

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

**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

**1. Name of Property**

Historic name: Chickasaw Neighborhood Historic District

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

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

**2. Location**

Street & number: Bounded by Broadway to the north, Louis Coleman Jr. Drive to the east, Ohio River to the west, and the southern boundary of Chickasaw Park, the rear of the lots on the southern side of Winnrose Way, Fordson Way, the southern boundary of Greenwood Cemetery and the Paducah and Louisville Railroad track to Louis Coleman Jr.

Drive \_\_\_\_\_

City or town: Louisville State: Kentucky County: Jefferson

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

<p>_____  <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	

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In my opinion, the property   meets   does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of commenting official:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Title :** **State or Federal agency/bureau**  
**or Tribal Government**

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
-

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Name of Property \_\_\_\_\_  
 Site

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Structure

Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2481</u>	<u>269</u>	buildings
_____	<u>179</u>	sites
_____	<u>2</u>	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>2481</u>	<u>450</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 2

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single dwelling \_\_\_\_\_

DOMESTIC /Multiple dwelling \_\_\_\_\_

COMMERCE/TRADE/business \_\_\_\_\_

COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant \_\_\_\_\_

EDUCATION/library \_\_\_\_\_

EDUCATION/school \_\_\_\_\_

RELIGION/church \_\_\_\_\_

FUNERARY/cemetery \_\_\_\_\_

RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility \_\_\_\_\_

LANDSCAPE/park \_\_\_\_\_

VACANT/NOT IN USE \_\_\_\_\_

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**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single dwelling \_\_\_\_\_

DOMESTIC /Multiple dwelling \_\_\_\_\_

COMMERCE/TRADE/business \_\_\_\_\_

COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant \_\_\_\_\_

EDUCATION/library \_\_\_\_\_

EDUCATION/school \_\_\_\_\_

RELIGION/church \_\_\_\_\_

FUNERARY/cemetery \_\_\_\_\_

RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility

LANDSCAPE/park

VACANT/NOT IN USE

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> Bungalow/Craftsman

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/Tudor Revival

MODERN MOVEMENT

NO STYLE

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Wood, brick

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

The Chickasaw Neighborhood Historic District is located in Louisville's West End, west of downtown Louisville. The neighborhood is bounded by Broadway to the north, Louis Coleman Jr. Drive (formerly 34th Street) to the east, the Ohio River to the west, and the former Kentucky state fairgrounds to the south.

The neighborhood has a number of historic focal points. Broadway is a mix of residential and commercial buildings and was originally a white neighborhood.

While the neighborhood is oriented in cardinal directions, it is not a strict grid. However, large portions are a traditional urban neighborhood, defined as an axial grid pattern with houses facing the street.

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Alleys provided vehicular access in the rear. This was the development pattern until the 1930s.

The axial grid pattern continued in the 1930s, but vehicular access to houses was provided by curb cuts and driveways, allowing access to a detached garage.

In the 1950s, subdivisions in the Chickasaw neighborhood departed from the overall grid with dead-end streets. These subdivisions also vary from the traditional urban neighborhood with a lack of curbs.

The latest subdivisions, dating to the 1960s and 1970s, incorporate a suburban design consisting of curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs.<sup>1</sup>

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### Narrative Description

Section 7 describes the traditional urban neighborhood street and platted subdivisions within Chickasaw. Not all streets were platted with subdivisions, and these areas are described by streets. These areas were merely part of the expanding city or were annexed as the city expanded. Named subdivisions are noted. House styles are from Virginia Savage McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> National Register, Suburban.

<sup>2</sup> Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Knopf, 2013).

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## Broadway

Broadway runs east-west across Louisville. The historic district encompasses only the south side of the street. Broadway is the earliest street in the district and this is reflected in the architecture. Construction dates begin in the 1890s, and the street was largely built out by 1928.<sup>3</sup> Houses are a mix of American Foursquares, bungalows, Colonial Revival, and vernacular turn-of-the-century styles. The 1928 Sanborn insurance map indicates that Broadway was built out by its publication. Frame automotive garages are present on the alley. What is markedly not present, however, are stables.

In the historic district, Broadway extends from Louis Coleman Jr. Drive before terminating at the Ohio River and features a tree lawn and sidewalk. The initial subdivisions and traditional urban neighborhoods developed along Broadway, and within a five-to-ten-minute walk were streetcar suburbs aimed at white middle- and upper-class residents. Broadway and the side streets extending to Garland that were developed before the 1930s fit the streetcar suburb development pattern of rectilinear small lots.<sup>4</sup> The development pattern also includes commercial uses at major intersections. In Chickasaw this includes commercial development at Broadway and Louis Coleman Jr. Drive, Broadway, and Cecil Avenue.

Multistory courtyard apartment buildings are another character-defining feature. On Broadway, this includes the Warwick Apartments at Broadway and Southwestern Parkway.

Broadway has one previously listed house, the 1902 Basil Doerhoefer House (NR #83002657), which is also a designated local landmark.<sup>5</sup> The 1908 Peter Doerhoefer House (NR #83002658) was demolished, but not before the interior elements were stripped out. The Doerhoefer brothers, tobacco merchants, built the homes. Later those homes became part of Loretto High School, a Catholic school that moved there in 1925, before being purchased by the present owner, Christ Temple Apostolic Church.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See 1928 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sheets 434, 435, 437, 439.

<sup>4</sup> David L. Ames and Linda Flint McClelland, "Historic Residential Suburbs; Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places," Washington DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2002, 18–19.

<sup>5</sup> "Basil Doerhoefer House/Loretto House School: Draft Report on the Proposed Designation as an Individual Landmark," Metro Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission, June 12, 2023,

<https://louisvilleky.gov/planning-design/document/23-landmark-0001-draft-designation-report>.

<sup>6</sup> Martha Elson, "Emergency Demolition Ordered for Landmark Home," *Courier-Journal*, Aug. 26, 2016, <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/local/centralwest/2016/08/26/emergency-demolition-ordered-landmark-home/89398106/>.

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### Southwestern Parkway

Southwestern Parkway is listed on the National Register, encompassing the portion that extends from Broadway to Winnrose Way. Frederic Law Olmsted designed the parkway in the 1890s. The streetscape features an expansive tree lawn with a single row of trees and a corresponding row in the front lawn right-of-way forming a tree-lined promenade. The street has stone curbs and is asphalt-covered, with a single traffic lane in each direction and a center turn lane. An unprotected bicycle lane is located on each side.

The east side contains residences, predominantly single-family homes with the exception of the 1925 Warwick Hall Apartments on the southeastern corners of Broadway and Southwestern Parkway.

### Chickasaw Park

The Olmsted firm designed Chickasaw Park. It opened in 1922 as a segregated park for African Americans. The park is sixty-one acres in size and borders the Ohio River to the west. The eastern boundary is Southwestern Parkway. The park reflects the Olmsted design with red cedar cypress and white pines. It features the only public clay tennis courts in Louisville, which were installed in 1923.

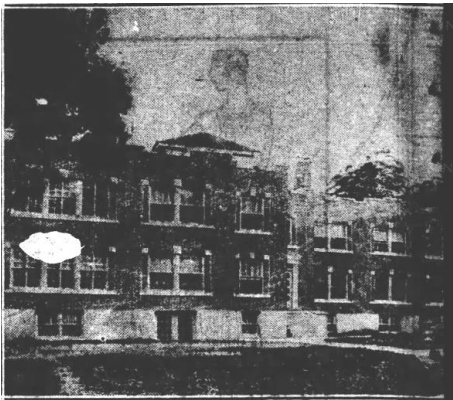


Figure 1. The Warwick Hall Apartments at Southwestern Parkway and Broadway in 1925.

Southwestern Parkway borders Westover No. 1, Westover No. 2, Castle Vista, Chickasaw Park, and a section of traditional neighborhood. The houses are predominately Cape Cod style, constructed in the 1940s–1950s. Southwestern has alley access on the east side in Castle Vista



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and Westover Nos. 1 and 2. The west side of the street is higher in elevation and the houses are above the sidewalk, requiring a stairway to access them.

**Westover Park No. 1**

Westover Park encompasses the area north of Chickasaw Park, south of Broadway and between the Ohio River and Southwestern Parkway. This includes Varble Avenue, Brewster Avenue, Garland Avenue, and Riverview Avenue, all west of Southwestern Parkway.

The plat was developed in the late 1920s. A 1928 advertisement noted the high elevation above the river and modern conveniences that included gas, electricity, water, sewers, street lights, fire hydrants, paved streets, and streetcar service.<sup>7</sup> In 1930, builder Lee Pruitt constructed five homes in Westover Park. The article stated that the trees were left on the river bank “to lend beauty and enchantment” to the subdivision. The houses ranged in price from \$7,500 to \$11,000.<sup>8</sup> The advertisements and articles did not mention that the subdivision carried racially restrictive covenants.

The subdivision construction history spans from the late 1920s two-story bungalows to 1930s and early 1940s frame and brick-veneer Cape Cods. Ranch houses from the 1960s are closer to Chickasaw Park. The subdivision contains only two vacant lots.

**Westover Park No. 2**

Samuel Plato and Joseph Ray constructed Westover Park No. 2 beginning in 1944. Plato constructed 94 houses on 110 lots, while contractor James Green assembled an additional twenty prefabricated National Homes on Dumesnil.

<sup>7</sup> “Westover Park,” *Courier-Journal*, July 12, 1928, 2.

<sup>8</sup> “Lee Pruitt, Builder, Plans Extensive Construction of Homes During 1930,” *Courier-Journal*, Mar. 31, 1930, 4.

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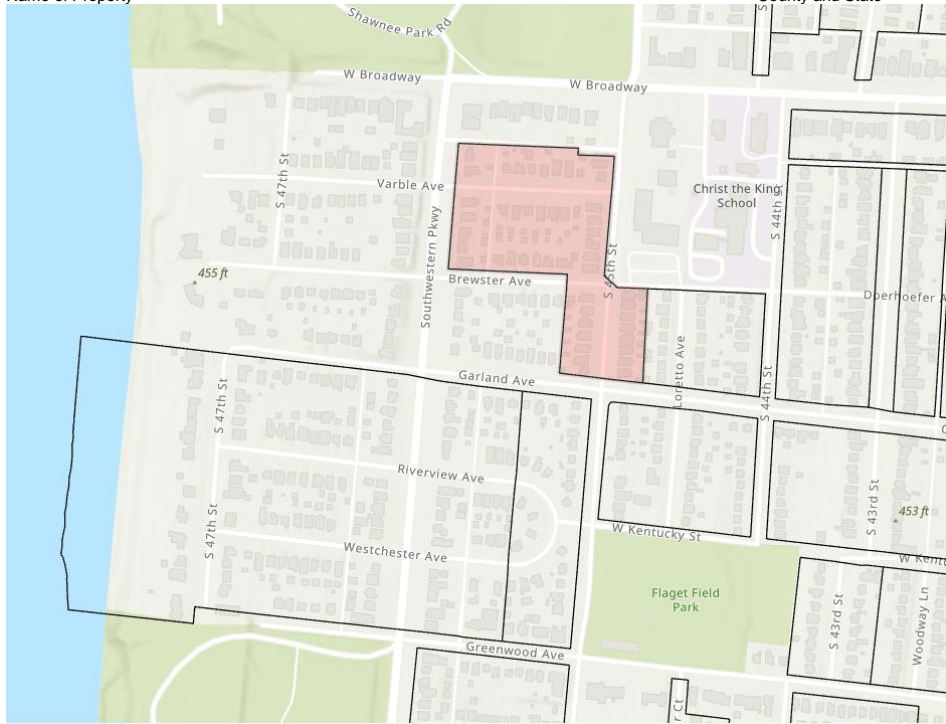


Figure 2. Castle Vista subdivision, highlighted (LOJIC)

**Castle Vista Addition**

The Castle Vista addition was developed in the early 1930s. Castle Vista is located on 45th Street, Varble, Brewster, and Southwestern Parkway. 731 Southwestern Parkway (inventory number) is the original 1931 Louisville Real Estate Board model home.<sup>9</sup> The house is a story and a half brick veneer with a cross-gable roof and a dormer. The house was originally built in the Jefferson County Armory for the 1931 Realtor’s Home Exhibition Show. It was dismantled and rebuilt at the site after the show.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> “Model House Nearing Completion,” *Courier-Journal*, May 15, 1931, 9.

<sup>10</sup> “Supply Groups Attend Show,” *Courier-Journal*, Feb. 28, 1931, 4.

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Figure 3. The 1931 Realtors Home Exhibition house at 731 Southwestern Parkway (Emily Tingle).

Castle Vista boasted a series of restrictions designed to maintain the properties' value. The house and garage exterior was to be stone or brick veneer. Only single-family houses were allowed to be built. Garages had to be in the rear and the vegetable garden could not go past the rear of the house.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> "Castle Vista Addition Homes are Equipped With Hoosier Kitchens," *Courier-Journal*, Dec. 21, 1931, 2.

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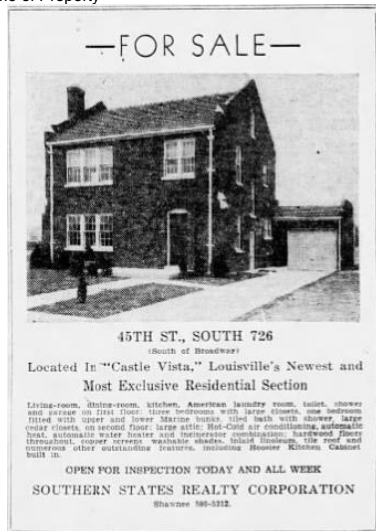


Figure 4. 726 South 45th Street, Castle Vista advertisement (1931), and 728 S. 45th Street.

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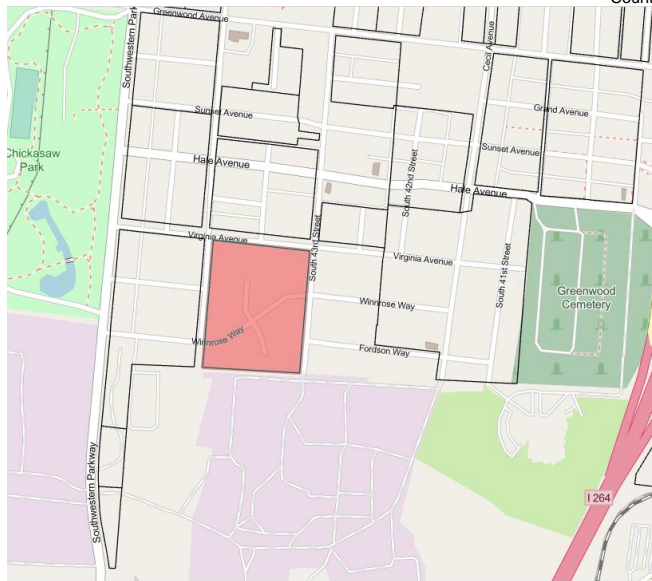


Figure 5. Algonquin Gardens subdivision, highlighted (LOJIC)

### Algonquin Gardens

Algonquin Gardens includes Winnrose Way, 43rd Street on the west, and Virginia Avenue from 43rd to 45th Streets. The houses are contemporary split-level and ranch-style brick and stone veneer one-story homes built from 1957 to 1961. The subdivision departed from the city grid, with Winnrose curving from west to east and with two cul-de-sacs.

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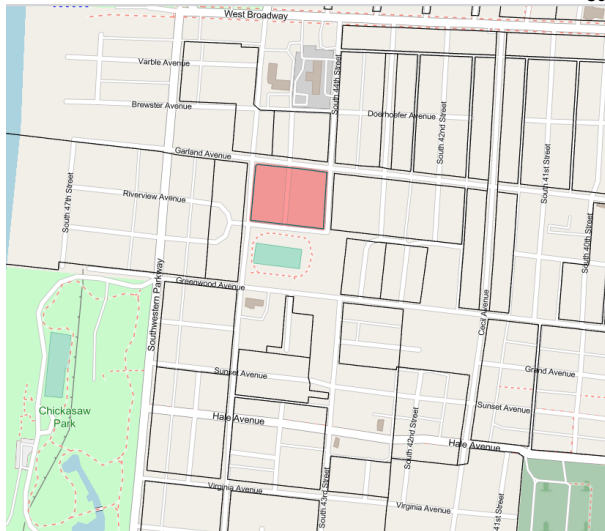


Figure 6. Lafayette subdivision, highlighted, (LOJIC)

### Lafayette

The Lafayette Homes subdivision, platted in 1949, is composed of prefabricated National Homes houses.<sup>12</sup> The four-room houses are made of prefabricated panels. Windows were installed at the factory, in Lafayette, Indiana, and sold through franchised dealers. Advertising indicates that the subdivision is the thrift line of models.<sup>13</sup> The models were introduced in 1948 in response to a federal government challenge to produce a house for \$6,000 or less, exclusive of the land cost.

<sup>12</sup> "Subdivision Business is Booming Here; 15 New Projects are O.K.'d," *Courier-Journal*, Nov. 20, 1949, 50.

<sup>13</sup> "National Thrift Homes," *Courier-Journal*, Oct. 16, 1949, 70.

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Figure 7. Advertisement for Lafayette subdivision (1950), and 901 S. 45th, a National House Inc. Thrift Home.

The panels are “stressed-skin” waterproof plywood panel walls on a steel structural floor.<sup>14</sup> The United States Department of Agriculture Forest Products Laboratory developed the manufacturing process and panel design, a byproduct of experiments in synthetic resins and bent plywood originally meant for airplane fuselages. The design was lighter, stronger, and stiffer than conventional construction.<sup>15</sup> The houses were assembled on-site in less than a week.

The Lafayette plat is an early example of the National Homes Inc. thrift line. Design characteristics include a lack of eaves and no porch. The subdivision, like other postwar infill developments, does not have street curbs. Vehicular access is gained through a driveway. There is uniform setback.

<sup>14</sup> Cynthia Johnson, *House in a Box: Prefabricated Housing in the Jackson Purchase Landscape Region, 1900–1960* (Frankfort: Kentucky Heritage Council, 2006), 57–58.

<sup>15</sup> Marisa Gomez Nordyke, “Restyling the Postwar Prefab: The National Homes Corporation Revolution in Home Merchandising,” *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of Vernacular Architecture Forum* 25, no. 2 (Fall 2018): 68.

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Figure 8. Loretto subdivision, highlighted (LOJIC)

### Loretto

Loretto was platted in 1925 but was not developed until the postwar period. The plat consists of minimal traditional houses and does not have an alley.



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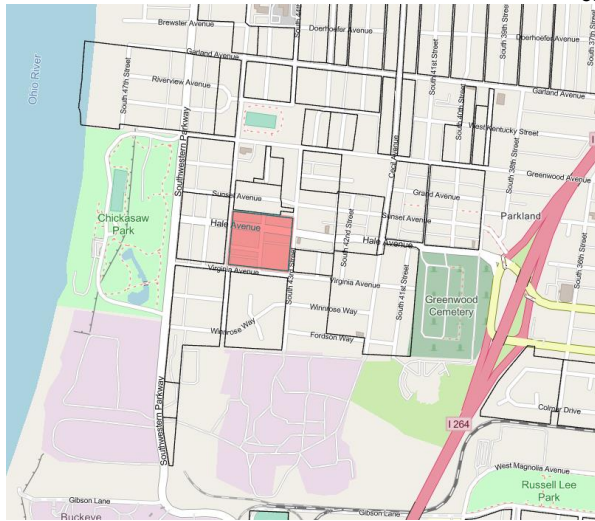


Figure 9. Exley subdivision, highlighted (LOJIC)

### Exley

Although Exley was platted in 1916, it was not developed until the postwar period. It is predominately minimal traditional houses and fits the postwar pattern of no curbs.

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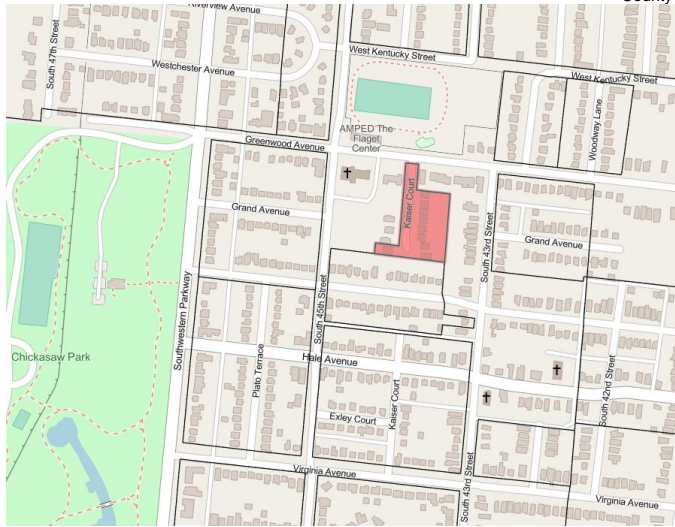


Figure 10. Kaiser Court subdivision, highlighted (LOJIC)

### Kaiser Court

Kaiser Court was platted in 1959, and it fit the pattern of postwar development. The houses are mainly ranch and ranchette style. The streets have curb cuts and driveways, and there is no curb.

### Alpha Gardens Section 1

This section contains the late 1960s ranch house and contemporary split-level development constructed in 1965. There is a sidewalk and tree lawn. The houses have a uniform setback and each house has a curb cut. The development is part of the Southwick urban renewal project.<sup>16</sup>

### Alpha Gardens Section 2

Alpha Gardens Section 2 is west of Section 1, with Colmar as the dividing line. The development was constructed by Earl Robinson Homes, an African American contractor in 1971. The development was part of the Southwick urban renewal project. Section 2 is an FHA Section 220 development, which allowed buyers to purchase the home without a down payment.

<sup>16</sup> John Finley, "Southwick Urban Renewal Developer Set," *Courier-Journal*, Aug. 27, 1970, 42.

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The development consists of a circular road, Regatta Way. The houses are ranch form and style. There is a sidewalk and tree lawn with a uniform setback. The development is bordered by I-265 to the west and the Paducah and Louisville Railroad Line to the south.

**Garages**

Garages were inventoried during the survey process. It is uncertain if all garages were surveyed. In plats without alley access aerial photographs indicated that garages may have been present at one time. However, the pace of development has rendered them moot.

The garages and their contributing status are in the annotated inventory table in accordance with the National Register of Historic Places *Best Practices Review*, "Evaluating Garages and Outbuildings in Historic Districts"<sup>17</sup>

The vast majority of garages were from the 1950s and later. Some earlier examples were noted along Broadway. Some subdivisions, such as Caste Vista, required or provided a garage that matched the house in material, usually stone cladding.

**Integrity Standards**

Most of the changes involve replacement of original cladding or windows with products that are compatible in design with the character of the district. Many of the houses have also undergone addition of small, unobtrusive, and highly reversible flat-roofed front porches or side carports. Permanent additions have been made to some of the houses, but these tend to be on the rear and therefore not highly visible from the street. These alterations have for the most part been carried out in a way that has preserved the most important character-defining features of the properties.

Due to the fairly plain character of the houses and their uniform construction, the main features that define the character of the district are the form, height, and proportion of the houses; the character of the façades; the pattern of setback from the street; and the spacing between the houses.

In considering whether the existing dwellings add to the significance of the district, determining contributing and noncontributing status, each house was considered for its role in maintaining the character of the district as a whole. The cumulative effect of all alterations for each house was weighed against the degree to which the original form and materials of the house had been retained.

<sup>17</sup> Evaluating Garages and Outbuildings in Historic Districts' *Best Practices Review*. Issue 2, January 2030, 5.

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Character-defining features that were the most important were the shapes and sizes of the original door and window openings (especially on the fronts of the houses) and retention of the original height, scale, setback, and gabled rooflines of the houses. Features such as window light configuration and cladding of side and rear walls were given careful consideration when assessing integrity, but these factors were given less weight than considerations related to façade configuration and materials, and the overall form, scale, and proportion of the houses.

If a property retains sufficient elements of façade, proportion, setback, and spacing to contribute to the overall look and feel of consistency and uniformity that gives this district its sense of prewar or post-World War II character, it contributes to the significance of the district despite the loss of some original architectural detail and materials. However, dwellings that have lost historic integrity due to significant alterations; those where the original form, proportion, street setback, or relationship to other houses has been destroyed; and buildings constructed outside the period of significance are considered noncontributing.

However, installation of replacement siding on contributing houses was considered minimally detrimental as long as the replacement material was an asbestos, wood, vinyl, or aluminum shingle or horizontal lap siding consistent with the character of the dwellings.

Replacement cladding in the front gables of the gable-front houses in the district was considered to be only mildly detrimental to integrity as long as the original siding had been retained on the façade's first floor. Re-cladding with stucco or other replacement materials on side and rear walls was also considered to be only minimally detrimental if the integrity of the house was good in other aspects.

Window replacement was considered to have a fairly minor impact on integrity as long as the original window opening proportions were retained for openings visible from the street, and as long as the replacement window was generally compatible with the simplified form and character of the dwellings. Replacement of original wood windows did not result in a major integrity loss as long as the double-hung window format was retained with the replacement window. Likewise, it was not a major integrity loss if an original multi-light wood picture window was replaced by a single-pane wood, metal, or vinyl picture window, as long as the opening was not converted to an architecturally incompatible format inconsistent with the original form of the house, such as a casement or horizontal sliding windows.

Front door replacement was also not a major integrity loss as long as the new door was architecturally compatible with the house's style and the door's opening size was not altered. Addition of wood or metal porches to the front of the houses also did not significantly diminish the integrity of contributing properties as long as the porches were visually unobtrusive, easily reversible, and did not result in the removal or alteration of window openings or brick veneer on the fronts of the houses.

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Small carports added to the side walls of the houses similarly do not have a major negative effect on the integrity of contributing properties as long as they are reversible and visually unobtrusive.

Attached garages and other additions do not result in a major loss of integrity for contributing properties as long as they are at the rear of the house or recessed from the front of the house in a way that the form of the original façade and the shape and roofline of the original house are still discernible.

To avoid serious integrity loss, the additions also should not be so large as to distort the original form and scale of the house. Roof dormer additions on the rear or sides of the houses are a minor integrity loss for contributing properties; front dormer additions also do not represent a major integrity loss for the house as long as the dormers are relatively small and do not consist of a large shed-roof dormer that covers the entire front roof on the side-gabled units.

**Historic District Integrity**

The discontinuous historic district, which is divided by an interstate highway, has good integrity and exhibits the character-defining features of each period. The streetscape is largely intact with a minimal number of vacant lots.

**Integrity of Location and Setting**

All contributing buildings are in their original location and setting. The district streetscapes are largely intact. The district maintains its original setting. The street and alley circulation pattern and configuration is original. Original stone curbs, if originally installed, are present. The streets have not been widened or narrowed and are original. There is one intrusive subdivision near the highway but does not detract from the overall setting.

**Integrity of Design, Materials, and Workmanship**

Although some alterations have been made, the houses, buildings, and streets maintain their original designs. The street pattern has not changed from the period of significance. There is no new infrastructure or streets in the district.

**Integrity of Feeling and Association**

The houses and buildings reflect the historic feel of the period when they were constructed. The buildings maintain their mass and form. The streetscapes retain their feel and association, whether a traditional urban neighborhood or postwar infill.

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### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

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**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HISTORY – Black

SOCIAL HISTORY – Civil Rights

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**Period of Significance**

1888–1975

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**Significant Dates**

1922

1943

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Subdivision/Architect/Builder**

Westover No. 2 – Samuel Plato, architect and builder

Algonquin Gardens – James Turner, builder

Lafayette – National Homes .. prefabricated homes

Woodway – James Kane, builder



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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Chickasaw Historic District is bounded by Broadway, the Ohio River, and Louis Coleman Jr. Drive. The southern limit is the Paducah and Louisville Railroad, Fordson Way, Winnrose Way, and the southern boundary of Chickasaw Park. The district is nationally significant under Criterion A, Ethnic History – Black and Social History. The period of significance is 1888–1975. This corresponds to the period of neighborhood formation dating from the time when Little Africa was established in the southwestern corner of Chickasaw to 1975 when the city established the formal boundaries for urban neighborhoods.

This period, and the neighborhood, illustrates Louisville’s African American history and the quest for full citizenship and a safe and enriching community.

The Chickasaw neighborhood was formed through a series of civil rights actions among Louisville residents. Many activists moved to Louisville for its relative racial calm. Unlike other cities with large African American populations, Louisville avoided the race riots that convulsed Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma at the turn of the century. Louisville also avoided race riots during the Red Summer of 1919, when labor unrest turned violent across the North and South. Consequently, Louisville became not only a place to settle but also a place where people regrouped before moving to another urban center. Over time, this pattern of settlement and movement created generational, nationwide networks that furthered civil rights on both a national and local stage.

At home, the result was a thriving, supportive neighborhood whose real estate patterns achieved national attention and civil rights actions informed national events.

### Historic Context

Louisville occupies a unique position in both civil rights and Black social history.

Although slavery was legal in Kentucky, Louisville had an antebellum free Black population comprising one-fifth of all African Americans in Louisville in 1860.<sup>18</sup> The first Black church was established in 1828.

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<sup>18</sup> J. Blaine Hudson, “Race, Residence and Environmental Justice in Louisville, Kentucky,” *Sustain* (Spring/Summer 2004), 19.

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Louisville's free Black population entered contracts and purchased real estate. But discrimination circumscribed their lives and was meant to hinder their competition, in business and life in general.

Louisville's Black churches became an important social nexus. In the antebellum period, free and enslaved Blacks could socialize together. After the Civil War, Black churches became a base for mass meetings and civil rights actions.

Louisville residents successfully fought streetcar segregation in the 1870s. In 1915, the Supreme Court decision *Buchanan v. Warley* overturned racial zoning, and Louisville's Quinn Chapel was the central NAACP meeting and fundraising site for the case. However, while Louisville's Black residents fought segregation in public accommodations and housing, those same Black residents could not fully exercise their rights as American citizens. Therefore Louisville's progressive reputation was only in comparison to other places in the South.<sup>19</sup> Housing segregation continued. Restrictive covenants ensured white neighborhoods were legally off limits to Black residents. Restricted by tradition and law, neither realtor nor banks would break the racial lines.

African Americans were largely confined to four areas: Parkland (known as Little Africa to white Louisvillians), east of Downtown, Smoketown, and the California neighborhood.<sup>20</sup> Housing was largely substandard, and segregation ensured it was overcrowded. Little Africa, the southern half of Parkland, was initially outside the city limits, effectively cutting it off from any infrastructure improvements. However, these improvements—paved streets, water, fire hydrants, and sewers—were not forthcoming after the city annexed the area, which was semi-rural and composed of small lots. Criss-crossed with roads, most dwellings were little more than cobbled together shacks of metal sheeting and scrap wood.<sup>21</sup> The lack of city infrastructure made the neighborhood much more dangerous for residents. Fires were a constant danger. Resident John Porter lost his two-story home when firefighters, who saw that fire from their station on Broadway, could only watch the house burn because there were no fire hydrants.<sup>22</sup>

In spite of the dire conditions, many African Americans thought Louisville was better than the Deep South.<sup>23</sup> The Great Migration led to a population increase as Southern migrants moved north. The migration consisted of all classes, laborers and teachers, farmhands and ministers. The migrants, some staying in Louisville, some passing through, and many knowing each other from cities in the South, formed business and social networks to help each other and establish a Black

<sup>19</sup> Luther Adams, *Way Up North in Louisville: African American Migration in the Urban South, 1930–1970* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2010), 39.

<sup>20</sup> Adams, 41–43.

<sup>21</sup> Joseph Cotter, "'Little Africa' Louisville's Settlement of Thrifty Negroes," *Courier-Journal*, Aug. 29, 1915, 18.

<sup>22</sup> "Fire in Little Africa" *Courier-Journal*, May 17, 1915, 2.

<sup>23</sup> Adams, *Way Up North in Louisville*, 47.

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community. These networks, consisting of both longtime Louisville residents and new arrivals, worked together to advance their quest for full citizenship.

A network that altered Chickasaw's development began in Atlanta at the turn of the century with the Atlanta Life Insurance Company. The network provided the guidance and resources through a national network that uplifted the West End, resulting in the formation of Chickasaw. The groups of residents changed over time but were inextricably connected through a generational network of bankers, politicians, and activists that together formed the Chickasaw neighborhood. Movement to and from Louisville, where change was a constant, helped drive this process. In many ways the district is a story of how America changed Louisville and vice versa, but at the center are the residents of Chickasaw.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The two initial points of growth were Broadway, forming a spine for further growth to the Ohio River and a path west from downtown for affluent white residents, and Little Africa, which was partially located at the southeastern portion of the current Chickasaw neighborhood, housing Black residents. The two areas would grow gradually together over the twentieth century, forming a neighborhood in the process.

Louisville's Little Africa neighborhood encompassed both the current Parkland and Chickasaw neighborhoods. Like many neighborhoods, its boundary was relatively fluid over time. By the 1950s, the neighborhood's boundaries differed according to the race of the responder.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Grady Clay, "Broadway to Lead Safari Into Little Africa," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, Mar. 13, 1955, 114.

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However, the growth of the neighborhood does not correspond to typical urban neighborhoods. Rather than wait for gradual change, Louisville's Black residents used political and legal means to form the bonds and community that made Chickasaw.

Many of the migrants originated from urban settings, having lived in a number of places before settling in Louisville.<sup>25</sup>

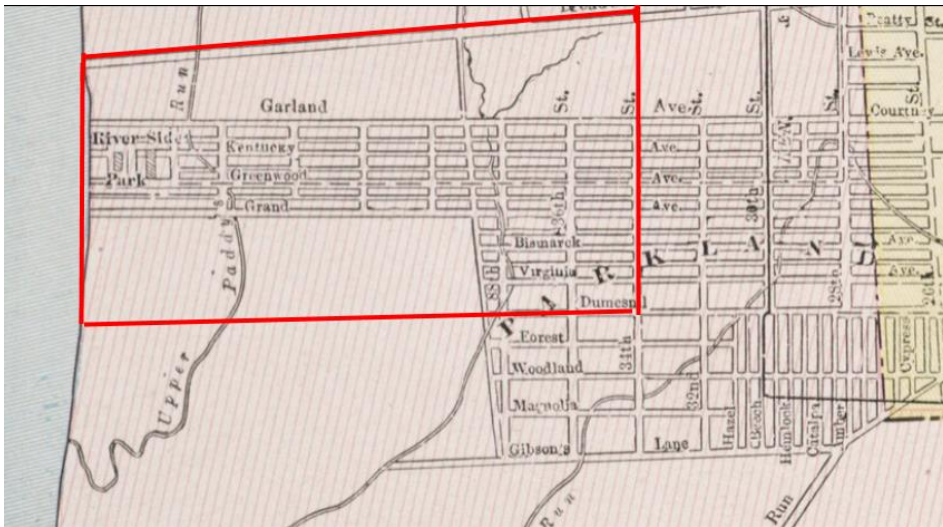


Figure 11. Louisville's West End in 1894. Red outline is the historic district boundary. (University of Louisville Archives and Special Collections)

**The West End**

Louisville's West End was largely undeveloped at the turn of the century. Basil Doerhoeffer, a tobacco manufacturer and first vice president of Union Bank, owned the tract on the southern side of Broadway.

The fifty-three-acre Chickasaw Park was originally called Spring Bank Park, part of the estate of Louisville Democratic political boss John Henry Whallen. Whallen, who ran the local political

<sup>25</sup> Adams, 19.

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machine and worked as a theater manager, had two mottos: "Don't deny anything" and "Don't write any letters."<sup>26</sup>

Semi-professional baseball teams used the park's diamond beginning in 1905.<sup>27</sup> The Louisville Giants, an African American team, used the diamond in 1908.<sup>28</sup>

From 1913 to 1915, the park was used for Louisville White Sox games, a Negro league team.<sup>29</sup> And for easy access, the Greenwood streetcar line ended at the park.<sup>30</sup> Whallen also held thinly disguised political events designed to highlight his patronage. A spring barbecue featured thirty lambs, six hogs, and three steers in addition to 1,500 pounds of fish for anyone who cared to attend.<sup>31</sup>

Whallen died in 1913, but his assets passed to his brother, James Whallen.<sup>32</sup> Spring Bank Park continued to host baseball games, exclusively African American teams. In May 1918, the grandstand burned down.<sup>33</sup>

Chickasaw Park opened in 1922. The city purchased the Spring Bank Park property for use as a park for African Americans.<sup>34</sup> In 1923, the park was expanded with a three-acre addition,<sup>35</sup> but the additional tract, located in the middle of park, had cut it in half.<sup>36</sup> When it opened, the park was not completely finished according the Olmsted firm's plan. The 1928 Louisville Women's Club annual report suggested completing the park.

The park's clay tennis courts were almost immediately pressed into regional service. In 1931, the Mid-Western Tennis Association held its open championship at the park with teams from Denver, St. Louis, Wichita, and Chicago.<sup>37</sup> African American tennis professional Althea Gibson, winner of the French Open in 1956 and the US Open and Wimbledon in 1957 and 1958, played at the courts in 1940. Muhammed Ali also trained at the park.

<sup>26</sup> "Noted Characters Memorable to Louisville," *Courier-Journal*, May 21, 1916, 51.

<sup>27</sup> "Amateur Baseball," *Courier-Journal*, June 12, 1905, 6. (1905 is the first instance of baseball scores from the park.)

<sup>28</sup> "Negro Clubs to Play," *Courier-Journal*, Apr. 10, 1908, 7.

<sup>29</sup> "Game at Spring Bank Park," *Courier-Journal*, Sept. 18, 1913, 9

<sup>30</sup> "The Plutos to Play White Sox," *Courier-Journal*, May 25, 1913, 38.

<sup>31</sup> "Trenches Prepared for Spring Bank Barbecue," *Courier-Journal*, July 23, 1913, 5.

<sup>32</sup> "Noted Characters Memorable to Louisville," *Courier-Journal*, May 21, 1916, 51.

<sup>33</sup> "Grandstand at Spring Bank Ball Park Burns," *Courier-Journal*, May 27, 1918, 2.

<sup>34</sup> "1,416 Acres Now in Park System," *Courier-Journal*, Jan. 1, 1922, 30.

<sup>35</sup> "Park Board Buys a Tract on Parkway," *Courier-Journal*, Oct. 11, 1923, 4.

<sup>36</sup> "Park to Have Superintendent," *Courier-Journal*, Jan. 17, 1923, 4.

<sup>37</sup> "To Hold Mid-Western Tennis Championship Tourney at Louisville August 10-14," *Chicago Defender*, Aug. 9, 1931, 9.

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**Parkland/Little Africa**

According to Joseph Cotter, teacher and later public housing namesake, Little Africa was centered on Virginia Avenue and 36th Street. By the 1890s, the neighborhood extended to Orleans Street to the south from Virginia Street.<sup>38</sup> In 1913, the *Courier-Journal* set the boundaries at Greenwood and Virginia, the state fairgrounds, and lower Parkland. A notable feature was its elevation: Little Africa was low. The 1915 Ohio River flood inundated the neighborhood in minutes when sewer caps burst, sending storm overflow coursing through the streets.<sup>39</sup>

Little Africa was different than Broadway in both the size and use of lots. Lots in Little Africa averaged twenty to twenty-five feet in width and were used not only as residences but also for agriculture. The residents, many from the Deep South, continued their rural traditions with gardens, and some raised chickens and hogs.

Around the turn of the century, Greenwood Cemetery was established.<sup>40</sup> The cemetery was segregated. It was closed in 1993, but the founder and owner, Louisville Crematories and Cemeteries, was found to have used the cemetery illegally, after it was at capacity.<sup>41</sup>

Basil Doerhoefer owned large tracts of land west of 38th Street along Broadway. In 1905, he donated land to the city for the construction of seven blocks of Broadway.<sup>42</sup> This would enable future residents to access his land that would later be developed.

African American residents began to move westward in Louisville, prompting white residents to seek legislation to limit their movement, citing concerns about property values and general “discomfort.”<sup>43</sup> Louisville’s City Council was responsive and in 1914 passed legislation that forbade Black residents from purchasing property on a majority-white block, over the protests of Louisville’s Black residents. In response, William Warley, African American editor and publisher of the *Louisville News*, and Charles Buchannan, a white real estate agent, participated in a test case with the NAACP. The NAACP followed Louisville’s ordinance closely, seeking a

<sup>38</sup> Joseph S. Cotter, “‘Little Africa’ Louisville’s Settlement of Thrifty Negroes,” *Louisville Courier-Journal*, Aug. 29, 1915, 18.

<sup>39</sup> “Flood Crest,” *Messenger-Inquirer*, Apr. 1, 1913, 6.

<sup>40</sup> Dates vary from the 1890s to 1910.

<sup>41</sup> Martha Elson, “Unexpected Burial at Cemetery Raises Questions,” *Courier Journal*, Oct. 26, 2016, <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/local/communities/2016/10/26/unexpected-burial-cemetery-raises-questions/92762962/>. The article gives the opening date as 1903.

<sup>42</sup> “Basil Doerhoefer House/Loretto House School: Draft Report on the Proposed Designation as an Individual Landmark,” Metro Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission, June 12, 2023.

<sup>43</sup> Mervin Aubespin, Kenneth Clay, and J. Blaine Hudson, *Two Centuries of Black Louisville* (Louisville: Butler Books, 2011), 126.

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case that would test broad legal principles. Since Louisville's case was well researched, and after others were overthrown around the country, defeating it would be a milestone.

In response, with NAACP support, Buchanan, a sympathetic white real estate agent, sold a lot at 37th and Pflanz Avenue in the Portland neighborhood. Warley refused to pay for the lot, citing the zoning ordinance, and was promptly sued by Buchanan for breach of contract. The national NAACP supported the court battle and a number of mass meetings were held at Quinn Chapel AME to bolster community and, more importantly, financial support for the legal battle. In 1917, the United States Supreme Court ruled Louisville's segregation zoning law unconstitutional.<sup>44</sup>

Black residents then began to move east into the Russell neighborhood. White residents, after the racial zoning ordinance had failed in the Supreme Court, solved their reluctance to live on the same street as African Americans by having the city change the street names. The color line, previously around 21st Street, became 31st Street with the westward movement of Black residents. To differentiate the color line, Walnut Street became Michigan Drive, Madison Street became Del Park Terrace.<sup>45</sup> However, an effort to rename Virginia Avenue to Oak Street failed in 1922. Renaming streets was not universally popular. The fire department protested the fact that the same street could have three or four names, resulting in "misruns."<sup>46</sup>

In 1921, a group of new young African American leaders in Louisville, including Warley, tired of being ignored by politicians and increasing attempts to segregate public transportation, formed a third party, the Lincoln Independent Party. Previously, in exchange for voting Republican, African Americans ensured that their underworld figures could operate rackets with more or less impunity. The Lincoln Independent Party was a reaction against all these problems.<sup>47</sup> In addition, it marked a break with the older, more conservative Black establishment, which worked closely with the white establishment. Previous Black leaders advocated a social order that mirrored that of Booker T. Washington and the Tuskegee Institute: Black residents would advance through hard work, frugality, sobriety, and not altering the racial status quo.<sup>48</sup> The Lincoln Party, however, was determined that the white power structure would not take the Black vote for granted.

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<sup>44</sup> The Quinn Chapel nomination was amended in 2020 as nationally significant for its role in the case and civil rights. "National Register Designates Louisville's Chestnut Street Baptist/Quinn Chapel A.M.E. Church Nationally Significant," *Kentucky.gov*, July 21, 2020, <https://www.kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=KentuckyHeritageCouncil&prId=94>.

<sup>45</sup> Aubespain, Clay, and Hudson, 126.

<sup>46</sup> "Barnes Balks on Six Cent Fare Demand," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, July 25, 1922, 1.

<sup>47</sup> George C. Wright, "Black Political Insurgency in Louisville, Kentucky: The Lincoln Independent Party of 1921," *Journal of Negro History* 68, no. 1 (Winter 1983): 10.

<sup>48</sup> Wright, 10.

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While Louisville was not hurtling toward segregation at the same pace as the Deep South, the actions of the white establishment did slow progress and cause setbacks. For example, the failure to stop the screening of D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* galvanized many African Americans around the country. In 1914, a petition to the city to scotch the segregation ordinance failed. In addition, the city council's attempts to segregate public transportation drove home the point that the old balance of maintaining the racial status quo was broken.

The new group of leaders represented a sea change in African American political thought. Most were not from Louisville but grew up in the South during a period of increasing tension and Jim Crow segregation. The reincarnated Ku Klux Klan, lynching, and increasingly restrictive Jim Crow laws may have driven them north but did not decrease their ardor for freedom.

### A New Era of Black Leadership

The new Black leaders also had different opportunities than the previous generation. They could collaborate with liberal whites within and outside Louisville to address racial issues in the courts. They could also gain a nationwide audience through publications such as NAACP's *The Crisis*. A nationwide network of business connections, through insurance companies such as Atlanta Life, Supreme Life, and Mammoth Life, provided up-to-date information from around the country. They did not have to maintain the status quo. Instead, they could change it. The Lincoln Independent Party was one path, but leaders would also start new businesses and work with a new generation that would change Louisville.

Wilson Lovett started the First Standard Bank in 1921. Lovett was raised in upstate New York but moved to Pennsylvania and later to Atlanta, where he worked for the Atlanta Life Insurance Company. He moved to Louisville around 1910, when he became the company's Kentucky supervisor. First Standard's board of directors indicates that Atlanta Life gave Lovett a path to the Black business and civil rights network at a national level. Atlanta Life offered insurance to African Americans on a subscription model through salesmen. These salesmen kept their finger on the pulse of not only Black business but Black social, political, and civil life. When Lovett was the president of the Louisville NAACP branch in 1925, he corresponded with W. E. B. Du Bois about how to increase the number of *Crisis* subscriptions, an action he thought would benefit both the national and local branch. First Standard and its board members advertised in *The Crisis*. A Simmons University advertisement noted its president and board member, C. H. Parrish.<sup>49</sup> The world of civil rights and Black business were intertwined locally and nationally.

In addition, people associated with Atlanta Life were also intertwined with Atlanta University and Du Bois before he left the school in 1910 to found *The Crisis*. Lovett corresponded with Du Bois throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The 1928 First Standard Bank board of directors included Ohio's Truman Kenna Gibson, an Atlantic Life alumnus, Du Bois associate, and future executive

<sup>49</sup> *The Crisis*, Nov. 1922, First Standard ad, 46; Simmons University, 5, accessed Nov. 1, 2023, <https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:521751/PDF/>.



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at Supreme Liberty Life in Chicago with Lovett. Crucially, attorney and future Louisville real estate developer Joseph Ray was the bank's cashier.<sup>50</sup>

African American contractor James Taylor began to develop the Harrod's Creek community in the 1919 in southern Oldham County. In 1922, Taylor, W. W. Spradling, Wilson Lovett, and Joseph Ray incorporated the James T. Taylor Real Estate Company. In 1924, the company W. W. Willis, *Louisville Leader* publisher joined the company.<sup>51</sup> In this instance, the group pioneered Black suburbanization in the region.

The future Chickasaw real estate developers continued to form professional networks. In 1926, Dennis Henderson, Nelson Willis, and Sam L. Brooks formed a law firm. Willis, a Chicago native and University of Chicago law school graduate, represented First Standard Bank, Black life insurance company Domestic Life, and James T. Taylor Real Estate Company. Henderson represented the Parkway Building and Loan Association. Brooks was apparently working as a teacher but had graduated from the University of Pennsylvania.<sup>52</sup> Not all would stay in Louisville. Willis would move to Chicago in the 1930s and become the head of the Chicago NAACP branch in 1950.<sup>53</sup>

The network continued to extend nationally. Lovett was instrumental in forming the National Negro Bankers Association in 1924, focused solely on African American-owned banks. At the first meeting in Cleveland, Louisville's Wilson Lovett was elected secretary and the group's aim established: promoting the general welfare of African American banks. And the 1926 meeting in Philadelphia established how: Lovett and Durham's Charles C. Spaulding, a founder and later president of North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance, agreed that the best path to progress was through cooperation with each other. Lovett stated, "We have tried too much to shy away from the things that will help us develop in a larger way."<sup>54</sup>

In 1927, Lovett, Nelson Willis, and Whitney Adams formed the Standard Realty Corporation.<sup>55</sup> In 1928, Adams formed the Whitney Adams Realty Company with Dennis Henderson and his wife, Penelope Adams.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, Lovett and Samuel Plato, a Black architect and

<sup>50</sup> Floyd J. Calvin, "Wilson Lovett's Life Reads Like Fiction," *Pittsburgh Courier*, Sept. 22, 1928, 13.

<sup>51</sup> "James Taylor Real Estate Company," *Courier-Journal*, June 17, 1924, 78.

<sup>52</sup> "Form Law Firm," *Chicago Defender*, Jan. 23, 1926, 3.

<sup>53</sup> Quinn Baron, "Remembering Nelson M. Willis," accessed Mar. 25, 2024, <https://www.law.uchicago.edu/news/remembering-nelson-m-willis-honor-black-history-month>.

<sup>54</sup> Alexa Benson Henderson, "Richard Wright and the National Negro Bankers Association: Early Organizing Efforts among Black Bankers, 1924–1942," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 117, no. 1/2 (Jan.–Apr. 1993): 58–59.

<sup>55</sup> "Whitesburg Firm Granted Charter," *Courier-Journal*, Jan. 7, 1927, 4.

<sup>56</sup> "Light Firm Here Granted Charter"

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contractor, were good friends, with Lovett serving as Plato's best man at his wedding, an event publicized in the society page of the *Pittsburgh Courier*.<sup>57</sup>

The intertwined business network of insurance, banking, and real estate professionals worked together around the country for almost two decades. In addition, many were located in the Mammoth Life Building, providing another avenue to work closely. With Du Bois at the helm of *The Crisis*, Black advancement was promoted through correspondence and reports in the magazine.<sup>58</sup> In 1927, Du Bois encouraged Lovett to work with a writer from Oklahoma, C. W. Joshua, for a literary piece about banking, an advertising effort that Du Bois surmised would pay off.<sup>59</sup>

Standard Realty worked with the Louisville Women's Club and the Urban League in conjunction with Herbert Hoover's Better Homes for Negroes movement. The Better Homes program was a Progressive concept to promote healthy living, and reduce disease, through better housing. Like many Progressive ideas it was meant to inculcate residents with upper-middle-class behavior. Respect for Black culture was not at the forefront of the movement, and the message was more assimilation than integration. Black organizations readily participated. The Louisville Urban League's director James Ragland emphasized "the value of home influence in character building" at Green Street Church, a prominent meeting location.<sup>60</sup>

While the Better Homes program often built new homes in Louisville, this was not always the case. In some cities houses were slightly remodeled. An example in Albemarle, Virginia, shows a house with an extended porch, new exterior paint, and a wire fence replacing the picket fence.<sup>61</sup>

In 1926, First Standard Bank financed a Better Homes house on Grand Avenue near 32nd Street after the city allocated land between 30th and 36th Streets for African American occupancy.<sup>62</sup> The city installed sewers and paved Grand Avenue for the houses, which quickly became a haven for Louisville's Black elite. James Ragland, the director of the Urban League, lived just east of 34th Street. However, before construction, the Louisville Women's Club and the Urban League surveyed white residents about the development, which they backed. The houses are significant for being part of the Better Homes of America program. They are also significant for

<sup>57</sup> "Looking in on Louisville," *Pittsburgh Courier*, Jan. 9, 1926, 5.

<sup>58</sup> Letter from Wilson Lovett to W. E. B. Du Bois, Oct. 20, 1925, <https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/pageturn/mums312-b170-i557/#page/1/mode/1up>.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from W. E. B. Du Bois to First Standard Bank, Apr. 4, 1927, <https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/pageturn/mums312-b176-i323/#page/1/mode/1up>.

<sup>60</sup> "Looking in on Louisville," 7.

<sup>61</sup> Charles S. Johnson, *Negro Housing: Report of the Committee on Negro Housing*, (Washington, DC: President's Conference on Home Building and Ownership, 1932), 75.

<sup>62</sup> Gail Elizabeth Chooljian Nall, "Louise C. Morel, The Louisville City Women's Club, and Municipal Housekeeping in Louisville, 1917-1935" (master's thesis, University of Louisville, 2004), <https://doi.org/10.18297/etd/1038>.

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using a Black architect (William C. Bonner), a Black contractor (Whitney Adams), and Black bank (First Standard).<sup>63</sup>



Figure 12. A Standard Realty Better Homes house at 3404 Grand Avenue.

Wilson Lovett left First Standard Bank in 1929 and became the treasurer at Supreme Liberty Life Insurance in Chicago. Lovett would join one of his former bank directors, Truman Gibson, who had founded the Supreme Life insurance company in Columbus, Ohio, in 1919. A merger with Liberty Insurance formed the new company in the Bronzeville neighborhood in Chicago. However, Joseph Ray, the president of First Standard Bank, would remain in Louisville.

### The Great Depression

The Great Depression banking collapse was not color-blind. Failures in the check clearing systems and bank runs, when the bank's deposits could not cover the total, ruined Black and white banks. The First Standard Bank failed in 1930 when the check clearing system it used collapsed, forcing the bank to suspend its operation.<sup>64</sup> The Great Depression slowed if not stopped private home building for African Americans as banks collapsed and Black insurance companies retrenched.

The First Standard Bank and American Mutual Bank merged in 1931 with Ray as a vice president, becoming Mutual Standard Bank. But by May, another bank run pushed Mutual

<sup>63</sup> Barbara Burlison Mooney, "The Comfortable Tasty Framed Cottage: An African American Architectural Iconography," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 61, no. 1 (Mar. 2002): 61.

<sup>64</sup> Gary Richardson, "The Check Is in the Mail: Correspondent Clearing and the Collapse of the Banking System, 1930–1933," *Journal of Economic History* 67, no. 3 (Sept. 2007): 659.

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Standard's collapse as well. The bank run was caused by homeowners who had purchased bungalows with home loans in the 1920s, presumably those sold by Standard Realty. The bank's collapse deeply affected both the formal and informal economies in the Black community. Churches gathered collections for those who lost their savings. Businesses and fraternal organizations who deposited their money as a point of pride were hit hard by the closure. It also affected the numbers racket and other gambling operations, as many patrons lost all their money. The fact that the bank closed a week before the Kentucky Derby, the city's gambling high point, added insult to injury.<sup>65</sup>

The Depression also adversely affected Louisville's Black homeowners. Most houses had first and second mortgages and some homes were lost entirely during the worst times.<sup>66</sup>

The Depression-era battle for survival worsened with the flood of 1937. Parts of the West End were greatly affected and would eventually result in a flood wall in the 1940s. Parkland/Little Africa was already vulnerable, being lower in elevation, but the 1937 flood left the entire West End largely underwater. Motorboats could travel on Broadway from 17th Street to the Ohio River, while smaller boats could traverse Broadway from end to end.<sup>67</sup>



Figure 13. Sewer improvements at Cecil Avenue and Hale Avenue in 1935, and view today (University of Louisville Archives and Special Collections and Google Streetview)

## World War II

Although the Standard Oil refinery and the Bond Brothers railroad tie creosote plant were already in the West End, the war brought in a host of other industries. While these did bring jobs, the environmental cost was steep, and African Americans did not fully benefit from the

<sup>65</sup> "Merged Bank in Louisville Close Doors," *Afro-American*, May 16, 1931, 1.

<sup>66</sup> Johnson, *Negro Housing*, 101.

<sup>67</sup> "Flood Diary: A 16-Year Old Girl's Sensational Account of the Flood in Louisville," *Baltimore Afro-American*, Feb. 6, 1937, 16.

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introduction of the firms. The constellation of chemical plants and refineries, called Rubbertown, was meant to replace the natural rubber supply, which was lost almost entirely to the Japanese conquest of Southeast Asia. Louisville had two qualities in the West End that made it attractive to wartime industrial needs: a steady supply of water from the Ohio River and a steady supply of alcohol, suitable for industrial use, from Louisville's distilleries.<sup>68</sup>

The level of pollution was horrific, usually composed of dust and an "acid cloud." Residents complained vociferously and organized into a group.<sup>69</sup> Led by white resident Lowell Armstrong, 619 S. 42nd Street, the group threatened court action against the B. F Goodrich, National Carbide Company, du Pont de Nemours, Louisville Refining, and Aetna Refining plants. The group conducted a survey of a sample of residents from 24th Street to the Ohio River bounded on the south by the Algonquin Parkway. In the survey, the vast majority of residents reported "colds" and one-third had nausea from the dust and fumes. The nearby Ford plant had canceled work mid-shift when the workers became nauseous and their eyes burned too much to work. The acidic fumes, worsened by atmospheric inversion, forced residents to sleep with their windows closed during heatwaves. Schools were forced to do the same when students could not stop vomiting. One resident, A. P. McCormack, said neighbors became odor experts and that the chemical plants smelled like a combination of geraniums and sauerkraut. When asked whether that might be the refinery instead, McCormack replied, "No, that smells like garlic."<sup>70</sup> The plants pointed the finger at each other. During the July 1944 acid cloud, National Carbide took credit for the dust but blamed the cloud on the neoprene manufacturing operation at du Pont, who claimed nothing was out of the ordinary. Mayor Wyatt claimed he was hamstrung because the plants were outside the city limits.<sup>71</sup>

By the 1950s, many of the white residents who complained about the chemical plants and refineries would move to the suburbs, but Black residents, who could not move, were victims of environmental racism, as cancer rates in the West End increased.

### The Postwar Period

The end of the war placed immense pressure on the housing market, and with segregated neighborhoods already crowded, African American veterans returning home were at a great disadvantage. Louisville needed eight hundred houses to meet the demand for Black veterans. One African American veterans building was constructed at 38th Street and Grand Avenue in 1946 with fifty-three units, and another at Beecher Terrace public housing projects for twenty-

<sup>68</sup> "Rubbertown Helps Whip Japs; Builds Louisville's Future," *Courier-Journal*, Mar. 26, 1944, 38.

<sup>69</sup> "Worst Smog Brings Tears to the West End; Mayor to Act," *Courier-Journal*, July 10, 1944, 1.

<sup>70</sup> "West Enders Urge Court Fight On 'Dust and Odor' Below Ohio River's Bend," *Courier-Journal*, July 29, 1944, 3.

<sup>71</sup> "Worst Smog Brings Tears to West End," 1.

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five families.<sup>72</sup> However, income requirement for public housing banned many veterans from living there, forcing veterans to stay at Grand Avenue. But by 1953, the Grand Avenue temporary housing, constructed of leftover and relocated Civilian Conservation Corps barracks, was in dire condition, which paled in comparison to the well-built army barracks at Bowman Field available to white veterans.<sup>73</sup>

Despite Ray's and Plato's homebuilding, Black residents, from the postwar period through the late 1940s, experienced a major housing shortage as veterans returned home.

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The 1948 *Shelley v. Kraemer* Supreme Court decision enabled rapid neighborhood change by removing restrictive covenants, or restrictive language placed in deeds that limited ownership to certain groups (usually white) and restricted others, often African Americans, Jews, and Mexicans. This also exposed the practice of blockbusting. Blockbusting had been previously used in the 1920s in racially transitioning neighborhoods that did not have racial deed covenants. Including racial restrictions in deeds after *Buchanan v. Warley* narrowed the places blockbusting would work. But the Supreme Court decision removed that obstacle for real estate agents. In some instances, a real estate speculator would start a rumor of an impending Black purchase to induce white residents to sell at bargain-basement prices, then sell the house at an inflated price to Black buyers.<sup>74</sup> However, after the *Shelley v. Kraemer* decision, Black residents began to move west into previously all-white neighborhoods. Black buyers immediately purchased houses between Greenwood and Dumesnil to 32nd Street. On Virginia Avenue, African American buyers moved past 28th Street to 36th Street.<sup>75</sup> Blockbusting was contentious in the Black community as well as the white community. But attorney Joseph Ray pointed out that progressively expanding African American neighborhoods was the only way to get new housing since it was difficult to buy land in all-white areas.

## Making Westover No. 2

In February 1938, Standard Realty planned to buy the Westover No. 2 subdivision from the Westover Development Company. Unlike Standard Realty's earlier projects on Grand Street, which were blessed by the city and various white civic groups, the Westover No. 2 development asserted Black legal property rights without checking with the white establishment first. The development also departed from the block-by-block westward movement of Black residents. Westover No. 2 was a jump into the middle of a white occupied area, albeit undeveloped. This development pattern differentiated it from Ray's postwar Kirby Avenue project, which were minimal traditional houses located between 32nd and 34th Streets.

<sup>72</sup> "Housing Project for Negro Vets Is Nearly Ready," *Courier-Journal*, Dec. 10, 1946, 10.

<sup>73</sup> "Shortage May Delay Homes for 567 Veterans," *Courier-Journal*, Sept. 6, 1946, 21. <sup>73</sup> "Worst Smog Brings Tears to West End," 1.

<sup>74</sup> "Housing's Crucial Role in the Pattern of Segregation," *Louisville Courier*, June 29, 1964, 6.

<sup>75</sup> "Negroes Now Own More Homes Than Ever Before," *Louisville Defender*, Feb. 16, 1956, 10.

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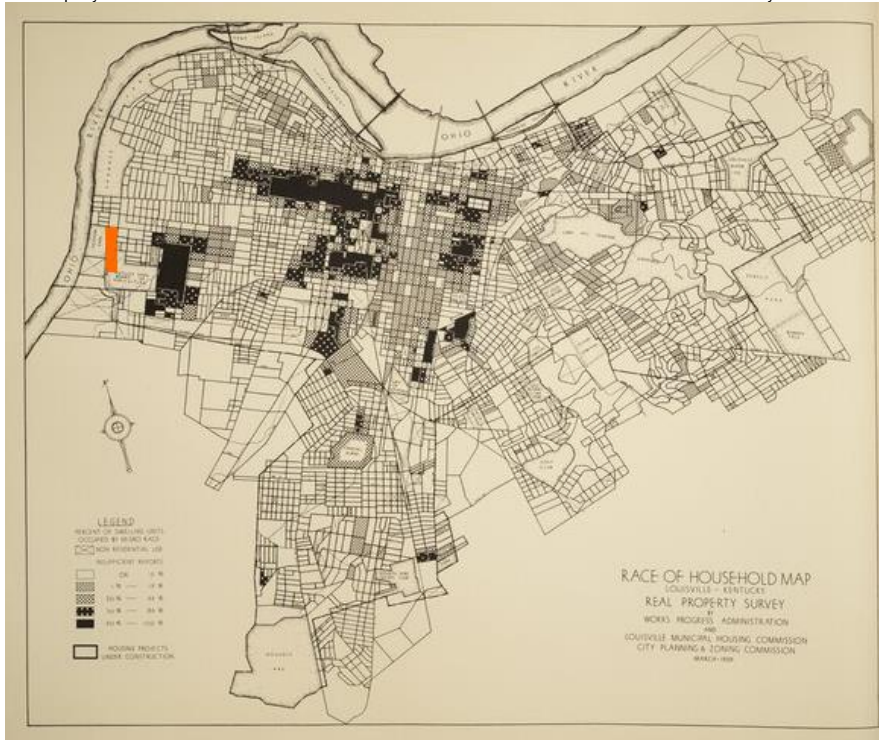


Figure 14. The 1939 Works Progress Administration Real Property Survey Race of Household Map. Black areas indicate African American occupancy. The orange highlight is the Westover No. 2 plat (University of Louisville Archives and Special Collections)

It was the beginning of process that would form Chickasaw into the dream of an integrated middle-class neighborhood where African American residents could live and exercise their full rights of citizenship. However the proposed development had to first contend with more white backlash in the West End.

When the adjacent subdivision's white residents in the developed Westover No. 1 tract learned of the sale, they quickly mobilized to block the transaction. Meeting at Christ the King Church basement in December 1939, a crowd of five hundred white residents heard that the Shawnee Improvement Corporation, a quickly formed white neighborhood group, had made a \$2,000

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down payment and signed notes for an additional \$8,500 to purchase the 111 Westover No. 2 lots bounded by Southwestern Parkway, 45th Street, Greenwood, and Virginia.<sup>76</sup>

White residents continued to threaten Ray. Appearing at a NAACP legal committee meeting, Ray said that opposition groups to his Westover purchase were asking the city to move Chickasaw Park, or rather its role as the sole park for African Americans, to the Highland Park district. However, a 3,000-signature petition slowed the move. Ray also recounted a conversation with a white resident who warned, "If you people move down, there might be a bombing some night." Ray retorted, "Negroes can also do some bombing."<sup>77</sup>

The Shawnee Improvement Corporation's ploy initially worked. Although Standard Realty made its down payment, the developer transferred the property to the American National Bank of Nashville, who sold the property to the Shawnee Improvement Corporation. Standard Realty sued for contract enforcement and the judge agreed that the sale was solely for the purpose of preventing the sale to Standard Realty. However, the white Westover No. 1 residents changed tack on their court appeal.<sup>78</sup>

The Shawnee Improvement Corporation appealed on the fact that Westover No. 1 had a racially restrictive covenant that barred Black occupancy or ownership. However, since Westover No. 2 was not fully platted, the deed restrictions were not included. The Shawnee Improvement Corporation faction, led by resident Helen McCurdy, posited that these restrictions were implicit and did not need to be enumerated in the deeds. The court disagreed. McCurdy lost the appeal in 1943, allowing the Westover No. 2 subdivision to be built. Standard Realty had solved a somewhat intractable problem in Louisville's African American housing market. City lots were difficult to acquire because private sales were restricted. Standard Realty's case, like *Buchanan v. Warley* before, chipped away at legal restrictions but did not entirely solve the problem. This would have to wait for open occupancy laws in the 1960s.

Westover No. 2 also solved the finance problem for Black buyers in the subdivision. Although FHA loan guarantees were ostensibly color-blind, actually getting a loan was dependent on local banks, who were loath to lend to African Americans because of community pressure and simple racism. Louisville's Mammoth Life Insurance and Domestic Life offered mortgages to Westover No. 2 buyers, sidestepping local banks, who were definitely not going to finance the development given the high-profile court case that challenged local racial restrictions. In the end, Mammoth Life funded approximately two-thirds of the loans, with Domestic Life picking up much of the balance.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>76</sup> "Crowd of 500 told \$2,000 Paid on Disputed Lots," *Courier-Journal*, Dec. 26, 1939.

<sup>77</sup> "Louisvillians May Lose Chickasaw Park," *Atlanta Daily World*, Oct. 20, 1939, 1.

<sup>78</sup> "Realty Firm Wins Round in Land Fight," *Courier-Journal*, Mar. 7, 1942, 11.

<sup>79</sup> "Big Help in Building," *Louisville Defender*, Apr. 30, 1953, 21.



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Figure 15. 1031 Southwestern Parkway at the time of completion in the 1950s and in 2022. (Filson Historical Society [left], Rory Krupp [right])

Winning the court case was only half of the battle. The FHA had to be persuaded that Louisville's African American residents could afford the houses. Construction was delayed when carpenters were sent to work on a war plant in Charleston, Indiana. The 1945 flood inundated eighteen houses and caved in the foundations of twelve more. The flood washed away building supplies. The insurance company balked at buying the FHA mortgages. Even selling the houses proved difficult when some prospective customers had to be convinced they were not "being robbed when they paid \$6,000 for 4 or five room modern bungalow."<sup>80</sup>

The Westover story received widespread coverage in the Black press. The *Cleveland Call and Post* reported that Mammoth Life had taken over the mortgages for the first twenty-five homes in the development.<sup>81</sup> When Joseph Ray died in 1959, the groundbreaking subdivision was mentioned in his obituary.

Westover No. 2 offered African American buyers something that was practically nonexistent in Louisville: a newly built home, and moreover one that was not overcrowded or artificially expensive. Westover is significant because it was the essentially the first Black subdivision by and for African Americans in Louisville, and perhaps one of the first in the nation, according to FHA representatives. Previous developments such as Grand Street in the 1920s were built with the acquiescence of nearby white residents and the white power structure. Westover No. 2 fought for the implicit rights of Black residents, and those residents built and subsequently financed the subdivision. Seward Mott, the Urban Land Institute director since 1944 and former FHA employee, during a tour of Plato Terrace, expressed "enthusiastic praise" for the project as it was

<sup>80</sup>"Promoter Transforms Wilderness," *Louisville Defender*, Apr. 30, 1953, 16.

<sup>81</sup>"Mammoth Life Insurance Buys \$127,000 FHA Mortgages," *Cleveland Call and Post*, Feb. 17, 1945, 16.

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“unique in America,” having been, “built, financed, and sold by Negroes to Negroes.” The article continued, noting that “private operators here do not contemplate building Negro housing.”<sup>82</sup>

Plato Terrace was one of two developments in Chickasaw in 1945. James T. Green, a white contractor who owned Woodland Builders, erected twenty-three prefabricated National Homes on Dumesnil Street between Southwestern Parkway and 45th Street. National Homes were built in Lafayette, Indiana. Founded in 1940, the firm sold the houses through a network of local home builders. The houses cost less than conventionally built homes, but the quality was every bit as good.<sup>83</sup>

Plato also built additional homes on Greenwood, Hale, Grand, Virginia, and Southwestern Parkway through the 1940s and early 1950s.<sup>84</sup> In total, Plato would construct ninety-four houses overlooking Chickasaw Park, an Olmsted firm–designed landscape.



Figure 16. Westover No. 2 residents gather to change the street name from Fordson Way to Plato Terrace to honor architect and builder Samuel Plato. (Filson Historical Society)

<sup>82</sup> Ed Edstrom, “Louisville’s Next 2 Years Hold Good and Bad Developers Find,” *Courier-Journal*, Sept. 16, 1945, 31.

<sup>83</sup> Colin Davies, *The Prefabricated Home* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005), 56.

<sup>84</sup> “New House Construction for Negroes is Stepping Up Here,” *Courier-Journal*, July 29, 1951, 11.

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However, the Westover No. 2 subdivision was only the beginning of a coalesced Chickasaw. The segregated nature of the overall neighborhood left it divided into civic associations and block clubs usually based on a combination of location and race. The majority of white residents did not want to share a neighborhood name with Black residents. Consequently, the neighborhood was a shifting patchwork of platted developments with separate civic associations.

In 1946, Black residents formed the Westover Civic Improvement Association.<sup>85</sup> It was across street from the Shawnee Improvement Corporation, but race was the real dividing line. Ostensibly, the group's purview was neighborhood maintenance, but the organization also took a strong stand on civil rights. In 1958, the civic organization purchased an NAACP membership for every civic association member.

The Westover No. 2 houses constructed in 1945 provided something Chickasaw Park had little of in the previous years: Black neighbors. Although it was Louisville's segregated park, in 1945 only 2 percent of the city's African American population lived with a mile of Chickasaw Park. Before 1945, it was a destination for most Black Louisville residents, not a neighborhood amenity. But when Janice Cunningham Johnson's parents bought a house on Southwestern Parkway in February 1945, Janice had an Olmsted-designed park virtually to herself. With only five houses built at the time, there were no other children.<sup>86</sup>

**HOME OWNERSHIP  
GUARANTEED  
THROUGH  
MAMMOTH LIFE'S MORTGAGE LOANS**

The death of the late H. E. Hall, MAMMOTH'S Co. founder and first President, will stand out. Through these death benefit monies and under existing better housing, better health conditions, better education and better old age security. When Joseph R. Ray, real estate broker, had success in securing the desirable site for homes, Westover Subdivision, all avenues for financing representative homes were closed. He placed his problem before H. E. Hall, who, because of his great vision, had MAMMOTH LIFE qualify to make FHA mortgage loans, and gave the company's firm commitment for approximately \$200,000.00. His action paved the way for the building of homes which are a credit to the community.

MAMMOTH has financed in the Westover area new homes at the cost of \$407,000.00. MAMMOTH has made it possible for many families to enjoy homes at a cost ranging from \$5,500.00 upward.

The Board of Directors proudly salutes the memory of the late H. E. Hall for his benevolent and unselfish attitude toward his fellowmen. His character is the stamp on the work of his successors in building greatness throughout the country.

In the city of Louisville alone, MAMMOTH has invested \$407,000.00 in mortgage loans. The city of Burton, Ohio, boasts of more beautiful, ultra modern homes because MAMMOTH understood their problems and located \$210,000.00. Cleveland, \$150,000.00. In Chicago, Illinois, MAMMOTH'S mortgage loans are \$100,000.00.

Other cities where MAMMOTH has earned the people its money are Columbus, Ohio; Saint Louis, Missouri; South Bend and Indianapolis, Indiana; Excelsior and Springfield, Illinois; Cynthiana, Henderson, Lexington and Paducah, Kentucky.

MAMMOTH LIFE'S officials feel that the company's responsibility does not stop with making mortgage loans, but that it reaches further. The officials have followed in the footsteps of their great leader and leader, H. E. Hall, by having had the benefit of their Mortgage Redemption Policy. This contract protects the family in case of the death of the mortgage loan. By covering your mortgage loan with one of MAMMOTH'S Mortgage redemption policies, make your home a blessing for generations to come.

Our MAMMOTH Sales Representatives will advise you concerning the protective coverage on mortgage loans by helping you secure a Mortgage Redemption Policy.

Call MAMMOTH'S local office -- JA. 2027  
C. C. McHenry . . . . . District Manager

*The Late  
H. E. HALL*

<sup>85</sup> "Life Membership in the NAACP," *Louisville Defender*, Oct. 24, 1963, 20.

<sup>86</sup> The Chickasaw Book Project Committee, "Panel Discussion Commemorating the 1943 Kentucky Court of Appeals Standard Realty v McCurdy," Yearly Club, Louisville, Kentucky, Oct. 29, 2023.

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Figure 17. Louisville's Mammoth Life used Westover in its advertising for home loans in 1953.  
(Louisville Defender)

Two events changed the park's role in the neighborhood. In the early 1950s, Black activists challenged the city's segregated park policies. The city wanted to construct a lighted baseball diamond with bleachers in Chickasaw Park adjacent to Southwestern Parkway. To the casual observer, the baseball diamond was a park improvement. To Chickasaw residents, diamond was a tool to further segregation in recreational facilities, depreciate property values, and overcrowd the park.<sup>87</sup>

For the nearest residents in Westover No. 2, this project would be a considerable disruption, as the location of the ball diamond would interfere with the quiet enjoyment of their homes. In addition, a civil rights battle was underway concerning park access for African Americans all over Louisville. The Westover Parkway Civic Association attorney, Charles Anderson, pointed out that placing the ball diamond in Chickasaw Park would further segregation by concentrating activities in one spot. This would harm the overall movement to integrate all the city parks.<sup>88</sup> The Louisville NAACP branch and the Urban League were against the lights in the park.<sup>89</sup> The mayor scotched the lights.

By 1954, Samuel Plato was recognized as a leading African American builder in the nation. *Insured Mortgage Portfolio*, an FHA publication, mentioned Plato along with other builders and noted developments such as Elliston Heights in Memphis. The article also point out the barriers to African American housing. While old-line Black-owned insurance companies, Atlantic Life, North Carolina Life, and Mammoth Life in Louisville, financed mortgages, the FHA program as a whole "depend[s] on voluntary cooperation with private enterprise."<sup>90</sup>

Even though Westover No. 2 added housing units, the overall growth of new homes for Louisville's Black residents was nonexistent, leaving them with few choices. They could move within an established Black enclave such as Smoketown, or they could move to a suburban location, although the choices were few in the 1950s. But what many did was move into areas that were being vacated by whites who moved to the suburbs.

### Urban Renewal and Continued Development

In 1955, urban renewal plans for Little Africa picked up steam, led by the Louisville Chamber of Commerce. Although the city annexed the area in 1921, there were no infrastructure

<sup>87</sup> "Westover Civic Association Photo," *Louisville Defender*, Apr. 16, 1953, 5.

<sup>88</sup> "Over Park Lights," *Louisville Defender*, Apr. 2, 1953, 1.

<sup>89</sup> "Charles Farnsley Photo," *Louisville Defender*, Apr. 9, 1953, 1.

<sup>90</sup> Albert L. Thompson, "Negro Mortgagees and Builders in the South," *Insured Mortgage Portfolio* 18, no. 1 (Fall 1953): 8.

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improvements. A 1955 *Courier-Journal* article reports that the streets had not been paved since the founding of the city. In addition, the city had not provided sidewalks, gas lines, or a sewer system to the neighborhood. The area was also topographically low, and it flooded during major floods in 1937 and 1945 and most times in between. The physical problems were exacerbated by the fact that a fly-by-night real estate salesman sold lots in the 1920s on an installment plan that left those titles in an ambiguous legal position, while other titles were passed down as “family property,” leading to numerous heirs, probate problems, and chain of title issues for the roughly twenty-to-twenty-five-foot lots, many vacant. Combined, all these factors did not make a healthy environment. The area had the highest infant mortality rate in Louisville. Some efforts, however, to improve the area had been made. Joseph Ray attempted to buy enough lots to develop housing, but holdouts on certain lots, most in the middle of the proposed development, halted the plan when adequate acreage could not be assembled.<sup>91</sup>

The city’s position was to start over, clearing the area of buildings and people. However, Mayor Broaddus was against any federal subsidies for the process except for clearance. The cleared property would be sold to private developers to build new housing.

The city’s first task was to change the name of the neighborhood. Earlier studies indicated that the sobriquets given to Black neighborhoods in Louisville, Little Africa and Smoketown, negatively portrayed the occupants.<sup>92</sup> In addition, the city was concerned that the areas would not be redeveloped. The Chamber of Commerce advocated for “Southwick,” “the name of an old subdivision.” Mayor Andrew Broaddus supported the change and residents “were generally silent and unconsulted.”<sup>93</sup>

However, African American development continued. In 1959, after a two-year wait, Dr. C. Milton Young and his wife, Hortense Young, received FHA approval for their fifty-two-unit apartment building at Grand Avenue between 37th and 39th Streets at the site of the previous veterans housing site. The apartment complex was billed as one of the first African American privately financed multifamily apartment buildings constructed in Louisville.<sup>94</sup> The mortgage was insured under FHA Section 220 that covered lenders losses in urban renewal areas, effectively removing all risk for private lenders.

One constant barrier to forming a middle-class neighborhood was Louisville’s white professional class, who often owned investment property in the West End. While Black homeowners often meticulously maintained their homes and yards, a fact the FHA advertised to white banks in the 1950s, white landlords had little incentive to do so. The lack of an open housing ordinance

<sup>91</sup> Grady Clay, “Broaddus to Lead Safari Into Little Africa,” *Courier-Journal*.

<sup>92</sup> Johnson, *Negro Housing*, 201.

<sup>93</sup> Grady Clay, “Movement to Improve Little Africa Showing Signs of Getting Into Gear,” *Courier-Journal*, Sept. 4, 1955, 39.

<sup>94</sup> “Apartment-Project Plans Approved By Urban Renewal Administration,” *Courier-Journal*, Oct. 13, 1957, 88.

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ensured a steady supply of tenants to exploit. Increasing their profit margin hinged on spending as little on their property as possible. One resident stated, "If you complain to your landlord, he just tells you you're lucky to get housing."<sup>95</sup> When Black residents complained to City Hall about a lack of code enforcement, city officials began to investigate. The result, according to residents, was Black homeowners being charged with code violations while rental homes were ignored.<sup>96</sup> It was a bitter pill for Black homeowners, who dealt with complaints from white homeowners about *their* property values being lowered when a Black family moved to the block.

Nonetheless, real estate development activity did occur on an interracial basis. In 1956, attorney and developer Eli Brown III and his company Metropolitan Investments planned a new development on a fifteen-acre site that was formerly a parking lot for the Kentucky State Fair.<sup>97</sup> Algonquin Gardens is a suburban-style subdivision that did not completely follow the urban grid. Two cul-de-sacs originate on the curving Winnrose Way. The African American contractor and Chickasaw resident James W. Turner (Kentucky Avenue) constructed the majority of the houses. FHA loans were provided by Mammoth Life and Domestic Life with an average home price of \$14,000. At the time, in 1957, three other subdivisions for African American residents were being constructed, but all were in suburban locations.<sup>98</sup>

By 1959, Brown and Turner had completed construction on fifty-five homes on the sixty-seven platted lots. The Ray and Henderson Agency, Joseph Ray and Dennis Henderson, were the real estate agents for the development. One additional feature that was not constructed was a private pool and clubhouse proposed in 1959. Louisville modernist architect Jasper D. Ward designed the unbuilt clubhouse.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>95</sup> "Memo to Louisville," *Courier-Journal*, Sept. 11, 1966, 84.

<sup>96</sup> "Memo to Louisville," 84.

<sup>97</sup> Grady Clay, "New Houses Offered to Negro Families Here Apparently Setting an All-Time Record," *Courier-Journal*, Dec. 29, 2022, 94.

<sup>98</sup> Grady Clay, "New Houses Offered to Negro Families Here Apparently Setting an All-Time Record," *The Courier-Journal*, Dec. 29, 2022, 94.

<sup>99</sup> "Evidence Points to Pool-Construction Boom," *Courier-Journal*, Apr. 26, 1957, 71.

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39  
Just *as* more families can enjoy the thrill of  
fine living in beautiful . . .

## Algonquin Gardens



Be sure to see these "Dream Homes" before the opportunity  
is gone forever . . . . .

### MODEL HOMES

OPEN DAILY  
11 A.M. - 9 P.M.

Here's the kind of home you've always wanted! Modern . . . beautiful  
. . . with carefully planned conveniences that make housekeeping  
easy. A home you'll proudly show to your friends. . . . a home  
for happy entertaining, for easy living.  
Just 67 families can enjoy the prestige of an address in Algonquin  
Gardens. 23 homes have already been sold, only 44 remain. Be  
sure to see these homes. . . . be one of the lucky few!

#### "Easy Living" Features

- Dish or Glass Veneer (no  
denting problems)
- 2 Spacious Bedrooms
- Ample Closet Space
- Floor-to-Ceiling Storage
- Gas Heat, Forced Air Furnace
- Your Choice Interior Colors
- Ceramic Tile Bathrooms
- Front Yard Sidewalk and Land-  
scaping
- Choice of Built-in Kitchen Cook-  
tops, or Dish, or Sissy Four or  
Six-packs
- GE Stoves and Laundry, Yon-  
kers' All-Seasoning may  
be financed with home  
loan
- Gravel Carving Driveway for  
Greater Traffic Safety
- All Driveway Available, No An-  
nouncement for Garage, Water,  
Septic

**NEW LOW F.H.A. Terms**  
As Little As  
**\$825**  
DOWN  
(Plus Closing Costs)  
**25**  
YEARS TO PAY  
BALANCE

**How To Get There** Drive west on Broadway to Gault,  
south on Gault to Virginia, west on  
Virginia to Algonquin Gardens between 43rd and 44th in Virginia Park.

Model Homes furnished by Bob Brady Appliances & Furniture, and Tri City  
Furniture & Appliances Co.

**Metropolitan Investment Company**  
DEVELOPERS  
JAMES TURNER, Builder

**RAY & HENDERSON** Sales Agent  
608 W. WALNUT JU 4-8933

Figure 18. An advertisement for Algonquin Gardens.

Chickasaw residents created a thriving social scene in the neighborhood. Churches and block clubs provided social spaces. Most streets or subdivisions had a club by the late 1950s. Some clubs, termed neighborhood improvement clubs, worked with local organizations such as the Urban League to work for better recreational facilities, street improvements, and yard beautification. In 1959, out of thirteen neighborhood improvement clubs, four were located in the Chickasaw neighborhood, whereas other areas had one club. These included the Grand Street Club, the Exley Court Club, 41st Street Club, and the 43rd Street Club.<sup>100</sup>

Chickasaw's women's organizations included members with influential national connections. In 1953, a group converted the local Mesdames Club into a Girl Friends chapter.<sup>101</sup> In 1957, Chickasaw residents hosted the National Links executives, an elite service organization for Black

<sup>100</sup> "Louisville Urban League Begins Membership Drive," *Courier-Journal*, Mar. 5, 1959, 5.

<sup>101</sup> "Gird Friends Inc.," *Louisville De Amsterdam News*, Oct. 24, 1953, 10.

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women, for the weekend. It was a group of activists and influential Black women including Murray Walls, a crucial force for integrating the Girl Scouts, activist Jewell Rabb, and Ione Stanley, wife of *Louisville Defender* publisher Frank Stanley Sr.<sup>102</sup> The Links organization placed Chickasaw's Black women members in a national level of elite African American society. Jack and Jill, another African American service organization that promotes Black culture for children, entered the neighborhood in 1952 with Ione Stanley as a founding member.

### The 1960s

Living in African American subdivisions did not mean that all neighborhood amenities were open to African Americans. Chickasaw residents now embarked on building a middle-class neighborhood, a place where they could safely raise their families and expand their rights. In doing so, residents would participate in the fight for equality in public accommodations and for an open housing ordinance. This civil rights action would intertwine local and national civil rights movements and players.

At the same time, housing disruption was increasing. Urban renewal, white flight to the suburbs, white backlash, and interstate highway construction would challenge the goals of creating a middle-class enclave.

### Public Accommodations

Concurrent with fair housing, Louisville's battle for equality in public accommodations surged in the early 1960s. Black residents faced a capricious system where one could be inconsistently denied service in restaurants, stores, or other arenas. It was impossible to know what was going to be enforced and where, creating an atmosphere of extreme uncertainty in many aspects of life.<sup>103</sup> In May 1963, Louisville passed a public accommodations law guaranteeing equal access to restaurants and stores for all.

In September 1963, the Louisville NAACP tested access to cafes in Louisville. Led by Frank Stanley Jr., the son of *Louisville Defender* publisher Frank Stanley and activist in his own right, the group tested ninety-nine restaurants in Louisville to see if they would be served. Three failed the test, including one in Chickasaw, Dub's Oyster House at 4532 Broadway.<sup>104</sup> All three establishments were members of the Louisville Tavern Operators Association and fought the law with "known segregationist lawyer" Jack Lowery.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>102</sup> "Louisville 'Links' Hostess to Officers," *Louisville Defender*, Feb. 26.

<sup>103</sup> Tracy K'Meyer, *Civil Rights in the Gateway to the South: Louisville, Kentucky, 1945-1980* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2011), 116.

<sup>104</sup> "Three 'Cafes' Refuse Despite City Law," *Louisville Defender*, Sept. 19, 1963, 1.

<sup>105</sup> Frank Stanley Sr., "I Am Non-Violently Mad . . .," *Louisville Defender*, July 18, 1963, 6.



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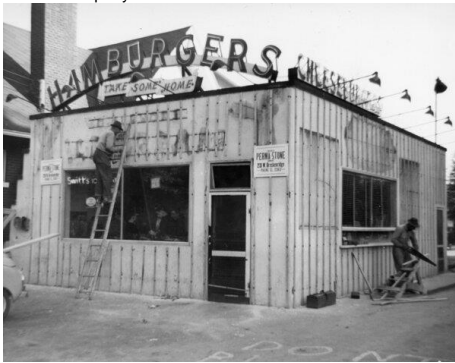


Figure 19. 4532 Broadway, the site of Dub's Oyster House, before and after Perma-Stone installation in the 1960s. (University of Louisville Archives and Special Collections)

The battle over the three cafes was not confined to Louisville. The cafe discrimination case moved to Congress. Jack Lowery testified to the House Judiciary Committee concerning civil rights in public accommodations laws. Lowery asserted that white merchants did not want to serve Black customers and blamed the specter of possible racial violence firmly on civil rights protesters.<sup>106</sup> Using the 1961 Kupie Double Burger demonstration as an example, Lowery blamed “slanted news coverage by the local press” for the fact that no one knew he had saved Louisville from “lawless riots” and business owners allegedly being subjected to the “filthiest obscenities imaginable” through a court injunction. In reality, white counter-protesters and merchant police appear to have caused the bulk of the shoving when Black protesters, mostly students, attempted to enter six businesses downtown.<sup>107</sup> Lowery predicted more violence if cafes and taverns were integrated: “A breeding ground of violence and bloodshed is where alcohol and forced integration are mixed.”<sup>108</sup> Lowery must have been forceful, as the committee’s chairman, Rep. Emanuel Celler (D-NY), had to assure the attorney that they had been studying the civil rights legislation for two years and were not going to be arbitrary or capricious.<sup>109</sup>

Lowery’s visit and testimony was not unnoticed in Louisville. The Louisville NAACP dispatched civil rights activists Rev. W. J. Hodge, Frank Stanley Jr., and Jesse Warders to Washington to meet with the Kentucky congressional delegation in a bipartisan fashion. In July

<sup>106</sup> *Hearing Before Subcommittee No. 5 of the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, Eighty-Eighth Congress, First Session [ . . . ],* vol. 3 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963), 2383.

<sup>107</sup> “21 Negroes Are Arrested in Picketing,” *Courier-Journal*, Ap, 22, 1961, 1.

<sup>108</sup> *Hearing Before Subcommittee No. 5*, 2382.

<sup>109</sup> *Hearing Before Subcommittee No. 5*, 2386.

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1963, the Louisville NAACP sent Dr. Maurice Rabb to Washington to confer with President John. F. Kennedy on civil rights issues.<sup>110</sup>

Chickasaw resident and *Louisville Defender* publisher Frank Stanley, in conjunction with a national NAACP campaign, advocated locally and nationally for open public accommodations in the early 1960s. Stanley used his position as president of the National Newspaper Publishers Association to press for civil rights on a national level when the trade group met with President Lyndon Johnson to press for civil rights legislation.

Chickasaw's southeastern boundary had been fluid before the 1960s, but it was somewhere in the area of 34th Street. Urbanist George Galster states, "We make our neighborhoods and then those neighborhoods make us."<sup>111</sup> In Chickasaw, residents formed a middle-class community that they then worked to preserve as urban renewal accelerated. This would solidify the neighborhood boundaries on the southeastern corner.

### The Open Housing Movement

The open housing movement in Louisville intersected national civil rights trends and activists with local action. In the early 1960s, a number of organizations were formed to advocate for an open housing ordinance. The Human Relations Commission (HRC), a government agency, was formed in 1962 and was directed by liberal whites.<sup>112</sup>

White flight and the lack of housing options for African American residents in Louisville threatened the neighborhood's interracial nature. In 1963, white activist Anne Braden (4403 Virginia Avenue) formed the West End Community Council (WECC). A 1961 interview with two Chickasaw families in the 900 block of S. 47th Street indicated that both families enjoyed living on their interracial street. The white neighbor maintained that the quality of the neighbor, and not their color, was most important. Other, however, residents did not have an issue with blockbusting if there was no open housing ordinance. What people wanted was a house that was well maintained and not overcrowded, and how that happened was not that important.<sup>113</sup> However, for Black residents, trying to move to another segregated neighborhood was nearly impossible. Savings and loan associations and real estate agents had a "gentleman's agreement" not to finance or show houses on segregated blocks.<sup>114</sup> Resources dwindled when Domestic Life was sold in 1963, leaving Mammoth Life as the only source of financing for many Black

<sup>110</sup> Cecil Blye, "Citizens and Civil Rights Dominate Local Scene Future Looks Bright and Rosy for Months Ahead," *Louisville Defender*, Jan. 1, 1964, 8.

<sup>111</sup> Lisa Krissoff Boehm, "Considering Urban Neighborhoods," *Journal of Urban History* 46, no. 6 (2020): 1417.

<sup>112</sup> Adams, *Way Up North in Louisville*, 166-67.

<sup>113</sup> Cecil Blye, "I'm Just Afraid to Sell to Negroes," *Louisville Defender*, Aug. 22, 1963, 1.

<sup>114</sup> Cecil Blye, "White Brokers Control West End Property Sales; Negroes Give Aid," *Louisville Defender*.

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homebuyers in Louisville.<sup>115</sup> But Mammoth Life operated in eight states, spreading thin their available financing.

The WECC started a campaign for open housing legislation, arguing that if the whole city was open, Black residents would have a choice, obviating overcrowding in Chickasaw and the whole West End. The group also sponsored get-togethers, block parties, clubs, and arts events.<sup>116</sup> The most visible component was a yard sign campaign. Signs were printed with the slogans “Not for Sale” and “I’m Not Moving” to discourage blockbusting.<sup>117</sup>

Not wanting her previous accusations of being a communist to sideline the movement, Braden assumed a behind-the-scenes role. Chickasaw resident Ruth Bryant assumed a leading role. She was joined by Hulbert James and West End YMCA director Gladdis Carter.<sup>118</sup>

At the same time, the movement for an open housing ordinance grew. Open housing was much more contentious than open public accommodations. In 1964, the HRC promoted a fair housing plan that fell flat. The white community completely balked at the proposal. City Hall and the HRC switched to a voluntary compliance approach, which was passed by the board of alderman in 1965. It failed miserably, as banks and real estate agents ignored the voluntary approach.<sup>119</sup>

In 1965, Rev. A. D. King, the brother of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., moved to Louisville to assume the pastorate at Zion Baptist Church. King resided at 1109 Southwestern Parkway in Chickasaw. Rev. Martin Luther King was no stranger to Louisville. Frank Stanley Sr. and King were Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity brothers. Stanley, who was president of the fraternity at the time, had presented a check for \$1,000 from the fraternity to support King and the Montgomery Improvement Association in March 1956.<sup>120</sup>

A group of African American activists formed the Council on Housing (COH) in 1966. Rev. A. D. King became a leader in the group and pushed for another fair housing ordinance that was ignored. The open housing campaign in Louisville went to a national level. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) sent field representatives to Louisville from Chicago’s open housing campaign. Rev. Martin Luther King came to Chickasaw to plan with Rev. A. D. King the open housing campaign in Louisville from his house on Southwestern Parkway. It was

<sup>115</sup> Cecil Blye, “Mammoth Provides Cash for Negro Buyers,” *Louisville Defender*, Aug. 15, 1963, 1.

<sup>116</sup> K’Meyer, *Civil Rights in the Gateway to the South*, 115–16.

<sup>117</sup> K’Meyer, 116.

<sup>118</sup> Adams, *Way Up North in Louisville*, 167.

<sup>119</sup> Adams, *Way Up North in Louisville*, 169.

<sup>120</sup> “Letter, Frank Stanley Sr. to Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Mar. 22, 1956,” in *The Papers of Martin Luther King Jr.*, ed. Clayborne Carson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 201–2.

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a national event run concurrently with open housing campaigns in New York and Cicero, Illinois.<sup>121</sup>

The groups held protests in March 1967 that drew considerable numbers of white counter-protesters in the all-white Southend neighborhoods. The protests and white angst coincided with a rising tide of white backlash starting after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It grew more pronounced as urban rebellions began to rock cities across the country. Protests continued as the board of alderman scotched another proposed ordinance in April 1967. The police response was telling. Hundreds of white protesters pelted Black open housing marchers with rocks and bottles, but Black protesters were arrested as they arrived and bottle throwing whites were ignored.<sup>122</sup>

The COH decided to interrupt the Kentucky Derby, held in the beginning of May. Muhammed Ali joined the fray, asking why he should fight in Vietnam when Blacks in Louisville are being treated like dogs.<sup>123</sup> However, Rev. A. D. King called off the Derby protests as a sign of goodwill.<sup>124</sup>

In November 1967, an electoral sweep of the aldermen removed the opponents of the open housing law. It passed 9–3.

White flight continued, and from 1960 to 1964 the white population in the West End dropped by 50 percent.<sup>125</sup> Louisville had gained national attention for its civil rights actions promoted by Rev. A. D. King, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., and Muhammed Ali. But the backlash continued.

In 1968, an urban rebellion started in the Parkland neighborhood, east of Chickasaw, when heavy-handed police at 28th Street and Greenwood Avenue responded to a rally protesting police violence. Bottles were thrown, although the timeline is unclear, and the police responded with reinforcements. Police reported sniper fire, an event that rarely occurred in urban rebellions.<sup>126</sup> The Kentucky National Guard was activated and the rebellion calmed after a day.

What was not tempered was the official response. As historian Tracy K'Meyer points out, it was a period of repression as "white leaders felt the pace of change slip from their grasp."<sup>127</sup> The city set its sights on "outside agitators and local civil rights activists," including a group of out-of-town activists claiming to be associated with Stokely Carmichael. A grand jury

<sup>121</sup> Adams, *Way Up North in Louisville*, 172.

<sup>122</sup> Adams, 175–76.

<sup>123</sup> Adams, 179.

<sup>124</sup> Adams, 179.

<sup>125</sup> Adams, *Way Up North in Louisville*, 183.

<sup>126</sup> Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, Mar. 1968 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1968), 180.

<sup>127</sup> K'Meyer, *Civil Rights in the Gateway to the South*, 192.

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indicted six activists including Chickasaw's Ruth Bryant and charged them a fabulous plot to blow up Rubbertown's oil refinery. The fact Bryant lived near the refinery and any explosion would destroy her home was immaterial. The Louisville Black Six were acquitted when the prosecution could not produce any evidence.<sup>128</sup>

While the open housing campaign and urban rebellions took place, urban renewal and interstate highway construction continued in the neighborhood. The Southwick urban renewal process was immediately recognized as problematic. The *Courier-Journal* noted that the total clearance concept had many hidden dangers: "You drive everybody out, more or less at once—and then the land sits idle while the City tries to drum up buyers."<sup>129</sup> However, without an open occupancy ordinance, finding new housing for those displaced was difficult without replicating the problems urban renewal was trying to solve.

In Louisville, it was quickly recognized that without an open housing ordinance, a second ghetto could be quickly built in Southwick and partly within the current Chickasaw neighborhood, without community intervention.

Consequently, residents in the mid and late 1960s fought against further segregation in the Southwick area and tried to implement a boundary between Chickasaw, Southwick, and Parkland neighborhoods to the east. The Alpha Gardens subdivision development, which anchored the southeast corner of the neighborhood, was initially unpopular. At the time, the subdivision was part of the Southwick urban renewal area. It's location by the Miles Park racetrack, the railroad line, and two trucking terminals is consistent with previous segregative housing practices that located African American developments in quasi-industrial settings. One resident noted that "the only purpose of the new housing is to assist the urban renewal in their efforts to contain the Negro in the West End."<sup>130</sup> The NAACP also opposed the development for the same reason, citing the potential for overcrowding the area.<sup>131</sup> Dr. Maurice Rabb stated, "The city wanted to build on every vacant spot in the West End," which would just "create more slums."<sup>132</sup> But the city and federal government did not heed the protests and the project moved forward.

Many residents wondered whether urban renewal and the changing demographics in the West End "was a plot concocted by white politicians, white money lenders, and white real estate people to make the West End a Negro ghetto and keep other areas just about all white."<sup>133</sup>

<sup>128</sup> K'Meyer, 197.

<sup>129</sup> "Millions for Urban Renewal Expected 'Andy Day,'" *Courier-Journal*, July 1, 1962, 63.

<sup>130</sup> "Foes of More Housing in Southwick Lose Round to Zoners," *Courier-Journal*, June 2, 1967, 20.

<sup>131</sup> "Foes of More Housing in Southwick Lose Round to Zoners."

<sup>132</sup> "Commission Votes West End Housing Despite Protests," *Louisville Defender*, June 8, 1967,

1.

<sup>133</sup> "Memo to Louisville," *Courier-Journal*, Sept. 11, 1966, 81.

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The *Courier-Journal* article reported that the theory was widespread through every class and educational level, including Dr. Maurice Rabb, one of the few interviewees who would give his name for fear of reprisal.<sup>134</sup>

It is debatable, however, whether the plot in this theory was indeed a coordinated action or the clumsy result of local racism and backlash to the civil rights movement. But the means, institutional racism, and end result were apparent to many. The outcome, an increase in residential segregation, bore out that something was indeed in play. One recommendation to the Chamber of Commerce was to use white builders to increase the housing supply in the West End and the area west of downtown, after they had lost their housing to urban renewal, in order that "transitional areas will not deteriorate at a rapid pace." This recommendation suggests that increasing the number of units in the West End would take the pressure off other areas.

A 1970 housing study by Hammer, Greene, Siler Associates for the Louisville and Jefferson County Planning Commission and the ensuing discussion by the Louisville Chamber of Commerce indicate that Rabb and others were not wrong. Rabb noted that at one time it was impossible to get a loan for a house in the West End. But in the mid-1960s, he stated the West End was the only place an African American could get a home loan.<sup>135</sup> In addition, the Housing Opportunity Centers, a federally funded entity charged with expanding housing options pursuant to open housing laws, enumerated the problems in Louisville housing that directly affected Chickasaw and the larger West End. A survey found that of 235 surveyed low-income housing developers, the vast majority simply would not build developments that integrated neighborhoods.<sup>136</sup>

The Housing Opportunity Center was also unsure of its goal. The decision to open up new areas where minorities had not been welcome was tempered by the "housing choice program" where people could move within their own communities. This resulted in dissipation of efforts to open up the suburbs.<sup>137</sup> In Louisville, this only increased segregation and the outward movement of white residents. Between 1960 and 1970, 57,000 new housing units were built in Louisville, with 55,000 of them going to white residents. During this period, nine hundred African Americans, mostly young, moved to the suburbs.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>134</sup> "Memo to Louisville," 81.

<sup>135</sup> "Memo to Louisville," 81.

<sup>136</sup> "Housing Opportunity Center Highlight Memorandum," Louisville Chamber of Commerce, Office Files, 1948–1967 on housing and Sinking Fund, Accession No. 88–26, Record Group 139, Folder Mayor's Correspondence, Housing (University of Louisville Archives and Special Collections).

<sup>137</sup> "Housing Opportunity Center Highlight Memorandum."

<sup>138</sup> "Housing Opportunity Center Highlight Memorandum."

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This combination of bureaucratic bumbling and resistance and lender recalcitrance meant that it was nearly impossible for Black residents to move out of the West End. White residents, however, moved in droves to the suburbs. This transition marginally eased the housing crisis by freeing up some homes for Black residency, especially in the northwest corner between Chickasaw and Shawnee Parks, but at the same time it increased residential segregation.

The Shawnee Expressway-Interstate 265 construction through Chickasaw added even more housing pressure and also divided the neighborhood in half. Construction in the West End began in 1967 from the Sherman Minton Bridge to River Park Drive.<sup>139</sup> The Shawnee Expressway opening revealed a number of design problems that affected the neighborhood and became another point of community unification. The Hale Avenue interchange, and the expressway itself, cut off a large portion of the neighborhood from the Virginia Avenue School, renamed Jesse Carter School. This required five hundred children from the neighborhood to cross the highway interchange to get to and from school each day. In addition, traffic was routed onto Sunset Avenue, which narrowed quickly, causing accidents and general chaos.

While interstate highways usually severed neighborhood ties, the opposite happened in Chickasaw. The neighborhood worked together to make sure children could safely get to school.

In 1975, the city received a Department of Housing and Human Development (HUD) grant that formalized the Chickasaw neighborhoods boundaries with the eastern border at Louis Coleman Jr. Drive. The boundaries were formalized in a report in 1979 (Figure 24).

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<sup>139</sup> "Shawnee Expressway To Be Let in Oct.," *Courier-Journal*, July 29, 1967, 11.  
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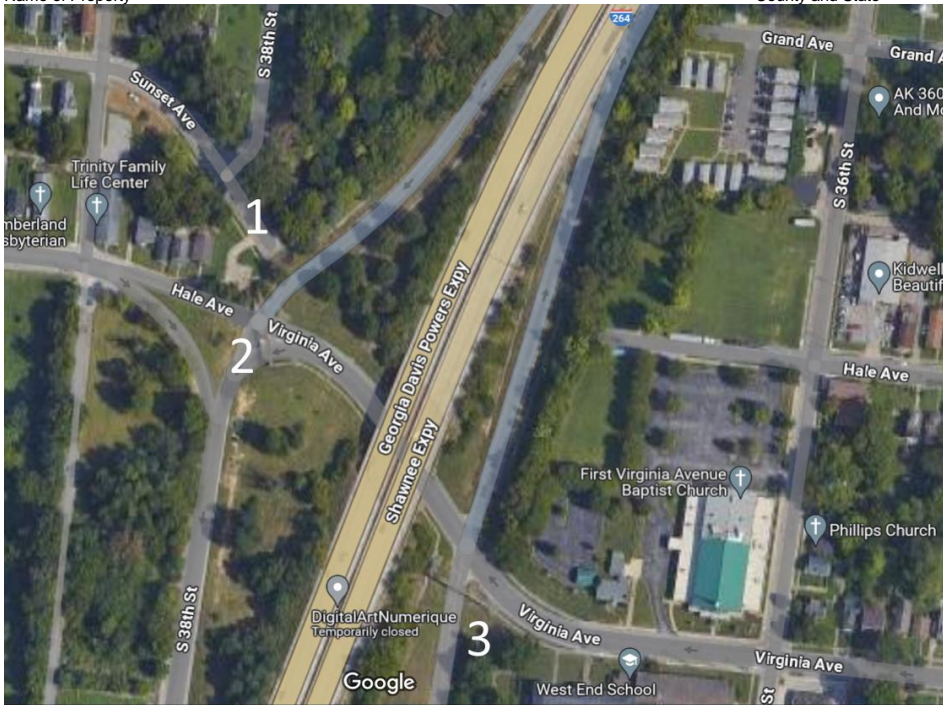


Figure 20. (1) Location of Sunset Avenue offramp. (2) Hale Avenue pedestrian bridge. (3) Virginia Avenue pedestrian bridge.

**Post-Period of Significance History**

The neighborhood block clubs formed an umbrella organization, the Chickasaw Federation, in the 1980s. Residential segregation did increase. As historian Luther Adams points out, Louisville’s largest civil rights triumphs, open housing, came with limited economic opportunity and increasing police brutality.<sup>140</sup>

**Comparable Properties**

The Chickasaw neighborhood’s subdivisions are comparable to other subdivisions around the country, but in aggregate. As a neighborhood entity, Chickasaw is unique. The Chickasaw neighborhood contains remnants of an originally rural enclave with extant houses on Sunset

<sup>140</sup> Adams, *Way Up North in Louisville*, 184.  
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Avenue dating from approximately 1915. Comparable properties from turn-of-the-century Black enclaves include Smoketown in Louisville, which has similar shotgun-style houses.

The neighborhood has Better Homes for Negroes program houses on the eastern portion dating from the 1920s. A Black architect designed the houses, a Black bank (First Standard) financed the houses, and a Black construction company built the houses. By 1931, over one thousand African American Better Homes committees were formed in the United States. The majority fulfilled a purely educational function and no homes were constructed.<sup>141</sup> The program constructed houses for African Americans in 1925 in Atlanta.<sup>142</sup> In New Rochelle, New York, a previously constructed apartment was furnished for Black occupancy.<sup>143</sup> A home, partially constructed from lumber "from old lumber taken from a shed," was constructed in St. Helena Island in 1924, although one was built in 1923 too.<sup>144</sup> The 1926 Guidebook indicates that houses for African Americans were not often built. In Louisville, there are approximately eight extant homes. However, Whitney Adams constructed approximately two hundred houses in Louisville in the 1920s, a testament to his ability to get financing.

Subdivisions that transitioned racially into middle-class and elite suburbs are more rare. The Castle Vista subdivision is comparable to the Addisleigh subdivision in Queens, New York. It is a development of 1930s Tudor homes that became an elite Black neighborhood in the 1940s.

The group of Black real estate developers and bankers that developed Grand Street would later build the Westover No. 2 subdivision in the 1950s. The FHA proclaimed Westover No. 2 a unique development at the time. Subdivisions during this period would be expected to be in or extensions of Black enclaves. Buying a large parcel in the midst of a white neighborhood was dangerous and unheard of.

The residents of Westover and the surrounding plats would engage in civil rights activities that operated on both a national and local level. Frank Stanley Sr., editor and publisher of the *Louisville Defender*, a paper that strongly supported civil rights legislation, lived in the neighborhood. In his capacity as the president of the National Negro Publishers Association in the 1960s, Stanley met with President Lyndon Johnson to advocate for civil rights legislation. Dr. Maurice Rabb was also able to travel to Washington, DC, for the NAACP to address local issues nationally. Rev. A. D. King, Rev. Martin Luther King's brother, lived in Chickasaw and actively worked for open housing legislation. In addition, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. often visited Chickasaw to visit and to plan future civil rights actions. Activists Carl and Anne Braden also lived in Chickasaw. They worked for an interracial community in Louisville but also worked throughout the South and Appalachia. The Braden house is being considered for the

<sup>141</sup> Johnson, *Negro Housing*, 250.

<sup>142</sup> *Guidebook of Better Homes in America: How to Organize the 1926 Campaign* (Washington, DC: Better Homes in America, 1926), 11.

<sup>143</sup> *Guidebook of Better Homes in America*, 54.

<sup>144</sup> *Guidebook of Better Homes in America*, 63–64.

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National Register.<sup>145</sup> It can be seen that the quality of housing in Chickasaw made the neighborhood attractive for professionals who were also local and national activists.

The opening of Black occupancy in the best housing in Louisville resulted in a middle-class neighborhood in the 1950s. Other factors include the union campaigns in the 1940s that eliminated the southern differential in wages. In addition, the range of manufacturing opportunities, though still not totally open to all skill ranges, helped position the neighborhood as middle-class destination.<sup>146</sup>

The intersection of real estate development and local and national civil rights actions helped further the civil rights agenda in Louisville and in the country. But it also made the neighborhood coalesce into a middle-class haven.

### Conclusion

The Chickasaw neighborhood was eventually formed when boundaries from adjacent neighborhoods shifted due to segregation, integration, urban renewal, and civil rights actions and outcomes. But what truly formed Chickasaw was the drive for a middle-class Black neighborhood where residents could exercise their freedoms and live without restrictions in a close-knit integrated community. Chickasaw is a culmination of several generations' work, hardship, and activism. There were often efforts to thwart it, but Chickasaw residents always made progress forming a community.

Louisville's position as a gateway to the south, geographically, politically, and socially, introduced not only ideas but people from around the country to implement them. As people moved to other parts of the country, they took the ideas and lessons with them.

The Chickasaw neighborhood contains several different development episodes but all are linked through a desire to fully exercise the residents' American rights. The earliest settlement, Little Africa/Parkland, began the movement north and west that would begin to change the neighborhood. The Better Homes Grand Court subdivision, located in Chickasaw and Parkland, honed Louisville's Black real estate businessmen, which would result in the groundbreaking Westover No. 2 building. Working with liberal white businessmen led to the Algonquin Gardens subdivision.

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<sup>145</sup> José Alonzo, "Wade & Braden Family Houses Could Receive National Register Status," WHAS 11, Feb. 27, 2024, <https://www.whas11.com/article/news/local/black-history/wade-braden-family-homes-national-landmark-status-black-history-louisville/417-97eab94e-cc2d-48ad-8aea-ac9eb316fccd>.

<sup>146</sup> "Addisleigh Park," Historic Districts Council, accessed Apr. 24, 2024, <https://hdc.org/hdc-across-nyc/queens/queens-landmarked/addisleigh-park/>.

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Working together, often across racial lines, neighborhood residents formed a community that promised all the benefits of American citizenship: equal access to jobs, housing, and a safe place to raise a family. Achieving this goal involved breaking barriers in housing law, equal employment, and public accommodations. The formation of the Chickasaw neighborhood illustrates the path to full and equal citizenship in the twentieth century.

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*Louisville Defender*

*Pittsburgh Courier*

*Chicago Defender*

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** 773.2 \_\_\_\_\_

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

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Datum if other than WGS84:  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

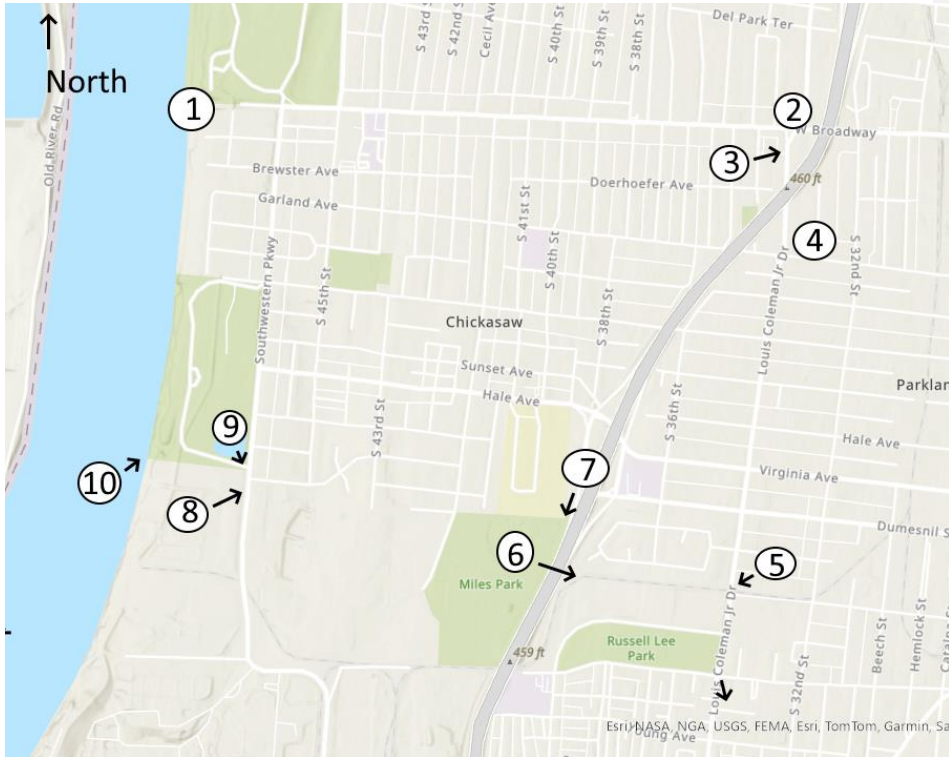


Figure 21. Boundary vertices.

- |                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
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| 2. Latitude: 85.808145 | Longitude: 38.249920 |
| 3. Latitude: 85.808635 | Longitude: 38.249530 |
| 4. Latitude: 85.809038 | Longitude: 38.345537 |
| 5. Latitude: 85.810983 | Longitude: 38.235089 |

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- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 6. Latitude: 85.817652  | Longitude: 38.235683 |
| 7. Latitude: 85.817780  | Longitude: 38.237401 |
| 8. Latitude: 85.829967  | Longitude: 38.238104 |
| 9. Latitude: 85.830705  | Longitude: 38.238962 |
| 10. Latitude: 85.834844 | Longitude: 38.239353 |

Or

**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

AD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The district extends from the centerline intersection of Broadway and Louis Coleman Jr. Drive west to the Ohio River. It proceeds south along the bank of the Ohio River to the southern boundary of Chickasaw Park where it extends to the centerline of Southwestern Parkway. From this point it extends to the rear of the lots on Dumesnil



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**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The district boundaries correspond to the Louisville Department of Public Works 1975 neighborhood delineation.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Rory Krupp  
organization: Owen & Eastlake  
Ltd  
street & number: 1356 Hamlet Street  
city or town: Columbus state: Ohio zip code: 43201  
e-mail rkrupp@oweneastlake.com  
telephone: 614-439-9068  
date: April 30, 2024

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map. See map in continuation pages for contributing and non-contributing status.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Chickasaw Neighborhood Historic District

City or Vicinity: Louisville

County: Jefferson

State: Kentucky

Photographer: Rory Krupp

Date Photographed: December 12, 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 17 (KY\_Jefferson\_Chickasaw Neighborhood\_0001) Southwestern Parkway at Broadway, view looking south.

2 of 17 (KY\_Jefferson\_Chickasaw Neighborhood\_0002) West side of Southwestern Parkway with Chickasaw Park in background, view looking southwest.

3 of 17 (KY\_Jefferson\_Chickasaw Neighborhood\_0003) Shelter house at Chickasaw Park, view looking northwest.

4 of 17 (KY\_Jefferson\_Chickasaw Neighborhood\_0004) Lafayette subdivision from Loretto and Garfield, view looking southeast.

5 of 17 (KY\_Jefferson\_Chickasaw Neighborhood\_0005) Kentucky Avenue at 45th Street, view looking northwest.

6 of 17 (KY\_Jefferson\_Chickasaw Neighborhood\_0006) 45th Street at Garland Avenue, view looking north.

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7 of 17 (KY\_Jefferson\_Chickasaw Neighborhood\_0007) Sunset Avenue from Southwestern Parkway, view looking east.

8 of 17 (KY\_Jefferson\_Chickasaw Neighborhood\_0008) Virginia Avenue at Plato Terrace, view looking northeast.

9 of 17 (KY\_Jefferson\_Chickasaw Neighborhood\_0009) Woodway Lane from Greenwood Avenue, view looking north.

10 of 17 (KY\_Jefferson\_Chickasaw Neighborhood\_0010) Grand Street east of Cecil Avenue.

11 of 17 (KY\_Jefferson\_Chickasaw Neighborhood\_0011) 35th Street from Broadway, view looking southeast.

12 of 17 (KY\_Jefferson\_Chickasaw Neighborhood\_0012) Grand Avenue at Louis Coleman Jr. Drive, view looking northeast.

13 of 17 (KY\_Jefferson\_Chickasaw Neighborhood\_0013) Alpha Gardens entrance, view looking west.

14 of 17 (KY\_Jefferson\_Chickasaw Neighborhood\_0014) Regatta Way at 36th Street, view looking southeast.

15 of 17 (KY\_Jefferson\_Chickasaw Neighborhood\_0015) Fordson Way at 43rd, view looking southeast.

16 of 17 (KY\_Jefferson\_Chickasaw Neighborhood\_0016) Kentucky Street east of I - 265, view looking west.

17 of 17 (KY\_Jefferson\_Chickasaw Neighborhood\_0017) Winnrose Way at 43rd, view looking southwest.

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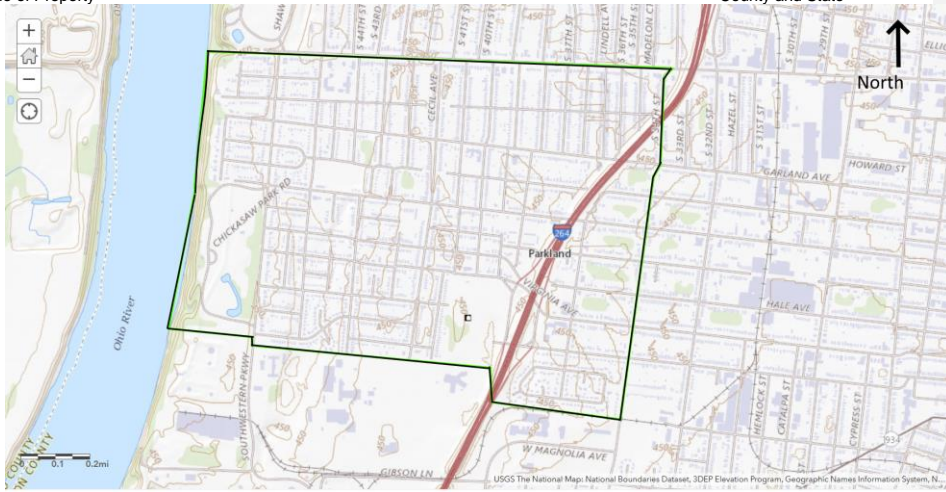


Figure 22. Historic district boundary on USGS national topographic map, 2024 (United States Geological Service)

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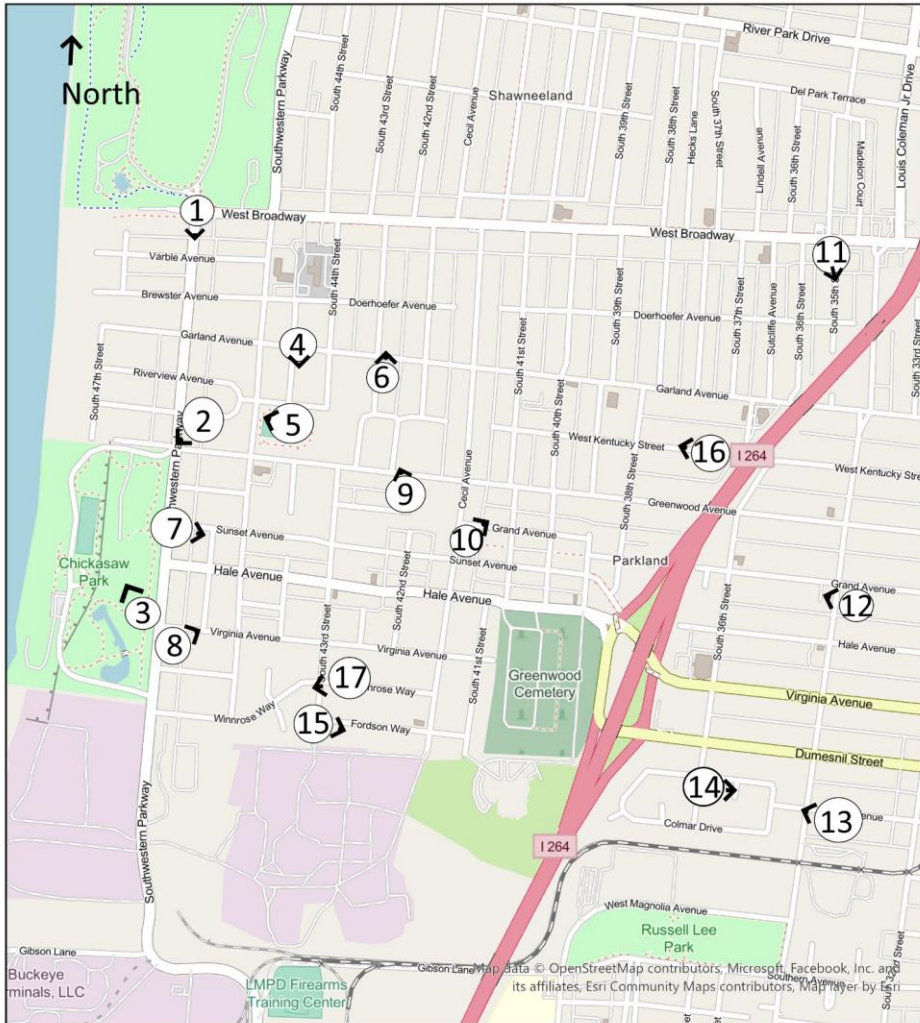


Figure 23. Photo Key.

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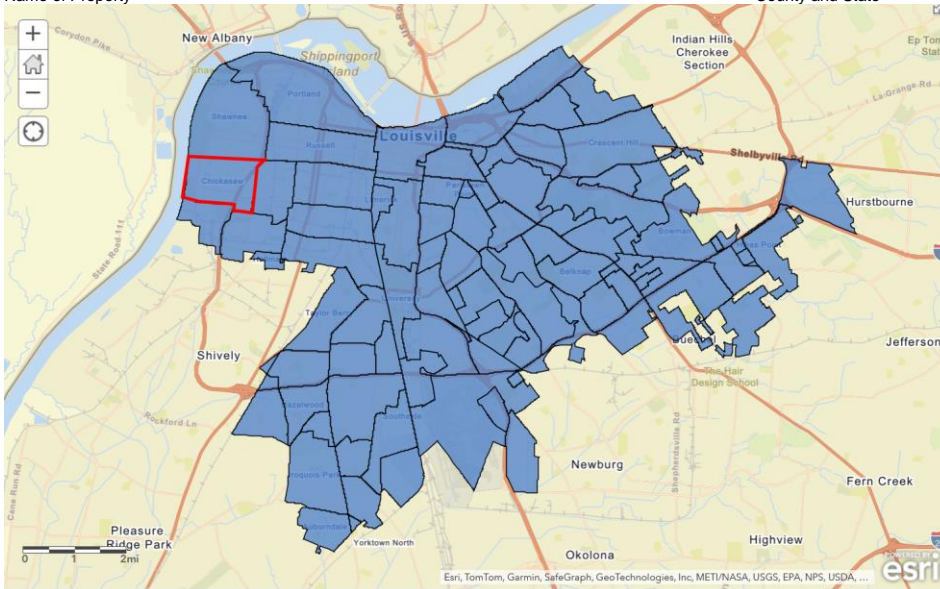


Figure 24. Location of the Chickasaw neighborhood in Louisville with 1975 borders (LOJIC)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations 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. 460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

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