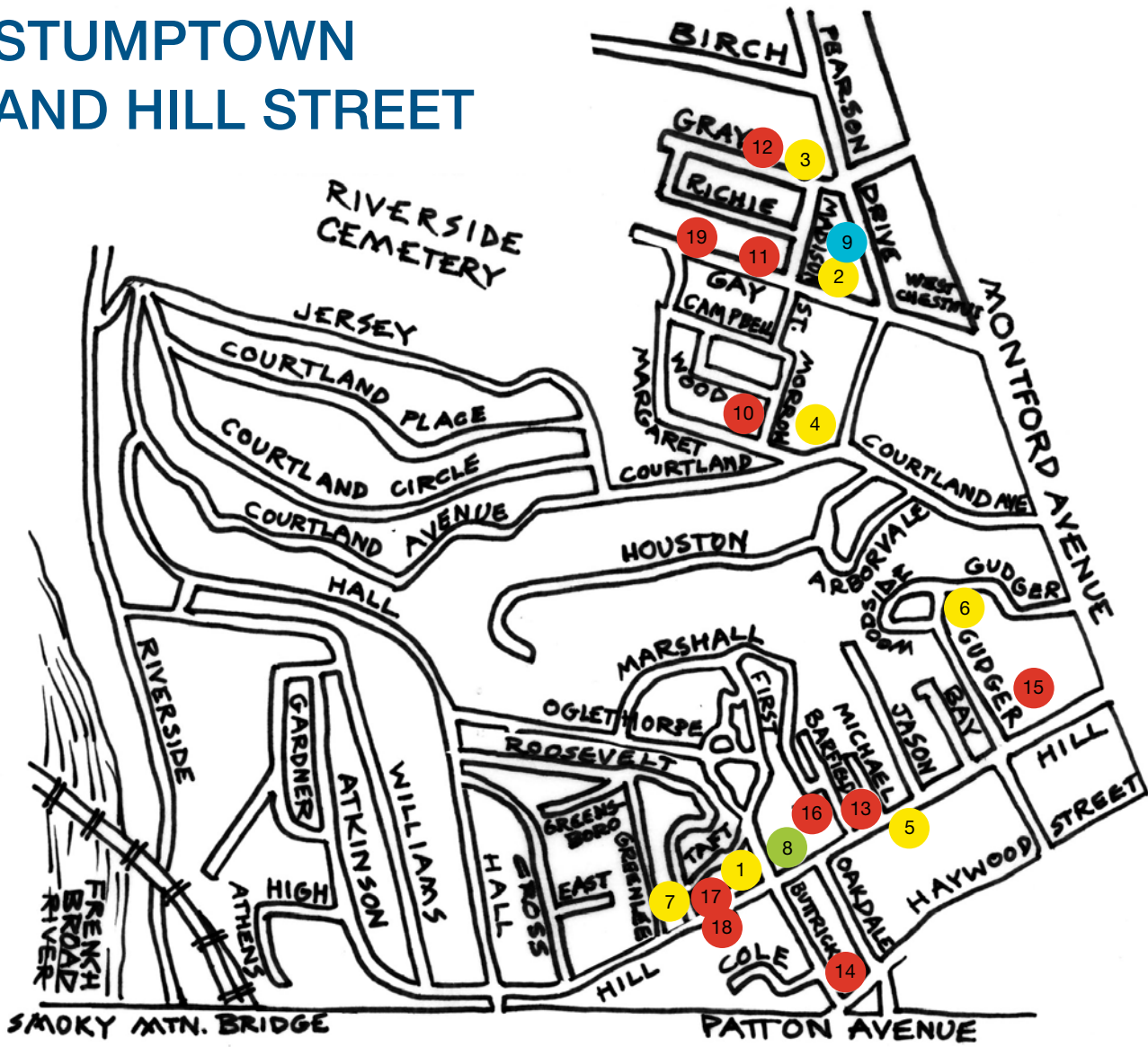


STUMPTOWN AND HILL STREET



CHURCHES

1. Hill St. Baptist Church — Hill and Buttrick Streets
2. Welfare Baptist Church — 27 Madison St.
3. Church of God — 13 Gray St.
4. Elder Perkins' Church — Morrow St.
5. Varick Chapel AME Zion Church — 80 Hill St.
6. Church of God in Christ — 89 Gudger St.
7. Church of God — 5 Roosevelt St.

SCHOOLS

8. Hill Street School — 118 Hill St.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

9. Stumptown Neighborhood Center — Madison St.

BUSINESSES

10. Morrow St. Corner Store — Morrow St.
11. Mr. Howard's Sweet Shop — 86 Gay St.
12. Chatham Brothers Grocery — 7 Gray St.
13. Torrence Hospital — 95 Hill St.
14. Reed's Coal Company — 8 Buttrick St.
15. Mrs. Bernice Williams Beauty Shop — 21 Gudger St.
16. Oliver Groce Grocery — 12 Barfield Ave.
17. Mrs. Edith Adams Beauty Shop — 157 Hill St.
18. Mrs. Ruby Sherrill Beauty Shop — 153 Hill St.
19. Midget Ice Cream Parlor — 73 Gay St.

Map by Betsy Murray, Archivist, Pack Memorial Public Library. Based on a 1950 map of Asheville. Locations are approximate. Shaded area indicates original boundaries of Stumptown neighborhood.

Hill Street Neighborhood — First to Fall

LOCATED NEAR downtown Asheville, the Hill Street neighborhood was home to African Americans as early as 1900. In the 1950s, the community included working-class families who owned their homes, small businesses, a school, and several churches. Former resident Daryl Wasson recalls: “You had this nice little community. These were all nice homes. They were cared for. There was nothing slovenly about it.” In the mid-1950s, the city started work on the Cross-Town Expressway, Asheville’s first superhighway.

Squarely in its path, Hill Street homes began to fall. Wasson says, “My mother and I watched them build the highway. In 1957 the highway department came



(L) Building of Cross-Town (E-W) Expressway, 1958. Courtesy Asheville Citizen-Times. (R) Daryl Wasson and friend, 6 Cross Street, Hill Street Neighborhood, c. 1958. Courtesy Daryl Wasson.

and took out all the houses except for three on our street (Cross St.). They came through again in '65, and they cleaned the place out completely in '67.”

Stumptown: A Dramatic Disruption

Mrs. Clara Jeter, President, Stumptown Neighborhood Association and Ms. Pat McAfee, Community Historian.

Around 1880, a thirty-acre tract in Asheville, near Riverside Cemetery, was cleared for black residential use. Called Stumptown, the area attracted many black families who came to Asheville in search of work. They formed a dynamic social network, and created a good, respectable community of homes, families, neighbors, and friends.

Stumptown residents found employment in Riverside Cemetery, at nearby Battery Park Hotel, or with affluent whites on Montford Avenue. By the 1920s, Stumptown’s population exceeded two hundred families. Although there was much poverty, we had treasures money cannot buy — pride, dignity, and self-respect, and most of all, love.

Urban renewal came as a total surprise to us. We heard bits and pieces about a new program that promised better living conditions. And then, remembers Mrs. Dorothy Ware, one day “my parents got a letter warning them they had only a few months to find a new home.” Other residents got similar letters. Where would we go? How would we get to work and church? If it’s urban *renewal*, why is eminent domain being exercised? What’s really going on here?



Dr. Mary Frances Shuford in front of community center in Stumptown, 1967. Courtesy Asheville Citizen-Times.

Stumptown residents experienced root shock repeatedly over the next two decades, as our homes were bulldozed to the ground, one by one, and the social order was broken. By the early 1970s little was left. Scattered, hurt, bitter, discouraged — we strove to build new hopes. In spite of the devastation, the strong values of our old community are visible in the successful lives of our young people. Stumptown lives on through them.