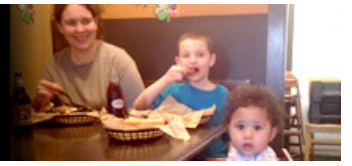




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The Highland Park Plaza Historic District

Following last week's profile of the [Chestnut Hill/Plateau Historic District](#), next up in our series of local histories is a look at the Highland Park Plaza Historic District.

Located in the northeastern corner of the city, the area is part of what is generally known as [Highland Park](#). The Highland Park Plaza Historic District abuts the [Chestnut Hill/Plateau Historic District](#) to the south. The Highland Park Plaza Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2004.

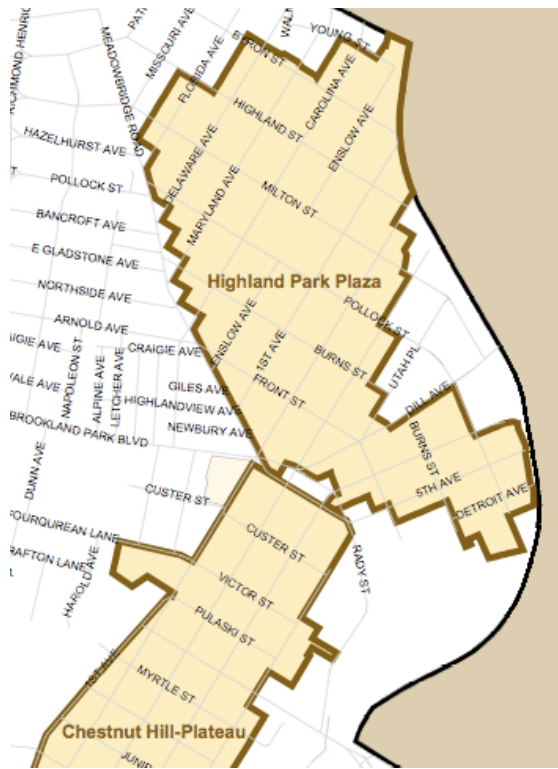


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The following text is a history of the area sourced from the Highland Park Plaza Historic District application to the National Registry. Photos are from [the Northside Richmond flickr pool](#) and various other sources.

Colony to Early National Period (1753-1830)

The Chestnut Hill development to the south of the Highland Park Plaza Historic District was the site of a farm and owned by prominent city man Samuel DuVal (1714-1784) in the late eighteenth century. He acquired acreage north of Shockoe Creek in 1745. He named the property Mount Comfort, and eventually built a large brick center-passage-plan dwelling on the flat center of the tract on the east side of the Meadowbridge Road.

Peter V. Daniel (1784-1860) acquired the tract for life through the inheritance of his wife, Lucy Randolph, in the early 1820s.' Daniel, lieutenant governor of Virginia from 1818 to 1835 and a justice of the U.S. Supreme Court from 1841 to 1860, lived most of his life on Grace Street in the city, but maintained his Mount Comfort Farm just outside the city.

Antebellum Period (1831-1860)

Immediately to the northeast of Mount Comfort was the property owned by Adolph Dill, a prosperous Jewish baker born in 1792, who arrived in Richmond in 1819 and lived and worked in the city. His house stood at 00 Clay Street in Jackson Ward. Dill's land, developed in 1908, represents the northern, Plateau section of the Chestnut Hill/Plateau Historic District, just south of Brookland Park Boulevard (originally Dill Street). His property, however, also included the section on the southeast edge of the Highland Park Plaza Historic District served by Fourth and Fifth avenues and Detroit Street. His house stood near present-day Detroit Street in the district. The 257-acre tract to the north of that part of which would become the first Highland Park development in 1890, was owned after 1847 by David Clopton. This later was the property of Frank Mosby. Walnut Grove, a Flemish bond brick house to the north of the Highland Park Plaza Historic District still stands immediately north of the district, much altered in the late nineteenth century.

Civil War (1861-1865)

The Civil War adversely affected Richmond in many and well-known ways. The principal impact in the immediate area was the construction of a fortification, Battery No. 7, which protected the city on its northeastern approaches in the Chestnut Hill/Plateau Historic District. This was located near the present-day Juniper, Willow, and Spruce Streets in the center of that district. An historic photograph in the Cook Collection at the Valentine Museum shows one-story frame house "beyond Chestnut Hill" that served as A. P. Hill's headquarters during the Seven Days Battle as it appeared in 1890. Its exact location is unclear, but it may have been the main residence on the Clopton tract mentioned above. The city's intermediate defenses crossed the district from the east at about the north end of Enslow Avenue to the west on Meadowbridge Road, incorporating several earthen batteries, none of which survive. No archaeological investigations have been made to determine if any trace remains of the battery in the built-up suburban lots.

Industrial Growth and Initial Development (1866-1889)

The property continued largely in the hands of a few owners and was developed only along the west side of the Meadowbridge Road. The intense industrial development which developed in the period was restricted to the area along Bacon's Quarter Branch. When, in September of 1889, the 135-acre Mount Comfort property was purchased for development, several older buildings were standing on the tract, but these soon vanished and the plateau was laid out in streets and lots.

The Virginia Central and the Chesapeake and Ohio railroads were consolidated under the latter name in 1868, with direct connections to a large geographical area. The tracts along the west side of Meadowbridge Road ran down the slope to Cannon's Branch and shared that water source with similar outlots owned by numerous persons. In about 1873, the Meadowbridge Road through the Highland Park area was superseded by a new highway, known as the Richmond and Henrico Turnpike, built along the bottom of the Cannon's Branch Ravine.

The area is shown in a map of Richmond, Manchester and Suburbs made in 1877 by F.W. Beers Co. The Highland Park area was still taken up by the rural tracts of Deane's heirs, Dill's heirs, and others. In fact, the entire area of Henrico County north of Richmond was divided up into small farms and nurseries, most of which were engaged in supplying the produce needed in the city. Development of the area was foreseen by prudent investors in the city and elsewhere. Richmond was the first city in the nation to have a revenue-producing electric streetcar line, in 1882. The streetcar stimulated the development of five streetcar suburbs. Popular destinations were included in parks at the terminuses of the early lines including Reservoir Park (Byrd Park) and Woodland Park (Forest Hills Park). Land improvement companies took advantage of the growing demand for housing in open suburban settings and the rising standard of living among the middle classes to open tracts of land in the north and south sides and the west end of the city.

The Southside Land and Improvement Company, the West End Land Company, and the Northside Land and Improvement Company were all chartered in 1889, immediately after electric streetcar lines became feasible. Both the Northside and Southside companies were chartered to operate streetcars as well as develop land. A streetcar line was opened in 1890 to the south of Richmond terminating in Woodland Park and serving the suburb named Woodland Heights.

A similar project was begun in 1889 immediately west of what would become the Highland Park area. The Barton Heights development and the Brookland Park suburb to its north were begun by James H. Barton and others. The project included construction of a viaduct over Bacon's Quarter Branch

connected to Richmond's First Street and including a streetcar line operated by the Richmond Railway and Electric Company.

In September of 1889, the 135-acre Mount Comfort property of Francis Deane was sold to the Northside Land Improvement Company.¹³ The property was laid out soon after in squares (as Richmonders then called blocks), streets, and alleys and known as "Mount Comfort." At almost the same time, the 150-acre tract some distance north of Mount Comfort, to be known as Highland Park, was purchased by the Highland Park Company, which shared many of the same developers as the Northside Land Company."

The Northside Land Improvement Company was dissolved in March of 1890 and its property transferred to a new entity, the Northside Land Company for \$150,000. The Northside Land Improvement Company was made up of two principals, J. M. Fourqurean, a dry-goods merchant, and N.V. Randolph, a manufacturer, and a number of prominent investors serving as directors. Fourqurean had held land on the west side of the Meadowbridge Road for some years.

A related, interlocking group of investors, including Randolph and Fourqurean, as well as Frank and A. F. Mosby, A. J. and Frank B. Enslow, and others, formed the Highland Park Company. Frank Mosby had sold the 150 acres to the Highland Park Company in 1890 for \$250,000. Mosby owned the land between the two suburbs, a tract later known as the Plateau. Here he conducted a prosperous business known as the Richmond Commercial Nurseries, supplying fruit trees to the mid-Atlantic region." The two development companies acquired the land for the two real estate ventures and together proceeded to build a viaduct and to provide a streetcar line to serve them.



Street Car Suburb (1890-1916)

In 1892, the Fifth Street Viaduct, a toll bridge, was built by their Northside Viaduct Company to carry vehicles, pedestrians, and a proposed streetcar line seventy-five feet above Bacon's Quarter Branch. The 1,200-foot-long viaduct was built by the Edgemoor Bridge Company of Wilmington, Delaware. The streetcar line was promised to buyers of lots as soon as sufficient lots were sold. As in the case of the other streetcar lines, a park was proposed near the terminus. This eight-acre Plaza Park, occupying two squares at a central point in the neighborhood, was mentioned in advertisements and a prospectus." No similar park was planned, however, for the Chestnut Hill development. The streetcar line, originally known as the Richmond-Hemico Railway Company, was completed by 1893 and was operated by the Richmond and Manchester Railway Company.

Two tracts in the northern end of the neighborhood owned by Mrs J. H. Gresham and E. D. Starke restricted growth in that section of the

neighborhood.

Although the street plan was shown overlaid on these tracts north of Highland Street and west of Carolina Avenue, development of lots was prevented until the mid-twentieth century. The area northeast of a diagonal drawn from the north end of Third Avenue to a intersection of Dill Street and Fourth Avenue was also developed in later years.

The Highland Park Company had issued a prospectus for the development in about 1890. It described over eight hundred “beautiful and valuable building lots.” The brochure included an economic promotion of suburban life: “Richmond is just beginning to recognize and appreciate the value and beauty of suburban residences . . . Suburban property was not appreciated and was inactive until the old limits of the city were entirely filled and the large incoming population were thus compelled to look for homes in the suburbs, where property is even now cheaper than in many Virginia towns of 10,000 residents.”

The site sloped gently toward the city, giving to each lot “the best sewerage and surface drainage” and “a high and commanding view of the entire city of Richmond.” A complex system of drawings supervised by disinterested parties was designed to ensure that the lot purchases would be randomly located and that no more than two contiguous lots could be owned in each square by the same purchaser. Profits from lot sales would be directed to paying the company’s share in the construction of the viaduct, laying out and “beautifying” the park, building houses, and lighting and paving streets. Regulations forbidding liquor sales, tanneries, butcher shops were boilerplate in similar suburban developments across the region, as was the express prohibition against “sale or lease to a colored person under any circumstance.”

Among the company’s first actions was the construction of “upwards of fifteen houses and a church (the Highland Park Methodist church, built, according to a contemporary publication, in the summer of 1892). That church and some of the houses on First and Second avenues are visible in a pair of Cook collection photograph from the new Highland Park School, built in 1909.

Most of the lots sold in 1891. In 1894, the effects of the Panic of August 1893 were felt by businesses and developers across the nation. Many communities failed because they had been “boomed” or falsely promoted. The Chestnut Hill, Highland Park, and Barton Heights projects undoubtedly suffered a slowdown, but recovered from the effects of the Depression because of the demand for housing and the improved living standards required by the middle classes in the New South.

Undoubtedly in response to the financial crisis that followed the Panic of 1893, the men of the community formed the Highland Park Citizen’s Association to promote the neighborhood and to foster community life for their mutual benefit. The group began in September of 1894 by publishing the first number of a monthly newsletter called the *Northside News*. In it the following announcement, in keeping with national trends in community and business development related to the development of chambers of commerce across the country, called notice to the group’s goals and “booster” spirit:

A number of gentlemen of the Northside have conferred together and have decided to have a called meeting on Tuesday, September 18, at 8:00 p.m. at Highland Park Hall for the purpose of organizing an association for the mutual benefit of the residents. See your neighbor and talk it up. Try to have one representative from each house on the Northside. Remember the date and the hour as it is important to have a full meeting and begin to work at once. Time is fleeting.”

Businesses grew up to serve and profit from the development of Highland Park and the neighboring suburbs. One of the most successful was the firm of Ruffin and Forqurean, a lumber company that supplied the materials for many of the houses built in the Northside area. Forqurean owned substantial tracts of land in the area and served as a director of both the Chestnut Hill and Highland Park companies. The lumber company, later known as Ruffin and Payne, was located on the southeastmost lot of Chestnut Hill. It remained in the area until 1966, when it moved a short distance to the north of the district on Laburnam Road. The coal-fired power plant that supplied Chestnut Hill and Highland Park with electricity was shared with the American Locomotive Works and stood nearby on the north side of Valley Road.



Necessary for the successful development of a new suburb was the provision of amenities close at hand for the residents, so that constant trips to the city were not needed. Prominent among these requirements were schools, commercial establishments, and churches. Since Chestnut Hill and Highland Park were in Henrico County, provision of a new county school district was necessary. The original schoolhouse for the area, located in the northern suburb, was the small, frame, two-room Highland Park Public School on the corner of Carolina Street and Meadowbridge Road, now gone. It was not superseded until 1909, when the present building of the Highland Park School was built on the west side of Second Avenue south of Dill Street (Brookland Park Boulevard), just outside the district. This school contained all grades, including a small high school department. Upon annexation of Highland Park into the city in 1914, the older students were transferred to the downtown John Marshall High School. In that year the enrollment at Highland Park School was 509, with an additional 27 high school pupils.

Commerce first developed along the southwest side of Meadowbridge Road. No stores are shown in the area on the map of 1901, but two frame stores are shown in the historic photographs taken from the Highland Park School in about 1909. Commerce later developed along Dill Street, later Brookland Park Boulevard, at the south end of the district, and all along Meadowbridge Road from Virginia Avenue to Second Avenue, although most commercial buildings date from the well into the twentieth century. Commercial buildings along Meadowbridge Road and Brookland Park Boulevard date from the first and second quarters of the century. As the twentieth century progressed, commercial buildings were permitted on isolated lots and in groups on cross streets through the north side of the city to allow close location of shops needed on a daily basis by residents. The principal shopping area within in the district was developed along Milton Street, where could be found a barber, two groceries, a candy shop ("confectionary"), a dry cleaners, and a service station.

The areas around Highland Park were developed in small sections as its success became apparent and annexed into the town. Many of the sections correspond to former outlots held by private individuals such as J.H. Willbur along Meadowbrook Road. West Highland Park consisted of lots like those in Highland Park along two streets extending west from Meadowbrook and was developed in 1895. This was followed by Highland Terrace an area of very small

lots owned by Wilbur just north of Brookland Park Boulevard in 1905, Hillcrest Park in 1906 to the north of Highland Park West and Northside Place, to its south, in 1907.)

2527-2519 Second Ave.



Lots in East Highland Park were offered for sale in 1915 in an area of Henrico County just over the C and O railroad tracks. A small vehicular bridge (now gone) was built over the tracks at the end of First Avenue to reach the new neighborhood. Another area developed to the east of the district in the early twentieth century is included in the proposed Highland Park Plaza Historic District. The smaller lots in this section were grouped along three streets to the southeast of and aligned with Dill Street. They infilled a previously undeveloped area in a curve of the railroad tracks, north of Rady Street, and southeast of Dill Street part of the original holding of Adolph Dill. The three streets moving east from Dill are Fourth Avenue, Fifth Avenue, and Detroit Street. It forms a distinct part of the neighborhood characterized by smaller lots, modest houses (mostly dating from the second decade of the twentieth century), and a ravine to the east.

The first church in Highland Park Plaza district was mentioned in an 1893 promotional publication as a “fine Methodist church” that the company “has built during the past summer”. This frame structure, with a tower and spire, was erected for the Highland Park Methodist congregation on the corner of Second Avenue and Dill Street. It undoubtedly reinforced the viability of the entire suburban project. The church was founded by a group of members of Centenary Methodist Church in downtown Richmond, who began holding Sunday schools in Northside Hall and the Highland Park schoolhouse in 1892,”he Highland Park Methodist Church built a new, brick, Classical Revival-style structure on a larger site incorporatin; the original lot in 1916. It was designed to be enlarged as the congregation grew. A photograph was published in 1924, it was enlarged with a new sanctuary with a columned portico in 1927 designed by the architectural firm of Baskervil and Lambert and the earlier building became the education wing. A tiny church structure of undetermined origin faces Dill Street just behind the Highland Park Methodist Church.

Mizpah Church had been founded in 1885 to minister to Presbyterians on the north side of Richmond. The congregation had originally built a structure on Henrico Turnpike three miles north of the city. After that church burned in 1891, they saw an opportunity of moving to the new suburban district and built the first church in the Chestnut HillPlateau neighborhood in 1892. A third Mizpah Presbyterian Church was built in 1926 on Brookland Park Boulevard in the Highland Terrace section that is immediately west of the proposed district.”

The Episcopal Church of the Ascension had its beginning in 1896, when a

member of Monumental Church in the city organized a woman's guild in the Highland Park area. Services were held in the town hall. The Highland Park company gave a lot for the erection of a chapel in the northern suburb of Highland Park and a small frame building was completed on Meadowbridge Road between First and Second avenues, by 1901, when it shows up on the map.⁸ The parish purchased lots at 2901 Fourth Avenue in the Plateau section in 1911 (outside the district) and built a new brick, Gothic Revival-style building in 1912. The frame church was demolished.

The Northside Baptist Church was organized in Chestnut Hill in 1907, at a meeting held at the town hall. Services were held in the town hall for about a year before a new Gothic Revival-style stone building incorporating high gabled roofs and a crenellated corner tower was built in the plateau section south of the district." The Highland Park Christian Church was organized in 1920 and built a church on Brookland Park Boulevard in the Highland Terrace section in 1927 after years of meeting in the Highland Park School. By 1901, the lots of Highland Park and Chestnut Hill were mostly sold, but relatively few were built upon. Chestnut Hill had approximately sixty houses, most near the southern end of the district. Highland Park proper had twenty-two houses completed, spread widely, but mostly on the southern three blocks of Enslow, First, Second, and Third avenue. A pair of photographs taken from the roof of the Highland Park School in about 1909 show a dramatic increase in the number of houses since 1901, although the houses were still often separated by numerous unbuilt lots.



In 1908, the now-adjacent villages of Chestnut Hill and Highland Park were consolidated in order to incorporate the area as a town. The council of Chestnut Hill voted to accept a new survey and to change the name of the new entity to Highland Park. The new town was an independent entity within Henrico County. The town developed rapidly in the era leading up to the First World War. Many of the squares north and south of Brookland Park Boulevard were completely vacant, as is clear from the history of Northside Baptist Church: "on Easter Sunday, April 11, 1909, the congregation met in the town hall and marched across the field to hold the first service in the new "town hall", or Highland Park Hall was located on Fourth Avenue just south of Brookland Park Boulevard, where it would be equally accessible to the northern and southern suburbs. It no longer stands, but a sketch in one history shows it as a two-story building with a gambrel roof.

A small frame building on Fourth Avenue housed a single horse-drawn fire engine.

World War I to World War II (1917-1945)

The period between the wars was occupied with the filling in of almost all of the vacant lots in the district. Commercial functions remained focused on Brookland Park Boulevard, which became a commercial strip road linking all

the Northside suburbs. Recreational activities were developed at Hotchkiss Field, west of the district. One of the principal meeting places for the community was Highland Park Pharmacy, housed in the two-story brick commercial building at the corner of Second Avenue and Brookland Park Boulevard.

In the 1930s many streets were regraded and repaved to eliminate steep sections. The viaduct was replaced in 1937 by a new concrete bridge named for Confederate General Stonewall Jackson. Some new institutional buildings were added or rebuilt. Saint Elizabeth's Roman Catholic Church was established by the Bishop of Richmond in 1923 in the Plateau area south of the district. A Classical Revival-style church was built in 1925 and included a basement social hall. The Highland Park Methodist Church, rebuilt in 1916, was much enlarged with a new Classical Revival-style sanctuary designed by the firm of Baskervil and Lambert in 1927.

Life in Highland Park in the 1920s resembled that in many other small communities in the early twentieth century. This is perhaps best recalled by a member of Mizpah Presbyterian Church, Wallace Bryan Stockton: "Highland Park became neat, with mixed architecture. The citizens were of mixed economic strata, from one end of the spectrum to the other, - but basically they and their community were modest. . . board fences abounded. There were chicken lots in back yards and barns for horses and cows. There were chicken thieves, too, and Gypsies from the C & O tracks. The community abounded with vacant lots for ball games and lots of ice houses for boys on hot summer days. . . . Scouting received strong emphasis in Highland Park. Each of the three protestant churches had active troops at various times. . . . When the patrols were not fighting each other there was unity in a rock battle with Barton Heights scouts down in the ravine.

The houses built in the district in the period between the world wars embody the popular architectural stylistic details available in national publications and pattern books. These include Bungalows, Foursquare, Tudor Revival, and Colonial Revival-style buildings.

The New Dominion (1946-Present)

After the end of World War II, Richmond's suburban population continued to grow and the mostly urban black population expanded as well. Increased affluence and expectations of higher living standards encouraged remaining urban populations away from the city center to the suburbs. Construction of the Richmond Petersburg Turnpike (Interstate 95) and urban renewal decreased the availability of traditional urban housing. The city's northern suburbs, with their close proximity to the city, access to public transport, pleasant streets, and affordable housing stock, were under pressure to change. Richmond's housing segregation traditions could not easily bend and Highland Park, in particular, felt threatened. In 1949, [the last streetcar ran down Fourth Avenue as the entire Richmond system was dismantled](#). The Highland Park line was, however, immediately replaced by a bus following the same route, which continues in operation today.

In 1942, almost all the residents of Highland Park signed a pledge not to be the first homeowner on the block to sell to a black buyer. The campaign was sponsored by the Highland Park Citizens Association and included a fund-raising effort to raise money for a white veteran who was outbid by a black purchaser. According to a contemporary article, the residents feared that black buyers would form syndicates to engage in "block busting." The idea was that a group of black buyers purchase a house at market value and then take advantage of white fears and subsequent flight to buy others at reduced rates, sharing the overall cost.

In spite of white fears, the transformation of Highland Park did not occur

quickly. The change began as many residents moved out to the growing suburbs in Henrico. The average income among residents declined as those who remained aged. The racial transformation did not happen until the mid-1960s, but when it did the process was sudden. Black homeowners replaced whites, until by 1970, about 70% of the properties had changed hands. By the late 1970s, very few white residents were left." According to a 1978 news story, a counselor for a fair housing group stated that some real estate salesmen played on racial fears and persuaded some whites to sell their homes at low prices. The real estate agents then sold or rented them to black residents at a substantial profit.

Locally-based commercial enterprises continued to serve the citizens from centrally located business areas along Brookland Park Boulevard and in neighborhood shopping districts like the 900 block of Milton Street. After the middle of the century, rather than invest in new buildings or demolish the existing stock of commercial buildings, merchants and building owners chose, in many cases, to maintain or to modernize the exteriors of the commercial building stock. Often this took the form of a new aluminum storefront. New shopping centers outside the neighborhood began to draw shoppers away from pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods and business districts.



As the community changed during this period, its churches also expanded and changed hands. A few Highland Park area congregations elected to move away due to the altered racial character of the neighborhood, in favor of larger suburban lots with room for additional expansion. Their large buildings, such as the former Northside Baptist Church, south of the district, were purchased by black congregations and their functions continued. Others, such as Highland Park Methodist Church, in the district and St. Elizabeth's Catholic Church in the Chestnut Hill/Plateau section, simply kept on with their ministry and gradually opened their doors to the changed community surrounding them.

Over the ensuing years, Highland Park has suffered from problems common to other older city neighborhoods. Crime, declining population, and a deteriorating housing stock kept property values low and most houses unrestored. Vacant and boarded up houses became common by the 1980s. Some new single-family houses were built in the 1960s and 1970s as well as several plainly detailed concrete block and frame apartment buildings. By 1990, the community had suffered from the ongoing exodus of homeowners as they moved into higher levels of income and whose children had reached the middle school years. Increased levels of crime, much of which was associated with certain isolated commercial locations, devastated the area.

Expansion of public facilities and services was a necessary accompaniment to the growth Richmond experienced during the period. Most of this took place outside the district, but the publicly owned former Highland Park School, just adjacent to the district on Second Avenue was developed as a public housing project for senior citizens in 1987-90. The empty building was sensitively remodeled.

Most important to the successful revival of the neighborhood, the Highland

Park Restoration and Preservation Program was formed in 1988. The organization's mission is to revive the potential for Highland Park and improve its declining housing stock. Toward that end, the foundation has worked closely with the City of Richmond to identify strategies for achieving historic preservation goals in the area. As result of this effort, several houses have been thoroughly rehabilitated as single-family homes. Most recently, programs established by the city have helped older communities, including Highland Park, revitalize by promoting their unique historic character and by funding further rehabilitation of decayed houses.

Links/see also:

- [Application to Historic Registry for Highland Park Plaza \(PDF\)](#)
- [Richmond Districts and Sites on the National Register \(PDF\)](#)
- [Highland Park \(wikipedia\)](#)
- [Northside Richmond flickr pool](#)

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August 17, 2009 at 6:30 am By [john m](#)

11

11 COMMENTS

#1 • [john m](#) • August 23, 2009 at 9:04 am

Also found this: [The Redevelopment of Highland Park and The Role of the Residents](#) (PDF) by Danielle Amarant

#2 • [PriderockT](#) • December 10, 2009 at 12:02 am

I'm not familiar with area desinations. Could someone, if at all possible, state street names and intersections, such as Broad and Parham? This will help some of us recognize where the specified area is.

#3 • [john m](#) • December 10, 2009 at 6:43 am

On the map at the top of the page, the intersection of the 2 biggest streets in the area is that of [Meadowbridge and Brookland Parkway](#).

#4 • [PriderockT](#) • December 10, 2009 at 10:41 pm

Thanks, John. Some of us were having a bit of a problem placing the area in perspective. Having an intersection helped a great deal.

#5 • [Bill](#) • October 2, 2010 at 5:50 am

I offer sincere thanks for this in-depth article. It inspired me to explore the area over several afternoons. Richmond has an architectural & historical gem in these neighborhoods, and "the past" that we create today will determine their survival. Our history as America's first electric streetcar city (and the resulting expansion) is unknown to many of our own residents. Thank you for illuminating this chapter for us, and please keep the light on!

#6 • Eugene Long • October 21, 2010 at 12:03 am

Thanks for the article. I lived my early life in Highland Park on Florida Avenue through college years until 1957 when I left the Richmond area. Highland Park Methodist was our home church where my father was for many years superintendent of the Church school.

#7 • Susan Mitchell • May 14, 2011 at 1:35 am

I've seen this reference to Adolph Dill as a German Jewish immigrant before but I'd like to know its source. Adolph Dill Sr. married (in succession) two women who were descended from the large colonial Gorgas/Keyser/Levering clan of southeastern Pennsylvania, a family not associated with Judaism. Adolph Sr. was born in the US, although his immigrant father was from Medersheim. Adolph was one of the first vestrymen of the historic St. James Episcopal Church in Richmond. He lived in an area of Richmond where several Jewish families also reportedly lived, but I have never seen anything that documents Adolph being a member of the Jewish faith. I'd be grateful to see such documentation if you are aware of any. Thanks

#8 • John McGlothlin • June 7, 2011 at 7:01 pm

I'm with you, Susan, as to Adolph having been Jewish. I doubt this very much as his sister, Christiana Dill, married Jesse Williams, a devout Baptist. Jesse named one son Adolph Dill Williams and one daughter Hannah Dill Williams (after Adolph's wife). Also Adolph is interred at Shockoe Cemetery and not at Hebrew Cemetery, the Jewish burial ground. I think somebody just guessed and its been repeated ever since.

#9 • C. Walton • January 2, 2012 at 6:52 pm

Having lived in various flats in Highland Park from the age of 5 to the age of 9 (1960-1965), I was hoping for a bit of information on the apartment houses surrounding the Plaza. We lived at 3309 1st Avenue, which seems to have been the only building on that block built specifically as an apartment building. I would also have loved to see more photos of the discussed buildings.

#10 • Grace L • October 18, 2012 at 2:03 pm

I have found this article very informative and useful for research on Highland Park. How would I get permission to use these photos in a documentary project? Where is the source of the photo of the street car? Thanks!

#11 • john m • October 18, 2012 at 8:59 pm

The street car image was probably from here:
<http://www.davesrailpix.com/odds/odd.htm> (scroll down to Virginia & Richmond)

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