

Note about the Historic and Architectural Resources of The Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri MPDF.

This document consists of the following:

- Original 1999 MPDF as amended in 2011 with the Associated Historic Context:
  - Black Settlement in The Ville, 1865 – 1910, page 5, Bookmark 1.
  - The Ville as a Center for Black Culture, 1910 – 1950, page 6 of this pdf, Bookmark 2.
  - The Ville as the Product of Residential Segregation Policies, 1920 – 1950, page 12, Bookmark 3.
  
- Cathy Sala  
Administrative Assistant  
September 2017

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Multiple Property Documentation Form**

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

New Submission     Amended Submission

**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

Historic and Architectural Resources of The Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

**B. Associated Historic Contexts**

(Name each associated historic context, identifying them, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

- I. Black Settlement in the Ville, 1865-1910
- II. The Ville as a Center for Black Culture, 1910-1950
- III. The Ville as the Product of Residential Segregation Policies, 1910-1950

**C. Form Prepared by**

name/title see continuation sheet

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**D. Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

See continuation sheet

*Mark A Miles*  
 Signature of certifying official **Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO**

*Nov. 21, 2011*  
 Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
 State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

**Historic and Architectural Resources of The Ville,  
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri**

**Missouri**

Name of Multiple Property Listing

State

**Table of Contents for Written Narrative**

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

	<b>Page Nos.</b>	
<b>E. Statement of Historic Contexts</b> (If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)	E-2 E-3 E-8	Black Settlement in The Ville, 1865-1910 The Ville as a Center for Black Culture, 1910-1950 The Ville as a Product of Residential Segregation Policies, 1910-1950
<b>F. Associated Property Types</b> (Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)	F-1 F-3 F-7 F-9	No. 1: Institutional Buildings No. 2: Single-Family Dwellings No. 3: Multi-Family Dwellings No. 4: Groups of Residences/Districts
<b>G. Geographical Data</b>	G-1	
<b>H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods</b> (Discuss the methods used in developing the public property listing.)	H-1	
<b>I. Major Bibliographical References</b> (List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)	I-1	

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

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Note: Contexts I and II that follow are from the original Multiple Property Document Form. They are included here to provide a complete and consistent statement of historic contexts. Except for consistency of punctuation and capitalization, and one factual correction on Page 7, these contexts are unchanged from the original submission.

### INTRODUCTION

From the city's inception, African-American residents have played a large part in shaping the character and culture of St. Louis. No extant area represents this contribution more than The Ville, a forty-two-square-block neighborhood in north St. Louis. After 1910 through the 1950s, The Ville was the city's center for black culture and history. Originally part of the common fields for the new Village of St. Louis, The Ville in the nineteenth century experienced a predictable pattern of development from farmland to suburb to an urban neighborhood with a small population of African-American residents and institutions. Race restrictive covenants starting in 1911 and increasingly institutionalized segregation combined to transform the neighborhood into an African-American enclave with boundaries imposed by regulation. Within that enclave, a unique social and rich institutional life grew up out of limited opportunities. Bounded by Sarah Avenue on the east, Taylor Avenue on the west, St. Louis Avenue on the north and Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard on the south, The Ville has influenced the development of black history far outside of the neighborhood's confines.

After the village of St. Louis was founded in 1764, the area now known as The Ville was set aside as part of the Grand Prairie Common Fields. Farmers in the village received plots laid out in long, adjacent strips. The first black residents of The Ville arrived at this time as the slaves of local landowners who farmed land in the area and lived farther south in St. Louis. One of these slaves was killed, and others abducted, in an ambush by British militia and Indians during the American Revolution. In the early nineteenth century the first permanent white settlers arrived in The Ville area, most of them from Virginia and Kentucky. Some of the first landowners had eponymous recognition in local street names: Kennerly; Wash (now Whittier); Goode (now Annie Malone Drive); and Taylor. James Kennerly had a particularly large plantation know as Cote Placquemine or "Persimmon Hill," near the present intersection of Kennerly and Taylor Avenues (destroyed by fire in 1863).

In 1860, the total population within the boundaries of St. Louis stood at 160,773, of which over 3000 were black (approx. 2% of the total population). That same year, Charles Elleard, who arrived from New York, soon became the proprietor of the Abbey Trotting Race Trace, just south of The Ville, and bought land from George Goode on which he built an impressive estate. Besides raising several types of animals, Elleard built a greenhouse and became known as a horticulturist

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of exotic plants and flowers. The area soon became known as Elleardsville, an unincorporated settlement just outside the rapidly growing city east of Grand Boulevard.

### CONTEXT I: BLACK SETTLEMENT IN THE VILLE, 1865-1910

The growth of St. Louis after the Civil War affected the small, rural settlement of Elleardsville, as St. Louisans escaping the congestion of the city moved west of Grand in increasingly large numbers. In 1876 Elleardsville was formally incorporated into the city of St. Louis following the passage of the city's new charter separating it from St. Louis County, and establishing the city's boundaries at their present size. The black community in The Ville had begun to grow steadily after the war, and there were enough black residents in 1873 to establish an elementary school for blacks in The Ville. Within five years of its founding, enrollment at Colored [elementary] School #8<sup>1</sup> (renamed Simmons Colored School in 1891; now razed) had nearly tripled.

Not long after Colored School #8 opened, two new and important institutions were organized in The Ville. Antioch Baptist Church began in 1878 at the home of William and Laura Coker on Wash (now Whittier) Street, and moved soon after to a location on Lambdin Avenue near Kennerly. A new sanctuary for the church was constructed in 1885 on Kennerly Avenue. That same year, St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church was founded at St. Ferdinand and Pendleton Avenues. (Both congregations have remained in The Ville, even though they now draw only a small percentage of their members from the neighborhood.)

By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, The Ville was an ethnically diverse neighborhood where African-Americans lived near settlements of Irish and Germans. An Irish Catholic parish and parochial school, St. Matthew's (NRHP 1986), was founded in The Ville in 1893. Developers subdivided plots for multi-family and small single-family residences. Anyone with \$2,000 could buy a lot and build a cottage.

St. Louis' late nineteenth century pattern of dispersed clusters of black settlement was typical for minority populations of less than 5% of the total population, according to sociologists Schoenberg and Rosenbaum.<sup>2</sup> By 1900, the percentage of African-Americans in St. Louis had grown to 6.2% (35,665 out of 575,235). However, Schoenberg and Bailey conceded that census data from 1900 cannot be interpreted in such a way to provide an accurate racial breakdown for The Ville. At the turn of the century, most housing in The Ville remained under the ownership of Irish and German

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<sup>1</sup> Colored School #8 was the eighth elementary school built for blacks in post-Civil War St. Louis.

<sup>2</sup> Sandra Perlman Schoenberg and Patricia L. Rosenbaum, *Neighborhoods That Work: Sources for Vitality in the Inner City*. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1980), 120.

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residents.<sup>3</sup> As one measure of black population, of the city's thirteen African-American public schools in 1900, only one, Simmons Elementary, was located in The Ville.<sup>4</sup>

Major growth in the black population of the Ville would not come until after the new Sumner High School was opened in 1910, but there are a number of indicators that the area was seen as a desirable neighborhood for African-Americans in the early 1900s. For example, in 1909 the black Bethany Presbyterian congregation moved to The Ville and renamed itself "McPheeters Memorial Presbyterian Church" after its founder, Thomas S. McPheeters (who had also raised the money for the purchase of land in The Ville). By 1910, 13 percent of the local ward population was black (3,108 of 23,253 residents). This was more than double the citywide concentration of blacks, which was 6.4%.<sup>5</sup> More significantly, a 1912 study reported that "most of the home owning negro population live in this section [Elleardsville]."<sup>6</sup>

Schoenberg and Bailey argue that the beginnings of home ownership and special "elite" status for The Ville were already planted by 1906. In that year, local African-American leaders began a campaign for the relocation of Sumner High School, the city's only high school for blacks until 1927, to an available tract of land in the heart of the neighborhood. Citing the general trend of westward migration in the city, neighborhood residents successfully swayed the Board of Education away from sites in the more densely African-American Central City and Mill Creek Valley areas (which together had accounted for more than half of the city's black population in 1900).<sup>7</sup> Sumner's move, accomplished in 1910, four years after local leaders first called for it, was a major factor in the subsequent popularity and image of The Ville. As Schoenberg and Bailey noted, "There is little question that it became a magnet for the wealth of institutions which located in The Ville in the next thirty years."<sup>8</sup>

### CONTEXT II: THE VILLE AS A CENTER FOR BLACK CULTURE, 1910-1950

The school board's decision to move Sumner High School to The Ville in 1910 encouraged the growth of a stable, middle-class black population in that community. In a time when black students commuted to Sumner from all over the city, concerned parents wanted to move as close as possible to the new high school. The lack of restrictive covenants in The Ville made this move

<sup>3</sup> Sandra Schoenberg and Charles Bailey, "The Symbolic Meaning of an Elite Black Community: The Ville in St. Louis," *The Bulletin*, Missouri Historical Society, vol. 23, no. 2 (January 1977), 94-95.

<sup>4</sup> Katharine T. Corbett and Mary E. Seematter, "Black St. Louis at the Turn of the Century," *Gateway Heritage*, vol. 7, no. 1 (Summer 1986), 41.

<sup>5</sup> Carolyn H. Toft, ed. *The Ville* (St. Louis: n.p., 1975), p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Schoenberg and Bailey, 95; quoting William August Crossland, "The Occupations of Negroes in St. Louis," (unpublished master's thesis, Washington University, 1913).

<sup>7</sup> Schoenberg and Bailey, 97; Corbett and Seematter, 41.

<sup>8</sup> Schoenberg and Bailey, 97.

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possible, although many neighborhoods near The Ville were off-limits to blacks. In the three decades following the school's move, many major black institutions located or built permanent homes in The Ville: schools (Charles Turner Open Air, Poro College and the Lincoln University School of Law, the conversion of Marshall School to black use); churches (Antioch Baptist); charitable institutions (St. Louis Colored Orphans Home); and the massive Homer G. Phillips Hospital. The Ville is remembered as the seat of black culture in St. Louis during this period.

Sumner High School prospered in its new location, and a short list of its graduates gives an indication of the school's importance in St. Louis history: opera singers Grace Bumbry, comedian Dick Gregory; rock and roll singers Chuck Berry and Tina Turner, actor Robert Guillaume, opera singer Robert McFerrin, and World War II hero Wendell Pruitt. Sumner's Normal School also accompanied it to The Ville, where it prospered as a teacher training center. In 1930, the normal school was renamed Stowe's Teachers College, after Harriet Beecher Stowe, and it relocated to Simmons School. In 1938 a separate facility built with PWA funding was opened for the normal school just northwest of Sumner High School; the building now houses the Turner Middle School.

While many residents began to gravitate toward this neighborhood because of the local educational system and home ownership opportunities, one external factor served to increasingly narrow black residents' housing choices. The increasing use of race-restrictive covenants in housing deeds in the 1910s limited where blacks could purchase property in St. Louis. Many residential areas became off-limits to the black population by 1920, creating black "ghettos" in areas where there was already an established black population. The Ville profited from this segregation in the sense that it created a concentrated community with little opportunity to move further west, as was the trend with the white population in that era. Between 1910 and 1920, St. Louis' population rose from 687,029 to 772,897 with the percentage of African-American residents rising from 6.4% to 9%. Changes in census tract reporting between 1910 and 1920 make it impossible to measure precise variations within the boundaries of The Ville, but by 1920, Tract 1113 which encompassed The Ville was approximately one-third black.<sup>9</sup> This initial growth following the arrival of Sumner H and the narrowing of options for St. Louis blacks laid the groundwork for the flowering of institutions and social life that gave The Ville its reputation as the center of St. Louis' black culture in the 1920s and beyond.

Sumner High School's relocation to The Ville also made possible the growth of black businesses in the area, such as Annie Malone's famous Poro College of Beauty Culture (now demolished) at the corner of St. Ferdinand and Pendleton Avenues. One participant in an oral history program held in the 1970s remembered:

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 26; *The Ville: The Ethnic Heritage of an Urban Neighborhood* (Carolyn Toft, ed., St. Louis: Social Science Institute, Washington University, 1975).



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*When Mrs. Malone brought the college to The Ville, she brought all this prestige with her. With her first money she built the orphans' home and a nursery school. Poro College was located near Sumner. It was a great opportunity for our race. It was a regular education center.<sup>10</sup>*

A rooftop garden on the building became the center for black social life in the 1920s. In 1930, Mrs. Malone (reportedly the richest black woman in the country) moved her business to Chicago. The Poro building later housed a hotel and, in 1939, another black institution, the Lincoln University School of Law.<sup>11</sup>

After World War I, whites began to move west in large numbers and the racial composition of the neighborhood reflected dramatic change. By 1930, the black population of the neighborhood had nearly reached 90 percent.<sup>12</sup> The neighborhood retained its middle-class atmosphere as the new black residents arrived, many of whom were teachers at the various Ville schools. The construction of a new St. Louis Colored Orphans' Home (later the Annie Malone Children's Home), Annie Malone's Poro College, a new sanctuary for Antioch Baptist Church, a new elementary school for handicapped children and the opening of the Elleardsville Branch YMCA added to the building boom that completed most of the institutional concentration in The Ville. In addition, Marshall Elementary School had been converted to black use in 1918, making The Ville the undisputed center for black education in St. Louis.

A former resident of The Ville recalls her family life there during this decade of change:

*We moved to The Ville in 1923...I think the thing that made The Ville unique was that there were so many one-story homes in it, little cottages where people lived in single families. We liked the area, and it was an area where everybody took a lot of pride in their places. As I look back on it now, it seems to me that most people were just ordinary, poor people...I think the most affluent were the school teachers...."<sup>13</sup>*

As the number of local black residents increased, there was apparently some resistance by their white neighbors. Another former resident remembered of the 1920s that "There was no doubt

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<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Toft, 12.

<sup>11</sup> The Lincoln University School of Law was established after Lloyd Gaines, a black graduate of Lincoln University in Jefferson City, was denied admission to the University of Missouri School of Law based on his race. The State of Missouri offered to pay black students' tuition to out-of-state professional schools, but the Supreme Court ruled in *Gaines v. Missouri* that the state must provide legal education for blacks within Missouri. The new school opened in the Poro College building in 1939.

<sup>12</sup> Toft., 26. The total population of The Ville in 1930 was 9,102.

<sup>13</sup> Carolyn H. Toft, ed. *The Ville*. (St. Louis: n.p., 1975), p. 15.

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about it, we were considered intruders by members of the St. Matthew's parish, mostly Irish and Italian." Still, this same resident remembered that "An emergency caused a change in attitude. One of the children had become critically ill. The family had no phone. Neither did their white neighbors....My mother graciously offered the use of our telephone."<sup>14</sup> As black residents moved into the area, black businesses followed and small stores could be found at large intersections in The Ville, like St. Ferdinand and Pendleton Avenues and along Easton Avenue (now Martin Luther King Dr.).<sup>15</sup> Most were small buildings with residential space above a first floor store.

The decade of rapid institutional and residential growth from 1920-1930 would be fortunate for residents of The Ville in the decade that followed, when the Depression forced a disproportionate number of blacks out of work.<sup>16</sup> The Ville was luckier than most St. Louis neighborhoods to receive three major Depression-era projects located within blocks of each other: Tandy Community Center, Stowe Teachers College, and most significantly, Homer G. Phillips Hospital. Social services for blacks had never equaled those for whites in St. Louis, and lack of adequate health care was a major issue for St. Louis' black population as early as 1900. One man in particular, a local black lawyer named Homer G. Phillips, campaigned loudly for a replacement to City Hospital No. 2, an outdated, overcrowded facility for blacks near downtown. Phillips, who was murdered in 1931, would never see the hospital named in his honor, which was constructed on Whittier Avenue in The Ville and completed in 1938. Twenty-five years after its founding, Homer G. Phillips Hospital (NRHP 1982) had trained more black doctors and nurses than any other hospital in the world.<sup>17</sup>

A bond issue passed in 1936 provided for the construction of three public recreational centers in black neighborhoods. With its swimming pool and nearby tennis courts, the Tandy Community Center was clearly designed as the showpiece of the three. City Architect Albert Osberg used a stripped Art Deco style with buff brick, similar to the design he had employed on the Homer G. Phillips Hospital four years earlier, for the Tandy Community Center, constructed in 1938. Like adjacent park, the community center was named for Captain Charlton Hunt Tandy, an African-American Civil War veteran who was active in politics and community concerns. Long the site of the Silver Gloves Boxing Tournament and numerous basketball games, Tandy may be most noted for its tennis courts, on which a young Arthur Ashe prepared to enter the all-white world of professional tennis.

Ironically, the growth of The Ville and its institutions was attributable to the Jim Crow laws of the early twentieth century. From the beginning of the agricultural depression in the 1920s to the

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>16</sup> Excluded from most skilled trade unions, 43% of blacks in St. Louis were unemployed by 1930. Corbett and Seematter, "No Crystal Stair," 83.

<sup>17</sup> "Homer G. Phillips Hospital: 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary," unpaginated.

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beginning of World War II, St. Louis experienced black immigration from the south. Segregation of public institutions and facilities in St. Louis had helped to concentrate this recent black settlement near downtown in congested, underserved areas. As the Great Depression began, African-American residents totaled 93,703 of the total population of 821,960. Ten years later in 1940, their numbers reached 106,086. Although this figure was still only 13% of a citywide population of 816,048, the ratio in The Ville remained at 90% black. (In the 1940s, the *St. Louis Argus* ran a weekly newspaper devoted to the African-American community, ran a weekly column called “Ville News” in which the author frequently referred to the neighborhood as Elleardsville. The Ville was the only neighborhood singled out for such special coverage, an indication of its status with the St. Louis black community.)

The seeds of residential desegregation in St. Louis were sown in 1948, when the Supreme Court case *Shelley v. Kraemer*, based on a property sale near The Ville (see Shelley House, NRHP 1988; NHL 1990), declared restricted covenants unenforceable by law.\* The catalyst for desegregation was urban renewal in the 1950s and 1960s that destroyed older, downtown black housing and displaced thousands of residents, many of whom migrated to neighborhoods in north St. Louis previously closed to them. The ending of educational segregation in the 1950s also meant that blacks moving to different areas of the city and county would be able to attend local schools. The paradox of The Ville’s situation is stated by sociologist Sandra Schoenberg, who noted that:

Although there are countless examples of deprivation caused by exclusion and segregation, this small enclave [The Ville] is an example of a richness in social life enforced by limited opportunity. Some of the forces that broke down this segregation were eagerly sought. Others such as displacement by urban renewal had destructive effects on the community’s integrity.<sup>18</sup>

The origins of The Ville’s subsequent decline are rooted in the drive to ensure equality for all St. Louis citizens. Black professionals continued to be attracted by the neighborhood’s resources until about 1950. The decade following saw a marked exodus of professionals from The Ville, coinciding with the general population trend in St. Louis to move west into St. Louis County.<sup>19</sup> Just when and how the shortened name “The Ville” was substituted for Elleardsville is unknown, but the new name was in common use by the mid-1970s when the first Ville Historic District

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\* Note: This is a correction to the original MPDF nomination, which stated, “...*Shelley v. Kraemer*, based on a property sale near The Ville (see Shelley House, NRHP 1988; NHL 1990), declared restrictive covenants unconstitutional.” In fact, the Supreme Court held that State courts could not constitutionally prevent the sale of real property to blacks even if that property is covered by a racially restrictive covenant. It did not declare a restrictive covenant unconstitutional in itself.

<sup>18</sup> Schoenberg and Bailey, 99.

<sup>19</sup> Toft, 27.

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Committee was formed to try to hold back further deterioration; the name has been retained for this submission since it has become strongly identified with the area and with attempts to revitalize it.<sup>20</sup>

The closing of Homer G. Phillips Hospital in 1979 accelerated the neighborhood's slide from its pre-World War II peak. Yet The Ville's institutions are also its mainstay. All of the public schools in The Ville remain open, as does the Tandy Community Center, the Annie Malone Children's Home and all of the area's historic churches. These institutions not only provide employment and social support, but also reinforce the historic character of The Ville by providing material evidence of the neighborhood's rich past. They are reminders of The Ville's importance not only to the city's African-American community, but to the city as a whole.

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<sup>20</sup> Toft, 30.

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## Context III: The Ville as the Product of Residential Segregation Policies, 1910-1950

The Ville originally developed as a 'suburban' residential neighborhood at the edge of the city, as described in Context II. The area became attractive to African-American citizens as a place to live and to own homes adjacent to their cultural institutions. However, the eventual static boundaries of what was to become The Ville were established – not because of normal market forces – but as a direct result of racial segregation policies in St. Louis and the use of real estate restrictive covenant agreements based upon race. The period of formalized racial segregation policies extends from 1910, the year that the first racial covenant was filed, through 1950, soon after the *Shelley v. Kraemer* Supreme Court decision that ruled that public officials could not enforce private restrictive real estate covenants based upon race. The court decision did not eliminate the use of such covenants or change behavior; existing covenants remained in place and were essentially honored and new covenants were recorded. Recognizing these factors, 1950 marks a period of change rather than a new static condition and the beginning of a time when additional factors affected residential life in The Ville.<sup>21</sup>

The implementation of racial segregation in St. Louis was part of a larger trend in American cities during the first half of the twentieth century. St. Louis, however, embraced this strategy and its implementation with a notable vigor.<sup>22</sup> A systematic, city-wide policy, enforced by the local real estate industry, constricted black residents to particular blocks. Ultimately government agencies, including the Federal Housing Administration, embraced the policy in the attempt to keep African-Americans segregated into certain predetermined neighborhoods.<sup>23</sup> The tools used to enforce these policies included contractual agreements between real estate agents and brokers and the use of restrictive covenants on property in areas directly adjacent to existing black neighborhoods. Meanwhile, the Federal government refused to provide mortgage insurance for houses in so-called "buffer" neighborhoods where both black and white residents lived even as it insured property in segregated black neighborhoods, although at a somewhat higher rate.<sup>24</sup> A map of the areas governed by race restrictive covenants illustrates that The Ville neighborhood was ringed on the north, east and west by blocks with these agreements: its boundaries were fixed not only by personal preference or market conditions, but also by racial prejudice (Figure 2).

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<sup>21</sup> Colin Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 82.

<sup>22</sup> Margaret Bush Wilson and Beverly A. Fleming, "The Shelley House," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, St. Louis (Independent City), 1987.

<sup>23</sup> Herman H. Long and Charles S. Johnson, *People vs. Property? Race Restrictive Covenants in Housing*, (Nashville, TN: Fisk University Press, 1947), 61.

<sup>24</sup> Long and Johnson, 72; see also Wilson and Fleming.

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## BACKGROUND

In the decades just after the Civil War, the City of St. Louis had a reputation for relatively tolerant racial policies. This social forbearance owed much to the rough atmosphere of the emerging mercantile and transportation center into which St. Louis was developing and to the City's relatively small percentage of African-Americans. While the schools, playgrounds and theaters in St. Louis were strictly segregated, streetcars and bathhouses were not.<sup>25</sup> And while black and white residential neighborhoods tended to be separate, that segregation owed as much to social class and income as it did to official policies. This was to change dramatically at the beginning of World War I.

The 1900 U.S. Census shows that out of a total population of 75,994,575 citizens, blacks comprised 11.6 percent of Americans, or 8,833,994. But 89 percent of this population lived in southern states. Until 1910 the Negro population of St. Louis held steady at about 6 percent of the total City population. Between 1910 and 1920, however, the black population grew by almost 60 percent and by 1930, it had increased by another 34 percent. By 1940, the City's African-American population was over 15 percent of the total population. This rise was directly related to the northern migration of African-Americans out of the rural south to the industrial north and Midwest, the long-term movement of black southerners north known as the Great Migration.<sup>26</sup>

Between 1910 and 1930 nearly two million African-Americans moved to the industrial cities of the north. Over a half million migrated from the south between 1916 and 1918. By 1950, the black population still comprised approximately 11 percent of the U.S. population; however, blacks were then 40 percent of the population in several major U.S. cities.<sup>27</sup> This historic migration of Southern rural African-Americans can be traced to many factors, starting with the intolerable living conditions in many Southern states and the search for better economic opportunities, living conditions and educational opportunities. During the World War I, as European immigration came to a halt, and the Labor Movement was beginning to exert greater influence, it was widely reported that agents of major industries traveled to the South to recruit black workers for steel mills, railroads and other industries: not just as replacements for white workers serving in the Armed Forces, but also to work as scabs for union-busting. This recruitment was one of the major factors in the resentment between black and white low-wage earners that fueled much of the racial prejudice in northern cities.

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<sup>25</sup> Scott, 95.

<sup>26</sup>"American Factfinder," U.S. Census Bureau, <factfinder.census.gov>, (accessed 29 July 2008); "The African-American Mosaic," Library of Congress Resource Guide for the Study of Black History & Culture <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/afam008.html> (accessed 29 July 2008).

<sup>27</sup> Long and Johnson, 14; "African-American History," Encarta Encyclopedia [http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia/761595158/African\\_American\\_History.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia/761595158/African_American_History.html) (accessed 29 July 2008).

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In St. Louis as well, the rapid increase in its black population produced a strong and unfavorable reaction. In 1916, St. Louis voters passed, by an overwhelming majority, a city ordinance that would bar any black person from moving onto a block that contained 75 percent white residents. Whites were also banned from moving onto blocks that were 75 percent African-American, making it clear that the races would live separately. The ordinance addressed only residential uses: property ownership was not restricted, nor did the law affect black servants or janitors of white-occupied buildings. Not only did the ordinance mandate blacks and whites to live on separate blocks, but it required schools, churches and all other public buildings to be segregated. Passage of this ordinance gave St. Louis the dubious honor of being the only city in the United States to mandate racial segregation by public vote. However, the ordinance was never implemented due to an immediate court challenge that attorney Homer G. Phillips helped to lead. Two years later, in 1918, the U.S. Supreme Court nullified the law by striking down a similar statute in Kentucky.<sup>28</sup>

### **CONSTRAINED AFRICAN-AMERICAN SETTLEMENT PATTERNS IN ST. LOUIS, 1910-1950**

During the first half of the twentieth century, the African-American population lived primarily in the older parts of the City: in housing that had originally been created for European immigrants, or in neighborhoods formerly occupied by the white middle class. Large, single-family residences were converted to apartments or rooming houses when their white owners moved west to escape the increasing industrial and commercial areas of the city center. Many of these once-exclusive neighborhoods were then at the edge or even in the midst of some of the most polluted sections of the City: the notorious Mill Creek Valley, traversed by railroad yards; or the Yeatman neighborhood of the City' Near Northside, adjacent to numerous factories. By 1940, the vast majority of the black population was contained in the area east of Grand Avenue, north of Chouteau Avenue and south of Cass (Figure 3).

The Ville was an exception to this pattern. The Ville had become the cultural center for the City's emerging black middle class when prominent African-American institutions were established there: Sumner High School, Lincoln Law School, Stowe Teachers College and other prestigious institutions and churches. But aside from its cultural attractions, The Ville was also one of the few places where African-Americans could purchase single-family houses.

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<sup>28</sup> "Segregation in St. Louis — Ordinances Restricting Negroes Carried by a Heavy Majority," *New York Times*, 1 March, 1916, New York Times Archives, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=9505E0D8153AE633A25752COA9659C946796D6CF> (accessed 29 July 2008); Robert I. Vexler, ed., *St. Louis, A Chronological and Documentary History, 1872-1970*, (Dobbs Ferry, NY: Oceana Publications, 1974). Also see "Timeline of Missouri's African-American History," Missouri State Archives, Missouri Secretary of State, <http://sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/africanamerican/timeline> (accessed 29 July 2008).

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## THE ST. LOUIS REAL ESTATE EXCHANGE

Disappointed by the ultimate failure of the 1916 segregation ordinance, its proponents soon found another way to achieve their goal: the St. Louis Real Estate Exchange would become very powerful in regulating where black citizens could reside in the City. The St. Louis Real Estate Exchange was incorporated under the State of Missouri in 1899 with over fifty corporate and individual members who were involved in the local real estate trade. The stated purpose of the Exchange was to promote public improvements and ordinances that would facilitate the “laying out of residential districts,” to secure a “closer union and more cordial relationship” among real estate agents of the City, and to facilitate mutual agreement on methods of doing business. The first meeting of the new Exchange was held in August 1899.<sup>29</sup>

The Real Estate Exchange was to become a powerful entity in the shaping of the real estate sector in St. Louis. It was also a driving force in the role of residential racial segregation in the City. Historian Colin Gordon summed up the role of the Exchange and its members: “the local real estate industry played an unusually active and formal role in drafting and sustaining restrictive deed covenants.”<sup>30</sup> The Exchange unified brokers under a common agreement about ethics, types of contracts, and territories. The Exchange published a yearly “diary” for distribution among its members. In its publication for 1927, the Exchange’s “Code of Ethics,” Article 34, reads: “A Realtor should never be instrumental in introducing into a neighborhood, a character of property, or occupancy, members of any race or nationality, or any individuals whose presence will be clearly detrimental to property values in that neighborhood.”<sup>31</sup> The published Exchange By-Laws included procedures for adjudicating disputes among members, hearings regarding violations of the By-Laws and Code of Ethics and a list of Exchange-imposed penalties. The publication also enumerated various active committees, most particularly the Committee on the Protection of Property, responsible for upholding restrictive covenants and restrictive warranty deeds:

Sec.14: The Committee on the Protection of Property shall consist of thirteen (13) members, and it shall be their duty to co-operate with local Improvement and Protective Associations to maintain certain restrictions and shall have authority to make investigations, to hold hearings, to file charges on violations of restrictions by

<sup>29</sup> Long and Johnson, 58; St. Louis Real Estate Exchange; Corporate License of 1899; St. Louis Recorder of Deeds Archives.

<sup>30</sup> Colin Gordon, *Mapping Decline: St. Louis and the Fate of the American City* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 79.

<sup>31</sup> St. Louis Real Estate Exchange, *1927 Diary and Manual of the St. Louis Real Estate Exchange*, Missouri Historic Society Library Collection, St. Louis, Missouri.



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Active members of the Exchange and to perform such other duties as may logically come within the provisions of such Committee.<sup>32</sup>

The Real Estate Exchange also published and distributed maps that designated “unrestricted colored districts” where agents were free to sell or rent houses to African-Americans. There is little doubt that the Real Estate Exchange was a major force in the residential racial segregation policies of the period (Figure 4).<sup>33</sup>

### RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS

A race restrictive real estate covenant is a contractual agreement among property owners that requires the signers not to sell, rent or otherwise convey property to a selected racial group. In St. Louis, these agreements were usually signed not just by individual property owners, but other cooperating parties as well, such as real estate agents and brokers, and local neighborhood and block associations. Normally, these covenants would be binding on all signatory parties for a specified period or until terminated by general agreement of the signers. The agreement would then be attached to the property deed and transferred or assigned to any subsequent property owner.<sup>34</sup>

The first formal covenants restricting residency were drawn up in 1910; ten years later, there was a total of only 35. But in the decade after World War I, use of covenants rapidly expanded and a total of 286 covenants were filed. After World War II some 550 city blocks were covered by race restrictive real estate covenants. The extensive use of such covenants earned St. Louis a place in Herman H. Long and Charles S. Johnson’s landmark study of the topic funded by the American Missionary Association, which focused on only two cities, St. Louis and Chicago.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> St. Louis Real Estate Exchange, *1927 Diary and Manual*.

<sup>33</sup> Long and Johnson. The Exchange also required the use of special forms, such as *Gill’s Missouri Real Estate Forms*. In its 1927 publication are instructions for the preparation of a warranty deeds: it includes this suggested language: “FOURTH: No persons not wholly of white or Caucasian blood shall ever own or occupy said lot except as a servant in a white family.” Another form, specifically identified as a “St. Louis Real Estate Exchange Form” is titled, “Uniform Restriction Agreement Against Use By Negroes,” blank copies to be had from the Real Estate Printing and Publishing Company. McCune Gill, *McCune Gill’s Missouri Real Estate Forms* (Hart Publishing Company, NY, NY, 1927).

<sup>34</sup> Long, Herman and Johnson, 58.

<sup>35</sup> Charles Johnson was President of Fisk University and Herman Long was the Associate Director of the Department of Race Relations of the American Missionary Society, housed in the Department of Social Studies at Fisk. “The AMA originally formed in New England in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century around the ‘Amistad’ law suit as a non-denominational Protestant religious organization dedicated to “the Negro Problem,” aiming to bring about full and equal privileges of citizenship to the black population of the United States during the latter half of the 19th century, leading into the 20th century. The Association did so under the doctrine that to deny these rights would serve to subvert the teachings of Jesus, thus those who attempted to deny these rights performed sins against God and man. Originally formed as a

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The majority of the blocks with these covenants were located at the edges of areas, like The Ville, that already had a substantial proportion of black residents, in effect hemming in African-American residents (compare Figures 2 and 3). Most blocks with covenants were in the central corridor west of downtown, with a few in the southern part of the City, around several small enclaves of historically black settlement. The Ville area can be seen tightly enclosed on the north, east and west. Residency in The Ville neighborhood was therefore not only by choice, as the African-American cultural heart of St. Louis, but was for many the only alternative in order to achieve a middle-class lifestyle through home ownership. The Ville offered African-Americans the freedom to purchase or construct housing appropriate to their rising incomes and social status.

### RESIDENTIAL PATTERNS IN THE VILLE

#### The Ville in 1909.

By the time Elleardsville was becoming a black community defined by restrictive real estate practices, it had been developed in typical St. Louis fashion with house types and styles that reflected local vernacular building and national trends, most often built in brick. Hence, for blacks, the built residential environment in The Ville was mainly an inherited one, rather than one developed during the period when the neighborhood was defined by racial segregation.

A significant portion of the parcels — approximately half — in the blocks that would later be considered The Ville neighborhood had been developed by 1909. Brick single-family houses with narrow side yards and attached flat buildings predominated. The large house set back from the street and surrounded by a yard at 4221 W. Cote Brilliante was built in 1900 by Reverend Duckworth. An exception to the strong pattern of building residences in brick occurred on several blocks between Newstead and Billups Avenues, where groups of wood-framed houses were built on North Market and the streets to the north.<sup>36</sup> The Frank R. Stewart Building & Realty Company erected two small groups of rowhouse-flats — flats that offered very small individual units — in 1907 and 1909 back-to-back, facing Cote Brilliant and Garfield, just east of Billups. The pattern of two-story commercial blocks at corners to house neighborhood commerce was underway. The Goode Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church stood at the corner of North Market and the St. James Episcopal Memorial Church occupied the corner of Cote Brilliante and Annie Malone. The overall

means of protest against other missionaries during the mid-19th century, the AMA promoted political activity and encouraged a strong anti-slavery sentiment among its missions".

<http://northbysouth.kenyon.edu/1998/edu/charleston/ama.htm>.

<sup>36</sup> The current, rather than historic street names are used. Lucky was renamed Aldine in 1929. Pendleton was renamed Billups and Goode was renamed Annie Malone in 1986. Easton Avenue was renamed Dr. Martin Luther King in 1968.

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pattern of a predominantly residential area with some neighborhood commerce and churches was established firmly by this time.<sup>37</sup>

### **The Ville in 1916.**

The residential area between Whittier and Newstead avenues spanned the area between Marshall School (MRHP 1999) on the south and Charles Sumner High School (NRHP 1988) on the north; from this early period it was the heart of The Ville, as documented by the 1920 census data as having the highest concentration of African-American residents. Groups of nearly identical detached brick houses erected by a developer prevailed on many streets. The clusters of houses were separated by a vacant lot or larger undeveloped area from the next group. Single family dwellings prevailed, though two-family flats were quite common as well. Two groups of houses built in 1912 and 1913, the gambrel-roofed houses on Cote Brilliante, were among the newest single-family houses in the area. With the ground story of brick and frame half-story that incorporated the roof, the house type was an economical way to build two-story residences. The north-south streets, Whittier, Annie Malone and Billups, had a somewhat more lively mix of single-family houses and flats than the longer blocks of the east-west streets.<sup>38</sup>

Many of the most densely-developed multiple dwellings in the neighborhood — attached rowhouse-flats with a single family per floor — were constructed at the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. A row of flats filled the south blockfront of Aldine east of the Marshall School. The F. L. Stewart Building & Realty Company developed a group of flats in 1907 on the north side of Cote Brilliante, just east of Billups. Several other projects soon followed. The Chaplin (George G.) Realty & Construction Company built a group of flats across the street from the Stewart buildings in 1909 and then added another group around the corner on Billups the following year. Further north, in 1909 Henry Schuerman developed a group of stores with flats above at 2400-12 Billups, at the corner of North Market, around the corner from another group of flats. Two other groups of flats faced Whittier, one just south of the intersection with Cote Brilliante, and the other north of Garfield. Just west of this group of flats, another one was situated perpendicular to Garfield, in the manner of buildings often labeled as Negro flats or tenements; this first instance in The Ville of this housing form was built between 1910 and 1915. A building, labeled “Negro Apartments” on Sanborn fire insurance maps of the area, stood on Cottage between Billups and Newstead.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> 1909 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

<sup>38</sup> 1916 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

<sup>39</sup> Building permits and 1916 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

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Non-residential uses in the neighborhood were quite limited. Two additional churches had been established: the St. James A.M.E. Church at the corner of St. Ferdinand and Billups and the Seventh Day Adventist Church on Cottage. Several stores were located along Billups, at the Garfield and North Market intersections. The Kicker Building commercial block stood on Newstead at North Market. The pattern of corner stores was strongly evident on Annie Malone. Dr. Martin Luther King had both residential and commercial areas with commercial buildings flanking the intersection with Annie Malone and dominating the two blocks to the west. Groups of stores stood both east and west of Annie Malone. A greenhouse business was located on the north side of Cote Brilliante in the W. 4200 block. The Century Woodworking Company had premises that extended through the block between North Market and St. Ferdinand avenues, west of Whittier. An iron works and carpet cleaning business on Dr. Martin Luther King Drive completed the industrial component of the neighborhood.

The 1920 U.S. Census for The Ville neighborhood shows that while black schools and religious institutions were beginning to concentrate in the area that became The Greater Ville, the population of the area was also changing. Though the majority of residents were white, a significant proportion of the residents were black (see Figure 5). Of the ninety-eight city blocks located in what is called the "Greater Ville" between Evans, Marcus, Ashland and Sarah, only one block, City Block 3683, was completely occupied by African-Americans. Twenty-five other blocks were more than 50 percent black; in another twenty-eight blocks fewer than 50 percent of the total residences had African-American living in them. The remaining forty-four blocks were occupied by whites and two families identified as "oriental." The occupations of the residents of the north side of the 4200 block of Cote Brilliante indicate that in 1920 most males had blue-collar jobs, though a proprietor of an undertaking business, a letter carrier, and an insurance agent resided on the block; the women included a dressmaker and a laundress.<sup>40</sup>

### **The Ville in 1950.**

The dense development of The Ville was completed by 1930 in a manner that reinforced earlier residential patterns and added more multi-family dwellings. Only a handful of vacant lots remained in the blocks between Marshall School and Sumner High School, between Whittier and Newstead. One of these lots was on the north side of Cote Brilliante, separating a row of flats from single family homes in the W. 4200 block. Another was on the south side of Aldine, adjacent to a group of flats that faced Billups. A few lots on the south side of North Market, between Goode and Billups, remained vacant. Since most single-family houses were built on single lots,

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<sup>40</sup> 1920 federal census enumeration sheets, compiled by Andrea Gagen, Cultural Resources Office.

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side yards were rare. Nevertheless some existed on North Market and on the south side of St. Ferdinand in the W. 4200 block.<sup>41</sup>

Multiple-family dwellings occupied many of the larger properties as yet undeveloped in 1916. Several groups of flats, in the Negro tenement type with rows of buildings placed perpendicular to the street, were built. L. Grossberg erected three two-story buildings of this type on the south side of Cote Brilliante in the 4300 block in 1927. A similar group was placed on the north side of St. Ferdinand adjacent to Newstead and a group of rowhouse-flats stood on the south side of St. Ferdinand in the same block. A group of five dwellings on the south side of Aldine in the 4200 block had been sited perpendicular to the street in the manner of the tenement flats; another set of Negro tenements had been built on the south side of Aldine in the 4500 block.<sup>42</sup>

Smaller building parcels were developed primarily with single- and two-family dwellings, as well as some larger flat buildings. The four-family flat building at 4200-4202 W. Cote Brilliante dates from 1927. The two two-family ones on St. Ferdinand were built in 1926 and 1928. Small apartment buildings were not constructed in The Ville.<sup>43</sup>

During the segregated residential period, the commercial component of The Ville neighborhood expanded primarily on Dr. Martin Luther King. Stores were built between flat buildings and the sidewalk in formerly residential areas and new commercial buildings were erected. Nevertheless, as was typical in St. Louis, small stores continued to be located throughout the neighborhood on some of the north/south streets. Some of these businesses were black-owned and others were not, for at least of portion of the segregated residential period. Annie Malone's Poro College was the most important commercial development in The Ville. The Poro College building, built in 1917 at St. Ferdinand and Billups, housed the Amytis movie theater and after the college closed in 1930, a hotel, as well as storefronts facing Billups. A neighborhood commercial area was located just to the south of Poro College at Billups and North Market, where a drugstore, shoe store, and filling station did business. The black-owned businesses in this area included Wilson's Dry Goods store on Billups and the Wardlow's market and confectionery. Two service stations, a beauty salon, and a barber shop were located on Whittier. A store in a basement of a large dwelling on Annie Malone, a small store among the four quite small buildings erected to the rear of the dwelling at the corner of Annie Malone and Aldine, and several small stores on Whittier just north of Dr. Martin Luther King document modest expansions to the commercial sector. Two of the neighborhood restaurants, Newton's Frosted Malt Bar and the Thrill Grill, were located on Billups. Five beauty shops served the neighborhood in addition to the Poro Beauty School. The Century

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<sup>41</sup> 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

<sup>42</sup> 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map; Building permit.

<sup>43</sup> 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

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Woodworking Company remained in operation and an auto parts warehouse was adjacent to the Poro College building. By 1950, the non-residential uses included three additional churches in the neighborhood.<sup>44</sup>

### Segregated Community Life

As Contexts I and II describe, the residents of The Ville were part of a community with its own schools, churches, hospital, and other institutions. The black community was multi-faceted by the time that the Great Migration brought waves of new residents into St. Louis and The Ville. Black community leaders responded to the expansion of their community in several ways. The Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, established in 1918, coordinated the practical matters of life: employment, housing, education and health care services. Members of the leadership group, which historian Clarence Lang described as “heavily composed of struggling black capitalists and trained professionals,” were active in local chapters of the National Negro Business League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, as well as in many local organizations.<sup>45</sup>

Lang makes the point that leaders in the black community successfully negotiated for a share of public resources for The Ville and its residents. While a vast majority of blacks in St. Louis worked as skilled and unskilled laborers, a middle class expanded to provide services to an African American clientele. Schoolteachers, doctors, nurses, and lawyers, and also beauticians and barbers provided these services. In segregated communities like The Ville, racial and religious affiliations were often stronger than class differences; city directories and census records show that The Ville did have a varied population. Though The Ville had an enviable set of public institutions, and children were raised to “confident adulthood sheltered from white racism,” the overcrowding of schools and housing, as well as other unequal conditions that existed, were due to the framework of racial segregation policies in The Ville.<sup>46</sup>

Home ownership was possible in The Ville neighborhood and therefore was an important physical symbol of the careful management of financial resources. What is known about leaders in The Ville community indicates that home ownership came at different times to the neighborhood residents. James T. and Bernice Bush purchased their home at 4243 W. Cote Brilliante in 1913, at the beginning of the time when he was a community leader. Dr. Herman S. and Mary Dreer rented at several locations before they purchased the lot at 4335 Cote Brilliante and built a house (NRHP

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<sup>44</sup> 1951 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, St. Louis Chapter of National Negro Business League, *Metropolitan St. Louis Negro Directory* (1943). Grace and Herman Morgan interview, The Ville Interviews, Priscilla Dowden and Athinia Frazier, September 7, 1997, Cultural Resources Office The Ville files, 1, 2.

<sup>45</sup> Clarence Lang, *Grassroots at the Gateway: Class Politics & Black Freedom Struggle in St. Louis, 1936-75* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 17.

<sup>46</sup> Lang, 22.

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2008).<sup>47</sup> Several savings and loan entities were established by African-American businessmen to assist would-be homeowners. The New Age Federal Loan and Savings Association, founded in 1915, provided loans and mortgages for home construction and purchase. The Peoples Financial Corporation followed in 1923 to serve working class blacks who had trouble obtaining credit. The Elleardsville Financial Corporation was founded in 1926 to finance home ownership as well. Dreer and Bush, and other residents of The Ville, were involved in these local financial institutions. The tie between home ownership and a pride in the neighborhood was recognized by the Elleardsville Civic League, which awarded prizes for the best-kept yard.<sup>48</sup> The owners of small brick homes in The Ville had a status above that of those renting housing in the neighborhood, yet they lived quite close together on the same streets. Renting a house or part of a free-standing two-family dwelling represented a step up from renting space in the older, more crowded rowhouse-flats.

Residents in The Ville during the Depression were affected by the disproportionate unemployment rate of blacks in the city. Many of the residents worked in the building trades as carpenters, bricklayers, painters, electricians and roofers, and no doubt were often out of work during this period. The small black businessmen who served blacks suffered the secondary effects of this unemployment. Yet during this period, blacks became more influential in city politics and civil rights interests. Edwina Wright, a teacher at Sumner High School in The Ville, led the Housewives League members in a movement that protested the lack of black employees in white-owned retail stores. Activists also were responsible for reversing some decisions about the black schools and supported the establishment in 1934 of the Booker T. Washington Vocational Training School for Negroes in the 1911 Franklin School at 814 19<sup>th</sup> Street (NRHP 2005).<sup>49</sup> The St. Louis Federation of Block Units, a volunteer organization founded in 1932,<sup>50</sup> promoted improvements in the physical environment, including the creation of community gardens and playgrounds in the black neighborhoods. Clarence Lang summarizes this activity as benefiting blacks across class lines and contributing to the overall improvement in the quality of life in The Ville and other black neighborhoods.<sup>51</sup>

Many citizens in The Ville participated in professional organizations, unions, and many social groups. James T. Bush was one of the founders and the president of the black National Alliance of

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<sup>47</sup> Kathleen E. Shea, Andrea Gagen and Jan Cameron. Dr. Herman S. Dreer House National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, St. Louis (Independent City), 2008, draft James T. Bush House National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 2006, City of St. Louis Cultural Resources Office, The Ville files.

<sup>48</sup> Dr. Herman S. Dreer House National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form and Lang, 21.

<sup>49</sup> Tom Duda and Matthew Bevins, Landmarks Association, "Franklin School," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, St. Louis (Independent City), 2004.

<sup>50</sup> "Auxiliaries — Federation of Block Units," *Urban League of St. Louis Metropolitan St. Louis web site* (accessed 31 August 2011). [http://www.ulstl.org/federation\\_of\\_block\\_units.aspx](http://www.ulstl.org/federation_of_block_units.aspx).

<sup>51</sup> *Metropolitan St. Louis Negro Directory* (1943), Lang, 38-41.

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Postal Employees; two other officers of this group also resided in The Ville. Members of the St. Louis Beauticians Association Local 125 noted their affiliation in the *Metropolitan St. Louis Negro Directory* published by the St. Louis Chapter of National Negro Business League in 1943. Since women's groups tended to meet in homes, it is likely that many of the meetings of the Worthy Matrons of the Order of the Eastern Star, Alpha Kappa Alpha and Sigma Gamma Rho sororities, and the Firemen's Wives Auxiliary were held in residences throughout The Ville.<sup>52</sup>

### Educators in The Ville

The provision of a complete school system for blacks in The Ville shaped life in the neighborhood in many ways. By 1920, black residents could complete their education from grade school through college within a few blocks. As the Marshall School National Register of Historic Places nomination points out, the schools were community gathering places for social events and were where neighborhood residents attended PTA meetings and enjoyed plays, festivals, lectures and fund-raisers. The children spent time at the schools for scout and other club meetings.<sup>53</sup>

This concentration of schools was accompanied by a large group of black educators – teachers and administrators – many of whom lived in The Ville. Over two hundred teachers lived in The Ville in 1943. These teachers included those who taught in black schools outside The Ville, but many of them taught at schools within walking distance of their homes. The teachers' residences were clustered on some of the streets with Aldine (28), Cote Brilliante (36), Garfield (24), and Kennerly (18) having the largest numbers of teachers residing on them. Over fifty teachers lived in the blocks in the heart of The Ville described in this context. The occupancy patterns varied and some teachers appear to have been boarders or residents of houses converted to flats. Some groups of women teachers lived together. In some cases, husband and wife were both teachers.

As much as any other group, the teachers in The Ville linked residential life to the institutions that defined The Ville culture and community. Oral histories recount how teachers were expected to conduct themselves inside of and outside of the classroom in a manner that was above reproach. Grace and Herman Morgan, both teachers in The Ville, note that the teachers lived in the neighborhood and walked to school. They taught the children how to live by the "Village rules" and to respect all adults. Mrs. Morgan recalls that the graduates from Stowe Teachers College were told "Ladies, I don't care how young you are, you are a teacher. You are a teacher when you walk down the streets and you are a teacher at home." One indication of the regard in which educators were held was the renaming of Pendleton, now Billups Avenue, after Dr. Kenneth

<sup>52</sup> *Metropolitan St. Louis Negro Directory* (1943).

<sup>53</sup> Cynthia Hill Longwisch and Steven E. Mitchell, Marshall School National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, St. Louis (Independent City), 1999.



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Billups, the music teacher at Sumner High School and later director of music for the St. Louis School system, in 1986.<sup>54</sup>

Towards the end of the segregated residential era, teachers were apprehensive about the changes to the close-knit community in The Ville that could result from school desegregation. These concerns ranged from questioning the effectiveness of desegregated education for black children to fears of losing their positions to white teachers. The teachers in The Ville shaped the future of the desegregated school system and of black teachers. After decades of separate state-wide professional teachers' organizations, the Missouri Teachers Association (the black group) and the Missouri State Teachers Association completed a merger in 1949. By the time that St. Louis schools were desegregated in 1954 and 1955, George D. Brantley and other black educators employed in the Superintendent's office had been involved with exchange programs and other initiatives that prepared the school system for this change. While desegregation of the schools was an important milestone, statistics show that demographics in the schools in The Ville did not alter significantly during the mid-1950s. The enrollment in Sumner High School decreased by nearly 300 in 1955 as students attended schools closer to where they lived, but no white students attended.<sup>55</sup>

### POPULATION CHANGES AND PUBLIC POLICY

The 1930 U.S. Census documents that the non-white population in The Ville neighborhood was 86 percent. Of the ninety-eight blocks, sixty had some African-American occupancy. Eight city blocks were completely African-American, and another twenty-eight were over 50 percent black. The other twenty-four blocks, extending as far west as Cora Avenue and as far north as Ashland were occupied by a mix of black and white residents (see Figure 6). In 1930, the occupants of the north side of the 4200 block of Cote Brillante included more white-collar workers than it had in 1920: two ministers, a teacher, a clerk for the railroad. A Pullman Porter, a saleslady in a clothing store, and business man who operated a driving service lived with many who had blue-collar occupations.<sup>56</sup>

The housing shortage after World War II and related overcrowding in existing housing was especially acute for black residents of St. Louis, whose choices were exceptionally limited and

<sup>54</sup> Grace and Herman Morgan interview, 9, 10; *St. Louis Street Index*, electronic version provided by the St. Louis Public Library, <http://www.slpl.lib.mo.us/libsrc/b-street.htm> (accessed September 6, 2011).

<sup>55</sup> Jessica McCully, "Black Resistance to School Desegregation in St. Louis during the *Brown* Era," 2009, digital version available at University of Missouri St. Louis website: <http://stlmre.umsf.edu/Data/McCulley-Desegregation.pdf> (accessed 29 August 2011) George D. Brantley, "Present Status of Integration in the Public Schools of Missouri," *Journal of Negro Education* 24(3) (Summer 1955), 295, 305.

<sup>56</sup> 1930 federal census enumeration sheets, compiled by Andrea Gagen, Cultural Resources Office.

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often substandard in condition. By 1940, all of the blocks in the heart of The Ville neighborhood were at least 76 percent black.<sup>57</sup> Once the 1940 census enumeration sheets are available, it will be possible to get a better understanding of the occupations of the residents.

The population of The Ville neighborhood in 1950 was nearly the same as it was in 1930. Then between 1950 and 1960 the population of The Ville decreased approximately 14 percent, or by 1,500 people. In 1960, The Ville was 99.5 percent non-white. Between 1950 and 1960, home ownership decreased by approximately 9.5 percent; during this same time period the total number of housing units also decreased by the same amount.<sup>58</sup>

During the 1930s new public policies began to affect housing segregation. Two “New Deal” programs, the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), supported a new framework for home ownership through the use of low down payments and private and public mortgage markets. In order to safeguard federally-backed loans and housing subsidies, the HOLC evaluated neighborhoods in terms of risks. These surveys highlighted who lived in neighborhoods as much as the age and quality of the housing stock; areas where residents were all white were rated higher than those with mixed residents. The 1937 HOLC/FHA map for St. Louis identified a large area where African Americans lived that included and surrounded The Ville as having the fourth or lowest residential security rating. The map color for this rating was red, and hence the term “redlining” began to be used to identify areas where investment opportunities were considered to be risky. This program had the effect of acknowledging and even supporting segregation in both existing and new suburban neighborhoods by refusing to make or guarantee mortgage loans in various areas. “Blight” was the additional negative category to emerge from this time period; blight is a poorly-defined term used to indicate areas that are substandard, undesirable and in need of elimination and redevelopment. In 1938, the City Plan Commission declared the Tandy neighborhood — the African-American area that included The Ville— blighted and recommended redevelopment with commercial and industrial uses. The 1947 St. Louis Comprehensive Plan mapped a much larger blighted area across the older residential neighborhoods in the city.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Matthew S. Bivens, *An Architectural and Historical Survey of Both Sides of Cora Avenue from Dr. Martin Luther King Drive to North Market Street in the city of St. Louis, Missouri Survey Report*, (Regional Housing and Community Development Alliance [RHCD], 2011), Exhibit 16.

<sup>58</sup> Census tract summaries, 1920 to 1960, analyzed by Andrea Gagen.

<sup>59</sup> Gordon, 88-89, map 2.6, 205; City of St. Louis, 1947 Comprehensive Plan, plate. 13. <http://stlouis-mo.gov/archive/1947-comprehensive-plan/plates.shtml>.

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The prominent African-American attorney and activist, George L. Vaughn, who represented the Shelleys in the landmark case, *Shelley v. Kraemer*, characterized the segregated housing situation in The Ville during the 1940s:

Negroes have no desire to live among the white people. But we were a people forced into a ghetto, with a resultant artificial scarcity in housing. The Negro had to pay from \$2,000 to \$4,000 more for a home in this ghetto than he would have to pay for comparable housing outside it. His health and moral welfare suffered, and, above all, his dignity of person.<sup>60</sup>

Residents of The Ville were eager to accede to all the perquisites of middle class life that whites in comparable economic status took for granted, and tried various means to break out of the geographical confinement. Blacks participated in the practice known at the time as “flipping.” A white or light-complexioned African-American would purchase a property from a white home owner, then transfer it with a quit-claim deed to the real purchaser of the property. The practice was also known as “block-busting,” and by 1943 it was becoming more and more common as a proven way to force the integration of all-white blocks.<sup>61</sup>

Black homeowners who had the means defied the boundaries of restricted areas in a variety of ways, attempting to purchase property on streets to the west: on Wagoner Place (NRHP 2008), and on Cora and Labadie Avenues and parts of Ashland and Marcus. Recent studies of Wagoner Place and Cora Avenue indicate that the first black residents moved to those streets during the last half of the 1930s and that flipping was used in many cases. These streets of larger residences were attractive to educators and physicians employed at Homer G. Phillips Hospital in particular. After World War II more blacks purchased houses directly and there is evidence that whites were moving out and ignoring the racial covenants that they had signed.<sup>62</sup> Blacks also began to file legal challenges to the enforcement of racial restrictive covenants, finally succeeding with *Shelley v. Kraemer* in 1948. The Shelley house (NRHP 1988; NHL 1990), located at 4600 Labadie in the northwestern portion of the Greater Ville, is just outside the area covered by this MPDF.

In 1947, the St. Louis Urban League published an extensive analysis of housing statistics (see Figure 7).<sup>63</sup> The data in this analysis was obtained by using black and white enrollment figures for public elementary schools for the years 1941, 1945 and 1947. The map produced by the Urban

<sup>60</sup> “417 Block Areas Here Affected by Supreme Court Racial Ruling,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 4 May 1948.

<sup>61</sup> John A. Wright, Sr., *The Ville, Black American Series*, (Chicago: Acadia Publishing, 2001), 113. See also “Restrictive Covenants”, <http://tlc.umsl.duc/dighistory/live-restrictive.cfm> (accessed 22 December 2006).

<sup>62</sup> Kathleen A. Shea and Jan Cameron, Wagoner Place Historic District National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. St. Louis (Independent City), 2007.

<sup>63</sup> “Negro Area Trend Map.” 1947. Urban League of St. Louis Files, 1920-1992, box sl 93, folder 5, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri-St. Louis.

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League shows seventy-six blocks for The Ville neighborhood as being predominately African-American.<sup>64</sup> 1950 census data coincides with these findings and documents the expansion of the predominantly black blocks to the west and south.<sup>65</sup> The Real Estate Exchange continued to attempt to limit where African-Americans could purchase property; it published a map in 1944 (see Figure 4) that delineated areas as “Negro settlements.” During the early 1950s, real estate advertisements “for colored” defined a “Negro Community” bounded by Delmar on the south, Natural Bridge to the north, Grand on the east and Union on the west.<sup>66</sup>

The landmark *Shelley v. Kraemer* case opened the door to a period of change in housing segregation that extended much beyond the vicinity of The Ville and St. Louis. It also marked the end of legally sanctioned use of restrictive covenants that among the factors that so clearly defined the Ville as the concentrated center of African American residential and social life. While changes that started in the 1940s continued after 1950, that year is used as the end of the period of significance. The 1950s and the following decades constitute the next chapter in the history of The Ville and its residential patterns. While the city’s schools were officially desegregated by the Supreme Court ruling in 1954, historians have noted how little the population of many schools changed due to the fact that the school district boundaries were not redrawn and there was no immediate large-scale relocation of black residents.<sup>67</sup> Soon thereafter, The Ville entered a period marked by disinvestment, a declining population, and the loss of buildings. The story of The Ville neighborhood is the story of the unrelenting struggle of African-American citizens for respect; and for equal opportunities in education, social services, civil rights and housing.

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<sup>64</sup> Negro Area Trend Map, 1947.

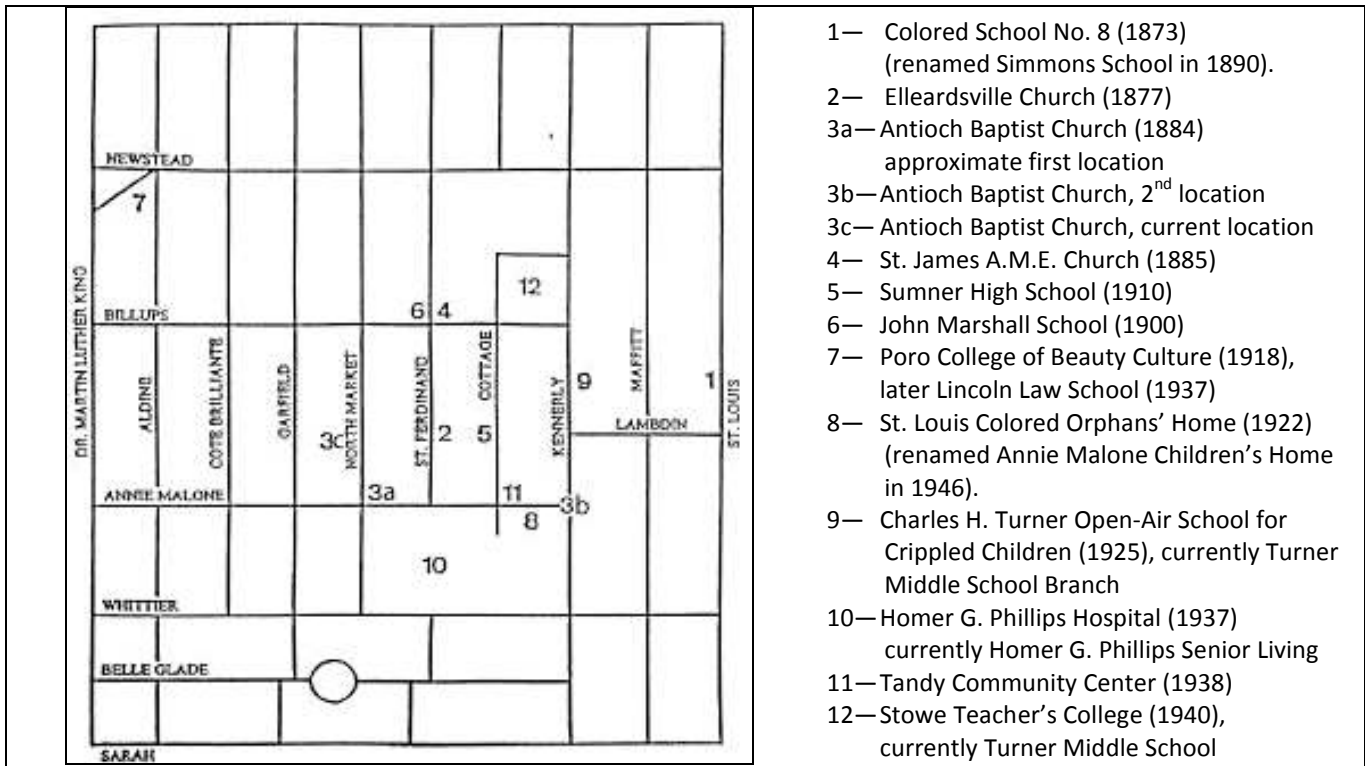
<sup>65</sup> Gordon, 3, 5, 88.

<sup>66</sup> Gordon, 86.

<sup>67</sup> Freivogel. 211.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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- 1— Colored School No. 8 (1873)  
(renamed Simmons School in 1890).
- 2— Elleardsville Church (1877)
- 3a— Antioch Baptist Church (1884)  
approximate first location
- 3b— Antioch Baptist Church, 2<sup>nd</sup> location
- 3c— Antioch Baptist Church, current location
- 4— St. James A.M.E. Church (1885)
- 5— Sumner High School (1910)
- 6— John Marshall School (1900)
- 7— Poro College of Beauty Culture (1918),  
later Lincoln Law School (1937)
- 8— St. Louis Colored Orphans' Home (1922)  
(renamed Annie Malone Children's Home  
in 1946).
- 9— Charles H. Turner Open-Air School for  
Crippled Children (1925), currently Turner  
Middle School Branch
- 10— Homer G. Phillips Hospital (1937)  
currently Homer G. Phillips Senior Living
- 11— Tandy Community Center (1938)
- 12— Stowe Teacher's College (1940),  
currently Turner Middle School

Fig. 1 — Location of early African-American Institutions in The Ville<sup>68</sup>

<sup>68</sup> From John Fulmer; Jennifer Spence; and Joseph L. Harl, "The Ville: Transformations in an American Neighborhood." Research Report #11. Archaeological Research Center, St. Louis. April 1995. Copy in Missouri Cultural Resource Inventory, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, State Historic Preservation Office, Jefferson City, Missouri.

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Fig. 2 — Location of race-restricted covenants in St. Louis, 1945<sup>69</sup>  
(Approximate boundaries of The Ville shown dotted)

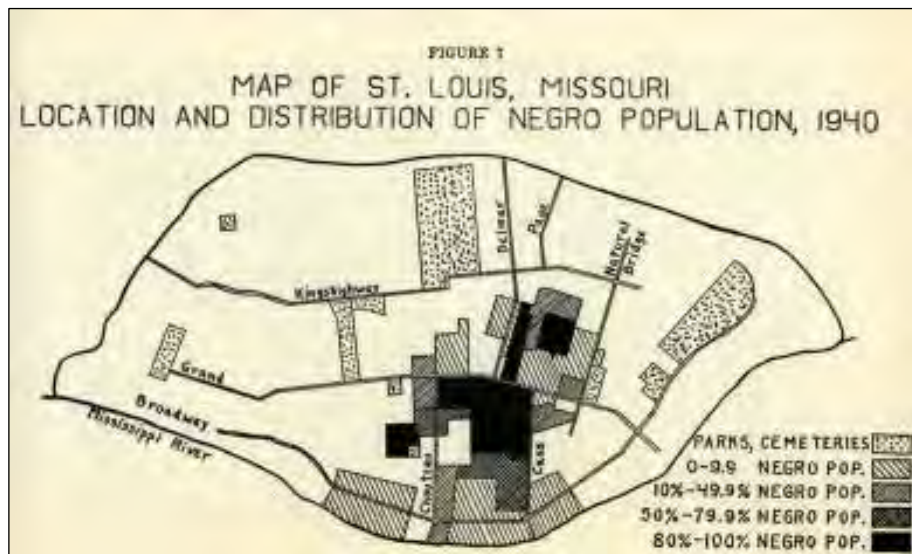


Fig. 3 — Black settlement patterns in St. Louis, 1940<sup>70</sup>  
The Ville is the black square in the upper right; the Greater Ville is the L-shape adjacent to its top and left)

<sup>69</sup> Long and Johnson, 24.

<sup>70</sup> Long and Johnson, 28.

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Fig. 4 — Location of areas designated by the St. Louis Real Estate Exchange for “negro settlement” in St. Louis, 1944<sup>71</sup>

(Approximate boundaries of The Ville neighborhood shown in white)

<sup>71</sup> Long and Johnson, 60.

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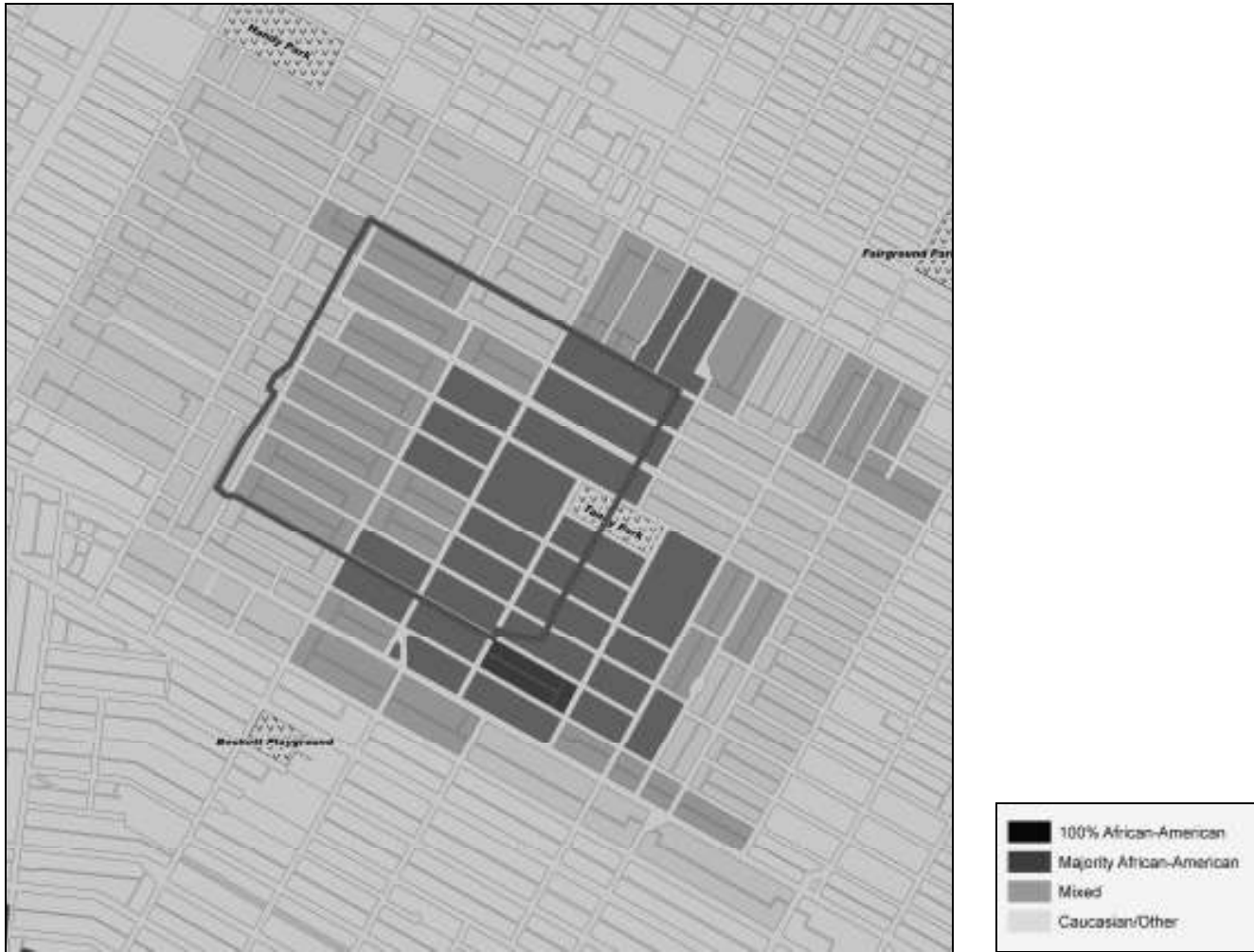


Fig. 5 — African-American Residents in The Ville in 1920 (per US Census Records)



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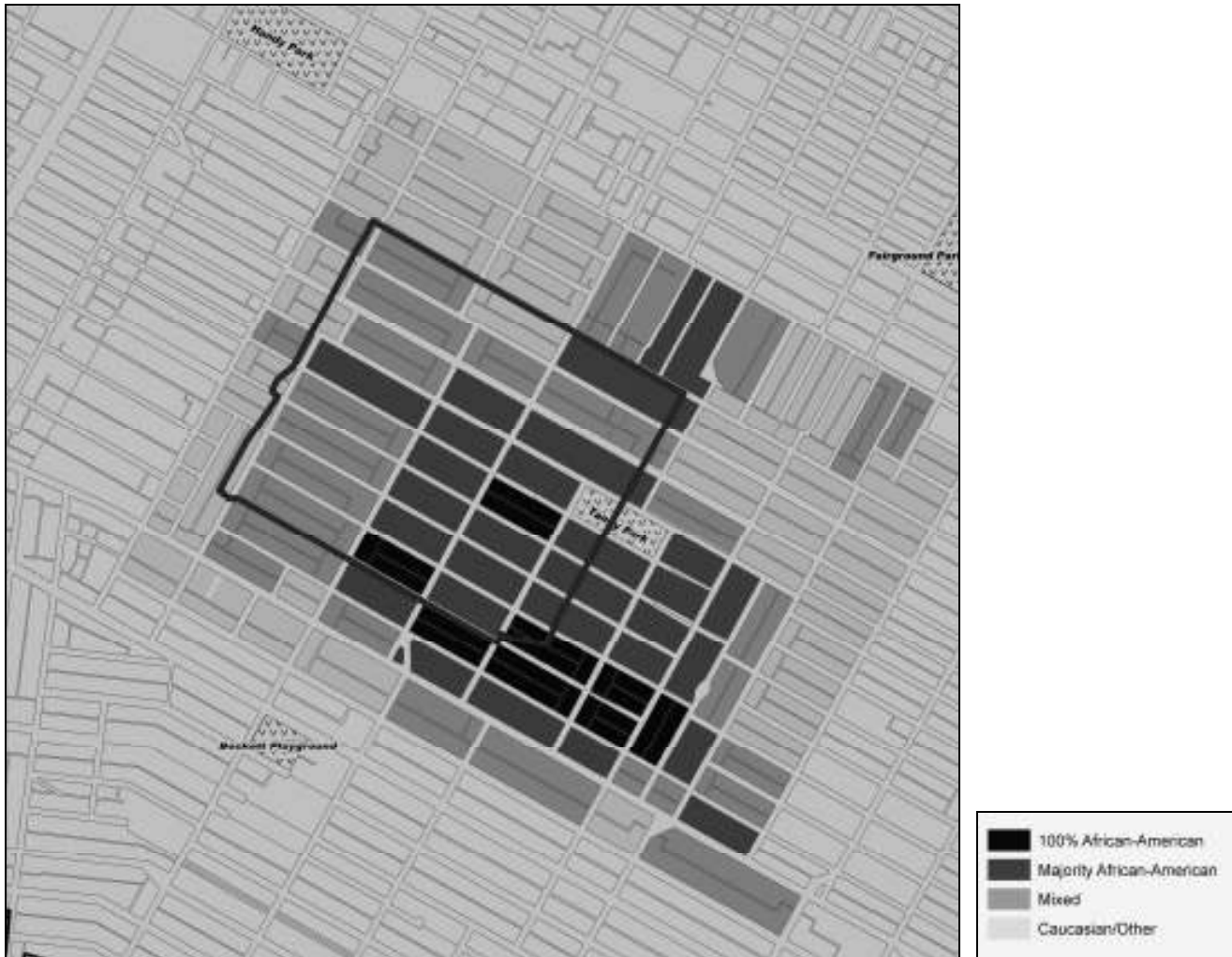


Fig. 6 — African-American Residents in The Ville in 1930 (per US Census Records)

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Fig. 7 — Detail of black settlement patterns in St. Louis, 1941-47<sup>72</sup>

<sup>72</sup> "Negro Area Trend Map" 1947. Urban League of St. Louis Files, 1920-1992, box sl 93, folder 5, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri-St. Louis.

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## F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

### Associated Property Type No. 1

- I. Name of Property Type: Institutional Buildings
- II. Description: The buildings in institutional use in The Ville vary in size, appearance, degree of monumentality, and use, although a few common qualities may be noted. Institutional buildings are defined as those buildings which were public or semi-public in nature and which served a function designed to promote or enhance the social welfare of the residents of The Ville. Through most of the period covered in this Multiple Property Submission, the buildings were segregated racially.

Twelve institutional-use buildings identified in The Ville to date include five schools, one hospital, one orphans' home, one community center, a firehouse and three churches. They are:

McPheeters Memorial Presbyterian Church (constructed in 1888 as St. James Episcopal Church, but significant for its black Presbyterian congregation from 1910-c. 1960)

Simmons Colored School (1898)

Marshall School (1900)

St. Matthew's Church (constructed 1906 as part of St. Matthew's Parish Complex, NRHP 1986)

Sumner High School (1908-1909; NRHP 1988)

Antioch Baptist Church (1921)

St. Louis Colored Orphans' Home (1922; now known as the Annie Malone Children and Family Service Center)

Charles Turner Open Air School (1924)

Homer G. Phillips Hospital (1932-1936; now Homer G. Phillips Dignity House/Senior Living Community)

Stowe Teachers College (1938-1954; known now as Turner Middle School, 1955-present)

Tandy Community Center (1938)

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Engine House No. 10 (no building permit available: still in use as a firehouse)

These institutional buildings were constructed of brick and conform to the residential scale of the neighborhood, with the exception of three previously-listed properties: the Homer G. Phillips Hospital, Sumner High School, and St. Matthews Church. Each building reflects the purpose for which it was built. For example, the Charles Turner Open Air School was constructed with only a minimal door sill for the wheelchair-bound students to cross. Tandy primarily houses a gym and swimming pool, functions expressed simply in large, square exterior proportions. The St. Louis Colored Orphans' Home was designed in a Colonial Revival style that belies strongly with surrounding residential architecture that was deemed an appropriate expression for an original institutional function of housing more than fifty children at any given time. With the exception of Tandy Community Center and the St. Louis Colored Orphans' Home, all are sited at grade. The public buildings (the schools, hospital, orphans' home and community center) were built to withstand a great deal of use over a period of years, the smaller churches somewhat less so. Buff brick was used in the eligible properties constructed after 1930; those built before 1930 are red or brown brick. With the exceptions of Marshall School, the institutional buildings in The Ville were built specifically for and continue to be associated with the service of the black community. All have served the black community almost exclusively since about 1930.

- III. Significance: The Ville's institutional buildings are significant under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage—Black since they represent notable African American accomplishment in an era of segregation. The Ville, like segregated communities in cities, towns and rural areas across Missouri and much of the nation, existed as an isolated world, separate and apart from the larger white community which surrounded it. Mobility was controlled by white political and economic conventions, de facto and de jure. Contact between the separate societies was permitted only to the extent it benefited the larger white society. The institutions of The Ville represented an effort to retain and exercise a measure of self-determination. As such, they performed a more vital function than merely the social function they provided; they served to nurture and preserve African American identity and autonomy. They also provided the only access to many of the vital social and support services which were denied to African Americans by a racist society. In fact, many of the institutions were founded specifically to serve the black community of The Ville at a time when such services were rare in St. Louis in general. These same institutions flourished during the heyday of black culture in The Ville from 1910 to 1950, drawing black professionals and members of the middle class to the neighborhood. During the same period institutions such as Marshall School and St. Matthew's Church, although constructed for the use of white residents, gradually assumed roles as integral parts of The Ville's African American community. That

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these institutions have endured through more recent, less prosperous times makes them all the more remarkable. That they remain today as reminders both of The Ville's initial importance to local black history and to its continuity in the city underscores their significance.

- IV. Registration Requirements: To be eligible for individual listing in the area of ethnic heritage-black, institutional buildings must have played a significant role in African American culture and history in St. Louis. Although an original construction by and for African Americans is not a requirement, a property not originally connected to black history must have specifically served the African American community in St. Louis, either during the seminal stages of black settlement in The Ville prior to 1910 or during the "glory days" of black culture in The Ville from 1910 through the 1950s. Most importantly, and obviously, the building must have had and served a public, or institutional, function; it must have served the social needs of the African American community of The Ville. Buildings which might be included in this property type served educational, religious and social welfare functions, such as churches, schools, and some government or public works buildings. Under Criterion A, integrity of materials, design, location and association will be most important. Additions should appear in scale with the main building, on side or rear elevations only, and not detract from the context of the building. Alterations should not significantly detract from nor substantially alter the historic appearance of the primary elevations. The functions of these institutions may vary widely, and each will necessarily reflect a variety of uses. Buildings must also be located within the boundaries of The Ville as described in Section G.

In completing an intensive reconnaissance survey of the Ville and surrounding blocks in 2005, the prevalence of several additional property types not included in the original multiple property document became apparent. Three new property types and additional sub-types are delineated below.

### **Associated Property Type No. 2**

I Name of Property Type: — Single-Family Dwellings

II. Description:

There are several types of existing single-family dwellings with The Ville Neighborhood due to several decades of development. Many of the pre-1900 dwellings are vernacular buildings that display a variety of styles and types. These dwellings are generally recognized by their form as opposed to their architectural style. The Shotgun, Gabled-El, Narrow Front, One-Story Massed Plan, and One-Story with Raised Basement are the most common forms and types of vernacular single-family dwellings within the neighborhood. Italianate or

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Second Empire styles appear on single family dwellings built within the Ville between 1870 and 1885. These houses are characterized by tall, narrow proportions, both of the building mass and individual elements, and are particularly known for their mansard roofs and bracketed cornices. Some may have plaster facades with incised detail.

After the turn-of-the-20<sup>th</sup> century, architectural styles and housing forms began to follow national trends. A dozen gambrel-roofed brick houses were erected in two groups in 1912 and 1913; one more was built during the late 1920s. These Dutch Colonial style houses were erected in many parts of St. Louis between 1910 and 1915, so it is not surprising to find them in The Ville. Nevertheless, this house type was erected at the time when The Ville was becoming a segregated black neighborhood. The two groups on Cote Brillante were among the newer houses and had decorative entry porches, but were somewhat less expensive to build than two-story all-brick houses. The gambrel roof allowed for a greater ceiling height and therefore more living space on the second story. These factors, more than stylistic considerations, may account for their appearance. Several houses built during the 1920s and after were the Bungalow/Bungaloid type of dwelling. This one or one-and-a-half story house characteristically had a full front porch and low-pitched front gable roof.

### III. Significance — Property Type: Single Family Dwellings

The earliest residential development and extant building stock could be associated with *Context I: Black Settlement in The Ville, 1865 to 1910*, or be associated more closely with the development of Elleardsville. Like many neighborhoods developed for immigrant residents, the area that became The Ville offered a variety of residential property types that accommodated people who were brought together by common social and cultural bonds rather than economic ones. Consequently it was not an area with one predominate house size and type. Residences dating from this early period include both single and multi-family residential types, though single family houses and duplexes predominated. While nationally popular styles were constructed during the early period of development, most extant properties erected prior to 1910 in this neighborhood are best described by their form rather than by applied ornamentation. Though not all of the housing in the Ville was built of brick, the vast majority was and this building material predominates in the building stock that remains.

As residences of the city's black population during the period of residential segregation from 1910 to 1950, the single-family houses in The Ville document the living conditions and the opportunities for middle-class house occupancy and ownership. Extant residential properties in The Ville are associated primarily with *Context III, The Ville as the Product of Residential Segregation Policies, 1910-1950*. The significance of the single-family house is

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derived from its standing as middle-class housing in the neighborhood as it became the segregated neighborhood during the 1910s, and that was built in the neighborhood once it became more fully segregated. The Ville offered African Americans the freedom to purchase or construct housing appropriate to their rising incomes and social status. The limited supply of houses available for purchase drove up the cost of dwellings, making a purchase more of an accomplishment than it otherwise might have been.

Single-family homes convey the more desirable middle-class housing stock and neighborhood setting and represent the ideals of middle-class housing ownership and occupancy in The Ville in the area of black ethnic history. The absence of restrictive covenants on deeds in The Ville made the purchase of a house possible, just as the presence of significant institutions made it desirable for middle-class blacks to move to The Ville in the first place. Because of the restrictions on where blacks could own property and live in the city, a dwelling occupied by a black resident during this period contributes to the understanding of that person's life and position in the community, as well as to the broad pattern of segregated residential life in The Ville as part of black ethnic history.

#### IV. Registration Requirements:

Residential properties in The Ville derive their primary significance from their association with residents in the neighborhood and its role as the center of African American society and culture in St. Louis between 1910 and 1950. Buildings must also be located within the boundaries of The Ville as described in Section G.

Residential properties individually listed in association with this historic context will most commonly be significant under Criterion B (Ethnic Heritage/Black or other area of significance). Properties nominated under Criterion B will have a direct association with the lives of important persons. In order to meet the registration requirements under this criterion, the property must be associated with an individual whose specific contributions to history can be identified and documented to be important within a local, state, or national historic context and that illustrate that person's important achievements. The residences of community leaders in The Ville may be eligible under Criterion B if documentation shows that the residence was important in that person's life and leadership role, for example, if it were the location of informal or formal meetings. The period of significance would be defined by the leadership period of that person's life or the period during which she or he lived in the residence. The level of significance would be determined by the person's achievements.

It is also possible that a residence could be nominated under Criterion A in association with significant events associated with the neighborhood or the larger African American

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community. For example, the residence where a local ladies organization frequently met to discuss neighborhood improvements or the house where important civil rights activities were planned and organized might be significant under Criterion A. Properties individually listed under Criterion A will generally be significant at the local level because their impact is of neighborhood or possibly citywide significance. In some cases, individual residences may be significant at a statewide level if the outcome of the events occurring at the property had regional or statewide implications. The period of significance for these properties will be the date of the span of years in which the specific event or series of events occurred.

It is unlikely that any individual single-family residence will be eligible under Criterion C in the area of Ethnic Heritage/Black because most of the house types and architectural styles extant in The Ville are common throughout the city, and therefore are not especially characteristic of The Ville's historic and cultural significance. Documentation would be required to demonstrate that the architectural style of a residence had particular importance in the context of black history in The Ville.

### **Integrity.**

The historic integrity of a single-family residence must be strong enough to convey its association with the significant persons or events with which it is associated. Replacement siding is acceptable provided that it generally replicates the pattern of original siding and does not obscure important character-defining features of the building style or property type. For example, replacing or covering historic clapboard siding with vinyl, asbestos, Masonite or aluminum/steel siding may be acceptable because it replicates the horizontal lines of the original material. Such re-siding that occurred during the period of significance does not adversely affect historic integrity. In contrast, replacement siding over stucco or masonry, or siding that alters the historic orientation of the original material (i.e. vertically oriented siding over clapboards) dramatically alters the exterior appearance of the building. Replacement windows may be acceptable provided that original exterior wall cladding and other historic features (i.e. porches, window trim, etc.) are intact. Porch alterations may be acceptable provided that historic exterior wall cladding and windows are intact. Additions are acceptable providing they do not obscure the primary elevation and are in scale with the original block of the building. In all cases, the cumulative effects of alterations will need to be assessed. Buildings that have experienced two or more of the above changes (i.e. window and siding replacement, or siding replacement combined with porch alterations) are too altered to reflect their period of significance and historic association.

Integrity of location, setting, feeling and association may vary in quality due to the extensive demolition that has occurred in The Ville. Nevertheless, some of these aspects of



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integrity must be present to enable the property to convey the historic condition of the property during the period of significance.

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### Associated Property Type No. 3

I Name of Property Type: Multi-Family Dwellings

II. Description: There were several types of existing multi-family dwellings within the Ville neighborhood due to its development over a period of time. However, many of the larger multi-family buildings have been demolished. Some building types have disappeared entirely from the neighborhood, such as the rowhouse-flats, the Negro tenements, and the Negro apartments. The flats in the two-story attached rowhouse configuration, as depicted on the Sanborn fire insurance maps, consisted of quite small units. The term "Negro tenement" appears on Sanborn fire insurance maps on some groups of attached houses set perpendicularly to the street to maximize the number of housing units on a site. The term "Negro apartment" appears on a small three-story brick apartment building on Cottage that was built by 1909. Therefore, the remaining multi-family buildings are a partial representation of what existed during the period of segregated residential practices.

The two-family flat is by far the most common multi-family building remaining in The Ville of the various housing types in this broad category. Sanborn fire insurance maps confirm that during the period of significance this housing type had a strong presence as well. Some of the two-family flats were large and stylish enough to be in the middle-class housing category; others were more modest. Built of brick, mainly between 1900 and 1930, these types of buildings display a variety of architectural styles including Vernacular, Craftsman, and Revival styles. Limited examples of four-family flat buildings and walk-up apartment buildings remain in The Ville neighborhood.

III. Significance :

In most cases, the two-family flats were built by developers at the turn-of-the-20<sup>th</sup>-century. As the black population of The Ville increased after 1910, successful blacks began to rent and purchase these homes, like they did single-family dwellings, as a desirable residential situation and as a sign of middle-class status. The absence of restrictive covenants on deeds in The Ville made the purchase of the two-family flats possible, just as the presence of significant institutions made it worthwhile for middle-class blacks to move to The Ville. Occupying one flat and renting the other one was no doubt a way to ease the burden of mortgage payments. The Shelley family's decision to purchase a two-family flat in an area with deed restrictions resulted in the landmark *Shelley v. Kraemer* Supreme Court decision. The Shelley's real estate transaction indicates the usefulness of this building type to black residents of St. Louis.

Larger multi-family dwellings other than two-family flats in The Ville did not have the same connection to middle-class status, but were located in better surroundings than the

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crowded tenements near downtown. The mix of the two-family flats and the less desirable multiple-family dwellings provided homes for blacks with various levels of income.

Like single-family dwellings, multi-family residential properties individually listed in association with this historic context will most commonly be significant under Criterion B in the black ethnic heritage area of significance, or perhaps under Criterion A. The significance discussed in that section above pertains to this similar property type as well.

#### IV. Registration Requirements:

Residential properties in The Ville derive their primary significance from their association with the segregated residential use of the neighborhood shaped by restrictive housing practices between c. 1910 and c. 1950. Two-family flat properties individually listed in association with this historic context will most commonly be significant under Criterion B (Ethnic Heritage/Black or other area of significance) or Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage/Black.

Properties nominated under Criterion B will have a direct association with the lives of important persons. In order to meet the registration requirements under this criterion, the property must be associated with an individual whose specific contributions to history can be identified and documented to be important within a local, state, or national historic context and that illustrate that person's important achievements. The residences of community leaders in The Ville may be eligible under Criterion B if documentation shows that the residence was important in that person's life and leadership role, as in the location of informal and formal meetings. The period of significance would be defined by the leadership period of that person's life or the period during which she or he lived in the residence. The level of significance would be determined by the person's achievements.

Two-family flats nominated under Criterion A may be sites of significant events associated with the neighborhood or larger African American community. For example, the residence where a local ladies organization frequently met to discuss neighborhood improvements or the house where important civil rights activities were planned and organized might be significant under Criterion A. Properties individually listed under Criterion A will generally be significant at the local level because their impact is of neighborhood or possibly citywide significance. In some cases, individual residences may be significant at a statewide level if the outcome of the events occurring at the property had regional or statewide implications. The period of significance for these properties will be the span of years in which the specific event or series of events occurred.

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It is unlikely that any individual multi-family residence will be eligible under Criterion C in the area of Ethnic Heritage/Black because most of the house types and architectural styles extant in The Ville are common throughout the city, and therefore are not especially characteristic of The Ville's historic and cultural significance. Documentation would be required to demonstrate that the architectural style of the residence had particular importance in the context of black history in The Ville. Buildings must also be located within the boundaries of The Ville as described in Section G.

### **Integrity.**

The historic integrity of a multi-family residence must be strong enough to convey its association with the significant persons or events with which it is associated. Replacement siding is acceptable provided that it generally replicates the pattern of original siding and does not obscure important character-defining features of the building style or property type. For example, replacing or covering historic clapboard siding with vinyl, asbestos, Masonite or aluminum/steel siding may be acceptable because it replicates the horizontal lines of the original material. Such re-siding that occurred during the period of significance does not adversely affect historic integrity. In contrast, replacement siding over stucco or masonry, or siding that alters the historic orientation of the original material (i.e. vertically oriented siding over clapboards) dramatically alters the exterior appearance of the building. Replacement windows may be acceptable provided that original exterior wall cladding and other historic features (i.e. porches, window trim, etc.) are intact. Porch alterations may be acceptable provided that historic exterior wall cladding and windows are intact. Additions are acceptable providing they do not obscure the primary elevation and are in scale with the original block of the building. In all cases, the cumulative effects of alterations will need to be assessed. Buildings that have experienced two or more of the above changes (i.e. window and siding replacement, or siding replacement combined with porch alterations) are considered too altered to reflect their period of significance and historic association.

Integrity of location, setting, feeling and association may vary in quality due to the extensive demolition that has occurred in The Ville. Nevertheless, some of these aspects of integrity must be present to enable the property to convey the historic condition of the property during the period of significance.

### **Associated Property Type No. 4**

- I. Name of Property Type: Groups of Residences/Districts

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- II. Description: A significant amount of building demolition has taken place in The Ville since the end of the segregated residential period covered by this MPDF. Nevertheless, a small number of areas of intact middle-class single and multiple-family housing units remain. These groups of single- and two-family residences can convey significant aspects of segregated black life in The Ville and hence are an important historic property type. Such properties are significant because of their association with the implementation of a historic movement in the northern United States to control and restrict the rapidly increasing numbers of blacks migrating from the rural south to the industrial north.

The strongest historic pattern in residential development in The Ville, as noted in Context III, is the neighborhood's dense development with a combination of residential building types housing a burgeoning population during the segregated housing era. As the black residents of The Ville replaced whites and their numbers increased during the decades of the Great Migration when there were few alternative residential areas open to them, this density remained a significant aspect of the residential component of The Ville history. With few vacant lots and side yards, the streets were lined with houses and two-family flats built in groups and areas with a more varied housing stock. Because this was a built environment largely constructed for the white residents of Elleardsville during the late nineteenth-century, and then further built-out during the early twentieth, it demonstrates residential construction patterns used widely in St. Louis and has houses in the typical building types and styles. Yet this physical environment also conveys a significant aspect of living in a racially segregated neighborhood in the area of black ethnic history: the possibility of middle-class residence occupancy and ownership in a neighborhood with a considerable amount of this type of housing.

The description and evaluation of the middle-class housing in The Ville must be considered in the context of the less desirable housing that was historically present, but has been demolished. The counterparts to the single-family and small flat buildings – rowhouse-flats and tenements – existed in close proximity. The Negro flats, or tenements, were the physical demonstration that many people who lived in the neighborhood had limited money for housing and few choices in where to live. The rowhouse-flats, perhaps a step up from the tenements due to their individual entrances, were more common. Both types of residences were extant in the late 1970's, but only one group stood into the 1990s.

- III. Significance: The surviving housing stock in this neighborhood consists of the building types associated with middle-class flat and house occupancy and ownership. Both the houses and two-family flats that were built in The Ville prior to the segregated residential period, and those built once that period was underway, are directly associated with an important goal of middle class life – living in a single-family home or flat building and

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perhaps even owning it on a street of similar houses. The founding of three credit-providing entities in the black community to assist with black home ownership underscores the challenges and importance of this aspect of life. The Block Unit program and contests that encouraged maintaining a good-looking yard were additional evidence of the importance of a middle-class residential setting in The Ville. The areas of The Ville where the streets are still lined with single and two-family homes best represent one of the most important sectors of housing in the neighborhood.

Groups of houses can convey the more desirable middle-class housing stock and neighborhood setting that existed during the period of significance and segregated housing area in relationship to the *Context III: The Ville as the Product of Residential Segregation Policies, 1910-1950*. These groups of residences that can be listed as small historic districts have historic significance under Criterion A as the tangible representation of the ideals of middle-class housing ownership and occupancy in The Ville in the area of black ethnic history. Because of the restrictions on where blacks could own property and live in the city, the dwellings —coupled with information on their owners and residents — document and enhance understanding of significant historical residential patterns.

Groups of houses that can be considered districts are particularly significant because they best represent intact areas of what the larger neighborhood was like prior to the extensive amount of demolition that has taken place in recent decades. The varied housing stock that remains, the single and mainly two-family houses that were rented and owned, were important to middle-class residential life in The Ville. These groups of houses represent the neighborhood and home-ownership ideals that provided the physical and legal context for the landmark *Shelley v. Kraemer* Supreme Court decision. The two-family flat that the Shelleys chose to purchase was similar to dwellings they could have purchased in The Ville neighborhood, but represents the need to find housing beyond the confines of the area set aside for blacks.

Local lore relates that the businessman lived next to the manual laborer in The Ville. As information is gathered about the owners and residents of the housing in The Ville, this assumption can be verified or refuted. Community leaders James T. Bush and Herman Dreer lived on Cote Brilliante, as did many teachers. During the early 1940s, of the row of eight gambrel roof houses on the south side of the 4300 block of Cote Brilliante, teachers lived in six. The streets that have intact groups of houses, in particular those where many teachers resided, can document and convey how this large and influential group of residents functioned in the Ville as part of the larger community. Recent studies have revealed how small districts can contribute much to our understanding of residential patterns. The second period of significance, 1943 to 1948, of the recently listed *Wagoner*

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*Place Historic District* (NRHP 2007) is based on the integration of housing in the district as blacks moved west out of the heart of The Ville. The recent survey of Cora Avenue highlights this area as having a similar history and historic significance based on housing integration that began during the 1930s. Groupings of houses in The Ville have a similar potential to convey patterns in social history and residential patterns that relate to broad patterns of housing segregation and integration, important themes in black history.

- IV. Registration Requirements: To be eligible for listing as a historic district, a group of dwellings must contain a high percentage of intact housing occupied by blacks during the segregated residential period. The group of residences must have the density to convey the built-up qualities of the neighborhood where residents lived in close proximity. Documentation must convey the history and occupancy of the properties during the period of significance and convey how the district is representative of the larger neighborhood. If the groups of houses had any particular identity other than part of the larger neighborhood, this must be documented and discussed. The size and type of dwellings, such as single-family and two-family, and their role in housing neighborhood residents, in most cases, is more important than architectural style in the discussion of individual properties.

Residential historic districts are almost exclusively eligible under Criterion A for association with home ownership and black culture in The Ville in the area of Ethnic History/Black. The period of significance for districts will be the period shaped by segregated residential housing policies, 1910 to 1950, as defined by Context III.

The groups of single-family and two-family housing built prior to and during the segregated residential period of The Ville, common in both building type and style, lack architectural significance in relationship to this area of significance. Moreover, the buildings erected by and for blacks in the neighborhood represent common building types and styles of the period and do not express any overt association with the area of significance. For these reasons, it is not expected that the residential historic districts would be eligible under Criterion C. Under this MPDF context, residential districts will not, as a matter of course, be eligible under Criteria B or D. Buildings must also be located within the boundaries of The Ville as described in Section G.

**Integrity.** The historic integrity of residential historic districts in The Ville rests strongly on the requirement for strong block fronts with few gaps; the presence of the dwellings is critical for conveying the setting, feeling and association with the period of segregated residential period of the Ville and will be the basis for district boundaries. Vacant sites where less desirable rowhouse-flat and tenement housing once stood convey somewhat

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the historic mix of housing and represent a different type of loss of integrity than lots where middle-class housing has been demolished. The integrity of design and materials of the individual buildings must convey the appearance of the building during the period of significance. A significant concentration and majority must retain historic exterior materials (siding, windows, and porch configurations/materials). Infill building within district boundaries should be quite limited in scope and compatible with the size and scale of the historic resources in order to be a minor and not intrusive component of the district streetscape. Setting in historic districts is also important, so features such as road and sidewalk patterns, drives and alleys, historic retaining walls, etc. should also be considered when assessing the integrity of location, setting, feeling and association, as well as the material aspects of the property.



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### G. Geographical Data

The boundaries of The Ville in north St. Louis, Missouri were established in 1987, with the designation of The Ville local historic district, as the east-west alley south of Dr. Martin Luther King Drive on the south, the north-south alley east of Sarah Street on the east, the east-west alley north of St. Louis Avenue to the north, and the north-south alley west of Taylor Avenue to the west.

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## H. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

An initial survey of The Ville was conducted by Landmarks Association of St. Louis in 1983-84. The product, an architectural survey map, plotted the initial evaluation of architectural significance. Follow-up work conducted in 1995-96 sharpened the focus, pinning down builders and dates of construction for each building dating from the historic period.

Background research determined that the most significant contexts shaping The Ville neighborhood were those associated with the history of African American settlement and its status as the historic seat of black St. Louis culture. Properties were therefore evaluated in the light of the two chronological contexts of black settlement and the heyday of black culture in The Ville.

A survey of residential properties in The Ville is documented in *Final Survey Report: Heart of the Ville* completed by Lynn Josse and Michael Allen (August 10, 2010). The objective of this survey was to identify and evaluate residential properties for listing in the National Register of Historic Places within an expanded MPDF. Consultants and the Cultural Resources Office staff determined which blocks were to be included in the survey, an area that included 300 properties. The consultants used the city building permits and *St. Louis Daily Record* to determine building dates, and other primary sources of information, including the 1920 and 1930 federal census records and the 1943 *Metropolitan St. Louis Negro Directory*, and various years of *Gould's Red-Blue Book* "to fill in the historical picture." Important survey results include that after 1920, building permit records show construction of more multi-family units and fewer single-family homes, and that few examples of this building type remain in The Ville. The survey authors included a list of properties recommended for listing in the National Register and identified potential small historic districts of residential properties.

This submittal expands on that work and includes a third context that addresses a significant aspect of African American life in the Ville: The Ville as a Product of Residential Segregation Policies, 1910-1950. This context identifies broad patterns in housing discrimination, segregation, residential and then the beginnings of de-segregation of housing opportunities, as well as residential building patterns, during the period of residential segregation in The Ville.

Registration requirements were determined by a study of property types located in The Ville and the knowledge of their general integrity and associations with relevant themes. Associations with important black themes such as home ownership and education were deemed particularly important.

The institutional properties submitted with the original Multiple Property Document were intended to be the first phase of a long-term project to evaluate and register properties in The Ville. The

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institutions were chosen first because they provided the framework of life in the neighborhood, and in many cases the impetus for settlement in The Ville. This amended submission adds other property types that have been identified in relation to the three historic contexts.

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