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Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Historic Structure Report

Final Submission

October 2024



Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument

Historic Structure Report

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Cover: View of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home from the street looking northeast. Photograph by BBB.

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Foreword

We are pleased to make available this Historic Structure Report for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument, part of the ongoing effort to provide comprehensive documentation for the landscapes and historic structures of the National Park Service.

The success of this project is due in large part to the staff of Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument, who are devoted to the protection and interpretation of this important resource. Multiple people at the park have been instrumental in providing support for this project, including Nora Katz, Historian, and Nathaniel Simmons, Supervisory Facility Operations Specialist.

We would like to thank the staff of Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners for their thorough research, rigorous existing conditions documentation, and carefully considered recommendations: Principal Jennie Gwin, Project Manager & Preservation Architect Lucy Moore, and Katie Hummelt, Preservation Specialist. The Park would also like to thank Interior Region 2 Historical Architects Ronda Bernstein and Arin Streeter for their work as Contracting Officer's Representatives and as primary NPS regional liaisons on this project.

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Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument
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1 Developmental History

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

The purpose of this Historic Structure Report (HSR, project) is to research, document, evaluate, and provide treatment recommendations and guidance for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home, a National Historic Landmark. A concurrent Cultural Landscape Report (2024 CLR) supports this HSR.

The HSR includes:

- A summary of the home's historical background and context
- Documentation on the home's chronology of development and use
- Physical descriptions and condition assessments of the home's architectural features
- An assessment of significance and integrity
- A summary of treatment requirements
- Summaries of the alternative treatments considered
- Documentation of the ultimate treatment and use
- Recommendations for treatment

Management Summary

Use Summary

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument is located at 2332 Margaret Walker Alexander Street (formerly Guynes Street) in Jackson, Mississippi. It is significant at the local, state, and national levels for its association with Medgar Wiley Evers and Myrlie Beasley Evers, an African American couple who made major contributions to the civil rights movement. It is also significant as the site of Medgar Evers's assassination on June 12, 1963.

The home and the surrounding neighborhood were built by and for African Americans. Real estate developer Winston J. Thompson and builder Leroy Burnett built the Evers home in 1956 as part of the Elraine subdivision, a neighborhood of Ranch-style houses in northwest Jackson. The Ranch style was common amongst 1950s suburban single-family residential developments.

In 1956, Medgar and Myrlie Evers purchased the lot on Guynes Street, and their house was constructed, incorporating design features selected by the Everses. The family moved in sometime before Christmas of that year. The couple lived in the home for six years with their three young children. On June 12, 1963, Medgar Evers was assassinated in their driveway. The following year, Myrlie Evers moved the family to California and rented the house to tenants for the next thirty years before donating it to Tougaloo College, a historically Black college, in February 1993.

Tougaloo College operated the home as a museum and interpretive site, overseeing a rehabilitation of the home in 1995 and a second rehabilitation in 2013.

In 2019, the John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (Dingell Act) authorized the establishment of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument as a unit of the National Park Service (NPS). The National Park Foundation provided funds to help transfer the house from Tougaloo College to the NPS on June 18, 2020. On December 10, 2020, the Department of the Interior announced the establishment of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument in Jackson, Mississippi.

The site continues to operate as an interpretive site, offering tours and sharing information about the Everses and their role in the civil rights movement in Jackson, Mississippi, and beyond.

Management Objectives

To help manage and operate the site, the project team developed management objectives to determine the desired condition and appropriate treatment of the home, responding to contemporary needs while preserving the historic structure as a valued cultural asset.

The project team developed the management objectives using the HSR Statement of Work developed by the NPS, previous management documentation provided by the NPS, the HSR site visit in November 2022, and collaborative discussions with the park and region (Interior Region 2: South Atlantic–Gulf). See the 2024 CLR for site-wide management objectives.

Management objectives for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument include:

- Preserve the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home as an interpretive site. Selectively restore features to the home's period of significance.
- Improve visitor access to the home.
- Improve sustainability.
- Improve resiliency to natural hazards.

Methodology Summary

To prepare this HSR, the project team conducted desktop research, archival research, oral history interviews, and field survey to document the home's history, significance, and character-defining features and assess existing conditions.

Working closely with the NPS, the project team established treatment requirements consistent with the established management objectives. The team then evaluated treatment alternatives for the overall treatment approach and for character-defining features related to:

- Visitor access and universal design
- Sustainability
- Resiliency

Based on management objectives and treatment options, the NPS determined the ultimate treatment would be rehabilitation, which would allow some modifications to character-defining features where essential to the home's use as an interpretive site. To this end, the project team developed treatment recommendations, emphasizing the preservation of character-defining features and recommending modifications only when necessary to support management objectives.

The project team did not include mechanical, electrical, plumbing, structural, fire protection, life safety, building envelope, or hazardous materials experts. Treatment options and recommendations were based on architectural observations, and they reference recommendations provided by engineers in the 2021 Condition Assessment by Lord Aeck Sargent, which is included in the Appendix. Treatments also include recommendations for further studies, including paint analysis, the investigation of the building envelope using temperature and moisture analysis, and probes to understand the underlying structure of the Roman brick veneer wall.

Organization of Historical Data

Medgar and Myrlie Evers are nationally significant figures whose lives have been chronicled in books and films, and their home in Jackson, Mississippi, has been documented in local, state, and national landmark designations. Part 1 - Chapter 2: *Historical Background and Context* of the HSR brings together three historical narratives: the lives of Medgar and Myrlie Evers as nationally significant civil rights leaders (Section 1: *The Evers Family*); the regional historic context (Section 2: *Regional Historic Context*); and the development of the Everses' home and neighborhood (Section 3: *The Evers Home and the Elraine Subdivision Development*). Historic photographs, plans, and newspaper articles accompany the narratives and provide additional information on the Evers family.

Section 1: The Evers Family

This section opens the chapter in order to provide a foundational understanding of the lives and work of Medgar and Myrlie Evers. It provides a short biography of the Everses and summarizes their personal histories, civil rights activism and leadership, and the dangers they faced. It also provides an account of their lives in their home and neighborhood and of the assassination of Medgar Evers in their family driveway. It briefly summarizes Myrlie Evers's life and work after leaving Jackson as well as the lives of the couple's three children.

Section 2: Regional Historic Context

This section provides a history of the region and context in which the Everses' neighborhood was developed. It summarizes the primary historic periods from the earliest known human presence to the civil rights era. This historical context section provides a background for the civil rights work of Medgar and Myrlie Evers and the development of the neighborhood.

Section 3: The Evers Home and the Elraine Subdivision Development

This section provides a history of the African American builders who developed the Elraine subdivision and the Evers home. It describes the ways in which the investigation into Medgar Evers's assassination took place within the landscape. It also provides a summary of changes within the city, neighborhood, and home during the periods in which it was used as a rental home (1965-1992), as a museum by Tougaloo College (1993-2019), and as a National Monument (2020 to present).

Historic Designations

In December 2016, the Secretary of the Interior designated the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House a National Historic Landmark (NHL). In March 2019, it was designated the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument and brought under the ownership of the National Park Service. See Figure 1–1 for a list of designation documents associated with Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument.

Designation Document	Designation Date	Property Name	Significance Level	Criterion	Themes/ Associations	Period of Significance
Medgar Evers Historic District						
Jackson Local Ordinance	Feb. 07 1994	Medgar Evers Neighborhood Historic District	Local	-	Civil Rights Movement; Medgar Evers & Margaret Walker Alexander	-
NR13000737	Aug. 02 2013	Medgar Evers Historic District	State	Criterion A	Community Planning & Development; Ethnic Heritage: Black; Social History	1955 - 1963
				Criterion B	Medgar Wiley Evers & Dr. Margaret Alexander	
				Criterion C	Architecture – Ranch-style	
Medgar and Myrlie Evers House National Historic Landmark						
Jackson Local Ordinance	June 03 1992	Medgar Evers Assassination Site	Local	-	Medgar Wiley Evers	-
Mississippi Landmark (049-JAC-4507-NR-ML) Book/Vol. No: V.4268, pg. 111	Designated: Nov. 09 1993 Listed: Mar. 11 1994	Medgar Evers House	State	Criterion A	Medgar Wiley Evers	-
NR00001459	Dec. 05 2000	Medgar Evers House	State	Criterion A	Ethnic Heritage: Black Social History	1956 - 1963
				Criterion B	Medgar Wiley Evers	
NHL 100000791	Designated: Dec. 23 2016 Listed: Feb. 16 2017	Medgar and Myrlie Evers House National Historic Landmark	National	Criterion 1	Site of Medgar Evers's Assassination	1956 - 1964
				Criterion 2	Medgar Wiley Evers; Myrlie Beasley Evers	
				NHL Themes	II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements,	
					2. Reform Movements	
					IV. Shaping Political Landscape	
					1. Parties, protest, and movements	

FIGURE 1–1. Designation documents associated with Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument (source: DHM, 2023).

Treatment and Use

The Dingell Act, signed into law on March 12, 2019, authorized the establishment of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument "to preserve, protect, and interpret for the benefit of present and future generations resources associated with the pivotal roles of Medgar and Myrlie Evers in the American Civil Rights Movement."

There is currently no General Management Plan (GMP) for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument. However, the recommended treatment approach for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home is rehabilitation, as characterized in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties*. The rehabilitation treatment approach calls for the preservation of character-defining features, protecting the integrity of the home while allowing for reversible modifications that support its functionality and use as an NPS unit.

As a National Historic Landmark, the home is also subject to Section 106 (54 U.S.C. § 306108) and Section 110 (54 U.S.C. § 306101) of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, and its implementing regulations at 36 Code of Federal Regulations [C.F.R.] part 800 16 U.S.C.

54 U.S.C. § 306107 - Planning and actions to minimize harm to National Historic Landmarks states:

> Prior to the approval of any Federal undertaking which may directly and adversely affect any National Historic Landmark, the head of the responsible Federal agency shall, to the maximum extent possible, undertake such planning and actions as may be necessary to minimize harm to such landmark, and shall afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment on the undertaking.

Section 106 Guidelines, 36 C.F.R. § 800.10 Special requirements for protecting National Historic Landmarks states:

> (a) Statutory requirement. Section 110(f) of the act requires that the agency official, to the maximum extent possible, undertake such planning and actions as may be necessary to minimize harm to any National Historic Landmark that may be directly and adversely affected by an undertaking. When commenting on such undertakings, the Council shall use the process set forth in § § 800.6 through 800.7 and give special consideration to protecting National Historic Landmarks as specified in this section.
>
> (b) Resolution of adverse effects. The agency official shall request the Council to participate in any consultation to resolve adverse effects on National Historic Landmarks conducted under Sec. 800.6.
>
> (c) Involvement of the Secretary. The agency official shall notify the Secretary of any consultation involving a National Historic Landmark and invite the Secretary to participate in the consultation where there may be an adverse effect. The Council may request a report from the Secretary under section 213 of the act to assist in the consultation.
>
> (d) Report of outcome. When the Council participates in consultation under this section, it shall report the outcome of the section 106 process, providing its written comments or any memoranda of agreement to which it is a signatory, to the Secretary and the head of the agency responsible for the undertaking.

Project Scope and Methodology

The scope of work and methodology used to complete a HSR includes a concise description of the following: (1) purpose of the project, (2) issue(s) to be addressed in the report, (3) level of investigation required to complete the work, (4) limitations defined in the project agreement, (5) process for conducting the work and the techniques used to complete it, and (6) format for the report.

Project Scope

The HSR includes the following sections:

Part 1: Developmental History

Chapter 1: *Introduction* provides a brief summary of the project context, goals, process, and conclusion.

Chapter 2: *Historical Background and Context* provides a brief history of Medgar and Myrlie Evers; their work in the civil rights movement at the national and state levels, which brought them to Jackson, Mississippi; their home; and its designers and builders.

Chapter 3: *Chronology of Development and Use* provides a timeline of the home's original construction, modifications, and use based on historical documentation as corroborated by physical investigations.

Chapter 4: *Physical Description and Conditions Assessment* provides an architectural description based upon non-destructive physical investigation of the home and a summary of existing conditions, followed by detailed descriptions and photos of the observed architectural conditions, organized by building element and material. The narrative is supplemented by existing condition drawings.

Chapter 5: *Significance and Integrity* provides a statement of significance and identifies a period of significance based on the home's 2015 NHL nomination. It lists the home's character-defining features and includes an evaluation of integrity for the historic property.

Part 2: Treatment and Use

Chapter 6: *Requirements for Treatment* outlines compliance requirements to applicable laws and regulations surrounding issues of life safety, fire protection, energy conservation, abatement of hazardous materials, and universal accessibility.

Chapter 7: *Alternatives for Treatment* presents and evaluates alternative approaches to help determine the ultimate treatment.

Chapter 8: *Ultimate Treatment and Use* discusses and analyzes the ultimate treatment and use of the home as defined in the NPS planning documents.

Chapter 9: *Recommendations for Treatment* addresses all of the character-defining historic materials and features that are identified in Part 1 - Chapter 4: *Physical Description and Conditions Assessment* and describes a treatment approach to each of them.

Methodology

This report was completed by a project team that included architects, historic preservation specialists, and project managers (Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners), architectural historians (ERO Resources), and contract managers and landscape architects (DHM Design).

The project team conducted desktop research, archival research, oral history interviews, and field survey to document the home's history, significance, and character-defining features; assess existing conditions; and provide appropriate recommendations for treatment.

The team documented, surveyed, and assessed the existing conditions of the home during a field visit on November 8, 2022. The character-defining features of the home were determined through the field survey and informed by NPS Preservation Brief #17, *Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Character as an Aid to Preserving Their Character*. The project team developed a list of building features and materials that were based on prior documentation and photographs provided by the NPS, then conducted a condition assessment. The condition assessment is part of a larger administrative process known throughout the Federal government as the Asset

Management Process. The NPS and other Federal agencies apply this process to their historic property portfolio in an effort to determine the condition of certain structures, guide the management process, and ensure that structures are maintained in good condition.

The project team assessed the building features using Qualitative Condition Ratings to determine if they were in good, fair, or poor condition. Building features were also assigned a Maintenance Deficiency Rating of minor, serious, or critical. This allows for the development of immediate, short-term, and long-term treatment strategies. The HSR uses these industry-wide standards for the assessment criteria.

The development of treatment recommendations is based on the condition and deficiency ratings of the features and the selected treatment approach, in coordination with the NPS. All recommended treatments meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and *NPS-28: National Park Service Cultural Resource Management Guidelines* as they pertain to historic buildings. All treatments are intended for general execution by trained historic preservation professionals.

Conditions Assessment

The project team examined the home's exterior and interior, noting conditions of all architectural systems. The team also looked for clues that informed the building chronology and indicated changes over time. Survey was limited to what was visible without destructive investigation or the use of lifts. As the team did not include structural or mechanical/electrical/plumbing (MEP) engineers, the architectural team reviewed a structural and MEP analysis provided in the September 2021 Condition Assessment, completed by Lord Aeck Sargent (see Appendix), and noted any variation from that assessment.

Research

The NPS provided many primary and secondary reference documents, including a 1995 Historic Structure Report and renovation drawings, a 2006 Architectural Conservation Assessment, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and NHL nomination forms, and a 2021 Condition Assessment. The team also reviewed other secondary sources including Myrlie Evers's memoir *For Us, the Living*, first published in 1967, just four years after her husband's assassination.

ERO Resources conducted archival research and oral history interviews. Senior architectural historian Chris Geddes and historian Leslie Moore visited Jackson, Mississippi, on October 24-28, 2022. Geddes and Moore completed research at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH), the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and Tougaloo College Archives.

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Papers at MDAH contain multiple family photos taken both inside and in front of the house, documenting architectural details and interior furnishings as well as exterior landscaping. Receipts in the collection provide information on purchases the family made. Additionally, bank books show donations/tithes to the Everses' church, memberships, newspaper and magazine subscriptions, house payments, and more. Memoirs, local histories, interviews, and newspaper articles provide information and context on the neighborhood and the Evers family.

Geddes conducted oral history interviews, formal and informal, with the following individuals:

- Keena Graham, Superintendent at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Historic Monument

- Reena Evers-Everette, daughter of Medgar and Myrlie Evers

- Robert Pittman, the son of a store owner on Delta Drive and a trial witness

- Minnie Watson, Primary Docent at the at the Medgar Evers Museum, which was run by Tougaloo College at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers home from 1993 to 2019. The interview was short as Watson was ill. She recommended that the project team speak with the maintenance department at Tougaloo College. The project team spoke with C. Erskine Brown, Assistant Vice President of Facilities and Real Property Management at Tougaloo College as of 2024. Brown did not have personal experience with the property and confirmed

that Tougaloo College had shared all related files with the NPS.

- Eulah Peterson, former Mayor of Mound Bayou (2017-2021) where Medgar and Myrlie Evers lived prior to Jackson. The telephone conversation did not yield any significant information about the Evers family while they lived in town.

Preservation Architect Lucy Moore (with project team) conducted an interview with Lawson Newman, who is the president of WFT Architects and was project architect for design and preservation work at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home for over 20 years. He was project architect for the 2013 renovation of the home and worked closely with his predecessor, who completed the 1995 HSR and renovation. Lucy Moore spoke with Lawson Newman at noon on November 9, 2023, by phone. In the fall of 2023, Lucy Moore explored the possibility of an interview with Kelle Menogan, the Vice President of Facilities and Real Property Management at Tougaloo College from 1993 to 2019, but was advised that he was in poor health.

Summary of Findings

Existing Conditions

The conditions assessment found the home to be in overall good condition with a high level of integrity, retaining many character defining-features.

Key issues observed include:

- Reports of moisture in the crawl space. The project team did not observe moisture during the November 2022 site visit, but the 2021 Condition Assessment notes water was found in the crawl space and reports high levels of mold detected in the interior air.

- The Roman brick veneer wall at the south (front) façade is bowing towards the street. Water damage was visible on the inside face of this wall in Bedroom 3. The NPS repaired the interior damage, but water issues are likely to continue until the exterior wall is treated.

- The home does not provide an accessible visitor entry and experience.

Treatment Recommendations

The continued use of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home as a museum is a change from its original use as a residence. Because of this change in use, rehabilitation is the recommended treatment. Rehabilitation calls for the preservation of character-defining features and protection of the integrity of the home while allowing reversible modifications that support its function and use as a National Monument open to the public.

The baseline treatment approach for all character-defining features is preservation. The ultimate treatment approach of rehabilitation allows for select modifications to character-defining features to accommodate the change in use from residence to museum. Treatment alternatives were developed in relationship to the management objectives including:

- Improve visitor access to the home.

- Improve sustainability.

- Improve resiliency to natural hazards.

Recommendations for Further Study

The NPS should consider the following future studies as part of its treatment approach.

Paint Analysis

No detailed paint analysis has been undertaken at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home. The current exterior paint color is based on paint chips obtained and viewed by WFT architects in 1994. The light green color was verbally confirmed by builder Leroy Burnett and Myrlie Evers-Williams, but no paint color, number, or name was documented. The NPS undertook a visual paint analysis of exterior paint samples in summer 2023 and identified a top layer of light green paint and a secondary layer of dark green paint. See Appendix for the NPS paint analysis memo. The NPS should undertake a detailed paint analysis of painted exterior and interior surfaces to determine original paint colors and finishes and provide a better understanding of building chronology.

Building Envelope and Mechanical Studies
The project team did not include mechanical engineers or building envelope performance experts. Before the NPS undertakes treatment of the mechanical system or building envelope, a mechanical study and an envelope study should be completed by the relevant experts. The NPS should also have a moisture risk analysis (using Wufi software) performed.

Exploratory Investigation
Exploratory investigation of the Roman brick veneer wall at the south (front) façade should be undertaken prior to fully developing a treatment approach. This would include the removal of a small number of bricks (probes) and should be evaluated by a structural engineer.

Additional Interviews
Interviews with descendants of builders Winston J. Thompson and Leroy Burnett could provide additional information on the home's construction.

Interviews with tenants from the Tenant Period (1965-1992) and their descendants could provide additional information and documentation on the home in that period.

Archival Research
The project team interviewed Lawson Newman at WFT Architects. Tougaloo College consulted with WFT Architects on projects at the home for more than twenty years. Newman indicated WFT Architects has hard copies of project files related to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home in flat files that were inaccessible as of 2024 due to office renovations but offered to share them with the NPS when they are accessible again. The project team put Newman in touch with Park Historian Nora Katz. The NPS has been in touch with Newman and shall request access to these files at a later date.

Additional information on the Everses and their lives in the home, including interior photographs, may be available in the Myrlie Evers-Williams '68 Collection at Pomona College in Claremont, CA.

This project included limited research at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH), including a cursory review of the Medgar Wiley and Myrlie Beasley Evers Papers, 1900-1994. Additional research in this collection, and in other collections related to the civil rights movement, may provide further information.

Previous Reports

The following is a list of previous reports on the Evers home, referenced in this HSR:

- TIC# 191451: "Medgar Evers Home Renovation - Historic Structure Report," 1995.
- TIC# 191452: "Medgar Evers Museum - Architectural Conservation Assessment," 2006.
- TIC# 191453: "Condition Assessment," 2021.
- TIC# 187838: "Foundation Document," 2023.

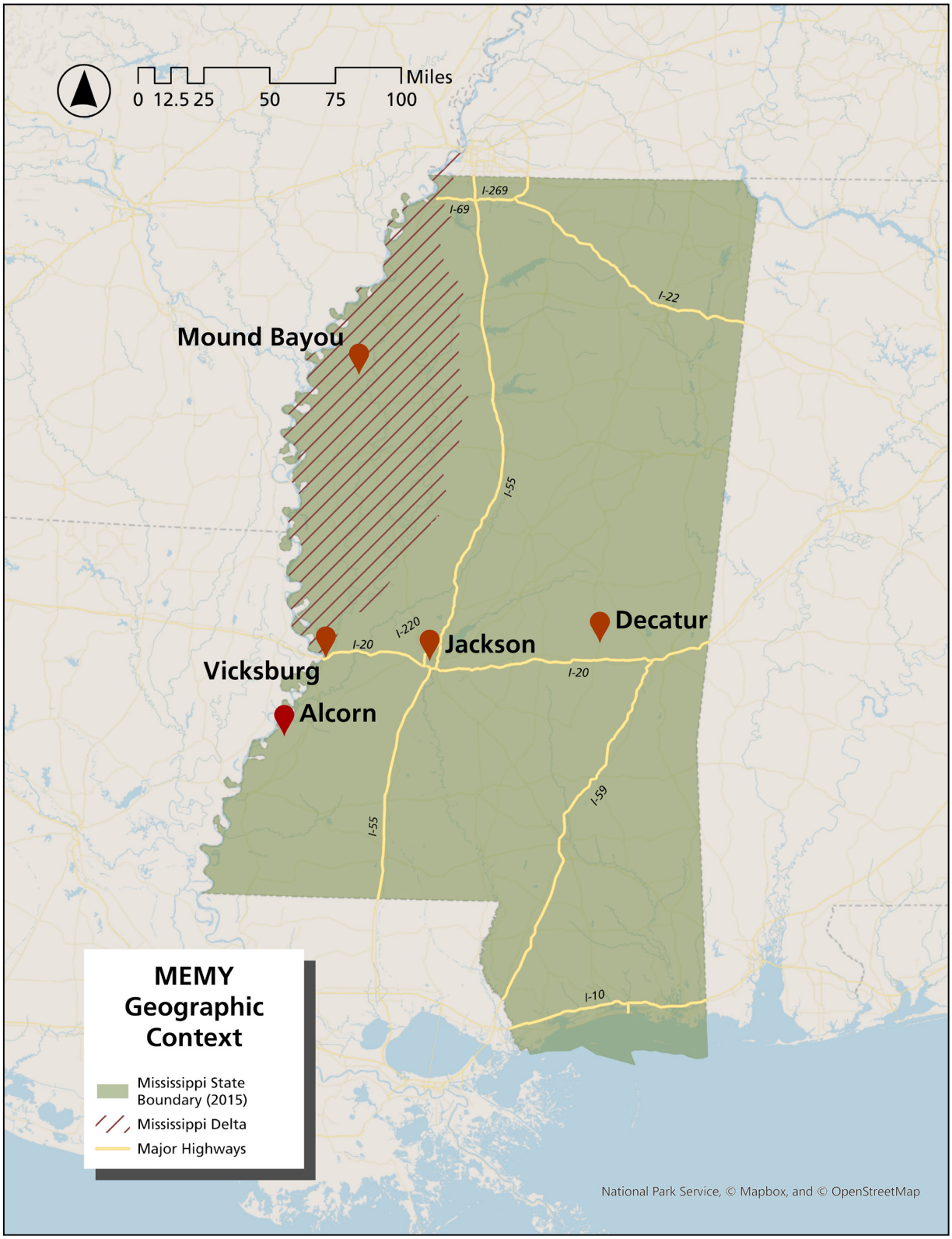


FIGURE 1–2. Map of Mississippi with key locations related to the lives of Medgar and Myrlie Evers noted. The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument is located in Jackson (source: NPS, 2023).

Administrative Data

Preferred Structure Name:	Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument
Other Structure Name:	Medgar Evers Home; Medgar Evers House
Address:	2332 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive Jackson, MS 39213
Park:	Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument
Region:	Interior Region 2: South Atlantic–Gulf
FMSS Number:	Home: 254168 Landscape: 254169
CRIS Number:	1170034
National Monument Designation Date:	March 12, 2019, under the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act
Structure State:	Mississippi
Date of Construction:	1956
Architect/Builder	Winston J. Thompson, developer Leroy Burnett, builder
Status:	National Historic Landmark; contributing structure within the Medgar Evers Historic District.
Cultural Resources Data (or Related Studies):	Cultural Landscape Report is being developed concurrent to the Historic Structure Report
Current Use:	Interpretive Site
Period of Significance:	1956-1964
Significance:	The home is associated with the lives of civil rights leaders Medgar and Myrlie Evers. The period of significance starts in 1956, when the house was built, and ends in 1964 when Myrlie Evers moved to California with her three young children.

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Chapter 2: Historical Background and Context

Note: The 2024 HSR and CLR were prepared simultaneously and share an identical "Historical Background and Context" Chapter.

Introduction

Medgar and Myrlie Evers are nationally significant figures whose lives have been chronicled in books and films, and their home in Jackson, Mississippi, has been documented in local, state, and national landmark designations. Building on existing documentation, this chapter brings together three historical narratives: the lives of Medgar and Myrlie Evers as nationally significant civil rights leaders (Section 1: *The Evers Family*); the regional historic context (Section 2: *Regional Historic Context*); and the development of the Evers home and neighborhood (Section 3: *The Evers Home and the Elraine Subdivision Development*). Historic photographs, plans, and newspaper articles accompany the narratives and provide additional information on the Evers family.

Section 1: The Evers Family

This section opens the chapter, providing a foundational understanding of the lives and work of Medgar and Myrlie Evers. It includes a short biography of the Everses and summarizes their personal histories, civil rights activism and leadership, and the dangers they faced. It also provides an account of their lives in their home and neighborhood, including the assassination of Medgar Evers in their family driveway. It briefly summarizes Myrlie Evers's life and work after leaving Jackson as well as the lives of the couple's three children.

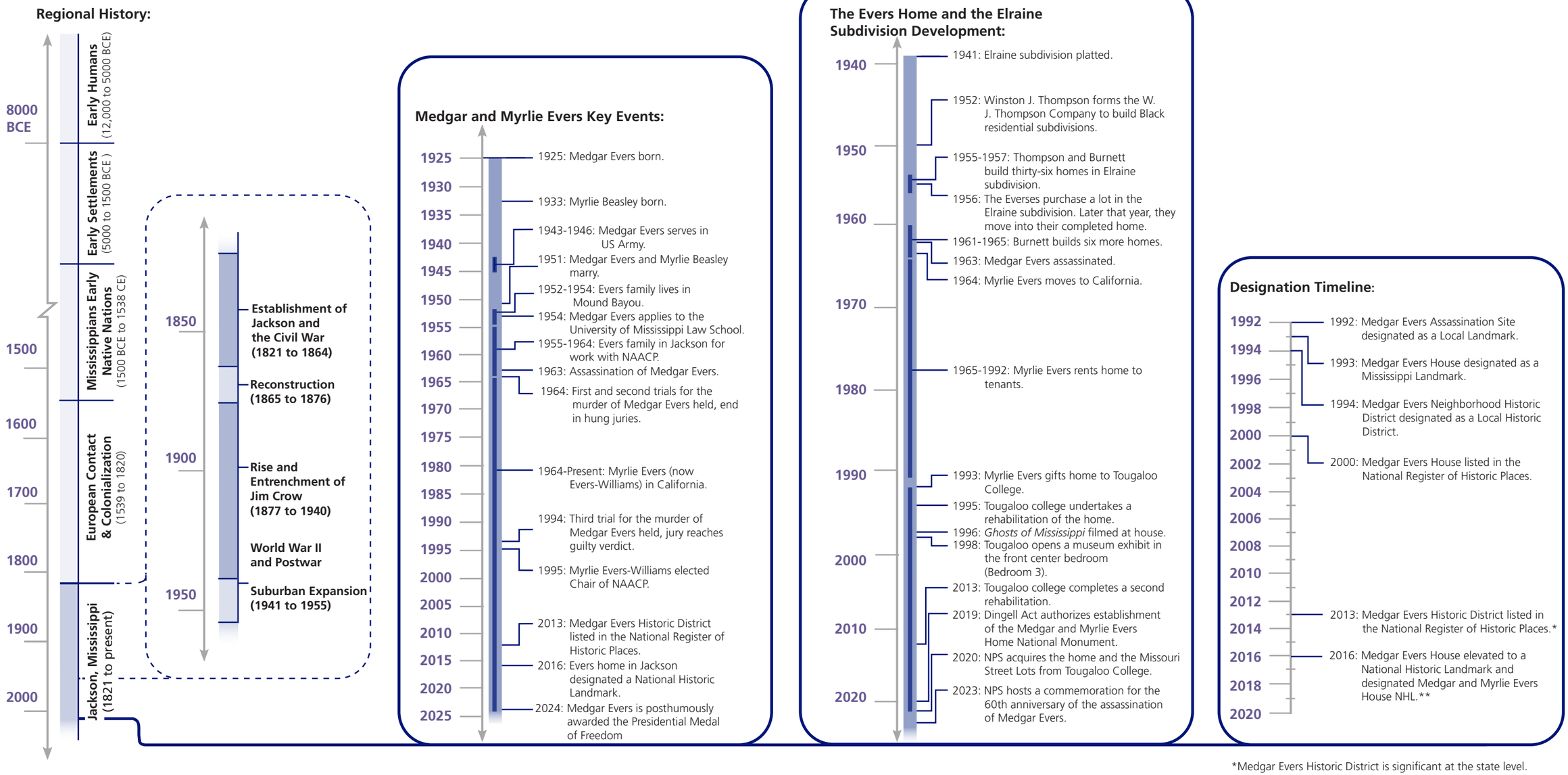
Section 2: Regional Historic Context

This section provides a history of the region and context in which the Everses' neighborhood was developed. It summarizes the primary historic periods from the earliest known human presence to the civil rights era. This historical context section provides a background history of the civil rights work of Medgar and Myrlie Evers and the development of the neighborhood.

Section 3: The Evers Home and the Elraine Subdivision Development

This section provides a history of the African American developers who built the Elraine subdivision and the Evers home. It describes the ways in which the investigation into Medgar Evers's assassination took place within the landscape. It also provides a summary of changes within the city, neighborhood, and the Evers home during the periods in which it served as a rental home (1965-1992), as a museum by Tougaloo College (1993-2019), and as a National Monument (2020 to present).

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*Medgar Evers Historic District is significant at the state level.

**Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL is significant at the national level.

FIGURE 2–1. The timelines above illustrate the developmental periods of the cultural landscape and key dates and periods in the development of the Evers home and the Elraine subdivision as well as in the lives of Medgar and Myrlie Evers (source: BBB Architects/DHM Design, 2024).

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Section 1: The Evers Family

Introduction

This section opens the chapter in order to provide a foundational understanding of the lives and work of Medgar and Myrlie Evers. It provides a short biography of the Everses and summarizes their personal histories, civil rights activism and leadership, and the dangers they faced. It also provides an account of their lives in their home and neighborhood and of the assassination of Medgar Evers in their family driveway. It briefly summarizes Myrlie Evers's life and work after leaving Jackson as well as the lives of the couple's three children.

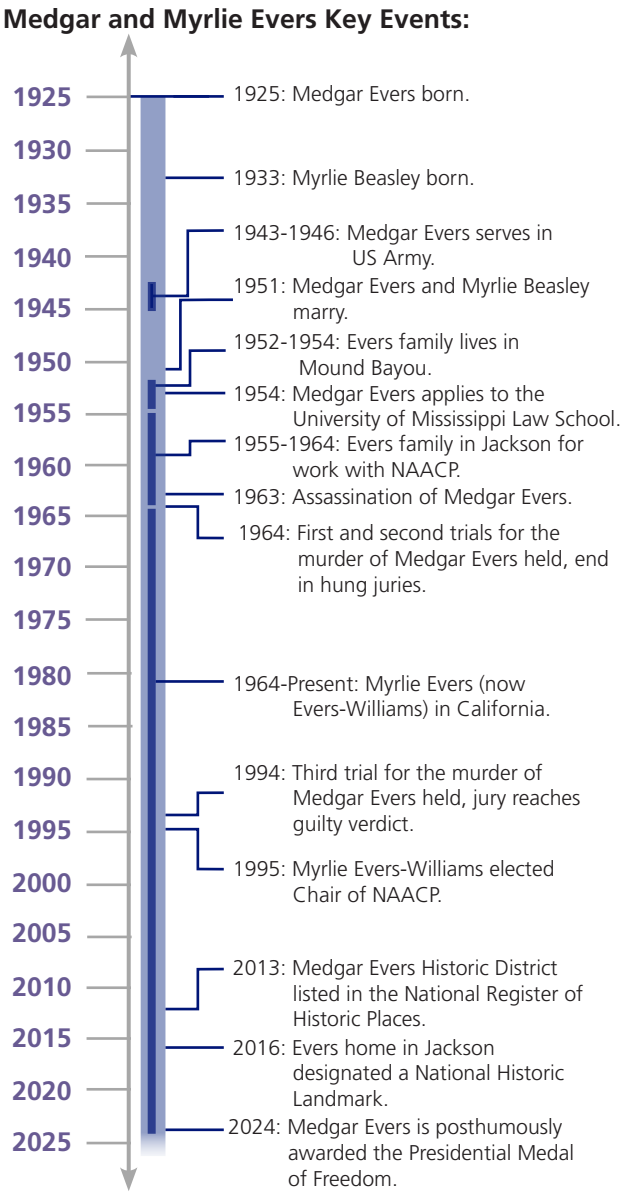


FIGURE 2–2. The timeline illustrates the significant events and periods associated with Medgar and Myrlie Evers (source: BBB Architects/DHM Design, 2023).

Early Years (1925–1952)

Medgar and Myrlie Evers were born in Mississippi during a period of racial segregation and violent oppression. White Mississippians held political control over the state's African American citizens—who constituted a majority of the state's population—through a system of exclusionary laws and racist violence. White Mississippians had adopted the Mississippi Constitution of 1890, which established a poll tax and literacy tests for voting, effectively disenfranchising Black citizens.[1] They continued to enact Jim Crow laws and customs, including a myriad of policies and practices designed to racially segregate all aspects of life and control how and where African Americans could eat, sleep, and live.[2] White Mississippians also kept many African Americans in a cycle of poverty through sharecropping, a system of land tenancy that replaced slavery through work agreements that exploited farm workers to the benefit of predominantly White landowners.

From 1882 to 1968, Mississippi had the highest number of lynchings in the United States.[3] Between 1882 and 1927, White Americans murdered at least 517 African Americans in the state.[4] In the face of brutal oppression, many Black Mississippians and Black southerners fled to states in the North, Midwest, and West. In a movement scholars termed the Great Migration, approximately six million African Americans between 1910 and 1970 left their loved ones and communities in the South in search of improved political, economic, and social opportunities. However, many more stayed in the South and found ways to resist.[5] The Great Migration transformed Mississippi's African American community from a majority to a minority of the state's total population. Statistics on African American migrants from Mississippi in the early and mid–1900s are limited. According to the US Census, the African American population as a percentage of the state's total population dropped

1 *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population, Volume III, Part 1, Alabama-Missouri*, (Washington DC: US Census Bureau, 1932), https://www.census.gov/library/ publications/1932/dec/1930a-vol-03-population.html; The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, "Mississippi Subversion of the Right to Vote," 1964, accessed August 2024, https://www.crmvet.org/docs/msrv64.pdf; Ronald G. Shafer, "The 'Mississippi Plan to keep Blacks from voting in 1890: 'We came here to exclude the Negro,'" *The Washington Post*, May 1, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2021/05/01/mississippi-constitution-voting-rights-jim-crow/.

2 Neil McMillen, *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press,1989), 7-9.

3 "History of Lynching in America," NAACP, accessed August 2024, https://naacp.org/find-resources/history-explained/history-lynching-america#:~:text=The%20highest%20number%20of%20lynchings,not%20occur%20in%20every%20state.

4 Myrlie Evers-Williams and Manning Marable, *The Autobiography of Medgar Evers: A Hero's Life and Legacy Revealed Through His Writings, Letters, and Speeches* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2005), 3-4.

5 "The Great Migration (1910–1970)," The National Archives, accessed August 2024, https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/migrations/great-migration. For more on the Great Migration, see Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns* (Random House: 2010).



FIGURE 2–3. Medgar Evers with his grade school graduating class at Newton Vocational School. Medgar Evers is in the back row, sixth from the left (source: Jennifer Baughn, "Mississippi's Equalization Schools: Modernism and Segregation," Mississippi Department of Archives and History, February 2022).

from 56.2% in 1910 to 45.3% in 1950 and to 36.8% in 1970.[6]

Medgar Wiley Evers

Medgar Wiley Evers was born in the small town of Decatur, Mississippi, 70 miles east of Jackson, on July 2, 1925, to James and Jessie Evers. Jessie Evers was a domestic worker and James Evers an entrepreneur who ran a variety of businesses, ranging from a small farm to a family funeral home. They raised seven children on their own land and were self-sufficient, community-minded, tenacious, and resilient in the face of White violence and intimidation.

As a child, Medgar Evers and his siblings enjoyed playing, hunting, and fishing together. Their childhood was disrupted by episodes of anti-Black racism. White Mississippians insisted on segregated public schools, and they underfunded schools for African American children.[7] Medgar Evers and his siblings attended the nearby one-room primary school in Decatur. For high school, they attended Newton Vocational School because the high school in Decatur did not allow Black students (Figure 2–3).[8] Newton Vocational School was a Rosenwald school; one of more than 600 schools in Mississippi constructed for African American students through a program launched and largely funded by Jewish American businessman Julius Rosenwald (Figure 2–4).[9] The Evers children were forced to walk, often long distances, to school because transportation was not provided for Black school children. White children

6 Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, "Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals By Race, 1790 to 1990, and By Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For The United States, Regions, Divisions, and States," US Census Bureau, https://web.archive.org/web/20141224151538/http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0056/twps0056.html.

7 LaTanya L. Dixon, "From Statehood to School Desegregation: Racial Disparities in the Public Education of Mississippi, 1817–1969," *AERA Open,* 6, no. 4 (October 2020), 1–15.

8 Myrlie Evers and William Peters, *For Us, the Living* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1967), 20-21, 23; Michael Vinson Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr* (Fayetteville, Arkansas: The University of Arkansas Press, 2011), 15-20.

9 Jennifer Baughn, "Mississippi's Equalization Schools: Modernism and Segregation," Mississippi Department of Archives & History, February 2022; William P. Hustwit, "Rosenwald Schools,"*Mississippi Encyclopedia*, accessed August 2024, https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/rosenwald-schools/.

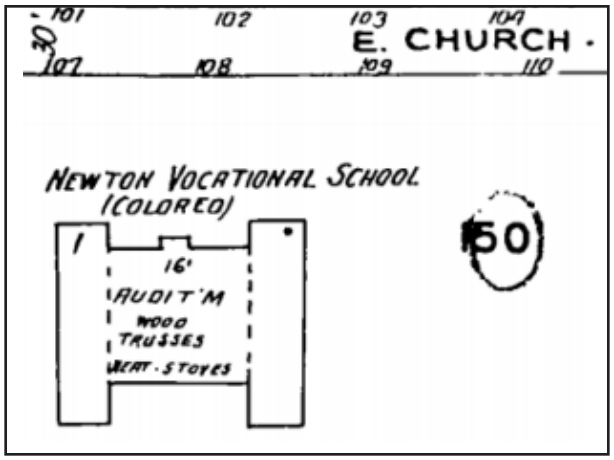


FIGURE 2–4. Newton Vocational School as illustrated on a Sanborn map (source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Newton, Newton County, Mississippi, Sanborn Map Company, Apr, 1927 in Baughn, "Mississippi's Equalization Schools").

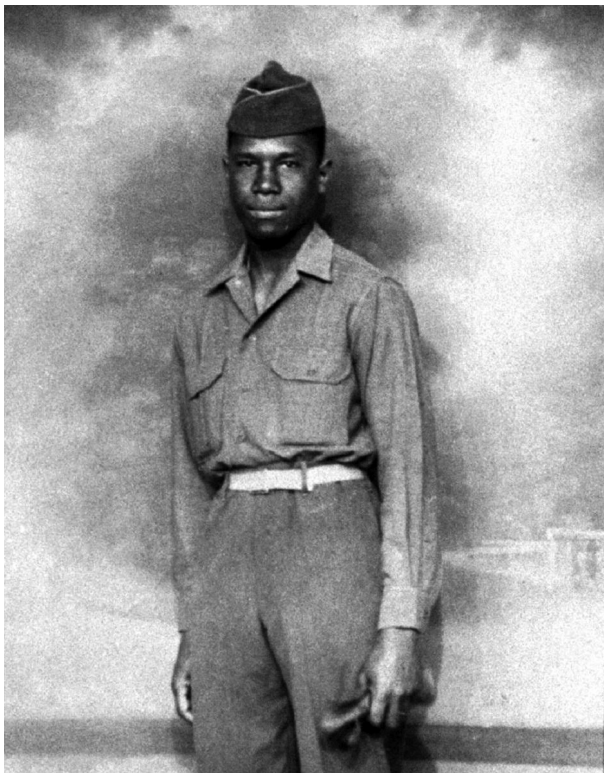


FIGURE 2–5. Medgar Evers in his United States Army Uniform in Charbourg, France, circa 1943 (source: John Storey, Getty Images).

in passing school busses regularly yelled and threw objects at them.[10]

They also experienced more violent incidents of racism. In one instance, Medgar Evers later recalled that local White men lynched a close family friend, dragging him through the streets of town before shooting him and leaving his clothes hanging in the community fairground for months as a silent warning.[11]

10 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr,* 19.

11 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 25.



FIGURE 2–6. Medgar Evers on his college football team (source: Alcorn State, accessed through Rick Cleveland, "Medgar Evers, football star before becoming civil rights champion," *Mississippi Today* (Ridgeland, MS), Feb 24, 2017, https://mississippitoday.org/2017/02/24/medgar-evers-football-star-before-becoming-civil-rights-champion/).

In October 1943, at age eighteen, Medgar Evers left high school to follow his older brother, Charles Evers, into the US Army with the expressed desire to leave the racial oppression of Mississippi (Figure 2–5). At the height of US involvement in World War II, Medgar Evers served as part of a segregated supply battalion in Belgium, France, and Germany.[12] In France, he was met with less overt racism than in Mississippi, an experience that stayed with him when he returned home at the end of the war.[13] His sister Carrie Elizabeth Evers-Jordan later recalled that he was hurt that "he had to go all the way to the back of the bus and sit down with his army uniform on [after he] don' went and fought for his country."[14]

Upon their return to civilian life, Medgar and Charles Evers were determined to cast their first votes in their home state. Mississippi had recently passed a law ending poll taxes for returning veterans. Two years prior, the US Supreme Court issued a decision prohibiting political parties from holding "White primaries," which were primary elections in which political parties only allowed White voters to participate. When Medgar and Charles Evers and four other Black World War II veterans attempted to vote in the Mississippi Democratic Party primary on July 2, 1946, an armed group of angry White men blocked their entrance to the Newton County courthouse while the county sheriff looked on and failed to intervene.[15]

In fall 1946, Medgar and Charles Evers used their servicemen benefits, provided through a law known as the GI Bill, to enroll at Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College (Alcorn College and the present-day Alcorn State University) in Jefferson County, Mississippi. Alcorn State University is the oldest historically Black land-grant institution in the country and was one of only two state colleges in Mississippi to admit African American students at the time. There, Medgar Evers completed his high school education

12 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 23-25; Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 28.

13 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 20-25; "Alcorn State Reveals Memorial of Medgar Wiley Evers," Alcorn State University Athletics, June 13, 2013, https://alcornsports.com/news/2013/6/13/GEN_0613135010.

14 Williams interview with Carrie Elizabeth Evers-Jordan, 2005 in Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 33.

15 Evers-Williams and Marable, *Autobiography of Medgar Evers,* 6-7.

and a bachelor's degree in business administration. Medgar Evers thrived as a student and was active in debate, the football and track teams, the school choir, and student government (Figure 2–6).[16] It was also at Alcorn College where Medgar Evers met his future wife, Myrlie Beasley.

Myrlie Louise Beasley

Myrlie Louise Beasley was born on March 17, 1933, in Vicksburg, Mississippi, to Mildred Washington Beasley and James Van Dyke Beasley. She was an only child, and her parents separated within a year of her birth. When her mother left Vicksburg, the family decided Myrlie Beasley would stay with her father and be raised by her paternal grandmother, Annie McCain Beasley, whom she called "Mama." A number of family members helped care for Myrlie Beasley in Vicksburg, including her father, who was a hardware store truck driver; her "Mama," a teacher; her aunt Myrlie Beasley Polk, also a teacher and for whom she was named; her uncle John Polk, the African American County Agent for the United States Department of Agriculture; her maternal grandmother, who was in the domestic service; and her great-great grandmother Martha Latham. Martha Latham was born into slavery in Mississippi about 1844. As was common and exploitative under slavery, a White man named McCain fathered Latham's son, Myrlie Evers's great-grandfather. Martha Latham lived with Myrlie and Annie McCain Beasley until Latham's passing in 1940.[17]

Myrlie Beasley's family was well-educated. Her uncle John Polk graduated from Tougaloo Southern Christian College (present-day Tougaloo College, a historically Black college), and both

16 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 26-35, 48. Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 48.

17 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 35-39; 1940 census records in Christina J. Thomas, "For Evers: Myrlie Evers-Williams," Diary of a Historian, January 29, 2013, https://diaryofahistorian.wordpress.com/2013/01/29/for-evers-myrlie-evers-williams/.



FIGURE 2–7. Myrlie Beasley, second from the left, with her high school singing group, the Chansonettes (source: NPS).

her grandmother and aunt had college training as teachers. Her aunt played the piano and organ for the Mount Heroden Baptist Church and taught Myrlie Beasley to play.[18]

Myrlie Beasley attended Magnolia High School and graduated in the spring of 1950 (Figure 2–7). She had hoped to pursue a degree in music, but neither of the two state colleges that admitted Black students in Mississippi offered a major in music. She petitioned the state for financial aid to attend an out-of-state music program but was denied. Instead, she attended Alcorn College where she studied education and music, and she met Medgar Evers her first day on campus. Medgar Evers and Myrlie Beasley began dating during her first year. They both spent the summer of 1951 working in Chicago, where they lived with their respective extended families who had moved North as part of the Great Migration. Medgar Evers proposed to Myrlie Beasley that summer in Chicago, and they married on December 24, 1951, in Vicksburg, Mississippi (Figure 2–8).[19]

Medgar and Myrlie Evers returned to Alcorn College after their wedding and lived with another couple in an apartment in a nearby housing development called Vet City.[20] Both continued their studies, and Medgar Evers graduated in the spring of 1952.

The chance to pursue high school and college educations in Mississippi, especially for African Americans at the time, was unusual. In 1950, about twenty percent of White adults had four years of high school education and roughly six percent had four years of college. By comparison, due to a racist educational system, those numbers were less than

18 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 35-39.

19 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 47-49, 50-67.

20 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 65.



FIGURE 2–8. Medgar and Myrlie Evers on their wedding day, December 24, 1951 (source: NPS).

three percent and six-tenths of one percent for African American adults, respectively.[21]

Mound Bayou (1952–1954)

In spring 1952, Medgar Evers was offered a job as an insurance salesman in Mound Bayou, Mississippi, by Dr. Theodore Roosevelt Mason Howard, a civil rights leader and surgeon who owned the Magnolia Mutual Life Insurance Company. Mound Bayou was an almost exclusively African American town of 1,300 in the heart of the Mississippi Delta (Figure 2–9).

Medgar Evers accepted the job despite Myrlie Evers's hope that she and her husband would escape Mississippi and its racial oppression for a life in Chicago. According to Myrlie Evers's later memoir, Medgar Evers "frequently professed love for the state [of Mississippi]," and "he wanted to live where there was space, not buildings, where you could hunt and fish and breathe clean air."[22] Committed to remaining in Mississippi, Medgar and Myrlie Evers moved to Mound Bayou in July of 1952.[23]

In selling insurance and collecting premiums door-to-door, Medgar Evers witnessed severe racialized poverty, worse than anywhere else in the state. It was also in Mound Bayou that the Everses met and learned from influential African American leaders fighting social and economic oppression, all while starting their own family.

The Mississippi Delta region was then (and is now) a flat, hot, fertile region in the northwest part of the state (Figure 1–2). There, predominantly White land owners forced predominantly Black men, women, and children—first as slaves and later as sharecroppers—to transform and cultivate the land into the nation's epicenter of cotton production. African Americans worked the land, but White landowners controlled almost every economic aspect of their lives, including the terms of land use, price of crops, and cost of food. Cotton was the driver of the state's economy, and Black laborers had limited employment opportunities beyond its cultivation. By the time the Everses moved to the Delta, the cotton market was in decline. White exploitation, paired with the fall of the single-crop economy, pushed many African American families into crushing poverty. Unable to find other work, Black families experienced

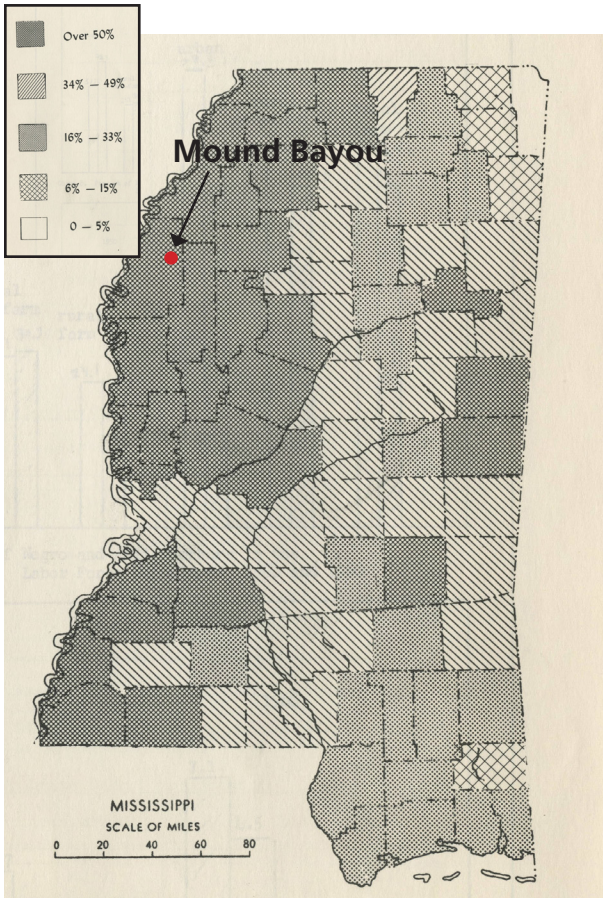


FIGURE 2–9. Map of Mississippi showing the percentage of the population that was African American, by county in 1960. Over 50% of the population in the counties surrounding Mound Bayou was African American (source: Bryan R. Dunlap, "Dunlap--Mississippi Freedom Project, 1964-1965 (Papers, 1964-1972, Z: Accessions, M2000-007, Box 2, Folder 6)." Wisconsin Historical Society. 2012. https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/ collection/p15932coll2/id/1779).

21 The United States Census Bureau, "Table 20.—Years of School Completed by Persons 25 Years Old and Over, by Color and by Sex, for the State, Urban and Rural, 1950, and for the State, 1940—Con," *General Characteristics, Mississippi*, accessed August 2024, https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1950/population-volume-2/37779777v2p24ch3.pdf, 24-29.

22 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 73.

23 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 69-73.

food shortages and increased infant mortality rates between 1946 and 1965.[24]

White landowners also exerted political and social control. White politicians, backed by violent White vigilantes, kept Black voters from the polls and Black leaders out of power. They also enforced strict racial segregation practices, limiting where African Americans could live, attend school, and seek recreation.[25]

Despite the region's culture of white supremacy, Mound Bayou was a predominantly Black community, home to Black land owners and business owners. Founded in 1887 by two formerly enslaved men, Isaiah Tecumseh Montgomery and Benjamin Titus Green, the town became a center for Black businesses, institutions, and political organizing. During the Everses' time, the town maintained connections to Black leaders throughout the state and nation, largely through relationships codified by the founding of local branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Regional Council of Negro Leadership (RCNL), headquartered in Mound Bayou.

The NAACP was founded in New York City in 1909 by a multiracial group of leaders including W. E. B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Mary Church Terrell, Oswald Garrison Villard, and Mary White Ovington. The founders aimed to secure for African Americans the rights guaranteed under the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, which ended slavery, provided equal protection of the law, and protected the right to vote for all men (the Fifteenth Amendment protected only a man's right to vote, but some NAACP leaders sought to expand that right to women as well). The first national office was established in New York City in 1910, and by 1919, membership had grown to 90,000 with more than 300 local branches, including branches in Vicksburg (founded in 1918) and Mound Bayou (founded in 1919). These early branches organized but dissolved almost immediately—their leaders

24 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 68; Mound Bayou Museum of African American Culture and History, accessed February 2023, https://www.moundbayoumuseum.com/; Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 85-88; National Park Service, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites Special Resource Study*, (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2022),13; Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press,1995),16.

25 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 38; NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites*, 13.



FIGURE 2–10. Regional Council of Negro Leadership (RCNL) meeting with Dr. Howard presiding (center) (source: David T. Beito, Linda Royster Beito, Jerry W. Mitchell, *T. R. M. Howard: Doctor, Entrepreneur, Civil Rights Pioneer* (Oakland, CA: Independent Institute, May 2018).

facing the perils of public discovery and White violence.[26]

Many White Mississippians saw the NAACP as a threat to the racial order and propagated the false assertion that the NAACP was an anti-American communist organization. During this period, American political leaders used the specter of communism and the 1917 Russian Revolution to stoke fears of immigrants, labor rights organizations, and the African American civil rights movement. In the late 1940s, the NAACP reorganized itself in Mississippi, building on the enthusiasm of Black veterans who returned from war demanding equal rights.[27]

The RCNL was founded in 1915 in Cleveland, Mississippi, ten miles south of Mound Bayou, by Dr. T. R. M. Howard (Figure 2–10). T. R. M. Howard was born in Kentucky and had moved to Mound Bayou in the 1940s to serve as the chief surgeon at the Black-owned and run Taborian Hospital. The RCNL was committed to resisting racist economic and social oppression and organized boycotts, rallies, and voting drives.[28] Because the RCNL was an organization formed in Mississippi, Black Mississippians generally viewed it with less skepticism than they did the NAACP.

Under Dr. T. R. M. Howard's mentorship, Medgar Evers joined the RCNL and met other notable African American civil rights leaders who would go on to shape both his life and the trajectory of the civil rights movement in Mississippi.[29]

These men included:

- Amzie Moore, a businessman and founding RCNL member who organized voter registration drives in the Mississippi Delta.[30]

- Dr. Emmett J. Stringer, a dentist and, beginning in 1953, president of the NAACP Mississippi State Conference.[31]

- Aaron Henry, a pharmacist and, starting in 1959, president of the NAACP Mississippi State Conference. He co-founded the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) and the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) and served as a State House Representative.[32]

- Reverend George Lee, a minister, businessman, and RCNL and NAACP organizer who was murdered by white supremacists in 1955 for openly advocating for African American voting rights. As one of his first acts as NAACP field secretary, Medgar Evers investigated Reverend Lee's murder and the cover-up by the local sheriff.

Medgar Evers's job took him all over the region selling insurance door to door and collecting premiums, largely from poor Black families. The majority of these families were sharecroppers trapped in a cycle of poverty by an economic system Myrlie Evers later described as "almost a duplication of slavery."[33] Like his mentors, Medgar Evers began to blend his professional work with civil rights activism. In efforts to help residents address their social and political oppression, Medgar Evers encouraged them to join the

26 "NAACP: A Century in the Fight for Freedom: Founding and Early Years," Library of Congress, accessed August 2024, https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/naacp/founding-and-early-years.html; Minion K. C. Morrison, "National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)," *Mississippi Encyclopedia*, accessed August 2024, https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/national-association-for-the-advancement-of-colored-people/; John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 29.

27 Dittmer, *Local People*, 29-31.

28 Biographical Notes in "Dr. T.R.M. Howard Papers, 1929-1976," Chicago Public Library, accessed August 2024, https://www.chipublib.org/fa-t-r-m-howard-papers/; Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 87-89; "Amzie Moore," Digital SNCC Gateway, accessed August 2024, https://snccdigital.org/people/amzie-moore/; John Dittmer, *Local People,* 32-33.

29 Biographical Notes in "Dr. T.R.M. Howard Papers, 1929-1976," Chicago Public Library; Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 87-89; "Amzie Moore," Digital SNCC Gateway; Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 57.

30 Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom,* 29; Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 57.

31 Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom,* 42; Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 73.

32 Payne, 57; Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 154, 239.

33 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 81.

NAACP.[34] Like his mentors, Medgar Evers traveled armed, carrying a .45 pistol under his seat for self-defense. The Everses would later keep a gun in every room of their house to protect their family.[35]

Medgar Evers excelled in his dual role as insurance salesman and grassroots organizer. Dr. T. R. M. Howard promoted Medgar Evers to district supervisor and asked him to serve as RCNL program director.[36] Medgar Evers reactivated the local NAACP branch and worked closely with Amzie Moore to grow the NAACP branch in Cleveland, Mississippi, into the second largest in the state.[37] Medgar gained valuable experience and perspective during this time. As his biographer Michael Vinson Williams describes:

> Evers learned two valuable lessons while working in Mound Bayou and its surrounding areas: the need to gain the trust of those with the most to lose in any struggle for equality and the genuine extent to which the Delta culture of oppression and violence perpetuated inequality and subservience among African Americans.[38]

While Medgar Evers was on the road, Myrlie Evers worked as a typist and ran their home. In her memoir she describes her time in Mound Bayou as challenging, with long, hot, and repetitive days. Two months into their lives there, Myrlie Evers had a miscarriage, which left her, by her later accounts, "more depressed than ever."[39]

The following summer, on June 30, 1953, Myrlie Evers gave birth to their first child, Darrell Kenyatta Evers (Figure 2–11). Despite Myrlie Evers's reticence, Medgar Evers named his son after Jomo Kenyatta, an anti-colonialist leader of the revolutionary Mau Mau in Kenya, who advocated violent resistance to British Rule.[40]

Myrlie Evers could not afford to stay home with her infant for long. As soon as she was able, she returned to work, leaving Darrell with her grandmother Annie McCain Beasley in Vicksburg, an arrangement she later described as "like leaving a part of myself."[41] Several months later, Myrlie Evers arranged for a local sitter to watch her son. With him home, she undertook the challenge of juggling the work of both a job and motherhood.[42]

In December 1952, the African American civil rights lawyer and future US Supreme Court justice Thurgood Marshall argued against segregation in schools in front of the US Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Inspired by the national anti-segregation campaign, Medgar Evers and fellow RCNL members made plans for Medgar Evers to apply to the University of Mississippi Law School, the top law school in the state with an all-White student body. Medgar Evers was the first Black applicant in its history. Medgar Evers and the RCNL members knew this would spark enormous public controversy. The university was a symbol of Mississippi's White, southern heritage. Myrlie Evers, pregnant with their second child, objected to the idea, calling it "selfish and foolish" because

34 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 58.

35 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 106.

36 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 78; Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 57.

37 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 63; Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom,* 33.



FIGURE 2–11. Myrlie Evers with son Darrell Evers circa 1953-1954, Mound Bayou, Mississippi (source: Photograph in Box 4, Mound Bayou Folder, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

38 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 58.

39 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 77.

40 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 31.

41 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 96.

42 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 92-97.

it would jeopardize their family's safety as well as Medgar Evers's work.[43]

Despite Myrlie Evers's misgivings, Medgar Evers submitted his formal application to the University of Mississippi on January 16, 1954, with Thurgood Marshall from the NAACP serving as his lawyer. Medgar Evers's brother, Charles Evers, recalled, "Most local Whites thought Medgar applying was an outrage."[44]

On September 13, 1954, Myrlie Evers gave birth to their daughter, Reena Denise Evers. On September 16, 1954, the day Myrlie Evers came home from the hospital with their daughter, Medgar Evers received a rejection letter from the Mississippi Board of Higher Learning, which cited a technicality. The Board went on to modify its admissions policies to make it even harder for Black applicants to gain admittance by requiring character references from five university alumni at a time when all alumni would have been White.[45]

Medgar Evers's campaign to integrate the University of Mississippi drew the attention of national NAACP leaders. In the spring of 1954, while Medgar Evers was awaiting a response to his application, the US Supreme Court unanimously ruled in the *Brown v. Board* case that segregated schools were unconstitutional. With the goal of enforcing the decision in Mississippi and of expanding the NAACP's membership and efforts in the most recalcitrant state, NAACP leadership decided to create a Mississippi field office. It was to be the first field office in the state, and the NAACP selected Medgar Evers as its first field secretary. On November 24, 1954, Roy Wilkins, head of the NAACP, officially offered Medgar Evers the position of Assistant Field Secretary for the state of Mississippi, to start December 15, 1954, in Jackson, the capital of Mississippi. He was offered an annual salary of $4,500 (the equivalent of roughly $50,000 in 2023, accounting for inflation). The NAACP also offered Myrlie Evers a job as Medgar Evers's secretary at a annual salary of $2,000.[46]

The position offered Medgar Evers a chance to turn his commitment to civil rights into a profession, but it also came with tremendous risk. Just three years prior, members of the Central Florida Ku Klux Klan had bombed the home of Florida NAACP field secretary Harry T. Moore and his wife, civil rights activist Harriette V. Moore. Local, state, and federal authorities did not recognize the Klan's involvement until a 2004–2006 Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) investigation, but it was clear the Moores were killed for their activism on behalf of racial justice.[47] Despite the danger, Medgar and Myrlie Evers accepted their positions with the NAACP, and made plans to move to Jackson.

43 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 75; Evers-Williams and Marable, *Autobiography of Medgar Evers,* 12; Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi: The Murder of Medgar Evers, the Trials of Byron de la Beckwith, and the Haunting of the New South* (New York City: Little, Brown & Co, 1995) 128-129; Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 91.

44 Evers-Williams and Marable, *Autobiography of Medgar Evers,* 13.

45 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 118-120; Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 78.

46 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 82; Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 137-140; CPI Inflation Calculator, United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, accessed August 24, https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm

47 Biographical sketch from "The Harry T. and Harriette V. Moore Archival Collection," National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution Online Virtual Archives, accessed August 2024, https://sova.si.edu/record/nmaahc.a2018.12?q=National+Museum+of+American+History+%28U.S.%29.+Division+of+Cultural+History&t=C.

Jackson and the NAACP (1955–1964)

Overview

In Jackson, Medgar and Myrlie Evers centered their lives around their work for the NAACP and their children Darrell and Reena Evers. As field secretary, Medgar Evers led the NAACP program in Mississippi, investigating cases of white supremacist violence and harassment, organizing voter registration drives and desegregation petitions, coordinating efforts with other local and national civil rights groups, and supporting the youth-led Jackson Movement.

As a secretary, wife, and mother, Myrlie Evers managed and edited speeches, reports, and correspondence. She was also responsible for the domestic labor that supported their daily work and lives. After two years as office secretary, Myrlie Evers left the position to focus on her home and growing family.

Together, Medgar and Myrlie Evers bought a house in a new Black suburb in north Jackson, making it a welcoming home for their growing family as well as their friends, neighbors, and colleagues in the civil rights movement.

Despite ongoing threats and several violent attacks, Medgar Evers served as NAACP field secretary for more than eight years, until he was assassinated on June 12, 1963. Following his death, Myrlie Evers and the children remained in Jackson for one year before moving to California. In that year, Myrlie Evers testified in two trials of her husband's murder, both of which ended in mistrial when the all-White juries could not reach a verdict.

Early Days

In January 1955, the Everses opened the new NAACP National Assistant Field Secretary Office, holding an official ribbon cutting on January 23,



FIGURE 2–12. View of Farish Street, 1947. Medgar Evers's NAACP office in the Big Apple Inn was located on Farish Street (source: Charles C. Mosley, Jr., Margaret Walker Center, Jackson State University).

1955, with national and regional NAACP leaders in attendance.[48]

The NAACP office was located at 507 ½ North Farish Street, above the Big Apple Inn. The Big Apple Inn was (and is, as of 2024) a family-owned and run restaurant, established in 1939 by Mexican immigrant Juan Mora.[49] The office was in the heart of the Farish Street neighborhood, the cultural and business hub for Jackson's African American community and the largest economically independent Black community in the state (Figure 2–12).

Myrlie Evers later remembered Farish Street as a place "where you could come together, where you could be treated with dignity and where you could learn entrepreneurship with the hope of spreading further."[50] The vibrancy of Farish Street has since been affected by economic disinvestment, but the building on North Farish Street that once housed the NAACP office remains, and the Big Apple Inn is still in operation.[51]

The family—which at the time included Darrell Evers (eighteen months old), Reena Evers (four months old), and their great-grandmother, Annie McCain Beasley—moved into a small, rental apartment in a large building at 1129 Maple Street, one and a half miles northwest of the NAACP office in Jackson (Figure 2–13).[52] While Medgar and Myrlie Evers ran the office, Annie Beasley cared for the children.

Six months in, the Everses relocated the NAACP office from Farish Street to the M. W. Stringer Grand Lodge, a newly built Black-owned Masonic Temple located at 1072 Lynch Street (Figure 2–14). The new location was across from the Washington Addition, a Black neighborhood in Jackson, near Jackson State College (present-day Jackson State University), which was one of only two state-run historically Black colleges in Mississippi at the time. The street was named for African American John R. Lynch, who served as speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives in 1872, and later as a three-term member of the United States House of Representatives.

Complete with office space, meeting rooms, and an auditorium, the Stringer Lodge was a nexus of African American history and organizing. It was built by the Prince Hall Masons of Mississippi and was named in honor of their founder and first Grand Master, Thomas W. Stringer, who served from 1867 to 1893. The Masons held a dedication ceremony on May 30, 1955, with a keynote speech given by Thurgood Marshall (Figure 2–15). The Stringer Lodge remains home to both the Prince Hall Masons and the NAACP as of 2024.[53]

Violent Opposition

The Everses' move to Jackson coincided with the emergence of strong White opposition to the US Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). While the NAACP saw the Court's decision as a starting point for their desegregation campaign in Mississippi, many White Mississippians saw the Court's decision as a threat to their segregated way of life. White citizens organized into Citizens' Councils (also known as White Citizens' Councils) and violently attacked Black leaders and civil right advocates.

48 Medgar Evers, "NAACP Holds Open House," (NAACP News Release, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Medgar Wiley and Myrlie Beasley Evers Papers, Box 4, Folder 1, January 1955); Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 136.

49 Courtney Ingle, "Big Apple Inn delights for over 80 Years,"*Magnolia Tribune* (Flora, MS), July 18, 2023, https://magnoliatribune.com/2023/07/18/big-apple-inn-delights-for-over-80-years/.

50 Myrlie Evers-Williams interview by Turry Flucker, Anna Hamilton, and Kate Hudson in Southern Foodways Alliance and Southern Documentary Project, "The Black Mecca of Mississippi: A Portrait of a Community," The Farish Street Project, accessed August 2024, https://olemiss.edu/projects/sfa/farish-street-project/.

51 Turry Flucker, Anna Hamilton, and Kate Hudson, "The Black Mecca of Mississippi: A Portrait of a Community."

52 The Maple Street apartments were torn down in 2009. Cheryl Lasseter, "Demolition underway at Maple Street Apartments," *WLBT*, April 8, 2009, https://www.wlbt.com/story/9883298/demolition-underway-at-maple-street-apartments/.

53 "Jackson Negro Masons Set Ground Breaking Ceremony for New Masonic Temple," *Jackson Daily News* (Jackson, MS), June 4, 1954; NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 87-88; M.W. Stringer Grand Lodge Historical Marker in Jackson, MS; Christopher Waldrip, "John Roy Lynch," *Mississippi Encyclopedia*, accessed August 2024, https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/john-roy-lynch.

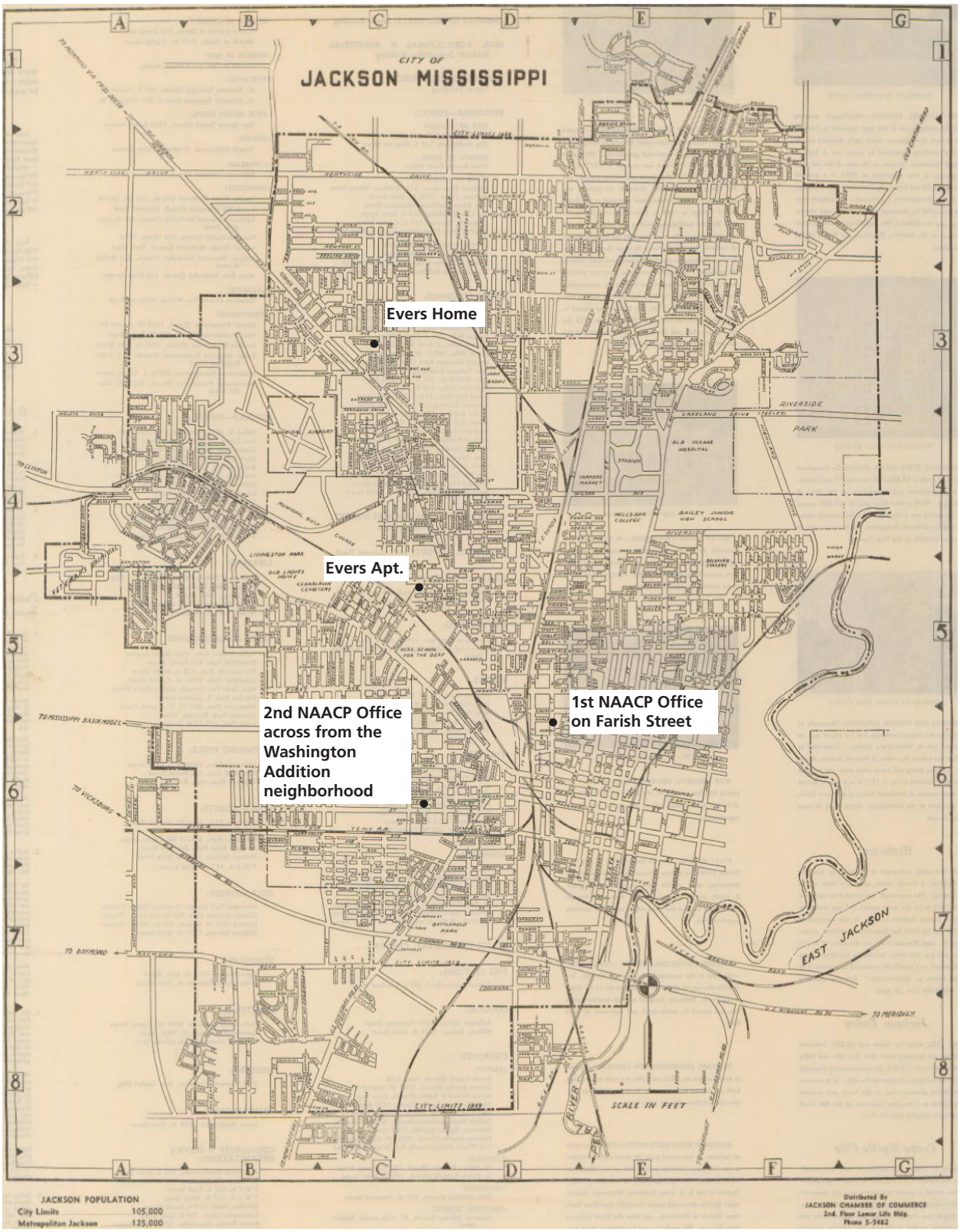
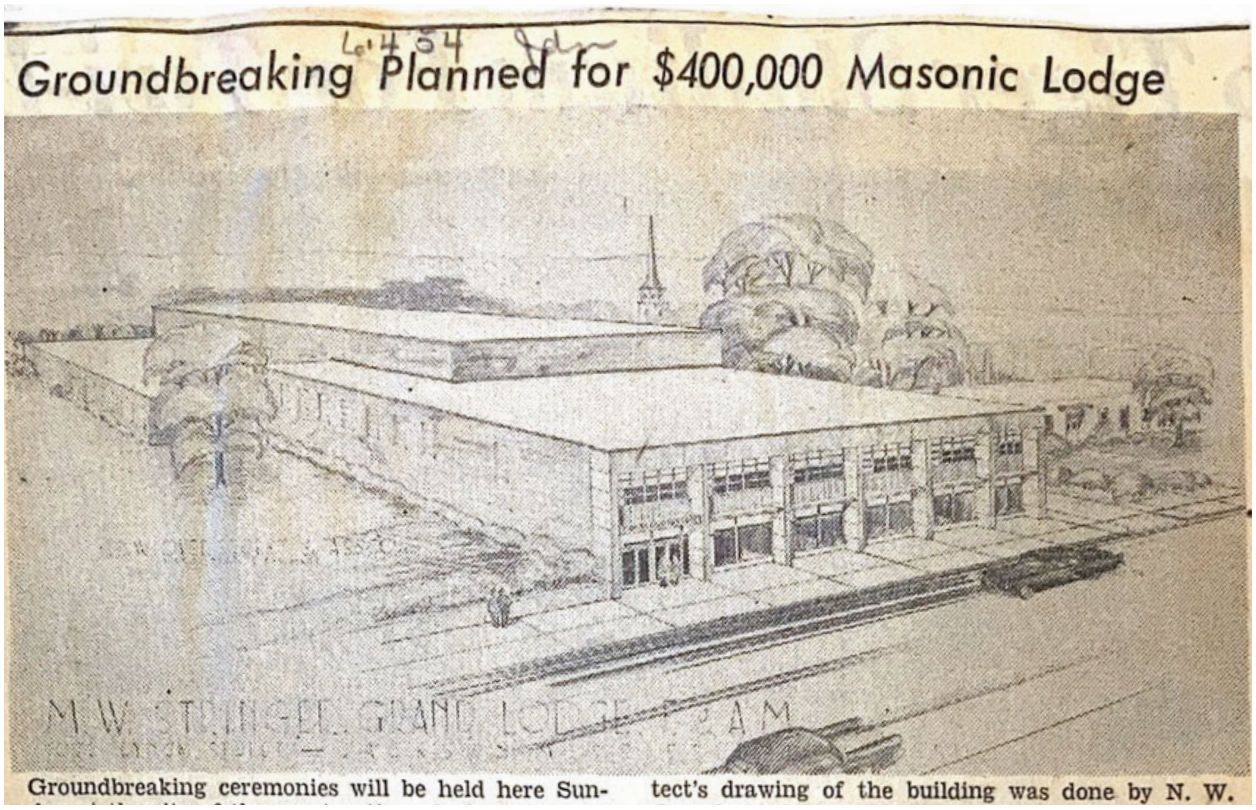


FIGURE 2–13. Map of Jackson, Mississippi, circa 1955 (source: City of Jackson, Mississippi, Jackson Chamber of Commerce, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, https://da.mdah.ms.gov/series/maps/detail/191396).


Groundbreaking Planned for $400,000 Masonic Lodge

Groundbreaking ceremonies will be held here Sun- tect's drawing of the building was done by N. W.

FIGURE 2–14. Architectural illustration of the Stringer Grand Lodge as planned in 1954 (source: "Jackson Negro Masons Set Ground Breaking Ceremony for New Masonic Temple," *Jackson Daily News* (Jackson, MS), June 4, 1954).



FIGURE 2–15. Medgar Evers (seventh from left), NAACP members, and Masons at the opening of the Stringer Lodge, May 30, 1955 (source: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Medgar Wiley and Myrlie Beasley Evers Papers, Box 4, Folder 1).

In July 1954, within two months of the Court's decision, a group of White leaders in Indianola, Mississippi, located thirty miles south of Mound Bayou, formed the first Citizens' Council. The group committed to using state and local laws to maintain segregation and uphold white supremacy. Within three months, they had 25,000 members and support from state and local leaders, elected officials, and powerful members of the press. While their stated focus was on the law, historian and former Tougaloo College professor John Dittmer noted that "through its unrelenting attack on human rights in Mississippi, the Citizens' Councils fostered and legitimized violent actions."[54]

Citizens' Council members threatened and attacked civil rights leaders and their families throughout the state, including the Everses and many of the Everses' friends and colleagues from their days in Mound Bayou, including Amzie Moore, Dr. Emmett J. Stringer, Dr. T.R.M. Howard, and Reverend George Lee. The State, including the police, the court system, and state agencies, as well as the FBI, did little to stop them.[55] Despite the ongoing risk, Medgar Evers pursued his work with the NAACP with Myrlie Evers's support from home.

In 1955, white supremacists in Mississippi meted out racial violence but were met with no accountability or justice. Between 1955 and 1959, White Americans killed at least twelve Black men and boys and were met with no justice or criminal convictions. In early 1955, White Citizens' Council members distributed a list, which came to be known as the "death list," of leading civil rights leaders whom they considered to be the greatest threats to a segregated Mississippi. It was rumored they also had a $1,000 bounty out for Dr. T.R.M. Howard.[56] Reverend Lee, who was included on the "death list," gave a speech in front of 10,000 people at a voter registration rally in Mound Bayou in April 1955. Two weeks later, he was shot and killed while driving. Local White police deemed his murder an accident despite clear evidence that he was shot.[57] Reverend Lee's widow, Rosebud Lee, insisted on an open casket.[58] In her memoir, Myrlie Evers wrote:

> I remember that after George Lee's death we all began to take [the 'death list'] more seriously ... The Reverend George Lee's name had been one of the nine, and now there were eight. One of the eight was Medgar's.[59]

In August 1955, a White man killed Lamar Smith, a civil rights activist, World War II veteran, and registered voter, in broad daylight in Brookhaven, Mississippi, sixty miles south of Jackson. The murderer was not tried or even arrested. White supremacists did not limit their violence to adults. In that same month, White men outside Money, Mississippi, tortured and killed Emmett Till, a fourteen-year-old boy from Chicago who was visiting family in the Delta.[60] Medgar Evers was instrumental in investigating Till's murder, tracking down witnesses, and providing information to the NAACP headquarters and national media. Thousands attended Till's funeral in Chicago. Just as Rosebud Lee insisted on an open casket, Till's mother Mamie Till-Bradley (later Mamie Till-Mobley) insisted on an open casket in order to "let the people see what they did to my boy," a quote disseminated in the national press. Reporters from almost 100 major newspapers covered the murder trial. Amzie Moore would later describe Till's lynching as the beginning of the modern civil rights movement. Despite clear evidence and national attention, the all-White jury found the White men who lynched Till not guilty. In December 1955, another White man killed Clinton Melton, a Black man working at a gas station. Another all-White jury failed to convict his killer.[61]

In an atmosphere of state-condoned anti-Black violence, attacks against African Americans were increasingly common and egregious. In April 1959, a White mob abducted and lynched Mack Parker, a Black man held on pretrial detention at a jail in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Despite an FBI

54 Dittmer, *Local People,* 46.

55 Dittmer, *Local People,* 45-46; Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 91-93.

56 Dittmer, *Local People,* 47, 53-54; Jennifer V.O. Baughn, "Medgar and Myrlie Evers House," National Historic Landmark Nomination Form (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2016), 19.

57 Dittmer, *Local People,* 53-54.

58 Elliott J. Gorn, *Let the People See, The Story of Emmett Till* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2018), 59.

59 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 160.

60 Dittmer, *Local People*, 47, 53-54. Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,*169.

61 Dittmer, *Local People,* 54-58.

investigation that identified members of the mob, a local and federal grand jury did not bring charges.[62] That same year, in a case that paralleled Medgar Evers's own efforts to integrate the University of Mississippi, Clyde Kennard, an African American applicant to Mississippi Southern College, was arrested on the first of a series of false charges that kept him imprisoned in harsh conditions for years. Mississippi's State Sovereignty Commission, a secret agency that operated from 1956 to 1977, with a mission to preserve segregation, had opened a file on Kennard in 1958 and facilitated the false charges and prison sentences that followed in retaliation for his efforts to integrate the university system.[63]

The Everses felt the loss of friends and community members and were themselves subject to attacks. White supremacists made threatening phone calls to their office and their home. Unknown White men and police officers followed Medgar Evers regularly while he traveled the state investigating racial violence, meeting with Black sharecroppers, or registering Black voters. When traveling, he carried a gun, and he switched cars with Myrlie Evers regularly in order to avoid being followed. According to Myrlie Evers:

> Medgar had taken to making notes as he drove of the make of car, the license number ... He didn't say so, but I knew that his idea was to leave some evidence in the event that he was killed or seriously wounded...[64]

In the spring of 1963, the threats escalated to attacks. Someone bombed the Evers home, and a White police officer came dangerously close to backing over Medgar Evers with his car.[65]

The Work, Medgar Evers

In the face of escalating White violence, the Everses continued their work. With Myrlie Evers's support, Medgar Evers and the NAACP office undertook membership drives and voter registration campaigns, led integration petitions and farm relief programs, and held regular mass meetings. He often worked alongside the national NAACP field secretary, Mildred Bond (later Mildred Bond Roxborough). They regularly traveled the state to conduct field investigations into White attacks the state ignored, including beatings, rapes, police brutality, voter discrimination, economic intimidation, and murder. Medgar Evers investigated the murders of his friend Reverend George Lee (working closely with T.R.M. Howard), Lamar Smith, Emmett Till, and Clinton Melton (Figure 2–16). In the absence of a fair judicial process, they drew national attention to the horrible conditions in Mississippi through reports to NAACP national leaders and regular press releases.[66]

According to Myrlie Evers:

> Medgar made it his mission to see that word of [Till's murder] was spread as widely and accurately as possible. Publicizing crime

62 Dittmer, *Local People*, 83-84.

63 Dittmer, *Local People*, 79-83; Williams, Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr, 163-167; "Clyde Kennard: Veteran, Student, Civil Rights Activist: 1927-1963." Americans Who Tell the Truth. Accessed September 2024. https://americanswhotellthetruth.org/portraits/clyde-kennard/.

64 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 287-288.

65 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 287-288.

66 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr,* 93; Dittmer, *Local People*, 79; Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 169.



FIGURE 2–16. Medgar Evers interviewing Beulah Melton about the murder of her husband Clinton Melton in 1955 (source: Mrs. Beulah Melton, 29, widow of shotgun-victim Clinton Melton, with her four children, being interviewed at her Mississippi home by NAACP field secretary Medgar W. Evers, 1955. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/96515033/).

and subsequent defeat of justice became a major NAACP effort.[67]

Minnie Watson, Tougaloo archivist and curator of the Medgar Evers Museum, believed that Medgar Evers encouraged Mamie Till to have an open casket funeral for her son.[68]

Medgar Evers worked with the NAACP national office to provided financial support for those targeted by the White Citizens' Councils. He oversaw the Mississippi Relief Revolving Fund, which helped Black farmers apply for loans from the Black-owned Tri-State Bank in Memphis, Tennessee, and supported the NAACP's creation of the Committee on Emergency Aid to Farmers in Mississippi in 1956.[69]

Several years into his role as field secretary, Medgar Evers was deeply pained by the ongoing White violence and frustrated with NAACP strategy, but he found inspiration in the growing youth movement. In February 1960, Black college students in Greensboro, North Carolina, staged a sit-in at the Woolworth's lunch counter, launching a wave of direct action campaigns opposing segregation. NAACP leaders worried the direct action approach would damage public opinion, but Medgar Evers saw its promise. In April 1960, he worked with student and community leaders to organize a boycott, dubbed the Easter Boycott, of White-owned businesses along Capital Street, Jackson's main commercial center. Students from local Black colleges, including Jackson State College, Campbell College, and Tougaloo College, distributed fliers that announced the boycott to roughly 61,000 African Americans. Local leaders estimated that seventy percent of African American residents participated.[70]

In the spring of 1961, Medgar Evers continued to organize with college students in a series of direct actions. Myrlie Evers would later describe them as a "change of tide in Mississippi" in which African Americans "took the offensive in the struggle for full citizenship."[71] Medgar Evers played a unique role supporting grassroots movements and connecting the efforts to the larger NAACP legal apparatus.

In March 1961, Medgar Evers supported the "Tougaloo Nine," nine college students who held a "read-in" at the Jackson Main Library to protest segregation in the city library system. As anticipated, the White librarians called the police, who arrested the students (Figure 2–17). Angered by the arrests, students at Jackson State College left class and marched to the jail. Police cut short their protest, attacking them with clubs, tear gas, and police dogs. The "Tougaloo Nine" were tried and found guilty, but the NAACP used their case to bring a lawsuit that eventually ended segregation in the Jackson Public Library.[72]

In May 1961, Medgar Evers and the NAACP helped James Meredith, a student at Jackson State College, file a desegregation lawsuit against the University of Mississippi. After a year and half of legal negotiation, Meredith integrated the very university from which Medgar Evers had once been denied admission.[73] It was a victory but one that came with a constant threat of White violence. James Meredith received death threats and had to be accompanied by US Marshals to ensure his safety during his studies.[74]

67 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 171.

68 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr,* 126.

69 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr,* 104; Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 142, 169.

70 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 181.

71 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 235.

72 Dittmer, *Local People,* 87-89; Annie Payton, "Tougaloo Nine," *Mississippi Encyclopedia*, June 11, 2018, https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/tougaloo-nine/.

73 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr,* 80, 224; Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 236.

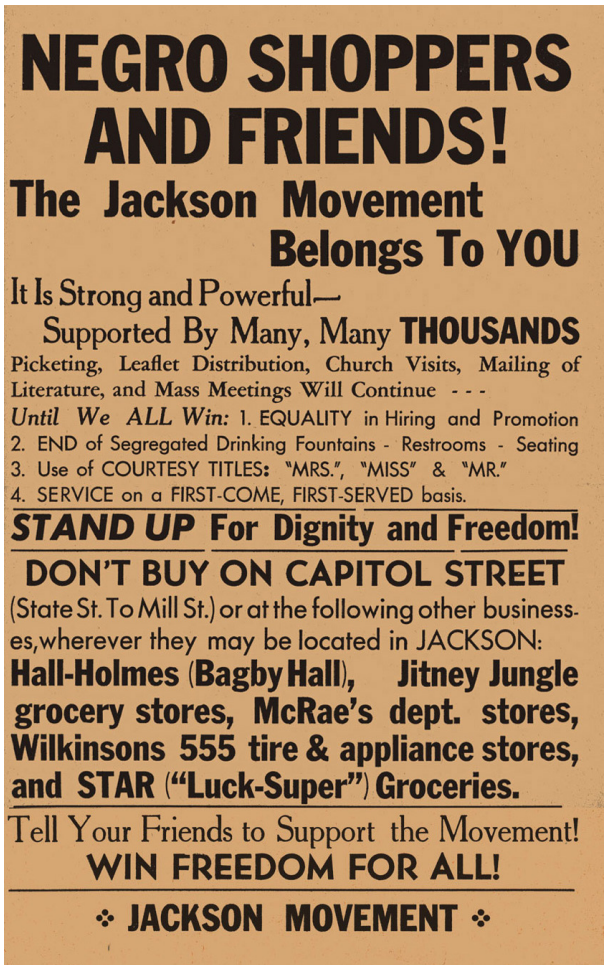
74 Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi,* 96.



FIGURE 2–17. The Tougaloo Nine arrested by police at the Jackson Public Library in 1961 (source: Mississippi Department of Archives and History and *WLBT News*, https://www.wlbt.com/story/36162936/tougaloo-nine-receive-freedom-trail-marker-for-library-sit-in/).

While local students held protests in Jackson in the spring of 1961, national civil rights groups also organized, with a focus on Mississippi. In May 1961, members of the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) came to Mississippi as part of the Freedom Rides, a movement in which activists rode buses throughout the South to protest segregation.[75] SNCC and CORE members brought a sense of urgency and commitment to direct action as a means of protest. Medgar Evers worried that their outsider status and approach would scare those Black Mississippians whose support the NAACP had long worked to cultivate. Despite his misgivings, Medgar Evers also served as a bridge. He helped young people who were arrested in SNCC-inspired protests and secured their bail money from the NAACP.[76]

75 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 218-219; John Dittmer, *Local People*, 93-95.



NEGRO SHOPPERS AND FRIENDS!

The Jackson Movement Belongs To YOU

It Is Strong and Powerful—
Supported By Many, Many THOUSANDS

Picketing, Leaflet Distribution, Church Visits, Mailing of Literature, and Mass Meetings Will Continue - - -

Until We ALL Win: 1. EQUALITY in Hiring and Promotion
2. END of Segregated Drinking Fountains - Restrooms - Seating
3. Use of COURTESY TITLES: "MRS.", "MISS" & "MR."
4. SERVICE on a FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVED basis.

***STAND UP* For Dignity and Freedom!**

DON'T BUY ON CAPITOL STREET
(State St. To Mill St.) or at the following other businesses, wherever they may be located in JACKSON:
Hall-Holmes (Bagby Hall), Jitney Jungle grocery stores, McRae's dept. stores, Wilkinsons 555 tire & appliance stores, and STAR ("Luck-Super") Groceries.

Tell Your Friends to Support the Movement!
WIN FREEDOM FOR ALL!

✣ JACKSON MOVEMENT ✣

FIGURE 2–18. Boycott flyer distributed by members of the Jackson Movement, from January 1963 (source: Archives and Records Services Division, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

Young people within the NAACP also pushed Medgar Evers and the organization to support direct action protests. From December 1962 to the spring of 1963, the north Jackson NAACP Youth Council organized boycotts of downtown businesses, calling for an end to Jim Crow practices. Medgar Evers joined their protests, which grew into the Jackson Movement, garnering support from Jackson's Black residents and the NAACP national leadership (Figure 2–18, Figure 2–19). With NAACP backing, the Jackson Movement expanded their demands, calling on the city and state to "end all state and government sponsored segregation in the parks, playgrounds, schools, libraries and other public facilities."[77] According to Medgar Evers's biographer Michael Vinson Williams:

> [Evers's] efforts were vital to the growth of the Jackson Movement and he stood at its center organizing resistance groups, strategy sessions, and financial support for those jailed in the battle to end segregation. He saw in the youth a renewed hope for change and it rejuvenated his spirit just as much as his presence bolstered theirs.[78]

By mid-May, Medgar Evers emerged as the public spokesperson for the Jackson Movement. On May 13, 1963, Jackson Mayor Allen C. Thompson dismissed the Jackson Movement's demands as unnecessary. In a local radio and television address he described Jackson as a city in which African Americans "are treated, no matter what anybody else tells you, with dignity, courtesy and respect."[79] Medgar Evers objected to this false depiction of segregated life and negotiated airtime with a local television station to respond, citing the Fairness Doctrine (a policy of the United States Federal Communications Commission that required media

76 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr,* 230.

77 Dittmer, *Local People,* 157-166; quote from a May 13, 1963 NAACP press release in Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr,* 241.

78 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr,* 227.

79 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr,* 241.

to present a range of viewpoints). Myrlie Evers recalled:

> As I watched him prepare for the speech, I felt a new surge of fear. This speech would receive widespread advance publicity. Thousands of Mississippi whites who had never seen a picture of him would now be seeing Medgar on television ... [w]hen it was over, he would be recognized everywhere.
>
> [The] announcement of the speech brought immediate threats of violence to the television station ... and secret arrangements were worked out for the taping ...[80]

In his televised response on May 20, 1963, Medgar Evers argued that it was time to end segregation. He described the way in which television had connected Black Mississippians to the global movement for Black freedom, from African American protestors to the leaders of "new free nations in Africa." He went on to note that the average African American in Mississippi "wants to get rid of racial segregation," "wants to register and vote without special handicaps," "wants more jobs above the menial level," and "wants the public schools and colleges desegregated so that his children can receive the best education that Mississippi has to offer."[81] Medgar Evers's speech drew local and national attention.[82]

In the days following his speech, white supremacists firebombed the Evers home. Police dismissed the incident as a prank.[83] Within two weeks of his televised address, Mayor Thompson agreed to meet with Jackson Movement leadership.

80 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 267.

81 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr,* 246.

82 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr,* 246.

83 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 273-276.



FIGURE 2–19. NAACP leaders Roy Wilkins and Medgar Evers being arrested for picketing outside the Jackson Woolworth, 1963 (source: SNCC Digital, https://snccdigital.org/people/medgar-evers/).

On June 1, 1963, *New York Times* ran a profile calling Medgar Evers the "Quiet Integrationist."[84]

The Jackson Movement protests continued when Mayor Thompson backed out of the commitments he made during his meeting with movement leaders. On May 31, 1963, Black students gathered for the movement's first mass march. Local police, backed by sixty state troopers armed with shotguns, confronted the protesters and arrested approximately 600 young people. City and state police detained them for days in a temporary detention area set up on the state fair grounds. When interviewed by the *New York Times*, Medgar Evers described the state action as "just like Nazi Germany."[85]

In the days that followed, Medgar Evers worked tirelessly to build public attention on the Jackson Movement and to bridge tension between factions within the civil rights movement. He gave speeches at the Stringer Lodge and at rallies across the Delta, met with NAACP and government officials, and coordinated with movement leaders.

Describing the challenge of meeting that moment, Myrlie Evers later recalled:

> There was so much pressure on Medgar from those two warring groups (the Jackson Movement and conservative Black leaders) ... [t]he stress was just more than a human being could take. And the last time that I really saw him alive was that morning of the 11th when he left and he kissed us all goodbye and he came back in the house and said, 'I'm so tired I can't go on, but I can't stop.' And he hugged us all again and left.[86]

After a long day of meetings and speeches, in the early hours of June 12, 1963, a white supremacist shot and killed Medgar Evers in his driveway. Medgar Evers's murder was a horrendous loss for his family. For the movement, it was both a horrible loss and a galvanizing moment. On the aftermath of his murder, Myrlie Evers reflected:

> Medgar was dead, and suddenly there were victories on every side. The Jackson police department hired Negro policemen. Some schools were desegregated. The airport was integrated. And that summer the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed by Congress. Federal registrars were sent to ... Mississippi to register Negro voters. Negros were admitted to theaters, restaurants, motels, hotels, and parks. Medgar had fought for all of these things, had given eight and a half years of his life to lead the fight.[87]

84 Mayor Thompson's invitation to meet came at least in part in reaction to on going protests. On May 28, a White mob attacked student protesters staging a Woolworths lunch counter sit-in. Footage of the violent attack appeared on the evening news around the country, pressuring the mayor into action. Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, Chapter 7; Dittmer, *Local People,* 165; "The Quiet Integrationist: Medgar Wiley Evers," *New York Times*, June 1,1963, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1963/06/01/89924723.html?pageNumber=8.

85 Dittmer, *Local People,* 157-166; Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr,* Chapter 6; Jack Langguth, "Jackson Police Jail 600 Negro Children," *New York Times*, June 1, 1963, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1963/06/01/89924617.html?pageNumber=1

86 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 298.

87 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 371.

The Work, Myrlie Evers

Myrlie Evers worked alongside Medgar Evers throughout their years with the NAACP in Jackson as a wife, mother, secretary, and community leader.[88]

For almost two years, the NAACP employed Myrlie Evers as Medgar Evers's office secretary. In this role, she supported civil rights investigations, voter campaign drives, and the constant communication required to stay in touch with NAACP leadership (Figure 2–20).[89] However, she found the job in the NAACP field office left her without the time needed to care for her family at home. In her memoir, Myrlie Evers wrote about her desire to leave her job to focus on their children:

> The strain of trying to hold down a job at the office and be an adequate wife, mother, and housekeeper at home ... became almost too much ... My daily separation from the children was having an obviously bad effect both on them and on me. I felt I was missing most of the fun of being a mother.[90]

Initially Medgar Evers objected to the change. Myrlie Evers explained in her memoir:

> He feared he would never find anyone to help him in the office in quite the same way that I had... Because I was his wife, because I loved him, because I worried about him and the terrible strain under which he was working, I went out of my way to take burdens from his shoulders...[91]

She also described the way in which their professional partnership spilled into their home, recalling:

88 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*; *The Evers*, directed by Loki Mulholland (2019, Joan Trumpauer Mulholland Foundation and Medgar & Myrlie Evers Institute).

89 *The Evers*, directed by Loki Mulholland.

90 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 185.

91 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 186.



FIGURE 2–20. Myrlie Evers typing in the NAACP field office, circa 1955-1956 (source: Photograph in Box 4, Myrlie Evers Folder, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

> The end of the working day generally meant simply that we moved our headquarters from the office to home, where the same people gathered, the same telephone calls came in, and the same problems were pursued ... Medgar sensed that his loss of my presence at the office would mean at least a partial loss of participation in his work at home.[92]

Myrlie Evers eventually did leave her position to focus on their home and family. Her grandmother, Annie Beasley, who had been living with the Everses to care for the children, moved back to Vicksburg.

In 1956, Medgar and Myrlie Evers built a house in northwest Jackson and moved into it sometime before Christmas of that year. Three years later, on January 10, 1960, Myrlie Evers gave birth to the couple's third child, James Van Dyke Evers, named after Myrlie Evers's father and called "Van."[93]

Myrlie Evers oversaw their children's education. In her memoir, she described the Jackson public schools as "not only segregated, they were overcrowded and poorly equipped." She noted that she and Medgar Evers "wanted the best possible education for our children."[94] The Everses sent their children to Christ the King School, a private Catholic school for African American children about a mile from the Stringer Lodge NAACP office. The school was staffed primarily by White nuns.[95]

In August 1962, when Darrell and Reena Evers were nine and seven years old, respectively, Medgar and Myrlie Evers signed a petition, along with eight other African American parents, to the Jackson Municipal Separate School District Board of Trustees and the superintendent. The petition called for an end to segregation and an improvement in the quality of education offered to Black children in the public school system. When school leadership ignored the petition, attorney Jack Young, one of only four African American attorneys in Mississippi, filed a federal lawsuit in March 1963.[96] The following spring, almost a year after Medgar Evers was murdered, Myrlie Evers was called to testify as plaintiff in the case, *Darrell Kenyatta Evers et al. v. Jackson Municipal Separate School District et al*.[97] The school system was eventually ordered to desegregate. In response, the school system announced a plan to do so one grade at a time. Myrlie Evers noted that the plan:

> [M]eant that Darrell and Reena, even if they had left the private Catholic school they attended, would never go to integrated schools in Jackson... But it also meant that some Negro children would have an opportunity to go to decent schools.[98]

Though focused on her family's home life, Myrlie Evers continued to support Medgar Evers's NAACP work. Work calls regularly came to the home phone, and meetings often spilled over from the office to the dinner table. As the Jackson Movement picked up in the spring of 1963, Medgar Evers worked long days, and Myrlie Evers did her best to support him. In her memoir she recalled asking him what she could do to help, to which he replied, "You're working almost as hard as I am. Just you keep home the way you have it for me."[99]

92 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 186.

93 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr,* 45.

94 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 231.

95 Christ the King School, "Christ the King School, Registration Fee for Darrell Evers," (Medgar W. Evers Papers (Z/2231.000/S), Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1963); Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 231.

96 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 245, 250-251.

97 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 370-371; Evers v. Jackson Municipal Separate School District, 232 F. Supp. 241 (S.D. Miss. 1964).

98 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 371.

99 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 272.

The Evers Home

Despite the ongoing threat of violence, Medgar Evers was committed to his work in his home state of Mississippi. While NAACP field secretary, Medgar Evers received a job offer that would have allowed him and his family to relocate to California, but he declined in favor of fighting for equality in Mississippi. In alignment with this commitment, Medgar and Myrlie Evers built a home in Jackson in 1956.[100]

The House and Neighborhood

In the midst of a post-World War II housing boom, Medgar and Myrlie Evers built a new home on Guynes Street in the Elraine subdivision. The couple and their two children Darrell and Reena Evers moved into their new home in 1956.[101] Myrlie Evers wrote about their move:

> [The apartment] was safer than a house, but when a new Negro subdivision opened, the first in Jackson to be developed by a Negro builder, we drove out to look. The houses were tiny ... but the desire to own our own home was strong.[102]

Jackson had long been home to middle-class African American neighborhoods, but the Elraine subdivision was the first postwar subdivision in Mississippi built by and for middle-class African Americans.[103]

African American real estate developer Winston J. Thompson and African American designer and builder Leroy Burnett partnered to develop the Elraine subdivision in northwest Jackson. They designed the neighborhood with popular Ranch-style homes (Figure 2–21).

100 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, xi, 226; Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 308.

101 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 226; William M. Gatlin, Vicki Myers, and Akili Kelly, "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2013), 23.

102 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 226.

103 William M. Gatlin,et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 20; "Homestead Heights, Jackson's First All-Colored FHA Subdivision, Presents Outstanding Construction Features," *Jackson Advocate*, August 30, 1941, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn79000083/1941-08-30/ed-1/seq-1/.



FIGURE 2–21. The Evers family outside their home. Medgar and Darrell Evers stand in the yard and Myrlie and Reena Evers exit the family car. The boy walking is likely a neighborhood friend, circa 1958 (source: NPS).

Thompson and Burnett were both Black veterans and secured financing from the Veterans' Administration for the land purchase. They constructed thirty-six homes along Guynes Street from 1955 to 1957. Medgar Evers qualified for veterans benefits, including a GI mortgage, and bought the home for roughly $9,500 (approximately $100,000 in 2023) with a $300 deposit, which he secured through a bank loan.[104]

In her memoir, Myrlie Evers describes how Medgar Evers had long dreamed of owning his own home in a quiet neighborhood. During their college summers in Chicago, they often explored the city's suburbs. She wrote:

> He dreamed of the sort of house he hoped someday to live in, the kind of street and neighborhood and town where he might raise a family, and the white suburbs of Chicago seemed to him right out of that dream. 'Listen,' he said suddenly, and I did. 'Do you hear how quiet it is? This is the kind of neighborhood to raise children in...'[105]

They found that quiet neighborhood on Guynes Street.

104 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 226; GI mortgages were made available through the Servicemen's Readjustment Act following World War II. While this was a common route to home ownership for White Americans, it was a funding option less accessible to Black Americans. Traditionally, FHA and GI mortgage lenders discriminated against potential Black buyers through a range of mechanisms, preventing Black families from accruing the same government-subsidized wealth available to White families.

105 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 30.



FIGURE 2–22. Darrell Evers in front of the bookcase between the dining room and the kitchen (source: Photograph in Box 3, Folder 4, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).



FIGURE 2–23. Medgar Evers and son (likely James "Van" Evers) in the driveway of their home, date unknown (source: Pomona College, https://www.pomona.edu/news/2023/02/09-90-civil-rights-pioneer-myrlie-evers-williams-68-donates-archival-collection-inspire-new-generations).

The Family Home and Community

The Evers home was lively and welcoming, and their neighborhood community supportive and fun. In a 2022 oral history interview, Reena Evers-Everette was asked about the first thing that came to mind when thinking of the home. She replied:

> The fun times ... this house had a lot of love, a lot of tragic moments, but not as much as the love, and the fun, and the excitement of knowing that [we] were safe when [our parents] were home.[106]

She went on to describe the family home as full of good food, delicious smells, laughter, and music.[107]

In her memoir, Myrlie Evers recalled the immense work of keeping house, particularly during their first months of marriage when she struggled to cook a decent meal. Medgar Evers's mother, Jessie Evers, was a wonderful cook and eventually helped her daughter-in-law learn. Reena Evers-Everette recalled her mother's delicious cooking, including

106 Reena Evers-Everette, interview by Chris Geddes and Leslie Moore, Jackson, MS, October 27, 2022.

107 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.



FIGURE 2–24. James "Van" Dyke Evers on the living room floor, summer 1960 (source: Photograph in Box 4, Folder 3, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).



FIGURE 2–25. Medgar Evers with his sons Darrell Evers (left) and James "Van" Evers (right), circa 1961 (source: Photograph in Box 4, Folder 3, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).



FIGURE 2–26. Medgar Evers holding a fish with Reena Evers, Darrell Evers, and an unknown boy standing in a neighborhood driveway (not at the Evers home), circa 1957 (source: Photograph in Box 4, Folder 3, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

ham, yams, greens, smothered chicken over rice, jambalaya, shrimp creole, rabbit from her father's hunting expeditions, Welsh rabbit (a toasted cheese dish also known as Welsh rarebit), cakes, and peach cobbler. She recalled that her father was not one to cook but would make protein shakes with eggs and milk in a blender.[108]

The Evers dining area was lined with books on the built-in shelves, and the living room featured a piano (Figure 2–22, Figure 2–27, and Figure 2–28). Myrlie Evers brought music into the home. She played the family piano and taught their children, neighbors, and other music students.[109] Myrlie Evers also played the piano and led singing during NAACP mass meetings at the Stringer Lodge and during Sunday church services at New Hope Baptist Church.[110] Reena Evers-Everette remembered that there was always music in the



FIGURE 2–28. Darrell Evers playing the piano in the living room while Van and Reena Evers stand nearby, March 1963 (source: Photograph in Box 4, Folder 3, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

108 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.

109 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022; Sandra McCall interview by Chris Geddes, January 2023. Sandra McCall, a family friend who lived in the Evers home from 1980 to 1985, recalled taking piano lessons from Myrlie Evers.

110 Sandra McCall interview, January 2023; Michael Vinson Williams, "Medgar Wiley Evers," *Mississippi Encyclopedia*, November 12, 2016, https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/medgar-wiley-evers/.

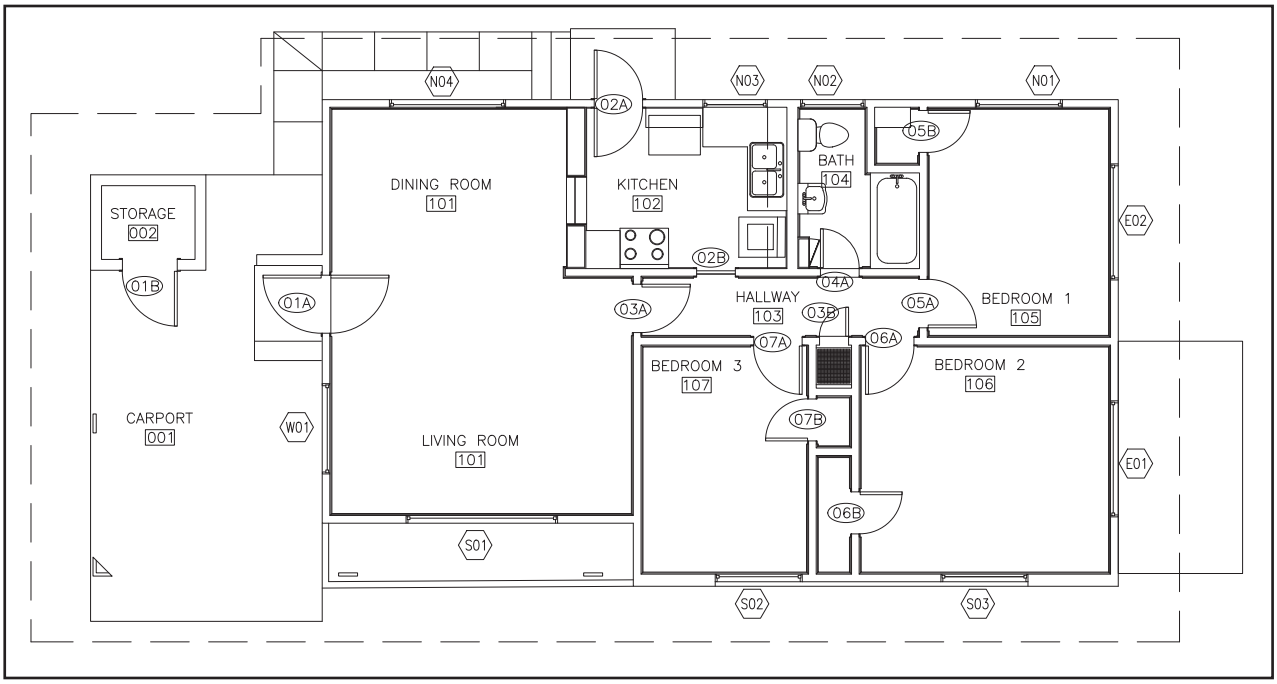


FIGURE 2–27. Floor plan of the Evers Home (source: NPS).

house: the radio; a record; or her mother playing the piano, singing, or humming.[111] In a 1996 interview, Darrell Evers recalled, "I can remember one of [Medgar Evers's] favorite songs was 'Hit the Road Jack.' We used to sing it to Dad all the time, every time he came home and every time he left. He loved that."[112]

Reena Evers-Everette remembers playing games such as Go Fish and Chinese Checkers, days spent with her mother, and running down the hallway to greet her father when he came home. She also remembers her father arriving home late, a common occurrence, and coming into their bedrooms to kiss her and her brothers good night.[113] On days off, Medgar Evers found respite in nature. In her memoir, Myrlie Evers wrote:

> Medgar's greatest relaxation was fishing, and as often as possible, he and Robert Smith [friend and co-owner of a local, Black owned grocery store] would slip off on Saturday ... to one of the many lakes within driving distance ... Stribling Lake, about forty miles northeast of Jackson, was the home of a legendary bass that Medgar had once hooked and then lost ... Except for fishing and hunting, Medgar had little chance to get away from his work.[114]

Darrell Evers recalled, "he used to love to take us fishing ... [t]hat was probably his favorite

111 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.

112 Darrell Evers interview in Billy Watkins, "Stirring Up Memories," *Clarion-Ledger* (Jackson, MS), May 22, 1996.

113 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.

114 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 198-199.



FIGURE 2–29. Myrlie Evers in the dining room with Van, Darrell, and Reena Evers, circa 1963 (source: Photograph in Box 4, Folder 1, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

thing" (Figure 2–26).[115] Reena Evers-Everette also remembered her father hunting and bringing home rabbit.[116]

The Everses were members of the New Hope Baptist Church, located at 2355 Whitfield Mills Road (now Martin Luther King Jr. Drive), about one mile south of their home on Guynes Street. Their involvement with the church varied. Myrlie Evers joined the church shortly after moving to Jackson. She attended every Sunday and regularly played piano for their two choirs. Medgar Evers visited a number of different African American churches on Sunday mornings in order to meet their ministers and congregations. He became a member of the New Hope Baptist Church in early 1956 but continued to visit other churches and avoided church organizations. He described his faith as a very personal matter.[117]

The Everses' neighborhood in the Elraine subdivision provided middle-class housing and attracted a number of teachers and professors. Some of their neighbors were active members in the NAACP. Their immediate neighbors included Houston and Jean Wells, who lived next door at 2338 Guynes Street, and Thomas and Johnnie Pearl Young, who lived across the road at 2331 Guynes Street.

Reena Evers-Everette recalled that the neighborhood children "lived in each other's homes."[118] The Evers children regularly invited friends to their home for meals and sleepovers. When Medgar and Myrlie Evers went out, older children in the neighborhood would babysit. When they left for overnight stays, the Evers children often stayed with the Youngs. At Christmas, the Elraine neighborhood held an annual holiday decorating contest. The Everses decorated a tree, placing it beside the piano and in front of the picture window. The children made cookies with Myrlie Evers and neighborhood friends, and Medgar Evers made eggnog.[119]

The Everses regularly hosted family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and fellow civil rights activists for dinner or drinks. Myrlie Evers ensured the home was open and welcoming. Anticipating visitors at any time, she kept the house spotless. Reena Evers-Everette and her brothers helped prepare the home for guests. She recalled:

> There was always the energy of movement, of making things happen, of understanding that there was an urgency for things that are right for all.[120]

Medgar and Myrlie Evers had close relationships with their families, and relatives visited regularly. Myrlie Evers's grandmother Annie Beasley and her aunt Myrlie Beasley Polk often stayed with them during regular visits from Vicksburg. Medgar Evers's brother Charles Evers and his family, as well as his sisters Carrie Elizabeth Evers-Jordan and Eva Evers, visited on occasion from Chicago.[121]

Political Organizing within the Home

Medgar and Myrlie Evers invited many figures of the civil rights movement to their home. As a child listening from her bedroom, Reena Evers-Everette remembers she could hear the adults' laughter at night. She reflected:

> It was great to hear the laughter because there were ... a lot of times in the house that [the dining room] was kind of like the second war room, strategy room. So many

115 Darrell Evers interview in Billy Watkins, "Stirring Up Memories."

116 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.

117 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 200-201.

118 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.

119 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.

120 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.

121 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.

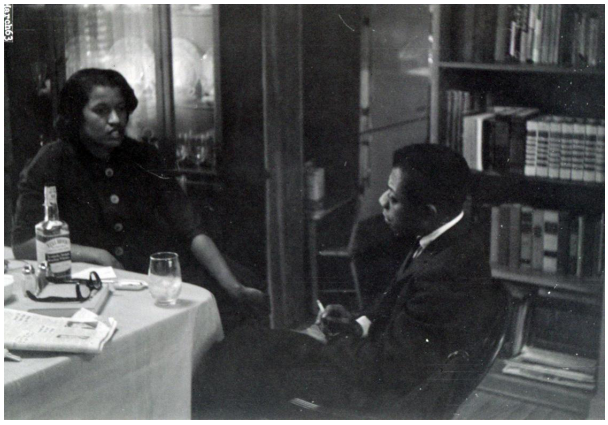


FIGURE 2–30. Myrlie Evers meets with James Baldwin, March 1963 (source: The Myrlie Evers-Williams Collection, Pomona College, https://www.pomona.edu/myrlie-evers-williams/photos).

> people in the movement who were doing things not only in Jackson ... I believe Fred Shuttlesworth came to the house. I know he came to CORE, COFO. And so many others came through.[122]

Fred Shuttlesworth was cofounder of both the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights (a successor organization to the NAACP after it was banned in Alabama).[123] At the time, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was director at the SCLC, a civil rights organization that opposed segregation, specifically through a campaign launched in Birmingham, Alabama, in April 1963.

John Doar, civil rights attorney for the United States Department of Justice, also met with the Evers family in their home. In 1961, he sat at the dining room table while Medgar and Myrlie Evers showed him a map of Mississippi counties, noting those in which Black citizens were prevented from registering to vote. According to blues artist Zac Harmon, who grew up down the road in the Elraine subdivision, even Hollywood stars who actively supported the civil rights movement visited the Evers home when they were in Jackson. He remembers Hollywood actor Sidney Poitier and singer and actor Harry Belafonte visiting the Everses.[124]

In 1963, Medgar Evers met and became friends with author, playwright, and activist James Baldwin who was on a lecture tour of the South for CORE. In the spring of 1963, he visited the Everses in their home (Figure 2–30, Figure 2–31). Reena Evers-Everette later recalled:

> We had a great time. I remember that being very special, and he was just so kind, so kind to us. And he said, 'You have a great dad.' Because dad was a *dad*; he played with us all the time. I never felt like I didn't have him. He was always there, no matter how far away he was. And that's kind of still the same way.[125]

In an interview years later, Baldwin remembered Medgar Evers as "a great man ... a beautiful man," and a "troublemaker," a striking description of Medgar Evers given his work bridging direct action movements and the more conservative NAACP leadership.[126]

122 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.

123 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.

124 John Doar, "Eyes on the Prize; Interview with John Doar, 1985," American Archive of Public Broadcasting, 1985, https://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip_151-dr2p55f743; Roger Wood, "Zac Harmon Through the Seasons," *The Living Blues* 53, no. 277 (2022); Robert F. Darden, "Sidney Poitier rarely spoke of that dark night in Mississippi," The Dallas Morning News, Jan 8, 2022, http://web.archive.org/web/20220108173542/https://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/commentary/2022/01/08/sidney-poitier-rarely-spoke-of-that-dark-night-in-mississippi/. Zac Harmon grew up in a home at 2247 Guynes Street, five houses down from the Evers home.

125 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.

126 "Bearing Witness to the Movement: Boots on the Ground," National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian Institution, accessed August 2024, https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/boots-ground.



FIGURE 2–31. Photograph of James Baldwin (left) standing with Medgar Evers in the Evers driveway (source: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, "A Sense of Place," Medgar Wiley and Myrlie Beasley Papers, call number: Z.2231.4.009).

Harassment and Violence

The steady threat of violence from members of the White community shaped daily life in Jackson for all African Americans and acutely shaped the home life of the Evers family.

When Medgar and Myrlie Evers selected their lot and home design, they did so in anticipation of an attack. As they considered their options within the Elraine subdivision, the Everses initially considered a larger corner lot, but according to Myrlie Evers:

> Medgar pointed out that the corner lot was more exposed, less protected by other houses, closer to the main highway, and hence easier to reach and get away from. It may seem incredible to the average American home buyer, but security from attack was a consideration we discussed at length, and in the end it dictated our final choice of a lot tucked securely between two other houses.[127]

Also for security reasons, the Everses selected a home floor plan that placed their main entry door underneath the carport, which shielded it from view from the street (Figure 2–27). It was a somewhat unconventional choice that favored access from the carport over access from the road (twenty-six homes on Guynes street were built with a similar floor plan, of which only four have a main entry door located at the carport).[128] They selected a gravel roof (instead of the typical shingle) so that they could hear intruders if they climbed up or hid there.[129]

Postwar Ranch-style houses were designed to convey privacy and security for suburbanite homebuyers.[130] As historians Elaine Tyler May and Clifford Edward Clark Jr. affirmed, Ranch-style homes evoked a sense of protection in the Cold War era. May writes, quoting Clark, "low-pitched roofs, attached carports, and fences surrounding yards gave these structures 'a sheltered look'," almost like an aboveground bomb shelter. She notes that "neither the Victorian homes ... nor the informal bungalows ... exuded this sense of isolation, privacy, and containment."[131]

The Evers home had three bedrooms, one bathroom, and an open living and dining area, divided from the kitchen by built-in shelves. Medgar and Myrlie Evers slept in the largest bedroom, situated in the southeast corner. Until James "Van" Evers was born in 1960, the children slept in the back bedroom, and the front bedroom was reserved for guests. After Van's arrival, he and his brother slept in the back bedroom and Reena Evers had the front room.

In her memoir, Myrlie Evers recalled their telephone was always ringing, often with calls from friends and colleagues, but also from White men and women harassing them with threats. The Everses changed their telephone to an unlisted number, but after sharing the number for work and organizing purposes, the threatening calls resumed.[132] Reena Evers-Everette recalled "[our] life was different from others', yes, but not a lot. I felt like a normal kid, except for when the threats started increasing."[133] Those threats increased as Medgar Evers became a well-known figure in the Jackson Movement. He and his family took additional precautions. Myrlie Evers recalled that in the spring of 1963:

> Medgar had walked around the neighborhood, surveying our house from every direction. He had found that by standing in a vacant lot across the street and up from us he had a clear view of the left-hand doors of our car parked in the carport. The lot was overgrown and provided excellent concealment, particularly at night, and he came back to the house with some new rules. [134]

These rules included turning off the headlights before exiting the car at night and climbing out the passenger door, instead of the driver-side door, so as not to be visible from the street. Myrlie Evers recalled talk in the neighborhood about asking the City of Jackson to clear the vacant lot, but

127 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 227.

128 Baughn, "Medgar and Myrlie Evers House," National Historic Landmark Nomination, 5.

129 Tour by NPS of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument, November 2022.

130 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 226.

131 Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 104.

132 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 246-248, 263-265, 279.

133 *The Evers*, Directed by Loki Mulholland, 2:30.

134 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 287.

neighbors were skeptical that White city officials would act on their request. The family began to avoid sitting in furniture near the front window, particularly at night.[135]

The Evers family owned several guns and placed them throughout the house. Myrlie Evers slept with a pistol on her nightstand. Medgar Evers kept a shotgun by his side of the bed and one in the car.[136] Myrlie Evers recalled that her husband lived in a constant state of vigilance, even at home in bed. She recalled:

> A dog would bark, a car pass the house, and he would freeze in instant alertness. If it was Heidi, our own German shepherd, that barked, he would leap up, snatching in one instinctive motion the rifle he now kept by the bed, and run to the living room to peer out the curtained windows."[137]

On May 28, 1963, the family's fears were realized when someone firebombed their home. Late that night, Medgar Evers was out at a mass meeting when attackers drove by the home and threw a homemade firebomb under Myrlie Evers's car, which was parked in the carport. Myrlie Evers recalled seeing, from down the hall, the carport lit up in flames. She telephoned her neighbors, then put out the fire with the garden hose. "Someone had tried to kill us," Myrlie Evers recalled. The White police officers dismissed the incident as a prank.[138] The following weekend, Medgar Evers taught his children how to fall to the floor without hurting themselves. Myrlie Evers recalled the way he then walked them through their home and discussed:

> [W]hat might be the safest place in the house in the event of a shooting ... discussing the problem almost academically, until they decided unanimously that the bathtub, if they could reach it, would provide the greatest protection for the children. I listened to all this with a feeling of horror...[139]

135 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 288.

136 NAACP, "Original Memory Book for Medgar Evers 50th Anniversary Memorial Service,"2013, https://issuu.com/siddagroup/docs/medgarevers1_proof-2.

137 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 273, 279.

138 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 276-77.

139 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 279-280.

The Assassination

June 12, 1963

In the early hours of June 12, 1963, Medgar Evers was assassinated in the driveway of his home (Figure 2–32). Myrlie Evers and their children heard the gun shot and came out into the hallway from where they could see Medgar Evers bleeding in the carport. In an interview for the *New York Times* thirty years later, Myrlie Evers-Williams (then remarried) recalled:

> Ever since 1954, when my husband accepted the position of NAACP field secretary of the state of Mississippi, we knew his life was on the line. In the spring of 1963, Medgar was leading economic boycotts of downtown businesses discriminating against our people. In the Jackson newspapers, there were editorials calling for "a flow of blood" in the streets, pinpointing Medgar as someone something should be "done" about...
>
> We had often spoken about the possibility of assassination. But in the spring of 1963 we spoke of it constantly. A dear friend, Dr. Felix Dunn of Gulfport, Miss., told my husband of a plan to wipe him out. Dr. Dunn had seen a death list with the names of 10 civil rights leaders on it. Medgar was No. 1.[140]

The day before the assassination, on June 11, 1963, Medgar Evers met with colleagues to plan testimony for his appearance before the US House of Representatives Judiciary Committee in Washington, DC. Medgar Evers was scheduled to testify on June 13 on the need for federal civil rights legislation. On June 11, the White House announced that President Kennedy would address the country on civil rights legislation later that evening. Medgar Evers called home and encouraged Myrlie Evers to watch the presidential address with their children. She and the children stayed up to watch President Kennedy on television while Medgar Evers was out late, attending a mass

140 Claudia Dreifus, "The Widow Gets Her Verdict," *New York Times*, November 27, 1994, https://www.nytimes.com/1994/12/18/magazine/l-the-widow-gets-her-verdict-130184.html; Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 298.



FIGURE 2–32. View of the home, driveway, and crime scene in the early hours of June 12, 1963 (source: Mississippi Department of Archives and History).



FIGURE 2–33. Police at the Evers home, June 12, 1963 (source: Library of Congress. *New York World-Telegram and the Sun* Newspaper Photograph Collection, NYWTS - BIOG--Evers, Medgar W.--Murder Case--Dead [item] [P&P]. Digital Id: cph 3c35504, http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3c35504).



FIGURE 2–34. Police studying the bullet hole left in the front window, June 12, 1963 (source: Mississippi Public Broadcasting).

meeting at the New Jerusalem Baptist Church after the President's speech.[141]

Years later, Myrlie Evers-Williams described the events of Medgar Evers's assassination:

> We heard the car, the motor, which we were very familiar with, and the children said, 'There's Daddy.' ... [W]e were in the bedroom. And we heard the car pull in the driveway, and this horrible blast. And the children fell to the floor, as he had taught them to do. The baby was on the bed with me, and I bolted up off the bed and ran to the front door, and opened the door, and there was Medgar at the steps leading to the front door with his keys in his hand. It appeared that the force of the bullet had pushed him past his car, my car, and he had

141 Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 283.



FIGURE 2–35. Bullet hole in the front window at the Evers home. The window shows a reflection of the car where Medgar stood when he was shot (source: Medgar Evers College, *Associated Press*, June 15, 1963, Accessed January, 2023, https://www.mec.cuny.edu/about/history/murder-of-medgar-evers/).

> pulled himself around to – to the doorsteps ... I screamed, I guess uncontrollably, and the children ran out shortly after I did, and they called, 'Daddy, Daddy, get up. Please get up, Daddy.' I recall going back in the house for a second to call someone – I don't even know who it was. At the time, I couldn't get through. I ran back out, and I kept calling to him, and the children were calling to him ... By the time I ran back out the second time, neighbors had come out and were over at the house. There were a couple of people helping to put Medgar on a mattress, and to put him in a vehicle to take him to a hospital for treatment.[142]

Fearing that the attacker was still nearby, a neighbor fired his shotgun at the ground in warning. Two White police officers arrived, but sat and watched as neighbor Houston Wells loaded Medgar Evers into the family station wagon. Wells drove him to the hospital, where he died approximately forty minutes later.[143] Their neighbors the Youngs brought the children into their home across the street while Myrlie Evers stayed at the crime scene.[144]

Byron de la Beckwith, a White Mississippian and member of the White Citizens' Council and the Ku Klux Klan, had shot Medgar Evers in the back with a high-powered rifle. Beckwith had been stalking Medgar Evers for days. That night, he hid in the overgrown vacant lot at the edge of the subdivision, waiting for Medgar Evers to pull into his driveway. The bullet struck Medgar Evers in the back, pierced the front picture window of the home, cut through the living room and wing wall into the kitchen, ricocheted off the refrigerator, shattered a coffee pot and landed on the kitchen counter-top (Figure 2–35 through Figure 2–38).[145]

Myrlie Evers later wrote about that night:

> There were policemen standing in my yard, stooping down over the blood in the carport, everywhere, and I saw them and recognized them as the men who had followed Medgar everywhere for months...

142 Testimony given by Myrlie Evers in Byron de la Beckwith, VI v. State of Mississippi, 94-KA-00402-SCT, 91-IA-01207-SCT (Supreme Court of Mississippi, Dec. 22, 1997), https://case-law.vlex.com/vid/beckwith-v-state-94-888069564.

143 Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi*, 305.

144 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 308.

145 Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi*, 151, 133-134; "Medgar Evers," History: Famous Cases and Criminals, Federal Bureau of Investigation, accessed August 2024, https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/medgar-evers#:~:text=Evers%20was%20a%20devoted%20husband,and%20pushing%20for%20school%20integration.; Ronald Smothers, "Jurors in Medgar Evers Case Handle Rifle From the Past," New York Times, January 28, 1994; Byron de la Beckwith, VI v. State of Mississippi, (Miss. 1997); Baughn, "Medgar and Myrlie Evers House," National Historic Landmark Nomination, 5.



FIGURE 2–36. View of the carport floor from the night of the assassination, June 12, 1963 (source: Mississippi Public Broadcasting).



FIGURE 2–37. View of the carport floor from the night of the assassination, June 12, 1963 (source: Mississippi Public Broadcasting).

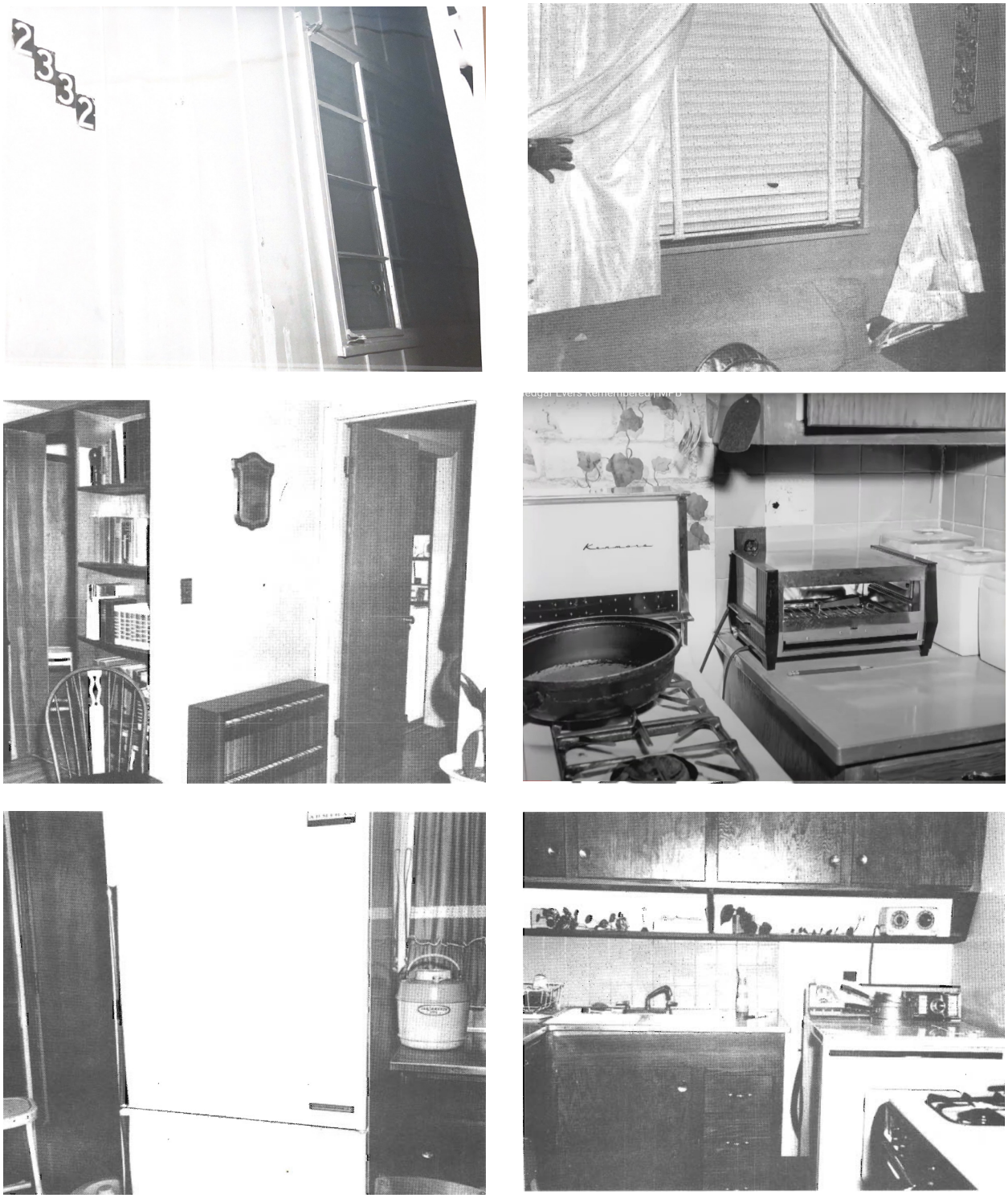


FIGURE 2–38. District Attorney's Office photographs taken the day of the assassination show the path of the bullet through the front window (top), through living room wall (middle left), into the kitchen knocking off a tile (middle right), then hitting the refrigerator (lower left) (source: District Attorney's Office Photographs reproduced in WFT Architects, "Medgar Evers Home Renovation, GS #501-052, A Historic Structure Report," Jackson, Mississippi, 1995, 12).

> To the police who were examining the place where Medgar fell, I screamed 'Do you think that by killing him you can put an end to what he's been doing?'[146]

Myrlie Evers recounted that while standing in her living room she "looked out of the window in the early morning light, looked through the hole the bullet had made, and saw the vacant lot that Medgar had stared at."[147]

Despite her pain and anger, Myrlie Evers attended a mass meeting that night at the Pearl Street Baptist Church and gave her first public speech. She told the crowd:

> I am left without my husband and my children without a father, but I am left with the strong determination to try to take up where he left off. And I come to make a plea that all of you here and those who are not here will, by his death, be able to draw some of his strength, some of his courage, and some of his determination to finish this fight.[148]

Funeral

The news of Medgar Evers's assassination brought outrage and unity throughout the African American community in Jackson and garnered national attention. On Saturday, June 15, 1963, more than 4,000 people attended his funeral at the Stringer Lodge, and 5,000 mourners joined the procession to Collins Funeral Home that followed (Figure 2–39, Figure 2–40). Fellow civil rights leaders and activists attended, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., James Meredith, NAACP Executive Director Roy Wilkins, and United States Congressman from Michigan Charles Diggs.[149] When the procession reached the funeral home, several hundred young people began to sing freedom songs and march towards Capitol Street, the site of the Jackson Movement's ongoing boycott. White police officers attacked the crowd with police dogs and clubs (Figure 2–41). Those marching fought back, throwing bricks and



FIGURE 2–39. Photograph of Myrlie Evers comforting her son, Darrell Evers, at the funeral, June 15, 1963 (source: John Loengard, *Life*, 1963).

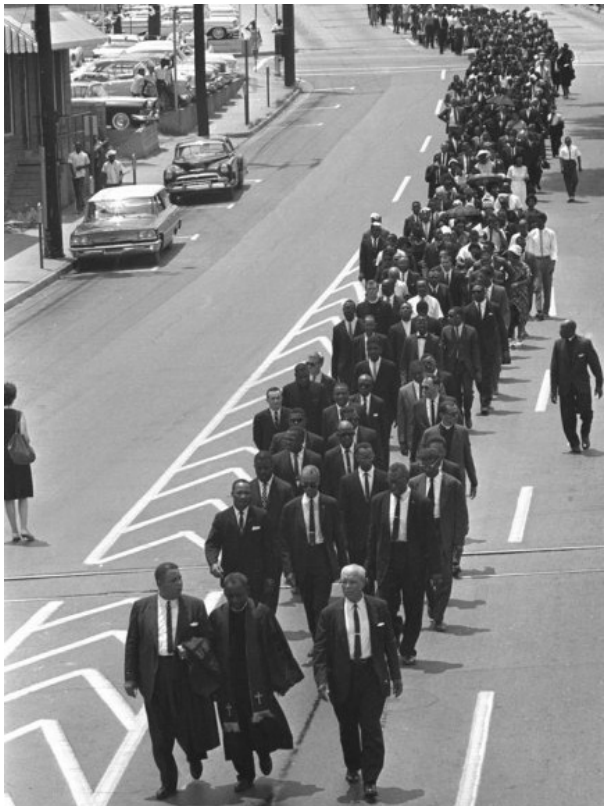


FIGURE 2–40. Marchers following in procession behind Medgar Evers's body after his funeral. Martin Luther King Jr. is marching in the second row on the left (source: *Associated Press*, June 15, 1963).

146 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 307.

147 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 307.

148 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 306-307.

149 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 316; Dittmer, *Local People*, 166-167.

bottles for the first time in a movement otherwise committed to peaceful resistance. Greater violence was avoided only when CORE and NAACP leaders, Black ministers, and a Justice Department lawyer convinced the marchers to disperse.[150]

Medgar and Myrlie Evers had planned for a family burial plot near their home in Jackson, but the American Veterans Committee, to which Medgar Evers had recently been appointed, and NAACP leaders persuaded Myrlie Evers to have Medgar Evers buried in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, DC. There, more people could visit his grave. Representatives of the NAACP, CORE, and SNCC met Medgar Evers's casket at Washington Union Station. A thousand mourners marched behind his hearse from the station to the funeral home, and 25,000 mourners paid their respects at a viewing at the John Wesley African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church on 14th and Corcoran Streets, NW. Medgar Evers was laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery on Wednesday, June 19, 1963 (Figure 2–42).[151] Two thousand people attended the grave site service, including Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy. The NAACP's Roy Wilkins spoke the final tribute.

The shock and outrage over Medgar Evers's assassination further amplified the need for federal

150 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 319-322.

151 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 322-326.



FIGURE 2–41. Police stand in front of the marchers after Medgar Evers's funeral (source: *Associated Press*, June 15, 1963).



FIGURE 2–42. A spread from *Life Magazine*, sharing the story of the Medgar Evers funeral and burial at Arlington National Cemetery (source: John Loengard, *Life*, 1963).

action. On the same day as the grave site service, President John F. Kennedy sent the Civil Rights Bill to Congress. The bill would eventually be signed into law as the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The following day, Myrlie Evers, Darrell and Reena Evers, and Medgar Evers's brother Charles Evers, met President John F. Kennedy at the White House. Later that year, President Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963, in Dallas, Texas.[152]

The national press covered Medgar Evers's murder and funeral, including *Life* magazine, which published photographs of Myrlie Evers and the Evers children at the funeral (Figure 2–42).[153]

Mourners held memorial services and vigils across the country.[154]

Investigation and Trials

The day after the assassination, police recovered the murder weapon—a high-powered rifle with a telescopic sight—in the overgrown honeysuckle vines and shrubs of the vacant lot near the Evers home. They found Byron de la Beckwith's fingerprints on the rifle and matched the rifle's serial number to paperwork showing the chain of ownership leading to Beckwith. On June 23, 1963, eleven days after Medgar Evers's assassination, the FBI arrested Beckwith at his lawyer's office in Greenwood, Mississippi, 100 miles north of Jackson (Figure 2–44). When Beckwith was

152 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 326; "The Civil Rights Act of 1964: A Long Struggle for Freedom, Exhibition Overview," Library of Congress, accessed August 2024, https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/civil-rights-act/overview.html.

153 Ben Cosgrove, "Medgar Evers' Funeral, June, 1963," *LIFE,* accessed August 2024, https://www.life. com/history/behind-the-picture-medgar-evers-funeral-june-1963/.

154 "Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home: Funeral and National Response," National Park Service, accessed August 2024, https://www.nps.gov/memy/learn/historyculture/funeral-and-national-response.htm.



FIGURE 2–43. Myrlie Evers and her children outside their home, shortly after Medgar Evers's assassination, June 1963 (source: NPS).

arrested, he had injuries around his eye matching the rifle scope.[155]

A grand jury indicted Beckwith for murder on July 2, 1963. In her memoir, Myrlie Evers recalled:

> I still felt sure nothing would be done about [Medgar Evers's murder.] Each new development surprised me: when a grand jury actually indicted him, when he was jailed and held without bail...[156]

155 Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi,* 151,133-134; "Medgar Evers," FBI History; Ronald Smothers, "Jurors in Medgar Evers Case Handle Rifle From the Past."

156 Evers and Peters*, For Us, the Living,* 335.



FIGURE 2–44. Byron de la Beckwith, handcuffed and flanked by FBI agents, after his arrest (source: Library of Congress, *New York World-Telegram* and the *Sun* Newspaper Photograph Collection, June 23, 1963, https://www.loc.gov/item/2005681191/).

Her skepticism was warranted. The Beckwith trial began in January 1964. Former Governor of Mississippi Ross R. Barnett, a virulent racist who had left the governorship just a few weeks prior, regularly attended the trial. In an interview thirty years later, Myrlie Evers-Williams recalled:

> While I was testifying, the Governor, Ross Barnett, walked in - I'll never forget this - and he paused and looked at me, turned and went to Beckwith, shook his hand, slapped him on the shoulder and sat down next to him. He was sending a clear signal to the jurors that this man was to be acquitted.[157]

Influential members of the White Citizens' Councils, including vocal segregationist Judge Russell Moore, also attended the trial.[158] Furthermore, a public subscription drive, was set up to receive donations from Mississippians to pay Beckwith's legal expenses.[159]

Despite overwhelming evidence, a jury of all White, Protestant men could not reach a verdict, and the judge declared a mistrial.[160]

The court held a second trial in April 1964, and an all-White, Protestant male jury again could not reach a verdict. Local journalists later discovered that during this second trial, the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission, a secret state agency that operated from 1956 to 1977 with a mission to preserve a segregated state, investigated the jury pool on behalf of the defense, allowing them to select amiable jurors. During the trial, the Ku Klux Klan burned crosses around Jackson. A number of Klan leaders attended the trial to support to Beckwith and intimidate those testifying against

157 Claudia Dreifus "The Widow Gets Her Verdict"; Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi,* 163-164.

158 Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi,* 162-163.

159 "Mississippians Raise funds for 21 Held in Killings," *The New York Times*, (New York, NY), December 7, 1964, https://www.nytimes.com/1964/12/07/archives/mississippians-raise-funds-for-21-held-in-killings.html.

160 Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi,* 160-202.

him.[161] The judge released Beckwith on bail. Cheering crowds greeted him upon his return to Greenwood. Three years later, while still accused of murder, Beckwith ran for state lieutenant governor. He lost in the primary, coming in fifth of six, but received 35,000 votes.[162]

At the close of the second trial in 1964, prosecuting District Attorney William L. "Bill" Waller said he was undecided on whether he would seek a third trial. Several months later he told the *New York Times* that he would not. In March of 1969, the Hinds County district attorney dropped the indictment against Beckwith and refunded his bond. In 1973, Beckwith attempted to murder a Jewish activist in the civil rights movement. He was arrested, convicted, and eventually served a three year sentence.[163]

Notwithstanding the State's disinterest, Myrlie Evers continued to seek justice for her husband. While living in California, she often returned to Mississippi to visit her aging parents and would ask friends about Beckwith. She was also in touch with *Clarion-Ledger* reporter Jerry Mitchell, who had discovered the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission's involvement in jury selection. When the paper published his reporting in 1989, Myrlie Evers launched a campaign to pressure the State to reopen the investigation. She contacted federal, state, county, and city officials. The Jackson City Council passed a resolution calling for a reopening of the case. Under political pressure, district attorney Robert "Bobby" DeLaughter reopened the investigation.[164]

Despite the high-profile nature of the case, the State had lost or disposed of the majority of the related evidence and court transcripts from the trials. Bobby DeLaughter worked closely with the Evers family to re-collect evidence. Myrlie Evers had retained a transcript of the original trial, which she turned over to the State. With the family's reluctant blessing, Bobby DeLaughter had Medgar Evers exhumed for an additional autopsy. Astoundingly, DeLaughter also rediscovered the murder weapon, Byron de la Beckwith's rifle, in a closet in his (DeLaughter's) wife's parents' home. Bobby DeLaughter's late father-in-law, Russell Moore, had been a judge in Jackson. Moore, who was an active member of the White Citizens' Council, had pressured Jackson police to arrest Medgar Evers in 1959 for advocating integration and regularly attended the first trial of Beckwith. After the two mistrials, Moore took the rifle, the key piece of evidence in the case, to his own home where DeLaughter later found it.[165]

In December 1990, a grand jury re-indicted Byron de la Beckwith for the murder of Medgar Evers. Beckwith appealed the re-indictment, and the State Supreme Court authorized the case in 1992. That same year, someone placed a bomb in Myrlie Evers-Williams's mailbox at her home in California. The bomb malfunctioned, and authorities could not identify a suspect, but her home was placed under police surveillance for months. The FBI could not determine if the attack was motivated by the Beckwith case or by the fact that she and her second husband, Walter Williams, were the only Black residents in their neighborhood.[166]

In 1994, in the same court room that held the first and second trials, the court finally heard the third trial of Byron de la Beckwith for the murder of Medgar Evers. This time, the jury was composed of Black and White men and women. This third jury found Beckwith guilty. He was sentenced to life in prison (Figure 2–45).[167]

161 "Klansmen Rally Around Beckwith; Some Appear at His Trial, Cross-Burning Reported," *New York Times*, April 11, 1964, https://www.nytimes.com/1964/04/12/archives/klansmen-rally-around-beckwith-some-appear-at-his-trialcrossburning.html; Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 368; "Beckwith's 2d Trial Ends in Hung Jury," *New York Times*, April 17, 1964, https://www.nytimes.com/1964/04/18/archives/beckwiths-2d-trial-ends-in-hung-jury.html; Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi,* 160-210.

162 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 369-370.

163 "Beckwith's 2d Trial Ends in Hung Jury," *New York Times*; Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi*, 212, 228, 234-243.

164 Peter Applebome, "Mississippi Hearing in Evers Slaying Pits Trial Rights Against Civil Rights," *New York Times*, October 15, 1992, https://www.nytimes.com/1992/10/15/us/mississippi-hearing-in-evers-slaying-pits-trial-rights-against-civil-rights.html; Claudia Dreifus "The Widow Gets Her Verdict";Maryanne Voller, *Ghosts of Mississippi,* 261-264, 285-286.

165 Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi,* 74-76, 272, 279, 288; Ronald Smothers, "Jurors in Medgar Evers Case Handle Rifle From the Past."

166 Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi,* 321.

167 William Booth, "Beckwith Convicted of Murdering Evers," *Washington Post*, February 6, 1994; Claudia Dreifus "The Widow Gets Her Verdict"; "Medgar Evers," FBI History.

In time, evidence emerged that the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission had interfered in the lives of the Everses prior to the Beckwith trial. In 1998, a court ordered the Commission's records, which had previously been kept secret, to be released to the public. Those records showed that the State tracked civil rights leaders and their families, paid informants to report on organizing efforts, and provided up to $50,000 a year to the Citizens' Councils. Agents for the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission tracked Medgar and Myrlie Evers and their children, keeping their license plates, birth certificates, and school information on file.[168] Records show that in 1958, Mississippi Governor James Coleman had Medgar Evers tracked daily.[169]

The Mississippi Sovereignty Commission records also showed that the State had shared information and state funds with private segregation groups and with local police who had connections to segregationist groups. No records specifically indicate a connection between the State and Beckwith, but that connection was clear for another civil rights murder in Mississippi. Records show that in the summer of 1964, the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission shared with local authorities the license plate number of the car driven by Freedom Summer volunteers James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman. The authorities shared that information with members of the Ku Klux Klan, who tortured and murdered the three men in Neshoba County, Mississippi, in June 1964.[170] The activity of this secret state agency illustrates the degree to which Mississippi was committed to retaining its racial hierarchy.

168 "Sovereignty Commission Online," Mississippi Department of Archives and History, accessed August 2024, https://da.mdah.ms.gov/sovcom/scagencycasehistory.php.

169 *Spies of Mississippi*, directed by Dawn Porter (2014; Trilogy Films, 2013), https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/documentaries/spies-of-mississippi/; Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi,* 74-75.

170 *Spies of Mississippi*, Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi,* 74-75, 264; "June 21, 1964: Three Civil Rights Workers Murdered in Mississippi," Zinn Education Project, accessed August 2024, https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/tdih/chaney-goodman-schwerner-murdered.



30 L+ THE NEW YORK TIMES **NATIONAL** SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1994

White Supremacist Is Guilty of Killing Rights Leader

Continued From Page 1

judge called Mr. Beckwith to the bench. "By the mandate of the law, it is mandated that I sentence you to a term of life in prison," Judge Breland said.

Although Mississippi has the death penalty, prosecutors could not seek it because the capital punishment statute in effect at the time of Mr. Evers's murder was later ruled unconstitutional.

As sheriff's deputies led Mr. Beckwith from the courtroom, he nodded and raised his hand in a weak wave. His wife, Thelma, shrieked and sobbed after Mr. Beckwith had left the room.

Outside a short time later, Myrlie Evers, the widow of the murdered civil rights worker, stood before reporters and warned that she was about to throw off the veil of composure that she had worn throughout the trial. She then broke into a smile, shouted a cheer and raised a clenched fist to the sky in triumph.

"My God, I don't have to say accused assassin anymore," she said, flanked by her oldest son, Darrell, and her daughter, Reena. "Now I can say convicted assassin." She was at once happy and rueful, choosing one of Mr. Beckwith's own crude terms for blacks as she discussed the significance of the conviction.

"It sends a message that it is no longer open season on 'jungle bunnies' " she said, emphasizing the last two words. "Medgar's life was not in vain, and perhaps he did more in death than he could have in life. Somehow I think he is still among us."

Mr. Beckwith's two court-appointed lawyers, Jim Kitchens and Merrida Coxwell, could not be reached for comment on whether they would file an appeal. The potential exists because the Mississippi State Supreme Court refused in 1992 to consider a claim by Mr. Beckwith's defense team that a new indictment of the former fertilizer salesman had violated his constitutional right to a speedy trial. The court said such an argument should be made after any new trial.

Until a decision is made on an appeal, Sheriff Malcolm McMillin said, Mr. Beckwith will be held in the Hinds County Jail, where he spent about 14 months before being released on bond in December 1992. As he was then, Sheriff McMillin said, Mr. Beckwith will be segregated from other inmates.

Under Mississippi's sentencing guidelines, Mr. Beckwith will have to serve a minimum of 10 years before he can be eligible for parole.

The verdict showed a sharp contrast between the Mississippi of 36 years ago and Mississippi today, capping a trial filled with reminders of how much things have changed since Mr. Evers was slain as he got out of his car in front of his house around midnight on June 12, 1963.

Then, the threshold question for whites in jury selection was matter-of-factly intoned by the prosecutor at the time, William Waller: "Do you believe it is a crime to kill a nigger in Mississippi?" Anyone who hesitated was immediately excluded.

A Different Demeanor

Now, the hurdles in jury selection involved finding people who felt it was possible for Mr. Beckwith to get a fair trial so long after the crime.

Thirty years ago, Mr. Beckwith took the stand in his defense, not only to deny that he had killed Mr. Evers but also to proclaim his segregationist opinions.

This time, Mr. Beckwith, once known for his volubility and volatility, went through much of the trial without testifying or engaging in attention-grabbing antics.

But the major contrast was still the verdict itself, said Neil McMillen, a history professor at the University of Southern Mississippi and the author of books on the segregationist White Citizens Council of the 1950's and 60's.

"This is very gratifying to know that there are 12 jurors in Mississippi who can hear a case with all of this history and emotion and come out with a unanimous verdict like this," he said. He added that the case could lead to pressure for reopening other cases from that era, like that of the killing of Vernon Dahmer, another Mississippi N.A.A.C.P. official, in 1966.

8 Cruelal Witnesses

Bobby DeLaughter, a prosecutor on the staff of the Hinds County District Attorney, Ed Peters, said the main element in the case was the testimony of six witnesses who said they had heard Mr. Beckwith brag about killing Mr. Evers. The most compelling, he said, was Mark Reiley, a 36-year-old former guard in a hospital prison ward in Baton Rouge, La.

Mr. Reiley guarded Mr. Beckwith in 1979, when Mr. Beckwith was incarcerated after the police found in his car a bomb, weapons and a map marking the home of the head of the New Orleans chapter of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

Mr. Reiley said Mr. Beckwith had taken a liking to him, bragged about

Associated Press

Myrlie Evers, widow of Medgar Evers, speaking to reporters yesterday after Byron De La Beckwith was convicted of the murder of her husband 31 years ago. With her was her son, Darrell Kenyatta Evers.

A Hot Summer of Bloodshed and Change

By PETER APPLEBOME

In the weeks before Medgar Evers's death, at a time when racial violence was as much a part of Mississippi life as the summer heat, both Mr. Evers and his wife, Myrlie, lived each day with the thought it could be his last.

"We both knew the end was near," Mrs. Evers said before the beginning of the murder trial that ended yesterday. "You don't challenge a system like that without knowing the price to be paid. We lived with threats on a daily basis, and both of us knew in the last three weeks that it wasn't going to be long."

If anyone lived with all the terrors of the civil rights era in the South, it was Mr. Evers, the point man for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in a state where the violence of the time played out in its most overheated form.

By the time he was 28, Mr. Evers had lost a family friend to a lynch mob and had been denied admission to the University of Mississippi Law School because he was black. He began his work with the N.A.A.C.P. in Mississippi investigating racial killings. His work on cases like that of Emmett Till, a Chicago teen-ager killed in Money, Miss., in 1955 for whistling at a white woman, was compiled in a pamphlet called "M is for Mississippi and for Murder."

Becoming a Lightning Rod

By 1963, he had become the most conspicuous civil rights leader in Mississippi, a lightning rod for the passions swirling across the South. The national focus of the civil rights movement was in Alabama, where the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was challenging Police Commissioner T. Eugene (Bull) Connor's police dogs and fire hoses in Birmingham. But the focus in Mississippi was in Jackson, where Mr. Evers was leading a drive for fair employment and integration.

It was perhaps the most dangerous time, when the old order was still unshaken but it was possible both for those who wanted change and those who resisted it to imagine a new order to come. After Mayor Allen C. Thompson of Jackson rejected Mr. Evers's demands in a locally televised speech, Mr. Evers, in an extraordinary move, was given equal air time.

"In the racial picture, things will never be as they once were," Mr. Evers said. "History has reached a turning point, here and over the world." Soon after, he announced a "massive offensive" against segregation in Jackson.

A Final Strategy Session

On June 12, prodded by Dr. King, President John F. Kennedy delivered his strongest speech ever on civil rights, signaling the full support of an often ambivalent Administration for the civil rights struggles in the South. Mr. Evers watched it with other N.A.A.C.P. officials and then they held a strategy session that lasted well into the night.

He drove home, where his wife and three children were waiting up for him. Carrying a stack of N.A.A.C.P. sweatshirts reading "Jim Crow Must Go," he stepped out of his Oldsmobile and a loud crack rang out from a .30-'06 deer rifle. He was pronounced dead an hour later.

Mr. Evers was buried four days later in Arlington National Cemetery, and became one of the most heralded martyrs of the civil rights struggle.

Ebony Magazine

Medgar Evers

- "I used to ask Medgar, 'How could you say you love this state when all these horrible things are happening?' " Mrs. Evers said. "But he always said it was his home and he wanted to make it a better place. I always had difficulty understanding the depth of his feeling for his native state, but over the years I've come to understand it a little more. If a cleansing of the soul comes out of this trial, that's what Medgar would have wanted."

After 31 years, blacks say justice has at last been done.

"killing that uppity nigger Medgar Evers" and claimed to have influence in Mississippi that protected him from being punished for the crime.

"My position is that Mark Reiley was our cleanup hitter," Mr. Peters said.

Other evidence included Mr. Beckwith's fingerprint on the telescopic sight of the rifle that prosecutors said had been used to kill Mr. Evers.

The jury apparently was not swayed by testimony from three police officers who said they had seen Mr. Beckwith 90 miles away at the time of the shooting. One officer testified in person; the testimony of the other two, contained in transcripts from Mr. Beckwith's previous trials, was read to the court.

One juror, Richard A. Donahou, 32, said his colleagues had agreed not to discuss their deliberations publicly.

The third prosecution of Mr. Beckwith had its beginnings in 1989, when The Clarion-Ledger of Jackson published accounts of the files of the Mississippi Sovereignty Commission, a now-defunct state agency that was created in the 1950's to marshal support for the maintenance of segregation. These accounts showed that the agency had helped Mr. Beckwith's lawyers screen potential jurors.

The reports set off a review by the Hinds County District Attorney's office, which found no evidence of jury-tampering, but it did find new witnesses who helped win a new indictment of Mr. Beckwith in December 1990.

Still, it was a long journey through state appellate courts before the third trial became a certainty. As Mr. Beckwith sat in jail for more than a year before being released on bond in late 1992, his lawyers pressed dismissal motions, arguing that his right to a speedy trial had been violated and suggesting that another trial would constitute double jeopardy. In April 1993, a ruling by the Mississippi Supreme Court eliminated barriers to another trial, and more than nine months later testimony began.

But the court, the state's highest, never closed the door on the possibility that it might hear further appeals after a retrial. It said the challenge on the speedy-trial provision could be raised on appeal if Mr. Beckwith was convicted.

Both the prosecution and the defense have acknowledged the likelihood of such a challenge, as well as the possibility that the case could shadow Mississippi for years to come.

FIGURE 2–45. A spread from the *New York Times* on the Beckwith conviction and Medgar Evers's legacy (source: "White Supremacist Is Guilty of Killing Rights Leader," *New York Times,* February 6, 1994).

Myrlie Evers, Continuing the Work

Life in Jackson

Myrlie Evers and the Evers children remained in their home in Jackson for a year following Medgar Evers's assassination. In July 1963, Myrlie Evers attended the NAACP convention in Chicago, where she gave a speech and accepted the Spingarn Medal, awarded to Medgar Evers posthumously. After the convention, she began accepting speaking engagements around the country, describing the violence and oppression in Mississippi and the civil rights movement's efforts to pursue justice and freedom.[171]

In 1964, Myrlie Evers continued to speak on civil rights and testified in the first and second Beckwith trials (Figure 2–46). Recalling her family's time in Jackson following her husband's assassination, Myrlie Evers wrote:

> I was 30. I had dropped out of college to marry Medgar when I was 18 and now I had children, ages 3, 8 and 9, looking to me. Medgar had made $6,100 a year and had left me with thousands of dollars of debt. The NAACP said, "If you'll make appearances on our behalf, we'll continue to pay his salary." I did it. Every weekend I was away making speeches. My eldest son began to fear that I, too, would be killed. He stopped talking and he could not hold down his food. And I was suicidal. The only reason I struggled to stay alive was the promise I'd made to Medgar to take care of the children.
>
> It became difficult for the family to have any semblance of recovery as long as we lived in that house. The blood remained on the concrete. The refrigerator still had the dent from the bullet that had passed through Medgar's body.[172]

In a later interview, Myrlie Evers shared:

> I realized that I could not live in the house where Medgar had been shot down and be mentally sound. Every time I walked out of the front door, I saw his body there and I could see the blood.[173]

In her memoir, Myrlie Evers lamented the way their home became a tourist attraction. She wrote:

> And then, strangers...began to appear. They would drive slowly by the house, pointing and looking. On weekends the traffic was almost bumper to bumper. At the vacant lot where the murderer had hidden, some would park their cars, get out, explore the honeysuckle thicket....There was never any question of people finding their way to our house. The Jackson *Daily News* had published not only the address but a map with directions for reaching us...Some of these strangers actually came up the driveway to inspect the broken window, to point to the spot where Medgar had fallen... Others asked me to pose by the window for a picture, and, when I refused, many of them went away angry. [174]

Life After Jackson

In July 1964, Myrlie Evers and the Evers children decided to leave Jackson and move to Claremont, California, with the help of the NAACP. The children enrolled in the local school, and Myrlie Evers returned to her studies. In 1968, she graduated from Pomona College with a degree in sociology.[175] During this time, she worked with William Peters, a journalist who chronicled racism in America, to write her memoir about her life with Medgar Evers. *For Us, the Living* was published in 1967 and was adapted into a film and broadcast on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) television program *American Playhouse* in 1983.[176]

From 1968 to 1970, Myrlie Evers worked as the planning director for the Claremont College system. In 1970, she ran for Congress as a Democrat in California's then traditionally

171 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 338-340.

172 Claudia Dreifus, "The Widow Gets Her Verdict."

173 Fred Beauford,"Interview: Myrlie B. Evers," *The Crisis*, June/July 1988, 30.

174 Evers and Peters*, For Us, the Living,* 330.

175 Evers and Peters*, For Us, the Living,* 374-375.

176 Margalit Fox, "William Peters, 85, Journalist Who Examined Race in US, Dies," *New York Times*, May 24, 2007, https://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/24/business/24peters.html.

1964 RICHMOND BRANCH
Membership Campaign

NAACP

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Campaign Headquarters: 420 North First Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
Dial 644-9337



- The Evers Family -

Guest Speaker
Mrs. Myrlie Evers

CAMPAIGN CHAIRMEN
Dr. C. C. Scott
Dr. John L. Howlette
Mrs. R. B. Sampson

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN
Mrs. Senora B. Lawson
Miss Catherine Minor
Edward Ready

PRESIDENT
E. L. Slade, Jr.

SECRETARY
Mrs. Kathryn G. Davis

Dear NAACP Member:

On this Sunday, April 12 - 4:00 P.M. your Richmond Branch will kick-off its 1964 Membership Campaign at the Fifth Street Baptist Church, Dr. C. C. Scott, pastor.

To bring information and inspiration to civil rights fighters of Richmond will be that courageous, gentle but firm, dedicated mother, gentlewoman and wife of the murdered

MEDGAR EVERS OF JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

Mrs. Myrlie Evers, leaves her three small children in benighted Mississippi to open our 1964 membership drive at a time when an all white male jury will begin, for a second time, to deliberate the fate of the white segregationist who murdered her husband, Medgar, with a shot in the back.

In accepting our invitation to open our 1964 Membership Campaign for 10,000 members Mrs. Evers asked that we convey to the Negro citizens of Richmond the following statement: "Medgar gave his life for our freedom, will you give your NAACP membership in the Richmond Branch 1964 Membership Campaign? To each of you, I declare, Medgar did not die in vain! I am determined to carry on until the things for which Medgar died become realities in Richmond, in Mississippi and elsewhere. You will, I hope, meet me at the Fifth Street Baptist Church this Sunday, April 12, 1964 at 4:00 P.M."

Because of you and others with similar convictions, your NAACP closed its 1963 year (the Centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation) with a record national membership of 515,000 but we had less than 5,000 members in Richmond. Just as our paid up memberships set a new record, NAACP activities on a twenty-four hour basis, set new records also. To mention only one demand made upon NAACP dollars; more than a quarter million dollars in hard cold cash was posted in bails for Freedom Fighters arrested in 1963.

We enter 1964 with the sobering knowledge that there remains much "Unfinished Business of Emancipation". If we are ever to be truly free, we must make even greater personal and combined sacrifices.

Won't you upon receipt of this letter contact only three (3) friends and invite them to our 1964 Membership Kick-off Meeting this Sunday?

Confident in our joint abilities to move Freedom Forward in Richmond, we launch our 1964 Membership Campaign for 10,000 adult and 1,000 youth members.

With continuing appreciation, we are

Very truly yours,

E. L. Slade, Jr.
President

Encl:

FIGURE 2–46. NAACP membership drive program with Myrlie Evers as guest speaker, April 12, 1964, Richmond, Virginia (source: Program in Box 3, Myrlie Evers Folder, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

Republican-voting 24th district and won thirty-six percent of the vote (Figure 2–47).[177] She later served as vice-president of an advertising firm and as a communications executive for an oil company. In 1987, she became the first Black female commissioner on the Board of Public Works in Los Angeles, a position she held until 1995.

In 1973, Myrlie Evers met Walter Williams, a retired longshoreman and a union civil rights activist.[178] They married in 1976, and she took the name Myrlie Evers-Williams. They moved to Bend, Oregon, in 1989. Walter Williams died of cancer in 1995.[179]

In 1989, Myrlie Evers-Williams founded the Medgar Evers Institute with the goal of preserving and advancing the legacy of Medgar Evers. In recognition of Myrlie Evers-Williams's continued leadership, the organization changed its name to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Institute in 2013, on the 50th anniversary commemoration of the assassination. The institute continues to champion civil rights with a focus on history, education, and reconciliation.[180]

Myrlie Evers-Williams joined the national board of the NAACP in the 1990s and served as chair from 1995 to 1998. In 1998, she was named Woman of the Year by *Ms. Magazine* and one of the "100 Most Fascinating Black Women of the 20th Century" by *Ebony*, in recognition of her struggle to bring Medgar Evers's assassin to justice and her service as the third woman to chair the NAACP.[181] That same year, she published her autobiography, *Watch Me Fly: What I Learned on the Way to Becoming the Woman I Was Meant to Be*.[182] Using Medgar Evers's papers, letters, and speeches, she also wrote Medgar Evers's biography, *The Autobiography of Medgar Evers: A Hero's Life and Legacy Revealed Through His Writings, Letters, and Speeches*, published in 2005.

In 2013, Myrlie Evers-Williams delivered the commencement address at the University of Mississippi, where Medgar Evers was denied admission in 1954.[183] She received honorary doctorates from seven colleges and universities. Alcorn State University, where she and Medgar Evers met (the school's name was then Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College), renamed its honors program in recognition of her civil rights work.[184] In January 2013, she gave the convocation at President Barack Obama's second presidential inauguration (Figure 2–48).

177 "At 90, Civil Rights Pioneer Myrlie Evers-Williams '68 Donates Archival Collection to Inspire New Generations," Pomona College, February 9, 2023, https://www.pomona.edu/news/2023/02/09-90-civil-rights-pioneer-myrlie-evers-williams-68-donates-archival-collection-inspire-new-generations; Claudia Dreifus, "The Widow Gets Her Verdict."

178 Jerry Mitchell, "Myrlie Evers sees vision of her late husband, Medgar," *The Clarion-Ledger* (Jackson, MS), June 14, 2014.

179 "Walter Williams, Husband of New NAACP Leader," *SF Gate*, (San Francisco, CA), February 23, 1995, https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/walter-williams-husband-of-new-naacp-leader-3043787.php.



FIGURE 2–47. Buttons and fliers from Myrlie Evers's campaign for Congress (source: The Myrlie Evers-Williams Collection, Pomona College, https://www.pomona.edu/myrlie-evers-williams/photos).

180 "Our Story," Medgar and Myrlie Evers Institute, accessed August 2024, https://eversinstitute.org/about/our-story/.

181 "100 Most Fascinating Black Women of the 20th Century," *Ebony*, 54, no. 5, March 1999.

182 "Medgar Evers," NAACP, https://naacp.org/find-resources/history-explained/civil-rights-leaders/medgar-evers.

183 "Myrlie Evers-Williams' Commencement Address Full of Memorable Moments," University of Mississippi, May 11, 2013, https://news.olemiss.edu/myrlie-evers-williams-commencement-address-full-of-memorable-moments/.

184 Kennedy Williams, "Alcorn's Honors Program Named After Myrlie Evers-Williams," HBCUConnect, August 19, 2022, https://hbcuconnect.com/content/382810/alcorn-s-honors-program-named-after-myrlie-evers-williams; "Myrlie Evers-Williams to Speak at Alcorn's Commencement," WAPT 16 ABC, May 5, 2014, https://www.wapt.com/article/myrlie-evers-williams-to-speak-at-alcorn-s-commencement/2088339.

In 2016, Myrlie Evers-Williams sat for a recorded interview that would become the basis of the documentary film *The Evers*. In the film, she and her daughter Reena Evers-Everette visit their family home in Jackson and discuss the life and legacy of Medgar Evers. The film was released in 2019.[185] In May 2024, President Biden awarded Medgar Evers the Presidential Medal of Freedom, posthumously, the Nation's highest civilian honor.

The Evers Children

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of Medgar Evers's murder, Myrlie Evers-Williams reflected on her family in an interview, saying:

> We have fared relatively well, but with great difficulty. By that I mean that the scars of witnessing Medgar's death, of not having . . . their father. The closeness that they all had with him is something that none of them have gotten over.[186]

Darrell Kenyatta Evers went on to become an avant-garde artist, entrepreneur, and father. As an artist, he shaped a life outside of—but still in conversation with—his father's legacy. His work involved themes of struggle and White racist violence, including a mural of South African anti-apartheid activist and politician Nelson Mandela and a piece exploring the filming of police officers beating Rodney King.[187] Darrell Evers died of colon cancer in 2001 at age forty-seven in Burbank, California.[188]

Reena Evers-Everette became a businesswoman, nonprofit board member, and mother. She graduated from the New York Fashion Institute of Technology. She returned to California and served as chair of the board of directors for the Claremont Chapter of the American Red Cross. She also worked at Claremont's Committees on Dialogue and Human Relations. After three decades in the field of international business, she became executive director of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Institute in 2012.[189]

James "Van" Evers, the youngest of the Evers children, inherited his father's interest and talent in photography. He is a professional commercial photographer and a father. One of his most well-known portraits, a testament to the wives and widows of the civil rights movement, is a photograph of Myrlie Evers-Williams; Dr. Betty Shabazz, widow of Malcolm X; and Coretta Scott King, widow of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.[190]

185 *The Evers*, directed by Loki Mulholland; Mulholland, Loki, "Who Killed Medgar Evers?," The Joan Trumpauer Foundation, November 30, 2017, https://joantrumpauermulholland.org/who-killed-medgar-evers/.

186 Fred Beauford, "Interview: Myrlie B. Evers," 29.



FIGURE 2–48. Photograph taken by James Van Evers of his mother Myrlie Evers-Williams and his sons shaking hands with President Barack Obama at President Obama's second inauguration, January 20, 2013 (source: J. Van Evers).

187 Glen Justice, "'The Word Is Free,'" *LA Times,* (Los Angeles, CA), March 20 1994, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1994-03-20-vw-36537-story.html#:~:text=Reena%20named%20her%20eldest%20son,Kenya%20and%20a%20noted%20author.

188 "Darrell Evers, Son of Slain Civil Rights Activist, Dies," *Washington Post*, (Washington, DC), February 20, 2001, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2001/02/20/darrell-evers-son-of-slain-civil-rights-activist-dies/0c97983e-59ab-49f3-aadb-d6d0ae722c5a/.

189 *The Evers*, directed by Loki Mulholland; Glen Justice, "'The Word Is Free.'"

190 "Medgar Evers' Son Honors Civil Rights Icon In His Own Way," *NPR*, August 12, 2013, https://www.npr.org/transcripts/209877780.

Section 2: Regional Historic Context

Introduction

This section provides a background history and context for the study area, consisting of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument. It summarizes the primary historic periods from the earliest known human presence to the civil rights era, contextualizing the civil rights work of Medgar and Myrlie Evers and the development of the Elraine neighborhood.

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument (study area) includes the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House National Historic Landmark as well as the Missouri Street Lots, which are vacant lots owned and administered by the National Park Service. The study area is within the Elraine neighborhood, which is now recognized as the Medgar Evers Historic District.

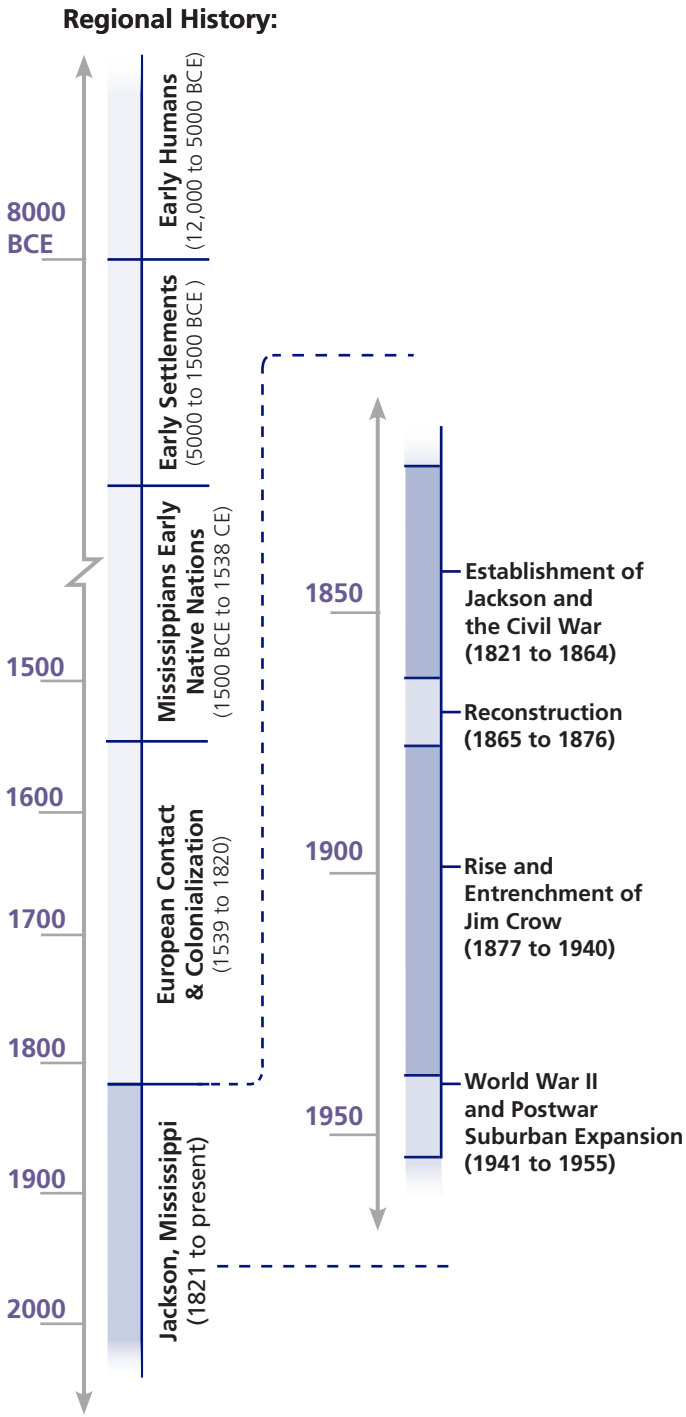


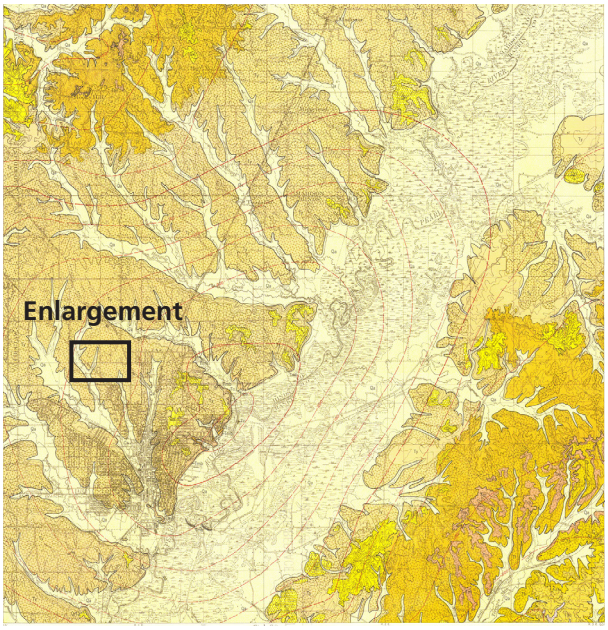
FIGURE 2–49. The timeline illustrates the developmental periods associated with the cultural landscape (source: BBB Architects/DHM Design, 2023).

Geological Context

The study area is located in what is now Jackson, Mississippi, situated near the western edge of the East Gulf Coastal Plain physiographic province, which formed 230–280 million years ago during the breakup of Pangea in the early Mesozoic Era. As the supercontinent broke apart, rifts of magma created a volcanic rift zone that formed the Atlantic Ocean Basin.[191] Bedrock and surface geology in the study area range in age from the Eocene to present. Bedrock formations from bottom to surface include the Cockfield formation (sand, clay, and lignite), Jackson group (sand and clay), Forest Hill sand, Vicksburg group (limestone), Byram formation (limestone, marl, clay), and Catahoula sandstone. Surficial geology generally consists of fluvial deposits, comprised of gravel beds, river terraces, and uncategorized alluvia (Figure 2–50).[192]

191 "Coastal Plain Province," National Park Service, April 30, 2018, https://www.nps.gov/articles/coastalplain.htm.

192 "Geology of Jackson Area, Mississippi," USGS, January 1, 1954, https://pubs.usgs.gov/bul/0986/plate-1.pdf.



Early Humans (12,000–5000 BCE)

Humans have lived in the East Gulf Coastal Plain for thousands of years, first appearing in archeological records in North America at the end of the ice age in the Paleo-Indian Period, roughly 12,000–8000 BCE (Before Common Era). The Paleo-Indians were hunter-gatherers who arrived near the end of the ice age, when many now-extinct animals including the mastodon were still present.[193]

In the Early Archaic period (8000–5000 BCE), humans in the region saw the extinction of some large mammals. Scholars believe humans continued to hunt and gather in small groups.[194]

193 Samuel Brookes, "Paleo-Indians," Mississippi Enclyclopedia, accessed September 2024, https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/paleo-indians/#:~:text=Paleo%2DIndians%20were%20hunter%2Dgatherers,of%20humans%20have%20been%20recovered.

194 David Morgan, "Archaeology and Prehistoric Mississippi," *Mississippi History Now*, (Mississippi Department of Archives and History, October 2002), https://www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov/issue/archaeology-and-prehistoric-mississippi; Jayur Mehta, "Archaic Period," *Mississippi Encyclopedia*, January 30, 2018, https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/archaic-period/.



FIGURE 2–50. Geology of the Jackson area, Mississippi. Pale yellow = Alluvium, composed of silt, sand, gravel, and carbonaceous matter. Orange with yellow dots = Moodys Branch formation, composed of fossiliferous, glauconitic sandy marl with loess or brown loam (source: USGS National Geologic Map Database, "Geology of Jackson Area, Mississippi" (USGS, 1954), https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/Prodesc/proddesc_21253.htm).

Early Settlements (5000–1500 BCE)

Starting in the Middle Archaic period (5000–3000 BCE), the climate in what is now the southeastern United States began to warm, causing sea level rise. The region that is now the state of Mississippi saw river fluctuation and the spread of fluvial wetland. Humans developed increasingly stationary societies, settling in river and swamp areas with seasonal food. They developed regional trade routes, including the Natchez Trace, a series of paths connecting the Cumberland River Basin to the Lower Mississippi River Valley. Archeologists have found evidence of human habitation along the Natchez Trace dating to roughly 8000 BCE at the Bear Creek Village site, 230 miles northeast of Jackson, Mississippi, at the Mississippi-Alabama border.[195]



By the Late Archaic period (3000–1500 BCE), the climate had cooled, and the region experienced weather patterns similar to those of today. The shoreline, rivers, and streams stabilized. Able to find more resources along stable waterways,

195 Jayur Mehta, "Archaic Period;" Ernie Price, "Natchez Trace," *Mississippi Encyclopedia*, April 14, 2018, https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/natchez-trace/.



FIGURE 2–51. This map shows the location of Native Nations circa 1500 CE, labeled in each tribe's own language when available (source: Peter Klumpenhower, "Indigenous American Nations, around 16th Century - 2022 Edition." Indigenous America Maps, February 1, 2022. https://indigamerica.blogspot.com/2022/02/this-map-aims-to-show-approximate.html#more).

groups began to settle in one place for longer periods of time. They domesticated plants and created fiber-reinforced pottery.[196]

Mississippian Early Native Nations (1500 BCE–1538 CE)

During the Woodland Period (1500 BCE to 1000 CE, Common Era) native peoples in the region continued to live in small communities and villages along waterways and trade networks, including the Natchez Trace. They grew corn and built large ceremonial and burial mounds. Archeological evidence indicates that the Natchez Nation formed as early as 700 BCE.[197]

Over the next seven hundred years, Native American people lived in what has been termed the Mississippian Civilization (1000 to 1700 CE), with larger societies in clan systems based on matriarchal lineage. By the end of this period, Mississippians had organized into nearly two dozen Native Nations. The Chahta (Choctaw), Chikasha (Chickasaw), and Nvce (Natchez) Nations were among the largest and were connected by the Natchez Trace. During this period, Native American people refined agricultural techniques, growing corns, beans, and squash, and continued to hunt, gather, and fish. They built ceremonial and burial mounds of increasing complexity. These historic mounds remain visible within the landscape today, located within thirty to forty miles of the study area.

The Choctaw people were the dominant group in the region surrounding the study area (Figure 2–51, Figure 2–52).[198] They trace their origins to the Nunih Waya (Nanih Waiya), meaning "bending" or "leaning mountain," which is located in Winston County, Mississippi, roughly 100 miles northeast of the study area.[199]

The Chickasaw, who lived north of the study area, believe their ancestors were created on the North American continent, north and west of what is now the Mississippi River.[200]

European Contact and Colonialization (1539–1820)

The arrival of Europeans to the Americas fundamentally changed the global order for American and European societies. Europeans brought economic pressure and disease to America and took back to Europe new foods as well as gold and silver in a quantity that would alter its economy.[201]

Through war, disease, and displacement, European settlement in the Americas killed an estimated 56 million Native Americans between 1492, with the arrival of Christopher Columbus, and 1600.[202] Europeans claimed land on which Native communities lived, farmed, and hunted, forcing many to move westward and enslaving others. European colonial powers competed with

196 Jayur Mehta, "Archaic Period."

197 Janet Rafferty, "Woodland Period," *Mississippi Encyclopedia*, April 15, 2018, https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/woodland-period/; David Morgan, "Archaeology and Prehistoric Mississippi;" NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites;* Jim Barnett, "The Natchez Indians," Mississippi History Now, October 2007), https://www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov/issue/the-natchez-indians.

198 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites*; David Morgan, "Archaeology and Prehistoric Mississippi."

199 Janet Rafferty, "Woodland Period;"Janet Rafferty, "Mississippian Period," *Mississippi Encyclopedia*, April 14, 2018, https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/mississippian-period/; "Mississippian Period, 900-1400AD," Chickasaw TV Video Network, Chickasaw Nation, accessed June 2024, https://www.chickasaw.tv/events/mississippi-period; "Nunih Waya," The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture, Oklahoma Historical Society, accessed June2024, https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry?entry=NU002; "Nanih Waiya Mound," Choctaw Cultural Legacy, accessed August 2024, https://choctawculturallegacy.com/nanih-waiya-mound/; NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 12.

200 LaDonna Brown, "The Chickasaw Creation Story," Chickasaw TV Video Network, Chickasaw Nation, accessed August 2024, https://www.chickasaw.tv/videos/the-chickasaw-creation-story.

201 Ned Blackhawk, "The Modern Scholar: A History of Native America, Lecture 2," 2010.

202 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 12; Alexander Koch, Chris Brierley, Mark M. Maslin, and Simon L. Lewis, "Earth system impacts of the European arrival and Great Dying in the Americas after 1492,"*Quarterly Science Review*, 2019, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277379118307261?ref=pdf_download&fr=RR-2&rr=80fea7f40c2c51ee, 13-36.





Key:



FIGURE 2–52. The map illustrates Indigenous territories in North America circa 1600, as assessed by the American Antiquarian Society in 1836 (source: Gallatin, Albert, and American Antiquarian Society. *Map of the Indian tribes of North America, about A.D. along the Atlantic, & about 1800 A.D. westwardly.* [Washington, D.C.: The Society, 1600] Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/2002622260/).

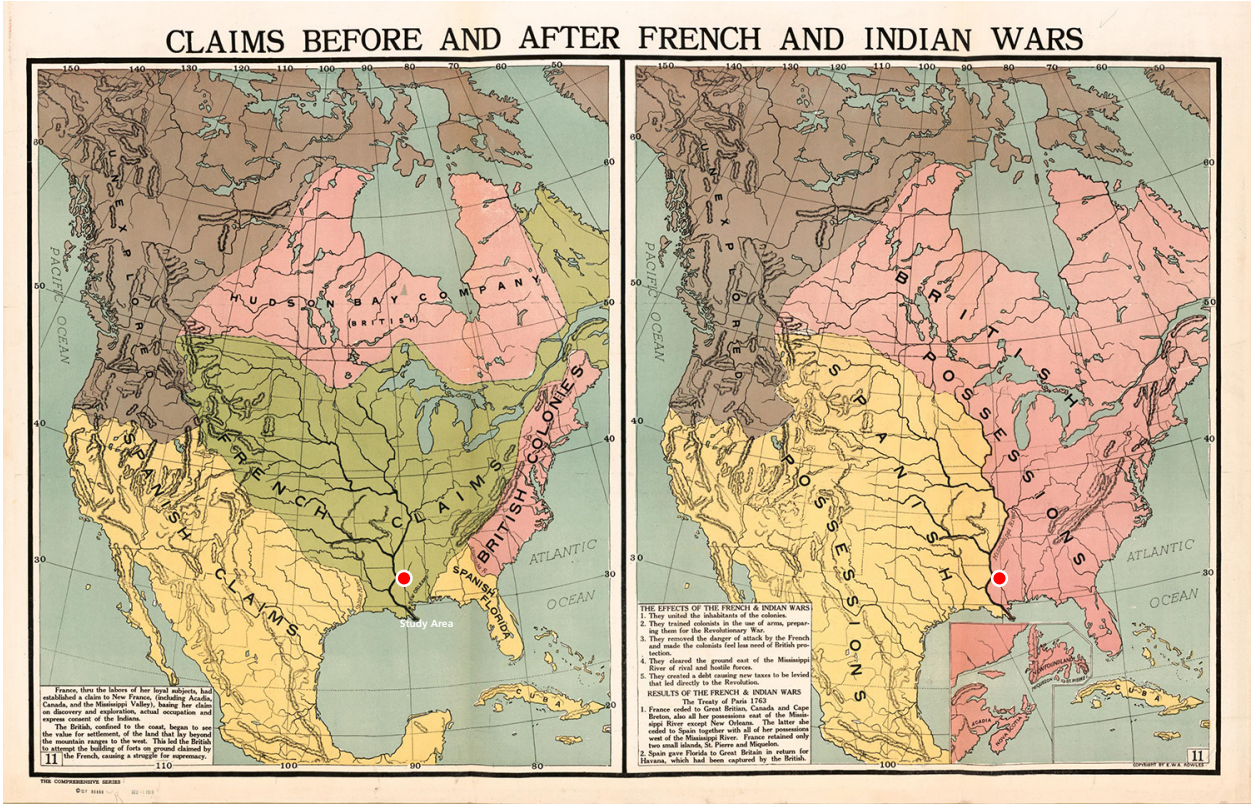


FIGURE 2–53. European claims to land in North America before and after the French and Indian War. These maps do not reflect Native American land claims (source: [Chicago, Ill.: Modern School Supply Co, 1919] Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/2009581137/).

each other for control of the region that is now Mississippi, establishing settlements and forming alliances with Native Nations while also destroying their way of life.[203]

Free and enslaved Africans were among the participants in the earliest European-led expeditions and colonial projects in the Americas. Free Africans joined expeditions as soldiers, interpreters, and servants.[204] As early as the 1400s, Europeans enslaved Africans and brought them to the Americas, launching the trans-Atlantic slave trade, a system of racialized, commodified enslavement through which traders shipped over 10.6 million Africans to North and South America and the Caribbean.[205]

In 1619 a Portuguese slave ship brought "20 and odd" Africans from Angola to a port near Jamestown, the capital of the English colony of Virginia. The Virginian Governor and Cape Merchant purchased the enslaved Africans and put them to work in the colony's tobacco fields, laying the foundation for the system of chattel slavery in the United States and in Mississippi.[206]

The Spanish

The 1539 expeditionary party led by Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto is credited as the first group of Europeans to explore the Lower Mississippi River Valley and cross the Mississippi River. De Soto's expedition included White men and women as well as free and enslaved Africans. Despite this early exploration, Spain's early land claims in North America centered around what is today Florida and Mexico.[207] The Spanish

203 Blackhawk, "The Modern Scholar."

204 "Immigration and Relocation in US History,"Library of Congress, accessed August 2024, https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/.

205 Trans-Atlantic Slave Database, accessed August 2024, https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/database#statistics.

206 Mary Elliott and Jazmine Hughes, "Four hundred years after enslaved Africans were first brought to Virginia, most Americans still don't know the full story of slavery," *New York Times Magazine*, August 19, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/19/magazine/history-slavery-smithsonian.html.

207 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites* 12.

did not settle in the Mississippi region, but scholars have determined through archeological and epidemiological evidence that they left behind waves of disease that decimated Native communities.[208]

The French

The French created the first European colonial settlements in the Mississippi region. French expeditions, including that of explorer and fur trader René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de Salle traveled from Canada, down the Mississippi. In 1682, he claimed the entire Mississippi River Valley for King Louis XIV and named it *La Louisiane*. In 1699, the French established Fort Maurepas along the Gulf of Mexico (in present-day Ocean Springs, Mississippi) to control southern access to the Mississippi River.[209] Fort Maurepas failed, but in 1716, the French built Fort Rosalie (in present-day Natchez, Mississippi) on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River. Fort Rosalie eventually grew into the third-largest territory in the Lower Mississippi River region.[210]

The French introduced the practice of racialized slavery into the region in 1719, when the Company of the Indies (founded as the Mississippi Company)—a private corporation backed by the French government—sailed the first slave ship across from Senegal.[211] The French forced enslaved people, predominantly those of African descent but also Native Americans, to work in the production of tobacco, indigo, rice, and lumber.[212] Prior to European slavery, Native American people had enslaved other Native American people. The European practice of chattel slavery introduced the constructs of racial hierarchies and supposed biological traits as justification for White enslavement of Africans and their descendants. [213]

The British

From 1754 to 1763, the British fought the French, who were allies with Native Nations, including the Choctaw, in the French and Indian War (the North American front of the global Seven Years War). When the French and Native Americans lost the war in 1763, the French government ceded the Louisiana Territory east of the Mississippi River to Britain and the territory west of the Mississippi River to Spain (Figure 2–53). The British also claimed some land held by the Choctaw.[214] The British-controlled Natchez District—the region southeast of what is now Jackson, Mississippi—grew into one of the largest population centers in the Lower Mississippi Valley. The British enslaved people of African and Native American descent, forcing them to work on cotton plantations in the Natchez District. The enslaved people made up roughly forty percent of the district's population.[215]

The Colonial Americans

British colonists declared independence from Great Britain in 1776 and fought the American Revolutionary War until 1783. Following the war, in 1795, the United States and Spain signed the Treaty of San Lorenzo (also called Pinckney's Treaty), defining the thirty-first parallel as the border between the United States and Spanish Florida. In 1798, the United States Congress created the Mississippi Territory from land gained under the treaty (now part of Mississippi and Alabama). The original boundaries consisted of the region bounded by the Mississippi and Chattahoochee rivers in the west and east, the thirty-first parallel in the south, and the point

208 Ned Blackhawk, "The Modern Scholar," 2010.

209 Anne Good, "Cadillacs and Conquistadors at the James Ford Bell Library," University of Minnesota, June 24, 2022, https://libnews.umn.edu/2022/06/cadillacs-and-conquistadors-at-the-james-ford-bell-library/; NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 12; Michael J. Bunn and Clay Williams, "A Failed Enterprise: The French Colonial Period in Mississippi," Mississippi History Now, September 2007, https://www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov/issue/french-colonial-period-in-mississippi.

210 Christopher Waldrip, "Fort Rosalie," *Mississippi Encyclopedia,* April 14, 2018, https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/fort-rosalie/.

211 Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), Chapter 1.

212 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 12.

213 Barbara Krauthamer, *Black Slaves, Indian Masters Slavery, Emancipation, and Citizenship in the Native American South*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 19.

214 "Choctaw History," Mississippi Choctaw, accessed August 2024, https://www.choctaw.org/about-us/tribal-history/; NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 12-13.

215 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 12-13.

where the Yazoo River joined the Mississippi River in the north (today near Vicksburg, Mississippi). The United States expanded the system of slavery within the Mississippi Territory, and beginning in 1798, waves of White migrants moved to the region, bringing with them enslaved laborers.[216]

Within the Mississippi Territory, the Choctaw and Chickasaw peoples self governed and held their land in common, meaning there were no individual land claims.[217] With the influx of American settlers, the US government forced Native Americans westward, through treaties often signed under duress. Between 1801 and 1830, Americans pressured Choctaw leaders into signing a series of treaties through which the Choctaw Nation lost access to their homeland, a total of 23 million acres. Through the Treaty of Doak's Stand in 1820, the United States took 5.5 million acres of Choctaw land, including land that would eventually become Jackson, Mississippi, and the study area.[218]

In 1817, the United States admitted the state of Mississippi, which was divided from the Mississippi Territory along with Alabama (admitted to the United States in 1819) (Figure 2–54).[219] The Mississippi state constitution codified slavery as a

216 James P. Pate, "Treaty of San Lorenzo (Pinckney's Treaty)," *Mississippi Encyclopedia*, accessed August 2024, https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/san-lorenzo-treaty-of-pinckneys-treaty/; NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites Special Resource Study*, 12-13.

217 Krauthamer, *Black Slaves, Indian Masters,* 6.

218 "History," Mississippi Choctaw; Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City: A History of Jackson, Mississippi's Built Environment, 1865-1950*, (Gainesville, GA: The Jaegar Company, 2000), 1.

219 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites*, 12.



FIGURE 2–54. Map of the Mississippi Territory in 1816 by American cartographer Fielding Lucas. The areas north of the 1798 boundary were annexed in 1804 and the coastal areas along the Gulf of Mexico were annexed in 1812 (source: Mississippi Territory. 29. H.S. Tanner, sc. (1816) by Fielding Lucas, David Rumsey Map Historical Map Collection).

state-supported institution, reflecting the interests of the wealthy White plantation owners in the Natchez District who made up the majority of the constitution convention delegates. At that time, approximately one-third of the state's population was enslaved. A small population of free African Americans lived in Mississippi, but White Mississippians placed constraints on their rights.[220] Some free African Americans in Mississippi also owned slaves. William Johnson, a Black man and well-off barber in Natchez, Mississippi, was born enslaved. At age eleven, he was freed and went on to enslave sixteen people by the time of his death in 1851.[221]

The 1830 treaty between the United States and the Choctaw people was a "removal" treaty, backed by the federal 1830 Indian Removal Act. Under the treaty, the United States claimed the remaining Choctaw land in Mississippi in exchange for land in "Indian Territory," which would eventually become Oklahoma. Under the orders of President Andrew Jackson, federal troops and state militia forced the people of the Choctaw and other Native Nations to move west. The United States forced roughly 70,000 Native Americans out of the region. Three thousand Native Americans died on the journey west in a march commemorated as the Trail of Tears.[222] Of the 19,000 Choctaw people in Mississippi in 1830, 13,000 were forced west and roughly 6,000 remained.

While the vast majority of enslavers were White, the native Choctaw and Chickasaw people understood that racialized slavery was a means to accumulate personal wealth. Some Native Americans enslaved African Americans, and in some instances, brought those enslaved with them when the United States government forced them off their land.[223] In 1831, before removal, eighty Choctaw families enslaved a total of 499 people. Thirty years later, members of the Choctaw Nation (in what is now Oklahoma) enslaved almost 2,300 people. Research shows that at least one descendant of the Choctaw people who remained in Mississippi owned a cotton plantation and enslaved almost 400 people. While some other descendents of the Choctaw people likely owned land and enslaved people, it was not the typical

220 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 12-13.

221 National Park Service, "The Life of William Johnson," Natchez National Historical Park, Mississippi, accessed August 2024, https://www.nps.gov/natc/learn/historyculture/williamjohnson.htm.

222 National Park Service, "Early Choctaw History," Natchez Trace Parkway, accessed June 2023, https://www.nps.gov/natr/learn/historyculture/choctaw.htm.

223 Barbara Krauthamer, *Black Slaves, Indian Masters,* 8-9.

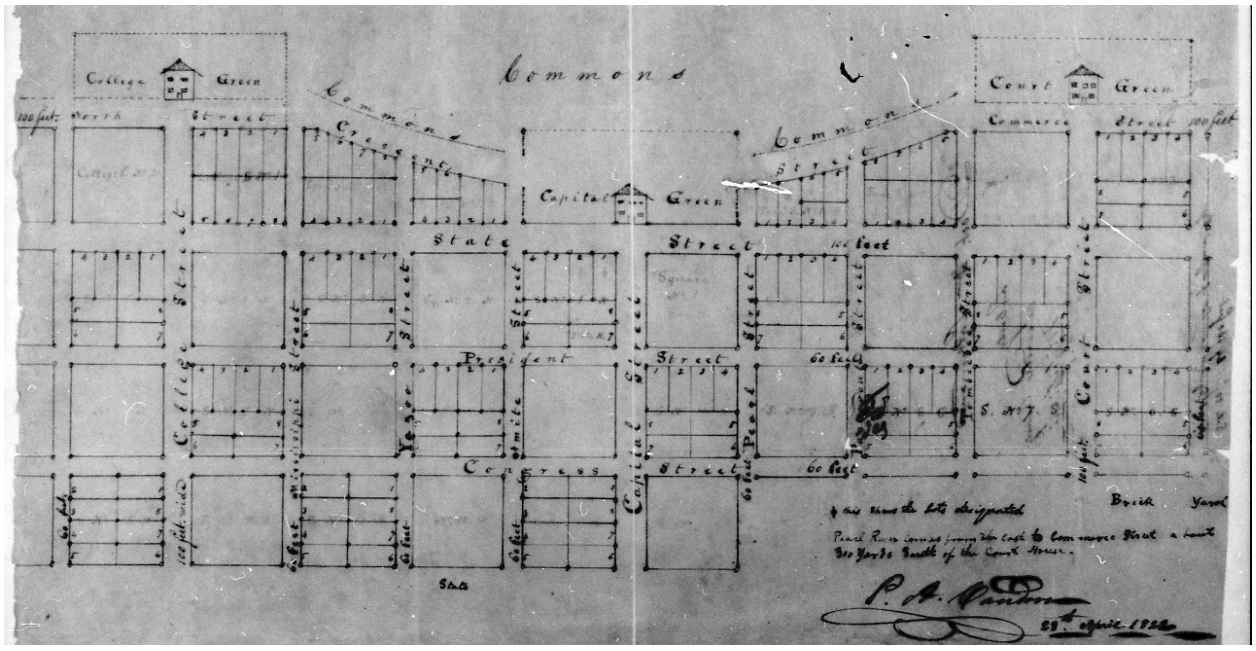


FIGURE 2–55. The plan for Jackson, Mississippi, as drawn by Peter VanDorn, 1822. (source: Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City*).

experience for the Choctaw people who remained in Mississippi. Most were denied land and worked as sharecroppers.[224]

Establishment of Jackson; American Civil War (1821–1864)

Jackson

When the United States Congress created the Mississippi Territory in 1798, and again when it admitted Mississippi as a state in 1817, the city of Natchez served as the capital. In 1821, the Mississippi General Assembly directed a small commission to select a centrally located site for a new state capital. The commission chose a location on the land taken from the Choctaw Nation under the recently signed Treaty of Doak's Stand. They selected a site on LeFleur's Bluff for its elevated topography and access to water and timber. It was a former ferry crossing approximately twenty feet above the floodplain west of the Pearl River. There, the Mississippi General Assembly established the town of Jackson as the seat of government, naming it after US Army Major General Andrew Jackson. Jackson had led the United States's western front in the War of 1812 against Native Nations and the British. Jackson was an enslaver, would serve as President of the United States from 1829–1837, and led the push for the US Indian Removal policies.[225]

In 1822, Peter VanDorn, a Mississippi lawyer and plantation owner, drew the initial plan for the city of Jackson. He based his design on Thomas Jefferson's "Checkerboard Plan," in which every other block was unoccupied and reserved as greenspace to mitigate the risk of fire spreading from structure to structure (Figure 2–55). However, city leaders did not implement the plan as envisioned and sold lots as needed for building construction.[226]

In the early 1800s, predominantly White cotton plantation owners in Mississippi used enslaved laborers, along with cotton gins and higher-yield cotton seed varieties, to increase production and profit. By the 1830s, Mississippi had become the largest cotton-producing state in the country, and cotton was its economy's largest driver. White Mississippians used the cotton economy and its sizeable profits as justification for their continued and increased reliance on racialized slavery. By 1830 more than 65,000 men, women, and children of African and Native American descent were enslaved in Mississippi. By 1840, that number had more than tripled to 195,211 people, more than half the state's population. In 1860, Mississippi's population reached 700,000; more than 430,000 were enslaved. Of the state's African American population, only 775 were free.[227] As the state's economy and population grew, so did the city of Jackson. By 1861, the city population had grown to 3,000. At that time, the majority of residents in Jackson and its surrounding counties were African American (Figure 2–56).[228]

State and city leaders oversaw the construction of institutional buildings and infrastructure, including the state capitol (1833–1840), the state penitentiary (1836), and city hall (1846–1847). In 1840, a new railroad line connected Jackson to Vicksburg. A bridge was constructed over the Pearl River at Commerce Street to replace the city's ferry. In the 1840s and 1850s, the city's residential neighborhoods expanded along arterial roads at State, Jefferson, and Congress Streets.[229]

224 Jeffrey L. Fortney Jr., "Slaves and Slaveholders in the Choctaw Nation: 1830-1866," Masters diss., (University of North Texas, 2009), https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc28371/m2/1/high_res_d/thesis.pdf, 28-29.

225 Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 2; Timothy B. Smith, "Jackson: The Capital City and the Civil War," *Mississippi History Now* (Mississippi Department of Archives and History, April 2010), https://www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov/issue/jackson-the-capital-city-and-the-civil-war; "The War of 1812 and Indian Wars: 1812-1821," Library of Congress, accessed August 2024, https://www.loc.gov/collections/andrew-jackson-papers/articles-and-essays/andrew-jackson-timeline-1767-1845/the-war-of-1812-and-indian-wars-1812-1821/.

226 Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 2-3.

227 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 13,14; Max Grivno, "Antebellum Mississippi," Mississippi History Now, July 2015), https://www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov/issue/antebellum-mississippi.

228 Hergesheimer, E. *Map showing the distribution of the slave population of the southern states of the United StatesCompiled from the census of*. Washington Henry S. Graham, 1861. Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/99447026/.

229 Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 2-3, 5-6.

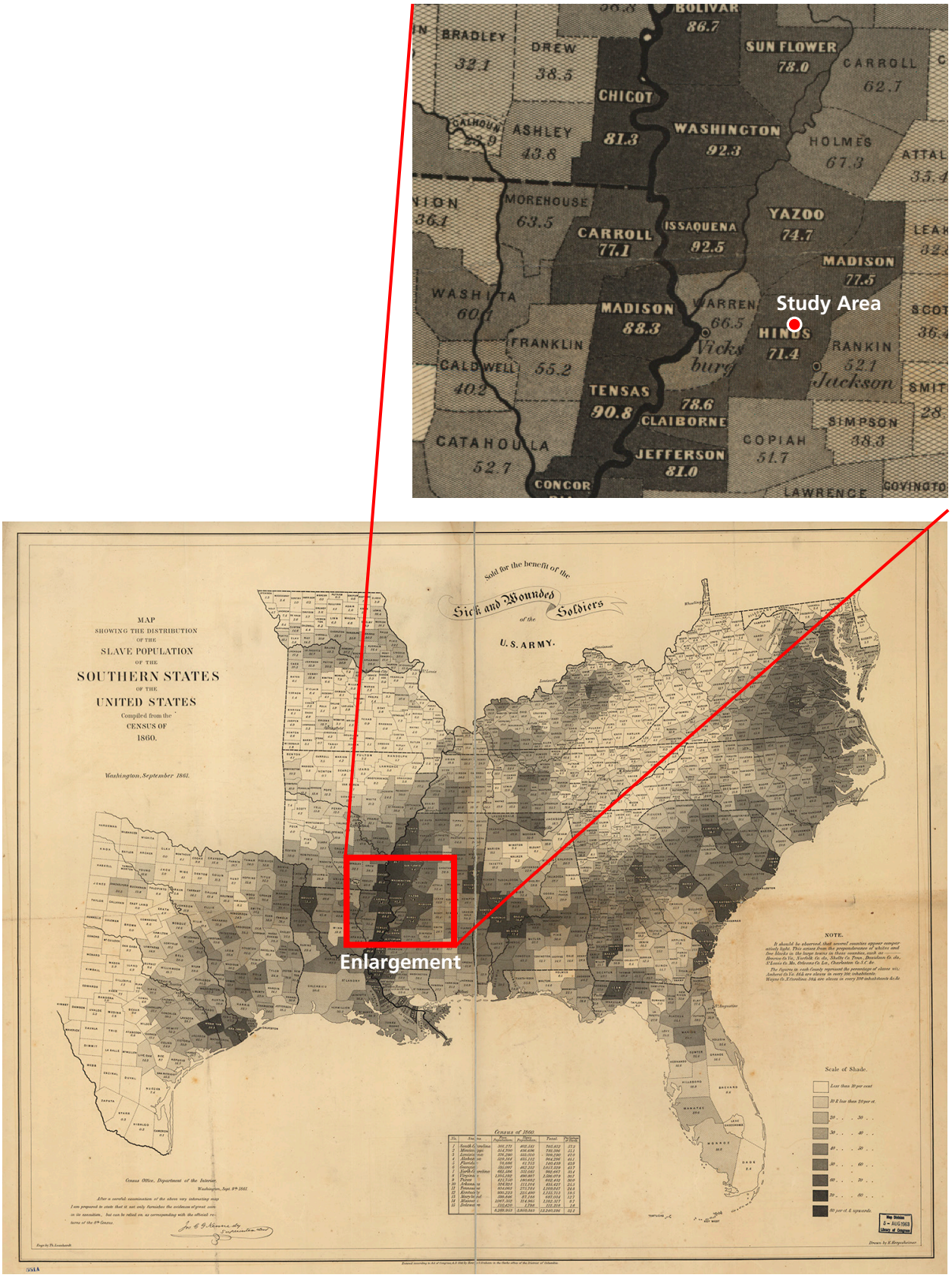


FIGURE 2–56. This map shows the percentage of enslaved men, women, and children amongst the entire population by county, according to the 1860 census (source: Henry Graham Washington, "Map showing the distribution of the slave population of the southern states of the United States, 1860," Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, Washington, DC, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3861e.cw0013200/?loclr=blogmap).

Civil War (1861–1865)

The dominant issue of the 1860 US presidential election was the extension of slavery into US territories. Republican Party candidate Abraham Lincoln ran on a platform to abolish slavery in the territories. Southern states saw his victory as a threat to what they claimed was their authority to enslave Black men, women, and children.[230]

In January 1861, Mississippi became the second state to secede because of its commitment to slavery.[231]

The Mississippi Declaration of Secession read:

> Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery – the greatest material interest of the world. Its labor supplies the product which constitutes by far the largest and most important portions of commerce of the earth. These products are peculiar to the climate verging on the tropical regions, and by an imperious law of nature, none but the black race can bear exposure to the tropical sun. These products have become necessities of the world, and a blow at slavery is a blow at commerce and civilization. That blow has been long aimed at the institution, and was at the point of reaching its consummation. There was no choice left us but submission to the mandates of abolition, or a dissolution of the Union, whose principles had been subverted to work out our ruin.[232]

The United States fought the Confederacy in the American Civil War from April 1861 until April 1865. The majority of White Mississippians supported the Confederacy, which was led by Jefferson Davis, a former Mississippi congressman and senator. Approximately 80,000 White Mississippians fought for the Confederate Army. 17,000 thousand Black Mississippians, most of whom had escaped slavery during the Civil War, enlisted as US Colored Troops, contributing to the over 185,000 formerly enslaved and free African American men who fought against slavery and demonstrated their fitness for citizenship.[233]

In September 1862, President Abraham Lincoln issued a preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, freeing enslaved people in Mississippi and other states of the Confederacy. While free in name, African Americans in Mississippi remained enslaved under the Confederacy. As regions within the Confederacy fell, many enslaved people escaped and took refuge in Union-controlled camps supported by the US military.[234]

In the early days of the Civil War, the city of Jackson emerged as an industrial hub. Its factories produced textiles, weapons, and ammunition to

230 National Park Service, "Slavery: Cause and Catalyst of the Civil War," Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, https://www.nps.gov/cuga/learn/historyculture/upload/SLAVERY-BROCHURE.pdf.

231 Clay Williams, "The Road to War (1846–1860)," *Mississippi History Now* (Mississippi Department of Archives and History, April 2002), https://www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov/issue/the-road-to-war-1846-1860.

232 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 14.

233 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 14.

234 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 14-15.



FIGURE 2–57. Illustration of United States troops taking Jackson (source: Civil War, *Harper's Weekly Newspaper*, June 20, 1863).

support the growing army. Its railroad and the Pearl River carried supplies and soldiers.[235]

In May 1863, US General Ulysses S. Grant and his troops marched on Jackson, occupying what had become a center for Confederate transportation, industry, military, and politics. US troops destroyed bridges, factories, warehouses, and the railway. The state government fled the capital and did not return until the war ended.[236] During the period of Federal occupation, a large fire damaged the city's commercial district in 1864 (Figure 2–57, Figure 2–58).[237]

Reconstruction (1865–1876)

After the war, the US Congress abolished slavery, provided equal protection under the law, and granted all men the right to vote. In 1867, Congress passed the Reconstruction Act, which outlined the terms for readmission to representation for the former Confederate states. Hence, the period following the Civil War was known as Reconstruction and was a time of political and social rebuilding in Mississippi and the city of Jackson.

Mississippi

In 1865, White Mississippi lawmakers passed "black Codes," legislation that significantly restricted African American civil rights in order to replicate the economic, social, and political power structure that existed under slavery.[238] Congress established the Freedmen's Bureau in 1865 to oversee formerly enslaved persons, war refugees, and lands abandoned and seized during the Civil War. The Freedmen's Bureau initially planned for the low-cost sale of forty-acre tracts of land. This land would come from abandoned and seized plantations and was to have been sold to individuals, including African Americans, in order to support an economy of individual farmers. Instead, the Bureau shifted its focus from land

235 Smith, "Jackson: The Capital City and the Civil War."

236 Smith, "Jackson: The Capital City and the Civil War."

237 Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 8-12.

238 "Black Codes (1865), Mississippi and South Carolina,1865," National Constitution Center, accessed August 2024, https://constitutioncenter.org/the-constitution/historic-document-library/detail/mississippi-south-carolina-black-codes-1865; Jason Phillips, "Reconstruction in Mississippi, 1865-1876," *Mississippi History Now*, (Mississippi Department of Archives and History, May 2006), https://www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov/issue/reconstruction-in-mississippi-1865-1876; NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 15.



FIGURE 2–58. "The Ruins of Jackson, Mississippi" by D.H. Boyett, 1865 (source: "Jackson, Mississippi, September, 1865, artist's impression," House Divided: The Civil War Research Engine at Dickinson College, https://hd.housedivided.dickinson.edu/node/44553).

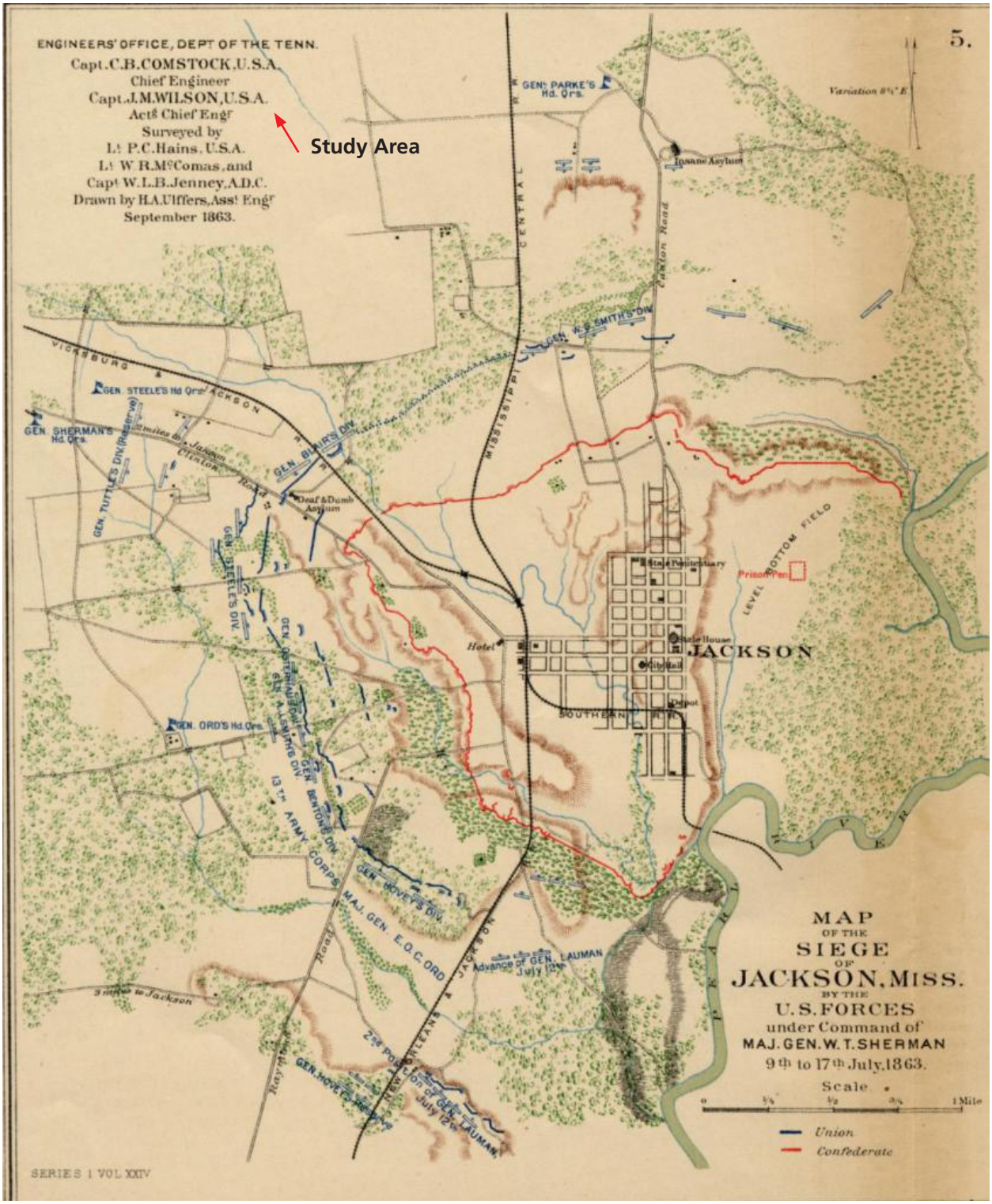


FIGURE 2–59. This map depicts the fortifications of Union and Confederate forces in Jackson as of July 1863. The study area is located northwest of downtown Jackson (source: "Map of the Siege of Jackson by United States Forces, 9th to 17th of July 1863," Engineers' Office, Department of Tennessee. Accessed September 2024. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jacksonsiege1863.jpg).

sales to labor deals, facilitating arrangements between freedmen, White landless farmers, and White landowners. These agreements laid the groundwork for the exploitative labor systems of tenant farming and sharecropping.[239]

In tenant farming, individuals rented land but often owned their own seed, crops, equipment and home. Under sharecropping, individuals owned very little and were forced to rent the land and all aspects of their farms and homes, often all from the same landowner. Landowners controlled what sharecroppers grew, when and how their crops were sold, and the price of everything from land to equipment and food. These systems, and sharecropping in particular, kept many farmers in a cycle of debt and poverty. Myrlie Evers described sharecropping as "almost an exact duplication of slavery."[240]

Between 1866 and 1870, Congress passed the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, abolishing slavery, providing equal protection under the law, and granting all male American citizens the right to vote regardless of race.[241] The Reconstruction Act of 1867 brought the states of the former Confederacy under US military control in order to enforce federally protected freedoms, including the rights of Black men to vote.[242]

African American voters in Mississippi helped elect a Republican-led government that rebuilt the state's railroads and bridges; expanded government services, including the establishment of the state's first public school system; and rejoined the Union in 1870 with a state constitution that enfranchised "all male inhabitants."[243] In 1870, African Americans comprised fifty-four percent of the state population yet they did not hold a majority of state government or Republican Party positions. 226 Black Mississippians did hold public office, including two senate seats.[244]

Jackson

By 1869, the city of Jackson's Republican-led Reconstruction government had rebuilt much of the city's war-damaged infrastructure (Figure 2–58, Figure 2–60). From 1860 to 1870, Jackson's population grew from 3,191 to 4,234. In 1874, the city annexed relatively large areas of land north and west of the city, including what would become the Farish Street neighborhood. Prior to the Civil War, the area belonged to large estates. It was surveyed and subdivided in the 1870s, and many modest homes were built by and for the descendants of slaves.[245] The land became a segregated area for African Americans by the 1890s.[246]

239 "African American Heritage: The Freedmen's Bureau," The National Archives, accessed August 2024, https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/freedmens-bureau.

240 USDA, "Black Farmers in America, 1865-2000: The Pursuit of Independent Farming and the Role of Cooperatives," Rural Business–Cooperative Service, Research Report 194, October 2003, https://www.rd.usda.gov/files/RR194.pdf, 3-4; Myrlie Evers and William Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 81.

241 Phillips, "Reconstruction in Mississippi, 1865-1876;" NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 15.

242 Phillips, "Reconstruction in Mississippi, 1865-1876;" Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 7; Neil McMillen, *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press,1989), 37.

243 Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi (*Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1995),12; Neil McMillen, *Dark Journey,* 38.

244 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 16; McMillen, *Dark Journey,* 37.

245 Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 8, 12; "Farish Street Historic District 'A Neighborhood Discovery' Oral History Collection," Jackson State University, Henry T. Sampson Library, Special Collections/University Archives, Jackson, Mississippi.

246 Adele Cramer, "Farish Street Neighborhood Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1980), 3.

Rise and Entrenchment of Jim Crow (1877–1940)

Mississippi Democrats and white supremacist groups brought an end to African American freedom, Black enfranchisement, and Reconstruction through violence, intimidation, and the eventual ratification of a new state constitution.

Mississippi

The Democratic Party and white supremacists responded to Black freedom and growing political clout with violence intended to silence the Black community. The Ku Klux Klan, founded in Tennessee in 1866, operated in Mississippi as a violent paramilitary organization that threatened and killed Black leaders and White supporters

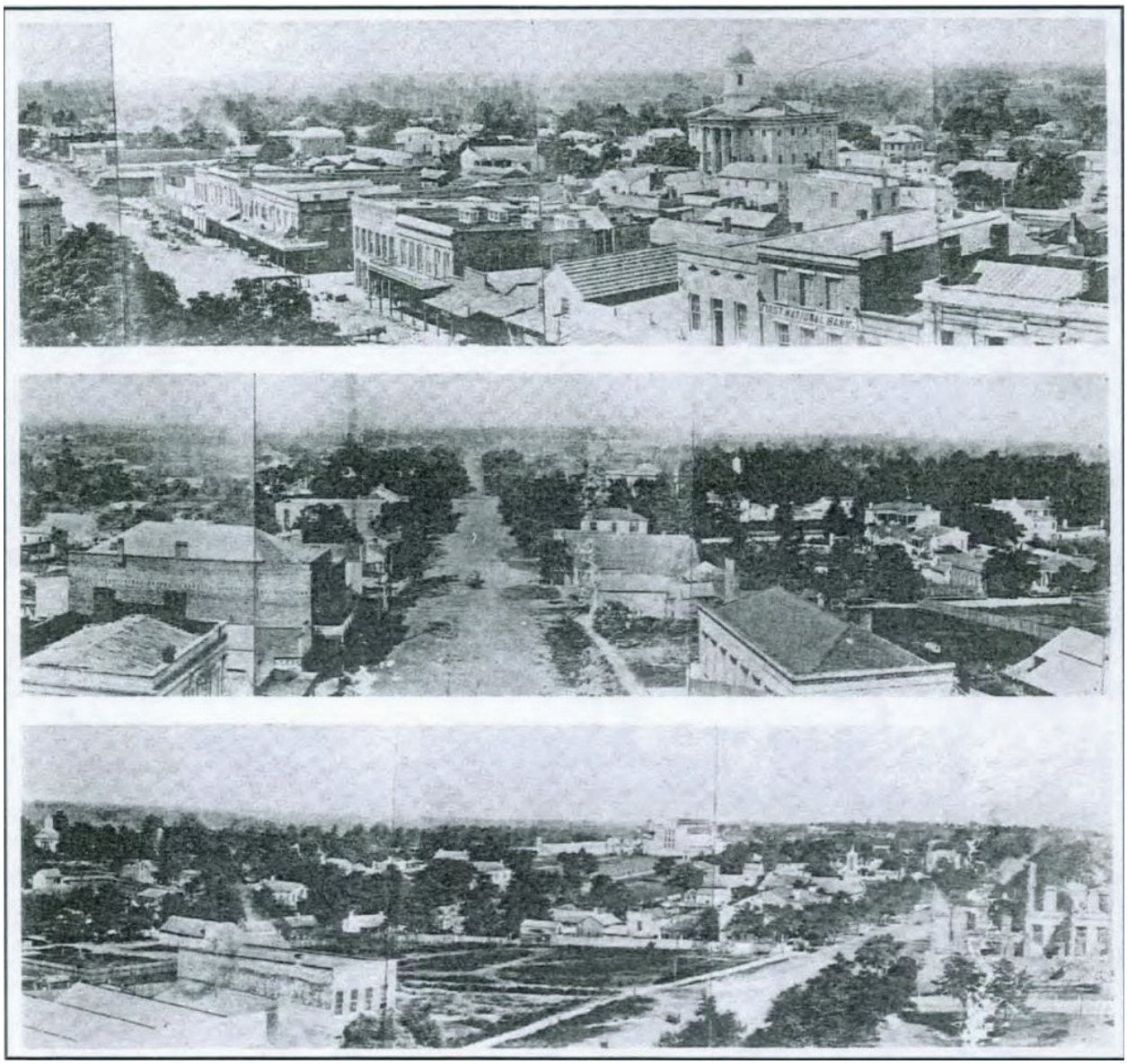


FIGURE 2–60. Stereographs of Jackson, Mississippi, by Elisaeus von Seutter, 1869 (source: Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 13).

of African American rights. In 1871, klansmen led a race riot in which White rioters killed approximately thirty Black leaders and citizens in Meridian, ninety miles east of Jackson.[247]

In 1875, Mississippi Democrats, who supported white supremacist policies, enacted the Mississippi Plan in a bid to regain power. Through what historian Neil McMillen refers to as a "counterrevolution," the Democrats disenfranchised Black voters, who largely voted Republican, through racial gerrymandering, voter intimidation, violence, and fraud. This movement brought an end to Reconstruction in Mississippi, African American enfranchisement, and Republican governance. In the 1875 election, white supremacists used violence to intimidate Black voters into staying home or voting against their own interests on election day. President Ulysses S. Grant refused to deploy federal troops to stop the ongoing White violence and threats. By the election of 1880, two-thirds of Black registered voters stayed home, and of those who did vote, many voted Democrat.[248]

In spring of 1877, Reconstruction effectively came to an end with the withdrawal of US troops from the South as part of an agreement reached between national political parties over the presidential election of 1876. In what would later be called the Compromise of 1877, southern Democrats agreed to recognize the questionable election of Republican candidate Rutherford B. Hayes. In return, Hayes agreed to pull federal troops from the South. Without the military support to enforce African American rights, White Mississippians moved to further obstruct Black voters through intimidation and terrorism.[249]

Democrats took control of local and state governments and passed a series of segregation laws, creating a Jim Crow caste system based on White ideas of racial superiority.[250] White lawmakers prohibited African Americans from using public schools, parks, and private businesses. Mississippi had the most oppressive segregation laws in the nation. In 1896, the US Supreme Court would uphold segregation laws as constitutional in the infamous case, *Plessy v. Ferguson*.[251]

Mississippi Democrats codified African American disenfranchisement in the Mississippi Constitution of 1890. In August of that year, delegates gathered in Jackson to write and ratify a new state constitution, "for the purpose of divising [sic] means by which the negro can be constitutionally eliminated from politics."[252] This goal was realized through poll taxes, literacy requirements, felony disenfranchisement, and the "understanding clause," which required voters to read a passage of the state constitution and describe its meaning.

White Mississippians also established control over Black communities, through terror and lynchings: public, extralegal killings of African Americans and those who supported them.[253] Black men and sometimes women were tortured and killed for perceived offenses like social transgressions or accusations (valid or not) of sexual assault.[254] Between 1882 and 1927, White vigilante mobs murdered at least 517 African Americans in Mississippi.[255]

African Americans also faced economic exploitation through the perpetuation of sharecropping as well as through "convict leasing," a system in which the state imprisoned men, women, and children—typically of African American decent—in work camps for minor infractions.[256] In the late 1800s, following the Civil War, African Americans living in mostly rural areas

247 "The Riot of 1871," *The Meridian Star*, (Meridian, MS), July 22, 2006, https://www.meridianstar.com/news/local_news/the-riot-of-1871/article_853b1fdb-0cd8-58cf-b81f-a1fcc44d4910.html.

248 McMillen, *Dark Journey,* 40; NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 18-19.

249 McMillen, *Dark Journey,* 40; NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 18-19.

250 "The Compromise of 1877," Anchor: A North Carolina History Online Resource, accessed August 2024, https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/compromise-1877; Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 22.

251 "Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)," The National Archives, accessed August 2024, https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/plessy-v-ferguson#:~:text=The%20ruling%20in%20this%20Supreme,numerous%20laws%20passed%20by%20Congress.

252 *The Raymond Gazette*, quoted in McMillen, *Dark Journey*, 40.

253 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 18-19.

254 "Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror," Equal Justice Initiative, accessed August 2024, https://lynchinginamerica.eji.org/report/; NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 20.

255 Evers-Williams and Marable, *The Autobiography of Medgar Evers*, 3-4.

256 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 21-22.

began to move to cities, including Jackson, looking for better job opportunities and an improved quality of life.[257] Facing brutal oppression and limited job opportunities throughout Mississippi, and the South in general, some African Americans fled northward, leaving behind loved ones and family ties for better jobs and greater security during what came to be called the Great Migration.[258]

Many African Americans stayed in Mississippi, finding ways to resist White oppression through art, music, community, and political organizing. African Americans in Mississippi established early branches of the NAACP in Vicksburg in 1918; Mound Bayou in 1919; and Jackson, Meridian, and Natchez in the 1920s.[259]

Jackson, Late 1800s

The city of Jackson was the last local government to succumb to the Mississippi Plan and control of the Democratic party. By 1888, Jackson was the only municipality in which Republicans retained control, but in the election that year, fear of White violence was so great that only one of the city's 270 Black voters cast his ballot. The Democrats won.[260]

Jackson was also the site of Black political organizing. In June 1889, African American leaders from forty Mississippi counties gathered in Jackson to denounce the "violent and criminal suppression of the black vote."[261]

The city of Jackson grew steadily in the late 1800s. The population rose from 4,234 in 1870 to 7,816 in 1900.[262] The city installed its first telephone lines in 1882, a municipal water system in 1888, and electric streetcars in 1898. The city also established its first citywide school system, a segregated system, in 1882. In 1894, the city expanded its school facilities to address overcrowding.[263]

Jackson's Early Suburban Expansion

In the early 1900s, cities throughout the United States experienced great expansion through a growing middle class, the rise in private automobiles, and increased highway funding. Influenced by the City Beautiful movement, city leaders undertook urban planning efforts to improve city streets and connect city centers with emerging residential suburbs through improved roads and green parkways.[264]

Between 1900 and 1930, car ownership in America jumped from 8,000 privately owned automobiles to nearly 27 million. The boom in car ownership changed Americans' relationship to the city as more individuals and families could live further from their place of work in suburbs that were less dense than urban neighborhoods. To support suburban expansion, the US Congress passed the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1916, which provided matching federal funds for state road projects, connecting farms with markets and land for suburban neighborhoods with cities. In 1916, the Mississippi Legislature established the State Highway Commission to make use of federal funding to pave state highways.

In the early 1900s, agricultural manufacturing and the timber industry spurred growth in Jackson as many rural Mississippians, Black and White, moved into the city to find better jobs and living

257 Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 22; Cramer, "Farish Street," National Register of Historic Places Form.

258 "The Great Migration (1910-1970)," Afircan American Heritage, The National Archives, accessed August 2024, https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/migrations/great-migration; NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 26-27.

259 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 22-24.

260 Phillips, "Reconstruction in Mississippi, 1865-1876;" McMillen, *Dark Journey,* 38.

261 McMillen, *Dark Journey,* 53.

262 Nelson, Winling, Marciano, Connolly, et al, "Mapping Inequality, Redlining in the New Deal America," accessed August 2024, https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/%23loc=13/32.314/-90.244&city=jackson-ms).

263 Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 30-31.

264 David L. Ames, Linda Flint McClelland, "Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places," *National Register Bulletin* (Washington DC: National Park Service, September 2002), https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB46_Suburbs_part1_508.pdf, 22.

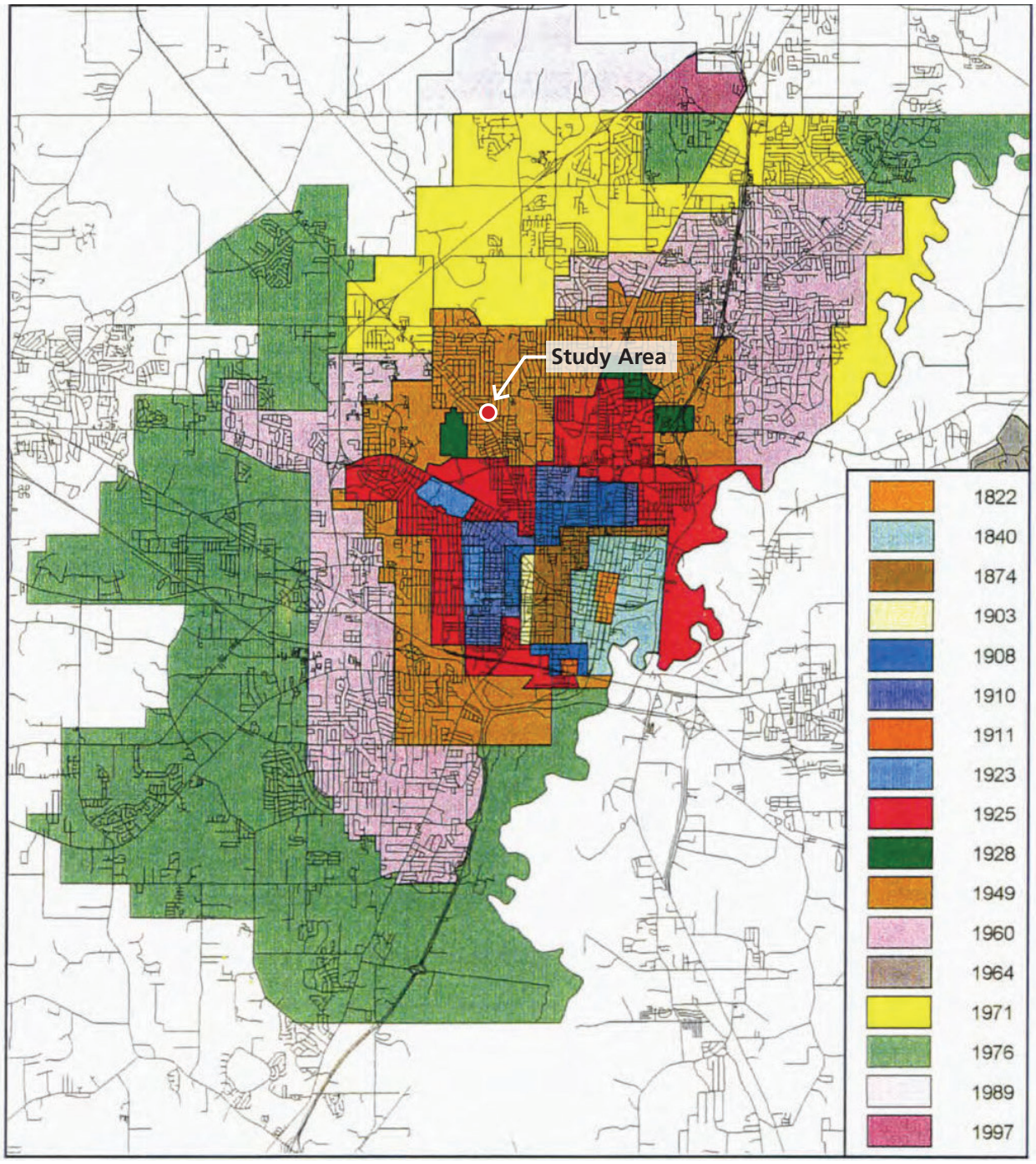


FIGURE 2–61. Annexation map of Jackson, Mississippi (source: Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 13).

conditions. Between 1900 and 1930, the city's population grew six-fold, from 7,816 residents to 48,282 residents. As of 1900, Black residents made up one-third of the city's population. By 1908, African Americans owned approximately one-third of the city's land area, and roughly one-third of Black families owned their own homes. From 1900 to 1930, Jackson expanded through seven annexations, more than tripling its land area (Figure 2–61). Jackson adopted its first zoning ordinance, dividing land into residential, commercial, industrial, park, and public uses, in 1929.[265]





FIGURE 2–62. Views of the Farish Street neighborhood in the 1920s. (Top) Farish Street being paved with brick. (Lower) View of Cohea Street, looking east toward the railroad tracks, 1927 (source: Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 87, 90).

In the late 1800s, African Americans lived throughout Jackson in somewhat integrated neighborhoods. Their homes were typically small and tucked away from the street or located as a buffer between White homes and industrial sectors. But in the Jim Crow period following Mississippi's 1890 Constitution, White residents of Jackson increasingly excluded Black residents from their White neighborhoods. Black home builders were relegated to land outside the city limits and to less desirable parts of town: along railways, floodplains, and heavy industrial areas.[266] As the City of Jackson grew, its White leaders provided Black communities with fewer public services, including street paving and lighting, sidewalks, and sewage and water systems.[267]

By 1900, many African Americans—including businessmen, ministers, educators, physicians, craftsmen, and tradespeople—lived and worked in the Farish Street neighborhood, which had been surveyed and subdivided in the 1870s. Often called the "Black Mecca of Mississippi," the Farish Street commercial district was a cultural and business hub for Jackson's African American community and was the largest economically independent Black community in the state (Figure 2–62).[268] African Americans also established a Black residential enclave in the Washington Addition, the neighborhood surrounding Jackson State College. As a public Black college and the predecessor to Jackson State University, the college opened its campus in 1902 on Lynch Street. Fifty years later, Medgar and Myrlie Evers opened the NAACP office in the Stringer Lodge on Lynch Street, across from the campus (Figure 2–14). The Washington Addition was subdivided in 1903 and annexed by the city in 1910. Sugar Hill, a neighborhood

265 Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 13, 44, 81; Nelson, et al, "Mapping Inequality"; Cramer, Farish Street Neighborhood Historic District Nomination.

266 William M. Gatlin,et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 20.

267 Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 33.

268 Turry Flucker et all, "The Black Mecca of Mississippi"; William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination,"20.

just northeast of the college, became home to a wealthier Black community.[269]

In keeping with national home trends of the time, home builders constructed bungalows and Victorian-style homes in the Farish Street and Sugar Hill neighborhoods and smaller Cape Cod-style homes in the more middle-class Washington Addition.[270]

Federal Housing Design and Segregation

In the 1930s, residential growth in Jackson plateaued as the Great Depression created conditions for a nationwide housing crisis. In order to restructure the housing market with checks on financing and home quality, the US Congress created the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) in June 1933 and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) in 1934. The FHA established standards for residential subdivisions and housing construction, shaping the planning and design of suburban neighborhoods around the country. To receive FHA funding, developers of subdivisions had to provide neighborhoods with connections to city roads, utilities, and services. The FHA encouraged developers to construct long blocks, curved streets, and generous housing plots. Homes were to be a minimum of 534 square feet and follow basic floors plans, issued by the FHA.[271]

FHA guidance improved housing standards in Mississippi and around the country, but the FHA and the HOLC also incentivized housing segregation and racial inequality. Incorporating policies of the FHA and the Federal Home Loan Bank System, HOLC developed a series of City Survey reports, including a set of maps of American cities meant to illustrate "housing security." The HOLC assigned "grades" to residential neighborhoods based on housing quality; recent sale and rental values; and the race, ethnicity, and class of residents. By policy, neighborhoods where African Americans, immigrants, and working-class people resided were discriminatively and systematically categorized as being higher risk for loans and investment, resulting in long-term negative impacts on the neighborhoods and their residents, in terms of not only wealth but also health. HOLC grades included A, "best;" B, "still desirable;" C, "definitely declining;" and D, "hazardous." Properties owned or occupied by African Americans were rated as "hazardous" and color-coded in red on the maps. This categorization of neighborhoods, which became known as "redlining," reinforced residential segregation in cities throughout America, including Jackson.

In Jackson, HOLC coded exclusively White neighborhoods "best" or "still desirable" and predominantly or exclusively Black neighborhoods as "hazardous" (Figure 2–63). Congress closed HOLC in 1954, but the patterns it reinforced remain. Nation-wide, in 2024, approximately seventy-four percent of the neighborhoods that HOLC graded as "hazardous" were low-to-moderate income.[272]

Study Area

Between 1900 and 1930, the area surrounding the land that would become the Evers home was transformed from fields and farmland into neighborhoods and a municipal airport (Figure 2–64). As of 1905, the area northwest of Jackson was sparsely populated farmland, connected to the city by a farm-to-market road. The road would later be numbered Highway 49 and, by 1929, a stretch would be designated the Whitfield Mills Road.[273] This road was later expanded and sections renamed Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and Medgar Evers Boulevard. In 1928, the city of Jackson purchased 151 acres of pasture land known as the Davis Stock Farm to develop the city's first airport. Less than one mile from the study area, Davis Field (later named Hawkins Field) was built just west of Whitfield Mills Road (Highway 49, later

269 William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 20.

270 Cramer, Farish Street Neighborhood Historic District Nomination.

271 William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 20; David L. Ames, et al., "Historic Residential Suburbs," 48-49, 61-62.

272 Nelson et al, "Mapping Inequality"; Wayne Glasker, "HOLC and the Federal Housing Administration," Rutgers University, accessed August 2024, https://crab.rutgers.edu/users/glasker/FHADMIN.htm; William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 8-9.

273 "Map of Jackson, Mississippi," (Jackson Chamber of Commerce, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1929) https://da.mdah.ms.gov/series/maps/detail/191391.

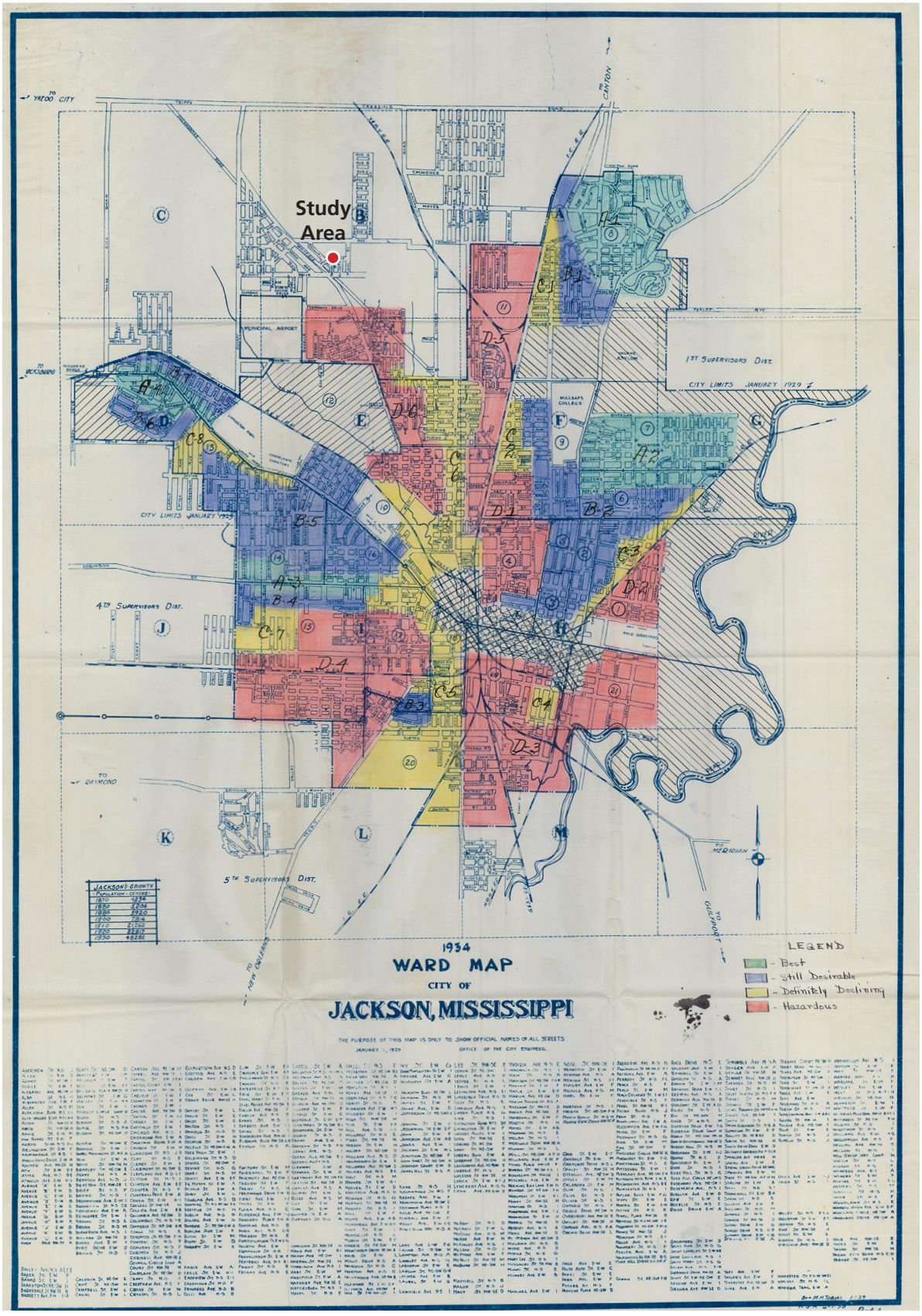


FIGURE 2–63. Home Owners' Loan Corporation residential security map of Jackson, Mississippi, from 1934. This map predates development of the Elraine subdivision (orange) (source: 1934 Ward Map, Jackson, MS, in "Mapping Inequality, Redlining in New Deal America," https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/%23loc=13/32.314/-90.244&city=jackson-ms).

named Delta Drive and renamed Medgar Evers Boulevard). By 1929, businesses had developed along Highway 49. Residential neighborhoods were subdivided west of Highway 49, between the main road and the new airport. East of Highway 49, W. Ridgeway Street (also called Avenue L and County Road) and Missouri Street, which would later form the northern and western boundaries of the Elraine subdivision plat, were delineated. Land east of Highway 49 remained largely undeveloped, with only a few areas of mature vegetation.[274] In 1930, the state paved two highways near Jackson, including Highway 49.[275]

274 "Historic Aerials of Hinds County, Mississippi," Historic Aerials, accessed August 2024, https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer.

275 "History," Jackson-Medgar Wiley Evers International Airport, accessed August 2024, https://jmaa.com/jan/about-jan/; "Celebrating Mississippi's Transportation Story," MDOT, accessed August 2024, https://mdot.ms.gov/MSDOT100/; David L. Ames, et al., "Historic Residential Suburbs," 22-23; Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 102.

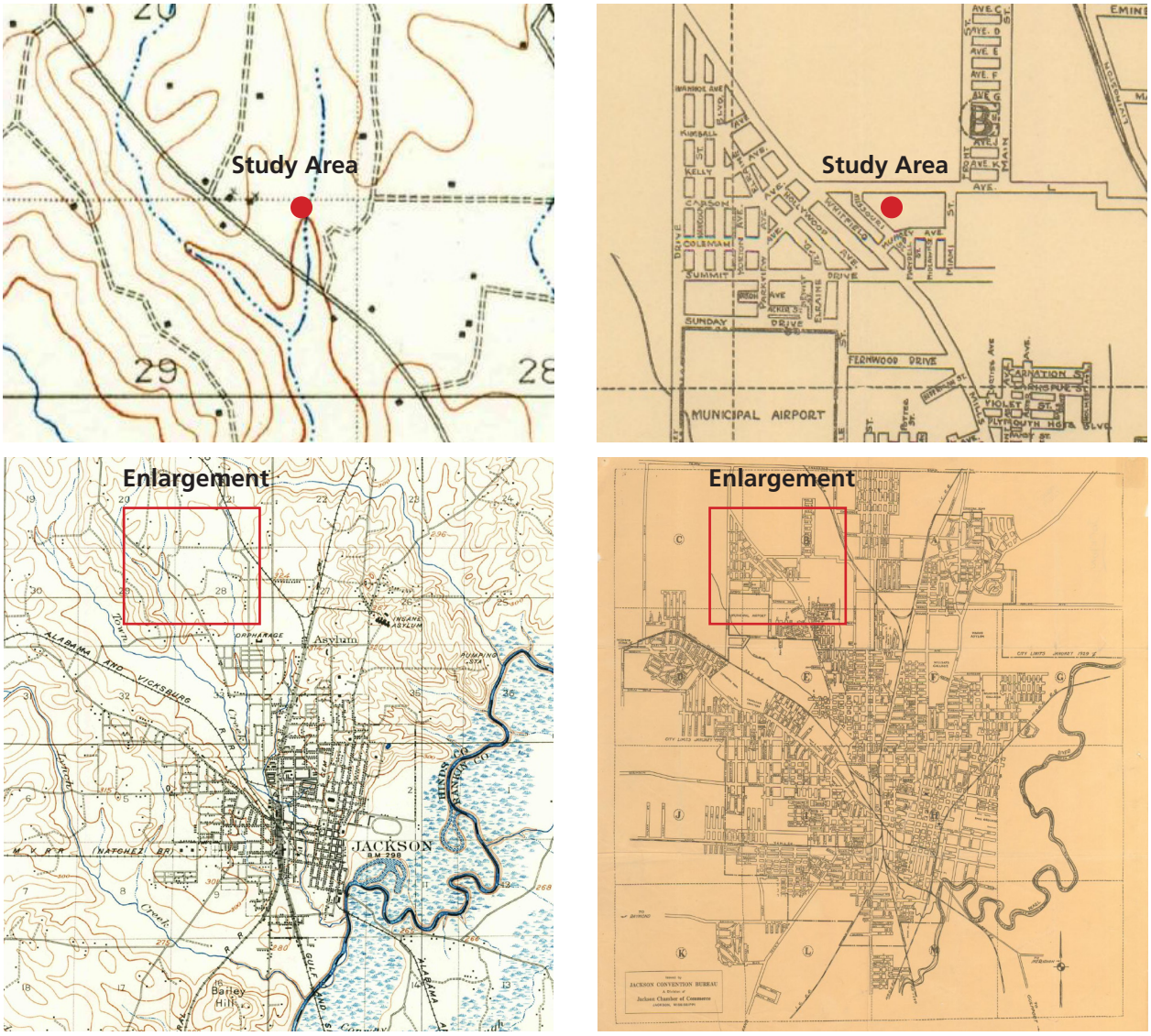


FIGURE 2–64. Left: This 1905 topographical map shows the sparsely populated farmland northwest of Jackson. Right: This 1929 map shows the municipal airport and neighborhood streets surrounding it (source: Historical Topographic Map Collection courtesy of the United States Geological Survey, Esri 1905. Map of Jackson, Mississippi, issued by Jackson Convention Bureau, https://da.mdah.ms.gov/series/maps/detail/191391).

World War II and Postwar (1941–1955)

The 1940s and 1950s were periods of tremendous growth for cities in the United States. In Jackson, the population more than doubled in just twenty years, from just over 62,000 people in 1940 to almost 145,000 in 1960. Industry and per capita income grew throughout the city. Jackson's leaders expanded the city boundary through annexations of surrounding land, including both developed neighborhoods and land slated for single-family-home subdivisions.[276]

World War II

United States involvement in World War II jump-started Jackson's rapid growth and change. As the United States prepared for war, factories sprang up around the country. In Jackson, local manufacturing grew quickly to keep up with the war effort, and the city redesignated Hawkins Field as the Jackson Army Air Base (Figure 2–65, Figure 2–66). The Army used the base as a basic training facility, eventually housing 5,000 men on site.[277]

While the increase in manufacturing and the military presence meant more jobs, White businesses owners largely excluded African Americans from the work. At the federal level, Black labor leaders pressured President Franklin D. Roosevelt to end the rampant hiring discrimination in wartime factories. In June 1941, President Roosevelt passed Executive Order No. 8802, which declared that "there shall be no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries and in Government, because of race, creed, color, or national origin." It was the first Presidential directive on race since Reconstruction. But without federal enforcement or state cooperation, White businessmen in Mississippi continued to discriminate.[278]

More than 85,000 Black Mississippians fought for the United States during the war, and their experience contributed to the foundations of the civil rights movement. African American soldiers, including Medgar Evers, fought against fascism and violent oppression abroad but saw those same forces at work at home. African American soldiers experienced fewer instances of racism and discrimination abroad, and after returning to the Jim Crow policies of the south, they were determined to advocate for change. The NAACP tapped into this sentiment and expanded organizational efforts throughout the South, including in Mississippi.[279]

Postwar Suburbs

Around the country, increasing prosperity, federally subsidized mortgages, and prefabricated construction created conditions for a boom in suburban development. Developers and homebuilders constructed self-contained subdivisions with modern residential architecture and landscaping that were connected to the city by arterial roads and freeways. FHA design guidelines continued to shape postwar suburban neighborhood design. Long blocks and curved streets were thought to minimize automobile collisions. These features also created a landscape distinct from the tighter urban grid. To further that distinction, and to emphasize the dominance of the automobile as the primary means of travel, developers also built roads with minimal or no sidewalks.[280]

Depicted in lifestyle magazines in the 1940s and 1950s, western Ranch-style homes grew

276 Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 105.

277 Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 107-108.

278 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 29; "Milestone Documents: Executive Order 8802: Prohibition of Discrimination in the Defense Industry (1941)," National Archives, accessed August 2024, https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/executive-order-8802.

279 Michael Vinson Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr* (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2011) 5; NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 33.

280 David L. Ames, et al., "Historic Residential Suburbs," 25; Benjamin Ross, *Dead End: Suburban Sprawl and the Rebirth of American Urbanism* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014), 16.

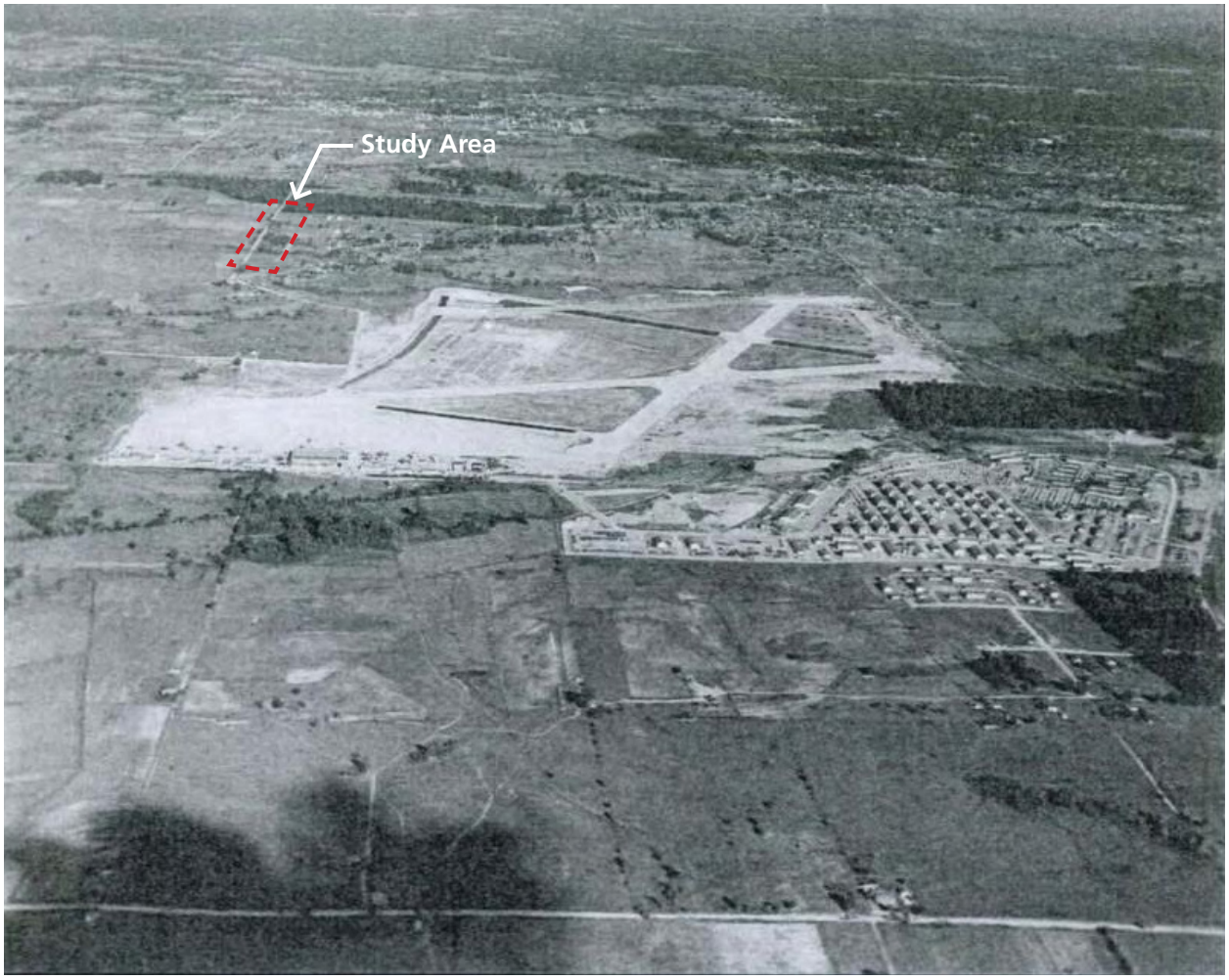


FIGURE 2–65. Jackson Army Air Base and Hawkins Field, looking east, 1941 (source: Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 108).

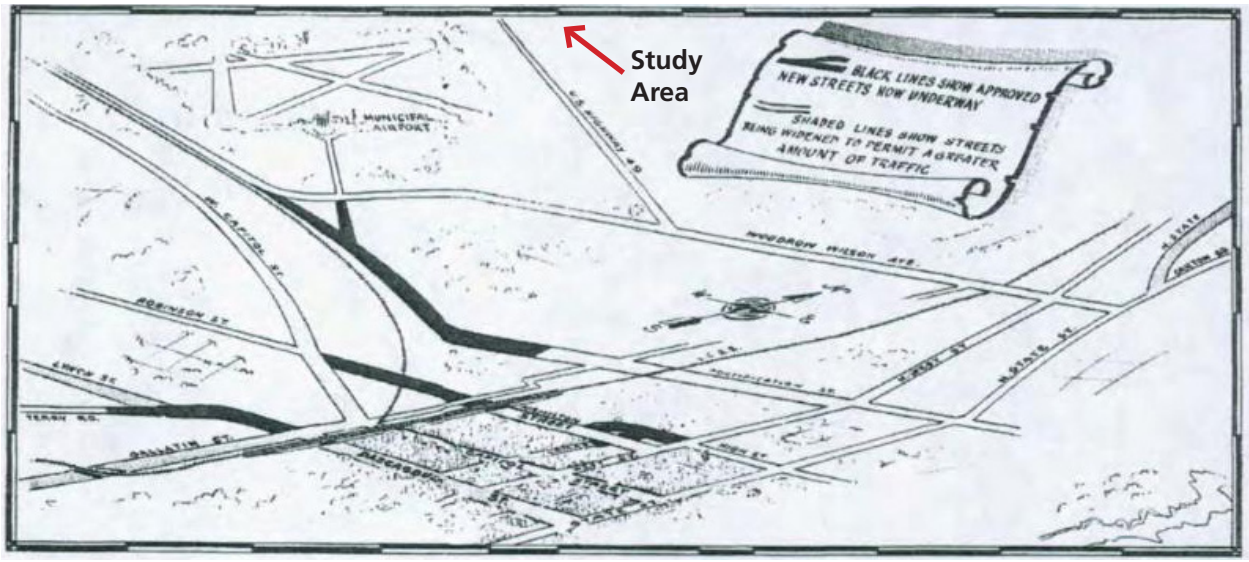


FIGURE 2–66. This diagram from the 1940s shows street improvements that would support suburban growth. The Elraine subdivision would be located east of US Highway 49 (present-day Medgar Evers Boulevard) (source: Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 116).

in popularity (Figure 2–67). In response, homebuilders found low-cost ways to incorporate modern consumer preferences for the style's low, horizontal silhouettes and rambling forms into the FHA's housing standards. With the high housing demand and development of prefabricated construction techniques, Ranch-style homes became the dominant style of new residential construction throughout the country in the 1950s and 1960s.[281]

Ranch-style home design was representative of the changing concepts of family life and the ideal suburban landscape. The style's "rambling," detached, single-family designs situated houses on spacious suburban lots. Homes had long, low façades and horizontal silhouettes that were enhanced by the incorporation of built-in garages or carports, designed on the assumption that every family would have at least one automobile. Builders used wood and brick wall cladding, often in combination, and offered options with sliding glass doors, picture windows, ribbon windows, carports, and decorative block screens. The Ranch style also emphasized the integration of indoor and outdoor living, with patios, terraces, sunshades, trellises, and privacy screens integrated into the landscape.[282]

Postwar Suburbs in Jackson

Following World War II, Jackson continued to experience an industrial boom. Between 1945 and 1951, seventy-five factories were constructed or expanded in Jackson. These factories produced clothing, leather goods, glass, ice, cottonseed oil, and food.[283] Returning veterans and new residents moved to Jackson for its job market, driving up the demand for housing. To meet the increasing need, developers built new subdivisions in and just outside of the city. By 1948, more than 200,000 people lived in subdivisions outside Jackson. In 1949 and 1960, city leaders annexed additional land and subdivisions, providing new

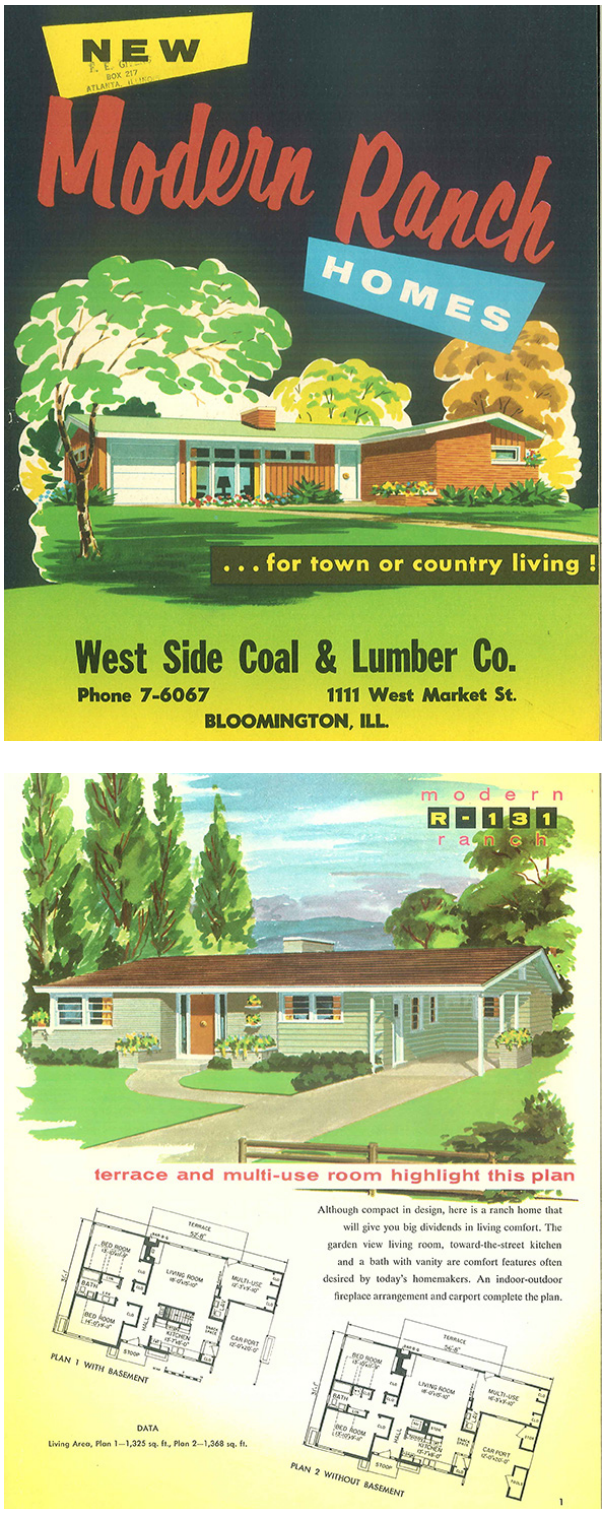


FIGURE 2–67. This page from the National Plan Service catalogue shows a Ranch-style home, similar to the Evers home (source: National Plan Service, Inc. "New Modern Ranch Homes." Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, 1956, https://dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/NewModernRanchHomes_NationalPlanService_1956.pdf).

281 David L. Ames, et al., "Historic Residential Suburbs," 66.

282 David L. Ames, et al., "Historic Residential Suburbs," 69.

283 Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 110.

neighborhoods with basic road and infrastructure improvements (Figure 2–61).[284]

The federal government and its social welfare programs for returning veterans helped finance Jackson's growing housing market. Through the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, known as the GI Bill, veterans could access low-interest mortgages for home buying. GI Bill benefits, on paper, were race neutral, despite the efforts of Mississippi Congressman John E. Rankin to prescribe reduced benefits for Black veterans. As a compromise with Rankin and his followers, Congress gave individual states administrative power. In Mississippi and throughout the South, White GI Bill administrators prevented African American veterans and their families from accessing equal education, healthcare, and housing. In 1947, the Veterans' Administration served 3,229 mortgage loans in thirteen Mississippi cities. Only two went to African Americans. On top of mortgage discrimination, White housing developers refused to sell to Black buyers. In turn, demand for housing among the growing Black community far exceeded the supply, and landlords chose to charge more to African American renters.[285]

Suburbanization is often racialized in terms of White flight and racially exclusionary practices like restrictive covenants, but subdivisions such as Elraine show that, despite the obstacles, African Americans also participated in the growth of the suburbs. In Jackson and other areas of the country, African American veterans and members of the Black middle class sought homes that offered a retreat from the city, were ideal for children, and provided modern services and amenities.[286]

The White real estate developer Reid-McGhee and Company built a number of African American suburbs throughout the state in the 1940s. In 1941, they developed Homestead Heights (also called Prosperity Heights) along Prosperity Street in north Jackson, the city's first FHA-backed development for African American homebuyers. Although it was built near a rail junction, the neighborhood was typical of 1940s suburban residential development. Following the FHA criteria, it had small Cape Cod-style wood-framed homes with hardwood flooring, two bedrooms, a living room, asphalt tile floor kitchen and bath, and electric chime doorbells.[287] In 1947, Reid-McGhee and Company constructed a similarly designed subdivision, the Mary Jones Subdivision, just off Whitfield Mills Road about a mile southeast of the study area.[288]

284 Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 112.

285 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites,* 32-33.

286 Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 207.

287 "Homestead Heights, Jackson's First All-Colored FHA Subdivision, Presents Outstanding Construction Features,"*Jackson Advocate*, (Jackson, MS), Aug. 30, 1941, accessed August 6, 2024, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn79000083/1941-08-30/ed-1/seq-1/.

288 "Reid-McGee and Company Opens Subdivision," *Jackson Advocate*, (Jackson, MS), Aug. 9, 1947, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn79000083/1947-08-09/ed-1/seq-1. Reid-McGee ran advertisements in the *Jackson Advocate* for the subdivision as early as 1945.

Section 3: The Evers Home and the Elraine Subdivision Development

Introduction

This section provides a history of the African American builders who developed the Elraine subdivision and the Evers home. It describes the ways in which the investigation into Medgar Evers's assassination took place within the landscape. It also provides a summary of changes within the city, neighborhood, and home during the periods in which it was used as a rental home (1965–1992); as a museum by Tougaloo College, a historically Black college (1993–2019); and as a National Monument (2020 to present).

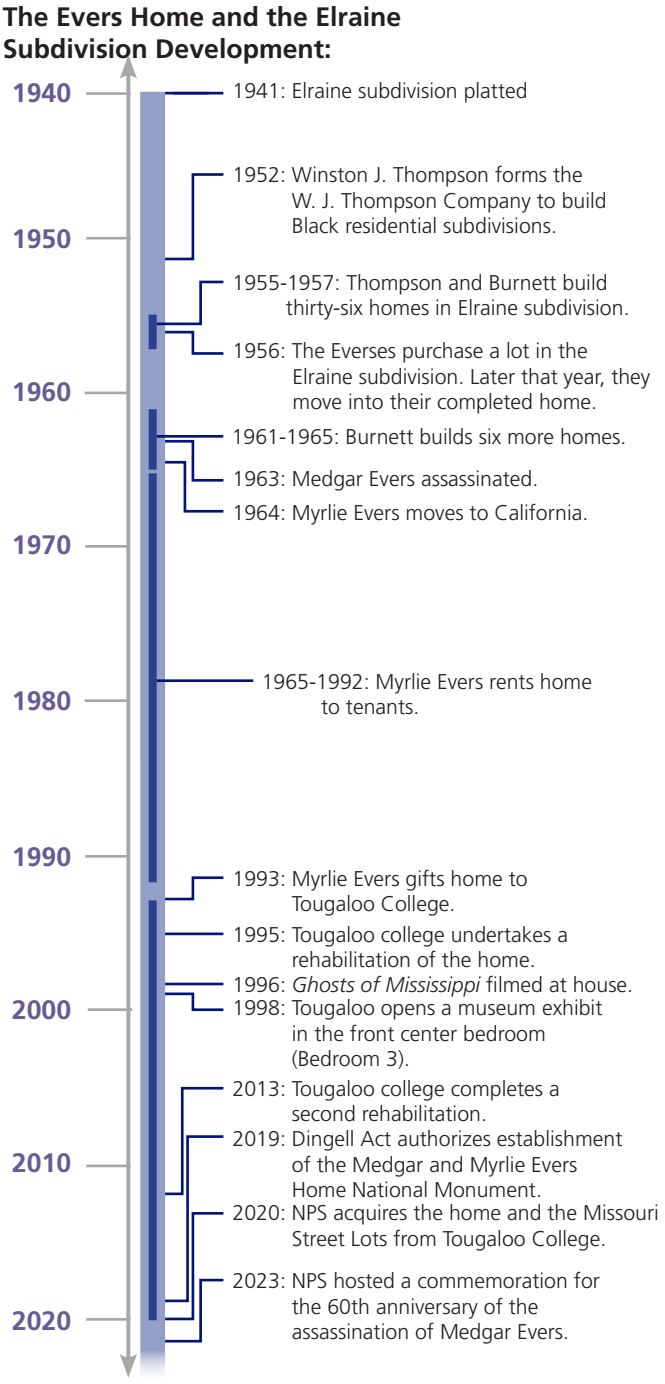


FIGURE 2–68. The timeline illustrates the significant events and periods associated the Evers home and the Elraine subdivision development (source: BBB Architects/DHM Design, 2023). See Figure 2–103 for a timeline of historic designation.

Study Area

By 1941, the Capital Land and Investment Company owned the land east of Highway 49 as part of the Capital City Poultry and Truck Farms subdivision.[289] In that year, the land that would become the Evers home was included in a plat of the Elraine subdivision, Part Four (Figure 2–69). The plat was a resurvey of the original Elraine Part One subdivision. This Part Four plat designated eighty-one lots approximately fifty feet wide along Guynes Street and W. Ridgeway Street ("County Road" on the 1941 plat map).

In 1949, the City of Jackson annexed the land to be included within the city boundary (Figure 2–61). In December 1952, Capital Land and Investment Company conveyed the land to William B. McCarty Jr. through a quitclaim deed.[290]

289 WFT Architects, "Medgar Evers Home Renovation, GS#501-052, A Historic Structure Report," Jackson, Mississippi, 1995, 12.

290 WFT Architects, "Medgar Evers Home Renovation,"16; Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City,* 13.

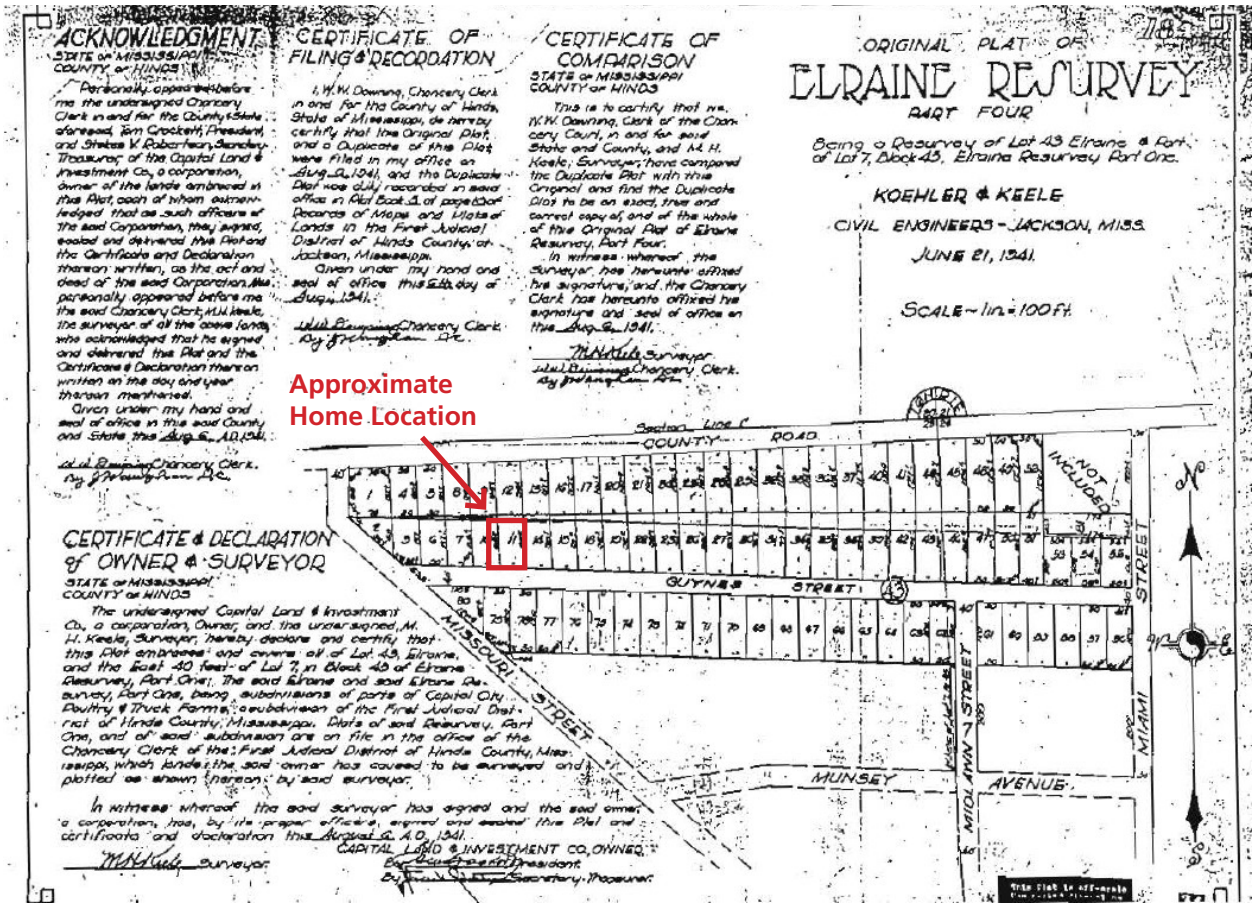


FIGURE 2–69. 1941 plan of the Elraine subdivision Part 4, prior to lot revisions (source: Hinds County, Mississippi, Plat Book 5, Page 18, Jackson Local Landmark Application).

The Elraine Subdivision and The Evers Home (1956–1964)

Developer Winston J. Thompson and builder Leroy Burnett built the Elraine subdivision as the first postwar subdivision in Mississippi by and for middle-class African Americans. Members of the Black middle-class, including teachers and professors, purchased its Ranch-style detached homes with driveways and grassy lawns.[291] In Elraine, the Everses and their neighbors built a close community in which to raise their children and live a quiet life removed from the city center. However, white supremacists would disrupt that peace through threats and attacks, including the assassination of Medgar Evers in the driveway of his home.

The Builders

In 1952, African American real estate developer and World War II veteran Winston J. Thompson formed the W. J. Thompson Company, later named Thompson Enterprises, to build residential subdivisions for Black middle-class families. Thompson operated out of an office less than a block away from the NAACP branch office in the Stringer Lodge. As early as the summer of 1953, Thompson had formulated plans to develop the Elraine subdivision as an African American suburban neighborhood and advertised the lots and homes in the local *Jackson Advocate*, the longest running African American weekly newspaper in Mississippi (Figure 2–70).

Despite discrimination from the White administrators of the GI Bill, Thompson was able to secure Veterans' Administration (VA) financing and purchased the Elraine subdivision land from William B. McCarty Jr. in 1955.[292] Between 1955 and 1957, Winston J. Thompson partnered with fellow African American World War II veteran and local home designer and builder Leroy Burnett (of

291 William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 5, 20.

292 WFT Architects, "Medgar Evers Home Renovation," 12; W. J. Thompson Company advertisements, *Jackson Advocate*, June 13, August 22, and October 31, 1953, Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn79000083/1953-10-31/ed-1/seq-6/); Jennifer V.O. Baughn, "Medgar and Myrlie Evers House," 4.



FIGURE 2–70. Advertisements in the *Jackson Advocate* for the Elraine subdivision from (left to right) June, August, and October 1953 (source: W. J. Thompson Company advertisements, *Jackson Advocate*, June 13, August 22, and October 31, 1953, Library of Congress, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn79000083/1953-10-31/ed-1/seq-6/).

Burnett-Gaston & Associates) to build thirty-six Ranch-style homes in the Elraine subdivision along Guynes Street (Figure 2–73). Between 1961 and 1965, Leroy Burnett built six additional homes, one on W. Ridgeway Street (1961), one on Guynes Street (1965), and four along Missouri Street (Figure 2–85).[293]

In 1956, Thompson Enterprises became the first African American-owned firm authorized to service FHA and Veterans' Administration loans in Mississippi. By then, Thomas Enterprises was the largest African American real estate company in the state. Between 1952 and 1956, Winston J. Thompson's company built roughly 250 homes in Jackson, Morton, Meridian, Mendenhall, Greenwood, and Forest, Mississippi.[294]

In 1956, Thompson Enterprises announced plans for a large, 500-home African American neighborhood about a mile northwest from the Elraine subdivision along Delta Drive (Highway 49) (Figure 2–71). The plan shows the FHA influence on its suburban streetscape, which featured curved roads, cul-de-sacs, and several "courts" suggesting shared greenspace. With this plan, Thompson Enterprises also anticipated larger homes and, in turn, more affluent home buyers. While homes in the Elraine subdivision sold for roughly $9,500, this other plan anticipated homes priced from $11,000 to $35,000.[295] Though the plan was not realized in full, aerial photographs from 1963 show about seventy homes were constructed in the northwest corner and some lots prepared for construction. Aerial photographs from 1971 show additional homes and continued construction.[296]

The Elraine Subdivision

Thompson and Burnett planned the Elraine subdivision to meet FHA standards. The neighborhood's location—removed from downtown Jackson—allowed them to develop large single-family lots with the conveniences of city services (water, light, and sewer) just a short drive from the city center. Thompson noted the city services in advertisements in 1953, noteworthy as the city often limited its services in African American neighborhoods.

Thompson and Burnett wanted bigger lots for the detached middle-class homes that were planned for the long block delineated on the subdivision plat (Figure 2–72, Figure 2–73). They divided every third lot and assigned half to each adjoining lot, creating two bigger lots from three original lots. In keeping with contemporary tastes in home design, Thompson and Burnett built thirty-six Ranch-style homes, each 850-950 square feet, of either one or one-and-a-half stories. Each had a similar basic design with two or three bedrooms, one bathroom, and an optional carport (Figure 2-27).[297]

The Elraine subdivision's landscape was typical of postwar suburban neighborhoods. Thompson and Burnett had most of the existing trees removed during construction, and homes were built set

293 William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 5,14-15.

294 "Negro Realty Firm Plans Huge Home Development," *Jackson Advocate*, March 24, 1956, https://www.newspapers.com/image/835016664.

295 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 226. Myrlie Evers wrote that the house cost $9500 – $300 down with a G.I. mortgage.

296 "Negro Realty Firm Plans Huge Home Development,"1956; "Historic Aerials of Hinds County, Mississippi," Historic Aerials, accessed August 2024, https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer.

297 William M. Gatlin, et al. "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 22.

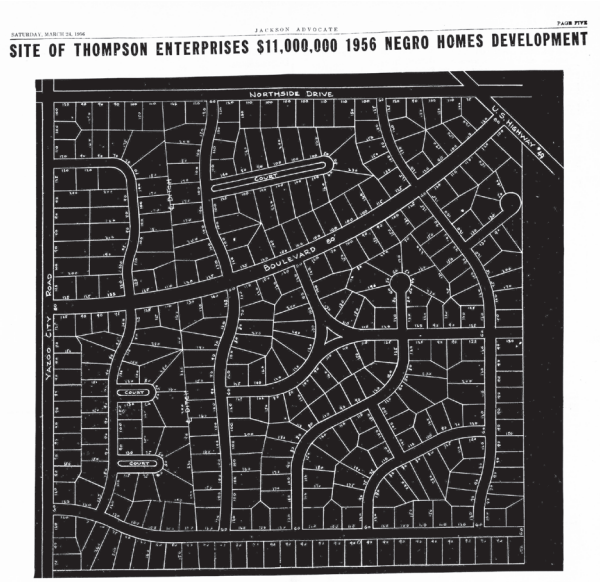


FIGURE 2–71. Thompson Enterprises plan for a new 500-home African American neighborhood northwest of the Elraine subdivision, 1956 (source: "Negro Realty Firm Plans Huge Home Development," *Jackson Advocate*, March 24, 1956, https://www.newspapers.com/image/835011894/).



FIGURE 2–72. Aerial from 1955, showing the boundary of the Medgar Evers Historic District (outlined in orange), which includes the original thirty-six lots of the Elraine subdivision. The location of the future Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument is outlined in yellow (source: Historic Aerials: NETRonline).



FIGURE 2–73. Aerial from 1960, showing the boundary of the Medgar Evers Historic District (outlined in orange), which includes the original thirty-six lots of the Elraine subdivision. The location of the future Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument is outlined in yellow (source: Historic Aerials: NETRonline).

back from the road, surrounded by grassy lawns.[298] Homeowners typically provided planted vegetation including young shrubs and trees, maintaining open views and a continuous lawn along either side of Guynes Street. Most yards had minimal fencing and were open to each adjoining neighbor's yard (Figure 2–76). As was typical of postwar suburban design, the subdivision did not have sidewalks. City utility poles were installed along Guynes and Missouri Streets.[299] Each home featured a concrete driveway that extended from under the carport, perpendicular to the road. The driveways stopped short of the compacted-earth road, and an intervening apron, likely of compacted earth, spanned the gap (Figure 2–74).[300]

The Black middle class families in the Elraine subdivision took tremendous pride in the upkeep of their homes and, in particular, their yards. In a 2023 interview Myrlie Evers-Williams recalled:

> Everyone made a choice to be the owner of the best landscaped yard on that street. That not only meant the front but the sides as well as the back. It really ended up being a very lovely place, and the children were involved in the plants. There was a tremendous amount of pride in our surroundings.[301]

While the Everses were living on Guynes Street, the City of Jackson paved the neighborhood's dirt roads, which Reena Evers-Everette remembered. She and friends Denise Sweet and Toni Young would make pretend pies and "cook" them on the extremely hot pavement.[302]

Water drainage was an ongoing issue in the neighborhood. Robert Pittman grew up in the neighborhood, contemporaneously to the Evers, on Delta Drive. He remembers the roads flooding and all of the neighborhood kids, Black and White, playing in the water.[303]

Though fun for the neighborhood children, the water could damage roads and homes. Thompson and Burnett had built the Elraine subdivision in a low-lying area, near the location of a former stream that fed into Town Creek (Figure 2–64, 1905 map), illustrating that even suburbs for middle-class Black home-builders and buyers were typically relegated to the less desirable locations. To control the water, Thompson and Burnett developed lots with gradual slopes that drained to grass swales that were parallel to the road and culverts that connected the swales under driveways (Figure 2–75, Figure 2–76, bottom image). The swales sloped to a low point at the drainage and sewer overflow channel, located one lot east of the Evers home.

298 Comparison of historic aerial photographs from 1955 and 1963. "Historic Aerials of Hinds County, Mississippi," Historic Aerials, accessed August 2024, https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer.

299 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.

300 William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 22; Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.

301 Reena Evers-Everette and Myrlie Evers-Williams interview, October 31, 2023.

302 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.

303 Robert Pittman, interview by Chris Geddes and Leslie Moore, Jackson, MS, October 26, 2022.



FIGURE 2–74. James "Van" Dyke Evers standing in the driveway, circa 1962. Note the driveway concrete stops short before the Guynes Street (source: Photograph in Box 4, Folder 3, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).



FIGURE 2–75. Neighborhood children sitting in a neighbor's front yard with their feet resting on the edge of the culvert (source: Photograph in Box 4, Folder 3, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).





FIGURE 2–76. (Top) Medgar Evers with children Darrell and Reena Evers standing in driveway circa 1958 (source: Photo in Box 4, Folder 1, Evers Family Papers Collection, Mississippi Department of History and Archives). (Lower) Reena and Darrell Evers and neighborhood children making a snowman, likely in the front yard across the street from the Evers Home. The Youngs' home and vacant lots across Missouri Street can be seen in the background. Culverts are visible on either side of the driveway, winter 1957–1958 (source: Photograph in Box 4, Folder 3, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

The Everses observed drainage issues on their property shortly after moving in. In letter dated May 1, 1957, responding to a query from Medgar Evers, Thompson wrote [vernacular and spelling retained]:

> It is true that some months ago I stated that the drainage situation on your property would be corrected by the City of Jackson ... [T]he trouble that causes the situation is that the water is not able to drain off your property due to the fact it can not cross the highway.
>
> We were told by the City of Jackson, some time last year, that as soon as the highway department finished their curbing cross highway 49, that the situation would be corrected. It is my under standing that this work about done. I will remind the City of Jackson of this immediately.[304]

It was common for city service administrators to disregard concerns of Black homeowners and builders.[305]

304 Letter from Winston J. Thompson to Medgar Evers, Jackson, Mississippi, May 1, 1957, Medgar Evers Home and Neighborhood Subject File, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

305 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 288.



FIGURE 2–77. Myrlie Evers and son Darrell Evers standing in the driveway, summer 1959 (source: Photograph in Box 4, Folder 1, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).



FIGURE 2–78. Photo of Reena and Darrell Evers in the driveway, summer 1959, taken by Medgar Evers (source: Photo in Box 4, Folder 3, Evers Family Papers Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).



FIGURE 2–79. Darrell and Reena Evers in the front yard making a snowman, winter 1957–1958 (source: Photo in Box 4, Folder 3, Evers Family Papers Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).



FIGURE 2–80. Reena and Darrell Evers with a friend playing in the snow in the front yard, winter 1960 (source: Photo in Box 4, Folder 3, Evers Family Papers Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

The Evers Home

Medgar and Myrlie Evers purchased their lot in the Elraine subdivision in 1956. Before the construction of their home was complete, the Evers family heard rumors of neighbors' concerns. Myrlie Evers recalled:

> There was nothing personal about it; it was just that Medgar's work and his notoriety threatened some of the more timid. There was talk that the wrong house might be burned down by mistake, that to have us in their midst would be dangerous for the whole community.[306]

Sometime before Christmas of 1956, the Everses, including their two children, Darrell and Reena Evers, moved into their home, a one-story, three bedroom Ranch-style house.[307] Darrell and Reena Evers lived in the house until they were eleven and nine, respectively. James "Van" Evers was born on January 10, 1960, and lived in the house until the age of four (Figure 2–78, Figure 2–79).

Their home had an open front lawn, contiguous with their neighbors' lawns, and featured perimeter shrubs and trees at the property lines (Figure 2–81). The Everses owned two cars at a time when car ownership was somewhat limited in the United States. In 1960, only fifteen percent of American families registered ownership of two cars.[308] For security purposes, Medgar and Myrlie Evers would switch cars with each other on occasion. When they were both home, one car was parked under the carport and the other in the driveway (Figure 2–74, Figure 2–81).[309]

Medgar Evers mowed their lawn regularly, sometimes with the help of Darrell Evers. Myrlie Evers, with the help of her husband and children, planted a variety of bulbs, perennials, roses, and

306 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 226.

307 "Society Slants," *Jackson Advocate*, (Jackson, MS), August 10, 1957, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn79000083/1957-08-10/ed-1/seq-3/.

308 Margaret Walsh, "Gender and the Automobile in the United States," Automobile in American Life and Society, 2004, http://www.autolife.umd.umich.edu/Gender/Walsh/G_Overview2.htm#:~:text=With%20the%20growing%20numbers%20of,access%20to%20the%20motor%20vehicle.

309 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 287.



FIGURE 2–81. The Evers children and neighborhood children standing on the lawn in front of the Evers driveway and carport, summer 1959 (source: Photograph in Box 4, Folder 3, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

shrubs along the front bedroom windows and within the Roman brick planter that was situated below the living room window. They planted upright evergreen shrubs and perennial beds west of the carport (Figure 2–81). Reena Evers-Everette recalled that her father gave her mother a rose for the yard and that he planted a live oak tree for her mother west of the driveway (Figure 2–77).[310] During interviews in October 2023, Myrlie Evers-Williams recalled planting roses, camellias, hydrangeas, azaleas, gardenias, tulips, daffodils, junipers, and arborvitae.[311]

The Evers backyard consisted of a lawn with shrubs, trees, and garden beds planted by the family. Myrlie Evers-Williams later recalled planting garden beds along the north and east property lines in the backyard and growing vegetables like mustard greens, collard greens, cucumbers, corn, tomatoes, squash, and peppers. Reena Evers-Everette remembers a mimosa tree, along with peach and plum trees planted by her father.[312] A narrow concrete walk led from the carport and driveway through the backyard to the home's rear entry door. The Everses had a clothesline and a swing-set from Sears, Roebuck and Company in the backyard. Medgar Evers built a perimeter chain-link fence around the backyard to keep the family dog Heidi, a German shepherd, gated. The fence featured a single swing gate under the carport. The family adorned the corner post of the backyard perimeter fence with a finial depicting the profile of a Native American. Later, Medgar Evers gave Myrlie Evers a finial depicting a cocker spaniel—similar in appearance to the Everses' first dog—and they placed it at the carport swing gate.[313] Extending from the carport, the concrete driveway initially featured a mailbox installed at the west corner of the lot near the road, but the Everses replaced it with a wall-mounted mailbox located under the carport and near their main entrance door.[314]

Reena Evers-Everette recalled stepping out of her home and smelling honeysuckle, which grew along the west portion of the chain-link fence in the backyard of their home. She also recalled smelling fresh bread from the nearby factory that made Sunbeam-brand bread. She remembered her father playing with her and her brothers in the yard and sitting with them in the backyard at night as they caught fireflies and studied the night sky.[315]

The Elraine subdivision sat directly adjacent to working-class White neighborhoods. White residents and homeowners lived along Missouri

310 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022; Interview with Darrell Evers in Billy Watkins, "Stirring Up Memories."

311 Reena Evers-Everette and Myrlie Evers-Williams interview, October 31 and November 1, 2023. Note: Species were identified in interview. Hardcopy information/documentation on the specific planting types selected by Medgar and Myrlie Evers for the Everses' yard is limited. Receipts from Sears Roebuck and Co. indicate the couple bought six bedding plants, four rose shrubs, and twenty-two bulbs in April 1963.

312 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022; Blackside, Inc, "Eyes On the Prize 1: Interview with Darrell Evers," Washington University in St. Louis, University Libraries, 1986. http://repository.wustl.edu/concern/videos/pz50gx59t.

313 Jimmie Gates, "Proposal Would Preserve Site of Evers Assassination," *Clarion-Ledger*, (Jackson, MS), March 17, 1992; Grace Simmons and Beverly Pettigrew Kraft, "Evers Home May Become Landmark," *Clarion-Ledger*, (Jackson, MS) October 6, 1992, Medgar Evers Home and Neighborhood Subject File, Mississippi Department of Archives and History; Email from Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument January 19, 2024.

314 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.

315 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.

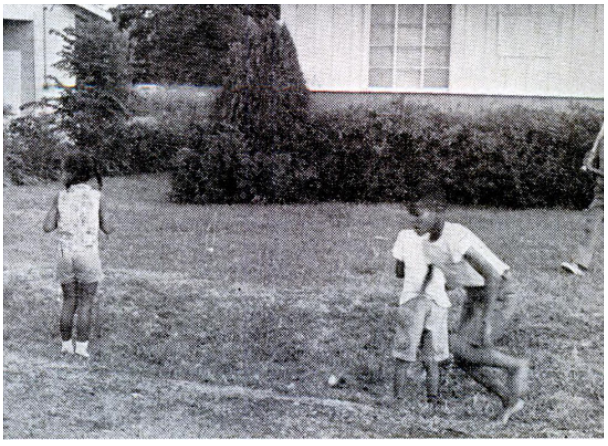


FIGURE 2–82. (Left) Reena and Darrell Evers playing in the neighborhood with friends, circa June 1963 (source: *Jet Magazine* 24, no. 12 (July 11, 1963), https://books.google.com/books?id=GMEDAAAAMBAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false).

Street to the south and in the Green Fields subdivision to the north and west. Myrlie Evers recalled:

> The unwritten law of the neighborhood was that our children never played with theirs. It was not that we didn't want them to know white children; we did. It was just that in Jackson, Mississippi, it was too dangerous. An altercation, a childish fight could be magnified into race war. We all knew who would win such a contest. The boundary was Missouri Street, a block from our house, and across that line catcalls and names were sometimes hurled between white and Negro children...[316]

Despite the unwritten rule, African American and White children did occasionally play games together across the "boundary," in what Myrlie Evers described as "that wonderful way that children have of subverting adult idiocy."[317]

316 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 229.

317 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 229.

The Neighborhood Community

The Elraine subdivision provided middle-class housing, attracting white collar workers and a number of teachers and educators. Of the twenty-two families living on Guynes Street in 1957, there were ten couples in which the husband, wife, or both were educators. Two residents were nurses and two were insurance agents. One resident owned and operated a drug store on Farish Street. A number of the residents actively supported the civil rights movement.[318]

In 1955, Margaret Walker (later, Dr. Margaret Walker Alexander for whom Guynes Street was renamed), her husband Firnist Alexander, and their children were the first to move into a home in the Elraine subdivision. Margaret Walker was an accomplished poet, author, English professor, and leading African American studies scholar at Jackson State College. In 1941, she was the first Black woman to receive the Yale University Younger Poets Award for her book *For My People*,

318 William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 23.



FIGURE 2–83. Aerial from 1963, showing the boundary of the Medgar Evers Historic District (outlined in orange), which includes the original thirty-six lots of the Elraine subdivision. The location of the future Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument is outlined in yellow (source: Historic Aerials: NETRonline).

considered to be one of the more important works of American literature. In 1966, she published *Jubilee*, an influential historical novel based on family stories of her enslaved maternal grandmother. Years later, Dr. Walker recalled of the neighborhood, "we sort of consider ourselves pioneers of better housing for black people..." Neighbor Bernice Lloyd Bell, a librarian at Jackson State College, remembered the neighborhood as a tight-knit community and the subdivision as "the first neighborhood that was somewhere really decent for blacks to live."[319]

In 1956, Dennis C. and Grace B. Sweet bought the house at 3604 Missouri Street, three houses down from the Evers home on the corner of Guynes Street.[320] Grace Sweet recalled:

> These homes were welcomed by the Afro-American community because this was the first complete street of homes of this caliber built in Jackson for Afro-Americans. Three bedrooms, nice large bath, central heat, attached storage room and beautiful landscaped lawn were the features advertised, and the homes sold like hotcakes.[321]

Houston and Jean Wells purchased 2338 Guynes Street, next door to the Everses. They owned a furniture business and were active in the NAACP. The Young family purchased the home at 2331 Guynes Street, across from the Evers home. The Youngs owned one of the largest lots in the subdivision, affording them room to convert the carport to living space and add a two-car garage to the west end of the house.[322]

The Evers children had friends in the neighborhood and they played together in each other's yards. Reena Evers-Everette recalled running through yards with her brothers and friends, unimpeded by fences, and along the neighborhood's dirt streets. They played hide and seek, chase, cowboys, tea party, and sports including football, softball, and stickball. Reena Evers-Everette remembered playing into the evening with her parents somewhat nervously checking on them. Robert Pittman, who lived on Delta Drive and who would later testify in the Beckwith trial, remembers playing in the neighborhood with friends in the years the Everses lived in Guynes Street. They would sneak into the homes still under construction to gather lumber scraps and nails.[323]

Medgar Evers was a fixture in the neighborhood. Grace Sweet recalled that Medgar Evers would often stop to chat with neighbors over a fence or while he was out playing with his children in the yard. Robert Pittman remembered Medgar Evers teaching him how to properly catch a baseball during neighborhood play.[324] In a 1996 interview, Darrell Evers recalled:

> He would all the time race me and three or four other kids in the neighborhood. We were on bikes, and he was on foot. He'd say, 'I'll beat you.' And we were like, 'Yeah, we're on bikes, it's downhill, no way.' And he would always win. That still amazes me to this day.[325]

Myrlie Evers was an avid gardener, as were many of her neighbors. Women in the neighborhood joined together to form the Spade and Fork Garden Club in 1956 (the same year that the Everses built their house in the subdivision) to beautify Guynes Street and the community. In 1957, Myrlie Evers served as the club treasurer and Margaret Walker Alexander served as its president.[326]

Spade and Fork Garden Club

The Spade and Fork Garden Club was actively involved in gardening, decorating the neighborhood for holidays, bringing gifts for new babies, and hosting parties (including a neighborhood "Secret Santa" gift exchange).

319 William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 23.

320 WFT Architects, "Medgar Evers Home Renovation," 12.

321 William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 23.

322 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.

323 Robert Pittman, interview by Chris Geddes and Leslie Moore, Jackson, MS, October 26, 2022.

324 Robert Pittman interview, October 26, 2022; Grace Sweet, interview by Chris Geddes, December 2022; Transcript from the case Byron de la Beckwith, VI v. State of Mississippi, (Miss. 1997).

325 Interview with Darrell Evers in Billy Watkins, "Stirring Up Memories."

326 "Society Slants," *Jackson Advocate*, (Jackson, MS), August 10, 1957, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn79000083/1957-08-10/ed-1/seq-3/.

The club was not only focused on community improvement—it also provided a forum for women to experiment, learn, and share ideas about horticulture. The club kept a library of books on gardening and flower arranging, produced a handbook, and invited guest speakers to meetings.[327] While women held the leadership positions in the organization, men were also involved and did much of the planting and landscaping work.

The Jackson Garden Club Council (a network of African American garden clubs in the city) hosted an annual Christmas decorating contest, which members of the Spade and Fork dominated over the years. The Everses won an award for their Christmas lawn decorations in 1956, and other Guynes Street residents (including the Youngs, who lived across the street) won awards in 1958.[328] Club members were deeply invested in charitable work, including partnering with other organizations to create Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets and providing flowers to hospitalized veterans.

The Spade and Fork is part of a larger story of garden clubs in the American South. Garden clubs were institutions that supported women's civic engagement and horticultural knowledge-sharing, but, like most American institutions, they were largely segregated. The earliest women's garden clubs in the United States date to the 1890s, but they proliferated during suburbanization in the mid 1900s. African American garden clubs built community, beautified their neighborhoods, and championed causes including voting rights and food justice.[329]

In addition to providing a support system for each other, Spade and Fork members' attention to lawn and garden care was incredibly competitive. They competed to see who had the most well-starched shirts, the most perfectly manicured roses, the best deviled eggs, and the shiniest waxed floors. In an October 2023 interview, Myrlie Evers-Williams described the Spade and Fork Garden Club as an effort to provide the "best living conditions we could for our families," fostering pride in their neighborhood and their community.[330] She

327 "Society Slants," *Jackson Advocate*.

328 "Society Slants," J*ackson Advocate*.

329 Hadley Keller, "The Lasting Legacy of Black Garden Clubs in America," *House Beautiful*, July 14, 2022, https://www.housebeautiful.com/lifestyle/gardening/a40613881/black-garden-clubs-america-history/.

330 Myrlie Evers-Williams and Reena Evers-Everette, interview by NPS, October 31, 2023, and November 3, 2023.



FIGURE 2–84. Myrlie Evers (center) and Margaret Walker Alexander (second from right) with neighbors at a garden club meeting (source: Margaret Walker Center).

described their garden and lawn as a "showpiece" meant to communicate prosperity and respectability. Gardening was a way for the women of Guynes Street to be creative and appreciate beauty despite the violence of white supremacy and segregation.

African American Residential Gardening

African American suburban home gardens cannot be separated from the larger history of gardening and suburbanization; however, they also have specific racial and cultural dimensions. As African Americans migrated from rural to urban environments, they used home gardens to maintain their connections with the land. The very nature of suburbanization bridged the rural and urban. African Americans brought with them traditions and practices reflective of their cultural heritage but also adapted them and reframed them in American social, economic, and political contexts of the mid 1900s, including their ongoing struggles for civil rights. Through gardens, African Americans expressed social aspirations including their "ambition for citizen rights," rooting them in middle-class notions of domesticity.[331]

African American gardening and associated activities, such as participation in garden clubs, provided opportunities for neighborhood beautification and improvement, horticulture and environmental education, nature appreciation, community building, and mutual aid and social support.

Home gardens included both ornamental and food gardens. In the Elraine neighborhood, ornamental gardens were often located in the front and side yards, while food gardens and fruit trees were planted in the back yard. They "featured flowers, shrubs, trees, and plants that were purchased individually, accepted as gifts, or cultivated from cuttings."[332] Ornamental gardens not only helped to beautify homes and communicate status, they also served as expressions of community and social responsibility. Well maintained yards and lawns "gave the impression of united, well-kept communities."[333] Home-grown produce from food gardens embodied American values of thrift and self-sufficiency. They helped meet the subsistence needs of African American families, guarding against economic and food insecurity. This was especially important given the often precarious nature of African American class status.

Home gardens, as both private and public spaces, materialized the aesthetic, socio-cultural, and utilitarian concerns of African Americans and provided refuge from racism and oppression.[334] As performative sites of African American creativity, class status, and citizenship, gardens reflected personal and shared values. In a world where so much seemed to be beyond their control, gardening spoke to the ability to control and master the natural environment, communicating this not only to the outside world but to the occupants themselves. The Ranch-style house, and specifically its features such as the picture window, "implied that the view through the windows existed for the pleasure of those inside, looking out on an environment they controlled."[335]

To this day, African American gardens remain "vital places and spaces of survival, spirituality, subsistence, ornamentation, work, and leisure."[336]

331 Paul Mullins, "'Ambitious to be Conventional': African American Expressive Culture and Consumer Imagination," in *Material Worlds Archaeology, Consumption, and the Road to Modernity*, eds. B.J Heath, E.E. Breen, and L.A. Lee (London: Routledge 2017), 256-272.

332 Dianne G. Glave, "Rural African America Women, Gardening, and Progressive Reform in the South," in "To Love the Wind and the Rain": *African Americans and Environmental History*, eds. Dianne D. Glave and Mark Stoll (Pittsburgh: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 39; Myrlie Evers-Williams and Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 31, 2023, and November 3, 2023.

333 "Patios, Pools, & the Invention of the American Backyard, Patios, Pools, & the Invention of the American Backyard," Smithsonian, accessed August 2024, https://www.sites.si.edu/s/archived-exhibit?topicId=0TO36000000L5NXGA0.

334 Mullins, "'Ambitious to be Conventional.'"

335 Clare J. Richfield, "The Suburban Ranch House in Post-World War II America: A Site Of Contrast In An Era Of Unease, Uncertainty, And Instability," (Master's Thesis: Barnard College, 2007), 57.

336 Glave, "Rural African America Women, Gardening, and Progressive Reform in the South," 39.

Missouri Street Lots

The "Missouri Street Lots" are comprised of three lots within the Elraine subdivision along Missouri Street. Tougaloo College transferred ownership of the lots to the National Park Service in 2020. The lots are located between the Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church (formerly Elraine Baptist Church) and the house at 3611 Missouri Street (Figure 2–85).

Prior to the Elraine subdivision's construction, this area included a gabled house on the northernmost lot (Lot 12), likely built after the late 1920s when Missouri Street was subdivided. During the period in which the Everses lived on Guynes Street, the two empty lots between Delta Drive and Missouri Street (Lots 13 and 14) were overgrown.

Robert Pittman and Reena Evers-Everette both remembered playing on the lots, near the ruins of the house that they called "Tut Tut." They also picked blackberries in the nearby shrubs.[337]

The Assassination and Investigation within the Landscape

The Evers home in the Elraine subdivision is located a block east of Delta Drive (now Medgar Evers Boulevard), the local commercial strip and main road that provided access into and out of the neighborhood. During the Everses' time in the neighborhood, Black and White landowners held commercial and residential property along Delta Drive. The lots behind the Delta Drive businesses remained vacant and overgrown. These lots became the setting of the investigation into Medgar

337 William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination,"21; Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022; Robert Pittman interview, October 26, 2022.

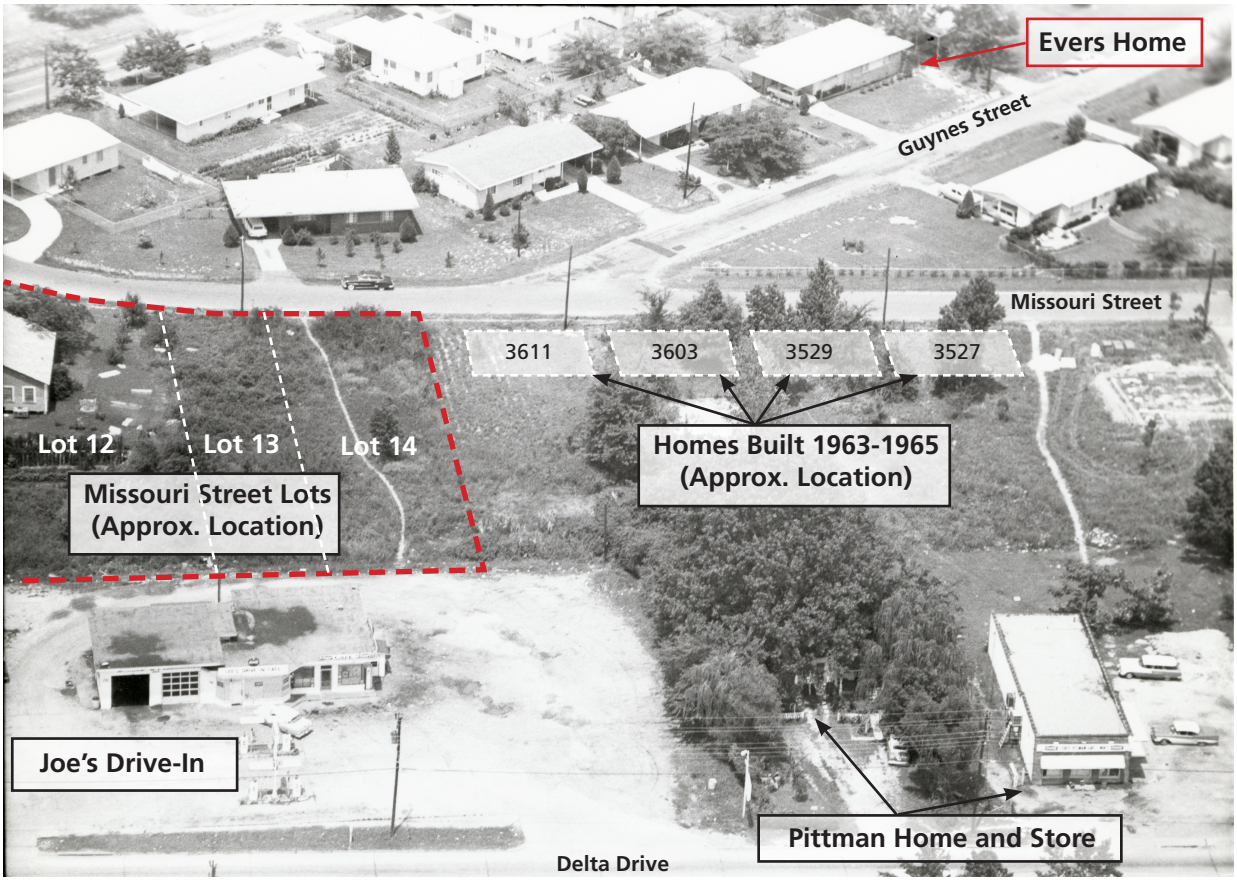


FIGURE 2–85. Aerial view of the Elraine subdivision, circa 1963, viewed from above Delta Drive, looking east (source: Photograph in Box 221, DeLaughter Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

Evers's assassination that would lead to Byron de la Beckwith's conviction more than thirty years later.

As early as 1956, Myrlie Evers recalled that Medgar Evers saw the highway as a vulnerability. On their first visit to the subdivision, she recalled:

> Medgar pointed out that the corner lot [a lot the Everses considered for purchase] was more exposed, less protected by other houses, closer to the main highway, and hence easier to reach and get away from.[338]

As of 1956, several small businesses, a home, and a church lined the east side of Delta Drive near the Elraine subdivision. Elraine Baptist Church was built in 1956 at the southeast corner of Delta Drive and W. Ridgeway Street, replacing a small commercial building and a residential-scale building oriented towards Missouri Street (Figure 2–85).[339]

Joe's Drive-In, a White-owned cafe and gas station, operated at 3622 Delta Drive, south of the church. Robert Pittman Sr. owned the next three lots to the south, where a small house and separate grocery store were located. The house, numbered 3608 Delta Drive, has since been demolished and replaced with an auto shop. The grocery store building at 3604 Delta Drive (present-day Medgar Evers Boulevard) remains.

The lots behind Joe's Drive-In and the Pittman property remained vacant and overgrown through 1963. Well-worn paths cut through the vacant lots, leading from the back of Joe's Drive-In and the Pittman Store to Missouri Street (Figure 2–85). Robert Pittman Jr. was fifteen in 1963 and remembered regularly using those social paths and seeing others do so. [340]

According to the investigation that led up to the third and final trial of Byron de le Beckwith for the murder of Medgar Evers, Beckwith was seen driving through the neighborhood in early June 1963. On the night of June 11, 1963, he parked his car in the parking lot behind Joe's Drive-In, from which he could access the vacant, overgrown lots. There Beckwith hid until Medgar Evers arrived home in the early hours of June 12, 1963. From the lots, he shot Medgar Evers with a high-powered rifle(Figure 2–86 to Figure 2–88).[341]

Court proceedings from 1997 summarized the investigation that took place in and around the Elraine subdivision:

> [Officer] Chamblee then testified that he and other officers measured the path of the bullet from the refrigerator, past the point of impact at the vehicle, to determine from whence it was fired. This search [led] them to an area behind three small trees and bushes where they determined that a person had been recently standing. They found a small limb broken off a bush in this area. The Evers' home was within view ... A trail led through the bushes for around 150 to 200 feet to the parking lot of Joe's Drive-In. The area was about 200 feet from the Evers' home.[342]

The day after the murder, the investigation recovered Beckwith's gun in honeysuckle vines and shrubs on the vacant lot (Figure 2–86, Figure

338 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 227.

339 "Historic Aerials of Hinds County, Mississippi," Historic Aerials, accessed August 2024, https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer; William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination,"5, 14.

340 Robert Pittman interview, October 26, 2022; "1963 birds-eye photograph" Photograph in Box 221, DeLaughter Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History; "Historic Aerials of Hinds County, Mississippi," Historic Aerials, accessed August 2024, https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer; William Booth, "Jackson Mississippi: The City Time Remembers," *The Washington Post*, (Washington, DC), February 11, 1994, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/1994/02/11/jackson-miss-the-city-time-remembers/3e7f1267-f09c-41d8-8bf3-ecd21d1ec145/.

341 Maryanne Vollers, Ghosts of Mississippi; Byron de la Beckwith, VI v. State of Mississippi, (Miss. 1997).

342 Byron de la Beckwith, VI v. State of Mississippi, (Miss. 1997). Following Beckwith's trial and conviction in 1994 (1990 indictment) for the murder of Medgar Evers, Beckwith appealed. In 1997, the Court determined that the trial was not a violation of Beckwith's rights and dismissed his appeal.

2–87).[343] The 1997 court proceedings also summarized testimony given in 1964 by Detective O. M. Luke of the Jackson Police Department. He testified that near the clump of trees, approximately 200 feet from the house:

> [S]omeone had cleared the vines out of the area of what I would call the north side of this tree, maybe the northwest side of the tree, approximately eighteen inches square ... I started to search, along with my partner, in the vicinity. I came out near the edge – the back of Pittman's lot in this trail. There's a trail that leads off of Joe's parking lot here. The trail leads from the corner of this lot out to where this trail was, and then, of course, this trail was leading over across to Missouri Street. And searching as closely as I was, I saw something in this hedge over there – over here that didn't look right. I took a second look, and I could tell it was the butt of a gun ... It was stuck up in the vines, I could say, approximately this far, twelve to eighteen inches ... the vine was pulled back over the hole where you – you would have to be looking pretty close to see it ... it was well hidden, and wasn't even touching the ground.[344]

According to Luke, the gun was approximately twenty-five feet from the edge of the drive-in parking lot.[345]

Later in 1963, Leroy Burnett built a house behind Joe's Drive-In at 3611 Missouri Street. He built three more houses behind the Pittman home and store at 3527, 3529, and 3603 Missouri Street from 1963 to 1965. As of 2023, these homes on Missouri Street are extant and adjacent to the Missouri Street Lots (Figure 2–85).

343 Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi*, 151, 133-134; Ronald Smothers, "Jurors in Medgar Evers Case Handle Rifle From the Past," *New York Times*, (New York, NY), January 29, 1994, https://www.nytimes.com/1994/01/29/us/jurors-in-medgar-evers-case-handle-rifle-from-the-past.html; Byron de la Beckwith, VI v. State of Mississippi, (Miss. 1997); William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 20.

344 Byron de la Beckwith, VI v. State of Mississippi, (Miss. 1997).

345 Byron de la Beckwith, VI v. State of Mississippi, (Miss. 1997).



FIGURE 2–86. Crime scene photograph showing the police retrieving the murder weapon, likely taken by Ralph Hargrove on June 13, 1963 (source: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, DeLaughter Collection, Z 2301.000).



FIGURE 2–87. Crime scene photograph showing the police retrieving the murder weapon, likely taken by Ralph Hargrove on June 13, 1963 (source: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, DeLaughter Collection, Z 2301.000).

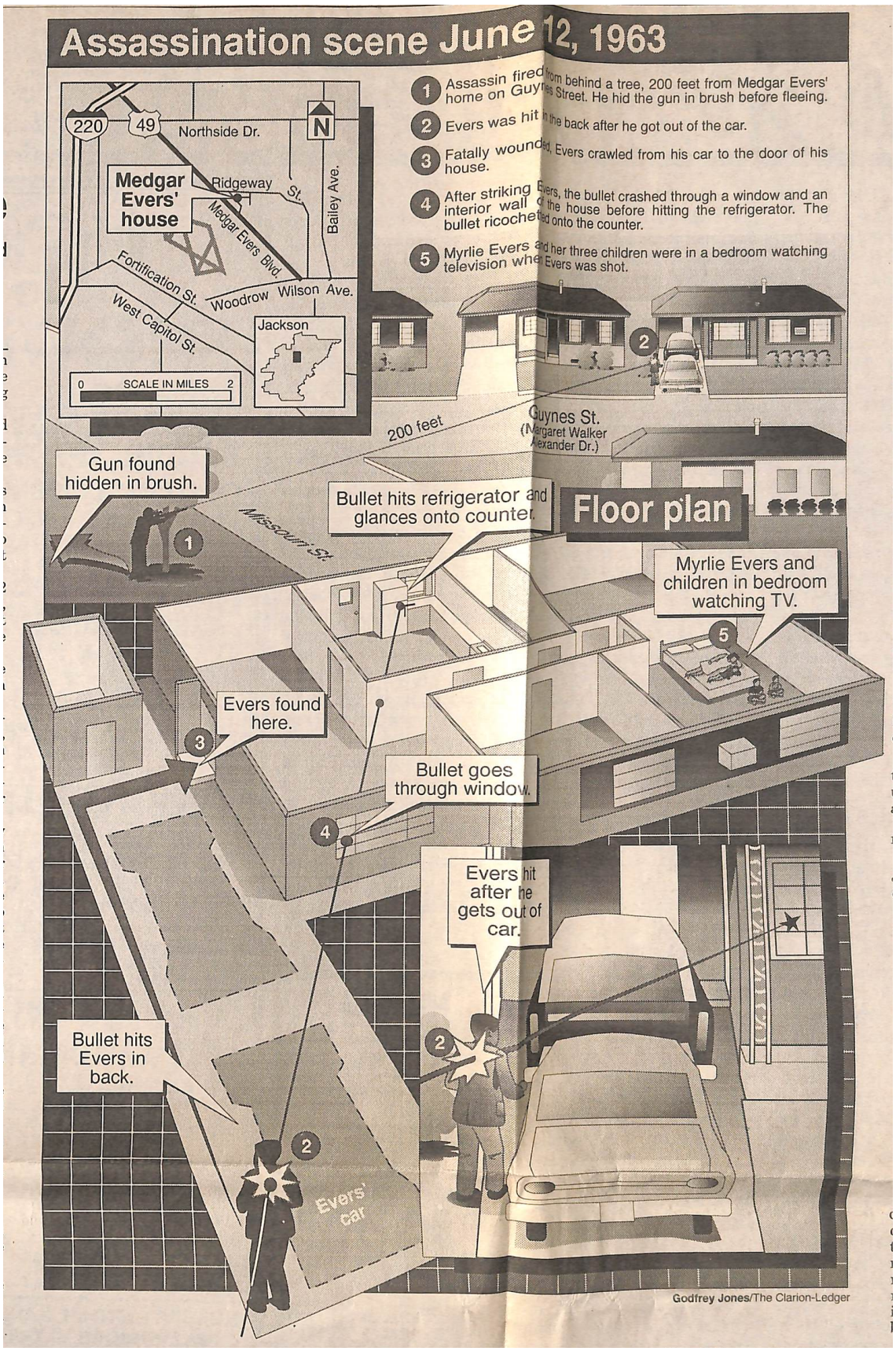


FIGURE 2–88. Illustration of the assassination scene by Godfrey Jones (source: Jackson *Clarion-Ledger*, Sunday, June 6, 1993).

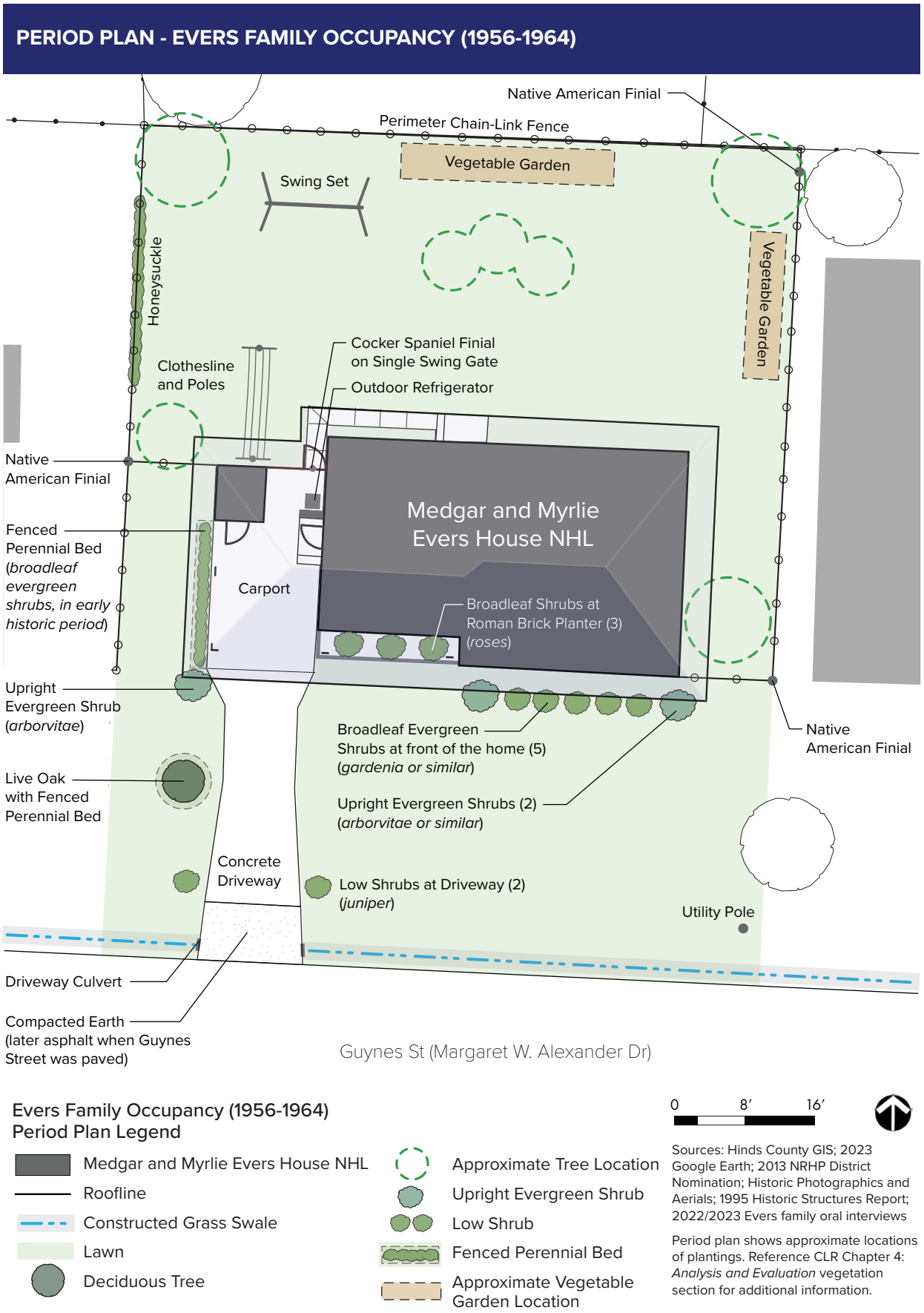


FIGURE 2–89. Landscape period plan during the Evers family occupancy, 1956-1964 (source: DHM Design, 2023).

Home Rental Period (1965–1992)

Jackson

In the years after Medgar Evers's assassination, the United States saw a series of civil rights victories. Around the country, and in Jackson in particular, White Americans resisted desegregation by creating private schools and disinvesting in public institutions.

Two Supreme Court cases, *Green v. County School Board* (1968) and *Alexander v. Holmes* (1969), forced the Mississippi school systems to integrate—years after the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision ended separate but equal education. To prevent their children from sharing classrooms with African American children, White parents fled the public schools. Working with the white supremacist Citizens' Councils, White parents created "Council" schools (Figure 2–90). By 1972, twenty-five percent of White students in the greater Jackson area were enrolled in Council schools; another twenty-five percent were enrolled in other private schools.[346]

White Americans, including residents of Jackson, further segregated daily life by leaving urban centers and moving to suburban homes outside city limits, a pattern termed "White flight." In Jackson, many left the city and county, moving to new suburbs in towns like Ridgeland and Madison, north of Jackson in Madison County; and Flowood, Pearl, and Brandon in Rankin County, just across the Pearl River.[347] Despite the exodus, White residents remained in power at the city and state levels, reducing investment in Jackson and

346 Will Stancil, "The Radical Supreme Court Decision That America Forgot," *The Atlantic*, May 29, 2018, https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2018/05/the-radical-supreme-court-decision-that-america-forgot/561410/.

347 Ward Schaefer, "Jackson 'White Flight' Slows In Last Decade," *Jackson Free Press*, (Jackson, MS), March 16, 2011, https://m.jacksonfreepress.com/news/2011/mar/16/jackson-white-flight-slows-in-last-decade/.



FIGURE 2–90. 1972 Council Schools brochure. (Source: "A step ahead in education, Council Schools," brochure of the Council Schools Foundation from Alan Huffman, "Waking Up at a Seg Academy," October 30, 2019, The Academy Stories.)

the public school system, which was increasingly Black.[348]

African American businesses also suffered during the 1970s and 1980s. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in public accommodations. Thus, Jackson's White establishments, including restaurants, stores, and libraries targeted for protest by the Jackson Movement, could not legally deny service to African Americans. This new law was a victory for civil rights, but it also depleted the customer base for Black-owned businesses. African American customers could go to White-owned stores, including a growing number of malls and corporate-owned grocery stores in the suburbs, but White customers did not frequent Black businesses. Paired with the impact of inflation during the 1970s, African American commercial districts like Farish Street were economically decimated (Figure 2–91).[349]

By the 1980s, residential and commercial investment had moved outside the city, and federal and state policies cut social welfare programs, hollowing out the urban Black community that remained. Jackson's population began to decline for the first time since the city's founding.[350]

Neighborhood

In the 1960s and 1970s, the city made drainage improvements in the Elraine subdivision. Between 1963 and 1971, the City lined the drainage and sewer overflow channel east of the Evers home with concrete.[351] In the 1970s, the City widened Guynes Street into the right-of-way. Concrete aprons, curbs, and gutters replaced the paved asphalt sections of driveways, culverts, and grass swales.

348 Will Stancil, "The Radical Supreme Court Decision That America Forgot"; NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites;* "Waking Up at a Seg Academy," October 30, 2019, The Academy Stories, accessed August 2024, https://www.theacademystories.com/post/waking-up-at-a-seg-academy; Charles Bolton, "The Last Stand of Massive Resistance: Mississippi Public School Integration, 1970," Mississippi History Now, February 2009, https://mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov/issue/the-last-stand-of-massive-resistance-1970.

349 Turry Flucker, et. al., "The Black Mecca of Mississippi: A Portrait of a Community."

350 William Booth, "Jackson Mississippi: The City Time Remembers."

351 "Historic Aerials of Hinds County, Mississippi," Historic Aerials, accessed August 2024, https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer.



FIGURE 2–91. Farish Street, 1978 (source: Farish Street Neighborhood Historic District, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, March 1980).

The area surrounding the neighborhood also saw demographic change. When Elraine was developed, the neighborhood was an African American enclave surrounded by White-majority neighborhoods. In the 1970s, many White residents left the area. For example, in the northwest Jackson Presidential Hills neighborhood, White residents made up more than eighty percent of the population but were less than half the population in 1980. Elraine remained an African American neighborhood. In January 1981, Guynes Street was renamed Margaret W. Alexander Drive in honor of her accomplishments as an international best selling poet, writer, and educator.[352]

The Evers Home

After leaving Jackson in 1964, Myrlie Evers rented out the home on Guynes Street to tenants. This report's Tenant Timeline (Figure 2–92) identifies renters for whom records could be found and the years in which they lived in the home. Sandra McCall was a family friend and lived in the home from 1981 to 1985, collecting the rent from the next tenant, Aaron Rollins, on behalf of Myrlie Evers-Williams.[353] She added bars to the windows during her residence. Between 1971 and 1982, tenants removed trees and shrubs from the front and side yards, including the upright shrubs along the open side of the carport and the broadleaf shrubs below the bedroom windows.

Missouri Street Lots

The gabled house on the northernmost Missouri Street Lot was razed between 1971 and 1977, and many trees were removed from the lots. The lots remained undeveloped through the remainder of the period, though the City placed utility poles in the right-of-way.

Tenant Timeline:

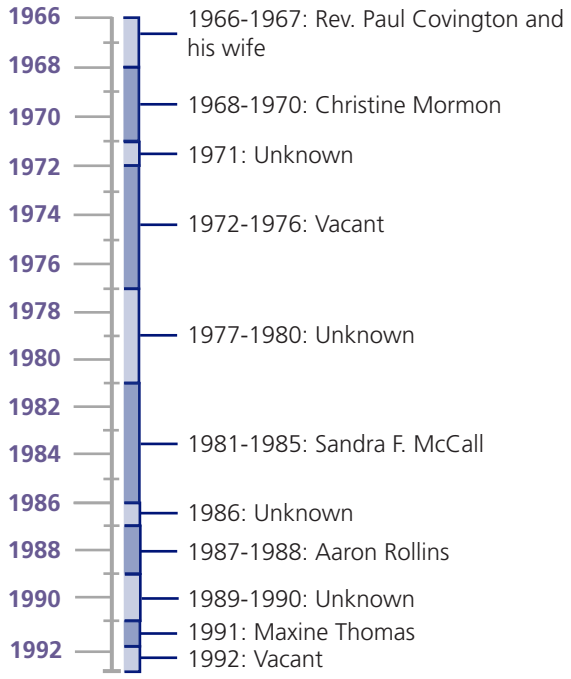


FIGURE 2–92. Timeline of tenants living in the home. (source: BBB Architects/DHM Design, 2023).

352 WFT Architects, "Medgar Evers Home Renovation," 12, 16.

353 Sandra McCall, interview by Chris Geddes, January 2023.

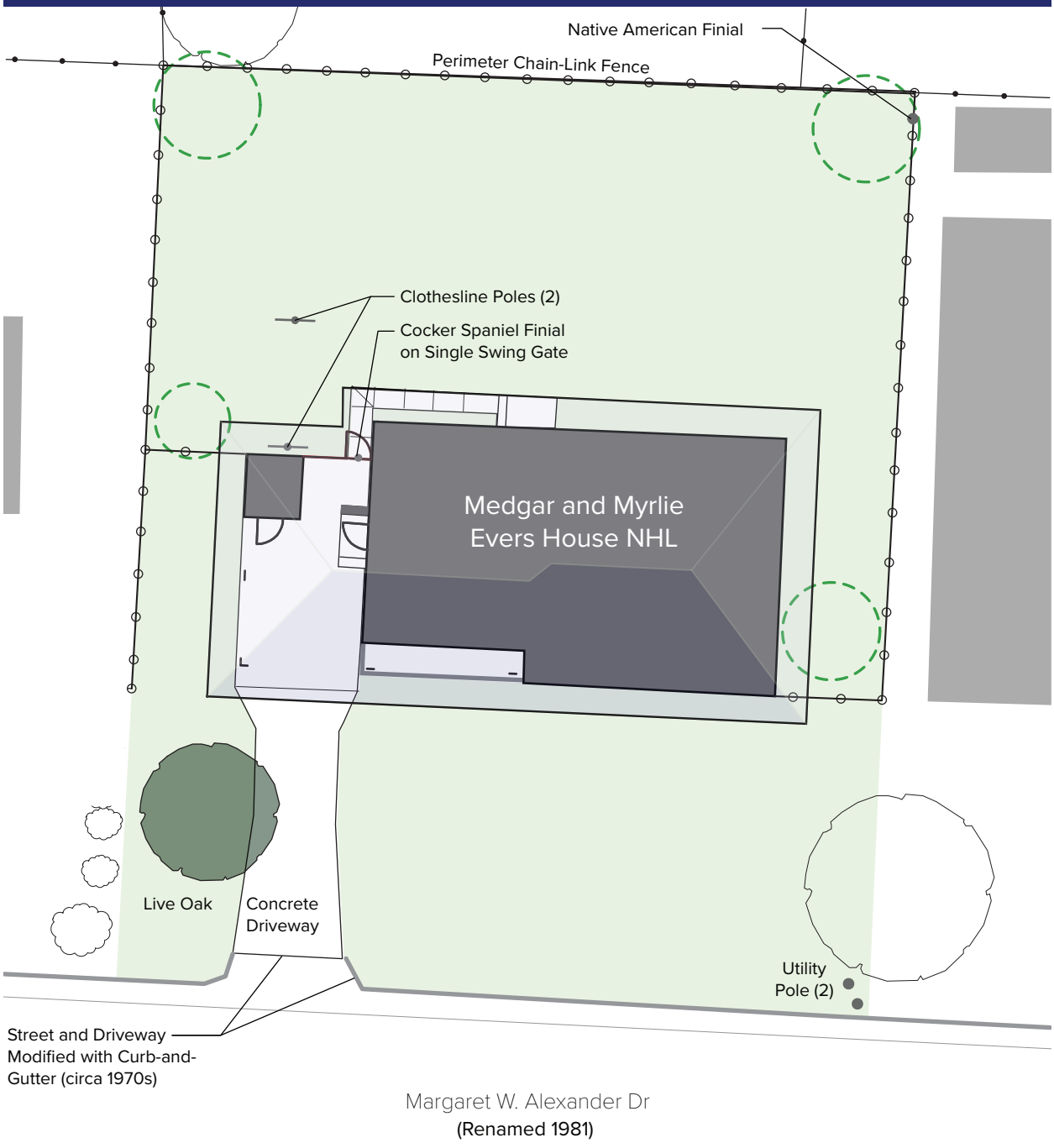


FIGURE 2–93. Aerial from 1971, showing the boundary of the Medgar Evers Historic District (outlined in orange), which includes the original thirty-six lots of the Elraine subdivision. The location of the future Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument is outlined in yellow. The gabled house on the northernmost of the Missouri Street lots is visible (source: Historic Aerials: NETRonline).



FIGURE 2–94. Aerial from 1982, showing the boundary of the Medgar Evers Historic District (outlined in orange), which includes the original thirty-six lots of the Elraine subdivision. The location of the future Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument is outlined in yellow. Between 1971 and 1977 the gabled house on the Missouri Street lots was razed. Little development occurred adjacent to the Elraine subdivision during this time (source: Historic Aerials: NETRonline).

PERIOD PLAN - HOME RENTAL (1965-1992)



Home Rental (1965-1992)
Period Plan Legend

- Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL
- Roofline
- Curb-and-Gutter
- Lawn
- Approximate Tree Location
- Deciduous Tree
- Low Shrub

0 8′ 16′

Sources: Hinds County GIS; 2023 Google Earth; 2013 NRHP District Nomination; Historic Photographics and Aerials; 1995 Historic Structures Report; 2022/2023 Evers family oral interviews

Period plan shows approximate locations of plantings. Reference CLR Chapter 4: *Analysis and Evaluation* vegetation section for additional information.

FIGURE 2–95. Landscape period plan during the Home Rental Period, 1965 to 1992 (source: DHM Design, 2023).

Tougaloo College Ownership Period (1993–2019)

Jackson

Residents, and particularly White residents, continued to leave Jackson in the 1990s and 2000s, removing a section of the tax base. From 1980 to 2020, Jackson saw a twenty-five percent decrease in population—from a high of over 200,000 residents to 153,000. From 1990 to 2000, nearly 35,000 White residents left the city.[354] In 2022, the population of Jackson was about eighty-three percent African American, and roughly one-quarter of Jackson's residents lived in poverty. The greater Jackson area experienced some new real estate development, but largely in the suburbs, outside city limits.[355]

After decades of neglect, Jackson's infrastructure, particularly its water system, began to crumble. A storm in 2010 left many residents without water for weeks. In 2012, the federal government put Jackson under a consent decree for violating the Clean Water Act for an excess of sewer overflows. Inadequate state funds have hindered the city's ability to repair the system. Ongoing leaks led to low water pressure and regular boil water notices.[356]

Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program Senior Fellow Andre Perry wrote about the water crisis in Jackson:

> In the case of Jackson, legacy infrastructure goes hand-in-hand with a legacy of racism. The costs of legacy infrastructure parallel long-standing economic and racial disparities in the region. Without steady economic growth and shared economic opportunity—in jobs, wages, and other activity—municipalities and water utilities struggle to predictably and equitably generate enough revenue to cover their infrastructure needs.[357]

Neighborhood

The Elraine subdivision landscape underwent very few changes during this period. A Ranch-style church parsonage was built east of the Elraine Baptist Church in the early 2000s, replacing the original parsonage.

Evidence suggests the neighborhood has experienced water issues in line with those seen throughout the city. A groundwater test conducted on site in 2013 found that groundwater pooling near and under the Evers home was potable, meaning the water on site was largely coming from a damaged pipe. Tougaloo College, the steward of the Evers home at the time, notified the City, but there is no record of repair.[358]

The Evers Home

In 1993, Myrlie Evers-Williams donated the home on Margaret W. Alexander Drive (formerly Guynes Street) to Tougaloo College, a historically Black college whose students and faculty had supported Medgar Evers's civil rights work. Myrlie Evers-Williams had served on the college's board.[359] During a symposium at which she ceremonially gifted the home to Tougaloo College, Myrlie Evers-Williams gave a speech in which she reflected:

> [Medgar Evers] will live with me forever, and I think he will live with some of you... Today I still miss him. But I don't mourn Medgar anymore. What we are doing now is

354 Ward Schaefer, "Jackson White Flight' Slows In Last Decade."

355 Molly Hennessy-Fiske, "White then Black residents abandoned Jackson, propelling its water crisis," *Washington Post,* (Washington, DC), September 4, 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/09/04/jackson-water-crisis/.

356 "City of Jackson - Mississippi Clean Water Act Settlement," United States Environmental Protection Agency, November 21, 2012, https://www.epa.gov/enforcement/city-jackson-mississippi-clean-water-act-settlement; "Mississippi City's Water Problems Stem from Generations of Neglect," Southern Poverty Law Center, June 28, 2023, https://www.splcenter.org/news/2023/06/28/timeline-jackson-mississippi-water-problems.

357 Andre M. Perry, Joseph W. Kane and Carl Romer, "In Jackson, Miss., A Water Crisis has Revealed the Racial Costs of Legal Infrastructure," Brookings Institute, March 29, 2021, https://www.brookings.edu/articles/in-jackson-miss-a-water-crisis-has-revealed-the-racial-costs-of-legacy-infrastructure/.

358 WFT Architects, "Medgar Evers Home Renovation," 236.

359 The Office of Michael Emrick, "Architectural Conservation Assessment, Medgar Evers Museum," (Nashville, Tennessee, 2006), 6.

> celebrating him, and we are also celebrating ourselves and our successes. For us, the living, he does go on.[360]

The year prior, in June 1992, the City of Jackson designated the home a local landmark. Tougaloo College sought state and national historic designations and funds for rehabilitation of the home after acquisition. The home was designated a Mississippi State Landmark in 1993, and the neighborhood was designated a local historic district in 1994.[361] Long-time neighborhood resident Grace Sweet advocated for the historic district designation in order to perpetuate "the name, the life and the work that Medgar Evers did...[and to] help to restore the neighborhood to

360 Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi,* 326.

361 "Medgar and Myrle Evers House Historic Resources Inventory Fact Sheet," Mississippi Department of Archives and History, accessed August 2024, https://www.apps.mdah.ms.gov/Public/prop.aspx?id=32997&view=facts&y=768#:~:text=It%20was%20designated%20a%20Mississippi,Historic%20District%2C%20in%20January%201994.; Jimmie Gates, "Tougaloo All Ready to Start Evers Home," *Clarion Ledger* (Jackson, MS), June 6, 1993.

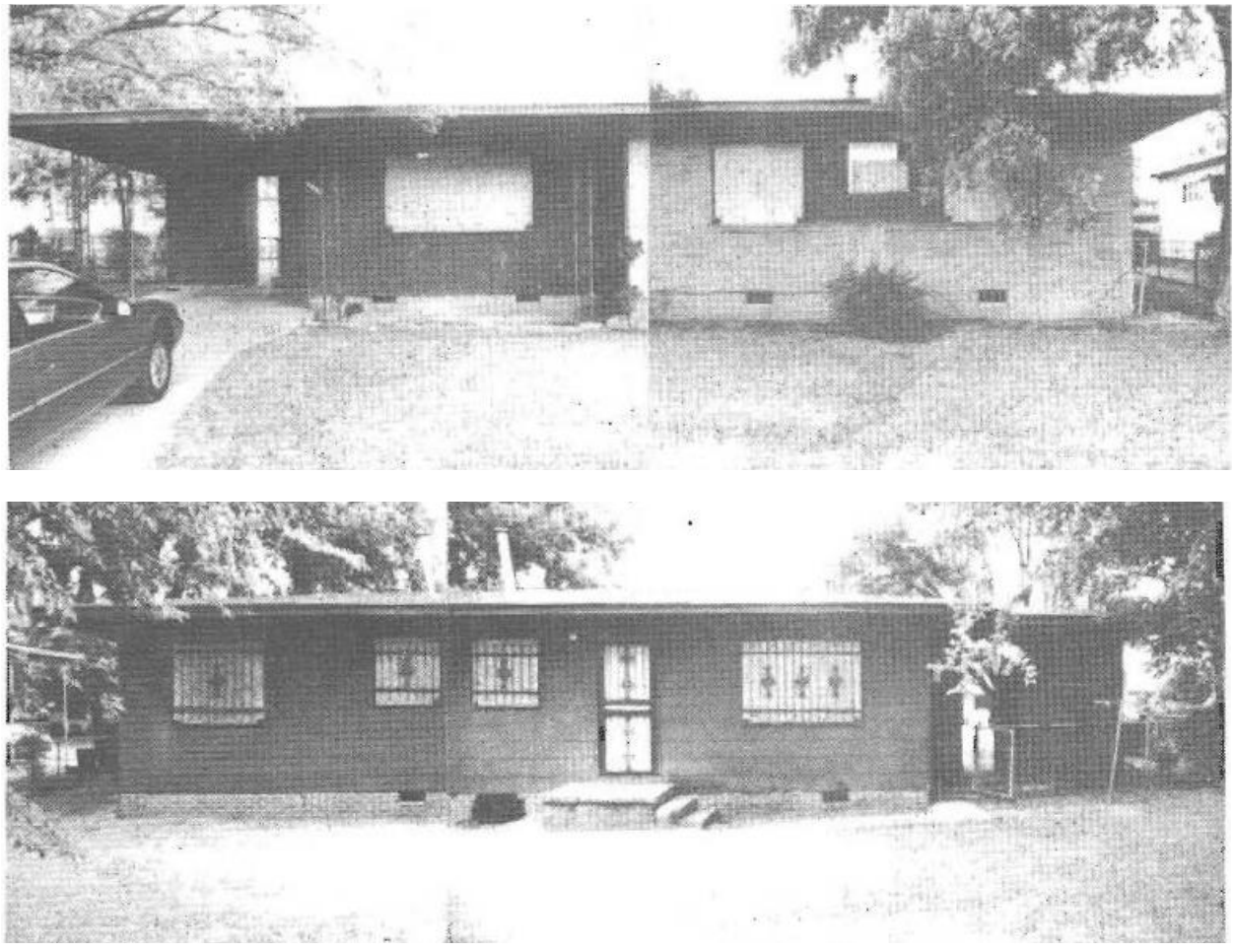


FIGURE 2–96. Photographs of the Evers home, south façade (top) north façade (lower), taken in 1994 (source: WFT Architects, Medgar Evers Home Renovation Historic Structure Report, 1995).

the beautiful status that it once had and hopefully crime will be deterred..."[362]

1995 Rehabilitation

Tougaloo College received $200,000 in state funds to rehabilitate the home. The rehabilitation study and design were developed by local firm WFT Architects. In 1994, Tougaloo College commissioned a Historic Structures Report that included photographic documentation and a conditions assessment, which noted significant water damage from a deteriorating roof and roof structure, but minimal alterations to the historic home (Figure 2–96, Figure 2–97).[363]

The rehabilitation took place in 1995, and upon completion, Tougaloo College opened the home as the Medgar Evers Museum, the state's first house museum dedicated to the civil rights movement.

See this Historic Structure Report Chapter 3*: Chronology of Development and Use* for a description of the 1995 rehabilitation.

Final Trial

During this same period, the third and final trial of white supremacist and assassin Byron de la Beckwith took place. On February 5, 1994, a jury found him guilty and sentenced him to life in prison.[364] While thirty years after the fact, the verdict gave the family and the larger community some semblance of justice.

362 Grace Simmons, "Medgar Evers' neighborhood designated historic district," *Clarion-Ledger*, (Jackson, MS), January 26, 1994.

363 Gates, "Tougaloo All Ready"; United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, "CPI Inflation Calculator," (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023), accessed March 2023, https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm; WFT Architects, "Medgar Evers Home Renovation," 17.

364 David Stout, "Byron de la Beckwith Dies; Killer of Medgar Evers Was 80," *New York Times*, (New York, NY), January 23, 2001, accessed March 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/2001/01/23/us/byron-de-la-beckwith-dies-killer-of-medgar-evers-was-80.html.

Book and Film

The trial and verdict garnered public attention and were the subject of a number of books and movies.[365] One book, *Ghosts of Mississippi: The Murder of Medgar Evers, the Trials of Byron de la Beckwith, and the Haunting of the New South* by Maryanne Vollers, was published in 1995. Shortly after publication, Castle Rock Entertainment adapted the book into the film *Ghosts of Mississippi*, released in December 1996. [366] The film told something of a White redemption version of history, centering the story on White prosecutor Bobby DeLaughter (played by Alec Baldwin)

365 Beverly Pettigrew Kraft, "Films, 3 books on hold for result of 3rd Beckwith trial," *Clarion-Ledger*, (Jackson, MS), June 6, 1993, https://yazoolibraryassociation.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/evers-medgar-charles.pdf.

366 Harvard Sitkoff, "Review of Ghosts of Mississippi" *Journal of American History*, Volume 84, Issue 3, December 1997, 1177–1178.

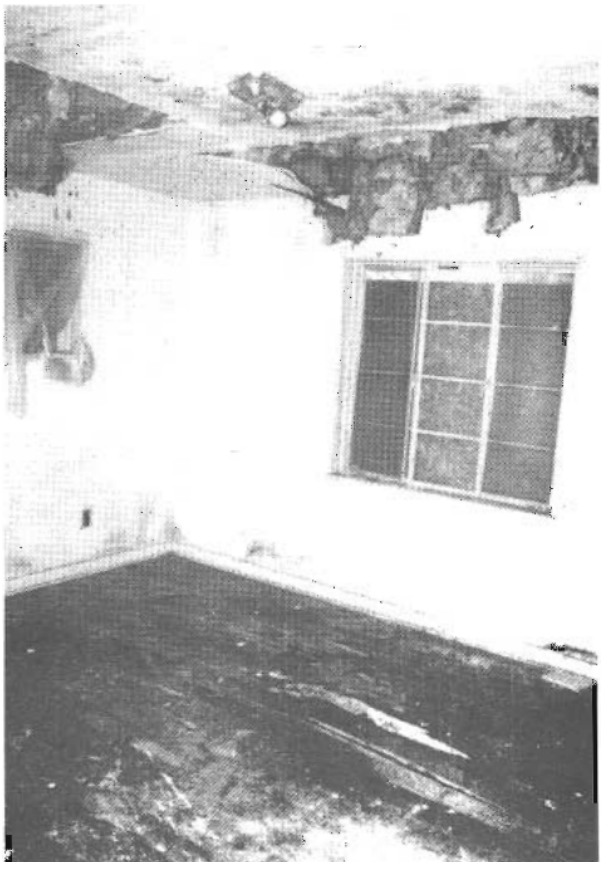


FIGURE 2–97. Severe water damage was present in the center front bedroom (Bedroom 3) in 1994 (source: WFT Architects, Medgar Evers Home Renovation Historic Structure Report, 1995).

instead of Myrlie Evers-Williams (played by Whoopie Goldberg).

Castle Rock used the recently rehabilitated Evers home as a background from which to tell the story of the assassination and the series of trials that followed. Castle Rock shot scenes from the 1960s, including the opening scene that depicts the assassination of Medgar Evers, with the rehabilitated home as the setting.[367]

The film crew also shot scenes set in the 1990s, telling the story of DeLaughter's retrial of Byron de la Beckwith. For these scenes, Castle Rock altered the rehabilitated home to make it look aged and abandoned. They let the grass grow long and painted it brown; they repainted the home's exterior a darker shade of green; and they covered the windows with plywood (Figure 2–98).[368]

After altering the home to make it look abandoned, Castle Rock returned the home to its rehabilitated state, repainting its exterior a brighter green and restoring the surrounding garden beds (Figure 2–99).

In collaboration with Myrlie Evers, Castle Rock Entertainment furnished the home while filming and donated the furniture to Tougaloo College and the Medgar Evers Museum after filming was complete. According to the 2005 Medgar Evers Museum Conservation Assessment by Shelley Reisman Paine, the museum at the time had a small number of original objects. The remaining 750

367 Billy Watkins, "Scene of the Crime," *Clarion-Ledger*, (Jackson, MS), May 10, 1996, Subject File Folder, Mississippi Department of Archives and History; Lawson Newman, interview by Lucy Moore by phone, Jackson, MS, November 9, 2023.

368 Billy Watkins, "Scene of the Crime," *Clarion-Ledger*, (Jackson, MS), 1996; Lawson Newman interview, November 9, 2023.



FIGURE 2–98. View of the Evers home, driveway, and the live oak tree during *Ghosts of Mississippi* filming on May 10, 1996 (source: *Clarion-Ledger*, Subject File Folder, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

period objects, including most of the furniture, were set pieces and props from the film.[369]

Castle Rock Entertainment also altered the landscape at the Evers home to accommodate filming on the property. The film crew lifted the driveway out in pieces, then reset the driveway, and they transplanted the live oak that Medgar Evers planted as a gift to Myrlie Evers to the Missouri Street Lots.[370]

369 Shelley Reisman Paine, Conservator, "Medgar Evers Museum Conservation Assessment," (Nashville, Tennessee, 2005).

370 Billy Watkins, "Scene of the Crime," *Clarion-Ledger,* (Jackson, MS), 1996; Lawson Newman interview, November 9, 2023.

Museum

Tougaloo College opened the home as the Medgar Evers Museum upon the completion of the 1995 rehabilitation. The Medgar Evers Museum's mission statement was as follows:

> The Medgar Evers Museum is a mechanism for learning and teaching, to make known and to keep alive the rich heritage and legacy left by Medgar Wiley Evers, Field Secretary for the Mississippi Chapter of NAACP.[371]

Minnie Watson served as the museum's first curator, a role she held until the home was conveyed to the NPS (Figure 2–100, Figure 2–101). In 1961, as a freshman at Campbell College, an all-Black private college in Jackson, Watson heard Medgar Evers speak. Inspired by his speech, she and friends joined the NAACP. Working with a minimal budget, she managed the museum, curated

371 Paine, "Medgar Evers Museum Conservation Assessment," 2005, 3.



FIGURE 2–99. Darrell Kenyatta Evers in front of the Evers home during *Ghosts of Mississippi* filming on May 22, 1996 (source: *Clarion-Ledger*, Subject File Folder, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

its collection, and provided tours for over twenty-five years as its only full-time employee.[372]

In 1998, the Medgar Evers Museum opened an exhibit in the front center bedroom (Bedroom 3), illustrating highlights from Medgar Evers's life and work (Figure 2–102).[373] To date, no further information on this exhibit has been located. The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 5, 2000.[374]

In November 2005, Tougaloo College conducted a conservation assessment to recommend treatments for the home and its collections, including recommendations to improve the mechanical system in the home to address climate and care of the collections.[375]

In October 2010, Tougaloo College commissioned an Interpretive Plan of Action, which documented the tours provided by Watson, evaluated the museum's programming, and made recommendations for improved interpretation and visitor experience.[376]

2013 Rehabilitation

From 2010 to 2013, Tougaloo College worked with WFT Architects a second time to rehabilitate and restore the property. The home and site regularly experienced drainage issues and standing water, especially in the crawl space, which led to rotting floorboards. To address the water issue,



FIGURE 2–100. Minnie Watson giving a tour in 2010 (source: Luckett, Interpretive Plan of Action for Medgar Evers Home/Museum, Tougaloo College, October 4, 2010).



FIGURE 2–101. Minnie Watson standing outside the home in 2019 (source: Rory Doyle, National Parks Conservation Association, https:// www.npca.org/articles/2020-mississippi-reckoning.)



FIGURE 2–102. Exhibit in Bedroom 3 opened by the Medgar Evers Museum in 1998 (source: DHM Design, 2022).

372 Mary Blessey, "Minnie Watson", *Jackson Free Press*, (Jackson, MS) July 20, 2011, https://www.jacksonfreepress.com/news/2011/jul/20/minnie-watson/; Pioneer Productions, "Jackson, MS Mini-Documentary Feat. Minnie Watson of the Medgar Evers Home Museum," Pioneer Productions, 2022, https://www.pioneerproductions.org/blog/2019/3/6/minnie-watson-jackson-ms-mini-documentary; Office of Michael Emrick, *Architectural Conservation Assessment,* 12.

373 Jeanne B. Luckett, "Interpretive Plan of Action for Medgar Evers Home/Museum," (Jackson, MS: October 4, 2010), 3.

374 Deborah Wise Oakley, "Medgar Evers House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2000), 6.

375 Paine, "Medgar Evers Museum Conservation Assessment," 2005, 24.

376 Luckett, "Interpretive Plan of Action for Medgar Evers Home/Museum," 3.

the crawl space floor was infilled and paved, a French drain and sump pump was installed, floors were replaced, and the mechanical systems were replaced.

During the rehabilitation, the bullet hole through the wing wall between the dining and living room was reopened for interpretation.[377]

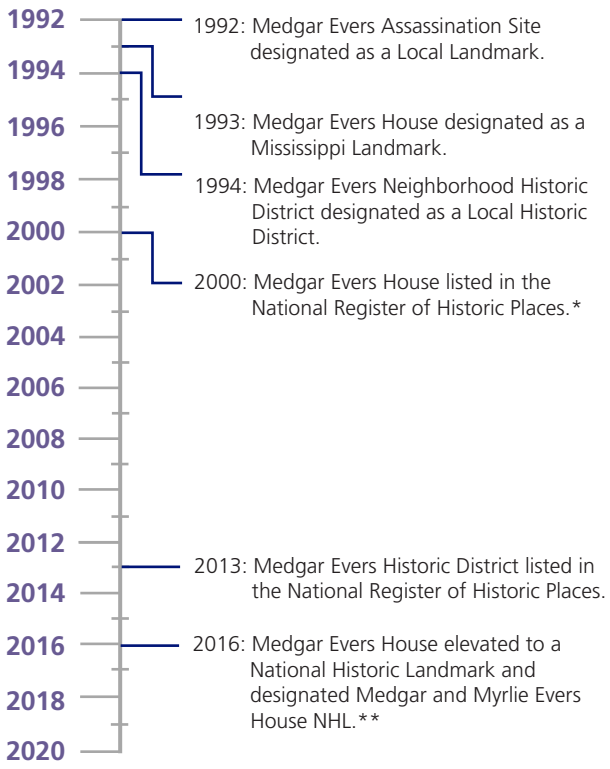
See Historic Structure Report Chapter 3*: Chronology of Development and Use* for a description of 2013 rehabilitation.

On September 18, 2013, the Medgar Evers Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) by the Secretary of the Interior on December 23, 2016.[378]

Missouri Street Lots

In 1994, Tougaloo College purchased the Missouri Street Lots with funds allocated from the Mississippi State Legislature. The College intended to provide an off-street parking area for the Medgar Evers Museum. However, the lots were not developed as such during Tougaloo College's ownership of the property.[379]

Designation Timeline:



*Medgar Evers Historic District is significant at the state level

**Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL is significant at the national level

FIGURE 2–103. Timeline of historic designations. (source: BBB Architects/DHM Design, 2023).

377 Newman interview, November 9, 2023.

378 Jennifer V.O. Baughn, "Medgar and Myrlie Evers House," 10.

379 WFT Architects, "Medgar Evers Home Renovation," 51.

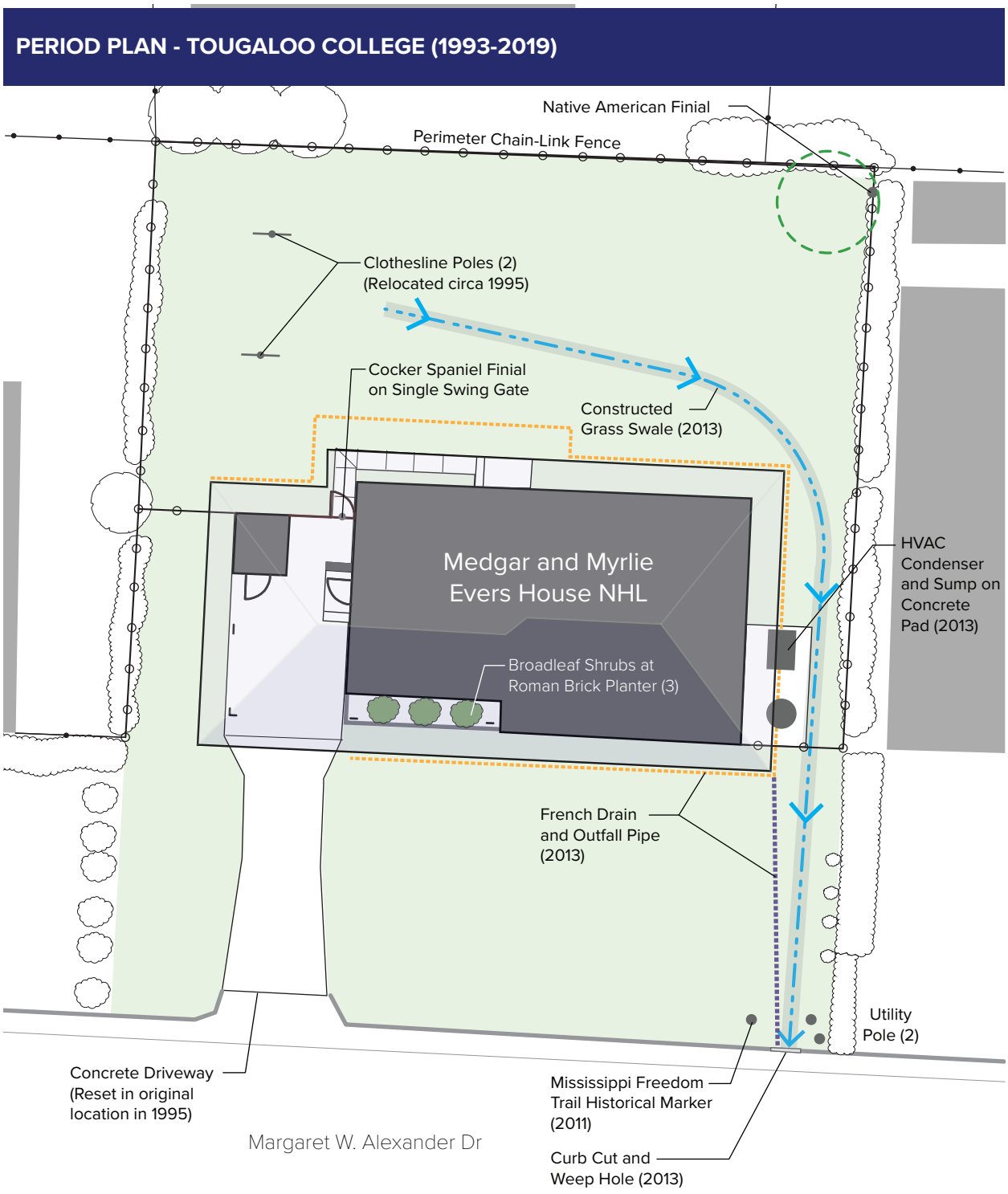


FIGURE 2–104. Landscape period plan during Tougaloo College's ownership, 1993 to 2019 (source: DHM Design, 2023).

National Park Service Ownership Period (2020 – Present)

Establishment of the National Monument

Section 2301 of the John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019 authorized the establishment of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument as a unit of the NPS.[380] The National Park Foundation provided funds to help transfer the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and the Missouri Street Lots from Tougaloo College to the NPS on June 18, 2020.

On December 10, 2020, the Department of the Interior announced the establishment of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument in Jackson, Mississippi. On the occasion of the announcement, US Secretary of the Interior David L. Bernhardt said,

> It is an honor to establish the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument. Medgar Evers was a true American hero who fought the Nazis at Normandy and fought racism with his wife Myrlie on the home front. It is our solemn responsibility as caretakers of America's national treasures to tell the whole story of America's heritage for the benefit of present and future generations. The life works of these great Americans helped shape our nation in making the United States a more perfect union, and for that, we should all be grateful.[381]

The Evers home continues to serve as a place of honor and memory. A memorial event is held annually on June 12, honoring the life of Medgar Evers. On June 12, 2021, the event also honored Medgar Evers's brother Charles Evers, a civil rights leader and Mississippi politician who died in July 2020.[382]

Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Medgar Evers Assassination

From 2022 to 2023, in preparation for the park's grand opening to the public and the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the 1963 assassination of Medgar Evers, the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and the Missouri Street Lots underwent several improvements to support visitor use.

The Historic Preservation Training Center worked alongside park staff to provide limited stabilization and interim accessibility improvements to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. The exhibits installed by Tougaloo College in the front bedroom (Bedroom 3) were removed. The interior face of the bedroom's exterior wall was opened to remove water-damaged material, including textured gypsum board and insulation. The walls were repaired with fiberglass insulation and finished to match existing treatment. The exhibits were replaced with non-original, period-appropriate furniture. The floor framing in the crawl space was reinforced, and the HVAC system received minor improvements. Around the exterior of the home, bricks were repointed and the original steel fixed and casement windows were repaired and stabilized. Landscape changes at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL included a repair of driveway joints (removal of sealant), installation of an interim wood privacy fence in front of the original chain-link fence, installation of an NPS park sign west of the driveway, and installation of an interim permeable stone paver path and wood ramp to improve accessibility to the home. A French drain was installed underneath the stone

380 U.S. Department of the Interior, "Federal Register Volume 85, Number 234: Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument." United States Government Publishing Office, December 4, 2020. https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/Fr-2020-12-04/html/2020-26693.htm.

381 "Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument," National Park Foundation, accessed August 2024, https://www.nationalparks.org/explore/parks/medgar-and-myrlie-evers-home-national-monument; "Trump Administration Establishes Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument," US Department of the Interior, December 10, 2020, https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/trump-administration-establishes-medgar-and-myrlie-evers-home-national-monument

382 Vickie King, "Medgar Evers and Charles Evers honored by family, politicians," *Mississippi Today*, June 12, 2021, https://mississippitoday.org/2021/06/12/medgar-evers-memorial/.

paver path to support drainage away from the west side foundation of the home.[383]

The NPS partnered with the Trust for Public Land to develop an interim outdoor education space and garden area at the Missouri Street Lots. A small gravel parking area, gathering area, and concrete loop were built, as well as a community space commemorated as Myrlie's Garden, which features a shade structure, raised-bed planters, and a garden cistern. Additional features that support community and visitor use include a wood, metal, and post-and-cable perimeter fence; site furnishings; an interpretive sign; and an NPS park sign (Figure 2–105).

383 "Stabilization Actions at the Evers Home, PEPC 110340," (US Department of the Interior: National Park Service, 2022); "Create Accessible Route and Install Guard Rail for Evers Home, PEPC 110761," (US Department of the Interior: National Park Service, 2022).



FIGURE 2–105. Myrlie Evers-Williams unveils the new park sign at the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the assassination of Medgar Evers (source: NPS Photos, 2023).

Chapter 3: Chronology of Development and Use

Introduction

This chapter details the physical construction, modification, and use of the property. It is based on historical documentation and interviews and is corroborated by first-hand observation.

A Cultural Landscape Report (2024 CLR) has been developed concurrent to this HSR. Please see the 2024 CLR for narratives on the chronology of development and use for the site and neighborhood.

Development Timeline

This timeline details the physical construction, modification, and use of the structure. A separate timeline of residents is provided in Chapter 2: *Historical Background and Context*.

June 21, 1941	Elraine subdivision Part Four, owned by Capital Land & Investment Company, was surveyed.[1]
1952	Quit Claim Deed for the land that would become the Elraine subdivision was issued to W. B. McCarty Jr.[2]
	Winston J. Thompson formed the W. J. Thompson Company to develop residential subdivisions for African American home buyers.[3]

1 WFT, "Medgar Evers Home Historic Structure Report," 1995, 16.
2 WFT, "Medgar Evers Home Historic Structure Report," 1995, 16.
3 William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 20.

1955	Thompson purchased the land that would become the Elraine subdivision and partnered with local builder Leroy Burnett of Burnett-Gaston & Associates to build thirty-six Ranch-style houses.[4] Construction began.[5]
1956	Medgar and Myrlie Evers purchased a lot in the Elraine subdivision.[6] Their house was constructed, and sometime before Christmas, the Evers family moved into their newly completed home.
1957	Thompson and Burnett completed construction on the thirty-six Ranch-style houses in the Elraine subdivision.
1963	An air conditioning unit was installed through the wall under the carport into the dining room.[7]
June 12, 1963	Medgar Evers was assassinated in the driveway of the Evers home. The bullet that killed Medgar Evers went through the front window and the wall between the living room and kitchen, dislodging a kitchen tile, and hitting the refrigerator. Crime scene photographs provide images of the home as it appeared in 1963 (Figure 2-39, Figure 2-90, Figure 3–1).
1963	At some point after the assassination of Medgar Evers, the features damaged by the bullet that killed Evers were repaired. The front window glass pane was replaced and the bullet hole in the wall between the living room and kitchen was covered over in drywall.[8]
July 1964	Myrlie Evers and her children left the Jackson home and moved to California.
1965-1992	Myrlie Evers retained ownership of the house, renting it to tenants.

4 William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 14-15.
5 WFT, "Medgar Evers Home Historic Structure Report," 1995, 12; W. J. Thompson Company advertisements, *Jackson Advocate*, June 13, August 22, and October 31, 1953, Library of Congress, *Chronicling America*, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn79000083/). Jennifer V.O. Baughn, "Medgar and Myrlie Evers House," 4.
6 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living,* 226.
7 Lord Aeck Sargent, "Condition Assessment," 2021; WFT, "Medgar Evers Home Historic Structure Report," 1995.
8 Interview with Lawson Newman of WFT Architects, November 9, 2023.

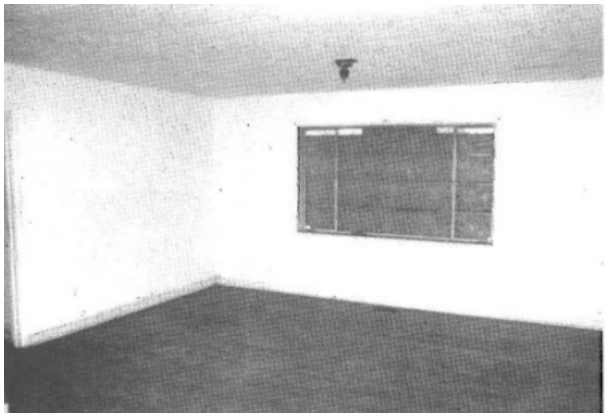


FIGURE 3–1. District Attorney's Office photographs of the crime scene show the home as it stood in 1963. These photographs show the carport and front façade. Note the unpainted metal trim and dark paint at the storage closet (top right) versus the lighter paint on the home (top left) (source: District Attorney's Office Photographs reproduced in WFT, "Medgar Evers Home Historic Structure Report," 1995).

Rental Period The following changes were made to the home during the Rental Period:[9]

- A curb was installed along the street and the driveway was modified and extended to connect to it.
- The original gravel roof was replaced with an asphalt shingle roof.
- A second air conditioning unit was installed on the south façade in Bedroom 2.
- The home was repainted, interior and exterior. It was painted dark green at an unknown date. The 1995 HSR identified colors of prior paint layers from areas of cracked or chipped paint and scrapings, exterior and interior. The 1995 HSR team confirmed the colors with Leroy Burnett and Myrlie Evers-Williams but did not note Pantone colors or conduct paint analysis.
  - » The HSR noted that the house had been repainted several times and that "some verbal evidence of colors and finishes has been obtained, but careful uncovering of paint layers should reveal the original paint and stains. Samples should then be computer analyzed in order to match the colors and promote accuracy of the color scheme."[10] No documentation indicates that this recommendation was undertaken.
  - » The HSR noted that a light green paint was found under dark green paint on paint chips taken from the wrought iron posts.
  - » Robert Pittman, in his October 2022 oral history interview, recalled seeing a television program about Medgar Evers but didn't recognize the house due to the color of paint. 1963 photos show the storage closet door was a lighter color; dark green is seen in 1994 photos and therefore is a later change.
  - » White paint covered the kitchen cabinets, bookcase, and dining/kitchen cabinet pass-through before 1994.
  - » The 1995 HSR took paint samples in the kitchen and determined paint colors over the years were light green, light yellow, and white before being returned to a light green in the 1995–1996 rehabilitation.
- The kitchen and bathroom flooring was replaced.
- The original pink-enameled wall sink in the bathroom was replaced with a painted vanity cabinet, sink, and faucet.[11]
- It is speculated that the toilet was relocated, likely from against the exterior wall to its existing location.[12]
- Metal bars were installed on the windows and doors. Windows were boarded over with plywood.
- Water damage developed around the perimeter, particularly in the southeast corner of the home, including to the ceiling, walls, and floor (Figure 3–2, Figure 3–3).

9 WFT, "Medgar Evers Home Historic Structure Report," 1995.
10 WFT, "Medgar Evers Home Historic Structure Report," 1995, 52.
11 The original pink enameled tub/shower combo with faucets remain in their original location. White ceramic fixtures (soap tray and cup/ toothbrush holder) are also original.
12 Lawson Newman interview, November 9, 2023. Newman reported that he observed an original plumbing opening for the toilet on the exterior wall of the crawl space. This, and the tile patching on the exterior wall, suggested that the toilet had been relocated to its existing location. The rehabilitation plan was to relocate the toilet to the exterior wall. However, this was not done, and the toilet remains located on the west wall.



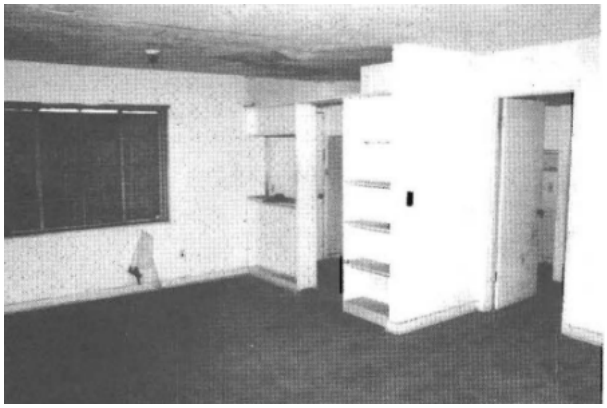


FIGURE 3–2. The Evers living room looking southeast (top) and looking northeast into the dining room and kitchen (lower) in 1994 (source: District Attorney's Office Photographs reproduced in WFT, "Medgar Evers Home Historic Structure Report," 1995). Note the painted built-in wood shelf and ceiling and wall damage.

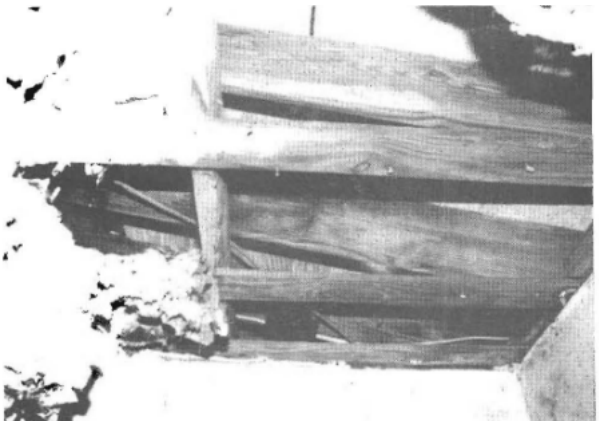




FIGURE 3–3. In 1994, major water damage was present in the southeast corner ceiling, walls, and floor, as visible in these interior photographs of Bedroom 2 looking southeast (lower) and looking up into the attic from the Bedroom 2 (top) (source: WFT, "Medgar Evers Home Historic Structure Report," 1995).

Feb. 1993 Myrlie Evers-Williams gifted the house to Tougaloo College.

Nov. 9, 1993 The house was designated a Mississippi landmark, at the request of Tougaloo College.[13]

Jan. 1994 The neighborhood surrounding the house was designated a local historic district, the Medgar Evers Neighborhood Historic District. It was the first historic district in the city.[14]

1994-1995 Tougaloo College commissioned a Historic Structure Report, completed by WFT Architects. WFT Architects photographed the house, interviewed Leroy Burnett and neighbors, and reviewed news reels and photographs from 1963 in order to document changes made between 1963 and 1993. Burnett confirmed the home had been minimally changed.

1995 - 1996 Tougaloo College undertook a major rehabilitation project to preserve the home and open it to the public as the Medgar Evers Museum (Figure 3–5).

The design team included:

- Architect: WFT Architects
- Site Engineering & Landscape Architect: Jackson Person & Associates
- Mechanical and Electrical Engineers: HESM
- Asbestos Inspection & Testing: EMC

The project undertook the following treatments:

- Removed the second air conditioning unit and restored the south façade.
- Repainted the interior and exterior.
- Restored the built-in wood shelf between the dining room and kitchen to a wood finish.
- Restored the kitchen cabinets to a wood finish.
- Replaced the asphalt shingle roof with a new asphalt shingle roof.
- Replaced broken and missing asbestos-cement shingle siding with a non-asbestos-containing shingle that very closely matched the original.
- Removed the metal bars that had been installed on the windows and doors.
- Replaced a significant portion of flooring, ceiling, and walls damaged by a long-term roof leak.
- Installed a period-appropriate pink enameled wall sink in the bathroom, which was salvaged from a neighboring home under renovation.[15]

13 J. Baughn, Medgar and Myrlie Evers House, MDAH Historic Resources Inventory.
14 J. Baughn, Medgar and Myrlie Evers House, MDAH Historic Resources Inventory.
15 Lawson Newman interview, November 9, 2023.

1995-1996 Concurrent with the rehabilitation project planning and completion, Castle Rock Entertainment approached Tougaloo College about using the home as the setting for the film, *Ghosts of Mississippi*, about the murder trial of Medgar Evers. Castle Rock purchased period furniture, which it donated to Tougaloo College after filming. Several pieces of furniture remain part of the home's interpretation as of 2023.

1997 Tougaloo College opened the Medgar Evers Museum. Minnie Watson served as its curator. [16]

1998 The Medgar Evers Museum opened an exhibit in Bedroom 3, illustrating highlights from the lives of Medgar and Myrlie Evers (Figure 3–6).[17]

16 Paine, "Medgar Evers Museum Conservation Assessment," 2005; Mary Blessey, "Minnie Watson", *Jackson Free Press*, (Jackson, MS) July 20, 2011

17 Luckett, "Interpretive Plan of Action for Medgar Evers Home/Museum," 2010, 3.

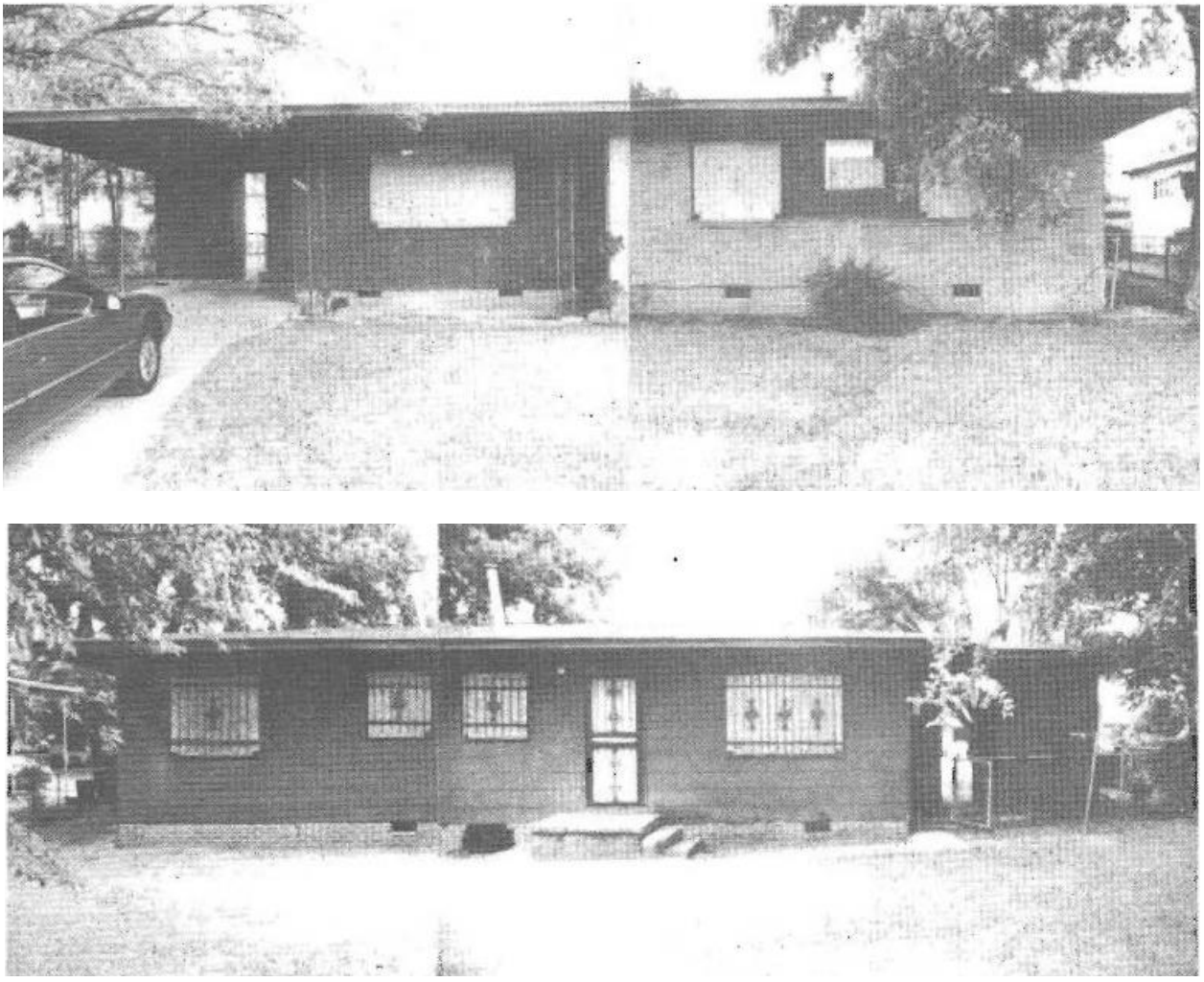


FIGURE 3–4. Photographs of the Evers home, south (front) façade (top) and north façade (lower), taken in 1994 (Source: WFT, "Medgar Evers Home Historic Structure Report," 1995).









FIGURE 3–5. Photographs of the Evers home taken in 1996, after the 1995 rehabilitation was complete and before the filming of *Ghosts of Mississippi.* Photographs show the living room looking southeast (top left), the dining room and built-in wood shelf (top right) and the south façade (lower) (source: WFT, "Medgar Evers Home Historic Structure Report," 1995).

Dec. 5, 2000 The house was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NR #00001459).

Nov. 5, 2005 Tougaloo College undertook a Conservation Assessment and an Architectural Conservation Assessment. The assessments documented conditions of the home and collections.

Oct. 2010 Tougaloo College commissioned an Interpretive Plan of Action, which documented the tours provided by Minnie Watson, evaluated the museum's programming, and made recommendations for interpretation and visitor experience.

2012-2013 Tougaloo College undertook a second major rehabilitation of the Medgar Evers Museum. WFT Architects was the architect of record. The project:

- Made major repairs to the foundation, including the construction of a trench drain in a concrete slab and the reconstruction of a large portion of the floor and structure. See the 2024 CLR for information on site work undertaken contemporaneously.
- Installed a new mechanical system.
- Carefully reopened the bullet hole in the living room and kitchen walls for interpretation.

2014 Architectural conservators EverGreene recreated the wall covering that once hung in the kitchen. The original wallpaper was removed shortly after the assassination, and the walls were painted for new tenants. EverGreene recreated the wallpaper based on the 1963 crime scene photo and additional research.[18]

Dec. 2016 The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL #100000791) by the Secretary of the Interior.

18 "Medgar Evers House," Evergreene Architectural Arts, accessed August 5, 2024, https://evergreene.com/projects/medgar-evers-house/.



FIGURE 3–6. Exhibit in Bedroom 3 opened by the Medgar Evers Museum in 1998. (Source: Luckett, 2010).

March 2019	The Dingell Act authorized the establishment of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument.
June 18, 2020	The National Park Service acquired the home by way of conveyance from Tougaloo College. [19]
Dec. 10, 2020	US Secretary of the Interior David L. Bernhardt announced the establishment of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument as the 423rd unit of the National Park System.[20]
Summer 2023	The NPS installed a temporary accessible path around the carport and a temporary ramp to the rear entry door. The NPS repaired water damage, replaced gypsum wallboard in Bedroom 3, and removed the exhibit in Bedroom 3.

19 "Trump Administration Establishes Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument," US Department of the Interior Press Release, December 10, 2020.

20 "Trump Administration Establishes Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument," 2010.

Chronology of Use

This chronology summarizes the uses of the home from its construction to the present. (See Chapter 2: *Historical Background and Context* for more contextual information on the history of the family, home, and site.)

Initial Design and Evers Home: 1956-1964

The Evers home was designed and built by local builder Leroy Burnett of Burnett-Gaston & Associates within the Elraine subdivision, a neighborhood under development by Winston J. Thompson, head of W.J. Thompson & Company.

In 1956, the Everses bought a lot on Guynes Street (now Margaret Walker Alexander Street), the site of their future home, which had not yet been built. At the time of purchase, the Everses were able to choose several design options, including the floor plan (based on one, two, or one and a half stories), door placement, and brick veneer locations. They selected a 900-square-foot, single-story home with three bedrooms. No original drawings or documentation of the home's construction have been found to date.

Myrlie Evers recalled in her 1967 memoir *For Us the Living* that she and her husband selected specific design options with security in mind because they knew their family was at risk of experiencing anti-Black violence, having moved to Jackson for Medgar Evers's job with the NAACP. The couple decided against a somewhat larger corner lot because of its exposure on multiple sides and its proximity to the main road. Rather than locating the entry door at the front façade, the Everses opted to place the door underneath the carport, enabling them to exit from the passenger side of a car and go straight into the house.

The design of the home and the neighborhood was typical of Ranch-style architecture in suburban subdivisions, featuring low, horizontal architecture and grassy front lawns.

Photos from their time in the home show that Medgar and Myrlie Evers furnished it with simple furniture, including a piano, and filled the shelves that divided the dining room and kitchen with books.

Tenant Period: 1965-1992

After leaving Jackson, Myrlie Evers, later Myrlie Evers-Williams, rented the house on Guynes Street to tenants. The Tenant Timeline found in Part 1-Chapter 2: *Historical Background and Context*, Section 3: *The Evers Home and the Elraine Subdivision Development* identifies renters for whom records could be found. One of these renters, Sandra McCall, was a family friend who lived in the home from 1981 to 1985 and collected rent on behalf of Myrlie Evers-Williams from the next tenant, Aaron Rollins.[21] McCall added bars to the windows during her residence. Between 1971 and 1982, trees and shrubs were removed from the front and side yards, including the upright shrubs along the open side of the carport and the roses below the bedroom windows.

Tougaloo College Ownership and the Medgar Evers Museum: 1993-2019

In February 1993, Myrlie Evers-Williams donated the house to Tougaloo College, a historically Black college, whose students and faculty had supported Medgar Evers's civil rights work.[22]

21 Sandra McCall interview, January 2023.
22 Jimmie Gates, "Tougaloo all ready to start Evers home," *Clarion-Ledger*, June 6, 1993.

This decision to change the home from a residential use to an institutional use was the first step towards operating the home as a formal historic site. It is worth noting that Myrlie Evers-Williams made this decision at a time when the state of Mississippi was reinvestigating Medgar Evers's 1963 assassination, which was largely the result of Myrlie Evers-Williams's persistence. This shared timing highlights the connection between the home and her ongoing civil rights work.

1995 Rehabilitation

Tougaloo College sought historical designation for the property and funds for its rehabilitation.[23] It received $200,000 in state bond funds (the equivalent of $420,000 in 2023) and began a rehabilitation project with the local architectural firm WFT Architects.[24] In 1994, Tougaloo commissioned a Historic Structure Report that included photography and a conditions assessment. The assessment noted significant water damage from the deteriorated roof, but minimal alterations to the historic house (Figure 3–4).[25] The rehabilitation took place in 1995, and Tougaloo College opened the home in 1996 as the Medgar Evers Museum, the state's first house museum dedicated to the civil rights movement.[26] The Museum's mission statement was:

> The Medgar Evers Museum is a mechanism for learning and teaching, to make known and to keep alive the rich heritage and legacy left by Medgar Wiley Evers, Field Secretary for the Mississippi Charter of NAACP.[27]

Minnie Watson served as the museum's first curator, a role she held until the home was conveyed to the NPS in 2019. Watson managed the museum, curated its collection, and provided tours for over twenty-five years as the only full-time employee, working with a minimal budget.[28]

The 1995 rehabilitation coincided with growing national interest in the 1963 assassination of Medgar Evers and the renewed prosecution of his murderer, Byron de la Beckwith. Capitalizing on this interest, Castle Rock Entertainment adapted a book about the assassination and trial into the film *Ghosts of Mississippi*, released in December 1996.[29]

Castle Rock used the recently rehabilitated Evers home as a backdrop from which to tell the story of the assassination and the series of trials that followed. Castle Rock shot scenes taking place in the 1960s, including the opening scene that depicts the assassination of Medgar Evers, using the rehabilitated home as the setting.[30]

The film crew also shot scenes set in the 1990s, telling the story of state prosecutor Bobby DeLaughter's retrial of Byron de la Beckwith. For those scenes, Castle Rock altered the rehabilitated home to make it look aged and abandoned. They let the grass grow long and painted it brown, repainted the home's exterior a darker shade of green, and covered the windows with plywood.[31]

After altering the home to make it look abandoned, Castle Rock returned the home to its re-

23 Gates, 1993.
24 Gates, 1993; CPI Inflation Calculator, US Bureau of Labor Statistics.
25 WFT, "Medgar Evers Home Historic Structure Report," 1995.
26 Jennifer V.O. Baughn, "Medgar Evers Home Museum," Society of Architectural Historians, SAH Archipedia, accessed August 2024, https://sah-archipedia.org/buildings/MS-01-049-0003.
27 Paine, "Medgar Evers Museum Conservation Assessment," 2005.
28 Paine, "Medgar Evers Museum Conservation Assessment," 2005.
29 Harvard Sitkoff, "Review of Ghosts of Mississippi," *Journal of American History* 84, Issue 3 (December 1997): 1177–1178.
30 Billy Watkins, "Scene of the Crime," *Clarion-Ledger,* May 10, 1996, Subject File Folder, Mississippi Department of Archives and History; Lawson Newman interview, November 9, 2023.
31 Watkins, "Scene of the Crime," 1996; Lawson Newman, interview November 9, 2023.



FIGURE 3–7. (Upper) Photograph of the Evers home, south façade, taken in 2000. (Lower) Photograph of the Evers home, north façade, taken in 2000 (source: Oakley, "Medgar Evers House," National Register Form, 2000).

habilitated state, repainting its exterior a brighter green and restoring the surrounding planting, except for a live oak tree that was moved and replanted on the Missouri Street lots.

Castle Rock Entertainment furnished the home while filming and donated the furniture to Tougaloo College and the Medgar Evers Museum after filming was completed. According to the 2005 Conservation Assessment, the museum at the time had a small number of original objects. The remaining 750 period objects, including most of the furniture, were set pieces and props donated to the museum.[32]

Castle Rock Entertainment also altered the home's landscape to accommodate filming on the property. The film crew lifted the driveway out in pieces, then reset the driveway, and transplanted the live oak that Medgar Evers planted as a gift to Myrlie Evers to the Missouri Street Lots.[33]

Museum Operations

In 1998, the Medgar Evers Museum opened an exhibit in Bedroom 3, illustrating highlights from Medgar Evers's life and work (Figure 3–6).[34]

In November 2005, Tougaloo College undertook a Conservation Assessment and an Architectural Conservation Assessment. The assessments documented conditions of the home and collections and made recommendations for improvements.

In October 2010, Tougaloo College commissioned an Interpretive Plan of Action, which documented the tours provided by Watson, evaluated the museum's programming, and made recommendations for interpretation and visitor experience.

2013 Rehabilitation

Starting around 2010, Tougaloo College undertook a second major rehabilitation, again working with WFT Architects. The house and site had experienced regular standing water, especially in the crawl space, which led to rotting floor boards. This rehabilitation made major repairs to the home's foundation and flooring. It replaced the entire flooring system, including the drop sill around the perimeter wall and floor joists. It infilled and paved the floor of the crawl space, installed a trench drain and sump pump, and replaced the floors. It also replaced the mechanical systems and carefully reopened the bullet hole in the living room and kitchen walls for interpretation.[35]

The rehabilitation was completed before the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Megdar Evers's assassination. The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Institute sponsored a number of events from June 9 to 12, 2013, including events at the Medgar Evers Museum.[36]

Surrounding Disinvestment

While Tougaloo College continued to operate and maintain the home as a museum, the city of Jackson's wealth depleted and infrastructure deteriorated (see Chapter 2: *Historical Background and Context* for information on White flight.)

With a limited tax base and minimal support from the state, Jackson experienced major failures in

32 Paine, "Medgar Evers Museum Conservation Assessment," 2005.
33 Watkins, "Scene of the Crime," 1996; Lawson Newman interview, November 9, 2023.
34 Luckett, "Interpretive Plan of Action for Medgar Evers Home/Museum," 2010, 3.
35 Lawson Newman interview, November 9, 2023.
36 "50th Anniversary Commemoration" Medgar and Myrlie Evers Institute; Debbie Elliott, "Fifty Years After Medgar Evers's Killing, The Scars Remain," *NPR,* June 5, 2013.

infrastructure and continues to face deteriorating roads, poor housing quality, and frequent contamination of the city water system.[37] These city-level challenges have impacted the maintenance and operation of the home.

National Park Service: 2019-Present

The John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019 authorized the Department of the Interior to establish the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument. On December 10, 2020, the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument was established and became a unit of the NPS. On the occasion of the announcement, US Secretary of the Interior David L. Bernhardt said:

> It is an honor to establish the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument. Medgar Evers was a true American hero who fought the Nazis at Normandy and fought racism with his wife Myrlie on the home front. It is our solemn responsibility as caretakers of America's national treasures to tell the whole story of America's heritage for the benefit of present and future generations. The life works of these great Americans helped shape our nation in making the United States a more perfect union, and for that, we should all be grateful.[38]

The home continues to serve as a place of honor and memory. A memorial event is held annually on June 12, honoring the life of Medgar Evers. On June 12, 2021, the event also honored Medgar Evers's brother Charles Evers, a civil rights leader and Mississippi politician who died July 22, 2020 (Figure 3–8).[39]

In June 2023, the NPS hosted commemorative events for the 60th anniversary of Medgar Evers's assassination. In preparation for the events, the NPS:

- Provided a path and a temporary wood ramp and stair to the rear door (north façade). See 2024 CLR for information on site work.
- Temporarily replaced the exterior wood door on the north façade to the kitchen.
- Removed the water-damaged drywall/gypsum board at Bedroom 3's exterior wall, installed insulation, and replaced the drywall/gypsum board. Exterior treatment was not undertaken.

37 WLBT Staff, "City-wide boil water notice issued in Jackson; officials apologize for 'terrible' timing," *WLBT,* December 25, 2022; Anna Wolfe, "Study: Bumpy roads cost Jackson and Mississippi drivers big bucks," *Mississippi Clarion Ledger.*

38 "Trump Administration Establishes Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument," 2010.

39 Vickie King, "Medgar Evers and Charles Evers honored by family, politicians" *Mississippi Today*, June 12, 2021.

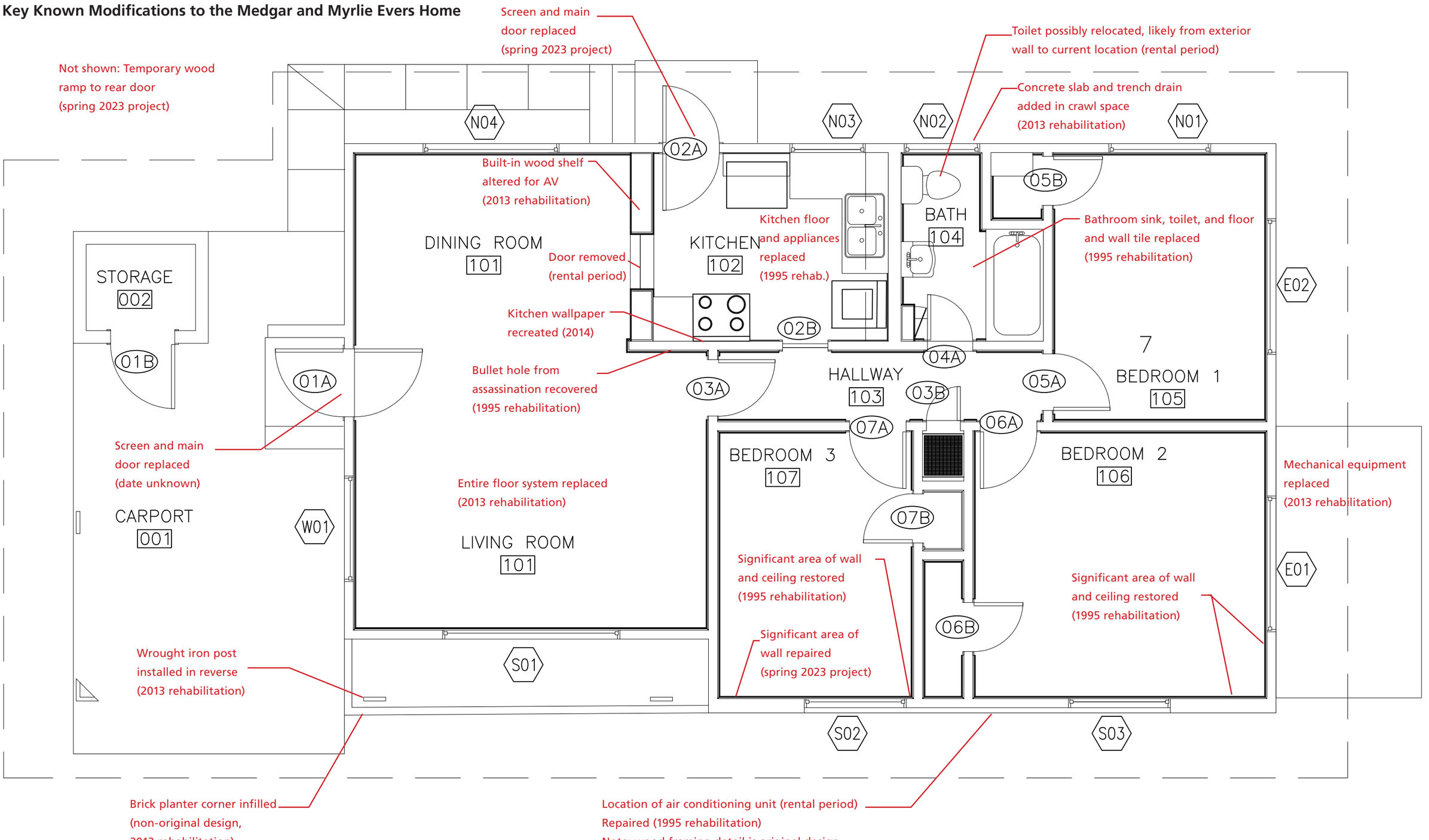






FIGURE 3–8. (Top left and right) Reena Evers-Everette speaks in the driveway of her childhood home; (lower) author and activist James Meredith attends the 2020 memorial event (credit: Vickie D. King/*Mississippi Today*; source: "Mississippi politician, civil-rights figure Charles Evers dies," *Arkansas Democrat Gazette* (Little Rock, AR), July 22, 2020).

Key Known Modifications to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home



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Chapter 4: Physical Description and Condition Assessment

Introduction

This chapter provides a physical description of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home and an assessment of the existing conditions observed on site in November 2022. It identifies areas and types of deterioration exhibited by the building's architectural exterior and interior features. A condition rating and deficiency rating is provided for each element. Photographs of elements and their conditions, as well as a bulleted description of the observed conditions, are provided. This chapter does not include mechanical, electrical, plumbing, structural, fire protection, life safety, or security conditions. It does provide a summary of conditions of those buildings systems as documented in the 2021 Condition Assessment, completed by Lord Aeck Sargent (see Appendix). See the 2024 Cultural Landscape Report for a physical description and conditions assessment of the site.

Physical Description

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home is located at 2332 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive in Jackson, Mississippi. Plans and elevations are based on the NPS-provided CAD drawings, which were developed based on a laser scan taken in November 2020 for the 2021 Condition Assessment. Please reference these drawings for room, door, and window numbers. The team has modified the CAD drawings to reflect existing conditions based on field observations. However, a complete field survey to confirm all dimensions was not performed. This architectural description draws on the 2000 National Register of Historic Places nomination form, written by Deborah Wise Oakley of the Mississippi Department of Archives & History (MDAH), and the 2015 National Historic Landmark nomination form, written by Jennifer V.O. Baughn of MDAH, as well as observations in the field.

Unless otherwise noted, all photographs were taken by the project team in November 2022.

Exterior

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House is a one-story wood-frame Ranch-style building facing south onto Margaret Walker Alexander Street (formerly Guynes Street). The home has a brick pier and brick wall (pier and curtain) foundation, enclosing a roughly two-foot-tall crawl space. The brick curtains between the piers on the north and east façades of the house are likely not original, although the date of their addition is unknown. The low-pitched hipped roof and rectangular form of the house highlight its low horizontal lines. The roof consists of built-up gravel with a metal furnace vent piercing the right side at the ridge. Eaves with exposed rafters extend three feet out from the walls. An undercut single-vehicle carport with original concrete deck fills the west end and contains a storage room at the back. A concrete driveway leads from the street to the carport. Four ornamental wrought-iron posts span the west half of the south façade; the two westernmost posts support the carport roof structure.

Multiple materials cover the exterior walls. The south (front) façade exhibits a combination of yellow Roman brick veneer and board-and-batten vertical siding, while asbestos-cement shingle siding covers the east and north (rear) façades. The board-and-batten siding on the south façade wraps around to the west façade wall, ending at the projecting Roman brick wall, which articulates the main entrance under the carport. North of the projecting Roman brick wall, the asbestos-cement shingle siding resumes along the west façade. Asbestos-cement shingle siding also covers the storage closet under the carport.

The south façade displays three steel-framed windows. To the east are two symmetrically placed twelve-light casement-and-fixed tripartite windows flanking a board-and-batten section with a centrally located decorative wood panel. These are bedroom windows. Toward the west end of the house, tucked under the main roof, is a tripartite picture window composed of a fixed middle pane flanked by four-light casement sidelights. This window provides light to the living room.



FIGURE 4–1. View of the home from the street, looking northeast (source: BBB, 2022).

The west façade shelters a low brick-and-concrete stair and landing that leads to the primary entrance under the carport. It has a brick foundation with a single concrete step and concrete landing. The main entry door has a simple wood frame and a flat wood door and screen door. Directly to the right (south) of the door is a non-original metal mailbox and a small interpretive sign about the assassination of Medgar Evers. High on the wall, between the door and the southwest corner of the house, is a six-light casement-and-fixed steel tripartite window. A bronze plaque noting the property's National Historic Landmark status is attached at the southwest corner. A single light fixture with one socket and a globe is attached to the ceiling above the landing. The carport ceiling consists of gypsum board panels with visible seams. To the left



FIGURE 4–2. Main, south façade looking north (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 4–3. Rear, north façade looking southwest (source: BBB, 2022).

(north) of the main entry, a Roman brick wing wall projects to the edge of the landing. This wall, working in concert with the rectangular storage room in the carport's northwest corner, funnels foot traffic through a narrow passage to the private backyard. An air-conditioning unit pierces the west façade wall behind the wing wall.

The north (rear) façade has four windows and a door atop a brick and concrete stair and landing that provides access to the kitchen. It features a brick foundation and has two concrete steps leading to the concrete landing. The rear door has a simple wood frame and a flat wood door and screen door. Placed at each end of the rear wall are twelve-light steel casement-and-fixed tripartite windows. The east window lights a bedroom, and the west window lights the dining room. Two six-light casement-and-fixed windows are centrally located to the east of the rear door, one for the bathroom and one for the kitchen.

In spring of 2023, the NPS added an accessible entry path to the home in preparation for the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the assassination of Medgar Evers. The NPS installed a brick path and wooden ramp leading from the path up to the rear door. The ramp is temporary.





FIGURE 4–4. East façade looking southwest (top) and west façade at the carport, looking northeast from the street (lower) (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 4–5. The NPS added this wood ramp in spring 2023 (source: ERO, 2023).

Two eight-light casement-and-fixed steel tripartite windows are evenly spaced on the upper portion of the east façade. A newer air-conditioning unit and utility equipment are also located along this façade.

Interior

The interior plan is typical of a Ranch-style house of the period. The main door opens directly into the living room and dining room area, which fills the western third of the house. The living room is at the front (south) of the open space, while the dining room is at the back (north). A wing wall extends from the hallway to create visual separation between the two areas. Stained pine built-in cabinetry divides the dining room and the kitchen. The cabinetry consists of a pass-through counter on the left, a door opening (missing its original swinging door) in the middle, and a book/display case on the right. None of this cabinetry reaches the ceiling, leaving an open area at the top.

The small kitchen has drywall walls with mounted cabinets and tile board backsplashes. Wallpaper (recreated) lines the wall behind the range. The kitchen has a non-original vinyl tile floor and features a range with stove and oven on the south wall with a small adjacent countertop. Opposite the range stands the refrigerator, placed between a countertop and the rear entry door. An L-shaped line of cabinets and countertops extends along the east and north walls. A washing machine stands next to the sink area on the east wall. Countertops are finished in original green plastic laminate with metal edges, and the original porcelain sink remains with a replacement faucet. All appliances are period appropriate but are not original to the house.



FIGURE 4–6. Wood shelving divider between the dining room and living room, looking northeast (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 4–7. Kitchen looking east (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 4–8. Kitchen looking southwest (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 4–9. Hallway looking east (source: BBB, 2022).

A second doorway on the south wall of the kitchen provides access to the hallway; the original swinging door is missing here as well. The hallway leads to three bedrooms and one bathroom. A hallway closet holds HVAC equipment. All oak hardwood floors throughout are non-original tongue-and-groove, which were repaired in the 1995 rehabilitation project and completely replaced in the 2013 rehabilitation project. The walls and ceiling feature original textured gypsum board. Shellacked Flush, hollow-core doors are finished with Colonial Revival-type door cas-



FIGURE 4–10. Bedroom 2, view to southeast (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 4–11. Bedroom 2, view to west (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 4–12. Bedroom 3, view to southwest (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 4–13. Bedroom 1, view to northeast (source: BBB, 2022).





FIGURE 4–14. Living and dining room, looking northeast (left) and looking northwest (right) (source: BBB, 2022).

ings. Some original door hardware remains, and some has been replaced with replica hardware over the years. Window openings are uniform, consisting of wood stools and jambs, original steel windows, and original casement window operators. Brackets that once held interior screens are intact, but no original screens remain.

Each bedroom contains a small closet with a shellacked hollow-core door and the same hardwood flooring seen throughout the house.

The bathroom contains a bathtub, sink, toilet, gas wall heater, a mirrored medicine cabinet, and a built-in cabinet behind the door. The sink and toilet are not original. It is speculated that the toilet was relocated to its current position, likely from a position along the exterior wall, sometime during the rental period.[1]

Flooring consists of non-original vinyl tile that continues the original white, dusty blue, and pink pattern. A period-appropriate frosted glass light fixture is placed above the mirrored medicine cabinet, but it is unknown whether it is original.

Yard/Landscape

See the 2024 CLR for a full description of the yard and landscape.

The paved street runs parallel to the house and lacks sidewalks, though there are solid concrete curbs present. A concrete driveway leads to the

1 Lawson Newman, interview by Lucy Moore by phone, Jackson, MS, November 9, 2023. Newman reported that he observed an original plumbing opening for the toilet on the exterior wall of the crawl space. This, and the tile patching on the exterior wall, suggested that the toilet had been relocated to its existing location. The rehabilitation plan was to relocate the toilet to the exterior wall. However, this was not done, and the toilet remains located on the west wall.





FIGURE 4–15. Bathroom looking north (left) and southwest (right) (source: BBB, 2022).

carport and front entrance. It has major cracks, exhibits signs of previous repairs, and was reset in the 1990s. The driveway under the carport is original and was extant during Medgar Evers's assassination. It exhibits a few scattered rust spots.

A shallow planter constructed of Roman bricks stacked three courses high is located under the main roof below the south façade picture window on the house's left side. Grass covers the yard and meets the house at the foundation.

Chain-link fencing encloses the backyard on all sides except the east. The backyard is accessed through two chain link gates, one original and one non-original. The original chain-link gate is located across the back of the carport. In features a cocker spaniel finial along its top rail in honor of the Evers family dog. An L-shaped concrete pathway leads from the gate to a brick and concrete landing with two steps (first step almost even with the concrete path) at the kitchen door on the north façade. A new chain-link double gate is located to the west of the carport, providing access to the backyard. It is wide enough for maintenance equipment to enter and provides access to the temporary accessible ramp leading to the kitchen door on the north façade.

Shrubs line the chain-link fence, separating the property from the neighboring property to the west. On the east side of the property, a row of shrubs creates a natural fence line. Toward the western side of the backyard stand two original (though relocated) metal "T" bars for a former clothesline, but the wires to hold the clothes are missing. A security camera attached to a metal pole stands in the northeast corner of the yard. A similar camera is placed east of where the driveway meets the street.



FIGURE 4–16. Southwest oblique and yard of home (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 4–18. Carport and non-original path and double gate to backyard at west end of the property (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 4–17. Rear (north) façade of the home, showing the two gates and the concrete pathway and brick and concrete landing at the kitchen door; T-bar in foreground. Note a temporary accessible ramp was installed after this photo was taken (source: BBB, 2022).

Existing Conditions Summary

Overall, the house and foundation appear to be in good condition with most of the architectural fabric dating to the period of significance. Mold, accessibility, and live load capacity are the biggest challenges facing the property and its use as an interpretive site.

As with most historic structures, water and moisture are an ongoing issue, particularly at the exterior wall in Bedroom 3, where the exterior Roman brick veneer is pulling way from the façade, allowing water to enter the wall cavity. Water remains a challenge in the crawl space, and the 2021 Condition Assessment by Lord Aeck Sargent noted mold detection.

Entryways and interior doorways are not compliant with the standard clearance requirements of the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA). However, alternative accessibility options are allowed to be negotiated with the Mississippi State Historic Preservation Office. The size of the house, roughly 900 square feet on the interior with another 240 square feet under the carport, makes it challenging to accommodate larger scale interpretation efforts.

To address the need to accommodate a greater live load, new beams are needed in the crawl space to support the floor.

This chapter provides a summary of existing conditions, followed by detailed descriptions and photos formated in a matrix template of the observed architectural conditions, organized by building feature and material.

Unless otherwise noted, all photographs were taken by the project team in November 2022.

Architectural

Foundation and Crawl Space:
The home has a brick pier and brick wall (pier and curtain) foundation that is generally in good condition. It encloses a roughly two-foot-tall crawl space. The underside of the floor above is lined with fiberglass batt insulation. Duct work is suspended from the floor above. The crawl space was dry during the site visit, but prior reports note that it takes on water when the site floods. The batt insulation in the crawl space provides insulation to the floors above, but as long as the crawl space remains susceptible to water infiltration, the insulation can also harbor mold.

Specific issues include:

- Ductwork in the crawl space. The ducts block access to the crawl space and get wet when the site floods. In isolated areas, the ducts are not sealed. This and the surrounding insulation are likely the source of mold in the home. The duct insulation is susceptible to damage and waterlogging when the crawl space floods, creating an environment that encourages mold growth.

- As noted in the 2021 Condition Assessment, the existing floor framing is sized to support a live load of 80-100 pounds per square foot (psf), varying by location within the home. According to the International Building Code, use of the structure as a museum and interpretive space should require a floor structure that uniformly supports a minimum of 100 psf.

Exterior:
The home exterior is generally in good to fair condition. The roof is in fair condition and missing some gravel. The exterior walls are generally in good condition with the notable exception of the south façade.

Specific issues include:

- The building envelope is typical of homes built in the 1950s and is neither as well-insulated nor as tight as a building constructed under modern codes would be. Although the International Building Codes allow these envelope conditions to remain because of the historic nature of the property, this has specific implications for interior environmental conditions, which cannot be controlled to the same standards as a modern museum.

- Roof gravel is spread thin and is missing in some locations. Gravel from the roof was found scattered in multiple locations on the ground and on HVAC equipment around the house.

- Small areas of mildew are visible on the exterior siding, windows, and doors.

- The Roman brick veneer wall at the south façade is detaching and bowing away from the house (towards the street) between the soffit and the windows. Failed repairs are visible between the brick veneer and the wall system behind it. Flashing at the brick veneer below the windows is bent and slopes towards the house. Both are likely areas of water penetration and sources of moisture.

- None of the windows could be opened, either due to corrosion or because they have been painted shut.

- Several attic vents at the eaves are filled with foam block, which obstructs ventilation. In some cases there are large gaps between the opening in the fascia panel and the foam. These gaps could allow water and rodents to enter the attic.

Interior:
The home's interior is generally in good condition, with the exception of evidence of moisture penetration in Bedroom 3. The ceilings are in good condition but have varied texture and non-original lighting. The interior walls and base molding are in good condition. The floors are mostly in good condition, but some areas exhibit cupping.

Specific issues include:

- The home is not ABA compliant for public use. The entry doors are accessed via stairs, a number of interior doors are too narrow, and the hallway and bathroom do not provide adequate turning clearance.

- An airborn mold spore analysis was conducted as part of the 2021 Condition Assessment and found a notable presence of mold in the house. While onsite, Park staff reported that many interpretive elements were removed from the house in 2022 because they were contaminated with mold.

- As of November 2022, the south wall in Bedroom 3 shows signs of significant water damage, likely related to the detaching and bowing brick veneer on the south façade.

Building Systems

The 2021 Condition Assessment documented the conditions of the home's building systems. What follows is a summary of the findings, paired with the architectural team's observations from the November 2022 site visit.

Mechanical:
The mechanical system is relatively new but oversized.

Isolated areas of ductwork in the crawl space are not sealed and leaking. The crawl space shows signs that water has pooled there in the past, but the ductwork insulation does not appear to show signs of having been flooded.

Electrical:
The electrical system is recently updated and appears adequate to the building's use as an interpretive site.

Plumbing:
The plumbing system is original and functional. The NPS noted the water is not potable.

Structural:
The roof sheathing and framing are generally in good condition. The structural report within the 2021 Condition Assessment noted a need to evaluate the beam over the dining room to confirm its strength.

The wall structure is generally in good condition. The structural report notes that the wall framing at the exterior wall of Bedroom 3 (south façade) should be evaluated when repair work is undertaken in that location.

The floor and floor structure underwent a major renovation in 2013 and are now in good condition. There are areas where the floor slightly slopes and is uneven. This condition has likely existed since remedial work in 2013 and does not pose a structural risk at this time. The 2021 Condition Assessment recommends that a mid-span support be added to increase stiffness and reduce the load at the ends of the joists with the notch bearing on the center beam. The existing floor framing is sized to support a live load of 80-100 pounds per square foot (psf), varying by location within the home. According to the International Building Code, use of a structure as a museum and interpretive space requires a floor structure that uniformly supports a minimum of 100 psf.

Fire Protection:
As of November 2022, the NPS plans to modify the existing fire protection system to switch from a wet pipe system to a wet pipe with antifreeze system. This will not require any new piping in the house.

The Jackson fire department will provide a new hose connection at the street.

Hazardous Materials:
All work must take into account potential hazardous materials. See the Regulated Materials Survey in the 2021 Condition Assessment by Lord Aeck Sargent.

Security:
The home has an existing functional security system as well as exterior and interior security cameras.

The home has security system contact strips on windows, but it is not known if they are functional or tied into the existing security system.

The NPS installed a perimeter fence at the backyard.

The NPS would like to incorporate a small number of additional cameras on the exterior and interior.

Accessibility:
The home has a number of accessibility challenges. There is no accessible route from the driveway into the home because of level changes within the concrete driveway and a short set of steps at the main entry door.

Once inside, an accessible path does not exist past the living and dining rooms. Accessibility considerations should be integrated into both treatment and interpretation planning.

Specific issues include:

- Both entries have stairs with landings and a 5" to 6" step up from the landings into the home.

- An accessible route requires a 36"-wide continuous clearance and permits a narrowing for two feet to a minimum of 32".

- The opening between the carport landing and the storage closet is less than 32".

- Entry doors: The carport entry door is 36" wide and meets ABA Accessibility Standards. The rear exterior door is 32", which means it only provides a 30"-31" clear opening, and does not meet ABA Accessibility Standards.

- Interior doorways: The doorway from the dining area into the kitchen and the doors to the hallway and bedrooms are all 30" wide. The opening from the hallway to the kitchen and the door into the bathroom are 24" wide.

- The hallway is just over 36" wide. Therefore, no obstructions should be placed within the hallway or along hallway walls below 36" in height.

- In new construction, doors are required to have maneuvering clearances: clear areas to approach, open, and close doors. Even if the interior doors met the 32" clear opening width, none of the interior doors provides adequate maneuvering space on either side. The doors to Bedrooms 2 and 3 pose the greatest barriers to accessibility; any modification at these locations is technically infeasible without negatively impacting the building's character. Operationally, all interior doors will be left open, but even as "doorways without doors," they do not meet the approach clearances required for full code compliance. Employees will have to use their judgment when providing visitor access to spaces beyond the Living and Dining Rooms. In open positions, the door from the Living Room to the Hallway and the door from the Hallway to Bedroom 1 provide similar clearances; consideration should be given to reserving a clear turn-around area inside Bedroom 1 to allow visitors with mobility devices that comfortably fit through the Hallway doorways to reverse direction.

- In new construction, accessible door hardware allows for easy one-handed operation. Door knobs, the hardware type found throughout the house, are not an accessible hardware design. However, this may not be an operational concern as visitors will be accompanied by staff and would not need to operate the doors. Employees operate doors minimally.

ABA Accessibility Standards provide an exception for historic structures unable to achieve full compliance with the standards stating: "Where the State Historic Preservation Officer or Adviso-

ry Council on Historic Preservation determines that compliance with the requirements for accessible routes, entrances, or toilet facilities would threaten or destroy the historic significance of the building or facility, the exception for alterations to qualified historic buildings or facilities for that element shall be permitted to apply."[2]

Building Envelope & Performance Objectives

The building envelope is typical of 1950s residential construction. It does not provide a continuous air or moisture barrier, which would be required for close temperature and air regulation, and its windows are single pane. The building envelope could be modified if improved energy efficiency and tighter temperature and humidity control are determined to be priorities or requirements of the building use. Envelope improvements work together, so any treatments should be considered holistically.

Existing Envelope:
The existing wall system is composed, from exterior to interior, of:

- Asbestos-cement shingle siding, wood board and batten siding, or brick veneer
- A layer of building felt
- 1x8 diagonal wood sheathing
- 2x4 wall studs infilled with batt insulation
- 3/8" textured gypsum board

The existing ceilings and floors also have insulation inserted between wood joists; batt insulation is used at the floor joists and loose insulation is used at the ceiling joists. The steel-framed windows have single-pane glazing.

2 "Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards: F202.5 Alterations to Qualified Historic Buildings and Facilities," U.S. Access Board, accessed August 2024, https://www.access-board.gov/aba/.

Condition Assessment Standard Definitions

On the following pages, condition matrices provide detailed information for various site, exterior, and interior elements. The exterior and interior elements are arranged according to the ASTM Uniformat II classification for building elements. The condition assessment definitions used in this HSR are based on those outlined in the NPS Park Facility Management Division (PFMD's) Asset Management Program (AMP), the Facility Management Software System (FMSS), and Focused Condition Assessments (FCAs).

Qualitative Condition Ratings:

GOOD
Routine maintenance should be sufficient to maintain the current condition; and/or a cyclic maintenance or repair/rehabilitation project is not specially required to maintain the current condition or correct deficiencies.

FAIR
The feature generally provides an adequate level of service to operations; but the feature requires more than routine maintenance; and cyclic maintenance or repair/rehabilitation work may be required in the future.

POOR
Feature requires immediate attention; routine maintenance is needed at a much higher level of effort to meet significant safety and legal requirements; cyclic maintenance should be scheduled for the current year; and/or a special repair/rehabilitation project should be requested consistent with park requirements, priorities, and long-term management objectives.

Maintenance Deficiency/Priority Ratings (10-Year Rating Period):

MINOR – Long-Term Priority
This rating indicates standard preventative maintenance priorities and preservation methods have not been followed; or there is a reduced life expectancy of affected adjacent or related materials and/or systems within five to ten years and beyond; or there is a condition with a long-term impact within five to ten years and beyond.

SERIOUS – Immediate/Short-Term Priority
This rating defines a deteriorated condition that if not corrected within one to five years will result in the failure of the feature; or a threat to the health and/or safety of the user may occur within one to five years if the ongoing deterioration is not corrected; or there is ongoing deterioration of adjacent or related materials and/or features as a result of the feature's deficiency.

CRITICAL – Immediate Priority
This rating defines an advanced state of deterioration which has resulted in the failure of a feature or will result in the failure of a feature if not corrected within one year; or there is accelerated deterioration of adjacent or related materials or systems as a result of the feature's deficiencies if not corrected within one year; or there is immediate threat to the health and/or safety of the user; or there is a failure to meet a legislated requirement.

NOT RATED
The feature was not rated as it was not extant at the time of the report or is non-contributing, removed, and/or not planned to be replaced.

Site

Driveway	
Description:	Concrete slab on grade.
Integrity:	Date of existing driveway is unknown. However, it is likely non-original and dates to the tenant period. See photos for driveway design in 1963, in which it stops short several feet from the road, and in 1996, in which it connects to the street and curb.
Condition Rating:	Fair
Condition Description:	• Significant deterioration. » Significant cracking dividing the driveway into eight pieces. The 2021 Condition Assessment noted that the cracking dates back to the 1990s, likely caused by roots of the oak tree, which was relocated to the Missouri Street Lots by the *Ghosts of Mississippi* film crew. The film crew also removed the driveway in pieces and reset it after filming. » Cracks have been repaired with a fill material that visually contrasts with the concrete. Fill material is failing. » Finish worn down to exposed aggregate. • Step from the driveway to carport ranges from 7/8" to 1-3/4".
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–19. Top: Driveway as seen in 1962 (left); June of 1963 (center); and 1996 (right) (sources: Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument; Library of Congress; Medgar Evers Home HSR, 1996). Lower: Driveway looking west (left); step in transition from driveway to carport (upper right); view of driveway looking south from the carport (lower right) (source: BBB, 2022).

Carport Concrete	
Description:	Concrete slab on grade; slopes slightly from back of carport to driveway and away from the house to the side yard.
Integrity:	Original design; likely original material.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	• Minor cracks. • Rust staining. • Isolated biological growth between house and storage closet. • Paint drips near base of metal carport posts. • Isolated areas of exposed aggregate.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–20. (Left) Rust staining, paint, and a minor crack visible at the concrete slab near the carport posts. (Upper right) Carport concrete floor slab. (Lower right) Staining and a small area of exposed aggregate visible near the carport closet (source: BBB, 2022).

Slab on Grade - Rear sidewalk	
Description:	Concrete slab at rear sidewalk; slopes away from house; walkway is 23-1/2" wide.
Integrity:	Original design; likely original material.
Condition Rating:	Fair
Condition Description:	• Minor cracks. • Biological growth.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–21. Rear sidewalk concrete slab (source: BBB, 2022).

Slab on Grade - At HVAC and Sump Pump	
Description:	Concrete slab at east façade for HVAC and sump pump.
Integrity:	Non-original slab.
Condition Rating:	Fair
Condition Description:	• Biological growth. • Lots of roof gravel on slab, HVAC unit, and duct work.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–22. (Left) Crack in concrete slab at HVAC unit. (Right) Roof gravel on slab (source: BBB, 2022).

Decorative Roman Brick - Planter	
Description:	Yellow, textured Roman brick with light mortar.
Integrity:	Partially original design; non-original brick at planter (reconstructed in 2013). The reconstructed planter has bricks at uniform height around the entire planter. Photos from the period of significance show the bricks stepping down at the corner by the driveway. See Part 2 - Chapter 9: *Recommendations for Treatment*.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	• Deteriorated mortar. • Failed mortar repairs.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–23. (Top left) Roman brick planter viewed from the driveway looking northeast and (lower) the lawn looking north (source: BBB, 2022).

Stair and Landing at Carport Entry Door	
Description:	Concrete landing and step on red brick foundation.
Integrity:	Original design; mostly original material.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	• Spalling at edge and corners of concrete. • Concrete spatter on brick. • Open joints between brick wing wall and landing, but covered so not exposed to rain. • Level, no movement.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor
Notes	Operationally, in order to maintain the carport as a sacred space, this doorway is not regularly used. For the planned use of the building, this entrance is not required as a means of egress.



FIGURE 4–24. (Left) Spalling at corner. (Right) Concrete and brick stair and landing at carport entry door (source: BBB, 2022).

Stair and Landing at Rear Door	
Description:	Concrete landing with two steps on red brick foundation; 18-1/2"above adjacent grade.
Integrity:	Original design; mostly original material.
Condition Rating:	Fair
Condition Description:	• Exposed aggregate. • Horizontal crack at top riser across entire length of landing. Failed crack repair. • Spalling at edge of concrete. • Biological growth.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor
Notes	To meet current code requirements for egress paths, the stairs and landing would require a hand rail. Stairs and landing do not require a guardrail as they are less than 30" above adjacent grade. The steps and landing are currently covered by temporary accessibility ramp.



FIGURE 4–25. (Clockwise from upper left) 1) Rear entry door top step/surface of landing. 2) Horizontal crack at top riser. 3) Siding meets top of the concrete landing. View at end of the top step. 4) Spalling surface at end of horizontal crack (source: BBB, 2022).

Substructure

Brick Foundation	
Description:	Brick piers and brick curtain wall with cast iron brick vents. Brick and mortar in piers are a different color than those in the curtain wall.
Integrity:	Brick piers are original. Based on physical conditions and historic photos of other houses in the neighborhood, it is likely that the brick curtains on the north and east façades were later additions (date unknown).
Condition Rating:	Good - the material is in good condition. Controlling moisture is a challenge.
Condition Description:	• Significant biological growth. • Limited number of cracked bricks. • Variety of mortar types. May have been repointed with Portland cement mortar mix. • Bricks at brick curtain wall are sloppily (over) pointed. • Paint and mortar spatter.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–26. (Left) Red brick piers and curtain wall with cast iron brick vents can be seen at the north façade. (Right) Brick and mortar at the brick piers are a different color and appearance than the curtain wall. Biological growth is visible on this brick on the north façade (source: BBB, 2022).

Crawl space & Floor Structure	
Description:	The crawl space features: • Exposed floor structure above: 2x8 and 2x10 joists, 2x10 central and rim beams, and 1x diagonal board floor sheathing. • Batt insulation between joists. Roughly 26" clear between the floor and face of fiberglass batt insulation. • Poured concrete floor and trench drain. • Mechanical ducts, roughly 24" tall (including insulation). • Two condensate lines drain to the trench drain in crawl space (see Appendix D: Structural Report by Palmer Engineering Company in the 2021 Condition Assessment). • Access door is at east façade; opening is roughly 15" tall and 30" wide.
Integrity:	Floor structure was largely replaced in 2013.
Condition Rating:	Poor
Condition Description:	• Flooding reported. Dry during visit; signs of past water pooling. • Non-original fiberglass batt insulation (and duct insulation) is susceptible to water infiltration and can also harbor mold. • Leaking ducts. 24" ducts in 26" clear space block access to west end of house. • Signs of termite damage - inactive. • The current floor structure is sized to support a live load of 80-100 psf, varying by location. According to the International Building Code, buildings serving as museums are required to uniformly support a live load of 100 psf.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Critical



FIGURE 4–27. Crawl space viewed from opening in the brick foundation at the east façade, looking at the brick foundation at the south façade (source: BBB, 2022).

Exterior

Asbestos-Cement Shingle Siding	
Description:	The siding consists of: • Shingles are 24" wide with an 11-1/2" exposure, vertical striated texture, and square bottom edges. Building corners are finished with painted metal trim. • Shingles are attached through building felt into wood sheathing; wall framed using 2x4 studs. • Typical exterior finish at west, north, and east façades and storage closet.
Integrity:	Shingles are mostly original. Some asbestos-containing cement shingles were replaced with non-asbestos-containing shingles during the rental period. According to the 1995 HSR, these can be identified by their pronounced and wider vertical pattern. WFT Architects estimated that about 10% of shingles were replaced in the 1995 rehabilitation with a non-asbestos-containing Owens Corning product or similar that very closely matched the original.
Condition Rating:	Fair
Condition Description:	• Limited biological growth. • Some shingles are damaged or broken. • No continuous flashing at the transition from siding to the brick foundation wall. Water may be getting in this way.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–28. (Left) Limited biological growth is visible on the asbestos-cement shingle siding on the north façade. (Right) The pronounced vertical pattern is visible on this shingle from the north façade. (Lower right) Asbestos-cement shingle siding on the east façade (source: BBB, 2022).

Metal Trim	
Description:	Painted metal trim at exterior façade corners.
Integrity:	May be original. Currently painted. Unpainted in 1963 (source: 1995 HSR, 47).
Condition Rating:	Fair
Condition Description:	• Bent or damaged in isolated locations. • Separating at corner near carport storage closet.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–29. (Left) Metal trim at northeast corner. (Upper right) Northwest corner of carport closet. (Lower right) South east corner of carport closet (source: BBB, 2022).

Board and Batten Siding	
Description:	The board and batten siding is located on the south and west façades. It is painted and consists of narrow wood battens and plywood siding. Behind the siding, the wall is composed of building felt, wood sheathing, and wall framing that consists of 2x4 studs.
Integrity:	Original design; mostly original material.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	• Small hornet nest at roof near the driveway. • Minor paint delamination and missing paint by planter. • Wood is solid (all pass pencil test).
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–30. (Left and upper right) Chipped and peeling paint on the exterior board and batten at the planter. (Lower right) Small hornet nest (source: BBB, 2022).

Decorative Roman Brick - Wing Wall at Carport	
Description:	A yellow, textured Roman brick wing wall is located at the main entrance under the carport. Wall is two wythes of running bond brick and extends from the carport concrete slab to the ceiling.
Integrity:	Original design and material.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	• Corner spalling at lower five courses of brick. • Loss of mortar in joints near concrete slab.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–31. (Left) Rear view of the decorative wing wall at the carport. (Upper right) Front view of decorative wing wall at the carport. (Lower right) Small loss of mortar between wing wall and the landing (source: BBB, 2022).

Decorative Roman Brick - South Façade	
Description:	The yellow, textured Roman brick on the south façade is pointed with light mortar. Brick spans the wall from the ground to the soffit in a U-shape around the windows. There are no visible weep holes. A commemorative plaque is mounted to the brick.
Integrity:	Original design; original material. Copper flashing was installed between the window and the brick veneer in the 2013 rehabilitation.
Condition Rating:	Fair. Brick material is in good condition. Transitions from brick to siding, windows, and soffit are poor. They appear to have been repaired with failing sealant.
Condition Description:	• Detaching and bowing slightly towards the street. Opening at top around a 1" - 1-1/2" gap. This gap has been present for at least 15 years (is noted in 2006 Architectural Conservation Assessment), and no documentation indicates that it was repaired beyond applying new filler (source: Michael Emrick, RA, *Medgar Evers Museum: Architectural Conservation Assessment Site Survey*, 2006, 5. Site survey was conducted in November 2005.) • Brick veneer is pulling away from the wall between the soffit and the windows. Failed caulk repairs are present. • Ferrous elements embedded in mortar. • Minor cracks in mortar. • Paint and caulk spatter on brick at windows and east façade. • Commemorative plaque is anchored into the wall. The 2021 Condition Assessment noted that mementos, including small notes and pennies, were wedged behind it.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Serious



FIGURE 4–32. Roman brick veneer wall with numbers keyed to photos on following page (Figure 4–34) (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 4–33. (Right) Gap behind brick veneer, large enough for a bird to build a nest (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 4–34. The Roman brick veneer visibly bows towards the street at the soffit. (Clockwise from upper left) 1) Veneer wall at west end. 2) Veneer wall above windows looking west. 3) Veneer wall above windows looking east. 4) Veneer wall at east end (source: BBB, 2022).

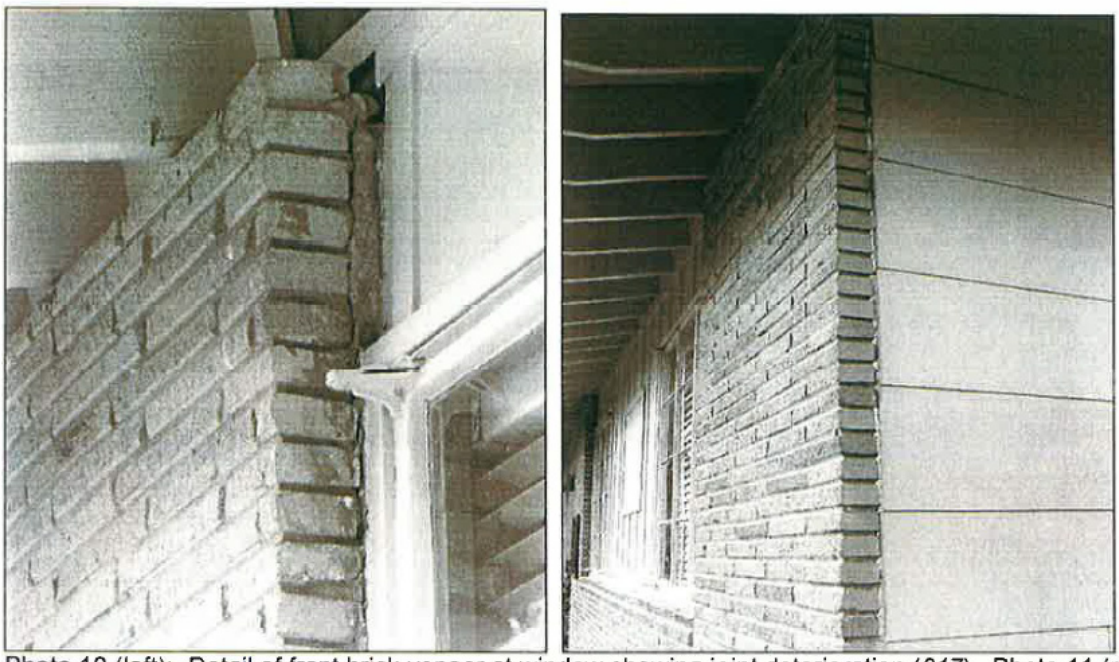


Photo 10 (left): Detail of front brick veneer at window showing joint deterioration (*017*). Photo 11 (right): Detail of front brick veneer at corner where cement asbestos siding begins and deteriorated condition of the vertical joint between the materials (*043*).

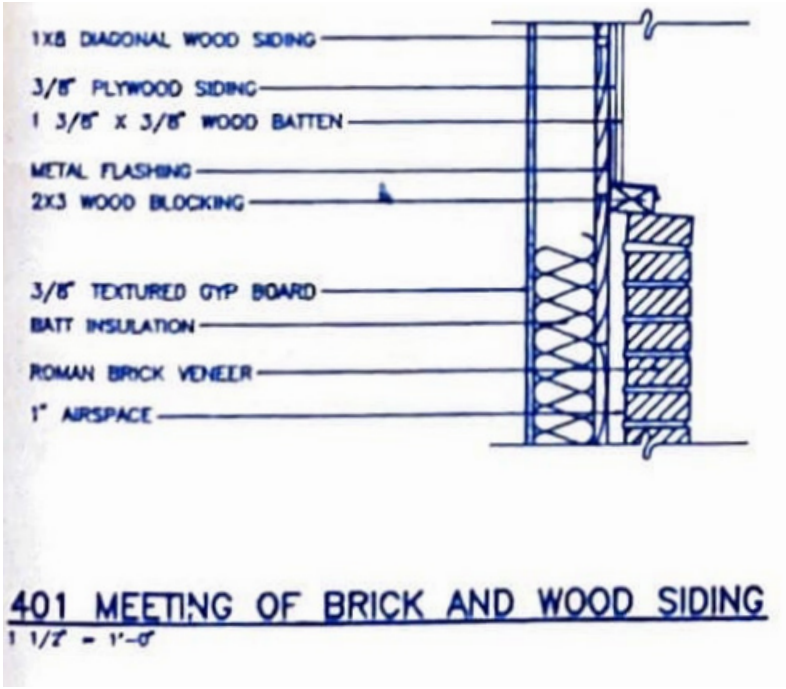








FIGURE 4–35. (Top) Photographs of the brick veneer at the window opening included in the 2006 Architectural Conservation Assessment (source: Michael Emrick, RA, *Medgar Evers Museum: Architectural Conservation Assessment Site Survey*, 2006, 5). (Left) Detail illustrating the condition where the Roman brick meets the wood siding as of the 1995 renovation (source: WFT Architects, Medgar Evers Home Renovation construction drawings, February 22, 1995). (Upper right) Commemorative plaque anchored to the brick wall. (Right, middle) Existing condition where Roman brick meets the wood siding. (Lower right) Example of a ferrous element embedded in the mortar (source: BBB, 2022).

Exterior Ceiling	
Description:	Painted, textured gypsum board ceiling at carport.
Integrity:	Original design and original material.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	• Texture varies. • Seems in gypsum board are visible.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor

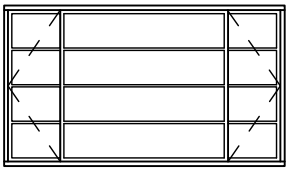


FIGURE 4–36. (Left) View of carport and ceiling from west yard, looking east. (Right) Varying texture visible on carport ceiling (source: BBB, 2022).

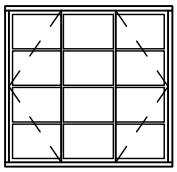
Windows - General	
Description:	Windows openings feature: • Painted steel-framed fixed and casement windows. • Single-pane glazing. • Exterior metal sill and casing. • Fixed center windows with operable casements on each side. • Interior window openings consists of painted 3/4"-thick wood stools and painted 1"-thick wood jambs, which extend 3/8" beyond the face of the gypsum board. There are no interior window casings.
Integrity:	Original design; mostly original material. Original metal screens missing.
Condition Rating:	Fair
Condition Description:	• All windows exhibit loss of paint/deteriorating finish. • Most putty is in poor condition. • Some panes are broken. • All windows show signs of rust. • All windows are painted or deformed shut. • Security contacts are present on all windows but may no longer be active.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Serious

Refer to the following pages for building elevations with window numbers and conditions of each individual window.

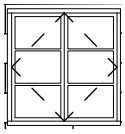
Window Types:



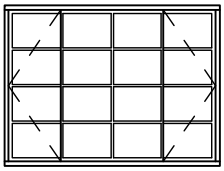
Type A



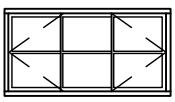
Type B



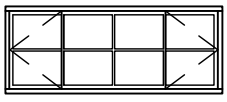
Type C



Type D



Type E



Type F

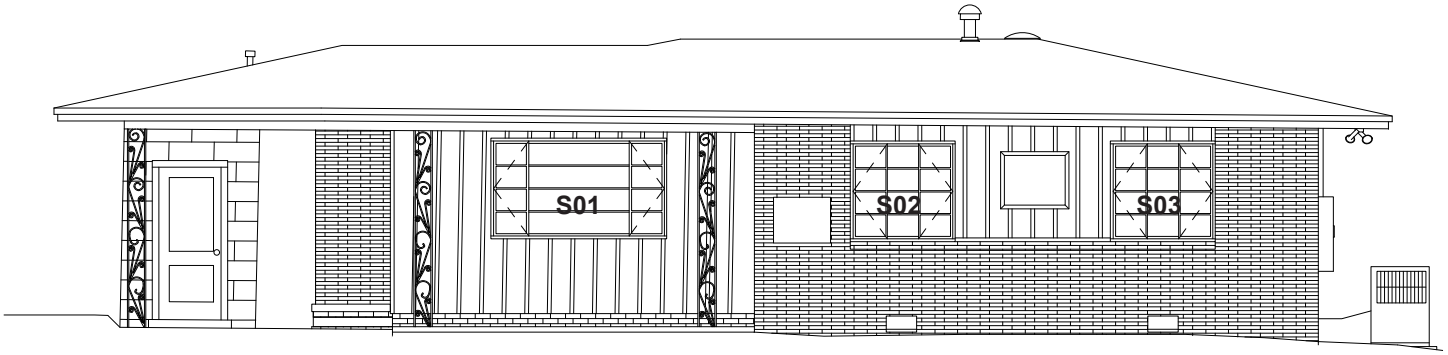


FIGURE 4–37. South elevation (drawing provided by the NPS, source: Lord Aeck Sargent, "Condition Assessment," 2021).



FIGURE 4–38. North elevation (drawing provided by the NPS, source: Lord Aeck Sargent, "Condition Assessment," 2021).

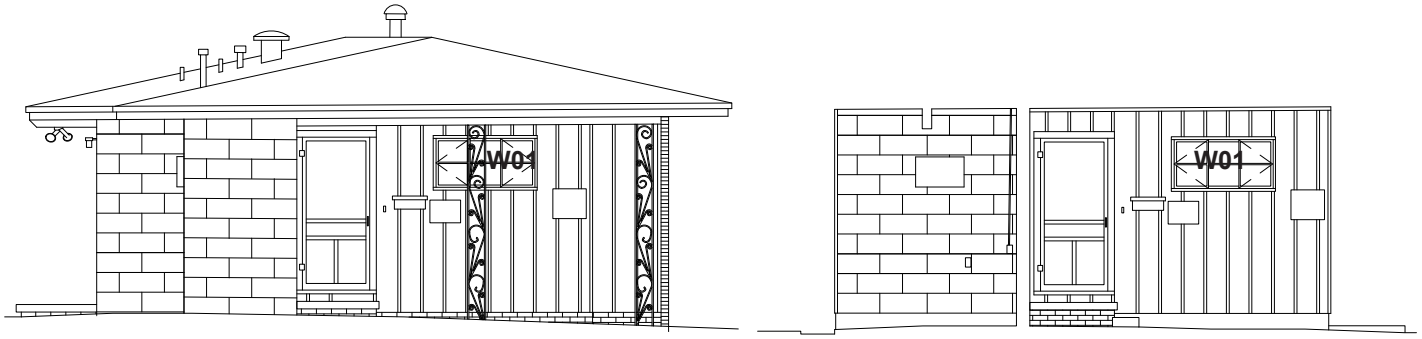


FIGURE 4–39. West elevation (left) and west elevation within carport (right) (drawing provided by the NPS, source: Lord Aeck Sargent, "Condition Assessment," 2021).

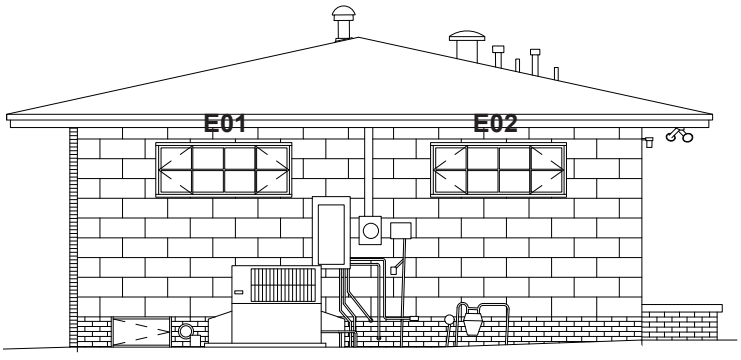
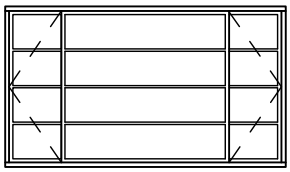


FIGURE 4–40. East elevation (drawing provided by the NPS, source: Lord Aeck Sargent, "Condition Assessment," 2021).

Window S01	
Location:	South Façade
Type:	A
Light configuration:	3 wide, 4 high, with wide center lights
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair — rust. Paint: Fair Muntins: Fair — mildew on underside. Putty: Poor Glazing: Good Exterior Sill: Fair — mildew present.
Notes	There is a gap between mullion and sashes of casement windows.



Type A

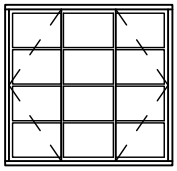






FIGURE 4–41. (Left) Window S01 exterior. (Upper right) Mildew visible on sill and underside of muntins. (Lower right) Failing putty and rust visible from interior (source: BBB, 2022).

Window S02	
Location:	South Façade
Type:	B
Light configuration:	3 wide, 4 high
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair Paint: Poor Muntins: Fair Putty: Poor Glazing: Cracked — one broken pane. Exterior Sill: Fair — some rust on steel.
Notes	Window exhibits: • Minor mildew. • Metal flashing on top of brick sill sloped back towards the house/window. • Small biological colonization where frame meets brick.

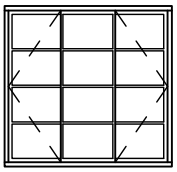


Type B



FIGURE 4–42. (Left) Window S02 exterior. (Center) Window S02 interior. (Right, top to bottom) 1) Metal flashing at brick sill slopes towards the house. 2) Small colonization. 3) Rust visible on interior muntin (source: BBB, 2022).

Window S03	
Location:	South Façade
Type	B
Light configuration:	3 wide, 4 high
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair Paint: Poor Muntins: Poor Putty: Poor Glazing: Good Exterior Sill: Fair — some rust.
Notes	Window exhibits: • Biological colonization (small hornet nest). • Gap between mullion and one casement window sash.

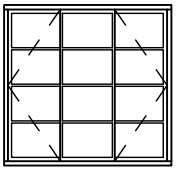


Type B



FIGURE 4–43. (Left) Window S03 exterior. (Center) Window S03 interior. (Upper right) Rust at sill. (Lower right) Interior hardware crank; cracked and failing paint (source: BBB, 2022).

Window N01	
Location:	North Façade
Type	B
Light configuration:	3 wide, 4 high
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair — rust. Paint: Poor Muntins: Poor — significant rust. Putty: Poor Glazing: Good Exterior Sill: Fair
Notes	N/A



Type B





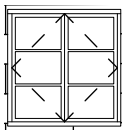






FIGURE 4–44. (Left) Window N01 exterior. (Center) Window N01 interior. (Right top to bottom) 1) Failed putty and rust at muntin, viewed from the interior; 2) Peeling paint and rust at casement; 3) Typical casement hardware; rust visible at sash (source: BBB, 2022).

Window N02	
Location:	North Façade
Type:	C
Light configuration:	2 wide, 3 high
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair — rust. Paint: Poor Muntins: Fair Putty: Poor Glazing: Good Exterior Sill: Fair
Notes	N/A



Type C





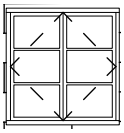






FIGURE 4–45. (Left) Window N02 exterior. (Center) Window N02 interior in the bathroom. (Right top to bottom) 1) Rust on underside of muntins; 2) Typical exterior casement hardware with visible rust; 3) Rust on interior muntin (source: BBB, 2022).

Window N03	
Location:	North Façade
Type	C
Light configuration:	2 wide, 3 high
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair Paint: Poor Muntins: Fair Putty: Poor Glazing: Good — over painting and/or puttying present. Exterior Sill: Fair
Notes	N/A



Type C





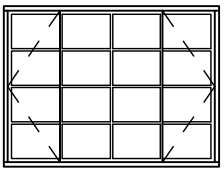






FIGURE 4–46. (Left) Window N03 exterior. (Center) Window N03 interior in the kitchen. (Right top to bottom) 1) Rust jacking at frame; 2) Interior hardware crank and rust; 3) Interior corner (source: BBB, 2022).

Window N04	
Location:	North Façade
Type	D
Light configuration:	4 wide, 4 high
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair — rust. Paint: Poor Muntins: Fair Putty: Poor — missing and cracked. Glazing: Poor — one pane cracked. Exterior Sill: Fair — rust.
Notes	Window exhibits: • Crank hardware inoperable. • Locks can move but window cannot open.



Type D





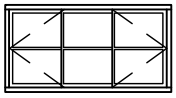






FIGURE 4–47. (Left) Window N04 exterior. (Center) Window N04 interior in the dining room. (Right top to bottom) 1) Rust and mildew visible under the muntins; 2) Rust at frame; 3) Interior hardware crank (source: BBB, 2022).

Window W01	
Location:	West Façade
Type	E
Light configuration:	3 wide, 2 high
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair Paint: Fair Muntins: Fair — mildew present. Putty: Fair — putty somewhat intact, likely because this window is covered. Glazing: Good Exterior Sill: Fair
Notes	Window exhibits: • Rust on all parts.



Type E



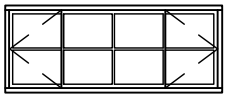






FIGURE 4–48. (Left) Window W01 exterior. (Right top to bottom) 1) Mildew on mullion and frame; 2) Mildew and cracked paint on muntin; 3) Typical casement hardware; rust visible at sash and on exterior frame (source: BBB, 2022).

Window E01	
Location:	East Façade
Type	F
Light configuration:	4 wide, 2 high
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair Paint: Fair Muntins: Fair — mildew present. Putty: Fair — cracking. Glazing: Good Exterior Sill: Fair
Notes	N/A



Type F



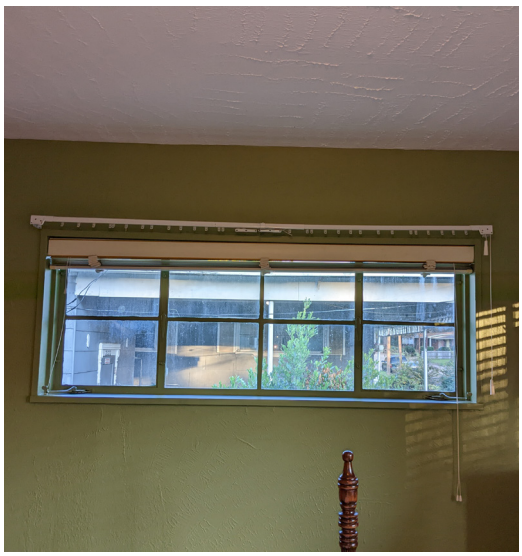
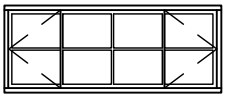




FIGURE 4–49. (Left) Window E01 exterior. (Center) Window E01 interior in Bedroom 1. (Right) Interior casement hardware (source: BBB, 2022).

Window E02	
Location:	East Façade
Type	F
Light configuration:	4 wide, 2 high
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair — rust. Paint: Poor — bubbling, mildew, cracking. Muntins: Fair — mildew present. Putty: Fair — cracking. Glazing: Fair — one cracked pane. Exterior Sill: Fair
Notes	N/A



Type F



FIGURE 4–50. (Left) Window E02 exterior. (Center) Window E02 interior, left side, at Bedroom 2. (Upper right) Rust under window frame. (Lower right) Rust visible on window frame and hinge (source: BBB, 2022).

Exterior Doors	
Main Door at Carport (01A)	
Description:	The main entrance at the carport features: • Flush, solid-core wood door. • Screened door.
Integrity:	Design and door frame original; doors non-original.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair Frame Paint / Stain: Fair Door Paint / Stain: Fair — large scratch on entry door. Painting peeling and missing on screen door. Hinges: Fair Other Hardware: Fair — screen handle bent. General Door Notes: » Door sits slightly ajar; does not close all the way. » New metal threshold with rubber seal. » Gouge in the center mullion at the lower portion of the screen door. » Screen stretched. » Wood threshold is 6" above the top landing.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–51. (Left to right) 1) Exterior view of screen door at the carport entry; 2) Interior view of the entry door at the carport; 3) Peeling paint on the screen door exterior; 4) Hinge on entry door (source: BBB, 2022).

Storage Closet Door at Carport (01B)	
Description:	The door is a two-panel wood door.
Integrity:	Door likely original. Knob not original.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair Frame Paint: Fair Door Paint: Poor Hinges: Poor Other Hardware: Fair — knob not original. General Door Notes: » Very hard to close. Door hangs crooked, likely due to poor condition of hinges. » Security contact present. » Paint checking. » Biological colonization (insect nest) inside frame.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–52. (Left to right) 1) Exterior view of carport closet door; 2) Interior view of the carport closet door; 3) Non-original knob; 4) Lower hinge (source: BBB, 2022).

Rear Entry Door (02A)	
Description:	Door 02A (pictured below) is a flush, solid-core wood door, featuring a screen door. The current door, installed at this location in spring 2023 (not pictured), is a temporary six-panel residential door. At this time, it is unknown when a door replicating the original design will be reinstalled.
Integrity:	Design is original; entry door (pictured) and screen door are non-original. The pictured entry door has been replaced with a temporary door due to extensive damage in spring 2023.
Condition Rating:	Fair
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair Frame Paint / Stain: Good — repainted in spring 2023; material gouged and missing. Pictured Door: Poor; Temporary Door: N/A Temporary Door Hinges: N/A Other Hardware on Temporary Door: N/A
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–53. Exterior view of screen door at the rear entry and interior view of the rear door as of November 2022 (source: BBB, 2022).

Wrought-Iron Posts	
Description:	Decorative wrought-iron posts at carport with organic scroll design.
Integrity:	Likely original; post to the east of the carport at the corner of planter appears to have been reinstalled backwards/upside down, likely during an earlier rehabilitation project.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	• Slight corrosion at post near carport storage closet. • Base of posts in planter are covered in mulch. • Post to the east of the carport in installed upside down. The original orientation is pictured in the photo of Medgar Evers and James Baldwin below.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–54. (Top, left to right) 1) Comparison of east post from 1960s (Medgar Evers together with James Baldwin) to the present (source: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Medgar Wiley and Myrlie Beasley Papers, call number: Z.2231.4.009); 2) Southwest post, looking towards carport; 3) West posts, looking towards street from west side of lot. 4) Detail of post at concrete (source: BBB, 2022).

Exterior Lighting	
Description:	Glass fixtures at carport; single bulb at storage closet.
Integrity:	Original location and non-original light fixtures.
Condition Rating:	Fair
Condition Description:	Rust at the carport fixture.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–55. (Left) Light fixture at carport. (Right) Light fixture in storage closet (source: BBB, 2022).

House Numbers	
Description:	Adhesive vinyl numbers on house exterior.
Integrity:	Original location and appearance. The 1995 HSR notes the house numbers as original.
Condition Rating:	Fair
Condition Description:	Second "3" is peeling.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–56. House numbers (source: BBB, 2022).

Signage and Mailbox	
Description:	The following signs are present: • Sign at west façade, recognizing that the site is a National Historic Landmark. • Sign at south façade, commemorating the site as the home of Medgar Evers. • Mailbox at west façade is black metal box attached to wall.
Integrity:	Signs and mailbox are not historic.
Condition Rating:	N/A
Condition Description:	N/A
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	N/A







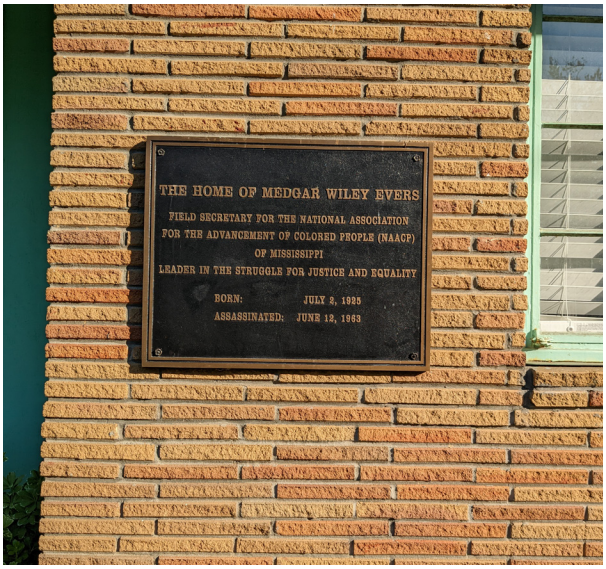


FIGURE 4–57. (Upper left) West façade of carport, showing existing mailbox and plaque. (Upper right) Crime scene photo from June 12, 21963. The mailbox and house numbers are visible above the car (source: Library of Congress. *New York World-Telegram and the Sun* Newspaper Photograph Collection, NYWTS - BIOG--Evers, Medgar W.--Murder Case--Dead [item] [P&P]. Digital Id: cph 3c35504, http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3c35504). (Left, lower) Plaque on west façade. (Lower right) Plaque on south façade (source: BBB, 2022).

Air Conditioner at Carport (Inactive)	
Description:	Air conditioner unit is mounted on the west façade, behind the wing wall at the carport. A gap is visible around the unit at the framing. On the interior, the unit features a painted wood casing.
Integrity:	Original location and material of air conditioner.
Condition Rating:	Fair
Condition Description:	• Not functional. • Air moves through unit. • Interior wood casing is in good condition.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–58. Air conditioner at carport. (Source: BBB, 2022).

Roof and Attic

Roofing	
Description:	The roof is wood framed, featuring a low-slope (about 10 degrees), built-up hipped roof consisting of asphalt and gravel. The roof features: • Plywood roof sheathing. • Painted, exposed rafters and 3-foot deep eaves. Attic vents located between rafters. • Painted wood fascia board cap and painted metal drip edge. • No gutters. • Attic vents that are typically covered in mesh, some in styrofoam.
Integrity:	Original design, framing, and sheathing. Non-original exterior material. The original built-up roof, consisting of asphalt and gravel, was replaced with asphalt shingles in the 1970s or 1980s. The asphalt shingle roof was replaced with a built-up roof (asphalt and gravel) in 1995 and again in 2013. The rafter tails were replaced in the 1995 rehabilitation according to a 2023 interview with WFT Architects.
Condition Rating:	Fair
Condition Description:	• Inadequate gravel stop. Roof gravel displaced and found on the mechanical units on the east façade and at the north façade. • Isolated areas of peeling paint at the stop, eaves, and fascia panel. • Small isolated areas of wood rafter deterioration. • Roof sheathing exhibits peeling paint and checking. • Attic vents typically covered in mesh, some in Styrofoam. • Attic has loose-fill insulation.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Serious — loose gravel is a safety concern.



FIGURE 4–59. (Top, left to right) 1) Attic vent covered by foam; 2) Attic vent covered by mesh; 3) Peeling paint at underside of roof sheathing. (Bottom, left to right) 1) Displaced roof gravel along the roof edge; 2) Thin and missing roof gravel on roof; 3) Existing attic insulation (source: BBB, 2022).

Interior

Interior Doors and Door Openings - General	
Description:	Hollow-core wood doors that are 1-3/8" thick. Door openings feature painted wood casings. The overall width of the casing is 2-1/2". A door and opening schedule is provided in Chapter 7: *Alternatives for Treatment.*
Integrity:	Most are original. The door at Bedroom 1 and the closet door in Bedroom 2 were replaced in the 1995 renovation. The painted wood casings are original.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	N/A
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor
Notes	Interior doors are presented in number order on the following pages starting with 2B. Exterior Doors 1A, 1B, and 2A can be found earlier in this chapter.

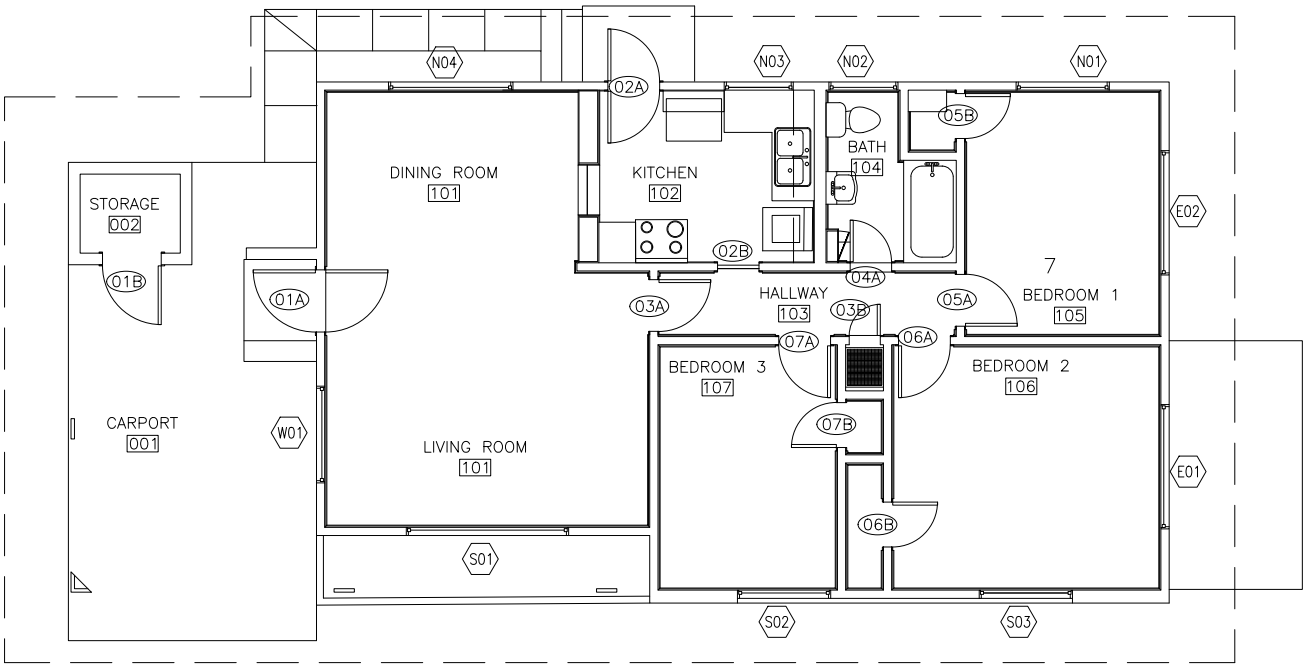


FIGURE 4–60. This floor plan provides door locations and numbers (source: BBB, 2022).

Doorway Between Kitchen and Hallway (02B)	
Description:	24" wide opening; painted 2-1/2" wide wood casing.
Integrity:	Original design and wood casing (no door in original design).
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	N/A
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	N/A



FIGURE 4–61. Kitchen door opening, viewed from the kitchen (source: BBB, 2022).

Door at Hallway and Living/Dining Room (03A)	
Description:	Flush, hollow-core wood-veneer door, measuring 30”; painted 2-1/2” wide wood casing.
Integrity:	Design original; door, hardware, and casing likely original
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Good Frame Paint: Good Door Stain: Fair Hinges: Fair Operating Hardware: Fair — latch does not engage. Casing: Good
Notes	30” door does not provide a 32” clear opening for accessible passage.



FIGURE 4–62. Hallway door and frame from the living room (left) and the hallway (right) (source: BBB, 2022).

Mechanical Closet Door (03B)	
Description:	Flush, hollow-core wood-veneer door measuring 18”; painted 2-1/2” wide wood casing.
Integrity:	Design original; door, hardware, and casing likely original
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair Frame Paint: Fair Door Stain: Fair — prior repairs visible; loss of veneer at interior. Hinges: Fair. Painted. Operating Hardware: Fair Casing: Good
Notes	Narrow door. Not part of public access. Two vents are located at the bottom of the door and are likely original. According to the 1995 HSR by WFT Architects, the Everses carved out the mechanical closet from the closet in Bedroom 3 when they installed a downflow gas furnace (no longer operational).



FIGURE 1–63. Mechanical closet door exterior (left) and interior (right) (source: BBB, 2022).

Bathroom Door (04A)	
Description:	Flush, hollow-core wood-veneer door measuring 24"; painted 2-1/2" wide wood casing.
Integrity:	Design original; door, hardware, and casing likely original.
Condition Rating:	Fair
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair Frame Paint: Fair Door Stain: Fair Hinges: Fair. Painted. Operating Hardware: Fair Casing: Good
Notes	N/A



FIGURE 1–64. Bathroom door viewed from hallway (source: BBB, 2022).

Bedroom 1 Door (05A)	
Description:	Flush, hollow-core wood-veneer door measuring 30”; painted 2-1/2” wide wood casing.
Integrity:	Design original; non-original door, replaced in 1995 renovation.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair Frame Paint: Fair Door Stain: Fair Hinges: Poor Operating Hardware: Fair Casing: Good
Notes	Dent in knob. 30” door does not provide a 32” clear opening for accessible passage.



FIGURE 4–65. Bedroom 1 door viewed from inside bedroom (source: BBB, 2022).

Bedroom 1 Closet Door (05B)	
Description:	Flush, hollow-core wood-veneer door measuring 26”; painted 2-1/2” wide wood casing.
Integrity:	Design original; door, hardware, and casing likely original.
Condition Rating:	Fair
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair Frame Paint: Fair Door Stain: Fair — loss of stain in section. Hinges: Fair Operating Hardware: Fair Casing: Good
Notes	N/A



FIGURE 4–66. Bedroom 1 closet door (left) and close up photograph of scratch in stain (right) (source: BBB, 2022).

Bedroom 2 Door (06A)	
Description:	Flush, hollow-core wood-veneer door measuring 30”; painted 2-1/2” wide wood casing.
Integrity:	Design original; door, hardware, and casing likely original.
Condition Rating:	Fair
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair Frame Paint: Fair Door Stain: Fair Hinges: Fair. Painted. Operating Hardware: Fair Casing: Good
Notes	N/A



FIGURE 4–67. Bedroom 2 door and frame viewed from the hallway (source: BBB, 2022).

Bedroom 2 Closet Door (06B)	
Description:	Flush, hollow-core wood-veneer door measuring 26”; painted 2-1/2” wide wood casing. The interior hardware features a thumbturn lock.
Integrity:	Design original; non-original door replaced in 1995 renovation. Original hardware and casing.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair Frame Paint: Good Door Stain: Good Hinges: Fair. Painted. Operating Hardware: Fair Casing: Good
Notes	N/A





FIGURE 4–68. Bedroom 2 closet door from bedroom (left) and detail of the original thumbturn lock hardware from the closet facing side (right) (source: BBB, 2022).

Bedroom 3 Door (07A)	
Description:	Flush, hollow-core wood-veneer door measuring 30”; painted 2-1/2” wide wood casing.
Integrity:	Design original; door, hardware, and casing likely original.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair Frame Paint: Good Door Stain: Fair — nicks, minor scratches. Hinges: Fair — painted. Operating Hardware: Fair — paint present at rosette. Casing: Good
Notes	Does not close and hangs crooked, indicating a problem with the hinges. 30” door does not provide a 32” clear opening for accessible passage.





FIGURE 4–69. Bedroom 3 door viewed from bedroom (source: BBB, 2022).

Bedroom 3 Closet Door (07B)	
Description:	Flush, hollow-core wood-veneer door measuring 26”; painted 2-1/2” wide wood casing.
Integrity:	Design original; non-original door replaced in 1995 renovation. Hardware is likely original; original casing.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	Frame Condition: Fair Frame Paint: Good Door Stain: Fair — minor scratches. Hinges: Fair — painted. Operating Hardware: Fair Casing: Good
Notes	N/A



FIGURE 4–70. Bedroom 3 closet door (left) and close up photograph of original hardware (right) (source: BBB, 2022).

Walls	
Description:	Walls consist of painted, textured gypsum board that is 3/8" thick.
Integrity:	Original design and mostly original material, with exception of repairs primarily at the exterior walls. Repairs in Bedroom 2 were undertaken in 1995. In the 2013 rehabilitation, the bullet hole in the wall between the dining room and kitchen was recovered. Lawson Newman of WFT Architects recalled in an interview conducted by the project team on November 9, 2023: It had been covered over in Sheetrock [drywall] during the rental years. We had the contractor grind away from the kitchen side. The hole had been patched. We had the contractor grind away the Sheetrock mud and open the hole from the kitchen side and put a camera in there to see where the Sheetrock mud was pushing through the hole. They scraped away the paint and found the hole and gently opened it back up. The tile is still missing from the bullet. The window (front window) was replaced for functional reasons early on.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	In November 2022, the south wall in Bedroom 3 showed signs of significant water damage, including bubbling and peeling paint and softness. No active leaks were visible. The NPS repaired this area in spring 2023, ahead of the events commemorating the 60th anniversary of the assassination of Medgar Evers. The NPS indicated that the wall cavity was dry at the time of the repair.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor
Notes	N/A



FIGURE 4–71. (Left) Southwest corner of Bedroom 3. (Right) Enlargement showing peeling paint and residue visible at Bedroom 3 south wall near the window. This condition was repaired in spring 2023 (source: BBB, 2022).

Kitchen Walls - Tile Board and Wallpaper	
Description:	The kitchen walls are finished with: • Tile board or pressed metal. • Wallpaper.
Integrity:	Tile board is original. The wallpaper was recreated from photographs in the 2013 rehabilitation. Lawson Newman of WFT Architects recalled in an interview conducted by BBB on November 9, 2023: The paper behind the stove, that is a replication. That came from WFT sending EverGreene photographs from the crime scene. That is their recreation of that design from the photograph. That is not historic – it is a recreation of that historic paper. At the time we and the college felt that was an important component.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	EverGreene conservators re-created the wall covering that once hung in the kitchen. The original wallpaper was removed shortly after the assassination, and the walls were painted for new tenants. EverGreene recreated the wallpaper based on the 1963 crime scene photo and additional research (source: "Medgar Evers House," Evergreene Architectural Arts, accessed August 5, 2024, https://evergreene.com/projects/medgar-evers-house/).
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	N/A



FIGURE 4–72. Kitchen wall finishes (source: BBB, 2022).

Bathroom Walls - Tile	
Description:	The bathroom walls are finished with 4”x 4” ceramic wall tiles.
Integrity:	Mix of original and non-original replacement tiles.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	Tiles are intact.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	N/A



FIGURE 4–73. Bathroom wall finishes (source: BBB, 2022).

Air Conditioner Wall Casing	
Description:	Air conditioner unit is mounted on the west façade of the building and comes through the house at the west wall of the Dining Room. On the interior, the air conditioner unit features a painted 2-1/2" wood casing.
Integrity:	Original location and material of casing.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	N/A
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–74. (Right) interior view of air conditioner with wood casing (source: BBB, 2022).

Hardwood Floors & Base Molding	
Description:	The hardwood flooring consists of: • Boards that are 2-1/4" wide, noted as oak in 2006 Architectural Conservation Assessment. • Hardwood is present in all rooms, except kitchen and bathroom. • Painted 3/4" x 3 1/2" wood base with a painted 3/4" quarter-round shoe at the floor.
Integrity:	Original design, non-original flooring material (entirely replaced in 2013 rehabilitation. Original wood base except locations of major repair (salvaged and reinstalled in 2013 floor replacement); non-original wood base shoe.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	• Slightly sloping and uneven floors, likely a result of damage to the floor framing that was remediated in 2013. This condition is not indicative of a structural risk. • Areas of cupping in hallway and Bedrooms 2 and 3, likely due to moisture. • Almost no scratches or gouges.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	N/A







FIGURE 4–75. (Upper left) Wood floor in the living and dining rooms. (Upper right) Typical base molding. This photograph is from Bedroom 1. (Left, lower) Cupping present at the wood floor in Bedroom 2 (source: BBB, 2022).

Vinyl Floors	
Description:	Vinyl composition floors, consisting of 9"x 9" tiles, are located in the kitchen and bathroom.
Integrity:	Non-original floors.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	No visible areas of damage.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	N/A



FIGURE 4–76. Vinyl floor in the kitchen (left) and bathroom (right) (source: BBB, 2022).

Ceilings	
Description:	Ceilings feature: • Painted, textured gypsum board. • Metal louvers at hallway ceiling to vent attic.
Integrity:	Original ceilings except locations of major repair, particularly in the dining room and Bedroom 3. Many existing light fixture locations are non-original.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	• Penetrations from previous and existing light fixtures, including non-historic track lighting and recessed lighting. • Areas of past repair are visible with distinct texture.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–77. (Upper left) Ceiling in living and dining room. (Upper right) Track lighting installed at ceiling in Bedroom 3 to light the wall exhibits. (Left, lower) Attic vent in hallway. (Lower right) Ceiling in Bedroom 3 (source: BBB, 2022).

Built-In Wood Shelving	
Description:	3/4" solid wood shelving separates the kitchen from the dining room. There is a 30"-wide opening at the center providing passage between the two spaces. The shelving has a clear-stained finish and the species is unknown but is possibly pine to match kitchen cabinets.
Integrity:	Original design and original material. Original pivot door at the opening is missing, but the pivot hinge remains. A false panel was installed during the 2013 rehabilitation to provide power and data.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	N/A
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–78. (Left) Wood shelving viewed from the living room. (Upper right) Detail of wood shelving at kitchen. (Lower right) Wood shelving viewed from the dining room. (Source: BBB, 2022).

Kitchen Cabinets, Drawers, and Counters	
Description:	The kitchen cabinets are made primarily of 5/8" plywood, reported in 1995 HSR to be pine. They have a clear finish and are partial overlay. Some shelves are 3/4" plywood. The upper cabinets are 12" deep and the lower cabinets are 24" deep. All counters are 3/4" plywood with original green plastic laminate top and original metal (aluminum or stainless steel) edges. A clear-stained molding, matching the cabinets, appears at the ceiling.
Integrity:	Original cabinets; drawer pulls and cabinet hinges are likely original, other hardware is likely non-original. Original counters and metal trim.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	Minor scratches.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	N/A









FIGURE 4–79. (Left) Kitchen cabinets surrounding the range at the south wall of the kitchen. (Upper right) 1963 photograph of hardware over the sink (source: District Attorney's Office Photographs reproduced in WFT Architects, "Medgar Evers Home Renovation, GS #501-052, A Historic Structure Report," Jackson, Mississippi, 1995, 12). (Right, middle and lower) Existing hardware on typical drawer and cabinet (source: BBB, 2022).

Kitchen Sink	
Description:	White porcelain double kitchen sink with metal (aluminum or stainless steel) edging.
Integrity:	Sink is likely original; faucet and handles non-original.
Condition Rating:	Fair
Condition Description:	Worn areas and some chips in porcelain around drain.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–80. Kitchen sink (source: BBB, 2022).

Kitchen Appliances	
Description:	Kitchen appliances consist of a 1960s-era refrigerator and range with a stove and oven. Both appliances feature teal enameled aluminum. There is a faux bullet hole in the refrigerator in the location where the bullet that killed Medgar Evers ricocheted.
Integrity:	Non-original; all original appliances had been removed by 1994. The existing appliances reflect design and vintage of the originals.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	N/A
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	N/A



FIGURE 4–81. (Left) Refrigerator. (Right) Range with stove and oven (source: BBB, 2022).

Bathroom Fixtures	
Description:	The bathroom fixtures include: • Sink • Toilet • Bathtub with faucet, shower head, and tile-mounted soap dish • Built in cabinet • Mirrored medicine cabinet • Tile-mounted soap dish, cup and toothbrush holder, towel rack, and toilet paper roll • Tile-mounted gas space heater
Integrity:	• Sink and toilet are non-original: Lawson Newman of WFT indicated that the sink had been replaced during the rental period. During the 1995 rehabilitation, a salvaged original sink from a different house in the Elraine subdivision was installed. The toilet was also replaced with one salvaged from a contemporary house in the neighborhood. Location of toilet likely non-original (see Chapter 3: *Chronology of Development and Use*). • Bathtub and faucet are likely original, shower head non-original. • Built-in cabinet likely original. • Mirrored medicine cabinet likely non-original. • Tile-mounted gas space heater original.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	Bathtub has chips in porcelain finish.
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–82. (Left) Bathroom sink and mirror. (Upper right) Toilet. (Lower right) Bathtub (source: BBB, 2022).

Lighting	
Description:	Existing lighting varies. None of the existing light fixtures are original.
Integrity:	No original fixtures; non-original recessed lighting. Originally, according to the 1995 HSR, each room had one ceiling fixture. An exception may have been the bathroom, where a wall-mounted fixture was located over the sink. Some existing fixtures are in original locations. New linear, directional lighting, and recessed lighting detracts from historic character.
Condition Rating:	Good
Condition Description:	N/A
Maintenance Deficiency/ Priority Rating:	Minor



FIGURE 4–83. Light fixtures in Bedroom 2 (source: BBB, 2022).

Chapter 5: Significance and Integrity

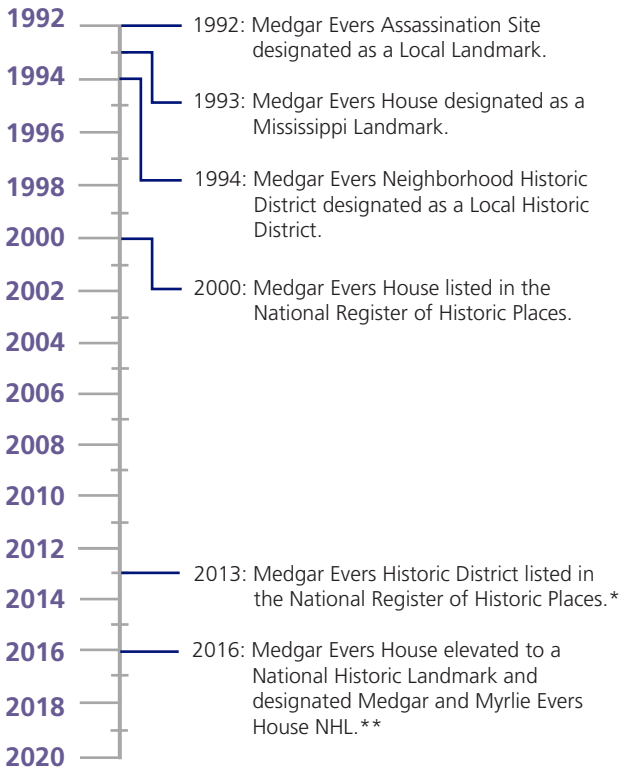
Introduction

This chapter summarizes the significance of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home under the National Register of Historic Places Criteria for Evaluation and the National Historic Landmarks program criteria. It also describes the period of significance of the property, which is the length of time when the property made the contributions or achieved the character of which its significance is based. See the National Register Bulletin 15 "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation" as a reference.

This chapter also summarizes the character-defining features of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home. Character-defining features are defined as aspects, qualities, or characteristics of a historic property that contribute to its physical character. Structures, objects, vegetation, spatial relationships, views, furnishings, decorative details, and materials may be such features.

This chapter then summarizes the integrity of the historic structure. Integrity relates to the degree to which the characteristics that define a historic property's significance are present. The seven aspects of historic integrity, as established by the National Register are: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Designation Timeline:



*Medgar Evers Historic District is significant at the state level

**Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL is significant at the national level

FIGURE 5–1. Timeline of historic designations. (source: BBB Architects/DHM Design, 2023).

Significance

The Evers Home has received multiple designations over the years (Figure 5–1).

Criteria for Evaluation

The NHL program defines properties of national significance, which retain a high degree of integrity, under one or more of the six NHL criteria. These criteria are codified in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The full listing of the criteria can be found in 36 CFR § 65.[1]

Criterion 1
Properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to, and are identified with, or that outstandingly represent, the broad national patterns of United States history and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained.

Criterion 2
Properties that are associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States.

Criterion 3
Properties that represent some great idea or ideal of the American people.

Criterion 4
Properties that embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen exceptionally valuable for a study of a period, style, or method of construction, or that represent a significant, distinctive and exceptional entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Criterion 5
Properties that are composed of integral parts of the environment not sufficiently significant by reason of historical association or artistic merit to warrant individual recognition but collectively compose an entity of exceptional historical or artistic significance, or outstandingly commemorate or illustrate a way of life or culture.

Criterion 6
Properties that have yielded or may be likely to yield information of major scientific importance by revealing new cultures, or by shedding light upon periods of occupation over large areas of the United States. Such sites are those which have yielded, or which may reasonably be expected to yield, data affecting theories, concepts and ideas to a major degree.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House (name used on the NHL designation form) is nationally significant under Criteria 1 and 2.

What follows is a summary of the NHL significance statement, closely based on that provided in the NHL designation form.

Medgar Wiley Evers, and his wife Myrlie Evers, made major contributions to advancing the goals of the civil-rights movement on a national level, which makes the house eligible under NHL Criterion 2. Medgar Evers's assassination on June 12, 1963, in the carport of his home, was the first murder of a nationally significant civil-rights leader, focusing national attention on the importance of civil rights legislation. His assassination pressed Myrlie Evers into a more prominent, national role for the NAACP. It also became one of the catalysts for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The house is eligible under NHL Criterion 1 as the site of Medgar Evers's assassination.

The Everses accomplished their significant work in the civil-rights movement while residing and often working from their suburban Ranch-style home. Medgar Wiley Evers was the first Mississippi field secretary for the NAACP. From 1955 until his assassination in 1963, he was involved in almost every significant civil-rights event in Mississippi, the heart of the segregated Jim Crow system, during the most important period of the civil-rights movement when it transformed from a few scattered regional voices to an organized national chorus. His leadership in the state of Mississippi, known as the "deepest bastion of segregation," made him a significant figure on the national civil-

1 National Park Service, "Determining the Eligibility of a Property for National Historic Landmark Designation," accessed September 2024, https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalhistoriclandmarks/eligibility.htm.

rights stage.[2] Medgar Evers's steady but passionate work for civil rights and his calm leadership abilities earned him a reputation as NAACP's "Man in Mississippi" – someone who could be relied on to make good decisions in a crisis.

Myrlie Evers was Medgar's partner in life and civil rights work. She served as Medgar Evers's secretary during his first two years as NAACP field secretary, before the demands of being a wife and mother led to her decision (with resistance from Medgar) to stay home. A large part of her time at home was spent hosting civil rights leaders, often overnight, and sheltering Black victims of abuse and threats from the White power structure that controlled all levels of local and state government in Mississippi. The couple faced threats and harassment because of Medgar Evers's work throughout the state.

The assassination of Medgar Evers in the driveway of his carport on June 12, 1963, was the first such murder of a national civil rights leader. It led President John F. Kennedy to push forward civil rights legislation, which eventually passed as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, following Kennedy's own assassination. Further, Medgar Evers's assassination and public funeral propelled Myrlie Evers onto the national stage as a civil rights leader and sought-after speaker for the NAACP. Her career culminated in the 1990s with a term as chair for the NAACP board of directors.

Period of Significance

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home's period of significance is 1956 to 1964, encompassing the year in which the Everses purchased the lot at 2332 Guynes Street (now Margaret Walker Alexander Street) to the year in which Myrlie Evers and the three Evers children moved to California, following the assassination of Medgar Evers.

After maintaining the house as a rental for nearly thirty years, Myrlie Evers-Williams donated it in 1993 to nearby Tougaloo College—a historically Black college—that operated the house as a museum dedicated to the legacy of Medgar and Myrlie Evers. Tougaloo College was responsible for overseeing the 1994-1996 historic structure assessment and rehabilitation work through a grant from the State of Mississippi. Upon completion of the work, the College opened the house for public tours in 1997. Minnie Watson served as curator of the Evers house during Tougaloo College's ownership and was involved with the 50th anniversary commemoration of the Medgar Evers assassination in 2013. Tougaloo College transferred the property to the National Park Service in 2020.

2 M.J. O'Brien, *We Shall Not Be Moved* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2013), 13 in Jennifer V.O. Baughn, "Medgar and Myrlie Evers House," National Historic Landmark Nomination Form (US Department of the Interior, 2016), 8.

Integrity

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home retains excellent integrity of materials, workmanship, design, setting, location, feeling, and association. The home underwent rehabilitation projects in 1995 and 2013. Both projects preserved character-defining features and restored material that was deteriorated or altered to the point that it could not be preserved. Original materials include but are not limited to exterior concrete, brick, and siding; wall and attic structural framing; steel casement windows; and interior walls, shelving and cabinets. The floors and underlying structure were entirely replaced in the 2013 rehabilitation. Areas of the exterior walls and the ceiling were repaired in 1995. The NPS repaired the interior face of the exterior wall in Bedroom 3 in the spring of 2023. The home's exterior and interior have been repainted numerous times. The exterior wood and screen doors have been replaced.

The home largely retains its original massing, layout, and design. No alterations or additions have occurred since its original construction in 1956. The bathroom was renovated during the rental period and has been somewhat restored since.

The home remains in its original location within the Elraine subdivision, surrounded by the original thirty-six minimally altered homes built by W. J. Thompson and Leroy Burnett. The setting remains intact, maintaining the feel of a Post–World War II subdivision.

Character–Defining Features

What follows is a list of character-defining features and materials within the home from which its significance is derived. Even with the renovation in 1995-1996 and the rehabilitation in 2013, the home retains a significant number of character-defining features dating to the period of significance (1956-1964).

Setting and Orientation

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home is a single-family home situated in a suburban neighborhood on a quiet residential street. It is surrounded by homes of a similar style that also date to the original development of the neighborhood. It has a lawn with planting beds and a driveway leading from the street to the carport. *See the 2024 CLR for additional information.*

Shape and Mass

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home is a Ranch-style house typical of post-World War II suburban development in the United States. It is an asymmetrical one-story house with a simple rectangular massing and a low-pitched roof with continuous overhang, typical of mid-century modern design. Its carport and decorative Roman brick wing wall are also typical of the style and date to the original construction of the house and period of significance.

Plan

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home floor plan is typical of small Ranch-style houses, especially its open, shared living-dining room, three small bedrooms, and shared bath. The location of the main entrance under the carport, while not unique to the Evers home, is distinct and illustrates the way in which the Everses considered the design of their home in relation to their family's safety and the threats they faced from white supremacists. The floor plan is essentially unaltered from its original arrangement (except for the mechanical closet added by the Everses) and dates to the period of significance. The only other change that has occurred is the removal of a swinging door between the kitchen and dining room.

Exterior Materials & Features

The exterior materials of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home are typical of mid-century modern design and home construction. The architectural features and materials mostly date to the period of significance. These materials and features include:

- Wood-framed structure with brick pier and curtain foundation. The wall and attic framing are original. The floor and floor framing were replaced during the 2013 rehabilitation.

- Built-up roof with light-colored gravel coating (original roof design, non-original material).

- Plywood board and batten siding at the front/south façade and carport.

- Asbestos-cement shingle siding at the rear/north and east façades and on the carport closet. Some shingles were replaced during the rental period and have a visibly different texture than the original. About ten percent of the shingles were replaced with non-asbestos containing shingles in the 1995 rehabilitation.

- Roman brick at the front/south façade and planter (original with non-original modification at the carport corner) as well as the carport wing wall.

- Decorative wrought-iron columns (original, one column incorrectly installed in 2013 rehabilitation).

- Textured gypsum-board ceiling at carport.

- Concrete slab in carport.

- Brick and concrete stairs and landings to main entry door and rear door.

Openings

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home fenestration (arrangement of windows and doors) is indicative of mid-century modern home design. The simple painted steel-framed casement windows are horizontal in orientation and original to the home's construction. As of the November 2022 site visit, the main and rear entries feature solid, unadorned wood doors with painted wood screen doors. The NPS replaced the rear door with a painted, six-panel temporary door in spring 2023. The existing screen doors are replicas of the originals. The two-panel wood door at the carport storage closet is original.

Interior Materials & Features

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home exhibits interior architectural features and materials that are typical of mid-century modern design and home construction. These materials and features include:

- Textured gypsum-board walls and ceilings. Areas of the interior face of the exterior walls were repaired in the 1995 rehabilitation. The NPS repaired one area of the exterior wall in Bedroom 3 in spring 2023. Large areas of the ceiling, particularly at the southeast corner (in Bedroom 2), were repaired in the 1995 rehabilitation.

- Hardwood floors are non-original (replaced in the 2013 rehabilitation due to rot) but match the original design. The painted wood wall base is original.

- Built-in wood shelving that divides the kitchen and dining room is original with some modifications. The pivot-hinge door was removed sometime during the rental period. A false panel for power and data was added in the 2013 rehabilitation.

- The bathroom has been partially renovated. The built-in cabinet is original. The bathtub and some tile are likely original. The sink is non-original and was salvaged from a neighboring home during the 1995 rehabilitation. The toilet is non-original, and it is speculated that the toilet was relocated from its original location against the exterior wall during the rental period.

- Flush wooden doors. Most interior doors are original with original hardware. The door from the hall to Bedroom 1 and the closet door in Bedroom 2 were replaced during the 1995 rehabilitation with doors closely resembling the originals. However, the door hardware is likely original.

- Painted wood casings at doors, windows, and the dining room through-wall air conditioning unit are original.

- Wood kitchen cabinets are original with non-original replica knobs and pulls. Cabinet drawer pulls and hinges are likely original. The pressed metal back splash is original. The brick and ivy wallpaper is a replica.

- The vinyl-composition kitchen floor is non-original but likely replicates the original.

- Overhead lighting fixtures are non-original.

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2 Treatment and Use

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Chapter 6: Requirements for Treatment

Introduction

This chapter outlines management objectives for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument. It also outlines requirements for recommended treatment, including compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Management Objectives

Management objectives help determine the desired condition and appropriate treatment of the historic structure, responding to contemporary needs while preserving the historic structure as a valued cultural asset.

The project team developed the management objectives using the HSR Statement of Work developed by the NPS, previous management documentation provided by the NPS, the HSR site visit in November 2022, and collaborative discussions with the park and region (Interior Region 2: South Atlantic–Gulf). See the 2024 CLR for site-wide management objectives.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home management objectives include:

- Preserve the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home as an interpretive site. Selectively restore features to the home's period of significance.
- Improve visitor access to the home.
- Improve sustainability.
- Improve resiliency to natural hazards.

Building Codes

Treatment recommendations for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home must comply with building codes, which include exceptions for existing and historic structures. The treatment recommendations are in accordance with the 2024 International Code Council (ICC) Model Codes and Standards, including the International Existing Building Code (IEBC).

As of March 2024, the State of Mississippi and the City of Jackson, Mississippi, have adopted the 2018 International Building Code (IBC). Federal properties are exempt from state and local building codes. It is NPS policy to comply with state and local codes to the extent possible, but the NPS retains ultimate authority to accept or reject any recommendation of a state or local government code official.

The NPS has adopted the technical requirements of the ICC and the IBC, referencing the latest edition published. As of March 2024, the latest edition of the ICC code series is 2024. The NPS has also adopted the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 101 Life Safety Code for use when IBC is silent.

Treatment recommendations concerning code compliance have been evaluated holistically and considered through compliance alternatives as documented in IEBC Chapter 12, "Historic Buildings." Attempts to strictly align the treatment of historic structures to code requirements for new construction can lead to alterations of historic materials, which may affect the property's significance and integrity.

Life Safety and Fire Protection in the Home

Life safety and fire protection consultants were not included within the scope of this report development. Life safety and fire protection analysis should be developed along with any significant future design and construction projects.

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home will continue to be used as a house museum. The IBC categorizes buildings by their Occupancy Classifications, which are then used to determine occupant load and life safety requirements.

Museum buildings are typically designated as Assembly Group A-3, with a maximum occupant load of 1 person per 30 net square feet. With a net area of around 900 square feet, the occupant load of the building would be 30, and the IBC directs that buildings with Assembly occupant loads less than 50 persons are, instead, to be classified as Business Group B. Chapter 12 of the IEBC, "Historic Buildings," contains a parallel but more expansive provision, allowing house museums with less than 3,000 square feet per floor to be designated as Group B when approved by the authority having jurisdiction. Because of the small size of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home, this exception is not necessary.

NPS intends to limit visitors to a maximum of ten people per group. Because there is no intention to modify the carport entrance to bring it into full code compliance, the building should be considered under the IBC as having a single exit served by the rear door, which is part of an exit path that is having its accessibility features improved. Both Group A-3 and Group B occupancies limit single-exit buildings to an occupant load of 49 persons.

In new construction and additions, the occupancy group would inform the number of required plumbing fixtures. This does not apply in the case of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home as visitor and staff facilities will be provided in other locations. The existing restroom will not be operational.

The home has a sprinkler system. Treatment recommendations call for the installation of a replacement mist system, which would cause less damage to historic building material if triggered.

Hazardous Materials

The project team did not include a hazardous materials specialist. A Regulated Materials Survey was conducted in 2020. See the 2021 Condition Assessment's "Environmental Report" in the Appendix for a full assessment. It notes that the drywall joint compound is an asbestos-containing material.

The United States banned lead-based paint in residential homes in 1978. The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home was constructed in 1956-1957. It may

have several layers of lead-based paint under layers of non-lead based paint.

Historic records indicate that a large number of the existing shingles on the exterior wall are made with asbestos.

Standards, Laws, and Regulations

Treatment recommendations are in accordance with the following laws and regulations:

- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended
- The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings (2017)
- National Park Service Management Policies (2006), Section 5.3.5 Treatment of Cultural Resources
- NPS-28, National Park Service Cultural Resource Management Guidelines
- NPS Preservation Brief #43 *The Preparation and Use of Historic Structure Reports*
- ABAAS (Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards): Accessibility to sites, facilities, buildings, and elements for new construction and alterations to Federal properties and leased portions of existing buildings or facilities
- Director's Order No. 42: Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities
- Executive Order 13834 issued May 17, 2018, on Efficient Federal Operations on the implementation of sustainable design and construction practices

Historic Preservation Treatment

Treatment recommendations for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home follow established preservation laws and standards.

The NHL program was created under the The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The Medgar and Myrlie Evers home is a NHL.

These treatment recommendations are in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, which addresses four possible treatment approaches: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction.

They are defined as follows:

1. *Preservation*: the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of a historic property. Preservation focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of a property's form as it has evolved over time.
2. *Restoration*: the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. Restoration is undertaken to depict a property at a particular period of time in its history.
3. *Rehabilitation*: the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values. Rehabilitation acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character.
4. *Reconstruction*: the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at

> a specific period of time and in its historic location.[1]

Because the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home no longer serves as a residence and is a house museum, rehabilitation is the recommended treatment approach. Rehabilitation stipulates the preservation of character-defining features.

The development of treatment recommendations also followed the NPS Management Policies (2006), Section 5.3.5 Treatment of Cultural Resources which states:

> The preservation of cultural resources in their existing states will always receive first consideration. Treatments entailing greater intervention will not proceed without the consideration of interpretive alternatives.[2]

1 Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, (US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services: 1995, Revised by Anne E. Grimmer 2017) https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/treatment-guidelines-2017-part1-preservation-rehabilitation.pdf.

2 U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service, *National Park Service Management Policies, 2006*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2006), https://www.nps.gov/subjects/policy/upload/MP_2006.pdf.

The project team consulted a number of relevant NPS Preservation Briefs in the development of these treatment recommendations. The project team also consulted professional guidelines and standards for mid-century modern materials such as poured concrete.

Preservation Planning

The development of this report has followed the guidance set forth in NPS-28, National Park Service Cultural Resource Management Guidelines and NPS Preservation Brief #43 *The Preparation and Use of Historic Structure Reports*.

Visitor Access and Universal Design

In order to provide improved visitor access to the home, these treatment recommendations comply with ABAAS, which include some important compliance alternatives for historic structures.

In new construction and alterations, ABAAS requires accessible spaces provide:

- A surface with a slope not to exceed 1:20 (5%) and a cross slope not to exceed 1:48.
- Ramps with a slope not to exceed 1:12.
- Handrails at ramps and stairs.

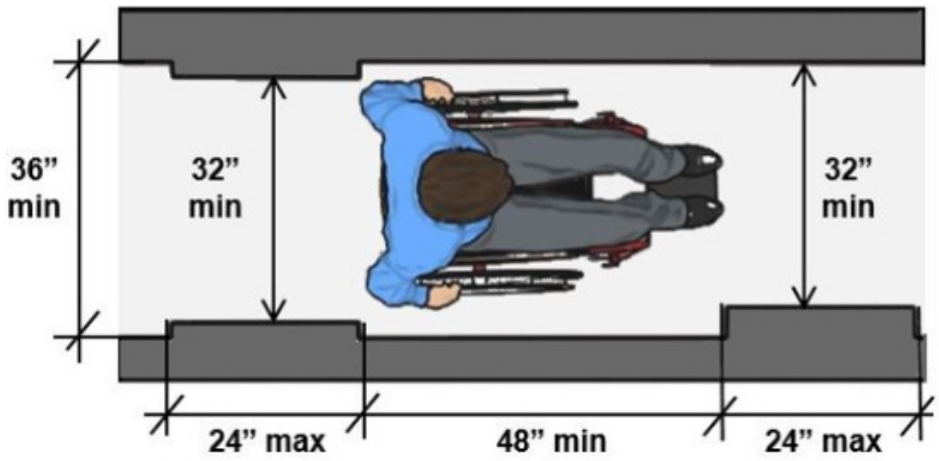


FIGURE 6–1. Clear path width requirements as diagramed in the *Guide to the ABA Accessibility Standards*, 403.5 (source: https://www.access-board.gov/aba/guides/chapter-4-accessible-routes/).

- Clear path that provides a thirty-six inch minimum width, with short passages at no less than a thirty-two inch width (Figure 6–1).

- Clear areas that allow for turning and maneuvering (Figure 6–2).

- Maneuvering areas and door hardware that allows for one handed opening.

ABAAS F202 Existing Buildings and Facilities outlines the application of ABAAS to existing and historic buildings. ABAAS F202.2 Additions requires that additions to existing buildings comply with its standards for new construction. No additions are recommended for the treatment of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home. ABAAS F202.3 Alterations states, "where existing elements or spaces are altered, each altered element or space shall comply with the applicable requirements." Treatment recommendations call for the inclusion of a ramp at the rear entry door. This ramp will be designed in compliance with ABAAS and should integrate principles of universal design.

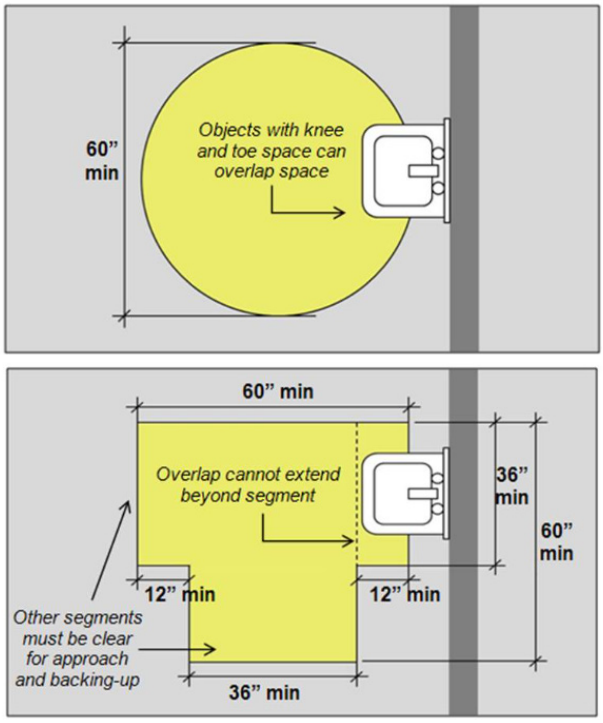


FIGURE 6–2. Circular and T-shaped turning space as diagramed in the *Guide to the ABA Accessibility Standards*, 304.3.

Should the NPS consider additional alterations in the future, ABAAS allows for the following exception:

> Where the State Historic Preservation Officer or Advisory Council on Historic Preservation determines that compliance with the requirements for accessible routes, entrances, or toilet facilities would threaten or destroy the historic significance of the building or facility, the exceptions for alterations to qualified historic buildings or facilities for that element shall be permitted to apply.[3]

Treatment recommendations also meet the applicable goals and objectives identified in Director's Order No. 42: Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities, including:

> 1. Incorporate the long range goal of providing the highest level of accessibility that is reasonable for people of all abilities in all facilities, programs, and services, instead of providing "separate" or "special" programs.
>
> 5. Ensure the implementation of "universal design" principles within the national park system.[4]

The addition of an accessible path and ramp provides a high level of accessibility and embraces principals of universal design.

Sustainable Design

The NPS is committed to sustainable design and the low-carbon operation of its facilities. In the development of these treatment recommendations, the project team considered Executive Order 13834, issued May 17, 2018, on Efficient Federal Operations, which calls for improved energy and environmental performance for executive agency facilities, and the *Secretary of the Interior's*

3 U.S. Acess Board, "Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards," accessed September 2024, https://www.access-board.gov/aba/

4 National Park Service, Director's Order No. 42: Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities, November 3 2004, https://www.nps.gov/subjects/policy/upload/DO_42_11-3-2000.pdf.

Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.[5]

The project team considered mechanical system and building envelope modifications to provide improved energy efficiency.

Design for Resilience to Natural Hazards

In order to provide improved resilience to natural hazards, these treatment recommendations consider federal and NPS resilience guidelines.

Climate change is causing irregular and more extreme weather patterns. In Jackson, Mississippi, this may mean increased rain, wind, and temperature fluctuations. In addition, the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home has experienced regular low-level flooding since its construction, a condition exacerbated by leaks in Jackson's drinking water infrastructure.

To preserve the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home and other historically significant structures, the NPS is working to foster climate change resiliency in all its facilities.[6] The development of the treatment recommendations considered the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Guidelines on Flood Adaptation for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, which provides direction for site and landscape measures and protection of utilities.[7] Site and landscape measures have been evaluated in the *2024 CLR*. This report's treatment recommendation options for the first floor framing, the crawl space, and mechanical ducts currently running within the crawl space have been informed by these guidelines.

5 Anne E. Grimmer, Jo Ellen Hensley, Liz Petrella, and | Audrey T. Tepper, "Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings," (US Department of the Interior: 2011), https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/sustainability-guidelines.pdf.

6 "Climate Change Resiliency,"National Park Service, accessed August 2024, https://www.nps.gov/subjects/sustainability/resiliency.htm.

7 Jenifer Eggleston, Jennifer Parker, and Jennifer Wellock, "Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Guidelines on Flood Adaptation for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings," (US Department of the Interior, 2021), https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/flood-adaptation-guidelines-2021.pdf.

Chapter 7: Alternatives for Treatment

Introduction

This chapter presents and evaluates alternative approaches to help determine the ultimate treatment for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home. Alternatives for the treatment of the property are organized around the management objectives, as follows:

- Preserve the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home as an interpretive site. Selectively restore features to the home's period of significance.
- Improve visitor access to the home.
- Improve sustainability.
- Improve resiliency to natural hazards.

This chapter addresses alternatives for treatment for access, sustainability, and resiliency in conjunction with the over-arching objective of preserving the home as an interpretive site.

Visitor Access and Universal Design

Improved visitor access to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home is a management objective that requires consideration of modifications to character-defining features that contribute to the home's significance and integrity. The project team considered the following aspects:

- Entry
- Circulation
- Egress
- Door hardware

The team identified treatment options that would address each challenge and evaluated them in combination with the preservation management objectives and standards for rehabilitation.

Virtual Interpretation

The NPS can provide interpretation through a 360-degree virtual tour or an interpretive sign and tactile model installed at the entrance to the site. This would provide an interpretation option for visitors who cannot fully access the site.

Entry

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home was constructed before the passage of the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) in 1968 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990.[1] As a private single-family home, neither of these laws would impose any new access requirements, but as a federal facility and an interpretive site open to the public, the ABA Accessibility Standards (ABAAS) currently apply. The home's interior floor elevation is roughly two feet above grade, with access through two entry doors that each feature concrete steps, a concrete landing, and a roughly six-inch step up to the threshold. The main entry at the carport has a 36-inch wide door that provides a wide enough opening to be compliant with ABAAS (32 inches). The rear entry door has a 30-inch clear opening that is narrower than what would be compliant with ABAAS (32 inches).

When the home became a house museum, Tougaloo College considered options for providing an accessible entry path but ultimately did not include that treatment in their 1995 and 2013 rehabilitation projects.[2]

As of the condition assessment site visit in November 2022, the home did not have an accessible path for entry and exit (Figure 7–1, Figure 7–2). However, as part of the preparations for the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the assassination of Medgar Evers, the NPS installed a paved walkway along the west side of the driveway leading to the backyard and a temporary wooden ramp and stair leading to the rear entry door (Figure 7–3). See the 2024 CLR for additional recommendations for the treatment of the path.

To address visitor entry, the project team considered the following options. In all options, an accessible path is defined as a 36-inch wide path that is stable, firm, and slip resistant with a cross slope less than 1:48.

1 Note on ABA and ADA: Congress passed the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA), the first federal law to address accessibility, in 1968. It requires federal facilities to be accessible to all. The ABA and its standards (ABAAS) apply to federal facilities including those managed by the NPS. The Americans with Disabilities Act, legislation to protect the rights of people with disabilities, was passed in 1990. Under the ADA, all new building construction and alterations must meet accessibility requirements. "History of the U.S. Access Board: 1968 – The Architectural Barriers Act Becomes Law," U.S. Access Board, accessed August 2024, https://www.access-board.gov/about/history.html.

2 Lawson Newman interview, November 9, 2023.



FIGURE 7–1. View of main entry at the carport as of November 2022 (source: BBB, 2022).

- Option 1a - RECOMMENDED: Remove temporary ramp and stair. Provide a permanent accessible path around the driveway. Provide a permanent ramp with ABAAS compliant railings up to the rear entry door. See the 2024 CLR for information on ramp design and coordination with the accessible path. The ramp should be built around and above the existing path and landing, and the construction should be reversible. Preserve the original rear entry door frame and provide a standard wheelchair (roughly 25 inches wide) for visitors as needed. The wheelchair could be stored in the carport storage closet for immediate access. SHPO concurs with this option.

- Option 1b: Provide ramp treatment described in Option 1a. Widen the rear entry door frame to provide an ABAAS-compliant clear width opening of 32 inches. Coordinate the wider frame opening with interior features (Figure 7–2, right).



FIGURE 7–3. Views of the accessible path and ramp as of summer 2023 from the street looking north (top) and the backyard looking south (bottom) (source: ERO, 2023).





FIGURE 7–2. View of rear entry from the exterior looking south (left) and from the interior (right) as of November 2022 (source: BBB, 2022).

- Option 1c: Provide ramp treatment described in Option 1a. Rehang the rear entry doors (screen door and interior door) with swing-clear hinges that, when open, provide a wider opening than a standard hinge door (Figure 7–4). Even with the use of the swing-clear hinges, the door approach clearances would not comply with the ABAAS.

- Option 1d: Provide an accessible path around the driveway to a lift and new platform at the rear entry door.

- Option 2: Provide an accessible path up the driveway into the carport and provide a ramp or lift at the main entry.

- Option 3: Preserve the main and rear entry paths in their original form. Provide interpretation through a 360-degree virtual tour or an interpretive sign and tactile model installed at the entrance to the site.

Option 1a is recommended because it provides an accessible path to an entry, protects the significance and integrity of the carport, and minimizes alterations to the rear entry door and other surrounding character-defining features. The Mississippi State Historic Preservation Officer has agreed that modifications to the rear entrance itself would impair the integrity and character of this National Historic Landmark, so specific ABA exceptions apply at the doorway. Consistent with NPS Director's Order #42, alternative methods of achieving program access for visitors unable to physically access the home's interior are required. As part of this option, the NPS plans to provide a wheelchair that is smaller than the doorways for visitors as needed. The NPS used this approach at the 60th anniversary commemoration event in June 2023 and found it successful.

Option 1b was considered because it would provide limited improved access, but it was dismissed because it would require alterations to character-defining features. A widened rear entry door would only provide access to the small kitchen, which itself provides a limited turning radius. Interior doorways from the kitchen to the dining room and hallways do not meet the ABAAS thirty-two inch clearance (see Circulation narrative). To widen the rear entry door, the door frame and exterior and interior door surrounds, as well as the built-in wood shelf and kitchen cabinet would have to be modified (Figure 7–2, right). These are original character-defining-features.

Option 1c was considered and dismissed for the same reasons as Option 1b. Option 1c is far less intrusive than Option 1b, but it does alter the appearance of the door and its integrity. Note, this is a relatively unobtrusive treatment measure. At any time in the future, NPS can decide to replace the hinges to allow for additional clearance (approximately two inches) at the back door. It is important to note that because of the limited turning radius within the kitchen, without also modifying the circulation path to the dining room, this option does not create an accessible path for a visitor to exit the building once it has been entered.

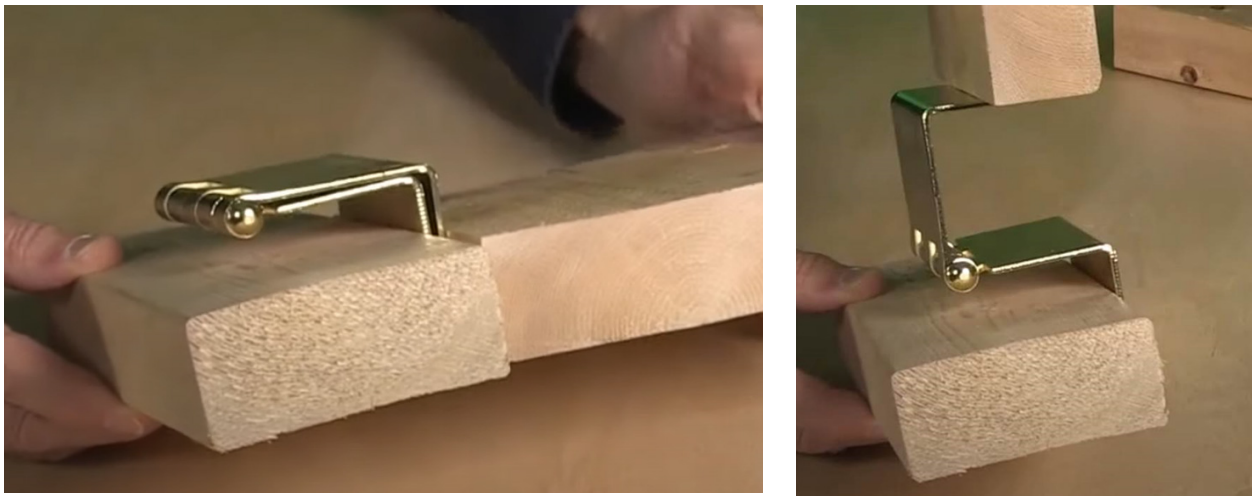


FIGURE 7–4. Swing-clear style hinge closed (left) and open (right).

Option 1d was considered and dismissed because a lift would have as much or more of an impact to the character-defining features, provide a less fluid visitor experience, and would require regular routine maintenance. Exterior lifts are prone to malfunction, and a purely mechanical solution is not recommended.

Option 2 was considered for its provision of an accessible entrance at the main entry, but was dismissed in recognition of the significance of the driveway, carport, and main entry as the site of the assassination of Medgar Evers. These areas should be preserved and alterations to their historic material avoided (Figure 7–1).

Option 3 was considered for its preservation value, but was dismissed as a sole solution because NPS wants to provide access to the home to all visitors. The use of a 360-degree virtual tour or an interpretive sign and tactile model installed at the entrance to the site is recommended as an additional solution with all options.

Egress

As a house museum with a floor area of around 900 square feet, the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home is required to have only one means of egress. The home was constructed with two exterior doors that provide egress via exterior concrete landings with steps: the primary carport entry and a rear entry to the kitchen. For construction of a new museum property, the building code would require that any exits provide code-compliant egress paths. Any allowed exterior landings and steps would have the landings level with the interior floor elevation and steps would be equipped with handrails.

To address egress the project team considered the following options:

- Option 1 - RECOMMENDED: Provide an ABAAS and code-compliant ramp at the rear entry door (see Entry). Preserve the main entry door, landing, and stair, unaltered.

- Option 2: Provide an ABAAS and code-compliant ramp at the rear entry door (see Entry). Assuming that two means of egress may be desirable for management purposes, provide a code-compliant landing and stairs at carport entry, with the landing level with the interior floor elevation, stairs adjusted to this new landing height, and handrails.

- Option 3: Provide an ABAAS and code-compliant ramp at the rear entry door (see Entry). Provide a wrought-iron handrail at the existing landing and stair at the carport entry (Figure 7–5).

- Option 4: Preserve both entry doors and paths in their existing conditions.

Option 1 is recommended because it offers a code-compliant solution at the rear entry while preserving the significance and integrity of the carport and main entry, areas that should be preserved (Figure 7–1). Because the house has operated as a museum for many years and modifications have been permitted in the past for its change of use from a residence, the existing conditions at the rear entry and carport entry are presumed to have been judged by the authority having jurisdiction as sufficient for satisfying



FIGURE 7–5. View of carport with annotation showing the approximate location of a handrail considered in Egress Option 3 and dismissed (source: BBB, 2022).

life safety considerations in accordance with the provisions for Historic Structures within the IEBC.

Option 2 was considered for its compliance with code, as intended for new construction, but was dismissed in recognition of the significance of the carport and main entry as the site of the assassination of Medgar Evers. For the same reason as in Option 1, this modification is not required by building code.

Option 3 was considered for improved safety but was dismissed in recognition of the significance of the main entry. For the same reason as in Option 1, this modification is not required by code, and safety concerns are minimal since the carport entrance is not a required exit and is not used for visitor access or egress.

Option 4 was considered for its preservation of character-defining features in a National Historic Landmark, but was dismissed because of accessibility considerations (see Entry narrative).

Circulation

The home's interior spaces are small and its doorways narrow (Figure 7–6, Figure 7–7). In its current form, the home does not provide circulation that meets ABAAS. All doorways, with the exception of the main/carport entry, provide clear openings under the ABA 32-inch standard. Visitors arriving at the rear entry will enter through a 30-inch clear doorway (see Entry narrative). The kitchen, with appliances installed, provides just under the ABA standard of a five-foot diameter turning area for wheelchairs (Figure 7–8). The doorway from the kitchen to the dining room provides a 30-inch clear opening. The doorway from the kitchen to the hallway provides a 24-inch clear opening, narrower than the standard wheelchair. The door between the living room and hallway has a 28-1/2-inch clear opening. The hallway is 36 inches wide and leads to bedroom doorways that provide 28-1/2-inch clear openings to each bedroom. As such. a person with a wide wheelchair or mobility device would find it challenging to navigate the home's interior spaces. Per ABAAS, doors in new construction should have maneuvering clearances, or clear areas to approach, open, and close doors. None of the doors beyond the entrance to the hallway provides adequate maneuvering clearance according to ABAAS. The hallway door itself does not provide adequate maneuvering clearance for a person in a wheelchair to be able to exit back into the living room if access had already been made beyond this point.



FIGURE 7–6. View from living room into the kitchen. Built-in wood shelf highlighted in red (source: BBB, 2022).

The door frames are original, some door leaves are likely original, and others are replacements (Figure 7–7). The kitchen layout is original as are some of its finishes. The built-in wood shelving between the kitchen and dining room is original with some minor modifications. It is missing its pivot door. The kitchen appliances are non-original but are from the period, and their spatial relationships and the kitchen layout retains integrity.

To address circulation, the project team considered the following options:

- Option 1- RECOMMENDED: Preserve the door frames and existing kitchen layout. Provide a standard wheelchair (roughly 25 inches wide) for visitors, as needed, which will allow most visitors to access the dining and living rooms, though not conforming with ABAAS requirements. The wheelchair could be stored in the carport storage closet for immediate access. Provide interpretation through a 360-degree virtual tour or an interpretive sign and tactile model installed at the entrance to the site.

- Option 2: Widen the door frame at the built-in wood shelving between the kitchen and the dining room to provide an ABA standard clear path between the kitchen and dining room.

FIGURE 7–7. (Right) Opening schedule including clear widths. Opening numbering is based on the 2021 Condition Assessment. Door widths are informed by the WFT 1995 rehabilitation drawing set (source: BBB, 2023).

Opening Schedule and Clear Width					
Number	**Location**	**Original Leaf**	**Width (Inches)**	**Thickness (Inches)**	**Clear Width* (Inches)**
01A	Main Entry	No	36	1-3/4	34-1/4
01B	Storage	Likely	32	1-3/8	30-1/2
02A	Rear Entry	No	32	1-3/4	30-1/4
02B	Kitchen	No Door	No Door	No Door	24
02C	Kitchen	No Door	No Door	No Door	30
03A	Hallway	Likely	30	1-3/8	28-1/2
03B	Mech. Closet	Likely	18	1-3/8	16-1/2
04A	Bathroom	Likely	24	1-3/8	22-1/2
05A	Bedroom 1	No	30	1-3/8	28-1/2
05B	Bd. 1 Closet	Likely	24	1-3/8	22-1/2
06A	Bedroom 2	Likely	30	1-3/8	28-1/2
06B	Bd. 2 Closet	No	24	1-3/8	22-1/2
07A	Bedroom 3	Likely	30	1-3/8	28-1/2
07B	Bd. 3 Closet	Likely	24	1-3/8	22-1/2

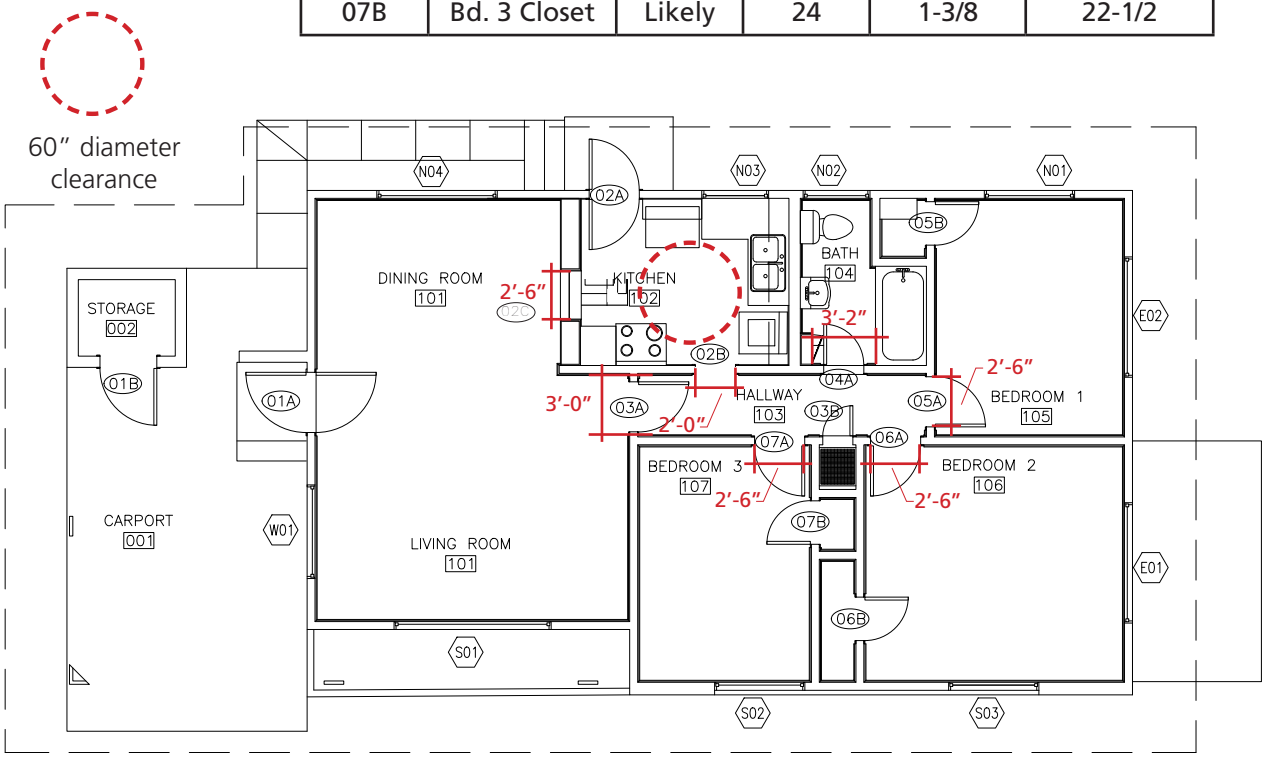


FIGURE 7–8. Floor plan of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home (source: BBB, 2023).

- Option 3: Widen all doorways and door frames to provide ABA standard clear openings and widen the hallway to provide ABA standard maneuvering clearances at hallway door and doors to bedrooms. Replace non-original appliances with smaller models to increase the circulation space in the kitchen.

Option 1 is recommended because it preserves the significance and integrity of the original door frames and surrounding material. It also provides a path with clear widths from the kitchen to the dining room that are similar to that at the rear entry door. This means a person who can navigate in through the rear door should also be able to move from the kitchen into the dining room and living room.

Option 2 was considered because it would provide ABAAS-compliant circulation throughout a larger portion of the home. It was dismissed because it would require the alteration of the wood shelving, a character-defining feature, and would provide a level of compliance that will not be achieved at the rear entry door (see Entry narrative).

Option 3 was considered because it is the most ABAAS-compliant approach, postulated to study the reasonability of changes that would be required to meet the management objective, as stated in NPS Director's Order #42. It would provide the highest level of accessibility that is practical within the building. However, it was dismissed because it would require extensive and drastic alterations to character-defining features in nearly every space of the house, including the overall floor plan, the door frames, the surrounding walls, kitchen features, and the built-in wood shelving in order to provide ABAAS-compliant access to a series of small spaces, which would be made even smaller through implementation of these alterations. Some doors would be required to be removed and not be replaced.

Door Hardware

Per ABAAS, doors in new construction should have accessible door hardware with handles that allow for easy, one-handed opening. Door knobs found throughout the house are not accessibly designed hardware.

To address door hardware, the project team considered the following options:

- Option 1 - RECOMMENDED: Preserve existing door hardware and rehabilitate altered or damaged door hardware.



FIGURE 7–9. Door knob on the hallway door, likely original (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 7–10. Example of an accessible door handle.

- Option 2: Provide new hardware with accessible handles like that used for ABAAS-compliant new construction.

Option 1 is recommended because it preserves the significance and integrity of the doors and interior spaces. Door handles would interject a contemporary feature into rooms that otherwise retain their 1950s mid-century modern style (Figure 7–9, Figure 7–10). Door hardware with accessible handles are not necessary for visitor accessibility as doors are typically kept open. Doors that are closed will not need to be opened by visitors and will be opened infrequently by NPS staff. Visitor entry to the building from the exterior will always be facilitated by staff, regardless of whether visitors have mobility limitations.

Option 2 was considered for its improved universal design but was dismissed because the replacement of door hardware would impact the integrity of the home's interior.

Sustainability

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home was constructed without air conditioning and with minimal insulation. It is located in Jackson, Mississippi, which is in what ASHRAE defines as climate zone 3A, warm and humid. Building codes establish minimum requirements for wall, ceiling, and floor insulation for new construction based on ASHRAE climate zones. Because these requirements do not apply to existing buildings that are not undergoing significant alterations, they do not apply to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home. However, improved sustainable design and operation at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home is a management objective. To that end, the project team considered the following:

- Replacement of or alterations to the mechanical system equipment

- Retrofit of the building envelope

The team identified treatment options that would address each challenge and evaluated them in combination with the preservation management objective and standards for rehabilitation.

Future Studies

The project team did not include mechanical engineers or building envelope performance experts. The following treatment options are based on architectural observations and recommendations provided by engineers in the 2021 Condition Assessment. Before the NPS undertakes treatment of the mechanical system or building envelope, a mechanical study and

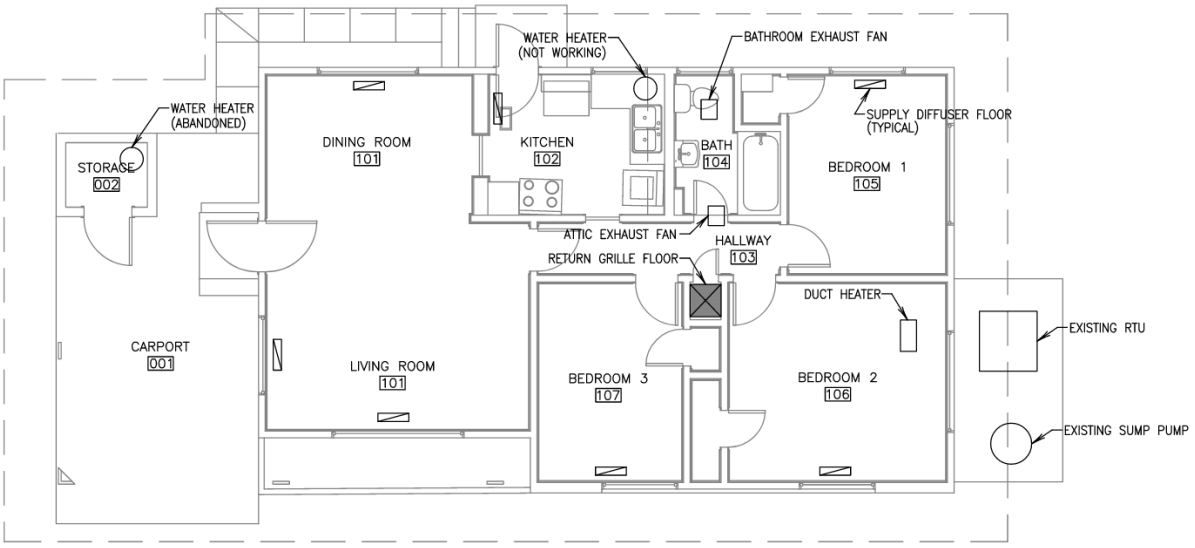


FIGURE 7–11. Mechanical and plumbing floor plan developed for the 2021 Condition Assessment (source: Lord Aeck Sargent, "Condition Assessment," 2021).

an envelope study should be completed by the relevant experts.

Mechanical System

The Everses added a through-wall air-conditioning unit at the exterior wall between the carport and the dining room in 1963, which remains in place but is inoperable. A second through-wall air-conditioning unit was added to the front/south façade during the rental period. It was removed and the opening patched and repaired during the 1995 rehabilitation.[3] A new heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system was installed as part of the 2013 rehabilitation. Equipment was located at the east façade, and air ducts were run through the crawl space below the floor to serve each room (Figure 7–11).

According to the 2021 Condition Assessment, the existing mechanical equipment is oversized and the home experiences moisture challenges. In an interview, WFT Architects noted that, prior to NPS ownership, the house museum staff typically turned on the air-conditioning only during the museum's limited hours of operation. The minimal use of the air-conditioning equipment may have contributed to the high indoor humidity.[4]

Should NPS want to replace the system, a mechanical engineer should undertake a study of alternative equipment options for improved efficiency, consulting the ASHRAE GreenGuide. The mechanical design should evaluate equipment with a strong dehumidification component in conjunction with a building performance study. The mechanical design should also factor in flood risks and explore relocating the ductwork.

Building Envelope

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home was constructed with minimal insulation, no vapor barrier, and single-pane windows (Figure 7–12). It has a porous envelope that lets in heat and humidity in the summer and cold in the winter. It also lets in moisture through the walls.

Without an air or vapor barrier or adequate insulation, the home's building envelope does not meet ASHRAE standards for new construction. As an existing building, the home is not required to meet the code's standards for building envelope energy efficiency when no significant alterations are being undertaken.

All changes to envelope layers and insulation should be evaluated through a building envelope performance model to assess movement in temperature and moisture. Changes to envelope construction could inadvertently trap moisture and lead to mold and rot.

To address building envelope performance concerns, the project team considered the following options:

Exterior Walls:

- Option 1 - RECOMMENDED: Preserve the existing exterior walls. As repairs are required (e.g. at the brick veneer wall on the south façade), a building envelope specialist should evaluate the application of a vapor barrier and additional or different insulation to the opened area of the exterior wall. See Chapter 9: *Recommendations for Treatment* for repair recommendations for the brick veneer wall. To minimize air infiltration, install a tight seal around windows and doors, and around any penetrations for MEP systems. A blower door test could be used to identify all the air leaks.

- Option 2: Conduct a building envelope performance study of the wall construction. Remove and reconstruct the interior face of all exterior walls with improved insulation and a vapor barrier. Original gypsum board could be removed, preserved off site, and reinstalled.

Option 1 is recommended because it retains a significant amount of original historic material in the exterior walls while allowing for alterations at locations already undergoing repair.

Option 2 was considered for its likely improvements to the wall's energy performance but was dismissed because it would alter original historic material and likely thicken the exterior walls, which would also alter the integrity of interior spaces within a National Historic

3 Lord Aeck Sargent, "Condition Assessment," 2021; WFT, "Medgar Evers Home Historic Structure Report," 1995

4 Lawson Newman interview, November 9, 2023.

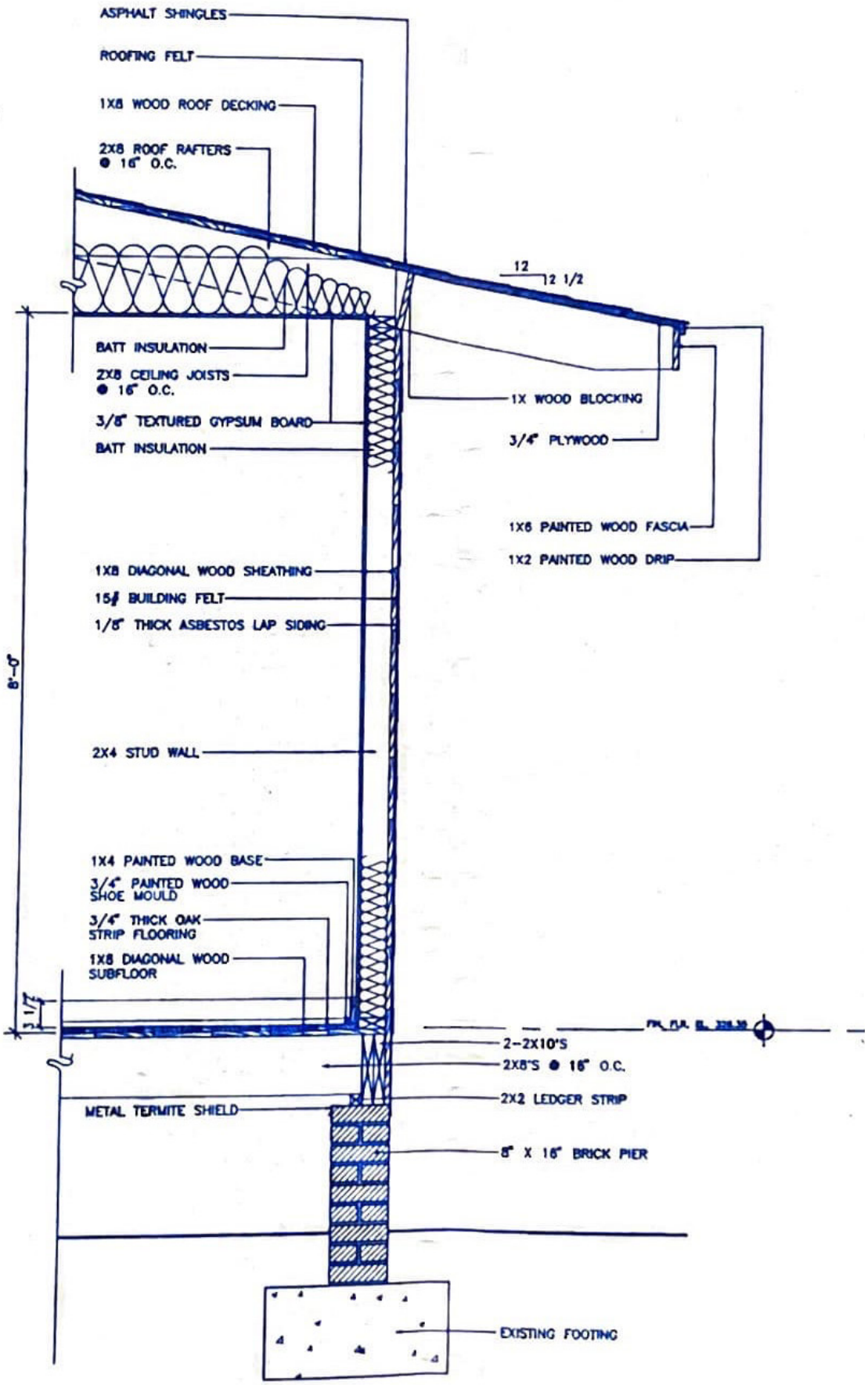


FIGURE 7–12. Wall section showing existing wall as of 1994, before the first rehabilitation project (source: WFT Architects, 1995).

Landmark. Hazardous materials testing conducted as part of the 2021 Condition Assessment also found traces of asbestos in the drywall joint compound.

Foundation:

Conduct a building envelope performance study of the foundation as part of the envelope assessment. Evaluate:

- The number and performance of vents. Existing vents may trap moisture. Improved or additional vents would provide additional ventilation, allowing humid air to exit the space. If additional vents are added, provide louvers behind vents. Envelope treatment should be coordinated with mechanical study.

- Whether a powered ventilation system with humidstatic control could improve conditions within the crawl space.

Note: The 2021 Condition Assessment recommends the installation of flashing at the transition from asbestos-cement shingle siding to the brick foundation. Crawl spaces are typically designed to allow some moisture. This treatment recommendation should be evaluated as part of the envelope analysis.

Floor and Crawl Space:

Addressing the water and moisture in the crawl space is the most critical issue for the longevity of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home. It is also intrinsically tied to the resiliency of the site. To preserve the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home, NPS has prioritized resiliency from natural hazards as a management objective. In Jackson, Mississippi, natural hazards include increased rain, wind, and temperature fluctuations.

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home has experienced regular, low-level flooding since its construction. Medgar Evers corresponded with the home builders about water drainage shortly after they moved into the home. Sometime in the 2010s, WFT Architects reported that a water inspector found potable water in the ground, meaning that drinking water from the city's water systems is contributing to the site's excess ground water. See the 2024 CLR for analysis of water retention and movement within the landscape.

Insulated mechanical ducts were installed in the crawl space as part of the new HVAC system in the 2013 rehabilitation (Figure 7–14). A trench drain (or French drain) was also installed in the crawl space concrete slab and was connected to a sump pump as part of the 2013 rehabilitation. Prior to the 2013 repairs, the floor framing was damaged from rot, powder post beetle infestation, and/or termite infestation. The 2021 Condition Assessment describes "signs of significant water and moisture



FIGURE 7–13. Existing floor insulation viewed from crawl space (left) and existing vent in foundation wall at the north façade (right) (source: BBB, 2022).

are still present within the crawl space."[5] The hazardous materials testing that was part of the 2021 Condition Assessment also found "elevated indoor airborne concentrations of fungal spores" (mold) as compared to outdoor air samples. It is likely that the main source of mold begins in the crawl space.[6]

That the 2013 rehabilitation included the removal and replacement of most of the structure's floor framing, subfloor, and finish flooring is evidence of the dire nature of this problem if not adequately addressed, both as an initial treatment and as ongoing maintenance concern. As a National Historic Landmark, it is critical that such drastic actions are not again required in the future because treatments address only the symptoms of the problem – dampness, mold, and potential rot – rather than the cause.

The project team for this HSR did not include mechanical or civil engineering consultants or building envelope specialists. Efforts to address the ongoing water and moisture challenges of the site should engage these specialists in order to ensure that changes and adaptations to address one aspect of the problem do not have negative repercussions on another.

As originally designed, the crawl space allowed relatively free movement of air below the house through the open pier structure at the north and east façades. The later infill of the spaces between the brick piers creates challenges for retaining sufficient passive ventilation of the crawl space. The lowered floor of the crawl space enables seepage of water through the foundation walls in periods of ground saturation. Originally constructed without air conditioning, maintaining a lower, controlled temperature within the main level of the house when exterior conditions are hotter and more humid—common conditions in Jackson's climate —creates dewpoint concerns in the crawl space, encouraging the condensation of water vapor either within the floor insulation or on the lower surfaces of the subfloor itself. Reliance on passive crawl space ventilation, even if the entrance of liquid water into the space is assiduously controlled, may not be sufficient to remove the moisture created by condensation of water vapor.

The project team did not see moisture in the crawl space in November 2022 but did see indications of prior moisture (Figure 7–15). NPS staff reports that when the trench drain is maintained, they do not observe moisture in the crawl space. In spring 2024, after a series of bad storms NPS staff reported the following:

- The sump pit, located outside the building on the east side, is very deep, so it has a relatively large holding capacity below the inverts of the pipes. The pump sits at the bottom.

- There are three pipe entrances: one from the crawl space, one from the trench drain system, and an exit to the street.

- The sump pump is not working, so all portions of the system were backing up, because there are no backflow preventers on any of the pipes.

- The line that runs to the street is small (likely an inch in diameter). The line is not meant to be a gravity drain from the house but connected to the discharge hose from the pump. The line does have some fall, but the amount of gravity flow through a pipe that size is small. The pump hose is disconnected from the outflow pipe.

- The NPS dropped a temporary pump in the pit and was able to pump out both the crawl space and the trench drain system. Doing so confirmed that the slope of the crawl space slab is to the drain.

- There is a conduit entering the pit as well, which carries the electrical. There are currently two lines: one that connects the pump and one to the float switch.

To address water and moisture in the crawl space, the project team considered various potential system components. However, this report does not make recommendations on them because a holistic, permanently maintainable solution needs to involve mechanical engineers and building envelope specialists. A future mechanical engineering and building envelope study should:

- Assess the existing trench drain, pit, and sump pump. Specifically, the study should identify the failure point of the sump pump.

5 Lord Aeck Sargent, 2021 Condition Assessment, 11.

6 Lord Aeck Sargents, 2021 Condition Assessment, 11.

- Make recommendations for a new commercial-grade submersible pump; ensure new pump has an alarm to indicate when there is a failure. Ensure that the new system has a water alarm that would indicate that water could be backing up into other systems.

- Consider adding a backflow preventer to the line coming from the crawl space, to help limit the possibility that water from any other direction (in the case of a failure elsewhere) backs up into the house.

- Consider installation of a secondary, redundant pump that can be placed at a higher elevation to reduce the risk of system failure due to water exposure or materials becoming clogged, which may result in poor drainage or overflow problems.

- Consider replacing the existing trench drain below the house with one that has a larger capacity. Note: an additional trench drain was installed under the permeable stone paver path in 2023 to mitigate drainage flow near the building's foundation. It connects to the trench drain installed during the 2013 improvements and wraps around all sides of the building. See the 2024 CLR for further details.

- Consider the replacement of the existing insulation at the floor system above the crawl space. Fiberglass batt insulation does not perform well in damp environments or in locations where it can become wet. Given the evidence of past flooding in the crawl space and past mold tests, it is likely that this insulation is contaminated and may foster further mold growth in recurring damp conditions. Replacement with a material that is more resilient to and less affected by wetting, such as mineral wool, would likely be a better alternative.

- Consider supplementing the passive ventilation provided by the intermittent foundation vents with an active system in which air is drawn into and evacuated from the crawl space by way of a ducted fan controlled by a humidistat.

- Continue efforts to press the city of Jackson to address the municipal drinking water system's leakage in the vicinity of the site, in recognition of the site's local and national importance and the threats this groundwater surcharge poses to the continued integrity of the structure.

Additionally, the project team noted that the existing ductwork in the crawl space, because it is also insulation-wrapped as required by building and energy codes, provides a similar refuge for mold growth as the insulation in the floor system, but with a greater vulnerability to flooding events. Two potential options are proposed for mitigating this vulnerability. Before implementing either one, the NPS should complete a mechanical study and design that incorporates an evaluation of system maintenance (including access), and the performance costs and benefits of either approach.

- Option 1: Replace existing mechanical ductwork in the crawl space in approximately the existing location. New ductwork and its insulation should be designed with ducts minimized in depth to the extent possible in order to keep the ducts as far from the surface of the slab as practicable. New ductwork and insulation need to be carefully and completely



FIGURE 7–14. Mechanical duct enters the crawl space at the east façade (source: BBB, 2022).

sealed. Duct insulation should be of a type that is less impacted by water and moisture than the existing foil-faced fiberglass.

- Option 2: Replace the majority of the mechanical ducts in the crawl space with a distribution system in the attic. The new distribution system would be connected to the HVAC equipment at the east exterior wall of the house via a duct in the crawl space, to and up through the hallway closet, and into the attic. Within the attic, the main trunk line would run along the attic spine, and the distribution ducts would run between the joists. The attic provides about twenty-four inches of clearance at its peak; roof joists are about eight inches deep.

In either option, the NPS should coordinate duct replacement with the installation of additional floor joists and floor insulation, as access will be far easier when ducts are not in place.

The NPS should also consider consulting a hazardous materials expert to advise on ongoing monitoring for mold spores in the interior air surpassing exterior levels.

Option 1 would have the following advantages:

- The replacement of existing insulated ducts would remove material that may contain mold.
- Replacement of the ducts with a more height-conscious configuration would improve crawl space access.
- Existing supply vent locations in the floor can be reused.
- Existing historic fabric would be minimally impacted.

Option 1 would have the following challenges:

- Without the implementation of a deliberate and holistic approach to the management of water and moisture in the crawl space, the new ducts could be subject to the same conditions that have negatively impacted the existing system and the interior environment of the house.
- Even with duct heights minimized, access within the crawl space for floor repairs or insulation maintenance or replacement will remain limited.



FIGURE 7–15. Crawl space viewed from the opening at the east façade. Unsealed ducts run below open fiberglass insulation. A waterline from past standing water is visible in the brick (source: BBB, 2022).

Option 2 would have the following advantages:

- The replacement of existing insulated ducts would remove material that may contain mold.
- Relocation of the greater portion of the ductwork to the attic minimizes, to the extent possible, the level of potential damage to the mechanical system that would result from water or flood events.
- Relocation of the greater portion of the ductwork to the attic creates better access in the crawl space for underfloor repairs.

Option 2 would have the following challenges:

- Attic space is limited. Design would have to be carefully considered in order to fit the allowable space. Supply grilles would not be able to reach the exterior perimeter of rooms.
- A segment of the supply trunk duct would remain in the crawl space, although replaced.
- Duct installation would require the removal and replacement of portions of the ceiling, work that would have to be done very carefully in order to avoid negative impacts on other original features.
- Ceiling grilles would need to be added to each space, increasing visual clutter, and potentially giving a false historical impression in a house that was built without air conditioning.
- Abandoning the existing vent locations in the floor would require patching and repair of these existing holes in the various flooring types.
- The electrical panel and other services within the hallway closet would need to be relocated for continued access, necessitating additional engineering design in addition to the mechanical system.



FIGURE 7–16. Hallway closet (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 7–17. Existing attic access through louvers in the hallway ceiling (source: BBB, 2022).

Attic:

Conduct a building envelope performance study of the roof and attic construction as part of the envelope assessment. Consider replacement or supplementation of existing loose-fill insulation with higher performing insulation (Figure 7–19).

Windows:

The home's windows are painted steel-frame single-pane windows. They were previously operable but have been painted shut. NPS would like the formerly operable windows to be operable again. The windows have non-original interior Venetian blinds. See Part 1 - Chapter 3 *Physical Description and Condition Assessment* for a description of the individual windows and their existing conditions. See Part 2 - Chapter 9: *Recommendations for Treatment* for preservation treatment recommendations in addition to the following recommended treatment option.

- Option 1 - RECOMMENDED: Preserve, restore (with historic paint colors determined by paint analysis), and seal the existing windows. Consider future treatment as part of a holistic building envelope performance study.

- Option 2: Add interior storm windows. This will likely require the removal of interior window hardware.

- Option 3: Consider replacing the original glazing with vacuum insulated glazing. An expert in historic window restoration would need to be consulted to determine if the existing mullions could support this new glazing.

- Option 4: Replace windows with insulated glass units (IGUs) and thermally improved steel frames and muntins to match the exterior profiles of the historic windows.



FIGURE 7–19. Existing attic insulation (source: BBB, 2022).





FIGURE 7–18. Window S02 on the front façade (left) and a view of its interior profile and hardware (right) (source: BBB, 2022).

Option 1 is recommended because it retains the greatest amount of historic material. The home is a small structure in a warm climate. The amount of energy efficiency provided by window alteration is relatively small. If the windows are to be altered to improve energy performance, it should be considered within a full building envelope framework.

Option 2 was considered for its improved insulation at the windows, but dismissed because it would require the removal of historic material and would change the appearance of the window profiles from the home's interior. It would also prevent window operability.

Options 3 and 4 were considered for their improved insulation but dismissed for their impact to historic material relative to the potential thermal improvement.

Chapter 8: Ultimate Treatment and Use

Introduction

This chapter discusses and analyzes the ultimate treatment and use of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home, as defined in national legislation and NPS planning documents and report development.

Legislation and Planning Documents

The John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (Dingell Act), signed into law on March 12, 2019, authorized the establishment of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument "to preserve, protect, and interpret for the benefit of present and future generations resources associated with the pivotal roles of Medgar and Myrlie Evers in the American Civil Rights Movement."

There is currently no General Management Plan (GMP) for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument. Based on its status as a NHL and the legislated significance, the Management Category for the house is "must be preserved and maintained." The ultimate treatment is Rehabilitation, as characterized in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties*, in order to preserve the historic character but also allow for accessibility and interpretation.

Use

As a unit of the National Park Service, the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument has a visitor use and a Park administrative use. Both require provisions for safety, accessibility, and the ability to remain resilient when faced with increasingly volatile weather considerations.

These use types and their requirements informed the development of treatment recommendations.

As a museum, the International Building Code uses a calculation of 1 person per 30 net square feet as an expected occupant load. Because the home has a net area of roughly 900 square feet, an occupant load of 30 people needs to be planned for when considering egress. Additionally, a building of this use can allow a maximum occupancy of up to 49 people with a single code-compliant exit. NPS intends to limit visitors to ten people per group, but these other occupancy numbers are important for establishing maximums, should other needs arise.

NPS anticipates a visitor arrival sequence in which visitors follow a path around the exterior of the carport, up a ramp, through the rear entry door and into the kitchen. From there, visitors will move into the living room/dining room, then into the bedrooms before exiting from the main entry door. Treatment recommendations consider an accessible visitor experience, balanced with the preservation of the home's historic fabric.

Treatment

The use of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home as a museum is a change of use from the building's original function as a residence. Because the structure has had this museum function through two previous preservation efforts, its continued use as a museum does not at this time constitute an additional change of use from a building code perspective. With the current management objectives of improving the building's visitor accessibility, resiliency, and energy efficiency, the ultimate treatment for management purposes has been defined as Rehabilitation.

Preservation within Rehabilitation

The NPS's default treatment approach for historic structures is Preservation. For this structure, the baseline treatment approach for all character-defining features should be understood as Preservation. The ultimate treatment approach of Rehabilitation allows for select modifications to character-defining features to accommodate specific management objectives. All treatment recommendations are in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, Rehabilitation Standards & Guidelines*, which emphasize a Preservation approach, protecting the integrity of the home while allowing limited reversible modifications that support its function and use as a National Monument open to the public.

Rehabilitation

The Secretary of the Interior defines Rehabilitation as:

> The act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.[1]

The Secretary of the Interior provides the following rehabilitation standards:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to

1 Weeks and Grimmer, The Secretary of the Interior's Standards, 2017, 75.

protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.[2]

Treatment recommendations for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home include minimal changes, balancing management objectives with the preservation of historic character, features, and spatial relationships.

Treatment recommendations do not include the addition of any conjectural features. Past treatment, including rehabilitations completed in 1995 and 2013, introduced a limited number of conjectural elements including the sink, toilet, and kitchen wallpaper. These features will be retained. This report notes their status as non-original features.

Treatment recommendations include the preservation of character-defining features typical of Ranch-style home construction, such as the low profile and roof line, the carport with its wrought-iron posts, and the decorative brickwork.

Deteriorated historic features, such as the brick veneer wall and the concrete landing, will be repaired and not replaced.

Further paint analysis and future cleaning are recommended to be undertaken with sensitivity, using the gentlest means possible.

Archeological resources are addressed in the 2024 CLR.

No additions are planned for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home.

2 Weeks and Grimmer, The Secretary of the Interior's Standards, 2017, 76.

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Chapter 9: Recommendations for Treatment

Introduction

This chapter provides treatment recommendations organized by character-defining features, following the organizational structural established in Part 1 - Chapter 4: *Physical Description and Condition Assessment*, including exterior and interior architectural features and building systems. See Part 2 - Chapter 7: *Alternatives for Treatment* for treatment options and analysis for building features related to management objectives. Where applicable, treatment recommendations provided in this chapter elaborate on the selected treatment options.

The project team did not include structural, mechanical, plumbing, electrical, or security engineers or hazardous materials and building envelope experts. The 2021 Condition Assessment, included as an Appendix provides some guidance on disciplines not addressed in this report. Treatment recommendations note the need for further study and engineering as appropriate.

General Notes

All contractors implementing recommended treatments should have demonstrated experience working on historic buildings. Mock-ups should be required for all treatments that are visible to the public before implementation.

Accessible Entry

What follows is a description of the recommended treatment option for providing an accessible entry. See Part 2 - Chapter 7: *Alternatives for Treatment* for treatment options and analysis.

Recommendation:
Replace the existing, temporary wood ramp and stair with an ABAAS-compliant ramp that extends from the new accessible path, as recommended in the 2024 CLR, to a platform level with the interior floor elevation. An accessible ramp is defined as a thirty-six inch wide stable, firm, and slip resistant path with a slope of less than 1:12, a cross slope less than 1:48, and handrails. The ramp should lead to a landing that provides a comfortable turning radius for wheelchairs and creates a less than a one-half inch threshold at the existing rear entry door.

The ramp should be of a simple design, constructed with materials that are in keeping with the home's architectural style but are visually distinct. This could be achieved through a brick and poured concrete ramp, similar in style but distinct in craftsmanship from the existing home's foundation, entry stairs, and walkways. Provide a simple, post-mounted metal handrail with no escutcheons, similar in style to the wrought-iron posts at the carport. The ramp should be a permanent feature, but constructed so that impact to historic fabric is reversible. See the 2024 CLR for further description and a precedent image.

Paint

Paint Analysis

No detailed paint analysis has been undertaken at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home.

The current exterior paint color is based on paint chips obtained and viewed by WFT architects in 1994. The light green color was verbally confirmed by builder Leroy Burnett and Myrlie Evers-Williams, but no paint color, number, or name was documented. The paint color was applied to all exterior painted surfaces. Historic black and white photographs suggest that the carport closet exterior walls were painted a darker color than the home, and that its door and door frame were painted a lighter color.

NPS undertook a visual paint analysis in summer 2023 and identified a top layer of light green paint and secondary layer of dark green paint. See NPS paint analysis memo provided in the Appendix. Historical records and photographs suggest that the dark green paint dates to the 1970s and 1980s when the home was rented.

Recommendation:
Undertake paint analysis of painted exterior and interior surfaces to determine original paint colors and finishes and provide a better understanding of building chronology.

Paint analysis should include Fluorescent Microscopy and Polarized Light Microscopy (PLM). It should be performed by a material conservationist.

Exterior paint samples should be taken from:

- board and batten siding
- asbestos-cement shingle siding on the house
- asbestos-cement shingle siding on the carport closet
- door frames
- window frames
- wrought-iron posts

Interior paint samples should be taken from a representative sample of locations:

- Walls, ceiling, and trim in all rooms (one sample per room)
- Kitchen and hallway door frames
- Window frames at south façade (one from the living room, one from two bedrooms)

Exterior Paint

Exterior paint should be selected for application in a humid climate and, as appropriate, by building material.

Primer and paint recommendations for cement-asbestos or wood surfaces include the following or similar:

- Primer: One coat of Benjamin Moore Fresh Start High-Hiding All-Purpose Primer 046
- Mid and Top Coats: Two coats of Benjamin Moore Aura Waterborne Exterior Low Lustre N634

Primer and paint recommendations for ferrous metal (e.g.: wrought-iron) surfaces include the following or similar:

- Primer: One coat of Benjamin Moore Acrylic Metal Primer HP1100
- Mid and Top Coats: Benjamin Moore Corotech Command Waterborne Acrylic Urethane Satin V392

Architectural Exterior

Floor, Foundation, and Crawl Space

The floor, foundation, and crawl space should generally be preserved. Damage should be repaired. See Part 2 - Chapter 7: *Alternatives for Treatment* for treatment options and analysis in the context of sustainable design and design for resiliency from natural hazards.

Floors (underside):

- Improve live load capacity by installing new, additional floor beams per the structural recommendations in the 2021 Condition Assessment to meet the code requirements for the building use.

- Floors have experienced ongoing moisture issues. A building envelope study that considers the treatment of the crawl space should be undertaken to inform the treatment of floors. See Part 2 - Chapter 7: *Alternatives for Treatment*.

Foundation:

- Clean brick masonry with water and bristle brush; repoint foundation with compatible mortar that matches existing in composition, compressive strength, color, and texture.

- See Part 2 - Chapter 7: *Alternatives for Treatment* for analysis of and recommendations for ventilation. Evaluate the number and performance of vents. Evaluate whether additional vents would improve conditions by allowing humid air to exit the space. Evaluate whether a powered ventilation system with humidstatic control would improve conditions. Envelope treatment should be coordinated with mechanical study.

Roof

The roof should generally be preserved. Damage should be repaired. The existing gravel roof was last replaced in 2013. A built-up roof should have a service life of twenty to thirty years.

NPS staff noted that Medgar Evers selected a gravel roof in order to hear possible intruders. This is part of the site interpretation. Therefore, the roof should not be replaced with a shingle roof.

- Assess and redistribute gravel on a regular basis.

- In ten to twenty years when roof is in need of replacement, or sooner if funding is available, consider replacing roof gravel with bonded aggregate (example: Gravel-Lok, a moisture-curing liquid that bonds aggregates).



FIGURE 9–1. Displaced roof gravel along the edge of the roof at the gravel stop (source: BBB, 2022).

Concrete Elements:

Concrete elements should generally be preserved. Damage should be repaired.

All Concrete:

- Regularly clean debris. Clean with water. Avoid the use of harsh detergents. Also avoid the use of deicing salts as salt will deteriorate the concrete.
- All concrete repairs should match existing concrete color and composition.
- For driveway treatment, see 2024 CLR.

Carport Concrete Slab:

- Monitor minor cracks. Should their width increase, cracks may be repaired with a crack filler that matches the color and texture of the existing concrete. Note: Existing staining is not from assassination.

Stair and Landing at Carport Entry Door:

- Monitor small area that has spalled. If spalling continues, repair the area using a compatible concrete mix, which can be set in a form. The repair may require a pin.

Stair and Landing at Rear Entry Door:

- Repair missing concrete using a compatible concrete mix that matches the color and aggregate of the existing concrete.
- Remove failed repair and loose concrete.
- Repair the corner that has spalled with a form. Use a pin to reinforce the repair.
- When repairing the area below the top step, create a control joint (intentional gap in material) to avoid future cracking at this location.
- Repairs should be completed after the temporary ramp and stair are removed and before the new long-term ramp is constructed.



FIGURE 9–2. Rear entry door stair and landing looking south (left). A horizontal crack is visible at top riser (right) (source: BBB, 2022).

Roman Brick Elements

Roman brick elements should generally be preserved. Damage should be repaired.

Roman Brick Veneer Wall at South Façade:

The Roman brick veneer wall at the front (south) façade is anchored to the wood-framed wall. A section of brick is detaching and bows towards the street, starting about half way up the wall, a condition observed in November 2022 and previously by WFT Architects in the 2010s (Figure 9–3).[1] In November 2022, significant water damage to the drywall at the wall's interior was visible in Bedroom 3 (Figure 9–5). Note that the location of this water damage is different than that observed in 1994, information that may impact envelope analysis at this location (Figure 9–6).

In preparation for the events commemorating the 60th anniversary of the assassination of Medgar Evers, NPS removed the damaged interior drywall and insulation, replaced the insulation, and replaced the drywall.

Exploratory investigation (probes), including the removal of a small number of bricks, should be undertaken prior to fully developing the treatment approach. Depending on when the Park intends to undertake this repair, the NPS may want to consider doing probes in the near future. Probes will help to determine the cause of the detaching and bowing, such as anchor failure. Probes should be reviewed by a preservation architect, structural engineer, and perhaps a building envelope specialist. The NPS should also have a moisture risk analysis (using the software WUFI) performed to determine if the addition of the insulation at the walls causes moisture to be trapped in the wall. Given the documented mold count (see the Hazardous Materials section of the 2021 Condition Assessment) and the fact that mold grows on wood, insulation, and drywall at surface humidity levels above 80 to 85 percent, humidity may be driving moisture into the wall.

1 Lawson Newman interview, November 9, 2023.



FIGURE 9–3. Roman brick veneer at south façade, with area that is visibly bowing highlighted in red (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 9–4. Roman brick veneer at south façade, with area that is visibly bowing highlighted in red (top left) looking east, (top right) looking west, and (lower) looking north from front lawn (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 9–5. Water damage visible in the interior face of the exterior wall at Bedroom 3 (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 9–6. In 1994, water damage was visible in the ceiling in Bedroom 3 (source: WFT Architects 1995 HSR).

A team of experts, including a preservation architect, structural engineer, and perhaps a building envelope specialist, should develop treatment recommendations and oversee their implementation. Depending on probe findings, the existing wall may be able to be re-anchored. If no other option is available, the wall may need to be reconstructed. The recommended treatment should include the installation of a non-staining metal flashing at the top of the Roman brick wall and at the top of the center wall section under the window sill. Flashing should be installed so that it slopes away from the house and should be color matched to the exterior paint (following paint analysis).

Other General Treatments:

- Clean gently with water.
- Repoint areas of failing mortar with mortar that matches the existing in color, texture, and composition. Perform mock-ups for color matching before proceeding with work.
- Remove commemorative plaque and ferrous anchors. Repair masonry at attachment points.

Roman Brick Planter Wall:

- Restore planter corner to original design. Remove corner bricks added in 2013 (Figure 9–9). See 2024 CLR for treatment of plants and mulch within planter.
- Repoint areas of failing mortar with compatible mortar. Continue to maintain by cleaning with water and bristle brushes. Avoid the use of harsh detergents. Avoid the use of deicing salts near the wall as salt will deteriorate the masonry.

Roman Brick Wing Wall at Carport:

- Continue to maintain by cleaning with water and bristle brushes. Avoid the use of harsh detergents. Avoid the use of deicing salts near the wall as salt will deteriorate the masonry.
- Repoint with mortar that matches the existing in color, texture, and composition - perform mock-ups for color matching before proceeding with work (Figure 9–8).



FIGURE 9–7. The Roman brick planter extends from the veneer wall to the carport. Board and batten siding clads the wall behind it (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 9–8. Deteriorated mortar at the brick wing wall (source: BBB, 2022).

Siding

Siding should generally be preserved. Damage should be repaired and the siding repainted. See the "Paint" narrative at the start of this chapter for guidance on paint selection.

Vertical board and batten plywood siding is painted at the south façade and carport (Figure 9–7).

- Remove hornet nest at roof near the driveway.

- Sand and repaint with original paint color, determined through additional paint analysis.

Asbestos-cement shingle siding is painted and located on the north, east, and west façades and on the carport storage closet. Some shingles were replaced during the rental period and have a variation in textured finish. Shingles that were broken at the time of the 1995 and 2013 rehabilitations were replaced with non-asbestos containing shingles, matching the finish of the original shingles. Asbestos-cement shingles are hazardous when removed, cut, chipped, or otherwise altered.

- Replace damaged asbestos-cement shingles with non-asbestos-containing shingles that match the original in size, shape, and texture.

- Exercise care when maintaining the lawn abutting the exterior walls with asbestos-cement shingle siding in order to avoid damaging shingles. Replacement is difficult without damaging shingles that lap above and is potentially expensive because of the hazardous material regulations and safety concerns. Where a large number of shingles would need to be replaced intermittently due to past damage, consider replacing entire stretches of the lowest shingle course with new material matching the original in size, shape, and texture.

- Repaint existing and replacement shingles with original paint color, following paint analysis.



FIGURE 9–9. (Left) Planter as seen behind Medgar Evers and James Baldwin has stepped down brick. (Right) Planter as reconstructed in 2013 infilled the corner (source: MDAH, "A Sense of Place," Medgar Wiley and Myrlie Beasley Papers, call number: Z.2231.4.009; BBB, 2022).

Metal Elements

Metal elements should generally be preserved. Damage should be repaired and the painted element repainted. See the "Paint" narrative at the start of this chapter for guidance on paint selection.

Wrought-Iron Posts at Carport:

The post at the corner of the planter appears to have been reinstalled backwards. Reinstall, mirroring the post on the driveway corner, to match the original orientation (Figure 9–9).

- Clean, remove corrosion, and repaint with materials suitable for exterior ferrous metal work, matching the original color after paint analysis is complete.

Metal Trim:

- Replace bent or damaged metal trim (Figure 9–11).

- Consider replacing trim with unpainted, corrosion-resistant trim to restore to original condition.

Fence Finials:

Two finials, one depicting a Native American in profile and the other depicting a cocker spaniel, are surmounted to the chain link fence separating the carport from the backyard (Figure 9–12). They are original to the Everses' time in the home and should be preserved. See 2024 CLR for treatment recommendations for the chain link fence.



FIGURE 9–10. Asbestos-cement shingle siding on the north and west façades. Shingles replaced during the rental period that are visibly different than the original can be seen in the lower two courses (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 9–11. (Top) Metal trim at northeast corner. (Bottom) Northwest corner of garage closet (source: BBB, 2022).

Windows

The casement windows are in fair condition with some broken panes, rusting casements, and damaged hardware. See Part 2 - Chapter 7: *Alternatives for Treatment* for treatment options and analysis in terms of thermal performance and the building envelope. The windows should generally be preserved. Damage should be repaired and the windows repainted with paint suitable for steel surfaces. See "Paint" narrative at the start of this chapter for guidance on paint selection.

Window treatment recommendations include:

- Clean and repair steel windows.
- Strip paint, remove corrosion where present, prime, and repaint with materials suitable for exterior ferrous metal work, matching the original color after paint analysis is complete. Cut out sealant and reseal perimeter of window.
- Replace broken glass panes (approximately 20%); match existing glass thickness, tint, etc.
- Remove existing and install new glazing putty. Mississippi's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) typically recommends Sarco Dual Glaze or equal. Sarco Dual Glaze is a good, elastic product, but it does take several weeks to cure.
- Restore window hardware by removing paint and repairing for operability. Replace with replica hardware if hardware restoration is not possible.





FIGURE 9–12. Finials at the chain link fence (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 9–13. Window N01 interior in Bedroom 1 with window hardware painted over (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 9–14. Window N02 exterior at the north façade (source: BBB, 2022).

Exterior Doors and Frames

The exterior door frames should be preserved and repaired, and the doors should be rehabilitated. The door and door frame at the carport storage closet should be preserved.

The door frames and the door at the carport storage closet are original. The doors and screen doors at the main entry and rear entry are not original. Doors observed in November 2022 appear to have been interior style doors, not treated for exterior weather conditions (Figure 9–15).

In 2023, the NPS replaced the rear exterior door with a typical suburban six-panel white unpainted exterior door. This replacement is intended to be temporary.

See Part 2 - Chapter 7: *Alternatives for Treatment* for treatment options and analysis of the rear entry door as relates to providing an accessible entrance.

Treatment recommendations include:

- Replace exterior wooden doors with flat, exterior wood doors.
- Replace existing screen doors with screen doors that replicate those visible in crime scene photographs from the night of the assassination. The existing rear screen door matches the original but is deteriorating.
- Determine the original paint color through additional paint analysis of door frame. Sand and repaint door frame with original paint color.



FIGURE 9–15. Bottom of rear door in 2023 after its removal (source: NPS, 2023).







FIGURE 9–16. The rear door has an original door frame with a non-original screen door (upper left); the main entry door at the carport has an original door frame with a non-original screen door (right) and wood door (left) (source: BBB, 2022).

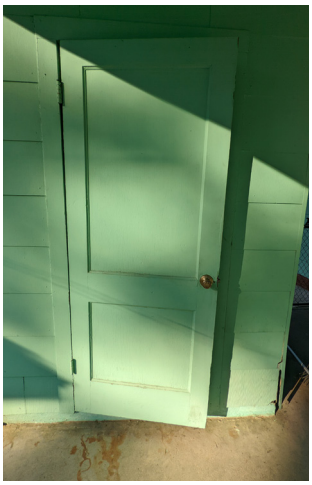




FIGURE 9–17. The carport storage closet door has an original door frame, door leaf, and hardware (source: BBB, 2022).

- Carport Closet Door: Remove, refinish, and re-hang door. Repair and repaint door frame. Remove biological growth inside frame.

Exterior Lighting

The exterior light fixtures are non-original and should be replaced with period replicas.

Carport Ceiling

The carport ceiling finish is non-original. Refinish with gypsum plaster coat to provide even texture. Repaint with original color as determined by paint analysis.

House Numbers

It is unknown whether the existing numbers are original. However, their location and appearance are character-defining. Continue to monitor condition and research possible replacements, as needed. Gently clean as part of routine maintenance.

Mailbox

The mailbox is non-original. Replace existing mailbox with one that matches the aesthetic of the original (Figure 3-1). See 2024 CLR.

Signage

Remove signs, including bronze plaques, and install freestanding signs; coordinate with recommendations in the 2024 CLR and evaluate as part of the interpretation plan.

Air Conditioner at Carport (Inactive)

The through-wall air-conditioning unit is original to the Everses' time in the home. Retain and preserve as non-functioning unit. Seal the gap around the unit and retrofit the unit to block air infiltration.







FIGURE 9–18. (Left) view of carport from west yard looking east. (Right) air-conditioning unit at the dining room, viewed from the exterior (top) and interior (lower) (source: BBB, 2022).

Architectural Interior

Ceilings

The ceilings are generally in good condition. Preserve the textured gypsum. Repair to match existing when lighting is rehabilitated.

Walls

The interior walls are generally in good condition. NPS repaired an area of water damage at the interior face of the Bedroom 3 exterior wall in spring 2023, ahead of the events commemorating the 60th anniversary of the assassination of Medgar Evers. Continue to monitor this wall in Bedroom 3 for signs of water. Coordinate future treatment of the Roman brick veneer wall with any interior treatment. The Roman brick veneer wall treatment should address water infiltration. Water will continue to infiltrate interior wall and cause mold and mildew until the exterior treatment is complete.

See Part 2 - Chapter 7: *Alternatives for Treatment* for building envelope recommendations. Any treatment to the exterior walls should be undertaken holistically.

Walls should be repainted to match the original colors as determined through paint analysis. As of November 2022, the interior walls did not need immediate painting for maintenance purposes.

The bullet hole between the living room wall and kitchen should be preserved. See Part 1 - Chapter 4: *Physical Description and Condition Assessment* for more information on the integrity of the bullet hole.

Floors

Floors were entirely replaced in the 2013 rehabilitation because of extensive rot. Clean gently. Wood floors in regular use typically require sanding and refinishing roughly every ten years. Given the limited foot traffic within the home, the floor finishes should last longer. When floors appear extensively scratched and scuffed, consider refinishing.

Baseboards are original. When refinishing the floors, carefully remove, catalogue, and store the molding, then reinstall after floor work is complete.

Built-In Wood Shelving

The built-in wood shelving is in good condition and largely retains its original design and materials. It should be preserved. The original pivot hinge door is missing. A false panel for power and data was installed in the 2013 rehabilitation, but the shelf unit retains its original appearance. Clean with water as needed. The NPS has considered installing a replica of the original pivot door. This is not recommended at this time in order to provide a more accessible interpretive experience.



FIGURE 9–19. Bullet hole in the wall between the dining room and kitchen, recovered as part of the 2013 rehabilitation (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 9–20. Floor, base, and shoe molding at Bedroom 3 (source: BBB, 2022).

Doors

The existing interior doors are a mix of original and non-original. Non-original doors are replicas of the original and should be retained. They are generally in fair condition. See Chapter 7: *Alternatives for Treatment* , Figure 7–7 for individual interior door information, by door.

Door-specific treatments include:

- Door 06B: remove paint from hinges.
- Door 07A: re-hang and refinish.

Door Hardware

See Chapter 7: *Alternatives for Treatment* for a discussion of door hardware.

Door hardware treatment recommendations include:

- Replace non-original door hardware that is visually similar but distinct from original door hardware.
- Door 05A: Replace dented knob (non-original).



FIGURE 9–21. Built-in wood shelf with false panel for power and data (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 9–22. Door at Bedroom 3, viewed from the bedroom side, is likely original (source: BBB, 2022).



FIGURE 9–23. Door at Bedroom 1, viewed from the bedroom side, is non-original. The door at Bedroom 2, behind, is likely original (source: BBB, 2022).

Bedroom 3 Exhibit

An exhibit, first installed in 1998, about the lives of Myrlie and Medgar Evers is mounted on all four walls of Bedroom 3 and features track lighting for exhibit illumination. The exhibit reflects an important milestone in the interpretation of the Evers Home as a historical site.

In order to return to the home to its appearance during the period of significance, Bedroom 3 should be restored to its original arrangement. The exhibit should be dismounted and stored or displayed off-site. The track lighting on the ceiling should be removed and replaced with period light fixtures. The walls and ceilings should be repaired and repainted.

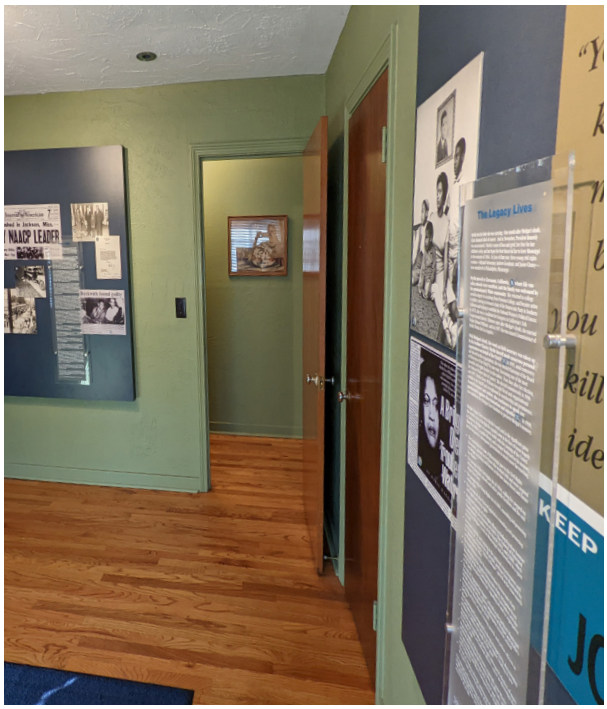




FIGURE 9–24. An exhibit about the life of Medgar Evers is mounted on the walls of Bedroom 3. The north and east walls are visible in the top photograph, and the west and north walls are visible in the bottom photograph (source: BBB, 2022).

Kitchen

The kitchen is generally in good condition. It retains some original features. Most of the finishes and appliances are non-original.

Treatment recommendations include:

- Preserve cabinets. They are in good condition and were restored in the 2013 rehabilitation.
- Preserve kitchen floor. Though non-original, it is in good condition and was restored in the 2013 rehabilitation.
- Replace non-original cabinet hardware with hardware of the period.
- Replace faucet and handles to match original (Figure 2-39).
- Repair porcelain finish of sink by using a porcelain patch material. Gently sand chipped areas to clean. Tape around the chipped area to protect from drips.
- Consider replacing appliances with those that more closely match those from 1963.
- Evaluate interpretation value of the faux bullet hole in the non-original refrigerator.



FIGURE 9–25. The kitchen looking southwest (left) and east (right) (source: BBB, 2022).

Bathroom

The bathroom is generally in good condition. It retains few features original to the home during the Evers family residence.

Lawson Newman of WFT architects indicated in a November 2023 interview that the toilet was originally mounted to the exterior wall. Documentation of the original bathroom layout is insufficient to recommend further restoration as of 2024.

Treatment recommendations include:

- Repair porcelain finish of bathtub by using a porcelain patch material. Gently sand chipped areas to clean. Tape around the chipped area to protect from drips.

- Consider conducting additional research to determine typical bathroom layouts and fixtures in the neighborhood and similar neighborhoods of the period.

Lighting

Light fixtures throughout the home are non-original. Additional lighting was added when the house became a museum.

Treatment recommendations include the following:

- Assess existing light levels. Consider goals to balance historic lighting with light levels necessary for interpretation (around 150 Lux for public use). Consult a lighting designer as part of the interpretive plan development.

- Remove existing interpretive lighting in Bedroom 3. Consult a lighting designer as part of the interpretive plan development. Any additional fixtures for interpretation displays should be distinct but complement the historic light fixtures.





FIGURE 9–26. The bathroom looking north (left) and southwest (right) (source: BBB, 2022).

Building Systems

Project Scope

A September 2021 Condition Assessment documented the conditions of the home's building systems (See Appendix). What follows is a summary of the Conditions Assessment recommendations, paired with the architectural team's observations from the November 2022 site visit.

Mechanical, electrical, plumbing, structural, fire protection, life safety, and security systems were not included in this project scope by their respective engineering disciplines. This chapter provides summary information and recommendations that were developed in the 2021 Condition Assessment.

Engineers should be consulted in planning future treatment to these systems.

Mechanical

See Chapter 7: *Alternatives for Treatment* for mechanical treatment options and analysis.

Electrical

According to the 2021 Condition Assessment, the electrical system was recently updated and appears adequate for the building's use as an interpretive site.

Plumbing

According to the 2021 Condition Assessment, the plumbing system is original and functional, but not currently in use. The NPS noted that water to the house is no longer potable.

The NPS and project team discussed continued water usage at the interpretive site. The NPS indicated the following:

- Water should continue to be provided at the exterior for irrigation and cleaning (see 2024 CLR).
- Water should continue to be provided to the sinks and bathtub tub for cleaning purposes only.
- The toilet should remain non-operational.

Fire Protection

The following recommendations are from the 2021 Condition Assessment.

- Integrate fire alarm and fire suppression systems.
- Replace existing sprinkler system with mist system. Water mist systems are permitted to be used for fire suppression in museum spaces classified as light hazard type occupancies. A water mist system, as defined by NFPA 750, is connected to a water supply or water and atomizing media supply, equipped with one or more nozzles capable of delivering water mist to control, suppress, or extinguish fires. These systems are considered to provide a performance similar to wet-pipe type sprinkler protection but with the use of less water. As such, these systems are suitable candidates for the protection of cultural resources because of the decreased likelihood of water damage resulting from a system discharge



FIGURE 9–27. Fire alarm equipment is mounted outside the closet door in Bedroom 1 (source: BBB, 2022).

when compared with that of a wet-pipe type sprinkler system.

- Conceal distribution piping.

Structural

The following recommendations are from the 2021 Condition Assessment.

- As a museum building, the floor would be required to support a live load of 100 pounds per square foot (psf). The existing floor framing, reinforced in 2013, is sized to support a live load of 80-100 psf, depending on the area. The 2021 Condition Assessment recommended adding mid-span support within the crawl space to add load capacity, increase stiffness, and reduce the loads at the notched bearing ends of joists at the center beam. Because the NPS intends to limit occupancy to ten visitors at any one time, the potentially invasive nature of these structural modifications should be weighed against actual needs.
- Evaluate the beam over the dining room to confirm its strength.

Structural engineering evaluation and design is required at the Roman brick veneer wall at the south façade. See discussion earlier in this chapter.

Security

The NPS would like to incorporate a small number of additional cameras on the exterior and interior. Cameras should be located to minimize impact on character-defining features. Mounting should be done so as to avoid irreversible alterations to historic fabric. When mounting to brick walls, anchors should be placed within the mortar, not the bricks. Consult NPS cultural resource staff as approximate camera locations are determined.

Hazardous Materials

All work must take into account potential hazardous materials. See the Regulated Materials Survey prepared by Lord Aeck Sargent in the 2021 Condition Assessment.

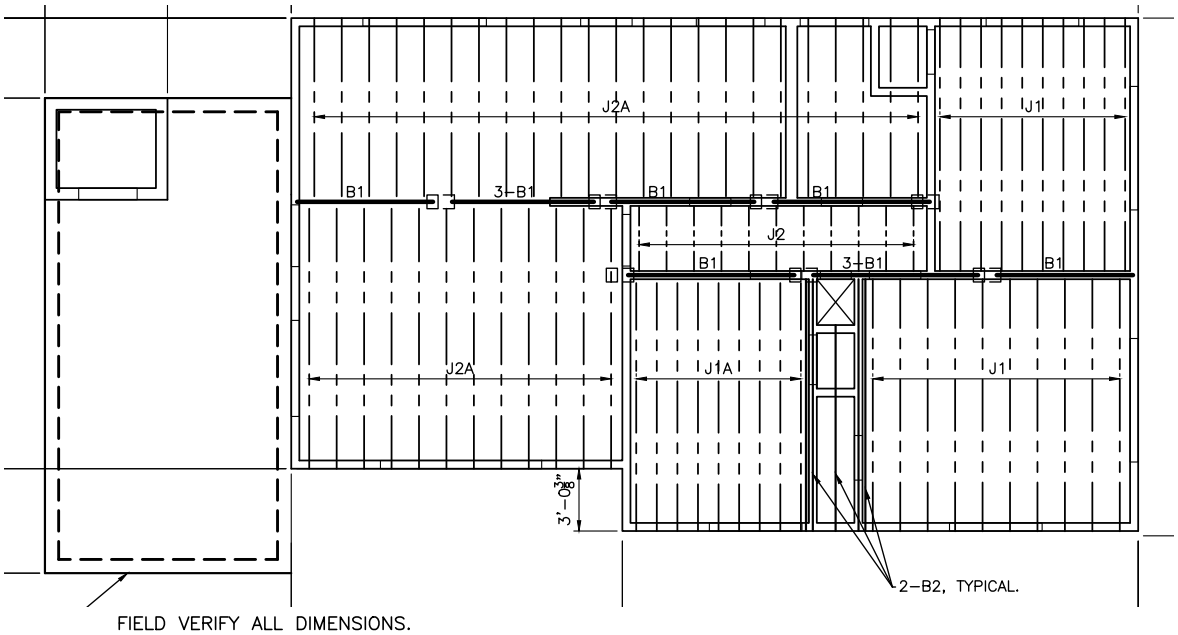


FIGURE 9–28. Existing condition first-floor framing plan (source: Lord Aeck Sargent, "Condition Assessment," 2021).

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