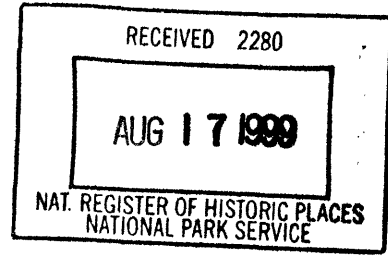


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

COVER



National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic and Architectural Resources of The Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Black Settlement in The Ville, 1865-1910
The Ville as a Center for Black Culture, 1910-1950

C. Form Prepared by

name/title see continuation sheet

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Claire F. Blackwell

12 August 1999

Signature and title of certifying official/Claire F. Blackwell, Deputy SHPO

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Edson H. Beall
for
Signature of the Keeper

9.17.99
Date

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section C Page 1 Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], MO

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 1 Historic and Architectural Resources of The Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Introduction

From the city's inception, African-American residents have played a large part in shaping the character and culture of St. Louis. No area represents this contribution more than the Ville, a forty-two-square-block neighborhood in north St. Louis. After 1910 through the 1950s, the Ville was the city's center for black culture and history. Originally part of the common fields for the new village of St. Louis, the Ville in the nineteenth century experienced a predictable pattern of development from farmland to suburb to an urban neighborhood with a small population of African-American residents and institutions. Race restrictive covenants starting in 1911 and increasingly institutionalized segregation combined to transform the neighborhood into an African-American enclave with boundaries imposed by regulation. Within that enclave, a unique social and rich institutional life grew up out of limited opportunities. Bounded by Sarah Avenue on the east, Taylor Avenue on the west, St. Louis Avenue on the north and Martin Luther King Boulevard on the south, the Ville has influenced the development of black history far outside of the neighborhood's confines.

After the village of St. Louis was founded in 1764, the area now known as the Ville was set aside as part of the Grand Prairie Common Fields. Farmers in the village of received plots laid out in long, adjacent strips. The first black residents of the Ville arrived at this time as the slaves of local landowners who farmed land in the area and lived farther south in St. Louis. One of these slaves was killed, and others abducted, in an ambush by British militia and Indians during the American Revolution. In the early nineteenth century the first permanent white settlers arrived in the Ville area, most of them from Virginia and Kentucky. Some of the first landowners had eponymous recognition in local street names: Kennerly, Wash (now Whittier), Goode (now Annie Malone Drive) and Taylor. James Kennerly had a particularly large plantation known as Cote Placquemine, or "Persimmon Hill," near the present intersection of Kennerly and Taylor Avenues (destroyed by fire in 1863).

In 1860, the total population within the boundaries of St. Louis stood at 160,773, of which over 3000 were black (approx. 2% of the total population). That same year, Charles Elleard, who arrived from New York, soon became the proprietor of the Abbey Trotting Race Track just south of the Ville, and bought land from George Goode on which he built an impressive estate. Besides raising several types of animals, Elleard built a greenhouse and became known as a horticulturalist of exotic plants and flowers. The area soon became known as Elleardsville, an unincorporated settlement just outside the rapidly growing city east of Grand Boulevard.

Context I: Black Settlement in The Ville, 1865-1910

The growth of St. Louis after the Civil War affected the small, rural settlement of Elleardsville as St. Louisans escaping the congestion of the city moved west of Grand in increasingly large numbers. In 1876 Elleardsville was formally incorporated into the city of St. Louis following the passage of the city's new charter separating it from St. Louis County, and establishing the city's boundaries at their present size. The black community in the Ville had begun to grow steadily after the war, and there were enough black residents in 1873 to establish an elementary school for blacks in the Ville. Within five years of its

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 2 Historic and Architectural Resources of The Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

founding, enrollment at Colored [elementary] School #8¹ (renamed Simmons Colored School in 1891; now razed) had nearly tripled.

Not long after Colored School #8 opened, two new and important institutions were organized in the Ville. Antioch Baptist Church began in 1878 at the home of William and Laura Coker on Wash (now Whittier) street, and moved soon after to a location on Lambdin Avenue near Kennerly. A new sanctuary for the church was constructed in 1885 on Kennerly Avenue. That same year St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church was founded at St. Ferdinand and Pendleton Avenues. (Both congregations have remained in the Ville even though they now draw only a small percentage of their members from the neighborhood.)

By the turn of the century the Ville was an ethnically diverse neighborhood where African-Americans lived near settlements of Irish and Germans. An Irish Catholic parish and parochial school, St. Matthew's (NRHP 1986), was founded in the Ville in 1893. Developers subdivided plots for multi-family and small single-family residences. Anyone with \$2,000 could buy a lot and build a cottage.

St. Louis' late nineteenth century pattern of dispersed clusters of black settlement was typical for minority populations of less than 5% of the total, according to sociologists Schoenberg and Rosenbaum.² By 1900, the percentage of African-Americans in St. Louis had grown to 6.2% (35,665 out of 575,235). However, Schoenberg and Bailey conceded that census data from 1900 cannot be interpreted in such a way to provide an accurate racial breakdown for the Ville. At the turn of the century, most housing in the Ville remained under the ownership of Irish and German residents.³ As one measure of black population, of the city's thirteen African-American public schools in 1900, only one, Simmons Elementary, was located in the Ville.⁴

Major growth in the black population of the Ville would not come until after the new Sumner High School was opened in 1910, but there are a number of indicators that the area was seen as a desirable neighborhood for African Americans in the early 1900s. For example, in 1909 the black Bethany Presbyterian congregation moved to the Ville and renamed itself "McPheeters Memorial Presbyterian Church" after its founder, Thomas S. McPheeters (who had also raised the money for the purchase of land in the Ville). By 1910, 13 percent of the local ward population was black (3,108 of 23,253 residents).

¹Colored School #8 was the eighth elementary school built for blacks in post-Civil War St. Louis.

²Sandra Perlman Schoenberg and Patricia L. Rosenbaum, *Neighborhoods That Work: Sources for Vitality in the Inner City*. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1980), 120.

³Sandra Schoenberg and Charles Bailey, "The Symbolic Meaning of an Elite Black Community: The Ville in St. Louis," *The Bulletin*, Missouri Historical Society v. 23 no. 2 (January 1977). 94-95.

⁴Katharine T. Corbett and Mary E. Seematter, "Black St. Louis at the Turn of the Century," *Gateway Heritage* 7, no. 1 (Summer 1986). 41.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 3 Historic and Architectural Resources of The Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

This was more than double the citywide concentration of blacks, which was 6.4%.⁵ More significantly, a 1912 study reported that "most of the home owning negro population live in this section [Elleardsville]."⁶

Schoenberg and Bailey argue that the beginnings of home ownership and special "elite" status for the Ville were already planted by 1906. In that year local African American leaders began a campaign for the relocation of Sumner High School, the city's only high school for blacks until 1927, to an available tract of land in the heart of the neighborhood. Citing the general trend of westward migration in the city, neighborhood residents successfully swayed the Board of Education away from sites in the more densely African American Central City and Mill Creek Valley areas (which together had accounted for more than half of the city's black population in 1900).⁷ Sumner's move, accomplished in 1910, four years after local leaders first called for it, was a major factor in the subsequent popularity and image of the Ville. As Schoenberg and Bailey noted, "There is little question that it became a magnet for the wealth of institutions which located in the Ville in the next thirty years."⁸

Context II: The Ville as a Center for Black Culture, 1910-1950

The school board's decision to move Sumner High School to the Ville in 1910 encouraged the growth of a stable, middle-class black population in that community. In a time when black students commuted to Sumner from all over the city, concerned parents wanted to move as close as possible to the new high school. The lack of restrictive covenants in the Ville made this move possible, although many neighborhoods near the Ville were off-limits to blacks. In the three decades following the move, many major black institutions located or built permanent homes in the Ville: schools (Charles Turner Open Air, Poro College and the Lincoln University School of Law, the conversion of Marshall School to black use); churches (Antioch Baptist); charitable institutions (St. Louis Colored Orphans Home); and the massive Homer G. Phillips Hospital. The Ville is remembered as the seat of black culture in St. Louis during this period.

Sumner High School prospered in its new location, and a short list of its graduates gives an indication of the school's importance in St. Louis history: opera singer Grace Bumbry, comedian Dick Gregory, rock & roll singers Chuck Berry and Tina Turner, actor Robert Guillaume, opera singer Robert McFerrin, and World War II hero Wendell Pruitt. Sumner's Normal School also accompanied it to the Ville, where it prospered as a teacher training center. In 1930, the normal school was renamed Stowe's Teachers College, after Harriet Beecher Stowe, and relocated to Simmons School. In 1938, a separate facility built with PWA funding was opened for the normal school just northwest of Sumner High School; the building now houses the Turner Middle School.

⁵Carolyn H. Toft, ed. *The Ville* (St. Louis: n.p., 1975), p. 6.

⁶Schoenberg and Bailey, 95; quoting William August Crossland, "The Occupations of Negroes in St. Louis," (unpublished master's thesis, Washington University, 1913).

⁷Schoenberg and Bailey, 97; Corbett and Seematter, 41.

⁸Schoenberg and Bailey, 97.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 4 Historic and Architectural Resources of The Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

While many residents began to gravitate toward this neighborhood because of the local educational system and home ownership opportunities, one external factor served to increasingly narrow black residents' housing choices. The increasing use of race-restrictive covenants in housing deeds in the 1910s limited where blacks could purchase property in St. Louis. Many residential areas became off-limits to the black population by 1920, creating black "ghettos" where there was already an established black population. The Ville profited from this segregation in the sense that it created a concentrated community with little opportunity to move further west, as was the trend with the white population in that era. Between 1910 and 1920, St. Louis' population rose from 687,029 to 772,897 with the percentage of African-American residents rising from 6.4% to 9%. Changes in census tract reporting between 1910 and 1920 make it impossible to measure precise variations within the boundaries of the Ville, but by 1920, Tract 1113 which encompassed the Ville was approximately one-third black.⁹ This initial growth following the arrival of Sumner and the narrowing of options for St. Louis blacks laid the groundwork for the flowering of institutions and social life that gave the Ville its reputation as the center of St. Louis black culture in the 1920s and beyond.

Sumner's relocation to the Ville also made possible the growth of black businesses in the area, such as Annie Malone's famous Poro College of Beauty Culture (now demolished) at the corner of St. Ferdinand and Pendleton Avenues. One participant in an oral history program held in the 1970s remembered:

When Mrs. Malone brought the college to the Ville, she brought all this prestige with her. With her first money she built the orphans' home and a nursery school. Poro College was located near Sumner. It was a great opportunity for our race. It was a regular education center.¹⁰

A rooftop garden on the building became a center for black social life in the 1920s. In 1930, Mrs. Malone (reportedly the richest black woman in the country) moved her business to Chicago. The Poro building later housed a hotel and, in 1939, another black institution, the Lincoln University School of Law.¹¹

After World War I, whites began to move west in large numbers and the racial composition of the neighborhood reflected dramatic change. By 1930 the black population of the neighborhood had nearly reached 90 percent.¹² The neighborhood retained its middle-class atmosphere as the new black residents arrived, many of whom were teachers at the various Ville Schools. The construction of a new St. Louis Colored Orphan's Home (later the Annie Malone Children's Home), Annie Malone's Poro College, a new sanctuary for Antioch Baptist Church, a new elementary school for handicapped children and the opening

⁹Ibid, 26. *The Ville: The Ethnic Heritage of an Urban Neighborhood* (Carolyn Toft, ed., St. Louis: Social Science Institute, Washington University, 1975).

¹⁰Quoted in Toft, 12.

¹¹The Lincoln University School of Law was established after Lloyd Gaines, a black graduate of Lincoln University in Jefferson City, was denied admission to the University of Missouri School of Law based on his race. The State of Missouri offered to pay black students' tuition to out-of-state professional schools, but the Supreme Court ruled in *Gaines v. Missouri* that the state must provide legal education for blacks within Missouri. The new school opened in the Poro College Building in 1939.

¹²Toft, 26. The total population of the Ville in 1930 was 9,102.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 5 Historic and Architectural Resources of The Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

of the Elleardsville Branch YMCA added to the building boom that completed most of the institutional concentration in the Ville. In addition, Marshall Elementary School had been converted to black use in 1918, making the Ville the undisputed center for black education in St. Louis.

A former resident of the Ville recalls her family life there during this decade of change:

We moved to the Ville in 1923 . . . I think the thing that made the Ville unique was that there were so many one-story homes in it, little cottages where people lived in single families. We liked the area, and it was an area where everybody took a lot of pride in their places. As I look back on it now, it seems to me that most people were just ordinary, poor people . . . I think the most affluent were the school teachers . . . " ¹³

As the number of local black residents increased, there was apparently some resistance by their white neighbors. Another former resident remembered of the 1920s that "There was no doubt about it, we were considered intruders by members of the St. Matthew's parish, mostly Irish and Italian." Still, this same resident remembered that "An emergency caused a change in attitude. One of the children had become critically ill. The family had no phone. Neither did their white neighbors . . . My mother graciously offered the use of our telephone."¹⁴ As black residents moved into the area, black businesses followed, and small stores could be found at large intersections in the Ville, like St. Ferdinand and Pendleton Avenues and along Easton Avenue (now Martin Luther King Dr.).¹⁵ Most of these were small buildings with residential space above a first floor store.

The decade of rapid institutional and residential growth from 1920-1930 would be fortunate for residents of the Ville in the decade that followed, when the Depression forced a disproportionate number of blacks out of work.¹⁶ The Ville was luckier than most St. Louis neighborhoods to receive three major Depression-era projects located within blocks of each other: Tandy Community Center, Stowe Teachers College and most significantly, Homer G. Phillips Hospital. Social services for blacks had never equalled those of whites in St. Louis, and lack of adequate health care was a large issue for St. Louis' black population as early as 1900. One man in particular, a local black lawyer named Homer G. Phillips, campaigned loudly for a replacement to City Hospital No. 2, an outdated, overcrowded facility for blacks near downtown. Phillips, who was murdered in 1931, would never see the hospital named in his honor, which was constructed on Whittier Avenue in the Ville and completed in 1938. Twenty-five years after its founding, Homer G. Phillips Hospital (NRHP 1982) had trained more black doctors and nurses than any other hospital in the world.¹⁷

A bond issue passed in 1936 provided for the construction of three public recreational centers in black neighborhoods. With its swimming pool and nearby tennis courts, the Tandy Community Center was

¹³Carolyn H. Toft, ed. *The Ville*. (St. Louis: n.p., 1975), p. 15.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁶Excluded from most skilled trade unions, 43% of blacks in St. Louis were unemployed by 1930. Corbett and Seematter, "No Crystal Stair," 83.

¹⁷"Homer G. Phillips Hospital: 25th Anniversary," unpagued.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 6 Historic and Architectural Resources of The Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

clearly designed as the showpiece of the three. City Architect Albert Osburg used a stripped Art Deco style with buff brick, similar to the design he employed on the Homer G. Phillips Hospital four years earlier, for the Tandy Community Center, constructed in 1938. Like the adjacent park, the community center was named for Captain Charlton Hunt Tandy, an African-American Civil War veteran who was active in politics and community concerns. Long the site of the Silver Gloves Boxing Tournament and numerous basketball games, Tandy may be most noted for its tennis courts, on which a young Arthur Ashe prepared to enter the all-white world of professional tennis.

Ironically, the growth of the Ville and its institutions was attributable to the Jim Crow laws of the early twentieth century. From the beginning of the agricultural depression in the 1920s to the beginning of World War II, St. Louis experienced black immigration from the south. Segregation of public institutions and facilities in St. Louis had helped to concentrate this recent black settlement near downtown in congested, underserved areas. As the Great Depression began, African-American residents totaled 93,703 of the total population of 821,960. Ten years later in 1940, their numbers reached 106,086. Although this figure was still only 13% of a citywide population of 816,048, the ratio in the Ville had shifted to 90% black. (In the 1940s, the *St. Louis Argus* ran a weekly column called "Ville News" in which the author frequently referred to the neighborhood as Elleardsville. The Ville was the only neighborhood singled out for such special coverage, an indication of its status with the St. Louis Black community.)

The seeds of residential desegregation in St. Louis were sown in 1948, when the Supreme Court case *Shelley v. Kraemer*, based on a property sale near the Ville (see Shelley House, NRHP 1988; NHL 1990), declared restrictive covenants unconstitutional. The catalyst for desegregation was urban renewal in the 1950s and 1960s that destroyed older, downtown black housing and displaced thousands of residents, many of whom migrated to neighborhoods in north St. Louis previously closed to them. The ending of educational segregation in the 1950s also meant that blacks moving to different areas of the city and county would be able to attend local schools. The paradox of the Ville's situation is stated by sociologist Sandra Schoenberg, who noted that

Although there are countless examples of deprivation caused by exclusion and segregation, this small enclave [the Ville] is an example of a richness in social life enforced by limited opportunity. Some of the forces that broke down this segregation were eagerly sought. Others such as displacement by urban renewal had destructive effects on the community's integrity.¹⁸

The origins of the Ville's subsequent decline are rooted in the drive to ensure equality for all St. Louis citizens. Black professionals continued to be attracted by the neighborhood's resources until about 1950. The decade following saw a marked exodus of professionals from the Ville, coinciding with the general population trend in St. Louis to move west into St. Louis County.¹⁹ Just when and how the shortened name "the Ville" was substituted for Elleardsville is unknown, but the new name was in common use by the mid-1970s when the first Ville Historic District Committee was formed to try to hold back further deterioration; the name has been retained for this submission since it has since become strongly identified with the area and with attempts to revitalize it.²⁰

¹⁸Schoenberg and Bailey, 99.

¹⁹Toft, 27.

²⁰Toft, 30.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 7 Historic and Architectural Resources of The Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

The closing of Homer G. Phillips Hospital in 1979 accelerated the neighborhood's slide from its pre-World War II peak. Yet the Ville's institutions are also its mainstay. All of the public schools in the Ville remain open, as does the Tandy Community Center, the Annie Malone Center and all of the area's historic churches. These institutions not only provide employment and social support, but also reinforce the historic character of the Ville by providing material evidence of the neighborhood's rich past. They are reminders of the Ville's importance not only to the city's African-American community, but to the city as a whole.

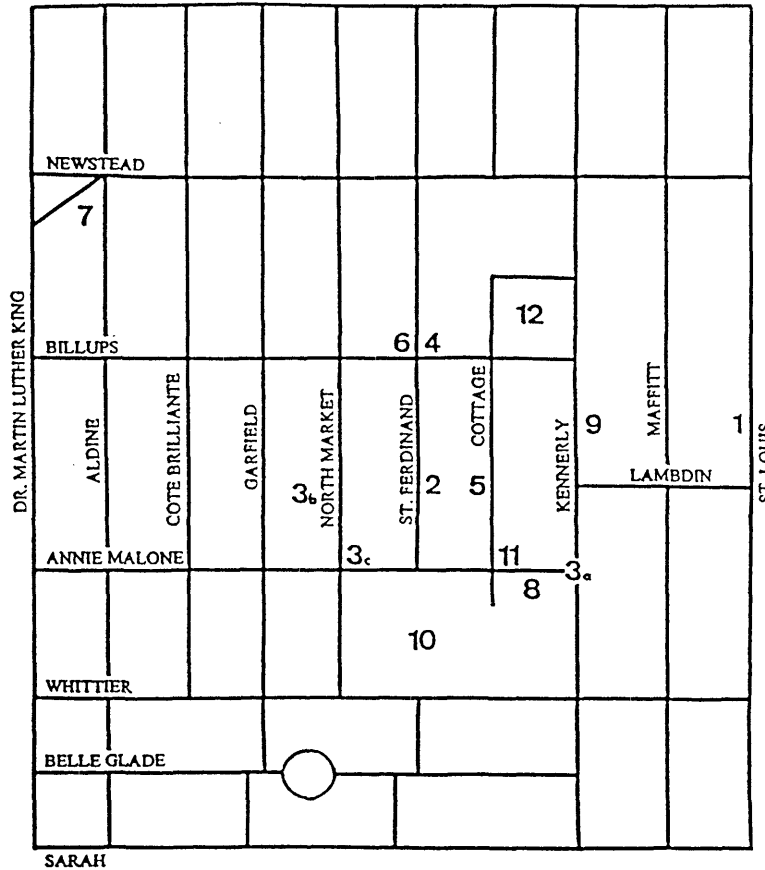
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 8

Historic and Architectural Resources of The Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Location of Early African-American Institutions in the Ville
(from Fulmer, *et al*, p. 41)



- 1) Colored School #8 (1873), renamed the Simmons School in 1890
- 2) Elleardsville Church (1877)
- 3a) Antioch Baptist Church (1884), approximate first location
- 3b) Antioch Baptist Church, second location
- 3c) Antioch Baptist Church, current location
- 4) St. James A.M.E. Church (1885)
- 5) Sumner High School (1910)
- 6) John Marshall School (1900)
- 7) Poro College of Beauty Culture (1918), then Lincoln Law School (1937)
- 8) St. Louis Colored Orphan's Home (1922), renamed the Annie Malone Children's Home in 1946
- 9) Charles H. Turner Open-Air School for Crippled Children (1925), currently Turner Middle School Branch
- 10) Homer G. Phillips Hospital (1937)
- 11) Tandy Community Center
- 12) Stowe Teacher's College (1940), currently Turner Middle School

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section F Page 1 Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Associated Property Types

Name of Property Type: Institutional Buildings

Description: The buildings in institutional use in the Ville vary in size, appearance, degree of monumentality, and use, although a few common qualities may be noted. Institutional buildings are defined as those buildings which were public or semi-public in nature and which served a function designed to promote or enhance the social welfare of the residents of the Ville. Through most of the period covered in this Multiple Property Submission, the buildings were segregated racially. The twelve institutional-use buildings identified in the Ville include five schools, one hospital, one orphans' home, one community center, a firehouse, and three churches. They are:

- McPheeters Memorial Presbyterian Church (constructed in 1888 as St. James Episcopal Church, but significant for its black Presbyterian congregation from 1910 - c. 1960)
- Simmons Colored School (1898)
- Marshall School (1900)
- St. Matthew's Church, (constructed 1906 as part of St. Matthew's Parish Complex, NRHP 1986)
- Sumner High School (1908-1909; NRHP 1988)
- Antioch Baptist Church (1921)
- St. Louis Colored Orphans Home (1922; the same institution is now known as Annie Malone Children and Family Service Center)
- Charles Turner Open Air School (1924)
- Homer G. Phillips Hospital (1932-1936; NRHP 1982)
- Stowe Teachers College (1938 - 1954; known as Turner Middle School 1955 - present)
- Tandy Community Center (1938)
- Engine House No. 10 (no building permit available; still in use as a firehouse)

All institutional buildings were constructed of brick and conform to the residential scale of the neighborhood, with the exception of three previously listed properties: the Homer G. Phillips Hospital, Sumner High School, and St. Matthew's Church. Each building reflects the purpose for which it was built. For example, the Charles Turner Open Air School was constructed with only a minimal door sill for the wheelchair-bound student to cross. Tandy primarily houses a gym and swimming pool, functions expressed simply in large, square exterior proportions. The St. Louis Colored Orphans Home was designed in a Colonial Revival style that belies its original institutional function of housing more than fifty children at any given time. With the exception of Tandy Community Center and the St. Louis Colored Orphans Home, all are sited at grade. The public buildings (the schools, hospital, orphans home, and community center) were built to withstand a great deal of use over a period of years, the smaller churches somewhat less so. Buff brick was used in the eligible properties constructed after 1930; those built before 1930 are of red or brown brick. With the exceptions of Marshall School, Engine House No. 10, McPheeters Memorial Presbyterian Church, and St. Matthew's Church, the institutional buildings in the Ville were built specifically for and continue to be associated with the service of the black community. All have served the black community almost exclusively since about 1930.

Significance: The Ville's institutional buildings are significant under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage--Black since they represent notable African-American accomplishment in an era of segregation. The Ville, like segregated communities in cities, towns, and rural areas across Missouri and much of the nation, existed as an isolated world, separate and apart from the larger white community which surrounded it. Mobility was controlled by white political and economic conventions, de facto and de jure. Contact between the separate societies was permitted only to the extent it benefited the larger white

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section F Page 2

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

society. The institutions of the Ville represented an effort to retain and exercise a measure of self-determination. As such, they performed a more vital function than merely the social functions they provided; they served to nurture and preserve African-American identity and autonomy. They also provided the only access to many of the vital social and support services which were denied to African-Americans by a racist society. In fact, many of these institutions were founded specifically to serve the black community of the Ville at a time when such services were rare in St. Louis in general. These same institutions flourished during the heyday of black culture in the Ville from 1910 to 1950, drawing black professionals and members of the middle class to the neighborhood. During the same period institutions such as Marshall School and St. Matthew's Church, although constructed for the use of white residents, gradually assumed roles as integral parts of the Ville's African-American community. That these institutions have endured through more recent, less prosperous, times makes them all the more remarkable. That they remain today as reminders both of the Ville's initial importance to local black history and to its continuity in the city underscores their significance.

Registration Requirements: To be eligible for individual listing in the area of ethnic heritage--black, institutional buildings must have played a significant role in African-American culture and history in St. Louis. Although an original construction by and for African-Americans is not a requirement, a property not originally connected to black history must have specifically served the African-American community in St. Louis either during the seminal stages of black settlement in the Ville prior to 1910 or during the "glory days" of black culture in the Ville from 1910 through the 1950s. Most importantly, and obviously, the building must have had and served a public, or institutional, function; it must have served the social needs of the African-American community of the Ville. Buildings which might be included in this property type served educational, religious, and social welfare functions, such as churches, schools, and some governmental or public works buildings. Under Criterion A, integrity of materials, design, location and association will be most important. Additions should appear in scale with the main building, on side or rear elevations only, and not detract from the context of the building. Alterations should not significantly detract from nor substantially alter the historic appearance of the primary elevations. The functions of these institutions may vary widely, and each will necessarily reflect a variety of uses. Buildings must also be located within the boundaries of the Ville as described in Section G.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section G Page 1 Historic and Architectural Resources of The Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Geographical Data

The boundaries of the Ville in north St. Louis, Missouri are Dr. Martin Luther King Drive on the south, Sarah Street on the east, St. Louis Avenue to the north, and Taylor Avenue to the west.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section H Page 1 Historic and Architectural Resources of The Ville, St. Louis [Independent City]

Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

An initial survey of the Ville was conducted by Landmarks Association of St. Louis in 1983-84. The product, an architectural survey map, plotted the initial evaluation of architectural significance. Follow-up work conducted in 1995-96 sharpened the focus, pinning down builders and dates of construction for each building dating from the historic period.

Background research determined that the most significant contexts shaping the Ville neighborhood were those associated with the history of African-American settlement and its status as the historic seat of black St. Louis culture. Properties are therefore evaluated in the light of the two chronological contexts of black settlement and the heyday of black culture in the Ville.

Registration requirements were determined by a study of the property types located in the Ville and a knowledge of their general integrity and associations with the relevant themes. Associations with important black themes such as home ownership and education were deemed particularly important.

The first institutional properties submitted with this cover document are considered to be only the first phase of what is hoped to be a long-term project of evaluating and registering properties in the Ville. The institutions were chosen because they provided the framework of life in the neighborhood, and in many cases the impetus for settlement in the Ville.

*What about
bounced
nominations*

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 1 Page 1 **Historic and Architectural Resources of the Ville, St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri**

A. Archival collections and manuscripts

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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