

Columbia's Historic

Sharp End

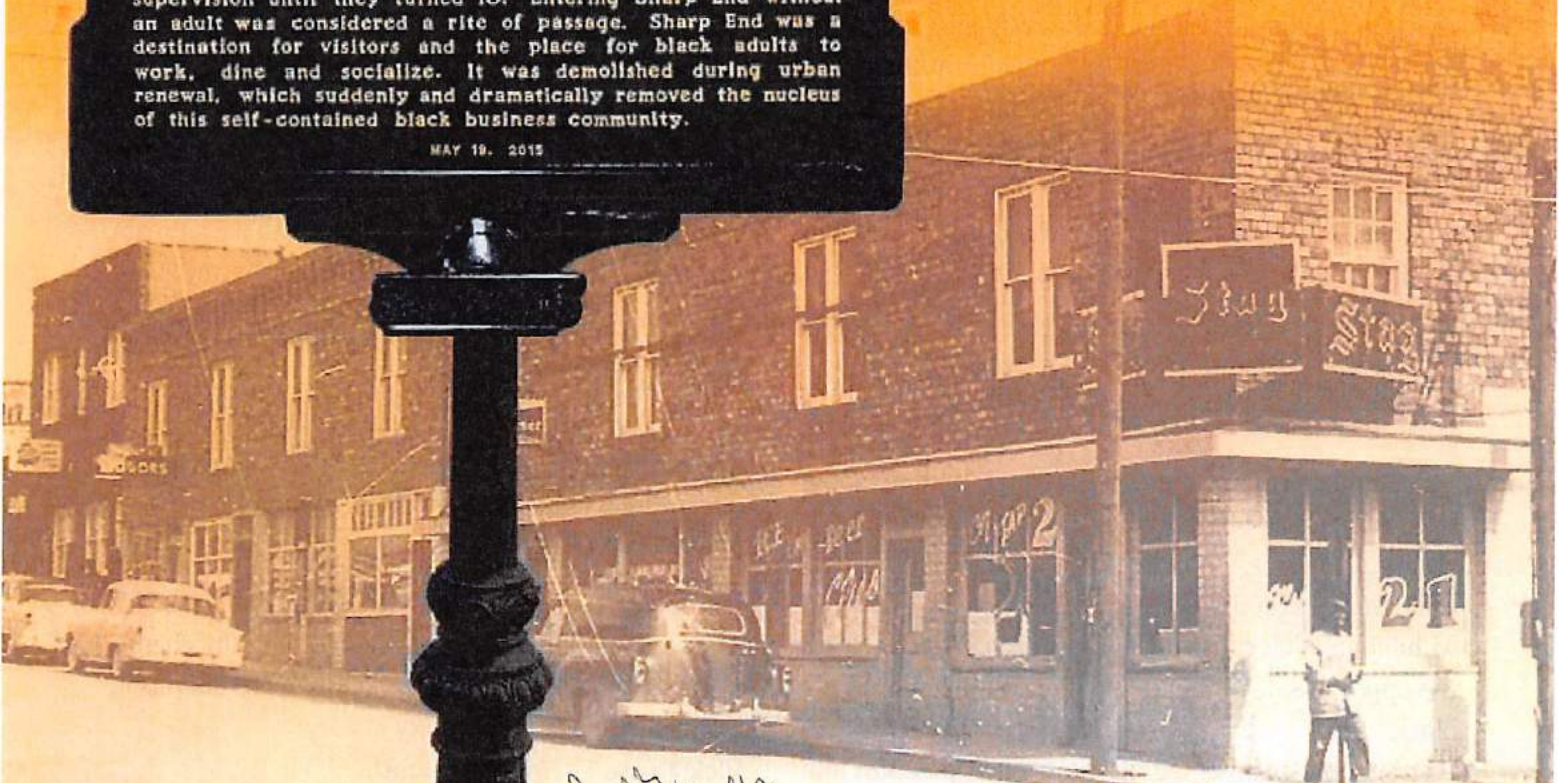
By Rudi Keller



SHARP END

From the early 1900s to the 1960s, the Sharp End business district was a city within a city for Columbia's black community. Stretching from Fifth to Sixth streets on both sides of Walnut Street, Sharp End was a robust business center with black-owned restaurants, meeting halls, barber shops, bars and more. In its prime, it was broadly known as the cultural heart of the black community, which included churches, schools, homes and social clubs. Sharp End was all business; children were not allowed there without parental supervision until they turned 18. Entering Sharp End without an adult was considered a rite of passage. Sharp End was a destination for visitors and the place for black adults to work, dine and socialize. It was demolished during urban renewal, which suddenly and dramatically removed the nucleus of this self-contained black business community.

MAY 19, 2015



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No Greater Value Than separate business district

COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

May 20, 2015

Sharp End recognition is long overdue

BY VICKI RUSSELL

Much of the history of Columbia's black community has been told in bits and pieces. Sometimes the greater community learns about it because an individual, such as Blind Boone, is recognized and remembered. Other times, we learn about it through the lens of a specific event.



Sharp End is one of those pieces of history — a significant one because, for a period of more than 40 years, it was the nucleus of the black business community and the focus of stories, traditions and legends remembered vividly to this day.

All of us have similar touchstones no matter where we grew up. Lifelong white Columbia residents, for example, talk about their memories of and adventures at the original Jack's Coronado, Breisch's Restaurant and Corn's Lake. For blacks, Sharp End was all that and more.

Although it was but one block long on Walnut and surrounded by several other black-owned businesses and neighborhoods, it was a destination in its own right. It provided jobs, diversions and a social network. If you were black, it was where you went for a night out, to catch a cab, get a haircut and hear the latest news or gossip.

Descendants of business owners fondly remember the strict rules about Sharp End as they were growing up. It was "not for kids," they explain. "It was for business." Children younger than 16 were not allowed in Sharp End without an adult companion. Kids who needed to get to the opposite side of Sharp End had to walk around the block.

One family member tells the story of his passport into

a Sharp End business after he turned 18. He took a note from his mother to verify he was old enough, but even that wasn't quite adequate. The business owner called his mom to ensure the note was legitimate.

Young blacks yearned for the day when they, too, could patronize Sharp End businesses. For some, that day never came. Just before they reached the right

age, Sharp End was gone. Its demolition, a result of urban renewal, seemed to take an instant in comparison to the decades required for it to reach its heyday.

Since then, the memories of Sharp End have been kept alive in church and social groups, where blacks have collected photographs, stories, lists of businesses and names of owners. The recognition of Sharp End has been an elusive but intensely important dream.

The success of any new community event depends on lots of elbow grease and a little magic. Such has been the case for the Sharp End Heritage Committee, which quickly gelled into a team determined to make a dream come true. Once the plan was outlined, however, we knew we needed the help of the greater community to achieve the goals.

And that's where the magic occurred. On behalf of the Sharp End Heritage Committee, I salute the businesses and institutions that agreed to help underwrite costs of the Sharp End recognition plan through event sponsorships and advertisements in this publication. Each of them not only agreed to support the effort financially, but they did so enthusiastically, welcoming the chance to ensure that Sharp End has its rightful place not just in black history but in community history.

Vicki Russell is Tribune publisher.



Courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri

This view of Sharp End, from the northwest corner of Fifth and Walnut streets and photographed sometime in the late 1950s, shows the two-story brick building constructed about 1910 that was the oldest commercial structure on Sharp End.

Commerce shaped a community on Sharp End

The American Dream, James Truslow Adams wrote when he popularized the phrase in 1931, was about more than achieving material prosperity.

It was, he wrote, a belief that “life should be better and richer and fuller,” with equal opportunity for achievement.

Americans have wandered, in migrations large and small, in search of that dream. On Walnut Street, in a place called Sharp End, many black Columbians found what they were looking for.

Born of necessity, Sharp End provided the kinds of services otherwise closed to blacks by legal and cultural segregation. For more than 50 years, from about 1910 to 1961, the barbershops, restaurants and taverns supported families, growing in numbers as blacks moved into the city from rural parts of Boone County.

“For me, when I became old enough, it seemed to me that it was at its peak,” said Larry Monroe, 77, whose mother, Vitilla Monroe, ran Aunt Vi’s Café when Sharp End was demolished in 1961 as part of an urban renewal program. “It was vibrant, businesses were flourishing, relationships were great, and people were getting along.”

Monroe is one of 13 members of

the Sharp End Heritage Committee, a group working to record the history of the now-vanished business district from Fifth Street to Sixth Street. The Tribune, in support of that effort, researched the land, the businesses and the people, as well as the social and economic conditions, that created Sharp End.

One of the most vexing questions has been the origin of the name. There are tantalizing clues, but none is definitive.

One came from a 1938 master’s thesis by Wilbur East, who wrote that St. Luke’s church was built “at the corner of Fifth and an unnamed street. Sometimes this street is called Sharp Avenue.”

It was not really a street, he

wrote, but a north-south alley east of Fifth Street. The thesis, however, makes several errors about St. Luke’s, including dating construction of the church 11 years too late. The alley is not shown on any map.

An alternative explanation for the name is that it was a place to dress well. The taverns stayed open late on weekends, as did some of the restaurants, and it was an era when women wore dresses and men wore suits and ties when going out.

A third possibility is it was a dangerous place where women and children were not allowed without escort and men were ready for trouble. “They carried knives and razors, they carried switchblade knives,” said Sehon Williams, 92.

A 1930 census taker called second-floor apartments on the south side of Walnut the “Sharp End Flats.” But it is likely he was adopting the name to the dwellings, not recording a formal name.

Wherever the name came from, it was in common use by 1917. The Columbia Missourian reported May 14, 1917, that John Tuttle had been fined \$500 for bootlegging and that Police Chief J.L. Whitesides arrested Tuttle “at Fifth and Walnut Streets, known to its frequenters as ‘Sharp End.’”

The 1910 census reported that, for the first time, more than half of Boone County’s blacks lived within

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the city limits of Columbia. A gradual but accelerating shift, begun during the Civil War, had increased the black population of 541 black residents in the city to more than 2,200. In the same period, the total black population of the county, including Columbia, fell by almost one-fifth.

As they moved from the countryside, blacks became increasingly crowded into less desirable areas of the city, along Flat Branch Creek, on Cemetery Hill, near the Wabash Railroad and in small homes in the Illinois and Indiana avenues area.

"The concentration of a large number of African-Americans in a very narrowly defined geographic area was true all over Missouri," said Gary Kremer, executive director of the State Historical Society of Missouri and a scholar of African-American history in the state.

The migration created the need for businesses to serve the growing community.

One of the first in the area close to Sharp End was a lunch counter at 508 E. Ash St., now the post office loading area. A man named Perry Bones, according to the 1910 census, or Perry Bowen, according to a 1909 city directory, ran a lunch counter out of the home he owned free of mortgage. Bones' or Bowen's wife was named Gilla, according to the census.

The racial caste structure of Columbia, which differed little from that found in the rest of the state, drew sharp distinctions between what was allowed and what was not.

"If your wife went downtown to buy a hat, she had to let the store clerk try it on. She couldn't try it on," Williams said. "And if she bought a dress, she just had to take it home, because if a black woman put a dress on it was used goods."

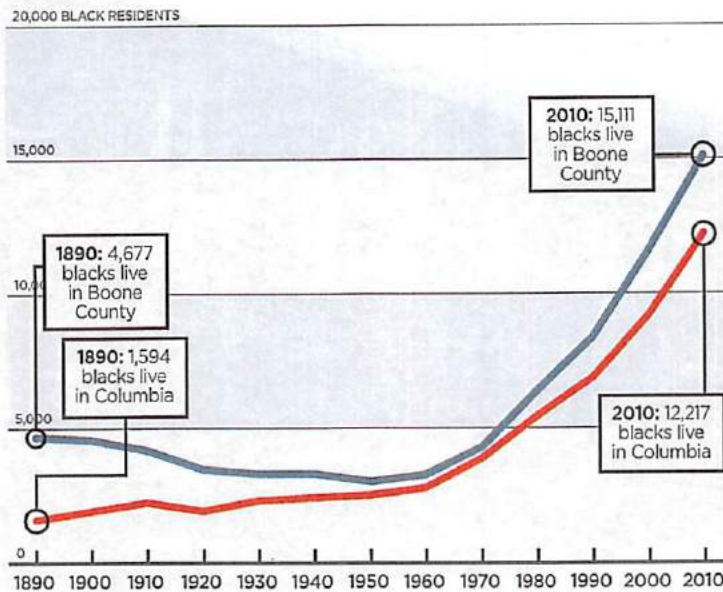
The separation persisted until barriers were broken down by court rulings and protests that integrated schools, employment opportunity and public accommodations.

"Columbia when I grew up — I started college in 1951 — Columbia was a very highly segregated community," former Mayor Darwin Hindman said.

His only interaction with blacks,

A CHANGING DEMOGRAPHIC

The black population of Boone County fell during the first half of the 20th century as people moved into the city and out of the area. Since 1950, black growth rates have exceeded that for whites.



Hindman said, was with the woman who cleaned his family's home twice a week and the man who maintained the landscaping for several families.

Segregation included geographic boundaries that were invisible to whites but made clear almost daily to blacks.

"Columbia used to be a place where Columbia ended for black people at Broadway," said Barbra Horrell.

The first commercial building on Sharp End was constructed about 1910 on the southeast corner of Fifth and Walnut streets. A two-story brick structure, it had storefronts at street level and apartments upstairs.

Preston Carter, who listed his occupation as an expressman making \$2 a week in a 1901 "Social and Economic Census of the Colored Population of Columbia Missouri," opened a pool hall.

A few doors east, Robert Rumans opened a barber shop. In the 1920s, the location would become the Phillips & Williams Barber Shop, which it would remain until the building was demolished.

Four other storefronts were vacant, but it was not long before they held a restaurant, a taxi company and other businesses. It was

a natural business location, close to black homes, churches and Douglass School.

In 1909, under the leadership of the Rev. Beriah McCain, the congregation of St. Luke Methodist Episcopal Church had constructed a new stone chapel across Walnut Street. The property just east of the church — the "Blue Row" of tenement apartments, home to 27 people in 1910 — came down in about 1925.

A new two-story brick building, with storefronts on Walnut Street and an Elks Hall for Turner Lodge 370, replaced it. The final addition to Sharp End came in 1931, with the opening of the Arcade Building on the south side of Walnut. It became home to such businesses as Brown's Place, operated by Victor Brown, the Elite Café owned by Robert and Edna Harris, and the pool hall run by Alton Patton, also known as "Mr. Heavy Patton."

"Columbia had thriving minority businesses, self-reliant people who went to work every day and made it happen," said Jim Whitt, chairman of the Sharp End Heritage Committee. "Against all odds, whatever they had to deal with, they stayed in business, and they serviced the community, and they provided jobs."

Because of the nature of many

businesses — pool halls and taverns among restaurants and barber shops — Sharp End was a place for adults to do business. There was a strict code on Sharp End: no children and no unescorted women.

When Larry Monroe needed a haircut as a child, his father took him to a barber shop on Fifth Street. "I would get my hair cut, and he would see a friend of his over on Sharp End on Walnut there, and he would set me on the steps of the church, and then he would go over and see what his friend wanted," he said.

Boys could play pool after they turned 16, if their parents gave permission, but young girls could not enter the pool hall. Mary Patton Nelson, whose father "Mr. Heavy Patton" operated the Arcade Pool Hall, had to send in word to her father if she wanted to talk to him.

"He would come out and say 'What do you want?' I'd say 'I am going to the show, I just wanted to see you,' " she recalled. "And he would say, 'OK, you've seen me. Now go on to the show.' "

Sharp End, while an important part of black Columbia, should be kept in perspective, Sehon Williams said. When he played jazz in the Green Tree Tavern as a teenager, "the place would be pretty well crowded. But one misconception that people have. They seem to think that, I don't know how you figure it, that Sharp End was the black community, but it wasn't — 80 percent of the people didn't even go on Sharp End."

Sharp End was demolished when the Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority included it in the 126-acre Douglass School Urban Renewal Area. Most of the businesses did not survive, although an attempt was made to relocate them to eight small spaces along Ash Street that became known as The Strip. The important thing to remember about Sharp End, Monroe said, was its visibility.

"It was a saddened thing for me, to hear they had torn it down, because it was for me one of our identifying marks," said Monroe, who was in Germany in the Army when his mother lost her business. "See, when urban renewal came through, it just wiped out everything identifying the black man in Columbia except the churches."

THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD

\$1.50 Per Year In Advance

Friday, November 1, 1901.

No. 1, No. 1.

<p>LINCOLN INSTITUTE</p> <p>Is the Best Supported and Best Equipped Institution of Its Kind West of the Mississippi River.</p> <p>Lincoln Institute, our State Normal at Jefferson City opened this year under very unfavorable circumstances.</p> <p>At the regular meeting of the Board of Regents in June last Prof. I. E. Page of Langston, Oklahoma, was elected to the presidency of the institution, but renounced his election in the</p>	<p>ITS PSYCHOLOGY.</p> <p>Why the Twenty-Eight Cent Bargain Is Such a Success</p> <p>"There is a curious lot of psychology in the habit merchants have of cutting prices," said a gentleman who keeps an eye on market, according to the New Orleans Times-Picayune. "and it is found in the conductor these cuts in price have on the minds of men or women. The shrewd merchant is a wily fellow in the matter of cutting a few cents off an article, and he is certain to do it in the most judicious of the ways. The shrewd merchant is a wily fellow in the matter of cutting a few cents off an article, and he is certain to do it in the most judicious of the ways. The shrewd merchant is a wily fellow in the matter of cutting a few cents off an article, and he is certain to do it in the most judicious of the ways."</p>	<p>A LETTER TO THE FARMERS</p> <p>From the Missouri World's Fair Commission</p> <p>St. Louis, Dec. 16, 1901.</p> <p>To the Farmers and Fruit Growers of Missouri:</p> <p>Our Legislature has provided very liberally for a presentation of the resources and products of our great State at the coming World's Fair, and it is the intention of this Commission that our Agricultural display be second to none. To accomplish this we must</p>	<p>LOCATIONS WHERE</p> <p>Some of Our Teachers Are at Present Presently Assigned</p> <p>Where Some of the Teachers are Located</p> <p>Mrs. Ella H. Howe of the class of '90 of Lincoln Institute is teaching at West Union College.</p> <p>Mrs. John U. Jones of the class of '90 of Lincoln Institute is teaching at West Union College.</p> <p>Mrs. John U. Jones of the class of '90 of Lincoln Institute is teaching at West Union College.</p>	<p>LOCAL AND PERSONAL.</p> <p>Mrs. J. Arlington Grant is on the sick list.</p> <p>Columbia is sorely in need of an opera house.</p> <p>Prof. John Payne of Brunswick was in Columbia Saturday.</p> <p>Mrs. Virginia Moore is attending school at George R. Smith's college.</p> <p>Master George Caldwell is attending school at Fisk university.</p> <p>Mrs. John Longfellow is a member of the Young Women's Association of Columbia.</p> <p>Rev. A. J. Green arrived last</p>
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The Library of Congress

The Professional World, a newspaper targeting a black audience, debuted on Nov. 1, 1901, under the direction of editor Rufus Logan. It would be published for almost 20 years, but complete volumes survive only for the first two years. Read the Professional World online at the Library of Congress's Chronicling America page.

BEFORE 1910

On Nov. 15, 1901, editor Rufus Logan lamented the lack of opportunity for black residents of Columbia in the third edition of his newspaper, The Professional World.

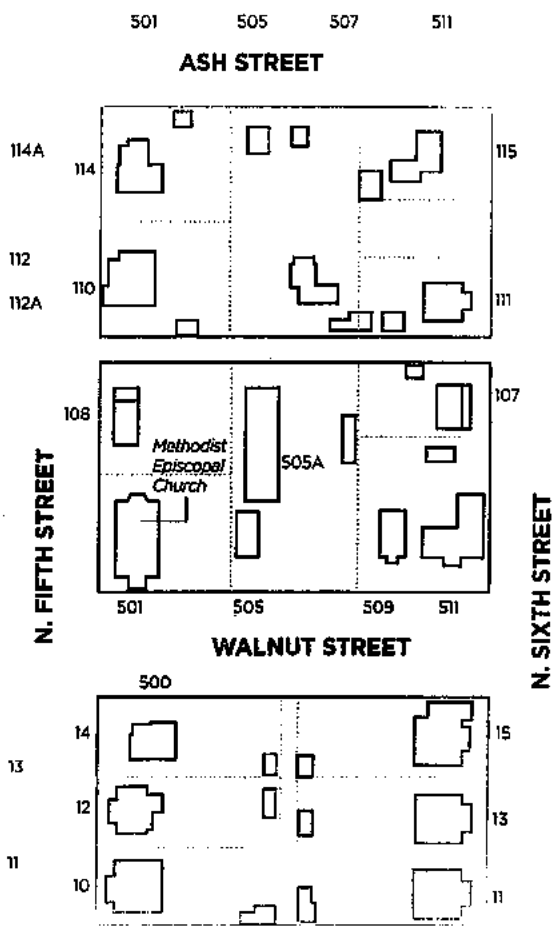
"The population of Columbia is 50 percent negroes without a single negro business house," Logan wrote. "A joint stock company well organized and properly managed should prove to be quite a profitable enterprise for Columbia negroes. All that is necessary is for some good energetic man to take the initiative in founding such a project."

The 1900 census found 1,916 blacks living in the city, about 34 percent of the population, not 50 percent as Logan reported. The area that would become known as Sharp End, site today of the Columbia Post Office and a parking garage, was a residential area populated by almost 100 people.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

5,651
Number of people residing in Columbia in 1900

1,916
Number of black residents in Columbia in 1900



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

On the north side, a brick church at Fifth and Walnut streets housed the Methodist Episcopal Church congregation, today known as St. Luke United Methodist Church. It is uncertain from available records whether the name was in use at the time. The Professional World, in 1903, listed the church only by its denomination.

Next door, a wood-frame building known as the "Blue Row" was home to 22 people.

On the south side of Walnut Street, the three original town lots, 142.5 feet by 80 feet, oriented north-south, were replatted in 1899 by H.H. Hill as six east-west lots. Five brick houses were constructed, three facing Sixth Street and two facing Fifth Street.

At 10 N. Fifth St., physician John Taylor, 39, lived with his wife, Carrie, 38, in one of those new houses. Charles Sutton, 32, a boarder, worked as a porter in a barber-shop. Next door at 12 N. Fifth St., Steve Harris, a porter for the Wabash Railroad, lived with his wife, Maggie.

On the north side of Walnut, teacher John Bannister, 44, lived at 115 N. Sixth St. with his wife, Mamie, 26, and their daughter Mamie, 13, and step-daughter Bertha Freeman, 7. Next door, Sallie Gordon, 49, was a widow who worked as a wash woman and could neither read nor write.

Her three sons, Clay, 21, Dan, 19, and Sam, 10, lived with her. Clay Gordon and Dan Gordon worked as laborers, while Sam Gordon attended school.

"One of the things that made the segregated communities so strong was because there were people from all walks of life in them as a consequence of segregation, so you had doctors and lawyers and teachers and preachers living in the same neighborhood with common laborers and so forth," said Gary Kremer, executive director of the State Historical Society of Missouri and a scholar of black history in the state.

Logan's Professional World was one example of the growing size and sophistication of Columbia's black population. "The columns of the Professional World will be open to all for the discussion of all



Rudi Keller/Tribune

Bill Thompson, left, of the Columbia Parks and Recreation Department points out items on the 1901 Social and Economic Census to Cheryl Wright.

subjects pertaining to the education and elevation of the negro," Logan wrote in his first edition. "The Professional World will doubtless come as a surprise to our many friends. Nevertheless we hope it will be made a welcome visitor and will receive an invitation to come every week."

White business owners, to sort out the new residents, commissioned a "Social and Economic Census of the Colored Population of Columbia Missouri" in 1901.

Pinckney Kelly, 30, in 1900, was a self-employed barber earning \$10 a week. He lived with his wife, Maggie, Benjamin Marshall, who was listed in the federal census as a houseboy, and Albert Whiteside, who earned \$1.65 a day as a railroad laborer. Kelly owned a three-room home worth \$250, furniture worth \$50 and two pigs.

The city economic census listed him as "unreliable."

Several prominent Columbia blacks were not included. No sheet was prepared for John Lange Jr., a contractor and son of John Lange, a butcher who moved to Columbia in 1850. Pianist J.W. Blind Boone, known nationally for his talent, was also missing from the record.

So was Annie Fisher, who was beginning to make herself known as a caterer and who had, by 1900,

Social and Economic Census of the Colored Population of Columbia, Missouri, 1901.

FAMILY REPORT.

Family Name	Address	Age	Sex	Color	Marital Status	Occupation	Income	Home Ownership	Home Value	Furniture Value	Other Property
Robert Rummans	Sharp End	30	M	Black	Married	Barber	\$10.00	Owned	\$250.00	\$50.00	2 pigs
Pinckney Kelly	Sharp End	30	M	Black	Married	Barber	\$10.00	Owned	\$250.00	\$50.00	2 pigs

Social and Economic Census of the Colored Population of Columbia, Missouri, 1901.

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Courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri

The creditworthiness of black households was rated in 1901 surveys of income, home ownership and expenses. The left sheet was for Robert Rummans, the first barber on Sharp End. The right was for Pinckney "Pink" Kelly, a longtime Sharp End barber.

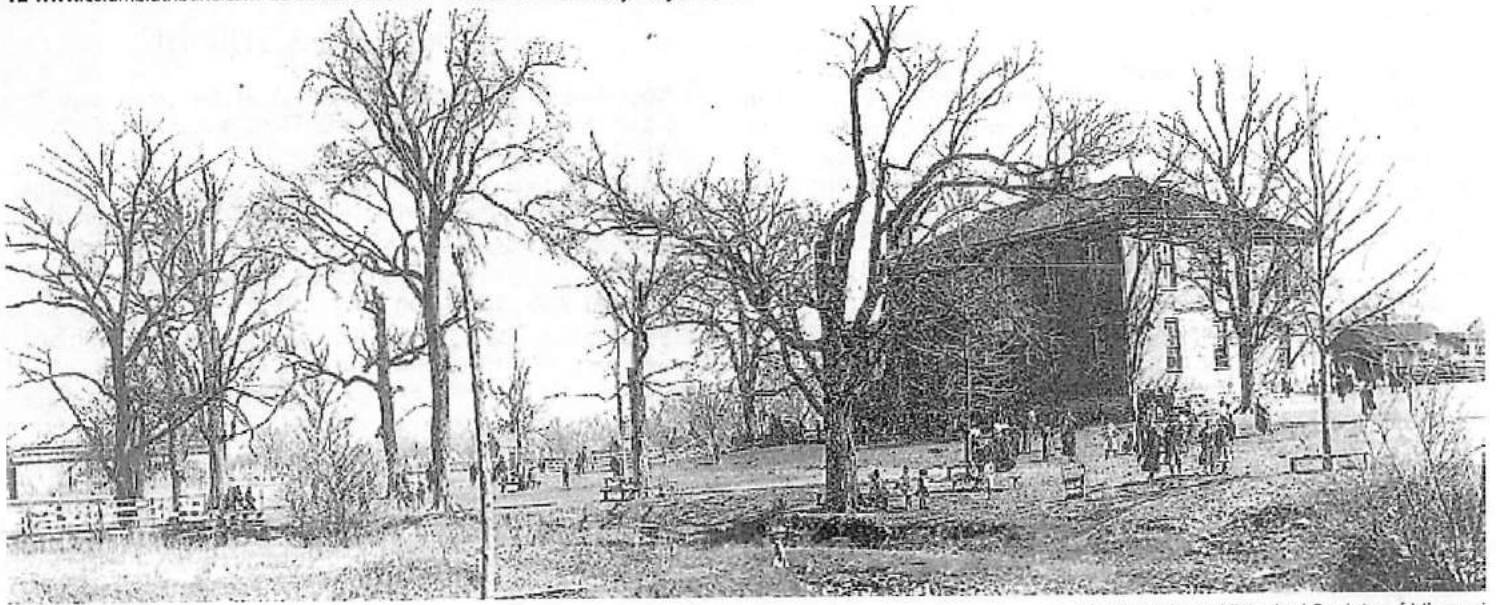
purchased a house at Seventh Street and Park Avenue worth \$325.

The black population continued to expand in the first decade of the new century, and the city grew as well. Annexation in 1906 more than doubled the size of Columbia, which had existed within static borders since 1849. The west boundary moved from Edgewood Avenue to West Boulevard. The north boundary shifted from Worley and Rogers streets to include what is now Business Loop 70. To the east, the new city limits

extended to what is now Keene Street. Previously, the east city limit had been William Street.

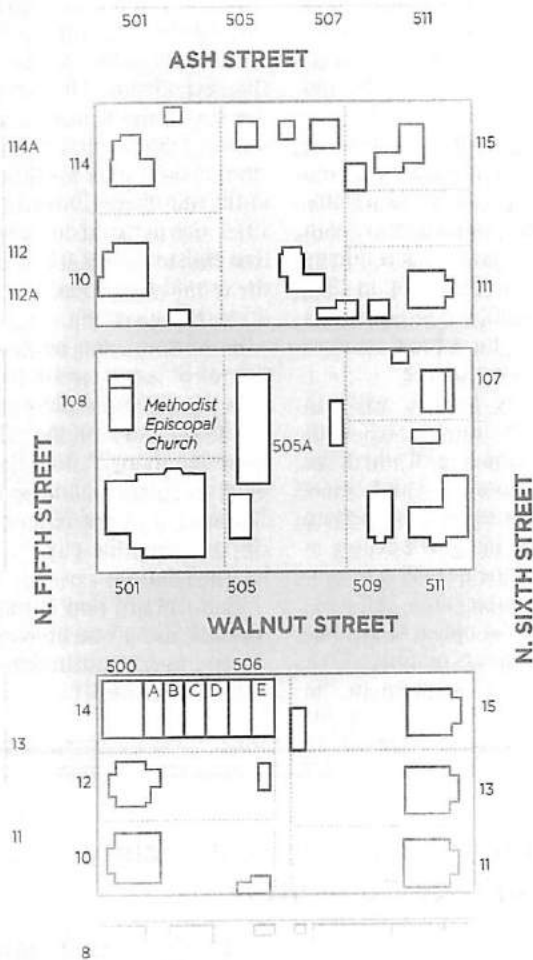
Change was coming on Sharp End as well. On the north side, St. Luke began rebuilding its church in 1909, constructing a stone edifice with entrances on Fifth Street and Walnut Street.

On the south side, a new brick commercial building was going up. Designed with seven store fronts, it included apartments on the second floor. When the decade closed, all that it needed was tenants.



Courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri

Frederick Douglass School, seen in a circa-1910 photo, was built in 1885 for up to 300 black children. In 1916, the Columbia Board of Education issued bonds to demolish the structure and erect the building now at Providence Road and Park Avenue.



THE 1910s

The first businesses to take advantage of new storefronts on Sharp End were a pool hall owned by Preston Carter, a barbershop owned by Robert Rummans and restaurant opened by George Scott. Exactly when each opened its doors is lost in the fog of history. A 1911 city directory lists none of the businesses nor any residents on the southeast corner of Fifth and Walnut streets, including the people there when the census was taken the year before. Carter and Rummans are listed by 1915, with Scott following in the 1917 edition.

In the first 10 years of the century, the migration into Columbia from the countryside had accelerated. In 1910 for the first time, more than half of black Boone County residents lived within the city limits. The population of rural blacks fell by one-fourth, and the number of black owned and operated farms fell by almost half.

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9,662

Number of people residing in Columbia in 1910

2,246

Number of black residents in Columbia in 1910

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

In the second decade, outside pressures of war and the emergence of the white supremacist Ku Klux Klan as a national force shifted that pattern. The black population of the county continued to decline. Between 1910 and 1920, for the first time since the census began counting the city separately, the black population of Columbia also waned.

The businesses that came first took care of black residents' personal needs with services that could not be obtained elsewhere in Columbia. Some blacks had begun developing food service for blacks before George Scott hired his widowed mother as the cook for his new restaurant, but the service had been provided out of private homes.

Similar districts were growing up across Missouri, Gary Kremer, executive director of the State Historical Society of Missouri, said. Kremer, a scholar of Missouri black history, said the segregated conditions pushed blacks together and created a demand that, in Columbia, would be met on Sharp End.

"Those service industries, restaurants, bars, barbershops, pool halls ... catered to an entirely African American community," Kremer said. "They were located in the very heart of the black community, a centralized location with the black community surrounding them in walking distance of all those businesses."

Scott was 24 and living with his parents, Charles and Annie Scott, at 15 N. Sixth St. when the 1910 census was taken. His father was a laborer, and his mother a boarding house proprietor. Scott was a porter in a grocery store, and his brother Andrew Scott, 25, was a teamster for Boone County Lum-

ber Co. His three other siblings, Henry, 22, Lola, 18, and Emma, 17, were not employed.

George Scott's father died during the decade, and by 1920 he was the head of the household at 15 N. Sixth St., sharing the home with his mother and his wife, 28-year-old Elizabeth.

Robert Rummans, 41 when the 1910 census was taken, was a veteran barber when he opened his shop. The 1901 economic census of Columbia blacks – a credit rating system for each black family – listed his income as \$9 for a six-day work week as a barber to support his wife, Tessie, 38, and their son Leon while living with his mother-in-law, Margaret Chapman, at 201 N. Tenth St.

The 1915 directory, which lists Rummans in Sharp End for the first time, also lists his address as 403 N. Fifth St., where he and his wife would live until his death in the 1930s.

The details gleaned from the 1910 census portray the differences in the working conditions of blacks compared to whites. The Crisis, the NAACP's national publication, reported in 1915 that 84.7 percent of black males and 54.7 percent of black females ages 10 and older were gainfully employed.

The comparable figures for the white population were 77.9 percent for men and 19.2 percent for women.

Sharp End remained a primarily residential area during the second decade of the century. The blocks now used for the post office and parking garage were home to nearly 100 people. The "Blue Row," old wood-frame tenements on the north side of Walnut Street, was home to 27 people ranging in age from 7 to 67 in 1910.

Only four older than 10 were not working, with the oldest, Alex Gray, 67, toiling as a laborer. Seven

SHARP END BUSINESSES 1910-1919

500 Walnut—Scott's Restaurant: Operated by George Scott, who resided with his wife, Elizabeth, and mother, Annie Scott, at 15 N. Sixth St.

500/502 Walnut – Carter Pool Hall: Operated by Preston Carter, who resided with his wife, Amelia, at 403 Oak St.

501 Walnut – Methodist Episcopal Church (St. Luke): Pastors during this period include Beriah McCain, H. Thomas Reeves and Daniel J. Mitchell.

506 Walnut—Barbershop. Operated by Robert Rummans, who resided with his wife, Tessie, at 403 N. Fifth St.

Sources: City directories, U.S. Census Bureau

men listed their occupations as laborer, and 11 of those employed were working in private homes. The youngest workers were Everline Snell, 10, a cook in a private home, Douglass Scott, 15, a hotel dishwasher, and George Shanks, also 15, a servant in a private home.

Snell reported attending school for at least part of the time since Sept. 1, 1909, while Scott and Shanks did not. They were among three of eight children 16 or younger, including one age 7, who did not go to school.

In 1910, black children in Columbia attended 25-year-old Douglass School, built to accommodate about 300 students. With almost 1,000 more black residents to serve than in the 1880s, in 1916 the Columbia Board of Education won approval for a bond issue to replace the aging school.

A two-story school, with 15 rooms and a library, was constructed on the same lot where the old school stood at Third Street and Park Avenue. It would remain the home of black education in Columbia for the next 45 years.

Preston Carter and his wife, Amelia, were the oldest of the pioneer entrepreneurs on Sharp End. Carter served 18 months in the Missouri State Penitentiary for

burglary from 1896 to 1897 and was listed in the 1900 census as a transfer company driver living in rented quarters at 610 N. Seventh St. He was 30 at the time, and Amelia, who reported she could neither read nor write, was 31.

On the 1920 census, Carter was listed as 59 and Amelia 41, and they owned their home at 403 Oak St.

What became known as the Great Migration was also reported for the first time on the 1920 census. Nationally, about 500,000 blacks had moved from rural areas, mostly in the South, to industrial cities of the North. The lure of jobs to fill war orders for Europe after 1914, the demand for manpower that enlisted 350,000 black men in the armed forces and fear helped drive the movement.

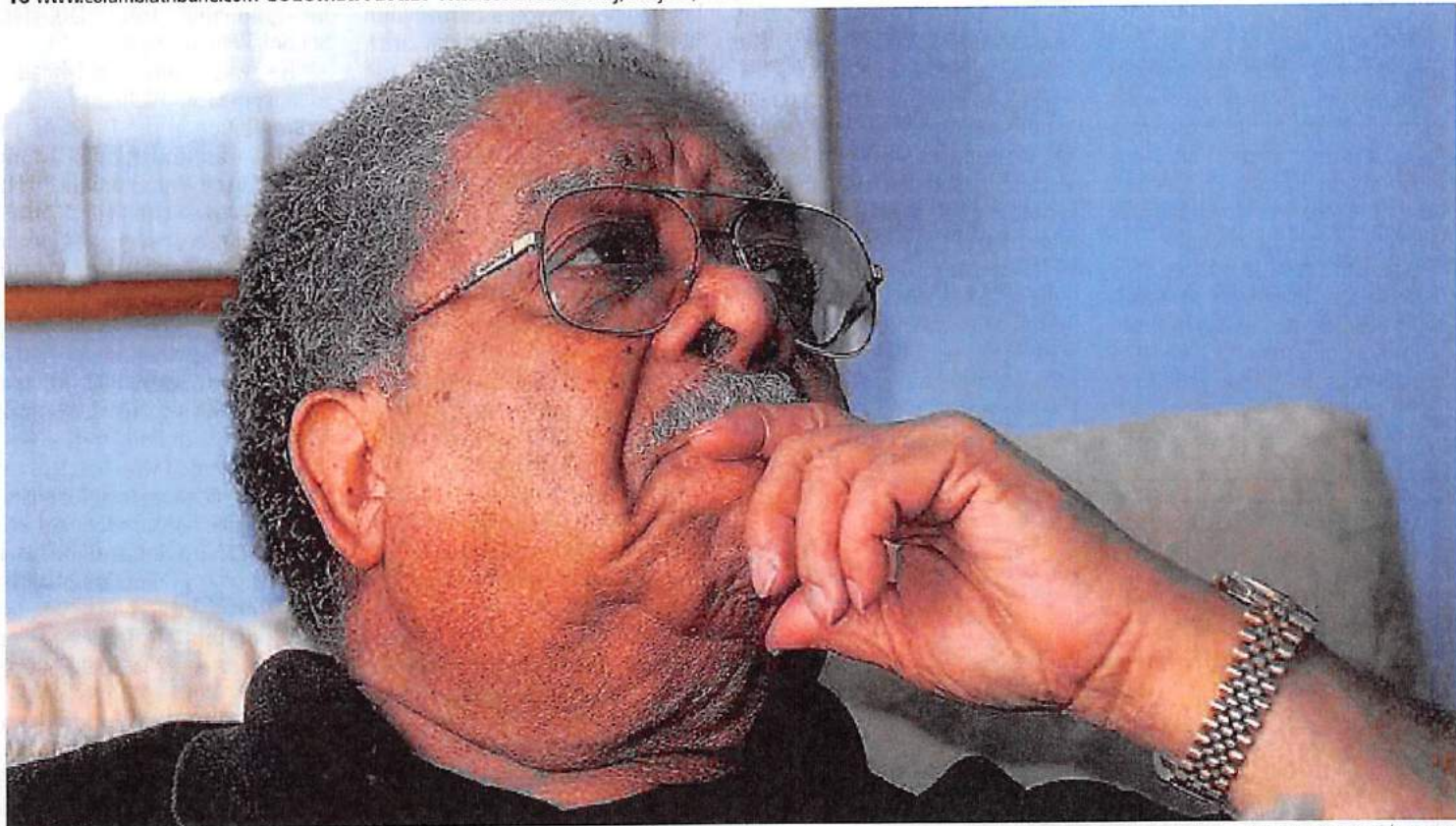
In Missouri, the black population of St. Louis and Kansas City grew by 33,000, while the overall black population of the state grew by fewer than 21,000. The black population of Columbia fell by 327, and blacks made up less than 20 percent of the city population for the first time.

That did not slow the development of Sharp End in the coming decade, as new businesses moved in and new construction expanded opportunities.

With special thanks to...

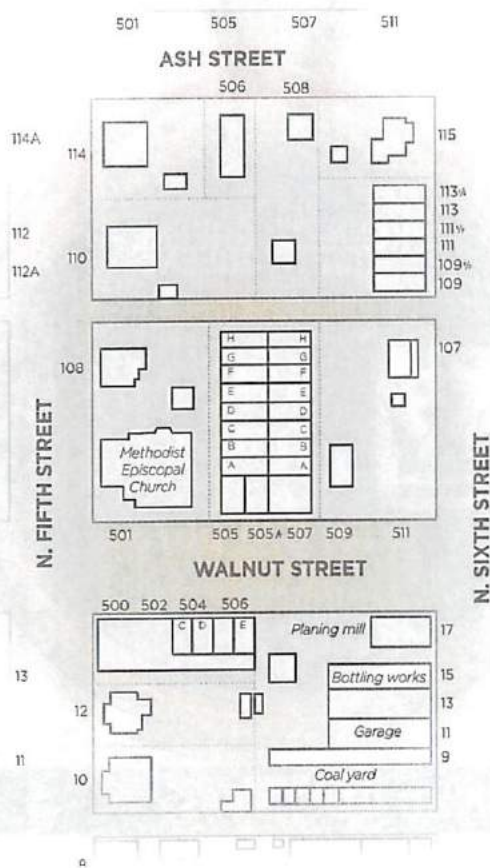
Mary Beth Brown, Bill Thompson, the staff of the State Historical Society of Missouri and members of the Sharp End Heritage Committee for their assistance in researching information for this publication.

COLUMBIA DAILY
TRIBUNE



Don Shrubshell/Tribune

Sehon Williams, 92, talks about the Sharp End neighborhood of Columbia where he once played the trumpet with other band members at the Green Tree Tavern.



THE 1920s

Sometime in the mid-1920s, Herbert Phillips, who was a barber, and Arch Williams, who was not, formed a partnership that became the longest-lived business on Sharp End.

The Phillips & Williams Barber Shop had four chairs, “a bunch of seats” and “guys who would just sit around in the barber shop,” Sehon Williams, 92, recalled. “And you also had some white guys that would sit around in the back of it.”

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10,392
Number of people residing
in Columbia in 1920

1,919
Number of black residents
in Columbia in 1920

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

Both men were about 30 when they formed their partnership. Williams, born in 1895, grew up in town where his father, Curtis Williams, was a coachman and a janitor in a shoe factory. Phillips was born in 1894 near Rocheport to George and Martha Phillips.

When the decade opened, Williams was living with his parents at 400 Hickman Ave., working as a janitor at a fraternity. The 1920 census does not record Phillips or

his family. By 1930, Phillips was able to marry Gertrude Phillips and move to 113 W. Worley St. She worked as a cook in a café.

Phillips & Williams barber shop moved into space used by George D. Washington for part of the decade. Washington used the shop as his home address for the city directory.

It was a time of growth on Sharp End, with new construction on the north side of Walnut Street, and new businesses filling those constructed a decade earlier.

On the north side of Walnut, on land owned by white farmer John M. Herndon, a two-story brick building offered commercial and residential space.

There were 16 small apartments and an open second floor used by Elks Turner Lodge 370. City directories published in 1923 and 1925 document the arrival of the building and the new businesses.

Maggie Brown opened the Dreamland Café. Charles and Paul Givens opened a tailor shop.

It was becoming an adult space where children or women were not allowed except for specific reasons, Williams recalled.

"I went there to get a haircut from a little kid on up," he said. "But generally, kids was not allowed. They wouldn't even let kids pass through there going downtown."

Williams was born in 1922, the second son of Sehon Williams Sr. and Effie Williams. The family rented a home at 3 W. Lyon St. for \$9 per month. His father was the chauffeur for James Wood, president of Stephens College.

Pinckney "Pink" Kelly cut Wil-

liams' hair every other Friday until he graduated from Douglass School, Williams said.

"He was short, bald-headed man, very nice," Williams said.

Prohibition in the 1920s meant alcohol was underground. "You had, in most communities, what was known as bootleggers," said Larry Monroe, who worked in Phillips & Williams Barber Shop in the final years of Sharp End.

Asked who would go to Sharp End, Williams answered: "People that liked to drink. Drink and shoot pool. If you liked to drink, you go on Sharp End."

From the men who had worked in the barber shop, including Herbert Phillips, Monroe heard the stories of Sharp End and the black experience in Columbia that he fears is being lost.

"All of this stuff they talked about, they never let it die," Monroe said.

Dozens of people continued to live on or near Sharp End.

The apartments above Carter's Pool Hall and the Phillips & Williams Barber Shop were home to



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27 people, according to the 1920 census.

Sixth Street, however, began to change. Facing east, south of Walnut, a planing mill serving Nu-Way Lumber Co. was constructed and a garage and coal yard opened. On the north side, banker William Conley secured a judgment for adverse possession of a lot with 80 feet of frontage on Walnut Street and 142.5 feet of Sixth Street.

Two small rental homes faced Sixth Street on the lot, with regular turnover as reflected in census and city directory records. The lot was used primarily by Nu-Way for lumber storage.

Conley sued the original founders of Columbia in an action that drew no opposition to his claim that he had been in "open, notorious use" of the property for more than 10 years.

The final city directory published during the 1920s listed three pool halls, three restaurants and two barber shops on Sharp End by the end of the decade.

New buildings, and new entrepreneurs, would soon join them.

SHARP END BUSINESSES 1920-1929

500 Walnut—Scott's Restaurant: Operated by George Scott, who resided with his wife, Elizabeth, and mother, Annie Scott, at 15 N. Sixth St. when the decade began and at 422 N. Third St. when it ended.

501 Walnut—St. Luke Methodist Episcopal Church: Pastors during the 1920s included William Ellis and Frederick Bowles.

502/504 Walnut—Carter Pool Hall: Operated by Amelia Carter after the death of Preston Carter on March 4, 1924. She resided at 302 Oak St.

506 Walnut—Barber Shop: In the 1923 and 1925 city directories, George Washington was listed as the proprietor. In 1923 he resided at the same address. For the 1925 directory, he was joined by a wife, Katherine Washington.

Phillips & Williams Barbershop: A Sharp End fixture until the end, opened about 1926 by Herbert Phillips and Arch Williams. Phillips lived with his wife, Getrude, at 113 W. Worley St. Williams lived at 506 E. Walnut St.

507 Walnut—Givens & Givens tailors: Operated by Charles Givens and Paul Givens, who also owned the Harmony Café at 17 N. Sixth St. In the 1927 directory, Paul Givens was listed as the sole proprietor and lived with Mamie Givens at 106 N. Third St.

507 Walnut—Elks Hall: Home to Turner Lodge 370. The 1927 directory listed the Exalted Ruler as David Clark, a driver for Renie Hardware, who lived with his wife, Clotellia, at 104 Hill St. The secretary was Isadore Pipes, janitor at the University of Missouri, who lived with his wife, Fannie, at 403 E. Walnut St.

507A Walnut—Barbershop: Operated by Charles Berry, who lived with his wife, Macie, at 102 Allen St.

508 Walnut—541 Taxi: Driver Jacob Foster was listed as living at the business address in the 1923 city directory. George Campbell, who lived with his wife, Myrtle, at 10 N. Fifth St., was listed as the owner in the 1925 directory.

Pool Hall: Operated by William Diggs, it was listed in the 1927 directory. Diggs listed his address with wife Carolyn Diggs as 508-A E. Walnut St.

Restaurant: Operated by Paul Givens.

509 Walnut—Dreamland Café: Operated by Maggie Brown, who listed her residence as 4 Allen St., rear, in the 1925 directory and 13 W. Allen St. in the 1927 edition.

511 Walnut—Billiards: Listed in the 1925 directory. Operated by George Washington, who had the barber shop at 506 Walnut St.

Source: City directories, U.S. Census Bureau

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PROUD TO BE A MINORITY OWNED BUSINESS

Columbia's Biscuit Queen

Annie Fisher set standards for success in catering, real estate.

Annie Fisher was sassy, sarcastic and subtle when she told a reporter in 1927 about a "pryin', curious" woman who visited her restaurant, the Wayside Inn.

"'Annie,' she says 'Annie, you'd be a big woman if you were in Africa, wouldn't you?'"

"'Yes,' I says, 'but you wouldn't let me stay there, so I'm making the best of the bargain right here in Columbia.'"

In a few words, Fisher dismissed the patronizing racism, alluded to her slave heritage and reminded the visitor she was a big woman anywhere. Fisher was Columbia's most successful independent businesswoman and perhaps the only Columbia business owner with a national clientele.

The unknown author of "Kneads Dough to Win Fame," published May 13, 1927, in the Springfield Leader, estimated Fisher's fortune at \$100,000. Fisher, 59, had been Columbia's premier caterer for 25 years - reportedly owning 1,000 place settings of china, crystal and cutlery. She rented the excess when she did not need it and invested her profits in real estate.

What brought her renown, however, was the "beaten biscuit," a product that showcased her skills in preparation and marketing.

Each catered meal featured the small, white biscuits with a crusty exterior. Fisher sold them via mail, for 10 to 15 cents per dozen. Her fame spread through catering clients, and by 1911 a Sedalia hostess made sure they were on the table when President William Howard Taft visited the Missouri State Fair.

"For probably 40 years she has been making these succulent biscuits in Columbia and the fame of her prowess as a biscuit maker is not local, but has spread to all parts of the United States..., the Leader reported.

A daughter of former slaves,

Fisher's story inspired people long before her death in 1938. She bought her first home about 1901, then accumulated 18 rental homes and built two mansions on her profits.

One mansion, at 608 Park Avenue, was demolished during the first phase of urban renewal. In its final years, it was the Freeman and Poindexter Funeral Home.

The other, on the 57-acre farm owned by her parents on today's Old 63, was demolished in 2011.

Verna Laboy moved to Columbia in 1994 and came to admire Fisher so much she learned to make beaten biscuits and portrays Fisher in presentations at area schools. Fisher turned disadvantage into opportunity, Laboy said.

"She rose above unbelievable circumstances and then played on their perceptions all the way to the bank," Laboy said.

According to her modest headstone in Memorial Park Cemetery, Annie Knowles was born Dec. 3, 1867. She was one of 11 children born to former slaves Robert and Charlotte Knowles, who lived just north of the Walter Lenoir estate. The family lived in a log cabin near Grindstone School, established to educate black children.

The 1870 census shows a household of eight with four children, including Annie, 3.

"My father found it very hard to provide food, clothing, shoes and shelter for all of us with the very little money he was earning, so when I was a very small girl he hired me out to rock the cradle for white people," she told the National Negro Business League at its 1919 convention in St. Louis.

Young Annie spent time in her employer's kitchen while the baby slept. Standing on a stool, she would peel potatoes and, more important, learned to make biscuits. She learned to cook so well,



Courtesy of the State Historical Society of Missouri

Annie Fisher, a Columbia businesswoman who made her fortune in catering, mail-order beaten biscuits and real estate.

she said in the 1919 speech, that her family put her in charge of cooking at home.

The 1880 census recorded Bob and Charlot Noles, with seven children from four months to 20. Annie was 12 and attending school with two siblings.

In June 1883, 15 and unmarried, Annie gave birth to a daughter she named Lucille Smith. The father is unknown today, historian Mary Beth Brown wrote in an article published by the Genealogical Society of Central Missouri.

Annie worked for the Lenoir family at Maplewood, and a Bob Smith was on the payroll in September 1884, Brown wrote. An account-book entry indicates Smith paid 50 cents for medicine for Annie in September 1887.

Brown became interested in Fisher, she said, while researching women in the Lenoir family. Frank Nifong wrote in his self-published autobiography that Fisher was "the most efficient cateress in the town of Columbia and that no university or social function was really classy without her service."

"I thought I would look into that

a little more," Brown said.

Work during the 1880s was tough, Fisher said in her 1919 speech. She often worked for board and clothing. She would wear what she was given, thinking little of how she looked.

"I remember one Sunday when I went to church dressed in an old second-hand party costume that was five or 10 years out of date, and as I marched up the aisle, and was about to take my seat, an old lady saw me coming and she said 'good Lord, move back, give Annie Fisher plenty of room, here she comes dressed like a peacock, she ought to know that the house of the Lord is no place for any such clothes as them!'" she said.

Embarrassed, she resolved that "these old second-hand clothes won't do for me."

About 1890, Annie Knowles moved into Columbia. She worked with growing success as a cook, and for four years in the 1890s, Brown wrote, Fisher was the cook for Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity.

The 1900 census records Fisher

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

as married and living with her daughter and three others, without husband William Fisher, at 202 S. Ninth St. Fisher headed the only black household on the block.

Fisher listed her occupation as cook. Lucille, 17, was in school.

Her siblings were grown, Fisher said in 1919, and she could think of herself and her daughter. "My sisters and brothers had become older. ... I was able to start buying a little home, it matters not how small that home was going to be."

She saved for five years to make a down payment on a two-room house at 608 E. Ash St.

"I paid that home off in 18 months after I started into business on my own hook," she said in 1919.

A 1904 city directory records her at that address with husband, William Fisher.

The marriage did not last, and in 1907 the Columbia Herald reported William Fisher was fined for disturbing the peace of his former wife. The newspaper reported Annie Fisher filed for divorce because she was unhappy, offering her husband \$137.50 not to contest it. He declined the money, but received nothing from the court, the newspaper reported.

"Annie did the work while Rev. William did the preaching," the Herald reported.

"I've had to work ever since I was old enough to walk, and when I got married it wasn't a success," Fisher said in the 1927 interview. "So, long ago I got the idea that the only way I could ever get ahead was to believe in myself and not the other fellow."

As her acclaim as a cook grew, so did the size of the dinners she prepared. She told her audience in 1919 that she had served an alumni dinner at the University of Missouri, receiving \$1,200 for the meal at the cost of \$2 per plate.

The change of administration at the University of Missouri in 1908 might have had an impact on her business. She told the 1919 audience that when she did not have enough table settings, "they would always be kind enough to let me use their silverware."

In 1908, A. Ross Hill took over as president from Richard Jesse, pres-



Courtesy of the State Historical Society of Missouri

Annie Fisher's home at 608 Park Ave. had 14 rooms and was A.C. Freeman Funeral Home when it was demolished in 1960.

ident since 1891. Fisher accepted a job to serve "a very large banquet," only to find "the official of the University then in charge denied me the use of their silverware, saying it belonged to the State University."

Undaunted, Fisher got on a train, went to St. Louis and rented silverware to serve 700 people. "I served that banquet and it brought me in \$1,300."

As her business grew, she moved her small home to another spot on the spacious quarter-acre lot and built a new five-room house.

A part of Fisher's legend that apparently is not true is that her beaten biscuits were given an award at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, said Brown, the researcher. Another well-known black entrepreneur from Columbia, horticulturalist Henry Kirklin, took examples of his plants to the fair and won a blue ribbon.

"I have found no record of her winning any awards or being a vendor at the 1904 World's Fair," Brown said. "I have had the archivists at the Missouri History Museum who hold the records for the World's Fair go through their lists because they have lists of everyone who won an award and everyone who was a vendor at the World's Fair, and she doesn't show up on any of those."

Fisher's properties, just two blocks from Douglass School, were prime residential locations for blacks. When she was finished amassing real estate, Fisher took

care of herself. She built 14-room brick home that was one of Columbia's largest and grandest.

The house "has hard-wood floors throughout," the University Missourian reported. "The fumed-oak library has a mantel and grate of natural stone. On the tamourets (sic) are brass jardinières. Her dining room contains cut glass and Haviland china."

Lucille was 30 when she married George W. Merritt on Dec. 31, 1913.

"Mr. Merritt is a musical composer of much ability and has two original compositions that will be featured at the Semi-Centennial celebration at Chicago," the Kansas City Sun reported in July 1915, referring to the fair marking 50 years since the end of slavery.

The exposition featured business demonstrations, including "the famous beaten biscuit of Annie Fisher of Missouri."

It is uncertain when Fisher began shipping beaten biscuits to customers outside of Columbia. "Mrs. Annie Fisher, a colored woman of Columbia, Mo., has made \$10,000 from selling beaten biscuits at 15 cents a dozen," The Crisis, the monthly magazine of the NAACP, reported in 1915. "She lives in a 14-room brick modern residence."

Fisher was not the only successful black businesswoman of her era. Annie Malone in St. Louis and Madame C.J. Walker in Denver — who got her start under Malone — vie for the title of first self-made female millionaires from fortunes made creating and selling hair care

products for black women.

The small item with the big return, the beaten biscuit, "is nothing more than an ordinary biscuit 'baked while the life is in it,'" Fisher told the reporter in 1927.

In Southern Food, John Egerton wrote that a dough of flour, milk and lard was kneaded for a lengthy period or sometimes beaten with a mallet or a skillet, giving the biscuit its name. The process introduces air into the dough.

A kneading machine was patented in 1877. Fisher, to speed up production, made a cutter with nails inside to push the biscuits onto a pan. That left small dots on the top of the biscuits, which had a crusty exterior and a soft interior.

"My home room teacher, Miss Emma Mae Turner, apparently knew Miss Fisher. She would make beaten biscuits, and then myself and a couple of other of the students would go and we would turn that machine for her," said Larry Monroe, 77, and a student at Douglass High School in the early 1950s. "And she would treat the class to those."

Some did not appreciate them. "She mailed them things all over the country," said Sehon Williams. "They was some nasty things. Oh they were nasty. But people bought them for their bridge parties."

Regardless of what anyone thought, they sold.

Her address to the National Negro Business League was recognition that Fisher achieved success by re-investing her profits into her businesses. In her talk at the August 1919 meeting, Fisher sought to pass on the lessons she had learned about building wealth.

"All told, I now own 18 houses and also a farm in the country that is well stocked with hogs, chickens and other things," she said. "I live in that 14 room brick home and I don't owe a dollar on it, and if I want to buy anything, I don't need to ask for credit for I can write my check."

Sehon Williams got his first look at Annie Fisher when his parents, Sehon and Effie Williams, brought their children to St. Paul AME Church during the 1920s. Williams, born in 1922, also remembers Sunday School picnics at the farm on what had become Highway 63.

"She was kind of a heavy-set woman," is all he remembers of Fisher herself, he said.

Fisher was at the height of her success in the 1920s. She and her daughter, listed as widow Lucille Merritt, lived at 608 Park Ave. with her widowed mother and three boarders. Fisher remained prosperous, and her property holdings grew to include a row of five houses in the 400 block of East Ash St. and two on Fourth Street.

Three homes Fisher owned still exist – at 316 N. Garth Ave., 318 N. Garth Ave. and 306 Oak St., built in 1900, 1910 and 1925, respectively. The farm once owned by her father was producing hams and chickens for her catered meals, and in the early 1920s Fisher began building what became her final home on the property. Her drive to find new outlets for enterprise was unabated.

"Last year Mrs. Fisher thought there was an opening for a chicken-dinner place in the country, so she ... built the elegant house that is now designated as the 'Wayside Inn,'" the Leader said. "It is a sumptuous place, with large, cheery dining rooms and, one is told, well patronized by the many persons who like Annie Fisher's cooking."

Fisher and her daughter lived in the home, also called Fair Oaks, in "true country club style," the newspaper reported.

The 1920s were dry, with national prohibition in effect. Fisher's restaurant, she told the reporter, was not a place to drink.

"My house has been sprinkled by our minister," she explained, "and people can't get common around here. When they comes to Annie Fisher's they comes to eat, and if they want to do any high-ballin' they must do it before they come and after they leave."

The 1930 census lists Fisher as a farmer, living with her daughter and a farmhand. Recognition of her success continued in new forms. In a chapter called Vocational Guidance for his 1933 book "The Mis-Education of the Negro," author Carter Godwin Woodson used Fisher to show how to achieve success by reinvesting in a business.

His facts weren't exactly correct, but he made his point.

"Another woman of color living in Columbia, Missouri, recently

gave the world another new idea," Woodson wrote. "She had learned cooking, especially baking. ... After studying her situation and the environment in which she had to live, she hit upon the scheme of popularizing her savorous sweet potato biscuits, beaten whiter than all others by an invention of her own; and the people of both races made a well-beaten path to her home to enjoy these delicious biscuits. In this way she has made herself and her relatives independent."

Beaten biscuits do not include sweet potatoes.

When she died in 1938, Fisher's Park Avenue home was valued at \$3,300 and the farm of 57 acres and a home were valued at \$3,500. Overall, her property was appraised at \$13,350. No bank accounts were listed, but there were few debts against the estate — \$456.24 for funeral expenses and \$14 for four house calls by Dr. Frank Dexheimer.

Her ability as a businesswoman, earning success and fame when opportunity was limited by bigotry, is a lasting lesson, Laboy said.

In the classrooms, Laboy said, she tells students Fisher's life shows "it is more important what you believe yourself, because when all of life and all of the world was against her because she was a black woman and a businesswoman, she just needed a few people to believe in her to succeed."

Her house on Park Avenue towered above others on the block, Monroe said, with a porch as tall as the roofs of houses on the other side of the street.

"You had to go to West Broadway to get a house that was comparable to that," Monroe said.

The writer of the Springfield Leader article found Fisher proud and confident. "I believe in myself," she said. "I've never asked for a job in my life. I make them come to Annie Fisher. Of course, I have to deliver the goods, as you say, but I don't go around askin' for favors."

There was no doubt she was delivering the goods, the article concluded.

"She's a smart woman, this Annie Fisher. She's a specialist in two kinds of dough — the kind that makes beaten biscuits and the kind that swells a bank account."

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Photo courtesy of Barbra Horrell

This photo shows some of the business operators who became fixtures on Sharp End. From left, foreground: Anderson Logan, barber Herbert Phillips of the Phillips & Williams Barber Shop and club owner Edward "Dick" Tibbs. Middle row, from left: Gene Cochran, David Hughes, Walter Patrice and Ellis Tibbs. Back row: Samuel Boone, left. The final man is unidentified.

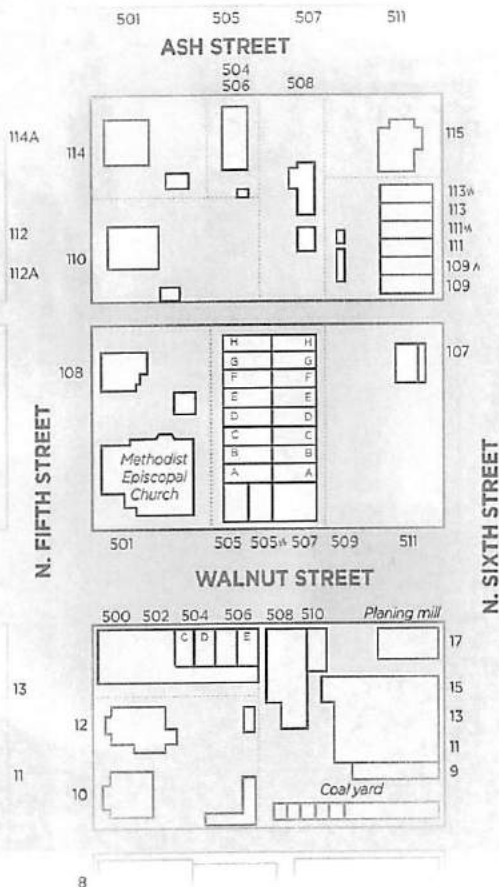
THE 1930s

New faces, new buildings and new opportunities helped Sharp End weather the Great Depression, as the end of Prohibition brought taverns and music to Walnut Street.

The young business owners brought a mix of skills and resources to their operations, some legitimate and some not. Alvin Coleman, Ed "Dick" Tibbs and David "Pig" Emory would become fixtures on Sharp End, joining Herbert Phillips of the Phillips & Williams Barber Shop, opened a decade earlier.

14,967
Number of people residing
in Columbia in 1930

2,301
Number of black residents
in Columbia in 1930



Coleman was 31, living with his parents at 401 Park Ave. and driving a truck for the family laundry business when the decade opened. James and Julia Coleman had been schoolteachers, first in Moberly and later at Douglass School, before going into business.

"Alvin Coleman was one of our rich men," said Rev. Raymond Hayes of St. Luke United Methodist Church.

Coleman owned a salvage yard, a coal yard, a pool hall and a liquor store. His first investment on Sharp End was listed as the Arcade Pool Hall at 510 Walnut St. in the 1932 city directory.

By the 1936 edition of the directory, Coleman was in business with Ed "Dick" Tibbs in a business they called Central Marketing. Tibbs' first business on Sharp End was called the Kingfish Smoke Shop, which also offered shoe shining.

In 1930, Tibbs was 25 and living with his mother Eva Williams and three other adult siblings ages 19 to 30 at 209 N. Garth Ave. Tibbs was working as a presser in a tailor shop.

"I think he just had a sixth grade education," son Ed Tibbs said. "He was a self-made man, just God was on his side. He was a smart man. He didn't have a degree but he had a Ph.D. in business. To have what he had in those days ... to keep it and to be able to pass it on the way he did, it took some intelligence."

Coleman, by contrast, was a college graduate. He and his wife, Julia, whom he married in the 1930s, had no children.

"They were like an uncle and aunt to me," said Mary Patton Nelson, daughter of Alton Patton, who operated a pool hall on Sharp End in the 1950s. Nelson knew the Colemans in the late 1940s and 1950s. "He was always busy, but he would ask about school and stuff. Vivian, she helped me grow up."

The new construction on Sharp End added the Arcade Building, 40 feet of storefront on the south side of Walnut Street that extended 77 feet deep along a north-south alley 10 feet wide.

The exact date when the Arcade Building was constructed is uncertain. The 1931 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the structure where there had been nothing in 1925.

It was built on property owned by Earl and May Morris, owners of Booche's. On Feb. 18, 1935, they sold the property to John and Ola McMullan. John McMullan was the manager of Taylor's Garage.

Along with Tibbs and Coleman, Edward O'Neal, with his wife, Eddie, were among the first to move into the Arcade Building. The O'Neals opened a pool hall in one space and a restaurant in another. The O'Neals, spelled various ways including O'Neill on the 1930 census, also lived on Sharp End.

The new businesses opening on Sharp End were a contrast to almost every other corner of the United States in the 1930s, where businesses were closing and throwing people out of work. The homeless and unemployed added their

ranks to farmers driven from the land by Dust Bowl conditions on the Great Plains and drought in Missouri. Millions looked for work.

The Depression either came late to Missouri or the state was slow to react and take advantage of relief programs. By October 1933, when 10.3 percent of the nation was receiving aid through New Deal relief programs, only 5.5 percent of Missouri residents were signed up.

In Boone County, 174 people were on relief in October 1933, 52 in Columbia and 122 in the rural sections. Only two of the city dwellers and 10 of the rural residents on relief were black.

Soon, 15 times those numbers would be receiving aid. From July 1934 to June 1935, the average number of Boone County residents on relief each month was 2,676. No racial breakdown is available for that figure.

The final report of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration put the cost of New Deal public assistance in the county at \$237,921 from April 1933 to December 1935. Local taxpayers contributed \$29,331.

While the Depression was speeding up migration for many Americans, it slowed for blacks in Boone County. The loss of black population, unchecked since 1880, stopped in the 1930s, although rural sections continued to lose population to Columbia. Columbia was also a destination for whites as city population overall

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26



BUCHROEDERS

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SHARP END BUSINESSES 1930-1939

500 Walnut—Scott & Johnson taxi service:

Owners George Scott and Harry Johnson; George Scott and his wife, Elizabeth, resided at 422 N. Third St., today's Providence Road. Johnson and his wife, Gussie, resided at 506 N. Third St.

Coleman's Café: Operated by Harry Coleman, who is listed in the 1932 directory with his wife, Margaret, at 309A Oak St.

Estes Smoke House: Operated by James Estes, who resides with his wife, Dorothy, at 202 N. Garth Ave.

501 Walnut—St. Luke Methodist Episcopal Church: Pastors during the 1930s included the Rev. William H. Smith and the Rev. C.C. Reynolds.

502 Walnut—Kingfish Smoke Shop, shoe shining: Owner Edward Tibbs resided at the business.

Central Marketing: Owners Alvin Coleman and Edward Tibbs. Coleman married during the decade, living with wife Vivian at 401 Park Ave., a home inherited from his parents.

504 Walnut—Billiards: Owner David Emory, listed as David Emmery in the 1930 census, resided at 203 N. Fourth St.

506 Walnut—Phillips & Williams Barbershop: Owners Herbert Phillips lived with wife, Gertrude, at 213 W. Worley St.; Arch Williams resided at 400 Hickman Ave.

506A Walnut—Rooming House: Managed by Paul Givens, who also operated a cigar store.

507 Walnut—Cigar store: Owner Paul Givens lived with his wife, Mamie, at this address.

507 Walnut Rear—Edmonston Flats: Sixteen-unit apartments behind storefronts.

507-1/2 Walnut—Elks Hall, Turner Lodge 370: The 1930 city directory listed J.S. Carter as Exalted Ruler and Clyde Buckner as secretary.

507A Walnut—Barber Shop: Owner Charles Berry lived with wife Macie at 102 Allen St.

508 Walnut—Billiards: Owner Edward O'Neal, whose wife operated an adjacent restaurant, resided at this address.

Red Bird Inn: Operated by Richard Benton.

508A Walnut—Restaurant: Owner Addie O'Neal lived at business address.

509 Walnut—Restaurant: Owner Beulah King, listed as a widow, residing at 209 E. Park Ave. in the 1930 census.

510 Walnut—Arcade Billiard Parlor: Operated by Alvin B. Coleman in 1932. See Central Marketing entry.

511 Walnut—Barbershop and billiards: Operated by Thomas A. McQuitty, who resided in 1930 with his wife, Georgia, and three children at 224 Lynn St.

512 Walnut—O'Neal's Lunch: This 1932 directory listing might represent a renumbering of the street. Operated by Addie O'Neal.

Northwest Corner, 6th & Walnut—Nu-Way Lumber Co.: Storage lot.

Source: City directories, U.S. Census Bureau



"My dad, I had never seen my dad without a tie on. My dad almost always had a tie on, white shirt and tie, throughout my entire life. I just thought that is the way you are supposed to be dressed."

— Ed Tibbs, son of Sharp End businessman

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

grew by more than one-fifth.

Sehon Williams, born in 1922, got his first job taking tickets at the Boone Theater when he was 16. His father was the chauffer for James Woods, president of Stephens College.

"I wore Jimmy Woods clothes until I was in the ninth grade," Williams recalled.

Williams' experience explains why one of the first businesses in the Arcade Building was Ed Tibbs' shoe shining and cigar shop. After he worked at Boone Theater, Williams took a job shining shoes at Davis Cleaner's on Broadway, a job he kept after he entered Lincoln University. He could make \$20 to \$25 on a Saturday, he said. "That was really good money, especially from Stephens College girls," Williams recalled. "Nobody wore tennis shoe in them days."

In the 1930s, the Sharp End of living memory emerged. Thomas McQuitty opened a barbershop he would operate until urban renewal forced him out. Emory would take over the pool hall at 504 Walnut and would be in business

through the 1940s.

In all, city directories from the 1930s, the best, albeit incomplete, source of information, shows 16 different people, including two women, operating businesses on Sharp End during the decade. There were pool halls at four addresses and four addresses with restaurants. A taxi company, shoe shining and smoke shops fill out the list.

The directories took months to complete for the entire city, meaning they were often out of date. The 1940 directory lists the Green Tree Tavern, operated by Coleman and Tibbs, where jazz bands entertained on weekends and patrons drank 3.2 percent beer, the strongest beverage legally available.

Columbia did not allow liquor by the drink until 1968.

The 1930s might have been when Sharp End came to mean well-dressed. "When you came there you had to be dressed," Ed Tibbs said. "My dad, I had never seen my dad without a tie on. My dad almost always had a tie on, white shirt and tie, throughout my entire life. I just thought that is the way you are supposed to be dressed."

A child who reads will be an adult who thinks.

The Tribune's *Newspapers in Education* program is a dynamic partnership between area businesses, schools, private citizens and the Columbia Daily Tribune. We highly value our participation in this program and the opportunity it provides for Columbia's youth and our schools. Newspapers offer a glimpse into Columbia's past, present and future and help students grow into future community leaders.

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bringing life to HISTORY

Students travel back in time as they seek memories of Sharp End.

If Ron'Zena Hill had a time machine that could take her to Sharp End, the place she would visit first would be Vitilla Monroe's restaurant, where soul food nourished the bodies and spirits of her customers.

Monroe – "Aunt Vi" to all who knew her – began her day with breakfast, opening by 6:30 a.m., and closed about 7 p.m., when customers had finished their evening meal. On weekends, her workday ended at 1 a.m.

"I think that every single person we've interviewed – we have interviewed six, and we are still waiting on our seventh – has talked about Aunt Vi's and her soul food and how good it was," said Hill, one of three Columbia high school students working on an oral history project for the Sharp End Heritage Committee.



Jimmy Whitt

"I have also learned that Aunt Vi's was like one of the only places where kids were allowed in – because kids weren't allowed in Sharp End – and it was basically their own little hangout," she said. "They had their own little section of the restaurant where they could go and grab a bite."

"I'd like to just sit down and try to talk to her," Hill said.

The students have been recording their conversations with committee members. An edited version will be shown at a reception May 19 after the dedication of an historic marker at the Walnut Street site of Sharp End. Hill, 18, and a senior at Rock Bridge High School, has been working on the project with Faramola Shonekan, a Rock Bridge junior, and Jimmy Whitt, a senior at Hickman.

Whitt is the son of Jim Whitt, president of the Columbia Board of Education and chairman of the Sharp End Heritage Committee. He said his first stop on Sharp End would be one of the pool rooms, which were among the first and last businesses on Sharp End.

"From a male perspective, I just feel the pool hall is the place where guys went and hung out, it was a fun time," Whitt said. "They weren't



Nick Schelle/Tribune

From left, Rock Bridge student Ron'Zena Hill, 18, prepares for an April 16 interview with classmate Faramola Shonekan, 16, to answer questions about what she's learned while conducting oral history interviews for the Sharp End Heritage Committee.

worried about anything happening outside the pool hall."

Hill, Shonekan and Whitt are among the last generation of students born in the 20th century. They grew up in a society freed of the legal and economic restrictions that propped up the rigid racial caste system their parents and grandparents lived under. They still experience vestiges of those times, in social attitudes and in school, they said, and want their work to emphasize how business owners on Sharp End made opportunities in difficult times.

The interviews, Shonekan said, have made history lessons come to life. "It was pretty much what they say in the textbooks. Everything was segregated," she said. "Whites didn't go out of their way to associate themselves with blacks, and blacks didn't do so either because they knew what would happen when they tried."

Boone County's history of slavery and segre-

gation is not discussed in school classrooms, Shonekan said. "I hear all this African-American history and civil rights and stuff like that, and I hear about it in textbooks, but it has never really impacted me until I have actually interviewed these people that have been there and seen Sharp End and lived and experienced it."

Members of both races interviewed for this project have said the demarcation line in downtown was Broadway. Blacks found on the south side of Broadway were directed to move to the north side by police. Whites said they rarely heard of anyone venturing onto Sharp End.

Before the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision outlawing segregated schools, black children living in town attended Douglass School. The Columbia Board of Education began integration by giving black parents a choice of sending their children to Douglass or to one of the previously white-only schools.

The high school program at Douglass ended after the 1959-60 school year, followed by the junior high program in May 1962.

Cheryl Wright's mother, Bernice Ballenger, made her one of the first black students to attend Jefferson Junior High School, now Jefferson Middle School. The only interaction she had with white children before school integration, she said, was to work as a babysitter for a white doctor.

"She told me to treat everybody the same, no matter what you do in school, you know as much as the next person," Wright recalled.

After a week in school, she said, there were few problems with other students. In art class, however, the teacher was blatantly racist, Wright said. The teacher was talking about colors, using crayons, when she held up a brown one. "She said, 'We will not use n.....-ish color words.'"

There was one other black, a teenage boy, in that class, Wright said. "And the guy and I, we kind of looked around at each other, and then some other kids, you could tell they were kind of embarrassed because they dropped their heads. It was terrible."

Some teachers, Hill said, retain vestiges of that attitude but are not as blatant in their disregard of black students. In an honors English course, she said, she felt excluded. As the teacher called on her, "she would always sigh, which made me feel like I wasn't important to the discussion or the class as a whole," Hill said.

It never went beyond signals, Hill said. "It was never like anything like calling me out, but actions speak louder than words at times," she said. "And her body language told me a lot about her, and I just never felt comfortable in that classroom, which, I don't know, made me sad, I guess."

Mary Patton Nelson had to fight at Hickman High School for recognition in the National Honor Society when she was forced to transfer before her senior year because of the decision to close the high school program at Douglass.

Nelson's mother resisted sending her to Hickman. "She said, 'I don't think they care anything about you being there, and you will just be shoved to the side.'"



Nick Schelle/Tribune

Mary Beth Brown, historian for the Sharp End Heritage Committee, discusses her involvement in the committee's work to document the black business district during an oral history interview at the Columbia Career Center.



"We had the march at Selma, and they had the sit-ins in Greensborough, N.C., but we also had the sit-ins here on Broadway, at restaurants in downtown Columbia."

— MARY BETH BROWN, historian of the Sharp End Heritage Committee

Nelson had earned her honor society privileges based on her work at Douglass. Advisers for the Hickman National Honor Society tried to block her from participating in the recognition ceremonies at her new school. There were 12 or 14 Douglass students involved.

Responding to an announcement on the school loudspeaker, she and the others went to the ceremony. "They said, 'you are not in our honor society,'" Nelson said. "They tried to convince us that the National Honor Society at Hickman was completely different from the one at Douglass."

It was part of a pattern, and most of it came from the adults, she said. "They had their own ways of being rude," Nelson said.

Whitt, a star basketball player who will attend the University of Arkansas next year, said he feels Hickman is a very welcoming place today. Sometimes, however, when he is alone or in a small number of blacks in a particular class, there is still something present.

"There is still that little barrier between you and the other students and the teacher, because it is

so noticeable," Whitt said.

Mary Beth Brown, historian for the Sharp End Heritage Committee, has guided the students in their oral history interviews. The most satisfying part, she said, is when the students make a personal connection between their own experiences and those of their subjects.

"We had the march at Selma, and they had the sit-ins in Greensborough, N.C., but we also had the sit-ins here on Broadway, at restaurants in downtown Columbia," Brown said. "When kids, especially kids in high school, realize that, it really makes it hit home for them, and it creates a moment and they are more likely to get excited about it and care about history."

The Sharp End Heritage Committee wanted to include students in the process of recognizing the black business district so the lessons of the entrepreneurs and the stories of their times would be passed on, Jim Whitt said. It is not just a segregation story, Whitt said.

"To be an entrepreneur takes a certain skill set, that's a universal skill set and it goes beyond whether you are white or black or any-

thing," he said. "That's the skill set that those folks had back then."

They worked on Sharp End, Whitt said, "because they serviced the market that was available to them."

His wife, Annelle Whitt, coordinated the selection of the students involved as director of the Multi-cultural Achievement Committee staff for Columbia Public Schools.

Son Jimmy Whitt said he became involved as a fill-in when one of the other students selected couldn't make it for a scheduled interview. His mother sent him a text message summoning him, he said. It helped that Brown had a list of questions prepared.

He was promised it would be a one-time request. He stuck with it, he said. "I hope it just brings another perspective and another sense of culture because of the world we live in now," Jimmy Whitt said. "We just want it to be so diverse because it helps us grow, it helps us grow as people, it helps us grow as a community."

The students said they are drawing personal inspiration from the interviews and want to share the lessons they are learning with the community.

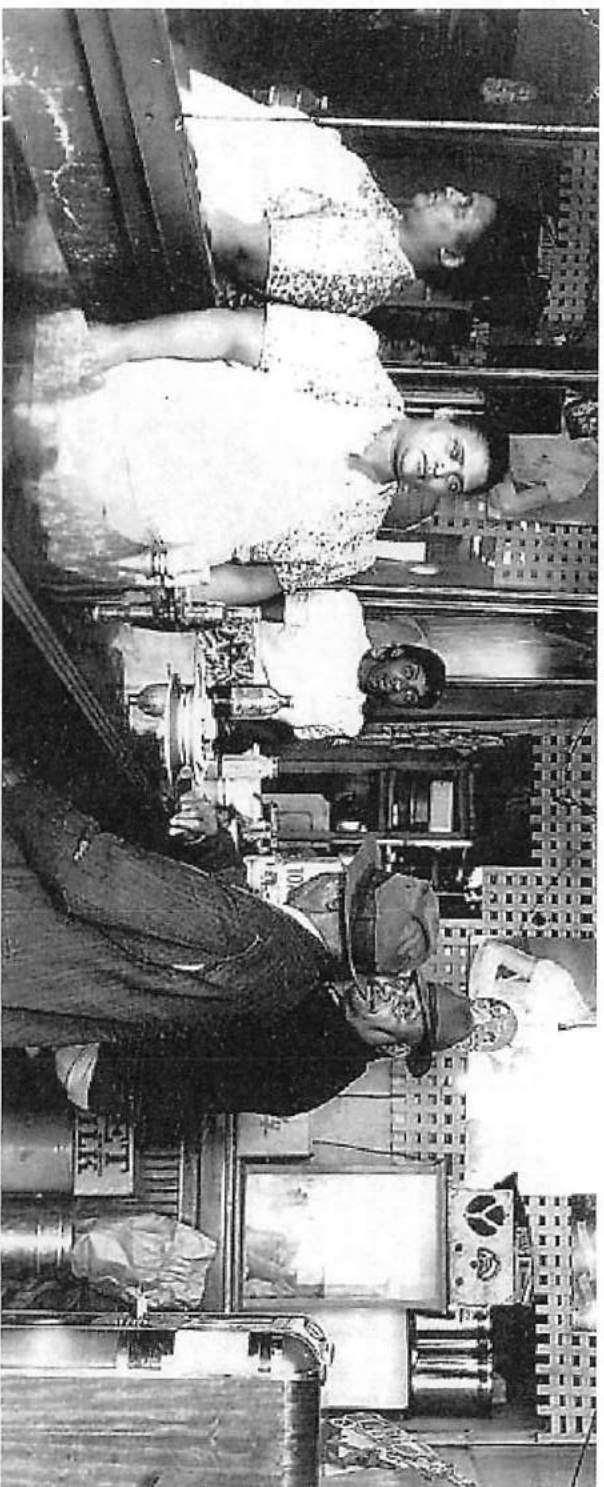
"I feel like it has taught me that I want to fight for people," Shonekan said. "Yeah, African-Americans had Martin Luther King Jr., they had Malcom X and some other huge black leaders during the time. It has taught me that I want to be like that, I want to be able to fight for people who can't fight for themselves, if that makes sense."

To understand mistrust of large-scale economic planning and development programs, Jimmy Whitt said, the community must remember Sharp End and how urban renewal shut it down.

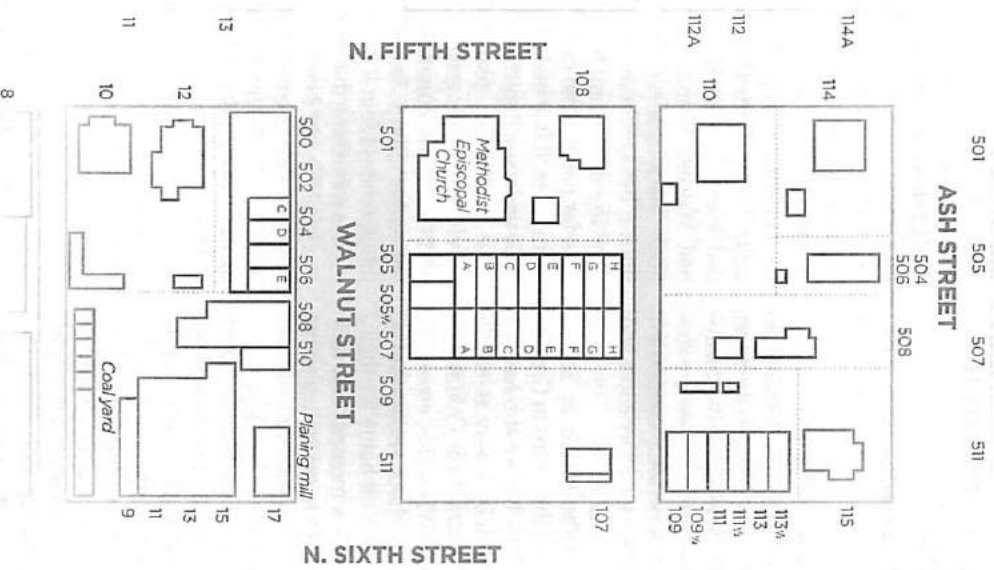
"It is something that affects your everyday life and how the city you grow up in has come forward is what is really interesting about it for me," Whitt said.

The raw video footage of the interviews will be preserved for researchers to use in the future.

"I am glad I got to be a part of this experience," Hill said. "I got to learn some things about my community that I didn't get in schools, in textbooks. Being able to document these people's lives has really been an eye-opener for me."



Courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri
 Edna Harris, left, operated the Elite Café at 520 E. Walnut St. from the late 1940s until the mid-1950s, when it was taken over by Lawrence Lee. David "Pig" Emory, far right, operated the Deluxe Pool Hall at 511 E. Walnut St. until his death in November 1950.



THE 1940S

Black Americans traditionally have had a number of ways of celebrating their emancipation from slavery.

In some communities, a weekend in June called Juneteenth celebrates the date the Emancipation Proclamation was made the law of occupied Texas during the Civil War, freeing the last slaves of the rebellious states.

In Columbia, the traditional date was Aug. 4, timed one month after Independence Day to symbolize the delay between the promise and delivery of freedom for all.

"There would be one, well, it would be, I guess, two days, because one day they would close off Sharp End from Fifth to Sixth Street," Sehon Williams said in a 2006 oral history interview with Gary Kremer, executive director of the State Historical Society of Missouri. "Be open gambling, dancing, drinking, whatever you wanted to do. Even some of the white policemen would come down and join in."

<p>Number of people residing in Columbia in 1940</p> <h1>18,399</h1>	<p>Number of black residents in Columbia in 1940</p> <h1>2,404</h1>
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The second day of the celebration, a picnic and dance on the grounds of Douglass School, was more geared to families because children were not welcome on Sharp End. But when things were lively, they were listening.

As a boy growing up on Park Avenue in the 1940s, the Rev. Raymond Hayes recalls sitting outside with his friends waiting for some exciting sounds to filter down from Sharp End two blocks away.

"We would sit out back and listen to all the stuff that was going on uptown at Sharp End," Hayes said. "I was never afraid of it. And fights were exciting, and killings were something to talk about."

The trends that created Sharp End – the migration of blacks from the countryside to a segregated city where most bars, restaurants and other service businesses were closed to their patronage – had abated but not stopped during the 1930s. But after pausing for a decade, the decline in the county's overall black population resumed and almost half of those remaining outside city limits moved or died.

Because of population shifts, by the end of the 1940s more than 80 percent of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

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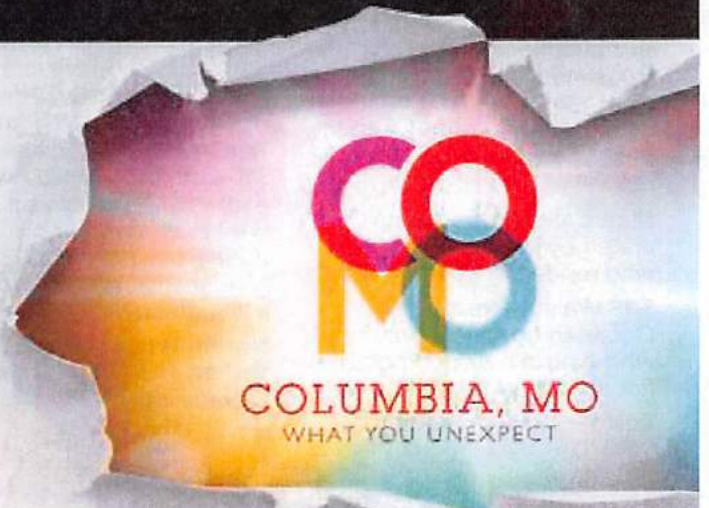
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Courtesy Suzette Miller
Hand-drawn ads in the 1949 Douglass School yearbook "The Meteor" advertised the Phillips & Williams Barber Shop on Sharp End and the Brown & Freeman Funeral Home occupying the Park Avenue mansion of Annie Fisher.

WELCOME TO COLUMBIA

Recognizing Columbia's Cultural Heritage

Columbia has always been full of incredible history, and the historic Sharp End area is no exception. The city is proud to welcome you to a place of great historical significance, a place where culture and entertainment thrived, a place that deserves to be recognized for its place in Columbia's business history.



SHARP END BUSINESSES 1940-1949

500 Walnut—Central Market: Operated by Alvin Coleman and Ed "Dick" Tibbs.

Scott's Taxi: Operated by Alvin Coleman.

Furnished Rooms: Managed by Cordelia Walker, 42 in 1940, who also lived in one of the flats. Eight tenants paid \$5 per month for their rooms.

501 Walnut—St. Luke Methodist Episcopal Church: Pastor Edgar T. Anderson. St. Luke was demolished 1941 and the congregation moved to a new brick church on North Second Street.

Cigars and shoe shining: Operated by Lawrence Marshall, who lived at 502 E. Park Ave.

502 Walnut—Green Tree Tavern: Operated by Alvin Coleman and Ed "Dick" Tibbs.

504 Walnut—Restaurant: Operated by Eugene Gordon and listed only in the 1940 city directory. Gordon, 21, and his wife, Margaret Gordon, 19, lived at 114 S. Third St. when the census was taken.

T&T Smoke Shop: Operated by Edward Tibbs.

505 Walnut—Restaurant: Owner C.W. Kelly resided with wife Hester at same address.

506 Walnut—Phillips & Williams Barber Shop: Owned by Herbert Phillips and Arch Williams. The shop is also listed at 512 Walnut in some city directories.

507 Walnut—Edmonston Flats: These apartments, called "The Cut," rented for \$7 a month and were home to 25 people in the 1940 census.

508 Walnut—Merrill-Slater Restaurant: Operated by Gertrude Merrill, who is listed as Gertrude Slater in the 1940 city directory. She resided at 104 N. First St. Also listed at 514 Walnut in the 1949 city directory.

Cigars and shoe shining: Operated by Lawrence Marshall, who resided at 601 E. Park Ave.

509 Walnut—Restaurant: Operated by Arlene Brown, 28, who lived in a \$7 per month flat at 500 E. Walnut St.

Restaurant: Operated by

Leonard Smith, according to the 1947 city directory. Smith, 58, lived with Gertrude Smith, 57, at 305 N. Garth Ave. when the 1940 census was taken. He worked as a janitor for the city, and she worked as a seamstress.

Walnut Grill: Operated by David "Pig" Emory, according to the 1949 city directory. Emory listed his residence as 511 Walnut St.

510 Walnut—Restaurant and billiards: Operated by Robert Williams, 26 at the time of the 1940 census, when he reported his occupation as a laborer earning \$9 per week. Williams lived at 322 McBaine Ave. The pool hall is listed at 510 Walnut, rear, in 1947.

Radio Cab Co.: Operated by Isadore Washington, who lived at 609 Park Ave.

511 Walnut—Barbershop: Operated by Thomas A. McQuitty.

Club Deluxe billiards: Operated by David Emory and listed in the 1947 and 1949 directories.

512 Walnut—Restaurant: Operated by Edgar Griffin, 65 when 1940 census was taken, who lived at 3 Switzler St.

Brown's Place beer tavern: Operated by Victor Brown, 39 in the 1940 census and living at 1619 E. Broadway with his wife, Loretta, Sallie Gatewood, 72, and Dorothy Hays, 16.

514 Walnut—Restaurant: Operated by David Emory, according to an entry in the 1947 city directory.

518 Walnut—Restaurant: Operated by Victor Brown, according to the 1949 city directory.

520 Walnut—Elite Café: Operated by Robert and Edna Harris who lived 103 W. Park Ave. Robert Harris listed his age as 36 in the 1940 census, when he earned \$10 a week as a dishwasher at a women's college. Edna Harris, who was Edna McClanahan in 1940, worked as a laundress.

Northwest Corner, 6th & Walnut—Nu-Way Lumber Co.: Storage lot.



But one misconception that people have. They seem to think that, I don't know how you figure it, that Sharp End was the black community, but it wasn't. Eighty percent of the people didn't even go on Sharp End. Of course, now Eighth Street was the white Sharp End, but most people didn't go down there. Same difference."

— SEHON WILLIAMS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

Boone County's black population lived within Columbia for the first time. Black residents, however, represented a rapidly diminishing portion of the city's overall population. The black population of Columbia grew by 3.5 percent in the 1940s, while the white population grew by 84 percent.

Columbia added 13,675 new residents in the 1940s, while the county as a whole grew by 13,441 people.

A large number of those new residents were veterans taking advantage of the GI Bill and its provisions supporting education and housing. Missouri sent 220,000 into the U.S. Army during World War II. Sehon Williams was one of them.

He was among 895,000 black men and women who entered the armed forces during the war. He found segregated conditions as bad or worse in many places as in Columbia, including Army post exchanges in Virginia.

Williams was drafted after his first year at Lincoln University in Jefferson City.

"When we were in Norfolk, Va., waiting to get on the bus, they had German soldiers with big POWs on the back of their coveralls," Williams said. "They were using them as custodians. They could walk in the PX and drink beer and lollygag with the white soldiers, but we couldn't go in there and buy a bottle of soda pop. And we were going overseas."

After serving in Italy, where he was a sergeant on quartermaster duty, Williams returned to find Columbia frozen in time as far as race relations were concerned.

"The first job I had was at Barth Clothing Co., and it only lasted two weeks," Williams said.

The manager had two sons working at the store who had recently graduated from Hickman. He thought Williams was not showing enough respect.

"He said, 'Don't you think you need to call Jimmy and Joe mister?'" Williams said. "I said 'For what? I'm older than they are.' The next morning he had my check and handed it to me and said you won't work out."

In the 1940s, Sharp End, as it had since its inception, offered a refuge and opportunity for people to try being their own bosses. City directories published in the 1940s give the names of 19 people who operated businesses on Sharp End. The list would be longer except for the disruptions created by World War II.

No directory was published between 1940 and 1947. Familiar names remained and expanded their operations. One familiar sight on Sharp End disappeared in 1941 when the stone St. Luke Methodist Episcopal Church on the northeast corner of Fifth and

Walnut streets was demolished. The property was purchased by Nu-Way Lumber Corp., which also secured control over the property on the northwest corner under a long-term lease for an 11,400-square foot lot for \$25 a month.

Businesses that would become familiar names opened during the 1940s. The Green Tree Tavern, in the large space at Fifth and Walnut streets where Sharp End began, offered beer and jazz music on weekend nights from local players and traveling acts. It was one of three or four businesses operated jointly by Alvin Coleman and Edward "Dick" Tibbs, including a liquor store and taxi service.

The Elite Café, a name that would remain a fixture on Sharp End until urban renewal, was listed for the first time in the 1949 directory. Proprietors Robert and Edna Harris were 36 and 38 respectively when the 1940 census was taken. He was a dishwasher who earned \$360 for 36 weeks work 1939. Edna worked the entire year for \$500. They rented a home at 103 W. Park Ave. for \$10 a month.

The apartments on and adjacent to Sharp End were home to nearly 100 people when the 1940 census was taken. The furnished rooms above the tavern, managed by Cordelia Walker, cost \$5 to \$7 a month and included 14 tenants. The pain of recovery from the Great Depression was evident on Sharp End – only one of the tenants had worked 52 weeks the previous year, and most labored for \$4 to \$10 per week when employed.

Arlene Brown, 28 and married, owned the restaurant at 509 Walnut St. in 1940 and lived in one of the \$7 rooms.

Not all Sharp End business owners lived in such meager circumstances. Victor Brown, owner of Brown's Place tavern at 512 E. Walnut St., was 39 in 1940, owned a \$3,000 home on at 1619 E. Broadway – across from Boone Hospital Center – and listed his occupation on the census as "beer salesman."

Brown was in the right place. Williams, asked in a recent interview who could be found on Sharp End, had a simple answer: "People that liked to drink. Drink and shoot pool. If you liked to drink,

you go on Sharp End. It's no different from now. If you want to have a drink you go out here to the bar."

Williams graduated from Douglass School in 1940 and played weekends in a jazz combo at the Green Tree.

"The place would be pretty well crowded," he said. "But one misconception that people have. They seem to think that, I don't know how you figure it, that Sharp End was the black community, but it wasn't. Eighty percent of the people didn't even go on Sharp End. Of course, now Eighth Street was the white Sharp End, but most people didn't go down there. Same difference."

Former Mayor Darwin Hindman, born in 1933, sold newspapers downtown in the 1940s. Downtown was crowded with farm families on Saturdays, and bars in black and white areas alike did a strong business.

"North of Broadway was a little bit seedy, even on Ninth Street, and as you went toward Sharp End it got seedier," Hindman said.

Under city ordinance at the time, only beer no stronger than

3.2 percent alcohol could be sold by the drink. "So when you went into a beer joint, if you wanted a drink you carried a half-pint," said Larry Monroe, describing a practice that continued until Columbia legalized liquor by the drink in 1968.

"And you would set there, and they would sell you bowl of ice and a pitcher of water set-up, and you sat there and you mixed your drink. And that's how you got around that."

The law, a holdover from prohibition, was not strongly enforced. "The mindset of enforcement was a little different then," Monroe said. "A lot of those guys that was driving that car, they would end up in there, too."

When the 1940s ended, Sharp End was fully developed and a place with enough turnover that people who wanted to try operating a business could find a chance.

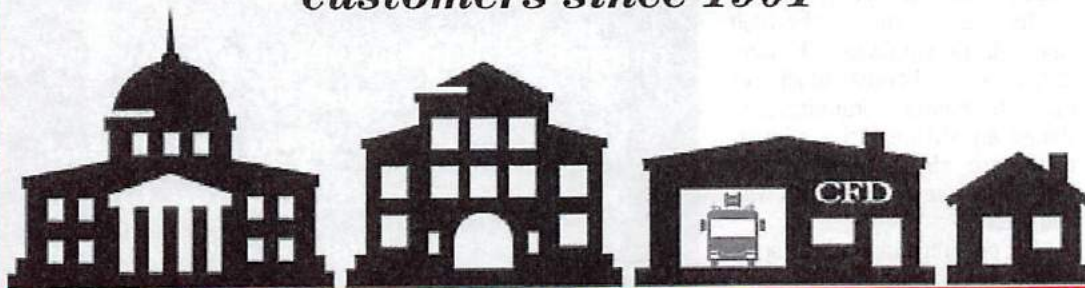
That would continue in the coming decade, until an unexpected threat developed that made control of the property, not just the businesses operating there, the important issue.

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St. Luke's built on congregations past

Origins are uncertain, but church pays tribute to history.

When the time came to demolish the brick chapel at Second and Ash streets that was home to St. Luke United Methodist Church for more than 50 years, the congregation found something unexpected when the cornerstone was removed.

The visible side of the white limestone block read "St. Luke Methodist Church E.T. Anderson Pastor 1941." On the inside were inscribed the words "First ME Church B. McCain 1909."

The block was a relic of the large stone church, demolished in 1940, that sat at the corner of Fifth and Walnut streets for 31 years. "So what we decided to do is to cut it in half and keep both old cornerstones because the idea was we are really building on other people," said the Rev. Raymond Hayes, pastor at St. Luke for 35 years. "And then they put a third stone for me on another wing. I wanted to emphasize the fact that we are building on those that come before us."

The origins of the congregation today known as St. Luke are uncertain. No comprehensive history of the church has been compiled, and some that have been attempted include glaring errors, including which branch of Methodism was practiced. Edgar Anderson, when he took over in 1938, found there were no minutes of meetings of the Board of Trustees.

"This church has no previous records, and the ones in their possession are rather meager," Albert McMillen recorded Sept. 19, 1941, for a community survey conducted by the Works Projects Administration.

A previous attempt at recording the history of the church, in 1938

by University of Missouri master's degree candidate Wilbur East, assigned the church to the wrong branch of Methodism and made what could be seen as other obvious mistakes in chronicling the early church history. East was conducting a survey of all six black congregations that worshiped in Columbia at the time.

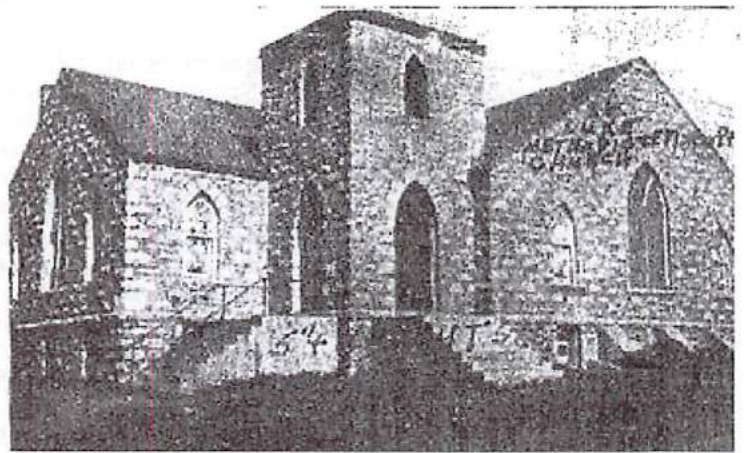
East found the Rev. William H. Williamson uncooperative. "In fact, Reverend Williamson told me he resented white people coming to his study and asking a lot of silly questions."

When he read that line, Hayes said it struck a chord.

"That had been a problem for a long time," said Hayes, the first black athlete to earn a letter at Hickman High School after the school was integrated in 1959. "I remember going through the civil rights movement and the urban renewal. Everybody was doing surveys, and they were going back, misinterpreting a lot of stuff. For a while people got tired of people coming in constantly and dragging information and then going back and writing stuff that was half true and half not true"

In the years after the Civil War, the newly freed blacks of Boone County quickly established churches, both inside Columbia and in the countryside near their homes, where 80 percent of the black population lived in 1870. Of 26 churches recorded in the 1860 census in Boone County, 17 were Methodist or Baptist. Blacks of those dominant denominations shared an African Union Church built with aid from the white Columbia congregations of the two sects.

That congregation quickly split. A city map published in 1875 shows a church at Ash and Water



Courtesy the Rev. Raymond Hayes

The St. Luke congregation worshipped in this stone building at Fifth and Walnut streets from 1909 to 1940, when the structure was condemned and the property sold to Nu-Way Lumber Co.

Street, the section of Columbia populated by blacks, and another — a one-room frame structure — between Broadway and Cherry Street. It was home to the Second Baptist Church congregation.

An 1890 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map indicates a frame church was among the structures on the block of Walnut Street between Fifth and Sixth Streets that would later become known as Sharp End.

Maps published by the same company in 1895 locate the Second Baptist Church in its brick chapel at Water Street and Broadway and the Second Christian Church in a frame building between Seventh and Eighth Streets.

An 1898 map of the full city provides locations for four black churches without giving any specific names. All are listed as an "African" church with the denomi-



Photo by Wynna Faye Elbert / State Historical Society

Let the historical significance of
The Sharp End
 remind Columbia where we have been
 and where we need to go.
 May we share a renewed sense of
 pride and ownership in our future.

— Representative Kip Kendrick

Paid for by Friends of Kip Kendrick • Vicky Riback Wilson, Treasurer

nation. The Second Baptist and Second Christian are shown, as well as St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church at Fifth and Park.

A second "African M.E. Church" was depicted at Fifth and Walnut streets, where St. Luke's stone chapel would be built in 1909. A 1908 Sanborn map portrays an unnamed Methodist Episcopal Church at that location, an "old" brick structure with a shingle roof, electric lights and stove heat. The entrance faced Walnut Street.

From the same period, a city directory published in 1909 refers to it as the "Northern Methodist Episcopal Church" and listed the pastor as George Abbott. McCain is listed as the pastor in a 1911 directory.

The name St. Luke was used by the University Missourian in a 1912 article about a meeting called by educator James Coleman, attended by 200, to discuss bringing University Extension courses to black residents of Columbia.

McMillen's summary of the early years of the church might be the best available. "Organized about 1880, the first house was a frame, about 30 x 50 feet in dimensions," he wrote in 1941. "This building stood on the northeast corner of North Fifth and Walnut streets. The erection of the building was through the efforts of Rev. Lewis Dickerson."

Dickerson raised money for the construction at a camp meeting, McMillen wrote. "This house stood until 1909, when it was torn down



Daniel Brenner/Tribune

Raymond Hayes has been pastor of St. Luke United Methodist Church since 1980.

and in its stead a large stone building was erected in its place."

The denominational distinctions missed by East, the MU master's student, might have been attributable to the multiple branches of Methodism that date almost to its emergence as a

separate branch of Protestantism in the 18th century. The first to break from the Methodist Episcopal Church were free blacks, who objected to segregation during worship services and

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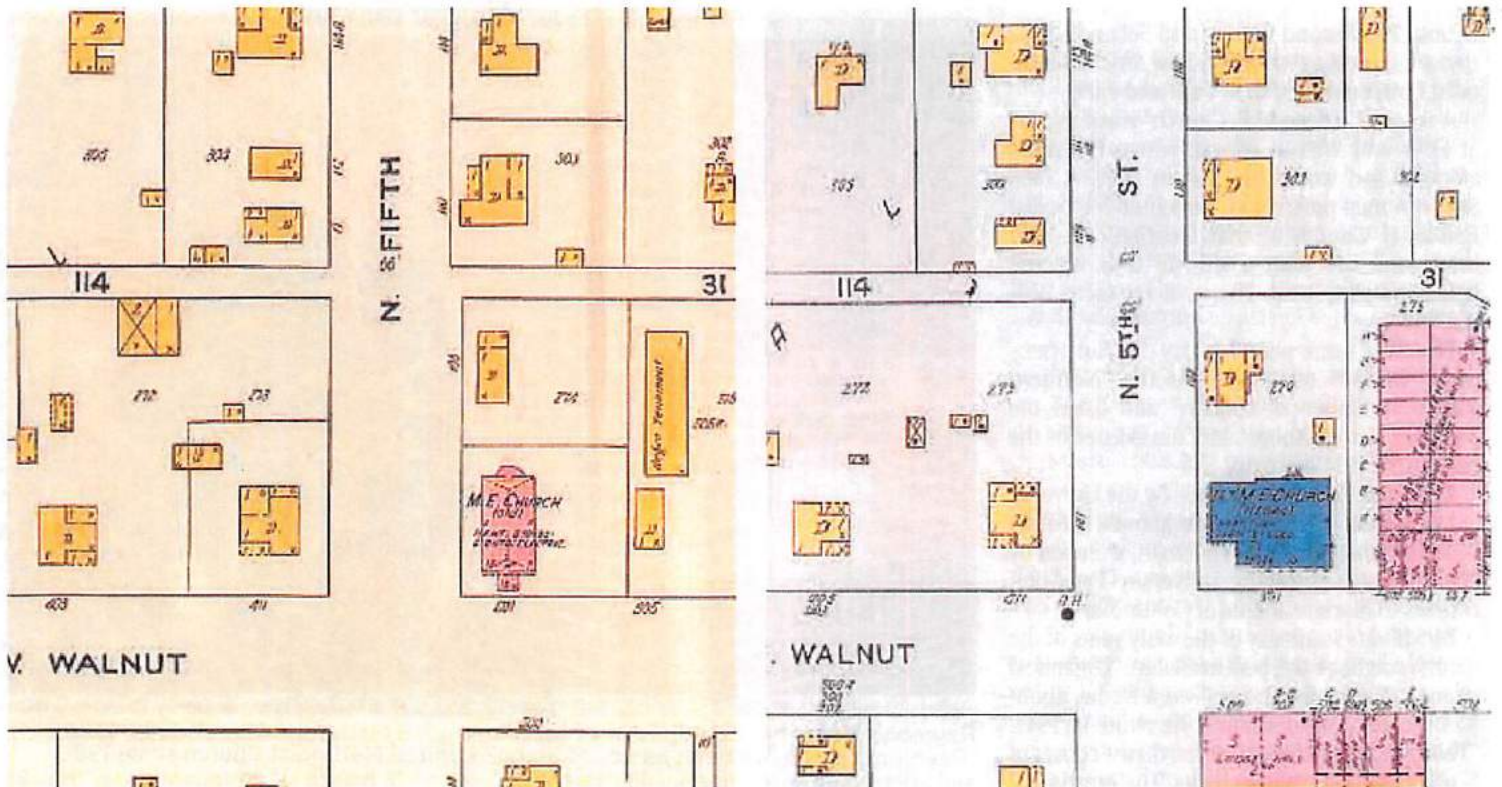


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Left: Courtesy University of Missouri special collections/Right: Courtesy Environmental Data Resources Inc.

These detailed views of the 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, left, and the 1925 map, right, show the differences between the brick church, demolished in 1909, and the stone building, constructed that same year, that housed the St. Luke congregation when it met on Sharp End.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 35

formed the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Not all blacks left the church at that time, Hayes said. "There were those who stayed and didn't leave; and St. Luke is part of those that stayed."

The next break came in the 1840s, when the northern and southern branches divided over slavery. Freed black Methodists aligned with the northern branch, which created a separate church hierarchy for black congregations.

East's paper mistakes St. Luke for a branch of Methodism that split in 1828 over church governance.

He compounds the error by reporting that the congregation formed in 1910 and worshipped in private homes until 1920.

East also offers a gratuitous slap at Williamson for a bad attitude. "The fact of the matter is that Reverend Williamson's church is not on a par with the other colored churches and he resented having his church compared with them."

What East's paper provides is a glimpse of the church as it operat-

ed on Sharp End. When construction was underway, a new commercial building was rising on the south side of Walnut Street. More construction followed in the 1920s and 1930s, drawing businesses catering to the legitimate and, during Prohibition, illegal needs of the community.

When East visited Sharp End in 1938, the Green Tree Tavern across the street was offering patrons jazz and drinking and drawing large crowds. "Sometimes the negroes at this saloon become so noisy that it is hard for the minister to talk to his congregation, even on Sunday," East wrote.

The church was used frequently as a community meeting place. In February 1922, St. Luke hosted the annual Lincoln birthday celebration for the Grand Army of the Republic Tiger Post, a "bean supper" of coffee, hardtack and beans, field fare for troops in the Civil War. Organized by post commander Wallace Lilly, the supper cost 10 cents.

A survey of church attendance by the *Missourian* in March 1922 found 25 people on hand for morning worship, 50 attending in

the afternoon and 65 in the evening. To finance the 1909 construction, the church mortgaged the property and found, at times, it was hard to pay the note with a small congregation.

St. Luke staged a benefit performance, "Columbia 1921 Follies," on March 18, 1921, in McKinney Hall on Broadway between Fourth and Fifth streets, to raise money. And on June 11, 1921, the church announcements in the *Missourian* included a request from Rev. J.C. McGinty for worshipers to be generous the next day.

"Rally Day will be held tomorrow," McGinty said. "Every member is asked to bring \$5 so that the church may meet its financial obligations due Tuesday."

The request was a big one at a time when many blacks earned \$1 a day or less and paid \$5 or less per month for living quarters.

McGinty sometimes received

compensation for his services in the form of food. On July 21, 1921, he published notice thanking them for "75 pounds of choice groceries and some cash which they brought and left at the parsonage on Tuesday night, June 28th."

Williamson told East the congregation numbered about 200 in 1938, but East wrote attendance did not back up the number. Collections were about \$14 to \$16 each Sunday, he reported, and the church's precarious finances were evident in the number of fundraising socials held and requests to white churches for aid.

The pastor of the white Southern Methodist congregation told East "Williamson was continually asking for financial aid from him and that on several occasions he had to refuse because the Methodist Church here in Columbia could not afford to give continual-



"The building was always in debt and it soon deteriorated because it was not kept in repairs."

— ALBERT MCMILLEN, writing about the church in 1941.

ly for the upkeep of this colored church."

Williamson told East he received about \$1,200 annually as compensation, "but that he could not see what business it was of mine how much money he was paid."

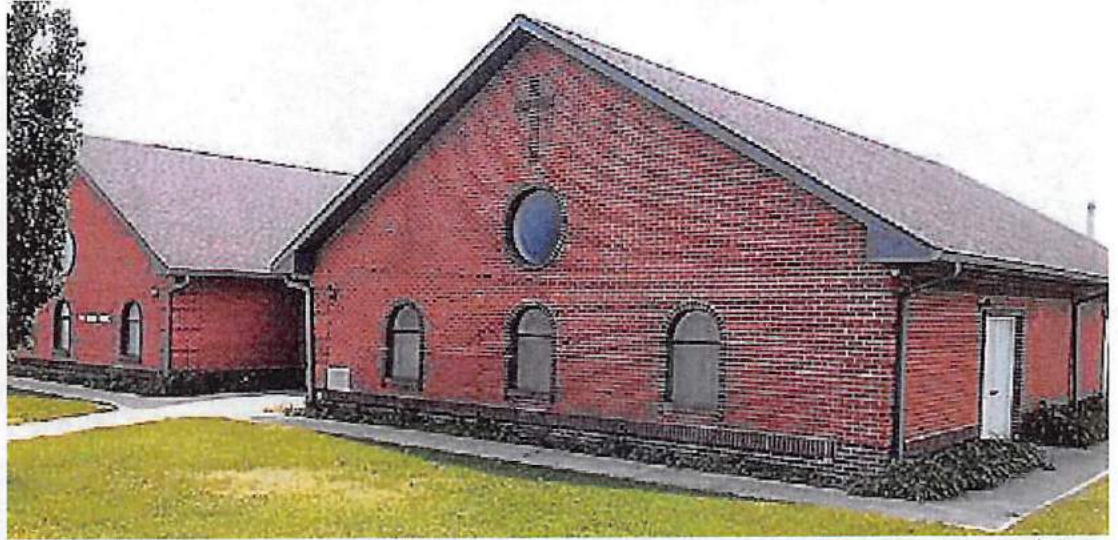
The church still owed \$1,500 on the mortgage in 1938, East wrote.

"The building was always in debt and it soon deteriorated because it was not kept in repairs," McMillen wrote in 1941.

A new pastor, the Rev. Edgar Anderson, was faced with a dilemma — attempt to raise enough money to repair the church or sell the property and use the proceeds to construct a more modest structure.

He chose the latter, using property at Second and Ash streets where a four-room home used as a church parsonage stood.

"Miss Nettie Bryant said a lot of people were really upset about it, about the decision to sell the property," Hayes said. "There was a lot of anger over it. Rev. Anderson moved the church anyway, and I guess they lost a lot of members over it. He made a big push on



Rudi Keller/Tribune

Luke United Methodist Church, 204 E. Ash St., as it appears today.

Cemetery Hill," the black residential section south of Broadway, "and brought those people into the church."

The church might have been pushed off Sharp End. City records do not exist for the period, but McMillen, who got his information from Anderson, wrote the building was condemned in 1940. The trustees sold the property to

Nu-Way Lumber Co., and the church was demolished.

One of the few people who remembers the church demolished 75 years ago is Sehon Williams, whose family attended St. Paul AME.

"On the corner of Fifth and Walnut streets used to sit a big stone church, just like the Christian Church at Tenth and Walnut

streets," he recalled. "It had big wide steps coming down on Sharp End and steps coming down on Fifth."

When he talks about the demise of the church, Williams speaks in the same terms many would use about urban renewal's impact on Sharp End 20 years later.

"They condemned it and tore it down," he said. "I don't know why."



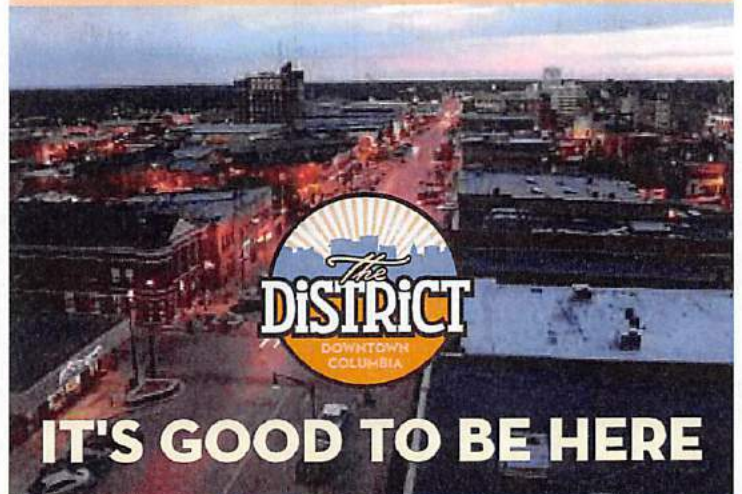
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IT'S GOOD TO BE HERE



Courtesy of the State Historical Society of Missouri

The Arcade Building was constructed circa 1930 and housed restaurants, taverns, barber shops and pool rooms during its lifetime.

THE 1950s

In the late 1950s Vitilla Monroe rose early every morning in her home on Pendleton Street and roused her teenaged daughter Erma so both could be at her restaurant, Vi's Café, by 5:30 a.m. The doors at 509 E. Walnut St. opened at 6:30. Erma would work for the next hour before walking three blocks to Douglass School. At that time of day, black city employees on their way to work were regular customers. Others would follow as the city woke up.

"It was busy every hour my mother was open," Erma, now Erma Officer, said in a recent interview.

She would return in the afternoon, when she was finished with extracurricular activities. Erma would sit at a table doing homework or help out in the restaurant until it closed at 7 p.m. On weekends, Vi's Café stayed open late, serving customers until 1 a.m.

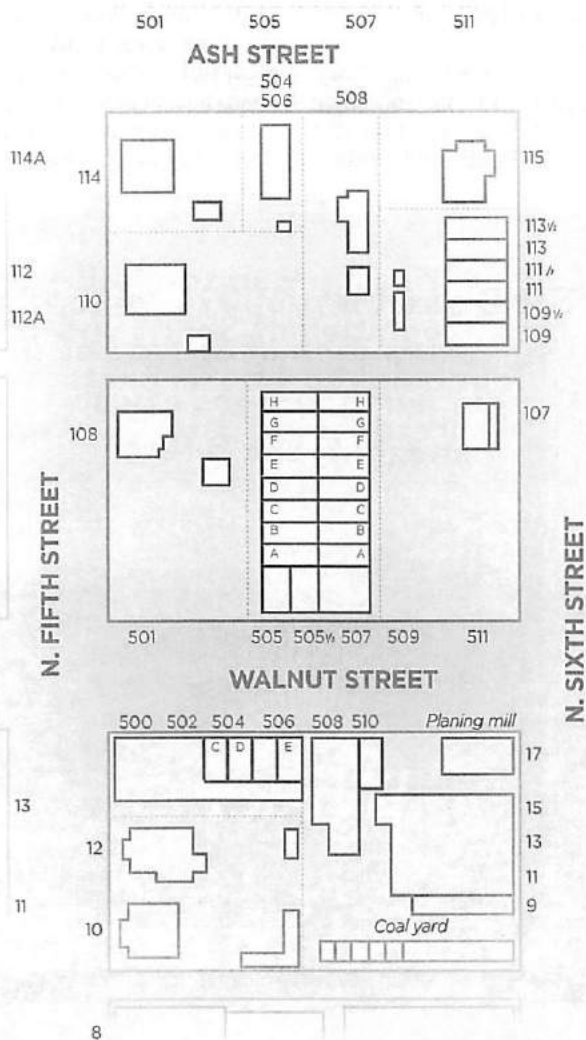
CONTINUED ON PAGE 40

31,974

Number of people residing in Columbia in 1950

2,489

Number of black residents in Columbia in 1950



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 39

Officer deflected a question about whether she was paid this way: "Her payment to me was to show me how as I grew to be businesslike. Her payment to me was how to treat others, not to expect any more than I was willing to give. Those were payments, those were life-learned lessons."

The date Monroe took over the restaurant is uncertain. Her son, Larry Monroe, said he believes it was 1957 or 1958. He was working in the Phillips & Williams Barber Shop across the street.

By that time, the future was already in doubt for the property developed into Sharp End from 1910 to 1930.

The Land Clearance and Redevelopment Authority, created in 1956, drew the boundary for its first urban renewal plan through the alley south of Walnut behind Sharp End in a plan submitted for federal approval in 1958. Sharp End was at its peak both for the number of businesses in operation and for its reputation as a destination.

"It was a time of segregation and it was a hot spot for entertainment," say Rev. Raymond Hayes, also a teenager in the 1950s. "And it attracted people who were on the 'chitlin' circuit," a name given to venues hosting traveling black entertainers.

As its reputation grew, and transportation improved, out-of-town customers were more common, Hayes said. "The soldiers from Fort Leonard Wood would come up and that was a place to come and there was a lot of fighting and competition over local girls, as you would expect."

The 1950s were a time of rising expectations nationally and for blacks in particular. President Harry Truman ordered integration of the Armed Forces in 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down school segregation in 1954 and Congress passed the first Civil Rights bill since the Civil War in 1957.

The vitality of Columbia's black community sparked the start of a black migration from outside Boone County. In the 1940s,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 41



55 years later...



Above photo Courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri/Bottom photo Daniel Brenner of the Tribune
The photo at top, taken during the late 1950s, shows Sharp End fully developed, with the 1910 building where Sharp End began in the foreground. The photo above, taken recently, shows the 11-deck parking garage that replaced the parking lot built when the Sharp End commercial buildings were demolished. RED1, the Small Business Technology and Development Center, a business incubator, a mortgage company and a restaurant occupy the storefronts at ground level.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 40

Columbia added 13,675 residents, but only 85 were black. In the 1950s, growth rates for whites and blacks became more balanced as the black population of 2,489 in 1950 grew by almost 300 people.

Rural sections of the county did not provide the increase. Only 521 of Boone County's 3,010 blacks remained living outside Columbia when the 1950s began, down from 2,648 in 1900. The rural population diminished by 18 in the 1950s. The growth in Columbia accounted for the first substantial boost in the county's total black population since the 1870s.

Detailed census rolls for 1950 will not be released until 2022. City directories published regularly attempted to record each address, whether it was a residence or a business and who lived or ran a business at that location. Those published in the 1950s show that, as in the past, Sharp End remained a residential as well as business location.

"The Cut" was apartments on the north side of Walnut Street, listed as the Edmondston Apartments in census reports and the directories. The rooms were behind the commercial space that housed Vi's Café, where the work area of the Columbia post office is today.

"Those apartments weren't very good," Hayes recalled. "It was good people who lived back there but conditions were terrible."

The directories for some years list the people living there when the survey was made. The Cut seemed to always be full and some tenants were long-term residents. The lists for apartments above the bar known in the 1950s as Club Twenty-One also have substantial lists of tenants.

Edith Prince and her family moved into one of the upstairs apartments in the late 1950s, after they arrived in town. It was a two-bedroom apartment with a living room and small kitchen shared by two adults and nine children. The adults took one bedroom she said, five girls took another and the boys slept in the living room.

"We used to sleep in one bed," she said. "We had no choice but to

sleep with each other."

On the street, the lineup of business owners continued to change, as it had since the inception of Sharp End. David "Pig" Emory died in November 1950. The Walnut Grill was taken over by Pearl Chandler, who also ran a pool hall on the south side of the street in the 1950s.

Chandler reputedly wouldn't let anyone curse in his pool hall, but other restrictions seemed to be loosening along Sharp End. Teenagers started coming into the businesses or passing through, when they would have been turned away in the past. Larry Monroe said he went into the Walnut Grill for the first time when he was 15.

"I remember the first time that I was able to go in the pool hall," he said. "I had to get written permission from my mom in order to shoot pool and I was 16 years old then."

Alton Patton, called "Mr. Heavy Patton" ran a typical pool hall on Sharp End, his daughter Mary Patton Nelson said. It was in the back of the Arcade Building, with an entrance through Brown's Place. She was never allowed inside, she said, but could go on Sharp End if she needed to talk to him.

He was generally holding court in the pool hall, and someone would retrieve him for her, she said. Nelson was in the first senior class that was required to attend Hickman High School in order to graduate, following the closing of the high school program at Douglass in 1960.

Her parents were older than most, Nelson said. Her father listed his birth as 1890 in Tennessee on the 1940 census and her mother Julia reported she was born in 1903.

They lived at 102 Allen Street. He reported he had not been employed for wages the previous year but that he had income of more than \$50 annually "from sources other than wages."

He made his money, Nelson said, "by gambling. I think when they got done shooting pool he would shoot dice. He was a hustler. He was a gambler. That is how he made his living."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42



**COLUMBIA
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE**

**HONORING THE
BUSINESSMEN
& WOMEN OF
THE SHARP END
HISTORIC DISTRICT**



SHARP END BUSINESSES 1950-1959

500-506 Walnut—Ebony Club: The club previously known as the Green Tree Tavern was listed under this name only in the 1951 city directory.

500-502 Walnut—Club Twenty-One: City directories published in the 1950s list a variety of proprietors. Billie Waers, who lived at 601 S. Glenwood, was named in 1954, and John Graves, with a residence in the county, was listed in 1956. The 1958 directory named Edward Griffin, who resided at 514 N. Fifth St.

502 Walnut—Walnut Apartments: This name was used in the 1951, 1954, 1956 and 1958 directories.

504 Walnut—Walnut Street Sandwich Shop: Listed for 1954, with operator Isadore Washington living at 2 W. Pendleton.

506 Walnut—Phillips & Williams Barber Shop: Herbert Phillips and Arch Williams remained partners in this venerable business that first opened in the 1920s. Phillips lived with his wife, Gertrude, at 213 W. Worley St.; Williams lived with his wife, Caroline, at 23 Worley St. The street might have been renumbered at some point because directories published in the 1950s also list the barber shop at 512 Walnut St.

Herndon's Tap Room: Operated by Roy "Shug" Herndon and listed in the 1956 and 1958 city directories. Herndon and his wife, Faye Herndon, lived at 501 E. Ash St.

508 Walnut—Shoe shining: Operated by Lawrence Marshall, according to 1951 and 1954 directories. Marshall lived at

601 Park Ave.

Shoe shining: Operated by Roy Herndon as listed in the 1956 directory.

McQuitty Barber Shop: Operated by Thomas A. McQuitty, who according to the 1958 directory lived with his wife, Hattie, at 227 Lynn St.

509 Walnut—Walnut Grill: Operated in the 1950s under a variety of owners. Pearl Chandler, who lived with his wife, May, at 207 N. Second St., is listed in the 1951 directory. Roy and Fay Herndon are the owners, according to the 1954 directory, and Faye Washington is running the restaurant in the 1956 edition. Washington gave her residence as 1413 Illinois Ave.

Little Harlem Café: Alonzo Rogers and his wife, Dora Rogers, were listed in the 1958 directory, with their residence at 21 W. Ash St.

Vi's Café: Vitilla Monroe, 40 in 1958, became the last tenant of this space on Sharp End.

509-511 Walnut—Edmondston Apartments: Also known as "The Cut."

510 Walnut—Chandler's Pool Hall: Operated by Pearl Chandler, who lived with his wife, May, at 207 N. Second St., according to the 1951 and 1954 directories.

Confectionery: Listed in the 1956 directory, operated by George A. Bradford, who lived with wife Ardella Bradford at 406 W. Davis St.

Shoe Shine: A 1958 listing for George Bradford.

511 Walnut—Deluxe Billiards & Pool: Operated by Ed "Dick" Tibbs after the death in 1950 of David "Pig" Emory.

514 Walnut—Walnut Street Tobacco Store: This is a 1951 listing operated by Isadore Washington.

Economy Liquors: Operated by Welfred Shock, who lived with his wife, Mary, at 104 N. West Boulevard, according to a 1954 directory.

Bob's Tobacco Store: Operated by Robert and Edna Harris, according to 1956 and 1958 listings. They lived at 106 E. Ash St.

516 Walnut—Radio Cab Co.: Operated by Isadore Washington and listed in a 1951 directory.

516 Walnut Rear—Arcade Pool Hall: Operated by Alton Patton, also known as "Mr. Heavy Patton." He lived with wife Julia at 102 E. Allen. Patton's business is listed as the Blue Shadow Pool Hall in the 1958 directory.

518 Walnut—Brown's Place: A restaurant listed with owner Perry Brown in every directory published in the 1950s. He and wife Pauline Brown lived at 519 E. Highway 40.

520 Walnut—Elite Café: Operated early in the decade by Robert and Edna Harris, according to listings in the 1951 and 1954 directories, then by Lawrence E. Lee, who lived at 406 Hickman Ave. with his wife, Stella, who is listed in the 1956 and 1958 editions.

Northwest Corner, 6th & Walnut—Nu-Way Lumber Co.: Storage lot.

Sources: City directories, U.S. Census Bureau

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

He was also a storyteller who could "talk to a hole in the wall" if no one was handy to listen, she said. "He was the kind of person who dressed nicely all the time, and people would mistake him for a minister."

As it had for more than 40 years, Sharp End continued to be a place where a black man or woman could be their own bosses.

Little had changed outside, despite national advances for blacks.

Every time they ventured beyond Sharp End and the black residential areas nearby, they were met with constant reminders of white control.

One of Larry Monroe's first jobs

was setting pins at Dean's Bowling Alley at Hitt and Broadway. The crew of six, when work was over, would walk home together. His first night on the job he got a reminder of his place in Columbia.

"When we got to Tenth and Broadway there were two white policemen, Jim Smith and Dutch Smith," Monroe said.

"And Dutch told us, 'Alright you boys, it is time to cross over. You don't walk on this side of Broadway after dark,' — the south side of Broadway."

The police were there every night, he said.

In Vi's Café, the life lessons weren't confined to Erma. Vitilla Monroe's niece, Cheryl Ballenger Wright, said all the youngsters in

the family pitched in. "Sometimes she had me being a waitress, and I had tips," Wright said.

"And on occasion she would get so busy and she and I would be the only ones there at the time that she would let me ring customers up."

A counter with barstools, tables and a room set up for families was the setting, but the food was the attraction, Wright said, rattling off a list of standard fare: Cornbread, chicken, greens, dried beans, navy beans, brown beans, different pastries, pies, bread pudding, roast beef and "ham on occasion."

Columbia voters rejected urban renewal and the creation of a land clearance authority the first time it was on the ballot in 1952.

It was approved narrowly in

1956 and the city immediately imposed a moratorium on new building permits in the targeted area.

The businesses on Sharp End would begin learning before the decade was out that their future was limited.

Vitilla Monroe just kept working, Erma Officer said.

"My mother was a very gentle person in the community and the café was a very, very vital part of the community. She served the people that came into the community, and the people who utilized sharp end."

And she did it with food, Officer said. "My mother was a fantastic cook, preparing meals fit for the president, or the court of England."



Courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri

Surveyors work in the block between Ash and Walnut streets during the 1960s urban renewal program that replaced Sharp End with a post office and parking lot.

THE 1960s CLOSED

The demise of Sharp End came swiftly.

Larry Monroe was in the Army, stationed in Germany when his mother, Vitilla Monroe, was forced to shut down Vi's Café at 509 E. Walnut St. The land under the building was sold July 30, 1960, to the Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority. A city directory published in 1961 listed only the Deluxe Pool Hall as still in operation out of more than a dozen businesses included in the 1958 edition.

Because of the delay between gathering and publishing the information, it is questionable whether Edward "Dick" Tibbs was still there when the directory was issued. Only six residents were listed, compared to 19

in the 1958 directory and almost 100 recorded by the 1940 census in the area now used for the post office and city parking garage.

A new Sharp End, dubbed "The Strip," opened on Ash Street between Fourth and Fifth streets.

It didn't last long as the housing in the area was removed, restrictions on the location of black-owned service and entertainment businesses relaxed and sit-ins forced integration in downtown restaurants.

"They built one big building right over here on Ash Street where the Tribune's printing room is," Monroe said. "And it had about eight or nine cubicles in there, ranging from 10-feet-by-22-feet, and that was to house all the buildings that were going to be displaced. My mom said it was not conducive for a good atmosphere, so she just went completely out of business."

Alvin Coleman built a theater, listed in the 1961 directory as the Princess Pam Art Theatre, at 111 N. Fifth St. to cater to blacks.

36,650

Number of people residing in Columbia in 1960

2,765

Number of black residents in Columbia in 1960

SHARP END LAND SALES

The Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority began buying Sharp End properties in December 1959 as part of the Douglass School Urban Renewal Area project. By July 30, 1960, all the properties now occupied by a parking garage on the south side of Walnut Street had been acquired. On the north side, where the post office stands today, the only holdout was Harold Johnson, who owned Nu-Way Lumber Co. and about half of the total property in the block.

Dec. 3, 1959: Irene M. Hulett, co-owners with W. Roger and Marjorie E. Hulett, recorded the sale of lots comprising two-thirds of the frontage along Fifth Street north of the alley between Broadway and Walnut Street.

Dec. 30, 1959: Clyde and Edna Hinshaw recorded the sale of a lot with one-third of the frontage on Sixth Street, running north from the alley between Broadway and Walnut Street.

Jan. 5, 1960: Harold and Val Hinshaw recorded the sale of portions of two

lots comprising the remaining frontage on Sixth Street south of Walnut Street and 40 feet of frontage along Walnut Street itself.

June 30, 1960: Ola McMullan recorded the sale of a portion of the property that included the Arcade Building, home to longtime Sharp End businesses Brown's Place and the Elite Café.

July 22, 1960: John M. Herndon and his wife Alice K. recorded the transfer of a 142.5-foot-by-80-foot lot in the middle of the north side of Walnut Street. Developed in the 1920s, it had been home to the Deluxe Pool Room, Vi's Café and apartments known as "The Cut."

July 30, 1960: Ola McMullan completed the sale of the land beneath the Arcade Building.

July 30, 1960: Roy and Dorothy V. McMullen recorded the sale of the property on the southeast corner of Fifth and Walnut streets, the first lot developed with a brick commercial building about 50 years earlier. It was home to the longest-lasting Sharp End businesses,

including the Green Tree Tavern/Club Twenty-One barroom and the Phillips & Williams Barber Shop.

Oct. 15, 1963: Helen Conley Trice, on behalf of heirs to William T. Conley, recorded the transfer of the lot at the northwest corner of Sixth and Walnut streets, used for storage by Nu-Way Lumber Co. since 1941. The lot also contains one or two frame dwellings.

May 22, 1964: Harold E. Johnson, doing business as Nu Way Lumber, recorded the sale of about half the property bounded by Ash and Walnut streets on the north and south and Fifth and Sixths streets on the east and west. The property included the lot that hosted St. Luke Methodist Episcopal Church until 1941.

June 7, 1965: The Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority recorded the sale of the full city block on the north side of Walnut Street to Ray Eckstein and Joseph Sieman for \$161,160 with a requirement that a post office be completed by July 31, 1966.

Source: Boone County Recorder of Deeds

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 44

Sehon Williams, who had his hair cut every other Friday at the Phillips & Williams Barber Shop, followed the business established in the 1920s to the new location. He noted that, like Vitilla Monroe, not every business owner stayed open.

"A couple of the guys, they didn't really have the resources to go anywhere else, really," he said. "The little restaurant that relied on black customers — suddenly you could go into any restaurant."

If Sharp End had survived, it would have found a rapidly growing customer base. The migration of blacks into Columbia from outside Boone County accelerated. The 1970 census recorded 998 new black residents in the city, a number that included births during the decade, and the total black population of Boone County exceeded 4,000 for the first time since 1910.

The already small black population outside the city shrank again during the decade, and when the 1970 count was made 90 percent of Boone County's black population lived within the city.



... Just to socialize, just eat out, just to get their hair cut. Just to dance. Sharp End was that place where many African Americans could go and feel comfortable that they weren't going to be harassed by whites, that they were not going to be treated any differently."

— ERMA OFFICER, graduate of Douglass School in 1960

Blacks represented less than 2 percent of the population outside Columbia, down from almost 12 percent in 1900.

Despite the fast growth — almost 40 percent during the decade — the white population grew even faster in the 1960s.

Part of the city's population growth was attributable to a large annexation program, but the county population topped 80,000 by 1970, growth of 46 percent over the decade.

Erma Officer, daughter of Vitilla Monroe, graduated from Douglass School in 1960. The newly built shop spaces on Fifth Street, known as The Strip, would not support

what her mother wanted to do with her restaurant.

"I believe her goal was to move her business out away from that area, period, to move it to an area that would serve a diverse population," Officer said.

She was unable to do that. Others did. Lawrence Lee, owner of the Elite Café in its final years, opened a music venue called Breezy Hill, and Ed Tibbs and Paul Britt opened Paradise Hill.

Both thrived by presenting touring acts that included Ike and Tina Turner, B.B. King, Ray Charles and others.

The loss of Sharp End, Erma Officer said, was like the loss of a

home. Her grandparents, Earnest and Mabel Ballenger, raised a family of five girls and two boys on a farm on Mount Celestial Road near McBaine.

In the summer, grandchildren would spend days at the farm and attend church with their grandparents.

Other times, Officer said, when her grandparents would drive to town, their destination would be Sharp End.

"I can remember my grandparents taking three or four of us who were much, much younger," Officer said. "And that would be a place where they would go and park just to be in the midst of people, just enjoy the laughter and the humor and that kind of thing."

Like the farm in McBaine, Sharp End was home.

"Sharp End was the comfort zone for African Americans," Officer said. "Just to socialize, just eat out, just to get their hair cut. Just to dance. Sharp End was that place where many African Americans could go and feel comfortable that they weren't going to be harassed by whites, that they were not going to be treated any differently."



Courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri

Protesters organized by the Congress on Racial Equality picketed Ernie's Steak House, 1005 E. Walnut St., and several other downtown restaurants in the early 1960s demanding equal access to public accommodations.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 47

by the early 1960s that black cultural leaders met with Attorney General Robert Kennedy to seek reforms.

Black writer James Baldwin, in a broadcast conversation with Dr. Kenneth Clark following that 1963 meeting, explained his reaction to talking to a 16-year-old from San Francisco whose family was losing its home to urban renewal.

"They were tearing down his house, because San Francisco is engaging — as most Northern cities now are engaged — in something called urban renewal, which means moving the Negroes out," Baldwin said. "It means Negro removal, that is what it means. The federal government is an accomplice to this fact."

The advent of urban renewal in Columbia coincided with pressures that might have dramatically altered Sharp End. Soon, almost

every restaurant in town would compete for black business after protests such as those at Ernie's, on Walnut Street five blocks east of Sharp End, integrated public accommodations in the city.

"It is just like anything else nowadays," said Sehon Williams, 92, a veteran of the segregated U.S. Army of World War II. "A black club has a hard time making it because you can go anywhere you want to go."

Other trends, however, might have strengthened Sharp End and allowed it to expand.

Part of the pressure for urban renewal came from the explosive growth in the white population outside the redlined black regions of the city. Between 1900 and 1960, while Sharp End existed, the black population of Columbia grew 44 percent while the white population grew by more than 800 percent.

Since 1960, when Sharp End

was demolished, Columbia's black population has grown 342 percent, almost double the rate of white population growth. A scenario where Sharp End remained a vibrant business district is speculation, said Gary Kremer, executive director of the State Historical Society of Missouri.

Urban renewal wiped out black business districts across the state, he said. The opening of other businesses to black patronage would have meant greatly increased competition for all the businesses involved, Kremer said.

"Historians call this counterfactual history, what would have happened if the circumstances that occurred hadn't been there," Kremer said. "I am not so sure that these segregated institutions would have thrived."

Urban renewal nearly passed over Columbia. Voters rejected a Housing Authority and "slum clearance" program by a 2-1 mar-

gin on May 6, 1952. After the Missouri Highway Department approved contracts for an "Inner Loop" and "Outer Loop" road system for the city, the Columbia City Council resubmitted the question, and it passed narrowly on May 29, 1956.

The Outer Loop is today known as Stadium Boulevard. The Inner Loop plan called for reconstruction of Third Street into the Providence Road used today and the same treatment for College Avenue. The Third Street plan required extensive use of eminent domain to widen the two-lane street and enclose Flat Branch Creek.

The Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority also had power of eminent domain as it worked through an inventory of more than 300 structures in the 126-acre urban renewal area.

"You had two reactions there,"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 50



Courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri

These houses, at an unknown location in central Columbia, were demolished as part of urban renewal programs that cleared large swaths of land between 1958 and 1970. The programs split the black community politically and socially.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 48

said Larry Monroe, who turned 20 the year the plan was submitted. "The people who were renting, they had mixed feelings because they were being displaced and they didn't know what or where they were going. The people who owned their homes, they were highly upset. Now most of those homes were good and they are still standing, but they had to get out of them."

Urban renewal was a program created by the Federal Housing Act of 1949. The goal was to remove substandard housing in cities large and small across the country, providing money for relocation to renters and market value for owners. The plan for the Douglass School Urban Renewal Area allocated \$196,000 for relocation.

The law could not overcome restrictive lending practices that limited where blacks could live, and no low-cost financing existed to cover the difference in value of modern construction compared to that being demolished.

One method of replacing the lost housing for poor families was the construction of housing projects such as those along Park Avenue, Unity Place and Trinity Place.

The biggest supporters of urban



The main thing was I was glad to see some of the housing removed, particularly over there on Cemetery Hill, it was just pretty awful. You had dirt floors, outhouses, I remember there was one there where the outhouse was just over the creeks and that when people did their thing it went into the creek. It was just awful."

— DARWIN HINDMAN, former mayor of Columbia

renewal were the landlords who could sell rundown homes they had neglected for years, Williams said.

"The homes that the black people owned, there wasn't nothing wrong with them," he said. "I tell you something else they did. If they wanted to move into the projects, they had to spend that money they got for that property before they could get in at a reduced rate."

Over its lifetime, the land clearance authority took on two additional urban renewal programs, clearing out the "Cemetery Hill" residential area where Lucky's Market now stands and creating a Flat Branch Urban Renewal Area for the area south of Broadway and east of Providence Road.

Anyone who had to walk along Broadway to get downtown knew there were issues that had to be addressed, said former Mayor Darwin Hindman, born in 1933.

"The main thing was I was glad to see some of the housing removed, particularly over there on Cemetery Hill, it was just pretty awful," Hindman said. "You had dirt floors, outhouses, I remember there was one there where the outhouse was just over the creeks and that when people did their thing it went into the creek. It was just awful."

Water came from common hydrants in many black neighborhoods. Former City Manager Ray Beck became director of the Public Works Department in 1960, a post he held for 26 years. "The toughest

was on Cemetery Hill, where there were gravel roads and no electricity. I won't describe what came out of some outdoor water hydrants."

It was Beck's job to put in the infrastructure after the land was cleared. He urged, and the city adopted, policies for road construction that included concrete pavement and curbs and guttering in the redeveloped areas.

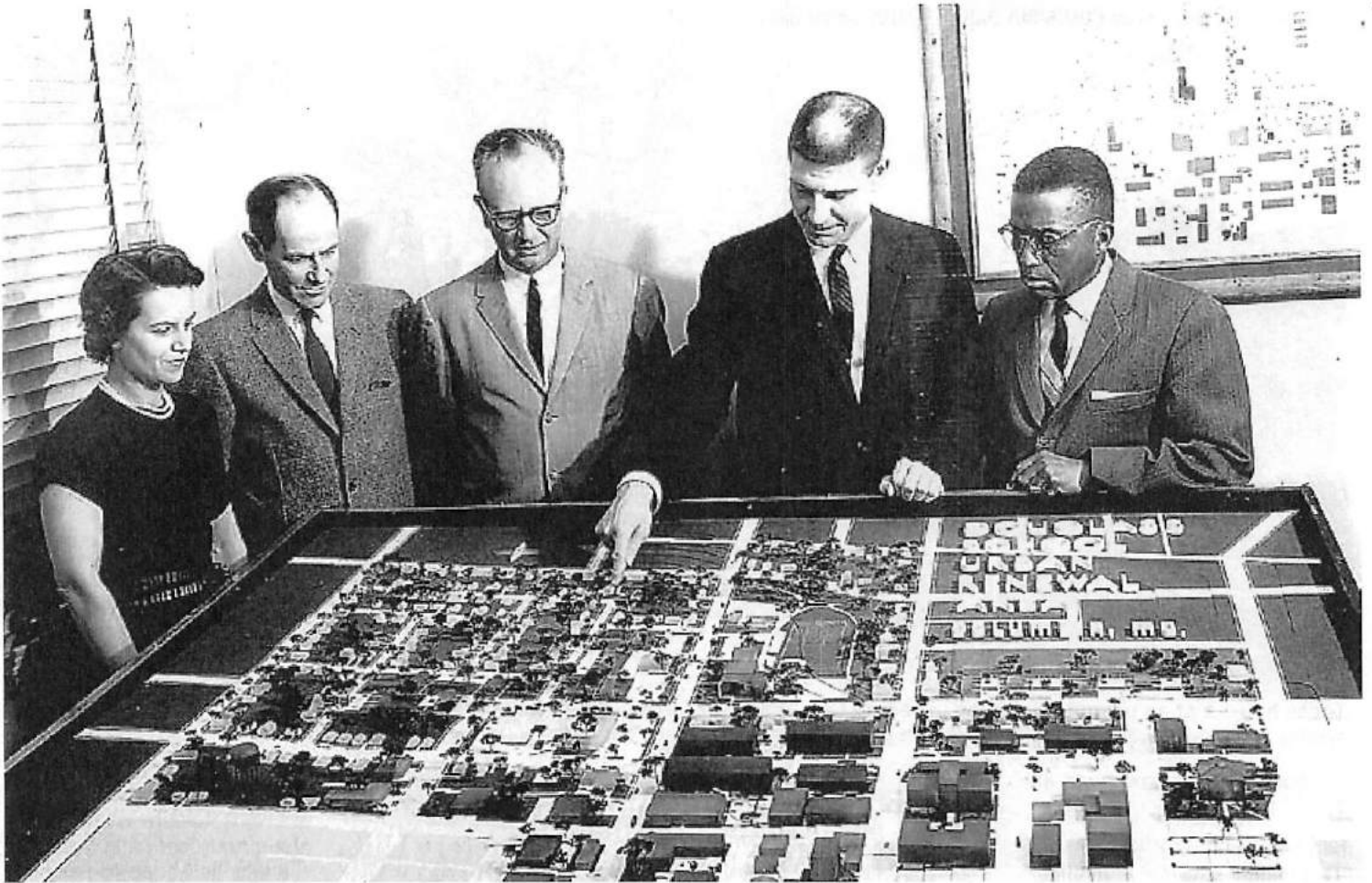
"My philosophy was to stop the bleeding and make everything good," Beck said.

Urban renewal was sold then and continues to be portrayed to Columbia's white residents as a solution to decrepit housing, Mary Beth Brown said.

"They don't show pictures of Sharp End and all the vibrant businesses that were there," Brown said. "So, I think it is important to show everybody in Columbia who wasn't here at the time that there was a vibrant business community that was destroyed by urban renewal."

Black owned businesses in Columbia are almost invisible today, and many are so small they escape being counted. In the last Survey of Business Ownership by the Census Bureau, the number of black-owned businesses was so small it was not reported.

The agency reported 0.3 per-



Courtesy Boone County Historical Society

Members of the Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority members look over a model of what the Douglass School Urban Renewal Area was supposed to be like after completion of the program. They are, from left, Dell Keepers, John Crighton, Charles Proctor, Chairman B.D. Simon and Dorsey Russell.

cent of the 14,676 businesses counted were owned by American Indians, which would be about 44 businesses. About 352 Columbia businesses, or 2.4 percent, are operated by people of Asian descent, the agency said.

In a study for REDI and the Small Business Technology and Development Center, Byndom, Stanton & Associates estimated 125 businesses are owned by blacks in Columbia. Many are small operations with little capital, said Stanton, who is self-employed in construction.

Many black business owners are "lifestyle entrepreneurs," Stanton said. "I am not really looking to grow a million-dollar business. I am looking to grow a business that makes as much as I was making when I was working for someone else."

The report recommended adoption of more visible outreach to black businesses to create net-

works for mutual support, Stanton said. It also recommended programs that will help black business owners overcome obstacles to financing.

"Government entities and all of that have to diversify how they assist small businesses, and in particular African-American businesses here in Columbia," Stanton said. "I think our biggest problem is we can't look to Kansas City and St. Louis and always try to mimic what they do and think that will be successful here. This is a different demographic, and the relationship between the black and white communities in Columbia is different than it is there."

The make-up of Columbia's black community today is dramatically different from the one that created Sharp End.

In 1910, the first business owners were the children or grandchildren of slaves, and almost all were born in Boone County. In 2010, the

census indicated Columbia had gained more black population in the previous 10 years than had lived here in 1910.

Taking advantage of greater affluence and fair housing laws, the black population of rural Boone County has been increasing steadily since 1970. In 2010, more blacks lived outside the city than at any time since 1890.

Verna Laboy grew up in Peoria, Ill., and moved to Columbia with her family in 1994. "I love Columbia, and I have had wonderful opportunities," she said.

Laboy has formed the Worley Street Roundtable to discuss education issues and helped form the Smithton Neighborhood Association to clean out drug dealers. She ran, unsuccessfully, for state representative. She has adopted pioneering black businesswoman Annie Fisher as a character to portray in classrooms to teach the lessons of overcoming adversity.

Vestigial racism is everywhere in the United States and cannot be a deterrent to achievement, Laboy said. "I just want them to stop buying into the hype that you can't do certain things because you are black," she said. "Get over it."

The process of studying the history of Sharp End, urban renewal and the exertions of black residents of Columbia to find a place of respect is a way of understanding what every family seeks, said Toni Messina, a member of the Sharp End Heritage Committee.

"There is the city we know and love and want to promote, but we also know there are income disparities, health disparities, business ownership disparities," Messina said.

"The question," she said, "is what can you do to change that balance so more people are able to not just live in Columbia but thrive and do well and achieve their version of the American dream."



Courtesy Barbra Horrell

This undated photo shows a gathering of well-dressed black women, and one man, in Columbia during the Sharp End era. They are, from left, front row: Stella Lee, unknown, Nancy Chandler, Maggie Brown and Carrie Hill. Second row, from left: Flora Forbis, Mary Forbis, Henry Tumey, Mary Brown and Pauline Wilson Buckner. Third row, from left: Unknown, Clara Payne, Suella Tumey, Julia Brooks and Addie Harris.

Lessons for going forward

Sharp End Committee members hope minority business opportunities will expand.

The Sharp End Heritage Committee began its work to find some truth and meaning in the life and death of Columbia's black business district.

Members want the placement of a historic marker May 19 to be a new beginning that promotes and expands minority business opportunities Columbia.

"If we want to grow minority businesses in Columbia, before we get there we need to deal with the past," committee Chairman Jim Whitt said. "Because Columbia has a very distinct history because of the Sharp End and what happened

to the Sharp End."

The growth of the black population of Columbia has outpaced the growth of the city generally since 1970, and there are three times as many black people living here than at that time. Blacks now make

up a larger share of the city's population than at any time since the 1940s, when Sharp End was thriving.

One of the truths about Sharp End is the need for a connected black community, with networks of businesses that support each other's prosperity, said Ed Tibbs, son of Sharp End fixture Edward "Dick" Tibbs.

"We need to stick together and help each other out if possible," Tibbs said. "Back then, times were really hard, even though they are hard now, but they are really hard

back then, and you just have to persevere. The cards are kind of stacked against you, and there is no secret about that, not just in Columbia but all across the country."

Columbia's urban renewal program demolished hundreds of houses, deliberately targeted the businesses on Sharp End as undesirable and paid little attention to the idea of providing adequate replacement space. Concerns that a repeat performance was in the offing helped kill the recent attempt to create a tax-incentive

HISTORIC SHARP END DEDICATION

A marker commemorating the location and importance of Sharp End was dedicated May 19, 2015. Walnut Street was closed from Fifth Street to Sixth Street for the unveiling in front of the REDI offices.

The program:

Welcome: James A. Whitt, Sharp End Heritage Committee Chair and President of the Columbia Board of Education.

Prayer: The Rev. David Ballenger, Log Providence Missionary Baptist Church

Comments on behalf of the community: Barbara A.B. Horrell, Horrell & Associates

Resolution presentations: Sen. Kurt Schaefer, 19th District; Rep. Kip Kendrick, 45th District

Comments on behalf of the city of Columbia: Mayor Bob McDavid

Ribbon cutting: Columbia Chamber of Commerce

Historic Marker Unveiling: Sehon Williams and Ed Tibbs

Reading of the Historic Marker: Deacon Larry Monroe, Second Missionary Baptist Church

Closing comments: James A. Whitt

zone for industry.

City government is participating in the committee in part to deal with that legacy, said Toni Messina, Civic Relations officer for Columbia.

"That is my interpretation of it, that it is a wound that had been kind of festering for a long time," Messina said. "That, coupled with really a loss of the sense of this area, so we want to bring it back, acknowledge what happened, and go forward with a sense of renewal and celebration."

Telling Sharp End's story is not about glossing over the conditions blacks faced every day as they tried to raise their families and achieve a bit of the American dream, said Larry Monroe, son of café owner Vitilla Monroe. It is a story of strength in spite of those conditions, he said.

"Sharp End is a statement that people are capable of commerce, people are capable interacting, people are capable of running businesses other than services," Monroe said. "Sharp End was an identifying mark, it was somewhat of a heritage in a way. It was not the lifeblood, but it was certainly a part of the lifeblood of this community."

Blacks were among Boone County's earliest settlers, but few are remembered as pioneers because they came to Missouri as

slaves. One-fifth of Boone County's population was black when the 1830 census recognized it as a separate county for the first time.

For 100 years after slavery ended, blacks had few opportunities except those they made for themselves, Anthony Stanton said. Many black business owners have trouble finding financing for expansion or competing for contracts to propel their growth.

"Our history here is different," Stanton said. "And this is how when I talk to others about those issues, this is basically my argument: It is not your responsibility. You are not going to be up all night thinking about how to build black businesses, and I don't expect you to."

"What I expect you to do is do your part in helping us achieve success, because it wasn't totally our fault, and I am talking in general, that the Sharp End is no longer our economic center. And then we will do our part fixing our own issues."

The Rev. James Gray, who can trace his family's roots in Boone County to slave times, said telling the story of Sharp End will open the door to the full history of the black experience in Boone County.

"Not only is it good for the city of Columbia, but also for a lot of the students, the African-American students and young kids in our school system," Gray said.

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Sharp End Heritage Committee



Jim Whitt

Executive Director of cPhase Sports Association, President of Columbia Board of Education. Member since 2009



Barbra A.B. Horrell

Consultant and Owner Horrell & Associates consulting firm



Tyree Bydom

Bydom Stanton & Associates "Griot"



Rev. James Gray

Member, Fun City Youth Academy Board of Directors Former manager, Boone Tavern



Toni Messina

Civic Relations Officer City of Columbia



Ed Tibbs

Son of Sharp End businessman Edward "Dick" Tibbs Entrepreneur



JJ Musgrove

Director Columbia Office of Cultural Affairs



Larry Monroe

Former barber in Phillips & Williams Barber Shop Retired Columbia building inspector



Sehon Williams

Retired, U.S. Postal Service World War II Veteran of 92nd "Buffalo" Division



Vicki Russell

Publisher, Columbia Daily Tribune



Anthony Stanton

Bydom Stanton & Associates Self-employed in construction

Not pictured:

Rev. David Ballenger, pastor of Log Providence Missionary Baptist Church

Mary Beth Brown, Committee Historian

Rachel Bacon, planner, Columbia Community Development Department

Katie Essing, executive director, Downtown Columbia Community Improvement District

Kenny Greene, jewelry designer and owner, Monarch Jewelry

Amy Schneider, director, Columbia Convention and Visitors Bureau

Annelle Whitt, MAC Scholars coordinator, Columbia Public Schools

THE LEGACY LIVES

MU salutes Sharp End Heritage Committee members for their important contributions to the conservation of Columbia's vibrant history.



Sharp End Heritage Committee members, front row, left to right: Ed Tibbs, Sehon Williams, Toni Messina, Ken Greene, Amy Schneider and James Gray. Second row, left to right: Katie Essing, Barbra A. B. Horrell, David Ballenger, Vicki Russell, Chairman James Whitt and Larry Monroe. Not pictured: Rachel Bacon, Mary Beth Brown, Tyree Byndom, J.J. Musgrove, Anthony E. Stanton and Annelle Whitt

"Preserving and promoting our community's African-American legacy enriches us all and brightens both our future and that of our children."

— *R. Bowen Loftin, MU Chancellor*

"It is critical that this history be preserved. Only through an understanding of the hard lessons of our past can we make better decisions for our collective future."

— *Mike Middleton, MU Deputy Chancellor*

"As a native Columbian, I applaud efforts to foster and commemorate the rich diversity of the Sharp End era for the Columbia community."

— *Barbra A. B. Horrell, MU retiree and alumna*

"It has been an honor to work on a project that enables the entire community to tell the story of Sharp End and ensure that it stays alive through memories."

— *Mary Beth Brown, MU staff member and graduate student*

"My dad was a business owner during the Sharp End era. Today, I'm proud to keep his legacy alive through this project and by still owning property in the area."

— *Ed Tibbs, MU retiree*

To share your memories of the Sharp End, please contact Toni Messina at trmessin@gocolumbiamo.com.

More information about Mizzou's efforts to preserve black culture and history: news.missouri.edu/2015/caretakers-of-culture