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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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name HOLDEN-PARRAMORE HISTORIC DISTRICT

other names/site number N/A; OR6109

2. Location

street & number Bounded by W. Church St., S. Division Av., Long St., McFall Av. & S. Parramore Av. N/A  not for publication

city or town Orlando N/A  vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Orange code 095 zip code 32805

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Barbara C. Mattick / Interim SHPO 8/7/2009  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Division Of Historical Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register  See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall 9-23-09  
Signature of the Keeper 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)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
81	24	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
81	24	total

Name of related multiple property listings

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- COMMERCE/Specialty Store
- COMMERCE/Office
- DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling
- DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling
- RELIGION/Church
- SOCIAL/Meeting Hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- COMMERCE/Specialty Store
- COMMERCE/Office
- DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling
- DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling
- RELIGION/Church
- SOCIAL/Meeting Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

- NO STYLE/Masonry Vernacular
- NO STYLE/Wood Frame Vernacular
- LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Gothic Revival
- See Section 7, Page 1

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation Concrete
- walls Brick
- Wood
- roof Tar and Gravel
- other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) 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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black

Period of Significance

c. 1921-1953

Significant Dates

c. 1921

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Arch: Unknown

Blder: Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of Repository

#

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 20 apprx.

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	4	6	1	9	0	0	3	1	5	7	1	0	0
	Zone		Easting					Northing							
2	1	7	4	6	2	3	6	0	3	1	5	7	1	0	0

3	1	7	4	6	2	3	6	0	3	1	5	6	8	8	0
	Zone		Easting					Northing							
4	1	7	4	6	2	1	0	0	3	1	5	6	8	8	0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Amy Groover Strelman, Preservation Planner/W. Carl Shiver, Historic Preservationist

organization Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation date August 2009

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 South Bronough Street telephone (850) 245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend 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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Section number 7 Page 1

HOLDEN-PARRMORE HISTORIC DISTRICT  
ORLANDO, ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA  
DESCRIPTION

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**SUMMARY PARAGRAPH**

The Holden-Parramore Historic District encompasses most of the remaining historic resources from the African American Holden-Parramore<sup>1</sup> neighborhood in Orlando, Florida, which developed in the early decades of the twentieth century. The district is bounded by West Church Street on the north, McFall Avenue on the west, Long Street and West South Street on the south, and South Division Avenue on the East. The commercial section of the district is found along the south side West Church Street between South Division Avenue and South Parramore Avenue and along both sides of South Parramore Avenue between West Church Street and Long Street. The district encompasses approximately 20 acres and contains a total of 106 buildings. Of these, 82 contribute to the historic character of the area, while 24 are considered noncontributing, for a ratio of 77 percent contributing to 23 percent noncontributing. All of the contributing properties were constructed between c. 1921 and 1953. The majority of buildings in the district are single family dwellings, most of which are Frame Vernacular or Masonry Vernacular in style. There are several multi-family buildings, most of which were constructed after the period of significance. All of the commercial buildings are either one or two stories in height. Several churches, a mosque, and other religious buildings are also found in the district. The primary building materials are wood, brick, and concrete, the latter often finished with stucco. Decorative details are generally limited to rooflines and windows. In many cases, the alterations that have occurred to the historic buildings over time have not seriously compromised their historic integrity. One building, the Well'sbuilt Hotel at 511 West South Street, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2000.

**SETTING**

Located in central Florida in Orange County, Orlando is the largest inland city in the state. In 2000, Orange County had 896,344 residents with approximately 185,951 people within the corporate boundaries of Orlando.<sup>2</sup> The greater Orlando area is located at the junction of Interstate Highway 4, the Beeline Expressway (State Road 528), and the Florida Turnpike and has experienced extensive suburban sprawl. Most of the development is located adjacent to the I-4 corridor, due in part to the construction of theme parks along I-4 such as Disney World, Sea World, and Universal Studios. The Holden-Parramore Neighborhood occupies an area immediately west of the central downtown district of Orlando, Florida. This neighborhood developed primarily from the 1900s through 1940s, but the majority of the buildings were constructed in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The surviving buildings remain from what was once a much larger and more densely settled neighborhood and are in fair to good condition, with most of their original historic features and fabric intact. The Holden-Parramore neighborhood is found immediately west of the downtown Orlando business center, which contains modern high-rise commercial buildings, many of which are found along the east side of the I-4

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<sup>1</sup> Holden Street was originally the name of what is now Long Street and was also associated with the name of the neighborhood.

<sup>2</sup> United States Census Bureau, Population Division, 2000 Census, <http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html>, accessed 17 November 2004.

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corridor which, along with the CSX Railway Line creates a physical, as well as a historical barrier between the two areas. The downtown area also has a locally designated historic commercial district that is found along both sides of South Orange Avenue and several east-west streets.

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

The Holden-Parramore Historic District comprises all or part of 11 city blocks. This area was historically platted using a grid system with streets running east-west and avenues extending north-south.<sup>3</sup> Located directly west of downtown Orlando, the historic district is an extension of the downtown grid. The area is characterized by one and two-story, masonry commercial buildings, single family dwellings, apartment buildings, and churches. The district boundaries include Long Street to the south, the intersection South Parramore Avenue and West Church Street to the north, South Division Avenue to the east, and McFall Avenue to the west. All properties along South Parramore Avenue are included in the historic district. Because the north side of West Church Street does not have any historic buildings, only the properties on the south side of West Church Street between South Parramore Avenue and South Division Avenue are included in the district boundaries. The residential resources within the historic district are concentrated along South Parramore Avenue between West Anderson Street and along West Jackson and Anderson streets. Several noncontributing buildings are over fifty years old and are generally of similar massing, materials, and setbacks as the historic buildings in the district; however, they have been compromised by unsympathetic alterations. The remainder of the noncontributing buildings were built after 1961, and thus do not meet criteria for being considered contributing resources.

The avenues in the district are single-lane, two-way thoroughfares, while the majority of the streets are one-way alternating between east and west. South Orange Avenue acts as an east-west divider in Orlando, and as a result, all the streets in the historic district are identified as "West." Buildings along South Parramore Avenue face east-west, while those on West Church Street face north because only the south side of the street is included in the district. Corner lot buildings are the exception. Because the district encompasses several subdivisions that were platted at different times, lot sizes and uses in the district are not uniform.

Beginning in the late 1930s, residents of the neighborhood began moving to other parts of the city, which caused the Holden-Parramore Neighborhood to become neglected and rundown. The deteriorated state of the neighborhood prompted the construction of public housing projects outside the Holden-Parramore neighborhood beginning in the late 1930s, resulting in the further abandonment and demolition of the older housing stock. More buildings were demolished in the 1940s and 1950s, and in the 1960s and 1970s numerous remaining houses were demolished to make way for the construction of Interstate Highway 4 and the East-West Expressway (State Road 408). The construction of these corridors resulted in the discontinuity of the district to the east and south. In recent years all of the historic buildings north of West Church Street were demolished,

<sup>3</sup> In the 1950s, all roads running north-south in Orlando were changed from streets to avenues and all east-west routes became streets.

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leaving the neighborhood only about a third of the size it had achieved at the height of its development during the mid-1920s. Nevertheless, the remaining resources along West Church Street and South Parramore Avenue, and in their general vicinity still express a neighborhood character. Recent work has been done to improve the "Main Street" appearance of the commercial area by repairing the sidewalks and lining the streets with trees and other landscaping features. Gas lamp styled street lights have also been installed along the streets and sidewalks. The commercial section of the district features restaurants, churches, grocery stores, barber shops and other establishments (Photos 1-3). All but a few of the commercial buildings are found along West Church Street and South Parramore Avenue, and most of the residential buildings are found in close proximity to these thoroughfares. The majority of the commercial buildings in the historic district are Masonry Vernacular in style and the houses are simple Wood Frame Vernacular buildings. There are some buildings of both types that exhibit distinctive forms of construction and traditional styles. These include such folk construction as shotgun houses and buildings exhibiting the Bungalow, Colonial Revival, Victorian, Mediterranean Revival and Moderne styles.

**ARCHITECTURAL STYLES**

Commercial Buildings

Buildings in the historic district represent types and styles popular in the United States from the 1920s through the 1950s. The typical commercial building in this district is either one or two stories; flat-roofed with a shaped parapet, and constructed of either concrete block or brick. Because of their familiar form and details, these resources are best described as Masonry Vernacular. The two-story commercial buildings are often examples of mixed use, with retail space on the first floor, and offices or living units on the second. Some of the storefronts of the contributing buildings often feature recessed doors flanked by glass display windows. In some cases, the original storefronts have been enclosed or boarded or re-subdivided to accommodate other businesses. A number of the commercial buildings have exterior walls covered with stucco. These are usually constructed of concrete block. The commercial buildings usually retain some of their original fenestration, but in some cases, the warm damp climate has caused the wooden sashes of windows to suffer rot, and metal frame windows to suffer from rust. A minority of the buildings are vacant or partly vacant, but there still seems to be considerable amount of patronage for the businesses in the historic district.

Masonry Vernacular

A common example of a one-story Masonry Vernacular commercial building is the one at 532-536 West Church Street (Photo 4), constructed c. 1922, located between South Terry and South Division avenues. The 1930 City Directory lists the building's occupant as the Hillman Dry Goods Company. This rectangular building has a brick structural system that rests on a continuous concrete foundation. The flat roof is built-up and features a stepped parapet. The fenestration consists of a fixed, single pane window in each of the

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storefronts. Exterior ornamentation includes brick sills, concrete panels in the parapet, and traditional recessed storefront entrances.

Two additional examples of two-story Masonry Vernacular commercial buildings are located at 512 South Parramore Avenue (Photo 5), constructed c. 1930, and 208-212 South Parramore Avenue (Photo 6), constructed c. 1925. The building at 512 South Parramore Avenue is located on the west side of South Parramore Avenue between Long Street and West Anderson Street. This rectangular, mixed-use building is constructed of concrete block surfaced with stucco and rests on a continuous concrete foundation. Its flat roof has a stepped parapet on the main facade and is surfaced with tar and gravel. The building features single, fixed glass pane windows for the ground level store fronts and metal, 2/2-light single-hung sash windows on the second story. This mixed-use building houses a restaurant and retail store on the ground level and residential apartments on the second floor. The brick building at 208-212 South Parramore Avenue is also a mixed-use. It is located on the west side of South Parramore Avenue between West Jackson and West Church streets. Like the building at 512 South Parramore Avenue, this building features a stepped parapet on the main facade. The multi-pane, fixed light storefront windows flank a central entranceway that is sheltered by an original wood and metal suspended canopy. Multi-light casement windows on the second story have concrete sills and headers and are flanked by decorative shutters. The second story of the main facade also features two balconies. In 1930, the building housed the Leo Trunk & Bag Company and the Terry Furniture Store.<sup>4</sup>

The building at 319 South Parramore Avenue (Photo 7), constructed c. 1947, is located at the northeast corner of South Parramore Avenue and West South Street. This rectangular, two-story, flat-roofed building is constructed of concrete block and rests on a continuous concrete foundation. The exterior walls feature royal blue ceramic tile facing on the first story and a stucco finish on the second level. The fenestration includes one, four, and six-paned fixed and four-paned pivot metal windows. Three belt courses are found at the bottom, middle, and top of the second story windows. Exterior ornamentation includes concrete sills and a decorative diamond motif along the roofline. The building is divided into four storefront bays. The ground floor is used for retail businesses and the second story is used for office space. The geometric massing, window ribbons, and simple detail lend an understated modern appearance to this building.

Perhaps the best example of a Masonry Vernacular commercial building in the historic district is the Well'sbuilt Hotel (Photos 8-9) at 511 West South Street, which was listed in the National Register in 2000. Dr. William Monroe Wells constructed this hotel in 1926. It provided lodging to African Americans during segregation when rooms were not available to them in other areas. The building now houses the Well'sbuilt Museum of African American History. This is the best preserved historic commercial building in the Holden-Parramore Historic District and has undergone restoration. Like other early commercial buildings in the district, this one is constructed of brick and features a stepped parapet on its main facade. The side elevations have been covered

<sup>4</sup> Polk's Orlando City Directory. Jacksonville, FL: R.L. Polk Publishing Co., 1930.



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with smooth stucco. The street facade is divided into three storefronts consisting of plate glass show windows that flank wood and glass entrance doors that are surmounted by rectangular transom lights. The storefronts are sheltered by a suspended wood and metal canopy, above which one finds a continuous series of clerestory lights. The second story of the main facade features single and paired 1/1-light double-hung wood sash windows. On the east elevation is a non-historic metal stairway that provides access to a second floor hallway. The west elevation features a plain stuccoed wall with single and paired 1/1-light double-hung wood sash windows.

Small Commercial Buildings

The historic district contains a number of small commercial buildings that usually contained a small business, such as a barber shop, shoe repair shop or specialty business. These buildings, although largely nondescript, still contribute to the historic ambience of the district. One of the best of these is Tim's Barber Shop (Photo 10) at 427 South Parramore Avenue which was constructed c. 1949. This small, one-story concrete block building contains a single major room in the front and a storage space in the rear. It has a flat roof with a stepped parapet on the front and sides. The two-bay facade features an entranceway and a single show window that also serves as advertising signage that announces its use as a barber shop. An electric rotating barber pole is found between the entrance and the show window, and a larger stationary barber pole is found on the other side of the doorway.

Art Moderne

The only Art Moderne commercial building in the historic district is the Hankins Building at 221 South Parramore Avenue (Photo 11), constructed c. 1947. Dr. Isaiah Sylvester Hankins was one of three African American physicians that provided medical care to the black residents of the Holden-Parramore neighborhood. The other was Dr. William Wells, the builder of the Well'sbuilt Hotel. Hankins was also a civic leader in Orlando and was an active participant in the Washington Shores development, which provided African Americans opportunities for new home ownership. The building is located on the east side of South Parramore Avenue between West Jackson and West Church streets. This rectangular, two-story, mixed-use building has a concrete structural system that rests on a continuous concrete foundation. The exterior walls are surfaced with smooth stucco and the flat roof is bordered by a low plain parapet. The fenestration includes metal, one-pane fixed and single-hung sash windows with 1/1-light configurations. The building is a late example of the Moderne style that was popular in Florida in the mid-1930s. Its smooth wall surface, flat roof, and horizontal emphasis provided by the projecting, rounded canopy are all characteristics of the Art Moderne architectural style. Although alterations to this building include new windows and doors, the building still retains a high level of historic integrity and contributes to the character of the historic district.

Single Family Dwellings

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Shotgun Houses

The Holden-Parramore Historic District is notable for its large number of variations on the shotgun type of house. The classic shotgun house is a narrow rectangular domestic residence, usually with a single door and window at each end. It was the most popular style of house in the Southern United States from the end of the Civil War (1861–1865), through to the 1920s. Alternate names include shotgun shack, shotgun hut, and shotgun cottage. Shotgun houses usually consist of three to five rooms in a row with no hallways. The term “shotgun house,” which was in use by 1903 but became more common after about 1940, is often said to come from the saying that one could fire a shotgun through the front door and the pellets would fly cleanly through the house and out the back door (since all the doors are on the same side of the house). Several variations of shotgun houses allow for additional features and space, and many have been updated to the needs of future generations of owners. The oldest shotgun houses were built without indoor plumbing, and this was often added later (sometimes crudely). “Double-barrel” shotgun houses consist of two houses sharing a central wall, allowing more houses to be fitted into an area. “Camelback” shotgun houses include a second floor at the rear of the house. In some cases, the entire floor plan is changed during remodeling to create hallways.<sup>5</sup>

The group of shotgun houses found at 636, 638, and 640 West Jackson Street (Photos 12-14), all of which were constructed c. 1925, represent variations on the classic shotgun house and may have been altered at a later date to make them more livable for their residents. The two houses at 636 and 638 West Jackson Street are nearly identical wood frame buildings, each of them having a narrow, rectangular ground plan, with drop siding exterior walls, a front-gable main roof covered with corrugated sheet metal, and a shed-roofed front porch (also surfaced with sheet metal) supported by wood posts and having a wood deck bordered by a simple horizontal board balustrade. The porches of the houses are accessed by cast concrete steps. Both houses rest on high, concrete block piers between which wood lattice panels have been installed to prevent the entrance of small animals or children. Each house has a four-bay main facade with a wood paneled door flanked by paired double-hung wood sash window on one side and a single double hung window on the other. The side elevations also have full-size windows that define the major rooms and a smaller window to provide natural light to the bathroom. Wooden rafter tails can be seen at the eaves of the main roof and porch, and a wooden latticed vent is found in the gable end of the main roof.

The house at 640 West Jackson Street (Photo 14) is similar in many respects to the ones described above, except that the exterior walls are constructed of rusticated concrete blocks, which was a popular and economical building material in Florida in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Another example of a shotgun house constructed with rusticated concrete block is the one found at 403 McFall Avenue (Photo 15). Constructed c. 1925, this shotgun house has undergone a number of improvements, such as the construction of a poured concrete block porch deck, and the house now rests directly on a continuous concrete block foundation

<sup>5</sup> “Shotgun Houses,” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shotgun\\_house](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shotgun_house).

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instead of being raised on piers. Its immediate neighbors at 716, 718, and 720 West South Street (Photos 16-18), all constructed c. 1930, have undergone further alterations, including covering the exterior walls with stucco and enclosing the porches with knee walls and screening. Still, the residences retain sufficient features of their historic character to contribute to the historic character of the district.

Frame Vernacular Houses

Frame Vernacular refers to a simple wood frame building, which is the product of the builder's experience, available resources, and response to the environment. These buildings are typically rectangular, of balloon frame construction, and rest on piers. They are one or two stories in height, with one-story front porches, and gabled or hipped roofs with overhanging eaves. Horizontal weatherboard and drop siding are the most common exterior wall materials. Some early buildings feature vertical board and batten siding or wood shingles, while asbestos shingles are common to post-1930s construction or as resurfacing for older buildings. Wood double-hung sash windows are typical, although many have been replaced by aluminum awning windows and jalousies. Ornamentation is sparse, and includes shingles, corner boards, porch columns, brackets, rafter tails, and vents in the gable ends.

The small wood frame house at 315 South Parramore Street (Photo 19), constructed c. 1923, is a small one-story residence with an end-gable roof and a rectangular ground plan. The house rests on concrete block piers and has small one-bay screened porch covered with a shed roof on its main facade. The exterior walls are drop siding and the original fenestration is 1/1-light double-hung wood sash windows. Like many of the historic residential buildings in the historic district, this house has undergone some non-conforming alterations, such as the replacement of some wood sash windows with metal sash ones, but the building retains most of its historic integrity.

The residence at 721 South Street (Photo 20), constructed c. 1924, represents a front-gable variation of the frame vernacular residence, but is larger and more complex than the shotgun house type. The house is sheathed in drop siding and rests on a continuous concrete block foundation. The five-bay main facade features a one-story porch whose hipped roof is supported by wooden posts united by a non-historic balustrade with spindle balusters. The main fenestration consists of original 4/1-light double-hung wood sash windows. A room created by a partial enclosure of the front porch has a metal awning window, indicating that it is a later addition. The only decorative elements—besides the balustrade—are the typical corner boards, porch columns, rafter tails, and the vent in the gable end.

The house at 646 West Jackson Street (Photo 21), constructed c. 1923, is a variation of the simple side-gabled hall-and-parlor house type which first made its appearance in the Tidewater South in the British colonial era. The house at 646 West Jackson Street incorporates many of the features—at least on the exterior—of this traditional house form. The exterior fabric is asbestos shingles (probably added some time before the 1950s)

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and the roof surfaces are covered with asphalt roll. The three-bay porch has a hipped roof with exposed rafter tails that is supported by simple wooden posts that rest on a wooden deck that is accessed by a short flight of concrete steps. The building rests on a concrete pier foundation, and the main fenestration consists of 2/2-light double-hung wood sash windows. There are several houses of this type in the historic district.

Bungalows

There are only two bungalows of note in the Holden-Parramore Historic District. These are the Dr. William Monroe Wells House (Photo 9 and 22) located at 519 West South Street, constructed in 1921, and the Woodford James Maxey House (Photo 23), constructed c. 1924 at 638 West Anderson Street. The Wells house has a rectangular ground plan and features a wood frame structural system that rests on a continuous brick foundation. The exterior is clad in weatherboard, and the hipped, or pyramidal-shaped, roof is covered in composition shingles. The house features a brick interior/exterior chimney on the east elevation of the building. A one-story porch located on the main (south) facade is one of the most prominent architectural characteristics of the house. The porch has a hipped roof that extends to the porte-cochere on the west. Simple wooden posts are supported by brick column bases. Simple wooden posts on brick column bases also support the roof of the porte-cochere on the west elevation. The porch is framed by a solid brick knee wall that extends from grade and terminates with the porch piers that support the wooden columns. The main entrance has a wood paneled door flanked by 5-light sidelights. The main fenestration consists of 4/1-light double-hung wood sash windows. These windows are found individually and in pairs. Despite the house's overall simple design, the building possesses architectural details that include window and door surrounds, wide overhanging roof eaves, and corner board, and is among the most distinctive houses in the district. The house was originally located down the street at 405 West South Street.

Woodford James Maxey was a public school teacher until 1904 when he became the first black letter carrier in Orlando. He maintained this position for thirty-five years and was active in civic organizations. The house (Photo 23) is a two-story, rectangular residence that features Craftsman elements. The Maxey House features a wood frame structural system that rests on a continuous brick foundation. The exterior is clad in clapboard and the hipped roof is covered in composition shingles. The house features brick chimneys on the east, west, and south elevations. The one-story porch located on the main (north) facade is the most prominent architectural feature of the house. The three-bay porch has a shallow hipped roof with battered columns and simple wood posts supported by the brick porch walls. The front steps are constructed of quarry tile with pieces of the tile inset in the walkway leading up to the house. The off-set main entrance to the house features a wood French door with multiple lights flanked by sidelights with five panes each. The main fenestration consists of double-hung windows with 4/1-light and 3/1-light configurations. These windows are found singly, in pairs, and sets of three. Although the house is simple in design, it does possess architectural details, including window and door surrounds, wide overhanging roof eaves, corner boards, and a plain frieze below the cornice.

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Victorian House & Cottage

The so-called Victorian House and Cottage at 541 West South Street (Photos 24-25), constructed c. 1927, are among the few remaining Folk Victorian houses left in the city. The level of detail found in the original turned columns, railings and carved fretwork is not found on any other buildings in Orlando, and the building is certainly unique among the other historic residences in Holden-Parramore Historic District. The main house is a two-story gable-front residence, has a rectangular ground plan, and a two-story full-width veranda on the main (south) facade. The house rests on concrete block piers, and its exterior is clad with drop siding. The main gable roof is surfaced with corrugated metal, as is the shed roof of the two-story veranda. The main entrance is accessed by a flight of wooden steps that leads to the three-bay porch which has a wooden deck that is bordered by turned wooden posts that support the upper veranda. The posts are united by an unusual Chinese Chippendale balustrade that is mirrored by a similar balustrade on the second level deck. All of the turned wooden posts on the first story feature Victorian-style wooden brackets, above which is a spindle band. Only the two outer posts of the second story veranda have brackets, but there is also a spindle band between the posts very similar to the ground level porch. The main facade has a double entranceway that may indicate that the building was once a rooming house. The main fenestration is 1/1-light double hung sashes with wide drip boards visually meant to imitate decorative cornices.

The one-story cottage at the rear of the property (Photo 25) is similar to the main house both in material and style. It has a steep front-gable roof surfaced with corrugated metal, as is the shed-roof porch of the one-story veranda. The full-width veranda also features turned posts, wooden brackets, a spindle, and a Chinese Chippendale balustrade. The house also features double entrance doors and 1/1-light double-hung wood sash windows.

Mediterranean Revival

There is one very distinctive Mediterranean Revival style house in the historic district. It is the Dr. Isaiah Sylvester Hankins house (Photos 26-27) at 219 Lime Avenue. Dr. Hankins (1895-1991) was born in Orlando and attended Johnson Academy through the 8th Grade, the highest offered to African American children in Orlando at that time. In 1910, he went Edward Waters College in Jacksonville, and subsequently was graduated from Howard University Medical College in 1925. He opened his practice in Orlando in 1926, practicing for more than 50 years. He was a founding officer of the Central Florida Medical Society. Hankins' house, constructed c. 1935, was one of the most luxurious in the Holden-Parramore. It combines features of both the Spanish Eclectic and French Eclectic styles. The two-story residence has a cross-gable roof surfaced with clay tile and rests on a continuous poured concrete foundation. The exterior walls are covered in stucco. The main facade of the house features two round-arched arcades: a four-bay, shed-roofed one serving as a loggia providing access to the main entrance, and a five-bay arcade that marks the entrance to the two-bay garage, one

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of which was used to station an ambulance.<sup>6</sup> The fenestration features a variety of window types, including 6/1-light double-hung sash; 6 by 6-light wooden casement window; and large fixed mullioned windows.

Historic Churches

There are two historic church buildings in the Holden-Parramore Historic District, the Old Mount Pleasant Baptist Church<sup>7</sup> (Photo 28) located at 306 South Parramore Avenue which was constructed c. 1921, and the Old Ebenezer United Methodist Church<sup>8</sup> (Photo 29) located at 596 West Church Street, which was constructed c. 1922. These are the oldest extant African American church buildings in the City of Orlando. The Old Mount Pleasant Church exhibits characteristics of the Romanesque Revival Style, having round arched windows, and square crenellated and rusticated concrete block exterior walls. A surprising feature of the building is the use of decorative wooden shingles in the gable of the main facade. The Old Ebenezer Church, which is constructed of a dark brown brick, combines Gothic Revival and Romanesque Revival characteristics, using both round and pointed arch windows and doors, and also featuring a square crenellated tower. The tower features a crenellated parapet and serves as the main sanctuary entrance.

**NONCONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS**

Noncontributing buildings comprise 23 percent of the buildings in the district. Despite their noncontributing status, these buildings match the setbacks, relative heights, massing, and building materials consistent with the other resources in the district. The noncontributing historic buildings, however, exhibit such a high degree of alteration that they no longer reflect their historic appearance. There are only two historic, noncontributing buildings in the district. These are what was originally a Queen Anne style residence (Photo 30), constructed c. 1910, located at 218 Lime Avenue and the small commercial building at 648 West South Street (Photo 31), constructed c. 1940, which was given its mansard roof and its existing facade sometime in the last twenty years. The non-historic, non-contributing buildings are all less than fifty years of age. Representative of one of the types of single family dwellings constructed in the Holden-Parramore neighborhood in the 1960s and 1970s is the one at 436 Buck Alley (Photo 32), constructed c. 1968. This simple Masonry Vernacular residence with its gable-front roof and concrete block structural system is reminiscent in appearance of the shotgun houses constructed forty years earlier. The small wood frame house at 642 West Anderson Street (Photo 33) appears at first glance to contribute to the character of the historic district, but actually was constructed c. 1995. The one-

<sup>6</sup> There was no city or hospital operated ambulance service for African American residents in Orlando at that time.

<sup>7</sup> Now the Shabach Christian Church.

<sup>8</sup> Now the Greater Refuge Memorial Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith.

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story brick commercial building at 600 West Church Street (Photo 34) also reflects the appearance of some of the historic commercial buildings in the district in material, massing, and general appearance, but was constructed c. 1981. The details that point to construction at a later date are the false mansard roof, the lack of historic storefront divisions, and the use of fixed ribbon windows on the main facade. The noncontributing buildings in the historic district also include apartment complexes like Division Oaks (Photo 35) found at 310 South Division Avenue, which was constructed in 1991. The Division Oaks complex is a series of connected Masonry Vernacular living units. Several churches in the historic district were also constructed after the period of significance. One of the larger of these buildings is the Harvest Baptist Church (Photo 36), constructed c. 1970, which is located at 514 South Parramore Avenue. The style of the church is a modernistic expression of the Gothic Revival style.

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CONTRIBUTING AND NONCONTRIBUTING BUILDING LIST

**CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS**

<u>Address</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Style</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>FMSF #</u>
<u>West Anderson Street</u>				
630	Duplex	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1940	8OR8687
634	Residential	Minimal Traditional	c. 1948	8OR8686
634B	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1930	8OR8686
638	Museum	Bungalow	c. 1924	8OR1293
643	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1930	8OR1296
647	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1930	8OR1297
712	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1930	Pending
<u>Buck Alley</u>				
434	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1925	8OR8688
<u>West Church Street</u>				
532-536	Commerce	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1922	8OR1429
554	Social	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1945	8OR5906
562-566	Commerce	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1940	8OR5905
596	Religious	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1922	8OR1434
612	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1935	Pending
614	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1950	Pending
618	Vacant Gas Station	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1924	8OR1435
630	Repair Shop	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1936	8OR5904
642	Convenience Store	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1949	8OR6096
<u>West Jackson Street</u>				
524	Apartments	Frame Vernacular	c. 1924	8OR1608
537	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1950	Pending
611	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1922	8OR1612
636	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1925	8OR1614
638	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1925	8OR1616
638A	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1925	8OR1616



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West Jackson Street (cont.)

640	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1925	8OR1617
640A	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1925	8O1617
646	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1923	8OR1618
708	Dentist Office	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1953	8OR1619
715	Residential	Bungalow	c. 1925	8O1645
716	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1927	8OR1623
716A	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1927	8OR1623
716B	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1927	8OR1623
719	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1921	8OR1626
720	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1927	8OR1627
720A	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1927	8OR1627
722	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1927	8OR1628
722A	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1927	8OR1628
722B	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1927	8OR1628

Lime Avenue

213	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1925	8OR1704
219	Residential	Mediterranean Revival	c. 1935	8OR1706
308	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1925	8OR1709
308A	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1925	8OR1614

McFall Avenue

403	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1925	8OR1759
413	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1953	8OR1389
437	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1946	8OR1764
443	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1936	8)R1765

South Parramore Ave.

208-212	Commercial	Commercial Style	c. 1925	8OR1832
216	Commerce	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1922	8OR1834
220	Religious/Commerce	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1945	8OR5902
221	Commerce/Residential	Art Moderne	c. 1945	8OR1833
306	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1921	8OR1958

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South Parramore Avenue (cont.)

306B	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1923	8OR1835
312	Religious	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1947	8OR5901
315	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1923	8OR1836
319	Commerce	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1947	8OR5900
408	Commerce	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1953	8OR8692
410-412	Commerce	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1953	8OR8691
416	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1924	8OR1837
419	Commerce	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1923	8OR1838
419A	Outbuilding	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1923	8OR1838
420	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1927	8OR1839
421	Religious	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1953	8OR1840
427	Commerce	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1949	8OR1842
428-434	Commerce	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1949	8OR8690
436	Commerce	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1951	8OR8690
437	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1924	8OR1846
446	Commerce	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1940	8OR1847
512	Commerce	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1930	8OR8683
516	Commerce; Domestic	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1952	8OR1849
539	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1923	8OR1850

West South Street

503	Commercial	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1922	8OR9001
511 (NR Listed)	Museum	Commercial	c. 1926	8OR1950
519	Museum	Bungalow	c. 1921	8OR1947
541	Residential	Victorian	c. 1927	8OR0187
541A	Residential	Victorian	c. 1927	8OR0187
640	Commercial	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1952	Pending
711	Residential	Bungalow	c. 1939	8OR1959
716	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1930	8OR1961
717	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1930	8OR1962
718	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1930	8OR1963
720	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1930	8OR1964
721	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1924	8OR1965

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South Terry Avenue

219	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1922	8OR1434
<b>NONCONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS</b>				

<u>Address</u>	<u>Use</u>	<u>Style</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>FMSF #</u>
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West Anderson Street

642	Residential	Frame Vernacular	c. 1995	N/A
654	Church	Modern Gothic	c. 1963	N/A

Buck Alley

436	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1967	N/A
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West Church Street

600	Commerce	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1981	N/A
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South Division Avenue

310A	Apartments	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1966	N/A
310B	Apartments	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1991	N/A

West Jackson Street

523A	Apartments	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1988	N/A
523B	Apartments	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1991	N/A
603	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1962	N/A
726	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1998	N/A

Lime Avenue

218	Medical Office	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1910	8OR1705
300	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1925	8OR1707

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McFall Avenue

427	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1962	N/A
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**NONCONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS (Cont.)**

South Parramore Avenue

305	Commerce	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1961	N/A
314	Religious	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1980	N/A
407	Commercial	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1953	N/A
413	Commercial	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1977	N/A
422	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1966	N/A
439	Commercial	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1962	N/A
445	Commercial	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1957	N/A
514	Religious	Modern Gothic	c. 1970	N/A

West South Street

635	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1969	N/A
648	Commercial	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1940	8OR1956

South Terry Avenue

224	Residential	Masonry Vernacular	c. 1967	N/A
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SIGNIFICANCE

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**SUMMARY**

The Holden-Parramore Historic District is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage: Black as the oldest and largest African American neighborhood in Orlando, Florida. Founded in the late 1800s, the Holden-Parramore area, along with the neighboring Callahan neighborhood, formed the heart of the city's black community in segregated Orlando, Florida. The original residents who comprised this community descended from individuals of many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, including African, various Caribbean countries, and Seminole Indian ancestry, in addition to native-born African Americans.<sup>9</sup> At a time when communities were defined by race, the Holden-Parramore neighborhood achieved its own distinct identity, characterized by its residential fabric and its social, religious, and commercial establishments, and other institutions. Despite the loss of much of its historic built environment, the remaining historic resources in the Holden-Parramore Historic District continue to reflect the development and evolution of Orlando's black community from the beginning of the 20th century to the 1950s when the area began to decline.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Settlement of the Holden-Parramore Neighborhood, 1880-1919

During the Reconstruction period, African Americans were faced with the monumental task of building themselves up economically without much help from the government, and while enduring discriminatory laws in the southern states known as the Black Codes. These codes restricted the rights of Blacks to the point that they were almost returned to a state of servitude. By the 1870s, African American residents were often working as day laborers for various local enterprises, including the growing agricultural industries or as domestic help for white families. As this population increased in the 1880s, several historically African American communities began to develop in the Orlando area. Indicative of the burgeoning African American populace, the Orange County Reporter documented over 500 African American persons residing in Orlando in 1884. Eatonville, located approximately six miles north of Orlando, was settled around 1883 as an "all-African American community." Today, this town is recognized as the earliest remaining incorporated black municipality in the country and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1998.<sup>10</sup> Another early African American settlement was located closer to Orlando's center just northwest of the historic Greenwood Cemetery between Central Boulevard and South Street. Known as Jonestown, this community established by James B. Magruder (1861- 1925) in the early years of the twentieth century. Magruder constructed up to forty houses in Jonestown for African American residents.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Leroy Argrett, Jr., A History of the Black Community of Orlando, Florida (Fort Bragg, CA: Cypress House, 1991) p. 9; "Black Seminoles," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black\\_Seminoles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Seminoles)

<sup>10</sup> Argrett, pp. 18-19.

<sup>11</sup> Eve Bacon, Orlando A Centennial History (Chuluota, FL: Mickler House, Publishers, Chuluota, Florida, 1975), p. 219.

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Around this time, the area of Orlando just west of the downtown core also became a predominantly African American community. Several churches and a school were established in the growing community, and around 1882, James B. Parramore (1839-1902) platted an area in the proximity of present day Washington Street and Parramore Avenue. In 1886, Parramore's property was replatted by the Reverend Andrew Hooper, a white developer. During this period, Reverend Hooper constructed several small frame dwellings to house locals employed as servants, because it was too far for them to walk from Jonestown to their white employers' residences. This area became known as Hooper Quarters, later named the Callahan Neighborhood, named after Dr. Jerry B. Callahan (1882-1947), one of the first black physicians in Orlando who opened a medical practice in 1908.<sup>12</sup> The neighborhood was bounded by Colonial Drive, Central Avenue, Division Street and Orange Blossom Trail.<sup>13</sup> In later years, this section was called Black Bottom because of the dark color of the dirt streets when it rained; this area was also historically called Pepperhill.

The African American community in west Orlando continued to expand southward, joining with the settlement known today as the Holden-Parramore Neighborhood. Starting in the 1880s, sections of the Holden-Parramore area were platted, and residential construction immediately ensued. It is interesting to note, most of the men purchasing and platting the land in the area were white, and they were also involved in the development of other areas throughout the City. In fact, the current name of the neighborhood is derived from two white Orlando pioneers who were prominent local citizens. Generally, the early neighborhood developers would either sell unimproved lots or construct houses on their land and then rent or sell the property to African Americans. On the unimproved lots, the new owners would generally build homes to be occupied by their own families rather than renters. The area that would form the Holden-Parramore neighborhood first appears on the Sanborn insurance maps in 1908.<sup>14</sup> There was only a scattering of single family dwellings, a public school, a Masonic Hall, Odd Fellows Hall, three churches—including the Ebenezer Methodist Episcopal Church at the intersection West Church Avenue and South Terry Avenue. As yet, there was no commercial district in the Holden-Parramore area. Division Street was already becoming the de facto if not the de jure boundary of the white and black areas of the city. There were two African American boarding houses along West Church Avenue in the block immediately east of Division Avenue.

In the early-1900s, the African American population continued to expand, and the Holden-Parramore Neighborhood reflected this growth pattern. At this time, G.C. Henderson began publishing an African American-oriented newspaper called the Florida Christian Recorder for the growing community. Also, numerous subdivisions were platted and then replatted during these years, including H.W. Metcalf's Addition, recorded in 1909; L. B. Long's Second Subdivision, filed in 1913; and W.E. Gore's Addition, recorded in 1911. Not much had changed by 1913, except that the neighborhood had expanded north, south, and west, but no area

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<sup>12</sup> "Dr. Jerry B. Callahan," <http://www.chicagotribune.com/topic/orl-bcopmain1807feb18,0,3259482.story?page=2>.

<sup>13</sup> Argrett, p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> Sanborn Maps of Orlando, Florida. New York: Sanborn Map Company, May 1908.

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was densely built up. Church Street now featured a number of colored hotels and rooming houses, but still no business center had yet emerged.<sup>15</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance maps from 1919 show dense collections of buildings throughout the Holden-Parramore Neighborhood. Most of the structures appear to be one-story wood frame residences, but commercial buildings are also evident at this time. The majority of these commercial buildings were concentrated along South Parramore Avenue and West Church Street.

**HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE**

Florida Boom Era, 1920-1929

By the 1920s, both the legal and cultural division of the races in Orlando lay at the aptly named Division Street. Everything to the east was white and everything to the west was black.<sup>16</sup> The African American community in Orlando continued to grow and thrive in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The Sanborn Maps of 1925 showed both side of West Church Street between Division Avenue and Terry Avenue lined with commercial buildings. Black-owned businesses, neighborhood churches, and educational institutions served a community that included merchants, doctors, ministers, educators, and professional people. Orlando's black community prospered despite the efforts to deny them the opportunities for financial, social, and political advancement and to keep them segregated. When the real estate boom hit Orlando in the 1920s, the western section of the City, including the Holden-Parramore Neighborhood, was already firmly established as the center of the African American community. At this time, the segregated nature of the City was very evident. For example, African American citizens could not even window shop along Orange Avenue, (one of the City's main commercial thoroughfares), without being chased away by business owners.<sup>17</sup> Legalized segregation, kept African Americans excluded from public facilities such as theatres, hotels, and restaurants in the white sections of the city. In response to segregation, Blacks found it necessary to establish their own businesses that they could patronize. Since the white population was physically and socially dissociated from the African American community, Orlando's black residents were forced to create their own institutions such as churches, social clubs, and schools.

Located on the corner of Parramore Avenue and Washington Street two blocks north of the historic district boundaries, Jones High School, formerly known as the Orlando African American School, was one of the primary educational institutions in the area. Constructed in the 1920s, the Ebenezer United Methodist Church, 594 West Church Street, and the Mt. Pleasant Church, 314 South Parramore Avenue, provided spiritual guidance for area residents. Dr. William Monroe Wells, one of the area's first physicians, built the South Street Casino in order to accommodate local social events and the Wells'built Hotel to house African American

<sup>15</sup> Sanborn Maps, May 1913.

<sup>16</sup> Polk's Orlando City Directory. Jacksonville, FL: R.L. Polk Publishing Co., 1925-1959.

<sup>17</sup> Lorry James, Personal Communication with Amy Groover of Janus Research, Tampa, Florida, November 11, 1998.

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entertainers and athletes staying in Orlando. Guests at the Wells'built Hotel included Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, Count Basie and Jackie Robinson.<sup>18</sup> During this decade, a library for the African Americans was established in the local Episcopal Church's rectory; the Negro Oddfellows Club was formed; and a beach along the shores of Lake Mann exclusively for the city's Black residents was dedicated.<sup>19</sup>

During the boom of the 1920s, even the predominantly African American areas were experiencing economic prosperity as job opportunities were plentiful, particularly in the construction and citrus industries. Numerous businesses were created or expanded in the commercial areas of the Holden-Parramore Neighborhood, including barber shops, dry cleaners, groceries, clothing stores, restaurants, funeral homes, and drug stores.<sup>20</sup> Some local residents like Woodford Maxey, Orlando's first African American letter carrier, were also investing in the area. Not only did he construct his family's home on West Anderson Street in the 1920s, but he also built several commercial buildings at this time.<sup>21</sup> During this period, dwellings continued to be constructed at a rapid pace. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps from 1925-1926 reveal that many more one-story Frame Vernacular residences with front porches were found throughout the neighborhood. Most of the houses were constructed for single-family occupancy, but duplexes were also evident in the area. Additional masonry churches and commercial structures were also constructed in the neighborhood during this time.

Another prominent local African American leader was Dr. Isaiah Sylvester Hankins (1895-1991) who was born in Orlando in 1895. Dr. I. Sylvester Hankins opened his medical practice in Orlando, Florida, in 1926. He graduated from Howard Medical College and practiced in Orlando for more than 50 years. He was a founding officer of the Central Florida Medical Society. Hankins also served as the first principal of the Orlando Colored School, which was founded in 1886.

During the 1920s the area experienced a remarkable burst of growth, both residential and commercial. West Church Street between South Bryan Avenue on the east and South Terry Avenue on the west was lined with commercial buildings and residences. The commercial center of the community at that time stopped at Terry Avenue. The remainder of West Church Street was lined with residences, as were both sides of South Parramore Avenue between Church Street and Long Street. By 1940, however, the commercial district had spread west along West Church Street to South Parramore Avenue and continued to the south along Parramore Avenue, although residences were intermixed with business locations in this area. By 1950, the Holden-Parramore neighborhood was almost fully built out with residences representing the largest category of construction.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Oliver, Mike. "Hotel's Next Gig: Guarding the Past," Orlando Sentinel, March 10, 1996.

<sup>19</sup> Argrett, p.46.

<sup>20</sup> Polk's Orlando City Directory. Jacksonville, FL: R.L. Polk Publishing Co., 1925-1959.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Sanborn Maps of Orlando, Florida. New York: Sanborn Map Company, April 1951.



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Great Depression Era, 1929-1940

The stock market crash of 1929 caused soup lines to become the order of the day for the skilled and unskilled alike in urban areas across the nation. African Americans in both cities and rural areas—many already living in poverty—suffered greatly from the economic depression. Unemployed whites took jobs they formerly disdained: street cleaning, garbage collection, elevator operation, domestic service. By 1932 half of all blacks living in the urban South could find no work. In the North, where three million blacks lived in the 1930s, conditions were equally bad. The median income of skilled workers declined 48.7 percent. Kelly Miller, a Howard University sociologist, estimated in 1932 that one-third of blacks were unemployed and another third were underemployed, commenting that the African American was "the surplus man, the last to be hired and the first to be fired." For the Roosevelt administration and the New Dealers, black poverty was one among many problems. New Deal agencies were reluctant to address black issues independent of overall New Deal programs for fear of alienating Roosevelt's political support among Southern Democrats. The Federal Housing Administration, for example, constructed segregated housing for the poor and refused to make loans to blacks to buy homes. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued an executive order forbidding discrimination in New Deal programs, but the order was ignored. In some cases, monthly relief checks to whites totaled \$32.66; to blacks, \$19.29.<sup>23</sup>

Although the economic effects of the Great Depression on the Holden-Parramore neighborhood were not immediately apparent—the Sanborn Insurance Maps of 1931 show more masonry buildings within the neighborhood in addition to the large numbers of frame buildings already built—the area had already begun to decline. Businesses along Church Street and Parramore Avenue began to fail, and the older housing stock was rapidly falling into disrepair. Homes were abandoned as some residents migrated to northern states in search of better employment opportunities. Most of the houses in the Holden-Parramore neighborhood were rental properties, and the often absentee owners were unable or unwilling to maintain them.

The Holden-Parramore Neighborhood and other communities in the city's west side remained the focal point of African American life in Orlando during the 1930s, but city officials were becoming alarmed about growing disheveled appearance of black neighborhoods in the city. In 1938, the city decided to respond to U.S. Housing Act of 1937 which provided for subsidies to be paid from the U.S. government to local public housing agencies to improve living conditions for low-income families. The act required that the construction of new public housing units be matched by the removal of an equal number of substandard dwellings from the local housing supply. This meant that, in deference to the real estate and home building interests, the federal housing program would increase the quality of housing without increasing the quantity.<sup>24</sup> The city created the Orlando Housing Authority to conduct a survey of the blighted sections of Orlando and began a program of the demolition of

<sup>23</sup> Jim Powell, "Why Did FDR's New Deal Harm Blacks?," [http://www.cato.org/pub\\_display.php?pub\\_id=3329](http://www.cato.org/pub_display.php?pub_id=3329).

<sup>24</sup> "The Past: United States Housing Act of 1937," <http://www.texashousing.org/phdebate/past5.html>.

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abandoned and uninhabitable properties.<sup>25</sup> Among the areas identified was Jonestown, a 12 block section of the city located between Greenwood Cemetery and a growing white neighborhood. The housing authority decided to demolish the neighborhood and move the residents to a new housing project to be funded by \$800,000 from the U.S. Congress. Jonestown property owners filed an injunction against the city to halt the destruction of their homes for a federally funded slum clearance project. However, the city decided to go forward with the project and a portion of Jonestown was razed and residents relocated to Griffin Park,<sup>26</sup> a housing development located on the southern edge of the Holden-Parramore Neighborhood.<sup>27</sup>

World War II, 1941-1945

For many members of the nation's African American population, the very location of their homes changed during the war years, as over half a million blacks migrated from the South to northern and western cities in search of war work. Upon arrival in cities such as Detroit, Michigan, and Richmond, California, they frequently found that the vast majority of defense jobs were reserved for white workers. In fact, at the beginning of the war, seventy-five percent of war industries would not hire African Americans, and another fifteen percent would only hire them for menial jobs.<sup>28</sup> President Roosevelt signed an Executive Order banning workplace discrimination in defense industries and the federal government, establishing the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) to enforce the order. The FEPC, however, was chronically understaffed and under-funded, and thus unable (and at times unwilling) to effect substantive changes in hiring practices. As the war progressed, severe labor shortages, rather than government action, ultimately brought African Americans into war industries.<sup>29</sup>

Many African American men and women in Orlando sought employment in civilian war industries to improve their economic situation, which had not gotten much better during the depression years.<sup>30</sup> A second migration of Orlando's African American residents began, further depleting the number of residents in the historically segregated neighborhoods. In the 1940s, while the United States was deeply involved in war-related activities, city officials in Orlando still encouraged the separation of the races. In 1943, the zoning board urged all local leaders, whether they were African American or white, to support segregation because that was the basis of the City's zoning.<sup>31</sup> By the mid-1940s, the City began to encourage residents to move out of the historically African American areas and purchase vacant land further west.

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<sup>25</sup> Lipman, Larry. "Blacks Zoned into Southwest Part of City." *Sentinel Star*, July 23, 1978.

<sup>26</sup> The area was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Griffin Park Historic District in 1996.

<sup>27</sup> *Orlando Sentinel-Star*. September 8, 1940.

<sup>28</sup> Kristin Celello, "World War II: The Home Front," <http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/solguide/VUS11/essay11b.html>.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> "Minorities and Women During World War II," [http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/WWII\\_Women/RA/NCraig/Minorities.html](http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/WWII_Women/RA/NCraig/Minorities.html).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

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In 1945, the Orlando Housing Authority constructed another housing project for African Americans. This was Carver Court, built for \$468,700. The goal of the public housing development was to stimulate the economy, resolve growing slum and housing problems, and meet local demands associated with the massive defense buildup that had occurred during World War II. The development consisted of 16 one-story buildings and 12 two-story buildings. As a well-defined group of affordable, multi-family, residential buildings organized around open spaces, Carver Court exemplified public housing projects constructed throughout the country during the late 1930s and 1940s. Its 212 units were built on a former landfill, and some buildings quickly began to experience problems with the ground settling, causing serious structural problems requiring the buildings to be demolished. The remaining 148 families who still lived there were relocated in 2001 and the remaining buildings were demolished in 2002.

Post-War Era, 1946-Present

By the end of World War II, the Holden-Parramore neighborhood was struggling to maintain its physical and cultural identity. As many African Americans began to migrate west, the older neighborhoods began to lose their middle and upper-income residents.<sup>32</sup> In 1947, a white businessman named James H. Graham (1914-1993) assembled a group of investors, including Isaiah Sylvester Hankins, and established the Washington Shores Subdivision to the west of the original black settlements. Many of the African American professional people who had built homes and businesses in Orlando's historically black community relocated to Washington Shores.<sup>33</sup> Financially able African Americans could now own newer and larger homes than those found in the older areas of the city.<sup>34</sup> Orlando in 1951 was a place of 52,000 people—about 25 percent of them black and concentrated in less than seven percent of the city's area. Segregation remained the law of the land and, in Orlando was strictly enforced. Blacks could cross Division Street and the railroad tracks to work and shop in the white-owned businesses downtown, but if two or more black men strayed across the line for reasons other than to make or spend money, there was a white police officer to intercept them.<sup>35</sup>

The next event that would seriously affect the integrity of the Holden-Parramore neighborhood was the construction of Interstate Highway 4 through Orlando. Construction of the \$30 million roadway began on November 28, 1958. The building of Interstate 4 met with a great deal of opposition in its planning stages. Many residents, both black and white were against the highway going through the heart of the city. They wanted it to have a more westerly route. Despite complaints, all sections were built as planned and the road was fully open by March 1965. Whether the results were intentional or not, the construction of the Interstate Highway System had its most detrimental impact on minority communities. It was a story repeated throughout

<sup>32</sup>Lorry James, Personal Communication with Amy Groover.

<sup>33</sup> Benjamin D. Brotemarkle, Crossing Division Street: An Oral History of the African American Community in Orlando (Cocoa, FL: The Florida Historical Press, 2005), p. 38.

<sup>34</sup> Clark, Mercedes, Interview with Kisa Hooks of Janus Research, Tampa, Florida, November 12, 2003.

<sup>35</sup> "Orlando's First Black Police Officers," <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/media/flash/2007-05/27973936.swf>

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the U.S. during this time; by the mid-1960s, interstate construction in urban areas was destroying roughly 37,000 residences annually. By 1969, nearly 70,000 homes, mostly occupied by blacks and Latinos, were being destroyed for the interstate program alone, in virtually every medium and large city in the country.<sup>36</sup>

The destruction of urban residential space prompted citizen protests known as “highway revolts” across the nation: in the South (Miami, Montgomery, Columbia, Birmingham, Charlotte, Tampa, Jacksonville, Orlando, Atlanta, and Nashville), the North (South Bronx, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and Camden, NJ), the Midwest (Kansas City, St. Paul, Indianapolis, Columbus, Cleveland, Milwaukee and Chicago), and the West (Los Angeles, Pasadena, and Seattle). In fact, opposition to many of the proposed interstate routes forced the government to pass new regulation in the late 1960s, ostensibly ensuring relocation assistance or new housing construction to replace units destroyed: a promise that would go largely unfulfilled in each and every community affected.<sup>37</sup>

Interstate Highway 4 was one of the first interstate highways to be constructed in Florida. The first section opened between Plant City and Lakeland in 1959. In 1960-1961, the Howard Frankland Bridge connecting Tampa and St. Petersburg opened to traffic, as well as the segment from Tampa to Plant City. The stretch from Lake Monroe to Lake Helen also opened during that period. The segment from Lakeland to Orlando was complete by 1962. By the mid 1960s, several segments were already complete, including Malfunction Junction in Tampa and parts of I-4 through Orlando. The construction of the highway involved the destruction of a large number of buildings in the eastern section of the Holden-Parramore neighborhood and blocked the access of a number of east-west streets to downtown Orlando. The construction of the Holland East-West Expressway in the southern part of the neighborhood, beginning in 1973, destroyed more buildings and further isolated the area. The once vibrant community of the 1920s began to deteriorate rapidly as even more residents began to move from the area, leaving many commercial buildings and residences vacant. During the subsequent decades the widespread demolition of deteriorating buildings led to the almost complete removal of commercial buildings along the eastern section of West Church Street, and blocks that were once filled with single family dwellings were left almost completely vacant, as if they had never been occupied.<sup>38</sup>

The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s eventually increased the number of Orlando neighborhoods accessible to African Americans for home ownership and new settlement. This trend that occurred nationwide increased the migration of citizens from historically tight-knit African American communities like the Holden-Parramore neighborhood. The 1960s also marked the departure of many middle-income black residents from the Holden-Parramore neighborhood. In 1960, the population of the neighborhood was 17,532; by 1990 the population had fallen to 8,344. The neighborhood continued to have roughly the same racial/ethnic mix—12

<sup>36</sup> [http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=show\\_mesg&forum=258&topic\\_id=2983&mesg\\_id=5081](http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=show_mesg&forum=258&topic_id=2983&mesg_id=5081).

<sup>37</sup> “Racism, the Interstate Highway System, and Urban Renewal,” [http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=show\\_mesg&forum=258&topic\\_id=2983&mesg\\_id=5081](http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=show_mesg&forum=258&topic_id=2983&mesg_id=5081).

<sup>38</sup> Kristen Larsen, “Revitalizing the Parramore Heritage Renovation Area: Florida’s State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program and Orlando’s Historic African American Community,” *Housing Policy Debate*, Volume 9, Issue 3, Fannie Mae Foundation, 1998, p. 602.

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percent white and 88 percent black. During this 30-year period, the median household income in Holden-Parramore fell relative to Orlando overall. In 1960 the median income represented 57.8 percent of the city median; by 1990 it was 39.4 percent of the city median.<sup>39</sup>

Demolition for public and private projects, most notably north of West Church Street, resulted in a loss of housing units, from a total of 5,621 in 1960 to 3,178 in 1990. Many of the units lost were single-family and duplex structures, which went from 70 percent to 57 percent of the total housing stock during the 30-year period. Owner-occupancy had always been low in Holden-Parramore, with only 20 percent of the occupied units being owner occupied in 1960 compared with 57 percent in the city overall. However, by 1990 the percentage dropped further to only 12 percent of the total housing units in the area. Although the community still had neighborhood schools in the 1960s, by the 1990s none remained, and the Orange County School Board bussed resident children to eight different elementary schools.<sup>40</sup>

Although roadway projects such as the construction of I-4 and the East-West Expressway, as well as demolitions and downtown development have lessened the physical cohesiveness of the neighborhood, the residents, local community organizations, and the City of Orlando have organized to revitalize the area and neutralize Holden-Parramore's negative image. The City is currently sponsoring a program to build historically sensitive infill housing, and design guidelines for the neighborhood have been created. Although renters constitute the majority of the residents in the Holden-Parramore neighborhood, there is a commitment to maintain the traditional fabric of the neighborhood. Also, historically sensitive infill housing is being constructed on vacant lots and newly landscaped streets and paved sidewalks have improved the streetscapes throughout the area. Although positive movement is evident in the neighborhood, a great deal of the historic fabric is still threatened and the area remains economically depressed.

The remaining historic resources of the Holden-Parramore Neighborhood still reflect the history of the African American community within Orlando. Historically, the Holden-Parramore neighborhood was an important element in the growth and development of Orlando and was instrumental in the expansion of the City to the west of the central downtown core. The neighborhood also represents the evolutionary patterns of the African American community. As the center of African American life in Orlando, the Holden-Parramore Neighborhood was home to several influential African American leaders and also was home to small businessmen, skilled workers, and residents who worked in the citrus groves or as domestic help for local families. The extant historic resources within the Holden-Parramore Historic District serve to illustrate a significant link to the developmental history and ethnic heritage of the City of Orlando. It remains as a physical reminder of the

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Kristen Larsen, p. 602.

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social order and self-containment that occurred nationwide, when African Americans found themselves excluded from white society.

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The east and west sides of South Parramore Avenue from Long Street north to the intersection with West Church Street where it continues along the south side of West Church Street east to South Division Avenue, Orlando, Orange County, Florida. See accompanying map entitled "Holden-Parramore Historic District."

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The district boundaries encompass the majority of the remaining historic resources in the Holden-Parramore neighborhood, which was the principal African American residential, commercial, religious, and institutional area of Orlando from the mid-1920s to the mid-1950s.

UTM REFERENCES

	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
5	17	462100	3156580
6	17	461900	3256580

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2. Holden-Parramore Historic District, Orlando (Orange County), Florida
3. Staff Photographer, Janus Research, Inc.
4. 2007
5. Digital Photo
6. Church Street, Looking East from South Division Avenue
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