WARNERSVILLE • TERRA COTTA • EAST WHITE OAK

In the era of segregation, proud, old communities provided hubs for businesses, churches, schools and culture

SAFE HARBORS

TIM RICKARD/News & Record

When I entered the Greensboro Historical Museum three months ago, it was the first time I had visited the Summit Avenue institution since the mid-1960s.

During that long-ago visit with my elementary school classmates, civil war artifacts, Dolley Madison costumes and that famous Model T Ford were among featured attractions.

My more recent visit to the museum was to see a new exhibit with its own rich history. "Warnersville: Our Home, Our Neighborhood, Our Stories," which continues through Nov. 30. Until I read the late Otis L. Hairston Jr.'s 2003 book about Warnersville, I had no formal knowledge of its legacy as Greensboro's first organized community for African Americans, formed after slavery ended.

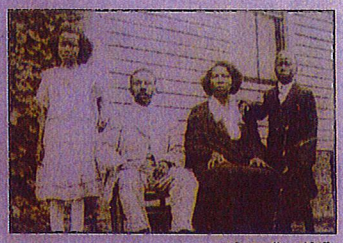
The exhibit didn't disappoint, drawing dozens of attendees eager to learn about the people and places who populated the southeast Greensboro community from 1867 until urban renewal shut it down in the early 1960s. Members of the Warnersville Community Coalition, led by James Griffin, attended an opening program in November 2014, as did various city leaders. Griffin's mother, Constance S. Griffin, ran the Warnersville Community Center from 1968 to 1985. Her presence helped former Warnersville residents maintain ties to the community long after its physical demise, said Griffin.

BONNIE NEWMAN DAVIS

A short film by documentarian Lisa Scheer, and artists and filmmakers Harvey Robinson and Carolyn Dewberry, captured Warnersville's

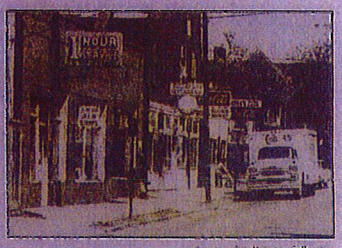
See Harbors, Page H4

Bonnie Newman Davis is an associate professor of journalism at North Carolina A&T State University.



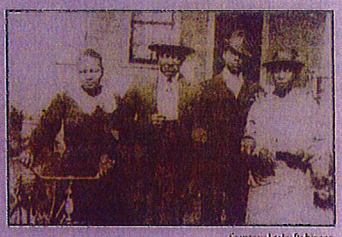
Courtesy Howard Griffin

Emma Griffin, Eddie Wheeler, Essie and Howard Harold Griffin on Austin Street in 1928.



Courtesy Otis Hairston Collection

A number of businesses served the mainly African American population in Warnersville.



Courtesy Larky Robinson

A family from Warnersville includes its bike in this photo, which can be seen at the exhibit.

WANT TO GO?

The exhibit "Warnersville: Our Home, Our Neighborhood, Our Stories" will be on display through Nov. 30 at the Greensboro Historical Museum. Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m.-5 p.m. Admission is free.

Harbors

Continued from Page H1

heyday, when numerous businesses, churches and schools formed a strong thread that is woven throughout Greensboro and beyond. Shiloh Baptist Church, St. Matthews United Methodist Church, Bennett College and J.C. Price School were born in Warnersville. Civil rights activists Otis L. Hairston Sr. and Ezell Blair Jr. grew up in Warnersville, as did basketball legends Bob McAdoo and Lou Hudson.

A mainstay of the community was the former J.C. Price School, which opened in 1922 and was the first school for blacks in Warnersville. Urban renewal disrupted much of the community during the 1960s. J.C. Price closed in 1983 and was demolished in 2014. Its former location on Freeman Mill Road is the future site of a Salvation Army youth facility that will house artifacts from the school. The school's cornerstone and a set of doors are part of the museum's exhibit. Despite the changes that swept through Warnersville, J.C. Price, named after Joseph Charles Price, who helped establish Livingstone College in Salisbury, was a constant reminder of the community's great achievements. Clarence Henderson, a former Price student, fondly recalls the school's status as a Greensboro "treasure," which served as the center of education and community for African Americans.

"One of the many things that was taught in the school was that we as blacks had to be more competitive in order to be thought of as equal to whites," Henderson told several N.C. A&T journalism students when the exhibit was unveiled.

Witnessing the excitement and pride during the exhibit's opening, I used social media to gauge the legacies of other communities settled by African Americans under adverse conditions and little hope. Rapid responses arrived from near and far.

Cathy Gant Hill, a former News & Record staff writer, noted that the Terra Cotta neighborhood deserves a mention. A quick Google search proved her correct, with the community's website noting its formation in the 1880s for employees of the Pomona Terra Cotta Co.

She also suggested the neighborhood where she grew up, East White Oak, in northeast Greensboro.

"We lived there until 1967," Gant Hill wrote. "My dad was born and raised there, went to school there, to church there, and my mom retired from Greensboro Parks & Rec as director of the East White Oak Community Center."

East White Oak is one of the city's oldest black neighborhoods, established as a mill village by Cone Mills.

The community was called Muchdea, as late as 1915, before being renamed. Meanwhile, the East White Oak Community Center is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Bryant Colson, who grew up in Greensboro and now lives in Hillsborough, cited Taylortown, near Pinehurst. "I've always been amazed and disappointed that this small African American community is so poverty-stricken in an affluent community like Pinehurst," Colson said about the area formed in the early 1900s. Still, the town's website illustrates the community's upbeat spirit, and a 2005 Christian Science Monitor article describes efforts to improve the town.

Several journalism colleagues mentioned Virginia locales, such as Seatack, founded by free blacks in the 1700s; Pocahontas Island, known as Petersburg's earliest predominantly African American neighborhood; and Richmond, Va.'s Jackson Ward community, home of Maggie L. Walker, the first woman to charter and preside over a bank. Like Warnersville, Jackson Ward was formed after the Civil War. With its mix of previously free blacks and newly freed slaves, it was known as the "Black Wall Street" of America, where commerce, religion and entertainment intermingled. Unlike Warnersville, it continues to thrive with revitalized housing, trendy restaurants and entertainment venues.

Decades before the Civil War, several of North Carolina's blacks migrated to Lakeview, Ill., to settle among Native Americans. It is one of the oldest settlements in Illinois and holds the oldest predominantly African America cemetery in Illinois, according to Internet sources.

Guests arrive for the Nov. 23 opening of the Warnerville exhibit.

Courtesy of the Greensboro Historical Museum

Randye Bullock of Detroit, who has family in Greensboro and Kernersville, said her mother was born in Lakeview.

"I remember when I was 5 years old, I visited one of my great aunt and uncles there," Bullock said. "They had no running water in the house. There were geese, chickens, an outhouse, etc. I have a photo of me taking a bath in a washtub."

Ronald Wade of St. Louis, described Brooklyn, Ill. (also known as "Lovejoy") as "a hardscrabble town just across the river from St. Louis and right next to East St. Louis. It is generally considered the first all-black town in America to be incorporated, in the late 1930s."

Karin Berry of Maryland referenced the Gist settlements for blacks in Ohio, and Cathy Jackson, a journalism historian in Norfolk, Va., mentioned Nicodemus, Kan., and American Beach, Fla. Nicodemus, a National Historic Site, is the only remaining western community established by African Americans after the Civil War. American Beach, the only beach in Florida that welcomed blacks during Jim Crow segregation, was founded in 1935.

I asked Jackson about the legacy and significance of such communities and towns today.

"The history lost through the eminent-domain, sometimes malicious destruction of African American cities and communities is tremendous," she replied. "Many of these towns represented havens to people who had none in the white world. These sites of remembrance echoed their need for homes, for safe harbors, for places to be themselves in a world that despised their race. Integration destroyed the fabric of far too many of these black communities, but for those remaining they stand as testaments to our history, to times when we waited on no man to tell us we deserved a place in the sun."

STRENGTH ON DISPLAY

Warnersville exhibit gives voice to community's endurance

JEFF SYKES | YES! WEEKLY

Poet and Warnersville native Alonzo Stevens uses the interactive kiosk display at the Greensboro Historical Museum.

BY JEFF SYKES
jeff@yesweekly.com | @jeffreysykes

The story of the Warnersville community in Greensboro, like all good southern literature, is full of loss and a deep sense of place. This story, however, is more than powerful because it's a true story lived by generations of African Americans who have refused to let circumstances dictate suffering.

A Quaker activist who bought up a few dozen acres of land to sell to recently freed slaves so that they might own their own property founded Warnersville in 1865. The community, just south of Lee Street between the modern day Freeman Mill Road and Eugene Street, flourished for generations until falling into decline after World War II. It was subjected to an early urban renewal program in the 1960s that all but wiped the neighborhood from the map.

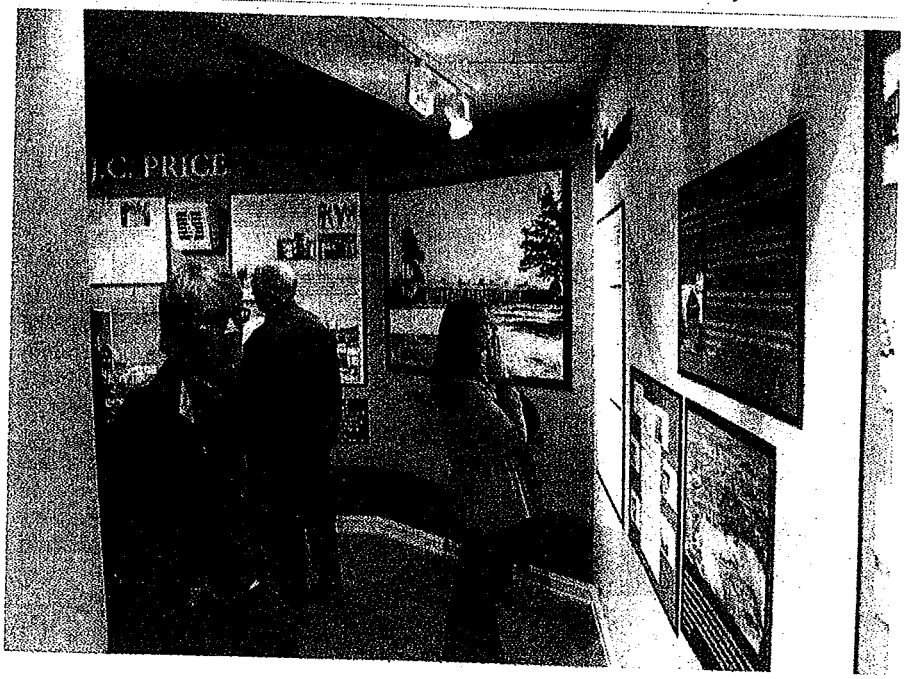
But that spirit of self-determination has lived on, even as the original families have endured a diaspora of sorts. After the redevelopment plan of the 1960s saw all but two community assets — J.C. Price School and Union Cemetery — leveled, it was the Warnersville Recreation Center that served as a gathering place.

James Griffin's mother, Constance Griffin, served as the assistant director at the rec center for 25 years. From 1960 to 1985 she was a mainstay in the community. Her grace and elegance left deep impressions on many, especially her son, who went on to found the Warnersville Historical and Beautification Society.

Griffin and another Warnersville native with deep roots in the community, Otis Hairston Jr., are two of the main reasons that a comprehensive exhibit surveying the history of the neighborhood opened this week at the Greensboro Historical Museum.

It was Lisa Scheer's vision, however, that served as a conduit to bring the power of the Warnersville story to life through the use of modern documentary techniques. Scheer, a Greensboro photographer and documentarian, was furthering her studies at Duke

SEE PAGE 15] ▶



JEFF SYKES | YES! WEEKLY

The Warnersville exhibit at the Greensboro Historical Museum.

WARNERSVILLE: 'I was really trying to express how I felt about the community back in those days.'

▶ FROM PAGE 11

University when Greensboro College bought the J.C. Price School with the intent to turn the property into athletic facilities.

The plan was controversial and drew opposition in 2008. With so much discussion of the neighborhood, a friend told Scheer about the redevelopment history and also about Otis Hairston Jr., who was said to have a rich collection of photos detailing Warnersville's past.

Scheer visited Hairston's home. Looking at photographs on his computer screen, and then out the large picture window onto the neighborhood as it stands today, the artist and investigator inside came to life.

"I set about trying to reconstruct in my mind what this place looked like," Scheer said. "I was trying to re-imagine a place that was all but vanished and articulate why there is such a profound sense of loss so many years after urban renewal."

Scheer set about collecting photographs and recording oral histories, similar to work she did on a project about mill villages in northeast Greensboro. She knew there was "an enormous story to be told there in that neighborhood."

She soon met James Griffin, and as his story unfolded so too did the idea of making a documentary film about his family and their experience during the Warnersville redevelopment and beyond.

Scheer collaborated with artist and filmmakers Harvey Robinson and Carolyn deBerry, who created a 12-minute film with Griffin narrating the story of his family displacement, the artifacts remaining from his family history and the spirit of endurance that remains despite the burden of loss.

Plans had been for Scheer to collaborate with the Greensboro Historical Museum on a Warnersville exhibit, but those plans were temporarily derailed when a staff change took place at the museum. Once current director Carol Hart was hired, however, the exhibit was back on track.

Hired in January of 2012, Hart said the Warnersville exhibit was an exciting opportunity to step into. She met with Scheer and the two began to plan out how to best tell the story. The first step for the museum was to form a community advisory committee to help guide the exhibit's scope.

John Zachman, the museum's curator of collections, said that the goal was to exhibit an authentic history of the Warnersville neighborhood, not the didactic voice of the museum.

"We knew it was not going to be possible to answer every question, but we wanted to answer the questions that were important to the community," Zachman said. "The community is the storyteller and the museum the venue."

The exhibit is the first of its kind for the museum, both in its intense focus on one neighborhood and in the use of a variety of multimedia technologies. A wealth of historical photos and artifacts fill the exhibit space, with lines of poetry by Alonzo Stevens displayed across the wall tops.

Stevens attended the exhibit opening Sunday and looked on with delight at an interactive kiosk set in the middle of the exhibit space. Museum staff collaborated with Greensboro's GIS and IT departments to create maps and overlays detailing the homes, businesses and churches razed or moved during the redevelopment.

Stevens said he began writing poetry in the early 2000s, reflecting on his youth during the 1940s and his memories of the neighborhood as it was.

"I was really trying to express how I felt about the community back in those days," Stevens said, adding that his primary poetic theme is to examine how people came together to overcome in spite of the hardships.

Scheer, the documentary photographer, said similar themes were present as she explored Warnersville's history and past and current residents shared their stories.

"I realized what it represented was a century's worth of work in the African American community in the urban south was essentially demolished," Scheer said. "Wiping out those churches and homes was really a shame."

Historical themes in often neglected African American history are in play in the Warnersville story, she said, including in-migration to urban cities, Jim Crow, segregation, and the kinship networks dating back to slavery that kept families connected despite displacement.

"Not only did this urban renewal program level the place, but it severed those very important kinship networks and it created this diaspora and maybe that was more painful for people," Scheer said. "They shared and took care of each other. The deeper I got into it, I was just so privileged to be part of those conversations, beautiful conversations about family life. They were beautiful interviews. It was an amazing experience."

Community activists are working to have Warnersville designated as a Community Heritage Site. Griffin, of the Warnersville Historical and Beautification Society, said the request is currently before the city manager's office, with a few council members backing the proposal.

Griffin said many residents have moved on from the sting of the displacement, and are focused on the current needs and future development. Student housing is making a difference in the character of the Warnersville area, he said, and a grocery store is desperately needed.

The heritage designation would preserve and protect the legacy of the community, with the goal being for the city to recognize Warnersville's history permanently.

"Since the buildings and the artifacts are no longer there, we feel that the land itself is a very special place and should be recognized," Griffin said.

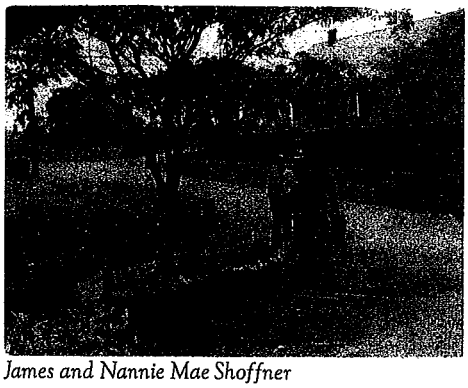
JEFF SYKES | YES! WEEKLY

Warnersville native James Griffin looks at his family photographs and memorabilia in the exhibit.

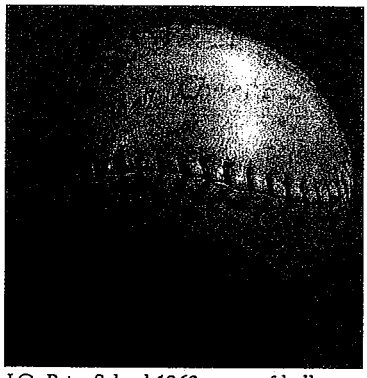
Finding Warnersville

For many, the opening this month at the Greensboro Historical Museum of an exhibit celebrating the life of one of Greensboro's most influential neighborhoods will be a rich journey into our heritage – for others, long overdue

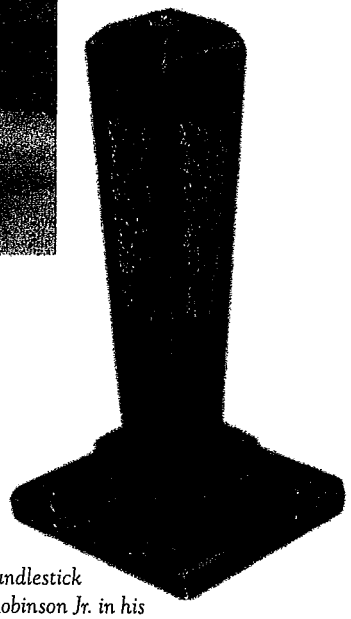
Robinson family: Martha Fox, Larky "Lark" Robinson, Larky M. Robinson and Ethel Potts Robinson in front of their house on Marsh Street



James and Nannie Mae Shoffner



J.C. Price School 1962 state softball championship ball



Wooden candlestick by Larky Robinson Jr. in his 9th grade shop class in 1967 at J C Price School

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM GREENSBORO HISTORICAL MUSEUM AND LARKY M. ROBINSON, JR.

By Molly Sentell Haile

Gloria Poole remembers once upon a time in Warnersville when her Uncle Marshall's pet ring-tailed monkey lived in a cage under the shade of her grandmother's huge peach tree. Everyone on the Southside knew her Uncle Marshall because the monkey would jump on him when he said, "Come here," and ride around the neighborhood in his arms, Poole says, bringing the past and her uncle back to life via oral history. That's the sort of unsung history the Greensboro Historical Museum is recreating in *Warnersville: Our Home, Our Neighborhood, Our Stories*, an exhibit that opens Sunday, November 23.

Visitors can see pictures of Warnersville's founder, a Quaker lawyer from Pennsylvania named Yardley Warner, as well as photographs of the thriving black-owned and operated businesses on Ashe Street during the mid 1900s. There are also candids of the opening of the swimming pool at Warnersville Recreation Center, a summertime bicycle festival, and the 1954–56 J.C. Price School high-stepping baton girls in their tall hats and white boots.

Better yet, visitors will hear history in the words and voices of those who made it through audio and video clips. Stories like James Griffin's. He recounts a childhood memory of his grandfather's funeral procession down Ashe Street. Griffin says when he turned to look back at the line of cars trailing behind, he saw his grandmother's house standing in front of flat, empty stretches of land where much of Warnersville had been recently razed for the redevelopment.

Others remember how teachers often ate dinner at their students' homes or how a boy who misbehaved down the street couldn't get home before word reached his mother. And there are stories of the Warnersville Rec Center direc-

tors and coaches, youth leaders and ministers at the neighborhood churches, and teachers at J.C. Price who taught kids not only sports and Sunday School lessons and grammar, but also how to live right and do good work in the world. Each of the stories in the exhibit connects to the broader Warnersville story of a community that continually redefines, rebuilds and preserves home.

"What is community?" asks Robert Harris, the Greensboro Historical Museum's curator of exhibits. "How much is geography part of that and what happens when the geography basically goes away? Does the community still exist? What methods does it carry on? . . . And in this case, everything changed so wide-sweeping, so fast."

Jon Zachman, the museum's curator of collections, adds that Warnersville hasn't received the attention or scholarship it deserves. "The physical destruction and the emotional or cultural loss of community – that's a universal story that largely impacted African-American communities," he says. "That's something I think a lot of people will be able to relate to." Communities were virtually destroyed by urban development all across the South, whether it was Durham or Richmond.

For the past year, Zachman, UNCG intern Angela Thorpe and a group of Warnersville residents serving on an Exhibit Advisory Group have collaborated on plans for the exhibit, gathering dozens of oral histories, more than 400 photographs and numerous artifacts. Among other things, the exhibit will chronicle Warnersville's controversial founding two years after the end of the Civil War. Yardley Warner, a white man from the North, bought 35 1/2 acres a mile south of Greensboro's city limit and, with the help of former slave and carpenter Harmon Unthank, sold the land in parcels to recently freed slaves at a time when local landowners refused to sell to them. The exhibit also highlights Warnersville's flourishing years as a vibrant neighborhood from the turn of the century to the 1960s and its struggles in the years following a 1969–71 top-down government urban renewal project that devastated the geography of the neighborhood. Despite losing numerous houses, dozens of stores, a number of businesses and several blocks that were cut off by wide thoroughfares, Warnersville residents worked hard to sustain their tight-knit community.

Warnersville's history needs to be "folded into the story of Greensboro." That is the charge of a historical museum, Zachman explains, to be a keeper of stories.

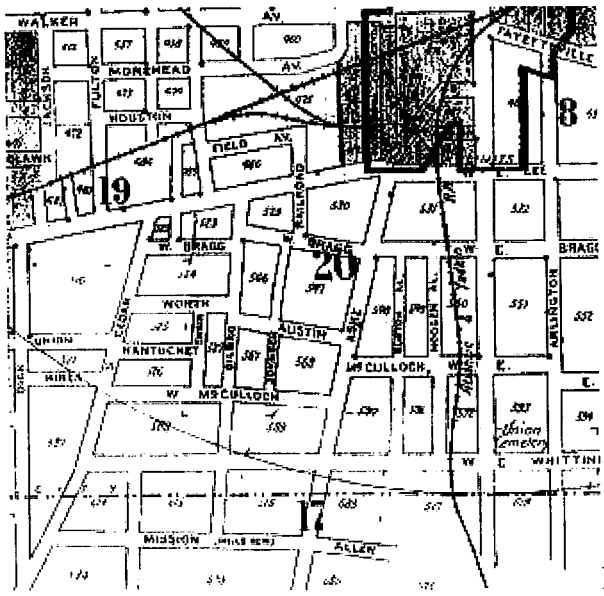
The GHM curators and the Exhibit Advisory Group are excited that the exhibit will reach many people who don't already know Warnersville's prominent role in Greensboro's history, including children who are growing up there now. Museum educators are collaborating with teachers at Jones Elementary School to plan field trips to the exhibit and visits by curators to the school. They hope stories about Warnersville – a place that has been cradle to a college, one of the Greensboro Four, and a venerable list of national and local educators, ministers, and social activists – will inspire present day students to imagine their own futures as leaders who care about their community.

James Griffin says the legacy of Warnersville's unique community continues in a world where many people don't know or care to know their neighbors. "Even today in Warnersville, because it's been almost fifty years since redevelopment, the same thing applies now," Griffin says. "We still know the neighbors four or five streets over and where everybody lives, which is unusual for any community these days and times. In this particular community you know people still. Everywhere." **OH**

Molly Sentell Haile, whose work has been published in the Oxford American, *is a graduate of UNCG's creative writing MFA program. She teaches creative writing at Hirsch Wellness Network in Greensboro.*

APRIL 14, 2008

Future-Perfect-in-Past-Tense: Reclaiming the Historic Warnersville Neighborhood

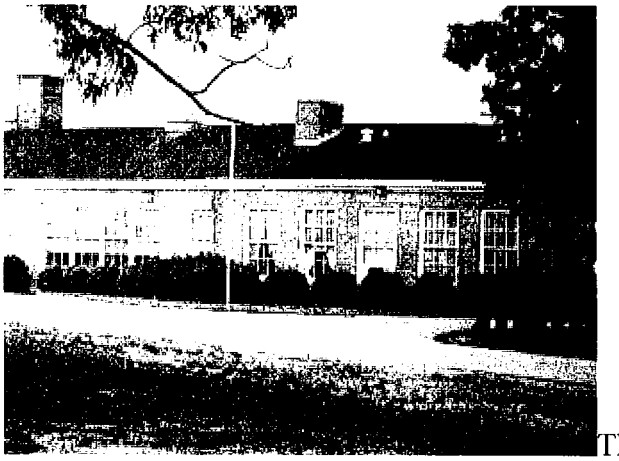


Future-Perfect-in-Past-Tense grammatical terms were once the topic of discussion in the classrooms of Warnersville's J. C. Price Elementary School, but today, the term describes a new direction planned by residents of the historically black neighborhood.

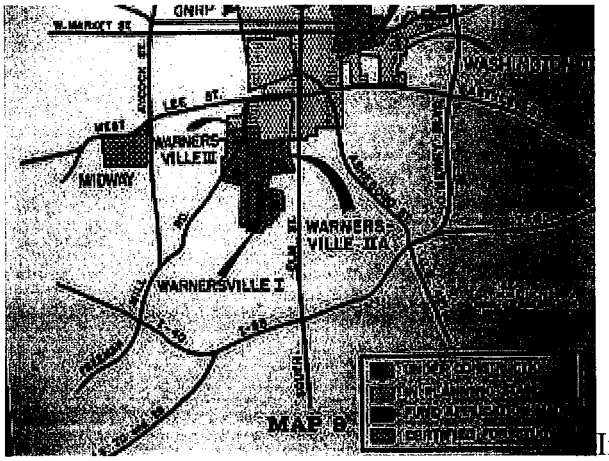
Warnersville's roots are deeply planted in Greensboro's soil. Yardley Warner, for whom the settlement was named, was a Quaker missionary from Philadelphia who visited the South in the closing days of the Civil War. Alarmed at the plight of blacks in the region, he sought to enhance opportunities for African Americans freed from slavery and after traveling the American South, he found a home in Greensboro among other Quakers who were sympathetic to his ministry.

In 1867, Warner purchased 35 ½ acres of land on behalf of a Quaker aid organization from Philadelphia, and subdivided the property into one acre lots. Each acre was capable of supporting a large family, and lots were sold to families that could build equity and financial independence through home ownership. Soon, a community of 600 people featured tidy frame houses with garden plots (image, right), a school, a church, and the Union Cemetery on South Elm Street.

The self-sufficient community became a model for similar settlements in the region. Warnersville, in essence, became Greensboro's first suburban community – predating other subdivisions by 20 years. Warnersville's school grew to become Bennett College for Women. Residents became community leaders, most notably Harmon Unthank, a freed man employed as a carpenter at a local wagon wheel factory who grew to become Director of the People's Savings Bank (believed to be North Carolina's first mutual savings institution).

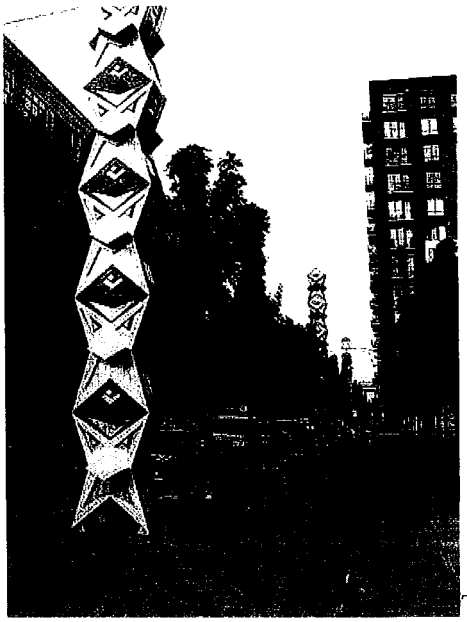


The community remained strong through the 1920s, when the J. C. Price School was erected and named in honor of Dr. Joseph Charles Price (1854-1893), the son of a slave who served as a minister, lecturer, and founder and president of Livingstone College in Salisbury. However, by the 1950s, the absentee landlords who owned much of the neighborhood had not improved housing to modern standards.



In the meantime, Greensboro instituted the first urban renewal program in the state with the intent of ridding the Gate City of vacant and substandard housing. The Warnersville neighborhood was promptly identified as an area of blight, and in 1965 the city moved to "renew" the neighborhood by rebuilding it to modern standards (map, right). This renewal project, funded by the federal government, was the first of its kind in North Carolina. The reconstruction process was so thorough that only the J. C. Price School and the Union Cemetery survived destruction. In place of the original frame houses and stores were widened avenues, suburban-style ranch houses, and garden apartments and townhomes.

Today, residents of Warnersville struggle with articulating their neighborhood's deep history with a lack of historic structures. Unlike nearby College Hill and Southside, the neighborhood has only two community landmarks to show for their notable past.


The solution may lie in blending the neighborhood's past with Greensboro's future. As the Gate City begins to cultivate its reputation as a creative city with investment in the arts, opportunities exist to define the historic Warnersville using art. Portland, Oregon's Pearl District has used art to enhance its neighborhood character, exemplified in the colorful totems that cover of the Portland Streetcar poles adjacent to Jameson Square

(image, lower right). Warnersville could do the same using its history of artisan residents as a theme to unite the whole.

Neighborhood organizers Angela Harris and James Griffin describe other initiatives to expand awareness of Warnersville history. These include historical narratives that will be placed along the planned Downtown Greenway adjacent to the neighborhood.

Warnersville's history may be largely destroyed, but spirit and enthusiasm for the neighborhood remain strong. With creative planning, the detriment of losing a community's history may be countered with opportunity for interpretive expressions of the past. The historic neighborhood is sure to maintain a strong position as a defining neighborhood in the Gate City.

Posted at 01:43 PM in Greensboro History | Permalink

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Thank you for highlighting one of Greensboro's hidden jewels and showing the significance impact Warnersville has had on the entire city.

Posted by: angee | April 14, 2008 at 10:33 PM

Thanks Angee, its a wonderful neighborhood - I can't wait to see what the future holds!

Posted by: Benjamin | April 15, 2008 at 09:33 AM

http://preservationgreensboro.typepad.com/weblog/2008/04/future-perfect.html

NEIGHBORS OF WARNERSVILLE

WARNERSVILLE COMMUNITY COALITION NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 3 March 2009

Brenda Bethel Hodge/Warnersville Community Scholarship

The Warnersville Community Coalition has established a scholarship in honor of Brenda Bethel Hodge who worked tirelessly to maintain J. C. Price School and to preserve the Warnersville legacy. Mrs. Hodge passed away suddenly last year while working with the community in planning its Warnersville Bicentennial Reunion Celebration.

Mrs. Hodge grew up in the Warnersville Community. She and her husband, Dr Johnny Hodge wrote the book: From Five Points to Donnell Hill and From Cedar Street to the Railroad: An Oral History of the Warnersville Community.

The Warnersville Community is the oldest African American community in the city of Greensboro. The history of the community is unique. In 1865 a Philadelphia Quaker named Yardley Warner came to the city and purchased 35 acres of land and sold it to recently freed slaves who sought independence and homeownership. Thus from its beginning the community was started as a planned effort to promote black independence and sustain community pride.

The scholarship will be awarded to Warnersville students who exemplify excellence and commitment to community. It is our hope that the scholarship will benefit Warnersville students and inspire them to continue to preserve the Warnersville legacy. Scholarships will be awarded to students that reside in the Warnersville community.

Students may receive additional information from their high school counselors or from the community website: www.warnersvillecommunity.org. For those desiring to donate to the scholarship fund, donations may be sent to Warnersville Community Coalition, P.O. Box 20656, Greensboro, N. C. 27420.

Margaret Pinnix (center above) celebrates her 80th birthday with her grandchildren and great grandchildren on February 22nd.

Nancy Mae Siler (left), 99, will celebrate her 100th birthday on May 1st. She is from Wilkes County and been a member of the Warnersville community since 1969. She attended the Community Christmas Fellowship with her family at the Warnersville Center.

Jean B. Williams graduated from A & T State University in December with a B.A. in Sociology. Jean is a lifelong resident of Warnersville. She is a member of St. James Baptist Church and Vice President of the Warnersville Community Coalition.

LET'S KEEP OUR COMMUNITY CLEAN. DO NOT LITTER.

THE COMMUNITY HAS A NEW WEBSITE (www.warnersvillecommunity.org) IF PERSONS HAVE PHOTOS TO ADD TO PHOTO GALLERY E-MAIL THEM TO US AT: NOW1867@AOL.COM THE COMMUNITY CAN NOW KEEP ABREAST OF HAPPENINGS IN THE COMMUNITY THROUGH OUR WEB SITE. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION CALL: OTIS HAIRSTON AT 336.574.2286 I6 OR MARGARET PINNIX AT 336.272.7987.

THE WARNERSVILLE – GREENSBORO COLLEGE ISSUES

The man for whom J.C. Price School was named stated the following in 1890 at the National Education Association meeting in Minneapolis: "If I had a thousand tongues and each tongue was a thousand thunderbolts and each thunder bolt had a thousand voices, I would use them all to help you understand a loyal and misrepresented and misjudged people." We, the representatives of the Warnersville Community Coalition, are here today as one of the thousand tongues, thunderbolts and voices to again respond to the demise of one of the remaining African American historic sites in Greensboro. J.C. Price School was built in 1922 making it one of the oldest schools in Greensboro for the education of African Americans.

Greensboro College is asking the community, which has lost much of its history due to urban renewal in the 1960s and most recently to the development of a modern subdivision and wide thoroughfares (*Greensboro Treasured Places, The Price of History,* June 20, 2007), to give up without complaint, one of its remaining historical sites. Thus, the voices raise the questions, "Is not African-American history worth more than just plaques, statutes or landmark signs?" While some may think and say yes, we the voices of the Warnersville Community Coalition say no.

While Greensboro College has offered certain concessions, it has chosen to ignore the remaining citizens of the Warnersville neighborhood, specifically senior citizens who sacrificed to buy homes in the area, to rear and educate their children at Jacksonville and David Jones Elementary schools and J.C. Price school willingly give up all of the history and lifetime memories for progress that in the end does not benefit the community in terms of beautification or economics. Moreover, Greensboro College has chosen to listen to the voices of the Warnersville Historical and Beautification Society whose agenda is the same as theirs. Again the exploitation of black Americans is trapped in the age old strategy of pitting one group against the other in order for a designated body to accomplish its goal(s). Unlike the chosen body, the Warnersville Community Coalition is comprised of residents of the community, alumni of J.C. Price and concerned citizens of Greensboro who stand for social justice reflective of the educational fervor of Joseph C. Price for whom it was named. Price, in his 1890s speech, says it most effectively, "the solution to the race problem [in this instance, the preservation of J.C. Price School] means the satisfactory and harmonious adjustment of the racial relation in the South and in the country as well, on the principles of humanity and justice." While some may say that J.C. Price is just a building, may we not forget that it is a monument to the education of African-American children in Greensboro. A monument that perhaps used in the most expeditious manner, serves to remind us all of the contributions of the faculty who taught there, the students who had their educational drive enhanced there and the future generation that must use its history to move the history of African-Americans in Greensboro into its rightful place. The demise of the school as a building of substance relegates the people who learned and taught the true meaning of the scholarship of teaching and learning to a nonentity position.

It is out of this background that the Warnersville Community Coalition once again responds to the proposed use of the J.C. Price School property as detailed by Greensboro College in the *Greensboro News-Record* of October 22, 2008. The Warnersville Community Coalition acknowledges that our response is reactive rather than proactive because the purchase of the J.C. Price School property by Guilford Technical Community College, and Greensboro College in 2003 from GTCC was not known by the community until 2005 when the announcement of the "Future Home of the Greensboro College Sports Park" signs went up. Hence, we question what would be so beautiful about a sports complex and what will be the long term economic benefits of the sports complex for the community?

Moreover, we believe that the College's actions fall within a long history of disrespect for African-American

Continued on page 3

communities and their residents. As we see it, the sports complex will negatively impact the community with noise, bright lights, traffic and an influx of outsiders. Further, there is the community's desire to maintain the one treasured landmark that is left for the community: J.C. Price School. We ask that Greensboro College honor the values that brought this community together and to refrain from any building activity of the nature proposed since it would destroy the right of Warnersville residents to enjoy the quality of life of their community to which they are entitled as homeowners, renters and as citizens of the Greensboro community.

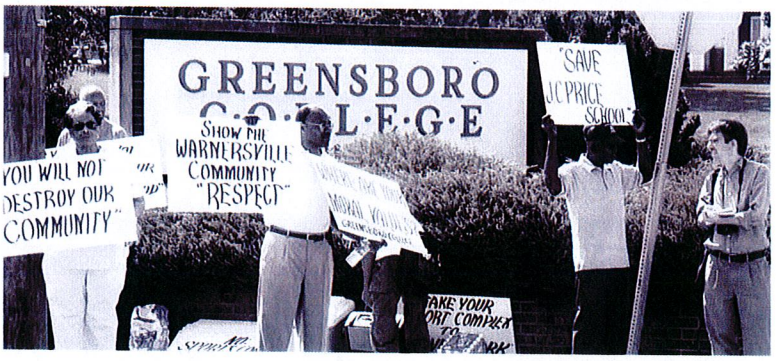
In the previously mentioned article, Greensboro College President Dr. Craven Williams made several statements that embrace our reasons for the continuous dialogue on this matter. Firstly, Dr. Williams stated that Greensboro College was not building a stadium, but rather a 30-acre Sports Park. To us it seems that this plan would necessitate semi-stadiums for spectators, parking for spectators, team members and staff, lights that would create problems for residents. It has been stated that the lights would be "low and very focused, and that the planted trees serve as a visual barrier that would help keep the lights from shining on adjacent properties and provide a safer place". The implication is that the Warnersville community is presently and unsafe place to be. We are uncertain whether or not that applies to the residents in the community, especially the residents of Hampton Homes. It seems that if this is true, then Greensboro College would be reluctant to build a facility in a place that would jeopardize the safety of the college students, spectators, staff and others that would be utilizing the Sports Park.

It seems that if this is true, then Greensboro College would be reluctant to build a facility in a place that would jeopardize the safety of the college students, spectators, staff and others that would be utilizing the Sports Park. Thus, the only assumption left is that the residents living in Hampton Homes and the surrounding residents, especially senior citizens, with the exception of the residents of the modern subdivision will eventually be relocated to ensure the safety of Greensboro College users of the facilities. Please note, that since the facilities are now unavailable for use by the children of the community, what guarantees do we have that they will be allowed to use the newly proposed facilities?

Secondly, Dr. Williams stated that "it has been painful for the Greensboro College community to be misunderstood as much as it has regarding the building of the proposed sports complex." Dr. Williams fails to realize that it is just as painful or more painful to be faced with the possibility of the loss of homes, the invasion of the community's privacy and the right to a quality of life as other residents of the Greensboro community. Senior citizens especially are fearful of the loss of their homes. Most painfully, we are asked to sanction the loss of another African-American historic site for the benefit of progress. It is apparent to us that the proposed complex will need more than the 30 acres on which the J.C. Price School is located.

Ms. Fannie Boyd Thompson '62

GREENSBORO COMMUNITY AND WARNERSVILLE RESIDENTS PROTEST



Greensboro community and Warnersville residents protest in front of Greensboro College against their plans to build a sports park in our community. Many residents of the Greensboro Community have voiced their outrage at the plans of Greensboro College to build a sports park in the historic Warnersville community.

LET'S KEEP OUR COMMUNITY CLEAN. DO NOT LITTER.

WARNERSVILLE NEIGHBORS' DECEMBER HOLIDAY GATHERING

Sights of the old neighborhood were around the room. Sounds of carols being sung by the group livened up the room and helped us to remember the reason for the season. A most precious moment then caught us all by surprise-- the arrival of the oldest community member, 99 year old, Mrs. Siler. We were called to order and a most wonderful prayer and blessing was given to the group. Smells of the delicious meal that had been prepared and shared by families was enjoyed by all.

During the stroll down memory lane some shared stories and facts about the importance of living in Warnersville. Living in this community has provided them with unforgettable childhood memories that will not be forgotten because of "urban renewal" or anything else. This community loved, cared and looked after one another. You could live here, shop here, have fun here, get educated here, and worship here. It was truly a village that raised this family of dedicated, hard-working community members.

A moment of 2008 accomplishments was shared. The most outstanding moment was the protest in front of Greensboro College to let them know of our dislike of the plans they have for destroying our quiet neighborhood. We strongly oppose the plans they have for this, "the oldest" African American neighborhood in Greensboro.

A drawing of names from the hat provided prizes for all in attendance that night. No one went home empty handed! It was the best way for such a joyous occasion to end.

Ms. Fannie Boyd Thompson '62

DVDS ARE STILL AVAILABLE FROM LAST YEAR'S COMMUNITY CONCERT: DOWN THROUGH THE YEARS: A MUSICAL CELEBRATION OF WARNERSVILLE. THE CONCERT WAS HELD DURING THE WARNERSVILLE BICENTENIAL REUNION SPONSORED BY THE WARNERSVILLE COMMUNITY COALITION. COST IS $10.00. PLEASE CONTACT OTIS HAIRSTON AT 336.574.2286.

Community Enhancement Project

Your Warnersville Community Coalition has applied for a grant through the Building Stronger Neighborhoods program. We have proposed a "Community Enhancement Project" that will provide activities, programs and outreach opportunities for youth, seniors and families in our neighborhood. We will partner with our community churches, Warnersville Recreation Center and Hampton Homes residents. The time frame for this project will be June 1st – December 31st of this year. It will include an eight week program during the summer specifically for middle school students' enrichment.

Outreach opportunities will include etiquette classes for selected middle school students; tutoring in reading and math, photography and leadership awareness workshops; family games night out, networking / socializing events to help bond members of the community and field trips for seniors and youth. Once a month we will invite an individual from selected professional careers to share with our community and serve as a positive role model for our young people.

This project will serve as a catalyst for helping to bond members of our community. It will provide opportunities for our senior citizens to share with the broader community as they enhance some of their personal skills. This project will also provide a setting for our young people to learn skills that will help them as they prepare to become productive citizens in our society.

Our ultimate goal with this project is to not only help our community bond, but also help our young people and families realize the potential for success that exists in our neighborhood and how they can positively impact the total community.

Coalition voted into Greensboro Neighborhood Congress

The Warnersville Community Coalition, a 30 year organization representing the citizens of Warnersville, was voted into the Greensboro Neighborhood Congress in January. The Greensboro Neighborhood Congress, a citywide alliance of neighborhoods, seeks to improve the quality of life within the city of Greensboro by addressing issues of city-wide importance and by empowering neighborhoods to resolve neighborhood-specific concerns.

Representing the community in the Congress is Mrs. Jean Williams, Vice-President of the Coalition, Ms. Annie Driffen, President Hampton Homes Residents Council and Otis Hairston, President of the Coalition.

The Coalition is working toward preserving the rich legacy and history of the community. It attempts to promote unity in the community by addressing concerns of the residents.

The Congress meets monthly at the Central Library. For additional information contact Mrs. Williams: 336-273-0696.

MARK 3:24 "IF A KINGDOM IS DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF, THAT KINGDOM CANNOT STAND."

ARTICLE ABOUT HISTORIC WARNERSVILLE

An Important Article on Warnersville

This article describes the development of Warnersville, a community created after the Civil War for recently freed, and then homeless and impoverished former slaves.

The author of the following article on the African-American settlement of Warnersville, Ms. Nell Craig Strowd (1902-1988), was a native of Gastonia, North Carolina. After attending the Woman's College (now UNCG), from which she graduated in 1923, Ms. Craig served as a staff reporter for the *Greensboro Record*, often writing feature articles as well as pieces for the society column. She was next appointed director of the News Bureau at the Woman's College and served in that capacity for four years. In 1945 she married Bruce Strowd, and in her later years she lived in Chapel Hill. Active in civic and political affairs in Orange and Chatham counties, she was also a co-editor of *History of Chatham County, 1771-1971*. She died in Chapel Hill and is buried in the Old Chapel Hill Cemetery.

Those interested in the history of Warnersville, and especially the prominent role of Harmon Unthank as leader of this important African-American community, owe Nell Craig Strowd a great debt, for without her interest and efforts much of what follows would have surely been lost.

Except for a couple of unimportant passages, Ms. Strowd's article on Warnersville is presented in full. Some notes have been added, providing US Census information on early Warnersville residents as well as other information.

Full Citation: Craig, Nell. 1941. Warnersville: Pioneer Venture in Home-Ownership by Means of Modest Charges and Long-Term Payments Started After the Civil War. *Daily News* (Greensboro), June 1, 8-9, sec. A.

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Warnersville by Nell Craig (1941)

Industrious Community

. . . one of Greensboro's largest negro settlements is today in the stable, industrious, educated, well behaved quality of its citizenry a memorial to the worth of the enterprise.

Begun two years after the close of the Civil War, [Warnersville] was sponsored by "The Association of Friends of Philadelphia and Its Vicinity for the Relief of Colored Freedmen." It was a unique undertaking for helping negroes, who had just been released from slavery and were not only without funds but also without means of earning, to become home owners. Launched by Yardley Warner, a Friend from Germantown, Pa., who came to Greensboro and lived as a pariah with the negroes in their community, started a school for them and taught in it, helped establish their church [and] encouraged them to plant vegetables and fruit trees and vines to meet their kitchen needs, the settlement, then south of Greensboro outside the city limits, was called Warnersville as a tribute to its founder.

The tract of land, containing 35 1/2 acres, according to courthouse records of the transaction, began, lifelong residents of the section recall, at about what is now known as Five Points and extended to "Donald's Hill" southerly, with Cedar street as the approximately eastern line.

Subdivided into Acre Lots

It was subdivided into acre lots, the size being this large in order that families might raise the major share of their provisions, and sold to negroes who had themselves so recently been property and denied privileges of ownership. Records of 25 of these transactions were found in Guilford county courthouse. All were to individuals except one which was made in 1882 to "St. John's lodge No. 12, F.A.A.O. York Masons" for the amount of $150. A negro lodge property is still in existence in this community, although it no longer bears the name of Mason.

No records seem to be in existence, either here or in Philadelphia, to show by what terms payment was made. The transfer went on over a period of years, first of the deeds bearing date of 1868 and the last several that of 1888. The recorded prices were by no means uniform, several being as low as $25, and the highest being in the amount of $400.

The entire tract, made up of two units, was aquired by Yardley Warner at a cost of $2,260, and was transferred to Elliston P. Morris, Anthony M. Kimber and Richard Cadbury,[1] trustees of "The Association of Friends of Philadelphia and Its Vicinity for the Relief of Colored Freedmen" by Warner and Hannah, his wife, in two deeds dated June 13, 1867. For the smaller tract of one and one-half acres, the sum of the consideration is left blank, and for the larger, containing "34 acres, more or less," the consideration is $1; hence the supposition that Warner was acting as agent for the freedman's association in the transaction.

Conveyed to Trustees

A year and a half had elapsed between the initial purchase by Yardley Warner and the date of conveyance of the property to the trustees of the association. The 34 acres had been purchased by Hugh Rice through his attorney, John A Gilmer, and was located in the deed, dated December 5, 1865, as "that tract or parcel of land lying and being in the County of Guilford on the waters of South Buffaloe Creek, known as the Bunch tract of land adjoining the lands of Levi Houston, deceased, Isaac Weatherly, deceased, and others, bounded as follows, to wit: Beginning at a post oak on Houston and Weatherly's line line thence north 82 poles, thence east to the public road leading to Parson's Mill from Greensboro, thence with said road south to a point on Weatherly's line, thence west to the beginning corner, containing by estimate 34 acres more or less."

The adjacent smaller parcel, under date of May 28, 1866, was purchased from James M. Garrett, the deed locating it as "that tract or parcel of land lying in the county of Guilford, and the state of North Carolina, bounded as follows: Beginning at the southwest corner of James M. Garrett's lot No. 5, near the edge of the country road running north 15 degrees east 10 poles to a stone, thence east 24 1/2 poles to cross street, thence south to the dividing line between lots Nos. five and six, thence west with the said dividing line to the beginning corner stone, containing one and one-half acres more or less."

Warner On Scene Quickly

Inauguration of the mission of rehabilitating the negro freedman, to which he dedicated his life, must have moved slowly for a zealot like Yardley Warner. Weary Confederate soldiers had hardly made their way on foot to their despoiled homes after the surrender of Gen. Robert E. Lee to Gen. U.S. Grant at Appomattox on April 15, 1865, before Warner was on the scene to decide what could be done for the negroes, confused by a condition new to them, and without means to subsist in their state of freedom. In the midst of the war, Warner, traveling with a pass issued by the secretary of war, had in 1863 penetrated the lines of both armies to study the plight of the negroes and arrange for some of them to go into northern states where Friends helped them to begin a new life. In the first summer after the close of the war, he came into North Carolina to continue his work for the Association of Friends, and by fall of that year he is thought to have established his first school for negroes in Greensboro.

Greensboro was probably selected because the generous proportion of Quakers, who had always practiced the doctrine of human freedom, in that and surrounding communities, made it an easier place in which to establish an unpopular philanthropy. To realize the difficult path which Warner had hewed out for himself, it is only necessary to try to recapture from traditional tales of one's heritage something of the bitterness which existed in the south at that time and was to leave the former confederacy with a wry mouth for decades to come. It was a bewildering time for freedmen and their former masters alike, and by mutual consent many of the negroes remained in the slave quarters into which they had been born, at least until they could become conditioned to their new and mystifying freedom. Others, however, without land or the means of acquiring it, without bread-winning labor or the direction of their lives to which they had grown accustomed, went out to enjoy the unfamiliar state of freedom. Homeless poverty was their lot, and this was the circumstance which the zealous Warner set out to remedy. Home ownership, he believed, would give anchorage to the confused freedmen, providing them with a sense of security, encouraging them in industry and thrift.

Eyed with Misgivings

The experimental project which the Philadelphia Quaker set up south of Greensboro to provide little freeholds for the black men must have been eyed with misgivings and disbelief by the people of the little southern town, who were bound by their heritage to think it doomed to failure. By that same heritage, sharpened by the bitterness of their own lives at the time, they were certain, too, to have looked with distrust and disdain on the man who not only sold land to their former chattel, but lived himself among them and taught their children with the aid of white women whom he brought from the hated north and England.

But, if they thought the project was doomed to failure, they were mistaken. Inspiration of Warner doubtless helped [the] determination of the new freedmen to make a life for themselves . . . , and leadership of one of their own race was beneficial. Harmon Unthank, himself a former slave, was that leader of their own race. Older residents of that section, who were toddlers when their fathers bought lots from the Philadelphia Friends, still refer to him as "the boss." Unthank himself was one of the early purchasers of a lot on the sub-division, a courthouse record in 1871 showing that he acquired one of the association's tracts for the sum of $50. Three years later, he built on this land, on what is now McCulloch street, a large two-story house, which still stands there and . . . only recently passed from

possession of the family by sale. His son, Jasper, is recorded as purchasing two of the lots, one in 1869 for $95, a second in 1887 for $60.

Unthank as Sales Agent

No doubt Unthank became sales agent for the association in the home ownership undertaking, for Warner remained only a few years and went on to establish other negro schools in this state and Tennessee. Certainly by his own example of industry and thrift, "the boss" encouraged his fellow freedmen in developing a stable type of citizenry, which has, through successive generations, worked diligently and been self-supporting, educated its children in public schools and in colleges, and stayed out of police court and jail.

Today in visiting the section, which has long since become a part of the incorporated part of Greensboro and is one of the most populous sections, it is difficult to go back in retrospect to the days of its genesis in a wooded country tract, or to trace mentally the steps of its early development.

Fortunately, a word picture of Warnersville, which must have been written less than a quarter century after John Barringer bought the first lot in 1868, has been preserved. Henry Stanley Newman, an English Friend, visited this country, and his journey through North Carolina was described in letters which he wrote back and had published in *The Monthly Review*. The clipping bears no date, but the visit is thought by local Friends to have taken place about 1890.

How Englishman Saw It

"I have been today to Warnersville," wrote Newman, "visited the coloured people in their houses, examined their garden plots, seen their school house and their church, and can bear testimony to the thriving character of their population. They number between 500 and 600 people, all coloured. Warnersville has extended far beyond the original purchase of Yardley Warner when he commenced the project about 1869. They have about 200 coloured children attending their school. They have a good house as a residence for the school teacher, who has two well qualified assistants. I find that in the adjoining city of Greensborough there is a very friendly spirit between the white people and the coloured. Coloured men are occupying several public offices, and a number of them are successful men of business, managing their own stores."

That success had not been acquired without diligent application of thrift and industry. Unthank's only living daughter, Alice V. Reynolds, wife of a Winston-Salem school principal, recalls, "My father went to work at 6 a.m. and worked until 6 p.m. He arose at 4 a.m. and worked his garden which supplied his family, the neighbors who had none, and all that the children could sell to make their own money. That's the way we dressed ourselves. We had every fruit and berry that grew. I got up every morning and set out plants until time to go to school. He had considerable land and used large tracts for a garden."

Wonder as to how people who were so recently released from slavery without a dollar in their possession, could find the means to pay even the small charge which the Friends made for the land and be able to build houses on their lots was set at rest by the statement of Mrs. Reynolds that her father, a carpenter, worked at a spoke and handle factory

for 30 years, and the further recollections of Hannah Moody Payne, 76 year-old woman who still lives in Warnersville, although not on the tract originally bought by her father, that most of the men worked in this factory. It was operated by McMann and Crane, who had been officers in the union army and stopped off in Greensboro after the war. Wagon spokes[,] handles and dogwood shuttleblocks[,] were made in this factory by the labor of negro men. An interesting sidelight is that this Greensboro product was used by the English in their wagon trains during the Boer war.

Talked With Unthank

Newman's account speaks of Unthank: "As I entered Warnersville I spoke to a middle-aged coloured man, and found it was Harman (Harmon) Unthank, an old slave and special friend of Yardley Warner, who has had the management of the property from the first and ever since the surrender has been a member of the County School Board. One day he was asked what was the name of the coloured settlement, and he did not know what to say. But when he went home it occurred to him to call it Warnersville, and next day, being himself a carpenter, he got a board, and asked one of the teachers to paint on it in large letters Warnersville. The board was then fixed on a post at the schoolhouse. The name got into the newspapers, and the town has since held fast to the name in honor of its founder."

In contrast to that visit is one paid some 35 years later, when the widow of Yardley Warner came from Philadelphia to North Carolina to attend a memorial service for him at Springfield meeting, where his grave is marked by the simple stone that the unworldly Quakers seem to favor. Notes that the 80-year-old Anne E. Warner made following that visit in 1926, when she planned to write a biography of her husband, were sent from Philadelphia by her son, J. Yardley Warner, with other materials for information in preparation of this article.

Newman's description of the Warnersville of about 1890 continues: "In the center of the front line of houses stands the mission house, where George and Emmie Dixon[2] and Miss Swinborne, of England, resided as teachers of the freedmen after the war. Their names are still held in grateful remembrance. On the walls of the little parlour are portraits of coloured philanthropists like Frederick Douglas. The coloured people are not reckless spendthrifts, but many of them are very saving, and one man who has saved up enough money to purchase four of these lots is described as 'miserly.' The fruit trees are now in abundant bearing, and the tall Indian corn is freighted with heavy ears. The gardening is what we in England should consider rough, but this is by no means peculiar to the coloured people."

This paragraph from Newman's letter further bears out recollections of Unthank's daughter and of Hannah Payne, who refers to "the boss" of the project as "Cousin Harmon." Hannah Payne, even after the passing of 70 years, remembers the mission house where the white teachers lived in the midst of the negroes they risked ostracism to teach. She remembers, too, the schoolhouse which stood on a site now occupied by a two-storied brick business building at the corner of Ashe and McCulloch streets, back of which she lives. The white women lived in two houses on Ashe street. She herself went to the original school and remembers Yardley Warner. How long she attended the school she does not remember, but when it was torn away, she went to "Bennett school," located at Five Points where St. Matthew's Methodist church now stands. There she was taught by another white man, "Mr. Steele," whom older Greensboro people will recall as the father of Wilbur Daniel Steele. This day school, of course, was the beginning of

the present Bennett college.

Later Taught By Negroes

But, back to Warnersville. This 76-year-old woman recalls that the school started by Yardley Warner was later taught by negroes who grew up in the community and went away to be educated. She was a pupil there of two of her cousins, Alice Davis, daughter-in-law of Unthank, and Lizzie Gibson, daughter of Yancey Gibson, who in 1871 bought one of the Friends' lots for the sum of $25. The two had gone to school at Hampton Institute.

In fact, these new landholders, so recently slaves who in most cases could not read or write, must have been inspired by their benefactor to give their children the advantages of education for the records show that the majority of them not only sent their children to the private schools which the northerners established and the local government later took over, but to the various colleges and institutes which sprang up for higher education of the negroes. Hampton institute in Virginia [and] Livingston college at Salisbury were attended by many, and later when Bennett college was established in Greensboro, still greater numbers studied there as day students. Many of them became teachers in their own community, an instance of the type of service which was apparent in the community from the beginning being extended to the second generation and found currently in Hannah Payne's daughter, Sylvia P. Ruff, who is a teacher in the Moore school of the Greensboro system, and lives with her mother on McCulloch street in the very heart of Warnersville.

60 Per Cent Entered College

"About 60 per cent of the children went to college and returned after graduation to teach the children in Warnersville and in other schools in North Carolina," Alice Reynolds recollects. "Hampton institute was well represented at that time, later Bennett College. Groups of women learned trades, and taught the children free. The men learned trades also."

One more glimpse of the Warnersville of that day is given in the Newman article. This has to do with the important phase of the religious life of the people.

"In the evening," wrote Newman, "I had a meeting with the coloured people in their own church in Warnersville. Dr. Benbow (Dewitt Clinton) kindly introduced me, remarking that I represented the Friends in England, who had subscribed so much after the war to help to educate the freedmen. The people themselves welcomed me as 'Yardley's friend.' The singing was exquisite. They have marvelously beautiful voices, and it reminded me of the Jubilee Singers from Fisk university we used to listen to in England. I then gave my address. 'You made one good point that just suited our people,' said a shining African afterward. 'What was that?' 'You told us about Jesus being a carpenter, and that he made all labour honourable, and that is just what our people need to understand.' Their coloured pastor, Rev. R.C. Campbell, offered a fervent prayer at the end for the Society of Friends: 'O Lord, they stood by us in the hour of our sorrow and distress and difficulty: do Thou, dear lord, stand by them now, and prosper them in all their efforts. They helped and taught us when we did not know what to do; do Thou help them and give them good success in all they are doing throughout the world for the welfare of their fellowmen. As I bowed and listened I thought that the benediction and prayer of the great coloured race on our behalf was availing before

the Throne of Heaven."

Maintained Law and Order

Newman may have consciously made his point about the Carpenter of Nazareth with the knowledge that most of the black men in his audience worked from 6 o'clock in the morning until 6 o'clock at night as carpenters in a factory run by two Yankee army officers. The building in which he spoke was doubtless the Methodist Church, which Unthank bossed like he did the rest of the community, his daughter recalling this with the comment, "Around the church he maintained law and order at all times."

In fact, the former bondman must have been the dynamo which made the experiment that was Warnersville work. Warner did not remain there long, moving on to other fields -- to England to raise money for his negro schools, to Tennessee and other parts of North Carolina to establish these schools. But the negro "boss" stayed there and, trusted and respected by his fellows, guided them until his death in 1894. That he held the confidence and esteem of the white people as well is manifest in the number of public offices which he held. The Newman account refers to him as being a member of the county school board. His daughter says, "He was interested in every improvement in Greensboro, and was on the board of the First National bank and attended every meeting. He was a Mason. Few things were done for the upbuilding of Greensboro without first consulting him. Albion W. Tourgee, the writer, was one of his intimate friends, and in his book, 'Bricks Without Straw,' my father was one of the characters."

Fact of Unthanks' friendship with Tourgee is not offered as guarantee of the black man's high standing with the white people who were native to the community, for Tourgee, who came in with the second Yankee invasion, that of the carpetbaggers, was despised, and he and his family were either shunned or openly reviled. However, there is sufficient other evidence of Unthank's good repute with the white people, and the Tourgee rating is only indicative of the scope and versatility of his friendships.

Took in Homeless Girls

One of his services to his own race was in taking homeless girls into his home, his daughter recalls. Perhaps that was why he built a house so large for a man of his race at that time. "He was an employment head," this daughter recalls, "and sent many girls to good homes all over the state."

Hannah Payne recalls that her family lived in the Unthank home until they could get their own two-room house built. Her father, Nicholas Moody,[3] through Unthank, a cousin of his wife, heard of the Warnersville project and moved his family there from Surry county, purchasing a lot for $235, the records of 1872 show.

The 76-year-old Mrs. Payne is the only one of Moody's daughters now living. A list of the names of the original purchasers of the freeholds in Yardley Warner's retreat found her remembering most of them, where there little houses stood, which are still in possession of the families [and] what has happened to the children of those ex-slaves.

Many Names Recalled

For instance, Yancey Gibson's[4] property on Doak street is today in possession of his granddaughter, Mamie McGibbony; Harmon Unthank's son, Jasper,[5] lived across the street from him, but none of that leading family is now left in the community; James Jones, who bought a lot in 1872 for $220, was a Methodist preacher, who brought up a family of educated children, the only living one being Mrs. Cora Hughes,[6] a leader in her race, who now lives in New York city; Mangum Walker, purchaser in the same year of a lot for $173, has a son, Charles,[7] still living in Greensboro; Grace McLean, one of the few women who took advantage of the home owning opportunity, buying a lot for $25, was twice married, first to Waddy, a singer, who was the father of the late Dr. James C. Waddy, and then to Anderson Nelson,[8] a teacher in the Warnersville school, later known as Ashe Street and now as J.C. Price school; Allen Hairston's[9] wife is living now on the same site at the corner of South and Ashe streets which he purchased with Jack Gorrell[10] in 1873; Solomon Williams'[11] property is still in the family, and is occupied by Lillian Cummings; Orpheus McAdoo, who in 1878 bought a lot with a house already on it for $183, had sons who became one of the world's pioneer troupes of negro musicians, touring Europe and establishing an opera house in Melbourne, Australia; and Thomas Jackson's[12] lot, bought in 1884 for $40, is still in the family.

But Jackson's son, also Thomas, can speak for himself. Born in 1883, he lives in a neat white frame house on the lot on Orchard street which his father bought from the Philadelphia Friends. Tom left Greensboro when he was 16 to become a cook in an Atlantic City hotel, and after 10 years there and in New York, returned to Greensboro and was head chef at Woman's college for a like period. Now he does landscaping for other people, truck farming and chicken raising for himself. He is too young to remember Yardley Warner or the beginning of Warnersville.

Others listed in Guilford courthouse records as purchasers of Warnersville tracts from the Philadelphia Friends are Jonathan W. McAdoo, Alfred Adams,[13] Constantine Davie, Charles Albright,[14] James Howell, Charlotte Gibson,[15] Washington Gorrell,[16] Matt Weatherly, Lydia Thompson and Albert Keiser.

Other Home-Owning Projects

Sprinkled among the same records are copies of other deeds from the northern bodies of Friends showing that in smaller scale home owning projects were started in Friendship, Oak Ridge and Jamestown townships. Only a few families were represented in each community.

In fact, the Warnersville enterprise was only one of many established by the hardworking Warner for the benefit of negro freedmen. The son in West Grove, Pa., who bears his name, writes, "My own personal recollection of him is very slight since I was only four years old when he died, but my mother told me that with money collected from Friends in England, Ireland and Philadelphia, he was able to establish 40 normal schools for freedmen in the states of North Carolina and Tennessee, in one of which I was born in 1881, known as Warner's institute."

Memoranda left by the widow who at the time of her death in 1929 was attempting to prepare his biography, includ [ed] an outline of the activities of Yardley Warner from 1873 to the time of his death in 1885, which is indicative of the extensive efforts of this one man on behalf of the negroes.

"1873 -- Visited England with sick brother, travelled round amongst Friends pleading cause of Freedmen's schools. Attended quarterly meetings all over country. Interceded(?) Friends and raised large sums to send to U.S.A. per R. Cadbury.

"Germantown, 1874 -- Southern journey visiting schools in Virginia, Georgia and Tennessee and North and South Carolina. Dalton, Ga., Knoxville, Tenn., Clinton, Friendsville, Morristown, Jonesboro, Tenn.

"1876 -- England again, raised more funds to send back to Philadelphia for colored schools. Engaged in Pales (?) mission, Wales, where he taught children, did temperance work. Married A.E.W.

"1877 -- To U.S.A. In 1881 took charge of Jonesboro Normal school. (This is no doubt the place where son, J. Yardley, was born.)

"1883 -- To Bush Hill, N.C., died 1885."

Warners Always Walked

Bush Hill was a few years after the death of Warner renamed Archdale. Friends there remember from their childhood days the Philadelphia Friend and his English wife and their small sons who lived at Bush Hill, and attended meeting at Springfield.

"They always walked and looked tired and bedraggled," one who was a contemporary of the Warner lads recalls. "The other Friends always had carriages and rode to meeting, but not the Warners. I'm afraid even the Friends were not always as thoughtful as they might have been of these people whose work with ex-slaves made them outcasts by the other white people."

Warner's work with freedmen there was in teaching a school in a negro community called then, and now, Little Davie. One old negro interviewed there remembers "Mr. Warner" and the school which he taught. Warner's teaching must have been advanced for the time and for the group which made up his classes, for he owned a skeleton which he used in teaching biology, and this he bequeathed to Will Blair who also used it in his own teachings for many years.

Dying of typhoid fever at Archdale, Yardley Warner is buried at Springfield Meeting. The dimming inscription on the modest little stone reads, "Yardley Warner, Born in Bucks county, Pa., 11th month, 2, 1815. Died in Bush Hill, N.C., 1st month, 7, 1885."

The North Carolina Prohibitionist, published at Bush Hill on January 29, 1885, carried this brief obituary: "The subject of this notice is Yardley Warner, who died at his home in this place, on the 7th day of this month of erysipelas and fever."

"Deceased had been laboring amongst the colored people of this neighborhood for more than a year. He was a kind hearted Christian, thoroughly devoted to his work, in which he engaged from a sense of duty. Always ready to

befriend the poor and oppressed, he was nonetheless ready to give of his means to every laudable enterprise. The afflicted family has the sincere sympathy of the entire community in this, the time of their sore bereavement, in the loss of one so dear to them."

He had taught at Little Davie until three weeks before his death, and the work "in which he engaged from a sense of duty" was taken up by his devoted wife. After teaching at Little Davie for a short time, however, she returned to England, taking her three small sons with her.

The customary sale of one's possessions after death left in the Archdale community a momento of Yardley Warner which gives another picture of him than that of the stern Quaker, who with earnest intensity devoted his life to an unpopular cause and left an intangible but lasting worthwhile memorial in the character of industrious and educated negro citizens of Greensboro's Warnersville section. Bought by Eli Mendenhall at the Warner sale, and given to his own children, this other memento of the humanitarian as a father, it has been placed in the Springfield Museum. It is a Noah's ark, complete with painted animals, lovingly carved by hand from wood by Yardley Warner for his little sons.

Notes

[1]Richard Cadbury (1835-1899) was the second son of the founder of the famous Cadbury chocolate company, John Cadbury.

[2]George Dickson, age 60, professor, born in England, along with wife Eunice of Massachusetts, age 40, were recorded in the 1870 census for Friendship Township, Guilford County, NC, p. 78. Yancey Gibson, noted below, resided with them.

[3]Nicholas Moody, age 47, worker in the spoke factory, was recorded in the 1870 census for Morehead Township, Guilford County, NC, p. 220.

[4]Yancey Gibson, age 65, farm worker, was recorded in the household of George Dickson in the 1870 census for Friendship Township, Guilford County, NC, p. 78.

[5]Jasper Unthank, age 50, Pullman car porter, was recorded in the 1900 census for Morehead Township, Guilford County, NC, ed 56, sheet 13b.

[6]James Jones, age 27, carpenter, was recorded in the 1870 census for Morehead Township, Guilford County, NC, p. 220. Cora Jones Hughes, Jones' daughter, was listed in his household, age 5 months.

[7]Mangum Walker, age 35, laborer, waas recorded in the 1880 census for Morehead Township, Guilford County, NC, p. 237. His son Charles, age 8, was listed in his household.

[8]Grace M. Nelson, age 48, wife of Alexander G. Nelson, was recorded in the 1900 census for Greensboro ward 5, Guilford County, NC, ed 56, sheet 3b. James Waddy, age 19, was listed in the same household.

[9]Allen Hairston, age 30, laborer, was recorded in the 1880 census for Morehead Township, Guilford County, NC, p. 236.

[10]Jack Gorrell, age 50, employed in a brick yard, was recorded in the 1870 census for Morehead Township, Guilford County, NC, p. 222.

[11]Soloman Williams, age 38, laborer, was recorded in the 1880 census for Morehead Township, Guilford County, NC, p. 237.

[12]Thomas Jackson, age 30, laborer, was recorded in the 1880 census for Morehead Township, Guilford County, NC, ed 119, p. 233.

[13]Alfred Adams, age 56, carpenter, was recorded in the 1880 census for Morehead Township, Guilford County, NC, p. 236.

[14]Charles Albright, age 34, railroad depot watchman, was recorded in the 1870 census for Morehead Township, Guilford County, NC, p. 220.

[15]Charlotte Gibson, age 58, occupation keeping house, was recorded in the 1870 census for Morehead Township, Guilford County, NC, p. 219.

[16]Washington Gorrell, age 36, brick mason, was recorded in the 1870 census for Morehead Township, Guilford County, NC, p. 220.