

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Sweet Auburn Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

Sweet Auburn Historic District

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Along Auburn Avenue

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Georgia

___ VICINITY OF

CODE

13

COUNTY

Fulton

CODE

121

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	___ AGRICULTURE ___ MUSEUM
___ BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	___ UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL ___ PARK
___ STRUCTURE	___ BOTH	___ WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL ___ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
___ SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
___ OBJECT	___ IN PROCESS	___ YES: RESTRICTED	___ GOVERNMENT ___ SCIENTIFIC
	___ BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	___ INDUSTRIAL ___ TRANSPORTATION
		___ NO	___ MILITARY ___ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple Ownership

STREET & NUMBER

See Continuation Sheet

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Georgia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Registry of Deeds; Fulton County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Pryor Street

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Survey of Historic Structures, Sites and Districts

DATE

November, 1973

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Atlanta Urban Design Commission

CITY, TOWN

Atlanta

STATE

Georgia

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Sweet Auburn was the center of a thriving black economy and base of a rising black middle class. The Auburn Avenue of the late 19th and early 20th centuries no longer exists. There does exist, however, numerous enterprises which date to this early period. Moreover, there remains the buildings in which much of the total life of all Afro-Atlantans, business and social, took place.

Auburn Avenue has no one particular architectural style as the present district is composed of buildings ranging in date of construction from the 1890s to the 1940s. Likewise, modern intrusions, including the construction of modern thoroughfare I-85 has severed the Avenue and made the total extent of the Avenue as one historic district impossible. There does exist on the west side of I-85/75 substantial historical remains with a good degree of integrity. These buildings stretch along a four block span of Auburn Avenue and when taken together give an effective picture of this once thriving business sector. This district does not, however, reflect the total picture of Auburn Avenue as important residential buildings are located on the east side of I-85/75. On this east side is also located the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places which includes the birthplace, Ebenezer Baptist Church and the Center for Social Change. But the inclusion of such important historical structures is impractical because of its disjuncture from the main center of economic buildings and its many intrusive elements.

Atlanta Life Insurance Company 148 Auburn Avenue

Located on Auburn Avenue is the second largest black insurance company in the United States, the Atlanta Life Insurance Company. Founded by Alonzo F. Herndon, a former slave of Walton County, Georgia, the Atlanta Life Insurance Company is a conglomerate of nine companies amalgamated in 1905. The company steadily grew so that by 1910, there were more than 42 branch offices. Herndon grew in reputation and finances to become one of the richest "Negroes" in the country. It is important to note that with financial success the business has remained on Auburn Avenue. This location may change in the near future as the company is thinking of relocating.

The Atlanta Life Insurance Company is a complex of buildings. The central building faces Auburn Avenue and has a Beaux-Arts classical facade. The structure was originally constructed as a YMCA. This new facade was added in 1927. An additional wing in similar style was added in the 1930s. This facade is without question one of the outstanding visual points of the district because of its highly stylized version of the corinthian order used to support the entablature. The double entrance doors of the first floor are topped with an ornate pediment.

Located also on this block are Rucker Building, the Atlanta Daily World office, the Smith House and Carriage Factory.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			Afro-American History

SPECIFIC DATES **1865-1930**

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The phenomenal growth of black enterprise in the post Civil War period is typified by the "Sweet Auburn Historic District." Once a sprawling expanse of one mile the district has been altered by the construction of a modern interstate highway as well as intrusive buildings of recent construction. There remains on the west side of I-85 outstanding examples of the institutional buildings of the district during the early 20th century.

The name Sweet Auburn was coined by John Wesley Dobbs and applies to Auburn Avenue which was called the "richest Negro street in the world." Like other black communities throughout the country, Sweet Auburn's success was intricately tied to the residential pattern forced on blacks by the rise of Jim Crow. The Sweet Auburn Historic District is a good example of the results of segregation policies as well as a prime case pointing out the merits of black entrepreneurs.

Though the success of Sweet Auburn in recent years has been diminished, the remnants of past days are clear along the streets of the Sweet Auburn Historic District.

History

In the post Civil War period blacks began a surge into the economic circles of commerce. Though many of these businesses were small there rose some very good examples of black entrepreneur expertise. The enterprises of Madame C. J. Walker, Asa Spaulding and Robert Abbott are but a few examples of this activity. However the rise of Jim Crow in the south led to the separation of communities thus giving rise to entire districts of black shops and businesses. Outstanding among such districts is "Sweet Auburn Historic District" in Atlanta. Without question this vast stretch originally one mile in length gained the reputation of "the richest Negro street in the world." The rise of Sweet Auburn is intricately tied to the history of the nation and imparticular to the part that the south has played in that history.

Sweet Auburn's history goes back to the end of the Civil War. Originally known as Wheat Street, the name was changed in 1893 to Auburn Avenue. During this period Wheat Street had no racial barriers and blacks and whites lived as neighbors. At this time also the majority of black businesses were located in what is now downtown Atlanta and along Decatur Street. In the 1890s, however, this pattern began to change.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bacote, Clarence, The Story of Atlanta University. Atlanta: 1969.

Carter, E. R., The Black Side. Atlanta: 1874.

Durett, Dan and White, Dana F., Another Atlanta: The Black Heritage. Atlanta; Western Publishing Company, Inc. 1975. (continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA 19

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,6	74,290,0	3,73,724,0	B	1,6	74,275,0	3,73,772,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,6	74,233,0	3,73,790,0	D	1,6	74,230,0	3,73,820,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Lynne Gomez-Graves, Historical Projects Director

ORGANIZATION

Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

1420 N Street, Northwest

TELEPHONE

(202) 462-2519

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D. C.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ____

STATE ____

LOCAL ____

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

65

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET Sweet Auburn
Historic District ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE One

Owner of Property

Contact: Bob Jackson
Inner City Development Corporation
55 Marietta Street
Atlanta, Georgia

Dr. Elizabeth Lyons
Preservation Department
Department of Natural Resources
Atlanta, Georgia

Atlanta Life Insurance Company
Atlanta Life Insurance Company
148 Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, Georgia

Big Bethel AME Church
Big Bethel AME Church
Auburn Avenue
Atlanta, Georgia

Butler Street YMCA
Young Mens Christian Association
22 Butler Street
Atlanta, Georgia

Odd Fellows Building & Auditorium
New Era Missionary Baptist Association

Municipal Market
Mayor
City Hall
Atlanta, Georgia

Herndon Building
Rose Martin
3049 Mission Ridge Court
Atlanta, Georgia (436-9235)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET Sweet Auburn
Historic District ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE Two

Big Bethel AME Church
Corner of Butler Street and Auburn Avenue

The Church throughout the black experience has played a very important leadership role both secular and sacred. Big Bethel has since its founding in 1865 been an important force in the development of Atlanta's black community. Not only has it provided spiritual leadership to its members but it has also fostered the development of diverse social, educational and economic institutions of great significance to that community. This church remains a source of leadership in this community.

Big Bethel was first constructed in 1891. It is a stone building fashioned of rough hewn granite. Built in Romanesque Revival form the church has been a prominent landmark on Auburn Avenue. There are two assymmetrically balanced towers on the south facade topped with steeple and belfrey steps rise to an arched central recessed entrance. The towers and interior of Big Bethel date from 1924, the time of the church's rebuilding after a fire. However, the basic structure which dates to 1891 is clearly discernable.

Butler Street YMCA
22 Butler Street

Butler Street YMCA is historically one of the most significant buildings of the Sweet Auburn Historic District. At this site was located the central recreational facility for the young black men of this community and all of Atlanta. Organized on May 16, 1920 the YMCA became more than a recreational facility it was used as a regular meeting place for Atlanta's many black fraternal, civic and political organizations. Many campaigns had their origin in this building. In the conference rooms of Butler Street YMCA according to John Calhoun, a local civic leader, many events were held for public participation.

In 1942, the Hungry Club was organized here. (For more than 30 years this organization sponsored lectures by persons of local, national and international fame.)

The Butler Street YMCA is a five story brick building in Georgian Revival style. The building was constructed by Hamilton and Son, a local contractor. The second level contains the conference rooms and meeting facilities used by local organizations. The first floor contains YMCA offices as well as large room for billiards, ping-pong and other games. The first floor is elevated and double stairways lead from either side up to a landing. The architects for the building were Heintz, Reid and Adler of Atlanta.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET Sweet Auburn
Historic District ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

**Odd Fellows Building and Auditorium
250 Auburn Ave.**

One of the most architecturally outstanding buildings of the business structures along Auburn Avenue is the Odd Fellows Building and Auditorium. This structure was the brain-child of Benjamin J. Davis, editor of the Atlanta Independent. William A. Edwards, a distinguished white architect of the south in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, designed the building. It was constructed in 1912-1913 by Robert E. Pharrow. At the time of the construction this building was local headquarters of the Atlanta Chapter of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows. The Odd Fellows building was an overwhelmingly large building for blacks to construct. This building is one of the major black entrepreneurial centers in America. The Odd Fellows is presently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. At the time of construction in 1912, many shops were located in the building. One of these, Yates and Milton Drugstore, remains an outstanding business today with shops located throughout the city.

This six-story brick building with unique terre-cotta figure has a two story section on its east side. At one time this six-story section contained stores and shops, forty-two offices and six lodge rooms in addition a large auditorium. Moreover, a real sense of pride was demonstrated in the terre-cotta figureheads on the building with their African features. These figures are located on opposite sides of the entrance and are clearly visible to the passerby or visitor. The recessed entrance portico has an arch above it. The first level of the building is fashioned of stone while the upper levels are brick. In addition this six-story building was topped with an exquisite roof garden. The building presently houses several small businesses and a community center.

**Herndon Building
251 Auburn Avenue**

Situated just opposite the Odd Fellows Building, the Herndon Building is one of the outstanding examples of a multiple use building of the Sweet Auburn Historic District. The structure was named after its builder Alonzo F. Herndon. The Herndon Building has been used as the home of the Atlanta Urban League up to 1964. It also provided space for the Atlanta School of Social Work, incorporated in 1925 and now a part of the Atlanta University. This building was a major source of office space for black businesses in Atlanta and until the construction of other office space in particular the Citizens Trust Building made on a large impression in the economics of Sweet Auburn.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET Sweet Auburn
Historic District ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE Four

The Herndon Building is a three-story brick structure. The building is easily recognized by the large "H" located on the front facade of the building. L shaped in plan, the building has a central entrance. This entrance is framed with leaded glass over the low entrance-way. Though a typical office building of the period, the Herndon building becomes unique because of its interior fashioned of salvaged wood.

Municipal Market
Between Bell and Butler Streets at 209 Edgewood

The Municipal Market brings another dimension to the Sweet Auburn Historic District. This building was located on Edgewood Avenue, a structure which was traditionally composed of all white businesses and where black entrepreneurs of Auburn Avenue never ventured to open shops. However, the Municipal Market acted as a common marketplace for the two communities. Today the market remains a source of fresh vegetables, poultry, fruit and meat and is one of the few remaining city owned markets in the country.

The Municipal Market was built in the 1920s by the architect A. Ten Eyck. Constructed of brick the building is two stories in height. At the time of construction there were two towered corner elements which flanked the one-story recessed entrance. The towers were removed as part of the renovation and rehabilitation of the building. Likewise, the addition of shed type brick sections between the end bays of the building has slightly altered its appearance. On the interior the market is very much the same as when constructed. There are numerous individual stalls located throughout. This facility has the capacity of becoming a major landmark attraction of Atlanta.

These buildings named as the most outstanding structures within the boundaries of the Sweet Auburn Historic District are not all the important sites. There are a number of one and two story shops along Auburn Avenue, Bell and Butler Streets that add to the total complexion of the district. One of these type buildings is the Healy Funeral Home on Bell Street built during the 1890s as a lodge building. The structure today remains an important part of the community. Likewise there are other barber shops, beauty parlors and cafes which taken together add much to the architectural texture of Sweet Auburn.

With the passage of time, many of the buildings that could have been added to the historic district have fallen into such disrepair, their inclusion is impossible. This condition is presently being combated by the Inner City Development Corporation, which is trying to revitalize the economic interest in the east side of Atlanta and in the Sweet Auburn Historic District.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET Sweet Auburn
Historic District ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE Five

Much of the material for completion of the description of the Sweet Auburn Historic District was provided by Dr. Elizabeth Lyons in the study 500.03 Preservation Plan: Sweet Auburn Project prepared by Dr. Gloria Blackwell, Dr. Elizabeth Lyons and Dr. C. A. Bacote, n.p. - August 1975.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET Sweet Auburn ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE Two
Historic District

As Auburn Avenue began to be developed into a commercial zone, black businesses began a steady flow into the district. Concurrent with this influx of blacks, there was a withdrawal of whites and white businesses to other parts of town -- particularly to Edgewood Avenue. Between the late 1890s and early 1920s the business district along Auburn Avenue rapidly increased. On the other hand, black businesses in the central business district steadily declined. By 1930, a concentrated variety of black professionals could be found in Sweet Auburn. There were only fourteen (14) black businesses left in central Atlanta and no professionals. The years between 1890 and 1930 parallel the assurgence of segregation; and also indicate the rise of Sweet Auburn as "the major center of black entrepreneurial and social activity within a large residential community." Coinage of the term John Wesley Dobbs was perhaps taken from the Oliver Goldsmith poem "The Deserted Village." Though the poem was one of lament, Dobbs lauded the success of Auburn Avenue and praised the triumphs of successful black businesses recognizing that it was the money invested in Auburn Avenue that made it "sweet." Of particular importance is the fact that while Georgia led the nation in lynchings between 1889 and 1918 with more than 386 reported blacks were making significant inroads in the economic life of Atlanta.

The steady growth in the black population of the city clearly establishes the spirit of uplift which was present. Schools were opened in the Reconstruction period (Bethel Church being a first location for a black school in Atlanta) and the climate was one of confidence and determination.

With the rise of segregation and the general acceptance of "seperate but equal" as indicated in the Plessy vs. Ferguson Supreme Court decision of 1896, the base of existence was laid for such streets as Sweet Auburn. It is also interesting to note that Booker T. Washington's Atlanta Compromise Speech was received to cheering crowds at Piedmont Park. The speech marks the surge of Atlanta's blacks to Auburn Avenue.

The rise of local black newspapers played an important part in setting the climate of opinion of black Atlanta. H. A. Hagler, a local printer, opened the People's Advocate in 1891. Though the paper was relatively short-lived folding in 1896, it laid the foundation for other papers in Atlanta. Hagler was instrumental in the organization of the Negro Press Association of Georgia. It was reported that ". . . Mr. Hagler runs the best paper in Georgia, the only Negro job office in Atlanta and the largest Negro bookstore in the South."

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET Sweet Auburn
Historic District ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE Three

Though many of these original buildings are long gone - the Atlanta Fire of 1917 leveled much of the district " - there does remain lasting symbols of these businesses and in the buildings of the Sweet Auburn Historic District. "

One of the outstanding figures in Sweet Auburn history is Alonzo F. Herndon. Born a slave, Herndon founded the Atlanta Life Insurance Company by uniting nine (9) black insurance societies. Operating a number of other enterprises, Herndon's wealth increased to make him one of the richest blacks in Atlanta. The Atlanta Life Insurance Company served blacks who were refused coverage by white companies. Herndon's monies were placed back into Sweet Auburn. His beaux-arts classical facade on his Atlanta Life Insurance building, gives testimony to his concern for beautifying Sweet Auburn. In addition, as a good businessman, he constructed the Herndon Office building. The violent riots of 1906 had indicated the need to build within the black community. In the riots wake there was a surge of construction.

The first building constructed after the riots was the Henry Rucker building. However, churches were to play an important role in the leadership of the community. In 1911 Henry Perry, a Texas native, founded the Standard Life Insurance Company in Big Bethel AME Church. Out of this endeavor was to come the Citizens Trust Company founded in 1921. For 50 years this business was also located on Auburn Avenue. Walter White, an Atlanta native and resident of Auburn Avenue Historic District was employed with Standard Life. White was instrumental in founding the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). He was later to become the Field Secretary of that organization.

With the rise of businesses and social consciousness came rise in social activity. The local YMCA had been founded in the basement of Wheat Street Baptist Church. The construction of the Butler Street YMCA at a cost of \$100,000 gave a source of recreation and guidance for Atlanta's black youth under segregation. Moreover, the "Y" was a major meeting place for the adults of the city. The Butler Street YMCA grew in respect and in later years became one "of the city's most venerated institutions."

Likewise local fraternal organizations joined in the expansion and development of Auburn Avenue. The Odd Fellows Building constructed in 1912 provided the community with facilities for concerts and theatre. The Royal Theatre of the Auditorium building was opened in 1914. In comparison to the city's auditorium, this structure was small, seating

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET Sweet Auburn
Historic District ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE Four

only about 1,300 on both the main floor and gallery floor. This facility opened to the black community a variety of talents including the Black Patti Company, Bessie Smith, the Rabbit Foot Show and Ma Rainey.

The Atlanta Fire of 1917 began a new trend in Auburn Avenue. Many of the older structures of the district were destroyed consequently during the rebuilding the character changed. Likewise the Zoning Ordinance of 1922, later declared unconstitutional, greatly altered "Sweet Auburn." After the 1930s, the development of Atlanta's west side became a central focus for blacks. Sweet Auburn continued to thrive as the center of black business and social life. However, as the west side of Atlanta grew, Sweet Auburn began to decline.

Population changes are reflected in land use. Former property used as residential property has now been supplanted by the Martin Luther King Center for Social Change. For this reason the district only encompasses the business area on the east of I-85/75.

The success of Sweet Auburn served as an example for the rise of other black business sectors. It overwhelmingly exemplifies the successes all over the south of black entrepreneurs who used segregation as a tool for the cohesion of the black community.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET Sweet Auburn Historic District ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE Two

Lyon, Elizabeth A., Blackwell, Gloria and Bacote, Clarence E. Sweet Auburn History - Culture Study for Sweet Auburn Urban Design Project, NEA City Options Project, City of Atlanta, 1975.

Porter, Michael L. "Black Atlanta: An Interdisciplinary Study of Blacks on the East Side of Atlanta, 1890-1930." Emory University, 1974.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Sweet Auburn
Historic District

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10

PAGE two

Beginning at the intersection of Houston and Courtland Streets, proceed in a southerly direction along the east curb of Courtland Street to a point of intersection with Auburn Avenue, then east along the ~~north~~ south curb of Auburn Avenue to a point of intersection with Piedmont Street, then south along the east curb of Piedmont Street to a point of intersection with Edgewood Avenue, then east along the north curb of Edgewood Avenue to a point of intersection with Butler Street, then proceed across Edgewood Avenue continuing along the northeast curb of Boaz Street to a point of intersection with Bell Street, then north along the west curb of Bell Street to a point of intersection with Edgewood Avenue, then east along the ~~north~~ south curb of Edgewood Avenue to a point of intersection with the west right-of-way of I-85, then north along said right-of-way to a point of intersection with Auburn Avenue, then west along the south curb of Auburn Avenue to a point of intersection with Bell Street, then north following the east curb of Bell Street approximately 80 feet past the north curb, then east, excluding a city power facility, continuing along the south side of Brooks Alley to a point of intersection with the west curb of Piedmont Street, then north along the west curb of Piedmont Street to a point of intersection with Houston Street, then west along the south curb to the point of beginning.

Curb lines are used to indicate that entire blocks are included in the Historic District boundaries. In cases where boundaries follow other lines, they are indicated in the boundary description.