosely Street in East Savannah worked on a tugboat at Atlantic Towing until he took a job with the U.S. Corps of Engineers operating a dredge in the river. Daryl Blalock, who grew up in East Savannah, has been a longshoreman for almost twenty years, just like Robert Harmon Sr. of Mosely Street in the 1950s.[51]

The coastal waters provided a living for fishermen, shrimpers, and oystermen for generations. Many of them docked their boats at the town of Thunderbolt, sited on a bluff overlooking the Wilmington River about three miles from eastern Savannah. Thunderbolt oysterman July Houston spent a life exploring the marsh, tidal creeks, and inlets. He knew all the best oyster beds in the area and did his best to keep their location secret. Setting off in his bateau, he harvested select oysters and brought them to the seafood factory in Thunderbolt where he and his wife Janie rented a stall. Customers knew to look for the best oysters there. Although the

Fig. 26: A mountain of oyster shells fronts a Maggioni oyster processing plant.

L.P. Maggioni Collection, MS 1893, Box 9.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

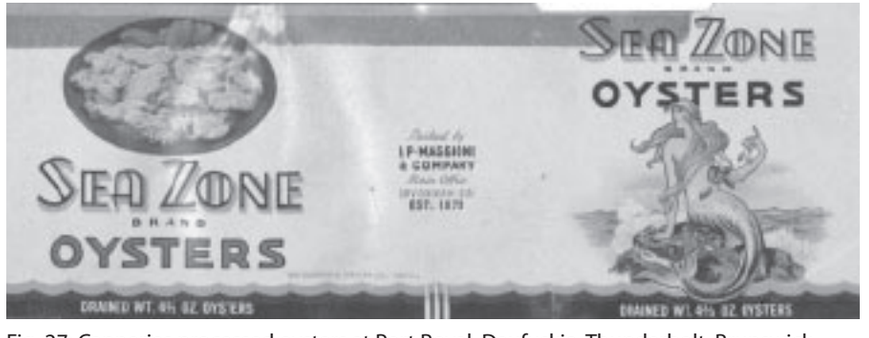


Fig. 27: Canneries processed oysters at Port Royal, Daufuskie, Thunderbolt, Brunswick, Fernandina, and other plants for shipment under the Daufuskie and Sea Zone labels.

L.P. Maggioni Collection, MS 1893, Box 2.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

better part of a century has passed since July Houston made a living from his bateau, his daughter, Maggie Houston Baker, who lived nearly to her 102nd birthday, and his granddaughter, Janie Baker Bowers, of Hanson Street in East Savannah remembered the weekend feasts of shrimp and raw oysters he provided for his family.[52]

Small-scale fishermen and oystermen like July Houston shared the Thunderbolt seafood market with large commercial concerns such as

Fig. 28: In 1932, women headed shrimp at Maggioni Seafood Plant No. 4.

Cordray-Foltz Collection, MS 1360, Box 17, Folder 3.

Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

Fig. 29: Men at the Maggioni plant in 1934 graded the shrimp into categories of small, medium, large, and jumbo.

Cordray-Foltz Collection, MS 1360, Box 17, Folder 3.

Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

L.P. Maggioni and Company. Luigi Paoli Maggioni was an accidental immigrant from Italy when, as a cabin boy, his ship foundered in a hurricane off the Gulf Coast of Florida. After some years in Florida, he moved to Savannah where he and his wife opened a general store in 1870 and gradually specialized in fresh fish and oysters. By 1883, Maggioni and Company operated an oyster factory at Daufuskie and an oyster cannery at Beaufort, South Carolina. At Maggioni's death in 1897, his son Gilbert took over the enterprise, first focusing on shipping fresh shrimp and oysters packed in ice to markets as far away as the Fulton Fish Market in New York. As the appetite for shrimp grew, Gilbert Maggioni saw the future of the company in canned shrimp which would enable him to tap more distant markets. Maggioni Seafood Plant No. 4 at Thunderbolt opened in 1928 and averaged 50,000 pounds of canned shrimp daily. A seafood empire developed, with canneries in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida packing shrimp, oysters, and vegetables. With oyster production reaching unprecedented levels in the 1930s, L.P. Maggioni and Company was known as the nation's largest supplier of cove oysters.[53]

By 1925, five million pounds of shrimp were unloaded on Thunderbolt docks and, at this point, the Ambos family became prominent in the coastal seafood business. Louis Ambos established a commercial shrimping fleet in 1927 and sold his catch to vendors at downtown Savannah's City Market as well as to the nearby canneries. Louis Ambos' enterprise was a natural extension of the family interest in seafood; his father, Henry Ambos, opened a restaurant in Thunderbolt in 1870. In turn, Louis' son, Henry, was actively involved in quality control of the newly caught shrimp.[54]

However, substantial changes to the Ambos business model were introduced after World War II, thanks to the collaboration of Henry Ambos and Bill Mullis. Mullis, a grocer in Pine Gardens, had a passion for shrimp. In an effort to cut the preparation time for cooks, he experimented with breading shrimp and then freezing it. Once his method was perfected, only a few minutes of frying were needed to transform frozen shellfish into hot, tasty shrimp. Mullis hired his neighbor, Mildred Hatfield of Hawthorne Street, to market the new product to Savannah grocers. At her first grocery, she offered samples of breaded shrimp to customers and managers alike. In no time, the shrimp were gone and she had her first order. That enthusiastic reception repeated itself time and again at Savannah grocery stores.[55]

Fig. 30: The patriarch of the Ambos family, Henry Ambos, center, is flanked by his sons George, left, and Louis, right, in this 1900 photograph.
Vanishing Georgia Collection, CTM-25.
Courtesy of the Georgia Archives.

Besieged by orders for frozen breaded shrimp, Bill Mullis and Mildred Hatfield set up an informal shrimp packing plant in a one-room shed behind his grocery. To expand the operation, Mullis presented his concept to Henry Ambos, who immediately saw its potential and agreed to bankroll the production of frozen shrimp. That collaboration was the marriage of Mullis' innovative process with the fleet, physical plant, and financial resources of the Ambos enterprise; the Trade Winds Company was established in 1948.[56] Frozen battered fantail shrimp was an immediate hit with consumers who appreciated the convenience and the availability of shrimp in and out of season.

Both Maggioni and Trade Winds used African American workers extensively in their Thunderbolt operations, employees classified in Maggioni's 1951 records as "shucking labor, packing labor, [and] boat labor."[57] When the trawlers put in at the Maggioni dock with the day's catch, workers were already waiting at the pier. Shrimp to be shipped fresh were packed in ice and transported by rail or later by air. Shrimp to be canned were headed and peeled, blanched in steaming water, graded according to size, and

finally packed into a glass jar.[58] Among the cannery workers were a number of East Savannah residents. Three generations of July Houston's family, for example, took jobs at the Ambos or Maggioni plants picking crab and cleaning shrimp. Janie Baker Bowers, his granddaughter, worked there as a young teenager after school, during weekends or summer vacation in the early 1940s. The best workers, she remembers, were the women who could head shrimp in each hand at the same time.[59]

White women also worked at the seafood plants, primarily in the packaging process. Mildred Hatfield from Pine Gardens, a key figure from the earliest days at Trade Winds, hired and trained white women from Pine Gardens to work in Thunderbolt. Friends and neighbors who became employees were, in her words, "a nice group." Ruth Armour Riner from Hawthorne Street in Pine Gardens worked breading shrimp. "I liked it down there [at Trade Winds]," she recalls, even if the pay was not as high as she had hoped.[60]

Fig 31: During the 1950s at Trade Winds, women observed stringent sanitary regulations, including clean uniforms and dipping their hands in bleach water.

Ambos Photograph Collection, Thunderbolt Museum.
Courtesy of Lena Ambos Meeks and the Thunderbolt Museum Society.

In the 1960s and 1970s, significant changes occurred in the industry. Seapak acquired Trade Winds in 1964. Overfishing reduced the shrimp catch while pollution closed many oyster beds to harvesting. These environmental factors combined with rising labor and operations costs closed the canneries at Thunderbolt. Today the remaining shrimpers and fishermen make a living selling their catch at the local retail or wholesale fresh market.[61]

SMALL BUSINESSES

Although large enterprises such as canneries, the railroads and the shipyard employed a significant number of eastside residents, small businesses contributed much to the economic vitality of the neighborhoods.

Years before the Wagner Heights neighborhood existed, Wheaton Street was a promising road for business development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Traffic was considerable enough that a toll gate was installed, roughly at the intersection of Waters and Wheaton. By 1882, the Forest City Laundry Company was in place near the toll gate and twenty years later the Winter Brewing Company operated across from the Catholic Cemetery.[62] The proximity to the cemetery attracted florist August C. Oelschig to build greenhouses near the intersection of Wheaton and Skidaway by 1890. Within a few years, he moved his nursery from its original location on Anderson Street to the Skidaway property, creating a compound that included his home, greenhouses, design space, a well, and a windmill. In 1904, he opened a florist shop downtown at the corner of Bull and Oglethorpe, a retail landmark for nearly fifty years. The Oelschig greenhouses earned a nation-wide reputation for tropical plants in the early twentieth century, cultivating and shipping more rubber plants than any nursery in the country.[63]

August Oelschig and his sons, Carl and Albert, often looked to residents of East Savannah to work in the greenhouses and tend to the plants. Jake Shellman, for example, held the critical position of keeping the temperature constant in the greenhouses. That close tie with East Savannah continued with the Oelschig grandsons, George, Carl Jr. and Albert Jr., the third generation of florists and horticulturalists.[64] George Oelschig and his son Kurt currently operate Oelschig Nursery on Gregory Street in Pine Gardens, where his greenhouses have stood for more than forty years.

A.C. Oelschig & Sons

A.C. Oelschig built his business through innovation. Marketing decorative greenery to New York was a first step, followed by introducing outdoor rose bushes. Before 1900, he was already a member of the Florists International Telegraph Delivery Association. Under the leadership of the fourth generation of Oelschig florists, the business remains an eastside tradition.

Fig. 32 (left): A.C. Oelschig walks by his greenhouses at the Skidaway compound. The base of the windmill is on the far right.
Courtesy of Walt Kessel.

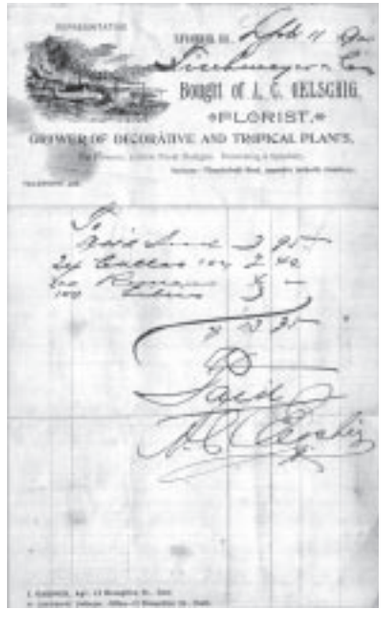


Fig. 33 (right): A receipt to the Tischmeyer family for lilies, seeds, and calla lilies was signed by A.C. Oelschig. The emblem for Florists International Telegraph Delivery Association was prominently displayed on the receipt.
Courtesy of George Oelschig.

Fig. 34 (left): The Oelschig firm purchased the first Ford delivery truck in Savannah during the first decade of the twentieth century. Before then, flowers were delivered by horse-drawn wagon or bicycle.
Courtesy of George Oelschig.

Fig. 35 (right): After World War II, the caladiums were flourishing under the care of Charlie Anderson from East Savannah and Lannie Best, a native of Bulloch County.
Courtesy of George Oelschig.

Fig. 36: About 1910, August Oelschig, center with cigar, was flanked by his employees. Jonas, standing on extreme left, was a resident of East Savannah and born into slavery. Sitting on the extreme left was Thomas, a flower deliveryman also from East Savannah.
Courtesy of George Oelschig.

Fig. 37: Billing itself as "Savannah's Most Complete Flower Shop" in 1948, Innecken Florist kept its greenhouses only steps away from the rear of the store.
Cordray-Foltz Collection, MS 1360, Box 13, Folder 15.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

In addition to the Oelschigs, other florists clustered around Wheaton Street. The Richardson Greenhouses, built just west of what is now Adair Street in Wagner Heights, came into the area in the 1880s and gave its name to Richardson Street. Innecken Florist, founded in 1926 and strategically located next to Hillcrest Cemetery, enjoyed a steady business in floral arrangements for funerals and gravesites. The store made a point to welcome African American customers and frequently advertised in the *Savannah Tribune* in the 1930s. John Hall Florist on Wheaton and Helmken Street also met the needs of Wagner Heights residents as well as the bereaved for many years.[65]

Often some of the first businesses established in neighborhoods were groceries or specialized markets. Joseph Hohnerlein, a butcher at City Market, set up his own grocery near Wagner Heights at the corner of Wheaton and Waters by 1920 and lived above the store. His business was a mainstay for Wagner Heights residents who counted on his excellent quality meats and fresh-ground blood sausage. He kept a herd of eighty cattle at the "Bottom," to the rear of Wagner Heights, in order to provide his customers with veal and other fresh meat. A large jolly man, he welcomed returning soldiers after World War II with a prime cut of meat. Both Hohnerlein sons joined their father at the store; in fact, his son Joseph Jr. lived within walking distance to the store from his Wagner Heights home on Adair Street.[66]

A longstanding grocery in Twickenham was Gay's, a small green store with concrete columns at the corner of Lawton and Hale Streets. Proprietor Raymond Gay served the community in the 1930s and 1940s with "a little bit of everything" in stock. Children spent their allowance on bubblegum, sweet rolls, peanuts and soft drinks. Mr. Gay offered the boys ten cents if they could grip the "electric machine" with low levels of current running but, despite their best efforts, none of the boys collected the dime.[67]

In East Savannah, Ladson Grocery had the inventory of a market, a general store, and a confectionary. There were few places to buy food within the neighborhood and the store extended credit to its customers until payday at the end of the month. Located at the intersection of Treat Avenue and East Gwinnett Street, the store offered meat and staple goods. Harold Baker, for example, recalled going to Ladson's and "buying five cents worth of liverwurst and five cents worth of bologna. For fifteen cents one could buy a very good satisfying meal."[68] Shoppers also bought kerosene at Ladson's since East Savannah did not have electric lights at that time. For the children, storeowner Mrs. Lavinia Ladson was "Mrs. Sweet." They bought candy and other treats from her; conveniently the children caught the school bus in front of her store. One of the few African American

Fig. 38: Lavinia Ladson's confectionary on East Gwinnett Street in 2010.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

proprietors in East Savannah, Mrs. Ladson was also the organist at the First African Baptist Church on Treat Avenue.[69]

When shipworkers came to live at Josiah Tattnall Homes, Moses Rogers Grove, and Deptford Place, more shops and stores were needed for this growing population. If wartime rationing limited the availability of sugar, butter, gasoline, tires, and many other products, merchants nonetheless saw an opportunity to start a business on the eastside. The Penn Store, a 1940s shopping center at the intersection of Capital Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, housed shops long after the war years. Tenants that renewed their leases at the Penn Store during the 1950s and 1960s were the Pine Gardens Beauty Shop, the Pine Gardens Barber Shop, the Penn Shoe Repair Shop, and the Penn Variety Store.

Between 1947 and 1949, the Pine Garden Grill was a favorite stop for breakfast or the blue plate special for lunch. Lizzie Hatfield prepared good Southern cooking such as fried chicken, meat loaf, beef stew, and barbecue.

Fig. 39: The Penn Store was much appreciated by shipyard workers because of its convenient location and the variety of businesses found there.
"Oglethorpe was Right … A Tales of Two Centuries" (Savannah: Housing Authority, 1946), 45.
Courtesy of the Municipal Research Library.

Fig. 40: Lizzie Hatfield in front of the Pine Garden Grill flanked by Clifford and John Crabb about 1947.
Courtesy of Ray Hatfield.

The customers enjoyed the tasty food and the best of country music and blues played on the juke box. Mr. Hagan, of Hagan's Grocery, stopped in for breakfast almost every morning.

Other small businesses found their niche outside of shopping centers and business corridors. James Rollo Fulcher worked for Atlantic Coast Line Railroad but he carried on a Venetian blind business part-time out of his home in Twickenham in the 1950s. Wallace Anderson established a small grocery in Pine Gardens on Causton Bluff Road. Shoppers appreciated the convenience of picking up all the necessities within walking distance of their homes. When Anderson gave up the store in the early 1960s, there was already another grocery, Miller's Meat Market, in the next block of Causton Bluff Road. Mr. Miller's willingness to custom cut the meat for his customers earned him a loyal clientele.[70]

Open for Business

Neighborhood businesses with a loyal clientele were integral parts of community life. Storeowners lived in the neighborhoods they served and their customers were friends as well as neighbors.

Fig. 41: James Rollo Fulcher displayed an example of his work at his home on East Gwinnett Street.

Courtesy of Doris Blessington.

Fig. 42: Wallace Anderson stood ready to serve his customers when his Pine Gardens store opened in the late 1940s.

Courtesy of Cathie VanWechel.

Fig. 43: Jimmy Jenkins Sr., above, built a reputation for quality workmanship in his roofing company, established in 1982 at his New Mexico Street home. His son, Jimmy Jenkins Jr., now carries on that tradition.

Courtesy of Patricia Jenkins.

Fig. 44: Vernon Black, left, and his son Fred serviced neighborhood cars at their Amoco station on President Street from 1960 to 1974.

Courtesy of Fred Black.

Small businesses often provided young people with their first work experience. In the case of a family-run business, children and teenagers were expected to help out with or without pay. Elsa Oelschig's job for her florist father in the years before World War I was dethorning roses as well as making bouquets and corsages. She then graduated to office work as she got older.[71] All the children in the Hohnerlein family worked in their father's butcher shop during the 1920s and 1930s. Daughter Augusta's job was to kill the chickens, a skill she mastered, and she also drove the delivery truck.[72] During the later 1940s, Ray Hatfield worked after school and on weekends at his parents' Pine Garden Grill. At thirteen, he became a short order cook, starting with the breakfast menu. He and his brother John also tended the barbecue overnight, cooking outdoors in a pit they dug themselves.[73]

At Vernon Black's Amoco service station on President, his son Fred was his right-hand man during the 1960s. Because Mr. Black was not well, Fred worked seven hours on both Saturday and Sunday, as well as after school during the week, for a total of fifty-eight hours weekly. He washed cars, changed the oil, made service calls, including one at the Savannah Golf Club where he repaired golf carts. The long hours he put into the business as a teen-ager paved the way for a thirty-year career with Amoco.[74]

Teenage boys often found part-time jobs at groceries in the area, such as Stop & Shop and Harold's Little Super Market. Joe Page and his friend delivered flyers for Stop & Shop to every home at Tattnall Homes, Moses Rogers Grove, and Deptford. Unlike some boys who just threw the flyers away, he and his friend earned the $5.50 that they divided between them by stopping at every door on their route. Womack's on Wheaton Street hired teenagers to put up stock, bag groceries, unload fresh produce from Florida, and sweep up at the close of the day. Some stores relied on their young employees to make deliveries. David Durden used his bicycle to deliver groceries for Harold's Little Super Market, graduating to a scooter by the time he was thirteen, while Ray Hatfield delivered fresh fish to Ardsley Park customers of Russo's Market on Price Street on his trusty Schwinn. Even Dr. Morgan's drugstore on East Gwinnett provided home delivery of prescriptions, thanks to nine-year-old Don Wilkins and his bicycle.[75]

Although young employees found work throughout eastern Savannah, no doubt their job searches began on Pennsylvania Avenue, one of the most heavily traveled roads in the area and a natural magnet for business. On the northern end of Pennsylvania Avenue there were a number of stores ranging from filling stations and auto parts stores, laundromats and cleaners, but a major shopping hub grew at the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and East Gwinnett Street. In the 1950s, Anderson's Market and Mack's Five-and-Ten-Cent Store anchored the corner for retailers. Interestingly, a family tie linked the stores. Edith Anderson Youmans and her brother Harry Anderson, with their spouses, opened stores next door to each other. Although Mack's moved to Medical Arts shopping center in 1962, the store continued to offer novelties that shoppers in the 1950s might recognize. Mack's closure in 2010 was mourned by customers whose loyalty stretched back for decades.[76]

Both the market and Mack's were gone by the mid-1960s but chain supermarkets came in, first L&A and then M&M by 1972. Chain stores were not new to the area by that time; Byrd Brothers had established its presence at the Penn Store by the late 1950s. These stores offered a wider assortment of produce, canned goods, and meats. With bigger marketing budgets, they advertised their competitive prices frequently.

Inevitably older neighborhood stores declined. Newcomers did not feel obliged to support nearby businesses. Even those individuals who spent

Fig. 45: Mack's Five-and-Ten-Cent Store had just about everything a shopper might need, whether it was supplies for the schoolroom, the kitchen, or the medicine cabinet.
Courtesy of Cathie VanWechel.

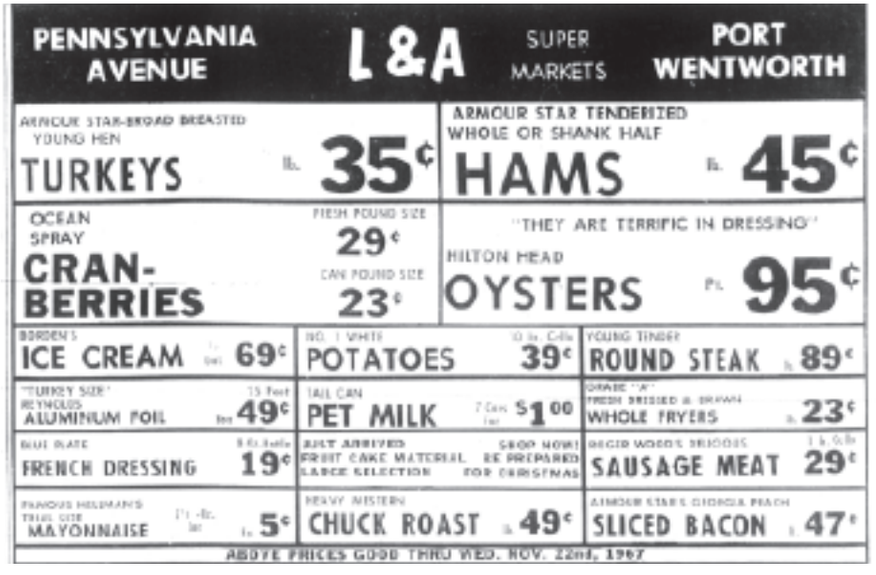


Fig. 46: Courtesy of the *Savannah Morning News*, 16 November 1967, Food insert, 7, with the assistance of Armstrong Atlantic State University.

years in the area may have been won over by newer and bigger stores and shopping centers. After the 1960s, increasing mobility in Savannah took residents out of their neighborhoods for work, entertainment, school, and possibly church, and their shopping patterns mirrored that fact. Symptomatic of the changing business environment was the fact that the prime commercial location at the intersection of East Gwinnett and Pennsylvania had become a church by 2008. Appliance stores, laundries, dry cleaners, and other stores disappeared, taking with them a measure of the area's economic vitality.

CONCLUSION

The eastside has always attracted working-class residents. Families moved to its neighborhoods because of good public transportation and the proximity of jobs, whether industrial or retail. Few expected to get rich, but most people found the means to build a decent life. Many of the first jobs reflected the commercial potential of the Savannah River and nearby waterways. Shrimpers, dockhands, shipyard workers, oyster pickers, tugboat mates, and longshoremen owed their living to the maritime economy. With these jobs as a foundation, neighborhoods could support small businesses and leisure activities. Beginning in the 1950s, new industrial development along the river, such as the opening of American Cyanamid in 1955, presented other employment prospects although some neighborhood residents chose to commute across town to Union Camp, the Savannah Sugar Refinery, and Continental Can Company.

Changing technology and economic needs created new jobs but other kinds of employment did not survive. For example, the market for naval stores dropped dramatically after World War II and Southeastern Shipyard did not adapt to peacetime. Similarly, railroad companies restructured after losing much of their passenger traffic to automobiles. In 1967, Atlantic Coast Line merged with Seaboard Air Line Railroad. For the eastside, the change was seen most vividly in the closing of the ACL rail yards on East

Fig. 47: Cashiers at M&M greeted the first customers at the new store on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Courtesy of Millicent Melaver.

Fig. 48: A tablecloth covering the sawhorse table, flowers from the garden, and Coca-Colas make a special birthday lunch for Southeastern employees Mary Barefield and her co-workers.

Courtesy of Larry Jenkins.

Broad Street with the subsequent loss of jobs. Canning in the seafood industry has virtually disappeared and shrimping faces aggressive international competition.

Economic downturns, especially the recession that began in 2007, have taken a toll on jobs. Unemployment has remained stubbornly high in the face of these challenges. Even data from the 2000 census shows eastside neighborhoods rate of unemployment was higher than the citywide figure of 8.3 percent.[77] In order to restore economic vitality to eastside neighborhoods, job creation is the keystone.

YOUTH

YOUTH

Fig. 1: Eli Whitney School, ca. 1953.
Courtesy of Cathie VanWechel.

FOR ELSA AND OLGA OELSCHIG, girls growing up in the 1890s and the first years of the twentieth century, there was always something fun to do close to home. At nearby Gordon's Woods, now Gordonston, the girls picked blackberries and huckleberries, all the while on guard against snakes. At home, there was a tree house in the mulberry tree and a basket swing with benches big enough to seat four children on each side. For a better view, the girls used the rope swing suspended from a live oak on the "hill." Their German father called the hill "little Switzerland," although it was actually an earthen fortification built during the Civil War as part of Fort Brown. One spring a May Pole stood on the hill, where the girls wrapped streamers of many colors around it as they danced. Sometimes the girls just rolled down the hill, after taking the precaution of wrapping their skirts tightly around them to preserve modesty.[1]

Childhood and adolescence are special times for every generation and young people who grew up on the eastside remember these formative years as some of the best years of their lives. Children learned responsibility doing chores or working to earn extra money on Saturday. Whether it was school days, summer days of swimming, or teenage dances at Savannah Gardens, these are memories that never grow old.

POWELL LABORATORY SCHOOL

Children first find identity outside the family in school. The eastside schools – some short-lived, others neighborhood institutions – shaped children's development in countless ways. The oldest school associated with the eastside was Powell Laboratory School on the campus of what is now Savannah State University. As a laboratory school, it was intended to provide student teachers with practical classroom experience under the supervision of veteran educators. For this historically black college, established as Georgia State Industrial College for Colored Youth in 1890, teacher education became one of its strongest programs. The presence of a laboratory school was also a boon to African American children in eastern Chatham County who received a quality elementary education in a progressive environment.

Powell Laboratory School, founded in 1894, was originally a county elementary school designated for black pupils by the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System. Because the school was housed on the campus of Georgia State Industrial College, it was known as "College School." Children in East Savannah and others who lived near the campus joined pupils from the recently closed county black school at Thunderbolt in enrolling for the fall term of 1894.[2] The school was in fact a response to the conviction widely held among African American families that education, even in segregated schools, provided the best opportunity for children to better themselves and the black community as a whole. There was never enough room for all the black children in Chatham County who wanted to attend school in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The new school year of 1894 began

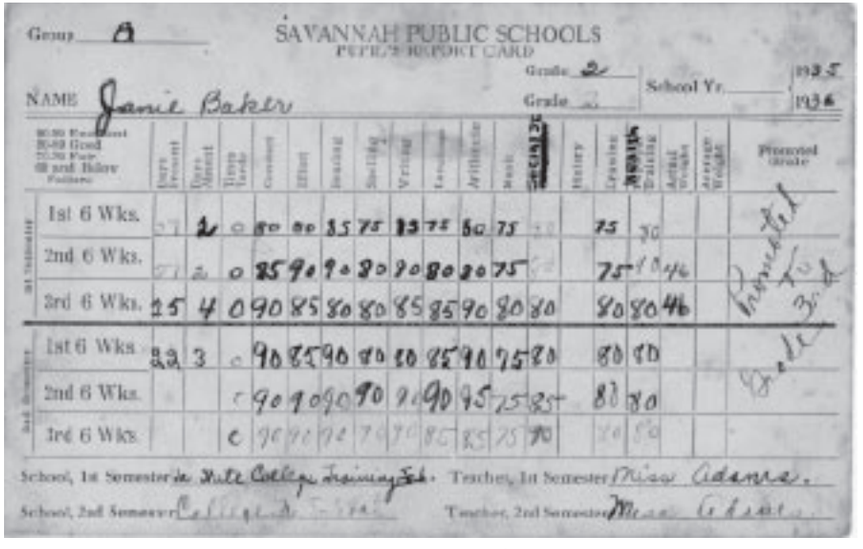
predictably in African American schools. "With the usual rush for seats, every available one [was] taken," the *Savannah Tribune* noted."[3]

After three decades of temporary quarters in available space on campus, the College School received financing to construct a new building from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. Rosenwald, retired head of Sears Roebuck and Company, was so profoundly moved by the work of Booker T. Washington that he, as early as 1912, was financing the construction of schools for African American children in the south. The new school, largely built by the college students, was considered "one of the best county school buildings in Georgia." Unfortunately, it burned to the ground on January 1, 1927.[4]

There was no hesitation on the part of the Board of Education to rebuild the school. The school system's commitment stemmed in part from the College School's growing student population. As the Board implemented a policy of consolidating one-teacher county schools, black pupils from Barstow School on Sackville Road transferred to the campus school in 1925, followed five years later by students from the newly-closed East Savannah School on Lovers' Lane (now Anderson Street) and the Whitemarsh Island School. But the distinction of the College School's status as a teacher training facility was also a factor. Increasingly, the school was referred to as "College Training School" or occasionally as the "Practice School." By 1930, a faculty of four taught the children and supervised apprentice teachers.[5]

In the 1931-1932 academic year, 179 students enrolled in the school's six grades. The lower grades attracted the most students – fifty-two students in first grade, forty-seven in the second, but only twelve in the sixth grade.[6] Apparently, as children became older, many had responsibilities at home or found jobs to earn additional income for their families. Although some students traveled from as far away as Tybee to attend school, others lived close by, such as the thirty-nine girls and boys from East Savannah. There were also eight children enrolled from LePageville, mostly first and second graders.[7]

Anna Robinson, a student at the school during the 1930s, remembers not only lessons in mathematics, reading, spelling, and writing, but also special programs such as recitals and plays staged in old Meldrim Hall on campus. For example, the students opened the Home Beautification Campaign in


SAVANNAH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

NAME Janie Baker

Grade 2

School Yr. 1935 1936

1st 6 Wks. 2 0 80 80 85 75 85 75 80 75 75 90

2nd 6 Wks. 2 0 85 90 90 80 90 80 80 75 75 80 46

3rd 6 Wks. 25 4 0 90 85 80 80 85 85 90 80 80 80 80 46

1st 6 Wks 22 3 0 90 85 90 80 80 85 90 75 80 80 80

2nd 6 Wks. 0 90 90 90 90 90 95 75 85 80 80

3rd 6 Wks. 0

School, 1st Semester State College Training Sch. Teacher, 1st Semester Miss Adams.

School, 2nd Semester [illegible] Teacher, 2nd Semester [illegible]

Fig. 2: Janie Baker Bower's second grade report card from 1935-1936 indicates a well-rounded course of study at the College Training School that included the core subjects of arithmetic, spelling, reading, writing, drawing, music, and health.
Courtesy of Janie Baker Bowers.

Thunderbolt by singing "America the Beautiful" at Meldrim Hall in 1930. Occasionally teachers brought the students outside for recitals on the banks of the Herb River that runs through campus. Susan Pollard, "a very good teacher" according to Mrs. Robinson, took her classes on field trips.[8]

Ms. Pollard, the fifth and sixth grade teacher, was an accomplished painter who had studied art in Madrid, New York, and Mexico City. Once she shared with her class that she had driven to Atlanta on vacation. Leroy Palmer from East Savannah, like many of his classmates, had never seen a woman drive. He asked her about it privately on the playground and she assured him, "a woman can do anything a man can do."[9] Ms. Pollard and other teachers, such as Mattie Payne, provided strong role models for their students.

In 1932, the College Training School moved into a new brick building. Two years later, it was named "Powell Hall," in memory of Willie Hill Powell. Appointed in 1911 as the first home economics instructor on campus, she taught at the college for nine years and died tragically in a car

100 Years of Education at Powell Laboratory School

From 1894 until 1994, the educational experiences provided by the nursery school, kindergarten, and elementary school were exemplary. Despite the different ages of children taught, these pupils spent their formative years being challenged by their teachers and motivated by the academic atmosphere of a college campus.

Fig. 3: Ernestine Lang assists a nursery school student in 1975.

Early Childhood Development Center Scrapbook, Compiled by Ernestine Lang.
Courtesy of Ernestine Lang.

Fig. 4: Recess for College Training School students in 1941 meant a chance to play games on the grounds near Powell Hall.

Hubertonian 1941, 36.
Courtesy of Charles J. Elmore.

Fig. 5: In 1967, kindergarten pupils and their teachers enjoy a round of "ring around the rosey" in front of Hill Hall on the Savannah State University campus.

Early Childhood Development Center Scrapbook, Compiled by Ernestine Lang.
Courtesy of Ernestine Lang.

Fig. 6: Willie Hill Powell distinguished herself as a well-known civic and church leader in Savannah during the early twentieth century. A member of the Toussaint L'Ouverture Chapter of the American Red Cross, she is pictured in this 1918 photograph in the back row, first person on the right.

Vanishing Georgia Collection, CTM-96. Courtesy of the Georgia Archives.

Fig. 7: Powell Hall, located on Alexis Circle at Savannah State University, serves as the most tangible reminder to the laboratory school's importance to the campus.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

accident in 1934. In time, the elementary school became identified with the building and the school was officially known as Powell Laboratory School by the early 1940s.[10]

For forty years, the College Training School had been under the management of the Board of Education, but SSU had played the part of godfather because of the school's location on the college campus. Both institutions had a vested interest in the school. For example, when the new Rosenwald building burned in 1927, both the school superintendent and the college president inspected the smoking rubble early on a Sunday morning.[11] Finally, in 1935, the school officially became a joint venture. The college appointed the staff who operated the teacher training program on campus, but the Training School functioned as a public county school for African American students under the Board of Education.[12]

Powell Laboratory students may have been the smallest Savannah State University Tigers on campus but they participated in college activities with great enthusiasm. Twice the students won first place for the best decorated building for Homecoming and they also acted in plays for Book Week.[13]

College students interacted with the Powell Laboratory children and both benefited in the exchange. Student teachers, sometimes two or three in each classroom, gave children individualized attention and shared experiences of living in Atlanta or North Carolina, faraway places to many Powell Laboratory students.[14] In turn, the children showed student teachers how much elementary pupils could accomplish under good leadership. For example, the youngest and the oldest children combined their efforts in the Rhythm Band and Flute Choir under the direction of Principal Dorothy C. Hamilton. The first and second graders played triangles, tambourines, and drumsticks as the rhythm section for the upper grade students on flutes. WTOC featured the musical group in a television broadcast in January 1957.[15]

Teachers challenged their students to be active – not passive – learners. Third graders, for example, fed different diets to white rats named Faith, Hope, and Charity as a science experiment and tracked the impact of diet on the rats. First graders studying animals had no zoo in Savannah to visit, so they made their own. They built cages and paper animals and kept scrapbooks for their research. "Enrichment Day," introduced in 1953,

gave students on all grade levels a chance to work creatively beyond the usual curriculum. On two Fridays a month, students focused on creative dance, science experiments, art projects such as carving and clay modeling, athletics, and speaking choirs for group recitations. Is it any surprise that by the time students reached fifth and sixth grade they considered dictionary work recreation?[16]

Such innovative lessons no doubt accounted for the fact that Powell Laboratory School was one of eleven county schools accredited in 1952 and one of only three African American schools so honored. Thirty-seven county black and white schools failed to meet the standards.[17] The Board of Education relegated county schools in its system to second-tier status, showing preference to city schools in Savannah. Black county schools were often the most disadvantaged in the system, but Powell Laboratory School demonstrated the rigor and effectiveness of its instruction. Credit goes not only to the hard work of students and teachers but also to the support of Savannah State University.

Close collaboration between students, parents, and teachers contributed greatly to the school's success. Parents gave wholehearted support to the school and participated in fund-raising efforts organized by the PTA to buy needed equipment. Teachers knew that they could count on parental backing in discipline, whether it was a spanking or a ride in a police car to correct misbehavior. For their part, teachers went beyond the call of duty to work with children. Eldora Marks, for example, invited students to come to her home on Saturdays for Student Council meetings. Routinely, teachers visited parents in the home to discuss the child's progress at school. This partnership between parents and teachers encouraged students to do their best to meet academic expectations.[18]

The relationship with the college shielded Powell Laboratory School from many of the handicaps experienced by black schools, but in the mid-1950s the school was obliged to go on double sessions because of overcrowding. A proposal for a new school, drafted in 1955, was approved but construction delays slowed the progress of the project. Marguerite Butler, PTA president, urged the Board of Education in February 1957 to complete the new building, reminding them "that neither teachers nor the children can do their best work while on half day sessions."[19] The anticipation of a new school, however, was bittersweet because Powell Laboratory was leaving the Savannah State campus. In the fall of 1957, the new elementary wing opened on Whatley Avenue in Thunderbolt with the Powell name intact, however, the new school, intended for both elementary and secondary students, was known as Sol C. Johnson School.[20] The heritage of sixty-three years of educating elementary school children at Savannah State University enriched the new school.

Even before the elementary school students left the campus, the college operated a nursery school and a kindergarten. Unlike the elementary program that was part of the public school system, the nursery school and kindergarten were affiliated solely with the college. The nursery school had welcomed its first nine students in January 1949 and, five years later, a kindergarten was added. Both pre-school programs continued to function after the elementary school moved. The laboratory setting allowed college students to work to improve children's cognitive development as well as their social skills.[21] Officially renamed as the Early Childhood Development Center in 1966, the nursery school and kindergarten were still commonly called "Powell Lab" on campus. Pupils who attended the Early Childhood Development Center were largely sons and daughters of faculty

Fig. 8: Children learned reading skills under the direction of Virginia Blalock at the new Sol C. Johnson School in the 1960s.
Courtesy of Virginia Blalock.

and staff. The children were a visible part of the campus, climbing on the jungle gym and graduating in cap and gown at the Kennedy Fine Arts Building. When the teacher training programs at Savannah State University were transferred to Armstrong State College, the pre-school and kindergarten closed in 1994.[22] Nonetheless, the nurturing atmosphere fostered by Director Ernestine Lang and Assistant Director Lottie Tolbert for nearly thirty years left an indelible mark on two generations of children.

MOORE AVENUE AND PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE SCHOOLS

Six months before the first keel was laid at Southeastern Shipyard, the Board of Education was at work to provide an education for the white children of defense workers who would be settling on the eastside. By December 1941, an agreement was in place between the Board of Education and the federal government. In return for three acres of land on Moore Avenue (now Skidaway Road), the Public Building Administration in Washington, D.C. promised to construct a school and lease it back to the Board of Education for one dollar per year. The brick school, complete with assembly room, library, and cafeteria, opened in January 1943.[23]

During the remainder of the war, white children from Twickenham, Gordonston, Avondale and the new defense worker housing attended Moore Avenue School. Doris Fulcher Blessington enrolled as a second grade student when Moore Avenue School opened its doors in 1943. She remembers a learning environment that was supportive of her interest in art, perhaps contributing to her career as a painter. One highlight of the school year she recalls was the May Day celebration when the students danced the minuet around a May Pole.[24] By 1949, Moore Avenue's primary pool of students included white children who lived south of East Gwinnett Street, that is, from the Gordonston, Avondale, and Victory Heights neighborhoods.[25]

The influx of new families into the area during the war caused the school population in Savannah to skyrocket. In 1944, there were more than 2,000 school-age children residing near Southeastern Shipyard. Despite the recent opening of Moore Avenue School, its sixteen classrooms could only absorb a small portion of the increase. Double sessions went into effect at many Savannah schools as a necessary stopgap measure for the overall population increase in the city.[26] As early as 1943, the Board of Education started negotiations for another school lease-back agreement with the federal

Fig. 9: In an ongoing evolution, Moore Avenue School was renamed Charles Herty School in 1958, closed in 1992, and resurrected as condominiums in 1998.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

government, purchasing property on Pennsylvania Avenue across from the Josiah Tattnall Administration Building. The new Pennsylvania Avenue School opened in 1945.[27]

Overcrowded and understaffed, the school's beginning was ragged. The school opened with temporary teachers and parents in the classrooms before permanent staff were hired. Even if staffing issues were resolved, the problem of overcrowding was not. In 1949, one student remarked, "No teacher can teach forty-five pupils at one time and not go home tired."[28] Another point of concern was the fact that "Penn Avenue," as it was commonly called, had no playground. Fortunately, the management of Josiah Tattnall Homes allowed students to use their playground but that arrangement was dependent on the good will of the housing management. Students hot and thirsty as they came in from playing in 1947 had only two drinking fountains at the school, another oversight in planning, compounded by overcrowding.[29]

By the 1950s, the number of classrooms grew from twelve to seventeen, effectively reducing class size and enhancing the learning environment.

Teachers engaged students with fun but purposeful activities, such as building a mock Indian village in one corner of the classroom to study tribal life. There was ample use of films and filmstrips, a new teaching tool at that time.[30] Most important was the balance of high expectations and encouragement. Rick Tindol can still draw the elaborate cursive "E" for "excellent" that sixth grade teacher Otha Woodcock placed on his spelling tests scoring a 100. It gave him incentive to do just as well in all of his schoolwork.[31] Students walked into Mary Crout's fifth grade classroom forewarned that she tolerated no nonsense. Some may have even heard how she summoned her own children home for dinner with a bugle. By the end of the year, however, her students agreed that she was a gifted teacher who was one of Penn Avenue's finest.[32]

The school also enjoyed strong community involvement through the PTA and dependable volunteer mothers who helped in the library and in the lunchroom. The PTA sponsored the Halloween Carnival, featuring a haunted house, games, bobbing for apples, and a fishing booth to snag prizes. Putting an altruistic spin on trick-or-treating, students in 1954 asked for donations of pet food instead of candy at Halloween to benefit the animal shelter.[33]

After the stability of the 1950s and the 1960s came a period of transition. In 1971 desegregation of all Savannah-Chatham County public schools began under the order of U.S. District Court Judge B. Avant Edenfield. As a result of "white flight," approximately 10,000 white children withdrew from the public school system and enrolled in private institutions. At Pennsylvania Avenue School, enrollment dropped from 593 pupils in 1968 to 367 when bussing began in 1971. The official capacity of the school was 476 students, leaving the school under-utilized throughout the 1970s.[34] In addition to the change brought about by integration, Pennsylvania Avenue became a tri-racial school by the mid-1970s. A number of Vietnamese families, refugees from the North Vietnamese takeover of their country, settled at Savannah Gardens and enrolled their children at Pennsylvania Avenue School. The children knew little if any English but demonstrated their eagerness to learn. East Savannah educator Rebecca Cooper, who was the school's Curriculum Specialist at the time, witnessed the children's remarkable progress. Most of the students were functioning well in English within six months.[35]

Fig. 10: Mary Crout's first fifth grade class at Pennsylvania Avenue School assembles for a class portrait in 1945.
Courtesy of Joe Page.

Pennsylvania Avenue School never recovered a robust number of students and rumors circulated that it might close even in the late 1970s. As the building aged, its maintenance and insurance costs were disproportionate to its size. Moreover, with a student body of only 220 students in 1991, the school failed to meet the state-mandated minimum of 450 pupils per school. The Board of Education, after considering all the facts, agreed to close Pennsylvania Avenue School effective June 1992 and bus the children to other schools. Ironically, the Board paired its closing with that of the old Moore Avenue School that had been renamed Charles Herty School.[36]

To the end, Pennsylvania Avenue School remained rooted in the community. Its last principal, Rebecca Ball, described the school as "a little social service agency." Teachers brought clothing for children in need and helped families whose water had been cut off. For some eastside residents, "Penn Avenue" had been a member of the family for two generations.[37]

Fig. 11: Pennsylvania Avenue School sits unused in 2010.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

DEPTFORD, SOUTHEASTERN, AND ELI WHITNEY SCHOOLS

For white children living near President Street, Deptford and Southeastern Schools served as makeshift solutions before a permanent elementary school could be built in the years after World War II. In 1947, the Board of Education agreed to buy a childcare center at Deptford Place from the federal government. Although the building was much too small for a conventional elementary school, its two rooms could be converted into classrooms for first and second graders. The rationale for the purchase was clear to Superintendent Ormond Strong:

> *There are many first and second grade pupils … living near [Deptford Place]. At present these small children are compelled to walk (or ride) a long distance to the nearest school. It would be a great convenience to them and to their parents if we could open a school for them . . . [at] Deptford.*[38]

The new Deptford School opened for the fall term, 1947, even before the sale of the building went into effect.[39]

Although Deptford School provided instruction for the youngest pupils, the Board of Education struggled to provide facilities for older children. Superintendent Alfred Vick anticipated what he called the "greatest influx of war babies" enrolling in school in the fall of 1949. The Savannah District Authority, as the port administration was known at this time, came to the rescue with a proposal to lease the west wing of Southeastern Shipyard's Administration Building as an "emergency school" rent free for one year. The designated space could accommodate fifteen classrooms and a cafeteria. Vick happily accepted the offer in the summer of 1949. There was just enough time to reconfigure the frame building for its new mission.[40]

The name suggested for the new elementary building was "East Savannah School," but the board finally settled on "Southeastern School" in recognition of the site's historic importance. The building promised to be an "outstanding school facility," according to one newspaper account, once remodeling was completed. It was already apparent, however, that the board was cutting costs on the renovation. For instance, instead of installing traditional blackboards in the classrooms, blackboard paint was applied to the wall.[41]

Fig. 12: Deptford School in 1962.
Courtesy of the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System.

Children crowded into the first through seventh grade classrooms at Southeastern from the day the school opened until the day it closed. Generally, forty-five to fifty students were assigned to each class. Mercer Blackburn, who taught fifth and later sixth grade at the school, remembers that the classrooms had connecting doors. When a faculty member fell ill, Mrs. Blackburn just opened the doors between the classrooms and taught all ninety or hundred students herself. The students were "good children," in her estimation, but not beyond pranks. One time, they tried to frighten her by letting a snake loose in the classroom. No doubt they were disappointed when she remarked casually, "we need somewhere to put this snake," and recruited one of the boys to move it gingerly to the aquarium. She made an effort to get to know her students by eating lunch with them in the cafeteria and playing softball or football with the boys at recess. The boys in turn made only token protests when she taught them to square dance.[42]

The Savannah District Authority and the Board of Education extended the rental agreement for classroom space on a year-to-year basis at a price of $4,500 annually beginning in 1950. A new permanent elementary school to be built in Pine Gardens Annex was in the planning stages by 1951, welcome news to Southeastern parents. "We have truly had a problem

being temporary for so long," confessed the PTA president in a letter to the superintendent.[43] The board was just as eager as the parents. New construction, they hoped, would allow them to close both Deptford and Southeastern, but in the interim Southeastern continued to operate. The board renewed the lease one last time for the 1952-1953 school year.[44]

The new Eli Whitney School was as different from Southeastern as parents and students could imagine. Instead of a two-story frame building growing more dilapidated by the year, Eli Whitney was a modern brick structure with three classroom wings jutting out from the administrative center, all on the ground floor. There were no exposed pipes in the ceiling like those that Malcolm Wigley had been known to swing on at Southeastern but skylights instead. Children at Whitney had new functional tabletop desks in place of the wrought-iron desks with wooden seats and writing surfaces they had used before.[45] The twenty-classroom school had room to accommodate all of the students from Southeastern, Deptford and even more when the fall term began in 1953.

Fig. 13: Mrs. Turner's third grade class at Southeastern School, 1950.
Courtesy of Larry Usry.

The excitement engendered by a new school carried over to students and teachers alike. Charles Varner, a rising fourth grade student when Eli Whitney opened, recalls a "pride of ownership" among his classmates, not only for the building but also for its name. "We were proud to be a new school named for such an important person." His teacher, Elizabeth Cooley, enlisted her students to join her in painting a mural of a cotton field in bloom on a wall in the auditorium. The finished product, said Mr. Varner, was "excellent."[46] Mercer Blackburn, one of the Southeastern teachers who transferred to Whitney, was also delighted with the new surroundings and appreciated the smaller class sizes of thirty to thirty-five children. Another Southeastern veteran, Rose Marie Jenkins, served as principal at the new school as she had at the old.[47]

For one special group of students and parents, Eli Whitney represented their first opportunity to attend school. Physically handicapped children had been excluded from the public schools until the Board of Education, the Crippled Children's Society, and the Health Department collaborated to fund a special classroom designed for both instruction and therapy. The Trustees Garden Village School, as it was called, occupied space in the old Deptford School but Whitney teacher Leila Sproul directed the program. By 1957, there were twenty-three elementary-age students enrolled in Whitney's satellite facility plus six kindergarten children in the new pre-school class.[48]

Teaching exceptional children was part of Eli Whitney School's mission from the outset, but the Board of Education redefined that mission in 1961. The focus shifted from physically to mentally challenged students. Frances Cook worked to teach her ten students, ranging in age from six to eleven, how to tend to their daily needs. Their classroom featured a kitchen, living room, and bedroom, built on a child-sized scale, where the students learned how to wash their hands, brush their teeth, and listen to instructions. This experimental program was housed at Deptford School, renamed Whitney Annex, until the building was sold in 1970 and demolished.[49]

Fig. 14: This seventh grade class was special in being the first such class at Eli Whitney School in 1953 but also one of the last. Within a few years, the seventh grade was assigned to junior high schools.
Courtesy of Daisy Riner Harrison.

Unexpectedly Eli Whitney found itself in the limelight in 1995 as a result of the Powell-Duffryn explosion. Spring vacation had already closed the school when the tank detonated on April 10, 1995. Although testing for toxic fumes in classrooms found no contamination, the Board of Education nonetheless ordered a precautionary evacuation of all 543 Whitney students. Bussing the children to East Broad Elementary School proved to be unworkable because of overcrowding, so the former airport terminal on Dean Forest Road became the stopgap schoolhouse. The novelty of going to school at "Air Whitney," as students and teachers named their new quarters, did not wear off in the three weeks that they spent there. The old Delta gates became the classrooms for the fourth-and fifth-graders, the Customs Office hosted the third grade, and the second-graders met at the gates for U.S. Air. The on-site learning included touring an airplane, which, in the words of seven-year-old Jeremy Brown, was "pretty neat."

In the students' absence, every inch of Eli Whitney Elementary School – floors, walls, ductwork, desks and chairs – was thoroughly cleaned.[50]

A cycle of boom and bust describes the evolution of Eli Whitney School in its fifty year history. A growing student population in the 1950s brought expansion and increased the number of classrooms to twenty-four by 1957. The school was 10 percent under capacity in 1971 and fell further during the next twenty years. The Board of Education invested in the school with a million dollar media center which opened in 1992, but already other worries about the presence of asbestos as well as the school's plumbing, heating and air conditioning, drainage, alarm systems, and flooring brought into question the facility's integrity. Rather than spend over three million dollars for renovation, the Board of Education decided to close Eli Whitney School in 2003.[51]

SHUMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

For many students on the eastside before 1963, the transition to junior high school was not only a move to a different school but a move out of the neighborhood. African American students attended Cuyler Junior High School on West Anderson Street near Laurel Grove Cemetery, while white students enrolled at Chatham Junior High School, located at 208 Bull Street, now the administration building for the Board of Education. By the early 1960s, Myers Junior High School on East 52nd Street was the school designated for white students from the eastside. Powell Laboratory students who made the change to the new Sol Johnson complex in Thunderbolt stayed in place when the junior and senior high classroom buildings opened in 1959. However, a new junior high school opened in 1963 that offered white students the convenience of a neighborhood school on Goebel Avenue.

The Board of Education acquired ten acres for the new school from the Savannah Golf Club in 1962 with the intent of naming the junior high in memory of the former President of the Board of Education, Leiston T. Shuman.[52] An innovative design for a "controlled-environment school," introduced for Shuman as well as three other junior high schools in Chatham County, meant that there were no windows and no noise outside the classroom to distract students from their work. Air conditioning opened the possibility to use the building even during the summer months.

Shuman Middle School, 1963–2010

In its five decades serving the eastside, Shuman encouraged students to develop their talents and to excel. Even as Shuman's mission to educate middle school students ended in 2010, the accomplishments of her students remain as a legacy.

Fig. 15: Carolyn Elam directs the Chorus in a medley of Broadway show tunes in a program entitled "Shuman Spectacular of '64."
Courtesy of Glenda Anderson.

Fig. 16: "Algebra Scholars," the ten students who scored the highest on a 1964 standardized test in Algebra are (front, left to right) Susan Stinson, Thomas Lanier, Lavenia Martin, Jackie Burke, Miriam Jordan, teacher Reba Smith; (back, left to right) Larry Black, Diane Seckinger, John Benton, Cecil Underwood, Michael Carn.
The Trojan 1966.
Courtesy of Glenda Anderson.

Fig. 17: With a wave and a smile, Principal Karyta Byers says good-bye to the last middle school students to attend Shuman.
Photograph by Carl Elmore.
Savannah Morning News, 11 June 2010, 4A.
Courtesy of the *Savannah Morning News*.

The students responded positively to the "wonderful, colorful, air-conditioned new school."[53]

The six hundred girls and boys who made up the new student body in September 1963 truly appreciated Shuman after attending Myers Junior High School on double sessions. From the time they arrived, they set out with enthusiasm to shape the image of Shuman. They chose school colors of blue and gray, named themselves the "Trojans," and cheered the football team at pep rallies. The seventh grade music class wrote the lyrics for the new school song: "We're royal blue and gray, We're Trojans!"[54]

Football and sock hops gave way, however, to a shocking intrusion of the real world. Students recall sitting in Mrs. Rojas's algebra class one Friday afternoon when the intercom broadcast a news bulletin that President John Kennedy had been shot. The class sat dumbfounded as Mrs. Rojas screamed and cried "inconsolably."[55] The dedication of the school, already scheduled for that November weekend, took place against a backdrop of national mourning.

From the beginning, a healthy balance of academics and extracurricular activities characterized Shuman's educational outreach. Teams for basketball, football, track and volleyball were organized the first year, with the girls' volleyball team bringing home the first trophies for the school. That winning tradition continued; in 2009, the Trojans basketball and football teams were crowned public middle school champions of Chatham County.[56] In scholastic achievement, the school earned the coveted designation of "Georgia School of Excellence" in 1999. The honor was savored all the more because it represented the culmination of hard work that raised the school's test scores 11 percent over a three year period.[57]

In the mid-1980s and early 1990s, Shuman reached out to a new group within its population – Vietnamese students. Although some students had been born in the United States and spoke English fluently, others were enrolling in an American school for the first time. Often those students

Fig. 18: Facing a flag adorned with black ribbons, the platform party joins in the Pledge of Allegiance during the dedication ceremony.

The Trojan 1964.
Courtesy of Glenda Anderson.

Fig. 19: The 1990 officers and advisors of the ESOL (English To Speakers of Other Languages) Club are, front row, from left to right, Thu Nguyen, Secretary; Samantha H. Ngo, Advisor; Hue Nguyen, President; Souriya Sriratanakoul, Treasurer; Tam Nguyen, Vice-President; back row, Patricia Mincey, Advisor.

The Trojan 1990, 71.
Courtesy of the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System.

struggling with the language were mentored by other Vietnamese students, but faculty members also took a special interest in the new arrivals. Special English classes introduced students to essential grammar and vocabulary and they made quick progress. Principal Roland James described the new students as "eager to learn." In addition, a club made up of Asian students promoted cultural awareness and gave newcomers a group to join and have fun.[58]

The Board of Education selected Shuman to become a magnet school for the performing arts beginning in 1992, a natural choice given the strong arts tradition at the school. When the school opened, for example, a classical bassoonist, Angel DelBusto, conducted the band and Carolyn Elam, a dynamic young teacher and musical theater veteran, led the chorus. At Shuman Fine Arts Middle School, students had the option of majoring in Theater, Visual Arts, Dance, Chorus, Band, or Orchestra. Thanks to specialized classes and tutorials, the Shuman Chorus, Band, and Orchestra received superior marks at the District Music Festival in 2007.[59]

As part of the "Passport to Excellence" program implemented by the Board of Education in the fall of 2010, the middle school era at Shuman ended and it was reborn as an elementary school. Certain cosmetic changes signaled the change. Playground equipment suitable for younger children stood on the grounds just as juvenile desks and chairs filled primary grade classrooms. A new word in the signage introduces the school to the neighborhood as "Shuman Elementary School." It is also a homecoming for elementary students from Presidential Plaza apartments in Pine Gardens who had been bussed to Islands Elementary School on Whitemarsh Island.[60] After losing Moore Avenue, Pennsylvania Avenue, and Eli Whitney Schools, the eastside once more has a neighborhood elementary school.

KINDERGARTENS

During the time before kindergartens became standard for elementary schools, the eastside had a number of small private facilities for five-year-olds. They varied widely, some attached to housing developments or churches, others wholly in private hands.

One of the first kindergartens was founded under the auspices of Josiah Tattnall Homes in 1944 and continued under the management of Savannah Gardens. It served families with young children for more than twenty years. In addition to helping children learn social skills, the kindergarten regularly hosted parties and programs for parents and family friends. The Morningside Baptist Church kindergarten also had long standing in the community. Established in 1963 under the direction of Mary Walker, the MBC kindergarten provided learning fundamentals in a spiritual environment. Declining enrollment and falling revenues finally forced the closure of the kindergarten in 1986. On nearby Skidaway Road, Gene Oelschig welcomed children to Playmates Kindergarten for fifteen years beginning in the 1950s.[61]

For the black children in the East Savannah neighborhood, choices for kindergarten included not only the class operated by Savannah State University but also Mother Emily's Kindergarten and Charles Moultrie Memorial Kindergarten. Mrs. Emily Snipes taught five-year-olds in her home on East Gwinnett Street in the 1950s, basing many of her lessons on the Bible. Ola B. Lewis remembers her training there as "top notch"; when she enrolled in first grade at Powell Laboratory School, she could already read.[62] By the 1960s, children could attend Moultrie Memorial

Fig. 20: Celebrating May Day, the children of Josiah Tattnall Homes Kindergarten dance around the May Pole to an appreciative audience in 1953.

Georgia Historical Society Photograph Collection, MS 1361-PH, Box 6, Folder 22.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.


Commencement Speaker

Fig. 21: Miss Annette Thomas.
The Herald, 1 June 1963, 6.
Courtesy of *The Herald*.

Kindergarten, also located on East Gwinnett. One of the highlights of the school year was graduation. In 1963, First African Baptist Church in East Savannah hosted the ceremony. An alumna, Annette Thomas, class of 1962, gave the commencement address. Even at age six, she had an impressive resume – former student at the nursery school at Savannah State, an enthusiastic member of the Sunday School at First Bryan Baptist Church, and a first grade student at Sol C. Johnson Elementary School where she excelled in her studies.[63]

CHILDHOOD FUN

Children growing up on the eastside were never at a loss for something to do. Sometimes organized groups structured activities for children but more often homemade fun or pickup games are what people remember best about childhood.

The hobo swing was a favorite among Twickenham youngsters. A rope swing securely anchored to a tree carried a child across a ditch where another child hopped on board back across the ditch. With two on board, a third child was ready and waiting as the swing swooped back over the ditch. A jump and a miss meant a rough landing in the ditch.[64] For boys in East Savannah and Moses Rogers Grove, black and white, making a pluffer was as much a part of summer as heat and humidity. Hollowing out a cylinder out of a palm shaft was the first step, then a whittled-down mop stick acted as the plunger. Chinaberries were the ammunition, sure to bring up a welt when they hit the target.[65] Slingshots and rubber guns were also homemade toys, along with scooters constructed along the lines of a soapbox derby. Girls in East Savannah were known to make dolls with Coca-Cola bottle bodies and grass hair.[66]

Every season brought out youngsters for a different sport – football, basketball, softball, baseball – and the boys did not have a monopoly on team sports. The Harmon sisters in East Savannah showed no mercy to the boys when they played softball and basketball; respectfully they were known in the neighborhood as the "hard-hitting Harmons."[67] In the summer, spray pools cooled the children at the housing developments, although David Durden remembers turning on the water for his friends from LePageville. In fact, it was not unusual for the boys at Moses Rogers Grove and LePageville to play basketball, baseball, and half-rubber together.[68] At the end of the day, Leroy Palmer recalls that white playmates from Josiah Tattnall Homes gathered at his home in East Savannah to listen to the large Grundig radio.[69] For most of the girls, the favorite games year-round included hop scotch, marbles, and jump rope – even double Dutch.[70]

None of the neighborhoods were far from the marsh; that proximity represented a standing invitation to explore the islands, bluffs, creeks and rivers.

Fig. 22: Rick Tindol and Spot try out the scooter Rick made in the back yard of his home in Savannah Gardens.
Courtesy of Roger Smith.

Fig. 23: The spray pool at Deptford Place attracts a crowd of children on a hot summer day.
Courtesy of Larry Usry.

Fig. 24: Brothers Larry and Joe Usry use a fallen tree as a diving platform at Strickland Island in the mid-1950s.
Courtesy of Larry Usry.

For children in the East Savannah neighborhood, the marsh and pasture at Roberd's Dairy were practically at their doorstep. Richard's Landing, at the end of Gable Street, was a favorite place to go fishing and crabbing. Boys in the neighborhood, and some of the girls, went swimming in a creek in the pasture, below Mosely Street. The more adventuresome went to Butler Creek, a tidal creek that emptied into the Wilmington River behind Bonaventure Cemetery. The older children taught the younger ones how to swim and, as Percil Moye observed, "if a kid came out of East Savannah, he knew how to swim."[71] Another favorite swimming hole for many eastside children was Strickland Island, at the north end of Forest Lawn Cemetery. At high tide, the water was deep enough for boys to dive off the bluff and there was room enough for forty or fifty swimmers. In the mid-1950s, boys of both races came to swim there until the tide went out. As Larry Usry remembers it, "Strickland Island was a place where blacks and whites could mingle."[72]

In the minds of many youngsters growing up in these neighborhoods, Causton Bluff was magical. A narrow dirt road, hardly wide enough for an automobile, led through the marsh to the bluff. In the woods, some

would-be hunters tried out their skills with air rifles or .22s while other visitors searched for Indian pottery and arrowheads. The remains of old Fort Bartow lay in rubble on the bluff for explorers hoping to find Civil War artifacts but perhaps found moonshine stills instead. Best of all was swimming in the Wilmington River. Boys clambered down the bluff to go skinny-dipping, but there was also an old diving tower where other kids went to swim.[73]

A new attraction riveted the attention of the eastside and all of Savannah in 1957 when an ice skating rink opened at the Savannah Sports Arena near the intersection of Pennsylvania Avenue and East Gwinnett Street. Aaron Newman, the owner of the arena, and his manager, Sol Passink, tapped into the enthusiasm for ice skating that began with Olympic star Sonja Henie during the 1930s and grew with the production of professional ice shows such as Holiday on Ice and Ice Capades. Although sultry Savannah seldom had any encounters with icy winters, Newman was certain that the novelty of ice skating would pique interest and that those who ventured out on the ice would love it. Youngsters on the eastside already had an interest in roller-skating, even when sidewalks were not always available. Children at Deptford Place, for example, roller-skated on the concrete slab foundations of housing units that had been torn down.[74] Translating that skating experience into a curiosity about ice skating was encouraged with newspaper ads offering ice skates for sale during the Christmas season. The ad also promoted the opening of the ice rink slated for January 1, 1957. For his part, Newman brought Eileen Meade, an amateur skating champion from New England, and her husband, Swiss star George Von Birgelen, to Savannah as instructors. On opening night, two thousand Savannahians packed the Sports Arena to see an exhibition by Meade and Birgelen, and five hundred of them gamely put on skates and slid out onto the ice. Skating sessions for the public were scheduled every morning, afternoon, and night except Sunday. For an admission price of fifty cents, skaters glided around the rink and first-timers wobbled their way around the rail. Some new skaters went home exhilarated; others saw their skills improve after taking lessons at Von's Ice Skating School at the rink.[75]

On the longest of the lazy days of summer, routine neighborhood happenings became diversions for youngsters. The arrival of the milk delivery wagon from Annette's Dairy, still drawn by a horse as late as the 1960s, was one such occasion. Everyone marveled how the horse knew the route, stopping only at houses scheduled for a delivery. Whether it was

Fig. 25: Eileen Meade's athleticism and grace served as a model for many fledgling skaters. Courtesy of Kathryn Oates.

Wagner Heights, Twickenham or Moses Rogers Grove, the horse made its rounds every other day, and the kids always took notice.[76] At Deptford, the kids followed the popsicle cart and sometimes got a piece of dry ice that they would roll around in their mouths and blow out a puff of "smoke." Another source of fascination was the DDT truck that drove through neighborhood streets at sundown to spray mosquitoes. It was as if the truck were the Pied Piper with a crowd of children trailing behind, nearly obscured by the cloud of chemicals and smoke. Some parents brought their children indoors and closed the doors and windows, but long before people recognized the dangerous poison spewed by the "fogger truck," it was a magnet for youngsters.[77]

SCOUTING AND CLUBS

A tradition of scouting for boys and girls has been engrained in the eastside for decades. Churches, such as First African Baptist of East Savannah, Morningside Baptist Church, and Riverside Baptist, sponsored scout troops, as well as Moore Avenue School, Pennsylvania Avenue School, Powell Laboratory School, and Eli Whitney School. Often the housing developments contributed meeting space at their administration buildings for troops organized by schools or PTAs. The Deptford Civic Club also established scouting groups for both girls and boys during World War II. Providing wholesome activities for children became a community-wide effort.[78]

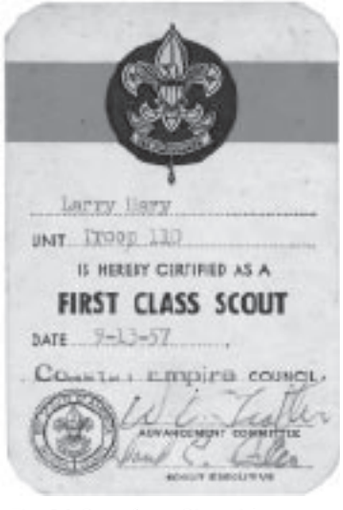


Fig. 26: Boys from Riverside Gardens and Deptford Place made up Troop 110 under Scoutmaster Herb Smith Coppage. Scout Larry Usry remembers they had no uniforms but no shortage of high jinks.

Courtesy of Larry Usry.

Perhaps the first African American scouting group organized on the eastside was Troop 50 at the College Training School on the campus of the present-day Savannah State University. By 1934, Scoutmaster Thomas N. Roberts had an engaged group of eighteen boys involved in many different interests. Boys played basketball and baseball; they took frequent hikes, not just for the exercise, but to learn more about nature. The scouts identified thirty-seven different kinds of trees on two rambles through the woods. On one occasion, they hiked on Gray's Island near Tybee where they constructed a fire pit and cooked veal stew and rice. After the meal, the boys took the exam for tenderfoot rank.[79]

Fig. 27: The nine- and ten-year-olds of Girl Scout Troop 39 are busy at a weekly meeting in March 1949 at Tattnall Homes Administration Building.

Georgia Historical Society Photographs, MS 1361-PH, Box 6, Folder 22.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

Powell Laboratory School sponsored the 4-H Club during the 1940s and 1950s that was especially popular with the girls from East Savannah. The girls learned about cooking, sewing, and personal health, but, in line with 4-H focus on rural life, they also had gardening projects and became familiar with farm animals. Ola B. Lewis competed with other African American girls at the state 4-H exhibition in Dublin in the 1950s where she won first place for her banana pudding one year. Even if she didn't like banana pudding personally, she had a new watch to show for her efforts.[80]

Growing Up on the Eastside

Remembering his childhood and adolescence on the eastside in the late 1940s and 1950s, David Durden said, "we grew up in the best era." No doubt many adults with childhood roots in eastern Savannah neighborhoods would agree, no matter when they grew up.

Fig. 28 (far left): Children at the Powell Laboratory Elementary Wing of Sol Johnson School perform in the 1960s.
Courtesy of Virginia Blalock.

Fig. 29 (left): Sisters Elsa and Olga Oelschig were best friends growing up and even double-dated when they were older.
Courtesy of Walter Kessel.

Fig. 30 (far left): Shirley Fulcher of Twickenham in her carriage in March 1929.
Courtesy of Larry Jenkins.

Fig. 31 (left): A 1994 nursery school graduate addresses the crowd in the last graduation exercises for the Early Childhood Development Center.
Early Childhood Development Center Scrapbook, Compiled by Ernestine Lang.
Courtesy of Ernestine Lang.

Fig. 32 (far left): Riding through Twickenham in the 1940s are Doris Fulcher Blessington, left, on Ginger and Sally Floyd, right, on Pie.

Courtesy of Doris Blessington.

Fig. 33 (left): John Fulcher with his prized Indian motorcycle, ca. 1930s.

Courtesy of Larry Jenkins.

Fig. 34: A highlight of the Summer Playground Program at Deptford was watermelon for all, ca. 1950.

Courtesy of Larry Usry.

TEENAGE YEARS

For many adolescents, one of the first steps towards adulthood is a part-time job. Many teenagers growing up on the eastside looked for opportunities to work, either for spending money or to contribute to the family income. Some youngsters were already adept at finding these opportunities close to home long before they became teenagers. At Moses Rogers Grove, for example, David Durden saw what seemed to be an endless number of Southeastern employees passing by near his home at every shift change. On a summer's day, he and a friend set up a stand near the exit to the shipyard selling lemon and cherry snow cones for a nickel apiece. An entrepreneur at age nine, he expanded his inventory to include bags of peanuts on sale for ten cents. As he got a little older, he checked out a lawn mower from the Moses Rogers office and offered to mow his neighbors' lawns for fifty cents.[81] Percil Moye and his friends in East Savannah fanned out into Gordonston and other white residential areas where they had a thriving mowing operation. At the end of the day, they split their earnings.[82] The proximity of the Savannah Golf Club also gave eastside youngsters an unusual opportunity to become caddies. Golfers hired boys as young as eight years old from East Savannah, Wagner Heights, and Twickenham to caddy a round for them.

Another rite of passage for white adolescents on the eastside was attending the dances at the Savannah Gardens Administration Building. With a phonograph and a stack of '45s, teenagers during the 1950s and 1960s danced the Bunny Hop, the Twist, the Mashed Potato, and the Shag. Under the watchful eyes of chaperones, kids danced, flirted, and had a good time. Many a crush blossomed on the dance floor and at least one marriage had its beginnings there. Terry Fountain saw a "cute" guy at the dance, Rick Tindol, whom she had also noticed at Savannah High School. She hoped he would ask her to dance, but he spent the evening playing ping-pong instead. Before too long they were dancing and dating and eventually they married. Deptford Place and Garden Homes also sponsored dances, with some teenagers cruising the scene at Deptford, Garden Homes, and Savannah Gardens in one evening.[83] Because housing developments were segregated, so were the dances. Black teens in nearby East Savannah were no doubt aware of these social events, but they took no part in them. However, East Savannah teenagers went to Jim's, a club open to adults in the evening, but welcoming to young people for dancing during the daytime.[84]

Fig. 35: The day after the concert, an editorial in the *Savannah Evening Press* concluded, "we predict for rock-n-roll, in the words of the Persian sage, that this too shall pass."
SEP, 26 June 1956, 6.
Courtesy of the *Savannah Morning News*, with the assistance of Armstrong Atlantic State University.

For some lucky teenagers in Savannah the most memorable moment of their lives to that point in time occurred on June 25, 1956. Swarms of "teen-aged boys with duck-tail haircuts and shiny-eyed girls popping gum" mobbed the eastside Sports Arena to hear Elvis Presley in concert. More than one girl passed out as Elvis sang "Heartbreak Hotel" and "Blue-Suede Shoes" cradling the microphone in his hands. Reporter Richard Epps relished describing the pandemonium:

> *The lyrics were enough to boil some spectators' blood, but it was his body movements – he appeared to have the joints of a grass snake – that really brought the screeching with a din that would have done justice to the seventh game of the World Series.*[85]

Jack Nasworthy recalled the crowd as "bulging, bulging, bulging" as he and his date stood for the performance, at least until she fainted. Terry Tindol attended the concert with her parents and even now her mother, Patrel Fountain, says of Elvis, "I loved him!"[86] Although Elvis kept a safe distance from the girls' outstretched arms, what the crowd did not know was how close he passed by them at the entrance. The Sports Arena officials put a cap on the singer, gave him a tool box to carry, and he walked into the arena in the company of several roofers. At the conclusion of the second show, Elvis exited the stage on the final notes of "You Ain't Nothing But a Hound Dog," but he had to hide in a storeroom backstage for an hour before it was safe to return to the DeSoto Hotel where he was a guest. The management was unimpressed with the rock-n-roll star and refused him admittance to the dining room because he was not wearing a jacket.[87]

Although none of the other concerts at the Sports Arena matched the excitement generated by Elvis, a number of other top performers appeared there until the mid-1960s, including James Brown and Percy Sledge.

CONCLUSION

"The best friends I have now are all people I knew in junior high school," said Shirley Hallman reminiscing about her teenage years on the eastside. "Ties don't go away."[88] Many of those friendships came out of shared experiences at school, whether it was struggling with multiplication tables or playing at Mother Emily's Kindergarten. Certainly the many elementary schools on the eastside were an academic and social hub, and that foundation carried over to secondary schools. Growing up in the company of friends, family, and neighbors shaped the adults who look back at childhood and adolescence with nostalgia; the hardships have faded from memory.

Fig. 36: The birthday girl invites her friends at the Early Childhood Development Center on the Savannah State campus to celebrate her big day in the 1960s.
Early Childhood Development Center Scrapbook, Compiled by Ernestine Lang.
Courtesy of Ernestine Lang.

The power of those memories is seen in reunions. In the 1990s, those who spent teenage years dancing to records at Savannah Gardens met to relive those good times. They continue to meet periodically, most recently in 2010. With the closure of Eli Whitney School imminent in 2003, Dean Evans, Herb Hilderbrand, and Charles Varner, three of the first students to walk into that school fifty years earlier, organized a reunion for the Eli Whitney Alumni Association. Former students separated by time and place returned to reminisce about school days while a disc jockey played "golden oldies" in the gym. There were stories of playing baseball on the

athletic field and climbing onto the roof at night just for the thrill of not getting caught. Thinking back over the good times and good friends at Eli Whitney, Cleon Todd spoke for all 120 schoolmates at the reunion, "I wouldn't trade them for anything."[89] A perpetual reunion continues on internet sites where former and current residents recapture their memories and share them with friends. The eastside as it is today and the eastside as it is remembered exist simultaneously.

SPORTS

SPORTS


SF

Fig. 1: The Sam Finley baseball team won the 1977 City Championship for boys in the 11-12 year old bracket.
Courtesy of Patricia Jenkins.

THE SIXTH GRADE BOYS who made up the Pennsylvania Avenue School football team in 1946 expected the City Championship playoffs to be tough. With only fourteen players, every member of the team had to be prepared to play both offense and defense. Their game was "hard-tackle football" made all the more dangerous because they wore no protective gear such as helmets or pads. Instead, the boys wore their usual "uniform" of long-sleeved gray sweatshirts, jeans, and Converse tennis shoes. Any hope of capturing the city title required a victory over archrival Anderson Street School, the only team that had defeated Pennsylvania Avenue during the regular season. The two teams met again during the playoffs at Grayson Stadium. Not only did the boys from Pennsylvania Avenue gain a sweet victory over Anderson Street, but they won the City Championship, an exceptional performance for a school only in its second year of operation.[1]

The achievement of the Pennsylvania Avenue team was not just a milestone for the players and a new school but also a reflection of the abiding interest in sports in the community. Whether it was a baseball game at the Savannah Gardens diamond, boxing and wrestling at the Savannah Sports Arena, or a passion for golf created by the neighboring Savannah Golf Club, sports provided a common ground for eastside residents.

SAVANNAH GOLF CLUB

The sports organization with the longest tenure on the eastside is the Savannah Golf Club, which incorporated in 1899 and opened a course conveniently sited on the street car line in the Hillcrest neighborhood the following year. For its nine-hole course, the club rented 110 acres, a tract roughly bordered by the Catholic Cemetery, East Gwinnett Street, Goebel Avenue, and the Central of Georgia tracks near today's President Street.[2] Confederate breastworks built with moats became ready-made hazards to challenge even experienced golfers. No. 4, dubbed the "Cannon Ball" hole, required a long drive to carry over a twelve-foot high gun emplacement, while the golfer playing No. 8, the "Majuba" hole, had to clear a moat and an equally high breastwork to approach the green.[3]

By 1901, the club counted 178 members on its roster, expanding to 195 the next year despite a doubling of annual dues from ten to twenty dollars. Men nominated to join the club had to be vetted by no fewer than two active members and elected by the Membership Committee. As a result, club members were white residents of the community, largely from upper class backgrounds. Women from Chatham County, aged eighteen and older, were eligible for associate membership if they had no male relative qualified to join. The club excused women from the twenty dollar initiation fee and gave them full use of the facilities but they were denied the right to vote or attend meetings.[4] Savannah Mayor Herman Myers applauded the club's welcome to females that, in his words, "[encourages] and [cultivates] among our young women a taste for vigorous, outdoor amusement and for strengthening physical exercise, which I often think is more needed in Savannah than even increased mental power

Fig. 2: 1901 Map of the Original Nine Hole Course at Savannah Golf Club.
Fortifications at the Savannah Golf Club, Central of Georgia Maps, MS 1362, 196-61-03007.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

and aptitude."[5] In fact, the club instituted a women's championship tournament in 1900, six years before a comparable annual men's championship began.[6]

The construction of a one-story white clapboard club house just north of East Gwinnett Street provided a comfortable place for members to gather between rounds. In pleasant weather, tea was served on the wide veranda overlooking the first tee and fairway. On cool rainy days, members retreated inside to a large living room where an oversized fireplace and a small bar kept the chill at bay. The purchase of property previously rented in 1911 confirmed the club's permanence in the neighborhood. Well-known course architect Donald Ross designed an eighteen-hole course in the 1920s. For members accustomed to a course of 2,642 yards with the original nine holes, the first nine of the new course were a demanding 3,055 yards. Par was set at 74 for the eighteen holes that tested the skills of golfers for 6,188 yards. Putting on the new grass greens was also an improvement greatly appreciated by members who remembered the old sand or clay greens.[7]

The clapboard club house gave way to a larger and more imposing structure in 1917. The new two-story stucco club house with red tile roof signaled a growing sophistication and affluence at the Savannah Golf Club. Locker rooms for both men and women expanded in size, while the public rooms catered to a leisurely lifestyle, which included card games, banquets,

and dances.[8] By the 1920s, the club attracted the interest of out-of-town golfers, especially after hosting the Georgia Amateur Championship in 1917. Advertising in conjunction with the DeSoto Hotel, the club extended an invitation to hotel guests to play the course for a fee. Even the most widely-traveled golfers had to be intrigued at the prospect of playing on a course built around Civil War fortifications. Members also collaborated with the Chamber of Commerce to feature the club in their brochures.[9]

Fig. 3: Ladies in full-brimmed hats and gentlemen in ties relax on the veranda of the original club house about 1910.

Georgia Historical Society Photograph Collection, MS 1361-PH, Box 22, Folder 31.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

The event that catapulted the Savannah Golf Club into the golf world's national spotlight was the Savannah Open, held on February 20-22, 1930. Atlanta attorney Bobby Jones, winner of the U.S. Open in 1923, 1926, and 1929 and widely regarded as the most talented golfer of the time, teed off before a starstruck gallery. Jones set a new course record of 67, seven under par, at the end of his first round, but to everyone's amazement, the new record fell the same day when twenty-one-year-old Horton Smith shot a 66. The duel between the two men continued throughout the tournament. Jones overcame a lackluster 75 in the second round with a record 65 in the third to claim a share of the lead with Smith. After the fourth and final round, Jones' scorecard read 72, Smith's 71. The one-stroke loss Jones suffered at Savannah was the last of his golfing career. Later that year, he won the Grand Slam – victories in the four most prestigious tournaments in golf at the time, the British Open, British Amateur Open, U.S. Open, and U.S. Amateur Open. He retired shortly thereafter at age twenty-eight, his Grand Slam triumph in one calendar year still unmatched.[10]

Just as the Savannah Golf Club showcased major talents such as Bobby Jones, the club's proximity shaped a strong interest in golf among young people in surrounding neighborhoods. Club members hired boys from Wagner Heights, East Savannah, and Twickenham as caddies and the experience allowed the youngsters to learn the game and to love it. Boys earned fifty cents for eighteen holes in the 1930s, good money for an afternoon's work. That was enough money for Paul Aimar of Wagner Heights to go to a movie and buy popcorn like the other eight-, nine-, or ten-year-old caddies from his neighborhood.[11] There was an even larger group of African American caddies from East Savannah who worked at Savannah Golf Club, as well as the Municipal Golf Club and General Oglethorpe Golf Club on Wilmington Island. Black caddies who became avid golfers themselves sometimes played the course at the Savannah Golf Club on Mondays when the club was closed, on some occasions using clubs lent to them by members.[12]

The desire to play the game was so strong in East Savannah that a home-made course was created in the area called the Diamond, roughly the land between Hanson and Mosely Streets. Leroy Palmer remembers taking a

Fig. 4: Bobby Jones, center, at the Savannah Open, 1930.
Cordray-Foltz Photograph Collection, MS 1360, Box 26, Folder 24.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

two-iron to dig a hole, walking fifty yards to dig another, and a third hole fifty yards further. He and his friends played the three-hole course with what clubs they had – a putter, two-iron, and a wedge, betting a nickel a hole.[13] In Wagner Heights, neighborhood boys also carved out a makeshift nine-hole course at the end of Henrietta Street. Not surprisingly, the boys putted on sand greens.[14]

The club's interaction with nearby neighborhood residents consisted primarily of employment opportunities, such as greensmen, bartenders, and cooks. Hamilton Mitchell of East Savannah enjoyed one of the longest tenures at the club. He joined the staff after Southeastern Shipyard closed in 1945 and spent the next thirty-five years working at the clubhouse, becoming the supervisor of service during the 1960s. "We tried real hard to give it our best," he remembered.[15]

On one occasion, however, the club had a direct bearing on the future development of the eastside. In 1962 the club agreed to sell 10.6 acres to the Board of Education as the site of the new Shuman Junior High School. Not only did this sale bring a significant change in land use to the Hillcrest neighborhood, but it also established a junior high school in eastern Savannah for the first time. The impact on the golf course was equally profound. The No. 1 and No. 18 holes were lost to the club, requiring a new configuration to the course. Fairways, greens, tees, and bunkers were reshaped, a driving range added, and a new clubhouse constructed. The expansion of the golf course was made possible by utilizing twenty-three acres south of President Street, land at one time used by the city as a landfill and purchased by the club in 1942.[16] In a final step to consolidate property, members voted to sell the old clubhouse to the Little Theatre. The clubhouse ballroom and dining room were converted into the theatre's performing space.[17]

Fig. 5: Miniature golf, quite the rage in the 1920s and 1930s, was available to black Savannahians at the Boys' Club course for a reasonable price.
Savannah Tribune, 7 August 1930, 2.
Courtesy of the *Savannah Tribune*.

The Savannah Golf Club has presided over numerous tournaments in its long history and hosted some of the most celebrated golfers in the nation. The Georgia Amateur Championship, for example, has been held at the

FORE!

By the 1920s, the public face of the Savannah Golf Club embraced both the new and the old. The twentieth century woman found in golf a challenging sport while the club provided her with ample opportunities to excel. Yet all the club's members and guests played a course surrounded by vestiges of the Civil War.

Fig. 6: In this 1916 photograph, a young woman concentrates on her drive after teeing off at No. 1.
Courtesy of George Oelschig.

Fig. 7: A golfer drives the ball off the top of a Confederate breastwork in this photograph published in a Chamber of Commerce brochure ca. 1920s.
"Hotel DeSoto Brochure," n.d., Ginger and Adam Wilkins Travel Brochure Collection.
Courtesy of Ginger and Adam Wilkins.

Fig. 8: The cover of this Board of Trade brochure features a drawing of a young woman at the Savannah Golf Club, with the new club house in the background.
Board of Trade, "Savannah, Birthplace of Georgia, Hub of the New South Brochure," 1925, Ginger and Adam Wilkins Travel Brochure Collection.
Courtesy of Ginger and Adam Wilkins.

Savannah Golf Club seven times, a record set in 2005. Although the course at 6,372 yards is shorter than some, it can be a challenge to make or break par.[18]

Fig. 9: This coveted ticket gave Savannah fans a chance to see the famed Sam Snead play an exhibition at the Savannah Golf Club early in his career.
Courtesy of the Savannah Golf Club.

Among the Savannah golfers identified with the club are Ceil Maclaurin and Hollis Stacy. In 1946, Ceil Maclaurin picked up a golf club to please her father and was frustrated to find that hitting the ball off a tee was harder than she imagined. In less than two years, however, she was playing competitive golf across the state, thanks in part to coaching from the Savannah Golf Club pro Matt Warren. She went on to win the Savannah Golf Club Women's Championship thirteen times, equaling the number of victories she enjoyed as the Savannah City Champion. At the state amateur tournaments, she was consistently a contender and had eight titles to her credit. When she moved on to the senior tour, she posted victories as the USGA Senior Women's Amateur Champion in 1976 and the Canadian Senior Ladies Amateur Champion in 1986. Even at the age of eighty-two, she won the Bill Davey Memorial Tournament at Jekyll Island. During her sixty-year playing career, she considered the Savannah Golf Club as

Fig. 10: Ceil Maclaurin sits at home surrounded by glittering reminders of past victories.
Photograph by Billy Deal.
Courtesy of the *Savannah Morning News Magazine,* 10 May 1964, 7.

her home course. Fittingly, the club named its ladies' club championship trophy in her honor in 2008.[19]

Ceil Maclaurin chose to keep her amateur status, but the golf prodigy that she inspired, Hollis Stacy, took her game to the professional ranks. A native Savannahian, Hollis Stacy grew up on East Gwinnett Street, a chip shot from the Savannah Golf Club, and learned to play on its course. Ceil Maclaurin admired the girl's competitiveness which was apparent even as a thirteen-year-old, and mentored the young golfer on the finer points of the game. At the age of fifteen, Hollis Stacy won her first national title, the U.S. Girls' Junior Championship of 1969 and successfully defended that title in 1970 and 1971.[20] Six years later, she defeated Nancy Lopez by two strokes to win the U.S. Women's Open, her first major victory as a professional and the fulfillment of a long-cherished goal. "I've always dreamt of winning the Open, even when I was eleven," she told reporters. "I remember playing at the Savannah Golf Club and thinking to myself, 'This is for the Open,' when I played No. 5. When I putted out today, I flashed back on that."[21] It was the start of a brilliant professional career that included seventeen more wins on the LPGA tour, among them two more U.S. Open titles.[22]

The Savannah Golf Club has taken great pride in the achievements of both women, superlative golfers that members claim as their own. The passing of Ceil Maclaurin in 2010 was a deeply-felt loss. As the club treasures the memories of the great golfers who have played the course for more than a century, members also look forward to the future, especially with the opening of a new clubhouse in 2010. With roots that stretch back to 1794, the Savannah Golf Club is well into its third century and the new clubhouse and pool complex mark the growth of the club over the past one hundred years at its eastern Savannah location.[23]

FOREST CITY GUN CLUB

As golfers brought their clubs by automobile, streetcar, or horse carriage to play the course at the new Savannah Golf Club in 1900, they unknowingly attracted the interest of other sportsmen to eastern Savannah. The availability of open land, the convenience of the Savannah, Thunderbolt, & Isle of Hope streetcar line, and the example of the Savannah Golf Club contributed to the decision of the Forest City Gun Club to relocate to the

Fig. 11: Hollis Stacy was a gallery favorite from the beginning.
Courtesy of the *Savannah Morning News*.

Fig. 12: Dr. Frank Wilson in field gear with his hunting dogs, ca. 1900.
Cordray-Foltz Collection, MS 1360, Box 27, Folder 3.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

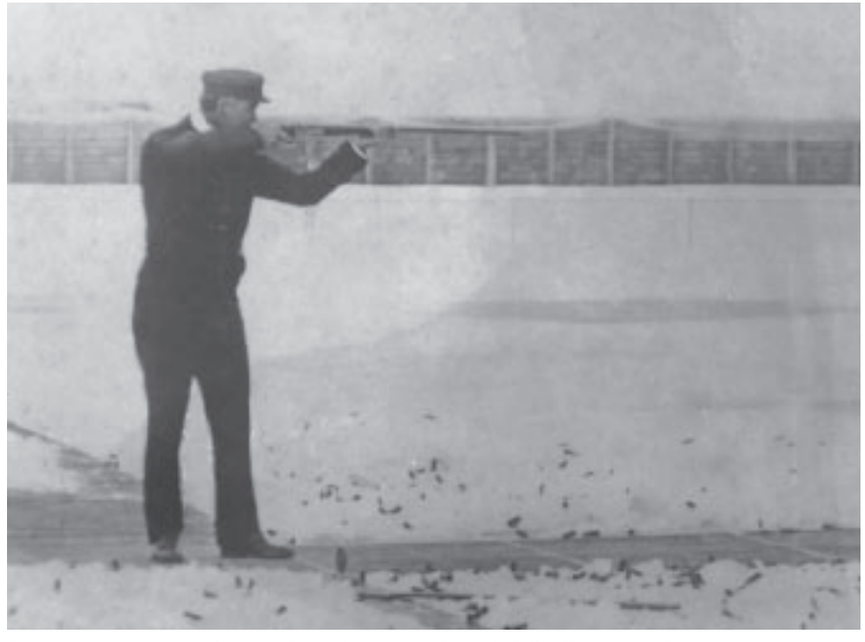


Fig. 13: An expert marksman, Dr. Wilson won the U.S. Rifle Championship in 1899.
Cordray-Foltz Collection, MS 1360, Box 27, Folder 3.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

area. In 1902, the gun club purchased ten acres of land bordered by Hale, Forest, Foster, and Screven Streets in the neighborhood.[24]

At this time, the Forest City Gun Club was already a well-established organization, founded in 1883, to promote skeet and trap shooting. Originally members met on Hutchinson Island with glass balls for targets instead of the clay pigeons commonly used today. By the 1890s, the club moved its activities to present-day Ardsley Park but the land used by the club was pre-empted for a hospital during the Spanish-American War.[25] In search of more permanent quarters, the club settled on a Twickenham location.

By 1916, a clubhouse with a wraparound porch had been built on Hale Street, at the southwestern edge of the property, leaving the lion's share of the acreage open for shooting.[26] Frank Cheatham Wilson served as president almost every year between 1902 and 1922, and the club flourished under his leadership. Dr. Wilson devoted much of his time outside of

his dental practice to hunting and shooting in competition. He was, in the words of club member Col. Ormonde Hunter, "a great shot" but his love for the sport transcended individual achievement. He was intent in sharing the skill and the companionship he found in the sport and focused his efforts on building the Forest City Gun Club.[27]

Even after Dr. Wilson stepped down from the club's presidency, he maintained a vital presence in the organization for the rest of his life. At age seventy, for example, he competed at a skeet shoot at the gun club, missing only one of fifty birds for the victory. The club remained in Twickenham until 1925; its two decades on the eastside was a period of stability unprecedented up to that time in the club's history.[28] At his death in 1950, Dr. Wilson left the bulk of his estate to the club, requesting only to be buried on the grounds of the gun club. That bequest made possible the purchase of acreage on Ferguson Avenue for the permanent quarters of the club. It is also the site where Dr. Wilson was laid to rest. Today the Forest City Gun Club is known as the "oldest and largest continuously-operated skeet, trap, and sporting clays club in America."[29]

SOFTBALL AND BASEBALL

On the eastside, the baseball tradition was established early when the Savannah Indians of the South Atlantic League opened the 1910 season in their new ball park, the Savannah Athletic Field, only a block south of Wagner Heights on Bolton Street. In May 1912, even President William Howard Taft enjoyed an Indians game at the park during a visit to Savannah. Taft, who played catcher on his sandlot team in Cincinnati as a boy, loved baseball. As he described it, baseball is "a clean, straight game, [which] summons to its presence everybody who enjoys clean, straight athletics."[30] Three thousand Savannahians packed the park in honor of the president's visit. Taft was an attentive fan, watching each pitch and hit. The Indians and their opponents, the Macon Peaches, were clearly rattled by the presidential presence, playing a sloppy game that reminded one sports writer of "school boys." After three innings, the president departed as the home team held the lead at 6-4. The Indians' bats finished off the Peaches by a score of 15-7.[31]

Only three weeks earlier, "Big Bill" Taft threw out the first ball of the baseball season, establishing for his successors a presidential rite of spring. Baseball was already the "nation's pastime" in 1910 and in Savannah it was also a "neighborhood pastime." Sandlot games were a feature of eastside neighborhoods for decades, complete with rivalries and bragging rights. In time, organized league play became the norm for both youngsters and adults, players of all ages savoring the crack of a bat or a pop-up fly dropping into a well-worn glove.

In the period before World War II, sandlot players in East Savannah, LePageville, Wagner Heights, and Twickenham overcame many obstacles in fielding a team. The most critical problem was equipment. In the 1920s, George Ponder of LePageville shaped wood into a bat by using a hatchet. To get a ball to hit, he traded vegetables from his family's garden for a used ball from youngsters in town.[32] George Oelschig, who played with the Twickenham Sluggers in the 1930s, was equally enterprising. He and his friends persuaded the Savannah Indians team to give them a few cracked bats which the boys taped up for their next game. Electric tape wrapped around a ball also made it usable when its cover was knocked off. The Twickenham boys were also known to visit the naval stores yards in search of rosin leaking out of a barrel. The rosin could be smeared over the ball to keep the string core of the baseball from unraveling.[33] For bases, there were any number of creative solutions. In East Savannah, a cloth base anchored home plate but the other three bases were outlined in the dirt.[34] Gunny sacks sufficed for bases for the Sluggers most of the time. However, when they played the Avondale team at Roberd's Dairy Farm, the Avondale boys picked up cow pies and placed them strategically as bases. As George Oelschig remembers, "When you slid into those cow pies, you knew it." Some of them, he added, were "pretty fresh."[35]

Neighborhood teams eventually laid informal claim to an open field close by for the games. In East Savannah, neighborhood ball games took place at the Diamond, the same open area used as a golf course. Fielders and base runners were careful to avoid the deep ditch that ran through the center of the Diamond and the occasional tree or bush.[36] Players from East Savannah met the LePageville team at their home field, "the Slip," a large lot near Southern States Phosphate and Fertilizer Company.[37] The Twickenham Sluggers claimed a cow pasture on the west side of Pennsylvania Avenue for their games, land they called the "Bullring." Originally there was an Indian mound on the site that was a favorite place for the boys to explore, but it was bulldozed in 1942 to build Josiah Tattnall Homes. By the early 1950s, Twickenham youngsters played ball on the plot of land occupied by Morningside Baptist Church today.[38]

Fig. 14: Members of the Tattnall Rippers team pose with their trophy.
Georgia Historical Society Photograph Collection, MS 1361-PH, Box 6, Folder 21.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

Inevitably neighborhood rivalries developed that turned on the outcome of the games. As Leroy Palmer phrased it, East Savannah was "serious" about baseball in the early 1940s, and the other neighborhoods echoed that sentiment. In East Savannah there was a team made up of young teenagers as well as a young adult team that played against their counterparts from Cann Park, Thunderbolt, LePageville, as well as a formidable team from Joe Street. LePageville counted East Savannah, Cann Park, and Old Fort among its rivals. Although the Twickenham Sluggers prided themselves on beating downtown teams regularly, their most important rival was the closest – Wagner Heights. The Wagner Heights team taunted the Twickenham boys as "farmers," reminding them that "you've got to pass our neighborhood before you get to town." Both teams were good enough, however, that neither one could claim bragging rights for long.[39]

In the newer neighborhoods of Pine Gardens and Savannah Gardens, baseball was as popular as it had been in the older areas. Ray Hatfield and his friends played sandlot ball in a vacant lot in front of his house on Hawthorne Street in the mid-1940s. Daisy Harrison played baseball with the neighborhood boys a decade later on the playground at Eli Whitney School because the girls had no team of their own.[40] The diamond at Josiah Tattnall Homes/Savannah Gardens was a recreational center not only for residents, but also for league play.

Amateur baseball leagues had been in existence in Savannah since the early twentieth century. The caliber of talent that amateurs exhibited in games staged at Forsyth Park compared favorably with that of the professional Savannah Indians; in fact, the demise of the Indians franchise in 1915 was attributed to the exceptional performance of the Military and City League players who took the field for the fun of it and a few dollars in donations.[41] By the time of World War II, league play became a greater presence on the eastside, especially at Southeastern Shipyard. Baseball teams at the shipyard belonged to the Service-Defense League, consisting of clubs from nearby military bases, Union Bag, and Savannah Machine and Foundry. Savannah fans supported the league, with as many as 2,000 turning out for the league opener in 1943. A few professional ballplayers, such as Jake Hines from the Savannah Indians at second base and manager Monroe Mitchell, formerly a pitcher with the Washington Senators and the Cleveland Indians, added luster to the shipyard roster.[42]

Without question, the most memorable day for the shipyard team was a no-hitter pitched by Jesse Powell against the Hunter Field Yellow Jackets in 1944. Powell struck out twenty-six batters and only two Yellow Jackets managed to set foot on first base through a walk and an error. The offense was provided by Jake Hines who hit three of the four singles produced by Southeastern. It was enough to win the game by a score of 1-0.[43]

The shipyard's newsletter, *The Sou'Easter*, and local newspapers covered the Service-Defense League games as part of the active sports scene in Savannah. Far less visible was Southeastern's African American baseball team. Although the team compiled a winning record in 1943, no details were provided in *The Sou'Easter*. The Colored Athletic Association, a shipyard organization comparable to the Southeastern Athletic Association for white workers, sponsored the team.[44]

Before Jackie Robinson

When the white and black Southeastern Baseball Teams took the field, they never played against each other. In the days before Jackie Robinson's 1947 debut in the major leagues, segregation on the playing field mirrored the racial inequality that existed in the workplace as well as in the larger society.

Fig. 15: The 1944 Southeastern Baseball Team at Grayson Stadium: front row, from left to right, Al Faehr, center; Jake Hines, second base; Gene McConnell, catcher; Monroe Mitchell, manager; Ed Shirah, right field; Johnny Gay, third base and pitcher; back row, Billy Mock, center field; Bill Elliott, shortstop; Gil Stancell, pitcher; Bubber Haupt, left field; Tom Malone, first base; and Jesse Powell, pitcher.

The Sou'Easter, 1 September 1944, Vol. 2, No. 12, 14.
Courtesy of Live Oak Public Libraries.

Fig. 16: The 1943 Southeastern African American team is pictured with the leadership of the Colored Athletic Association. In the front row, from left to right, are teammates J. Quarterman, M. Pitts, J. Cole, J. Ford, Jones, B. Sapp, and William [last name unknown]. In the back row are C. Stone, Umpire; Earl Palmer, Treasurer; Willie Outland, Business Manager; Albert Walker, President; LeRoy Bolden, Secretary and Scorer; and W. Waters, Coach.

The Sou'Easter, 1 August 1943, Vol. 1, No. 10, 11.
Courtesy of Live Oak Public Libraries.

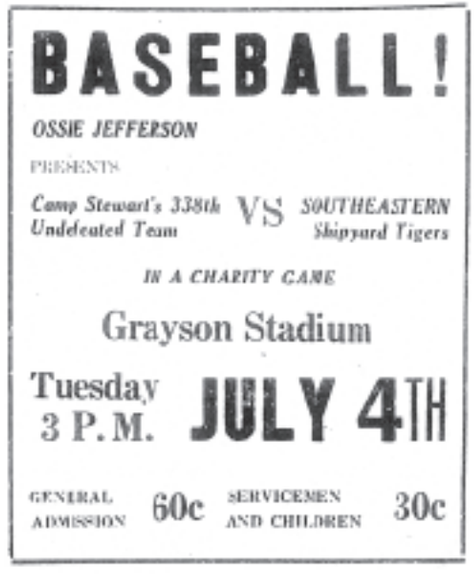


Fig. 17: This advertisement in the *Savannah Tribune* was aimed at African American fans, encouraging them to support the black Southeastern baseball team and that of Camp Stewart in an Independence Day game in 1944.

Savannah Tribune, 29 June 1944, 5.
Courtesy of the *Savannah Tribune*.

Fig. 18: Catcher Jimmy Jenkins Jr. of the Sam Finley A's beats the throw to Foye Rockett playing for Dial Finance in 1977.
Courtesy of Patricia Jenkins.

League play for eastside youngsters and adults appeared shortly after World War II and remained a summer staple for decades. Baseball sponsored by the city recreation department attracted a great deal of enthusiasm, with Tattnall Homes fielding strong teams in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The Tattnall Rippers, for example, won the 1951 City Junior Baseball Championship on August 4. The boys were not the only players to celebrate at Tattnall Homes that August weekend. The Tattnall men held first place in the Oglethorpe League and, by virtue of that ranking, took on the League's All-Stars, consisting of the most talented players from the rest of the league. The Tattnall pitcher struck out sixteen and Tattnall hitters outscored the All-Stars 11-9.[45]

When the city program affiliated with the Little League organization in the early 1950s, boys from nine to twelve were eligible to play. Savannah Gardens emerged as a Little League powerhouse owing to a strong support system of parents and sponsors. They provided encouragement, transportation, and uniforms; and good coaching gave the players the skills they needed. The boys came to the games with a "winning attitude" and, more often than not, they went home with a victory. By the 1960s, Little League expanded to include older boys; thirteen- and fourteen-year-old boys played in the pony league, and high school boys, aged fifteen through seventeen, qualified for the senior league. Boys could grow up playing Little League ball.[46]

Edward E. Lennox, Sr. of Pine Gardens was in many ways the godfather of youth baseball on the eastside during the 1970s. He nurtured players in the same way he cared for his own grandchildren and he attended to every detail of the game, from running the concession stand to picking up boys in his truck to take them to the game. Without regard to the racial prejudices of the day, he recruited players from East Savannah to integrate the white teams from Savannah Gardens.[47] His daughter and son-in-law, Patricia and Jimmy Jenkins Sr., were as stalwart supporters of youth athletics as he was, and the three of them worked tirelessly to promote the teams. In order to provide an opportunity for girls to play baseball, E.E. Lennox and Patricia leased the former site of LePageville with the intent of transforming the President Street property, overgrown with trees and brush, into a ball field. One year later, in 1979, the field was dedicated as the Wessels and Downing Athletic Field. For twenty-four years, it provided neighborhood youngsters a place to play.[48]

Even after the City of Savannah severed its ties with Little League in 1979, the baseball program continued under the auspices of the recreation department. Nonetheless, it was up to dedicated parents and sponsors, such as Redding's Market, DeRenne Paints, and Jenkins Roofing, to keep the ball in play. E.E. Lennox taught the boys and the community at large how much could be accomplished through teams like the Sam Finley A's, representing Sam Finley Construction Company. In one eight year span, the team had six conference championships to its credit as well as city championships. Players never forgot what the team meant to them. According to Mil Cannon from Savannah Gardens, "we played often in mismatched uniforms, but we could play and won several city championships despite our impoverished backgrounds. Our common poverty gave us a super kind

of unity that we parlayed into excellent team play on the baseball field." One of his best friends, Daryl Blalock from East Savannah, agreed. From age eight to eighteen, he played with the Sam Finley baseball team, fondly dubbed the "Green Machine." His superb pitching was often a key factor for the team's fine record.[49]

BOXING AND WRESTLING

The Southeastern Athletic Association promoted boxing as one of the shipyard's most popular sports programs. Beginning in the fall of 1943, the Southeastern Shipyard boxing team scheduled matches at the Municipal Auditorium on Bull Street with nine or ten bouts per card. Standouts on the Southeastern team included John Merritt, a rigger fighting at 195 pounds whose square-jawed appearance earned him the nickname "Joe Palooka" after the comic strip character. At the other end of the weight classification was Savannah bantamweight Tommy "Killer" Kiene, a favorite with the hometown crowd for his punishing left jab. In his three-year professional career that ended in 1941, Kiene won most of his nearly fifty bouts by knockouts.[50]

Fig. 19: Tommy Kiene displays his powerful left jab in a match against Tom Conway at Chatham Field in April 1944.

The Sou'Easter, 15 May 1944, Vol. 2, No. 5, 14.
Courtesy of Live Oak Public Libraries.

In December 1943, a five-man team from Southeastern battled shipbuilders from the yard in Wilmington, North Carolina in a contest widely-publicized in Savannah in newspapers with both black and white readers. Southeastern won the match, with four knockouts and one bout by decision.[51] The opening bout on the card that evening featured two black welterweights from Southeastern, notably "Young Tiger Moore," the protégé of his father, an experienced fighter well-known in local boxing circles. That evening the younger Moore pummeled his opponent so convincingly that the referee stopped the fight. It was a rare occasion when black and white shipyard workers appeared on the same card, even if Moore's victory did not figure in the Southeastern team's win.[52]

Even after Southeastern and its sports programs disappeared, one indication of the continuing interest in boxing was found at Moses Rogers Grove. After World War II, a regulation boxing ring was set up for the use of residents, children and adults. Bouts attracted neighborhood talent as well as boxers from the westside for some spirited matches.[53] However, in the 1950s and 1960s, it was the foresight and determination of Aaron Newman that created a niche for both boxing and wrestling on the eastside. Initially, he established a thriving sheetmetal business at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Bolling Street. A smaller building on the property, however, became known as the Little Arena, when Chic Witt, a local sports promoter, rented the space to showcase amateur boxers. When Newman persuaded Witt to feature wrestling matches as well, the response to wrestlers such as Chief Big Heart was overwhelming. With no auditorium in Savannah willing to open its doors to wrestling, Newman decided to build his own facility, the Savannah Sports Arena on East Gwinnett Street, just east of Pennsylvania Avenue. His intention was to use the arena for sporting and entertainment events.

The inaugural attraction, the "Ice Follies of 1956," opened to a packed house. In its first two years, the new arena hosted a variety of athletic events, including roller skating and ice skating, as well as popular concerts featuring Little Richard, Connie Francis, Loretta Lynn, and the unforgettable Elvis Presley. Although Newman dreamed of bringing wrestling to the arena, he put that plan on hold when Webster's Department Store offered to rent the building at an attractive price.[54]

When Webster's gave up the lease seven years later, the building again became a venue for sports. The best known boxer to fight at the arena was Sugar Ray Robinson. His 1965 bout with Earl Basting was a stepping stone in his effort to reclaim the middleweight championship and to ratchet up a professional career that already spanned twenty-five years. The fight ended when Robinson's left hook knocked out Basting in the first round.[55]

Fig. 20: The Savannah Sports Arena.
Courtesy of Kathryn and Jerry Oates.

For all the interest that a boxer of Robinson's caliber generated in Savannah, the attendance was disappointing – only 1,600 patrons filled the 2,800 seats. The steep ticket price of ten dollars was likely the reason. Billy Deal, the sports editor at the *Savannah Morning News*, argued that a sellout would have been assured if Savannah boxer and local favorite Gordon Lott had been paired against Robinson.[56] Deal's evaluation of Lott as a welterweight and his appeal to Savannah audiences was correct. Lott rose to No. 8 ranking by the World Boxing Association for his weight classification and had a 32-6 record over a six-year professional career, winning nine of his first ten bouts by knockout. At the Sports Arena, he and another Savannah boxer, Fred Sullivan, consistently drew crowds into the Sports Arena in 1968 and 1969.[57]

Even more popular than boxing at the Sports Arena was wrestling. Beginning in 1967, Tuesday night wrestling attracted a solid core of loyal fans to the eastside. Attendance spiked when WTOC began broadcasting wrestling live from their studio. Ticket sales at the arena doubled and tripled. Parking was so tight on East Gwinnett Street that cars also jammed into Hanson Street in residential East Savannah. Even Mayor J.C. Lewis was in the crowd on occasion. As Aaron Newman remembered, "We didn't have a night we didn't turn people away."[58]

On one occasion, however, the audience poured out of the door as fast as they could. Wrestlers that night shared the ring with Victor the Bear, known in wrestling circles as unbeatable. The only rule for this battle royale was that any wrestler who was thrown over the ropes was disqualified. Wrestlers promptly began to throw each other out of the ring until the bear was unleashed two minutes into the match. Face to face with Victor, the wrestlers dove over the ropes, eliminating themselves from the competition and joining the spectators in a speedy exit. Victor the Bear was the undisputed winner.[59]

Although a number of wrestling icons such as Gorgeous George appeared at the Sports Arena, perhaps the most memorable match featured Bobo Brazil. Standing 6'6" and weighing 270 pounds, Bobo Brazil was an imposing man and one of the first nationally-recognized African American wrestlers. His status in the sport is comparable to that of Jackie Robinson in baseball because Bobo Brazil helped to integrate wrestling. Newman brought him to Savannah in the early 1960s where black and white Savannahians packed the arena to watch Bobo Brazil wrestle. It was, in all likelihood, the first match in Savannah that paired a black and a white wrestler in the ring.[60]

ICE HOCKEY

The Sports Arena made history on April 25, 1957 when the first ice hockey game was played in Savannah. Even though the rink was smaller than standard for ice hockey, Aaron Newman promised "lots of action" for spectators new to the game and he delivered a fast, high-scoring contest. The teams, the Hornets and the Rockets, were cobbled together with soldiers from Camp Stewart and Hunter Air Base, a German exchange student, and volunteers, just enough men to take to the ice but no reserves for substitution. In the third period, both teams scored repeatedly in a frenzied effort to keep or capture the lead, but the Hornets won convincingly by a score of 9-6. The crowd of 500 jeered one player who "fell on the puck and refused to budge," before the referee called the only penalty in the game but, otherwise, the game was free of brawls and blood.[61] The Sports Arena hosted several other games in May and June, 1957. For an admission charge of ninety cents, passionate fans, as well as the curious, could experience ice hockey in person at an affordable price.[62]

Fig. 21: Members of the victorious Hornets are, from left to right in front, Pinky Karpenko, "Red" Fillmore, George Tirschtigel, and in back, Jim Crossley, Mac Fiske and Ed Glinsky.
Courtesy of Kathryn and Jerry Oates.

CONCLUSION

In the same way that an ice hockey game in Savannah on a warm June evening was unforgettable, sports create lifelong memories. The neighborhoods on the eastside have had a wealth of sports experiences for more than a century. In the early 1900s, the presence of the Savannah Golf Club and the Forest City Gun Club made the Hillcrest and Twickenham neighborhoods destinations for recreation. The golf club helped introduce the game to local residents. If Twickenham children maintained a cottage industry of selling lost golf balls back to players, many employees of the club also profited by becoming knowledgeable and proficient in the sport.[63] Baseball permeated the lives of youngsters and adults for decades, not just as spectators but as active participants. Sandlot ball, Little League, and the Southeastern Shipyard team all have an important place in the context of neighborhoods. There were vacant lots and well-equipped diamonds where teams could play; there were parents, sponsors, and coaches who contributed their time to make baseball a meaningful part of growing up and living fully.[64]

The Savannah Sports Arena was a neighborhood resource of unique importance. The arena brought boxing, wrestling, ice hockey, and a number of talented athletes to the eastside and to the greater Savannah community. Although the opening of the Civic Center in 1974 undercut the arena's viability as a venue, the heyday of the East Gwinnett Street facility in the 1950s and 1960s established the eastside as a center for entertainment and athletic events.

MEMORY

MEMORY

Fig. 1: Hillcrest Abbey Cemetery.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

CEMETERIES AND BURIAL SITES are a tangible expression of the memory of a community. The earliest burial sites in eastern Savannah were those of the Native Americans who inhabited the area hundreds of years before the arrival of Europeans and Africans. One of those sites, a burial mound near LePageville, could be easily overlooked. The circular mound had been reclaimed by vegetation and, although it measured seventy-six feet in diameter and rose in a gradual slope to a height of four feet, it receded just as imperceptibly to ground level. Thomas Cain and a team of archaeologists employed by the WPA excavated the site in 1939 and named it the Deptford Burial Mound. Of the human remains uncovered in the mound, three were either complete or partial cremations and three others were burials. A layer of shells covered some of the remains but no personal possessions accompanied the dead to the hereafter.[1]

Only one-quarter mile away was the Deptford village site, also excavated by the WPA. Ironically, far more burials – forty-two in all – were found there. Bodies were scattered, apparently near the area where they spent their lives. Bodies were often buried in fetal positions, others laid out horizontally; occasionally only a skull or skeletal fragments were committed to the earth.[2] Seemingly the villagers had no desire for formal burial grounds. The differences in burial patterns could be attributed to the gap in time separating the earliest from the later interments. Although no definitive dating of either Deptford site can be made, analysis of the pottery fragments found in the burial mound fill suggests a time frame between the years 1200 to 1325. The village site, however, appears to be far older, no later than the year 1000.[3]

Despite the differences apparent among the Native Americans living at Deptford hundreds of years ago, providing for the dead was a responsibility that they took seriously. Today's residents on the eastside share that sense of responsibility. With a number of cemeteries within their neighborhoods, residents are intent on providing a respectful and dignified resting place for those who have passed on.

CATHOLIC CEMETERY

When Colonial Cemetery closed in July 1853, Savannah Catholics found themselves in a desperate situation. Since the late eighteenth century, the southwestern corner of the old cemetery had been informally reserved for French and Irish Catholics but city officials refused to assign a section of the new Laurel Grove Cemetery for the use of the church's communicants. The Rt. Rev. Francis X. Gartland, Bishop of Savannah, had no choice but to look elsewhere for land that could be consecrated to receive the remains of the faithful. On August 2, 1853, he purchased 8.3 acres bordering on what is now Wheaton Street. Three weeks later, thirty-two-year-old Catherine Finney, "brought dead from Cockspur Island," was the first person interred in the new Catholic Cemetery.[4]

A year later, the cemetery began to fill all too quickly as a yellow fever epidemic raged in Savannah. In the eastern part of the city where immigrant Irish Catholic families lived, the disease was rampant.

Fig. 2: The Rt. Rev. Francis X. Gartland, Bishop of Savannah.
Courtesy of the Catholic Diocese of Savannah Archives.

Bishop Gartland, along with his close friend from Philadelphia, Bishop Edward Barron, tended to the sick, administering last rites when needed. Both men fell victim to the epidemic and died only days apart in September 1854. The two bishops were buried at Catholic Cemetery.[5]

Located two miles east of Savannah, the cemetery seemed removed from the congestion of the city. The Reinhard farmhouse was one of the few structures nearby and only the traffic along the road to Thunderbolt disturbed the calm of the cemetery. That serenity disappeared with the outbreak of war in 1861. Fort Brown stood just beyond the eastern edge of the cemetery while a line of gun emplacements stretched north towards Fort Boggs to guard the eastern approaches to the city. Although no combat desecrated sacred ground, Union troops camped there in 1865 and tore down cemetery fences. As they turned the guns of Fort Brown around to face west and any possible threat from Savannah, some graves were damaged or destroyed.

In fear of further depredations, church officials urged families to remove their loved ones' remains to safety. Members of the Sisters of Mercy at Saint Vincent's Convent and the cathedral organist, Mary Prendergast, removed the bodies of Bishops Gartland and Barron, four priests, and two nuns and reburied the remains in the Convent Garden. It was not until an elaborate Christmas Eve ceremony in 1867 that the clergy's remains returned to Catholic Cemetery.[6]

By that time, the most poignant reminders of the Civil War at the cemetery were the graves of Confederate soldiers who died during the conflict. Among them were Pvt. James Ryan, 22nd Battalion, Oglethorpe Siege Artillery, Co. C, an Irishman born in County Tipperary who died in October 1862 at a camp one mile from the cemetery; Savannahian Peter Joseph Prudhomme of the 63th Regiment, Georgia Volunteers, Co. D, dead at age nineteen years, eight months, and five days; and fifty-five-year-old Pvt. Patrick Monogh, serving with the Irish Jasper Greens, who died at Causton Bluff Battery in 1862.[7] As the years passed, Confederate veterans who survived the war joined their comrades at Catholic Cemetery. In 2007, the graves of 560 Confederate dead had been identified, although it is possible that there may be as many as seventy more in unmarked graves. Nineteen new headstones of previously unknown Confederate veterans were put in place in 2008.[8]

To honor the memory of twenty-eight members of the 1st Regiment, Georgia Volunteers, Irish Jasper Greens who died in the Civil War, a special monument was erected in the cemetery in 1910. On Confederate Memorial Day, three granddaughters of commissioned officers unveiled the seven-foot high hammered copper statue of a Confederate soldier. Although the soldier stands at ease, his hands resting on the butt of his rifle, the statue, placed on a tall granite pedestal, is imposing above the

Fig. 3: The Oglethorpe Marble & Granite Company in Savannah erected the Confederate Monument in the cemetery after the statue arrived by rail, in all likelihood from Philadelphia. Courtesy of Oglethorpe Marble & Granite Company, Virginia and Dan Mobley.

rows of graves. His rifle rusted away, but a replacement wooden gun varnished to a copper sheen returned to his hands in 2009.[9]

In addition to Confederate soldiers and sailors, the cemetery became the final resting place for clergy who had served the diocese. Many men of the cloth were buried at Priests' Row and Bishops' Row. Little Sisters of the Poor, the Missionary Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, and the Sisters of Mercy are also interred at the cemetery. Mother Matilda Beasley, who founded in 1889 the first African American order of nuns in Georgia, was buried at Catholic Cemetery in 1903. Her community, the Sisters of the Third Order of Saint Francis, devoted their efforts to Saint Francis Home, a refuge for African American girls who had lost their parents or lacked proper care. Mother Matilda established the orphanage in 1887.[10]

The tombstones and gravesites at Catholic Cemetery, whether simple or elaborate, reflect the changing expressions of grief over time. Older sections of the cemetery exhibit detailed ironwork, such as that found at the John Rourke and the Patrick McDonald lots. Impressive obelisks, columns, and crosses marked graves for families and individuals, while statuary provided perpetual mourners. In more recent times, simple headstones without decoration or sentiment prevailed.

Fig. 4: The first African American nun in Georgia, Mother Matilda Beasley was beloved for her compassion for children.

Courtesy of the Catholic Diocese of Savannah Archives.

Some of the most beloved examples of Savannah cemetery art are found at Catholic Cemetery in the works of gifted stonecutters John Walz and Antonio Aliffi. Walz, a German artist recruited to work on the larger-than-life statuary that graces the front of the Telfair Academy of Arts and Sciences, received a number of commissions at Bonaventure, Laurel Grove, as well as Catholic Cemetery. Perhaps his best known work at Catholic Cemetery was his memorial for stone-cutter Patrick Hagan who died in 1912. When Mr. Hagan's devoted Irish terrier, Prince, died a few months later, Mrs. Mary Hagan buried the dog beside her husband. The church objected to an animal's remains interred in sacred ground and they were removed. Nonetheless, Mrs. Hagan commemorated the special bond between master and dog with a statue of Prince sculpted by Walz to sit faithfully on the memorial. Prince's shiny head indicates that

Fig. 5: At Catholic Cemetery in November 2009, Fr. P. James Costigan blesses the graves on Priests' Row.

Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

many visitors stop to pat him; Loretta Lominack remembers making a point of doing so as a child every time she came to the cemetery. On Saint Patrick's Day, Prince has been known to sport a green ribbon in memory of his Irish master.[11]

Walz identified a promising sculptor in Sicily, Antonio Aliffi, and urged the younger man to come to Savannah to work in his studio. After his arrival in 1910, Aliffi's contributions were not immediately recognizable since he did not sign his own name to his works but that of his employer. A talent such as his, however, soon brought him numerous commissions and even invitations to work on the busts of the presidents at Mount Rushmore and the Confederate Memorial at Stone Mountain. At Catholic Cemetery, he sculpted a sorrowing angel to express the grief felt by the William Flood family at the death of their only son. Angels had been one of his favorite subjects to sculpt since he was a child; for the Flood monument, he chose his daughter Grace to serve as the model for the angel.[12]

Epitaphs in Stone and Iron

Although an epitaph in words is traditionally found on tombstones, the cemetery art chosen by the family of the deceased often commemorated the life of their loved one in visual form.

Fig. 6: The elaborate iron gate was a fitting entrance to the Rourke lot, cast at the family's foundry in Savannah.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

Fig. 7: This Celtic cross identifies the grave of Frank Bohan by incorporating his first name into the carved floral motif.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

Fig. 8: Prince, who "for twelve long years . . . was his master's shadow," remains a devoted companion.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

Fig. 9: Aliffi balances artistic technique, as seen in the detailed rendering of the angel's wings, with the expression of loss and mourning.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

Fig. 10: Bill Canty at work "sprucing up" a monument in Catholic Cemetery.
Photograph by Steve Bisson.
Savannah Evening Press, 26 August 1982, 33.
Courtesy of the *Savannah Morning News*.

Fig. 11: One of the many volunteers at Catholic Cemetery rakes leaves off a burial lot.
Courtesy of the Catholic Diocese of Savannah Archives.

With a presence that spans more than 150 years, Catholic Cemetery is the anchor institution in eastern Savannah. Originally situated two miles from the city, the cemetery is now in proximity to residential areas, businesses, a golf course, and an elevated limited access highway. Naturally, the cemetery has changed just like its surroundings. Its physical dimensions have grown as land acquisitions provided needed space. The purchase of eleven acres in 1938 to the north and northwest of the older sections of the cemeteries was especially important.[13] Even the name of the cemetery varied over the years, designated "Cathedral Cemetery" and "Cemetery of Saint Vincent de Paul" at different times. One tradition that continues is the Blessing of the Graves that occurs early in November as part of the remembrance of All Souls' Day. The ceremony features reading of the Scripture, recitation of the rosary, and the blessing of the graves with holy water. Priests of each Savannah parish also read the names of their communicants who have died in the past year.[14] Families of the deceased often gather for the solemn occasion, perhaps comforted by the dignified service that honors their loved ones.

Catholic Cemetery has been fortunate over the years to have a cadre of volunteers who generously give their time for the upkeep of the cemetery. For years legendary Bill Canty came to the cemetery twice a week to clean tombstones of friends and strangers alike. He called it a hobby, but in fact it was his gift to those with no family to attend to the graves. He was well into his eighties before infirmities curtailed his cleaning expeditions.[15] The Catholic Cemetery Preservation Society was founded in 2002 on the strength of such volunteer efforts. The society undertook a massive project to inventory the cemetery by reconciling funeral records with burial sites. Even sonar technology was used to identify unmarked graves. The result of their labor is a three volume work listing the names of all those buried at Catholic Cemetery and the location of their gravesites.[16]

HILLCREST ABBEY MEMORIAL PARK AND MAUSOLEUM

By 1916, there were two cemeteries, side by side, that fronted on Wheaton Street. The gated entrance to Hillcrest Cemetery was located just west of Catholic Cemetery but Hillcrest's grounds extended as far as the rear of Wagner Heights. Although the new cemetery had no religious or municipal affiliation, Hillcrest offered bereaved families the special assurance that graves received "perpetual care," for no additional charge. Families would no longer be responsible for the maintenance of individual lots; instead uniformly manicured lawns maintained by the cemetery would create order.[17] This progressive policy for cemetery maintenance anticipated by fifty years the perpetual care mandated by law.

Florist A.C. Oelschig already owned lots at Bonaventure Cemetery but, with the opening of Hillcrest near his home at the intersection of Wheaton and Skidaway, he gave them away and bought new lots at Hillcrest. Ill with throat cancer, he needed the Hillcrest gravesite all too soon. He was buried in October 1916, and his grave was covered with flowers from his own greenhouses. The family later erected a monument to his memory that took the shape of a felled log.[18]

More and more families chose to bury their loved ones in the new eastside cemetery as landscaping and flowerbeds enhanced the site. In 1917, the Lewis family interred the remains of their thirteen-year-old son Edward at Hillcrest, erecting a classically-inspired monument with columns and pediment. More poignant, however, was the image of Edward, dressed in a tie and cap, affixed to the monument. In 1925, Whitmarsh Henry MacFeeley was laid to rest at Hillcrest, taking to his grave a claim to be the youngest soldier in the Confederate army. He enlisted in the 21st South Carolina Volunteers in mid-July 1864, a boy not yet twelve years old but large enough to pass for fourteen. As a drummer boy and orderly, he soon became the "pet of Hagood's Brigade" and considered himself privileged to shake hands with Gen. Robert E. Lee and Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard during the war.[19] In his later life, he worked as a printer and proofreader for newspapers in Charlotte, Baltimore, New York, and finally Savannah. Although it remains a matter of conjecture whether MacFeeley was in fact the youngest Confederate soldier, nonetheless a bronze plaque was erected near his grave in 1966 to assert his claim.[20]

By the early 1930s, management sought to develop Hillcrest into the model of a "modern cemetery." Great attention was lavished on landscaping to create unobstructed views of green space extending towards the woods, while small plants and flower beds were concentrated along the avenues. Hillcrest resembled a park. Fencing, canopies, or metal wreaths commonly found in older Victorian-style cemeteries were banned. In particular, the crosses placed at the foot of Confederate veterans' graves were prohibited as evocative of "death and destruction [which] are out

Fig. 12: This imposing monument marks the Oelschig gravesite.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

of harmony with the ideals which the memorial park is endeavoring to portray." Instead the cemetery was orderly and seamless; no boundary markers were permitted between lots.[21]

Major renovations to the cemetery took place in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The addition of a mausoleum was the most substantive change as it offered sheltered crypts inside the Abbey Building. Complicating the construction was the fact the site also contained remnants of Confederate breastworks associated with Fort Brown. Hillcrest management was sensitive to the importance of preserving the ruins, even if to the untrained eye they appeared to be only earthen mounds. Without jeopardizing the breastworks, the mausoleum was set back a respectful distance overlooking the ruins.[22] A bronze plaque erected by the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Sons of Confederate Veterans in 1951 places the ruins in historical perspective.

Improvements to the entrance road also enhanced the signature feature of Hillcrest. Since 1916, the Wheaton Street entrance had been the cemetery's public face. Initially an iron gate bracketed by brick pillars, the entrance evolved into a striking esplanade bordered by palmettos that still welcomes the public to the memorial park.

Fig. 13: The stately monument on the left, one of the first to be erected at Hillcrest, honors the memory of Edward Caleb Lewis. More than ninety years later, the image of the boy on the monument is still compelling.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

Fig. 14: Renovated in 1996, the lichgate offers a sheltered seat to those who pause at Hillcrest.
Courtesy of Hillcrest Abbey Memorial Park and Mausoleum.

The lichgate inside the park has also been a familiar fixture at Hillcrest since the cemetery first opened. Traditionally, a lichgate stands near the entry of a churchyard, a small roofed building where a casket may rest before a funeral. Mourners were known to tie up their horses at Hillcrest's small wooden lichgate in years past; today the lichgate functions more like a gazebo where visitors can sit.[23] As part of Hillcrest's continuing renovations, in 2010 the Trinity Chapel opened as the latest addition to the mausoleum complex.

In recent years, the forty-eight acres comprising the cemetery have been gradually and thoughtfully put into use. The land has been developed systematically section-by-section as part of a long-range plan. The most recent property acquisition occurred in the mid-1990s when land adjacent to the Truman Parkway was incorporated into the park.[24] The intent of creating a place of natural beauty with live oak, palms, and crepe myrtle, gently curving roads, and open space has been fulfilled.

The Land and Cemetery Design

The management of Hillcrest Memorial Park has always taken pains to use its land respectfully. Attention to landscaping as well as harmonizing the graves with the land and its contours is indicative of Hillcrest's sensitivity to aesthetic, historical, and environmental issues.

Fig. 15: Landscaping has always been a priority at Hillcrest Memorial Park as this early photograph shows.

Courtesy of Hillcrest Abbey Memorial Park and Mausoleum.

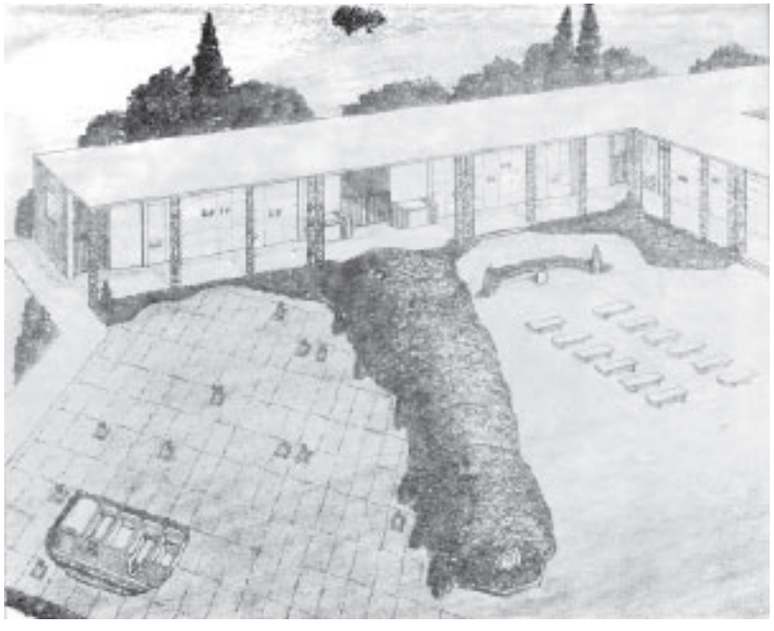


Fig. 16: An architectural drawing of the Hillcrest Mausoleum illustrates how the Civil War ruins were to be incorporated into the building plan.

Courtesy of Hillcrest Abbey Memorial Park and Mausoleum.

Fig. 17: By 1941, bronze tablets level with the ground instead of monuments, an option available in modern cemetery design, were used at Hillcrest.

Cordray-Foltz Collection, MS 1360, Box 16, Folder 6.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

Fig. 18: The Esplanade at Hillcrest Abbey Memorial Park.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

EAST SAVANNAH CEMETERY

Benjamin Moultrie, a resident of East Savannah almost all of his life, described the neighborhood cemetery located at the end of Alaska Street in these words: "That's our cemetery down there… . That's the most important part. I wanted you to know that…we own our own cemetery."[25] The cemetery was as old, or even older, than the East Savannah community. Benjamin Moultrie recalls his grandmother's story that the land for the cemetery was a gift from a slave owner who wanted to ensure that his former slaves had a proper burial.[26] Headstones that date to 1874 confirm that the East Savannah Cemetery has existed for considerably more than a century.

The cemetery has always been at the heart of East Savannah residents. In 1935, its maintenance and supervision was a primary reason for the establishment of the Community Club of East Savannah, the predecessor of today's neighborhood association. Adam Morrell, Isaac Green, and John Brown were the founding fathers of this organization and they took the upkeep of the cemetery upon themselves. During the first year of its existence, the Community Club, seventeen members strong, succeeded in fencing the burial ground.[27]

Fig. 19: The grave of Robert Greene was marked with this hand-carved headstone.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

Fig. 20: Entrance to the East Savannah Cemetery in 2009.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

Care of the cemetery continues to be an important focus of the club's work. By 1992, the Cemetery Committee was responsible for its operation as well as maintenance. The club also linked its membership policies to preferential cemetery access. Non-members paid considerably more to buy a lot than members; at the time of a funeral, members were excused from a gate fee that was routinely paid by non-members. This policy tied cemetery use and membership together with financial incentives, but, more important, the policy reinforced the sense of cemetery "ownership" in the community.[28]

Ironically, the question of the cemetery's "ownership" became a matter of legal contention in the 1980s. A suit was brought against the Community Club on the grounds that the cemetery was legally the property of Juanita Hendrix and she accused the club of trespassing. Indeed, neither the club nor its members had title to the property. However, according to their attorney, Georgia law recognized that continuous and public presence at a property for a period of twenty years confers possession of that property even without a deed. Moreover, there was legal precedent that individuals

Fig. 21: The tree canopy over East Savannah Cemetery shelters gravesites a century old.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

Fig. 22: A World War I veteran, Charlie Anderson worked for many years at the Oelschig greenhouses.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

who designate land as a cemetery and use it as a burial ground by interring bodies and erecting markers at gravesites for a period of time in fact own that land.[29]

The club and Ms. Hendrix agreed to an out-of-court settlement of the suit in 1987. Ms. Hendrix relinquished any claim to the cemetery and also granted a permanent easement across her property to permit access to the cemetery entrance on Alaska Street. For its part, the club agreed to limit the number of future burials at the cemetery to two hundred. The cemetery would be considered at full capacity when these additional burials take place and no more interments would be permitted. The settlement removed all doubt as to the legal ownership of the cemetery.[30]

For residents with long memories, a visit to the East Savannah Cemetery is much like a reunion with friends and neighbors. It is also a way to remind younger people of the women and men they never met who made a difference in the community in times past. Adam Morrell, the unofficial "Mayor of East Savannah," rests there along with Charlie Anderson, Hamilton Mitchell, and a host of others, their life stories entwined with that of East Savannah.

LEPAGEVILLE CEMETERY

For residents of LePageville mourning the death of a neighbor, the walk from the church service to the cemetery was a short one. The two churches in the community, LePageville Baptist Church on Haines Street and LePageville Holiness Church facing Fleming Street, were only a short distance from the wooded cemetery. For some families, that walk to bury a loved one was all too frequent. Two of the Ponder brothers, George and Jesse, made that sad trek on six different occasions, after the death of their mother, three sisters, brother, and sister-in-law. People in LePageville with more means marked the graves with stone headstones, but as George Ponder remembers, "We were poor people. We didn't have any money for headstones." Instead he and his brothers fashioned wooden crosses. "We'd carve the name of the person on the wood or write it on and then take a stake and drive it into the ground." When the wind and weather warped a cross, the Ponder brothers simply made a replacement.[31] The last known burial at LePageville cemetery occurred in 1964, only three years before the houses were razed. For the better part of a hundred years, the cemetery was an integral part of the community but, when the residents left, the memory of the cemetery left with them.[32]

In 1978, Pine Gardens residents Edward E. Lennox Sr. and Patricia Jenkins, on behalf of the International Little League, negotiated a lease of the land where LePageville homes once stood. That tract on the north side of President Street, overgrown after years of neglect, became a girls' softball field. However, as the land was being cleared, an elderly former resident of LePageville, Alexander Milton, spoke up for the cemetery where his family members lay buried. He explained to Patricia Jenkins that the woods contained an historic African American cemetery and he asked her to protect it. Even though she had grown up in nearby Moses Rogers Grove and a LePageville woman, Martha Miller, had cared for her as a child, Mrs. Jenkins had no idea that the cemetery existed. She assured Mr. Milton that the woods were safe from the bulldozer and she promised to protect the integrity of the cemetery.[33]

The initial challenge she faced was simply documenting the existence of the cemetery, a task made difficult by the absence of burial records. A dogged researcher, she combed through maps, newspaper articles, and city directories, gleaning information that outlined the history of LePageville. Former residents also shared information with her about family members buried at the cemetery. A few headstones remained, which Jimmy Jenkins, Sr., Mrs. Jenkins' husband, showed to Savannah civil rights activist W.W. Law and Jim Golden, Director of the Chatham County Recreation Department in 1978.[34]

Fig. 23: George Ponder, left, and Jesse Ponder, kneel beside one of the few remaining headstones at LePageville Cemetery.
Courtesy of Patricia Jenkins.

Fig. 24: Displaying a map and photograph discovered during research about LePageville are, from left to right, Minnie Lou Robinson, Patricia Jenkins, Jesse Ponder, and George Ponder.
Courtesy of Patricia Jenkins.

Important discoveries of human remains heightened the sense of urgency to preserve the cemetery. Buddy Myers, whose Southeast Chain and Specialty moved to a President Street location in 1994, found bones on his land four different times in four different places.[35] Adjacent to Southeast Chain land was a tract recently purchased by Engelhard Corporation. Given the discoveries on Myers' land, Engelhard hired an archaeological investigator in 2000 to survey their own property for evidence of the cemetery. Thirteen "probable graves," six to seven feet long, were identified in what appeared to be five rows. The report concluded that the probability of discovering additional gravesites was "likely."[36]

Once the existence of the cemetery was beyond doubt, another mystery remained to be solved. The headstones visible in the late 1970s had largely disappeared and reports circulated that the bodies interred at LePageville had been exhumed and reburied at other Savannah cemeteries. Those

reports, however, could not be confirmed. According to some witnesses, only the tombstones had been moved. The uncertainty weighs heavily on some former residents of LePageville. "I've got all my people buried back there," explained George Ponder. "It's not going to change nothing, but I'd feel good if I knew they were really there."[37]

What had begun with Alexander Milton's request to protect the cemetery had blossomed into a network of volunteers dedicated to resurrect the memory of the village and to honor its cemetery. David Blount, for example, arranged for heavy equipment on weekend loan from his employer, Savannah Gas Light Company, to help clear brush off the land. Minnie Lou Robinson, whose mother and grandfather were buried in the cemetery, worked to identify others interred at LePageville.[38] Others who also devoted time and energy to the cause included former LePageville residents, George and the late Jesse Ponder, Ruthie Rawlerson, and Johnnie Mae Swinton; Buddy Myers of Southeast Chain; third district Aldermen Ellis Cook (1992-2008) and Larry Stuber (2008-); and Asst. County Manager Pat Monahan. If Patricia Jenkins' research and persistence energized their effort, Engelhard Corporation made their dreams a reality. On November 6, 2003, Jimmy Christopher, the Engelhard Site Manager, presented the deed for 3.8 acres to the LePageville Memorial Cemetery Corp. for a token one dollar. This historic event, twenty-four years in the making, took place at a formal ceremony at the LePageville site on President Street.[39]

The work continues at LePageville. Volunteers continue to offer assistance clearing the woods of weeds and debris on clean-up Saturdays and fundraisers tap into community support. In 2007, a brick and iron arch marking the entrance to the LePageville Memorial Park was dedicated. A marble monument is planned for the site, on which the names of those individuals buried at the cemetery will be inscribed. It is estimated that five hundred persons were laid to rest at LePageville.[40]

CEMETERIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhoods consist of individuals who reside there whether they have a street address or live in the memories of friends and family. East Savannah and LePageville cemeteries are defined by this neighborhood connection. The gravesites at these cemeteries are the resting places of former residents who remain close to the hearts of their loved ones.

These cemeteries also have been fortunate to have neighborhood champions to protect and preserve them. For more than seventy years, the neighborhood association of East Savannah kept the management and maintenance of the cemetery on Alaska Street as its highest priority. Even legal challenges did not deter them from this responsibility. LePageville Cemetery could have been lost had it not been for activists who understood its importance to the living and appreciated its historic value. The collaboration of neighbors and former residents of LePageville proved to be a potent force strong enough to preserve the cemetery and to ensure that the community itself is remembered.

All the cemeteries on the eastside invite visitors to look back in time. For many people, cemeteries teach family history. Others may find links to military history, artistic expression, or religious beliefs. Because of the invaluable memories that cemeteries preserve, the land and the monuments are a precious resource deserving of respect. Eastside residents embrace the face that cemeteries are an extension of neighborhood ties.

Fig. 25: Minnie Lou Robinson stands before the new entrance to LePageville Memorial Park.
Photograph by Steve Bisson.
Savannah Morning News, 12 February 2010, 1D.
Courtesy of the *Savannah Morning News*.

IDENTITY

IDENTITY

Fig. 1: A Strathmore Estates duplex, 2009.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

VICKY BRYANT has a March birthday. When she was growing up in East Savannah in the 1950s and 1960s, she celebrated her big day with family and friends, but there was also a party for all the other people in the neighborhood who were born in the month of March. These March babies, from the youngest to the oldest, celebrated their birthday month together at a home in the neighborhood.[1]

The common birthday party is one small example of the many personal links which, when taken together, help define neighborhood identity. Broader factors contribute to the character of a neighborhood as well: institutions such as schools and churches, employment, neighborhood associations and the response to change. Eastern Savannah neighborhoods share a common geography but each has a unique history which has made them as individual as a person.

EAST SAVANNAH NEIGHBORHOOD

A rural, isolated area in its beginnings in the late nineteenth century, East Savannah carried a sense of separation from encroaching development for decades. Corinthia Manigault remembers Iowa Street, as well as the rest of East Savannah, as a "small village" when she was growing up in the 1920s. Benjamin Moultrie III compared his boyhood years in East Savannah to "living in the Garden of Eden." In the 1930s, fruit trees in the summer supplied plums, pears, apples, and peaches, while walnuts and pecans were plentiful in the fall. Adam Morrell often invited the children of the neighborhood to pick plums, grapes, and pecans at his home on Iowa Street. According to Benjamin Moultrie, a boy never went hungry playing in East Savannah in those days. Even after World War II, vestiges of rural life remained, such as cows grazing nearby.[2]

Glimpses of community life in East Savannah survive in the columns written by Maggie Morrell in the *Savannah Tribune* during the 1940s. Mrs. Morrell chronicled the comings and goings of East Savannah residents, houseguests and dinner guests, illnesses, funerals, and the arrival of new babies. Special birthdays were noted as well: "Congratulations to Mrs. Geneva Walker who passed another milestone July 8. Here's hoping you enjoy many more happy birthdays." Mrs. Morrell was discreet enough to omit exactly which milestone was being celebrated.[3] What emerges from these anecdotes is a portrait of a busy social network, not only within the neighborhood, but extending to other parts of Savannah as well as towns in Georgia and South Carolina and points north. Friends and relatives who had moved to Philadelphia or Baltimore remained very much within the social orbit despite the distance that separated them from East Savannah.

Mrs. Morrell's columns entitled "East Savannah" make it clear that the bedrock of the community was First African Baptist Church of East Savannah. Although she discusses the activities of Saint Mary A.M.E. Church in East Savannah, as well as the LePageville Baptist Church, she focuses attention on First African Baptist, the church most identified with the East Savannah neighborhood. In doing so, her column reflected the attachment of many of her readers to that pioneer church.

Fig. 2: Rev. Edward C. Johnson, pastor of First African Baptist Church of East Savannah, 1898-1907.
"75th Anniversary Program," 1972.
Courtesy of Mary Roberson.

In the 1890s, residents of East Savannah attended First African Baptist Church at Franklin Square but reconciling the street car schedule with church services was difficult. With the blessing of the Franklin Square church, the First African Baptist Church at East Savannah was established at a service in August 1897 as the familiar words of "Blest Be the Tie that Binds" were sung. Charter members numbered forty-two and they set to work immediately organizing a Sunday School. Within seven months, Deacon Edward C. Johnson was ordained as the first pastor of the church, a post that he held for nine years.[4]

The hallmark of the church has been its community-based ministry. In addition to revivals and homecomings, the church sponsored special musical events such as a performance of "The Heavenly Bound Glee Club and Quartet" to a "capacity crowd" in 1944 or concerts by the young people of the church. There were services honoring young men of the neighborhood serving in the armed forces during World War II and Women's and Men's Day celebrations began in the 1960s.[5] Of particular importance to the church was its outreach to children and young adults. Many of the neighborhood children attended Vacation Bible School, complete with fun and educational activities. When coupled with Sunday School or Junior Church, children acquired a solid foundation in their faith thanks to caring teachers. Janie Baker Bowers, for example, taught the children to present a speech from memory at Easter services that not only improved their poise in public speaking but also reinforced their understanding of Easter. To provide wholesome outlets for youngsters, scouting was encouraged and both girls and boys held their troop meetings at the church. Today, the Perry J. Jones Foundation, established by the church in honor of their tenth pastor, provides scholarship assistance for young adults.[6]

Fig. 3: Dedicated in 1950, this building served the congregation of First African Baptist Church, first as a sanctuary, now as a fellowship hall.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

Fig. 4: The 250 members of First African Baptist Church have worshipped in this spacious building since 2002.

Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

The church faced hardships in the more than hundred years of its ministry. Hurricanes destroyed the sanctuary twice, once in the church's infancy in 1898, and again in 1940. After the second devastating storm, the church held services at Saint Mary A.M.E. on Wednesday and Friday evenings for a year until a temporary building was erected. In the interim, fund-raising activities rallied the congregation. Mrs. Rachel Mitchell of East Gwinnett Street, for example, held a seafood dinner at her home, earmarking the money collected for the church. Only in 1950, a full ten years after the storm, was a permanent structure on Treat Avenue ready for occupancy.[7] Whatever obstacles the congregation faced became opportunities for spiritual growth. According to the current pastor, Rev. Thomas E. Williams, the mission of the church is to be "a pillar of the community" that is dedicated to serve.[8]

Residents also gather at the church for meetings of the East Savannah Community Association. For more than seventy years, the organization has worked to improve the quality of neighborhood life. One of its founders, Adam Morrell, held the informal title of "Mayor of East Savannah" because of his activism in community affairs. He and his wife, Maggie, opened their home to families needing a place to live in the neighborhood and helped them locate permanent housing. He took the concerns of East Savannah residents to W.W. Law to acquaint the civil rights leader about local issues. Many of his neighbors also went to him for advice because Adam Morrell was respected as "the wise man of the community."[9]

Of the many neighborhood associations in Savannah, the East Savannah Community Association is the only one to operate a cemetery. Safeguarding family and neighborhood memories is a unique service that demonstrates the organization's commitment to the community. The association spearheaded other significant projects, such as street paving, providing financial assistance and health seminars for seniors, and even offering utility subsidies for needy residents when funds permit. East Savannah has supported National Night Out for more than twenty-five years. In 2007, this group hosted the National Night Out event which set a local record as the single largest gathering of its kind. President Ella Harmon envisions a permanent community center where residents will have access to meeting space, computers and other resources to lay the foundation for economic empowerment in the neighborhood.[10]

Fig. 5: In this 1933 photograph, houses on the original Plant Street of LePageville stood close by the railroad tracks to Tybee.

Cordray-Foltz Collection, MS 1360, Box 17, Folder 9.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

East Savannah is no longer the isolated community that existed in the early twentieth century. It abuts against the World War II housing development originally known as Josiah Tattnall Homes, later named Savannah Gardens and Strathmore Estates. But change has exacted a toll on the neighborhood. The close-knit community where "everyone knew each other and neighbors looked out for neighbors" has been diluted, but the continuing presence of church and proactive neighborhood leaders help to maintain neighborhood identity in East Savannah.[11]

LEPAGEVILLE

Built by the Savannah, Florida & Western Railway in 1885 as a village for African American workers, LePageville initially derived its identity as an extension of the railroad. The village, as designed by SF&W wharf manager Robert LePage, provided employees with the necessities – inexpensive housing to rent, convenient access to work on the docks, gardens to grow food, and a church for spiritual support.[12] Employees changed their corporate allegiance to Atlantic Coastline Railroad (ACL) after it acquired SF&W in 1902, but LePageville remained unchanged, except for the repainting of the houses in ACL gray and burgundy. When the railroad leased the property to a firm tied to Southern States Phosphate and Fertilizer Company during the mid-1950s, there had been no substantive improvements made in LePageville for fifty years. There may have been as many as fifty of the two-room houses, heated by two fireplaces, but twentieth century necessities, such as indoor plumbing and electricity, were usually lacking. For drinkable water, most families relied on the community water pump, located near the church. The one constant, however, was cheap rent.[13]

Families who lived in LePageville accepted the hardships that came with the cheap rent. Minnie Lou Robinson lived in LePageville between 1936 and 1938, and remembers the difficulties obtaining water for day-to-day needs, such as cooking, drinking, bathing, and laundry. "It was a long walk just to get water for the house," she said.[14]

Despite the struggles of living in LePageville, memories of residents are often sharpest in describing the good times that existed there. In months when rent was short, residents would throw rent parties in the 1930s. To the music of a hand-cranked Victrola, friends and neighbors enjoyed fried chicken, pigs' feet, chitterlings, fried fish, collard greens and potato

Fig. 6: In 1967, this house was one of sixteen homes in LePageville with electricity. Courtesy of Patricia Jenkins.

salad, dinners bought to help pay the rent. City folks, however, came for the moonshine or "home brew." Stills were frequently found in the woods in eastern Savannah and one LePageville house in particular was raided from time to time by the police. At Christmas and New Year's, LePageville observed a holiday tradition of lighting bonfires, tending them with care so that they burned and crackled all night long. Even when there was no holiday to celebrate, a game of checkers under the chinaberry tree was always a pleasant pastime.[15]

A continuing source of support for the residents was the church. Methodists originally met at the home of their pastor, Rev. F.E. Washington, but in 1895 they built a church on Haines Street. The building accommodated two congregations at first; Methodists and Baptists alternated Sunday services for thirteen years before the church was reorganized as the LePageville Baptist Church.[16] The congregation's numbers grew as many LePageville families joined the church after baptism in the

Savannah River. The church maintained an active schedule of worship services, Sunday School, and choirs, in addition to revivals. Special events included musical programs, Women's Day, and fundraisers such as cake raffles.[17]

The ties of church and family bound many residents to LePageville. In the woods behind their homes lay the cemetery, where sisters and brothers, parents and grandparents were buried. Yet, over time, some residents relocated. By 1966, the number of families inhabiting LePageville dwindled to twenty-seven. There were thirty-one homes still standing; some had been destroyed by fire, others that had been abandoned were torn down board by board for firewood. Of the homes remaining, half had electricity but none had indoor toilets. The stumbling block for many residents to find better housing was money. In seventy years, the costs of renting a cottage had hardly changed; only increasing from $6 per month in the 1880s to a mere $7.50 in 1967.[18] Shelter could not be had for the amount

Fig. 7: Sources of life for the community, the water pump and the LePageville Baptist Church stand nearly side by side.
Courtesy of Patricia Jenkins.

Fig. 8: Renovations continued over the years to create a pleasing brick façade for Saint Thomas Missionary Baptist Church.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

paid in rent at LePageville. The solution proposed by the Economic Opportunity Authority (EOA) was to condemn the homes at LePageville so that residents would be entitled to priority status for public housing.[19] LePageville was razed in 1967.

Even after residents scattered to new homes, the kernel of the community remained alive through its church. The congregation of the LePageville Baptist Church purchased a two-story apartment building on East Park Avenue for a new church home. Extensive renovations transformed the first floor apartment into a place of worship. Fittingly, lumber from the old church was incorporated into the new sanctuary to blend past and present. In preparation for the first service on June 22, 1968, members of the congregation worked all night to attend to last minute details, finishing at 7:30 in the morning in time for a "very uplifting" program. The congregation honored one of its own by naming the new church the Saint Thomas Missionary Baptist Church in memory of Deacon Henry Thomas.[20]

Forty years after the homes at LePageville were leveled, new construction on the President Street site stood as an enduring reminder of the people who had lived and died there. Large letters on the arched entrance identified the "LePageville Memorial Cemetery." The hard work that put the cemetery under protection is in a larger sense a measure of the legacy of the LePageville community.

HILLCREST NEIGHBORHOOD

Hillcrest neighborhood is distinctive because it has been shaped more by several large-scale land holders than by its only residential area, Wagner Heights. Since 1853, the area now known as Hillcrest has been defined by the cemeteries and golf course that brought Savannahians from other parts of the city, or even people from other parts of the state, to the eastside. In terms of property ownership, these three institutions – Catholic Cemetery, Savannah Golf Club, and Hillcrest Memorial Park and Mausoleum – occupy most of the acreage of Hillcrest neighborhood.

Fig. 9: With the purchase of the Savannah Golf Clubhouse, the Little Theatre of Savannah gained its first permanent home in 1962.
Photograph by Walt Kessel.
Courtesy of Walt Kessel.

Fig.10: Bob Simerly and Julie Slappey appeared in the Little Theatre's production of *Little Mary Sunshine*.
Photograph by Walt Kessel.
Courtesy of Walt Kessel.

Two additional institutions came into Hillcrest neighborhood when the Savannah Golf Club sold its clubhouse, built in 1917, to the Little Theatre of Savannah, Inc. as well as the acreage on which Shuman Junior High School was built.[21] Although Shuman was the first junior high for white students on the eastside when it opened in 1963, the school later drew an integrated student body from a wider geographical area, introducing both teachers and pupils to the area. The Little Theatre brought a fan base with it when it relocated to East Gwinnett Street. Specializing in arena productions since its founding in 1950, the Little Theatre's first task was to transform the clubhouse dining room and ballroom into a stage that could open on three or even four sides, as well as provide seating for 200 people.

Only two months after purchasing the property, the Little Theatre inaugurated the 1962-1963 season with a production of *The King and I*.[22]

In its seventeen years on East Gwinnett Street, the Little Theatre of Savannah presented scores of musicals, such as *Auntie Mame*, *Showboat*, *The Sound of Music*, and *West Side Story*, and plays including *Inherit the Wind*, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, and *The Sandbox*. Season after season, dedicated volunteers worked behind the scenes to provide costumes, sets, lighting, choreography, make-up, and ticket sales while talented actors, singers, and dancers stole the spotlight.[23]

An electrical fire in 1979 ended the Little Theatre's run on East Gwinnett Street when the building was completely destroyed. The players, production crews and the management regrouped as the Savannah Theatre Company in 1983 and resumed performances at the historic Savannah Theatre at Chippewa Square.[24]

If the imprint of large property owners on Hillcrest is inescapable, a more penetrating question is to evaluate the impact that these institutions had on their eastside neighbors. Although a private golf club and a Catholic cemetery impose certain restrictions on their usage, nonetheless ties with the community existed, especially in terms of job opportunities. Boys from Wagner Heights, East Savannah, and Twickenham worked as caddies at the golf club, taking home with them not only coins in their pockets but also a love of the game. Allen and Sidney Greene of LePageville helped lay the greens at the club in the 1930s, while other men found work at the clubhouse. At Catholic Cemetery, East Savannah residents were sometimes hired by families of the deceased to clean the gravesites. Anna Robinson recalls that her grandmother and uncle charged twenty-five or fifty cents per cemetery lot for monthly maintenance in the 1930s. Other jobs available included digging graves and landscaping.[25]

Shuman, as a neighborhood school, welcomed community participation. Principal T.H. Edwards Jr. set the tone in the first year the school opened by encouraging parents to become active in the Parent Teacher Association: "Let us all be enthusiastic members." Parents not only joined the PTA and helped with fundraisers, but also sponsored a school variety show that first year, even providing some of the talent in a mother-daughter ballet.[26] The Little Theatre taught theater classes that introduced the stage to Shuman's students between the ages of four and eighteen. Among the neighborhood residents who joined a theatre production was Dell Course from Twickenham who sang in *Li'l Abner*. Shuman faculty member, Carolyn Elam who had experience in musical theater, had featured roles in a number of shows.[27]

Wagner Heights on Wheaton Street, Hillcrest's residential island, has been an established neighborhood for almost a century. Its surroundings conspired to confine it to the small area originally platted in 1912, that is, six blocks long and two blocks deep. At first the Reinhard farm blocked any expansion to the north; to the northeast was the "bottom," a low-lying area that may have been a rice field during the plantation era. Within the memory of former Wagner Heights residents, the bottom was a cow pasture in the 1920s and a truck farm during the 1930s.[28] Traffic engineers routed the Truman Parkway through the bottom in 1992 but the construction process demolished a number of Wagner Heights homes and Innecken Florist on Wheaton Street. Half of the homes in the 100 block of Adair Street were destroyed, for example, and Henrietta Street and its seventeen houses disappeared altogether.[29] A small neighborhood became dramatically smaller, further endangering its viability.

Wagner Heights has been home to hard-working families throughout its existence. Originally a number of German families clustered in the neighborhood, in proximity to others with German ties, such as Frank Werm, A.C. Oelschig, and William Winter. That ethnic identity faded by mid-century as newcomers attracted by a convenient location and reasonable home prices settled in Wagner Heights. Data from the 2000 census suggests that yet another shift in identity has occurred. Renters outnumbered homeowners by a proportion of 3:2 – a significant departure from the past – and unemployment was high. With so few households in Wagner Heights to consider, statistics may not always give an accurate representation, but it appears that there has been a noticeable decline in home ownership and the gap between the financially secure and insecure has grown.[30]

TWICKENHAM NEIGHBORHOOD

Patrel and Jim Fountain moved to Josiah Tattnall Homes with their toddler Terry in 1948 and counted themselves lucky to have found a place in the midst of the housing shortage after World War II. The family stayed there for two years before they located a home in Twickenham Terrace. It was not

Fig. 11: This home at 1820 East Gwinnett Street was one of several on the street built and owned by members of the Frank F. Black family. Dolores Black Fulcher and her daughter Doris (left and center) lived two doors down from Josie Black (right), Dolores' mother.
Courtesy of Doris Blessington.

just any house; it was the Fountain family home on Lawton Avenue where Jim had been born. Finally available after the expiration of a long-term lease, the house became the home of Patrel and Jim Fountain for the better part of four decades.[31]

The experience of the Fountain family was not unique in Twickenham. The Lawton Avenue house James Robert Fulcher purchased about 1919 was handed down to his son John. John's daughter Mary, in turn, purchased the home from her parents in 1980.[32] A home owned by successive generations, like that of the Fountain and Fulcher families, is one indication of the stability among Twickenham property owners. Similarly, Fannie Mae Langdale has lived in her home on Lawton Avenue since 1934, inheriting the home from her parents, Dora and George Bishop.[33]

Fig. 12: Even before the baby boom, young families found Twickenham a congenial place for raising children. Kay Fulcher Adams, third from the left, and her friends were guests at a birthday party about 1942.
Courtesy of Kay Adams.

The stability that had characterized Twickenham homeowners for decades broke in the 1980s. By that time, some of the longtime residents had grown old and sold or rented their property; others moved out sensing changes in the neighborhood. Home ownership declined as more rental

homes became available, and there was a dramatic change in the racial composition of the neighborhood as a result of "white flight." The changes set in motion in the 1980s accelerated in the 1990s such that today the number of renters almost equals the number of homeowners. More recently, Twickenham has been rediscovered by younger people, among them students and faculty from the Savannah College of Art and Design, who appreciate the neighborhood's affordability and its proximity to downtown.[34]

During much of Twickenham's existence, Sunday mornings found many neighborhood residents at worship at Morningside Baptist Church. This core church acted as a unifying force in the neighborhood for nearly seventy years. Founded in 1935 as a Sunday School, it was supported soon after by the First Baptist Church at Chippewa Square as the Twickenham Baptist Mission. A tent revival in the summer of 1936 at the former site of the Forest City Gun Club elicited such strong response that Rev. Robert L. Owen started holding services at his home on Forrest Avenue when the cooler fall weather arrived. In October 1937, Morningside Baptist Church was officially established.[35]

The church enrolled 137 children at its first Vacation Bible School in 1941, an indication of the importance of youth ministry at Morningside. Attendance peaked at 485 in 1956, but by then children had an array of church activities available all year round. There were Boy Scouts, Training Union on Sunday evenings for Bible study, the Royal Ambassadors for boys, Girls' Auxiliary, in addition to Sunday School. Perfect attendance at Sunday School earned a pin to wear, but no one challenged the record held by Diane Wells who collected eleven pins in all.[36]

When children became involved at the church, parents often followed their lead. A number of children from Josiah Tattnall/Savannah Gardens attended church activities at Morningside; as Arthur Kirk recalls, "that's what started the wife going and I started going to church [too]." Even when the first shipyard workers settled at Tattnall in the 1940s, "everyone in this neighborhood attended Morningside Baptist Church," according to Charlotte Serners.[37] Broad-based adult programming offered activities ranging from athletics to Bible study. There were nine missionary circles for women, available "morning, noon, and night," in the words of church historian Fannie Mae Langdale. Morningside participated in church leagues for men's basketball and other sports, earning many trophies over

Fig. 13: Cord outlined the heart-shaped programs for the Sweetheart Banquet to round up attention for the western theme.
Courtesy of Kay Adams.

Fig. 14: Sweethearts in western gear complement the stagecoach backdrop.
Courtesy of Kay Adams.

Fig. 15: Morningside Baptist Church, 2010.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

Fig. 16: With Reverend Nguyen's guidance, the Vietnamese congregation grew from five to forty-nine in less than ten years.
Courtesy of Fannie Mae Langdale and Morningside Baptist Church.

the years.[38] Social events included church dinners such as the 1957 Sweetheart Banquet built around a cowboy theme. After dining "off the chuck wagon," couples were serenaded by "roving cowboys" and later everyone joined in the singing of western ballads such as "The Yellow Rose of Texas."[39]

The growth of the church continued unabated through the early 1960s, requiring a new sanctuary building in 1957 with seating for 1,200 people. By 1963, Morningside had more than 1,700 members.[40] At this point, the church broadened its outreach with specialized ministries. A Sunday School class for deaf children, for example, began in 1963. As more Asian immigrants began to move into the eastside, the church responded with a Vietnamese mission. In 1988, Rev. Luong Kim Nguyen held the first services in a small building at the corner of East Gwinnett Street and Lawton Avenue which was dedicated as an independent congregation, the Savannah Vietnamese Baptist Church, in 2001. A Laotian mission began in 1990 under the leadership of Oudone Thirakoune from the Home Mission Board.[41]

As the neighborhood residents aged, so did the congregation. Members of long standing moved away and found new church homes. Despite the church's efforts to reach out to new neighbors with block parties and other activities, attendance at Sunday services declined. In 2004, only 28 percent of members worshipped in the sanctuary on average and Sunday School attendance lagged further behind at 18 percent. The decision of Rev. Everett Tumblin to retire in 2004 prompted the church to re-evaluate its future. The members decided to partner with an African American congregation then worshipping at the Savannah Baptist Center. The spacious building on East Gwinnett Street became the home of Christ's Community Church in 2005. Fewer and fewer "Morningsiders" still attend the old church with the new name, as infirmities, death, and cross-town addresses pare their ranks, but Fannie Mae Langdale, who was baptized as a teenager after the 1936 tent revival, looks forward to Sundays as always.[42]

PINE GARDENS NEIGHBORHOOD

Pine Gardens originated from the pressing need for defense worker housing during World War II. The attached housing units of Moses Rogers Grove and Deptford Place, in addition to single-family residences at Pine Gardens, were designed to be affordable options for shipyard workers. For

Fig. 17: Joe Page, on the right, entertains his nephews, Eddie and Ronald Page, in front of his family home on Causton Bluff Road in the early 1950s.
Courtesy of Joe Page.

those workers who stayed after the war, Pine Gardens represented a decent place to settle down and raise a family. New arrivals looking for a good start in their new lives in Savannah found Pine Gardens just as appealing. The neighborhood was a place of unlocked doors, open windows, and familiar faces. Everyone took it upon themselves to look after the children at play. Almost everyone had faced hard times at some point in their lives, which bred empathy for families in difficulty.[43]

The longevity of the wartime housing in the neighborhood varied considerably. Deptford Place was dismantled piecemeal until it disappeared altogether by 1968. Moses Rogers Grove, reincarnated as Riverside Gardens and later as Oak Tree Townhouses, became increasingly crime-ridden by the 1970s. The open space and shade trees still attracted young families but crime problems made residents wary in what they characterized as a "rough neighborhood."[44] Finally, as the buildings themselves sagged beyond repair, the project was demolished in 2001. Only Pine Gardens, this unassuming defense housing development, survived intact. That distinction, rare among wartime-era housing projects, was one reason that the neighborhood is seeking designation on the National Register of Historic Places. Neighborhood residents collaborated with students and faculty from the Savannah College of Art and Design to submit the application in 2010. As part of that effort, neighborhood historian Charles Varner created a "Savannah Memories" website that included vintage photographs and the recollections of people who grew up in Pine Gardens.[45]

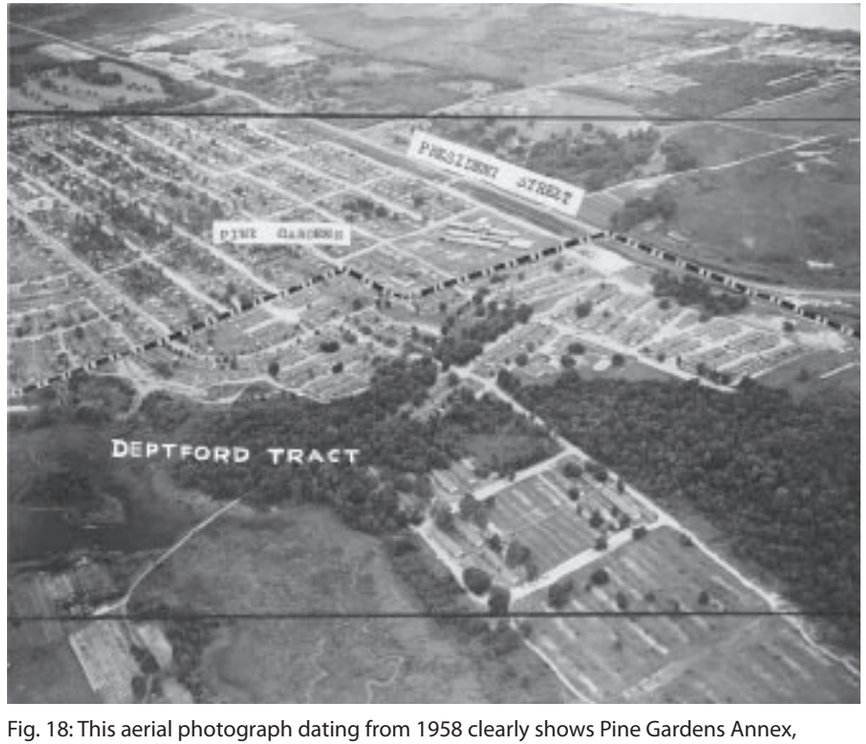


Fig. 18: This aerial photograph dating from 1958 clearly shows Pine Gardens Annex, Deptford Place, and Eli Whitney School.
Photograph by Steve Bisson.
Savannah Morning News, 26 June 1958, 16B.
Courtesy of the *Savannah Morning News*.

The National Register application is indicative of the proactive stance of the Pine Gardens Neighborhood Association (PGNA). Founded in 1994, on the lawn, and unmowed grass, are a priority because they impact the entire neighborhood. Such problems have worsened with the growing number of absentee landlords. The association also works to combat drug dealing, the most serious crime problem in Pine Gardens.[46] Activities sponsored by the PGNA include an Easter egg hunt for the youngsters, National Night Out, Safety Fair, and Christmas at the Fire Station featuring Santa as a special guest. Members are encouraged to act on the organization's motto: "People Giving Neighborly Assistance." By dealing with common problems and by organizing events beneficial to all, the PGNA hopes to become representative of homeowners and renters, whites and blacks, the elderly and the young.[47]

Riverside Baptist Church also brought neighbors together and reinforced common values. Like the neighborhood it served, Riverside grew out of the era of wartime housing. The sudden explosion of population that came with the opening of Southeastern Shipyard in 1942 overwhelmed the ability of Morningside and other nearby churches to accommodate potential members. As a stopgap solution, non-denominational services took place on Sundays at the administration buildings at Deptford and Moses Rogers Grove. However, with the sale of Moses Rogers Grove in 1949, the now-privatized housing development called Riverside Gardens opened its auditorium to a Baptist mission sponsored by First Baptist Church in downtown Savannah. The fledgling congregation selected the name of Riverside Mission soon after its first service held in April 1950.[48]

In only three years, the congregation established a church of their own. Members bought three lots at the corner of Capital Street and Causton Bluff Road early in 1953. In April, a tent revival was held on the property. A congregation formed, and the group continued to meet in the tent for three months in anticipation of the completion of their church building. When the new sanctuary opened in July, it was modest – cement floors and folding chairs – but members were delighted. The crowning touch was the official founding of Riverside Baptist Church on September 13, 1953 with 187 charter members.[49]

Ministering to the Pine Gardens community, the church experienced phenomenal growth. In a twelve month period in 1957 and 1958, Riverside Baptist Church conducted 175 baptisms, which averaged one baptism for every three members. No other church in the Southern Baptist

Fig. 19: Initially the choice of a tent for the revival was a necessity since the Riverside Gardens auditorium was too small to accommodate the crowd. With ongoing services there after the revival, the tent served to announce to the neighborhood the coming of a new church.
Courtesy of Riverside Baptist Church.

Fig. 20: Riverside Baptist Church, 2010.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

Convention could boast a higher ratio of baptisms to members.[50] The reason for the church's astonishing expansion was in part owing to its successful programming for children and young adults at Sunday School and in outside activities. Boys who joined the Royal Ambassadors, for example, fielded a baseball team, attended conferences at Rock Eagle, and worked on Bible study. Growing pains necessitated a new sanctuary in 1982 as Riverside approached its thirtieth anniversary. The new sanctuary, spacious enough to seat 360 people, was a tangible symbol of all that had been accomplished in three decades.

The church's location at the intersection of Causton Bluff Road and Riverview Drive was strategic in its early days, poised between the single-family dwellings of Pine Gardens and the apartments at Deptford Place. However, the demolition of Deptford gave rise to an industrial park in its stead. The loss of friends and neighbors who left the area when Deptford closed diminished the congregation and the neighborhood as a whole. The loss of Deptford also ushered in more commercial development into a mostly residential neighborhood. This change did not prompt any backlash on the part of residents towards the new businesses, but the industrial park represented a major change in the fabric of the neighborhood. Residents, currently, are most occupied with the problems of crime and property maintenance. Resolving those concerns will be critical to the future of Pine Gardens.

SAVANNAH GARDENS NEIGHBORHOOD

Inez Hendrix retired to Arkansas Street in Savannah Gardens at age seventy-three. It was perfect for her needs – affordable, close to her children and grandchildren, and just enough room to indulge her green thumb. In the small space that made up her front and back yards, vegetables and flowers competed for attention; no matter what the season, the garden flourished. "My doctor says it's working in my yard that keeps me young," she said. Like her butter beans and petunias, she thrived at Savannah Gardens. When she died in 1982, after fourteen years at Savannah Gardens, she was spared seeing her home and her garden demolished when radical change came to Savannah Gardens in the 1990s.[51]

In 1994, the Savannah-Chatham County Board of Education announced that a new high school would be erected on land occupied by part of Savannah Gardens, specifically, the tract bordered by Pennsylvania Avenue and Capital Street. Roughly half of the 728 apartments at Savannah Gardens were torn down as a result and 110 families were relocated. When the news was announced, residents such as Margie Thornton were dismayed. She and her husband had raised three children in their four-bedroom unit and for twenty-eight years her apartment at Heywood Court had been home. "I have liked this place since we moved in. I really love it and I don't want to move anywhere else," she said.[52] If the sale of the property surprised residents, it was considered an opportune and expedient measure by the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation that had owned Savannah Gardens since it went into bankruptcy in 1993. The $1.65 million paid in the property sale gave "Freddie Mac" resources to invest in the remaining apartments.[53]

The new school that emerged from the rubble of Savannah Gardens was "Savannah High School," carrying on the name and tradition of the Blue Jackets. Its predecessor on Washington Avenue was known as the "million dollar school" when it first opened in 1937; the new Savannah High School was just as impressive, at a cost of $21 million. The new school echoes the columns and red brick exterior of the Washington Avenue

Fig. 21: Savannah High School and its sixty-acre campus dominate Pennsylvania Avenue. Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

Fig. 22: Dr. Toney Jordan, principal of the School of Liberal Arts, balances strict enforcement of the rules with encouraging students. Here he reminds a student to tuck in his shirttail during one of his routine walks through the halls of Savannah High School.
Photograph by Hunter McRae.
Savannah Morning News, 22 March 2009, 1A.
Courtesy of the *Savannah Morning News*.

building, but its two-story atrium and sixty-foot skylight create a striking airy interior. With the advantages of state-of-the-art technology, the school was designed to provide a supportive learning environment when its first students enrolled in 1998.[54]

The hopes invested in the new school have, as yet, been unfulfilled. Despite the efforts of principals and teachers, Savannah High School has been one of the most troubled schools in the Savannah-Chatham County system. Truancy and drop-out rates are too high, and the school's reputation for disorderly classrooms, fights and violence discredit it in the eyes of many parents and taxpayers. From 2004 to 2009, Savannah High failed to achieve "adequate yearly progress," as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act, and fell into the category of "needs improvement." Savannah High shook off that stigma thanks to an extensive reorganization plan in 2009. Two new and smaller schools – the School of Liberal Arts and the School of Law and Criminal Justice – were established, each occupying a separate wing of the building and led by its own principal. Because of their status as new schools, they did not carry the academic baggage of Savannah High. Each school started the 2009-2010 academic year free of the "needs improvement" millstone. In time, a third school will be created at Savannah High, a School of Communications.[55] Although it is too soon to evaluate the long-range impact of this reorganization plan, this dramatic step may prove to be a turning point.

Neighborhoods seldom undergo such massive change in land use like that of the building of Savannah High School, which effectively reconfigured half of the Savannah Gardens neighborhood. But innovations in housing, just as sweeping as those changes implemented by the Board of Education, will continue the rebuilding of the neighborhood. In November 2007, the Community Housing Services Agency Development, Inc. (CHSA) purchased the remaining part of Savannah Gardens for $12.5 million. The CHSA, a non-profit community development partner with the City of Savannah, envisions demolishing the 374 apartments constructed in World War II and rebuilding in their place a mixed-use complex.[56]

The apartments had been in need of substantial overhaul since Savannah Gardens was auctioned on the court house steps to the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation in 1993. Four years later, Freddie Mac, in turn, sold the property to Kirk and Mark Leaphart from South Carolina, who renamed the housing development "Strathmore Estates." Despite the new roofs and vinyl siding that the Leapharts provided, the wear of six decades showed on apartments designed to last only until the end of the war. Strathmore Estates was considered an eyesore and only its low rents were attractive.[57]

Residents contributed their ideas for the physical redesign of the new complex that will reclaim the name of "Savannah Gardens." At their suggestion, shade trees would remain rather than fall victim to progress. New parks and squares will be within easy access of all residents, including a large central open area designated as "Tattnall Square." In addition to green space, the master redevelopment plan calls for a mix of single-family residences, multi-family housing, retail shops, and mixed-use properties with both residential and business functions. Homeowners, renters, seniors, and retailers will all have a stake in Savannah Gardens.[58]

Fig. 23: Despite the addition of a toaster oven, this kitchen still had its original sinks and shelving.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

Detached single-family residences, available for purchase or lease, will stand on the perimeter of Savannah Gardens. By placing these homes adjacent to the freestanding homes of East Savannah and Twickenham, there will be a seamless transition in housing styles. The center of Savannah Gardens will feature townhouses and apartment buildings. Pennsylvania Avenue and Crescent Drive will anchor much of this multi-family housing, with ample off-street parking for residents. Offices and retail space will share prime locations on Pennsylvania Avenue; further possibilities for commercial development exist on East Gwinnett Street.

A signature feature of the new Savannah Gardens design is accessibility. Sidewalks and green space will encourage pedestrian use, while traffic-calming elements ensure streets where automobiles, bicycles, and walkers can co-exist. The looping Crescent Drive, dating from the original 1943 layout, was preserved as a means to connect the western and eastern sides of the complex bisected by the busy thoroughfare of Pennsylvania Avenue. Most important, the fences and other physical barriers that isolated residents in the past will disappear. For example, on Long Avenue in East Savannah, an intimidating stretch of cyclone fencing nine blocks long separated that neighborhood from the housing complex. Instead, the new Savannah Gardens will have multiple entrances to connect it to adjoining neighborhoods, an important step in building a sense of community.[59]

Demolition of vacant apartments began in the fall of 2008 and full-scale demolition resumed in June 2010. However, before the buildings are reduced to rubble, "harvesters" reclaim materials that can be used again. Instead of clogging landfills with demolition debris, the Emergent Structures Project, a collaborative effort involving private and public partners, recycles materials that can be reused rather than deplete natural resources. At Savannah Gardens, oak shelving, tongue-and-groove roofing, hardwood floors, heartpine studs, and cedar shingles are just a few of the vintage treasures reclaimed.[60]

The City of Savannah, CHSA Development, and Mercy Housing Southeast, Inc., partners in rebuilding and financing Savannah Gardens, estimate that the construction will be completed by December 2013 at a cost of $110 million in public and private funding. The 490-unit complex will help to address a critical shortage of affordable housing in Savannah,

Fig. 24: This architectural drawing depicts an example of multi-family housing that will be built at Savannah Gardens.
Courtesy of Community Housing Service Agency.

that is, housing that costs no more than 30 percent of a household's income. In fact, residents who plan to return to Savannah Gardens after it reopens have been insistent that rents remain manageable. According to resident Harold Littlebird, who serves on the redevelopment advisory committee, "We keep saying, 'We've got to keep it affordable.'" Savannah Gardens is intended to serve those in need of affordable housing but not to the exclusion of those with more financial means. A mixed-income development will provide a stronger revenue stream than one with uniform rents and standardized housing.[61]

The revitalization of Savannah Gardens is the largest housing innovation initiated in Savannah in recent years. Livable and affordable housing built in a setting that encourages interaction between residents will restore this keystone development on the eastside and will energize economic growth throughout the area. Eddie Johnson Jr., an eight-year resident, watched the demolition of dilapidated apartments with satisfaction in the summer of 2010. In an understatement that summed up the hopes for Savannah Gardens, he said, "this place is going to be better."[62]

Fig. 25: Hardwood floors, such as this one, were considered inexpensive building materials when installed in 1943. Today they can be harvested for reuse.
Photograph by Geoff L. Johnson.

NEIGHBORHOODS AND RACE

The backdrop for many of the changes taking place in all these eastern Savannah neighborhoods has been race. As early as 1899, a confrontation reminiscent of later day civil rights battles occurred over the right of African Americans to sit anywhere they wished on the Savannah, Thunderbolt & Isle of Hope Railway. The town of Warsaw, known as Thunderbolt today, passed a law in 1899 that required separate seating for the races. A previous attempt to segregate streetcars in 1872 had been overturned by a black boycott, and, with that precedent in mind, Solomon Johnson, editor of the *Savannah Tribune*, called for another boycott in September 1899. According to Johnson, "the colored people of Savannah will never consent to be herded as cattle on the streetcars."[63]

The boycott, no doubt, impacted the black residents of East Savannah directly, as the streetcar was a primary mode of transport. Since Johnson solicited the support of black churches to promote the boycott, it is also entirely possible that the First African Baptist Church of East Savannah had a role to play. Johnson estimated that normally half of the riders who boarded the streetcars were black and, although the boycott was not universally observed, the financial losses were substantial as the boycott continued during the fall. Finally in late November, the crisis ended when the Warsaw city fathers rescinded the law and integrated seating was restored. After a two-month boycott, the *Savannah Tribune* celebrated: "No more jim crow [*sic*] cars in Savannah. It has been abolished."[64] The victory, however, was short-lived. A city-wide boycott in 1906-1907 lasting eighteen months failed to stop a new segregation policy for streetcars that was imposed by the Savannah City Council.[65]

In the days of the Jim Crow south, segregation imposed expectations on how much contact was permissible between African Americans and whites, and neighborhoods reflected those unwritten rules. Children could cross racial lines at play but even they were aware of the limitations. In the late 1950s, for example, Charles Varner recalls playing baseball at the segregated Coke Field on President Street:

> *Sometimes the black kids would come out of the woods and sneak on Coke Field to play baseball with us. We always played amicably without fighting or racial name calling. When our mothers would come to pick us up…the black kids would run into the woods.*[66]

Fig. 26: These young men from Strathmore Estates will have better recreational facilities for a pick-up game at the new Savannah Gardens.

Photograph by Richard Burkhart.
Savannah Morning News, 17 February 2009, 1A.
Courtesy of the *Savannah Morning News*.

Segregated housing was the norm at that time; Wagner Heights and Twickenham were traditionally white neighborhoods and only white shipyard workers were eligible for housing at Pine Gardens or Savannah Gardens. As a result, the core of black East Savannah was largely isolated socially from adjacent neighborhoods. As Henry Robinson described it, "We kept to ourselves in East Savannah…; worked our jobs, and went to church."[67]

The watershed of the Civil Rights Movement impacted black and white residents alike. Among the East Savannah residents who participated in the movement were Corinthia Manigault, Eartha and Benjamin Moultrie, Rebecca Cooper, and Jeannette Westley, all veterans of picketing Broughton Street stores during the boycott in 1960-1961. Mrs. Westley joined Hosea Williams' Crusade for Voters when she was a student at Savannah State College and faced the taunts of angry whites as she was denied service at McCrory's 5¢ and 10¢ Store on Broughton Street.[68]

Young people from the eastside also stood on the front lines of desegregating the Savannah-Chatham County public schools. Ola B. Lewis from East Savannah spent a trying junior and senior year at Savannah High School as one of the first African American students to desegregate that school. She endured name-calling and isolation, but defended herself when pushed into an altercation. In hindsight, she believes that those difficult times made her a "stronger person." Ironically, years later she served as assistant principal at Savannah High School for a brief period.[69] Sally Rountree Klein and Mil Cannon, both with ties to Savannah Gardens, were pioneers in desegregation, but, in their case, they were white students attending formerly all-black schools. Sally Klein was among the first students to enroll at Sol C. Johnson High School. She attributes much of the credit for the school's smooth assimilation of white students to Julian Williams, the African American student council president. In fact, he served as her campaign manager the next year in her successful bid as student council vice-president.[70] Mil Cannon helped to desegregate two primary schools, Robert W. Spencer Elementary School on Wheaton Street and John W. Hubert Elementary School on Grant Street. He credits the teachers at these schools and also Sol C. Johnson High School with giving him the confidence to succeed despite the poverty he experienced growing up in Savannah Gardens. "I never had a bad teacher at any of my schools here in Savannah," he said. He graduated as valedictorian of his class at Johnson High School.[71]

With the integration of schools, the integration of housing followed. African American families first moved into Savannah Gardens in the 1960s and into the other white neighborhoods during the 1970s. By the year 2000, census data shows an African American majority in all these eastside neighborhoods.[72] Interestingly, the neighborhood with the longest tradition of integration is East Savannah. Since the 1940s, a few white families have lived on Bolling and Alaska Streets on the southern edge of the neighborhood.[73]

Even when racial barriers disappear in housing, schooling, and the workplace, social integration can still be elusive. Sunday mornings have often been described as the most segregated time of the week. Eastside churches, such as Riverside Baptist Church and Morningside Baptist Church, addressed that issue by reaching out to new residents as the neighborhoods integrated. The decision of Morningside to partner with an African American congregation was perhaps the most dramatic effort in this regard.

Fellowship in Many Forms

Morningside Baptist Church and Riverside Baptist Church tailored their programs around special interest groups. Both churches built active youth organizations that attracted large numbers of young people. In addition, Morningside's outreach to the Vietnamese community brought mission work to the church's doorstep.

Fig. 27: Morningside teenagers enjoy a Sunday afternoon baseball game at Forsyth Park in August 1954. Left to right: Charles Brady, Jack Bunton, Herbie Smith, Bruce Newton, Paul Coppage.

Courtesy of Kay Adams.

Fig. 28: Stacy Hooks, left, jumps for joy before leaving with other Riverside boys for the nation-wide Royal Ambassadors Congress in Oklahoma in the 1970s. His father, Rev. O.T. Hooks, standing on the extreme right in the back row, accompanied the boys in the church bus to the meeting.

Courtesy of Riverside Baptist Church.

Fig. 29: In 1990, Rev. Luong Kim Nguyen hosted a Christmas dinner in the style and taste of Vietnam. Among his guests were new arrivals who stayed with the Morningside pastor while they waited for housing to become available.

Courtesy of Rev. Luong Kim Nguyen.

The arrival of Vietnamese refugees also expanded the racial and ethnic composition of the eastside neighborhoods. Beginning in the mid-1970s, Vietnamese families fleeing the communist takeover of South Vietnam found their way to Savannah. A number of Vietnamese came to eastern Savannah as a result of Morningside Baptist Church's Vietnamese mission, and, specifically, the efforts of Rev. Luong Kim Nguyen. He came to the United States in 1980 with his three sons after several years in a Thai refugee camp; it was eleven years before his wife and youngest son were permitted to join him in the United States. He understood the uncertainty and despair of refugees and worked to ease their transition to a new life. Morningside's commitment to sponsor incoming refugees was critical.[74]

As pastor of the Vietnamese mission on East Gwinnett Street beginning in 1988, Rev. Nguyen helped new arrivals to find the basics – housing, employment, and English lessons. Apartments at Savannah Gardens were the most affordable and became the residence of choice, although some families preferred Presidential Plaza in Pine Gardens. As more and more Vietnamese families moved into these complexes, there was the comfort of neighbors who spoke their native language, who celebrated the same holidays and enjoyed the same cuisine, and who empathized with the frustrations of living outside of the mainstream. Lan Pham, who came to Savannah at age fourteen, remembers as many as twenty Vietnamese families living on her block in Savannah Gardens. Despite language difficulties, the Vietnamese found jobs in hotels, restaurants, printing companies, and dry cleaners and worked hard to build a better life. Children overcame the language barrier more quickly than their parents, thanks in part to the special language programs offered in the public schools. Lan Pham, who spoke no English when she arrived in Savannah, enrolled in English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program at Savannah High School to become fluent. Years later she returned to Savannah High to teach in the same program. Adults struggled more with the language. Morningside Baptist Church offered classes focusing on conversational English because verbal fluency lagged behind even when adults read English with ease.

In spite of the support the refugees received as they settled on the eastside, they learned soon enough about the hard edge of racial prejudice. In Savannah Gardens, there were instances of taunting and even violent altercations. Perhaps for that reason, Lan Pham's parents imposed restrictions on her activities because it was "too dangerous outside."[75] Naturally, the Vietnamese fell back on their own neighborhood social networks and also attended functions of the Vietnamese Association of Savannah, a city-wide organization, for wider social interaction. The New Year's, or "Tet" celebrations, were the highlight of the social calendar for Vietnamese residents, but weekend get-togethers, dinners reminiscent of Saigon, and weddings cemented friendships.[76]

Sinking roots into Savannah meant buying a house and that goal became a high priority for families. Although rental housing had served them well enough at the beginning, a house represented a better lifestyle that made the scrimping and hard work worthwhile. Census data indicates that the number of Asian residents in Savannah Gardens, Pine Gardens, and East Savannah neighborhoods peaked in 1980 and remained fairly steady for at least the next ten years. By 2000, however, the number of Asian residents dropped by 80 percent. There is no doubt that they moved out of these neighborhoods; in all likelihood, many of them purchased homes elsewhere.[77]

Even though Vietnamese residents are fewer in number now than in the past, their presence has added to the reconfiguration of the racial dynamic

Fig. 30: Vietnamese hymns fill the sanctuary of the Vietnamese Baptist Mission.
Courtesy of Fannie Mae Langdale and Morningside Baptist Church.

on the eastside. African Americans now outnumber whites, reversing the pattern that existed for most of the twentieth century. White flight coincided with a rapid growth in the number of African American residents in the 1980s. The evolution into truly interracial neighborhoods has been accomplished largely in the time frame of twenty years without major incidents. Whether the population will grow more diverse remains to be seen.

COMMUNITY

Each neighborhood has followed a unique path to the present. Residents take pride in the family ties, neighborhood institutions, and accomplishments that inhabit their collective memory. But, in looking beyond neighborhood boundaries, how has the concept of "community" on the eastside evolved over the years?

The Southeastern Shipyard era created a community, almost overnight, when workers poured into newly-constructed defense housing at Deptford Place, Moses Rogers Grove, Pine Gardens, and Josiah Tattnall Homes. The single purpose of building Liberty Ships bound these residents together into a "company town," and, to varying degrees, pulled Twickenham, Wagner Heights, and East Savannah into the shipyard's orbit.

No other event, before or after the war, was so compelling in forging an overarching community on the eastside. Nonetheless, certain institutions functioned as "community magnets" that brought neighborhoods together for specific purposes.

With the post-war demographic bulge of the "baby boom", for example, child-rearing became the pivot of neighborhood life and schools became the bridge between neighborhoods. Strong elementary schools – Moore Avenue (later renamed for Charles Herty), Pennsylvania Avenue, Powell Laboratory, and Eli Whitney – were among the most effective institutions in creating community identification. The oldest of these schools, Powell Laboratory on the campus of Savannah State College, connected East Savannah and LePageville to other African American neighborhoods throughout eastern Chatham County during the era of segregated education. Moore Avenue/Charles Herty, Pennsylvania Avenue, and Eli Whitney first brought white families and later African American parents from adjacent eastside neighborhoods to work together in the best interests of the children. Mothers who did not work outside the home frequently volunteered to help in the library or lunchroom, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, and PTA meetings acted almost like community forums. The closure of all three of these schools between 1992 and 2003 was a devastating loss for eastside neighborhoods. With the conversion of Shuman Middle School to a K-5 elementary in 2010, the eastside regained a neighborhood elementary school, which hopefully will restore the community glue that has been lost.

For more than fifty years, a community hub for eastside neighborhoods was the Administration Building at Josiah Tattnall Homes/Savannah Gardens. Although it catered to the needs of its residents first, the management opened its doors to other community activities. However, it was not until the integration of Savannah Gardens in the 1960s that it became truly inclusive.

Every age group found activities suited to their interests at the Administration Building. For more than twenty years, kindergarten children attended classes there and delighted their parents and grandparents with Maypole parties and Christmas programs. Older children learned the basics of ballet and tap dancing from Doris Martin. Later they did the Twist and the Mashed Potato at the teenage dances held at the Administration Building. For many of those teenagers, the weekly dances at Savannah Gardens became an adolescent rite of passage. For the whole family, there was movie night on the weekend.[78]

For civic events requiring ample seating, the Administration Building offered the best facilities on the eastside. Consequently, community meetings were generally held there, often enough, in fact, that the Administration Building was commonly referred to as the "Community Center" by the 1970s. Issues of common concern were debated there, whether it was vandalism, speeding on neighborhood streets, or even the sale of Josiah Tattnall Homes in the 1950s, but joyous occasions, such as wedding receptions, took place there too.[79] When the Administration Building was torn down in 1998 as part of the land preparation for the Savannah High School, a community landmark disappeared. There were so many memories attached to the building and the good times that it represented that one former resident, Diane Wells, took home a brick from the rubble as a souvenir.[80]

Fig. 31: Josiah Tattnall Homes Administration Building, located at Pennsylvania Avenue and Elgin Street, was a convenient meeting place for residents of adjacent neighborhoods.

Courtesy of Charles Varner.

Even before the demolition, planning for a community center was underway. The Board of Education and the City of Savannah agreed to locate a community center on the campus of Shuman Middle School in 1997. The plans envisioned a spacious facility complete with game room, Golden Age office for seniors, multi-purpose room, and a fitness center with locker rooms.[81] When the 8,000 sq.ft. facility opened in 1998, a new "community magnet," the Eastside Regional Center, anchored in Hillcrest neighborhood provided space for computer access, tutorials, meetings, and basketball games.

Credit for this center goes not only to the City and the Board of Education but also to a concerned group of residents who had been advocating for a new facility since 1980. Patricia Jenkins, Edward Lennox Sr., and C.B. Sapp were among those who saw a need for more recreational opportunities for eastside children and their determination to lobby on behalf of this issue gave rise to the Eastside Neighborhood Association.[82] Although the association was in fact short-lived, its existence nonetheless showed the civic-mindedness essential for community-building.

The transformation of Savannah Gardens from blighted housing to a showcase for sensitive urban design will be the key to encourage community development in the future. The development represents a $110 million investment in the eastside which will build not only appealing new housing with abundant green space but also stimulate new and existing businesses. As shoppers return to patronize neighborhood shops, Pennsylvania Avenue will again be the "main street" of the eastside. With the removal of the fences that isolated the complex replaced by open street access, Savannah Gardens will be able to function as a social and economic crossroads for the community.

CHALLENGES

Even with the revitalization of Savannah Gardens, significant challenges remain to create a viable community. Property maintenance issues underlie tensions between homeowners and absentee landlords. Dilapidated and vacant homes drag down the neighborhood, creating pockets of blight and lowering property values. Daisy Harrison voiced the complaints of many homeowners in Pine Gardens and other neighborhoods as well: "the rundown rental properties have caused the community to go downhill and not be what it used to be." Tenants and homeowners alike have the responsibility of mowing the lawn, disposing of litter, keeping the noise level down, and returning garbage containers to the lane after collection day.[83] However, because current tenants tend to be more transient than those of the past, they are less likely to see themselves as part of the neighborhood and may slough off responsibility unless they identify with community goals. For established residents who had lived in a more stable environment for decades, these changes are daunting as they jeopardize the core of neighborhood life.

Crime also preys on neighborhoods in transition. Residents agree that drug trafficking has escalated during the past twenty years and represents the most serious threat to the area. That portion of Pennsylvania Avenue bordering Strathmore Estates was known as "crack alley" in the mid-1990s because of drug dealers driving there to sell crack from the comfort of their cars. Adolescents copied the strategy by selling drugs from their bikes or sometimes stationing their bicycles where they could act as look-outs for dealers. Often the location of crack houses in neighborhoods is common knowledge. The latest concern is the proliferation of methamphetamine labs. The Pine Gardens Neighborhood Association educates its residents about this powerfully addictive drug and the dangers of explosion from "cooking" meth.[84]

Inevitably drug use leads to other crimes as addicts steal to support their habits. The soaring rates of burglary and robbery at Strathmore Estates between 2005 and 2008 may be linked to drug use. In fact, former Police

Fig. 32: Santa's little helpers dropped by Tattnall Homes Administration Building to perform at the Christmas program in 1948.

Georgia Historical Society Photographs, MS 1361-PH, Box 6, Folder 22.
Courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society.

Chief Michael Berkow identified Strathmore Estates as "one of the most serious crime centers in the City" in 2007.[85] With revitalization, the new Savannah Gardens will begin with a clean slate on crime. Other neighborhoods, however, must continue to be vigilant to achieve a meaningful reduction of serious crime.

Resiliency characterized eastside residents for more than a century. They have carved out neighborhoods from land at one time inhabited by Native Americans, farmed by slaves, defended with fortifications, and crossed by railroads. These neighborhoods have been the homes of shipyard workers, shrimpers, shopkeepers, and cannery workers. Yet these residents have embraced the concept that neighborhoods can be more than brick and mortar, that neighborhoods, in fact, mirror the full sweep of daily life. With a niche for recreation and entertainment, the eastside made room for golfers and theater-goers. Residents took time to ice skate, play baseball, and swim. Sports fans cheered on Bobby Jones and Sugar Ray Robinson, and stars such as Elvis Presley and James Brown belted out rock classics to mesmerized teenagers. At the same time, these neighborhoods built a tradition of strong churches and schools that created lifelong ties. The cemeteries that co-exist with the living link the past and present in human terms. Even places that have disappeared such as LePageville are still part of the collective memory. The multi-dimensional experience of eastern Savannah defies simple generalization.

At the heart of the area's resiliency is its ability to reinvent itself. Now, on the cusp of another period of dramatic change, the diversity and richness of the past will provide the shoulders on which the future will be built.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

CDSA	Catholic Diocese of Savannah Archives
CCCH	Chatham County Court House
EDP-OH	Oral History Collection, Eastside Documentation Project
GHS	Georgia Historical Society
LOPL	Live Oak Public Libraries
MRL	Municipal Research Library
SCCPSS	Savannah-Chatham County Public School System
SEP	*Savannah Evening Press*
SH	*The Herald* (Savannah)
SMN	*Savannah Morning News*
SNP	*Savannah News-Press*
ST	*Savannah Tribune*

ARCHIVES AND DOCUMENT COLLECTIONS CONSULTED

Catholic Diocese of Savannah Archives
Chatham County Court House
Coastal Heritage Society
Georgia Archives
Georgia Historical Society
Ginger and Adams Wilkins Travel Brochure Collection
Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries
Hillcrest Memorial Park and Mausoleum Archives
Library of Congress
Live Oak Public Libraries – Georgia Room, Bull Street Library
Municipal Research Library
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People who lived and worked in eastern Savannah tell neighborhood stories best. These forty-two individuals graciously shared their memories in videotaped interviews with Dr. Charles Elmore and Dr. Martha Keber. We appreciate their candor, insights, and generosity in making the past a vivid part of the present.

HAROLD BAKER

A resident of East Savannah for forty years, Rev. Harold Baker has deep family and spiritual roots in the community. He is a lifelong member of First African Baptist Church of East Savannah and "always had the desire to preach." He was ordained a minister at that church in 1956.

MAGGIE HOUSTON BAKER

Maggie Baker worked hard all her life. Born in Thunderbolt, she learned to pick crab, clean shrimp, and shuck oysters as a child. As a wife and mother of five children, she continued to work hard to provide for her family. In 2009, she celebrated her 101st birthday with children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren.

DARYL L. BLALOCK

Memories of baseball are some of Daryl Blalock's most vivid recollections of growing up in East Savannah. He played on championship Little League teams for ten years and he lettered in baseball at Savannah High School where he played second base, centerfield, and pitcher.

DAVID C. BLOUNT

Growing up in Deptford Homes gave David Blount an appreciation for the unique features of eastern Savannah. As an adult, he joined other volunteers to save the African American LePageville Cemetery, tackling difficult jobs such as clearing the land overgrown with brush and debris.

JANIE BAKER BOWERS

Much of Janie Baker Bowers' life has revolved around education. From her first job as sole teacher in a one-room schoolhouse in Metter to her last position at Frank W. Spencer Elementary School, her career spanned nearly forty years. Her passion for education inspired her two daughters, both principals in the Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools.

LYNETTE B. WARD BRIDGES

Growing up in a home that prized education, Lynette B. Ward Bridges found teaching to be a natural calling. After receiving both undergraduate and graduate degrees in English education, she taught on the secondary level and has served as principal of two elementary schools in Chatham County.

VICTORIA R. BRYANT
Few educators have the breadth of experience as Victoria Bryant. Beginning her career as a paraprofessional, she taught in elementary and middle schools, moved to the administrative level, and established the top-ranked magnet school in the country as principal of Thunderbolt Elementary School.

DOROTHY BELL CAMPBELL
Dorothy Bell Campbell decided to become a teacher while still an elementary school student. She spent much of her thirty-six year career with the Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools in eastern Savannah schools. She taught over a decade at Powell Laboratory School and seventeen years at Shuman Middle School, where she was the librarian.

MILBOURNE R. CANNON JR.
As valedictorian of his graduating class at Sol C. Johnson High School, Mil Cannon spoke on the theme, "Not to Equal but Excel," the school motto. That theme runs throughout his life, as he rose above the poverty of his childhood in eastern Savannah to succeed in Little League baseball, in education, and in business.

ELLISON P. COOK
As alderman for the third district in Savannah, Ellis Cook was attentive to the concerns of his constituents in eastern Savannah. He worked with the East Savannah Community Association to get streets paved in that neighborhood during the 1990s. He also participated with the LePageville Memorial Cemetery Corp. to preserve the cemetery and continues to be active in that organization.

DR. REBECCA R. COOPER
As a young child, Rebecca Cooper wanted to attend Savannah State University and to become a teacher. In fulfilling that goal, she taught on both the elementary and secondary levels, as well as moving into administrative posts in recent years. Her skill has taken her from the Savannah-Chatham County schools to public school systems in Glynn County, Georgia and Jasper County, South Carolina.

DAVID DURDEN
Growing up in eastern Savannah in the 1940s and 1950s gave David Durden a strong foundation for his later life. He learned the value of hard work delivering groceries on a bicycle and sweeping up late on a Saturday night. He developed lasting friendships and an appreciation for family because "people looked out after each other." According to Mr. Durden, "we grew up in the best era."

ELLA MARIE HARMON
Over the past twenty years, Ella Marie Harmon helped to build the outreach programs of the East Savannah Community Association. She has led the organization as president since 1998 and has popularized health seminars for seniors and an October Fest for children. Because of her interest in young people, she works with the First Baptist Church of East Savannah in providing scholarships.

DAISY RINER HARRISON

In over fifty years of residence in Pine Gardens, Daisy Riner Harrison has seen her close-knit neighborhood decline because of run-down properties and drug dealers. As President of the Pine Gardens Neighborhood Association, she has been pro-active in addressing these problems and building a core of concerned neighbors to return Pine Gardens to better days.

MARY E. HILTON

Mary Hilton moved with her husband and infant son into Tattnall Homes in 1950. The apartment on Wisconsin Avenue has been her home for six decades. However, all the homes in her complex are currently under demolition order to make way for a new mixed-income housing development to be called Savannah Gardens. Mrs. Hilton is promised a modern apartment when the redesigned complex is built.

THELMA WELCH HODGES

Born in 1908, Thelma Welch Hodges challenged the norms set for women. At Savannah High, she organized a girls' cheerleading squad and even took a shop class where she learned to operate a lathe. In World War II, she worked with an acetylene torch at Southeastern Shipyard and was one of two women given the honor of releasing a ship during a launch by burning through the plates that held the vessel fast.

JOHN MARVIN JENKINS

East Savannah gave John Marvin Jenkins rich memories of playing baseball, football, swimming, and golf with other boys in the neighborhood. After graduating from Beach High School, he served four years in the Air Force, with the majority of that time spent in France. He returned to Savannah where he was employed by Union Camp for thirty-five years.

ARTHUR L. KIRK

Arthur Kirk has spent a life on the water, first in the Coast Guard during the Korean War and then on tugboats. He has spent more than fifty years working for the Atlantic Towing Company in Savannah, where he became a docking pilot. His anchor in East Savannah has been Savannah Gardens, where he has resided for most of his adult life.

SALLY ROUNTREE KLEIN

A pivotal event in Sally Rountree Klein's life was the integration of Sol C. Johnson High School where she was among the first white students to enroll. She found much in common with her African American classmates and was voted vice-president of the student council her second year. She went on to earn both undergraduate and graduate degrees in education and became a teacher in Savannah.

JACK D. LEE

Jack Lee began work at Southern States Phosphate and Fertilizer Company as a foreman in 1949. By the time he retired forty-eight years later, he had become the company's president. During his years at Southern States, he had the opportunity to know a number of the residents of LePageville, who rented their homes from the company.

OLA B. LEWIS

A born educator, Ola Bryan Lewis served as teacher and administrator for the Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools, and after her retirement, for Armstrong Atlantic State University. A turning point in her life was attending the newly-desegregated Savannah High School. Although she endured taunts and isolation as an African American student, the experience left her a "stronger person."

CORINTHIA MANIGAULT

Corinthia Manigault has seen many changes in her neighborhood of East Savannah. Born in 1913, she remembers when the neighborhood was like a small village where families pumped water from a well and cooked on a wood stove. She participated in change directly by joining desegregation efforts in the 1960s.

MATILDA BRYAN MARTIN

Matilda Bryan Martin's mother told her as a child that she would attend Savannah State University and become a teacher. That prediction was fulfilled. Matilda Bryan graduated from Savannah State and taught for more than thirty-nine years, primarily at Beach High School. Her goals were to establish positive relationships with her students at Beach and to lead by example.

BENJAMIN MOULTRIE III

Benjamin Moultrie recalls a wonderful boyhood growing up in East Savannah. He and his friends went swimming or played baseball and golf, picking fruit off the trees for snacks. He continued to live in East Savannah as an adult, raising six children with his wife. Mr. Moultrie worked at the Georgia Ports Authority during his twenty-five year career.

PERCIL MOYE

For Percil Moye, enlistment in the U.S. Army at age seventeen opened a different world from his East Savannah home. Stationed in Germany for three years, he then returned to Savannah where he completed his college education and worked in the field of mental health.

GEORGE OELSCHIG

A third generation florist, George Oelschig has deep roots in eastern Savannah. He grew up at the family compound at the intersection of Skidaway Road and Wheaton Street and established his own nursery business in Deptford Plantation area in 1967. He is well-versed in the Oelschig family history and is one of the founders of the Germany Heritage Society in Savannah.

LEROY H. PALMER

Life has come full circle for Leroy Palmer. He left East Savannah to enlist in the army and eventually settled in New York. Forty-five years later, he returned to East Savannah and bought the house on Iowa Street that his grandfather built. He also resumed his education, graduating from Savannah State University at the age of sixty-nine. Currently he works as a paraprofessional with special education students at Robert W. Gadsden Elementary School.

GEORGE PONDER

George Ponder served in the U.S. Army during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War for a total of twenty-nine years. When he returned to Savannah in 1979, he was disappointed to see that his boyhood home of LePageville had been torn down. He and his brother, Jesse, were among the primary figures working to preserve the LePageville Cemetery, where several of their family members are buried.

SISTER LILLIAN QUADRELLA, RSM

"The Lord puts a seed in your heart and you know that's your calling." Sister Lillian Quadrella knew that she would become a nun while a student at St. Vincent's Academy and joined the Sisters of Mercy at age eighteen. She celebrated fifty years of service as a nun in 2009. Her roots in eastern Savannah go back to her childhood at Tattnall Homes when her parents worked at Southeastern Shipyard.

RUTHIE L. GREENE RAWLERSON

Ruthie Rawlerson has vivid memories of growing up in LePageville. Although she and her family worked hard to make ends meet, she also remembers good times, such as the traditional bonfires on New Year's Day and summer boat excursions to Daufuskie Island complete with feasts of deviled crab, fried chicken, and potato salad.

MARY T. ROBERSON

Mary Roberson moved to East Savannah in 1944 to live with her grandmother. The community at that time lacked electricity, paved roads, and telephones and, as a teenager, she could not imagine staying there for any length of time. However, marriage and family, as well as membership in the First African Baptist Church of East Savannah, turned this neighborhood into her home for more than sixty years.

WILLIE M. ROBERSON

After thirty-two years working with American Cyanamid, Willie Roberson took on responsibility to lead the East Savannah Community Association as president. He worked with city officials to bring about important improvements, such as paving streets and installing sidewalks on Treat Avenue.

ANNA LAVINIA YOUNG ROBINSON

Two important East Savannah families were united with the marriage of Anna Lavinia Young and Jonas Robinson. The Young family had long been residents of East Savannah and the Robinsons were a large family who raised livestock in the fields nearby. The young couple moved to a small house on Treat Avenue in 1953 which Jonas Robinson expanded and decorated with ironwork.

HENRY ROBINSON

The East Savannah neighborhood that Henry Robinson remembers as a child had open fields, some plowed by his father for crops, others used as a baseball diamond and golf course by the children. Drafted during World War II, he served in the U.S. Navy and later worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

MINNIE LOU ROBINSON

Minnie Lou Robinson lived in LePageville as a child from 1936 to 1938. The hardships of daily life there were balanced with the joys that come from living in a close-knit community. In recent years, Ms. Robinson took a leading role in preserving the LePageville Cemetery.

CHARLOTTE CHRISTINE SERNERS

A native of Hartsfield, Georgia, Charlotte Christine Serners came to Savannah with her family early in the 1940s and settled at Josiah Tattnall Homes. Although she moved from one apartment to another in the complex, Crescent Avenue has been her address for more than sixty years. She worked at a bank from 1953 to 1980, rising to the position of teller supervisor, but her life centered on raising her son.

SADIE DAVIS STEELE

Forty-two years in the classroom brought many accolades to Sadie Davis Steele. She was named Georgia Teacher of the Year among African American educators in 1959. The first grade students she taught at Haven Home School in the 1930s also presented a plaque of appreciation to her in 2008. In addition, Goodwill Industries and the King-Tisdell Cottage Foundation honored her for her volunteer efforts.

CHARLES VARNER

Pine Gardens was Charles Varner's childhood home and the friends that he made there in the 1950s and 1960s continue to be close. In 2003, the closing of Eli Whitney Elementary School led him and several other classmates to organize a 50th reunion for Whitney students. Since that time, he has become a neighborhood historian, working to obtain designation on the National Register of Historic Districts for Pine Gardens.

THAD WELCH JR.

Born in Savannah, Thad Welch Jr. built a distinguished career in the U.S. Air Force over a period of twenty-four years. He trained pilots, flew combat missions in Vietnam, and also taught physics at the Air Force Academy. Among his many decorations is the Silver Star, won for rescuing a downed pilot in Vietnam under enemy fire.

JEANNETTE A. WESTLEY

For Jeannette Westley, the Civil Rights Movement was a life-changing event. She learned how to stay calm and disciplined even when she was jeered while demonstrating for equal rights. As a student at Savannah State University, she participated in activities organized by the student council but worked primarily with Hosea Williams' Crusade for Voters. After graduation, she worked as the Director of Grants and Contracts at Savannah State.

ANDREA BOWERS WILLIAMS

Andre Williams has found her niche in the Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools. As principal of Garden City and Robert W. Spencer Elementary Schools, Ms. Williams brought together parents and teachers to turn underachieving schools into successful centers of learning. The strong educational foundation she received during her East Savannah childhood no doubt contributes to her ability to help students.

REV. THOMAS E. WILLIAMS

The fourteenth pastor of First African Baptist Church of East Savannah, Rev. Thomas E. Williams has served the congregation since 1986. He sees his mission as one of reaching out to all members of the community and welcoming them into church fellowship. With the building of a new church in 2002, the sanctuary can now accommodate four hundred people.

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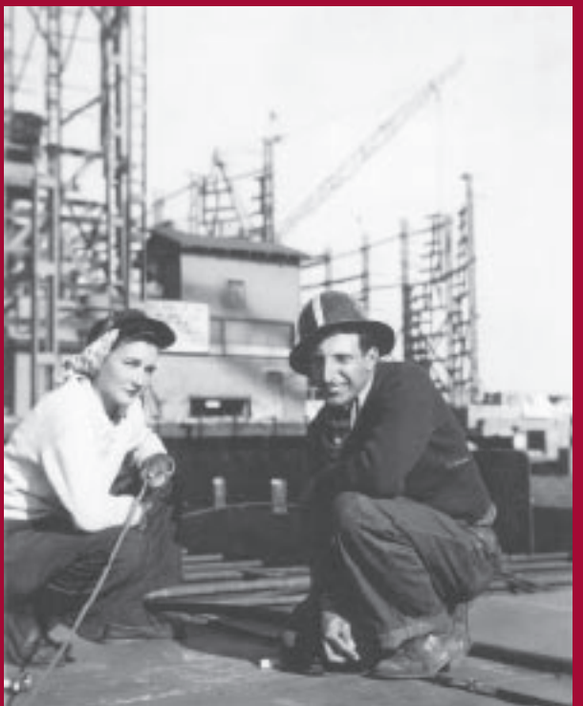

Courtesy of Sister Lillian Quadrella, RSM.

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