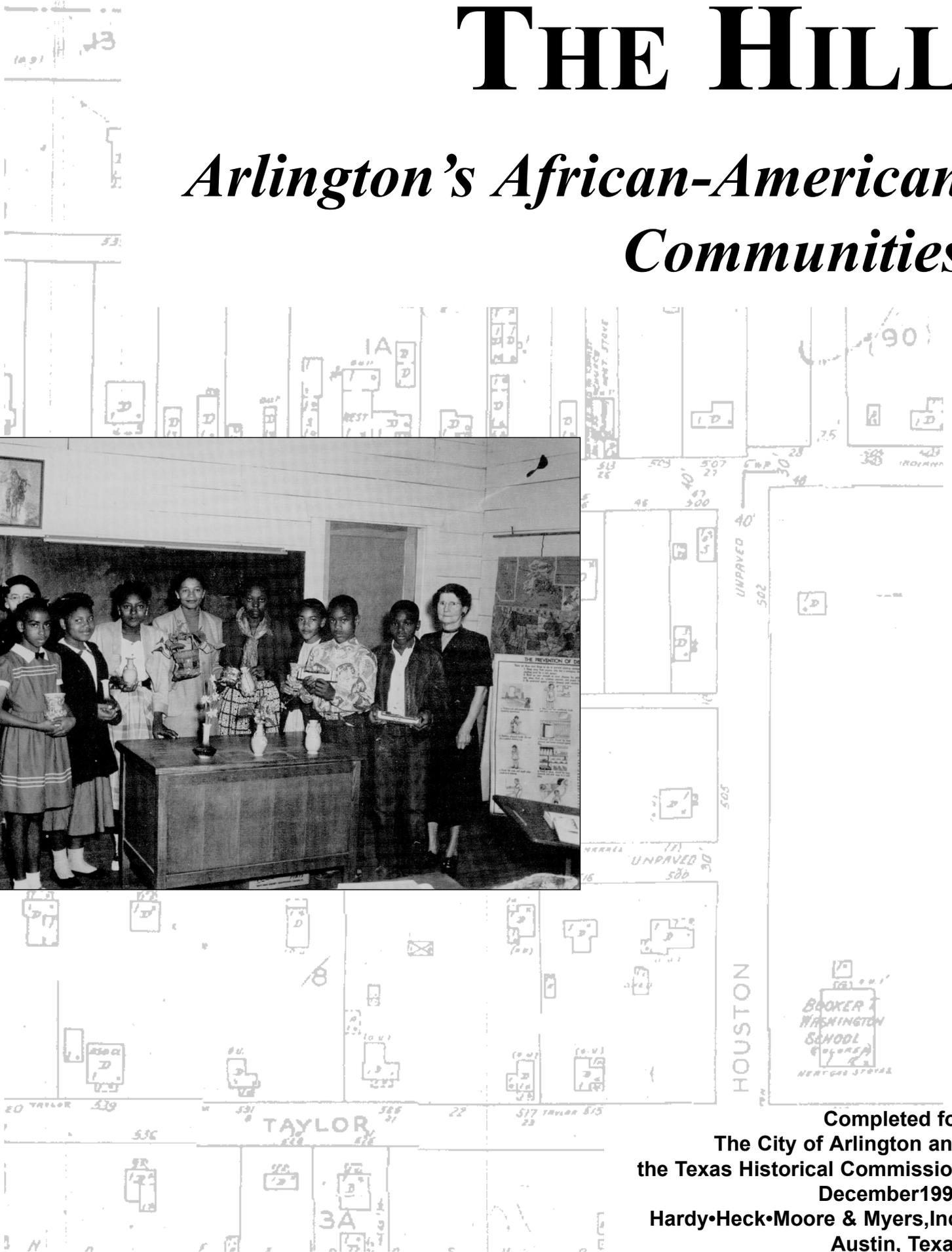


# THE HILL

## *Arlington's African-American Communities*



Completed for  
The City of Arlington and  
the Texas Historical Commission  
December 1999  
Hardy•Heck•Moore & Myers, Inc.  
Austin, Texas



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## *Arlington's African-American Communities*

A report on the growth and development of  
Arlington's Historic African-American Communities  
1845-1999

Completed for the City of Arlington  
and the Texas Historical Commission  
December 1999

Prepared by Terri Myers  
Hardy•Heck•Moore & Myers, Inc.  
Austin, Texas

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## INTRODUCTION

The approximately five-block area of Arlington known as The Hill, The Wilkerson Addition or The Negro Residential Area -- depending on the source and time period -- was the only historic addition platted specifically for the city's African American residents. While Arlington's black populace was scattered throughout the town in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, most lived in one of several ad hoc settlements north of the Texas & Pacific Railroad tracks. One well-remembered area, called Roger's Pasture, lay between East and Collins streets, roughly bounded by Division Street on the north and the railroad tracks to the south. Roger's Pasture and other small pockets of African American settlement dwindled as residential areas in the 1940s when they were redeveloped for commercial and industrial use, leaving The Hill as the city's sole "Negro" section.

The largest and arguably most significant of Arlington's historic African American communities, The Hill lay just beyond and northwest of the original townsite boundaries. The Hill has always been an exclusively African American enclave with mixed residential, commercial and institutional uses within the neighborhood. All of the city's historic black institutions, including three churches and a school, and the major businesses owned by and catering to blacks - - groceries, restaurants and nightclubs -- were built in The Hill. Some evidence suggests that initial African American settlement in the vicinity of The Hill developed independently from the city of Arlington. Although the Wilkerson Addition, which includes The Hill's main street, was not officially platted until 1907, it apparently reflected the presence of an existing African American settlement. The Reconstruction-era farming community possibly pre-dates nearby white neighborhoods in Arlington. Long after it was officially platted as a city addition, The Hill retained some of its semi-rural characteristics. Residents worked garden plots and raised chickens, cows and goats long after The Hill was incorporated into the city limits. In addition, the neighborhood was separated from Arlington's downtown and white residential neighborhoods by farm lots, pastures and vacant tracts of land.

The Hill remained somewhat isolated from downtown and white residential neighborhoods until the city's post-World War II growth finally encompassed the area. When Roger's Pasture and other pockets of African American settlement were redeveloped in the postwar era, black residents moved to The Hill

which became the city's sole black neighborhood from the late-1940s until the mid-1960s when Arlington's public schools were integrated. As late as 1964, members of the United Community Progress Association (UCPA), a neighborhood association, petitioned the mayor to open "a new Negro area" in Arlington (UCPA Minutes, December 1, 1964). By that time, however, many younger black families had moved out of The Hill to find housing elsewhere. School desegregation, which resulted in closing Booker T. Washington as a neighborhood school, also spurred outmigration from the community. In addition, urban renewal efforts and the acquisition of former residential lots for a pool and park reduced the neighborhood's historic housing stock in the mid-1960s, a trend that continues to the present.

The Hill retains its association as Arlington's only historic black neighborhood in the minds and memories of many of its citizens. However, few cultural resources dating to the historic period ending in 1950, survive to reflect that legacy. Among the most significant of the neighborhood's historic buildings are the present Church of God in Christ, built about 1939 (altered in later construction campaigns) at 513 N. Indiana, the Arthur and Minerva Manning House, built about 1910 at 500 Watson (Echols) Street, and Booker T. Washington School, built in 1953-1954 at the corner of Taylor and Houston streets. Although the school does not yet meet the recommended age listing, it soon be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Other sites within the neighborhood, though their buildings or other associated cultural resources are gone, may be appropriately recognized through state historical markers or displays. Possible resources for recognition may include the site of the original Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Arthur Manning Pool, George Stevens Park, the nightclubs of Indiana Street such as Lou's Blue Lounge, and the pioneer settlers of The Hill, themselves.

#### **GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF BLACK COMMUNITIES IN ARLINGTON:**

##### *From the Plantation to The Hill*

Many of the pioneer black settlers of Arlington and the surrounding countryside trace their families to the antebellum plantations near Johnson Station, in the vicinity of Arkansas and Matlock roads, south of present Arlington. Names of black families including Johnson, Ditto, Ish and Brinson that appear in early Arlington area census and deed records can be directly

linked to the plantations of M.T. Johnson, T.A. Ish, Jack Ditto and M. J. Brinson at Johnson Station. Descendants of these former slaves and early black settlers still live in the Arlington area today. They maintain an unbroken connection with Tarrant County's past that extends for a century and a half.

### *The Middleton Tate Johnson Plantation*

Possibly the most significant plantation to Arlington area African Americans was that of Middleton Tate Johnson. A Texas Ranger and advisor to Governor E. M. Pease, Johnson was one of Tarrant County's pioneers, and was instrumental in the early development of the area (Rencurrel, December 24, 1999). He established a farm on a section of unbroken land a few miles south of present Arlington as early as 1846. He is reported to have been a large slave owner in Tarrant County in the antebellum period. According to the 1850 slave schedule for the combined Tarrant and Ellis counties, Johnson was the largest slave holder in Tarrant County, with 21 men, women and children enumerated by age, sex and color. Seven of Johnson's slaves were shown as mulattos, while the others were listed as black. None were listed by name (U. S. Bureau of the Census 1850, Schedule 2).

Several slave narratives recorded in the 1930s describe life on the Johnson plantation during the last years of slavery and the period immediately following the Civil War. Although there were only 14 total slave owners with fewer than 100 slaves enumerated in the combined Ellis and Tarrant County slave schedules for 1850 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1850, Schedule 2), by emancipation in 1865 those numbers must have increased greatly. Unfortunately, the entire 1860 census for Tarrant County, including the slave schedule, has been lost and it is difficult to estimate the total number of slaves in the county at that time. Betty Borner, a child born on the M.T. Johnson Plantation about 1857, recalled that Johnson owned about 75 slaves, in addition to her own family of 12 (Borner, 1937: 1).

Slave narratives and numerous secondary sources indicate that other slave owners in the area included John or Jack Ditto, several Brinson families, T. A. Ish, Carter Cannon and William Buford (Borner, Hamilton and Hayes narratives, 1937). In many cases, freed slaves took the surnames of their former masters after emancipation and the Brinson, Ish, and Ditto names appear among black families in the 1880 and the 1900-1920 census records for the Arlington area and particularly in The Hill (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920).

### *Emancipation and Reconstruction in Tarrant County*

Among the earliest known records that identify emancipated black residents of the Johnson Station area by name are the 1867-1869 voter registration roles. These records reveal little information other than the name and color of the voters but it is significant that many of the surnames that later appear in Arlington census records are clustered together in the registration roles, indicating they lived in the same area. Among them were Jack Ditto, patriarch of a long line of residents of The Hill, Monday Brinson, Warner and Andrew Coleman, James Givens, Ned Purvis, Denis Campbell, and Robert, Daniel, Emanuel and Bailey Johnson (Tarrant County Voter Registration Role, Precinct 12, 1867-1869, on microfilm, Texas State Archives). Since it is known that Jack Ditto remained at Johnson Station for at least ten years after the war, it can be assumed that the others named with him were also residents of the Johnson Station area.

It was not unusual for former slaves to remain on the plantations for a few years after emancipation, working for wages or board. Some plantation owners apparently deeded land to their former bondsmen to get them started after the war. This reportedly is the origin of the black community at Mosier Valley, near Arlington, where the plantation owner deeded 50 acres of his property to each of his former slaves (Hamilton 1937: 5). According to several sources, M.T. Johnson granted his slaves the right to farm on his property with the land reverting to his estate upon his death (Bormer, 1937: 1). Since he died in 1866, this provision could not have been particularly helpful to the newly freed and struggling families.

Most black families in Tarrant County during this period had to fend for themselves; some worked their own land while most hired themselves out to established farmers. Still others left the farms to find employment in the new towns and cities springing up throughout the west in the postbellum period. Those who remained in the Johnson Station area may have lived in two-room log “dogtrot” type houses similar to slave cabins like those on the Johnson plantation before the war. Former slave Hannah Mullins recalled that her father took her to live in such a cabin after the war (Mullins 1937: 2). Fannie Ditto Wilson, whose family lived at Johnson Station after emancipation, recalled that all of her eight brothers and sisters slept in one room; the girls in one bed and the boys in another. The house had both a front and a back door and the family had a corn patch right behind the house (Wilson 1937: 1-3).

During this difficult beginning, former slaves in Tarrant County were also plagued with harassment by the Ku Klux Klan. At least five slave narratives associated with Tarrant County mention Klan activity in the Johnson Station area, and three offer accounts of an infamous incident in which Jack Ditto's family was terrorized by the KKK. Jack Ditto was a farmer who had also been a slave preacher on the Johnson plantation. He continued his ministry after emancipation, apparently as a circuit rider for small congregations in the area around Johnson Station. A registered voter and well-known African American minister, Ditto was probably perceived as a leader among his people and therefore a threat to white supremacy. Sometime in the early 1870s, a band of night-riders barged into Ditto's house, confronting his wife and terrifying his children. After a futile search for the preacher, they shot and killed his baby daughter in her mother's arms. (Hamilton, Wilson 1937: 1-3). After this incident, the family moved to Arlington, probably just after the railroad arrived and the town was founded in 1876. They were among the town's first black families. Jack and Martha Ditto, and their son Tom, remained in Arlington for the rest of their lives and some of their descendants still live in the area (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1880, 1900-1920).

There is little available information about the lives of black residents in this part of Tarrant County in the 1870s. Since Arlington wasn't founded until 1876, it is not represented in the 1870 census and many of the former Johnson Station slaves do not appear in the census returns for that year at all. However, their absence doesn't necessarily mean they were not living in the county. People all over the South were on the move after the Civil War and many, particularly blacks, were not accounted for in census records. Census records do document several black families known to have lived in the Johnson Station area who later moved to Arlington. Among them were three Brinson families who lived next to M.J. Brinson, a white farmer. According to the 1870 census, M. Ish, a 35-year old black woman, lived in L. Brinson's household with her three sons, identified by the initials F., J. and D. Another black woman, E. Childs, lived with her children in the same household. All of these are names of black families who later helped form Arlington's black communities. Most noteworthy, perhaps, was seven year old F. (probably Frank) Ish, one of the first documented residents of The Hill. Ish occupied a lot on Ish (Indiana) Street, in the Wilkerson Addition at the time it was platted in 1907 (E.F. Wilkerson Addition to the City of Arlington, 1907, Plat Records).

One of the county's most important black communities in the postbellum period, however, was known as Mosier Valley, a farming settlement near Arlington composed entirely of black residents. A desire to form their own community, to own property, and possibly to protect their families from the Ku Klux Klan, drew many blacks to Mosier Valley in the Reconstruction era. After a lifetime of slavery, the concept of forming an all-black town, free from the dictates and interference of whites, must have been very appealing to these Freedmen. The community was rural or semi-rural and most of the inhabitants worked small 50-acre farms reportedly deeded to them by their former master.

At the same time, others were drawn to new, booming towns like Fort Worth. In 1876, the Texas & Pacific Railroad Company extended its line from Dallas to Fort Worth, by-passing Johnson Station and creating the new town of Arlington. Its direct access to rail service gave Arlington a distinct advantage as a potential commercial and industrial hub for the region and many families -- both black and white -- abandoned Johnson Station for economic opportunities in the new town.

#### *Early Black Settlement in Arlington*

Only three black families were enumerated within the Arlington townsite in 1880. Among them was Hannah Mullins who was born on the Johnson plantation about 1856 and married William Mullins about 1872. They established a home of their own on the Johnson plantation in the 1870s but moved to Arlington by 1880 where they were counted as residents of the town in the census (Mullins, 1937; U.S. Bureau of the Census 1880, Tarrant County, E.D. 92). Eli and Louisa Coleman headed another household that included their children and stepchildren. Lotta Robards, a widow, and her ten year old son William comprised the town's third and final black family. Lotta Robards worked as a servant, while Eli Coleman listed his occupation as a farmer and William Mullins was shown as a farm hand (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1880, Tarrant County, E.D. 92). None of these names reappear in the 1900 census although the Coleman family name is found in later census records for the town.

While only three black families are listed in the Arlington townsite for the 1880 census returns, a number of others lived just outside the town boundaries but in the same census precinct. Some of these family names reappear 20 years later in the 1900 Arlington census, an indication of their continued presence in the area since 1880. They are among Arlington's earliest known black

residents whose descendants remain in the area today. They are also a link to Tarrant County's antebellum era as some, like Jack Ditto and his wife Martha and, most likely, the Ish, Brinson and Johnson families were slaves on local plantations. In addition, Frank and Dennis Ish, Thomas Johnson, Jane Taylor and her family, and households headed by Eli Griffin, Monday and Thomas Brinson, Mal Miller and a Mr. Farrow, all lived in the Arlington area in 1880. Nearly all, including preacher Jack Ditto, were listed as farmers or farm hands in the 1880 census returns (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1880, Tarrant County E.D. 92).

As Arlington's population grew from 1880 to 1900, so did its black community. Little is known about where and how black families lived in Arlington during this period, but a few clues reveal substantial gains since the city's founding. Although no federal census records exist for 1890, a draft history of Arlington and early Tarrant County states that of slightly less than 1,000 residents, 94 were identified as black. While the majority were occupied as day laborers or servants, there were two preachers and two teachers among the city's black residents (Rencurrel, n.d., n.p.). This indicates that churches and a school served Arlington's black community as early as 1890, although no independent records have been found to confirm the assumption and existing congregations date their organization no earlier than 1895.

The 1890s were extremely significant in the city's black history. Three churches were organized whose congregations remain active in Arlington today. The first was the Church of God in Christ (1895), also known as the Holiness Church or Emmanuel Church of God in Christ, followed by Mt. Olive Baptist Church (1897), denoted in early deed records as the "Colored Baptist Church of Arlington", and the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church (1898), now known as Armstrong Chapel AME. The AME church trustees were J.W. Wilson, S.T. Dorsey and A.R. Parker, all of whom probably lived in Arlington. A. Forbes served as pastor with E. Holmes as Presiding Elder of the Dallas District (Cornerstone, Armstrong Chapel AME Church).

A county school for Arlington's black children was also in place during the 1890s. The earliest known reference to the Arlington "Colored School" occurs in the 1886-1897 Tarrant County Superintendent's records. The school was described as a wood building of "bad character" with a seating capacity of 35 students and the buildings and grounds valued at \$125. Although 37 school-age children were eligible to attend the school, only 18 students were

actually enrolled. Minnie Fuller served as teacher for the 80-day school year (Annual Reports of County Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tarrant County, 1896-1901). The school became part of the Arlington Independent School District (AISD) when it was formed in 1902 and county records ceased to document its activities. AISD owns the lot north of the Church of God in Christ at 515 N. Indiana Street which is thought by some to be the site of the city's first "Colored School" (Rencurrel correspondence, December 24, 1999).

Three churches and a school indicate that Arlington had a sizable black population interested in their support by the 1890s. The exact locations of Arlington's original black churches are unknown but early Texas congregations typically met in members' homes or, in good weather, brush arbors, before buildings were constructed. It has been reported that the first Mt. Olive Baptist Church existed on Ish Street (now Indiana) by 1897 (Shay, Arlington News, Feb. 8, 1996: 1B). Based on their longstanding presence in The Hill, it is likely that the earliest churches lay in that region of town. Most certainly they were north of the railroad tracks that divided Arlington east to west, where the majority of blacks lived throughout Arlington's history.

#### *The Black Community at the Turn of the Century*

The 1900 census offers important information about how black families lived in Arlington at the turn of the century. Several distinct enclaves of black families appear grouped together in the townsite census records for that year. Two appear relatively close to one another north of the railroad tracks off Elm and East streets but it is impossible to determine exact locations from the enumerator's notes. One such node counted the following families among its residents: Tom and Lizzie Brinson, Will and Lizzie Rose, their children, and stepsons Ross and Clifford Pervis, Masey and Emiline McCoy, preacher Jack and Martha Ditto, their son Thomas S. Ditto, a young man of 18, and the Mal and Julia Miller family. All of these people lived near one another although the exact location is unknown. Significantly they all owned their own homes, free and clear. Approximately half of the adults could read and write and 11 adult men -- one of the women -- were shown as day laborers which makes their home ownership even more noteworthy (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1900: Tarrant County E.D. 110).

In a separate but nearby African American enclave, were households headed by Henry Childs, John and Fannie [Ditto] Wilson, Henry Keith, James Jacobs and Rachel Childs. Boarder Joe Givens lived in Rachel Childs' house-

hold. Except for John Wilson, who listed his occupation as a preacher, men in this area worked as day laborers and rented their homes (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1900, Tarrant County E.D. 110). Wilson was preacher Jack Ditto's son-in-law. Frank and Harriet Ish and Eleck and Eliza Johnson rented farms outside the town of Arlington (E.D. 111), although they appear to have been living just beyond the town boundaries. Nearly all of these families were known to have been slaves on area plantations and most later owned property in The Hill.

As noted earlier, many of the families who lived on Arlington's periphery in 1880 appear among the city's residents in the 1900 census. It is probable that Arlington simply grew outward to include those households that were not counted as part of the townsite in the earlier census. Again, it is difficult to know exactly where these families lived as no street addresses were provided in the census or ad valorem tax records for this period.

After the turn of the century, Arlington began to expand from a sleepy railroad station/cotton farm center beginnings. In 1902, an Interurban rail line was extended through town along Abrams Street, connecting Arlington with Dallas on the east, and Fort Worth on the west. Also in 1902, town citizens formed an independent school district, breaking away from the countywide system. At that time, both the North Side white school, on the present Kooker School site at N. Center and E. Sanford streets, and the black school were of frame construction. In 1903, the year after the district incorporated, the white school was damaged and the black school was destroyed in a storm (Stiles 1955: 8). The school trustees took bids to build new schools. Members decided to build a 20' x 30' frame school for black children, at a cost of only \$109, and a new brick school for the white students at a cost of nearly \$12,000 (Minutes of the Board of Trustees, September 14, 1903; September 21, 1903). The location of the new school for black children is unknown but it is thought to have been in the vicinity of the present Booker T. Washington School at Houston and Taylor streets, within The Hill.

## **THE PASTURE AND THE HILL: DISTINCT AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITIES**

### *The Wilkerson Addition, 1907*

In 1907, Arlington resident E. F. Wilkerson platted an addition to the city of Arlington that contained 24 lots fronting both sides of a single long street. Originally named Ish Street, renamed Indiana, it became the main street of the

black community that later included the 400-500 blocks of Watson (now Echols), Taylor, and the adjoining parts of Prairie, Houston, and Sanford streets. The addition lay to the northwest of Arlington and was physically separated from the main body of the town by tracts of vacant and pasture land. An interrupted street grid pattern, several dead-end streets and barriers created by the railroad tracks and the east-west running Division Street, afforded only limited access to the neighborhood from the main part of town. None of Arlington's streets connected directly to Indiana (Ish) Street, the community's "Main Street".

As stated earlier, Wilkerson's platting of the addition may have merely legitimized an existing community since deed records, church histories and oral tradition indicate that the African American churches and school in this area date to the late-19th century. The Ish and Keith families already occupied lots facing the street when it was platted and it is thought that other black families also lived in the immediate vicinity at that time. Deed records indicate that Wilkerson sold a lot adjacent to his addition to the "Colored Baptist Church of Arlington" (Mt. Olive Baptist Church), as early as 1905, several years before it was platted. In addition, members of the Johnson family lived to the east of the Ish's, to whom they were related, in an area now covered by the extension of West Street. Because of the existing black families living in the area and Wilkerson's acknowledgement of Ish and Keith's occupancy, it seems apparent that he intended the addition for black residents. It is the only known black residential addition platted in Arlington.

When first occupied, the area that later came to be known as The Hill could probably be characterized as rural or semi-rural. Local residents recall farms and pastureland surrounding The Hill, particularly on the north and east, until after World War II. The closest white families, such as the McKees at the northwest corner of Oak and North, and the Harris family at the northwest corner of Oak and Sanford, maintained large farm lots well into the 20th century (Rumans, October 7, 1999; Pointer, October 6, 1999). Within the neighborhood itself, residents cultivated vegetable gardens and raised chickens and even cows into the 1930s (Ditto October 8, 1999). Immediately north of the neighborhood, on the present site of Mt. Olive Baptist Church, lay a grove of pecan trees and a stock pond where baptisms were performed (Mills, September 17, 1999).

Many of the same black residents who appeared in earlier census records are represented in the 1910 census of Arlington. A number of black families were clustered together in the census records in what appears to have been The

Hill. They included families of Burt and Rosa Dorsey, Will Rose, Bill and Easter C---, Joe and Mary Jane Givens, Bob and Melissa Bidford, Frank and Harriet Ish, John Chimney, Tom and Pearl Ditto, John Wilson and eight others. Dorsey, Rose, Bidford, Ish, Chimney, Ditto and Wilson all owned their homes (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Tarrant County, 1910, E.D. 158). It is not certain where each of these families lived, although several are known to have lived on Ish (Indiana) Street from tax and deed records. Others in the area may have owned property, as well. E.F. Wilkerson sold a parcel of land adjacent to his original addition to R.D. Simpson, a teacher in the “Negro School” that same year (Deed Record Vol. 35: 12).

Occupations for men in this group included work as a cook in a private home, a janitor, a shoemaker and a fireman at the power house. Several worked as laborers on streets and bridges. Several women listed jobs as laundresses but most were shown to be keeping house. It was a neighborhood of couples and families, a handful of whom rented rooms to lodgers in their households . Ages for heads of households and their wives in this area tended to range from about thirty to forty-five, making them among the first generation born out of slavery. They were also the first consistently literate generation since emancipation (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Tarrant County, 1910, E.D. 158)

In 1911, the Wilkerson Addition was included in the Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. overview map, with Ish Street (Indiana) mistakenly shown as Ash Street. The addition appears as a separate enclave beyond the city's northern boundaries (Sanborn Map Company, 1911). It was probably included in the overview map for its development potential and in anticipation of Arlington's increased growth in that direction. Despite known development in The Hill during this period, it is not shown in detail as are other Arlington neighborhoods. In fact, the addition was omitted altogether from later Sanborn maps published in 1917 and 1927 and did not appear in detail until 1932. Its absence from the 1917 and 1927 maps indicates that the town had not grown out to encompass the area as apparently expected in 1911.

Despite its omission from the Sanborn maps, The Hill experienced significant growth in the 1910s. One of the hallmarks of the period was the construction of Mt. Olive Baptist Church about 1912 or shortly afterward. The imposing twin-towered frame church stood at the head of West Street, just beyond the northwestern boundary of the original townsite (Shay, Arlington News, Feb. 8, 1996: 1B). Many residents perceived that the church stood in the middle of

West Street. It appears that West Street simply terminated at North Street, the town's original northern boundary, and the church lay about half a block further in an open area that was not yet incorporated into the city street grid. According to his descendants, the church property was donated by Tobe Johnson. The church parcel lay just east of the platted lots of the Wilkerson Addition but may actually have been part of the Ish-Johnson property.

The building's impressive size and prominent location at the head of the street reflected a substantial black Baptist population most likely drawn from the surrounding area at that time. Mt. Olive had a commanding presence, capping the end of the street, which may be why the Ku Klux Klan staged a march up West Street with a demonstration in front of the church in 1929 (Jesse Ditto interview, October 1999). Mt. Olive Baptist Church stood on this site until 1966, when West Street was extended through to Sanford, connecting the growing northern suburbs with the older part of Arlington. The church was demolished to make way for the new road.

### *Roger's Pasture*

During the first decades of the 20th century when The Hill was being defined as a neighborhood, black families still lived in other places throughout Arlington. Roger's Pasture is probably the most notable black community outside The Hill. It is certainly the one most people clearly remember. Southeast of The Hill, but north of the T&P railroad tracks, the area was approximately bounded by East Street on the west, Collins on the east, Division Street on the north and the railroad tracks on the south. This was not a platted neighborhood like the Wilkerson Addition but apparently a collection or scattering of houses in a field fronting the railroad tracks in the vicinity of several cotton gins and cotton oil presses where residents may have found work (Mills November 1999; Sanborn Map Company, 1911, 1917, 1927).

The land may have belonged to Carrie Rogers, a widow and the city's first woman constable, who lived close to the area. In 1902, Mrs. Rogers built 13 houses and bought "a number of small houses to be used for rental property". She also bought and moved old buildings, including the North Side School damaged in the 1903 storm and the "old electric depot" to remodel for a rental unit (Joyner 1976: 147). It is believed that she brought a number of older houses from nearby Handley and moved them onto her property for rental to black fami-

lies who occupied the area until the 1940s. Many of Arlington's older black residents recall that their parents, grandparents and many others in the black community lived or were born in Roger's Pasture (Mills November 4, 1999).

As Arlington grew and developed in the 1940s, such small settlements along the railroad tracts and Division Street (Bankhead Highway) became more valuable for industrial and commercial uses. Gradually black families moved out of Roger's Pasture and the other "Negro Settlements", although pockets remained here and there into the 1940s (Mills November 4, 1999). Some of these displaced families moved to The Hill which had become the city's most established black residential community by 1910, expanding to include Watson and Taylor streets by 1920. Today, Roger's Pasture is a memory and The Hill contains the only surviving remnants of Arlington's historic black communities.

#### *Development of The Hill: 1920s and 1930s*

In 1920, the census returns identified two separate "Negro Settlements" for the Town of Arlington. Although streets within these so-called settlements are not distinguished, it is clear that one area lay near or adjacent to Carrie Rogers' home where she lived with her two grown daughters. From deed and plat records, later city directories and interviews, it appears certain that the other major concentration of black households identified in the 1920 census was in the Wilkerson Addition, now called The Hill (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1920, Tarrant County, E.D. 158).

Described only as a "Negro Settlement", rather than by street name as in the white sections of Arlington, The Hill contained 28 twenty-eight households with exactly 100 members. Although less than a quarter of the adults could read and write, and nearly all of the men were identified as laborers and the women laundresses, fully half (14) of the families owned their own homes. Among the homeowners were Joe and Lila Johnson, Henry and Ella Keith, Georgia Carter, Clima and Verda Burrus, John and Susan Ingram, Henry and Amy Childs, Emiline McCoy, and William and Lizzie Rose. Others were Walter and Sarah Drake, Eliza Livingston, Ben Campbell, Callie Simpson, John and Lizzie Chimney, Frank and Harriet Ish, and Joseph and Mary Jane Givens (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1920, Tarrant County E.D. 158).

People who rented their homes in 1920, but whose families have long-standing roots in The Hill included Clint Smith and his brother-in-law, Frank Ditto, Earl Hudson, Walter Drake, Jerry Harris and Bud Johnson along with their

families. Renters William and Maud Logan are of interest because Maud was listed as a teacher in the public school, the only professional occupation in the neighborhood (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1920, Tarrant County E.D. 158).

Both the Keith and Ish names were identified on opposite sides of Ish (Indiana) Street on the original plat of the Wilkerson Addition. From the manner in which names were listed by the enumerator, Mrs. C. M. Cook, it appears that she documented all of the residents of Ish Street and the area behind the street to the east where the Johnsons lived next to Mt. Olive Baptist Church. It is not clear what other streets were documented in The Hill but it does appear that Mrs. Cook made an effort to record every household as accurately as possible. She took care to record names, family relationships and work situations in greater detail than previous enumerators in the black communities (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1920, Tarrant County, E.D. 158).

Few contemporaneous records or photographs have been found that depict the dominant domestic building forms that composed the neighborhood at that time. Surveys conducted by students at the University of Texas at Arlington in 1979, and by Hardy•Heck•Moore, Inc. in 1987, indicate that a number of two and three-room shotgun houses typical of early 20th century black communities and a few bungalows characteristic of the 1920s, existed in the neighborhood along with a greater number of small, vernacular frame dwellings. All of the shotgun houses have been demolished in the past decade.

Interviewees who remember the area from the 1920s recall it as a neighborhood largely comprised "shotgun houses and little bungalow type houses" (Ditto, Oct. 8, 1999). The "shotgun" term seems to have been used to describe any small two or three room house that were not identified as bungalows or some other notable type. Certainly by 1927, shotgun houses dominated the residential scene on Indiana while less distinctive two-room houses, bungalows and vernacular houses were more prevalent on Watson (now Echols) and Taylor.

One of the only remaining houses associated with black families from the early development of The Hill is the Arthur and Minerva Manning House at 500 Echols (Watson) Street. Its date of construction is unknown but the frame, vernacular L-plan dwelling type would have been common throughout the North Central Texas countryside from the turn of the century to about 1920. It is a rare, surviving example of the type today, especially in an urban setting. Manning and his wife are known to have owned the house as early as 1927 but it was

probably built earlier. The couple lived in the house until as least 1967. Mrs. Manning, by then a widow, sold the property in 1980 (Deed Records, Tarrant County, various dates).

From later Sanborn Maps (1932-1949), there appear to have been other small L-plan or side-gabled frame houses with half- or full-facade front porches dating from about the turn of the century to the mid-1920s scattered throughout the neighborhood by the 1920s. By all accounts, there were no elaborate or high-style houses in the modest neighborhood. Most had only two- or three-rooms and none had running water or indoor plumbing in the 1920s (Ditto October 8, 1999; Johnson October 7, 1999).

In addition to the houses, all of the city's black institutions were located in The Hill by the 1920s. They included the "Colored" school, the Church of God in Christ (Holiness Church), Armstrong Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and Mt. Olive Baptist Church. The most imposing building in the neighborhood was the twin-towered frame Mt. Olive Baptist Church building. Built about 1912, it dominated both the physical landscape and the spiritual life of the community. Although the AME and Holiness (Church of God in Christ) churches had active memberships in the 1920s, most residents of The Hill recall that the Baptist Church had many more parishioners and hosted a number of community and social activities such as the black Masonic Lodge (Ditto and Johnson, October 1999). No historic photographs have been located for the other churches but Sanborn maps indicate that were small rectangular frame buildings. The Holiness Church is the only one that occupies its 1920s site but the frame building was replaced with a later brick and concrete block edifice about 1939 and it has been enlarged since then (Pointer October 6, 1999; Sanborn Fire Insurance Co., various dates).

By the mid-1920s, several small businesses including Allen Pointer's cafe and domino parlor near the southeast corner of Prairie and West streets, at the rear of G.R. "Red" Wright's garage on Division Street, sprang up in the neighborhood (Pointer, October 6, 1999). A few neighborhood stores selling items like sugar, bread, pickles, and soft drinks came and went over the years but the most enduring commercial operations in The Hill were the "honky-tonks", the most memorable of which were Ben Gilmore's Dragnet Club and, later, Lou's Blue Lounge, both on Indiana Street.

While there are no census returns or city directories that identify inhabitants of The Hill from 1930-1950, the Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. maps published during that period help illustrate the community's built environment. By

1932, the city of Arlington had grown out to meet the neighborhood, which in turn had become more densely populated. As a result, the map company issued a special 1932 addition to its 1927 map that include the Wilkerson Addition. It was the first time the neighborhood was detailed on maps of the city.

Unfortunately the earliest Sanborn map of the area was revised by pasting over the original 1932 map so the earliest depiction of the area reflects its 1949 appearance. The 1932 index is intact, however, and identifies all three historic churches, but not the school. Some older residents of The Hill recall that school was held in one of the churches, possibly the Holiness Church, for awhile which might explain its absence from the 1932 map.

The Hill was fairly well developed by 1932 when the map was originally published. The 1949 revised map may offer a fair reflection of the neighborhood for the period spanning the late-1920s to 1950 due to economic and political constraints on domestic construction during the Great Depression and World War II. Architectural landmarks in the neighborhood during the period included Mt. Olive Baptist Church and the frame Booker T. Washington School at Taylor and Houston streets. [The school that immediately preceded the 1953 Booker T. Washington School occupied the same site. It was probably built after 1932 and was not called Booker T. Washington by the school board until 1941]. Indiana Street remained the neighborhood's main commercial and institutional focus, with the Church of God in Christ anchoring the southern end of the street and two restaurant/nightclubs, including Ben Gilmore's Dragnet Club at 521 Indiana Street, in the middle of the block. A small neighborhood store shared the lot with Gilmore's club and another occupied the northwest corner of Indiana and Houston streets, on what later became the site of Lou's Blue Lounge. The rest of the street was crowded with residences

Standard front-gabled "shotgun" houses, consisting of two or three rooms and a porch were the most common identifiable types of dwellings. There were a few bungalows in the neighborhood, primarily in the newer developed sections on the north side of Prairie and the south side of Sanford streets. Most houses in the area, however, appear to have been small, frame vernacular dwellings. Indiana Street was the most densely developed in the neighborhood. Watson (Echols) and Taylor streets contained larger lots although multiple houses typically occupied a single lot. One large lot at the southeast corner of Watson and Sanford streets contained six or seven tiny one- or two-room houses. Three small dwellings associated with the Tobe Johnson family clustered around Mt.

Olive Baptist Church, which was separated from Indiana Street by what has been described as an alley where N. West has been extended. Small outbuildings were scattered throughout the neighborhood (Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. maps, 1932 revised to 1949).

None of the streets, with the possible exception of Indiana Street, were paved as late as 1949. No designated parks or other public recreation facilities served The Hill which remained physically set off from the main part of town by vacant land to the east and pasture to the north. There was no direct access to either Indiana or Watson streets and N. West terminated at North Street, the original town boundary. Taylor was the only neighborhood street in The Hill that connected through to Division Street, the main east-west arterial through the northern part of town, but it terminated before reaching the railroad tracks, effectively cutting off any direct access to the city (Sanborn Fire Insurance Co., map, 1932 revised to 1949).

#### *Postwar Changes in The Hill*

According to several local residents, the dearth of job opportunities for black men and the lack of housing for black families in Arlington led to an exodus from the neighborhood after World War II. Those who remained in the neighborhood tended to commute to jobs elsewhere. By 1950, the Chance Vought (later Ling-Temco-Vought or LTV) manufacturing plant in Grand Prairie employed a number of black men who lived in The Hill. Some car-pooled while others took the Texas Motor Coach which picked them up at the corner of Center and Division streets, within walking distance of The Hill, and dropped them off only two blocks from the manufacturing plant. When General Motors opened its local factory in 1953, a number of Arlington's black residents were hired to work at the plant. According to one former resident of The Hill, some farmland near GM was subdivided into housing tracts that allowed blacks to buy houses. Younger residents of The Hill, in particular, seized opportunities to move to modern houses in new, desirable neighborhoods. Newly returned veterans were able to use their GI loan benefits to purchase their own homes in these new subdivisions. At the same time, automobiles allowed greater flexibility for commuting to distant work sites. General Motors offered generous purchase plans for its employees that allowed them to buy their own cars, enabling them to commute to work. These changes, combined with Arlington's historic intolerance and segregation policies, led many of its younger black families to move out of the restrictive environs of The Hill in the postwar period.

Originally, all or nearly all jobs for blacks at Temco and General Motors were janitorial in nature but greater opportunities gradually opened for both black men and women throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In several interviews, residents or former residents of The Hill noted that they had worked for Vought (LTV) or GM for 20 or 30 years, retiring as inspectors, crew bosses, secretaries, etc (Eulyssee Pointer, October 6, 1999).

In the mid-1950s, Booker T. Washington School (built in 1953 and opened in 1954), anchored the southwest corner of the neighborhood. Mt. Olive Baptist Church still occupied the far southeastern corner at the edge of the black neighborhood. To the east, Oak Street had only recently been platted for postwar development, filling in what had been a kind of buffer zone of mostly vacant land that separated The Hill from a white residential neighborhood further east. Oak Street's original residents were white and remained so throughout the 1950s and 1960s (City directories, 1950-1967). Oak Street's rear lots abutted a lightly populated, unplatted black residential area to the north of Mt. Olive Baptist Church, generally aligned along the alley that was later extended as N. West Street. It was the first time the buffer zone between The Hill and the white neighborhood to the east had been bridged.

Indiana remained the principal neighborhood street in The Hill, with the Church of God in Christ at the southeastern end and the two clubs at mid-street during the postwar era. Single-family residences -- at least 13 shotgun houses 12 other dwellings -- filled in the remaining narrow lots. Watson and Taylor streets were less densely populated than Indiana, with fewer shotgun houses and some new construction undertaken in the 1950s and 1960s. Five or six substandard, dilapidated dwellings shared a lot at the southeast corner of Watson and Sanford streets until they were razed in 1963 for a community swimming pool. Watson, Taylor, Houston and Sanford streets remained unpaved until the mid-1960s (Sanborn Fire Insurance Co., map, 1932 revised to 1965).

A few photographs of The Hill from the 1950s depict a neighborhood of modest frame bungalows and shotgun houses, some with picket fences, grass and large trees (Arlington Historical Society, September 15, 1999; Felicia Johnson personal collection. On Taylor and Watson streets, houses were set on fairly large lots with room for yards and gardens, but narrow lots on Indiana Street had little room for many amenities. Since the neighborhood was developed over a long period of time with no standard plan, houses are irregularly set-back from the streets. Although Indiana was not identified as an unpaved road in Sanborn maps -- as were the other streets in The Hill -- it appeared to be a dirt street,

without curbs or gutters, in photos from that time. Former resident Eulyssee Pointer recalled that the neighborhood had only dirt streets where “water ran down roads like a creek” (Pointer October 6, 1999).

While many of The Hill’s original residents owned their own homes in the 1910s and 1920s, interviewees frequently described the area as largely rental property. Several stated that white absentee landlords rented most of the houses to the neighborhood’s black residents. Economic reversals during the Great Depression and war-era transience during World War II may have resulted in some shift in ownership in the 1930s and 1940s. However, city directories and deed records show that home ownership, particularly among older residents and descendants of early families, was relatively high in the 1950s and increased in the 1960s. Several black families in The Hill owned their homes for much of the 20th century; the Mannings owned their house from at least 1927 until 1980 and Ruffin Pointer has owned his home since 1933. Some blacks owned their own rental properties in the neighborhood, as well (City directories, various dates; Tarrant County deed records, various).

By 1960 city directories indicate a high instance of home ownership in The Hill. Indiana Street had a larger rental rate than the other streets but long time home owners included Willie Walker, Joe Givens, Ben Gilmore, James Psalms, Henry Nelson, and Mrs. Ruth Reeves. On Taylor Street, seven of nine homes were owner-occupied: Hettie Farmer, Tom Ditto, Claude Waters, Lillie Winchester, Austin Johnson, Willie Taylor and Ross Purvis all owned their own homes. Watson Street had the highest number of homeowners in 1960, with Arthur Manning, Gussie Gilmore, Grady Echols, Jesse Sheppard, John Smith, Lonnie Green, Marvin Taylor, and Sarah Drake listed as homeowners. A number of black families living on the east-west streets in The Hill, such as Houston, Prairie and Sanford also owned their own homes in the early 1960s. Although N. West was not an officially designated street through The Hill, several people including Mrs. Luvenia Johnson, owned property along the alley, possibly including the lot occupied by Mt. Olive Baptist Church (Arlington City Directory, 1960). The Johnsons were among the oldest residents of The Hill, probably dating to its initial settlement.

### *Decline as a Residential Neighborhood*

Several factors contributed to the decline of The Hill in the 1960s. Ironically, such progressive programs as school and housing desegregation, street improvements, the removal of sub-standard housing and the creation and

expansion of park facilities contributed to an outflow of residents from the community. With school integration in the mid-1960s, Booker T. Washington School was closed and converted to a special learning center. Thus, while gaining a Civil Rights victory, the community lost its neighborhood school, a unifying institution in the neighborhood since the 1890s. It also lost residents. With Booker T. Washington closed and the removal of housing barriers, Arlington's black residents were no longer restricted to living in The Hill and families with young children were drawn to newer subdivisions with neighborhood schools.

In 1963, the city was forced to locate new park facilities for the community when Dallas property owners terminated the city's lease of their pastureland on the north side of Sanford Street for use as a "Colored Park". Unable or unwilling to buy the vacant land from the owners, the city looked within the heart of the black neighborhood for a suitable park site. Across the street from the pasture, at the southeast corner of Watson and Sanford streets, lay six or seven small houses in poor repair. The city bought the property and demolished the houses, displacing at least 12 tenants, to build a swimming pool for the "Negro Community". It was named Arthur Manning Pool, for the city's first black employee and a longtime resident of The Hill. "Slum clearance" for the creation of neighborhood recreation facilities, while perhaps well-meaning, further reduced the neighborhood's housing stock and subsequent land acquisitions for the park's expansion claimed still more dwellings, further eroding the community's residential fabric.

Other changes in the neighborhood's built environment affected the community in the 1960s. Street improvements in 1965 turned N. West Street into a thoroughfare connecting Sanford Street, the northern boundary of the neighborhood, with Division Street, on its southern border. Long overdue infrastructure improvements such as sewer and water improvements and the installation of permanent paving, curbing and guttering in 1964, came too late to bolster The Hill's viability as a desirable family neighborhood (Star-Telegram Mid-Cities Bureau, November 17, 1964: 1). At the same time, greater job opportunities and the creation of new housing developments that were open to black families and free of the stigma of segregation, continued to draw young families away from The Hill. Perhaps the most resounding blow to the neighborhood's historic character, however, was the demolition of Mt. Olive Baptist Church, a dominant fixture in the community since 1912, for the extension of N. West Street (Star-Telegram Mid-

Cities Bureau, November 17, 1964: 1). Several historic houses, probably associated with the Johnson and Ish families since the late 19th century, were also lost to the street expansion project.

### **SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS IN THE HISTORIC PERIOD**

Through the 1960s, Arlington was typical of many small southern towns in its segregation policies, whether de facto or de jure. Black residents lived in a separate part of town from whites and schools were strictly segregated. No attempts were made to provide equal facilities for blacks under the segregated school system. Local school board minutes and county school superintendent records reveal blatant funding inequities for black teachers, school buildings and recreational facilities. Salaries for black teachers were consistently lower -- approximately one-half to three-fifths -- than white teachers for the years 1923-1942. Little money was provided for books and materials during that period. One resident of The Hill recalled that black students received used books when white schools got new ones. School board minutes from the 1920s through the early 1940s show no expenditures for playground equipment, special classes for music or athletics, coaches, or any extra-curricular activities for the black school. During the same period, though, such expenses were regularly approved for white schools.

Greater inequities in Arlington's separate schools are evident in the lack of higher education classes. No provisions were made for black student to continue their education beyond grade school until 1932, when the board decided that those who wanted to attend high school could commute to I. M. Terrell, in Fort Worth. Students rode the Interurban to Ft. Worth until 1935 when it was replaced by a private bus system, the Texas Motor Coach. Initially, students had to pay their own transportation to I.M. Terrell, in addition a charge of 10 cents per day for the privilege of attending the Ft. Worth school. In fact, the Arlington Independent School District never offered secondary education for its black students until desegregation laws mandated that they be allowed to attend local high schools. As a result, few of Arlington's black students continued their education beyond the 8th grade until the late 1960s. Arlington's schools and neighborhoods remained segregated until AISD was forced to integrate its schools in 1965. In addition to separate schools, black parents also had a separate PTA and Neighborhood Betterment League, later known as the United Community Progress Association.

Hospitals and churches were among other local institutions that followed segregation practices during this period but the consequences in health care were much greater than for worship. Because Arlington lacked hospital facilities for blacks, segregation was sometimes a life-and-death issue for local families. Blacks were forced to go to Ft. Worth to the hospital until provisions were made for them in Arlington, about 1958. Separate white and black churches tended to be self-selected and thus had fewer deleterious consequences to the community's social fabric. No known historic integrated churches existed in Arlington. Three historic African American churches in The Hill date their congregations to the 1890s. They have always had a black membership although there is no known mandate against white attendance.

Public or community facilities in Arlington were segregated, as well. In 1955, the city began leasing a pasture on the north side of Sanford Street, adjacent to the Wilkerson Addition, for use as a "Colored Park", as it was shown on a contemporary map. About 1957, it was named to honor George Stevens, the principal of Booker T. Washington School who had served the school since 1941. The city never owned the property, however, and in 1963, its owners terminated the city's lease to build apartments on the site. The city tried to buy the land but determined that it was too expensive and instead purchased land in The Hill for redevelopment as a park. At least six small houses at the southeast corner of Watson and Sanford streets were demolished to build a swimming pool for black children. It was called Arthur Manning Pool after the city's first black employee, a sanitation worker who owned a house in the neighborhood with his wife Minerva since the 1920s. The city acquired other lots around the pool and announced its intention to create more permanent park facilities for Arlington's black community. It is noteworthy that city remained committed to its policy of maintaining a segregated park system as late as 1963 and 1964, in the context of the Civil Rights movement.

Segregation also factored in social activities, as well. Interviewees recall that some retail and grocery stores admitted black shoppers but no restaurants allowed blacks to dine in the same area with white patrons. In some instances, black patrons could order get food to take out at downtown cafes by going to the kitchen door. There were no theaters that allowed blacks in Arlington and they had to go to Ft. Worth or Grand Prairie to see the latest movies.

Housing opportunities for blacks in Arlington were also limited. In 1964, the United Community Progress Association (UCPA), the black neighborhood association, petitioned the mayor to open "a new Negro area" in Arlington.

Mayor Vandergriff said the proposal would be considered if there were sufficient buyers to warrant building the houses (UCPA minutes, December 1, 1964). As late as 1967, the community streets, park and pool were not shown in official city maps. In fact, it is noteworthy that there is so little acknowledgement of Arlington's black population in official documents throughout the city's history.

Throughout most of its history, the Hill was socially, as well as physically segregated from the rest of Arlington. Older residents recall instances of support and goodwill between individuals among both races, but the primary connection between the communities was the blacks' previous condition of bondage and continued service to the white community until the 1950s. Most of the earliest residents of The Hill were farmers, farm laborers and/or day laborers. Some lived in tenant houses on nearby cotton farms such as the Rudd and Christopher farms part of the year, even after they came to Arlington. Both women and men worked in the fields and children as young as six and eight picked cotton. Farmers typically came to the edge of The Hill with a wagon, parked in an open space and let workers come to them. Some who had their own wagons (later, trucks) were haulers. Others owned slips or fresnos and hired themselves out as diggers.

Historically, most of Arlington's black residents defined their relationships with whites were as hired workers, often day laborers, laundresses, cooks and maids. Few black men who did not own their own land held steady jobs and even those who owned homes in The Hill worked as laborers through the 1930s. Some found regular janitorial work for white businesses in town. However, even those jobs were limited. White schools in the 1920s hired white janitors who earned the same salary as black teachers, about \$60 per month. The janitor for the black school earned only \$6 per month. In the 1920s and 1930s, when the Arlington Downs Race Track and Top of the Hill Terrace were operating, some blacks obtained steady jobs as waiters, laundresses, cooks, housekeepers and groundskeepers, but these were relatively short-lived endeavors. Some blacks worked at the Masonic homes but not, apparently, in significant numbers.

Entrepreneurial opportunities for blacks were scarce and limited to boundaries of The Hill. One man, Allen Pointer, opened a little shop as a cafe/domino parlor in the 1920s and Tom Ditto and the Gilmores opened "honky-tonks" such as the Dagnet Club, on Indiana Street. Lou Henry Taylor opened a small grocery store on Taylor Street in 1946 and eventually moved her enterprise to the corner of Indiana and Houston streets about 1957. There she

developed a side-by-side grocery and lounge known as Lou's Blue Lounge or the Blue Magic Club. Some women in the area also provided hair styling services, generally from their homes.

Black professionals, with a few notable exceptions like long-time teacher Gloria Echols, were rare in Arlington. Perhaps because it had a larger black community and more black facilities and institutions, professionals were drawn to Fort Worth and rarely chose to live in Arlington. Some early preachers like Jack Ditto lived in Arlington but most ministers, school principals and teachers lived in Fort Worth and traveled to Arlington throughout the historic period. In 1951, Arlington had no black doctors, lawyers, or journalists. Gloria Echols, a teacher at Booker T. Washington School, was The Hill's only known black professional at that time.

Black women in Arlington tended to have greater long-term job opportunities as domestic workers -- including positions as maids, cooks, and caretakers -- for white families, while keeping their own house and raising their own children. Black women derived a degree status from their employers and took pride in working for particularly prominent doctors or lawyers for many years. Benefits of such long term relationships usually included gifts of clothing and housewares from their employers. Black women in high demand could also be choosy about their employers. Some close bonds apparently formed between white families and their maids and cooks, but such relationships were rarer between black men and their employers.

## **CULTURAL RESOURCES IN THE HILL**

Since the mid-1960s, The Hill has experienced ongoing redevelopment at the expense of its historic building fabric. In a 1987 cultural resources survey, the neighborhood was described as "having a unique collection of vernacular buildings on Taylor, Watson and Indiana streets between W. Sanford and Houston streets [that] forms what is left of Arlington's one distinctive ethnic enclave . . ." (Hardy•Heck•Moore, Inc. (HHM), 1987: 15). The neighborhood had already lost significant building stock by that time, but since the HHM survey was completed, five of the seven documented historic resources have been demolished, including two significant buildings considered individually eligible for National Register listing. One of the street's significant nightclubs at 521 Indiana has also been lost since the last survey was conducted. The only surviv-

ing historic buildings documented in the 1987 survey -- a bungalow at 512 Indiana and the Church of God in Christ -- were given low priority status because of integrity loss due to alterations but these may be reconsidered.

By the time the 1987 survey took place, Watson Street (now Echols) had already lost a number of small, older dwellings to urban renewal in the mid-1960s. It retains two of the three historic houses documented in that survey, the most noteworthy of which is the ca. 1910 Arthur and Minerva Manning House at 500 Watson Street. The other surviving historic house is a bungalow at 512 Watson. Watson Street also received some infill construction in the early post-war period and has a number of 1950s tract- type Ranch and Minimal Traditional style houses. Taylor Street retains much more of its early- to mid- 20th century building fabric than Indiana or Watson streets. All of the four historic 1920s and 1930s bungalows that were recorded in the 1987 survey are still standing although they have experienced alterations since their construction. All were low priority sites according to the 1987 survey: they date to the historic period but were considered noncontributing properties due to alterations. Some of these properties may be reconsidered.

Interestingly, while The Hill has declined as a residential neighborhood, its institutions remain vibrant. Mt. Olive Baptist Church, in particular, draws congregants from throughout Tarrant County and beyond. All three of Arlington's historic black congregations are more than a century old but Mt. Olive grew to be the largest, numbering approximately 10,000 members in 1999. More research needs to be done on the early churches and schools to determine their exact locations and whether they followed the black population to this area or if they were built to serve an existing community.

Three newer church buildings have been established on N. West Street since the road was extended through from North to Sanford and paved in the mid-1960s. Mt. Olive Baptist Church was forced to vacate its original site which was in the path of the new thoroughfare. The congregation temporarily moved to Indiana Street before building a sanctuary at 414 N. West Street in 1966. That building is currently occupied by the Greater New Hope Church of God in Christ which was established in 1978. Mt. Olive continued to expand its congregation, outgrowing a succession of buildings until it moved to its current site on Sanford Street. The church retains an annex building constructed in 1981 at 402 N. West Street. Armstrong Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME)

Church also has a relatively new church building near the other two churches on N. West Street. Established in 1898, the AME congregation built a new church in the 400 block of N. West Street in 1984.

While neither the AME nor Mt. Olive Baptist Church retain cultural resources that reflect early development patterns established in the neighborhood, the Church of God in Christ Holiness Church has been on its current site since before 1927 and is one of the last vestiges of the historic building stock on Indiana Street. The current church built in 1939 conforms to the earlier patterns that saw churches, residences, honky tonks, restaurants and small groceries line Indiana, the main street of the community, from the 1920s into the 1970s.

### **EXTANT HISTORIC RESOURCES IN THE HILL**

#### *Booker T. Washington School - 1953*

Built in 1953 and opened in 1954, Booker T. Washington School replaced an earlier, smaller black school on the same site. Tarrant County records show that Arlington had a separate school for blacks by 1897. Its location is unknown but classes may have been held in one of the area's churches. In 1903, a year after the formation of the Arlington Independent School District, a storm destroyed the black school and a new frame school 20 x 30 was built at a cost of only \$109 (compared with the North Side School at nearly \$12,000). Its location is unknown but it was likely in the project area. The first substantial school building for blacks was built on the current Booker T. Washington site and was a four-room frame school about 40 x 60 feet in size. It was built after 1932 (does not appear in the 1932 index although other significant buildings such as churches in the area do) and may have been a W.P.A. project. School Board Minutes show that a committee was formed to look into getting federal assistance to build the school but there was no subsequent mention of it.

The present Booker T. Washington School was under construction in 1953 and 1954 when the *Brown v. The Board of Education* decision was made. The school remained segregated for more than a decade after *Brown*. This is the only surviving historic school building associated with blacks in Arlington and it is a good, if modest example of then-modern schools in the postwar era. It has unquestionable historic significance for Arlington's black community.

*The Arthur and Minerva Manning House - 500 (now 508) Watson.*

Built about 1910, the Manning House appears to be the oldest extant property in the project area that retains its historic appearance and architectural integrity to a large degree. It is a simple, L-plan farmhouse with a second ell to the rear. It is a rare surviving example of the type. Arlington has few such surviving vernacular dwellings that reflect its agriculture-based beginnings. It may also be significant for its association with Arthur Manning, a sanitation worker thought to be Arlington's first black city employee. The neighborhood swimming pool -- now covered over -- was named in honor of Manning. Manning and his wife Minerva lived in the neighborhood by the 1920s but it is not known whether they built the house or were its first occupants. The Mannings occupied the house as late as 1967 and Mrs. Manning still owned the property after her husband's death. She sold it in 1980. The Mannings are remembered as very early residents of the Hill and were well respected in the community.

It is possible that the house originally belonged to the Wilkerson family who platted the Wilkerson Addition which included Indiana (Ish) Street and later the areas that include Watson and Taylor streets. However, by the time this house was built, the area was already identified with the black community and it is unlikely that a white family would have built their house there. Deed research is required for further information.

*Lou's Blue Lounge - 510 N. Indiana*

Described as a neighborhood watering hole/grocery store in a 1991 Arlington Citizen-Journal article, Lou's Blue Lounge was established on Indiana Street by Lou Henry Taylor about 1957. Ms. Taylor's original business was started in 1946 when she converted her garage at 539 Taylor Street (later renumbered as 519 Taylor) into a little grocery store. In 1957, she moved to 508 Houston and opened Lou's Blue Lounge around the corner from her house on Indiana Street. A tiny frame store occupied the site at 500-508 N. Indiana in 1949. In 1960, Ms. Taylor's store at 508 N. Indiana was called Taylor's Grocery and may have been in the small frame store. By 1967, the earlier building had been replaced by a much larger concrete block building although it may have incorporated the earlier building. Taylor's Grocery was still addressed as 508 N. Indiana but Lou's Blue Lounge was given a separate address of 510 N. Indiana that year. The current building configuration appears to date from the mid-1960s.

To ensure order in the club/pool hall, Ms. Taylor said she always kept a gun on her hip for the men, a baseball bat for the women and a belt for the kids. Ms. Taylor connected the business to her house by an enclosed corridor. Ms. Taylor sold the business to tenants who renamed it Club BYOB in 1991 (Citizen Journal, January 20, 1991: 1B; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps and City Directories). Between 1968-1972, the store/lounge building was again altered, probably to its current configuration.

The lounge is a colorful landmark in the community, largely due to Ms. Taylor's personality and as a remnant of an earlier era when several infamous honky tonks such as the Dragnet Club shared the community's main street, Indiana St., with its churches and residences. The building's ca. 1965 construction date and subsequent alterations make it difficult to identify the building with the neighborhood's historic built environment but its history, and that of other nearby clubs, may warrant further documentation.

*Church of God in Christ (Holiness Church) - 515 N. Indiana*

The Church of God in Christ is Arlington's oldest organized black church, dating to 1895. While the original church site is unknown, it is thought to have been in the project area and is one of three historic black churches whose congregations survive in the area. It is the only one that retains any of its pre-1955 historic fabric. A Church of God in Christ, also known as the Holiness Church, has occupied this site since before 1927 but the current church was built of concrete block by congregation members in 1939 (Sanborn maps; Pointer October 6, 1999). Its appearance has been moderately altered since its 1939 construction but it retains a strong historic relationship to the original black settlement in Arlington and it is the only community church on its historic site in The Hill.

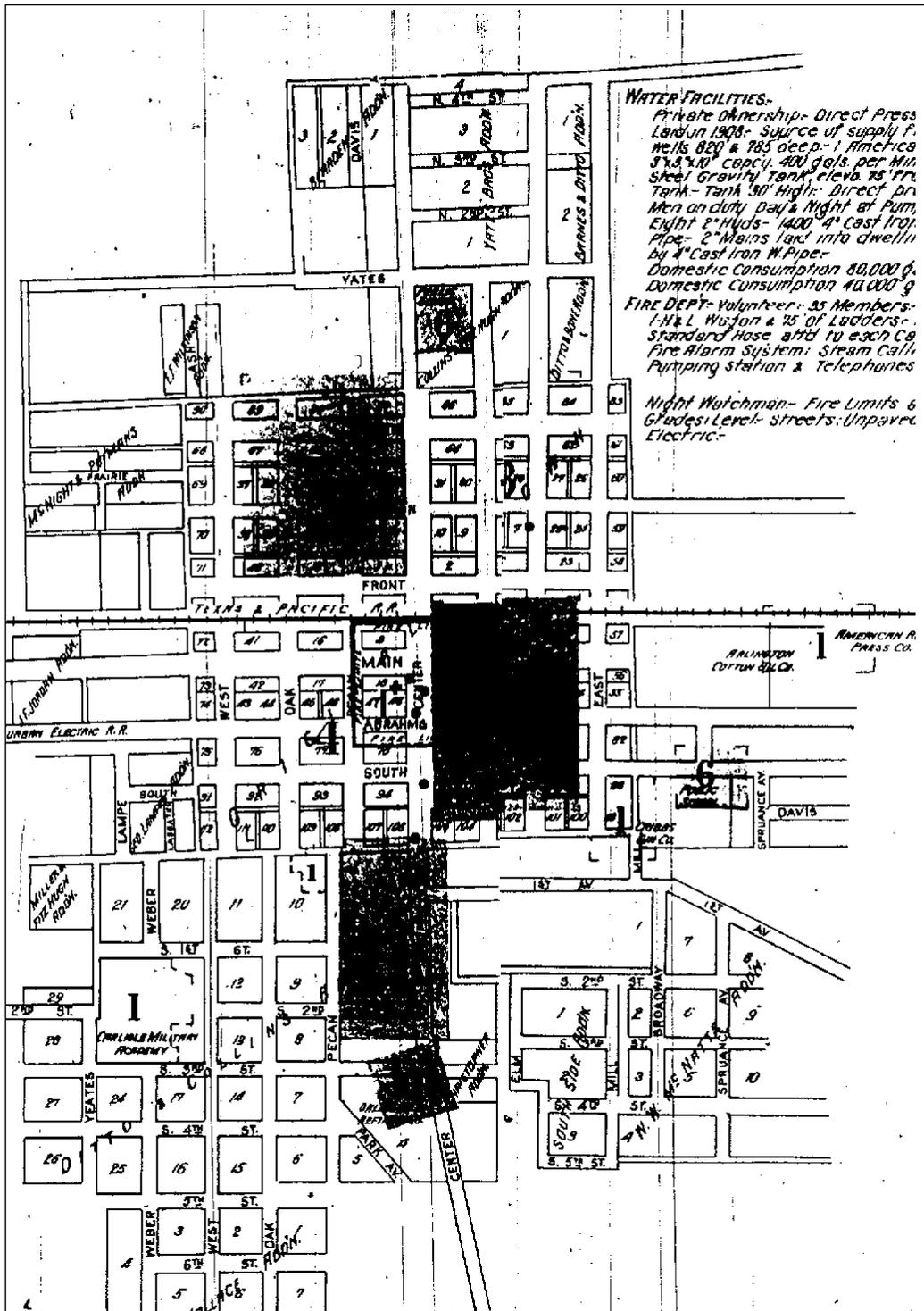


Figure 1. 1911 Sanborn map showing the Wilkerson Addition in the top left corner surrounded by vacant land.

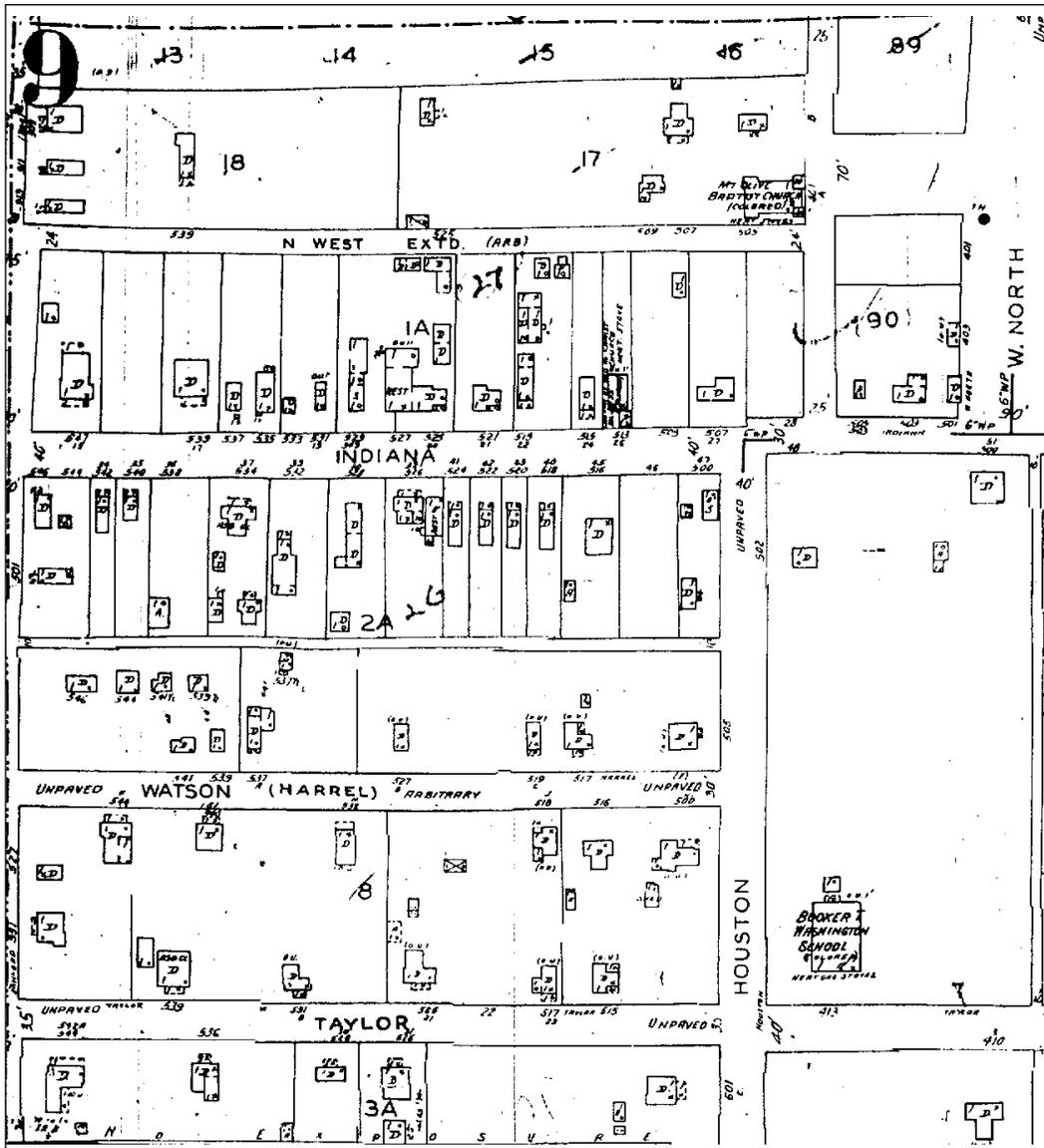


Figure 2. 1932, revised 1949 Sanborn map showing the Hill.

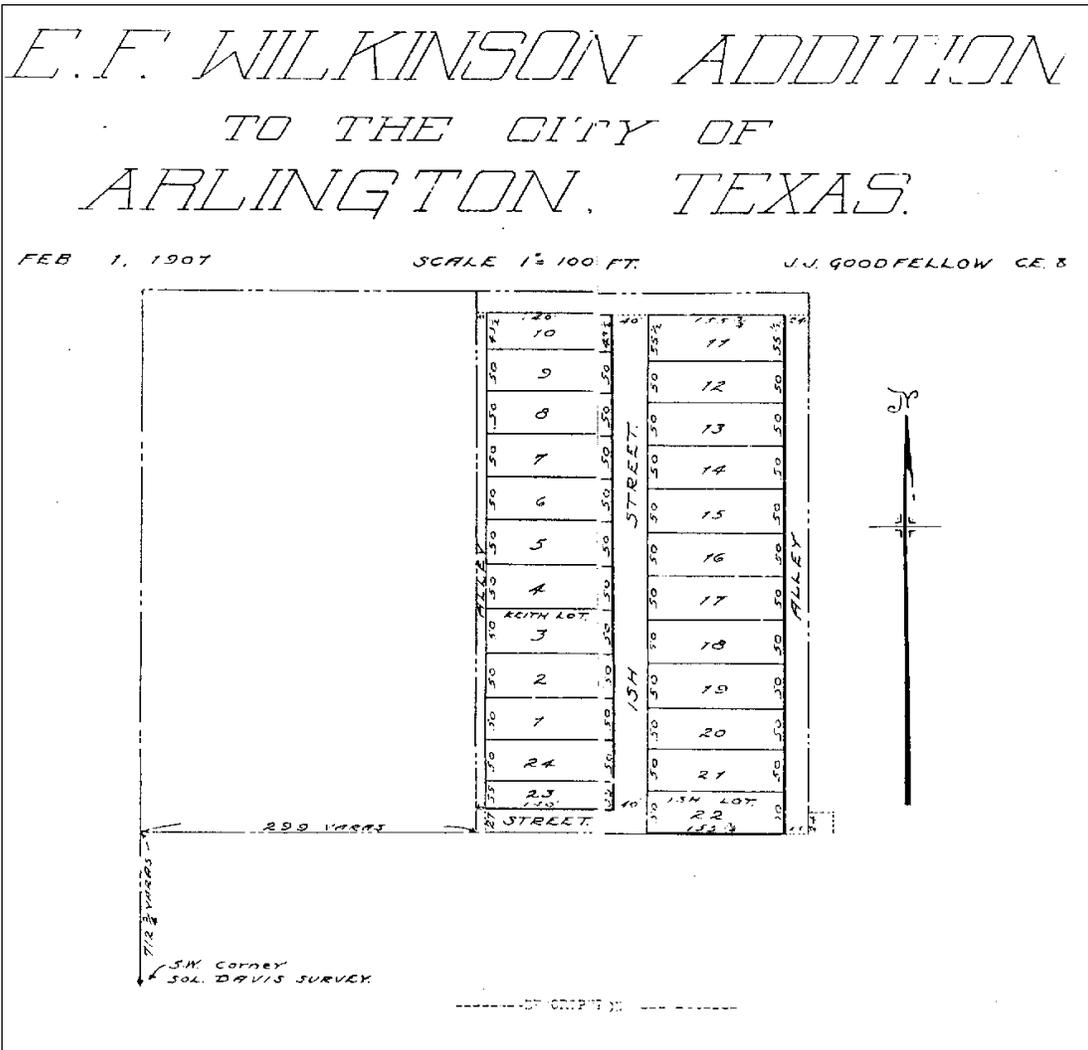


Figure 3. Ish (Indiana) Street, Wilkerson Addition, 1907.



Figure 3. Booker T. Washington School, Arlington, TX.