

housing project,
of Fenwick Streets
June 27, 1948

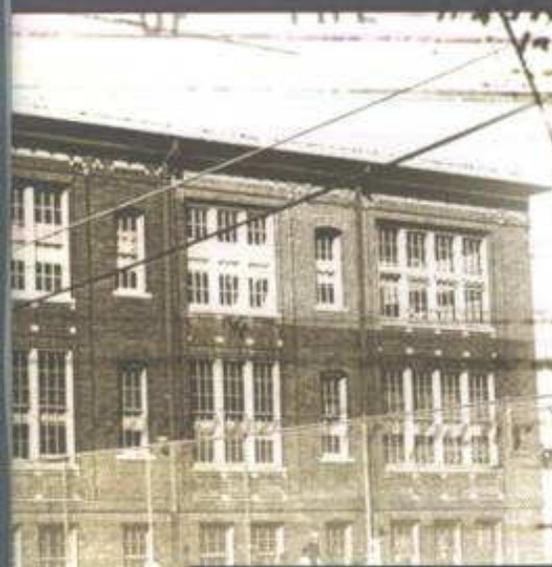


National
Fair Grounds

Ivy City

Neighborhood

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT



Ben J. Fenwick

Mount Olivet
Cemetery

AN EMPOWER DC INITIATIVE

6350

131

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Early Days	3
Ivy City Track	3
Employment	4
Notable Ivy City Residents	5
Civic Groups & Activism	6
Challenges	12
Ivy City Today	16
Ivy City Voices	23

DEDICATION



Ms. Thelma Carter

This booklet is dedicated to the former, current and future residents of Ivy City. May they be energized and inspired by their proud neighborhood history, and may they continue to band together for the betterment of their community.

With great love for and in memory of Ms. Thelma Carter who exemplified true, dedicated and selfless community leadership. We love and miss you.

In the spirit of Col. Perry Carson, Reverend Dr. Alexander Crummell and all others who have dedicated their lives to the uplift of African Americans.

Special thanks to all of the contributors to this project including current residents, Crummell School alumni, community institutions and volunteers.

This project would not have been possible without the involvement of all participants, and the support of the Humanities Council of Washington, DC.

Introduction

The community of Ivy City is one of DC's smallest, oldest and least known neighborhoods. Its small triangle of one-hundred year old brick row houses and apartments are bounded by Mount Olivet Rd, West Virginia Avenue and the busy lanes of New York Avenue NE that run along the railroad tracks.

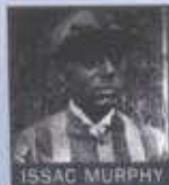
To those who know and love Ivy City, it is a place like no other in the District. It is a small, close knit community of people, a little village unto its own. There are extended families, and long-time neighbors, and residents of the past who continue to return to visit. Ivy City's spirit of community has endured throughout its over 100-year history, and despite significant challenges met along the way.

After years of neglect, blight and disregard on the part of local political leaders, the community is now touched by the same changes taking place elsewhere in the District, including rising housing costs and the threat of displacement of long time residents.

But history teaches us not to discount the perseverance of Ivy City and its residents. Instead, we honor its past in order to nourish the next chapter of community building in Ivy City.



WILLIE SIMMS



ISSAC MURPHY

THE SUNDAY STAR

Ivy City itself, which lies between West Virginia and New York avenues and about 1 mile north of Florida avenue, is today hardly identifiable, although the streets still bear the original names. It was likely once a part of Brentwood, later known as the Patterson tract, which at one time included Kendall Green, the country estate of Amos Kendall, now the Columbia Institute for the Deaf, founded by Mr. Kendall. - By John Claggett Proctor "In Historic Ivy City" *The Sunday Star*, Washington, DC *Sunday*, March 31, 1936

THE SUNDAY STAR

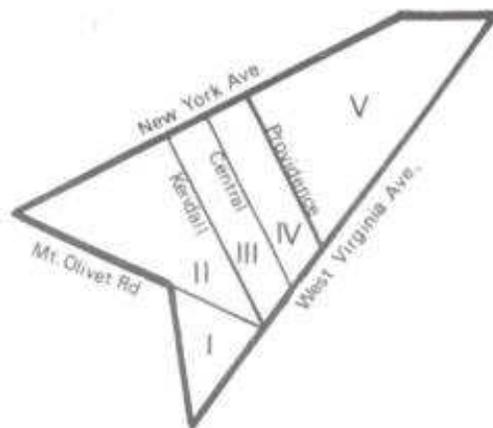
Indeed the writer recalls the early days of the National Fair Grounds at Ivy City—just around 50 years ago—when this place could be reached only by the Washington branch of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, unless one did not mind getting mired in the mud. But look this territory over today and what a transformation we find! Houses everywhere, and probably where the old race track once stood we might also find residences instead of an enthusiastic, howling audience such as attended these annual affairs while the fairgrounds were in operation. - By John Claggett Proctor *Old "Ivy City"* Washington, DC April 19, 1931

Early Days

At the time of Ivy City's founding, the acres of ground outside of the original federal city laid out by Pierre L'Enfant were open and sparsely developed. Early maps show only tracts of ground named for land owners, and a Baltimore & Ohio Railroad line.

According to one memoir of the time, a particular character of Washington's elite named Thomas Seaton Donoho⁸, a poet and writer, owned a three-story home in the vicinity and had a love for ivy. His home came to be known as Ivy Hall and his property Ivy City.⁹

It was a Georgetown lawyer named Frederick W. Jones who established the Ivy City neighborhood in 1873 and laid out the streets of Ivy City which retain their original names, along with 205 building lots that were offered at \$100 a piece.⁶



Ivy City map, from the "Ivy City Voice"

Ivy City Track

The National Fair Grounds opened in 1879 on 152 acres just north of Ivy City and established the Ivy City Track which hosted horse races throughout the 1880's. Ivy City's Fenwick Street ran alongside the track and was populated by those involved in racing including horse trainers and dealers.⁸ The Ivy City Track also hosted gun and shooting exhibitions in the early 1890's. Fifty years later, an article in the Sunday Star recalls the opening of the Fair Grounds which included the largest parade ever seen along Pennsylvania Ave. The parade featured local businesses including thirteen breweries, a pretzel maker, a candy maker and five dairy wagons, along with floats representing the outlying communities of Brightwood, Anacostia and Tenleytown. President Hayes and members of his cabinet attended opening day of the races.⁹

A Washington Post article of 1934 looks back on the racing tradition at Ivy City, noting that it was the "first track of any importance in this city." According to the article, many famous horses raced at Ivy City led by many famous jockeys, including several African Americans who are noted in history books. Among these were Isaac Murphy and Willie Simms, called "two of the greatest riders of all time."¹⁰ Both men have been inducted into the Racing Hall of Fame. Murphy, whose father had escaped slavery, was the first jockey to be inducted into the Racing Hall of Fame in 1955. He died at age 36 in 1896 having won over 40% of his races.

Business at the Ivy City track slowed and restrictions on betting began to harm attendance. The property was sold at auction in 1891 for \$133,500 to a man with intentions to subdivide the land and build homes.⁴ The property changed hands once again and was sold to the Ivy City Brick Company, who, in 1893, leased the track for three years to a racing syndicate led by Congressman Tim Campbell of New York. That same year a fire broke out destroying the clubhouse, among other structures. Soon thereafter racing at Ivy City ceased permanently.

Notable Ivy City Residents

Among the industrious characters of early Ivy City was a Washington hero named Col. Perry H. Carson (1842-1909). Because of Carson's stature and notoriety he was dubbed "the tall black oak of the Potomac." Carson was employed as a janitor at DC's municipal building, but also served as a leader amongst black Republicans and was very active in efforts to uplift African Americans.¹

Former Ivy City resident Victor A. English became a doo-wop singer who sang bass and baritone for the Rainbows in the 1960's.² Tilmon O'Bryant came up to become the first black assistant police chief of Washington. And, Ms Romaine Bell Thomas, who once lived on Capitol Avenue, attended and later taught at Crummell School, became a public school principal and a leader in the AARP DC region. Ms Thomas's late husband, Harry Thomas, served as Ward 5 Councilman from 1986-1998. Her son, Harry Thomas Jr, was elected to the Ward 5 City Council seat in 2007.

Perry H. Carson (1842-1909), a mountain of a man and a giant in District politics, was a resident of Ivy City from 1893 to 1901. Carson was over six feet tall, weighed 245 pounds, and had silver-white hair for most of his adult life. He lived in the southernmost house on the west side of Kendall Street, NE, which no longer exists.

As a teenager, Carson worked on the underground railroad, helping slaves reach freedom. During the Civil War he transported ammunition and supplies for the Union Army and later volunteered for combat.

Perry Carson settled in Washington after the war, became active in politics and, according to the Afro-American newspaper, "stood in the forefront of the battle for Negro citizenship." The Post called Carson "the black boss of Washington." He was three times a delegate to the Republican National Convention.

Though generally affable, Carson did not back down from a fight, arming himself when necessary and mixing it up in the ethnic political street fighting which was common. In the class tension that existed within the African American community at the time, Carson championed the working class. He led a walkout of the 1881 Emancipation Day festivities leaving 150 to march in a parade that had previously drawn as many as 5,000 participants.

The Post, the Evening Star, and the Afro-American wrote fairly glowing obituaries upon Carson's death in 1909. The Bee, the newspaper of the African American elite in Washington, practically spat, accusing Carson of poor leadership and decision making, disloyalty, self-promotion at the expense of his people, and having "never [been] elected a delegate to the National Republican Convention fairly, but once."

Excerpt from article by Brian Kraft, originally published in DC North issue of May 2004

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Ina R. Friedman



A Biography of Tilmon B. O'Bryant, Assistant Chief of Police, Washington, D.C.

Tilmon O'Bryant



The wedding of Ms. Romaine Bell and Mr. Harry Thomas at Bethesda Baptist Church. From the collection of Ms. Romaine Thomas.

Civic Groups & Activism

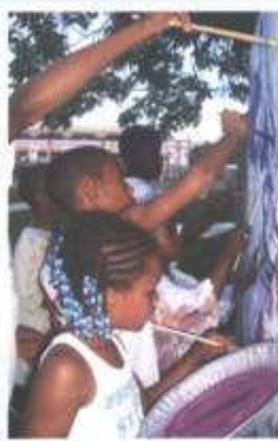
As early as 1895, Ivy City residents had organized themselves to petition for neighborhood improvements¹ and, by 1911, had officially organized the Ivy City Civic Association. At that time, black communities formed "civic" associations while white communities formed segregated "citizens" associations. The Ivy City association was among the first of its kind.

Among the improvements championed by the Civic Association were lighting and street improvements, and sewer improvements to address the chronic flooding problems experienced by the community with each heavy rain. A newspaper article from 1946 chronicles the "struggle for area improvement" led by the Civic Association, saying that the group sought the involvement of all age groups by organizing teens into a junior association. The article also describes Ivy City as the "heart of the colored area" with neighboring Trinidad being primarily white except for Montello Avenue. The article ends with a quote from Mr. Crowe, a well known Ivy City resident who was both a deacon at Bethesda Baptist Church and then president of the Ivy City Civic Association. "The general attitude of the community's residents is one of pronounced determination to continue organized efforts toward community betterment," said Crowe.²

Members of the Ivy City Civic Association were undoubtedly pivotal in the successful petition to create a new 6-room brick school when the old Ivy City School was clearly inadequate. The Civic Association advocated that the school bear the name of the recently deceased Perry Carson, but the commissioners refused and, after some contention, named it the Alexander Crummell School. Reverend Doctor Alexander Crummell was a noted educator, clergyman and abolitionist who lived in Washington from the 1870's until his death in 1898. The Alexander Crummell School was one of the first schools in Washington named for an African American and today remains the only known monument to Crummell.



Per the request of Marcus Crews, Adrian Fenty, Adrian Fenty signs pledge of support for Crummell School, 2006 photo credit Ingrid Drake



Ivy City Youth paint a banner as part of Campaign for Crummell School (2006) photo credit Ingrid Drake



Ivy City Youth testify about the renovations of Crummell School at a DC Parks & Recreation Hearing, 2006 - photo credit Ingrid Drake



Students of the Ivy City Preschool late 1970's. From the collection of Ms. Jeahette Swanson



Crummell School Alumna and residents meet with Councilman Jim Graham about the status of Crummell School (2003) photo credit Parisa Norouzi

CRUMMELL

“We read and sang about exotic locations beyond our borders, took imaginary trips to faraway places, and began to dream of possibilities far beyond Ivy City, where our little segregated school was located. My interest in world geography was born in this environment when we sang about those faraway places with strange sounding names. I knew that I wanted to visit those places, and eventually I did join the Foreign Service, and got a chance not only to visit but to live in many countries around the world, and experience new languages, customs, foods, etc.”

MS. MARVA WROTEN

“We had great teachers, and in those days teachers would come to your house. If you didn't do your homework or if you didn't turn your homework in, your teachers wouldn't call on the phone, they would knock on your door. And sit down and talk to your mother, or your father or your grandmother.”

MR. CHARLES BROWN

“I remember one teacher, my second grade teacher, Mrs. Taylor. She was working on some kind of project with Howard University and she was going to the library there. I had never been to a university. She took me there with her to deliver some books and while we were there, she kind of gave me a little tour and talked about some things and talked about the campuses. We rode through the campus. That really did have a great influence on my life.” **MS. ROMAINE THOMAS**

“When I went to school I would buy pickles and the teacher would have the math class first and then the English class second and the boys would steal my pickles while I was up in math class. I would smell it and cry.” **MS. DOROTHY “NICEY” GARY**

“I was at Crummell. Of course, I was young, but I met a lot of people. They were friends, but we still communicate now. After 50 some years, I am still in touch with a lot of people.”

MS. JACKIE COUNCIL



Snowden Ashford, architect of the Alexander Crummell School



Celebration held at Crummell School. From the collection of Mr. Clifford Coulson



The Crummell School as originally constructed, before additions. From the collection of the Summer School Museum and Archives



Crummell School with students in the yard in better days. From the collection of the Summer School Museum and Archives



ST. ALEXANDER CRUMMELL

Alexander Crummell who died on September 10, 1898 was lovingly memorialized by the Washington Community when the Crummell School was built in 1911. As a child he felt called to the priesthood but, because of his race, he was driven from college and rejected for admission to the Episcopal Church's seminary. Ordained priest in 1844, he went to England and earned a degree at Cambridge University, making him one of a handful of Americans with a prestigious British degree. He went as an Episcopal missionary to Liberia where he labored indefatigably as missionary, pastor, church coffee

plantation manager, and co-founder and professor at the University of Liberia. His vision was to establish a model democracy based on a blending of communal African culture and European education and technology. He championed the indigenous Liberians against the Americo-Liberian elites. He fled Liberia after an attack on him left one of his church leaders dead and his son severely beaten. He became missionary-at-large to African Americans in Washington, DC and in 1873 founded St. Luke's Church which he developed into a flourishing congregation but could not realize his vision of St. Luke's as a missionary center with a school, hospital, and community center. Crummell was an erudite, teaching preacher who drew the Black intelligentsia and notable whites, such as, President Chester A. Arthur. Crummell taught at Howard University and authored many publications including four books. He founded the American Negro Academy, forerunner of the NAACP and the ecumenical Colored Ministers Union. He mobilized Black Episcopalians into a black caucus now known as the Union of Black Episcopalians which defeated a southern plan to segregate black members into a separate church. Crummell's ministry spanned more than half a century and three continents. Out of his deep faith that all people are equally children of God, he labored at all times to build institutions that would serve Black spiritual, educational, and economic empowerment. Ivy City's Alexander Crummell School at the heart of this neglected community exemplifies his life.

By The Reverend John Carleton Hayden, Ph.D., J.C.D.
September, 2006



Rosa Parks, (left) and Rep. John Conyers (right) at a hearing. Mrs. Parks sparked the Montgomery, Ala. bus boycott of 1955. Mr. Conyers was the President's adviser for national capital affairs. At right, Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) congratulates Mrs. Parks and Ms. Hershey. (Below photo)

Crumell school needs subject of hearing

A public hearing before a panel of citizens on "The Critical Needs of the Crummell Elementary School," located at Gallaudet and Kendall Streets, N.E., Washington, D.C., will be held at the Mt. Vernon Methodist Church, 1818 West Virginia Avenue, N.E., on Friday, April 20, 1966, at 7:45 p.m.

A tour is also scheduled to be made by members of the panel of the school at 2 p.m.

The purpose of the hearing is to allow parents, and other concerned citizens, to focus city-wide attention on their concerns regarding the numerous grave deficiencies of the Crummell School Program.

Distinguished citizens, comprising the panel are: Dr. Eusebia Hayes, member of the D.C. School Board; Attorney Walter B. Lewis of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission; David Black, Associate Director of the Binnsy Attinson, Director Washington Urban League; Binnsy Attinson, Director of the Baker's Dozen Youth Center of Howard University; Clarence Withridge, President of the Near Northeast Council of Civic Associations; and a trustee of UPO; and Mr. Lewis Cross, member of Executive Committee of the Ivy City-Trinidad Civic Association. The D.C. Citizens for Better Schools has promised to send a representative also. The Area 7 Council-PTA President has also been invited to sit on the panel, but had not made a decision at press release time.

Mrs. Delcia Hewitt, 1740 Montello Avenue, N.E., is Chairman of Parents for a Better Crummell School. Members of the group's Steering Committee include: Mrs. Evelyn Brown, Mrs. Mary

Washington Afro American clipping featuring Crummell School and Rosa Parks dated April 30, 1966. From the collection of Ms. Remetta C. Freeman

Some time around 1950, Ivy City merged with Trinidad to form the Ivy City-Trinidad Civic Association. The group's involvement stretched beyond the community's borders to address issues including Home Rule and desegregation. A May 1949 article calls the association "one of the most active organizations of the kind in the District."⁶ The article describes the association's requests for improvements including an 8-room addition to Crummell School to include a gymnasium and assembly hall. The association also requested the acquisition of an adjacent lot and the development of a playground, installation of cement walks, a fence to enclose the grounds, a canopy and a swimming pool. The article notes that three boys' baseball teams had been established in the community.

Still, in July 1951, the addition to Crummell had not been realized and the Association continued to advocate for the overcrowded school. An article noted that the population of that area had increased 50% since 1947 and 200 apartments were close to completion. The association recommended that a new school be built on a five acre site owned by the city at Mount Olivet Road and Holbrook Streets, NE and that a major recreation center be constructed for the area.⁷

By 1952 street paving was underway in Ivy City due to the continued organization and petitioning of the community.

RECREATION

"If you didn't play baseball or horseshoes, you were no good in the neighborhood."

MR. THEODORE COATES

"I remember this neighborhood when we had block parties... They'd have food, they'd have live bands, and activities going on for the kids. Shut a whole street down and just have fun. I remember those days. Every year."

MR. JOEL MCPHERSON

"My brothers and my sister danced all the time. We even had a lot of parties and my brothers used to sing doo-wop under the streetlights and all of the girls would be all silly and everything and those were good times." **MS. AUDREY RAY**



Young Romaine Bell Thomas and her brother at the intersection of Capitol Ave and Mt Olivet Rd, near their childhood home. The old Bethesda Baptist Church can be seen in the background. From the collection of Ms. Romaine Thomas.

"One Halloween... The fellas got together and had a little band and they came round on Fenwick Street singing, 'Show me the way to go home. I'm lost and I want to go to bed. I had a drink about an hour ago, and it went right to my head.' A whole string of them was marching and singing, 'Show me the way to go home.' I just laughed. I thought that was so funny. They had the little horns. That was the type of thing they would do at that time."

MS. CHARLOTTE TYNER



Ivy City Baseball Team. From the collection of Mr. Clifford Coulson

Ivy City men's bowling team 1961-62. From the collection of Mr. Theodore Coates.



Ladies on the beach. From the collection of Ms. Romaine Thomas



Neighborhood dance contest. From the collection of Ms. Jeanette Swanson

“I moved out here in this area where a lot of wild fruit, cherries, peach trees, blackberries, plenty of room to run and play, baseball, ride bikes, so it was like moving to the country when I moved out of NW out here.” **MR. CLIFFORD COULSON**

“The main thing we had back in that day was May Day when we would have the wrapping of the maypole. All the girls would have on white socks, white shoes and white dresses and the guys would have on suits and each class would do a certain dance, Spanish dance, Mexican dance, German dance.” **MR. CLIFFORD COULSON**

“We would always go to a beach called Carl and Sparrow's Beach. At that time, we were still faced with some aspects of segregation. At that time they called it the colored beach rather than Negro or black beach. We had no concern about going to any other beach because that was all we knew. When we got to that beach we had such a great time sharing the food, sharing the fun, and frolicking in the water and renewing all of our values and our fellowship.” **MS. ROMAINE THOMAS**

“I used to ride my bicycle right there on the hill on Capitol Ave and Mt. Olivet Rd... I would enjoy going up that road and then sitting back to enjoy coasting back down to my house which was right there on Mt. Olivet and Capitol Ave. That was lots of fun.” **MS. ROMAINE THOMAS**

Challenges

The Ivy City community faced multiple threats over its lifetime. With little support on the part of city government for this working class African American community, community leaders constantly fought off unwanted attempts to destroy the residential area of the neighborhood. In the 1950s-1960's the city proposed to change all the zoning in Ivy City to commercial, effectively wiping out the historic residential section. Ivy City residents successfully fought off this proposal but, soon after, plans for a freeway, which would have cut through the community, caused many residents including long time leaders to pack up and leave. The proposed East Leg of the Inner Loop Freeway would have destroyed Ivy City, in addition to other DC neighborhoods, by imposing a 6-lane highway which would have cut through the neighborhood and crossed under Mount Olivet Road. "As the city talked about the East Leg, people moved out," a resident is quoted as saying."

The fight against the freeway is one of DC's most important civic battles which brought together black and white residents in the creation of the Emergency Committee on the Transportation Crisis and included over a decade of organized community protest. In the end, maybe due to the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the chaos that followed, the freeway plans did not go forward. However, it is clear that the looming threat of the freeway's construction caused residents to move out of Ivy City, contributing to its lessening population and loss of homeowners. The destruction of H Street, NE, the main shopping area for African Americans, after the assassination of King may also have contributed to Ivy City's decline.

In October 1976, Ivy City was chosen as a site for a Human Development Project led by the nonprofit organization Institute for Cultural Affairs (ICA). ICA moved two organizers into the community who, following an ICA model, assisted the community with developing and carrying out a four year Human Development plan. From 1976-1980, ICA, along with neighborhood residents, created the Ivy City Preschool and the Ivy City Corporation (ICCO), which promoted commerce in the community. The group established block clubs, organized health fairs, participated in voter registration, organized a youth group called the Jets, and participated in a host of other activities. All activities were centered at the Crummell School, and were documented in the Ivy City Voice, a newsletter which was published during that time.

CHALLENGES

"I just wanna know—if they gonna push all of us out, which I think they is—why they can't just let everybody know? Just tell them, so we know. I goes to the meetings and I learned a lot by going to the meetings, but they really don't tell you nothing, like they gonna sneak up on you."

MS. ERICKA CREWS



Children at the Ivy City Preschool. From the collection of Ms. Susan Craver



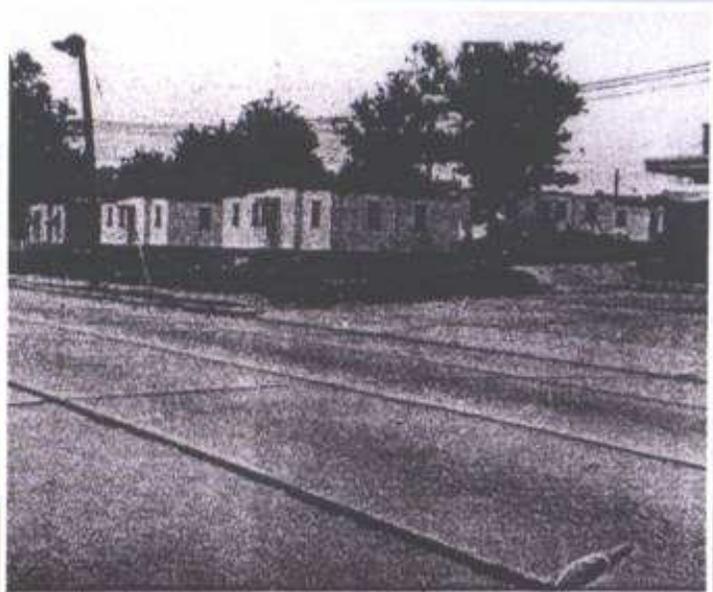
The Washington Post Feb. 24, 1967

ROUTE — The broken line shows path of the Inner Loop's East Leg.

Map of the path of proposed freeway.
Source, Washington Post



Kendall St.
NE, 2006.
Photo by
Parisa
Norouzi



640. Negro temporary housing project,
West Virginia Avenue and Fenwick Streets
NE
June 27, 1948

"Temporary Negro Housing" from
the Historical Society of Washington.

IVY CITY VOICE

Ivy City An Oral History Project 14

IVY CITY VOICE
A Great Place to be Alive
Ivy City, Wash., D.C. Vol 22 Sept

IVY CITY CORPORATE
CORPORATE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

PRESCHOOL GRADUATION

CITIZEN on the MOVE

...and ...

IVY CITY VOICE
A Great Place to be Alive
Ivy City, Wash., D.C. Vol 7 Dec, 1976

Early Learning Program Be

EDITORIAL
CRUMMELL SCHOOL

EDITORIAL
CLEAN IVY CITY!

IVY CITY VOICE
A Great Place to be Alive
IVY CITY, WASH. VOL 1

IVY CITY CAN

IVY CITY VOICE
A Great Place to be Alive
IVY CITY, WASH. VOL 1 MARCH 1977

THE PRINT SH

NEW Market Location

CITIZEN ON THE MOVE

THE IVY

IVY CITY VOICE

From the collection of Ms. Susan Craver

The efforts of community members under the Ivy City-Trinidad Civic Association and the Institute for Cultural Affairs are remarkable. Yet, Ivy City experienced a steady decline starting in the 1960's, made ever worse by the city's closing of Crummell School in the 1970's. A Washington Post column from 1979 captured the sentiment of some residents: that despite long standing struggle, improvements had not come as hoped. The article notes that only 75 of Ivy City's 584 registered voters came out to vote that year, a clear sign of a sense of hopelessness that began to set in.⁸

The Ivy City Human Development Project fell apart in 1980, with the looting and arson of the annex at Crummell School, which housed the preschool and print shop. But other efforts in the community continued to develop. Mildred Nero-Drinkard and a group of DC schoolteachers formed the Mandala United Ministries program, which included a community garden and a headquarters on Kendall Street, NE. Their program included food distribution to seniors and disabled adults, job training and health care and recovery programs. The organization operated in Ivy City in the mid-1980's.⁹ Another civic group called the Ivy City Patriots came into being, and Ms. Dorthia Austin operated the Ivy City Resource Center out of a row house at the corner of Capitol Avenue owned by Bethesda Baptist Church.

Ivy City became typified by extremely bad housing conditions, rat infestations, illegal dumping, drug trafficking, torn up roads and environmental pollution.⁸ Still, all along the way, residents organized, participated and held out hope that their cherished neighborhood would once again flourish and quality of life for neighborhood residents would improve. A 1986 community festival led by the Mandala organization included a guided tour of Ivy City, pointing out the failures of city government to address neighborhood concerns. When then-Councilman Vincent Spaulding prepared to speak at the event, residents booed him off the stage. Then-Mayor Marion Barry was quoted in an article following that event, agreeing that Ivy City is neglected. "It is probably the Anacostia of Northeast," he said.¹

Throughout the 1980's, the problem of drug trafficking and substance abuse grew in Ivy City and surrounding communities. And in the 1990's, the community was plagued by trash transfer stations and illegal dumping, which exacerbated the rat problem. Residents successfully shut down a trash transfer station in 1997 that was hauling 250-300 tons of trash a day in the neighborhood.⁹ The community, along with other areas of the District, suffered from decrepit streets and sidewalks and sometimes the city failed to pick up the garbage.⁹ Only adding to the desperation of the area was the Crummell School Homeless Trailers, a set of steel boxes set up to house homeless men alongside the long vacant and boarded Crummell School. The only shiny and new facility in the neighborhood was the new Youth Detention Facility on Mt. Olivet Road. In 2001, Ivy City and Trinidad residents made one tenth of the service calls to the new Mayor's call center but saw little results.⁸



Photo of
Dorthia Austin



Photo of Mildred
Drinkard, The
Washington
Times



Aujeneah Milner and Okia Ferguson,
photo by Ingrid Drake

People of the future would
love Ivy City to still be here.
Help Crummell and the community.
Build more playgrounds and help the
kids get along.

So I am here today to tell you what I think. Crummell has a big place in our heart. So people would say "no, not me" but if you didn't you wouldn't be here. We're not here to watch a movie, we're here to bring the community together. Because the first thing I thought was I wonder what the community is like. And then I saw Crummell was boring. So I can be looking at a crusty old building or an old building with a new beginning. Are you sitting back, helping or giving people more reasons to keep Crummell a closed building? So you the people of Ivy City, make a change. Not for Crummell, Ivy City but for yourself. I am Aujeneah and I am making Ivy City a better place.

Speech by Aujeneah Milner, age 12,
August 4, 2006 at a community event
featuring an outdoor film screening for
the children of Ivy City

Ivy City Today

As recently as 2005, DC's Office of Planning had two options on the table for Ivy City. The first was to relocate everyone and turn the area into a commercial zone, a plan reminiscent of the freeway battles decades earlier. The second option was to turn Ivy City into a "mixed-income" community, understood by many to be code for "gentrifying" the area by bringing in higher income residents. The resulting increase in housing costs was sure to have the same effect as option number one – the displacement of current residents.

Housing costs in Ivy City rose 30% in 2003 alone.¹ The community's median household income in 2005 was under \$20,000.² In the face of government sponsored redevelopment planning, continued blight and decay and the threat of displacement, residents again began to organize and, working with Empower DC, formed the Historic Ivy City/Crummell School Revitalization Coalition (Ivy City Coalition). Residents learned that the city government had compiled ownership of over 30 vacant or abandoned properties in Ivy City and planned to build predominately market rate housing through the city's Home Again Initiative. The Ivy City Coalition was able to pressure the city to work alongside a task force of residents, and through ongoing citizen pressure won a commitment that 60% of the planned housing units would be made available for low and moderate income residents.

Additionally, residents successfully blocked attempts to sell the Alexander Crummell School, which had been designated a historic landmark in 2002, and continue their efforts today to work with newly elected Councilman Harry Thomas Jr. and Mayor Adrian Fenty to ensure its renovation and reuse as a community center. Ivy City youth, calling themselves the Ivy City Achievers, organized community events, testified on the neighborhood's behalf, and painted a mural which is now installed in the small park on Capitol Ave, NE.

Those who love Ivy City share a vision that Ivy City's future will resemble in some ways its past. The Alexander Crummell School will again bustle with residents and serve as the heart of the community. The community will be tight-knit, like a little village. Residents hope that the neighborhood will see revitalization that benefits current residents, and that low income people are not forced to leave Ivy City. Yes, some things will change. But there is no doubt that the spirit of Ivy City will always remain.



Ivy City youth enjoy a neighborhood party, 2006. Photo by Linda Leaks



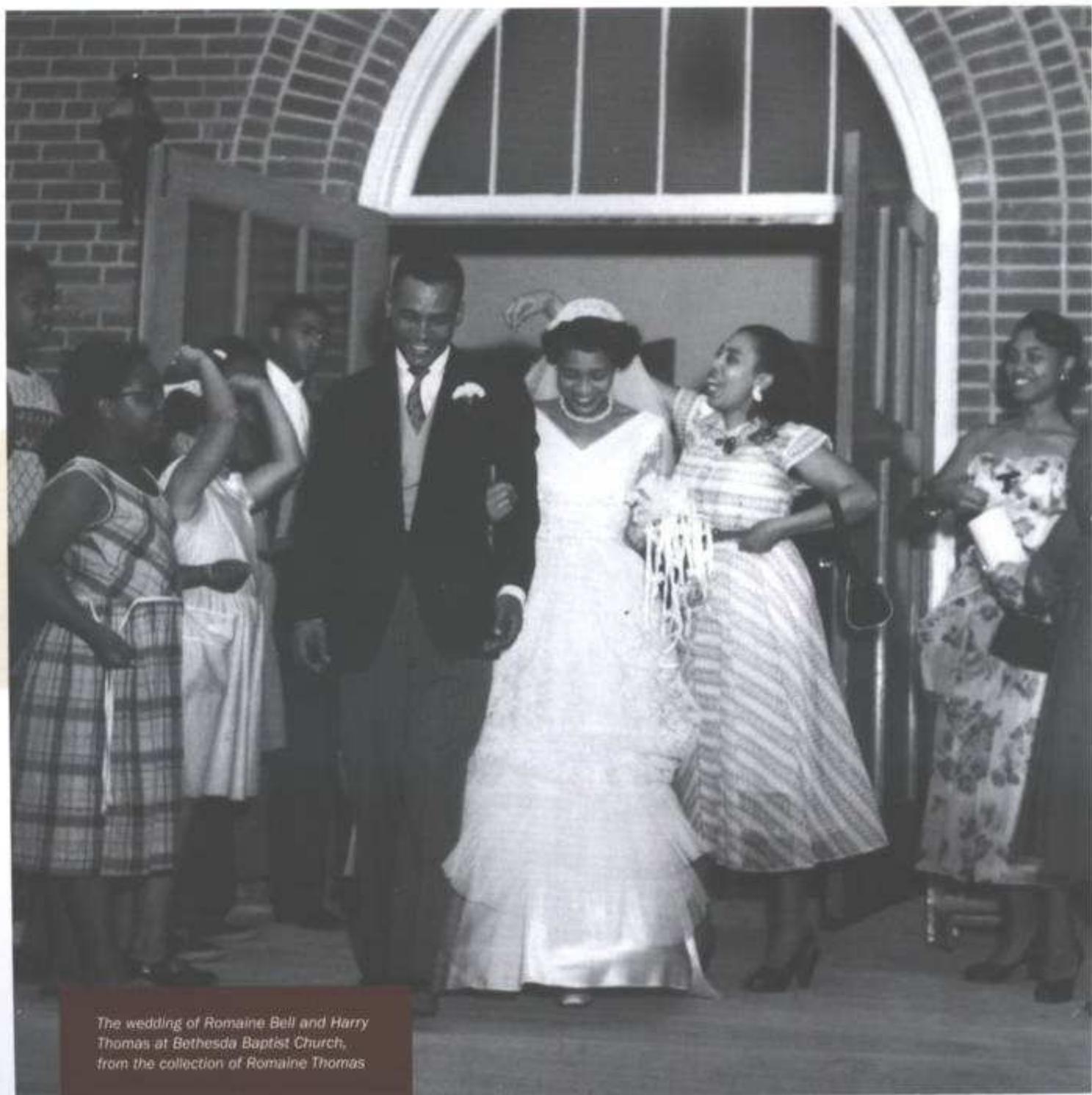
DC Government map showing the properties slated for development



Romaine Thomas speaking at a community event, 2006



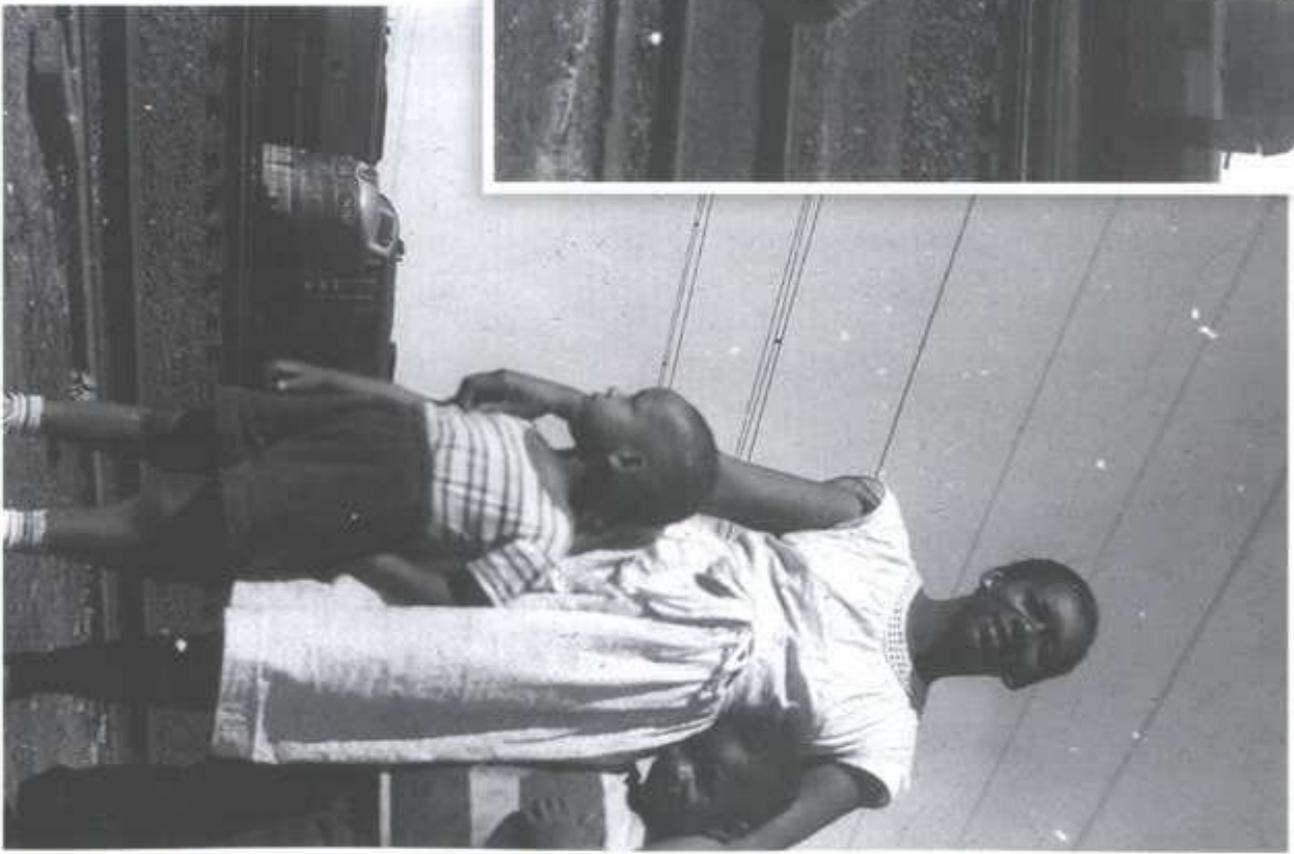
Ms. Remetter-C. Freeman sings the Black National Anthem with her sons at the Ivy City Celebration, 2006. Photo credit Arash Norouzi



The wedding of Romaine Bell and Harry Thomas at Bethesda Baptist Church, from the collection of Romaine Thomas



Boy at Ivy City Track, source unknown



Family with Train, source unknown



Ivy City couple, from the collection of Ms Florine Moore



Girls in front of Crummell School, from the collection of Clifford Coulson

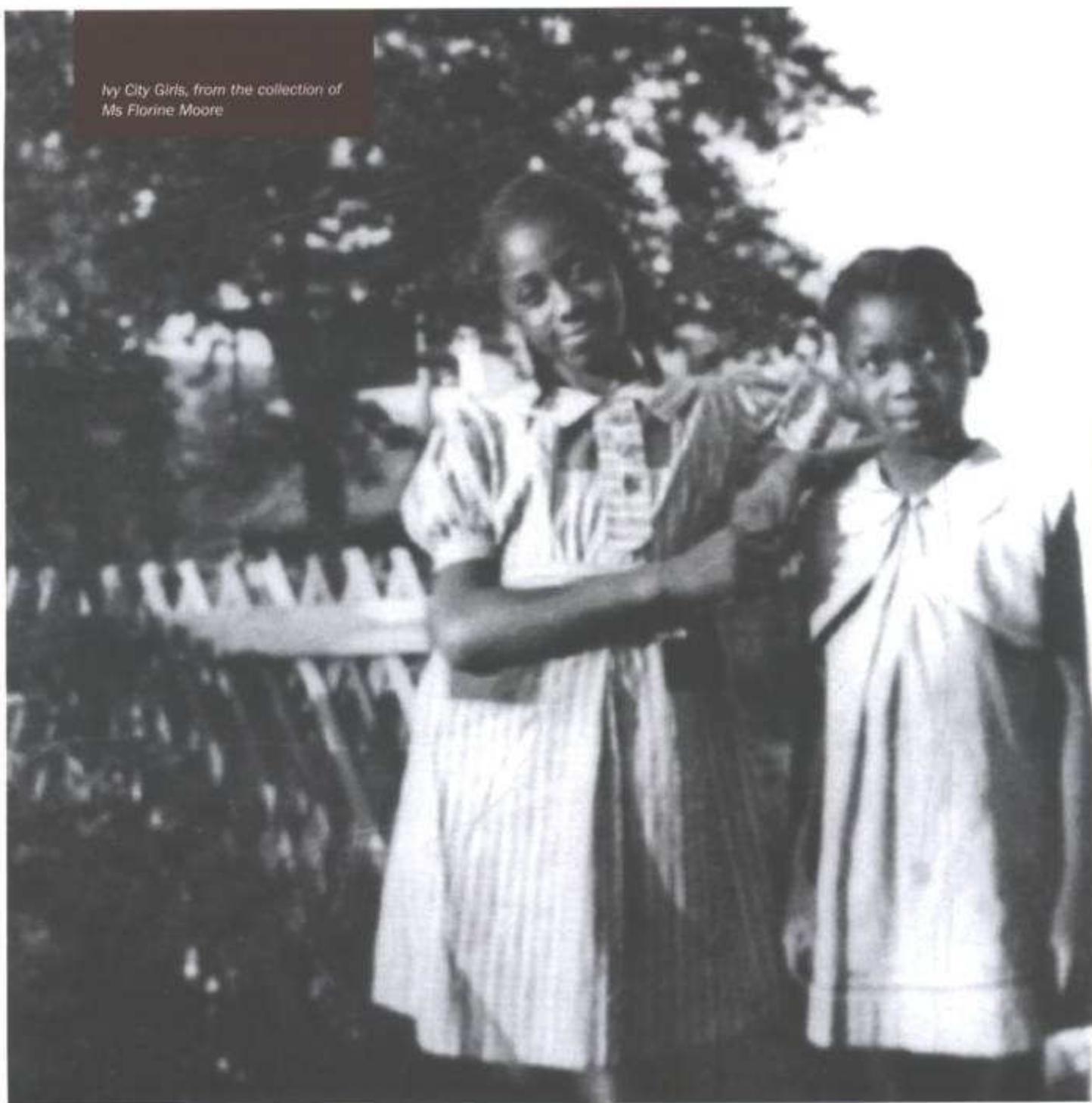


Ivy City couple, source unknown

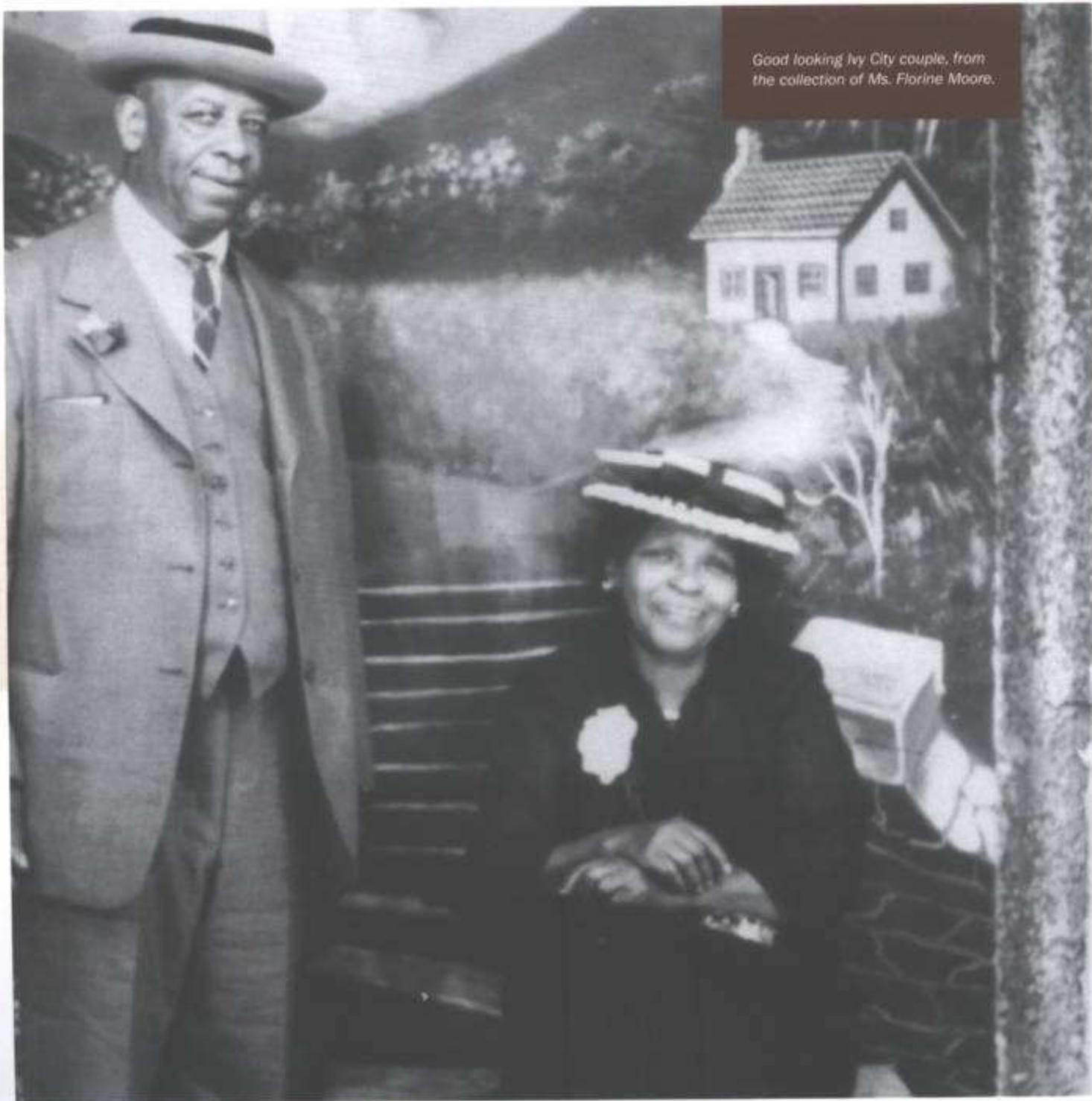


Family sitting along Mt Olivet Rd, from the collection of Romaine Thomas

*Ivy City Girls, from the collection of
Ms Florine Moore*



*Good looking Ivy City couple, from
the collection of Ms. Florine Moore.*



Ivy City Voices



Charlotte Tyner

I was born in Sanford, NC. My birthday is February the 17th, 1919. My father was on a farm, until he decided he didn't want to farm anymore. He packed us all up, and we left that little city and we came to Washington, DC.

We lived in Ivy City three different times. We lived on Fenwick Street, and that house is still standing. That's back of the church. We went to Corcoran Street. We stayed there for a while. We watched them build those brick houses across the street from that house. We left that house and then we went to Fenwick Street again. This time it was a big house. We stayed there awhile.

West Virginia [Avenue], of course, wasn't open for a long time. It wasn't even there. Later on they opened it up. Actually, there were no businesses, just homes. Except the three stores and the school. When we were on Fenwick Street, there were three Caucasian families out there. I'll say two.

It wasn't just a poor section for poor people. The German lady who lived up the street from us when we were on Fenwick Street, she would gather all the children up and take them over in the field up Gallaudet Street, it was just this plain field. Take them over there Easter Monday. She would take them over there and let themselves have a party.

One Halloween, we couldn't go outside the fence. The felias got together and had a little band and they came round on Fenwick Street singing, "Show me the way to go home. I had a drink about an hour ago, and it went right to my head." A whole string of them was marching and singing, "Show me the way to go home." I just laughed. I thought that was so funny. They had the little horns. That was the type of thing they would do at that time.

My brothers went to the Methodist church up the street. We would go there, but for some reason or other, they were too dry for us. Me and Helen, thought, "I don't think were gonna like this." We wanted to see what it was like down at the [Bethesda] Baptist church... And they would sing... hmmm. We started singing also. We were the youngest things in the choir. The pastor said, "Let those girls sing if they want to. Why sure, they're younger, but they can sing." So we got in that choir, and we stayed there. I'm still in it.

Yeah sometimes, Brother Crowe, the group of them would mention the Civil Rights program, and what we should do. You know, read more, things like that. So we would know what to do, if we had an encounter with anything. It was all interesting to us. Because whatever it was, we hadn't heard it before. It was something that we would like, so we'd pay strict attention to what they were saying. And try to get the books and tried to read 'em.

[Segregation] It's something you get used to. But when things start opening up to you, and you start spreading out a little bit, you wonder, 'how in the world, did you get so confined to these things?' But, now it's all together. Much much better. It's different. You can feel free.



Remetter Freeman

My name is Remetter, Comelia for the C., Freeman, and I was really born in North Carolina. But my Mom and Dad came to Washington D.C. when I was three months old, the youngest of five children, and we settled in Ivy City on Mount Olivet Road and Corcoran Street. That was our first home. And then we moved, I understand... to Kendall Street. And where I remember is 1845 Corcoran Street, NE, because that's where I started at Crummell School.

My father and Mom, they came in 1930. My father worked on the railroad, I understand, and my Mom worked at the former Home Laundry which was over there, off of West Virginia Avenue...where most of the women in Ivy City worked if they didn't work in the homes for the people. Most of them worked in the laundry and the men worked on the railroad.

At the school, we always had May Day, but basically I always attended the church, where I've been going since I was four years old. They used to take us on excursions, you know, Carl's Beach and Sparrow's Beach...but other than that we basically just hung out in Ivy City and did things that kids, you know, would ordinarily do.

Yes, Bethesda Baptist Church played a great role in my life...Deacon Lewis W. Crowe – I will never forget him. And then of course Aaron's grandfather, Deacon Enoch Gray, he taught at Crummell – he was a teacher there. And then he was a member of Bethesda. He was one of the Deacons of Bethesda Baptist Church. All of those deacons, they had a great play in your life; they were exemplary- their deportment, the way they treated you, things they taught you and so you just looked up to them, and you never saw them doing anything, and you just looked up to them and said, "Oh my gracious, I want to be like that."

Crummell was really, really great. The teachers were inspiring. They encouraged you to go one mile and then go two, three, four more. Because we weren't allowed to say, "I can't do that." Can't wasn't in our dictionary. They told us we could do anything we wanted to do. And they encouraged us...When we got to school in the morning, we had a handkerchief on our skirt or up here somewhere. They checked your teeth to see if you'd brushed your teeth, made sure that you didn't come to school dirty. You had to be clean. They checked your nails. And they encouraged us to be clean and neat and to things like that. You had to have your hair combed, and they encouraged the girls to wear ribbons, and it was just nice.



Theodore & Alfred Coates

[Theodore] I was born on Oct 23rd 1928. My mother was a home keeper, my father worked for the District Government. I had two brothers and a sister. My sister passed away when she was 4 years old. And my older brother got killed in the Korean War. So I have one living brother left, and that's Alfred Coates, sitting next to me.

We lived at 1822 Central Place, that was where I was born, 1822 Central, upstairs on the 2nd floor. Dr Smith was the delivering doctor.

[Our father] worked for the environment—the trash collectors for the district government. In fact, that's the time—that was mainly one of the most jobs that the colored person would have, for the District Government. At the time...they had the colored would throw the trash, and the whites would drive the truck, then they opened it up then, everybody drive and now everybody threw the trash. So he worked there 30 some years.

[Alfred] I had a good time in Crummell School. I was what you would call one of them...one of those -- well you wouldn't say genius, but I was considered one of the smart ones in Crummell School. It was myself, Benny King, Yvonne Carlin, Gloria Tabscott, and Elizabeth Hall. We all skipped two grades in Crummell School, that's how smart we were. I thought I was smart, but I wasn't smart, my mother was smart. She went there before I did and I caught one of the same teachers...she taught my mother and she taught me and she would gets me, and tell me, "Alfred, you didn't know that?" My mother's name was Isabel and she would say, "Isabel would have knew that."

[Alfred] Yeh, we used to have the carnival come in, sometimes they would come down on West Virginia Ave down next to the cemetery, and after the carnival they used to have a racetrack there, then they used to have motorcycle races, we did auto races, we used to go down there and throw rocks on the track and go around and pick em up so we could get in free. Then they had the market, then we had Gallaudet where the carnivals used to come over there. I know one time we had a Western Show and the cattle got loose and were running all through the woods, the guys on horseback they were rounding up the cattle. Then come through the woods and everything.

[Alfred] I think what's so special about it, it's the people used live here, still called it home and don't want to get rid of it. It's a good suburb. It's a good settlement, it's an old tradition sort of like the Indians have their reservations, this is a reservation for the old people that live here. Once they get a taste of Ivy City, they don't want to lose it...I've been in love with Ivy City since I was born.



Romdine Bell Thomas

I was born in Washington, DC right after the Depression which took place early in the 1930s and part of the 20s. When I say I was born in Washington, DC, I was born right here in this community on Montello Ave., NE. I was born at home. I was delivered at home by a Dr. Smith who was the community doctor. He was well thought of in the community and most of the people used him as their doctor.

I attended church here when I was growing up, the Bethesda Baptist Church. But let me tell you this-- my husband and I were married in the Bethesda Baptist Church! It was the second building, not the third building where we are now... we didn't have any apartments when I was growing up, there were just houses... You didn't have many houses that were really attached or row houses. You could stand at the corner of Mt. Olivet Rd. and look all the way across the area because it was so sparsely populated.

One house that I did live in in Ivy City was...1801 Capitol Ave. at Mt. Olivet Rd. That house was the end house of 3 other houses and it had a nice side yard to it. I remember a lovely, wonderful oak tree that was in the yard. I spent many hours of the day and many days during the summer playing under that oak tree with some of my friends and my brother.

I used to ride my bicycle right there on the hill on Capitol Ave and Mt. Olivet Rd. That was my great pastime and my hobby. I loved to ride bicycles. At that time, that road was just two lanes and wasn't even a highway. It was just a road up Mt. Olivet Rd. and they called the woods up there Patterson Woods, you know, where Gallaudet College is located now? The school was over there too on Brentwood Rd. None of that was there, not any of it at all. There was nothing there but woods. Then Mt. Olivet Rd. had this small, 2 lane road that went up and over to New York Ave. I would enjoy going up that road and then sitting back to enjoy coasting back down to my house which was right there on Mt. Olivet and Capitol Ave. That was lots of fun.

Oh yes, my father, my mother, everybody practically in the community was a member of that civic association. Mr. Crowe was a very good civic association leader. At that time, people respected the leadership. People were cooperative. People were overjoyed to have someone who was taking on that kind of role in the community and provided the kind of leadership that would help families to really survive and families to really grow and families to really work together.

I would be so happy and so thrilled and just really excited to see the restoration of the school and to see that this school could become a flourishing, economical, cultural center for the residents of this community as for those who are beyond the boundaries.



Clifford Coulson

I was born in Pennsylvania but my mother came to live here in DC when I was a young boy, a young baby. We moved to Ivy City in 1942 during the war, and we've been here ever since. We lived on Capitol Avenue, 1829, had a big house on Capitol Avenue, right around the corner.

[I had a] Beautiful childhood, I moved out here in this area where a lot of wild fruit, cherries, peach trees, blackberries, plenty of room to run and play, baseball, ride bikes, so it was like moving to the country when I moved out of NW out here. I had a beautiful time in Ivy City. There were some bad guys here, so you had to kind of go around them and watch out but there's always going to be some bullies where you are, so there were some bullies here but I still had a great time here.

My mother was a housekeeper, I had a stepfather and he worked at the laundry down the street. He drove a truck and he was a mechanic. The main thing we had back in that day was Mayday when we would have the wrapping of the maypole. All the girls would have on white socks, white shoes and white dresses and the guys would have on suits and each class would do a certain dance, Spanish dance, Mexican dance, German dance. They would do a dance and they would wrap the maypole.

My wife and her mother attended this church here, Bethesda, but the building wasn't here, it was back in the woods, and there was a little creek that ran through it, and me, I lived around the corner on Kendall Street, that's the church I attended. And the preacher would ring the bell every Sunday, we would come from far and near. He would stop past the five and ten cent store and get a bag of old broken up cookies to make the kids come and have a good time and if you came and had a good time you'd get a handful of cookies and enjoy Sunday school.

Ivy City was a place where all family people lived and people all knew each other and if you did anything everybody knew it. So there was this family and that family and we used to all get cleaned up in the afternoons and put on clean clothes after we take a bath and just walk the streets and eat ice cream, all the ice cream trucks. And then we had a man, who had a pocket full of money, he used to rent bicycles. You could rent a bicycle for thirty cents, that was a lot of fun but you couldn't go out of Ivy City.

I'd like to hit the lotto and become a multi-millionaire. Come in here and take every house and renovate it, and the schools and the streets. And have everybody who grew up here to come back, and participate in the housing and the old stores. And everything would be nice and easy, we could walk the streets with no traffic.



Kenneth Tapscott

I was born in Washington, DC in Freeman's Hospital on December the 16th, 1932. I've lived in Ivy City 90% of my 73 years. My family came to Ivy City from Warrington, VA where my father was originally born and raised. My mother was born and raised in Washington, DC. I can't tell you when we came here except I was born in 1932, they were here before I was [born].

My mother worked at Wilkins coffee. She was packing coffee back in the old days. My father was an automobile mechanic. He worked at the Greyhound station on New York Avenue and Kendall Street, northeast.

The house I grew up in was 1811 Capitol Avenue, NE, right across the street from the Bethesda Church. There was 5 houses on that block...I was raised in Ivy City. I was a Sunday school teacher. I went to the [Trinity] Baptist Church on Central Place, NE where I was baptized. I went to Crummell School which is on Gallaudet Street, NE. [We lived in] A two-bedroom house. We had an outhouse. There was no bathroom. There was no electric. We had to go outside back in the old days and get wood and coal. We had a fire stove. We had to go outside to the back to the restroom. We bathed in a metal tub, my morn, dad and I. And so, we had a nice life back in those days. We enjoyed it all.

When I was a little boy, and when I turned 10 years old, I used to serve the Washington Star. My first wagon was given to me by the Washington Star...I drove the bicycle for Western union at 13, 14 years old. All down around through Washington, DC. The first bicycle I ever owned in my life. The Western union gave me a uniform, they gave me a bicycle. And they took so much out of my money every payday to pay for the bicycle. And I used to shine shoes at the Union Station...I made a beautiful shoebox and I used to shine shoes at the Union Station.

And I'm proud of my life. I'm proud to be in Ivy City, that's why I purchased this building. It was a gift from heaven above. I was able to get it at a proper price and I was able to pay because of the fact that I saved my money. I lived in this building 25 years before I purchased it. I paid rent here. Now, I live rent-free. And I'm gettin' richer and richer every day. I bought the building under the tenant's first right and purchased it for \$40,000 five years ago. Do you realize this building now selling for \$500,000? I was surely a blessed young man. Even though I'm 73 years old, I'm still a blessed young man.

No matter what happens. Always something in life that will come away that will make you wonder where, why and how. But if you keep a steady mind, a steady job, and a steady attitude about being not poor, famous or rich and save as much as you can, you will overcome the beautiful world. You will be glad that you did all those things in your life.



Dorothy "Nicey" Lorraine Scott

I was born in Providence Hospital. And my parents was brought up from St. Mary's County, had farms and everything down there, on the water. I lived a beautiful life here. And was raised on Montello Avenue and went to Crummell School.

Then when we grew up we went to Crummell and then that's when I met all these people. The community was lovely. All the sidestreets then was white. I got, I think when I was 6 or 7, I got a job, going to store for people, making money, oh I was something! But everybody just loved me, even the store people, the pharmacy, they knew me, my sister and I.

And every time we got sick, my daddy would send us over there and he'd fix up that medicine for us. Castor oil and soda. And then when I went to school I would buy pickles and the teacher would have the math class first and then the English class second and the boys would steal my pickles while I was up in math class. I would smell it and cry. Then I met Marjorie and Freeman and a lot of people from Ivy City. But Ivy City was lovely; no problems, no fighting, no nothing. We had a good life.

I had an aunt that had a big, nice house in Ivy City. She lived on Kendall Street and I would go there and sit there in their yard on Sundays, out in the church yard and just think about the old times. My mother had a house on Montello Avenue, and it was lovely. We had three bedrooms, it was real nice, nice front, pool in the backyard, nice yard. We used to have pigeons, raise pigeons. My aunt would come down and help show us how to raise pigeons and birds and we'd kill the birds and fry em. My aunt, she was country, see, she knew all of that.

And then, the Coates girl from Ivy City, this was during segregation, and her and I, they went by color, and we got a job across the street from Lansburg, this restaurant as salad girls and they kept us cause they didn't want nobody else there. And then I worked for Chinese, they were crazy about me, they had places on H Street, NE, and I went and worked for them as salad girl.

I was a type of girl that worked my way and I would get on the train because my mother didn't want me associating with the girls going to clubs at night and hanging around, night clubs, parties, and I would catch the train and go to New York and I'd go to New York and work for my cousin. She lived in Harlem and she had a beautiful home in Sugar Hill. And she told me all about life. And what to expect and everything, so that helped me a lot. And I worked all summer up there and came home in time for school. So I enjoyed myself, saved my money, had a good time.



Charles Brown

We go back at least 100 years. My mother was born and raised in Ivy City, and I was and so was my sister. Like I said we go back at least a 100 years...From what I understand, my great-uncle built the house, which was 1828 Providence St. Which is where I lived until...April, 2005. He built the home.

You know where the railroad trains are up on New York Avenue? That's where he worked. And my aunts, my mother, and people like that they worked in the government, some of them were housekeepers and things like that... But the history of it is...Black people weren't allowed to do too many things. There were certain jobs that we couldn't have, and there was places that we couldn't go. That's why Ivy City was so important. Because it was an all black part

of the city. We also had we had at least 3 stores, grocery stores. We had a Laundromat, a barber shop and a dry cleaners. All right there in Ivy City.

[Crummell School] was a very nice school. It was great. We had great teachers, and in those days teachers would come to your house. If you didn't do your homework or if you didn't turn your homework in, your teachers wouldn't call on the phone they would knock on your door. And sit down and talk to your mother, or your father or your grandmother or somebody like that. So it was a great school. I think we got a pretty good education there for what was available to black people at that time.

Well the neighborhood hasn't changed that much. The difference is we had more families and everyone knew everyone else...Now like I said everyone knew everyone. We called all the grownups uncle and aunt even though they may not have been any kin to us. And, all the parents looked out for all the children. That's the same way it was for me...How has it changed over time? Well, I hate to say this, but the difference is drugs. See there was no such thing, when we were coming along. We didn't know anything about it. Unfortunately for the children growing up now that's something that they have to deal with. We never heard a gunshot. Never. That's how it's changed. And not only Ivy City, that's how times have changed.

For those that's still there it's probably because of the feeling of family, the feeling of having some identity, who you are. That's why people who leave Ivy City, they come back all the time. They can move out but that don't stop them from coming back. They do that because that's home for them. So I think that's what keeps them here.

Well I've been involved in politics for the last maybe 8 years. And what spurred me to do it was the fact that I could see that our neighborhood, Ivy City, there was plans to pretty much bulldoze our entire neighborhood. And that's what got me involved, because I knew it was all political. So that's what spurred me to do that. Just trying to save our neighborhood. That's our history.



Audrey Ray

I was born July 28, 1953 in DC General Hospital, it was called Gallatin at the time. I was in the 6th grade... and our apartment building caught on fire and I was asleep at the time. I was rescued Hollywood style by a fireman and the Red Cross placed us over here in Ivy City and that's where I've been, since I've been 12.

[My parents] came to DC because my mother's brother lived here...they rented a house up there on Capitol Avenue, where the park is now, in 1938. [The house we moved to after the fire] is a three bedroom house, it's kind of small, it was built in 1905 and it didn't have a bathroom on the inside, and it still doesn't have closets. When they brought the bathroom in, in around 1927, it chopped the back room in half...My parents rented this place... When the owner died in 1972, it was in the will that we would be given the first shot to buy the house...Bought the house for \$12,500, and I'm not even going to tell you what it's worth now. But it's awesome, it's a great investment. When I moved to Ivy City...I knew a lot of the kids already here, it was just great for me, because all of my little had buddies, I was in the midst of them. We all went up to play at Crummell of course, that's a no-brainer. They had a rec center up there, community center, and we did a lot of fun stuff. Also you know the parents and adults in Ivy City was secondary parents, surrogate parents for when our parents couldn't see what we were doing. They could come and slap us up in the back of the head or go and tell or call our parents. And it was nothing to see somebody's parent, including mine, to come around the corner with a belt in their hand.

The community has been made blighted, through neglect. It's not through the residents of Ivy City that is doing this, it's outsiders that are doing this. Go around the corner and look at Crummell right now... Kids right out there on Central Place, just openly selling dope. They even have tables out there, and they pull a couch on government property and just lounging. And the police roll on down the street, don't say a thing. But I've seen the police harass the legitimate kids. They just hang out, they have nowhere to go, they have nowhere to congregate like I did when I was young. Crummell is closed, we're fighting like I don't know what to get it open again, restored. The police will mess with those kids but they won't do anything with the criminals.

I would love to hear giggles and laughter again. I would love to hear the cascading of roller skates up and down the sidewalk. And the paperboy, a paperboy instead of a paper man in a car, throwing my paper and hitting the door. You know what I'm saying? I would just love to see people teeming in and out of the city, going back and forth to work, or going to the rec center or whatever, with purpose and with a sense of community. I would love to see that.



Aaron Aylor

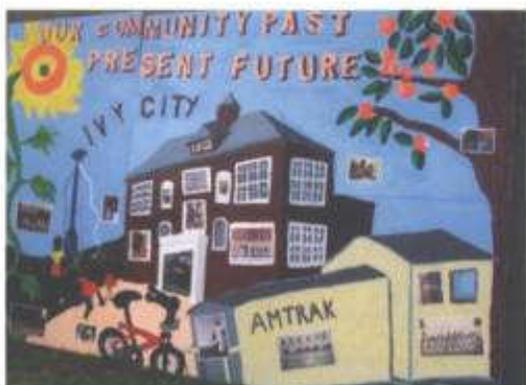
Well, I was born in 1964 so I grew up in interesting times...I've been through three or four sets of riots by the time I was six or seven years old. I remember the National Guard and the Army being on the Mall and down by the museums and even downtown. I remember the smell of cordite. I remember that—like being scared—guys with guns with bayonets on em... A lot of kids from the suburbs and from other places don't see that growing up and that's history. That stuff is amazing.

And I remember that. I remember DC burning. And in fact, being in Ivy City when it happened—We knew all hell was busting loose everywhere else. I just remember being scared that night—but it was alright, you know.

I was kept out of here for a reason. I didn't find out that Enoch Gray was my grandfather until I was 16 years old. I did not know of my African American Heritage. And I think that that was done—I think they believed it would be for my best interest, for my safety or whatever—my life, my future....To this day my mom doesn't really talk about her African American ancestry, and if she does, it's halting. She's one of the people I'm sure you wanted to interview and she probably won't. And I'm sorry about that because that family's been in Ivy City... I found a deed on a property with Enoch Gray and Perry Carson's name on the same lot of land from 1897. So I think they've been here for a while.

...I have distinct memories of Kendall Street and Ivy City being a beautiful green place with a lot of people coming and going and the church was very central and everybody seemed to know everybody and a lot of people... I remember my uncle, Little Enoch, coming over to the house drunk with fish—he used to go fishing every weekend on the Chesapeake Bay and bring fish or whatever he had over to Mamita's house—and there always was food on the table. I guess we were as poor as Job's Turkey Hen—but I never knew it.

I don't know. I'm proud to be part of this community—to be from here—and to be part of it—and to be part of it's—hopefully—its big resurgence. Because, at the turn of the century, I think this place was really something. I remember like a fleeting glimpse of that from when I was a small child...I hope Ivy City comes back strong...as someone who was born and raised here and has come back here...I really appreciate where I've come from. I'm looking forward to many, many, many, many years of working in and with the community. Kind of like continuing—I believe—what my grandfather did. I wouldn't even think to be filling his shoes, but if I could do some small part to come back and make it better. I think that somewhere—Clarice, and Enoch and little Enoch would be smiling from where they are up in heaven—I know they'd be happy. So that's about it.



ENDNOTES

- a Thomas Seaton Donoho was named after William Winston Seaton (1785-1866) who along with his brother-in-law Joseph Gales served as editor of *National Intelligencer*, a popular newspaper of its day. Seaton was also Mayor of Washington from 1840-1850.
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- d Brian Kraft, *ibid*
- e Proctor, John Claggett. "Old Ivy City." *The Sunday Star*. 19 April 1931
- f Scanlon, Edward. "Race Baiting Move Recalls Ivy City and Benning, Tracks Rich in Lore of Turf." *The Washington Post* 1 April 1934
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- i Brian Kraft, *ibid*
- l Brian Kraft, *ibid*
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- p Wheeler, Linda. "Ivy City Looks for Ways to Refurbish Community." *The Washington Post* 27 Dec. 1986
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- r Manisfield, Virginia. "Garden, Faith Flourish in Ivy City with Churches' Help." *The Washington Post* 4 August 1984
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- x Fannie Mae. "Housing in the Nation's Capital"
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Full transcripts and audio recordings of oral history interviews are available at the Martin Luther King Jr. Library.

SPECIAL THANKS



HARRY THOMAS, JR.
COUNCILMEMBER
WARD 5

COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
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February 9, 2009

It is with great honor that I give my support to preserving and documenting the rich history of Ward 5's Ivy City. It was Edmund Burke who stated, "People will not look forward to posterity who will not look backward to their ancestors." It is in that regard that I applaud the accomplishment in assembling this document chronicling the heritage of the Ivy City community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harry Thomas, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Harry "Tommy" Thomas, Jr.
Ward 5 Councilmember

List of Participants

ORGANIZATIONS

- DC Commission on Arts & Humanities
- DC Indymedia
- DC Radio Co-op
- DC Writers Corp
- Empower DC
- Humanities Council of Washington, DC
- Sumner School Museum and Archives
- WPFW Radio, 89.3FM—*listener sponsored community radio*

INSTITUTIONS

- Bethesda Baptist Church
- Ivy City Masjid
- Trinity Baptist Church

CRUMMELL SCHOOL ALUMNI

- Charles Brown
- Alfred Coates
- Theodore Coates
- Clifford Coulson
- Jackie Council
- Remetter C. Freeman
- Dorothy "Nicey" Gary
- Eleanor Grant
- Dolores Hope
- Sarah Hunter
- Marjorie Jones
- Reecy Lenix
- Florine Moore
- Margaret Rice
- Elaine Smith
- Kenneth Tapscott
- Romaine Thomas
- Charlotte Tyner
- Daisy Wroten

IVY CITY RESIDENTS

- Dorthia Austin
- Aaron Aylor
- Ivan Blake
- Erika Crews

- Marcus Crews
- Shawn Crews
- Tony Crews
- Okia Ferguson
- Khalifah Yusef Madeen
- Joel McPherson
- Aujeneah Milner
- Audrey Ray
- Ms Jeanette Swanson
- Gregory Tyson, Jr
- Ms Sadie Ward
- Percy Williams
- Artwan Williams

VOLUNTEERS & SUPPORTERS

- Lauren Barthel
- Catherine Benedict
- Brittany Benowitz
- Lauren Boegen
- Schuyler Borton
- David Bosserman
- Gladys Brooks
- Olivia Cadaval
- Ellen Chenoweth
- Susan & Forrest Craver
- Zainabu Dance
- Calenthia Dowdy
- Ingrid Drake
- Morgan Drake
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- Linda Leaks
- Roshin Mathew
- Marya McQuirter
- Cathy Meals
- Mohammed Mobaldin
- Parisa Norouzi
- Arvie Parks
- Emily Rudicell
- Nancy Shia
- Nancy Suggs
- Gail Taylor
- Holly Thomas
- Lawrenz Wheatly
- Jabari Zakiya

About Empower DC

The District of Columbia Grassroots Empowerment Project (Empower DC)'s mission is to enhance, improve and promote the self-advocacy of low and moderate income DC residents in order to bring about sustained improvements in their quality of life. Become a member and take action with Empower DC for affordable housing, quality affordable child care and government accountability. Visit www.EmpowerDC.org or contact us at (202) 234-9119 for more information.

About the Ivy City Neighborhood & Oral History Project

The Ivy City Neighborhood and Oral History Project was initiated in the summer of 2004 by Empower DC, a nonprofit grassroots organizing project. Having worked with community members to preserve the Alexander Crummell School among other community initiatives, Empower DC sought to record and celebrate the rich tradition of community life and organization in Ivy City in order to nourish and inspire current & future residents and other Washingtonians. Since that time, the project has completed over 20 oral history interviews with current and former residents, collected photos and historic memorabilia and conducted research on neighborhood history. Yet, the deep history of Ivy City still offers numerous people, institutions and events to explore. Full transcripts of oral history interviews are available at the Martin Luther King, Jr Memorial Library, Washingtoniana Division.

Published 2009

Made possible in part by support from the Humanities Council of Washington, DC. Layout and Design by StudioH3.com.

National Fair Grounds Association

145 W
Virginia Avenue ar



HUMANITIES COUNCIL
OF WASHINGTON, DC

If you are inspired by Ivy City and want to support efforts to restore the Crummell School and revitalize the community without displacing its residents, please contact Empower DC at (202) 234-9119, 1419 V St, NW Washington, DC 20009.

Mount Olivet Cemetery

