

HOLBROOK-ROSS HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Holbrook-Ross Historic District, named for two major streets, is significant as the first neighborhood in Danville for African American professionals. Lawyers, ministers, dentists and physicians, as well as, business owners, insurance agents, postal clerks, and skilled craftsmen, made it their home in the late 19th century. It grew rapidly during the 1880s following the construction of the Danville School, the city's public school for blacks. By the turn of the 20th century, Holbrook Street had become Danville's foremost black residential address. The district is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register.

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GREEN BOOK
LOCATION

1938-1967

I.W.TAYLOR HOUSE

Irvin Warwick Taylor (1879-1951) was a pioneering educator in Danville and served as the long-time principal of Westmoreland Elementary School. He actively participated in civic activities and was a board member of First State Bank. Today, a school in Danville honors his legacy by carrying his name. Below is a quote from the Register & Bee following his death.

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Professor Taylor's Useful Life

Irvin W. Taylor's contribution to the education of the young people of his race should not be unsung, nor should his quiet and philosophic attitude towards the reforms which came during his lifetime on racial matter. Certainly he was a valuable figure in the community life, albeit one who shrank from recognition and who was content to see the advancement of causes dear to him.



HARGRAVES - GEARY HOUSE



John Hargraves, a craftsman, built his stunning Queen Anne residence located at 307 Holbrook St. The house boasts a cross-gable roof adorned with five gables that feature returns supported by double brackets. Additionally, another gable highlights the entrance of the spindled front porch. His son-in-law, Dr. John E. Geary, moved into the family home and became one of the city's first black dentists.

George and Ruth Pringle resided on the upper level of their home while running a restaurant in the basement. Known as Pringle's Blue Room, during segregation, the establishment also functioned as a tourist home. It was a popular spot for the negro baseball leagues, including the legendary Jackie Robinson, when they were in town.



Pringle's Blue Room
348 Holbrook Street

MERRITT HOUSE



Dr. Bishop Merritt resided at 310 Holbrook St. Originally from South Hill, VA, he made his home in Danville and became the city's first black dentist. Additionally, he was the first African American to complete an internship at the Guggenheim Dental Clinic.

Allen-Williams House

ROBERT ALLEN JR. (1871-1919) WAS A SKILLED CRAFTSMAN AND BRICK MASON WHO CONSTRUCTED HIS RESIDENCE AT 406 HOLBROOK ST. HE ALSO PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN BUILDING LOYAL BAPTIST CHURCH, HOLBROOK STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, AND SEVERAL OTHER NOTABLE STRUCTURES IN THE CITY OF DANVILLE. HIS SON IN LAW JERRY WILLIAMS, WAS A CIVIL RIGHTS ATTORNEY WHO WORKED ON SEVERAL KEY COVIL RIGHTS CASES WITH THE NAACP LEGAL DEFENSE FUND. THURGOOD MARSHALL WAS A FREQUENT VISITOR OF THE HOME.



The Westmoreland School, established around 1880, was the first public high school for Black students in Danville. William F. Grasty served as one of the early principals, followed by E. A. Gibson upon his retirement. In 1925, a new building was constructed on the site, which also housed an elementary school led by Principal I.W. Taylor. Today, the former school building is now home to the Headstart preschool program.



**Westmoreland
School**



IT'S A
PINK &
GREEN
TOUR



This tour is part of the Holbrook-Ross Greenbook Guided Walking Tour, organized by local historian Karice Luck-Brimmer for Our History Matters.