

A Living Legacy

THE HANNIBAL SQUARE HERITAGE CENTER DOCUMENTS THE EVERYDAY LIVES OF THE RESIDENTS OF HISTORIC WEST WINTER PARK.



COMMUNITY PRIDE IN HANNIBAL SQUARE is a 10 x 18 foot mosaic mural located on the building that houses the Winter Park Community Center. It took six months to fashion the piece, which was worked on by students, seniors and volunteers under artist Lynn Tomlinson.

One day while Phylis Moore was working at the Hannibal Square Heritage Center, a man came in with a large cooler. Jerry Clark had just driven from Tallahassee to west Winter Park to deliver its contents — photographs.

The pictures were of his family from when they lived here. His father owned the shoeshine stand that was once in front of the neighborhood body shop. With that business he put all five of his children through college. When Clark heard about the Heritage Center and its mission to preserve the area's history, he came in "with a cooler full of pictures and lots of stories," says Moore.

The Heritage Center — founded by

Crealdé School of Art executive director Peter Schreyer, a documentary photographer — opened on April 28, 2007 after several years of planning, community input and hard work. What is at the heart of the center is a one-of-a-kind collection of reproductions of early pictures of daily life in the African-American neighborhood that are preserved with oral histories. Within *The Heritage Collection: Photographs and Oral Histories of West Winter Park*, each historic photo is framed with a story about it, along with a smaller, current picture of the person who submitted it.

"It's a truly unique way to preserve history because it is told by the people



PHYLIS MOORE IS THE DOCENT MANAGER at the Heritage Center. She was born and raised in west Winter Park.



THE HERITAGE CENTER was built in a bungalow style in order to blend into the rest of West Winter Park. It currently has more than 100 historic photos recorded with oral histories. This fall, the Collection Team will be holding another Heritage Day to solicit more shots. If you happen to have any, they're looking for images of buildings and the neighborhood. This original etching of the Center is by Crealdé artist Kathy Corey.

who lived it," says Betsy Schreyer, Peter's wife and the marketing consultant for the Heritage Center.

With the help of a grant from the Central Florida Community Foundation in 2001, Peter was able to assemble a Heritage Collection Team which included anthropologist Dr. Ron Habin and local historian and neighborhood native Fairloyn Livingston. The team started asking people to share their photos in 2002 during Community Heritage Days. They were collected by the research team and aided by the Crealdé photography department and community representatives. Residents were not asked to give up their original photographs. Instead, they were reproduced into an archival, museum quality exhibition.

The first phase of the collection was displayed at the Winter Park Community Center in January 2003. When word got around that Crealdé was trying to help preserve the history of the area, more and more locals wanted to be involved in the process. As a volunteer, Moore, who is now the docent manager, was a significant supporter of the project from the very beginning.

"I was born and raised here, I know a lot of people and I thought it would be fun," she says.

Once people in the community embraced the project, they told friends and relatives, many of whom now reside in other cities or states.

"It's an old-fashioned community, it's trust based," says Peter Schreyer. "It's about who you know and word of mouth."

More and more people started sharing their photos and stories with the center, mailing them and, in some cases, hand delivering them. Within a few years, the collection had clearly out-

grown its temporary showcase at the Community Center.

Hannibal Square

There's a 10-by-18 foot mosaic mural on the outside of the Winter Park Community Center that was made by more than 500 students, seniors and volunteers under the direction of artist and Crealdé's public art coordinator, Lynn Tomlinson. Funded by the Golden Rule Foundation, *Community Pride in Hannibal Square* depicts what happened there in 1887. According to research by Livingston, African-Americans had a curfew that prohibited them from crossing the railroad tracks after dark. There was an election one night, and an African-American publisher, Gus Henderson, rallied the registered voters in the neighborhood. They gathered in Hannibal Square before proceeding to cross the tracks and vote. As a result, two people from the west side were elected to the Winter Park town council.

Crealdé has been involved in the neighborhood since 1996 when it started offering free art classes to kids and seniors at the Community Center. They slowly built relationships with area residents, as well as with the Winter Park government. Thanks to the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), the City of Winter Park and Crealdé School of Art, the beautiful, two-story building that is the center came to be.

As the Heritage Collection grew, so did Crealdé's vision for the place that would house it perma-



That's my cousin, Eddie Terrell Jr., at the Welbourne Nursery and Kindergarten, one of the oldest institutions in the community for kids. The Day Nursery has been there...my brother is sixty-two, maybe, and he attended school there. This photograph was taken in the late 1960s, maybe. Eddie today would be in his thirties. They had a fair at the nursery, and he was all dressed up as a cowboy that day. Eddie was approximately two or three years old.

Mrs. Hazel Walker
Lifelong West Winter Park Resident

February 16, 2002

THE TWO-STORY Heritage Center has two galleries, two classrooms, a genealogy room and more. It offers free art classes to neighborhood youths and seniors, as well as some of Crealdé's classes.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE HERITAGE CENTER



nently. The Heritage Center is much more than just a museum — there are two art galleries, a state-of-the-art digital photography studio, two classrooms, and a Family History Research Library operated by the City of Winter Park. It's become a hub for community events and activities as well as a major source of pride to the residents.

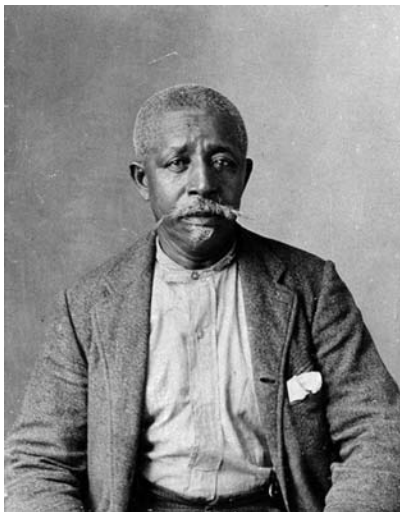
"The people who live here love it because it's a tribute to them," says Peter.

But it's not just current residents who cherish the center. "The pictures give residents near and far a lot of joy," says Moore. One of her favorite things about working at the center is getting to watch people get excited about an old photo or a story from the hey days of the neighborhood. "People come from all over the United States, and it's not just African-Americans," she adds.

Suddenly the phone rings at the Heritage Center and Moore warmly greets Jesse Dykes. Dykes, 86, grew up in west Winter Park but later moved to Philadelphia. He was the first African-American caddy at the Winter Park Golf Club. He is also the first person to set up an art scholarship fund through Crealdé to help neighborhood students in need, and he's never even seen the center.

"What happened in Winter Park was quite unique," says Dykes. "I have to give something back."

THE HEART AND SOUL of the Heritage Center is its collection of historic photos that are accompanied by their stories.



This is my grandfather, Mr. Dempsey Phillips. He was born in Richmond, Virginia, and he was a chef on the train. He married Matilda, and they resided in Valdosta, Georgia. To that family, Laura and Lena were born. Dempsey settled with his family on eighteen acres in Winter Park, Florida, where he farmed. He also had cows and hogs. He was a chef at the old Seminole Hotel, and every Thanksgiving he held a family gathering. Dempsey Phillips died Tuesday, June 7, 1932.

Mrs. Rose Bynum
Lifelong West Winter Park Resident

September 9, 2003

This photograph was taken in 1940 and is a picture of the Winter Park Social Club taken at a banquet at the Everready Club on South Street in Orlando, Florida. My Aunt Lila was quite a socialite! She would have club meetings and parties at Mr. Barbour's house. Mr. Barbour would let her bring her friends over, and they had a lot of fun there. The fellows were not there. When they wanted to have their big gala things, that's when they invited their husbands and boyfriends. This event right here is, I guess, a banquet they would have once a year. They got all dressed up and went to Orlando to this club. This building no longer exists, but the Everready Club still exists.

Mrs. Annie Burns, Retired Kindergarten Teacher
Mr. Joe Burns, Retired Math Instructor

April 17, 2002





FIRST WORLD DRUMMERS and Dancers perform at a fall folk art gala. The Heritage Center already has become a cornerstone of the community.

Historically, west Winter Park was an African-American community in which all of the stores and businesses were owned by African-Americans. There was a separate school for the children there (the building now houses the Winter Park Community Center) and 11 churches, among dozens of businesses. Hannibal Square was also bustling with activity. It was a thriving community until it started to decline in the 1970s. Peter first photographed the neighborhood in the '80s. There were still a few businesses operating then, although many were boarded up.

Land is scarce in Winter Park and over the past 10 years people started turning their interest toward the city's west side. Developers bought up properties cheaply, new buildings were constructed, and white-owned businesses opened. The more gentrified the neighborhood became, the more the Heritage Collection Team wanted to help preserve its rapidly disappearing culture.

But Crealde's vision expands beyond local boundaries. It is hoping that people from other communities will follow its example and use the Heritage Center as a model to retain their own unique stories. In fact, that's part of



THE HANDS of renowned folk artist Mr. Imagination and a local senior above the memory wall art project outside the center.

the mission of the Heritage Center.

"It's inspirational not only to historic neighborhoods, but to anyone who values their community," says Betsy, "Other communities could use this as a model."

Peter says, "We're hoping it will become a new way of storytelling, before we lose all our history."

It is a fantastic model indeed. More than 400 people attended the opening, including noted folk artist Ruby Williams. In addition to the Heritage Collection, there is a timeline on display that parallels national history with historic events in west Winter Park. In its

first year a dozen Crealde art classes were held there, and the center has hosted several events including opening receptions for exhibitions, community activities, and a special series of events in partnership with the Jeanine Taylor Folk Art Gallery that featured internationally-known folk artist Mr. Imagination.

The Center already has a working relationship with a heritage-based group in Evanston, Il. that is following its example. It is also in the process of expanding its relationship with other museums, African-American heritage sites and centers for African-American studies. Locally, Crealde will continue adding more classes, including digital photography. Patrons can look forward



SCHREYER (FAR LEFT) with Joe Terranova, Mayor David Strong (center), Livingston (far right) and members of the community.

to another Heritage Day this fall when the Collection Team will be soliciting photographs for the sixth time. The center will also host a traveling exhibition from the Florida Museum of History in Tallahassee. Early in 2009 they will be teaming up once again with N.Y. Nathiri, the executive director of the Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community, to collaborate for the 20th anniversary of the Zora Neale Hurston Festival.

If the past is an indication of things to come, the Hannibal Square Heritage Center is sure to continue to be a source of inspiration. **oam**

The Hannibal Square Heritage Center is located at 642 W. New England Ave. in Winter Park. Hours are Tuesday-Thursday from noon to 4 p.m.; Friday from noon to 5 p.m.; and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Admission to the center is free. The center provides free art classes to seniors and youths in the community, and offers some tuition-based Crealde classes as well. It hosts visiting exhibitions and cultural programs

with a focus on local history, cultural preservation and southern folklore. The City of Winter Park sponsors a genealogy center on the second floor where volunteer help people trace their family trees. The Heritage Center is always looking for volunteers. For more information call 407.539.2680 or visit www.crealde.org and click on Hannibal Square Heritage Center.