Cultural History

Prior to the Civil War, most of the American South was inclined toward the plantation being the economic focus for the wealthy land-owners, and both free, white workers and owned, slaved labor. As a consequence, the South's major urban centers were located on its coastal periphery, and those cites were focused on exporting the South's main cash crops of tobacco, rice, sugarcane, and cotton (Hilliard 1994, 115–17). The resulting distinction between rural settlements being focused on the plantation, and the urban settlements being focused on primary trading centers, encouraged the slaveholders to increase the profit realized from their slave holdings; and, "especially during the last two antebellum decades," this led to a policy of "hiring out" slaves (Goldfield 1991, 130).

The fine details of "hiring out," were left to the slave-holder, the person renting the slave's labor, and possibly the slaves themselves; slaves that had been "hired out" often made their own living arrangement for at least part of the year, even where this was technically against local laws (Goldfield 1991, 137–40). The combination of having little in the way of money to rent nicer properties, and the fact that "hired out" slaves weren't legally entitled to "living out," pushed the population to the periphery of the urban centers "outside of areas controlled by fire codes that prohibited the erection of flimsy wooden structures (Goldfield 1991, 140–41). However, that move toward peripheral settlements was itself a change from the pattern that had been more typical "during the height of urban slave holding," before the practice of "hiring out" became more common (Groves and Muller 1975, 173).

In Southern cities that were prominent long before the Civil War, the earliest settlements were more likely to have been integrated, to facilitate "the efficacy of slave control" (Groves and Muller 1975, 173). On the large plantations that comprised large areas of the inner American South, the antebellum trend had been toward large fields for planting, with nucleated habitation areas; during the postbellum period many former slaves rejected nucleation of their habitation structures, and many houses were moved closer to a tenant farmer's assigned parcel of the now subdivided plantation properties (Hilliard 1994, 122–24).

Postbellum Settlement Patterns in the American South

Following the Civil War, there was an overall shift in population demographics; generally, people were moving into urban areas, with a concurrent tendency to move out of the American South. The American South is often defined differently by different researchers; unless otherwise noted, the region includes Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. The perceived emigration of African Americans, from the South, varies depending on how one defines the South, and whether one treats the South as a total region, or considers differential rates of migration for internal sub-regions of the South. In particular, high levels

of postbellum emigration amongst African Americans, during the 19th century, only holds true for the “Atlantic seaboard states” (Roback 1984, 1189).

Moreover, in the two decades following the Civil War there were high levels of immigration, for blacks and whites, to the southwest of the cotton growing heartland, especially into Arkansas and Texas. For Florida, immigration of black and white settlers remained high into the 20th century (Roback 1984, 1188). In 1870, 85.3 percent of all African Americans resided in the South, by 1910 that number was down to 82.8 percent, by 1950 only 61.5 percent of African Americans lived in the South, and by 1990 that figure had dropped to 46.2 percent (Shelley and Webster 1998). In part, the retention of existing African Americans, or the attraction of new immigrants, may be related to “federal land sales and not the breaking up of plantations” (Parker 1980, 1034). However, Florida may have been attractive to recently freed people due to the generally sparse population, especially outside the main cotton producing counties in the extreme north-center of the state, and also the parity between black and white settlers entering Florida (African Americans were 48.9 percent of the population in 1870, and 41 percent in 1910), although that balance would shift heavily in the favor of whites during the second half of the 20th century (Shelley and Webster 1998, 168).

The earliest shift of populations was not from South to North or West, but from rural areas to urban areas; by 1870, urban areas “with populations of more than four thousand in 1870 saw their Negro population increase by an average of 80 [percent] over 1860 levels” (Kellogg 1977, 312). Relative to the total populations throughout the South, native blacks and whites moved to the cities at comparable rates. For 1870 (7.7 percent whites/8.8 percent blacks), 1880 (8.3 percent whites/9 percent blacks), 1890 (12 percent whites/13.5 percent blacks), 1900 (14.2 percent whites/15.5 percent blacks) and 1910 (19.5 percent whites/19.7 percent blacks) African Americans were moving into the cities at slightly higher rates, but by 1920 (25.4 percent white/23.5 percent blacks) the trend changed, with more whites moving into the cities (Roback 1984, 1190).

However, in terms of overall population, there were compositional difference between North and South. “[B]efore 1900 blacks rarely formed as much as 5 [percent] of the total population of Northern cities, whereas they comprised more than 40 [percent] of the populations of Southern cities” (Groves and Muller 1975, 176). If Oklahoma is included in the South, and immigrant populations are considered, then the South’s residents were 31.4 percent urban in 1930, 36.7 percent urban in 1940, 44 percent urban in 1950, and 57.7 percent urban in 1960 (Nicholls 1964, 27). By 1970, 74 percent of all African Americans in the U.S. lived in urban areas; and, by 1980, that number increased to 85 percent (Aiken 1985, 383; Bryce, Erber, and Clay 1977, 158). Furthermore, the trend was for African Americans to move into the older city centers of urban area. During the decade from 1960-1970, “[b]lacks increased as a percent of central city populations from 16.4 [percent] to 20.5 [percent],” and “for central cities whose metropolitan areas had a population of one million or more, the percent of blacks increased from 18.8 percent to 25.2 percent (Bryce, Erber, and Clay 1977, 158).

Overall, there were four main settlement patterns in the urban South:

1. alleys and central courts,
2. highly dispersed residences in predominantly white residential areas,
3. urban clusters, and
4. "shantytown settlements near the city's edge, [that] became widespread during 1850's" (Kellogg 1977, 311).

The initial settlement was typically followed by newcomers "crowding into existing black residential areas," which would eventually become overcrowded and dilapidated; with the increased stress of high population densities and deteriorating material conditions, there was a frequent pattern of abandonment in contiguous neighborhoods, which created opportunities to expand existing areas (Groves and Muller 1975, 178). Thus, the two primary means of increasing residential areas were to acquire recently vacated housing along the boundaries between existing neighborhoods, and to build "first-occupancy housing adjacent to the outer fringes of the core urban clusters;" in the case of new growth, "these communities take the form of sectors bounded by highways and, more frequently, railroad tracks" (Kellogg 1977, 320).

In Florida, "[b]arriers to expansion could be natural features such as lakes and swamps or cultural features such as canals, railroads, and highways;" but, occasionally, if the growth of black residential enclaves threatened to encroach on white residential areas, then physical barriers, like walls, were sometimes erected to separate the communities, such as seen in Boca Raton (Lee 1992, 382). Prior to the turn of the 20th century, the division and sale of house lots was typically left to the discretion of the property owner; however, from 1910 to 1917 racial zoning was employed to create racially homogeneous neighborhoods, and until 1948 homeowner associations were allowed to utilize racially exclusive covenants to racial homogeneity (Gotham 2000; Silver 1997). Thus, the patterns of residential centralization, seen in the present, can often be attributed to "the coalescence of enclaves," as historic settlements become aggregated through steady accretion (Groves and Muller 1975, 190).

Settlement History of Tampa

The original town of Tampa grew up around the military Fort Brooke; the fort was constructed in 1824. The fort itself is often remembered as the point of origin for Major Dade, who's ill fated expedition to Fort King touched off the Second Seminole War on December 28, 1835; by the end of the war, the fort would also serve as a temporary interment facility for Indians awaiting transport to Indian Territory in what is now Oklahoma. By the end of the 1830s, several lots, including 3 on Tampa Street near Whiting, had been sold to private citizens, and the stage was set for a burgeoning civilian population (Pizzo 1969, 7). The town of Tampa was finally incorporated in 1855, only 10 years after Florida was established as a state (Dunn 1977, 16). Tampa's growth progressed slowly through the next 30 years; it was hampered by an outbreak of Yellow Fever in 1858 that reduced the town's population by one quarter, and by the decommissioning of Fort Brooke

in 1859, though some troops remained stationed there until 1882 (Panamerican Consultants 2001, 4; Pizzo 1969, 81).

The 1880 census records that Tampa's population was 720 people; only 5 years later, after Vicente Martinez Ybor agreed to move his cigar manufacturing industry to Tampa, the population trebled to almost 2,500 (Dunn 1977, 19, 21). One traveler described the unpainted houses and dirt roads of Tampa; she called particular attention to several dominant features of the town, including 2 saloons and 2 lumber mills (Hewitt 2001, 23). It was in the vicinity of one of those lumber mills that one of the Tampa areas earliest recognized neighborhoods, the African American enclave known as "the Scrub," sprang to life; this neighborhood, "bounded by Scott [Street] on the north, Cass [Street] on the south, Central Avenue on the west, and Nebraska [Avenue] on the east" housed the highest "concentration" of blacks in the Tampa area, and was described as 'impenetrable and serv[ing] to remind one of a walled city' (Howe 1999, 5; Panamerican Consultants 2001, 4).

African American Settlement History of "the Scrub" Neighborhood

The neighborhood is also mentioned during an outbreak of Yellow Fever in 1887, when "the Scrub" and Ybor City were brought under the supervision of the local board of health's inspections" (Barker 1984, 48). The household organization of this period tended towards inclusion of the extended family, and perhaps boarders as well; in 1880, about half of Tampa's 178 African American run households were "male-headed nuclear families" (Howe 1999, 6–7). In about 64 percent of those 178 households, a male was the sole money earner of the house; however, the 1880 census did list, for the first time in Tampa, the profession of laundress (Howe 1999, 11–12). However, there had certainly been laundresses plying their trade in the area for quite some time (Figures 1-2); shortly after emancipation a woman named Dorcas Bryant had "homesteaded a 60 acre tract" here, and she supported herself by taking in laundry (Hewitt 2001, 26).

Figure 1. A resident of "the Scrub" taking in laundry for additional income (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 79).

By 1900, there were 4,382 African Americans living in Tampa, comprising almost 30% of the total population; over the next 30 years, a disparity in population growth would lower this to closer to 20% of the total population (Howard and Howard 1994, 2). Although oppressive laws at the state and local level continually curtailed participation in the larger community, the African American community thrived in some areas, as evidenced by the numerous black owned businesses that grew up on Central Avenue. The strength of this neighborhood was in

Figure 2. Laundry drying in the backyards of "the Scrub." Mays (1927, 84) noted the presence of washtubs.

its cohesiveness, and ability to mobilize as a community; much of daily life was organized around family, school, and church, but there were also a number of more civic-minded enterprises and service organizations.

African American Life in Tampa

Among the city's foremost African American service organizations, the Tampa Urban League, founded in the 1920s, was instrumental in the community; also important were the Clara Frye Hospital for blacks, and a weekly periodical called the Tampa Bulletin, founded in 1910 and 1915 respectively. In 1880, county census records indicate that there were only "two black teachers" living in Hillsborough County, and they were not listed on any official county payrolls; however, due to a drive within the community, sufficient money was raised to open Tampa's Harlem Academy in 1889 (Howe 1999, 23). The first few decades of the 20th century saw the number of schools grow to "eight public and nine private institutions by the mid-twenties" (1994, 6). Churches also flourished over this time period; "the city's four oldest black churches" all dated to the second half of the 19th century, but by 1926, there would be 42 black churches in Tampa (Howard and Howard 1994, 5).

The stability of the family unit among Tampa's African Americans "kept alive black culture and undoubtedly brought the city's African-American community needed psychological and economic support" (Howard and Howard 1994, 3). The census of 1900 records that 75% of "black families with children were two-parent households;" additionally, the divorce rates also seem to have been low—"in 1930, for instance, there were 2,10 married women between 25 and 34 years of age compared to only 103 divorced females in the same age range" (Howard and Howard 1994, 3–4). Although the strength of the family was undeniable, few of these families could afford to own their homes, and "by the 1920s over 75 percent of the city's African Americans resided in rental housing units located in all of Tampa's black neighborhoods" (Howard and Howard 1994, 4).

A growing and prosperous Tampa was attracting an influx of predominantly unskilled workers, around 40% of whom were coming from outside Florida, these newcomers inevitably found themselves crowded into neighborhoods like "The Scrub [which] stood out as a blighted collection of cheap rental units" (Howard and Howard 1994, 1, 3). The cost of these rental units were disproportionately higher (averaging $5.38 per week) than many other Southern urban centers, such as New Orleans ($4.52 per week), Memphis ($3.73 per week), Louisville ($4.54 per week), Charleston ($3.11 per week), and Richmond ($4.46 per week); although, these prices were somewhat lower than those of Northern industrialized urban centers, such as New York-Harlem ($7.16 per week), Dayton ($6.00), Philadelphia ($7.95 per week), and Indianapolis ($5.48 per week), however wages may have been correspondingly higher there as well (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 18).

The residents of these neighborhoods could look forward to the assistance of their own community, if not from offices of the larger city, through the many service organizations initiated by and maintained by Tampa's African American citizens. Tampa's African American community has a strong tradition of female activists such as Dorcas Bryant and Blanche Armwood, both of whom were active both in their neighborhoods and in greater Tampa itself; a large number of women's organizations and "sororities rendered important civic services that include charity work, social improvement, building homes for orphans and single working women, and encouraging" appreciation of the fine arts (Howard and Howard 1994, 4). With strong community support areas like Central Avenue began to prosper; "by the mid-1920s, for example the black business community consisted of some 185 various African-American commercial establishments that employed about 400 men and women" (Howard and Howard 1994, 8).

Some of the notable businesses include the Central Life Insurance Company, which eventually became "one of the state's largest black enterprises," and the previously mentioned Tampa Bulletin, which was, not just "black-owned and operated, [but also] employed only black typesetters and linotype operators" (Howard and Howard 1994, 8). The Tampa Urban League provided a number of services to Tampa's African American community including "two day-care nurseries for working mothers, alternative home placements for juvenile delinquents, family case work, the organization of clubs and

recreation for black youth, and even employment placement" (Howard and Howard 1994: 9) (Howard and Howard 1994, 9); in 1927, the Urban League commissioned a study of "Negro life in Tampa," which remains the authoritative source for information about Tampa's African American communities in the 1920s. The study was nominally conducted under the supervision of Arthur Raper, but the research was in actuality conducted by, and the report written by Dr. Benjamin E. Mays with the assistance of his wife Sadie Gray Mays.

This study examined every aspect of African American life in Tampa, including education, social services, religion, housing, employment, and population statistics; officially the report was titled "A Study of Negro Life in Tampa: made at the request of the Tampa Welfare League, the Tampa Urban League, and the Tampa Young Men's Christian Association," however it has become colloquially known as the "Raper Report." The report included, under the description "Tampa Proper," both the upscale Central Avenue and the impoverished neighborhood referred to as "the 'Scrubbs;'" however, the report also stated explicitly that the neighborhoods were "a unit only in that [they occupy] contiguous territory" (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 5). This area was home to more than a third of Tampa's 23,323 (Tampa's total population at the time was around 150,000) African Americans, with a population of 8,362 people; the majority of structures in the neighborhood were white-owned rental properties consisting mostly of "1 story frame buildings," with the "'Shotgun' type [being] the most prevalent" (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 5, 11).

The study evaluated the living conditions of 326 of these rental houses, reporting that 146 had "Bad" interior conditions, and another 127 were listed as only "Fair;" additionally 259 of these structures had no bathing facilities, and only 114 had an indoor toilet (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 11). Outdoor toilets serving multiple families accounted for another 136 properties, leaving 76 with only privies to serve one or more families. Additionally, only 144 of the houses had an indoor source of water; the remaining households were served by either an outdoor spigot (85), or a well (97) for their freshwater needs (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 11). Although the City of Tampa claimed that these neighborhoods were served with refuse removal several times per week, everyday in the case of some neighborhoods; however, 44 families reported receiving no refuse removal service, are were likely to have disposed of their own refuse by either burning or buying it in the backyard (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 11). Each family averaged about 4.5 people living in an average of 4 rooms, and roughly half of those families had children under the age of 15; many (31%) of those families subsidized the cost of rent by taking in "lodgers" (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 11).

Quality of life was indeed problematic for the African Americans in Tampa; there was insufficient hospital space available for the size of the community; during the 1920s, the population was dwindling by sheer attrition, with few births than deaths (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 23). Furthermore, due to the lack of hospital space expectant mothers had to rely on the skill of under-trained midwives to assist in childbirth; of stillbirths recorded in

1926, about 47% were attributed to African American mothers, with the black community accounting for only 20% of the total population there would appear to be a definite disparity (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 22). Additionally, "50% of Negro deaths were individuals aged15-44," of the 534 deaths [in 1926] in this age group, 42 were directly caused by homicides (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 23). Infants suffered from the squalid living conditions as well; "81% of deaths caused by diarrhea and enteritis occurred between birth and 1 year of age" (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 26).

There was little available to Tampa's African Americans for recreation; blacks were barred from enjoying the city's parks "except in the capacity of servants" (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 27). There were 2 theaters on Central Avenue, but both had "extremely bad ventilation and sanitation; less wholesome entertainment was available in places like the Lafayette Dancing Academy, and the various pool halls that could be found at the back of some of the neighborhood's barber shops (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 27). Dr. Mays summed the situation up quite succinctly when he wrote:

> *For a colored population of 23,000, Tampa provides a Branch Library and a salaried playground supervisor. The City of Tampa provides no public park for Negroes: it provides no playgrounds, except unequipped school grounds: it provides no public pool or beach. The private recreation and amusements are of such a nature that the Negro public receives no benefit therefrom. The Commercial recreation and amusement is of such a nature and so poorly supervised, that it perchance is more harmful than beneficial (1927, 32).*

Despite being virtually ignored by the City of Tampa, these neighborhoods did thrive in some cases; for the most part there was work available, and there were strong community ties to the churches and schools.

Large numberss of Tampa's African Americans were employed in unskilled trades, such as laborer, janitor, maid, or bellboy; however, there were also professionals such as physicians, dentists, pharmacists, undertakers, and at least one lawyer. There were also a number of African Americans employed in skilled trades; conditions varied for skilled workers, some, like the "brick layers" were joined with fellow white workers in a union, and received the same pay for the same work (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 42). Other skilled workers, such as the carpenters and painters, were not allowed admittance to the unions of the white workers; however, there were also non-union jobs where black workers could expect to be well, if not equally paid, including the cigar making operations in Ybor City (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 42–43). Additionally, there was the Longshoreman's Local 1402 whose one time leader, Perry Harvey Sr., gave his name to the park where the current study is located (Howard and Howard 1994, 9). Tampa's utility departments did employ black many black workers, but in many cases, it was their policy to "lay off" black workers when whites were in need of employment (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 46).

At the time of the Tampa Urban League study conducted by Dr. Mays, there we "3322 colored children enrolled in the public schools," and another 610 youths enrolled in various private institutions (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 53). However, this meant that about a quarter of the school-aged children were not enrolled in any school; furthermore, on any given school day, fully 20% of students did not attend classes (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 53). The schools that catered to African American students, in most case, lacked sufficient size or other accommodations for the size of their student body; there was also precious little space dedicated to recreation, and only the Harlem Academy had any type of playground equipment (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 55). A 1925 study, conducted by Columbia University, determined that almost 85% of Tampa's African American students were "over age" for their grade level; Mays attributed this fact, in part, to irregular attendance and students who got a "late start" (1927, 55). The schoolteachers responsible for were poorly compensated for their efforts, with salary ranges from $60 to $100 for female teachers and $65 to $167 for male teachers; out of those salaries, teachers were expected to keep themselves attired with "good clothes," to attend summer classes for self-improvement, and often felt compelled to provide supplies for their students (Mays, Raper, and McGrew 1927, 55).

The church also played a large part in the life of Tampa's African American citizens; even during the late 19th century, Tampa's churches were "a major source of news and inspiration, [they] served as a kind of town hall with the minister as publicist and exhorter" (Howard and Howard 1994, 5). Mays asserted that, "aside from the home, the church is the most important factor in the life of the Negro" (1927, 48). The churches took on a prominent role in uniting the communities, and a number of ministerial alliances provided a voice for African Americans in the political sphere of greater Tampa (Howard and Howard 1994, 5–6). Baptist and Methodist churches were among the most well attended, as well as "small storefront-like churches that sprang up in those years;" however, "lower income blacks" were more likely to become congregants in the Catholic and Episcopalian churches, than middle-class or affluent African Americans (Howard and Howard 1994, 6). The churches also served as focal points for community action and social interaction; additionally, the churches were supporters of education, directly sponsoring some private schools (Howard and Howard 1994, 6).

Figure 3. "The Scrub," in the process of being cleared (1952).

From the 1940s to the 1970s, Tampa aggressively pursued expansion, and various urban renewal projects (Figures 3-6); however, going back to the 1930s "the Scrub" neighborhood was targeted for clearance (Panamerican Consultants 2001, 6). The city annexed a significant portion of the suburbs surrounding old Tampa in 1953, and began acting on a 1952 ruling in the state legislation that allowed

Figure 4. A lot in "the Scrub," after clearance for urban renewal (1952).

Figure 5. An elevated view of a lot that has been cleared for urban renewal (1952).

Figure 6. "The Scrub," mostly cleared for urban renewal (1953).

the city to pursue urban renewal projects (Kerstein 1998, 77–78). Many of Tampa's impoverished neighborhoods were targeted for demolition; moreover, private housing, rather than public housing, was expected to cover almost all the residents that were displaced by these projects (Kerstein 1998, 79). A group of Tampa's prominent African American businessmen, including Perry Harvey Sr., did manage to bid successfully for a contract to build housing; their organization, Tampa Park Apartments Inc., "developed about 370 subsidized rental units" (Kerstein 1998, 80). "The Scrub" neighborhood itself was partially cleared in 1954; the 1968 "construction of the Jefferson Avenue approach to I-275," and other projects in 1970 and 1972 removed the last vestiges of the once prosperous Central Avenue, and the dilapidated structures of "the Scrub" (Panamerican Consultants 2001, 6).

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