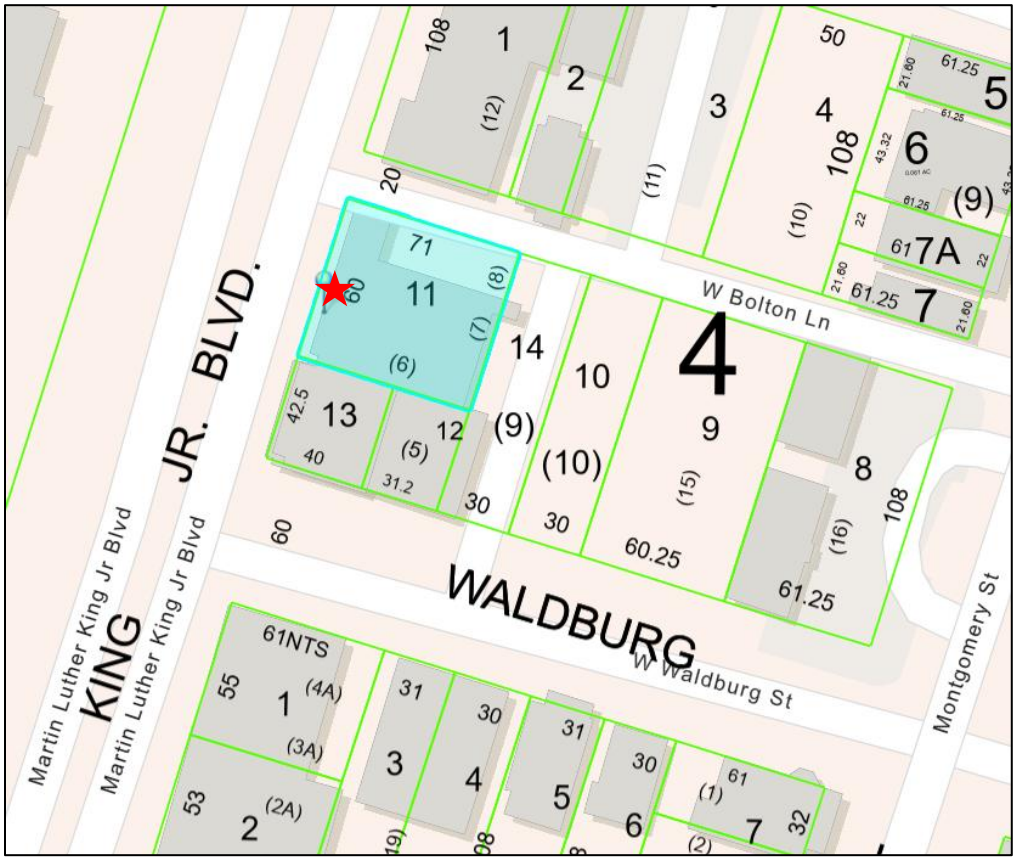
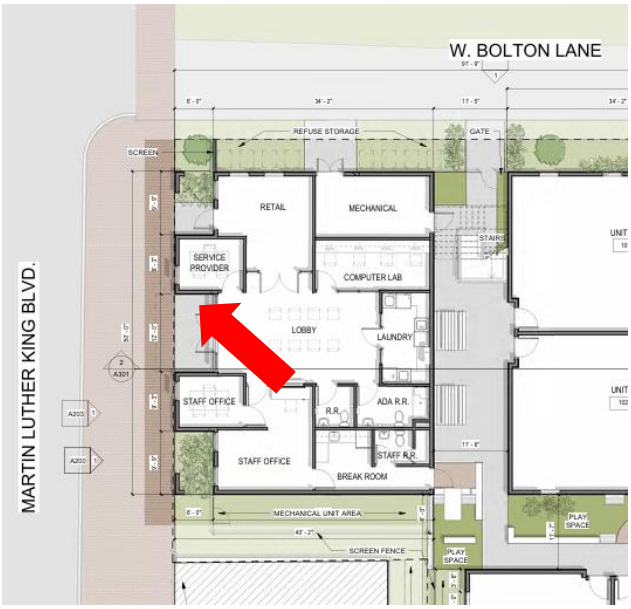
Project Description:
Bronze plaque mounted to the wall adjacent to the entrance of the building at 916 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard conveying the history of the Fonvielle Office Building and Savannah Pharmacy business formerly at the site.

Marker Location:
Mounted on the exterior wall (under the overhang) to the left of the front entrance of 916 Martin Luther King Boulevard, Savannah, GA 31401

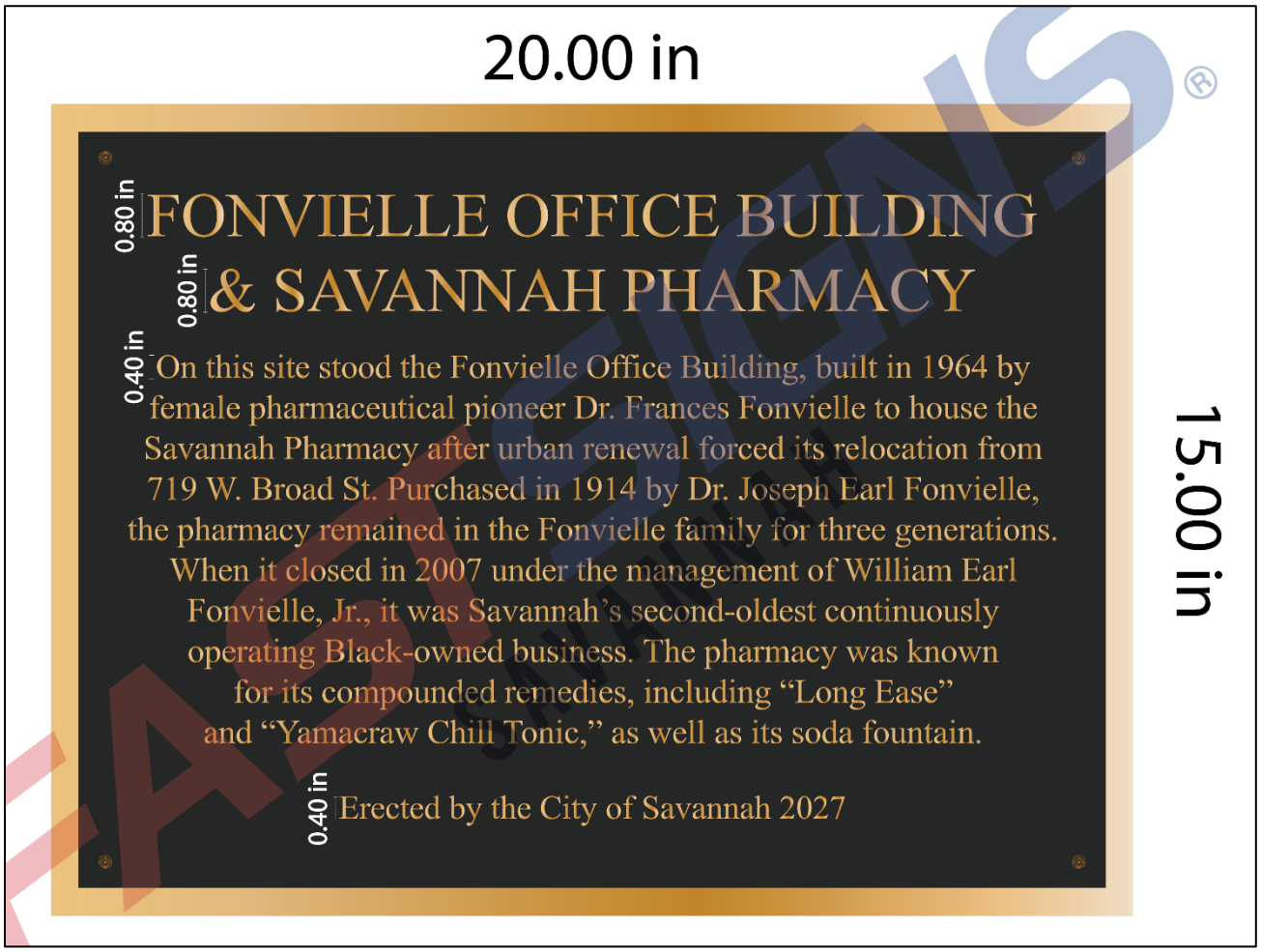






Marker Drawing:

20” wide x 15” tall Bronze Precision plaque (cast bronze alloy 22000 free of lead and mercury)



Marker Text:

FONVIELLE OFFICE BUILDING & SAVANNAH PHARMACY

On this site stood the Fonvielle Office Building, built in 1964 by female pharmaceutical pioneer Dr. Frances Fonvielle to house the Savannah Pharmacy after urban renewal forced its relocation from 719 W. Broad St. Purchased in 1914 by Dr. Joseph Earl Fonvielle, the pharmacy remained in the Fonvielle family for three generations. When it closed in 2007 under the management of William Earl Fonvielle, Jr., it was Savannah’s second-oldest continuously operating Black-owned business. The pharmacy was known for its compounded remedies, including “Long Ease” and “Yamacraw Chill Tonic,” as well as its soda fountain.

Erected by the City of Savannah 2027

Text Size and Font:
The font style is Times New Roman. The title text is all caps and 0.80 inches tall. The body text is 0.40 inches tall.

Method of Installation:
The plaque will be installed on the exterior wall, within the entrance alcove, partially sheltered from the exterior elements by the overhang. The plaque has holes for exterior screws for installation and comes with decorative rosettes to cover the screws.

Marker Themes:

> On this site stood the Fonvielle Office Building, built in 1964 by female pharmaceutical pioneer Dr. Frances Fonvielle to house the Savannah Pharmacy after urban renewal forced its relocation from 719 W. Broad St. Purchased in 1914 by Dr. Joseph Earl Fonvielle, the pharmacy remained in the Fonvielle family for three generations. When it closed in 2007 under the management of William Earl Fonvielle, Jr., it was Savannah's second-oldest continuously operating Black-owned business. The pharmacy was known for its compounded remedies, including "Long Ease" and "Yamacraw Chill Tonic," as well as its soda fountain.

The marker addresses the following themes:

- Arts and Humanities (including art, **architecture,** music, theater, literature, education, etc.)
    - Before its demolition, the Fonvielle Office Building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its unique architecture and important representation of African American business in the twentieth century. The building was designed by architect Eugene A. Maxwell, AIA, and constructed by local African American contractor Boisy Goldwire. Maxwell, a graduate of Tulane University, was known for his "engineered architecture" which featured pre-cast concrete elements, similar to those seen in the Fonvielle Office Building's solar screen. Prior to his work on the Fonvielle building, Maxwell designed the Daffin Park Bath House which displays a concrete butterfly-style roof.
- Science and Engineering (including technology, inventions, **medical,** communications, etc.)
    - In 1914, Dr. Joseph Earl Fonvielle partnered with Dr. Walter E. Moody to purchase the Savannah Pharmacy from Lee Chemical Company. After Dr. Moody's death in 1942, Dr. Fonvielle assumed full control of the business. After Dr. Fonvielle's death in 1954, William Earl Fonvielle maintained the family business until his untimely death in 1955. Dr. Fonvielle's daughter, Frances, also a graduate of Howard University pharmaceutical school, moved home from Atlanta to help her mother run the pharmacy. Dr. Frances Fonvielle served as president of the Savannah Pharmacy from 1955 to 1998, and was considered "an African-American female pioneer in the pharmacy business." During her time as president, Frances called on her nephew, William Earl Fonvielle, Jr., to help maintain the store. Starting at the age of eight, Earl worked the cash register and ran deliveries to neighboring customers. After receiving a master's degree from the University of Detroit, Earl moved back to Savannah to help run the Pharmacy. After Frances' death in 1998, Earl became the third generation of the Fonvielle family to own and operate the business. The Fonvielle family's dedication allowed the Savannah Pharmacy to serve Savannah for almost an entire century.
    - The Savannah Pharmacy was noted for compounding its own medical remedies like a patented cold medicine called "Long Ease" and the "Yamacraw Chill Tonic."
- Civic and Institutional; Social and Humanitarian; Local History (folklore and/or local heroes); and Cultural and Ethnic
    - In the 1950s and 1960s urban development and public housing initiatives called for the 600 and 700 blocks of West Broad Street (now Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard) to be demolished. The Fonvielle family was offered $15,000 for the land and building their business was located on

(719 West Broad Street) without relocation funds. Frances Fonvielle was unable to obtain a loan from local banks due to her gender and race. Despite the odds, Frances built the Fonvielle Office Building, providing a new home for the Pharmacy, in 1964 at 916 West Broad Street with financing from the North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company.

- The Savannah Pharmacy provided more than pharmaceutical products for its shoppers, selling cosmetics, home goods, and entertainment. Their popular soda fountain was a favorite spot for local children to get ice cream on Sunday afternoons. The Savannah Pharmacy was more than just a corner drug store; it was a neighborhood institution that served as an important social gathering place for the surrounding community for decades.
- After years of decline brought on by urban renewal, the desegregation of local businesses and increasing competition from national chain drug stores, Earl Fonvielle closed the Savannah Pharmacy in 2007. At the time of its closing, the Savannah Pharmacy was the second oldest-continuously operating black-owned business in Savannah, after the Royall-Bynes Funeral Home.

For additional information, see the following:

- "Savannah Pharmacy and Fonvielle Office Building." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. Prepared by Steven Moffson, Architectural Historian, October 10, 2012.
- Spracher, Luciana. "The Savannah Pharmacy, 1914-2007." City of Savannah, Research Library & Municipal Archives, December 2009.

Cost Estimate:

- 20" x 15" x 0.25" Bronze Plaque, including shipping: $2,009.12
- Installation: to be handled internally by City of Savannah/CHSA Development, Inc.
- Maintenance Escrow: to be determined by City of Savannah

Total: $2,009.12

City of Savannah/CHSA Development, Inc. has identified and secured the needed funding for the marker, including the maintenance escrow once identified by the Park and Tree Department. The marker will be installed by the City of Savannah and will be the property of the City of Savannah Mayor and Aldermen. The City of Savannah will be responsible for future maintenance of the marker.

CITY OF
Savannah
RESEARCH LIBRARY AND
MUNICIPAL ARCHIVES

THE SAVANNAH PHARMACY, 1914-2007

A brief history of the Savannah Pharmacy business, properties, and owners.



Savannah Pharmacy Building, 914-916-918 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.[1]

IMPORTANT

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City of Savannah, Research Library & Municipal Archives
Prepared by L. Spracher, December 2009

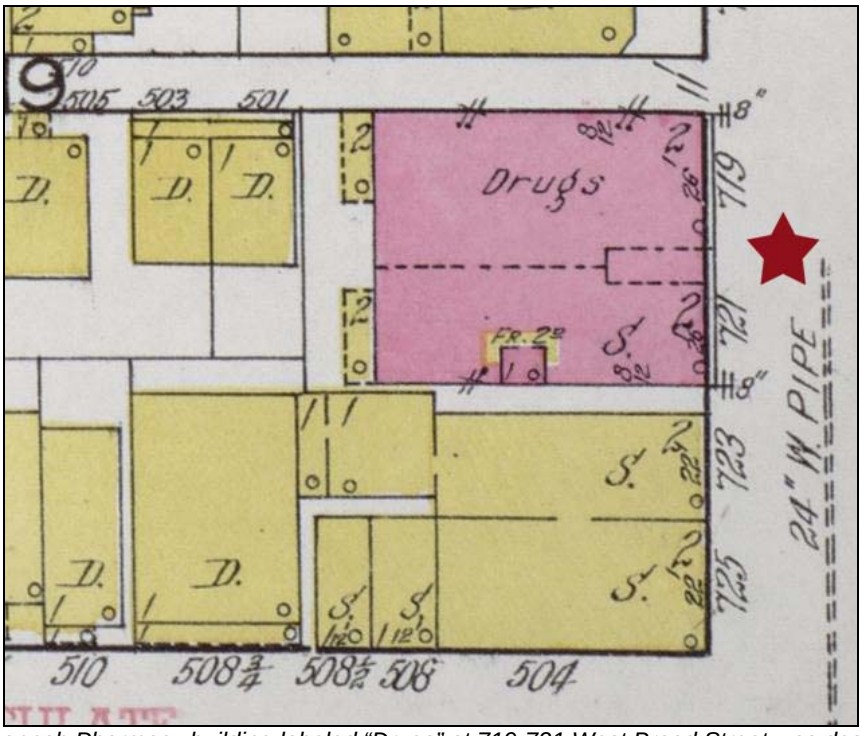
[1] Property Record Card, PIN 2-0052-04-11, Chatham County Tax Assessor's Office, available on-line at www.sagis.org (accessed 12 October 2009).



Savannah Pharmacy entrance, 719 West Broad Street, August 1960.
Note the terrazzo flooring in entry reading "Savannah Pharmacy 1914."
Photograph courtesy of Savannah Development and Renewal Authority.

The business known as the Savannah Pharmacy first appeared in the Savannah City Directory in 1907. Between 1907 and 1913, the drug store was located at 811 West Broad Street (now known as Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard), between Gwinnett and Bolton streets. G. W. Smith, noted as "colored" in the directory, was listed as proprietor or manager of the pharmacy until 1910. In 1912, Walter E. Moody made his first appearance in the city directory, as a clerk at the Savannah Pharmacy. The following year, in 1913, Moody was listed as the druggist and in 1914 as the manager. In 1915, the pharmacy was first listed at its generally recognized historical location of 719 West Broad Street, near the corner of Maple Lane in the Currytown neighborhood (this would serve as the Savannah Pharmacy's main branch for almost fifty years). Walter E. Moody was still listed as the manager in 1915. Joseph Earl Fonvielle appears in the city directory for the first time in 1916 and is listed as a pharmacist at Savannah Pharmacy.[2]

[2] Savannah City Directories, 1905-1916, Georgia Historical Society (hereafter GHS); Elmore, Charles J., "Historical Analysis and Summary of the Westside Documentation Project," (22 September 2005), Record Group 6112-003 Department of Cultural Affairs - Westside Neighborhood Documentation Project, Box 6112-003-7, Sub-series 1, Folder 33, page 20 (hereafter Elmore/Westside), City of Savannah, Research Library & Municipal Archives (hereafter RLMA).



The two-story Savannah Pharmacy building labeled "Drugs" at 719-721 West Broad Street was described in the 1937 Savannah Cadastral Survey as a commercial brick building with brick foundation, unpainted brick trim, flat roof of tar and gravel, and wood frame windows. At the time, it was valued at $8,500.00 and considered in fair condition.[3]

There is some inconsistency in available sources regarding the earliest years of the Savannah Pharmacy business. According to interviews with Fonvielle's grandson, William Earl Fonvielle, Jr. (known as Earl), Moody and Fonvielle purchased the business from the Lee Chemical Company in 1914 and operated under the name Lee Chemical Company until 1917 when they changed it to the Savannah Pharmacy. The consistent appearance of the Savannah Pharmacy in the city directories starting in 1907 indicates that the business was known as the Savannah Pharmacy prior to Moody and Fonvielle's purchase. According to local historians Charles Elmore and Charles Lwanga Hoskins, Fonvielle and Moody purchased the Savannah Pharmacy from the Lee Chemical Company, of Albany, Georgia, in 1914 with a loan from the Wage Earners Bank. It is likely that the move to 719 West Broad Street coincided with the purchase of the pharmacy business. At the time of its close in 2007, the Savannah Pharmacy was the second oldest continuously-operating, black-owned business in Savannah, after the Bynes-Royall Funeral Home (established by William Royall in 1876).[4]

"The growth of the [Savannah Pharmacy] business was said to be 'one of the high spots in local Negro business enterprises'."[5] Over the years, the Savannah Pharmacy had several branches, though the main branch always remained at 719 West Broad Street. In 1917, their first branch, known as Savannah Pharmacy No. 2, was located at 140 Farm (Fahm) Street, between York and Oglethorpe. Moody served as manager at this location. By 1930, there were two branches, one at 202 Randolph Street and another managed by William H. Kirby at 615 West Bay Street. By 1940, the West Bay branch had closed and

[3] W.P. A. of Georgia, Chatham County, Savannah Cadastral Survey: Garden Ward, Block 5, Subdivision 16, North ½ Lot 1, 719-721 W. Broad, Clerk of Superior Court Record Room, Chatham County Courthouse (hereafter CCCH); Insurance maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1916 : volume 1 : [sheet 38 of 144] / published by the Sanborn Map Company, University of Georgia Libraries Map Collection, Athens, Ga., presented in the Digital Library of Georgia (hereafter DLG), available on-line at http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/sanb/id:savannah_ga-1916-1-s-38 (accessed 12 October 2009).

[4] Fonvielle, William, oral history interview, 2 August 2002 (Kieran Taylor, interviewer), Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007), Interview R-0174, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, available on-line at http://docsouth.unc.edu/sohp/R-0174/menu.html (accessed 14 October 2009) (hereafter Fonvielle SOHP); Elmore, Charles J., *Black America Series: Savannah, Georgia* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000), 81; Hoskins, Charles Lwanga, *Out of Yamacraw and Beyond: Discovering Black Savannah* (Savannah, GA: The Gullah Press, 2002), 34, 125; Elmore/Westside.

[5] Hoskins, 34.

another opened at 1307 Augusta Avenue in the West Savannah neighborhood. In 1950, the Augusta Avenue location was still active, along with a second location on West Broad Street at 1221 West Broad (the former Boaen's Pharmacy, later Knight's Drugs and Sundries). However, by 1960 the company had consolidated back down to just the original main branch at 719 West Broad, probably due to a series of deaths in the Fonvielle family.[6]



Savannah Tribune *article (undated).*
Image available in Few, Jenel, "Health care primitive for early blacks," Savannah Morning News *(15 February 1999), available on-line at http://old.savannahnow.com/stories/021599/ACCblackhist.html (last accessed 2 December 2009).*

Savannah Pharmacy was known for compounding its own medicines. Fonvielle and Moody mixed all of the prescriptions and created many unique recipes:

> *Joseph Fonvielle and Moody made many of their own generic medicines in a basement laboratory [according to the Savannah Cadastral Survey, this building had no basement[7]], such as castor oil and a cure-all called Yamacraw Chill Tonic. But they were most famous for their patented cold medicine called Long Ease [see page 6 for an advertisement], which they began manufacturing in 1936. The pharmacy stopped making it three years ago [circa 1996], although a neon sign on the storefront still touts "Home of Long Ease". "We couldn't keep it on the shelves," Earl Fonvielle said. "People came from Florida and New York to buy it."… And if their medicines couldn't cure black Savannah, their homemade ice cream kept the community cool.[8]*

3,000 square feet in the rear of the building was set aside for the manufacture of ice cream, which was then sold at the Pharmacy's soda fountain. Charles Elmore "remembers walking with his brother and sister to the pharmacy in the 1950s for ice cream and cherry Cokes on Sunday afternoons…. The old place had a white tile floor and one heck of a soda fountain."[9] "On any given Sunday, I guess we would have probably a hundred kids come in here," and the "fountain…was generating a hundred dollars a day."[10] Company ledgers from the 1930s through 1950s show that at times more money was made from the sale of ice cream than the sale of prescriptions.[11]

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[6] Hoskins, 34; Savannah City Directories, 1917, 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960, GHS; *Supplement to the Urban Redevelopment Plan for the Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard and Montgomery Street Corridor, South of Gwinnett Street* (Prepared by Savannah Development and Renewal Authority and the Phase II Advisory Committee with assistance from the Bureau of Public Development for the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah, December 2002), Savannah Area Local Government Documents Collection, uncatalogued document, page 6, (hereafter Supplement), RLMA.
[7] Savannah Cadastral Survey: Garden Ward, Block 5, Subdivision 16, North ½ Lot 1.
[8] Few, Jenel, "Health care primitive for early blacks," *Savannah Morning News* (15 February 1999), available on-line at http://old.savannahnow.com/stories/021599/ACCblackhist.html (last accessed 2 December 2009).
[9] Mobley, Chuck, "Intersections of history," *Savannah Morning News* (1 February 2004), available on-line at http://old.savannahnow.com/stories/020104/LOC_elmore.shtml (last accessed 2 December 2009).
[10] Savannah City Directories, 1960, 1963-1964, GHS; Fonvielle, William E., interview, 26 July 2005 (Charles Elmore, interviewer), Record Group 6112-003 Department of Cultural Affairs – Westside Neighborhood Documentation Project, Box 6112-003-7, Sub-series 1, Folder 9 "Fonvielle," (hereafter Fonvielle/Westside), RLMA; Fonvielle SOHP; Hoskins, 34.
[11] Few.



Dr. Joseph Earl Fonvielle.
Image available in Elmore, Charles J., Black America Series: Savannah, Georgia *(Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000), 81.*

It was largely due to the dedication of the entire Fonvielle family that the Savannah Pharmacy survived in Savannah for over ninety years. The story of the business is intertwined with the story of the family. According to both the 1920 and 1930 United States Federal Censuses, Joseph Earl Fonvielle, was born around 1888-1889 in North Carolina. His grandson Earl believes he is a native of Camilla, Georgia. So, it is likely that he was born in North Carolina, but raised in Camilla. Fonvielle was trained at Livingstone College, in Salisbury, North Carolina, and graduated from Howard University Pharmacy School in 1914. He worked in Albany, Georgia briefly before moving to Savannah. It is possible that his time in Albany was spent with the Lee Chemical Company.[12]

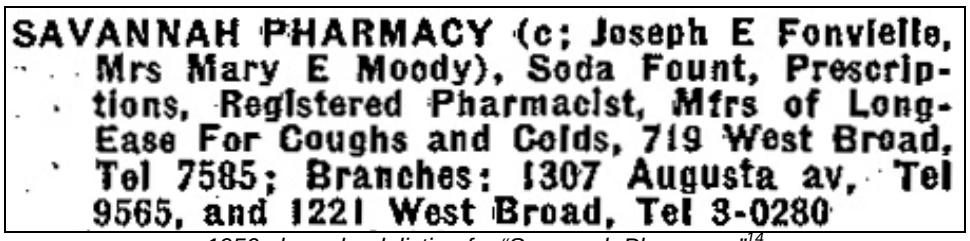


Earl Fonvielle stands in front of the Fonvielle family home at 913 West 36th Street, 2004. Photograph by Bob Morris available in Mobley, Chuck, "Home Stand," Savannah Morning News *(15 February 2004), available on-line at http://old.savannahnow.com/stories/021504/LOC_blackhistory3.shtml (last accessed 2 December 2009).*

J. Earl Fonvielle, and his wife, Lillian, lived in several areas of Savannah before settling in the Cuyler-Brownville neighborhood on West 36th Street. Walter Moody and his wife, Mary, lived at 915 West 36th Street as early as 1920. By 1930, the Fonvielles were living at 913 West 36th Street, right next door to the Moodys. The 1940 City Directory lists both families living at 913 West 36th Street. The 1930 Census indicates that Lillian Fonvielle (age 40 in 1930) and Mary M. Moody (age 47 in 1930) were both born in

[12] Fonvielle SOHP; Elmore, 81; United States Federal Census, 1920, Savannah, Chatham, Georgia, Roll T625_240, Page: 33A, Enumeration District: 58, Image: 1132, Ancestry.com, 1920 United States Federal Census [database on-line] (hereafter Federal Census 1920); United States Federal Census, 1930, Savannah, Chatham, Georgia, Roll 343, Page: 1B, Enumeration District: 11, Image: 1110.0, Ancestry.com, 1930 United States Federal Census [database on-line] (hereafter Federal Census 1930); Few.

Virginia. It is possible that there was some sort of family connection between the Fonvielles and Moodys. However, further documentation would be required to prove this theory.[13]


SAVANNAH PHARMACY (c; Joseph E Fonvielle, Mrs Mary E Moody), Soda Fount, Prescriptions, Registered Pharmacist, Mfrs of Long-Ease For Coughs and Colds, 719 West Broad, Tel 7585; Branches: 1307 Augusta av, Tel 9565, and 1221 West Broad, Tel 3-0280

1950 phone book listing for "Savannah Pharmacy."[14]

Following Walter E. Moody's death on August 17, 1942, at the age of 63, J. Earl Fonvielle assumed full control of the Savannah Pharmacy, though Moody's widow, Mary, continued to own a share in the business. The next generation of Fonvielles soon began to work with their father. J. Earl and Lillian had three children, William Earl (born circa 1917 in Georgia), Reginald N., (born circa 1919 in Washington, D.C.), and Frances E. (born circa 1921 in Georgia). Reginald served as a clerk in the pharmacy, and William Earl was a branch manager. The latter, lived with his wife, Mattie, and their three children two doors down from his parents at 917 West 36th Street. The family homes were only about a fifteen minute walk from the main pharmacy, and J. Earl would travel back and forth between home and the pharmacy.[15]

> *[Grandfather was a] tall bald guy with a strong voice, and he didn't have much use for children…. So, he was strictly business. He worked every day. He came home for lunch, came home for dinner. At that time the store stayed open until midnight. So he would come home for lunch, and he'd go back to the store, and then he'd come home again around five for dinner, and then he would go back to the store and stay until midnight.*[16]

Dr. Fonvielle died on February 28, 1954, at the age of 65. He was buried in Lincoln Memorial Cemetery. Fonvielle left behind the Savannah Pharmacy legacy to his three children and four grandchildren, including William Earl Fonvielle, Jr., born at Charity Hospital in 1947. Dr. Fonvielle had been an active member of the African-American community, serving on the Charity Hospital Board and as a member of the West Broad Street YMCA. He was also a member of the South Atlantic Medical Society.[17]

Tragedy soon struck the family and business again. The eldest son, William Earl Sr., was also a graduate of Howard University's Pharmacy School and it was assumed he would carry on in his father's footsteps, but in October 1955, he was killed during a robbery. Fonvielle was only thirty-seven years old. His eight year old son, William Earl, Jr., witnessed the robbery and murder.[18]

> *I was sitting out front in the store with my grandmother, and two guys came in, and he [my father] was having problems. He was so nervous opening the register and the guy shot him. I remember it was like it was yesterday, and he was lying on the floor saying, "Call Mac." Mac was his friend, Dr. MacDoo, and he said, "Call Mac." Of course the ambulance came and took him away, and four days later he died of infection…. He died at Charity Hospital.*[19]

[13] Savannah City Directories, 1920, 1930, 1940, GHS; Federal Census 1920; Federal Census 1930.
[14] Savannah City Directory, 1950, page 498, GHS.
[15] Indexes of Vital Records for Georgia: Deaths, 1919-1998, Certificate #16860, Georgia Health Department, Office of Vital Record, 1998, Ancestry.com, Georgia Deaths, 1919-98 [database on-line] (hereafter Georgia Deaths); Federal Census 1920; Federal Census 1930; Savannah City Directory, 1950, GHS; Fonvielle SOHP.
[16] Fonvielle SOHP.
[17] Georgia Deaths, Certificate #2542; "FONVIELLE – ," *Savannah Morning News* (1 March 1954), 2:1; *Savannah Morning News* (3 March 1954), 2:1; Fonvielle SOHP; Elmore, 81.
[18] Fonvielle SOHP; Elmore, 83; Georgia Deaths, Certificate #22053.
[19] Fonvielle SOHP.



Savannah Pharmacy store window, April 1961.
Photograph courtesy of Savannah Development and Renewal Authority.



Miss Frances E. Fonvielle, second generation owner/operator of Savannah Pharmacy.
Image available in Elmore, Charles J., Black America Series: Savannah, Georgia
(Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000), 82.

At that time of her brother's death, Frances E. Fonvielle was working as a pharmacist in Atlanta after receiving her pharmacy degree from Howard University in 1946. She came back to run the Savannah Pharmacy with her mother. Frances would serve as president of the Savannah Pharmacy from 1955 to 1998, and is considered "an African-American female pioneer in the pharmacy business." William Earl's widow moved to Macon to live with her parents, taking their two daughters. William Earl Jr. was left in Savannah to be raised by his grandmother, Lillian. "At the time I thought that was the worst thing in the world, but as it turned out it was probably the best thing in the world."[20] Young Earl was often called on to help his grandmother and aunt in the store.[21]

[20] Fonvielle SOHP.
[21] Fonvielle SOHP; Elmore, 82.



I was able to wait on customers and ring the cash register at ages eight and nine. As I grew older I became a delivery boy for the drug store, and I hated it. However, my grandmother told me I had to work in the store, and that was how it was.[22]

At eight years old, I was delivering on Saturdays… I'd have to be up to this store going places at eight o'clock Saturday morning, and I would work until one. I would ride, shoot, I would go down as far as Forty-fifth Street. I'd go up here… and Frogtown… At eight years old and collect money on my bike…. My biggest problem was when I'd go out delivering, I'd stop and play.[23]

Earl Fonvielle in front of the Savannah Pharmacy, 719 West Broad Street, August 1960. Photograph courtesy of Savannah Development and Renewal Authority.

Frances served as pharmacist and the business carried on. The 1963 City Directory advertised "Prescriptions Filled, Promptly and Accurately, Drugs, Sundries, Cosmetics." The Fonvielles rented out space to local dentists, doctors, and businesses serving the African-American community. Dr. Charles Collier practiced dentistry in Savannah for forty years and at one time rented space above the Savannah Pharmacy, as did Dr. Bell, another black dentist. Father and son doctors Dr. Stephen M. McDew, Sr. and Dr. Stephen M. McDew, Jr., a graduate of Savannah State and Meharry Medical College, had adjoining offices in the pharmacy building. The D. J. Hill Real Estate Agency and Acme Insurance Agency both leased offices from the Fonvielles.[24]

Despite its success, the Savannah Pharmacy would not survive the turbulent 1960s unscathed. As the 1960s began, West Broad Street was lined with businesses, many prospering due to segregation.

> *Working down here at 719 [West Broad], and the street all up in here, nothing but businesses. Right across the street was McLaughlin's Market. You had I don't know how many restaurants. You had the bars. You had the fish market, the undertakers. It was a booming street. Everybody traded, all black people traded on West Broad. You see because at that time they didn't want you in the white grocery stores. I mean, you could go in the Jewish grocery stores, of course…. But, basically you had to shop in the black community. In terms of pharmacies, I remember they had Elliot's Cut Rate, and you couldn't go in the front door. They had a section in the back for quote colored people. So it meant that black folks had to shop in the community. As a result all black businesses prospered.*[25]
>
> *The African-American business presence was particularly vibrant south of Union Station in the 1930's and 40's, but it was never just one racial or ethnic makeup. The businesses included barbershops, restaurants, shoe companies, theaters, professional offices, banks, funeral homes, etc. Professionals had their offices in the Wage Earners Savings*

[22] Fonvielle/Westside.
[23] Fonvielle SOHP.
[24] Savannah City Directories, 1960, 1963-1964, GHS; Fonvielle/Westside; Hoskins, 42-43.
[25] Fonvielle SOHP.

> *and Loan Building; the Dunbar Theater Building; the Savannah Pharmacy Building; Powell Hall and Captain Edward Seabrook's Building. Between Gwinnett and Taylor and to some degree north of this, there were approximately 50-70 Black owned businesses.*[26]

While segregation had helped African-American businesses grow and prosper, the progress of the 1960s, including integregation and Urban Renewal, would help lead to their decline. "The Urban Renewal strategies of the 1950s and 1960s in Savannah can take the bulk of the blame for the loss of many commercial establishments and neighborhoods."[27] In 1955, the Urban Renewal Administration announced plans to renew the area bounded by Indian Street on the north, 52nd Street on the south, West Broad Street on the east, and Hopkins, Kollock and Magnolia streets on the west. This area included the Savannah Pharmacy on the 700 block of West Broad Street. Local community leader W. W. Law wrote the NAACP's New York office in 1956 concerned about the "mammoth urban redevelopment program." Law's warnings went unheeded. In 1959 the path of Interstate 16 onto West Broad Street and the flyover ramp entering Montgomery Street were staked out, and plans for new public housing on West Broad Street were underway (400 hundred units making up Simon S. Frazier Homes and Herbert L. Kayton Homes, just west of West Broad Street).[28]

The public housing and traffic improvement initiatives called for the clearing of the entire 600 and 700 blocks of the west side of West Broad Street through buyouts.

> *Most of them [the businesses] were black owned…. They come in, and they sell you a line,…and then they tell you you don't have a choice…. What are you going to do? So nobody fought. I think my aunt and my grandmother were the only ones that really fought because they were quite adamant, but in the long run they still had to give it up and move.*[29]

> *Urban renewal ruined the black community…. It's bad enough building the projects, and they you've got to have the highway. So black businesses didn't stand a chance. They took it all.*[30]

The Fonvielle family was offered only $15,000 for the land and building. Relocation costs were not provided to displaced businesses. The Fonvielles found they could not get a loan through a local bank to rebuild, having a single black woman president working against them at every institution. Finally, Frances Fonvielle worked out an agreement with North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company to finance the construction of a new store for $75,000 with they agreement that they would occupy the second floor in 1964.[31]

The Savannah Pharmacy closed its doors at 719 West Broad Street in 1963 and prepared for its move to its final location at 916 West Broad Street. The old building was demolished, along with almost everything else on that block.[32]

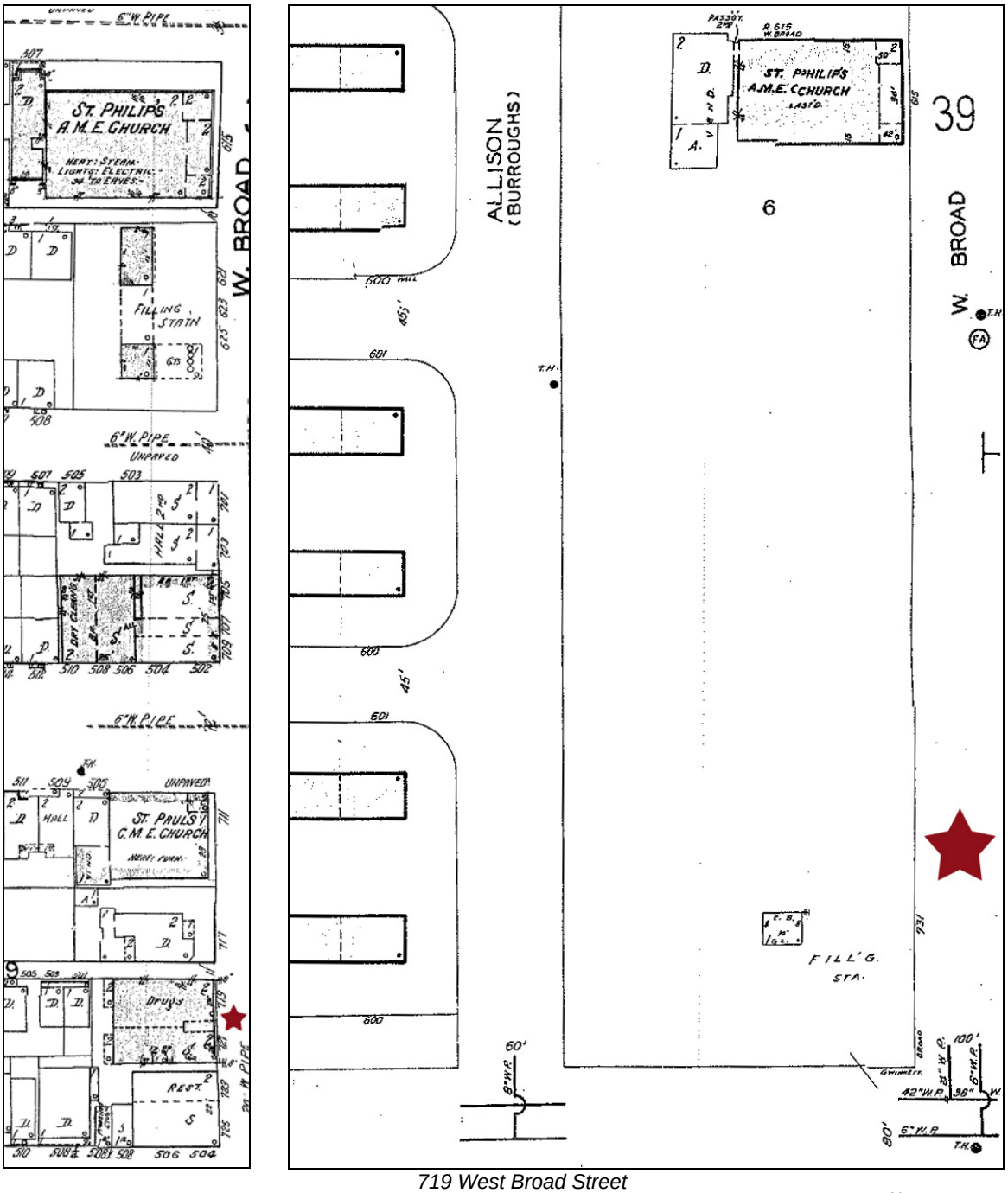
> *Bunch of storefronts. Undertakers, knocked down everything, fish markets, all that stuff had to go.*[33]

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[26] *Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard/Montgomery Corridor, Existing Conditions Survey*, Section, "Cultural Resource Survey" (Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission, 1995), Savannah Area Local Government Documents Collection, #SGA.MPC.1995-007 (hereafter *Existing Conditions Survey*), RLMA.
[27] Supplement, 3.
[28] Supplement, 3; "HAS: The History" (February 2006), Savannah Area Local Reference Files: "Organizations – Housing Authority of Savannah," 4-5, RLMA; Fonvielle/Westside; "From West Broad Street to MLK Boulevard: A Shadow of a Legacy," (Savannah State University, College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences, 2007), available on-line at http://www.savannahstate.edu/class/EyesonthePrize%20copy/ (accessed 14 October 2009).
[29] Fonvielle SOHP.
[30] Fonvielle SOHP.
[31] HAS, 4-5; Supplement, 3; Fonvielle SOHP.
[32] Supplement, 3; Fonvielle/Westside.
[33] Fonvielle SOHP.

Over forty years later, the lot is still vacant and now a source for concern as the community tries to revitalize that section of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.[34]

> *Well, where our store was is empty. That hurts me to think they tore down a black landmark and nothing's there.*[35]



719 West Broad Street
Left: October 1954; Right: February 1963, (undated corrections, circa after 1963).[36]

[34] Supplement, 3; Fonvielle/Westside.
[35] Fonvielle SOHP.
[36] Sanborn Insurance maps of Savannah, Georgia: October 1954, Volume 1, Sheet 38 and February 1963, Volume 1, Sheet 38, GHS.

In September 1962, Lillian and Frances Fonvielle purchased the property known as 914-916-918 West Broad Street from the family of Louisa M. Logan for the relocation of the Savannah Pharmacy business (*see* Appendix A "Property Ownership" for a partial chain of title). The eastern side of the 900 block of West Broad Street was historically mixed, in terms of race and ethnicity, with African-Americans, white, and Jewish tenants (*see* Appendix B "Savannah City Directories" for more information). The property was made up of a hodge-podge of two-story structures, including commercial and residential spaces. Over the years, commercial tenants included Von's Radio & TV Service, Owens Beauty Salon, Evie's Café, and Ben's Barber Shop.[37]



916 West Broad Street
Upper left: 1898; Upper right: 1916; Above: 1954.[38]

[37] Deed Book 81L – Page 476, CCCH; Savannah City Directories, 1914-1917, 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1963-1964, GHS.
[38] Insurance maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1898 : [sheet 50 of 110] / published by the Sanborn-Perris Map Company Limited, DLG, available on-line at http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/sanb/id:savannah_ga-1898-s-50 (accessed 12 October 2009); Insurance maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1916 : volume 2 : [sheet 103 of 144] / published by the Sanborn Map Company, DLG, available on-line at http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/sanb/id:savannah_ga-1916-2-s-103 (accessed 12 October 2009); Sanborn Insurance maps of Savannah, Georgia, October 1954, Volume 1, Sheet 103, GHS.

> *Boise Goldwire, a local black contractor, was hired to construct the $75,000 building. Since he was a black contractor he could not get a construction bond over $20,000. Therefore, this forced him to build the building in pieces at a time, as he could only borrow $20,000 at a time. He built a beautiful and fully functional building. In twelve years my aunt and grandmother paid off the mortgage to North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company.*[39]

The new two-story building, known as both the Savannah Pharmacy Building and the Fonvielle Office Building, was occupied in 1964. Savannah Pharmacy occupied the first floor at #916 West Broad Street, in the center of the building. Kendrick's Shoe Shop Repairs moved into #914. Dr. Stephen M. McDew, Jr. moved with the Fonvielles to the new building and occupied #918 with the Acme Insurance Agency. As agreed upon, North Carolina Mutual occupied the upstairs space, numbered 918 ½.[40]



Savannah Pharmacy entrance, circa January 2007. Image available at "February Black History Month," Savannah-Chatham County Public School System, available on-line at http://www.sccpss.com/Students/Black+History+Month/February+11.htm (accessed 14 October 2009).



Savannah Pharmacy shelves, circa 1960s. Photograph courtesy of Savannah Development and Renewal Authority.

Over the next 40 years, the Savannah Pharmacy building had fairly consistent tenancy (*see* Appendix B "Savannah City Directories" for more information). #914 was occupied by Kendrick's Shoe Shop, an alteration shop, Picture This flower shop, and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Observance Day Committee/Association. #918 was occupied by Dr. McDew and the Acme Insurance Agency at least through 1980 (by 1990 this space was vacant). In 2000, #918 was occupied by the Savannah District AME Church. The Savannah Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) also used offices in the pharmacy building (#918). North Carolina Mutual occupied the second floor through 1990 (there was no listing for this floor in the 2000 directory). In 1970, The American Bakery & Confectionary and Workers International Union AFL-CIO Local 110 shared this space. Around 2002, a Dr. Pope occupied the entire second floor.[41]

[39] Fonvielle/Westside.
[40] Savannah City Directory, 1965, GHS; "Group provides Links to history," *Savannah Morning News* (29 November 2005), available on-line at http://old.savannahnow.com/stories/112905/3457631.shtml (last accessed 2 December 2009).
[41] Savannah City Directories, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, GHS; "The Civil Rights Movement and the NAACP in Savannah, Georgia," from "A Shadow of a Legacy"; Fonvielle SOHP.

It was business as usual for the Savannah Pharmacy. Earl Fonvielle remembered the transition:

> *I came back to see the new store [from college], and I remember my aunt asking me would I get the accounts and file them correctly, and at that time I think we brought from down there like two hundred accounts.*[42]

> *We brought the fountain from the old store down here. It used to be over here where all the space back there is ["Savannah Pharmacy" is written on the mirror behind what used to be the fountain*[43]*]…. Ice cream, sodas, shakes yeah and knick-knacks.*[44]

When the pharmacy moved to the new location they had already stopped making their own ice cream; "So we bought ice cream when we came down here, but it still was a good quality ice cream, and we did real well with it." Eventually the soda fountain was sold. "It just wasn't profitable…. So finally we did away with the fountain. We sold it for fifty dollars, and the guy [Mr. Bradley] took it out of here."[45]



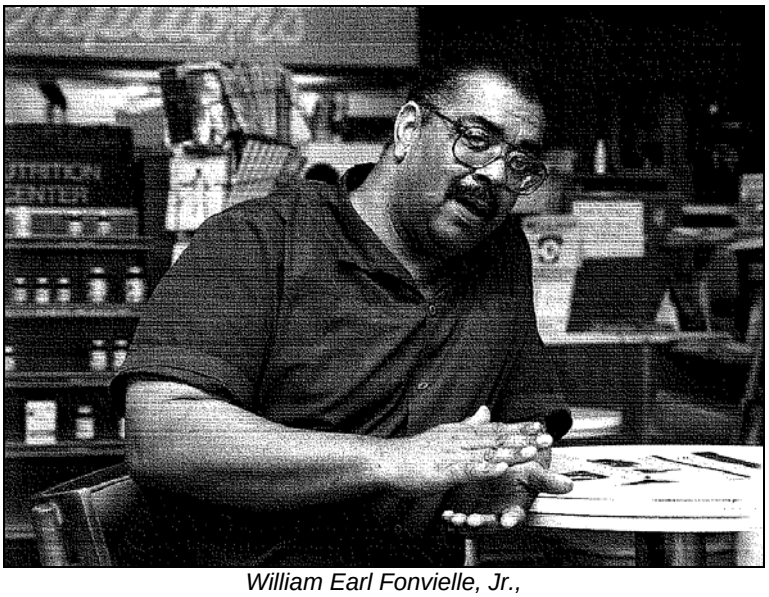
Savannah Pharmacy, interior, circa mid-1960s.
Photograph courtesy of Savannah Development and Renewal Authority.

After graduating from St. Pius X High School in 1964, Earl Fonvielle left Savannah for college, first attending Florida A & M and then transferring to Miles College, a small African-American church college in Birmingham, Alabama were he received his B.S. degree. Fonvielle had no intention of returning to work at the Savannah Pharmacy, "I swore I would never work, come back here and work after seeing my father get killed."[46] He received his master's degree from the University of Detroit and ran a methadone program in Detroit from about 1968-1975. Frances and Lillian continued to run the business, but by the mid-1970s Lillian was ready to retire and Frances needed help.[47]

> *My grandmother worked in the store, and she said, "Son, I'm getting ready to retire. I'm tired. We're losing the pharmacy." Okay. I was going like I don't know where I fit into all this. So I came home on a visit, and they said we need you here. I said well, I'm not a pharmacist. I mean, I've worked in the store all my life. I know everything to know including how to fill prescriptions what have you, but so I said, "What good can I do?" "We*

[42] Fonvielle SOHP.
[43] "Group provides Links to history."
[44] Fonvielle SOHP.
[45] Fonvielle SOHP.
[46] Fonvielle SOHP.
[47] Elmore, 83; Fonvielle SOHP; Savannah City Directory, 1970, GHS.

need you here." So I went back to Detroit I guess it was five or six months later I said well, she kept calling me. "We need you here." So I said, "Well my grandmother raised me. She did everything in the world for me. I'll go back home and see what I can do." Sure enough we had a pharmacist that had been here forever, and he resigned to go to West Side Urban, and my grandmother…retired. So and [that] left my aunt and two clerks. So I came in and I said, "Well, I don't know what I can do, but I'm here."[48]



William Earl Fonvielle, Jr.,
third generation and final owner/operator of Savannah Pharmacy.
Image available in Elmore, Charles J., Black America Series: Savannah, Georgia *(Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2000), 82.*

"There is a certain amount of pleasure still serving customers my parents and grandparents did." Some have been shopping at the store for 50 or 60 years.[49]

Lillian retired and lived in the family home on 36th Street until her death on Christmas Eve 1980 at the age of 90 years. Earl returned to Savannah Pharmacy and assumed the role of secretary/treasurer. His aunt Frances served as president until her death on February 12, 1998, at which time Earl became the sole owner of the family business and inherited the pharmacy property.[50]

Since relocation of the pharmacy in the 1960s, the business had been in a long-slow decline, along with the rest of the neighborhood. Urban Renewal did not have the desired effect on the once thriving business community along West Broad Street. The diverse business mix was gone, and crime, substandard housing, litter, and traffic deterred new businesses from moving in. Coupled with the loss of a consistent African-American clientele, who could now shop at all businesses whether white or black owned, the Savannah Pharmacy struggled to hang on. Their inability to compete with larger chain drug stores was probably the final nail in the coffin.[51]

To be truthful, I don't know how I'm existing. People say, "Well, how do you stay down there," and I go, "By the grace of God." It is tough, real tough. I'm not ashamed to say it on my W-2 last year [circa 2001], I made five thousand dollars. That meant I made five thousand dollars out of here. Of course, I have other interests and things that kept me going, but had it not been, I could not have survived working for Savannah Pharmacy.[52]

It's two things that stopped me from selling this store. One, there is a need in this community because the closest pharmacy is Broughton, CVS at Broughton and Bull.

[48] Fonvielle SOHP.
[49] "Group provides Links to history."
[50] Georgia Deaths, Certificates #044516, 010267; Elmore, 83; Deed Book 209J – Page 253, CCCH.
[51] Supplement, 8; "The Savannah Pharmacy," from "A Shadow of a Legacy."
[52] Fonvielle SOHP.

Secondly, the legacy. Those are the only two things that stopped me from selling this store because it's just not a money making venture anymore. I put so much of my inheritance in here until sometimes I look in the mirror and how foolish can you be, but I'm able to pay people, and I'm able to carve out a little for myself.[53]

I've got a business that's been going on for eighty-eight years. That's not good enough. I mean, I've got the property that the building sits on. The whole thing's worth three hundred some thousand dollars…. We've got your black physicians, and never do they come together. I'm trying to think how many black physicians patronize me in terms of sending their clients here, I mean, their patients here. You've got one upstairs where people can't help but come down. One around on Trade and Henry. That's about it. Two black physicians that will say go around to Savannah Pharmacy, but they'll pick up the phone just as quick and call CVS or Eckerd's…. So that type of loyalty doesn't exist.[54]

Earl Fonvielle has a small, homey-looking pharmacy on Martin Luther King Boulevard on the black side of town here. And it just breaks his heart every time he realizes yet another black customer has given up on him and gone to one of the white pharmacies in town.[55]



Earl Fonvielle, circa 1999. Photograph by Adam Traum. Image available in Few, Jenel, "Health care primitive for early blacks," Savannah Morning News *(15 February 1999), available on-line at http://old.savannahnow.com/stories/021599/ACCblackhist.html (last accessed 2 December 2009).*

In 2002, Earl deeded the pharmacy property to his some William Clay Fonvielle. Clay moved to Houston, Texas where he became involved in real estate and served as Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Amiyi Airlines. With nobody to carry on the family business in Savannah and unable to sustain it, Earl Fonvielle closed the Savannah Pharmacy in 2007. At the time, the Savannah Pharmacy was the second oldest African-American owned business in Savannah and "the only black-owned pharmacy in the city."[56] Earl Fonvielle purchased The Rosette, a lounge on Waters Avenue near 37th Street, and ran it for a short period of time before selling that business and moving to Macon to live closer to his sister.[57]

In June 2009, William Clay Fonvielle sold the Savannah Pharmacy building to the City of Savannah for use by the Bureau of Public Development.[58]

[53] Fonvielle SOHP.
[54] Fonvielle SOHP.
[55] "Back to business Savannah's black leaders say past holds lessons for future," *The Boston Globe* (16 September 1997), available on-line at http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1P2-8438052.html (accessed 20 November 2009).
[56] Elmore, 83.
[57] Deed Book 235T – Page 133, CCCH; "Regional & Local Business Briefs: Jenkins grad named VP," *Savannah Morning News* (13 April 2005), available at http://old.savannahnow.com/stories/041305/2955305.shtml (accessed 20 November 2009); Elmore, 83; Sundrla, Lise, Executive Director, Savannah Development and Renewal Authority, to Luciana Spracher, Archivist, City of Savannah Research Library and Municipal Archives, Subject "Savannah Pharmacy photos" (24 November 2009, email).
[58] Deed Book 353V – Page 536, CCCH; Deed Book 354A – Page 55, CCCH.

Appendix A

Property Ownership, 1924-2009

Property Description:
North ½ Lot 6, Lot 7, Lot 8, of subdivision of Lots 13, 14, 20, Elliott Ward

> *All those certain lots, tracts or parcels of land situate, lying and being in the city of Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia, and being known and designated upon the map or plan of said City as the Northern One-Half of Lot Number Six (6) and all of Lots Seven (7) and Eight (8) of the Subdivision of Lots 13, 14 and 20, Elliott Ward. Said property herein conveyed having a frontage of Sixty-six (66) feet on the East of West Broad [Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard] and a depth Eastwardly of Seventy-one and two tenths (71.2) feet and being bounded as follows: On the North by Bolton Street lane; on the East by Lot Number Nine (9), said Ward; on the South by the Southern One-Half (1/2) of Lot Number Six (6), said Ward; and on the West by West Broad Street [Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard].*[59]

Chain of Title
Clerk of Superior Court Record Room, Chatham County Courthouse

Deed Book – Page ***Date*** ***Type of Instrument***	***Grantor*** ***to Grantee***
Book 19S - Page 117 29 August 1924 Deed	Acme Realty Company to Louisa M. Logan
Book 81L - Page 476 12 September 1962 Deed	William G. Logan and Joseph A. Logan, individually and as surviving Executors under the will of Louisa M. Logan; and James P. Houlihan, Jr., individually and as Executor under wills of Louise M. Houlihan and James P. Houlihan to Mrs. Lillian P. Fonvielle and Miss Frances E. Fonvielle *Notes:* Louisa M. Logan, died 27 February 1942. Her property was willed to her three children: Mrs. Louise M. Houlihan (died 27 November 1955). Her interest passed to James P. Houlihan and James P. Houlihan, Jr. James P. Houlihan died 26 May 1960 and his interest passed to James P. Houlihan, Jr.; William G. Logan; and Joseph A. Logan.
Book 209J - Page 253 13 January 2000 Deed from Estate	William Earl Fonvielle [Jr.], as Executor under the Last Will and Testament of Frances Elizabeth Fonvielle to William Earl Fonvielle [Jr.], *Notes:* Under terms of Item V of Last Will and Testament of Frances E. Fonvielle, died 12 February 1998.

[59] Deed Book 235T – Page 133, CCCH.

Book 235T - Page 133 21 May 2002 Quit Claim Deed	William Earl Fonvielle [Jr.] to William Clay Fonvielle
Book 354A - Page 55 5 June 2009	William Clay Fonvielle to Mayor and Aldermen of City of Savannah
Book 353V - Page 536 28 July 2009	William Clay Fonvielle to Carol Brady Fonvielle, mother

Notes:
Power of Attorney regarding 916 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard to ratify the sale agreement between William Clay Fonvielle and Mayor and Alderman of City of Savannah, 5 June 2009.

Appendix B

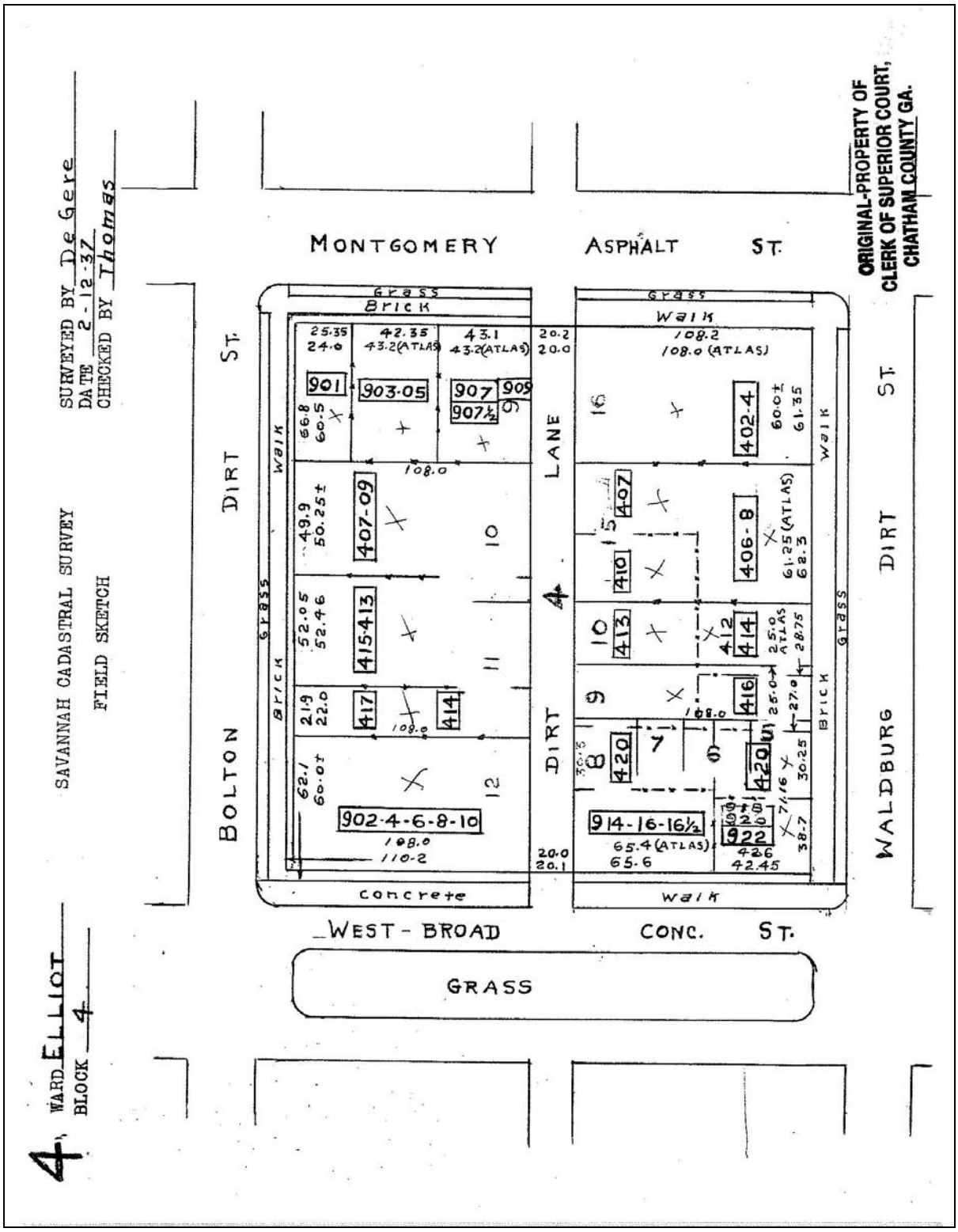
Savannah City Directories, 1915-2000, Georgia Historical Society
914-922 block of West Broad Street/Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard
(In older city directories "c" indicated "colored" for African-Americans)

1915	914, Vacant 914 ½, H. L. Hood 916-916 ½, H. J. Brown 918, B. F. Handy, c
1920	914, David Eiseman 916, H. Fisher 918, Mose Robertson, c 920, Lottie Williams, c
1930	914, N. Robbins 914 ½, Mrs. Annie Anderson 916 Vacant 918, A. Tompkins, c 920, Vacant 922, Baker Tire Company
1940	914, Anna Howard, c 914 ½, Anna H. Carter, c 916, J. B. Pinckney, c 918, David Howard, c 920 Rudie's Beauty Salon, c 922 J. L. Stokes, c
1950	914 Stewart Bros Café, c 916 Von's Radio Service, c; Mrs. Eloise Washington, c 918 Owens Beauty Salon, c 920 Vacant 922 Stokes Shoe Repair, c
1960	914 Evie's Café 914 ½ Mrs. Lolla B. nelson 916 Von's Radio & TV Service; Mrs. Hattie J. Roberts 918 Owens Beauty Salon 920 Michaels Barber Shop
1963-1964	914, Ben's Barber Shop 914 ½, Mrs. Lola B. Nelson 916, Vacant 918, Owens Beauty Salon 920, Michael's Barber Shop
1965	914, Kendrick's Shoe Shop Repairs 916, Savannah Pharmacy 918, McDew, Stephen M., Jr., physician; Acme Insurance Agency 918 ½, North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company

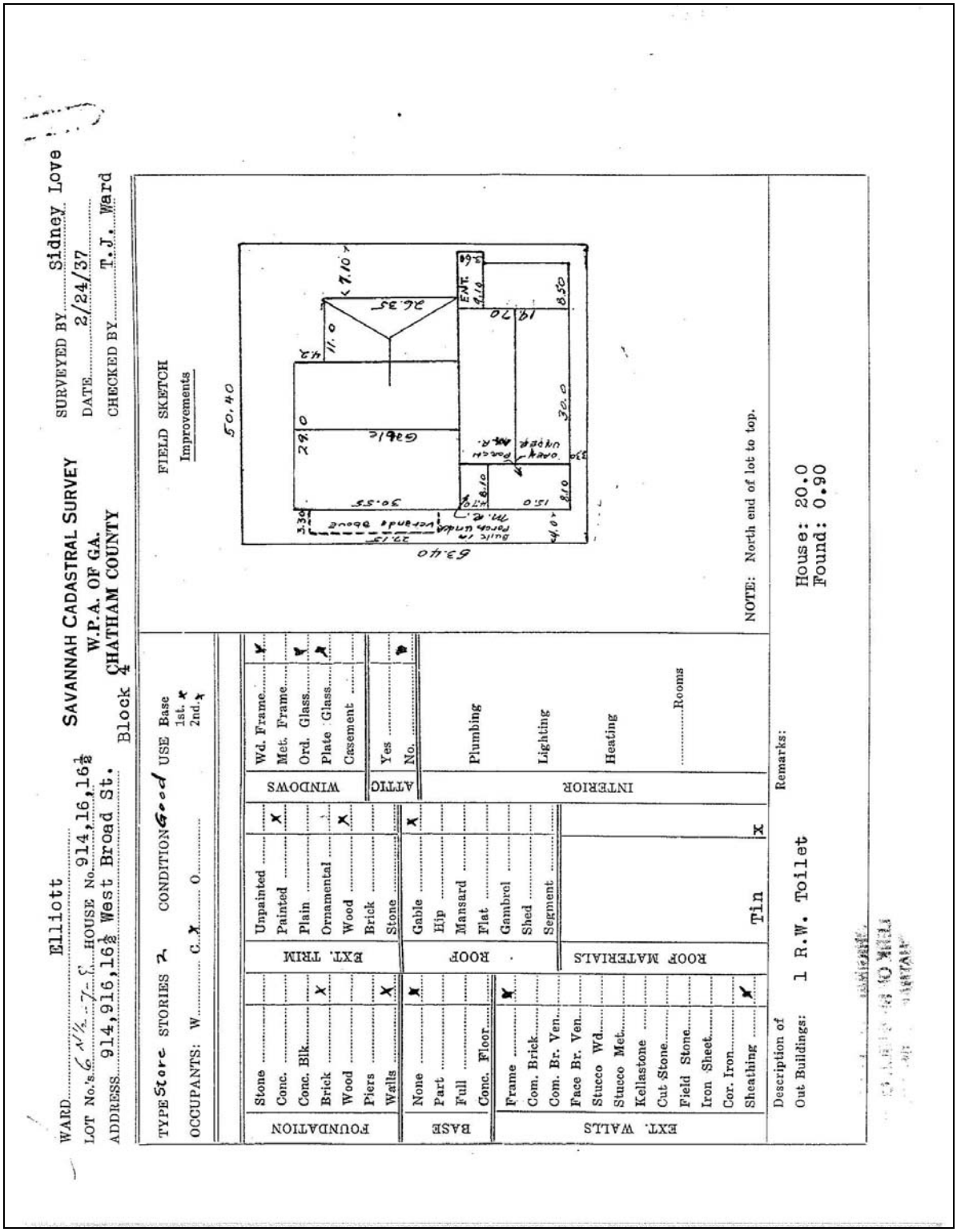
1970	914, Kendrick's Shoe Shop 916, Savannah Pharmacy 918, McDew, Stephen M., Jr., physician; Acme Insurance Agency 918 ½, North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company; American Bakery & Confectionary; Workers International Union AFL-CIO Local 110
1980	914, Alteration Shop 916, Savannah Pharmacy 918, McDew, Stephen M., Jr., physician; Acme Insurance Agency of Savannah, Inc. 918 ½, North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company
1990	914, Savannah Pharmacy, Inc., Mrs. Frances E. Fonvielle, president, William E. Fonvielle, secretary-treasurer, (3 employees) (snack bar) 918-918b, vacant (2 houses) 918 ½, North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company
2000	914, MLK Observance Day Association; Picture This, artificial flowers 916, Savannah Pharmacy, William E. Fonvielle, treasurer, drug stores, (5 employees) 918, Savannah District AME Church

Appendix C

Savannah Cadastral Survey, W.P.A. of Georgia, Chatham County, Clerk of Superior Court
Field Sketch, Ward Elliott, Block 4



Savannah Cadastral Survey, W.P.A. of Georgia, Chatham County, Clerk of Superior Court
Field Sketch, Ward Elliott, Lot Nos. n ½ 6, 7, 8



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