1784

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

**1. Name of Property**

Historic name Blagden Alley/Naylor Court Historic District
Other names/site number N/A

**2. Location**

Street & Number Squares 367 and 368 [ ] Not for Publication N/A
City, town Washington [ ] Vicinity N/A
State District of Columbia Code DC County NA Code 001 Zip Code 20009

**3. Classification**

| Ownership of Property | Category of Property | No. Resources w/in Prop. Contr. | Noncontrib. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| [x] Private | [ ] Building(s) | 154 | 5 | Buildings |
| [ ] Public-Local | [x] District | 0 | 0 | Sites |
| [x] Public-State | [ ] Site | 0 | 0 | Structure |
| [ ] Public-Federal | [ ] Structure | 0 | 0 | Objects |
| | [ ] Object | 154 | 5 | Total |

Name of related multiple property listing
N/A

Number of contributing Resources previously listed in the National Register 1

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [ x] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion the property [xx] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Carol B. Thompson — 10/2/90

Signature of certifying official / S.H.P.O. — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

[✓] entered in the National Register. Patrick Andrus 11/16/90
( ) see continuation sheet

[ ] determined eligible for the National Register. (see continuation sheet). ____ ____

[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register. ____ ____

[ ] removed from the National Register ____ ____

[ ] other, (explain:)____ ____ ____

for) Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

| Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions) | Current Functions (enter categories from instructions) |
|---|---|
| Domestic/Multiple Dwelling | Domestic/Multiple Dwelling |
| Commercial/Trade | Commercial/Trade |
| | |
| | |

**7. Description**

| Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions) | Materials (enter categories from instructions) |
|---|---|
| Mid-19th Century | foundation: Brick |
| Late Victorian | walls: Brick |
| | Frame |
| | roof: Slate |
| | other: N/A |

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**Site Description and Square Configuration**

Squares 367 and 368 are located in the northwest quadrant of Washington, D.C. The squares are bounded by 10th Street to the west and 9th Street to the east. Square 367 is bounded on the north by O Street and on the south by N Street, while Square 368 has N Street as its northern border and M Street as its southern limit.

Square 367 has a system of four alleys running through it commonly known as Naylor Court. Two large alleys, both 30' wide and parallel to one another, extend from O Street, southward about three quarters the length of the square. At this point they are intercepted by a third alley, 20' wide, which runs in an east/west direction across the entire square. A smaller, shorter alley, 15' wide, also runs east to west on O Street behind the property lines intersecting the two larger alleys.

Square 368 has an H-shaped configuration of alleys and is known as Blagden Alley. A very narrow 10' wide alley bisects the square and extends north to south from N Street to M Street. In the center of the square, larger 30' wide alleys branch away from this smaller alley and form the shape of an H.

**General Architectural Characteristics**

The predominant building type in Squares 367 and 368 is residential. This category includes rowhouses, detached houses, alley dwellings, and apartment buildings. A variety of other building forms can also be found along the street including a church, stores and commercial structures. Behind the street facades are numerous hidden buildings located on the extensive

[x] see continuation sheet

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
[ ] nationally [x] statewide [ ] locally

Applicable National Register Criteria [x]A [ ]B [x]C [ ]D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) [ ]A [ ]B [ ]C [ ]D [ ]E
[ ]F [ ]G

| Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions) | Period of Significance | Significant Dates |
|---|---|---|
| Ethnic Heritage-Black | 1833-1932 | N/A |
| Social History | | |
| Community Planning and Development | | |
| Architecture | Cultural Affiliation | |
| | N/A | |

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and period of significance noted above.

Squares 367 and 368 qualify for designation as a historic district because the two squares: 1) provide a unique understanding and illustration of alley configurations and development in the context of Washington's urban history, as well as demonstrating the use of alleys in the urban plans of cities throughout the United States; 2) represent the residential patterns of the working class, particularly black Americans in the Nation's Capital; and 3) illustrate a strong social reform movement which attempted to elevate the miserable living conditions in the alleys, not only in Washington but across the country.

The area of significance of community planning and development is illustrated by the direct effect that the planning of Washington, D.C., had on Squares 367 and 368. Both of these squares were included in the original grid plan for the City of Washington. By 1794, each square had been platted into large lots for public sale with a system of alleys in the form of an "H" punctuating the interior of each square. These alley configurations were originally conceived as ways to reach the rear of the lots, thereby providing front and rear access to each lot, particularly when the squares were as large as Squares 367 and 368. Square 368 retains the original "H" configuration as platted in 1794 and Square 367 has an alley that was an early modification of that original configuration.

Architecturally, the squares are significant for their wide range of building types which represent nearly a century of development, and encompass residential and commercial buildings fronting

[x] see continuation sheet

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

[x] See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

[ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)
[ ] previously listed in the NR
[ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register
[ ] designated a National Historic Landmark
[ ] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
[ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #_____

Primary location of add. data:
[x] State SHPO office
[ ] Other State agency
[ ] Federal agency
[ ] Local government
[ ] University
[ ] Other
Specify repository:
_____

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 9.75 acres

UTM References

| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | /1/8/ | /3/2/4/3/5/0/ | /4/3/0/8/7/7/0/ |
| B | / / / | / / / / / / / | / / / / / / / |

[ ] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries run along the center of the streets surrounding squares 367 and 368. Commencing at the southeast corner, the intersection of 9th and M Streets, N.W., the boundaries proceed west along the middle of M Street, N.W. to the intersection of M Street and 10th Street, N.W.; proceed along the middle of 10th Street, N.W. northward until the intersection of 10th and O Streets, N.W.; proceed east along the middle of O Street,, N.W. until the intersection of 9th and O Streets, N.W.; proceeding south along the middle of 9th Street, N.W. to the point of origin.

[ ] See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The district includes Squares 367 and 368 in their entirety. These two squares have historically formed the Blagden Alley/Naylor Court neighborhood, which include the alley lots and the lots facing onto the public streets.

[ ] See continuation sheet

## 11. Form Prepared By


Name/title Katherine Grandine, Historian; Kimberly Prothro, Architectural Historian
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alleyways. These include alley dwellings, as well as garages and stables. In the entire two square area, there are 160 extant buildings. The majority of these are of brick construction, although two frame buildings, three concrete block buildings, and one metal structure can also be found.

The extant buildings range in date from the 1830s until the present. While the majority of the existing buildings in the area were constructed between 1870 and 1900, 12 date from the 1850s-1860s and three houses date even earlier--1833-39; 1839-44; 1844-54. After the turn of the century and continuing as a trend through the 1920s, new construction replaced older buildings. Since the 1930s, only a handful of new buildings have been erected. In recent years some renovation and restoration of the area has taken place.

**Architectural Description-Street Buildings**

The earliest buildings constructed on squares 367 and 368 were wood frame buildings. Although most of these early wood buildings were replaced by more substantial and fireproof brick structures in the late 19th and early 20th century, two frame buildings, one located at 927 M Street, N.W. and the other at 1211 10th Street, N.W., remain. 927 M Street, N.W., which according to tax records dates to the period between 1839-1844, is three bays wide, three stories tall and is covered with clapboard siding. An overhanging wood cornice with modillions separated by dentils lends support to the shed roof with its two chimneys. All of the windows on each of the three floors of the facade are double-hung wood sash windows. 1211 10th Street, N.W., dates between 1833-1839 according to tax records, has been completely covered with vinyl siding and its windows and doors have been modified.

Brick construction replaced wood as the common building material starting just before the Civil War and after 1877 when wood structures, classified as fire hazards, were forbidden within the limits of the City of Washington.[1] Eight brick buildings in the two squares were constructed before 1863. In general, early brick buildings are characterized by their flat facades with symmetrical fenestration and their plain and limited ornamentation. 931 and 933 M Street, N.W., and 1243 10th Street, N.W., are examples of pre-1863 brick constructions. 931 and 933

[1] Alison K. Hoagland, "Nineteenth-Century Building Regulations in Washington, D.C.." Records of the Columbia Historical Society. Washington, D.C.: By the Society, Vol. 52.

M Street, N.W., respectively dates between 1854-1859 and 1844-1854 according to tax records, appear to be identical buildings. They are both three bays wide and two and one half stories tall with raised basements and flat roofs. Steps at the far eastern bay of the house lead from the sidewalk above the basement windows and door to the first floor level of the house. A door with a transom surmounted by a stone lintel opens at the east end bay, while two long and narrow nine-over-nine-light, double-hung wood sash windows can be found at the two bays to the west. The second and attic floor windows are progressively smaller; those of the second floor are six-over-six-light, double-hung windows and those above, three-over-three. All of the windows have stone lintels and sills. At the roof line of both houses are brick dentils with an egg-and-dart cornice molding above.

1243 10th Street, N.W., dates to the period between 1859-63 according to tax records, is a two-story brick house with a metal standing seam gable roof. The building is attached on the south side and has a brick interior chimney at its north wall. This unadorned facade is punctuated on the first floor of the far southern bay by a door flanked by two double-hung, wood sash windows. The floor above similarly has three double-hung wood sash windows. All of the windows on both floors appear to be replacements.

Following this early period of Federal Revival architecture came the more ornamented Victorian Aesthetic styles, including Gothic Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne and Romanesque Revival styles.

One example of the Gothic Revival style is represented in the survey area by the church located at 917 N Street, N.W. This church, constructed of brick in the mid-1870s, has since received a formstone facade. Two square towers fenestrated by pointed arched windows on the lower levels and by roundels with stained glass above, flank either side of a slightly recessed gable-roofed facade. A central entrance door leads to the central aisle of the longitudinal church, while two windows above the door allow natural light to penetrate the nave.

The Second Empire style was fashionable for residences in the late 19th century and is very visible in the survey area. One of the most prominent features of this style is the mansard roof which essentially adds a third story to the building, while visually maintaining a lower roof line. Secondary features of this style include dormer windows, overhanging eaves and brackets. A group of large, imposing houses, all designed in this style, were built along M Street between 1871 and 1874. With the exception of 913 which lost its mansard roof in an 1895 remodeling, 901-915 M Street, N.W., (included in this row is the Blanch K. Bruce House at 909 M Street,

N.W., a National Historic Landmark) all have mansard roofs with dormer windows and ornamental trim around the round arched windows. Instead of a dormer window, a two-windowed bay at 907 M Street, N.W. actually breaks the roof line to extend into the attic level. A round observation window culminates at the center top of the bay and the whole is surrounded with an articulated wood frame. A suggestions of the popularity of the Second Empire style in the 1870s is noticeable in the examination of building renovations, as illustrated at 1337 10th Street, N.W. This brick house (constructed sometime in the 1870s or early 1880s) was remodeled in 1887 to include a mansard roof, identified in correspondence as being "a French roof."

Despite the early popularity of large, prominent houses designed in the Second Empire style, the trend was short-lived on Squares 367 and 368. More numerous were the smaller two- or three-story rowhouses. These rowhouses were designed for the middle class using the ornamentation associated with the Italianate and Queen Anne styles.

Houses characteristic of the Italianate style are generally asymmetrical in plan or massing and embellished with wood or tin cornices, often decorated with brackets. Many houses in the survey area fall within this style category, as can be seen in the row of houses running east along O Street from the corner of 10th and O. The corner house, 942 O Street, N.W., built 1878, is a particularly fine example. It has an irregular plan and asymmetrical massing. A crowning feature is the elaborate cornice line with wooden brackets and modillions. The flat roof has a wide overhanging eave, as does the highly articulated enframement above the entry door. Other examples of the Italianate style in the area, evident from their elaborate bracketed cornices and use of hood molds around windows include, among others, the row of houses from 918 to 924 N Street, N.W., all built circa 1874; 938 N Street, N.W. (1877); 1218 9th Street, N.W. (1874-86); 920 O Street, N.W. (1878), and 1219 10th Street, N.W. (1869-74).

After 1871, the Washington building regulations permitted bay windows to project into public space. One-story polygonal bays began to appear on the front facades of the two and three-story rowhouses.[2] Some of the existing projections are additions to earlier buildings and can be identified by their awkward union to the main structure. One example of an added bay window is found at the three-story brick rowhouse located at 1217 10th Street, N.W. (1854-59). Here,

[2] Alison K. Hoagland, "Nineteenth-Century Building Regulations in Washington, D.C.." Records of the Columbia Historical Society. Washington, D.C.: By the Society, Vol. 52.

the brick bay abuts the flat facade of the main structure, as opposed to being integrated into it. Another example is at 920 N Street, N.W. This brick house, built in the early 1870s did not receive its wood bay window until 1892 (D.C. Permit to Repair #2055, 04/14/1892).

After 1871, other one-story projecting bays, often with cornices which matched cornices at the roofline, were built as part of new constructions. In the 1880s and 1890s the projecting bay had reached a mature form: the rowhouse was two or three stories, with a two- or three-story projecting bay integrally incorporated into the design of the facade. There are numerous examples of this including the row at 902-910 O Street, N.W. This row consists of several two-story rowhouses all built in 1886 with two-story rectangular bay projections well integrated as part of the facade. The facades are fenestrated with narrow one-over-one-light, double-hung, wood sash windows with brick, segmental-arched lintels. Stepped corbelling, on both the flat facade and projecting bay, builds towards the cornice line to support the slightly projecting flat roof.

Corbelled brick cornices as found at 902-910 O Street, N.W. and at 1330 9th Street, N.W. and elaborate brickwork, brick insets, and decorative panels are prominent features of rowhouses constructed between 1880-1900 and are often vernacular expressions of the Queen Anne style. These decorative brick elements are illustrated at 1326 and 1328 9th Street, N.W. (1892). Projecting brick headers form a checkerboard pattern and add decoration to the flat upper story facade of this house, while a similar one row pattern on this same house acts as a capital to the pilaster shafts separating the round arched windows of the third floor. Integrated brick work also appears above the second story of 918 O Street, N.W. (1889). In order to keep up with the new fashions, owners often built new facades on older buildings and incorporated the intricate brick work popular at the time, such as can be seen at 1304 9th Street, N.W. (1863-69) and 943 M Street, N.W. (1854-59). At 1304 9th Street, N.W., a permit to repair was issued in 1886 for a brick bay addition to the existing 1863-69 structure (D.C. Permit to Repair #398, 08/10/1886). The intricate brick detailing on the existing facade indicates that the entire facade was remodelled at that time.

By the 1890s, the Romanesque Revival style, as seen at 925 N Street, N.W. became a popular style in the city. This building was designed by Thomas Franklin Schneider, one of Washington's most well-known architects in the late 19th century. It is a four-bay, three-story structure with a basement. A two-story semicircular bay projects from the three most western bays of the house. The first floor and raised basement of the house have a rusticated stone treatment while the second and third floors have smooth stone surfaces with rusticated lintels

articulating the window frames. The windows at the third floor are the most ornate, being separated by squat columns with cushion capitals. Both the flat roof of the main building and the two-story projecting bay support stone balustrades above a denticulated cornice. The balustrade at the top of the main facade is held together at either end by piers and attached columns. This house is a highly sophisticated design, especially for the area. At its construction, it was the most expensive dwelling built on the two squares, with a projected cost of $18,000.

At the beginning of the 20th century, a return to classically-inspired architecture ensued the eclecticism of the mid-to-late 19th century and resulted in the evolution of new building styles. A variation of the Romanesque Revival style, identified as Rectangular Romanesque, emerged when the robust quality of the Romanesque Revival began to seem outdated as compared to the discipline and order associated with the classical revival. Creative architects saw the possibility of blending the forms and materials of the Romanesque with the restraint and disciplined control of the Classical traditions. 1239 and 1241 10th Street, N.W. represent this architectural blend by having characteristics indicative of both the Romanesque and Classical Revival styles. 1239 10th Street, N.W. (1896) is a three-story building with a three-story projecting rectangular bay with rounded corners, supported by a raised, rusticated stone base. A large round arched window flanked by piers with rusticated stone capitals opens the lower level of the bay, while a similar arch surrounds the door of the recessed facade. The second floor has rectangular windows with flat stone lintels above. Round-arched windows can be found at the third floor and very prominent dentils are visible at the cornice line. A pediment with acroteria projecting from the bay add to the classical touch of this building. 1241 10th Street, N.W. (1900) retains the Romanesque style projecting bay, but has otherwise moved further away from the Romanesque and closer to the Classical Revival. Rectangular openings have replaced round arched windows, and an entablature with roundels is located just below the denticulated cornice.

Eventually purer classical designs in both plan and detail emerged to form the Classical Revival style. The Henrietta Apartment building, located at 933 N Street, N.W. demonstrates the use of more refined classical details than those seen on the Rectangular Romanesque rowhouses noted above. The Henrietta, designed in 1900 by B. Stanley Simmons, is a five-story building whose facade is organized in the classical columnar division of base, shaft and entablature, each one being separated by a brick frieze decorated with scallop shells. Although smooth brick is used at all three levels, the lower level windows have rusticated stone surrounds and modillion keystones, while the second through fourth floor windows are left unadorned. The fenestration

at the attic level is highly refined with round arched windows separated by pilasters and groups of windows surmounted by scrolled pediments. The flat roof of the apartment has overhanging eaves embellished with large modillions and dentils and egg-and-dart molding below.

Another apartment building in the survey area is also classified as Classical Revival style. The Atlantic, located at 1305 10th Street, N.W., was designed by Albert H. Beers in 1911. This apartment building is basically rectangular in plan with a series of rectangular projections and recessions on the 10th Street and N Street facades which break the monotony of the large elevations. The front of the building is actually located at the long axis of the building facing 10th Street. Here, a central bay with the door at the lower level is slightly recessed while wider, three-bayed portions project to either side. On either side of these projections are end wings, two-bays wide, recessed and on line with the central entrance bay. The two end bays are not identical: the end extending north on 10th Street is two bays wide, while the corner of 10th and N Streets, is one bay wide. All of the bays are pierced with double windows with stone lintels. A projecting cornice ornamented with dentils and corner modillions caps the top of the four-and-a-half story structure.

By the 1920 and 1930s, a more restrained classicism became popular; classical forms were retained while being stripped of their details. This style was most prevalent in public buildings and commercial structures and is referred to as Stripped Classicism. On Squares 367 and 368, two buildings in this style have been identified. These are located at 1248 9th Street, N.W. and 1229 10th Street, N.W. 1248 9th Street, N.W. is an automotive equipment and supplies store constructed in 1923. It is a rectangular building in plan, has a flat facade and is three stories tall with a flat roof. The first floor originally had three overhead garage doors which have since been infilled with brick. Transom lights above the garage doors still remain. Separating the garage doors are two pedestrian doors, one of which is arched, the other of which is rectangular with a transom light above it. A brick stringcourse with molding delineates the first floor from the second and third floors. These floors are unornamented and simply fenestrated with four bays of windows with flat arched brick lintels. Separating the third floor from the entablature is another string course with dentils. The entablature is simply a continuation of the brick facade with a single row of five concrete roundels.

1229 10th Street, N.W., is a brick residential structure currently divided into separate apartments. It is L-shaped in plan, is two stories tall, and has a flat roof. Constructed in 1927, it is very similar to the automotive shop at 1248 9th Street, N.W. The facade of this building, facing 10th Street, is two bays wide. The first floor has a door and side light on the south, and

a large window opening with three windows to the north. Pairs of windows, separated by concrete roundels, fenestrate both bays of the second floor. Above the second story is an unfenestrated attic level decorated with integrated brick work.

**Architectural Description-Alley Buildings**

Behind the residences and other buildings of the streets are located the alleys and the buildings associated with them. Originally, the majority of the alley buildings were stables and small dwellings. Today, many of the dwellings have been converted into garages or have been demolished. Judging from those that remain standing, however, alley dwellings were generally two-story brick structures, two to three bays wide and two rooms deep. Flat facades with simple, symmetrical fenestration, flat roofs and corbelled cornices are the most prominent aspects of these houses, all of which have direct orientation to the alleys. Second story window openings on the front facades of the alley dwellings generally have brick segmental arched lintels and brick sills. The side elevations of the end rowhouses are often pierced with small window openings, as are the rear elevations. Examples of alley dwellings that still remain standing in the survey area can be found on Square 367, lots 824 and 827, and on Square 368, lots 106-111, lot 83, and lots 150-151. The row of alley dwellings on Square 368, lots 106-111, also identified as 36-46 Blagden Alley-South, was constructed in 1885. While other individual alley dwellings remain, this is the only grouping of structures to survive as a row. All six of these buildings are two story brick buildings attached to one another with large modified garage door openings on the ground level and smaller windows on the second story. Most of the second story windows have segmental brick arches and brick sills, while the cornice line below the flat roofs is decorated with corbelled bricks.

Other types of buildings located in the alleys originally included stables, barns, tin shops, sheds, and other subsidiary service structures. Some of the stables and barns were individual buildings with residences above them. Others were grander structures and served a larger public. Two such stables existed in the survey area--the livery stable at 1223R Naylor Court, N.W., and the stable located on Blagden Alley. The livery stable on Naylor Court was constructed in 1883. It is a large brick structure, rectangular in plan with the east end elevation serving as the facade. The flat facade consists of two levels with a series of stepped pedimented roofs culminating at the center. The ground level was originally broken by nine bays of rectangular stable door openings separated by brick piers. The second floor has a series of alternating brick segmental arched receiving doors and pairs of smaller brick arched windows with brick sills. The side

elevations are similarly fenestrated with stable doors at the lower level and with single, arched windows at the second floor. All of the door and window openings have been infilled with brick.

The livery stable located on Blagden Alley was constructed somewhat later, in 1909. This is a brick structure, rectangular in plan, but with an end gable roof. The end gable facade, facing south, has sliding wooden stable doors on the first floor and brick arched windows on the second story. Under the gable is a semi-circular opening divided into five narrow lights. A monitor light extends the length of the building and lets natural light penetrate from the roof.

Most of the individual stables were originally two-story structures and have since been converted into or replaced by one-story garages or auto shops of some kind. Other alley buildings have been left vacant or have been demolished leaving many gaps and empty lots. Some more recent construction from the 1940s to the 1960s has replaced early alley buildings, while leaving the configuration of the alleys unaltered. An example of this is located on Square 368, lots 101-105 where five alley dwellings were replaced in 1960 by one large, rectangular, concrete block structure. The most recent extant example of architecture which meets the 50 year-old age requirement established by the National Register is located at 1234-1238 9th Street, N.W. This brick commercial structure extending from 9th Street, N.W. into Blagden Alley was designed by F. G. Wilcox in 1932.

**Architects**

As evident from the building permits studied in this survey, many of the houses in the area followed similar plans and patterns which did not necessarily require consultation with architects. In general, architects were not associated with the specific designs and not many were listed on the permits to build for the rowhouses. However, of the architects named, Nicholas T. Haller was the one listed most frequently on the permits for these two squares. Nicholas T. Haller was a Washington architect who worked from the 1870s until his death in 1917.[3] He designed a number of residences in the city as well as in other states and is listed in Barton's Washington Directory of the 1880s as the "well-known architect" who was responsible, among other things, for the row of houses for Charles E. Foster at the corner of 19th and R Streets, N.W. The

[3] Traceries, Vertical Files.

"Real Estate Gossip" column of the Evening Star in the 1890s associates Haller's name with the construction of private residences throughout the city. His own house, 1729 S Street, N.W., is an elaborate Victorian house. Other, large commissions of Haller include the Warder (Atlas) Building at 527 9th Street, N.W. (1892), listed on the National Register, and 36 apartment buildings. On Squares 367 and 368, Haller was responsible for 918-918-1/2 O Street, N.W., 1330-1334 9th Street, N.W., 1315 Naylor Court-West, N.W., and 1311-1313R 10th Street, N.W.

Another architect, Thomas Jasper Collins (1844-1925), designed 1329 10th Street, N.W, also in the survey area. Born in Washington, D.C., Collins was the son of a family actively involved in the design and construction of buildings in the city since 1791. His grandfather submitted a design for the White House competition. 1329 10th Street, N.W. was designed in 1887. In 1890, shortly after the construction of this building, Collins moved to Staunton, Virginia, and became the architect for the Staunton Development Company. In 1891, he opened his own practice and became the premier architect in that city until his retirement in 1911. The designs of T.J. Collins in Staunton are numerous. He is responsible for most of Staunton's historically significant buildings which he designed in a variety of architectural styles. His son, Sam Collins, continued the practice and the family business continues on today.[4]

Thomas F. Schneider, the architect for 925 N Street, N.W. was an important player in shaping the city's built environment at the turn of the 20th century. During the 45 years of his architectural practice in the nation's capital, he was responsible for the design of over 2,000 residences and 19 apartment buildings, including the significant Cairo Apartment Building. Schneider was born in Washington, D.C. in 1859. He graduated from the local public school system in 1875 and began his architectural training as an apprentice in the office of Cluss and Schulze. In 1883, he left the firm to open his own office. He was only 23 years old when he set up an independent practice at 929 F Street, N.W., with $5OO in borrowed capital. Among Schneider's extant work are the Cairo (1615 Q Street, N.W.), the Iowa (Logan Circle), the Albemarle (1704 T Street, N.W.), the Woodley (Columbia Road, N.W. at Mintwood Place, N.W.), California Court (2125 California Street, N.W.); the Ethelhurst (15th and L Streets, N.W.); the 1700 block of Q Street, N.W.; the 1300 block of Wallach Place, N.W.; and Schneider's Triangle (Square 53 on Washington Circle).

[4] Historic Staunton Foundation, Correspondence, August, 1989.

B. Stanley Simmons, architect of the apartment building known as the Henrietta, was also an important Washington architect. He was responsible for the design of more than 20 apartment buildings in this city of which the Henrietta was his first. The architect was born in Charles City, Maryland, but came to Washington at the age of 10. He graduated from the Boston Institute of Technology (now MIT) and returned to the District where he lived and practiced architecture until his death at the age of 60. Simmons was a prolific designer, and well respected in his time. In 1902, when he was 31, the Evening Star said of him:

> "an architect who has added to the beauty and growth of this city. He has designed some of the largest apartment houses in the city. Among the monuments to his skill and originality: the Mount Vernon, the Gloucester, the Cumberland, the Henrietta, the Veronica, the Eastern, the Franklin, and the Dupont are the most conspicuous. Mr. Simmons is capable and enterprising; these qualities added to an energetic spirit have brought to him deserved success..."

Simmons was known not only for his apartment buildings, but for his hotels, banks and many residences. He was an adept architect who worked in a variety of styles ranging from the elaborate Beaux Arts expression used at the Elk Club (now demolished) and the National Metropolitan Bank Building to the more restrained Classical Revivalism found at the Henrietta Apartment Building.

Albert H. Beers who designed the Atlantic Apartment Building at 1301 10th Street, N.W., was one of Washington's most prolific architects. Beginning his career in Connecticut, Beers then moved to Washington where he worked for eleven years. In the last five years before his death in 1911, Beers worked most closely with developer, Harry Wardman, designing innumerable rowhouses and apartment buildings, of which the Dresden Apartment Building is probably the best known. The Atlantic Apartment Building was constructed the year of his death, so was most undoubtedly one of the architect's last buildings to be erected.

Paul J. Pelz, the architect of 1241 10th Street, N.W. was the designer of the Library of Congress building. Born in Germany, Pelz worked in New York before relocating to Washington, D.C. in 1872 as the chief draftsman for the U.S. Lighthouse Board. After designing the Library of Congress with Smithmyer, Pelz turned to residential design. He was the architect of some of the earliest Cleveland Park houses. He also designed dwellings for the U.S. Army at Fort Monroe and for the U.S. Navy at Pearl Harbor.

Other architects and builders involved in the survey area and known to the Washington community include: Joseph Burden, Diller B. Groff, A. Goenner, John G. Meyers, and Julius Wenig. Joseph Burden is especially known for the construction of a group of four rowhouses at 2421-2427 I Street, N.W., which added to the picturesque quality of the Foggy Bottom neighborhood. Unfortunately, both houses built by Burden in Squares 367 and 368, 1214 1/2 Blagden Alley-West, N.W., and 1216R 9th Street, N.W., have been demolished and thus cannot be compared to the extant houses in Foggy Bottom.

on both the public streets and the alleyways. The middle-class residences oriented to the public streets illustrate a rich variety of building types and architectural styles. This housing stock, includes some buildings which pre-date the Civil War, and represent the long history of residential occupation in this area. Significant examples of late 19th-century residential architecture illustrate the changing fashions in style and design. In the interior of each square is an extensive collection of utilitarian alley buildings including residential, commercial and auxiliary structures that are hidden behind the buildings facing the public streets.

The area of significance of black ethnic heritage is illustrated by the social history evident in the development of the squares. Though both whites and blacks were early property owners on each square, social stratification occurred during the last quarter of the 19th century which segregated whites and blacks. Whites lived primarily in residences facing onto public streets while working-class blacks lived primarily within the alleyways. Blagden Alley on Square 368 and Naylor Court on Square 367 became labyrinths of dwellings, stables, and commercial structures. These alley communities were isolated from the life on the surrounding public streets. The blacks most affected by this development were those of the working class, mostly from the south, who migrated to Washington, D.C. following the Civil War.

The area of significance of social history is illustrated, not only by the history of the residents of Squares 367 and 368, but also by the humanitarian efforts made to improve the welfare of alley inhabitants. During the late-19th and early-20th centuries, social organizations and individuals representing the white middle- and upper-class invested their time and money to rectify and relieve the substandard living conditions of alley residents. Blagden Alley in Square 368 was often studied as an example of typical alley conditions, and these studies provided the strong commitment to the eradication of alley dwellings.

The efforts of social reformers to abolish alley dwellings started in the late 19th century and continued into the 1950s. As a result of these efforts, many alleys were re-configured, and the residential communities within the alleys demolished. Blagden Alley and Naylor Court remain despite the zeal of housing reformers, and pressures from the development community. The primary street facades of Square 367 and 368 continue to screen the extensive network of buildings which face onto the alleys in the interior of each square. The buildings located in the alley include dwellings, stables, garages, and commercial structures. Although the individual structures have been altered, the buildings and the configuration of the alleyways retain sufficient integrity to convey the isolated quality associated with alley life.

Blagden Alley and Naylor Court are remaining examples of alleyways, despite the increasing number of alley closings as the result of new construction.

In addition, archaeological resources have been identified in the area. Through shovel test pits, a number of house lots have been noted as having a high probability of intact archaeological resources. These resources could be significant in the information they could yield on the alley dwellings and their inhabitants, as well as on the past occupants of the entire area.

Squares 367 and 368 meet the following Criteria as established by final rules of the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board appearing in the D.C. Register, April 12, 1985:

Criterion (a) (1): They are the site of significant events or are associated with persons, groups, institutions or movements that contributed significantly to the heritage, culture or development of the National Capital or the Nation;

Criterion (a) (2): They exemplify the significant military, political, economic, social, scientific, technical, educational, historical, archaeological, architectural or artistic heritage of the National Capital or the Nation;

Criterion (a) (3): They embody the distinguishing characteristics of architectural styles and building types significant to the development of the National Capital;

Criterion (a) (5): They contain information about or evidence of historic or prehistoric events, processes, institutions, design, construction, settlement patterns, or other facets of earlier cultures that is known or established likely to be important to knowledge or understanding of such cultures.

Squares 367 and 368 meet the following criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places:

Criterion A: They are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history; and

Criterion C: They embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic

values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

In 1988-1989, Squares 367 and 368, located between 9th and 10th and M and N Streets, N.W., became the subject of a comprehensive cultural resources survey. The study was funded in part by the District of Columbia Historic Preservation fund using National Park Service Survey and Planning Funds. Following approved methodology as established by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for an Intensive Survey based on archival and on-site research, data were collected on the social, cultural, and architectural history of the two squares. It was recorded and compiled using the District of Columbia Historic Survey System (DCHS), the District of Columbia's computerized building inventory program. The research and survey effort was directed by Traceries, a Washington, D.C. research and consulting firm, on behalf of the Blagden Alley/Naylor Court Historical Society.

An archaeological component was also part of the comprehensive resources survey. It consisted of a literature search, visual examination of the open space to determine the probability of finding archaeological remains, and selected on-site testing. The tested sites revealed archaeological features as well as artifacts including foundations, bottle glass, window glass, assorted ceramics, and nails. The archaeologists concluded that several sites on Squares 367 and 368 have a high potential of yielding intact subsurface cultural resources. These resources represent the entire history of the neighborhood of Bladgen Alley and Naylor Court and could contribute to the knowledge of early African-American lifestyles and traditions in Washington, D.C. The archaeological component was conducted by the Potomac River Archaeological Survey at The American University.

The names Blagden Alley and Naylor Court were derived from two 19th-century property owners: Thomas Blagden and Dickerson Nailor. Thomas Blagden owned lot 15 on Square 368 from 1854 to about 1887. Blagden lived near New Jersey Avenue between I and K Streets and ran a lumber yard in the city. Dickerson Nailor (now spelled Naylor) owned lot 21 on Square 367; he was a grocer at 488 N Street, N.W. where he also lived.

**Community Planning and Development**

Squares 367 and 368 were part of the original city of Washington. They were drawn and numbered on the earliest maps of Washington, D.C., notably the Ellicott Plan published by

Thackara and Vallance, in 1792. The details of the further subdivision of these individual squares is not known to date. The "Original Survey of Squares" dated to 1793-1796 and signed by Ellicott, Freeman, Fenwich, Brent, Briggs and Nicholas King is the earliest document that shows the subdivision of city Squares 367 and 368 (completed in 1794). Square 367 had 18 lots and Square 368 had 22 lots. The lots were large, ranging in size from corner lots 100' x 100' to deep lots 68.9' x 185' located in the middle of each square. Each square was platted with a public alley in its interior. These alleys were 30' wide, in the shape of an "H" with a 15' wide alley bisecting each square north to south. No property was oriented solely onto the alleyway.[1]

The exact history of the alley configuration in Washington, D.C., remains unclear; documentation to date does not explain who introduced alleyways into the plan of the City of Washington. However, the use of the basic gridded division of land has been associated with city planning since the time of the ancient Greeks.

The grid system of urban design had been traced to the rebuilding of Miletus in Asia Minor in 466 B.C., when early "city planners" had the opportunity to lay out an entire urban center in a deliberate and uniform fashion. The result, often attributed to Hippodamus, a city planner and native of Miletus, was a very regular system of streets aligned orthogonally and enclosing large rectangular blocks, but which contained no alleyways. Scholars surmise that a system of minor alleys evolved in the gridded city to provide quicker passage for pedestrian use. The first documented finding of a system of alleyways which bisected large blocks of land was at Olynthus in Macedonia in 429, B.C. Excavations of that city show that through each of the large blocks ran an alley 4-1/2 feet wide. The alleys were planned, along with the streets, as original elements of the town.

The grid form, which produced a system of alleyways, continued as the basis for town plans for thousands of years and reached the New World during the Colonial period. William Penn's plan for Philadelphia in 1682 consisted of a street grid which formed large blocks of land; alleys were forbidden. This grid proved inadequate, and "by the 18th century, as Elfreth's Alley and

[1] Ellicott, Freeman, Fenwich, Brent, Briggs and Nicholas King, Register of Squares, 1793-1796, National Archives, Record Group 351.

many similar alleys still remind us, the generous original blocks were subdivided by streets and alleys that reduced the living quarters to doll's-house size..."[2]

Study of Pierre L'Enfant's plan for the City of Washington indicates that it was primarily concerned with the positions of streets and public spaces. Methods of laying out this complex street system must have been the topic of numerous discussions among the District of Columbia's planners, although no records of these have been discovered to date. In 1791, George Washington issued the first regulations to govern how the streets and squares were to be filled. Of the eight original building regulations, one regulation, though still open to heated discussion as to meaning, appears to address alleys within squares:[3]

> 6th. The way into the squares being designed in a special manner for the common use and convenience of the occupiers of the respective squares--The property in the same is reserved to the public, so that there may be an immediate interference on any abuse of the use thereof by any individual, to the nuisance or obstruction of others. The proprietors of the lots adjoining the entrance into the squares, on arching over the entrance, and fixing gates in the manner the commissioners shall approve, shall be entitled to divide the space over the arching, and build it up with the range of that line of the square.

While it remains unclear if George Washington actually meant alleys as the word is defined here in the above regulation, Regulation No. 3, issued on July 20, 1795, specifically mentions alleys as a public thoroughfare.

> 1. That every owner of the soil, master workman, or other person employed in erecting dwelling houses, kitchens, stables, or other buildings, within the City of Washington, who shall lay the materials prepared or collected for such buildings, or shall knowingly suffer them to be laid or disposed of, so that such materials shall, in any wise, obstruct or impede the free passage of waggons, carts, drays, or other carriages in the squares,

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[2] Lewis Mumford, The City in History, (Great Britain: Pelican Books, 1966).

[3] See J.L. Sibley Jennings, Jr., "Artistry as Design: L'Enfant's Extraordinary City," The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress, Vol. 36, No. 3, pp. 225-278 for a detailed discussion of his interpretation of the definition of "square."

avenues, streets, or alleys of the said city, or in any of them, shall forfeit the sum of twenty dollars, for every such offence.[4]

In the "Original Survey of Squares" (1793-1796), a total of 487 squares in the City of Washington were subdivided to include alleyways. The most prevalent alley configuration was the H-shaped alley; it was located in 176 squares, of which Square 368 is an excellent extant example. The H-shaped alley configuration persisted over time. In 1852, the Hamilton Plats showed 223 squares with H-shaped alleys out of a total 381 squares with alleys.[5]

Although originally all land on Squares 367 and 368 was subdivided to include both public street and alley access, the large lots began to be subdivided into smaller and smaller parcels, some of which had no access to the public streets except through the alleyways. The history of the subdivision of Square 367 illustrates this trend. Originally platted as an "H" alley, Square 367 was replatted, by 1839, into 58 lots, 48 of which faced the street and 10 of which were located in the middle of the square, surrounded by alleyways. The square was then bisected east to west by a 20' alley behind lots facing onto N Street, N.W. Two 30' wide alleys ran north to O Street and were intersected by a 15' alley which ran east-west behind the property that faced O Street. According to historian James Borchert (and as confirmed by 1852 plat maps), this made Square 367 one of the first of eight squares in the City of Washington to be subdivided with lots that faced solely onto an alley.[6]

**Social History: General Settlement**

The physical settlement of Squares 367 and 368, like the majority of Washington, D.C., did not occur until the mid to late 19th century. In the early 19th century, settlement occurred in the

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[4] D.C. Building Regulation, No. 3, City of Washington, July 20, 1795.

[5] Boyd Hamilton, Maps and Plats of the City of Washington, 1852.

[6] James Borchert, Alley Life in Washington: Family Community, Religion, and Folklife in the City, 1850-1970 (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1980), p. 18. Borchert means that, by 1852, Squares 386, 465, 568, 569, 624, 367, 378, 448, and Reservation 10 had been further subdivided into lots that only faced onto the alley and had no direct street access.

area of Georgetown, Capitol Hill, the Navy Yard, the White House, Lafayette Square, F Street, N.W.; few buildings were constructed north of H Street, N.W.[7]

In the second decade of the 19th century, 7th Street, N.W. emerged as a major transportation artery when a turnpike was constructed leading to Rockville, Maryland. By 1822, it was reported that this turnpike was of great utility to the City of Washington. In 1845, 7th Street was paved with cobblestone between H Street, N.W. and Virginia Avenue, S.W. It was the first street to be paved by the city government. The development of 7th Street, N.W. had an important impact on the development of Squares 367 and 368 and the surrounding squares as the general growth of city was directed northward.

On Squares 367 and 368, no improvements were assessed before 1833 although most of the land was in private ownership. The first improvements appeared between 1833 and 1839. Square 367 showed four improvements, two of which were located on lots in the alley. Three improvements were located on Square 368 along 10th Street, N.W., one of which seems to be 1211 10th Street, N.W.

By 1843, a sufficient number of residents had settled north of H Street to petition the city council for permission to establish a public market on what is now Mount Vernon Square. It was called Northern Liberties Market after the neighborhood, known by the same name and bounded approximately by 3rd, 15th, G, and O Streets, N.W. Twenty years later, the 1857 Boschke map still showed Squares 367 and 368 on the northern edge of settlement in City of Washington. Denser settlement stretched south and southeast, but little was developed north of these two squares. This map showed that the majority of the buildings faced the street. Most of them were freestanding or semi-detached. However, some buildings faced the alley on both squares, but they were not truly isolated from the main streets because of the large number of unimproved lots on both squares.

On Squares 367 and 368, the tax records and assessment records from 1859 recorded 81 owners. Of these, 20 were identified as "colored". Eleven owners were women; of these, three were

[7] Map of Washington, D.C., dated about 1802 from the Library of Congress Geography and Maps Division as published in the Junior League of Washington's An Illustrated History: The City of Washington (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), p.85.

black women. The black owners tended to be located in groups, particularly at southeast corner of 10th and N and the southwest corner of 9th and O Streets. There were a few other black owners scattered throughout the squares. Only one black owner was identified as owning property in the alley of Square 367.[8]

In 1859, 72 owners were assessed for improvements on their property. The majority of these improvements (40) were valued at below $500 and were probably wood-frame dwellings. Seventeen improvements were assessed at over $1,000; these assessments included a few brick buildings.[9] The earliest brick dwellings were 931-933 M Street, N.W., 1217 10th Street, N.W., and 943 M Street, N.W., all constructed before 1859.[10]

During the Civil War (1861-1865), all of the District of Columbia became a vast army encampment and most orderly development of the city came to a halt. The population grew at a tremendous rate and the physical fabric of the city deteriorated. After the war, thousands of people fled the ravaged South, settling permanently in the city. The city experienced its greatest single jump in population in the decade of the 1860s, almost 75%.[11] The increasing

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[8] Tax Records and General Assessments, National Archives, Record Group 351; James Borchert, Alley Life in Washington (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), p.5. Borchert reports that the mix of black and white ownership tends to support the theory that racial segregation was not as pronounced before the Civil War. Whites tended to live in the urban core, while black residences ringed that core. To the north, K Street "proved to be such a formidable dividing line that, with few exceptions, blacks lived to the north of the street, whites to the south."

[9] E.F.M. Faehtz and F.W. Pratt, Real Estate Directory of the City of Washington (Washington, D.C.: Faehtz and Pratt, 1874).

[10] Dating is based on tax records. For these buildings no permits to build were located, only repair permits. 943 M Street, though actually an older building, had a newer brick facade that was added in 1886.

[11] Constance McLaughlin Green, Washington, A History of the Capital, 1800-1950, Vol. I (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 183.

population along with the ravaged physical appearance of the city had a major impact on the subsequent development of Squares 367 and 368.

Starting in the spring of 1871, the Board of Public Works started to grapple with the tremendous problems facing the City of Washington. Alexander Shepherd, a powerful member of the Board of Public Works, began extensive physical improvements to the city. The section targeted for these improvements was the northwest quadrant of the city bordered by the Mall on the south, P Street on the north, New Jersey Avenue on the east, and New Hampshire Avenue on the west. Included in this area was 7th Street, 9th Street, the Logan Circle area, the Dupont Circle area, and sections in and near Foggy Bottom. Public streets were regraded and paved; sewer lines were laid; street lights were installed. A new center market was constructed in 1871-72 on the site of the older market at the corner of 7th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Unsightly older markets were removed, as was the Northern Liberties Market (demolished in 1872) over the irate protests of the vendors. The vendors relocated the market to 5th and K Streets, N.W.[12]

Improvements also occurred in the area of public transportation. Starting in 1862, a horse car line had operated along 7th Street between Florida Avenue and the Potomac River. In 1872, the Metropolitan Company started a streetcar line on 9th Street between M and Constitution. This line was extended north to Florida Avenue in about 1873.

The Board of Public Works also wrote and enforced new building codes. The original stricture against wooden buildings proclaimed by George Washington in 1791 had been eased in 1796. Wood-frame houses became the rule, not the exception, until the 1870s. The 1872 building regulation still allowed wooden structures within the city limits of Washington, though not within 24 feet of any house built of brick or other non-combustible material. By 1877, the construction of wooden buildings was forbidden within an area called the "fire limits," defined as the limits of the City of Washington and the southern part of Georgetown. Previously existing wooden structures were not necessarily demolished--two frame dwellings are still extant on

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[12] William M. Maury, Alexander "Boss" Shepherd and the Board of Public Works. George Washington Studies, No. 3. (Washington, D.C.: George Washington University, 1975), pp. 27-28.

Square 368--but the building regulations essentially required that after 1877 the building of Washington's housing stock be of brick and stone.[13]

Another regulation that had an impact on the design of buildings after 1871 was the permitting of projecting bays on buildings. In 1877, the building regulations also allowed tower and show-window projections.

Both the public improvements and the new building codes greatly affected the development of Squares 367 and 368 in the last quarter of the 19th century. The major streets were paved with either concrete or wood paving. Gas and water mains were laid on all four streets surrounding the squares by the end of 1871. Sewers were laid along 9th and 10th Streets in 1872; and, in 1873, a small sewer was laid into the alley of Square 367.

During the 1870s, as the number of wood structures, decreased, while brick structures increased. No new wood-frame houses were constructed and the number of brick structures increased dramatically. The new brick houses were substantial structures, ornamented with elaborate cornices and other decorative elements that are associated with the Victorian Aesthetic, particularly the Italianate, the Queen Anne, and the Romanesque Revival styles. The most elegant group of buildings were located at 901-915 M Street, N.W., constructed between 1871 and 1874 and assessed at values of $9,000 and $10,000. These buildings reflected the popularity of the Second Empire style and rivaled similar buildings located in the West End, notably at Michler Place at 1739-1751 F Street, N.W.

With the construction of 901-915 M Street, N.W., it seemed as though Square 368 would attract prestigious residents. Indeed, one of the occupants of 909 M Street, N.W. (a national Historic Landmark) was Blanche K. Bruce, the first black man to serve a full term as a U.S. senator. He represented Mississippi from 1875 until 1881. The other residents in this group of buildings included lawyers and doctors. Eventually, however, fashionable addresses migrated west and north towards Logan and Dupont Circles. Alexander Shepherd, himself, can illustrate this trend through the addresses where he chose to live towards the end of his career in Washington, D.C. In 1862, Shepherd lived at 440 9th Street, N.W.; between 1864-1870, he lived at 368 10th

[13] Alison K. Hoagland, "Nineteenth-Century Building Regulations in Washington, D.C., Records of the Columbia Historical Society (Washington, D.C.: By the Society, 1981) pp. 57-77.

Street, N.W.; in 1871, he resided at 1125 10th Street, on Square 369, one block south of the current study area; in 1872, he moved his home to the corner of Connecticut Avenue and L Streets, N.W. where he resided until 1874. Shepherd's own country estate was Bleak House, located north of Brightwood along 7th Street, N.W. (now Georgia Avenue). Shepherd was also one of the first trustees, instrumental in the establishment of the North Presbyterian Church (now Salem Baptist Church) at 917 N Street, N.W.

The subsequent development of Squares 367 and 368 became largely middle class, in keeping with the squares in the immediate neighborhood. However, the residential patterns became segregated by class and race. The largely white middle-class built substantial brick buildings facing the main public streets, adjacent to and replacing the earlier wood frame buildings. These dwellings reflected current trends in rowhouse design and ornamentation. At the turn of the century, two large apartment buildings were constructed on Square 367. These buildings illustrated the growing trend of accepting apartment living in this city for both the wealthy and the middle-class. The occupations of the white residents included an undertaker, government clerks, doctors, lawyers, and tradesmen. Ninth Street, N.W., developed as the main commercial street, with owners living above or near their stores.

**Social History: Black Ethnic Heritage in Alleys**

Behind the public street facades, the property oriented onto the alleyways developed in a very different fashion. The growing population in the city dramatically increased the demand for housing, particularly for inexpensive dwellings for the large number of working class blacks. One solution to this population pressure was to increase the population density on each square by subdividing lots at the rear of street property that faced directly onto alleyways. This is amply illustrated in the history of Squares 367 and 368.

Before 1867, Square 367 had only ten lots officially recorded as fronting solely on the alley, although the 1857 Boschke map showed several structures located near or on the alleys. The earliest extant alley dwelling is located on Square 367 at the rear of 1316 9th Street, N.W. It was constructed between 1863 and 1869 as a dwelling. At the time of its construction, the property remained a single lot, indicating a possible social relationship between the inhabitants of the two buildings.

Not until 1867 were lots subdivided fronting solely on the alley on Square 368. This was done by Alexander Shepherd. S.T.G. Morsell subdivided another large lot into alley lots in 1873.

Between 1871 and 1874, 15 alley dwellings were constructed on Square 368. These were all two-story brick dwellings. According to maps and assessment records, no frame buildings were constructed in the alleys on Squares 367 and 368 after the Civil War. The frame buildings shown on the 1887 Hopkins map pre-dated the Civil War.

Although inhabited alleys were reported before the Civil War (Borchert has identified at least 49 inhabited alleys in 1858), the number of such alleys dramatically increased after the war. By 1871, there were 118 inhabited alleys. Two years later, in 1873, the Board of Health reported 500 inhabited alleys.[14] Of these, Blagden Alley and Naylor Court were two.

From the 1880s onward, Blagden Alley contained one of the larger alley populations in the city of Washington. In the 1880 census, 42 heads of households were recorded as living in Blagden Alley; 22 were recorded in Naylor's Court. All of these persons were black and were employed largely in unskilled or service occupations.

The largest number of buildings constructed on the alleys occurred during the 1880s. In 1885, 16 brick alley dwellings were constructed on Square 368 behind 927 M Street, N.W., six of which remain extant today. Another row of six dwellings was constructed behind 1210-1216 9th Street, N.W. (now demolished). The average alley house was two stories, about 12' wide and 24' deep with one or two rooms on each floor. A small back yard contained a water hydrant, privy, and shed.

At the same time, there occurred construction of a large number of stables and commercial structures in the alley. The largest was in Naylor Court. It was originally constructed as a two-story building with dimensions of 105' x 90'. It was expanded in 1888 with an addition of 26' x 90'. Numerous private stables were constructed on both squares. Research seems to indicate that before 1875, no stables were constructed in the alleys.

The residents of the alleys developed a life of their own. They were isolated behind the street facades and hidden away in what became called "blind alleys". In his book on alley life, James Borchert details the techniques that allowed the residents to survive in rough social and physical circumstances. He argues that the alley dwellers had a strong sociological stratification. They watched out for each other and guarded each other from the outside world. For many of these

[14] Borchert, Alley Life in Washington, pp. 271-273.

people, this was their first experience in an urban environment and they adapted their previous lifestyles to fit the circumstances. Often a house would contain an extended family, or two families would share a house; frequently lodgers would be taken in to help support the rent. Crowding, along with the unsanitary privies, poor construction of buildings, and limited economic means resulted in a high death rate among alley dwellers. Reformers complained that, considering the conditions, rents for alley dwellings were too high.

**Social History: Humanitarian Reforms**

As early as the 1870s, the Board of Health reported that many alleys were "lined on both sides with miserable dilapidated shanties, patched and filthy" that were "unfit for human habitation."[15] The physical degradation and the perceived moral decay spurred housing reformers to action. With the increasing numbers of alley dwellings, these housing reformers mounted campaigns to stop the harm and degradation caused by alley living. In 1892, the U.S. Congress passed a ban on the construction of dwellings in alleys. Though no new construction was permitted in alleys, the ban did not abolish the alley housing that already existed.

From 1890 to 1910, many reformers studied and reported on the living conditions in Washington's alleys. In 1896, an investigation was undertaken by the Committee on "Housing of the People" of the Washington Civic Center. The investigation extended to 35 alleys with special reference made to their sanitary and sociological conditions. Of the 191 dwellings studied, 12 of these were located in Blagden Alley.

The surveyors concluded that alley houses were unsanitary, overcrowded, and harborers of disease. The overcrowding was especially noted. The surveyors had accounts of seven persons living in two rooms (a mother and her sons--21, 17 and 7) occupying one bed chamber. Another case showed nine individuals living in two rooms. Five, almost all adults, slept in one room (the mother, 43, a son, 21, and daughters, 19, 17, and 14; and four persons used another room--a mother 45, an aunt, 70, a son, 22, and a baby, 9 months old).

Furthermore, the alleys were viewed as encouraging immoral behavior. As was recorded:

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[15] Board of Health, Second Annual Report (Washington,D.C., 1874).

> "There is no secret that many of the alleys hide criminals. Our records reveal three openly disreputable houses...In one dwelling resides a woman with a jail history. Other houses are tainted with the suspicion of being 'fast' and men in them are supported by women who have no visible income. Tenants, not immoral themselves, profit from the traffic in sin as one night chambermaid in a brothel whose 'tips' exceeded her wages."[16]

The physical conditions of alley dwellings appalled the investigators. The houses were without cellar or attic. Floors rested on the earth, open below the floor and not built to withstand cold or rain. The hot sun shone on the bare tin roofs above. Poor drainage and precautions for cleanliness were lacking. The privies were often located in close proximity to the dwellings as the size of the yard averaged 10' by 12' and the smell was reported as 'smothering.' Housing reformers often commented on the stench of the alleys caused by decomposing rats and cats and horse manure from the stables.

In 1897, the city's police department made a special census of the alleys. They reported that 237 blocks in the old Federal City had inhabited alleys. The total alley population was 17,244 (approximately 11% of the city's population). Of these, 16,046 were black; 1,198 were white. The greatest numbers of these alleys were concentrated in the southwest quadrant; the northwest quadrant between 1st and 15th Streets; and, to a lesser extent, in the area of Foggy Bottom. The northeast and southeast quadrants also showed some inhabited alleys, but most of these had smaller populations and were more widely dispersed. According to Borchert, the estimation of the alley population was conservative. Many police were afraid to enter the alleys alone, even when accompanied by others. Borchert also argued that many of the alley dwellers would be reluctant to give accurate information to outsiders, particularly the police.[17]

Reformers continued the campaign to abolish alley dwellings throughout the 1890s and the first decade of the 20th century. In 1904, reformers brought the noted humanitarian Jacob Riis to Washington to visit alleys and report his findings to the U.S. Congress. This report and the publicity attending it won over President Theodore Roosevelt who urged in a 1904 address to

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[16] Clare De Grafenreid, "Typical Alley Houses in Washington, D.C, Women's Anthropological Society Bulletin 7, 1897.

[17] James Borchert, "The Rise and Fall of Washington's Inhabited Alleys, 1852-1972," Records of the Columbia Historical Society (Washington, D.C.: By the Society) p. 278.

Congress that the alleys be systematically studied and concluded that the "hidden residential alleys are breeding grounds of vice and disease and should be opened into minor streets."[18]

In 1909, Charles Weller, Secretary of the Associated Charities, published his study on the alleys of Washington. He compiled studies from other researchers and actually spent a month living in what he called a "typical" alley; the alley where he chose to live was Blagden Alley. In his first impressions of the alley, he recorded:

> It is with some misgivings that one leaves the well lighted outer streets with their impressive residences and turns into a narrow passageway where he must walk by faith, not sight. Noises which faintly recall those of the Midway Plaisance at the world's fair, grow louder as the explorer approaches the wider inside alleys. Night with its dark shadows accentuates the strangeness of the scene. Near a gas light on one of the inner corners a group of people are seen playing together roughly. A cheap phonograph near by rasps out a merry ditty. The shrill cries of children pierce the air as the ragged, dirty youngsters dart about among their elders. Two lads with notably large feet and broken shoes dance skillfully while a slovenly, fat woman picks at her guitar. From the little mission in an alley parlor comes occasionally a wail of primitive, weird chanting. An uncouth black man lounges up to a buxom young woman and hugs her. On a doorstep nearby a young man is heard arguing with his mistress and begging her to "le' me ha' fi' cents."
>
> Older folks, crowded around their doorways, are complaining of the sultry, oppressive August air and some are arranging ironing boards and rocking chairs on which they will sleep all night outside the houses. They call back and forth to each other across the alley street and speak with notable civility to the policemen who pass, in pairs, at intervals, with their clubs kept close in hand. There is a burst of profane quarrelling occasionally and some fighting, but most of the prevailing noises are merry and careless.

[18] James Borchert, "The Rise and Fall of Washington's Inhabited Alleys, 1852-1972," Records of the Columbia Historical Society (Washington, D.C.: By the Society) p. 280.

> Pandemonium reigns. One sees no immediate cause for fear, but feels intuitively a suggestion of evil possibilities and latent danger.[19]

By 1911, the housing reform movement was able to gain the conversion of one major alley into an interior playground. By 1914, the reform movement reached its peak, having enlisted the support of Washington society, including First Lady Mrs. Ellen Wilson. Her deathbed request to abolish the alley dwellings was in great part responsible for legislation that completed the eradication of alleys by 1918. The advent of World War I, however, effectively stopped the legislation.

Reports on the numbers of dwellings located in the alleys continued to be collected. In 1912, there were 46 dwellings reported in Blagden Alley and 11 in Naylor Court. In 1929, 16 were reported in Blagden Alley and two in Naylor Court. The decreasing numbers of alley dwellings reflected not only the actions of the reformers, but also changing economic pressures. Business demands on the alleys increased. While the number of alley dwellings decreased, the numbers of commercial structures, including large livery stables, increased.

Another factor that greatly affected the subsequent use of alleys was the increasing popularity of the automobile. A number of stables and alley dwellings were converted into garages. In the case of dwellings, this was most often accomplished by removing the second story and widening the original front doors to accommodate cars. This trend is especially evident in both the alleys on Squares 367 and 368.

With the Depression, New Deal reformers again sought the removal of alley housing. In 1934, Congress created the Alley Dwelling Authority "to provide for the discontinuance of the use as dwellings of the buildings situated in alleys in the District of Columbia." Under the Alley Dwelling Authority, no alley houses were to be inhabited after July 1, 1944. Though the Authority made considerable progress in opening a number of alleys, the advent of World War II and the resulting housing shortage postponed the enforcement of the abolition of alley dwellings until 1955. In 1954, citizens' groups involved in the historic preservation movement of Georgetown and Foggy Bottom were successful in repealing the ban on the abolition of alley dwellings. The alleys were then inhabited by affluent white Washingtonians. In 1970, Borchert

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[19] Charles F. Weller, Neglected Neighbors (Philadelphia, Pa.: John F. Winston Company, 1909).

reported that there remained at least 20 inhabited alleys in the city of Washington, a substantial decrease from the numbers of alleys in the 19th century.[20]

**Conclusion**

Squares 367 and 368 which include Blagden Alley and Naylor Court retain the physical evidence of their social history and the evolution of social stratification. Though the actual number of alley dwellings has diminished, those that are extant forcibly illustrate the condition of life in the alleys. Moreover, the alleyways remain a labyrinth of commercial and auxiliary structures. The houses facing the public streets, which remain largely intact, hide the extensiveness of the alleyways and provide physical evidence to illustrate the stark contrast between public street life and life in the alleys.

Therefore, the entirety of Squares 367 and 368 qualify for designation as a historic district in the District of Columbia and listing on the National Register of Historic Places because they are sites which inspired humanitarians to reform the deplorable conditions of alleys and are strongly associated with the history of blacks in Washington, D.C. These two squares exemplify the significant political, economic, and social forces that caused alleys to be planned in the early history of Washington, D.C., and to evolve into the habitations for the working classes, particularly blacks. The buildings on Squares 367 and 368 embody the distinguishing architectural characteristics of residential and commercial structures found both on public streets and in the alleys that are significant to the history of Washington, D.C. Finally, several sites on Squares 367 and 368 have a high potential of yielding archaeological resources that could contribute to the knowledge of early African-American lifestyles and traditions in Washington, D.C.

[20] James Borchert, "The Rise and Fall of Washington's Inhabited Alleys, 1852-1972," Records of the Columbia Historical Society (Washington, D.C.: By the Society) pp. 286-288.

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