

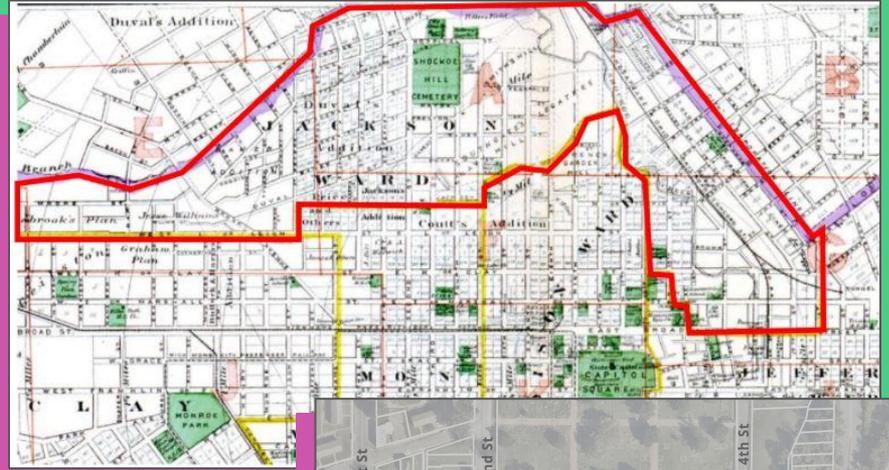
**NORTH JACKSON WARD
VISION PLAN**

10 Historical Facts About the Area in Words and Pictures

Name & Historic Demographics

By the 1930's, approximately 8000 Black citizens called Jackson Ward home.

- "Jackson Ward" was originally the name of the area's political district within the city, or *ward*, from 1871 to 1905, yet has remained in use long after losing its original meaning.
- In the mid 1800's and in the years following the Civil War, many Jewish and German immigrants resided in Jackson Ward.
- Demographics shifted in the last decades of the 19th century and, by World War I, the neighborhood was almost entirely occupied by Blacks. By the 1930s, approximately 8,000 Black citizens called Jackson Ward home.



Jackson Ward as a political ward outlined in red. Beers map, 1877.



Vision Plan Study Area - Richmond Land Bank properties shown in blue.

Second Street

N. 2nd St. is the primary connector between the northern & southern portions of Jackson Ward. In the early days of the neighborhood, it served as both a commercial and residential corridor.

- N. 2nd Street lies at the western edge of the study area. Until the 1840s, N. 2nd Street was the only passable route of travel from the city center to the almshouse and cemeteries in North Jackson Ward.
- Many buildings along N. 2nd Street had stores or other commercial establishments on the first floor and residences above.
- To the west of N. 2nd Street was the area originally known as Little Africa and later as “Postletown” because its streets - St. James, St. Paul, St. John, and St. Peter - were named for the Apostles.



Central to the historic Jackson Ward's social and economic life was Second Street, also known as "The Deuce." Black-owned businesses such as the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank chartered by Maggie L. Walker, the Southern Aid Insurance Company, the Richmond Planet newspaper, and Miller's Hotel thrived during racial segregation. The Hippodrome Theater was a hub of African American nightlife and entertainment.

Bojangles

Bojangles was an African-American tap dancer, actor, and singer, and one of Jackson Ward's most famous residents.

- Many Black historical figures of significance are associated with Jackson Ward. In 1878, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson was born in the wooden frame structure at the rear of 301 Preston Street/915 N. 3rd Street.
- Bojangles was the best known and the most highly paid Black American entertainer in America during the early 1900's. His career began in the age of minstrel shows and spans Broadway theatre, the recording industry, Hollywood films, radio and television. There is a statue of him at the corner of Leigh St. and Adams.



Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, photographed by George Hurrell in 1935. Smithsonian Magazine.



"Bill 'Bojangles' Robinson showing is wife, Elaine, the house at 915 N. 3rd Street." Photograph. Richmond, VA: Richmond Times Dispatch, 1974.

Black Fraternal Orders

The Knights of Pythias & the Independent Order of Calanthe were headquartered in Jackson Ward

- By the 1890s, the house Bojangles was born in became the hall for the Knights of Pythias.
- The Knights of Pythias (along with its female counterpart, the Independent Order of Calanthe) was a fraternal organization that provided social, cultural, and financial support for the Black community of Jackson Ward.



301 Preston Street with wood frame addition. Photograph. Mary Wingfield Scott Old Richmond Neighborhoods.

Baker School

The Baker School was the first African-American public elementary school in the City of Richmond.

- In 1871, with the opening of the Baker School, North Jackson Ward was selected for the creation of one of the first three public schools to be constructed in Richmond and the first African-American public elementary school in the city.
- The Navy Hill School opened shortly thereafter on nearby N. 6th Street.



The Baker School, 1939 building designed by Marcellus Wright.

St. Luke's Penny Savings Bank

The St. Luke Penny Savings Bank, chartered by Maggie Lena Walker, was headquartered in Jackson Ward on St. James St.

- Maggie Walker was a civil Rights leader, businesswoman and banker.
- On November 2, 1903, the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank opened for business at the St. Luke Headquarters Building at 900 St. James Street.



*Top: St. Luke Headquarters Building, Maggie L Walker National Historic Site
Right: Entrance to St. Luke Penny Savings Bank with staff, National Park Service*



Maggie Walker's Rental Properties

Maggie Walker also owned several rental properties in Jackson Ward as well as property in Frederick Douglas Court

- Her North Jackson Ward properties included four duplexes at the corner of N. 4th Street and Bates Street within the study area.
- In an example of the self-sufficiency of Richmond's Black community, these duplexes were rented by Walker to Black tenants on terms that she believed were fairer than those on offer by white landlords at the time.



Maggie Walker rental houses (red arrow). Photograph. Richmond, VA: Edith Shelton Photo Collection, The Valentine Archives.

Public Housing Construction

Gilpin Court was Jackson Ward's low-income housing project, named after African American actor Charles Sydney Gilpin

- In 1935, the Public Works Administration proposed to demolish several blocks of Jackson Ward housing to make way for the construction of low-income housing.
- With the formation of the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority in 1940, work on three “high-standard, low-rent housing projects” was cleared to begin in 1941.
- Gilpin Court has remained in constant use and has been expanded and altered over the years, resulting in the demolition of additional historic building stock.



Gilpin Court, Richmond Times-Dispatch

I-95

The construction of the Interstate Highway in the 1950's & 1960s isolated the northern portion of Jackson Ward

- The northern portion of Jackson Ward was separated from the southern portion by the construction of the interstate highway in the 1950s-1960s. (Figure).
- The highway construction and subsequent policies isolated the northern portion of Jackson Ward and the neighborhood experienced dislocation and additional demolitions.
- Today, the area north of the interstate highway is known as North Jackson Ward, while the area south of the highway extending south to Broad Street is recognized simply as "Jackson Ward."



Jackson Ward separated by construction of highway. "Aerial view of downtown Richmond during construction of Richmond-Petersburg Turnpike." Photograph. Richmond, VA: Richmond Times Dispatch, 1957. Note: Area of Jackson Ward shown in red circle.

Remaining Structures

In the study area's four square blocks, 61 of the 77 parcels are vacant, with no remaining structures.

- The remaining structures include 12 residential buildings, one church building, two commercial structures, and one social club (originally constructed as a residence).



Some of the remaining structures in North Jackson Ward, June 2020

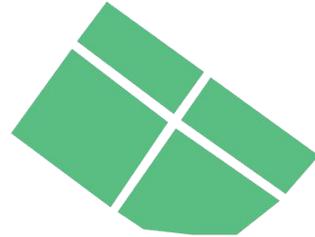
North Jackson Ward's Future

This summer, the Richmond Land Bank invites the public to learn about and participate in the North Jackson Ward Vision Plan: Building on the Past to Create a Vision for the Future. This brief engagement process funded by the Richmond Land Bank and Historic Richmond aims to create a vision plan with a set of community values and visuals that will guide the future development for 20 properties in North Jackson Ward.

[Take the Survey](#)



Ebony Walden Consulting
Facilitating Change



NORTH JACKSON WARD
VISION PLAN

