

A HISTORY OF THE CARVER AND NEWTOWNE NEIGHBORHOODS

The Carver-Newtowne history is one of explosive growth followed by a struggle for survival. During the neighborhood's early years it was defined by outside forces: the location of the railroad, city industrial growth, and Richmond's residential expansion. Both immigrant families and former slaves found a home and a job within the neighborhood's borders. Years later the effects of racial politics become evident. From 1930 through 1960, the area was considered a "Negro neighborhood," one in which African Americans were permitted to live. With an increased African American population and limited available housing, all residents could not be adequately housed in the neighborhood's older dwellings. This situation was compounded by indifferent landlords and the inability of neighborhood residents to obtain home improvement loans to update and expand their homes. In spite of the mixed housing conditions, a thriving community existed. A community in which many worked, worshiped, and played.

Carver and Newtowne-West lie to the west of downtown Richmond, bordered generally by West Marshall Street on the south, Interstate 95 to the north, Belvidere Street on the east, and Hermitage Road to the west. The development of this area has been significant in the history of the city of Richmond. Its history is presented in five eras: Early Development: 1767-1866, City Annexation and Growth: 1867-1919, Early City Planning: 1920-1949, Urban Renewal: 1950-1985, and Neighborhood Revitalization: 1986-1999. Residential, industrial, and institutional development will be explored as influenced first by the City of Richmond's expansion and later by demographics, city planning policy, and neighborhood activism.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT: 1767 - 1866

In the early 1700s, William Byrd III, son of Richmond's founder, owned a large land holding west of Richmond that included what would become the Carver and Newtowne neighborhoods. When Byrd, who had spent beyond his means while living in England, was forced to raise cash to pay his debts he sold lottery chances on this land. James Buchanan "won" much of the present Carver in this lottery.¹ Buchanan's land was characterized by a rolling

¹ Drew St. J. Carneal, *Richmond's Fan District*, (Richmond: Historic Richmond Foundation, 1996); 11,13.

terrain which sloped from a flat plateau along its southern edge toward the steep ravine of Bacon Quarter Branch, a creek, to the north. Numerous small springs bisected the area. Two springs noted on early maps were Cove Spring, at what are now Moore and Bowe streets, and Buchanan's Spring, which flowed through the area between Hancock and Harrison streets. Author Virginius Dabney in describing the latter location states, "the cool spring was notable for its translucent purity, and the shade of the huge trees made it a place of restful quietude."² The presence of Buchanan's Spring had a large impact on land development—both fostering growth along its banks and also hindering expansion to the west. In 1787, the Reverend John Buchanan inherited his brother's land and constructed Carver's first known residence at this spring near today's West Broad and Hancock streets.

The Carver area attracted additional settlers in the 1800s. At that time, with barriers imposed by the James River on the south and Shockoe Creek to the east and north, Richmond residents looked to the west for new home sites. This growth was facilitated by construction of the Richmond Turnpike in 1804. The Turnpike, later renamed Broad Street, helped with the transport of coal and tobacco from outlying areas and though that may have been the Turnpike's initial purpose, shortly land speculation was booming and the Turnpike provided access to the Carver area. For investors, the "most coveted tract" was the property owned by Rev. John Buchanan. In 1810, Buchanan sold the eastern portion of his land to fellow Scotsman John Graham.³ Bullock and Harris platted the first development within this area in 1817. Surrounding large property owners, some of them land-speculators, included J. McMurdo, Robert Gordon, E. Carrington, Daniel Call, Chief Justice John Marshall, Will McKinzie, and A. Blair.⁴

Michael Hancock built the second area's second large home between 1815 and 1817 on Marshall Street to the east of Rev. Buchanan.⁵ What is interesting about this property is that it

² Virginius Dabney, *Richmond: The Story of a City*, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976); 69.

³ Carneal, 23.

⁴ F.W. Beers, *Illustrated Atlas of the City of Richmond.*, (Richmond: F.W. Beers, 1876). Also Richard Young, *Map of the City of Richmond and its Jurisdiction*, (Richmond, Va.: Frank D. Bailes, 1817); Mary Wingfield Scott, *Old Richmond Neighborhoods*, (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1950; reprint, Richmond: Wm Byrd Press, 1984); 251.

⁵Scott, 231. Also Dabney, 171. Dabney states that this residence later became the home of Judge Dabney Carr, who called the place 'Elba,' and, prior to the Civil War, it was the home of John Minor Botts—"an unremitting foe of secession."

was also the home of African Americans Sam Poser and Sam Smith, who lived on the northwest corner in the 1820s and 1830s. They are among the first African Americans to be living in this area. It is not known if these men were free blacks or slaves.⁶

The northeastern edge of Carver was less desirable as a residential location due to the rugged and impassable ravine formed by Bacon Quarter Branch and it thus developed in a different manner. As early as 1819, a brickyard was located on the present day West Leigh Street between Belvidere and Glimmer streets and by 1845 three additional brickyards were in operation: Davis and Son at 719-721 West Leigh Street, and William Davis and Son, W. Ragland, and Carter and Bowles each located at the intersection of West Leigh and Glimmer streets. At the southwestern edge of Carver industrial development occurred due to the presence of the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad (RF&P) whose tracks ran along West Broad Street to Hancock Street where they angled to the northwest.⁷

The first planned development was residential in nature. Several homes were built as early as 1818 along the seven hundred block of West Marshall Street.⁸ (Figure 1: 701 and 703 West Marshall Street) Carver though, would not resemble a small neighborhood until the 1840s and 1850s when residences were built along West Marshall, West Clay and Catherine streets between Munford and Graham streets for European American settlers. (Figure 2: 712 West Marshall) (Figure 3: 722 West Clay Street) The homes built on West Marshall and Catherine streets were small frame residences, while those along West Clay Street were larger and primarily constructed of brick. These early homes usually exhibited the Classic Revival or Greek Revival architectural styles. Many homes were owned and occupied by shopkeepers and laborers, such as mechanics, bricklayers and carpenters, but large real estate owners or builders

⁶ Carr, "The Garden," (Richmond, Va., n.d.). Carr writes that the brick house of Poser and Smith sat at the edge of the property's garden. Sam Smith was "the boss of the place and had charge of the fruit trees, the vine yard, the berries and vegetables."

⁷ Kimberly M. Chen, "Carver Industrial Historic District," (Richmond, Va., 1999); 8-13. The RF&P depot was located at Eighth and Broad Streets. The first RF&P train was dispatched from Richmond in 1836.

⁸ Mary Wingfield Scott, "Mary Wingfield Scott papers 1935 to 1953: Houses, Catherine Street to Clarke Street," (File Box 6, Valentine Museum, Richmond, Va.). Scott notes an insurance policy was issued to Joshua Carter for a dwelling and carriage house at 701 West Marshall in 1818.

also constructed homes as investments.⁹

During this antebellum period to the east of Carver at West Leigh Street and Brook Avenue, there were the homes of a number of free blacks. Most likely free blacks were also living within the present Carver boundaries.¹⁰ In 1866, the Mills & Starke city directory identified eleven “colored” residents in the 700 and 800 blocks of West Leigh and West Marshall Streets and in the 300 block of Gilmer Street.

The Carver area was becoming more and more accessible to the city by 1866. In 1860, the Virginia State Legislature had authorized construction of street railroads and shortly thereafter horse drawn cars traveled west on Broad Street to the then city limits at Adams Street, within walking distance for the new residents east of Munford.¹¹ Clay and Leigh streets had been extended beyond the city limits to the general vicinity of Lombardy Street by 1865.¹² (Figure 4: 1861-1865 map of Richmond drawn during the Civil War, Lt. Peter S. Michie.) And, following the burning of downtown Richmond by evacuating Confederate soldiers, many of the burned out businesses relocated to Broad Street—rapidly transforming it from a country road into a commercial thoroughfare expanding toward Carver.¹³ The stage was set for continued growth westward.

ANNEXATION AND GROWTH: 1867 - 1919

The second era in Carver’s history began with City annexation in 1867 of lands as far west as Lombardy Street. The Carver area, then referred to as “Sheep Hill,” was to become one of the most densely populated sections of the city.¹⁴ Plats reflecting Richmond’s established grid

⁹Scott, 237. Studio I Class, Department of Urban Studies, VCU, “History, Urban Design Elements and Historic Resources of the Carver Neighborhood,” Class Project, (Richmond, Va., 1997); 8.

¹⁰Scott, 245. The concentration of free blacks led to the formation of Ebenezer Baptist Church at West Leigh and Judah Streets in May 1858. In 1866, this church was also used as a Freedman’s Bureau school.

¹¹ *Richmond News Leader*, n.d. (Valentine Museum, Richmond, Va.).

¹² Peter S. Michie, “Richmond, Virginia.” map. (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1865).

¹³ William Griffin, *One Hundred Fifty Years of History: Along the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad*, (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1984); 44.

¹⁴ Scott, 302. Also Richard Waller, Interview by Dennis D. Joyner, 14 April, 1999; Irving Haggins, Interview by Lucy Lucas and Trina Davis, 12, December 1999. “Sheep Hill” referred to the early practice of the herding sheep and cattle along Leigh Street to the stock yards and slaughterhouses located at Brook Road and Bacon Quarter Branch.

street pattern were quickly filed for land development. Two of these plans subdivided the area between Broad and Leigh streets, the Graham Plan from Munford to Hancock streets and the Gallstone Plan between Hancock and Bowe streets. By 1846 Graham's Plan had been further subdivided into the Boshier and Harvie subdivision plans. To the north between West Leigh and Moore streets, the large Glazebrook Plan extended between Oak and Bowe streets. This plan was further subdivided by 1889 into the Hazelbrook Tract to the east and the West End Land Company Plan to the west.¹⁵ New developments required that streets be extended and this required that gullies be filled and some elevations leveled. Author Michael Chesson points out these were "minor obstacles compared to the imposing hills and deep ravines to the east [of the city]."¹⁶ These streets though, would run at an angle due to the northwesterly forty degree angle established earlier by Carver's southern boundary, West Broad Street (the Richmond Turnpike). The city engineer's annual report for 1874 indicates how slowly improvements would be completed. During that year, Hancock was the only Carver street to be improved, it was graded between Clay and Leigh streets.¹⁷ Maps document the opening of streets across Buchanan's Spring, West Marshall by 1876 and Catherine, West Leigh, and Moore by 1889. Also, by 1889, two streets enabled passage to the north across Bacon Quarter Branch ravine. These were Oak with a small bridge at grade within the ravine and Dinnen with a narrow footbridge across the shallower western end of the creek. By 1905 a steel bridge spanning the ravine allowed wagons and carriages to cross at Lombardy Street.¹⁸

As a primarily residential neighborhood grew in the eastern part of Carver, industrial development along the south and west was being driven by the presence of the RF&P railroad. The first industrial structures in the area were built by this railroad. In 1873, the RF&P constructed car shops along Leigh Street west of Lombardy Street and in 1875 locomotive

¹⁵Beers, map. Also G. Wm. Baist, *Atlas of the City of Richmond, Virginia*. (Philadelphia: G. Wm. Baist, 1889), and Scott, notes.

¹⁶ Chesson, Michael B. Chesson, *Richmond After the War 1865-1890*, (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1981);122.

¹⁷W. E. Cutshaw, *Annual Report of the Engineer Department of the City of Richmond*, (Richmond: Evening News Steam Presses, 1874); 13. Other improvements in the immediate vicinity included the grading of Broad Street to Hancock and its graveling to Belvidere. During 1874 the city sewer was also extended along Clay Street to just east of Brooke Road.

¹⁸ Beers. Also Baist and Sanborn, 1905.

facilities. This resulted in a huge complex, known as Boulton, which included a machine shop, car shop, blacksmith's shop, paint shop, carpenter's shop, offices, and storehouse in addition to a nine-stall roundhouse and a 65-foot iron turntable. (Figure 5: RF&P Boulton shops) In 1880, the railroad expanded further by building a freight depot alongside their tracks on Broad Street between Hancock and Harrison streets.¹⁹ These facilities, though luring other industrial enterprises to the area and providing employment to the neighborhood.

Industry began locating in Carver after Richmond's 1882 river front fire prompted the passage of ordinances banning certain businesses from expanding or building along the James River.²⁰ Large three to four story industrial structures were soon built along the southern streets of West Marshall and West Clay and the western streets of Bowe and Lombardy. The Peter Strumpf Brewing Company, c.1890, was the earliest of these large-scale industries. This company purchased the Home Brewery, located on Buchanan's Spring at Harrison and Clay Streets, and added a two-story brick office building (1125 West Clay Street), brick stables (700 Harrison Street), and a beer garden. At least six large industries built or expanded their factories in Carver between 1895 and 1906. These were Joseph Heppert's planing mill and lumberyard (512 Goshen Street), the print shop for Baughman Stationary Company (1418-28 West Marshall Street), the Sitterding, Carneal, and Davis Company planing mill (Moore and Lombardy streets), the Consumer's Ice Company (700 Harrison Street), the American Tobacco Company warehouse (700 to 900 blocks of Bowe Street) and the Eagle Paper Company (1402-08 West Marshall Street).²¹ (Figure 6: Consumer's Ice Company) (Figure 7: British American Tobacco Company) The construction of large structures continued along West Marshall and West Clay streets between 1910 and 1915 with the Pin Money Pickles Company (1500 West Marshall Street) and the Virginia Railroad and Power Company (1120 West Clay Street) locating along these streets, and the Eagle Paper Company expanding its operations.²²

¹⁹ Griffin, 45, 61. In 1903, RF&P expanded their facilities further by constructing a large steam power plant. Also Sanborn map, (1905).

²⁰ Chen, 8-13.

²¹Ibid., 8-14, 8-15.

²²Ibid., 8-15, 8-17.

Also, prevalent were small neighborhood businesses. Black owned businesses in 1906 included watchmaker Marcellus Waller (1100 West Leigh Street), blacksmith Benjamin Waller (1019 West Leigh Street), and J. Pryor's grocery (1227 Moore Street). By 1910, listings in the city directory of black owned businesses were much more extensive. These included sixteen grocery stores located primarily on Catherine, West Leigh and Moore streets, the University Pharmacy (825 West Leigh Street), Waller Jewelry (1007 West Leigh Street), and Benjamin Waller's blacksmith shop (308 Graham Street).²³

Industrial growth, with its accompanying demand for workers, was the dominate factor promoting residential growth in the Carver and Newtowne neighborhoods. By 1889 residences had been built on all major streets. West Leigh, Moore and Boyd streets had predominately one and two story frame houses. (Figure 8: 1430 West Clay Street) West Clay and West Marshall Streets contained a mixture of frame and brick two story residences.²⁴ These homes were predominately in the Italianate or Queen Anne architectural style.²⁵ Housing was also built for lower income residents in the form of tenements. These structures appear on the 1886 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map along Ram Cat Alley between Munford and Graham streets. In the early twentieth century tenements were also erected on the cross streets of Hancock, Harrison, and Bowe.²⁶

Early city directories provide information on occupation and race of neighborhood residents. The 1879 city directory indicates that a mixture of economic and social classes with laborers as the predominate occupation, but teachers and physicians also represented. The housing pattern in Carver was a predominately segregated one with African Americans living between West Leigh Street and Bacon Quarter Branch and primarily European immigrants

²³Hill Directory, *Richmond, Virginia, 1900*, (Richmond: Hill Directory, 1900). University Pharmacy was known by neighborhood residents as Dr. Jackson's drug store.

²⁴ Baist. Also Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, "The Carver Conservation and Redevelopment Area," (Richmond, Va., 1999). The former brickyard locations were initially considered unsuitable for construction due to the poor quality of soil that had replaced the clay removed for brick manufacturing. Inexpensive housing ultimately was built on these sites and occupied by low-income workers.

²⁵Studio I Class, Department of Urban Studies, VCU, "History, Urban Design Elements and Historic Resources of the Carver Neighborhood," Class Project, (Richmond, Va., 1997); 9.

²⁶ Sanborn map, (1886). Alley was located between Broad and Marshall streets. Also Chen, 7-2.

settling along West Marshall, West Clay and Catherine streets. By the 1870s there was increased integration, yet specific streets remain segregated. West Clay Street was entirely European-American, while the cross-streets of Glimmer, Hancock, Kinney, Norton, and Oak were occupied entirely by African Americans.²⁷ By the end of this era, 1919, the racial composition of the Carver neighborhood would become almost entirely African-American.

Residential development was also occurring to the west of Lombardy in what is now Newtowne-West. By 1889 J. H. Dinnen had platted land from Allen Street to Hermitage Road into a grid pattern with narrow lots. Small frame one and two story houses were built over the next years to house workers from the nearby meat packing operations. Often two residences were built on a single lot, thus increasing the density within the housing area.²⁸

Public transportation was a pressing issue for these early residents and major streetcar companies reportedly fought in front of the city council and the state legislature for exclusive rights to build new lines. Carver residents took advantage of this political situation and successfully lobbied to be included in the 1887 city ordinance authorizing electric streetcars. By May 1888 the first trolleys were in continuous operation running along Clay Street to Hancock Street before continuing along Broad Street west to Harrison Street. The Clay Street Line could provide frequent access to the city with its double tracks. These allowed trolley cars to pass each point along the route every five minutes between 6:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. seven days a week.²⁹ By the early 1900s, public transportation was available to Newtowne residents via a single track trolley line along West Leigh Street that connected to the Clay Line at Clay and Hancock streets.³⁰ Passenger rail service became convenient to residents in 1880 when the RF&P opened the Elba Station at West Broad and Pine streets and, in 1907, when the Richmond to Ashland

²⁷ J. H. Chataigne, *Chataigne's Directory of Richmond, Virginia*, (Richmond, Va.:Baughman Bros. Pub. , 1879-80).

²⁸Baist. Also Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Maps of Richmond, Virginia*, (Pelham, N.Y.: Sanborn Map Co., 1905).

²⁹ Richmond, Va., "An Ordinance to Authorize the Construction and Operation of a Street Railway," 1899(?), 8.

³⁰ Richmond Department of Public Works, *Directors of Public Works for the City of Richmond, Va. 1828-1956*, (Richmond, 1957);38. Also Richmond, "Ordinance to Authorize Street Railway," 4. The ordinance required trains to pass every 20 minutes on this line.

Electric Railway began operations from a terminal at 814 West Broad Street. (Figure 9: Terminal of the Richmond-Ashland Railway Line) The construction of this railway's elevated trestle though, necessary to cross Bacon Quarter Branch, destroyed numerous dwellings between Broad and Moore streets.³¹(Figure 10: Richmond to Ashland trestle)

A large number of neighborhood public and private institutions were also begun in the nineteenth century. The first schools established were private schools for African American students. In 1867, Richmond Institute (later Virginia Union University) was founded to the north of Carver along Lombardy Street, Moore Street Industrial School was established by a mission of the Second Baptist Church in 1878, and Hartshorn Memorial College, on Lombardy and Leigh streets, was founded in 1883 for the education of young black women. (Figure 11: Hartshorn Memorial College) Two public schools were also built. Elba School, an elementary school for the white children, was built in 1880 at 1000 West Marshall Street and Moore School, an African American elementary school, was built in 1887 at 1113 Moore Street. Moore School had a large enrollment of 947 students during its first year, foreshadowing that growth would continue and necessitate the construction of an addition in 1914. By 1905, two more schools were also constructed in Newtowne along Moore Street.³²

Other neighborhood institutions, which demonstrate the communities' growth and vitality, were the churches. In 1875, Moore Street Missionary Baptist Church was organized by members of the Second Baptist Church. Its first location was at 812 Moore Street. Other churches formed by 1886 were Elba Park Church and West Clay Street Baptist Church. By 1906 Hill's city directory indicates that Carver was home to five churches: Marshall Street Christian Church, College View Mission, Broad Rock Baptist Mission, Moore Street Baptist Church, and First Union Baptist Church. In addition to schools and churches, other early community

³¹ Griffin, 45. Also Carlton McKenney, *Rails in Richmond*, (Glendale: Interurban Press, 1986); 95, 100. The trestle was constructed between Graham and Gilmer streets from 814 West Broad Street to Moore Street where it curved to the north. Rail service was interrupted between 1917 and 1919, the line ceased operations in 1938.

³² Wm. H. Deierhoi, "A Bicentennial Sketch of the Richmond Public Schools," (Richmond, Va.: Richmond Public Schools, 1976). Also Sanborn (1905). Enrollment at Moore Street School would reach 1,390 students by 1921.

gathering places would have been, “Spring Garden Park” at Harrison and Clay streets and the Broad Street baseball grounds which, in 1905, were located at Lombardy and Broad Streets.³³

EARLY CITY PLANNING: 1920-1949

The historical focus for Carver and Newtowne-West begins to change in the 1920s from one of construction of the built environment to one of maintaining a viable community. During the era from 1920 to 1949 the physical deterioration of Richmond’s densely populated central city neighborhoods forced the city to address the issue of public housing. Carver, then known as “Uptown,” was one area significantly impacted by the city’s plans. Though a vibrant neighborhood, the changing demographics, the mixture of industrial and residential uses, the predominately older housing stock, and the bank lending practices in African American residential areas presented obstacles to Carver’s renewal and growth.

The planning movement began in Richmond in 1919 with the formation of an interim planning committee. Following a national trend, land use zoning was one of the first areas addressed through city planning efforts. In 1927, the City Council adopted the city’s first zoning map. Zoning for Carver deviated from existing land use in that the north side of West Marshall Street and the south side of West Clay Street were zoned industrial west of Gilmer Street, in Newtowne-West residences west of Allen Street on the south side of West Leigh Street were zoned industrial. Though some industries were located in these areas, they were primarily residential streets.³⁴

In addition to evaluating land use, the city also studied population and housing conditions during these years. In 1934, they found that approximately 5,000 African Americans lived within Carver’s boundaries, thus making it one of the most densely populated of the older central city neighborhoods.³⁵ Statistics for the Carver-Jackson Ward area north of Broad Street between

³³Beers. Also Sanborn, (1905).

³⁴ Richmond City Planning Commission, “Zoning: District Maps.” (Richmond, Va., 1925 and 1927). The 1925 proposed zoning map had designated Leigh Street west of Munford as commercial.

³⁵ Richmond Planning Commission, *A Master Plan for the Physical Development of the City*, (Richmond, 1946); 79, 71, pl. 14.

Henry and Harrison Streets revealed the dense housing conditions documenting 70.5 persons per acre in 1920 and 55.9 persons per acre in 1930.³⁶ City housing inspectors provided further evidence of density by calculating that from 1926 to 1935 a total of 425 houses had been demolished in African American neighborhoods with developers and individuals constructing only thirty new dwellings. New housing construction in Carver and Newtowne from 1926 to 1935 only resulted in five units in Carver and four in Newtowne, and one apartment building in each area.³⁷

The city drew up extensive redevelopment plans in an effort to alleviate the dense and unhealthy living conditions. Slum clearance was always the proposed first step. Urban planning professor Christopher Silver, analyzing public policy during this time, stated, “The demise of the public-private partnership in low-income housing construction led to a pervasive belief that, until all traces of existing housing deterioration had been eradicated, center-city neighborhoods were not worthy of private housing investment.”³⁸ Initial plans for slum clearance and construction of public housing units, both in Carver and other neighborhoods, created controversy and were ultimately vetoed at the polls. Thus, little was accomplished in the 1930s other than to document a need. In 1940, the city Housing Authority was established to deal directly with housing related issues. Harland Bartholomew, author of the city’s 1946 master plan, encouraged action by emphasizing the housing plight of the city’s African American population in the master plan. He also alluded to the effects of segregated housing practices, by observing that shortage of “available housing facilities for this [African American] population” had “forced large numbers back into previously discarded quarters.”³⁹

By the late 1940s the city’s planners and policymakers had become even more convinced that massive slum clearance was necessary. Central city housing areas were evaluated for slum or “blighted” conditions with the intent that these areas would be redeveloped. “Blight”

³⁶Ibid., pl. 15, 16. Housing type within this area was almost entirely one and two story residences, many without indoor plumbing facilities.

³⁷Christopher Silver, *Twentieth-Century Richmond: Planning, Politics, and Race*, (Knoxville, Tenn: University of Tennessee Press, 1984); 141. Also Richmond, Master Plan, 70.

³⁸ Silver, 142.

³⁹ Richmond, Master Plan, 68.

characteristics, as defined by Bartholomew at the time, included both buildings that were no longer maintained in a state of good repair and the replacing of owner/occupants with renters. He elaborated further on the causes: the proximity of objectionable industrial development, encroachment of more intensive or inappropriate uses, proximity of Negro development, and other factors such as schools or parks that were too small or poor street paving within the community.⁴⁰ Carver's designation as a blighted neighborhood would have been in keeping with these criteria.

The issue for Carver residents would be the threat of wholesale housing clearance when a mixture of housing conditions existed in much of the neighborhood. This variety was documented by the 1940 federal census, which indicated that the number of residences needing major repairs between Henry and Harrison streets was 5 to 10 percent and between Harrison Street and the Boulevard was 25 to 50 percent. The percentage of overcrowded dwellings (homes with more than one and one-half persons per room) between Henry and Harrison was 10 to 15 percent and between Harrison Street and the Boulevard was 20 percent or more.⁴¹ Current Carver residents provide additional detail regarding housing conditions recalling homes without electricity or indoor plumbing and families carrying their drinking water from the open springs at Catherine and Harrison Streets.⁴² One can thus determine that numerous dwellings needed some level of upgrading.

The city's second zoning map, adopted in 1943, did not encourage residential reinvestment in these neighborhoods as industrial zoning remained in place along the perimeters and along Lombardy Street.⁴³ Although the boom period of industrial construction had passed, a sizeable number of industrial buildings were constructed between 1926 and 1935.⁴⁴ These

⁴⁰ Harland Bartholomew, "Housing Conditions and Policies, Richmond, Virginia," (Richmond: City Planning Commission, 1942); 5, 6.

⁴¹ Richmond, Master Plan, pl. 25, 27.

⁴²Scott. Also Lucy Lucas and Viola Robinson, Interview by author, 29 April 2000, and Barbara Abernathy, Interview by author, 2000.

⁴³ Richmond, zoning map, (1943). Zoning in Newtowne was changed from industrial to residential for the block between Allen and Mossella streets on the south side of West Leigh Street.

⁴⁴ Richmond, Master Plan, Pl. 10, 11. Eleven commercial structures were built during these years.

businesses continued to provide easily accessed employment to neighborhood residents when other large employers, such as the RF&P Boulton shop, had moved from the area. Local employment was important as few residents owned automobiles during this period.⁴⁵ Businesses building in Carver between 1920 and 1950 included the Cusson, May and Company printers (715-721 Bowe Street), the Hajoca Heating Company (1208 West Marshall Street), Tomlinson Heating and Plumbing Supplies (1300 West Marshall Street), the Beaufont Company (703-07 Harrison Street), the Haines, Jones and Cadbury Company (1208 West Marshall Street), the City Ice Company (1200 West Marshall Street), and Biggs Antique Company (900 West Marshall Street). The vacant Eagle Paper Company buildings (1402-08 West Marshall) were purchased by Friedman-Marks for suit manufacture.⁴⁶

As in the earlier era, the neighborhood's African American population owned small businesses. Also, due to early settlement by Jewish and German immigrants several corner stores were owned by these individuals. An evaluation of the major east west streets in 1920 indicates that at least eight black owned businesses thrived at this time, with the majority located on West Leigh Street. These businesses included the European Boot Black Parlor, University Pharmacy, West End Hair Dressing Parlor, Virginia Café, West End Electric Shoe Repairing Shop, and the Afro American Old Folks Home. (Figure 12: Afro American Old Folks Home) Other small businesses, such as laundries, beauty shops, and cafes operated out of homes but were not reflected in the city directory.⁴⁷

The 1930 Hill's city directory documents a dramatic increase in the variety of small black owned businesses. Businesses located on the streets of West Clay, West Marshall, and West Leigh totaled twenty-two. These included service-oriented businesses, such as barber and beauty shops, cleaners, and shoe repair shops, a jewelry store, a physician, a notary, and restaurants. African American owned business opening in the 1940s included the Carter Brothers' Funeral

⁴⁵Lucas and Robinson Interview. Also Waller interview; Griffin, 62. The Boulton operation, with the exception of passenger car shops and mechanical department offices, moved from Lombardy and West Leigh streets to the company's Acca freight yard outside the city limits in 1924.

⁴⁶Chen, 7-7, 7-8, 8-15. Also Hill, (1920, 1930, 1940, 1950).

⁴⁷Hill, (1920).

Home on West Leigh Street and Edward Bushell's dental practice on West Clay Street.⁴⁸ Jewish and German owned corner stores had also grown in number since 1920 and would continue to dominate the grocery business through 1940. (Figure 13: Moore Street Market) The number and variety of businesses present would indicate that this was a self-contained neighborhood; one where residents could meet daily needs without leaving the area.

During the 1930s and 1940s, the pressing need for additional neighborhood schools was finally addressed. Maggie L. Walker High School opened in 1938 at Lombardy and Leigh streets. (Figure 14: Maggie Walker High School) All Richmond African American ninth grade students attended this school and then, following their freshman year, chose to attend either Maggie Walker High School for vocational and industrial courses or Armstrong High School for college preparatory classes.⁴⁹ A new elementary facility would also be built. As early as 1913, the neighborhood Elba Elementary School had been labeled as antiquated. In 1941, the Richmond School Board developed plans to replace the aging school with a new structure⁵⁰ A replacement though was not built until after World War II when, in 1949, a large addition was built onto the Moore Street School and the Elba School was closed. The combined school was renamed George Washington Carver Elementary School. This school, along with providing a modern educational facility for neighborhood children, also provided the neighborhood with a new name—Carver.⁵¹

URBAN RENEWAL: 1950 - 1985

Between 1950 and 1985 the city implemented programs to address needs identified in the 1946 city master plan. Most important to Carver, were those plans dealing with transportation and housing issues. These plans required extensive redevelopment within the neighborhood and thus prompted residents to organize in an effort to influence public policy.

⁴⁸ Hill, (1930, 1940).

⁴⁹ *Richmond News Leader*, 7 September 1938.

⁵⁰ *Richmond News Leader*, 5 June 1952.

⁵¹ The earliest references to Carver as a geographical location are found in Richmond newspaper articles of 1954. The *Richmond Times Dispatch* in June 20, 1954 references the Carver Area Citizen's Committee.

In 1950, the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) conducted an extensive housing study of the 122-acre area encompassing all of Jackson Ward—including northern and eastern Carver. This study revealed a strong market for new housing close to the central business district and also the severely deteriorated housing throughout the Jackson Ward area.⁵² The first “Carver Plan” was part of the resulting Jackson Ward redevelopment strategy. The Carver plan specifically called for the razing of more than 400 dwellings to make way for a turnpike, the extension and widening of Belvidere Street, and allocation of land for industrial reuse—it immediately created controversy.⁵³ A 1953 editorial in the *Richmond News Leader* presents one perspective asserting that the “structures involved in the Carver Project for the most part appear to be the very sort of dilapidated and unhealthy dwellings contemplated under the State and Federal slum clearance acts.”⁵⁴ (Figure 15: Dilapidated Housing on Axtell Street) The newly formed Carver Displacement League, representing the neighborhood view point, proposed a program of spot removal and rehabilitation. League president Oliver P. Chiles, took issue with coverage by the paper contending that housing pictured in the newspaper focused on deteriorated rental properties and was thus misleading to the public. He also stressed that displaced elderly persons would not find acceptable housing elsewhere with the proposed compensation for their homes. Desiring to convey the League’s support for improved housing he stated, “We would not have you believe we are against progress or against the city being made more beautiful, but we are gravely concerned with one fact and that is, that this progress and beauty not be purchased by those persons who are least able to do so.”⁵⁵ Despite neighborhood concerns, the Carver redevelopment plan moved forward.

Although the city and RRHA had rejected the resident’s recommendation that rehabilitation be substituted for a total clearance strategy, the city Health Department designated Carver for housing code enforcement and rehabilitation in 1954. Their action provided support

⁵² Silver, 212, 213. More than 25 percent of city residents surveyed favoring new housing construction in the central city area.

⁵³ Ibid., 221.

⁵⁴ *Richmond News Leader*, 8 December 1953.

⁵⁵ Silver, 219.

to the idea that clearance was not the only feasible strategy. Another entity joining the rehabilitation effort was the Richmond Home Builders Association, who formed the Home Builders Rehabilitation Corporation for the purpose of providing loans to owner-occupants for property improvements. The joint effort was focused on a seventeen-block area bounded generally by the streets of West Marshall, West Leigh, Munford, and Bowe. Within this area the Home Builders also renovated 1209 Catherine Street to serve both as a model for rehabilitation and as headquarters for the Carver Area Citizen's Committee and the Home Builder's health and rehabilitation committee.⁵⁶ By 1959 this collaborative effort had assisted in bringing 97 percent of the 888 substandard dwellings into compliance with the city's housing code. New homeowners had also been attracted to the neighborhood, thus increasing owner occupancy from 40 percent to 60 percent. Carver citizens had actively supported the rehabilitation program and were credited for being integral to success. Among these citizens were Oliver Chiles, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Hughes and Mrs. Carrie Faines, who had gone door to door educating and encouraging their neighbors.⁵⁷

Area developments the neighborhood could not influence were the continued intrusion of Broad Street commercial ventures, the construction of a truck terminal on residentially zoned Catherine Street, and the city's construction of a large gas holding tank. Also, moving forward was Richmond's transportation plan. In the summer of 1958, the Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike (Interstate I-95) was built along the northern edge of Carver. Interstate construction required extensive housing clearance and thus demolished Boyd Street and the eastern end of Moore Street. Coinciding with interstate construction was the extension of Belvidere Street along Carver's eastern boundary.⁵⁸ (Figure 16: Belvidere Street extension) The construction of these roads had a major impact on the neighborhood by not only reducing the number of dwellings, but

⁵⁶ *Richmond Times Dispatch*, 20 June 1954. Also *Richmond News Leader*, 1 July 1959. Financing was major obstacle impeding success of rehabilitation efforts. Few lending institutions would provide loans due to the low assessment value of neighborhood housing.

⁵⁷ Silver, 220. Also *Richmond News Leader*, 30 June 1959.

⁵⁸ Robert Hopson, "Richmond's Department of Public Works," *Virginia Municipal Review*, (August 1962); 169.

also by increasing traffic, altering the residential nature of the northern and eastern edges, and isolating Carver from its residential neighbor Jackson Ward.

In 1962, the final phase of the Carver plan was implemented with additional clearance of deteriorated properties north of Leigh Street by the RRHA and then construction of the ninety-eight unit Hartshorn Home community by private developers. This ranch style housing development offered affordable housing and also a community room and swimming pool. (Figure 17: Hartshorn Homes) The homes, located north of West Leigh Street between Harrison and Bowe streets, were also close to both the G.W. Carver and Maggie Walker schools. The Hartshorn community had the distinction of being the first of its kind to be insured by the Federal Home Administration.⁵⁹

In the early 1960s the city also adopted its third zoning map and wrote a comprehensive community renewal plan.⁶⁰ These documents were not entirely compatible in their visions for Carver and Newtowne-West. For Carver, the renewal plan highlighted incompatible land use zoning by stating that industries exerted a “poor influence on [the] residential area” and that neighborhood problems included “heavy through traffic, some narrow streets, and [the] abandoned railroad viaduct.” The report’s recommendations, which promoted a “potentially sound residential neighborhood,” included the rehabilitation of properties generally south and southeast of Carver Elementary School and the removal of scattered incompatible land uses, the abandoned railway viaduct, and excessively deteriorated residences.⁶¹ The two documents were also significant to Newtowne’s future. Zoning as revised in 1961 designated the entire area west of Lombardy Street as industrial. The community renewal report did not take issue with this

⁵⁹ *Richmond Times Dispatch*, 6 January 1963. The Viking Development Corporation of Norfolk, Virginia and the Reynolds Aluminum Service Corporation of Richmond built Hartshorn homes. Homes initially sold for \$11,500. Also Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, “The Carver Conservation and Redevelopment Area,” Staff Report, (Richmond, February 1999).

⁶⁰ *Richmond Times Dispatch*, 11 January 1959. This study, encompassing 298 blocks with 6,500 houses, was the largest slum clearance and rehabilitation program ever considered by the city.

⁶¹ Richmond City Planning Commission and the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, *Community Renewal Program, Richmond, Virginia*, (Richmond, Va.: City, 1966); 60, 61. Also Richmond, zoning map, (1961). The 1961 zoning map expanded the industrial zone along Broad and Marshall streets to include West Clay between Hancock and Norton streets.

industrial zoning though it did acknowledge that the “residential areas [were] adversely affected by industrially oriented traffic, noise, odors, and dust from adjacent incompatible uses.” The report also encouraged the expansion of the Maggie Walker High School grounds from twelve to twenty acres.⁶²

During the 1960s and 1970s there were also important changes associated with either existing or former area industries. In 1965, West Marshall Street resident Mrs. Lillie Thomas was successful in persuading the city to dismantle the former Richmond-Ashland railway viaduct between Clay and Catherine streets. And in 1969, the Export Leaf Tobacco Company contributed to the neighborhood street scape by constructing a new office at 1601 West Leigh Street. This building was designed by Richmond architect David Warren Hardwicke. But also during these years the Home Brewing Company closed leaving a vacant structure and the RF&P freight depot at Hancock and Broad was demolished to make way for a parking lot. The reuse of former industrial sites would become a component in future revitalization efforts.

During this era, Carver residents had formed two neighborhood associations, the West of Belvidere Neighborhood Association and the Carver Area Civic Improvement League, and had achieved a level of success influencing redevelopment and revitalization plans for their neighborhood. Newtowne residents had also organized as the Newtowne Civic League. A city-wide change that could not be altered by neighborhood activism though, was the Richmond School Board’s consolidation of the city’s seven high schools in 1979.⁶³ The consolidation of Maggie Walker High School with John Marshall High School, which resulted in Maggie Walker housing grades seven through ten, was an emotional one for the community. Not only had they identified strongly with in their high school, but events evolved from the school’s presence. One example is the long-standing rivalry with Armstrong High School that was played-out each year

⁶² Richmond, zoning map, (1961). Also Richmond and RRHA, 68, 69. The last comprehensive evaluation of city zoning took place in 1979. The approved zoning map included only one change for Carver and Newtowne areas, the north side of West Marshall Street between Munford to Gilmer streets was zoned residential.

⁶³ *Richmond News Leader*, 19 March 1985. After 1979, students attended Maggie Walker through the tenth grade and then transfer to John Marshall High School. Also *Richmond News Leader*, 12 July 1963. Two wings were added to Maggie Walker High School in 1963 to increase school capacity from 900 to 1400 students.

in a Thanksgiving football game known as the “Classic.” This was an occasion that drew people together and forged neighborhood bonds.

For Carver and Newtowne this era of physical change, combined with neighborhood residents relocating to other areas of the city, made reestablishing a neighborhood identity an essential ingredient in neighborhood revitalization during the coming years.

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION: 1986 - 1999

The most recent era in the Carver and Newtowne history, 1986 to 1999, is an exciting one as evidenced by the positive changes within the neighborhood. During this period the neighborhood associations successfully impacted public policy and joined RRHA in writing conservation and redevelopment plans. Also, the Carver-VCU Partnership was formed to facilitate their working toward mutual goals.

In the early 1980s, Madeline Peters, president of West of Belvidere neighborhood association, led the effort to have Carver designated as a conservation and rehabilitation district. The process was begun in 1985 when RRHA personnel, city planners, and VCU students conducted a preliminary housing survey of Carver. Their survey would become the basis for a neighborhood revitalization plan entitled “The Carver Conservation and Redevelopment Area Plan” and that the City Council would approve in 1986. This conservation and redevelopment plan encompassed an area extending generally from a southern boundary formed by West Marshall and West Clay streets to West Leigh Street between Munford and Bowe streets. Mayor Roy A. West, Carver City Council representative at this time, championed its passage emphasizing that the neighborhood supported the plan while also recognizing that there would “have to be some give and take,” and that additional planning would cause inconveniences. He further elaborated, “That’s what’s so exciting to me about the Carver project—the people bought it, they worked with it, and they are willing to stick with it to see it through.”⁶⁴ The Conservation and Redevelopment Plan centered around five efforts: 1) low interest loans and grants to homeowners for property renovation, 2) urban homesteading—acquisition and provision of

⁶⁴ *Richmond Times Dispatch*. 7 September 1986.

vacant houses to low and moderate-income persons willing to repair and occupy them, 3) rehabilitation loans to rental property owners, 4) removal of dilapidated and abandoned buildings, and 5) clearing specific areas for redevelopment.⁶⁵ The Carver plan also divided the conservation district into three geographical areas and outlined recommendations appropriate to each area. The plan's smooth adoption was due in part to private efforts already evident in the neighborhood. These include new homeowners renovating houses along West Clay and West Marshall streets, neighborhood residents using FHA loans to renovate frame buildings between Harrison and Kinney streets, and the Task Force for Historic Preservation in the Minority Community purchasing five houses for renovation and resale to residents.⁶⁶

In the late 1980s the influence of the West of Belvidere association faded and the Carver Area Civic Improvement League (CACIL) became the primary advocate for the Carver community. Led by CACIL president Helen Smith, the community actively worked with the RRHA and the city to further the conservation and redevelopment plan. A first hurdle was cleared in 1988 when the city's master plan was amended to recommended a zoning change from industrial to residential or residential- office for fifty-six properties in the 800 and 1000 blocks of West Marshall Street. Neighborhood residents had requested this amendment, and though some area property owners expressed opposition, others, such as Barbara Abernathy and JoAnn Childs, worked for its passage. The conservation district was subsequently expanded to include these West Marshall Street properties and in 1989 zoning was changed along these blocks.⁶⁷

(Figure 18: Carver Conservation and Rehabilitation District)

The largest building program proposed in the Carver Conservation and Redevelopment Plan, thirty-four town homes to be located in the 800 blocks of West Leigh and Catherine streets, was funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 1988. The neighborhood worked diligently with RRHA to assure the Victorian style town home plans would complement the neighborhood's existing architecture. They were so successful that the

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷Task Force for Historic Preservation in the Minority Community, *Neighborhood Developments*, May 1988. Also Richmond City Planning Commission, "Carver Rezonings," Staff Report, (Richmond, Va., March 1989).

plans were commended by the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Before construction began, the project was interrupted for two years when opponents filed a class action lawsuit. The case was finally dismissed in April of 1991. In 1993 the groundbreaking for the town homes was held and by 1994 the first homes were dedicated.⁶⁸ (Figure 19: New Carver town homes)

By 1997 accomplishments under the Carver Conservation and Redevelopment Plan. included the rehabilitation program's support for renovation of 157 residences, the homesteading program's purchase, rehabilitation, and sale of thirty-two houses to first-time homeowners, and the redevelopment program's purchase of eighty-one dilapidated structures.⁶⁹ (Figure 20: 706 Catherine St.) Other revitalization efforts were also taking place in Carver. These included the construction in 1991 of a Habitat for Humanity home on the corner of Catherine and Munford streets and the renovation the former Home Brewery building at 1125 West Clay into Clay House, Virginia's first single-room occupancy facility.⁷⁰ The neighborhood Smith-Peters Park, named in honor of community leaders Helen Smith and Madeline Peters, was constructed on Catherine Street in 1997.

The Newtowne-West Civic League, led by Marian G. Carter, was actively involved in determining their neighborhood's future during this period. Since 1961 Newtowne homeowners had been unable to get rehabilitation loans for their properties due to the area's industrial zoning. Thus, in 1987, the League requested assistance from the RRHA. The program initiated by RRHA at that time provided much needed emergency assistance for home repairs. In 1988, the League, with support from their City Council representative William J. Leidinger, was successful in having the city's master plan amended to change the proposed zoning of 100 properties from industrial to residential. This was an important step as industrial zoning had not only prevented residents from obtaining improvement loans, but had also encouraged investors

⁶⁸ Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, "Carver Conservation and Redevelopment Area Program Progress Report: 1987 - 1997," (Richmond, Va., 1997); 3,4. Also *Richmond Times Dispatch*, 15 October, 1988; *Richmond News Leader*, 29 December 1988; and *Richmond Times Dispatch*, 25 April 1989.

⁶⁹ RRHA, progress report, 2,3.

⁷⁰ RRHA, staff report.

to purchase residential properties with the intent of consolidating land parcels for development as industrial sites. In 1990, the City Council passed the zoning change. Areas affected by this change were between West Leigh Street and the alley north of Moore Street from Middlesex Street to Elizabeth Street, and the south frontage along West Leigh Street between Allen Avenue and Mossella Street.⁷¹ As a result of these initiatives public/private partnerships were formed between the RRHA and the nonprofit Habitat for Humanity and the private developer Richmond Homes. These partnerships constructed fifteen new homes for lower income residents between 1990 and 1996.⁷²

In 1996, the “Newtowne-West Redevelopment and Conservation Plan” was written by the Newtowne-West Civic League and RRHA. The principal strategies put forth in this plan were for clearance and redevelopment and for capital improvements. (Figure 21: Newtowne-West homes) For this plan to be fully implemented an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance will be necessary to change existing industrial zoning to residential in sections of the conservation area.⁷³

Continued revitalization and growth were bolstered in 1999 when the combined Carver/Newtowne-West neighborhood was selected by the city to be one of six city neighborhoods participating in the Neighborhoods in Bloom program. This program commits an increased level of funding to these neighborhoods for redevelopment and rehabilitation activities over a period of two years. In the Carver/Newtowne-West area, the RRHA was requested to administer the program. Neighborhoods in Bloom also has a Blitz to Bloom component, which incorporates other city agencies to increase public safety and the provision of human services in the targeted neighborhoods.

As the residential areas are being redeveloped into single family homes, demolition or adaptive reuse of the former industrial buildings becomes the next challenge. During the past

⁷¹ Richmond City Planning Commission, “Ordinance No. 90-34: Rezoning of Properties in the Newtowne Neighborhood,” Staff Report, (Richmond, Va., 5 March 1990). Also Richmond, zoning map, (1979 updated to 2000).

⁷² Newtowne-West Civic League and RRHA, 1,2.

⁷³ Ibid., 2, 22.

fifteen years numerous industrial buildings were demolished to facilitate construction of new structures. In 1998 and 1999, VCU two buildings along Carver's southern edge, the Siegel Center at Harrison and West Broad streets and, to the east of this building, the Fine Arts College. Adaptive reuse of buildings is evident by the wide range of newer businesses prospering in the neighborhood. These businesses provide a variety of services such as printing, employment referral, health care, automobile repair, and loan financing. Also present are a large rental-storage facility and a trucking firm.⁷⁴ Though economic development is important to Carver's future, some businesses create parking problems and traffic congestion, and thus are not appropriate for the area. In 1999, the Carver Industrial Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places to foster reuse by enabling developers to take advantage of the federal and state rehabilitation tax credits. This historic district is located in southeastern Carver generally along Lombardy and West Marshall streets. Structures in the district represent the area's industrial development between 1890 and 1930 and include a "collection of skillfully crafted and finely detailed" buildings, which also represent a wide range of architectural styles.⁷⁵ The current challenge is the conversion of these structures to uses which are compatible with the rest of the neighborhood.

The Carver and Newtowne neighborhood associations have worked closely with the RRHA since the early 1980s. Another promising partnership was recently formed between Carver and Virginia Commonwealth University. In 1998, Barbara Abernathy, president of CACIL, and Dr. Eugene Trani, president of VCU, formed the Carver-VCU Partnership with a goal of "creating a safe and nurturing community for everyone who lives, works, and studies in the area."⁷⁶ A year later the partnership received a two-year grant from HUD for the purpose of developing a Community Outreach Partnership Center and engaging in supportive activities. One example of partnership promoted cooperation may be seen in the design for a new VCU student dormitory to be constructed at 1100 West Broad Street. This facility will provide student

⁷⁴R. L. Polk, *Polk Cross Reference Directory for Richmond, Va.*, (Detroit: R. L. Polk, 1999).

⁷⁵Chen, 7-1.

⁷⁶ "Carver-VCU Partnership Background," 1.

housing and also contain a community center for Carver residents.⁷⁷

During the coming year the community will see the Maggie Walker High School building reopen as a Governor's School. This building housed the public school's Arts and Humanities Center, Open High School, and Richmond Community High School from 1987 to 1990 and had then stood vacant for ten years.⁷⁸ Located at Lombardy and West Leigh streets, the school's reopening will contribute to the continued revitalization of the area. Other important institutions are George Washington Carver Elementary School and Moore Street Baptist Church. Carver Elementary continues to educate neighborhood children and also provides support programs to local families. The neighborhood landmark, Moore Street Baptist Church, has served as a spiritual center for over 100 years and draws its large membership from across the city. The church also fosters a strong community by opening its doors to the many neighborhood groups which use its facilities as a meeting place. Two other supportive neighborhood churches are Bethany Baptist Church at 900 West Catherine Street and Crusade for Christ Temple at 1700 Moore Street in Newtowne.

SUMMARY:

The physical history of the Carver and Newtowne neighborhoods spans a period of over 200 years. It is a history of contrasts, from the early treed estate neighboring a brick yard to the current beautifully renovated dwelling adjacent to an abandoned and graffiti marked factory. The presence of the RF&P Railroad along the southern border attracted large industries, which in turn created employment opportunities. Between 1840 and 1920 Carver was an integrated community of primarily working class residents. Newtowne-West, developing after 1890, was from inception an African American laborer community. By 1930 the joint neighborhoods had become a self-sufficient African American community with stores, physicians, schools, and churches. Important Richmond institutions founded during these years included Hartshorn Memorial College, Moore Street Baptist Church, Maggie Walker High School, and George

⁷⁷ Richmond, Va., "Ordinance No. 99-282-256: To Authorize a Special Use of Real Estate, Property Known as 1100 West Broad Street." (Richmond, Va., 1999).

⁷⁸*North Light*, February 1987. Also *Richmond Free Press*, 9-11 December, 1999.

Washington Carver Elementary School.

By 1930, little private housing reinvestment was occurring in the area and thus dense and deteriorating housing conditions developed in some sections. The city, recognizing that public funds would be needed to revitalize central city neighborhoods, conducted studies and designed redevelopment plans. At first of these plans had little citizen input, but in the 1950s neighborhood residents organized and promoted their vision for a rehabilitated residential neighborhood. Though large buildings along the perimeter foster a continued commercial presence, neighborhood residents have worked collaboratively with both public and private entities to sustain their neighborhood's historical residential character and rebuild its vitality. Many of these individuals are long-time residents, but also important are the new residents—"urban homesteaders." Challenges remain, but successes provide a strong foundation to ensure that these communities continue to be neighborhoods "on the move."⁷⁹

⁷⁹Abernathy interview. CACIL has used the slogan "A neighborhood on the move" since the 1980s.

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