

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Dunbar Historic District
Other name/site number: NA
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: Roughly bounded by South Fredericksburg Street, West Martin Luther King Drive,
Herndon Street, and Centre Street
City or town: San Marcos State: Texas County: Hays
Not for publication: NA Vicinity: NA

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
(nomination request for determination of eligibility) meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my
opinion, the property meets does not meet) the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:
 national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

_____ Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer		_____
Signature of certifying official / Title		Date
Texas Historical Commission		
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government		

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

_____	_____
Signature of commenting or other official	Date

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government	

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that this property is:
- ___ entered in the National Register
 - ___ determined eligible for the National Register
 - ___ determined not eligible for the National Register
 - ___ removed from the National Register
 - ___ other

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

Category of Property

<input type="checkbox"/>	building
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
29	15	buildings
0	2	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
29	17	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: DOMESTIC: single dwelling
 COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
 RELIGION: religious facility
 GOVERNMENT: correctional facility
Current Functions: DOMESTIC: single dwelling
 COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
 RELIGION: religious facility
 RECREATION/CULTURE: museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification: LATE VICTORIAN: Folk Victorian; LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Bungalow/Craftsman; LATE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY REVIVALS: Tudor Revival; Gothic Revival; MID-CENTURY MODERN RESIDENTIAL: ranch house; NO STYLE

Principal Exterior Materials: FOUNDATION: CONCRETE, WOOD
 WALLS: WOOD, CONCRETE BLOCK, BRICK, STONE
 ROOF: METAL, ASPHALT

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7-7 through 7-19)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	B	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
<input type="checkbox"/>	D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations: NA

Areas of Significance: Community Planning and Development, Ethnic Heritage/Black (*local level of significance*)

Period of Significance: 1908–1972

Significant Dates: 1908

Significant Person: NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: NA

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 8-20 through 8-42)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheets 9-43 through 9-59)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. Part 1 approved on (date)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other—Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number: NA

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 9.2 acres

Latitude/Longitude Bounding Coordinates (see continuation sheet 10-60)

Verbal Boundary Description: (see continuation sheet 10-60)

Boundary Justification: (see continuation sheet 10-60)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Brandy Black, Architectural Historian; Jenya B. Green, Architectural Historian; and Izabella Z. Nuckels, Historic Preservation Specialist

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Date: October 30, 2023

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets MAP-61 through MAP-63)

Figures (see continuation sheets FIGURE-64 through FIGURE-93)

Photographs (see continuation sheets PHOTO-94 through PHOTO-117)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, D.C.

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Photograph Log

Dunbar Historic District

San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photographed in April 2023 by Izabella Nuckels and Mitch Ford, Stantec

Photograph 1:

Streetview along the south side of West Martin King Drive. View looking southeast from Feltner Alley to the eastern edge of the historic district.

Photograph 2:

The Cephas House and the Old First Baptist Church on the south side of West Martin Luther King Drive. View looking southwest.

Photograph 3:

Streetview along north side of West Martin Luther King Drive at Feltner Alley. View looking northeast.

Photograph 4:

Streetview along West Martin Luther King Drive from Comanche Street. View looking east.

Photograph 5:

Streetview along north side of West Martin Luther King Drive at Comanche Street. View looking northwest.

Photograph 6:

Streetview along the south side of West Martin Luther King Drive. View looking southwest from Comanche Street.

Photograph 7:

Streetview along south side of West Martin Luther King Drive. View looking southwest from Shady Lane.

Photograph 8:

Streetview along the south side of West Martin Luther King between Shady Lane and Herndon Street. View looking southeast.

Photograph 9:

Streetview along north side of West Martin Luther King Drive between Nance and Herndon Streets. View looking north.

Photograph 10:

Streetview along east side Herndon Street. View looking southeast.

Photograph 11:

Streetview of the north side of Centre Street. View looking northwest from Shady Lane.

Photograph 12:

Streetview at the north side of Centre Street and Shady Lane. View looking northwest.

Photograph 13:

A ca. 1910 National folk-form house at 316 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #15A). View looking north.

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Photograph 14:

A ca. 1910 National folk-form house at 218 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #25). View looking north.

Photograph 15:

A ca. 1920 National folk-form house at 523 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #3). View looking southeast.

Photograph 16:

The ca. 1925 Craftsman-influenced Cephas House at 217 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #30). View looking southwest.

Photograph 17:

A ca. 1925 bungalow-form house at 302 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #18). View looking north.

Photograph 18:

A ca. 1935 vernacular house at 125 Nance Street (Map ID #13). View looking northeast.

Photograph 19:

A ca. 1940 Tudor Revival house at 129 Nance Street (Map ID #12A). View looking northeast.

Photograph 20:

A ca. 1910 outbuilding at 129 Nance Street (Map ID #12B). View looking northwest.

Photograph 21:

The 1908 Old First Baptist Church on the corner of West Martin Luther King Drive and Comanche Street at 219 West Martin Luther Drive (Map ID #27). View looking south.

Photograph 22:

A ca. 1960 former barbershop at 201 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #33). View looking south.

Photograph 23:

A ca. 1920 commercial building at 404 Centre Street (Map ID #21). View looking northwest.

Photograph 24:

The 1912 Calaboose African American History Museum at 200 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #31). View looking northwest.

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Narrative Description

Initially developed during the Reconstruction era, the Dunbar Historic District is a historically Black community with residential, religious, commercial, cultural, and community resources southwest of the San Marcos, Hays County, Texas, courthouse square.¹ The proposed 9.2-acre historic district, a subset of the larger community, is generally bounded by South Fredericksburg Street to the east, West Martin Luther King Drive to the north, and Herndon Street to the west; Centre Street on the southwest; and a dogleg to Valley Street on the southeast.² Of the district's 46 total resources, 29 are contributing buildings constructed between 1908 and ca. 1970. The resources within the nominated historic district retain sufficient integrity to convey the Dunbar community's significance at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Ethnic Heritage/Black. The period of significance extends from 1908, when the Old First Baptist Church was constructed, to 1972 corresponds with historical patterns in the Dunbar community, namely the mid-1970s floods and urban renewal, which initiated demolition and new development trends.

Setting

The Dunbar Historic District is in San Marcos, Hays County, Texas, north of Purgatory Creek and approximately 0.15 miles southwest of the courthouse square (**Figure 1**). The proposed district is bound by South Fredericksburg Street to the east; the north and south sides of West Martin Luther King Drive, including two parcels on the east side of Nance Street, to the north; and Herndon Street to the west. Its south boundary extends southbound from Herndon Street to Comanche Street, then doglegs to incorporate the eastern portion of the block that Centre Street, Fredericksburg, and Shady Lane surround. It is inclusive of the Wesley Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church (Wesley Chapel; Map ID #34A). Single-family residential resources, mostly privately owned, primarily comprise the historic district. Two churches, including the Wesley Chapel; several commercial buildings; and a historic calaboose functioning as a non-profit museum (Map ID #31) in the district are remnants of a Black community that developed to function independent of the white community, to the degree possible. The 46 resources in the historic district were constructed between 1908 and 2013 (**Figure 2**).

The nominated boundary is a subset of the historic Dunbar community, which encompassed approximately 84 acres (**Figure 3**).³ This larger area historically extended west to South Mitchell Street and south to Gravel Street, adjacent to Purgatory Creek. It is primarily a residential area with single-family dwellings, many constructed after the period of significance. Several nonhistoric-age multiple-family dwellings are on the north side of West Martin Luther King Drive, west of the historic district. South is Dunbar Park, the former site of the city's segregated public school that operated until the mid-1960s. The Home Economics Building is the only extant resource associated with the Dunbar School and was individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2024.⁴

The areas north, south, and east of the historic district developed during the second half of the nineteenth century. North of the district is West San Antonio Street, and to the west is the San Antonio Street Local Historic District, a residential corridor established in the late nineteenth century. South of the historic district is Purgatory Creek and the

¹ The Black population in the United States is diverse with many of African descent and others who immigrated from various places. The term Black is used throughout for an inclusive representation of the diverse ethnicities that historically experienced similar racialized discrimination.

² Current street names are used throughout this document. West Martin Luther King Drive was previously West Comal Street, and before that, Comal Street. South Fredericksburg and South Guadalupe Streets both acquired the directional descriptor between 1906 and 1912.

³ For almost a century, the approximately 84-acre area described as the entirety of the community had no known formal name or planned boundaries; it became known as the Dunbar community sometime after the school for Black pupils was renamed in 1961.

⁴ [National Register, San Marcos Colored School Home Economics Building, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas, National Register of Historic Places #100010800.](#)

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railroad tracks, which separate the Dunbar community from the historically Mexican American East Guadalupe neighborhood.

Although no longer extant, a commercial area of Black-owned businesses, called “the Beat,” evolved between ca. 1910 and 1955 along the south side of West Martin Luther King Drive between South Fredericksburg and South Guadalupe Streets.⁵ In 1922, eight businesses including restaurants, barbershops, a tailor, and several vacant buildings comprised “the Beat.”⁶ By the 1950s, the commercial area began a period of decline. Nonhistoric-age commercial resources comprise the area east of South Fredericksburg Street.

Purgatory Creek, a waterway that flows southeast from Comal County to the San Marcos River east of the district, borders the southern edge of the community and is prone to flooding.⁷ It enters the community south of Daily Street (outside of the district), flows through Dunbar Park with a retention pond at the south end of the park, and continues south of Gravel Street. The creek’s floodplain encompasses the entire park and most of the larger community on its west side. It also extends north of Valley Street from the park to Shady Lane and across the Wesley Chapel parcel within the district.⁸

Layout and Circulation Pattern Development

Historically and currently anchored by present-day West Martin Luther King Drive, San Marcos’ Black residents established the Dunbar community during the Reconstruction era at the southwest corner of the original town plat and on adjacent “Farm Lots,” southwest of the city core. The portion of the Dunbar community in the original town plat was composed of Blocks 12, 16, and 19 from South Fredericksburg Street west to encompass the west side of Comanche Street (**Figures 6 and 9**).⁹ Settlement began on the original town lots, along east-west West Martin Luther King Drive, and progressed westward from South Guadalupe Street along West Martin Luther King Drive.¹⁰ Single-family residences, churches, and businesses associated with San Marcos’ Black residents would eventually occupy Farm Lots 5, 12, and 13 (**Figure 6**).¹¹ By the early twentieth century, the six-block D. S. Combs Addition was platted, bound by Shady Lane to the east, West Martin Luther King Drive to the north, Jackman Street to the west, and Purgatory Creek (later Gravel Street) to the south, defining the street system in the historic district.¹² The B. W. Breeding Addition, composed of the two blocks with Jackman Street to the east, West Martin Luther King Drive to the north, Endicott Street to the west, and Valley Street to the south, defined the street system for the Dunbar community and its present-day configuration (**Figure 17**).¹³

Institutions, land ownership, and businesses anchored and supported the community’s establishment and evolution. In 1866, the Colored Baptist Zion Church, now known as First Baptist, National Baptist Convention Church (First Baptist Church, herein) was organized on Guadalupe Street (now South Guadalupe Street),¹⁴ and Black ownership of town

⁵ Sanborn Map Company, *San Marcos, Hays County, Texas* (ProQuest Digital Sanborn Maps, 1867–1970), 1944, Fire Insurance Map; Sanborn-Perris Map Company, *San Marcos, Hays County, Texas* (Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection), 1896, Fire Insurance Map.

⁶ Sanborn Map Company, *San Marcos, Hays County, Texas* (Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection), 1922, Fire Insurance Map.

⁷ Texas State Historical Association, “Purgatory Creek,” in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 1995.

⁸ City of San Marcos Engineering Department, *City Regulated Floodplains (PreAtlas 14)*, 2023, ArcGIS Map.

⁹ A. George Mason, Town of San Marcos, Map 1496, Map Collection, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, ca. 1881, Plat Map.

¹⁰ Mason, Map of San Marcos.

¹¹ Mason, Map of San Marcos; Sanborn Map Company, *San Marcos, Hays County, Texas* (ProQuest Digital Sanborn Maps, 1867–1970), 1930, Fire Insurance Map.

¹² Sanborn Map Company, *San Marcos, Hays County, Texas* (Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection), 1912, Fire Insurance Map.

¹³ Sanborn Map Company, *1930*.

¹⁴ Elvin Holt, “First Baptist Church NBC History,” 2023.

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lots had commenced by at least March 1868.¹⁵ Before 1881, West Martin Luther King Drive stopped west of Comanche Street and connected directly to North Street, which today intersects San Antonio Street but not West Martin Luther King Drive. Three buildings were south of West Martin Luther King Drive in 1881. At the northwest corner of West Martin Luther King Drive and South Fredericksburg Street were a two-story jail and several one-story, street-facing buildings with gable roofs.¹⁶ One-story, single-family dwellings fronted West Martin Luther King Drive between South Guadalupe and South Fredericksburg Streets by 1891.¹⁷ Five years later, a “Negro Restaurant” with an adjacent barbershop was on the south side of West Martin Luther King Drive, mid-block between South Fredericksburg and South Guadalupe Streets. “The Beat” that developed in this area started in the 1920s.¹⁸ Single-family residences, constructed during the second half of the nineteenth century, were on the north side of West Martin Luther King Drive across from the historic district.¹⁹

Property types are consistent, but lot layouts vary in the historic district. Nearly all the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century buildings were wood-frame, one-story dwellings with front porches, but they have variable L-plan, T-plan, rectangular, square, and irregularly shaped building footprints. Most are oriented toward the street, but some are set back and centered on their lots. Lot sizes and building setbacks and placement differ and are most inconsistent between Shady Lane and South Fredericksburg Street, particularly near the bend in West Martin Luther King Drive at Shady Lane, where the street was extended. Until 1930, commercial buildings were street-facing, rectangular, and built to the lot line.²⁰

As the community evolved, infrastructure was upgraded. Streets were paved and curbs were installed in sections of the historic district (**Photographs 1 through 12**). The streets retain their historically varied widths. Sidewalks, of differing widths and placement, were added on stretches of West Martin Luther King Drive, around Eddie Durham Park, and on Herndon and Centre Streets (**Photograph 1, Photograph 2, Photograph 10**) by the early 1970s.²¹ Most houses have concrete-paved walkways from the street to the primary entrance and concrete paved or gravel driveways.

Property Types, Forms, and Construction Dates

The Dunbar Historic District comprises 46 resources, primarily residential, built between 1908 and 2013. Of 35 domestic resources, 22 are contributing. The historic district has 3 contributing and 2 noncontributing religious resources, and 3 contributing commercial resources. The contributing 1912 Calaboose African American History Museum (CAAHM) at 200 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #31) was originally a jail but became a United Service Organization (USO) for Black servicemembers during World War II. Eddie Durham Park at the east end of the historic district, established in 2013, is a noncontributing recreational site (Map ID #32).

The contributing domestic resources were constructed between ca. 1910 and ca. 1970. Most are one-story and wood-frame construction. The dwellings at 507 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #8), 316 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #15A; **Photograph 13**), 218 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #25; **Photograph 14**), 523 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #3; **Photograph 15**), and 209 Comanche Street (Map ID #28) are National Folk forms. These rectangular-plan houses, constructed between ca. 1910 and ca. 1925, are the earliest-built dwelling type in the historic district. Typical features include full-width porches, board-and-batten wood siding, and minimal ornamentation. An 1881 map and Sanborn maps from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century show similar

¹⁵ Hays County Clerk, Deed Record E:424, San Marcos, March 14, 1868.

¹⁶ Augustus Koch, *Bird's-Eye View of San Marcos, Hays County, Texas* (Wikimedia), 1881.

¹⁷ Sanborn-Perris Map Company, *San Marcos, Hays County, Texas* (Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection), 1891, Fire Insurance Map.

¹⁸ Sanborn Map Company, 1922.

¹⁹ Sanborn-Perris Map Company, 1896.

²⁰ Sanborn Map Company, *San Marcos, Hays County, Texas* (Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection), 1906, Fire Insurance Map; 1912; 1922; 1930.

²¹ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Hays County, 1973, Aerial Image.

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rectangular, one-story, wood-frame dwellings with full-width porches in these locations.²² A few of the National Folk-form dwellings were present by 1930, but their current form, size, and materials indicate they were constructed earlier and likely relocated to their respective sites by that time.²³ Several dwellings have no distinguishable architectural style, but other forms and styles represented include bungalow-form houses with front-gable porches and wood siding, like the Cephas House at 217 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #30; **Photograph 16**) and the ca. 1925 dwelling at 302 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #18; **Photograph 17**); a ca. 1935 stone-clad vernacular house with jagged rock exterior facing (Map ID #13; **Photograph 18**); a ca. 1940 brick Tudor Revival house with a primary entrance set under a steeply pitched gable (Map ID #12A; **Photograph 19**); and, Minimal Traditional and Minimal Ranch style houses built at midcentury including the ca. 1945 Minimal Tradition dwelling at 517 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #11).

Three churches are in the Dunbar Historic District. The substantial 1908 Old First Baptist Church²⁴ (Map ID #27; **Photograph 21**), at the southeast corner of West Martin Luther King Drive and Comanche Street, is a two-story, twin tower, wood-frame building with a basement and two brick interior chimneys. A semi-circular set of concrete steps leads to a centered entrance flanked by two square towers projecting above the roofline. The stone-clad Wesley Chapel at 224 South Fredericksburg Street (Map ID #34A) was constructed in the 1960s with a front-gable roof projecting over the entrance and Postwar Modern architectural influences. Associated with the Wesley Chapel are the contributing ca. 1950 bungalow-form building to the south (Map ID #36), and the noncontributing Lucille Cheatham Marguerite C. Hill Fellowship Hall (Map ID #35) that has been modified with a substantial side addition to the primary elevation and replacement of all visible historic materials. Victory Chapel at 312 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #16) is a ca. 1970 rectangular church building with no apparent style. It is noncontributing to the district because of recent modifications to the exterior. Outside the district, the Jackson Chapel United Methodist Church (UMC), a 1960s Postwar Modern-influenced, brick, L-plan church, formerly stood at 524 Centre Street.²⁵

The commercial resources in the historic district were constructed between 1949 and ca. 1960. The ca. 1960 former barbershop at 201 West Martin Luther King Drive is a rectangular, concrete-block building (Map ID #33; **Photograph 22**). It is just one of the many barbershops and beauty salons that were in the community. At 404 Centre Street, the one-story, front-gable rectangular building with brick cladding that now houses a tattoo business is the former site of a 1920s grocer-turned-local store that operated through the mid-twentieth century. Shop owner Ollie Hamilton replaced the original wood-frame store with a masonry building in 1949 (Map ID #21; **Photograph 23**). A ca. 1960 restaurant with permastone cladding and wood siding at the southwest corner of West Martin Luther King Drive and Comanche Street (Map ID #23) has additions and storefront alterations typical of continuously operating commercial properties; it retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a business from the historic community's development.

Secondary resources associated with domestic dwellings and Wesley Chapel (Map ID #34A) include garages, sheds, and other functional buildings, most of which were constructed outside of the period of significance. Impermanent or portable wood or metal sheds or ancillary structures were excluded from the resource count.

Previous Surveys/Designations

Previous documentation was initially reviewed to identify a methodology for developing the Dunbar Historic District boundary: the 1996 *Historic Resources Survey of the Dunbar and East Guadalupe Neighborhoods*, the 2003 local historic district designation by the City of San Marcos for a portion of the community, and the 2019 *My Historic SMTX*

²² Koch, *Bird's-Eye View*.

²³ Sanborn Map Company, 1930.

²⁴ Use of the term "old" to refer to the 1908 building differentiates it from the sanctuary the congregation has used since it was built in 1985. To corroborate, the church history on the website "About Us" describes the 1908 building as the Old First Baptist Church.

²⁵ *San Marcos Daily Record*, "Jackson Chapel," June 8, 2023.

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*City of San Marcos Historic Resources Survey Report Phases 1 & 2.*²⁶ The 1996 survey documented 264 properties in two adjacent neighborhoods with photographs and year built, property type, stylistic influence, and exterior materials. Each resource was assigned a rating of low, medium, or high priority to identify the concentration of contributing resources in a historic district and those that might be individually NRHP-eligible. Historic contexts were developed for both neighborhoods. At the time of the 1996 survey, the Dunbar “neighborhood had lost a great deal of its historic character through the construction of post-1950 buildings and alterations to its extant historic functions.” The most common alterations were exterior siding replacements and “functional and necessary ... additions.”²⁷ The survey recommended a potential historic district along West Martin Luther King Drive between Fredericksburg and Herndon Streets and on the north of Centre Street. The City of San Marcos designated a similarly defined area as the Dunbar Local Historic District in 2003 (**Figure 4**). Three properties within the local historic district also have individual local historic landmark designation: the Dunbar School, the Old African American Baptist Church (Map ID #27), and the CAAHM (Map ID #31).²⁸

The 2019 historic resources survey report assessed a larger area of San Marcos, including the entirety of the Dunbar community. The report included a historic context; photographic documentation and evaluation of the existing preservation priority of resources rated as low, medium, or high; and individual historic resources survey forms for high-priority resources. The report recommended the Dunbar Local Historic District and four other local historic districts eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture, with “modest vernacular housing associated with the historically African American Dunbar neighborhood.”²⁹ The survey did not recommend an expansion of the Dunbar Local Historic District boundary, but it did recommend an expansion of the San Antonio Street Historic District to the north down Nance Street to include the first building outside the Dunbar Historic District on the east side of the street. Nearly all the properties adjacent to the west and south sides of the local historic district were identified either as low priority or nonhistoric-age.³⁰

NRHP Boundary Identification

The intent of this nomination was to select a subset of the Dunbar community that retains a concentration of resources with sufficient physical and historical integrity to convey their significance as a historic district and to develop the statement of significance that describes the larger community’s history and development. To identify the historic district boundary, professional historians conducted field investigations in 2023 to verify the 2019 report data and to assess resources in and adjacent to the Dunbar Local Historic District (**Figure 4**). The resources within the boundary are extant buildings that retain sufficient integrity to convey their historical significance.

As a result, the Dunbar Historic District nominated to the NRHP follows the Dunbar Local Historic District boundary that extends along West Martin Luther King Drive from Herndon Street to South Fredericksburg Street, with some exceptions (**Figures 1 and 4**). One nonhistoric-age property on the west side of Nance Street between West San Antonio Street and West Martin Luther King Drive has also been excluded. On the east side, the five parcels north of the CAAHM (Map ID #31) between Feltner Alley and South Fredericksburg Street are excluded. These include three single-family dwellings and one accessory building on four parcels north of the 1884 former Hays County Jail that have substantially compromised physical integrity with major modifications to their primary façades and would be noncontributing. The former jail was individually listed in the NRHP in 1983 but is excluded from the Dunbar Historic

²⁶ City of San Marcos, Ordinance No. 2003-21 (April 28, 2003); Hicks & Company, *Historic Resources Survey Report: City of San Marcos Phases 1 and 2*, Hicks & Company for the City of San Marcos (2019); Newlan Knight and Associates, *Historic Resources Survey of the Dunbar and East Guadalupe Neighborhoods*, Newlan Knight and Associates (1996).

²⁷ Newlan Knight and Associates, *Survey of Dunbar and East Guadalupe*, 15.

²⁸ City of San Marcos, 2003 Ordinance; Ordinance No. 2004-16 (April 12, 2004); Ordinance No. 2018-46 (November 20, 2008).

²⁹ Hicks & Company, *Survey Report*, 80.

³⁰ Hicks & Company, *Survey Report*, 46–51.

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District since the building's relationship to a Community Development and Planning area of significance predates this nomination's period of significance and is more strongly associated with the overall local population rather than improvements the Black community made to the neighborhood. However, a future amendment may consider expanding the period of significance and context to include the former Hays County Jail.

The area to the east of the proposed Dunbar Historic District and outside the local historic district no longer has resources historically associated with the community, and the area to the west of the proposed Dunbar Historic District and outside the local historic district is composed of nonhistoric-age resources. The early-twentieth-century "Beat" commercial district, on the south side of West Martin Luther King Drive between South Fredericksburg and Guadalupe Streets, was replaced by a surface parking lot and a single commercial building by 1973.³¹ Between 1973 and 1981, the last remaining single-family dwelling on the north side of the street was replaced.³² Adjacent to the western boundary of the historic district is a block bound by Herndon, Jackman, and Centre Streets and West Martin Luther King Drive. However, because most of the primary buildings on this block are nonhistoric-age, the area was excluded from the Dunbar Historic District.

Buildings on the north and south sides of West Martin Luther King Drive from Herndon Street to South Fredericksburg Street and adjacent to but outside the Dunbar Local Historic District were also considered. Most resources north of the West Martin Luther King Drive street-facing parcels between Comanche and Nance Streets are nonhistoric-age. The 2019 historic resources survey identified a Craftsman-style house adjacent to the northernmost resource in the historic district on the east side of Nance Street as a potential expansion to the San Antonio Street Historic District; however, research did not indicate that it was associated with the Dunbar community; it was excluded from the Dunbar Historic District.

The southern boundary of the proposed Dunbar Historic District doglegs north of the parcel at the northwest corner of Herndon and Centre Streets west to Comanche Street, and it includes the parcels on the north side of Centre Street between Shady Lane and Comanche Street and the Wesley Chapel property. The three parcels on the north side of Centre Street between Herndon Street and Shady Lane include a vacant lot and two nonhistoric-age properties. On the two blocks to the south, bound by Jackman Street, Valley Street, Shady Lane, and Centre Street, most of the primary resources are nonhistoric-age. Resources on the Wesley Chapel parcel were evaluated; one of its three primary buildings is nonhistoric-age.

Several National Folk-form dwellings (523 West Martin Luther King Drive, Map ID #3; 507 West Martin Luther King Drive, Map ID #8A; 323 West Martin Luther King Drive, Map ID #19; 218 West Martin Luther King Drive, Map ID #25; and 209 Comanche Street, Map ID #28) were likely relocated to their current locations from elsewhere. All constructed around 1910, these residences were moved by 1930, contributing to the community's evolution and development. These resources were moved to residential lots and retain street-facing orientations, compatible with the character of other dwellings in the historic district.³³

Most resources adjacent to the Dunbar Historic District are nonhistoric-age. Criterion Consideration G allows properties to be included in the NRHP if they have achieved "significance within the past 50 years [that] is of exceptional importance," and this exception was considered for nonhistoric-age resources.³⁴ In this case, Criterion Consideration G is not applicable for nonhistoric-age resources since the end of the period of significance, 1972,

³¹ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, 1973.

³² Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Hays County, 1973, Aerial Image; 1981.

³³ Patrick W. Andrus and Rebecca H. Shrimpton, *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, National Register of Historic Places, 1995).

³⁴ Linda F. McClelland, *National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* (National Park Service, 1997), 16.

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precludes their inclusion. Resources constructed after significant flooding events and urban renewal efforts during the 1970s represent development trends that differ from the original and historic development of the community.

Integrity

Dunbar Historic District retains integrity to be able to convey its significance as a Black community that developed from Civil War Reconstruction through the early 1970s. Review of archival documents and historic-period and current maps and aerial photographs shows the continuous progression of development to the west and south around what became West Martin Luther King Drive and South Fredericksburg Street. By the turn of the twentieth century, a community had emerged. It was composed of one-story, wood-frame dwellings with front porches on various-sized lots. Amenities were all within walking distance. Churches were scattered through the blocks, as were parks and schools, a commercial corridor, and small businesses. In the Dunbar Historic District, these character-defining attributes were retained.

The Dunbar Historic District exhibits the aspects of integrity crucial for properties listed under Criterion A—location, setting, feeling, and association. The community's setting has undergone diminished integrity outside of the historic district, but within it, varied street and lot sizes, house placements on their lots, distribution of dwellings intermixed with religious and commercial resources, and circulation routes have been preserved. The bend in West Martin Luther King Drive at Shady Lane, north of Purgatory Creek and the railroad tracks, and narrow streets protect viewsheds in the historic district. True to the historic period, the historic district retains low-profile property types and is absent of nonhistoric-age multiple-story buildings in or near the boundary. With these attributes, the historic district retains integrity of setting. The district's integrity of feeling as a neighborhood, with amenities scattered among residential improvements, has been retained. Nonhistoric-age infill construction is mostly composed of appropriately scaled and positioned one-story, single-family dwellings. This new construction and physical alterations to most individual buildings, however, would not prevent historic-period residents from recognizing the historic district's aesthetic and its integrity of feeling. Lastly, the historic district's associative qualities are irrefutable; it sustains robust integrity of association with archival evidence that relates history to the Dunbar community and its buildings. As the core of San Marcos' Black community for decades, it is the location of the San Marcos "Colored" School (now Dunbar School) Home Economics Building in Dunbar Park, Black churches, and the CAAHM (Map ID #31). Newer improvements, like the 2013 Eddie Durham Park (Map ID #32) that pays homage to a Black hometown hero, benefit the historic district by recognizing and celebrating meaningful contributions of Black San Marcos citizens to the city's history.

Less critical but still important, the Dunbar Historic District's contributing resources retain sufficient integrity to convey their historic-period appearances. The respective historic-period functions of the property types are apparent, and the resources generally appear to have original building footprints, forms, fenestration patterns and sizes, porch types and placements, and roof types. Replacement materials and other modifications are part of the continued use of historic buildings, especially dwellings. Typical alterations to contributing resources in the historic district include window, primary door, and wall cladding replacement and rear additions, most of which are reversible and do not prevent resources from conveying their architectural style and/or form.

Contributing and Noncontributing Resources

Contributing buildings were constructed during the period of significance, 1908 to 1972, and retain integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. A contributing resource must be in its original or historic-period location. The setting, or physical environment, should convey material and historical traits common to the neighborhood. In this historic district, integrity of setting requires that contributing resources conform to the neighborhood's typical

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environment with analogous setbacks, similar lot sizes, and common physical traits like their one-story heights, wood exterior materials, and repeated building footprints. Integrity of feeling, or aesthetic, communicates a contributing resource's salient features despite certain physical alterations such that a historic-period owner would recognize the building. The neighborhood street system must also retain attributes of location, setting, and feeling. Contributing resources must be affiliated with the neighborhood's historical development and convey associative qualities with community planning and development and Black ethnic heritage.

The contributing resources in the Dunbar Historic District have intact physical characteristics with certain acceptable modifications that reflect home-improvement trends. Nevertheless, the original design intent should be evident with the presence of character-defining attributes, such as roof forms, fenestration patterns, and form or stylistic details. Alterations and additions should not obscure historic-period stylistic influences or workmanship. Additions and enclosures are acceptable, as they represented the desire for—and economic means to achieve—expanded interior dimensions for comfort. These modifications provided supplementary living space. Two examples of contributing are #19 and #28. The National Folk-form dwelling at 323 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #19) has a partially-infilled front porch; however, it is sited on a corner and the secondary street-facing elevation is intact. The National Folk-form dwelling at 209 Comanche Street (Map ID #28) has a side addition visible from the primary façade, but it does not obscure the primary street-facing elevation. With both dwellings, the historic form, materials, workmanship, and design remain apparent. Most original materials should be present; exceptions are replaced windows and doors, if fenestration patterns, shapes, and sizes are unchanged, since updated materials provided improved insulation, utility systems, and more efficient living conditions. Exposed exterior wood cladding required regular repair and paint; sturdy, if nonhistoric, replacement materials provided a cost-effective means to long-term low-maintenance upkeep. Thus, some buildings with multiple material replacements are contributing to the district because their overall form, scale, massing, composition, and details are sufficiently intact to convey the intended design.

Noncontributing resources either detract from the district's character because they were built after the period of significance or because of radical modifications—second-story additions, additions prominent from the primary elevation, or significant modifications to fenestration—and attendant loss of physical integrity would prevent historic-period residents from recognizing the building. Resources with modifications that have yielded them noncontributing include the ca. 1925 dwelling at 315 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #24) that has a second story addition, side addition and alteration to the porch and entrance such that the entrance is oriented away from the street, thereby diminishing its ability to convey the historic appearance of the dwelling. Other modified noncontributing resources are the ca. 1970 Victory Chapel at 312 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #16) that has a substantial side-entry addition visible from the primary façade; and Lucille Cheatham Marguerite C. Hill Fellowship Hall at the Wesley Chapel (Map ID #33A) that has replacement siding, windows, and an altered primary entrance. The site at 216 Centre Street (Map ID #29) is a remnant of a building that was damaged in a fire, and it no longer retains integrity.

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Inventory of Resources

The tabular inventory enumerates each resource in the Dunbar Historic District by unique map identification number, current name/description, address, historic function, year built, architectural style/form, and contributing/noncontributing status (**Table 1**). Resources enumerated in the table are buildings, except for two sites, which are noted with an asterisk under “Map ID.”

Table 1. Contributing and Noncontributing Resources in the Dunbar Historic District

No.	Map ID ³⁵	Current Name/Description	Address	Year Built	Architectural Style/Form	Contributing or Noncontributing
1	1	Dwelling	514 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 1945	No style	Contributing
2	2A	Dwelling	128 Nance Street	ca. 1945	Minimal Traditional	Contributing
3	2B	Secondary Domestic Resource	128 Nance Street	ca. 2018	No style	Noncontributing
4	3	Dwelling	523 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 1920	National Folk	Contributing
5	4	Dwelling	207 Herndon Street	ca. 1930	Bungalow form	Contributing
6	5	Dwelling	213 Herndon Street	ca. 1930	Bungalow form	Contributing
7	6	Dwelling	212 Shady Lane	ca. 1945	Minimal Ranch	Contributing
8	7	Dwelling	503 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 1925	Bungalow form	Contributing
9	8A	Dwelling	507 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 1910	National Folk form	Contributing
10	8B	Secondary Domestic Resource	507 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 2010	No style	Noncontributing
11	9A	Dwelling	511 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 1925	Bungalow form	Contributing
12	9B	Secondary Domestic Resource	511 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 1925	No style	Contributing
13	9C	Secondary Domestic Resource	511 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 2005	No style	Noncontributing
14	9D	Secondary Domestic Resource	511 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 2020	No style	Noncontributing
15	10	Dwelling	515 West Martin Luther King Drive	2007	No style	Noncontributing
16	11	Dwelling	517 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 1945	Minimal Traditional	Contributing
17	12A	Dwelling	129 Nance Street	ca. 1940	Tudor Revival	Contributing
18	12B	Secondary Domestic Resource	129 Nance Street	ca. 1910	No style	Contributing

³⁵ Map IDs are associated with the labels in Figure 2. An asterisk indicates it is a site.

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No.	Map ID ³⁵	Current Name/Description	Address	Year Built	Architectural Style/Form	Contributing or Noncontributing
19	13	Dwelling	127 Nance Street	ca. 1935	Vernacular	Contributing
20	14	Dwelling	125 Nance Street	ca. 1950	No style	Noncontributing
21	15A	Dwelling	316 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 1910	National Folk form	Contributing
22	15B	Secondary Domestic Resource	316 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 1950	No style	Contributing
23	16	Victory Chapel	312 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 1970	No style	Noncontributing
24	17	Dwelling	306 West Martin Luther King Drive	1999	No style	Noncontributing
25	18	Dwelling	302 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 1925	Bungalow form	Contributing
26	19	Dwelling	323 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 1910	National Folk form	Contributing
27	20	Dwelling	213 Shady Lane	1950	Minimal Ranch	Noncontributing
28	20B	Secondary Domestic Resource	213 Shady Lane	2019	No style	Noncontributing
29	20C	Secondary Domestic Resource	213 Shady Lane	2019	No style	Noncontributing
30	21	Sacred Craft Tattoo	404 Centre Street	1949	No style	Contributing
31	22	Dwelling	400 Centre Street	ca. 1970	Minimal Traditional	Contributing
32	23	Casa de Don Lorenzo	307 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 1960	No style	Contributing
33	24	Dwelling	315 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 1925	No style	Noncontributing
34	25	Dwelling	218 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 1910	National Folk form	Contributing
35	26	Dwelling	202 West Martin Luther King Drive	2008	No style	Noncontributing
36	27	Old First Baptist Church	219 West Martin Luther King Drive	1908	Gothic Revival	Contributing
37	28	Dwelling	209 Comanche Street	ca. 1925	National Folk form	Contributing
38	29*	Building Ruin	216 Centre Street	ca. 1950	NA	Noncontributing Site
39	30	Cephas House	217 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 1925	Craftsman-influenced; Bungalow form	Contributing
40	31	Calaboose African American History Museum	200 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 1912	No style	Contributing
41	32*	Eddie Durham Park	205 West Martin Luther King Drive	2013	NA	Noncontributing Site
42	33	City Finance	201 West Martin Luther King Drive	ca. 1960	No style	Contributing

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No.	Map ID ³⁵	Current Name/Description	Address	Year Built	Architectural Style/Form	Contributing or Noncontributing
43	34A	Wesley Chapel A.M.E. Church	224 South Fredericksburg Street	ca. 1963	No style	Contributing
44	34B	Wesley Chapel A.M.E. Church	224 South Fredericksburg Street	ca. 2000	No style	Noncontributing
45	35	Wesley Chapel A.M.E. Church Fellowship Hall,	224 South Fredericksburg Street	ca. 1970	No style	Noncontributing
46	36	Wesley Chapel A.M.E. Church	224 South Fredericksburg Street	ca. 1950	Bungalow form	Contributing

Architectural Descriptions for Select Contributing Resources

*316 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #15A; **Photograph 13**)*

This ca. 1910 one-story residence has a National Folk form and a broken side-gable roof with an integrated, full-width front porch. It has board-and-batten wood siding and one-over-one, wood-sash windows. The windows have been boarded on the interior, and the glazing is no longer extant. A similar dwelling was near this location in 1912 but facing east. At that time, this intersection came to a sharp corner. Reconstructed by the mid-twentieth century, the intersection took on a curve, and the dwelling may have been reoriented at that time and/or moved to this location. It is typical of the community's one-story, gable-roof, wood-frame houses. ³⁶

A ca. 1950 garage (*Map ID #15B*) is also on the parcel.

*218 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #25; **Photograph 14**)*

This ca. 1910, one-story, rectangular National Folk-form house has a front-gable roof and a partial-width, integrated front porch. The wood siding is board and batten, and the windows and doors have been boarded. This dwelling is not apparent on maps until 1944. ³⁷ It was in this location by at least 1958. It was likely moved to this location during the historic period, and it is typical of the one-story, gable-roof frame houses in the community. ³⁸ The dwelling is currently vacant.

*523 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #3; **Photograph 15**)*

This ca. 1920 house has a National Folk form, centered primary door, board-and-batten wood siding, and six-over-six double-hung wood-sash windows. There is a front-gable portico with supports over the primary entrance. The building has a rear addition. It was likely moved to this location during the historic period. ³⁹

³⁶ Sanborn Map Company, 1912; 1922.

³⁷ Sanborn Map Company, 1944.

³⁸ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Hays County, 1958, Aerial Image.

³⁹ Sanborn Map Company, 1930.

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*217 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #30; **Photograph 16**)*

The ca. 1925 Cephas House is a Craftsman-influenced bungalow with a front-gable roof, wood siding, one-over-one double-hung wood-sash windows, and a partial-width porch with supports set on tapered columns atop square posts. The building has exposed rafter tails and roof brackets. The City of San Marcos used Community Development Block Grant funds to restore the building. Modifications include the addition of a rear ramp and replacement skirting and porch and entry railings. The building's function has changed from domestic to public community space. It was home to Ulysses "Boots" Cephas, a blacksmith and a prominent community member.

*125 Nance Street (Map ID #14; **Photograph 18**)*

This ca. 1935 one-story, vernacular residence is clad in varied flat stone that extends to the roofline in a jagged configuration. The building has a central front door with a decorative brick surround and wood windows. The south side of the primary façade has a multiple-light bay window. A stone-clad exterior chimney is on the south side.

*129 Nance Street (Map ID #12A and 12B; **Photograph 19, Photograph 20**)*

This ca. 1940 one-story, Tudor Revival house features a steeply pitched front gable and brick siding. Concrete stairs with metal railings lead to the single-door entrance. There is a rear addition, and the front door has been replaced.

A ca. 1910 one-story, secondary domestic building on the parcel has a partial-width, integrated porch and gable roof. It has board-and-batten wood siding. The building's materials indicate this approximated year-built date. It was likely moved to this location during the historic period.⁴⁰

*219 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #27; **Photograph 21**)*

The 1908 Old First Baptist Church is at the intersection of West Martin Luther King Drive and Comanche Street. It replaced a ca. 1872 church on Guadalupe Street that the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) burned in the late nineteenth century. The symmetrical, front-gable building has wood siding and two-story square circulation towers flanking a central entrance. Multiple-light windows with arched tops are boarded. Two chimneys extend from the full-height basement. The roofline was altered in 1936, and the front entry steps were added in 1953.⁴¹ The front porch has been infilled. The congregation moved to a new building in 1986.

*201 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #33; **Photograph 22**)*

This ca. 1960 one-story, rectangular-plan, concrete-block former barbershop has a front-gable roof and metal casement windows. A mural, signage, and metal security bars have been added.

⁴⁰ Sanborn Map Company, 1944.

⁴¹ Hicks & Company, *Survey Report*.

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*404 Centre Street (Map ID #21; **Photograph 23**)*

This 1949 brick commercial building has a rectangular plan, front-gable roof, and centered, projecting front porch. The brick has been painted, and new signage has been added. In 1922, it was a wood-frame grocery.⁴² Shop owner Ollie Hamilton replaced it with a masonry building in 1949.⁴³

*200 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #31; **Photograph 24**)*

The ca. 1912 Calaboose African American History Museum is a one-story rectangular building with minimal detailing. The building is oriented east-west and faces West Martin Luther King Drive. The original, eastern portion of the building is constructed of brick and has a metal-clad hipped roof. A ca. 1943 frame addition to the west side of the primary façade is clad in aluminum siding and has a side-gable roof with exposed rafter tails. All the building's wood windows are one-over-one, double-hung sashes. The roof, primary door, and siding on the addition have been replaced. The building was a city jail during the early twentieth century, a United Service Organization club for Black servicemembers during World War II, a community center later, and now houses the CAAHM.

⁴² Sanborn Map Company, 1922.

⁴³ Susan Hanson, "Miss Ollie's Grocery Has Staying Power," *San Marcos Daily Record*, June 27, 1984, 12.

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Statement of Significance

The Dunbar Historic District, in San Marcos, Hays County, encompasses roughly nine acres of what was once the city's thriving Black community. The neighborhood emerged as an independent Black community during the Reconstruction Era with churches and Black-owned homes and businesses present as early as the late 1860s. By the early twentieth century, the community established itself as the self-contained center of Black life in San Marcos with residences, churches, school, and a commercial and entertainment district called "The Beat." During the Civil Rights Movement, locals successfully petitioned to rename the San Marcos "Colored" School after Black poet and author Paul Lawrence Dunbar, which also became the name of the neighborhood. The proposed district is an intact concentration of buildings that reflect Dunbar's residential, religious, and commercial development. Dunbar Historic District is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the local level of significance in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Ethnic Heritage: Black. The period of significance extends from 1908, the construction date of the earliest built resource, the Old First Baptist Church, to 1972, when a significant flood event coupled with urban renewal initiated the neighborhood's decline.

Brief History of San Marcos, Texas

San Marcos is in southeastern Hays County between San Antonio and Austin. Paleo-Indian people lived near the San Marcos Springs, northwest of the current courthouse square, at least 8,000 years ago.⁴⁴ By the seventeenth century, the Tonkawa who occupied Central Texas were composed of numerous bands including the Sana, Cantona, Emet, Toho, and Tohaha.⁴⁵ Between 1691 and 1750, the Sana lived northeast of San Antonio in present-day San Marcos.⁴⁶ Various bands of the Comanche and Apache occupied the region during the nineteenth century.⁴⁷ The arrival and settlement of European-descended settlers in the region brought diseases and forced displacement that diminished the Indigenous population.

European settlers passed through the San Marcos area as early as the eighteenth century, and more permanent Spanish and Anglo-American settlement emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Spanish attempted their first permanent settlement in the area in 1808, establishing Villa San Marcos de Neve as one of several military outposts. Due to devastating floods and armed resistance by the Comanche and Tonkawa, the Spanish abandoned the settlement by 1812.⁴⁸ The Republic of Mexico issued two land grants encompassing the present-day San Marcos area: the Juan Martin de Veramendi Survey in 1831 and the Thomas Jefferson Chambers Survey in 1834 (**Figure 5**).⁴⁹ Early Anglo-American settlers arrived in the region during the period of Mexican rule and increased immigration after the 1836 establishment of the Republic of Texas.⁵⁰

In 1848, the Texas legislature organized Hays County and designated San Marcos the county seat, starting San Marcos' rise as an increasingly important population center. Stagecoach lines linking the county north to Austin and south to San Antonio prompted the town's early development, and Anglo-American settlers arrived from Georgia, Arkansas, and other parts of Texas.⁵¹ The county soon supported a sawmill, cotton gin, church, and school, and the

⁴⁴ Paul F. Cecil and Daniel P. Green, "Hays County," in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2020.

⁴⁵ Jeffrey D. Carlisle, "Tonkawa Indians," in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2021.

⁴⁶ Thomas N. Campbell, "Sana Indians," in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 1995.

⁴⁷ Jeffrey D. Carlisle, "Apache Indians," in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2020; Carol A. Lipscomb, "Comanche Indians," in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2020.

⁴⁸ Cecil and Green, "Hays County."

⁴⁹ A. B. Langermann, Map of Hays County, University of North Texas Libraries, Portal to Texas History, Texas General Land Office, September, 1877; Cecil and Green, "Hays County."

⁵⁰ Cecil and Green, "Hays County."

⁵¹ Cecil and Green, "Hays County"; Daniel P. Greene, "San Marcos, Texas," in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2020.

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1850 county population comprising 387 individuals included 128 enslaved people.⁵² The first permanent residential community near San Marcos was Stringtown, a line of houses facing the old San Marcos-to-New Braunfels postal route from Purgatory Creek south to York Creek at the Comal County line. Starting in 1850, 18 families from Georgia arrived, bringing enslaved people and settling on this road in log cabins. Stringtown had a store and community building that functioned as both church and school.⁵³ In 1851, General Edward Burleson, William Lindsey, and Dr. Eli T. Merriman purchased 640 acres from the Veramendi Survey, and they laid out town lots centered around a courthouse square on the south bank of the San Marcos River.⁵⁴ Large undivided lots, some of which are labeled on maps as “farm lots,” were platted on the north, west, and south sides of town (**Figure 6** and **Figure 7**).⁵⁵

The nineteenth-century agricultural economy in Hays County, which heavily relied on enslaved labor, gained traction as the Civil War neared and in the following years. In 1860, the county’s population was 2,126, 37 percent of which was enslaved.⁵⁶ Raising livestock was a principal industry, and agriculture expanded with more than 10,000 acres of improved farmland.⁵⁷ In the years after the Civil War, farmers sought laborers to meet demands of the expanding agricultural economy.⁵⁸ Cotton became a staple crop, and Hays County farmers produced more than 350,000 bales in 1870.⁵⁹ As the county seat, regional cotton trade was centered in San Marcos, and gins and mills opened in town for processing.⁶⁰ Several agricultural facilities developed southwest of the courthouse square and near the railroad, including the Giesen Cotton Yard at southwest corner of South Fredericksburg Street and West Martin Luther King Drive and the San Marcos Oil and Gin Company, south of the railroad tracks and approximately one-third of a mile from the courthouse.⁶¹

Through the first decades of the twentieth century, a new transportation route and educational institution transformed San Marcos’ economy and industry. The population was 742 in 1870, 240 of whom were Black residents.⁶² The town incorporated in 1877. The 1880 arrival of the International–Great Northern Railroad almost doubled the city’s population from 1,232 in 1880 to 2,335 by 1890. The railroad traveled between Austin and San Antonio, and points beyond, via San Marcos and infused the local economy with commercial and industrial improvements. During the 1880s, there were two banks, an opera house, saloons, stores, and other businesses.⁶³ The establishment of the Southwest Texas Normal School (later known as Southwest Texas State University and now as Texas State University) also contributed to San Marcos’ growth. Only admitting white and Mexican American residents, the school opened in 1903 with an enrollment of 303 students. The institution was elevated to a four-year college in 1918. San Marcos flourished into a small college town surrounded by farmlands with a population of 4,527 people, including 739 Black residents in 1920.⁶⁴

⁵² Greene, “San Marcos”; U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Census.gov, 1853).

⁵³ Al Lowman, “Stringtown (Hays County), Texas,” in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2019.

⁵⁴ Dudley R. Dobie, *A Brief History of Hays County and San Marcos, Texas* (San Marcos Public Library, 1948); Greene, “San Marcos.”

⁵⁵ Mason, Map of San Marcos.

⁵⁶ U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, *1860 Census: Population of the United States* (Census.gov, 1864).

⁵⁷ U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Agriculture of the United States in 1860* (Census.gov, 1864).

⁵⁸ Dobie, *Brief History*.

⁵⁹ U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, *1870 Census: The Statistics of the Population of the United States* (Census.gov, 1872).

⁶⁰ Greene, “San Marcos.”

⁶¹ Sanborn Map Company, *San Marcos, Hays County, Texas* (Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection), 1902, Fire Insurance Map; Sanborn-Perris Map Company, *1896*.

⁶² U.S. Department of the Interior, *1870 Population*.

⁶³ Greene, “San Marcos.”

⁶⁴ *Texas Almanac*, “City Population History from 1850–2000,” 2023; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *1930 Census: Population, Volume 3* (Census.gov, 1931).

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San Marcos' population increased during World War II, nearly doubling from 5,134 in 1930 to 9,980 by 1950, largely due to the opening of a navigation training facility just 4 miles southeast of San Marcos.⁶⁵ The San Marcos Army Air Field (SMAAF, now Camp Gary) opened in 1942 as a navigation school and airfield base, with training for students beginning in June 1943. During the war the navigation school trained about 10,000 students.⁶⁶ In 1953 the base was renamed Gary Air Force base after Lt. Arthur Edward Gary, the first San Marcos resident killed in WWII. In 1964, the site opened as a Job Corps facility and was named Gary Job Corps Center, training 200 men and women in its first year.⁶⁷

In the last half of the twentieth century education became the largest local employer as the population continued to grow. The Gary Job Corps Training Center and the university both had burgeoning work forces.⁶⁸ By 1950, the Texas State University (TSU) campus had grown to 65 acres with an enrollment of 2,000.⁶⁹ School integration occurred first at the college level in San Marcos, and later in the public schools. The college enrolled its first Black students in 1963, and public school integration was complete in 1965.⁷⁰ By 1967, student enrollment at TSU had grown to 12,894 students.⁷¹ By 1970, the population of San Marcos increased to 18,860, largely due to the expanding Austin metropolitan area along Interstate Highway 35.⁷² In 1973, Hays County became part of the Austin Metropolitan Statistical Area⁷³

Reconstruction-Era Development

Black freedmen founded settlements, freedom colonies, or freedmen's towns across the South from 1865 to 1930.⁷⁴ After emancipation, no land was distributed to freedmen, and agricultural sharecropping was a common immediate transition. Therefore, many freedmen remained in rural areas and formed communities outside of towns. Laws such as the Homestead Act of Texas (1866), which banned Black Texans from accessing public lands available to all white people for settlement, created further barriers to land ownership.⁷⁵ Freedmen's settlements often emerged on the peripheries of white towns and in undesirable areas in bottomlands or along floodplains. These communities were typically anchored by a church and often also had schools, cemeteries, business districts, and civic or political organizations. Texas freedmen and women established hundreds of these communities throughout Reconstruction.⁷⁶ What began from restricted opportunity flourished into spaces of safety, autonomy, and prosperity as Black Texans began purchasing land and establishing settlements.

⁶⁵ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1950* (Census.gov, 1952).

⁶⁶ Shirley Ratisseau, "Gary Air Force Base," in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2020.

⁶⁷ *San Marcos Record*, "Gary Job Corps Completes a Year of Training Today," March 3, 1966, 16.

⁶⁸ Greene, "San Marcos."

⁶⁹ Texas State Historical Association, "Texas State University," in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2020.

⁷⁰ Charlie Hughes, "Five Negro Coeds Register as College Desegregates After Court Order Monday," *The [Southwest Texas State] College Star*, February 8, 1963, City of San Marcos: Johnnie M. Armstead African American History Collection; *San Marcos Record*, "Trustees Take Step in Desegregation; Study Report of Accreditation Team," May 14, 1964, 5.

⁷¹ Texas State Historical Association, "Texas State University."

⁷² *Texas Almanac*, "City Population History."

⁷³ Greene, "San Marcos."

⁷⁴ Andrea Roberts, et al, "What are Freedom Colonies?," 2020.

⁷⁵ Thad Sitton et al., "Freedmen's Settlements," in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2022.

⁷⁶ Roberts, "Freedom Colonies."

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Emancipation and Reconstruction in San Marcos

In 1860, San Marcos' population of 1,191 included 532 enslaved people.⁷⁷ They learned of their emancipation after June 19, 1865, when the U.S. Colored Troops and Union Major-General Gordon Granger delivered General Order No. 3 at Galveston:

The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves.⁷⁸

The period of Reconstruction that followed offered Black residents of San Marcos some expanded rights but it was not an era free of discrimination. Congress formed the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (more commonly referred to as the Freedmen's Bureau) as a temporary federal agency to support freedmen and white refugees, administer property abandoned during the war, and oversee affairs relating to freedmen. Locally, Black land ownership began the year following emancipation and, where it continued at the southwest corner of San Marcos, formed the beginnings of a community. In 1870, most local freedmen were farm laborers, and many others were domestic servants. A few Black men were skilled workers, including Virginia-born stone mason John Jackson, Kentucky-born shoemaker Green Nichols, native Texan butcher James Carson, and North Carolina-born state police officer Morris Norman.⁷⁹

Through the end of the nineteenth century, laws dictated the social structure of segregation in San Marcos. In 1869, Texas had satisfied federal requirements of ratifying a constitution that supported public education and granted Black men the right to vote, and shortly thereafter approved the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. The next year, President Ulysses Grant declared an end to Reconstruction in Texas, paving the way for the removal of federal troops that precipitated decline in safety and civil rights for Texas' Black community. At the federal level, civil rights legislation also suffered reversals. The Civil Rights Act of 1875 guaranteed all citizens access to public amenities including transportation, places of public amusement, inns, and theaters. In 1883, the United States Supreme Court ruled the Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional, asserting that the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution did not authorize such legislation.⁸⁰ These reversals paved the way for the introduction of Jim Crow laws. In San Marcos, newly freed men and women encountered violence, legalized discrimination, and inequitable treatment. White violence against the Black community emerged almost immediately at the end of Reconstruction. The KKK organized and was active in San Marcos by 1873, when the group set fire to the First Baptist Church.⁸¹

Land Ownership – Tables referenced are on continuation sheets 87-93

Shortly after emancipation, Black residents began purchasing land out of the Chambers Survey, north of the original town plat, and on Blocks 12, 16, and 19 at the southwest corner in the area that would become the Dunbar community (**Figure 5** and **Figure 6**). Robert Brixey, a farm laborer from Arkansas, purchased Lot 13, Block 12, on December 12,

⁷⁷ Patrick Cox, "Slave Owners Exercise Great Influence," in *Story of Slaves of Hays County* (Johnnie M. Armstead African American History Collection, 2020); Bob Barton Jr., "County's Population Grows Six Fold Between '50 and '60," in *Story of Slaves of Hays County* (Johnnie M. Armstead African American History Collection, 2020).

⁷⁸ General Orders, No. 3. U.S. House, 54th Congress, 1st Session (H. Doc. 369, Part 2). "General Order Number 3," 1896. U.S. Documents Collection. Y 1.1/2: SERIAL 3437

⁷⁹ U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Inhabitants, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas, Ancestry, National Archives and Records Administration, 1870, Manuscript Population Census.

⁸⁰ C-Span, "Civil Rights Cases: 1883," *Landmark Cases: Historic Supreme Court Decisions* (2022).

⁸¹ Chris Davis, "San Marcos Church, Once Destroyed by KKK, Finding New Life," *KXAN*, November 19, 2018.

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1866.⁸² He purchased Lot 10, Block 12, in June 1868; Lot 12, Block 12, in 1869; and 25 acres out of the Chambers Survey in December 1868.⁸³ Brixey's three town lots were on the east side of South Fredericksburg Street, north of West Martin Luther King Drive. Ownership commonly turned over quickly and in 1869, Brixey sold Lot 10, Block 12 to Alabama native Louisa Carson (**Table 2** and **Figure 9**).⁸⁴ A few Black buyers held substantial acreage. For example, George Miller, a dottler⁸⁵ from Arkansas purchased 150 acres out of the Chambers Survey in March 1868.⁸⁶

During the 1870s, Black property owners purchased land out of at least three surveys in and near San Marcos. These were the Thomas Jefferson Chambers Survey on the north side of San Marcos, the Juan Veramendi Survey which encompassed the original town plat and the south side of the town, and the J. W. Berry Survey that was adjacent to and north of the Jefferson Survey. Approximately 70 percent of those who owned lots outside the city held property in the Chambers Survey at some point during that decade.⁸⁷ Several who owned land out of the Chambers Survey worked as farmers, presumably cultivating their newly purchased land (**Table 3**). These included Jack Gray from Arkansas, who owned 30 acres; Henry Barnes from Arkansas, who owned 80 acres; Charles Brooks from Alabama, who owned 66 acres; James Hill from Tennessee, who owned 24 acres; and James Scott from South Carolina and his wife, Julia, who owned 6 acres. Other Black residents worked as domestic servants and farm laborers, some of whom owned livestock like cattle, horses, and sheep (**Table 4**).

Black residents acquired more town lots in the 1870s. Town lot ownership consolidated in Block 12, and then expanded west to encompass Block 16. Oliver Burleson and William Proctor began buying lots out of Block 16 on the west side of South Fredericksburg Street by 1870.⁸⁸ Anderson Jenkins, a farm laborer from Mississippi, purchased the east half of Lot 14, Block 12, in that year.⁸⁹ Green Nichols, a shoemaker from Kentucky, owned Lot 16, Block 12, from at least 1871 through 1879, when he sold it to Henry Richardson.⁹⁰ In 1871, Henry Toliver purchased Lot 13, Block 12.⁹¹ In 1873, Charlotte Arch, Mary Francis Polk, and Leroy Polk bought Lot 10, Block 16.⁹² By 1880, Sam Jefferson, a laborer from Tennessee, owned Lot 11, Block 12.⁹³ Pleasant Richardson, a farmer from Virginia, bought Lot 16, Block 16, in 1880.⁹⁴ In 1881, George Holland, a laborer from Louisiana, purchased Lot 2 of Block 16.⁹⁵ The community continued to expand west through the end of the century (**Table 2** and **Figure 9**).

Freedmen also purchased lots outside the southwest corner of town and out of other surveys. Black landowners purchased several lots out of Blocks 7 and 23 of the original town plat northeast of the courthouse square. Yet, it does not appear that a concentration of Black development emerged in this area. Similarly, rural Black land ownership extended to include land out of the J. W. Berry, the B. W. White, the Elijah Clark, and the Henry Lollar Surveys (**Table 2** and **Figure 9**).

⁸² Hays County Clerk, Deed Record E:187, San Marcos, June 1, 1867.

⁸³ Hays County Clerk, Deed Record E:504, San Marcos, June 23, 1868; , Deed Record F:139, San Marcos, May 4, 1869.

⁸⁴ Hays County Clerk, Deed Record F:131, San Marcos, April 15, 1869.

⁸⁵ A dottler works with pottery.

⁸⁶ Hays County Clerk, Deed.

⁸⁷ Hays County, Tax Collector and Assessor, Ad Valorem Tax Roll, Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910, Family Search, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, 1870; 1871; 1872; 1873; 1874; 1875; 1876; 1878; 1879.

⁸⁸ Hays County, 1870.

⁸⁹ Hays County Clerk, Deed Record F:406, San Marcos, January 20, 1870; U.S. Department of the Interior, 1870 Inhabitants.

⁹⁰ Hays County, 1871; , Deed Record M:359, San Marcos, October 15, 1879; U.S. Department of the Interior, 1870 Inhabitants.

⁹¹ Hays County Clerk, Deed Record G:139, San Marcos, April 10, 1871.

⁹² Hays County Clerk, Deed Record I:2, San Marcos, December 24, 1873.

⁹³ Hays County, Tax Collector and Assessor, Ad Valorem Tax Roll, Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910, Family Search, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, 1880.

⁹⁴ Hays County Clerk, Deed Record N:473, San Marcos, October 22, 1880; U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Inhabitants, Enumeration District 76, Precinct 1, Hays County, National Archives and Records Administration, Ancestry, 1880, Manuscript Population Census.

⁹⁵ Hays County Clerk, Deed Record P:12, San Marcos, December 16, 1881; U.S. Department of the Interior, 1880 Inhabitants.

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Churches

Land ownership established the physical location of San Marcos' Black community and its anchor institutions, churches chief among them, just as they were for freedmen's colonies. Churches were locations for essential gatherings, not only for worship services, but also for political and recreational activities. Intended to provide safe, secure gathering spaces during segregation, local churches could not always shield the community from racially motivated violence. Founders established three Black churches: the First Baptist Church (Map ID #27), the Wesley Chapel (Map ID #34A), and the Second Baptist Church (now Greater Bethel Baptist Church) (**Figures 12, 14, and 15**). These churches were one-story, wood-frame buildings.⁹⁶ Through the early twentieth century, the congregations utilized the nearby Purgatory Creek for baptisms.⁹⁷

In 1866, Reverend Moses Jones organized the Colored Baptist Zion Church on Guadalupe Street, which underwent several transitions during its long history. In 1873, the KKK set the church on fire, causing significant damage.⁹⁸ In 1881, church trustees Ola Burlison, Dora Dusta, Luckey McQueen, and John Thomas purchased a lot from Julia Ann Travis on 219 West Martin Luther King Drive.⁹⁹ The congregation became the Colored Missionary Church and in 1908, built a two-story sanctuary with square towers flanking the entrance (**Figure 20**). By the early twentieth century, the church had become the First Missionary Baptist Church led by Reverend G. F. Curry. In 1936, the building was remodeled under Reverend J. C. Connally.¹⁰⁰ In 1986, the congregation vacated the 1908/1936 building after it had a third sanctuary built on Mitchell Street at the west end of the community and became the First Baptist Church (Map ID #27).¹⁰¹ The former sanctuary is currently vacant.¹⁰²

Two other principal Black congregations organized in the late nineteenth century. By 1875, Reverend Richard Robert Haywood established the Wesley Chapel.¹⁰³ In 1879, the first church was built on South Fredericksburg Street.¹⁰⁴ In 1909, this church also fell victim to KKK violence and was set on fire.¹⁰⁵ The extant 1963 church was remodeled in 1989.¹⁰⁶ The Second Baptist Church formed in 1883, and by 1896 had a sanctuary on South Fredericksburg Street, north of West Martin Luther King Drive that the congregation used until the early 1920s.¹⁰⁷ By 1930, the congregation had become the Greater Bethel Baptist Church and had relocated to Centre Street.¹⁰⁸

These churches did not have affiliated cemeteries and burials, for both Black and white San Marcos' deceased were in the city cemetery.¹⁰⁹ A few Black families who resided in San Marcos, however, chose to be buried in a rural cemetery. Situated about 3.3 miles north of San Marcos on Post Road, and halfway between Nance's Mill and

⁹⁶ Sanborn Map Company, 1912.

⁹⁷ *San Marcos Record*, "Purgatory Creek," September 6, 1940, 8.

⁹⁸ Holt, "History."

⁹⁹ Hays County Clerk, Deed Record O:193, San Marcos, April 4, 1881.

¹⁰⁰ First Baptist Church NBC, "About Us," 2023.

¹⁰¹ First Baptist Church NBC, "About Us."

¹⁰² Holt, "History."

¹⁰³ Texas Historical Commission Staff, Wesley Chapel A.M.E. Church, Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Files, University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, Texas Historical Commission, July 19, 1984, Official Texas Historical Marker Application.

¹⁰⁴ Dorothy Schwartz, Ulysses Cephas, Tula Townsend Wyatt Collection, Hays County Historical Commission, San Marcos History Center, December 28, 1988, Historical Marker Application.

¹⁰⁵ Shetay Ashford-Hanser et al., "African American Experiences in the Historic Dunbar Neighborhood in San Marcos, Texas: A Case Study of Counter-Life Stories," *Social Sciences*, Volume 9, No. 10 (2020).

¹⁰⁶ Wesley Chapel A.M.E. Church, Building Plaque, 1963.

¹⁰⁷ The 1930 fire insurance map for San Marcos depicts the building on South Fredericksburg Street served as a Mexican Methodist Church; Sanborn Map Company, 1922; 1930.

¹⁰⁸ Rachel Sonnier, "Greater Bethel Baptist Celebrates 136 Years," *San Marcos Daily Record*, 2019.

¹⁰⁹ Find A Grave, San Marcos Cemetery Memorials.

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Mountain City, the earliest grave in what was first known as the San Marcos “Colored” Cemetery dates to 1885.¹¹⁰ In 1893, residents from San Marcos and the neighboring Blanco community organized the San Marcos–Blanco Cemetery Association and trustees purchased a 10.62-acre tract that included the cemetery for \$200.¹¹¹ At least two of the five association trustees, Luckey McQueen and Henry Richardson, resided in San Marcos. It remains unknown where either of these men were buried, but at least two prominent Black San Marcos leaders and members of their families—the Tolivers and the Cephases—were buried here.¹¹²

Residential Improvements

As neighborhoods emerged in late-nineteenth-century San Marcos, residents constructed permanent homes. Contemporaneous dwellings in the area were mostly single-family, one-story, wood-frame houses of mildly variable plans. The street-facing homes were built along the north and south sides of West Martin Luther King Drive near Blocks 16 and 19. Most were centered on their lots, but placement and setback differed somewhat. Many of these homes embraced the National Folk form with side-gable roofs and exterior chimneys on a gabled end (**Figure 8**).¹¹³ Some had board-and-batten wood siding, which was less expensive than horizontal weatherboard.

Nearby, segregated neighborhoods formed. To the north of the Black community, improvements were limited to white residents. They had houses constructed along Belvin, San Antonio, Lindsey, Burleson, and Hopkins Streets by 1860. To the northwest of the community were subdivision plats for the 1868 Lindsey & Harvey and the 1870 C. L. McGehee Additions.¹¹⁴ The areas south and west of the town center along Purgatory Creek developed into segregated neighborhoods for Black and Mexican American residents. The International–Great Northern and Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroads separated these communities from the San Marcos city center to the north.¹¹⁵ South of Purgatory Creek, the first four Mexican American neighborhoods in San Marcos began to form: Los Barrios del Jorobado, de la Nalga Pelona, de la Victoria, and del Pescado. Jorobado and Nalga Pelona together came to be known as the East Guadalupe neighborhood, la Victoria is now Victory Gardens, and Barrio del Pescado is the present-day Wallace Addition.¹¹⁶ The East Guadalupe neighborhood is roughly bounded by Cheatham Street to the north, South Guadalupe Street to the west, McKie Street to the east, and Interstate Highway 35 to the south.¹¹⁷

Education

The Black community in San Marcos largely forged its own nineteenth-century educational institutions. In 1866, the community purchased a house to hold classes in; the location of this site remains unknown.¹¹⁸ In Texas, the Freedmen’s Bureau helped established 16 schools for Black children by 1866.¹¹⁹ In 1868, Bureau trustees helped establish a freedmen’s school with the purchase of 4 acres out of Farm Lot 5 from Edward Burleson.¹²⁰ Although the State mandated taxes to pay for the free public school system, it did not allocate equal funding to support the

¹¹⁰ Find A Grave, San Marcos-Blanco Cemetery Memorials.

¹¹¹ *San Marcos Daily Record*, “Texas Historical Marker is Approved for San Marcos-Blanco Cemetery on Post Road,” June 1, 1997, 2B; Hays County Clerk, Deed Record 42:151, San Marcos, June 16, 1893.

¹¹² This cemetery has also been referred to as a paupers’ plot. In 1981, it was renamed the San Marcos Community Cemetery. In 1996, it the name was restored to the San Marcos-Blanco Cemetery. Find A Grave, San Marcos-Blanco Cemetery.

¹¹³ Koch, *Bird’s-Eye View*.

¹¹⁴ Hicks & Company, *Survey Report*; Sanborn Map Company, 1912.

¹¹⁵ Sanborn Map Company, 1922.

¹¹⁶ Nick Castillo, “Council to Discuss Creation of Mexican American, Indigenous Heritage Culture District,” *San Marcos Daily Record*, May 28, 2021.

¹¹⁷ Newlan Knight and Associates, *Survey of Dunbar and East Guadalupe*.

¹¹⁸ Juan R. Palomo and Ollie W. Giles, “A Subjugated Race: As Slaves, As Free People, Blacks Faced Harsh Life,” *Celebrate San Marcos 150!*, March 2001.

¹¹⁹ Anna Victoria Wilson, “Education for African Americans,” in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2020.

¹²⁰ Hays County Clerk, Deed Record E:358, San Marcos, January 23, 1868.

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construction and maintenance of schools for Black children.¹²¹ Case in point, between 1876 and 1878, Hays County organized 31 schools, with only one for Black children, which opened January 13, 1877, with 50 students.¹²² Thus, Black communities held classes in their churches or other non-traditional spaces taught by a minister or other informed person. In 1879, the Bureau trustees conveyed the freedmen's school property to the Wesley Chapel Board of Stewards, and they built a new wood-frame sanctuary that also served as a school that year.¹²³ In 1880, Joseph Cephas, James Gilmore, and Jackson Johns were schoolteachers.¹²⁴ In 1884, elected school trustees were Jefferson Toliver, George Holland, and Dock Roberts.¹²⁵ By 1885, 90 students were enrolled.¹²⁶ By this time, 32 percent of public school students in San Marcos were Black, all attending a single school for all grade levels.¹²⁷ In 1890, the school board allocated funding to build a school for white children.¹²⁸ That year, the former white school building was relocated next to the Wesley Chapel to serve students (**Figure 12**).¹²⁹

Civic Engagement

The Black community participated in local politics. As civic and political leaders, they worked to ensure their rights and safety. Since the Texas Republican Party's 1867 origination, the organization integrated emancipated Black Texans into state politics at the first Republican Convention.¹³⁰ In the early 1880s, Joseph Cephas, George Holland, Jackson Johns, Jefferson D. Toliver, and Thomas Cheatham were Black delegates for the Hays County Republican Party.¹³¹ In 1882, Cephas served as secretary for the Hays County Republicans.¹³² The party advocated for economic and social programs, railroad development, and free public schools. Through Reconstruction, 44 Black Texans served the Texas Legislature as Republicans.¹³³ Hays County Republicans for Precinct 1 elected Holland, Joseph Cephas, Johns, Toliver, Rev. J. W. Watson, and Rev. A. R. Norris as Black delegates to the 1886 county convention.¹³⁴ Little is known about these appointed officials, but they followed the path of the first Black Texas politicians who unanimously supported protections from violence and education. These 14 men—12 in the House and 2 in the Senate—paved the way for the 1870 Texas Legislature.¹³⁵ By 1870, the State Constitution granted Black men of age the right to vote but permitted segregation of public accommodations in transportation, education, and religion. As the late nineteenth century ebbed, Democrats gained more influence and power through Jim Crow-era legislation and practices. By the turn of the century, restrictive laws and the poll tax limited the Black vote, constraining the

¹²¹ Joe E. Ericson and Ernest Wallace, "Constitution of 1876," in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2021; Wilson, "Education for African Americans."

¹²² Hays County Historical Commission, "African American Heritage Committee," 2023; Palomo and Giles, "A Subjugated Race;" Texas Historical Commission, "Dunbar School" Texas Historical Commission (1987), National Register of Historic Places Delisting.

¹²³ Hays County Clerk, Deed Record I:517, San Marcos, April 7, 1875.

¹²⁴ U.S. Department of the Interior, 1880 Inhabitants.

¹²⁵ *San Marcos Free Press*, "Personal," August 7, 1884, 3.

¹²⁶ *San Marcos Free Press*, "Home News," July 16, 1885, 3.

¹²⁷ *San Marcos Free Press*, "Home News."

¹²⁸ *San Marcos Free Press*, "The Amended Street Improvements and School House Ordinance," March 13, 1890, 3.

¹²⁹ Palomo and Giles, "A Subjugated Race"; Sanborn Map Company, 1902; 1912.

¹³⁰ Carl H. Moneyhon, "Republican Party," in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2021.

¹³¹ *San Marcos Free Press*, "Republican Meeting," July 15, 1886, 3; "Better than Vacation," August 12, 1886, 3.

¹³² *San Marcos Free Press*, "Republican County Convention," August 24, 1882, 4.

¹³³ Republican Party of Texas, "Overview and History," 2023.

¹³⁴ *San Marcos Free Press*, "Better than Vacation."

¹³⁵ Barry A. Crouch and Larry Madaras, *The Dance of Freedom: Texas African Americans During Reconstruction* (University of Texas Press, 2008).

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Republican Party and eliminating Black participation in politics.¹³⁶ After the last Black legislator in Texas was elected in 1896, it took another 70 years and a monumental national civil rights movement for another to be elected.¹³⁷

Twentieth-Century Evolution

Jim Crow restrictions and segregation compelled Black communities to develop their own business, institutions, and organizations in the twentieth century. Entrepreneurs developed an essential commercial district, and leaders formed organizations intended to improve and enrich lives as the area attracted more residents. The purpose of these organizations ranged from inspiring political activism and community service to fostering social connections. Faced with a political, economic, and cultural environment that actively disenfranchised Black citizens, these institutions and organizations served the particularly important purpose of marshaling advocates for equal opportunity.

Commerce and The Beat

Commercial businesses that sold goods and services within the Black community generated economic stability. Black communities established business districts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Tulsa, Oklahoma, the Greenwood District, well known as Black Wall Street, was an exemplary business district, and versions of this occurred throughout Texas. Black entrepreneurs in San Marcos opened retail, entertainment, and food establishments. By 1896, a restaurant was off West Martin Luther King Drive between South Fredericksburg and South Guadalupe Streets. There was a barbershop in 1902 and a skating rink in 1906).¹³⁸ By 1912, this stretch of West Martin Luther King Drive had at least 10 Black-owned businesses including barbershops, cafés, and general stores. Combined, the Black commercial district became known as “The Beat” (**Figure 13** and **Figure 16**).¹³⁹ The Beat stretched from South Fredericksburg to South Guadalupe Streets within the J. S. Travis Addition. Jefferson D. Toliver, with investment partners Polk Kyle, Budd Hall, and Anthony Giles, established the commercial district around 1911 when they began purchasing lots along West Martin Luther King Drive between South Fredericksburg and South Guadalupe Streets. This commercial stretch had three attached two-story buildings with lodging on their second floors, and several one-story, stand-alone buildings. By 1912, there was a grocery, poolhall, three barbershops, and four restaurants.¹⁴⁰ Toliver’s son, John M. Toliver, operated the People’s Mercantile Company, and his daughter-in-law, Allie Brown Toliver, operated a barber and beauty shop.¹⁴¹

The name of this area, The Beat, likely derived from the Black community early on; by the 1930s, the nickname was engrained when the *San Marcos Record* referred to it as “The Beat” or “Down on the Beat” (**Figure 21**).¹⁴² At least 16 businesses were in operation within The Beat by then.¹⁴³ Businesses that operated in the commercial district over time included Irene’s Tea Room, Ernest Warren’s Confectionery, J. E. Taylor Grocery, Bolden Funeral Home, Mount Zion Funeral Parlor, Cebron Traywick’s Barber Shop, Louis Perkins’ Tailor Shop, Richard Coleman’s Tailor Shop, George Kerr’s Restaurant, Moses Cheatham’s Restaurant, J. E. Warren’s restaurant, a poolhall, and several cafés.¹⁴⁴ By the mid-1940s, some storefronts on the south side of West Martin Luther King Drive that once comprised The Beat had

¹³⁶ Moneyhon, “Republican Party.”

¹³⁷ Crouch and Madaras, *Dance of Freedom*.

¹³⁸ Sanborn Map Company, 1902; 1906; Sanborn-Perris Map Company, 1896.

¹³⁹ Anonymous, The Beat Historical Marker [Draft], Johnnie M. Armstead African American History Collection, City of San Marcos, Rescarta-Web, 2015.

¹⁴⁰ Sanborn Map Company, 1912.

¹⁴¹ Anonymous, Historical Marker.

¹⁴² Leslie A. Cooper, “Odds and Ends,” *San Marcos Record*, May 28, 1937, 4.

¹⁴³ Cooper, “Odds and Ends,” 4; Sanborn Map Company, 1930.

¹⁴⁴ Anonymous, Historical Marker; San Marcos Telephone Company, *Telephone Directory* (San Marcos Public Library, 1920); *Telephone Directory for San Marcos and Martindale, Texas*, 1921); *Telephone Directory* (San Marcos Public Library, 1930).

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been converted to dwellings.¹⁴⁵ In 1955, the Century Phone Company acquired the land and demolished the buildings. Nevertheless, some businesses that developed outside of The Beat persisted. Landa's Grocery, later named Wheatville Grocery, on the corner of Centre Street and Shady Lane, had opened in the early 1920s (**Photograph 23**). It became Hamilton's Grocery when Ollie Hamilton purchased it in 1949 (Map ID #21).¹⁴⁶ Her grocery business remained in operation until her death in the 1980s.¹⁴⁷ Other 1920s- and 1930s-era businesses were the Cephas and Giles Blacksmith Shop on South Guadalupe Street, Henry Byars Garage across from The Beat on West Martin Luther King Drive, and Johannah Hardeman's Restaurant on Belvin Street.¹⁴⁸

Residential Improvements

Black residents continued to develop housing near the southwestern edge of town, following national design trends in the early twentieth century. New homes were typically the most modest version of the bungalow form—usually a one-story, rectangular building with a low-pitched, front-gable roof—rather than one of its many complex interpretations. The focal point of the front façade is a projecting partial- or full-width porch with support piers that may exhibit Craftsman-inspired details, like tapered columns or ornamental dentils. Gable ends often have one or more small windows or other embellishments. Windows are usually double-hung, wood-sash. Along the roof line and at the gable ends, rafter tails and brackets are exposed.¹⁴⁹ The dwelling at 213 Herndon Street (Map ID #5) exhibits bungalow form, and those at 217, 302, 503, and 511 West Martin Luther King Drive are examples with Craftsman influences.

Churches

New congregations formed and opened houses of worship throughout the community to accommodate more diverse religious practices in the early twentieth century. Four congregations introduced new sanctuaries to the community: the Pentecostal Temple Church of God in Christ at the corner of Centre and Jackman Streets, a second Methodist Church on West Martin Luther King Drive, Jackson Chapel UMC at Centre and Herndon Streets, and the Antioch Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ at Shady Lane and Centre Street. Today, six congregations that formed during the period of significance are active.

Education

In the early twentieth century, there were separate schools for white, Black, and Mexican American students. On June 22, 1918, the San Marcos Board of Trustees purchased a tract of land on West Martin Luther King Drive and Endicott Street in the southern portion of the community and moved the school¹⁵⁰ that was next to the Wesley Chapel (Map ID #34A) to this land. Black students continued to attend classes in this new location. Inequalities in funding and maintenance for the school persisted after it was moved in 1918, and the Black community organized to combat the issues. By 1925, the San Marcos Colored Parent–Teacher Association (PTA) had formed, headed by Alice Meyer. The PTA hosted events and fundraisers for the school and students.¹⁵¹ During the 1930s, the school had a page in the *San Marcos Record* titled “The Hornet.” Student authors contributed articles on school athletics, clubs, and

¹⁴⁵ Sanborn Map Company, 1944.

¹⁴⁶ San Marcos Telephone Company, *Telephone Directory* (San Marcos Public Library, 1926).

¹⁴⁷ Anonymous, Ms. Ollie Hamilton, 1904–1984, Johnnie M. Armstead African American History Collection, City of San Marcos, Rescarta Foundation, n.d., Unpublished Biography.

¹⁴⁸ San Marcos Telephone Company, *1921 Directory; 1930 Directory*.

¹⁴⁹ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture (Revised)* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2015).

¹⁵⁰ This was the former white school, moved to the Wesley Chapel location and opened in 1890 for Black students.

¹⁵¹ *San Marcos Record*, “Hays County P.T.A. Meeting,” October 30, 1925, 6.

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achievements.¹⁵² The articles noted the inadequacies of school facilities—specifically detailing the lack of a study hall, library, auditorium, and athletics facilities that local white schools had.¹⁵³

Native Mexican and Mexican American residents had also formed schools to educate their children since they were similarly excluded from public schools.¹⁵⁴ In 1901, Mexican American students attended school in a former a school for Black children. In 1908, 41 Mexican American students attended an elementary school at the corner of Valley and Herndon Streets.¹⁵⁵ By 1922, a segregated L-plan public school was in the East Guadalupe neighborhood at the northwest corner of South Cedar (McKie) Street and Marne Avenue for these students.¹⁵⁶ In 1930, the Southside School, for Mexican American students, was on South Austin Street in the East Guadalupe neighborhood.¹⁵⁷

Civic and Social Engagement and Culture

As mid-century neared, several groups aimed at expanding civil liberties and economic opportunities for Black residents operated in the community. In 1933, Henry Landa headed the Black division of San Marcos' National Recovery Administration (NRA).¹⁵⁸ This organization, formed during the Great Depression following the enactment of the National Industrial Recovery Act in 1933, was charged with drafting voluntary industrywide agreements to fix prices and wages that might spur economic recovery.¹⁵⁹ Participants in San Marcos' Black NRA division included the Tolivers, J. S. Myers, J. C. Whitley, Nelson Johns, Ernest Armstead, Reverend J. B. Keaton, and at least one woman, Emma Brown. The Black and Mexican American NRA divisions in San Marcos organized several hundred consumers who committed to shopping only at NRA member companies.¹⁶⁰ A 1935 United States Supreme Court ruling abolished the NRA, but in the decades to come, other causes galvanized local political action.¹⁶¹

Community residents formed organizations to participate locally in the national fight for the expansion of civil rights for Black Americans. By the 1950s, San Marcos had an active branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Members of the branch in 1954 included President James E. Smith and Reverends M. C. Arnold and M. N. Taylor.¹⁶² In the 1950s, the San Marcos branch actively advocated for school integration.¹⁶³ Community residents also sought to celebrate and safeguard civil liberties they could access. To this end, a Voter's Club of approximately 100 members formed. They met at the former Calaboose/United Service Organizations (USO) Building (Map ID #31) and exercised influence in local elections.¹⁶⁴

Fraternal organizations sought to improve the quality of life for San Marcos' Black community. Black fraternal lodges were organized in Texas starting in 1871 with the Prince Hall Grand Lodge in Galveston, and soon after, local chapters of fraternal and sororal groups formed in cities statewide.¹⁶⁵ These groups organized civic and political agendas, and

¹⁵² *San Marcos Record*, "The Hornet," January 13, 1939, 8.

¹⁵³ *San Marcos Record*, "The Hornet."

¹⁵⁴ Texas Historical Commission Staff, Southside School, Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Files, University of North Texas Libraries, Portal to Texas History, August 2, 2012, Official Texas Historical Marker Application.

¹⁵⁵ Texas Historical Commission Staff, Southside School.

¹⁵⁶ Sanborn Map Company, 1922.

¹⁵⁷ Sanborn Map Company, 1930.

¹⁵⁸ *San Marcos Record*, "Exemption Body Hears Petitions of 3 Employers," September 15, 1933, 1.

¹⁵⁹ National Archives and Records Administration, "National Industrial Recovery Act (1933)," 2023.

¹⁶⁰ *San Marcos Record*, "Petitions."

¹⁶¹ National Archives and Records Administration, "National Industrial Recovery Act."

¹⁶² *San Marcos Record*, "NAACP Asks School Board for Special Segregation Hearing," July 23, 1954, 1.

¹⁶³ *San Marcos Record*, "Segregation Hearing." *San Marcos Record*, "School Dads Delay Ruling on Segregation Question," July 15, 1955, 1.

¹⁶⁴ Texas Historical Commission, "San Marcos Restores Old Calaboose," *The Medallion*, September, 1990, 2, City of San Marcos: Johnnie M. Armstead African American History Collection.

¹⁶⁵ Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1525–1995* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1995); Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge Free and Accepted Masons of Texas and Jurisdiction, "When and Where Were the First Lodges in Texas Organized?," 2023.

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often sold members life insurance and death benefits. In San Marcos, these organizations included the Pride of San Marcos Lodge #494 P.H.A., the Knights of Pythias, the Order of Eastern Star, and the Carver Court of Calanthe #93; the Heroines of Jericho, the Household of Ruth, Church Women United, and Women of Wisdom explicitly served women members.¹⁶⁶

Both religious-based and secular groups offered opportunities for people to gather socially and provided networks for undertaking political and charitable activities near mid-century. Some, like the Colored Missionary Society of the First Baptist Church, were associated with a religious congregation. The society, active by 1940 and headed by Sister Mary Crunk, sponsored events like a clothing drive for children.¹⁶⁷ Secular clubs similarly organized social events and philanthropic projects. The Gay Paree Civic and Social Club formed in 1963. The group organized community projects and social gatherings, raised money for local families, planned events, and developed a scholarship program.¹⁶⁸ After the 1970 and 1972 Purgatory Creek floods, the club held a benefit dance to aid those impacted.¹⁶⁹ Club members during the 1960s and 1970s included Amentha Bratton, Laney Wilson, Lillie Bell Townsend, Marguerite Cheatham Hill, Myrtle Johnson, Annie Crayton, Nelvia Burleson, Grace Sanders, Mary Joe Holms, Rose Brooks, Martha Davis, Dorothy Robinson, and Willie Mae Beard.¹⁷⁰ The club remained active throughout the 1970s. These individuals contributed to the social, cultural, and political life of San Marcos; their contributions, along with the others listed above and countless individuals not detailed here, irrevocably shaped the development and character of the community.

Cultural events in the 1920s and 1930s centered around annual holidays, with Juneteenth a particularly prominent celebration. Advertisements for emancipation celebrations appeared in the *San Marcos Free Press* as early as the 1880s, of note since white-operated newspapers selectively reported on the Black community.¹⁷¹ Events included dinner, music, speakers, and a reading of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.¹⁷² The San Marcos Independent Marching Band that Ulysses Cephas organized and the San Marcos "Colored" Band that John Toliver, and later Ellis Younger, directed performed for Juneteenth parades and other events.¹⁷³ In 1926, the community hosted a three-day Juneteenth emancipation celebration at the Hays County Fairgrounds.¹⁷⁴ The planning committee included Committee Presidents Toliver and Cephas. The San Marcos "Colored" Band entertained at the event. That same year, historian-author Carter G. Woodson launched the annual National Negro History Week, the second week of February.¹⁷⁵ The community hosted weeklong events at churches to celebrate with programs on Black history, art, music, poetry, and

¹⁶⁶ Mary Compton, "Church Women United Honors Two 'Valient [sic] Women' in Ceremony," *The Record*, May 16, 2001, City of San Marcos: Johnnie M. Armstead African American History Collection; Cheryl Mulhollan, "Black Women Leaders Welcome Changing Ideas," *San Marcos Daily Record*, October 29, 1978, 15; Rachel Willis, "The Women that 'Lifted as They Climbed'," *San Marcos Daily Record*, October 26, 2017, 5, City of San Marcos: Johnnie M. Armstead African American History Collection.

¹⁶⁷ *San Marcos Record*, "Colored Missionary Society Asks For [Aid]," December 6, 1940, 12.

¹⁶⁸ Mulhollan, "Women Leaders," 15.

¹⁶⁹ *La Otra Voz*, "Gay Paree Benefit Dance Tonight," June 16, 1972, 5.

¹⁷⁰ *Hays County Citizen*, "Gay Paree Club Honors Winners of Scholarship," June 15, 1966, 2; Unknown Newspaper, "Superintendent Thomas D. Carter," n.d.: Johnnie M. Armstead African American History Collection.

¹⁷¹ Mark I. Pinsky, "Maligned in Black and White: Southern Newspapers Played a Major Role in Racial Violence," 2023; Brent Staples, "How the White Press Wrote Off Black America," *New York Times*, July 10, 2021.

¹⁷² *San Marcos Free Press*, "Emancipation Day," June 24, 1886, 3.

¹⁷³ Leslie A. Cooper, "Odds and Ends," *San Marcos Record*, June 23, 1939, 4; Schwartz, Cephas.

¹⁷⁴ Anonymous, Sixty-Third Emancipation Celebration, Tula Townsend Wyatt Collection, San Marcos History Center, 1926, Flyer.

¹⁷⁵ The concept was expanded in 1976 when the Association for the Study of African American Life and History designated February as Black History Month, according to "Black History Month: A Commemorative Observances Legal Research Guide," 2023.

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literature that were open to the public. Participating churches included the Greater Bethel Baptist Church, Wesley Chapel (Map ID #34A), Jackson Chapel UMC, and the First Baptist Church (Map ID #27).¹⁷⁶

Youth Activities

Adults organized recreational opportunities for Black youth within the segregated mid-century landscape. In 1939, the San Marcos Negro Citizens Recreation Board, under the direction of the San Marcos Recreation Board, opened a playground for the Black residents. Joe Brown oversaw the park opening; other members of the recreation board were Ollie Hamilton, Faye Cheatham, Alice Floyd, George Kerr, Ivory Smith, Walter Brown, and Ulysses Cephas.¹⁷⁷ J. M. Toliver led Boy Scout Troop 105 in 1939, and Gaston Burleson, Oscar Williams, and B. P. Grant served on the scout committee.¹⁷⁸ In 1940, Troop 105 operated a clean-up campaign for elderly residents and a sponsored 5-mile hike along the Blanco River. Grant was scoutmaster and Lawson Wade was his assistant.¹⁷⁹

The Impact of World War II

During World War II, Black servicemembers resided in this segregated community where they could rent homes, attend church, and become a temporary part of the local Black community. With no housing on the SMAAF, approximately 400 families resided in San Marcos.¹⁸⁰ Local residents, like Ulysses Cephas, rented homes they owned to Black families.¹⁸¹

In 1943, the USO clubhouse for Black servicemembers opened on West Martin Luther King Drive in the former Calaboose (Map ID #31) with Myrtle Hardin as director.¹⁸² The Black USO club offered services and entertainment for enlisted armed forces, providing a “home away from home.”¹⁸³ The first event at the club was a 1943 Christmas Eve gala.¹⁸⁴ That year, the War Department ordered integration of USO facilities, yet the San Marcos USO did not integrate before its 1946 closure.¹⁸⁵ After the USO closed, the Black community petitioned the City for a recreation program that was approved in 1946, and included redevelopment of the former Calaboose/USO as a recreation center (Map ID #31).¹⁸⁶ Members of the recreation board that oversaw the effort included Chairman Ulysses Cephas, Lola Smith, George Smith, Walter Brown, Dora Cheatham, Etta Hollins, and G. E. Teague.¹⁸⁷

In 1949, American Legion Negro Post 144-A was established as a segregated club in San Marcos for Black veterans (**Figure 26**). Post 144-A held at least one meeting at the “Colored Social Center,” likely meaning the recreation center in the former Calaboose/USO building.¹⁸⁸ After 1960, the American Legion integrated nationally, and the segregated Black post dissolved when most members joined the integrated post.¹⁸⁹

World War II was the engine that accelerated social change locally and had a lasting impact on the Black community in San Marcos. The war brought focus to segregation in public accommodations after a 1948 presidential executive order technically abolished racial discrimination in the military. Thus, local Black servicemembers were first to

¹⁷⁶ *San Marcos Record*, “National Negro History Celebration,” March 1, 1940, 8.

¹⁷⁷ *San Marcos Record*, “Negro Citizens Open Playground Last Thursday,” June 23, 1939, 1.

¹⁷⁸ *San Marcos Record*, “Troop 105, Boy Scouts,” January 13, 1939, 8.

¹⁷⁹ *San Marcos Record*, “The Boy Scout Troup Number 105,” May 14, 1940, 13.

¹⁸⁰ *San Marcos Record*, “Gary AFB to Call for Housing Bids,” July 8, 1955, 1.

¹⁸¹ Schwartz, Cephas.

¹⁸² *San Marcos Record*, “Negro USO Club Will Be Located in Old City Jail,” November 5, 1943, 4.

¹⁸³ Paul X. Rutz, “Here’s How the First USO Centers Were Created,” 2020.

¹⁸⁴ *San Marcos Record*, “USO Club.”

¹⁸⁵ Sydney Johnson, “How the USO Served a Racially Segregated Military Throughout World War II,” 2022.

¹⁸⁶ *San Marcos Record*, “Recreation Center.”

¹⁸⁷ *San Marcos Record*, “Colored Recreation Center Approved by City Council,” January 11, 1946, 1.

¹⁸⁸ *San Marcos Record*, “Post 144-A Holds Meeting December 7,” December 16, 1949, 4.

¹⁸⁹ Unknown Newspaper, “American Legion Negro Post: Carver Post 144A,” n.d., City of San Marcos: Johnnie M. Armstead African American History Collection.

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experience various levels of integration that trickled down to other arenas of the community. During the gradual snowball effect of desegregation policies approved in the 1940s and 1950s, San Marcos residents were continually exposed to this proto-civil rights movement with its heightened potency against segregation.¹⁹⁰

The Impact of Civil Rights

San Marcos' Black and Mexican American communities' highest priority was gaining access to education at mid-century, a challenge that required capital to maintain a comfortable and safe building with basic amenities for a healthy learning environment. In 1943, the Negro PTA of San Marcos (formerly the San Marcos Colored PTA) organized fundraisers for school amenities, including a lunchroom, but was unsuccessful at obtaining funds to complete the project.¹⁹¹ The community petitioned the Hays County School Board to fund indoor plumbing at the school. In response, in 1946, the County purchased army barracks from Camp Swift that were moved to the campus and appended to the main school building with indoor restrooms installed.¹⁹² Additions and repairs to the public San Marcos "Colored" School, however, did little to address inequalities in facilities, faculty, and supplies for Black students. Before integration, resident Katherine Hardeman taught preschool in a building at 125 Nance Street (Map ID #14).¹⁹³ Hardeman's school offered a second schooling option to relieve some overcrowding at the public school. By 1955, the San Marcos "Colored" School had more than 200 students enrolled in 12 grades and 7 teachers.¹⁹⁴ Mexican Americans organized at mid-century to support integration and adequate educational resources for their children when, in 1948, the City passed a bond to reconstruct the Southside School, maintaining its segregated status.¹⁹⁵

This was disheartening at best, but community advocacy in small towns like San Marcos generated change locally. In 1954, the San Marcos branch of the NAACP requested that the school board conduct a special hearing on integration. The group argued that San Marcos' public schools did not abide by the regulations of the Texas Education Agency in regard to segregation and that education facilities were unequal.¹⁹⁶ Reverend M. C. Arnold of First Baptist Church was the local NAACP spokesman, James E. Smith was president, and Reverend M. N. Taylor was a member.¹⁹⁷ In 1955, the branch petitioned the San Marcos School Board, calling for an immediate end to segregation. Their petition collected more than 65 signatures from parents of Black pupils.¹⁹⁸ In the fall of 1955, the board approved public school integration, beginning with the senior class at San Marcos High School.¹⁹⁹

The newly integrated system, however, did not treat all students equally.²⁰⁰ School busses only picked up white students, and Black and Mexican American students had to walk to school. The cafeteria remained segregated and the community launched a nearby cafeteria so that students did not have to miss a meal or classes.²⁰¹ The school board prohibited Black students from participating in extracurricular activities, except football and band. By the 1930s, the basketball and track teams were only for white boys; the Black community established their own basketball and

¹⁹⁰ Matthew F. Delmont, *Half American: The Epic Story of African Americans Fighting World War II at Home and Abroad* (Viking, 2022).

¹⁹¹ Mallory B. Randle, "Works Projects Administration," in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 1996; *San Marcos Record*, "Negro Parents and Teachers Association," February 19, 1943, 5.

¹⁹² *San Marcos Record*, "Board Accepts New Building at Southside Elementary School," April 15, 1949, 1.

¹⁹³ *San Marcos Record*, "Operation Head Start Plan Applied for by Local School," May 13, 1965, 17.

¹⁹⁴ *San Marcos Record*, "Ruling on Segregation."

¹⁹⁵ Texas Historical Commission Staff, Southside School.

¹⁹⁶ *San Marcos Record*, "Segregation Hearing"; "Negro Delegation Appears Before School Board Meet," August 13, 1954, 1.

¹⁹⁷ *San Marcos Record*, "Segregation Hearing."

¹⁹⁸ *San Marcos Record*, "Ruling on Segregation."

¹⁹⁹ Elvin Holt, A Brief History of African Americans in San Marcos [Draft], Johnnie M. Armstead African American History Collection, ResCarta Foundation, City of San Marcos, September 24, 1999, Unpublished Paper.

²⁰⁰ Delna Tull, "A History of Desegregation in San Marcos: Blacks Make Social Progress Since 1954 Supreme Court Ruling," *San Marcos News*, February 12, 1978, 1-2, San Marcos History Center: Tula Townsend Wyatt Collection; Tull, "A History of Desegregation in San Marcos."

²⁰¹ Tull, "A History of Desegregation in San Marcos."

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baseball teams and played against neighboring all-Black leagues.²⁰² Although not associated with the school, Black teams borrowed the mascot as their own. The Hornets baseball team was organized in the 1950s by Reverend I. H. Pierce of Jackson Chapel UMC.²⁰³ In 1964, the team won the Pony League Championship with the coaching of Alonzo Hardge Jr.²⁰⁴

An important transition occurred for local education and the Black community in 1961, when the San Marcos “Colored” School was renamed. Black citizens and PTA members presented the school board with three potential names: Coleman, after longtime local educator Miss Ola Coleman; Dunbar, after Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872–1906); and Lincoln, after President Abraham Lincoln.²⁰⁵ The school board unanimously approved the name Dunbar. The neighborhood surrounding the campus became known as the Dunbar community.

As the decade continued, so did desegregation. Although the State of Texas did not formally repeal its Jim Crow laws until 1969, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 further enforced public school desegregation by tying federal funding to integration.²⁰⁶ This landmark legislation prohibited discrimination in public accommodations and federally funded programs based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; it also provided for increased enforcement of guarantees of voting rights and school desegregation.²⁰⁷ That year, the San Marcos School Board voted to desegregate the remaining schools and grades during the 1964–1965 school year.²⁰⁸ This included phasing out the Dunbar School, which had two remaining teachers. When San Marcos reached complete integration in 1965, the Dunbar School closed. The campus remained empty until 1973, when it was purchased by Clarence D. and Frances Curtis Marshall. The Marshalls donated the land and buildings to the City for Dunbar Park. The main building became the Dunbar Community Center.²⁰⁹

Urban Renewal and Environmental Impacts

In an area historically prone to flooding, the Dunbar community was subject to mid-century and later urban renewal efforts that sought to upgrade infrastructure. In 1949, Congress approved the Federal Housing Act authorizing local governments to seize and demolish private and public property for the purpose of improving aging infrastructure.²¹⁰ The first funding cycle began in 1950 as a major component of post–World War II federal aid to cities. It was not until 1957 that Texas finally passed legislation allowing cities to receive federal assistance for urban renewal projects.²¹¹ Texas cities benefited from the increased tax revenues and cost reductions from redevelopment. However, residents in the impacted areas did not. The racist tactics of urban renewal often perpetuated segregation. Increased taxes and fluctuating property values led to in-and-out migration and gentrification of these areas.²¹² By 1960, urban renewal programs extended to business districts and neighborhood redevelopment projects. In cities across the nation, the consequences of urban renewal included the destruction of historic buildings, the displacement of vulnerable families, and the removal and closure of small businesses.²¹³

²⁰² *San Marcos Record*, “The Hornet.”

²⁰³ *San Marcos Daily Record*, “Remembering Hardge’s Hornets,” February 10, 2019, 1B.

²⁰⁴ *San Marcos Daily Record*, “Hardge’s Hornets.”

²⁰⁵ *San Marcos Record*, “Dunbar Elementary.”

²⁰⁶ Arnoldo de León and Robert A. Calvert, “Civil Rights,” in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2020.

²⁰⁷ U.S. Senate, “Civil Rights Act of 1964,” 2023.

²⁰⁸ *San Marcos Record*, “Trustees Take Step in Desegregation.”

²⁰⁹ Katherine Bansemer, “‘Something That Can Identify Us’: A History of the San Marcos Dunbar School and Community Center,” *Intersect: Perspectives in Texas Public History*, Volume (Spring, 2020): 15.

²¹⁰ Ann Pfau et al., “Urban Renewal,” in *The Inclusive Historian’s Handbook*, PressBooks, 2023.

²¹¹ Megan McCarthy, “A History of Urban Renewal in San Antonio,” *Planning Forum: Journal of Community and Regional Planning*, Volume 13–14 (2009).

²¹² Ashford-Hanserd et al., “African American Experiences in the Historic Dunbar Neighborhood in San Marcos, Texas.”

²¹³ Pfau et al., “Urban Renewal.”

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In the 1960s, San Marcos began urban renewal initiatives, which addressed repeated flooding in the Dunbar community. In 1962, the City Council voted to embark on urban renewal projects and formed the Urban Renewal Agency.²¹⁴ By 1965, the General Neighborhood Renewal Plan included the area along the San Marcos River; other southern portions of the city were designated as urban renewal areas.²¹⁵ In 1968, the agency planned El Molino, housing improvements for low- and moderate-income families and flood control measures along Purgatory Creek.²¹⁶ The plan purported to differ from other contemporaneous urban renewal initiatives in San Marcos by focusing on improving existing housing rather than demolishing it.²¹⁷ In spite of frustrations with the failure of planned renewal projects to swiftly deliver benefits for occupants, some Dunbar residents harbored hopes that El Molino would provide improved housing and prevent future flooding.²¹⁸ Residents of renewal-affected areas formed the Project Area Committee to ensure community involvement and direction from the city, and Dunbar residents attended public meetings on the project.²¹⁹ In spite of public involvement, by 1972, the plan reportedly called for the displacement of 111 homeowners, 58 tenants, and 27 individuals in the Dunbar community and the central business district.²²⁰ Despite planning efforts, the Urban Renewal Agency failed to implement the project before more devastating flooding occurred.

At the junction of the San Marcos River and Purgatory Creek, the Purgatory watershed continually threatened flooding. In 1896, flooding devastated the communities in San Marcos along Purgatory Creek, damaging bridges, railroads, and homes.²²¹ Significant floods occurred in 1940, 1957, 1965, 1970, and 1972. Flooding events had outsized impacts in the Black and Mexican American neighborhoods adjacent to the creek. On May 15, 1970, the Dunbar community experienced some of the worst flooding to hit the area. Two people were killed, and many homes and businesses were destroyed.²²² Almost exactly two years later, another storm flooded the community. On May 18, 1972, Purgatory Creek rose 2 feet higher than the 1970 flood, and more than 300 homes were destroyed.²²³ The City demolished the damaged homes and offered temporary housing and trailers to the flood victims.²²⁴ The Dunbar community and churches held benefits and raised money to help. The Gay Paree Civic and Social Club held a fundraising dance that club president Johnnie Bratton hosted.²²⁵ However, many were unable to rebuild, and repetitive flooding forced them to relocate.²²⁶ Post-flood renewal improvements displaced families, and as homes and historic resources were demolished, modern infill construction took their place.

The Dunbar community's susceptibility to flooding and its urban renewal experience echoed national trends that adversely affected Black communities. *De facto* and *de jure* relegation of Black property ownership to unappealing real estate of little economic value and at high risk of flooding was a phenomenon in cities across the United States. By the twentieth century, some Black neighborhoods within segregated urban spaces came to be known as "bottoms" or

²¹⁴ *San Marcos Record*, "Special Election Ordinance," August 23, 1962, 18.

²¹⁵ *Hays County Citizen*, "That Meeting—What Was It?," October 20, 1965, 4; *San Marcos Record*, "Councilmen Go Against Voters Action on GNRP," October 14, 1965, 1.

²¹⁶ *San Marcos Record*, "Application for El Moliño Ready for Ft. Worth Trip," June 20, 1968, 1.

²¹⁷ *San Marcos Record*, "Application for El Moliño."

²¹⁸ *La Otra Voz*, "Urban Renewal Has Brought Frustration but Still Can Salvage Neighborhoods," July 21, 1972, 4.

²¹⁹ *San Marcos Record*, "PAC in on the Planning," September 16, 1971, 34; *La Otra Voz*, "El Moliño Approved, But Local Funds Doubtful," July 21, 1972, 1.

²²⁰ *La Otra Voz*, "El Moliño Approved."

²²¹ *Texas Democrat*, "San Marcos Swept by Flood," August 1, 1902, 1.

²²² *San Marcos Record*, "River Project Funds Here; First Property Purchased," May 28, 1970, 1; "Another Flood Hits," May 18, 1972, 1.

²²³ *San Marcos Record*, "Another Flood."

²²⁴ *La Otra Voz*, "City Promises Aid to Flood Victims," June 16, 1972, 1.

²²⁵ *La Otra Voz*, "Benefit Dance."

²²⁶ *La Otra Voz*, "Aid to Victims."

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“black bottoms.”²²⁷ These terms connoted physical landscape features like the lower elevations of creek bottoms and silt-darkened soil resulting from frequent flooding. They also depicted the reality of living conditions for Black communities and their status, or lack thereof, in society.²²⁸ While many “bottoms” shared geographic and topographic attributes, the defining characteristic of a “bottom” was the presence of Black American residents. Toni Morrison underscores this idea when she satirically names the Black community on the hilly margins of the fictional Ohio town where her 1973 novel *Sula* is set, “Bottom.”²²⁹ Although Morrison’s Bottom was at elevation, its residents occupied the lowest rung in the economic and social hierarchy. As professor of landscape architecture K. Ian Grandison writes, “This is why African American neighborhoods across the South—and in the North as well—have historically been called the ‘black bottoms,’ regardless of the actual location topographically. The bottoms are where they are, for they are the bottom of society.”²³⁰ Systematic underinvestment in these communities led them to be branded as “slums” or “blighted,” designations that had material consequences for the communities and their occupants. By the mid-1950s, municipal planning authorities often targeted these neighborhoods to be razed for urban renewal and highway development projects.²³¹ These national patterns played out locally in San Marcos, threatening to uproot a community that so many had contributed to building.

Dunbar Community Members and Leaders

From its earliest days, the Dunbar community has been home to individuals active in civic, commercial, communal, and religious life. During and immediately following Reconstruction, Black residents of the Dunbar community used their newly won political enfranchisement, becoming participants in local politics while religious leaders organized congregations that would gain a lasting influence on the community. After the withdrawal of federal troops at the end of Reconstruction allowed white Texans to implement racist Jim Crow laws, Dunbar residents formed commercial ventures to serve the needs of Black community members excluded from San Marcos’ white businesses. As the twentieth century progressed, devoted teachers provided education to Black students and fought for school integration following the abolishment of legalized segregation. Active community members participated in fraternal, sororal, and civic organizations, and sought to craft connections between residents of Dunbar and the past. The actions of these individuals shaped the Dunbar community over the course of its development.

Prominent Families and Individuals

Members of several prominent Black families—including the Cephases, Cheathams, Tolivers, and Hollands—made outsized contributions to local politics through the avenues of educational institutions and religion. Joseph Cephas (born ca. 1843) and his wife, Elizabeth Cephas (1852–1932), lived in San Marcos from at least 1880.²³² Joseph Cephas was a blacksmith and schoolteacher during the late nineteenth century.²³³ Thomas Cheatham (born ca. 1832) helped organize early civic life for the Black community of San Marcos.²³⁴ At an 1881 meeting of Black citizens of San Marcos, Cheatham advocated for San Marcos as the seat of Hays County.²³⁵ When Hays County organized its school district for Black students in 1877, Cheatham was one of its three trustees.²³⁶ Virginia-born Henry Toliver (born ca. 1835) was an early Black landowner in San Marcos. In 1880, Toliver worked as a farmer and lived with his wife,

²²⁷ Ujiji Davis, “‘The Bottom’: The Emergence and Erasure of Black American Urban Landscapes,” *Avery Review*, Volume 34 (October, 2018); Kenrick Ian Grandison, “Negotiated Space: The Black College Campus as a Culture Record of Postbellum America,” *American Quarterly* 51, No. 3 (September, 1999).

²²⁸ Davis, “‘The Bottom,’” 1.

²²⁹ Toni Morrison, *Sula* (Vintage Books, 1973), 3–7.

²³⁰ Grandison, “Negotiated Space,” 542.

²³¹ Davis, “‘The Bottom’.”

²³² Find A Grave, Elizabeth Cephas, Memorial 24311231; U.S. Department of the Interior, 1880 Inhabitants.

²³³ Schwartz, Cephas; U.S. Department of the Interior, 1880 Inhabitants.

²³⁴ U.S. Department of the Interior, 1880 Inhabitants.

²³⁵ *San Marcos Free Press*, “Meeting of Colored Citizens,” December 15, 1881, 5.

²³⁶ Tula Townsend Wyatt, “History of Dunbar School: Over a Century of Service,” *Hays County Citizen*, April 22, 1976, 8.

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Candes, a laundress.²³⁷ Their son, Reverend Jefferson Davis Toliver (1873–1937), was a prominent member of the community.²³⁸ Reverend Toliver was the Wesley Chapel minister for 30 years and in 1886, he was one of the Black delegates at the Hays County Republican Party convention.²³⁹ George Holland (born ca. 1838) was another early landowner and civic leader. He was chairman of the Precinct 1 Republicans in 1886 and was on the Hays County Republican Party convention that year.²⁴⁰ These individuals demonstrated the political possibilities available to Black Texans during Reconstruction and in the brief period immediately thereafter, before implementation of Jim Crow laws. Several other Dunbar residents were integral in shaping the Dunbar community. The son of Joseph and Elizabeth Cephias, Ulysses Cephias (1884–1952), was a notable local blacksmith, an active member of San Marcos' First Missionary Baptist Church, and the organizer of a Black band, the San Marcos Independent Band (**Figure 23**).²⁴¹ Along with his wife, Cora Willie "Willie" Cephias (1889–1975), he helped plan local Juneteenth celebrations in 1926.²⁴² In 1946, Cephias was chairman of the City of San Marcos' recreation center for Black residents.²⁴³ Harvey E. Miller (1929–2020) was born in Georgetown, Texas, and spearheaded a 1962 effort to force the Georgetown Independent School District to integrate. In 1966, Miller moved to San Marcos, where he helped revitalize the city's Juneteenth celebration and led a committee to transform the Dunbar School into a park and community center. In 1999, Miller founded the Dunbar Heritage Association; he received the Trailblazer Award and the San Marcos Community Senior Citizen Volunteer Award for service to his community.²⁴⁴ Eddie Durham (1906–1987), born to Luella Rabb and Joseph Durham Sr. in San Marcos, was a noted swing-era jazz guitarist and trombonist thought to have been the first person to record an amplified guitar (**Figure 25**).²⁴⁵ Lucius Jackson (1941–2022), who grew up near Durham Park, went on to play for the National Basketball Association and for the gold-medal-winning U.S. Olympics team at the 1964 Tokyo Summer Olympics.²⁴⁶

Religious leaders were among the most important individuals in the Dunbar community and, in the twentieth century, religious leadership and civil rights advocacy went hand in hand in Black communities. Among early leaders in San Marcos were Reverend Moses Jones, who organized the First Baptist Church of San Marcos in 1866; and Reverend Richard Robert Haywood, who had formed the Wesley Chapel (Map ID #34A) by 1875.²⁴⁷ Decades later, in 1954, Reverend M. C. Arnold of First Baptist Church was spokesman for the local NAACP chapter along with branch President James E. Smith and Reverend M. N. Taylor.²⁴⁸ That religious leaders pressed civic initiatives underscored their centrality to the community.

Entrepreneurs

In the early twentieth century, Black entrepreneurs developed the Beat, a commercial district within the Dunbar community. In addition to the Tolivers, others were instrumental, establishing small businesses that became part of daily life. Ollie Hamilton, long associated with the Beat, ran a store. Born around 1908, Hamilton moved from nearby

²³⁷ U.S. Department of the Interior, 1880 Inhabitants.

²³⁸ Texas Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Rev. Jefferson Davis Toliver, Texas, Death Certificates, 1903–1982, May 23, 1937, Ancestry.

²³⁹ *San Marcos Free Press*, "Better than Vacation"; Texas Department of Health, Toliver.

²⁴⁰ *San Marcos Free Press*, "Better than Vacation."

²⁴¹ Anonymous, Cephias Family Tree: Revelations for Future Life, Johnnie M. Armstead African American History Collection, January 7, 1985; Find A Grave, Ulysses "Boots" Cephias, Memorial 24311329; Schwartz, Cephias.

²⁴² Find A Grave, Cephias; Schwartz, Cephias.

²⁴³ *San Marcos Record*, "Recreation Center."

²⁴⁴ Dunbar Heritage Association, "Our Founder," 2023.

²⁴⁵ Dave Oliphant, "Eddie Durham (1906–1987)," in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2020.

²⁴⁶ Elvin Holt, Calaboose African American Museum Exhibits, 2023, Personal Tour.

²⁴⁷ Elvin Holt, "Residents Work to Transform Historic Church into Community Activity Center," *San Marcos Daily Record*, May 5, 1993, 10; Texas Historical Commission Staff, Wesley Chapel.

²⁴⁸ *San Marcos Record*, "Segregation Hearing."

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Kyle to San Marcos in 1923.²⁴⁹ She worked for an aunt and uncle at their Landa Grocery about 10 years later. Hamilton inherited the store at 400 Centre Street in 1949. She operated Hamilton's Grocery there through at least the mid-1980s (**Figure 24**).²⁵⁰ The store had one of the only phones in the community and was a gathering place for adults and children.²⁵¹ She won the 1984 local Lizzie Grant Award for her service.²⁵² Several people ran small businesses in their homes, like barber shops and beauty salons. At mid-century, Nelson Smith on Valley Street dug worms from Purgatory Creek, a woman named Pinky sold candy on Centre Street, and a Mr. Gardner sold newspapers he brought from San Antonio.²⁵³ Many of these entrepreneurs and their businesses became institutions in the Dunbar community.

Educators

Just as segregation compelled the formation of Black-owned businesses, unequal access to education forced the Dunbar community to form schools for Black children. Among the schoolteachers with influence in the education of Black youth in San Marcos were Ola Lee Coleman and Katherine Steen Hardeman. Before school integration, Coleman taught Black students in the segregated San Marcos school system for 36 years, retiring in 1951. When the San Marcos Independent School District (ISD) Board of Trustees met in 1961 to decide on a new name for the "colored" school, Coleman's name was considered along with Dunbar and Lincoln.²⁵⁴ Hardeman attempted to meet the needs of Black children excluded from white preschools during segregation and later pushed back at attempts to prevent school integration. Hardeman received a bachelor's degree from Huston-Tillotson College and a master's degree from Prairie View A&M College; she majored in education and minored in administration and supervision. In the 1960s, Hardeman operated a preschool for Black, white, and Latino children whose parents made less than \$300 a month and sought to have her preschool incorporated into the Head Start program. The preschool operated at 125 Nance Street (Map ID #14).²⁵⁵ Hardeman went on to file a lawsuit for the right to become the first Black teacher the San Marcos ISD hired following integration.²⁵⁶ Hardeman was also politically active; she sat on the first board of directors of the local League of Women Voters when it organized in 1962.²⁵⁷ In 1965, Hardeman served as secretary of the city's Planning and Zoning Commission.²⁵⁸ In 1966, when she was elected to the San Marcos Charter Commission, she was "interested in the growth, development and the people of the town."²⁵⁹ Hardeman was active in the Matrons of Jericho, Eastern Star, and Court Order of Calanthe.²⁶⁰ She was not alone in her active participation in the local community, as many other Dunbar women formed or joined social and civic organizations.

Women of Dunbar

Many women who resided in the Dunbar community during the twentieth century took on multiple social, religious, and civic roles to serve their community. Myrtle Hardin, originally of Waco, acted as the first director of the USO club for Black servicemembers in San Marcos.²⁶¹ Lifelong San Marcos resident Ollie Giles (1933–2021) contributed to the

²⁴⁹ Hanson, "Grocery Staying Power," 12; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Inhabitants, Precinct 1, Hays County, National Archives and Records Administration, Ancestry, 1940, Manuscript Population Census.

²⁵⁰ Hanson, "Grocery Staying Power," 12.

²⁵¹ Robert Bratton et al., History Drop-In for Dunbar School, San Marcos Public Library, 2023, Informal Conversation.

²⁵² Unknown Newspaper, "Grant Honoree," June 21–27, 1984, Rescarta Foundation: Johnnie M. Armstead African American History Collection.

²⁵³ Bratton et al., History Drop-In, 2023.

²⁵⁴ *San Marcos Record*, "Ola Lee Coleman Retiring after Teaching School 35 Years," June 8, 1951, 5; Wyatt, "Dunbar School," 8.

²⁵⁵ *San Marcos Record*, "Operation Head Start."

²⁵⁶ Robin Blackburn, "'Lifting as They Climb': A Story of Influential Black Women," *San Marcos Daily Record*, November 12, 2017, 1, 6A.

²⁵⁷ *San Marcos Record*, "Mrs. William Crook Elected President of Women Voters," June 21, 1962, 2.

²⁵⁸ *San Marcos Record*, "Legal Notice," July 15, 1965, 7.

²⁵⁹ *Hays County Citizen*, "Twenty-Four Candidates File," June 15, 1966, 16; "417 Favor Commission," June 22, 1966, 1.

²⁶⁰ Blackburn, "Influential Black Women," 1, 6A.

²⁶¹ *San Marcos Record*, "USO Club"; "Dedication of the Colored USO Club Held Last Week," February 18, 1944, 8.

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local Historic Preservation Commission, Hays County Historical Commission, Cemetery Preservation Board, and Genealogy Society, among others.²⁶² Giles served as Head Usher at the Jackson Chapel UMC and frequently attended San Marcos City Council meetings to advocate for causes like the rehabilitation of the Dunbar School for use as a community center.²⁶³ Lizzie Grant (1872–1983), a resident of San Marcos from 1911, was an active member of the Jackson Chapel UMC and was remembered for giving away vegetables from her garden and making house calls on sick friends.²⁶⁴ In 1979, the NAACP of San Marcos began honoring citizens who made outstanding contributions to their community with the Lizzie Grant Award each Juneteenth; that year, Grant became the first recipient of the award bearing her name.²⁶⁵ Johnnie Armstead (1933–2008) led efforts to preserve Black historic sites in the Dunbar community. A member of the Hays County Historical Commission and the Heritage Association of San Marcos, Armstead founded the CAAHM in 1997 and organized efforts to preserve the Cephass House (Map ID #30) and create Eddie Durham Park (Map ID #32). Armstead was an active member of Greater Bethel Baptist Church and served her community for 20 years as a volunteer and later as a paid office manager and executive assistant for the San Marcos Democratic Headquarters.²⁶⁶ Marguerite Cheatham Hill (1918–2010) lived in San Marcos from infancy and attended the Dunbar School. Hill worked at Southwest Texas State University for 20 years and was an active member of Wesley Chapel (Map ID #34A). She participated in community organizations including the NAACP, American Woodsman #127, the Order of Eastern Star, Church Women United, and Carver Court of Calanthean #93. Hill's active role in the San Marcos community earned her the Lizzie Grant Award.²⁶⁷

Select Contributing Resources

Cephass House (217 West Martin Luther King Drive; Map ID #30)

The Cephass House is on the block bounded by South Fredericksburg and Comanche Streets, about one block south and two blocks west of the San Marcos city center and near the eastern boundary of the local Dunbar Historic District (**Figure 19, Photograph 16**). It is west of the 2013 Eddie Durham Park (Map ID #32), adjacent to and east of the Old First Baptist Church (Map ID #27).²⁶⁸

Ulysses Cephass, a lifelong resident of San Marcos, was born to formerly enslaved San Marcos residents Joseph and Elizabeth "Lizzie" Cephass.²⁶⁹ His father was a noted blacksmith who passed the skill on to his son.²⁷⁰ The senior Cephass was civically active, serving as a Hays County delegate at the 1882 state Republican convention in Austin.²⁷¹

Like his father, Ulysses Cephass became a prominent blacksmith, horseshoer, and participant in civic life. He and Cora Willie "Willie" Brady married in 1907.²⁷² In 1910, she was a laundress, and his mother and other family members

²⁶² Find A Grave, Ollie W. "The Brown Shugga" Hargis-Giles, Memorial 237865064.

²⁶³ Find A Grave, Hargis-Giles; Susan Hanson, "Ollie Giles: 'A Squeaky Wheel,'" *San Marcos Daily Record*, November 7, 1982, 1B.

²⁶⁴ *San Marcos Daily Record*, "Lizzie Grant Celebrates 108 Memorable Years," February 17, 1980, 3B; "Free Big Juneteenth Fest this Week," June 12, 1983, 1.

²⁶⁵ Anita Miller, "Juneteenth Presentation Set Tonight," *San Marcos Daily Record*, June 19, 1986, 1; *San Marcos Daily Record*, "Juneteenth."

²⁶⁶ Anonymous, Black Women Biographies, Johnnie M. Armstead African American History Collection, ResCarta Foundation, City of San Marcos, n.d., Unpublished Biography; Bibb Underwood, "Standing By Her Convictions," *San Marcos Daily Record*, February 2, 2003, 1C.

²⁶⁷ Anonymous, [Marguerite Cheatham Hill], Johnnie M. Armstead African American History Collection, City of San Marcos, ResCarta Foundation, n.d., Unpublished Biography.

²⁶⁸ *Austin American-Statesman*, "Cephass House, Eddie Durham Park Dedications," August 13, 2013.

²⁶⁹ Find A Grave, Cephass; Schwartz, Cephass.

²⁷⁰ Schwartz, Cephass.

²⁷¹ *San Marcos Free Press*, "Convention."

²⁷² Schwartz, Cephass.

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resided with the couple.²⁷³ In 1914, Joseph Cephas, residing in Grayson County at the time, sold land out of Farm Lot 5 to his widowed mother, son Ulysses, and daughter Eliza Cephas Hill, who resided in Tarrant County.²⁷⁴ They had a Craftsman-influenced home built on the land between 1922 and 1930.²⁷⁵ Ulysses and Willie Cephas resided there as late as 1950.²⁷⁶

Ulysses Cephas made a living as a blacksmith and acquired property in the Dunbar community. As early as 1921, Cephas operated a blacksmith shop with business partner Anthony Giles at 228 South Guadalupe Street (**Figure 19**).²⁷⁷ In 1923, Cephas and Giles jointly purchased their shop, on the southern half of Lot 11, Block 2, of the J. S. Travis Addition.²⁷⁸ The property, about two blocks south of the Beat, was proximate to both the community and the several industrial enterprises adjacent to the International–Great Northern Railroad.²⁷⁹ That same year, the Cephases bought the east half of the west half of Lot 14, Block 12.²⁸⁰ Undeveloped in 1922, by 1930, this parcel contained a single-story dwelling with a full-width porch that fronted south onto West Comal Street.²⁸¹ In 1935, Cephas became sole owner of the blacksmith shop when he purchased Giles' share.²⁸²

During the next decade, Cephas continued to acquire residential property in the Dunbar community. In 1939, Cephas purchased the eastern half of Lot 13, Block 16.²⁸³ The property at 218 West Comal Street fronted south and faced the Cephas residence.²⁸⁴ Ulysses and Willie Cephas sold the west half of that lot to their daughter, Naomi Wade, and her husband, Oscar Wade, in 1944.²⁸⁵ The parcel contained a single-story dwelling with a partial-width porch (Map ID 24). The east half of the lot, which the Cephases retained, had a narrow, rectangular-plan dwelling.²⁸⁶ That same year, Cephas purchased the westmost quarter of Lot 14, Block 12, bringing another single-family residence under his ownership.²⁸⁷ After their daughter's untimely 1945 death, Cephas repurchased the property from her widower.²⁸⁸ Thus, by 1945, in addition to their own home, the Cephases owned at least four other residences in the community.

The Cephases were active in the community. Ulysses Cephas organized a local Black band, the San Marcos Independent Band.²⁸⁹ Cephas was a member of and participated in the First Missionary Baptist Church choir for many years.²⁹⁰ Along with Anthony Giles and Robert W. Franklin, Cephas was a church trustee in 1924 when Hays County executed a deed reaffirming that the church owned a portion of Farm Lot 5.²⁹¹ The Cephases served on planning

²⁷³ U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Population: Precinct 3, Nueces County, Texas, National Archives and Records Administration, Ancestry, 1910, Manuscript Population Census.

²⁷⁴ Hays County Clerk, Deed Record 66:295, San Marcos, August 11, 1914; *Times-Leader*, "Recent Sale of Real Estate, as Reported by the Hays County Abstract Co.," September 11, 1914, 1.

²⁷⁵ Sanborn Map Company, 1922; 1930.

²⁷⁶ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing, Enumeration District 105-8, San Marcos, Hays County, National Archives and Records Administration, Ancestry, 1950, Manuscript Population Census.

²⁷⁷ Holt, Museum Exhibits, 2023; San Marcos Telephone Company, 1921 Directory.

²⁷⁸ Hays County Clerk, Deed Record 85:367, San Marcos, June 27, 1923.

²⁷⁹ Sanborn Map Company, 1922.

²⁸⁰ Hays County Clerk, Deed Record 84:553, San Marcos, February 26, 1923.

²⁸¹ Sanborn Map Company, 1922; 1930.

²⁸² Hays County Clerk, Deed Record 108:606, San Marcos, March 1, 1935.

²⁸³ Hays County Clerk, Deed Record 118:425, San Marcos, May 8, 1939.

²⁸⁴ Sanborn Map Company, 1922.

²⁸⁵ Hays County Clerk, Deed Record 128:632, San Marcos, January 6, 1944; Texas Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Naomi Wade, Texas Death Certificates, 1903–1982, Ancestry, April 2, 1945, Texas Department of State Health Services.

²⁸⁶ Sanborn Map Company, 1944.

²⁸⁷ Hays County Clerk, Deed Record 128:607, San Marcos, December 17, 1944; Sanborn Map Company, 1944.

²⁸⁸ Hays County Clerk, Deed Record 133:62, San Marcos, October 11, 1945.

²⁸⁹ Anonymous, Cephas Family Tree.

²⁹⁰ Schwartz, Cephas.

²⁹¹ Hays County Clerk, Deed Record 87:510, San Marcos, June 10, 1924.

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committees for the 1926 Juneteenth festivities held at the Hays County Fair Ground.²⁹² The Cephas House is representative of a local formerly enslaved Black family that achieved a level of relative wealth. The City of San Marcos restored the house for community use in 2013 using a Community Development Block Grant.²⁹³

Calaboose African American History Museum/USO Club (200 West Martin Luther King Drive; Map ID #31)

The building at the corner of West Martin Luther King Drive and South Fredericksburg Street served several functions since its construction (**Figure 22**). The building is one block south and two blocks west of the San Marcos city center, adjacent to the eastern boundary of the local Dunbar Historic District. This building was the local jail through the first quarter of the twentieth century, housed the San Marcos USO Club for Black servicemembers at mid-century, and later provided a community center for Black residents. Today, it is the CAAHM.

The Calaboose is on the site of both the original Hays County and the San Marcos jails.²⁹⁴ The original two-story stone building was constructed for Hays County in 1873 and operational by 1874.²⁹⁵ By 1884, the outdated building prompted Hays County to issue bonds for the construction of a new jail on an adjacent lot.²⁹⁶ Northcraft & Donalson designed and built the new jail in 1884.²⁹⁷ That same year, the City of San Marcos purchased the 1873 building from Hays County for \$1,000 to use as a municipal jail.²⁹⁸ The 1873 jail, referred to as a calaboose through at least the early 1890s, housed Black, white, and Mexican prisoners as early as 1885.²⁹⁹ By June 1896, the jail's second story had been removed, and it was a one-story stone building.³⁰⁰ In 1910, the "City Prison" held seven men and three women inmates, half foreign-born white and the half Black.³⁰¹ By 1912, much of the one-story jail had been demolished and the stone reclaimed to construct a bridge and other features on San Antonio Street. A replacement jail was constructed around the remnant jail cages, which remained in good condition.³⁰² By 1919, a one-story, square-plan, brick calaboose had been constructed on the site of the 1873 jail.³⁰³

By 1943, the building's use had transitioned from a municipal jail to the clubhouse of the San Marcos USO branch for Black servicemembers. World War II prompted the formation of the USO, which in 1941 began organizing clubs across the United States to meet the needs of servicemembers. Local USO chapters met in churches, reused buildings, or purpose-built spaces; USOs sought to meet a range of needs experienced by servicemembers stationed far from home and provided religious, social, and economic support.³⁰⁴ Many USOs were racially segregated; in 1943, about 180 of the country's 1,326 USO centers were designated specifically for Black servicemembers and overseen by the USO Negro Service Committee.³⁰⁵

²⁹² Anonymous, Celebration.

²⁹³ *Austin American-Statesman*, "Dedications."

²⁹⁴ Koch, *Bird's-Eye View*.

²⁹⁵ Evan R. Thompson, History of the San Marcos Calaboose/USO Club to 1946, January 7, 2021; *West Texas Free Press*, "Jail Delivery," June 13, 1874, 3.

²⁹⁶ *San Marcos Free Press*, "Commissioners' Court Proceedings," September 4, 1884, 3; Thompson, History to 1946.

²⁹⁷ *San Marcos Free Press*, "Proceedings."

²⁹⁸ Hays County Clerk, Deed Record T:472, San Marcos, August 21, 1885; Mason, Map of San Marcos.

²⁹⁹ *San Marcos Free Press*, "[Prisoners in the County Jail]," November 5, 1885, 3; Thompson, History to 1946.

San Marcos Free Press, "Prisoners"; Thompson, History to 1946.

³⁰⁰ Sanborn-Perris Map Company, 1896.

³⁰¹ U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, *Financial Statistics of Cities Having a Population of Over 30,000: 1912, Bulletin 118* (Census.gov, 1914).

³⁰² *San Antonio Express*, "Old San Marcos Jail Torn Down," August 20, 1912, City of San Marcos: History of the San Marcos Calaboose/USO Club to 1946, by Evan R. Thompson.

³⁰³ Thompson, History to 1946.

³⁰⁴ Rutz, "First USO."

³⁰⁵ Johnson, "USO Served Segregated Military."

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Racial segregation at the San Marcos USO Club prompted the need for a local branch for Black servicemembers.³⁰⁶ The USO club housed in the former Calaboose was organized in May 1943 for Black servicemembers stationed at Camp Gary, a U.S. Army Air Corps training base near San Marcos.³⁰⁷ That year, an addition to the west side of the Calaboose accommodated the building's new function.³⁰⁸ The community celebrated the club's opening with a three-day dedication ceremony in February 1944. The program featured J. M. Tolliver as master of ceremony, remarks by E. W. Mandram, a solo by Willie Cephas, a speech by President C. Downs of Austin's historically Black Samuel Huston College, and a formal dance that attracted attendees from Austin, San Antonio, Gonzales, Lockhart, and San Marcos.³⁰⁹ Myrtle Hardin of Waco served as the USO Club's first director; other staff members included Lovaine Lewis and Bertram Simon.³¹⁰ While in operation, the club servicemembers held events like dances, parties, movies, bingo, and holiday celebrations.³¹¹

Following World War II, Black citizens of San Marcos petitioned the city to sponsor a recreation program for Black residents. City Council approved the recreation program, to be housed in the former Calaboose/USO building, in 1946.³¹² Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the Calaboose was an integral meeting place for the Black population and its membership organizations, like fraternal lodges and civic clubs, and its social events, like weddings, parties, and teas.³¹³

The Texas Historical Commission designated the Calaboose a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark in 1990.³¹⁴ In May 1997, the City of San Marcos adopted a resolution to designate the building as a history museum. Johnnie Odoms Armstead subsequently organized and oversaw the renovation of the building into the CAAHM.³¹⁵ The city dedicated it as a local historic landmark in 2021.

Conclusion

The Dunbar Historic District is significant under Criterion A, in the area of Community Planning and Development and Ethnic Heritage: Black at the local level as the longtime center of African American social, cultural, civic, religious, and commercial life in San Marcos. The Dunbar community developed organically on land parcels acquired by Black families after the Civil War. Institutions—like Dunbar School, First Baptist Church, and the Beat—anchored the community through the 20th century. The period of significance extends from 1908, the construction date of the Old First Baptist Church, to 1972, when a significant flood event and urban renewal initiated the neighborhood's decline.

³⁰⁶ *San Marcos Record*, "USO Club."

³⁰⁷ *Asterope*, "Home Away From Home," January 30, 1945, 2; Texas Historical Commission, "Restores Old Calaboose."

³⁰⁸ *San Marcos Record*, "USO Club."

³⁰⁹ *San Marcos Record*, "USO Club."

³¹⁰ *San Marcos Record*, "USO Club".

³¹¹ *Asterope*, "Home."

³¹² *San Marcos Record*, "Recreation Center."

³¹³ Texas Historical Commission, "Restores Old Calaboose."

³¹⁴ Texas Historical Commission, The Calaboose, Official Texas Historical Marker, Texas Historic Sites Atlas Number 5209010246, *Texas Historic Sites Atlas*, 1990.

³¹⁵ Calaboose African American History Museum, "About the Calaboose," 2023.

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Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Section 10: Geographical Data

Latitude/Longitude Bounding Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1.	Latitude: 29.880268	Longitude: -97.944248
2.	Latitude: 29.880314	Longitude: -97.943847
3.	Latitude: 29.880127	Longitude: -97.943816
4.	Latitude: 29.880242	Longitude: -97.942787
5.	Latitude: 29.880217	Longitude: -97.942280
6.	Latitude: 29.878552	Longitude: -97.942042
7.	Latitude: 29.878492	Longitude: -97.942125
8.	Latitude: 29.879264	Longitude: -97.943168
9.	Latitude: 29.878867	Longitude: -97.943521
10.	Latitude: 29.879103	Longitude: -97.943793
11.	Latitude: 29.878964	Longitude: -97.943952
12.	Latitude: 29.879054	Longitude: -97.944057
13.	Latitude: 29.878572	Longitude: -97.944608
14.	Latitude: 29.878891	Longitude: -97.944975
15.	Latitude: 29.879050	Longitude: -97.945049
16.	Latitude: 29.879123	Longitude: -97.944966
17.	Latitude: 29.879299	Longitude: -97.945167
18.	Latitude: 29.879600	Longitude: -97.944825
19.	Latitude: 29.879669	Longitude: -97.944903
20.	Latitude: 29.879900	Longitude: -97.944643
21.	Latitude: 29.879771	Longitude: -97.944492
22.	Latitude: 29.880050	Longitude: -97.944447
23.	Latitude: 29.880080	Longitude: -97.944220

Verbal Boundary Description:

The Dunbar Historic District is depicted on Figure 2, a scale map. The district is roughly bounded by South Fredericksburg Street on the east, parcels along the north and south sides of West Martin Luther King Drive, Herndon Street on the west, and Centre and Valley Streets on the south to include the triangular-shaped Wesley Chapel A.M.E. Church parcel. The district encompasses parts of 7 blocks and the entirety of 38 parcels.

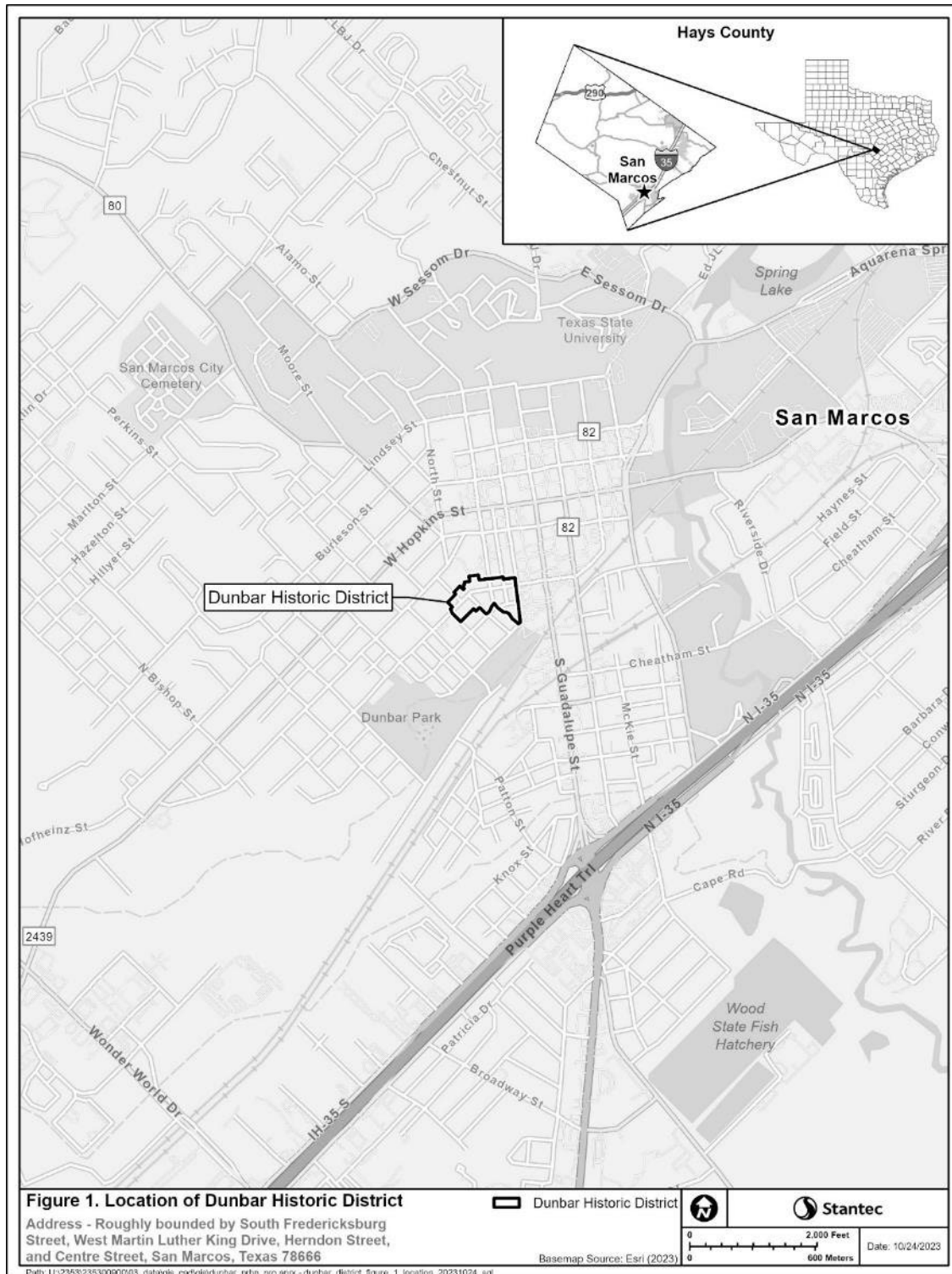
Boundary Justification:

The boundary, a subset of the historic neighborhood boundary, was drawn to include the highest concentration of contributing resources associated with the Dunbar community.

Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

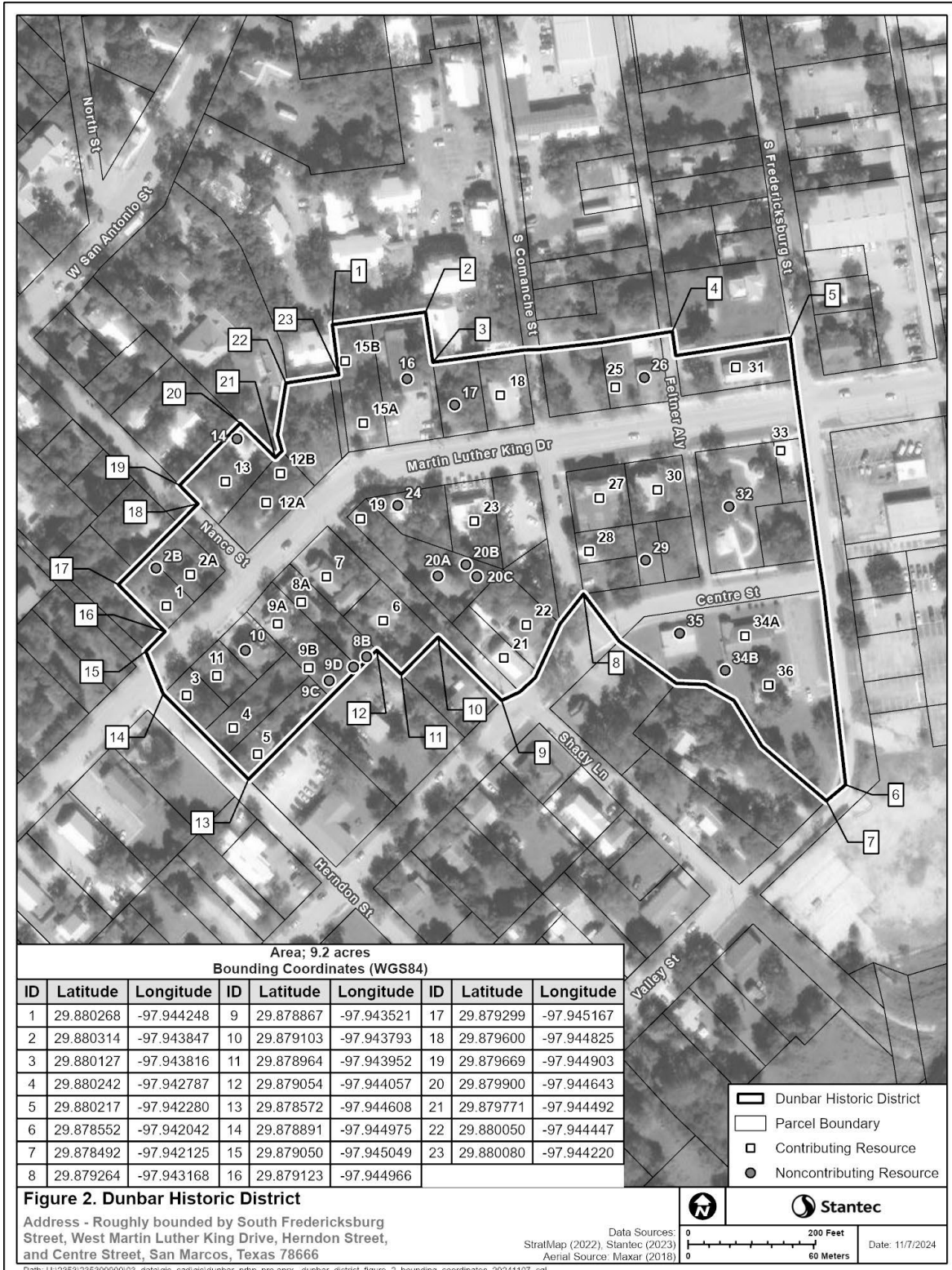
MAPS

Figure 1. Location of the Dunbar Historic District in San Marcos. Stantec, 2023.



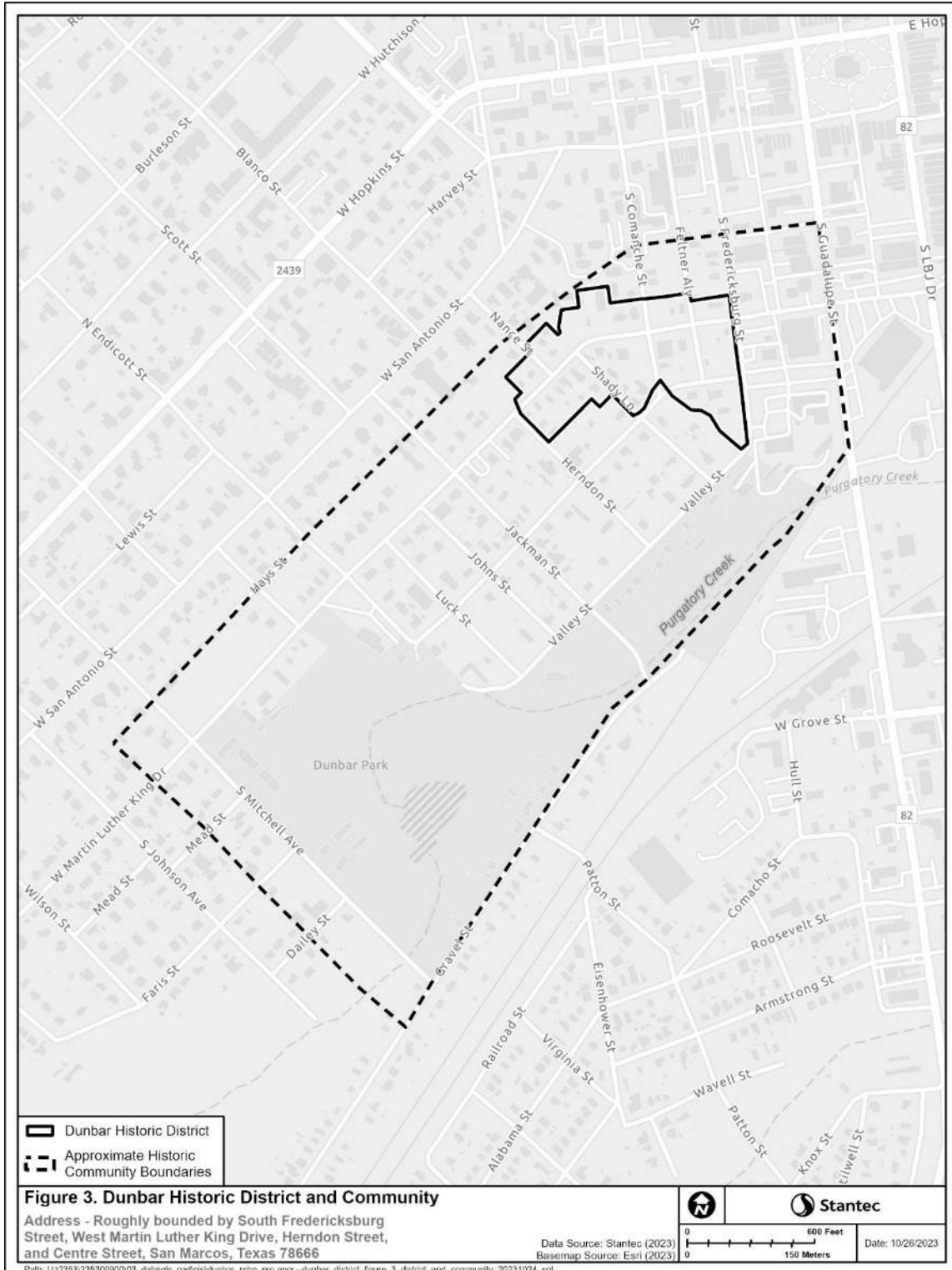
Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Figure 2. Scale Map of Contributing and noncontributing resources in the Dunbar Historic District. Stantec, 2023.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Figure 3. This map depicts the location of the Dunbar Historic District within the historic Dunbar community boundary. Stantec, 2023.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

FIGURES AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION

Figure 4. The City of San Marcos designated Dunbar a local historic district in 2003.³¹⁶

Proposed Dunbar Historic District



³¹⁶ City of San Marcos, 2003 Ordinance.

Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

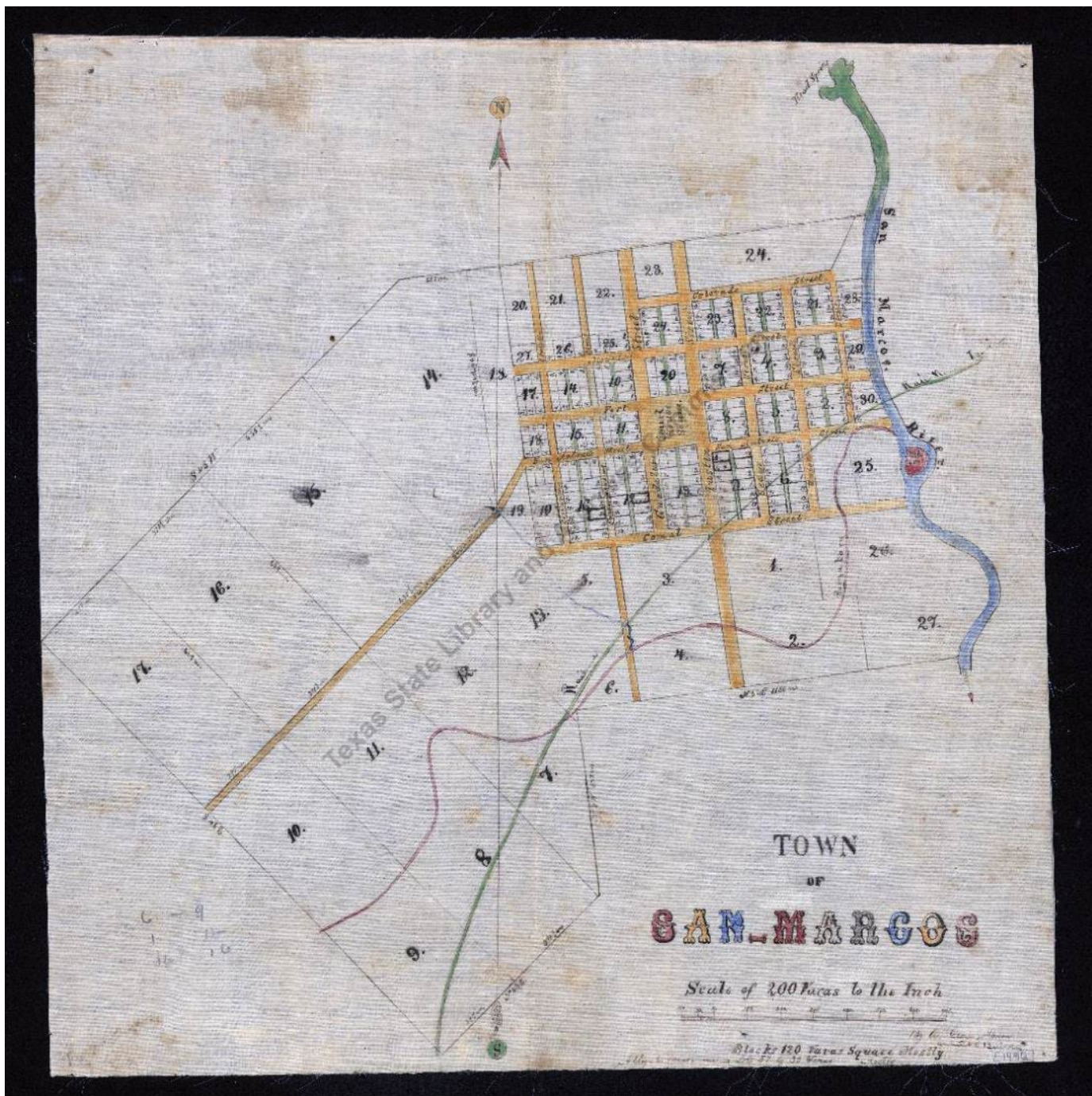
Figure 5. The star on this 1877 Hays County map represents the location of San Marcos; the excerpt details the locations of the Chambers and Veramendi Surveys. Annotated by Stantec.³¹⁷



³¹⁷ Langermann, Map.

Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Figure 6. This 1881 San Marcos map shows out lots, labeled as farm lots, south and west of town. Black residents began purchasing town lots out of Blocks 12 and 16 before the 1870s.³¹⁸



³¹⁸ Mason, Map of San Marcos.

Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

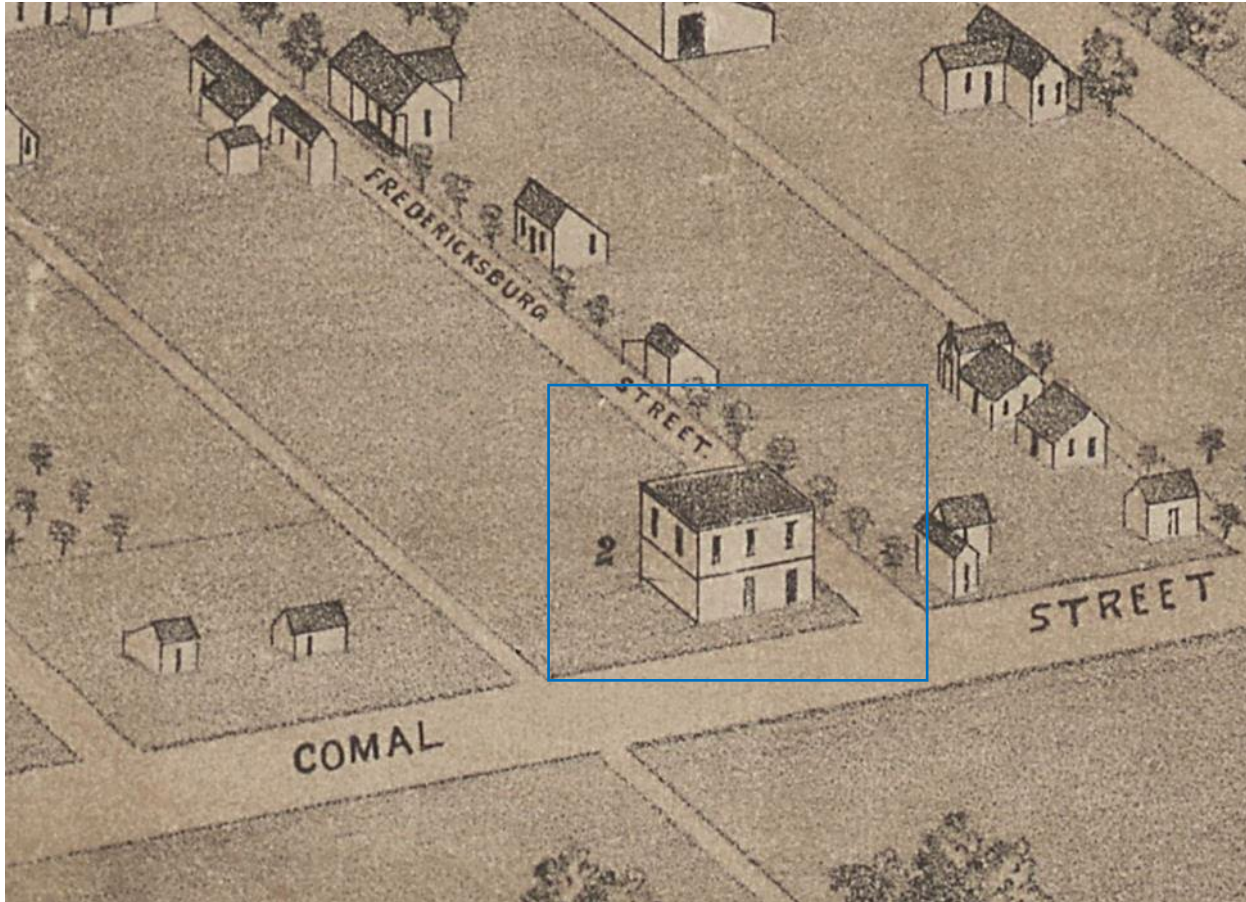
Figure 7. The beginnings of the Dunbar community are depicted near Purgatory Creek on this 1881 bird's-eye view.³¹⁹



³¹⁹ Koch, *Bird's-Eye View*.

Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

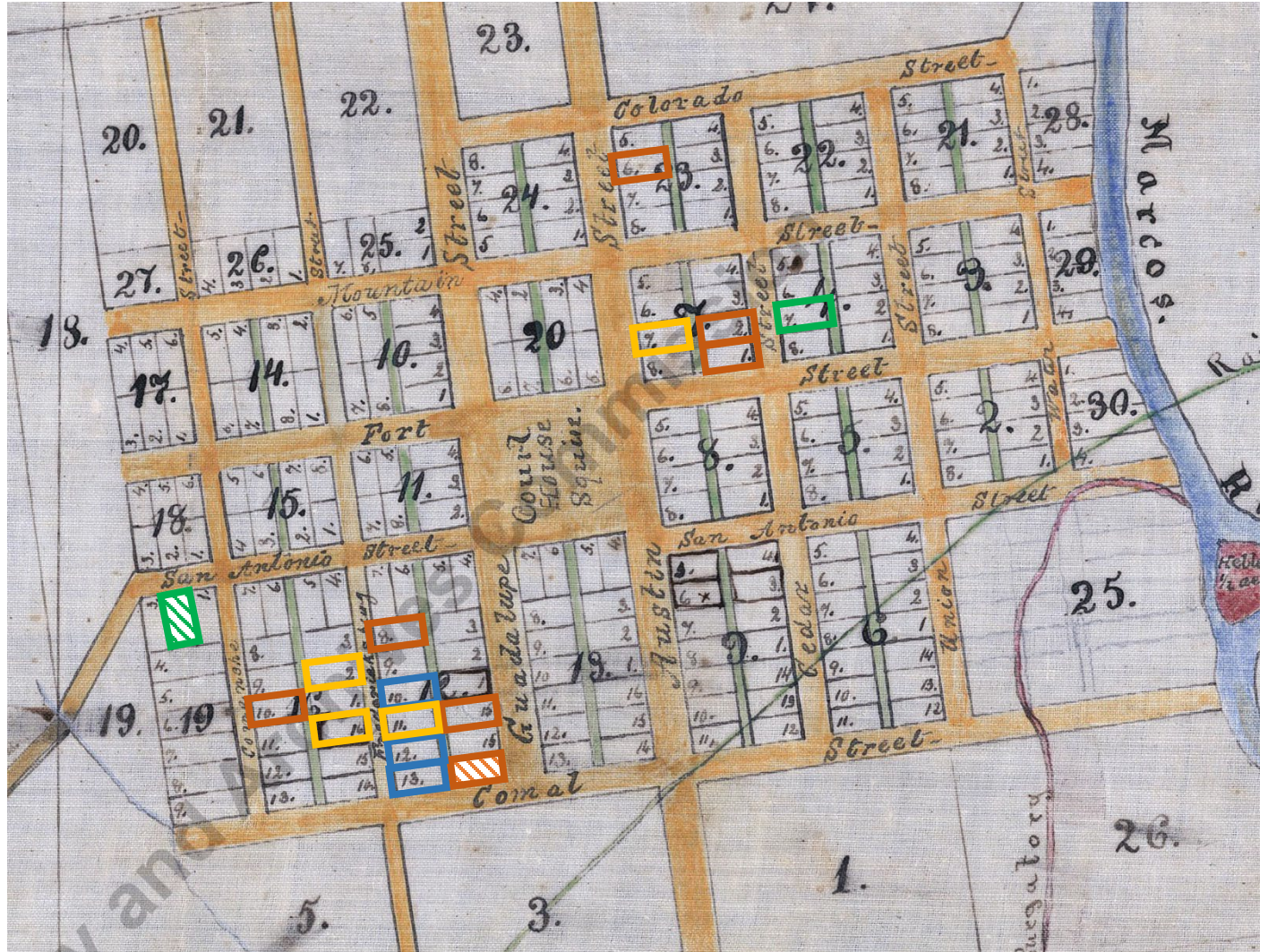
Figure 8. This excerpt from the 1881 bird's-eye view depicts the location of the Calaboose (blue box; now Map ID #31). Excerpted and annotated by Stantec.³²⁰








³²⁰ Koch, *Bird's-Eye View*.

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Figure 9. This map excerpt depicts the city lots of known nineteenth century Black residents.³²¹ Excerpted and annotated by Stantec.

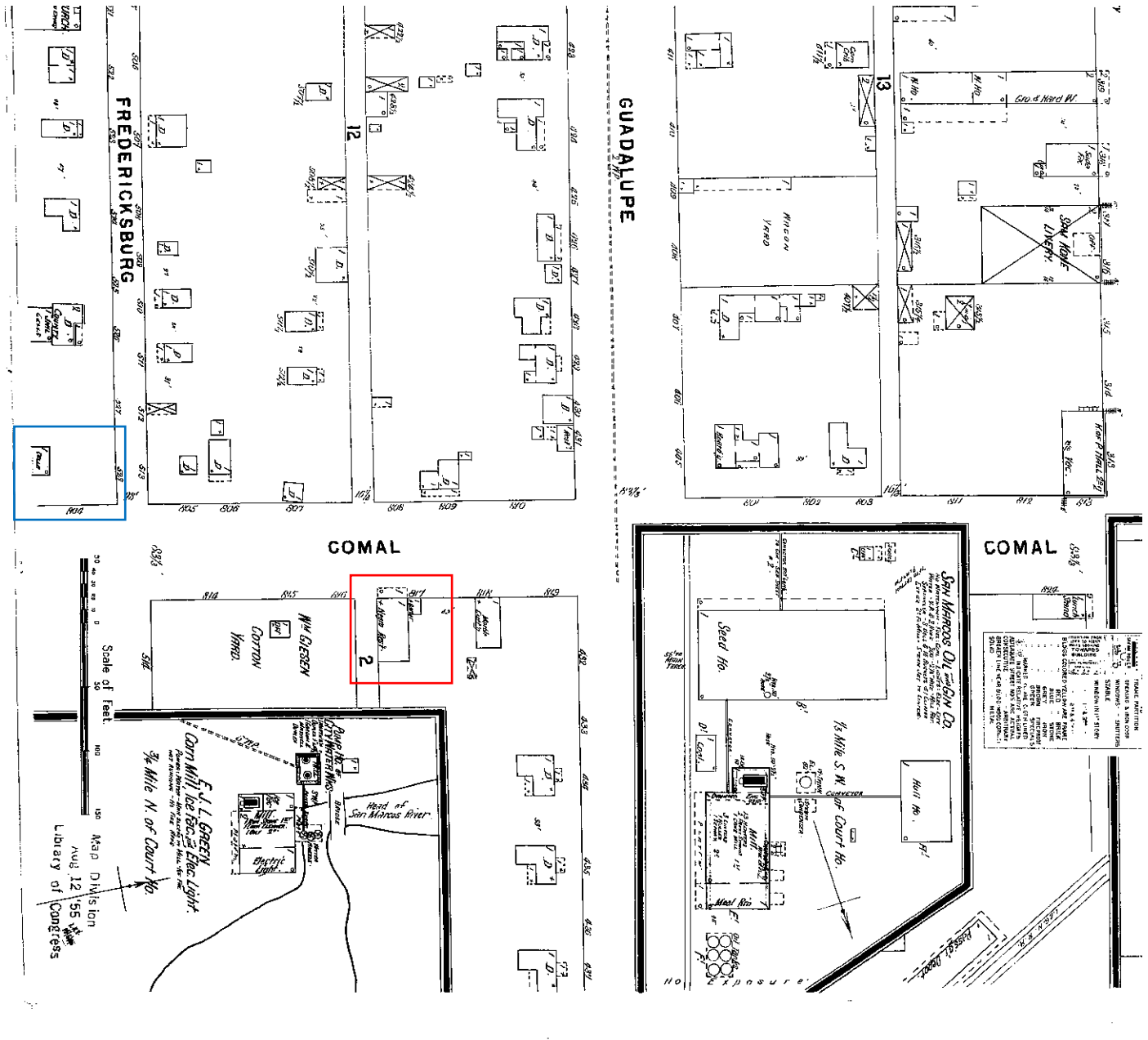


-  Black ownership starting in the 1860s
-  Black ownership starting in the 1870s
-  Black ownership starting in the 1880s
-  Black ownership starting in the 1890s
-  Indicates partial lot ownership

³²¹ Mason, Map of San Marcos.

Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Figure 10. This excerpt from the 1896 Sanborn map shows the Calaboose (blue box). A “Negro Restaurant” and attached Barber (red box) are on the south side of West Comal between Guadalupe and Fredericksburg Streets. Excerpted and annotated by Stantec.³²²



³²² Sanborn-Perris Map Company, 1896.

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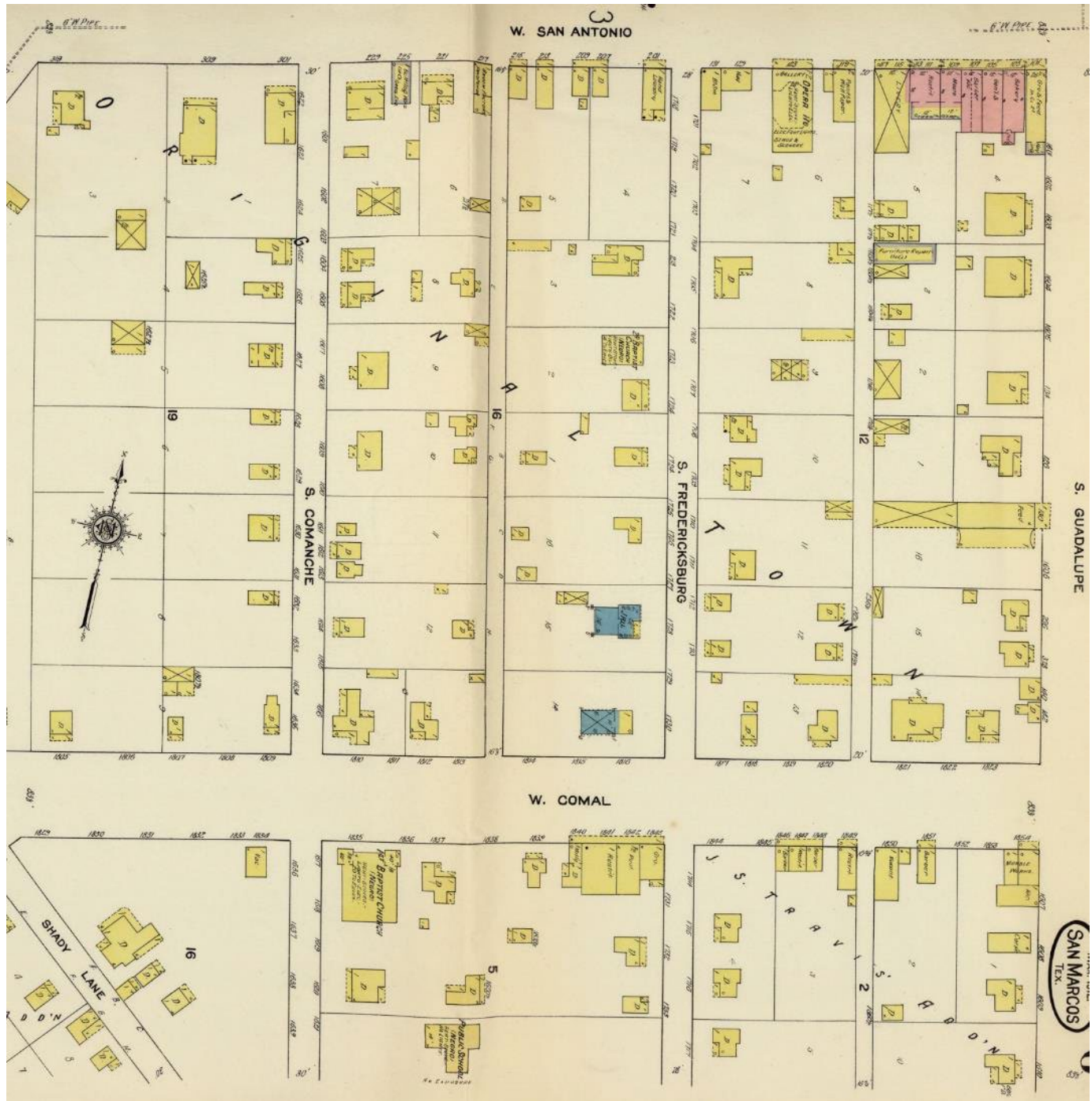
Figure 11. This 1906 map excerpt depicts a two-story “Negro Skating Rink” (red box) at the southwest intersection of West Comal and Fredericksburg Streets, near the Calaboose (blue box). Excerpted and annotated by Stantec. ³²³



³²³ Sanborn Map Company, 1906.

Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

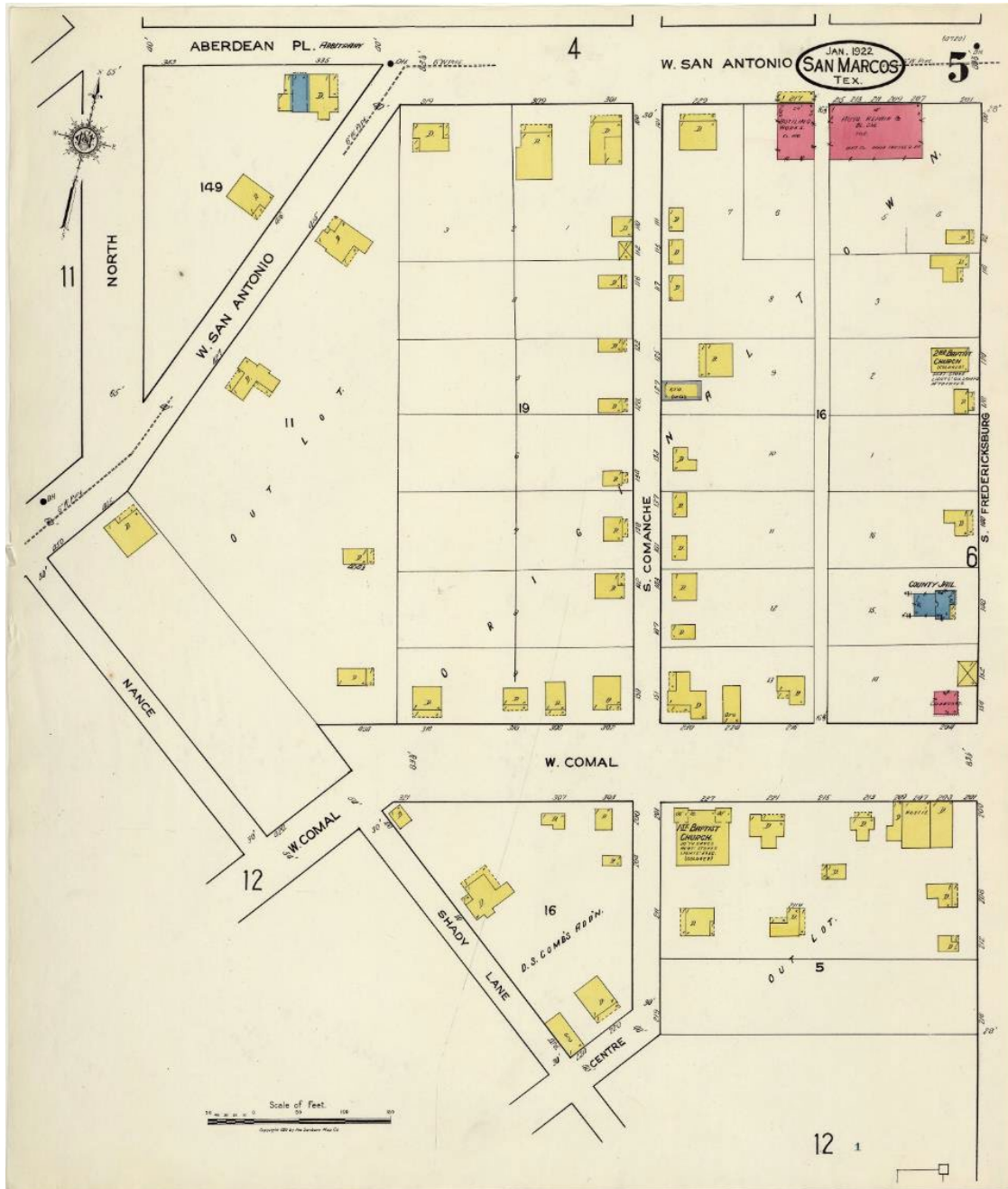
Figure 12. On this 1912 map excerpt are the Old First Baptist Church (Map ID #27) and “Public School (Negro)” south of West Comal Street, between Comanche and Fredericksburg Streets, and the commercial corridor on the south side of West Comal Street. The three blocks north of West Comal Street are Blocks 12, 16, and 19 of the original town plat. Excerpted by Stantec³²⁴



³²⁴ Sanborn Map Company, 1912.

Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

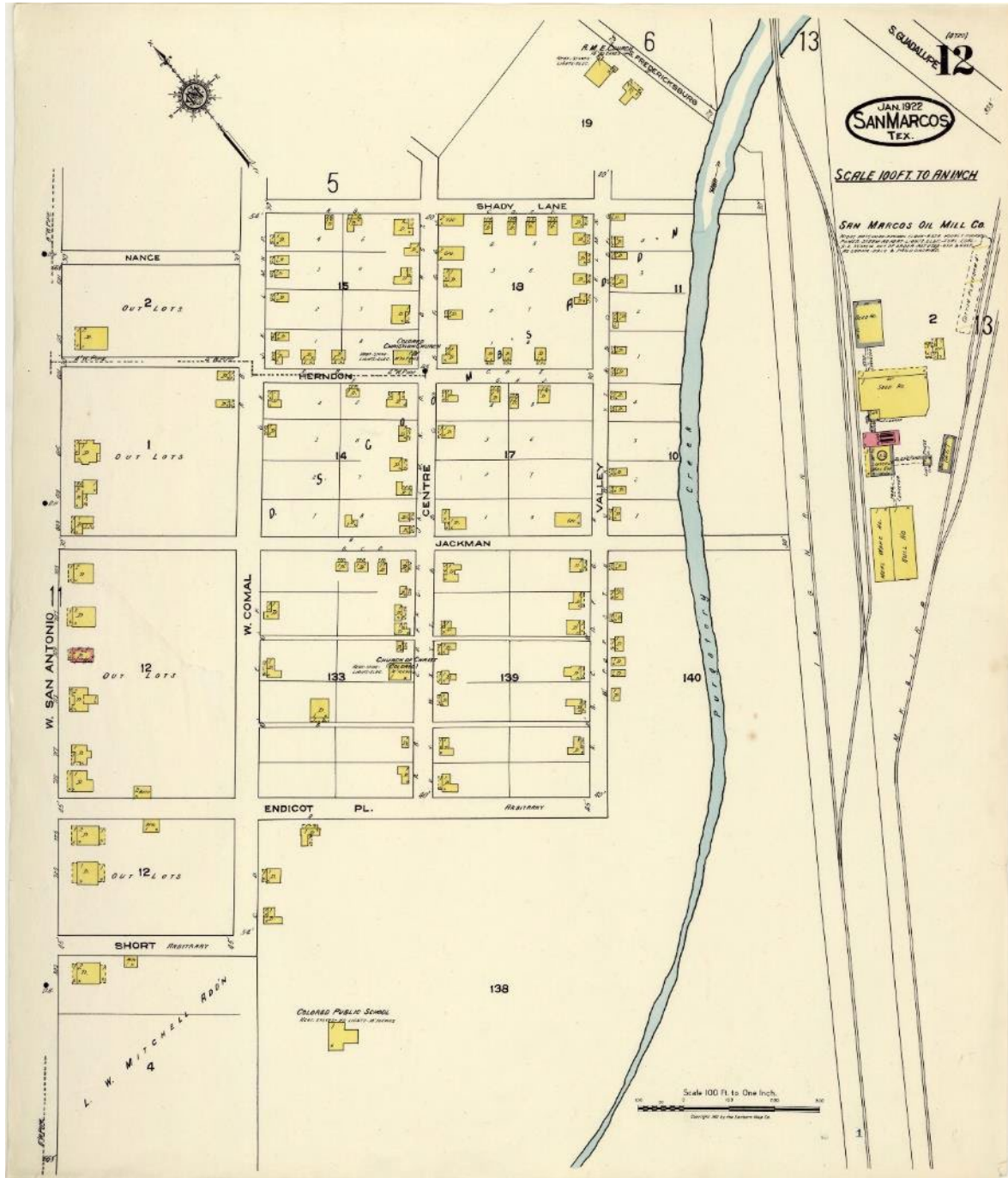
Figure 14. In 1922, the east side of the Dunbar community was mostly residential but included the county jail, the Calaboose (Map ID #31), the First (Map ID #27) and Second Baptist Churches, a bottling works, and a few



Original located at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

businesses.³²⁶ Figure 15. In 1922, the west side of the Dunbar community was almost all one-story wood-frame houses with front-facing porches. Their footprints and lot placements varied some.³²⁷



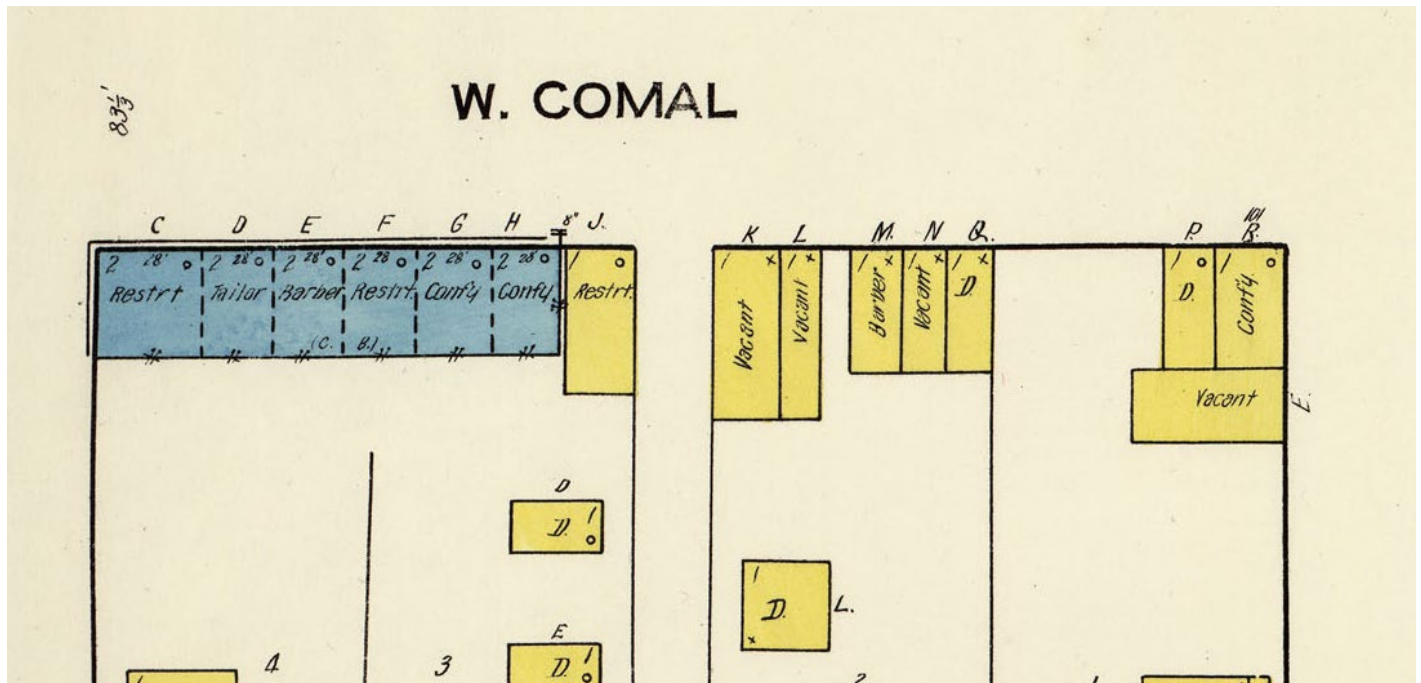
Original located at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

³²⁶ Sanborn Map Company, 1922.

³²⁷ Sanborn Map Company, 1922.

Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

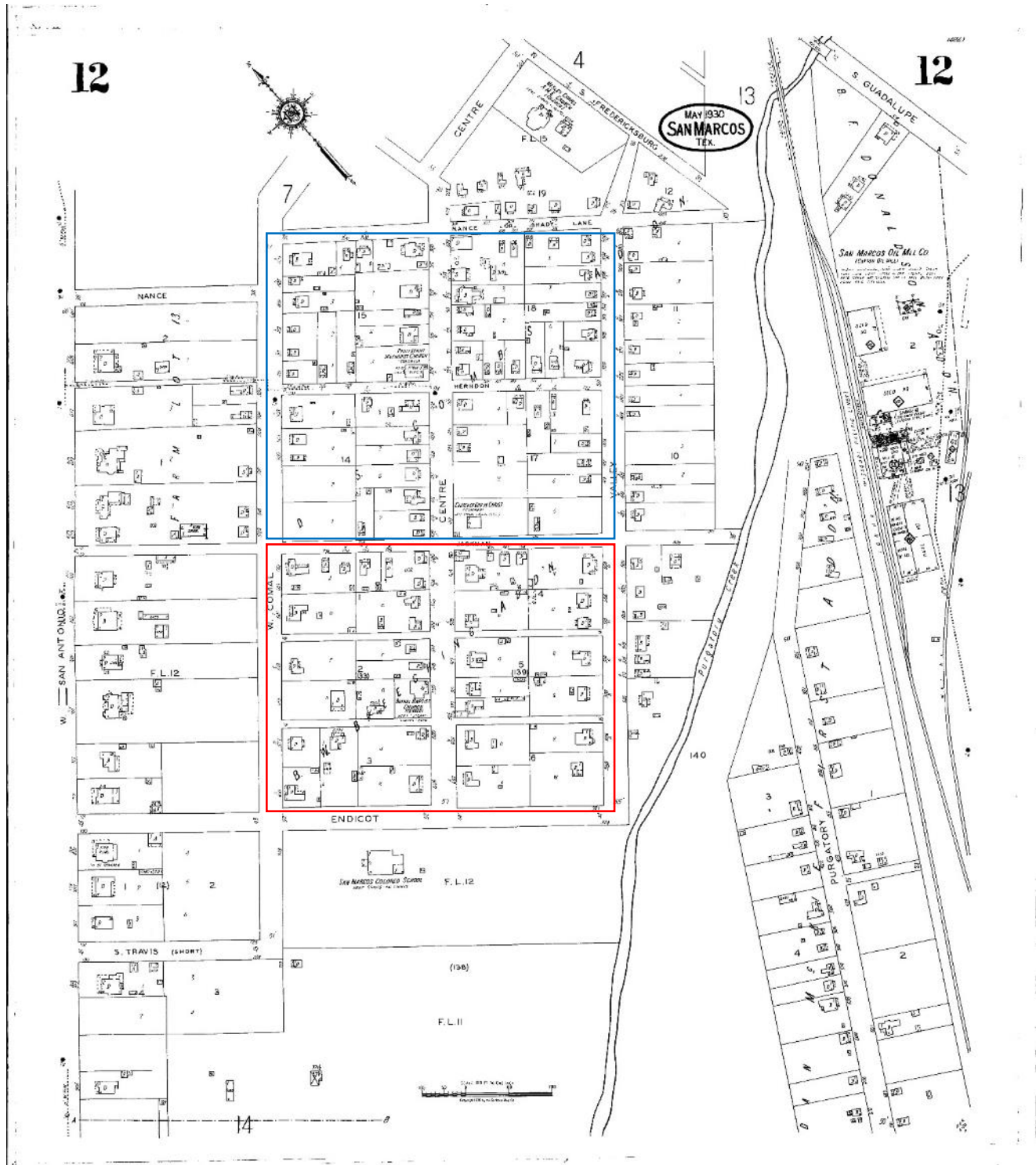
Figure 16. The Beat corridor was wall-to-wall building by 1922. Excerpted by Stantec.³²⁸



³²⁸ Sanborn Map Company, 1922.

Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Figure 17. The west side of the Dunbar community in 1930, with the B. W. Breeding (red box) and D. S. Combs (blue box) Additions noted. Annotated by Stantec.³²⁹



³²⁹ Sanborn Map Company, 1930.

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Figure 20. Members of the Old First Baptist Church (Map ID #27) pose in July 1918.³³²



³³² Anonymous, First Baptist Church N.B.C. on MLK Street, July, 1918, Photograph.

Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

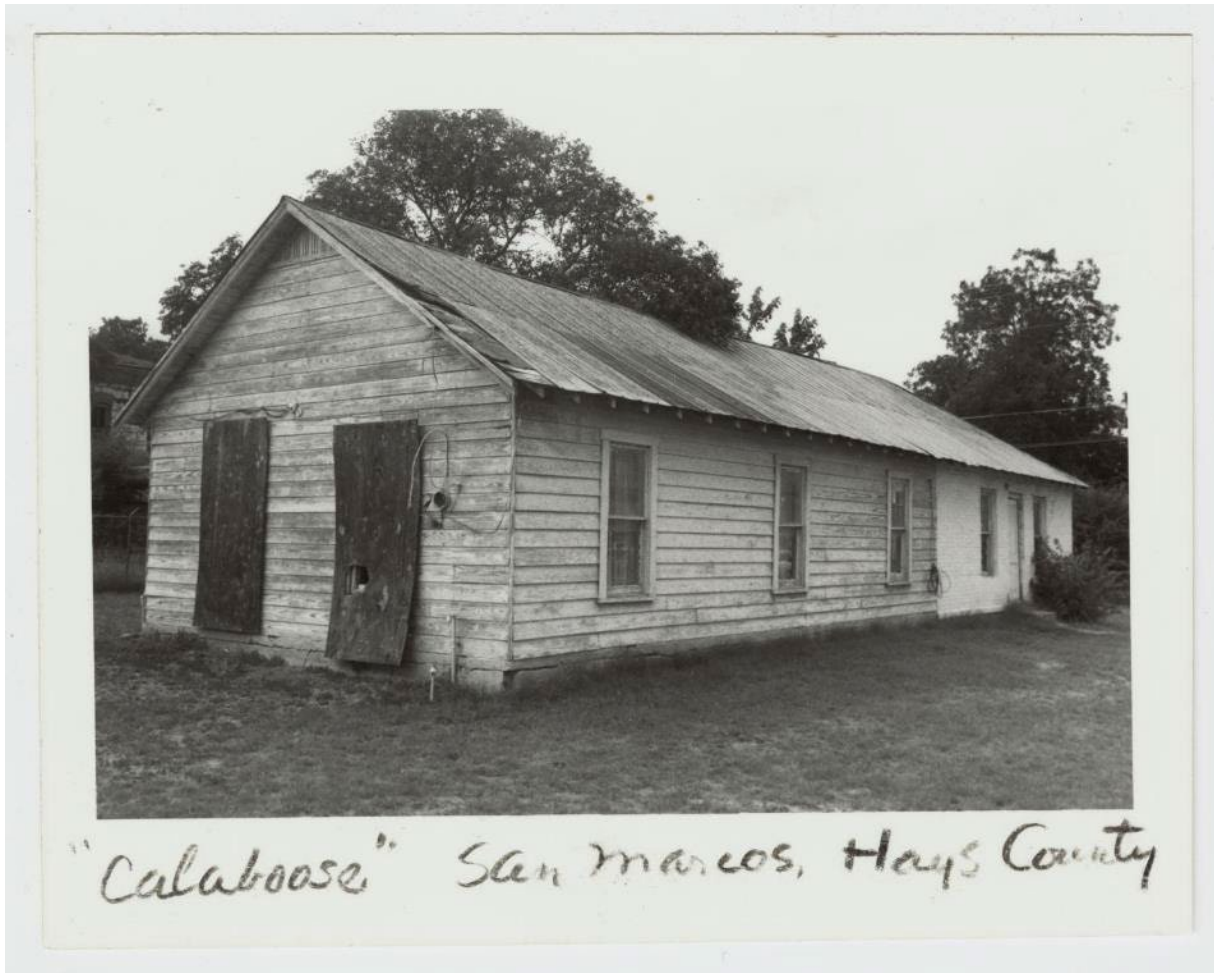
Figure 21. This undated photograph may have been taken in the Beat.³³³



³³³ Anonymous, The Beat, n.d., Photograph.

Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Figure 22. The Calaboose (Map ID #31) in 1989, view facing northeast.³³⁴



³³⁴ Kim Bradley, The Calaboose—San Marcos, Hays County, Texas, August, 1989, Photograph.

Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Figure 23. Ulysses Cephas, undated photograph.³³⁵



Ulysses Cephas

³³⁵ Anonymous, Ulysses Cephas, Johnnie M. Armstead African American History Collection, Calaboose African American History Museum, n.d., Aerial Image.

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Figure 24. Ollie Hamilton at her grocery store in 1984.³³⁶



³³⁶ Unknown Newspaper, "Hamilton Named Grant Recipient," June 21-27, 1984, Calaboose African American History Museum: Johnnie M. Armstead African American History Collection.

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Figure 25. Eddie Durham, undated photograph.³³⁷



Eddie Durham

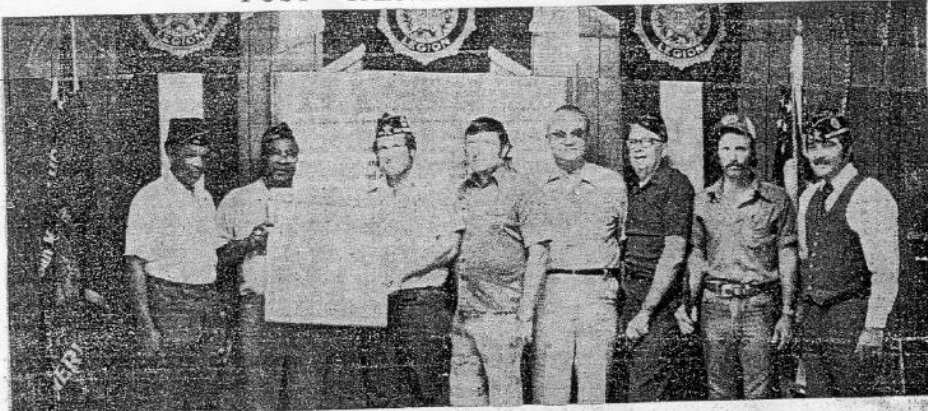
³³⁷ Anonymous, [Eddie Durham], Johnnie M. Armstead African American History Collection, Calaboose African American History Museum, n.d., Aerial Image.

Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Figure 26. This undated clipping shows at bottom a 1949 photograph of American Legion members from Carver Post 144-A receiving their charter from Post 144, San Marcos' segregated white American Legion branch. At top, an undated photograph shows American Legion members from Post 144 after integration. ³³⁸

(Items submitted by Harvey Miller and Dr. Elvin Holt)

AMERICAN LEGION NEGRO
POST - CARVER POST 144-A



AMERICAN LEGION members from Post 144-A, which was the separate black post until it merged with Post 144, presented their charter and other mementoes to the Post Home in a ceremony Monday. The mementoes included the old colors, flags, pictures, records and a collection of M-1 rifles. Pictured here are

Lloyd White; Sammy Hardeman, chaplain; Bob Fox, commander; Ronnie Dannelley, first vice commander; Jesse Adams, second vice commander; Henry Piner, historian; Ronnie Stewart, sergeant-at-arms; and Steve Hadlock, adjutant.



RECEIVING CHARTER-Sammy Hardeman, former commander of the American Legion Negro Post, Early Carver Post No. 144-A, is shown displaying the charter presented to him by J.L. Ford, member of Post No. 144's committee for the organization of a new post. In

the 1949 photograph left to right are: Terry Jacks, commander, San Marcos Post No. 144, the sponsoring organization; Ernest Sanders, Samuel Hardeman, Alfonso Washington, Van Herring, Curtis (Bo) Rowland, J.L. Ford, and Carl Burleson.

Veterans

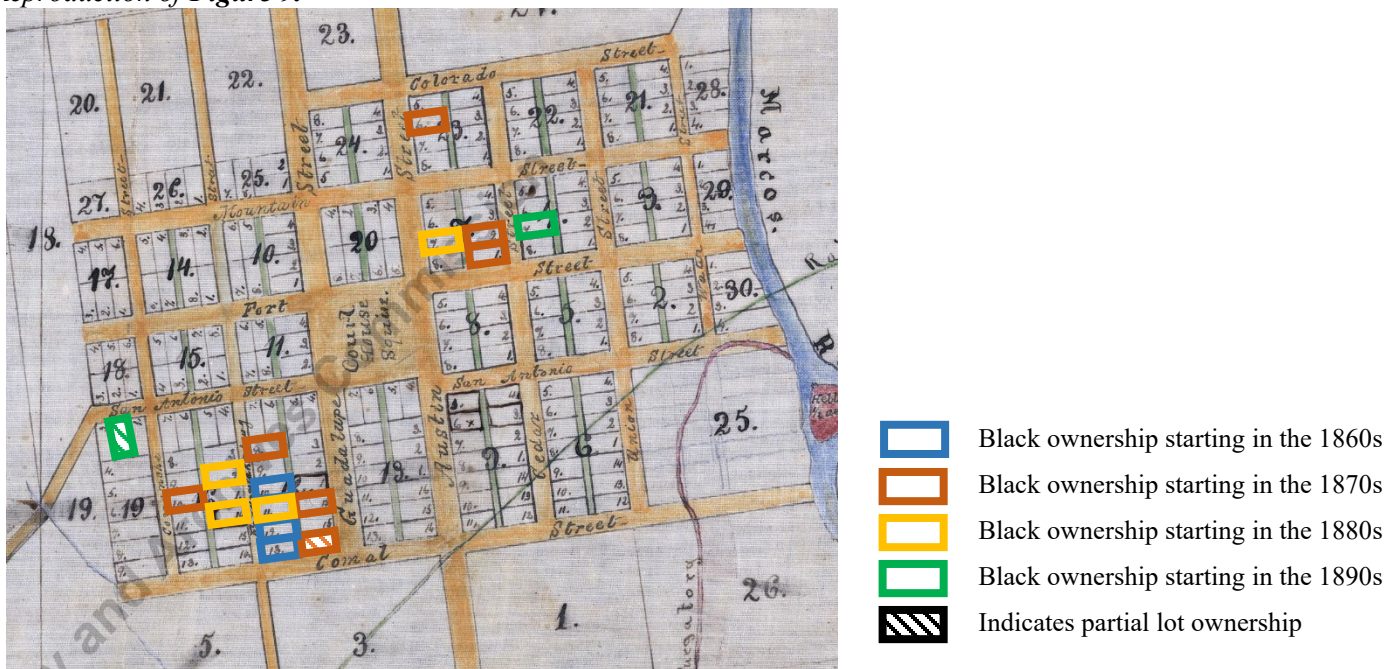
³³⁸ Unknown Newspaper, "American Legion."

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Methodology for Figure 9 and Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4:

Manuscript federal census, state and county ad valorem tax, and county deed records were reviewed online to identify nineteenth-century Black property owners in San Marcos. Post-Civil War ad valorem tax rolls from 1866 to 1869 identified Black taxpayers by race and included information on land ownership. Researchers identified Black heads of household in San Marcos using 1870, 1880, and 1900 census records; census records for 1890 are unavailable. Researchers cross-referenced the list of Black heads of household with ad valorem tax roll records for Hays County from 1870 through 1879, 1880, and 1893 to determine Black landowners in San Marcos and its vicinity; tax records for 1881 through 1892 are unavailable online. Ownership information for the 1880s and 1890s can benefit from continued research to compensate for gaps in tax and census records. Researchers confirmed land ownership where possible using deed records at the Hays County Clerk. In **Table 2**, where no data are provided in the grantor column, data are sourced from ad valorem tax records. Where a grantor is listed, data from tax records have been confirmed with deed records.³³⁹ **Figure 9** is reproduced for reference.

Reproduction of Figure 9.



³³⁹ Hays County, Tax Collector and Assessor, Ad Valorem Tax Roll, Texas, County Tax Rolls, 1837–1910, Family Search, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, 1867; 1868; 1869; 1870; 1871; 1872; 1873; 1874; 1875; 1876; 1877; 1878; 1879; 1880; 1893; U.S. Department of the Interior, 1870 Inhabitants; 1880 Inhabitants; Enumeration District 72, Precinct 1, Hays County, National Archives and Records Administration, Ancestry, 1900, Manuscript Population Census.

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Table 2. This table enumerates known nineteenth-century Black residents who owned city lots.³⁴⁰

Landowner	Birthplace	Occupation	Year Acquired (from tax record or filed deed record date)	Block	Lot	Grantor(s)
<i>1860s</i>						
Robert Brixey	Arkansas	Farm Laborer	1866 (deed)	12	13	A. Wilson
Robert Brixey	Arkansas	Farm Laborer	1868 (deed)	12	10	A. Wilson
Oliver Burleson	Virginia	Farmer	1868 (deed)	16	10	Ed Burleson
Robert Brixey	Arkansas	Farm Laborer	1869 (deed)	12	12	George T. McGehee
Louisa Carson	Alabama	Keeping House	1869 (deed)	12	10	Robert Brixey
<i>1870s</i>						
Anderson Jenkins	Mississippi	Farm Laborer	1870 (deed)	12	half of 14	W. O. Hutchison
Robert Brixey	Arkansas	Farm Laborer	1870 (tax)	10	1	N/A
James Carson	Texas	Butcher	1870 (tax)	12	11	N/A
Green Nichols	Kentucky	Shoe Maker	1870 (tax)	12	16	N/A
Anthony Barton	Texas	Farm Laborer	1871 (deed)	7	1	Mary E. Lindsey, Q. E. Lindsey, L. J. T. Harvey, H. S. Harvey
Anthony Barton	Texas	Farm Laborer	1871 (deed)	7	2	Mary E. Lindsey, Q. E. Lindsey, L. J. T. Harvey, H. S. Harvey
Oliver Burleson	Virginia	Farmer	1871 (deed)	12	8	Ed Burleson
Henry Toliver	Virginia	Farmer	1871 (deed)	12	13	W. O. Hutchison, John W. Herndon
Ellen Reef	Kentucky	Keeping House	1871 (tax)	23	6	N/A

³⁴⁰ U.S. Department of the Interior, 1870 Inhabitants; U.S. Department of the Interior, 1880 Inhabitants; U.S. Department of the Interior, 1900 Population. Deed research was conducted using the Hays County Clerk online database and ad valorem tax records were reviewed using Family Search to access the Texas State Library and Archives Commission collection.

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Landowner	Birthplace	Occupation	Year Acquired (from tax record or filed deed record date)	Block	Lot	Grantor(s)
Mary Francis Polk (with Leroy Polk, Charlotte Arch)	Texas	Laundress	1873 (deed)	16	10	W. O. Hutchison
<i>1880s</i>						
George Holland	Louisiana	Laborer	1880 (deed)	16	2	Gusto Mireles
Pleasant Richardson	Virginia	Farmer	1880 (deed)	16	16	W. H. Robbins
James Carson	Texas	Butcher	1880 (tax)	12	10	N/A
Sam Jefferson	Tennessee	Laborer	1880 (tax)	12	11	N/A
Anderson Jenkins	Tennessee	Cook	1880 (tax)	12	half of 14	N/A
Manuel Logan	Kentucky	Laborer	1880 (tax)	7	7	N/A
Manuel Logan	Kentucky	Laborer	1880 (tax)	7	one third of 2	N/A
Ellen Reef	Kentucky	Keeping House	1886 (deed)	23	6	W. C. Dugger, Roger Byrne
<i>1890s</i>						
Sam Pierce	[illegible]	Day Laborer	1893 (tax)	4	7	N/A
Mary F. Polk	Texas	Laundress	1893 (tax)	16	10	N/A
Andrew Ramsey	Texas	Oil Mill Cake Stripper	1893 (tax)	19	half of 2	N/A
Henry Richardson	Louisiana	Freighter	1893 (tax)	12	half of 16	N/A
Squire Rucker	Louisiana	Farm Laborer	1893 (tax)	Part of Farm Lot 13	N/A	N/A
Peter Taylor	Missouri	Water Hauler	1893 (tax)	6	West 2.5 of V (?)	N/A

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Table 3. This table enumerates known nineteenth-century Black ownership of town and farm lots.³⁴¹

Number of Landowners	Property Description
1860s	
4	Thomas Jefferson Chambers Survey
2	Block 12 (Town of San Marcos 1881 Plat Map)
1	Block 16 (Town of San Marcos 1881 Plat Map)
1870s	
7	Thomas Jefferson Chambers Survey only
4	Block 12 (Town of San Marcos 1881 Plat Map)
3	Thomas Jefferson Chambers and Juan Veramendi Surveys
1	F. Steussy Survey
1	Henry Lollar Survey
1	Juan Veramendi and John William Surveys
1	Robert Clever Survey
1	Thomas Jefferson Chambers and B. W. White Survey
1	Thomas Jefferson Chambers and Farm Lot 4
1	Thomas Jefferson Chambers and J. W. Berry Surveys
1	Thomas Jefferson Chambers and Z. Hinton Surveys
1	Block 16 (Town of San Marcos 1881 Plat Map)
1	Block 7 (Town of San Marcos 1881 Plat Map)
1	Block 2 of J. W. Mitchell Addition
1880s	
8	Thomas Jefferson Chambers Survey
5	Juan Veramendi Survey
4	Block 12 (Town of San Marcos 1881 Plat Map)
3	J. W. Berry Survey
2	Elijah Clark Survey
2	A. M. Esnaurrizar Survey
2	George Sultzbough Survey
2	Block 7 (Town of San Marcos 1881 Plat Map)
2	Block 16 (Town of San Marcos 1881 Plat Map)
1	Block 23 (Town of San Marcos 1881 Plat Map)
1	Farm Lot 4
1	Henry Lollar Survey
1	Josiah Whitley Survey
1	T. H. W. Forsyth Survey

³⁴¹ U.S. Department of the Interior, 1870 Inhabitants; U.S. Department of the Interior, 1880 Inhabitants; U.S. Department of the Interior, 1900 Population. Ad valorem tax records were reviewed using Family Search to access the Texas State Library and Archives Commission collection.

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Number of Landowners	Property Description
<i>1890s</i>	
1	Block 12 (Town of San Marcos 1881 Plat Map)
1	Block 16 (Town of San Marcos 1881 Plat Map)
1	Block 19 (Town of San Marcos 1881 Plat Map)
1	Block 23 (Town of San Marcos 1881 Plat Map)
1	Block 4 (Town of San Marcos 1881 Plat Map)
1	Block 6 (Town of San Marcos 1881 Plat Map)
1	E. Clark Survey
1	Ed Burleson Survey
1	Farm Lot 13
1	J. W. Berry Survey
1	James Wells Survey
1	P. J. Allen Survey
1	Robert Clever Survey
1	T. H.W. Forsyth Survey
1	William Blanton Survey

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Table 4. This table enumerates details about nineteenth-century Black occupations and land ownership in San Marcos for heads of households, based on federal decennial manuscript censuses.³⁴²

Occupation	Number of Heads of Household	% of Total Heads of Households	Number of Town Lot Landowners	Number of Out Lot Landowners	Total Landowners	Occupation as % of Total Landowners
<i>1870 Census</i>						
Butcher	1	3%	1	0	1	6%
Dottler	1	3%	0	1	1	6%
Farm Laborer	26	65%	2	9	11	65%
Farmer	2	5%	0	1	1	6%
Keeping House	4	10%	1	0	1	6%
Servant	2	5%	0	0	0	0%
Shoemaker	1	3%	1	0	1	6%
State Police	1	3%	0	0	0	0%
Stock House	1	3%	0	0	0	0%
Stone Mason	1	3%	0	1	1	6%
<i>Total</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>1880 Census</i>						
Barber	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
Brick Yard	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
Butcher	1	1%	1	0	1	3%
Carpenter	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
Cook	2	1%	1	0	1	3%
Farmer	99	57%	1	18	19	66%
Freighter	3	2%	0	1	1	3%
Keeping House	8	5%	0	0	0	0%
Laborer	34	19%	3	1	4	14%
Laundress	13	7%	0	1	1	3%
Minister	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
School Teacher	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
Servant	4	2%	1	1	2	7%
Stone Mason	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
Wash Woman	5	3%	0	0	0	0%
<i>Total</i>	<i>175</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>1900 Census</i>						

³⁴² U.S. Department of the Interior, 1870 Inhabitants; U.S. Department of the Interior, 1880 Inhabitants; U.S. Department of the Interior, 1900 Population. Deed research was conducted using the Hays County Clerk online database and ad valorem tax records were reviewed using Family Search to access the Texas State Library and Archives Commission collection.

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Occupation	Number of Heads of Household	% of Total Heads of Households	Number of Town Lot Landowners	Number of Out Lot Landowners	Total Landowners	Occupation as % of Total Landowners
Bank Black	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
Barber	2	1%	0	0	0	0%
Butcher	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
Coachman	3	2%	0	0	0	0%
Coal	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
Cook	9	6%	1	0	1	10%
Day Laborer	45	28%	1	2	3	30%
Drayman	4	3%	0	0	0	0%
Farm Laborer	14	9%	0	1	1	10%
Farmer	37	23%	0	3	3	30%
Hack Driver	2	1%	0	0	0	0%
Hardware Salesman	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
Hay Driver	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
Horse Trader	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
Janitor	2	1%	0	0	0	0%
Laundress	20	13%	0	0	0	0%
Laundry Man	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
Minister	3	2%	0	0	0	0%
Oil Mill Cake Crusher	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
Oil Mill Cake Stripper	3	2%	1	0	1	10%
Oil Mill Press Feeder	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
Preacher	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
School Teacher	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
Railroad Section Hand	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
Servant	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
Silverware Agent	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
Water Hauler	1	1%	0	0	0	0%
Wood Hauler	1	1%	1	0	1	10%
<i>Total</i>	<i>160</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>100%</i>

Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

PHOTOGRAPHS

Dunbar Historic District

San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photographed in April 2023 by Izabella Nuckels and Mitch Ford, Stantec

Photograph 1. Streetview along the south side of West Martin King Drive. View looking southeast from Feltner Alley to the historic district's eastern edge.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 2. The Cephas House and the Old First Baptist Church on the south side of West Martin Luther King Drive. View looking southwest.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 3. Streetview along the north side of West Martin Luther King Drive at Feltner Alley. View looking northeast.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 4. Streetview along West Martin Luther King Drive from Comanche Street. View looking east.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 5. Streetview along the north side of West Martin Luther King Drive at Comanche Street. View looking northwest.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 6. Streetview along the south side of West Martin Luther King Drive. View looking southwest from Comanche Street.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 7. Streetview along the south side of West Martin Luther King Drive. View looking southwest from Shady Lane.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 8. Streetview along the south side of West Martin Luther King Drive between Shady Lane and Herndon Street. View looking southeast.



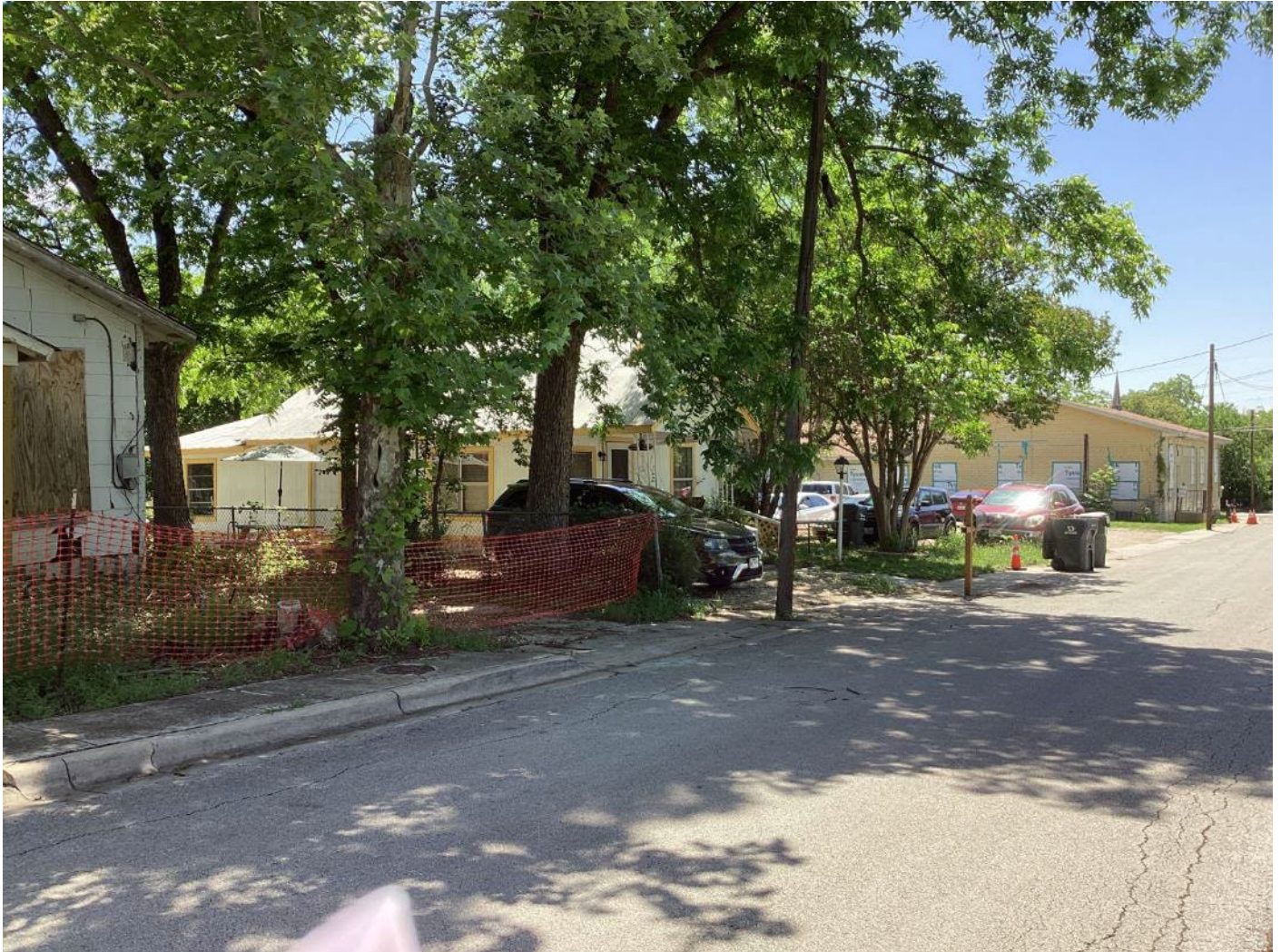
Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 9. Streetview along the north side of West Martin Luther King Drive between Nance and Herndon Streets. View looking north.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 10. Streetview along the east side of Herndon Street. View looking southeast.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 11. Streetview of the north side of Centre Street. View looking northwest from Shady Lane.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 12. Streetview at the north side of the Centre Street and Shady Lane. View looking northwest.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 13. A ca. 1910 National Folk-form house at 316 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #14). View looking north.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 14. A ca. 1910 National Folk-form house at 218 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #25). View looking north.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 15. A ca. 1920 National Folk-form house at 523 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #3). View looking southeast.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 16. The ca. 1925 Craftsman-influenced Cephas House at 217 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #30). View looking southwest.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 17. A ca. 1925 bungalow-form house at 302 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #18). View looking north.



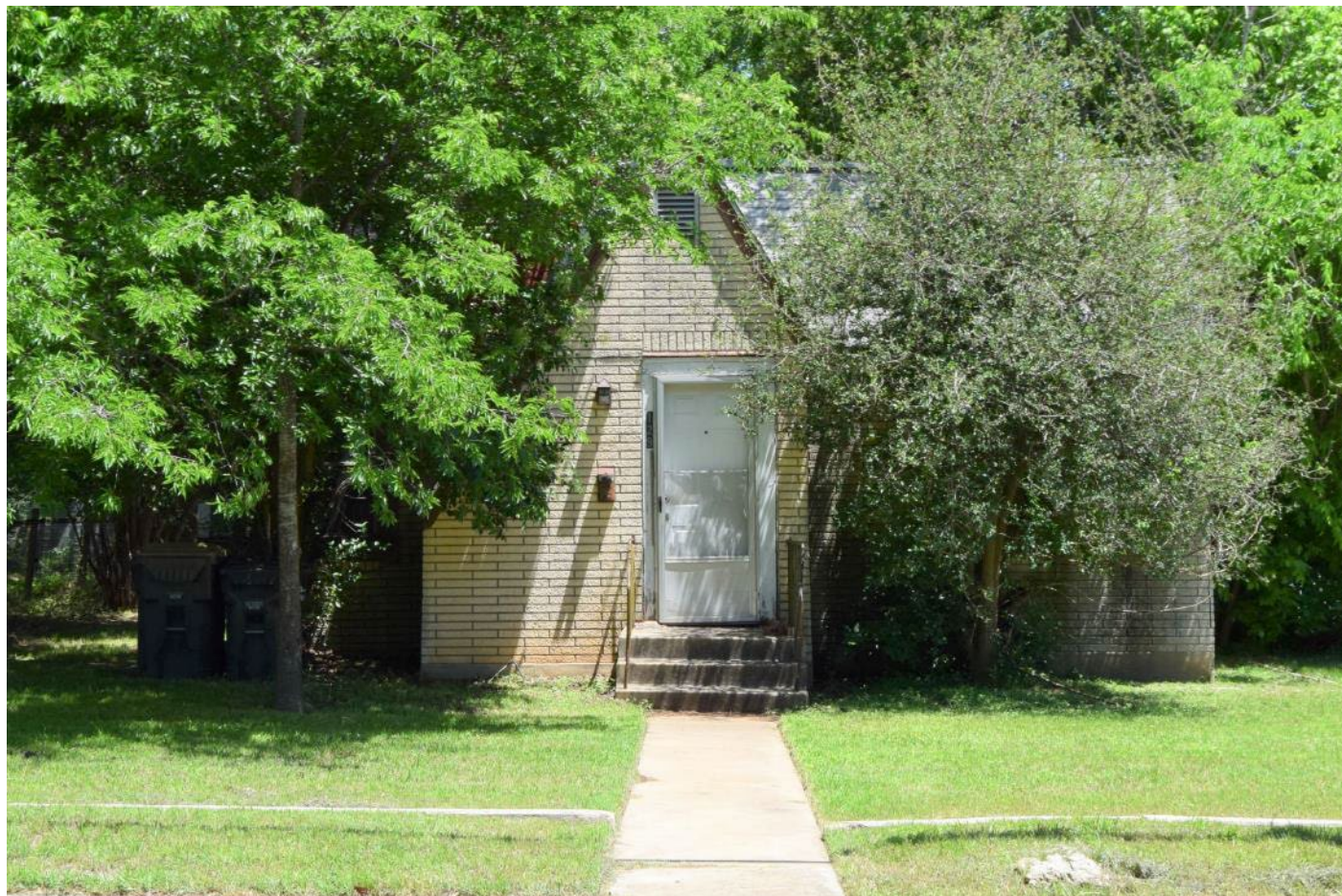
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Photograph 18. A ca. 1935 vernacular house at 125 Nance Street (Map ID #14). View looking northeast.



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Photograph 19. A ca. 1940 Tudor Revival house at 129 Nance Street (Map ID #12A). View looking northeast.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 20. A ca. 1910 outbuilding at 129 Nance Street (Map ID #12B). View looking northwest.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 21. The 1908 Old First Baptist Church on the corner of West Martin Luther King Drive and Comanche Street at 219 West Martin Luther Drive (Map ID #27). View looking south.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 22. A ca. 1960 former barbershop at 201 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #33). View looking south.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 23. A ca. 1920 commercial building at 404 Centre Street (Map ID #21). View looking northwest.



Dunbar Historic District, San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photograph 24. The 1912 Calaboose African American History Museum at 200 West Martin Luther King Drive (Map ID #31). View looking northwest.



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