

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Edmonton Heights Historic District  
Other names/site number: n/a  
Name of related multiple property listing: n/a  
Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

### 2. Location

Street & number:

3800-3822 Colton Lane NE, 3802-3831 Crane Drive NE, 3802-3811 Eton Road NE, 3812-3818 Melody Circle NE, 3800-3836 Melody Road NE, 3800-3814 Meridian Street N, 200-303 Salem Drive NE, 202-250 Victory Lane NE, 100-125 Whitney Avenue NE, 100-199 Wilkenson Drive NE

City or town: Huntsville State: AL County: Madison

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

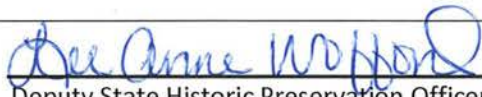
I hereby certify that this x nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

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

    national     statewide   x   local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

  x   A     B   x   C     D

	<u>May 7, 2021</u>
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer	Date
Alabama Historical Commission	

In my opinion, the property     meets     does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

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

*Lisa Deline*  
Signature of the Keeper

6/21/21  
Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>201</u>	<u>53</u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>1</u>	objects
<u>201</u>	<u>54</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Modern Movement/Ranch Style

Other/Minimal Traditional

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: CONCRETE

Walls: WOOD/Weatherboard

Walls: BRICK

Roof: ASPHALT

Roof: METAL/Steel

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## Narrative Description

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### Summary Paragraph

Located to the northeast of downtown Huntsville, Alabama, Edmonton Heights is a rectangle shaped neighborhood with predominately diagonal streets on the western end of the subdivision and predominately vertical streets on the eastern end. There are 201 contributing and 54 non-contributing resources within the district. With the exception of one community building owned by Alabama A&M University, the rest of the district is composed of predominately small 3 bedroom, 1 bath post World War II era houses, the majority built between 1959 and 1966. The buildings are predominately Compact Ranch and Minimal Traditional in style, with some Contemporary and Early American styles as well. The district has good integrity – the original design is intact, setting is predominately unaltered, and the materials and workmanship are mostly the same.

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### Narrative Description

The large, almost 78.34 acre neighborhood, has the majority of streets laid out in an northeast-southwest diagonal. The landscape has slight hills, creating a park-like suburban setting, which isolates the neighborhood from Alabama A&M University to the north and commercial developments to the west and south. The landscape directly to the east is part of the Chapman Mountain Nature Preserve. The boundaries of the National Register district are the original boundaries of the platted development. The topography of the district is notable for its undulating landscape and the curved connecting streets. The developer was clearly aware of contemporary trends, and turned away from a strict grid system to create interconnected streets within the park-like setting. The neighborhood would be classified as Subtype IV Historic Residential Neighborhood, a Post-World War II and Early Freeway Suburb, in the Multiple Property Documentation Form, *Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States, 1830-1960*.

Cross-referencing the Polk telephone directories indicates that construction started in 1959. Colton, Crane, and Eton Roads were developed first. Most of Meridian Street North was developed in 1960, as were Whitney and Wilkenson Drive NE. Although houses were built by 1960 on Melody Road NE, much of the block remained unsold and vacant until 1962. Some portions of the street weren't built until 1965 to the early 1970s. Houses on Victory Lane NE were mostly constructed by 1960, but the vast majority were vacant until 1961 or even later. At least 30 homes were still unsold in 1963.

The houses are typically set in the center of large lots, providing front and rear yards of roughly equal size. The appearance of the neighborhood has changed little since it was first developed. Deciduous trees and bushes are the main vegetation, although a number of the larger trees have reached the end of their life spans. Landscaping is evenly distributed within the lots. The

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neighborhood does not have sidewalks, although it does have concrete gutters between the street and the individual lots. A masonry sign (noncontributing object (#148), Photo 11) is located at the northeast corner of Meridian Street NE and Whitney Avenue NE.

Architecturally, the modest 3 bedroom, 1 bath houses have a rich variety of facades. All of the original homes have one story, and are clad either in masonry or wood.<sup>1</sup> Original wood windows are either 2/2 horizontal double-hungs or Colonial styled multi-lights. Most of the houses have shallow front porches. Most of the original houses either fit into one of the following styles: Contemporary (approximately 18% of the subdivision), Compact Ranch, (60%), Early American subset (13%), and Minimal Traditional (12%). The Contemporary Houses often have an asymmetrical front gable, with narrow porch supports and areas of brick and wood wall alternating between window bays. Examples of this style that retain strong integrity are 3814 Meridian Street North (Photo 5), 107 Wilkenson Drive NE, 179 Wilkenson Drive NE (Photo 10), and 3802 Meridian Street North. Compact Ranch examples are side gabled, hip on gable, or hipped roofed, and many have wrought or cast iron porch supports and integrated brick planters. A large number of the Compact Ranches have brick only on the lower half of the elevations, with clapboard on the upper portion. Examples of Compact Ranches with strong integrity are located at: 3816 Crane Drive NE (Photo 2), 113 Whitney Avenue NE (Photo 8), 165 Wilkenson Drive NE, 131 Wilkenson Drive NE (Photo 9), and 100 Whitney Avenue NE. The Early American subsets are side gabled, often with panels under the windows. They are predominately clad with brick as well. Examples with strong integrity are located at: 3810 Crane Drive NE (Photo 1), 3808 Melody Road NE, and 3836 Melody Road NE. The Minimal Traditional examples have broad pitched roofs, cross gables, and shallow to non-existent eaves. The decorative nuances that further identify each substyle tend to rotate between half-façade brick walls, extending brick fins, false facades, unusually large bay openings with paneling below and multi-light, double-hung windows above. Examples with strong integrity are located at: 220 Victory Lane NE and 3803 Melody Road NE (Photo 4). Some of the houses have carports, and the most common styles with garages are the Contemporary or the Compact Ranches.

The Contemporary styled houses were predominately built between 1960 and 1961, while the Minimal Traditional were clustered predominately from 1961-1963, but some were constructed as late as 1972. The Early American subset of the Compact Ranch were built during the entire period of construction, and interestingly enough, the majority of the contributing 1970-1975 houses are from this style as well, clearly a nod to the growing interest in all things “Colonial” with the impending American Bicentennial. The main Compact Ranch Style (the largest subset of styles) was constructed through the building period with no significant concentration. The repetition of, and variations of, these designs represent developer Folmar and Flinn’s ability to make minor changes to exteriors, yet enough to claim different designs. This keeps the subdivision fresh, with almost three dozen “models,” without creating the monotonous rhythm found in current subdivisions.

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<sup>1</sup> Folmar and Flinn advertised using Masonite, but it is unknown if any of the houses in Edmonton Heights were clad with the material.

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**Integrity**

The Edmonton Heights neighborhood retains significant integrity for most of its components. The original design is intact, setting is predominately unaltered, and the materials and workmanship are mostly the same. These components come together to create a strong sense of place which is still tangible within the neighborhood and contributes to a high degree of integrity of feeling. The most significant reduction to the neighborhood’s integrity is A&M’s Edmonton Heights Family Life Center (223 Salem Drive NE), which is located at the northwest intersection of Salem Drive NE and Melody Road NE. This is the only large scale disruption in the neighborhood; the original house located at this address has been engulfed by one -story additions and remodels. The smattering of infill houses mostly match the scale of the historic residential buildings, and there are a few vacant lots as well. The neighborhood is remarkable for its park-like rhythm, which is created through the interplay between the diagonal streets, large lots, and petite houses. The houses, as a whole, have strong integrity, and the majority are in good to fair condition. There are some houses that have been abandoned, and are showing signs of distress. The neighborhood still easily reads as a Post World War II era suburb. Most houses have concrete driveways that terminate either to the side of the house, or directly to a carport or garage. Fences are sporadic, and are most commonly a low chain link variety. There are no significant outbuildings; those that exist are newer, the majority of which are prefabricated and set behind the primary dwelling.

The most common alterations are vinyl siding and replacement windows. It is unknown if the metal posts used for a number of the Contemporary houses are original, or replacements for wood posts. For 53 houses, the cumulative effect of multiple alterations and/or non-historic additions rendered the buildings noncontributing. There are only a small number of new constructions in the district (four), and three houses that could either be significant remodels or new construction. There are slightly more vacant lots from houses that have been demolished.

**Inventory of Contributing and Noncontributing Resources**

In the table below, noncontributing resources are shaded. All are buildings, except #148, which is a noncontributing object. Descriptions and photographs of individual buildings are on file with the Alabama Historical Commission under the survey numbers listed below.

The inventory is based on the appearance of the district at the time of the survey, which took place in late 2018.

Resource #	Survey #	Property Address	Build Date	Style	Reason for NC
<b>Colton Lane NE</b>					
1	Ma01000	3800 Colton Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
2	Ma01001	3801 Colton Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
3	Ma01002	3802 Colton Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	

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Resource #	Survey #	Property Address	Build Date	Style	Reason for NC
4	Ma01003	3803 Colton Ln. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	Altered
5	Ma01004	3804 Colton Ln. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
6	Ma01005	3805 Colton Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
7	Ma01006	3806 Colton Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
8	Ma01007	3807 Colton Ln. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
9	Ma01008	3808 Colton Ln. NE	1959	Compact Ranch	
10	Ma01009	3809 Colton Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	Altered
11	Ma01010	3810 Colton Ln. NE	c 1961	Minimal Traditional	
12	Ma01011	3811 Colton Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
13	Ma01012	3812 Colton Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
14	Ma01013	3813 Colton Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
15	Ma01014	3814 Colton Ln. NE	c 1963	Minimal Traditional	Altered
16	Ma01015	3815 Colton Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
17	Ma01016	3816 Colton Ln. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
18	Ma01017	3817 Colton Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
19	Ma01018	3818 Colton Ln. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
20	Ma01019	3820 Colton Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
21	Ma01020	3822 Colton Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
<b>Crane Drive NE</b>					
22	Ma01021	3802 Crane Dr. NE	c 1961	Minimal Traditional	
23	Ma01022	3803 Crane Dr. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
24	Ma01023	3804 Crane Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
25	Ma01024	3805 Crane Dr. NE	c 1960	?	
26	Ma01025	3806 Crane Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
27	Ma01026	3807 Crane Dr. NE	c 1960	Contemporary	
28	Ma01027	3808 Crane Dr. NE	c 1962	Compact Ranch	
29	Ma01028	3809 Crane Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
30	Ma01029	3810 Crane Dr. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
31	Ma01030	3811 Crane Dr. NE	c 1961	Minimal Traditional	
32	Ma01031	3812 Crane Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
33	Ma01032	3813 Crane Dr. NE	c 1960	Contemporary	
34	Ma01033	3814 Crane Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
35	Ma01034	3815 Crane Dr. NE	c 1960	Contemporary	
36	Ma01035	3816 Crane Dr. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
37	Ma01036	3817 Crane Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
38	Ma01037	3818 Crane Dr. NE	2016	New or Remodel	New construction
39	Ma01038	3819 Crane Dr. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	

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Resource #	Survey #	Property Address	Build Date	Style	Reason for NC
40	Ma01039	3820 Crane Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
41	Ma01040	3821 Crane Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
42	Ma01041	3822 Crane Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
43	Ma01042	3823 Crane Dr. NE	c 1960	Minimal Traditional	
44	Ma01043	3824 Crane Dr. NE	c 1960	Contemporary	
45	Ma01044	3825 Crane Dr. NE	c 1960	Contemporary	
46	Ma01046	3827 Crane Dr. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
47	Ma01047	3828 Crane Dr. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
48	Ma01048	3829 Crane Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
49	Ma01049	3831 Crane Dr. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
<b>Eton Road NE</b>					
50	Ma01050	3802 Eton Rd. NE	c 1960	Contemporary	
51	Ma01051	3803 Eton Rd. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
52	Ma01052	3804 Eton Rd. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
53	Ma01053	3805 Eton Rd. NE	c 1961	Minimal Traditional	Altered
54	Ma01054	3807 Eton Rd. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
55	Ma01055	3809 Eton Rd. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
56	Ma01056	3811 Eton Rd. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	Altered
<b>Melody Road NE</b>					
57	Ma01057	3800 Melody Rd. NE	c 1962	Compact Ranch	
58	Ma01058	3801 Melody Rd. NE	c 1962	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
59	Ma01059	3802 Melody Rd. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
60	Ma01060	3803 Melody Rd. NE	c 1961	Minimal Traditional	
61	Ma01061	3804 Melody Rd. NE	c 1961	Minimal Traditional	
62	Ma01063	3806 Melody Rd. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	Altered
63	Ma01064	3807 Melody Rd. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
64	Ma01065	3808 Melody Rd. NE	post 1975	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
65	Ma01066	3809 Melody Rd. NE	c 1969	Compact Ranch	
66	Ma01067	3810 Melody Rd. NE	c 1972	Minimal Traditional	
67	Ma01068	3811 Melody Rd. NE	c 1968	Ranch	Altered
68	Ma01069	3815 Melody Rd. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
69	Ma01070	3817 Melody Rd. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
70	Ma01071	3819 Melody Rd. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
71	Ma01072	3820 Melody Rd. NE	c 1966	Compact Ranch	
72	Ma01073	3821 Melody Rd. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
73	Ma01074	3822 Melody Rd. NE	c 1968	Compact Ranch	
74	Ma01075	3823 Melody Rd. NE	c 1960	Contemporary	Altered



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Resource #	Survey #	Property Address	Build Date	Style	Reason for NC
75	Ma01076	3824 Melody Rd. NE	c 1966	Compact Ranch	
76	Ma01077	3826 Melody Rd. NE	c 1966	Compact Ranch	
77	Ma01078	3828 Melody Rd. NE	c 1973	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
78	Ma01079	3830 Melody Rd. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
79	Ma01080	3832 Melody Rd. NE	c 1968	?	
80	Ma01081	3834 Melody Rd. NE	c 1968	Compact Ranch	
81	Ma01082	3836 Melody Rd. NE	c 1973	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
<b>Melody Circle NE</b>					
82	Ma01083	3812 Melody Cir. NE	c 1971	?	Altered
83	Ma01084	3814 Melody Cir. NE	c 1971	Compact Ranch	Altered
84	Ma01085	3816 Melody Cir. NE	c 1971	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
85	Ma01086	3818 Melody Cir. NE	c 1972	Compact Ranch	
<b>Meridian Street N</b>					
86	Ma01087	3800 Meridian St. N	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
87	Ma01088	3802 Meridian St. N	c 1960	Contemporary	
88	Ma01089	3804 Meridian St. N	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
89	Ma01090	3806 Meridian St. N	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
90	Ma01092	3810 Meridian St. N	c 1961	Contemporary	Altered
91	Ma01093	3812 Meridian St. N	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
92	Ma01094	3814 Meridian St. N	c 1960	Contemporary	
<b>Salem Drive NE</b>					
93	Ma01095	200 Salem Dr. NE	c 1961	?	Altered
94	Ma01096	202 Salem Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
95	Ma01097	203 Salem Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
96	Ma01098	205 Salem Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
97	Ma01099	207 Salem Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
98	Ma01100	209 Salem Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	Altered
99	Ma01101	210 Salem Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	Altered
100	Ma01102	211 Salem Dr. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
101	Ma01103	212 Salem Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	Altered
102	Ma01104	213 Salem Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
103	Ma01105	215 Salem Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	Altered
104	Ma01106	217 Salem Dr. NE	c 1961	Minimal Traditional	
105	Ma01107	219 Salem Dr. NE	c 1961	Minimal Traditional	
106	Ma01109	223 Salem Dr. NE	c 1961	Remodeled	Altered (used by A&M)
107	Ma01111	301 Salem Dr. NE	c 1968	Compact Ranch	Altered

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Resource #	Survey #	Property Address	Build Date	Style	Reason for NC
108	Ma01112	303 Salem Dr. NE	c 1968	Compact Ranch	
<b>Victory Lane NE</b>					
109	Ma01113	202 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
110	Ma01114	203 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
111	Ma01115	204 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
112	Ma01116	205 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
113	Ma01117	206 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
114	Ma01118	207 Victory Ln. NE	2014	New or Remodel	New construction
115	Ma01120	209 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
116	Ma01121	210 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Remodel	Altered
117	Ma01122	212 Victory Ln. NE	c 1960	?	
118	Ma01123	214 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
119	Ma01124	215 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Remodel	Altered
120	Ma01125	216 Victory Ln. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
121	Ma01126	217 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	Altered
122	Ma01127	218 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Minimal Traditional	
123	Ma01128	219 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Minimal Traditional	
124	Ma01129	220 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Minimal Traditional	
125	Ma01130	221 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
126	Ma01131	222 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
127	Ma01132	223 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
128	Ma01133	224 Victory Ln. NE	c 1960	Minimal Traditional	
129	Ma01134	225 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Minimal Traditional	
130	Ma01136	227 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	?	Altered
131	Ma01137	228 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
132	Ma01138	229 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
133	Ma01139	231 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
134	Ma01140	233 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
135	Ma01141	234 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	?	Altered or New Construction
136	Ma01142	235 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
137	Ma01143	236 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
138	Ma01144	237 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	Altered
139	Ma01145	238 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
140	Ma01146	239 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
141	Ma01147	240 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
142	Ma01148	242 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
143	Ma01149	244 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
144	Ma01150	246 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
145	Ma01151	248 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	

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146	Ma01152	250 Victory Ln. NE	c 1961	?	
<b>Whitney Avenue</b>					
147	Ma01153	100 Whitney Ave. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
148	Ma01154	101 Whitney Ave. NE	21st C	n/a	Contemporary sign
149	Ma01155	103 Whitney Ave. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
150	Ma01156	104 Whitney Ave. NE	c 1961	Minimal Traditional	Altered
151	Ma01157	105 Whitney Ave. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
152	Ma01158	106 Whitney Ave. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
153	Ma01159	107 Whitney Ave. NE	c 1960	?	
154	Ma01160	108 Whitney Ave. NE	c 1961	New or Remodel	Altered or New Construction
155	Ma01161	109 Whitney Ave. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
156	Ma01162	110 Whitney Ave. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	Altered
157	Ma01163	111 Whitney Ave. NE	c 1963	?	Altered
158	Ma01164	112 Whitney Ave. NE	c 1963	New or Remodel	Altered or New Construction
159	Ma01165	113 Whitney Ave. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
160	Ma01166	114 Whitney Ave. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	Altered
161	Ma01167	115 Whitney Ave. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
162	Ma01168	117 Whitney Ave. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
163	Ma01169	119 Whitney Ave. NE	c 1961	Ranch	
164	Ma01170	121 Whitney Ave. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
165	Ma01171	123 Whitney Ave. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
166	Ma01172	125 Whitney Ave. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
<b>Wilkenson Drive NE</b>					
167	Ma01173	100 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
168	Ma01174	102 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 2018	New or Remodel	New construction
169	Ma01175	103 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
170	Ma01176	104 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
171	Ma01177	105 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
172	Ma01178	107 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
173	Ma01179	109 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Minimal Traditional	
174	Ma01180	110 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
175	Ma01181	111 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Contemporary	
176	Ma01182	112 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
177	Ma01183	113 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
178	Ma01184	114 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
179	Ma01185	115 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	Altered

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Resource #	Survey #	Property Address	Build Date	Style	Reason for NC
180	Ma01186	116 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
181	Ma01187	117 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	?	Altered
182	Ma01188	118 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
183	Ma01189	119 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	Altered
184	Ma01190	120 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Minimal Traditional	
185	Ma01191	122 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	Altered
186	Ma01192	123 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
187	Ma01193	124 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
188	Ma01194	125 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	Altered
189	Ma01195	126 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	Altered
190	Ma01196	127 Wilkenson Dr. NE	2011	New or Remodel	New construction
191	Ma01197	128 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	Altered
192	Ma01198	129 Wilkenson Dr. NE	1959	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
193	Ma01199	130 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	?	
194	Ma01200	131 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1962	Compact Ranch	
195	Ma01201	132 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
196	Ma01202	133 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Contemporary	Altered
197	Ma01203	134 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Minimal Traditional	
198	Ma01204	135 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Contemporary	
199	Ma01205	136 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	Altered
200	Ma01206	137 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	Altered
201	Ma01207	138 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Minimal Traditional	Altered
202	Ma01208	139 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
203	Ma01209	140 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
204	Ma01210	141 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
205	Ma01211	142 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Minimal Traditional	
206	Ma01212	143 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
207	Ma01213	144 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
208	Ma01214	145 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1962	Minimal Traditional	
209	Ma01215	146 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
210	Ma01216	148 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
211	Ma01217	149 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	Altered
212	Ma01218	150 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	Altered
213	Ma01219	151 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
214	Ma01220	152 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
215	Ma01221	153 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
216	Ma01222	154 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	?	Altered
217	Ma01223	155 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Minimal Traditional	
218	Ma01224	156 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Contemporary	

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Resource #	Survey #	Property Address	Build Date	Style	Reason for NC
219	Ma01225	157 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1963	Compact Ranch	
220	Ma01226	158 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
221	Ma01227	159 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1964	Compact Ranch	
222	Ma01228	160 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
223	Ma01229	161 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1968	Compact Ranch	
224	Ma01230	162 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1964	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
225	Ma01231	163 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Contemporary	
226	Ma01232	164 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
227	Ma01233	165 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
228	Ma01234	166 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
229	Ma01235	167 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
230	Ma01236	168 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Minimal Traditional	
231	Ma01237	169 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	Altered
232	Ma01238	170 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
233	Ma01239	171 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
234	Ma01240	172 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	Altered
235	Ma01241	173 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Minimal Traditional	Altered
236	Ma01242	174 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	Altered
237	Ma01243	175 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
238	Ma01244	176 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	
239	Ma01245	177 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
240	Ma01246	178 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	?	Altered
241	Ma01247	179 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Contemporary	
242	Ma01248	180 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
243	Ma01249	181 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
244	Ma01250	182 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
245	Ma01251	183 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	?	
246	Ma01252	184 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
247	Ma01253	185 Wilkenson Dr. NE	1959	Compact Ranch	
248	Ma01254	187 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Contemporary	
249	Ma01255	189 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	Altered
250	Ma01256	191 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Minimal Traditional	Altered
251	Ma01257	193 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Minimal Traditional	
252	Ma01258	195 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1960	Compact Ranch	
253	Ma01259	197 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch	
254	Ma01260	199 Wilkenson Dr. NE	c 1961	Compact Ranch (Early American)	

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

### Criteria Considerations

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

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

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Community Planning & Development

Ethnic Heritage/Black

**Period of Significance**

1959-1975

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1959 construction of houses started

1962 Martin Luther King Jr and Reverend Abernathy visited

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Folmar and Flinn, developers/builders

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Summary Statement of Significance**

Edmonton Heights is a post World War II era planned development that meets the criteria for National Register listing under both Criteria A (associated with broad patterns of history) and C (embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type or period). Under Criterion A the neighborhood is significant at the local level in the areas of ethnic heritage, and community planning and development as a planned suburb for African Americans and its relationship to the Federal Housing Authority (F.H.A.), the Veteran's Administration (V.A.) and Federal sponsorship of Urban Renewal (colloquially called "Negro Removal"). Edmonton Heights is Huntsville's only planned suburb for African Americans, and illustrates the effects of post-war growth, Urban Renewal, and racial discrimination in federal and local housing policy on the

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African American Community. Although the residents of Edmonton Heights had access to F.H.A. and V.A. loans in greater concentrations than most African Americans, the scale of the program was due to backroom deals orchestrated by the builders, Folmar and Flinn. These deals, which were common in other Folman and Flinn developments as well, benefited a small circle of powerful and wealthy investors. Urban Renewal programs, under the federal Housing Act of 1949, provided loans for cities to acquire and clear slum areas to be sold for private redevelopment. Edmonton Heights provided housing for some African Americans who lost their homes as a result of Huntsville's Urban Renewal program, the Heart of Huntsville.

Edmonton Heights is notable under Criterion C at the local level for its architecture, predominately intact post World War II era housing stock, and as a representative example of a housing development by Folmar and Flinn, one of the largest speculative building companies in the south at the time. Edmonton Heights is the most well-preserved of the African American neighborhoods established by Folmar and Flinn in Alabama. The curving roads and large setbacks in Edmonton Heights are typical of Folmar and Flinn neighborhoods and reflect the guidelines set by the F.H.A. The collection of homes in Edmonton Heights displays characteristic features of Folmar and Flinn architecture and of post-World War II suburban housing for moderate-income residents, including low pitched roofs, contrasting exterior materials, carports, shallow recessed porches, and a compact 3 bedroom, 1 bath floor plan. The variations on standard Minimal Traditional, Contemporary, and Transitional Ranch house designs within the district illustrate Folmar and Flinn's method of "pre-engineering" the construction of houses and reflect a broader trend among suburban housing developers.

The historic district's period of significance is from 1959, when construction started on the first houses, through 1975, when the last house that shares design features with the original development was constructed.

### **Edmonton Heights**

Huntsville, Alabama, now known as a space and defense center was still a small city, with a population of about 13,000 in 1940. But the city grew exponentially, when the U. S. Army selected almost 40,000 acres of land to the southwest of the city as a site for two large arsenals – the Huntsville Arsenal (a chemical warfare plant, established in 1941) and the Redstone Ordnance Plant (artillery shell manufacturing, established in 1941). In 1949 the Army missile program selected Huntsville as its location. The Huntsville Arsenal and the Redstone plant were merged, and the following year a team of more than a hundred German scientists under the leadership of Wernher von Braun moved to Huntsville to support the Army's missile program. Von Braun's team was ultimately responsible for the Jupiter-C rocket and the Saturn V rocket, which helped astronauts reach the moon. In 1960 a presidential executive order established the George C. Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, causing the city to grow exponentially during this time. By 1967, the quaint southern town had seen its prewar population of 13,000



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explode to an estimated 144,000.<sup>2</sup> Huntsville, and neighboring areas, struggled to keep up with the housing demand. Employment at Redstone and a number of support industries provided jobs for African Americans that were not possible in other regions of the Deep South. But Huntsville still remained racially segregated, and there were few housing options for African Americans moving into the city. Most lived in the area to the south and west of downtown at that time, which was in the process of being targeted for slum removal. If the city was going to condemn most of the downtown African American neighborhood, it needed to have a residential neighborhood for the displaced residents. Segregation policies provided limited options. Edmonton Heights provided much needed housing for the city's growing African American population.

The area now encompassed by Edmonton Heights was owned by Carl B. Thomas and the State of Alabama before it was developed. Carl B. Thomas sold his land on December 28, 1958 to the Urban Land Corporation, a subsidiary of Folmar and Flinn, a large speculative housing builder based out of Montgomery. A *Huntsville Times* article spotlighting Folmar and Flinn in October of 1958 mentioned company plans for a subdivision near Alabama A&M, a historically black college. The plans were to build up to 700 homes. The final plat was considerably smaller though, with 261 lots.<sup>3</sup> Although the plat map recorded with Madison County shows the neighborhood streets as currently laid out, a City of Huntsville Map dated 1957 (and revised September of 1958) shows a slightly different layout for the streets in Edmonton Heights.<sup>4</sup> This topographic map shows two additional streets to the far east, Ridge Road and Hinney (? street name not entirely legible) Drive, neither of which were constructed. The reason for the discrepancy between the two maps is not known, but the Madison County Property Index lists most of the land transactions for "Part A Edmonton Heights," indicating that an unbuilt part B may have been planned. Surprisingly enough, some of the land was sold to the City of Huntsville. Easements for sewage and drainage right of ways were purchased from Alabama A&M.

Edmonton Heights was platted with protective covenants on December 13, 1958.<sup>5</sup> The protective covenants, typical for the era, were:

- A) Only detached single family or detached duplex buildings with private garages could be constructed.
- B) Minimum building lines generally no closer than 30' to the front lot line.
- C) Residential structures could not be built on less than a full lot.
- D) No noxious or offensive trade/activity permitted.
- E) No temporary residences (basement, trailer, shack, etc.) allowed.
- F) Minimum square footage of 600 square feet and minimum cost of \$5,000.

<sup>2</sup> n.a. "Courthouse History." Madison County Alabama, <https://madisoncountyal.gov/government/about-your-county/history#ad-image11> (accessed January 11, 2020)

<sup>3</sup> n/a. *Huntsville Times*, October 19, 1958. pg. 50.

<sup>4</sup> Map located at Alabama A&M Archives.

<sup>5</sup> Original Madison County Plat Book 2, Vol 1, page 51.

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- G) Perpetual easement for telephone and power.
- H) Perpetual easement for storm drainage and utilities.
- I) Streets designated for public use.

In early 1959, the Urban Land Corporation began selling lots to several different construction companies, which built the houses in the newly platted neighborhood. The construction companies listed for Edmonton Heights were Booker Homes, Carver Homes, and Stone Homes. All three of these were incorporated by James M. and Mary B. Folmar and Henry I. and Mary Flinn Jr.<sup>6</sup>

Publicity for the neighborhood in Huntsville's largest newspaper, the *Huntsville Times*, was substantially less than it had been for earlier white neighborhoods, but it is not known if this was due to the race of the occupants, or if the scandal the company was encountering with its land sales at the same time that Edmonton Heights was ready to be occupied, impacted the size of the development and/or the publicity. The project was advertised fairly heavily in the *Huntsville Mirror* (the African American newspaper), starting in February of 1959. Sales of houses in the subdivision appear to have started in the fall of 1959. Of the numerous advertisements for Edmonton Heights, only two identify Folmar and Flinn (in tandem with Ideal Homes). Both advertisements are from November of 1959, the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 29<sup>th</sup>.

*The Huntsville Mirror* focused on issues of race and Civil Rights law along with more mundane commentary on sports and social events. Ads for Edmonton Heights often occupied a quarter of the page, and were titled with headlines ranging from "THIS is NEWS!" to "NEW, ROOMY, QUALITY HOMES FOR HUNTSVILLE'S DISCERNING NEGROS" or "YOUR LIFE WILL BE BEAUTIFUL IN EXCLUSIVE EDMONTON HEIGHTS!" Although race was often emphasized in the advertisements, another key selling point for the neighborhood was price. Advertisements that focused on the superiority of home ownership verses renting were common. Federal Housing Authority (F.H.A.) buyers had the ability to move in for \$235, veteran rates were listed between \$100 and \$135 depending on the specific advertisement. The F.H.A. provided mortgage insurance on loans made by F.H.A. approved lenders. The F.H.A. helped finance military housing and homes for returning veterans. The mortgage for a Veteran's Administration (V.A.) loan is guaranteed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Access to both programs was sought after by lenders, since federal funding for both programs guaranteed that lenders would be paid if the mortgagee defaulted. The construction of suburban homes, eligible for F.H.A. loans, specifically for African American owners was rare. The National Historic Landmark theme study on racial discrimination in housing noted that in the southern cities of Atlanta and Charlotte only a modest number of loans were made to African American homeowners, and then only in segregated subdivisions in isolated portions of suburbia. By 1960 the F.H.A. and V.A. combined excluded racial minorities from 98% of newly constructed homes.<sup>7</sup> Clearly the

<sup>6</sup> Alabama Secretary of State Business Entity Records, accessed online, 2/28/2019.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew D. Lassiter and Susan Cianci Salvatore. *Civil Rights in America: Racial Discrimination in Housing: A National Historic Landmarks Theme Study* (Washington, D.C.: National Historic Landmarks Program, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2019), pg. 32.

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promotion of F.H.A. and V.A. loans to purchase homes in Edmonton Heights was a rarity, and its proximity to Alabama A&M, a historic black college, made it even more unique.

The neighborhood was promoted as being modern, and “Built for the Ambitious, Home-Loving Negro families of Huntsville” and “Proud Huntsville Negro.”<sup>8</sup> The proximity to Alabama A&M was highlighted as well. Amenities advertised in “North Alabama’s Most Exclusive Negro Subdivision” included paved streets, landscaped lots, curbs and gutters, brick veneer, forced air, heat and washer connections. Residents were given a choice of numerous house designs. Homes were promoted as architect designed, with between 32 and 31 different home styles, and 5 different home plans. All houses had 3 bedrooms and 1 bathroom. The three main design categories identified in the survey were Compact Ranch, Minimal Traditional, and Contemporary, although each one of these categories has numerous subsets. The houses at 134 and 136 Wilkenson served as model homes furnished by Mason Furniture, and were opened to the public with great fanfare in October of 1959.<sup>9</sup> The official dedication was on December 12, 1959. The Councill High School band provided music, while Reverend Ezekiel Bell gave the invocation.<sup>10</sup> Professor J. H. Richards introduced the guests- Hank Aaron of the Milwaukee Braves (and the National League Batting Champion of 1959), race leader Mr. Jolin Lee Flore of Mobile, and Mr. A. L. Thompson, an advisor for the F.H.A. in Atlanta. Reverend H. R. Snodgrass closed the dedication ceremonies with a benediction. Mr. A. L. Thompson spoke on the character of Flynn and Folmar as people who had an interest to “serve humanity.” There was a also a considerable listing of the benefits of the F.H.A. programs for the public, with an emphasis on how those in attendance were to be commended on their “efforts to eliminate slums and blight from <their> midst” and that “successful urban renewal can be achieved only if there is a substantial body of citizen support in the community.”<sup>11</sup>

Urban Renewal in the United States is closely related to redevelopment programs that focused on slum clearance and were often implemented by local public housing authorities. Federal loans, often under the framework provided by the Taft-Ellender-Wagner Act of 1949, provided the resources for municipalities to acquire and clear slum areas, then sell the property to private developers for redevelopment following a municipal plan. The Housing Act of 1954 provided mortgages backed by the F.H.A. to help create new housing in these projects, and formally introduced the term “Urban Renewal” to planning vocabulary in the United States.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> n/a. Edmonton Heights Advertisement. *Huntsville Mirror*, July 18, 1959. pg. 2 and n/a. Edmonton Heights Advertisement. *Huntsville Mirror*, July 11, 1959. pg. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Although city records show almost all the homes in the neighborhood as being constructed in 1959, Polk phone directories show that the homes were constructed in waves. The 1960 directory has no listings for Colton Lane, Salem Drive, very few for Melody Road or Victory Lane. Specific construction dates and development patterns within the neighborhood are unknown.

<sup>10</sup> Bell lived at 101 Whitney Ave NW.

<sup>11</sup> n/a. “Edmonton Heights Dedication Held.” *Huntsville Mirror*, December 19, 1959. pg. 1 and 8.

<sup>12</sup> Lassiter and Salvatore. *Civil Rights in America: Racial Discrimination in Housing: A National Historic Landmarks Theme Study*, Part 3.

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The development and promotion of Edmonton Heights was interwoven with the Heart of Huntsville Plan, which was formally announced to the public in July of 1961. Parts of the plan had been in development since at least 1951 by Hannes Luehrsen, a German-born architect at Redstone Arsenal, and designer of Memorial Parkway.<sup>13</sup> Massive federal grants covered 2/3 of the project cost, which cleared substantial portions of Huntsville. The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) sponsored program allocated almost 10 million dollars to acquire and redevelop land in downtown, covering areas that were commercial and residential. The first “improvement” was razing the west side of Courthouse Square, removing most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century historic commercial buildings.<sup>14</sup>

There was significant clearance of historic African American neighborhoods during this Urban Renewal project, including the houses around Council High School (the African American high school). The Huntsville Housing Authority was involved with the project and used condemnation as a clearing tool, and then assisted the population with relocating. This process was assisted by building commitments from the F.H.A. under Section 221 of the 1961 Housing Act, which provided housing for people displaced by federal projects, such as Urban Renewal programs.<sup>15</sup> Newspapers noted “... the Negro man or woman who have their life savings tied up in a home” could be impacted by the project.<sup>16</sup> In November and December of 1960, advertisements were run in both the *Huntsville* and *Birmingham Mirrors* that compared the superior modernity of Edmonton Heights houses to the run-down “Shot Gun style” houses in the “Heart of Huntsville.” The houses built at Edmonton Heights were clearly planned to help offset the demolition of the African American neighborhood for the Heart of Huntsville plan. African American’s weren’t just displaced from their homes; many lost businesses as well. Melvin Sistrunk (who grew up at 134 Wilkenson Drive NE) recalls his dad’s BBQ stand on Church Street being taken by the city under the Church Street Development Plan. His father took the building apart board by board, to keep what little he could of the establishment. He retired after losing his business.<sup>17</sup> Other residents recalled that although Edmonton Heights was indeed a nice place to live, and was essentially the only place African Americans could live in the city, that the houses were overpriced. Billy Woods, who grew up at 3823 Crane Drive NE, remembers his father commenting on the inflated prices for the neighborhood. His father was a realtor, and knew the prices were too high, but you had to “bite the bullet if you didn’t want to live in the projects.”<sup>18</sup> He mentioned that his father struggled to pay the inflated mortgage in the 1970s.

<sup>13</sup> n/a. “New Studies Urged: Huntsville Has Neglected To Plan Luehrsen Says.” *Huntsville Times*, December 11, 1959. pg. 15. Redstone Arsenal is to the southwest of downtown Huntsville and is home to an Army base as well as NASA’s Marshall Space Flight Center. Memorial Parkway, Highway 231, is the expressway that runs north/south through most of Huntsville.

<sup>14</sup> The project also included a “Heart of Huntsville” mall which opened in 2001 and was at the intersection of Clinton Avenue and Memorial Parkway. This area was razed in 2007 for the Constellation project which included hotels, and is still under development.

<sup>15</sup> Bill Austin. “Land Deal Fraud Charged to Four.” *Huntsville Times*, November 30, 1962. pg. 1-2.

<sup>16</sup> n/a. *Huntsville Times*, July 2, 1961. pg. 5.

<sup>17</sup> Oral interview, by phone, October 18, 2020.

<sup>18</sup> Oral interview, by phone, October 18, 2020.

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By June 25<sup>th</sup> of 1960, the *Huntsville Mirror* was reporting that 242 houses had been built, and 170 were occupied. By September 10<sup>th</sup> the newspaper noted that there were only 16 houses left to sell.<sup>19</sup> The paper started advertising the “home of the week” with Mr. and Mrs. Albert Townsend at 3822 Colton Lane on October 22, 1960, and Mr. and Mrs. James Burns’ home at 3802 Meridian Drive NE was showcased on November 12, 1960. Early residents of the neighborhood worked in a variety of jobs. A review of the Polk Telephone Directories from 1960 through 1975 show teachers at Councill High School, nurses at Huntsville Hospital, workers at Redstone Arsenal, brick masons, cab drivers, preachers, cooks, and janitors among the early residents. Although a few property owners were listed as working at Alabama A&M, the majority of neighborhood residents worked further afield. Approximately 6% of the residents worked at Alabama A&M,<sup>20</sup> 7% were in education either as a student or a high school or elementary school teacher, 9% served in one of the armed forces, 16% worked for Redstone or NASA, 28% were manual laborers, and the remaining 28% worked in a variety of occupations. Oral interviews indicate that in later years (by the late 1960s and early 1970s) a number of faculty for A&M had moved into the neighborhood.

Data showing where the residents lived before moving to Edmonton Heights has not been compiled, but based on the advertisements comparing the new development to the “Heart of Huntsville” is it not inconceivable that a significant number had originally lived in that neighborhood. Edmonton Heights is almost 6 miles away from the “Heart of Huntsville” neighborhood, and any residents that had originally worked downtown (or even at Redstone) had a significantly longer commute now, and if they did not own cars, transportation would be another issue to address.

The proximity of Edmonton Heights to the Blue Mountain Lodge, a Freemason lodge for African Americans, allowed some of their members to easily reach the lodge. The current lodge building, located on Higdon Road, just to the north and east of Alabama A&M, was constructed in 1959, at the same time Edmonton Heights was being developed. The lodge sits on land granted to it by William Councill, a former slave who served as the first president of the Huntsville Normal School (Alabama A&M). The land was granted to the lodge in 1906. It is not known if the 1959 building is a replacement for an earlier structure on the site, or if it is the first lodge building constructed on the property. When the names of Edmonton Heights residents

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<sup>19</sup> Without pulling individual deeds, it is not entirely certain when houses in Edmonton Heights were constructed. Polk Directories for Huntsville typically list addresses for houses that are vacant. It is notable that entire streets in Edmonton Heights do not show the first year or so after the development, there is a clear incremental listing of properties. Some addresses are not shown until the mid 1970s, indicating that some of the lots may have remained empty. It would take extensive cross referencing of the property deeds with Polk Directories to gather additional details.

<sup>20</sup> Of the 11 residents that identified A&M as their employer, only 5 were listed as teaching at A&M. The rest served the university in other capacities.

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are cross referenced with the 1960-1970 membership rolls of the lodge, five Edmonton Heights residents appear in the membership rolls:<sup>21</sup>

Wade O. Bone (listed as a wholesale man for NASA), a resident at 104 Wilkenson Drive NE  
Marion Davis (no occupation listed), who lived at 118 Wilkenson Drive NE  
Arthur Gurley (a janitor at the Post Office), who lived at 135 Wilkenson Drive NE  
Walter Kelly (a laborer for the city of Huntsville) who lived at 118 Wilkenson Drive NE  
Clinton Parker (who owned Parker Shoe Hospital), a resident at 121 Whitney Avenue NE

As Huntsville's exclusively designed African American neighborhood, Edmonton Heights was the natural location for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to stay during his 1962 visit to Huntsville. Dr. King stayed the night of March 18<sup>th</sup>, at 101 Whitney Avenue NE, which was the home of Reverend Ezekiel Bell, his wife Eltie, and their two sons. Reverend Bell served as the first pastor at Fellowship Presbyterian Church, which was formed in his Edmonton Heights home, and eventually built a church on Meridian, just to the south of Edmonton Heights.<sup>22</sup> Reverend Bell chaired Huntsville's first Civil Rights organization, the Community Service Committee. Reverend Ralph D. Abernathy also joined Dr. King in staying the night. Unfortunately, the contemporary house was razed in the 2010s.<sup>23</sup>

Residents indicated a significant amount of pride growing up in "The Heights," and although it was considered a "tough" neighborhood in the 1960s and 70s, it was solidly middle class.<sup>24</sup> As some families moved into higher economic strata during the 1970s and 80s, they moved out to the Sparkman and Cedarcrest neighborhoods, over near the University of Alabama Huntsville Campus. By the late 1990s migration to other suburbs, the crack drug epidemic, and the relocation of residents from the downtown housing projects (Lincoln) into Edmonton Heights began to change the neighborhood. The small size of the houses, and in particular the fact that they only have one bathroom, will likely make maintaining the neighborhood's integrity challenging for the future.

### **The Developer: Folmar and Flinn**

Folmar & Flinn, based out of Montgomery, Alabama, were one of the largest speculative builders in the South from the 1950s through the 1970s. Their first construction project in Mobile was in 1954, and within four years more than \$25 million worth of homes and apartment units were built or in advanced planning stages.<sup>25</sup> The company relied heavily on

<sup>21</sup> 1960-1970 membership rosters for the Blue Mountain Lodge, possessed by the Blue Mountain Lodge.

<sup>22</sup> The 1960 Polk Directory lists Reverend Bell as pastor for the Normal Episcopal Church.

<sup>23</sup> Mike Marshall. "The house at 101 Whitney Ave. is among Huntsville's strongest connections to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr." *Huntsville Times*, January 20, 2012. Accessed digitally October 16, 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Oral interview, Billy Woods, by phone, October 18, 2020.

<sup>25</sup> n/a. "Mobile Operations Soon Will Be Over \$25 Million." *Huntsville Times*, October 19, 1958. pg. 46. Company archives have not been located.

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F.H.A. financing, and while most of its units were developed for white families, they did develop a handful of neighborhoods for black families only.

The company started in 1946 when two ex-Airforce GIs and friends from their college days at Alabama Polytechnic University, 33 year old Jimmy Folmar, a civil engineer, and 31 year old Henry I. Flinn, Jr., borrowed \$5,000,000 to start building speculative housing.<sup>26</sup> They borrowed the loan from Lamar Kelly, the former state senator and head of All States Life Insurance company's loan division.<sup>27</sup> The original incorporation name was Urban Land Corporation. Although Alabama Secretary of State records show that the Urban Land Corporation was incorporated by Henry I. Flinn Jr., Jasper M. Folmar, and H. O. Davis, Davis' name isn't mentioned in any of the period newspapers. He may have been a silent partner, or sold out his share shortly after founding. A number of affiliated companies were incorporated by Folmar and Flinn, including the Meadow Corporation, Ideal Sales, Commercial Contractors, Master Built Ideal Homes, A. E. Associated, Urban Land Corporation, Booker Homes, Stone Homes, and Carver Homes.<sup>28</sup>

The company specialized in a process that they called "pre-engineering," which was borrowed from the assembly-line techniques used by automobile manufacturers.<sup>29</sup> Their process was so automated that they bragged their carpenters didn't even need a saw, because every piece of lumber that arrived at the site was already pre-cut to the exact measurements needed.<sup>30</sup> They referenced Ford's assembly line as an inspiration for their own production lines, "Everything associated with a housing project .... Is engineered to close tolerance before the first nail is driven..."<sup>31</sup> This technique was not unique to Folmar and Flinn, wartime construction and post war housing developments, such as Levittown utilized the method.<sup>32</sup> It is possible that Folmar and Flinn were the first southern builders to use the technique. Within a decade they were constructing between 2,000-3,000 homes a year, and had 70 employees in their home office, and another 150 in the field.<sup>33</sup> As the company expanded, Pleas Looney, who was the head of the state Planning and Industrial Development Board resigned his position to become a public

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<sup>26</sup> "Jimmy" James Folmar was the brother of Emory Folmar, who joined the construction firm in 1954 as an administrative assistant. He later became a Montgomery City Councilperson and then served as mayor of the city from 1977 until 1999. Allen Rankin. "Rankin File: Folmar & Flinn: They Pause for Breath." *Alabama Journal*, June 21, 1951. pg. 8.

<sup>27</sup> Lynne Brannen. "Two Vets Work Near Miracle on Housing." *Bristol News Bulletin* (Tennessee/Virginia), November 5, 1948. pg. 19.

<sup>28</sup> Carver Homes was originally incorporated by Carl W. Bear, Clifford A. Herren, and Catherine G. Cole, and later reincorporated by Henry I. Flinn Jr., Mary C. Flinn, James Folmar, and Mary Folmar.

<sup>29</sup> n/a. "Big Residential Project Begun by Folmar, Flinn In Decatur." *Huntsville Times*, October 19, 1958. pg. 50.

<sup>30</sup> n/a. "Focus on Efficiency." *Huntsville Times*, October 19, 1958. pg. 41.

<sup>31</sup> n/a. "Houses Are Built On An Assembly Line." *Huntsville Times*, October 19, 1958. pg. 47.

<sup>32</sup> On Levittown, see Dianne Harris, *Second Suburb: Levittown, Pennsylvania* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013) and Barbara M. Kelly, *Expanding the American Dream: Building and Rebuilding Levittown*. (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1993) for additional information.

<sup>33</sup> n/a. "Multi-Million Dollar Housing Program Goal in Huntsville." *Montgomery Advertiser*, October 19, 1958. pg. 66.

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relations specialist with Folmar and Flinn.<sup>34</sup> In the fall of 1958, the company opened a new corporate headquarters building in Montgomery.<sup>35</sup> The grand opening of the new headquarters was well attended by political and business leaders alike. A representative of the Governor (who was out of town), State Representative Virgis Ashworth, and the State Assistant Attorney attended, as did representatives from Huntsville and Decatur city governments. Madison County Chair of Commissioners, Roy L. Stone, C. B. Holliman, the Alabama director of the Federal Housing Authority, and General John. A. Barclay attended as well.<sup>36</sup>

The modern building, which enveloped more than 14,000 square feet, included space for the sales, mortgage/loan, law, purchasing and bookkeeping departments on the main floor, while the architectural and engineering offices along with the construction coordination and estimating departments were upstairs. The building also housed auxiliary companies. Folmar and Flinn appear to have dominated the Deep-South speculative housing market with the number of developments constructed in such a short period of time, 1950s- early 1960s, and the broad expanse of locations where they worked. Not much is known about the architectural plans the company used. They did have architects in house. In 1958 Joseph W. Meadows was the director of architecture, and the architects working under him included Frank Ross Jr., Sherrod B. Hixson, Pat Thomas Williams and Albert F. Breedlove.<sup>37</sup> Architects John McCabe and Dwight "Jack" Thornhill also worked for the firm.<sup>38</sup> It is unknown how many different housing plans they produced, nor how frequently they rotated through plans, but a quick comparison of the 3 bedroom, 1 bath houses at Edmonton Heights shows that the designs are similar, if not exact matches to the 3 bedroom, 1 bath houses at their Gadsden development, Oakleigh Estates.

Folmar and Flinn covered almost every aspect of the projects from initial planning and site development to construction and landscaping. They had a policy of using Alabama products when possible, and purchased their Ualco aluminum sliding windows from Sash Sales and Supply Company in Sheffield.<sup>39</sup> One of the few jobs they outsourced was street paving. The company prided itself on building communities, not just housing units. They boasted that a number of their apartment complexes had swimming pools, and they built shopping centers in tandem with some of their developments.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> n/a. "Pleas Looney Reaches Top Executive Status." *Selma Times Journal*, January 19, 1958. pg. B4.

<sup>35</sup> The original company headquarters is still standing at 88 West South Boulevard, and currently houses a church. Folmar & Flinn are reported as vacating this building by 1965.

<sup>36</sup> "Folmar and Flinn Enter Bold New Era as Modern Home Office Building Dedicated." *Huntsville Times*, October 19, 1958. pg. 39.

<sup>37</sup> n/a. "Blend of Beauty, Utility Is Sought by Architects." *Huntsville Times*, October 19, 1958. pg. 42.

<sup>38</sup> n/a. "Big Residential Project Begun by Folmar, Flinn In Decatur." *Huntsville Times*, October 19, 1958. pg. 50.

<sup>39</sup> n/a. "Southern Sash Windows Are Used in Meadow Homes." *Huntsville Times*, October 19, 1958. pg. 42.

<sup>40</sup> n/a. "Community Development Program is Stressed in Apartment Projects." *Birmingham News*, October 19, 1958.



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Although a full list of their projects has not been compiled, the following projects, both single family neighborhoods and apartment units, are reported to have been built by the company:<sup>41</sup>

Birmingham: Chapel Hill, Leeds

Decatur: Western Gardens (100 houses)

Gadsden: Oakleigh Estates (318 houses)

Huntsville: Edmonton Heights<sup>42</sup>, Meadow Hills (135-385 houses depending on source), Spragin's Homes (23 houses), Lakewood Manor

Mobile: Hillsdale Heights (931 units), Dauphine Apartments (168 units), Berkshire Hills (400 houses), Berkshire Arms (304 Apartments), Sunset Hills (250 houses), Farmingdale (128 houses), Greenwich Hills (50-100 houses), Greenwich Hills (100-300 houses)

Montgomery: Mobile Heights, Cloverland Shopping Center and Cloverland (the first suburb built by Folmar and Flinn, 539 units, unclear how many were houses vs apartments), Lamar Court Apartments and Fairview Villa Apartments (198 apartments combined), Hillcrest Apartments (34 apartments), Caroline Court (84 apartments), Clayton Court (48 apartments), Fairview Villa (98 apartments), Fair Manor (100 apartments), Lanier Court (120 apartments), Wareingwood (10 apartments), Beauvoir (10 apartments), Southern Meadows (136 apartments)

Pensacola, FL: Avondale

Pascagoula, MS: Jackson Estates (96 houses) also possibly 100 garden apartments in the same development

Although most of their developments were for whites, the company constructed at least three African-American only suburbs: Hillsdale Heights (Mobile), Mobile Heights (Montgomery), and Edmonton Heights in Huntsville. Mobile Heights was advertised as meeting "Negro's Housing Needs" and for being "one of the largest of its type in the Southeast."<sup>43</sup> The subdivision cost 3 million dollars to develop and encompassed 451 houses. It was planned as a slum clearance project, to "... partially erase the blight of the filthy, half-fallen down shanties that have been

<sup>41</sup> Although Texas and Memphis, Tennessee are mentioned as locations for one of their future developments in newspaper advertisements, additional details were not located. All of the developments listed in this report appear to have been constructed or under construction at the time newspaper articles were covering Folmar and Flinn. But information is inconsistent or incomplete regarding construction date, number of units, and sometimes, even if the units were apartments or single family homes.

<sup>42</sup> Original plans were for Folmar and Flinn to build 700 houses on 180 acres at Edmonton Heights, n/a. "Multi Million Dollar Housing Program Goal in Huntsville." *Huntsville Times*, October 19, 1958. pg. 50.

<sup>43</sup> n/a. "Folmar and Flinn ... Building Today for Tomorrow." *Extra Supplement, Huntsville Times*, October 19, 1958. pg. 37.

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the Negro's lot."<sup>44</sup> Newspapers across the south reported that Folmar and Flinn pioneered model homes for "Negros" and that their Montgomery houses were the "best deal ever offered southern Negroes."<sup>45</sup>

After World War II, "white flight" and the accompanying suburban housing boom significantly altered racial demographics within American cities. As white families moved into the new suburban tracts, cities began to be associated with minority, and particularly, African-American residents, who were prevented from migrating to the suburbs in a large part due to discriminatory building and lending practices. F.H.A. and V.A. mortgage guarantees were subsidies that supported the postwar housing boom and its accompanying increase in home ownership. The subsidy was largely unavailable to African Americans. Between 1934 and 1960, the federal government underwrote \$120 billion in new housing, but only two percent of that went to minorities.<sup>46</sup> Both Mobile Heights and Edmonton Heights were outside of the city limits when they were constructed.

Folmar and Flinn constructed at least three projects in Huntsville: Lakewood Manor, Meadow Hills, and Edmonton Heights. Lakewood Manor and Meadow Hills were for white families. Both were located to the west of Edmonton Heights, on the far side of Highway 231 (Memorial Parkway). Lakewood Manor sits to the south of Lakeview Drive NW, ending at York Road NW for the southern boundary. Meadow Hills, is to the north of Norwood and Griffith Drives NW, ending at Akins Drive. Both neighborhoods are to the west of Highway 231, and are bound at the west by Blue Springs Road NW. It is not known if they built other neighborhoods in Huntsville.<sup>47</sup>

Meadow Hills was constructed first, in 1958. Period articles are somewhat unclear on the size of the project. It may have been developed in more than one stage, or could be more than one actual project. At least 150 houses were constructed, with indications that another 100 were in the planning stages. Spragin's Homes properties appear to have been a part of this sub-development. Newspaper articles mentioned that Folmar and Flinn had acquired more property near the area to build an additional 3,000 houses, although this may have been a reference to a separate development.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Rex Thomas. "Homes for Negroes: \$1-A-Day." A.P. Syndicated. *The News* (Paterson, New Jersey), April 20, 1950. pg. 9.

<sup>45</sup> Burns Bennett, "Two Ex Airforce Piolets build Up Business; Develop Housing Addition." *Bonham Daily Favorite*, January 26, 1951. pg. 6. This article was syndicated by the United Press and shows up in multiple newspapers around the country between January and February of 1951.

<sup>46</sup> David Kushner, *Levittown: Two Families, One Tycoon, and the Fight for Civil Rights in America's Legendary Suburb*. New York: Walker Publishing, 2009. pg 190.

<sup>47</sup> Period advertisements from 1969 mention the Meadow Corporation as responsible for construction, but no additional information on that corporation or its relationship to the ones listed above has been located. n/a. *Huntsville Mirror*, June 27, 1969. pg. 4.

<sup>48</sup> n/a. "Folmar and Flinn ... Building Today for Tomorrow." *Extra Supplement, Huntsville Times*, October 19, 1958. pg. 50. Meadow Hills is off of Winchester Road NE.

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### **Folmar and Flinn Single Family Housing**

Edmonton Heights is a representative example of a Folmar and Flinn neighborhood and of a post-war suburban housing development in Huntsville that utilized F.H.A. loans and provided housing for middle-class African American families. Folmar and Flinn single housing developments often utilize gently curving roads, laid at a diagonal or following the contour of the terrain. Sidewalks are rarely present, but concrete street curbs do exist, and houses typically have a sizeable setback from the street, with few, if any, front yard fences, giving a park-like appearance to the developments. All of their developments were known for their extensive pre-engineering, both at the site level, and down to individual house components. The focus on cost saving measures and with using local materials when possible is highlighted in many of the feature articles and company advertisements. Edmonton Heights' layout follows the preferred design, and local newspaper reports commented on the cost saving measures used by the company with its standardized building components.

Edmonton Heights is an excellent representation of a post World War II suburban neighborhood that met F. H. A. requirements. The F.H.A. established standards for reviewing subdivision plans submitted by developers requesting F.H.A. approval. Among these was installation of appropriate utilities and street improvements, protection of values through deed restrictions which addressed setbacks, lot sizes, and minimum construction costs.<sup>49</sup> Edmonton Heights met these requirements with its covenants requiring only single family or detached duplex buildings with private garages, a minimum set back of 30' to the front lot line, only residential structure, no trade activities, minimum square footage of 600 feet and a minimum cost of \$5,000, perpetual easement for telephone, power, storm drainage, and utilities, and streets designated for public use.

The F.H.A. also had "desirable standards" which were not strict requirements, but were also deciding factors in subdivision approval. Among these was careful adaptation of subdivision layout to topography, the elimination of sharp corners and dangerous intersections, long blocks that eliminated unnecessary streets, generous and well shaped house sites. Edmonton Heights illustrates these standards as well, with the diagonal layout of Wilkenson, Crane, Colton, Melody, and Victory Streets, and the long blocks of these streets as well. Even shorter streets like Eton have at least one curve, creating a picturesque landscape. The ratio of house to lot is large, all houses have significant set backs with generous back yards. F.H.A. did not have one set style of single family houses that were approved, and Edmonton Heights prevented a monotonous visual experience with significant variation between a number of housing styles; Minimal Traditional, Contemporary, and Ranch styles are all represented. A common denominator is all are built on concrete slabs, and all floor plans had three bedrooms and one bathroom. Folmar and Flinn clearly reused plans, and the 3 bedroom, 1 bath houses at their

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<sup>49</sup> David L. Ames and Linda Flint McClelland. *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 2002), pgs. 58-59.

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Oakleigh Estates in Gadsden often showcase the same designs as those constructed at Edmonton Heights.

Folmar and Flinn often advertised two different “tiers” of housing, smaller 3 bedroom/1 bathroom houses and larger three bedroom/two bath houses. Some developments appear to have a mix of both types. Edmonton Heights exclusively contains the 3 bedroom/1 bath model. The houses in Folmar and Flinn developments are often a mix of three basic styles, Minimal Traditional, Contemporary, and Transitional Ranches (or full sized Ranches for larger homes). When carports are a part of the design, they are open on the side, creating a distinctive expansive look to the properties that reads very different from the enclosed carports (or garages) used by other developers. Low pitched roof lines with shallow recessed front porches on the Ranch houses styles, half brick walls, low brick planters integrated into the house design, half vertical brick walls on the Contemporary designs, and a frequent use of open carports. Although the other Folmar and Flinn development/s in Huntsville, to the west of Highway 231, “Meadow Hills,” has the larger sized residences, the basic forms and styles utilized by Folmar and Flinn are showcased with the housing stock on Medaris Road NW. Oakleigh Estates in Gadsden (designed for white families), also has 3 bedroom, 1 bath models. Houses in this neighborhood are placed closer to the front of the building lots than in Edmonton Heights, but the basic development layout is the same - slightly curving roads, often set at a diagonal, low concrete curbs and/or gutters. The design of Minimal Traditional, Transitional Ranch, and Contemporary house designs are quite similar, and perhaps identical to those in Edmonton Heights, and of the neighborhoods reviewed it has the most similarities.

The two other African American neighborhoods built by Folmar and Flinn, Mobile Heights in Montgomery and Hillsdale Heights in Mobile, appear to have suffered significant resource alterations and loss, and do not retain the integrity present at Edmonton Heights. Mobile Heights is comprised of smaller lots than Edmonton Heights and has sidewalks. It is not known if the sidewalks are original to the neighborhood or not. This neighborhood seems to be comprised predominately of Transitional Ranches, and a few Minimal Traditional designs. The Contemporary designs that are showcased in Edmonton Heights do not appear. Fully brick houses are more common. There have been more changes with the addition of fences and a number of fiberglass column porch supports added, but the basic pattern of the neighborhood remains the same. Hillsdale Heights appears to have had a number of the original houses razed, new infill is prevalent, but there are a handful of properties that clearly show the Folmar and Flinn designs – Minimal Traditionals with shallow porches, half brick façade walls, and brick planters by the front entrance.

Edmonton Heights’ location, bound by Alabama A&M to the north, railroad tracks to the east, and a major road to the west, served as a protective buffer, isolating the neighborhood from development pressures that impacted other Folmar and Flinn subdivisions. As a result, the neighborhood provides a relatively unaltered design compared to the other Folmar and Flinn developments reviewed for this study.

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### Controversy with F.H.A. Loans

A key factor in Folmar and Flinn's success was the company's ability to acquire F.H.A. loans. These loans were critical for housing projects designed for families forced out of their homes by slum clearances, highway building, or other federal programs. The Federal Housing Authority (F.H.A.) was created in 1934, under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.<sup>50</sup> It set standards for construction and underwriting, with the goal of improving housing standards and stabilizing the mortgage market. F.H.A. approved homes meant the house could be purchased with an F.H.A. (government backed) loan, which had a much smaller down payment than conventional loans. Most builders when applying for F.H.A. loans did not receive the full allotment requested. It wasn't uncommon for a builder who requested loans for 30 houses to receive half of that amount. But Folmar and Flinn managed to receive 200-300 F.H.A. loans per a grouping during the 1950s.<sup>51</sup> The person giving the F.H.A. loans was the Alabama state director of the Federal Housing Authority, Charles B. Holliman. Holliman was selected for his position by Carl B. Thomas (a Huntsville cattleman and active within the Madison County Republican Party) and Claude Vardaman, the chairman of the Alabama Republican Party.

After Holliman was in office, Thomas and Vardaman began to benefit from the purchase of large tracts of land that were quickly sold for housing development plats. Thomas and Vardaman always managed to sell their land to Folmar and Flinn. In 1958 the Vardamans purchased 160 acres of farm land for \$165,000 and in less than a year sold it to Folmar and Flinn for \$360,000. Marvin Mostelar of Mobile, the Republican National Committeeman from Alabama, also benefitted in the same way. All of these men typically held their land just long enough to avoid taxes on the capital gains. The federal government, and the press, began to notice the pattern in 1957 when General John A. Barclay (Commanding General of the Army Ballistic Missile Agency), Major General John Bruce Medaris (Commanding General of the Army Ordinance Missile Command), M. B. Spragins (President of First National Bank), John Acuff (vice-president of First National Bank), Carl B. Thomas (a cattleman and active figure within the Madison County Republican Party), and Roy L. Stone (Chair of the Madison County Board of Commissioners) more than doubled their money after just a few months of investment in Gadsden real estate, which was slated to be part of a Folmar and Flinn 315 unit housing development with F.H.A. loans. The land deal brought in a profit of more than \$140,000 in less than a year, with each of the two generals more than doubling their investments.

By 1959 the press was reporting on the large profits gained from F.H.A. projects intended "for families forced out of their homes by slum clearances, highway, or other federal aid programs."<sup>52</sup> News of the scandal were published in journalist Drew Pearson's syndicated

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<sup>50</sup> For additional information on Federal policy and suburban development, see Kenneth T. Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

<sup>51</sup> Drew Pearson. "Medaris Involved in Land Scandal." *Tulare (California) Advance Register*, October 26, 1959. pg. 8.

<sup>52</sup> James Free. "Investigators on Spot in FHA 'Favoritism' Row." *Birmingham News*, October 10, 1959. pg. 1-2.

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“Washington Merry-Go-Round” column, reaching a national audience. The relationship between Folman and Flinn, Thomas, and Vardaman continued at least until 1959, when the *Birmingham News* reported that \$195,000 profit was made by the Thomases and ultimately the Vardamans selling land to Folmar and Flinn for a development near the Chapel Hill neighborhood in Montgomery.<sup>53</sup> In 1961, in the midst of the legal troubles caused by the land acquisition deals, Folmar and Flinn discovered a massive employee conspiracy that embezzled an estimated five million dollars.<sup>54</sup>

The Federal House and Home Finance Agency in D.C. sent two investigators out to look at the large profits, at the request of Alabama Senator John J. Sparkman (D), who was chairman of the Senate Housing Subcommittee. At the time, Alabama Congressman Albert Rains (D) was chairman of the House Housing Subcommittee. General Medaris resigned in what the newspapers called a “major real estate scandal of the south.”<sup>55</sup> Period newspapers indicated that the probe over real estate deals covered at least two other states, although only Florida is mentioned. The other state remains unknown.<sup>56</sup> U.S. Attorney Macon L. Weaver was in charge of the investigation, and estimated that between 50 and 60 witnesses would be called.<sup>57</sup> By the summer of 1962 a federal grand jury subpoenaed Major General John B. Medaris, Claude and Sue Vardaman, Charles B. Holliman, Charles A. Wiegand, Carl B. Thomas, Henry Flinn, and James Folmar. In November, Carl B. Thomas, Charles B. Holliman, Claude O. and Sue M. Vardaman were indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of conspiracy to defraud the government through various land deals that occurred in Bessemer, Birmingham, Decatur, Gadsden, Huntsville, and Mobile. Eight co-conspirators were named: James W. Rutland Jr., Tomas and Duncan P. Liles, William A. McElvy, Harry M. Barnes Jr., James M. Folmar, Henry I. Flinn Jr., William M. Cagle, and Edward H. Dennis.<sup>58</sup> The indictment charged that in return for his appointment as an F.H.A. administrator, Holliman agreed to issue F.H.A. building commitments (a federal guarantee) to people selected by Vardaman. Holliman was also paid for authorizing the commitments. In August of 1962 Thomas and Vardaman pleaded no contest to the federal fraud conspiracy charges. Each received one year probation and a \$3,000 fine. At the request of the Justice Department, charges were dropped against Sue Vardaman.<sup>59</sup> In October of 1963 Holliman, who pleaded not guilty, was fined \$500.<sup>60</sup> The following year the F.H.A. blacklisted Carl B. Thomas, Charles Holliman, and Claude Vardaman from having any

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Specific information regarding the land fees for Edmonton Heights has not been located, but the press did report on how the Thomases and others made significant money off Mobile’s African American housing project, Hillside Heights. \$288,000 was paid for a 300 acre tract that was sold to Urban Land Corporation for \$645,000, a return on investment of \$357,000.

<sup>53</sup> Irving Beiman. “Vardamans Make Profit.” *Birmingham News*, September 23, 1959. pg. 1-2.

<sup>54</sup> n/a. “Building Firm Lists Theft of \$5 Million.” *Alabama Journal*, January 13, 1961. pg. 1.

<sup>55</sup> Drew Pearson. “Army Missile Experts Show Business Acumen.” *Florence Morning News*, October 26, 1959. pg. 4. and Drew Pearson. “Medaris Involved in Land Scandal.” *Tulare Advance Register*, October 26, 1959. pg. 8.

<sup>56</sup> Bill Austin. “Huntsville Men Called: Jury Begins FHA Probe.” *Huntsville Times*, August 22, 1962. pg. 1-2.

<sup>57</sup> Bill Austin. “Land Probe Begins: U.S. Jury Hears Medaris, Banker.” *Huntsville Times*, August 23, 1962. Pg. 1-2.

<sup>58</sup> Bill Austin. “Land Deal Fraud Charged to Four.” *Huntsville Times*, November 30, 1962. pg. 1-2.

<sup>59</sup> Associated Press. “Carl Thomas Found Guilty in Land Case.” *Huntsville Times*, September 25, 1936. pg. 1-2

<sup>60</sup> Associated Press. “The Latest.” *Decatur Daily*, October 10, 1963. pg. 1.

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housing loans insured by the agency.<sup>61</sup> Folmar and Flinn had difficulty selling all of their speculative houses, and ultimately the federal government was left with more than 1,700 houses valued at \$15 million dollars. Thirty unsold homes were left in Edmonton Heights, and both the *Huntsville* and *Birmingham Mirror* began running advertisements for the unsold homes in 1963.<sup>62</sup> Folmar and Flinn dissolved in 1964.

Future research areas should include evaluating any similarities between not only Folmar and Flinn's planned communities to each other, but specifically any architectural relationship between the three African American communities that they planned. Another area for additional research could be continued outreach to families of the original residents. Since Edmonton Heights is a relatively new development, cross referencing original occupants by address with current property owners on city provided data, showed that approximately 40 of the 261 houses appear to be owned by the original occupants, or their descendants. Ten percent (four) of those owners currently live out of state. Letters were sent to each of these property owners in hopes of learning more community history or locating historic photographs. Two of the forty property owners responded. The low rate of responses may have been due to the advanced age of the original residents, coupled with logistical issues faced by the Covid Pandemic. Tracing the individual parcels that were temporarily owned by Carl B. Thomas and determining who the prior owners were for the parcels could provide additional information about how the suburbs were planned. A final area for research would be to locate the original court documents, which are deposited at the federal archives in Atlanta. That facility was closed to researchers (due to Covid) at the time this document was created.

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<sup>61</sup> Associated Press. "FHA Blacklists 3 Alabama GOP." *Alabama Journal*, September 25, 1964. pg. 13.

<sup>62</sup> n/a. Edmonton Heights Repossession Advertisement. *Birmingham Mirror*, March 2, 1963. pg. 4 and n/a.  
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Edmonton Heights Historic District

Name of Property

Madison, AL

County and State

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Edmonton Heights Historic District

Name of Property

Madison, AL

County and State

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Edmonton Heights Historic District  
Name of Property

Madison, AL  
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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

Edmonton Heights Historic District  
Name of Property

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**Primary location of additional data:**

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

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** AHC Survey #Ma01000-Ma01260

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 78

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)**

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

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 34.778231 | Longitude: -86.572255 |
| 2. Latitude: 34.778055 | Longitude: -86.561880 |
| 3. Latitude: 34.774944 | Longitude: -86.562417 |
| 4. Latitude: 34.775129 | Longitude: -86.572309 |

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Edmonton Heights is a large rectangular plat, and bordered by Meridian Street North to the west. The rear lot lines of lots facing Wilkenson Drive NE, Victory Lane NE, and Melody Road NE to the north create the southern boundary. The rear lot lines on the east side of Melody Road NE create the east boundary, while the north boundary is created by the rear lot lines of lots to the north of Whitney Avenue NE, Wilkenson Drive NE and Salem Drive NE.

Edmonton Heights Historic District  
Name of Property

Madison, AL  
County and State

### Boundary Justification

Boundary encompasses original subdivision plat that was filed at Madison County Courthouse.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Caroline T. Swope, M.S.H.P., Ph.D.  
organization: Kingstree Studios  
street & number: 1038 Jackson Street SE  
city or town: Decatur state: AL zip code: 35601  
e-mail cswope@nventure.com  
telephone: 253-370-6984  
date: February 8, 2021

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Edmonton Heights Historic District  
Name of Property

Madison, AL  
County and State

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Edmonton Heights Historic District  
City or Vicinity: Huntsville  
County: Madison State: AL  
Photographer: Caroline Swope  
Date Photographed: November 2018 and October 2020

1 of 20

3810 Crane Drive NE, northwest façade, taken facing southeast (November 2018)

2 of 20

3816 Crane Drive NE, northwest façade, taken facing southeast (November 2018)

3 of 20

3802 Melody Road NE, northeast façade, taken facing southwest (November 2018)

4 of 20

3803 Melody Road NE, south façade, taken facing north (November 2018)

5 of 20

3814 Meridian Street North, west façade, taken facing northeast (November 2018)

6 of 20

244 Victory Lane NE, northwest oblique, taken facing southeast (November 2018)

7 of 20

110 Wilkenson Drive NE, west oblique, taken facing east (November 2018)

8 of 20

113 Whitney Avenue NE, south façade, taken facing northwest (November 2018)

9 of 20

131 Wilkenson Drive NE, south façade, taken facing northwest (November 2018)

10 of 20

179 Wilkenson Drive NE, northwest façade, taken facing southeast (November 2018)

11 of 20

Entrance off Whitney Avenue NE, former location of 101 Whitney Avenue NE, where Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. stayed the night, taken facing northeast (October 2020)

Edmonton Heights Historic District  
Name of Property

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12 of 20

Colton Lane NE facing north towards Salem Drive NE (October 2020)

13 of 20

Colton Lane NE facing south towards Victory Lane NE (October 2020)

14 of 20

Melody Road NE at intersection with Salem Drive NE, facing north (October 2020)

15 of 20

Salem Drive NE and Colton Lane NE, facing west (October 2020)

16 of 20

Salem Drive NE and Colton Lane NE, facing southwest (October 2020)

17 of 20

Victory Lane NE at intersection with Wilkenson Drive NE facing southeast (November 2018)

18 of 20

Whitney Avenue NE at intersection with Eaton Road NE, facing southwest (October 2020)

19 of 20

Wilkenson Drive NE at intersection with Crane Drive NE, facing east (October 2020)

20 of 20

Wilkenson Drive NE at Meridian Street North, facing east (October 2020)

**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 to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.





Edmonton Heights Historic District  
Name of Property \_\_\_\_\_

Madison, AL  
County and State \_\_\_\_\_

### Boundary Map


Datum: WGS84

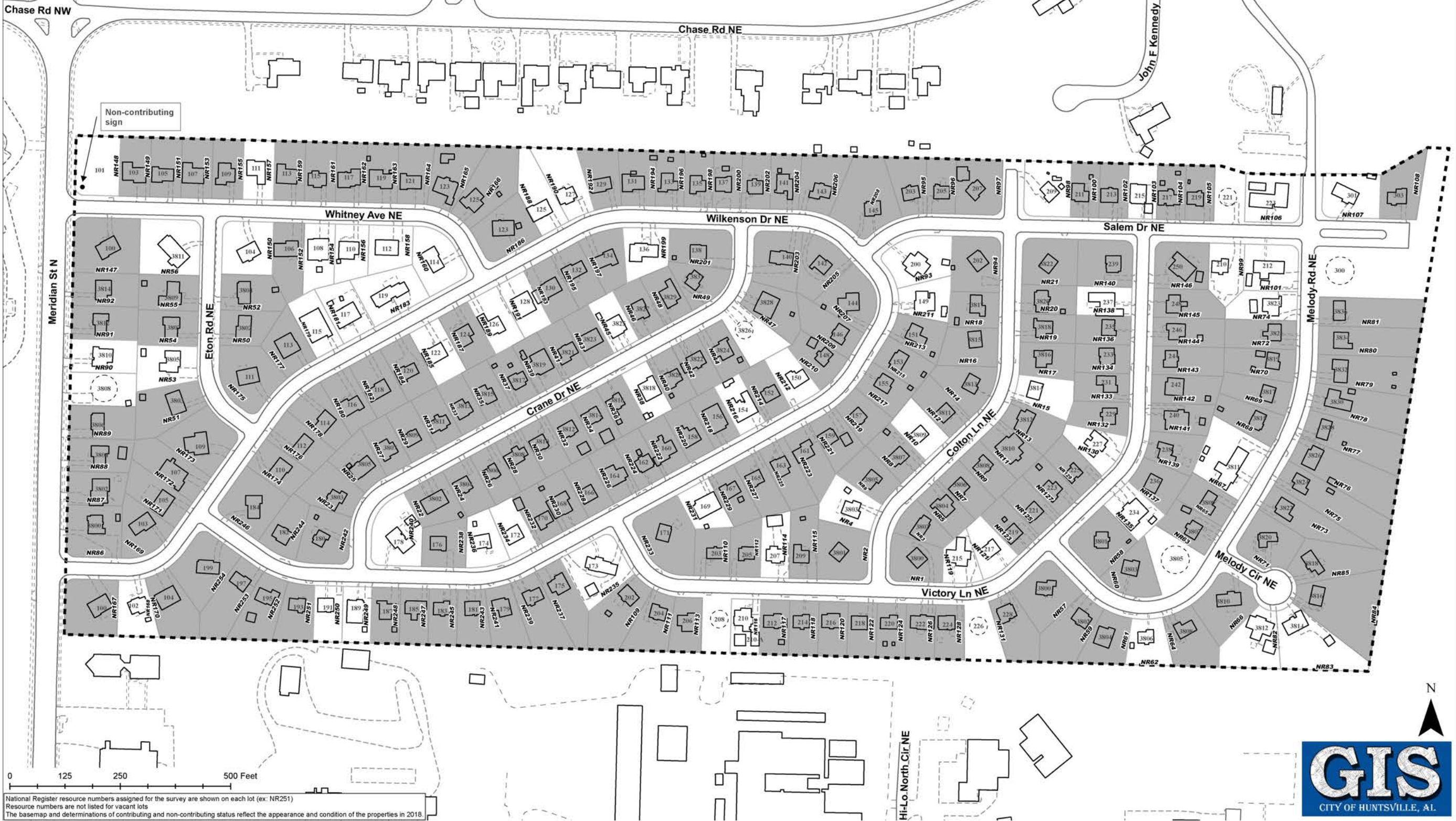


# Sketch Map

Edmonton Heights Historic District  
Huntsville  
Madison County, AL

## Edmonton Heights National Register District

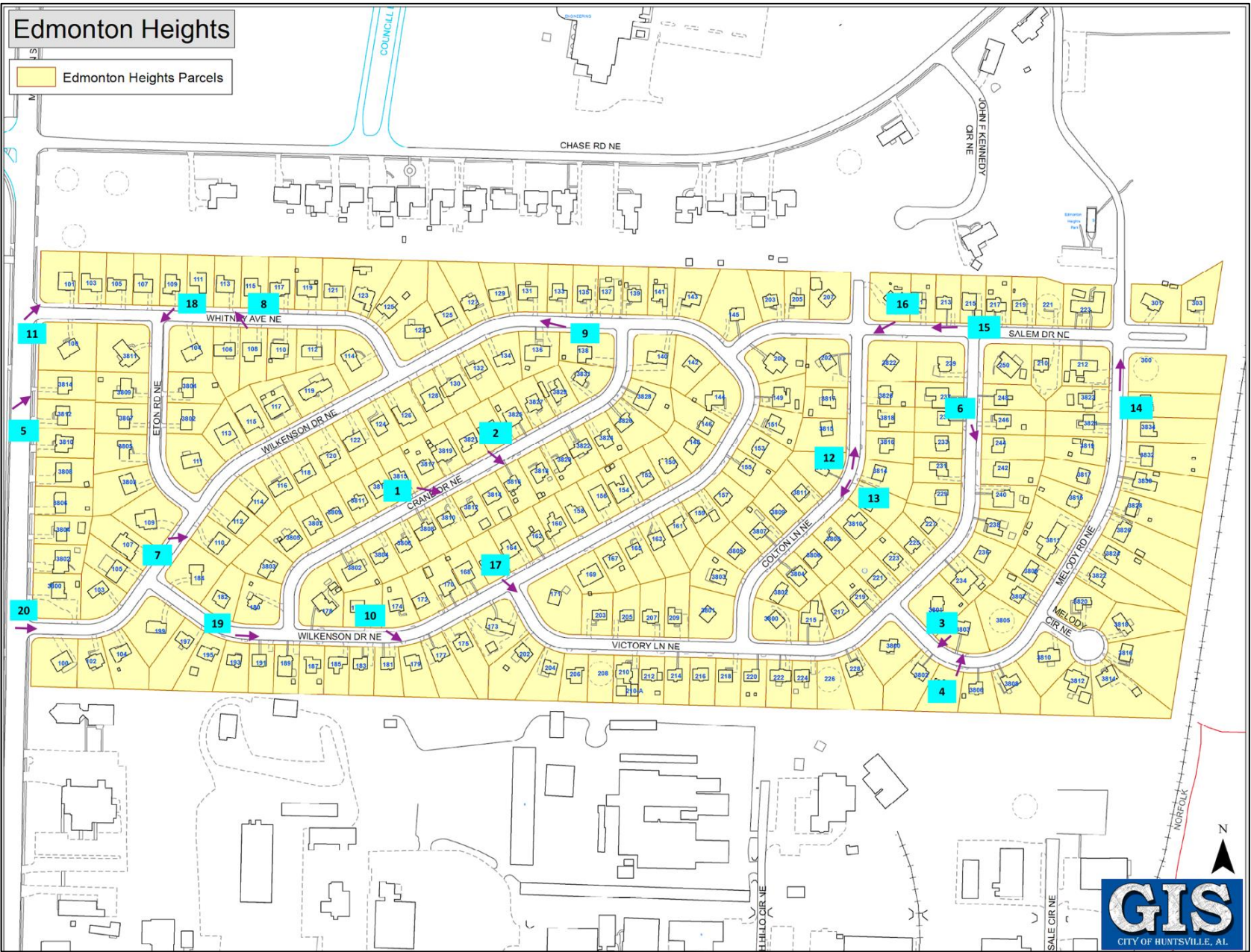
-  Building Address
-  Property Resource Number
-  Edmonton Heights Historic District
-  Contributing Resources
-  Non-Contributing Resources



Edmonton Heights Historic District  
Name of Property

Madison, AL  
County and State

### Photo Key Map



## Edmonton Heights

Edmonton Heights Parcels

Edmonton Heights Historic District  
Name of Property

Madison, AL  
County and State



Figure 1: 1957 (revised 1958) City of Huntsville Map

Edmonton Heights Historic District  
Name of Property

Madison, AL  
County and State



Edmonton Heights Historic District  
Name of Property

Madison, AL  
County and State

**VETERANS**  
MOVE IN FOR  
AS LITTLE AS  
**\$135**  
This Includes Closing Costs  
**-FHA-**  
MOVE IN FOR  
AS LITTLE AS  
**\$235**  
Includes Closing Costs  
—IN EXCLUSIVE—  
**“Edmonton Heights”**  
North Alabama's most exclusive  
NEGRO SUBDIVISION  
Adjoining A&M College — JE 2-5643

Figure 3: Edmonton Heights Advertisement, *Huntsville Times*, September 24, 1959, pg. 35.

Edmonton Heights Historic District  
Name of Property

Madison, AL  
County and State

**A MESSAGE TO THE  
NEGRO  
MOTHERS  
--OF HUNTSVILLE--**

There's A Beautiful, New  
Way Of Life Open To You  
And Your Family In The  
**EXCLUSIVE**  
**'EDMONTON HEIGHTS'**  
Subdivision Adjoining A. & M.  
College. Insist On Your  
Husband Taking You Out To  
Investigate The Possibility  
Of A Bright New Future.  
The Moving In Price Is  
Amazingly Low And The  
Monthly Payments Are  
Within Most Families Means.

VETERANS MOVE IN FOR AS LITTLE AS	<b>\$135 Down</b>	INCLUDES CLOSING COSTS
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FHA FINANCED MOVE IN FOR AS LITTLE AS	<b>\$235 Down</b>	INCLUDES CLOSING COSTS
---	-------------------	------------------------------

**SEE OUR MODEL HOMES**

**'EDMONTON HEIGHTS'**  
*"The Height Of Negro Living"*  
Phone JE 2-5643      Phone JE 2-5643

Figure 4: Edmonton Heights Advertisement, *Huntsville Mirror*, July 25, 1959, pg. 8.



Edmonton Heights Historic District  
Name of Property

Madison, AL  
County and State

# EDMONTON HEIGHTS



EDMONTON HEIGHTS "HEART OF HUNTSVILLE PLAN"  
SO YOU WANT TO COMPARE

**IT'S A FACT**

- LOT: 7,200 Sq. Ft. With Trees
- FOUNDATION: Concrete Slab
- SIDING: Part Brick
- ROOF: Truss
- VENTILATION: Good
- WINDOWS: Aluminum
- SPACE: 6-Rooms plus Bath
- UTILITIES: Lights, Water, Gas, and Sewage
- HEAT: Central
- STYLE: Modern



**IT'S TRUE**

- LOT: 1,800 Sq. Ft. With Weeds
- FOUNDATION: Wood & Termites
- SIDING: None
- ROOF: Leaking
- VENTILATION: Cross
- WINDOW: Broken
- SPACE: 1 1/2 Rooms Plus??
- UTILITIES: ????
- HEAT: Coal & Wood Heater
- STYLE: Shot Gun

**ATTENTION!**  
**NO DOWN PAYMENT**  
**FOR VETERANS!**

**FIRST YEAR INSURANCE FREE**  
**BUY NOW!! BUY NOW!!**  
**EDMONTON HEIGHTS**

C. H. WINSLOW - Sales Manager  
South of A & M College on Meridian Street  
Phones: 534-5643 JE 9-7605 534-3652 JE 6-2909

Figure 5: Edmonton Heights Advertisement, *Birmingham Mirror*, December 10, 1960, pg. 5.

Edmonton Heights Historic District  
Name of Property

Madison, AL  
County and State

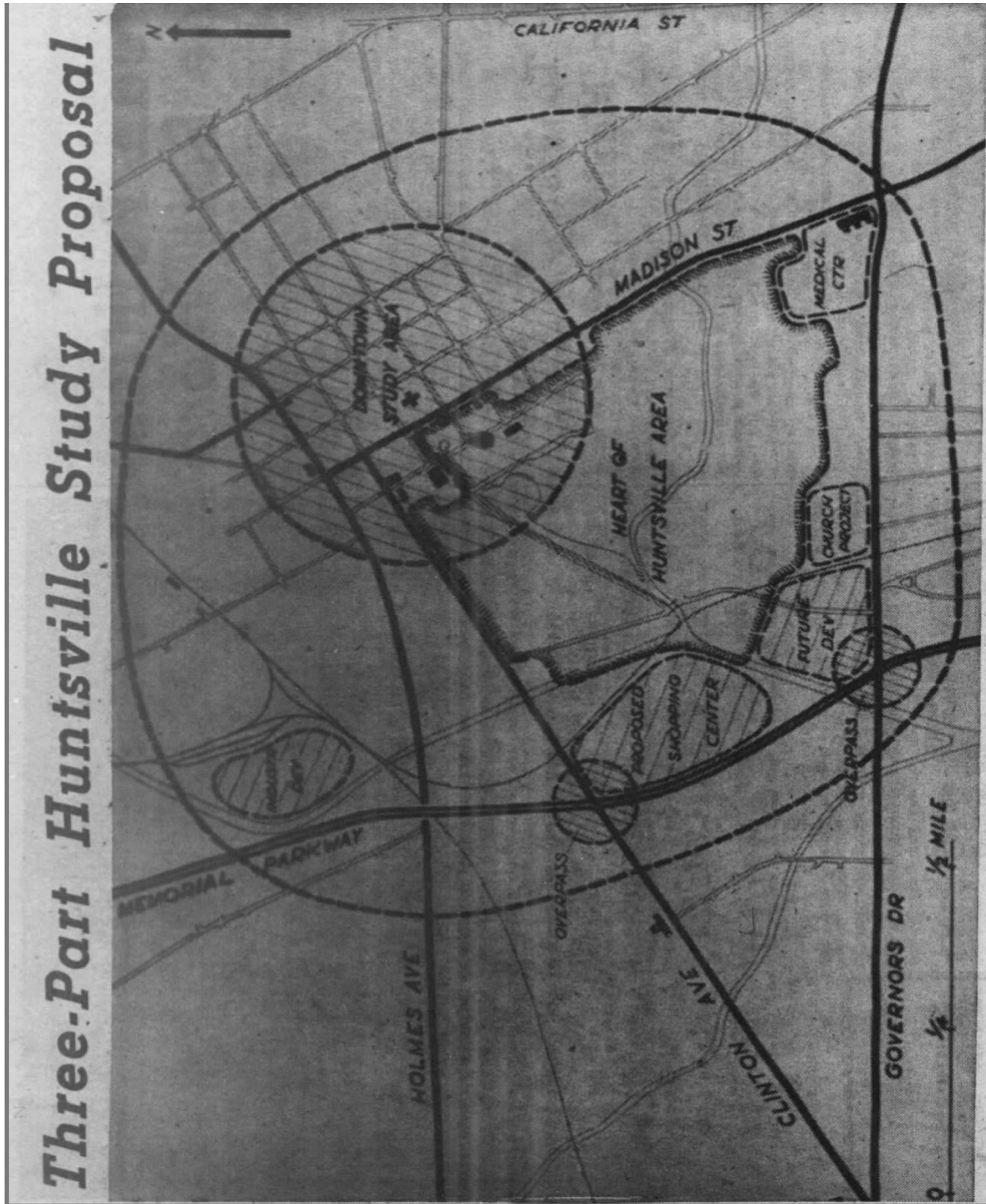


Figure 6: Heart of Huntsville Urban Renewal Plan, *Huntsville Times*, December 11, 1959 pg. 15.

Edmonton Heights Historic District  
Name of Property

Madison, AL  
County and State

**The Huntsville Times**

**FOLMAR and FLINN**

...building today for tomorrow!

**EXTRA** **EXTRA**

**James M. Folmar** **Henry I. Flinn, Jr.**

**New Folmar and Flinn Office Building Combines Beauty, Efficiency In Contemporary Architecture**

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Modern, attractive and efficient . . .

These words well describe the new office building dedicated here recently by Folmar and Flinn Inc. and The Meadow Corporation, the South's largest operative builders.

The modern structure on South Boulevard houses the headquarters of the entire Folmar and Flinn operations in Alabama, Mississippi and Florida, with space for all supervisory personnel, officials and engineering and architecture departments.

Hundreds of persons from all walks of life gathered in Montgomery to help Folmar and Flinn dedicate the new building and to congratulate them on their rapid growth during the past 12 years.

The new building will be the hub of millions of dollars worth of housing and other construction operations of Folmar and Flinn, The Meadow Corporation, Ideal Sales and A. E. Associated.

Details and pictures of the interior of the new building, and stories of the dedication, the open house program and visitors participating can be found elsewhere in this publication.

Figure 7: Folmar and Flinn Advertisement, *Huntsville Times*, October 19, 1958, pg. 37.

Edmonton Heights Historic District  
Name of Property

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**Figure 8: Undated photograph belonging to Nevada Easley, resident of 108 Whitney from 1963 until 2013. (Photo Courtesy of the Huntsville Madison County Public Library Special Collections Department)**

Edmonton Heights Historic District  
Name of Property

Madison, AL  
County and State



**Figure 9: Nevada Easley, resident of 108 Whitney, photographed with two of her sons (Donald is likely the older child, Marcus is likely the younger child), February, 1966.**

**(Photo Courtesy of the Huntsville Madison County Public Library Special Collections Department)**





3802



803





3  
8  
4

475-1856









EDMONTON HEIGHTS  
**After School**  
PROGRAM  
Tutoring & Mentoring  
Homework Assistance  
Service Learning  
Summer Camp

SALEM  
NO OUTLET





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 5/7/2021      Date of Pending List: 5/18/2021      Date of 16th Day: 6/2/2021      Date of 45th Day: 6/21/2021      Date of Weekly List: 6/25/2021

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept       Return       Reject      6/21/2021 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Lisa Deline      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2239      Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

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





# ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

468 South Perry Street  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900  
334-242-3184 / Fax: 334-240-3477

Lisa D. Jones  
Executive Director  
State Historic Preservation Officer

May 7, 2021

Ms. Joy Beasley  
National Park Service  
1849 C Street NW  
Mail Stop 7228  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Beasley:

Accompanying the electronic submission of this letter, please find the nomination form and supporting documentation to be considered for listing the following Alabama resource in the National Register of Historic Places:

Edmonton Heights Historic District  
Huntsville, Madison County, Alabama

In accordance with the instructions for electronic submissions, two files are being submitted with this letter. One file (AL\_Madison County\_Edmonton Heights Historic District\_form.pdf) contains the signed nomination, photo log, and maps. The second file (AL\_Madison County\_Edmonton Heights Historic District\_photos.pdf) contains ten (10) of the twenty (20) photographs that accompany the nomination. The following photographs are included in the PDF:

- Photo #1 (p. 1)
- Photos #3-6 (pp. 2-5)
- Photo #9 (p. 6)
- Photos #13-14 (pp. 7-8)
- Photos #17-18 (pp. 9-10)

Your consideration of this National Register of Historic Places nomination is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lee Anne Wofford".

Lee Anne Wofford  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

LAW/edc