

HISTORIC RESOURCES
SURVEY REPORT

PAXTON STREET AREA

DANVILLE, VIRGINIA



Hill Studio, 2014
Funded By: VDHR Cost Share Survey & Planning Grant

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CHAPTER 1: PROJECT BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

In 2013 and 2014, Hill Studio conducted a reconnaissance-level historic resources survey of the Paxton Street Area of Danville, Virginia. The survey was completed for Virginia's Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) as part of their cost-share program. The survey represents the first major effort to document the historic resources in the Paxton Street area and to assess its significance and integrity in its entirety. This survey report includes a description of the survey methodology, an analysis of survey findings, and recommendations for further research.

PURPOSE

The Paxton Street Area has been determined potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register by VDHR. The area was evaluated in 1971, but the resources were not individually recorded at that time. Since 1971, Danville's economy has struggled due to high unemployment rates caused by the closure of several major industries. A population decrease of 25 percent has led to high vacancies in the worker housing and subsequent deterioration. A significant number of historic houses have been condemned and demolished, including a handful in the Paxton Street Area.

The City of Danville identified the Paxton Street Area as a high priority for architectural survey in 2012 and submitted a Cost Share Survey Planning Application soon after being granted Certified Local Government (CLG) status. Although most resources within the Paxton Street Area are not under immediate demolition threat, many are vacant and/or neglected.

The City has conducted a number of architectural surveys in the past, the first in 1971. These survey projects have led to the listing of several historic districts in the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register. Danville's historic districts include the Tobacco Warehouse and Residential Historic District, the Holbrook-Ross Historic District, the Downtown Danville Historic District, the Mechanicsville Historic District, the North Danville Historic District, and the Danville Historic District. It was anticipated that the survey of the Paxton Street Area would be used to provide documentation of the neighborhood.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Hill Studio was awarded the cost-share contract to perform the reconnaissance survey of approximately 200 properties in the Paxton Street Area in late 2012. Due to limited funding, only 79 properties were completed under the program during that cost-share cycle. Hill Studio surveyed an additional 80 resources in the same cycle under a separate contract with the City of Danville.

In 2013, the City of Danville submitted another Cost Share Survey and Planning Grant application to complete the survey of the Paxton Street Area. Hill Studio was again granted the contract. Survey tasks included a field survey, historical research, data entry, photography, and the creation of site plans and base maps for the remaining 82 properties in the Paxton Street Survey Area. All work was completed in accordance with the standards of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the National Park Service.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODS

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

All work was planned in accordance with established state and federal standards for documentation of historic resources. Survey tasks included historical research, field survey, photography, and the creation of site plans and base maps. All survey data was entered into Virginia Cultural Resource Information System (V-CRIS). The survey files were completed in accordance with instructions provided by VDHR. All survey designs and plans were made in accordance with National Register Bulletin #24.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hill Studio used resources from the Danville Public Library to research the history of the Paxton Street Area and its relation to the development of the City of Danville as a whole. Resources were also used to research the histories of individual properties and their owners. Specific sources included Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, the 1877 Beers Map, city directories, and general history books. *Victorian Danville: Fifty-Two Landmarks: Their Architecture & History* by Mary Cahill and Gary Grant and *Danville: A Pictorial History* by Clara G. Fountain were especially useful.

DELIVERABLES

Task 1: Project Initiation

Hill Studio met with VDHR staff and representatives from the City of Danville to discuss the project scope. A windshield survey was conducted to review the survey boundary as part of this meeting. Hill Studio appeared twice at the public meetings of the Danville Preservation Task Force to inform the public about the project, including the methodology and the project schedule. Prior to the meetings, the public was notified and residents within the survey area were invited.

Task 2: Background Research

Hill Studio conducted a review of relevant documents and records concerning the project area. Materials available in the VDHR archives as well as in other City records and local repositories were used to understand what documentation exists. Background data was reviewed prior to fieldwork so that known buildings, sites, and structures could be located and further investigated during field survey.

Task 3: Reconnaissance-Level Survey

Hill Studio conducted the field survey of approximately 190 properties in the Paxton Street area. The survey was consistent with the procedures established by the *Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for a Comprehensive Reconnaissance Survey*.

All field data was entered into the Virginia Cultural Resources Information System (V-CRIS). Survey files were compiled for each property surveyed and included reconnaissance documentation in accordance with 2011 DHR Guidelines. Hill Studio completed this survey report containing an architectural summary of the Paxton Street area, as well as recommendations for further work.

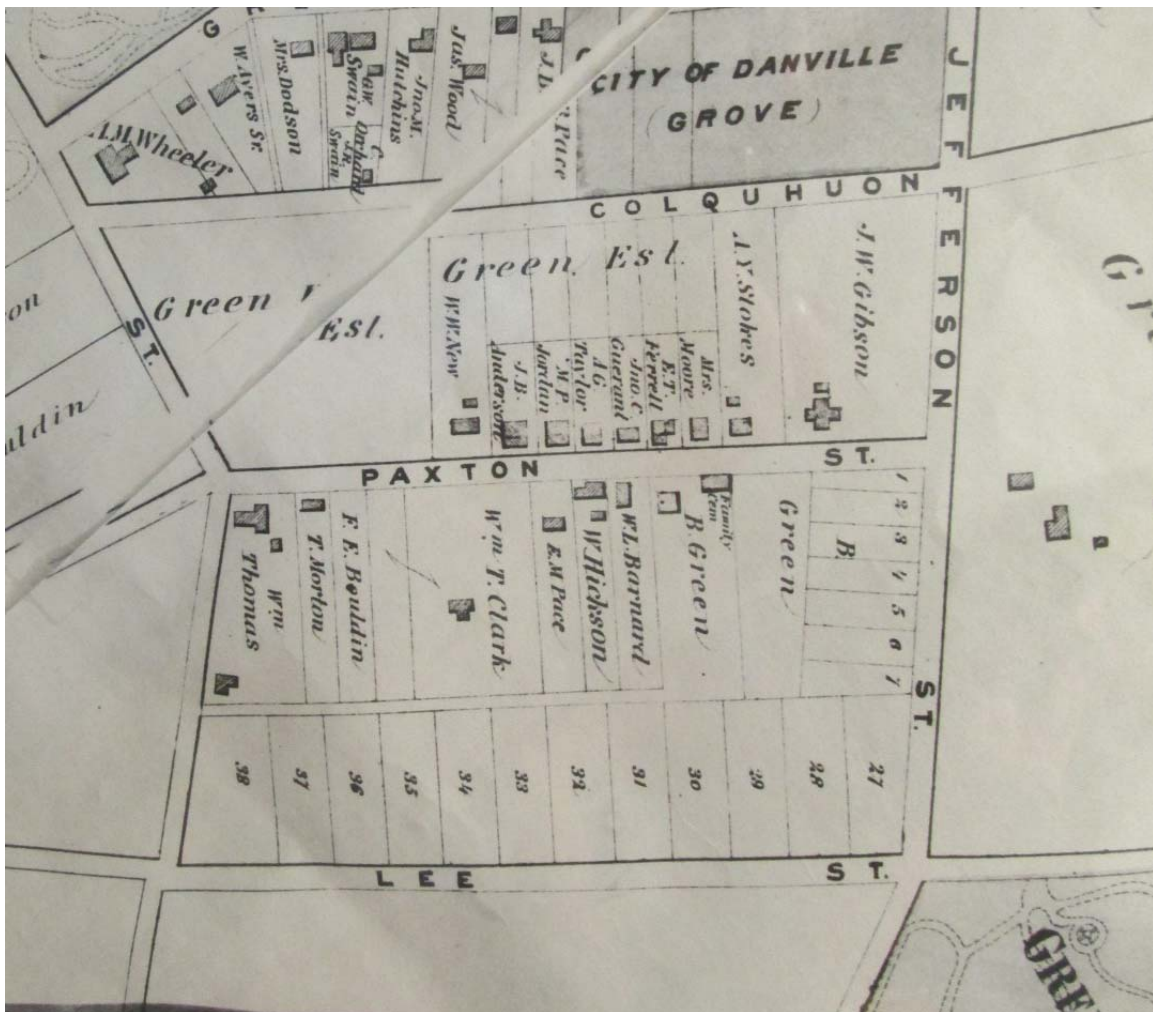
CHAPTER 3: SURVEY FINDINGS

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Paxton Street Area developed in the late nineteenth century. The F.W. Beers Map of Danville, dated 1877, shows earliest sixteen residences were located along Paxton Street. Lots had been platted on the north side of Lee Street and on the west side of Jefferson Street, south of Paxton Street. The Green Estate occupied much of the land in and around the survey area in 1877. The survey area continued to develop in the 1880s and 1890s. Grand Victorian-era houses were built during this period on Paxton, Jefferson, and Stokes streets.

At the turn of the century, a population boom occurred, due to the success of Danville's tobacco and textile industries. The number of city residents grew from 10,000 in 1890 to 19,000 in 1910. The population increase stimulated residential development across the city. Workers associated with the tobacco and textile industries settled within the survey area. Residential construction continued in the early twentieth century to accommodate an influx of mill workers. Most of these worker cottages were concentrated along Lee and Buford streets. Some were also located along Stokes Street and Holbrook Avenue.

Figure 2: Beers Map, 1877



COMMON BUILDING TYPES

The survey area consists of 190 primary resources and 50 secondary resources. Most of the resources are residential since the area developed as a residential neighborhood (See Table 1). Single-family dwellings comprise the majority of the resources, at 90 percent. The second most represented building type is the duplex, at 4 percent. Almost all of the dwellings are wood frame. While residential properties are the predominant resource type within the survey area, there are some examples of non-residential properties. Within the survey area are two churches, a commercial building, an automotive service station, and a warehouse. Each of these non-residential uses is residential in scale and is in keeping with the character of the historic area.



859 Colquhoun St. (108-5727)



901 Colquhoun St. (108-5735)



840 Lee Street (108-5795)

Table 1

Building Type		
Single Dwelling	171	90%
Duplex	8	4%
Apartment Building	3	2%
Church	2	1%
Multiple Dwelling	2	1%
Commercial	1	1%
Service Station	1	1%
Garage	1	1%
Warehouse	1	1%

PERIOD OF CONSTRUCTION & ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

The majority of the resources in the Paxton Street Area were built around the turn of the century, during the Reconstruction & Growth Period, which spans from 1866 to 1916. The earliest properties in the survey area are located on Paxton and Jefferson streets. Approximately 5 percent of the primary resources in the survey area were constructed between 1880 and 1889. The predominant



812 Paxton St. (108-5821)
Italianate, ca. 1880



924 Paxton St. (108-5849)
Italianate, ca. 1880

style of the houses built during this decade is the Italianate style, characterized by detailing such as bracketed cornices and windows with decorative surrounds and molded crowns.

Table 2

Construction Date		
1880-1889	9	5%
1890-1899	14	7%
1900-1909	91	48%
1910-1919	26	14%
1920-1929	22	12%
1930-1939	10	5%
1940-1949	8	4%
1950-1959	7	4%
Post 1960	3	2%

Residential construction continued into the next decade. Around 7 percent of the primary resources in the survey area were constructed between 1890 and 1899. The residential buildings comprise a variety of architectural styles that were popular in the Victorian era. The Queen Anne, Folk Victorian, and Italianate styles are the most common. The Holcombe House, at 903 Paxton Street, and the Roach House, at 909 Paxton Street, are excellent examples of the Queen Anne style. The resources constructed during this decade are concentrated on Paxton, Jefferson, and Stokes streets.



903 Paxton St. (108-5844)
Queen Anne, ca. 1892



909 Paxton St. (108-5845)
Queen Anne, ca. 1893



815 Paxton St. (108-5822)
Folk Victorian, ca. 1895

Approximately 48 percent of the primary resources in the survey area date to the first decade of the twentieth century. Most are simple one-story folk houses adorned with Victorian detailing of Queen Anne inspiration. These Folk Victorian cottages are typically of the gabled-ell or shotgun form and feature spindlework detailing on their front porches and/or gable fields. The Folk Victorian style is the most prominent architectural style in the study area, at 19 percent (See Table 3). While houses of this type are scattered throughout the survey area, these small worker cottages are concentrated in the southern portion, along Stokes, Lee, and Buford streets. Similar worker houses were built in the following decade, between 1910 and 1919. The resources built during this period comprise 14 percent of the building stock in the survey area.



602 Jefferson St. (108-5897)
Folk Victorian, ca. 1900



855 1/2 Stokes St. (108-5881)
Folk Victorian, ca. 1900



864 Lee St. (108-5810)
Shotgun Cottage, ca. 1900

Around 12 percent of the primary resources in the survey area date between 1920 and 1929. The predominant style of this period is the Craftsman bungalow (11%). The bungalow form is typically one-and-one-half stories with a low-pitched gabled or hipped roof and a large front roof dormer. Craftsman bungalows often feature gable-roofed front porches with brick piers or tapered square wood columns on brick piers. Other common features visible on houses in the survey area include exposed rafter tails and multi-light over single-light fenestration. The Craftsman style continued to be popular in the survey area into the 1930s. Revival styles were also common in the 1920s and 1930s.



850 Stokes St. (108-5874)
Craftsman Bungalow, ca. 1930



864 Paxton St. (108-5839)
Craftsman Bungalow, ca. 1936



858 Stokes St. (108-5883)
American Foursquare, ca. 1923

Table 3

Styles		
Folk Victorian	37	19%
Craftsman	20	11%
Colonial Revival	9	5%
Queen Anne	9	5%
Italianate	7	4%
Classical Revival	4	2%
Other	8	4%
No Discernable	96	51%

The study area was 91 percent developed by 1939. The remaining lots were built out in the following decades with residences in Revival or Ranch styles. Cape Cod houses were also popular. The 1940 service station at 884 Stokes Street is a good example of the Moderne style in the neighborhood. Growth during this period is associated with the population boom that followed World War II.



884-886 Stokes St. (108-5895)
Moderne, ca. 1940



939 Paxton St. (108-5853)
Colonial Revival Cape Cod, ca. 1941



727 Holbrook Ave. (108-5752)
Tudor Revival, ca. 1950

CONDITION ASSESSMENT & THREATS

The resources in the survey area are primarily in fair or poor condition. Deterioration and neglect are common threats. There are forty (21%) vacant properties in the district (See Table 4). Since the 2013 survey, two resources in the survey area have been demolished and several others are slated for demolition. Replacement materials, such as vinyl windows and synthetic siding are common. Many roofs are now covered with asphalt shingle roofing. The residences in the best condition with the highest levels of integrity are located on Paxton and Jefferson Streets.

Table 4

Occupancy		
Occupied	150	79%
Vacant	40	21%

LOCATION & SETTING

The Paxton Street Area is situated southeast of Main Street, just beyond Millionaires Row and downtown. It is positioned on land that slopes somewhat to the east and to the south, as it approaches the railroad tracks. Concrete retaining walls are common in the survey area, especially on streets with substantial slopes, such as Buford Street. Jefferson Street and Holbrook Avenue are the major north-south thoroughfares in the survey area. Brick sidewalks and granite curbing are found on Jefferson Street and on a small portion of Paxton Street. The other streets have concrete sidewalks, but feature granite curbing in most instances. Buford Street has no granite curbing and has no sidewalk along the south side of the street. The residential properties are positioned on narrow rectangular lots and have uniform setbacks. Short concrete walks are common between the public sidewalks and the front porches of the houses. Driveways are common, but many are unpaved. Secondary structures, if present, are located behind the residences. Clusters of mature trees are common in the backyards, along the rear lot lines.



View of Paxton Street, looking west

CHAPTER 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

The following efforts are recommended for future preservation efforts within the City of Danville:

- *Amend & Update the Danville Historic District:* It is recommended that the Danville Historic District be amended to include the Grove Street study area. The 2014 Preliminary Information Form (PIF) found that the Grove Street area should be incorporated into the existing Danville Historic District, due to similarities in historical development and building stock. The Grove Street area developed alongside Main Street in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The architectural character of its residential building stock relates to the residential area of the Danville Historic District, located east of Main Street. The most common building types in this section of the Danville Historic District are one and two family homes, built in popular late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century styles. While these buildings are impressive, they are simpler and of a smaller scale than the high style houses of Millionaires Row along Main Street. The Grove Street area is contiguous to the Danville Historic District, connected by Jefferson Avenue, Chestnut Place, Chambers Street, and Holbrook Street. It shares many streetscape features, such as brick sidewalks, regular setbacks, and granite curbing.

Listed on the National Register and the Virginia Landmarks Register in 1973, the Danville Historic District nomination does not specify a period of significance or applicable criteria and areas of significance. The consultant believes that the district is locally significant under Criterion A, in the area of community development for its role in the early expansion of the City of Danville and Criterion C, in the area of Architecture as it contributes to the wide range of architectural styles popular from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century represented in the Danville Historic District. The recommended period of significance is 1830, the construction date of the Lanier House, to 1940, when the last major wave of development concluded.

- *Consider the Historical Marker for High Street Baptist Church:* City residents have expressed interest in recognizing the role of the High Street Baptist Church in the Civil Rights Movement. The church's former pastor, Reverend Lendell W. Chase, was a civil rights activist and president of the Danville Christian Progressive Association (DCPA). The church served as the headquarters for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) while they helped to organize protesters in Danville. When the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. made his speech at High Street Baptist Church in 1963, it was the height of the movement.
- *Develop Historic Contexts for Civil Rights Movement in Danville:* The City of Danville received a great deal of national attention during the summer of 1963, when it laid claim to the most violent episode of the Civil Rights Movement in Virginia. A month after the infamous "Bloody Monday" in Danville, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. arrived in the city to speak to a group of protesters at High Street Baptist Church. King returned to Danville at least twice in 1963. The resources associated with the Civil Rights Movement in Danville should be identified and historic contexts should be developed.
- *Survey & Evaluate the Almagro Neighborhood:* The Village of Almagro was annexed by the City of Danville in 1932. It was historically an African-American community, separated from the rest of the city by the railroad tracks. Prior to annexation, the community was self-governed with its own post office and police force. The neighborhood comprises several institutional buildings and a collection of worker houses, which were built for tobacco warehouse and textile mill workers. Part of the neighborhood was the focus of a FY 2000 Hope VI Revitalization Grant.

- *Re-Evaluate the Schoolfield Historic District:* The Schoolfield Historic District (108-5065) was determined eligible in February 2001. Because five years has elapsed since this determination, it is recommended that the district be re-evaluated for potential listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.
- *Update the Old West End (OWE) Design Guidelines:* The local historic overlay district design guidelines were adopted in October 1999 and revised in August 2010. The Old West End Rental District Study recommends that the existing design guidelines be revised and expanded to provide more guidance regarding historic styles and procedures, as well as examples of acceptable and prohibited materials.
- *Survey of Antebellum Resources in Danville:* Identify antebellum resources in Danville and develop a historic context and registration criteria to help determine which houses might be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The findings could be used as a planning tool or to promote heritage tourism.

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APPENDIX

RESOURCE INVENTORY

DHR ID	Addresses
108-5655	802 Paxton Street
108-5656	644 Jefferson Street
108-5660	702 Holbrook Avenue
108-5661	616 Jefferson Street
108-5662	820 Lee Street
108-5707	816 Buford Street
108-5708	817 Buford Street
108-5710	819 1/2 Buford Street
108-5711	820 Buford Street
108-5712	821 Buford Street
108-5713	822 Buford Street
108-5714	824 Buford Street
108-5715	825 Buford Street
108-5716	826 Buford Street
108-5717	838 Buford Street
108-5718	840 Buford Street
108-5719	835 Colquhoun Street
108-5720	835 Colquhoun Street
108-5721	837 Colquhoun Street
108-5722	841 Colquhoun Street
108-5724	855 Colquhoun Street
108-5725	857 Colquhoun Street
108-5726	858 Colquhoun Street
108-5727	859 Colquhoun Street
108-5728	861 Colquhoun Street
108-5729	865 Colquhoun Street
108-5730	866 Colquhoun Street
108-5731	867 Colquhoun Street
108-5732	883 Colquhoun Street
108-5733	885 Colquhoun Street
108-5734	895 Colquhoun Street
108-5735	901 Colquhoun Street
108-5736	902 Colquhoun Street
108-5737	903 Colquhoun Street
108-5738	904 Colquhoun Street
108-5739	907 Colquhoun Street
108-5740	908 Colquhoun Street
108-5741	910 Colquhoun Street

108-5742	916 Colquhoun Street	108-5809	863 Lee Street
108-5743	918 Colquhoun Street	108-5810	864 Lee Street
108-5744	920 Colquhoun Street	108-5811	866 Lee Street
108-5752	727 Holbrook Avenue	108-5812	867 Lee Street
108-5755	735 Holbrook Avenue	108-5813	879 Lee Street
108-5757	739 Holbrook Avenue	108-5814	881 Lee Street
108-5758	741 Holbrook Avenue	108-5815	883 Lee Street
108-5760	747-749 Holbrook Avenue	108-5816	884 Lee Street
108-5774	716 Jefferson Street	108-5817	885 Lee Street
108-5775	810 Jefferson Street	108-5818	887 Lee Street
108-5776	814 Jefferson Street	108-5819	895 Lee Street
108-5777	816 Jefferson Street	108-5820	897 Lee Street
108-5778	824 Jefferson Street	108-5821	812 Paxton Street
108-5779	805 Lee Street	108-5822	815 Paxton Street
108-5780	809 Lee Street	108-5823	817 Paxton Street
108-5781	810 Lee Street	108-5824	820 Paxton Street
108-5782	811 Lee Street	108-5825	821 Paxton Street
108-5783	814 Lee Street	108-5826	823 Paxton Street
108-5784	815 Lee Street	108-5827	824 Paxton Street
108-5785	818 Lee Street	108-5828	827 Paxton Street
108-5786	819 Lee Street	108-5829	828 Paxton Street
108-5787	821 Lee Street	108-5830	834 Paxton Street
108-5788	824 Lee Street	108-5831	840 Paxton Street
108-5789	826 Lee Street	108-5832	841 Paxton Street
108-5790	831 Lee Street	108-5833	848 Paxton Street
108-5791	835 Lee Street	108-5834	849 Paxton Street
108-5792	836 Lee Street	108-5835	855 Paxton Street
108-5793	837 Lee Street	108-5836	858 Paxton Street
108-5794	839 Lee Street	108-5837	862 Paxton Street
108-5795	840 Lee Street	108-5838	863 Paxton Street
108-5796	842 Lee Street	108-5839	864 Paxton Street
108-5797	844 Lee Street	108-5840	866 Paxton Street
108-5798	845 Lee Street	108-5841	868 Paxton Street
108-5799	846 Lee Street	108-5842	872 Paxton Street
108-5800	847 Lee Street	108-5843	902 Paxton Street
108-5801	848 Lee Street	108-5844	903 Paxton Street
108-5802	850 Lee Street	108-5845	909 Paxton Street
108-5803	852 Lee Street	108-5846	910 Paxton Street
108-5804	854 Lee Street	108-5847	911 Paxton Street
108-5805	856 Lee Street	108-5848	921 Paxton Street
108-5806	858 Lee Street	108-5849	924 Paxton Street
108-5807	859 Lee Street	108-5850	927 Paxton Street
108-5808	860 Lee Street	108-5851	931 Paxton Street

108-5852	933 Paxton Street	108-5897	602 Jefferson Street
108-5853	939 Paxton Street	108-5898	604 Jefferson Street
108-5854	813 Stokes Street	108-5899	620 Jefferson Street
108-5855	814 Stokes Street	108-5901	660 Jefferson Street
108-5856	817 Stokes Street	108-5902	662 Jefferson Street
108-5857	818 Stokes Street	108-5903	664 Jefferson Street
108-5858	819 Stokes Street	108-5904	668 Jefferson Street
108-5859	820 Stokes Street	108-5905	674 Jefferson Street
108-5860	823 Stokes Street	108-5906	698 Jefferson Street
108-5861	824 Stokes Street	108-5908	709 Holbrook Avenue
108-5862	827 Stokes Street	108-5909	710 Holbrook Avenue
108-5863	829 Stokes Street	108-5910	711 Holbrook Avenue
108-5864	830 Stokes Street	108-5911	715 Holbrook Avenue
108-5865	831 Stokes Street	108-5912	718 Holbrook Avenue
108-5866	832 Stokes Street	108-5913	720 Holbrook Avenue
108-5867	833 Stokes Street	108-5914	722 Holbrook Avenue
108-5868	834 Stokes Street	108-5915	729 Holbrook Avenue
108-5869	835 Stokes Street	108-5916	733 Holbrook Avenue
108-5870	839 Stokes Street	108-5918	736 Holbrook Avenue
108-5871	847 Stokes Street	108-5919	742 Holbrook Avenue
108-5872	848 Stokes Street	108-5920	752 Holbrook Avenue
108-5873	849 Stokes Street	108-5921	754 Holbrook Avenue
108-5874	850 Stokes Street	108-5922	760 Holbrook Avenue
108-5875	851 Stokes Street		
108-5876	852 Stokes Street		
108-5877	853 Stokes Street		
108-5879	854 Stokes Street		
108-5880	855 Stokes Street		
108-5881	855 1/2 Stokes Street		
108-5882	856 Stokes Street		
108-5883	858 Stokes Street		
108-5884	859 Stokes Street		
108-5885	860 Stokes Street		
108-5886	861 Stokes Street		
108-5887	862 Stokes Street		
108-5888	863 Stokes Street		
108-5889	865 Stokes Street		
108-5890	867 Stokes Street		
108-5891	868 Stokes Street		
108-5892	869 Stokes Street		
108-5893	871 Stokes Street		
108-5894	876 Stokes Street		
108-5895	884 Stokes Street		