

Supplementary Listing Record

NRIS Reference Number: SG100005373

Date Listed:


7/23/20

Property Name: Crawford Grill No. 2

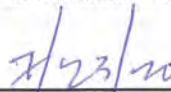
County: Allegheny

State: PA

This Property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation



Signature of the Keeper



Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

The following corrections are made to this nomination:

Section 8. The Period of Significance is 1945-1968. The significant date of 1917 is dropped. The area of significance Ethnic Heritage: Black is also added as the most significant extant resource representing the broad contributions of the Crawford Grill #2 venue that served as a center of Black social life within Pittsburgh's Hill District neighborhood.

The PENNSYLVANIA SHPO was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: **Crawford Grill No. 2**
 Other names/site number: Sochatoff Building
 Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: **2141 Wylie Avenue**
 City or town: **Pittsburgh** State: **PA** County: **Allegheny**
 Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,


I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national X statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A X B C D

	6/8/2020
Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy SHPO	Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____	_____
Signature of commenting official:	Date
_____	_____
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Lisa Deline
Signature of the Keeper

7/23/2020
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site

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Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION/CULTURE – Music Facility

DOMESTIC – Hotel

COMMERCE/TRADE – Restaurant

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER – With Romanesque Revival Influences

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Constructed in 1917, the Sochatoff Building containing the Crawford Grill No. 2 jazz club is located a mile east of Downtown Pittsburgh at 2141 Wylie Avenue in the city's Hill District neighborhood (see Figure 1, Vicinity Map). The three-story, brick commercial building is rectangular in plan and occupies the entire 22-foot by 120-foot lot on which it sits. It is bounded by Wylie Avenue on the south, Elmore Street on the east, an abandoned section of Ishar Way to the north, and a paved parking lot to the west (see Figure 2, Site Plan). There is a concrete sidewalk on both the Wylie Avenue and Elmore Street sides. The former slopes down to the west, while the latter rises up to the north. The jazz club, which occupied the entire first floor, was established by African American businessman William Augustus "Gus" Greenlee and later flourished under the ownership of Greenlee's partner, Joe Robinson, and later his son, William "Buzzy" Robinson. It operated from 1945 until 2003. On each of the two floors above the club are two five-room apartments accessed via an entrance on Elmore Street near the rear of the building (see Figure 3, Floor Plans). Surrounding the site is a mix of historic two- and three-story, brick commercial and apartment buildings; the three- and four-story, brick, Legacy senior public apartments (Rothschild Doyno Architects, 2007); and vacant lots, which once contained late nineteenth and early twentieth century brick row houses as well as storefronts with apartments above (see Photos 1-4 for streetscape views of the immediate neighborhood).

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Narrative Description

Exterior

The Sochatoff Building, named for original owner Joseph Sochatoff (pronounced Sock-a-toff), is a three-story, yellow brick commercial building with Romanesque Revival influences (Photo 5). The storefront, facing Wylie Avenue, contains glass-block windows and a recessed vestibule for public access to the Crawford Grill No. 2 (the second of three clubs of the same name opened by Greenlee). The vestibule configuration and precast terrazzo panels beneath the windows date from a major renovation to the club in 1953 that altered the symmetrical 1917 storefront. Above, bare concrete blocks mark the location where a full-width neon sign on white Carrera glass announced the name of the club from the time of a major renovation in 1953 under Joe Robinson to c. 1976, when the storefront was renovated and the glass block installed under Buzzy Robinson (Figure 4).¹

Above the storefront, the front facade is three bays wide (Photo 6). Window openings at the third story are capped by Romanesque arched brick lintels (all other window openings throughout the building are rectangular and all openings in masonry walls have stone sills). The front façade terminates in a decorative brick cornice with carved stone banners reading “Sochatoff Building” and “1917.” Behind the cornice is a flat membrane roof that slopes toward the rear of the building (Photo 31).

The east facade, facing Elmore Street, is fourteen bays wide (Photo 7). A door in the center of the first story provides access onto the club’s elevated stage; a door at the north end opens to a vestibule and stairway that provides access to four apartments on the upper floors, the basement, and a stair penthouse on the roof. Between the doors on this façade, window openings have been infilled with brick sometime in the middle of the twentieth century. At the center of the second and third stories is a recessed porch, shared by the two apartments on each floor and originally providing access to a fire escape, which was removed c. 2012. The east façade terminates with the continuation of the decorative brick cornice from the front façade. On this side of the building it has a somewhat crenelated appearance due to the upward projection of a series of chimneys.

The rear and west facades are clad in red brick. The rear facade is three bays wide, with windows into the apartments and stairwell (Photo 8). The west facade has no window or door openings since this façade historically abutted the building to the west (the Sochatoff Building being the last structure on the block to be constructed; Photo 9).

With the exception of some original wood, one-over-one, double-hung sash windows in the recessed porches, all existing windows and doors date from the c. 1976 renovation or later. The windows consist of double-insulated glass panels with simulated divided lites in the upper sashes.

¹ Renovations from c. 1976 are described in Ulish Carter, “Grill Still Tops After All These Years,” *New Pittsburgh Courier*, 8 January 1977.

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Interior

On the first floor, the plan of the club is long and narrow with a center aisle running north-south connecting primary spaces (Photo 10). The elevated wooden stage on the east wall is the center of the club—some would argue it is the symbolic epicenter of jazz in Pittsburgh. The stage has two tiers—a modification from c. 1976 to provide more space to perform and greater height above musicians' heads, which nearly hit the ceiling in the original design (Photo 11). In plan, the stage has chamfered corners with its front faced in 4" x 4" tiles. On its north side, a narrow stair with open iron handrail provides access to both tiers as well as the stage door from Elmore Street (Photo 12). To the south, a small passage provides access behind the bar and to a stair under the stage to the basement, which contained storerooms along with two green rooms where musicians could wait or relax when not performing (Photos 29 and 30).

The stage essentially divides the club in two. To the south is the bar area, with the public entrance and small business office at the front, closest to Wylie Avenue (Photos 13 and 14). On the east wall, between the entrance and the stage, is a long bar and mirrored backbar with a bulkhead above that curves out from the stage and turns over the front entry area. Immediately in front of the bar, where barstools would have been, the floor is tile. Across from the bar are U-shaped booths that allowed patrons to face one another when dining and to shift and face the stage when acts were playing. Most of the booths are covered in burgundy-colored vinyl. The center aisle and floor beneath the booths is oak, laid on a diagonal. Overhead, are a series of light fixtures with copper armatures in an arch configuration. Most of these finishes date from the c. 1976 renovations. Finishes at this end of the club that remain from the 1953 renovation include remnants of a large marching jazz band mural on the west wall above the booths constructed of thin strips of bronze sheet metal set into routed grooves in a plywood substrate (Photos 15 and 16); wood paneling, which retains some original inset horizontal gold metal bands; and an acoustic tile ceiling. In the office, where some of the acoustic tile has been removed, portions of the original decorative tin ceiling are still visible above.

To the north is the dining room, with additional booth seating on the west wall in gold-colored vinyl and a dance floor on the east side enclosed by an iron handrail (Photo 17). These features date from the c. 1976 renovation; in 1953 the entire dining room contained booth seating. To the north of the dance floor is the kitchen, with a pass-through in its south wall for food orders ready to be taken to diners (Photo 18). The northeast corner contains a storeroom with a flight of stairs to the basement. The northwest corner houses restrooms.

Above the club are two five-room apartments on each floor, connected by the rear stair from Elmore Street (Photo 19). From the stair hall, a long single-loaded corridor on the west side of each floor leads to the apartments (Photo 20, second floor; and Photo 25, third floor). Originally, a door with glass transom led from the corridor into every room. Some of these doors have been covered with wood paneling on the hallway side and drywall on the apartment side, and most transoms have been concealed on the hallway side by drop ceilings (Photos 21 and 22). The presence of so many doors suggests an original function as separate rentable rooms—an argument bolstered by period sources indicting that Joseph Sochatoff was a "hotel keeper" and a

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1924 article suggesting that the property was a cafe and hotel.² However, an advertisement in the *Pittsburgh Courier* from 1927 for a five-room flat at \$50 per month suggests that the single-room plan had been abandoned by this time in favor of two larger apartments on each floor (Figure 5).³ Today, each five-room unit contains a living room, dining room, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom along with small auxiliary spaces that could have served as nurseries or offices, plus the shared recessed porches. Units typically feature two fireplaces, hardwood floors, and painted wood trim throughout. Some rooms have been altered over time by the addition of wood paneling, drop ceilings and the replacement or removal of original fireplace mantels (see Photos 23 and 24 for additional views of second floor features; and Photos 26-28 for third floor features).

Integrity

2141 Wylie Avenue retains integrity for its period of significance, especially for its association with the Crawford Grill No. 2.

Location: The building remains in its original location.

Design: The building retains its massing, plan (apartments over storefront), fenestration patterns, and method of construction. The jazz club retains its overall plan and sequences of spaces, with the elevated stage as the central focal point. The apartments continue to reflect the layouts and many of the finishes present when the Crawford Grill first opened in 1945.

Setting: While adjacent buildings to the west have been demolished, sufficient surrounding fabric remains to provide a sense of the neighborhood during the club's heyday. Newer construction is compatible in scale, setback and materials. Significantly, the Sochatoff Building retains its commanding position as an anchor building at the corner of Wylie and Elmore.

Materials: The exterior of the building retains its brick facades, decorative brick cornice, carved stone date and name banners, stone window sills and the precast terrazzo panels at the front façade. Inside, the club retains many materials from 1953 and subsequent renovations, such as the wood paneling with horizontal metal bands, curving bulkhead and acoustic tile ceiling.

Workmanship: Decorative art and craft skills continue to be expressed in the building's brick cornice and carved stone banners and in remaining elements of the bronze marching band mural on the wall across from the bar.

Feeling: The Crawford Grill No. 2 is located in what continues to be the heart of the Hill District and the symbolic center of Pittsburgh's jazz legacy. The historic and cultural significance evoked by the presence of the building is palpable. On nearly every visit over the past three years, the author has been approached by passersby from the neighborhood who are concerned about the

² United States Draft Registration Card, 12 September 1918; "Assistant Law Librarian Booze Case Witness," *Pittsburgh Press*, 23 October 1924.

³ *Pittsburgh Courier*, 17 December 1927.

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future of the building and recount having played or listened to music in the club and the significant impact that those experiences have had on their lives.

Association: The Sochatoff Building retains its association with the Crawford Grill No. 2 since no other use has occupied the first floor since the club closed in 2003. Features remain intact to convey the activities and significant musical events that took place inside for almost six decades.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Performing Arts

Period of Significance

1946-2003 for Criterion A

1945-1950 for Criterion B

Significant Dates

1917

1953

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

William Augustus "Gus" Greenlee

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

William Arthur Thomas, architect of the building

B & W Seating Company, designer/installer of the 1953 interior

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Sochatoff Building at 2141 Wylie Avenue is significant under the following two National Register Criteria:

Criterion A for Performing Arts for its association with the historic Crawford Grill No. 2 jazz club, which operated on the first floor from 1945 to 2003. The period of significance is 1946 to 1968. The beginning date is the year that long-time club managers Joe and Buzzy Robinson considered to be the start of the Crawford Grill No. 2 as an important jazz venue (and the year they marked in subsequent anniversary celebrations). The end date corresponds to the 1968 riots following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the subsequent decline of the club's racially mixed clientele, which was a key component of its significance. This Criterion emphasizes the contributions of the Robinsons in developing the Crawford Grill No. 2 into a nationally known jazz club following the death of founder Gus Greenlee.

Criterion B for Performing Arts for its association with William "Gus" Greenlee. The period of significance is 1945 to 1950. The beginning date is the year Greenlee acquired the property and began to develop the second iteration of his successful dining and entertainment establishment, the Crawford Grill, which he had opened at 1401 Wylie Avenue in 1933 (hereafter, Crawford Grill No. 1). The end date is the year that health concerns forced his retirement from active management, culminating in his sale of the property to Joe Robinson and his wife, Lyda. Additionally, the Crawford Grill No. 2 is the most significant extant resource representing the broad contributions of Greenlee to Pittsburgh's Hill District neighborhood and his national impact on jazz, baseball, and the struggle for the equality of African Americans at large. Related resources in the performing arts, such as the Crawford Grill No. 1, and in sports, such as Greenlee Field where his Pittsburgh Crawfords baseball team played, no longer exist.

In 2001, the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (Pennsylvania's State Historic Preservation Office) recognized the significance of the Crawford Grill with a state marker. The marker program, which requires that a site have a least state-level significance, recognized the club itself, along with the contributions of Gus Greenlee and Joe Robinson. The marker text reads as follows: "A center of Black social life where musicians such as Art Blakey, Mary Lou Williams, John Coltrane drew a racially mixed, international clientele. Here, Crawford Grill # 2, the second of three clubs opened 1943; was owned by William (Gus) Greenlee, later by Joseph Robinson." Research to-date has not found an explanation for citing 1943 as the opening date on the marker.

While the contributions of Joe and Buzzy Robinson are central to the significance of the Crawford Grill No. 2, it is felt that their efforts are best considered under Criterion A, and not B. Their significance is so integrally tied to the club and, unlike Greenlee's impact, does not extend significantly into other areas.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

A Brief History of Pittsburgh's Hill District Neighborhood

The history of the Hill District—especially in racial terms—is woven tightly into the history of the Crawford Grill. Located between Pittsburgh's Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers, the neighborhood rises eastward from Downtown toward the city's Oakland neighborhood, giving it grand vistas to the west, north and south. The greater Hill District has five divisions: Lower Hill/Crawford-Roberts, Middle Hill and Upper Hill, moving from west to east, respectively; Bedford Dwellings to the north; and Terrace Village to the south (Figure 6).

The proximity of the Hill District to town made it one of the city's earliest residential neighborhoods. Among the first to settle in the Lower Hill were free African Americans who had established a vibrant middle-class community as early as the prerevolutionary period that came to be known as Little Haiti.⁴ By the 1820s, they were followed by white elites. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, as the upper classes drew their attention to more remote suburbs, the Hill District became a culturally dynamic home for new immigrants. They came largely from Europe initially, and included a large Jewish population, followed by African Americans from the South during the Great Migration of the early-twentieth century. By the early 1930s, the Hill District had become a majority African American neighborhood—but still very much a melting pot. Five years before the opening of the Crawford Grill No. 2, the 1940 Census listed people from twenty-five nationalities living in the neighborhood.⁵

The Hill District became the cultural and symbolic center of African American life in Pittsburgh. At its heart was Wylie Avenue. This major east-west commercial thoroughfare was known as the "Broadway of the Hill District," for its blocks of theaters, restaurants and jazz clubs. It was also simply known as The Avenue.⁶ "Wylie Avenue was about three miles long from Herron [Avenue on the east] all the way to the courthouse. Three miles of retail stores, door to door," described Dr. Nelson Harrison, a longtime jazz musician and historian who played regularly at the Crawford Grill No. 2. "It was alive 24/7."⁷ Blacks and whites together supported a vibrant cultural life and the Hill became a center for developing and attracting top jazz talent at a number of local clubs. Harlem Renaissance poet Claude McKay dubbed the intersection of Wylie Avenue and Fullerton Street the "Crossroads of the World" while others regularly referred to the Hill District as "Little Harlem" from the late 1920s into the 1950s.⁸

⁴ Lynne Conner, *Pittsburgh in Stages: Two Hundred Years of Theater*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007, 24).

⁵ Laurence A. Glasco, "The Hill and the African American Experience," in *August Wilson: Pittsburgh Places in His Life and Plays*, ed. Laurence A. Glasco and Christopher Rawson (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, 2011), 29, 31.

⁶ Richard Gazarik, *Wicked Pittsburgh*, (Charleston: The History Press, 2018), 58; William M. Rimmel "Broadway of Hill Disappearing," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 22 November 1956.

⁷ Patrick Doyle, "Pittsburgh's Hill District Reimagined," *Pittsburgh Magazine*, January 2015; Dr. Nelson Harrison, interview with author, 25 June 2019, Pittsburgh.

⁸ Charles F. Danver, "The 'Toughest Street,'" *Pittsburghesque*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 12 March 1929, 10.

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Happenings in the Hill's jazz scene and broader cultural life were disseminated widely, in part through the efforts of the *Pittsburgh Courier* one of the country's most influential African American newspapers (published from 1907-1965, and 1967-present as *The New Pittsburgh Courier*). With a peak circulation over 350,000 in 1942, the *Courier* reached readers in all forty-eight states plus Europe, Africa, Canada, the Philippines and the West Indies.⁹ *The Courier*, like Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright August Wilson who grew up a few blocks away from the Crawford Grill No. 2, publicly embraced the Hill as a symbol of identity demonstrating "the ability of the Hill's African American community to construct understandings of black lives, social spaces, and places that reflected the black cultural autonomy from white society."¹⁰ The *Courier* "would come to be best known for launching the World War II Double V Campaign (a media campaign aimed at the African American community which sought victory at home against racism and victory abroad against the Axis powers)" and for its decade-long campaign to integrate professional baseball.¹¹ The *Courier* is also significant for the work of Charles "Teenie" Harris, one of the paper's principal photographers from 1938 to 1975. Nicknamed "One Shot," for his ability to capture a scene in a single click, Harris chronicled life in Pittsburgh's African American neighborhoods. His body of work constitutes arguably the largest and most complete photographic documentation of a minority community in the United States.¹² Locations of the *Courier*'s office and August Wilson's house can be seen in Figure 7, "Gus Greenlee's Hill District."

In 1957, as part of an effort to eliminate substandard housing and create a cultural district on the edge of downtown, the City demolished approximately ninety-five acres of the Lower Hill just seven blocks west of the Crawford Grill No. 2, which included Crawford Grill No. 1 and most of the Crossroads of the World (Figures 7, 8 and 9). Stemming from the relatively new planning concept of urban renewal, the effort eliminated over four hundred buildings and displaced eight thousand residents—mostly African American.¹³ While many people in the neighborhood initially had faith that the plans would improve their lives, the redevelopment efforts are now largely considered a near total failure. Most of the promised new housing did not materialize. Evicted residents were left scrambling to find homes on their own in other neighborhoods, mainly the Middle Hill and Homewood on the city's eastern edge—bringing overcrowding and tension to those areas.¹⁴

Plans for the envisioned "cultural acropolis" also did not materialize. Designed as part of the city's first Renaissance, a massive post-World War II program of downtown reconstruction and flood and smoke control, the redevelopment called for a civic auditorium, arts center,

⁹ Glasco, "The Hill and the African American Experience," 33.

¹⁰ Colter Harper, "The Crossroads of the World: A Social and Cultural History of Jazz in Pittsburgh's Hill District, 1920-1970" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2006, 4.

¹¹ The National Baseball Hall of Fame, "About Wendell Smith," <https://baseballhall.org/discover-more/stories/wendell-smith/345>, accessed 9 July 2019.

¹² Robert J. Gangewere, *Palace of Culture: Andrew Carnegie's Museums and Library in Pittsburgh*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 169.

¹³ Glasco, "The Hill and the African American Experience," 38.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

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combination opera house and symphony hall, theaters, an art museum, hotels, offices and a half dozen state-of-the-art residential towers in park-like settings. Only the Civic Arena, with its innovative retractable dome, and Washington Plaza Apartments, designed by I.M. Pei, were ever built. By the late 1960s, federal funding priorities changed and subsidies largely dried up. Urban renewal demolitions in the Hill and elsewhere in the city caused neighborhood groups with little prior voice in city hall to rise up and oppose further destruction. In 1968, the riots following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. helped close the chapter on the original plan for the Lower Hill as investors instead focused their efforts on restoring a collection of historic downtown performance venues. Echoing the words of NAACP head, Byrd Brown, many neighborhood leaders felt that the idealistic social housing plans had gone from urban renewal to "negro removal."¹⁵

By the year 2000, the population of the Hill District had seen decreases as dramatic as the increases that began a century prior. In 1950, before the massive urban renewal policies went into effect, the neighborhood peaked at almost 54,000 residents. Fifty years later, that number had dropped to less than 13,000—a loss of seventy-five percent during the peak years of the Crawford Grill No. 2. Today, about forty percent of the Hill District's residents live below the poverty line. The vast majority of residents are African American, with about six percent of the population being white.

Down but not out, the turn of the new millennium offered a glimmer of hope for the Hill. A tight overall labor market saw African American unemployment drop by more than half. Serious crime in the city fell substantially. Racial segregation in city neighborhoods declined—the first drop in living memory. There was significant new construction that included Washington Square (an African American-owned office building on Centre Avenue), the Crawford Square townhouse development, the Legacy senior housing facility and a new public library.¹⁶ This trend continues today with recent completion of a community pharmacy, grocery store and YMCA along with ambitious plans for a new mixed-use neighborhood on the site of the former Civic Arena, which was demolished in 2011.

History of the Sochatoff Building

In 1888, when he was about sixteen years old, Joseph Sochatoff, emigrated to the United States from Odessa, Russia. While it is unknown if he left by himself or with family, he was not alone. Russian Jews at that time, under the reign of Alexander III, were witnessing a sharp deterioration in their economic, social and political condition. Faced with starvation, many thousands chose to leave the Russian Empire.¹⁷ After graduating from high school in Atlantic City, New Jersey, Sochatoff eventually settled in Pittsburgh's Hill District around 1895. There, he began a succession of retail ventures, including a men's furnishings store at 517 Wylie Avenue in 1902.¹⁸

¹⁵ Byrd Brown, quoted in Laurence A. Glasco, "The Next Page: That Arena on the Hill—The Complex Legacy for Black Pittsburghers," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 5 July 2010.

¹⁶ Glasco, "The Hill and the African American Experience," 51-52.

¹⁷ I. Michael Aronson, "The Attitudes of Russian Officials in the 1880s Toward Jewish Assimilation and Emigration," *Slavic Review* 34, no.1 (March 1975): 1.

¹⁸ *Pittsburgh Press*, 22 March 1902, 8.

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In 1912, he obtained a retail liquor license and became the proprietor of a saloon at 2150 Wylie Avenue (across the street and a few doors east of the subject property; see Figure 7 for location).¹⁹ At this time, he moved to the upstairs apartment with his wife Mary Gorbach Sochatoff and family. The couple had met in Atlantic City; she was also an immigrant from Odessa.

By December 1914, business had developed sufficiently to allow Joseph and his wife to purchase the lot at 2141 Wylie—one of the few undeveloped parcels remaining in the neighborhood (Figure 10).²⁰ Published accounts from the spring of 1916 in *The American Contractor* and *The Moving Picture World* indicate that Pittsburgh architect William Arthur Thomas was hired to design a three-story building that was originally to house a motion picture theater with apartments above (Figures 11 and 12).²¹ While no evidence has emerged that the theater function ever came to fruition, initial planning for it could account for the tall ceiling heights on the first floor. The building was completed in 1917 and is first listed in the 1918 edition of the city directory.

For its first two decades, the first-floor retail space was occupied by a series of different merchants, before Joseph and Mary's son Benjamin operated the Elmore Inn for a few years beginning around 1937. Accounts from newspapers and city directories provide the following snapshot of various tenants and life on Wylie Avenue during that time:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Function</u>
1918	Lawrence Lamont, barber
1919-1921	Young & Lawrence, barber and billiards
1922-1923	The Barnett House, restaurant
1923-1924	The Morry House, restaurant managed by Morry W. Nydes, with “music and high class entertainment every evening by the best of race musicians and entertainers. . .The Home of Good Eats. . .Open every evening with a complete line of Chinese and American dishes (prepared by chef Henry Yee)” ²²
1924	Café and hotel, Joseph Wisotsky, proprietor
1926	The HUB Restaurant, Joseph Wisotsky, proprietor ²³
1930-1932	Gauffney's Auburn Palace, Richard Gauffney, proprietor; featuring “a Chinese Pavilion—Chop Suey and Other Delicacies” along with “Dining and Dancing—Versatile Entertainment—Music by the Auburn Palace Band. . .Open from 7pm to 5am.” ²⁴

¹⁹ *Pittsburgh Press*, 11 July 1912, 16.

²⁰ Allegheny County, Deed Book 1790 / Page 546, 31 December 1914.

²¹ *The American Contractor*, 18 March 1916 and 26 February 1916, 16; *The Moving Picture World*, 25 March 1915, 2040.

²² *Pittsburgh Courier*, 15 December 1923 and 31 May 1924.

²³ *Ibid.*, 22 May 1926.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 2 August 1930.

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1933	Blue Wing Cafe, which hosted a dinner in March 1933 for more than 200 unemployed men of the Hill District and featured a talk by the Negro Council of the Fifth Ward urging that Negro trade not sustain businesses with Jim-Crow employment policies. ²⁵
1933	The Cabin Inn ²⁶
1937-1941	The Elmore Inn, featuring the “largest bar, best place to eat; quick service; cooking by former William Penn [Hotel] chef.” ²⁷ An advertisement from 1937 lists “Catering—Colored People,” as a feature, in a perhaps awkwardly phrased effort by Sochatoff to attract Hill District residents. ²⁸
1941	Easton’s Grill at the Elmore Inn, Ben Loney, entertainment manager ²⁹

Around 1923, Mary Sochatoff moved back to Atlantic City with son Fred and daughter Ruth while Joseph and son Ben moved to Pittsburgh’s East End.³⁰ From there, the latter managed a number of real estate and business ventures and divided their time between Pittsburgh and New Jersey. The advent of Prohibition in 1920 may have prompted the Sochatoffs’ plans, as revenue at the saloon no doubt declined, and after police seized 180 quarts of whiskey from Sochatoff in March of 1920.³¹ In 1947, Mary Sochatoff died in Atlantic City, followed by her husband’s death there in 1952.³²

Ben Sochatoff’s success running the Elmore Inn seems to have been mixed and marked at times by uneasy relationships with the African American community. The *Pittsburgh Courier* reported on a wide range of entertainment formats attempted during his tenure, ranging from evenings packed with live music and Jitterbug dancing, to nightly shows by female impersonators, to a proposed “beauty contest for colored girls between the ages of 21 and 28,” which was rebuked by the Independent League of Negro Voters and resulted in a published apology by Sochatoff in the *Courier* along with the promise to “hire a Negro bartender at once.”³³

In March 1945, Joseph and Mary Sochatoff sold 2141 Wylie Avenue to William “Gus” Greenlee and his wife Helen.³⁴ Greenlee was looking to expand his entertainment business to the then more popular part of Wylie Avenue and, while its success was mixed, the Elmore Inn was sufficiently furnished for the provision of food, drinks and entertainment and had some degree of an established patronage.

²⁵ Ibid., 4 March 1933.

²⁶ Ibid., 25 November 1933.

²⁷ *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 4 March 1937.

²⁸ *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*, 3 March 1937.

²⁹ *Pittsburgh Courier*, 22 February 1941.

³⁰ *Pittsburgh Press*, 1 April 1923.

³¹ *Pittsburgh Press*, 15 March 1920.

³² *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*, 24 August 1947; *Pittsburgh Press*, 1 May 1952.

³³ Chester L. Washington, “Up and Down the Avenue: Reflections from Wylie—The Street That Starts at a Church and Ends in Jail,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 25 March 1939; “Red Hot Show at Elmore Inn,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 23 December 1939; *Pittsburgh Courier*, 22 July 1939.

³⁴ Allegheny County, Deed Book 2850 / Page 431, 13 March 1945.

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In December 1950, the Greenlees sold the property to Joseph Robinson and his wife Lyda.³⁵ Robinson would soon transform the Crawford Grill No. 2 and operate it as one of the city's most successful and influential jazz clubs for the next half century.

In May 1994, widow Lyda Robinson conveyed ownership to her son Buzzy (her husband, Joe Robinson, had passed away in November of the previous year).³⁶

And in August 2009, William Robinson sold the property to Crawford Grill Development LLC, whose goal is to preserve the legacy of the jazz club.³⁷ Speaking shortly after the sale, Pittsburgh Steeler Hall-of-Famer Franco Harris said, "This is a good corner. You stand here and your head just starts bobbing up and down. This is such a historic site that the preservation and history of it has to live on."³⁸

See Figure 13 for chain of title.

Architect William Arthur Thomas (1862-1932)

The Carnegie Mellon University Architecture Archives contains records of approximately forty projects designed by William Arthur Thomas. Unfortunately, 2141 Wylie Avenue is not one of them. However, the website for the archives contains this brief biography:

William Arthur Thomas was an architect and developer who practiced in Pittsburgh during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Thomas was born in Ebbw Vale, Wales, and became an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects before relocating in Pittsburgh in the early 1880s. Thomas' professional work included houses, apartment houses, and commercial and institutional buildings built primarily in Pittsburgh's East End neighborhoods of Friendship, East Liberty, Squirrel Hill, Shadyside and Bellefield. He designed competent buildings distinguished by careful detailing, mostly in the Queen Anne, Colonial Revival and Craftsman/Bungalow styles.

Thomas' most interesting projects were serial housing groups. Like other developers of the time, Thomas repeatedly purchased and subdivided tracts of vacant land, and erected series of houses. In his case, Thomas designed the houses himself. These houses were related to each other by a variety of means including complementary overall design; the use of similar floorplans behind dissimilar facades; and/or the arrangement of buildings in mirror-image sequences. Thomas and his family often lived in one of the new houses for a time before selling off the property and moving on.³⁹

³⁵ Allegheny County, Deed Book 3194 / Page 261, 5 December 1950.

³⁶ Allegheny County, Deed Book 9214 / Page 175, 12 May 1994.

³⁷ Allegheny County, Deed Book 14021 / Page 306, 24 August 2009; *New Pittsburgh Courier*, 14 April 2010.

³⁸ *New Pittsburgh Courier*, 14 April 2010.

³⁹ Carnegie Mellon University, Architecture Archives, "Key Architects and Firms,"

<https://www.library.cmu.edu/ArchArch/collection/william-arthur-thomas>, accessed 5 July 2019.

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Additional research for this nomination reveals that Thomas also did a significant amount of work in the Hill District. His most notable commissions there were for the Calvary Baptist Church (1914) on Wylie Avenue near Kirkpatrick Street and plans for the first Syrian church in Pittsburgh at 1308 Franklin Street near Logan Street (c. 1914; though construction has not been confirmed). Newspaper records indicate that prior to designing the Sochatoff Building, Thomas designed at least a half dozen similar brick buildings nearby, with stores on the first floor and two or three floors of apartments above.⁴⁰

Significance Under Criterion B—Gus Greenlee

William “Gus” Greenlee, was one of the most influential African American business owners in Pittsburgh during the first half of the twentieth century. Though controversial for amassing his fortune through illegal enterprises, he made significant and lasting contributions in the worlds of entertainment and sports that provided unprecedented opportunities for African Americans to advance themselves and enjoy a collective sense of pride in their community and culture.

Greenlee was born December 26, 1896 in Marion, North Carolina.⁴¹ His father was a masonry contractor and one of the most prominent African Americans in town. His mother urged her children to attend college, but Greenlee left school his second year and migrated north in 1916 to Pittsburgh, where he had an uncle. In his early years he made a living by shining shoes, working in a steel mill and driving a taxi cab. After serving in World War One and being wounded in battle, he returned to Pittsburgh. With the advent of Prohibition, Greenlee found the Hill District a fertile ground for selling bootleg liquor from his taxi. Dubbed “Gasoline Gus,” because he was rumored to have transported his merchandise in gas cans, he soon became a prominent figure in the Hill.⁴²

Greenlee’s success allowed him to open the Paramount Inn at 1213 Wylie Avenue, taking over management of what had been a successful early jazz club called the Collins Inn (see Figure 7 for location). Advertised as a “Cabaret Par Excellence” that featured “refined entertainment” and “light lunches,” the Paramount was a speakeasy where liquor was served surreptitiously and a variety of entertainment acts were featured, including Greenlee’s own Paramount Inn Orchestra, considered by the *Pittsburgh Courier* to be “the city’s best.”⁴³ Although the police were successful in closing his club in 1922, Greenlee reopened in 1924 with partner Thomas “Kid” Welch. Under the daily management of William Cleveland, the revitalized club quickly became

⁴⁰ One of the larger and best known commissions by Thomas outside the Hill District was Sixth Presbyterian Church, Forbes and Murray Avenues, in Squirrel Hill (1924).

⁴¹ While many accounts list 1897 as the year of Greenlee’s birth. However, his United States Draft Registration Card from 1917 lists his date of birth as December 26, 1896. That document also indicates that at the time, Greenlee worked as a chauffeur and lived at 1428 Bedford Avenue near the intersection with Fulton Street in the Hill District. The building was demolished as part of the 1956 Urban Renewal efforts.

⁴² Rachel Kranz, “Gus Greenlee,” *African-American Business Leaders and Entrepreneurs*, (New York: Facts On File, Inc., 2004), 117; John N. Ingham and Lynne Feldman, “Greenlee, William Augustus,” *African-American Business Leaders: A Biographical Dictionary* (London: Greenwood Press, 1994), 297-98.

⁴³ Ingham and Feldman, 298; *Pittsburgh Courier*: 16 August 1924, 11 October 1924, 28 November 1925.

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a popular “black and tan cabaret,” a term referring to the racial mix of patrons.⁴⁴ “The *Courier*, a steady supporter of Greenlee, praised the Paramount as ‘just about the classiest beer garden and nite club the city has ever enjoyed’ due to Greenlee’s ‘fine judgment and excellent taste.’”⁴⁵ Greenlee’s experience booking acts for the Paramount led him to the promotional side of the entertainment industry. In 1925, with his manager from the Paramount, he founded the Greenlee and Cleveland musical booking agency, with offices on the third floor of the club. The agency booked acts for many local venues, not just Greenlee’s, including some of the largest performance spaces in town like the five thousand-seat Duquesne Gardens.⁴⁶

That same year, Greenlee partnered with William “Woogie” Harris (brother of photographer Teenie Harris) to introduce Pittsburgh to the numbers racket—a lottery system where people could bet as little as a half-cent on a three-digit number drawn every day and win up to six hundred times their wager.⁴⁷ This kind of illegal gambling flourished in poor neighborhoods, enabling Greenlee to bring in as much as twenty to twenty-five thousand dollars in bets per day as his operations spread throughout the city.⁴⁸

Greenlee’s wealth quickly skyrocketed—at one point estimated at over a million dollars—and earned him the name “the Caliph of Little Harlem.”⁴⁹ His prosperity allowed him to wield enormous financial and political power in Pittsburgh’s African American community where he “tiptoed deftly on both sides of the law.”⁵⁰

While bootlegging and the numbers game as positive forces in the development of African American community conflicts with the more traditional accounts of them as predatory rackets, they provided Greenlee with a capital surplus, which made him a rarity among African Americans in the 1930s.⁵¹ This allowed him to invest in his community in ways rarely seen at the time, particularly in the areas of philanthropy, sports and entertainment.

Charity—The Bank of Gus Greenlee

Despite the rough figure suggested by his illegal activities, Greenlee was an undisputed and respected philanthropist, genuine in his charity.⁵² His numbers revenue, which was in part a response to Jim Crow laws that prevented African Americans from gaining access to capital by

⁴⁴ Ingham and Feldman, 298; *Pittsburgh Courier*, 16 August 1924.

⁴⁵ Harper, 71, citing the *Pittsburgh Courier*, 15 July 1933.

⁴⁶ Kranz, 117; *Pittsburgh Courier*, 28 November 1925 and 30 January 1926.

⁴⁷ *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 26 September 1930.

⁴⁸ Kranz, 117.

⁴⁹ Charles F. Danver, “The Caliph of ‘Little Harlem,’” *Pittsburghesque*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 10 October 1932; “Death Scores ‘Hit’ on Retired Numbers Boss,” *Pittsburgh Press*, 8 July 1952.

⁵⁰ Monte Irvin with Phil Pepe, *Few and Chosen: Defining Negro Leagues Greatness* (Chicago: Triumph Books, 2007), 172.

⁵¹ Rob Ruck, *Sandlot Seasons: Sport in Black Pittsburgh* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 151; Robert Kuhn McGregor, *A Calculus of Color: The Integration of Baseball’s American League* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2015), 34.

⁵² Ruck, 34.

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other means, became a primary source of investment. After the sudden collapse of the Hill District's Steel City Bank in 1925, the African American community was without a financial institution of its own—except, that is, for the numbers bank afforded by Greenlee.⁵³ Throughout his life, Greenlee helped fellow African Americans with scholarships and funding to buy homes and start businesses at a time when most white-owned banks refused these services—and, often, he had little expectation of being fully paid back, except in loyalty. He regularly provided poor residents with food, handed out turkeys on holidays and offered a soup kitchen on Wylie Avenue throughout the Great Depression.⁵⁴ Although the numbers trade broke the law, there appears to have been little stigma in the community to being involved. Greenlee himself argued in 1932 that “if it hadn't been for the numbers, my people would have been a lot worse off than they were.” At one point, his numbers-related payroll supported seventy people and their families.⁵⁵

Sports—The Pittsburgh Crawfords

Greenlee's domination of the numbers racket had considerable positive benefit for African American sport and helped set the stage for the ultimate integration of professional baseball. In 1930, Greenlee used his wealth to purchase the semi-pro Crawford Colored Giants baseball team. The club, which he renamed the Pittsburgh Crawfords, had been organized by Jim Dorsey, the director of the Crawford Recreation Center, a combination bathhouse and community center catering primarily to African Americans, located at the corner of Wylie and Crawford Avenues.⁵⁶ Greenlee made the unprecedented move of paying all players a regular starting salary of \$125 a month at a time when “few blacks in the 1930s had the money to bank roll sports teams.”⁵⁷

While initially claiming to know nothing about sports, “Greenlee, whose numbers business knew no depression, began opening up his bank account” to attract the best players and quickly built “a great black baseball dynasty. . . recruiting some of the best black ball players in the nation.”⁵⁸ He soon assembled “what is arguably one of the greatest baseball teams of all time. . . which included five future Hall of Famers: Leroy ‘Satchell’ Paige, ‘Cool Papa’ Bell, Josh Gibson, Judy Johnson, and Oscar Charleston.”⁵⁹ Bob Feller, himself a Hall of Fame inductee, admirably called the Crawfords “the Yankees of Negro baseball.”⁶⁰

“Greenlee's next move was a truly breathtaking step for a black team—he decided to build a state-of-the-art stadium for the Crawfords” on Bedford Avenue on the northern edge of the Hill District (Figures 15-19; see Figure 7 for location).⁶¹ African American teams “had long been

⁵³ Ibid., 150.

⁵⁴ Kranz, 118; “Greenlee and Harris, ‘Big Shots’ in Racket to Feed Hungry,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 22 December 1930.

⁵⁵ Ingham and Feldman 299; Greenlee quoted in Danver, “The Caliph of ‘Little Harlem.’”

⁵⁶ Donn Rogosin, *Invisible Men: Life in Baseball's Negro Leagues* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 14-15.

⁵⁷ Ingham and Feldman 300; Jim Bankes, *The Pittsburgh Crawfords* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2015), 20.

⁵⁸ Ingham and Feldman, 300-301.

⁵⁹ Kranz, 117.

⁶⁰ Rogosin, 16.

⁶¹ Ingham and Feldman, 300-01.

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without playing fields of their own, leaving them at the mercy of white stadium owners who rented to the black clubs when their own teams were on the road.”⁶² With a goal of giving African American teams greater control over their schedules, Greenlee broke ground on his own baseball field in the fall of 1932, having collaborated with Pittsburgh architect Louis A. S. Bellinger, one of only sixty African American registered architects in the country.⁶³ “Six months, \$100,000, seventy-five tons of steel, and fourteen railroad cars of cement later, Greenlee Field was ready.”⁶⁴ Designed, built and owned by African Americans, it was the pride of the community. Seating six to eight thousand fans or more (depending on the event) Greenlee Field featured lights for the baseball, boxing, football and auto racing—three years before the first night game in Major League Baseball was played at Crosley Field in Cincinnati.

Having established a team and a place to play, Greenlee next set out to form a league. In 1933, he formed a second Negro National League to replace the one that had folded two years earlier. “Despite its wobbly rebirth during the absolute depths of the depression, the league surpassed all previous efforts at organized black baseball and survived until the late 1940s.”⁶⁵ His accomplishments would earn him the sobriquet “Jesus of Negro Sport,” by Negro League player Gabe Patterson.⁶⁶ “Four years after Greenlee reopened the Negro National League, a competitive Negro American League began and soon a Golden Era in black baseball had begun” that would last until 1947, when Jackie Robinson made his debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers and became the first African American to play in the major leagues.⁶⁷

While the role played by Dodgers General Manager Branch Rickey in signing Robinson is generally well known, less known is the significant role played by the African American community to support integration from within. A key player was Wendell Smith, sports reporter for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, who, with the backing of his paper, helped lead the fight for integration from Pittsburgh’s Hill District (Figure 20). Encouraged to pursue Civil Rights angles, Smith interviewed over fifty white National League players and managers in 1939 about their thoughts on segregation and used the resulting data—that over seventy-five percent had no opposition—to put pressure on major league club owners who claimed players would never tolerate a black teammate. By 1945 Smith helped organize tryouts for black players with the Pittsburgh Pirates, Boston Braves, and Boston Red Sox, though each time ownership refused to sign anyone.⁶⁸

Smith, who is acknowledged for his role in the 2013 film *42* (named for Robinson’s uniform number) also played a critical role vetting African American players for Branch Rickey.

⁶² Ruck, 156.

⁶³ Geri Strecker, “The Rise and Fall of Greenlee Field: Biography of a Ballpark,” *Black Ball, A Negro Leagues Journal*, 2, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 42.

⁶⁴ Ruck, 156.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁶⁶ Ingham and Feldman 300; Lawrence D. Hogan, *The Forgotten History of African American Baseball*, (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2014), 160.

⁶⁷ Ron Borges, “Baseball’s Dirty Secret,” *The National* (11 April 2009), <https://www.thenational.ae/sport/baseball-s-dirty-secret-1.495096>, accessed 7 July 2019.

⁶⁸ The National Baseball Hall of Fame, “About Wendell Smith.”

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Numerous sources credit Smith with being the person to first suggest Jackie Robinson, including Robinson himself in his autobiography *I Never Had It Made*.⁶⁹ However, in a column in the *Pittsburgh Courier* following Greenlee's death in 1952, Smith unmistakably credits Gus Greenlee:

“[Gus Greenlee] was, indeed, one of the great men of our time. Had he not passed this way, there probably wouldn't be a Negro player in the big leagues today. He had so much to do with that “great experiment” as anyone we know, including Branch Rickey. It was Greenlee, in fact, who Rickey called upon when he first started thinking about signing Negro players. . . .Around 1944. . .[Greenlee] was in the process of organizing the United States League, a circuit that never bloomed profusely but did turn out to be the avenue which led Jackie Robinson, Roy Campanella and the others to the majors. . . .Negro baseball reached its greatest heights under his direction. Crowds numbering as high as 50,000 turned out for the games. . . .Those big crowds attracted the attention of major league owners. Rickey, for instance, was especially impressed. The daily papers started devoting considerable space to Negro baseball. . . .Baseball fans started asking why players like Paige, Gibson, Willie Wells, Buck Leonard and all the other great Negro stars weren't in the majors. . . .Finally one day in 1945, Rickey said to him: “If you think you can find me a player good enough to play in the majors, get him for me. . . .Jackie Robinson's name eventually came out on top. Greenlee knew that whenever a major league club signed Negro players, it would sound the death knell for Negro baseball. He knew, too, it meant that his proposed United States League would die. But unlike other promoters in Negro baseball, he did not care. He said: “I don't care if I never own another Negro team or promote another game. I want to see Negro players in the major leagues.”⁷⁰

Smith was not alone in acknowledging Greenlee's role in helping to integrate baseball. Satchell Paige stated at the time of Greenlee's death, “Whatever I gained in this life I owe to the generosity of Greenlee. That goes for all the other men of my race who are in baseball today, whether they know it or not.”⁷¹ Jimmy Powers, sports writer for the *New York Daily News* concluded that “Greenlee was a potent factor in opening the door for the Negro Ballplayer to enter the major leagues. Gus, for years, poured his money into baseball, keeping alive the great Negro league, as a testing and proving ground for young talent.”⁷²

While integration was clearly a high point in Greenlee's career in sports, his own fortunes were not as illustrious. While his Crawfords dominated the Negro leagues for five years, two events in 1937 brought an end to the Greenlee domain. First, his numbers racket took a series of decisive hits as a new, progressive administration had city police step up their raids, aided by a low-level

⁶⁹ Jackie Robinson with Alfred Duckett, *I Never Had It Made: An Autobiography of Jackie Robinson* (New York: Harper Collins, 2013): 19.

⁷⁰ Wendell Smith, “Gus Greenlee Was One in a Million,” Wendell Smith's Sports Beat, *Pittsburgh Courier*, 19 July 1952, 14.

⁷¹ Satchell Paige quoted in Jimmy Powers, The Powerhouse, *New York Daily News*, 13 July 1952, 192.

⁷² Jimmy Powers, The Powerhouse, *New York Daily News*, 13 July 1952, 192.s

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Greenlee employee who was reportedly providing detectives with the locations where numbers money was being counted.⁷³ Then, nine of his sixteen regular players, including Satchell Paige, deserted Greenlee for the Dominican Republic, drawn by the enormous salaries of dictator Rafael Trujillo, who thought a great baseball team would bolster his popularity. While Greenlee struggled to hold on, he was finished as a power by 1939.⁷⁴ He sold the team and the franchise moved to Toledo, where it lasted only a few years. In the midst of all this, he also lost his stadium. In 1938, the Pittsburgh Housing Authority selected the stadium as part of the site for Bedford Dwellings, its first low-income public housing development under the 1937 Wagner-Steagall United States Housing Act. Federal officials, hoping to pressure Greenlee out of the numbers racket at this particularly vulnerable time, played a role in ultimately getting him to sell for a mere thirty-eight thousand dollars. At the close of the 1938 season, the stadium was demolished and the dictates of early urban renewal efforts had established their foothold in the Hill.⁷⁵

Baseball wasn't Greenlee's only foray into professional sports. In 1935 he bought the contract of twenty-one-year-old light-heavyweight boxer John Henry Lewis and moved him into his Frankstown Avenue home in the city's East End. Greenlee didn't live in the Hill by this time, but in what one *Courier* writer called the "dicty," or stylish, district of Pittsburgh. Greenlee's numbers partner, Woogie Harris, lived next door. Greenlee built a boxing ring in his backyard and constructed a dormitory for a stable of African American fighters. His goal was to have a fighter in each of the eight weight classes in the sport. While none of his other fighters went far, Lewis defeated Bob Olin in fifteen rounds on Halloween night 1935 in St. Louis. He became the first African American light-heavyweight world champion in history and Greenlee became the first African American to manage a world champion.⁷⁶

Entertainment—Establishment of the Crawford Grill

By the late 1920s, Gus Greenlee owned a number of businesses in the Hill District. In 1929, he purchased a three-story, late-nineteenth century brick building that would become his famed Crawford Grill. Located at 1401 Wylie Avenue, on the northwest corner of Wylie and Townsend Street, a block from the famed Crossroads of the World, the building had previously been the Leader House, a hotel and later speakeasy established around 1910 (Figures 21-23; see Figure 7 for location). For the first few years, Greenlee operated a restaurant in the space, initially the Green Boot and then the New Avenue.⁷⁷ With the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment, Greenlee seized on the opportunity to establish a more "legitimate" high-end restaurant, bar and cabaret from which he would base his various business ventures, host notable guests, and feature

⁷³ Kranz, 188; Averell "Ace" Smith, *The Pitcher and the Dictator: Satchel Paige's Unlikely Season in the Dominican Republic* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 59.

⁷⁴ McGregor, 35.

⁷⁵ John L. Clark, "The Rise and Fall of Greenlee Field," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 10 December 1938.

⁷⁶ Aaron Skirball "Louis vs. Lewis: A Pittsburgh-Managed Fighter Faces the Champ," *Pittsburgh Quarterly* (Winter 2014); Ruck 166; Floyd G. Snelson, "Gus Greenlee: Big Mogul of Pittsburgh," *Pittsburgh Courier*, 19 November 1932.

⁷⁷ *Pittsburgh Courier*, 30 November 1929 and 8 March 1930.

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both local and touring entertainers and bands.⁷⁸ Greenlee apparently selected the name Crawford Grill to help cross-promote the club and his recently purchased baseball team.⁷⁹

Not surprisingly, given his clout, Greenlee was reportedly the first African American in the city to get a liquor license after Prohibition ended on December 5, 1933.⁸⁰ He wasted no time making renovations, some of which were required by post-Prohibition legislation. Changes included turning two small dwellings behind the building on Whitcomb Street into a connected kitchen for the Crawford Grill (see Figures 24 and 25 for Sanborn maps). Greenlee held a soft opening of his new venue on Christmas Eve.⁸¹ The *Courier* described the venue as follows (all spelling is original):

“When you take a stroll down the Avenoo in search of cool drinks and good food served in ultra style, you will stop at the newly remodeled and “glorified” Crawford Grill and GO NO FURTHER!!! Because it is the SPOT! Clothed in new garments of Spanish creation, painted in bright terra cotta and paisley frescoes of exotic design, you will hardly recognize the old Grill. . . [The bar area is] a novel replica of a Spanish hacienda. . . .No detail has been overlooked. . . .The Crawford Grill. . .has the finest stock of liqueurs the connoisseur might desire. Its wine list is on par with the most expensive restaurants and drinking palaces in the country. . .and the prices are lower. . . .And the food! It will match the liqueurs in perfection. Chef J.E. Brown, “King of Cuisine,” will give common dishes rare flavors. . . [and] is prepared to please the most discriminating epicure.⁸²

In early 1934, The *Courier* added that “The place right now is one of the show-spots of the country. Known from coast to coast, it ranks favorably with anything of its kind in the east and Midwest.” The paper also quoted Greenlee, who said “I’m going to have everything in the line of drinks that one can ask for. We realize that our people want a place of this kind, and we are giving it to them.”⁸³

Like his Paramount Inn before, the Crawford Grill No. 1 quickly became one of the most popular black and tan clubs in the city. Ethnomusicologist Colter Harper, who wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on the social and cultural history of jazz in the Hill, notes that during the 1930s and 40s, “the Grill,” as it came to be known, catered to a wide range of clientele and became noted as one of the Hill’s most popular meeting places for everyone from “the highest profession” to the “lowest rackets,” demonstrating that class divisions in Pittsburgh’s African American communities were less prevalent in the nightclubs of the Hill District.⁸⁴ Writing about the Grill in his book *Sandlot Seasons: Sport in Black Pittsburgh*, author Rob Ruck writes that “An evening’s crowd included both blacks and whites, and black customers were usually fairly representative of

⁷⁸ Harper, 98.

⁷⁹ *Pittsburgh Courier*, 14 July 1951.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 9 December 1933.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 16 December 1933 and 23 December 1933.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 23 December 1933.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 6 January 1934.

⁸⁴ Harper, 98, citing the *Pittsburgh Courier*, 14 July 1951. See citation for Harper’s dissertation in footnote 10.

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a cross-section of the city's black population. Visiting Negro League ballplayers, members of black Pittsburgh's elite, and workmen unwinding after a shift could be found at adjoining tables, if not actually drinking together."⁸⁵

Harper notes that at a time when most of the drinking spots along Wylie were seen as "holes-in-the-wall," the Grill offered "something besides swinging doors, stand-up bars, backrooms and free lunch."⁸⁶ Greenlee's vision for his new venue required a considerable investment, leading the *Courier* to note that, he "has spent more money among Negroes in improving various places in the Hill district than any other Negro we know. . . ."⁸⁷ A key factor in differentiating his club from others was "Greenlee's featuring of entertainers from outside of Pittsburgh, particularly New York, [which] contributed to the club's popularity and distinctiveness in the Hill."⁸⁸

The Crawford Grill was far more than just a music venue in that it "served as stage for Greenlee's public life. Here he balanced his image as both a powerful and extravagant racketeer and softhearted philanthropist dedicated to the betterment of the Hill District. In public, Greenlee played up the role of the socialite racketeer with expensive cars, tailored white suits, and highly visible business ventures . . . In the Grill, Greenlee played the role of gracious host. . . ."⁸⁹ Directly across Wylie Avenue, Greenlee's partner, Woogie Harris, reigned over a similar empire from his Crystal Barbershop. Greenlee's open and hospitable nature, Harper notes, is illustrated by a meeting in his private office after a party he threw for Duke Ellington:

One of the most important collaborations in the jazz world had its roots in the Crawford Grill. As Gus Greenlee's nephew George asserts, it was at the Crawford Grill that he was able to arrange the 1938 meeting between a young Billy Strayhorn and Duke Ellington. . . The following day Greenlee and Strayhorn met Ellington at the Stanley Theater where Strayhorn's impressive piano skills prompted Ellington to request an arrangement to use with his orchestra. The results, performed on the last day of Ellington's stay in Pittsburgh, impressed him so much that he invited Strayhorn to New York, beginning one of the greatest collaborations in jazz.⁹⁰

"While the first Crawford Grill always provided great entertainment," Harper points out that, "music was mostly a backdrop to the club's social scene and to Greenlee's grand lifestyle." As the *Courier* wrote in 1951, "Under the ownership of Greenlee, Crawford Grill has been the meeting place of every Negro baseball club operating since 1932, every championship fighter, including Joe Louis who lived there while training for Hans Birkie, theatrical and radio stars, including Jimmy 'Schnozzle' Durante, Lena Horne, Ethel Waters, Bill 'Bojangles' Robinson, Billy Eckstine and all the native talent. Band leaders, white and colored, paid a visit to the 'Grill'

⁸⁵ Ruck, 139.

⁸⁶ Harper, 99, citing the *Pittsburgh Courier*, 23 December 1933.

⁸⁷ *Pittsburgh Courier*, 6 January 1934.

⁸⁸ Harper, 100.

⁸⁹ Harper, 101-02

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 101-02.

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on every trip to Pittsburgh.”⁹¹ “Pittsburgh jazz musicians identified the Grill as foremost a center of the Hill’s social life rather than a center of musical innovation. . . . Trends and practices begun in the 1930s continued into later decades. Throughout the 1940s, for example, musicians at the Grill were expected to play the role of entertainers rather than artists, subduing modernistic musical trends in favor of popular favorites performed in a style recognizable to the venues patrons.”⁹²

The real action in jazz at the time was occurring just down the street at 1213 Wylie. There, in the building recently vacated by Greenlee’s Paramount Inn, was the union hall and Musician’s Club of Local 471 of the American Federation of Musicians, the black musicians’ union, which had been founded in 1908. A creative focal point of the Hill’s nightlife, this was the place where musicians could socialize, book jobs, play, rehearse, and jam freely with local musicians and those traveling through town. Soon, however, the coming destruction of the Lower Hill would force the move of the union hall out of the neighborhood and “clubs such as the Crawford Grill No. 2 and the Hurricane Bar would become new focal points of jazz performance where musician and audience values were reconciled in highly charged performances.”⁹³

The Crawford Grill No. 1 remained in business until 1951, when it was destroyed by fire—a fact that Gus Greenlee’s family reportedly kept from him due to his deteriorating health at the time.⁹⁴ The building was demolished in 1959 as part of the urban renewal scheme that destroyed the Lower Hill so that the misguided cultural acropolis could be started.

Significance Under Criterion A—The Crawford Grill No. 2

By the late 1930s, the club scene on lower Wylie Avenue was beginning to peak. Action and nightlife were moving further up in the Hill, but still on the Avenue. Seeing the writing on the wall, Gus Greenlee made the strategic decision to purchase the three-story, Sochatoff Building at 2141 Wylie Avenue in early 1945 (Figures 26-29). The first known published mention of his new venture is an advertisement in the January 6, 1945 edition of the *Courier*, that touts a menu of Chinese and American dishes, beer, wine, whiskies, and mixed drinks and the fact that food was available all night.⁹⁵

This move to the Middle Hill will come to be seen in historical context as both a means to maintain continuity with the African American nightclub traditions of the Crawford Grill No. 1 and the Lower Hill (especially after Urban Renewal), but also as an opportunity to break from previous traditions of nightlife in that portion of the neighborhood. Part of a whole new generation of jazz clubs, the new Grill, along with similar small clubs like the Hurricane Bar, would be at the center of a “reshaping of the neighborhood’s physical and social landscape [that] coincided with the ‘golden age of modern jazz. . . .’” so termed by musicologist Ingrid Monson because it “established the aesthetic standards by which succeeding generations of jazz

⁹¹ *Pittsburgh Courier*, 14 July 1951.

⁹² Harper, 106-07.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 186.

⁹⁴ Gazarik, 61.

⁹⁵ *Pittsburgh Courier*, 6 January 1945.

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musicians have continued to measure themselves in the early twenty-first century.”⁹⁶ This time, the emphasis would be on the music—performed in an intimate setting and for highly receptive audiences.⁹⁷

The transition of the Crawford Grill No. 2 into a jazz venue that would become nationally recognized began at once. Wanting to distinguish his new venue from the many taverns along Wylie and Centre Avenues that served drinks and food into the late hours, Greenlee inaugurated some pivotal changes. First, he hired Bill Norwood, a former chief cook for the U.S. Navy who had worked for eighteen years in various hotels and nightclubs.⁹⁸ Simply put, the food had to be something special.

Second, he made the decision to have a regular schedule of live musical entertainment and installed a raised stage midway through the venue’s main room, at a height of more than five feet off the floor, thus making music the central focus. With this accomplished, patrons could view performers from any seat in the house and the height of the musicians aided the projection of their acoustic instruments.⁹⁹

Third, and most important in the historic arc of the club, Greenlee brought in his friend Joe Robinson as a partner and manager of the club within a year of buying the building (Figures 30 and 31).¹⁰⁰ Joseph Robinson was born in March 1904 in Oceola, Arkansas, and migrated north to Pittsburgh when he was nineteen years old. After working a series of odd jobs, he befriended Gus Greenlee.¹⁰¹

Robinson would prove to be visionary and vital to the future of the club, especially when Greenlee’s health rapidly declined in late 1950 and he was forced to increasingly withdraw from the daily management of his business affairs, which at the time included a short-lived Crawford Grill No. 3 on the Northside, which operated from 1948 to 1955. Suffering from heart problems, he was first confined to his home on Frankstown Road, but then entered the Veterans Hospital in Aspinwall where he stayed until several months before his death in July 1952 at the age of 56.¹⁰² His deteriorating health prompted the sale of the Crawford Grill No. 2 to Robinson in December 1950.

One of Robinson’s first moves was to do more with the music and build the club’s identity as a jazz venue. In 1952, he replaced the house entertainer, Hammond organist Sammy Nowlin, with

⁹⁶ Harper, 187; Ingrid Monson, *Freedom Sounds: Civil Rights Call Out to Jazz and Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 4.

⁹⁷ Harper, 186.

⁹⁸ Harper 203; *Pittsburgh Courier*, 10 February 1945.

⁹⁹ Harper, 205.

¹⁰⁰ “Robinson-Greenlee’s Grill No. 2 Drawing Satisfied Patrons,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 15 June 1946.

¹⁰¹ The 1930 U.S. Census shows Robinson living on Taylor Street on Pittsburgh’s Northside with his wife Lydia [sic], son William, and in-laws William and Mary Edmonds. His occupation is listed as butler to a private family. In 1940, his family is listed as living on Charles Street on the Northside and included wife Lyda, sons Joseph and William, daughter Joyce and mother-in-law Mary Edmonds. His occupation is listed as collector of commissions in the financial industry.

¹⁰² *Pittsburgh Courier*, 27 January 1951.

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local alto saxophone legend Leroy Brown and his quartet, the “Brown Buddies.” Brown did not have far to commute as he and his wife Betty moved into one of the second-floor apartments around the same time.¹⁰³ That same year, as part of a significant investment to attract and maintain patrons, Robinson installed central air conditioning throughout the club.¹⁰⁴

Robinson’s most impactful move, however, was a complete renovation of the club in the summer of 1953 to create an environment for jazz on par with major clubs throughout the country. “I am putting a new face on the inside. [The] ceiling will be lowered, new booths installed, new bar, back bar, modern lighting, and even more comfort for the ladies. I am spending more money on remodeling than the entire building cost. . . .”¹⁰⁵

Robinson believed enough in his investment to go to the added expense of hiring a professional photographer, Pittsburgh’s Vinard Studio, to document the new interior and create a color postcard (Figure 32). The reopening was celebrated with a week of festivities at the end of August and the club was an immediate success (Figure 33). The *Courier* described the revitalized venue as follows:

For those who have not seen the new Crawford Grill Number Two, here is what it looks like: a low modernistic ceiling of attractive sound absorbent materials gives a cozy air. The booths in the bar section are gay pumpkin red, with the booths in the dining room in restful chartreuse. . . .The maddest touch of all is the bronze mural of a band on parade cast in modernistic figures that march along the wall opposite the new bar. . . .The general good taste of the decorations gives the Crawford Grill Number Two an air of quiet splendor that is enhanced by gold bands at strategic spots in the room. The dining room features a very pretty wall pattern. Everywhere one looks there is a new, more imposing color scheme to relieve the sameness of the average place. . . .The B & W Seating Company outdid itself in designing this room, plus creating a fine new bar with matching stools. A wonderful job.¹⁰⁶

The *Courier* later also praised Robinson’s staff:

“The chief reason for the ultra-modern appearance of the Crawford Grill Number Two . . . is that Manager Joseph Robinson took over the place some eight years ago and built what was formerly no more than a saloon into one of the top night spots to be found anywhere. . . .there are five cooks, seven waitresses, four bartenders, not to mention the band that plays nightly and the men who clean the place.”¹⁰⁷

Among those who attended the opening was Pittsburgh’s Mayor David Lawrence who praised the club as “one of the finest places I’ve ever been in.” Lawrence, a primary catalyst in the city’s

¹⁰³ *Pittsburgh Courier*, 12 July 1952; Nate Guidry “Stairway to Heavenly Music—A Life in Tune: Betty Brown Tells All About Her More Than 50 Years of Living Above Crawford Grill,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 29 June 2007.

¹⁰⁴ *Pittsburgh Courier*, 19 July 1952.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 13 June 1953.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 29 August 1953.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 24 October 1953.

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redevelopment, stated “I am as proud of this restaurant as I am of the big skyscrapers going up downtown. Small businesses are the lifeblood of Pittsburgh as well as the big industries. I salute Joe Robinson.”¹⁰⁸

Also on hand to document the renovation was Teenie Harris, whose images from August 1953 show the renovated interior both devoid of patrons just before the reopening and packed with people once the doors were thrown open (Figures 34-39). In his images, Harris captured the social and economic vitality that was present in the Hill District that week as the neighborhood celebrated the success of one of their own.

For the design of the interior, Robinson selected the B & W Seating Company of Pittsburgh, whose showroom and factory was just a mile away at 2817 Forbes Avenue. Founded in 1946 by brothers Gordon W. and George W. Beers and Samuel D. White, the company specialized in the manufacturing of custom restaurant furnishings, including the design of complete interiors (Figures 40 and 41).¹⁰⁹ The firm boasted in their advertising that “Your comfortable evening at the cocktail lounge is made possible by the B & W Seating Company.”¹¹⁰ Later incorporated, and known as The B & W Corporation, the company boasted in a 1956 advertisement that it had “built and remodeled hundreds of restaurants and supper clubs in the past 10 years,” including the Eagles Club (Ambridge), Cappy’s Restaurant and Bar and Weinstein’s Restaurant & Delicatessen (both in Squirrel Hill), Mona Lisa (Whitehall), Tootie’s Park Row Restaurant (South Hills), and Carbone’s Restaurant (Greensburg).¹¹¹

With the renovations complete and business increasing, Robinson returned his focus to the music. In early 1954, he began hiring other local musicians known for their jazz talents, including an extended contract with pianist Walt Harper and his quintet (Figure 42). Harper’s group, the first local African American group to break the racial divide to perform for white college campus dances and socials, offered “a widely marketable sound for both jazz and popular music lovers.”¹¹²

In April 1956, Robinson made a critical shift in his approach to selecting acts and began to feature more inventive and well-known touring jazz acts for weeklong engagements. He booked bassist, composer, and bandleader Charles Mingus and his quintet following the release of his critically acclaimed album *Pithecanthropus Erectus*.¹¹³ “Mingus represented a sharp stylistic departure from the local groups that had built the Grill’s popularity, and marked the beginning of a most significant era for the club. Shortly afterwards, in May of 1956, drummer Art Blakey returned to his hometown to play the Crawford Grill with his Jazz Messengers. . . . Blakey had grown up performing in Hill District venues such as the old Savoy Ballroom and was a source of pride for the neighborhood. Cecil Brooks, drummer for Walt Harper’s band, recalls Joe Robinson

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 5 September 1953.

¹⁰⁹ *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*, 21 March 1946; *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 14 May 1952.

¹¹⁰ *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 28 December 1948.

¹¹¹ *Pittsburgh Press*, 23 January 1956.

¹¹² Harper 208-09.

¹¹³ Harper 381, citing the *Pittsburgh Courier*, 31 March 1956.

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expressing that he was ‘taking a chance’ by bringing in Art Blakey.”¹¹⁴ However, Blakey’s popularity at the Grill convinced Robinson that focusing on top touring acts was the way to go. From then on, the Grill featured modern recording jazz artists—a shift away from the local artists who tended to play what people expected to more innovative groups from New York.¹¹⁵ While the focus on booking big name touring acts has echoes of the approach taken by Gus Greenlee decades before at the Crawford Grill No. 1, it differs markedly in the level of innovation Robinson sought in his acts and the consistency of the acts playing jazz.

Touring groups that followed included Chet Baker, Miles Davis, Max Roach, Cannonball Adderley and Oscar Peterson. A sampling of advertisements for acts booked during 1957 and 1958 can be seen in Figure 43. “These artists were instrumental in developing the aesthetic standards and symbolic meanings of jazz’s golden age.”¹¹⁶ The club became “a jazz mecca where all of the greats played.”¹¹⁷ During what Harper calls “the Crawford Grill’s height from 1957 to 1967,” drummer Max Roach was one of the most featured touring jazz artists. He was an innovator who built a reputation as one of the leading jazz drummers and bandleaders.¹¹⁸ In 1963, he “broke all Grill records for attendance” with nightly crowds forcing the management “to close the doors in order to maintain some semblance of elbow room.”¹¹⁹

Robinson’s approach drew a socially and racially diverse audience. Patrons included blue-collar workers and members of Pittsburgh’s professional and business elites such as Roberto Clemente and Willie Stargell (Pittsburgh Pirates baseball legends), the Rooneys (owners of the Pittsburgh Steelers), the Kaufmanns (of department store and Fallingwater fame), and the young playwright August Wilson (who frequented the Grill).¹²⁰ “For whites from outside the neighborhood, the Grill provided a means for socializing with African Americans and experiencing top jazz artists in a community setting.”¹²¹ College students would come to the Grill to “get an education that they couldn’t get downtown” where informal segregation policies existed at many clubs.¹²² Birdie Dunlap, owner of the Hurricane Club, remarked on the atmosphere found in the Hill’s small clubs: “I just can’t explain it...because segregation and prejudice was rampant. But everybody would be sitting together in the same booths. And I had a good time with ‘em.”¹²³ Dunlap’s nephew Bill Easley added, “If folks weren’t integrated when they came in...they sure were by the time they left.”¹²⁴

¹¹⁴ Harper, 210-11.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 211.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Christiane Bird, *The Da Capo Jazz and Blues Lover's Guide to the U.S.*, 3rd ed., (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2001), 199.

¹¹⁸ Harper, 211.

¹¹⁹ Harper 213, citing the *Pittsburgh Courier*, 21 September 1963.

¹²⁰ Barbara Klein, “Taking Its Bow,” *Carnegie Magazine*, Carnegie Museum of Art (Winter 2015), <https://carnegiemuseums.org/magazine-archive/2015/winter/feature-531.html>, accessed 3 July 2019.

¹²¹ Harper, 236.

¹²² Chuck Austin, interview with Colter Harper, 31 August 2008, quoted in Harper, “The Crossroads of the World,”

¹²³ Harper, 237 citing Ann Butler, “Birdie’s Place,” *The Pittsburgh Press*, 3 April 3, 1984.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

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Joe Robinson was not alone in shaping the music program at the Grill. He was assisted in this endeavor, and in much of the daily operation of the club, by his son Buzzy, who was not afraid to book cutting edge talent at the Grill (Figure 44). In the early 1960s, the new musical direction of free jazz began to challenge the established jazz culture. Colter Harper notes that “Free jazz discarded the dominant stylistic norms as well as the social norms of jazz’s ‘golden age,’ challenging musicians and listeners alike to reevaluate the music’s place in their communities.”¹²⁵ “In February of 1960, alto saxophonist Ornette Coleman performed at the Crawford Grill No. 2 with his quartet, . . . on the heels of his 1959 release *The Shape of Jazz to Come*. This album, with its conspicuous absence of piano and new approaches to improvisation, was a seminal moment in the ascendant free jazz movement” (Figure 45).¹²⁶ Responses in the Hill were mixed at best. Even those experienced with the once revolutionary style of bebop tended to react negatively to the aesthetic sensibilities of the style.¹²⁷ This did not deter Buzzy from continuing to book experimental artists amidst other mainstays touring acts throughout the early 1960s. In 1964, Buzzy Robinson moved to New York City where he opened a nightclub called “The Gig,” in November.¹²⁸ After trying his hand at a number of other business ventures, he returned in 1970 “to help his ailing dad run the business.”¹²⁹ Joe Robinson had become ill in Detroit while attending his sister’s funeral and had to be flown home. He was so sick that he missed the service and, once back in Pittsburgh, was unable to attend the month-long celebration of the club’s twenty-fourth anniversary.¹³⁰

Buzzy came home to more than an ailing father. The club, the culture and the neighborhood were all suffering some degree of trauma. Colter Harper cites three factors that were contributing to the decline of jazz clubs in the Hill District, like the Grill, during the period of Buzzy’s absence. First, the stylistic changes that jazz underwent in the mid-1960s left many audiences feeling alienated. Second, was the 1965 merger of the black musicians’ union Local 471 with the white musicians Local 60. While the merger aimed to eradicate segregation, it ironically ended up destabilizing the African American jazz community and led to the closing of the black Musicians Club—where so much influential creativity had occurred for decades. The third and final factor was the impact of the riots of 1968 following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King.¹³¹ In Pittsburgh, the riots began on April 5 and lasted until April 12, resulting in “33 firemen and 12 policemen injured; 505 fires throughout the City, but concentrated principally in the Hill; 926 arrests. . . ;[and] estimated property damage from fires at \$620,660.”¹³² “Both the Hill’s business infrastructure and social life experienced a catastrophic blow that left the community fractured and isolated.”¹³³

¹²⁵ Harper, 248.

¹²⁶ Ibid, citing the *Pittsburgh Courier*, 13 February 1960.

¹²⁷ Harper, 248-49.

¹²⁸ *Pittsburgh Courier*, 14 November 1964.

¹²⁹ *Pittsburgh Press*, 16 June 1970.

¹³⁰ *New Pittsburgh Courier*, 6 June 1970.

¹³¹ Harper, 247.

¹³² City of Pittsburgh, “Progress Report—Mayor’s Special Task Force [on Civil Disturbances],” Pittsburgh, 1968, 2.

¹³³ Harper, 266.

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While the physical Crawford Grill No. 2 had not been destroyed, the upward momentum of the club was gone. People simply stopped going to the Hill in large numbers—especially white patrons. Looking back on that time in a 1975 interview, Joe Robinson (who had recuperated by this time from his illness) conceded starkly that “When they killed Martin Luther King, they killed me. Used to be you couldn’t find a place to sit during lunch hour. . .” [Now,] how can I ask my friends to come up here for a \$5 dinner when they’re liable to end up with \$500 worth of damage to their cars? We’re stuck here. We’d move if we could, but who wants this type of place? We’re too big to be a neighborhood bar, and we aren’t getting enough business to continue the way we did in the past.”¹³⁴ Soon after, the large acclaimed lunch menu was discarded in favor of a less expensive one and entertainment was curtailed.

Making matters worse, the Grill wasn’t losing only white patrons. In a 1971 interview, Joe Robinson) indicated that even some of his African American patrons were deserting him—although for reasons that were generally positive: “Ten or fifteen years ago, black people would flood into our place because they knew they weren’t especially wanted in the restaurants and taverns downtown. But now that [they’re] making a little more money and being accepted a little better, some of the people who used to come in now go downtown for an evening on the town.”¹³⁵

In May 1971, the club celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary with two weeks of festivities (Figure 46). Still able to attract relatively big acts for special occasions, the Grill featured the R&B group Ruby & the Romantics, whose recording, “Our Day Will Come,” had topped the U.S. Billboard Hot 100 chart in 1963.¹³⁶ However, in many ways, the anniversary was the symbolic swan song for the Grill. In 1973, Joe Robinson was arrested for operating what was described as “the Hill District’s largest numbers bank” from within the Grill.¹³⁷

In 1976, with Buzzy now managing almost all aspects of the club’s operation, an effort was made to revitalize the club and attract new business in time for the club’s thirtieth anniversary. A new sign was installed out front (presumably the neon sign had failed) and the interior redecorated (Figure 47). “I want this club to be like an oasis in a desert,” Robinson stated. To that end, he “lowered the stage and widened it to make space for dance troupes and plays, as well as the traditional musical shows. He also added chandeliers throughout and Afro-American works of art on the walls.”¹³⁸ A modern lighting system was added to illuminate the stage and the newly created dance floor—a reluctant nod to the reality that disco was more popular than jazz among many in the younger crowd.¹³⁹

¹³⁴ *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 25 March 1975.

¹³⁵ Al Donalson, “Hill Entrepreneurs Find It Tough ‘Keeping Faith,’” *Pittsburgh Press*, 26 October 1971.

¹³⁶ *New Pittsburgh Courier*, 1 May 1971.

¹³⁷ “Hill Bet Raid Nets Owner of Grill,” *Pittsburgh Press*, 21 August 1973. The outcome of his arrest has not been determined.

¹³⁸ *New Pittsburgh Courier*, 8 January 1977.

¹³⁹ *Pittsburgh Press*, 31 August 1976.

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Unfortunately, the changes were not enough to alter the trajectory of the club and that of the larger Hill. In 1983, Joe Robinson died at the age of 79.¹⁴⁰ By the early 1990s, live entertainment at the club was largely limited to the weekends.¹⁴¹ In 1997, Buzzy Robinson sold the business entity to Les Montgomery and retired from decades in the jazz industry. Asked what he considered to be the most memorable show the Crawford Grill No. 2 ever booked, he reminisced, “We’ve had them all here. Art Blakey, Charlie Mingus, Sarah Vaughn, Dizzy, Miles, Chet Baker, you name it. But nothing captures the glory of that time more than [pianist] Oscar Peterson’s week-long gig here [in March 1958]. I never realized a single instrument could make so much music.”¹⁴²

In the end, Montgomery was not able to turn the tide either. His version of the Crawford Grill No. 2 closed in 2003. Attempting to capitalize on the famous Crawford Grill name, he opened The New Crawford Grill at Station Square later that same year, opposite downtown on the south shore of the Monongahela River. After an initially strong start, he was forced to close in 2006 due to a lack of foot traffic.¹⁴³ In 2009, Buzzy Robinson sold the Sochatoff Building.

Conclusion

While Gus Greenlee’s antecedents in criminal activity cannot be ignored, “few others matched his influence on the social and economic life of the Hill District” and his support of African Americans in baseball.¹⁴⁴ He owned what is arguably one of the greatest baseball teams of all time—of any color—and worked to integrate the sport.¹⁴⁵ Dr. Hugo A. Freund, writing in the journal *Pennsylvania Folklife*, elevates Greenlee to the status of folk hero, not unlike Robin Hood, for his impact on his community.¹⁴⁶

The success of Greenlee’s Crawford Grill No. 1, which he carried over to Grill No. 2, knew no equals in Pittsburgh. “In its heyday—which spanned decades, as well as different locations—the Crawford Grill was far more than its simple façades suggested. In addition to the world-class jazz that became its claim to fame, it was also equal parts town hall, boardroom, and bank. It was the Hill District.”¹⁴⁷

While many American cities had intimate jazz clubs that were part of the circuit of touring musicians, the Crawford Grill No. 2 holds a particularly revered status among historians, musicians, promoters and fans. Music historian Art Cromwell clearly fixes the Crawford Grill in the pantheon of American jazz:

¹⁴⁰ *Pittsburgh Press*, 15 November 1983.

¹⁴¹ *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 10 April 1994.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 18 December 1997.

¹⁴³ (Klein; Nate Guidry, “New Crawford Grill Has Played Its Final Note,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 10 January 2006.

¹⁴⁴ Harper, 68.

¹⁴⁵ Michael Santa Maria, “King of the Hill: Looking Back at Gus Greenlee’s Pittsburgh,” *American Visions* 6 (June 1991), 20-24.

¹⁴⁶ Hugo A. Freund, “Working the Seams: African American Professional Performers Moving Between White Public Culture and African American Private Culture,” *Pennsylvania Folklife* 45, no. 2 (Winter 1995-96), 94.

¹⁴⁷ Klein.

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Many are gone now . . . the clubs. Moribund, or boarded up; landscaped away, urban renewed . . . Memories affixed to photographs, stories, or recordings that echo the vibrancy that flowed through rivulets of black urban commerce called “The Street,” “The Stroll,” “Paradise Valley,” “The Hill,” “Jungle Alley,” or simply “The Avenues;” names like Wylie, Central, Lennox, 39th, Cedar, 18th & Vine, or Ridge & Garland. On these streets were the places: the Beehive, Crawford’s, the Caves, the Apartment, the Bluebird, the Downbeat, Minton’s Playhouse, Val’s, the Palace, Trianon, or the Regal, and the Howard—Lost Jazz Shrines. All names affixed to eras and to artists who helped define the historical arc of jazz.¹⁴⁸

What set the Crawford Grill No. 2 apart was not that it helped contribute to a particular style or flavor of jazz, but rather that it fostered creativity on a unique scale. While debated, the consensus among scholars and musicians seems to be that there is no easily defined “Pittsburgh Sound.” This may have been a reason Ken Burns didn’t mention Pittsburgh as a particular influencer in his 2000 miniseries, “Jazz.” Instead, the city’s legacy is, as Colter Harper points out, “the individuality of its innovators,” and the Crawford Grill No. 2 was at ground zero.¹⁴⁹ He writes, “Pittsburgh’s sound is as diverse as the myriad innovators who originated from this city. Artists such as Ahmad Jamal, Billy Strayhorn, and Errol Garner have shaped such individual styles that they defy reduction to an individual trait. This creative diversity is Pittsburgh’s gift to the creativity of jazz. Venues such as the Crawford Grill provided a space in which a variety of stylistic approaches and creative outlooks could be expressed.”¹⁵⁰ Samuel W. Black, Curator of African American Collections at the Senator John Heinz History Center, adds that “. . . jazz is an ever-evolving African American art form. Pittsburgh was in the center of this innovation and its musicians, composers, and teachers were on the cutting edge of every shift, change, or new sound in jazz.”¹⁵¹

Pittsburgh’s Lower Hill was a definitive center for nightlife that rivaled Harlem as the cultural capital of the African American community. For a considerable expanse of time under the Robinsons, “the Crawford Grill was the only music house between New York and Chicago that exclusively played Jazz.”¹⁵²

In his profile of Gus Greenlee called “King of the Hill,” author Michael Santa Maria asserts that, “If Greenlee had done nothing else in life, his legacy in Pittsburgh would be secure solely on the basis of the Crawford Grill.¹⁵³ That’s saying a lot about the man who is much more widely known for his accomplishments in baseball.

¹⁴⁸ Art Cromwell, “A Persistence of Memory,” foreword to *Lost Jazz Shrines*, program book, ed. Willard Jenkins, *The Lost Jazz Shrines Project*, 1998, 8.

¹⁴⁹ Harper, 279.

¹⁵⁰ Colter Harper, email to author, 24 June 2019. This footnote is the only reference in the nomination to this email. All other mentions of Harper continue to refer to his previously cited dissertation.

¹⁵¹ Samuel W. Black, “Pittsburgh Jazz: An Innovation on American Music—A Museum Honors Its City’s Musicians,”

Regional Museums and the Post-Industrial Age, ed. Susan Hanna (Paris: International Council on Museums, 2012), 69.

¹⁵² *New Pittsburgh Courier*, 4 July 2018.

¹⁵³ Santa Maria.

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“It was at the Grill that standards were set—where innovation, improvisation and tradition were allowed to flourish,” wrote Nate Guidry, jazz critic at the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.¹⁵⁴ Dr. Nelson Harrison affirms that the Crawford Grill No. 2 was nationally known throughout the entertainment business for the caliber of its musicians and that “Once you played at the Grill, it launched you to any stage in the world.”¹⁵⁵ Writing at the time of its closing in 2003, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* editors concluded that the Grill “. . . was an important proving ground on jazz’s long and winding road. Sometimes, the road to New York’s Blue Note [Jazz Club] ran directly through the Crawford Grill.”¹⁵⁶

Many of the jazz world’s best musicians cut their teeth at the Grill, where the expectations of the audience and management didn’t allow for slackers. The club was known for its “call and response” interactions between performers and the crowd. “When bands were not up to the listeners’ standards—when they did not swing hard enough, interject some original personality or dramatics into the performance, or when they became too self-absorbed—audiences would respond with attentive silence;” sometimes they would take an even more prominent role in the performance and actually guide the musicians.¹⁵⁷ Harrison states that the Grill is significant not just because it was a major jazz club, but because “it became a school where jazz neophytes could learn from and play with the best musicians in the business.”¹⁵⁸ “If you played there and got accepted,” he says, “there’s no venue on the planet you can’t handle.”¹⁵⁹ While it is difficult to directly attribute the success of any particular performer to the Crawford Grill, excepting perhaps Billy Strayhorn at Crawford Grill No. 1, George Benson, Stanley Turrentine, and Walt Harper certainly owe some considerable credit to the Grill.¹⁶⁰

The high standards at the Crawford Grill No. 2 helped Pittsburgh earn the nickname “the land of the giant killers.” The term is derived from session musicians, typically sent by the black

¹⁵⁴ Guidry, “Stairway to Heavenly Music.”

¹⁵⁵ Nelson Harrison, quoted in Klein. Harrison is a clinical psychologist, educator, composer, archivist, lyricist, arranger and veteran trombonist. He graduated from Pittsburgh’s Westinghouse High School in 1959 and has been an active member of the Pittsburgh music scene since the early 1950s both in jazz and the symphonic worlds. He first played in the Crawford Grill No. 2 in 1956 and first led a band there in 1964. He played with Art Blakey there in 1964 and also with Kenny Clarke for six months in 1979). He toured internationally with Count Basie and quipped during his interview with the author of this nomination that it might be easier to name the few jazz greats he hasn’t played with than to list all those with whom he has had the opportunity to jam—and he has the pictures to prove it. Over the years he has amassed a collection of artifacts of Pittsburgh jazz and has almost 200,000 photos and over 3,000 tapes including sounds from inside the Crawford Grill No. 2 from as early as 1960. Much of this depository is open to the public at his blog, Pittsburgh Jazz Network (jazzburgher.ning.com). He is also the inventor of the trombetto, a compact brass instrument with four valves that plays a chromatic range of six octaves with a trombone mouthpiece.

¹⁵⁶ *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 10 February 2003.

¹⁵⁷ Harper, 226.

¹⁵⁸ Nelson Harrison, “The Crawford Grill Experience,” Legacy of the Historic Crawford Grill #2, Part 2, Pittsburgh Jazz Network, jazzburgher.ning.com, accessed 27 June 2019.

¹⁵⁹ Harrison, interview with author.

¹⁶⁰ Bird, 199.

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musicians' union, Local 471, who were so talented they would challenge the regular members of big bands and jazz groups for their seats.¹⁶¹

The Crawford Grill No. 2 is frequently referenced as a “jazz mecca,” by music historians and musicians—both those who played its stage and those who never did. Harrison acknowledges that this is partially for the reasons one might expect, “People brought life, color and personality to the place with a zest you could not find in other venues. Tourists came from all over the world to get “the Crawford Grill Experience.”¹⁶² However, he contends that the use of the term “mecca” did not just apply to the pilgrimages made by fans. It is also because the Grill had a particular place of reverence among musicians—and still does. “The Grill was part of their acculturation,” he says. “They had to go. They had to pay their respects.”¹⁶³

Part of the reason for this reverence, Harrison and others argue, is because they feel that the Crawford Grill No. 2 isn't mere brick and mortar, but a depository of history and the souls of the men and women who played on its stage and filled its seats. Writing on his Pittsburgh Jazz Network blog, Harrison explains that “To the musicians who played there and the regular patrons, the Crawford Grill was known in the vernacular as ‘the Crib,’ a ‘spirit house’ in the African sense where the ancestors hovered, inspired, admonished and protected all who were there.”¹⁶⁴ He continued in a similar vein in a *Post-Gazette* story by Kevin Kirkland: “You walk in and feel the spirits. Our mentors are still there. Other musicians say ‘We got to be careful about what we play there. They're listening.’” Commenting on the demolition of another spirit house, the Syria Mosque (1911-1991), Harrison replied, “Losing the Grill would be even worse. It is the soul of black Pittsburgh.”¹⁶⁵

The importance attributed to the Crawford Grill in the African American community is similar to that cited by August Wilson when he claimed that his childhood home at 1727 Bedford Avenue held “the blood's memory.” French historian Pierre Nora uses the term *lieu de mémoire*, or a site of memory, to describe those places where a profound sense of historical continuity exists. These realms, Nora argues, are there to help people transport the past into their everyday lives and to stave off the act of forgetting.¹⁶⁶

Dr. Vernell A. Lillie, founder of Pittsburgh's award-winning Kuntu Repertory Theatre stresses that the significance of the Crawford Grill No. 2 extends beyond jazz. She recounts that August Wilson would sit for hours at the Crawford Grill with other African American storytellers like Rob Penny (playwright, poet, social activist and professor) and Chawley P. Williams (Pittsburgh street poet). “It was a place,” Lillie said, “where all of its patrons were treated with dignity and a place where these men began to dream about making their community—the predominantly black Hill District, its inhabitants' voices and experiences, together with its local colour—the subject

¹⁶¹ Black, 68.

¹⁶² Harrison, “The Crawford Grill Experience.”

¹⁶³ Harrison, interview with author.

¹⁶⁴ Harrison, “The Crawford Grill Experience.”

¹⁶⁵ Nelson Harrison, quoted in Kevin Kirkland, “Long-Dormant Center of Hill Jazz Scene Seeks New Life,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 1 July 2007.

¹⁶⁶ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire.” *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989), 19.

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of their art,”¹⁶⁷ A direct outcome was the formation of the Centre Avenue Poets’ Theater Workshop, founded in 1965, by Wilson, Penny, Williams and poet and community organizer Nick Flourney.¹⁶⁸

Wilson also frequented the Grill to simply listen (Figure 48). “Wilson would sit bring a yellow pad and sit quietly in the corner to record [his elders’] aspirations and their lives.”¹⁶⁹ Later in his career, Wilson paid homage to the Crawford Grill No. 2 twice in his ten-play *Pittsburgh Cycle*, a decade-by-decade anthology of African American life in the Hill District during the twentieth century. In *Fences* (1985), set in 1957, Lyons Maxson plays in a band at the Crawford Grill and in *King Hedley II* (2001), set in 1985, the Grill was hiring local singers.

Wilson was also directly impacted by the music of the Crawford Grill No. 2. Paul Carter Harrison, playwright and former chair of the Columbia College Theatre Department, recounts that one transcendent night in the mid-1960s, Wilson stumbled across a crowd of some two hundred people standing outside the club’s stage door. “At first, [Wilson] thought they were gathered around a recent killing. Drawn to the gathering, he discovered that they were the overflow audience of a packed Crawford Grill, outside listening with intense reverence to the improvisational inventions of John Coltrane, ‘stunned into silence by the artful power of Coltrane’s exploration into man’s relation to divinity.’ It was at that point of bearing witness to the collective spirit induced by Coltrane’s musical voicing that Wilson began to listen to jazz and discern that the ‘core of black aesthetics was the ability to improvise.’ And the same could be said about Black survival.”¹⁷⁰ Reflecting on that moment later in his career, Wilson recalled thinking, “I want to make my art like that, to stun people into silence.”¹⁷¹

On the community level, clubs like the Crawford Grill No. 2 and the Hurricane provided continuity for those living in the rapidly changing world of the Hill District, especially after the Urban Renewal upheavals that destroyed the Lower Hill. The Crawford Grill No. 2 was a place of respite, where the community could socially connect in times of “root shock,” a term coined by Mindy Thompson Fullilove to describe the “traumatic stress reaction to losing all or part of one’s emotional ecosystem” through the demolition of neighborhoods, the ripple effects of which can negatively impact entire communities for decades.¹⁷²

The Grill was also significant as a place of welcoming during the turmoil of segregation. “There was never any nonsense about having great black artists come in by the back door like they did at the Cotton Club in New York. The Crawford Grill was part of the social, cultural and political

¹⁶⁷ Vernell A. Lillie, quoted in Mary L. Bogumil, “August Wilson’s Relationship to Black Theatre: Community, Aesthetics, History and Race,” in *The Cambridge Companion to August Wilson*, ed. Christopher Bigsby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 54.

¹⁶⁸ Conner, 167-68

¹⁶⁹ Bogumil, 53.

¹⁷⁰ Paul Carter Harrison. “Derek Walcott/August Wilson: Homage to 20th Century Masters of Word.” *Black Renaissance/Renaissance Noire* 17, no. 2, (September 2017), 36.

¹⁷¹ Christopher Reynolds “Mr. Wilson’s Neighborhood,” *Los Angeles Times*, 27 July 2003.

¹⁷² Harper 220; Mindy Thompson Fullilove, *Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, And What We Can Do About It* (New York: Random House, 2004).

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landscape of Pittsburgh. Its presence was felt throughout the city. All politicians, black and white, would stop in at the Crawford Grill to have meetings and make themselves known.¹⁷³

Ralph Proctor, author and professor of African American history at the Community College of Allegheny College has written that, “The Grill provided a place of elegance in an area outsiders tended to think of as down-trodden. One could dress in elegant outfits, hear elegant music, and eat elegant food while escaping the surrounding world filled with racial hatred. Its reputation extended far beyond its physical boundaries and many white folks came to hear the music, let their hair down, and eat the famous chicken wings.”¹⁷⁴

Proctor concludes by pointing out what was, perhaps, one of the most basic but most vital aspects of Pittsburgh’s most fabled jazz club. Created by Gus Greenlee and nurtured by Joe and Buzzy Robinson, the Crawford Grill played an integral role in the social and cultural history of the city because at the Grill, “for many whites it was the first time they came to realize that we [African Americans] were a vibrant people full of hope and dreams despite oppressive racism.”¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ “Crawford Grill Historical Marker,” *Behind the Marker*, ExplorePAHistory.com, <https://explorepahistory.com/hmarker.php?markerId=1-A-68>, accessed 5 July 2019.

¹⁷⁴ Ralph Proctor, quoted in Klein.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

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Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Note: The Pittsburgh architecture and preservation firm Pfaffmann + Associates contributed much to this nomination. While previously employed there, the author co-wrote a report, *Crawford Grill No. 2: Historic Structure Report & Master Development Plan*, which laid much of the groundwork for the present document.

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Carnegie Museum of Art, Citations for Charles "Teenie" Harris Images

Note: All photographs are © 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive

Figure 4. Charles "Teenie" Harris, American, 1908–1998, *Exterior of Crawford Grill No. 2, with ferns in windows, 2141 Wylie Avenue, Hill District*, c. 1945-1960, black-and-white: Kodak safety film, H: 4 in. x W: 5 in. (10.20 x 12.70 cm), Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh: Heinz Family Fund, 2001.35.24626, photograph © 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive.

Figure 20. Charles "Teenie" Harris, American, 1908–1998, Detail from *Wendell Smith, William "Bill" Nunn Sr., Gus Greenlee, Satchel Paige and another man at a table in Crawford Grill No. 1*, c. 1941, black-and-white: Agfa Superpan Press safety film, H: 4 in. x W: 5 in. (10.20 x 12.70 cm), Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh: Heinz Family Fund, 2001.35.3058, photograph © 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive.

Figure 21. Charles "Teenie" Harris, American, 1908–1998, *Wylie Avenue with Crawford Grill No. 1 and Cramptons Drugs on left, Hill District*, c. 1947-1951, black-and-white: Kodak safety film, H: 4 in. x W: 5 in. (10.20 x 12.70 cm), Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh: Heinz Family Fund, 2001.35.2495, photograph © 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive.

Figure 22. Charles "Teenie" Harris, American, 1908–1998, *William A. "Gus" Greenlee, and his son William A. "Bill" Greenlee Jr., standing at bar in Crawford Grill No. 1*, c. 1940-1945, black-and-white: Agfa safety film, H: 4 in. x W: 5 in. (10.20 x 12.70 cm), Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh: Heinz Family Fund, 2001.35.3487, photograph © 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive.

Figure 23. Charles "Teenie" Harris, American, 1908–1998, *William "Woogie" Harris playing mirrored piano on stage above bar in Continental Bar at Crawford Grill No. 1, with Mildred "Pinky" Greenway fourth from right*, c. 1945-1950, black-and-white: Ansco safety film, H: 4 in. x W: 5 in. (10.20 x 12.70 cm), Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh: Heinz Family Fund, 2001.35.8637, photograph © 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive.

Figure 31. Charles "Teenie" Harris, American, 1908–1998, *Joseph "Joe" Robinson presenting check to Marion Bond Jordon for Pittsburgh branch of NAACP, in office of Crawford Grill, No. 2*, 1955, black-and-white: Kodak safety film, H: 4 in. x W: 5 in. (10.20 x 12.70 cm), Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh: Heinz Family Fund, 2001.35.52428, photograph © 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive.

Figure 34. Charles "Teenie" Harris American, 1908–1998, *Interior of newly redecorated bar in Crawford Grill No. 2 with alternating checkered block floors, bronze marching band sculpture on wall, and upholstered booths*, August 1953, black-and-white: Kodak safety film, H: 4 in. x W: 5 in. (10.20 x 12.70 cm), Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh: Heinz Family Fund, 2001.35.8441, photograph © 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive.

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Figure 35. Charles "Teenie" Harris, American, 1908–1998, *Women and men crowded in newly redecorated bar in Crawford Grill No. 2 with alternating checkered block floors, bronze marching band sculpture on wall, and upholstered booths, another version*, August 1953, black-and-white: Kodak safety film, H: 4 in. x W: 5 in. (10.20 x 12.70 cm), Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh: Heinz Family Fund, 2001.35.41975, photograph © 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive.

Figure 36. Charles "Teenie" Harris, American, 1908–1998, *Interior of newly redecorated dining room in Crawford Grill No. 2 with alternating checkered block floors, upholstered booths, and upside down tree patterned wallpaper*, August 1953, black-and-white: Kodak safety film, H: 4 in. x W: 5 in. (10.20 x 12.70 cm), Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh: Heinz Family Fund, 2001.35.44591, photograph © 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive.

Figure 37. Charles "Teenie" Harris, American, 1908–1998, *Women including one in foreground wearing dark suit and brooch, and men, including one in military uniform seated in booth, gathered in newly redecorated dining room of Crawford Grill No. 2*, August 1953, black-and-white: Kodak safety film, H: 4 in. x W: 5 in. (10.16 x 12.70 cm), Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh: Heinz Family Fund, 2001.35.41974, photograph © 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive.

Figure 38. Charles "Teenie" Harris, American, 1908–1998, *Group portrait of service staff with seven women, including waitresses, and two men, possibly including chef Norwood on right, posed in newly redecorated bar in Crawford Grill No. 2 with bronze marching band sculpture on wall in background*, August 1953, black-and-white: Kodak safety film, H: 4 in. x W: 5 in. (10.20 x 12.70 cm), Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh: Heinz Family Fund, 2001.35.42148, photograph © Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive.

Figure 39. Charles "Teenie" Harris, American, 1908–1998, *Band with Bobby Anderson on drums, George "Duke" Spaulding on piano, Bill "Bass" McMahon on bass, and Leroy Brown on saxophone standing on stage, with audience looking on from below, at Crawford Grill No. 2*, August 1953, black-and-white: Kodak safety film, H: 4 in. x W: 5 in. (10.20 x 12.70 cm), Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh: Heinz Family Fund, 2001.35.10098, photograph © 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive.

Figure 42. Charles "Teenie" Harris, American, 1908–1998, *Walt Harper's jazz band performing with Jon Morris on trombone, Nate Harper on saxophone, Walt Harper on piano, Bill Lewis on bass, and Harold "Brushes" Lee on drums, on raised stage in Crawford Grill No. 2*, June 1954, black-and-white: Kodak safety film, H: 4 in. x W: 5 in. (10.20 x 12.70 cm), Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh: Heinz Family Fund, 2001.35.11432, photograph © 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive.

Figure 44. Charles "Teenie" Harris American, 1908–1998, *Portrait of William "Buzzy" Robinson seated on desk in office with mail addressed to Mr. Joseph Robinson, c/o Crawford Grill [No.2], 2149 Wylie Avenue, on desk*, c. 1960-1975, black-and-white: Kodak safety film, H: 4 in. x W: 5 in. (10.20 x 12.70 cm), Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh: Heinz Family Fund, 2001.35.5719, photograph © 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre.

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

Latitude: 40.445584

Longitude: -79.978004

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

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NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Sochatoff Building fully occupies Allegheny County Tax Parcel 0010-K-00090-0000-00 (Deed Records, Allegheny County Department of Real Estate, County Office Building, 542 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15219). See Figure 2.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the entire parcel on which the present building is situated. This is the parcel of land historically associated with the Sochatoff Building and the Crawford Grill No. 2. No extant historically associated resources have been excluded.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jeff Slack, AICP
organization: Time & Place LLC
street & number:
city or town: Pittsburgh state: PA zip code: 15217
e-mail: j_h_slack@yahoo.com
telephone:
date: 29 July 2019

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Crawford Grill No. 2; Sochatoff Building

City or Vicinity: Pittsburgh

County: Allegheny State: Pennsylvania

Photographer: Jeff Slack at Time & Place LLC; Jeff Slack at Pfaffmann + Associates, unless noted otherwise

Date Photographed: June 2019; July and August 2018, unless noted otherwise

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0001

Photo 1. Wylie Avenue, looking west, showing the east side of the Crawford Grill No. 2 (photo by Jeff Slack, Time & Place LLC, June 2019; hereafter T&P, 2019).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0002

Photo 2. Wylie Avenue, looking east, showing the front facade of the Crawford Grill No. 2 on the left (T&P, 2019).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0003

Photo 3. Elmore Street, looking north, showing the front facade of the Crawford Grill No. 2, center, and the Legacy Apartments on the left (T&P, 2019).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0004

Photo 4. Elmore Street, looking south, showing the rear facade of the Crawford Grill No. 2 (T&P, 2019).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0005

Photo 5. Front facade, looking north (T&P, 2019).

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PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0006

Photo 6. Upper stories of the front facade, looking north, showing the ornate cornice and carved stone date and name banners (T&P, 2019).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0007

Photo 7. East facade, looking west, showing the stage door, center, and recessed porches of the second and third floor apartments (T&P, 2019).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0008

Photo 8. Rear facade, looking south, showing the door to the apartments at the rear of the east facade (T&P, 2019).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0009

Photo 9. West facade, looking east (T&P, 2019).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0010

Photo 10. First floor, looking north from the main entry, showing bar area (photo by Jeff Slack, Pfaffmann + Associates, August 2018; hereafter P+A, 2018).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0011

Photo 11. First floor, looking north, showing the stage with dining room beyond (P+A, 2018).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0012

Photo 12. First floor, looking south, showing the stage, with stage door in upper left and bar beyond (P+A, 2018).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0013

Photo 13. First floor, looking south from the stage toward the entrance and office (P+A, 2018).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0014

Photo 14. First floor, looking southwest, showing the office (P+A, 2018).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0015

Photo 15. First floor, looking northwest, showing the bronze marching band mural above the booths (P+A, 2018).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0016

Photo 16. First floor, looking southwest, showing the bronze marching band mural (P+A, 2018).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0017

Photo 17. First floor, looking north from the stage toward the kitchen, showing the dance floor in the foreground (P+A, 2018).

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Photo 18. First floor, looking south from the kitchen, showing the pass-through into the dining room (P+A, 2018).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0019

Photo 19. Second floor, looking east, showing the stairs for the apartments (P+A, 2018).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0020

Photo 20. Second floor, looking south, showing the corridor and drop ceiling (P+A, 2018).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0021

Photo 21. Second floor, looking southeast in the corridor, showing one of the transoms that had been concealed (P+A, 2018).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0022

Photo 22. Second floor, rear apartment, looking northwest, showing one of the doors that had been concealed (P+A, 2018).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0023

Photo 23. Second floor, rear apartment, looking northwest, showing typical doors, trim and hardwood flooring (P+A, 2018).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0024

Photo 24. Second floor, rear apartment, looking east, showing one of the fireplaces (P+A, 2018).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0025

Photo 25. Third floor, corridor, looking south, showing paneled walls and drop ceiling (P+A, 2018).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0026

Photo 26. Third floor, rear apartment, looking east, showing that the fireplace and finishes have been altered from the original (P+A, 2018).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0027

Photo 27. Third floor, living room of the front apartment, looking east, showing access to the shared recessed porch and former fire escape egress (P+A, 2018).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0028

Photo 28. Third floor, bedroom in the front apartment, looking west, showing the projecting chimney breast that once contained a fireplace mantel (P+A, 2018).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0029

Photo 29. Basement, looking south into storerooms (P+A, 2018).

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PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0030

Photo 30. Basement, looking north at collapsed stair to kitchen above (P+A, 2018).

PA_Allegheny County_Crawford Gril No. 2_0031

Photo 31. Roof, looking north, showing temporary roofing with stair penthouse in background (Rob Pfaffmann, Pfaffmann + Associates, P+A, January 2018).

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

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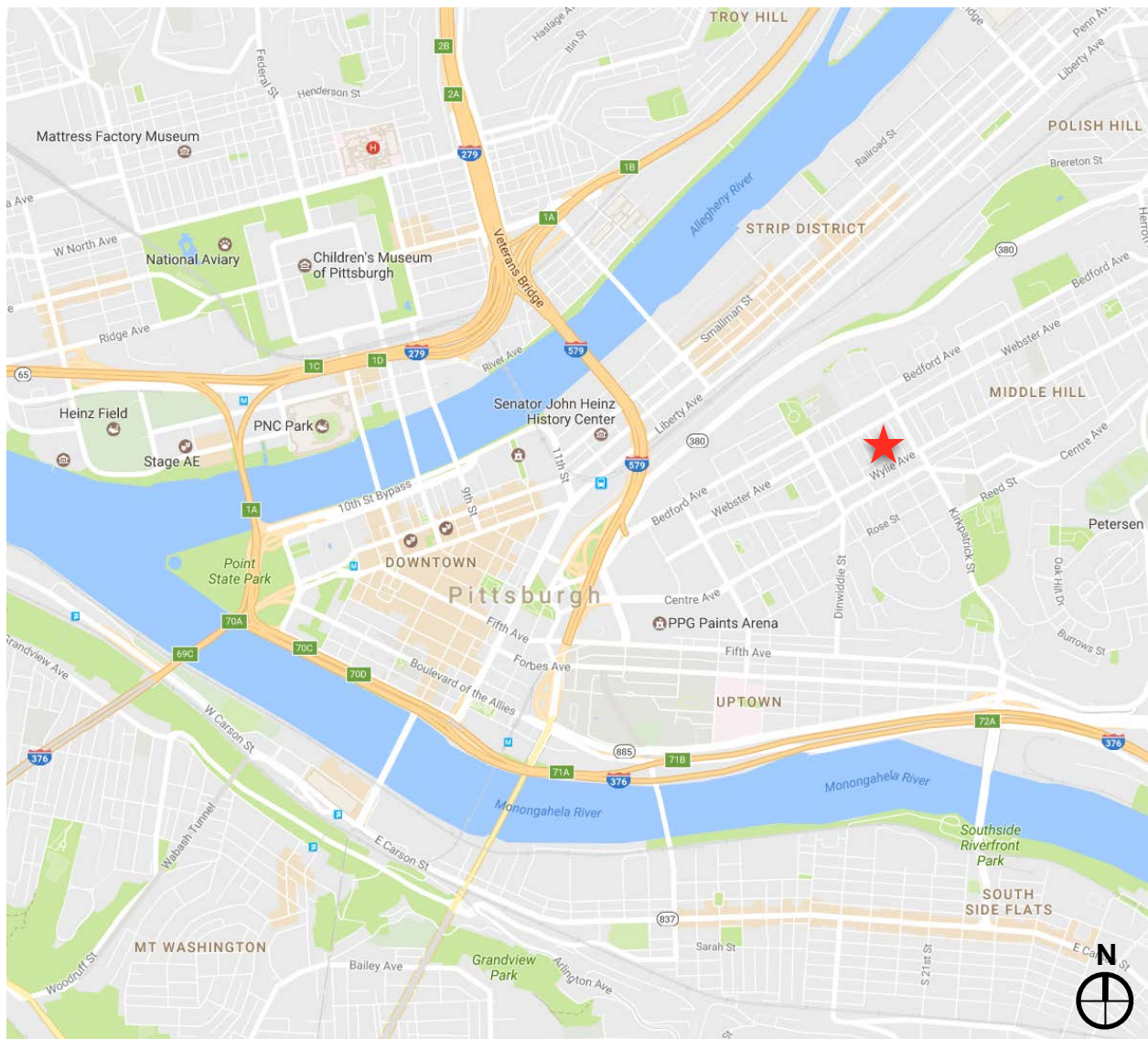


Figure 1. Vicinity map, with red star showing the location of the Sochatoff Building and the Crawford Grill No. 2 in Pittsburgh's Hill District neighborhood (Google Maps).

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Plan North

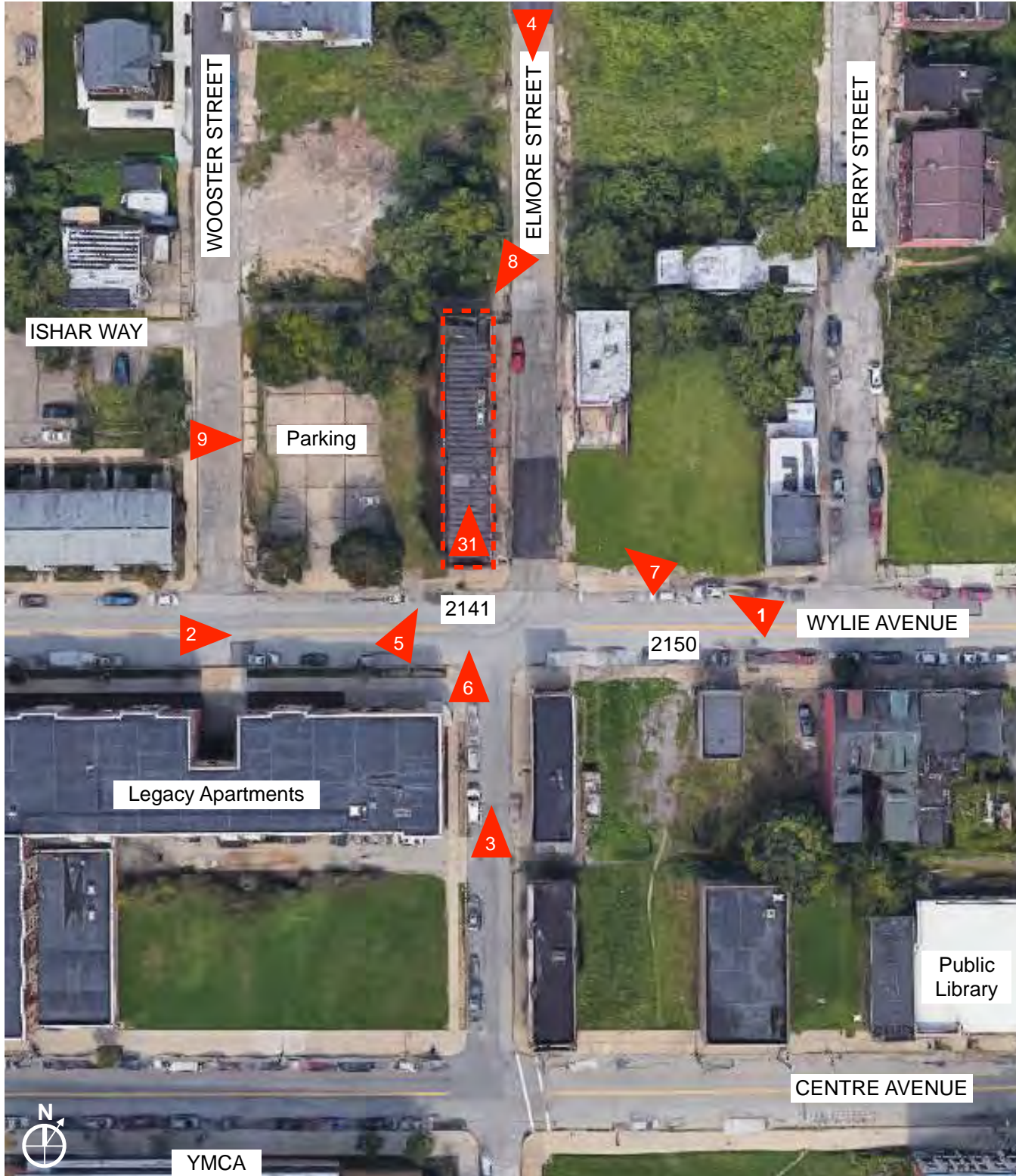


Figure 2. Site plan and photo key (Google Maps). The National Register boundary is indicated by the red dashed rectangle.

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Figure 3. Floor plans and photo key (base plans courtesy Pfaffmann + Associates).

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Figure 4. Front facade of the Crawford Grill No. 2 from 1953, showing the newly renovated storefront and neon sign on white Carrera Glass (© 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles “Teenie” Harris Archive— See full citation at end of Bibliography).

FOR RENT

3 rooms—43 Arthur St.....	\$25
4-rm. house—2123 Rose St.....	30
4-rm. house—2921 Webster Ave.	45
5-rm. house—2538 Wylie Ave...	50
5-rm. house—3367 Milwaukee St.	65
6-rm. house—1712 Webster Ave.	45
5-rm. flat—2141 Wylie Ave.....	50
5-rm. flat—54 Lawson St.....	35
7-rm. house—21 Wooster St.....	55

D. R. LEWIS, Agent
1317 Wylie Ave. Grant 3743

Figure 5. Advertisement showing a five-room flat for rent a decade after the Sochatoff Building was constructed (*Pittsburgh Courier*, 17 December 1927).

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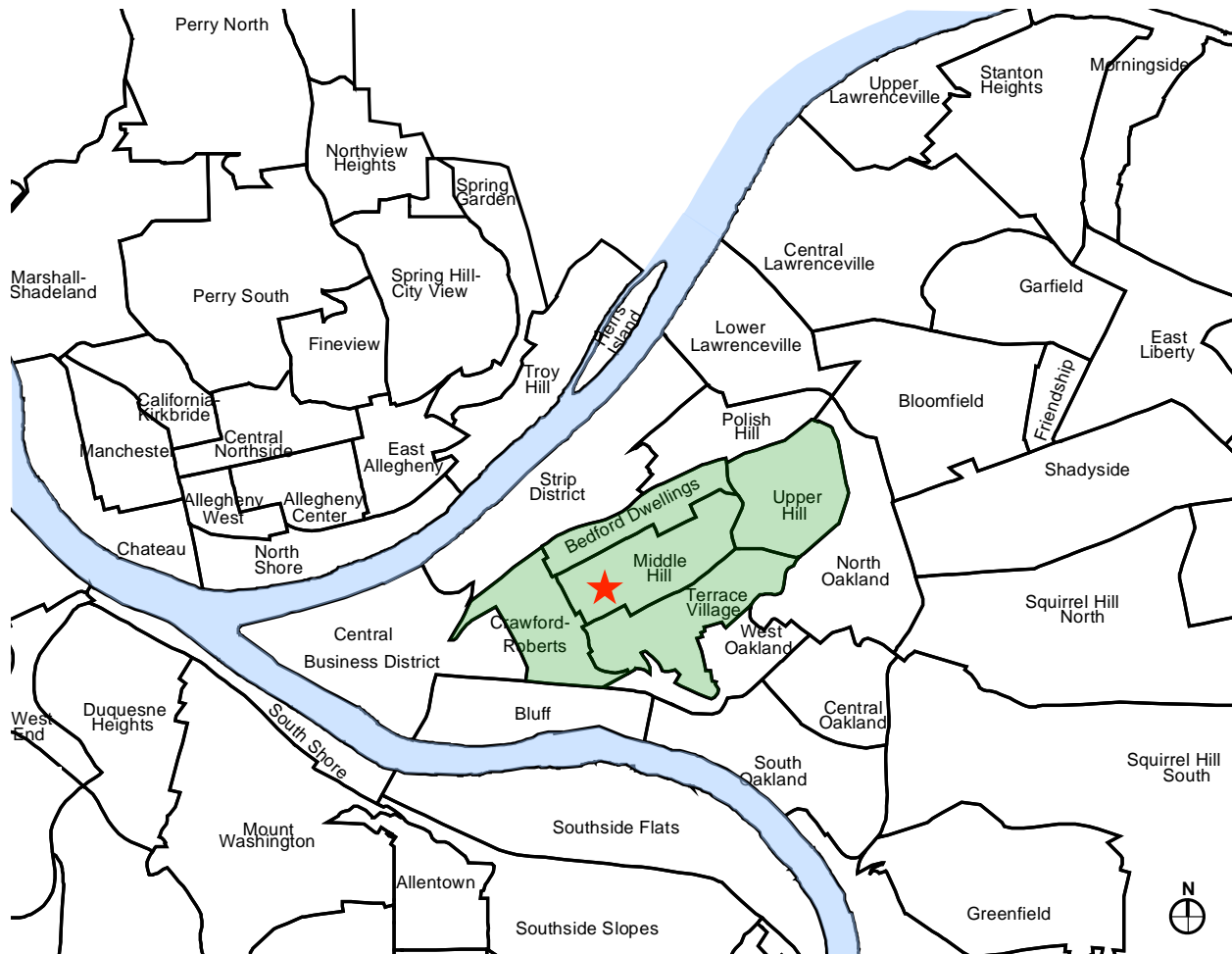


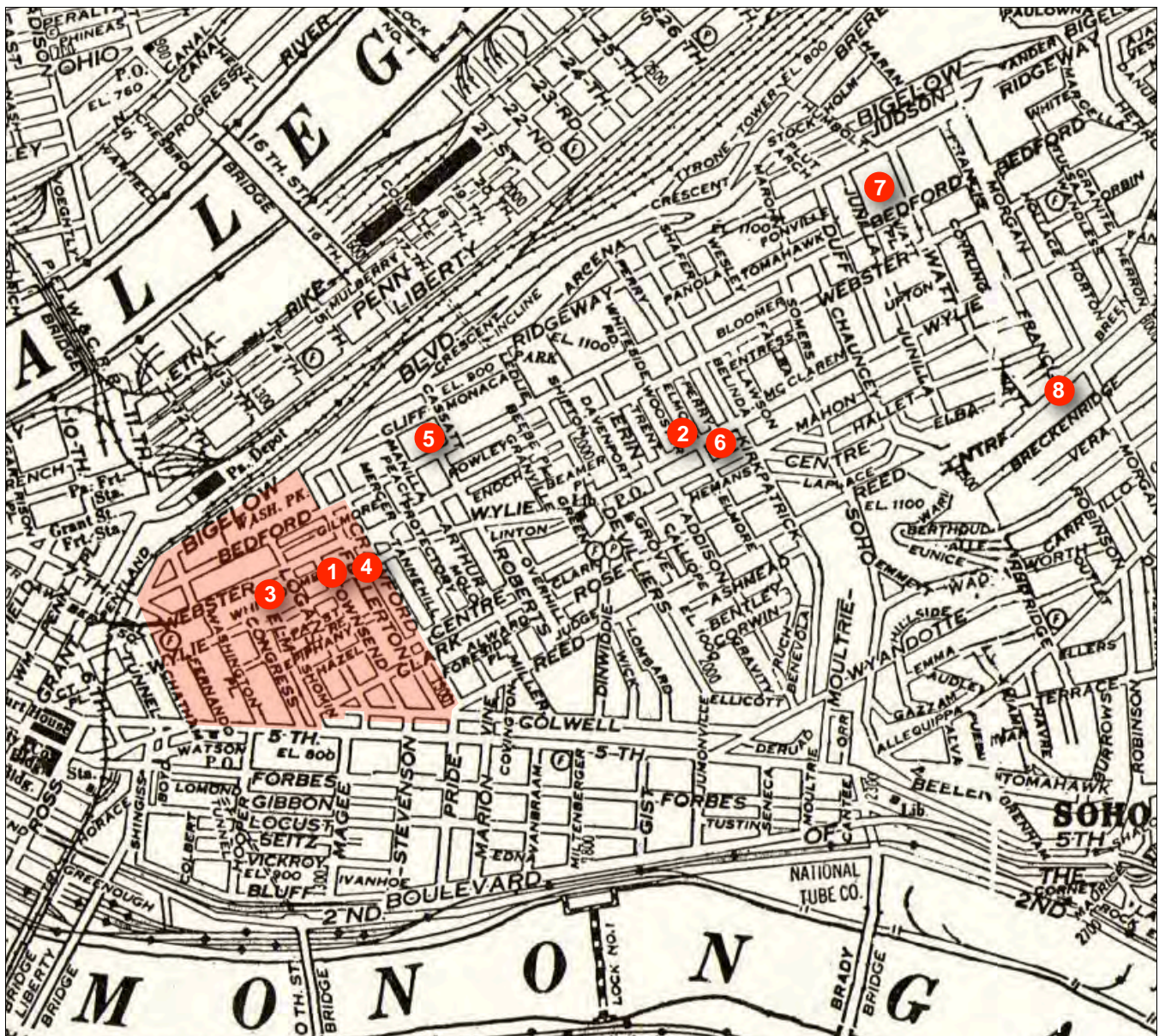
Figure 6. Neighborhood map, showing in green the current locations and names of the five neighborhoods that comprise the greater Hill District (City of Pittsburgh). The red star indicates the location of the Crawford Grill No.2 in the Middle Hill.

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Gus Greenlee's Hill District

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Crawford Grill No. 1 (1401 Wylie Avenue) | 5 August Wilson's Childhood Home (1727 Bedford Avenue) |
| 2 Crawford Grill No. 2; Sochatoff Building (2141 Wylie Avenue) | 6 Joseph Sochatoff's saloon and home (2150 Wylie Avenue) |
| 3 Paramount Inn, Musician's Club (1213 Wylie Avenue), future site of the Civic Arena | 7 Site of Greenlee Field (501 Bedford Avenue) |
| 4 The Crossroads of the World (Wylie and Fullerton) | 8 Pittsburgh Courier Office (2628 Centre Avenue) |

 Extent of the 1950s Urban Renewal demolition of the Lower Hill

© 2019 Time & Place LLC, Jeff Slack AICP



Figure 7. Map showing locations of key sites related to Gus Greenlee (map excerpted from *Pittsburgh—Central Section*, George F. Cram Company, 1942, modified by author).

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Figure 8. August 1957 view of the Lower Hill District, looking southeast from Downtown, showing demolition underway that would ultimately eliminate ninety-five acres of buildings and displace eight thousand people, most of whom were African American. Circled in right, the not-yet-demolished Crawford Grill No.1, left, and Woogie Harris's Crystal Barbershop, right (John R. Shrader, in Grimley, et al., *Imagining the Modern*, 198).

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Lower Hill: Hopes for Living on a Higher Plane

Since the 1920's, the Lower Hill has deteriorated. Today for every acre used for housing, 155 families are cramped into the squalor of crumbling tenements. Unquestionably, in this cobblestone jungle that chokes off the eastern end of the Golden Triangle, Pittsburgh can realize its greatest sociological gain and an important economic advantage.

Reconversion means relocation of 8,000 persons; complete disruption of daily habits of these people. But it also holds promise of living on a more humane, spacious scale for the people who exist there now and those who will follow in new apartment dwellings and modern commercial buildings.

Under the broad, imaginative program proposed by the Allegheny Conference on Community Development and the Urban Redevelopment Authority, 95 acres of the slum will be obliterated.

In place of blight, starting in 1957, traces

will appear of a new pattern of streets and Crosstown Boulevard and a combination civic auditorium-sports arena with the unique feature of a retractable roof.

The roof of the arena will pivot like a Spanish fan, permitting a starlight setting for the Civic Light Opera and other outdoor events when the weather is good, and folding quickly into a weathertight dome when it rains.

A mobile floor arrangement will permit 8,500 spectators for operettas, 12,000 for hockey, ice shows, circuses and rodeos, and up to 16,750 for boxing and conventions. Enough exhibit space will be available to satisfy 90 percent of the conventions now held in the United States. Parking will be provided for as many as 3,000 autos.

As the project develops in stages, land values will go up. The main business district will have a gentler backdrop, and the crowded masses, gentler living.



Rendering by Architects Mitchell & Ritchey.

NINETY-FIVE ACRES of slums will be razed by the Urban Redevelopment Authority on the eastern fringe of the Golden Triangle. Key feature of the dramatic Lower Hill project is

a new civic auditorium-sports arena (shown in center of the sketch) with a retractable roof for summer light opera. The auditorium and a new Crosstown Blvd. will be built first.

Figure 9. A page from the 1956 Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce publication, *Pittsburgh: Renaissance City of America*, showing the vision for the proposed Cultural Acropolis in the Lower Hill. Despite the many promises of more humane living conditions, in the end, a major justification was the creation of a "gentler backdrop" for the downtown business district.

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Figure 10. On the left is the vacant lot on the northwest corner of Wylie Avenue and Charles Street (now Elmore Street) that Joseph and Mary Sochatoff would purchase in December 1914 to construct their eponymous building (Historic Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh City Photographer Collection, 1911).

**Moving Picture Theater & Apt.
Bldg. (sig. 450, 4 apts.): \$25,000. 3
sty. & bas. 24x120. Wylie av. &
Charles st. Archt. W. A. Thomas,
Park bldg. Owner Jos. Sochatoff,
Wylie av., nr. Charles st. Plans in
progress. Face brk., stone trim, comp.
rf.**

Figure 11. Notice in the February 26, 1916 edition of *The American Contractor*, indicating that Joseph Sochatoff was working with architect W. A. Thomas on the plans for the new building, which at the time was going to contain a theater.

**PITTSBURGH, PA.—Joseph Sochatoff plans to erect a three-
story moving picture theater and apartment building, 24 by
120 feet, to cost \$25,000.**

Figure 12. A similar notice in the March 25, 1916 edition of *The Moving Picture World* indicates that initial plans called for a theater and apartments.

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Date	Deed Book	Page	From	To	Notes
2009 Aug 24	14021	306	William P. Robinson	Crawford Grill Development, LLC	
1994 May 12	9214	175	Lyda Robinson	William P. Robinson	
1950 Dec 5	3194	261	William A. Greenleed and wife Helen	Joseph Robinson and wife Lyda	
1945 Mar 13	2850	431	Joseph Sochatoff and wife Mary	William A. Greenlee and wife Helen	Deed indicates at one time the address was 2421 Wylie
1914 Dec 31	1790	546	James T. Nelson and Wife	Joseph Sochatoff	Sochatoff has the building constructed in 1917

Figure 13. Chain of title (Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. Deed Records).



Figure 14. Announcement of the Greenlee and Cleveland musical booking agency (*Pittsburgh Courier* 28 November 1925)

W. A. GREENLEE AND WM. F. CLEVELAND
 Of the Paramount Inn management, have organized the Greenlee and Cleveland booking agency, for the purpose of supplying the demand for orchestras and entertainers to an exclusive clientele.
 Already they have requisitions for more orchestra service than was anticipated and their headquarters at 1213 Wylie avenue will soon undergo alterations to accommodate musicians in their leisure hours. Mr. Greenlee or Mr. Cleveland can be reached by calling Grant 9198, 9397 or 1569.

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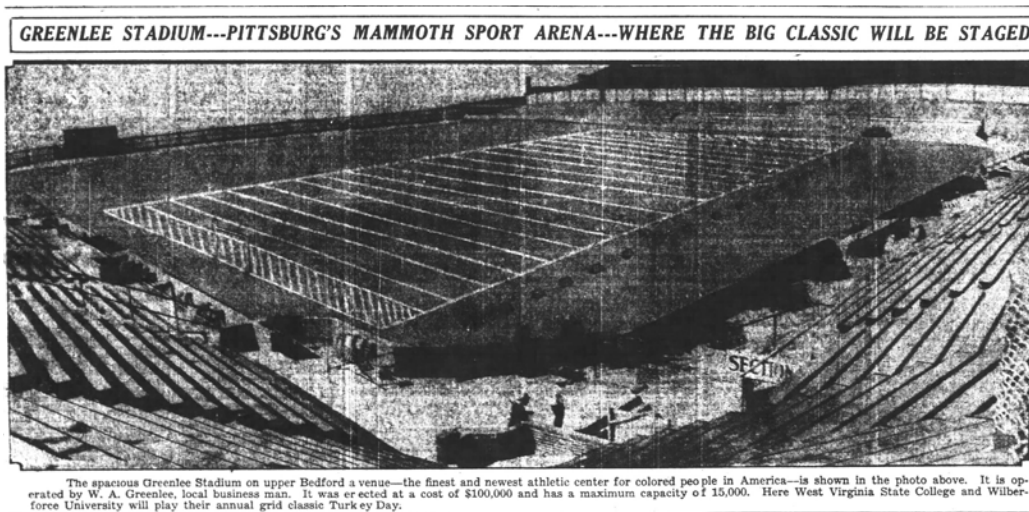
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Figure 15. Greenlee Field, looking north, c. 1938 (Carnegie Mellon University Architecture Archives). Figure 16 (inset). Advertisement *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 9 June 1933).



Figure 17 (left). The 1935 Pittsburgh Crawfords posing outside Greenlee Field (National Baseball Hall of Fame, in Strecker). Figure 18 (right). Southwest corner of Greenlee Field, c. 1938 (Carnegie Mellon University Architecture Archives, in Strecker).



The spacious Greenlee Stadium on upper Bedford a venue—the finest and newest athletic center for colored people in America—is shown in the photo above. It is operated by W. A. Greenlee, local business man. It was erected at a cost of \$100,000 and has a maximum capacity of 15,000. Here West Virginia State College and Wilberforce University will play their annual grid classic Turkey Day.

Figure 19. Greenlee Field configured for football (*Pittsburgh Courier*, 19 November 1932).

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Figure 20. From left to right: Wendell Smith (*Pittsburgh Courier* sports writer), William "Bill" Nunn, Sr. (*Pittsburgh Courier* managing editor), Gus Greenlee and Satchel Paige (© 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Detail from Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive—See full citation at end of Bibliography).



Figure 21. Wylie Avenue, looking east, c. 1947-51, showing the Crawford Grill No. 1 at left (© 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive—See full citation at end of Bibliography).

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Figure 22. William A. "Gus" Greenlee, and his son William A. "Bill" Greenlee, Jr., standing at bar in Crawford Grill No. 1 (© 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive—See full citation at end of Bibliography).



Figure 23. William "Woogie" Harris playing mirrored piano on stage above bar in Continental Bar at Crawford Grill No. 1 (© 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive—See full citation at end of Bibliography).

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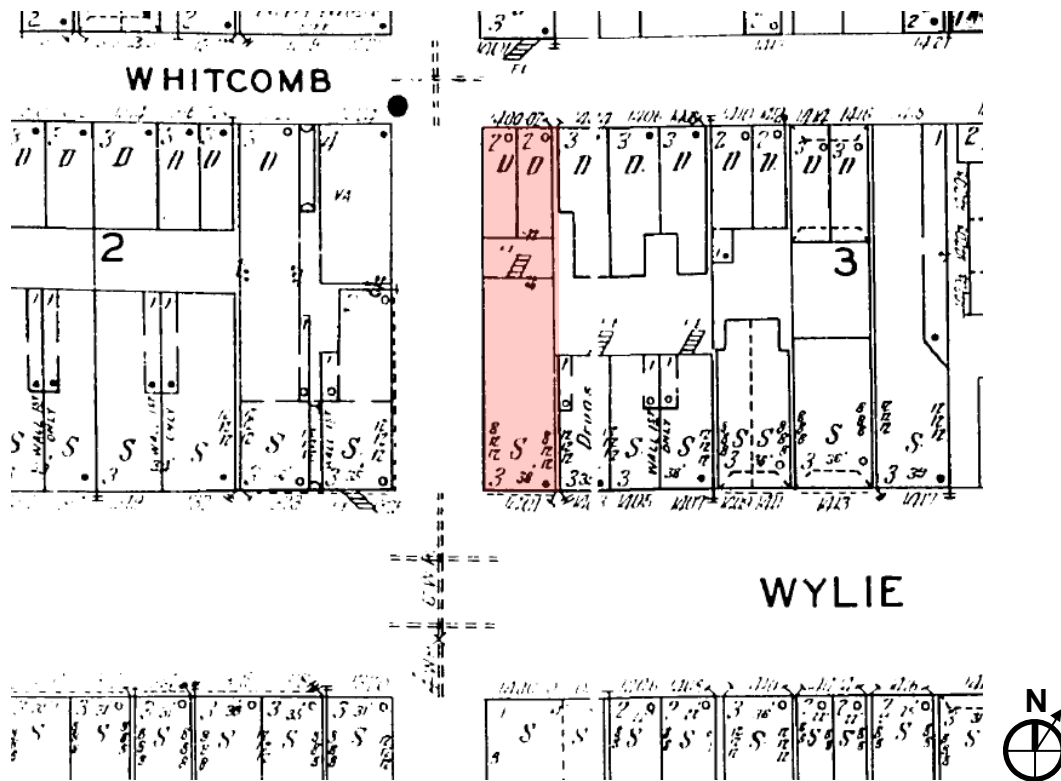


Figure 24. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map from 1924-27, showing the Leader House building and dwellings on Whitcomb Street that would soon be purchased by Gus Greenlee and transformed into the Crawford Grill No. 1.

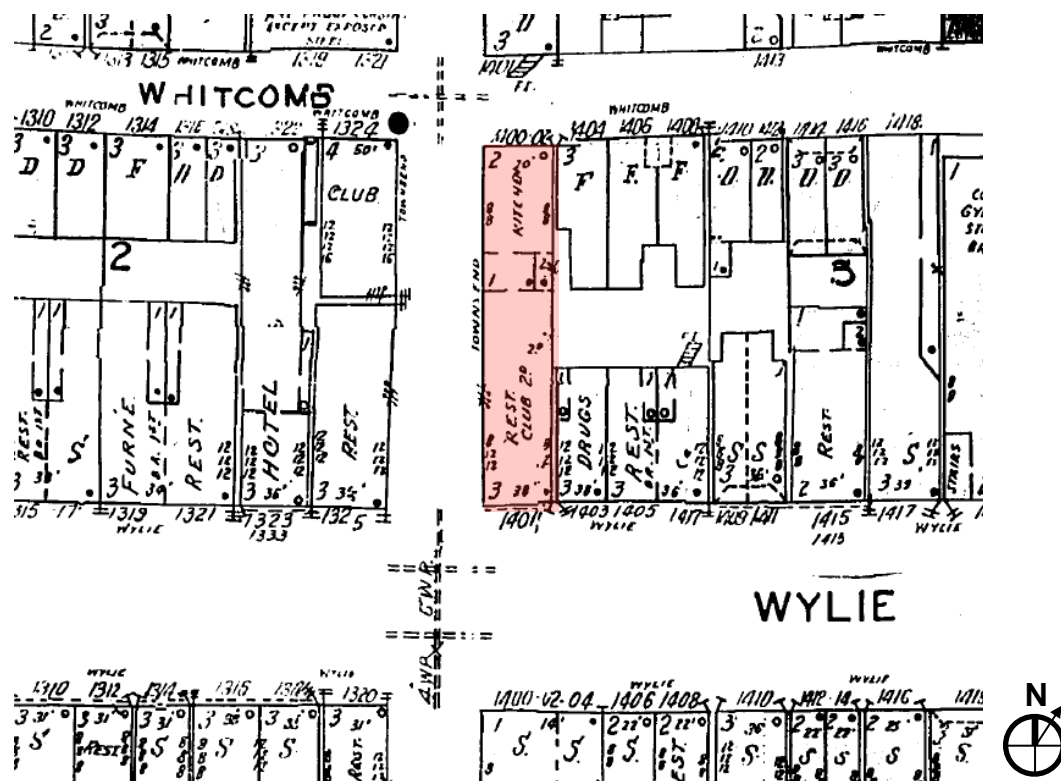


Figure 25. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map from 1927-51, showing the Crawford Grill No. 1 occupying the entire block between Wylie Avenue and Whitcomb Street.

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Figure 26. Exterior of 2141 Wylie Avenue (right) in 1937, showing how the Sochatoff Building looked around the time Gus Greenlee purchased it (Historic Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh City Photographer Collection).



Figure 27. Interior of 2141 Wylie Avenue around the time Gus Greenlee purchased it (undated photo in *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 30 April 1982).

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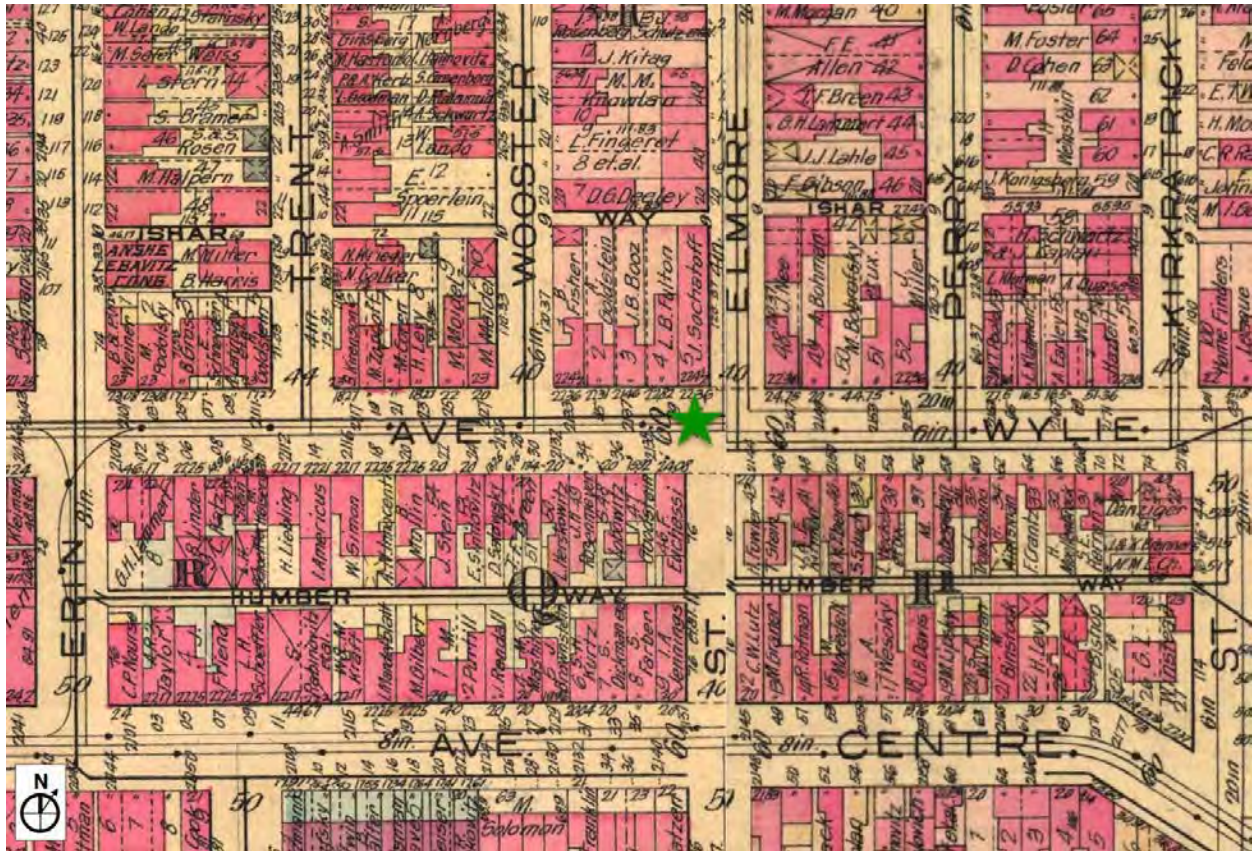


Figure 28. 1923 Hopkins Map, showing the Sochatoff Building (green star) and surrounding neighborhood.

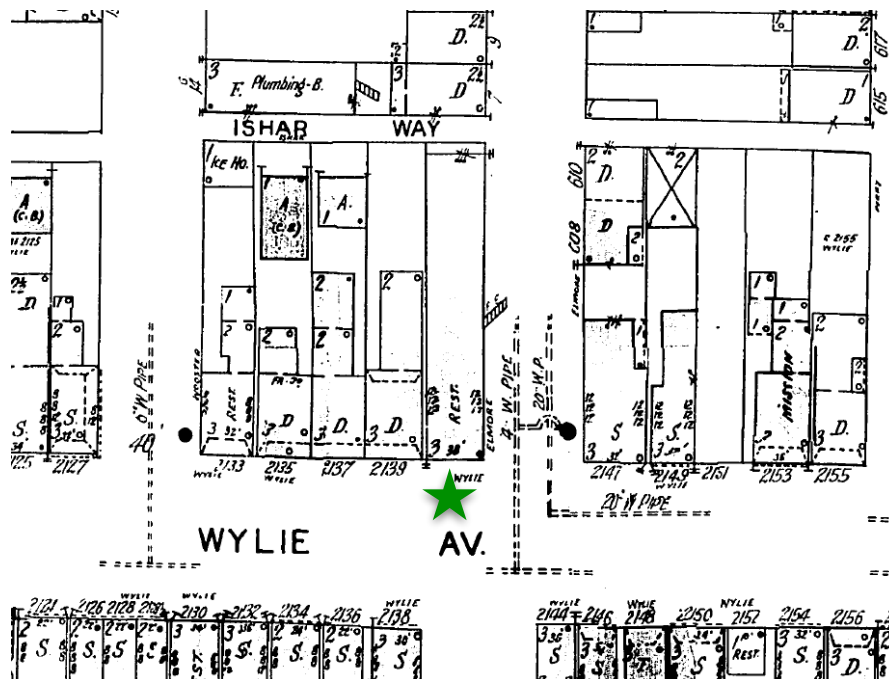


Figure 29. 1927-51 Sanborn Map, showing the Sochatoff Building (green star).

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Robinson and Greenlee
NOW TOGETHER AT
CRAWFORD GRILL No. 2

3 BIG MEALS SERVED DAILY
Breakfast: 5 to 10 A. M. • Luncheon: 10 to 4 P. M.
Dinner: 4 to 9 P. M.

TYPICAL BREAKFAST
Choice of Orange or Grapefruit Juice • Eggs (Any Style)
Bacon, Ham or Sausage, Toast, Coffee and Jelly
Club Breakfast • • 40c-50c-60c

LUNCHEONS
Fish or Eggs, Brazed Beef Stew with Vegetable,
Brazed Beef or fillet of Perch a la Creole

DINNER
All Sea Foods in Season, Broiled, Roasted, or fried
Chicken, Steaks and Chops, Genuine Italian Spaghetti.

WM. E. (Bill) NORWOOD, Chef
37 Months Experience as Chef with U. S. Navy

CRAWFORD GRILL NO. 2
2141 Wylie Avenue at Elmore Street - COurt 960!

Figure 30. Advertisement from 1946 indicating that Joe Robinson (who interestingly got top billing) and Gus Greenlee were working together at the Crawford Grill No. 2 and that Bill Norwood was the chef (*Pittsburgh Courier*, 14 September 1946).



Figure 31. Joe Robinson in the office of Crawford Grill, No. 2, shown presenting a check to Marion Bond Jordon for the Pittsburgh branch of the NAACP, (© 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive—See full citation at end of Bibliography).

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“Ultra Swank. . . Ultra Modern. . . Ultra Gay!”



“The Prettiest Lounge in the East!”

Figure 32. 1953 postcard of the newly renovated interior of the Crawford Grill No. 2 (Vinard Studios). Quotes are from the *Pittsburgh Courier* coverage of the week-long grand reopening celebration (29 August 1953).

The Day You Have Been Waiting For Is Now Here
GRAND OPENING MONDAY, AUGUST 31
OF THE NEWLY REMODELED
CRAWFORD GRILL No. 2
Wylie Avenue At Elmore Street

Everything Is New . . . New, Comfortable Plastic Booths in Chartreuse and Pumpkin Red . . . New, Modernistic Murals on the Walls . . . New Chinaware, All Tending to Give a Cozy Atmosphere . . . Designed to Make Your Eating and Drinking a Pleasure . . . Try Our Delicious Steak and Chicken Dinners. Our Bartenders Can Mix Any Drink You Desire.

Interior Front View of New Plastic Booths and Bar Rear Interior View of New Plastic Chartreuse Booths LeRoy Brown and his Brown Buddies

Hear LeRoy Brown and his Brown Buddies Every Evening
Beginning Sunday, Sept. 6, Dining Room will be open every Sunday from 10 A. M. to 10 P. M. for those fine dinners.
EVERYBODY WELCOME . . . A BEAUTIFUL ROSE WILL BE GIVEN TO EACH LADY

Figure 33. Announcement in the *Pittsburgh Courier* of the official grand reopening of the Crawford Grill No. 2 (29 August 1953).

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Figure 34. Interior of the Crawford Grill No. 2, looking south, August 1953, showing the bar area and the bronze mural of the marching band (© 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive—See full citation at end of Bibliography).



Figure 35. The same view during the reopening celebration, August 1953 (© 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive—See full citation at end of Bibliography).

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Figure 36. Interior of the Crawford Grill No. 2, looking north, August 1953, showing the dining area (© 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive—See full citation at end of Bibliography).



Figure 37. The same view during the reopening celebration, August 1953 (© 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive—See full citation at end of Bibliography).

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Figure 38. Some of the staff of the Crawford Grill No. 2 posing in front of the bronze marching band mural, August 1953. Chef Bill Norwood is at the far right (© 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles “Teenie” Harris Archive—See full citation at end of Bibliography).



Figure 39. Leroy Brown on saxophone (standing), Bobby Anderson on drums, George “Duke” Spaulding on piano, and Bill “Bass” McMahon on bass, during the Crawford Grill No. 2 reopening festivities, August 1953 (© 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles “Teenie” Harris Archive—See full citation at end of Bibliography).

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Figure 40. Advertisement for the B & W Seating Company, designers of the 1953 interior of the Crawford Grill No. 2 (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 28 December 1948).

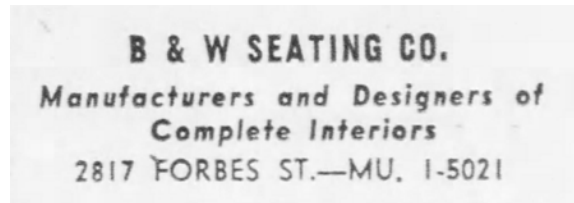


Figure 41. Advertisement for the B & W Seating Company, indicating that by this time, the business was designing complete interiors—just in time for the August 1953 renovation of the Crawford Grill No. 2 (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 14 May 1952).



Figure 42. Walt Harper's jazz band performing with Jon Morris on trombone, Nate Harper on saxophone, Walt Harper on piano, Bill Lewis on bass, and Harold "Brushes" Lee on drums, June 1954 (© 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive—See full citation at end of Bibliography).

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STARTING TONIGHT-IN PERSON
CHET BAKER
SENSATIONAL JAZZ ARTIST
MATINEES FRIDAY & SAT. 5 to 7
CRAWFORD GRILL
2141 WILEY AVENUE
FOR INFORMATION CALL CO.1-9601

March 1957

STARTING TONIGHT-IN PERSON
Julian Cannonball Adderley
SENSATIONAL JAZZ ARTIST
MATINEES FRIDAY & SAT. 5 to 7
CRAWFORD GRILL
2141 WILEY AVENUE
FOR INFORMATION CALL CO.1-9601

April 1957

...OW!
TERRY GIBBS
MASTER VIBRAHARPIST
featuring **TERRY POLLARD**
MAT. FRI. & SAT. 5 TO 7
CRAWFORD GRILL
2141 WILEY AVE-AIR CONDITIONED-CO.1-9601

June 1957

TONITE & ALL THIS WEEK!
MILES DAVIS
Master of the Trumpet
Matinee Friday & Saturday to 7 P. M.
Coming—**ART BLAKEY—MAX ROACH**
CRAWFORD GRILL
2141 WILEY AVE-AIR CONDITIONED-CO.1-9601

August 1957

TONITE & ALL THIS WEEK!
ART BLAKEY
Master Rhythm Drummer
Matinee Friday & Saturday to 7 P. M.
Coming—**MAX ROACH**
CRAWFORD GRILL
2141 WILEY AVE-AIR CONDITIONED-CO.1-9601

September 1957

TONITE - ONE WEEK ONLY!
The MAX ROACH Quartet
FEATURING
KENNY DORHAM on TRUMPET
MAT. FRI. & SAT. 5 to 7-NEXT WEEK ART BLAKEY
CRAWFORD GRILL
2141 WILEY AVE * CO.1-9601

November 1957

STARTS TONITE-1 WEEK ONLY-IN PERSON
JAMES MOODY
AND HIS ORCHESTRA
featuring **EDDIE JEFFERSON**
MAT. FRI. & SAT. 5 TO 7
RESERVATIONS NOW FOR OUR COMING MON. DEC. 30
★ GALA NEW YEARS EVE PARTY ★ **SONNY STITTS**
CRAWFORD GRILL
2141 WILEY AVE • CO.1-9601

December 1957

Opening Tonight—1 Week Only
IN PERSON
STAN GETZ
Matinees Fri. & Sat. 5 to 7 p. m.
CRAWFORD GRILL
2141 Wiley Ave. CO. 1-9601

January 1958

TONITE & ALL THIS WEEK!
Welcome Her to a
Triumph Homecoming!
PITTSBURGH'S
Dakota STATON
"Whose smash Album 'Late, Late Show' has
made her the most talked about singer in
the country!"
APPEARING AT THE
CRAWFORD GRILL
2141 WYLIE AVENUE
For information call
COurt 1-9601
MATINEES: EVERY
FRI. & SAT. 5 TO 7

March 1958

Starting Tonight—ONE WEEK ONLY
The most fabulous pianist of our times
Oscar Peterson
And His AWARD-WINNING TRIO
APPEARING AT THE
CRAWFORD GRILL
2141 WYLIE AVENUE
Matinees: Friday & Saturday 5 to 7
For information call: COurt 1-9601
NEXT WEEK: Fol. 's, zwa
DAKOTA STATON

March 1958

Figure 43. A sampling of advertisements for entertainment at the Crawford Grill No. 2 from the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 1957-58.

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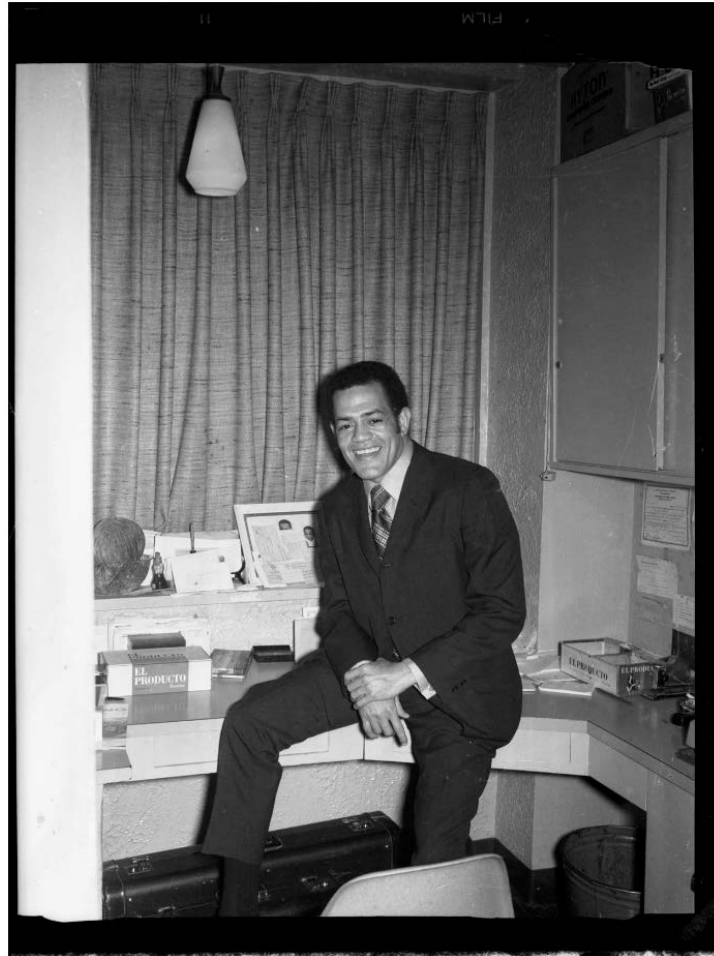


Figure 44. Buzzy Robinson in the office of Crawford Grill No. 2 sometime in the 1960s or early '70s (© 2019 Carnegie Museum of Art, Charles "Teenie" Harris Archive—See full citation at end of Bibliography).



Figure 45. Advertisement for Ornette Coleman—"The most controversial figure in the jazz world" (*Pittsburgh Courier*, 15 February 1960).

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Crawford Grill WILL CELEBRATE THEIR **SILVER ANNIVERSARY**
(25 YEARS IN BUSINESS)
TWO WEEKS BEGINNING MAY 10 THRU MAY 22 TWO WEEKS OF EXCITING FESTIVITIES, PRIZES, GIFTS AND FUN FOR ALL!

RUBY AND THE ROMANTICS
APRIL 25 thru MAY 1

THE BAGDADS
MAY 3 thru MAY 15

SONNY STITT
JUNE 3 thru JUNE 12

JOHNNY "HAMMON" SMITH AND BRENDA JONES
JUNE 14 thru JUNE 26

JAMES MOODY & EDDIE JACKSON
JUNE 28th thru JULY 10

SAMSON & DELILAH
MAY 17 thru MAY 29

CRAWFORD GRILL • 2141 WYLIE AVE • 261-9601 or 261-7534

Figure 46. Advertisement for the Grill's Silver Anniversary (*Pittsburgh Courier*, 1 May 1971).



Figure 47. Exterior of the Crawford Grill No. 2, c. 1990, showing the sign that had been installed around 1976 (Bird, *Da Capo Jazz and Blues Lover's Guide*, 199).

Crawford Grill No. 2
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Figure 48. August Wilson, late in his career, sitting in a booth at the Crawford Grill No. 2 with the lights from the c. 1976 renovation overhead (Huntington Theatre Company).

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Photo 1. Wylie Avenue, looking west, showing the east side of the Crawford Grill No. 2 (photo by Jeff Slack, Time & Place LLC, June 2019; hereafter T&P, 2019).



Photo 2. Wylie Avenue, looking east, showing the front facade of the Crawford Grill No. 2 on the left (T&P, 2019).

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Photo 3. Elmore Street, looking north, showing the front facade of the Crawford Grill No. 2, center, and the Legacy Apartments on the left (T&P, 2019).



Photo 4. Elmore Street, looking south, showing the rear facade of the Crawford Grill No. 2 (T&P, 2019).

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Photo 5. Front facade, looking north (T&P, 2019).

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Photo 6. Upper stories of the front facade, looking north, showing the ornate cornice and carved stone date and name banners (T&P, 2019).



Photo 7. East facade, looking west, showing the stage door, center, and recessed porches of the second and third floor apartments (T&P, 2019).

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Photo 8. Rear facade, looking south, showing the door to the apartments at the rear of the east facade (T&P, 2019).



Photo 9. West facade, looking east (T&P, 2019).

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Photo 10. First floor, looking north from the main entry, showing bar area (photo by Jeff Slack, Pfaffmann + Associates, August 2018; hereafter P+A, 2018).



Photo 11. First floor, looking north, showing the stage with dining room beyond (P+A, 2018).

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Photo 12. First floor, looking south, showing the stage, with stage door in upper left and bar beyond (P+A, 2018).



Photo 13. First floor, looking south from the stage toward the entrance and office (P+A, 2018).

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Photo 14. First floor, looking southwest, showing the office (P+A, 2018).



Photo 15. First floor, looking northwest, showing the bronze marching band mural above the booths (P+A, 2018).

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Photo 16. First floor, looking southwest, showing the bronze marching band mural (P+A, 2018).



Photo 17. First floor, looking north from the stage toward the kitchen, showing the dance floor in the foreground (P+A, 2018).

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Photo 18. First floor, looking south from the kitchen, showing the pass-through into the dining room (P+A, 2018).



Photo 19. Second floor, looking east, showing the stairs for the apartments (P+A, 2018).

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Photo 20. Second floor, looking south, showing the corridor and drop ceiling (P+A, 2018).



Photo 21. Second floor, looking southeast in the corridor, showing one of the transoms that had been concealed (P+A, 2018).

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Photo 22. Second floor, rear apartment, looking northwest, showing one of the doors that had been concealed (P+A, 2018).



Photo 23. Second floor, rear apartment, looking northwest, showing typical doors, trim and hardwood flooring (P+A, 2018).



Photo 24. Second floor, rear apartment, looking east, showing one of the fireplaces (P+A, 2018).

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Photo 25. Third floor, corridor, looking south, showing paneled walls and drop ceiling (P+A, 2018).



Photo 26. Third floor, rear apartment, looking east, showing that the fireplace and finishes have been altered from the original (P+A, 2018).

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Photo 27. Third floor, living room of the front apartment, looking east, showing access to the shared recessed porch and former fire escape egress (P+A, 2018).



Photo 28. Third floor, bedroom in the front apartment, looking west, showing the projecting chimney breast that once contained a fireplace mantel (P+A, 2018).

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Photo 29. Basement, looking south into storerooms (P+A, 2018).



Photo 30. Basement, looking north at collapsed stair to kitchen above (P+A, 2018).

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Photo 31. Roof, looking north, showing temporary roofing with stair penthouse in background (Rob Pfaffmann, Pfaffmann + Associates, P+A, January 2018).











1917
SOCIETY BUILDING

Historical marker text on a blue sign.



1917

SOCHATOFF BUILDING



STOP

Edmore St

1st St

















































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 6/8/2020 Date of Pending List: 7/2/2020 Date of 16th Day: 7/17/2020 Date of 45th Day: 7/23/2020 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 7/23/2020 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Lisa Deline

Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2239

Date 7/23/20

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office
PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION

June 8, 2020

Joy Beasley, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service, US Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington DC 20240

Re: Crawford Grille, Allegheny County, and Wagner Farmstead, Northampton
County, PA

Dear Ms. Beasley:

Enclosed please find pdf versions of the true and correct National Register of Historic Places nominations for the above properties, including signed first pages. Letters of support and tif images will follow in the future. There were no objections received for either property.

The proposed action for both properties is listing in the National Register. Our Historic Preservation Board members support the nominations.

If you have any questions regarding the nominations or our request for action, please contact Elizabeth Rairigh via erairigh@pa.gov . Thank you for your consideration of these submissions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Andrea L. MacDonald'.

Andrea L. MacDonald
Director, PA SHPO

enc.

ALM/aef