19NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Jackson Ward Historic District (Additional Documentation)

Other names/site number: VDHR File No. 127-237

2. Location

street & number roughly bounded by Gilmer, Marshall, North Third and Leigh Streets

city or town Richmond vicinity N/A

state Virginia code VA county Richmond (Independent City) code 760 zip code 23220

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ■ nomination ▯ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ■ meets ▯ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ■ nationally ▯ statewide ▯ locally. (▯ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date 10/27/98

Director, Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ▯ meets ▯ does not meet the National Register criteria. (▯ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:
- ▯ entered in the National Register
  - ▯ See continuation sheet.
- ▯ determined eligible for theNational Register
  - ▯ See continuation sheet.
- ▯ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ▯ removed from the NationalRegister
- ▯ other (explain) _____

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

Jackson Ward historic District (Additional Documentation) — Richmond, Virginia

Name of Property — City and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- [x] private
- [ ] public-local
- [ ] public-State
- [ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- [ ] building(s)
- [x] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Non-contributing	
3	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
COMMERCE	Office
COMMERCE	Professional
HEALTH CARE	Office

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
COMMERCE	Office
HEALTH CARE	Office
VACANT/NOT IN USE	

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	CONCRETE
walls	CONCRETE; BRICK
	STONE: SLATE
roof	ASPHALT
other	

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Jackson Ward historic District (Additional Documentation)
Name of Property

Richmond, Virginia
City and State

8. Statement of SignificanceApplicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- [x] **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [ ] **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [ ] **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] **B** removed from its original location.
- [ ] **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- [ ] **D** a cemetery.
- [ ] **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] **F** a commemorative property.
- [x] **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black

Period of Significance
1800 - 1970

Significant Dates
1970

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- [ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- [x] previously listed in the National Register
- [ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register
- [x] designated a National Historic Landmark
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record#

Primary Location of Additional Data

- [x] State Historic Preservation Office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Name of repository :

Jackson Ward historic District (Additional Documentation) — Name of Property

Richmond, Virginia — City and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _____

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1				3			
2				4			

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kathryn Colwell, James Hill, Susan Horner, Kathy Lucia, Mary Harding Sadler

organization Sadler & Whitehead Architects, PLC date 17, June 2002

street & number 800 West 33rd Street telephone 804-231-5299

city or town Richmond state VA zip code 23225-3533

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.0. Box 37127, Washington, DC 200137127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (10240018), Washington, DC 20503.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Jackson Ward Historic District is north of downtown Richmond, Virginia in an area roughly described by Duval Street on the north, Third Street on the east, Marshall and Clay Streets on the south and Gilmer Street on the west. This additional documentation is submitted in order to expand the significance of the Jackson Ward Historic District to include the Civil Rights era (1940-1970). A majority of the buildings associated with the institutions and people who contributed to the Civil Rights movement were constructed prior to 1940. Most have architectural or historical significance established in earlier survey efforts. A majority of these properties are typical of the Italianate and Greek Revival buildings found throughout the neighborhood. This amendment identifies buildings specifically associated with African Americans in Richmond who fought to win the civil rights guaranteed to them by the Constitution.

We identify thirteen properties connected with the Civil Rights movement and eight properties associated with community leaders or the business reinvestment within the Ward during this era. Three of these buildings are changed from non-contributing to contributing status. Two of them, the Virginia Mutual Beneficial Insurance Company Building and Doctors Thornton and Howlette Medical Offices are modern buildings designed by local architects. The third, The Sheffield Building, is an Italianate duplex with a prominent one-story modern addition.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Inventory of Historic Buildings in Jackson Ward

The 1976 National Register of Historic Places nomination form for the Jackson Ward Historic District includes a general inventory that highlights buildings with particular architectural or historical significance. In 1987 and 1992 the City of Richmond and the Department of Historic Resources coordinated a building-by-building inventory with survey forms documenting the full range of buildings and styles represented in the Ward. Styles in the historic district include mid-19th century Greek Revival houses, Italianate dwellings and commercial buildings, an Art Deco theater, and the modern office buildings we propose to add to the list of those considered significant. Since completion of the survey in 1992, dozens of historic buildings in the historic district have been lost through demolition, fire, and neglect. The historic district was placed on the National Trust's 2001 list of *America's Eleven Most Endangered Places*. Recent loss of the offices at 623 North Third Street, from which Oliver Hill and his law partner Spottswood Robinson prosecuted desegregation cases that were part of the landmark Brown v. Board of Education decisions, makes clear the ongoing threat to the most significant landmarks of the Civil Rights era.

Where Did the Civil Rights Movement Take Place in Richmond

The Civil Rights movement in Richmond was marked by the intense efforts of Jackson Ward lawyers, businessmen, professionals and others to establish equitable treatment through integration, voter registration, and loyalty to the black-owned businesses. The movement's success was a result of a community of activists who organized and inspired others in meetings, sermons, and social gatherings that took place in historic

buildings throughout Jackson Ward. The Ward had become the heart of Richmond's African American community during the century following the Civil War. As noted by the National Trust: "Founded by free blacks and immigrants, Jackson Ward became a gerrymandered voting district in the 1870s that kept those groups voting in one area. When early 20th-century Jim Crow laws separated the races, the people of Jackson Ward created a self-sustaining economy that made the area famous as the 'Black Wall Street' and alive with theaters, clubs and restaurants." [1]

With few exceptions, the buildings cited in the following inventory predate the Civil Rights movement. Their style, scale, and material derive from their mid-19th to early-20th century origins. The three buildings selected for addition to the inventory have a modern aesthetic. In their deliberate choice of contemporary architectural idiom, businessmen Booker T. Bradshaw and Clarence Townes, Sr. at the Virginia Mutual Life Insurance Company Building; John Howlette, MD and William S. Thornton, MD at 206 – 208 East Clay Street; and James E. Sheffield, Esq. At 12 – 14 West Leigh Street; boldly asserted a commitment to the Ward's future vitality.

AN INVENTORY OF BUILDINGS IN THE JACKSON WARD HISTORIC DISTRICT THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA

The three buildings whose status has changed from "non-contributing" to "contributing" are indicated with a double asterisk (**)

First Street, North
400 Block (Even)

420 ca.1880, Italianate, 2-story, brick residence converted to commercial use, stretcher bond, 2 bays, corbelled brick and molded cornice, rock-faced stone lintels, projecting bay, 1/1 windows, central chimney. Law offices of civil rights attorneys Roland Ealey, Herman Benn, and M. Ralph Page in the 1960s. In 1963, the Richmond Branch of the NAACP was located in the building.

Second Street, North
500 Block (Even)

516 ca. 1900, Italianate, 2-story, brick commercial building, stretcher bond, 2 bays, bracketed cornice, paired 1/1 windows, molded storefront cornice intact. Annex for the Hotel Harris, one of three African American hotels associated with North 2nd Street entertainment and nightlife during the 1940s and 1950s.

528 The Hippodrome Theatre, ca. 1934, Art Deco, 2-story, stucco, symmetrical façade, with paired central entry doors. This theater was a popular entertainment center from the 1930s through the 1950s. The Hippodrome attracted the "greats" of the era, including Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, and Louis Armstrong.

500 Block (Odd)

537 ca. 1890, Italianate, 2-story, brick commercial building, stretcher bond, 4 bays, pilasters and cornice on storefront, 1/1 windows with segmental arches, bracketed cornice at roof line. Office of Benjamin A. Cephas Real Estate for over thirty years. Cephas was the first African American appointed to the Richmond Public Library Board.

539-541 Hotel Eggleston, ca. 1900, Italianate, 3-story, brick hotel, 6 bays, Permastone facing on second and third floors, metal balconies on second and third floors, 1/1 windows with segmental arches. Hotel owned by Neverett Eggleston, Sr. The Hotel Eggleston and its restaurant Neverett's Place were popular meeting spots for Richmond African Americans in the 1940s and 1950s.

600 Block (Odd)

603 ca. 1900, Vernacular, 2-story, brick commercial building, stretcher bond, 4 bays, plain cornice. This building housed Richmond's premier African American photography firm, Brown's Photography.

Third Street, North
600 Block (Even)

614 Third St. Bethel AME Church, ca. 1857, Italianate, 1-story, 4 bays, 1-story front porch of brick and wood with a brick balustrade and Tuscan columns, lancet arch windows with tracery, corbeling and other decorative brickwork, towers on both front corners, gabled roof. One of Jackson Ward's most active churches in the Civil Rights movement. The church was the site for numerous organizational meetings.

Clay Street, East
1 Block (Odd)

11 ca. 1878, Italianate, 2-story, brick residence, stretcher bond, 3 bays, 1-story porch with iron posts, brackets, frieze and balustrade, 2/2 segmental-arch windows, decorative vents. Home of Clarence W. Newsome, civil rights attorney with the firm of Hill Tucker & Marsh.

100 Block (Even)

110-112** The Virginia Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company Building was designed by Tiffany Armstrong, architect with David Warren Harwicke & Partners. It was built in 1963 for community leaders and businessmen Booker T. Bradshaw and Clarence Townes, Sr. to house their insurance company business headquarters and other tenants, including the neighborhood ABC store. Until the mid-1990s when Jackson Center was built nearby on 2nd Street, this was the largest office building in Jackson Ward. The Virginia Mutual Beneficial Life Insurance Company Building, at the northwest corner of Second and Clay Streets, has one of the most prominent sites in Jackson Ward. The owners and their architect consciously rejected the idea of constructing a building in a traditional idiom. Their goal was to create a modern structure that would speak to the future rather than the past.

The building has the stripped-down aesthetic of the International Style. A four story rectangular box constructed of pre-cast concrete, the building is organized by windows aligned in the open vertical strips between the shallow projections of the U-shaped wall panels. The base of the building is clad with a slate veneer, except at the south-facing entry elevation. A wall of store-front doors and windows is recessed behind an arcade created by two square columns. Most of the building's interior has been altered over time due to the changes of business and retail tenants. The elevator lobbies are distinguished by beige and blue-green mosaic wall panels and,

Clay Street, East, cont.

110-112** cont. at the small entry lobby a suspended ceiling of bronze and blue-green, anodized, aluminum squares.

Virginia Mutual Benefit Life's founders were community leaders who supported the Civil Rights Movement with significant financial contributions and business expertise.

200 Block (Even)

206-208** Doctors Howlette and Thornton Medical Offices. Optometrist John Howlette, MD and podiatrist William S. Thornton hired architect C. Page Highfill of Hyland and Highfill architects in 1961 to design their offices at 206-208 East Clay Street. The project pairs long, narrow one-story buildings along a canopied walk. The buildings are brick boxes, designed in the modern style with very little ornament. Corrugated panels shelter the serpentine walk leading from the property's gated entry to an outdoor fountain centered between the two offices. The narrow garden lining this path is planted with topiary and other ornamental shrubs. The site presents an unexpected oasis in the city. The entry bay in each of the buildings is delineated with a wall panel of painted diagonal siding. In the case of this unusual property, these two understated buildings become a backdrop to the property's primary feature, its garden.

John L. Howlette and William S. Thornton were both prominent doctors and community leaders. Thornton was one of the founding members of the Crusade for Voters.

212-214 Southern Aid Society of Virginia Building, ca. 1910, Renaissance Revival, office building, brick, stretcher bond, 4-story, 7 bays, first floor pediments, Corinthian pilasters, 1/1 windows with arches and keystones, rustication, cornice with modillions, parapet roof. Headquarters for the Southern Aid Life Insurance Company and numerous professional offices including the law firm of civil rights attorneys Hill Tucker & Marsh.

Clay Street, West
400 Block (Odd)

419 ca. 1883, Italianate, brick residence, stretcher bond, 2-story, 2 bay, brick stoop, pilasters and entablature around entrance, large bowed window, cornice with dentils and frieze with vents. Home of Earl W. Davis, a Field Representative for the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations) who was a leader in the Crusade for Voters.

Clay Street, West cont.
500 Block (Odd)

503 ca. 1850, Greek Revival residence, brick, stretcher bond, 2-story on a raised basement, 3 asymmetrical bays, sidelights and transom at front door, Greek Revival porch with square posts, plain frieze and cornice, 6/6 windows, stepped parapet roof. Home of Roy West, community leader and Richmond Public Schools administrator during desegregation West served on the Richmond City Council and was elected Mayor in 1982.

Leigh Street, East
100 Block (Even)

102 ca. 1880, Italianate, brick residence, stretcher bond, 2-story, 3 bays, Neo-Classical porch with Corinthian columns and turned balustrade, 1/1 segmental-arch windows, bracketed cornice with decorative vents. Home of Dr. J.J. Smallwood, professor at Virginia Union University and active in the Civil Rights movement.

104 ca. 1880, Italianate, brick residence, stretcher bond, 2 story, 3 bays, porch with decorative iron posts, balustrade and brackets, cornice with modillions, shed roof. Home of James H. Johnston, President of Virginia State College, Petersburg, VA, who was active in the Civil Rights movement.

118 ca. 1880, Italianate, brick residence, stretcher bond, 2 story, 3 bays, stone stoop, 2/2 windows, full-length windows on the first floor, bracketed cornice with decorative vents. Law offices in late 1950s of civil rights attorneys Oliver Hill, Martin C. Martin, and James R. Olphin.

100 Block (Odd)

117 ca. 1880, Italianate, brick residence, stretcher bond, 2 story, 3 bays, Victorian Vernacular porch with turned posts and balustrade and sawn brackets, double front door, 2/2 segmental-arch windows, bracketed cornice with dentils and decorative vents. First Richmond law office (1939) of prominent civil rights attorney Oliver W. Hill.

Leigh Street, West
1 Block (Even)

12-14 ** Sheffield Building, ca. 1880 with 1965 addition, Italianate, brick office building, stretcher bond, 2 story, 7 asymmetrical bays, one-story section with fixed sash windows, 2/2 windows in two story section, bracketed cornice. James E. Sheffield moved his law practice to the Sheffield Building in 1965 as part of a larger effort to revitalize Jackson Ward. In 1974, Sheffield became the first African American Virginia Circuit Court judge.

Leigh Street, West, cont.

18 ca. 1890, Queen Anne, brick residence, stretcher bond, 2 story, 3 bays, Neo Classical porch with Corinthian columns and simple turned balustrade, 1/1 windows with rock-faced stone lintels, projecting turret, false mansard slate roof. Home of S.W. Robinson successful Jackson Ward real estate attorney.

216 Ebenezer Baptist Church, ca. 1858, Greek Revival, brick clad with stucco, Ionic columns form stone and brick portico, arched stained glass windows on sides, shingle roof with pediment gable, cupola with Palladian louvered vents and four spires, iron fence. The 1963 civil rights march on Richmond City Hall to draw attention to inequities in employment opportunities originated at this church.

St. James Street
500 Block (Even)

520 ca.1880, brick residence, stretcher bond, 2-story, 3 bays, Victorian Vernacular wood porch 3 bays wide with square posts and balustrade and sawn brackets, full length windows on first floor, 2/2 segmented-arch windows upstairs, bracketed cornice with decorative grills. Home of Dr. Joseph E. Jones, professor at Virginia Union University who was active in the Civil Rights movement.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Jackson Ward, the historic heart of Richmond's African American community, was profoundly involved in and affected by the civil rights struggle. It was the locus from which dozens of desegregation cases were filed by the law firms of Hill Robinson & Martin, and later Hill Tucker & Marsh. The Ward served as an incubator for black businesses. Excluded from participation in white civic and business affairs, blacks developed interdependent relationships that gave rise to businesses whose success garnered political and economic clout to the black community. The business and political leadership nurtured in the Ward helped to unmake segregation.

Jackson Ward is significant on the national level under *National Register Criterion A* for its critical role in the Civil Rights movement. The Historic District meets *Criterion Consideration G* because of the broad significance of the Civil Rights movement in our nation's history. This extension of the district's period of significance, 1940 to 1970, begins at the time when Jackson Ward's civil rights strategy had matured among the black leaders and action resulted. The era continues through the years of the Civil Rights movement and ends in 1970, the year District Court Judge Robert R. Merhige handed down his landmark ruling that students would be bussed to achieve racial integration of public schools.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Jackson Ward's Historic Designation

The Jackson Ward Historic District was listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register in April 1976 and the National Register of Historic Places in June 1978 because: "The area is broadly significant to students of black, urban, and business history and is unique for having been the center of Negro community life in Richmond during a watershed era for that race and the nation."[2] In June 1978, the exceptional significance of Jackson Ward was formally recognized when it was awarded National Historic Landmark status. The neighborhood was comprehensively surveyed by Tyler Potterfield with the City of Richmond and David Edwards of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in 1987 and 1997. The 1976 Nomination Form authored by Margaret Peters, Calder Loth, H. Peter Pudner, and Joseph Yates, notes that the Period of Significance for the Jackson Ward Historic District extends from 1800 – 1899 and from 1900 (with no concluding year). This addendum proposes to specifically extend the period of significance to include the Civil Rights Era beginning in 1940 and to designate 1970 as the period's terminus.

Background

Segregation developed in Jackson Ward due to restrictive public policies and local attitudes concerning the rights of African Americans following the Civil War. By 1940, the Ward had become home to approximately 5000 African Americans. It was the heart of Richmond's black commercial, cultural, and religious life. In effect, Jackson Ward functioned politically and economically as a "separate city" within the larger metropolis. Following the example of Maggie Lena Walker and the reconstruction era organizations that grew out of the black churches and fraternal organizations, black citizens of the Civil Rights era continued to give back to

strengthen their community. They took pride in their race, and ultimately banded together to overcome obstacles imposed by both legal segregation and the equally limiting *de facto*, or customary segregation.

Ironically, as monumental achievements were made by Jackson Ward attorneys litigating civil rights cases through the court system, Richmond's city planners forever altered the physical fabric of the community through an expansive urban renewal program. Residents could do little to influence the path of the proposed roads and Jackson Ward soon found itself bisected, both vertically and horizontally, by the broad concrete expanses of the I-95 expressway and the Belvidere Street extension. Though urban renewal removed some of the area's most blighted residential properties, it also demolished the physically cohesive community. By 1970, the impact of the city's urban renewal program and blacks' recently won civil rights became evident as many businesses closed or relocated. But even as the physical fabric was lost, the black community continued to identify with Jackson Ward. As a result, efforts to revitalize the neighborhood are underway so that the Ward can nurture another proud generation.

The years 1940 to 1970 represent an era of unprecedented black achievement as successful litigation brought the integration of public schools and African Americans were elected and appointed to numerous political and judicial positions for the first time in our nation's history.

Prominence in the fight for Civil Rights

Litigation

Jackson Ward was the locus from which dozens of desegregation cases were filed by the law firm of Hill Martin & Robinson, later Hill Tucker & Marsh. Senior partner Oliver W. Hill served as head of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) Virginia legal defense team. Over time the firm has operated out of several offices, all located within Jackson Ward. The initial thrust was to prove that the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) decision, which had established 'separate but equal,' was unconstitutional. Hill and partner Spottswood W. Robinson III represented the plaintiff in the Prince Edward County desegregation case *Davis v. County School Board of Prince Edward County* (1951). This case became one of five that formed *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954). Hill and Robinson joined New York NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall in successfully arguing *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* before the United States Supreme Court, thus effectively ending legal school segregation.

Virginia's response to *Brown* was to create policies that collectively became known as "Massive Resistance." Hill's firm vigorously filed law suits opposing the legislature's efforts to perpetuate segregation. In a 1999 interview, Hill stated that suits were filed against Virginia school systems in sixty jurisdictions—representing more litigation than any other state in the Union.[3] Among the acts of Virginia's General Assembly were the Gray Plan (1956) that provided tuition for private school and empowered School Boards to determine pupil school placement and the Stanley Plan (1956) composed of thirteen actions designed to prevent integration. Hill and his legal team responded by filing cases against school boards in Arlington, Norfolk, Newport News, and Charlottesville. Before these cases could be settled, the General Assembly moved to establish independent Pupil Placement Boards. Within the year, Hill successfully obtained a court order temporarily stopping this practice in Richmond. However, the test came when, as the 1958 school year began, six African American

students were denied placement in the all white school of their choice. Attorney Martin A. Martin (partner in Hill Martin and Robinson) represented the plaintiffs in this case *Warden v. Richmond School Board* (1958). Though no settlement was reached until 1961, success was achieved in August 1960 when two African American students were admitted to all white Chandler Elementary School.

Another Richmond School Board tactic to prevent integration was to create "dual attendance zones." Eleven African American parents filed a class action suit to challenge this procedure in *Bradley v. Richmond School Board* (1961). Attorneys Samuel W. Tucker and Henry Marsh III of Hill Tucker & Marsh successfully argued this case and in 1963 the Freedom of Choice Plan was established. However, few students chose to attend a school outside of their district and due to Richmond's segregated residential patterns, schools remained segregated. Tucker and Marsh filed the pivotal case leading to Judge Robert R. Merhige, Jr.'s 1970 landmark ruling in which he ordered the bussing of black and white students to schools outside of their neighborhoods in order to stimulate racial integration of public schools. The ruling would have a profound effect on Jackson Ward and on the nation at large.

Civil rights cases originating from the offices of Jackson Ward attorneys were not limited to school desegregation. Three other examples involved public school teachers' salaries, courtroom seating, and segregation of restaurants. In 1941, Hill teamed with fellow NAACP attorneys Leon Ransom, District of Columbia, and Thurgood Marshall, New York, to represent the black Richmond Teacher's Association in obtaining black teacher salaries equal to those paid white teachers. Immediately upon hearing the suit had been filed, the Richmond School Board passed a pay parity plan. In 1963, the firm of Ealey & Page successfully represented the plaintiff before the U.S. Supreme Court whereby the Court ruled that segregated seating in courtrooms was unconstitutional. The offices of attorneys Roland D. Ealey, and M Ralph Page were located at 420 N. 1st Street (JWHD, NHL)[4]. Also in 1963, Hill associate Clarence W. Newsome represented student demonstrators who had been arrested during a lunch counter demonstration.

Voter Registration

Litigation was but one tool used by Richmond's African American population to gain their civil rights; voter registration was a second method. In 1936, only 1,527 blacks were registered to vote. Increasing this number was difficult as many blacks felt their vote did not count. By 1940, through efforts of Jackson Ward dentist Jesse M. Tinsley, President of the Richmond branch NAACP, and Roscoe C. Jackson of the Democratic Voter's League, the number of blacks voting rose by 50 percent. The progressive mayoral candidate Gordon B. Ambler won, with the support of the black vote. During his administration, he began to address long-standing community problems. The power of the vote was not lost on Richmond's black citizens and in 1948 they helped elect attorney Oliver W. Hill as the first African American to serve on the City Council since Reconstruction.

In the wake of *Brown*, Virginia's legislature mounted an offense against both school integration and the organizations that fought for integration—particularly the NAACP. In 1956, the Richmond Crusade for Voters was founded to sustain the NAACP's efforts in registering voters. Founders were William S. Thornton, John Mitchell Brooks, and William Fergusen Reid. The Crusade's voter-registration campaign during 1957 was known as the "Miracle of Richmond." The drive resurrected an antebellum tradition whereby one black taught

another to read. The motto "each one teach one" now became "each one reach one." The highly successful campaign resulted in a 30 percent increase in black voter registration by 1958.[5] Alarmed by the success of the voter registration campaigns, the Virginia legislature introduced "blank sheet" registration under the guise of testing literacy. The *Richmond Afro-American, the Richmond Planet* countered from its offices at 301 E. Clay Street (now demolished) by launching a "Boomerang for Bigots" program aimed at educating blacks on how to fill in the blank form thus lessening the impact of the blank sheet registration maneuver.[6]

The organizational minds behind the Crusade were educated black professionals who met daily in strategy sessions. Many meetings were held at Slaughters Hotel at 527-529 North 2nd Street (now demolished) and later at the 533 Club next door (now demolished). The commitment was substantial since the Crusade's goal was not only to register voters, but also provide voter education, endorse candidates, establish precinct clubs, and provide transportation to the polls. By the 1962 city council elections, the Crusade had become so effective that seven of the nine candidates it endorsed were elected. In 1966, African Americans represented 48 percent of Richmond's population and 34 percent of all registered voters.

Critical to the voter registration and other civil rights campaigns were the city's black churches—fifteen of which were located in Jackson Ward. These churches, particularly Fifth Street Baptist Church, 705 N. 5th Street (now demolished), Third Street Bethel African Methodist Episcopal, 616 N. 3rd Street (NRHP)[7], and Leigh Street African Methodist Episcopal, 500 E. Leigh Street (now demolished) were the location for mass meetings. But all churches were critical to the effort, with their pastors playing key rolls.

Non-violent protest

Both the Richmond Branch and Virginia Chapter of the NAACP had their offices in Jackson Ward. NAACP staff worked zealously with professors and students at Virginia Union University, pastors, and local businessmen in organizing civil rights protests. Individual actions also garnered attention. As early as 1939, local NAACP president Jesse Tinsley and his wife Ruth defied Richmond's social conventions by entertaining First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt in their home at 531 N. 4th Street (now demolished).[8] Richmond's first organized protest occurred in February 1960 when students from Virginia Union University staged the first "sit-in" at F. W. Woolworth's lunch counter. Other lunch counters targeted included G. C. Murphy, Thalhimer's, and Peoples Service Drug. Later, while picketing Thalhimer's department store, three blacks were arrested. Those arrested included Ruth Tinsley, whom though not picketing was standing near the store and refused to comply with a police officer's order to "move on." By June 1963, sixty restaurants had dropped racial barriers. Demonstrations continued through the year. In August, picketers marched from Ebenezer Baptist Church, 216 W. Leigh Street (JWHD, NHL), down Broad Street to demand increased job opportunities within city government. And later, between 300 and 400 demonstrators gathered at the black YMCA, 214 E. Leigh Street (now demolished), for a bus caravan to D.C. to join the March on Washington.

Richmond's demonstrations differed from those in other states in that they proceeded with few arrests and without violence. But Richmond had not been a passive player in the Civil Rights movement. It has been suggested that the leaders of Richmond's Civil Rights movement were primarily conservative businessmen who had learned to work within the system and who had confidence in achieving the goal through legal means.[9] What is evident is that local black leaders were effective in devising strategies that achieved the desired

outcome without provoking violence. Their actions contributed significantly to passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Important local successes resulting from their efforts are the "firsts" for African Americans who worked and lived in Jackson Ward.

1948 - Oliver W. Hill became first African American elected to the Richmond City Council since Reconstruction
1953 - Booker T. Bradshaw elected as first African American on the Richmond School Board
1964 - Spottswood W. Robinson, III became first African American appointed as a judge on the U.S. District Court in Washington. In 1966, Robinson became first African American appointed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia.
1964 - Dr. William Ferguson Reid and Dr. William M.T. Forrestor became the first African Americans admitted to the Richmond Academy of Medicine
1964 - Benjamin A. Cephas became first African American appointed to the Board of the Richmond Public Library
1966 - William Ferguson Reid became first African American elected to General Assembly in modern times
1966 - Henry Marsh III elected to the City Council and in 1977 became Richmond's first African American Mayor
1974 - James E. Sheffield appointed as first African American Virginia Circuit Court Judge

Prominence of the Business Community

The Jackson Ward business community, with Second Street as its heart, developed as a result of local African Americans' determination to preserve their access to goods and services even as the white community was busy erecting Jim Crow laws to limit such access. Early key businesses, such as Maggie Walker's St. Luke's Penny Savings Bank (NRHP, NHL), and the Southern Aid Society (JWHD, NHL), had grown out of fraternal organizations and self-help societies with ties to the black church. By example, these institutions established a precedent–that business owners would give back, reinvest in their community. This commitment is clearly noted in the financial support and organizational acumen that businessmen provided to the Civil Rights movement.[10] It is also seen through the expansion of individual businesses that reinvested in the physical fabric of Jackson Ward by building new structures and redeveloping old.

Coupled with a business's obligation to the community was the black consumer's responsibility to support local black establishments. Local pastor Dr. Gordon Blaine Hancock, Moore Street Baptist Church, noted that because blacks "possessed little political clout, national, state, and local governments could ignore their complaints... By spending where possible in Negro enterprises, the Negro could at least provide jobs for some members of his group and, at the same time, use his leverage as a consumer to coerce white merchants to hire Negroes."[11] Dr. Hancock coined the phrase "Double Duty Dollar" to express this concept. Similar economic solidarity campaigns of the time included the NAACP's "Buy Black", frequently advanced in the black newspaper the *Afro-American and Richmond Planet*, and "Don't Buy Where You Can't Work."[12] The emphasis on taking pride in and reinvesting in one's race became for many a natural thought pattern and

ensured a vibrant, supportive community even as daily experiences resulting from Richmond's staunch segregationist policies were severely limiting.

For the black business owner, profitability remained a challenge, as black businessmen had to overcome competition from white business owners, who frequently had both the capital and credit to offer wider selection and better prices, and also an increasingly blighted streetscape created by overcrowding and poverty within the Ward.[13] In spite of these challenges, black owned businesses in Jackson Ward, and particularly along 2nd Street, thrived. Few consumer needs would have gone unfulfilled as businesses included established insurance and financial institutions, the offices of emerging young professionals, funeral parlors, real estate offices, hotels, restaurants, clubs, theaters, and service providers including barber and beauty shops, repair shops, dry cleaners and tailors. Residents remember the Jackson Ward of the 1940s and 1950s as "jumpin" and never closing.

Among Jackson Ward's established insurance companies were Richmond Beneficial Life Insurance and Southern Aid. In keeping with the self-help tradition, two insurance men Booker T. Bradshaw and Clarence Townes Sr. established the Virginia Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company in 1933; with headquarters in the Southern Aid Building at 214 E. Clay Street (JWHD, NHL). Over the next thirty years their business thrived and expanded to Washington D.C. and other Virginia cities. In the early 1960s plans were developed for a new headquarters building. Desirous of being a positive force within the Jackson Ward community, Bradshaw and Townes purchased property prominently located on the corner of Second and Clay Streets for their building and employed progressive Richmond architect Tiffany Armstrong. At a time when Jackson Ward's commercial center was declining, Bradshaw and Townes gave Armstrong instructions to design a building that conveyed their faith in Jackson Ward's viability as a commercial center. The Virginia Mutual Benefit Insurance Building at 110-112 E. Clay Street was dedicated in 1963 and remains a symbol of the achievements that earned Jackson Ward the reputation as "the Black Wall Street" in the 1900s. Its founders were leaders in the community serving on numerous boards. Their individual achievements include Mr. Bradshaw's election to the Richmond School Board in 1953, the first African American to serve in that capacity since Reconstruction, and Mr. Townes being cited by President Eisenhower for his service to the Department of Commerce's Advisory Committee on Minority Business Development.

Prominent financial institutions included the Consolidated Bank and Trust, successor to Maggie Walker's St. Luke's Penny Savings Bank. In 1966, Consolidated's president J. Jay Nickens, Jr. co-founded the Richmond Improvement Coordinating Council. The Council, noting that 75 percent of Richmond's black population was low income and unskilled, assisted these individuals, through education, to obtain better jobs and housing conditions. In current times, Consolidated continues to exert influence in the Jackson Ward community from its prominent building at 327-329 N. 1st Street (constructed in 1974, after the proposed period of significance).

During the Civil Rights era, numerous young black professionals established practices in Jackson Ward. Because Virginia colleges would not admit African Americans to their graduate programs, many students had received tuition assistance from the legislature to study out of state. They now returned and began dismantling the system that had enabled a segregated society. Most prominent among these was Oliver W. Hill who established a law practice with Spottswood W. Robinson III and Martin C. Martin in 1943. Their firm Hill Robinson & Martin was located first in the Consolidated Bank & Trust Building at 327 N. 1st Street

(demolished) and later at 623 N. 3rd Street (demolished). During the 1960s, when Samuel W. Tucker and Henry L. Marsh III joined forces with Hill, their firm Hill Tucker & Marsh was located in the Southern Aid Building at 214 E. Clay Street (JWHD, NHL). In addition to these firms' monumental success in litigating desegregation cases, the individual attorneys also achieved prominence. S. W. Robinson became the first African American to be appointed a judge on the U.S. District Court in Washington (1964). Later he was the first African American judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia (1966). In 1977, Henry Marsh III was elected as Richmond's first black mayor. In 1999, Oliver Hill was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in recognition for his role as one of the "lions" of the Civil Rights movement. [14] In 2000, Hill received the American Bar Association's highest award in recognition for his leadership in the Civil Rights movement.[15]

Attorney James E. Sheffield, moved to Jackson Ward in 1965 when he chose to become part of the area revitalization effort. He purchased a vacant and dilapidated building at 12 - 14 West Leigh Street to house his law practice. The redevelopment project expanded the structure toward the street to accommodate additional office space. Other professional offices relocating to the Sheffield Building following this remodeling were those of attorney Harrison Bruce, physician Charles Cummings, and dentist Anthony Malloy. In 1974, attorney Sheffield became the first African American to be appointed as a Circuit Court Judge in Virginia.

Among the notable doctors and dentists establishing a practice in Jackson Ward were podiatrist William S. Thornton, optometrist John L. Howlette, physician William Fergusen Reid, and dentist Jesse M. Tinsley. Dr. Thornton and Dr. Howlette established their practices at 415 North 2nd (now demolished) in the 1950s. Throughout their lifetimes they worked to create opportunities for African Americans. Dr. Thornton, co-founder of the Crusade for Voters in 1956, served as its president for many years. Dr. Howlette, the second African American to be licensed to practice optometry in Virginia, in 1968 helped co-found the predominantly black National Optometric Association. Their ongoing commitment to the community was demonstrated in 1963 when they jointly invested in the construction of a modern office building at 206 - 208 East Clay Street. The prominent Richmond architectural firm of Hyland and Hyfill designed the building—a striking one-story structure with landscaped courtyard.

Also active in civil rights activities were Doctors Reid and Tinsley. William Fergusen Reid had joined Thornton and Brooks in founding the Crusade for Voters in the 1950s. In 1967, Dr. Reid was elected as the first African American to serve in the Virginia House of Delegates. Dr. Reid's office was located at 611 Chamberlayne Ave. (demolished). Jesse M. Tinsley served as president of the Richmond branch NAACP for fifteen years and then as state NAACP president for twenty years. Dr. Tinsley's dental practice at 402½ N. 2nd Street (outside JWHD) also housed the headquarters of the Richmond NAACP.

Due to a large and concentrated black population, service businesses also thrived during this era. The 1940 Hill's *Richmond City Directory* identifies 107 black retail or service related businesses along the streets of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, Clay and Leigh. This large number does not include those businesses that were operated out of an individual's home and thus were not given a listing. In some instances a business formed overnight when a local segregated practice created a need within the community. Such was the case of the Manhattan Car for Hire company, which seven men formed when white owned cab companies refused to pick-up black passengers. The business, using the owner's personal black Packards, operated out of 520 North 2nd Street

(demolished) from 1927 through the 1950s. Cab company executive Edward L. Slade, Jr. served as president of the Richmond Branch NAACP in the 1960s and was instrumental in organizing the bus caravan of demonstrators to the 1963 Civil Rights March on Washington.

Central to the social life of Jackson Ward were the theaters, restaurants, clubs, and hotels along the three blocks of N. 2nd Street between Clay and Leigh Streets. Interviews relate that "Two Street" never closed during the World War II years, as patrons and soldiers on leave would cross back and forth going from club to club, to the Hippodrome theater, and to restaurants and hotels. The Hippodrome booked the big entertainers of the time, including Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Nat King Cole, and Louis Armstrong, who then stayed at a 2nd Street hotel. In Richmond, only hotels located in Jackson Ward were open to African Americans. Most prominent of these were Slaughters (now demolished), Eggleston (JWHD, NHL), and Harris (now demolished).

Neverett Eggleston, owner of the Eggleston Hotel at 539 - 541 North 2nd Street, began his career by first managing the hotel when it was Miller's Hotel and then purchasing it. While making his hotel and its restaurant, Neverett's Place, one of the favorite spots along 2nd Street, he continued to purchase and develop commercial property in Jackson Ward. In 1954, he extensively remodeled the Eggleston Hotel creating a new facade in keeping with the modern architecture of the time. Neverett Eggleston, Jr. continued in his father's footsteps by investing in property and in 1964 built Motel Eggleston at 604 - 606 North 2nd Street. A third major property owner of the era was James R. Stallings who developed both housing and commercial properties. Stallings purchased his first house in the 1940s. In addition to rental housing, he invested in historic commercial properties purchasing the Hippodrome, St. Luke's Building, and Slaughter's Hotel as they became available. Stallings also constructed numerous new buildings in Jackson Ward, including apartments and retail space.

As an African American community, Jackson Ward has influenced thoughts and events far beyond its borders. When the number of African Americans purchasing property and establishing businesses grew in the 1900s, Jackson Ward became known as a black financial and entertainment center. The combination of successful businesses, influential churches, and fraternal organizations created an atmosphere in which educated black professionals could challenge Jim Crow laws and change history. Jackson Ward attorneys and businessmen not only participated in the Civil Rights movement, but were leaders in the key areas of litigation and voter registration. These achievements and the ongoing commitment of Richmond's African American citizens to Jackson Ward are recognized in this National Register Historic District amendment.

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_____. "Rights Push Here Strong, Not Stormy." *The Richmond Times Dispatch.* 14 March 1999.

PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Property: Jackson Ward Historic District
Locaton: Richmond, VA
Photographer: Mary Harding Sadler
Date: summer 2001
Negative no.: 19750

Negatives are stored at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Photo: 1 of 4
Subject: Virginia Mutual Beneficial Life Insurance Company Building
Location: 110-112 East Clay Street

Photo: 2 of 4
Subject: Doctors Howlette and Thornton Medical Offices
Location: 206-208 East Clay Street

Photo: 3 of 4
Subject: Sheffield Office Building
Location: 12-14 West Leigh Street

Photo: 4 of 4
Subject: The Hippodrome
Location: North 2nd Street

ENDNOTES

[1] National Trust for Historic Preservation. "America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places 2001-Historic Jackson Ward." Available from the Internet at http://www.nationaltrust.org/11Most/2001/jacksonwrd.htm.

[2] National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the Jackson Ward Historic District, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 1976.

[3] Michael Paul Williams, "Rights Push Here Strong, Not Stormy," *The Richmond Times Dispatch* (March 14, 1999).

[4] The Jackson Ward Historic District (JWHD) was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in July 1976. In June 1978, the exceptional significance of the JWHD was formally recognized when the neighborhood was awarded National Historic Landmark (NHL) status.

[5] Christopher Silver and John V. Moeser, *The Separate City* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995), p 74.

[6] Silver, p. 74.

[7] Third Street Betel African Methodist and the St. Lukes's Penny Savings Bank are individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

[8] "Remembering a Heroine: Ruth E. Nelson Tinsley," *Richmond Free Press* (January 17-19, 1994).

[9] Clarence Townes, Jr., interview by Kathryn E. Colwell, 15 March 2002.

[10] Townes, 15 March 2002.

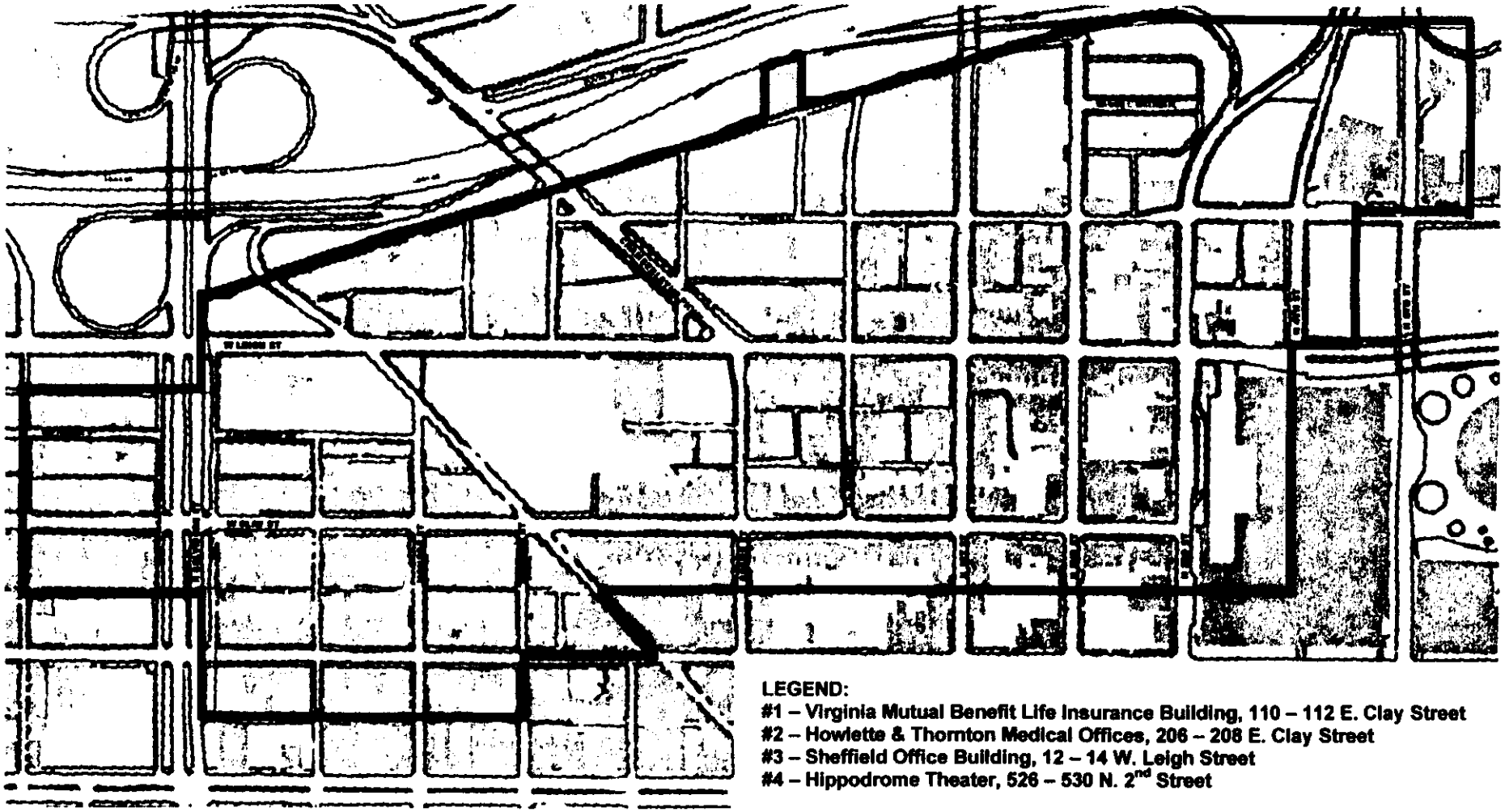
[11] Raymond Gavins, *The Perils and Prospects of Southern Black Leadership: Gordon Blain Hancock, 1884-1970.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1977), p. 67.

[12] Karen Holt Luetjen, "Second Street: Business and Entertainment in Jackson Ward, 1950 – 1965", Manuscript, (Valentine Richmond's History Museum, 1990), p. 4.

[13] Overcrowded and poorly maintained housing in Jackson Ward was in part the result of segregationist public policy. Virginia's 1924 Racial Integrity Law and Richmond's 1920s zoning ordinances had prohibited persons of different races from residing on the same street. The federal government's 1933 Home Owner's Loan Corporation practiced the policy of "redlining" predominately African American neighborhoods, thus homeowners in the Ward were ineligible for homeowner loans. Compounding the problem was the movement of more affluent black homeowners to adjacent neighborhoods following the Supreme Court ruling in *Shelley v. Kraemer* (1948) that blacks could live in white neighborhoods.

[14] Michael Paul Williams, "Rights Lion to get Medal of Freedom," *The Richmond Times Dispatch* (May 22, 1999).

[15] American Bar Association, "Civil Rights Lawyer Oliver W. Hill to Receive 2000 American Bar Association Medal," News Release. Available from the Internet at http://www.abanet.org. In 1994, Oliver Hill was also awarded the Thurgood Marshall Award by the American Bar Association's Individual Rights & Responsibilities Section for his leadership in the Civil Rights movement.



Jackson Ward Historic District
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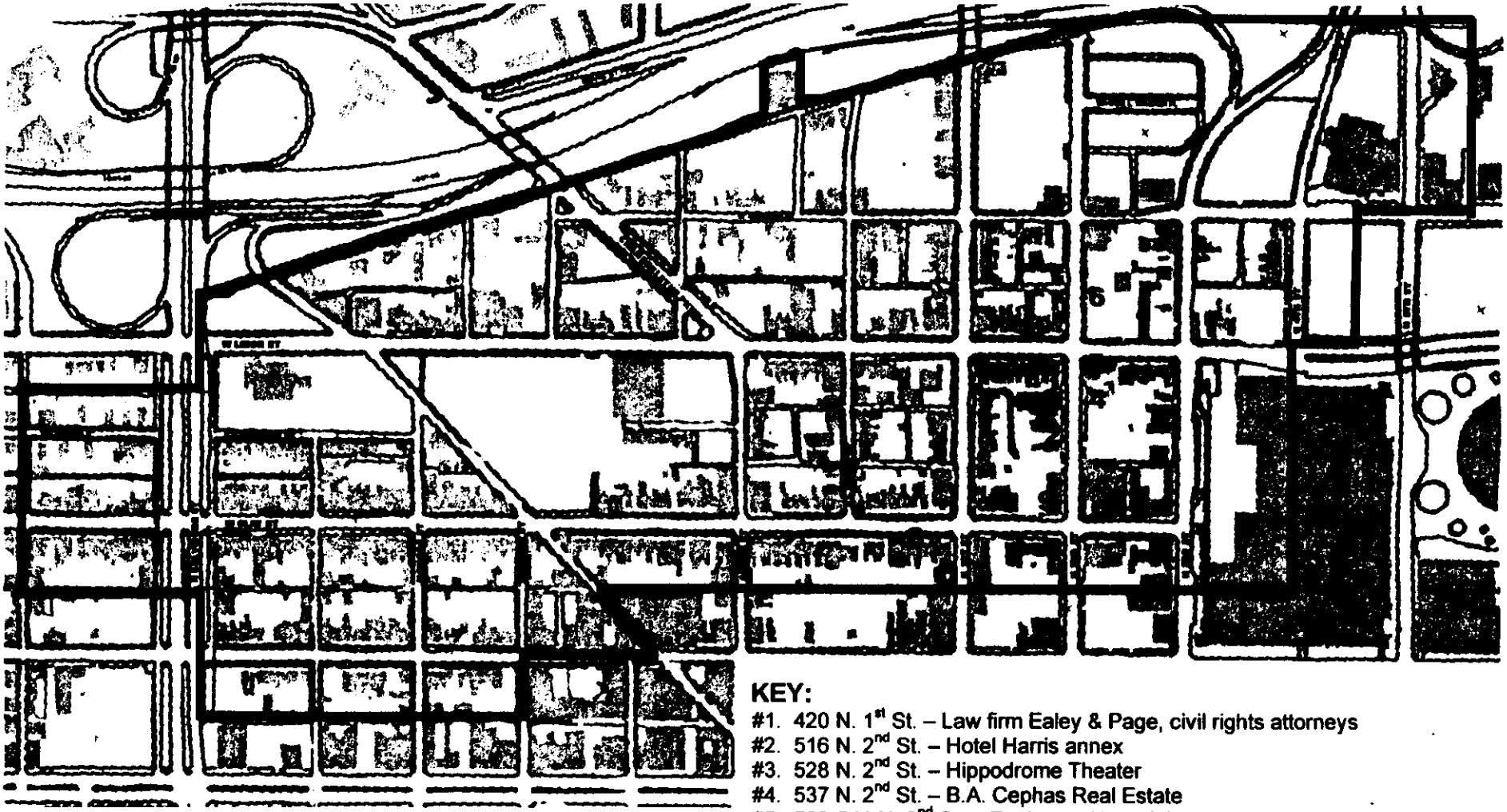
Map with Photograph Key



KEY:

#1. 420 N. 1st St. – Law firm Ealey & Page, civil rights attorneys
#2. 516 N. 2nd St. – Hotel Harris annex
#3. 528 N. 2nd St. – Hippodrome Theater
#4. 537 N. 2nd St. – B.A. Cephas Real Estate
#5. 539-541 N. 2nd St. – Eggleston Hotel & Neverett's Place
#6. 603 N. 2nd St. – Brown's Photography
#7. 614 N. 3rd St. – Third St. Bethel A.M.E. Church
#8. 11 E. Clay St. – Home of Clarence Newsome of firm Hill, Tucker & Marsh
#9. 110-112 E. Clay St. – Virginia Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Co.
#10. 206-208 E. Clay St. – Office, Doctors John Howlette and William Thornton

Jackson Ward Historic District
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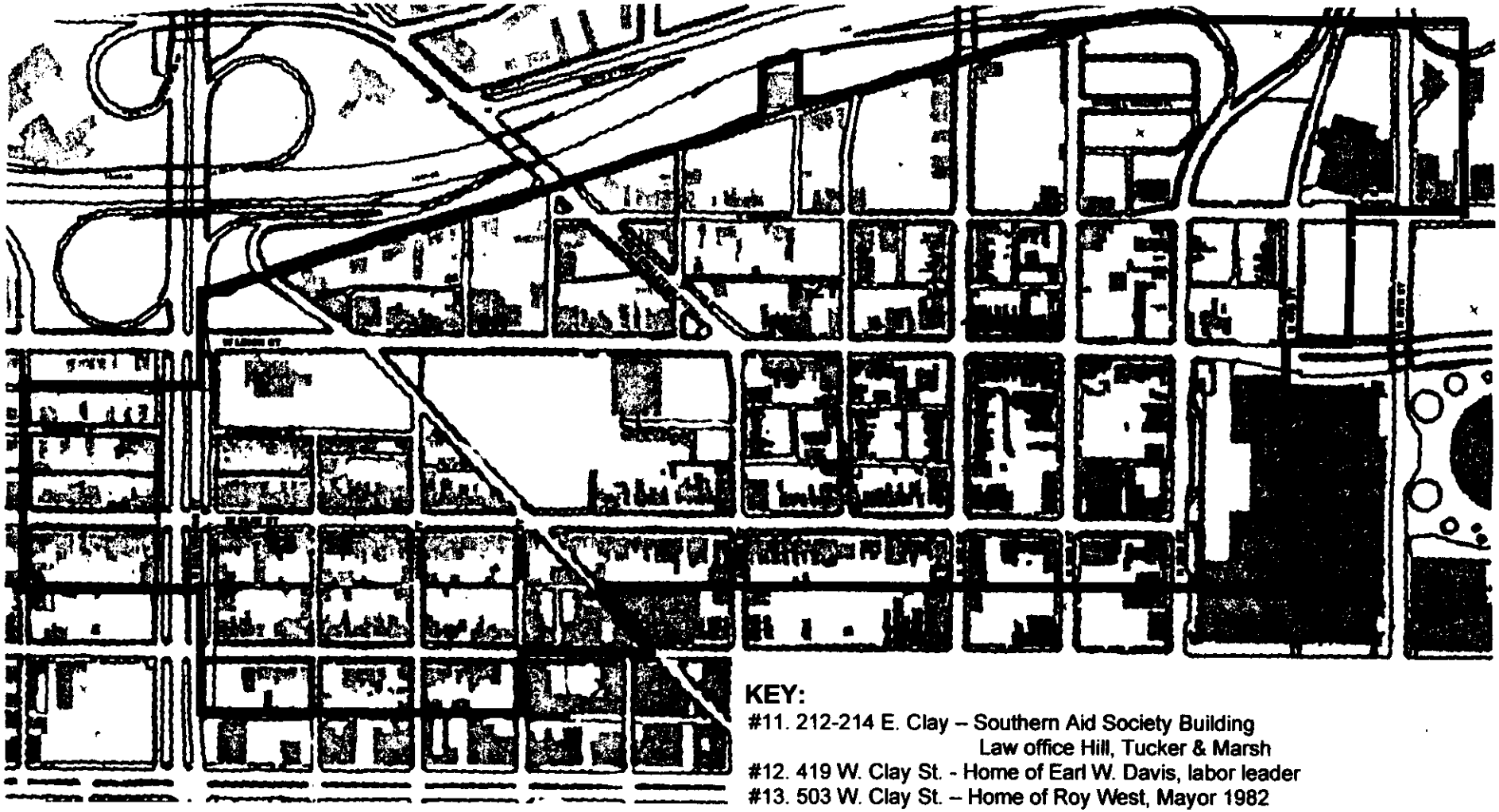

KEY:

#11. 212-214 E. Clay – Southern Aid Society Building
Law office Hill, Tucker & Marsh
#12. 419 W. Clay St. - Home of Earl W. Davis, labor leader
#13. 503 W. Clay St. – Home of Roy West, Mayor 1982
#14. 102 E. Leigh St. – Home of Dr. J.J. Smallwood, VUU
#15. 104 E. Leigh St. – Home of Dr. James H. Johnston, President VSC
#16. 118 E. Leigh St. – Law office attorneys Hill, Martin and Olphin
#17. 117 E. Leigh St. – First Richmond law office of Oliver W. Hill
#18. 12-14 W. Leigh St. – Sheffield Building
#19 .18 W. Leigh St. – Home of S. W. Robinson, real estate attorney
#20. 216 W. Leigh St. – Ebenezer Baptist Church
#21. 520 St. James St. – Home of Dr. Joseph E. Jones, VUU

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