



PARKLAND LOVE



A Neighborhood History

BEFORE YOU READ

Contents

Foundation of Parkland

Homecoming Week

Stories Through Architecture

Parkland's Historic Heart

Parkland Heroes

The neighborhood of Parkland is rich in stories, places, and people. Layers of history create a neighborhood so significant, the city of Louisville now officially recognizes Parkland's core block - 28th Street just north of Virginia Avenue to just south of Dumesnil Street - as a preservation district. There is so much more than a boundary on a map though, and questions emerge when the neighborhood is explored. What did 28th Street look like 200 years ago? Who built the tall, impressive buildings? Where did all the street names come from? What did people do in Parkland when Louisville - the city - was still a mule-and-cart ride away?

Several documents of the past, archival photographs, resident conversations, and individual contributions have helped inform this guide. It is a brief telling of what others have told before in

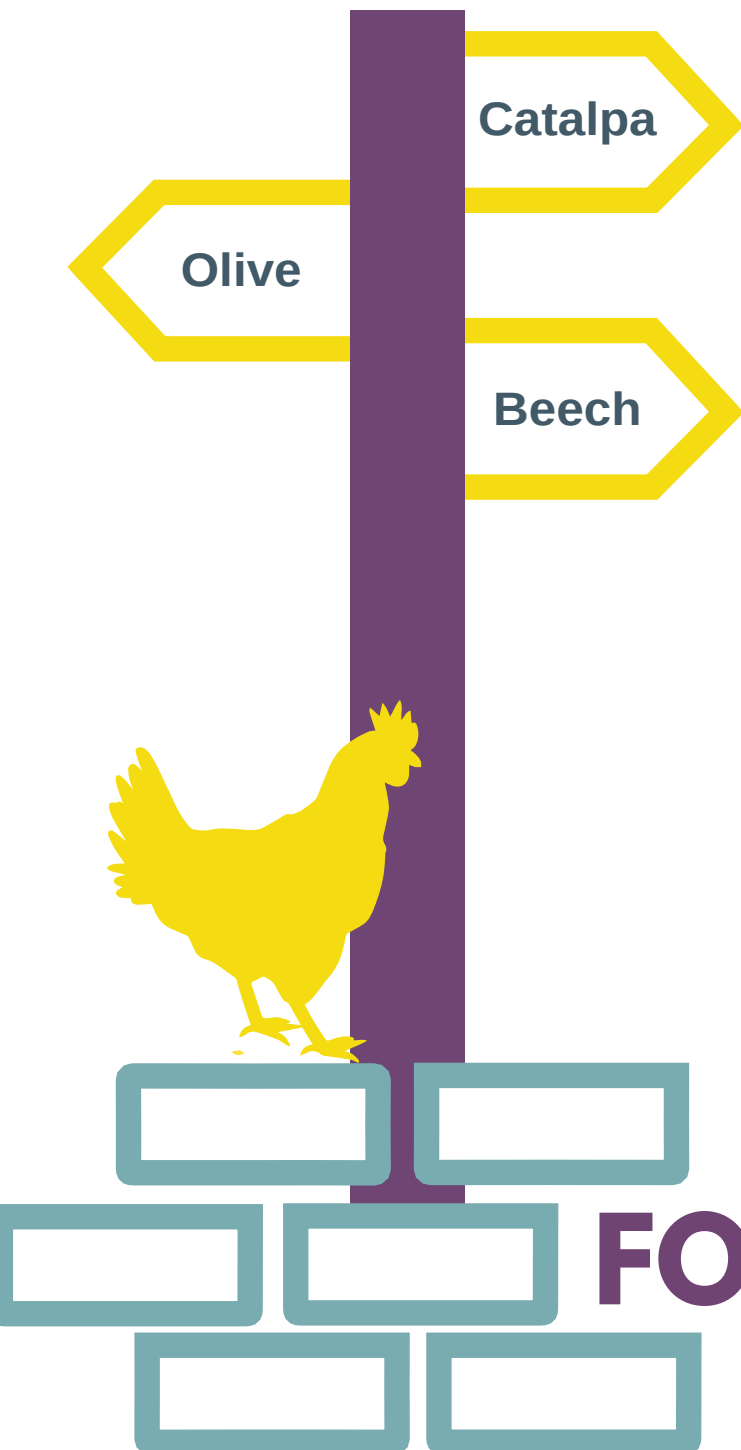
greater detail. For more details on sources, and for tips on how to find out additional information and sources for the numbered cited sources, please see the back page.



Today 28th Street is a thoroughfare connecting schools, homes, commerce, manufacturing, and recreation. About 200 years ago, in 1817, the same path would have cut through farmland pastures and crossed wooded streams. There is a bench in Shawnee park, and street name or two nearby, commemorating the earliest inhabitants of what would be the Parkland neighborhood. Even up through the 1850s, what is now 28th Street passed through “more of a wilderness than anything else,” [1] and it was 1874 before anyone thought of adding streets, houses, or more people.

Morris-Southwick Development Company began subdividing and selling 342 acres of land, calling it Parkland. [2] “Its breathtaking atmosphere of beautiful trees, ponds, gentle hills, and acres of colorful wildflowers naturally made it one of the most desired [new developments]. A mule-drawn car, later trolley cars, and ‘steam cars’ [made] trips [to and from] the new suburb in Parkland even more convenient.” [3] What is now Dumesnil Street, was once Orleans Avenue, and where livestock used to meander, people began to build. The original homesteaders in the area were few in number, mostly of German descent but with some African-American families settling as well. Street names like Catalpa, Hemlock, Beech, Olive, Hemlock, and Hazel - names that remain even today - honored the living trees that grew in lush groves all around, evoking an image of stability and tranquility in the minds of those crammed together on Louisville’s congested blocks, and further encouraging new settlers.

By the 1880s, development was thriving. A mix of wealthy and more modest-income families called the settlement home. Elegant and grand houses were built along Virginia Avenue and Catalpa Street, while smaller cottages lined adjacent side streets.



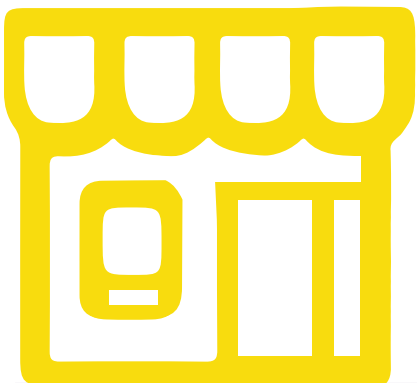
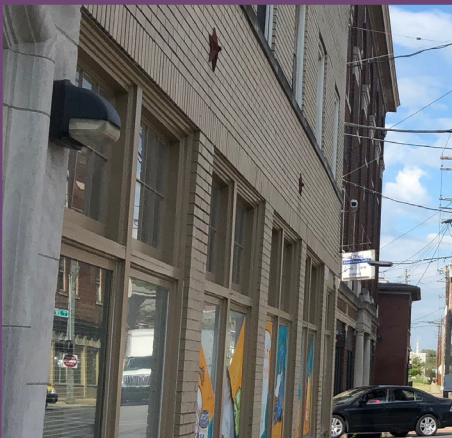
FOUNDATION OF PARKLAND

New businesses cropped up to serve the new community. Residents elected mayors, tradesmen set up shop, and farmland became village. The energy in this new community burned bright enough to overcome both a national economic depression (in the 1870s) and a devastatingly fierce tornado in 1890.

On March 27th “ tornado touched down in Parkland near ‘Thirty-second Street and Gibson Lane’ (Southern Avenue). From there it moved eastward ‘over the Dulaney farm’ (Victory Park) ‘to Twenty Second Street and Garland,’ and from there past ‘Twenty-first and Howard Streets’ and on ‘to Eighteenth Street,’ just south of where it intersects ‘with Maple Street.’” [4]

In the wake of destruction, the city of Louisville annexed the Parkland subdivision to support rebuilding efforts, but after just a few years the neighborhood was welcoming the new century with even more stunning homes, vital businesses, thriving churches and strong schools.

PARKLAND 2019



FOUNDATION OF PARKLAND

H O M E C O M M I N G W E E K

In 1874, Parkland received its first charter and became an independently thriving municipality, though its boundaries then were wider than any lines on today's map. By 1881, the first black families had started to erect prominent homes along Orleans (now Dumesnil Street) and Virginia Avenues. During this time of Parkland's transition from farmland owned by a few wealthy landowners to neatly plotted homesteads inhabited by both moderate and wealthy transplants, the area held a



few different names depending on who was asked. "Very early...[it was] known as Homestead, Kentucky," but then there were other names, like "South Parkland" and "Parkland Subdivision." "It was called 'Needmore' by the colored residents," but "colored folks from up in town...called it 'Little Africa.'"

One of the original black families to move to Parkland were the Cotters. In the 1870s, Joseph S. Cotter's family left their lives as slaves on a Bardstown, KY plantation to start anew in Parkland's growing, and promising, township. 40 years later, in the early 20th century, the whole place had become a vibrant hub, inhabited mostly by African American tradesmen, preachers, teachers, homemakers, small farmers, and families.

This period of Parkland's history, now about 100 years ago, is captured in memory thanks to "Homecoming Week," a commemoration celebration

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H O M E C O M M I N G W E E K

that drew regional attention in the summer of 1916. Joseph S. Cotter, the principal of the neighborhood's S. Coleridge-Taylor school, organized a week-long celebration to commemorate 25 years of Parkland.

At the time of "Homecoming Week" there were "700 colored homes, six churches, seven groceries, one drug store, owned by A.J. Duncan, president of the Parkland Improvement Club and Mayor of 'Little Africa,'" [6] as well as, "five bricklayers, six carpenters, nine concrete workers, one blacksmith, two paperhangers, three contractors and builders, three plasterers, two ice men, two farmers, and two doctors."

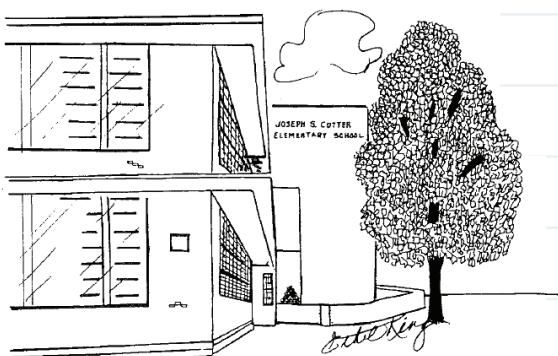
"Homecoming Week" was about more than celebrating the health and prosperity of the predominantly black community; the Parkland Improvement Club also wanted to generate interest and support for modernizing the area with improvements like smooth "cinder" pathways, mailboxes, and lamp posts. In 1916, Parkland and Louisville were connected via paved roadways and even streetcars, but this was a collective effort around beautifying the little township.



STORIES THROUGH ARCHITECTURE



For many decades, Parkland was a mixture of architecture, economic backgrounds, and lifestyles. One source describes the neighborhood in the early 1900s as having “bright green lawns checkered with sunshine and shade, the most modern and improved styles of cheerful homes, bungalows, cottages and palatial residences with substantial garages in the background to some of them.” [7] Ethel King’s book, “From Parkland to the River’s Edge” depicts Parkland differently. “[Some] residents raised farm animals, had outdoor water and toilet facilities, and raised their own gardens. It was not uncommon to see places that were overgrown with weeds and thickets, frogs in ponds....However...[t]here were [also] many nice homes with neatly kept yards. These homes used the services of LG&E and had indoor water and toilet facilities.” [8] Imagine Parkland today with frog ponds, little electricity, candlelit windows, and outhouses...then imagine Parkland later, with a record store, grocery, bakery, a bank, and Gulf gas station.



Parkland’s buildings tell even more than these written descriptions about the flow of people, money, lifestyle, and commerce in the neighborhood. Nationally renowned architect, Samuel Plato, an African American Alabama-native who attended Simmons College, designed the Virginia Avenue Colored School now known as the West End School. Beyond the work of this national and well-respected artist, other Parkland buildings tell stories today of rich spiritual heritage, engaged community, dedication to young minds, and eclectic commercial

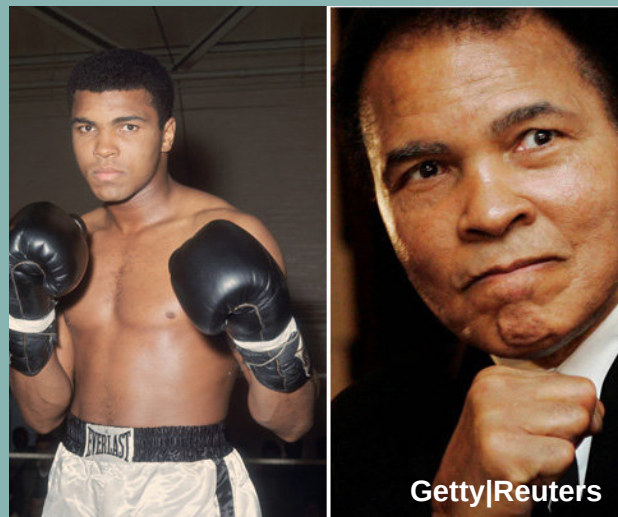
businesses. Some buildings with rich histories include, Parkland Masonic Temple, the Dunn Building, Sons & Daughters of Parkland Hall, the Washburn Building, Pleasant View Missionary Baptist Church.

Parkland Love

- Native son of the Parkland neighborhood, Ali was a world-renowned gold-medal champion boxer.
- His childhood home - 3302 Grand Avenue - is now a dedicated memorial open to the public, right here in Parkland.
- After his death, the streets of Parkland were flooded with devotees, fans, admirers, neighbors, friends, and family. The funeral procession wound its way through Parkland in recognition of Ali's love for his childhood neighborhood.

Beyond the Neighborhood

- Famously devoted to promoting peace, understanding, philanthropy, and compassion, Ali braved discrimination to speak loudly, proudly, and selflessly for oppressed people. He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2005.
- Ali's legacy has extended from his beginnings in Parkland to circle around the world. His mission is preserved in the work of the local organization and museum, The Muhammad Ali Center.



Muhammad Ali

PARKLAND PRIDE the People

Every neighborhood has its treasures, and Parkland is no different. While there are special buildings and valued businesses, some of Parkland's greatest treasures are the people who call it home. The following individuals are either past or current Parkland residents - all of them leaders in compassion, advocacy, skill, and spirit - whose lives and actions spread Parkland Love near and far.



Eleanor Jordan

Parkland Love

- Nationally-recognized and award-winning, Jordan considered Parkland home for over 50 years, and led the creation of the Parkland Neighborhood Improvement Association, serving as its charter President.
- Among many things, Jordan fiercely championed two major issues: 1) preserving Parkland's historic architecture and 2) providing better quality, affordable childcare for low-income families. She helped to form the Parkland Alliance Neighborhood Association and also co-founded the West Louisville Childcare Alliance.

Beyond the Neighborhood

- Elected in 1996 to the Kentucky House of Representatives from the 42nd district in Louisville, Jordan was the only African American female serving in the 138-member governing body.
- She sponsored and supported legislation on pay equity for women, women's health, early childhood education reforms, civil rights, and housing.
- She was the first African American to be the Director of the Kentucky Commission on Women (appointed by Governor Stephen L. Beshear).

PARKLAND

PRIDE the People

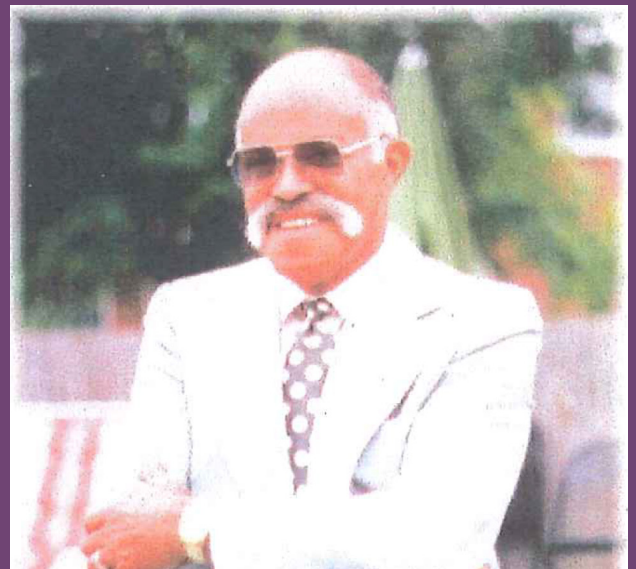
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- Author of, "From Parkland to the River's Edge," a lovingly written history of Parkland from its earliest days to the 1950s. Meant for kids and adults alike, it includes self-drawn illustrations and blank pages for the reader's own Parkland stories.
- King worked to organize the Parkland Historical Society, and sought the inclusion of every Parkland resident in the improvement of the neighborhood.
- She devoted herself to collecting and recording the many stories of development and change in Parkland over the years.

Beyond the Neighborhood

- King worked for over 24 years as an educator in the Jefferson County Public Schools system, in addition to offering her skills to the Charles Shedd School for Students with Dyslexia and the Laubach Literacy Program.
- She founded Scribes, Inc., a local organization dedicated to preservation and historical research, continuously spreading her joy of history to those around her.
- She has deep roots in religious ministries in Kentucky and Tennessee, serving urban and rural communities alike.

Ethel King



George Stovall

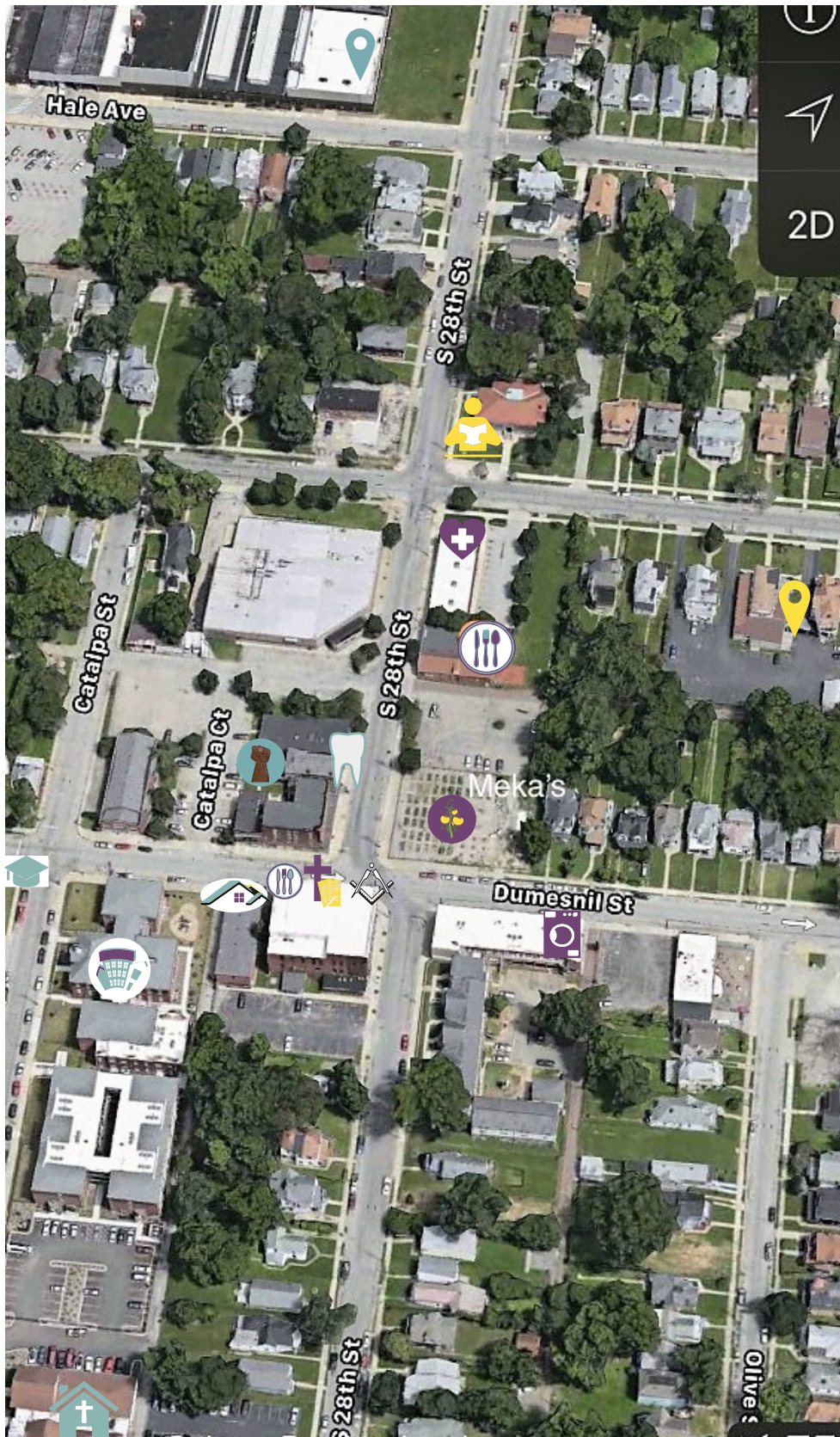
Parkland Love









- Stovall owned Stovall's Drywall Construction Company, as well as co-owned the neighborhood staple, Friel & Stovall's Hardware & Variety Store at 1213 S. 28th Street.
- He was an honored member of Parkland's Prince Hall Grand Lodge on Dumesnil Street.
- Beloved community member, Stovall was a Parkland advocate and leader throughout his years in the neighborhood.

Beyond the Neighborhood

- The memory of Stovall's community advocacy and leadership is commemorated in the George W. Stovall Award, given by the NeighborWorks organization to those individuals who: strengthen relationships between neighborhoods and local government, demonstrate leadership and development skills, and show commitment to addressing the housing needs of low-to-moderate income families. Notable recipient: former Mayor Jerry Abramson.

MAP OF PARKLAND'S HISTORIC HEART



-  Reynolds Metals
-  Meka's Irma Dee's
-  Historic Parkland Library
-  Omni Medical Center
-  Hathaway and Clark Funeral Home
-  NAACP Louisville Branch
-  Family Scholar House
-  Metro Housing Resource Center
-  Marination's Catering
-  Prince Hall Grand Lodge, Mason Lodge
-  Parkland Community Garden
-  Parkland Laundromat
-  Jesus and a Job
-  Parkland Dental Center
-  Shiloh Baptist Church
-  Maupin Elementary

* This map is a work in progress to collect and share: neighborhood resources, services, and treasures as they build and change.

Parkland Love: A Neighborhood History

Sources

Photos, written documents, and personal accounts telling more about Parkland's history found in a number of places:

Filson Historical Society
University of Louisville Archives and Special Collections
Ethel King's book, "From Parkland to the River's Edge"
Louisville's Parkland Historic Preservation District guiding document
Louisville's adopted Parkland Neighborhood Plan (2017)

- [1] Alfred W. Harris, P.S.,P.T., History of the Progressive Spirit of Parkland Lodge No. 638, F. & A. M. 1888-1918 (unpublished, Louisville, 1918), Filson Club, Louisville
- [2] Ethel I. King. From Parkland to the River's Edge. (Peter's Publications, 1990) p. 1
- [3] Ibid. p. x
- [4] Ibid. p. 31
- [5] Joseph S. Cotter. Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Founding of Colored Parkland or "Little Africa"; Louisville, KY 1891-1916.
- [6] Ibid. p. 12
- [7] Parkland Neighborhood Plan, 2017
- [8] Ethel I. King. From Parkland to the River's Edge. (Peter's Publications, 1990) p. 1

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Parkland's Story Continues

On May 28, 1968, 78 years after a natural tornado tore through Parkland, a powerful human force emerged at the very heart of the community. Often referred to as Louisville's race riots, sometimes called an uprising, the events that unfolded in Parkland in 1968 - Parkland Disturbance Day - helped shape the neighborhood as it is today.

Stay tuned for an upcoming second edition of Parkland's history - a deeper dive into the last 60 years which will reflect on recent events and people, and will continue illuminating even more Parkland Love!



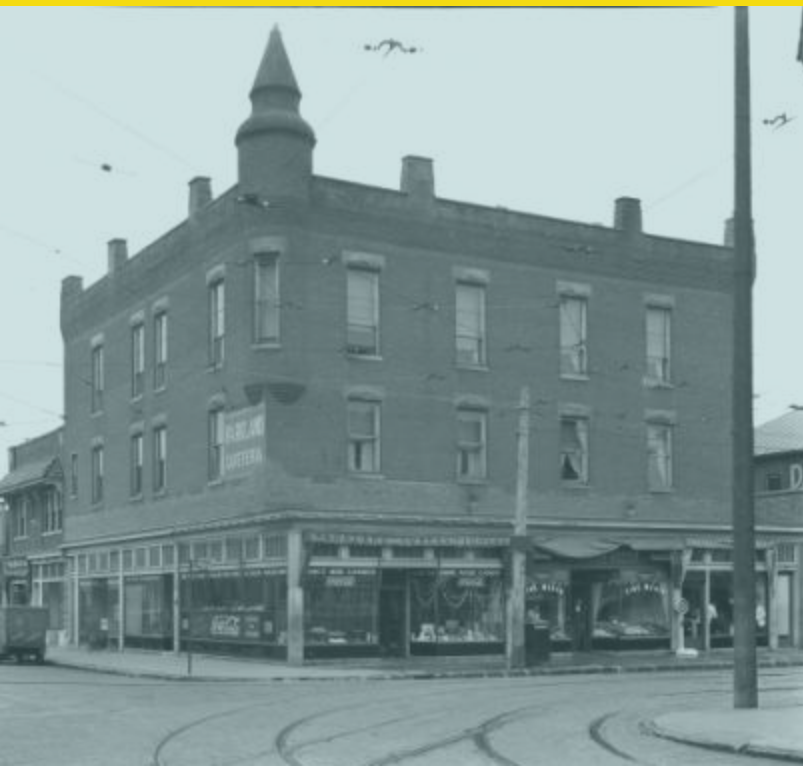
PARKVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

PARKVILLENA@GMAIL.COM

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**ART&DESIGN:
BRIANNA HARLAN**



PARKLAND'S STORY CONTINUES