From Frontier to Urban Community... a Gainsboro Prelude

Gainesborough to Big Lick to Roanoke

The early settlement of Roanoke started along the **Big Lick, a large salt marsh** that attracted animals and hunters to the Roanoke Valley. The earliest roads through the valley followed Native American and buffalo trails. Later, Scots-Irish and German settlers traveled from the north along the Great Wagon Road, which connected to the Carolina Road (to the south), and the Wilderness Road (to the west), all of which merged near the Big Lick. Early settlement near the intersection of current day Williamson Road and Orange Avenue included a mill, tavern, store and post office. By 1835, **the Town of Gainesborough was formally chartered** on 68 acres and named after Major Kemp Gaines, who had helped develop the community.

With the coming of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad to the valley in 1852, **a depot was built about a half mile south** of the Town of Gainesborough, near the current Shenandoah Avenue and Second

Street. The railroad named the new community **"Big Lick"** after the nearby postal station, and **Gainesborough became known as "Old Lick."** The name Gainesborough remained in tax records, eventually shortened to "Gainsborough" and, later, "Gainsboro" in the 1970s.

The Big Lick depot and tracks were destroyed in the Civil War, but the community rebuilt and prospered in the following years. In 1874, **the new town of Big Lick was chartered** along the railroad tracks, a one-square-mile town which incorporated the original town of Gainesborough to the north. While the area surrounding the depot developed with businesses and factories, Old Lick/ Gainesborough grew with

Magnolia, a Gainesborough inn and stagecoach stop, located near the present-day intersection of Orange Avenue and Williamson Road.

St. Andrew's Catholic Church, circa 1923, with the old Gainesborough area in the background. Father Lynch, the first priest, held the first mass in a railroad car in the early 1880s. Since 1902, the Gothic sanctuary has been a prominent landmark in the Roanoke skyline.

an influx of newly-freed blacks seeking job opportunities with the railroad. The Shenandoah Valley Railroad line terminated in 1881, and **Big Lick was incorporated as Roanoke** the following year, home of the new Norfolk & Western Railway headquarters.

Mixed Neighborhood to African-American Community

As Roanoke grew, its neighborhoods were referenced by quadrants, with Jefferson Street being the central divide between **"Northeast"** and **"Northwest."** At the turn of the century, **the area was racially, socially and economically mixed.** By the 1920s, **the area was a self-sufficient, prominent African-American neighborhood** with many black professionals and businesses located in commercial hubs on Gainsboro Road, Henry Street and the first block of Gilmer Avenue. Surrounded by residential development, churches, and civic establishments that extended both to the west and the east, the neighborhood was prosperous and active in social, cultural and educational crusades of the times. Many black

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, deed restrictions prevented blacks (and other minorities) from living in Roanoke's new subdivisions. Hence it was in the older neighborhoods, like the original portions of Big Lick, that black residents settled and established their businesses. The restriction above is from a 1923 deed in Roanoke's Wasena neighborhood.

leaders – lawyers, doctors, teachers, diplomats – made indelible marks on civil rights and the lives of African-Americans, both in Roanoke and in the nation.

Impacts of Urban Redevelopment

At the end of the 1950s, there were two significant blows to the local economy: the closure of the American Viscose Plant and layoffs from the Norfolk & Western Railway. These two operations had been the top employers of residents of Northeast and Northwest. With the neighborhood declining and urban renewal funds as a potential solution, **the area was targeted for redevelopment** starting in the 1950s. What followed would disrupt the fabric of the community and further displace many of its residents and businesses. Large portions of Northeast were cleared and the landscape flattened to make way for the new interstate corridor, a civic center, and large industrial parks. By the 1990s, 1,600 homes, more than 200 businesses, and 24 churches had

been removed. **Street realignments altered the shape of the neighborhood,** including the realignment of 2nd Street, Wells Avenue and Gainsboro Road. **The once-vibrant African-American commercial core on Henry Street and Gainsboro Road was gone,** and much of the residential neighborhood was replaced with large tracts of land offered for new development.

Ironically, the end of segregation helped hasten the loss of many long-established black institutions. With access no longer restricted, many African Americans chose to live and do business in other areas.

Today, neighborhood organizations work to **preserve the heritage of Gainesborough** and tell the story of this vibrant area. Gainsboro and Henry Street are listed on the National Register of Historic Places to honor of the significant cultural and architectural heritage of the neighborhood.

The clearance of much of Northeast and Northwest during urban renewal desired the area of black "mom-and-pop" businesses, churches, and black role models and leaders. The community including Henry Street was silenced.

Milestones in Education

The first known school for African Americans in the area was the **1872 Old Lick Colored School,** located in a modest log building on Diamond Hill, where the Civic Center now stands. Other schools for blacks were built, including the **Gainsboro School** (at Gainsboro Road and Rutherford Avenue NW) and the **Gregory School** operating in Northeast through the early 20th century. In 1916, the Roanoke School Board authorized the construction of the **Harrison School,** which opened the following year. Located on Harrison Avenue NW, it became the first school to offer a secondary education for blacks in Southwest Virginia.

The Gainsboro Library

In the late 1930s, the Roanoke Library Board begin discussing a potential bond issue to finance simultaneous construction of a new Gainsboro branch library and a new main library building in downtown. Two years later, however, the Library Board reneged, recommending the Gainsboro branch simply expand into another room of the Odd Fellows Hall. Black leaders addressed the City Council, saying a new Gainsboro library building had been promised, and that black voters would not vote for the bond issue without it. City Council yielded, allocating a small portion of the bond to the Gainsboro library construction. The bond passed, and the new Gainsboro facility was designed within its small budget. However, the main library facility's construction required supplementary funding from the Works Progress Administration, a program which was frozen ahead of World War II. The Gainsboro library was completed in 1941, while the main library was delayed for decades.

Gainsboro Library, circa 1942

Following a petition from black leaders, the **Gainsboro branch of the Roanoke library system opened in 1921** in the Odd Fellows Building on Gainsboro Road; it was one of only four black libraries in the South at the time. Twenty years later, the City issued a bond to construct a new library facility on Patton Avenue, on land acquired from St. Andrew's Catholic Church. This historic library still serves the community and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Lucy Addison came to Roanoke from Northern Virginia in 1887 and taught in Roanoke City Schools for forty years. She was the **first principal of the Harrison**

School, which grew to become the largest black school in Virginia. Addison served on the Library Board at the time. In 1982, the church built a new sanctuary; the old church was listed on the National Register of Historic Places until it was destroyed by Fire in 1995.

the Roanoke Library Board to open a branch of the library on Gainsboro Road. She was vice-president of the Burrell Memorial Hospital Association and superintendent of the Sunday School at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. **A new high school for blacks was constructed and named in Addison's honor** in 1928; the building stands today northwest of the I-581/Orange Avenue interchange.

Lucy Addison (left) and Addison High School in the 1920s (below). The school later became Booker T. Washington Jr. High School. It is now used for school administration.

Health Care and Medicine

Segregation in the early 20th century kept black doctors and nurses from working in the white hospitals of Roanoke. Black citizens were also denied treatment in these facilities.

By 1914, a committee of doctors led by Isaac Burrell included J.B. Claytor (Sr.), J.S. Cooper, S.F. Williman, L.C. Downing, and J.H. Roberts, was working to establish a hospital to serve the region's black residents. Dr. Burrell became gravely ill, but was denied medical service in Roanoke's white hospital. Burrell had to travel to Washington, DC, for treatment; he made the trip out on the baggage car of a train, but died following surgery in 1914. The remaining group of doctors purchased a building at 311 Henry Street and renovated it to meet hospital standards. Named in memory of

their colleague, **the Burrell Memorial Hospital opened in 1915,** with ten beds and modern equipment in a minor and major operating room. Soon outgrowing this building, Burrell Hospital relocated to the former Allegheny Institute building on McDowell Avenue in 1921. A new four-story facility was built on the site in the 1950s; the building still stands, but no longer serves as a hospital.

The first home of Burrell Hospital (top) and the 1921 location at the former Allegheny Institute (center). Burrell Hospital staff in the 1950s (bottom).

Dr. Edward R. Dudley, first black dentist in Roanoke, examining a young boy at his clinic in Burrell Hospital, in the late 1920s.

were not limited to dentistry. He also served as a probation officer and helped organize the Magic City Building and Loan Association, the first black savings institution in the area.

In 1947, the family of Dr. John B. Claytor built **the Claytor Memorial Clinic** on 1st Street NW in honor of his wife, who died in 1946. Mrs. Claytor had hoped her husband and sons would practice together, and the Claytor Clinic became one of the earliest group practices in Roanoke, with several members of the Claytor family practicing there. The clinic still stands, but was damaged by fire in 1995.

Switch the image of Claytor Sr and Jr?

The Henry Street medical complex, circa 1940

In 1913, **the first black dentist in Roanoke, Dr. Edward R. Dudley,** located his office on Gilmer Avenue. His talents, however,

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The Influence of Churches in Gainsboro

In addition to religious activities, the churches in Northeast and Northwest were instrumental in **providing community leadership, childhood education, and information on public and social issues.** By 1900, there were nine black churches in the area, and many more would follow. **Four of the earliest churches are still active in the community.**

The Big Lick Colored Baptist Church was established in 1867, developing out of Bible study classes for black residents taught by Dr. Charles Cocke, founder of Hollins College. Later known as the **First Baptist Church (Colored),** the congregation built a new structure in 1898 on North Jefferson Street; it was the **first church in the community built by blacks, for black parishioners.** One of the longest-serving ministers of the church was **Reverend A.L. James.** Pastor for over thirty years, James also served on the library committee, the Burrell Memorial Hospital Association board, and was Vice President of the Negro Organization Society of Virginia, a grassroots organization that promoted community self improvement for African Americans during the Jim Crow era. He founded,

Above: The 1898 First Baptist Church (Colored)
Below: Rev. A.L. James

edited and published *The Church News,* the only black newspaper in Southwest Virginia at the time. In 1982, the church built a new sanctuary; the old church was listed on the National Register of Historic Places until it was destroyed by Fire in 1995.

St. Paul Methodist Church moved in the early 1880s to a church on the corner of Henry and High Streets, in a building that was once home to Greene Memorial Church (which had relocated to downtown). After 35 years on Henry Street, the church moved to its current location on Fifth Street, in the former St. James Methodist Episcopal Church. The entire congregation celebrated the move by walking in a procession from the old church to their new one. Like many church ministers of the day, St. Paul's **Reverend D. W. Harth** served in many capacities, including as principal of the Gainsboro School and a practicing attorney.

HISTORIC IMAGES OF ST. LUKE METHODIST NEEDED

St. Luke Methodist...

The original **Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church** (constructed 1898) featured a stained-glass window dedicated to Confederate General Stonewall Jackson. The window was designed in 1906 by the church pastor, **Reverend Lylburn Downing;** it honors Jackson's legacy of teaching Sunday school to blacks, including Downing's parents, in Lexington, Virginia. When the original church burned in the 1950s, the congregation built a new church at the same location (Patton Avenue, which was formerly Fifth Avenue). The window was salvaged from the burned structure and is the centerpiece of the new sanctuary.

Reverend Downing served as the pastor of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church for over forty years, until his death in 1937. He was a probation

Window memorializing Stonewall Jackson at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church (at left). The original Fifth Avenue Presbyterian sanctuary, lost to fire in the 1950s (above).

officer, supervisor of a home for delinquent youths, served on the Library Committee and was a member of various social organizations. For twenty years, he was the only black member of the Roanoke Republican Committee.

Park Street Baptist was established in 1892 by five members who met in a building on Park Street (now Fifth Street). Four years later, the congregation built a new structure at the corner of McDowell and Peach Road. Later known as **Hill Street Baptist,** the church was remodeled and expanded in the mid-1900s, but was later demolished during urban renewal efforts of the 1970s. In 1980, the congregation built a new church in the southeast Roanoke NW, where they continue to meet for worship.

A 1902 view of the first offices of Hill Street Baptist Church, at the corner of McDowell and Peach Road.

A Once-Vibrant African-American Community

Older than the new City of Roanoke developing to its south, Gainesborough ("Old Lick") was growing as **a racially-diverse neighborhood** that was the center of the African-American community by the 1890s. Businesses were the community were located on Gainsboro Road, from Gilmer Avenue north to Rutherford Avenue, and along First Street (later Henry Street) north of the railroad tracks. Doctors, lawyers, ministers, educators, industrial laborers (mostly at the railroad), domestic workers, and self-employed residents **lived together as a cohesive community** where residents looked after one another.

By the early 1920s, the neighborhood became a **self-sustaining African-American community.** Strong religious, educational, and social institutions, as well

View of Peach Hill, circa 1899. Hill Street Baptist Church is the white building at the top of the photo.

as professional and commercial services developed to serve the growing black population, otherwise denied services in the segregated South. **Skilled black leaders emerged in all these fields.**

From the early 1900s through the 1960s, a **vibrant business district and numerous social activities for the black community were found on Henry Street and Gainsboro Road.** The area bustled with restaurants, hotels, and a theater; insurance companies, law offices, financial institutions, and medical offices/pharmacies; barbershops, undertakers, tailors, dry cleaners, and as many other businesses. *The Roanoke Tribune,* a weekly newspaper, was first

Views of the area from the 1907 City of Roanoke Plan. The picture at left is labeled "General View, North Side." On the right is North Jefferson Street, with First Baptist Church (Colored) in the background.

Modern Houses for Colored People... C. B. BRADY

published in 1939 from Gilmer Avenue. Ten black-owned grocery stores operated throughout the neighborhood, but there were also white-owned grocery stores, including one now restored at the corner of Gilmer Avenue and Jefferson Street.

Social and Cultural Life

Social organizations and activities unified the community and boosted black leaders' influence.

The Roanoke Chapter of the NAACP was founded in 1916. Other organizations included the Freemasons, the Association of Colored Railway Trainmen and Locomotive Firemen (and its Ladies Auxiliary), Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, the Magic City Medical Society, and the Magic City Literary and Political Club. Women were also active, forming the Magic City Business Club in 1907, and establishing garden clubs dedicated to improving private properties, civic grounds, and public spaces. In addition, there were branches of the YMCA and YWCA on Wells Avenue.

Henry Street developed as the entertainment center from 1900 to 1960. A central gathering spot was the **Strand Theatre.**

The black chapter of the Elks of the World, at their lodge on Wells Avenue, circa 1930.

Built in 1923 as a cinema and small performance venue, it was later the Lincoln Theater, then the Ebony Club. Major black performers of the era, including Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Fats Waller, Ethel Waters, Cab Calloway, Lionel Hampton, Fats Domino, Dizzy Gillespie and the Harlem Globetrotters, would give their shows in the City's bigger segregated venues (Star City Auditorium, Hotel Roanoke, the

The Lincoln Theater (1930s)

American Legion), but were excluded from staying in whites-only lodging. This brought them back to Henry Street hotels. Band members would frequently hold **jam sessions and parties after hours,** often with residents in attendance.

Oscar Micheaux, one of the nation's first African-American film producers and distributors, established a corporate office and the Congo Film Company in the Strand Theatre in the 1920s. He produced at least six films from this location. His 1921 movie, *The House Behind the Cedars,* featured local actors and scenes in the neighborhood, including a garden party shot in the 400 block of Gilmer Avenue NW. Unfortunately, no print of the film survives. A historic marker on Henry Street highlights the Strand Theatre and the work of Oscar Micheaux.

Duke Ellington in the 1950s

"The Ebony Club had a great deal of entertainment going on during the late 50's and early 60's. During those days there was no air conditioning, just big front fans to cool the twirling doves. This side doors were left open; we could go past any friends. We had no money to buy a ticket, so we made our way to the side door and watched the shows. Sometimes a door man would turn us away, but we would always come back. The people inside would be dancing and wiping sweat. You could feel the heat coming through the open door. But no one paid the beat no mind. The music was good, the drinks were good, and the party was live; seemed like they danced all night." David Ramsey Sr., recalling his memories of the Ebony Club as a child. From: The Times and Life on Henry Street.

Civic Rights Trailblazers

Some of the most significant contributions made by Northeast and Northwest residents were in the **advancement of civil rights.**

A.J. Oliver was a 19th century pioneer in law and the **first black attorney in Roanoke.** Born during the Civil War, he began his legal career in West Virginia as one of the first black attorneys in the state, passing the bar in 1887. After relocating to Roanoke in 1889, he quickly established himself as a community leader, often preaching at St. Paul Methodist Church and joining the Freemasons and Odd Fellows. Oliver spent his life advancing civil rights in Virginia. In 1900, he was a delegate to the Virginia Conference of Colored Men Convention in Charlottesville that met to petition the white men of the state for racial equality and justice, especially in education. Two years later, he led a group of black Roanoke citizens objecting to the school board's use of only white teachers in black schools.

Born in 1901 and raised in Northeast Roanoke, **Belford Lawson, Jr. was a key national civil rights**

Top: A.J. Oliver, first black lawyer in Roanoke
Bottom: Belford Lawson, Jr., civil rights lawyer

attorney in the mid-twentieth century. As a lawyer in Washington, DC, he cofounded the **New Negro Alliance, which actively challenged discrimination by organizing protests against** retail stores to demand employment for black workers. In the 1938 case *New Negro Alliance v. Sanitary Grocery Company,* Lawson became the first African American to argue and win a case before the US Supreme Court, securing the right of the Alliance to picket. He later served on the defense team in a second Supreme Court case, *Henderson v. the Southern Railroad,* which successfully challenged discriminatory seating policies. In his later life, Lawson served on the NAACP Executive Board and as General President of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. He was also the first black man to address the Democratic National Convention in 1956.

Attorney Reuben Lawson was a **decisive legal figure in Virginia's civil rights landscape.** He argued the case *Ingram vs. Virginia* in 1946, which addressed the exclusion of blacks as jurors in state cases. He served as an attorney for the NAACP, arguing several

Oliver White Hill and Reuben Lawson lead a group of blacks to the US District Court in Roanoke in 1959. The group attended a hearing on the desegregation of Floyd County schools.

school desegregation cases in Southwest Virginia in the 1950s and 1960s. He built the Lawson Law Building, which still stands on Gilmer Avenue.

Oliver White Hill was a civil rights lawyer who grew up in the house at 401 Gilmer Avenue, which still stands. During his legal career he fought the "separate but equal" policies of the segregated South and won more than 75 segregation cases in the State of Virginia. In the 1940s, his legal accomplishments included successful court cases ordering equal pay for teachers. In 1954, he served as the trial lawyer for *Davis vs. Prince Edward County School Board,* one of five U.S. Supreme Court cases included in Brown vs. Board of Education, ending segregation in public schools. He also represented Rufus Edwards, a Gilmer neighbor, in a Supreme Court case that required white union officials to represent black union members as part of their bargaining unit. He remained active in civil rights as an attorney until his death in 2007, at 100 years of

"I have loved the law and risk of life; he has challenged the law... we lead the community of our country. He has become one of my heroes, and I have been urged to do everything that I can become to make America very, very indivisible and justice for all."
President Bill Clinton in 1999, awarding Oliver White Hill the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Edward R. Dudley was the son of Roanoke's first black dentist and grew up at 405 Gilmer Avenue. After achieving his law degree in 1941, he served as assistant Attorney General in New York. In 1943, he joined the legal staff of the NAACP fighting for blacks to be admitted to Southern universities, equal pay for black teachers, and an end to discrimination in public transportation. In 1948, President Truman appointed him as **America's first black ambassador,** to the country of Liberia. Later, he was a justice on the Domestic Relations Court for New York City, president of the Manhattan Borough, and a member of the New York City Council, before becoming a justice on the New York State Supreme Court.

The neighborhood also produced **four pilots of the "Tuskegee Airmen,"** a distinguished group of black airmen during World War

Edward R. Dudley being sworn in as Manhattan borough president, 1961.

II. Before the 1940s, black service members were banned from skilled training and service as pilots. Civil rights groups and the black press pushed for changes, leading to the War Department training a select group of nearly 1,000 black men at Tuskegee Army Air Field in Alabama. The men joined four all-black squadrons, becoming the first African Americans to fly combat aircraft. During the War, the Tuskegee Airmen, also known as the "Red Tails," achieved one of the lowest loss records in escorting bombers and won more than 850 medals. LeRoi Williams, his brother Eugene Williams, Ralph Claytor and Theodore Wilson **served with the Tuskegee Airmen,** proving themselves to be as skilled and brave as their white counterparts. Even though the Tuskegee Airmen proved their worth as military pilots, they were still forced to operate in segregated units and did not fight alongside their white countrymen.

Images of four Tuskegee Airmen

Chartered Town of Gainesborough

Orange Avenue (current alignment)

Magnolia

Great Road

Big Lick salt marsh

Camden Road (Tinker Complex)

Civic Center Complex

St. Andrew's Catholic Church

Gainsboro and Henry Street Historic Districts

William Street

current Post Office

Hotel Roanoke

Gainsboro and Henry Street Historic District

Civic Center Building Complex

YMCA Depot Junction Historic District

original Site of Big Lick Depot

Long Lick salt marsh

Original Town of Big Lick

HISTORIC GAINSBORO

This map depicts the evolution of the Gainsboro community from early settler days to the present. The base is Sanborn Insurance Maps from 1919; these are overlaid with historic and modern features.

1919 Sanborn map

historic road trace

modern road alignments

modern building footprints

EVOLUTION OF A NEIGHBORHOOD NAME

Today's Gainsboro neighborhood and the surrounding area has been referenced by many names over the years. The first settled area was known as Big Lick in the 1800s, named after the large salt marsh near the Great Road. In 1835, the settlement was chartered as the Town of Gainesborough by Major Kemp Gaines. When the development of the platted town failed, the Gainesborough name gradually fell out of favor. In 1852, with the establishment of the Big Lick Depot by the railroad, the name "Big Lick" became more common. In 1882, the Town of Big Lick became the City of Roanoke.

Over the years, the spelling of Gainesborough was shortened to Gainsborough and Gainsboro. The historic name of the original town persisted in many businesses and institutions along the original Gainsboro Road, such as the Gainsboro School and the Gainsboro Library. But for early residents of the area, the neighborhood was referred to as simply "Northeast" or "Northwest," based on the City's quadrants divided by Jefferson Street and the railroad. The resurgence of the historic Gainsboro name appeared in the 1970s as part of a redevelopment plan to revitalize the area. Stone gateways constructed with the realignment of Gainsboro Road in the 1990s now bear the name, as does the Gainsboro Historic District, which encompasses many of the oldest structures remaining in the area.

Today, the name Gainsboro applies generally to the neighborhood from Orange Avenue to the railroad tracks, and from I-581 to 5th Street.

View of Gainsboro from downtown Roanoke (circa 1928), looking north along Jefferson Street, which divided "Northwest" and "Northeast." Norfolk and Western Railway General Offices (near the Roanoke Higher Education Center) are in the center.

View of Gainsboro (Northeast and Northwest), looking north over the Hotel Roanoke. St. Andrew's Church is in the center left, with First Baptist Church (Colored) in front. Commonwealth Avenue leads off to the east.

View of Northeast, looking north along 4th Street. Norfolk and Western Railway roundhouse and machine shop are in the foreground. The original alignment of Williamson Road curves around the wooded hill at top.

A GAINSBORO TIMELINE

- 1798: "Big Lick" postal station established
- 1740s: first permanent settlers
- through early 1700s: Native hunters track game near area salt licks
- 1835: Town of Gainesborough chartered
- 1882: Big Lick becomes Roanoke
- 1882: Hotel Roanoke built
- 1881: Shenandoah Valley Railroad arrives
- 1874: Town of Big Lick chartered
- 1867: First Baptist Church (Colored) established
- 1852: Virginia and Tennessee railroad built through Roanoke Valley
- 1928: Lucy Addison High School built
- 1923: Strand Theater built
- 1921: Gainsboro Library opens in Odd Fellows Hall
- 1921: Burrell Hospital moves to McDowell Avenue
- 1970s: heyday of Henry Street
- 1917: Harrison School opens
- 1916: Roanoke NAACP founded
- 1915: Burrell Memorial Hospital opens in house on Henry Street; first to serve blacks
- 1902: existing St. Andrew's Church dedicated
- 1971: Gainsboro Redevelopment Plan calls for redevelopment in Northwest area
- 1968: Roanoke Civic Center construction
- 1966: I-581 completed through Gainsboro
- 1958: Viscose Plant closes; mass layoffs at N&W Railway
- 1950s: Roanoke begins urban renewal efforts in Northeast
- 1948: Clayton Memorial Clinic opens
- 1941: current Gainsboro Library opens
- 2005: Gainsboro Historic District
- 2004: Henry Street Historic District
- 1996: Gainsboro Library on National Register
- 1995: Gainsboro Road/Wells Avenue realignment

1700s   1800s   1900s   2000s

NATIONAL EVENTS

- 1775-1783: American Revolutionary War
- 1861-1865: Civil War
- 1865: slavery abolished
- 1865-1877: Reconstruction
- 1877: Jim Crow era begins
- 1914-1918: World War I
- 1929-1939: Great Depression
- 1939-1945: World War II
- 1941-1946: Tuskegee Airmen trained in Alabama
- 1954: Brown vs. Board of Education declares school segregation unconstitutional
- 1964: Civil Rights Act racial discrimination is illegal
- 1965: Voting Rights Act
- 1968: Assassination of Martin Luther King