



Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Cultural Landscape Report

Cultural Resources
Interior Region 2: South Atlantic–Gulf



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Cover Photo: View of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House National Historic Landmark (source: DHM Design, 2023).

Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument

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DHM Design Corporation

ERO Resources Corporation

Beyer Blinder Bell Architects and Planners LLP

National Park Service

Interior Region 2: South Atlantic–Gulf

Cultural Resources, Partnerships and Science

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Cultural Landscape Report

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Foreword

We are pleased to make available this cultural landscape report, part of our ongoing effort to provide comprehensive documentation for the landscapes and historic structures of National Park Service (NPS) units in the Interior Region 2: South Atlantic–Gulf (SERO). A number of individuals and institutions contributed to the successful completion of this work. We would particularly like to thank the staff at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument for their assistance throughout the process. We hope this effort will be a useful tool for park management in continuing efforts to preserve the cultural landscape and to others interested in the significance of the park’s many cultural resources.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Management Summary

The purpose of this [Cultural Landscape Report](#) (CLR) is to research, document, evaluate, and provide treatment recommendations and guidance for the physical landscapes associated with the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument (study area). A concurrent [Historic Structures Report](#) (HSR) supports this CLR.

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument comprises two component landscapes: the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House National Historic Landmark (Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL) and the Missouri Street Lots. The Secretary of the Interior designated the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House as a National Historic Landmark in 2016. The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL is significant as the site of Medgar Evers's assassination and for its association with Medgar and Myrlie Evers, two African American advocates of civil rights who advanced the movement on a national level. The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and Missouri Street Lots are located within the Medgar Evers Historic District (the district), which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2013 (Figure 1–1).

Mississippi and the city of Jackson share a long history of African American resistance to centuries of white supremacist violence and racial inequality. Medgar Evers, a World War II veteran, and his wife,

Myrlie Evers, moved to Jackson to open the first Mississippi field office for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1955. Medgar and Myrlie Evers fought against segregation, discrimination, inequality, and racial injustice at the local, state, and national level.

In 1956, Medgar and Myrlie Evers bought a home in Jackson on Guynes Street (later renamed Margaret W. Alexander Drive). The home is located in the Elraine subdivision, the first postwar suburban neighborhood built by and for middle-class African Americans in Mississippi. Through their home purchase, the Evers joined millions of middle-class Americans who bought new suburban homes through mortgage programs subsidized by federal housing and veterans benefits policies. Although these programs and policies were supposedly race neutral, White administrators oversaw policy implementation that largely blocked African Americans from accessing federal funds. Despite rampant discrimination within federal programs, developer Winston J. Thompson and builder Leroy Burnett, both African American veterans, used Federal Housing Administration financing to develop the Elraine subdivision, which is now recognized as a historic district.

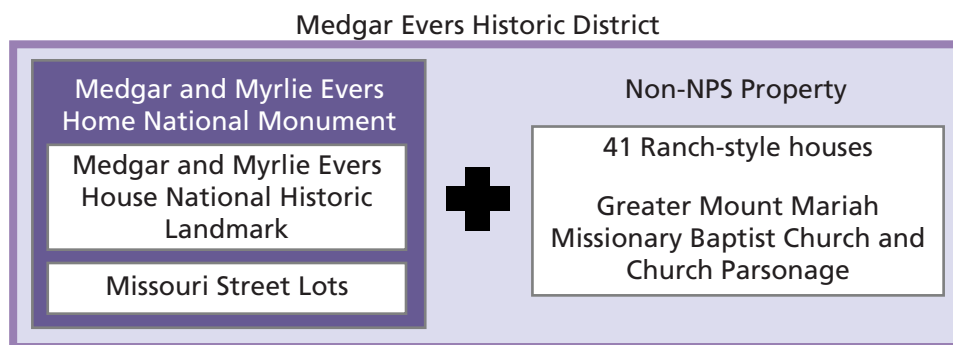


FIGURE 1–1. Cultural landscape hierarchy at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument with the study area in dark purple (source: DHM Design, 2024).

While suburban homeownership typically promised quiet family living, the Everses recognized that their home was a target for white supremacist violence. With that in mind, the Everses selected their home's location and design features to minimize vulnerability. Despite the efforts of Medgar and Myrlie Evers, a white supremacist assassinated Medgar Evers in the Everses' driveway as he returned home from work on June 12, 1963. The assassination of Medgar Evers became a catalyst for passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Myrlie Evers (later Evers-Williams) persisted as a national civil rights leader and actively sought justice for her husband's assassination.

Myrlie Evers and the Evers children continued to occupy the home until 1964, when they moved to California. She continued to own the home and rented it out to tenants from 1966 to 1992. During this time, the home and landscape went through a period of changes, including alterations to the exterior and removal of plantings. Myrlie

Evers-Williams eventually donated the home, in 1993, to Tougaloo College, a historically Black college. Tougaloo College rehabilitated the interior and exterior of the home, opening it as a house museum and offering tours through 2020. The National Park Service (NPS) acquired the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and Missouri Street Lots through Section 2301 of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019. The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument became the 423rd national park unit in late 2020. The site continues to operate as a house museum, offering tours and providing interpretation on the African American struggle for civil rights (Figure 1–2).



FIGURE 1–2. View of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL (source: DHM Design, 2023).

Previous Planning Documents

This CLR builds upon previous planning documents, including those listed below that primarily document the significance of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument.

- *Medgar Evers Home Renovation, A Historic Structure Report (1995)*
- *Medgar Evers Museum Architectural Conservation Assessment (2006)*
- *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Condition Assessment (2021)*
- *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Foundation Document (2023)*

This section summarizes the relevant aspects of these projects and how they inform future treatment of the cultural landscape. Summaries of National Register of Historic Places documentation and a significance evaluation follow the Historical Data section of this chapter. As of 2024, the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL does not have a General Management Plan (GMP).

Medgar Evers Home Renovation, A Historic Structure Report (1995)

WFT Architects completed an HSR for Tougaloo College in 1994 to describe the Evers home's condition and alterations since 1963. The study concluded the Ranch-style single-story house had changed little since the departure of the Evers family. Notable modifications to the home included the change in paint color from the original light green and replacement of the asphalt shingle roof and exterior doors. Tougaloo College used the report to facilitate rehabilitation of the home between 1995 and 1996. They repaired the damaged ceiling, walls, and floor and restored the home's original exterior and interior paint colors.

The report only addressed the home and did not provide any context for changes within the landscape. It recommended developing a sensitive landscape plan that reflected the planting at the home in 1963. It noted the limited historical photographs and video footage available of the original plant species and their locations. The report recommended interviewing Myrlie Evers for more information. Additionally, it noted a need

for on site parking and suggested the Missouri Street Lots as a potential location for parking.¹ The recommendation for parking within the district predates its designation as a historic district.

The 2024 HSR expands upon the 1995 HSR and provides treatment guidelines to accommodate visitors and accessibility needs.

Medgar Evers Museum Architectural Conservation Assessment (2006)

The Office of Michael Emrick prepared an Architectural Conservation Assessment of the home in November 2005. The report focused on the condition of the site and historic structure. The report recommended developing a general maintenance plan, improving accessibility, and installing a security system. Recommendations for the exterior of the house included window rehabilitation, repainting, gutter installation, and masonry repointing. Recommendations for the interior included floor stabilization, chandelier rewiring, kitchen floor restoration, and general painting.

The report limited site recommendations to installing a ramp for accessibility at the rear kitchen door, correcting the sidewalk slope to prevent drainage toward the foundation, adding vegetation to screen the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) unit, and repairing the stoop and driveway. This report provided a site evaluation and recommended additional treatments to the cultural landscape.²

Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Condition Assessment (2021)

Lord Aeck Sargent completed a Condition Assessment for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL following its acquisition by the NPS in 2020. The assessment identified features of the historic home structure and landscape, including character-defining features of the historic structure, and provided treatment recommendations for the driveway and site

1 WFT Architects, *Medgar Evers Home Renovation, A Historic Structure Report*, Jackson: WFT Architects, P.A., 1995, 20.

2 The Office of Michael Emrick, *Architectural Conservation Assessment, Medgar Evers Museum*, Jackson, Mississippi. Nashville: The Office of Michael Emrick, 2006, 6.

drainage. It noted site accessibility as a challenge to opening the home to visitation. Additionally, it noted the need for improved site drainage since the 1995 HSR.

The report provided initial documentation of some of the landscape features and evaluated accessibility, drainage, and treatment for the driveway. The assessment did not include the Missouri Street Lots.³

Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Foundation Document (2023)

The NPS developed a Foundation Document for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument in 2023. The Foundation Document outlines a brief description of this national monument, includes information about its significance, resources, values, interpretive themes, and administrative data, and gives a brief description of existing conditions and an assessment of planning and data needs. The Significance section conveys the park's values apart from the significance discussed in National Register of Historic Places documentation. The sections Evers Home Historic Structure, Evers Home Landscapes and Views, Sacred Space: the Carport, and Connection with the Elraine Neighborhood briefly describe fundamental resources and values.⁴

The Foundation Document outlines cultural resource data and planning needs, including the need for this CLR and concurrent HSR.

Historical Data

Chapter 2 of this CLR includes historical narratives on the Evers family, regional historic context, and the Evers home and the Elraine subdivision development. Together, these narratives provide the historical overview for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument.

European Contact and Colonialization (1539–1820)

Prior to European colonization in the late 1600s and early 1700s, nearly two dozen Native Nations lived in the region. The Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Natchez peoples were among the largest groups.⁵

In 1719, the French established the first European colonial settlements in the Mississippi region and introduced the practice of racialized slavery. They forced enslaved people, predominantly those of African descent, to work in the production of tobacco, indigo, rice, and lumber. The British took control of the region following the French and Indian War (1754–1763) and used enslaved laborers to expand the region's cotton industry.⁶

Following the American Revolutionary War (1787–1791), the American government took control of the region. In 1798, the government designated the territory bounded by the Mississippi and Chattahoochee Rivers as the Mississippi Territory and forced a series of treaties on the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations to claim their land.⁷

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

The United States recognized the western half of the territory as the state of Mississippi in 1817. In 1821 the Mississippi General Assembly established the town of Jackson as its state capital. In the early 1800s, the predominately White plantation class in Mississippi expanded the use of enslaved labor to increase cotton production and profit. In 1830, Mississippians enslaved more than 65,000 men,

3 Lord Aeck Sargent, *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Condition Assessment*, Atlanta: Lord Aeck Sargent, September 2021, 11.

4 NPS, *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Foundation Document*, Jackson: NPS, 2023, 6.

5 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>.

6 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites Special Resource Study*, Washington, D.C.: NPS, 2022, 12, 13.

7 Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City: A History of Jackson, Mississippi's Built Environment, 1865-1950*, Gainesville: The Jaeger Company, 2000, 1.

women, and children who were predominantly of African descent, though some were Native American. As a result, Mississippi became the largest cotton producer in the country. Thirty years later, the enslaved population reached more than 430,000, over half the state's population.⁸ As the state and its cotton economy grew, so did Jackson.

After Abraham Lincoln's election as president of the United States in January 1861, Mississippi became the second state to secede from the United States, citing its commitment to slave labor as "Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery — the greatest material interest of the world."⁹ In the early days of the Civil War (April 1861–April 1865), Jackson emerged as an industrial hub for the Confederacy. In 1863, Jackson came under control of the United States Army, which destroyed industrial complexes and infrastructure to weaken the power of Jackson's government. Government officials fled, and after the war they returned to a damaged city.¹⁰

Reconstruction (1865–1876)

After the war, Congress made several constitutional amendments: abolishing slavery (1865), providing equal protection under the law (1868), and granting all men the right to vote (1870). During this time, in 1867, Congress passed the Reconstruction Act to enforce federally protected freedoms in the South.¹¹ African American voters in Mississippi, including those in Jackson, helped elect Republican-led state and city governments that rebuilt infrastructure and expanded

government services.¹²

Rise and Entrenchment of Jim Crow (1877–1940)

The state Democratic Party and white supremacists responded to African American freedom and political clout with violence. In 1875, Mississippi Democrats enacted the Mississippi Plan to regain power by disenfranchising Black voters through gerrymandering, intimidating voters, and perpetuating violence and fraud. The Mississippi Plan, and the federal government's unwillingness to enforce federal freedoms, brought an end to Reconstruction in Mississippi.

Mississippi Democrats codified African American disenfranchisement in the Mississippi Constitution of 1890 and passed a series of laws to enforce segregation and perpetuate inequality. These laws, along with those passed in other southern states, become known as Jim Crow laws.¹³ At this time, Jackson's population was roughly one-third African American, and its local government was the last to succumb to the Mississippi Plan and the Democratic takeover.¹⁴

In the early 1900s, American cities, including Jackson, expanded through a growing middle-class, a rise in private automobiles, and federal policy and funding.¹⁵ Jackson more than tripled its land area from 1900 to 1930 through a series of annexations. By 1929, the study area and its surroundings remained farmland, but homes and businesses dotted nearby Highway 49.¹⁶ Residential growth in Jackson, and across the country, eventually slowed in the Great Depression of the 1930s.

8 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites Special Resource Study*, 13, 14.

9 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>; NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites Special Resource Study*, 14.

10 Timothy B. Smith, "Jackson: The Capital City and the Civil War"; Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City*, 8-12.

11 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>; 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.

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

13 Note: Jim Crow was a 1830s caricature of a Black man portrayed by a White minstrel show actor. "Jim Crow" became a derogatory term for a Black person and later a term for post-Reconstruction anti-Black laws.

14 Neil McMillen, *Dark Journey*, 38–48; Jason Phillips, "Reconstruction in Mississippi, 1865-1876."

15 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: NPS, September 2002), https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NrB46_Suburbs_part1_508.pdf, 22.

16 Historic Aerials, "Historic Aerials of Hinds County, Mississippi," Historic Aerials: NETOnline, <https://www.historicaerials.com/topomap/Arkansas/Mississippi>.

World War II and the Evers Family's Life Before Moving to Jackson (1941–1955)

United States involvement in World War II (1939–1945) jump-started Jackson's rapid growth and change as well as the larger American economy. More than 85,000 Black Mississippians, including Medgar Evers, served in the United States military. After fighting for freedom overseas only to return to the racism and Jim Crow policies of the South, many African Americans were motivated to work for change. The NAACP, founded in 1909, had previously received limited support in the South, but saw this as a chance to expand its organization and political foothold in the region following the war.¹⁷

In 1946, Medgar Evers used his serviceman's benefits, known as the GI Bill, to enroll in Alcorn Agricultural and Mechanical College, a historically black institution, where he met Myrlie Beasley in 1950 on the first day of her freshman year. The two married the following year in December of 1951. Upon graduating in 1952, Medgar Evers took a job in Mound Bayou, a historically Black town in the Mississippi Delta, home to a number of Black political organizers¹⁸ (Figure 1–3).

In Mound Bayou, Medgar Evers worked as an insurance salesman and Myrlie Evers as a secretary. Two of their three children were born in Mound Bayou, Darrell Evers (1952) and Reena Evers (1954). At this time, Medgar Evers volunteered for the NAACP, recruiting members as he sold insurance. With support from the NAACP, Medgar Evers became the first African American to apply for admission to the all-White University of Mississippi Law School.¹⁹ He was rejected, but his efforts garnered national attention, leading to the NAACP offering him a job as the first NAACP field secretary in Mississippi in 1954.

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

18 Myrlie Evers and William Peters, *For Us, the Living*. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1967), 26, 49, 63, 72–74.

19 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 92–97, 118–120; Michael Vinson Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr*, 2.

The Evers Family's Life in Jackson (1956–1964)

In 1955, Medgar and Myrlie Evers moved with their children to Jackson, Mississippi, to open the NAACP office. In 1956, the Everses purchased a Ranch-style house in the Elraine neighborhood, a subdivision developed for Black middle-class families by Winston J. Thompson and Leroy Burnett.

White supremacists threatened Medgar Evers and his family throughout his time as NAACP field secretary. When they selected their home's lot and design, the Everses chose a mid-block lot rather than one on an exposed corner and a floor plan that placed the entry door under the carport, where the entrance was shielded from the street.²⁰ Law enforcement ignored threats and even participated in intimidation and harassment of the Evers family.

Through his work, Medgar Evers investigated cases of white supremacist harassment and violence, organized voter registration drives and desegregation petitions, coordinated efforts with local and national civil rights groups, participated in demonstrations against police brutality, and supported the youth-led Jackson Movement. Myrlie Evers worked as his secretary for the first two years of their life in Jackson. She left the position to focus on their home and family, actively supporting her husband's work and completing the domestic labor that supported their lives together. In 1960 she gave birth to their third child, James Van Dyke "Van" Evers.

Medgar Evers's Assassination and the Investigation

In the early hours of June 12, 1963, white supremacist Byron de la Beckwith assassinated Medgar Evers at his home, in his own driveway. Beckwith entered the neighborhood through a vacant lot and shot Medgar Evers with a high-powered rifle.²¹

Thousands of mourners attended Medgar Evers's funeral in Jackson before he was buried with full

20 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 136, 220.

21 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), 133–134, 151.

military honors in Arlington National Cemetery. The murder investigation led to the indictment of Byron de la Beckwith. Myrlie Evers testified in the first two murder trials in 1964, both of which ended in mistrials when the all-White male juries could not reach a verdict. In the summer of 1964, Myrlie Evers and her three children left their home in Jackson and moved to California.²²

Myrlie Evers (later Evers-Williams) continued her civil rights work, giving speeches for the NAACP around the country and later serving as its chairman of the board. She was instrumental in pressuring local authorities to reopen the investigation to convict Byron de la Beckwith. In 1990 a grand jury reindicted him for the murder of Medgar Evers. After a series of appeals, Byron de la Beckwith was found guilty in a third and final trial held in 1994 and sentenced to life in prison.²³

Home Rental and Tougaloo College Ownership (1965–2019)

From 1966 until 1992, Myrlie Evers rented out the home in Jackson. During this time, many of the original plantings around the home were removed, and the home was repainted.

The City of Jackson designated the Medgar Evers House a local landmark in 1992. In 1993, Myrlie Evers donated the home to Tougaloo College, a local private, historically Black college whose students and faculty had supported Medgar Evers's civil rights work.

After acquiring the Evers home, the college made plans to develop the site into a house museum. In 1994, the college acquired three vacant lots within the Elaine subdivision from Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) and the City of Jackson with the intent to build a visitor center and parking lot on the land.²⁴ The following year, in 1995, the college undertook an extensive rehabilitation of the home and reopened it as the Medgar Evers Museum. Castle Rock

Entertainment filmed the motion picture *Ghosts of Mississippi*, which depicts the murder and trials of Medgar Evers, using the home after its rehabilitation as a setting for key scenes.

The Elaine subdivision was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Medgar Evers Historic District in 2013, and the home was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2016.²⁵ The NHL property commemorates the legacies of two civil rights activists and provides insights into the Evers family's daily life.

National Park Service Ownership (2020–present)

Section 2301 of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019 authorized establishment of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument as an NPS unit. 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. In December 2020, the NPS established the site as the 423rd national park unit.²⁶ The site continues to operate as a house museum, offering tours and providing interpretation on the struggle for civil rights. The three vacant lots, generally referred to as the Missouri Street Lots, were developed into an outdoor education space and garden by the NPS in partnership with the Trust for Public Land in 2023.

22 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 220.

23 William Booth, "Beckwith Convicted of Murdering Evers," *The Washington Post*, February 6, 1994, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/1994/02/11/jackson-miss-the-city-time-remembers/3e7f1267-f09c-41d8-8bf3-ecd21d1ec145/>.

24 WFT Architects, *Medgar Evers Home Renovation, A Historic Structure Report*, 51.

25 Jennifer V. O. Baughn, "Medgar and Myrlie Evers House," National Historic Landmark Nomination Form (US Department of the Interior, 2016), 10.

26 "Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument," (Washington DC: United States Government Publishing Office, December 4, 2020), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-12-04/html/2020-26693.htm>.

Summary of Historical Status Documentation

This CLR builds on the National Register of Historic Places documentation for the Medgar Evers Historic District and the National Historical Landmark documentation for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House. Chapter 4: Analysis and Evaluation summarizes the National Register of Historic Places status of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument and the Medgar Evers Historic District, evaluates the significance of the cultural landscape, and offers recommendations on how to amend existing National Register of Historic Places documents to include findings from this report.

The primary historical status documentation evaluated in this report are the following:

Medgar Evers Historic District National Register of Historic Places Nomination (2013)

The Medgar Evers Historic District was designated a local landmark by the City of Jackson in 1994, prior to its placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The [Medgar Evers Historic District](#) was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2013. The period of significance for the district extends from 1955, when the Elaine subdivision was established by W. J. Thompson Company, to 1963, the year Medgar Evers was assassinated. Forty-two of the forty-four properties within the district are listed as contributing.²⁷

The district is significant at the state level for Community Planning and Development, Ethnic Heritage: Black, and Social History (Criterion A), for Medgar Wiley Evers and Dr. Margaret Walker Alexander (Criterion B), and for Ranch-style Architecture (Criterion C). The district consists of forty-three contributing buildings and one non-contributing building.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House National Historic Landmark Nomination (2016)

The Secretary of the Interior designated the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House a National Historic Landmark in 2016. The period of significance extends from 1956, when the Everses purchased their house, to 1964, when Myrlie Evers and the Evers children moved to California following Medgar Evers's death.²⁸

The [Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL](#) is significant at the national level as the site of Medgar Evers's assassination (Criteria 1) and for its association with significant persons Medgar Wiley Evers and Myrlie Beasley Evers (Criteria 2), both nationally significant persons for their association with the NAACP and the civil rights movement.

²⁷ William M. Gatlin, Vicki Myers, and Akili Kelly, "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (US Department of the Interior, 2013), 3, <https://www.apps.mdah.ms.gov/nom/dist/237.pdf>.

²⁸ Baughn, "Medgar and Myrlie Evers House," National Historic Landmark Nomination, 9.

TABLE 1-1: Designation documents associated with Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument (source: DHM Design, 2024).

Designation Document	Designation Date	Property Name	Significance Level	Criterion	Themes/ Associations	Period of Significance
Medgar Evers Historic District						
Jackson Local Ordinance	Feb. 7, 1994	Medgar Evers Neighborhood Historic District	Local	-	Civil Rights Movement; Medgar Evers and Dr. Margaret W. Alexander	-
NR13000737	Aug. 2, 2013	Medgar Evers Historic District	State	Criterion A	Community Planning and Development; Ethnic Heritage: Black; Social History	1955–1963
				Criterion B	Medgar Wiley Evers and Dr. Margaret W. Alexander	
				Criterion C	Architecture – Ranch-style	
Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL						
Jackson Local Ordinance	June 3, 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. 9, 1993 Listed in the National Register: Mar. 11, 1994	Medgar Evers House	State	Criterion A	Medgar Wiley Evers	-
NR00001459	Dec. 5, 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 in the National Register: 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		

Project Scope and Methodology

Project Objectives

This CLR addresses the need to preserve and rehabilitate the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument cultural landscape, focusing on the evolution and treatment of the cultural landscape. This CLR not only provides park management with an assessment of the character-defining features at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and the Missouri Street Lots as component landscapes of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument but also develops site specific treatment recommendations. This CLR achieves the following directives:

1. Describe the historical development of the landscape;
2. Document the existing site conditions;
3. Provide analysis of the landscape's potential National Register of Historic Places significance;
4. Identify and assess integrity of character-defining features;
5. Determine appropriate treatment strategies;
6. Develop treatment recommendations that facilitate preservation of these resources, address park management concerns, and inform ongoing and proposed facility development.

This CLR recommends new infrastructure for visitor services and facility operations support at the vacant Missouri Street Lots and for development of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL, including circulation improvements and site furnishings that connect the two destinations.

This CLR addresses the following management concerns at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument:

- Visitor and staff parking and vehicle circulation
- Physical security and vandalism
- Lack of pedestrian facilities and ABAAS accessibility for site circulation
- Flooding, water ponding, erosion control, and surface water management
- Traffic and impacts on the neighborhood
- Night illumination
- Hours of operations
- Appropriate, authorized activities in the residential area, which could include noise and other impacts

The following limitations and exclusions are recommended to be addressed in future work:

- Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL stormwater management strategies are limited to visual assessment and recommendations for establishing positive drainage around the immediate vicinity of the home. Refer to the concurrent HSR for additional stormwater management recommendations for the home.
- Missouri Street Lots visual assessment and treatment recommendations are limited to regionally appropriate stormwater management goals and strategies. Fully engineered solutions are excluded.
- Medgar Evers Historic District stormwater management strategies are excluded.
- Drainage study, calculations, or hydrologic/hydraulic modeling are recommended to be completed by others in future design phases.
- Traffic studies are excluded.
- Infrastructure capacity assessment (i.e., water, sewer, electric, stormwater) are recommended to be completed by others in future design phases.
- Sewer and water line evaluations and water pressure testing are recommended to be completed by others in future design phases.
- Investigation, analysis, or interpretation of soil composition, soil/concrete conditions, and geophysical or geotechnical engineering are recommended to be completed by others in future design phases.

This CLR adheres to federal standards and guidelines, including:

- *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Processes, and Techniques*
- *Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards*
- National Environmental Policy Act, 1969, as amended
- National Historic Preservation Act, 1966, as amended
- *NPS Director's Order 28: Cultural Resources Management*
- *Preservation Brief 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment, and Management of Historic Landscapes*
- *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation (48 Federal Register 44716)*
- *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*

Report Methodology and Format

This CLR is organized in two parts:

Part 1 (Chapters 2–4) contains detailed documentation of the historical development of the study area landscape, an evaluation of existing landscape conditions, and an analysis of integrity with identification of contributing features.

In October 2022, project team members traveled to the study area to conduct on-site research and survey site conditions, perform oral history interviews, and document the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument and the Elrairie subdivision with photographs. Team members conducted a follow-up site visit in June 2023 to document interim landscape changes at the monument that the NPS conducted to prepare the site for the grand opening to the public and commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the 1963 assassination of Medgar Evers. A combination of photographs, annotated aerial imagery and base

maps, and GIS (geographic information systems) data form the basis for the evaluation of the existing conditions and analysis of the landscape.

The project team's historical research focused on both primary and secondary sources. Team members conducted primary research at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the Tougaloo College archives, and the Mississippi State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Team members also conducted oral history interviews with Myrlie Evers-Williams, Reena Evers-Everette, Grace Sweet and Robert Pittman (long time residents of the Elrairie subdivision), Sandra McCall (a renter of the Evers home), Lawson Newman (architect during the home rehabilitation efforts in 1995 and 2013), and Keena Graham (superintendent of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument). Secondary research included review of all nominations to local, state, and federal historic registries as well as a review of other relevant NPS documentation.

Part 2 (Chapter 5) identifies an appropriate landscape treatment approach, consistent with the landscape's significance, condition, and use based on the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Landscapes*, and provides recommendations and implementation projects for treatment, management, and maintenance of historic landscape resources.

The project team members collaborated with Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument staff and NPS Interior Region 2: South Atlantic–Gulf staff through numerous planning meetings and review periods to develop the recommended treatment for the study area.

Description of Boundaries

Medgar Evers Historic District

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument is located in northwest Jackson, Mississippi, within the Medgar Evers Historic District (Figure 1–4). Located north of downtown Jackson and approximately 4 miles northwest of the state capitol, the area was platted as part of the Elaine subdivision, Part 4, in 1941. From 1955 to 1957, African American veterans Winston J. Thompson and Leroy Burnett developed and built thirty-six homes within the Elaine subdivision. Leroy Burnett built six additional buildings in the Elaine subdivision from 1963 to 1965. In total, the district includes forty-one Ranch-style properties as well as the Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church (formerly the Elaine Baptist Church) and a church parsonage (Figure 1–5). The district comprises approximately 12 acres.

The district boundaries encompass:

- Thirty-six properties (including the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL) on the north and south sides of Margaret W. Alexander Drive (originally Guynes Street) in Jackson, Hinds County, Mississippi, west of Miami Street and east of Missouri Street;
- Four properties and two lots (the Missouri Street Lots) on the west side of Missouri Street, south of W. Ridgeway Street and north of the southern lot line of the property commonly known as 3611 Missouri Street;
- Two properties—Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church and its parsonage—at the corner of W. Ridgeway Street and Medgar Evers Boulevard;
- Two properties east of Missouri Street and facing W. Ridgeway Street.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL is on Lot 33 of the Medgar Evers Historic District with an address of 2332 Margaret W. Alexander Drive (Figure 1–5, Figure 1–9). The property includes a one-story Ranch-style home with a rectangular floor plan, covered carport, driveway, front lawn, and backyard enclosed by a perimeter fence (Figure 1–6).

Missouri Street Lots

The Missouri Street Lots are located on the west side of Missouri Street and south of W. Ridgeway Street (Figure 1–8 and Figure 1–10). Collectively, the lots are 0.64 acres and are vegetated with grass and a few mature trees. The lots were updated with interim improvements for the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the 1963 assassination of Medgar Evers—the park's grand opening to the public—in 2023 (Figure 1–7). Existing use at the Missouri Street Lots should be treated as an interim phase while a long-term strategy and treatment are devised to meet the needs of both the community and the park.

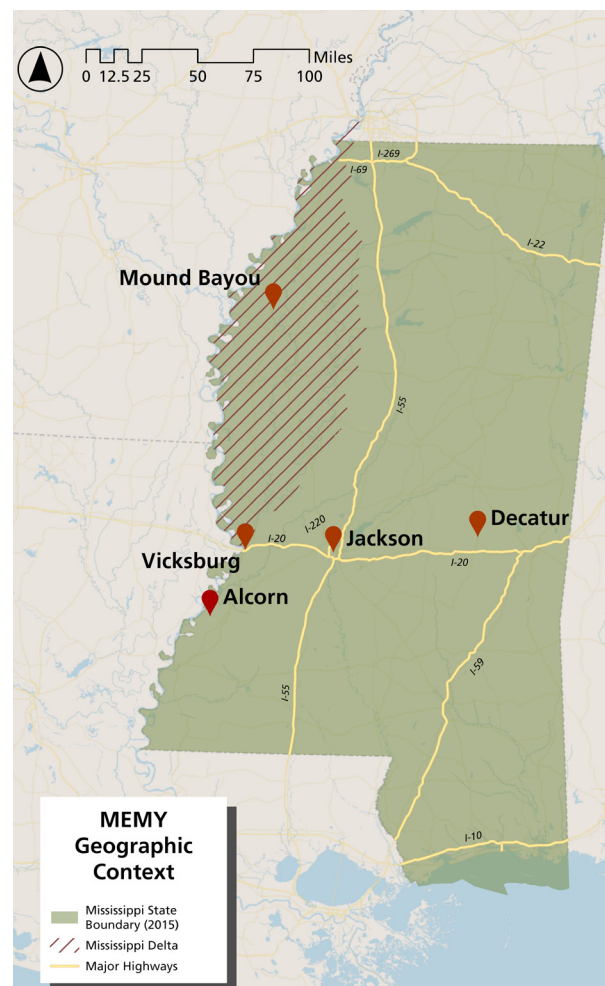


FIGURE 1–3. This map of Mississippi highlights significant areas associated with Medgar and Myrlie Evers (source: NPS, 2024).



FIGURE 1-4. Context Map: Medgar Evers Historic District is located in Jackson, Mississippi, approximately 4 miles northwest of downtown Jackson (source: DHM Design, 2024).



FIGURE 1-5. Boundary Map: The study area is within the Medgar Evers Historic District and includes the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and the Missouri Street Lots (source: DHM Design, 2024).



FIGURE 1-6. Front of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL on Margaret W. Alexander Drive (source: DHM Design, 2023).



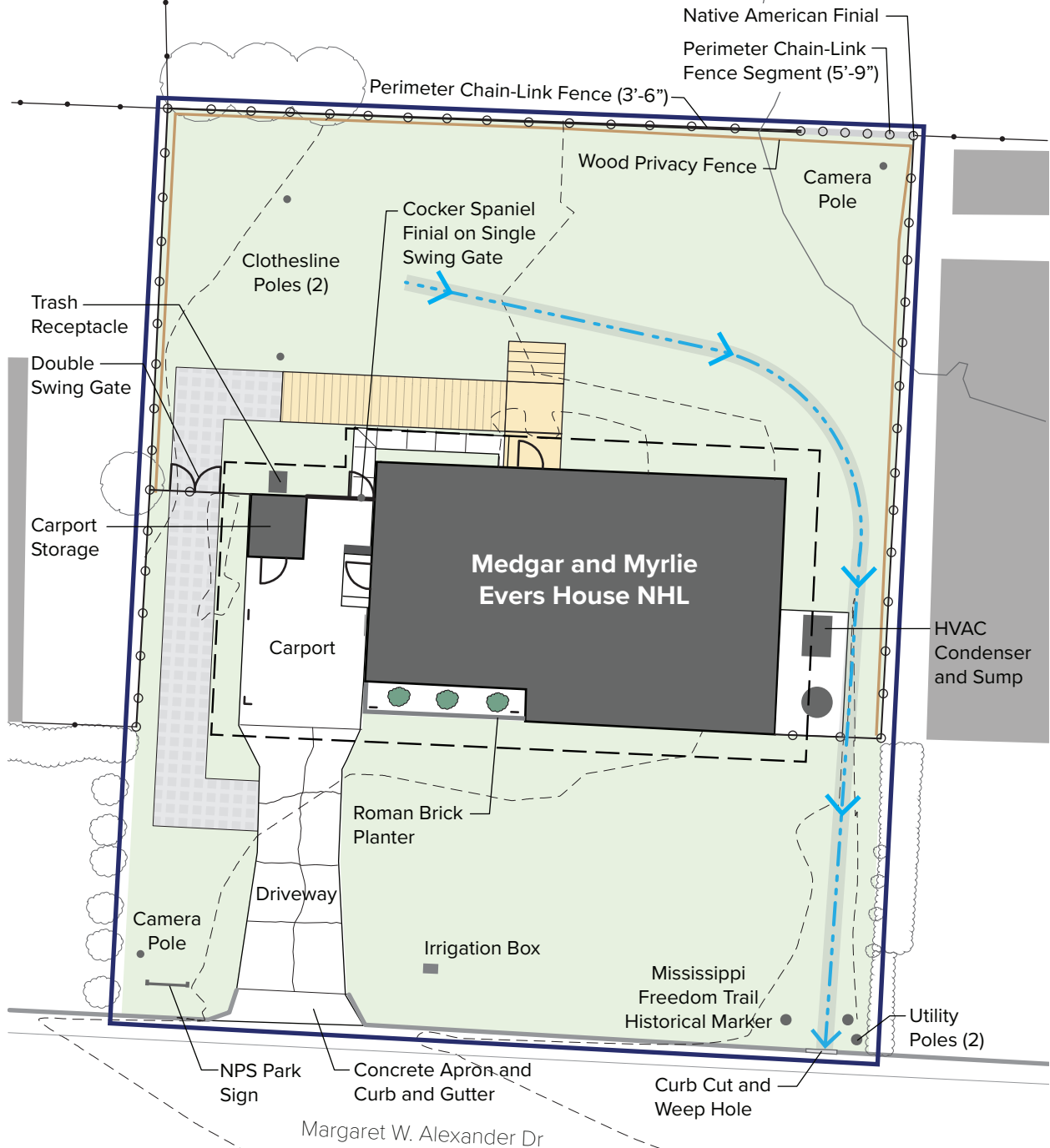
FIGURE 1-7. The Missouri Street Lots are accessed from Missouri Street (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 1-8. Entrance to the Medgar Evers Historic District at the intersection of W. Ridgeway and Missouri Streets (source: DHM Design, 2023).

MEDGAR AND MYRLIE EVERS HOUSE NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

Component Landscape within the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument



Legend

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Study Area Boundary | Constructed Grass Swale |
| Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL | Stone Paver Path |
| Roofline | Wood Ramp |
| Lawn | Perimeter Chain-Link Fence |
| Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL Vegetation | Wood Privacy Fence |



Sources: Hinds County GIS; 2023 Google Earth; 2013 NRHP District Nomination; 2022/2023 Field Investigations

FIGURE 1–9. Existing Conditions Map: The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL operates as a house museum within the Elrairie subdivision in northwest Jackson (source: DHM Design, 2024).



FIGURE 1–10. Existing Conditions Map: The Missouri Street Lots, south of Missouri Street in the Medgar Evers Historic District, were undeveloped until they came under management by the NPS (source: DHM Design, 2024).

Summary of Findings

Significance

The findings of this CLR concur with the significance statements documented in the *Medgar Evers Historic District National Register of Historic Places Nomination* (NR13000737) and *Medgar and Myrlie Evers House National Historic Landmark Nomination* (NHL 100000791).

Medgar Evers Historic District

This CLR uses the Medgar Evers Historic District's period of significance, 1955 to 1963, for the evaluation of the contributing and non-contributing features within the district boundary. Based on analysis of historic condition and changes to the landscape since the period of significance, the district retains sufficient integrity to the period of significance to convey its historic association. The cultural landscape retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to the period of significance. The setting has been compromised by property vacancies, changes within the residential landscape, and alterations to Guynes Street/Margaret W. Alexander Drive. Although houses within the district have been altered over time, they retain the qualities of Ranch-style homes of the period.²⁹

The Missouri Street Lots are located within the district and the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument but outside the National Historic Landmark boundary. Development of the Missouri Street Lots falls outside the period of significance of the district, and the extant features of the Missouri Street Lots are non-contributing. The Missouri Street Lots contribute to the district only in lot size and shape. The live oak tree that was transplanted to the site from the Evers home is managed as a cultural resource.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

This CLR uses the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House National Historic Landmark's period of significance, 1956 to 1964, for the evaluation of the contributing and non-contributing features within its boundary. Based on analysis of historic condition and changes to the landscape since the period of significance, the Medgar and Myrlie

Evers House NHL retains sufficient integrity to the period of significance to convey its historic association. The cultural landscape retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association to the period of significance. The setting has been compromised by the loss of planted vegetation from the period of significance and the addition of features to accommodate accessibility.³⁰

Treatment

As a newer unit of the NPS, the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument has several management documents currently under development. During development of this CLR, the park did not have a GMP in place to define a direction for resource preservation and visitor use. This CLR relied upon the previous preservation plans, the park's Foundation Document, a list of issues and concerns identified by the park, and the park's future interpretive, functional, and management goals as a basis for developing treatment guidance for the cultural landscape at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument.

The scope of work for this CLR states the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument "Must Be Preserved and Maintained" and the ultimate treatment should be rehabilitation, as characterized in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. This CLR concurs with this treatment approach. Chapter 5 of this CLR discusses the full range of treatment needs and objectives for the cultural landscape. Improvements to the exterior and interior of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL are covered in the concurrent HSR.

Rehabilitation would allow for the preservation of contributing features to support interpretation of the home, reinforce period character, and protect the integrity of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. Additionally, rehabilitation would improve the overall appearance of the site and allow for features that support its functionality and use as an NPS unit.

29 William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 18.

30 Baughn, "Medgar and Myrlie Evers House," National Historic Landmark Nomination, 9.

This CLR outlines the following management objectives for the park:

- Preserve the cultural resources at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument. Allow for a rehabilitation approach that repairs and restores landscape features in order to enhance understanding and aid interpretation of the cultural landscape.
- Provide physical and visual connections between the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and the Missouri Street Lots that are compatible with the historic character of the Medgar Evers Historic District.
- Improve visitor access throughout the National Monument by addressing parking and ABAAS accessibility.
- Enhance security and night illumination at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and the Missouri Street Lots.
- Create a schematic design for the expansion of visitor services and development of the Missouri Street Lots.
- Recommend boundary expansion to address gaps in visitor services and administrative spaces consistent with NPS management policies.
- Identify strategies to coordinate with neighbors to preserve the cultural landscape within the Medgar Evers Historic District.

Recommendations for Further Study

Listed below are potential sources of additional information about the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and the Elaine subdivision/Medgar Evers Historic District. This information could inform further restoration and interpretation efforts.

- Visit additional research repositories that came to light after the initial site visit for the HSR/CLR projects; these repositories could yield further photos, newspaper articles, and information about the Evers family. Repositories include:
 - Margaret Walker Alexander Center at Jackson State University
 - Additional new research material at Mississippi Department of Archives and History
 - WLBT Jackson news station archives
 - NAACP archives
 - County planning offices
 - Myrlie Evers-Williams '68 Collection at Pomona College Archives
- Locate and interview the former renters of the home, which could yield photos and/or insight on changes made to the interior or exterior of the home and landscape.
- Conduct additional oral history interviews with neighbors and descendants of the developer and the builder to gather more information about activities at the home, the neighborhood, and the location of plantings.

In addition to the above sources of additional information, the following research projects could enhance the findings of this CLR:

- Amend the Medgar Evers Historic District's nomination to the National Register of Historic Properties to provide updates and findings from this CLR.
 - Update the nomination so that each criterion and area of significance correspond to a period of significance to capture the additional houses built by Leroy Burnett between 1964 and 1965. These houses are within the district boundary and are listed as contributing features, but the current

period of significance does not capture their development.

- Research and revise building descriptions and construction chronologies for individual properties in the district, as needed. Clarification is needed for properties like 3604 Missouri Street. Although it is listed with a construction date of 1964, historical aerials and the 1995 HSR interview with its occupant, Grace Sweet, date this building to 1956. Additionally, the date of construction for the church parsonage appears to be later than the "circa 1980" date listed in the nomination.
- Research Dr. Margaret W. Alexander, a prolific author and professor at Jackson State College who lived in a house on Guynes Street (now Margaret W. Alexander Drive).
- Conduct additional research on the greater Elraine subdivision and other homes in Jackson developed by Winston J. Thompson and Leroy Burnett to determine if these properties share similar qualities to the homes within the Elraine subdivision.
- Conduct a condition assessment of the overall site drainage features and systems within the Medgar Evers Historic District, specifically at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL in coordination with the City of Jackson.³¹

31 Note: Project team members of this CLR reached out to the City of Jackson for water utility records and received no response. The previous city contact NPS received during National Monument establishment was the following: Jordan Rae Hillman, Director, City of Jackson Planning and Development jhillman@city.jackson.ms.us



Image source: Photograph in Box 4, Folder 1, Evers Family Papers Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Part 1

Historical Background and Context
Existing Conditions Documentation
Analysis and Evaluation

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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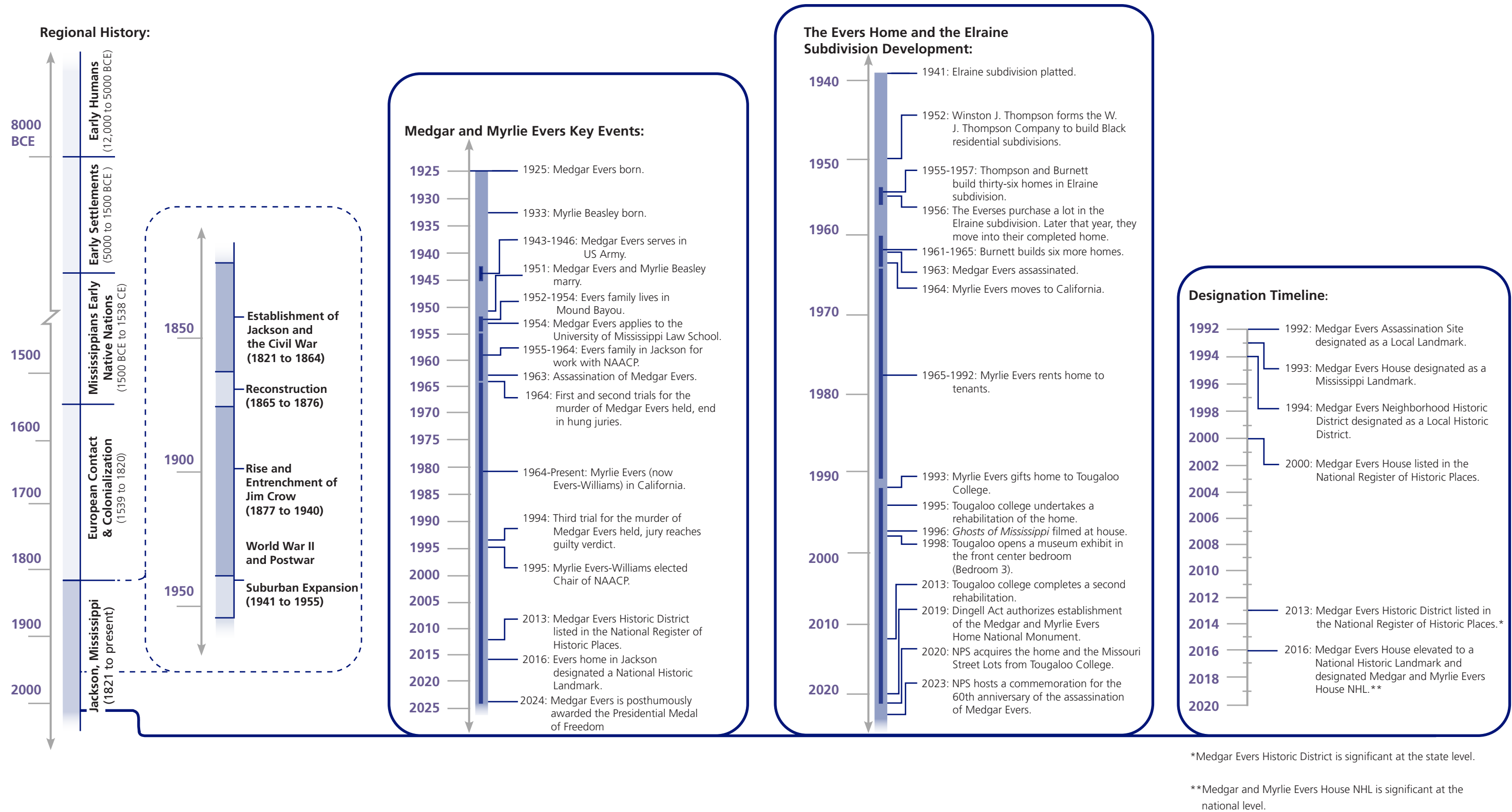


FIGURE 2-1. The timelines above illustrate the developmental periods of the cultural landscape and key dates and periods in the development of the Evers home and the Elraine subdivision as well as in the lives of Medgar and Myrlie Evers (source: BBB Architects/DHM Design, 2024).

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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.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers Key Events:

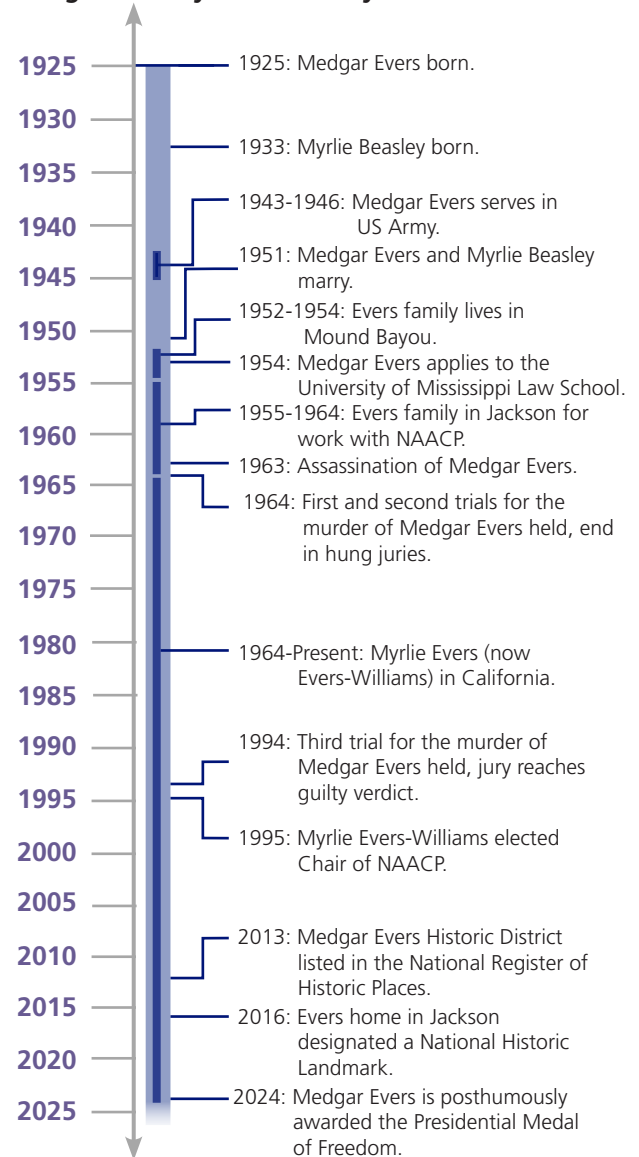


FIGURE 2–2. The timeline illustrates the significant events and periods associated with Medgar and Myrlie Evers (source: BBB Architects/DHM Design, 2023).

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/>.

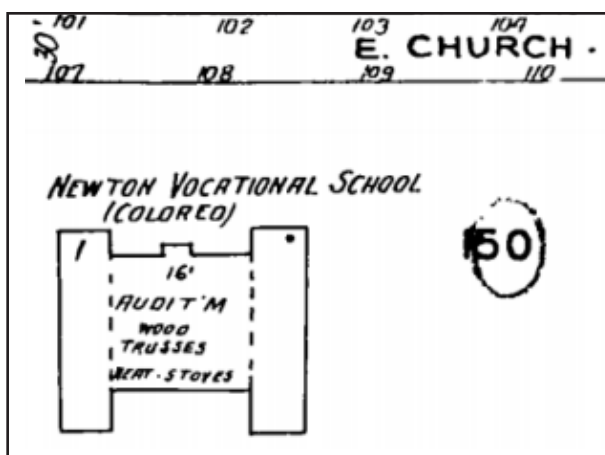


FIGURE 2–4. Newton Vocational School as illustrated on a Sanborn map (source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Newton, Newton County, Mississippi, Sanborn Map Company, Apr, 1927 in Baughn, "Mississippi's Equalization Schools").

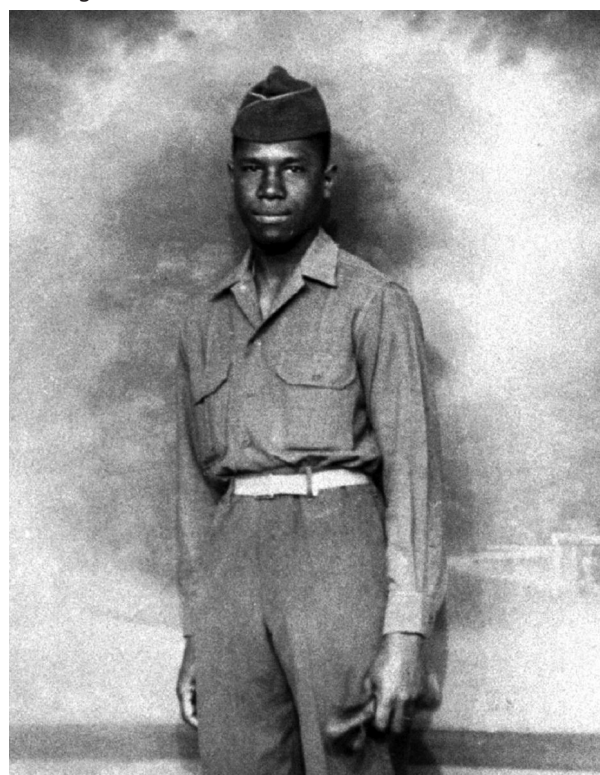


FIGURE 2–5. Medgar Evers in his United States Army Uniform in Charbourg, France, circa 1943 (source: John Storey, Getty Images).

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

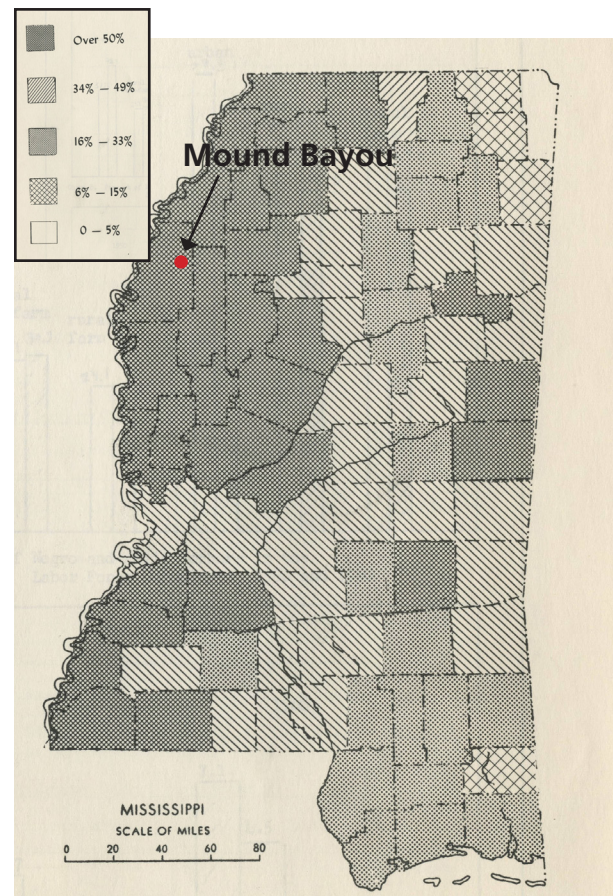


FIGURE 2–9. Map of Mississippi showing the percentage of the population that was African American, by county in 1960. Over 50% of the population in the counties surrounding Mound Bayou was African American (source: Bryan R. Dunlap, "Dunlap–Mississippi Freedom Project, 1964–1965 (Papers, 1964–1972, Z: 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



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 2–13). 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 2–14). 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>.

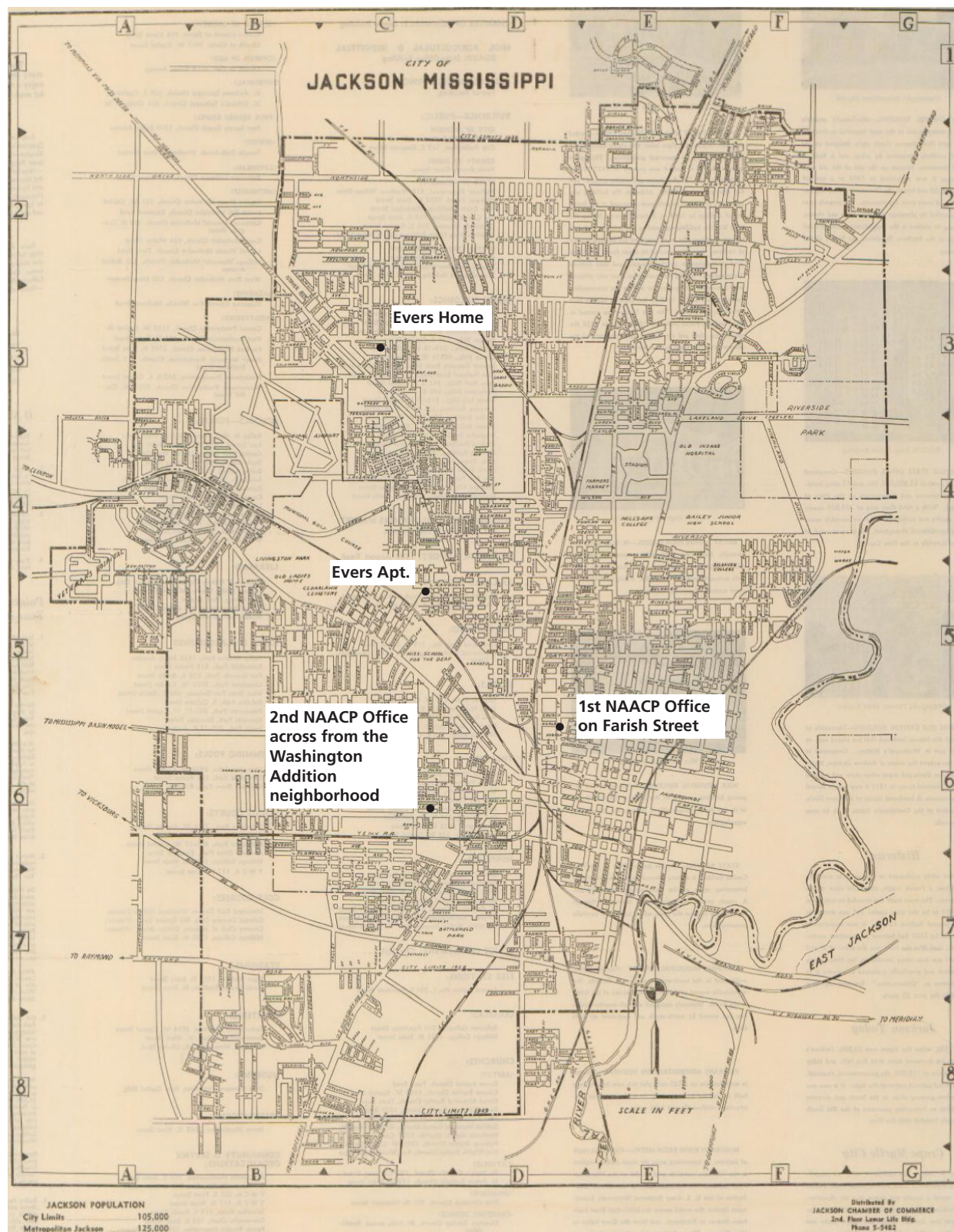


FIGURE 2–13. Map of Jackson, Mississippi, circa 1955 (source: City of Jackson, Mississippi, Jackson Chamber of Commerce, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, <https://da.mdah.ms.gov/series/maps/detail/191396>).

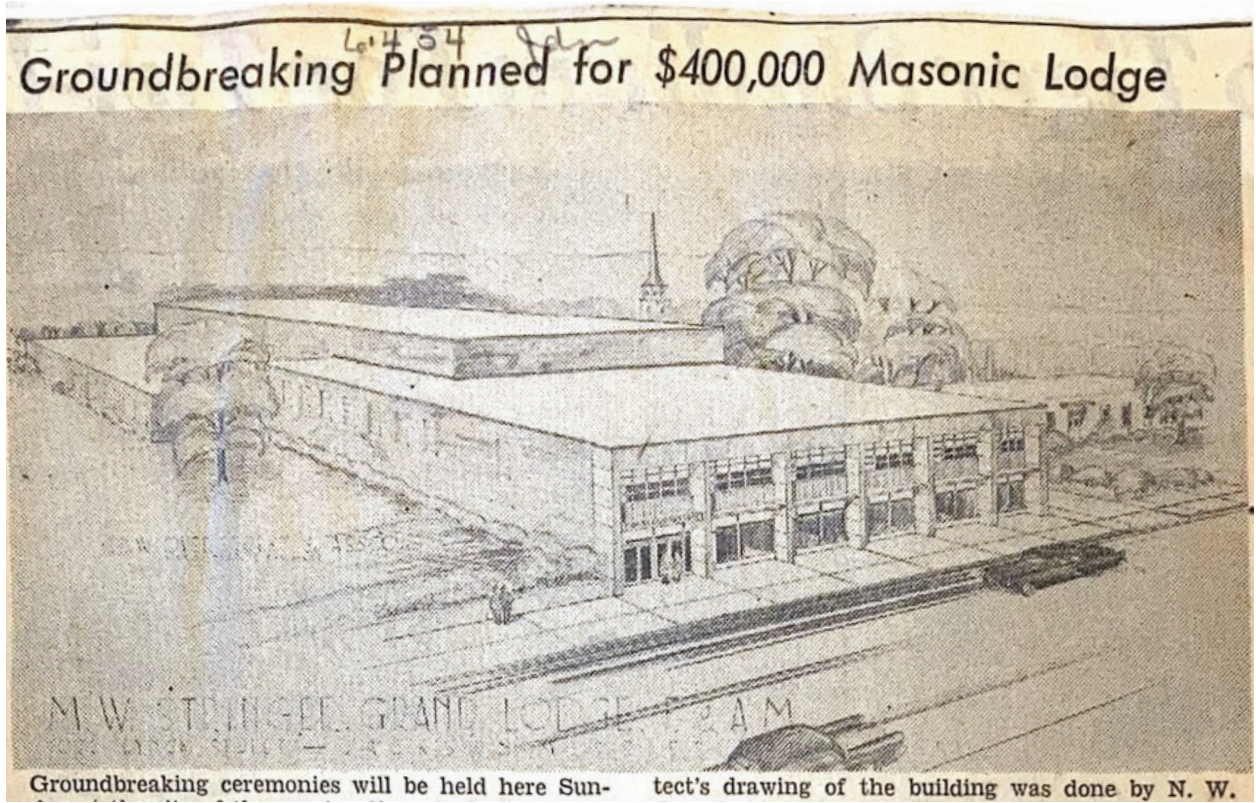


FIGURE 2-14. Architectural illustration of the Stringer Grand Lodge as planned in 1954 (source: "Jackson Negro Masons Set Ground Breaking Ceremony for New Masonic Temple," *Jackson Daily News* (Jackson, MS), June 4, 1954).



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

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/>).

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.

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 provide 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

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 Marianne Volders, *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/>).

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.

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

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).

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

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. Negroes 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/>.

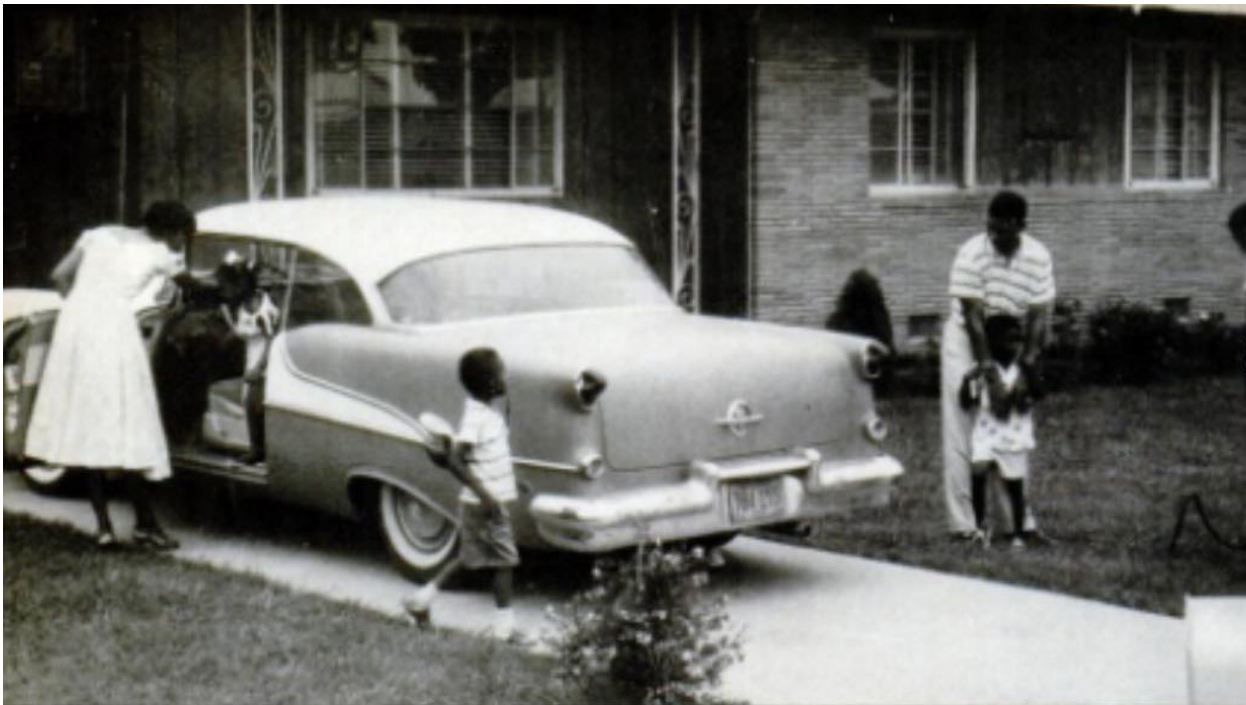


FIGURE 2–21. The Evers family outside their home. Medgar and Darrell Evers stand in the yard and Myrlie and Reena Evers exit the family car. The boy walking is likely a neighborhood friend, circa 1958 (source: NPS).

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

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.



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).

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.

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

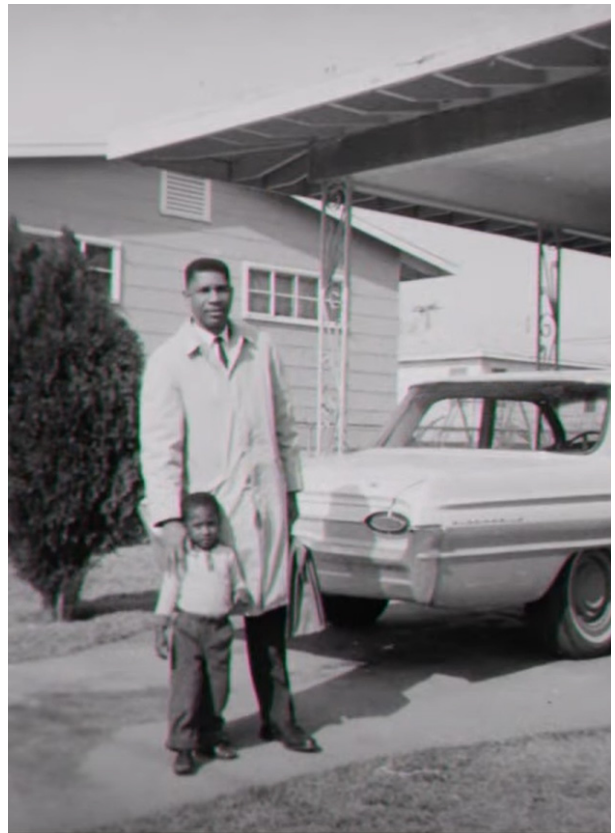


FIGURE 2–23. Medgar Evers and son (likely James "Van" Evers) in the driveway of their home, date unknown (source: Pomona College, <https://www.pomona.edu/news/2023/02/09-90-civil-rights-pioneer-myrlie-evers-williams-68-donates-archival-collection-inspire-new-generations>).

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).

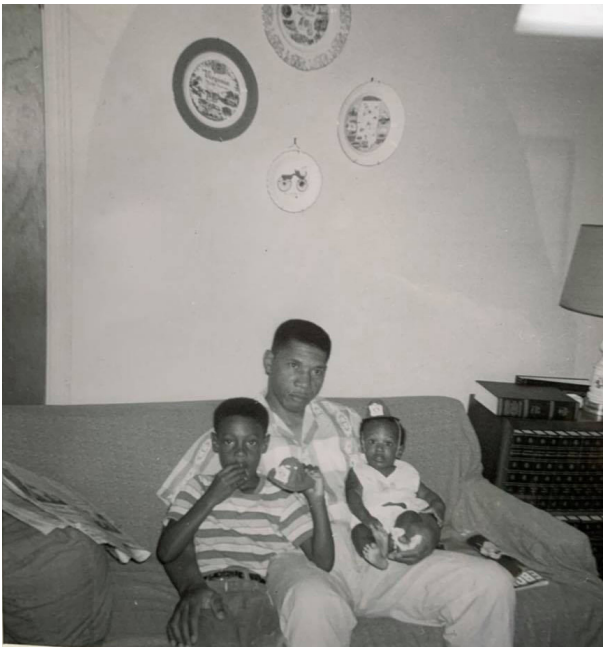


FIGURE 2–25. Medgar Evers with his sons Darrell Evers (left) and James “Van” Evers (right), circa 1961 (source: Photograph in Box 4, Folder 3, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).



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/>.

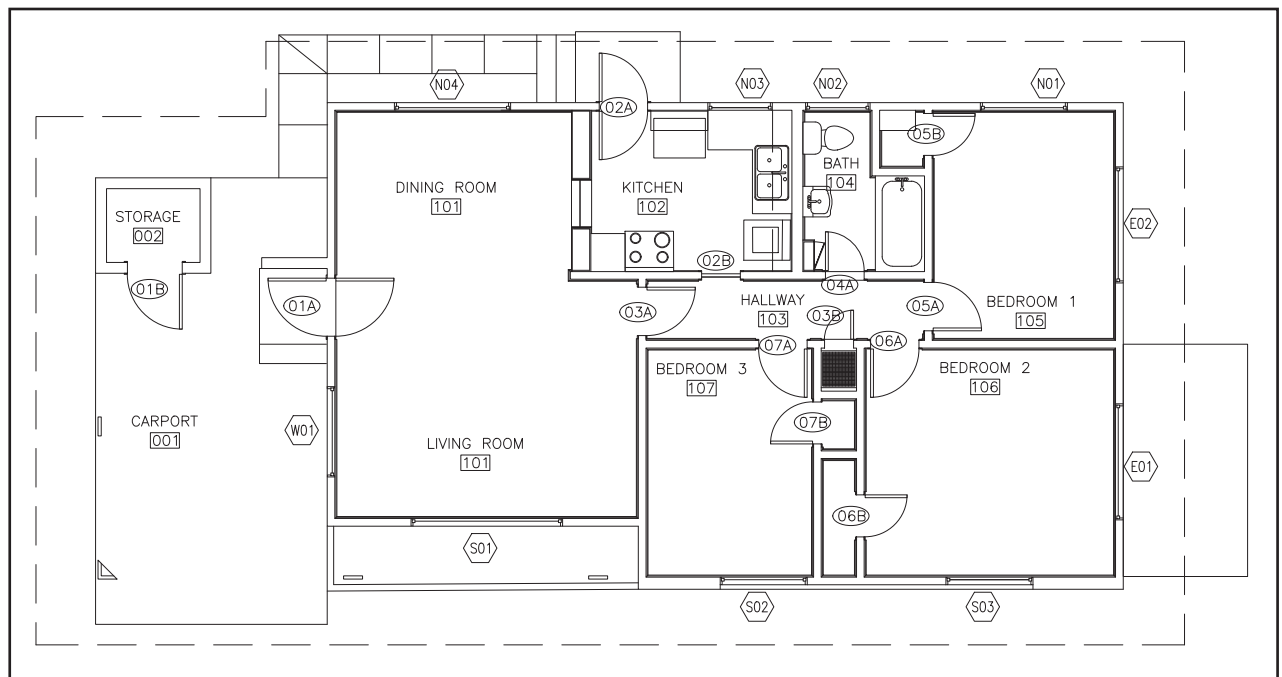


FIGURE 2–27. Floor plan of Medgar and Myrlie Everses' Home (source: NPS).

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

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

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

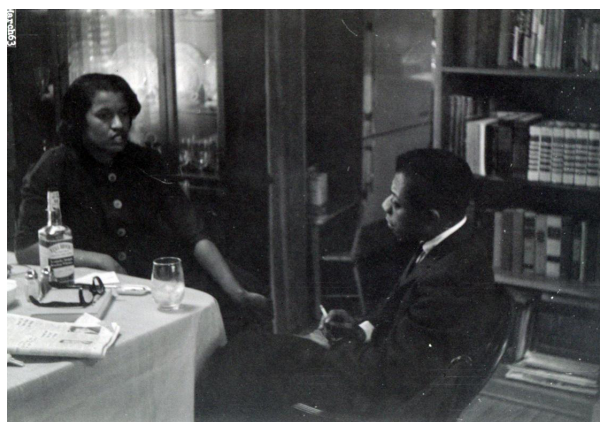


FIGURE 2–30. Myrlie Evers meets with James Baldwin, March 1963 (source: The Myrlie Evers-Williams Collection, Pomona College, <https://www.pomona.edu/myrlie-evers-williams/photos>).

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.

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.

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.¹²⁵

125 “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).

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.

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.¹²⁶

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).¹²⁷ They selected a gravel roof (instead of the typical shingle) so that they could hear intruders if they climbed up or hid there.¹²⁸

Postwar Ranch-style houses were designed to convey privacy and security for suburbanite homebuyers.¹²⁹ 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.”¹³⁰

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.¹³¹ 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.”¹³² 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.¹³³

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

¹²⁶ Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 227.

¹²⁷ Baughn, “Medgar and Myrlie Evers House,” National Historic Landmark Nomination, 5.

¹²⁸ Tour by NPS of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument, November 2022.

¹²⁹ Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 226.

¹³⁰ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), 104.

¹³¹ Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 246–248, 263–265, 279.

¹³² *The Evers*, Directed by Loki Mulholland, 2:30.

¹³³ 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.¹³⁴

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.¹³⁵ 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.¹³⁶

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.¹³⁷ 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...¹³⁸

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

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

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

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

138 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. 1.¹³⁹

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

139 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>).

meeting at the New Jerusalem Baptist Church after the President's speech.¹⁴⁰

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



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

140 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.¹⁴¹

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.¹⁴² Their neighbors the Youngs brought the children into their home across the street while Myrlie Evers stayed at the crime scene.¹⁴³

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).¹⁴⁴

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...

144 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).

141 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>.

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

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



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?’¹⁴⁵

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.”¹⁴⁶

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.¹⁴⁷

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.¹⁴⁸ 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).

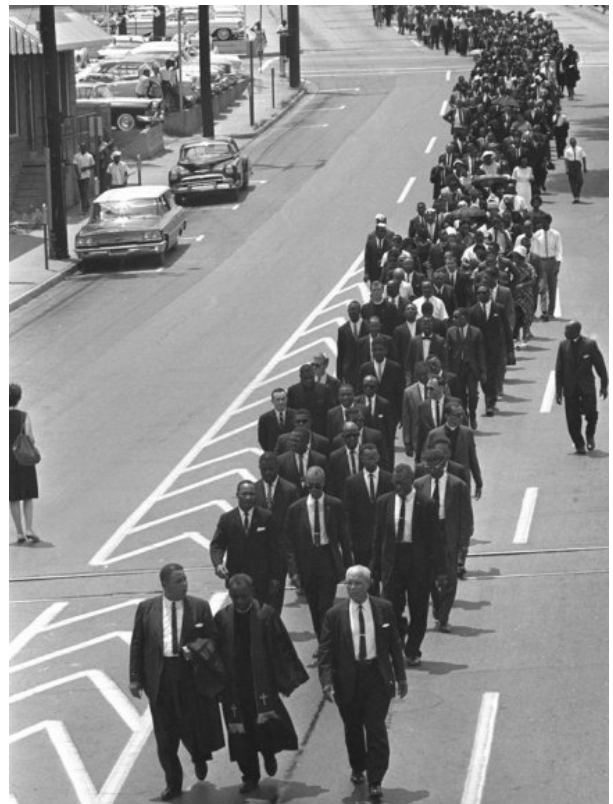


FIGURE 2–40. Marchers following in procession behind Medgar Evers’s body after his funeral. Martin Luther King Jr. is marching in the second row on the left (source: *Associated Press*, June 15, 1963).

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

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

147 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 306–307.

148 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.¹⁴⁹

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

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

Wednesday, June 19, 1963 (Figure 2-42).¹⁵⁰ 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*, 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.¹⁵¹

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).¹⁵²

151 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>.

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

Mourners held memorial services and vigils across the country.¹⁵³

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

153 "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.¹⁵⁴

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...¹⁵⁵

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

155 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.¹⁵⁶

Influential members of the White Citizens' Councils, including vocal segregationist Judge Russell Moore, also attended the trial.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, a public subscription drive, was set up to receive donations from Mississippians to pay Beckwith's legal expenses.¹⁵⁸

Despite overwhelming evidence, a jury of all White, Protestant men could not reach a verdict, and the judge declared a mistrial.¹⁵⁹

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

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

157 Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi*, 162-163

158 "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>

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

him.¹⁶⁰ 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.¹⁶¹

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.¹⁶²

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.¹⁶³

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.¹⁶⁴

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.¹⁶⁵

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).¹⁶⁶

160 “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.

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

162 “Beckwith’s 2d Trial Ends in Hung Jury,” *New York Times*; Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi*, 212, 228, 234-243.

163 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.

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

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

166 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.¹⁶⁷ Records show that in 1958, Mississippi Governor James Coleman had Medgar Evers tracked daily.¹⁶⁸

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 1964.¹⁶⁹ The activity of this secret state agency illustrates the degree to which Mississippi was committed to retaining its racial hierarchy.

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

168 *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.

169 *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>.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES NATIONAL SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1994

White Supremacist Is Guilty of Killing Rights Leader

Continued From Page 1

judged 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 Ireland 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.

An sheriff's deputy 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 leader, 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 any more," she said, flanked by her oldest son, Darrell, and her younger, Kevin. "Now I can be 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 'nigger baiters,'" 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. Somewhere I think he is still among us."

Mr. Beckwith's two court-appointed lawyers, Jim Kitchens and Merrianda Cowell, could not be reached for comment on whether they would file an appeal. The potential exists because the Mississippi State Supreme Court ruled 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, Mr. Beckwith will have to serve a minimum of 15 years before he can be eligible for parole.

The verdict showed a sharp contrast between the Mississippi of 34 years ago and Mississippi today. In the 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, 1964.

Then, the threshold question for whites in jury selection was matter-of-factly ignored 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 volatility and volatility, went through much of the trial without flinching or making an attempt at grabbing attention."

But the major contrast was still the verdict itself, said Neil McMillin, 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 its 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. leader.

8 Crucial 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 Rayley, a 36-year-old former guard in a hospital prison ward in Baton Rouge, La.

Mr. Rayley guarded Mr. Beckwith in 1971, 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. Rayley and Mr. Beckwith had taken a liking to him, bragged about



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 Kenyetta Evers.

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 Rayley was our cleanup litter," 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 39 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 perjury trials, was read to the court.

One juror, Richard A. Donahoe, 32, said his colleague had agreed not to discuss their deliberations publicly. The third prosecution of Mr. Beckwith had its beginning in 1980, 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 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 to 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.

A Hot Summer of Bloodshed and Change

By PETER APPLEBONE

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 after 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 overt 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 for Mississippi and Murder."

Becoming a Lightning Rod

By 1962, 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 would 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 Strategic Session

On June 12, preceded 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 waited in 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. pamphlets, he stepped

"Jim Crow Must Go," he stepped into a 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 honored martyrs of the civil rights struggle.



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. It's a cleansing of the soul comes out of this trial, that's what Medgar would have wanted."

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.¹⁷⁰

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.¹⁷¹

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.¹⁷²

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.¹⁷³

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.¹⁷⁴ 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 1983.¹⁷⁵

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

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

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

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

175 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>.

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

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

11

NAACP



- 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

1964 RICHMOND BRANCH
Membership Campaign

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

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

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.
E. L. Slade, Jr.
President

Enc1:

11

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).¹⁷⁶ 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.¹⁷⁷ 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 1995.¹⁷⁸

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.¹⁷⁹

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.¹⁸⁰ 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*.¹⁸¹ 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 1954.¹⁸² 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.¹⁸³ In January 2013, she gave the convocation at President Barack Obama's second presidential inauguration (Figure 2–48).

- 176 “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.”
- 177 Jerry Mitchell, “Myrlie Evers sees vision of her late husband, Medgar,” *The Clarion-Ledger* (Jackson, MS), June 14, 2014.
- 178 “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>).

- 179 “Our Story,” Medgar and Myrlie Evers Institute, accessed August 2024, <https://eversinstitute.org/about/our-story/>.
- 180 “100 Most Fascinating Black Women of the 20th Century,” *Ebony*, 54, no. 5, March 1999.
- 181 “Medgar Evers,” NAACP, <https://naacp.org/find-resources/history-explained/civil-rights-leaders/medgar-evers>.
- 182 “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/>.
- 183 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 2019.¹⁸⁴ 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.¹⁸⁵

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.¹⁸⁶ Darrell Evers died of colon cancer in 2001 at age forty-seven in Burbank, California.¹⁸⁷

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 2012.¹⁸⁸

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.¹⁸⁹

184 *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/>.

185 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).

186 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.>

187 "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/>.

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

189 "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.

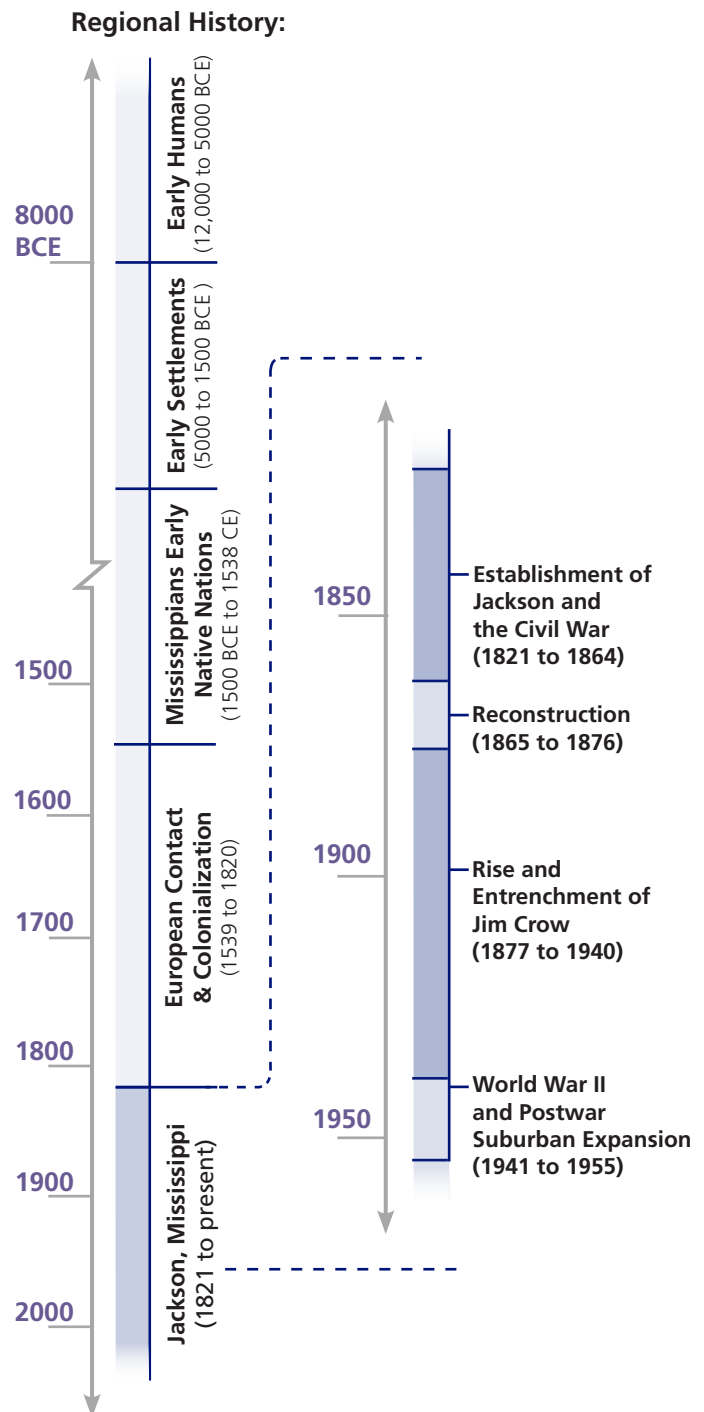


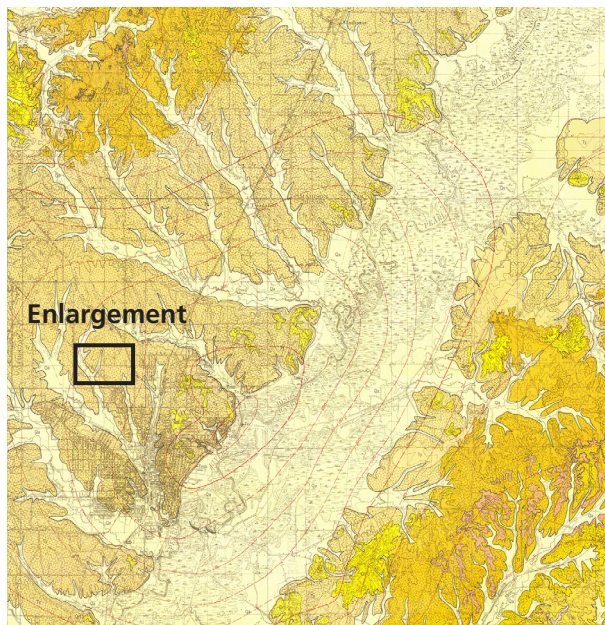
FIGURE 2–49. The timeline illustrates the developmental periods associated with the cultural landscape (source: BBB Architects/DHM Design, 2023).

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.¹⁸³ 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).¹⁸⁴

183 “Coastal Plain Province,” National Park Service, April 30, 2018, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/coastalplain.htm>.

184 “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.¹⁸⁵

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.¹⁸⁶

185 Samuel Brookes, “Paleo-Indians,” Mississippi Encyclopedia, accessed September 2024, <https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/paleo-indians/#:~:text=Paleo%2DIndians%20were%20hunter%2Dgatherers,of%20humans%20have%20been%20recovered.>

186 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/>.

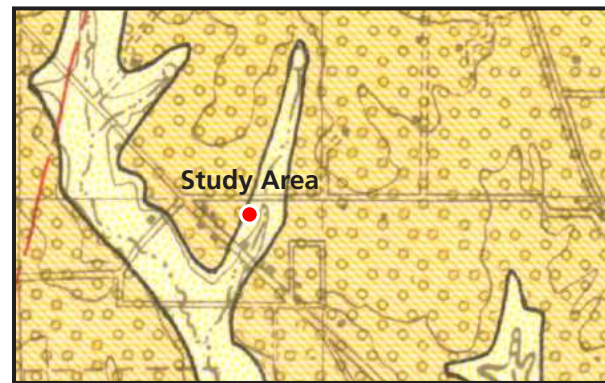


FIGURE 2–50. Geology of the Jackson area, Mississippi. Pale yellow = Alluvium, composed of silt, sand, gravel, and carbonaceous matter. Orange with yellow dots = Moodys Branch formation, composed of fossiliferous, glauconitic sandy marl with loess or brown loam (source: USGS National Geologic Map Database, “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.¹⁸⁷

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,



¹⁸⁷ 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.¹⁸⁸

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.¹⁸⁹

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).¹⁹⁰ 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.¹⁹¹

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.¹⁹²

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.¹⁹³

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 1600.¹⁹⁴ Europeans claimed land on which Native communities lived, farmed, and hunted, forcing many to move westward and enslaving others. European colonial powers competed with

188 Jayur Mehta, “Archaic Period.”

189 Janet Rafferty, “Woodland Period,” *Mississippi Encyclopedia*, April 15, 2018, <https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/woodland-period/>; David Morgan, “Archeology and Prehistoric Mississippi,” NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites*; Jim Barnett, “The Natchez Indians,” *Mississippi History Now*, October 2007, <https://www.mshistorynow.mda.ms.gov/issue/the-natchez-indians>.

190 NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites*; David Morgan, “Archeology and Prehistoric Mississippi.”

191 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 June 2024, <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.

192 LaDonna Brown, “The Chickasaw Creation Story,” Chickasaw TV Video Network, Chickasaw Nation, accessed August 2024, <https://www.chickasaw.tv/videos/the-chickasaw-creation-story>.

193 Ned Blackhawk, “The Modern Scholar: A History of Native America, Lecture 2,” 2010.

194 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:

Eskimaux	Blue
Athapascas	Red
Algonkin-Lenape	Yellow
Iroquois	Brown
Cherokees	Purple
Creeks	Red
Choctas & Chickasas	Red
Sioux	Green
Black Feet	Purple
Pawnees	Yellow

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/>).

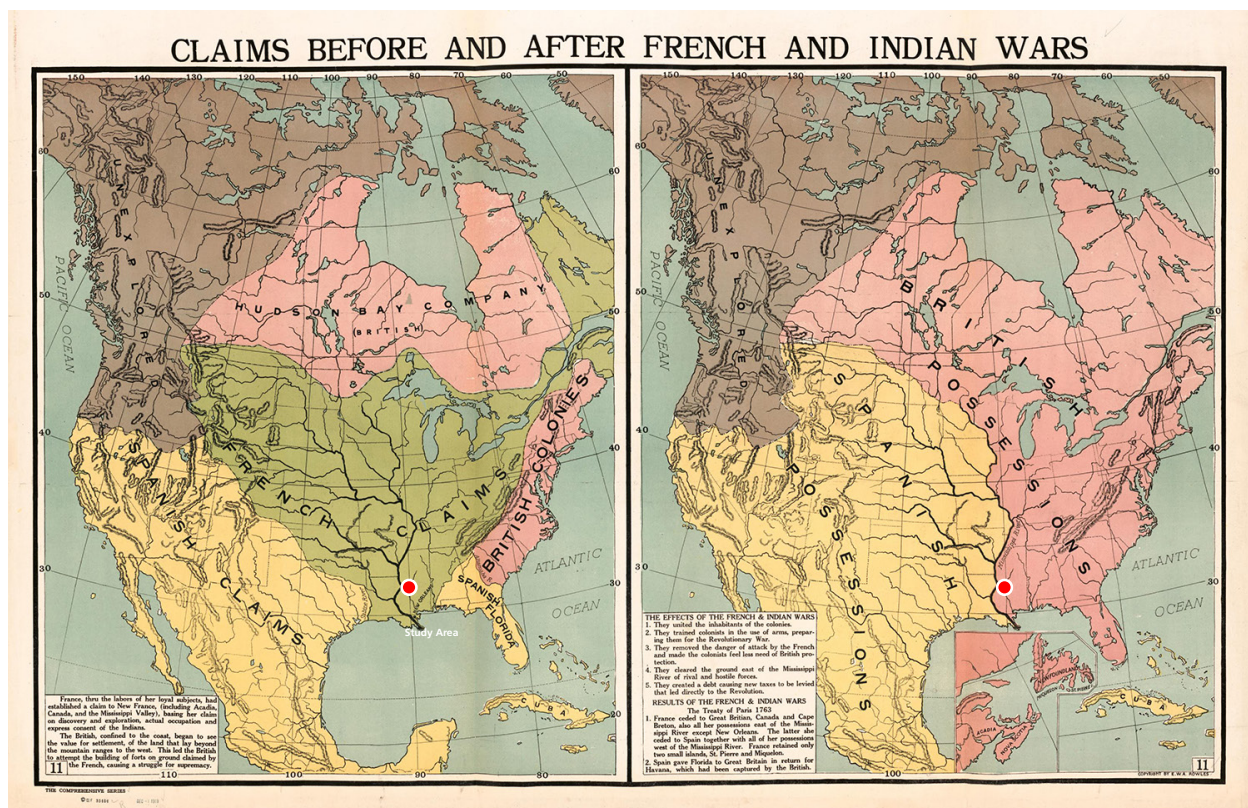


FIGURE 2-53. European claims to land in North America before and after the French and Indian War. These maps do not reflect Native American land claims (source: [Chicago, Ill.: Modern School Supply Co, 1919] Map. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2009581137/>).

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.¹⁹⁵

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.¹⁹⁶ 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.¹⁹⁷

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.¹⁹⁸

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.¹⁹⁹ The Spanish

195 Blackhawk, “The Modern Scholar.”

196 “Immigration and Relocation in US History,” Library of Congress, accessed August 2024, <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/>.

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

198 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>.

199 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.²⁰⁰

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.²⁰¹ 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.²⁰²

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.²⁰³ 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.²⁰⁴ 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.²⁰⁵

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.²⁰⁶ 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.²⁰⁷

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

200 Ned Blackhawk, “The Modern Scholar,” 2010.

201 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>.

202 Christopher Waldrip, “Fort Rosalie,” *Mississippi Encyclopedia*, April 14, 2018, <https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/fort-rosalie/>.

203 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.

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

205 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.

206 “Choctaw History,” Mississippi Choctaw, accessed August 2024, <https://www.choctaw.org/about-us/tribal-history/>; NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites*, 12–13.

207 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.²⁰⁸

Within the Mississippi Territory, the Choctaw and Chickasaw peoples self governed and held their land in common, meaning there were no individual land claims.²⁰⁹ 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.²¹⁰

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).²¹¹ The Mississippi state constitution codified slavery as a

208 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.

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

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

211 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.²¹² 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 1851.²¹³

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.²¹⁴ 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.²¹⁵ 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 descendants of the Choctaw people likely owned land and enslaved people, it was not the typical

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

213 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>.

214 National Park Service, “Early Choctaw History,” Natchez Trace Parkway, accessed June 2023, <https://www.nps.gov/natr/learn/historyculture/choctaw.htm>.

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

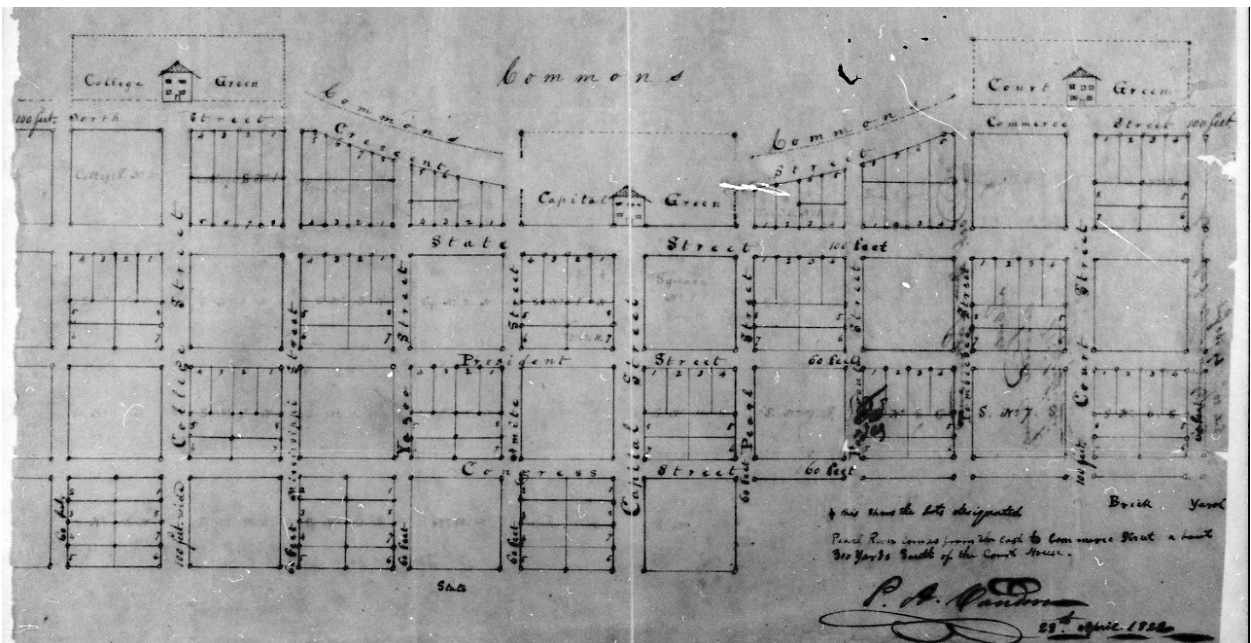


FIGURE 2–55. The plan for Jackson, Mississippi, as drawn by Peter VanDorn, 1822. (source: Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City*).

experience for the Choctaw people who remained in Mississippi. Most were denied land and worked as sharecroppers.²¹⁶

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.²¹⁷

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.²¹⁸

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.²¹⁹ 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).²²⁰

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.²²¹

216 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.

217 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/>.

218 Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City*, 2–3.

219 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>.

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

221 Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City*, 2–3, 5–6.

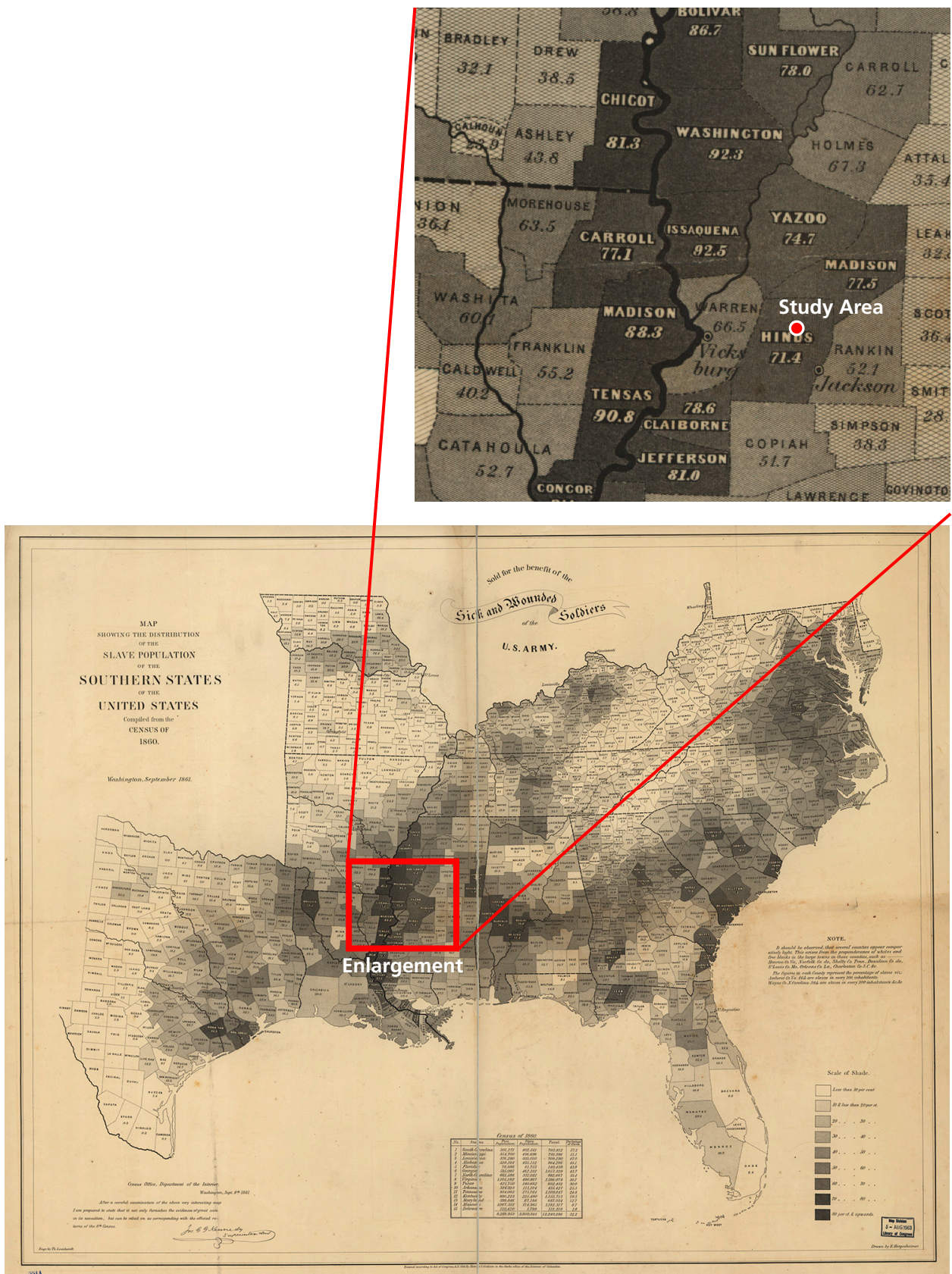


FIGURE 2-56. This map shows the percentage of enslaved men, women, and children amongst the entire population by county, according to the 1860 census (source: Henry Graham Washington, "Map showing the distribution of the slave population of the southern states of the United States, 1860," Library of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

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.²²²

In January 1861, Mississippi became the second state to secede because of its commitment to slavery.²²³

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.

222 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>.

223 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>.

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.²²⁴

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.²²⁵

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.²²⁶

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

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

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

226 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.²²⁷

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.²²⁸ During the period of Federal occupation, a large fire damaged the city's commercial district in 1864 (Figure 2–57, Figure 2–58).²²⁹

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.²³⁰ 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

230 “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.

227 Smith, “Jackson: The Capital City and the Civil War.”

228 Smith, “Jackson: The Capital City and the Civil War.”

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



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>).

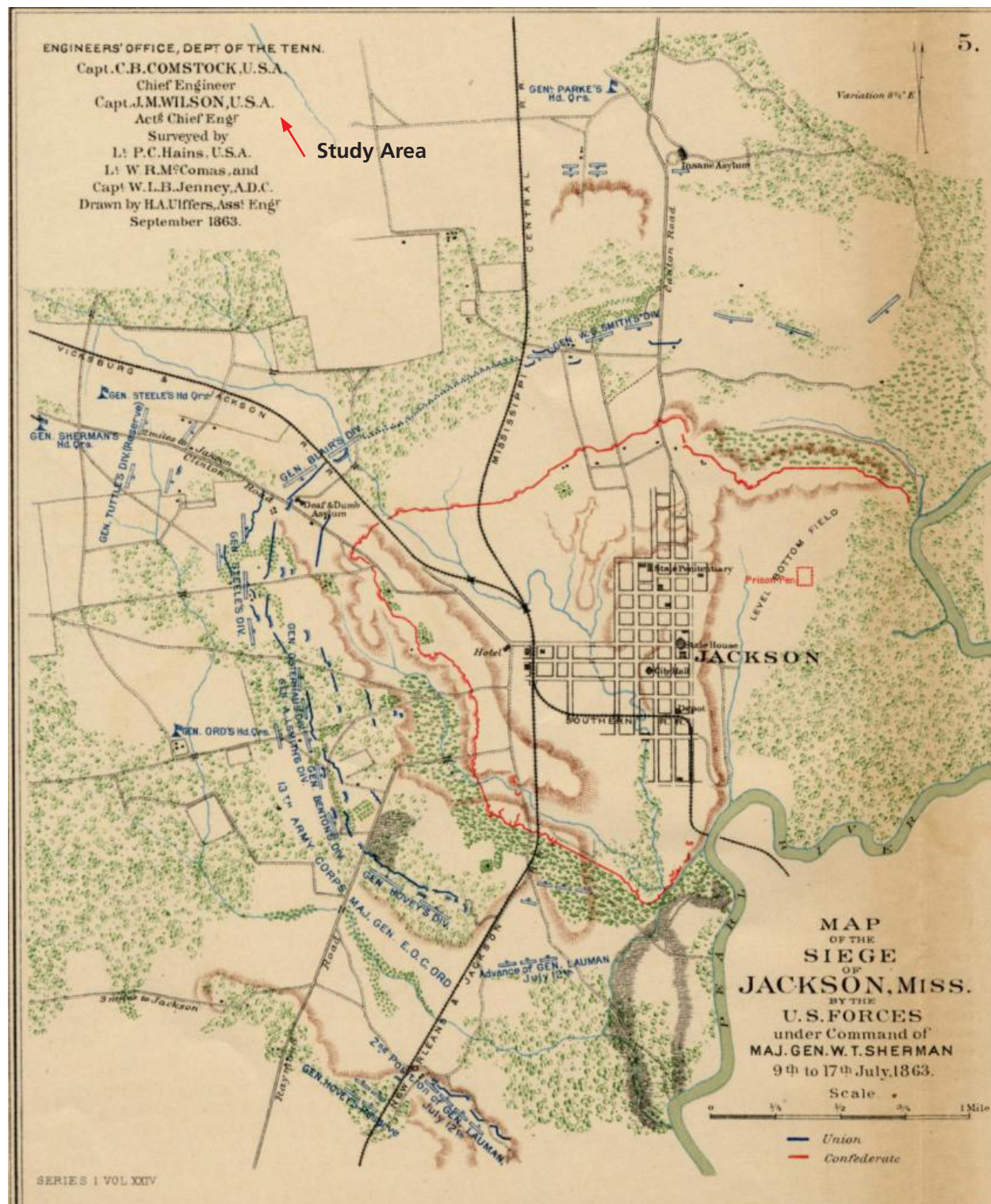


FIGURE 2–59. This map depicts the fortifications of Union and Confederate forces in Jackson as of July 1863. The study area is located northwest of downtown Jackson (source: "Map of the Siege of Jackson by United States Forces, 9th to 17th of July 1863," Engineers' Office, Department of Tennessee. Accessed 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.²³¹

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.”²³²

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.²³³ 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.²³⁴

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.”²³⁵ 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.²³⁶

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.²³⁷ The land became a segregated area for African Americans by the 1890s.²³⁸

231 “African American Heritage: The Freedmen’s Bureau,” The National Archives, accessed August 2024, <https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/freedmens-bureau>.

232 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.

233 Phillips, “Reconstruction in Mississippi, 1865-1876;” NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites*, 15.

234 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.

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

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

237 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.

238 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

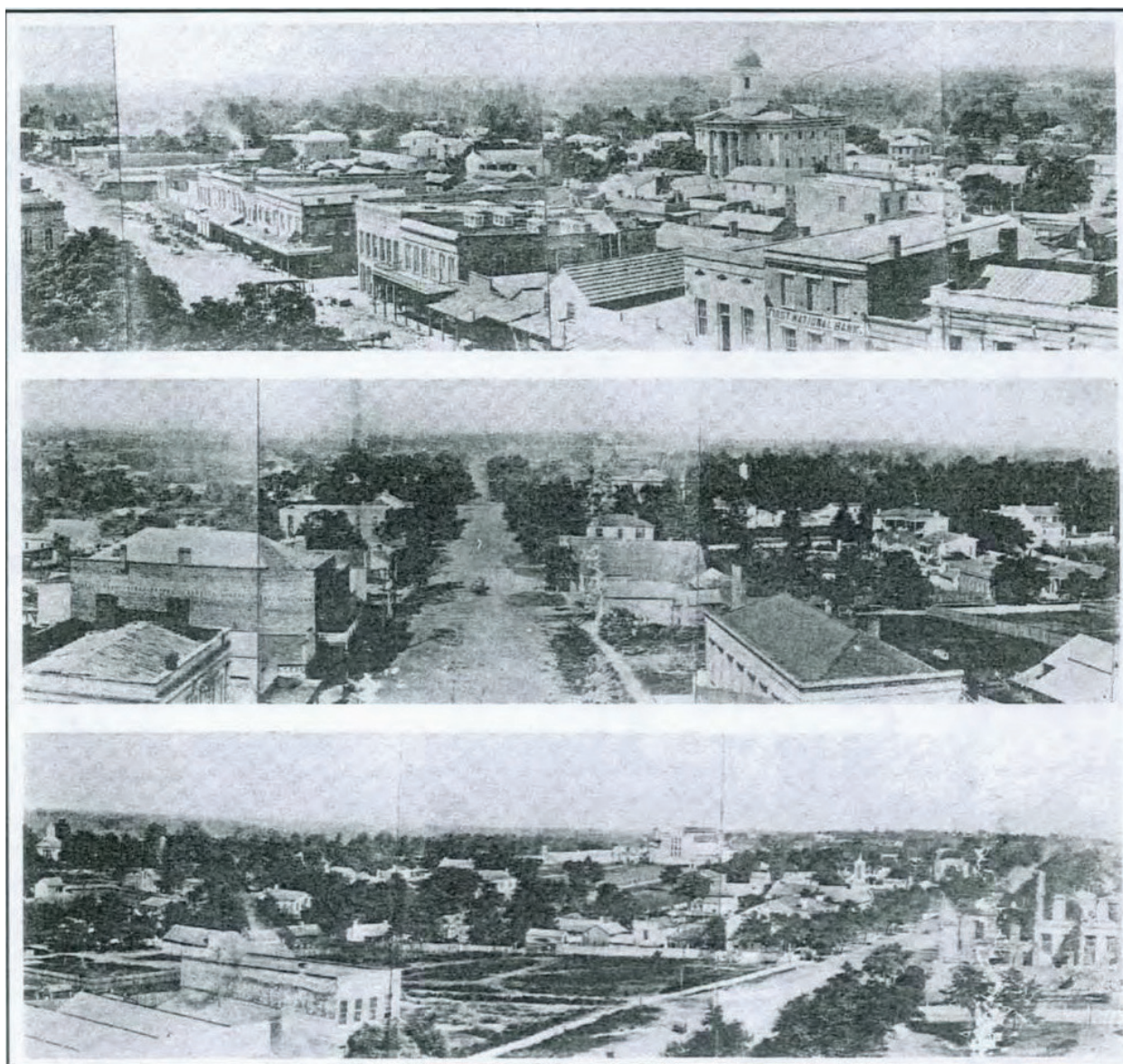


FIGURE 2–60. Stereographs of Jackson, Mississippi, by Eliseus von Seutter, 1869 (source: Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City*, 13).

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.²³⁹

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.²⁴⁰

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.²⁴¹

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.²⁴² 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*.²⁴³

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.”²⁴⁴ 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.²⁴⁵ Black men and sometimes women were tortured and killed for perceived offenses like social transgressions or accusations (valid or not) of sexual assault.²⁴⁶ Between 1882 and 1927, White vigilante mobs murdered at least 517 African Americans in Mississippi.²⁴⁷

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 descent—in work camps for minor infractions.²⁴⁸ In the late 1800s, following the Civil War, African Americans living in mostly rural areas

239 “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.

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

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

242 “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.

243 “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>.

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

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

246 “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.

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

248 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.²⁴⁹ 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.²⁵⁰

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.²⁵¹

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.²⁵²

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.”²⁵³

The city of Jackson grew steadily in the late 1800s. The population rose from 4,234 in 1870 to 7,816 in

1900.²⁵⁴ 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.²⁵⁵

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.²⁵⁶

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

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

250 “The Great Migration (1910-1970),” African 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.

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

252 Phillips, “Reconstruction in Mississippi, 1865-1876;” McMillen, *Dark Journey*, 38.

253 McMillen, *Dark Journey*, 53.

254 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>).

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

256 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.

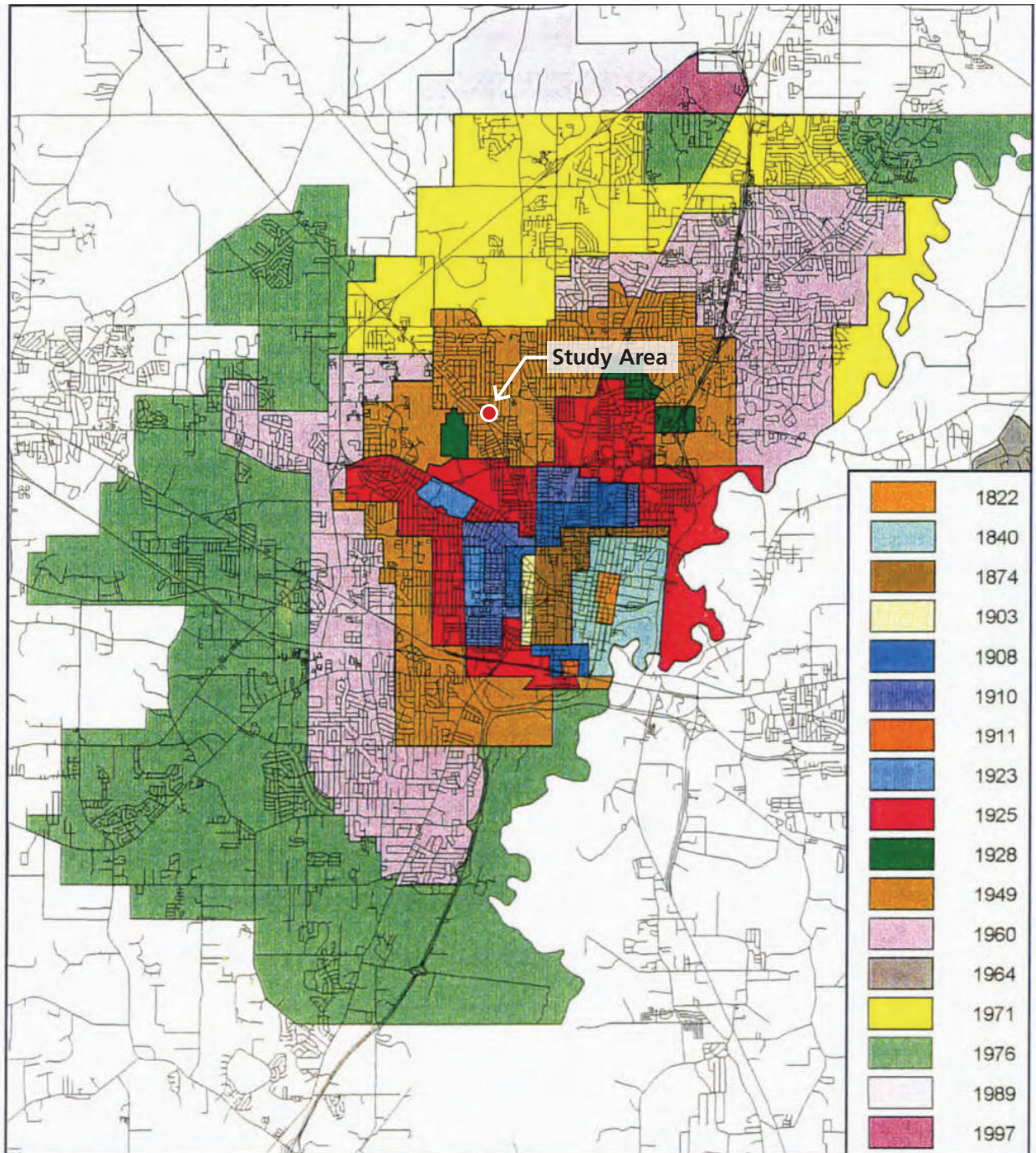


FIGURE 2-61. Annexation map of Jackson, Mississippi (source: Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City*, 13).

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,



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).

commercial, industrial, park, and public uses, in 1929.²⁵⁷

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.²⁵⁸ 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.²⁵⁹

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).²⁶⁰ 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

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

258 William M. Gatlin, et al., “Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination,” 20.

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

260 Turry Flucker et al, “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.²⁶¹

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.²⁶²

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 floor plans, issued by the FHA.²⁶³

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.²⁶⁴

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.²⁶⁵ 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

261 William M. Gatlin, et al., “Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination,” 20.

262 Cramer, Farish Street Neighborhood Historic District Nomination.

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

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

265 “Map of Jackson, Mississippi,” (Jackson Chamber of Commerce, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1929) <https://da.mdah.ms.gov/series/maps/detail/191391>.

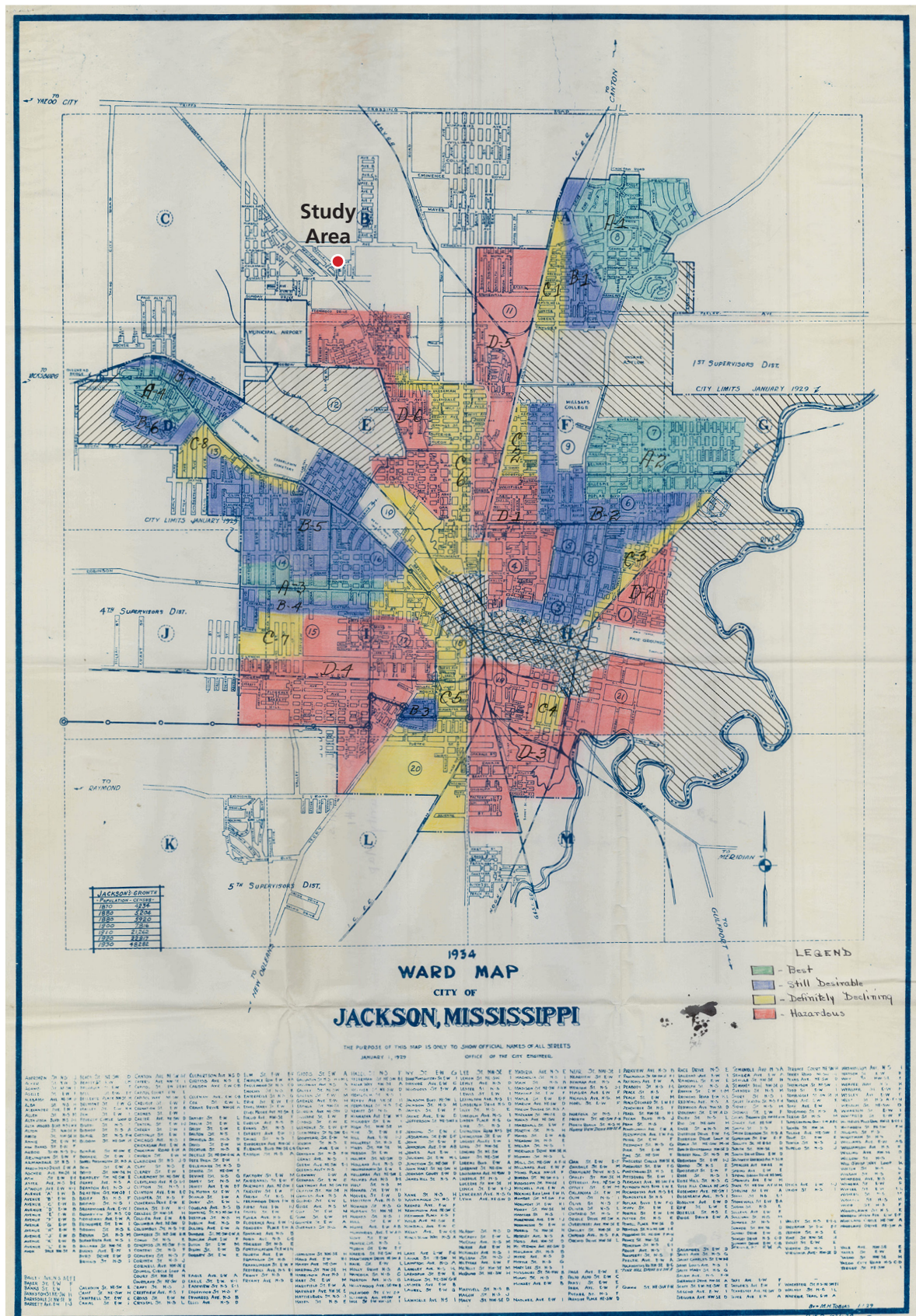


FIGURE 2-63. Home Owners' Loan Corporation residential security map of Jackson, Mississippi, from 1934. This map predates development of the Elaine subdivision (orange) (source: 1934 Ward Map, Jackson, MS, in "Mapping Inequality, Redlining in New Deal America," <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/%23loc-13/32.314/-90.244&city=jackson-ms>).

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 Elaine subdivision plat, were delineated. Land east of Highway 49 remained largely undeveloped,

with only a few areas of mature vegetation.²⁶⁶ In 1930, the state paved two highways near Jackson, including Highway 49.²⁶⁷

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

267 "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.

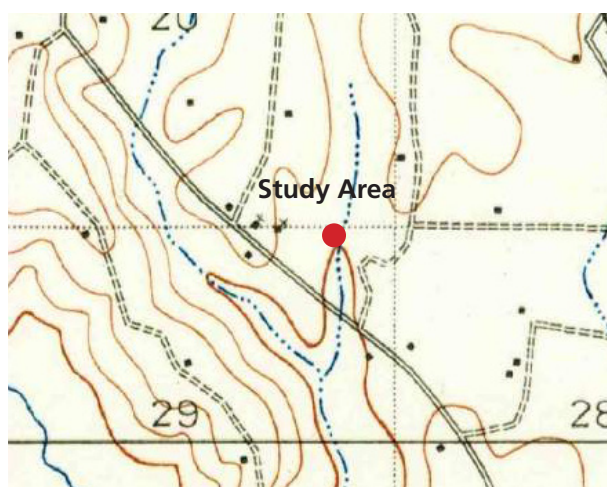
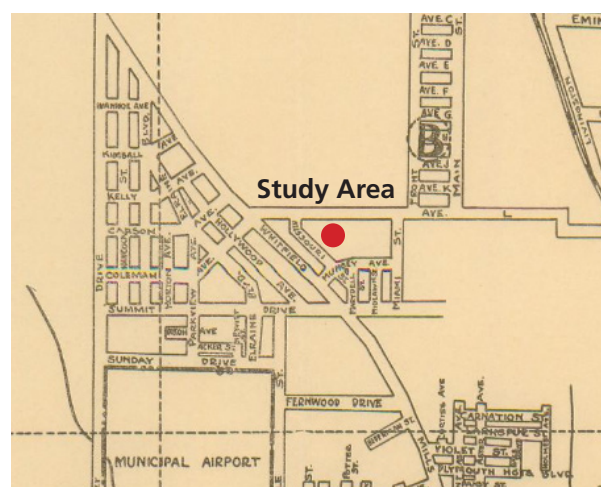
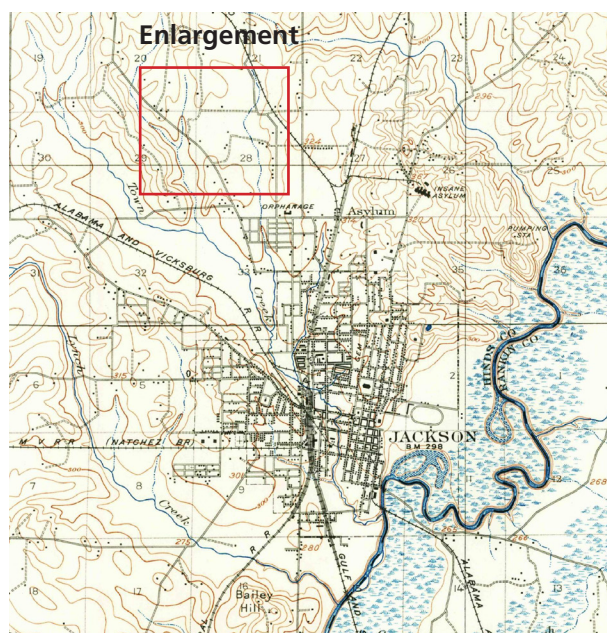
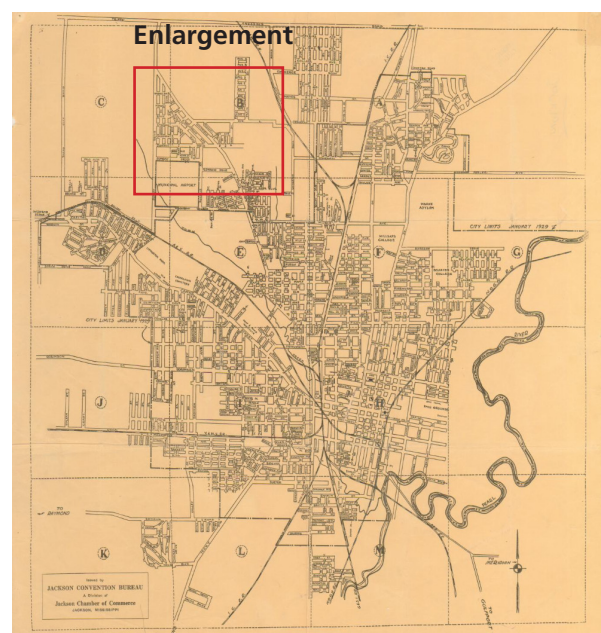


FIGURE 2–64. Left: This 1905 topographical map shows the sparsely populated farmland northwest of Jackson. Right: This 1929 map shows the municipal airport and neighborhood streets surrounding it (source: Historical Topographic Map Collection courtesy of the United States Geological Survey, Esri 1905. 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.²⁶⁸

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.²⁶⁹

While the increase in manufacturing and the military presence meant more jobs, White business 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.²⁷⁰

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.²⁷¹

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.²⁷²

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

²⁶⁸ Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City*, 105.

²⁶⁹ Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City*, 107–108.

²⁷⁰ 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>.

²⁷¹ Michael Vinson Williams, *Medgar Evers: Mississippi Martyr* (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2011) 5; NPS, *Mississippi Civil Rights Sites*, 33.

²⁷² 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.

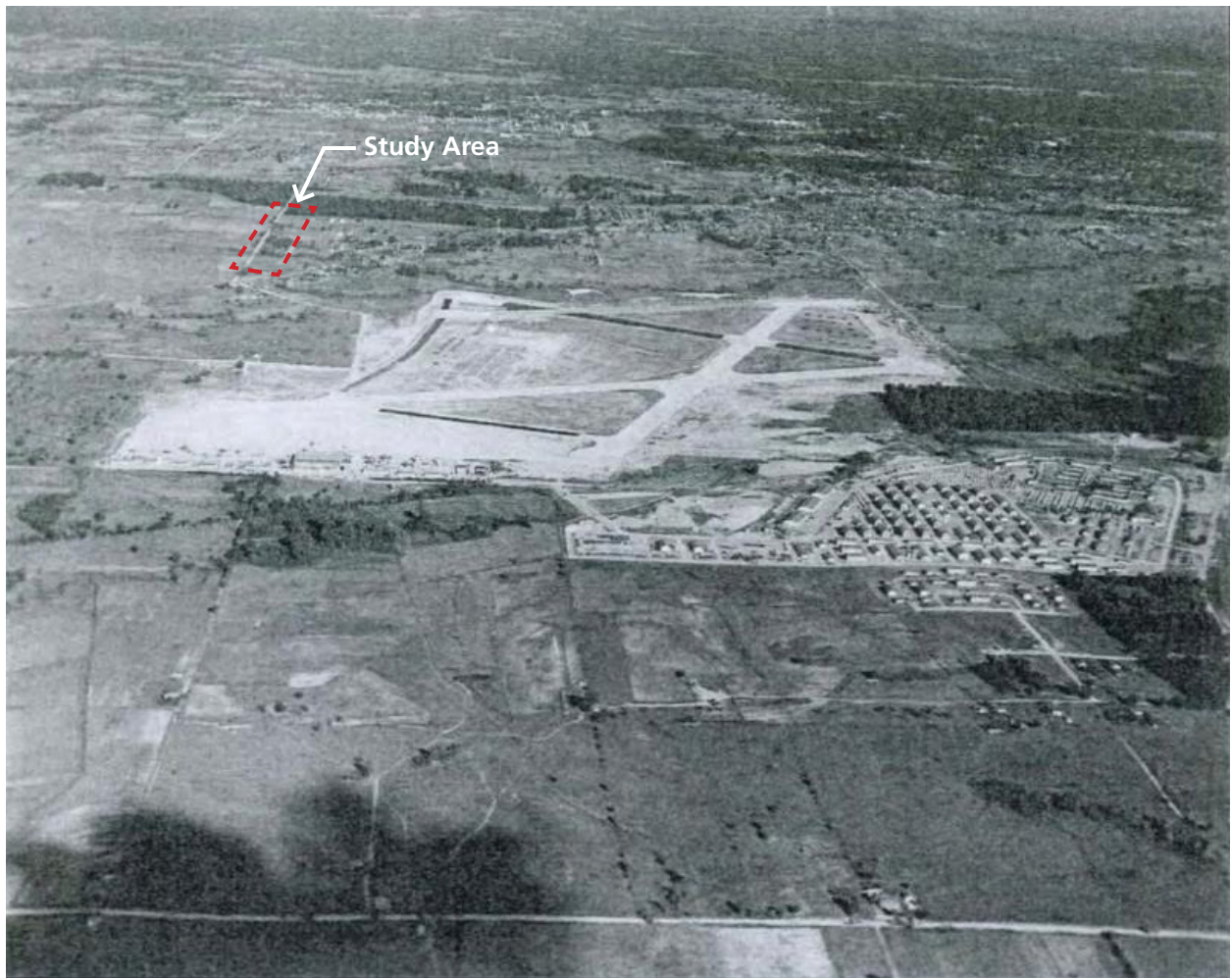


FIGURE 2–65. Jackson Army Air Base and Hawkins Field, looking east, 1941 (source: Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City*, 108).

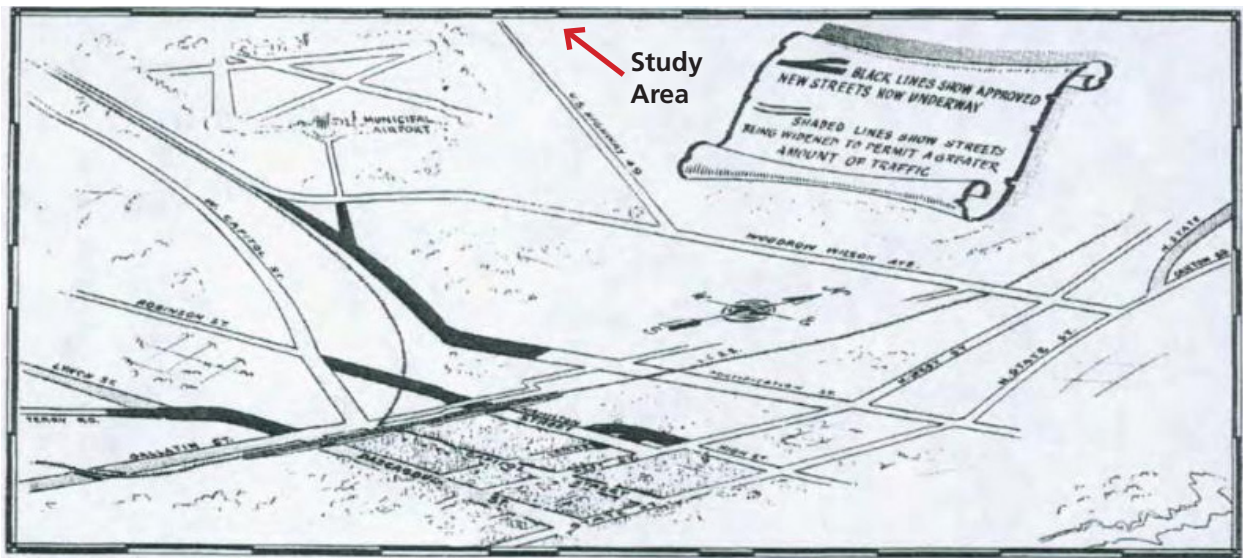


FIGURE 2–66. This diagram from the 1940s shows street improvements that would support suburban growth. The Elrairie subdivision would be located east of US Highway 49 (present-day Medgar Evers Boulevard) (source: Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City*, 116).

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.²⁷³

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.²⁷⁴

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.²⁷⁵ 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

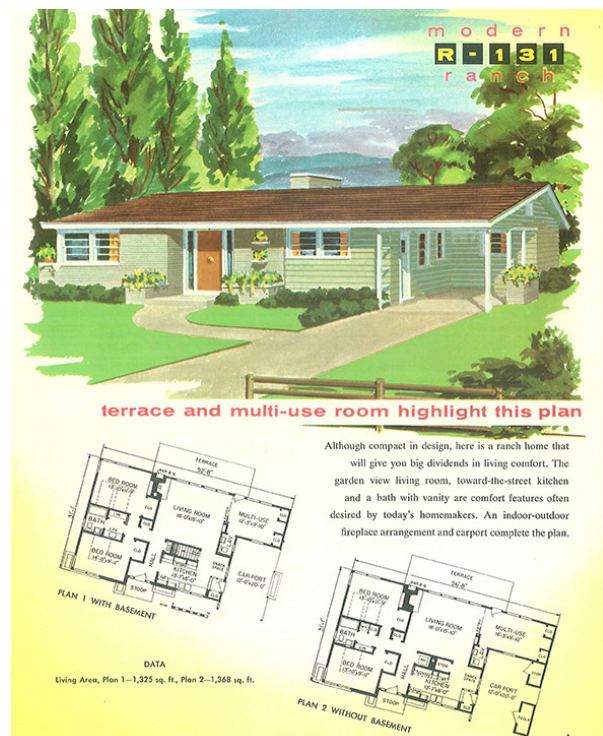


FIGURE 2–67. This page from the National Plan Service catalogue shows a Ranch-style home, similar to the Evers home (source: National Plan Service, Inc. "New Modern Ranch Homes." Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, 1956, https://dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/NewModernRanchHomes_NationalPlanService_1956.pdf).

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

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

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

neighborhoods with basic road and infrastructure improvements (Figure 2–61).²⁷⁶

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.²⁷⁷

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.²⁷⁸

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.²⁷⁹ 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.²⁸⁰

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

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

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

279 “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/>.

280 “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).

The Evers Home and the Elraine Subdivision Development:

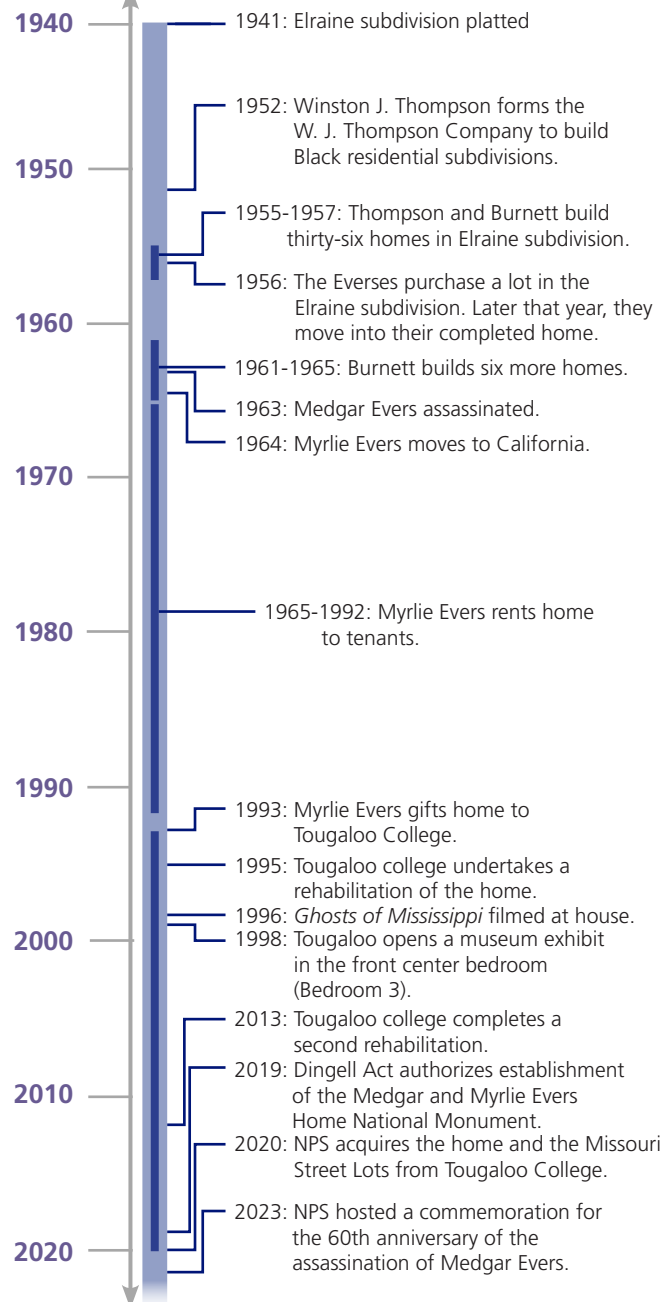


FIGURE 2–68. The timeline illustrates the significant events and periods associated the Evers home and the Elraine subdivision development (source: BBB Architects/DHM Design, 2023). See Figure 2–103 for a timeline of historic designation.

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.²⁸¹ 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.²⁸²

281 WFT Architects, “Medgar Evers Home Renovation, GS#501-052, A Historic Structure Report,” Jackson, Mississippi, 1995, 12.

282 WFT Architects, “Medgar Evers Home Renovation,” 16; Jaeger Company, *From Frontier Capital To Modern City*, 13.

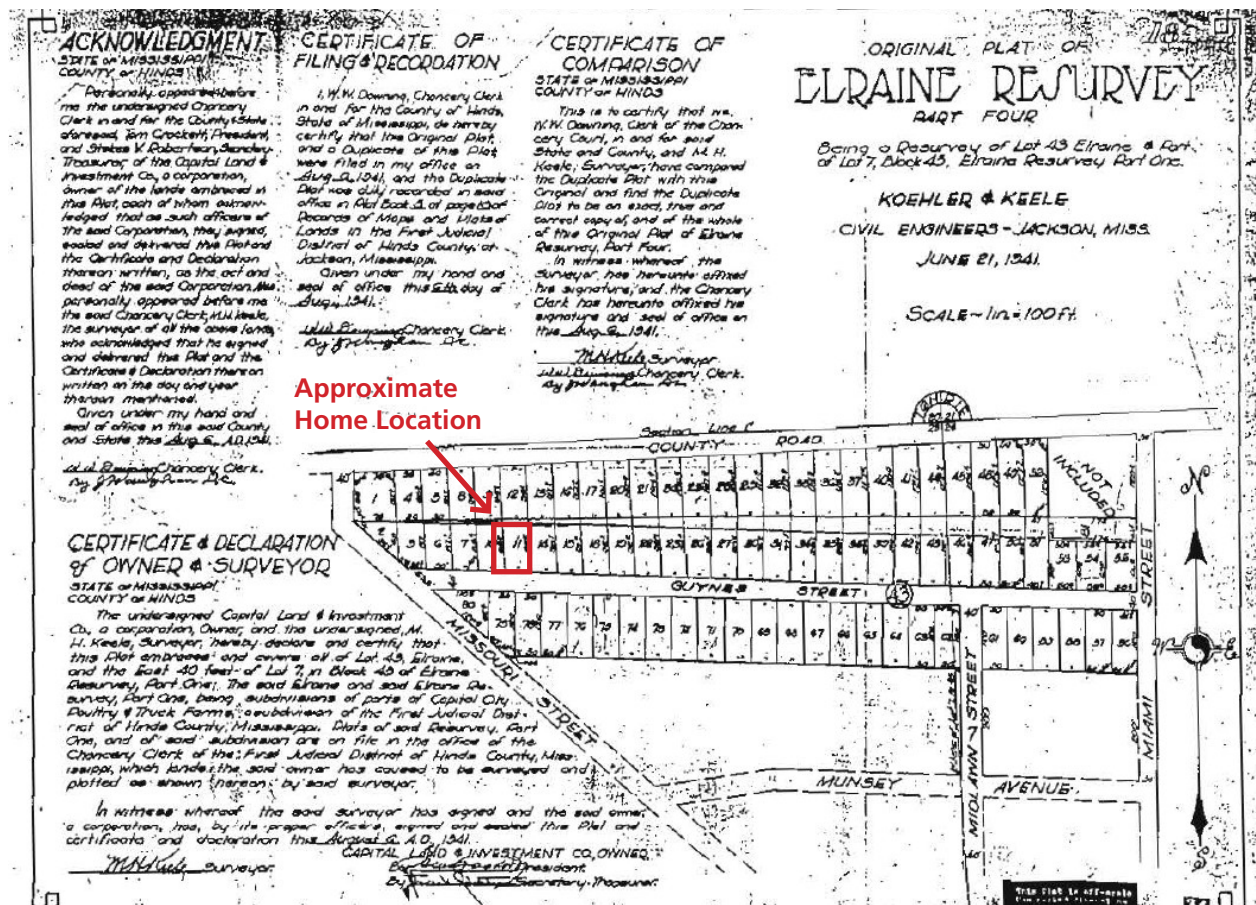


FIGURE 2–69. 1941 plan of the Elraine subdivision Part 4, prior to lot revisions (source: Hinds County, Mississippi, Plat Book 5, Page 18, Jackson Local Landmark Application).

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.²⁸³ 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 1955.²⁸⁴ 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

283 William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 5, 20.

284 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 2–86).²⁸⁵

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.²⁸⁶

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 \$35,000.²⁸⁷ 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.²⁸⁸

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).²⁸⁹

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

289 William M. Gatlin, et al. "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 22.

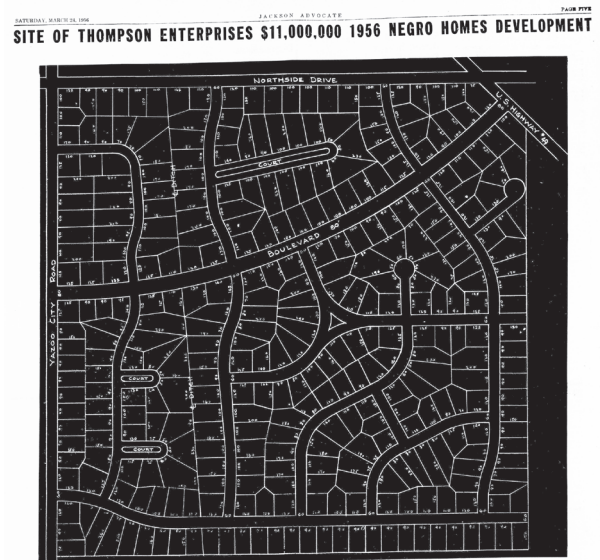


FIGURE 2–71. Thompson Enterprises plan for a new 500-home African American neighborhood northwest of the Elraine subdivision, 1956 (source: "Negro Realty Firm Plans Huge Home Development," *Jackson Advocate*, March 24, 1956, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/835011894/>).

285 William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 5, 14-15.

286 "Negro Realty Firm Plans Huge Home Development," *Jackson Advocate*, March 24, 1956, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/835016664>.

287 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 226. Myrlie Evers wrote that the house cost \$9500 – \$300 down with a G.I. mortgage.

288 "Negro Realty Firm Plans Huge Home Development," 1956; "Historic Aerials of Hinds County, Mississippi," *Historic Aerials*, accessed August 2024, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.



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 Elrairie 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 Elrairie 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.²⁹⁰ 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.²⁹¹ 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).²⁹²

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.²⁹³

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.²⁹⁴

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.²⁹⁵

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 2–77). The swales sloped to a low point at the drainage and sewer overflow channel, located one lot east of the Evers home.

295 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).

290 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>.

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

292 William M. Gatlin, et al., “Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination,” 22; Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.

293 Reena Evers-Everette and Myrlie Evers-Williams interview, October 31, 2023.

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



FIGURE 2-75. (Top) 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. (Right) 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).



FIGURE 2-77. 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.²⁹⁶

It was common for city service administrators to disregard concerns of Black homeowners and builders.²⁹⁷

296 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.

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



FIGURE 2–78. 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 2–79. 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 2-80. 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 2-81. 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.²⁹⁸

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.²⁹⁹ 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 2–79, Figure 2–80).

Their home had an open front lawn, contiguous with their neighbors' lawns, and featured perimeter shrubs and trees at the property lines (Figure 2–82). 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.³⁰⁰ 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 2–82).³⁰¹

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

²⁹⁸ Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 226.

²⁹⁹ "Society Slants," *Jackson Advocate*, (Jackson, MS), August 10, 1957, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn79000083/1957-08-10/ed-1/seq-3/>.

³⁰⁰ 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.

³⁰¹ Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 287.



FIGURE 2–82. 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 2–82). 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 2–78).³⁰² During interviews in October 2023, Myrlie Evers-Williams recalled planting roses, camellias, hydrangeas, azaleas, gardenias, tulips, daffodils, junipers, and arborvitae.³⁰³

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.³⁰⁴ 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.³⁰⁵ 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.³⁰⁶

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.³⁰⁷

The Elraine subdivision sat directly adjacent to working-class White neighborhoods. White residents and homeowners lived along Missouri

305 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.

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

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

302 Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022; Interview with Darrell Evers in Billy Watkins, "Stirring Up Memories."

303 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.

304 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>.

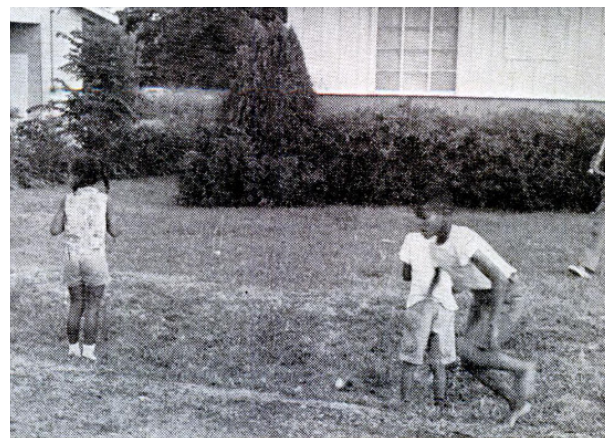


FIGURE 2–83. (Left) Reena and Darrell Evers playing in the neighborhood with friends, circa June 1963 (source: *Jet Magazine* 24, no. 12 (July 11, 1963), <https://books.google.com/books?id=GMEDAAAAMBAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>).

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...³⁰⁸

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.”³⁰⁹

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.³¹⁰

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*,

308 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 229.

309 Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 229.

310 William M. Gatlin, et al., “Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination,” 23.



FIGURE 2–84. 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.”³¹¹

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.³¹² 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.³¹³

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.³¹⁴

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.³¹⁵

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.³¹⁶ 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.³¹⁷

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.³¹⁸

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).

³¹¹ William M. Gatlin, et al., “Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination,” 23.

³¹² WFT Architects, “Medgar Evers Home Renovation,” 12.

³¹³ William M. Gatlin, et al., “Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination,” 23.

³¹⁴ Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022.

³¹⁵ Robert Pittman, interview by Chris Geddes and Leslie Moore, Jackson, MS, October 26, 2022.

³¹⁶ 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).

³¹⁷ Interview with Darrell Evers in Billy Watkins, “Stirring Up Memories.”

³¹⁸ “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.³¹⁹ 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 1958.³²⁰ 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.³²¹

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.³²² She

321 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/>.

322 Myrlie Evers-Williams and Reena Evers-Everette, interview by NPS, October 31, 2023, and November 3, 2023.

319 "Society Slants," *Jackson Advocate*.

320 "Society Slants," *Jackson Advocate*.



FIGURE 2–85. 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.³²³

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.”³²⁴ 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.”³²⁵ 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.³²⁶ 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.”³²⁷

To this day, African American gardens remain “vital places and spaces of survival, spirituality, subsistence, ornamentation, work, and leisure.”³²⁸

323 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.

324 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

325 “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>.

326 Mullins, “‘Ambitious to be Conventional.’”

327 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.

328 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 2–86).

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.³²⁹

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

³²⁹ William M. Gatlin, et al., “Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination,” 21; Reena Evers-Everette interview, October 27, 2022; Robert Pittman interview, October 26, 2022.

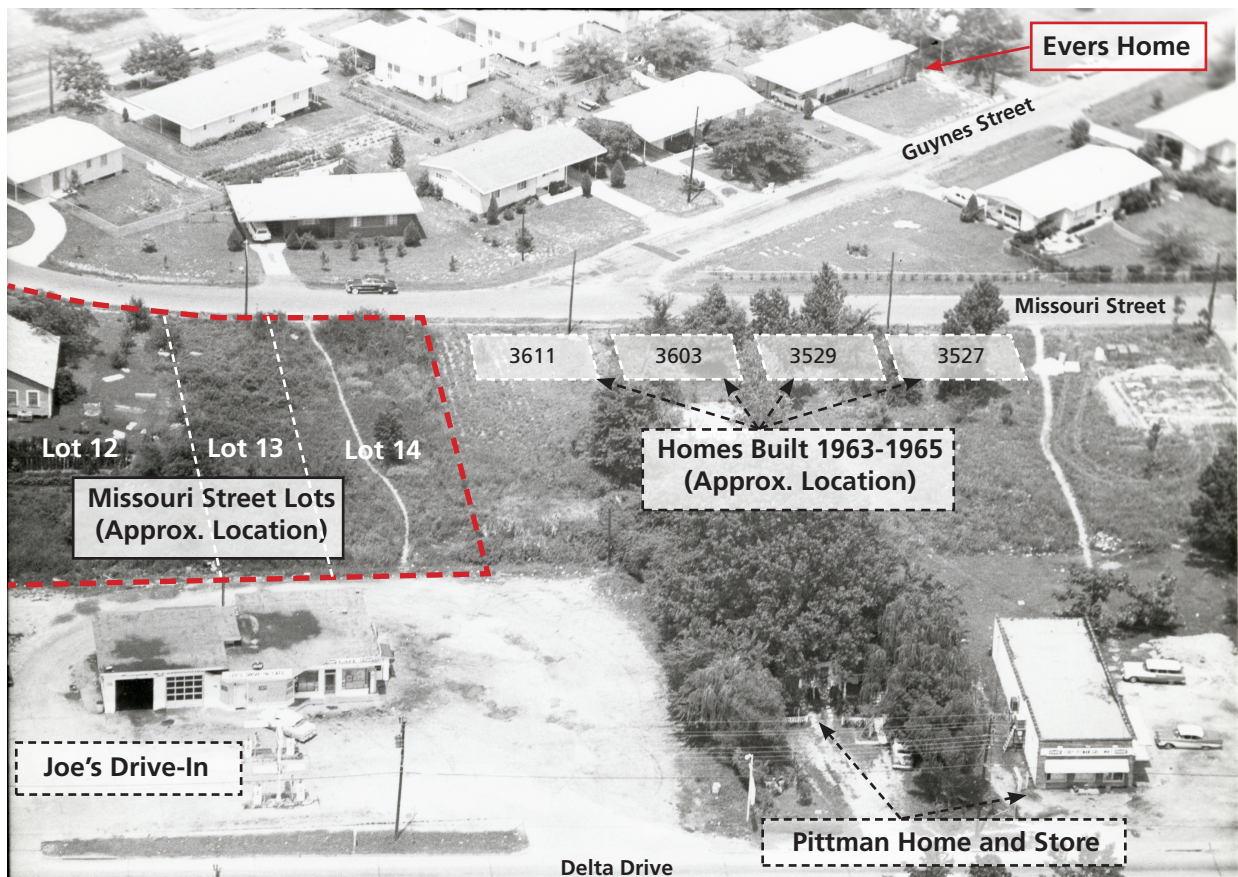


FIGURE 2–86. Aerial view of the Elraine subdivision, circa 1963, viewed from above Delta Drive, looking east (source: Photograph in Box 221, DeLaughter Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

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.³³⁰

As of 1956, several small businesses, a home, and a church lined the east side of Delta Drive near the Elaine subdivision. Elaine 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 2–86).³³¹

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 2–86). Robert Pittman Jr. was fifteen in 1963 and

remembered regularly using those social paths and seeing others do so.³³²

According to the investigation that led up to the third and final trial of Byron de la 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 2–87 to Figure 2–89).³³³

Court proceedings from 1997 summarized the investigation that took place in and around the Elaine 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.³³⁴

The day after the murder, the investigation recovered Beckwith's gun in honeysuckle vines and shrubs on the vacant lot (Figure 2–87, Figure

³³⁰ Evers and Peters, *For Us, the Living*, 227

³³¹ "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.

³³² 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/>.

³³³ Maryanne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi*; Byron de la Beckwith, VI v. State of Mississippi, (Miss. 1997).

³³⁴ 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.

2–88).³³⁵ 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.³³⁶

According to Luke, the gun was approximately twenty-five feet from the edge of the drive-in parking lot.³³⁷

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 2–86).

337 Byron de la Beckwith, *VI v. State of Mississippi*, (Miss. 1997).



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. 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).

335 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.

336 Byron de la Beckwith, *VI v. State of Mississippi*, (Miss. 1997).

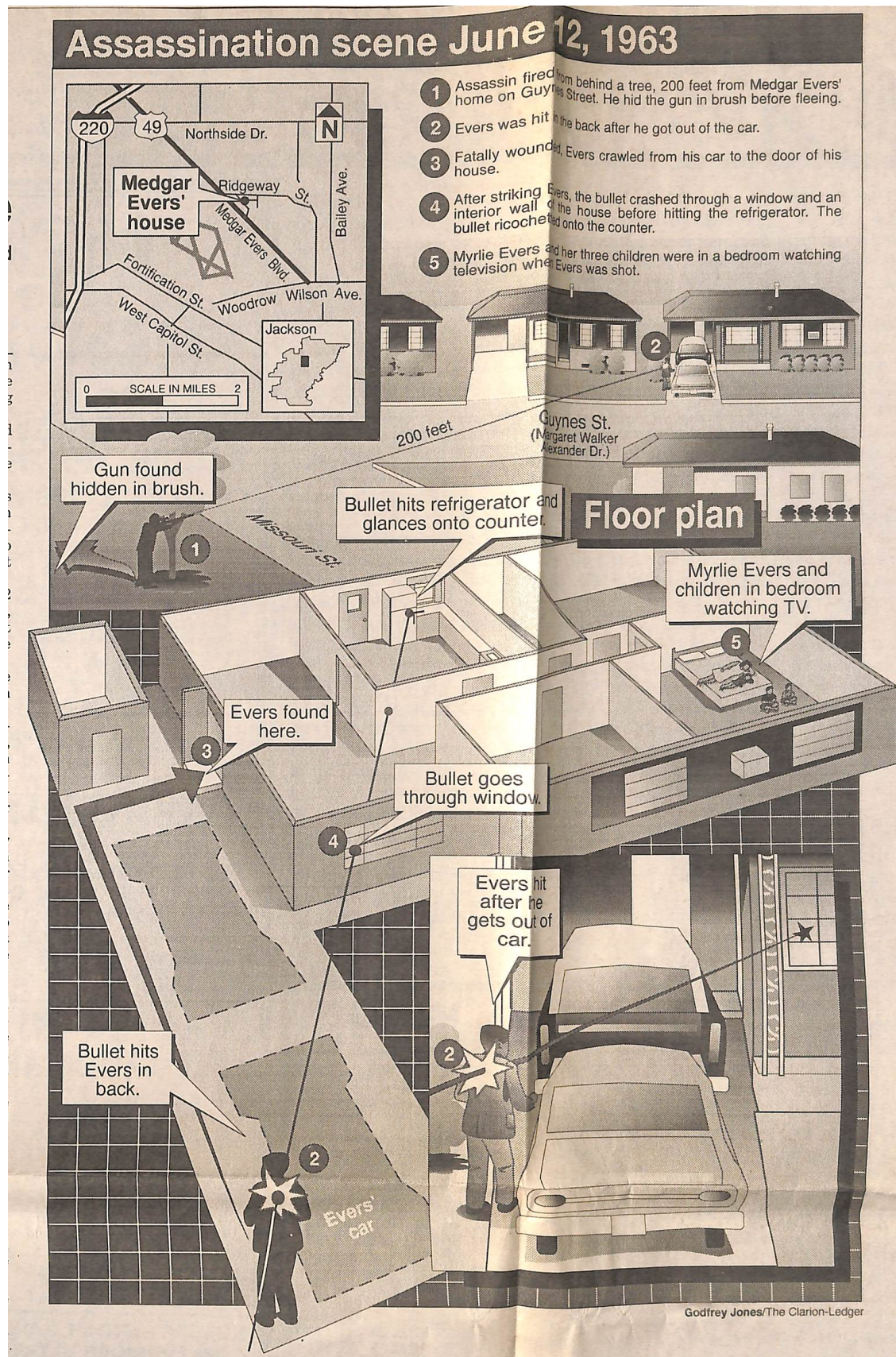
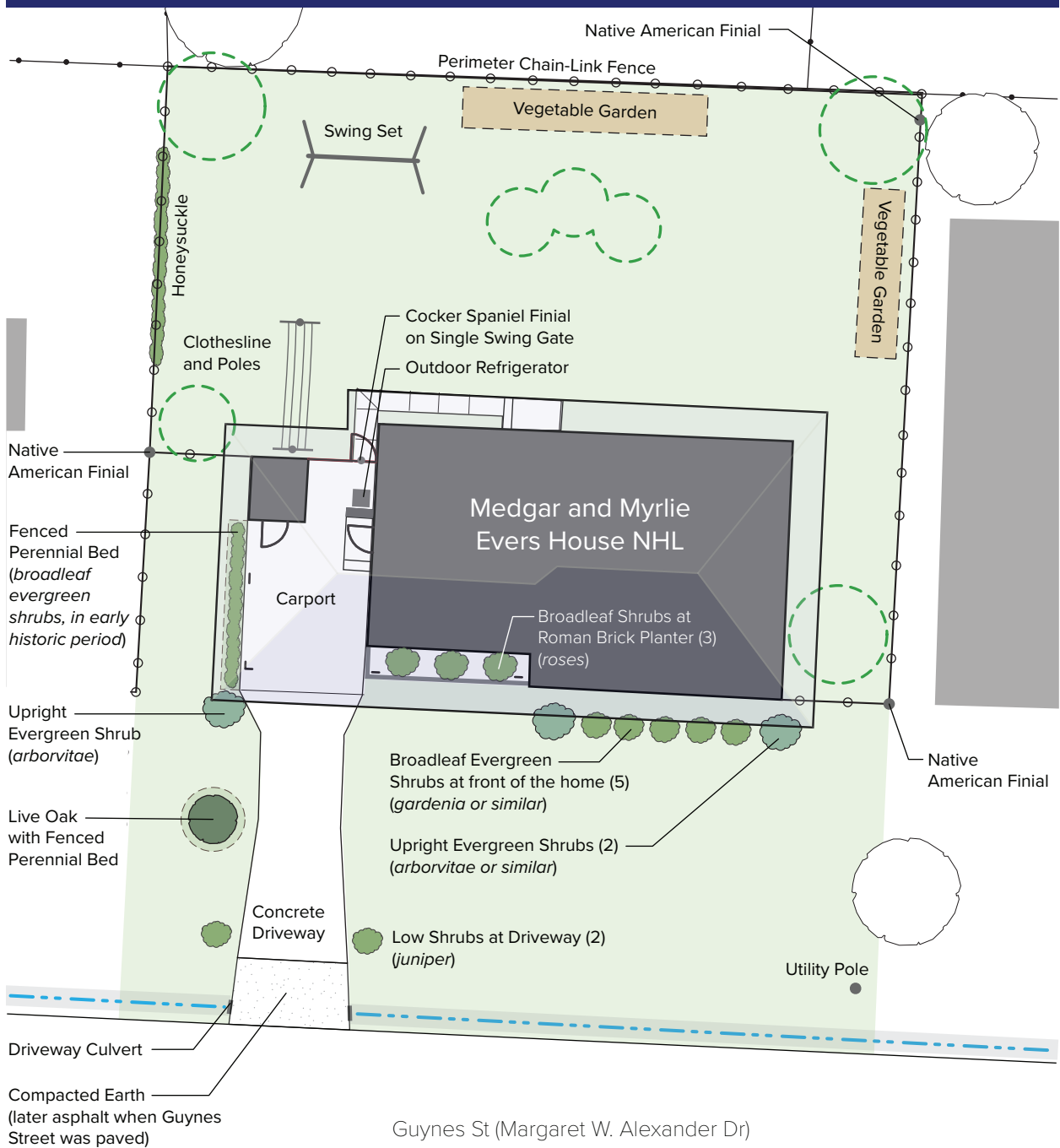


FIGURE 2–89. Illustration of the assassination scene by Godfrey Jones (source: Jackson *Clarion-Ledger*, Sunday, June 6, 1993).

PERIOD PLAN - EVERS FAMILY OCCUPANCY (1956-1964)



Evers Family Occupancy (1956-1964) Period Plan Legend

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL | Approximate Tree Location |
| Roofline | Upright Evergreen Shrub |
| Constructed Grass Swale | Low Shrub |
| Lawn | Fenced Perennial Bed |
| Deciduous Tree | Approximate Vegetable Garden Location |

0 8' 16'



Sources: Hinds County GIS; 2023 Google Earth; 2013 NRHP District Nomination; Historic Photographs and Aerials; 1995 Historic Structures Report; 2022/2023 Evers family oral interviews

Period plan shows approximate locations of plantings. Reference to Chapter 4: Analysis and Evaluation vegetation section for additional information.

FIGURE 2-90. 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 2–91). 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.³³⁸

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.³³⁹ Despite the exodus, White residents remained in power at the city and state levels, reducing investment in Jackson and

338 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/>.

339 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/>.

Facts about Council Schools:

WHY AND HOW THEY STARTED: Citizens Council leaders organized Council School No. 1 in 1964 when it became apparent that the federal government was seeking control of public schools. Today, the non-profit Council School Foundation operates the largest private school system in the nation.

WHO ARE THE STUDENTS? From a beginning enrollment of 22 in 1964, the student body of Council Schools has swollen to approximately 5,000, or about 25 per cent of the total number of white pupils in Jackson and environs. In all, approximately half of the white pupils in the Jackson area are in private schools.

WHO ARE THE TEACHERS? Instructors and administrators of Council Schools are chosen for professional competence, character, dedication and leadership ability from two main groups—skilled, experienced teachers who no longer wish to teach in public schools and college graduates who have excelled while earning degrees in education. All must meet qualification standards of the Mississippi Private School Association. All must have the Bachelor's Degree; one-third have the Master's Degree.

ARE COUNCIL SCHOOLS ACCREDITED? Not only are Council Schools fully accredited by the Mississippi Private School Association Accrediting Commission, but Council School graduates score consistently well above the national average on the American College Test.

WHAT DOES IT COST? Tuition fees for pupils in Council Schools are within reach of all. No capital investment fee is required of parents. Discounts are allowed for families with more than one child enrolled. Work scholarships are available.

CURRICULUM: The curriculum of Council Schools is all-inclusive. A wide range of elective subjects includes courses in driver education, home economics, band, arts and sciences.

WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL FACILITIES? Council School classrooms are individually heated and air-conditioned. They are carpeted and draped. They are located in attractive, ground-floor buildings interconnected by covered sidewalks on spacious, landscaped campuses. Each school has an all-purpose gymnasium-auditorium building.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Students of Council Schools participate in football, basketball, baseball, track, tennis, golf, swimming, science fairs, band contests, literary competitions and other activities of the Mississippi Private School Association.

RELIGIOUS TRAINING: Each day at all Council Schools begins with prayers and scripture readings.

Study Area

O.B. FENDERGRASS, Superintendent

1. Formerly Council School 1/New Textbook Depository/555 Hartfield St.
2. Council School 2/McCluer/McCluer and Swell Rd./222-8576
3. Council School 3/Mantua/5055 Mantua Rd./582-8651
4. Council School 4/Plantation/Plantation Blvd. (4 acres reserved)
5. Council School 5/Central Road/Raymond Bolton Rd./857-4821
6. Council School 6/Magnolia/555 Magnolia Rd./322-4311
7. Council School 7/Hanging Moss/1555 Hanging Rd./366-3412
8. Council School 8/Flowood/Mangum Rd./352-4456 (30 acres reserved)

BUSINESS-CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP: Council Schools are operated by a non-profit, educational, business foundation. Patrons enjoy a business-customer relationship, knowing that the Council School Board of Directors has central control of the system and can act in the interest of the schools by making business decisions. Under the law, Council Schools are free from outside interference.

WHERE DO YOU ENROLL?

COUNCIL SCHOOL FOUNDATION
254 East Griffith St./Phone 352-4456
Jackson, Mississippi

A step ahead in education
COUNCIL SCHOOLS

FIGURE 2–91. 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.³⁴⁰

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 2–92).³⁴¹

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.³⁴²

Neighborhood

In the 1960s and 1970s, the city made drainage improvements in the Elrairie subdivision. Between 1963 and 1971, the City lined the drainage and sewer overflow channel east of the Evers home with concrete.³⁴³ 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.

340 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.mah.ms.gov/issue/the-last-stand-of-massive-resistance-1970>.

341 Turry Flucker, et. al., "The Black Mecca of Mississippi: A Portrait of a Community."

342 William Booth, "Jackson Mississippi: The City Time Remembers."

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



FIGURE 2–92. 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.³⁴⁴

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 2–93) 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.³⁴⁵ 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:

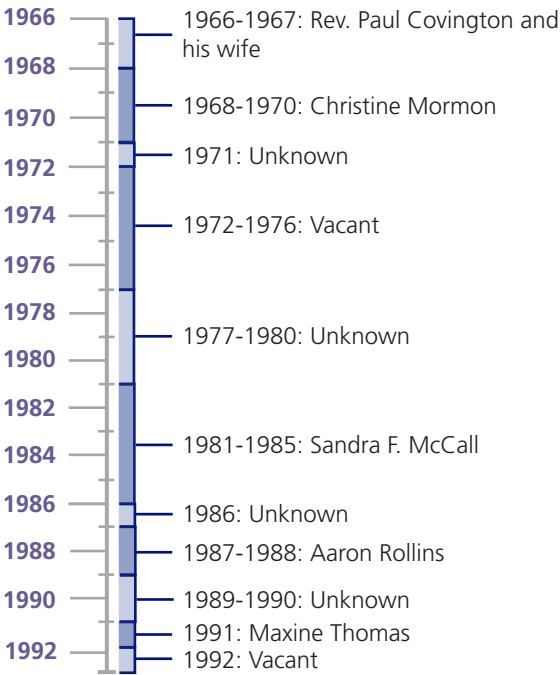


FIGURE 2–93. Timeline of tenants living in the home. (source: BBB Architects/DHM Design, 2023).

344 WFT Architects, “Medgar Evers Home Renovation,” 12, 16.

345 Sandra McCall, interview by Chris Geddes, January 2023.

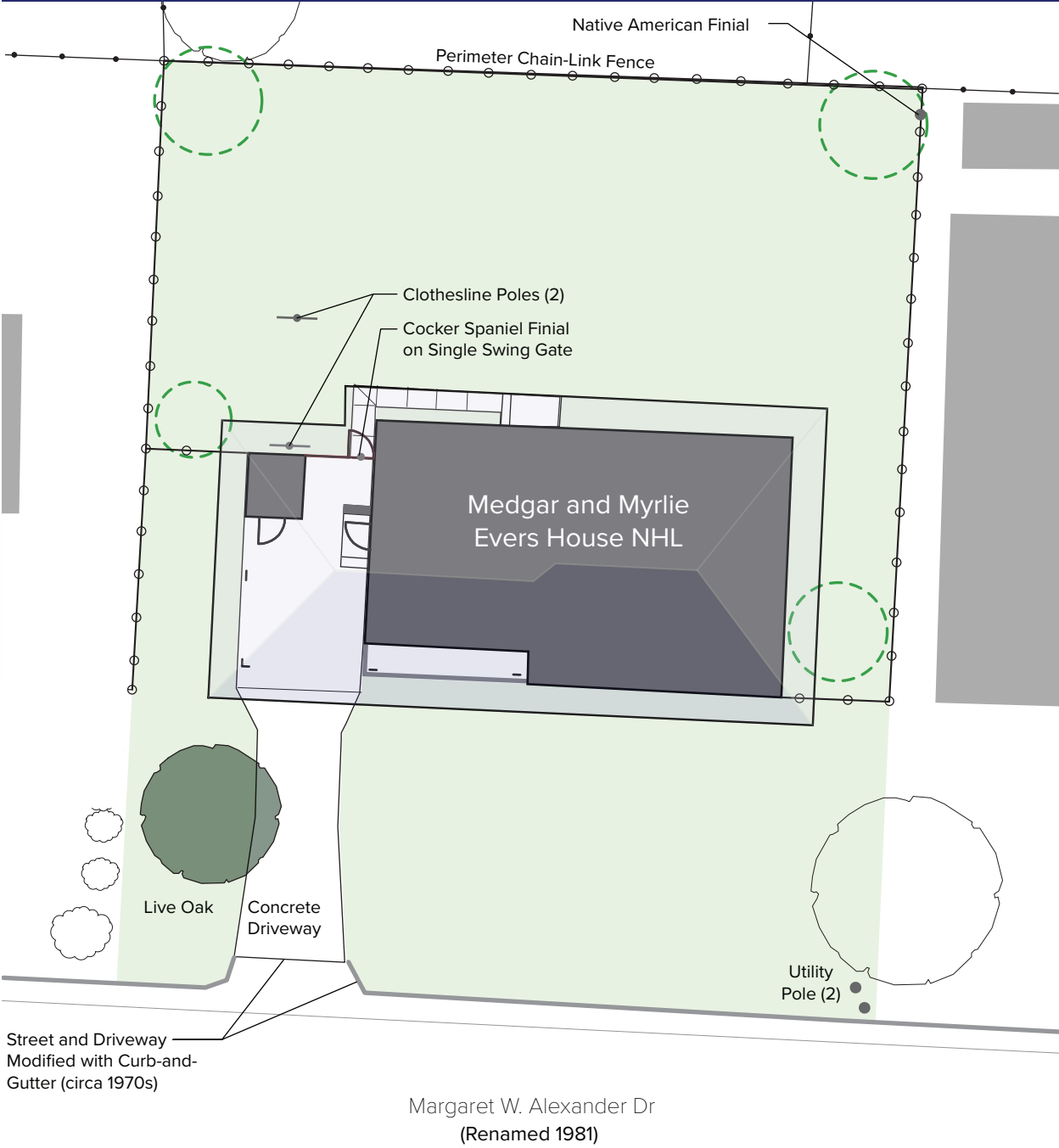


FIGURE 2–94. Aerial from 1971, showing the boundary of the Medgar Evers Historic District (outlined in orange), which includes the original thirty-six lots of the Elraine subdivision. The location of the future Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument is outlined in yellow. The gabled house on the northernmost of the Missouri Street lots is visible (source: Historic Aerials: NETRonline).



FIGURE 2–95. 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 Photographs and Aerials; 1995 Historic Structures Report; 2022/2023 Evers family oral interviews

Period plan shows approximate locations of plantings. Reference to Chapter 4: Analysis and Evaluation vegetation section for additional information.

FIGURE 2-96. 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.³⁴⁶ 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.³⁴⁷

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.³⁴⁸

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.³⁴⁹

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.³⁵⁰

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.³⁵¹ 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

346 Ward Schaefer, "Jackson White Flight' Slows In Last Decade."

347 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/>.

348 "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>.

349 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/>.

350 WFT Architects, "Medgar Evers Home Renovation," 236.

351 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.³⁵²

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 1994.³⁵³ 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

353 “Medgar and Myrlie 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.](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.

352 Marianne Vollers, *Ghosts of Mississippi*, 326.

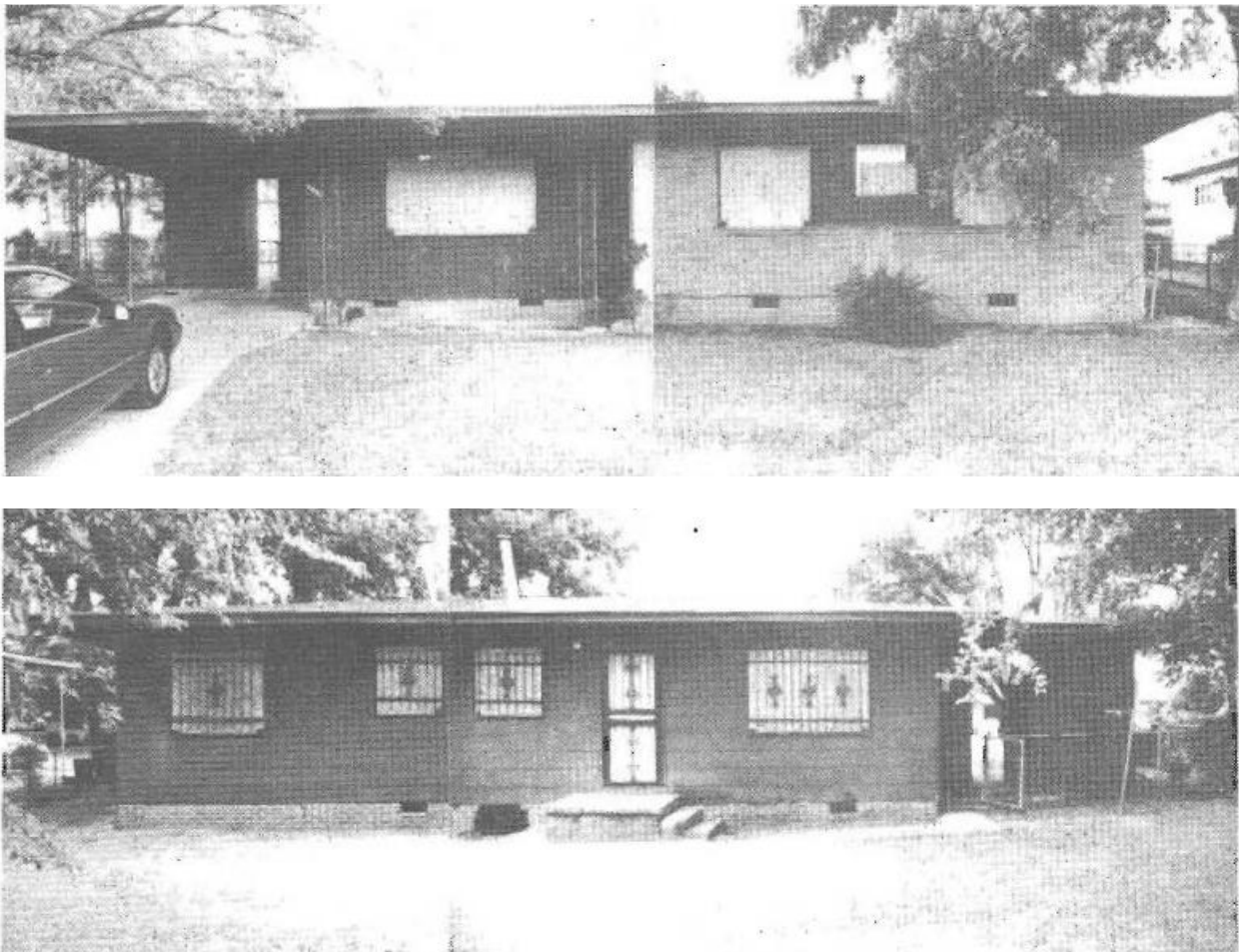


FIGURE 2–97. Photographs of the Evers home, south façade (top) north façade (lower), taken in 1994 (source: WFT Architects, Medgar Evers Home Renovation Historic Structure Report, 1995).

the beautiful status that it once had and hopefully crime will be deterred...”³⁵⁴

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 2–97, Figure 2–98).³⁵⁵

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.³⁵⁶ While thirty years after the fact, the verdict gave the family and the larger community some semblance of justice.

Book and Film

The trial and verdict garnered public attention and were the subject of a number of books and movies.³⁵⁷ 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 1996.³⁵⁸ The film told something of a White redemption version of history, centering the story on White prosecutor Bobby DeLaughter (played by Alec Baldwin)

357 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>.

358 Harvard Sitkoff, “Review of *Ghosts of Mississippi*” *Journal of American History*, Volume 84, Issue 3, December 1997, 1177–1178.

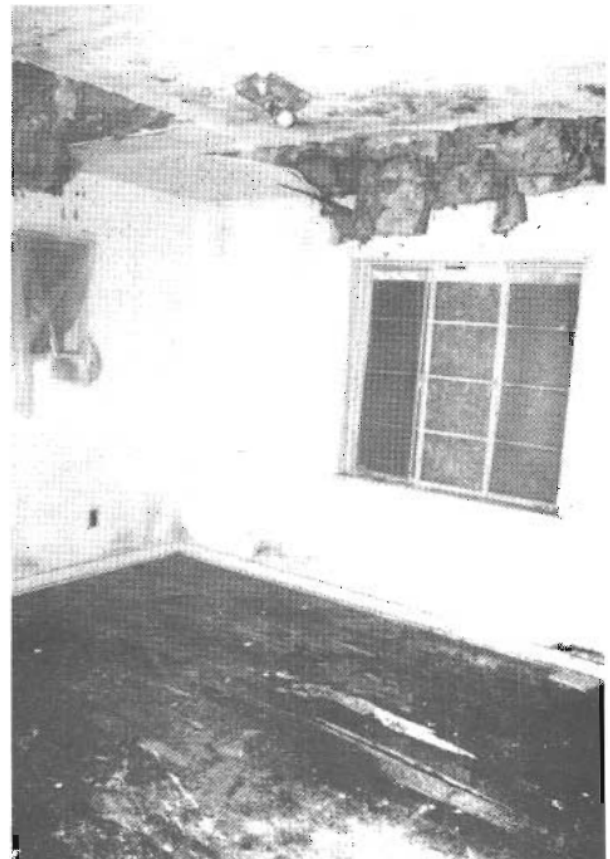


FIGURE 2–98. Severe water damage was present in the center front bedroom (Bedroom 3) in 1994 (source: WFT Architects, Medgar Evers Home Renovation Historic Structure Report, 1995).

354 Grace Simmons, “Medgar Evers’ neighborhood designated historic district,” *Clarion-Ledger*, (Jackson, MS), January 26, 1994.

355 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.

356 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>.

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.³⁵⁹

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 2–99).³⁶⁰

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 2–100).

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

359 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.

360 Billy Watkins, "Scene of the Crime," *Clarion-Ledger*, (Jackson, MS), 1996; Lawson Newman interview, November 9, 2023.



FIGURE 2–99. 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.³⁶¹

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.³⁶²

361 Shelley Reisman Paine, Conservator, "Medgar Evers Museum Conservation Assessment," (Nashville, Tennessee, 2005).

362 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.³⁶³

Minnie Watson served as the museum's first curator, a role she held until the home was conveyed to the NPS (Figure 2–101, Figure 2–102). 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

363 Paine, "Medgar Evers Museum Conservation Assessment," 2005, 3.



FIGURE 2–100. 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.³⁶⁴

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 2–103).³⁶⁵ 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, 2000.³⁶⁶

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.³⁶⁷

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.³⁶⁸

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,

364 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.

365 Jeanne B. Luckett, "Interpretive Plan of Action for Medgar Evers Home/Museum," (Jackson, MS: October 4, 2010), 3.

366 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.

367 Paine, "Medgar Evers Museum Conservation Assessment," 2005, 24.

368 Luckett, "Interpretive Plan of Action for Medgar Evers Home/Museum," 3.



FIGURE 2–101. Minnie Watson giving a tour in 2010 (source: Luckett, Interpretive Plan of Action for Medgar Evers Home/Museum, Tougaloo College, October 4, 2010).



FIGURE 2–102. Minnie Watson standing outside the home in 2019 (source: Rory Doyle, National Parks Conservation Association, [https:// www.npsa.org/articles/2020-mississippi-reckoning](https://www.npsa.org/articles/2020-mississippi-reckoning).)



FIGURE 2–103. Exhibit in Bedroom 3 opened by the Medgar Evers Museum in 1998 (source: DHM Design, 2022).

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.³⁶⁹

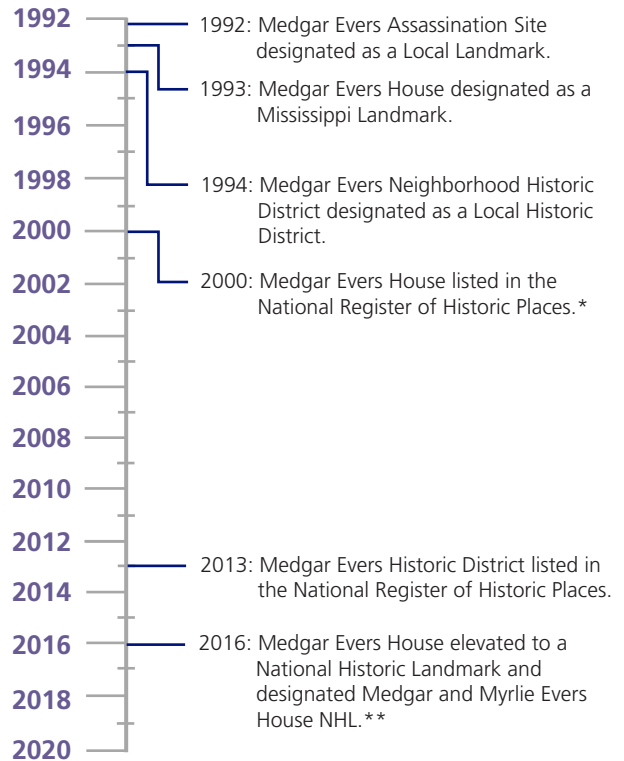
See Historic Structure Report Chapter 3: *Chronology of Development and Use* for a description of 2013 rehabilitation.

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, 2016.³⁷⁰

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.³⁷¹

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 2–104. Timeline of historic designations (source: BBB Architects/DHM Design, 2023).

369 Newman interview, November 9, 2023.

370 Jennifer V.O. Baughn, "Medgar and Myrlie Evers House," 10.

371 WFT Architects, "Medgar Evers Home Renovation," 51.

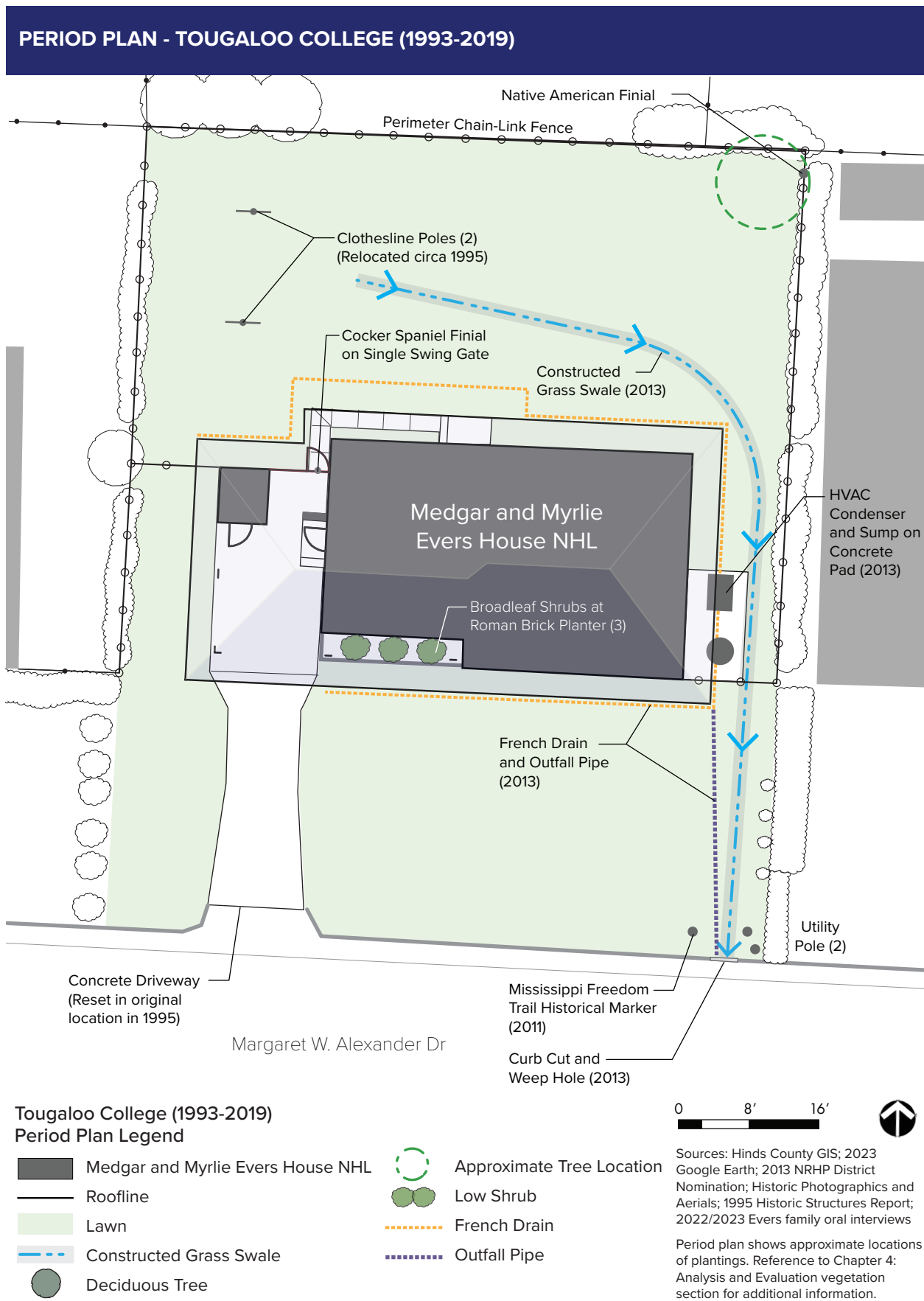


FIGURE 2–105. Landscape period plan during Tougaloo College’s ownership, 1993 to 2019 (source: DHM Design, 2023).

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.³⁷² 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.³⁷³

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 2020.³⁷⁴

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

372 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>.

373 "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>

374 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.³⁷⁵

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 2–106).

375 “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 2–106. 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: Existing Conditions Documentation

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the existing condition of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument cultural landscape within the Medgar Evers Historic District (the district). The cultural landscape of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument is organized into two component landscapes: the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House National Historic Landmark (Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL) and the Missouri Street Lots. Project team members evaluated the condition of the cultural landscape during initial field investigations in November 2022; team members conducted a follow-up visit in June 2023 to review interim improvements incorporated to support the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the 1963 assassination — the park’s grand opening to the public. Narrative text, photographs, maps, matrices, and diagrams convey the existing condition of the cultural landscape.

Landscape characteristics are the processes and physical forms of a cultural landscape — the tangible and intangible qualities that either influence a landscape’s development or are products of its development. Individually and collectively, these characteristics give the landscape its historic character and facilitate our understanding of the landscape’s cultural importance.¹ The landscape characteristics relevant to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument cultural landscape include the following:

- *Land Use:* The organization, patterns and forms of the landscape in response to human use.
- *Spatial Organization:* The arrangement of elements and the compositional aspects of ground, vertical and overhead planes which define space.
- *Topography:* The three-dimensional

configuration of the landscape surface understood through features and orientation.

- *Constructed Water Features:* Built features and elements that utilize water for aesthetic or utilitarian functions.
- *Views and Vistas:* Features that determine a range of vision, including those that are natural, designed, or controlled.
- *Circulation:* Features and materials that allow for systems of movement.
- *Buildings and Structures:* Historical constructed forms and edifices.
- *Small-Scale Features:* Human-scaled elements specific to a landscape that provide detail and diversity combined with function and aesthetics.
- *Vegetation:* Indigenous or introduced trees, shrubs, vines, ground covers, herbaceous plants and natural vegetative cover.

The project team evaluated the existing condition of the cultural landscape using the following criteria:

- *Good:* No clear evidence of major negative disturbances, and features do not require immediate intervention. Only minor/routine maintenance is needed.
- *Fair:* Minor deterioration, decline, or damage is evident; features may require immediate intervention. If deferred, features will likely require attention in a few years.
- *Poor:* Deterioration, decline or damage is serious; the feature may present a hazardous condition. Extensive and immediate attention is required.²

1 Robert R. Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan A. Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process and Techniques*, Washington, D.C.: NPS, 1998, 53.

2 Robert R. Page, et al., *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, 67.

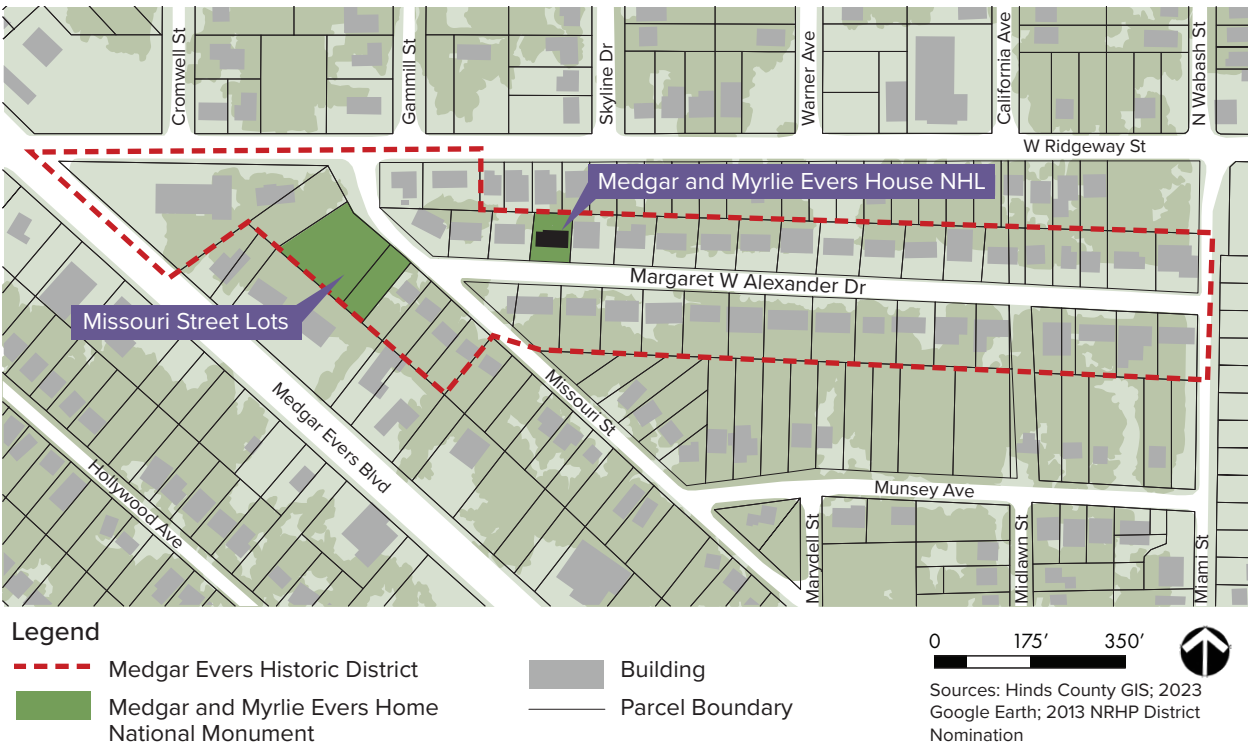


FIGURE 3-1. Historic District Boundary Map: The Medgar Evers Historic District is defined as the Elaine subdivision (source: DHM Design, 2024).

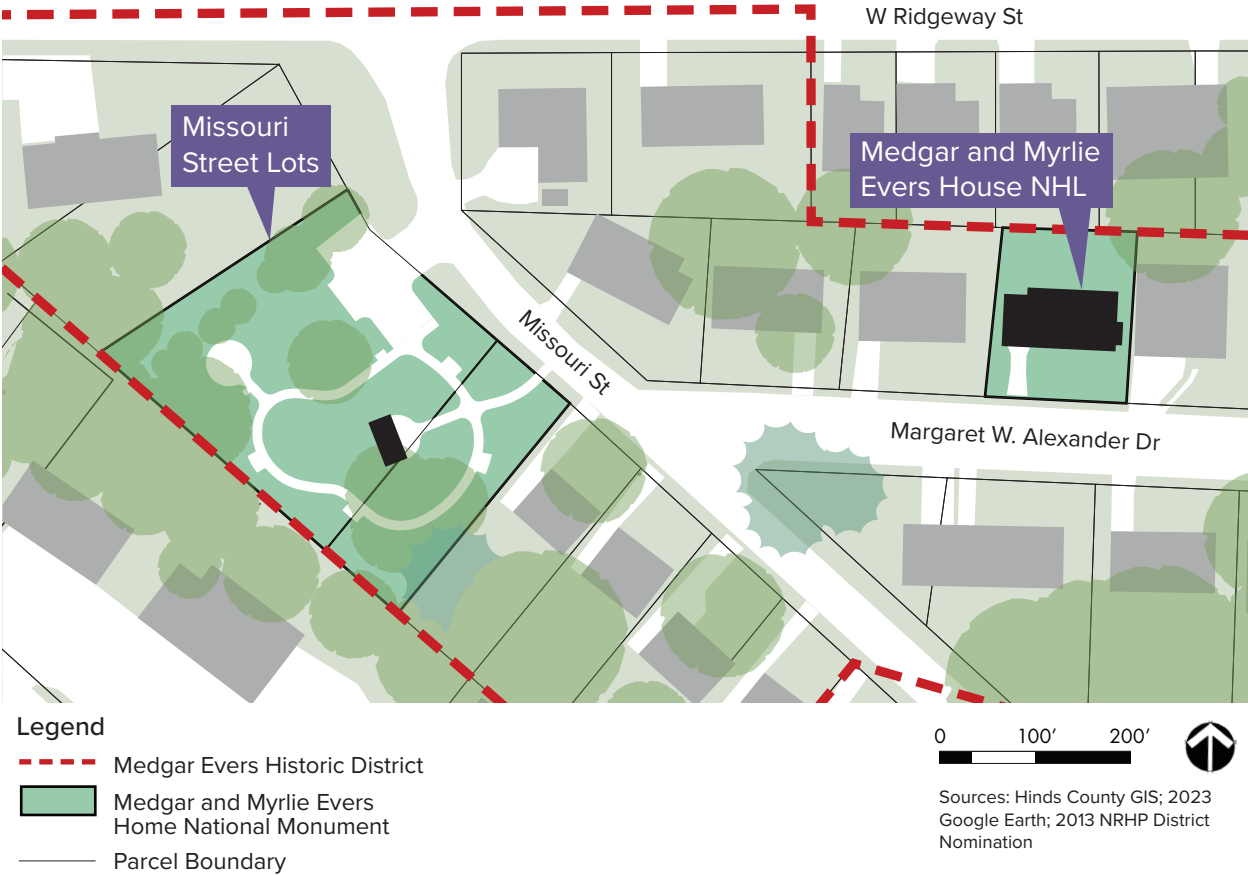


FIGURE 3-2. National Monument Boundary Map: The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and Missouri Street Lots (the study area) are NPS owned properties of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument in Jackson, Mississippi (source: DHM Design, 2024).

Land Use

Medgar Evers Historic District

Medgar Evers Historic District is defined as the Elrairie subdivision, a residential neighborhood in northwest Jackson. Many of the residents who lived in the neighborhood during the Evers family's occupancy, or their descendants, continue to reside in the subdivision today.³ Of the forty-four properties within the district, forty-two are for residential use (Figure 3-1). The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument property is zoned as residential but functions as a house museum (NHL property) and an outdoor education space and garden area (Missouri Street Lots) managed by the National Park Service (NPS) (Figure 3-2 and Figure 3-3). The Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church is a religious institution within the district.

Properties outside the district along Medgar Evers Boulevard are primarily for commercial use. Missouri Street and Margaret W. Alexander Drive are low traffic public streets without sidewalks. The

neighborhood is primarily accessed for residential purposes or by visitors to the national monument.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

The NPS owns and manages a house museum at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL, which provides a space to educate visitors on the Evers family's life, Medgar Evers's assassination, and the roles Medgar and Myrlie Evers played in the civil rights movement and beyond.

Missouri Street Lots

The Missouri Street Lots function as an outdoor education space and garden area within the district. The NPS owns and manages the Missouri Street Lots, which provide park elements for leisurely activities such as walking paths, seating and gathering areas, and shade structures. A section of the site is dedicated to Myrlie Evers's fondness for gardening and features raised garden beds for neighborhood use. Interpretive signage on site provides visitors with contextual information about the Elrairie subdivision and the Evers family's life. This part of the park also features a small parking area.

³ NPS, *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Foundation Document*, Jackson: NPS, 2023, 15.

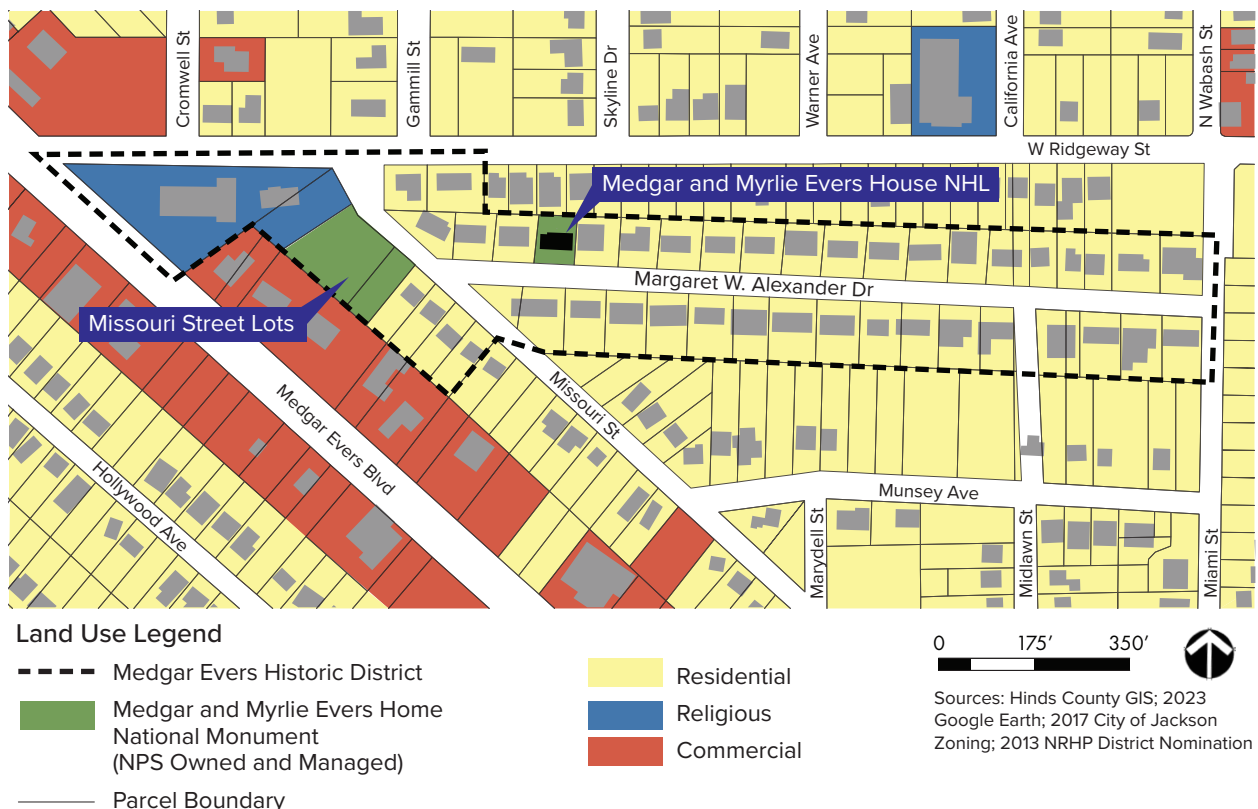


FIGURE 3-3. Land Use includes a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional uses. The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL is a residential property that operates as a house museum. The Missouri Street Lots are zoned residential and function as an outdoor education space and garden area (source: DHM Design, 2024).

Spatial Organization

Medgar Evers Historic District

The Elaine subdivision was the first postwar suburban neighborhood built by and for middle-class African Americans in Mississippi. Between 1955 and 1957, veterans Winston J. Thompson and Leroy Burnett developed thirty-six lots along what was then Guynes Street; the road was renamed in 1981 to Margaret W. Alexander Drive. Between 1961 and 1965, Leroy Burnett developed six additional lots in the subdivision. Lot sizes for the thirty-six original homes are generally wider than those in the surrounding subdivisions, allowing for the primary facade of each building to be oriented parallel to the road rather than perpendicular.

The orientation and siting of the thirty-six original buildings along Margaret W. Alexander Drive emphasize shared features, creating a visual symmetry among the parallel rows of Ranch-style residences on either side of the road. The visual connections are disrupted only at the properties that are neglected.

All thirty-six of these Ranch-style homes share a similar scale and setback from the road. The driveway is typically on the right side of the home when viewing from the road; three left-facing driveways are the exceptions, each associated with one of the three properties west of the drainage and sewer overflow channel, including the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. The alignment of the left-facing driveways is based on the division of drainage in the district since its lowest point is at the drainage and sewer overflow channel (Figure 3–10).

A contiguous groundplane of front lawn unifies the properties along the road. The front lawn is occasionally punctuated by shrubs or a low fence at property lines; shrub perimeter plantings often function as an extension of fencing along property lines. Backyards are typically enclosed with a combination of chain-link fence and plant material, creating a private space for residents (Figure 3–5).

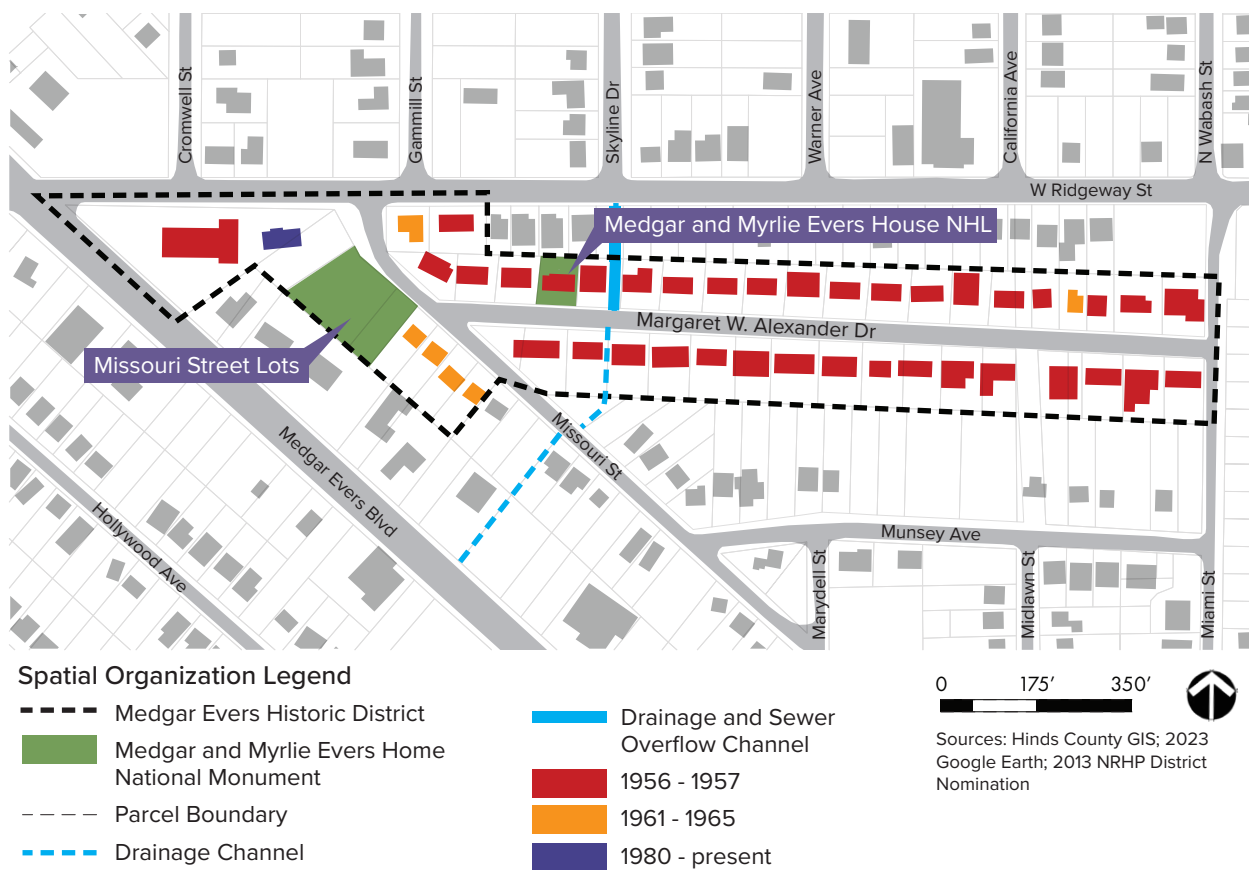


FIGURE 3–4. Spatial organization is consistent within the periods of development of the Medgar Evers Historic District (source: DHM Design, 2024).

Of the six additional lots developed by Leroy Burnett between 1961 and 1965, four are on Missouri Street (1963–1965), one is at the corner of W. Ridgeway Street and Missouri Street (1961), and one is on Margaret W. Alexander Drive (1965)⁴ (Figure 3–4). Most of these lots are narrow, and the home on each is sited near the center of the lot, allowing for a spacious backyard. These additional homes share a similar setback, and are set parallel to the road.

The Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church (formerly the Elrairie Baptist Church) is situated on a triangle lot at the northwest corner of the district at the intersection of Medgar Evers Boulevard and W. Ridgeway Street. A one-story Ranch-style parsonage stands directly east of the church. A cast iron perimeter fence encloses the church property; vehicular and pedestrian access is at W. Ridgeway Street.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL is located on one of the original lots developed by Winston J. Thompson and Leroy Burnett in 1956. The Ranch-style home is centered on the lot and has a spacious front lawn and backyard. The front lawn is defined by low ornamental shrubs on adjacent properties on the east-west sides and is open toward the road. The backyard is enclosed by a perimeter chain-link fence with access gates on the southwest side. A wood privacy fence has been installed on the inside perimeter of the backyard chain-link fence.

The primary façade of the building is oriented toward Margaret W. Alexander Drive; the primary access for visitors to the home is through the rear kitchen door on the building's north side. (The original primary entrance of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL was underneath the carport rather than along the more typical front facade. Three other homes within the district were built with the primary entrance underneath the carport.)

A driveway extends orthogonally from under the carport to Margaret W. Alexander Drive.

A stone paver path extends from the driveway along the carport's west side to a wood ramp at the north side of the building that accesses the primary entrance (Figure 3–6). A narrow concrete walk extends parallel on the north side of the building and previously provided access to the rear kitchen door prior to the wood ramp's installation.

Missouri Street Lots

The Missouri Street Lots are defined by fencing along the perimeter of the property. The fence on the south, west, and east sides is tall and bordered by a mature canopy of trees. This fence is used for privacy whereas the fence on the north side is low and set back along the right-of-way of Missouri Street.

A parking area and concrete walk provide access to the site from Missouri Street. Vehicular parking is located at the northern edge of the site, parallel to Missouri Street. A concrete loop walk provides pedestrian access to a gathering space to the west and a shade structure and raised-bed planters on the east.

The shade structure and raised-bed planters are oriented toward a view of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. In contrast to most buildings within the district, which are parallel to the road, the shade structure is oriented southwest to northeast. A live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) with a wide mulch ring stands at the center of the Missouri Street Lots, acting as a focal point. The tree was originally planted by Medgar Evers at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and transplanted to its current location.

⁴ Note: Clarification is needed for 3604 Missouri Street. Although it is listed with a construction date of 1964, historic aerials and the 1995 HSR interview with its occupant, Grace Sweet, date this building to 1956.

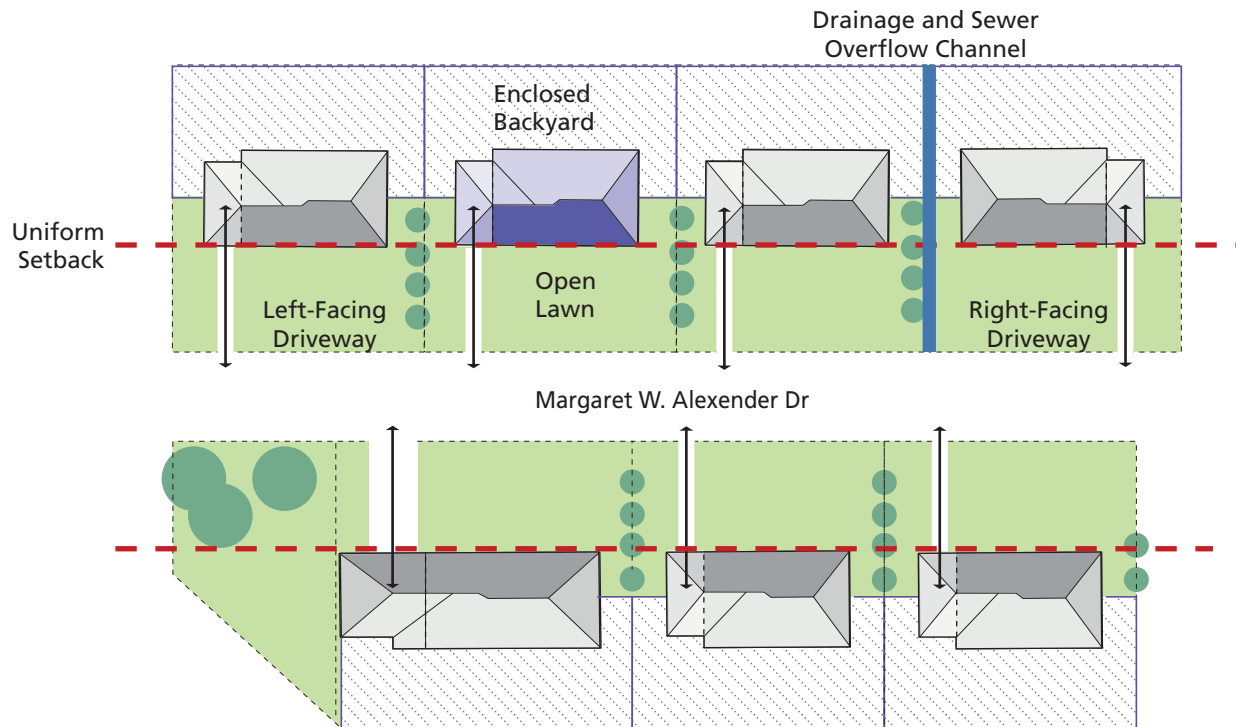


FIGURE 3-5. Houses within the Medgar Evers Historic District share similar spatial qualities, such as uniform setback, enclosed backyards, open front lawns, driveways oriented to the right of the home, and perimeter fencing and/or plant material. The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL (purple) and the two adjacent properties share all these qualities but one; the driveway of each is oriented on the left side of the home. Refer to Figure 3-6 for legend (source: DHM Design, 2024).

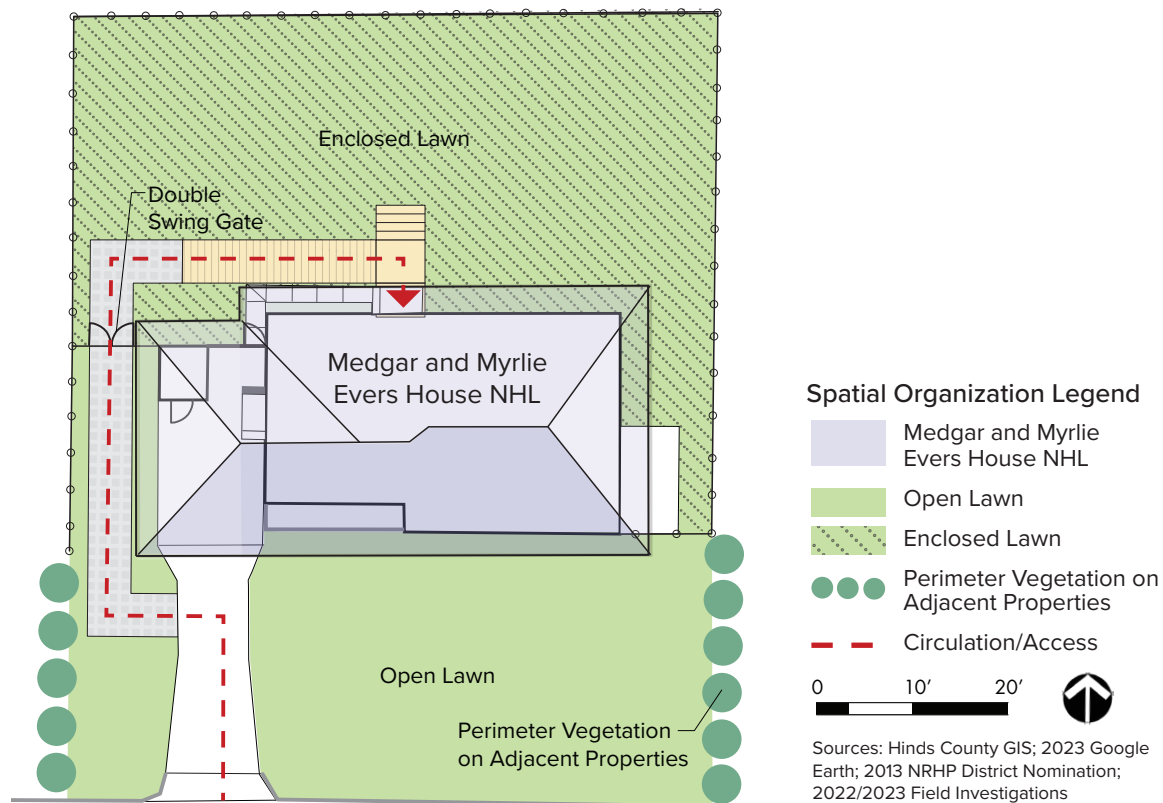


FIGURE 3-6. The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL property is delineated by perimeter vegetation on adjacent properties and perimeter fencing (source: DHM Design, 2024).

Topography and Constructed Water Features

Medgar Evers Historic District

Topography in the district varies from east to west. A high point at the intersection of Miami Street and Margaret W. Alexander Drive gradually slopes down to the west toward the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. The slope increases slightly to the west of 2222 Margaret W. Alexander Drive (Figure 3-7). East from the Missouri Street Lots, topography slopes down and continues to fall to a low point east of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. A drainage and sewer overflow channel situated at the low point collects runoff within the district (Figure 3-10).

Surface runoff along Margaret W. Alexander Drive is pushed from the crown of the road to concrete curb and gutter systems on both sides of the road (Figure 3-8). Inlets along Margaret W. Alexander Drive collect runoff, moving it toward the drainage and sewer overflow channel.

The drainage and sewer overflow channel is a municipal channel located less than 100 feet east of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL (Figure 3-9). The constructed channel comprises

both concrete-lined open channels as well as below-grade culverts. The channel appears to carry drainage flows as well as emergency overflow sewage from a combined wastewater/stormwater sewage system. The system extends north to south, entering the Medgar Evers Historic District near Skyline Drive, to the north, and exiting along Medgar Evers Boulevard.

The sections of the drainage and sewer overflow channel that are open feature warning signs to avoid contact with waterflow. The headwall and concrete channel on the north side of road has visible cracking and vegetation growth between stones and is in fair condition. The overflow conveyance eventually becomes a tributary to Town Creek Tributary 5, southwest of the district. There is no known information about the capacity of this conveyance and whether overtopping flows from the system would inundate any of the existing buildings in the district.

Constructed grass swales on both sides of Missouri Street facilitate drainage along the side of the road toward the low point in the district. Swales average six to twelve inches in depth (sometimes

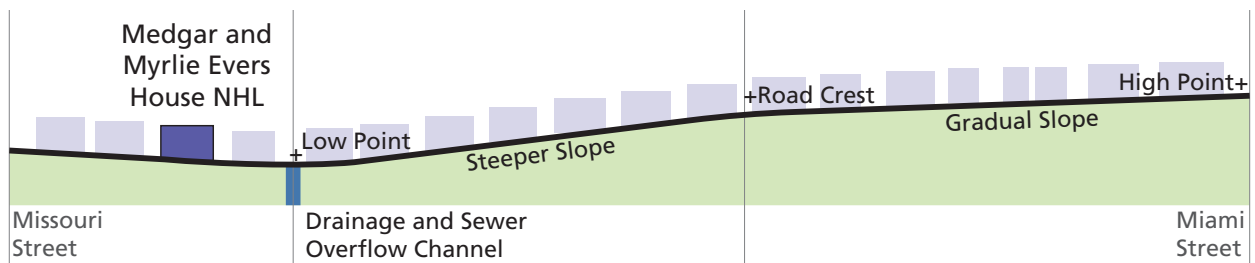


FIGURE 3-7. The section shows the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL adjacent to the low point near the drainage and sewer overflow channel of the Medgar Evers Historic District (source: DHM Design, 2024).



FIGURE 3-8. The road slopes to a low point at the drainage and sewer overflow channel (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3-9. The drainage and sewer overflow channel east of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL (source: DHM Design, 2022).

exceeding twelve inches) and connect to a series of culverts under residential driveway crossings. On residential lots, lawns slope away from buildings toward the road.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL is situated west of the low point of the district. Topography is predominantly level, and drainage slopes northwest to southeast. Runoff flows onto the property from adjacent properties. Small depressions and a sink hole are located at the northwest corner of the lot. Per NPS observation, drainage problems occur at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL as runoff moves across the site.

A constructed grass swale parallels the building on the north and east, diverting water away from the building. On the southeast side of the property the swale reaches a curb cut at Margaret W. Alexander Drive. The curb cut allows water to flow along the road before reaching the drainage and sewer overflow channel to the east (Figure 3-11).

A French drain was installed under the permeable stone paver path in 2023 to mitigate drainage flow near the building's foundation. It connects to a French drain installed during 2013 improvements; the drain wraps around all sides of the building. An outfall pipe connects to the French drain at the southeast corner of the building, leading water toward a small weep hole adjacent to the curb cut at Margaret W. Alexander Drive (Figure 3-12).

Missouri Street Lots

Topography at the Missouri Street Lots slopes down toward the southeast corner of the property. The shade structure and concrete walk cut into the slope and collect standing water during storm events (Figure 3-14). Water infiltration rates after storm events are unknown. A constructed grass swale starts south of the concrete apron at Missouri Street and slopes east toward Margaret W. Alexander Drive (Figure 3-13). A culvert under the concrete walk connection at Missouri Street allows drainage to continue southeast in the constructed grass swale. The Missouri Street Lots are slightly elevated above the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL.

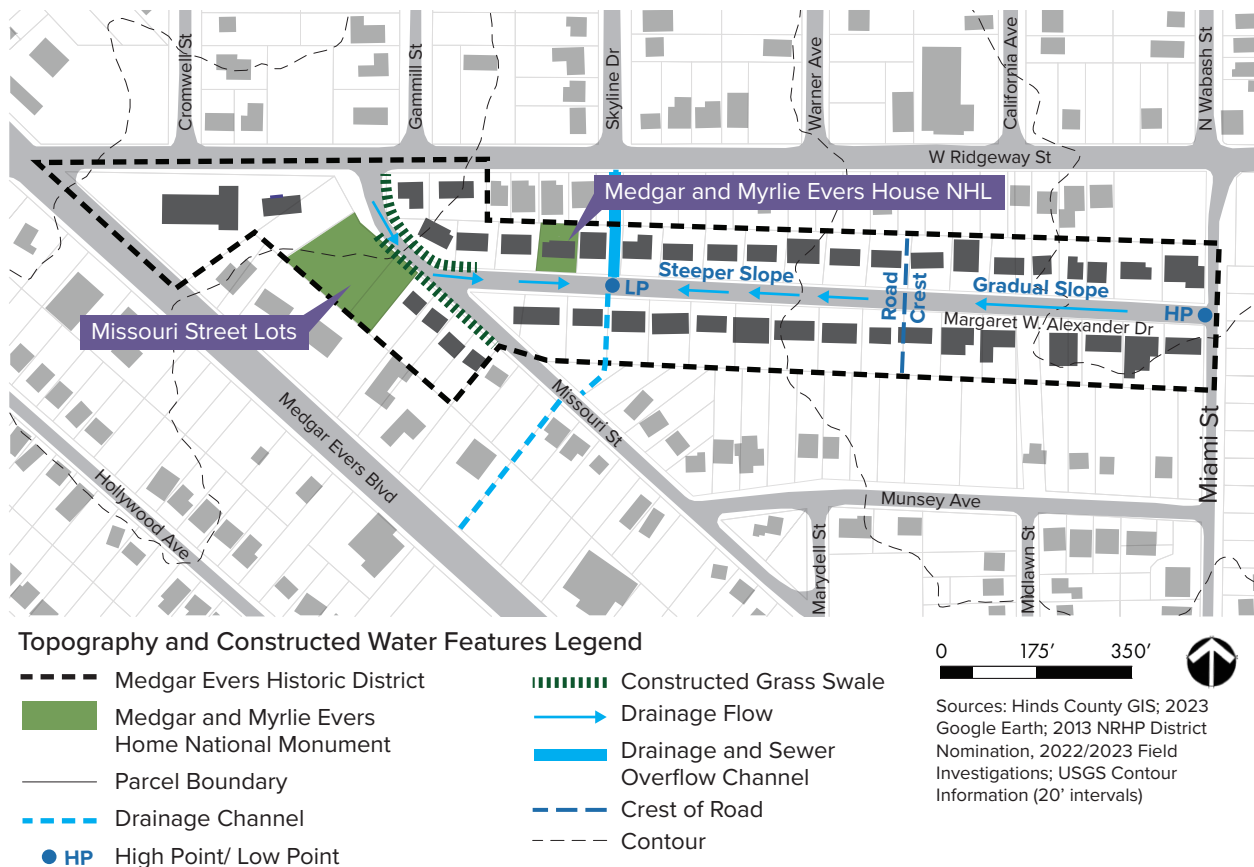


FIGURE 3-10. Drainage within the district utilizes a combination of roads and constructed features (source: DHM Design, 2024).

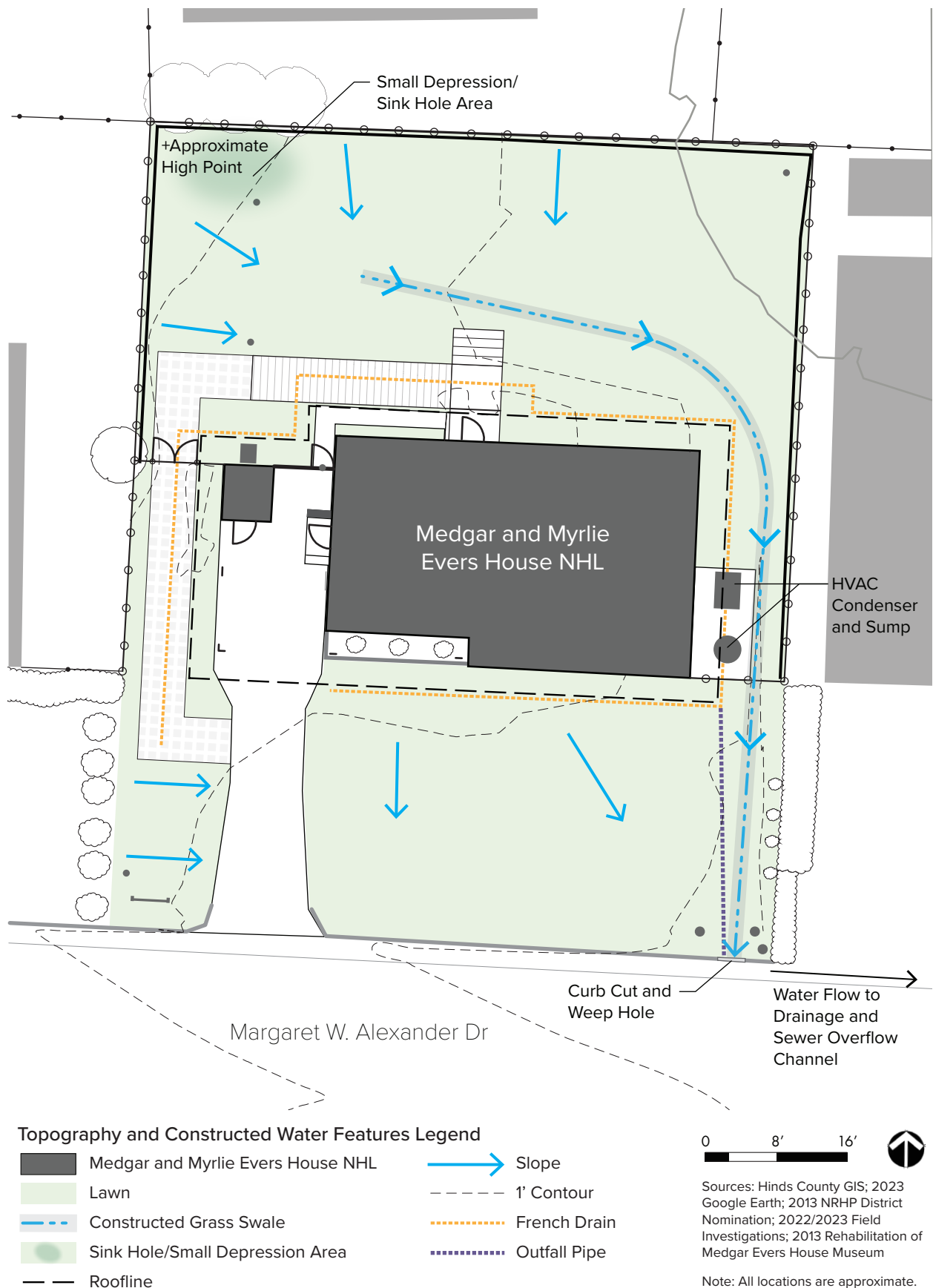


FIGURE 3-11. The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL is west of the low point of the district (source: DHM Design, 2024).

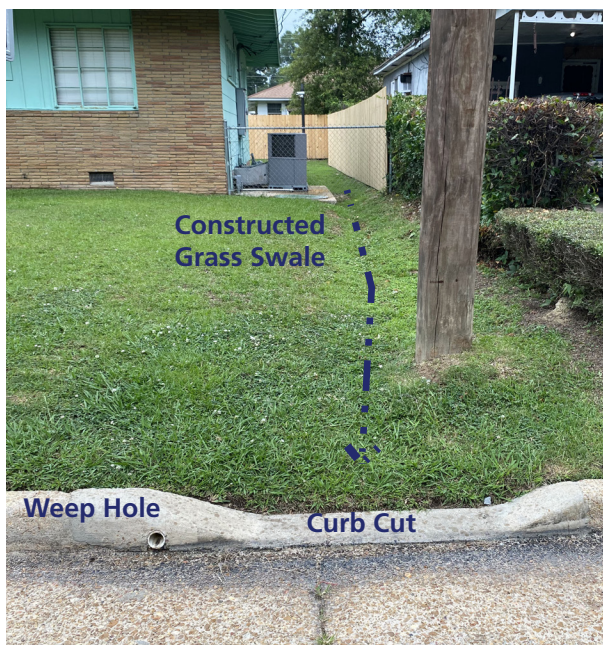


FIGURE 3–12. The curb cut and weep hole from the outfall pipe at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3–13. The constructed grass swale follows the edge of Missouri Street and has connecting culverts at driveway and walkway crossings (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3–14. At the Missouri Street Lots, drainage issues at the shade structure occur after a large storm event (source: DHM Design, 2023).

Views and Vistas

Medgar Evers Historic District

Primary views within the district include views from Missouri Street and Margaret W. Alexander Drive (Figure 3–15). Views to homes and front lawns are generally open; some are framed by shrubs and ornamental trees at the perimeter of properties. Visibility is greater on the north side of Margaret W. Alexander Drive; there, fewer mature trees within front lawns allow for direct east-west views from Miami Street and Missouri Street (Figure 3–16). Small-scale features such as perimeter fencing obstruct some long-range views within the district.

The north approach from W. Ridgeway Street onto Missouri Street has open views of the Medgar Evers Historic District. Two long-range views are established by the intersection of Missouri Street and Margaret W. Alexander Drive and framed by mature vegetation and residential homes along each road. The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL is clearly visible to the north from the intersection of both roads. The south approach from Missouri Street toward Margaret W. Alexander Drive includes linear views of the road corridor limited by thick vegetation on both sides.

Views to backyards from Margaret W. Alexander Drive are generally screened by perimeter shrubs and/or chain-link fences. Residents generally have a filtered view into their neighbor's backyards; homeowners rely on a chain-link fence to demarcate property boundaries and filter views.

Views toward the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL from south of the intersection of Margaret W. Alexander Drive and Missouri Street are screened by pine trees, a large camellia, and the residence at 2331 Margaret W. Alexander Drive. The houses now located along Missouri Street to the south-southwest of this intersection are in the approximate location where Byron de la Beckwith hid with a rifle to assassinate Medgar Evers, approximately 200 feet away.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

The view between the front lawn of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and Margaret W. Alexander Drive is open and unobstructed, similar to that view of other homes in the district (Figure 3–18). Shrubs at the perimeter of the property provide partial screening to adjacent properties.

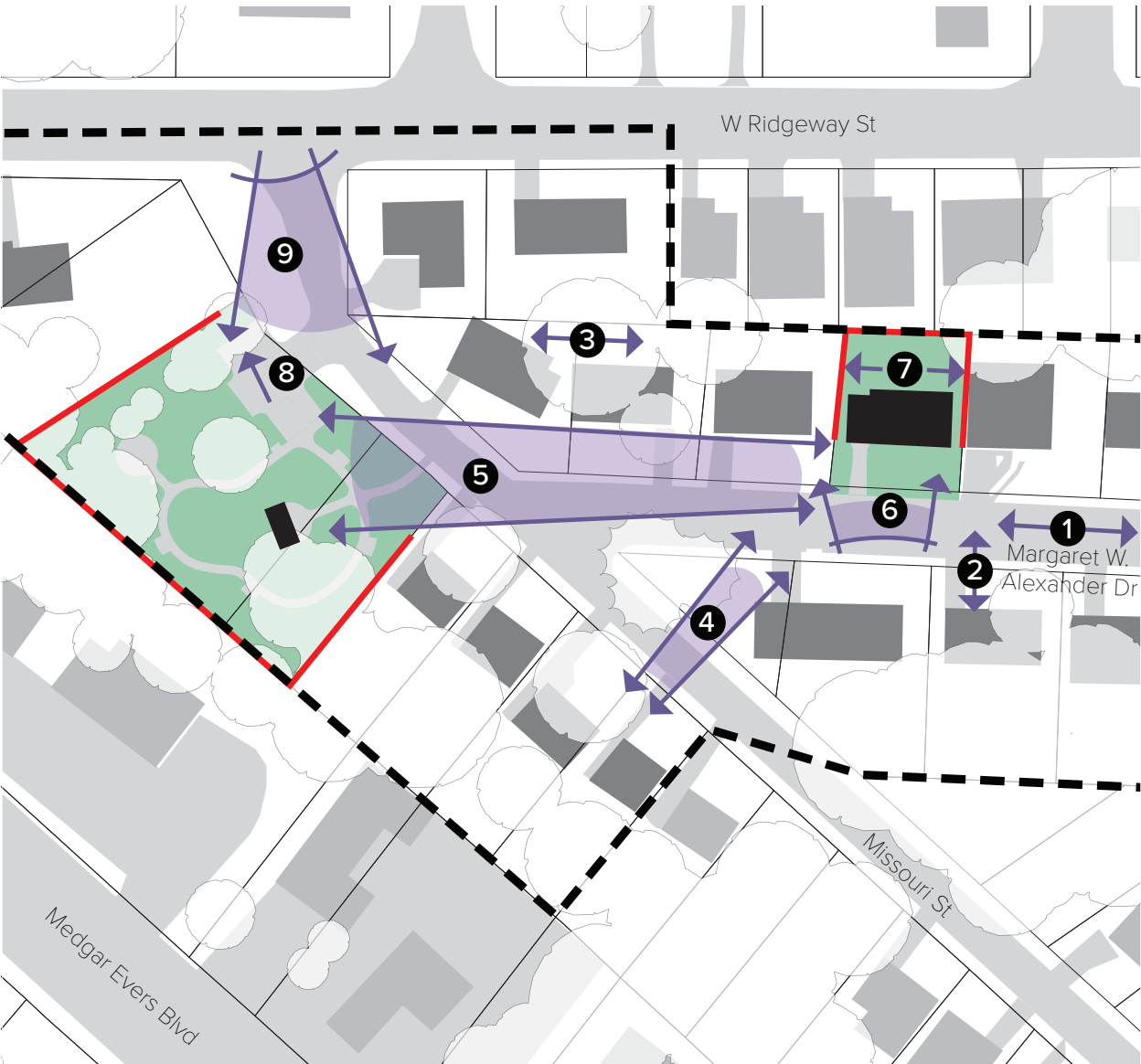
Views from the backyard to adjacent properties are obstructed by a perimeter wood fence (Figure 3–19).

Missouri Street Lots

Views to the Missouri Street Lots from Missouri Street are generally open and framed by fencing and mature trees. The NPS park entrance sign is highly visible from the intersection of Missouri Street and W. Ridgeway Street. Views to adjacent properties on the east, south, and west side of the Missouri Street Lots are partially obstructed by a perimeter wood fence.

Views to the Missouri Street Lots from the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL are mostly open; low perimeter vegetation and small-scale features such as utility poles in the Elaine subdivision provide partial screening (Figure 3–17).

The shade shelter is oriented to frame a view to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and create a visual connection between the Missouri Street Lots and the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. The shelter is elevated higher than the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL, providing a unique vantage point.



Views and Vistas Legend

- Medgar Evers Historic District
- Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument
- View
- Shade Structure
- Privacy Fence
- 1 Corridor views along Margaret W. Alexander Dr
- 2 Views to residences from Margaret W. Alexander Dr

- 3 Views to adjacent properties from backyards
- 4 Views between the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and the assassin's approximate position
- 5 Views between the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and Missouri Street Lots
- 6 Views to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL from Margaret W. Alexander Dr
- 7 Obstructed views to adjacent properties from the backyard
- 8 Views to adjacent properties
- 9 Views to Missouri Street Lots from Missouri Street/W. Ridgeway Street

0 100' 200'

Sources: Hinds County GIS; 2023 Google Earth; 2013 NRHP District Nomination, 2022/2023 Field Investigations

FIGURE 3–15. Key views of the Medgar Evers Historic District, Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL, and Missouri Street Lots (source: DHM Design, 2024).



FIGURE 3-16. Views within the Elraine subdivision along Margaret W. Alexander Drive are framed by mature vegetation and the extension of a continuous front lawn among properties (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3-17. Views to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL from the Missouri Street Lots are mostly open and are framed by adjacent buildings, vegetation, and small-scale features in the Elraine subdivision (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3–18. Views to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL from Margaret W. Alexander Drive are open and unobstructed (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3–19. Views to adjacent properties from the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL backyard are obstructed by a wood privacy fence on the north, east, and west sides (source: DHM Design, 2023).

Circulation

Medgar Evers Historic District

Medgar Evers Boulevard and W. Ridgeway Street bound the district on the west and north sides, respectively. These vehicular routes provide primary access to the Medgar Evers Historic District and the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument therein (Figure 3–20). Medgar Evers Boulevard provides vehicular access from downtown Jackson and the larger region. It is a two-way, five-lane paved asphalt road with commercial development bordering both sides. W. Ridgeway Street is a two-way, two-lane paved asphalt residential collector road connecting Medgar Evers Boulevard to the district. Together, the vehicular routes have approximately five bus stops within a five-minute walk of the district.

Streets within the district are residential in scale and provide access to NPS property and individual homes. Missouri Street and Margaret W. Alexander Drive are not bordered by sidewalks, and pedestrians walk on the road, reflecting the

nonurban, residential feel of the neighborhood. During field investigations, the project team observed that vehicles often exceeded the posted 25 miles per hour (MPH) speed limit and used the residential roads to cut through to arterial streets. School buses use both roads for pick-up and drop-off. The roads are demarcated with signage at the intersections but do not include pavement markings.

Missouri Street parallels Medgar Evers Boulevard and provides northwest-to-southeast access into the district. Missouri Street is a two-way paved asphalt road bordered by constructed grass swales. The road is free of concrete sidewalks, curbs, and gutters (Figure 3–21). Missouri Street is in fair condition with minor asphalt cracking.

Margaret W. Alexander Drive is a two-way paved asphalt road through the center of the district. The road extends east-west along the subdivision grid, connecting Miami Street and Missouri Street (Figure 3–23). Margaret W. Alexander Drive is



FIGURE 3–20. Circulation routes providing access to the Medgar Evers Historic District for privately owned vehicles, tour buses, and JTRAN city buses are highlighted above (source: DHM Design, 2024).



FIGURE 3-21. Missouri Street does not have sidewalks or curbs on either side of the road (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3-22. Margaret W. Alexander Drive is defined by concrete curb and gutter on both sides (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3-23. The intersection of Missouri Street and Margaret W. Alexander Drive begins the transition from constructed grass swales to a concrete curb and gutter system (source: DHM Design, 2023).

delineated by a raised concrete curb and gutter (Figure 3–22). The road provides ample space for street parking on both sides. Margaret W. Alexander Drive is in fair condition with minor asphalt cracking.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

The driveway serves as the primary pedestrian access to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL from Margaret W. Alexander Drive. The driveway width varies from 8 to 12 feet, widening at both the carport and Margaret W. Alexander Drive. Visitor parking is limited to the public right-of-way but only two or three cars can be accommodated in front of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL.⁵ The concrete driveway is in fair condition, with deterioration and cracks and has settled into eight uneven slabs (Figure 3–24). A cementitious patch treatment was completed in 2023 to stabilize the driveway. The concrete apron and curb and gutter at the end of the driveway at Margaret W. Alexander Drive are in good condition.

The stone paver path west of the driveway leads visitors to the entrance of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. The path extends at a right angle from the driveway through the double chain-link gate and wraps around the home to a wood ramp and landing at the rear entrance of the building (Figure 3–25). The gravel-set stone pavers are arranged in alternating two by two in a horizontal and vertical crosshatch pattern with a single brick border on each side. The stone pavers are permeable, allowing water to flow into a French drain below. The stone paver path, wood ramp, and landing were constructed in 2023 and are in good condition.

An original narrow concrete walk extends into the backyard through a single chain-link gate north of the carport and wraps around to a two-step stoop at the rear entrance of the building. The wood ramp was built parallel to the original concrete walk, and the two-step stoop was covered by the wood ramp and landing (Figure 3–26). The concrete walk and two-step stoop are in fair condition but are no longer functional as a circulation route.



FIGURE 3–24. The concrete driveway is visibly worn and has significant cracking (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3–25. The stone paver path extends parallel to the carport to the rear entrance (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3–26. The stone paver path connects to the wood ramp and landing for access to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. The narrow concrete walk and rear entry stoop are no longer used for access (source: DHM Design, 2023).

5 NPS, *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Foundation Document*, 5.

The carport entrance now serves as a secondary access point to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. This entrance is not used by visitors. The carport's concrete slab is mostly free of cracking and is in good condition. A lip between the concrete driveway and carport is a tripping hazard. Based on previous survey and field observation, the driveway and carport entrance stoop are not Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards (ABAAS) compliant. The stairs lack handrails, and the cross slope of the driveway exceeds 2.5%. The maximum allowable built cross slope per ABAAS is 2.0%.

Missouri Street Lots

The vehicular parking area at the Missouri Street Lots consists of a gravel drive aisle with a concrete apron at Missouri Street and a wide parking area (Figure 3–27). The parking area has five parking stalls; four informal stalls, for standard vehicles, and one ABAAS- accessible stall, which is defined by a concrete pad and access aisle striped with the appropriate symbology. Based on visual assessment and field measurements, the concrete parking stall and aisle meet accessibility compliance for slopes and are flush with the adjacent concrete walk (Figure 3–28). The remainder of the parking area has gravel surface, and its edge is defined by wheel stops. Three of the wheel stops function as barriers rather than parking stalls.

The primary pedestrian circulation feature at the Missouri Street Lots is a concrete loop walk around the site. The concrete loop walk is accessed via a concrete extension at Missouri Street or from the parking area. Two paved areas connect to the concrete loop walk and offer amenities, including a shade shelter near the raised-bed planters and a picnic area nearby, surrounded by mature trees. Site furnishings, including benches and trash receptacles, are set on intermittent concrete pads along the concrete loop walk (Figure 3–29). Both the parking area and the concrete walk were constructed over the existing grass swales along Missouri Street and feature corrugated plastic pipe culverts.

All circulation features at the Missouri Street Lots, including the concrete apron, gravel parking, accessible concrete parking, and concrete loop walk, were constructed in 2023 and are in good condition.



FIGURE 3–27. The concrete apron provides vehicular access to the Missouri Street Lots (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3–28. The accessible concrete parking stall and aisle and gravel parking at the Missouri Street Lots (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3–29. Pedestrian circulation at the Missouri Street Lots loops throughout the site (source: DHM Design, 2023).

Buildings and Structures

Medgar Evers Historic District

The district comprises primarily residential buildings. Forty-two buildings, each 850–950 square feet, reflect the one-story Ranch-style typical of 1950s and 1960s suburban development. Low-pitch roofs, horizontal lines, and integrated carports are common architectural elements of the residences within the district (Figure 3–30). Exterior finishes vary among brick, brick veneer, board-and-batten, and lap siding. Window styles vary among the homes. Decorative metal elements, including lights, window and door coverings, handrails, and columns adorn many of the primary façades.⁶

The buildings vary in condition. A majority of the buildings are well maintained by current residents, but a few buildings are in poor condition with visible deterioration on the exterior and failing structural features (Figure 3–31).

The two buildings located at the northwest corner of the district are associated with the Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church. The church, located at the intersection of Medgar Evers Boulevard and W. Ridgeway Street, is a brick building with one and a half stories and an intersecting gable roof (Figure 3–32). The church parsonage is a one-story Ranch-style building directly east of the church. The church was built about 1956 alongside other buildings within the Elraine subdivision. The church parsonage was built about 1980 (Figure 3–33). From exterior observation, both buildings appear to be maintained and in good condition.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL is a one-story Ranch-style home. The building has a low-pitch hipped roof, horizontal lines, and a one-car carport supported by four ornamental metal columns. A small storage closet is located at the northwest corner, underneath the carport. The building's exterior consists of asbestos siding on all sides with Roman brick and wood board-and-batten accent walls on the primary facade. A

shallow Roman brick planter is located below the roofline and picture window. The building style is consistent with other buildings in the Elraine subdivision.

The HSR, written in conjunction with this CLR, provides a detailed building chronology and a condition assessment for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL.

Missouri Street Lots

A wood shade structure is located in the center of the Missouri Street Lots. The four-post structure is constructed with crossbeams and projecting eaves, similar to a pergola, but is topped with a roof. Four square wood beams extend from the corners of the structure to square brick pedestals. The brick consists of various shades of brown in a running bond pattern with a contrasting off-white mortar and a 1-inch red-brown veneer at the base of the square wood posts. The shade structure was built and installed by the NPS in 2023 for the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the 1963 assassination of Medgar Evers.

The shade structure is set back from the road and is oriented to feature a view toward the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL (Figure 3–34). A skillion roof is pitched to maximize shade coverage from southern solar exposure. The structure is in good condition.

6 William M. Gatlin, Vicki Myers, and Akili Kelly, "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (US Department of the Interior, 2013), 32–33, <https://www.apps.mdah.ms.gov/nom/dist/237.pdf>.



FIGURE 3–30. A typical Ranch-style home in the Elrairie subdivision with a low-pitched roof and attached carport (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3–31. The home across from the Missouri Street Lots matches the Ranch-style architecture found throughout the Elrairie subdivision. The home has the same layout as the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL, including access through the carport (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3–32. The Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church at the intersection of Medgar Evers Boulevard and W. Ridgeway Street differs in size, massing, and architectural style to other buildings in the Elraine subdivision (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3–33. The church parsonage is located east of the Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church, which is adjacent to the Missouri Street Lots (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3–34. The shade structure at the Missouri Street Lots is oriented towards the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL (source: DHM Design, 2023).

Small-Scale Features

Medgar Evers Historic District

Small-scale features within the district provide municipal and residential functions. Municipal small-scale features include regulatory and direction signage, utility access, utility poles, overhead electric lines, irrigation boxes, and hydrants. Common residential features include chain-link perimeter fencing, lawn statuary, mailboxes, and exterior furnishings. Small-scale features at the residential scale are largely vernacular and were not evaluated individually for their condition at the district scale.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

Fences and Gates

Perimeter chain-link fencing outlines the north, east, and west edges of the property line. The fence is shared with neighbors and connects with other property-line fences. The chain-link fencing is approximately 3'-6" in height except for a 5'-9" segment in the northeast corner of the property. The fence is in poor condition with rusted sections and a few holes evident in the north section. A wood privacy fence was installed inside of the chain-link fence in 2023, and it is in good condition.

A Native American finial is located at the northeast corner of the chain-link perimeter fence in the backyard. The wood privacy fence obstructs the view of the finial (Figure 3-41). The finial is in good condition.

Two interior swing gates near the carport provide access to the backyard. A single pedestrian swing gate under the carport is in fair condition and shows signs of general wear and rusting. The gate is adorned with a cocker spaniel finial in fair condition (Figure 3-35). The section of fence adjacent to the single swing gate appears new.

A double swing gate is located on the opposite side of the carport storage. It provides access to the backyard (Figure 3-36). The gate was installed in 2023 and is in good condition.

Clothesline Poles

A set of clothesline poles is located in the northwest corner of the backyard, perpendicular to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. The



FIGURE 3-35. Single swing pedestrian gate adorned with cocker spaniel finial (source: DHM Design, 2022).



FIGURE 3-36. The double swing gate provides the primary access to the backyard (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3-37. Clothesline poles located directly north of the accessible wood ramp (source: DHM Design, 2023).

poles are in poor condition with visible cracking of the exposed concrete footings and rust on the metal poles (Figure 3–37). The line connecting the poles is missing.

Camera Poles

Two security poles with surveillance cameras are located at the northeast and southwest corners of the property. The poles were installed by the NPS between 2021 and 2022. The northeast camera surveys the east side yard and backyard while the southwest camera surveys the front lawn, carport, and driveway (Figure 3–38). The camera poles are in good condition, however the cameras no longer function.

Site Furnishings

A metal bear-proof trash receptacle is located on the north side of the carport storage. The receptacle is in good condition.

Signage

In 2023, at the southwest corner of the property, an NPS park sign was installed parallel to Margaret W. Alexander Drive. The sign is in good condition.

A Mississippi Freedom Trail historical marker is located on the southeast corner of the property along Margaret W. Alexander Drive (Figure 3–39). The historical marker is in good condition.

Utilities

Two utility poles with overhead electric lines are located on the southeast corner of the property. The installation date of the utility poles is unknown. A streetlight is mounted to the pole at the west side.

An HVAC/condenser unit and sump pump (manhole) are located on a concrete slab east of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL (Figure 3–40). The system was installed in 2013 and appears to be in good condition.

An irrigation box is located east of the driveway in the front lawn. The irrigation system covers the entire yard and is in poor condition; the system is nonfunctional, and some sprinkler heads are missing or damaged. The installation date of the irrigation system is unknown.



FIGURE 3–38. Camera pole located at the northeast corner of the backyard (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3–39. Mississippi Freedom Trail historical marker for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL (source: DHM Design, 2022).



FIGURE 3–40. HVAC utilities at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL (source: DHM Design, 2023).

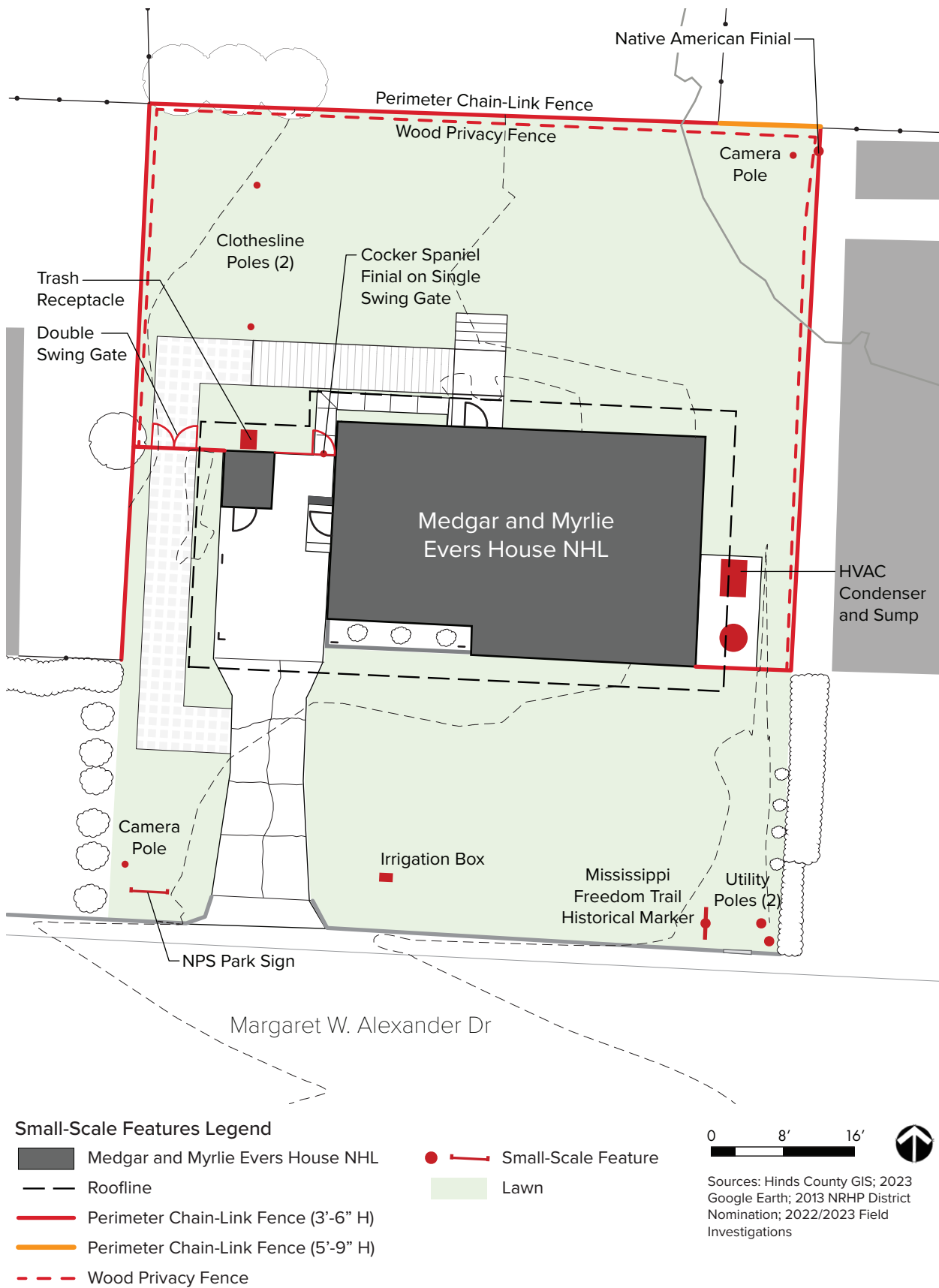


FIGURE 3-41. Existing small-scale features at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL primarily include common objects found at residential properties (source: DHM Design, 2024).

Missouri Street Lots

Perimeter Fence

A wood privacy fence is located on three sides of the property. The perimeter fence screens views from adjacent properties and Medgar Evers Boulevard. The wood fence was installed in 2023 and is in good condition (Figure 3–44).

A short jog of metal fence intersects with the fence at the Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church property. The Missouri Street Lots fence features metal posts and pickets similar in spacing and color to those at the church property, but is taller and features different finials. The fence, installed in 2023, is in good condition.

A post-and-cable fence is located on the north side of the property. Low, wood posts are spaced approximately 12 feet apart with two openings, one at the parking area and one at the concrete loop walk entrance. The fence provides high visibility into the Missouri Street Lots from Missouri Street. The post-and-cable fence was installed in 2023 by the NPS and is in good condition.

Site Furnishings

Metal benches, picnic tables, and trash receptacles are located throughout the Missouri Street Lots. Some benches and trash receptacles are surface mounted whereas others are moveable (Figure 3–42).



FIGURE 3–42. Site furnishings at the Missouri Street Lots include trash receptacles, picnic tables, and benches (source: DHM Design, 2023).

Small-scale features at the gravel parking area include concrete wheel stops and two metal posts for a future vehicular gate.

Raised-bed planters and a garden cistern are located at the center of the property near the shade structure. The raised-bed planters are modular metal boxes approximate 30 inches in height. A large stainless steel water cistern is used to collect water for the garden (Figure 3–43).

All site furnishings at the Missouri Street Lots were installed in 2023 and are in good condition.

Signage

An NPS park entrance sign is located at the northwest corner of the Missouri Street Lots. The sign is sited with high visibility from the W. Ridgeway Street and Missouri Street intersection.

An interpretive sign is located on the east side of the property at the Missouri Street Lots. Two panels provide information on the Elrairie subdivision and the life of the Evers family.

All signage on the Missouri Street Lots was installed in 2023 and is in good condition.

Utilities

Three utility poles with overhead electrical lines connecting to the subdivision are located along Missouri Street.



FIGURE 3–43. A garden cistern and raised-bed planters are located at the center of the property (source: DHM Design, 2023).

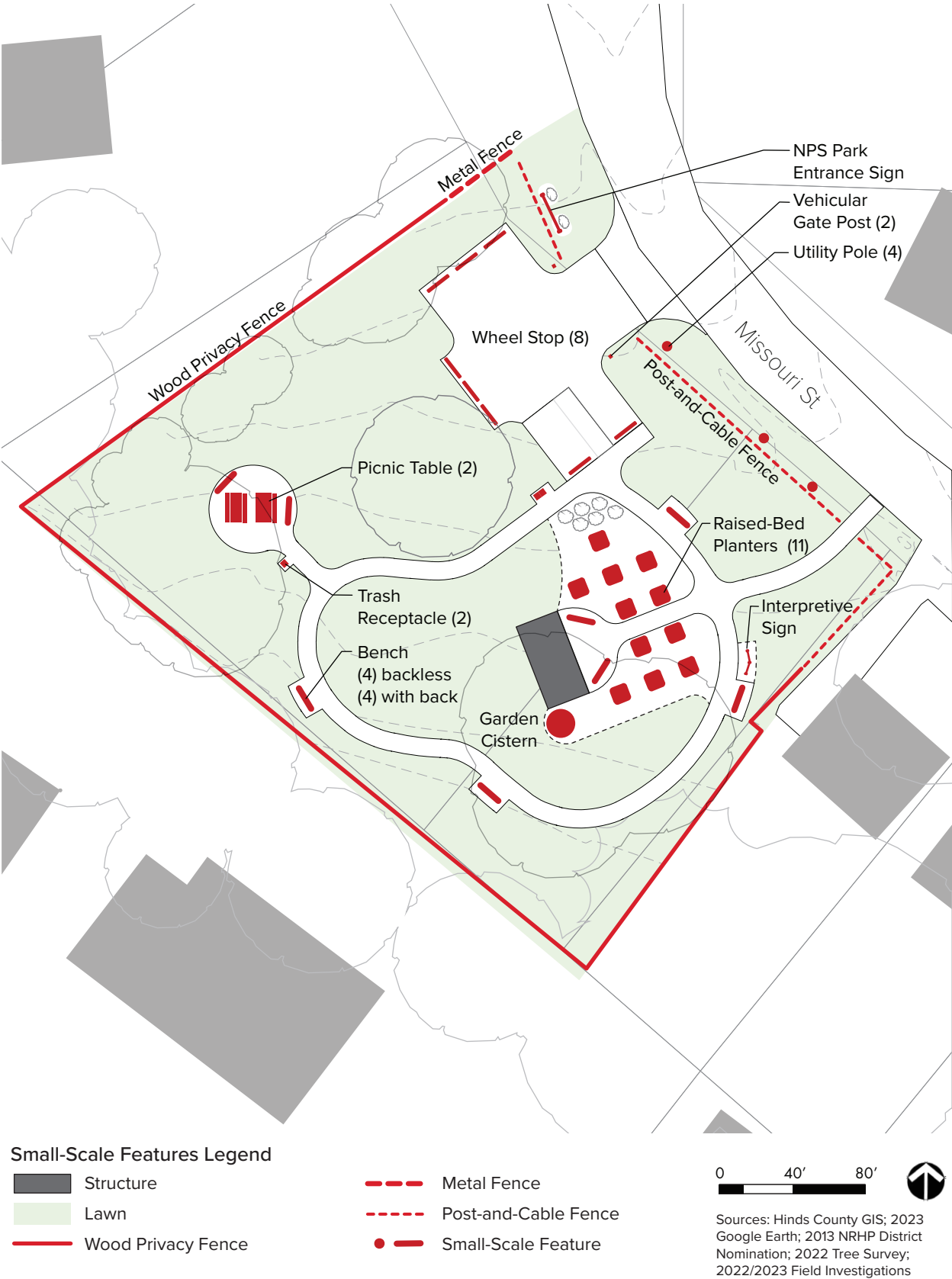


FIGURE 3-44. Existing small-scale features at the Missouri Street Lots include site furnishings, perimeter fencing, and signage (source: DHM Design, 2024).

Vegetation

Medgar Evers Historic District

Trees within the district consist of ornamental and volunteer trees typical to the southeastern United States. Jackson falls within USDA Hardiness Zone 8b (with an average annual extreme winter temperature of 10–15 degrees Fahrenheit). A combination of mature broadleaved deciduous and needle-leaved conifer trees provide canopy cover. Coverage is heavier in backyards of properties, with limited trees lining the street frontage. Longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*), common hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), white oak (*Quercus alba*), American elm (*Ulmus americana*), and southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) are prominent species found in the district. District trees, shrubs, and other vegetation were not evaluated at an individual level outside of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument.

Neighboring front lawns with limited fencing and street trees at property lines create a unified turf groundplane across the district. Ornamental shrubs are set at the front of homes and along property boundaries, punctuating the individual qualities of the lots.

The maintained appearance of vegetation varies among properties. Many properties are well maintained with mown lawns and manicured shrubs. Some properties have unmaintained lawns and overgrown vegetation at the front and side yards. Invasive species such as tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) were identified along fence lines.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

Existing vegetation at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL includes a maintained lawn on all sides of the building (Figure 3–48). A continuous lawn connects the yards in front and back (Figure 3–46). The lawn is in good condition, although some weeds were identified in the backyard. Duet (*Rosa* ‘Duet’) and Oklahoma (*Rosa* ‘Oklahoma’) roses are planted in rubber mulch in the Roman brick planter at the front of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL, framing the picture window (Figure 3–45). The roses are in good condition.

On adjacent properties, perimeter shrubs border the front lawn and assist in framing the property extents (Figure 3–47). Additionally, volunteer vegetation on adjacent properties grows along the



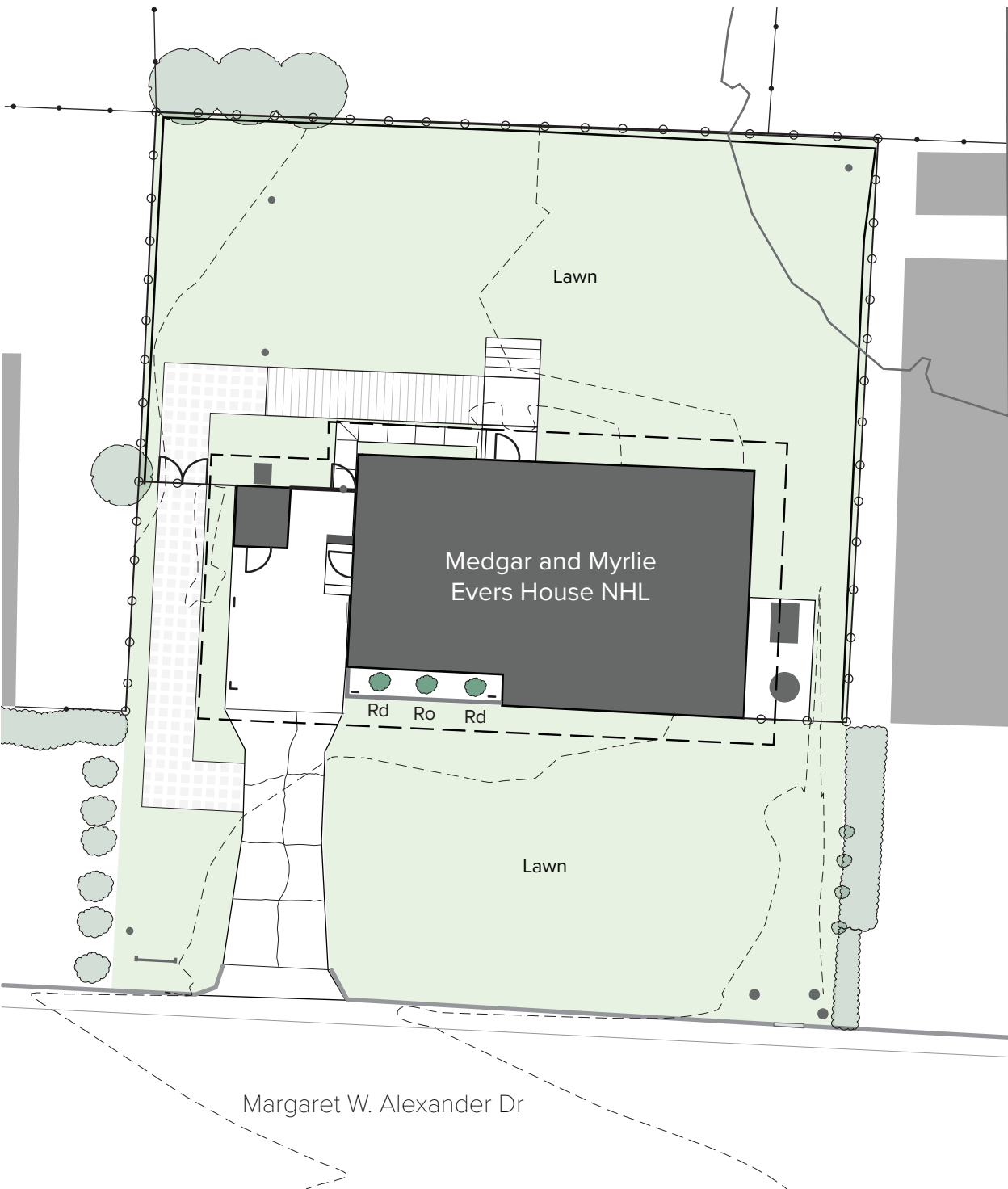
FIGURE 3–45. Duet and Oklahoma roses frame the picture window of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3–46. Maintained lawn surrounds the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL on all sides (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3–47. Perimeter vegetation on adjacent properties defines the east and west sides of the front lawn (source: ERO Resources Corporation, 2023).



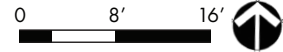
Vegetation Legend

- Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL
- Roofline
- Lawn
- Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL Vegetation
- Planted Perimeter Vegetation on Adjacent Properties

Small-Scale Feature

Plant Species Key

- | | |
|----|--|
| Rd | Duet Rose (<i>Rosa 'Duet'</i>) |
| Ro | Oklahoma Rose (<i>Rosa 'Oklahoma'</i>) |



Sources: Hinds County GIS; 2023 Google Earth; 2013 NRHP District Nomination; 2022/2023 Field Investigations

Note: Plant species are based on field investigations.

FIGURE 3–48. Existing vegetation at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL is a large, continuous lawn defined by perimeter vegetation on adjacent properties. The roses in the Roman brick planter were planted in 2023 (source: DHM Design, 2024).

backyard fence lines and is mostly obscured by the wood privacy fence. This fence-line vegetation varies from multi-stem native deciduous trees to invasive tree of heaven.

Missouri Street Lots

Vegetation at the Missouri Street Lots is consistent in age, size, and species with that of the rest of the Medgar Evers Historic District. A mature canopy provides shade and defines the perimeter of the property (Figure 3–49). Trees are 35–50 feet in height and include American elm (*Ulmus americana*), white oak (*Quercus alba*), live oak (*Quercus virginiana*), black cherry (*Prunus serotina* Ehrh), pecan (*Carya illinoensis*), American sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), and common hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*) (Figure 3–51). The lawn is mown grass in good to fair condition with some barren patches.

Raised-bed planters in the center of the site are cultivated with garden vegetables, including tomatoes and bell peppers and herbs such as rosemary and basil. Several roses (*Rosa* ‘Radrazz’ *Knock Out*) are planted north of the raised-bed planters and at the NPS park entrance sign. The planters and roses are in good condition.

Between the property line and Medgar Evers Boulevard is a heavily wooded area with mature canopy and thick, overgrown understory. Trees are 6–24 inches in diameter and provide additional screening from Medgar Evers Boulevard. Overall, the mature tree canopy on the Missouri Street Lots is in good to fair condition.

A large live oak (*Quercus virginiana*) located in the middle of the property was transplanted from the front lawn of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL by Castle Rock Entertainment during the filming of *Ghosts of Mississippi* in 1996 (Figure 3–50). The tree was evaluated by a local arborist in 2022 and is in fair/poor condition. Stabilization efforts include soil aeration, mulching, and pruning. Its mulch ring sets it apart from other trees on the site.



FIGURE 3–49. The Missouri Street Lots are defined by mature perimeter vegetation and lawn with some barren patches (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3–50. The live oak was transplanted from the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL front lawn to the Missouri Street Lots in 1996 (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 3-51. Existing vegetation at the Missouri Street Lots is largely defined by mature perimeter tree canopy. The transplanted live oak is at the center of the property (source: DHM Design, 2024).

Climate Change

Studies on the implications of climate change have not been conducted at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument (MEMY). Vicksburg National Military Park (VICK) is located approximately 50 miles west of the site and is within the same Gulf Coast Inventory and Monitoring Network. VICK and MEMY are at the same latitude, with no landforms or geographic features nearby that would alter the climate locally for one and not the other. Similar to VICK, MEMY is subject to tornadoes, storms, hurricanes, and flooding that could affect the structure, trees, plants, and soils of the site.

Information in the following section was derived using two climate briefs from VICK: *Climate Change Resource Brief (2014)* and *Park Visitation and Climate Change Brief (2015)*. Each brief presents the results from NPS-led scientific studies on climate change within the VICK.

Temperature

Future climate projections for the area were developed from recent studies completed in VICK. The studies used fourteen temperature and precipitation variables to determine percentiles used to create future projections. Results indicated no temperatures were considered “extreme warm” or “extreme cold.”⁷ Although the data recorded from studies at VICK is consistent with historical ranges in the area, particular elevated climate events such as heatwaves, floods, and droughts are more likely and should be planned for.

Precipitation

VICK and much of the Natchez Trace Parkway area receive between 55 inches (1,400 mm) and 63 inches (1,600 mm) of precipitation each year.⁸ As an area with a high amount of annual precipitation, climate studies show the potential for a larger variation in specific rainfall events, suggesting a larger frequency of more intense storms as well as extended periods with less rainfall.⁹ Overall, the annual precipitation quantity is not anticipated to change significantly.

Park Visitation

Studies completed at VICK determined the visitor-temperature relationship in the region was classified as “moderately strong,” suggesting that temperature plays a significant factor in determining what month visitors decide to visit parks in the southeastern United States.¹⁰ VICK is part of the southeast region of the NPS (with hot/humid summer months and temperate/dry winter months), which will continue to experience larger climate shifts.

10 NPS, *Visitation and Climate Change, Park-specific Brief, Recent Climate Change Exposure, Vicksburg National Military Park*, Fort Collins: NPS, Climate Response Program, 2015, 2.

7 NPS, *Climate Change Resource Brief, Recent Climate Change Exposure of Vicksburg National Military Park*, Fort Collins: NPS, Climate Response Program, 2014, 2.

8 NPS *Climate Change Resource Brief*, 4

9 NPS *Climate Change Resource Brief*, 2.

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Chapter 4: Analysis and Evaluation

Introduction

This chapter presents the evaluation of historical significance for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument cultural landscape within the Medgar Evers Historic District. The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House National Historic Landmark (Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL) and the Missouri Street Lots are component landscapes within the Medgar Evers Historic District (the district).

Both the district and the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL are individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Medgar Evers House, originally listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1994, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2016. This section includes a summary of the National Register of Historic Places status for the property, an analysis of integrity, and a comparative assessment of historic condition and changes for each landscape characteristic identified in the historic landscape.

National Register of Historic Places
Criteria applicable to the Medgar Evers
Historic District:

- Criterion A – Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to broad patterns of history.
- Criterion B – Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- Criterion C – Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

National Historic Landmark criteria
applicable to the Medgar and Myrlie
Evers House:

- Criterion 1 – Property is 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. (Relates to Criterion A above)
- Criterion 2 – Property is associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States. (Relates to Criterion B above)

Historical Significance

Medgar Evers Historic District Statement of Significance

The Medgar Evers Historic District (synonymous with the Elraine subdivision) was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2013. The period of significance for the district extends from 1955, when it was established, to 1963, the year Medgar Evers was assassinated. The district encompasses forty-four properties. Winston J. Thompson and Leroy Black developed thirty-six of these properties between 1955 and 1957. The properties featured Ranch-style homes similar in scale and floor plan. After the initial development, Leroy Burnett built six more Ranch-style homes in neighborhood, three between 1961 and 1963 and another three between 1964 and 1965. The later six homes are compatible with the initial properties in style, materials, massing, and setback. All forty-two Ranch-style homes are listed as contributing to the district. In addition, the Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church, built in 1956, is listed as contributing to the district. The district boundary includes one non-contributing church parsonage, located east of the church.

The *Medgar Evers Historic District National Register of Historic Places Nomination* identified the district as significant under Criteria A, B, and C. The Areas of Significance for the district are Community Planning and Development, Ethnic Heritage: Black, Social History, and Architecture.

Criterion A

The Medgar Evers Historic District is historically significant at the state level as the first postwar suburban neighborhood built by and for middle-class African Americans in Mississippi. Winston J. Thompson (a Black entrepreneur) and Leroy Burnett (a Black builder) jointly developed a majority of the homes within the subdivision.

After the Civil War, formerly enslaved African Americans moved to cities, including Jackson, to seek economic opportunities. They were relegated to areas of the city often less desirable than those of White neighborhoods. After World War II, economic opportunities improved, and all sought opportunities to live in newly constructed subdivisions. Many of these new developments often excluded Black home buyers. In his study of African-American suburbanization, Andrew Wiese

outlined the similarities between Black and White suburban developments:

Developers built new homes with amenities identical to those being offered to millions of white suburbanites at the time, and they advertised suburban living as a domestic retreat from the city, ideal for children, and replete with every modern convenience. Black middle-class home owners stressed many of the same points. They desired homes of their own complete with modern services and amenities. They wanted well-maintained, ever ornamental, residential landscapes with open space, grass, trees and, room for gardens. They hoped that their homes would prove to be sound investments as well as good places to raise children, and, like Americans elsewhere, they wanted to live in neighborhoods with people of similar backgrounds and outlook. In the midcentury South, that meant neighborhoods that were black—as well as middle class.¹

Winston J. Thompson and Leroy Burnett recognized the need to develop a subdivision for Black middle-class Americans living in Jackson. As the proprietor of W. J. Thompson and Company, Winston J. Thompson purchased the land from W. B. McCarty in 1955. W. J. Thompson and Company was the first Black-owned business authorized to originate and service Federal Housing Administration and GI loans.

As partners, Winston J. Thompson and Leroy Burnett developed and constructed the Elraine subdivision. In an effort to increase lot sizes, they widened the eighty parcels of the Elraine subdivision, Part 4 by dividing every third lot. Together, they developed and built thirty-six Ranch-style homes similar in scale along Guynes Street between 1955 and 1957, including the Evers home. Many early residents were teachers or engaged in professional or clerical employment, including prominent Black community leaders. As the largest African American real estate business

¹ William M. Gatlin, Vicki Myers, and Akili Kelly, “Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination,” National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (US Department of the Interior, 2013), 21-25, <https://www.apps.mdah.ms.gov/nom/dist/237.pdf>.

in Mississippi, W. J. Thompson and Company is credited with building over 250 homes across Mississippi.

Criterion B

The Medgar Evers Historic District is historically significant at the state level for its association with significant persons Medgar Wiley Evers and Dr. Margaret W. Alexander, both of whom owned properties within the Elraine subdivision.

Medgar Evers was the first Mississippi field secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Medgar and Myrlie Evers purchased their home at 2332 Guynes Street in 1956. Medgar Evers played a significant role in the civil rights movement in Mississippi. He devoted his career and life to achieving better opportunities for African Americans within the state. Medgar Evers was assassinated in the driveway of his own home in 1963. Myrlie Evers and their children lived in the home until 1964.²

Dr. Margaret W. Alexander was an internationally recognized poet, novelist, essayist, and educator. Prior to her move to Jackson, she published *The Crisis* in 1934 and *For My People* in 1942, for the later which she won the Yale Series of Younger Poets prize. She and her husband, Firn Alexander, moved to Jackson in 1949, where she became a teacher. In 1955, she and her husband bought the first home sold in the Elraine subdivision, 2205 Guynes Street.

In 1966, she wrote the internationally best-selling novel, *Jubilee*, about the life of enslaved people on a Georgia plantation. She published numerous articles, essays, five volumes of poetry, and a biography of African American author Richard Wright, a Mississippian. Dr. Margaret W. Alexander engaged in speaking events across the country. She was awarded a Rosenwald Fellowship in 1944, a Ford Fellowship in 1954, a Senior Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1991, the Mississippi Arts Commission Governor's Award for Excellence in Arts in 1992, and was inducted into the African American Literary Hall of Fame in 1998. She received four honorary doctorates in her lifetime. She passed away on November 10, 1998,

and her home is still owned by members of her family.³

Criterion C

The Medgar Evers Historic District is significant at the local level for its concentration of Ranch-style homes in Jackson, Mississippi. Originally developed in California in the 1930s, the Ranch-style included characteristics such as asymmetrical massing and hip or gable roofs with moderate or wide eaves. The Ranch-style is generally one story, faces its long axis toward the road, and usually includes a garage or carport, depending on climatic conditions. The Ranch-style grew in popularity after World War II. Within Jackson, most Ranch-style homes are isolated and infill historic districts of the early 1900s. The Ranch-style homes within the Elraine subdivision define the district, conveying a uniform design. Most of the homes were built over a three-year period, between 1955 and 1957. Houses built later present similar massing, setbacks, materials, and the characteristics of the Ranch-style, conveying the vision of Winston J. Thompson and Leroy Burnett for a unified subdivision.

The Ranch-style homes reflect the desires of the middle-class African American homebuyers who sought middle-class amenities and homes similar to those sought by White working-class people. The homes within the district were larger than those in surrounding neighborhoods, and the district features a lower home density than typical for the time and location within Jackson.

² William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 29.

³ William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 30-31.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL Statement of Significance

The site was designated a Jackson Local Landmark in 1992 and a Mississippi Landmark in 1993, and the site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2000 as a state-significant property. The property was elevated to a National Historic Landmark in 2016. The period of significance for this National Historic Landmark extends from 1956, when the Everses purchased the home, until 1964, when Myrlie Evers and the three Evers children moved to California following the assassination of Medgar Evers.

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL nomination identified the property as significant under Criteria 1 and 2. (This National Historic Landmark along with the Missouri Street Lots were designated the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument in 2019.)

NHL Criterion 1

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL is nationally significant as the site of Medgar Evers's assassination. Medgar Evers was assassinated on June 12, 1963, in the carport of his home, 2332 Guynes Street, by Byron de la Beckwith. Medgar Evers's murder was the first of a nationally significant civil rights leader. His assassination brought national attention to the civil rights movement and acted as a catalyst for civil rights legislation in the following years, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Myrlie Evers testified at both of the trials against Byron de la Beckwith in 1964, both of which ended in mistrials. She would eventually be instrumental in bringing her husband's murderer to justice in 1994.⁴

NHL Criterion 2

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL is nationally significant for its association with Medgar and Myrlie Evers, both of whom made major contributions to advancing the goals of the civil rights movement on a national level.

Medgar Evers was the first field secretary for the NAACP in Mississippi and was actively involved in almost every civil rights event in the state from 1955 to 1963. Mississippi was known as the "deepest bastion of segregation" and "the heart of the Jim Crow system" at that time, making Medgar Evers a significant person on the national civil rights stage. He held this position as the movement transformed from scattered voices to an organized national chorus. His passion for the civil rights movement, his leadership abilities, and his unflappable decision-making skills earned him the title of the NAACP's "Man in Mississippi." He actively worked for the civil rights movement up until his death in 1963.⁵

Together, Medgar and Myrlie Evers accomplished significant progress in the civil rights movement while residing at 2332 Guynes Street. The Evers family regularly received threats and harassment because of Medgar Evers's role in the NAACP. Myrlie Evers initially assisted Medgar Evers with work as his secretary during his first two years in Jackson. As demands increased in motherhood, Myrlie Evers decided to leave her position and focus on life at home. She continued to actively host civil rights leaders and shelter Black victims of abuse in their home.⁶

Medgar Evers's assassination and public funeral propelled Myrlie Evers into a more prominent, national role as a speaker for the NAACP. She used her speaking engagements to encourage membership, share her story, and raise funds. Her involvement with the NAACP lasted throughout the 1990s and culminated with her service as the organization's chairperson of the board of directors, the first woman to hold the position. In 2018, she founded the Medgar Evers Institute to preserve and promote her husband's legacy and work for civil rights.⁷

4 Jennifer V. O. Baughn, "Medgar and Myrlie Evers House," National Historic Landmark Nomination Form (US Department of the Interior, 2016), 18-22.

5 Baughn, "Medgar and Myrlie Evers House," National Historic Landmark Nomination, 8.

6 Baughn, "Medgar and Myrlie Evers House," National Historic Landmark Nomination, 8-9.

7 Baughn, "Medgar and Myrlie Evers House," National Historic Landmark Nomination, 22.

Analysis of Integrity

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance—how well the physical features of the landscape relate to its historic significance. The Medgar Evers Historic District and the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument were assessed to determine whether the landscape characteristics that shaped the cultural landscape during the period of significance are present today. The National Register of Historic Places defines seven aspects or qualities that define integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The district and the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL retain a high degree of integrity. The Missouri Street Lots contribute to the district only in lot size and shape as development on them postdates the period of significance.

Location

Location is the place where the cultural landscape was constructed or the landscape where the historic event occurred. The Medgar Evers Historic District retains the original boundaries that defined the Elraine subdivision. The size and shape of the lots remain intact and are defined by Missouri Street and Margaret W. Alexander Drive. All of the original lots and homes developed and built by W. J. Thompson and Company from 1955 to 1957 are extant; some are still owned by the original families and have minimal alterations. Each home remains in its original location. The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL retains its original property boundary as defined in the Elraine subdivision, Part 4.

Design

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, and spatial organization of the property. The Medgar Evers Historic District possesses integrity of design as it retains its spatial organization with its defined property lines, house locations, and street layout present at the time of construction. The uniformity of Winston J. Thompson and Leroy Burnett's design for the Elraine subdivision is maintained through its uniform building setback along Margaret W. Alexander Drive, Ranch-style homes, and contiguous groundplane of lawn. Each Ranch-style home built by W. J. Thompson and Company has a low, horizontal silhouette, presents with the long front side facing the road, and reflects the functional needs of single families after World War

II. None of the original forty-two homes within the Elraine subdivision have been demolished, and only a small number have been altered. Alterations at individual properties include conversion of carports to living spaces (typical for small homes) and rear additions. Most of the homes retain original windows and exterior finishes. All of the contributing homes in the subdivision were constructed by the same developer and/or builder between 1955 and 1957 or 1961 and 1965. All of these properties were present during the period of significance.

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL retains design integrity as its footprint has remained largely unaltered since the home's construction in 1956. The Ranch-style home retains its original siting and spatial organization, similar to other properties within the Elraine subdivision. Minor modifications to the landscape design include accessibility improvements, removal of original plant material, and the addition of exterior utilities. These changes do not detract from the modest appearance of the home or its association with the Everses and the Elraine subdivision.

Setting

Setting is the physical environment of the landscape. Prior to development, the land for the Elraine subdivision had been farmland and with few large trees. W. J. Thompson and Company developed the subdivision on land near the edge of the furthest reaches of northwest Jackson. Few commercial developments existed nearby apart from a select few on Delta Drive (now Medgar Evers Boulevard). Many of the surrounding roads remained unpaved. Drainage at the homes and along the streets had not been fully addressed by the City, leading to issues with flooding. The Elraine subdivision was still developing during the time the Evers family lived there, and the full build out would not be completed until after they left.

The surrounding context of northwest Jackson has changed since the end of the period of significance. The city expanded as new land areas were annexed in, leading to more suburban development. The surrounding road system is now paved, the tree canopy has grown, and drainage has been incrementally addressed at a city-wide scale. Adjacent development along Medgar Evers Boulevard is largely screened by mature vegetation. An electrical substation was constructed to the east

of the district, and it is visible from Margaret W. Alexander Drive. These changes to the surrounding area, in addition to changes within the subdivision, have compromised the integrity of setting in the Medgar Evers Historic District.

Since the end of the period of significance, several homeowners have moved out of the district or ceased their property upkeep; a few properties became neglected over time, including Dr. Margaret W. Alexander's home. The lack of upkeep compromises the appearance of the properties and vegetation along Margaret W. Alexander Drive.

The National Park Service (NPS) developed the Missouri Street Lots into an outdoor education space and garden area as part of the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the 1963 assassination of Medgar Evers. Repurposing these previously vacant lots into an outdoor education space and garden area has added to the appeal of the park without detracting from the historic integrity of the district and has added functionality to lots intended for development.

Additional modifications to the district's setting include the widening of Margaret W. Alexander Drive in the mid-1970s, which altered drainage and driveways at the original properties built between 1955 and 1957. The Elaine subdivision largely retains its suburban setting despite the larger external pressures from changes in northwest Jackson and Medgar Evers Boulevard and the increase in use because of Evers family's home's elevated status as an NPS unit.

The setting of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL has been altered since the period of significance. The original trees and shrubs added by the Evers family have been removed. A live oak planted by Medgar Evers was transplanted from the Evers's front lawn to the Missouri Street Lots in 1996. The NPS modified the cultural landscape at the home to address accessibility and drainage needs.

Materials and Workmanship

Materials are the physical elements combined or deposited during a distinct period of time in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. Workmanship is the physical

evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during a given period in history. The Medgar Evers Historic District retains integrity of materials and workmanship. The consistencies of materials and workmanship throughout the district continue to reflect the historic construction by one construction company. Many homes retain their original divided-light casement windows and exterior siding.

The Ranch-style home at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL possesses integrity of both materials and workmanship. The home conveys a uniform construction by its low-pitch hipped roof; assortment of exterior siding in the asbestos shingles, board-and-batten, and Roman brick; attached carport; picture window in the living room; and divided-light metal casement windows.

The landscape surrounding the home has been modified with changes to circulation and vegetation. Modifications to circulation on the property have altered historic features and introduced new materials to the site. While the driveway retains its original footprint as well as some original materials, materials at the driveway's connection to Margaret W. Alexander Drive were changed when the apron and curb and gutter system were installed. The original driveway was one continuous slab of concrete and did not have joints. In 2023, stone pavers, a wood ramp, and a wood fence were installed west of the driveway and in the backyard for interim accessibility and security improvements to the property in preparation for the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the assassination and the park's grand opening. These features introduced new materials and workmanship to the cultural landscape that are not reflective of the historic materials used in the landscape.

The original plant material cultivated by the Evers family during their occupancy has been removed since the period of significance. The Evers family cultivated and maintained various trees, shrubs, bulbs, and perennials in the front of the home and in its backyard. The loss of original vegetation diminishes the integrity of materials and the ability of the property to convey the role the Everses had in improving and caring for their property.

Feeling

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. Integrity of feeling results from the combined effect of setting, design, materials, and workmanship; these physical features, taken together, convey the property's historic character. The materials and workmanship of buildings and the layout of the houses within the Medgar Evers Historic District all date to the period of significance. Modifications to the setting and individual properties do not detract from the district's integrity of feeling as a modest post–World War II subdivision. The district retains the original road pattern, sizes of lots, and many of the materials that reflect patterns of suburban life.

Setting, materials, and workmanship are diminished within the landscape, resulting in some loss of integrity of feeling at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. Nevertheless, the home, lawn, and driveway retain a strong sense of design, materials, and workmanship for a 1950s–1960s Ranch-style home conveying a historic sense of place.

Association

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a cultural landscape. Intact features within the Medgar Evers Historic District provide tangible connections to Medgar Evers's assassination and the lives of the original families who lived within the subdivision. The neighborhood retains its identity as the Elaine subdivision, and many of the original families who purchased a home from the W. J. Thompson Company still reside in the subdivision.

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL retains integrity of association as the original home of the Evers family and the site of Medgar Evers's assassination on June 12, 1963. The view between the Evers's home and the location where Byron de la Beckwith fired the shot that killed Medgar Evers continues to be an important visual connection for sharing the story of Medgar Evers's assassination and the civil rights movement. The Evers family continues to regard the location of the assassination in the carport and the home as a sacred space and points for reflection and commemoration.

Missouri Street Lots Integrity

The Missouri Street Lots were not mentioned in the *Medgar Evers Historic District National Register of Historic Places Nomination* and were not identified as a contributing or non-contributing feature. The lots were likely included in the district boundary as they were part of the original lots purchased by the W. J. Thompson Company and were slated for development. In addition to the original homes built along Guynes Street between 1955 and 1957, Leroy Burnett built homes on lots south of the Missouri Street Lots between 1963 and 1965. For this reason, the Missouri Street Lots contribute to the district in lot size and shape and retain integrity of location.

The Missouri Street Lots share an association with the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument as they are owned and managed by the NPS as an outdoor education space and garden area. During the filming of *Ghost of Mississippi* in 1996, the film crew transplanted to the Missouri Street Lots a live oak originally planted by Medgar Evers at the Evers family's home. The live oak should be managed as a cultural resource because of its association with Medgar Evers, but it has diminished integrity of location.

Contributing and Non-contributing Features

Using the landscape characteristics identified in Chapter 3, this section categorizes individual features based on their historical significance to the cultural landscape.

- *Contributing features* are the elements associated with the landscape characteristics of the cultural landscape during the period of significance. These features retain integrity from the period of significance.
- *Non-contributing features* are the extant features constructed or added after the period of significance and do not contribute to the historic character of the cultural landscape.⁸

A non-contributing feature can be further classified as compatible or incompatible, according to the following criteria:

- For a non-contributing feature to be considered *compatible* with the historic character of the inventory unit, it must meet these criteria of the *Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties Guidelines for Rehabilitating Cultural Landscapes*:
 - The installation of the feature did not destroy or negatively impact the historic materials, features, and spatial organization that characterize the property.
 - The feature's materials, size, massing, and location harmonize with the character of the property.
 - The feature is clearly differentiated from the historic fabric so that a false historical appearance is not created.
- A non-contributing feature is considered *incompatible* with the historic character of the inventory unit when the feature has these qualities:
 - It creates a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties.

- It impairs the integrity of the property and its environment by including new additions and alterations that are incompatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, proportion, and massing of the property's characteristics.

Contributing and non-contributing features are listed in Tables 4-1 through 4-11 and in a consolidated feature list in Appendix A.

⁸ Robert R. Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan A. Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Processes and Techniques*, Washington, D.C.: NPS, 1998, 5.

Comparative Analysis of Historic and Existing Conditions

Land Use

Medgar Evers Historic District

Historic Condition and Changes

Land use of the Medgar Evers Historic District during the period of significance was primarily residential. The district consisted of forty-two residential homes and one religious institution, the Elaine Baptist Church, now the Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church. The Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church built a parsonage directly east of the church building in the 1980s (Figure 4-1).

Evaluation

Residential and religious land uses within the district remain similar to those during the period of significance. Most of the residences within the district remain occupied, but several have been vacated over time and remain empty. The Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church continues to hold religious services on a weekly basis.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

Historic Condition and Changes

The Evers family occupied the home from 1956 to 1964. Myrlie Evers and the Evers children moved to California after the assassination of Medgar Evers. Myrlie Evers maintained the home as a rental property for thirty years until she donated it to Tougaloo College in 1993. Tougaloo College, a local private, historically Black college, operated it as a house museum until the NPS acquired the home in 2020.⁹ The NPS reopened the house museum and expanded public tour opportunities following the park's grand opening in 2023.

Evaluation

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and the Missouri Street Lots do not retain their original land uses. The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL retains its association with the Evers family and their residency, but it has been modified for public tours and is no longer occupied as a residence.

⁹ Baughn, "Medgar and Myrlie Evers House," National Historic Landmark Nomination, 8-9.

Missouri Street Lots

Historic Condition and Changes

A residence was located on Lot 12 of Missouri Street prior to construction of the Ranch-style homes of the Elaine subdivision. The residence remained on the lot until it was razed in the mid-1970s¹⁰ (Figure 4-2). Lots 13 and 14 were used to cut through for access to the subdivision from Medgar Evers Boulevard. Lot 12, 13, and 14 were acquired by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) and the City of Jackson at an unknown date. The lots were conveyed to Tougaloo College in 1994 so the college could build a parking lot and visitor center to support the house museum. The lots remained open and vacant from the mid-1970s until the NPS, in partnership with the Trust for Public Land, constructed an outdoor education space and garden area in 2023.

Evaluation

After the residence on Lot 12 was razed in the mid-1970s, the Missouri Street Lots were vacant for nearly fifty years. Lots 13 and 14 remained undeveloped during the period of significance and were used as an informal pedestrian access to the neighborhood until 2023, when the NPS constructed a fence around three sides of the site. While this improved space does not contribute to the district, it is compatible with the character of the district. The Missouri Street Lots provide space to meet NPS needs for visitor contact, education, interpretation, and reflection without impacting the integrity of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL.

¹⁰ Historic Aerials, "Historic Aerials of Hinds County, Mississippi," Historic Aerials: NETOnline, <https://www.historicaerials.com/topomap/Arkansas/Mississippi>; "1963 birds-eye photograph" Photograph in Box 221, DeLaughter Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

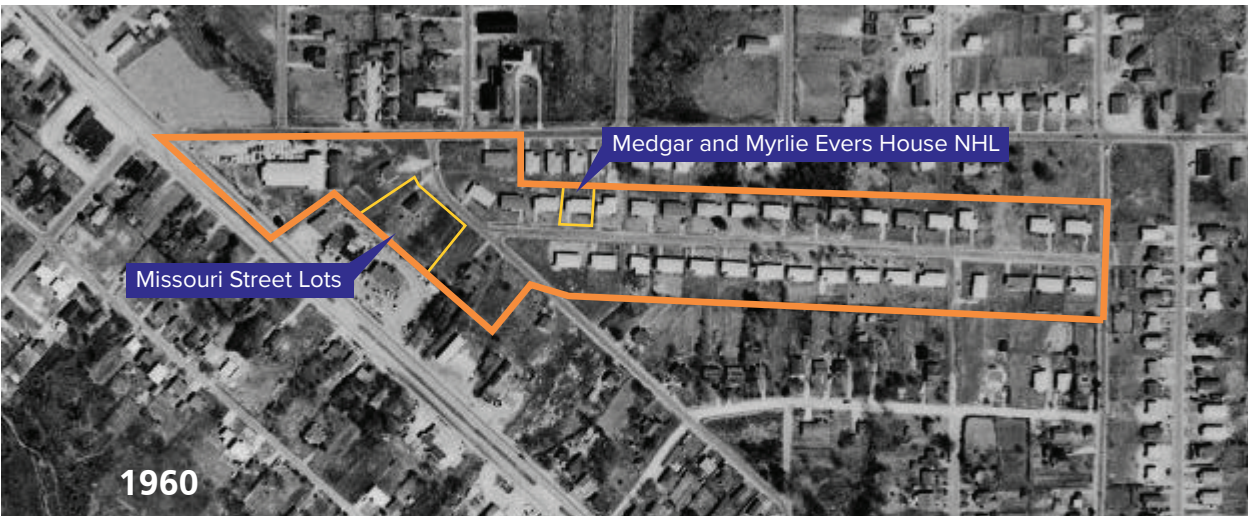


FIGURE 4-1. The Missouri Street Lots were not redeveloped as part of the Elraine subdivision. The building on one of those lots was removed in the late 1970s, and the Missouri Street Lots remained undeveloped until additions by the NPS in 2023 (source: Historic Aerials: NETRonline, Hinds County, Mississippi, 1960).



FIGURE 4-2. Birds-eye view of the Missouri Street Lots (separated as 12, 13, 14 in purple), circa 1963. This photo partially shows the residence on Lot 12, which was razed in the mid-1970s (source: Photograph in Box 221, DeLaughter Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

TABLE 4-1: Land Use Contributing and Non-contributing Features

Land Use Feature	Description	Evaluation
Residential Neighborhood	The Medgar Evers Historic District remains primarily a residential neighborhood as it was during the period of significance.	Contributing
Church and Parsonage	The Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church, at the west portion of the Elraine subdivision, remains as a religious institutions within the district. The church parsonage retains its association with the church.	Contributing
Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument (NPS Owned and Managed)	The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL operates as a house museum and is no longer residential. The Missouri Street Lots previously included a building, which was razed. Today the lots function as an education space and garden area for visitors and residents of the Elraine subdivision.	Non-contributing, Compatible

Spatial Organization

Medgar Evers Historic District

Historic Condition and Changes

The spatial organization of the Medgar Evers Historic District remains mostly intact from the original postwar subdivision developed by Winston J. Thompson and Leroy Burnett.

Prior to development of the subdivision, the parcel sizes were approximately 50 feet wide. Winston J. Thompson widened the parcels to 75 feet by dividing every third lot in half, providing more frontage to each of the thirty-six residences built along Guynes Street (present-day Margaret W. Alexander Drive) between 1955 and 1957 (Figure 4-4). Winston J. Thompson and Leroy Burnett designed the subdivision to have a uniform setback and home style and a contiguous groundplane of lawn.¹¹ All the homes are one story or one and a half stories, providing a visual uniformity across Margaret W. Alexander Drive.¹² Grass swales were a defining feature within the subdivision and prominent feature within each yard.

Leroy Burnett built six additional Ranch-style homes in the district between 1961 and 1965. These homes were built in a style consistent with those developed in the mid-1950s in terms of materials, massing, and setback.¹³ With the exception of the home at the corner of W. Ridgeway Street and Missouri Street, these additional homes were built on narrow lots and do not have the same lawn frontage or spacious backyard as the original homes built between 1955 and 1957.

The largest modification to the district occurred after the period of significance when the city widened Guynes Street, which removed the grass swales and a portion of each front yard in the district. Additionally, over time, properties within the district were individually modified to include new additions, circulation features, and vegetation or fencing at the property boundaries.

11 WFT Architects, *Medgar Evers Home Renovation, A Historic Structure Report*, Jackson: WFT Architects, P.A., 1995, 16.

12 Note: Two of the buildings within the district are one-and-one-half-stories including Dr. Margaret W. Alexander's home (2247 Margaret W. Alexander Drive).

13 William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 5-6.

Evaluation

Spatial organization at the level of the district is retained from the period of significance and contributes to the cultural landscape. Although the widening of Margaret W. Alexander Drive reduced some of each property's frontage, the major circulation thoroughfare and the driveways retained their alignments. Overall, the modification improved many of the drainage challenges the district faced from the period of significance (see Topography and Constructed Water Features in this chapter). Additional modifications have occurred to the spatial organization on individual properties in regards to vegetation, circulation, and small-scale features. These individual changes do not detract from the overall arrangement of the district but do impact the spatial organization of individual homes such as the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

Historic Condition and Changes

During the period of significance, the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL property was defined by a uniform groundplane shared among residences. Other defining elements were young deciduous trees, defined property lines of shrubs and fence, and a driveway that connected each property to Guynes Street.

The groundplane of lawn shared among properties remains intact alongside the defined property lines of shrubs and fence. On the east and west sides of the front lawn of the Evers family's home, the property line is planted with shrubs on the adjacent properties (Figure 4-3). The plant materials has likely changed over time and is subject to the owner preference.

The original chain-link fence that enclosed the backyard and delineated the property line on the east, north, and west sides remains intact but has been obstructed by a taller interim wood privacy fence built directly on the inner side of the fence in 2023. The young deciduous trees that would eventually provide shade and privacy for the Evers family were removed after the period of significance.

The driveway and the original concrete walk that accommodated access to the entrances of the home remain intact. The entrance to the driveway was

modified when the city widened the road in the 1970s. The alignment and access to the carport remain. A stone paver walk and wood ramp were installed along the west and north sides of the property to provide an interim accessible entrance into the home in 2023.

Evaluation

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL retains its original spatial organization associated with the district, including its relationship to the road and shared front lawn. The property retains its defined property line, front lawn, backyard, and driveway. The integrity of feeling has been diminished by the changes in fence material and height. The original chain-link fence, at approximately 3'-6" high, allowed for visibility into neighboring backyards and reinforced a connection to the rest of the neighborhood. The new fence is taller, made of wood, and without openings, establishing a sense of enclosure that separates the property from the rest of the district. Additionally, feeling is impacted by the loss of deciduous trees that once provided a shaded canopy. Additional changes in spatial organization include the new circulation route added to the west and north sides of the home.

Missouri Street Lots

Historic Condition and Changes

The spatial organization of the Missouri Street Lots has changed in response to its shifting land uses. From post-1920s to mid-1970s, a residence was located on Lot 12. This home did not share the same spatial qualities of the postwar subdivision developed by Winston J. Thompson and Leroy Burnett.¹⁴ Apart from the period when a residence existed on the lots, the Missouri Street Lots remained vacant and devoid of structures or defined circulation.

A fence was built along the west side of the Missouri Street Lots in about 1992, partially defining the property boundary. Deciduous trees grew and spread along the property line of the Missouri Street Lots. Apart from a live oak transplanted from the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL to the Missouri Street Lots in 1996, the trees were likely voluntary species that grew into a unmaintained thicket condition by 2022.

¹⁴ Historic Aerials, "Historic Aerials of Hinds County, Mississippi."

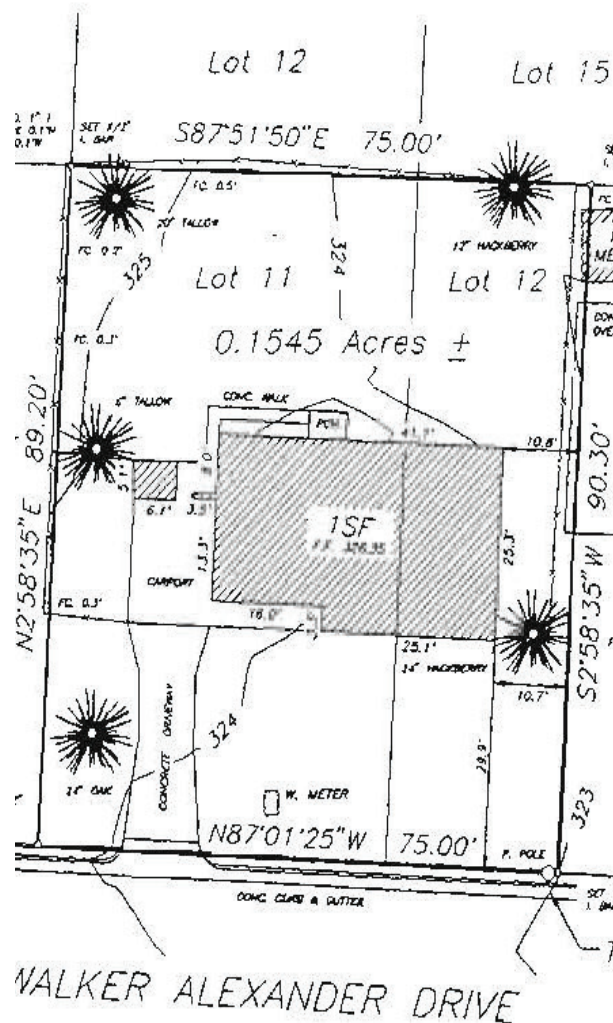


FIGURE 4-3. The 1995 survey of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL shows the layout of the trees that have been removed over time and features that were in place prior to development of the site by the NPS (source: WFT Architects, 1995 Historic Structure Report).

The Missouri Street Lots remained a void within the district for approximately fifty years until the NPS developed the space into a garden area and outdoor education space in 2023. This space features a privacy fence on the south, west, and east sides; an internal concrete loop walk; a parking area connected to Missouri Street; and two gathering areas with supporting infrastructure for picnicking and gardening. The organization of the path and site elements is formal, but the alignment of the shade structure and raised-bed planter garden is oriented to provide a view toward the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL.

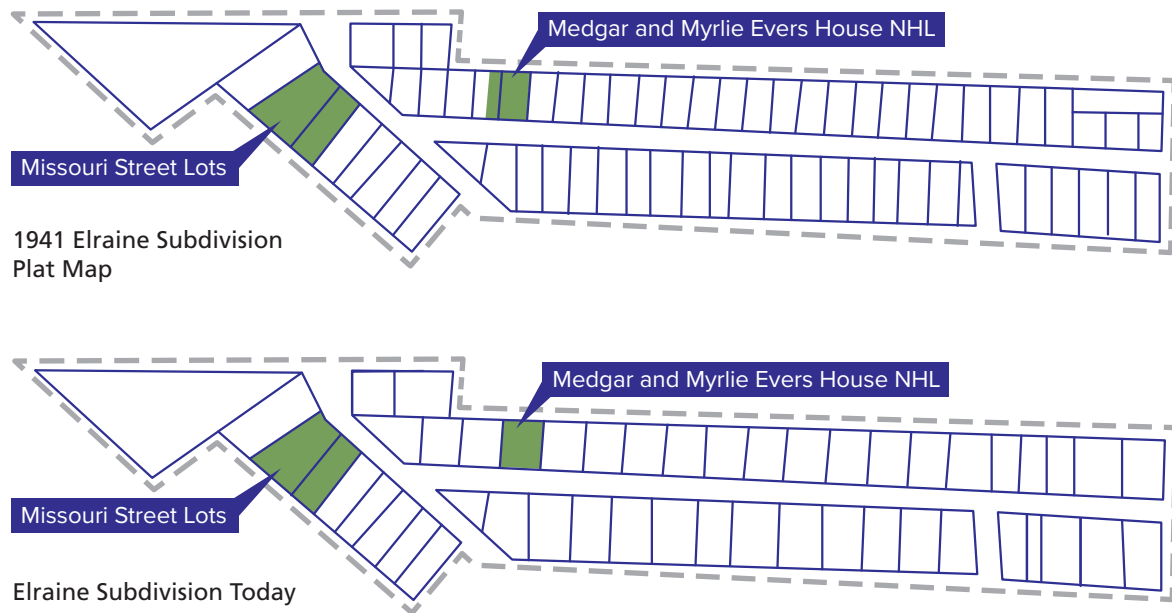


FIGURE 4-4. The original 1941 Elraine subdivision compared with the plat map of today, which shows the parcels widened by Winston J. Thompson and Leroy Burnett. Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument shown in green (source: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1941 Elraine subdivision plat map; DHM Design, 2024).

TABLE 4-2: Spatial Organization Contributing and Non-contributing Features

Spatial Organization Feature	Description	Evaluation
Medgar Evers Historic District	Layout of the subdivision, including the orientation of buildings to the street, building setback, contiguous groundplane of lawn, and shared style of houses.	Contributing
Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL	Siting of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL, including the defining boundary, orientation of the building, and layout of the driveway.	Contributing
Missouri Street Lots	Concrete loop walk, parking area, and shade structure were installed after the period of significance and differ from the spatial qualities of the district.	Non-contributing

Evaluation

The spatial organization of the Missouri Street Lots did not contribute to the district during the period of significance. Recent constructed elements do not detract from the historic character of the district due to their scale. Most of the development is set back at a similar distance from the road as other features within the district; however, the shade structure is set at an angle, so it does not match the orientation of other buildings and structures within the district, which are set parallel to the road.

The property line is delineated with a fence, similar to other properties within the district. The Missouri Street Lots and the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL are the only lots within the district defined by an interim wood privacy fence, reinforcing their shared relationship and land use apart from the rest of the district.

Topography and Constructed Water Features

Medgar Evers Historic District

Historic Condition and Changes

Prior to development of the Medgar Evers Historic District, the land served as a drainageway for Town Creek, a tributary of the Pearl River. The location of the existing drainage and sewer overflow channel was historically a drainage ditch with a canopy of trees surrounding it (Figure 4-5 and Figure 4-6).

Winston J. Thompson and Leroy Burnett developed each subdivision lot with a gradual slope that drained to a grass swale that paralleled Guynes Street. Culverts extended the drainage from the swales under the driveways (Figure 4-7). These swales drained to the low point at the drainage and sewer overflow channel, less than 200 feet east of the Evers family's home.

Guynes Street (present-day Margaret W. Alexander Drive) was modified with drainage improvements after the period of significance. Constructed grass swales were infilled, driveway culverts were removed, and property drainage was redirected to the widened road, which utilized a series of concrete aprons at driveways, curbs, and gutters. Metal inlets were built along the road, moving the stormwater underground (Figure 4-8). The

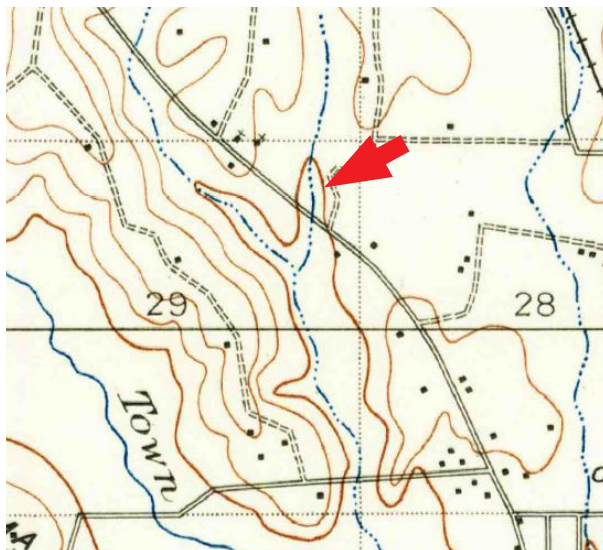


FIGURE 4-5. In 1905, the future location of the drainage and sewer overflow was a tributary for Town Creek. Multiple sections of Town Creek would eventually be channelized and pumped underground throughout the 1900s (source: Historical Topographic Map Collection courtesy of the United States Geological Survey, ESRI 1905).

drainage ditch was channelized and hardened between 1963 and 1971.¹⁵ Remnants of the original constructed grass swales remain on both sides of Missouri Street.

Evaluation

The City converted the Elaine subdivision's drainage system from swales to a curb and gutter system along Margaret W. Alexander Drive. Missouri Street retains a series of grass swales and concrete culverts to direct drainage. These constructed grass swales are likely original as they connect with concrete culverts under driveways at contributing properties along Missouri Street. They appear to be more narrow and shallow than the constructed grass swales that previously existed along Margaret W. Alexander Drive.

The drainage and sewer overflow channel retains its original location and alignment but has been modified to include new concrete sidewalks.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

Historic Condition and Changes

The Everses were plagued with drainage issues at their property from the time they moved in. Medgar Evers reported drainage issues to Winston

¹⁵ Historic Aerials, "Historic Aerials of Hinds County, Mississippi."

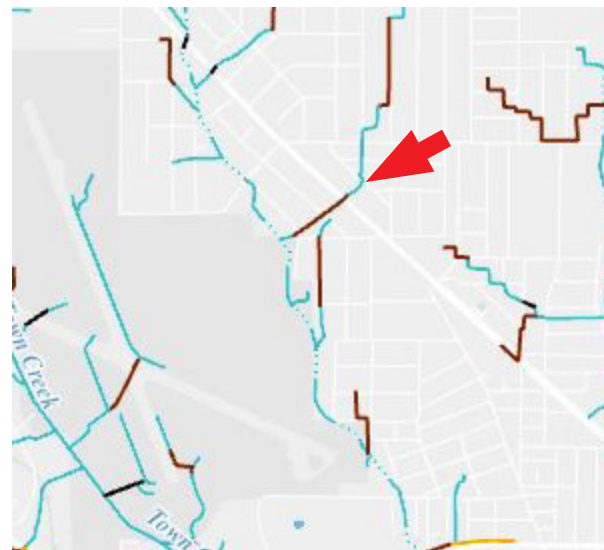


FIGURE 4-6. Location of the drainage overflow channel and channelized sections of Town Creek, 2023. Blue lines are the approximate locations of daylit channels and streams, and brown/red lines are locations of underground pipelines (source: USGS National Map Viewer, National Hydrography Dataset).

J. Thompson a year after the Everses moved into their home. Commercial development along Highway 49/Delta Drive (present-day Medgar Evers Boulevard) and lack of curbing likely contributed to drainage issues within the district.¹⁶

Drainage at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL was not improved upon until after the period of significance. The first notable drainage improvement came with the district-wide drainage upgrades along Guynes Street. The grass swale at the Evers's home was removed and replaced with a concrete apron, curbs, and gutters.

In 2013, Tougaloo College installed a constructed grass swale along the north and east sides of the building to divert water around the home. Tougaloo College also installed a French drain on all sides of the building (Figure 4–9). At the southeast corner of the property, the College installed a curb cut and weep hole to allow site drainage to feed into the street.

In 2023, the NPS installed a French drain below the permeable stone paver path on the west side of the carport to further assist with drainage issues near the building foundation.

¹⁶ Letter from Winston J. Thompson to Medgar Evers, Jackson, Mississippi, May 1, 1957.

Evaluation

Topography at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL has been altered since the period of significance to accommodate drainage issues. The grass swales, curb cut, and French drain at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL are modern additions to the property that assist with protecting the building's foundation.

Missouri Street Lots

Historic Condition and Changes

Topography and drainage at the Missouri Street Lots was altered with development of the property in 2023. The constructed grass swale at the south east corner of Missouri Street was partially infilled to support construction and drainage at the parking entry and concrete walk. A culvert was installed under the concrete apron of the parking entry and at the walk to assist with drainage at the swale. The introduction of hardscape on the Missouri Street Lots has altered drainage patterns at this previously undeveloped area.

Evaluation

Constructed water features at the Missouri Street Lots have been modified since the period of significance to install culverts at the original grass swales. Topography has been altered to support new infrastructure, including the concrete loop walk, shade structure, and the parking area.



FIGURE 4–7. Neighborhood children sitting in a neighbor's front yard at the top of the constructed grass swale that historically lined the streets in the Elaine subdivision, 1959 (source: Photograph in Box 4, Folder 3, Evers Family Papers Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).



FIGURE 4-8. Concrete curb and gutter line both sides of Margaret W. Alexander Drive, replacing the constructed grass swales from the period of significance (source: DHM Design, 2023).

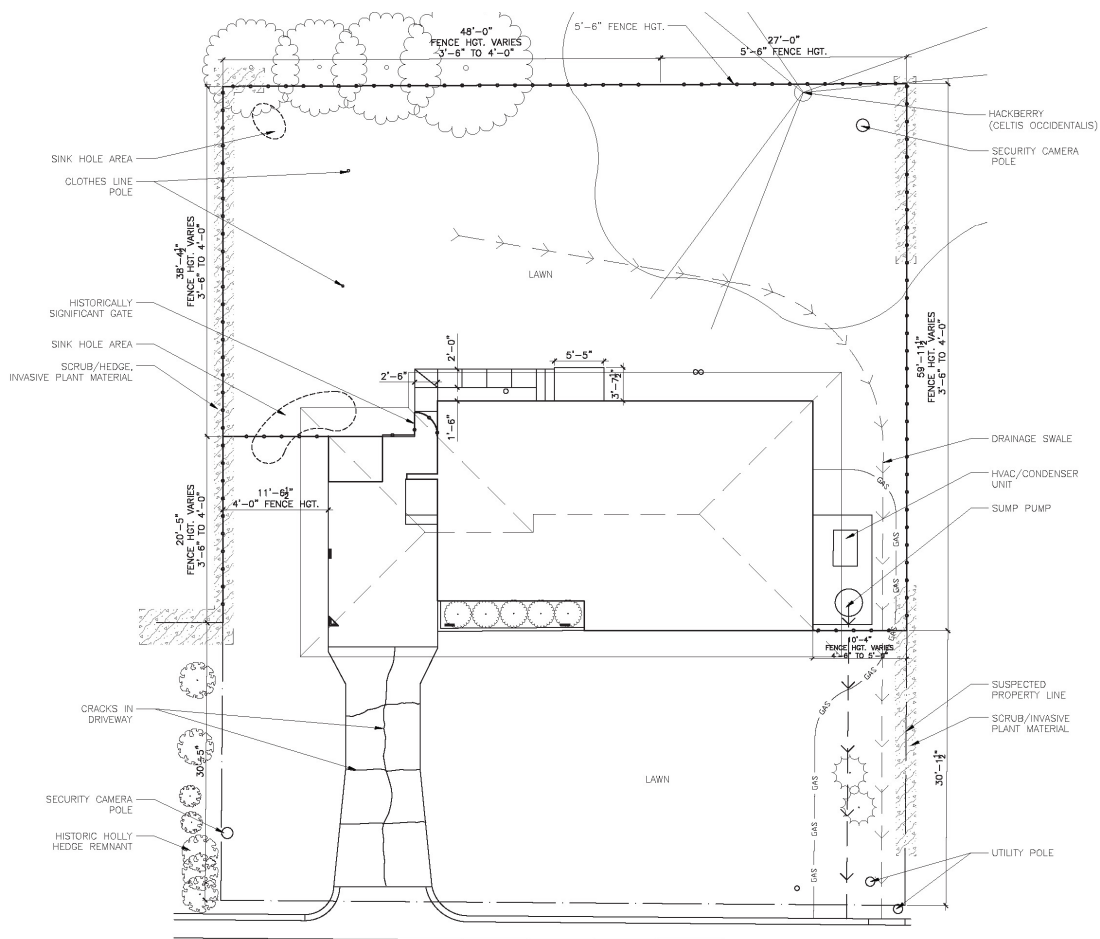


FIGURE 4-9. Tougaloo College installed a constructed grass swale and French drain on the north and east sides of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL in 2013 to divert water away from the building foundation and crawlspace (source: Lord Aeck Sargent, 2021 Condition Assessment).

TABLE 4-3: Topography and Constructed Water Features Contributing and Non-contributing Features

Topography and Constructed Water Features	Description	Installation Date	Condition	Evaluation
Medgar Evers Historic District				
Drainage and Sewer Overflow Channel	Originally an unlined drainage ditch; less than 100 feet east of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL; located at the lowest point in the subdivision. The ditch has been lined with concrete since the period of significance and retains integrity of location.	Period of significance	Fair	Contributing
Constructed Grass Swales and Culverts Along Missouri Street	A system of grass swales and culverts parallel the east and west sides of Missouri Street. Historic culverts are concrete and contribute to the historic character of the district alongside constructed grass swales. Some culverts have been replaced and corrugated plastic culverts have been introduced.	Period of significance	Fair to Poor	Contributing
Concrete Curb and Gutter and Inlets at Margaret W. Alexander Drive	Modifications to Margaret W. Alexander Drive were made after the period of significance to accommodate drainage. These modifications replaced the original grass swales and driveway culverts that extended parallel to the street. These modifications include 6-inch concrete curbs with gutters that extend along both sides of the road, conveying water to the low point at the drainage and sewer overflow; intermittent steel inlets collect runoff.	After the period of significance	Fair	Non-contributing
Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL				
Constructed Grass Swale and Curb Cut	A grass swale conveys water from the northeast of the property to a curb cut at Margaret W. Alexander Drive. Installed by Tougaloo College, these features were implemented to reduce drainage issues at the building foundation.	2013	Good	Non-contributing, Compatible
French Drains Under Permeable Stone Pavers and Around the Building; Outfall Pipe and Weep Hole	A French drain extends below the stone pavers and around the building. An outfall pipe at the southeast corner of the building connects the French drain to a weep hole near the curb cut. The French drain on the west side and permeable stone pavers were installed in 2023; the original French drain, outfall pipe, and weep hole were installed in 2013. These features were installed to further mitigate drainage issues at the building's foundation.	2013-2023	Good	Non-contributing, Compatible

Views and Vistas

Medgar Evers Historic District

Historic Condition and Changes

During the period of significance, views within the Medgar Evers Historic District were generally open. Views within the neighborhood from Margaret W. Alexander Drive were open and framed by buildings on either side of the road. Few trees were established within the newly developed subdivision.

After the period of significance, the open character of the district was altered by the growth of a mature canopy and the addition of backyard fences between properties. Many property owners, such as the owner of 2331 Margaret W. Alexander Drive, have replaced their carport with a covered garage, resulting in screened views.

Evaluation

Views to the district, the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL, and the Missouri Street Lots contribute to the historic character of the district. A few key views have been altered by the addition of vegetation, small-scale features, and buildings.

During the period of significance, open views within the district were primarily the result of the relatively young development of the subdivision; rather than an intentional design choice, open views were facilitated by the dearth of mature vegetation. Mature vegetation has since grown, and additional development has occurred on the surrounding properties, including the addition of a garage at 2331 Margaret W. Alexander Drive, screening many of the original open views in the district.

Within the district, views to residential front lawns from Margaret W. Alexander Drive remain open and reflect the historic character of the Elaine subdivision. Views to adjacent properties from backyards have been modified as residents have intentionally limited views through the use of privacy fencing and perimeter shrub plantings.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

Historic Condition and Changes

The Everses were mindful in selecting an internal lot because of security concerns associated with Medgar Evers's work as field secretary for the

NAACP. They rejected an available corner lot in favor of a lot screened from major roads by developed properties on both sides. The primary entrance to the home was accessed through the carport in lieu of a front door facing the road. Even with these considerations, views to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL from Missouri Street remained open and mostly unobstructed, providing a visual line of sight from the location where Byron de la Beckwith assassinated Medgar Evers.

Additional residences were built south of the Missouri Street Lots between 1963 and 1965, including a home at the approximate location where Byron de la Beckwith hid to assassinate Medgar Evers (Figure 4-10). The construction of these homes screened views into the district from Delta Drive and W. Ridgeway Street.

Evaluation

The view to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL from the approximate location where Byron de la Beckwith hid to assassinate Medgar Evers has changed from its historic condition (Figure 4-11). Mature evergreen trees, large shrubs, and the replacement of the carport with a garage at 2331 Margaret W. Alexander Drive has screened visibility to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. In 1964, Leroy Burnett constructed a home on the lot where Byron de la Beckwith hid. The installation of the privacy fence in the backyard has screened views, but views of the house from the road remain open.

Missouri Street Lots

Historic Condition and Changes

The Missouri Street Lots were primarily open and undeveloped aside from the residence on Lot 12, which was razed in the mid-1970s. The lots did not have mature trees, which allowed for high visibility from Delta Drive. Views to the district from Medgar Evers Boulevard and W. Ridgeway Street are now fully or partially screened by mature vegetation and property development.

Evaluation

The Missouri Street Lots retain their views from the road. Views to adjacent properties were obstructed by the installation of a wood privacy fence around sections of the perimeter of the NPS property.



FIGURE 4–10. View to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL, in the 1960s, seen from the south approach of Missouri Street in the approximate location where Byron de la Beckwith hid to fire the shot that murdered Medgar Evers (source: El Malvaney, Preservation in Mississippi, Civil Rights Medgar Evers, accessed November 2022 <https://misspreservation.com/2013/06/12/medgar-evers-slept-here/>).



FIGURE 4–11. The view of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL from the approximate position of the assassin has been modified from the historic condition. The view is now obstructed by mature conifers, large shrubs, and the garage addition to the home at 2331 Margaret W. Alexander Drive (source: DHM Design, 2023).

TABLE 4-4: Views and Vistas Contributing and Non-contributing Features

Views and Vistas Feature	Description	Evaluation
Medgar Evers Historic District		
Corridor Views Along Margaret W. Alexander Drive	Views remain open, framed by mature vegetation and buildings with a continuous front lawn extending among properties.	Contributing
Views to Residences from Margaret W. Alexander Drive	Views remain similar to those of the period of significance: Typically open with some partial screening from planted vegetation at the perimeter of properties.	Contributing
Views to Adjacent Properties from Backyards	Views remain similar to those of the period of significance: mostly open, though some properties have added chain-link fencing along property lines for demarcation, allowing for some screening.	Contributing
Views Between the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and the Approximate Sniper's Position	Views differ from the historic condition: screened by large evergreen trees and large shrubs; in addition, the house at 2331 Margaret W. Alexander Drive was expanded after the period of significance.	Contributing
Views Between the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and Missouri Street Lots	Views remain open, framed by mature vegetation and buildings, small-scale features in the district, and partial screening from low perimeter vegetation at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL.	Contributing
Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL		
Views to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL from Margaret W. Alexander Drive	Views remain open and unobstructed, similar to historic condition.	Contributing
Views to Adjacent Properties from the Backyard	Views have been modified from the historic condition: obstructed by a wood privacy fence installed in 2023.	Contributing
Missouri Street Lots		
Views to Adjacent Properties	Views have been modified from the period of significance: obstructed on the east, south, and west by a wood privacy fence; open with minimal obstructions north toward W. Ridgeway Street and east toward Missouri Street.	Contributing
Views to Missouri Street Lots from Missouri Street/ W. Ridgeway Street	Views remain similar to those of the period of significance: open, with the NPS park entrance sign is highly visible from W. Ridgeway Street.	Contributing

Circulation

Medgar Evers Historic District

Historic Condition and Changes

Circulation to and from the Elaine subdivision was developed consistent with the character of 1950s postwar suburbs, focusing primarily on automobile access. Delta Drive (present-day Medgar Evers Boulevard) and County Road (present-day W. Ridgeway Street) predate the development of the Elaine subdivision and served as the primary connections from northwest Jackson to downtown. Guynes Street (present-day Margaret W. Alexander Drive) and Missouri Street predate the Medgar Evers Historic District and were developed as the primary vehicular routes within the district.

Grass swales paralleled both sides of the road and extended drainage under driveways through a culvert. The culverts were surrounded by a compacted earth berm that acted as the connection point between each property's concrete driveway and Guynes Street. The City of Jackson paved Guynes Street with asphalt while the Everses occupied the home.

The alignment of Guynes Street remains intact from the period of significance, but it has since been widened and repaved. The City removed compacted earth berms, culverts, and grass swales and replaced them with a widened asphalt road complete with a concrete apron at each driveway and curbs, gutters, and inlets set along the road for drainage. The finished work resulted in not only a wider road with improved drainage but also the loss of a portion of each driveway and lawn frontage in the right-of-way.¹⁷ Guynes Street was renamed in 1981 to honor Dr. Margaret Walker Alexander, a notable African American poet and writer who lived with her family in the subdivision.¹⁸

Evaluation

Missouri Street and Margaret W. Alexander Drive retain their historic alignments and contribute to the cultural landscape of the district. Despite

modifications to Margaret W. Alexander Drive and to each driveway, these features still retain their integrity of location and association with each property.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

Historic Condition and Changes

The concrete driveway at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL continues to provide access to and from Margaret W. Alexander Drive. Similar to those of other properties in the district, the original driveway connected to the road via a compacted earth berm, and the driveway was shortened to accommodate the existing concrete apron, curb, and gutter. The original driveway appears to have been a uniform concrete slab without score joints. For the filming of *Ghost of Mississippi* in 1996, the film crew lifted the driveway and reset it.¹⁹ A cementitious patch treatment was completed in 2023 to stabilize the driveway. Today the driveway is used for pedestrian access only.

The stoops at the carport and rear entrance and the concrete walk are original to Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. The NPS modified the original pedestrian circulation to accommodate universal access into the home. The stone paver path and wood ramp and landing were installed as interim improvements in 2023 to provide an accessible route. The wood landing is set on top of the rear entrance stoop and limits use of the concrete walk original to the home.

Evaluation

The driveway, concrete walk, and stoops at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL are original and are contributing features within the cultural landscape. The city altered the driveway to install a concrete apron similar to those installed on the other properties within the district, a film crew reset the driveway, and the NPS stabilized the driveway by making repairs. The driveway retains a high level of integrity of location, setting, design, and association as the site of Medgar Evers's assassination.

The NPS added an accessible route to accommodate pedestrian circulation into the

17 WFT Architects, *Medgar Evers Home Renovation, A Historic Structure Report*, 16.

18 "Margaret Walker," Margaret Walker Center, Jackson State University, <https://www.jsums.edu/margaretwalkercenter/>.

19 Historic Aerials, "Historic Aerials of Hinds County, Mississippi."

home. The route introduced new design, materials, and craftsmanship to the cultural landscape (Figure 4-12). The route made obsolete the access to the rear of the building from the narrow concrete walk since the wood ramp landing now blocks access to the stoop. The new route modified public access from the entrance under the carport to the rear of the building. The carport entrance remains accessible to NPS staff.

Missouri Street Lots

Historic Condition and Changes

The original building on the northwest lot of the Missouri Street Lots was connected to Missouri Street by a driveway, which was likely removed with the structure in the 1970s. Social trails

between Delta Drive and the Missouri Street Lots accommodated access to the neighborhood.

The NPS introduced new circulation to the Missouri Street Lots in 2023. A parking entry drive with a concrete apron provides access to a gravel parking area. The NPS modified a portion of the constructed grass swale along Missouri Street to accommodate a culvert under the drive. A concrete loop walk was added to provide pedestrian access to the site from Missouri Street.

Evaluation

All circulation features at the Missouri Street Lots were installed after the period of significance and are non-contributing.

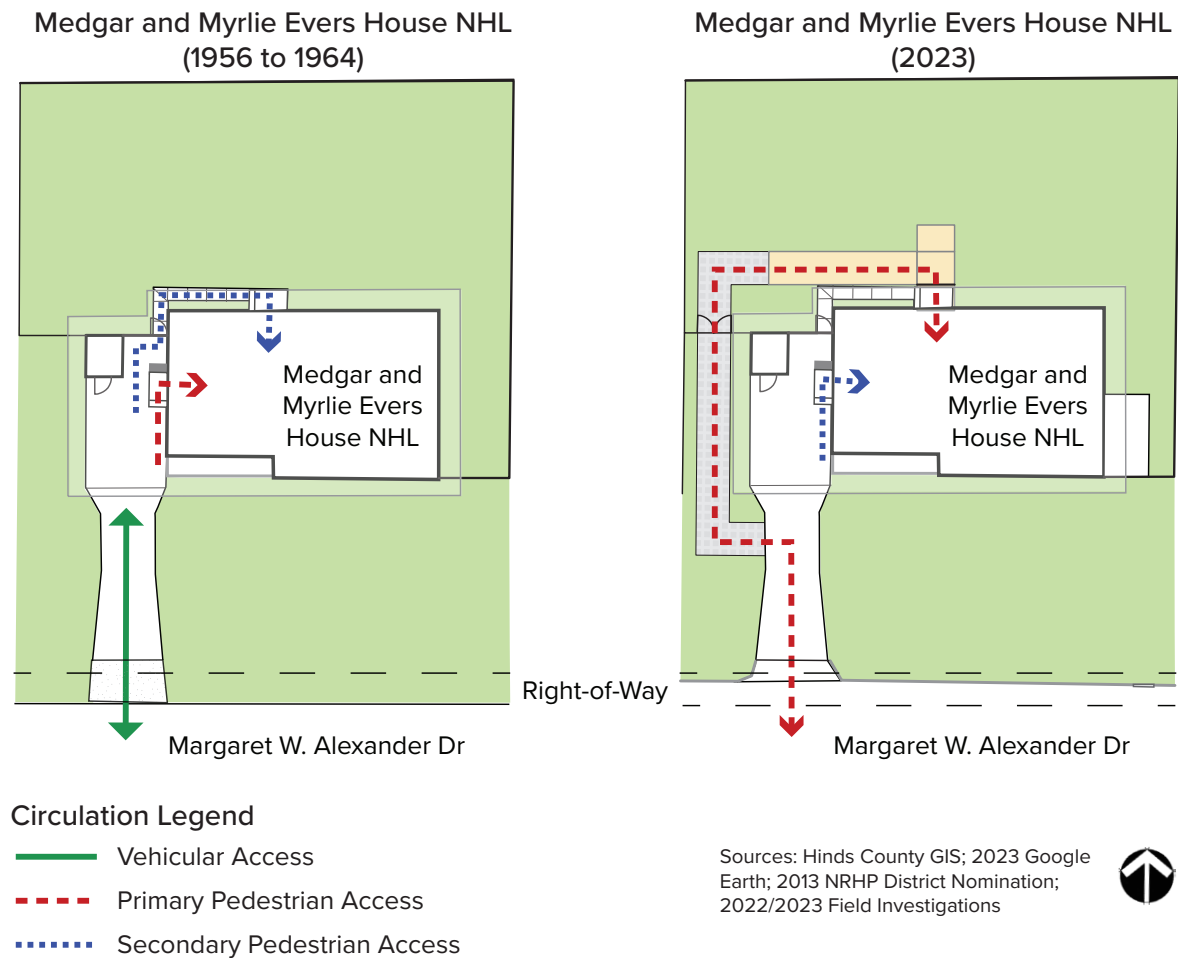


FIGURE 4-12. Circulation at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL has changed with physical alteration to the road and changing land uses at the house. The conversion of the house from a residential property to a house museum has altered access. The driveway is no longer accessible to vehicles and primary pedestrian access is now through the rear of the house rather than through the carport (source: DHM Design, 2024).

TABLE 4-5: Circulation Contributing and Non-contributing Features

Circulation Feature	Description (Measurements are Approximate)	Installation Date	Condition	Evaluation
Medgar Evers Historic District				
Missouri Street	The street retains a high level of integrity with original alignment and features, including constructed grass swales and culverts. Today, the street is a 20-foot, two-way asphalt-paved street with no pavement markings or sidewalks; speed limit is 25 MPH; no street parking.	1955-1956	Fair	Contributing
Margaret W. Alexander Drive (Guynes Street)	The street retains integrity of location but has been altered from the historic condition through widening and the installation of curb, gutter, and inlets. Today, the street is a 35-foot, two-way asphalt-paved street with no pavement markings or sidewalks; speed limit is 25 MPH; street parking available on both sides.	1955-1956	Fair	Contributing
Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL				
Concrete Driveway	Constructed in 1956 with the Evers home, historically was used for vehicular parking. Retains integrity of location, feeling, and association with the assassination of Medgar Evers. Features an 8-by-12 foot aggregate concrete drive with vertical and horizontal cracks creating eight uneven slabs. Connects to the concrete slab underneath the carport.	1956	Fair	Contributing
Rear Entrance Stoop	Constructed in 1956 with the Evers home. Concrete step and landing set atop a Roman brick base. Landing for the wood ramp is on top of the concrete step. Use has been altered with the installation of the wood ramp and landing on top of the stoop; retains integrity of location, workmanship, and design.	1956	Fair	Contributing
Carport Entrance Stoop	Constructed in 1956 with the Evers home as a concrete step and landing set atop a Roman brick base.	1956	Good	Contributing
Concrete Walk	Constructed in 1956 with the Evers home as a 2-foot concrete walk; no longer used for circulation.	1956	Fair	Contributing
Concrete Apron and Curb and Gutter	Constructed during the widening of Guynes Street in the 1970s. Located where the concrete driveway meets Margaret W. Alexander Drive.	After the period of significance	Good	Non-contributing, Compatible

TABLE 4-5: Circulation Contributing and Non-contributing Features (*continued*)

Circulation Feature	Description (Measurements are Approximate)	Installation Date	Condition	Evaluation
Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL				
Stone Paver Path	A pervious paver path, 5 feet wide, with crushed stone between pavers. Pavers are 5 inches by 8 inches arranged in alternating two by two crosshatch pattern with a single brick border on each side. Installed by the NPS; modifies the primary circulation route to the Evers home.	2023	Good	Non-contributing, Incompatible
Wood Ramp, Stairs, and Landing	Wood posts, ramp, landing and stairs; post inside clearance along the ramp is 4 feet 4 inches, average ramp slope 3.4 percent, and ramp railings are 38 inches in height. Wood landing average slope 0.5 percent with 5-foot 8-inch clearance between posts. Wood steps include four risers with average height of 6.5 inches. Installed in 2023 with the stone paver path; modifies circulation at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL.	2023	Good	Non-contributing, Incompatible
Missouri Street Lots				
Parking Area	A 24-foot gravel drive aisle with concrete apron at Missouri Street. Extends into a 46-foot gravel parking area (four standard stalls and one accessible stall). Gravel size varies from ¼ inch to 1 inch. Concrete accessible stall is 11 feet with 5-foot striped aisle; slope ranges from 0.5 percent to 1.0 percent. Installed by the NPS in partnership with Trust for Public Land; does not contribute to the historic character.	2023	Good	Non-contributing
Concrete Loop Walk	Typical width is 5 feet; defined areas for a shade structure, picnicking, and site furnishings. Installed by the NPS in partnership with Trust for Public Land to formalize pedestrian circulation on site.	2023	Good	Non-contributing

Buildings and Structures

Medgar Evers Historic District

Historic Condition and Changes

The original forty-two Ranch-style residential buildings within the Medgar Evers Historic District were built between 1956 and 1965. The first thirty-six homes were built by Winston J. Thompson and Leroy Burnett along Guynes Street between 1955 and 1957. Leroy Burnett built the remaining homes elsewhere in the district between 1961 and 1965. The Elaine Baptist Church (present-day Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church) was built in 1956 at the intersection of Medgar Evers Boulevard and W. Ridgeway Street.

Typical of other Ranch-style homes of the time, each of the properties had a long, low façade and a horizontal silhouette. The homes, each 850–950 square feet, shared a similar basic design: two or three bedrooms and one bathroom. The exterior of the homes utilized a combination of materials, including brick and wood wall cladding. Options for features included a picture window and decorative railing at the carport.

After the period of significance, many of the original homeowners modified their home by expanding its floor plan and replacing the carport with a covered garage. Apart from garage additions, new additions to the floorplan have typically been at the rear of the building and are not visible from the road.²⁰ Elaine Baptist Church built a church parsonage after the period of significance.

Evaluation

All forty-two original Ranch-style homes and the Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church within the district are listed as contributing features in the 2013 *Medgar Evers Historic District National Register of Historic Places Nomination*; however, the period of significance of 1955 to 1963 does not account for two of the Ranch-style homes built in 1964 and 1965 (Figure 4-13). (The nomination lists 3604 Missouri Street as a 1964 construction, but it was built in 1956.)

The only non-contributing building in the district is the church parsonage.²¹ Residential

buildings within the district retain much of their original historic character, including low-pitch roofs, horizontal lines, and integrated carports. Modifications to the buildings do not detract from the visual character of the original homes (Figure 4-14).

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

Historic Condition and Changes

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL is one of the original buildings that Winston J. Thompson and Leroy Burnett built in 1956. Minor alterations to the exterior after the period of significance include painting and the installation of security bars over windows, which have since been removed. Tougaloo College rehabilitated the home to its original condition in 1995 and again from 2010 to 2013 with assistance from WFT Architects.

Evaluation

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL retains its original exterior materials and has a high degree of integrity. The building remains similar to its condition during the period of significance and has undergone rehabilitation efforts to restore its original character. Refer to the concurrent HSR for additional analysis and evaluation of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL.

Missouri Street Lots

Historic Condition and Changes

The NPS built a wood shade structure on the Missouri Street Lots in 2023. The shade structure is the first structure built on the property since the residential building on Lot 12 was razed in the 1970s.

Evaluation

The shade structure at the Missouri Street Lots is a non-contributing feature of the cultural landscape. The structure's orientation and setback differ from those of the other buildings in the district. The craftsmanship of the structure is not compatible with the appearance or quality of other structures in the district.

²⁰ William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," 6.

²¹ William M. Gatlin, et al., "Medgar Evers Historic District Nomination," Appendix.

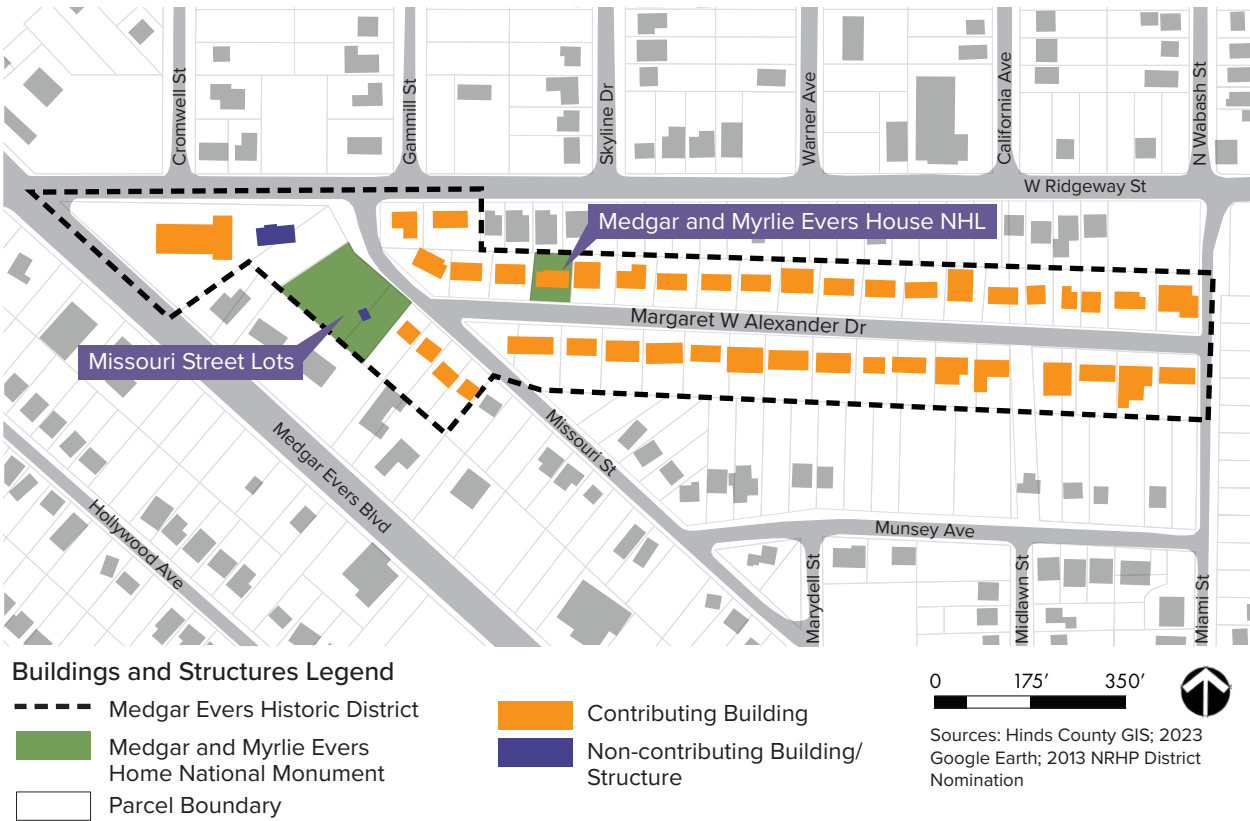


FIGURE 4-13. Most of the buildings and structures within the Medgar Evers Historic District are contributing (source: DHM Design, 2024).



FIGURE 4-14. Most modifications to homes in the district retain historic feeling and association with the neighborhood, including the home at 2106 Margaret W. Alexander Drive, which was modified to include a two-car garage (source: DHM Design, 2023).

TABLE 4-6: Contributing and Non-contributing Buildings of the Medgar Evers Historic District

Buildings and Structures Feature	Description	Installation Date	Evaluation
Medgar Evers Historic District (Evaluation is based on the 2013 <i>Medgar Evers Historic District National Register Nomination</i>)			
2105 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2106 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached two-car garage and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2111 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached two-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2112 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2118 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; covered front porch; driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2121 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached two-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2124 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1965	Contributing
2130 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; carport has been converted into living space, two-car driveway aligned on right side of home.	1956	Contributing
2131 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-and-one-half-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door and covered front porch; secondary entrance on the east side of the building located on the closed portion of Midlawn Road; closed road serves as a two-car driveway.	1956, enlarged circa 1990	Contributing
2200 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing door; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2205 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	Dr. Margaret W. Alexander's home, a one-and-one-half-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; the property doesn't have a defined driveway, but it appears to share the closed portion of Midlawn Road for parking.	1956	Contributing
2206 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home; a metal ramp has been installed to the street facing front door.	1957	Contributing
2214 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style house with front door accessed through the carport; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2215 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2222 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; carport has been converted into living space; one-car driveway aligned on right side of home.	1956	Contributing

TABLE 4-6: Contributing and Non-contributing Buildings of the Medgar Evers Historic District (*continued*)

Buildings and Structures Feature	Description	Installation Date	Evaluation
Medgar Evers Historic District (Evaluation is based on the 2013 <i>Medgar Evers Historic District National Register Nomination</i>)			
2223 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached two-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home; a wood ramp has been installed to the street facing front door.	1956	Contributing
2229 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2230 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2235 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style house with front door accessed through the carport; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2240 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached two-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2241 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2246 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2247 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-and-one-half-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached two-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2300 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2305 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2310 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2314 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2315 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached two-car garage and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2319 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached two-car garage and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2322 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on left side of the home.	1956, enlarged circa 1979	Contributing
2325 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing

TABLE 4-6: Contributing and Non-contributing Buildings of the Medgar Evers Historic District (*continued*)

Buildings and Structures Feature	Description	Installation Date	Evaluation
Medgar Evers Historic District (Evaluation is based on the 2013 <i>Medgar Evers Historic District National Register Nomination</i>)			
2331 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached two-car garage and driveway aligned on right side of the home	1956	Contributing
2338 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on left side of the home.	1956	Contributing
2346 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1956	Contributing
3672 Medgar Evers Boulevard	Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church (formerly the Elrairie Baptist Church); one-and-one-half-story church building; parking on north and west sides; primary entrance is on the west side of the building.	Circa 1956	Contributing
2335 W. Ridgeway Street	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; one-car carport and two-car driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1957	Contributing
2343 W. Ridgeway Street	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; one-car driveway located on the rear/south side of the home accessed by Missouri Street.	1961	Contributing
3529 Missouri Street	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; one-car driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1963	Contributing
3611 Missouri Street	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; one-car driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1963	Contributing
3527 Missouri Street	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; one-car driveway aligned on right side of the home; a wood ramp has been installed to the street facing front door.	1964	Contributing
3604 Missouri Street	One-story Ranch-style house with front door accessed through the carport; attached one-car carport and driveway aligned on left side of the house.	1964	Contributing
3603 Missouri Street	One-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; one-car driveway aligned on right side of the home.	1965	Contributing
2439 W. Ridgeway Street	Church parsonage; one-story Ranch-style home with street-facing front door; attached two-car garage and driveway aligned on right side of the home; accessed through the Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church parking lot.	Circa 1980	Non-contributing

TABLE 4-7: Buildings and Structures Contributing and Non-contributing Features at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument.

Buildings and Structures Feature	Description	Installation Date	Condition	Evaluation
Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL				
Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL 2332 Margaret W. Alexander Drive	One-story Ranch-style house; built in 1956 alongside the other Ranch-style houses of the Medgar Evers Historic District; rehabilitation efforts occurred in the 1995 and between 2010 and 2013; the house retains a high level of integrity. Refer to the concurrent HSR for detailed condition assessment.	1956	Good	Contributing
Missouri Street Lots				
Shade Structure	Wood structure with skillion roof, 8-inch by 8-inch wood timber posts within a 2-foot by 2-foot brick base, approximately 23 feet by 11 feet in length; roof ranges in height from 13 feet to 15 feet; installed by the NPS; orientation and setback differ from other buildings in the Medgar Evers Historic District.	2023	Good	Non-contributing

Small-Scale Features

Medgar Evers Historic District

Historic Condition and Changes

Numerous small-scale features within the Medgar Evers Historic District have provided residential and municipal functions since early development of the subdivision.

Evaluation

Many of the small-scale features in the district are tied to individual properties and reflect residential life. Small-scale features were not evaluated at the district level; however, features that date to the period of significance, including clotheslines, finials, swing gates, decorative railings at porches, and chain-link fences retain integrity and contribute to the district's historic character. Features installed after the period of significance, including lawn ornaments, planters, wood fences, site furnishings, wood railings, metal ramps, decorative lighting, and trash receptacles do not contribute to the historic character of the district but reflect the personal tastes of the property owner.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

Historic Condition and Changes

Small-scale features at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL are primarily residential features typical of suburban life during the 1950s and 1960s: a clothesline, a mailbox at the end of the driveway, perimeter fencing, and a gate to the backyard. The fence and gate had ornamental finials fixed to the top, including Native American and a cocker spaniel finials that exist today. At least two additional Native American finials were located at the southwest and southeast corners of the perimeter fencing; however, it is undetermined if there were additional finials. The cocker spaniel finial was a gift from Medgar Evers to Myrlie Evers in memory of a family dog.²²

The city installed two utility poles with overhead power lines and a streetlight at an unknown date. The shorter utility poles throughout the district match the location of poles documented in 1963.

During its management of the Evers family's home, Tougaloo College installed historical plaques about the significance of the landmark and Medgar Evers's life as a civil rights leader.

During the rehabilitation of the home in 1995 and 2010 to 2013, the clothesline poles were likely shifted to accommodate drainage improvements in the backyard.

The NPS installed multiple small-scale features to accommodate maintenance and operations at the landmark, including two camera poles, a double swing gate, a fence west of the carport, a wood privacy fence on the inside perimeter of the chain-link fence in the backyard, a trash receptacle, and an NPS park sign (Figure 4–15).

Evaluation

The clothesline poles, perimeter chain-link fencing, single swing gate, and decorative finials contribute to the historic character of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. These features retain integrity of feeling and association with the Evers family. Non-contributing features installed after the period of significance accommodate present-day land use of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL as a house museum and NPS site.

Missouri Street Lots

Historic Condition and Changes

The NPS, in partnership with the Trust for Public Land, installed numerous small-scale features at the Missouri Street Lots prior to the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the 1963 assassination of Medgar Evers. These features include wood, metal, and post-and-cable fence at the perimeter of the property, picnic tables, benches, vehicle gate posts, wheel stops, trash receptacles, an interpretive sign, and an NPS park entrance sign. The Missouri Street Lots feature a space commemorated as "Myrlie's Garden," which displays raised-bed planters and a garden cistern.

Evaluation

All small-scale features at the Missouri Street Lots are non-contributing as they were installed after the period of significance and do not carry association to the historic condition of the property.

²² Reena Evers-Everette, interview by Chris Geddes and Leslie Moore, Jackson, MS, October 27, 2022.

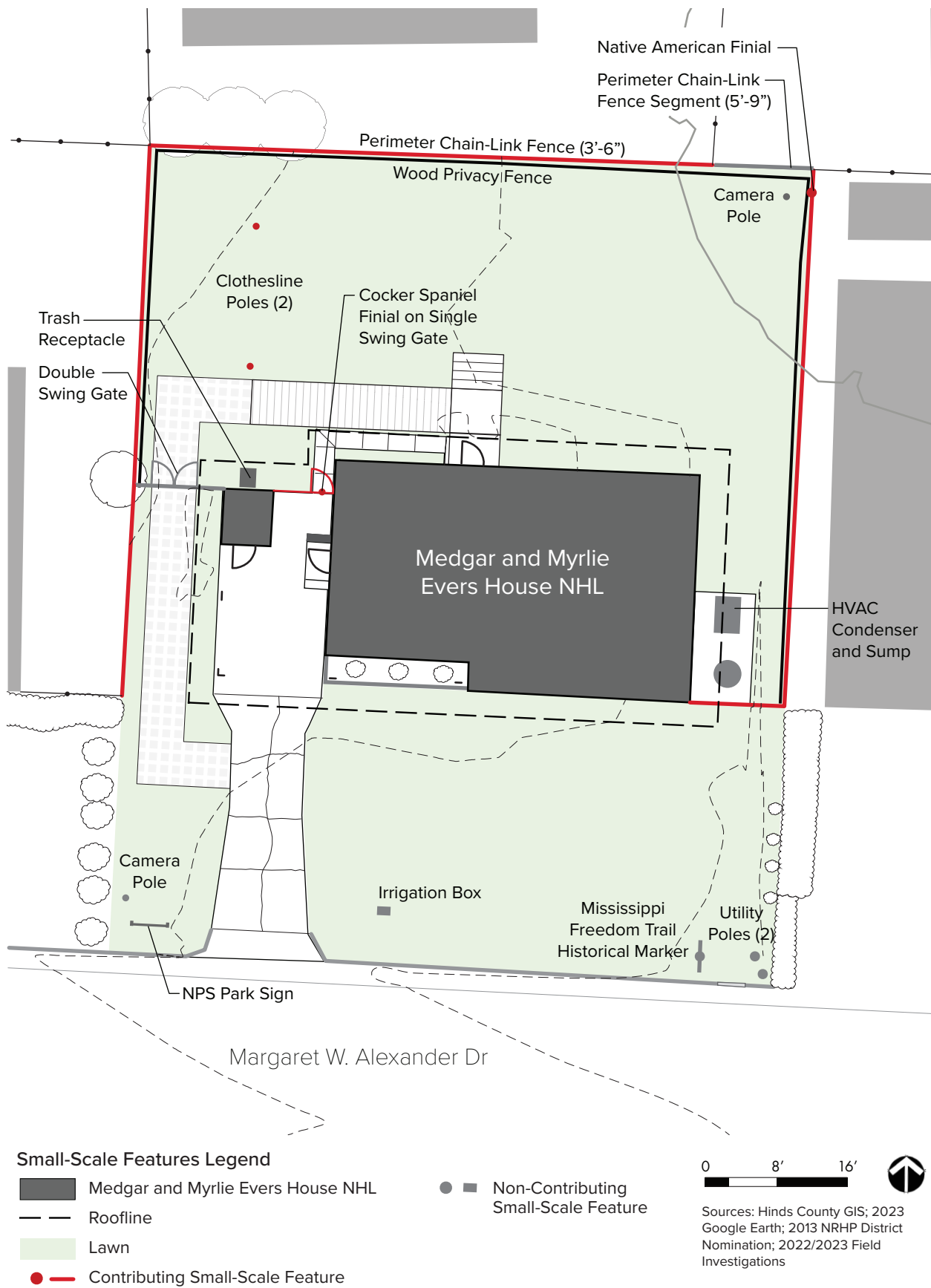


FIGURE 4-15. The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL small-scale contributing features include the clothesline poles, perimeter chain-link fencing, and finial fixtures atop fencing (source: DHM Design, 2024).

TABLE 4-8: Small-Scale Contributing and Non-contributing Features

Small-Scale Feature	Description	Installation Date	Condition	Evaluation
Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL				
Perimeter Chain-Link Fence (3'-6")	Metal chain-link fence 3'-6" height; posts are spaced approximately 9'-9" apart; installed by Medgar Evers.	Period of significance	Poor	Contributing
Single Swing Gate	Metal chain-link gate; similar to its historic condition; installed by Medgar Evers.	Period of significance	Fair	Contributing
Cocker Spaniel Finial	6" x 6" metal finial centered on the single swing gate with two anchor screws at the gate crossbar. A gift from Medgar Evers to Myrlie Evers; installed by the Evers family.	Period of significance	Fair	Contributing
Native American Finial	3"x 3" metal finial at the northeast corner of the perimeter fence; installed by the Evers family.	Period of significance	Good	Contributing
Clothesline Poles	Two 2" diameter metal posts approximately 5' tall embedded in semi-exposed concrete footings; posts are spaced approximately 12'-8" apart. 3/4" diameter bar extends 36" across the top; installed by the Evers family; likely relocated.	Period of significance	Poor	Contributing
Utility Poles	Two utility poles with overhead electric lines extend along Margaret W. Alexander Drive; a streetlight is mounted to the west pole and a civil rights tour sign (#49, Jackson) is located on the east pole and identifies the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL as a tour stop.	Unknown	Good	Non-contributing, Compatible
Perimeter Chain-Link Fence Segment (5'-9")	Metal chain-link fence, approximately 5'-9" height; located on the northeast corner of the backyard; unknown installation.	After the period of significance	Poor	Non-contributing, Compatible
Irrigation System	Irrigation system box is located in the front lawn east of the driveway; sprinkler heads can be found throughout the front lawn, side lawn, and backyard. The system is nonfunctional, and some sprinkler heads appear damaged or missing.	After the period of significance	Poor	Non-contributing, Compatible
Mississippi Freedom Trail Historical Marker	Ornate metal sign on metal pole; the sign describes the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL site and the events of the Evers' assassination; installed during the Mississippi Freedom Trail 50th Anniversary Freedom Rides.	2011	Good	Non-contributing, Compatible

TABLE 4-8: Small-Scale Contributing and Non-contributing Features (continued)

Small-Scale Feature	Description	Installation Date	Condition	Evaluation
Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL				
HVAC/ Condenser and Sump	Utilities associated with the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL; refer to HSR for detailed condition assessment.	2013	Good	Non-contributing, Incompatible
Camera Poles	Security cameras mounted on 10'-0" poles in 12" diameter concrete footers; cameras do not function; installed by the NPS.	Between 2021-2022	Good	Non-contributing, Incompatible
Double Swing Gate	Metal chain-link gate; installed by the NPS.	2022	Good	Non-contributing, Compatible
Wood Privacy Fence	1"x 6" plank wood fence, 6'-0" height; posts are spaced approximately 6'-10" apart; installed by NPS on the inside of the perimeter chain-link fence.	2023	Good	Non-contributing, Incompatible
Trash Receptacle	Bear-proof metal trash receptacle; 22"x 26"x 4'-4" height; installed by the NPS.	2023	Good	Non-contributing, Incompatible
NPS Park Sign	2"x 54" metal national park sign with two 5"x 3" metal posts; 3'-9" height; installed by the NPS.	2023	Good	Non-contributing, Incompatible
Missouri Street Lots				
Utility Poles	Three poles total. Two poles are located within 5'-0" of one another at the southeastern corner; one pole is at the center of the property, directly south of the constructed grass swale along Missouri Street; unknown installation date, predates 2023 additions to the Missouri Street Lots.	Unknown	Good	Non-contributing
Wood Privacy Fence	1"x 6" wood plank fence, ranging in height from 6'-0" (east and west property line) to 8'-0" (south property line); posts are spaced approximately 6'-10" apart; installed by the NPS.	2023	Good	Non-contributing
Metal Fence	1"x 1" metal rails; 3"x 3" posts spaced 6'-0" apart; 6'-0" height, matches character of adjacent fencing at Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church; installed on the northwest corner of the property by the NPS.	2023	Good	Non-contributing

TABLE 4-9: Small-Scale Contributing and Non-contributing Features (*continued*)

Small-Scale Feature	Description	Installation Date	Condition	Evaluation
Missouri Street Lots				
Post-and-Cable Fence	5.5"x 5.5" wood posts; spacing varies between 12'-0" on center to 12'-6" on center; 32" height; 1/2" diameter cable rails, two between posts; installed by the NPS along Missouri Street.	2023	Good	Non-contributing
Site Furnishings	Furnishings include benches, picnic tables, and trash receptacles. Metal benches both with and without a back; 6'-0" (length) bench with 36" square accessible clear ground space companion area. Metal picnic tables are 6'-0" length; Trash receptacles are metal bear-proof and surface mounted; all furnishings installed by the NPS in partnership with Trust for Public Land.	2023	Good	Non-contributing
Wheel Stops	6'-0" length concrete wheel stop; installed by the NPS in partnership with Trust for Public Land.	2023	Good	Non-contributing
Garden Cistern	400-gallon stainless steel water storage tank; installed by the NPS in partnership with Trust for Public Land.	2023	Good	Non-contributing
Raised-Bed Planter	5'-0"x 5'-0" modular metal raised-bed planter; 30" height, 5'-0" spacing between planters; installed by the NPS in partnership with Trust for Public Land.	2023	Good	Non-contributing
Vehicular Gate Post	4"x 4" metal posts, 6'-2" height, about 6" from edge of gravel driveway; no gate attached; installed by the NPS in partnership with Trust for Public Land.	2023	Good	Non-contributing
Interpretive Sign	5"x 3" metal posts supporting two 3'-0"x 4'-0" interpretive panels, 6'-4" height, panels describe the Elrairie subdivision and life of the Evers family; an attached metal box has park brochures; installed by the NPS in partnership with Trust for Public Land.	2023	Good	Non-contributing
NPS Park Entrance Sign	8"x 3" metal posts supporting 10'-3" park entrance sign, 5'-9" in height; installed by the NPS in partnership with Trust for Public Land.	2023	Good	Non-contributing

Vegetation

Medgar Evers Historic District

Historic Condition and Changes

Prior to development of the Elaine subdivision, vegetation within the study area consisted of open fields and scattered woodland. Few mature trees within the residential properties predate the Elaine subdivision. After the subdivision was built, residents cultivated native and nonnative ornamental and fruit trees, shrubs, perennial flower gardens, and vegetable beds on their properties. After the period of significance, homeowners continued to care for their homes by routinely replacing trees, shrubs, and garden beds according to their individual preferences, needs, and tastes.

Front lawns of turf grass, a common feature of American postwar suburban landscapes, were installed across the subdivision. The lawns unified homes across the subdivision on one groundplane. The continuous lawn remains mostly intact across properties.

Evaluation

The project team did not evaluate vegetation on individual properties at a district level. The existing mature canopy trees and shrubs planted during the period of significance contribute to the historic character; the trees and shrubs added after the period of significance are non-contributing but are compatible with existing mature tree species in the district. Invasive species, including tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), threaten existing contributing and compatible vegetation because of their dense growth patterns and allelopathic nature.

Most of the property owners across the district continue to maintain and care for their lawns. Some lawns have become overgrown or patchy because of inconsistent care, diminishing the integrity of the unified lawn across the district.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

Historic documentation on the specific planting types selected by Medgar and Myrlie Evers for the Everses' yard is limited. Research involved reviewing previous planning documents, newspaper articles, and all available historic photographs (Figure 4–19 through Figure 4–37). In addition, the project team conducted oral

interviews with Reena Evers-Everette and Myrlie Evers-Williams about their recollections of the vegetation during their time at the site.

Historic Condition and Changes

Medgar and Myrlie Evers were both actively engaged in gardening at their house. They selectively added vegetation to the property according to their individual preferences and needs, defining their space as their own, separate from their neighbors. During the period of significance, Medgar and Myrlie Evers cultivated a variety of deciduous trees, fruit trees, ornamental shrubs, herbaceous flowering plants, and vegetables.

Locations for vegetation included a planting bed at the carport, a planting bed in the Roman brick planter, individual foundation plantings at the front of the home, honeysuckle along the west perimeter fence in the backyard, a planting bed around the live oak, shrubs at the driveway entrance, and small vegetable beds in the backyard along the north and east fences²³ (Figure 4–16). Historic photographs from 1959 to 1963 reveal that plant material within some of these areas changed during the period of significance (Figure 4–19 through Figure 4–30).

A summary of findings for vegetation types is discussed in the following section. Refer to Figure 4–38 and Table 4–10 for compiled information on each plant species and approximate location.

Trees

Photographs showing the location of trees in the front lawn and backyard during the period of significance are limited to unclear aerials. One aerial photograph from about 1963 roughly depicts trees in the center of the backyard (Figure 4–17). During oral interviews with Myrlie Evers-Williams and Reena Evers-Everette, they recalled fig, apple, plum, peach, pecan, and mimosa trees in the backyard. They shared approximate locations

23 Reena Evers-Everette and Myrlie Evers-Williams, interview by NPS, Digital, October 31, November 1, 2023.

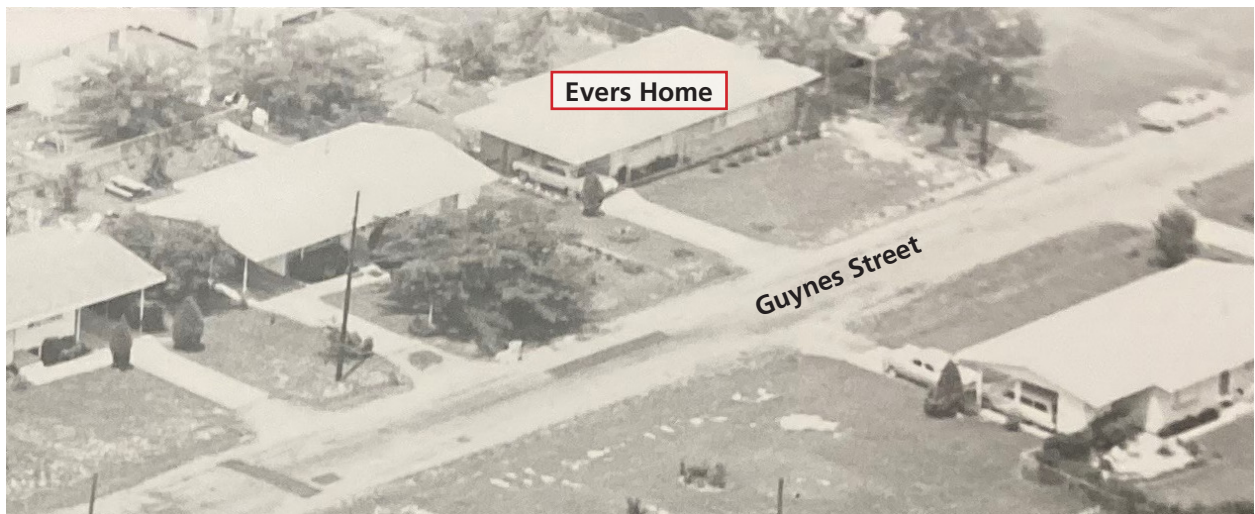


FIGURE 4-16. Vegetation at the driveway, carport, and building are all visible from the birds-eye, circa 1963 (source: Photograph in Box 221, DeLaughter Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

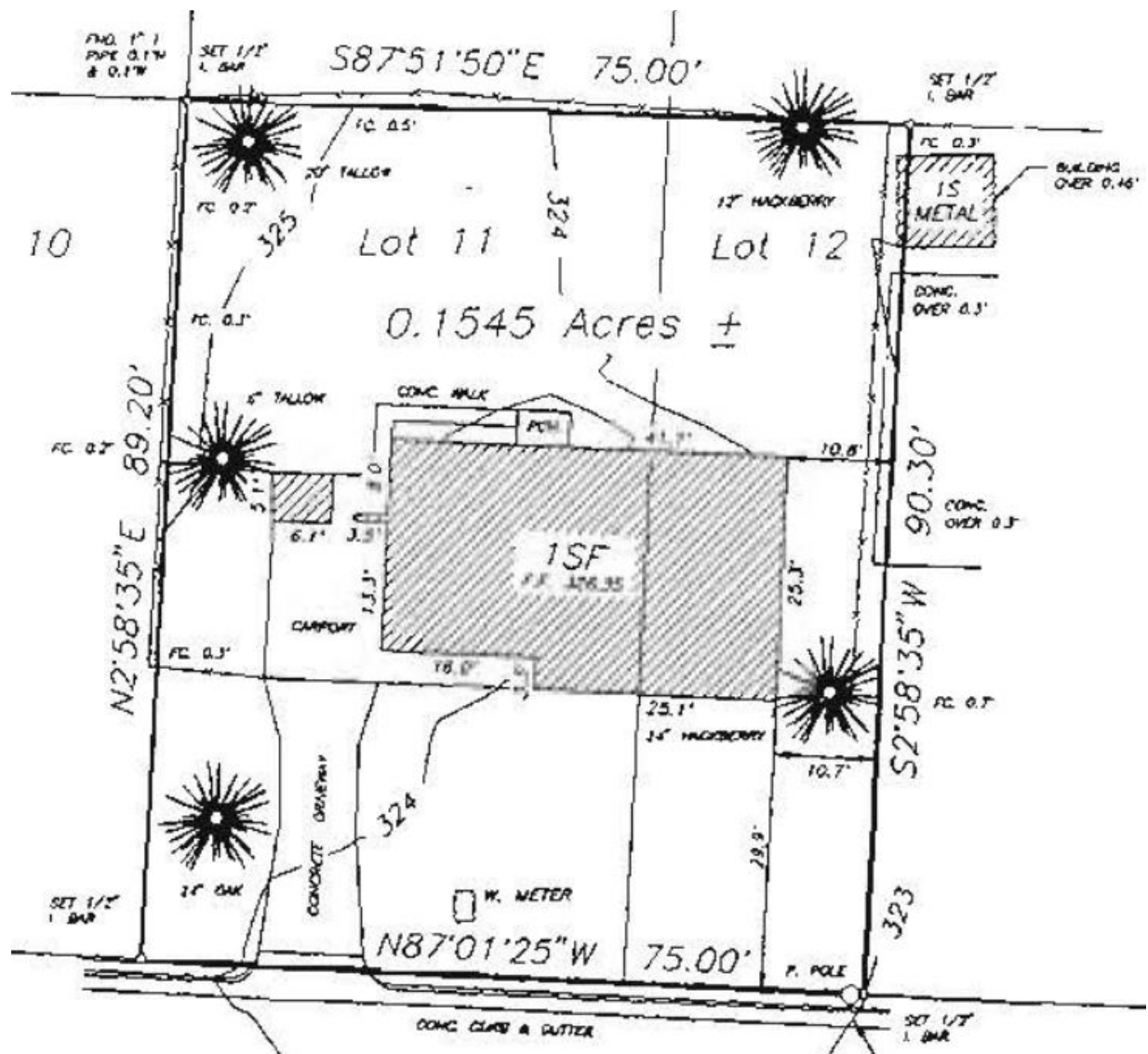


FIGURE 4-17. Survey of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL during the 1995 HSR. All existing trees at that time were identified on the property and included live oak, tallow, and hackberry (source: WFT Architects, 1995 HSR).

based on their recollections from 60 years prior.²⁴ Additionally, a live oak was planted west of the driveway by Medgar Evers during the period of significance. This live oak is documented in historic photographs.

The *Medgar Evers Home Renovation, A Historic Structure Report* (1995) by WFT Architects provided a documented plan of tree locations in 1995 in the cultural landscape prior to their subsequent removal (Figure 4–18). Trees in this plan include a live oak west of the driveway and hackberry and tallow trees in the fenced backyard. It is unknown whether the hackberry or tallow trees date to the period of significance as these are fast growing tree species in Mississippi and could have been planted at a later date.

The live oak was transplanted to the Missouri Street Lots during the filming of the *Ghost of Mississippi* in 1996. The tallow trees and most of the hackberry trees were removed between 2000 and 2021. The NPS removed the hackberry at the northeast corner of the property between 2020 and 2021 because of its size, branching canopy, estimated age, visible condition, and proximity to multiple buildings and structures²⁵ (Figure 4–31 through Figure 4–37).

Shrubs, Perennials, and Vegetable Beds

The family and neighborhood residents in the Spade and Fork Garden Club, including Myrlie Evers, utilized their gardens to express creativity, and the plant palettes within beds changed over time. Photographs of the front yard from the period of significance depict the location of plantings as well as the form and appearance of shrubs and perennials.

Information on species was initially limited. Evers family's receipts from 1963 (found in Box 3, Financial Receipts Folder, Evers Family Papers Collection, MDAH) show the purchase of roses, pots, and bulbs likely planted at the Evers family's home (See Appendix C). During oral

interviews with Myrlie Evers-Williams and Reena Evers-Everette, they recalled planting the following shrubs and perennials species: gardenias, azaleas, hydrangeas, roses, junipers, arborvitae, honeysuckle, camellias, daffodils, and tulips. They recalled planting vegetable beds along the north and east backyard perimeter fence. All of the original shrubs and planting beds were removed after the period of significance.

While the species of the shrubs, perennials, and vegetables are not known, Susan Hitchcock, Historical Landscape Architect with the NPS Interior Region 2: South Atlantic–Gulf, recommended the use of the [Henry G. Gilbert Nursery and Seed Trade Catalog Collection](#) from the National Agricultural Library to identify species available in local nursery and seed catalogs available at the time. The rose species purchased and planted by the Everses were likely Hybrid Tea roses, which were fairly common and available during the 1950s and 1960s. Mister Lincoln, Queen Elizabeth, and Peace roses are a few of the cultivars that were readily available to middle class Americans during the period of significance.

Turf Grass

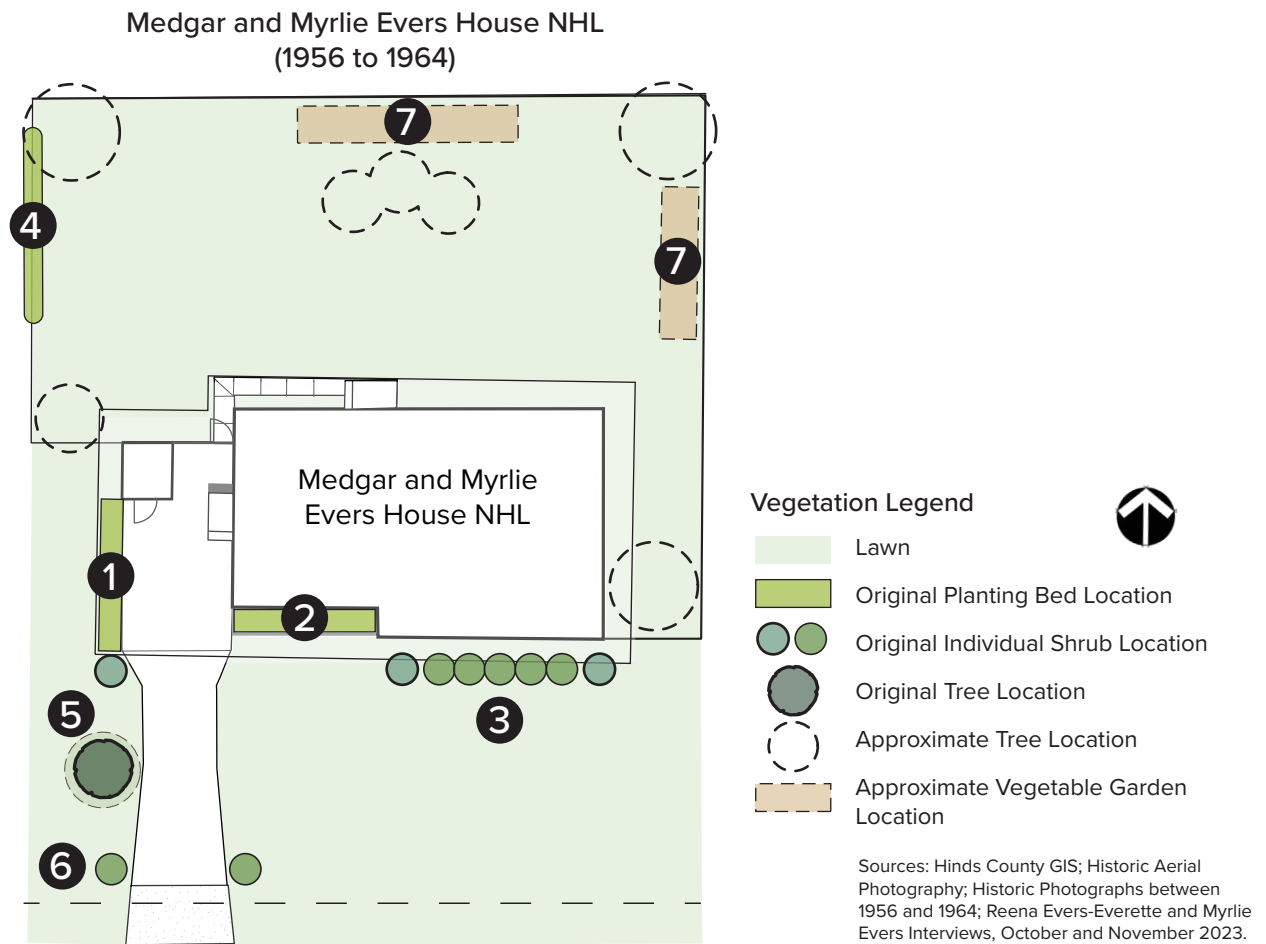
Similar to other homes in the subdivision, the Evers front lawn and backyard were planted with turf grass. The project team coordinated with the NPS to determine the species of turf grass. Nathaniel Simmons, Park Facilities Manager, corresponded with subject matter experts in the local Jackson, MS community. Felder Rushing, a writer and gardener from Mississippi, determined the species to be St. Augustine based on its thick, flat blade grass commonly used in the southeastern United States during the 1950s and 1960s. Michael Stachowicz, an NPS turf expert, reviewed historic photographs and confirmed the species. While St. Augustine remains the predominate species at the site, new turf grass species and weeds have been introduced since the period of significance.

Evaluation

The lawn remains the only contributing vegetation at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. While the composition of species within the turf grass has changed, the lawn reflects a similar appearance to the turf from the period of significance. Integrity would be heightened by restoring the turf to St. Augustine (see Chapter 5: Treatment Recommendations).

24 Reena Evers-Everette, interview by Chris Geddes, Jackson, MS, October 27, 2022; Mitchell, Jerry, "Simply Daddy": Reena Evers-Everette shares memories of Medgar," Clarion Ledger, Jackson, June 2015; Reena Evers-Everette and Myrlie Evers-Williams, interview by NPS, Digital, October 31, November 1, 2023.

25 Lord Aeck Sargent, *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Condition Assessment*, Atlanta: Lord Aeck Sargent, September 2021, 21-22.



Description of Planting Areas

1 Planting Bed at Carport

Changed from individual shrubs to a rectangular, narrow planting bed between 1959 and 1964. During the period of significance, the planting bed was delineated by a low, ornamental fence with perennial or annual flowers. An arborvitae shrub (or similar) was located south of this planting area throughout the period of significance. All plant material was removed after the period of significance.

Based on oral interviews conducted in 2023, shrub species growing in the bed before it was changed to a perennial bed may have included camellias, hydrangeas, or azaleas.

2 Roman brick Planter

Individual shrubs within planter. Plant material changed after the period of significance.

Based on oral interviews conducted in 2023, plant species during the period of significance may have included roses.

3 Foundation Plants at the Front of the Home

The family planted a row of broadleaf evergreen shrubs flanked by two evergreen shrubs (likely arborvitae). One shrub was removed during the period of significance, and the remaining ones were removed after period of significance.

Based on oral interviews conducted in 2023, broadleaf shrubs were gardenias and/or azaleas.

4 Honeysuckle on the Perimeter Fence

In interviews from 2023, Myrlie Evers-Williams and Reena Evers-Everette recall honeysuckle growing on the chain-link perimeter fence along the west property line of the backyard. The honeysuckle was removed after the period of significance.

5 Live Oak Planting Bed

Live oak planted by the family with surrounding circular flower bed. The planting bed was delineated by a low, ornamental fence with perennial or annual flowers and removed after the period of significance. The live oak was transplanted to the Missouri Street Lots in 1996.

Based on oral interviews conducted in 2023, plant species in the bed around the tree during the period of significance may have included tulips or daffodils.

6 Shrubs at Driveway Entrance

Juniper shrubs on each side of the driveway. Junipers replaced single small broadleaf shrub planted at the beginning of the period of significance. Removed after the period of significance.

7 Vegetable Gardens in the Backyard

Vegetable garden beds were kept by the family in the backyard along the north and east perimeter fencing. The beds were removed after the period of significance.

Based on oral interviews conducted in 2023, plant species during the period of significance may have included mustard greens, collards, cucumbers, corn, tomatoes, squash, and peppers.

Note: Available information on trees from the period of significance is limited. The 1995 HSR provided the first plan documented snapshot of trees locations prior to their subsequent removal. The 1995 HSR identified hackberry and tallow trees in the yard at that time. Reena Evers-Everette and Myrlie Evers-Williams identified live oak, fig, apple, plum, peach, pecan, and mimosa as trees present during the period of significance during oral interviews.

FIGURE 4-18. Location of vegetation at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL in 1964, at the end of the period of significance. Refer to Figures 4-19 through 4-30 for historic photographs of individual areas (source: DHM Design, 2024; Reena Evers-Everette and Myrlie Evers-Williams Interviews, 2023).

1. Planting Bed at Carport



FIGURE 4-19. Medium flowering shrubs along the carport were removed by 1963. Evers and neighborhood children standing on the front lawn in 1959 (source: Photograph in Box 4, Folder 3, Evers Family Papers Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).



FIGURE 4-20. Evergreen shrub (likely arborvitae) and medium flowering shrubs at carport, 1959. Reena and Darrell Evers in the driveway (source: Photo in Box 4, Folder 3, Evers Family Papers Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History; The Evers film, 3:25).



FIGURE 4-21. Fenced perennial bed replaced the medium flowering shrubs at the carport by 1963. Photo taken in 1963 (source: 1995 Historic Structures Report).

2. Roman Brick Planter



FIGURE 4-22. Broadleaf evergreen shrubs in Roman brick planter, circa 1960. James Baldwin (left) standing with Medgar Evers (right) (source: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, "A Sense of Place," Medgar Wiley and Myrlie Beasley Papers, call number: Z.2231.4.009).



FIGURE 4-23. Broadleaf evergreen shrubs in the Roman brick planter, circa 1962. James "Van" Dyke Evers standing in the driveway (source: Photograph in Box 4, Folder 3, Evers Family Papers Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).



FIGURE 4-24. Broadleaf evergreen shrubs in the Roman brick planter, circa 1963. Myrlie Evers and her children outside their home (source: NPS).

3. Foundation Plants at Front of the House

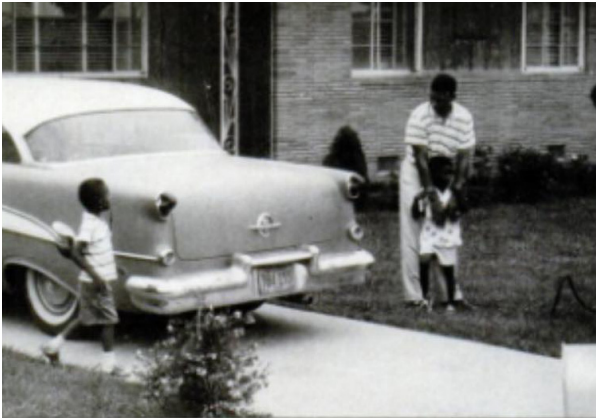


FIGURE 4-25. Low flowering shrubs at the driveway, upright evergreen shrubs and broadleaf evergreen shrubs at the building facade, circa 1958. Medgar and Darrell Evers stand in the yard, the boy walking is likely a neighborhood friend (source: NPS).



FIGURE 4-26. Low flowering shrubs at the driveway, upright evergreen shrubs and broadleaf evergreen shrubs at the building facade, 1957 to 1958. Darrell and Reena Evers in the front yard building a snowman (source: Photo in Box 4, Folder 3, Evers Family Papers Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).



FIGURE 4-27. Broadleaf evergreen shrubs at the building facade, 1960. Reena, Darrell Evers, and a friend playing in the snow (source: Photo in Box 4, Folder 3, Evers Family Papers Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

5. Live Oak Planting Bed and 6. Shrubs at Driveway Entrance



FIGURE 4-28. Myrlie and Darrell Evers with the recently planted live oak west of the driveway, 1959 (source: Photograph in Box 4, Folder 1, Evers Family Papers Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).



FIGURE 4-29. Juniper shrubs replaced the low flowering shrubs at the driveway by 1963. The fenced perennial bed was added to the Live Oak, the upright evergreen shrub (likely arborvitae) remains, 1963 (source: Mississippi Department of Archives and History).



FIGURE 4-30. Juniper shrubs at the driveway, the upright evergreen shrub (likely arborvitae) at the carport, and the fenced perennial bed around the live oak, 1963. Police at the Evers home (source: Library of Congress. *New York World-Telegram and the Sun Newspaper Photograph Collection*, NYWTS, BIOG-Evers, Medgar W.-Murder Case-Dead. Digital: cph 3c35504, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3c35504>).

Additional References - Vegetation Photos from Background Reports, 1995 through 2021.



FIGURE 4-31. Mature vegetation, including the live oak before it was transplanted (left), 1996 (source: WFT Architects, 1995 HSR).



FIGURE 4-32. Mature vegetation during assessment of the home in 2000 (source: National Register of Historic Places, Medgar Evers House National Register Nomination, 2000).



FIGURE 4-33. Mature vegetation during assessment of the home in 2000 (source: National Register of Historic Places, Medgar Evers House National Register Nomination, 2000).

Additional References - Vegetation Photos from Background Reports, 1995 through 2021.



FIGURE 4–34. Vegetation at the home, 2006 (source: The Office of Michael Emrick, Architectural Conservation Assessment, 2006).



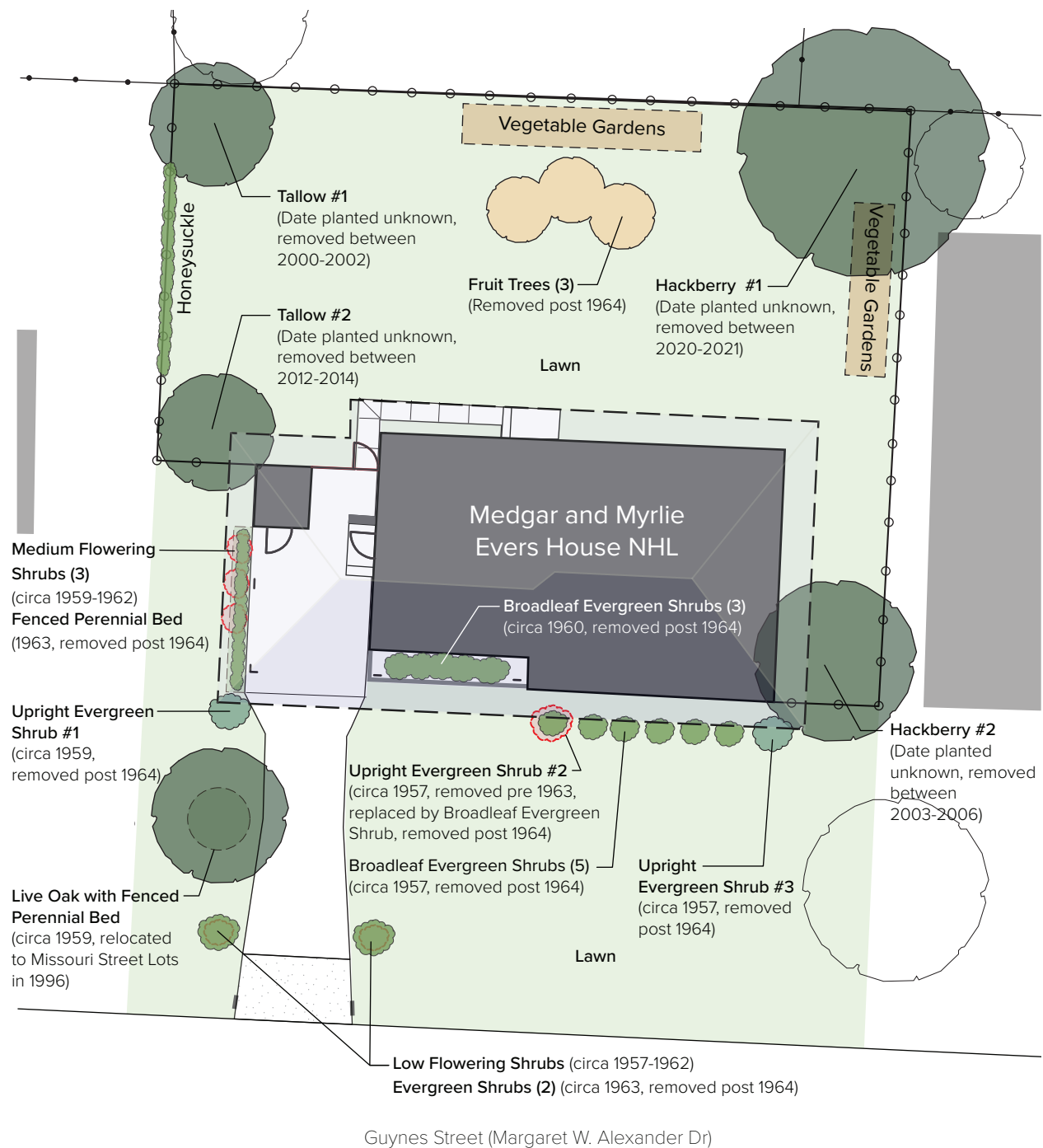
FIGURE 4–35. Vegetation at the home, 2008 (source: National Register of Historic Places, Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL National Register Nomination, 2016)



FIGURE 4–36. Vegetation at the home, 2013 (source: National Register of Historic Places, Medgar Evers Historic District National Register Nomination, 2013).



FIGURE 4–37. Hackberry tree in the backyard, 2020 (source: Lord Aeck Sargent, Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Condition Assessment, 2021).



Vegetation Analysis Legend

- Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL
- Roofline
- Lawn
- Deciduous Tree
- Fruit Tree

- Upright Evergreen Shrub
- Broadleaf Evergreen Shrubs
- Fenced Perennial Bed
- Vegetable Garden
- Replaced Vegetation

0 8' 16'



Sources: Hinds County GIS; 2023 Google Earth; 2013 NRHP District Nomination; Historic Photographics and Aerials; 1995 Historic Structures Report; 2022/2023 Oral interviews with the Reena Evers-Everette and Myrlie Evers-Williams.

FIGURE 4–38. This map depicts all known vegetation present during the historic period and up through 1995. As of 2024, only the turf lawn remains from the period of significance. Vegetation Analysis was compiled through historical aerials, photographs, oral history interviews and report documentation at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. In general, location of plant materials was consistent throughout the site's history, however species were changed over the years (source: DHM Design, 2024).

TABLE 4-10: Vegetation Analysis Matrix at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL Landscape Plantings				
Common Name	Location	Existed During the Period of Significance	Notes	Source
Tallow #1	NW corner of property	Unknown; based on size in photo could have existed historically	Removed between 2000–2002	Survey as part of 1995 HSR by WFT Architects
Tallow #2	NW corner of house	Unknown; based on size in photo likely established after the period of significance	Removed between 2012–2014	Survey as part of 1995 HSR by WFT Architects
Fruit Trees (3)	Center of back yard	Unknown; based on size in photo likely existed historically	Circa 1959, removed post 1964	2022/2023 Oral interviews with Reena Evers-Everette and Myrlie Evers-Williams
Hackberry #1	NE corner of property	Unknown; based on size in photo and growth rate likely established after the period of significance	Removed between 2020–2021	Survey as part of 1995 HSR by WFT Architects
Medium Flowering Shrubs (3)	Planting bed at carport	Existed historically/ non-extant	Circa 1959–1962	Figure 4–19 (1959, source: MDAH)
Fenced Perennial Bed	Planting bed at carport	Existed historically/ non-extant	1963, removed post 1964	Figure 4–21 (1963, source: 1995 HSR)
Upright Evergreen Shrub #1	SW corner of carport	Existed historically/ non-extant	Circa 1959, removed post 1964	Figures 4–19, 4–20 (1959, source: MDAH)
Broadleaf Evergreen Shrubs (3)	Roman brick planter	Existed historically/ non-extant	Circa 1960, removed post 1964	Figures 4–22, 4–23, 4–24 (circa 1960–1963, source: MDAH)
Upright Evergreen Shrub #2	Foundation plants at the front of the home - west	Existed historically/ non-extant	Circa 1957, replaced by Broadleaf Shrub, removed post 1964	Figures 4–25, 4–26, 4–27 (circa 1958–1960, source: MDAH)
Broadleaf Evergreen Shrubs (5)	Foundation plants at the front of the home	Existed historically/ non-extant	Circa 1957, removed post 1964	Figures 4–25, 4–26, 4–27 (circa 1958–1960, source: MDAH)
Upright Evergreen Shrub #3	Foundation plants at the front of the home - east	Existed historically/ non-extant	Circa 1957, removed post 1964	Figures 4–26, 4–27 (circa 1958–1960, source: MDAH)
Hackberry #2	SE corner of house	Unknown; based on size in photo and growth rate likely established after the period of significance	Removed between 2003–2006	Survey as part of 1995 HSR by WFT Architects
Live Oak	West of driveway	Existed historically/ non-extant	Circa 1959, transplanted to Missouri Street Lots in 1996	Survey as part of the 1995 HSR by WFT Architects, 1959 Photo
Live Oak Fenced Perennial Bed	West of driveway	Existed historically/ non-extant	Circa 1959, removed post 1964	Figures 4–29, 4–30 (1963, source: Library of Congress)
Evergreen Shrubs (2)	Either side of driveway entrance	Existed historically/ non-extant	Circa 1963, removed post 1964	Figures 4–25, 4–29, 4–30 (1958–1963, source: NPS/ Library of Congress)
Vegetable Gardens in Backyard	North and west sides of the backyard	Existed historically/ non-extant	Circa 1956, removed post 1964	2023 Oral interviews with Myrlie Evers-Williams and Reena Evers-Everette
Honeysuckle	West side fence of the backyard	Existed historically/ non-extant	Circa 1956, removed post 1964	2023 Oral interviews with Myrlie Evers-Williams and Reena Evers-Everette

The Roman brick planter remains intact as a historic planting location; however, it is planted with Knockout Roses (*Rosa 'Radrazz' Knock Out*) in rubber mulch. The rose cultivar and rubber mulch are not historic or compatible with the historic materials available during the period of significance.

Missouri Street Lots

Historic Condition and Changes

Vegetation at the Missouri Street Lots varied during the period of significance. The northernmost lot's vegetation consisted of residential vegetation and trees prior to the razing of the building in the 1970s. The southernmost lots were covered in overgrown vegetation and a few trees were dispersed throughout the lots as well.

In 2023, vegetation on the lots consisted primarily of mature trees along the property boundary, the transplanted live oak from the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL, raised planters, and planting beds. The mature tree canopy around the perimeter of the site is not original to the period of significance; it appears to have grown alongside the thicket area between Missouri Street and Medgar Evers Boulevard that developed beginning in the 1970s.

The live oak is actively monitored and cared for with routine pruning, soil aeration, and mulching within the dripline. The NPS planted rose beds at the NPS sign and raised-bed planters near the shade structure in 2023.

Evaluation

The transplanted live oak is originally from the Evers family's home but was transplanted to the Missouri Street Lots. The tree has lost its integrity of location; however, it persists as an original tree, and it retains its association with the Evers family and their home. Planting beds and raised-bed planters were installed after the period of significance and are non-contributing features.

The mature tree canopy at the Missouri Street Lots reflects the character of other mature vegetation found throughout the district. The vegetation does not date to the period of significance and is not associated with the development of the Elaine subdivision. The mature trees and lawn are compatible with the character of the district.

TABLE 4-11: Vegetation Contributing and Non-contributing Features

Vegetation Feature	Description	Installation Date	Condition	Evaluation
Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL				
Lawn	Includes the front and side turfgrass lawn, and backyard of the property; developed during the period of significance. Although historically the grass was St. Augustine and currently the grass is a mix of species, the overall appearance and form remain consistent.	Period of significance	Good	Contributing
Roses in the Roman Brick Planter	East of the carport/drive; Duet rose (Rosa 'Duet') and Oklahoma rose (Rosa 'Oklahoma') 18-24 inches in height, set in rubber mulch; installed by the NPS; plant material and mulch are not original to the period of significance, but the planting location is original.	2023	Good	Non-contributing, Incompatible
Missouri Street Lots				
Transplanted Live Oak	Live oak (<i>Quercus virginiana</i>) transplanted from the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL property in 1996; the tree has lost its integrity of location but retains integrity of association and materials.	1996	Fair to Poor	Managed as a cultural resource
Mature Tree Canopy	Mature deciduous trees are located on the east, south, and west sides of the property. Species include American elm (<i>Ulmus americana</i>), white oak (<i>Quercus alba</i>), live oak (<i>Quercus virginiana</i>), black cherry (<i>Prunus serotina Ehrh</i>), pecan (<i>Carya illinoensis</i>), American sweetgum (<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>), and common hackberry (<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>); Not original to the site, but is consistent with the canopy.	Unknown	Good to Fair	Non-contributing
Lawn	Maintained turfgrass; occasional weeds and barren patches; a constructed grass swale runs along a section of Missouri Street north of the property; installed by the NPS; Plant material is not original to the site, but matches the character of the lawn throughout the District.	2023	Good to Fair	Non-contributing
Raised-Bed Planter Vegetation	Mix of vegetable plants, including tomatoes, bell pepper, and herbs such as rosemary and basil; installed by the NPS.	2023	Good	Non-contributing
Rose Bed	Knock out rose (<i>Rosa 'Radrazz' Knock Out</i>) 18"– 24" in height; installed by the NPS.	2023	Good	Non-contributing

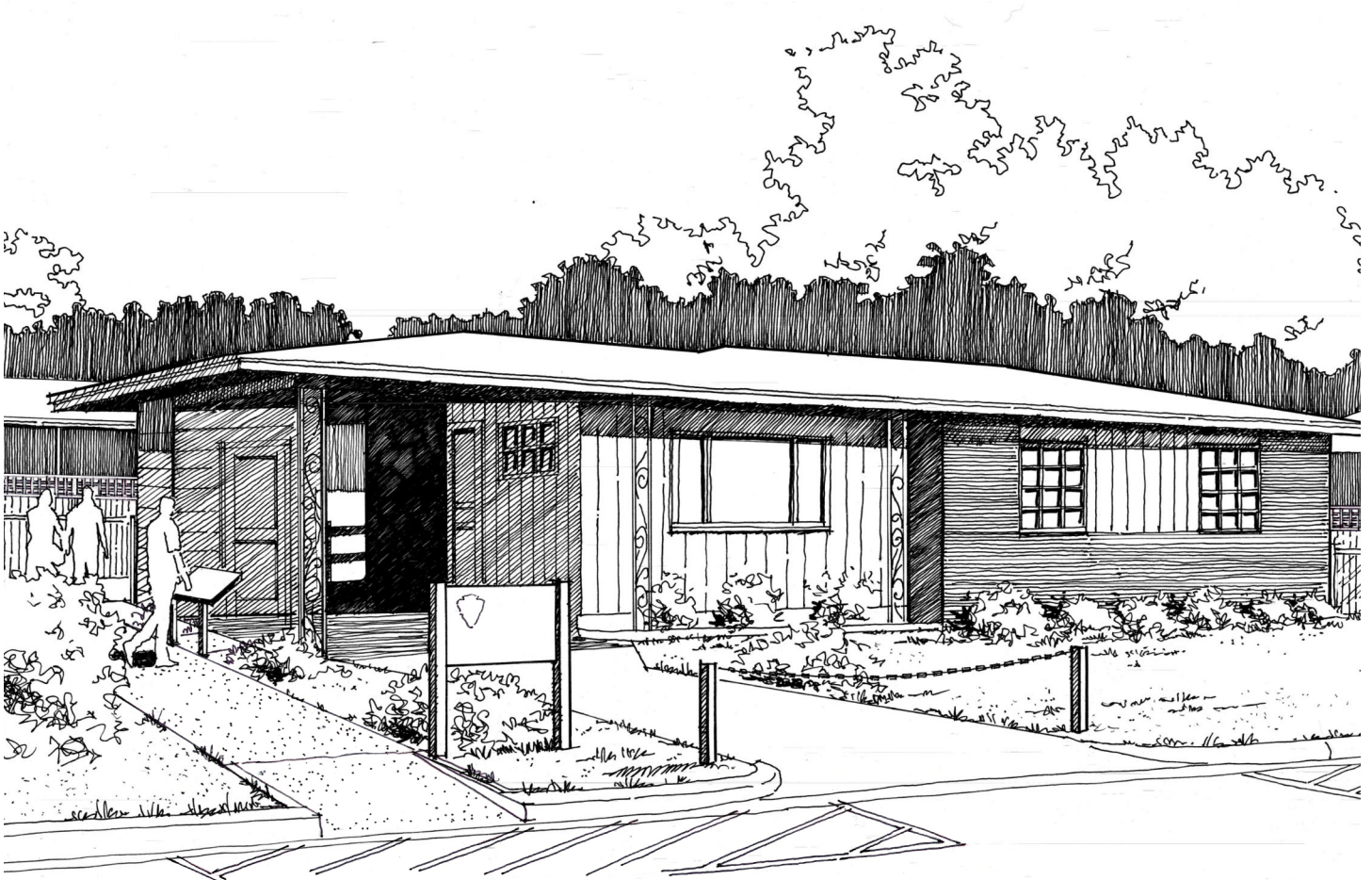


Image source: DHM Design, 2024

Part 2

Treatment Recommendations

Chapter 5: Treatment Recommendations

This chapter addresses management objectives and treatment guidance for the cultural landscape of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument, which comprises the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House National Historic Landmark (Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL) and the Missouri Street Lots. This chapter contains four sections as follows:

- Background Documentation and Management Objectives
- Resilience to Natural Hazards
- Treatment Guidance
- Implementation Strategies

The treatment guidance section is divided into three subsections: Overall Park, Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL, and Missouri Street Lots. The later two subsections contain drawings depicting the treatment recommendations for the NHL property and the Missouri Street Lots.

This chapter incorporates feedback and discussions during planning meetings between the park and National Park Service (NPS) region (Interior Region 2: South Atlantic–Gulf) for rehabilitating and maintaining the park’s cultural landscape. Consultation with park staff to address ongoing site issues and directives contributed to the treatment recommendations, all of which align with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Management objectives, in turn, provide a framework for treatment guidance and implementation strategies. In addition to providing guidance on existing park property, this chapter provides guidance on developing additional visitor services for the park that are compatible with the historic character of the Medgar Evers Historic District (the district). Although treatment guidance focuses on properties owned and managed by the NPS, this chapter also provides general guidance on collaborating with neighbors within the district to manage and preserve the district resources.

Background Documentation and Management Objectives

For the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument, this chapter proposes treatment guidance in alignment with established management documentation (including documents developed for the house museum operation under Tougaloo College), enabling legislation and applicable laws, and NPS policies and standards, including the following:

Law, Policy, and Guidance

- Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties
- National Historic Preservation Act (1966, as amended)
- Accessibility Standards issued under the Architectural Barriers Act (1968, as amended)

Pre-NPS Documentation

- *Medgar Evers Home Renovation, A Historic Structure Report* (1995)
- *Medgar Evers Museum Architectural Conservation Assessment* (2006)

Enabling Legislation

- John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (2019)

NPS Documentation

- *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Condition Assessment* (2021)
- *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Foundation Document* (2023)
- *Long-Range Interpretation Plan* (ongoing)

The following section contains landscape-specific treatment recommendations from each report or act.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* guides recommendations for treatment of the cultural landscape at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument. These standards outline four treatment approaches: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction.¹

- **Preservation** – this treatment approach applies measures to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of a cultural landscape. Preservation may include initial stabilization work as well as ongoing preservation maintenance and repair efforts of historic aspects and features. Preservation typically results in the lowest amount of physical intervention and attempts to maintain the existing state of a historic property.
- **Rehabilitation** – this treatment approach allows for compatible and contemporary uses of the cultural landscape while preserving features that contribute to its historic, cultural, and architectural values. Changes to the cultural landscape may include additions, alterations, and repairs that do not diminish the integrity of the cultural resource.
- **Restoration** – this treatment approach aims to accurately depict the forms, features, and character of a cultural landscape as it appeared at a particular period in time. This approach requires removing features from other periods of history and reconstructing missing features from the period of significance.
- **Reconstruction** – this treatment approach utilizes new construction as a means of recreating a site, landscape, building, structure, or object to represent a specific period of time.

¹ Anne E. Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, (NPS, Technical Preservation Services Washington D.C.; 2017), <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/secretary-standards-treatment-historic-properties.htm>.

National Historic Preservation Act

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to consider the effects their actions have on historic properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Section 106 of the act allows the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, State and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, interested parties, and the public a period to review and comment prior to any action on the site that might impact the historic integrity of the property.

As a National Historic Landmark, designated for outstanding historic significance and representation of American culture and values, the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House site is subject to the highest level of scrutiny. Additionally, the entirety of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument is located within the Medgar Evers Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its state-level significance. Decisions with the potential to impact the historic property are subject to Section 106 review.

In addition to Section 106, the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument must follow Section 110 guidance. Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act mandates that federal agencies assume responsibility for all historic properties that fall under their jurisdiction. Section 110 outlines the historic preservation responsibilities of federal agencies and helps ensure that historic preservation is fully integrated into the ongoing programs of all federal agencies:

National Historic Landmarks (NHL) are designated by the Secretary under the authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935, which authorizes the Secretary to identify historic and archaeological sites, buildings, and objects which “possess exceptional value as commemorating or illustrating the history of the United States.” Section 110(f) of the National Historic Preservation Act requires that Federal agencies exercise a higher standard of care when considering undertakings that may directly and adversely affect NHLs. The law requires that agencies, “to the maximum extent possible, undertake such planning and actions as may be necessary to minimize harm to such landmark.” In

those cases when an agency's undertaking directly and adversely affects an NHL, or when Federal permits, licenses, grants, and other programs and projects under its jurisdiction or carried out by a state or local government pursuant to a Federal delegation or approval so affect an NHL, the agency should consider all prudent and feasible alternatives to avoid an adverse effect on the NHL. (Sec. 110[a][2][B] and Sec. 110[f]).²

Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards

All recommendations for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument abide by Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards (ABAAS) issued by the United States Access Board. These standards apply to all designed, built, altered, or leased properties funded by the federal government. A detailed guide to standards for accessible routes, parking spaces, entrances, and more is available online.³

In addition to following ABAAS, recommendations for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument were guided by *NPS Preservation Brief 32: Making Historic Properties Accessible*. This preservation brief provides guidance on enhancing accessibility while preserving the historic character and integrity of the building and landscape.⁴

Medgar Evers Home Renovation, A Historic Structure Report (1995)

The original HSR, the first formal report that focused on the restoration and renovation of the historic home of Medgar and Myrlie Evers, recommended the following management objective:

The primary goal should be a careful renovation/restoration of both the house and the grounds to their 1963 appearance.

Since recent changes have been negligible, this goal can reasonably be achieved through repair and replication methods coupled with a planned maintenance program that will insure the continued stability of the property.⁵

The HSR guided the initial restoration of the Medgar Evers House Museum throughout its management by Tougaloo College, providing baseline treatment guidance for preservation of the home and landscape.

See Table 5–1 for comparison of the 1995 HSR recommendations with the existing conditions and CLR guidance.

Medgar Evers Museum Architectural Conservation Assessment (2006)

In 2006, the *Medgar Evers Museum Architectural Conservation Assessment* revisited preservation guidance and treatment recommendations at the Medgar Evers House Museum. The project provided an updated condition assessment and a prioritized list of treatment recommendations for the issues at the home after Tougaloo College had operated it as a house museum for a decade.

The report included a section on maintenance and best management practices for the home and landscape. The report recommended developing a cyclical maintenance plan in order for Tougaloo College to maintain stewardship of the historic property.⁶

The report prioritized preservation of the home and included some general guidance for the cultural landscape.

See Table 5–1 for comparison of the 2006 conservation assessment recommendations with the existing conditions and CLR guidance.

John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (2019)

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National

² For more information on Section 106 and Section 110 Guidelines with respect to National Historic Landmarks, see the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's website: <https://www.nps.gov/dscw/cr-nhpa.htm>.

³ The most up-to-date guide to the ABAAS Accessibility Standards is available on the Access Board's website: <https://www.access-board.gov/>.

⁴ Thomas C. Jester, and Sharon C. Park, *Preservation Brief 32, Making Historic Properties Accessible*, NPS, Washington D.C., September 1993.

⁵ WFT Architects, *Medgar Evers Home Renovation, A Historic Structure Report*, Jackson: WFT Architects, P.A., 1995, 51.

⁶ The Office of Michael Emrick, *Architectural Conservation Assessment, Medgar Evers Museum*, Jackson, Mississippi. Nashville: The Office of Michael Emrick, 2006, 10-11.

Monument became an NPS unit through Section 2301 of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019. This enabling legislation declared the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument a unit of the NPS in order 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.⁷

The monument was officially established after the property was transferred from Tougaloo College to the NPS in 2020. Agreements were made to continue to provide interpretive and educational services relating to the monument.

The Secretary of the Interior was given authorization to enter into agreements with property owners within the Medgar Evers Historic District to identify, mark, interpret, and provide technical assistance with respect to the preservation and interpretation of the property. No such agreements have been made to date.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Condition Assessment (2021)

The *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Condition Assessment* was developed to document the condition of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL following acquisition from Tougaloo College and the establishment of the monument as an NPS unit. The report provided baseline treatment guidance and was consulted during some of the initial rehabilitation work to make the property operable prior to the park's opening in June 2023.

The report's recommendation of several treatment activities was based on observations and assumptions rather than thorough research into the landscape characteristics that give the site its integrity. Moving forward, preservation guidance for the national monument shall be directed by this CLR and concurrent HSR rather than the observations made in the *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Condition Assessment*.

7 "Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument," (Washington D.C.: United States Government Publishing Office, December 4, 2020), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-12-04/html/2020-26693.htm>.

See Table 5–1 for comparison of the 2021 condition assessment recommendations with the existing conditions and CLR guidance.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Foundation Document (2023)

The Foundation Document describes the significance of the park.

Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument in Jackson, Mississippi, preserves the home of Medgar and Myrlie Evers, and interprets their contributions to the modern American civil rights movement and their legacies in the ongoing struggle for freedom and justice.⁸

Fundamental Resources and Values (FRVs) described in the Foundation Document warrant primary consideration during planning and management of the property because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

The FRVs listed in the Foundation Document are as follows:

- Medgar and Myrlie Evers House
- Evers Home Historic Landscape and Views
- Sacred Space: the Carport
- Connection with the Elraine Neighborhood

This chapter builds on the Foundation Document by providing treatment guidance for the park's fundamental resources.

For a more detailed descriptions of each FRV, refer to the Foundation Document.⁹

See Table 5–1 for alignment of the Foundation Document and recommendations with CLR guidance.

8 NPS, *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Foundation Document*, Jackson: NPS, 2023, 4.

9 NPS, *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Foundation Document*, 6-7.

TABLE 5-1: Previous Recommendations Matrix. Recommendations made by planning documents to preserve the cultural landscape at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument. The Status column denotes whether treatment has occurred or whether the CLR concurs with previous recommendations (source: DHM Design, 2024).

Previous Recommendation	Status
<i>Medgar Evers Home Renovation, A Historic Structure Report (1995)¹⁰</i>	
Obtain more information on historic plant species, such as their locations and appearance. Acquire and review more photo references and interview Myrlie Evers-Williams for information on historic planting plan at the home.	Additional research about plants present during the period of significance was completed for this CLR, including interviews with Myrlie Evers-Williams and Reena Evers-Everette.
Utilize Missouri Street Lots for off-street parking and to curb anticipated influx of traffic from cars and buses on Margaret W. Alexander Drive.	Small parking area at Missouri Street Lots was installed in 2023. Parking alternatives were explored in this CLR.
Install unobtrusive security fencing, lighting, and hard surfacing on Missouri Street Lots. Consider adding information or visitor center in future.	Interim fencing, lighting, and hard surfacing was installed in 2023. Visitor services were preliminarily explored in this CLR.
Install system of French drains, catch basin, and drain line to divert water away from the home and prevent water from accumulating in crawlspace.	Improvements to property drainage system were made in 1995, 2013, and 2023. Additional recommendations are provided in this CLR.
Install ramp to exterior of the home to achieve universal access. Carport is preferred location for ramp because of narrowness of kitchen door and space. Consult with State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) on any changes at the home to accommodate accessibility needs.	Interim ramp was installed at rear of the home in 2023 with concurrence from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH/state SHPO); MDAH concurrence was requested on modification to kitchen space and door for ABAAS access.
<i>Medgar Evers Museum Architectural Conservation Assessment (2006)¹¹</i>	
Install ramp at rear of the home to aid in accessibility.	Interim ramp installed in 2023. HSR provides additional recommendations for construction of a permanent compatible ramp.
Correct slope of rear sidewalk so water drains away from foundation and crawlspace.	No longer recommended; drainage was repaired and site observations confirmed rear sidewalk drains away from the foundation.
Repair cracks and patching on concrete driveway.	Completed in 2023.
Install low evergreens on east side of the home to hide HVAC unit from street view.	No longer recommended because the HVAC unit is not visually obtrusive in the landscape and hedges were unlikely present here during the period of significance.
Repoint brick masonry and rear concrete stoop at rear of the home.	Not completed; rear stoop covered with wood ramp in 2023. Refer to the concurrent HSR for additional recommendations.

¹⁰ WFT Architects, *Medgar Evers Home Renovation, A Historic Structure Report*, 51-53.

¹¹ The Office of Michael Emrick, *Architectural Conservation Assessment*, 10-11.

TABLE 5-1: Previous Recommendations Matrix (*continued*). Recommendations made by planning documents to preserve the cultural landscape at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument. The Status column denotes whether treatment has occurred or whether the CLR concurs with previous recommendations (source: DHM Design, 2024).

Previous Recommendation	Status
<i>Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Condition Assessment (2021)</i> ¹²	
Install ramp at rear of the home to aid in accessibility.	Interim ramp installed in 2023. HSR provides additional recommendations for construction of a permanent compatible ramp.
Protect lawn, Roman brick planter, and sidewalk at rear of the home.	CLR concurrence with additional recommendations to restore historic turf species and garden plantings.
Remove hackberry tree from backyard.	Completed 2022–2023.
Maintain existing and compatible plant material.	CLR concurrence.
Replace in-kind backyard perimeter chain-link fence. Install security fence within property line.	An interim wood privacy fence was installed in 2023; CLR recommends maintaining historic chain-link fencing and replacing the interim wood privacy fence with a more compatible alternative.
Clean concrete and brick masonry with appropriate biological cleaner and repoint brick masonry at rear stoop.	Not completed; rear stoop covered with wood ramp in 2023. Refer to the concurrent HSR for additional recommendations.
Repair cracks and patching on concrete driveway.	Completed in 2023.
Develop preservation and interpretation strategy at carport as site of Medgar Evers’s assassination.	CLR concurrence.
Prevent water from entering the home by addressing site drainage with French drain and improving existing swale. Encourage positive drainage away from foundation. Install hedges and plant material at edge of property to absorb water.	French drain system was expanded in 2023, but swale was left undisturbed. CLR concurs there should be positive drainage away from property but does not agree with installation of incompatible plant material. Condition Assessment claims historic hedges existed along property line and that hedges should be installed, but CLR found no evidence in support and does not recommend hedges be installed.
Fill and compact sink holes on property.	CLR concurrence.
Remove and reinstall heaving footings at clothesline poles.	CLR concurrence.

¹² Lord Aeck Sargent, *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Condition Assessment*, Atlanta: Lord Aeck Sargent, September 2021, 28-31.

TABLE 5-1: Previous Recommendations Matrix (*continued*). Recommendations made by planning documents to preserve the cultural landscape at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument. The Status column denotes whether treatment has occurred or whether the CLR concurs with previous recommendations (source: DHM Design, 2024).

Previous Recommendation	Status
<i>Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Foundation Document (2023)</i> ¹³	
Medgar and Myrlie Evers House	
Internal and external renovations are needed to improve ABAAS-compliant accessibility and visitor safety so the home can open to the public for NPS visitation.	Interim ramp and paver walkway were installed at the exterior of the home in 2023. Additional recommendations for accessibility at the house are provided in this CLR and concurrent HSR.
Evers Home Historic Landscape and Views	
Restore aspects of landscape's historic character, including roses and fruit trees.	CLR concurrence. This CLR provides details on restoring the historic plant material.
While longer-term visitor use planning occurs, explore short-term options to reduce potential impacts on neighbors from visitors to the home.	CLR concurrence.
NPS to consider opportunity to provide privacy screening within landscape.	Interim solution completed in 2023 with the addition of a wood privacy fence around three sides of backyard. This CLR provides recommendations on the replacement of the 2023 interim fence with a compatible fence.
Sacred Space: the Carport	
Define sacred space boundaries to inform park planning and administration.	CLR concurrence.
Consider adding signage to direct visitors and prevent vehicular use.	CLR concurrence.
Consider directing visitors to back entrance (directly into kitchen) to reduce casual visitor contact with concrete slab and sacred space area.	CLR concurrence.
Consider using Missouri Street Lots for activities to reduce visitor traffic at carport.	CLR concurrence.

13 NPS, *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Foundation Document*, 11-17.

Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP)

As of July 2024, a LRIP is currently in development for the park and is expected to be completed by fall 2024. The goal of the LRIP is to align the park's approach to interpretation with recommendations from the Foundation Document, this CLR, and concurrent HSR. Interpretation themes that align with the goals of this CLR are the following:

- Interpretation will share the story of the assassination from the point of view of the Evers family, the neighborhood, the Black community of Jackson, and the larger civil rights movement.
- The park does not wish to activate the backyard with a swing set or other small-scale features that may encourage visitor use, so the backyard will have very few small-scale features that represent the life of the Evers family. The park is considering a passive approach to interpretation through signage in the backyard or a mural along the fence. CLR recommendations align with this approach in the backyard, with the exception of the recommendation to install of trees, vines, and interpretive vegetable gardens.
- Signage is planned for the Missouri Street Lots to interpret the transplanted live oak and its significance. Additionally, the park is considering a mural along the fence that depicts life in the neighborhood based on information in this CLR, carried forward by the LRIP.

Resilience to Natural Hazards

This CLR utilized guidance developed by the *Cultural Resources Climate Change Strategy* (CRCC, the NPS Cultural Landscape program's climate change guide) and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* to align treatment with strategies for long-term resource protection. The NPS developed the CRCC to evaluate the risk of climate change on cultural resources and plan for cultural resource protection. With funding and oversight from the NPS, the Cultural Landscape Research Group at the University of Oregon utilized the framework of the CRCC to produce guidance for managing cultural landscapes.¹⁴ The 2017 update to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* included guidance on how to facilitate resilience to natural hazards specific to rehabilitation.

In accordance with the recommendations on resilience to natural hazards in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (2017, page 72), this chapter of the CLR completes the following:

- Identifies vulnerabilities within the historic property, including existing and potential threats;
- Assesses the potential impact of these vulnerabilities on character-defining features of the cultural landscape;
- Provides accurate documentation of the cultural landscape's character-defining features as a guide for future rehabilitation work.

In addition, the standards provide recommendations for ongoing stewardship of the landscape that align with this CLR as follows:

- Continuing to monitor and evaluate the resource's character-defining features to assess potential impacts on a regular basis;
- Providing the CLR as a digital and physical document for access in case of an immediate threat to the resource;

¹⁴ Robert Z. Melnick, Noah P. Kerr, Veronica Malinay, and Olivia Burry-Trice, *Climate Change and Cultural Landscapes: A Guide to Research, Planning, and Stewardship*, (Cultural Landscape Research Group, University of Oregon, Eugene, 2017), 5.

- Maintaining the cultural landscape in good condition;
- Undertaking work to prevent and minimize loss, damage, or destruction of the cultural landscape and its character-defining features.¹⁵

This chapter of the CLR outlines existing and potential threats related to climate change at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument and provides strategies for long-term stewardship of the cultural landscape. Refer to the HSR for detailed recommendations and long-term strategies specific to the historic home of Medgar and Myrlie Evers.

Natural Hazards and Existing Threats

Based on climate change studies conducted at Vicksburg National Military Park, located approximately 50 miles west of Jackson, the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument is likely to see increased climate shifts with variation in rainfall and temperature (Figure 5–1). Precipitation shifts are likely to include a greater frequency of more intense storms and periods with less rain. These phenomena could lead to natural hazards such as heat waves, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, and droughts. Additionally, temperatures normally localized in summer and winter seasons are likely to extend into the shoulder seasons.¹⁶

The CRCC determined that the natural hazards expressed above may have the following potential impacts on the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument cultural landscape.

Threats to constructed features (buildings, structures, circulation features, and small-scale features):

- Increased risk of tropical storms and tornados that could result in damage to constructed features from falling limbs and trees;
- Increased desiccation, warping, and cracking of constructed landscape features;



FIGURE 5–1. As intense storms become more common, future improvements to the cultural landscape should consider strategies in adaptation, mitigation, and resilience (source: DHM Design, 2023).

- Washout or damage to roads and landscape features throughout park;
- Loss or compromise of associated landscape features and structures.

Threats to vegetation:

- Decline or disappearance of some vegetation species while other species are favored;
- Potential biological selection pressure for incompatible vegetation (i.e., invasive species);
- Water stress, which may inhibit growth of some species;
- Decreased soil fertility from erosion, waterlogging, leaching;
- Exposure of vegetation to conditions potentially less suitable for optimal growth, thereby making them more susceptible to pests and diseases;
- Loss of culturally significant plants from temperature stress from heat island effect.

¹⁵ Anne E. Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, 153.

¹⁶ NPS, *Climate Change Resource Brief, Recent Climate Change Exposure of Vicksburg National Military Park*, Fort Collins: NPS, Climate Response Program, 2014, 2.

The cultural landscape at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument has been impacted by drainage issues and is currently threatened by adjacent invasive species. Climate change will likely exacerbate these issues if they are not addressed through treatment recommendations and management.

Adaptation

Adaptation in human systems is defined as “the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects, in order to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.”¹⁷ The NPS should plan ahead and prepare for potential adverse scenarios.

Adaptation goals for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument may include developing and testing new drainage solutions that respond to higher frequency storms, considering compatible vegetation more tolerant of future regional climatic conditions, and supporting research for the use of new materials, in both the building and landscape, that respond positively to the changing environment.

Mitigation

Mitigation is defined as the lessening of potential adverse impacts of natural hazards through actions that reduce hazard, exposure, and vulnerability.¹⁸ The NPS should monitor potential hazards and actively plan strategies for mitigating loss to character-defining features.

Mitigation goals specific to the park may include pruning trees as they grow to encourage a stable structure and routinely removing invasive species. The park should mitigate potential threats from flooding and drainage by actively maintaining the French drain system at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. If the NPS expands visitor services at the park by adding new infrastructure, solar panels on the new structures could mitigate nonrenewable energy use.

Resilience

Resilience is the ability of a system and its component parts to anticipate, absorb, accommodate, or recover from the effects of a hazardous event in a timely and efficient manner.¹⁹ A resilience/resistance strategy as outlined by the CRCC consists of one or more actions that change the nature and/or setting of a resource to make it better able to withstand and recover from environmental forces. This strategy aims for survival of the resource despite possible impacts to integrity; however, resilience strategies do not necessarily mean the resource will be impaired.²⁰ Resiliency within a cultural landscape should aim for design solutions that respond to hazards.

Specific resiliency changes to resources may include soil amendments, replacement of vegetation with compatible species adapted to predicted conditions, use of new materials that better withstand changes in moisture or wind, and development of locations that consider evolving floodplains.

The NPS has incorporated a form of green infrastructure into its most recent site improvements at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House National Historic Landmark by installing a permeable paver system with a French drain. This and other forms of stormwater management capture, slow, and encourage infiltration of stormwater. The NPS should consider green infrastructure in other non-contributing locations as a means to reduce the risk of flood hazards.

17 NPS, 526 DM 1 - *Applying Climate Change Science, Series: 31- Environmental Quality Programs (Parts 515-526)*(Office of Policy Analysis, Washington D.C., 2023), 1.

18 NPS, *Statement of Work, Task Order No. 140P5122F0039, The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument CLR & EA*, (NPS, Jackson, 2022), 12.

19 NPS, *Statement of Work*, 12.

20 Marcy Rockman, Marissa Morgan, Sonya Ziaja, George Hambrecht, Alison Meadow, *Cultural Resources Climate Change Strategy*, (NPS, Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science and Change Response Program, Washington D.C., 2016), 36.

Management Objectives

Management objectives assist in determining the desired condition and treatment of the cultural landscape and respond to contemporary needs while preserving the landscape as a valued cultural resource. The following management objectives were developed through the project's Statement of Work, evaluation of previous management documentation, 2022 and 2023 field investigations, and collaboration with the park and region:

1. Preserve the cultural resources within the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument. Allow for a rehabilitation approach that repairs and restores landscape features in order to enhance understanding and aid interpretation of the cultural landscape.
2. Provide physical and visual connections between the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and the Missouri Street Lots that are compatible with the historic character of the Medgar Evers Historic District.
3. Improve visitor access throughout the National Monument by addressing parking and ABAAS accessibility.
4. Enhance security and night illumination at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and the Missouri Street Lots.
5. Create a schematic design for the expansion of visitor services and development of the Missouri Street Lots.
6. Recommend boundary expansion to address gaps in visitor services and administrative spaces consistent with NPS management policies.
7. Identify strategies to coordinate with neighbors to preserve the cultural landscape within the Medgar Evers Historic District.

Treatment Guidance

Treatment guidance is divided into recommended treatment approach, overall park guidance, guidance for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL, and guidance for the Missouri Street Lots. Treatment guidance reflects the National Register status and integrity of each property.

Recommended Treatment Approach

Rehabilitation is the primary treatment approach for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument. Rehabilitation allows for the preservation of contributing features and the restoration of missing features and permits the removal of noncontributing features to reinforce the historic character of the cultural landscape. This approach allows for modifications to accommodate visitor access and the addition of new compatible features to support interpretation and safety. New elements should complement historic features without creating a false sense of history.

Rehabilitation treatment recommendations follow the guiding principles of standards for rehabilitation as outlined in *A Guide To Cultural Landscapes Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques*.²¹ The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument does not have a primary planning document such as a General Management Plan (GMP) or Site Development Plan (SDP) to assist in the determination of treatment. This CLR will serve as a guiding document for planning and treatment recommendations.

Overall Park Treatment Guidance

Overall park treatment guidance is used to direct preservation and future development of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument as a comprehensive park unit. Management issues and considerations are outlined alongside park-wide treatment recommendations that align with the park's primary management objectives.

Objective: Preserve the cultural resources at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument. Allow for a rehabilitation approach that repairs and restores landscape features in order to enhance understanding and aid interpretation of the cultural landscape.

²¹ Robert R. Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan A. Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process and Techniques*, Washington, D.C.: NPS, 1998, 88.

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and the Missouri Street Lots have been altered since the end of their respective periods of significance. Character-defining landscape features were removed and altered to meet changing needs and land use. Preservation of contributing features within the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument is of the highest priority as these features give context for the events of Medgar Evers's assassination and reflect the life of the Evers family.

Planning and design efforts should prioritize preserving and protecting the unaltered areas within the park. Features modified or removed should be restored where possible to enhance visual understanding of the historic context and aid interpretation efforts within the cultural landscape.

Recommendations to achieve this objective include the following:

- Preserve and protect contributing features within the cultural landscape. Refer to the concurrent HSR for treatment guidance on preserving character-defining features in the exterior and interior of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL.
- Remove from NPS property the non-contributing features that diminish the integrity of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and the district.
- Ensure all treatment actions are guided by applicable laws, NPS policies, and cultural landscape treatment standards.

Objective: Provide physical and visual connections between the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and the Missouri Street Lots that are compatible with the historic character of the Medgar Evers Historic District.

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument requires physical and visual connections to tie together its discontinuous properties as a cohesive park unit. These connections will aid in directing visitors and delineating the park from the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Currently, connections between the two park properties are visual and limited. The visitor must infer a connection from monument signage, interpretive signage, and similarity in wood privacy fencing. These features alone are not enough to convey the connection of the properties or aid wayfinding within the district (Figure 5–2). Planning efforts should prioritize developing visitor connections for improved safety, wayfinding, and access between the two park properties.

Recommendations to achieve this objective include the following:

- Ensure planning and design preserve the historic character of the Elraine subdivision by considering the impact modifications will have on the historic character of the district. Consult the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* for guidance on developing new features within the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument.
- Allow for the addition of sidewalks within the district to aid safe access for visitors walking between the Missouri Street Lots and the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL.
 - Coordinate with the City of Jackson and Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) to design sidewalks within the district (Figure 5–3).
 - Ensure sidewalk design respects the qualities of the historic postwar subdivision. Similar to other postwar subdivisions, the Elraine subdivision was designed without sidewalks in favor of automobile access among properties. The addition of sidewalks will impact the integrity of the cultural landscape but is necessary to promote safe, universal access between the park's properties.
 - With community support, consider providing sidewalks throughout the district to provide safe, equitable access to resources. Restore the lawn of each property owner impacted by the addition of sidewalks.
- Allow for small-scale features that support a visual identity between the discontinuous park properties.

- Consider using landscape materials at the Missouri Street Lots that are differentiated but associated with the materials at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. Ensure that all materials reflect the status as a National Monument.
- Limit the additions of small-scale features at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL to interpretive elements that express the essence of the site, such as signage. Consider nonstructural interpretive elements, like a digital tour, that limit physical installations in the landscape. Consult with the [NPS Harpers Ferry Center](#) for guidance on signage and wayfinding.
- Align any new shade structures or built infrastructure at the Missouri Street Lots to provide a strong visual connection to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL.

Objective: Improve visitor access throughout the National Monument by addressing parking and ABAAS accessibility.

Because of limited street parking along Margaret W. Alexander Drive, parking and pedestrian access have been problematic since the Medgar Evers House Museum opened to public tours in the mid-1990s; at that time, the Missouri Street Lots were proposed as a parking area for the house museum. In 2023, the NPS built a small parking area on the Missouri Street Lots to provide visitor parking for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument, but the NPS developed most of that property into a community- and visitor-use space to support park programming.

The parking area at the Missouri Street Lots, which comprises four standard parking stalls and one ABAAS stall, does not provide sufficient parking for large events, tour groups, or buses. Many visitors park or idle in the road in front of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. Street parking and vehicular idling negatively impact the park's residential neighbors and impedes traffic on Margaret W. Alexander Drive. (Parking is not permitted within the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL driveway or carport.)

The NPS implemented circulation improvements at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and

Missouri Street Lots in 2023 to accommodate universal access across the park. Universal access should be expanded when connections are developed between the two component properties of the park.

Achieve this objective by developing a long-term parking plan to limit traffic and congestion issues within the Medgar Evers Historic District:

- Utilize the small parking area at the Missouri Street Lots as an interim solution to managing privately-owned vehicle parking.
- Develop an off-site parking area in proximity to the park, preferably at a visitor center developed near the district, to facilitate visitor contact and wayfinding between the two park properties. Then limit the parking area at the Missouri Street Lots to one ABAAS stall and two staff parking stalls to reduce confusion about visitor parking and prioritize accessibility.
- Consider developing bus parking along the south side of W. Ridgeway Street as an interim solution for bus parking.
- Coordinate with the City of Jackson and MDOT to develop parking and access to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument.

Objective: Enhance security and night illumination at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and the Missouri Street Lots.

The component properties at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument lack features that aid in providing a safe and secure environment, including security lighting, gates, and functional security cameras. Parking within the driveway at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL is not permitted; however, there are no barriers to deter vehicular access.

The *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Foundation Document* identified trespassing, vandalism, theft, and other inappropriate actions as threats to the cultural landscape.²² Planning and design efforts should

²² NPS, *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Foundation Document*, 13.



FIGURE 5-2. The physical and visual connections between the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and the Missouri Street Lots should be reinforced through select improvements recommended in this CLR (source: DHM Design, 2023).

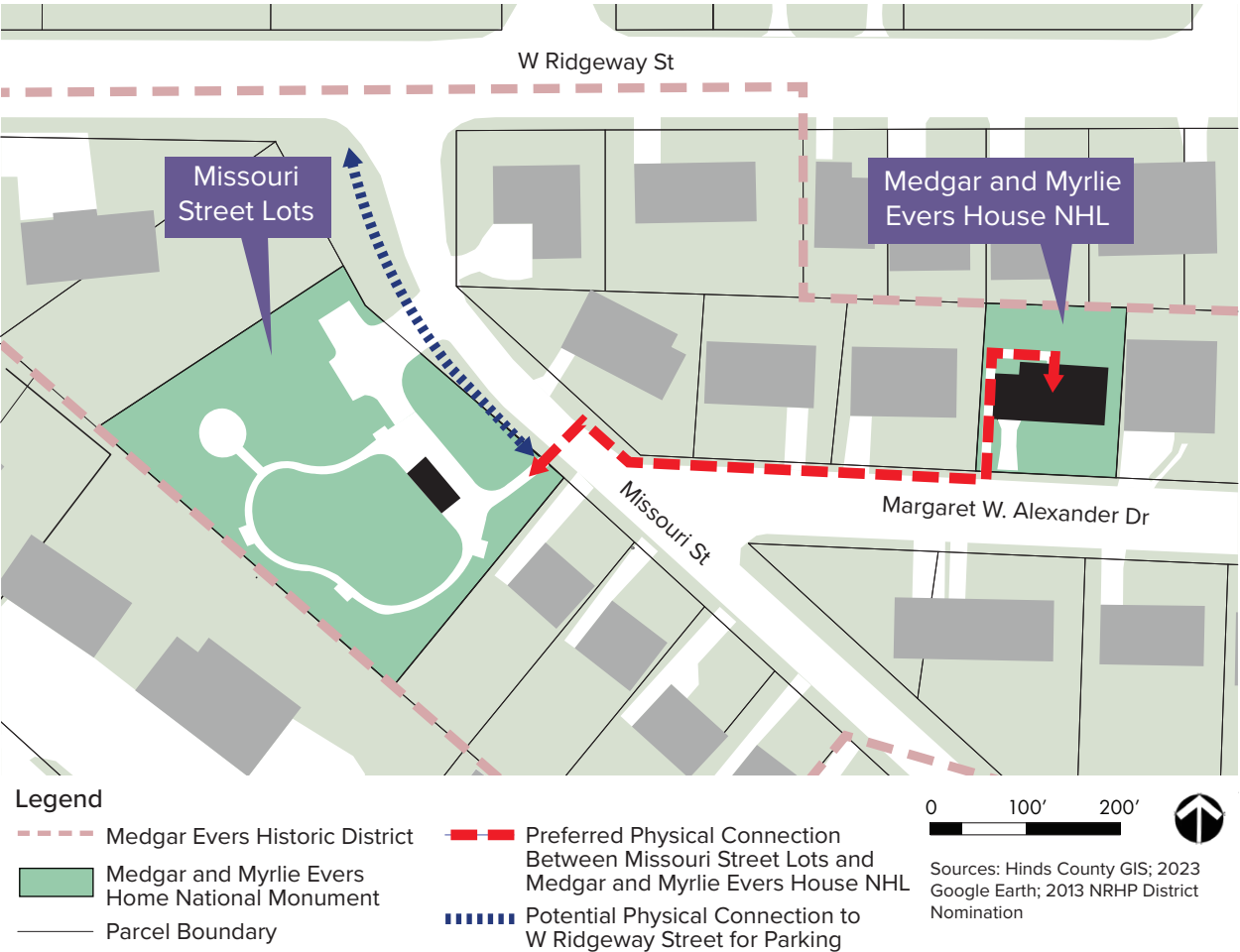


FIGURE 5-3. The preferred treatment approach for creating physical connections for visitors traveling between the Missouri Street Lots and the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL (source: DHM Design, 2024).

consider incorporating security features and lighting within the cultural landscape to reduce the risk of threats to public safety and NPS operations.

Recommendations to achieve this objective include the following:

- Incorporating comprehensive security and lighting measures at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and Missouri Street Lots.
- Locate lighting along paths of travel to ensure safe access to the building during evening hours and integrate lighting into non-contributing features where possible (e.g., on lighting posts and park signs and furnishings).
 - Respect the historic character of the cultural landscape when determining locations and style for lighting.
 - Abide by the NPS sustainable outdoor lighting principles, including the use of full cutoff and energy efficient fixtures, to limit light pollution within the district.
 - Refer to DarkSky International and Illuminating Engineering Society when considering the addition of site lighting.
- Coordinate with the City of Jackson to provide and maintain overhead street lighting along Missouri Street and Margaret W. Alexander Drive.
- Provide and/or maintain vehicle barriers at the entrance to each driveway.
- Provide surface mounting for existing and future property furnishings at the Missouri Street Lots to reduce the risk of theft.

Objective: Create a schematic design for the expansion of visitor services and development of the Missouri Street Lots.

In 2023, the cultural landscape at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument was altered to meet the interim needs of visitors and staff prior to the park's grand opening, which was coincident with the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the 1963 assassination of Medgar Evers. The Missouri Street Lots were vacant prior to the improvements, and nearly all features

now on site are non-contributing aside from the transplanted live oak, constructed grass swales, and views. As of 2023, the Missouri Street Lots operate as an outdoor education and garden space for community and visitor use.

As the park considers opportunities to expand services and programming (e.g., restrooms, administrative space, etc), further development of the Missouri Street Lots could be considered in a way that balances visitor needs with community uses. Any future development on the Missouri Street Lots should align with the spatial character of the district (e.g., building heights, orientations, and setbacks). Programming elements should be appropriately scaled to meet visitor and community needs without visually impacting the historic character of the district. Achieve this objective by modifying noncontributing features at the Missouri Street Lots to be more compatible with the spatial character and qualities of the district. Any larger scale modifications or development should be constructed outside of the historic district boundary.

Objective: Recommend boundary expansion to address gaps in visitor services and administrative spaces consistent with NPS management policies.

A boundary expansion would provide space to enhance public enjoyment and better meet administrative needs, such as through the development of a visitor contact station and parking area. These types of facilities would help the park fulfill its mission and reduce its operational burden on the adjacent community. This infrastructure should not be constructed within the historic district as it would likely have an adverse impact to the historic character of the district. In addition, neighbors have expressed the desire to reduce traffic impacts within the residential neighborhood where it is located.

Three public and stakeholder engagement meetings were held in Jackson on March 28 and 29, 2023, to discuss long-term planning for visitor use at the Monument, including the potential boundary expansion. Meetings were held at:

- Two Mississippi Museums, 222 North Street, March 28, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.;
- Evers Home National Monument, Missouri Street Lots, March 28, from 5 to 7 p.m.; and

- Medgar Evers Library, 4215 Medgar Evers Boulevard, March 29, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Comments from the public and stakeholders indicated strong support for management concepts that pushed visitor impacts outside of the immediate neighborhood.

Need for Visitor Services and Administrative Space

As of 2024, the only building within the park boundary is the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House, which functions as a house museum. The building is integral to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and cannot be altered to meet additional visitor uses or needs typically found at a visitor center or park headquarters (e.g., visitor contact, visitor amenities, staff offices). Staff offices are not located on site, which limits access to the resource and creates inefficiencies and limitations on visitation hours at the national monument. As of March 2024, visitor contact is limited to tours, which are offered to groups no larger than ten on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 10am to 12pm and 2pm to 4pm. Groups larger than ten must call to reserve time for a tour. Additional space is needed for visitor services and staff offices. The park has also faced challenges with finding consistent, affordable leased office space that is within a reasonable distance of the home.

Need for Parking

Currently, traffic and visitation to the monument are having negative impacts on the neighborhood and residents. Traffic is a concern for residents of the neighborhood, including issues with speeding and additional traffic volume due to visitors. Much of the visitation to the monument occurs by large tour buses, which can carry up to sixty passengers. Large tour buses could potentially damage the street because heavy vehicles cause greater wear and tear on residential streets than passenger cars. Up to three or four buses and numerous private vehicles per day park in front of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL, often blocking driveways or impeding traffic. Visitors walk into private driveways and yards and can be disruptive to neighbors and neighborhood activities. Visitors often treat the entire neighborhood as a park and do not distinguish between the NPS-owned and managed properties and the private residential properties.

In 2023, the cultural landscape at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument was altered to meet the interim needs of visitors and staff prior to the park's grand opening, which was coincident with the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the 1963 assassination of Medgar Evers. Minimal parking is now available with these improvements; however they are insufficient to meet long-term park needs.

Boundary Expansion

To address the lack of visitor and administrative infrastructure in a way that retains the residential character of the neighborhood, NPS should seek to expand the monument boundary. The location of the boundary expansion should be outside the historic district but proximate to the monument, ideally adjacent to Medgar Evers Boulevard, which is a main road that can accommodate higher traffic volumes. Facilities within the expanded boundary could include parking for visitors, tour buses and staff; visitor contact station; a bookstore; restrooms; NPS offices; a garage; maintenance storage; and outdoor gathering, interpretive and contemplative space.

Acquisition of any properties to accomplish this goal would be contingent on legislative expansion of the Monument boundary and the interest of a willing seller. Further planning would be required to evaluate options for development on future parklands.

Objective: Identify strategies to coordinate with neighbors to preserve the cultural landscape within the Medgar Evers Historic District.

The Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument is within the boundaries of the Elaine subdivision. The *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Foundation Document* emphasizes that the NPS-owned property is part of the larger residential neighborhood:

The success of the park's operational and interpretive missions therefore depends on healthy connections with the neighborhood and preservation of its historic character.²³

23 NPS, *Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Foundation Document*, 7.

As the NPS continues to expand its presence in the district, whether through land acquisition or increased interpretive activity, strategies should be identified to maintain the primary land use as residential within the district. Continued residential use will reinforce the district's integrity as the first postwar suburban neighborhood built by and for middle-class African Americans in Mississippi (Figure 5–4 and Figure 5–5).

Additionally, residents within the neighborhood have expressed interest in preserving the historic character of the district. While the CLR does not include guidelines or a treatment approach for the management of properties not owned by the NPS, it does offer select guidance for respecting the historic character of the district as it relates to NPS-owned property.

Recommendations to achieve this objective include the following:

- Using outreach such as a newsletter or public meeting to coordinate with neighbors on work within the district.
- Developing a vegetation and viewshed management plan to manage vegetation that obstructs contributing views within the district.
- Coordinating with adjacent neighbors to maintain trees and shrubs along NPS property lines.
- Coordinating removal of invasive species along NPS property lines and providing guidance to neighbors about threats of invasive species.



FIGURE 5–4. The wrought iron handrail and the brick stoop above are examples of features within the Medgar Evers Historic District which reflect its historic character. Future additions within the district should be compatible with existing features (source: NPS, 2024).



FIGURE 5–5. Decorative wrought iron and brick planters, depicted here at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL, are prominent character-defining features in the Medgar Evers Historic District (source: DHM Design, 2023).

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL Treatment Guidance

The preferred treatment approach at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL incorporates all the desired rehabilitation recommendations into a comprehensive vision for the cultural landscape. This preferred treatment enhances the visitor experience by allowing them to visualize the landscape from the period of significance, extending into the landscape the goals of the house museum as an interpretive and educational space. The proposed treatment supports functionality and universal access to the house museum for visitors and NPS staff (Drawing 5-1 and Drawing 5-2).

The preferred treatment for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL aligns with the management objectives by:

- Preserving the cultural, historical, and architectural significance of the National Historic Landmark through the preservation of contributing features;
- Restoring missing features that would aid in interpretation, including plantings from the period of significance and small-scale features;
- Limiting additions of interpretive small-scale features to placement along the path of travel;
- Allowing interpretive signage, privacy fencing, and wayfinding that matches the visual character of the National Historic Landmark;
- Providing a universally accessible route for access to the Missouri Street Lots that does not impinge on the driveway or carport;
- Providing a vehicular drop-off zone in front of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL for safe access;
- Providing lighting and security measures in select locations to aid in resource protection;
- Providing a low-profile post-and-chain barrier at the driveway entrance to prevent non-NPS vehicular access.



DRAWING 5-1: The preferred treatment for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL implements management objectives outlined by this CLR while maintaining a residential character that does not detract from the surrounding homes in the Elaine subdivision. Note: The recommended treatment sketch does not show accessible sidewalks; the sidewalks would be coordinated with the City of Jackson as they would be in the right-of-way, outside the property boundary (source: DHM Design, 2024).

Treatment: Landscape Characteristics

Treatment guidance at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL focuses on rehabilitating the cultural landscape to reinforce the character of the period of significance, preserving contributing features, repairing missing or diminished features, and supporting visitor and staff use through the addition of contemporary features.

Land Use

- Maintain use of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL as a house museum.
 - Preserve the residential character of the building and landscape to reflect the historic character of the period of significance.
 - Modify the interior and exterior of the building and landscape to accommodate universal access in a way compatible with the scale and materials of existing features. Ensure that the materiality of all new infrastructure developed for accessibility also aligns with National Monument and National Historic Landmark status. Coordinate with NPS Cultural Resources staff and Mississippi SHPO if modifications require alteration of character-defining features.
- Preserve the carport as a sacred space.
 - Limit gathering, access, and staging within the carport (Figure 5–6).
 - Install a compatible commemorative plaque adjacent to the carport denoting the carport as a sacred space and the location of Medgar Evers assassination. The plaque will provide an artistic element to allow for visitor reflection and remembrance (Figure 5–7).
 - Allow for limited employee use of the carport for access to the storage shed and for maintenance.
- Develop an NPS protocol for managing offerings left in the sacred space in memory of Medgar Evers.
 - Allow for nonpermanent offerings that do not cause harm to contributing features within the carport (concrete pad, stoop, and decorative wrought iron posts).
 - Reevaluate this location for offerings if they are causing damage—staining, efflorescence, scaling, blistering—to the carport.
- Allow for passive visitor use within the front lawn and backyard along the path of travel. Avoid locating interpretive signage and features away from the primary accessible path of travel to limit impacts to the lawn and other contributing features.



FIGURE 5–6. The carport is designated as a sacred space and serves as a focal point for reflection and commemoration (source: DHM Design, 2023).



FIGURE 5–7. Engraved bronze commemoration plaques similar to the above artistically honor the life of those that have passed. These plaques can include imagery, quotes, and denote appropriate uses for the sacred space (source: Maryland State Art Collection).

Spatial Organization

- Preserve the spatial organization of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL.
 - Maintain spatial qualities of the cultural landscape, such as the open front lawn, enclosed backyard, and defined property boundary.
 - Maintain constructed features that define the spatial organization of the home, including the orientation of the building and perpendicular alignment of the driveway.
- Replace interim non-contributing incompatible features (wood privacy fence, stone paver path, and wood ramp) with those compatible with the character, stature, and spatial organization of the site.
- Respect historic patterns and relationships to ensure spatial composition is preserved when adding or replacing features.
 - Coordinate drainage improvements in the right-of-way (curb cut, concrete apron, curbs and gutters) with the City of Jackson.
- Consider compatible forms of green infrastructure, like an underground cistern or an infiltration area with amended porous soils, to support drainage needs and site resiliency. Allow for underground water capturing methods to be used for irrigation of the cultural landscape and further promote environmental stewardship. Consider underground infrastructure locations which do not negatively impact contributing features.
- Ensure drainage features added to the cultural landscape are visually unobtrusive and do not negatively impact contributing features.
 - Avoid drainage modifications that negatively impact the visual character of the district and neighboring properties, such as diversions into or across adjacent properties, installing aboveground catchment features, etc.

Topography and Constructed Water Features

- Preserve lawn topography and maintain the constructed grass swales at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL. The grass swales at the National Historic Landmark are not original; however, grass swales are a compatible feature used within the district.
 - Avoid altering contributing features when addressing drainage needs.
- Improve non-contributing features that support positive drainage away from the building (e.g., grass swales, French drain, curb and gutter, concrete apron, curb cut).
 - Refer to the concurrent HSR for guidelines on treatment options for the trench drain and sump pump at the Evers family's home.
 - Replace the entirety of the existing French drain with a larger capacity system around the perimeter of the Evers family's home. Minimize directional changes in the French drain which could increase clogging. Provide multiple cleanout openings, including at all changes in direction, to allow for maintenance operations.

Views and Vistas

- Maintain the open, unobstructed view of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL from Margaret W. Alexander Drive.
- Coordinate with neighbors to establish viewsheds and to repair contributing views within the district, specifically the views of the building and landscape at the National Historic Landmark.
- Avoid interpretation at the view of the National Historic Landmark from the location where Byron de la Beckwith assassinated Medgar Evers. This location is not within NPS-owned property, and the park does not wish to focus on interpretation from the assassin's point of view.
 - Coordinate with interpretation staff to focus on views from the National Historic Landmark to views within the Elaine neighborhood. Open views and spatial relationships are integral to understanding the events of Medgar Evers's assassination and the safety precautions Medgar and Myrlie Evers took to protect their family while living within a new subdivision.

- Remove and replace the wood privacy fence with a fence compatible with the historic character of the site and representative of the stature of the park as a National Monument (Figure 5–8).

Circulation

- Maintain the alignment and footprint of contributing circulation features, including the rear concrete sidewalk, carport, driveway, and entrance stoops at the carport and rear of the building.
 - Repair and replace in-kind contributing concrete surfaces as they reach the end of their material life cycle, matching concrete surface finish and color. Slope surfaces to drain away from the building.
 - Repoint brick masonry at the carport and rear stoops. Refer to the concurrent HSR for additional recommendations.
 - Evaluate the structural integrity of circulation features every five years.
- Manage vehicular access to the driveway to preserve the driveway and carport.
 - Install a compatible, nonpermanent barrier at the entrance of the driveway to prevent non-NPS vehicular access. Consider a barrier such as a painted metal post-and-chain barrier or removable wood bollard typical of a park or historic setting. Avoid options with elaborate caps or ornamentation (Figure 5–9).
- Replace the interim circulation features (stone paver path and wood ramp, stairs, and handrail) with compatible features reflective of the historic character and stature of the park as a National Monument. Ramps and walks shall be compliant with United States Access Board requirements.
 - Replace the interim stone paver path with an ABAAS compliant, compatible exposed aggregate concrete finish with color that is compatible with the cultural landscape. Maintain approximate width of 5'-0". Adjust alignment to intersect with Margaret W. Alexander Drive and remove

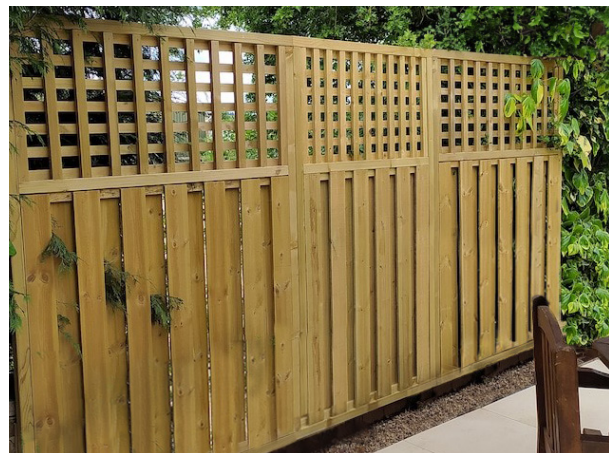


FIGURE 5–8. Examples of a compatible privacy fence which meets the needs of the NPS and adjacent neighbors. The privacy fence should reflect the residential character of the neighborhood while representing the stature as a National Monument (source: top: [classicfenceco.com/wood.fencing](https://www.classicfenceco.com/wood.fencing); bottom: <https://www.etsy.com/listing/1261486795/bespoke-tetbury-trellis-planter-panel>).



FIGURE 5–9. Example of a non-permanent, compatible post and chain barrier to prevent non-NPS vehicles from entering the driveway (source: [drivewaylocker.com](https://www.drivewaylocker.com)).

primary pedestrian access at driveway. Consider permeable paving as an option to maintain positive drainage and promote infiltration on the west side of the building (Figure 5–10).

- Replace the interim wood ramp, stairs, and handrail with those that are ABAAS compliant. The ramp and stairs should be simple in design and constructed with materials in keeping with the Evers family’s home’s architectural style but distinct from the original brick and concrete material. The ramp and stairs should be constructed so as to minimize impacts on historic fabric. The ramp could be brick and concrete, in keeping with the existing material palette, but distinguished in color or texture. The handrail should be of thin wrought iron, simple in design, and similar in proportion to the wrought iron columns at the carport (Figure 5–11). Refer to the concurrent HSR for additional recommendations.
- Provide visitor circulation improvements at the right-of-way and within the cultural landscape to support safe, universal access to the home.
 - Coordinate with the City of Jackson for circulation modifications in the right-of-way, including the addition of a raised sidewalk and striped drop-off area in front of the National Historic Landmark.
 - Limit visitor access to the driveway and carport to preserve features within the defined sacred space.

Buildings and Structures

- Maintain the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL as the focal point of the cultural landscape.
 - Refer to the concurrent HSR for guidelines on rehabilitating the exterior and interior of the home.
 - Avoid locating within the property boundary additional buildings and structures that would detract from the home and encourage movement outside of the desired path of travel.

- Limit the exterior utility footprint to the east side of the home and reduce visibility with low profile and below ground utility structures when possible.

Small-Scale Features

- Preserve contributing small-scale features, including the backyard perimeter chain-link fence, single swing gate, cocker spaniel finial, Native American finial, and clothesline poles.
- Monitor the backyard perimeter chain-link fence (currently obstructed by the wood privacy fence).



FIGURE 5–10. An exposed aggregate permeable paving is compatible with the historic character while maintaining positive drainage and promoting infiltration (source: Bay Area Pervious Concrete, <https://www.bayareaperviousconcrete.com/residential-gallery>).

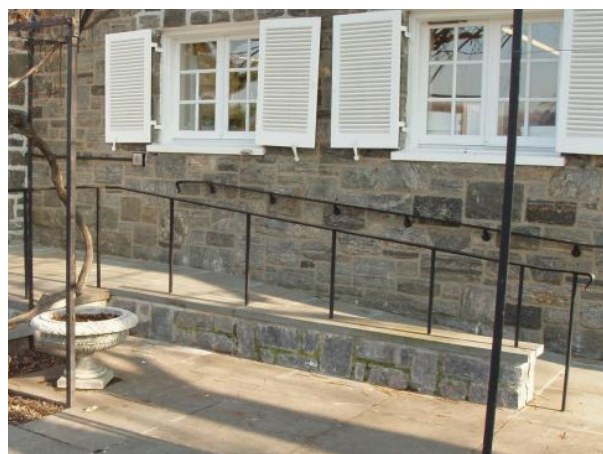


FIGURE 5–11. Example of a ABA-compliant ramp at a historic building constructed of compatible materials (source: Barrier-Free Access / NYC Preservation Commission).

- Coordinate with adjacent neighbors to maintain the backyard perimeter chain-link fence in place.
 - Consider removing the two finials and replacing each with a cast so the originals may be moved into the park's museum collections for preservation and to limit risk of vandalism or theft.
 - Recast and reset the clothesline pole footings flush with the ground.
 - For visitor safety, avoid reinstalling clothesline wires.
- Provide non-contributing, compatible small-scale features that support visitor use and site function. Allow for modification or removal of incompatible, non-contributing features. Routinely evaluate condition of and need for non-contributing features.
 - Maintain and repair in-place non-contributing, compatible fencing and gates as needed.
 - Coordinate with the City of Jackson on the repair and maintenance of utilities within the property line and right-of-way.
 - Avoid locating trash and recycling receptacles within the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL property boundary.
 - Replace the NPS sign in the front lawn with a lower-profile sign that complements the historic features of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL.
 - Consolidate historical markers and plaques currently on the exterior of the home and along Margaret W. Alexander Drive to one location along the path of travel (Figure 5-12).
 - Allow for the installation of small-scale features that support security, including cameras, NPS compliant lighting, and a low-profile post-and-chain barrier at the driveway. Select features that are discreet and that do not feature ornamentation (e.g., finials) incompatible with the historic character of the site.
- Repair the security camera poles in the front lawn and backyard.
 - Encourage passive use and interpretation at the site by including contemporary interpretive features and restoring missing features.
 - Design a maximum of two interpretive signs to be placed along the path of visitor travel; appropriate locations include the front lawn and backyard.
 - Consider incorporating a nonpermanent mural along the new, compatible backyard wood privacy fence that illustrates the Evers family's backyard activities and aligns with the Long-Range Interpretive Plan. Limit the mural's extent so it is not in view from the front lawn and Margaret W. Alexander Drive. The mural should be compatible in size, scale, and feel with the district.
 - Consider marking the approximate location of the original swing set in the backyard. Avoid installing a swing set, which would create undesired active use in the backyard.
 - Add low, decorative fencing along the planting bed west of the carport. Match style, height, and appearance of the fencing to those of the period of significance (Figure 5-13).



FIGURE 5-12. The interpretive signage at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL reflects the NPS style for educational panels (source: DHM Design, 2024).

Vegetation

- Replace the turfgrass at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL lawn with St. Augustine grass to match the lawn's historic appearance. (Figure 5–14).
 - Survey the existing lawn at the National Historic Landmark to determine if there are still patches of St. Augustine grass that can be used for plugs throughout the yard.
 - St. Augustine grass seed is not available and it must be planted using plugs or sod. To establish St. Augustine using existing grass on site, harvest plugs from dense areas of St. Augustine and plant in bare and patchy areas. For full-scale lawn renovation, obtain St. Augustine plugs or sod from a turf retailer. If a classic St. Augustine variety cannot be obtained, more contemporary St. Augustine varieties would be compatible.
 - Turf renovation methods will vary depending on if plugs or sod is planted. Aerate prior to planting grass and amend soil as needed. For the first seven to ten days, water in multiple short intervals throughout the day. For the next week, irrigate once a day, and for the third week, irrigate two to three times.
 - Establish a consistent mowing schedule to encourage optimal growing. Use only push mowers at the National Historic Landmark. Refer to the [University of Florida Extension St. Augustine Turf Maintenance Calendar](#) for guidance on maintaining St. Augustine grass after establishment.
- Coordinate with adjacent neighbors to maintain vegetation along the property lines, including removing encroaching invasive species such as tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), a threat to compatible vegetation.
- Maintain the planting bed within the reconstructed Roman brick planter.
 - Replace the rubber mulch with a undyed, weed-free, fine compost mulch.

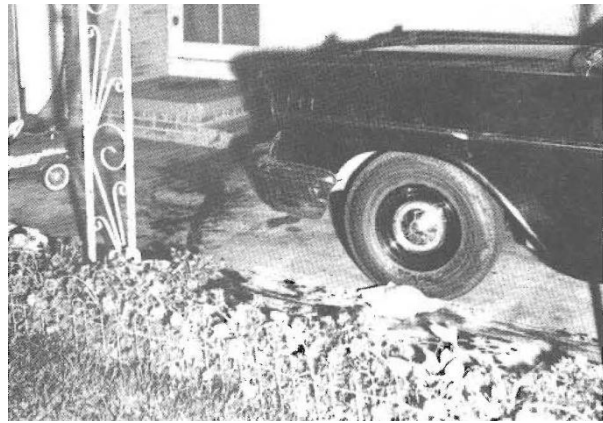
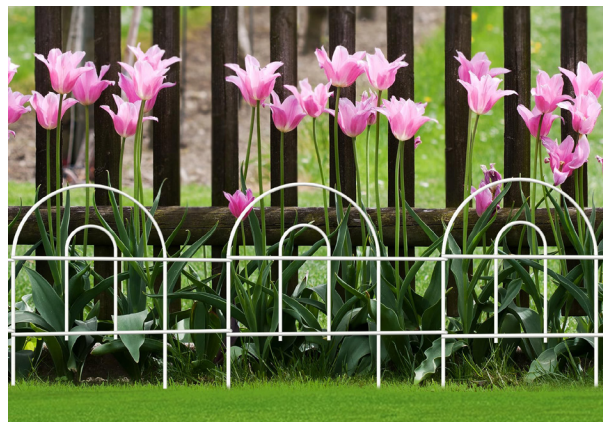


FIGURE 5–13. Low, decorative garden fence was installed at the planting bed west of the carport in 1963. New decorative fencing should reflect the style, height, and appearance of the fencing from the period of significance (source: top image Mississippi Department of Archives and History; bottom image Forehogar Garden).



FIGURE 5–14. The lawn at the Medgar and Myrlie Ever House NHL was St. Augustine turfgrass historically. St. Augustine plugs may still exist on site and should be harvested from dense areas to fill bare or patchy areas (source: DHM Design, 2023).

- Mulch shall be recessed behind the planter wall to match its historic condition below the top of the wall (Figure 5–15).
- Restore period-appropriate plant species in original locations, including the planting bed at the carport, the planting bed in the Roman brick planter, individual foundation plantings at the front of the home, honeysuckle along the west perimeter fence in the backyard, shrubs at the driveway entrance, and small vegetable beds in the backyard along the north and east fences. See treatment plan on the following page for approximate locations.
- Fruit Trees: Avoid replanting the non-extant mimosa (*Albizia julibrissin*) tree as it is considered highly invasive. Consider replacing it with a compatible noninvasive species with like form and appearance. Appropriate fruit trees include peach (*Prunus persica*), plum (*Prunus domestica*), pecan (*Carya illinoensis*), fig (*Ficus carica*), and apple (*Malus domestica*) within the center of the backyard to reflect species Myrlie Evers and Reena Evers-Everette recalled from the period of significance during 2022/2023 oral history interviews.
- Deciduous Trees: In the location of the original non-extant hackberry and tallow trees, consider planting compatible, noninvasive species with like form and appearance such as: Sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), Black Gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), Winged Elm (*Ulmus alata*), Chinese Elm (*Ulmus parvifolia*), Willow Oak (*Quercus phellos*). Avoid replanting non-extant tallow trees (*Triadica sebifera*) as it is considered highly invasive.
- Shrubs/Perennials: Plant shrub and perennial species which existed on site during the period of significance. Consider species stated in oral history interviews with Reena Evers-Everette and Myrlie Evers-Williams such as the following: gardenias, azaleas, hydrangeas, roses, junipers, arborvitae, honeysuckle, camellias, daffodils, and tulips. Replace roses in the Roman brick planter with a Hybrid Tea cultivar readily available during the 1950s and 1960s such as Mister



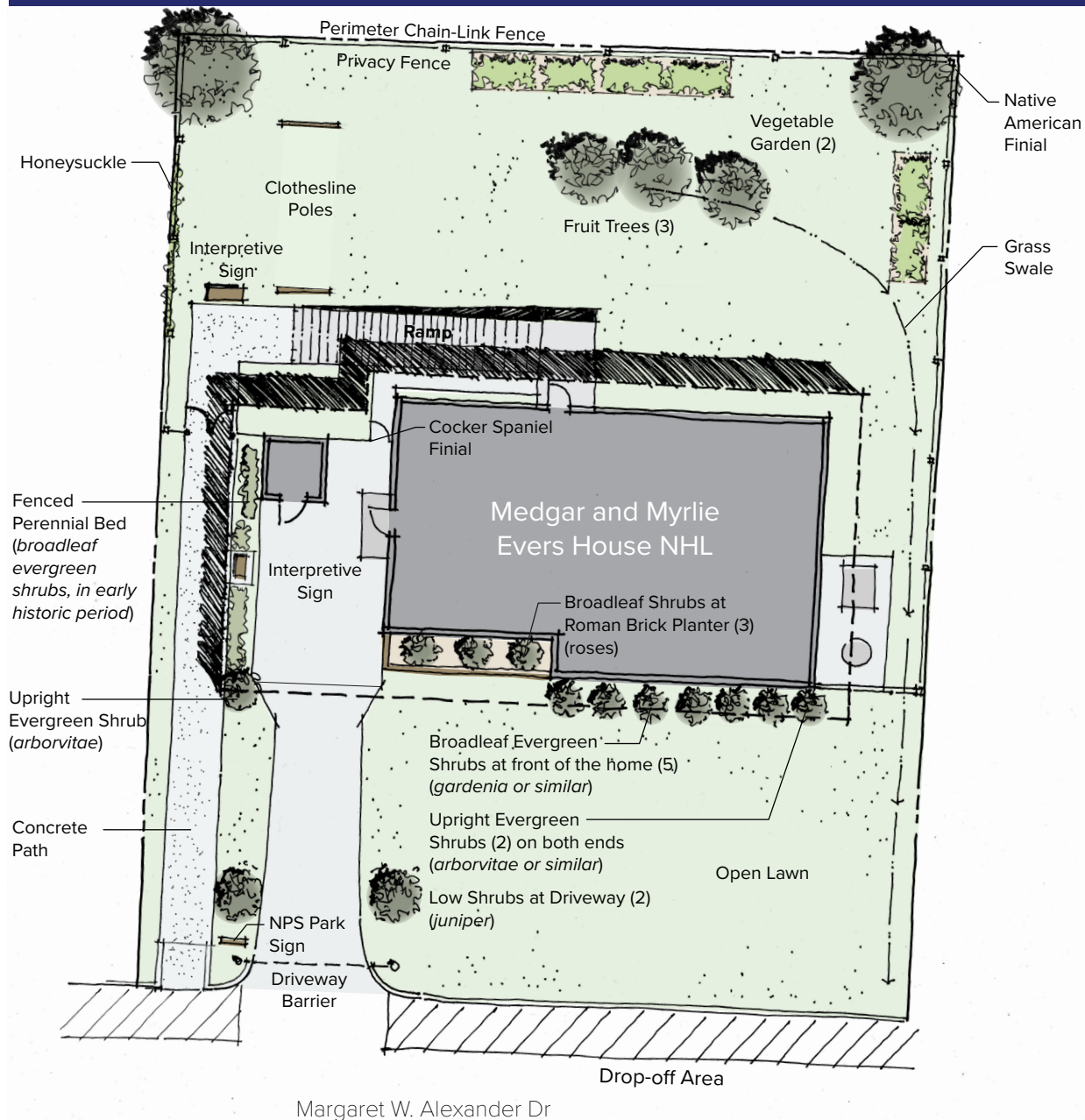
FIGURE 5–15. Plants within the Roman brick planter were recessed behind the planter during the period of significance. Myrlie Evers and her children outside their home (source: NPS).

Lincoln, Queen Elizabeth, and/or Peace roses.

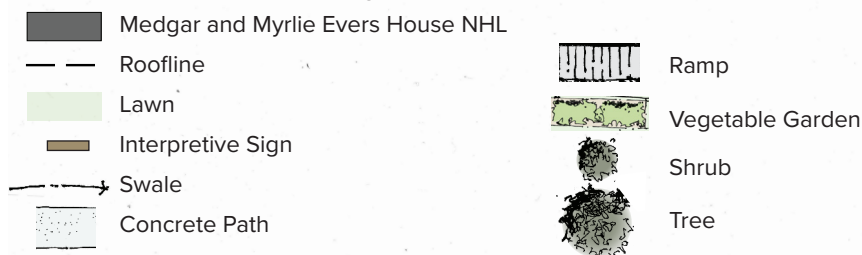
- If species cannot be determined, select species with similar height, spread, and appearance. Match cultivars when possible.
- Avoid installing mulch planting beds directly at the foundation of the building.
- Avoid planting large deciduous or evergreen trees within 10 feet of the home.
- Maintain the vegetation through routine care, including watering, pruning, and replacing plants as needed.
- Replace the nonfunctional irrigation system with a new system that promotes efficient water use and positive drainage away from the building. Establish a long-term irrigation plan at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL.

MEDGAR AND MYRLIE EVERS HOUSE NHL RECOMMENDED TREATMENT PLAN

Component Landscape within the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument



Recommended Treatment Legend



0 8' 16'



Sources: Hinds County GIS; 2023 Google Earth; 2013 NRHP District Nomination; 2022/2023 Field Investigations

Note: Refer to Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL Treatment Guidance Vegetation section for additional information on tree, shrub, and perennial species.

DRAWING 5-2: Preferred treatment of the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL preserves the landscape features that convey the cultural landscape's historic character while implementing features that accommodate universal access and provide interpretation. Note: The recommended treatment sketch does not show all accessible sidewalks; the sidewalks would be coordinated with the City of Jackson as they would be in the right-of-way, outside the property boundary (source: DHM Design, 2024).

Missouri Street Lots Treatment Guidance

Rehabilitation guidance for the Missouri Street Lots recommends a holistic design focused on reinforcing the spatial character and appearance of the district and preserving contributing features. The preferred treatment supports visitor, community, and staff use by adding contemporary features to support functionality and universal access.

Implementation of this treatment approach requires development of additional visitor services off-site, potentially a visitor center with parking, for example.

Preferred treatment proposes the following modifications to the Missouri Street Lots:

- Expand the plaza; design a new shade pavilion and restroom as one structure; relocate and expand Myrlie's Garden to provide ample gathering and visitor contact space for tours and interpretation programming.
 - A new combined shade structure/visitor pavilion/restroom would be designed and placed parallel to the road along the same setback as the character-defining buildings within the district. The selected location would give prominence to the structure and provide a direct view to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL from the Missouri Street Lots, which would assist in visitor wayfinding and orientation. The materiality of the structure would be fitting for the stature of a National Monument and could include artistic elements to represent the civil rights movement in Mississippi.
 - Myrlie's Garden would be relocated and expanded to become the backdrop of the plaza and provide a space for community needs apart from day-to-day visitor use and staff operations.
- Repurpose the picnic area into a contemplative space with seating for reflection and sculptural/monumental elements that celebrate the lives of Medgar and Myrlie Evers and/or the civil rights movement in Mississippi.
- Reduce the parking area to correspond with expanded off-site parking to discourage visitor traffic within the district. The parking area would continue to provide priority parking to NPS staff and to visitors with accessibility needs.

traffic within the district. The parking area would continue to provide priority parking to NPS staff and to visitors with accessibility needs.

The preferred treatment for the Missouri Street Lots aligns with the management objectives by:

- Preserving the cultural, historical, and architectural significance of the district through the preservation of contributing features, including grass swales, the transplanted live oak, and views;
- Reorganizing features to align with the character of the district and support visitor, staff, and community needs;
- Limiting small-scale feature additions along the path of travel;
- Allowing interpretive signage, privacy fencing, and wayfinding to match the visual character of the Missouri Street Lots;
- Retaining the Missouri Street Lots' ABAAS parking stall and extending universal access from that stall to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL via a new sidewalk;
- Providing lighting and security measures in select locations to aid in resource protection;
- Meeting visitor, staff, and district needs for expanded services at the Missouri Street Lots.

Treatment: Landscape Characteristics

Treatment guidance at the Missouri Street Lots focuses on preserving contributing features within the cultural landscape and preserving the historic character of the Medgar Evers Historic District.

Updates to the Missouri Street Lots were implemented in 2023 in anticipation of the public opening of the park, which was coincident with the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the 1963 assassination of Medgar Evers. The features of the Missouri Street Lots remain in good condition and are not in need of immediate repair. The property consists of mostly non-contributing features, which do not need alteration until visitor services are expanded.

Land Use

- Maintain land use of the Missouri Street Lots as a public space.
 - Allow for modifications to improve visitor and community amenities and experience.
 - Consider implementing a contemplative space for reflecting on Medgar Evers's assassination and the civil rights movement in Jackson (Figure 5–16).

- Avoid introducing land uses at the Missouri Street Lots that conflict with the residential character of the neighborhood. Consider alternative locations for commercial land uses associated with visitor services, including retail, offices, and parking.
- Promote public gathering and visitor contact at the Missouri Street Lots prior to tours to minimize gathering at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL carport and driveway.

Spatial Organization

- Respect the spatial organization and historic character of the district when designing and implementing new features at the Missouri Street Lots. For example, match alignment, lawn frontage, and setback from the road to those characteristics of the district when locating new features.

Topography and Constructed Water Features

- Maintain constructed grass swales in place along Missouri Street as contributing features within the district.



FIGURE 5–16: Example of a contemplative/reflective space possibly suitable for the existing picnic pad at the Missouri Street Lots (source: Riz Gache Design)

- Coordinate with the City of Jackson on cyclic maintenance of culverts and swales within the right-of-way.
- Evaluate how drainage improvements may impact adjacent properties. Avoid modifications that would negatively impact the historic character of the district.
- Modify the topography or install subsurface drainage infrastructure near the existing shade structure and plaza to avoid water ponding during heavy rain events.
- Consider incorporating compatible forms of green infrastructure that support drainage improvements and property resiliency.
- Allow for additional structures to be constructed on site to serve visitor, community, and staff needs.
- Replacing the existing shade structure with a combined restroom and shade structure building which serves the needs of visitors and NPS facilities operations (Figure 5–17).
 - The combined structure could allow for two unisex restroom facilities, a small storage closet, a drinking fountain, and a shaded gathering area similar in size to the existing structure.
 - Select materials and style for the combined structure which are compatible with the district and fitting for the stature of a National Monument. Natural materials, such as stone and board and batten siding, should be sourced locally as feasible.
 - Consider locating the combined structure parallel to Missouri Street along the same setback as other buildings in the district (Drawing 5–3). If an alternative location is required, consider one which provides close proximity to accessible parking and maintains a clear line of sight with the National Historic Landmark.

Views and Vistas

- Coordinate with neighbors to establish viewsheds and repair contributing views within the district, specifically the open views from Missouri Street and W. Ridgeway Street.

Circulation

- Modify non-contributing circulation features to meet access needs and connections.
- Consider the spatial organization of the district when designing new circulation features. Limit connections to the road: one access point for vehicles, and one access point for pedestrians. Aim for perpendicular connections where feasible.
- Add sidewalks within the right-of-way to support safe access for visitors.
 - Coordinate new sidewalks within the right-of-way with the City of Jackson and MDOT.
 - Respect the historic character of the district when implementing sidewalks. Maintain contributing grass swales where feasible.

Buildings and Structures

- Consider the size, scale, massing, height, and location of new structures with respect to the historic character of the district.

Small-Scale Features

- Allow for additional small-scale features to be implemented on site to serve visitor, community, and staff needs.
 - Consider the material, scale, form, appearance, and location of new small-scale features with respect to the character of the district.
 - Consider replacing the corrugated metal raised-bed planters with a compatible low-profile material (e.g., wood edging).

Vegetation

- Preserve the transplanted live oak, originally from the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL, which is managed as a cultural resource.

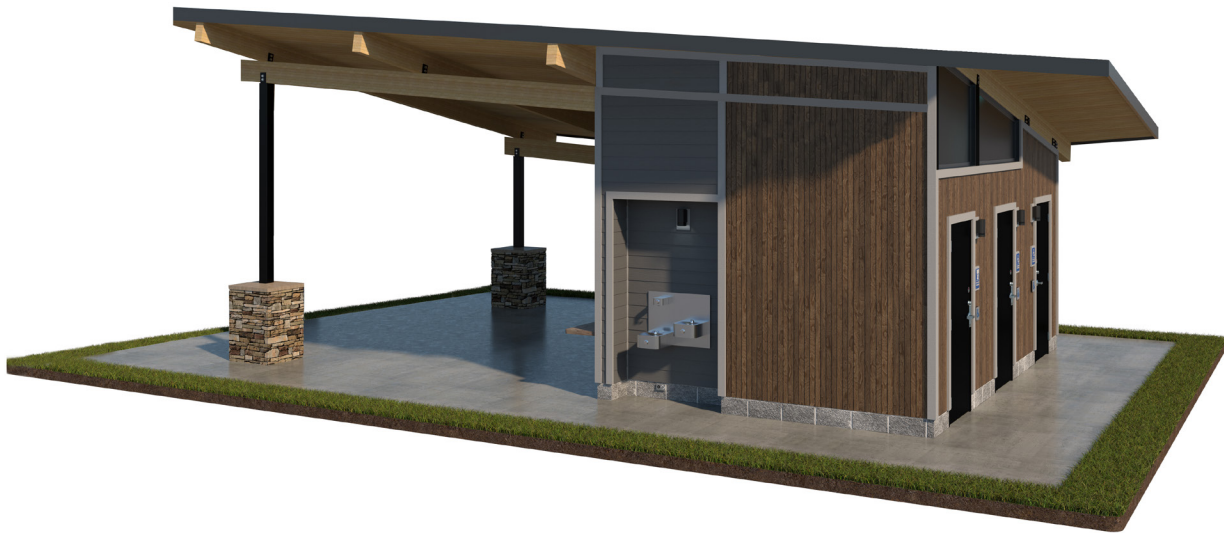
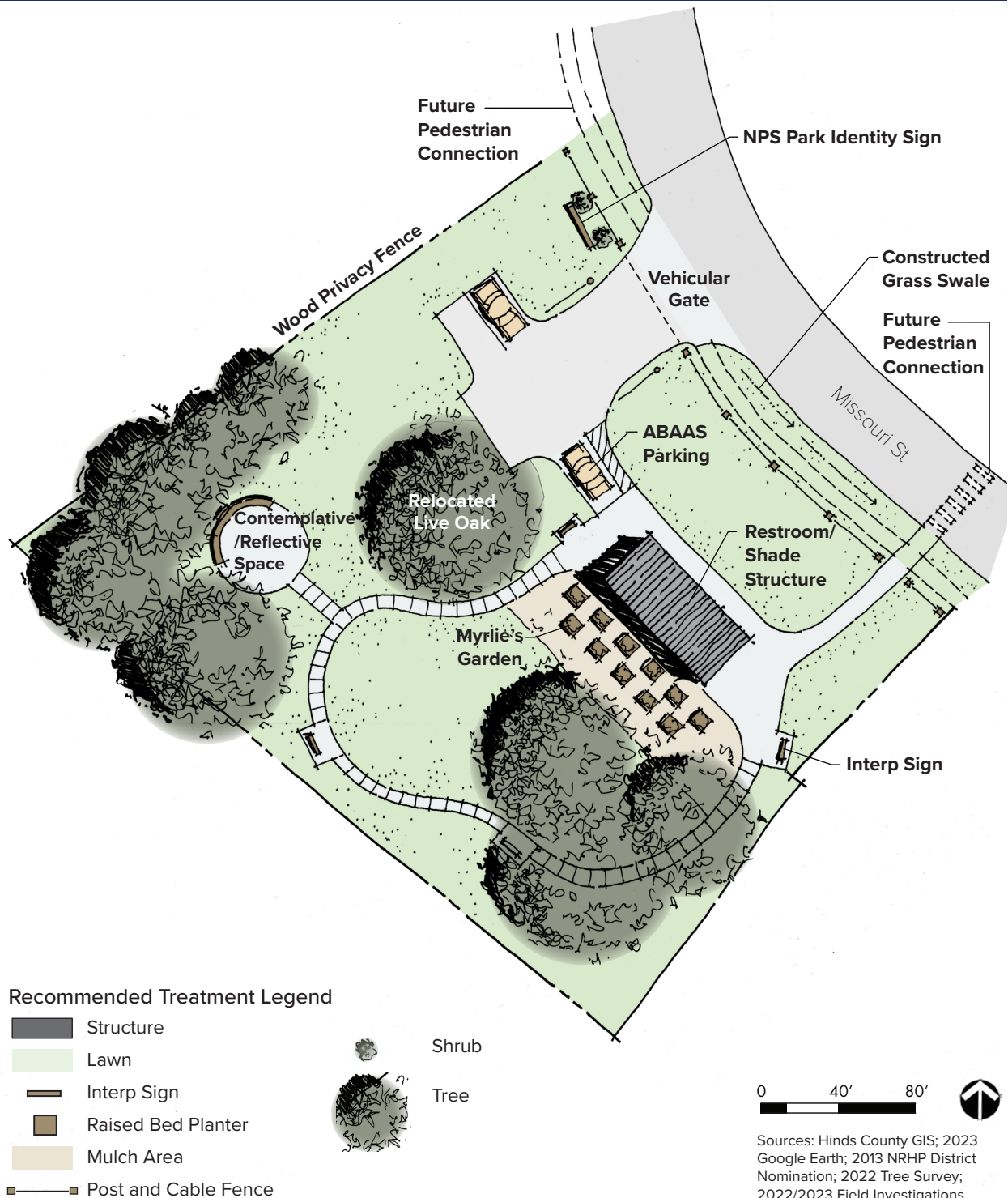


FIGURE 5–17. A combined restroom and shade structure building at the Missouri Street Lots should contain natural materials and a design style compatible with the district (source: DHM Design/ adapted from ArlingtonVA.us).

- Evaluate the health of the tree annually by consulting an arborist or natural resource specialist. Determine a long-term solution for preserving and maintaining the tree.
- At the end of the tree’s life, consider repurposing its wood into a commemorative structure or furnishing in honor of the Evers family.
- Coordinate with adjacent neighbors to maintain vegetation along the property lines, including removing encroaching invasive species (threats to compatible vegetation), such as tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*).

MISSOURI STREET LOTS RECOMMENDED TREATMENT PLAN

Component Landscape within the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument



DRAWING 5-3: Preferred treatment of the Missouri Street Lots selectively designs features on site to provide expanded visitor and community services. This drawing is a schematic design that indicates the key elements recommended. The exact location of the elements and circulation patterns does not impact the historic character for the district and can be altered as needed to meet objectives. Note: The drawing shows the ideal location of a universally accessible sidewalk to protect contributing drainage; however, the sketch does not show further connections within the district because these would be coordinated with the City of Jackson. All sidewalk improvements would occur in the right-of-way (source: DHM Design, 2024).

Implementation Strategies

This section outlines implementation strategies for future and ongoing facilities projects and planning efforts. These strategies align with management objectives and treatment guidance. Each project and planning effort includes a level of priority with a description of actions and associated landscape features to guide the work most critical to preserve and enhance the cultural landscape’s historic character. This implementation framework will assist in preparing facility projects for submittal in the Project Management Information System for funding.

Priority Definitions

High – Action is a critical repair related to safety (to implement within 1–2 years)

Medium – Action is a serious repair, and rehabilitation is needed to preserve integrity of the resource (to implement within 2–5 years)

Low – Action time frame is flexible or related to routine maintenance (to implement within 5+ years)

TABLE 5-2: Future Facilities Projects Table; Future facilities projects to aid in rehabilitating the cultural landscape at Medgar and Myrlie Evers National Monument with assigned priorities (see Priority Definitions) (source: DHM Design/NPS, 2024).

FUTURE FACILITIES PROJECTS		
Priority	Landscape Feature	Task Description
Project 1	Restore Landscape at Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL.	
Medium	Drainage System	Replace the entirety of the existing French drain with a larger capacity system around the perimeter of the Evers family's home. Consider installing an underground cistern to support drainage needs and site resiliency.
	Irrigation System	Replace the nonfunctional irrigation system with a new system that promotes efficient water use.
	Lawn	Replace the turfgrass at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL lawn with St. Augustine grass to match the historic appearance.
	Vegetation	Install compatible vegetation and planting beds from period of significance in original locations, including the planting bed west of the carport, the Roman brick planter, the foundation planting area at the front of the home, the driveway (shrubs), along the west fence (honeysuckle vine), and the backyard (fruit trees and small vegetable beds in the north and east sections of the backyard along the perimeter fencing). Replace the rubber mulch with a undyed, weed-free fine compost mulch.
	Clothesline Poles	Recast and reset clothesline pole footings to be flush with ground.
Project 2	Improve Visitor Accessibility at Medgar and Myrlie Evers National Monument	
Medium	Path	Replace the interim stone paver path with an ABAAS compliant, compatible exposed aggregate concrete finish and with a color that is compatible with the cultural landscape. Realign path at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL to intersect with Margaret W. Alexander Drive; remove stone paver path connection at driveway, and repair lawn. If available, use exposed aggregate permeable paving, if not available, use standard exposed aggregate paving.
	Ramp	Replace the interim wood ramp, stairs, and handrail with ABAAS compliant ramp and stairs. The ramp and stairs should be of simple design and constructed with materials in keeping with the Evers family's home's architectural style but distinct from original brick and concrete material. Refer to the concurrent HSR for additional recommendations.
	Driveway Barrier	Install a compatible, nonpermanent barrier at the entrance of the driveway to prevent non-NPS vehicular access. Consider a barrier such as a painted metal post-and-chain barrier or removable wood bollard typical of a park or historic setting. Avoid options with elaborate caps or ornamentation.

TABLE 5-2: Future Facilities Projects Table (*continued*); Future facilities projects to aid in rehabilitating the cultural landscape at Medgar and Myrlie Evers National Monument with assigned priorities (see Priority Definitions) (source: DHM Design/NPS, 2024).

Priority	Landscape Feature	Task Description
Project 3 Improve Security at Medgar and Myrlie Evers National Monument (NHL and Missouri Street Lots)		
Medium	Camera Poles	Repair security camera poles in the front lawn and backyard.
	Lighting	Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL: Install full cutoff lights in select locations near driveway and along path of travel to ensure safe access to the building during evening hours. Missouri Street Lots: Install full cutoff lights in select locations along path of travel, shade shelter, Myrlie's Garden, reflective space, and parking.
	Site Furnishings	Surface mount site furnishings at Missouri Street Lots.
	Privacy Fence	Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL: Remove and replace the wood privacy fence at the Missouri Street Lots with one compatible with the historic character of the district and representative of the stature of the park as a National Monument. Consider developing a mural of appropriate size and scale for the wood privacy fence that illustrates the Evers family's life in the backyard and neighborhood. Missouri Street Lots: Remove and replace the wood privacy fence with a fence compatible with the historic character of the site and representative of the stature of the park as a National Monument.
Project 4 Improve Signage at Medgar and Myrlie Evers House National Monument		
Low	Interpretive Signage	Install interpretive signage at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and the Missouri Street Lots to tell a comprehensive story that depicts not only the Evers family's life in the neighborhood and their home but also the events of Medgar Evers's assassination. (In-progress)
	NPS Park Sign	Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL: Adjust the existing park sign as needed to accommodate the proposed path. If a replacement sign is needed, install a new, low-profile park sign. Consider planting a flower bed around the sign to reflect the historic flower bed around the Live Oak.
	Historical Plaques	Consolidate historical markers and plaques currently on the exterior of the home and along Margaret W. Alexander Drive to one location along the path of travel.
	New Commemorative Plaque	Install a compatible commemorative plaque adjacent to the carport denoting the carport as the location of Medgar Evers assassination and as a sacred space. Potentially place to the west of the driveway in the perennial bed. The plaque will provide an artistic element to allow for visitor reflection and remembrance.
Project 5 Improve Visitor Infrastructure at Missouri Street Lots		
Low	Missouri Street Lots	Design and build expanded plaza to provide ample gathering and visitor contact space for tours and interpretation programming.
		Modify topography near the existing shade structure and plaza to prevent water ponding during heavy rain events.
		Design and build a combined restroom and shade structure building which serves the needs of visitors and NPS facilities operations and aligns with the spatial organization of the district.
		Relocate Myrlie's Garden and expand planters to provide space for community needs apart from day-to-day visitor and staff functions.
		Design and build contemplative space with seating for reflection; remove picnic space.
		Reduce parking lot size to discourage visitor traffic within the district while continuing to provide priority parking for NPS staff and visitors with accessibility needs.

TABLE 5-3: Ongoing Facilities Projects Table; Ongoing facilities projects aid in rehabilitating the cultural landscape at Medgar and Myrlie Evers National Monument with assigned priorities (see Priority Definitions) (source: DHM Design/NPS, 2024).

ONGOING FACILITIES PROJECTS		
Priority	Landscape Feature	Task Description
Project 6 Ongoing and In-House Projects		
Low	Native American Finial and Cocker Spaniel Finial	Move original pieces into the park's museum collections to preserve them and limit risk of vandalism or theft. Source replacement finials for interpretive use.
	Low Decorative Fence	Provide low decorative fence along planting bed west of carport. Match style, height, and appearance of fence to that from period of significance.
	Transplanted Live Oak	Evaluate transplanted live oak with a qualified arborist and determine long-term plan for preserving the tree and repurposing it at the end of its life cycle.

TABLE 5-4: Future and Ongoing Planning and Coordination Projects Table; Future and ongoing planning efforts aid in rehabilitating the cultural landscape at the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument with assigned priorities (source: DHM Design/NPS, 2024).

FUTURE AND ONGOING PLANNING AND COORDINATION PROJECTS		
Planning Effort 1	Improve Circulation to and from the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument	
High	Sidewalks within the District	Coordinate with City of Jackson, MDOT, and district homeowners to design and build sidewalks between Missouri Street Lots and the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL to promote safe, universal access between the NPS-owned properties. Respect character of district when designing and implementing sidewalks.
	Street Parking	Coordinate with City of Jackson and MDOT to develop street parking on W. Ridgeway Street, outside the district boundary.
	Sidewalks	Provide sidewalks within the district to connect parking from outside the district to the Missouri Street Lots; respect character of the district when designing and implementing sidewalks.
Planning Effort 2	Expand Visitor Services for the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument	
Medium	Visitor Center/ Park Headquarters	Acquire additional land outside the historic district but proximate to the monument for expanded visitor services which consider the following: parking for visitors, tour buses and staff; visitor contact station; a bookstore; restrooms; NPS offices; a garage; maintenance storage; and outdoor gathering, interpretation, and contemplative space. <i>Note: Acquisition of any properties to accomplish this goal would be contingent on legislative expansion of the Monument boundary and the interest of a willing seller. Further planning would be required to evaluate options for development on future parklands.</i>
		Design and build visitor center/park headquarters to accommodate park needs, including visitor services, park staff offices, and parking.
Planning Effort 3	Collaborate with Neighbors to Preserve Medgar and Myrlie Evers Historic District (Ongoing)	
Medium	Future Work within the District	Communicate with neighbors on work occurring within the district through a newsletter or public meeting.
	Vegetation and Invasive Species	Coordinate with adjacent neighbors to maintain trees and shrubs along the national monument property lines.
	District Integrity	Develop informational resources to help district residents meet their preservation needs, such as how and where to apply for historic preservation grants.

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Sandra McCall, interview phone call by Chris Geddes. January 2023.

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Appendix B: Selected Pages from the 2013 Medgar Evers Historic District NRHP Nomination

Appendix C: Receipts for Home Goods and Expenses

Appendix A: Landscape Characteristics Feature List

Medgar Evers Historic District	
Feature	Evaluation
Land Use	
Residential Neighborhood	Contributing
Church and Parsonage	Contributing
Spatial Organization	
Medgar Evers Historic District	Contributing
Topography and Constructed Water Features	
Drainage and Sewer Overflow Channel	Contributing
Constructed Grass Swales and Culverts Along Missouri Street	Contributing
Concrete Curb and Gutter and Inlets at Margaret W. Alexander Drive	Non-contributing
Views and Vistas	
Corridor Views Along Margaret W. Alexander Drive	Contributing
Views to Residences from Margaret W. Alexander Drive	Contributing
Views to Adjacent Properties from Backyards	Contributing
Views Between the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and the Approximate Sniper's Position	Contributing
Views Between the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL and Missouri Street Lots	Contributing
Circulation	
Missouri Street	Contributing
Margaret W. Alexander Drive	Contributing
Buildings and Structures	
(41) Residential Buildings on Margaret W Alexander Dr, Medgar Evers Blvd, Missouri St, and Ridgeway St	Contributing
Greater Mount Mariah Missionary Baptist Church	Contributing
Church Parsonage	Non-contributing

Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL	
Feature	Evaluation
Land Use	
Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument (NPS Owned and Managed)	Non-contributing, Compatible
Spatial Organization	
Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL	Contributing
Topography and Constructed Water Features	
Constructed Grass Swale and Curb Cut	Non-contributing, Compatible
French Drains Under Stone Paver Path and Around the Building; Outfall Pipe and Weep Hole	Non-contributing, Compatible
Views and Vistas	
Views to the Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL from Margaret W. Alexander Drive	Contributing
Views to Adjacent Properties from the Backyard	Contributing
Circulation	
Concrete Driveway	Contributing
Rear Entrance Stoop	Contributing
Carport Entrance Stoop	Contributing
Concrete Walk	Contributing
Concrete Apron and Curb and Gutter	Non-contributing, Compatible
Stone Paver Path	Non-contributing, Incompatible
Wood Ramp, Stairs, and Landing	Non-contributing, Incompatible
Buildings and Structures	
Medgar and Myrlie Evers House NHL (2332 Margaret W. Alexander Drive)	Contributing
Small-Scale Features	
Perimeter Chain-Link Fence (3'-6")	Contributing
Single Swing Gate	Contributing
Cocker Spaniel Finial	Contributing
Native American Finial	Contributing
Clothesline Poles	Contributing
Utility Poles	Non-contributing, Compatible
Perimeter Chain-Link Fence Segment (5'-9")	Non-contributing, Compatible
Irrigation System	Non-contributing, Compatible
Mississippi Freedom Trail Historical Marker	Non-contributing, Compatible
Camera Poles	Non-contributing, Incompatible
Double Swing Gate	Non-contributing, Compatible
Wood Privacy Fence	Non-contributing, Incompatible
Trash Receptacle	Non-contributing, Incompatible
NPS Park Sign	Non-contributing, Incompatible
HVAC/ Condenser and Sump	Non-contributing, Incompatible
Vegetation	
Lawn	Contributing
Roses in the Roman Brick Planter	Non-contributing, Incompatible

Missouri Street Lots	
Feature	Evaluation
Land Use	
Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument (NPS Owned and Managed)	Non-contributing
Spatial Organization	
Missouri Street Lots	Non-contributing
Views and Vistas	
Views to Adjacent Properties	Contributing
Views to Missouri Street Lots from Missouri Street/ W. Ridgeway Street	Contributing
Circulation	
Parking Area	Non-contributing
Concrete Loop Walk	Non-contributing
Buildings and Structures	
Shade Structure	Non-contributing
Small-Scale Features	
Utility Poles	Non-contributing
Wood Privacy Fence	Non-contributing
Metal Fence	Non-contributing
Post-and-Cable Fence	Non-contributing
Site Furnishings	Non-contributing
Wheel Stops	Non-contributing
Garden Cistern	Non-contributing
Raised-Bed Planter	Non-contributing
Vehicular Gate Post	Non-contributing
Interpretive Sign	Non-contributing
NPS Park Entrance Sign	Non-contributing
Vegetation	
Transplanted Live Oak	Managed as a cultural resource
Mature Tree Canopy	Non-contributing
Lawn	Non-contributing
Raised-Bed Planter Vegetation	Non-contributing
Rose Bed	Non-contributing

Appendix B: Selected Pages from the 2013 Medgar Evers Historic District NRHP Nomination

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National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

Medgar Evers Historic District
Name of Property

Hinds County, Mississippi
County and State

Narrative Description

The Medgar Evers Historic District encompasses the 36 original lots developed in 1955 - 1957 by Winston J. Thompson and Leroy Burnett, African American entrepreneurs, and known as the Elaine Subdivision, as well as six additional lots later developed by Burnett in early 1960s and Greater Mt. Mariah Missionary Church (formerly the Elaine Baptist Church), constructed c. 1956. The district covers approximately twelve acres and is located about 3 miles northwest of downtown Jackson. Hawkins Field (Old Jackson Municipal Airport) is less than a mile to the southwest of the district. The district is roughly bounded by W. Ridgeway Street to the north, Medgar Evers Boulevard to the south/southwest, Munsey Street to the south, and Miami Street to the east. Medgar Evers Boulevard is a southeast extension of U.S. Highway 49 and is a major corridor running between I-220 to the northwest and Woodrow Wilson Avenue, to the southeast.

Most of the resources in the district face what is now known as Margaret Walker Alexander Drive (formerly Guynes Street). Margaret Walker Alexander Drive runs straight east-west between Miami Street, which runs straight north-south, and Missouri Street, which runs straight northwest-southeast. Lots sizes are primarily uniform throughout the district at approximately 75 feet wide by 90 feet deep.¹ The exceptions are on the western end where the angled intersections at Medgar Evers Boulevard and Ridgeway Street; Missouri Street and Ridgeway Street, and Missouri Street and Margaret Walker Alexander Drive create irregular lots.

Houses in this district are predominately in the Ranch style, generally set back from the street about 20 – 30 feet. Most residences in the district are one-story, with low-pitch roofs and horizontal lines that are typical of the style. The house designs also incorporate carports, acknowledging the importance of the automobile in American culture by the 1950s.² Although there are no sidewalks in the district, the Ranch homes with landscaped lawns along moderately wide asphalt streets retain the suburban character of the original development.

The topography of the district and the surrounding area is relatively flat. Other neighborhoods with smaller sized residences surround the district to the north, east, and south, although the lots in these subdivisions are generally narrower and the houses are more likely to be minimal traditional in inspiration. Medgar Evers Boulevard to the west is predominantly commercial.

Generally speaking, the houses in the Medgar Evers Historic District are in good condition and retain a high level of architectural integrity. The houses in the district are a good representation of post-World War II modest-sized housing with undercut one-car carports. Forty-two of the buildings contribute to the district, one is non-contributing, and one, the Medgar Evers House at 2332 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive, has been previously listed in the National Register of Historic Places (2000). The oldest home in the district is the Margaret Walker Alexander House at 2205 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive, which she and her husband moved into as soon as it

¹ WFT Architects. *Medgar Evers Home Renovation: A Historic Structure Report*, 1995.

² Virginia & Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 479.

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was completed in 1955.³ Although most of the houses were completed between 1955 and 1956, two houses built in 1963, two built in 1964 and two built in 1965 are considered contributing to historic district significance. All six houses are ranch style house compatible with the other houses in the district in terms of style, materials, massing and setback. Additionally, the majority of these houses were built by Leroy Burnett, one of the original developers. Over the past few decades, minor alterations have taken place to houses throughout the district that have either increased interior floor space or increased carport/garage/driveway space to accommodate more automobiles. Additions have typically been to the rear and are not visible from the public right of way. Homes with later garages still retain the characteristics of the Ranch style. A few houses now have replacement windows and/or siding.

Inventory of Resources

C = Contributing element; NC = Non-contributing element; PL = Previously listed element

The inventory is arranged alphabetically by street name in ascending numerical order. Resources are classified as “contributing” (C) or “non-contributing” (NC) to the historic character of the district, or “previously listed” (PL) for resources already listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

1. **(C) 2105 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch**
One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation. The roof structure consists of a side gable roof with three-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of brick veneer. The windows on the front façade are steel four-light and one-light fixed windows with four-light casement windows flanked on each side; two of the front façade windows have faux shutters on each side. The front door is wood behind a decorative metal security door. The house has a shallow front porch that is equipped with a concrete handicap ramp. The house also has a one-car side carport supported by a brick wall and two steel pipe columns.

2. **(C) 2106 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch**
One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation. The roof structure consists of a hipped roof over the main house and a front gable roof over the garage. The exterior finishes consist of brick veneer. The front façade windows are steel, one-light and four-light fixed windows with four-light casement windows flanking each side. The front door is a wood door behind a decorative metal security door. The house has a shallow front porch supported by a brick column and steel tube column. The house also has a two-car garage to the right of the porch.

3. **(C) 2111 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch**
One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation with an asphalt shingle side gable roof. The exterior finishes consist of brick on all four sides. There are three steel frame windows on the front façade. One of the windows is a picture window, which is flanked by four-light casement windows on each side; two others have a smaller fixed four-light at the center flanked by four-light casement windows. A set of steps go up to

³ Grace B. Sweet, *Personal Notes*.

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the entrance that is sheltered under the roof overhang, which is supported by two metal posts. The main entrance has a hollow core wood door with accent paneling. The house has a side carport on the right side with three metal posts to support the roof.

4. (C) **2112 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch**
One-story house resting on a brick conventional foundation with an asphalt shingle side gabled roof. The exterior walls are asbestos shingle siding with a vertical wood board and batten accent wall on the front façade. There are three steel frame windows on the front façade. One of the windows is a picture window which is flanked by four-light casement windows on each side; two others have a smaller fixed four-light at the center flanked by the same four-light casement windows. A set of steps lead to the entrance, which is sheltered under the roof overhang, supported by two metal posts. The front entrance has a hollow core wood door with accent paneling. The house has a side carport on the right side with three metal posts supporting the roof.
5. (C) **2118 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch**
One-story house resting on a brick conventional foundation with asphalt shingle side gable roof. The primary façade is brick veneer with asbestos siding on the remaining three elevations. There are three aluminum windows on the front façade. One of the windows is a picture window which is flanked by 2/2 sing-hung at each side. The two other windows are 2/2 single-hung. Decorative metal security bars have been added to the entrance door and windows. A set of steps lead to a small entrance portico which is supported by decorative metal posts. The house has a single-car driveway.
6. (C) **2121 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch**
One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation. The roof structure consists of a side gable roof with three-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of brick veneer. The windows on the front façade are steel, four-light and one-light fixed windows with four-light casement windows flanked on each side. Each of the front façade windows has faux shutters on either side. The front door is wood with decorative paneling. The house has a shallow front porch. Attached to the front porch is a side two-car carport supported by a brick wall and one brick column.
7. (C) **2124 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1965 Ranch**
One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation. The roof structure is a side gable roof with three-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of asbestos siding on all sides with a four-foot tall brick accent wall on the front façade. The front façade windows are paired, single-hung, 2/2 divided light aluminum windows with wire mesh screening. The front door is wood with paneling behind a glass screen door. The house has a square front porch and a side carport supported by two decorative wood columns.
8. (C) **2130 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch**
One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation. The roof structure is a front gable over the principle house with a flat roof over the carport. The exterior finishes consist of asbestos siding on all sides. The front façade windows are steel, four-light

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fixed windows with four-light casement windows flanking each side. The front door is wood with an oval decorative glass light in the middle. The house has a shallow front porch and a side carport supported by four steel tube columns. Underneath the carport is a small square storage closet.

9. (C) **2131 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956, enlarged c. 1990 Ranch**
One-and-one-half-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation. The property encompasses both 408-850 and 408-851 parcel numbers. The roof structure consists of a hipped style roof with three-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of asbestos shingle siding. There are four aluminum 9/9 single-hung windows on the front façade. Each of the windows is covered with metal guard bars. A set of steps leads to the main entrance door, which is sheltered under a small portico with wooden posts. There is also a secondary entrance that is sheltered under the roof on the east side of the house; the second entry is located on the closed portion of Midlawn Rd. This closed portion of the road also serves as a two-car driveway for the property.
10. (C) **2200 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch**
One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation with asphalt shingle side gabled roof. The exterior finishes consist of asbestos siding on all sides with a wood vertical board and batten accent wall on the front façade. There are three steel frame windows with faux shutters. Each window is composed of a fixed three-light widow, which is flanked by four-light casement window on each side. An ornamental metal security door has been added to the entrance door. A set of steps lead to the entrance that is sheltered under the roof overhang, which is supported by two metal posts. Metal handrails at the entrance steps were added at a later date. There is a side carport on the right side of the house with metal posts to support the roof.
11. (C) **2205 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch**
Margaret Walker Alexander House
One-and-one-half-story Ranch style house sitting on a brick conventional foundation. The roof structure of both levels consists of a hipped style roof with three-tab asphalt shingles. The front façade finishes are a combination of wood bard and batten siding and brick veneer. Two metal posts support the roof overhang. The windows on the front façade consist of three steel picture windows with sliding glass windows on the bottom, two aluminum sliding glass windows on the upper story, and three steel four-and-one-light fixed windows with four-light casement windows flanking each side. The property doesn't have a defined driveway but it appears as though the property shares the closed portion of Midlawn Rd. for parking.
12. (C) **2206 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1957 Ranch**
One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation. The roof consists of a side gable intersected by a front gable with three-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of asbestos siding on all sides with a wood vertical board and batten accent wall on the front façade. The front façade windows are steel, four-light fixed windows with four-light casement windows flanking each side. The front door is wood behind a decorative

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metal security door. The house has a shallow front porch and a side carport supported by two ornamental metal columns and one steel tube column. Underneath the carport is a small square storage closet.

13. (C) **2214 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive** **1956** **Ranch**
One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation. The roof is hipped with three-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of wood vertical board and batten siding on all sides with a brick accent wall on the front façade. The front façade windows consist of four-light and one-light fixed steel windows with four-light casement windows flanking each side. The house has a shallow front porch with a side, one-car carport supported by four brick columns.
14. (C) **2215 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive** **1956** **Ranch**
One-story Ranch style house sitting on a brick conventional foundation. The roof structure consists of a side gable roof with three-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of brick veneer. The windows on the front façade are steel, four-light and one-light fixed windows with four-light casement windows flanking each side. Each of the front façade windows has faux shutters on either side. The front door is wood with decorative paneling behind a decorative metal security door. The house has a shallow front porch with a one-car side carport supported by four brick columns.
15. (C) **2222 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive** **1956** **Ranch**
One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation with asphalt shingle side gabled roof. The exterior finishes consist of brick on all sides. There are four windows with a brick window sill and metal guards (except one of them) on the main façade. Three of the windows are steel frame, composed of a fixed four-light window flanked by four-light casement windows on each side. The fourth window is an aluminum frame picture window, which is flanked by 2/2 single-hung at each side. An ornamental metal security door has been added to the wood entrance door. A pair of metal handrails was added at the entrance steps at a later date. A set of steps lead to the entrance, which is sheltered under the main roof overhang, supported by two brick columns. There was a side carport on the right side which has now been enclosed and converted into interior space.
16. (C) **2223 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive** **1956** **Ranch**
One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation with an asphalt-shingle side gable roof. Exterior finishes consist of brick veneer. There are three steel frame windows with faux shutters on the front façade. One of the windows is composed of a picture window which is flanked by four-light casement windows on each side. The two others have a smaller fixed four-light window at the center, flanked by four-light casement windows. Each of the windows is covered with ornamental metal guard bars. The front door is wood behind a decorative metal security door. A set of steps lead to the entrance that is sheltered under the roof overhang, which is supported by two metal posts. The house has a double carport on the right side with decorative wood work above the entrance.
17. (C) **2229 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive** **1956** **Ranch**

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One-story Ranch style house sitting on a brick conventional foundation. The roof structure consists of a side gable roof with three tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of wood lap siding. The windows on the front façade are aluminum, 6/6 simulated divided light windows. Each of the front façade windows has faux shutters on each side. The front door is wood with decorative paneling behind a decorative metal security door. The house has a shallow front porch with decorative metal hand railing leading up to the front door. The house has a one-car side carport supported by three wood Doric style columns.

18. (C) 2230 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch

One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation. The roof structure consists of a side gable roof with three-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of brick on all sides. The windows on the front façade are steel four-light and one-light fixed windows with four-light casement windows flanking each side. Each of the front façade windows has faux ornamental metal shutters on each side. The front door is wood behind a decorative metal security door. The house has a shallow front porch with a set of metal handrails leading to the front entry steps. The house also has a single-car carport supported by three ornamental metal columns.

19. (C) 2235 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch

One-story house resting on a brick conventional foundation with an asphalt shingle hipped roof. The exterior finishes consist of vinyl lap siding on all four sides with brick veneer accents on the front façade. There are three steel frame windows on the front façade. One of the windows is a picture window which is flanked by four-light casement windows on each side. The two other windows have smaller fixed four-lights at the center flanked by light casement windows. A set of steps in the carport go up to the main entrance door. The carport has been enclosed by additional part in the back side. There is another entrance door to this newer part through the carport. There is a single side carport on the right side supported by three wood columns.

20. (C) 2240 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch

One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation. The roof is hipped with three-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of brick on all sides with a brick ledge under all windows. The windows on the front façade are steel, four-light and one-light fixed windows with four-light casement windows flanking each side. The front door is wood with accent paneling. The house has a shallow front porch with a brick flower bed. The house also has a two-car side carport supported by three ornamental metal columns with a brick wall base.

21. (C) 2241 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch

One-story Ranch style house sitting on a brick conventional foundation. The roof structure consists of a side gable roof with a front gable over the porch area. The roof material is three-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of brick on all four sides with vinyl lap siding on wall underneath the carport. The windows on the front façade consist of one vinyl clad window with twenty simulated divided lights, one 8x8 simulated divided light vinyl clad sliding window, and one steel frame four-light fixed window flanked by two four-

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light casement windows. The front door is wood with decorative paneling behind a decorative metal security door. The house has a shallow front porch with a raised porch area with steps leading down both sides; the steps have metal handrails on each side. The house has a one-car side carport supported by four wood Doric style columns and two ornamental metal columns.

22. (C) 2246 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch

One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation with asphalt shingle side gabled roof. The exterior finishes consist of vinyl lap siding on all sides with an asbestos siding accent wall on the front façade. There are three steel frame windows on the min façade; each window is composed of a fixed four-light window which is flanked by four-light casement windows on each side. An ornamental metal security door has been added to the wood entrance door. The house has a side carport on the right side with metal posts to support the roof. A set of steps lead to the entrance that is sheltered under the roof overhang, which is supported by two metal posts. Also, there is a small aluminum storage shed at the rear of the property.

23. (C) 2247 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch

One-and-a-half-story house resting on a brick conventional foundation with an asphalt shingle hipped roof and gable roof. The second story portion of the home is located at the rear of the open carport. The exterior finishes are a combination brick and vertical wood board and batten siding. There are three steel frame windows on the front façade. One of the windows is a picture window which is flanked by four-light casement windows on each side. The two other windows have a smaller fixed four-light arrangement at the center flanked by four-light casement windows. The front door is wood behind an ornamental metal security door. A wheelchair ramp encompasses the shallow front porch area. A secondary entrance door is located under the open carport. The carport has a low brick wall on the right side and is supported by an ornamental metal column.

24. (C) 2300 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch

One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation. The roof structure consists of a hipped roof with three-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of vertical wood board and batten siding with a brick accent wall on the front façade. The windows on the front façade are steel, four-light and eight-light fixed windows with four-light casement windows flanking each side. The front door is wood behind a decorative metal security door. The house has a shallow front porch and a single-car carport supported by three ornamental metal columns.

25. (C) 2305 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch

One-story Ranch style house sitting on a brick conventional foundation. The roof structure consists of a side gable roof with three-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of simulated stone clad siding and aluminum lap siding. The windows on the front façade are steel, four-light and one light fixed windows with four-light casement windows flanked on each side. The front door is wood behind an aluminum screen door. The house has a

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shallow front porch with a one-car side carport supported by three wood columns.
Underneath the carport is a small square storage closet.

- 26. (C) 2310 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch**
One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation. The roof is side gabled with three-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of asbestos lap siding with a vertical board and batten accent wall on the front façade. The windows are steel, four-light fixed windows with four-light casement windows flanking each side. The front door is wood behind a decorative metal security door. The house has a shallow front porch and a side carport supported by two steel tube columns. Under the carport is a small, square storage closet.
- 27. (C) 2314 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch**
One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation. Asphalt shingle side gabled roof. The exterior finish is brick veneer. There are three aluminum windows on the main façade with faux shutters. One of the windows is double, 6/6 single-hung, while two others are 6/6 single-hung. An ornamental metal security door has been added to the wood entrance door. A set of steps lead to the entrance that is sheltered under the roof overhang, which is supported by a metal post and a brick column. There is a side carport on the right side of the house with brick columns and a low wall made of brick.
- 28. (C) 2315 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch**
One-story Ranch style house resting on brick conventional foundation with an asphalt shingle hipped roof. The exterior finishes consist of brick on all four sides. There are three steel frame windows on the front façade. One of the windows is a picture window which is flanked by four-light casement windows on each side. The other two windows have a smaller fixed four-light arrangement at the center flanked by four-light casement windows. Each of the front façade windows are fitted with ornamental metal guard bars. The front door is wood behind an ornamental metal security door. A set of steps with metal handrails lead to the entrance which is sheltered under the roof overhang. The original house had a one-car side carport that has since been replaced with a two-car garage with an aluminum paneled door.
- 29. (C) 2319 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch**
One-story Ranch style house sitting on a conventional brick foundation. The roof structure consists of two front babbled roofs connected by a flat roof with three-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of asbestos siding on all four sides with vertical board and batten siding around the garage area. The windows on the front façade consist of aluminum 2/4 and 6/6 divided light windows. The front door is wood behind a decorative metal security door. The house has a shallow front porch with a raised square stoop at the front door. The house also has a two car garage with a decorative metal piece above the garage door.
- 30. (C) 2322 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956/enlarged c1979 Ranch**

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Hinds County, Mississippi

County and State

One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation. The roof structure consists of a front gable roof with a front gable extension over the front porch. There are also flat roof structures that cover east side of the house and the carport. The roof is covered with three-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of asbestos siding on all sides. Other materials on the front façade include custom mill work balusters that hang from the roof eave overhangs and below the front window. The windows on the front façade are steel four-light and eight-light fixed windows with four-light casement windows flanking each side. Faux window shutters also flank the front façade windows. The front door is wood behind an aluminum screen door. The house has a shallow front porch and a single car carport supported by three metal tube columns. The 1979 additions are to the rear and not visible from the public right of way.

- 31. (C) 2325 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch**
One-story house rests on a brick conventional foundation with an asphalt shingle side gabled roof. The exterior finishes consist of wood lap siding on all four sides, with vertical wood board and batten accent wall between two windows on the front façade. One of the windows is a large fixed four-light window which is flanked by 4-light casement windows. The other two windows have a smaller fixed four-light arrangement at the center flanked by four-light casement windows. The house has a shallow front porch with a one-car side carport supported by five metal tube columns. Underneath the carport is a small, square storage closet.
- 32. (C) 2331 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch**
One-story house resting on a brick conventional foundation with an asphalt-shingle side gable roof. The exterior finishes consist of a combination of vertical wood board and batten siding and brick on the front façade and asbestos siding on the remaining facades. There are three steel frame windows with faux shutters on the front façade. One of the windows is a picture window which is flanked by four-light casement windows. The other two windows have a smaller fixed four-light arrangement at the center, flanked by four-light casement windows. The front door is wood behind a decorative metal security door. A set of steps with decorative metal handrails lead to the entrance, which is sheltered by the roof's overhang. The house originally had an open two-car carport, which has since been enclosed by an aluminum paneled garage door. Surrounding the garage door are strips of ornamental metal.
- 33. (PL) 2332 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch**
Medgar Evers House (NRHP, 1992)
One-story Ranch style house sitting on a conventional brick foundation. The roof structure is hipped with an aggregate roofing material. The exterior finishes consist of asbestos siding on all sides with brick and batten board accent walls on the front façade. The front façade windows are steel, four-light fixed windows with four-light casement windows flanking each side. The house has a shallow front porch and a one-car side carport supported by four ornamental metal columns.
- 34. (C) 2338 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch**

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

Medgar Evers Historic District

Name of Property

Hinds County, Mississippi

County and State

One-story house rests on brick conventional foundation with asphalt shingle side gable roof. Its primary façade consists of asbestos siding. Also on the right side of the main façade is vertical board and batten siding. There are three steel frame windows on the main façade with faux shutters. Each window is composed of a fixed four-light window which is flanked by four-light casement windows on each side. A security glass door has been added to the entrance. The house has a side carport on the left side with wooden posts to support and wood lattice fence which was added thereafter to enclose the carport. A set of steps lead to the entrance that is sheltered under the roof overhang; the entrance porch is supported by two metal posts. There is a handicap ramp at the entrance and an enclosed porch with wooden lattice fence at the back side of the house.

35. (C) 2346 Margaret Walker Alexander Drive 1956 Ranch

One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation. The roof structure consists of a side gable roof with three-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of vinyl lap siding. The windows on the front façade consist of four aluminum single-hung 6/6 simulated divided light windows. Each of the windows on the front façade is trimmed by three-inch wood molding. The front door is wood and is covered by the roof overhang. A set of concrete steps lead to the front entrance. The house also has a shallow front porch and a single-car side carport supported by three metal tube columns.

36. (C) 3672 Medgar Evers Blvd. c. 1956 Greater Mt. Mariah M.B. Church (formerly Elaine Baptist Church)

One-and-one-half-story church building on a slab-on-grade foundation. Roof structure consists of a tall front gable intersecting a side gable roof with three-tab asphalt shingles. The church is surrounded by evergreen landscaping and asphalt parking lot. The building has a symmetrical layout with a north-to-south axis intersecting an east-to-west axis. The exterior materials are brick with brick buttresses running along both sides of the building's longest axis. The window above the primary entrance to the building is an aluminum fourteen-light fixed window shaped proportionally with the shape of the roof pitch above. The other windows on the structure consist of tall aluminum six-light fixed windows and aluminum single-hung 2/2 divided light windows. The principle entrance is a metal double-leaf door with exterior light fixtures on each side. The secondary entrance is a metal single door with one exterior light fixture and covered by a canvas awning.

37. (C) 3527 Missouri St. 1964 Ranch

One-story Ranch style house sitting on a conventional brick foundation. The roof structure is a side gable roof with 3-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of asbestos siding on all four sides with brick up to the window sill on the front façade. The windows on the front façade are aluminum single-hung 2/2 divided light windows behind decorative metal security bars. The front door is wood behind a decorative metal security door. The house has a rectangular front porch with a handicap ramp enclosed by a wood lattice fence. A single car driveway runs along the side of the house.

38. (C) 3529 Missouri St. 1963 Ranch

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

Medgar Evers Historic District**Hinds County, Mississippi**

Name of Property

County and State

One-story Ranch style house that sits on a conventional brick foundation. The roof structure is a side gable with an intersecting front and rear gable with 3-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of simulated wood vinyl siding on all four sides with brick up to the window sill. The windows on the front façade consist of aluminum single-hung 2/2 divided light windows. The front door is wood behind a decorative metal security door. The house has a rectangular front porch covered by a front gable roof extension. The house has a single car driveway that runs along the side of the house.

39. (C) 3603 Missouri St. 1965 Ranch

One-story Ranch style house resting on brick conventional foundation with an asphalt shingle side gabled roof. The exterior finishes consist of asbestos siding on all four sides with brick up to the window sill on the front façade. The windows on the front façade consist of aluminum single-hung 2/2 divided light windows. The front entrance has a wood door behind an ornamental metal security door. The house has a rectangular front porch partially covered by the roof overhang. A single-car driveway runs along the side of the house.

40. (C) 3604 Missouri St. 1964 Ranch

One-story house resting on a brick conventional foundation with an asphalt shingle hipped roof. The exterior finishes consist of asbestos siding on all sides with a brick accent wall on the front façade. The windows on the front façade consist of steel twelve-light and four-light fixed windows flanked by four-light casement windows on each side. The front entrance has a wood door behind an ornamental metal security door. The house has a rectangular front porch and a one-car side carport supported by four ornamental metal columns. Underneath the carport is a small square storage closet.

41. (C) 3611 Missouri St. 1963 Ranch

One-story wood frame house on brick conventional foundation with an asphalt shingle side gabled roof. The exterior finishes consist of asbestos siding on all 4 sides with brick up to the window sill on the front façade. The windows on the front façade consist of aluminum single-hung 2/2 divided light windows. The front entrance has a wood door behind an ornamental metal security door. The house has a rectangular front porch covered by a front gable roof extension. A single car driveway runs along the side of the house.

42. (C) 2335 Ridgeway St. 1957 Ranch

One-story Ranch style house that sits on a brick conventional foundation. The roof structure is hipped with three-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of vinyl lap siding on all sides. The windows on the front façade consist of two steel eight-light casement windows and one steel eight-light fixed windows flanked by two four-light casement windows. The front entrance has a wood door with a square stoop. The stoop is flanked by a set of decorative metal handrails. The house has a one-car side carport supported by two ornamental metal columns.

43. (C) 2343 Ridgeway St. 1961 Ranch

One-story Ranch style house resting on a brick conventional foundation. The roof structure is a side and rear facing gable with three-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

Medgar Evers Historic District

Hinds County, Mississippi
County and State

Name of Property

vinyl lap siding on all sides with brick up to the window sill. The windows on the front façade consist of aluminum single-hung 2/2 divided light windows. Also on the front façade is an aluminum picture window with a sliding window at its base. The front door is wood with a decorative door light behind a decorative metal security door. The house has a square raised stoop partially covered by the roof eave. The stoop area is enclosed by a three-foot tall Prairie style wood fence. The house has a single-car driveway that is accessed from Missouri St.

44. (NC) 2439 Ridgeway c. 1980 Ranch
Greater Mt. Mariah M.B. Church - Parsonage

One-story Ranch style house on a slab-on-grade foundation. The roof structure is side gable intersected by a front gable. The roof material is three-tab asphalt shingles. The exterior finishes consist of wood board and batten siding. The windows on the front elevation consist of aluminum, single-hung 4/4 divided light windows. The front door is wood behind a decorative metal security door. The house has a rectangular front porch that is covered by the front roof gable.

Appendix C: Receipts for Home Goods and Expenses

PURCHASER MUST EXECUTE (Business Concerns should answer only the questions which apply)

Date March 25, 1937

To Wells Furniture Co. Town Jackson State Miss.
(Corporate, Firm or Trade Name of Dealer)

For the purpose of securing credit for the purchase of the articles mentioned in the contract on the reverse side hereof, the Undersigned makes the following representations:

Print Purchaser's Name Medgar W. Evers Husband or Wife Name Mrs Myrtle B. Residence or nearest Phone 6-9822

Home Address 2332 Guynes St (No. and Street) Jackson, Miss. (City and State) How Long (Years) (Months) 9

Previous Home Address 1129 Maple St Apt. 16 E Jackson, Miss. How Long (Years) (Months) 1 6

Age 32 White ☐ Colored ☒ Single ☐ Married ☒ Number of Dependents Including Wife 3 Monthly Income \$ 425.00

Own Home ☒ Rent Home ☐ (No. of Street) (City and State) Financed in What Company Present Value \$ Mortgage \$

Recorded In Name of Both What Position Dis. Sec.

Present Employer N.A.A.C.P. If in business for self, what business? How Long (Years) (Months) 2 6

Business Address 1072 W. Lynch St. (Address) (City and State) How Long (Years) (Months) 2 5

Name Former Employer Magnolia Mut. Insurance Co. (Address) Mt. Bayou, Miss.

Bank Checking Account Deposit Guaranty Bank (No. and Street) (City and State)

First Trade References Deposit Guaranty Bank (Address)

Second Trade References Biljac Olds Co. (Address) Jackson, Miss.

Third Trade References Associates Disc. Corp. (Address) Jackson, Miss.

Name and Address of a Relative Not Living With Mrs. Eddie Harper 1011 Woodrow Wilson Drive Jackson, Miss.

2332 Guynes St. Jackson, Miss. (Purchaser's Mailing Address)

Medgar W. Evers (Purchaser's Signature)

ASSIGNMENT AND WARRANTIES

Jackson Miss. April 2, 1937
(City or Town) (State) (Date)

FOR VALUE RECEIVED, the Undersigned does hereby sell, assign, and transfer all of his right, title and interest in and to the contract on the reverse side hereof, and the chattels described therein, to Deposit Guaranty Bank & Trust Co., Jackson, Miss., Assignee, its successors and Assigns, with power to take legal proceedings in the name of assignee or of the Undersigned. The Undersigned warrants: that the down payment was made by Buyer in cash and not its equivalent, unless otherwise expressly stated in the contract, and that no part thereof was loaned, directly or indirectly, by Undersigned to Buyer; that said chattels are free from all liens and encumbrances whatsoever except said contract; that said contract is valid, and there are no liens superior thereto; that at the time of the execution of said contract said chattels were new and Buyer was 21 years of age or over and had legal capacity to execute said contract and the note mentioned therein; that there is now owing the amount set forth in said contract; that all description of said chattels in said contract are correct and sufficient; that all of said chattels have been delivered and completely installed in accordance with the terms of the sale of the same to Buyer; that if the undersigned is required, either by contract or by practices established by the Manufacturer, to service any of said chattels, such service will be performed; that there are now no disputes between Buyer and the Undersigned with respect to said chattels, or any offsets or counterclaims to said note. In case of a breach of any of said warranties, the Undersigned will, upon demand, made at anytime thereafter by the holder thereof, repurchase said note and contract for the amount then unpaid thereon.

Dated April 2, 1937

Address of Assignee:
200 East Capitol Street, Jackson, Hinds County, Mississippi.

By Wells Furniture Co. (Corporate, Firm or Trade name of Dealer) (Seal)

By Huston Wells (Owner, Officer or Firm Member)

Without Recourse

(Dealer) (Seal)

By (Officer, Firm Member or Owner)

In Case of Recourse dealer and/or endorser Sign Below

Undersigned hereby and severally do hereby waive presentment, demand, protest, notice of protest, non-payment or dishonor, and notice of the sale of any collateral security, and do authorize any extension or extension in the time or time of payment without notice, in case of non-payment of any amount due hereon, we severally agree to pay the same.

Wells Furniture Co. (Seal)
(Corporate, Firm or Trade name of Dealer)

By Huston Wells (Owner, Officer or Firm Member) (Seal)

Wells Furniture Company Conditional Contract for Medgar Evers's Purchase of a Washing Machine, Page 1 (source: Receipt in Box 3, Financial Receipts Folder, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

Description of Merchandise (Show Serial or Other Identifying Numbers)	Cash Price
(1) Whirlpool RCA Washer	
Sale # DA90P Model # W5704800 Serial # 51R658	349.95
Sale Tax	12.25
TOTAL CASH PRICE	\$ 362.20
The time balance evidenced by note of buyer of even date to seller's order), is payable in <u>24</u> monthly installments of \$ <u>14.50</u> each and _____ final installment of \$ _____, the first installment payable <u>MAY 15,</u> 19 <u>57</u> , the balance of said installments to be paid on even date of each ensuing month thereafter.	Total Cash Price _____ \$ <u>62.20</u> Allowance on merchandise traded in _____ (subtract) \$ _____ Type _____ Make _____ Model _____ Basis Price (on which Down Payment figured) _____ \$ <u>362.20</u> Cash on or before delivery (Down Payment) _____ (subtract) \$ <u>62.20</u> Unpaid Balance of Cash Price _____ \$ <u>300.00</u> Time price Differential Including Insurance If Any and Discount (add) _____ \$ <u>48.00</u> Time Balance _____ \$ <u>348.00</u>
The aggregate amount of monthly installments plus the down payment is the total time price of the chattels. Said note is a negotiable instrument, separate and apart from this contract, even though at time of execution it may be temporarily attached hereto by perforation or otherwise.	

1/W/E, hereinafter termed "Buyer", hereby buy and accept delivery of the foregoing chattels, to be kept or installed at
2332 Gaynes St. Jackson Hinds Miss.
 No. and Street City or Town County State

and buyer will pay seller therefor the total price provided herein. Title to said chattels shall remain in seller until all amounts owing hereunder, are fully paid. In cash. Said note or this contract may be negotiated or assigned, or the payment thereof renewed or extended without passing title to said chattels to buyer. The loss, injury or destruction of said chattels shall not release buyer from the payment of said indebtedness.

Said chattels shall remain personal property, and nothing, anything, which may be done by the parties hereto to the contrary notwithstanding shall prevent seller from removing the same or so much thereof as seller in his sole discretion may determine, from any premises to which same may be attached, or in which the same may be, upon any default or breach of this contract.

Buyer shall not misuse, secrete, sell, encumber, remove or otherwise dispose of or lose possession of said chattels, nor permit nor suffer any lien, encumbrance or charge against said chattels, and shall be responsible for any loss of or damage to said chattels.

If buyer should fail to pay said indebtedness or any part thereof when due, or break this contract, or if any execution or writ be levied on any of buyer's property, or a receiver thereof be appointed, or if a petition in bankruptcy or other petition under the Bankruptcy Act should be filed by or against buyer, or if for any reason other than that herein provided, the entire unpaid balance of said note and said indebtedness shall at once become due and payable at seller's election, and seller may, with or without notice or demand, by process of law or otherwise, take possession of said chattels or any part thereof, wherever located and seller may retain the same, together with all amounts paid thereon, which shall be considered for the reasonable use for said chattels, or seller may sell said chattels or any part thereof at public or private sale with or without legal procedure, and with or without having said chattels at the time of sale and seller or its assigns may become the purchaser of such property and apply the proceeds after deducting all expenses, liens, and a reasonable attorney's fee, paid or incurred by seller, to the payment of said indebtedness and interest, and pay buyer the surplus, if any; or in case of a deficiency, buyer will pay seller the same at once; at any sale hereunder, seller or its successors or assigns may purchase all or any part of the property covered hereby. Buyer waives all claims, damages and demands against the seller arising out of the repossession, retention and sale as aforesaid.

Any indulgence granted buyer shall not constitute a waiver of any of seller's rights hereunder. Any part of this contract contrary to the laws of any state shall be so invalid, that such invalidity shall not affect the validity of the remainder of this contract, which may be enforced to the extent permitted by law, and when assigned or negotiated shall be free from any defense, counterclaim, or cross complaint by seller. Time is of the essence of this contract.

This contract constitutes the entire agreement; no waiver or modification shall be valid unless written upon or attached hereto.

This contract shall apply to, inure to the benefit of and bind the executors, administrators, successors and assigns of both buyer and seller.

Buyer states that he has not borrowed and will not borrow any money, and that there is not and will not be any extension of credit, in connection with the purchase of said chattels other than the one evidenced hereby.

Buyer acknowledges receipt of a true copy of this contract.

10-10-1932

Witness: James Willey Disc. 48.00
Res. 15.00
2-127
Accepted by: Wells Furniture Co.
(Corporate, Firm or Trade Name of Dealer)
Witness: James Willey
(Owner, Officer or Firm Member)
DEALER MUST EXECUTE ASSIGNMENT ON THE REVERSE SIDE HEREOF

NOTE

FOR VALUE RECEIVED, THE UNDERSIGNED JOINTLY AND SEVERALLY PROMISES TO PAY TO THE ORDER OF
Wells Furniture Co. The Sum Of Three Hundred Forty Eight -- And -- NO/100
(Corporate, Firm or Trade Name of Dealer)

24 monthly installments of \$ 14.50 each and final installment of \$ the first installment
payable May 15th, 1957, balance of installments payable on even date of each succeeding month thereafter until this note is fully paid
with interest after maturity at the highest lawful rate. If any installment of this note is not paid when due the entire amount unpaid shall be due and payable
forthwith at the election of the holder of this note without notice. The acceptance of any installment hereof by the holder after the time when it becomes due
as herein set forth shall not be held to establish a custom, or waive any rights of the holder to enforce prompt payment of any further installments of otherwise
installment the undersigned jointly and severally agree to pay a reasonable attorney's fee.

The undersigned and all endorsers and other parties hereto hereby waive presentment for payment, demand, protest and notice of demand, protest and non
payment.

WITNESS: (X) (Buyer's Signature)

(Signed)

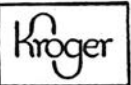
CREDIT BILLING COPY

Sears 648369

SEARS, ROEBUCK AND CO.

SRC	CLC	EAA	MCA	CASH	SELLING STORE NO.
✓					
DIV.		SALES NO.		DATE	
71		430		4/8	
NAME					NO. OR NAME OF STORE CARRYING ACCOUNT
ADDRESS					
CITY					
QUAN.	STOCK NO.	DESCRIPTION		PRICE	AM'T SALE
6		Bedding Plants @ 69¢ Total			4 14 17 4 31
APR 8 - 1963					
This purchase is made under my Sears Revolving Charge Agreement for the credit sales price consisting of the above cash price plus the credit service charge.				☐ FLOOR ☐ DOCK ☐ WHSE. ☐ _____	TOTAL 4 31 DEP. BAL.
PURCHASED BY <i>Mrs. Myrtle B. Evers</i>					

Receipt for Bedding Plants, Sears, Roebuck & Company, April 8, 1963.
 (source: Receipt in Box 3, Financial Receipts Folder, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

 **THE KROGER CO.** No 39417

LAYAWAY RECEIPT

Date 2-27

Received from M. W. Evers
CUSTOMER

Ten dollars and XX cents: \$ 10 00/100

as a deposit on Power Mower
TYPE OF MERCHANDISE

STORE STAMP
V-171 KROGER GROCERY
JACKSON, MISS

Eugene Kessel
AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

THANK YOU!

Form 1923

Kroger Co. Receipt Showing Layaway Deposit for A Power Mower for M.W. Evers, February 27 (year not written) (source: Receipt in Box 3, Financial Receipts Folder, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

CREDIT BILLING COPY **Sears** 648253
SEARS, ROEBUCK AND CO.

SRC	CLC	EAA	MCA	CASH	SELLING STORE NO.
✓					
DIV.	SALES NO.	DATE	APPROVAL		
77	357	4/2			
NAME MEDGAR EVERS 2332 GUYNES JACKSON, MISS.					NO. OR NAME OF STORE CARRYING ACCOUNT
ADDRESS					
CITY 2226					
QUAN.	STOCK NO.	DESCRIPTION	PRICE	AM'T SALE	
4		Roses	39	1 56	
12		Pots	3	86	
10		Bulbs	9	1 04	
10		Bulbs		59	
			3 59		
			14		
			3 73		
APR 2 - 1963					
This purchase is made under my Sears Revolving Charge Agreement for the credit sales price consisting of the above cash price plus the credit service charge.					
☐ FLOOR ☐ DOCK ☐ WHSE. ☐ BAL.					
PURCHASED BY <u>Mrs. Myrlie B. Evers</u> TOTAL DEP. BAL.					

CREDIT BILLING COPY **Sears** 648369
SEARS, ROEBUCK AND CO.

SRC	CLC	EAA	MCA	CASH	SELLING STORE NO.
✓					
DIV.	SALES NO.	DATE	APPROVAL		
71	430	4/8			
NAME MEDGAR EVERS 2332 GUYNES JACKSON, MISS.					NO. OR NAME OF STORE CARRYING ACCOUNT
ADDRESS					
CITY 2226					
QUAN.	STOCK NO.	DESCRIPTION	PRICE	AM'T SALE	
6		Lodging Plants @ 69		4 14	
				17	
				4 31	
APR 8 - 1963					
This purchase is made under my Sears Revolving Charge Agreement for the credit sales price consisting of the above cash price plus the credit service charge.					
☐ FLOOR ☐ DOCK ☐ WHSE. ☐ BAL.					
PURCHASED BY <u>Mrs. Myrlie B. Evers</u> TOTAL DEP. BAL.					

CREDIT BILLING COPY **Sears** 348719
SEARS, ROEBUCK AND CO.

SRC	CLC	EAA	MCA	CASH	SELLING STORE NO.
✓					
DIV.	SALES NO.	DATE	APPROVAL		
9	238	4/2			
NAME MEDGAR EVERS 2332 GUYNES JACKSON, MISS.					NO. OR NAME OF STORE CARRYING ACCOUNT
ADDRESS					
CITY 2226					
QUAN.	STOCK NO.	DESCRIPTION	PRICE	AM'T SALE	
1	8676	Grass Cutter		1 98	
			TAX	8	
				2 06	
APR 2 - 1963					
This purchase is made under my Sears Revolving Charge Agreement for the credit sales price consisting of the above cash price plus the credit service charge.					
☐ FLOOR ☐ DOCK ☐ WHSE. ☐ BAL.					
PURCHASED BY <u>Mrs. Myrlie B. Evers</u> TOTAL DEP. BAL.					

Sears, Roebuck & Company Receipt Showing Purchase of Roses, Bulbs, and Pots Signed by Mrs. Myrlie B. Evers, April 2, 1963 (source: Receipt in Box 3, Financial Receipts Folder, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

CHRIST THE KING SCHOOL 1962-1963
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI Pupil's Name Darrell Evers

Registration Fee \$4.00 Audio-Visual Aid Fee \$1.00
Supply Bill \$4.50 Book and Library Fee \$1.00

Tuition	S.	1.00	S.	1.00	S.	1.00	S.	1.00	O.	1.00	O.	1.00	O.	1.00	O.	1.00
Lunch	S.	1.25	S.	1.25	S.	1.25	S.	1.25	O.	1.25	O.	1.25	O.	1.25	O.	1.25
Tuition	N.	1.00	N.	1.00	N.	1.00	N.	1.00	D.	1.00	D.	1.00	J.	1.00	J.	1.00
Lunch	N.	1.25	N.	1.25	N.	1.25	N.	1.25	D.	1.25	D.	1.25	J.	1.25	J.	1.25
Tuition	J.	1.00	J.	1.00	F.	1.00	F.	1.00	F.	1.00	F.	1.00	M.	1.00	M.	1.00
Lunch	J.	1.25	J.	1.25	F.	1.25	F.	1.25	F.	1.25	F.	1.25	M.	1.25	M.	1.25
Tuition	M.	1.00	A.	1.00	A.	1.00	A.	1.00	A.	1.00	M.	1.00	M.	1.00	M.	1.00
Lunch	M.	1.25	A.	1.25	A.	1.25	A.	1.25	A.	1.25	M.	1.25	M.	1.25	M.	1.25

Receipt Showing Fees for Darrell Evers at Christ the King School, 1962-1963 School Year (Receipt in Box 3, Financial Receipts Folder, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).

WELLS FURNITURE COMPANY, INC.
409 N. Farish Street Phone FL 5-7843
Jackson, Miss. 8-6-1963

Sold to Mr. Medgar Evers
Address Bayou St
Delivery Date 8-6-63

1 Bed 3/4 E. Ammer	34	75
1 Chair	31	95
1 Chair	12	95
1 #470 Bed E. Ammer	24	95
1 Bed Spring	34	95
1 Matt	34	95
TOTAL	180	70
Sales Tax	7	24
SUB-TOTAL	187	94
DOWN PAYMENT		
Less Down Payment		
Carrying Charges		
TOTAL		
Old balance		
Unpaid time balance		

Date Payments Start 19

I acknowledge delivery to me and acceptance by me of the above described articles for which I agree to pay to the WELLS FURNITURE COMPANY, INC., its successors or assigns the sum of \$ _____ as follows: \$ _____ cash in hand and payable \$ _____ each and every _____ from date hereof. The final payment shall be the amount of the balance then due.

W. Wells Salesman Signature of Purchaser
187.94 Signature of Purchaser
239.19 O.K. By _____ / Date _____, 19____

Receipt for a New Mattress and Bed Equipment for Reena After Medgar's Assassination, Wells Furniture Company, August 6, 1963 (source: Receipt in Box 3, Financial Receipts Folder, Evers Family Papers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History).



Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument
Jackson, Mississippi