

NEIGHBORHOODS: NORFOLK 1911 ANNEXATION

By the end of the Civil War, rail lines throughout the City of Norfolk were broken, and commerce was almost non-existent. The railroad and cotton, however, contributed to Norfolk's economic recovery during and after reconstruction. Tracks of the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad were repaired, and trains carrying cotton, corn, flour, peanuts, tobacco, wheat, and timber for export began arriving at Norfolk's docks. A new rail connection was made within a few years between the Seaboard and Roanoke Railroads. This turned the city into a center for cotton export during the 1870s and 1880s. In the 1870s, the Port of Norfolk began outdistancing the Fall Line Cities in commercial trade. While the new rail connections contributed to increased trade, it was a change in shipbuilding technology which was the main factor in this recovery. Larger, heavier ocean-going steamships could not navigate the shallow inland rivers leading to Richmond and other cities as sailing ships and barges could. Deep-water ports such as Norfolk became the centers for sea-going trade as a result.

In the 1880's, Norfolk's export industry became even more firmly established as a result of the railroad. The Norfolk and Western Railroad, which had been established in 1876, merged several smaller lines connecting Norfolk to the rich coal fields of the Appalachians. Shipments of coal for export began arriving in 1883. Coal quickly replaced cotton as the number one export, and it was evident that existing port facilities would be inadequate to handle future coal exports. The Norfolk and Western tracks were extended directly to the new coal piers at Lambert's Point upon their completion in 1886.

A number of historical records and books attribute the name, Lambert's Point, to an early Virginia colonist named Thomas Lambert. A land grant recorded in 1635 showed that he had received from the English crown a 100-acre tract of land.

In 1911, Lambert's Point and Huntersville were annexed to the City of Norfolk. Huntersville, one of Norfolk's oldest and most intact settlements remaining from the late 19th century, is unique because it was not planned by a company or commission, but developed over time. It was also unique because this small area, which is located today in the heart of the City of Norfolk, was the most cosmopolitan of Norfolk's neighborhoods. It was the only predominantly Black neighborhood to be annexed during the more than 70 years of annexation.

The southern portion of Huntersville had been part of the land belonging to Samuel Boush which was taken within the city limits in 1761. In 1890, Huntersville consisted of small frame houses mostly clustered in the area of Church Street. There was once a botanical and zoological park named Lesner's Park located between Lee (Lexington) and Washington Streets in the middle of the neighborhood. There was also an "old Burying Ground" north of the intersection of Church and Goff Streets. Industry in the neighborhood was localized south east of the intersection of Church Street and the rail line leading from the Lambert's Point Shipyard. The two industries located on this area were the Baltimore United Oil Company, and the company stables belonging to the City of Norfolk's Railroad. Most of the land-owning residents of Huntersville were Caucasian, upper and working-class. Some early resident of this era were Richard T. Webster, carpenter; and Asa H. Hawks, justice of the peace.

Blacks were one of the earliest groups to settle in Huntersville. Many European immigrants also settled along Church Street after 1890. When annexed, Huntersville contained a large number of Black, Oriental, Jewish, and Eastern European families and businessmen. Because of this demographic mix, Huntersville had been passed over for annexation a couple of times in the first 10 years of the 20th century.

As a completely self-sustaining area, Huntersville developed the city's first African-American newspaper entitled the Norfolk Journal & Guide. The newspaper owner, P.B. Young, inhabited a house that continues to stand on A

Avenue. This house is a large brick Colonial Revival style dwelling, built after WWI when the boom in the economy allowed those who succeeded to build and develop other areas of the city.

In 1900, this area had grown 70% in housing and 20% in commercial interests along Church Street. Additionally, industry had expanded due to the sale of Lesner's Park to a brewery in 1895. There was more expansion along the northern boundary of the neighborhood with industry expanding along the RR. Norfolk county also built a the John T. West School within the borders of Huntersville in 1906 which was located on Bolton Street. The only public school in the city at this time were Booker T. Washington High School, and the John T. West School.

In modern terms, the boundaries of the Lambert's Point and ODU neighborhoods are: Bounded on the southwest by the Elizabeth River, roughly extending from 49th Street to Lambert's Point Terminal, Pier P. The northern boundary roughly extends from the Elizabeth River at 49th Street, to the intersection of 49th Street and Colley Avenue. The eastern boundary roughly extends from the intersection of 49th Street and Colley Avenue, to the eastern boundary of the Lambert's Point Terminal, ending at Pier P.

The boundaries of the Huntersville Neighborhood is: The northern boundary roughly extends from the intersections of E. 29th Street and Church Street, along Waverly Way, terminating at the Lafayette River. The eastern boundary extends from the Lafayette River to Summit Avenue, along Summit Avenue to the intersection of Summit Avenue and Ludlow Street. It then extends in a southeasterly arc from this point along Rugby, Taggart , and Bolton Streets, to Princess Anne Road. From Princess Anne Road, this boundary extends east to Park Avenue, following Park Avenue to Corprew Avenue. The southern boundary extends west from Corprew Avenue, to Bagnall Road, then northeasterly from the intersections of Chapel Street and Bagnall Road, to the intersection of Tidewater Drive and Princess Anne Road. It then extends roughly to Church and Goff Streets, then to the intersection of Princess Anne Road, and Armistead Avenue. The southern boundary roughly extends north along Armistead Avenue to 22nd Street, from 22nd Street to Church Street, and from Church Street to E. 29th Street.

Boroughs Established:

Barberton

Colley Ave.

Lamberts Pt. ODU

Olde Huntersville