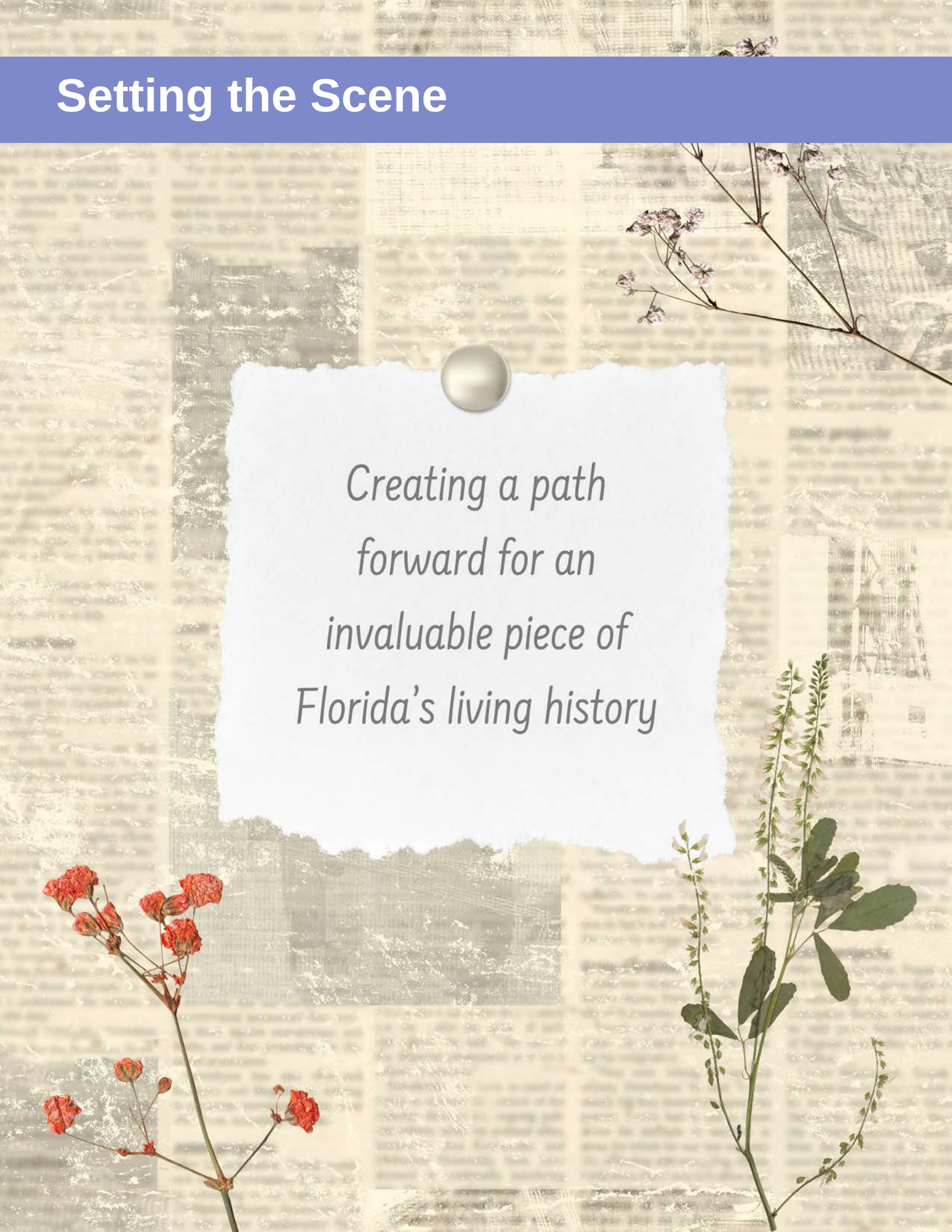
North Star Legacy Communities: A Bicentennial Celebration

Leon County

Setting the Scene



JOHN G. RILEY
CENTER & MUSEUM

Introduction

North Star Legacy Communities was born after Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University professor, Dr. Sandra Thompson, recognized that the fabric of the Leon County Legacy Community she grew up in was radically changing. After emancipation, previously enslaved African Americans and freedmen established Legacy Communities on or near plantation land. Over the years, these freed enslaved individuals, their children, and their grandchildren formed tightly-knit communities that acted as hubs of economic activity and social support in a nation that actively sought to dismantle their prosperity.

Once prosperous and self-sufficient, Legacy Communities are now under threat of disappearing. During the 20th Century, many living in Legacy Communities decided to move to the United States' western and northern regions during a period known as The Great Migration. The Great Migration took place due to a combination of factors, including increasing racial discrimination, Jim Crow laws and segregation, lack of economic opportunities, and racial violence from white supremacist hate groups like the Ku Klux Klan. This migration resulted in loss of resources and significant decrease in population for Legacy Communities, which have not recovered to this day. Legacy Communities continue to face many threats, including demographic changes, urban redevelopment i.e "renewal", and a lack of property education, alongside many of the societal inhibitors racism creates. Embedded in these limitations is a host of legal implications, including the problem at the center of this project. Heirs property is probated property that has been passed to a property owner's many descendants equally, otherwise known as tenants in common. The land issue of heir's property comes about when a subset of the land owners decide to sell their property, or if the property has unknown unpaid taxes. In these cases the land is sold at a discounted rate, often to buyers.

This project takes a direct approach to documenting community assets and providing economic tools to residents. The collection of oral histories was the first step in identifying the unique strengths and skills present in each community. The goal is that these stories and documented assets will help to bolster tourism in Leon County. To facilitate this, the North Star Legacy Communities project created an eChamber of Commerce database housed on our website, NorthStarLegacies.com. The other iterations of the project is housed here too.

Ultimately, the North Star Legacy Communities project aims to link Legacy Communities together and to celebrate and promote these historic communities at the state level. It is our hope this project will eventually span across Jefferson and Madison Counties to join over two hundred historic communities.

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Executive Summary

This report serves as the third iteration of the North Star Legacy Communities project series. It follows the Jackson County project entitled “A Florida Treasure”, which established a framework for conducting historic preservation and economic development activities throughout North Florida, and the Gadsden County project entitled “Gadsden County Heritage”, the second iteration of the project. This document on Leon County’s “North Star Legacy Communities: A Bicentennial Celebration” is poised to carry on the preservation activities for Legacy Communities and Historical African American communities nationwide.

This report seeks to highlight Black stories in Leon County, which have often been neglected by formal planning processes, entrenched institutions, and historical sources. This document aims to highlight these stories, preserving the legacies of these communities and their residents. These communities are in danger of vanishing due to an aging populations, lack of recorded history, out-migration, and perpetual disinvestment. However, the endurance of these communities in the face of such challenges demonstrates their resiliency, and their stories deserve to be told.

The North Star Legacy Communities: A Bicentennial Celebration has two goals: historic preservation and economic development. This is accomplished by working to fill in the gap in Leon County's recorded historical cultures, traditions, and resident’s stories. Additionally, by highlighting existing community assets and economic opportunities the project will foster economic resiliency within each identified Legacy Community.

Florida State University’s Department of Urban & Regional Planning (FSU-DURP) is working alongside the John G. Riley House and is in partnership with the Legacy Communities of North Florida Inc (LCNF). They were awarded a Small Matching Grant from the Florida Department of State (FDOS). These funds were used to produce five deliverables: a map book outlining people, site, and community profiles with current demographic and economic conditions in Leon County, an interactive Esri ArcGIS StoryMap exploring Leon County History, the website with an eChamber of Commerce database, and a project video detailing our findings throughout the project.

As of July 2024, the project has identified 18 Legacy Communities and collected oral histories from 33 community members, of which 21 have been refined into “People Profiles” that highlight personal histories and stories experienced by residents. Additionally, 18 “Community Profiles” have been collected and refined to highlight stories of identified Legacy Communities. Regarding community assets, 30 “Site Profiles” have been collected and refined to exhibit places important to residents and the history of their respective communities. The economic opportunity database developed by the research team has cataloged 223 unique assets and it is displayed on the eChamber of Commerce website as a marketing tool for tourism for Legacy Community businesses.

Following the completion of our pre-contract period, this project will be further developed through additional research, in continued collaboration with community partners, to build more knowledge about Legacy Communities in North Florida. Ways to achieve this include expanding the project to other North Florida counties and further refining information-gathering techniques to fill gaps in the research. Ultimately, this project will expand the archive of oral histories, promote economic development, and celebrate the uniqueness of these communities’ legacies.

Maps

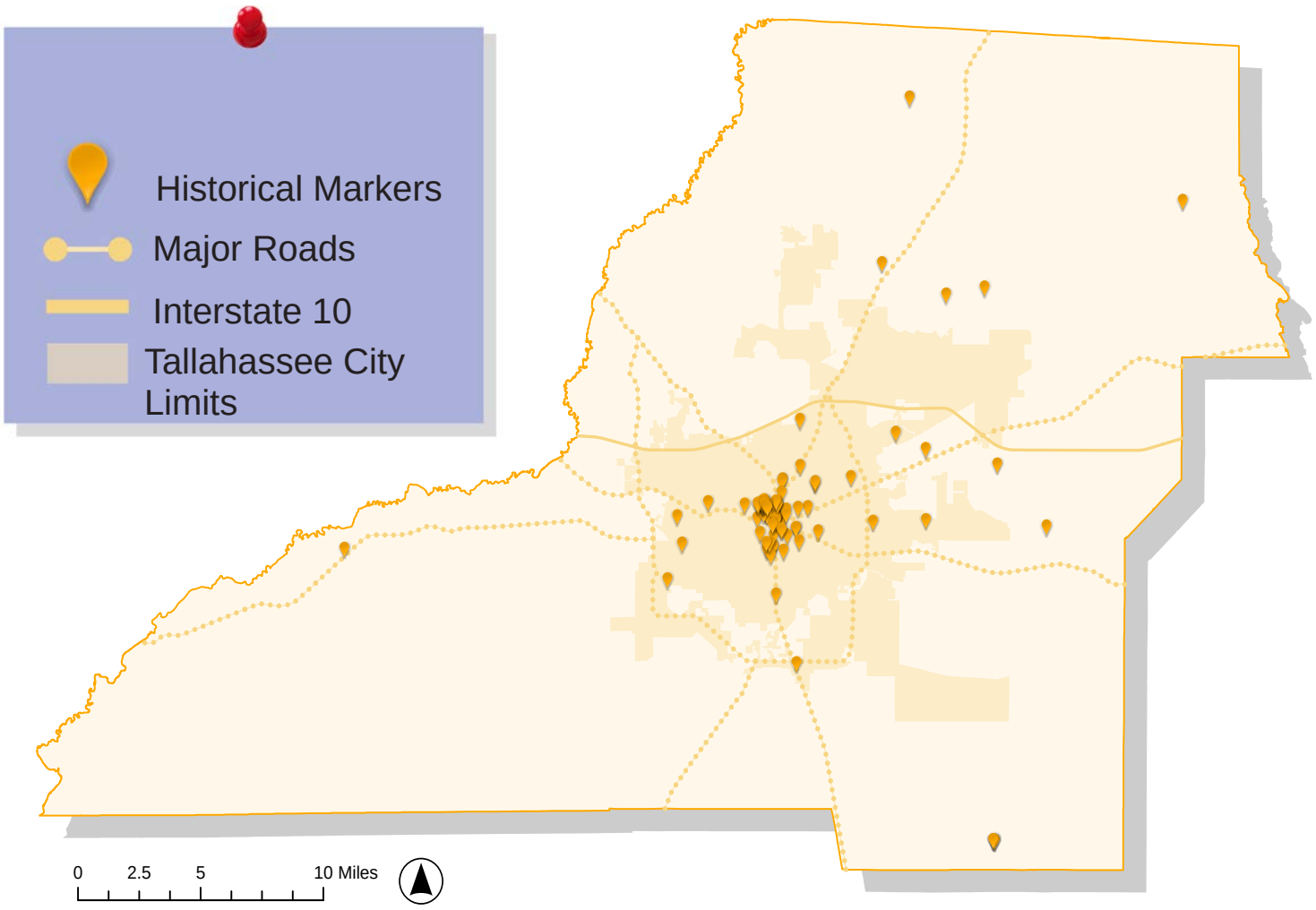
Some aspects of Leon County's Black history are well documented. From the efforts of Althemese Barnes to the Meek-Eaton Black Archives Research Center and Museum, there have been numerous projects committed to showcasing and preserving Black history in Florida's Capitol County. This project aims to add to the existing literature with an examination of his-torically Black institutions and community assets county-wide. We seek to encourage the social and economic resilience of Leon County's Legacy Communities by preserving intergenerational knowledge through the collection of oral histories and identification of Black-owned businesses.

The following maps display current economic and demographic data, historic demographic data, Legacy Communities, and other relevant institutions in Leon County. Data for these maps was sourced from the United States Census Bureau's 2020 Decennial Census, American Community Survey's 5-Year Estimates for 2018 to 2022, and oral histories from Legacy Community members. For this project, Black and African American is used to refer to individuals who self-identified as Black or African American and not as Hispanic or Latino on the 2020 Decennial Census. These maps highlight concentrations of poverty, median household income, unemployment, and more.

Historic Maps

This map pinpoints the locations of historic markers in Leon County. These markers include historic homes, schools, businesses, churches, monuments, and more.

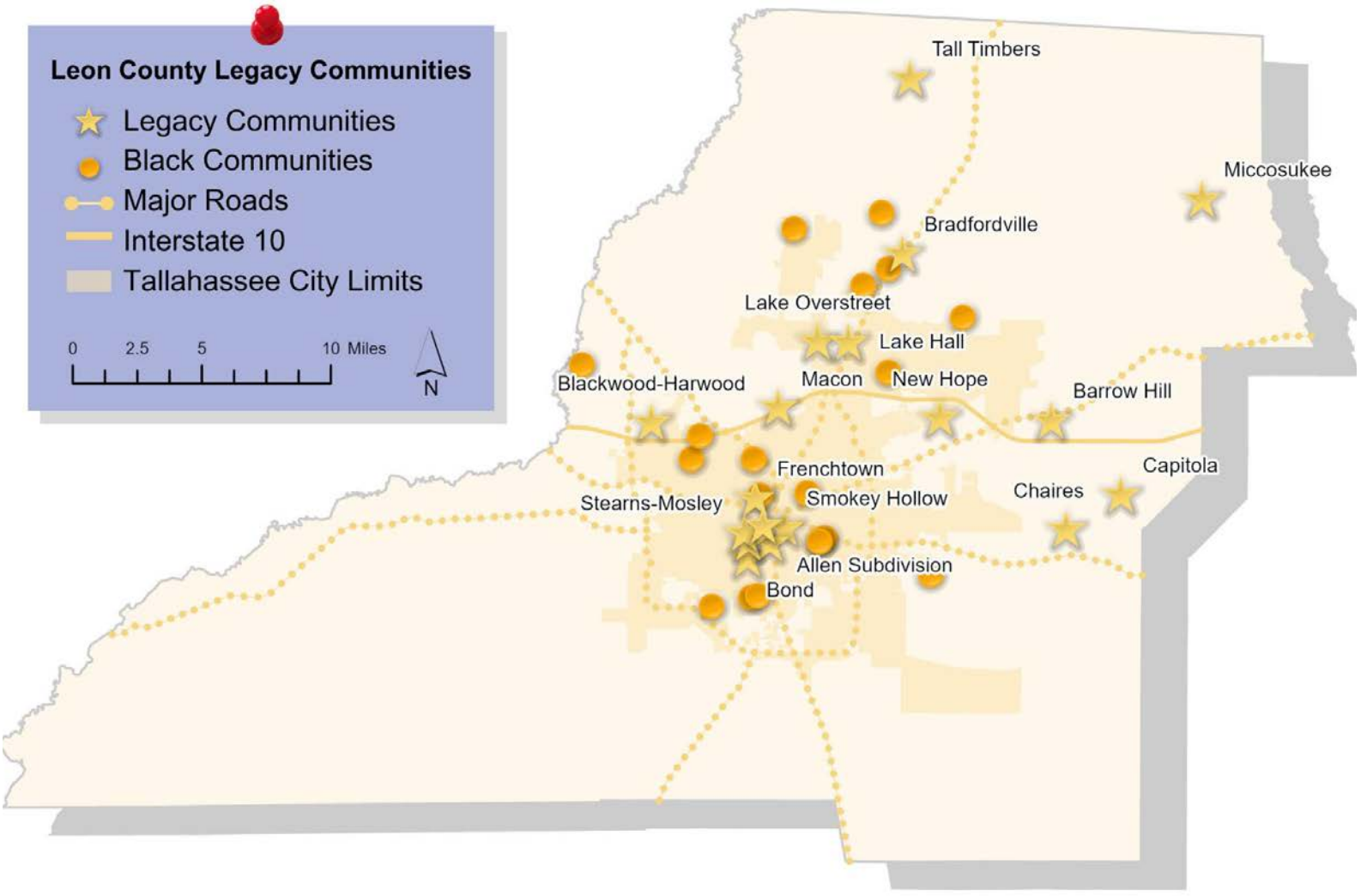
Historical Markers in Leon County 2024



Communities

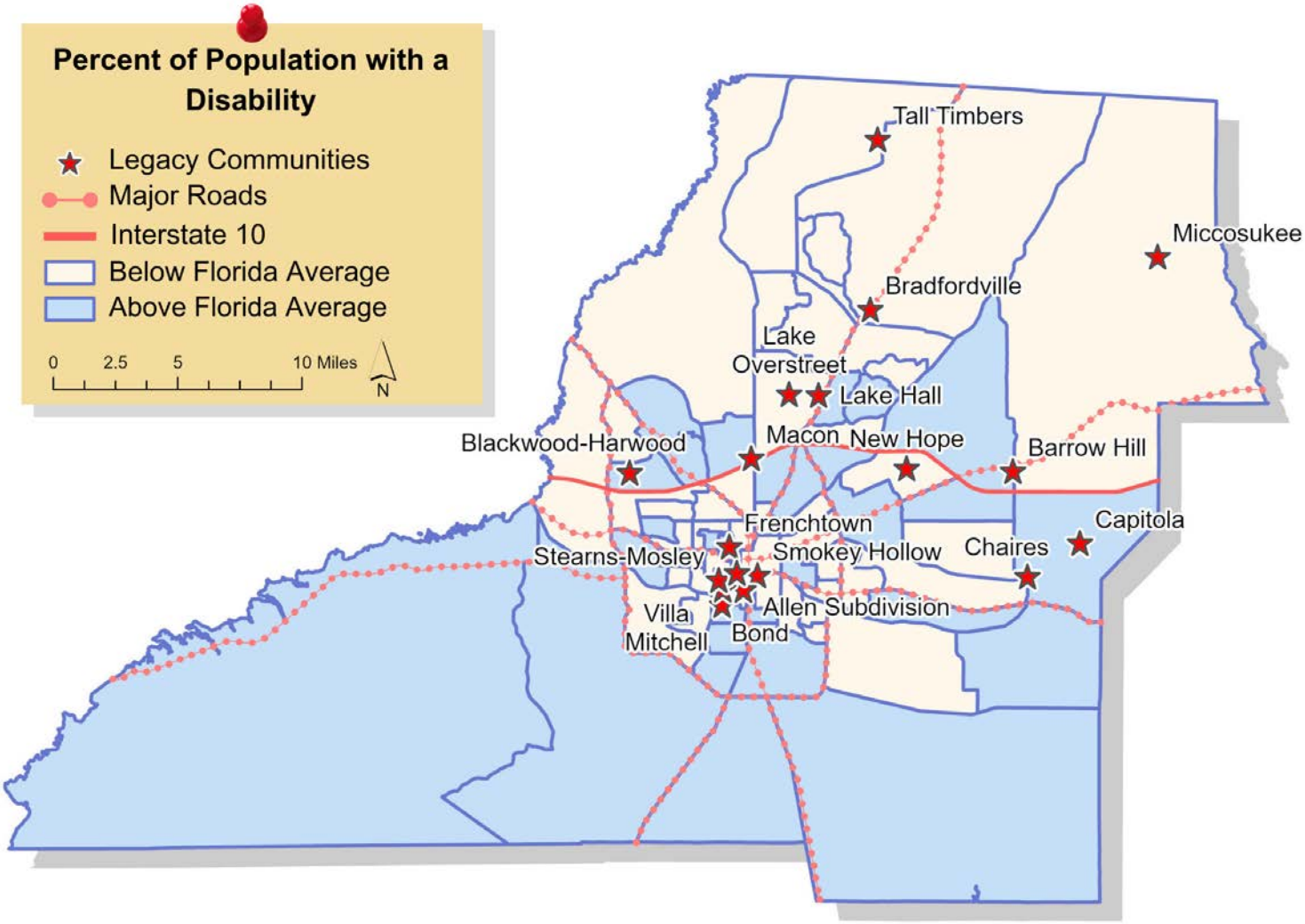
This map displays the locations of Leon County's Legacy Communities in relation to Tallahassee's city limits. According to this map, the majority of Legacy Communities are outside of city limits.

Legacy and Black Communities in Leon County



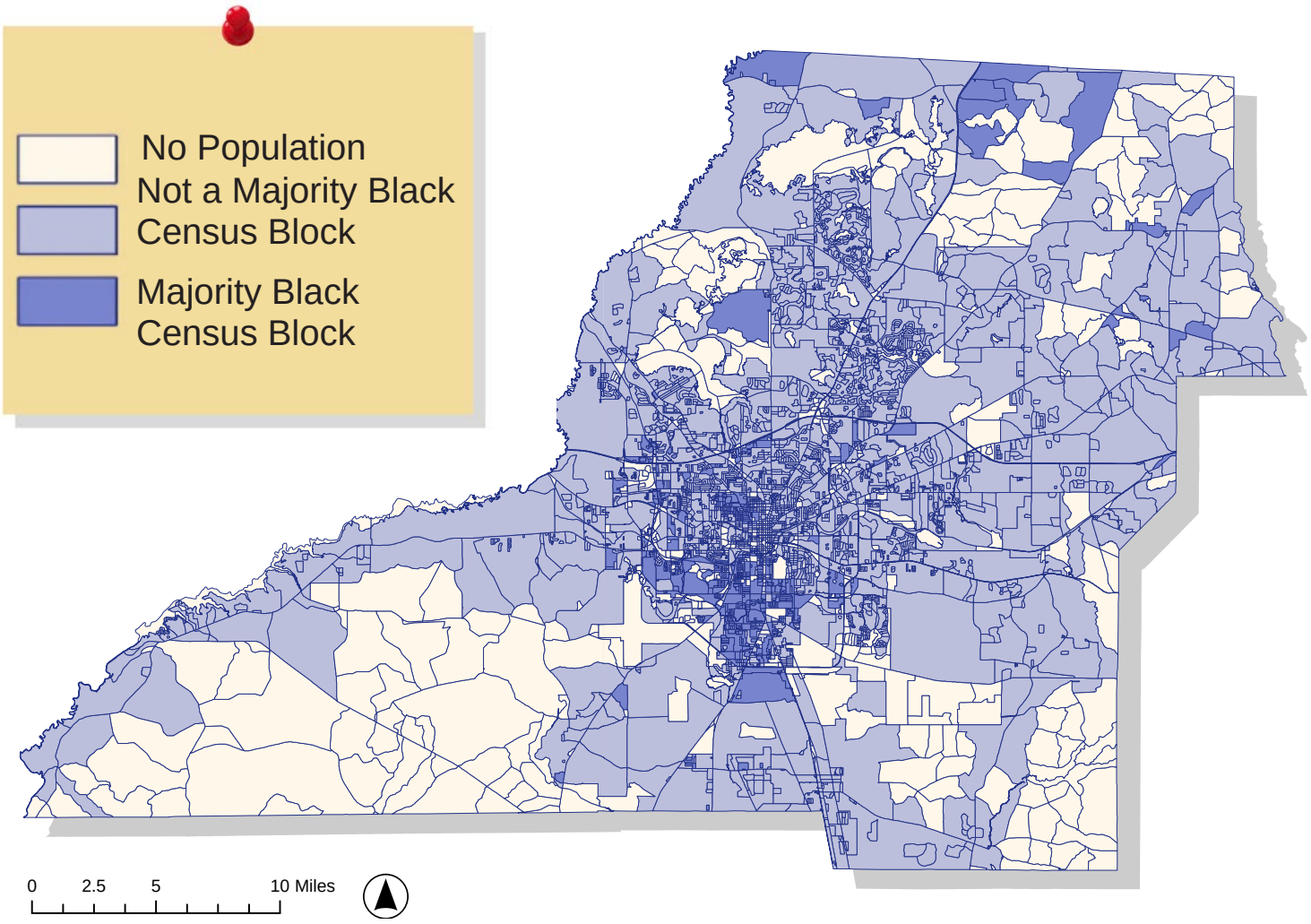
Demographics

Disabled Population by Census Tract, 2018-2022 Estimates



This map shows concentrations of disabled populations in Leon County, the highest concentrations of which are located South of Tallahassee's city limits. The state average was 13.5% from 2018 to 2022, while Leon County's average was 11.9%. The majority of Leon County's Legacy Communities are located in census tracts with low concentrations of people with disabilities.

Majority Black or African American Census Blocks, 2020 Decennial Census

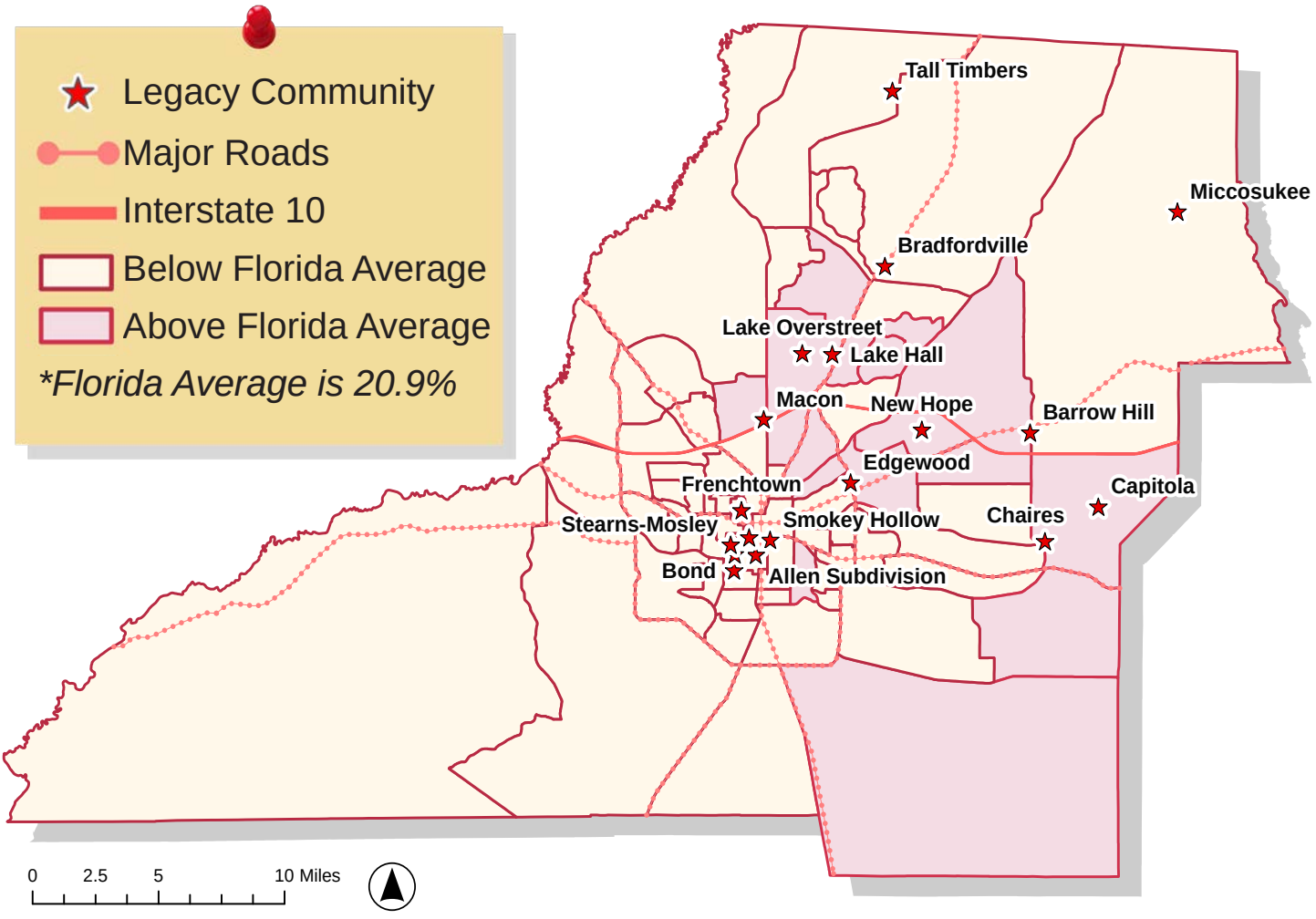


This map shows the distribution of individuals who self-identified as Black or African American on the 2020 Decennial Census. In majority Black census blocks, 60% or more of the population self-identified as Black or African American on the 2020 Decennial Census. Most of Leon County's majority Black census blocks are located within Tallahassee’s city limits. Census blocks in more rural areas, excluding Woodville, have the lowest concentrations of Black residents.

Senior Population

These maps highlight the distribution of all individuals over the age of 65 and individuals over the age of 65 that self-identified as Black or African American in Leon County on the ACS's 5-Year estimates from 2018 to 2022. Based on this data, the state average for people over the age of 65 is 20.9%. We also identified that the Florida average population of Black or African Americans over the age of 65 was about 12.8%.

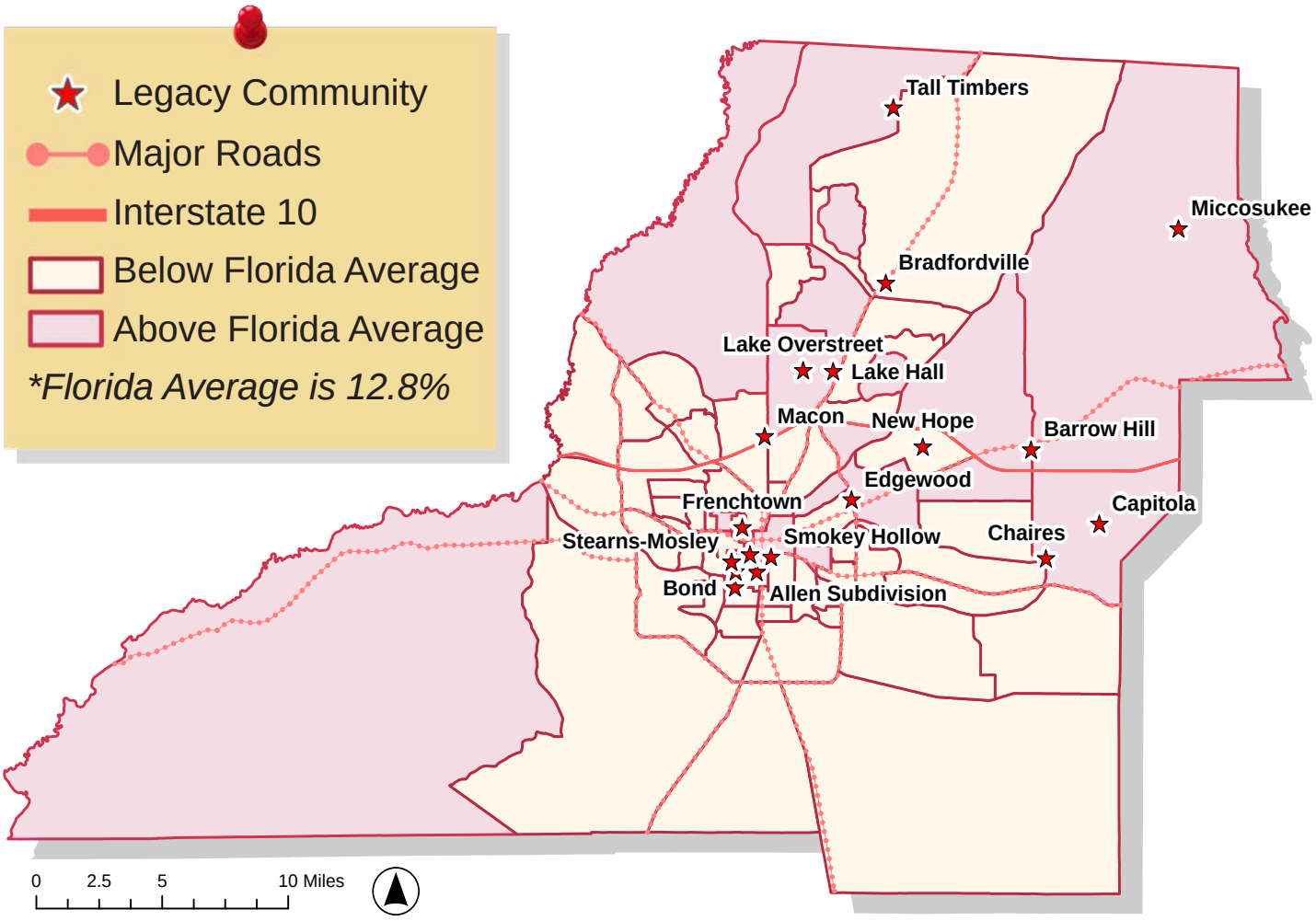
Census Tracts with Above Average Rates of Seniors, 2018-2022 Estimates



Both maps show fewer seniors within Tallahassee's City limits which likely stems from the presence of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), Florida State University (FSU), and Tallahassee Communtiy College (TCC).

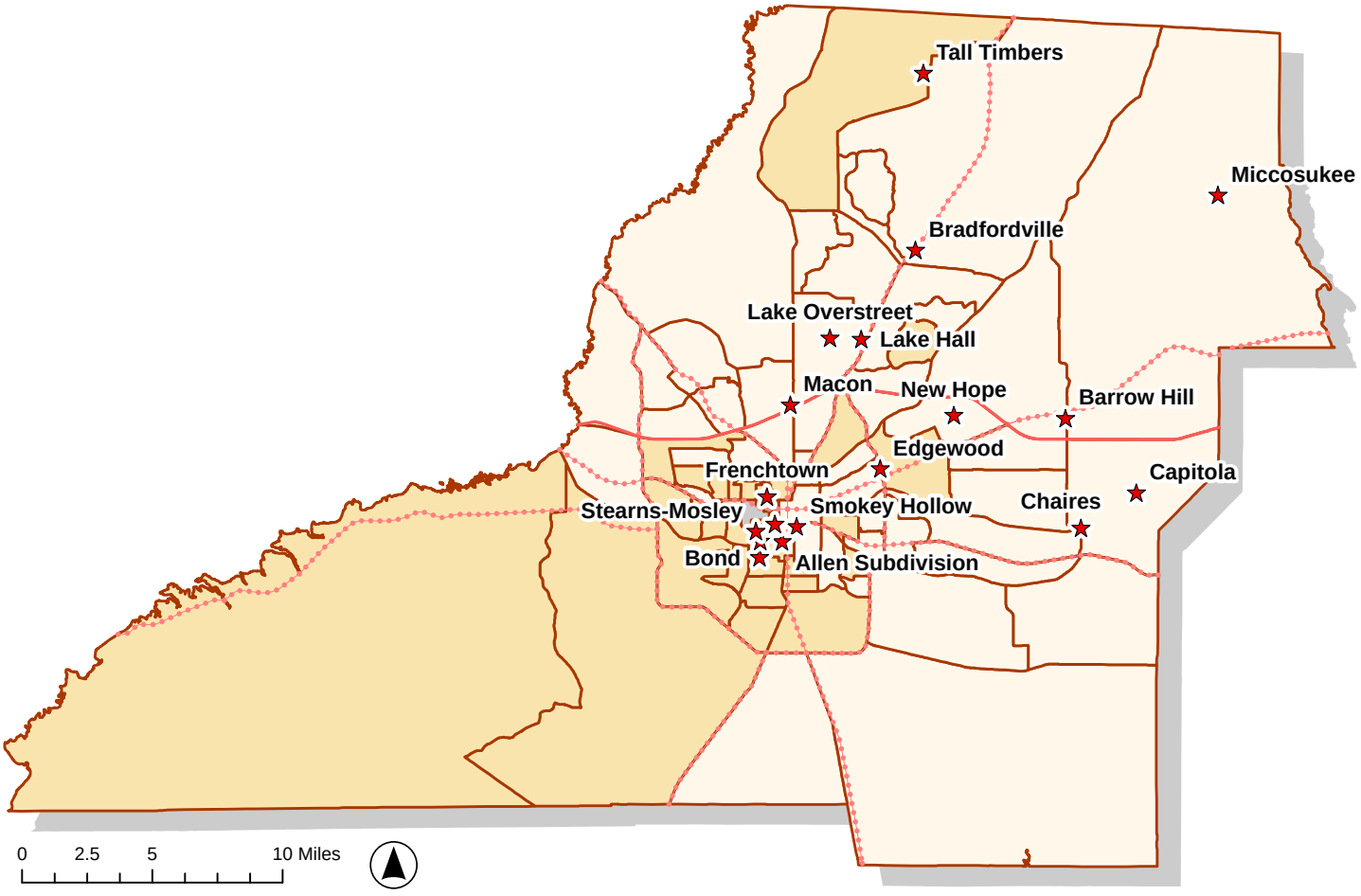
The total population map shows a more even distribution of seniors across the County, whereas the Black population map shows higher concentrations of seniors in Leon's Northern and rural census tracts. There are also pockets of above average Black and African American seniors in Census Tracts around Legacy Communities like Frenchtown and Smokey Hollow.

Census Tracts with Above Average Rates of Black or African American Seniors, 2018-2022 Estimates



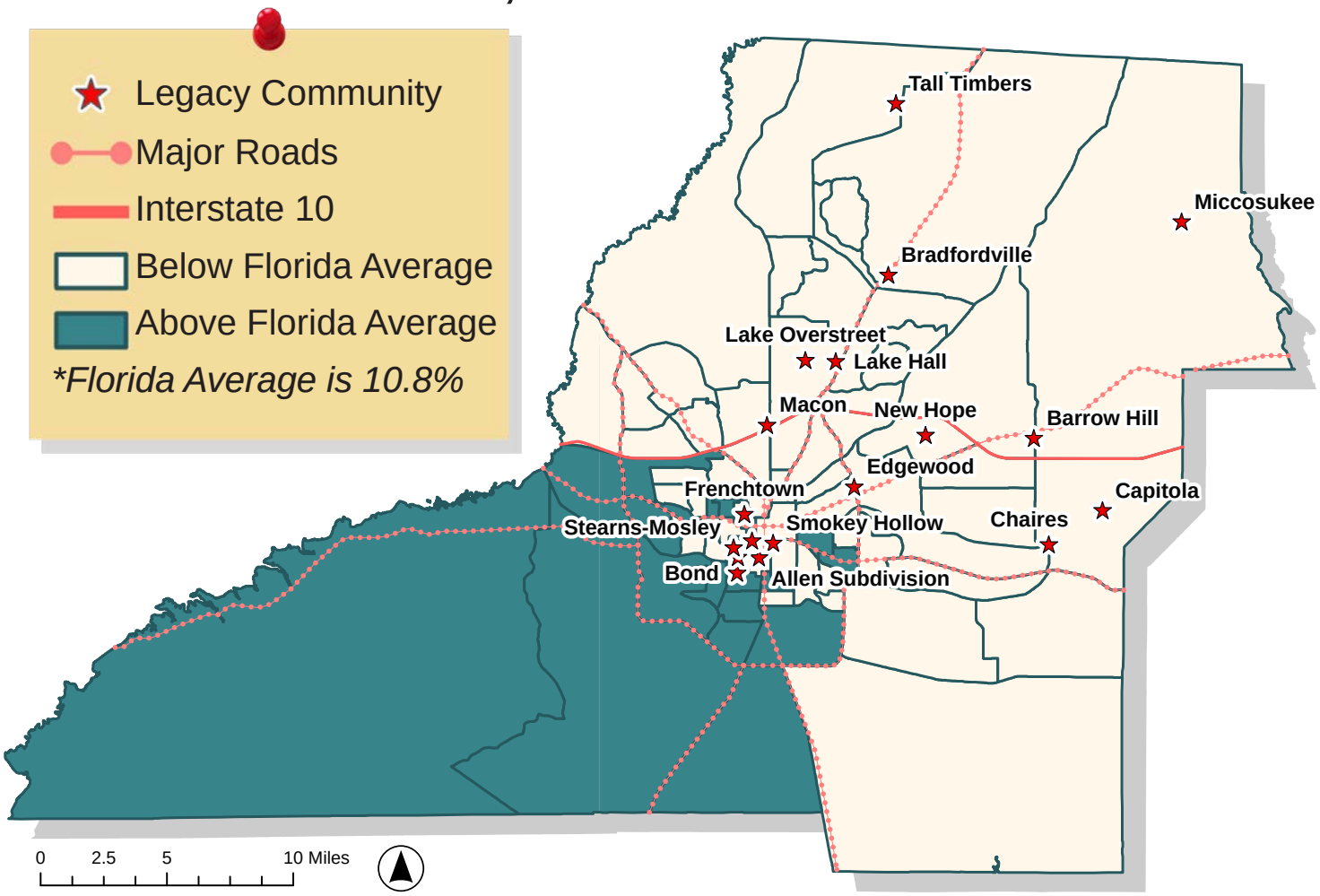
This map shows that the majority of households in Leon County have access to an automobile. From 2018 to 2022, 6.3% of households in Leon County had access to vehicles. Comparatively, Florida's average was 5.97%. The greatest concentrations of households without access to an automobile are located in the Southwest part of the County, which may be due to the fact that this is a rural portion of the county.

Census Tracts with Above Average Rates of Households with No Personal Vehicle, 2018-2022 Estimates



Education

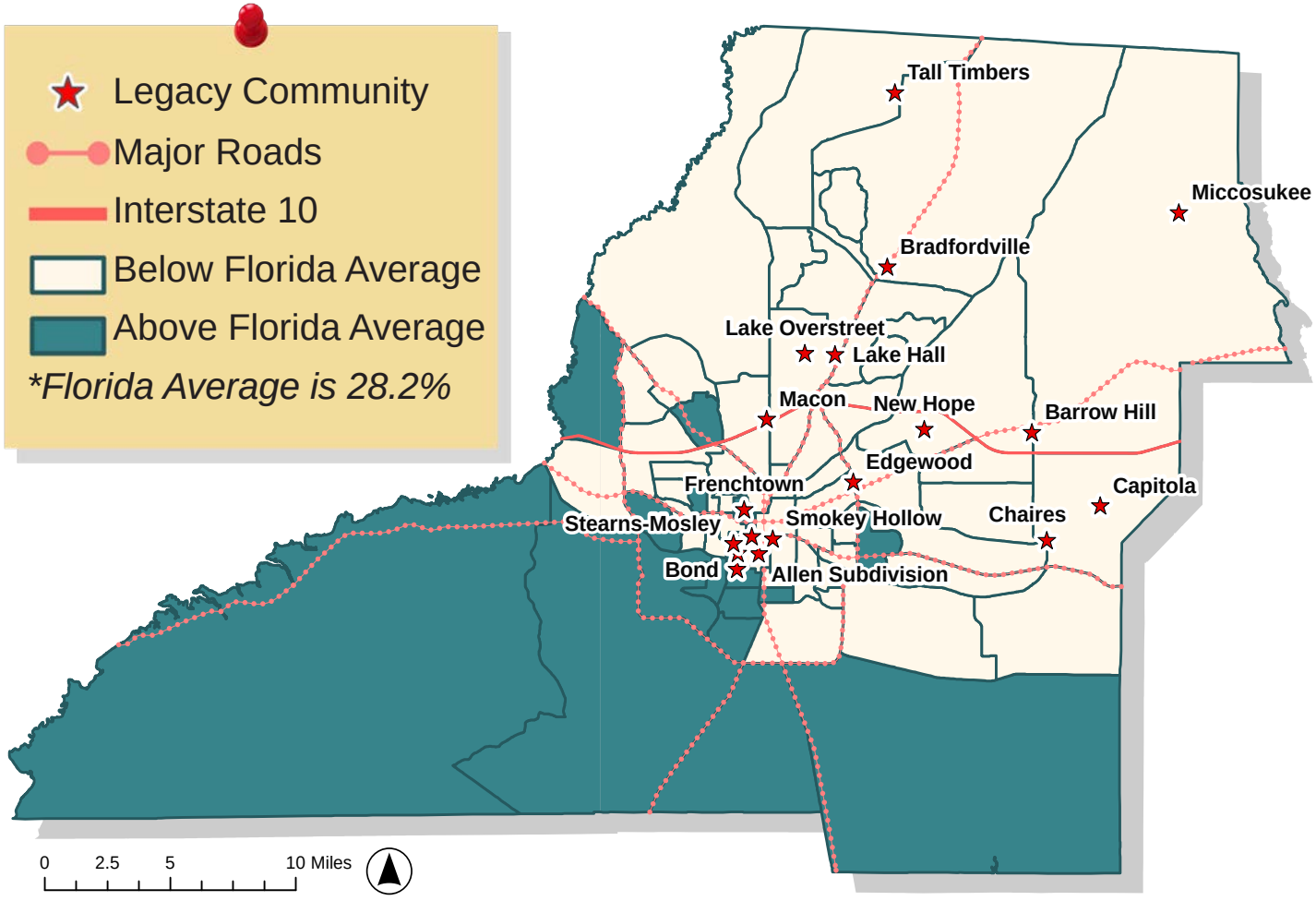
Census Tracts with Above Average Rates of Individuals Whose Highest Education Completed is Less than High School, 2018-2022 Estimates



This map displays the population of Leon County who earned less than a high school degree or equivalent from 2018 to 2022. At that time, 10.8% of Floridians had less than a high school education. Comparatively, only 6.6% of Leon County's residents had less than a high school education. This map shows that there are greater concentrations of individuals with less than high school education attainment in Leon's Southern and Southwestern tracts.

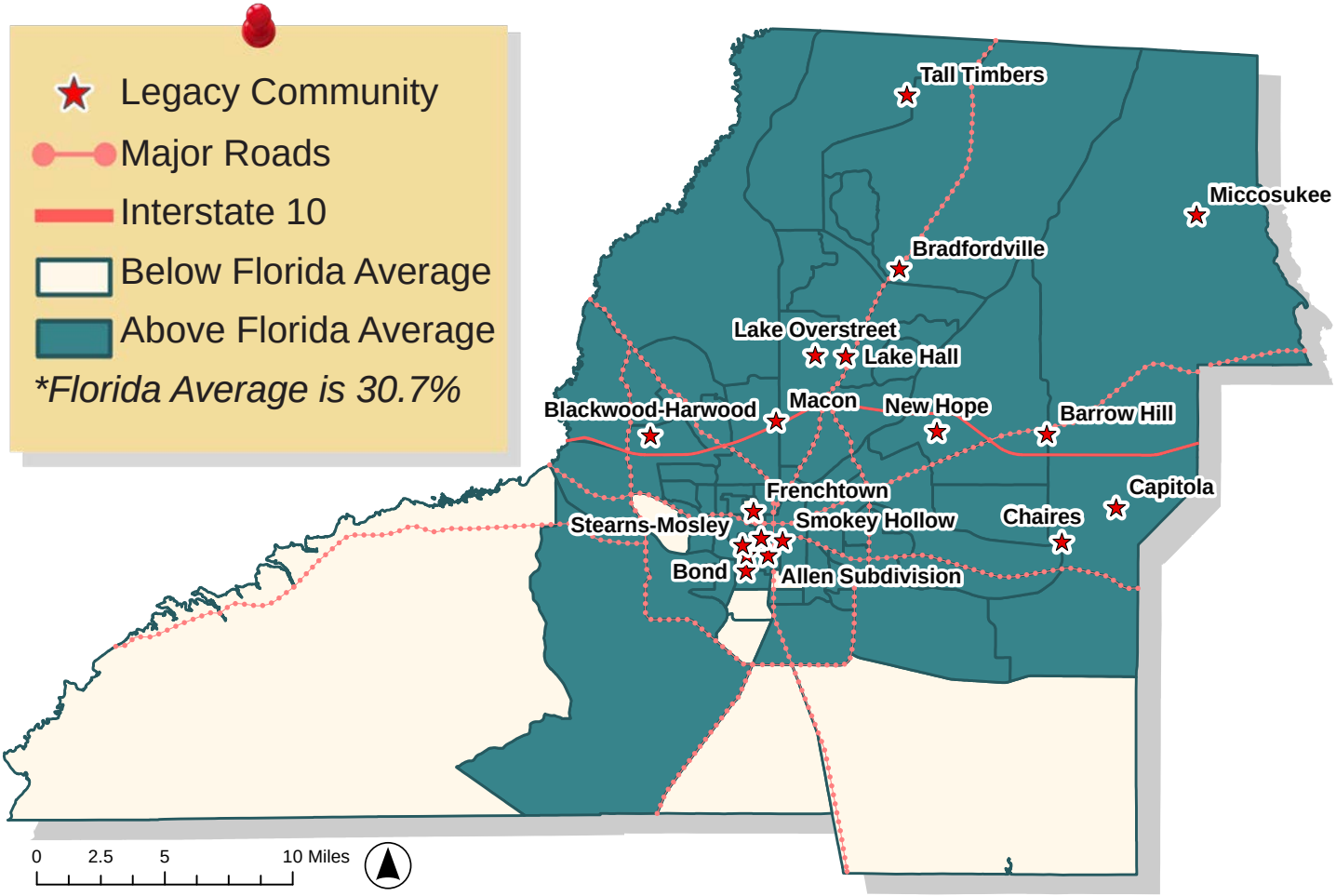
This map displays the population of Leon County who have earned a high school diploma or equivalent degree between 2018 and 2022. From 2018 to 2022, 19.1% of Leon County's residents had only a high school diploma. This was lower than Florida's rate of 28.2% during the same period. The highest rates of individuals with only a high school diploma or GED equivalent in the County are found mostly in the Southern census tracts. Additionally, there are concentrations outside of Tallahassee's City limits to the East and West.

Census Tracts with Above Average Rates of Individuals Whose Highest Education Completed is a High School Degree or Equivalent, 2018-2022 Estimates



This map displays the population of Leon County who have earned a Bachelor's degree from 2018 to 2022. The average for the state during this time period was 30.7%, while the average for Leon County was 46.6%. The County average being higher than the overall state average could be credited to the County's three universities. Leon would be more likely to have residents with a Bachelor's degree than other counties. According to this map, the majority of residents in census tracts South of Tallahassee's city limits have less education than a Bachelor's degree. This trend could be credited to the fact that this area is more rural.

Census Tracts with Above Average Rates of Individuals Whose Highest Education Completed is a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, 2018-2022 Estimates

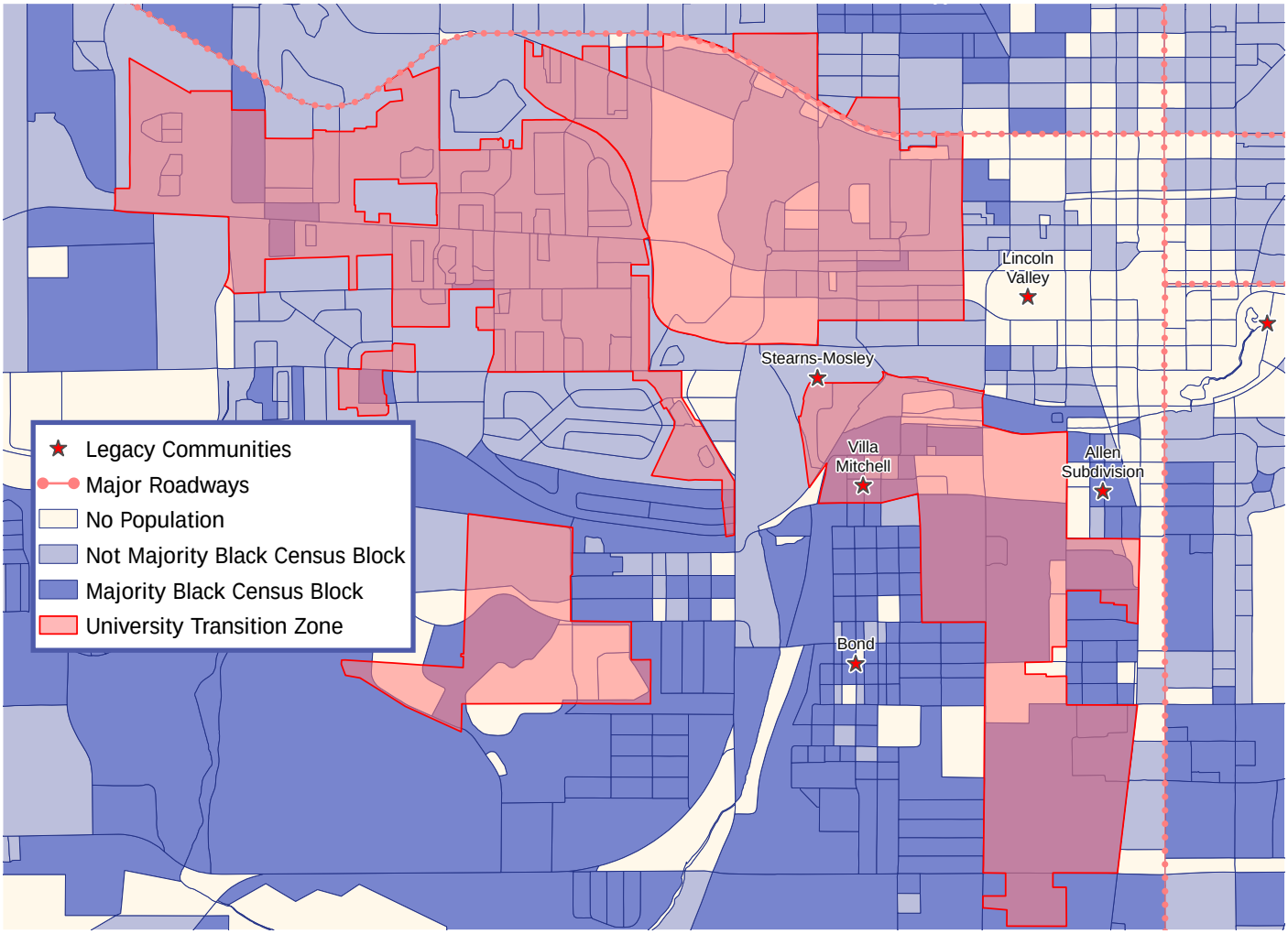


University Impact

The University Transition Zoning (UTZ) map displays land in the City of Tallahassee that is part of the UTZ District. The City's Legacy Communities and Black population demographics are also included on these maps. The purpose of this is to display Legacy Communities and Black populations at risk of, or currently experiencing, encroachment by university development.

The intent of UTZ, as stated by the City of Tallahassee, is to:
1. Provide higher-density residential opportunities and student-oriented services near campuses.
2. Protect existing residential neighborhoods from student housing encroachment.
3. Transition industrial and lower-density residential uses to vibrant urban areas.

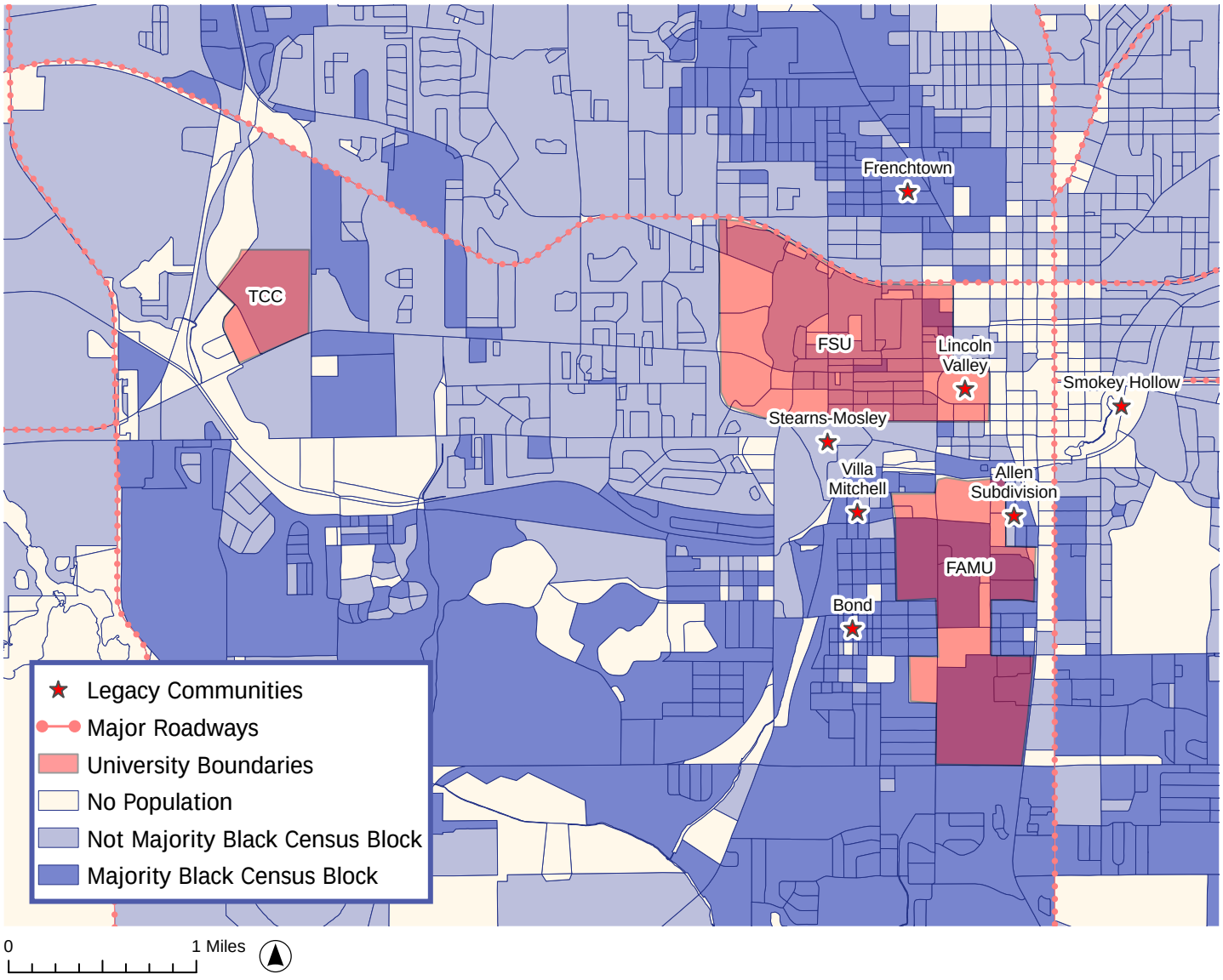
University Transition Zones and Black Population by Census Block in Tallahassee, Florida



This ordinance promotes student housing and student-oriented development, which has been occurring at an increasingly rapid rate in recent years. Development North of FSU along Tennessee Street has been shifting towards Frenchtown, an active Legacy Community. Despite claims that the UTZ will protect neighborhoods from encroachment, Frenchtown's residents and business owners have raised concerns.

This also poses a risk to two other Legacy Communities near universities, Griffin Heights and Bond. These development patterns can lead to an increase in property taxes, rent prices, or property value. Over time, a process like this displaces previous residents and businesses who can no longer afford to live or operate in an area, transforming the community entirely.

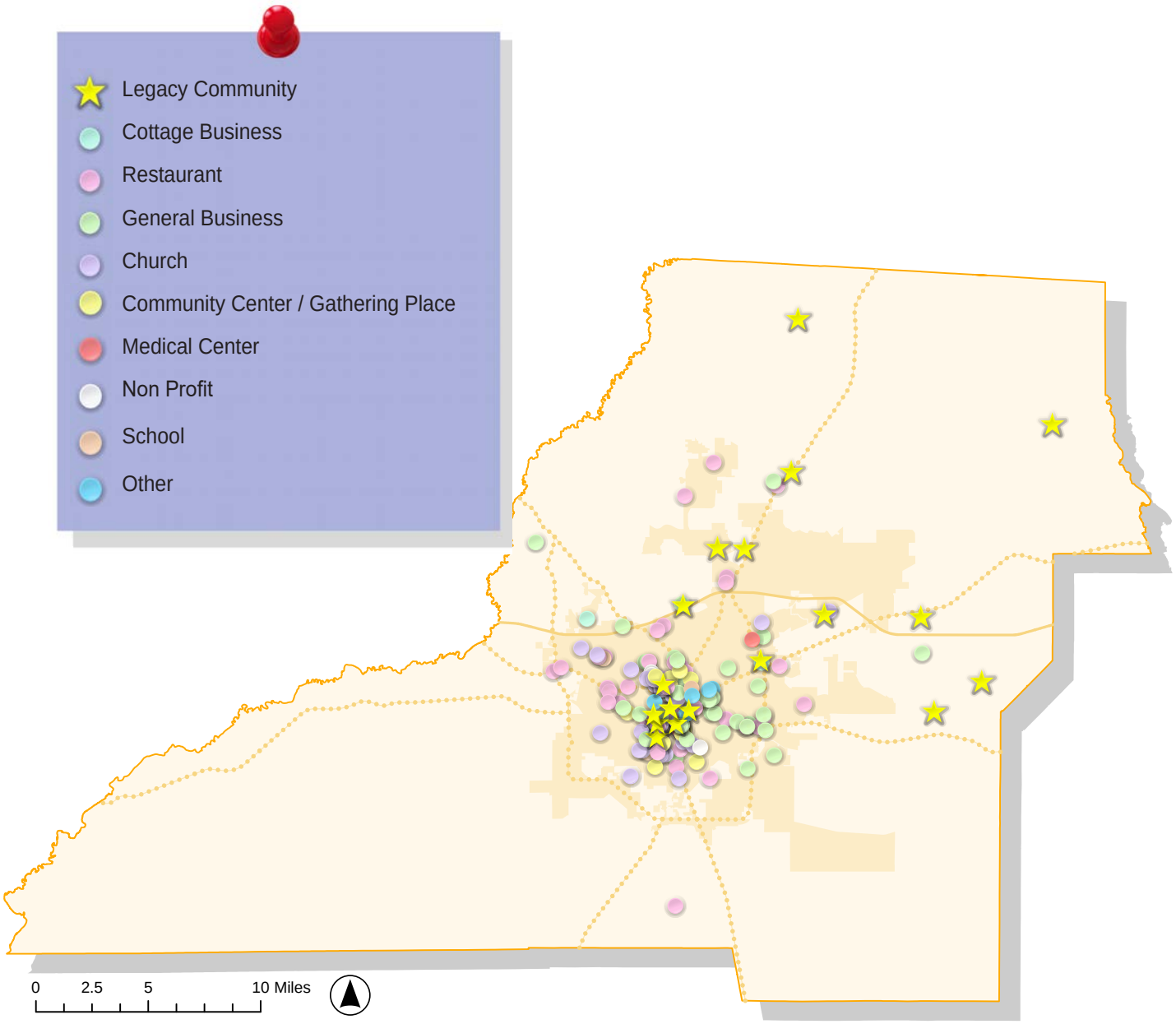
Universities and Black Population by Census Block in Tallahassee, Florida



Business and Economy

The assets we have documented in this project play an important role in Leon County Legacy Communities. Over the course of the project, we sourced a total of 228 assets. Of those, 181 are businesses and were also added to the eChamber of Commerce database housed on our website.

These assets were sourced and included in this project to help promote economic and recreational activity in Legacy Communities in Leon County. The business assets listed in the e-Chamber of Commerce database will facilitate interaction and communications between the community and local business owners, which will encourage investment, engagement, and patronage.



If a task is once begun,
Never leave it till it's done.
Be the labor, great or small,
Do it well or not at all

~ A poem recalled by Quincy Jones
from their time in grade school ~

Community Profiles

Despite the challenges endured by the Legacy Community members, their resiliency and commitment to one another is apparent in their attitudes and their history. Descriptions of daily life in these communities are filled with stories centered around community and family. Through our key informants and interview process, the 2024 Studio Team has noted 18 confirmed legacy communities in Leon County, as well as 45 communities requiring additional research to verify their origins. Noting the location of these communities has highlighted a pattern – many legacy communities are located on the sites of former plantations. These communities have endured tragedy, discrimination, and disinvestment, but due to the commitment of community members, there are still opportunities for positive growth. The following community profiles highlight resident stories, describing life in these places.

While many of these communities are still active today, some of the profiles cover communities which did not survive the challenges of the 20th century. Their existence is marked by the cemeteries, physical landmarks, and stories that remain. Profile length will vary depending on availability of information.

At the end of the Map Book there is a list of communities which are identified but did not have enough available information to fill a profile. Through ongoing research and interviews, we hope to develop these profiles further. The full list of communities and their designations are in Appendix A.

Bond

Since 1925

"Heart and soul of Tallahassee's South Side"

In 1927, Benjamin J. Bond and his wife Letitia received 29 acres of land in southern Tallahassee. The Bonds used their land to farm blueberries until Benjamin passed away in 1932. Afterward, Letitia divided her property and sold it to African American families.

The Bonds' property was turned into several subdivisions. Today, many neighborhoods make up the Greater Bond Neighborhood Association (GBNA). Among these are the Leon Arms, Medical Commons, Cherry Hill, Normal School, Saxon Street, and Villa Mitchell neighborhoods.

Cornelius Speed Jr. and his wife Josie purchased land from Letitia in 1944. Their grocery store, Speed's, is still in operation. Next to Speed's is 803, which served as a gathering space to organize for prominent figures in the Civil Rights Movement such as Dr. C. K. Steele and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

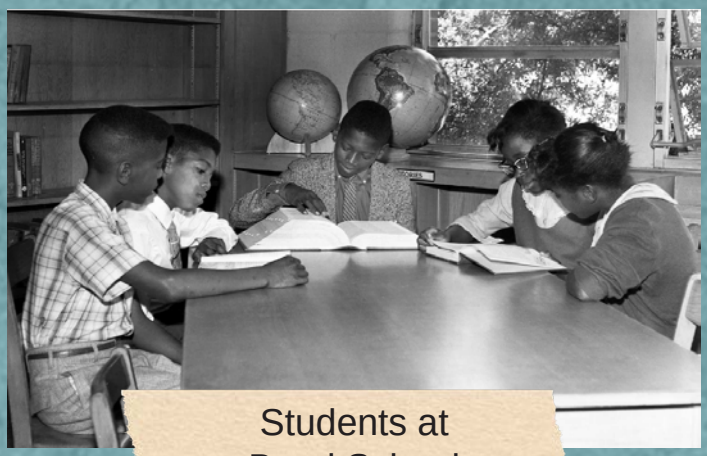
For almost a century, Bond has remained an active and instrumental part of Black history in Leon County. From protests for equal pay and facilities to sit-ins, residents like Robert and Trudie Perkins and D. Edwina Stephens fought to enact meaningful change for their communities. Their efforts live on throughout Greater Bond.

Greater Bond's rich history continues to shine through the neighborhood's many monuments, parks, and cultural centers. The Speed-Spencer-Stephens Park celebrates the legacies of three influential Bond families. Other sites, such as Bond Elementary, function as key communal meeting areas for the neighborhood's residents.

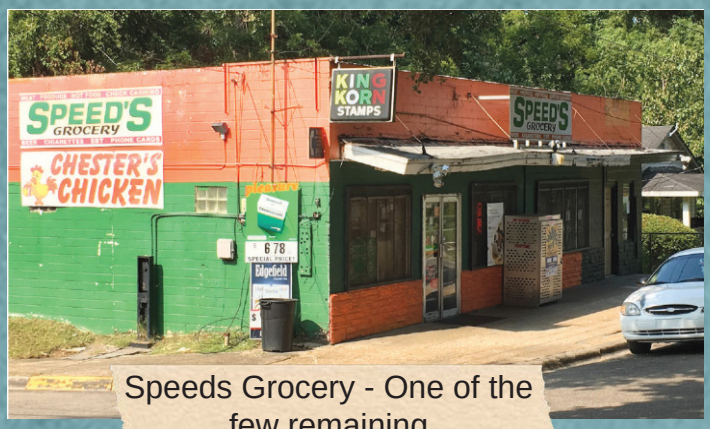
Greater Bond is one of four neighborhoods in Tallahassee that have participated in the City's Neighborhood First Program. In 2018, the GBNA established a Community Action Team. Working with the City of Tallahassee's Neighborhood First Program, the Community Action Team highlighted four focus areas: community beautification, economic development and resident empowerment, land use, and neighborhood safety and crime prevention education. The Neighborhood First Program is

projected to invest upwards of $6.4 million in these areas. The investments include funding projects such as the Housing Façade Program and the Engagement Around Community Infrastructure. These efforts are working to uplift the Greater Bond community and maintain it as the “heart and soul of Tallahassee’s south side.”

Community Center
Field Day 1970



Students at
Bond School



Speeds Grocery - One of the
few remaining
original businesses

In and Out Barbershop

Frenchtown

Since 1825

The beginnings of the Frenchtown community can be traced back to the year 1825, when the Marquis de Lafayette was granted land for his service in the American Revolutionary War. Lafayette outlawed slavery in this new settlement, which attracted many free Black settlers into the new territory.

Aerial Photo of Frenchtown 1959

Frenchtown served as a bastion for free Black settlers before the start of the Civil War in 1861. After the Civil War ended in 1865, the presence of a free Black community in Frenchtown drove many freedmen to the neighborhood. Thanks to this new influx of people, the community and the local economy began to expand.

The Frenchtown community would emerge as an important social and economic hub for Black Americans living in the area. Despite being cut off from white society because of segregation, the Frenchtown neighborhood thrived. The neighborhood contained businesses, churches, parks, bus services, a cemetery, and a movie theater. Many of the houses located within the neighborhood were New Orleans-style shotgun homes, some of which can still be seen in the neighborhood today. In the 1920s, Black culture flourished in Frenchtown alongside Black cultural movements like the Harlem Renaissance. Many Black-owned establishments, such as B-Sharp's Jazz Café and the Red Bird Café, served as important social hubs and places of artistic impression. Famed jazz artists Ray Charles, Little Richard, Al Green, and the Adderley Brothers performed in Frenchtown's music venues during this time.

Frenchtown would continue to prosper into the 1960s during the Civil Rights Movement. Multiple protests against segregation took place in Frenchtown, including the Tallahassee Bus Boycott in 1956, led by local activist C.K. Steele, and the Lunch Sit-Ins led by students at Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU) from 1960 to 1963. The presence of organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference further helped to facilitate the neighborhood's political activism.

Despite the success of local activists working to desegregate the City of Tallahassee, the legacy of segregation still lingers.

Suburban development led to many white families who were living closer to Tallahassee's urban core to move toward the then newly developed, larger, inexpensive housing further out of the city limits.

During the late 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement began to achieve victories in the federal legislation to desegregate public goods. As an unintended consequence, Frenchtown lost some important neighborhood assets such as the Lincoln High School, which was relocated as an integrated high school in the year 1970.

White Flight and neighborhood disinvestment following integration resulted in economic decline for Frenchtown. What had once been a thriving Black community in the heart of Tallahassee now began to experience economic difficulties as it became harder for local businesses to compete with large, national companies and chains. The 1970s and 1980s would be marked by continued neighborhood disinvestment from the City and a developing reputation from whites that Frenchtown was a hot spot for criminal activity. The people of Frenchtown refuse to let this negative reputation define their community.

In 1998, efforts to revitalize the neighborhood by the City Commission resulted in the Greater Frenchtown Community Redevelopment Area. Multiple projects have been introduced in Frenchtown since, in hopes of repairing the neighborhood's image and local economy tarnished by racism and neglect from the City.

Several neighborhood projects have been established to address the lack of adequate goods and services in Frenchtown. iGrow Farm started in 2012 and has proven to be a key community asset for engaging local youths while increasing food security in the area.

Additionally, Frenchtown's unique cultural and architectural heritage, paired with the significant number of historic buildings, has led to efforts to preserve the area's heritage. The John G. Riley Center has commemorated this history with the Soul Voices of Frenchtown Trail, which runs along the Carter-Howell-Strong Park.

Frenchtown residents persist in advocating for improved neighborhood conditions, upholding the grassroots tradition established by the earlier Civil Rights Movement. Elders still remember what Frenchtown once was and what it still can be – a testament to Black culture and economic resilience.

Smokey Hollow

Since the 1890s

Smokey Hollow was a thriving African American community of working-class individuals, immigrants, and families located on the edge of Tallahassee's downtown. Former community members recall the name "Smokey Hollow" stemming from the haze of smoke that hung over the neighborhood from the wood stove fires that were always burning. Others credit the haze to the nearby City-run incinerator and gas plant.

Located in the shadow of the capitol, Smokey Hollow was characterized by unpaved roads and shotgun style houses. Smokey Hollow's residents were primarily common labor force workers and government employees.

During the harsh years of the Great Depression, many African Americans moved into Smokey Hollow as it presented an economic opportunity ideally situated between the City and farming land. The community had an array of businesses, churches, and schools. Local farmers sold their dairy products, produce, and other goods at the weekly Curb market.

While Smokey Hollow was self-sustaining, segregation had a significant effect on the neighborhood. In an interview with WFSU, Cicero Hartsfield recalled that "Blacks couldn't live where they so desired, so it was

Smokey Hollow Commeration

one of the places where Blacks lived." The neighborhood was bordered by the City's incinerator, landfill, water treatment, and electrical plants, all of which worsened living conditions in the area.

Despite not having access to the same education opportunities, children were encouraged to excel in school from a young age. As they got older, children typically attended the Old Lincoln High School.

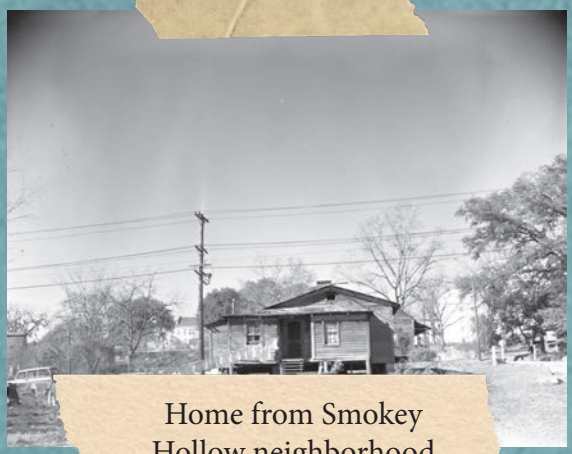
Urban renewal ultimately led to the displacement of community members. In a push to expand Apalachee Parkway and build new state government offices, most of the land was acquired by eminent domain. This led to mass displacement of residents in the once thriving black neighborhood. Most relocated to the Frenchtown or Bond neighborhoods. By the late 1960s, many of Smokey Hollow's original structures had been

destroyed to make room for the expansion of government buildings.

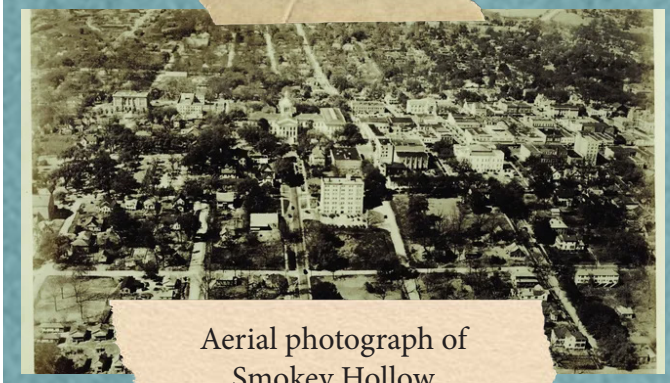
For nearly forty years, Smokey Hollow was abandoned. Then, in 2000, Smokey Hollow was recognized by the National Register of Historic Places. Plans to develop the nearby area into a park and stormwater retention pond, well known today as Cascades Park, launched in 2009.

Amidst redevelopment in 2016, Althemese Barnes, the former Director of the John G. Riley Center and Museum, served on a panel fighting to preserve Smokey Hollow for its historic significance. A series of spirit homes have been built on the site. These homes are steel structures that follow the footprint of the original architecture in the neighborhood and are accompanied by a series of plaques highlighting the history of the community.

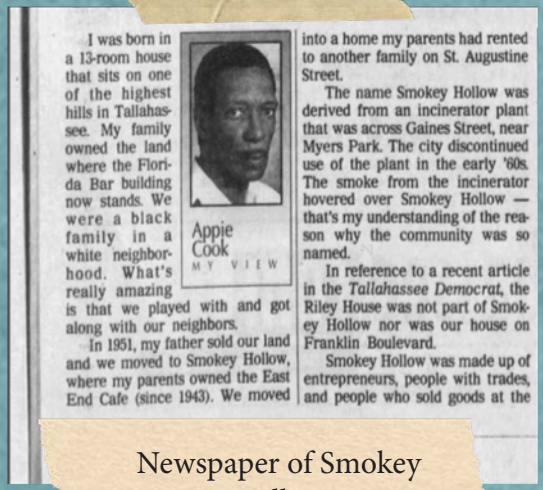
In a 1998 Tallahassee Democrat opinion piece, former resident Appie Cook reminisced that “the community I never stopped loving was torn down in 1963. The community is gone, but the love will never die.” Smokey Hollow is a testament to the injustices faced by Black communities under the guise of urban renewal. Despite this, Smokey Hollow will be remembered for its enduring sense of community.



Home from Smokey Hollow neighborhood



Aerial photograph of Smokey Hollow



I was born in a 13-room house that sits on one of the highest hills in Tallahassee. My family owned the land where the Florida Bar building now stands. We were a black family in a white neighborhood. What's really amazing is that we played with and got along with our neighbors.

In 1951, my father sold our land and we moved to Smokey Hollow, where my parents owned the East End Cafe (since 1943). We moved into a home my parents had rented to another family on St. Augustine Street.

The name Smokey Hollow was derived from an incinerator plant that was across Gaines Street, near Myers Park. The city discontinued use of the plant in the early '60s. The smoke from the incinerator hovered over Smokey Hollow — that's my understanding of the reason why the community was so named.

In reference to a recent article in the *Tallahassee Democrat*, the Riley House was not part of Smokey Hollow nor was our house on Franklin Boulevard.

Smokey Hollow was made up of entrepreneurs, people with trades, and people who sold goods at the

Appie Cook
MY VIEW

Newspaper of Smokey Hollow

Allen Subdivision

Since 1908

The area known as Allen Subdivision started as a series of five adjacent tracts of land, the earliest of which was platted in 1908. There is no officially recorded subdivision known as Allen Subdivision, but the name could stem from some of the area's early developers: C. K. and Della Allen.

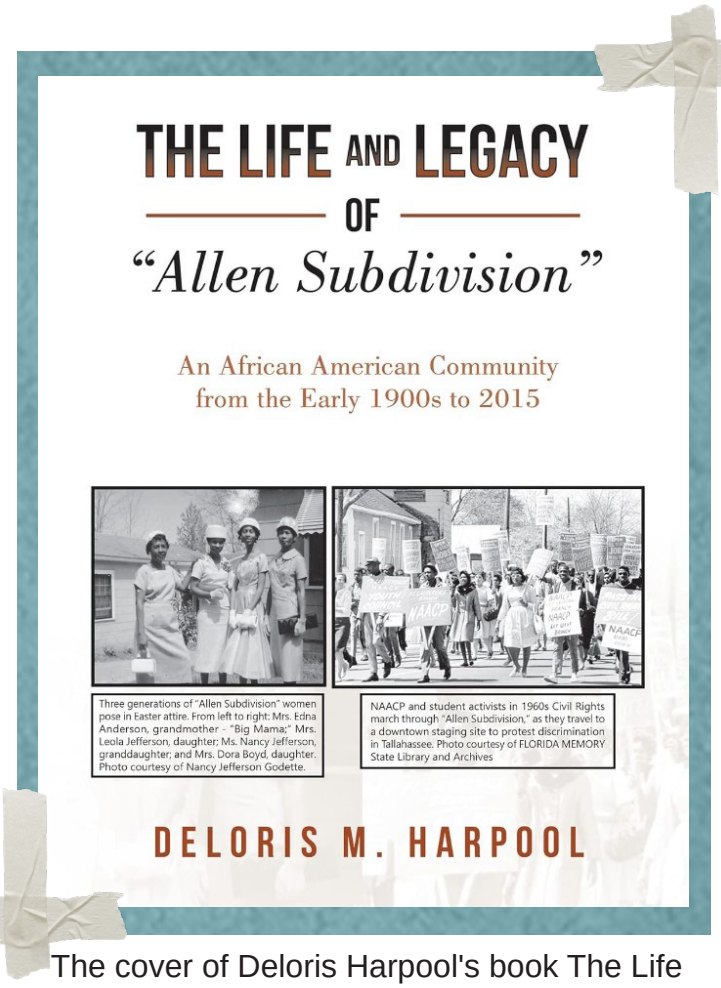
From 1920 to 1930, this area was characterized by fields and unpaved streets, and most homes had no running electricity or indoor plumbing. In 1955, a resolution was signed to complete the paving of Allen's streets. In 1960, 45% of Allen's homeowners were African American.

Allen Subdivision's history is detailed by Deloris M. Harpool in The Life and Legacy of Allen Subdivision: An African American Community from the Early 1900s to 2015. Harpool details the neighborhood's history, traditions, and traumas. From cross burnings and boycotts to home-grown foods and family recipes, Harpool's account provides an honest eyewitness account. Her work spans decades of research and lived experience.

Harpool's book describes Allen Subdivision as a good, strong community. In it, she describes the community's ties to Gethsemane Missionary Baptist Church, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), and the Capital City Ice Plant. Institutions like these were integral to the community's "it takes a village" mindset. From the moral teachings at Gethsemane to the hard working role models of the neighborhood's schools and businesses, Allen Subdivision's institutions helped foster the area's enduring sense of community.

During the Civil Rights Movement, Allen Subdivision became a hotspot for political organization and activism. Allen Subdivision hosted its fair share of marches, protests, and boycotts. In 1956, Wilhelmina Jakes and Carrie Patterson refused to move to the back of a bus, sparking the Tallahassee Bus Boycotts.

In 1985, construction of the M. S. Thomas Bridge forced the relocation of many of Allen's residents. Continuing into the nineties, encroachment from



The cover of Deloris Harpool's book The Life and Legacy of "Allen Subdivision": An African American Community from the Early 1900s to 2015

FAMU forced more homeowners to leave the neighborhood.

As of 2015, only a handful of residents still lived in their original homes. According to Harpool, this stems from the success and upward mobility experienced by many of Allen Subdivion's residents.

In 2020, Allen Subdivision received grant funds from Tallahassee's Neighborhood Partnership Grant. The neighborhood was able to install commemorative markers to highlight Allen Subdivision's key people and places.

Allen Subdivision will be memorialized in Tallahassee's History and Culture Trail. This trail will highlight historically Black neighborhoods, businesses, and people in the areas surrounding the Capital Cascades Trail and FAMU Way. It was designed in collaboration with a citizen working group, which included past residents and local historians. Allen Subdivision is set to be the first of six themes along this 1.5 mile trail.

Bradfordville

Since 1829

The Bradfordville area was settled by members of the Bradford Family in the late 1820s and early 1830s. In 1860, Bradford's plantations covered approximately 9,000 acres across northern Leon County, primarily around Lake Iamonia.

The Bradfordville area has been home to a wide variety of general stores, schoolhouses, churches, and cemeteries through the 19th and early 20th Centuries. These include the Old Bradfordville school, a segregated one-room schoolhouse for Black children, and Pisgah United Method Church, a non-segregated church where the entire congregation gathered under one roof, albeit in separate seating.

Much of Bradfordville's recorded history is distinctly skewed in favor of the region's white perspective. Despite this, several physical manifestations of historic Black excellence have called Bradfordville home, including the Bradfordville Blues Club.

The Bradfordville Blues Club has been a major landmark in the area since the 1960s when the building served as a local community center. Its history as a social hub continued into the 1990s and early 2000s when it was converted into a dedicated Club, offering a diversity of live blues music for the next 30 years. The Blues Club was the first such establishment in the state of Florida to receive a Mississippi Blues Trail marker, thanks to its historic role as a stopping point for traveling blues and jazz musicians. Though the Club was forced into permanent closure in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, its legacy lives on in the hearts and minds of the surrounding community.

Blues music represents a foundational component of Black history in the United States; the genre originates in the years following the end of the Civil War and describes the experiences, hardships, and aspirations of freedmen and women. As the years passed and challenges came and went, the genre evolved to reflect the new experiences of the Black individual in America. In this way, blues music represents a living and breathing history that details what history books and library archives sometimes fail to capture. To learn more about the history of blues music in Bradfordville, readers can visit the trail marker found at 7152 Moses Lane, off of Bradfordville Road.

Today, much of the forested land found within the boundaries of the former plantations is protected by conservation easements, which prevent new development. Beyond these protected lands, however,

the Bradfordville area has seen substantial population growth and new development through the 2000s and 2010s, including on former plantation land. The depth of Bradfordville's history may not be known by all who live in the area today. We hope that readers from this area will be inspired to learn more about the history of the land and the legacies of those who once called it home.

Villa Mitchell

Since the 1940s

The Villa Mitchell Hill community was located along Canal Street in South Tallahassee. Today this would be along FAMU Way. Between 1836 and 1837 the Tallahassee Railroad (TRR) was built from Tallahassee to Saint Marks. The construction of this railroad posed a more efficient route for planters and businessmen to transport and bring their products to market. As cotton was a large export, this industry was an important economic factor for African American people to form their community after emancipation.

For residents of the Villa Mitchell Hill community, there was a sense of pride in their community. People were proud of their ancestors and recognized the roles they had. This was especially true during the Jim Crow Era, where these residents faced many exclusions. People had a community they felt connected to and could rely on.

In an interview conducted by researchers for the city of Tallahassee with Doris Hall, who grew up in Villa Mitchell Hill, she gave a glimpse into what life was like. Doris recalls that her mom would work for the white-owned businesses. As the eldest child, Doris was responsible for looking after her younger siblings, clothes washing, and tending to the yard. For many households, there was no grass but they would keep the yard dirt clean. Many families would have vegetable gardens where they would provide for other families with the produce they had grown. The community also had mulberry trees, blackberry, and plum plants that everyone would pull from.

Major providers for work were the turpentine industry, dairying, and the Elberta Crate Company. By the 1900s, Leon County was the first in Florida to take part in the dairying industry. Residents also took part in the pecan industry where they gathered and sold pecans from their trees to the Tallahassee Pecan Company. The Elberta Crate Company provided another job opportunity for Black men and women who could not work for the city or state. Some recall that this provided one of the best opportunities for pay. Other residents would create small businesses for day-to-day needs in the community. Once Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) opened, this became another large employer for Villa Mitchell Hill residents.

Attending church was important for the community. The main churches for the community included the Greater Fountain Chapel AME Church, Gethsemane Missionary Baptist Church, and Saint Michael's and All Angels Episcopal Church.

Residents of Villa Mitchell Hill had a role in the Tallahassee Bus Boycotts as these individuals relied on the buses for transportation around the city. During these protests, the communities of Villa Mitchell Hill, Allen Subdivision, and Providence served as an epicenter and safe place for participants. In 1963, FAMU students who were also residents of Villa Mitchell Hill participated in sit-in movements at the Florida Theater, which was white-only.

It is recognized that the community still exists today with some of the original homes intact. As of 2022, the History & Culture Trail along FAMU Way features Villa Mitchell Hill as a theme along the trail. This highlights the value of the community and the experiences and contributions it had to Tallahassee.

Lake Oversteet Community

Since the 1870s

Within Alfred B. Maclay Gardens State Park is Lake Overstreet, one of Leon County's last undeveloped coastlines. Despite this, a thriving community once existed just beyond its shores.

The Lake Overstreet Community began when tenant farmers and formerly enslaved people of the Papy plantation purchased land from General Mariano Papy in the 1870s. These sales allowed for the creation of one of Florida's first land-owning African American Communities.

Spencer Robinson purchased land from the Papys in 1871. Today, their land is best remembered for the Cedar Shake House. Though it is unclear whether the Robinsons constructed it, they came into possession of the House before he passed the property to his children.

The Cedar Shake House was eventually passed on to Henry and Annie Sawyer, two employees of Maclay Gardens. Their daughter-in-law, Estelle Sawyer, detailed what life was like in the Lake Overstreet Community in the late 1930s and early 1940s in an interview with the John G. Riley Center. Alongside her husband Wiley, Sawyer owned and operated the Lake Overstreet Inn, the only business in the area. They sold snacks and beer and had live music and dancing.

Unfortunately, the Sawyers were forced to close the Lake Overstreet Inn after a series of illegal property transactions that resulted in the loss of Black-owned property in the Lake Hall and Lake Overstreet communities. In the end, they couldn't afford a lawyer to defend their right to their land.

Before state acquisition, an archaeological assessment was conducted in the Community, surveying roughly 890 acres of land. Artifacts ranging from glass bottles to old batteries have been found.

Today, the Lake Overstreet Community lives on in the descendants of those who lived there. Oral histories from seven residents can be found in the John G. Riley Center and Museum's Digital Archives.

Macon

Since 1876

"Considered one of the oldest intact communities in Leon County"

Henry Macon Sr. was a freedman who purchased 320 acres of land for $1,600 on January 31, 1876. He then sold this land to other Black people in the area, thus the Macon community was born.

In September 1994, the Macon Community began its annual festival reunion. Shortly after, Grace Williams began her work as an activist for the community. She worked hard to put Macon on the map and gain recognition from city and county officials.

Macon Community School

Richard Davis and Odell Johnson, President and Vice President of the Macon School and Community Association Inc., continued Williams' work in the community. They obtained municipal services to enhance the quality of life for residents in the area. Additionally, Davis is the former liaison to the Council of Neighborhood Associations. He obtained the federal tax exemption for the community in 2003 under the Macon School and Community Association, Inc.
The Macon Memory Gardens is a small cemetery in the community and is the final resting place of Henry Macon Sr. Today, along with the cemetery, the community boasts a park, 3 churches, and a community garden. The Macon Community consists of around 240 single-family homes and an apartment complex with 300 units. Through the efforts of Grace Williams, Richard Davis, and Odell Johnson, the Macon Community is thriving and still "considered one of the oldest intact communities in Leon County".

Barrow Hill

Since the 1870s

Before Emancipation, Barrow Hill was a plantation owned by John S. Winthrop. Winthrop was among the largest slave owners in the 1860 Slave Census Schedules. The Barrow Hill Plantation covered portions of East Tennessee Street, Miccosukee Road, and Lincoln High School.

Residents describe the community as a rural area on Jacksonville Highway, eight miles east of Tallahassee's city limits. Founders of Barrow Hill include Mr. George Washington, Mr. Hannah Lewis, Mr. George Proctor, and Mr. Shack Gardner. In 1872, residents worked either as farmers, sharecroppers, or sawmill workers. Community members were politically active: Mr. Verge Harris became the area's first Justice of the peace, Mr. Cornelius Speed the first Sheriff, and Reverend Abraham Bryant the first Ordained Minister.

According to a 1996 account from the Barrow Hill Second School Reunion, Barrow Hill was named for a Mr. Barrow who lived in a house on a hill that overlooked the Barrow Hill School. Dr. Sandra Thompson, founder of the North Star Legacy Communities project, grew up in Barrow Hill. As a child in this community, Dr. Thompson connected with people who were born in the 1800s. These adults, some

The Barrow Hill School House in 1965.

of whom were enslaved, taught Dr. Thompson about the community's history.

Even as a child, she recognized that Barrow Hill's homes and resources were different from her white counterparts. Despite this, Barrow Hill's residents valued what they had: community. Community members would often share land, crops, and other resources with their neighbors.

Barrow Hill hosts several yearly events including the Barrow Hill Shooting Match. In 2022, the event featured target shooting, drumming, music, food, and dancing.

Lake Hall

Since 1870

Lake Hall is a historic community site located within Alfred B. Maclay State Gardens, just north of Tallahassee. It is closely connected to the nearby Lake Overstreet community.

In 1870, a one-room schoolhouse, named the Lake Hall School, was built on land the families had purchased themselves. In what may be one of the earliest land purchases by Black farmers in Leon County, at least six families purchased almost all of the land surrounding Lake Hall and Lake Overstreet. This and other land purchases around the County represented a monumental break from the past, where Black farmers had no legal right over the land on which they built their families and livelihoods.

The families of Lake Hall and Lake Overstreet were connected by close ties of kinship and communal networks, concentrated in the area around Lake Hall Road. Small businesses like the Payne family's general store provided important goods and services within the community.

New employment opportunities in state government following World War II, combined with close proximity to the state capital, proved to be the strongest force pulling young people away from the tenant farming livelihood of their parents and grandparents. By the 1950s, the developed land and associated fields had mostly been abandoned and reclaimed by pine forests.

As Black families moved away from the Lake Hall area, they left evidence of their presence on the physical landscape and in the artifacts they left behind. Archaeological assessments conducted by Dr. Glen Doran of Florida State University's Department of Anthropology have revealed at least twenty-five historic sites in the Lake Hall-Lake Overstreet area. These include several houses, hand-dug drainage ditches, and areas for disposing of household waste and other garbage.

Lake Hall stands as a testament to the experiences of Leon County's Black community after the Civil War and Reconstruction through Jim Crow and the post-war period in the 1940s. To learn more about life in Lake Hall from those who lived it, readers are encouraged to listen to recorded interviews with Betty Madison, Mary King, and Anna James conducted by the John G. Riley Center and Museum, which are available online in their digital archive.

Capitola

Since 1917

"But time is a mill the millstone has rolled over a thousand times since those days"
- George Russ

Capitola is a census-designated place (CDP) in Leon County, Florida. Capitola's population is currently just over 300 people, with over 42% of them Black or African American. Capitola is located on land previously regarded as the Evergreen Hills Plantation, and many residents are descendants of the enslaved people of the Plantation who settled on the land following emancipation.

Evergreen Hills Plantation was a cotton plantation established by Green Hill Chaires. The Plantation was established sometime during the 1820s, one of several established by the Chaires family when they arrived in Leon County. Evergreen Hills Plantation, located in eastern Leon County, covered 6,700 acres of land, which were divided into two tracts. The first tract bordered the La Grange and Francis Eppes Plantations, and the second bordered the Verdura, Woodland, and Chemonie Plantations.

In the 1910s, land developers began planning for the town of Capitola before the town was officially established in 1917. The boundaries of Capitola partially cover land previously recognized as the Evergreen Hills Plantation. At its inception, there were both Black and white residents in Capitola, split by the Florida Central Railroad tracks that run through the town. To the east of the tracks resided most of Capitola's white residents, while Black residents resided primarily on the west side.

There is limited recorded history regarding the formation of Capitola and its Black community. One lifelong Capitola resident, George Russ, participated in a series of interviews in the late 20th century. In these interviews, Russ presented oral histories passed to him through generations, as well as his accounts as a Black Capitola community member. In these accounts, Russ expressed that many other Capitola community members have similar stories and

sentiments as him. His grandfather, Gripper Russ, was born enslaved on the El Destino Plantation, becoming a freedman in his lifetime. Gripper continued to reside in proximity to El Destino, leading to generations of the Russ family residing in Capitola.

Born in 1904, George Russ has shared his childhood experiences of segregation and discrimination as a Black resident in Capitola. Russ has mentioned the abuse and mistreatment he endured by members of the Chaires family. During his time in school, Russ remembers the contrast in the segregated schools.

After the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, Russ began to recognize the shifting racial dynamics within the town of Capitola. In a 1985 interview, George Russ stated, “Right here in Capitola is one of the best places it is for the whites and the Blacks to get along.”

Despite remaining a small community, Capitola is an active community with a prominent Black population. Despite the progress made during the Civil Rights Movement, as well as more positive racial relations in the community, issues such as housing segregation persist.

The majority of the information on Capitola’s Black history is based on personal stories and shared oral histories of the community’s residents, such as George Russ. Russ never forgot the discrimination he became familiar with throughout his adolescence and adulthood but found pride and empowerment through the progress he witnessed in his lifetime. Captiola’s community members, who have been dedicated to preserving their community and ancestors’ histories, are the primary historical recorders of Capitola. These stories are rich with information and personal insight into the experiences of Capitola residents, demonstrating the value of recording and preserving these histories for future generations.

Capitola resident George Russ, 1997

Town of Capitola plaque

Griffin Heights

Since 1901

In 1901, the State Primitive Baptist Church convened to discuss the creation of a school in the area that would become Griffin Heights. Later, in 1907, the Griffin Normal and Industrial Institute for Negroes was established to provide quality education to Black youths.

Funding for the school came from the newly emerging community, who donated substantial amounts of money to ensure the school provided a quality education. The name of the school, and subsequently the neighborhood, comes from the first pastor of St. Mary Primitive Baptist Church, Reverend Henry Griffin.

The neighborhood grew as the Griffin Normal and Industrial Institute's enrollments increased. A huge boom in the population came post-World War II when Black military families homesteaded in Griffin Heights. The community's demographic profile was heavily impacted by segregation. While Griffin Heights was excluded from white society, its isolation meant that its residents existed across a wide socioeconomic spectrum. Despite these differences, the community was tightly knit.

When the Leon County School District consolidated in the early 1950s, the Griffin Normal and Industrial Institute began to attract students from rural schools. The Griffin Normal and Industrial Institute building would be used for special programs for a few years until it was demolished.

While Griffin Heights currently faces issues due to the disinvestment, many of the institutions that helped build the community still exist. Griffin Heights is home to seven churches, John G. Riley Elementary School, and Griffin Middle School. The Griffin Heights community continues to recognize the value of its educational assets and has invested in them heavily to ensure that the next generation continues to receive the highest quality of education possible.

Today, The Griffin Heights Neighborhood Association continues to be an advocate for the needs of their community. Working with the City of Tallahassee, there have been multiple plans put in place to address the community's challenges. These include proposals for the development of a new grocery store to address food insecurities and advocating for improvements to John G. Riley Park. These efforts have culminated into the Griffin Heights Neighborhood First Plan which aims to improve the area's conditions and relationships.

New Hope Community

Since the 1830s

Historical records indicate that the New Hope Community was located somewhere between Miccosukee and Centerville, in Leon County, Florida. Enslaved people often formed campsites known as “brush arbors”. These sites served as private places for worship, away from overseers, and were commonly named “New Hope”. It is believed that Leon County’s New Hope Community may have similar origins.

In 2020, the undocumented location of New Hope Cemetery was rediscovered by Gloria Jefferson Anderson, as a result of her extensive efforts towards researching her paternal history. During her adolescence, Anderson’s father informed her that their ancestors were buried at New Hope Cemetery, but the exact location was unknown. Anderson’s father passed away when she was a teenager, initiating her to investigate and uncover her ancestor’s stories, dedicating over 25 years to these efforts. Anderson’s research is aimed to not only study the Cemetery, but the New Hope Community as well.

Through Anderson’s extensive efforts, the absence of New Hope’s history and the community’s, through the lens of historical record-keeping, is being rewritten. Anderson has compiled a variety of information on the Community, mostly on her lineage, but her efforts and the discovery of New Hope Cemetery have initiated further research, towards the site, at a larger scope.

In 2020 and 2021, the Florida Department of State Division of Historic Resources (DHR) Bureau of Archaeological Research surveyed New Hope Cemetery. The survey involved confirmation of the Cemetery’s location and the presence of unmarked gravesites. DHR’s survey led to the official coordinates and boundaries of the Cemetery being defined, as well as the site being commemorated and granted preservation by the State.

During a meeting in December of 2022, the city of Tallahassee’s Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency (IA) approved the expansion of New Hope Cemetery’s initial historical survey.This updated survey falls under Blueprint’s Northeast Gateway Cultural Survey Project and will shift focus on the New Hope Community and Cemetery. The survey expansion will incorporate the insights of historical experts of the area, interpretive writing, and research aiming to identify and document the Black historical context and stories of the Community.

Abraham Crowell (Gloria Jefferson Anderson's Great Grandfather) was born into enslavement in North Carolina. In the early 1800s, he was relocated to Leon County, where he was made to labor on the Welaunee Plantation. He and his wife, Suwannee, built a family together and raised 16 children.

Gloria Jefferson Anderson's efforts towards uncovering the history of the New Hope Community have been transformative to our understanding of this community. Anderson's story is inspiring, but it also reveals how challenging it is to access Black history—further instilling the importance of recording Black history and stories.

Miccosukee

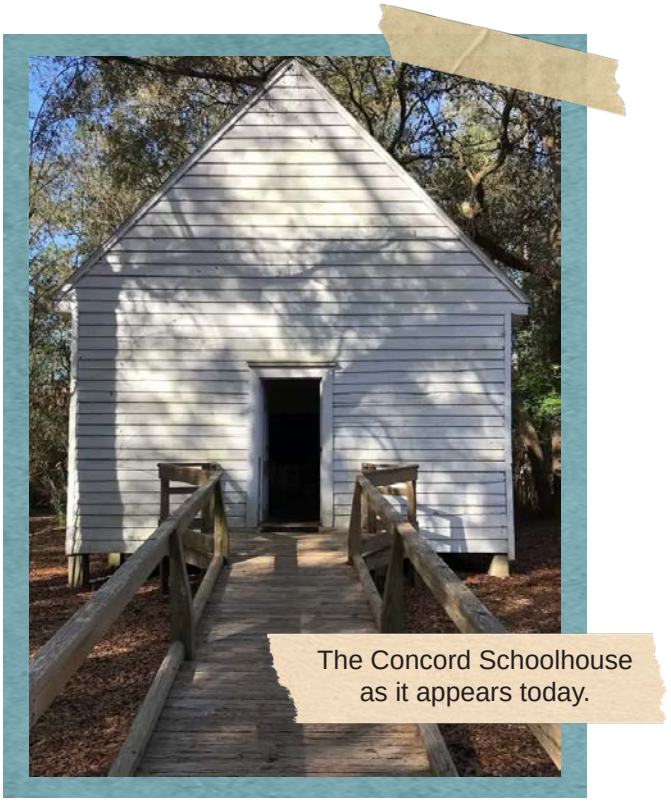
Since the 1870s

Miccosukee is a small community located in northeast Leon County, Florida. This area was first settled in the 1700s by the Seminole Tribe.

In 1818, General Andrew Jackson led a military operation in Florida. After several cross-border raids, Jackson targeted the Miccosukee Tribe, one of the three Seminole entities. These attacks led to the burning of homes and the capturing of livestock and supplies in the area, which caused major losses for the Tribe.

In the mid to late 1800s, Miccosukee shifted into a key hub for cotton plantations, including the Blakey Plantation, and in 1838, the Concord African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church was built in the Miccosukee area. Today, the church building has been donated and relocated to the Tallahassee Museum.

In the 1940s and 1950s, farming was a prominent activity in the area. Many residents either worked on farms or had their own. One resident shared that many men lived on former plantations and worked as sharecroppers. At the time, this was a tight-knit community, with residents helping out one another and sharing their farm yields.



The Concord Schoolhouse as it appears today.

The Concord School House was built in 1897 and was among the first public schools for Black people in Leon County, playing a fundamental role in the progression of education in the area. In 1969, following the desegregation of public schools, the Leon County school board donated the schoolhouse to the Tallahassee Museum. The school, like the church, was donated in acknowledgment of its historical significance and educational importance.

Despite the challenging events that the Miccosukee community has faced, the area's heritage lives on through its historical landmarks and the ongoing use of its name for both the lake and the community.

Chaires

Since the 1820s

The Chaires Community is located in southeast Leon County. It was established during the 1820s by the Chaires brothers. Known as Florida's first millionaires, the Chaires were the owners of one of Middle Florida's largest plantations.

The community had a cotton gin, packinghouse, store, public schools, and churches. In the 1870s, the Chaires School, later known as Station I School, was started. This was a one-room schoolhouse for Black children in the community. The school closed in 1967 following desegregation.

In the early 1900s, Chaires had two churches, Pilgrim Rest and St. Paul, though Pilgrim Rest closed in 1915 upon the death of their pastor. St. Paul was near the train tracks and during school breaks, May Day, and the 4th of July, there were community gatherings and picnics. There was also Patterson's Store, which one resident claimed was always bustling. J.R. Alford owned many acres of land in the area and sold some to Black folks during this time as well.

In the year 2000, Chaires was added to the National Register of Historic Places and it was given a historic district marker in 2004.

Since desegregation and integration, Chaires' demographics have shifted. According to Dr. Sandra Thompson, founder of the North Star Legacy project, many of Chaires' new residents have no knowledge of the area's history. Thankfully, projects such as WFSU's, Florida State's public media outlet, Not so Black and White: A Community's Divided History provide a glimpse at what life was like in Chaires and other Legacy Communities.

Original Chaires Schoolhouses in 1900

Stearns-Mosley

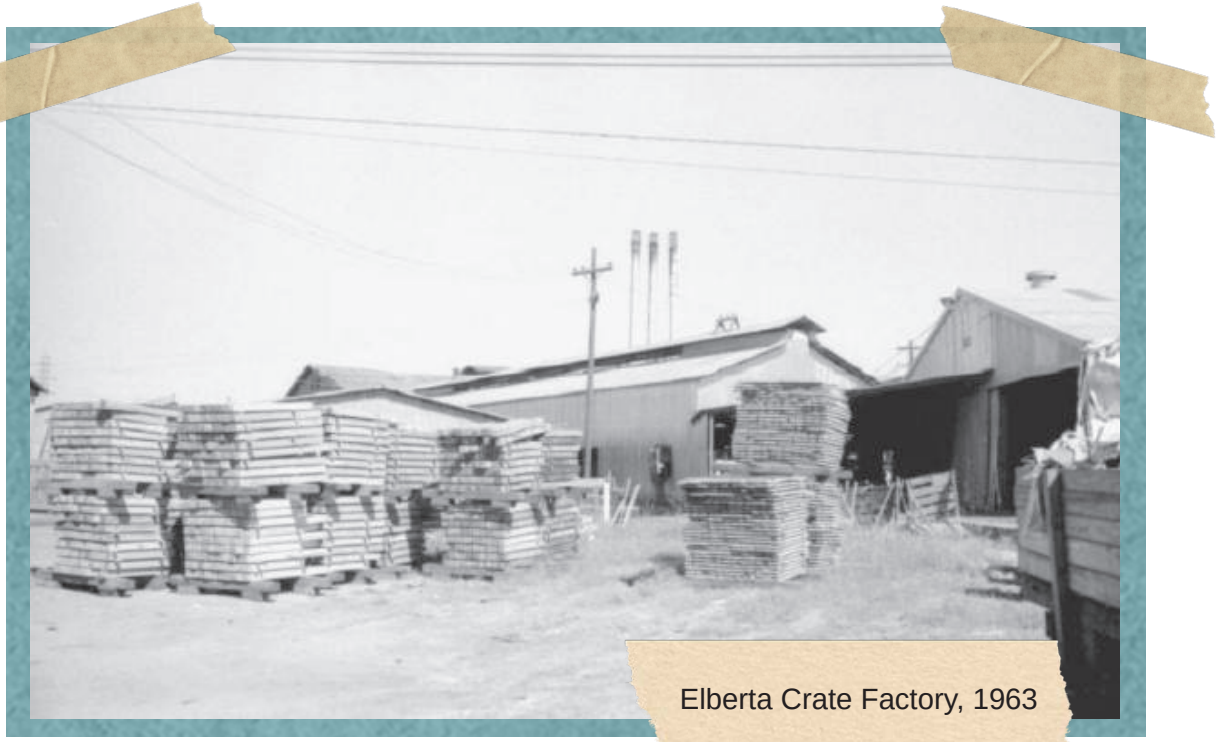
Since 1880

Originally situated on a brickyard from the 1860s, the Stearns-Mosley neighborhood was mapped out in the 1880s, though the community was not established and developed until the turn of the century. Stearns-Mosley is located in the Gaines Street Corridor of Tallahassee, Florida. Though this neighborhood's location was not a plantation site, it was originally a neighborhood composed of Black people before and after enslavement. In contrast with today, this area is now filled with developments and housing complexes.

The condos located at 1200 Stearns Street that stand today are situated where housing for the Elberta Crate Factory was during the 1950s.

Stearns-Mosley, along with the entire Gaines Street Corridor, is one of the many areas/landmarks highlighted for preservation for its historic significance by the City of Tallahassee's Historic Preservation Plan.

Many of the houses in the area have been demolished and the land has been used for student housing developments, for the adjacent Florida State University. Previously there was a community center, which closed to the public in 2022 and is now only for use by residents of the 1200 Stearns Street condos. Though this community is being encroached on by new construction developments, FAMU Way (South) and Gaines Street (North), there is still life in this area.

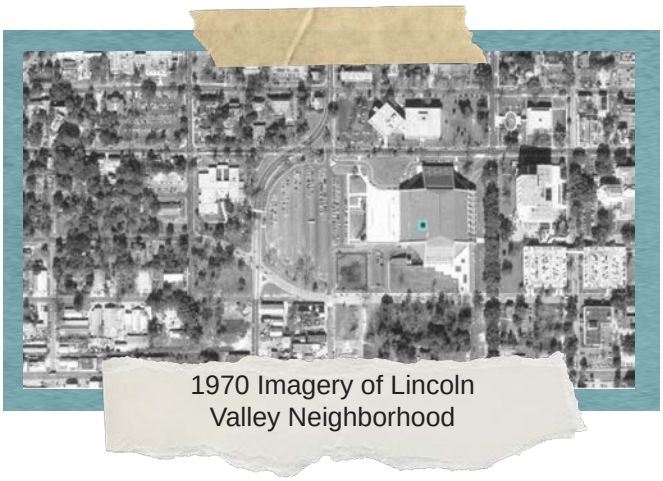


Elberta Crate Factory, 1963

Lincoln Valley

Late 1800s - 1980s

Following the construction of the Tallahassee-St. Marks rail line, industrial developers flocked to the Gaines Street Corridor. As industry grew in Tallahassee, so did the demand for residential development to house employees. This led to a series of residential neighborhoods developing in the Corridor during the late 1800s and early 1900s.



1970 Imagery of Lincoln Valley Neighborhood

One neighborhood that formed during this time was Lincoln Valley, formerly located where the Donald L. Tucker Civic Center currently resides. Before the 1980s, Lincoln Valley was a flourishing and predominantly Black neighborhood.

Throughout the 1900s, the Gaines Street Corridor became the economic hub and business sector of Tallahassee. As the call for the industry grew, city planners and politicians conceptualized a different vision for the area through redevelopment projects and the rezoning of many parcels for industrial and commercial uses. One of these projects began in 1981, with the city-funded construction of the Donald L. Tucker Civic Center. The Civic Center was built in Lincoln Valley, directly resulting in the loss of the neighborhood. As a result, Lincoln Valley's residents were displaced, losing both their homes and the community they shared.

While the neighborhood may have been lost, the stories of Lincoln Valley Community and its residents can now be used as a cautionary example of how disinvestment and neglect of historically Black neighborhoods in favor of economic development results in displacement and the loss of communities. The issue of displacement is a reality that Tallahassee's Black community has faced many times, and City officials and planners must ensure current and future growth does not repeat this pattern. While there are limited recordings of the stories of Lincoln Valley's residents, their stories deserve to be told. Despite the unfortunate ending of Lincoln Valley, this story should not be forgotten.

Tall Timbers

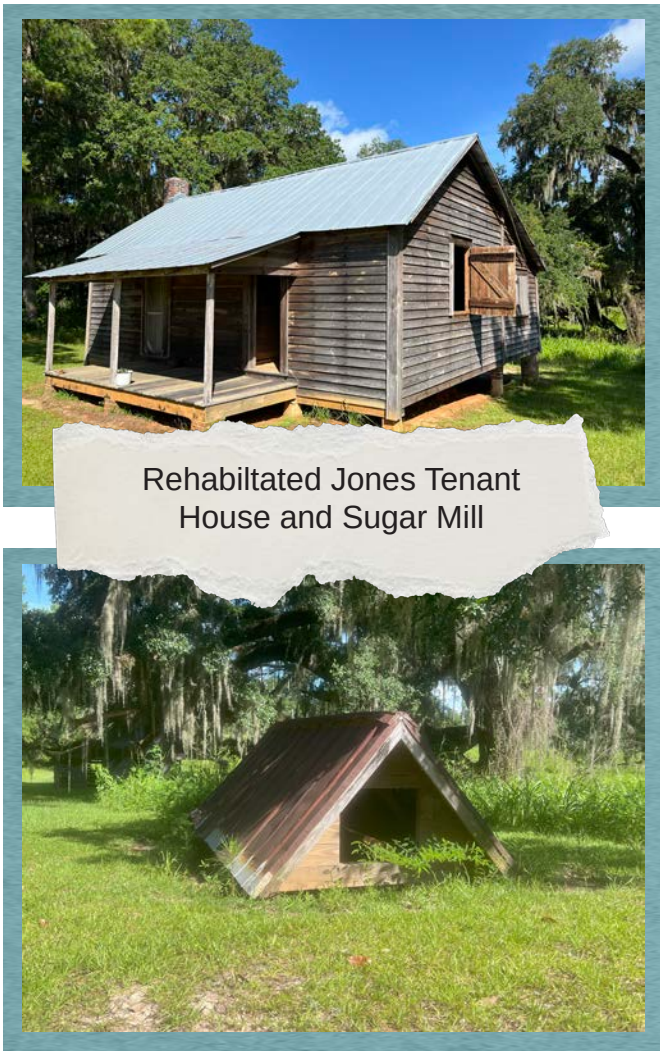
Since the 1830s

Between 1830 and 1860, Griffin W. Holland, a Virginia planter, acquired land in northern Florida for his Woodlawn Plantation. The land was eventually purchased by Edward Beadel in 1895 and renamed Tall Timbers.

During this time, Black families were moving to Florida to work on homesteads and plantations. There is evidence of five Black families working in this area, from 1870 to 1900: the Fisher, Nix, Stratton, Vickers, and Wyche families. All but the Vickers rented land as opposed to sharecropping.

Those who rented land from white landowners would lease a parcel at a fixed rent rate, allowing them to have greater control over the quantity and variety of crops their family produced. On the other hand, participating in sharecropping allowed the landowner to receive about one-third of the product.

Families would live on-site in wooden homes which were typically large with roughly six people per home. These homes were typically full of openings to allow for airflow during the summer months. During the winter, newspapers were used to insulate the walls. Outdoor kitchens were a common feature to reduce the likelihood of a kitchen fire burning the whole house down. Restrooms were always located outside of the house alongside a sugar mill shack to store crops.



Rehabiltated Jones Tenant House and Sugar Mill

Educational opportunities were limited for families in Tall Timbers. The only evidence of school in the area is a listing of appropriations for the 1880 school year, which had Hickory Hills listed as the recipient. There is little evidence of what happened following this year and whether this

Old Tenent Farmland

Syrup Making Furnance

school continued to exist. The school was shut down likely due to poor attendance, loss of interest, and population shifts.

Church was an important aspect of the Tall Timbers community. It was not only a place of worship but also a social and political center. Each year, Emancipation Day celebrations would halt farming operations to allow people to gather at Church for picnics. Hickory Hill Primitive Baptist Church remains today, and those buried in the Church's cemetery represent the families that worked on one of the plantations. The Great Migration during the 1900s caused some of the tenant families to relocate elsewhere. The 1940s experienced an African American community of nine families, some descendants of the original five. Then in the 1950s, the population dropped following World War II, when soldiers received housing stipends.

In 1989, Tall Timbers was named a cultural landscape by the National Register of Historic Places. Today, there are preservation efforts to restore the few remaining tenant farmhouses and corn cribs. Only two of the original twenty structures remain, but over $260,000 has been raised through public and private sources to restore the site. There is also a $50,000 grant from Anheuser-Busch Companies for the creation of exhibits to preserve the history of Tall Timbers. Nathaniel Bush, who was a local tenant farmer himself, was the carpenter who helped to rebuild the home. Descendants of the original families were brought in to gain support for the restoration project. These efforts include gathering oral histories, preserving the area's cultural legacy, and restoring the few remaining buildings.

Restoring these historic sites provides the opportunity for the public to walk through authentic tenant farms. It also highlights the key role these Black tenant farmers had in Southern Agriculture, especially in Leon County.

Edgewood

Since 1865

"Neighbors helping neighbors."

Edgewood was founded by farmers, many of whom were sharecroppers and formerly enslaved people, on land that was formerly part of the Barrow Hill Plantation. It was named for its physical position on the northeastern edge of Tallahassee's City limits. It currently sits between Miccosukee Road and Mahan Drive. Gloria Jefferson Anderson, a community historian and genealogist who grew up in Edgewood, described it as "Neighbors helping neighbors."

Edgewood was home to two Juke Joints where people could come together for entertainment in the evenings: The Red Top Inn and the Burgess Drop Inn. The Red Top Inn was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Gainer, and the Red Top Baseball Club was part of the entertainment offered as part of the juke joint.

Edgewood is a deeply religious community. Churches act not just as places of worship but also as places to come together with neighbors. Today, Churches like Testerina Primitive Baptist, St. Peter Primitive Baptist, and Mount Olive Missionary Baptist exist within the community.

In the past, a handful of schools serviced the community. Among these were the Testerina Church School, which was part of Testerina Primitive Baptist Church on Miccosukee Road, and the Raney School, which sat on the property of the St. Peter Primitive Baptist Church.

Edgewood was once a hub for the Black Community in the area. With its churches, schools, businesses, and community resources, Edgewood's residents have worked hard to uplift each other, with many community members becoming educators, business leaders, spiritual leaders, and professional athletes. To this day, the community has people living there, some of whom still live in the houses they grew up in, continuing the legacy of the Edgewood community.

Juneteenth Empowerment Day Festival

On June 19th, 1865, the Union arrived in Galveston Bay, Texas, declaring statewide emancipation, freeing over 250,000 enslaved people. The formerly enslaved people of Texas celebrated their emancipation the following year, on the anniversary of the event, which they named “Juneteenth”. Over time, recognition and celebrations of this holiday have spread throughout the country, evolving to commemorate the emancipation of Black Americans nationwide. In 2021, President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act, recognizing Juneteenth as a federal holiday.

On June 15th, 2024, Tallahassee held its 4th Annual Juneteenth Empowerment Day Festival. The event took place at Cascades Park and attendance was open and free to the public. This year’s festival coincided with Tallahassee and Leon County’s Bicentennial year which placed more emphasis on Leon County’s Black history and community. The Juneteenth Empowerment Day Festival aimed to honor the history and progress made by the Black community in the face of adversity, highlighting the empowerment that has come from the community’s resilience. The festival offered a unified space to celebrate the history, culture, and businesses of Leon County’s Black community.

Over 100 vendors participated this year, many of which were local, Black-owned businesses. Throughout the event, several performances, speeches, and award announcements occurred in Cascades' amphitheater. The event offered a day to highlight, celebrate, and learn more about Leon County’s Black history and community. Black entrepreneurship was a main focus of the event, providing Black-owned businesses a platform to promote their goods and services. The varying speeches during the event ranged from retellings of historical events to motivational speeches to empower the community. Though Tallahassee’s Juneteenth Empowerment Day Festival began only four years ago, it has quickly become a beloved, impactful event to the community, offering a new local tradition of commemorating the County’s Black community.


How do you celebrate Juneteenth?
What is your favorite family recipe?
Who is your favorite Black icon?
SZA
Being proud of being Black
Rib Roast
Community involvement
Collard Greens
Sweet potato pie
Games
Maya Angelou
My Mom
Corn Casserole
Lebron James
Michael Jacks
Family
Empowerment
Aknee
Cookout
Jarriet Tubman
Beyonce
Seafood pasta
Banana pudding
Swimming
Zendaya
Mac & Cheese
Celebrating
TikTok
Gale King
Spaghetti
Chadwick Boseman
Pecan Pie
Louis Armstrong
Events
Friends
Helping others
Pasta salad
Barak Obama
Tacos
Aretha Franklin
MLK JR
Learn Black history
Corn
Family
Queen Latifah

Hill Family Emancipation Day Celebration

Since 1867

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Emancipation Day 2024

Though Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in January of 1863, it would be more than two years before the news reached Florida. On May 20th, 1865, the Emancipation Proclamation was first read in Florida on the steps of Tallahassee's Knott House. Leon County was the first to recognize May 20th, Florida's Emancipation Day, as an official county holiday in 2020. Thanks to the efforts of local activists and historians, Emancipation Day, also known as May Day, is celebrated every year in Florida's capital city. This year's events included The Civil War Commemorative Service at Tallahassee's Old City Cemetery and a reenactment of the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation at the Knott House, followed by a free lunch.

The Civil War Commemorative Service at the Old City Cemetery was held by the John G. Riley Center & Museum. It featured numerous speakers, several living history actors, a 21-gun salute, and a grave decorating ceremony for the cemetery's 31 Union soldiers. The 2nd Infantry Regiment United States Colored Troops (USCT) Living History Association was in attendance and performed the Union soldier reenactment. Jarvis Rosier, the coordinator of the USCT Living History Association, spoke about the importance of remembering the history of the 31 soldiers and highlighted the significance of their sacrifice as the ultimate dedication to the liberation of many. Other speakers included County and City Commissioners, such as Bill Proctor and Diane Williams-Cox, Aron Myers Executive Director of the Riley Museum, and State House District 9 Representative Alison Tant. This ceremony created powerful visual imagery, with students from Montford Middle School, Bethel Missionary Baptist Christian Academy, and John Gilmore Riley Elementary School placing roses at the graves of fallen Civil War soldiers alongside living history reenactors in period-appropriate mourning attire, honoring the sacrifice made by few for the liberation of many.

Grave decorating in Old City Cemetery

Ceremony at Old City Cemetery

The Museum of Florida History and John G. Riley Center & Museum also hosted Remembering May 20, 1865, in front of the Knott House Museum as part of the Emancipation Day celebrations. Black communities in Florida have chosen to celebrate May Day over the federal holiday, Juneteenth. Many speakers reiterated the point that Juneteenth is not their holiday, as Juneteenth is the day that news of Emancipation reached Texas. This fact was evident not only in the speakers' convictions but in the breadth of individuals who traveled for the event. Groups from neighboring towns and beyond, such as one group from Clearwater, who make the drive annually, were in attendance. This program encouraged the remembrance, reverence, and celebration of Florida's Emancipation through song and speech. "Lift Every Voice and Sing" was performed by the Mina String Quartet and Jovan

Ceremony at Knott House

Osborne. The dramatic reading of the Emancipation Proclamation was carried out by the USCT Living History Association and Brian Bribeau, who acted as Brigadier General Edward McCook issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. Their reenactment was as respectful as it was sobering, a fitting conclusion to this year's Emancipation Day celebrations.

Photograph of the Payne Family

Road to Lake Hall, circa 1890

Site Profiles

The following profiles highlight important sites in Leon County. The Legacy Communities of Leon County are home to numerous sites of historic and cultural value. From civil rights memorials to historic homes and churches, these sites tell the stories of the communities they are located within.

African American Cemeteries

"The cemeterirs contain stories about people, places, and families which are often missing form the larger public narrative."
- Black Cemetery Network

Under-documentation of Black Cemeteries is a nationwide problem that has recently gained considerable attention in Florida.

Segregation affected every aspect of life, and death, for Black people living in America. Black people were frequently barred from white graveyards, leaving Black communities to come up with their own solutions. Many small graveyards have been discovered on former plantations where enslaved people were buried on the property. Often, when the enslavers abandoned their land post-emancipation, they would move the bodies of their family members with them and leave the graves of the enslaved behind. This abandonment contributed to the loss of documentation on thousands of graves and graveyards across the South. This neglect of Black heritage and history has resulted in significant distress for those who have lost family members or witnessed the deterioration of their community's cemeteries. In response to an outcry for the recovery and restoration of these lost sites, grave preservation projects have been launched nationwide.

In Florida, a concerted effort is being made to document and preserve the remaining cemeteries to ensure a peaceful resting place for their residents. This movement first gained traction in Central Florida, with the Tampa Bay area at the forefront. In an interview conducted by CBS in Clearwater, Florida residents shared their personal experiences with undocumented and unpreserved African American cemeteries. They shared memories of coffins being destroyed for retail development, difficulties locating relatives' graves, and unsafe conditions when heavy rain

exposed bones. All of these issues occurred despite promises of safe grave relocations, which were not always fulfilled.

The Black Cemetery Network, an initiative led by the University of South Florida, has begun documenting Black cemeteries in the Eastern U.S., compiling research on the subject, and advocating for their upkeep while also spreading awareness. Organizations like the Black Cemetery Network are becoming more common as the problem persists, hoping to unite efforts and preserve forgotten histories, but the trend of paving over small cemeteries for parking lots and retail spaces persits.

This issue is present in Leon County as well. In the last few years, Black cemeteries have been discovered along the Miccosukee Greenway, at the Capital City Country Club, and off of Edenfield Road. The Riley House is currently working in partnership with Tallahassee-Leon County GIS to map the area's many hidden African American cemeteries. Local historians are confident that there are many more waiting to be found.

Testerina Primitive Baptist Church
Tallahassee Democrat

Welaunee Plantation man
Tallahassee Democrat

Munree Plantation
Historical Marker Database

Bethel Missionary Baptist Church

Since 1870

While Bethel's first church building was finished in 1870, the Church's history dates to the 1830s, when Father James Page began leading services on John Parkhill's Leon County plantation and others across Leon, Madison, and Jefferson Counties. In 1869, Father Page purchased the site of the original church building (located in northwest Tallahassee) for $250. Over the following year, the Church raised considerable funds through festivals and "entertainments," which paid for its construction. The final service before the original building was demolished was held on October 6, 1974, and the current building, located on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, opened in September 1976.

Other members of the Church's former leadership include Reverend C.K. Steele, a major figure in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s. Reverend Steele was one of the founders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and served as president of the Tallahassee chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). For the past 31 years, Bethel has been headed by Dr. RB Holmes, who is nationally recognized for his leadership in faith and community matters. Under Dr. Holmes' leadership, Bethel currently has over 50 ministries, offering support to people of all ages, genders, and backgrounds. Bethel also serves as a gathering space for a variety of civic and social organizations.

Over the years, the Church has also facilitated the creation of other Black institutions in the Tallahassee area, including but not limited to: Steele-Collins Charter Middle School, Bethel Family Counseling Center, Bethel Towers (a senior living facility), and the Carolina Oaks subdivision, with more projects anticipated in the future.

The Bethel Missionary Baptist Church is an organization dedicated to enhancing and supporting the lives of community members through their spiritual, economic development, and social justice missions.

Bethel Missionary Baptist Church

Economy Drugstore

Since 1887

Located in the Frenchtown Neighborhood, Economy Drugstore, the oldest Black owned pharmacy in Tallahassee, has been around since the 1940s.

Purchased by the McMillian family in 1951, the pharmacy offered more than just medication, serving as a place for local kids to hang out, with a soda fountain, pinball machine, and comic books. Alexis McMillian, daughter of the original owners, runs the pharmacy now. She fondly recalls learning to read from the comic books in the shop. The shop keeps this tradition alive today by selling ice cream and other goods.

In addition to serving as a gathering place for community members, Economy Drug Store also sold local baked goods. McMillian still remembers which of her neighbors sold lemon meringue and sweet potato pie in the shop when she was a child.

As one of the only original Black owned businesses still in Frenchtown, The Economy Drugstore intends to stand the test of time. The Store has several planned aesthetic renovations including new awnings and new paint. Additionally, the Community Redevelopment Agency Facade Grant provided the drugstore with $20,000

Front of the Economy Drug Store

Inside Economy Drug Store

Portraits Inside Economy Drug Store

Inside Economy Drug Store

Alexis McMillan outside of the store

for a new roof to help improve the physical structure.

Mrs. McMillian enjoys the Pharmacy's status as a prominent fixture in the community, and loves to offer a listening ear to residents' medical concerns. Most customers are multi-generational, and she enjoys seeing whose family members come into the Store. The pharmacy has served as a training ground for new pharmacists from both FAMU and the University of Florida. Her niece, also a pharmacist, plans to take over the family business–ensuring many more years of quality service to the Tallahassee community.

The FAMU Hospital

Since 1911

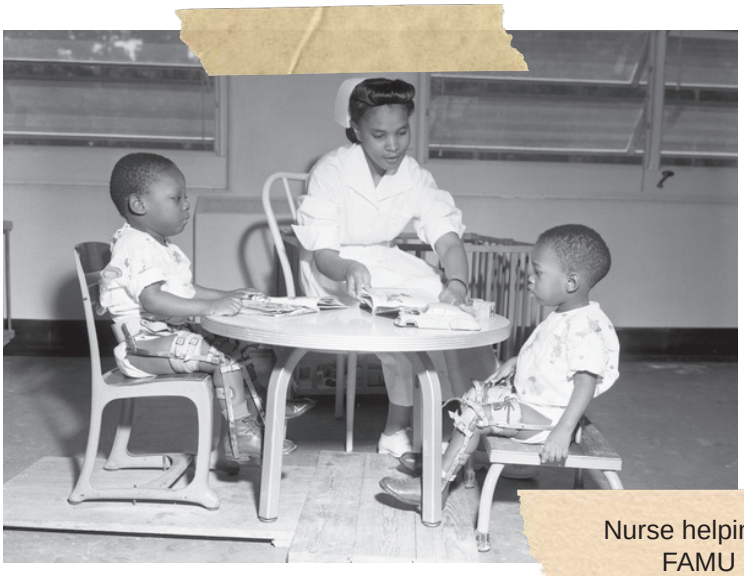
In 1911, the Florida Agricultural & Mechanical College Hospital was built. At the time, the two-story Sanitorium was primarily built to serve tuberculosis patients. The Hospital provided medical services for patients of all races in Leon County and the surrounding area. It played a significant role as a center for the Black Community in Leon County. As the first hospital that treated African Americans in the area, it improved healthcare accessibility before access to healthcare was recognized as a civil right.

In 1926, the Hospital was used as the School of Nursing where students could learn medical practices, receive clinical training, and conduct research.

In 1937, William Grey, Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University's (FAMU) president at the time, and Leonard H.B. Foote, the Hospital's first director, campaigned to construct a larger and more modern hospital. The new hospital's grand opening was in 1950 and was renamed as the FAMU Hospital in 1953.

In 1971, the Hospital closed after losing Federal and State funding to the Tallahassee Memorial Hospital. Although the building is no longer used as a hospital, it still stands on FAMU's campus. It is now named the Foote-Hilyer Building and is home to FAMU's Student Health Services.

The creation of the FAMU Hospital helped many African Americans gain medical degrees. It stands as a symbol of Black excellence and inspiration for the local community.



Nurse helping children at FAMU Hospital

College Medical Director
Dr. L.H.B. Foote

Nurses at FAMU Hospital

Clematis Garden Club

FAMU Hospital in 1965

Adminstrator meeting

Hickory Hill Cemetery

Since 1919

> *"Hickory Hill Cemetery reflects the ethnic backgrounds, religious beliefs, and settlement patterns of the Black community of Welaunee Plantation"*
> *-Historical Site Marker*

The Welaunee Plantation was established by Udo Fleishmann in 1918. African Americans lived and worked at Welaunee Plantation as sharecroppers and tenant farmers. In 1919, Fleischmann's wife, Jeanne Kerr Fleischmann, donated the land to Welaunee's tenant farmers who used it to create Hickory Hill Cemetery.

Hickory Hill Cemetery is located across from Dove Lake, where the community held baptism ceremonies. Its headstones are made of cement or cast iron and many feature intentionally misspelled words and backwards lettering, in alignment with rural, African American burial traditions and spiritual beliefs.

Throughout the 1950s, Leon County's agricultural industry was drastically declining. In 1952, when Udo Fleischmann passed away, his wife began selling plots of plantation land, forcing tenant farmers to move off the property and find work elsewhere. The latest marked grave at Hickory Hill Cemetery is dated 1947, though research has supported that it was at some point in the 1950s when the Cemetery became inactive.

In 1997, John and Eleanor Mettler inherited land that included Hickory Hill Cemetery. The Mettlers hired Sharyn Thompson to study, document, and survey the Cemetery. In 1998, the Mettlers donated portions of their land to the City of Tallahassee, which began planning the Miccosukee Greenway. The Trust for Public Land signed the rights of Hickory Hill Cemetery to its descendants and three nearby churches (New Zion Primitive Baptist, Mount Olive Primitive Baptist, and Testerina Primitive Baptist Church). In 2010, the site received an official historical marker, by the State of Florida.

There are successful efforts documenting the history and culture of the Weluanne Community and the Weluanne Plantation descendants continue to preserve, restore, and study the Cemetery.

John G. Riley House

Since 1890

"The John G. Riley Center & Museum for African American History & Culture Inc. serves as a 'historical and cultural gem' that preserves African American history through the art of storytelling and visual images"

The John G. Riley House stands as the last original home of Smokey Hollow. The House, constructed in 1890, was sold to the City of Tallahassee in 1973 and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.

Its owner, John Gilmore Riley (1857-1954), a formerly enslaved person and one of the few Black landowners in Tallahassee at the time, was the principal of Old Lincoln High School from 1892 to 1926. The John G. Riley House, using a grant from the State Division of Historical Resources, created a short form illustrated children's book to mark the impact of the man himself. He was well known for renting homes in good condition to Black families, which helped to create the Smokey Hollow community.

Riley was careful with money, using the rent he collected to buy more land and facilitate the construction of more homes. In the children's book he is named Tallahassee's first Black millionaire. In addition to being an inspiration for Black success, Riley used his money generously to help local families in need.

In 1996, the House was transformed into a Center and Museum for African American History and Culture, honoring Riley's significant contributions to his community.

Althamese Barnes, an avid historian and the first director of The Riley House, worked tirelessly to establish it as a site for cultural learning. The Riley House supports numerous exhibits, productions, and workshops as a part of their ongoing efforts to preserve Florida's Black heritage. They are currently embarking on a four-year, four-part series documenting Tallahassee's Black History, starting in the Antebellum. Their upcoming section, set to be released in the Fall of 2024, will focus on the Civil War and the Reconstruction Era.

Through partnerships with Tallahassee-Leon County GIS, the Riley House has published maps of former plantations in Leon County.

Their next GIS project aims to document the numerous small African American cemeteries scattered throughout the County. This project plans to preserve and memorialize their legacies.

The Riley House partners with several other organizations to put on events celebrating Black history, such as the May 20th Emancipation Day celebration, held annually in partnership with the Department of State's Division of Historic Resources. The John G. Riley House is also featured along the Florida Black Heritage Trail, which highlights significant Black institutions throughout the state.

John G. Riley House

John G. Riley Statue

Olean's Cafe

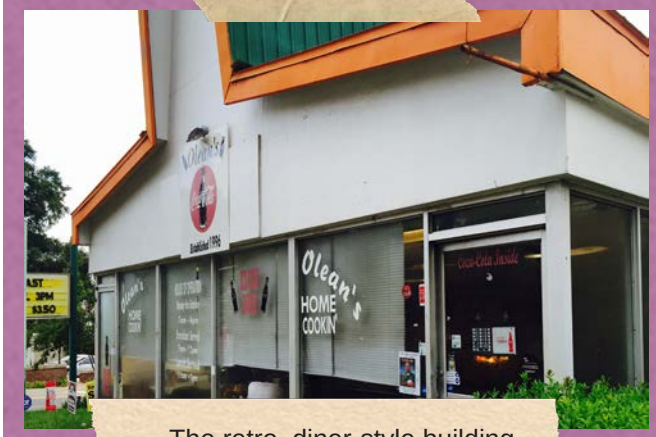
Since 1995

Olean's Cafe is owned and operated by Olean McCaskill. It was originally located in the State Department of Revenue building. In 1997, Olean's relocated to a retro, diner-style building off South Adams Street across from Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU), and continues to operate from that location to this day.

Olean's Cafe is a staple for Tallahassee's Black community, serving homestyle, traditional Southern dishes. Beyond food service, McCaskill prides her establishment as a place to cultivate community. In a 2013 interview, she stated that everyone in Olean's, customers, and employees alike, are considered family. "Sometimes people come in and they don't have enough money, or somebody needs something to eat, and I say… 'Well lord I got all this food, ain't nobody got no business being hungry".

Olean's Cafe is decorated with FAMU sports memorabilia, Bible verses, and posters of historical Black figures, including Barack Obama and Martin Luther King, Jr. Other religious homilies in the Cafe include gospel signs, posters from church events, and figurines of praying hands, with gospel soundtracks playing in the background.

Olean's Cafe is a beloved Tallahassee establishment. McCaskill aims to not only serve food but to share positivity and love with her community.



The retro, diner-style building of Olean's Cafe.

Johnathan McCaskill helps customers at his mother's restaurant, Olean's Cafe.

Knott House

Since 1843

Known today as the Knott House, this historic home has been a temporary host to a number of Tallahassee's important historical figures and families. The first of these owners is George Proctor, the House's builder, carpenter, and architect. George was the son of Antonio Proctor, an emancipated slave who was freed during the War of 1812. George played an important role in shaping Tallahassee's physical landscape: between 1829 and 1849, he designed and built many homes in addition to the Knott House.

Brigadier General Edward M. McCook took up residence in the Knott House during the Union occupation of the City of Tallahassee following the end of the Civil War in May of 1865. It was on the steps of the Knott House on May 20th, 1865 that the Emancipation Proclamation was first read in the state of Florida, two years after Abraham Lincoln first issued it. Emancipation Day was celebrated this year with a dramatic reading of the Proclamation on the House's front steps.

The Knott Family purchased the house in 1928. At this time, a number of renovations were carried out under the supervision of Luella Knott. Of these alterations, the most striking are the four columns framing the House's entrance. The House has been renovated several times since much of the Victorian-style furniture found within is original to this first renovation.

The Knott House was a private home until 1985 when it came under the charge of the Historic Tallahassee Preservation Board. The House first opened to the public as a museum in 1992, nearly 10 years later. Today, the Knott House is administered and maintained by the Museum of Florida History.

Historic Photo

2024 at Emancipation Day

Smokey Hollow Commeration

Since 2014

The Smokey Hollow Commemoration at Althemese Pemberton Barnes Park, completed in 2014, highlights a once-thriving community on the edge of downtown Tallahassee. When Smokey Hollow was an active community, a variety of woodyards, churches, and restaurants flourished in the area.

Though the original structures no longer exist, replica frames of the shotgun homes that were common at the time stand on the site. The frames outline the typical style of these homes: the parent's room, the children's room, and the kitchen with a bathing area. The three replica homes represent the "Family and Home Spirit," "Community Spirit," and the "Enduring Spirit" which epitomize the values of the community. Situated in front of each structure is an informational plaque describing how these values contributed to the resilience of this close-knit community.

Smokey Hollow Commeration

At the other end of the park stands the Smokey Hollow Barbershop. It is one of the only remaining original buildings from the community, having been rehabilitated and relocated to its current location. While Smokey Hollow was still active, the Barbershop was utilized as a local meeting place for community members to exchange stories and share daily news.

Rehabilitated Barbershop

Althemese Barnes played an integral role in ensuring the preservation and recognition of this historic community, advocating for the remembrance and conservation of the stories of the original residents. In collaboration with Blueprint, Barnes helped to assemble a committee of former residents and local officials to incorporate their memories and ideas into the Commemoration that can be seen today.

Greenwood Cemetery

Since 1937

Rededication Ceremony 1987

Greenwood Cemetery is an important part of Tallahassee's history. It served as the only burial ground for the City's Black community following the closure of the two public cemeteries, Oakland and Old City, to Black residents in 1937. In 1936, the City attempted to create a segregated public cemetery exclusively for use by the Black community. However, the land was unsuitable for burials and was never utilized for that purpose. The original 10 acres of land on which Greenwood is sited were purchased for $10 by the Greenwood Cemetery Company, itself founded by members of the Black community. Today, the cemetery has grown to cover just over 12 acres.

Though the Cemetery has seen continuous use since its founding, physical conditions on the site have waxed and waned over the decades. Maintenance of graves and associated plots was the responsibility of individual families and was not regularly scheduled for the entire grounds. In 1986, the Greenwood Foundation was born out of a collective desire to see the cemetery restored and well-maintained into the future. To achieve this goal, the Foundation mustered an impressive grass-roots restoration campaign supported by the diligent efforts of local volunteers, as well as monetary donations. In light of their success, both the City and the County provided additional financial support. In 1987, after the successful conclusion of restoration efforts, Greenwood was acquired by the City of Tallahassee and became a public cemetery, 50 years after its founding.

A wide variety of grave markers can be found in Greenwood, reflecting a long and diverse history of traditional burial practices. It is home to several important local historical figures, including: Maxwell Courtney, Willie Gallimore, and James M. Abner, among others. Greenwood Cemetery is tangible proof of the ability of Tallahassee's Black community to overcome the odds and achieve better outcomes while preserving its history.

New Hope Cemetery

Since the 1800s

In January 2020, the City of Tallahassee's Parks and Recreation Department was informed of a potential unmarked cemetery site. Leon County resident, Gloria Jefferson Anderson, presented the City with information found during her ongoing research of her father's ancestry. Anderson had discovered that her ancestors were previously enslaved on the Welaunee Plantation, leading her to a potential burial ground located within the Miccosukee Greenway, near Tallahassee's Testerina Primitive Baptist Church.

This ongoing process is led by Leon County's Parks and Recreation Department with assistance from the Florida Department of State Division of Historical Resource (DHR) Bureau of Archaeological Research.
Gloria Jefferson Anderson remains involved with the site and formed the New Hope Cemetery Project Committee. The Committee collects oral histories and historical records from local community members, attempting to identify and memorialize buried individuals.

As of 2024, New Hope Cemetery is awaiting a formal historical marker from the State of Florida. Leon County has taken immediate actions, as suggested by the DHR, towards preserving and honoring the site, such as partial trail closures and fence installations. The County has committed itself to continuously maintaining, commemorating, and deterring any future development impeding the preservation of New Hope Cemetery.

Historic photograph of
Union Bank

Graduating class at FAMU

Lake Ella

Since the 1860s

Lake Ella, once a natural sinkhole pond, is a popular gathering spot in Tallahassee. Initially named Bull (Buhl) Pond, it gained popularity as a gathering place for the Black community in the 1860s when Black churches began holding baptisms there.

In the same decade, after slavery was abolished, annual Emancipation Day celebrations began, including picnics and political rallies. Fishing, festivals, waterskiing, and fireworks displays were popular as well.

In the 1920s, around the same time the pond was renamed Lake Ella (reasons are unclear as to why), Gilbert S. Chandler opened the Tallahassee Auto Camp which was later converted into the city's first motel: the Tallahassee Motor Motel. These stone cottages are now better known as the Cottages at Lake Ella and are home to quaint, locally-owned businesses. These include several Black-owned shops and restaurants, such as Big Easy Sneauxballs and Barb's Brittle.

Lake Ella 2009

Fishing and outdoor activities remained popular through the 1940s and 50s. The widening of North Monroe Street in the 1960s, as well as other developments, led to pollution and a decline in fish populations over the years. Fourth of July fireworks displays, hosted by the local JayCees chapter, continued until the late 1970s when they moved to Tom Brown Park.

In 1983, the City addressed pollution and flooding by removing sediment and recontouring the shoreline. In 1993, over 200 ducks were relocated from the Lake. Fred Drake Park, built in 1994, is adjacent to the Lake. In the early 2000s, the area surrounding the Lake was renovated with a paved sidewalk, gazebo, and reinforced banks.

Lake Ella is an important part of Tallahassee's Black history as a place of spirituality, recreation, and celebration.

Heritage Hub

Since 2016

Frenchtown Farmers' Market wall art at Heritage Hub

Sign entering Heritage Hub

The Heritage Hub is a multi-purpose social junction on West Georgia Street and Martin Luther King Boulevard in Tallahassee's Frenchtown neighborhood. Commonly referred to as the Frenchtown Farmers Market, this Hub includes a KitchenShare, a market, and a farmer training program.

The KitchenShare, which joined the Hub in 2018, is the first food-based incubator in Tallahassee. This facility provides kitchen rentals, training in food safety and equipment use, and support for aspiring entrepreneurs in the food industry. The goal is to ignite economic development and diversify the local economy by catering to underrepresented groups, including Black residents, students, and veterans.

The Frenchtown Farmers Market is a staple for the community and has been active since 2011. It offers fresh foods to the Frenchtown community and surrounding areas. After an eight-month hiatus last year, the Farmers Market was back up and running as of August 2023.

Another valuable part of the Heritage Hub is its various business support services. These are specifically designed to help local entrepreneurs grow and maintain their businesses. In 2016, renovations to the facility were made, including the addition of an ADA-compliant restroom.
The Heritage Hub serves as a crucial element in stimulating economic growth and creating job opportunities in the Frenchtown area, while also providing a place for the community to gather and interact. It fosters greater social ties and addresses food disparities in the community by improving the accessibility to fresh food.

Soul Voices of Frenchtown Heritage Trail

Since 2019

Frenchtown, Tallahassee's oldest Legacy Community, was founded on land that was allocated to newly freed African Americans following the Emancipation of enslaved peoples in 1865.

Originally, Gilbert de Motier, better known in American history as the Marquis de Lafayette, owned the land. In 1831, a French Settlement was created in the area. Lafayette required "that no slaves would be purchased or employed in the operation, but free men only." The African Americans who were relocated here would go on to create homes, schools, churches, businesses, and banks. The area only began to be called "Frenchtown" during the Reconstruction Era, years after the French had left the area.

The Soul Voices of Frenchtown Heritage Trail marks the rich history of those founding peoples. In the 1990s, Althemese Barnes began to collect and record the history of the neighborhood and the voices of many of the residents who were born and raised in Frenchtown. In 2019, the Heritage Trail was established through the combined efforts of Althemese Barnes and the Riley House. The Trail's name refers to the voices of the long-term residents who have passed on since their recordings were collected, hence "Soul Voices". Each marker on the Trail captures the stories of historic Frenchtown.

Lake Hall School

Since 1878

The Lake Hall School was built in 1878 by emancipated African Americans. It is a one-room clapboard building that sits on two adjacent properties. The building served as a school for children living in the Lake Hall Community, whose parents were previously enslaved on the Killearn and Papy Plantations.

The Randolph Family donated the land on which the School was built in the 1870s. The School helped support the community's transition away from the sharecropper lifestyle by educating the descendants of the residents, giving them access to new job opportunities. This was especially important as the Florida Black Codes actively limited the land African Americans could own and often forced the sale of their land to white buyers. Consequently, many were forced to become tenant farmers or sharecroppers.

While the School stopped operating in the 1950s due to the beginning of integration efforts during the Civil Rights Movement, the building still stands today. Geraldine Seay, current owner of the B Sharps Jazz Cafe and retired faculty at Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU), applied for the School to be added to the Local Register of Historic Places, and the Leon County Commission agreed unanimously.

Seay's research on the property emphasizes the importance of preserving the School's history. However, since the building sits on two properties, it has two different owners, making it twice as difficult for the County to purchase it. There have been discussions about adjusting property lines, purchasing both properties, or moving the entire building to another location, as was done with the Concord Schoolhouse, preserved in the Tallahassee Museum. Due to the house's poor condition (structural damage and portions of an original walling missing), a decision has not yet been made.

A look at the Lake Hall School House in 2022.

The Union Bank

Since 1841

Historic photograph

The Union Bank is the oldest surviving bank in the state. It was built by a group of enslaved people under the direction of David F. Wilson in 1841. The original business was chartered in 1833 as a planter's bank, where plantation owners could borrow funds against their slave holdings and land.

In 1869, the Union Bank was leased to the newly established National Freedmen's Savings and Trust Company. This was part of a national effort to help the newly freed population achieve economic independence by providing essential banking services. Charles Rollins, a man born into slavery in Florida, was the first to open an account in the Tallahassee branch of the Freedman's Bank.

In 1969, the Union Bank was almost demolished and replaced by a parking lot. Due to its historic significance, a group of preservationists organized a campaign to save the building. In 1971, they were successful in their efforts, and the Bank was relocated to 219 Apalachee Parkway. Since 1994, the building has been maintained by the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU). It is used today as both an archive and a public museum.

Current Day

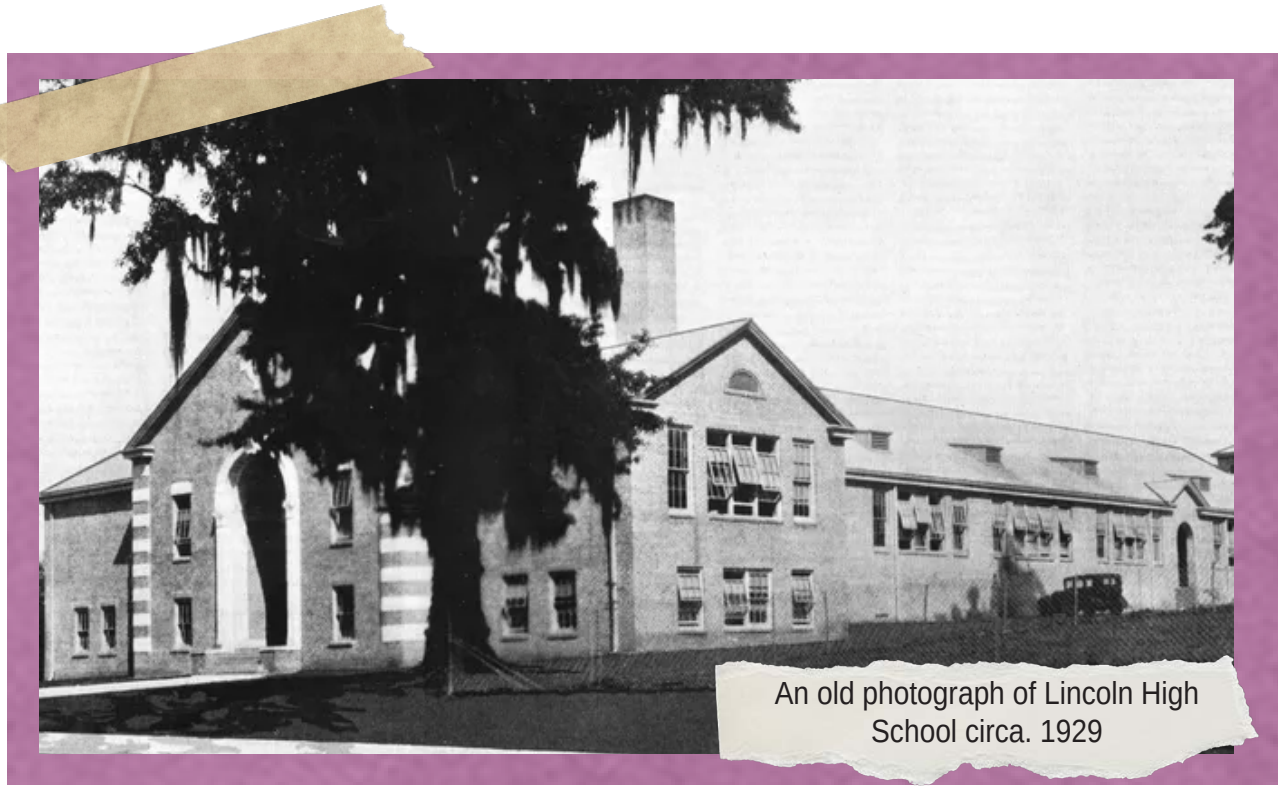
Old Lincoln High School

Since 1869

The original Lincoln High School building served as the primary source of education for Black Americans in Leon County from 1869 to 1989. It was built under the direction of the Freedmen's Bureau and was one of three schools in Florida created to educate the newly emancipated population.

The School has changed locations three times since its founding. In 1906, the School relocated to 438 West Brevard Street, where its historic marker stands today. Lincoln High School provided education to the Black community until its closing in 1969, following efforts to desegregate schools in Leon County.

Old Lincoln High School no longer operates as a school, but instead acts as the Lincoln Neighborhood Center: a community center and museum open to all Tallahassee residents. In 2016, the City of Tallahassee held a special ceremony to celebrate the School's designation as a historic site. The event was attended by former Lincoln alumni and their descendants. Notable former alumni of the old High School also include the likes of Wallace "Famous" Amos and Carrie P. Meeks. Old Lincoln High School is a testament to Frenchtown's ability to cultivate an enduring sense of community across multiple generations.



An old photograph of Lincoln High School circa. 1929

The Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU)

Since 1887

One of the first historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the United States, the Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU) has been a leader in Black education since 1887. The school was founded by Thomas Van Rensselaer Gibbs, who sought to provide a place of learning for Black people during the emergence of Jim Crow in Florida.

FAMU would start its life as a "normal school," meaning it was a place that trained its students to become teachers. In 1891, the school received a $7,500 grant through the 2nd Morrill Act for the mechanical and agricultural arts. This would begin the diversification of FAMU's educational output, expanding to include both education for teachers and industrially-minded students. This action also designated FAMU as a Florida land grant institution for Black Americans.

It wasn't until 1905 that FAMU was officially designated as a higher education institution, resulting from FAMU's management changing from the Board of Education to the Board of Control. The University officially delegated its first degrees the following year to 317 students. The University would go on to expand its physical presence and educational opportunities to include a Bachelor of Science in education, the sciences, home economics, agriculture, and the mechanical arts.

FAMU was finally elevated from college to university status in 1953. Through this new accreditation, FAMU was the first Black university to become part of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCC). Through the 1950s and '60s, the University saw its greatest period of growth in physical presence and student population, demanding the construction of 23 new buildings to accommodate its enrollment of more than 3,500 students.

It was also during this time that students and faculty became embroiled in the growing Civil Rights movement. Two FAMU students, Wilhelmina Jakes, and Carrie Patterson, participated in a bus boycott in 1956 to protest the segregation of Tallahassee's bus system after the two were arrested for refusing to give up their seats in the white section of a city bus.

Inspired by the Greensboro Sit-Ins that took place on February 1st, 1960,

FAMU students decided to enact their sit-in to protest segregation on February 13th of the same year. Students from FAMU and Florida State University would go on to form an interracial coalition and conduct a larger lunch counter sit-in at Woolworth's, which saw violent police and segregationist opposition.

Graduating class of 1904

Following the events of the Civil Rights era, FAMU continued to evolve as calls for desegregation were finally answered. Under the leadership of Dr. Benjamin L. Perry, FAMU transitioned to a desegregated unitary system while still retaining its autonomy. In 1971, the University was recognized as a full-time member of the State University System of Florida. FAMU delivered its first Ph.D in 1984 when Dr. Walter L. Smith took charge of administration.


Aerial Photo of FAMU

Since 1987, FAMU has made a concerted effort to celebrate and preserve its heritage as a premier Black University. That year, President Dr. Frederick S. Humphries oversaw the University's centennial celebration: "A Legacy to Preserve-A-Future to Design." FAMU would cultivate the minds of many former alumni including the likes of Dorothy "Dot" Inman-Johnson. FAMU continues to celebrate its rich history and stands to this day as a paragon of Black intellectualism.

Social Rights Movement
by FAMU Students

Taylor House

Since 1894

Located in historic Frenchtown, the Taylor House was built by Lewis Washington Taylor and his wife, Lucretia McPherson Taylor. Lewis Taylor was an educator and businessman, teaching at Bel Air School House, Centerville School House, and Lincoln High School, an all-Black school at the time. In addition to teaching, Lewis Taylor also worked as a salesman and a tutor to the children of affluent white families. Lucretia Taylor was a cook and seamstress. She was born into slavery on May 19, 1865, just one day before the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation on the steps of the Knott House.

The Taylors had 13 children, 11 of whom went on to become educators as well. The family's educational legacy would continue through their granddaughter Aquilina Howell, who became the first female Assistant Superintendent of Leon County Schools. In this role, she aided in integrating schools in the 1960s. Howell is also responsible for saving the Taylor House from demolition in 1995.

The Taylor House is the oldest home in Frenchtown and one of the oldest Black structures of its architectural style left in Tallahassee. The house remained in The Taylor Family until 1977. In 2011, it opened as a museum preserving the history of the historic African-American community of Frenchtown. Before opening to the public, the house was restored to its original 1894 appearance. The museum gives visitors a glimpse of what life was like living in Frenchtown in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Taylor House

Concord School House

Since 1897

The Concord School began in the 1870s before the construction of the School House. Before the School House was built, the School likely used the Miccosukee A.M.E. Church as a meeting place. In 1893, Fayette and Jennie Burney sold a half-acre of their land, off of Godbold Road, for $1.00 so that a school could be built on the site.

The Concord School House followed the archetypal one-room layout of other African American schoolhouses of the time. The one-room schoolhouse accommodated students across several grade levels, and It was typical for older students to help teach the younger ones in the classroom. During this time, winter would have likely been the most active for the schoolhouse because farming families required less help from their children.

The Concord School House would become one of the largest rural schools in Leon County. The Schoolhouse was used until 1968 when the Concord School integrated with the previously all-White Miccosukee School. The school transitioned into the Miccosukee School's brick building which was built in the 1930s. The desegregation of schools was achieved through the Black community's unrelenting fight for equality, leading to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which required schools to integrate in order to receive federal funding. After integration, the school was referred to as Concord Elementary until its closing in 1985.

The Concord School House was constructed in 1897 for the education of Black children in the rural community of Miccosukee. Today, the school can be found in Tallahassee Museum's Old Florida exhibit, where it was moved in 1974. The brick school building is currently being restored to serve as a public gathering place in Miccosukee. Preserving these structures is a way to pass down stories to future generations and keep them connected. These structures need to be preserved to serve as a physical record of the community's history.

Old City Cemetery

Since 1829

The Old City Cemetery is the oldest public cemetery in Tallahassee. It was founded in 1829, while Florida was still a territory. It would not become part of Tallahassee proper until 1840 when it was acquired by the city. Despite being a public cemetery, it was segregated for many years, with people of color typically buried on the western side of the cemetery.

The cemetery is now the final resting place for many influential Tallahassee Community members, including John G. Riley of the Riley House and Thomas Vann Gibbs, who helped create the Florida State Normal Industrial School (known today as Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University). The cemetery also has grave markers for Union soldiers who were either killed or died later of wounds from the Battle of Natural Bridge during the Civil War. Not all of the soldiers buried in the Cemetery following the battle have been identified.

Today, the Old City Cemetery has been used to host commemorative events for the City such as part of this year's Emancipation Day (May 20th) celebrations. The Events included a tribute and litany to the fallen soldiers, as well as decoration of their graves to honor those who gave their lives for the freedom of enslaved peoples.

The Old City Cemetery is a community fixture that captures many historic aspects of Tallahassee. Despite a history of segregation in the burials, the figures honored in the cemetery are vastly important to Tallahassee's history. The Old City Cemetery holds an important role as one of the most well-preserved historic cemeteries in Leon County that continues to honor the African-American Community in the county, even when other historic cemeteries have been neglected.

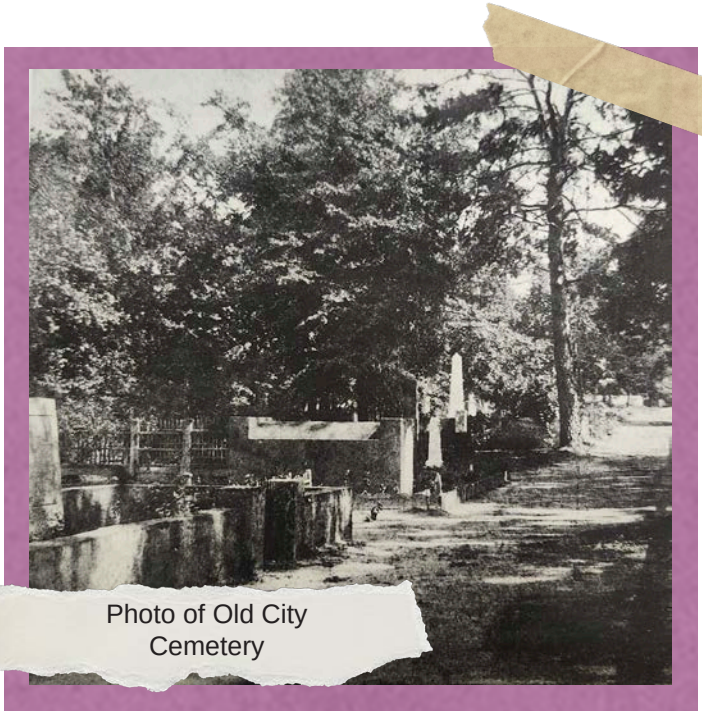


Photo of Old City Cemetery

Adams Street Civil Rights Walk

Since 2013

The Civil Rights Walk on Adams Street honors the activists who participated in the various protests in Leon County throughout the 1950s and 1960s, including bus boycotts and counter sit-ins.

The Tallahassee Bus Boycotts began on May 29th, 1956 as a response to two Black students (Wilhelmina Jakes and Carrie Patterson) from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University being arrested for sitting in the whites-only section of a city bus.

The Reverend C.K. Steele, on behalf of the NAACP, supported the two students. The Reverend would become one of the leaders of the boycott. Within days, other students and community members began a bus boycott to pressure the city government. On December 22nd, 1956 the United States Supreme Court declared bus segregation unconstitutional, initiating the return of the Black community in Tallahassee to the city buses.

The Tallahassee Lunch Counter Sit-Ins were a series of protests in 1960. The Sit-Ins were peaceful civil rights protests that faced violent responses from the police with many protesters being tear-gassed and arrested. The Sit-Ins led to the "Jail-No-Bail" movement where students and protesters, like Patricia Stephen Due, chose to spend time in jail to bring attention to the treatment of the protesters in Tallahassee.

Unveiled on September 30th, 2013, the walk features 16 sidewalk panels depicting the stories of the protest and the protesters who pushed for change in Tallahassee. Key figures included in the Civil Rights Walk are the Reverend Dr. Charles Kenzie Steele and Patricia Stephen Due.

The Adams Street Civil Rights walk has become a permanent memorial for the people who struggled and fought to better Tallahassee and push for real changes to be made in Florida. Their efforts helped lead to the integration of many public areas in the state.

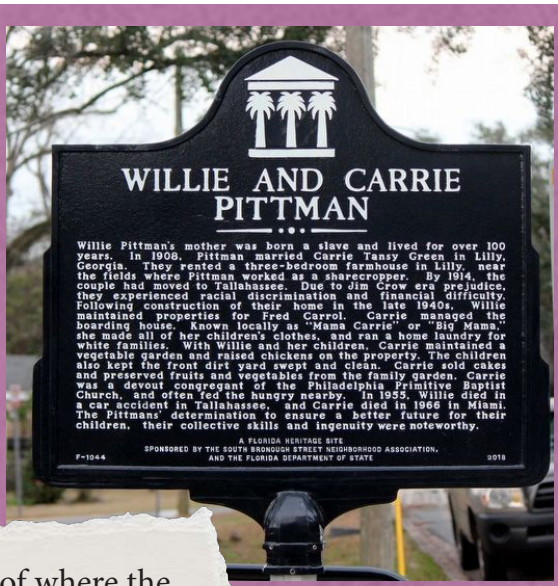
Pittman Boarding House

Since 1914

For many years, the Pittman Boarding House stood as a symbol of Black ingenuity, compassion, pride, and prosperity for its residents. Beginning in 1947, Willie and Carrie Pittman purchased a lot on South Bronough Street in the Allen Subdivision to build the Pittman Boarding House. This two-story, 13-bedroom home served as a home for female African American students who were unable to attain housing at Florida Agricultural & Mechanical College. At that time, it was one of 91 Black-owned businesses in the Allen Subdivision.

Carrie managed the boarding house, where she made all of her children's clothes and ran a home laundry service for white families in the area. Together, the Pittmans grew and sold food from their garden, raised chickens, and gave back to their community. For example, Carrie was an active member of the Philadelphia Primitive Baptist Church where she helped to feed hungry individuals in the area.

The Pittman Boarding House was added as a Florida Heritage Site in 2018. While the original home has been demolished, in 2020 a commemorative marker was placed on the corner of Jakes and Patterson in recognition of the role the Pittman Boarding House held in the Allen Subdivision.



Historical Markers in place of where the Pittman Boarding House was located

African American Schoolhouses

"If hope were a place"
- Geraldine Seay, Friends of the Lake Hall School

The onset of the Reconstruction Era in the second half of the 19th Century led to the construction of a number of small, one-room schoolhouses for African American Children. In Leon County alone, it is estimated there were upwards of fifty such schoolhouses, most of which were located on or near plantation grounds. Today, only six remain standing in various states of deterioration or preservation.

Many newly emancipated peoples worked to purchase land to build schoolhouses and new communities to provide a better future for their descendants. This was the case for the Lake Hall School, which was purchased by formerly enslaved people and built on land north of Maclay Gardens. Similarly, the Concord Schoolhouse, near Miccosukee, was built on land sold specifically for the purpose of building a schoolhouse.

The Freedmen's Bureau, a federal U.S. government agency, played an important role in supporting Black education throughout the South. More than half of the agency's budget was devoted to the advancement of education for newly emancipated peoples. In 1866, the Bureau purchased school buildings and provided money for rent when the Florida Legislature limited Black schools.

Though Congress closed Florida's Freedmen's Bureau's offices in 1870, some of the County's one-room schoolhouses remained in operation for more than 100 years, until the 1964 Civil Rights Acts brought an end to segregation in education.

Across Leon County, preservation efforts for the remaining schoolhouses are underway.The Lake Hall School was recently added to the Local Register of Historic Places. Preservationists are working to add the Raney School to the same Local Register. The County designated the Concord School a Florida Heritage Site in 2004, and the building was relocated to the Tallahassee Museum in the early 1970s. With so few original structures remaining to remind present and future generations of the value of education and the struggle to attain it in spite of fierce opposition, time is of the essence. Readers can play a part in the preservation of the County's schoolhouses by helping spread awareness of their existence and the fight to save them.

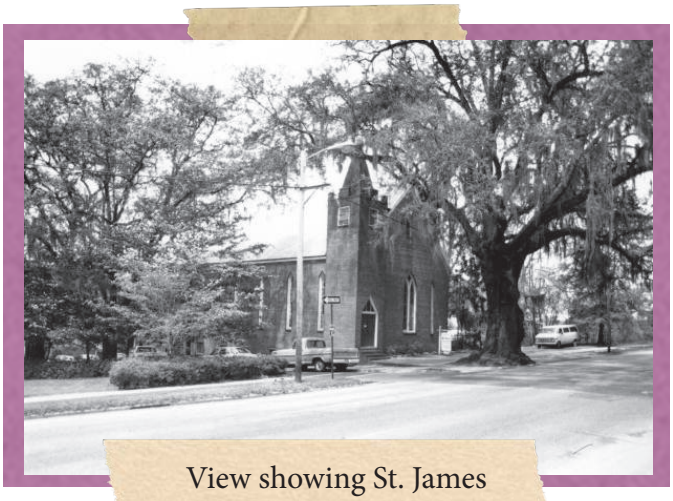
St. James Colored Methodist Episcopal (C.M.E.)

Since 1899

St. James C.M.E. is one of the oldest Christian Methodist Episcopal churches in the country. It is located on the corner of Park Avenue and Bronough Street in downtown Tallahassee. The Church was built in 1899, on land donated by the Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church. Formerly known as the Tallahassee Station of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, it was the first church established in Tallahassee.

Before the St. James Church was constructed, its members used the Tallahassee Station in the afternoon to worship. A member of the Church, John G. Riley stated that St. James "was organized about 1845 under the auspices of Trinity M.E. Church, as a place of worship for slaves who believed and practiced the Methodist Doctrine; notably there were no other Christians among white churches in this community who made such provision for the moral and spiritual betterment of slaves."

In the early 1870s, the land from Trinity M.E. was received by St. James C.M.E. The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church was established by Southern Methodists who gave property under the condition that the



View showing St. James C. M. E. Church

C.M.E. held a non-political status. This condition stemmed from African Methodist Episcopal churches being used as political assemblies.
In addition to serving as a church, St. James C.M.E. was also a school. It was the first public school in Leon County attended by Black children and is considered the birthplace of the Leon County Public School System.

Being one of the oldest Christian Methodist Episcopal churches in the country, formed by the oldest church in Tallahassee, and the first public school in Leon County, makes St. James C.M.E. a treasure to the community. The building stands right in the heart of Tallahassee, next to the Old City Cemetery. St. James C.M.E. holds a rich history in its walls and adds tremendous character to the community.

The Tookes Hotel

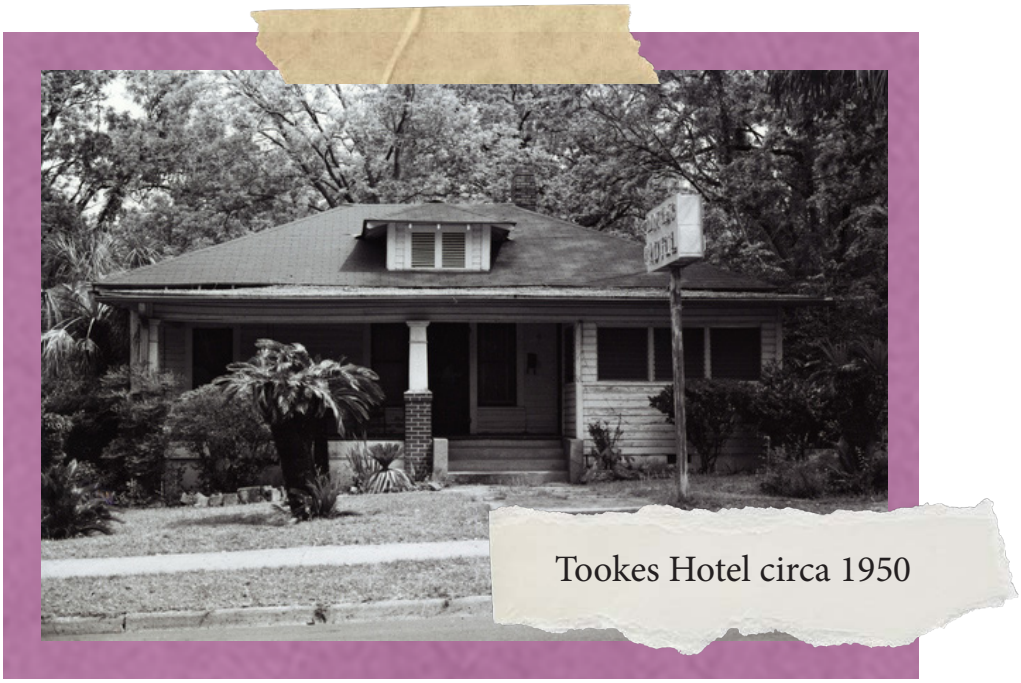
Since 1948

The Tookes Hotel was founded in 1948 by entrepreneur and Frenchtown community member Dorothy Nash Tookes. Dorothy and her husband, James Tookes, converted their home into a bed-and-breakfast when Frenchtown was considered a “Black Wall Street.”

The Tookes Hotel was located in a cultural epicenter in Tallahassee. People would often frequent the same store, share the same barber, and doctor, and attend the same churches. “If you don’t know the history, you would think ‘Oh it was always student housing,” Ron McCoy, Tookes’ grandson and the Hotel’s current owner, commented on the change surrounding the Frenchtown neighborhood.

Frenchtown experienced the impacts of neighborhood disinvestment during the early 1980s, leaving Tookes Hotel to close its doors. The building acted as a halfway house to help those formerly incarcerated or recovering drug users reintegrate into society. In 2001, the Tookes Hotel was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

McCoy has been working on renovating and restoring his grandmother’s building to its old glory. He hopes that beyond serving as a hotel for visitors the hotel will also host events that include the Frenchtown community, as it used to in the past. Having received funds from the federal infrastructure grant, Ron McCoy plans to use the old hotel as an Airbnb beginning in August 2024.



Tookes Hotel circa 1950

History and Cultural Trail

Since 2013

The History and Culture Trail at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) Way is a remembrance and celebration of the area's history of the neighborhoods, businesses, and people living around the Capital Cascades Trail. The installation of this project began in 2013 and is set to finish in 2024.

Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency led the project as the final amenity in the Capital Cascades Trail Segment 3 Project, which began in 2013. This segment has a $1.1 million investment with $350 million for infrastructure investment in the southside. At completion, there will be a Coal Chute Pond, Van Buren Street, Skateable Art Park, and Capital Cascades Trail (CCT) restroom. Blueprint has cited that the History and Culture Trail path will include images and historic materials of the neighborhoods, businesses, and individuals who have lived and worked in this area, collected through extensive community outreach and research.

The project is comprised of six sections, covering the Allen Subdivision, FAMU History, and Civil Rights, Villa Mitchel and Economic Engines, Boynton Still and Economic Engines, Railroad Depot and Community, and the Elberta Crate Factory.

The three components include historical monuments, public art installations, and new community gathering spaces. The historical monuments are found throughout the trail and display images and information about the contributions and cultural importance of the people who lived in these communities. About a dozen art installations will be placed throughout the trail to complement each historical monument. The community gathering space is located near Lake Bradford Road and features hand-carved wood sculptures. The public art pieces were commissioned by seven artists who were inspired by the people and their history.

The History and Culture Trail is an important site highlighting the Black communities, businesses, and individuals living in the areas surrounding the Capital Cascades Trail at FAMU Way.

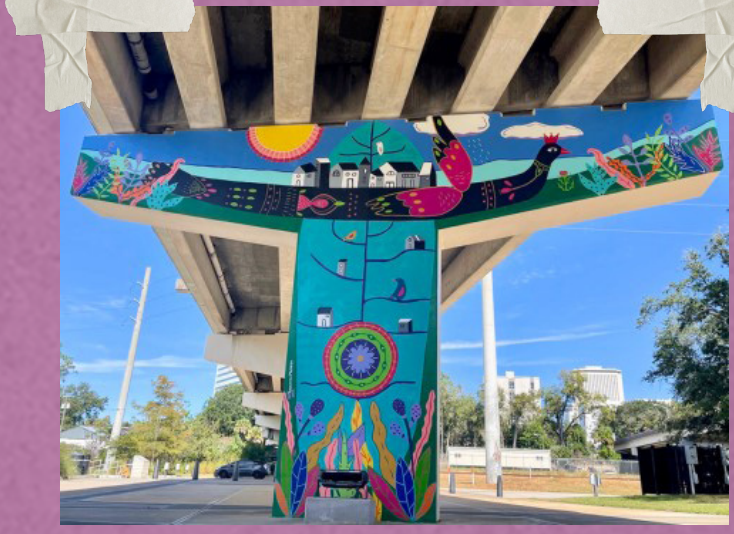
Mark Dickson, “In Honor of the Worker”. This 15-foot-tall aluminum sculpture honors the workers of the Elberta Crate & Box Company which opened a factory in 1922.

John Birch, “Community, Your Move, and Metamorphosis” wood sculptures. This sculpture stands 9 feet tall at the center of the community gathering space. The three sculptures capture the spirit of Boynton Still Quarters.

Joseph Cowdrey, “A Stroll Down Seaboard Street” mural. The series of murals highlights the Railroad Depot’s role in connecting Tallahassee to markets across the United States. This helped to spur economic and residential development in the area.

Alisha Lewis, “For the Generations to Fulfill the Dream.” This piece is influenced by the women of FAMU's role in the local and national Civil Rights Movement, including sit-ins, bus boycotts, and marches.

Bradley Cooley Jr, “The Jazz Man.” The sculpture honors the musical history of Tallahassee including the Adderley brothers who were Smokey Hollow residents. People remember attending the Ship Ahoy, Savoy Club, Peppermint Pation, Hillside Fountainette, and The Harrison Inn for musical talents in the FAMU area.



Yasaman Mehrsa, “We are All One”. These murals are inspired by the spirit of the Allen community. Through color and symbolism, these murals represent the community’s past, present, and future.

People Profiles

An integral part of understanding Legacy Communities is the collection and preservation of oral histories. From community members oral history interviews conducted by our team. The information gathered from these interviews has been used to create case profiles highlighting just a few of the many invaluable local historians, community leaders, and residents. The members of these communities with case profiles have taken the time with interviewers to provide a detailed oral history of their lives in the Legacy Communities and how the communities have changed during their lifetime. The goal of these case profiles is to highlight the lives of those living in the community. Descriptions of daily life in these communities are filled with fond memories centered around community and family.

Profiles have been written based on interviews and research. While interviews have been condensed for the purpose of formatting requirements of the Map Book, profiles were written to highlight the story and significance of each community, site and person.

Althemese Pemberton Barnes

Althemese Pemberton Barnes, a Tallahassee native, comes from a large extended family spread out across Leon County. On weekly trips to visit relatives in the Miccosukee-Centerville area, she would learn about her family's extensive personal history. Throughout her long career, she would frequently return to her central belief in the importance of listening to and preserving the stories and history of her community.

Barnes' parents supported her and her siblings through college. She received a Bachelor's degree in music education as well as a Master's degree in Guidance and Counseling from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU). After graduating, she worked for the Florida Department of Labor and Education (FLDOE) for thirty years before retiring in 1995.

Starting in January 1996, she and her husband Calvin worked tirelessly to prepare for the opening of the John G. Riley House Museum of African American History and Culture. Earlier fundraising enabled the house to be purchased from the City, as well as initial restoration to be completed, in 1981. The effort to preserve and expand the Museum has been continuous and has been supported thanks to the efforts of local organizations, staff, volunteers, and interns. Barnes served as the Museum's Executive Director for more than twenty years, during which she oversaw the addition of a dedicated Visitor Center to the Museum's property in 2013. She was also involved in the collection of numerous oral histories and wrote several books about the history of Leon County, Tallahassee, and neighborhoods like Smokey Hollow and Bond.

Building on her work at the Riley House, Barnes spearheaded the creation of the Florida African American Heritage Preservation Network (FAAHPN) in 2001, a professional network dedicated to the training of professional museum directors to maintain the State's African American museums. Additionally, FAAHPN produces numerous

high-quality publications and provides a wide variety of services, such as grant writing training and archive digitization.

In 2012, Barnes was nominated by then-President Barack Obama to serve on the board of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Similar in purpose to Barnes' own FAAHPN, the IMLS works more broadly to support museums, libraries, and other institutions of knowledge and history across the nation. Barnes served in this position until the end of her term in 2015. That same year, she was honored by the City of Tallahassee as a recipient of the Greater Chamber of Commerce Lifetime Leadership Award for her efforts as part of the Smokey Hollow Community Historic Preservation Project.

"I didn't see in society what they stood for or what they had accomplished. There was a lot of writing going on, but it was not written in color"

In 2020, Barnes retired from her position as Executive Director after twenty-four years of service and was succeeded in the position by Dr. Aron Meyers. Nevertheless, Barnes has remained active in Florida's historic preservation scene. In 2021, she helped to convene the first Journey to Emancipation history conference here in Tallahassee, which detailed the history of Emancipation in both Florida and the Nation.

In addition to the Lifetime Leadership Achievement Award she received in 2015, Barnes was honored for her myriad restoration and preservation projects when the City of Tallahassee inaugurated Althemese Pemberton Barnes Park near Cascades Park. Other projects in which Barnes has played a pivotal role include the restoration of Greenwood Cemetery in collaboration with Dorothy Inman-Johnson in 1986 and the creation of Frenchtown's Soul Voices Heritage Marker Trail in 2019. Most recently, she and her husband attended the 2024 Emancipation Day celebrations at the Old City Cemetery and the Knott House.

Dorothy Inman-Johnson

As a 2024 recipient of the Americorp Lifetime Achievement Award issued by President Joe Biden for her contributions to the betterment of society, Dorothy “Dot” Inman-Johnson is a certified life-long activist. Born and raised in Birmingham, Alabama as the fifth of fourteen children, Inman-Johnson grew up attending civil rights protests with her family and would continue her activism at Clark College. Upon completing her studies, she worked as a teacher.

Before moving to Tallahassee so her then-husband could attend FAMU in 1971, Inman-Johnson sent her resume, degree, and references to the Leon County Public School District. As a Black educator, she experienced some resistance from the school board when attempting to add her name to the substitute teacher list, despite previous teaching experience. Eventually, she spoke directly to Black principals to finally be added as a substitute teacher. Later, during her first full-time teaching role at John G. Riley Elementary School in Griffin Heights, she became a teacher’s union representative. Through this role, she entrenched herself in local politics. In 1986, Inman-Johnson became the first Black woman elected to the City Commission. She focused many of her efforts on community support, ensuring that the people were her first concern. While serving as a City Commissioner, she continued teaching and held board positions for several local advocacy agencies. She was also the first Black woman to serve as Tallahassee’s mayor in 1989, and again in 1993. Through the many roles she has served in, Inman-Johnson has weaved resources together and capitalized on partnerships.

One of the projects Inman-Johnson is most proud of is the Mini Pedestrian and Street Safety (PASS) program. College Terrace, a neighborhood next to FAMU, provided housing for many professors but lacked proper sidewalks and drainage systems.

After constituents petitioned the City Commission for road improvements, the Commission agreed to the improvements on the condition that all residents sign a petition agreeing to place a lien on their homes to fund the project. Inman-Johnson immediately recognized the inequity, as the city was funding identical road improvements near a newly constructed mall at no cost to that area's residents. After the improvements were declined by the neighborhood, Inman-Johnson asked Dan Kleman, the City Manager at the time, why the city wasn't helping older neighborhoods. He explained that there weren't any city policies that encouraged improvements to older neighborhoods.

"Just because you don't have it, does not mean you can't have it"

Once the lack of policy was identified, Inman-Johnson worked with Kleman to create the Mini PASS program bringing older neighborhoods up to current standards without charging residents disproportionately.

Another point of pride for Inman-Johnson includes her work to preserve the Riley House and present-day John G. Riley Museum. At the time, Althemese Barne, a lifelong local activist and future Executive Director of the Riley House, had recently quit teaching to save the rapidly deteriorating Riley House, then owned by the Florida NAACP. Barnes asked the City Commission for money to help preserve the last original home from Smokey Hollow, which was denied. Upon hearing this, Inman-Johnson decided to allocate her portion of the $50,000, that each commissioner received, for discretionary city funding to preserve the historic home. Despite this, some obstacles persisted. Since the house is owned by the Florida NAACP, it created political problems around her donation. Inman-Johnson again had to rely on her political savvy to get the NAACP's Florida headquarters to transfer ownership to the local chapter. Once that issue had been addressed, the lack of funding became the project's next hurdle. Inman-Johnson had to call in a favor with Frank William's Development Company Florida Developers Inc. - the first certified Black Development Company in Florida. Of the $50,000 total, $10,000 had to be set aside for museum materials, leaving only $40,000 to fund repairs which were far more costly. When Inman-Johnson explained the situation,

William recognized the importance of preserving the home and agreed to the partnership as an in-kind donation providing the labor for the project. This act of goodwill is a significant part of the reason that the Riley House stands today as a Black History Museum.

Another of Inman-Johnson's many proud accomplishments is the preservation of the Greenwood Cemetery. Greenwood is a Black Cemetery in Tallahassee, primarily used when cemeteries were still segregated. In Greenwood, families were responsible for maintaining their relatives' plots themselves because the Cemetery was owned privately, not publicly. Over time, this task became increasingly difficult as families moved away, eventually leaving the area unrecognizable as a final resting place. The City Commission was approached by Anita Davis (the first woman to be the Executive Director of the local NAACP), Althemese Barnes, and Reverend James Vaughn to preserve Greenwood Cemetery. The City Commission declined their request, claiming it would be too expensive to bring the Cemetery to a maintainable point. Inman-Johnson intervened, convincing the Commissioners to agree to maintain the property if it could be brought to a manageable state.

Through numerous partnerships and the dedicated efforts of the four original community advocates, who leveraged personal relationships and attended weekend workdays, the community ultimately succeeded in restoring the Cemetery. Inman-Johnson created

> *"People thought there was no way in hell we could accomplish that"*

a board to oversee the project, which included Sharyn Thompson, a cemetery expert, Henry Lewis, the first Black person elected to the City Commission since reconstruction and the Chair of the County Commission, former Governor Leroy Collins, and the then-Executive Director of the State Historic Preservation Board. The others on the board were on the planning project committee that included representatives from throughout the community, totaling about 25. Inman-Johnson used her connections in the education system to encourage students to volunteer on the project for community service credits. Local businesses often donated food to the volunteers, making the undertaking a community event rather than a chore. Community members volunteered their time on weekends and brought their gardening equipment from home. Inman-Johnson also reached out to local businesses for labor and equipment donations to help address some of the more serious

impediments, like major root systems disturbing graves. These community partnerships allowed the team to bring in local media to draw attention to the project and gain more volunteers. Eventually, Thompson was able to match graves and records, formally documenting many individuals' final resting places. Once the work was done, Inman-Johnson went back to the City Commission to lobby them to add a road to the cemetery that would provide access and make it easier to maintain and officially adopt it as a city-maintained cemetery.

Today, Dot Inman-Johnson is stepping out of retirement to run for the City Commission, citing a need to refocus their efforts on the local community. Her platform includes centering quality of life by increasing affordable housing, increasing livable wages, reducing the crime rate, and reducing poverty. Inman-Johnson hopes to bring transparency back into politics, allowing citizens to play a stronger part in their local politics. Even though she is not a Florida native, her lifelong dedication to the betterment of the City on behalf of all who call it home has made her a permanent fixture in the social and political fabric of Tallahassee.

Painting by Dot Inman-Johnson

Talethia Edwards

Talethia Edwards is the Executive Director of “Good News Outreach” and a mother of seven, who has a burning passion for being the voice for the unheard. Edwards obtained her master's degree from Florida State University’s Department of Urban and Regional Planning and has utilized her education to spark positive changes in Tallahassee’s historically neglected communities.

As a devoted community leader, Edwards actively serves on the boards of organizations such as Kids, Inc. of the Big Bend, Early Head Start, CACA Head Start, The PHI Center, and the Tallahassee Lenders Consortium. She also plays a key role in committees including the Early Childhood Obesity Prevention (ECOP) Task Force, the Leon County School District Advisory Committee, and the Title I Advisory Committee. In addition to these commitments, she serves as president of her neighborhood association, the Greater Bond Neighborhood Association, and is deeply involved in her children’s education, where she works as PTO vice president, a school advisory committee member, and a parent partner for Florida’s Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems team.

Edwards’ work has also guided her into collaboration with local leaders, specifically Tallahassee Mayor, John Dailey. This relationship has aided in Edwards gaining visibility to address the concerns and needs of historically African American communities, such as Frenchtown and Bond. Edwards is passionate about engaging with others, building relationships and understanding the complex systems that make up communities. Her quest for knowledge has led her to

participating in Harvard Workshops and public speaking events centered around community outreach and urban planning. Edwards uses her experiences to ignite and lead positive change for Tallahassee's African American community members.

Community conversation in Newtown neighborhood, Sarasota

Roderick Arnold

Born in Leon County, Roderick Arnold has called Tallahassee home for his entire life. He grew up near downtown, in close proximity to parks, shopping, and other activities, which contributed to a sense of accessibility to his surroundings. Due to the increasing population of college students and expansion of transportation infrastructure, these qualities are becoming noticeably harder to encounter, with Arnold recalling the construction of new apartment complexes and sidewalks as an example. Yet, Arnold believes that this is changing with a return of balance. In recent years, he has observed more coffee shops and small businesses emerging in his community, helping to draw in longtime and older residents.

Reflecting on his childhood, Arnold remembers how he regularly spent time at his grandma's and mother's house for cherished family dinners. These dinners fostered a sense of both community and connection, with a chance to bond with family members during mealtime. He recalls these family dinners with joy, and has since carried on the tradition of these dinners in his own home. Enjoying both the preparation and cooking, Arnold recognizes the importance in continuing to cultivate family and community ties through acts of service and quality time. Arnold mentions that by cooking, it allows his mom, who passed down this tradition, to relax and enjoy the moment, emphasizing how fulfilling it is to witness these full circle moments.

Reminiscing deeper, he remembers being able to play outside with childhood friends in the neighborhood, riding bikes and playing games with one another. A fond memory of Arnold's growing up is being able to visit his friends by just showing up to their house without having to call beforehand. He wishes his daughters got to experience these moments of powerful neighborhood connection that he was able to experience, but notes that the neighborhood he currently lives in lacks this type of dynamic.

Today, Arnold works in customer service, providing desktop support to individuals. When asked about his favorite part of the job, he indicated that having the chance to help people solve problems is what drives him most. He mentioned how assisting others is one of his core values in not just his job, but throughout all corners of his life.

Geraldine Floyd

"We had all these people who were examples of possibility and there was no way we could not believe in ourselves, we saw people who accomplished things and they came from very humble beginnings and knowing that we did too, we had inspiration."

Geraldine Floyd was born in Tallahassee in 1946. Growing up three houses down from the fork of Old Bainbridge Road and Central Road, Floyd lived with her mother, father, and sisters in an old shotgun house. Floyd recalls playing with the kids in her neighborhood regularly and making their own fun. She remembers creating her own toys from scratch; Dolls were made from old soda bottles with matchsticks in place of limbs, wrapped together with hemp strings.

Fun and games were not the only part of Floyds upbringing. Being the daughter of a high school teacher, she was often encouraged to read, an activity that helped to stimulate her future interest in subjects like drama, literature and history. Her father assigned book reports to ensure that she would never lose her fondness for learning. Beyond reading at home, Floyd was responsible for a lot of household chores growing up. This was an important task, considering that they did not have access to immediate home luxuries.

At the age of thirteen, Floyd's family moved to the Jake Gaither community. Unfortunately, a childhood illness would keep her homebound for several of her early teen years. However, it was during her time at home that she discovered her love for language, French in particular, after reading a biography of Haitian revolutionary Toussaint Louverture. It was also during this time that she decided that her future husband must speak French. Eventually, Floyd would recover and continue her youth alongside her friends. She attended Lincoln High School, where she participated in school activities like the school drama and dance club. While growing up in Jake Gaither, Floyd was given the opportunity to experience what Black excellence could be. She was also a witness to the growing Civil Rights movement in Tallahassee. She remembers her father taking the family to a church ten miles down Thomasville Road so that they could congregate with fellow Civil Rights activists. It was her father who would announce that it was time for the Black community to boycott stores that gave preferential treatment to white customers.

Floyd attended the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), where she double-majored in speech and theater alongside a double minor in English and French. It was during her time at FAMU that she met her husband, who did indeed speak French. She was married in 1969 at the age of 22. After graduating, she traveled around Florida for ten years, living in places like Jacksonville, St. Petersburg, and Miami. After relocating to Gainesville in pursuit of a Master's degree at the University of Florida (UF), Floyd eventually moved back to Tallahassee due to her mother's illness.

After moving back, Floyd began working as a teacher in Gadsden County. She taught for over 40 years, and now spends her time as a volunteer, teaching children who need extra tutelage to succeed in their academic careers. Geraldine Floyd's story tells the value of living in a community where the visions and goals center around safeguarding the future of the next generation, and her dedication to shaping that next generation has made a difference in the lives of many.

Deloris Mills Massey Harpool

Deloris Harpool is a proud former resident of the Allen Subdivision, and one of six siblings who grew up on Hudson Street in south-central Tallahassee. Following her retirement and return to Tallahassee, Harpool began noticing significant changes to her beloved community as redevelopment spread throughout the area, leading her to write her 2022 book *The Life and Legacy of Allen Subdivision*. As the title suggests, the book memorializes the vibrant past of the Allen Subdivision and shines a light on the activities of those descended from the area. At a presentation on June 1st, 2024 with the Tallahassee African American Genealogical Society (TAAGS) she described how insulated growing up in the Allen Subdivision was. She recalled that despite the severity of racism and the impacts of segregation at the time, she never knew that they were forced to live separate from the white families in Tallahassee. Harpool described the community as a “quiet, close-knit and humble community” with many of their needs all being available within the community bounds. This strong sense of community protected children from many harsh realities of life in the 1950s. Harpool received her Bachelor's degree in Sociology and a Masters in Counseling from Florida A&M University (FAMU), then worked toward becoming a Certified Public Manager (CPM) at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

Harpool discussed the strong social and political ties of the community due to its proximity to FAMU. She also shared memories of the Pittman Boarding House, run by the parents of the honorable Carrie Mae Pittman Meek, the first Black woman elected to the Florida State Senate. The Pittmans ran a boarding house for women attending FAMU and were subject to backlash following civil rights protests due to the close relationship between the University and the Subdivision. Harpool described her experiences seeing marches going through her neighborhood, the St. Michael’s Episcopal Church being teargassed

when protestors took refuge there, and a cross burning in front of the Pittman Boarding House during the Tallahassee bus boycotts. Today, both the House and Carrie Mae Pittman Meek are commemorated in the neighborhood. The old boarding home is recognized by a bench dedicated to Pittman Meek and her husband, and the street the home sits on has been renamed in Senator Pittman Meek's honor.

Harpool also shared many activities that she used to participate in while living in the Allen Subdivision. She describes dances for teenagers hosted at both the Parish House at St. Michaels Church and at FAMU High School. Businesses like the Fountainette often catered to teenagers who would come to eat, drink sodas, and dance after school, acting as a community space for many residents. As well as being an active student at Famu High School being both a cheerleader and a member of the choir. Harpool painstakingly collected numerous oral histories for her book *The Life and Legacy of Allen Subdivision*, documenting the community's relationship with institutions like FAMU, Gethsemane Missionary Baptist Church, and St. Michael's Episcopal Church. Her research has contributed to the community's memorialization in Blueprint's History and Culture Trail Project, which will be unveiled in the fall of 2024. The Trail will take participants along FAMU Way while highlighting significant communities like Allen Subdivision, sites of civil rights commemoration, and other significant sites and community fixtures. More than 90 businesses worked to keep the Allen Subdivision alive and well– often at great personal cost to the owners– but are no longer physically present in the community. Harpool intends to keep their memory alive and thank them for their contribution to the community through her partnership with Blueprint. The ultimate goal of their collaboration will be the creation of a memorial inscribed with the names of the businesses that sustained the Allen Subdivision.

Carlton and Roderick Sheffield

The Sheffield family has been in the mechanical trades since 1938, when Wesley Sheffield opened his store in Quincy, FL. Feeling that the rural life wasn't quite for him and his family, Wesley would open another store in 1966 in Tallahassee's Frenchtown neighborhood. Working on cars is a tradition in the Sheffield family. It began with Wesley Sheffield who passed it down to his two sons Carlton Sr. and Roderick, and his grandson, Carlton Jr., who is the proud parent of six children. Regardless of family history, Carlton Jr. fears that his children will not continue the tradition.

The history of the Sheffield family is checkered with competition against larger national business chains. Despite the fierceness of the automobile repair industry, Carlton Jr. states that he would gladly encourage any of his children to pursue his family's trade if they expressed an interest in continuing the business.

Carlton Jr. and Roderick have a life-long fascination with cars. Roderick has worked on cars since he was a small child. Carlton Jr. was also exposed to the family trade at an early age but did not see being a mechanic

as anything other than a job until he was nineteen years old.

Owning a business in Frenchtown brought less stability than the family hoped for. The Shop was relocated four times due to difficulty obtaining a long-term lease agreement with their landlords. These relocations mimicked the ongoing shuffling of the Frenchtown community due to the new development of national business chains in the area. Roderick recounts that when the Norwood Mall was first developed, he and his family moved the Shop closer to the mall. However, as the mall began to decline, so did the many small businesses that moved in hopes of sharing in its prosperity. Sheffield's Body Shop was lucky enough to relocate and avoid the same fate as the surrounding businesses.

The business has finally found its permanent location along 4th Avenue, where it continues to provide motor vehicle service and repairs. According to Carlton Jr., the most rewarding part of working as a mechanic is seeing the satisfaction on their customers' faces.

However, the Sheffields noted how much Frenchtown has changed. In the past, everyone knew everyone

"The past has ccome, change is here, history is gone"

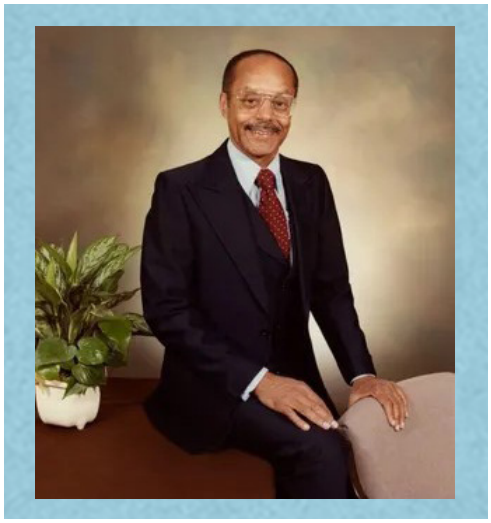
in the historic Black neighborhood. Transactions were not just interactions between customers and workers, but between neighbors who knew where to turn when they needed a dependable good or service. Now, because of new student housing projects popping up along Tennessee Street, the sense of community has shifted.

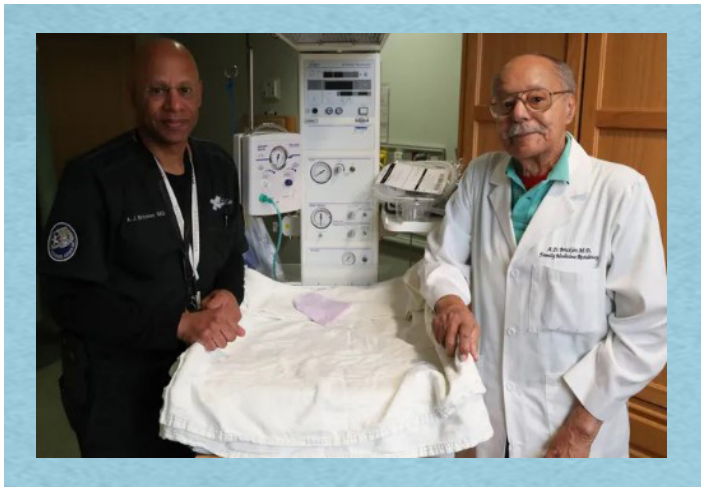
"Frenchtown was a Black Wall Street. Grocers, dry cleaners, car lots, everything you could be found in there or neighboring Black communities." He feels that some issues within Frenchtown have been left unchecked by the City Commission. Roderick hopes that with the right investments and assistance, Frenchtown can return to its former prosperity. While the neighborhood has faced historic disinvestment, new movements created by community members have resulted in positive impacts on the community. These include the Frenchtown Neighborhood First Plan, iGrow community garden, Carter-Howell-Strong Park, and the Frenchtown Heritage Hub.

The Brickler Family

The Brickler family has deep roots within American Black History. Dr. Alexander Brickler's grandmother was Harriet Tubman's niece. In 2013, a Harriet Tubman exhibit was hosted in Tallahassee, and among other artifacts were Tubman's pistol and sword, which were donated by the Brickler family. The family also has a long line of Black medical professionals in Tallahassee.

Dr. Alexander D. Brickler began his medical career during the Korean War as a statewide medical officer. He moved to Tallahassee in 1957 to work alongside his father-in-law, Dr. R. L. Anderson. Anderson was the medical director of the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) Hospital. Together they opened Anderson-Brickler Midwifery & Obstetrical Services. At the time, the FAMU Hospital needed an obstetrician, so later the same year, Brickler joined the staff at the FAMU Hospital.





Fourteen years later, the color barrier was broken at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital (TMH), and Dr. Brickler and his father-in-law joined the medical staff in 1971, becoming the first Black physicians at the hospital. Among patients, he was known simply as A.D. Having remarkable expertise in his field and a comforting bedside manner, he was popular among patients.

Sadly passing away on October 30, 2023, at the age of 94, he was known as the best obstetrician in Tallahassee, having delivered over 30,000 babies during his career. The Tallahassee Memorial Alexander D. Brickler, MD Women's Pavilion was named in his honor.

Today the Brickler family medical legacy lives on through Alexander Brickler's children: Dr. A.J. Bricker III who is currently practicing at TMH, and Dr. Celeste Brickler-Hart who practices at the North Florida Thyroid Center.

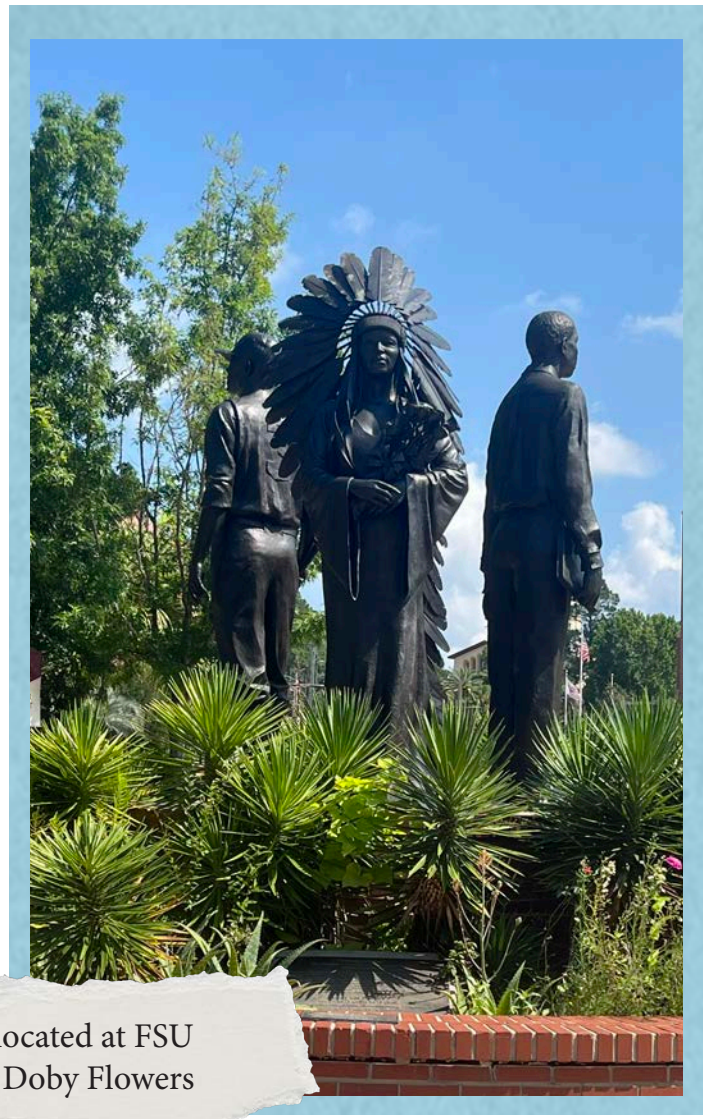
Fred Flowers

Fred Flowers was the first Black athlete to play at Florida State University (FSU). After graduating from Tallahassee's Old Lincoln High School, he chose to attend FSU on an academic scholarship. During Flowers' time at FSU, he was one of just ten Black students on campus. He also was one of the founding members of the Chi Theta Chapter of Omega Psi Phi fraternity at FSU. This was the first African-American Greek letter organization on FSU's campus.

At FSU, Flowers earned a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy in 1969 and then a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning in 1973. In 1979, Flowers graduated from the Levin College of Law at The University of Florida (UF).

Following his graduation from UF, Flowers began his private practice in Tallahassee in 1981. Flowers Law LLC has handled an array of cases involving civil rights, personal injuries, wrongful deaths, wills, probate, and guardianship over the last 40 years. The firm's mission is to make a positive impact and demonstrate respect while striving for justice for all.

He is a trial attorney who has fought for equal rights for clients stemming from his personal experiences in the civil rights movement. His career has focused on holding the government, businesses, and people accountable for individual liberty violations.
In 2004, the Integration Statue was unveiled on FSU's Legacy Walk. This statue features Fred Flowers, along with his sister Doby Flowers, and Maxwell Courtney. Courtney was the first Black graduate of FSU in 1965, and Doby Flowers was FSU's first Black homecoming queen. The Integration Statue stands as a reminder of the barriers that these students fought to break, reminding us of the progress we have made and the values we uphold today.



Integration Statue located at FSU featuring Fred and Doby Flowers

Doby Lee Flowers

A seventh-generation Tallahassee resident, Doby Flowers, attended Florida State University (FSU), receiving her Bachelor's degree in Social Work in 1971 and a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning 1973. She is best known for being crowned FSU's first African American homecoming queen in 1970.

In her words:

"It wasn't a beauty contest… 'We broke the barrier to education with the first Black student, we broke the barrier to athletics with Fred being the first black athlete in Southern majority university, but for social mores, which the homecoming queen was the epitome of and recognition of beauty'. So it wasn't about looking pretty, it was a political statement, saying we've got to break this last bastion."

Flowers aimed to make a significant impact and bring about change, and she succeeded. In 1970, of the 18,000 students enrolled in the university, only 35 were Black. It was impossible for her to win solely based on votes from the Black student population. Though the odds, demographically, were not in her favor, she achieved a historic victory.

After graduating, the Flowers siblings decided to stay in Tallahassee. In 1995, Doby purchased the Magnolia Leaf House in Thomasville, Georgia, and worked to preserve the home and its history. Shortly after, she opened the Magnolia Leaf Bed and Breakfast, which is still in operation today. Then, in 1997, she joined her brother at his law firm, Flowers Law, LLC, as firm manager.

In more recent news for Doby, in 2018, she along with her brother Fred, co-founded the Civil Rights Institute at FSU. Located in the Gus A Stavros Center, this institute is committed to researching civil rights in America and encouraging social change.

Jami A. Coleman

Jami A. Coleman first moved to Tallahassee to start law school in 1993. There, she received a Bachelor's degree in 2004 and her Juris Doctorate in 2008. In 2009, she graduated from Georgetown University Law Center with a Master of Law in Taxation.

Coleman's practice focuses on several fields, including probate matters. She currently sits on the Florida Bar's Probate Rules Committee and is a member of the Florida Bar's Real Property Probate Trust Litigation Section, Legal Services of North Florida, Legal Aid Foundation, and FSU Veterans Clinic. Additionally, she worked with Dr. Sandra Thompson on passing the Uniform Partition of Heirs' Property Act, which helps families clear title to their land.

With regard to community engagement, Coleman stressed the importance of having relatable community liaisons and representatives. In her words: "You have to have a representative that understands the people that they're addressing. It's important for me to be out in the community to talk about these issues because: 1) I look like the community that I am trying to serve and 2) I want to convey that they can trust me with their issues so that they will take heed to the information".

The inherent mistrust that many Black communities have in property-related information stems from decades of racially motivated and underhanded property dealings. Unfortunately, the longer a property sits as an heirs property, the more expensive the probate process gets. Coleman hopes that heirs' property assistance programs, like Alachua County's, will become more widespread. Steps have been taken in Leon through county-run heirs' property workshops, though there is room for improvement.

Gloria Jefferson Anderson

Gloria Jefferson Anderson was born in 1948 in the former Gambles Plantation, a former sharecropper settlement. Before relocating three and a half miles from the city limits of Tallahassee to the Edgewood community. Growing up in the house her father constructed in the early 1950s, Gloria spent her youth surrounded by a tight-knit community.

Being separated from the city of Tallahassee, Gloria Anderson's family needed to be self-sufficient. Everyone in Gloria's family utilized every resource and skill they had on hand to provide for their home. Anderson's Dad worked as a carpenter throughout his life, and he used this background in carpentry to help construct Anderson's childhood home. This resourcefulness stemmed from a legacy of slavery and sharecropping that made it necessary for rural, Black families to utilize every asset they had to their name to survive. Anderson's Dad had learned his craft from his father and passed down his craft to one of Anderson's brothers who continues to be the handyman for her family to this day. "They knew how to build. And they were able to go to church and built the churches themselves… they were pretty much self-sufficient," commented Gloria Anderson on the resourcefulness of her old community.

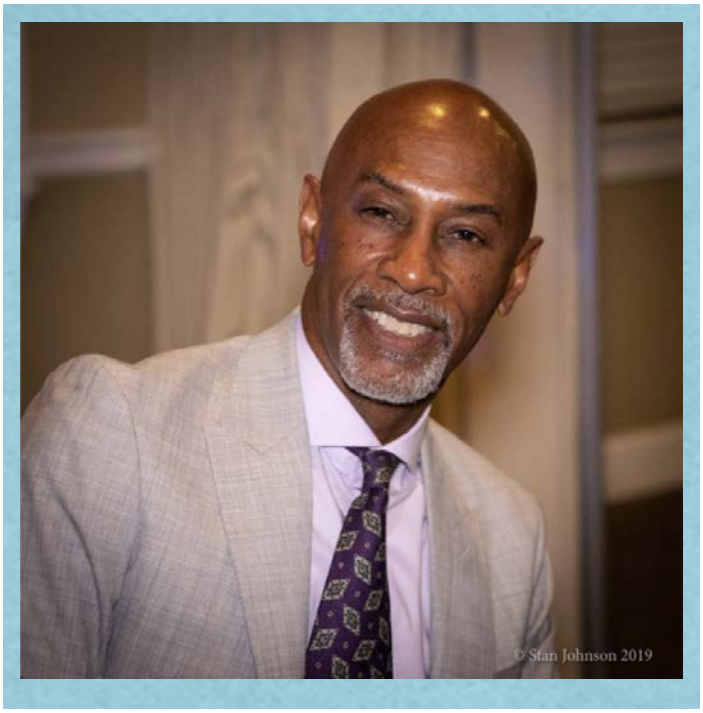
Anderson's family was not alone. Surrounded by nineteen families, the community was active with one another. Although at the time there wasn't a full sized church the community would come together spiritually by the local prayer house which served the spiritual needs of the community. Anderson remembers attending the Santa Rosa Prayer House for Sunday School, which was the only place that offered such services. Like most buildings in Edgewood, it was constructed by the men of the community. At the time, it was common practice for people in rural areas to construct prayer houses if they didn't have churches nearby. While it has since been torn down, it was the only Baptist church in a community full of Baptists. Other places that Anderson recalled where people used to hang out with each other included listening to music at the local Juke Joints, relaxing at the Red Top Inn, and watching their baseball team. "…families would get together, the neighbors would dress up, and they would go to [the game], they had the jugs right there, and it's that so hot fish and beer, and everybody would watch the baseball game every Saturday evening," Anderson fondly recalled.

While church and baseball games ensured that the Edgewood community remained engaged with one another, it would be festivals and events that everybody looked forward to. The 20th of May was celebrated with great jubilation. Anderson, alongside her mother and sisters, would prepare the food in advance for the upcoming festivities. They would start working in anticipation of the celebration, baking two weeks before the festivities while the cooking started several days before. Ida Jefferson's, Anderson's sister, baking skills were often the talk of the town, especially her spiced peach cobbler. Yet, Anderson's favorite treat of the festivities was the homemade lemonade her uncles would make and store in a large barrel for Emancipation Day.

Children would be let out of school early around noon to ensure that they wouldn't be late for the celebrations. The children would play games like the ring game while the elders would begin church service and pray in gratitude for their emancipation. The end of prayer would be signaled by the slow beat of a drum right before 3:00 pm, reminiscent of the way drums signaled the emancipation of the enslaved peoples of Florida. Afterward, everybody would join in the festivities and enjoy the company of each other, food, music, and dancing. "Everybody just shared what they had, different people, and we just had a good time and then the old people danced," Gloria fondly recalled. These celebrations would go on for many years and helped to cement Edgewood as a community.

Recently, however, the legacy left behind by the older community members is in danger of erosion. New development over the years threatens to demolish the remains of the old Edgewood community alongside many other rural Black communities. Anderson has made it her mission to preserve the history and heritage of her old community. Back in 2020, after following a trail of evidence from old plantation records, Gloria Anderson discovered an old cemetery belonging to the New Hope community. Anderson and other members of the New Hope community now hope that she can help preserve and identify the former graves of her community long deceased relatives. Gloria Jefferson Anderson currently hosts the New Hope Cemetery committee with the help of Project Blueprint with the hopes of illuminating her community's undocumented history.

Ronald J. McCoy



Born in the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) Hospital in 1958, Ronald J. McCoy was raised in the vibrant neighborhood of Frenchtown here in Tallahassee. Growing up in Frenchtown surrounded by a tight-knit community and an entrepreneurial family helped to shape Ron McCoy's future business savvy. His grandmother and grandfather were Dorothy and James Tookes, who were the owners of the soon-to-be renovated Tookes Hotel.

In 1964, the family moved to J. Edgar Park, a neighborhood for Black professionals, but they would continue to frequent Frenchtown for their services. "It was a thriving community," McCoy said, reminiscing on his old neighborhood. "[When] I was a little boy, and I remembered all these businesses … drugstores, pool halls, dime stores, ice cream parlors, you got your haircut and ladies got their hair done. It was just a thriving community."

McCoy graduated from FAMU in 1976 with a Business Degree in Accounting. As an entrepreneur, he sold a variety of goods. Today, he owns the luxury eyewear brand, EyeDope Inc., and works for FAMU's Small Business Development Center.

One venture that Ron McCoy and the Frenchtown community are excited about is the current renovations in the Tookes Hotel. McCoy plans on reviving the historic hotel as an Airbnb. It is slated to be open by the end of Summer 2024.

Like many community members who were raised in the Frenchtown neighborhood, McCoy is eager to see his childhood home make a comeback. While many businesses have gone, some stores still hold strong. Ron McCoy envisions young entrepreneurs occupying Frenchtown's historic business strips. He believes that revitalization efforts from younger business owners could reinvigorate the Frenchtown neighborhood.

Benjamin Crump

Benjamin Lloyd Crump is a civil rights attorney who is oftentimes referred to as Black America's Attorney General. He was born in North Carolina as the oldest of nine siblings. He moved to Florida for high school and eventually migrated to Tallahassee to attend FSU. There, he received a bachelor's degree in criminal justice in 1992 and his Juris Doctor in 1995.

In 1996, Crump founded Parks and Crump Attorneys at Law with Daryl D. Parks. For years, Parks and Crump were known for their work on negligence, auto accidents, and medical malpractice cases. Then, in 2006, Gina Jones contacted the firm regarding the death of her son Martin Lee Anderson. This was the first of Crump's many high-profile civil rights cases.

From the residents impacted by poisoned water in Flint, Michigan to the family of George Floyd, Crump has handled some of the nation's most prominent civil rights cases.

In 2017, Crump launched Ben Crump Law. This nationwide firm works alongside Morgan & Morgan's extensive team of attorneys. With offices in Tallahassee, Sacramento, and Washington D.C., Crump Law aims to continue advocating for social justice and ensuring "that those marginalized in American society are protected by their nation's contract with its constituency."

"I believe in justice for all, and especially for those without a voice who need our help most of all."

Zach Clemons

"You bless someone, you'll be blessed as well"

Zach Clemons started barbering at thirteen in his cousin's shop. Working there led him to barber school and his mentor Garrett. After gaining experience working in his cousin's and Garrett's shops, Clemons opened the In and Out Barber Shop in 1997. Since its opening, the Shop has been more than just a place for haircuts- it's a place to share stories, link with neighbors, and train the next generation of barbers.

Today, Clemons mentors barbers, encouraging them to open their shops after gaining experience and continuing the cycle. The most rewarding aspect of Clemons' career is that it has allowed him to put his four children through college. He prides himself on being an old-school barber in an old-school barber shop. According to him, barber shops have lost the sense of community they were once known for. Historically, barber shops in Black communities have acted as gathering spaces that foster connections between community members and teach young men life lessons.

Clemons, who moved to the Bond Community at seven from Madison County, cherishes his neighborhood's history. He fondly recalls events

Zach cutting hair in Barber Shop

and businesses that nurtured his community including the swimming lessons at the Walker Ford Pool, Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University's (FAMU) agricultural summer camp, Speed's Grocery Store, and the Robinson's Grocery Store. Clemons feels that these experiences have diminished over time; he takes pride in teaching the children in the community. He believes kids can get inspiration for their future by going out into their community and learning from businesses like In and Out Barber Shop. By being a strong example, his shop teaches and informs the community. "That's what barbers do, they gotta keep their community informed."

For Clemons, Bond used to be a very close-knit community, but that sentiment seems to have been lost over the years. He says, “That’s what happens when the university starts building, people move out, that is just the nature of life.” Clemons hopes that through his barbershop, he can bring back that sense of community one haircut at a time. His dedication to his community and profession is evident in his efforts to create a safe place where generations come in for haircuts, to learn the trade, and to socialize. The In and Out Barbershop has established a legacy within the Bond Community, inspiring future generations to pursue successful businesses and growing community ties.

In and Out Barber Shop

Anjali Austin

As Department Chair, Graduate Program Director, and Professor at Florida State University's (FSU) School of Dance, Anjali Austin stands at the pinnacle of a career steeped in the rich traditions of her family and the vibrant world of dance. Born in Tallahassee, Florida, Austin is a fifth-generation Tallahassee resident whose roots run deep in the local soil.

Raised initially by her maternal grandmother, Gussie Beatrice Arnold Hill, her early years were a blend of familial warmth and cultural heritage. After completing high school in San Francisco, she moved to New York City, where she spent 13 years with the Dance Theatre of Harlem, immersing herself in the beauty of ballet.

Beyond the dance studio, Austin's commitment to her heritage shines through in her curatorial work. At the FSU Museum of Fine Arts (MoFA), she is the curator of The Gussie Beatrice Arnold Hill Quilt Exhibit. The exhibit features 33 quilts, each a testament to Arnold Hill's skill and creativity. Austin collected stories from her cousins, piecing together the narrative of her grandmother's quilting process. For generations, the Arnold Hill family lived as an agrarian family off Miccosukee Road and Centerville Road. Each quilt is a patchwork of memories, constructed from well-loved and well-used fabrics, embodying the stories of the Arnold Hill family. Though Austin doesn't always know the specific origins of each piece, she believes some quilts may date back several generations, created by her ancestors.

These quilts are a powerful testament to the enduring stories of Black Legacy Communities– a rich tapestry of history, comfort, and resilience. Through the exhibit, Austin aims to preserve and share these stories with future generations, ensuring that the rich heritage of her family and their contributions to the cultural milieu are not forgotten.

"It really is a matter of what they had on hand to be able to create what I call these very creative and contemporary pieces, these works and how they used everything, everything from a little sliver of an apron to a sleeve to flour sacks from where they would go and get food. So, it was really about being able to be frugal and make good of what you have."

The Gussie Beatrice Arnold Hill Quilt Exhibit at the FSU Museum of Fine Arts (MoFA)

Alexis McMillan

In the heart of Frenchtown, where memories of a once-thriving Black business district linger, stands a pillar of the community: Economy Drug Store. For over seventy years, this family-owned establishment has been more than just a place to fill prescriptions– it's been a sanctuary of care and compassion. At the helm of this second-generation legacy is Alexis McMillan, a woman whose dedication to her family's business and the well-being of her neighbors transcends the ordinary. Her parents were Geraldine and Howard A. Roberts, both pharmacists and Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University's pharmacy program alumni. Her mother graduated in 1954 as one of the first women to graduate from the pharmacy program.

From the time she could reach the counter, McMillan was immersed in the world of pharmaceuticals. She spent most days with her parents and sister in the shop. Around midday, her mom and sister would head home, but she always insisted on staying. She spent her afternoons reading comics and playing hopscotch outside the store. Closing up the shop nightly with her father gave her the opportunity to really experience Frenchtown. McMillan recalled another shop on the block, a record store, run by Tallahassee's first Black DJ Mr. Krenshaw, who played popular Black artists of the time. The atmosphere created through music, and the community found within it helped cement the Economy Drug Store as a place to hang out. McMillan grew up in Jake Gaither with strong ties to Frenchtown. The relationship between these two neighborhoods was evident as many of the black-owned businesses were located next to Jake Gaither in the Allen Subdivision or Frenchtown. From celebrations to protests, these communities supported one another in their endeavors.

"It was like my playground"

Birthday Party on
South Bronough St

Today, McMillan continues to uphold the values instilled in her, blending modern medical knowledge with a personal touch that only decades of family tradition can provide. The store is not merely a place to fill prescriptions; it is a living testament to the resilience, solidarity, and rich heritage of Frenchtown and Jake Gaither. As one of the last standing pillars of a once-thriving Black business district, Economy Drug Store stands as a beacon of hope and continuity, reminding us all of the strength found in the community and the enduring legacy of those who came before us. Alexis McMillan's unwavering dedication ensures that this legacy will continue to thrive, and with a niece next in line to take over the family business, they will be providing care and compassion for generations to come.

Shakonda Peters

Born in 1973 in Tallahassee Memorial Hospital, Shakonda Peters is a lifelong member of the Old St. Augustine community. Growing up with her single mother and sister, Peters lived within a tight-knit, spiritual community that was largely self-sufficient. Living along what was at the time a “dead-end” road, Peters recalled that her family had to ride into town to access basic amenities. Despite being separate from the hustle and bustle of city life, Peters enjoyed the warmth of a close community and has many fond memories of caring for barn animals, church gossip, and time spent outdoors.

From an early age, education was pushed heavily by her mother, who urged her to do well in school. Her education was heavily impacted by school zoning regulations, which forced her to attend Rickards High School as opposed to the closer Lincoln High School. Peters would learn later in life that school was determined by one’s postal code. Since then, she has been a strong advocate for school choice.

After graduating from Rickards, Peters entered Florida Agricultural

Rickards High School, 1967

and Mechanical University (FAMU) and became the first member of her family to obtain her Bachelor's degree in 1996. Feeling inspired by her daughter, Peters's mother would return to FAMU to complete her degree alongside her other daughter. This cross-generational inspiration continued when Peters’ daughter while working on her Doctorate during the COVID-19 pandemic, inspired Peters to pursue a Master’s degree. She has since completed her Master’s program and is now planning on pursuing her Ph.D at Florida State University (FSU). Shakonda Peters’ story reminds us of the importance of generational bonds and how those connections can inspire both older and younger generations to pursue their desired paths.

Faheem Rashad Najm (T-Pain)

Faheem Rashad Najm, commonly known as T-Pain, was born in Tallahassee in 1984. Growing up on Ridge Road in the Jake Gaither Neighborhood, Najm had an early passion for music, turning his bedroom into a music studio at ten years old. His stage name is derived from his hometown, his challenges living in Tallahassee, and his struggles in achieving recognition through his music. Najm was pulled from Nims Middle School when he was 13 to be homeschooled and devote more time to his passion for music. He eventually joined the Tallahassee rap group Nappy Headz before pursuing his solo music career.

Najm was signed to fellow musician Akon's record label, Konvict Muzik in 2005 at age 21, and released his first album, "Rappa Turnt Sanga," that same year. He went on to become a 12-time Grammy nominee and two-time Grammy winner.

While T-Pain no longer lives in Tallahassee full-time, he has been known to make appearances in the city. He has found various ways to give back to the community he grew up in, including donations to local organizations like the Tallahassee Soccer Club. He has also expressed interest in making an appearance as part of the City's Bicentennial Celebrations, which will take place throughout 2024.

Eva Killings (Mrs. Killings)

Eva Killings' life is a remarkable tapestry woven with threads of resilience, compassion, and community spirit. Killings was raised in the Bond neighborhood when there were still “clay roads and tin tubs.” She grew up in a large family, one of eight siblings including a twin sister. Her father, a mechanic, truck driver, and World War II veteran, provided for the family. Her mother was a homemaker who lived with disabilities, as did one of Killings’ brothers. This familial environment nurtured Eva's empathetic nature and honed her ability to identify others' needs.

The Bond community of Killings’ childhood was a close-knit, quiet neighborhood where doors were left unlocked. Her family often got together and participated in communal activities like turkey hunts for Christmas. One of her fonder family memories included going out to Buck Lake Road for her family's sugarcane festivities. The 20th of May was also a time of celebration with food, and music- specifically drums which were often played by church members and her cousins. The neighborhood, however, has changed significantly since Killings’ youth. She notes that the once tightly-knit community now lacks the vibrancy it once had, a stark contrast to the days when families were interconnected and a sense of security pervaded the area.

Working at the Seminole Café at Florida State University (FSU) Killings became known for her exceptional care towards students, particularly those with disabilities, a compassion

"I would come behind the counter because they gave me love, so I gave love

deeply rooted in her own family experiences. Living paycheck-to-paycheck, Killings would often give up her lunch to students who couldn't afford to pay for one, embodying the selflessness that defines her character.

"I look back and see that I have come a long way"

Killings' impact at FSU extended beyond her job duties. She is remembered by hundreds of students long since graduated for her warmth, often waving to students in the dining halls calling after them with her famous "I love you!" To be loved by Killings is a blessing. Once, a student was ill and lacked insurance to be seen by a doctor, so Killings escorted them to the health and wellness center and insisted they treat 'her baby.' Her unwavering kindness earned her a special place in the hearts of many, leading to a hallway in the original student union being named after her, simply reading: "Eva Killings Hallway – 'I love you.'" Today, the sign hangs framed in her home a testament to her unfaltering service to the hundreds of students that come through FSU's doors every year.

Her nearly half a century of hard work culminated in a moment of profound recognition when she was invited to the Union Trustee meeting about the opening of the current student union, the only person present without a degree. Reflecting on her life, Killings expressed amazement at how far she had come, acknowledging the love and respect she garnered through her unyielding dedication to others.

Eva Killing's story is a testament to the power of love, resilience, and community. Her life's work at FSU and her roots in the Bond community illustrate a legacy that continues to inspire and uplift, reminding us all of the profound impact one person can have on many. If you or someone you love have been touched by the unwavering love and dedication she has provided, please support her efforts to retire on her GoFundMe page, available online and through our interactive StoryMap.

Barrie Roberts Ashcroft

Often referred to as Grandma or Auntie Barrie by all lucky enough to encounter her, Barrie Roberts Ashcroft is a generous and attentive soul and a fixture in her community. The youngest of five siblings, Ashcroft described her mother, a professional chef, Pete Birdie Roberts, as a soft, lovable woman. Her father Simon Peter Roberts, was a skilled carpenter and artist.

Growing up in Frenchtown, children were tasked with making their own fun. Many days were spent walking within the neighborhood– they would walk from Carolina Street over to Griffin Jr. High (present-day middle school), then two miles to Riley Elementary, and some days if they were still bored they would walk all the way to Jake Gaither. Occasionally on their walks they would visit the local cemeteries in Frenchtown, at the Lincoln Center and Old City Cemetery, and read gravestones to help spend the days. The kids would color, make frog homes, play hide and seek, play cards, and hopscotch, and would sometimes make dolls from Coca-Cola bottles using rope from their houses. She also shared fond memories of collecting fresh dates on her walk home from school. When the kids were too little to reach the dates, they had to get creative. She has maintained a strong relationship with many of the people she grew up with, calling to check up on people frequently. As teens, they would frequent the Dade Street Recreation Center to roller skate. The center hosted a teen dance on Friday nights, so they were sure to practice on their skates because they would open the floor for pairs. Ashcroft shared that you knew you'd made it when one of the Webster Boys, a set of three brothers, asked for a dance. Not only were the Webster Boys the best dancers and skaters in the neighborhood, but they could skate backward, a skill they eventually taught Ashcroft as well. During her late teens, a pool opened up in the community,

> *"We've been knowing each other as long as we've known ourselves"*

providing another venue for recreation. Ashcroft learned to swim when she was 19. In addition to the recreation opportunities, Frenchtown was well known for the wide variety of craftsmen and restaurants. Although her family had modest means, her mom always

encouraged them to shop locally. When Ashcroft's kids were growing up she adjusted the phrase to "don't make the mall rich" urging her kids to support small business owners of any race.

Throughout our interview, Ashcroft discussed the difficulties that Black individuals face in uncovering and preserving their historical heritage as a consequence of the disruptions caused by slavery. The Roberts family's interest in history is incredibly

> "Don't go making the white man rich"

deep-rooted; Ashcroft's sister, Anthon "Ann" Roberts', voice is featured on Frenchtown's Soul Voices Trail by the lake at Carter- Howell-Strong Park.

Once, Ashcroft and her sister traveled to Cuthbert Georgia, where their mother was born in an attempt to better ascertain some of their family history. There, they went to the library and were shocked to find it in utter disarray, with documents on the floor and a complete lack of organization. They were unable to find any information about their mother or her family, so they attempted to check the

> "You have to be interested in your history"

local universities' documents. They were unable to do so as the University was closed for spring break. Ashcroft expressed hopes of returning, but her sister has since passed.

Despite these difficulties in learning more about her mother's family, Ashcroft was close with a cousin of hers who has since passed. Margaret Adele Yellowhair —whom Ashcroft affectionately referred to as 'Sissie'— was an astonishing entrepreneur and the owner of the first Black Theater in Leon County, the Capitol Theater. Ashcroft shared that her cousin had to battle the gender norms of the time to gain respect. One story shared involved Yellowhair slapping a gun down on the table to silence the room and make her authority clear. In addition to the theater, Yellowhair owned a beauty store and had other side ventures. Yellowhair was acknowledged by the bicentennial celebration, where an honor was bestowed to Ashcroft on her behalf. By chance, one of Ashcroft's relatives found a news

article recounting the festivities held at the centennial celebration where Charlie Yellowhair performed African Tribal dances with a group of about 16 people. Before knowing this fact about her family's history, she learned African dance practices while in New York– participating in several group performances.

From her childhood days spent exploring Frenchtown to her deep engagement with local history and family legacy, Ashcroft exemplifies the strength and determination that define her journey. Her experiences, from the simple joys of making frog homes as a child to the profound impact of her cousin Margaret Adele Yellowhair's trailblazing achievements, illustrate a life lived with purpose and authenticity. Ashcroft's commitment to preserving history, supporting local businesses, and honoring the past reflects a deep understanding of the challenges faced by Black individuals in the quest for historical recognition and cultural heritage. She is the epitome of community and will likely continue offering sage advice and insight to those who come by her lifelong home, Frenchtown.

Weldon Richardson

Weldon Richardson grew up in the Macon Community with his parents, siblings, and grandfather. Macon is located on the outskirts of Tallahassee and consists of around 240 single-family homes and an apartment complex with 300 units. It's considered one of the oldest intact communities in Leon County.

Richardson described Macon as a rural community during the 1970s and early 1980s. He recalls a big field where he and the other kids would play football and other games. The field, which was city-owned, was the site of a water tower. He said, "When I was eight, it felt like the field was a mile from my house, but it was just a few houses down."

His grandfather lived to the east of him on a few acres of land. On the back of the property, his grandfather ran a popular juke joint, referred to as "The Store". He remembers being told that he was not allowed in there after dark. During those hours people would go there to dance and play pool. He would often visit during the day to get snacks and sodas.

There was also the Mt. Zion Primitive Baptist Church, which was right next door to his grandfather's house. He remembers people using his grandfather's land to park. His family attended service every Sunday and would often celebrate after with lunch at southern-style restaurants.

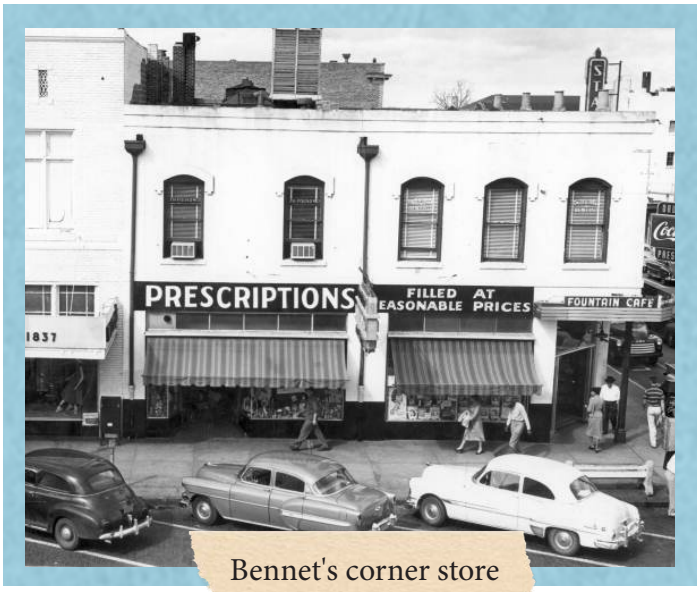
Richardson no longer lives in the community but often visits the cemetery where his family is buried. When he visits he passes by his childhood home and grandfather's place where he has many memories. To this day, people still talk about his grandfather's juke joint and their fun times in Macon.

Meshelle Bradford

Born and raised in the 1970s, Meshelle Bradford grew up in Griffin Heights, a neighborhood that despite its urban setting, embraced a country lifestyle. Bradford's childhood was filled with simple joys—running around the neighborhood, shooting squirrels out of trees, and chasing raccoons away from chicken coops.

Regardless of its proximity to the city, Griffin Heights' residents brought their farming backgrounds to their new homes. Bradford's neighbor, Louis Chamber, owned a fruit and vegetable truck, providing fresh produce to the community. Evenings were spent on front porches, with neighbors chatting and socializing across the street. The community's heart was their neighborhood church, New Covenant Holy Temple, just five doors down from Bradford's house. Living near Bennet's corner store, Bradford would sneak off to grab snacks, often on her way to Riley Elementary. The Hill, a local skateboarding spot, was where Bradford's brothers, cousins, and other neighborhood kids would gather.

Her parents instilled in her a sense of responsibility and hard work, keeping her busy with household chores and seasonal tasks. Her father, a carpenter from Georgia, taught her how to fix just about anything. As a daddy's girl, she spent a lot of time with him, learning skills that made her independent. Her mother, a maid from the Gullah-Geechee culture of South Carolina, brought many West African traditions into their home. Bradford inherited her mother's skills and traditions, making almost everything from scratch, from chicken perlo to blueberry doobie. Meshelle Bradford's memories of Leon County are filled with nostalgic visits to places like the Varsity Theater, the roller rinks, Sambo's restaurant, Piccadilly's buffet, the Tallahassee Mall, the Northwoods Mall, Quincy's Steakhouse, and Crystal's Burger Joint. Many of these places are gone now or have changed significantly, but they remain vivid in her memory.



Bennet's corner store

Kim Mills

Kim Mills' story begins in the heart of Tallahassee, in Crowder Quarters. Crowder Quarters had a unique charm as each house was identical. In those days, the neighbors all knew one another, forming a tight-knit community where kids freely rode bikes and played until dusk.

The area housed a diverse mix of residents, including teachers, state workers, housekeepers, waitresses, construction workers, and small business owners. Mills' mother worked as a nurse, and her father was a laborer at Greyhound and later at Borden Milk.

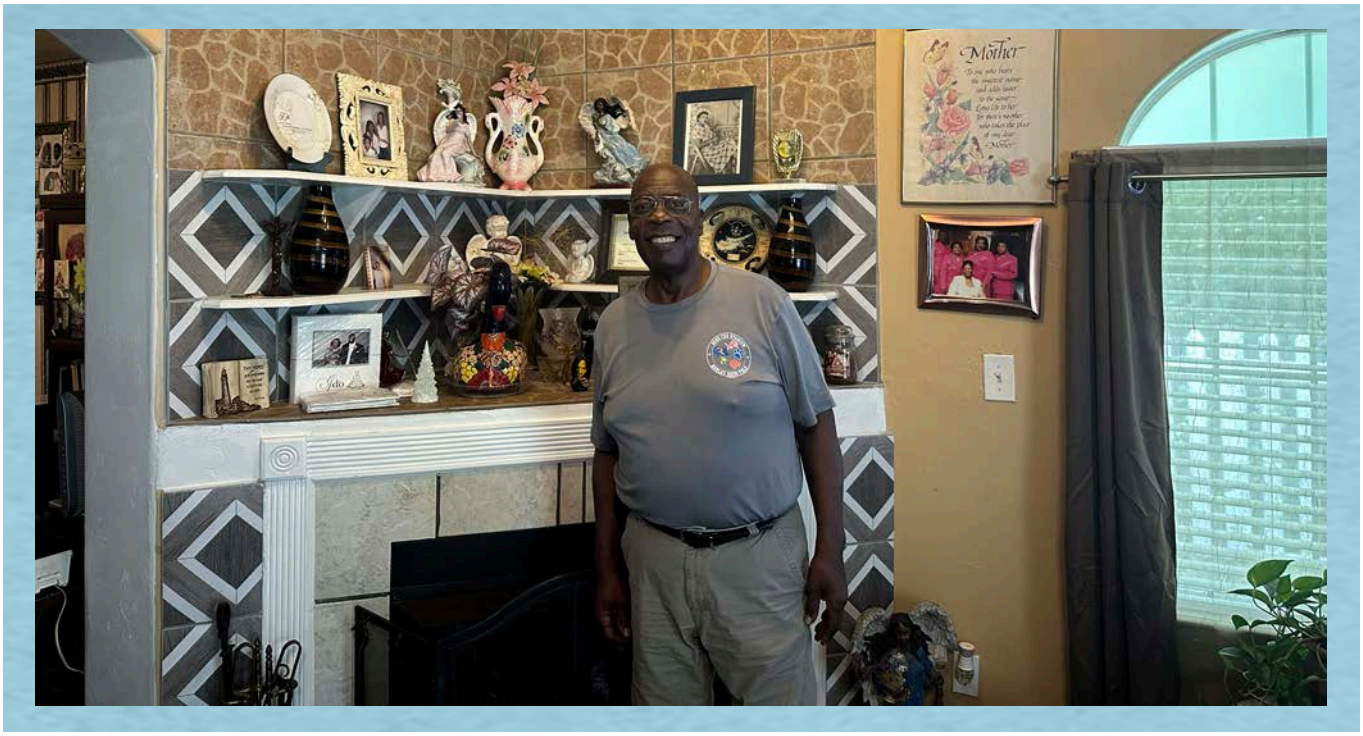
In sixth grade, Mills' family moved to Harlem Street, where her mother still lives today. One of the neighborhood's endearing features was a house-turned-store, which opened its doors in the afternoons for kids to buy homemade snacks after school. The community also boasted a larger grocery store called Bennet's and a popular juke-joint known as Hawk's, which her younger sisters often visited. Next door to Mills lived her grandmother, Henretta Sykes, pastor of New Covenant Holy Temple, a church founded on the principle of providing a place for women to lead. Though Sykes passed away, Mills continues to attend the church, honoring her legacy. She was famous for her cooking, especially her cornbread dressing and goulash. Kim Mills' story is a testament to the enduring power of family, tradition, and community. Her childhood memories are filled with simple joys, from bike rides and homemade snacks to cherished family outings and annual trips to the fair. Living next door to her grandmother instilled in her a deep sense of faith and a passion for cooking, which she now channels into creating beloved holiday dishes for her family. As she prepares her signature casseroles and shares her mother's recipes with her daughters, Kim ensures that love, community, and culinary tradition will continue to thrive in future generations.

George Clinton

George Clinton is an R&B artist and producer who moved to Tallahassee in 1994. Clinton is highly accomplished in the music industry and has led two successful funk bands. His bands ‘Funkadelic’ and ‘The Parliaments’, also known as P-Funk, are characterized by their unique sampling techniques and blend of doo-wop, soul, rock, and funk music. Clinton has worked with well-known artists such as T-Pain, Kendrick Lamar, and the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Since moving to Tallahassee, Clinton has opened his recording studio, ‘What Production Company’, to continue working with artists. His other achievements include being inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, being presented with a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, and earning a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Some of his greatest hits are “Atomic Dog”, “Give Up the Funk (Tear the Roof off the Sucker)”, and “Last Dance”. In 2017, he wrote his memoir, titled "Brothas Be Like, Yo Ain’t That George, Ain’t That Funkin’ Kinda Hard On You?", where he describes his career in the music industry. Clinton is considered a pioneer in funk music and talks about “dedicating himself to spreading the gospel of funk music.” After 30 years of calling Tallahassee his home, George Clinton was presented with the keys to the City by Mayor John Dailey on February 22, 2024. The ceremonial key recognizes his impact in the community and honors his legacy as a music legend.

Leonard Barnes



Born and raised in Tallahassee, Leonard Barnes has witnessed the Capital City's transformation over the years. Growing up on a sprawling farm along Tennessee Street, where a Dollar General now stands, he fondly recalls a time when the lush landscape flourished with diverse crops. One of Barnes' cherished memories is of the Leon County Fair held each October, his family would come together to slaughter hogs for cracklings and prepare for the winter. Despite being hard work, it did not feel like work then, and being raised on a large farm with family all around made most events a large gathering.

In his early childhood, Leonard was raised by his grandparents, who had fifteen children of their own. Today, their family has expanded to include

"A day of killing hogs and getting ready for the winter, but we loved it"

twenty-seven grandchildren and seventy-three great-grandchildren scattered across the country. Following a fire on the property, Leonard's grandfather, Benjamin Thurman, sold most of the property, prompting Leonard to move to Springfield. This neighborhood, now part of modern-day Frenchtown, spans from Brevard Street to Griffin Heights.

As a teenager, there were few places where Black teens could safely

gather and have fun outside of their neighborhood. One popular spot was The Snack Bar, a teen juke joint. Despite its small size, it was always packed, especially after football games. Another favorite hangout was the Leon Theatre, the only movie theater in town where Black people were allowed.

It was at Old Lincoln High School where he met his wife, Doretha, in the ninth grade; they were married by the end of their high school education. Lenoard was a part of the last class to graduate from the Original Lincoln High School, which closed in 1967. He explained how his class decided, despite integration, they wanted to finish their education at Lincoln High School. The students finished the remainder of their school year at Griffin Middle School to maintain Old Lincoln as their alma mater.

Leonard was offered a scholarship to play football in Texas upon graduation but declined as his wife wanted to stay in Tallahassee. Their sweetheart romance lasted fifty-six years until her passing, but he still visits her daily at her grave site. The early days of their relationship posed some difficulties as she lived across town in Smokey Hollows. They both attended Old Lincoln High, meaning she had to walk across town to get to school every day. Eventually, Leonard started giving her his lunch money so she could catch the bus. Later in their relationship, she admitted that at times she would use the money to buy a donut and just walk to school. Their relationship was filled with love and humor as Doretha was a well-known jokester.

Early in their relationship, Leonard would walk from Springfield, down Apalachee, to visit her. One time on his journey home a truck pulled up next to him, and he first noticed the cross in the back of the truck– and then the hoods on the passengers' heads. He took off running down the road as they chased him before he came upon a police car, which ignored his situation and allowed the assailants to continue chasing him. He eventually made it home safely, but challenges of that nature were not rare.

It was scary, but we had to get through it.

Leonard recalled the frequent conversations he would have with other Black teenagers as they hung out, none of them ever understanding why the hatred existed. Once when his cousins came to visit from New York, they decided to play basketball on the Florida State University (FSU) courts

and were promptly detained. Leonard explained that Black people couldn't even walk across FSU’s campus without being arrested or chased out. During football season, some of the teens would come together to watch FSU’s games at the top of Pensacola Street but they had to leave early to ensure that exiting fans did not spot them, for fear of violence.

Leonard began his career at FSU in 1969 and celebrated thirty-six years of dedicated service upon his retirement in 2005. Starting at Strozier Library as one of the few Black employees, he worked his way up to Clerk 3, forming many friendships along the way. His outstanding work led to a recommendation for a position at the nursing school, where he continued to excel. Recognizing his talent and dedication, the school appointed him as the Director of Student Advising, waiving the degree requirement for the role. Leonard was honored as the nursing school's first Exemplary Employee, and a plaque commemorating this achievement proudly hangs in his home today. A photo of Lenoard hangs on the third floor of the School of Nursing, honoring his contributions to the program and his legacy in the program's history.

Leonard loves Tallahassee, expressing the pride he feels from not only his accomplishments at the university but also of those who make up the integration statue, who are all Old Lincoln High School graduates. His story is a testament to the resilience, community spirit, and unwavering commitment to progress that characterize Tallahassee and its people. Through his life's journey, Leonard Barnes has left an indelible mark on the city he loves, inspiring future generations to build on the foundation he helped establish.

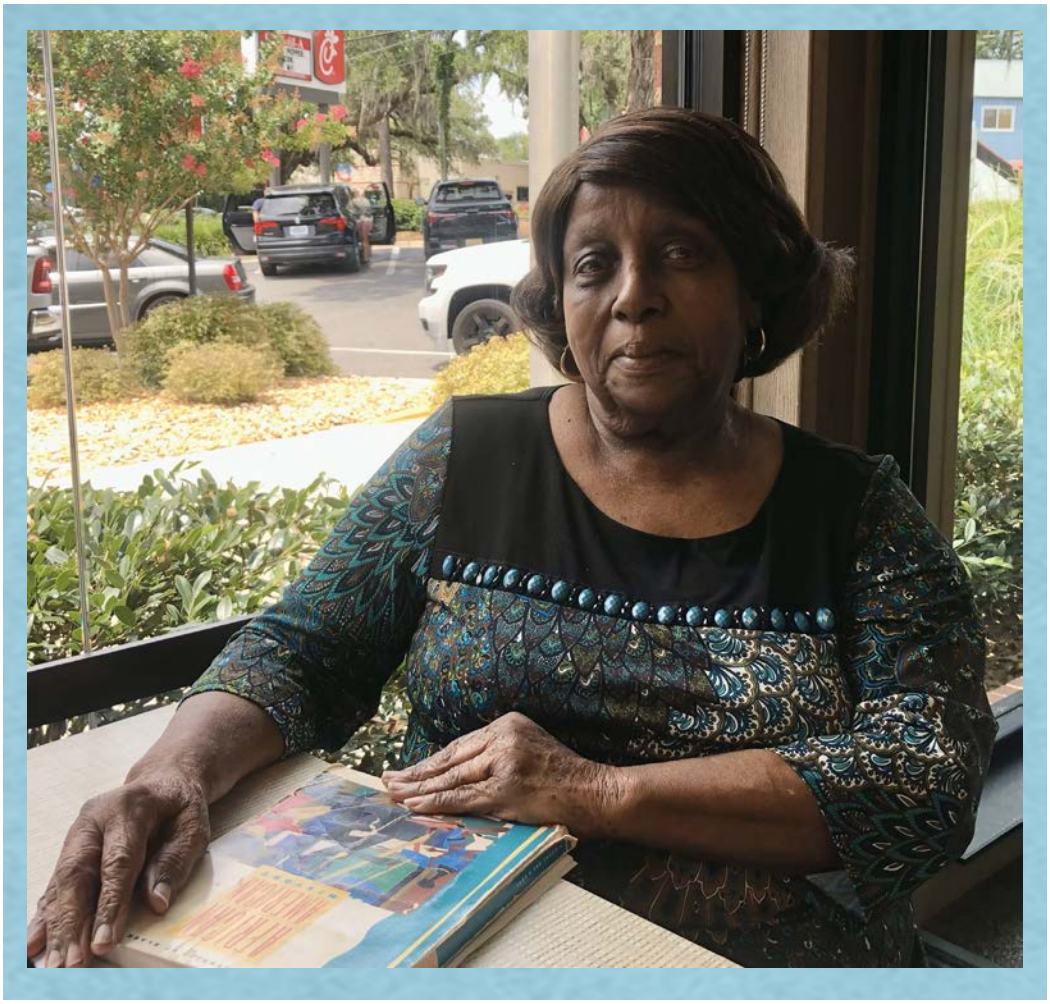
Lisa Montgomery

Lisa Montgomery was born and raised in Leon County on Mission Road. Growing up, her community was very close-knit. As she recalls, her neighborhood used to have dirt roads where she could often see horses, pigs, corn fields, and sugar cane around her. When thinking of her childhood, she remembers playing with the other kids and eating her mother's salmon croquettes.

After graduating from Godby High School, Montgomery joined the military. After the birth of her daughter, she transitioned to a government job before working at Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU). While working at FAMU, she pursued a master's degree in social work. Through her education in social work, Montgomery found that giving back and working with the community is very important to her.

According to Montgomery, Tallahassee's blend of new developments and the preservation of old traditions is something that needs to find a balance. So while she does say that Tallahassee has seen some changes over the years, it continues to be a place where someone can live and raise a family. Tallahassee is a place where family can come together and follow in traditions, like a weekly family meal.

Doris J. Smith



Doris J. Smith and her sister Deloris were born in the small town of Ocala, Florida on Valentine's Day 1943. Growing up in Ocala, they developed a fondness for teaching, which her teachers noted early on. Smith recalled a conversation between her Dad and her 5th-grade teacher, Mrs. Mencher, about Doris and Deloris: "…Leeroy, you have two teachers on hand." Smith moved to Tallahassee alongside her sister after graduating from high school to pursue degrees in education at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU). It was there that she met her future husband, a lifelong Tallahassean.

Following her graduation from FAMU, Smith started her career as a teacher in 1970 at Quincy Middle School, where she taught for two years. Afterward, she briefly taught high school in Thomasville before moving back to Leon County to teach at the Leon County High School. Working in newly desegregated schools in the heat of the Civil Rights movement, Smith found her white pupils to be more fascinated by her than hostile. Her priority as a teacher was always to look out for the well-being of her students, especially those students moving into previously segregated spaces.

As a teacher, Smith was active in extracurriculars. She helped organize various clubs, including the Charmrettes and Brothers 10, which allowed students to travel North America – ensuring that her students got to see more of the world than they might have otherwise. On those trips, her students got the opportunity to see places ranging from Atlanta to Washington D.C, and Canada.

After dedicating twenty-seven years to teaching, Smith received a call from her former mentor from her time at FAMU, Professor Eaton. He reached out to specifically request that she help him operate the newly formed Black Archives (now called the Meek-Eaton Archives), located in what was once the Union Bank. She heeded the call of her old professor and soon found herself working at the archive. She stayed for sixteen years, until her retirement at the age of seventy. She now spends her days in relaxation, proud of the career she led, though she still plans trips with her church.

Doris J. Smith's dedication to expanding her students' horizons, whether through travel or archiving Black history, characterizes her many years of service to the Leon County community. Shaped by the support of her community and her teachers, she demonstrates that care and compassion make all the difference in people's lives, no matter who they are.

Chaires School

Civil Rights Boycott in Tallahassee

Resources

This section contains additional resources for photographs, project deliverables, research informations, map credits, links to our website, and electronic materials

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The following is a list of all photos, captions, and sources found in the Map Book:

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References

Florida State University Department of Urban and Regional Planning Summer 2024 Studio

The Economic Database and Electronic Chamber of Commerce

The Economic Database and the Electronic Chamber of Commerce were created to provide and document information on Legacy Communities and contribute to economic development in the county. This information was collected through community outreach conduced via phone, community events and online research.

The Economic Database and E-Chamber of Commerce were designed for community members searching for local goods and services, visitors interested in learning more about Legacy Communities, county organizations, and entrepreneurs that want to expand their reach to these areas.

Map Credits

All maps are sourced using data from the U.S. Census Bureau and were created by the project's mapping team. Maps that depict legacy communities were created by conducting oral interviews, and asking interviewees to validate the geographic area of their community

Previous Interations of the North Star Legacy Communities Project

Jackson County - Florida State University Department of Urban and Regional Planning Summer 2020 Studio
Gadsden County - Florida State University Department of Urban and Regional Planning Summer 2020 Studio

Texas Freedom Colonies

The Texas Freedom Colonies Project is an educational, social justice initiative dedicated to preserving the heritage of Texas' historic African American settlements. Dr. Andrea Roberts and her team's inspiration were key pillars for the final website design. Please visit their website, linked below, to learn more about how Dr. Roberts and her team sought to preserve the heritage of Black settlements in Texas.

Appendix A

Participants

Profiles have been written based on interviews and research. While interviews have been condensed for the purpose of formatting requirements of the Map Book, profiles were written to highlight the story and significance of each community, site and person.

The following is a list of people who were interviewed whose profile you will find in the Map Book:

Alexis McMillan
Anjali Austin
Barrie Roberts Ashcroft
Carlton Sheffield
Deloris Harpool
Dorothy Inman-Johnson
Eva Killings
Geraldine Floyd
Gloria Jefferson Anderson
Jami Coleman
Leonard Barnes
Lisa Montgomery
Roderick Sheffield
Roy McCoy
Shakonda Peters
Weldon Richardson
Zacchary Clemons

The following is a list of people who were not interviewed but you will find their profile in the Map Book:

Althemese Barnes
Benjamin Crump
Brickler Family
Doby Flowers
Faheem Rashad Najm
Fred Flowers
George Clinton

The following is a list of informants who were interviews where used to supplement community and site profiles:

Akin Akinyemi
Aron Myers
Carmen Trammell
Chris Carlberg
Doris J Smith
Fajr Ibraheem
Gloria Seabrook
Jillian Driscoll
John Baker
Julianna Hare
Kim Mills
Marcus Curtis
Michelle Bradford
Myioshi Brinson
Tatryone Sims
Tyrone Scorsone

The following is a list of communities identified, researched and profiles written:

Allen Subdivision
Barrow Hill
Bond
Bradfordville
Capitola
Chaires
Edgewood
Frenchtown
Lake Hall
Lake Overstreet
Lincoln Valley
Macon
Miccosukee
New Hope
Smokey Hollow
Stearns-Mosley
Tall Timbers
Villa Mitchell Hill

The following is a list of communities identified but not enough current research collected to write a profile:

Bannerman
Belair
Blackwood-Harwood
Blocker
Crowder Quarters
Gibbs
Goodbread
Griffin Heights
Jake Gaither
Kershaw Subdivision
McBridge
Old Town
Pine Hill
Roberts
Springfield
Springhill
Sugarfoot
Zion Hill