
TOWN OF ASHLAND'S
AFRICAN AMERICAN
HERITAGE TRAIL



THE HANOVER COUNTY
BLACK HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC.

204 VIRGINIA STREET
ASHLAND, VIRGINIA 23005

*This project made possible by a grant from the
Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy*

INTRODUCTION

For centuries the lives and contributions of African Americans have been significant to the creation of history here in Ashland/Hanover County, Virginia.

Documentation of this history and identification of historical sites depicting the lives and lifestyles of Black Americans, however, has not been adequate. Historical sites, for example, pertaining to this history and accomplishments of African Americans are generally not highlighted or readily accessible to the public. The Hanover County Black Heritage Society (HCBHS) is concerned that many students, researchers, educators, tourists, and others interested in this history are unable to find a reliable, accurate, meaningful collection of information representative of the lives and experiences of African Americans in this County. Moreover we are persuaded that the achievements of “everyday people” are a source of inspiration for the masses. With this in mind, the HCBHS has begun the necessary research utilizing oral histories from seniors and other documents to record this rich history in Hanover County.

The “African American Heritage Trail” in the Town of Ashland is a walking tour that explores the history and lifestyles of Ashland’s 20th Century African Americans. This tour includes eight sites. Three are located in the downtown historic district and five are located in Berkley Town which, until recently, was an entirely black community. Included are the Cab Theatre, Ashland/Hanover Visitor Center, Shiloh Baptist Church, South Anna Elks Lodge #874, Eunice D. Bundy House, John M. Gandy High School, Hanover County Training School Site, and the Virginia Shelton Sears House. Only the Visitor Center is open to

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December 2000

the public. All others are private.

A bibliography for this publication is available at the Society, and an exhibit of the sites is on display at the HCBHS Museum. The Museum is within the Ashland Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and on the Virginia Landmarks Register.

It is our hope that this project will enhance public understanding of African American history by providing a vehicle through which all citizens, young and old, who are interested in the past, are provided access to this rich and meaningful history. In addition, it will help everyone by providing a foundation for determining the ways in which their lives and experiences touch and overlap with those of the African American community thereby reinforcing the concept that all people contributed and were significant to the creation of this great county.

The Society's Board of Directors thanks everyone who assisted us with this endeavor, especially the Virginia Foundation for The Humanities and Public Policy which made this project possible through its grant program. I would like to personally thank my co-researchers, Don Makosky and Kate Neckerman, who spent hours at the Hanover County Court House, Virginia Historical Society, Library of Virginia, Ashland/Hanover Visitor Center, University of Richmond, reading the *Herald Progress*, conducting interviews and meeting as a team. We also thank Rosanne Shalf for her help. Her book, *Ashland, Ashland* was a great beginning reference and a guide to further research.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Hemphill, Founder and Program Director
Hanover County Black Heritage Society, Inc.

December 2000

ASHLAND/HANOVER VISITOR CENTER

112 North Railroad Avenue

Open to the Public



THE Hanover County's *Herald Progress* once called Ashland "the little town the railroad built." The Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac (RF&P) was the railroad. Chartered in 1834, it operated between Richmond and Washington, and ran its first trains to Ashland by 1836. The RF&P purchased some 400 acres in what is now Ashland. The



ASHLAND/HANOVER VISITOR CENTER

abundance of white oak and slash pine provided fuel for locomotives. Still the area developed slowly. The railroad took a few steps toward developing a resort community, beginning with a “recreational cottage” and later a hotel. The discovery of mineral springs aided the effort and suggested that it was a healthy place in which to live. People began to move to Ashland. The Civil War changed the character of the town and the railroad: during the conflict two stations were destroyed by fire, and both were quickly replaced. Following the War — 1866 and 1890 — new stations were built to keep pace with changing needs. All stations were built at approximately the same location, now 112 North Railroad Avenue.

The Ashland/Hanover Visitor Center is located in the building used as a depot or train station for many years. W. Duncan Lee, a prominent Richmond architect and Ashland native, designed the present building which was built in 1923 at a cost of \$15,539. The structure has been praised for its grace: in an article published 14 June, 1985, the *Richmond News Leader* quoted an architectural firm: “Its orderliness, form, proportion and balance, along with the beauty in its color and texture, creates a picturesque edifice in the town. It’s a jewel.” The Center is within the Ashland Historic District which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and on the Virginia Landmarks Register.

The customs of the time dictated one aspect of the design. It provided a waiting room for African American travelers on the south side of the building and a waiting room for white travelers on the north. Each waiting room had its own entrance, access to the ticket office, two restrooms, and a water fountain. It is said that the two rooms occupied the same amount of space, but some



ASHLAND/HANOVER VISITOR CENTER

disagree believing that the south room is smaller. And that was a frequent practice in the southern states. Over the years some structural changes have been made which may obscure original dimensions. Visitors today will see the two waiting rooms, each with its own window to the ticket office. Two of the original wooden benches stand ready. The original baggage cart stands outside the station today in the very same place where it stood years back. In earlier times, station hands pushed the cart with its load of mail to and from the post office.

The Jim Crow customs persisted in travel. Historians who study the segregation that faced African American travelers agree that its unpredictable, contradictory forms of discrimination made it particularly oppressive. Litigation might ease one burden and increase another. *Morgan v Commonwealth of Virginia* was brought to the United States Supreme Court in 1946. The high court ruled against Virginia, declaring that segregation on interstate buses was unconstitutional. Later that year a federal circuit court ruled that the decision covered both rail and bus travel. Catherine Barnes’ *Journey from Jim Crow* (Columbia, 1983) details ways in which both rail and bus lines instituted rules as a basis for segregation. How did all this affect Ashland travelers? We cannot know. Some observers would note that the RF&P announced in 1946 that it would stop segregating its interstate riders. Some would ask about in state riders. Some would note that African Americans might have waited without difficulty in the “white” waiting room.

The RF&P ran its last passenger train to Ashland in August 1959. Mail and some freight service continued until 1967 when the company canceled service at the station. In 1983 the RF&P donated the building to the town. Today the Visitor Center hon-



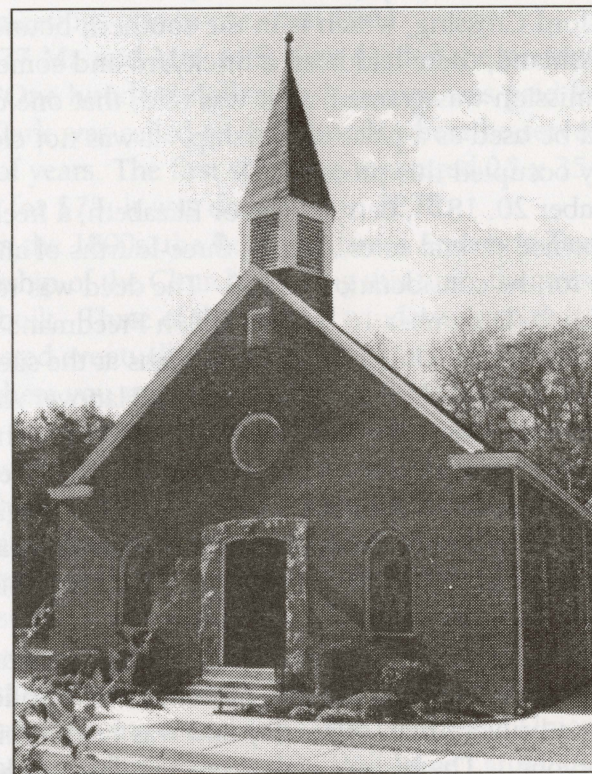
ASHLAND/HANOVER VISITOR CENTER

ors its history with exhibits of railway memorabilia in the ticket office and in the south waiting room. The Smithsonian's National Museum of American History honors Ashland's history by using one of the station's waiting room benches in a long-term exhibition, "Field to Factory: Afro-American Migration, 1915-1940." It considers the "Great Migration" when hundreds of thousands of African Americans migrated to cities in the North. The focus is on individuals who left home, traveled great distances and made new homes and lives and changed the society forever.

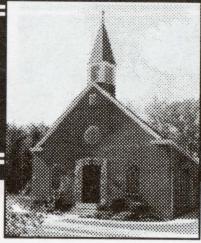
SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH

106 South James Street

Not Open to the Public



The Baptists were believed to be the first denomination to establish churches for African Americans in Hanover County. The Shiloh Baptist Church, first called Shiloh Freedman's Baptist Church, had at least two other homes before it

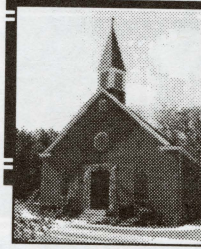


SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH

claimed its present site on James Street. The first site was near the south line of Ashland. The history of Shiloh, being searched out and recorded in these days, tells the reader that "somewhere around Langsford Crossing, which is in the southern boundary of the Town of Ashland, there had been a brickyard and some shanties. Permission was granted, so it was told, that one of these shanties could be used as a place of worship. It was not clear just how long they occupied this property."

On November 20, 1874, Betsy Hogg, or Elizabeth, a freeborn woman who owned several acres, deeded three-fourths of an acre to the Church for the consideration of \$30. The deed was recorded in Hanover County December 16, 1874. Shiloh Freedman's Baptist Church created an "arbor church" made of boughs at the site of the present church cemetery, close to Cubs Lane and Hanover Avenue. The record of the deed describes that location as "being in the County of Hanover immediately on the road leading from Peter Tinsley's gate to the town of Ashland." Born in 1802 in Virginia, according to the 1850 census, Betsy Hogg was the great, great, great, great grandmother of Ashland's Carolyn Tibbs Hemphill, Hanover County Black Heritage Society founder.

The people's history of the Shiloh Baptist Church tells us that the Reverend Burrell Toler was the first pastor. He was called "a great preacher, a brilliant man of his day and was held in high esteem by everyone." The history goes on to say that "He held office that was not, to our knowledge, held by any other Negro to this day, Chaplain of the Legislature..." Burrell Toler, or Burwell as the name sometimes appears, is listed in directories such as *Freeman Lawmakers: A Directory of Black Officeholders during Reconstruction*. Born a slave in 1821 or 1822, probably in Hanover County, he achieved much in the church and in public



SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH

life. For instance, the Reverend Toler represented Hanover and Henrico Counties in the important constitutional convention December 3, 1867 to April 17, 1868. The constitution as revised in these meetings was in use until 1902.

In 1877 Mr. and Mrs. M.E. Cox deeded the present site to Shiloh. "One hundred dollars cash money was paid for the land." John F. Clark was called to the Church where he served for a number of years. The first structure measured 25 x 35 feet and was built for \$75; it was dedicated in 1878.

Late in the 1800s, the Reverend James Anderson Taylor assumed the leadership of the Church. During this time, the present structure was built. Three of the original windows from that building were donated eventually to the Hanover County Black Heritage Society where you can see them today. It is said that during his years, the largest number of candidates ever baptized in one day came forward.

Shiloh Baptist Church has played an active role in the community, often inviting groups and the public to its services. The African American newspaper, *The Richmond Planet*, dated 20 August 1927, announces the Charitable Union's plans to visit Shiloh.

We are going to Ashland, Va. on August 28, 1927, Fourth Sunday, 75 cents round trip. The Charitable Union will run a trolley to Ashland August 28. Will leave Laurel and Broad St., Station for Ashland at 9:30 returning will leave Ashland at 6:30 P.M. We will hold services with the Shiloh Baptist Church, 11:30 to 1:30 and 3:30-5:30 P.M. At 11:30 Rev. E. Moore will preach to the Union. At 3:30 Bro. J.L. Lovings will preach to the Church.

So come and go with us if you want to have a good outing.



SHILOH BAPTIST CHURCH

By 1956, the Reverend Thomas J. King had come to Shiloh. He is remembered as a "soft-spoken, intelligent and artistic man." He did the current painting on the back wall of the pulpit. Mrs. King organized the Kings Songsters, a group of young women. Examples of community involvement abound. *The Herald Progress* reported that the John M. Gandy High School choir would supply all the music when the youth department of the Church gave its regular program Sunday, February 26, 1956. "The public is invited." The next month the newspaper reported all details of the March 26-30 Lenten services.

At the time this little brochure is being written, the year is 2000. It seems important to review the most recent years just as the account reviewed the earliest years. Reynolds R. Robinson was called to the Church in 1972. The Church began a major building and renovation project. An education building was constructed. In 1993 the Reverend Robinson retired. In 1994, the Reverend Michael Shannon, Sr. was installed as the new leader. From the church's history, one learns that he "brings with him a great family heritage of Baptist ministers and teachers." The Reverend Shannon continues his services as the year 2001 approaches.

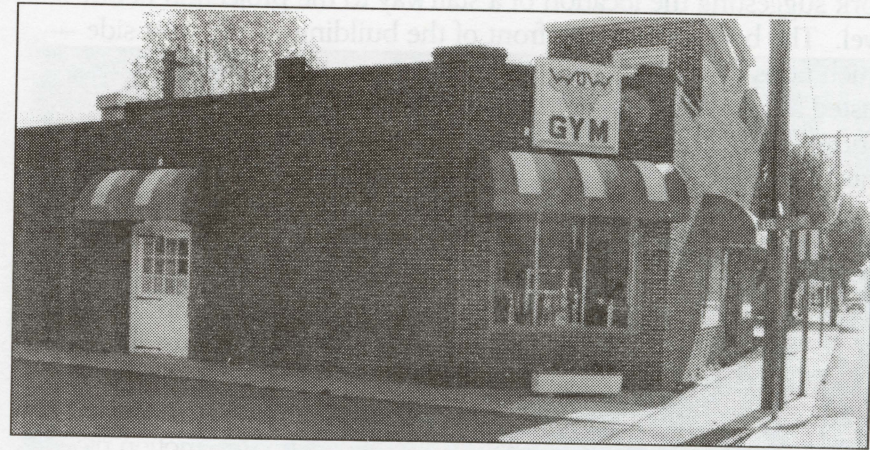
Many, many ministers have served the Church over the years. Descriptions of their service, dedication, and leadership would fill volumes.

WORK OUT WONDER GYM

THE FORMER ASHLAND THEATRE
AND THE CAB THEATRE

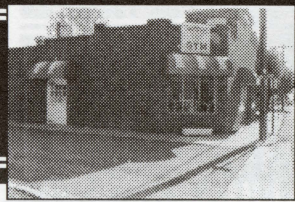
301 Center Street

Not Open to the Public



What makes this building significant to the African American community? Two theatres, both with segregated seating, occupied the building. First it was the Ashland Theatre, a "combination white and colored house" for 21 years, from 1927 to 1948. Then in 1948 a new Ashland Theatre was built for white patrons, and the former combination house became the CAB or Cab, for African American patrons. Town residents who remember either theatre speak of the good times at the movies. Imagine the trains roaring by! Imagine popcorn descending from above! Since its movie days, the building has been occupied by several businesses. Today's business is a gym. You are welcome to look through the windows. The building is within the Ashland Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and in the Virginia Landmarks Register.

Mr. and Mrs. D.H. Covington, long interested in motion pic-



WORK OUT WONDER GYM

tures, built the town's first movie theatre in 1927. Construction began in April of that year. The frame structure had metal covered sides and large windows. Later, the exterior was covered with brick. The exterior on the south side shows a "shadow stair" on the brickwork suggesting the location of a stairway to the projection booth level. The booth was at the front of the building — the west side — which faces the tracks. A marquee-like or arched entrance once existed at the northwest corner and was used by white patrons. African Americans used the outside stairs until a separate entrance near the northwest corner was constructed; then they climbed boxed-in stairs to the balcony. The ticket booth was located in the northwest section of the building. The seating area of the former theatre is distinguished by the original stamped tin ceiling of 24-inch square tiles with a crown molding of impressive depth.

The separation of the races in theatres was a Jim Crow "custom." Around the turn of the century, many such customs were regularized into law. Virginia did so in 1926. It required "the separation of white and colored persons at public halls, theatres, opera houses, motion picture shows and places of public entertainment and public assemblages." Legal language detailed the responsibilities and penalties.

When the CAB opened on August 10, 1948, "Reet Polite and Gone" was playing. Later that week, the feature was "Fabulous Texan" at both movie houses. One of today's town residents remembers his boyhood job. The theatres hired the boy and his bicycle, which was equipped with a large basket. After the first show at the Ashland, he would pile the reels in the basket and pedal furiously to the CAB. After the CAB had its turn, off he went to the Ashland for the second showing there. Not all movies were shown at both houses, but here's another. In 1956, both featured Disney's "The African Lion" and "The Littlest Outlaw." The price of admission? Just 40 cents for adults and 20 cents for children. It would be another good time at the movies in Ashland with lions charging, outlaws roughhousing, and the ever-present trains roaring — and the boy pedaling furiously back and forth.

SOUTH ANNA ELKS LODGE #874 ASHLAND

612 Henry Street

Not Open to the Public



Lodge #874 of the Improved Benevolent Protective Order of Elks in Ashland has been for about seventy years one of the principal social organizations for working class African American men in the community.

Founded by a few men about 1928, Ashland Elks Lodge



SOUTH ANNA ELKS LODGE #874 ASHLAND

#874 at first owned no property. In 1931, John S. Coleman, Littleton Hughes, and E.E. Moore, as trustees of the Lodge, purchased a home on the east side of what was then called the "continuation of Henry Street." In 1938 Trustees Littleton Hughes, C.E. Miller, William F. Buckner, and William Brown sold the property on the east side of Henry Street to the Hanover National Bank in exchange for the property across Henry Street known as the "Community Inn," which had been vacant for some time. This building at 612 Henry Street is still the Ashland Elks Lodge.

The Hanover County Black Heritage Society has come into possession of a file of 169 applications for admission to membership into Elks Lodge #874, running from 1934 until 1994. From these documents can be drawn a composite picture of the men who belonged to the Lodge.

For the first twenty years or so, about 46 percent of the applicants were in their twenties, while 18 percent were in their thirties and another 18 percent in their forties. After 1960, the largest number of applicants, 45 percent, were in their thirties, with 21 percent in their twenties and 20 percent in their forties.

Where did these men come from? Fifty-three applicants gave Hanover County outside of Ashland as their place of birth, and thirty-eight more named the Town of Ashland specifically. Other Hanover County places cited by applicants included Doswell, Ruther Glen, Elmout, and Hickory Hill. Thirteen men said they were born in Caroline County. Twelve named Richmond, but only one of these joined before 1975. In later years more men gave out-of-state birth places on their



SOUTH ANNA ELKS LODGE #874 ASHLAND

applications. These places included New York City; Newark, NJ; Baltimore, MD; Fayetteville, Greensboro. and Asheville, NC; Tallahassee, FL; and simply the states of Alabama, Florida, and North Carolina.

The Elks Lodge was truly a club of working class men. One person gave his occupation as teacher, one as school principal, and one as attorney. A supervisor, a couple of salesmen, and a few self-employed businessmen were also members. As for the bulk of the members, they represent a full spectrum of the jobs held by African American men in the years the Lodge has existed. Some worked on the railroad as redcaps, firemen, cooks, or lineman. A good many of the earlier members were farmers. A dozen were truck drivers. Among the trades represented were masons, electricians, painters, a barber, a rug fitter, a carpenter, a plasterer, a butcher, and a shoe repairman. There were cooks, bakers, restaurant workers, and grocery store employees. Members held just about every job in the lumber industry, and in the later years many have been industrial machine operators.

From the application forms, many of the leaders of the Lodge can be identified. Those who were Exalted Rulers include Leroy Carrington, Sr., George Howard, Alvin L. Jackson, Andrew Jackson, Curtis Lewis, Sr., David Morris, Raymond Thomas, Joseph Tinsley, Sr., and James C. Woolfolk. Both A.W. Jackson and Wilbert Tinsley served for many years as Secretary. The persons who proposed the largest numbers of new members were (in the order of the numbers they proposed) A.W. Jackson, David Morris, Curtis Lewis, Sr., Franklin Jackson, Frank



SOUTH ANNA ELKS LODGE #874 ASHLAND

Redford, Earl Goings, and Leroy Carrington, Sr.

Particularly during segregation times, the Lodge was a focal point in the life of Ashland's African American community. Spouses and daughters of members could affiliate as "Daughter Elks." The Lodge often sponsored dances and picnics. The Elks look after each other at the time of a member's death through their Burial Fund. Should an Elk move to another state, wearing his Elks ring gave him assurance of being "protected."

THE EUNICE DANIEL BUNDY HOUSE

704 Henry Street

Not Open to the Public

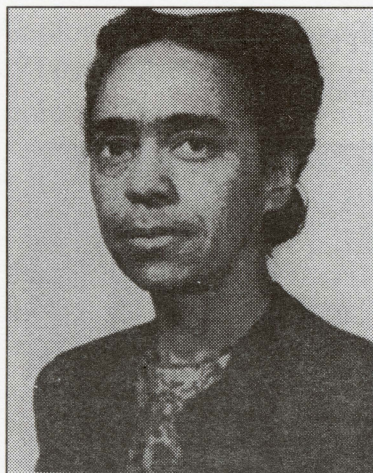


Eunie Daniel, the daughter of William Henry and Helen (Coleman) Daniel, was born in Emporia, Virginia, on March 7, 1904. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Virginia Union University in 1930 and the Master of Arts degree from Teachers College, Columbia University in 1939. Her career as an educator began in 1930 when she came to Hanover County as a teacher in the Hanover County "Negro" school system. In 1936 she was appointed principal of Hanover County Training School which became John M. Gandy High School in 1950. This facility housed both the elementary and high school. Upon separation of the two schools in the 1966-67 school term, Mrs. Bundy chose to remain principal of the elementary school and held her position until her death in 1969.

The Black Heritage Society chose to include the Eunie Daniel Bundy House because it was her home. Her stature as an educator



THE EUNICE DANIEL BUNDY HOUSE



Mrs. Eunice D. Bundy

and as a community leader made her an exemplary citizen. It was in 1959 while principal of the John M. Gandy School that she became owner of the simple yet gracious home. She bought the house on Henry Street — near the school — on May 1, 1959 from Mr. and Mrs. Charlie McCarthy. They had purchased the house in 1959 from previous owner J. Enos Ray who received ownership in 1957. Two still earlier owners are known: Lindsay Johnson who had acquired the property from Hattie Foreman in 1946. Mrs. Virginia D. Bowman, Mrs. Bundy's sole heir, inherited the

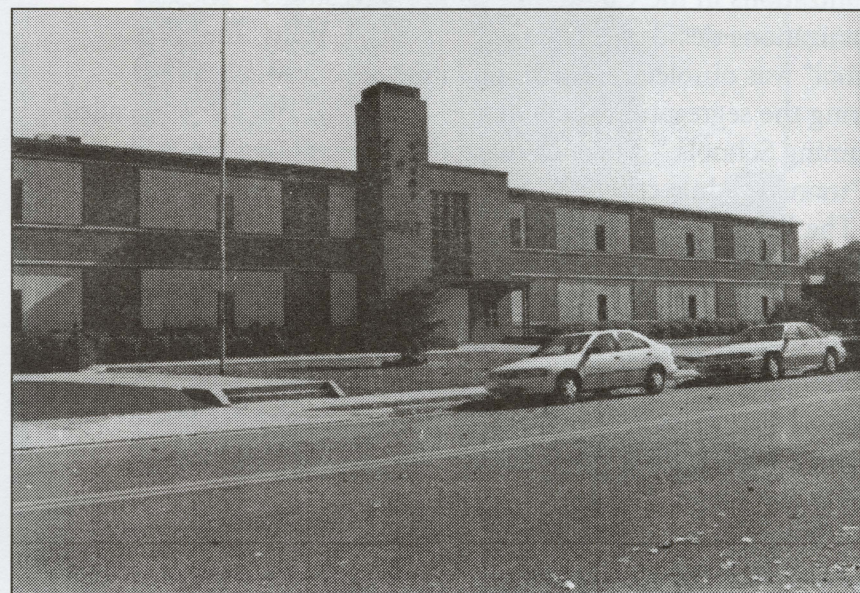
house at the time of her death in 1969. Then in 1977 Robert Lee and Mary Burruss bought the property.

Mrs. Bundy was active in community affairs and served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Hanover County Chapter of the American Red Cross, and as Vice-President of the Hanover County Tuberculosis Association. She was active in the Virginia Teachers Association, and held membership in the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the Hanover chapter of the NAACP, and the Southern Conference on Human Welfare. She served as president of the Hanover County Teachers Association from 1935 until 1943, and was treasurer of the Secondary School Principals from 1945-1947.

Mrs. Bundy left a rich legacy to Hanover County. Those teachers and administrators who worked with her and the students who were under her discipline attest to the fact that her endurance, faithfulness, integrity, foresight, perseverance, and leadership had a profound influence upon them. Her portrait still hangs in the library of the present John M. Gandy School.

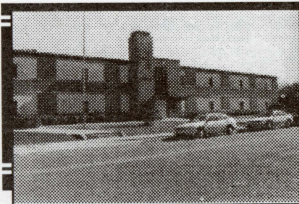
JOHN M. GANDY HIGH SCHOOL

Henry Street
7497 County Complex Road
Not Open to the Public



After many years of debate and conflict between the Hanover County School Board and the “Negro” citizens of Hanover County concerning building an adequate school facility for the “Negro” children of Hanover County, the decision was made in 1948 to construct a new building.

Prior to the construction of the new building, “Negro” children attended the Hanover County Training School that consisted



JOHN M. GANDY HIGH SCHOOL

of a collection of old buildings that had been moved from the site of the all-white Henry Clay School.

John M. Gandy High School was the name chosen by the Hanover County School Board for the new \$300,000 Negro high school. The Board consulted a number of African American organizations in the County for name suggestions. These organizations decided the name "Hanover County Training School" was obsolete. (*The Herald Progress*, April 13, 1950) During the segregation years many schools for blacks were called "Training Schools." Some thought this implied that blacks had to be "trained" while other children were educated.

The Reverend Robert F. Bowles in his article "History of the High School Movement, the Hanover County Training School, John M. Gandy High School" stated the new modern equipped building consisted of twenty classrooms, a library, an auditorium-gymnasium, a clinic room, a science laboratory, and principal's office. This imposing structure, he said, stands as a credit to our Country, an honor to our State and the fulfillment of hopes, dreams, sacrifices and service to our people.

The school was named for the late Dr. John M. Gandy who was born in Jackson, Mississippi. Gandy came to Virginia in 1898 to teach Latin and Greek at what was then known as Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, now Virginia State University. He taught there for sixteen years and became third president of the institute in 1914. He held the position for twenty-eight years. (*The Herald Progress*, April 13, 1950)

Even though the building was not ready for regular classes, commencement exercises for the class of 1950 were held in the auditorium.

THE SHELTON HOUSE

203 Berkley Street

Not Open to the Public



One of the best examples of a "Sears House" in Hanover County is the Shelton House. It has been lovingly maintained for more than sixty years by one of Ashland's established African American families.

Between 1908 and 1940 Sears, Roebuck and Company issued each year a *Book of Modern Homes and Building Plans*, a catalog through which it sold the blueprints, instructions, and building materials for dozens of home styles. The Shelton House is called "The Maytown" and was illustrated in most catalogs put out between 1911 and 1922. It is known to have been built in places as near as Baltimore, MD, and Roanoke, VA, and as distant as Sioux City, IA, and Portage, WI. Based on Hanover County tax records, Ashland historian Rosanne Shalf has concluded that



THE SHELTON HOUSE

this home was built in 1918 and its value was assessed at \$1,000. It and the Janie Young house on Jamestown Road (also built and owned by African Americans) are the two-story Sears houses noted in the *Survey of Historic Resources, Hanover County, Virginia* (1992).

In 1937 the house was sold at auction out of the estate of the African American John Coleman, its presumed builder, and came into the possession of Pillsbury Shelton. He paid \$900 for the property and the home. It has remained in the Shelton family ever since; Pillsbury Shelton's widow, Virginia, lives there still.

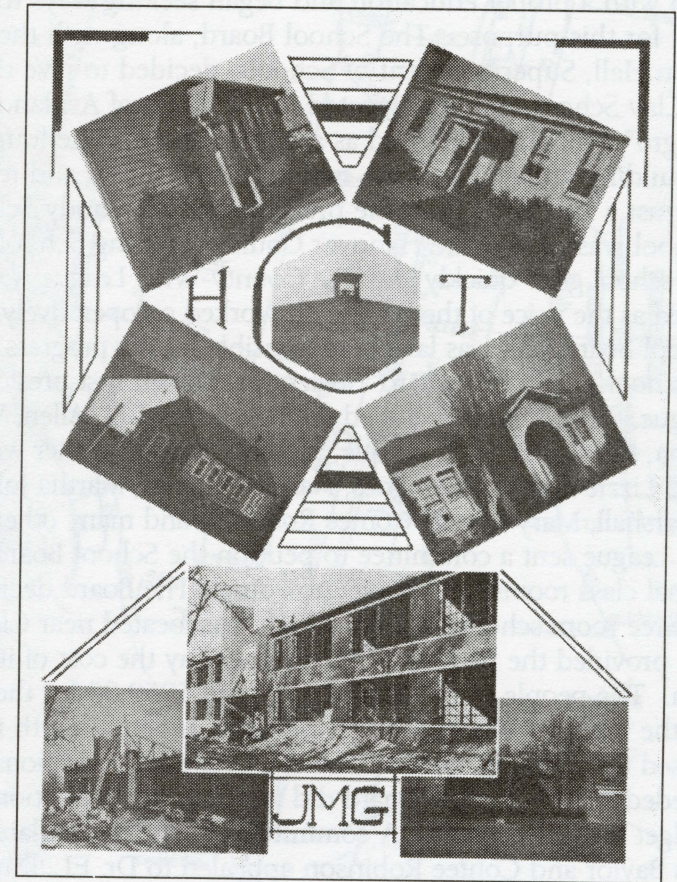
The Shelton House retains intact most of its original decorative features. These include the full front porch, the corner turret with decorated overhang, the beveled plate glass in the front door, and the bay windows with patterned panes. Originally the house did not have running water, and the old pump still stands in the back yard. Shortly after the Sheltons acquired the house, they turned the pantry into a bathroom.

The Shelton family exemplify the strengths of character that distinguish so many people in Ashland's African American community. Born in 1905 on Hickory Hill plantation, Virginia Shelton, as a teenager, walked five miles each school day from Hickory Hill Church (now Providence Baptist Church) to Ashland, then commuted by trolley to attend Virginia Randolph School in Henrico County. Indeed, education has been one of the highest priorities of the family. Her older son, Charles Pillsbury Shelton, Jr., went to business school in New York City. Her other three children — Earl Scott Shelton, Virginia Alfreda Shelton Harris and Doris Juanita Shelton Anthony — commuted by bus to Virginia Union University for their degrees. Doris Shelton was a member of the first class to graduate from John M. Gandy High School, in 1950, and taught in a segregated one-room school in Hanover County for the next five years.

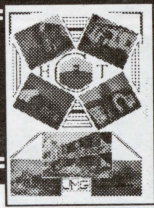
The best thing about the Ashland community, said Virginia Harris, Mrs. Shelton's older daughter, was that "everybody knew each other. It was safe. As people said, 'The dark was our friend.'"

HANOVER COUNTY TRAINING SCHOOL SITE

200 Block Berkley Street



According to the Reverend Robert F. Bowles, author of "History of The High School Movement: The Hanover County Training School, John M. Gandy High School"



HANOVER COUNTY TRAINING SCHOOL SITE

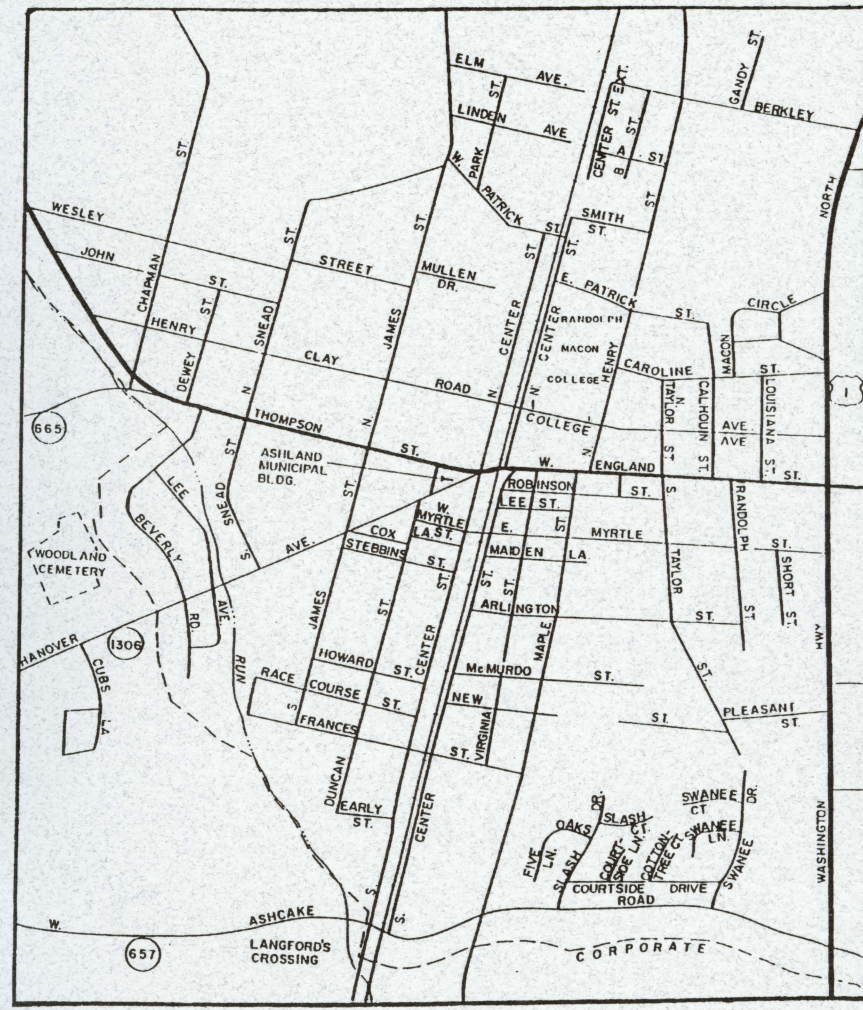
ASHLAND CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE

during the 1920's and 30's, a few members of Hanover and adjacent communities became interested in providing their "Negro" children with a proper education and began seeking ways to build a school for this purpose. The School Board, along with the late J. Walton Hall, Superintendent of Schools, decided to give the old Henry Clay School building, located in the Town of Ashland, for the "Negro" children to be used as a school house. The four-room frame building was taken down, materials transferred and re-erected just a few yards from the present John M. Gandy School. The school was named the Hanover County Training School.

The school grew quickly and The County-Wide League was organized as the voice of the people. It worked co-operatively with the School Board, and was largely responsible for the progress made by the school. The late Richard Tinsley was chosen first president of the League. The workers included the Reverends T.M. Allen, W.L. Anderson, Carter Bray, J.C. Temple, and E.E. Moore. Other workers included Lizzie Bray, A.D. Hughes, Nannie Hughes, Martha Johnson, Nora Marshall, Mary Moore, Contee Robinson and many others.

The League sent a committee to petition the School Board for additional class rooms due to overcrowding. The Board decided to give a three room school building which was located near Clay Springs provided the patrons of the County pay the cost of its erection. The people of the community paid \$950.00 for the erection of the building. Later the School Board added a fourth room to be used for home economics classes. Eventually, additional land was needed and the School Board did not have appropriations in the budget for this purpose. A committee consisting of Clara Holmes Baylor and Contee Robinson appealed to Dr. F.L. Day and he loaned the committee funds to purchase a lot. With this addition there were eight classrooms. During World War II, a cinder block classroom building and a two-room cannery were added.

In the summer of 1950 John M. Gandy High School was built.



THE HANOVER COUNTY BLACK HERITAGE SOCIETY, INC.
204 VIRGINIA STREET
ASHLAND, VIRGINIA 23005
