# A HISTORY OF BULL STREET COMMONS

2909-2913 BULL STREET, SAVANNAH GA

PREPARED BY ETHOS PRESERVATION FOR RE: PURPOSE SAVANNAH, AUGUST 2023

W. PIRE

PO Box 3125, SAVANNAH, GA 31402 912 349 9617 www.ethospreservation.com e t h o s

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### INTRODUCTION

Bull Street Commons was located at 2913 Bull Street, Savannah, Georgia within the Norwood Ward. The structure was composed of three separate buildings (five separate dwellings), 2909 Bull Street, 2911 - 2913 Bull Street, and 4-6 West 46th Street (also known as Pearl Street). The buildings were combined with two hyphen additions to create one structure which adopted the address of 2909 - 2913 Bull Street.

Information on the structure has been found under multiple addresses:

"2909 Bull Street"

"2911 Bull Street"

"2913 Bull Street"

"White Bluff Road"

"4 - 6 Pearl Street"

"4 Pearl Street"

"6 Pearl Street"

"4 - 6 46th Street"

"4 46th Street"

"6 46th Street"

Areas of opportunity for further research:

If more research is warranted, Ethos Preservation would recommend looking further back into deed records, archived City of Savannah Permit records, archival research into Sunnyside, and archival research into the King family. This path might yield more exact build dates and history of the evolution of the structures and land.



### 2909 BULL STREET

2909 Bull Street was likely a wood framed one-story Georgian Cottage. Prior to deconstruction, the house featured an exterior side chimney and hipped roof. The original layout would have consisted of a hallway and four equally sized rooms. This house was built circa 1890 but had undergone material changes early on in its life. The materials of the house were older than the surrounding buildings. However, the brick piers, chimney, and fireplace were built from machine made bricks indicating the house had been raised and had chimneys added after its initial construction. Additional evidence of the house being raised rather than moved was the discovery of the original chimney remnants below the house and the framing in the floor and roof. The original chimney was located on the interior in the center of the two north rooms. The window framing and trim uncovered during deconstruction also indicated that the house was altered.. The window framing and trim aligned with the added chimney on the north wall. Additionally, the machine made brick masonry had lime mortar indicating these alterations were likely completed before the 1920s. By the 1920s, Portland Cement had become a widespread popular choice for use as a binder in mortars, replacing lime binders. In the 1891 Bird's Eye View of Savannah, there is a small square house with a side gabled roof depicted in the same location as 2909 Bull Street. Evidence is inconclusive as to whether the house depicted in the 1891 Bird's View was the modern day 2909 Bull Street.



# 2911 - 2913 Bull Street

2911-2913 Bull Street was a wood framed one-story duplex built circa 1900. The building had many alterations over the years including the addition of two interior gable end chimneys. Upon deconstruction, it was discovered the chimneys were not original, based on evidence of two interior hearths uncovered. Additionally, evidence of the original wall locations were discovered indicating the original house type was a double Georgian Cottage. Each duplex originally had a central hall and four equal sized rooms. 2913's original chimney location was on the interior, centered on the dividing wall of the two north rooms. 2911 would have mirrored 2913.



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### 4 - 6 PEARL STREET

4-6 Pearl Street was a wood framed one-story duplex worker's cottage with a side gabled roof. Built circa 1895, the house would have been two rooms wide and two rooms deep with a central shared chimney. The building had numerous alterations including the removal of an interior chimney and an altered porch and entrance.



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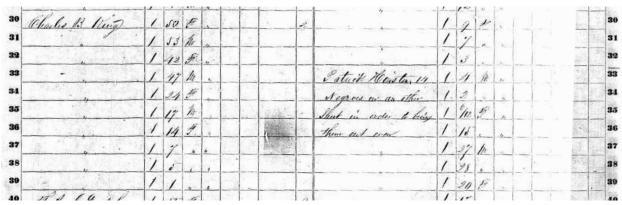
In 1884, an advertisement in the Savannah Morning News noted 18 acres of land for sale in "Kingsville" upon the passing of Rev. Charles B. King in 1880. Little is known of the use of the land and when it was divided into lots. The land was likely used for production of goods prior to 1880. The 1860 U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedule lists King's 10 enslaved people living at White Bluff Road (Bull Street today).



Charles B. King Portrait, 1851.



1884 advertisement in the Savannah Morning News.



U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedule listing Chales B. King's 10 enslaved people. Ages range from 1 to 53 years of age.

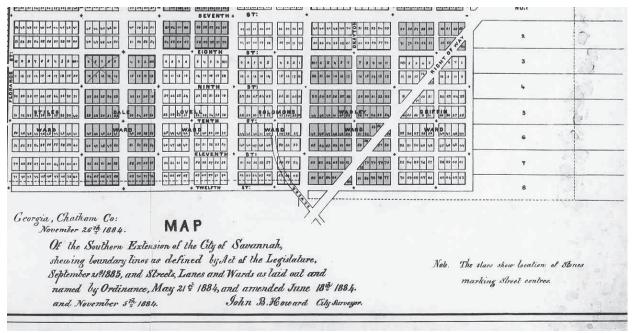


Historically the neighborhood was known as Kingsville and more recently as Bingville. The first time Kingsville shows up on a map is on the 1875 Chatham County State of Georgia Survey Map by Charles G. Platen.



1875 Map of Chatham County, State of Georgia by Charles G. Platen.

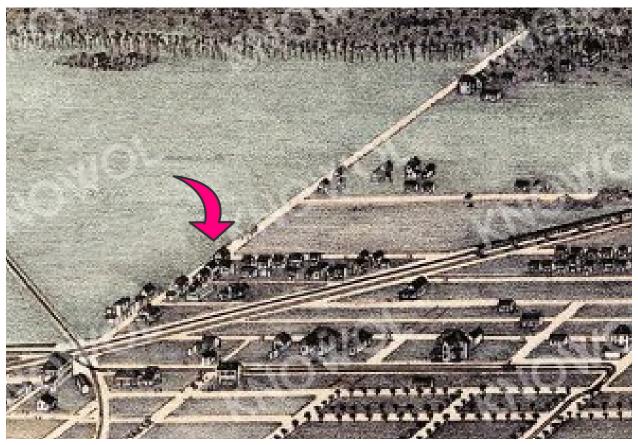
It was not until 1885 that city limits had been extended to 12th Street, later known as Estill Avenue, and now known as Victory Drive.



1884 Extension of the City of Savannah.



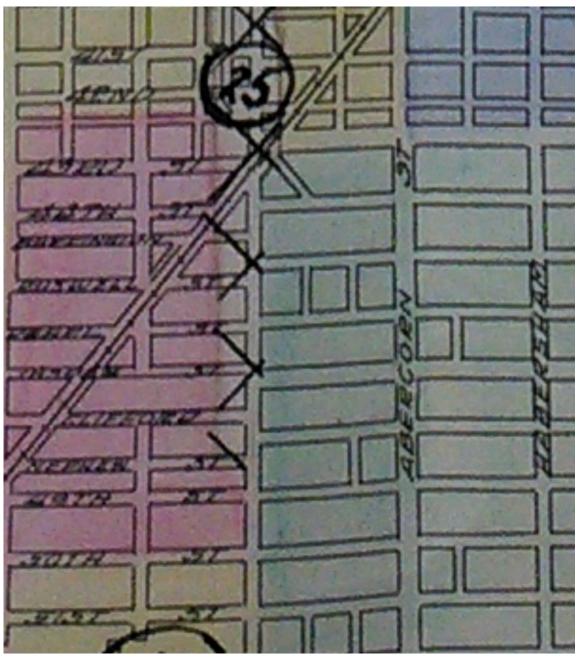
In the 1891 Birds Eye View, Kingsville is shown with modest houses and buildings, and much of the surrounding area is undeveloped. By 1906, Kingsville had been incorporated into the newly extended city limits.



1891 Bird's Eye View showing the Kingsville neighborhood and location of Bull Street Commons.



The Kingsville neighborhood has historically been home to Black and working class residents. As the area developed, this trend continued, although many buildings fronting Bull Street transitioned into commercial businesses. Eventually, Bull Street became a thoroughfare of separation between white middle-upper class on the east side and Black working class residents on the west side.



The 1929 HOLC Red Line Map highlights the Kingsville neighborhood in pink, indicating it to be "Hazardous."



Sunnyside was a majority African American subdivision bounded by 44th Street to the north, 46th Street to the south, by Habersham to the east, and Bull to the west. This location is now the northwestern corner of Ardsley Park.

The federal government planned a hospital complex with a surrounding neighborhood of 250 homes in early 1898 to support the Spanish-American War effort. The hospital never materialized, but Horace Rivers developed the small neighborhood into the affordable Sunnyside suburb for working class residents. The two, three, and four-bedroom houses for rent included newly-built water lines to every lot. African American residents made up the majority of the population, with just a small number of white residents in the suburb. It did not take long for the homes to be rented, newspaper ads advertising residences available in Sunnyside had ceased by 1901.



Entrance to Ardsley Park from Bull Street and 48th Street, looking towards the NW corner. 1930s. Georgia Historical Society.

### A HEALTHY LOCALITY. Savannah's Fine New Suburbs.

Championville is the name of the new suburb directly south of the city, east of Bull street and south

of Estill avenue. This village contains about two hundred and fifty houses. These houses were built by the United

States government and are of the most substantial kind. They contain from three to four rooms. The rooms are comfortable, many of them contain fire-places, and has good ventilation. The streets in the village are properly laid out and an excellent water and fire service is main-tained. There is now being erected an immense pumping tower to better perfect the service. The streets are all well lighted, and have all of the conveniences of the city. This is a healthy locality, being dry. For this reason it was selected by the

government for hospital purpose.

The street cars ran through the village which will be convenient for the residents to reach any part of

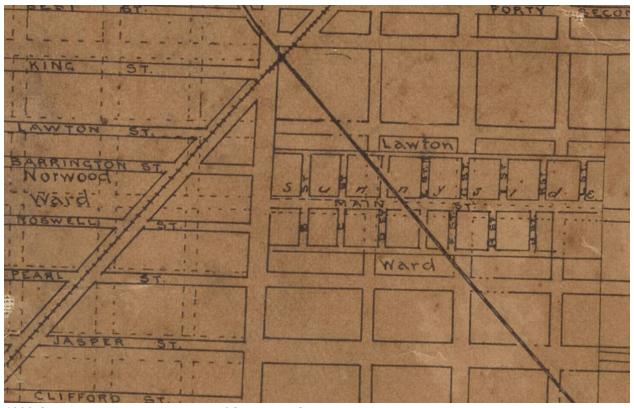
About sixty of these houses are already rented and the others are ready for tenants.

The houses rent from three to four dollars per month, Messrs, Rivers & Gibbes are agents, and those desiring the quietness of an excellent neighborhood can find no better place with such a resemble amount for rent and executionally ball houses. rent and exe

"A Healthy Locality." Savannah Tribune advertisement for Championville from 1901.



As the city continued to expand, Sunnyside became an attractive location for more development. Rivers ended up selling a portion of Sunnyside to allow north-south streets to extend past Estill Avenue (today's Victory Drive). In 1910, Germania Bank foreclosed upon Sunnyside. The real estate development company of brothers Harry Hays Lattimore and William Lattimore purchased the properties with the intention of demolishing Sunnyside and developing Ardsley Park. With this development what was once an attractive neighborhood for African Americans became a neighborhood exclusive to middle and upper class white residents, with explicit racial and social covenants on the property deeds.



1906 Goettes Map showing closeup of Sunnyside Subdivision.

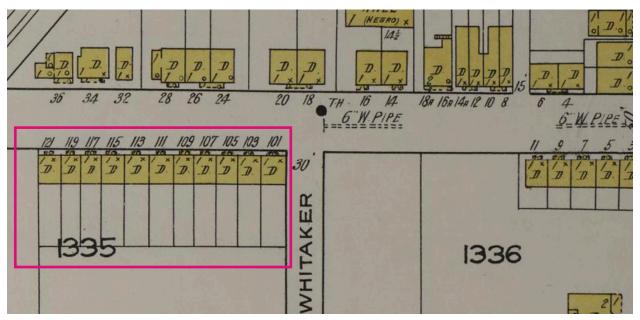


City permits found in the City of Savannah Municipal Archives show that a few houses from Sunnyside were moved west across Bull Street. We believe some of them may still exist today, on the south side of 46th Street between Barnard and Whitaker Streets.

7 10 00		3/12	190
To the Ros	norable Mayor an	d Aldermen,	
	City of Savannah:		
Gentlemen:			
	The undersigned resp	pectfully requests	permission to
			house on
Lot 970		720220000	Ward
Street No.			
Owner		4 7	
Portion of Lot	to be built on		
Fronting on			Street
Remarks			
Moce toul	en louse from	Sinn Sile	tout , #
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Let 14-25-	28-29-37-33-2	2 Mingamelli	subdu
Section (3)	South side	of 46-31	Millian
Barrand All	Killa St.		
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	্ৰ প)	respectfully,	

City of Savannah permit application from 1910 asking to move houses from Sunnyside to "...south side of 46th st between Barnard and Whitaker St."





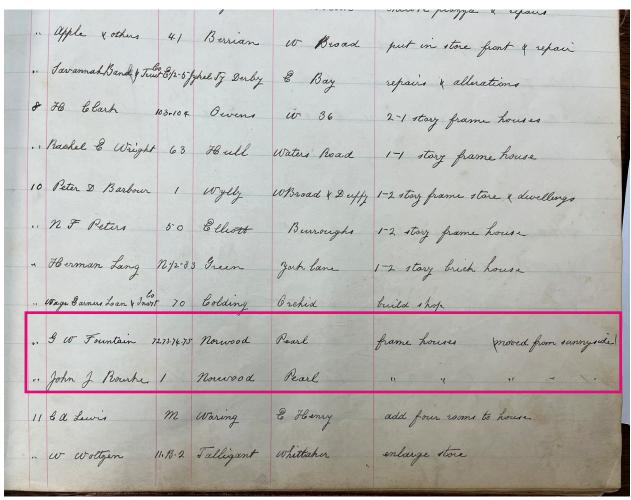
1916 Sanborn Map showing possible Sunnyside houses after being moved to west of Bull Street.



Possible Sunnyside dwellings as seen today, that were mentioned in the 1910 permit application.



Additional records showed that John J. Rourke and George W. Fountain (Fountain was one of the few white residents of Sunnyside) received permits to move houses from Sunnyside. It is unknown whether any portion of Bull Street Commons was from Sunnyside, but it is a possibility.



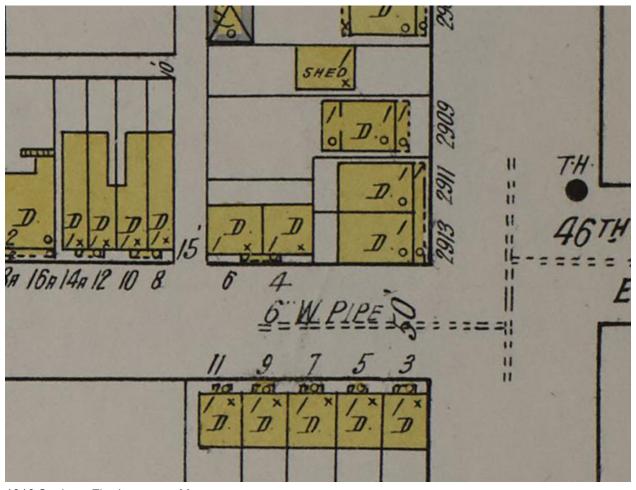
1910 Register of Permits from City of Savannah Municipal Archives showing G. W. Fountain and John J. Rourke applying to move houses from Sunnyside to Norwood Ward.



### BUILDING EVOLUTION

Bull Street Commons remained residential for most of its life. In 1950, the building became a furniture store after all of the buildings were connected by additions. During the time businesses occupied the building, some of the space continued to be rented out as a residence.

Below is the 1916 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing buildings before they were connected by hyphen additions. By this time, the rear porch of 2909 Bull Street had been enclosed and the front porch of 2911-2913 Bull Street had been altered. 4 - 6 Pearl Street is shown as having a shingle roof and 2909 - 2913 are shown as having composite roofs.

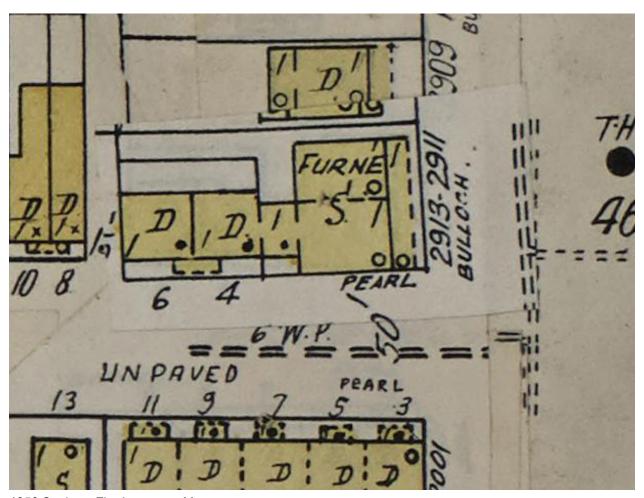


1916 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.



### BUILDING EVOLUTION

The 1950 Sanborn Map shows 4 - 6 Pearl Street and 2911 - 2913 Bull Street connected by a hyphen addition. 2911 - 2913 Bull Street is shown to have been altered on the interior. The party wall was demolished and a new wall and opening built. This new wall location was shifted slightly north of the original party wall. 4 - 6 Pearl Street is shown as now having a metal roof. 2911 - 2913 Bull Street is now being used as a furniture store.

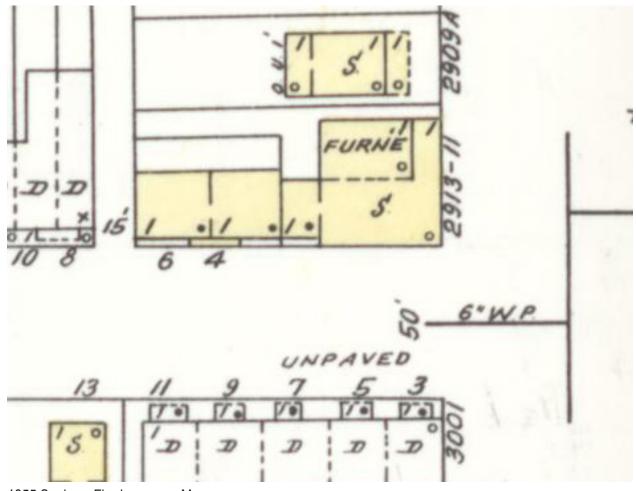


1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.



### Building Evolution

The 1955 Sanborn Map shows 4 - 6 Pearl Street as having a new opening in the party wall and an enclosed porch. 4 - 6 Pearl Street is now indicated to be a part of the furniture store. 2911 - 2913 Bull Street's porch has been enclosed. 2909 Bull Street is now being used as a store.



1955 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.



\*City Directories have proven unreliable for correctly noting homeowners versus residents. Additional deed research would be able to confirm ownership of properties.

#### 2909 Bull STREET

#### 1888 - Lot Sold to Matilda Harrison

(Owner) Matilda Harrison

#### 1910 - C.H. Dorsett sold property to Richard Adams (c)

(Owner) C.H. Doresett

#### 1910 - Richard Adams (c)

(Owner) (Resident) Richard Adams (c) (city directories show Richard Adams was a resident of Sunnyside prior to moving to 2909 Bull Street)

(Resident) Etta Scott (c) (occupation: Washwoman)

(Resident) Rebecca Stykes (c) (occupation: Washwoman)

1914

(Resident) Lucy A. Pittman (c) (occupation: Cook)

1915

(Resident) Edward Mackay (c)

1916 - 1920

(Resident) Angus and Essie Aiken (c)

1917 - 1918

(Resident) John (Johnnie) Bryant (c) (occupation: Chauffeur at W.R. Dancy)

1921 - 1922

(Resident) Joseph (occupation: Auto tire repairer) and Queenie Butler (c) (Queenie was the sister of John Bryant and Essie Aiken)

1923

Vacant

1924 - 1927

(Resident) James and Mollie (Mary) Johnson (c)

1930

Vacant

#### 1934 - Emma B. Roberts

(Owner) Emma B. Roberts (Resident) George White (c)



#### 1939 - John Rourke

(Owner) John Rourke

1940

(Resident) Rebecca Himer (c)

1942

(Resident) Lavina Anderson (c)

1947 - 1948

(Resident) Milton Morrison

#### 1948 - Herman L. Flythe sold property to Emma B. and Karl Derst

(Owner) Herman L. Flythe

#### 1948 - Emma B. and Karl Derst

(Owner) Emma B. and Karl Derst

1950

(Resident) Melton (Milton) (occupation: Car repairman ACL) and Nettie M. Morrison

1950 - 1955

Karl Derst Furniture Store

#### 2911 BULL STREET

#### 1910 - C.H. Dorsett sold property to Jesse Beech (c)

(Owner) C.H. Dorsett

#### 1910 - Jesse Beech

(Owner) (Resident) Jesse Beech

(Resident) Cyrus and Jane Williams and children - Davis, Peter, and Thomas (son-in-law) (c)

1911

(Resident) Lou Williams (c); Peter (occupation: Laborer) and Lula Williams (c)

1913 - 1914

(Owner) (Resident) Jesse (occupation: Laborer) and Lucy Beech (c)

1916

(Resident) Sarah Williams (c)

1917

(Resident) "Tall" Cyrus Marshal (c)

1918

(Resident) Henry Grant

1918 - 1922

(Resident) William and Hester Thomas (c)

1923 - 1930

(Owner) (Resident) Jesse Beech (c); Hester and Mattie Beach (Beech (c)



1932 - 1934

(Resident) Esther Beach (c)

#### 1939 - John Rourke

(Owner) John Rourke

1940 - 1948

(Resident) Jessie Beach (c)

#### 1948 - Karl Derst purchased property from John Rourke

(Owner) Karl Derst

1950

Karl Derst Furniture Inc.

#### 2913 Bull STREET

#### 1910 - C.H. Dorsett sold property to Jesse Beech (c)

(Owner) C.H. Dorsett

#### 1910 - Jesse Beech

(Resident) Walter and Susie Blalock (c); William (c) (occupation: Painter at P. Barrett)

1911

(Resident) Moses (occupation: Laborer) and Mary Johnson (c) (City Directories show Moses and Mary Johnson were residents of Sunnyside prior to 2913 Bull Street)

1915 - 1916

(Resident) William (occupation: Farmer) and Hester Thomas (c)

1918

(Resident) J. Carter (c)

1919

(Resident) Samuel Heyward (c)

1920

(Resident) William Houston (c)

1920 - 1921

(Resident) Malinda Davis (c)

1922

(Resident) Fannie Jordan (c) (occupation: Cook); Charles Waters (c); Mae B. Waters (c)

1923 - 1928

(Resident) Joseph (occupation: Driver at Breunan and Co.) and Lula Hall (c)

1927

(Resident) Charles Waters (c)

1928

(Resident) Laura Flemming (c) (occupation: Cook at J.L. Kirby)



**1930 - 1932** (Resident) Lula B. Hall (c) **1934** (Resident) Eva Battle (c)

#### 1939 - John Rourke

(Owner) John Rourke

1940

(Resident) Clifford (occupation: Attendant at Marine Hospital) and Elsie Thompson (c)

1942

(Resident) Estella Jenkins (c) (occupation: Cook at N. Mirsky)

### 1947 - Karl Derst purchased property from John Rourke

(Owner) Karl Derst

1947 - 1948

(Resident) Alvin and Catherine Powell (c)

1950

Karl Derst Furniture

1975 - 1985

Karl Derst Furniture and Interior Decorating

### 1985 - Karl Derst deceased and property is transferred into Trust

(Owner) Lee Derst Jr., Trustee

1986

(Resident) Jean Mitchel

#### 4 PEARL STREET

### 1900 - Elbert (Albert) and Ellen Scott (c)

(Owner) Elbert (Albert) (occupation: Driver at C.M. Gilbert and Co.) and Ellen Scott (c)

Elbert (Albert) Scott can be traced back to 1889 through City Directories living off White Bluff Road (Bull Street)

1909

(Resident) Rosa Jones (c); Maude Jones (c)

#### 1910 - Unknown Owner

1910

(Resident) James Davis and wife (unknown name) and children - Frank and "Unknown" (son) (c)

1911

(Resident) Rebecca Shake (c) (occupation: Washwoman)

1912

(Resident) Jesse (occupation: Cook) and Lucy Beach (c)

1913 (Resident) Amanda Young (c) (occupation: Washwoman) 1914 (Resident) Arthur (occupation: Painter) and Viola Deas (c) 1918 (Resident) Sheppard and Ella Shedrick (c) 1919 (Resident) Joseph (occupation: Driver for Brennan & Co.) and Lula Hall (c) 1920 (Resident) Lula Waters (c) 1921 (Resident) Anna Danley (c) (occupation: works for J.G. Woo) 1923 (Resident) Sarah Owens (c) 1925 (Resident) Ella Frickson (c) 1926 (Resident) Eva Jenkins (c) 1927 (Resident) Mac and Elizabeth Butler (c) 1932 (Resident) Anna Washington (c) 1940 (Resident) Robert Thompson (c) (occupation: Gardner); R.B. Hubert (c) 1942 (Resident) Perry (Percy) C. (occupation: works at airport) and Verta Mae Gerald (c)

### 1947 - Karl Derst purchased property

(Owner) Karl Derst

1947 - 1948

(Resident) Robert Thompson (c)

#### 1950 - No more records with address

#### 6 PEARL STREET

### 1900 - Elbert (Albert) and Ellen Scott (c)

(Owner) (Resident) Elbert (Albert) (occupation: Driver at C.M. Gilbert and Co.) and Ellen Scott (c) Elbert (Albert) Scott can be traced back to 1889 through City Directories living off White Bluff Road (Bull Street)

1907

(Resident) Rosa Bowen (c)

#### 1910 - Unknown Owner

1910 - 1911

Jessie (occupation: Laborer) and Lucy (Lizzie) Beach and children - Jessie Jr., Mabel, and Charlotte (c)

1913

(Resident) Charles (occupation: Painter) and Dora Breland (c); Mary Faust (c) (occupation: Washwoman);

Samuel (occupation: Laborer) and Laura Parker (c)

1920

(Resident) Sarah Owen (c)

1922

(Resident) Ella Murrell (c); John Small (c)

1923

(Resident) Estill Thompson (c)

1924

(Resident) Robert Lee Trice

1924 - 1925

(Resident) Annie Belle Trice

1925

(Resident) Lonnie and Ocie Rhodes (c)

1927

(Resident) William and Pearl Johnson (c); Leola Johnson (c)

1928

(Resident) Sadie Pelote (c)

1930

(Resident) Joe Whitley (c)

1932

(Resident) Roscoe Williams (c)

1934

(Resident) Chas. C. Cochran (c)

1940

(Resident) Edw. (occupation: works at O.S.S. Co.) and Eloise Brown (c)

1942

(Resident) Ruby Dell Jackson (c)

### 1947 - Karl Derst purchased property

(Owner) Karl Derst

1947 - 1948

(Resident) William (occupation: works at airport and Susie Furse (c)

#### 1950 - No more records with address



### 2909 - 2913 Bull Street (full structure)

### 1985 - Karl Derst deceased and property is transferred into Trust

(Owner) Lee Derst Jr., Trustee

#### 1990 - Lee Derst Jr.

(Owner) Lee Derst Jr. **1990 - 1995** 

Stage Front Costumes, Front Presentations Stage, Production Stage

#### 1997 - Stella Moore purchased property from Lee Derst Jr.

(Owner) Stella Moore

#### 2015 - Parks and Wolf Investments LLC purchased property from Stella Moore

(Owner) Parks and Wolf Investments LLC

### 2017 - Bull Street LLC purchased property from Parks and Wolf Investments LLC

(Owner) Bull Street LLC



EIGHTEEN

THE BULLETIN OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF GEORGIA

#### Judge John J. Rourke Dies in Savannah



### nthony Harty ies in Savannah

AVANNAH, Ga.—Funeral ser-

MARTIN SCHEXNAYDER
ERAL IN SAVANNAH
VANAH, Ga. — Funeral serjor Mrs. Levina Schexnayder,
w of Martin Schexnayder, who
May 28.\*were held from the
ch of Our Lady of Lourdes in

# Experts Continue Study of Body of Pope Pius X for Canonical Report

the word.

St. Mary's Home, Savannah, Holds Graduation Exercises

Special to The Bulletin Savannah Ga.—Graduation exercises and the annual May protect of the Comment of the Nativity of Qur. Commelius E. Murphy officing. Holds Graduation Exercises

(Special to The Bulletin
AVANNAII, Ga.— Graduation
Graduation Control of the Church of the Nativity of Our
Mines Corolle Casey, Helen
Marie Crowley, Lacey Bannister and
Dorothy Von Dolteren.

It was announced that Mines Usick
Masters. Conmic Casey, Helen
Marie Crowley, Lacey Bannister and
Dorothy Von Dolteren.

It was announced that Mines Usick
Masters Conmic Casey, Helen
Marie Crowley, Lacey Bannister and
Dorothy Von Dolteren.

It was announced that Mines Usick
Athense Corolle Casey
Corner Clayton and Jackson Streets
ATHENS

GEORGIA

THENS

GEORGIA

\*\*Wilere Your Dollars Have More Cents\*\*

MISSES\* and WOMEN'S DRESSES.
COATS and MILLINERY

301 East Clayton Street

Athens, Georgia

MISSES\* and WOMEN'S DRESSES.
COATS and MILLINERY

301 East Clayton Street

Athens, Georgia

A graduation exercises held recently at Freeman Army Air Field, Symmour, Ind., Thomas J. Mulligan, Jr., was commissioned as an officer and received the silver wings of a pilot. He is a member of St. Mary's-on-The-Hill parish





#### MOON-WYNN DRUG COMPARY

Prescription Work Our Specialty 197 Clayton St.

ATHENS, GEORGIA

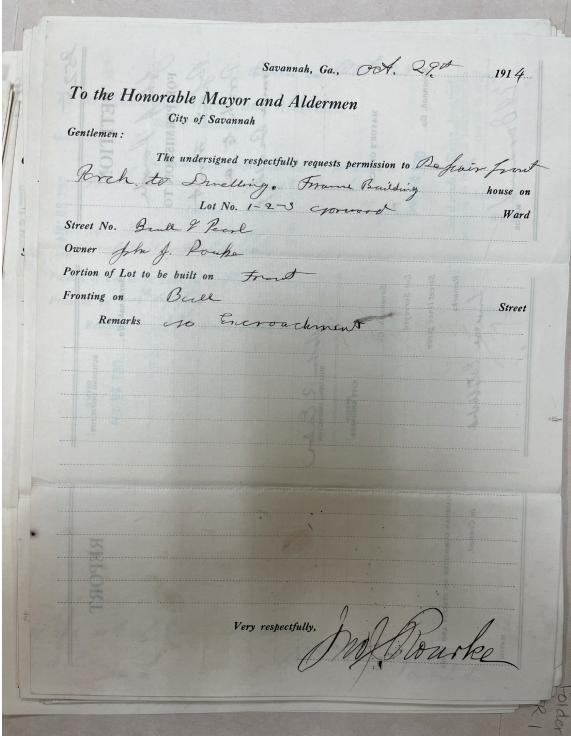
#### Our Best Wishes HODGSON OIL REFINING CO.

ATHENS, GEORGIA

### Gunn's Men's Store

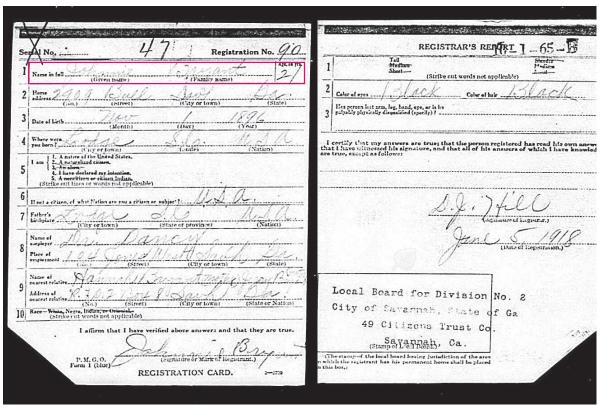
Hart Schaffner & Marx Clothes

Athens, Georgia

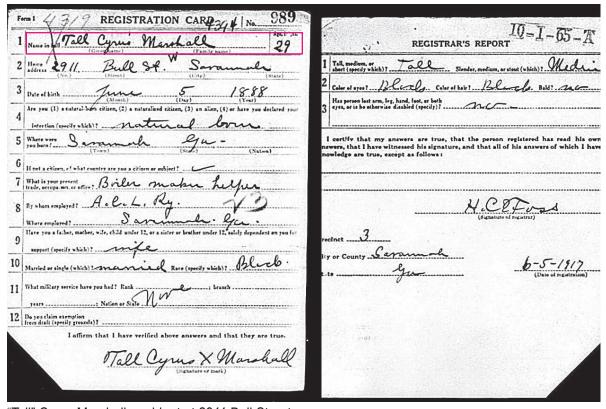


John Rourke's 1914 application to the City of Savannah for a permit to remodel and repair the front porch of 2911-2913 Bull Street.





Johnnie Bryant, resident at 2909 Bull Street.



"Tall" Cyrus Marshall, resident at 2911 Bull Street.

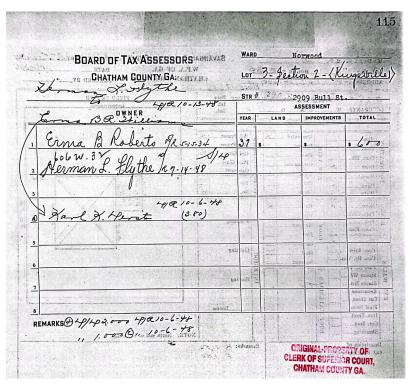


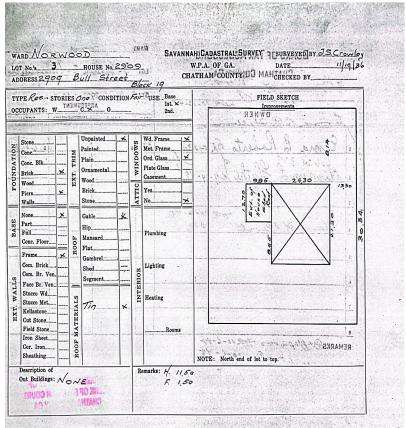


Karl K. Derst senior yearbook photo from Georgia School of Technology, 1933. Owner of 2909 - 2913 Bull Street (including 4 - 6 Pearl Street).



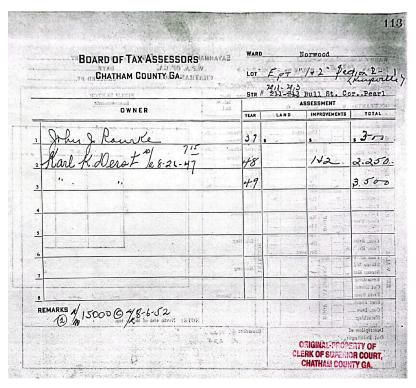
2909 Bull Street Cadastral Survey

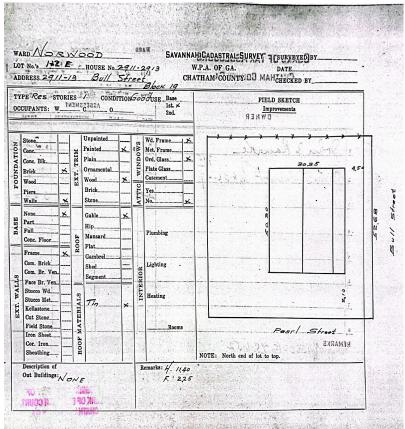






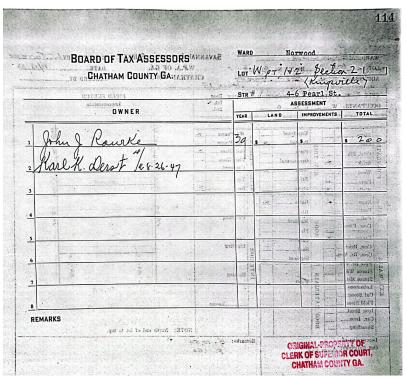
2911 - 2913 Bull Street Cadastral Survey

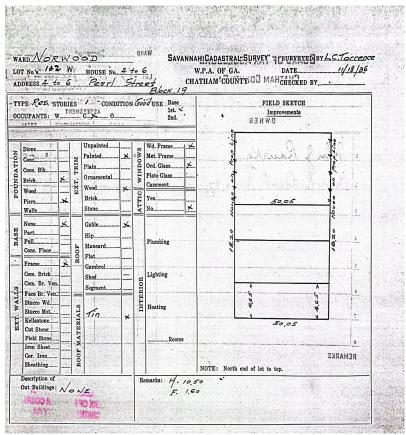






### 4 - 6 Pearl Street Cadastral Survey







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  :6482?tid=&pid=&queryId=abaa55c6b0c61433698dcecd9d780b49&\_phsrc=mrz1256&\_phstart=succe
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