

WOOK-TV TELEVISION PRODUCTION FACILITY
PROPERTY HISTORY AND EVALUATION

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April 18, 2013

Julia A Rogers Prize Essay

I chose the WOOK-TV television studio building as the subject of my Historic Property Documentation paper. WOOK-TV was the nation's first African American television station. My basic research strategy began with a general internet search (Google) and a targeted website search of the Washington, D.C. State Historic Preservation Office, the National Register of Historic Places, and World Cat Classic through the Goucher Library, for information on WOOK-TV. When beginning any paper, I cast a wide net to help identify both dead ends and further avenues of inquiry. In this case, I did not find any books or articles specifically written about WOOK-TV, or information in either the state or federal historic registers, but I did find local repositories of information about WOOK-TV in the special collections at the Washington, D.C. Public Library and archived at the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum in Washington, D.C. The library files and the museum archives helped me to narrow the focus of my research to two main sources: local newspapers and a trade journal for radio and television broadcasting. Through those two sources, I was able to reconstruct a history of WOOK-TV, including specific information about the studio and the station's staff and programming. While World Cat Classic did not yield specific information on WOOK-TV, it was an excellent source for general information on the history of television. Using the Goucher Library's Inter-Library Loan system, I was able to gather references to provide the context for evaluating WOOK-TV's significance and eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Through my research, I learned that when a subject lacks a published body of work, the best sources for specific information are often local libraries and archives, while the online resources collected on the Goucher Library website are good for locating broad historical references.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

5321 1st Place, Northeast, Washington, D.C. was the location of the WOOK-TV television production facility from 1963 to 1972. WOOK-TV was the first television station in America with all programming content created for an African American audience. The WOOK-TV building was evaluated for eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in April, 2013.

Construction of the WOOK building began in 1961 and concluded in the fall of 1962. The building was a small, mid-century modern structure with five recording studios, and a community room on the first floor and offices on the second floor. The exterior of the building features a distinctive diamond-shaped pattern in the concrete block of the second story, separated from the plain concrete block of the first story by horizontal concrete band course. A cantilevered concrete canopy protected the front entry of the building. The simple flourishes of patterned block, a band course and cantilevered canopy provided for a modestly decorated building. As the building permit has not been accessible, the designer of the building is undetermined.

WOOK-TV was located in a small industrial park in Northeast, Washington, D.C. close to its target audience in the District and in neighboring Prince George's County, Maryland. Although it was situated in a relatively isolated industrial subdivision, the property was located near the intersection of two major arterial roads, providing easy access to the station for both employees and visitors.

WOOK-TV broke the color barrier in television by providing programming developed by and for African Americans and employing an integrated staff. From 1963 to 1972 WOOK-TV

provided an outlet for news and entertainment for the District's African American community, a traditionally marginalized population. Television as a medium had been dominated by white Americans since its inception. Other ethnicities appeared infrequently on television programs, usually portrayed as stereotyped caricatures. During the 1960s, programming directed toward minorities was mainly developed by whites and African Americans were excluded from employment opportunities in television due to segregation. Leaders in the Black Power Movement of the 1960s realized that television was a powerful new medium for communication. Rather than leave representation of black images and messages to white station owners attempting to appeal to the "Negro market," the leaders of the movement engaged in series of maneuvers to take over stations catering to African Americans. WOOK-TV was one of the stations targeted, albeit unsuccessfully.

WOOK-TV was an important first step towards full-on African American participation in the medium of television. The widespread success of *American Bandstand* in the early 1960s created a national youth culture, but because the show maintained a policy of segregation, African American teens were excluded from participation in the new youth culture. *Teenarama Dance Party* functioned as a locally inclusionary mechanism, allowing African American teens to partake in the youth culture on the local level. The show also presented a positive portrayal of African American teens and helped to build their self-esteem, as well as providing a safe space for social interaction. Additionally, music-oriented programming may have seemed frivolous, but shows like *Teenarama Dance Party* were instrumental in promoting black musical artists and creating a market for those artists.

WOOK-TV building conveys the appearance, feeling and association of the television station during its period of significance while retaining a high degree of integrity. WOOK-TV's

period of significance begins in 1963 when the station first began broadcasting and ends in 1972 when the station went dark. Despite a 2007 remodeling for a new occupant that included the construction of a two-story entrance on a side elevation, and slight changes to the building's front façade, the physical integrity of the WOOK-TV building is good. When viewed from the sidewalk along 1st Place looking to the northwest, the 2007 addition is not visible and with the transmission tower looming behind it, 5321 1st Place looks much as it did when it was a functional television production facility.

The WOOK-TV building is recommended for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, as an early expression of African American communication and entertainment in the medium of television, and an inclusive purveyor of teen culture.

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PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

5321 1st Place, NE, Washington, D.C. was constructed in 1962 as a television production facility for WOOK-TV. The station was the nation's first African American television station. Although the station was on the air for less than a decade, from 1963 to 1972, it is best remembered for its teen dance show "Teenarama Dance Party."

Neighborhood Description

The WOOK-TV building is located in Chillum Castle Manor, a small commercial subdivision laid out across a low hill in northeast Washington, D.C. near the border of Prince George's County, Maryland (Figure 1). The subdivision was surveyed circa 1920-1930 and organized as a series of rectangular lots aligned along the intersection of two roads: 1st Place and Ingraham Street. Riggs Road was the northern terminus of 1st Place and provided access into the development. Ingraham Street, dead ended at the railroad tracks and was the southern terminus for 1st Place.

Development of the subdivision began in mid-1930s and continued sporadically with construction concentrated adjacent to the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad tracks (Figure 2). Three buildings were constructed in Chillum Castle Manor in 1962: the WOOK-TV building, 5201 1st Place, and 120 Ingraham Street (Figures 3-5).¹ Originally, these buildings shared similar massing, similar construction materials and a rectangular footprint. All three buildings were constructed of concrete block in a stack bond, composed of decorative blocks combined to create a geometric design, rhythmically repeated across the façade facing 1st Place (Figures 6 - 7). Differences in the level of detail on the exterior of the buildings, location on their respective lots,

¹ District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds. Personal communication.

and orientation of the buildings on the lot may be attributable to building function: 5321, a television production facility, is the most detailed and 5201 and 120 both likely small warehouses originally, are plainer. None of the other remaining buildings in Chillum Castle Manor share common characteristics with the three 1962 buildings. By 1974, the subdivision was nearly built out and its original 43 lots were consolidated into 10 large lots, only 6 of which were occupied with commercial masonry structures (Figures 8 - 10).

Building Description

The WOOK-TV building occupies a lot in the northeast corner of Chillum Castle Manor subdivision. The building is set back from the street on a large asphalt paved lot that is utilized for parking. The associated open lattice television/radio tower is located in the northeast corner of the lot, behind the building close to the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad tracks (now the Metro-rail tracks).

The first building at 5321 1st Place was a small single-story radio transmission station constructed for WOOK-AM in 1960 (Figure 11).² This earlier building was incorporated into the building envelope of the WOOK television production facility (Figures 12 – 13). The WOOK-TV building is a two-story concrete block structure that wraps around the front and side façades (Figure 3). It appears that the building's exterior color was originally either a light blue or light gray, but was painted dark brown during renovations performed in 2007.³ The lower story of the building has concrete block veneer in a stack bond. The first and second floors of the structure are divided by a modern interpretation of a band course of concrete that frames the plain, lower stack bond blocks and provides a visual break between the two stories. The frames

² *Washington, District of Columbia* [map]. "Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1867-1970."

³ Lindsay-Johnson, *Dance Party: the Teenarama Story*.

are exactly the width of the upper panels and are two blocks high. The division occurs below the mid-point of the structure, elongating the patterned, upper panels. The vertical element of the panels is balanced by the rusticated frames, which provide a horizontal feature that draws the eye across the building's façade (Figure 14). At the second story of the building, the concrete block is in a stack bond, divided into vertical panels, 6 blocks wide, and separated by spaces similar to expansion joints. The blocks of each panel form a geometric "diamond" pattern, repeated across the upper story of the building. Metal fasteners embedded in the front of the building above the original main entry may have been used to fasten a sign (i.e. "WOOK") to the building (Figure 15). The building has a flat roof, with the concrete veneer extending past the roofline to form a shallow parapet.

The original main entrance to the building faces 1st Place and is covered by a concrete cantilevered canopy with recessed lighting to illuminate the entryway (Figure 16). The original front entry is slightly off-set from the center of the building, set slightly closer to the south. The entry consisted of four aluminum-framed fixed glass panels and glass double entry doors in aluminum frames with two panels to either side. The panels and doors were capped with a fixed glass aluminum-framed transom that was divided into three panes.⁴ This arrangement is duplicated by a second set of doors, creating a narrow foyer that provided a break between the exterior and interior of the building. During the 2007 remodeling, this main entry was abandoned and altered: removing all but the interior set of double doors and accompanying transom that provided passage from the foyer into the lobby. The area was infilled with concrete block matching the appearance and patterning of the original building and a flat steel door set in a steel frame was set back in the entry opening, however the opening itself was left unaltered. A

⁴ Lindsay-Johnson, *Dance Party: the Teenarama Story*.

second door on the north side of the building provided informal access to WOOK (Figure 17). The access door is a single glass panel, with a glass transom above and a side light along one side, all set into an aluminum frame. The door and accompanying glazing appears to be original to the building.

There are four fixed sash, aluminum framed windows along the front façade. Like the original main entry, the windows are also not centered on the building's façade, and set closer to the north side of the building (Figure 14). The floating panels beneath all of the windows were added during the 2007 renovation. The panels are a thick gage corrugated aluminum sheet with regularly arranged round perforations. There are four upper and four lower windows along the north façade of the building that match the materials and size of those on the front façade, including the floating metal panels. The arrangement of the windows on the front façade varies on each story and overall has an irregular bay configuration (Figure 14). There are no windows on the south side of the building which could be related to the original interior layout of the building or the building's close proximity to 5201 1st Place (Figure 10). It is unknown if windows were present on the rear upper story of the building.

There is an addition to the rear of the radio transmission station for which no information on construction or fixtures and finishes has been found. By tracing the property's development through zoning and Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, it appears that this addition was constructed between 1963 and 1974.⁵ It is a single story structure with a flat roof and concrete block walls in a stretcher bond. Flat panel steel doors in steel frames provide access to the interior from the north wall of the building (Figure 18). Cables from the transmission tower enter the building along the north wall as well. The addition is owned by a communications

⁵ *Washington, District of Columbia* [map]. "Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1867-1970."

company, not the community service group who owns the original radio station and WOOK-TV parts of the building. There is no access between the addition and the main building. The addition lacks decorative elements and likely private, functional space, rather than the public space contained in the television production facility.

The 2007 remodeling project altered the original front entry of the WOOK-TV building. Two additions were also made, but these additions impacted only the portion of the building that was the original radio transmitting station, not the television production facility (Figure 19). The alterations shifted the main entrance from the WOOK-TV building to the front façade of a two-addition off the north wall of the original radio station. The front half of the addition is constructed of aluminum framed fixed sash windows with floating courses of staggered corrugated fiberglass panels and heavy gage corrugated aluminum panels. Panels are staggered within courses and each individual panel alternates between horizontal and vertical orientation of the corrugation. The panel walls extend past the roofline to form a parapet around the flat roof of the addition. The new main entrance to the building faces 1st Place, but is located in the two-story addition. The entry is a glass panel door set in an aluminum frame, covered by a panel of corrugated fiberglass set in an aluminum frame and suspended from the exterior wall frame by two cables. The rear half of the addition is concrete block with a parge coat of masonry-based mortar that is troweled smooth (Figure 20). This section of the addition lacks ornamentation because it encloses a stairwell. A small planting landscaped with bushes and perennials was added to the area between the WOOK-TV building and the sidewalk to the new main entry.

The second addition constructed during the 2007 project was a second story added above the original radio transmitting station (Figure 20). Unlike the rest of the building, this

addition was painted a lighter shade of brown, providing an obvious contrast with the older part of the building. The addition has a flat roof, and fixed sash aluminum windows of the same proportions as the original building's windows along the south and rear façades.

The WOOK television production facility was constructed with “five studios, a community room, and the latest in equipment,”⁶ with office space on the second floor. The configuration and sizes of the studios has not been determined. The furnishings of the community room⁷ on the ground floor were documented in a color photographs. It had a tile floor laid out in a stair step pattern with alternating rows of a darker tile (gray or blue) and a lighter tile (beige or off-white). The lower half of the concrete block walls were gray and the upper half of the walls was painted white. The acoustical drop ceiling consisted of rectangular white tiles set in a white-painted grid, with surface mounted fluorescent lights. A small kitchenette was also present, with blue cabinets.

Lacking architectural plans and building permit information, it is impossible to say what the floorplan and remaining fixtures and finishes of the WOOK television production facility may have been. Therefore, it is difficult to estimate how much of the original floorplan remains intact. Due to the sensitive nature of the current functions of the building, only the interior hallways were available for viewing on the first floor. The second story houses offices, as it likely did when WOOK owned the building, but whether or not these offices retain the original layout is unknown. The offices are finished with: painted drywall; an acoustical drop ceiling similar to that in the community room photograph, and flat doors set in steel frames. The first floor hallways have similar components and finishes. The front half of the two-story

⁶ “WOOK’s White House Visitor,” *Broadcasting* (February 17, 1967): 68.

⁷ Lindsay-Johnson, *Dance Party: the Teenarama Story*.

addition on the north façade houses the lobby/reception area on the ground floor, with offices on the second floor, and the rear portion contains a stairwell.

A HOME FOR WOOK

Richard Eaton, founder and president of the United Broadcasting Company, created WOOK-AM in 1947. WOOK-AM was one of the first radio stations in the United States programmed specifically for an African American audience. In 1947 WOOK-AM aired from its new station in a hotel at 1143 Connecticut Avenue in northwest, Washington, D.C., broadcasting from channel 1340 on the AM frequency. It was one of the first radio stations in the country with programming specifically oriented towards an African American audience and was the first radio station in the District of Columbia to hire an African American disc jockey. Three years later, frequent visitors to the premises and tension with hotel management lead to the station's relocation to 717 I Street, NW.⁸

By the mid-1950s, Eaton was on the move again and purchased several lots in the Chillum Castle Manor subdivision.⁹ A 300-ft tall radio tower and small, frame radio station were constructed in 1956 and WOOK-AM shifted its broadcasting to 1st Place, NE, while maintaining its office on I Street, NW.¹⁰ A concrete block radio transmitter station was constructed in front of the tower at 1st Place in 1960, rendering the frame building obsolete, with WOOK-AM continuing to broadcast from 1st Place, NE.¹¹

The success of WOOK-AM propelled Eaton to branch out into television. The radio station transmitting building was expanded to include television production facilities. A new

⁸ "All Radio and TV Stations," *Broadcasting Yearbook 1950*: 108.

⁹ District of Columbia, deed recorded in Book 9678, Folio 43.

¹⁰ "Radio AL to MT," *Broadcasting Yearbook 1956*: 88.

¹¹ "Radio by State AL to MT," *Broadcasting Yearbook 1960*: A-128.

building was constructed to house both WOOK-AM and WOOK-TV at 5321 1st Place, NE. Construction on the new facility was completed in the fall of 1962 and WOOK-TV aired its premiere broadcast on March 5, 1963.¹² WOOK-TV was broadcast from 1962 to 1973, going dark due to issues with the station's operating license which prevented the purchase of the equipment the facility needed to transmit a stronger signal.¹³

After WOOK-TV went off the air, the United Broadcasting Company continued to operate a radio station out of the 1st Place facility until 1993, when the building was sold to Radio 100 of Maryland Limited Partnership. Radio 100 owned and operated a radio station from 5321 1st Place until 1995 when the building was sold to a labor union.¹⁴ At some point between 1963 and 1974 a single-story concrete block addition was added off the rear of the original radio station, stretching the building to the rear line of the lot.¹⁵ The building remained relatively unaltered until it was purchased by a community service organization in 2006.¹⁶

In 2007, the building underwent a major exterior and interior renovation.¹⁷ A second story was constructed above the original radio station and the main entry was abandoned and altered and a two-story addition was constructed off the north side of the building, again at the site of the original radio station. The original interior fixtures and finishes were replaced, but the extent to which the original floorplan was altered is unknown: there are no extant floorplans for the television production facility and access to interior portions of the first floor is limited due to the services provided by the current owners. Despite these additions, the exterior of the

¹² "In Memorandum: Channel 14 WFAN-TV 1963-1972," *Broadcasting* (February 28, 1972): 27.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ District of Columbia, deed, document number 9300037637.

¹⁵ *Washington, District of Columbia* [map]. "Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1867-1970."

¹⁶ District of Columbia, deed, document number 2006155025.

¹⁷ Taylor, Denise. Personnel communication.

television production facility is relatively untouched and still retains its association as the WOOK-TV building (Figures 21 – 22).

WOOK AND EARLY BROADCASTING FACILITIES IN THE DISTRICT

The WOOK-TV building is located in a small commercial subdivision off Riggs Road, isolated from surrounding residential and commercial areas by parkland and the railroad tracks. The relative isolation of the WOOK-TV production facility and limited development of its surrounding environs provide little context in which to understand the decisions behind the selection of the building's location. It is through the evaluation of the site selection patterns of all television and radio production facilities operating in the District of Columbia in the 1940s and 1950s that provides the context for the WOOK-TV building.

Location Patterning of Early Broadcasting Facilities

Although radio was developed prior to television, the same factors for site selection in the 1940s and 1950s influenced both media: topography, zoning, and technology. “Downtown” (the city center) and the southern half of the District are in a floodplain, and lay at sea level. The northern half of the District is comprised of a series of river terraces that terminate in a ridge, which roughly follows the northern boundary of the city with its highest elevations between 300 and 350 feet above sea level.¹⁸ In general, the higher areas in the northern part of the city were zoned for residential use, with downtown zoned for commercial use and the entire District subject to height restrictions.¹⁹ The final components of site selection are the height of the transmission tower and its proximity to the production facility: while radio transmission towers could be located in surrounding areas, per Federal Communications

¹⁸ U.S. Geological Survey. *Washington West quadrangle, District of Columbia-Maryland-Virginia* [map].

¹⁹ National Capitol Planning Commission web site, *Building Heights in the Nation's Capital*.

Commission regulations, television towers had to be located in the center of the population they were intended to serve.²⁰

In the 1940s, this combination of factors had the effect of pushing transmission tower locations north out of the District and into Montgomery County, Maryland, while concentrating production facilities in hotels in the Northwest quadrant of downtown.²¹ WOOK-AM also followed this pattern and when the station first aired in 1947, it was located in the Meridian Mansions, a hotel in Northwest. No mention of WOOK is made on the National Register of Historic Places Inventory form for Meridian Mansions²² (Figure 23).

The 1950s saw a split between radio and television facilities. Radio production facilities continued to operate in various locations in downtown Northwest with their transmission towers either in Montgomery County or in new locations in Northwest near television production studios (Figure 24). Rather than continuing to operate out of existing buildings, television broadcasting companies relocated out of downtown into upper Northwest and constructed their own production facilities (Figure 24). WOOK-AM, like its contemporary other radio stations, remained in Northwest, but relocated to 717 I Street (e.g. “8th & Eye Sts”).²³

In 1960 when the United Broadcasting Company constructed a small radio transmitting station in Northeast at 5321 1st Place for WOOK-AM, it was one of two radio stations operating outside of the Northwest quadrant of the District. Two years later, the United

²⁰ Committee on the District of Columbia. *Television Towers*. H.R. 79-F7.2 (October 10, 1945): 63-67.

²¹ Sparenberg, Jennifer. (Short Title) *Spatial Analysis of Radio and Television Production Facilities*.

²² Meridian Mansions, National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form.

²³ “Directory of Broadcasting Stations in the U.S.,” *Broadcasting Yearbook, 1938 through 1972*.

Broadcasting Company constructed a television production facility for WOOK-TV collocated with WOOK-AM. It was the only television station located outside Northwest (Figure 25).²⁴

WOOK-TV in Northeast, Washington, D.C.

From the early 1950s until at least 1972, WOOK-TV remained the only television production facility located outside of Northwest. Rather than the old idea of locating a broadcasting facility based on topography, zoning and technology, WOOK-TV's location was more likely influenced by the location of its target audience, accessibility via automobile, and topography.

By 1960, African Americans comprised 54 percent of the District's population.²⁵ Montgomery County, Maryland along the northwest border of the District was a predominantly white county, while Prince George's County, Maryland along the eastern border had a large African American population. Prince George's County in particular had numerous African American neighborhoods dating back to the 19th century near its border with the District of Columbia.^{26,27} WOOK-TV's location on the east side of the District would have placed the combined radio and television production facility within range of both the District's African American population and that of neighboring Prince George's County.

The second factor in selecting a location for the WOOK-TV building would have been its accessibility via surface streets. The WOOK-TV building is located near a confluence of major roads into the District: New Hampshire Avenue; Riggs Road/Missouri Avenue, North Capitol Street and South Dakota Avenue (Figure 26). The production facility's location was

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Gibson, Campbell and Kay Jung. (Short Title) *Historical Census Statistics*.

²⁶ Anacostia Trails Heritage Area. (Short Title) *Trail Blazing Stories of African American History*.

²⁷ National Park Service. *African American Historic Resources of Prince George's County, Maryland*.

easily accessible for WOOK-TV employees and visitors either travelling into the District from Prince George's County or from other areas within the District itself. Visitors to the station included both local teen dancers in-studio to film *Teenarama Dance Party* and African American performers in town to play a show at the Howard Theatre. Due to the WOOK-TV building's proximity to four arterials through the District, WOOK-TV was located within 3.5 miles of the Howard Theatre following a route easily traversable via major roads (Figure 26). The Howard Theatre is one of the oldest theatres in the country to feature African American entertainers and serve an African American audience.²⁸ By the time WOOK-TV aired in 1962, the Howard Theatre had been hosting African American performers for more than 50 years.²⁹ Venues like the Howard Theatre worked in conjunction with African American radio stations to promote African American performers.³⁰ WOOK-TV's *Teenarama Dance Party* frequently featured in-studio visits by top African American musical acts that were in town to perform at the Howard Theatre, including the Temptation, the Marvelettes, Martha Reeves, and James Brown."³¹

Topographically, the Chillum Castle Manor subdivision is located on a small hill, almost 200 feet above sea level. While not as high as the location of other stations in Northwest, the surrounding area to the east slopes gently away from the subdivision and WOOK's transmission tower is visible from at least one mile away. In light of these three new factors – proximity to target audience, accessibility to major arterial roads, and topography – the United Broadcasting Company's decision to construct the WOOK-TV production facility in Northeast Washington, D.C. was a logical decision.

²⁸ Howard Theater National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Austen, Jake, (Short Title) *TV-a Go-Go*, 109.

³¹ Washington D.C. Cultural Tourism, African American Heritage Trail.

WOOK-TV, THE “NEGRO MARKET” AND TEEN DANCE SHOWS

The history of WOOK-AM and WOOK-TV are inextricably linked by the idea of providing a media outlet for an underserved segment of the population: African Americans. Richard Eaton, a white Harvard-educated Quaker, had been working in radio for 7 years when he decided to form the United Broadcasting Company and create a radio station with programming aimed exclusively at African Americans.³² When Eaton began WOOK-AM in 1947, there was only one other radio station in the nation dedicated solely to African American programming, WDIA-AM in Memphis, Tennessee.³³ However, WDIA-AM’s radio announcers (e.g. disk jockeys) were all white. WOOK-AM was the first radio station to hire a full-time African American announcer, Hal Jackson.³⁴ The success of WOOK-AM and WDIA-AM encouraged the formation of other all-black broadcasting radio stations across the county.³⁵

Creating WOOK-TV

In 1961, construction began on a combined radio/television production facility from which both WOOK-FM and WOOK-TV would be broadcast. On hand at the dedication of the WOOK building were “FCC members and Washington civic leaders” and the assistant news secretary to President Kennedy.³⁶ That same year, Eaton was given the Advertising Club of Metropolitan Washington’s “Award of Achievement” on the opening of his new building and in recognition of his “record of integration, which included employment of the first Negroes in key radio positions” due to WOOK-AM’s long history of hiring African Americans as radio

³² “Richard Eaton, Pioneer in Black Radio with Station WOOK, Dies at Age 81,” *The Washington Post*.

³³ Alston, Roland. “Black-owned radio: taking to the airwaves in a hurry,” *Black Entertainment* (July 1978): 6.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ “WOOK’s White House visitor,” *Broadcasting* (February 17, 1961): 68.

announcers and in other positions at the station, dating back to 1947 when the station first aired.³⁷

While WOOK-TV's general manager, John Panagos, was white, the positions related to programming were staffed by African Americans who had worked with or were known to Eaton through WOOK-AM: Joseph "Tex" Gathings, Program Director; Lionel Hampton, Music Director, and Clifton D. Holland joined the television staff in 1966 as the Vice President in Charge of Special Programming.³⁸³⁹ The WOOK-TV staff remained largely consistent through the nine years the station was on-air with only minor changes: Panagos was replaced by E. Carlton "Bud" Myers, Jr., another white man, in 1966 as the general manager; Tex Gathings left WOOK in 1972 and was replaced by Joseph Washington, and Bob King, host of *Teenarama Dance Party*, left WOOK-TV in 1968 due to a management dispute.⁴⁰⁴¹ The extent of African Americans employed by WOOK-TV is not known although photographs show African American cameramen and articles in trade journals discussed the station's African American employees organizing into a union bargaining unit in the fall of 1968.⁴²⁴³

WOOK-TV operated as an independent, non-network affiliated station on the ultra-high frequency (UHF) on Channel 14. This allowed Eaton to maintain control over all aspects of the station, but also put the station at a disadvantage technologically and financially. In 1963 when WOOK-TV first aired, UHF was an emerging technology: a converter needed to be installed on a television set in order to receive a UHF signal. At the time of the station's initial broadcast,

³⁷ "Radio chain founder honored for new building," *Jet* (January 26, 1961).

³⁸ United Broadcasting Company. (Short Title) "A Presentation of the Washington Market."

³⁹ "Meet the fine executives behind United Broadcasting Company," *Broadcasting* (December 5, 1966): 41.

⁴⁰ "Television Facilities," *Broadcasting Yearbook*, 1963 through 1972.

⁴¹ Lindsay-Johnson, Beverly. *Dance Party: the Teenarama Story*.

⁴² Lindsay-Johnson, Beverly. *Dance Party: the Teenarama Story*.

⁴³ "Union-recognition issues sparks UBC walkout." *Broadcasting* (September 2, 1968): 32-33.

roughly 90,000 to 100,000 homes in the District had television sets that were able to receive UHF signals.⁴⁴ Even though WOOK-TV's demographic research found an estimated 57 percent of the District's residents were African American, it is unlikely that all African Americans in the District had a television set, much less the converter needed to receive UHF channels.⁴⁵ In 1962, Congress passed the All-Channel Television Receiver Law which required all television receivers constructed after April 30, 1964 to be equipped to receive VHF and UHF signals.⁴⁶ The law was intended to aid existing UHF stations most of which were either marginally profitable or operated at a loss and to increase the number and diversity of program choices.⁴⁷ By going on the air in 1963, the United Broadcasting Company gambled on picking up enough advertisers for WOOK-TV to be profitable when the receiver law went into effect a year later. Eaton had actually held a Federal Communications Commission license for WOOK-TV since 1954, but because of the notorious unreliability of UHF in the 1950s, many UHF stations folded quickly. So Eaton waited for UHF to become economically viable before launching his television station.^{48,49} The United Broadcasting Company's initial outlay for the WOOK-TV start-up was estimated at half a million dollars.⁵⁰ The way independent stations generated revenue was by attracting and holding both a large audience and advertising interest.⁵¹ This is not to say that independent stations were unsuccessful, just that it was more difficult for them to be successful than a nationally affiliated station. Launching WOOK-TV at a time when the audience was less

⁴⁴ Laurent, Lawrence. "First negro television station to start broadcasting Feb. 11," *The Washington Post* (January 22, 1963): A23.

⁴⁵ United Broadcasting Company. "A Presentation of the Washington Market."

⁴⁶ Webbink, Douglas W. "The Impact of UHF promotion: the all-channel television receiver law." *Law and Contemporary Problems*, (Summer 1969): 535-561.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ingram, Clarke. "Channel Six: UHF," DuMont Television Network Historical Web Site (1999-2008).

⁴⁹ Laurent, Lawrence. "WOOK entering TV via UHF on Sept. 1," *The Washington Post* (January 31, 1962): D6.

⁵⁰ Laurent, Lawrence. "First negro television station to start broadcasting Feb. 11," *The Washington Post* (January 22, 1963): A23.

⁵¹ Gelman, Morris J. "Life without networks." *Television* (June 1963): 65.

than 100,000 viewers meant it was harder to attract advertisers, which in turn meant less revenue, resulting in a small operating budget.

WOOK-TV was initially slated to begin broadcasting on September 1, 1962, but had technical difficulties and was unable to broadcast. Timed to appear with WOOK-TV's premiere, the *Washington Post* and *Broadcasting* (a weekly trade journal devoted to radio and television) ran articles outlining the station's proposed programming, 100 percent of which was oriented towards a black audience: variety entertainment, fashion, sports, culture, national and local news with special attention to Washington's African American population, films, and original and syndicated shows.⁵²⁵³ It was promised that WOOK-TV would also use its counterpart's radio announcers on the television station, offer employment opportunities to Howard University students, and that station personnel would be integrated, not segregated.⁵⁴ WOOK-TV did utilize its radio staff on the television side of its broadcasting and did have an integrated staff. However it is unknown whether or not students from Howard University were actually employed as volunteers, interns, or staff.

WOOK-TV Program Format

WOOK-TV premiered in February 1963, operating from 5 pm to 11:30 pm. The station's initial programming was heavily slanted towards music and did not necessarily reflect the programming promoted in the fall of 1962. The reaction from leaders in the African American community was swift and derisive: the station was accused of depicting African Americans

⁵² Laurent, Lawrence. "WOOK entering TV via UHF on Sept. 1," *The Washington Post* (January 31, 1962): D6.

⁵³ (Short Title) "Ethnic group programming expands." *Broadcasting* (September 3, 1962): 46.

⁵⁴ Laurent, Lawrence. "WOOK entering TV via UHF on Sept. 1," *The Washington Post* (January 31, 1962): D6.

“...in the tap-dancing, shouting type of program...following the pattern of (WOOK) radio...”⁵⁵ *Jet* magazine derided the station having come up with “...only a menu of gutbucket music and commercials” and having “...hired no trained newsmen and failed to develop citywide programs aimed at improving conditions.”⁵⁶ Representatives of the Urban League of the District and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) were also concerned that WOOK-TV would carry the segregation problem to the airwaves. To stem the tide of criticism, Eaton met with community leaders to assure them that the station would not program anything distasteful to them and both parties agreed to meet every five to six weeks to discuss the subject matter of the station’s programming.⁵⁷ Indeed, criticism aimed at WOOK-TV may have over-estimated the station’s operating budget, which very likely prevented the station from being able to afford to hire trained newsmen, rather than using its radio announcers as newsmen. Although Eaton did later admit to steering clear of controversial issues when the station first went on the air, WOOK-TV was born out of a radio station, and the music-heavy focus of the initial programming may have been more of a case of relying on what the owner and Program Director were familiar with: music.

From 1963 to 1966, the station’s programming was a mix of purchased film and original programming created and filmed at 5321 1st Place, NE. The programming consisted of:

- Lionel Hampton’s music show (original, syndicated by the United Broadcasting Company and telecast over stations);
- *Aunt Mary’s Birthday Party* – aimed at children 7 to 12 years of age (original);
- *Teenarama Dance Party*, hosted by WOOK AM announcer Bob King (original);
- *The Precola DeVore Show* – covering beauty, fashion, and women’s interests (original);

⁵⁵ Whitten, Leslie H. “D.C. civil rights leaders protest negro oriented tv station,” *The Washington Post* (February 11, 1963): A3.

⁵⁶ Ticker column under “Confidential,” *Jet* (February 28, 1963): 10-11.

⁵⁷ “Equipment problems delay WOOK-TV,” *Broadcasting* (February 2, 1963): 125.

- News program hosted by Tex Gathings (original);
- A variety show featuring local talent (original);
- *Oscar Brown Jazz Time, U.S.A.* (purchased);
- *Broadway Music Goes Latin* (purchased);
- Mahalia Jackson's spiritual/gospel program (purchased);
- Bishop Fulton Sheen's spiritual program (purchased)
- Professional wrestling (purchased), and
- Feature films (purchased).⁵⁸⁵⁹⁶⁰

Criticism of WOOK-TV's music-oriented programming came to a head in 1966 when two companies, Washington Community Broadcasting Company and Washington Civic, attempted to take over the station by filing competing applications with the Federal Communications Commission for the WOOK-TV license.⁶¹ If successful, the Washington Community Broadcasting Company wanted to continue to operate WOOK-TV as an African American-oriented station, but include history, culture, and editorial issues focused on the African American community.⁶² The Washington Civic group did not disclose whether or not it would continue African American-oriented program, but stated it would "emphasize educational and public service programming."⁶³ The challenge may have been a call to arms for WOOK-TV: in late 1966, Clifton D. Holland, an African American, was promoted to Vice President of Special Programming of the United Broadcasting Company and pursued more community-oriented programming.⁶⁴ In early 1967, this new shift in programming was reflected by the addition of two and a half hours of news co-hosted by Program Manager Tex Gathings and an original show "Controversy" hosted by Dennis Richards, a young radio announcer from Massachusetts.⁶⁵

⁵⁸ "Nation's first minority group TV station to broadcast today," *Chicago Defender* (February 11, 1963): 16.

⁵⁹ United Broadcasting Company. (Short Title) "A Presentation of the Washington Market."

⁶⁰ "Television Highlights," *The Washington Post* Television Listings 1963-1970.

⁶¹ (Short Title) "Three way fight for WOOK-TV," *Broadcasting* (September 5, 1966): 47.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Adams, Leroy F. "New group seeks WOOK TV outlet," *The Washington Post* (September 2, 1966): B1.

⁶⁴ "Meet the fine executives behind United Broadcasting Company," *Broadcasting* (December 5, 1966): 41.

⁶⁵ "WOOK-TV switches to news and opinion talk," *Broadcasting* (February 6, 1967): 67.

Richards' new show featured interviews with guests and phone-in participation from viewers, with a focus on controversial topics such as venereal disease, police department problems, etc.⁶⁶ Unfortunately, this new programming was not well received, with the *Washington Post* reporting that WOOK-TV did not appear to have the budget to adequately cover the news with only a staff of three reporters, and went on to note that "a staff of 30 isn't considered large for a Washington TV station news operation."⁶⁷ The same article offered the backhanded compliment that WOOK-TV had "discontinued their collection of ancient films" to switch to more news related programming. This new criticism aptly reveals the station's operation was based on a tight budget with little or no profit.

WOOK-TV's Twilight Years

The period of 1967 to 1972 was tumultuous time for WOOK-TV filled with major changes at the station, labor union disputes, and other legal issues. In 1968, WOOK-TV changed its call letters to WFAN-TV. The reason for the change in call letters has not been found, however, it may have been related either to the attempted license takeover initiated in 1966 which remained locked in litigation or to align the station with WFAN-FM, the United Broadcasting Company's Spanish-language radio station, one of the first "Latin-oriented" radio stations in the District.⁶⁸ However, the change in call letters had little effect in the media and local newspapers and radio/television trade journals still referred to the station as WOOK-TV.⁶⁹

The change in call letters echoed a change in upper management with the replacement of United Broadcasting Company Vice President and WOOK-TV General Manager John Panagos

⁶⁶ Laurent, Lawrence. "Channel 14 looks to news," *The Washington Post* (February 3, 1967): A1.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ "Cuban invasion story still being written," *Broadcasting* (September 19, 1966): 89.

⁶⁹ "Call letter applications," *Broadcasting* (February 26, 1968): 66.

with E. Carlton “Bud” Myers and the redirection of the station’s programming format to include more local news and attempt to address serious issues.⁷⁰ Changes in management were also reflected by changes in staff: Bob King left the station in 1968 due to a dispute with management His position as host of *Teenarama Dance Party* was filled by a rotating cast of personnel until the show’s cancellation in 1970⁷¹ and by the summer, the station’s employees attempts to unionize sparked a series of labor issues culminating in a walkout in August.⁷²

Despite having changed its programming format the prior year, WOOK-TV again altered its programming in 1969. These changes to WOOK-TV’s programming provided Spanish-language programs to appeal to the growing community of Latinos in the District, in addition to its African American-oriented programming.⁷³

The series of programmatic changes beginning in 1967 and continuing through the late 1960s illustrate WOOK’s struggle to increase and retain both audience and advertisers. WOOK-TV’s audience attrition was partially due to the station’s undersized transmitter which was only one quarter of the height and power needed to transmit a steady signal.⁷⁴ Because of the ongoing license issue, the Federal Communications Commission froze the permits for improvements to WOOK-TV’s transmission equipment.⁷⁵ The freeze on improvements had two effects on WOOK-TV: the station sought other ways to increase its signal and the freeze sparked a series of programming changes in attempt to gain a wider audience within the range of its current transmission. In 1966, WOOK-TV joined five other District television stations to pursue constructing a tall tower in Montgomery County that would increase the range of all six

⁷⁰ “Meet the fine executives behind United Broadcasting Company,” *Broadcasting* (January 9, 1967): 11.

⁷¹ Lindsay-Johnson, Beverly. *Dance Party: the Teenarama Story*.

⁷² “Union-recognition issues sparks UBC walkout,” *Broadcasting* (September 2, 1968): 32-33.

⁷³ “Television Highlights,” *The Washington Post* (1969-1970).

⁷⁴ Eaton, Richard. “In memorandum: channel 14 WFAN-TV 1963-1972,” *Broadcasting* (February 28, 1972): 27.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

stations.⁷⁶ A shared tower would have obviated the need for the United Broadcasting Company to go through the Federal Communications Commission for permits to upgrade its equipment and nullified the punitive effect the permit freeze had on WOOK-TV's operation. However, as of 1969, the tall tower had yet to materialize and Montgomery County was successfully fighting against the tower's construction. Additionally, WOOK-TV's programming changes had little or no effect on increasing their audience or pool of advertisers.

Compounding WOOK's licensing and transmission problems were accusations leveled against the station by the Washington Community Broadcasting Company which contended WOOK was using its religious programming to run "a numbers racket."⁷⁷ The Washington Community Broadcasting Company followed its accusation by filing a petition with the Federal Communications Commission to broaden upcoming hearings into WOOK-TV's license to include the numbers racketeering.⁷⁸ Ultimately WOOK-TV's license issues and racketeering accusation spread: engulfing seven of the United Broadcasting Company's stations, nationwide, in the license hearings.⁷⁹⁸⁰

No longer able to continue operation amidst the continuing license renewal issues and financial shortfalls, WOOK-TV went dark on February 12, 1972.⁸¹ Richard Eaton addressed WOOK-TV's demise in an advertisement taken out in both the *Washington Post* and *Broadcasting* magazine titled "In Memorandum."⁸²⁸³ According to Eaton, the main reasons for WOOK-TV's non-viability were the lack of a strong enough signal to reach a large enough

⁷⁶ "Six D.C. stations get local OK for tall tower," *Broadcasting* (June 6, 1966): 72.

⁷⁷ "Was WOOK used in numbers racket?" *Broadcasting* (June 30, 1969): 61-62.

⁷⁸ Jones, William H. "Group charges WOOK with 'numbers' boost," *Washington Post* (June 24, 1969): A1.

⁷⁹ "The media: changing hands," *Broadcasting*, Vol. 80, No. 13 (March 29, 1971): 94.

⁸⁰ "Renewals clouded by bribe charges," *Broadcasting*, Vol. 81, No. 19 (November 8, 1971): 44.

⁸¹ Levey, Robert F. "WFAN going off the air," *The Washington Post* (February 9, 1972): D1.

⁸² Eaton, Richard. "In memorandum: channel 14 WFAN-TV 1963-1972," *Broadcasting* (February 28, 1972): 27.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

audience to attract advertisers that would have provided for profitable operation of the station.⁸⁴

In terms of WOOK-TV's achievements, Eaton cited the station's public affairs programs (*Washington Speaks, Hot Seat, Controversy, and Checkpoint 14*) and the station's coverage of the D.C. Public School System (*Tune in your Schools, The D.C. Superintendent's Report, and the Scholastic Quiz*).⁸⁵ It is ironic that information on WOOK's troubles with the Federal Communications Commission is widely available, while information on what Eaton considered WOOK's best achievements is relatively nonexistent.

Finally, on April 26, 1974, the Federal Communications Commission revoked the license for WOOK-TV/WFAN-TV (Channel 14), Washington, D.C. on the grounds that the station had been dark for substantial periods of time and there was no indication it would resume operations in the near future.⁸⁶

WOOK-TV and the "Negro Market"

The rise and fall of WOOK-TV is best understood against the backdrop of what was happening to communication media during the early to late 1960s. By the 1960s, African Americans had migrated from rural areas, primarily in the South, and settled in cities, such that nearly two-thirds of the African American population was concentrated in the twelve largest American cities.⁸⁷ Corporate America had noticed the emerging consumer demographic, but had not considered African Americans to be an important market until the early 1960s. Advertising in television and radio trade journals for the "Negro Market" began as a slow trickle which increased in prevalence such that by 1962, *Sponsor* published a special edition aimed exclusively

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Eaton, Richard. "In memorandum: channel 14 WFAN-TV 1963-1972," *Broadcasting* (February 28, 1972): 27.

⁸⁶ "FCC lifts licenses of two Eaton UHF's," *Broadcasting* (April 29, 1974): 7.

⁸⁷ Abbott, Carl. *Urban American in the modern age: 1920 to the present*, 68.

at capturing African American viewers/listeners.⁸⁸ However, until the 1970s the majority of the radio and television stations with either partial or complete programming aimed at African Americans were white-owned.⁸⁹ Although WOOK-TV was “white-owned,” to dismiss WOOK-TV as an attempt to cash in on the new “Negro market” hyped in the trade journals ignores evidence to the contrary: when Eaton started WOOK-AM in 1947 there was no recognition that a “Negro market” existed, and hiring African Americans to staff a radio station was a rarity. WOOK-TV was created out of WOOK-AM “to provide meaningful service to a then neglected audience...the Black Community.”⁹⁰ The veracity of Eaton’s conviction is believable considering WOOK-TV operated at a loss during all of its nine year run before going dark. Easton estimated WOOK-TV’s losses in revenue to be roughly \$1.45 million.⁹¹ Had Eaton been seeking only profit, he could have targeted a broader demographic or unloaded the unprofitable station by allowing Washington Community Broadcasting Company to take over WOOK-TV’s license. The idea of serving underrepresented communities was a recurring theme for United Broadcasting Company properties: establishing the first Spanish-language radio station in Washington, D.C. in 1960, the first Cuban-oriented radio station in Miami, Florida in the early 1960s, and the first Japanese-language television station in Honolulu, KIKU-TV, in 1967.⁹²⁹³

When WOOK-TV first aired in 1963, civil rights leaders were stuck in a position of demanding “an end to racial discrimination in the television industry, but feared that black-oriented television would exacerbate divisions among Americans” or worse, that these stations would lead to frivolous “escapist” programming rather than address the political, economic, and

⁸⁸ Weems, Robert E., Jr. (Short Title) “The revolution will be marketed,” *Radical History Review* (Spring 1994): 96.

⁸⁹ Alston, Roland. “Black-owned radio: taking to the airwaves in a hurry,” *Black Entertainment* (July 1978): 20.

⁹⁰ Eaton, Richard. “In memorandum: channel 14 – WFAN-TV, 1963-1972,” *Broadcasting* (February 28, 1972): 27.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² “Richard Eaton, Pioneer in Black Radio with Station WOOK, Dies at Age 81,” *The Washington Post* (June 3, 1981): C8.

⁹³ Raycom Media Companies web site, *KGMB/KHNL/KOGG/KHBC history of call signs*.

educational needs of the African American community.⁹⁴⁹⁵ Such criticisms were leveled against WOOK-TV and a similar debate ensued over Channel 38 in Chicago.⁹⁶

The campaign for black media control and accountability was an important part of the black power movement of the 1960s and 1970s.⁹⁷ Television and radio were powerful purveyors of culture and by controlling these media outlets leaders of the black power movement felt they could provide a platform for communication, eliminate misinformation and news from the white corporate establishment and further the causes of the movement. Indeed, activists from the Urban League and NAACP created the Washington Community Broadcasting Company in the attempt to introduce elements of politics into black media and to increase the economic potential of black media.⁹⁸ The filing of a competing license application for WOOK-TV was a deliberate attempt to take over the station and provide what they considered to be more substantive programming. However, what the community leaders overlooked was the positive impact WOOK-TV's original programs had on African American teenagers, particularly *Teenarama Dance Party*.

Teen Culture and Teenarama Dance Party

Teen "bandstands" (e.g. dance shows) were extremely popular throughout the 1950s and 1960s. When *Ted Steele's Bandstand* premiered in 1950, it was the only teen dance show on the air, 8 years later there were 70 teen dance shows around the country.⁹⁹ This profusion of locally filmed and broadcast teen dance shows is attributable to the phenomenal success of *Bandstand*,

⁹⁴ Godfried, Nathan. (Short Title) "Identity, power, and local television," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, (2002): 118.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 122.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 117.

⁹⁷ Ward, Brian. (Short Title) *Just my soul responding*, 533.

⁹⁸ Ward, Brian. (Short Title) *Just my soul responding*, 533-534.

⁹⁹ (Short Title) "It started with Steele," *Dance Magazine* (April 1958): 70.

the precursor to *American Bandstand*.¹⁰⁰ *American Bandstand* evolved out of the local teen dance show *Bandstand*, which was filmed in Philadelphia and broadcast to Philadelphia and its suburbs, Southern New Jersey, Delaware, and the upper Chesapeake Bay region of Maryland.¹⁰¹ *Bandstand* was vigorously marketed on the radio prior to airing in 1952. The advertising had its intended effect: 1,500 teenagers turned up the first day of filming.¹⁰² *Bandstand's* popularity continued to grow and by 1955 it was the top rated show in its timeslot.¹⁰³ Teenagers lined up around the block to get on the show, even on days when it was not filming.¹⁰⁴ Like all teen dance shows, *Bandstand* featured “regulars” who appeared multiple times a week. The regulars received fan mail and became minor celebrities among their peers.¹⁰⁵ Kids travelled from all around the country to try to get on *Bandstand*¹⁰⁶ and teens tuned in to see what the regulars were wearing, how they were dancing, and to hear the latest rock and roll albums.¹⁰⁷ Despite Dick Clark’s claim to the contrary, *Bandstand* was effectively segregated on the dance floor. The show featured African American musical performers, played records by African American musical artists, but black teens were kept off the show and out of the audience through a series of rules and slights. At first, African American teens were allowed in the audience and on the show in limited numbers, but were only allowed to dance with other African American teens.¹⁰⁸ When African American teens did get on the show, they did not appear on camera, likely to discourage their participation.¹⁰⁹ To further discourage participation, *Bandstand's* producers’ limited participation of African American dancers to half the show and when that still did not provide

¹⁰⁰ Shore, Michael, et al. (Short Title) *The history of American Bandstand*, 13.

¹⁰¹ Delmont, Matthew F. (Short Title) *The nicest kids in town*, 33.

¹⁰² Austen, Jake. (Short Title) *TV-a go-go*, 39.

¹⁰³ Delmont, Matthew F. (Short Title) *The nicest kids in town*, 39.

¹⁰⁴ Shore, Michael, et al. (Short Title) *The history of American Bandstand*, 12.

¹⁰⁵ Shore, Michael, et al. (Short Title) *The history of American Bandstand*, 12.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid: 11.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid: 44.

¹⁰⁸ Toale, Kaylyn. (Short Title) “From American Bandstand to Total Request Live,” 12.

¹⁰⁹ Austen, Jake. (Short Title) *TV-a go-go* (Short Title), 42.

enough of a disincentive, the producers enforced a dress code that required the boys to wear a suit jacket – something many African American teens did not have.¹¹⁰ However, African American teens within *Bandstand*'s broadcast range were not totally denied the dance show experience.

The *Mitch Thomas Show* debuted in the summer of 1955 in Wilmington, Delaware with an African American host, audience and teen dancers.¹¹¹ The teens that could not get on *Bandstand* went to Wilmington to appear on the *Mitch Thomas Show*. The trip to Wilmington would not have been easy: most teens would have purchased bus fare and taken the 28 mile trip one-way from Philadelphia to arrive early enough to make filming, which for most teen shows was in the late afternoon/early evening, and then bussed home – all for an hour on camera. During the three years the show aired, African Americans engaged in the same behaviors as their white counterparts: having favorite regulars and following the fashions and dance moves of the dancers and the music featured on the show. African American teens wrote to the “Teen Talk” column of the *Philadelphia Tribune* to gossip about regulars on the show and *Tribune* writers followed what was happening in the wake of the show, describing the teens and their fan clubs supporting their favorite musical artists and disc jockeys.¹¹² The lengths African American teens were willing to go and participate in *The Mitch Thomas Show* illustrate the importance of both inclusion in teen culture and of teen dance shows as disseminators of that culture (e.g. fashion, dance moves, music).

As with the Philadelphia market, segregation issues played out in teen dance shows in the Baltimore and Washington, D.C. markets. Both *The Buddy Deane Show* (Baltimore) and *The*

¹¹⁰ Toale, Kaylyn. (Short Title) “From American *Bandstand* to Total Request Live,” 12.

¹¹¹ Delmont, Matthew F. (Short Title) *The nicest kids in town*, 133.

¹¹² Delmont, Matthew F. (Short Title) *The nicest kids in town*, 134.

Milt Grant Show (Washington, D.C.) first aired in 1957 after *American Bandstand* had moved to Hollywood and was broadcast nationally through the ABC network. Unlike, Washington, D.C. which received the broadcast, the local ABC affiliates in Baltimore did not pick up *American Bandstand* making *The Buddy Deane Show* the only teen dance show in Baltimore for several years.¹¹³ *The Buddy Deane Show* maintained a policy of segregation: African American teens were allowed to dance on the show (only with each other) on one Monday of each month. On the show it was known as “Special Guest Day,” but to local teens it was called “Black Monday.”¹¹⁴ The show’s policy of segregation ultimately caused the Baltimore Board of Education to withdraw its support of the show in 1958 and made the studio the frequent location of a mixed crowd of teenage protestors, both African American and white.¹¹⁵ The teen protestors forced integration of *The Buddy Deane Show* in a coordinated move where they tricked producers to acquire tickets for black and white teens for the show on August 12, 1963, a “Black Monday,” and the teens rushed into the studio just before filming began.¹¹⁶ The timing was such that the show was forced to begin filming, albeit with the studio lighting kept dim in attempt to hide the dancers’ ethnicities. The studio received arson and bomb threats in the wake of the stunt. Station management was interested in integrating the show, but in the face of the backlash after the teens’ attempted integration, the show was cancelled instead.¹¹⁷ While the station, WJZ-TV, denied integration as the reason for the show’s cancelation, both Deane himself and the print

¹¹³ Austen, Jake. (Short Title) *TV-a go-go*, 52.

¹¹⁴ Wexler, Laura. “The Messy Truth of the Real Hairspray,” *The Washington Post* (September 17, 2003): C1.

¹¹⁵ Wexler, Laura. “The Messy Truth of the Real Hairspray,” *The Washington Post* (September 17, 2003): C1.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

media stated otherwise. WJZ-TV claimed the show was cancelled as part of a general attempt to “broaden the appeal of the Channel 13 program schedule.”¹¹⁸

Similar to its Baltimore contemporary, *The Milt Grant Show* was also segregated with one Tuesday a month set aside for African American teens to dance on the show, again, only with each other. This became unofficially known as “Black Tuesday.” Unlike *The Buddy Deane Show*, Grant made an attempt to appeal to African American teens by including them on air, by making “Black Tuesday” a weekly event and by making a “special effort” to have musical artists appearing at the Howard Theatre make appearances on the show.¹¹⁹ These efforts made Grant, a white host, well-liked among African American teens.¹²⁰ *The Milt Grant Show* enjoyed high ratings and full sponsorship before being abruptly cancelled in 1961.¹²¹ Like *The Buddy Deane Show*, Grant’s show was cancelled purportedly as part of an overall attempt “to change the image of the station.”¹²² Grant’s show proved to the Washington, D.C. market that a teen dance show featuring African American teens could find and retain both an audience and sponsors, but the District’s African American teens would wait two more years until they could dance in front of television cameras again.

WOOK-TV’s *Teenarama Dance Party* was part of the station’s lineup from 1963 to 1970. The show followed the typical teen dance show format: “a popular local disc jockey emceed a televised record hop sponsored by local businesses which were plugged incessantly, local kids danced and occasionally got to offer opinions on music and local and national acts lip-

¹¹⁸ “Deane says integration ended show,” *The Baltimore Sun* (December 14, 1963): 9.

¹¹⁹ Harrington, Richard. “Before Dick Clark, Washington had boogied on Milt Grant’s show,” *The Washington Post* (May 2, 2007): C1.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Laurent, Lawrence. “Milt Grant’s Dismissal Still Poses a Mystery,” *The Washington Post* (April 15, 1961): B18.

¹²² Laurent, Lawrence. “Milt Grant’s Dismissal Still Poses a Mystery,” *The Washington Post* (April 15, 1961): B18.

synched to their current record;”¹²³ and there was a regular group of teen dancers. Like other teen dance shows, *Teenarama* had rules enforced both formally by WOOK-TV Program Director Tex Gathings and informally among the regular dancers themselves.¹²⁴ The rules required young men to have a jacket and ties (which one of the station’s young employees lent to teens who did not have them); suggestive dances were forbidden; young men had to ask the young women to dance and return them afterwards to where they found them, and like its white counterparts, *Teenarama* was segregated: white teens were forbidden to dance on the show.¹²⁵¹²⁶

Teenarama Dance Party effectively slipped into the vacancy left by the cancellation of *The Milt Grant Show*: musical artists performing at the Howard Theatre dropped in for appearances on the show; *Teenarama* captured about 65 percent of the total teenage viewing audience many of whom were surely among Grant’s viewers, and *Teenarama* aired in Grant’s show’s original time slot, from 5 pm to 6:30 pm, Monday through Saturday. *Teenarama* also took over *The Milt Grant Show*’s role in transmitting teen culture and reinforcing teen identity of African American teenagers.

American Bandstand helped to construct a national youth culture, that “encouraged teens to imagine themselves as part of a national audience participating in the same consumptive ritual at the same time.”¹²⁷ Yet despite *American Bandstand*’s dependence on African American musical artists, the show’s history of discrimination against African American teens effectively marginalized them from this national youth culture.¹²⁸ *Teenarama Dance Party* directly counteracted the effects of marginalization with a message of inclusion: one of *Teenarama*’s

¹²³ Austen, Jake. (Short Title) *TV-a go-go*, 52.

¹²⁴ Gaines, Patricia. (Short Title) “Fans bop back in time,” *The Washington Post* (August 2, 1998): B1.

¹²⁵ Ibid

¹²⁶ Lindsay-Johnson, Beverly. *Dance Party: the Teenarama Story*.

¹²⁷ Delmont, Matthew F. (Short Title) *The nicest kids in town*, (Short Title), 159.

¹²⁸ Delmont, Matthew F. (Short Title) *The nicest kids in town*, (Short Title), 6.

regular dancers recalled “I used to always sit on the floor at home watching *American Bandstand* and Milt Grant and say ‘I wish we could have our own dance program’ ...It seemed like it took a long time, but it happened.”¹²⁹ Host Bob King made a similar observation when the show first aired, “Maybe for the first time, these kids feel they belong to something, maybe for the first time they have a sense of importance.”¹³⁰ Beverly Lindsay-Johnson, producer of a documentary on *Teenarama* and its cultural impact, saw the show as important to the self-esteem of African American teenagers through its positive portrayal of them on television, and moreover that *Teenarama* provided teens with a safe space “to dance, socialize and be affirmed in one’s personal identity.”¹³¹ Because of its positive reinforcement, *Teenarama* is remembered fondly by the “regulars” and fans alike and has inspired an award-winning documentary *Dance Party: the Teenarama Story* and Teenarama Incorporated, a non-profit organization of the show’s participants that hosts cookouts, reunions, and a scholarship for District high school graduates.¹³²¹³³

As well as helping African American teens, *Teenarama* also helped promote African American musical acts. Cultural historian Jake Austen sees televised local teen dance shows as integral to the success of musical artists by providing a more efficient mechanism for promoting the artists to their fan base.¹³⁴ Although the more prominent musical artists were known within mainstream culture in the 1960s and 1970s, for smaller and local artists, teen dance shows allowed them to connect to their audience and network with local disc jockeys to encourage air

¹²⁹ Gaines, Patricia. (Short Title) “Fans Bop Back in Time,” *The Washington Post* (August 2, 1998): B1.

¹³⁰ Randall, Nan. (Short Title) “Rocking and rolling road to respectability,” *The Washington Post* (July 4, 1965): F5.

¹³¹ Toale, Kaylyn. (Short Title) “From American Bandstand to Total Request Live,” 15.

¹³² *Dance Party: the Teenarama Story*, documentary web site.

¹³³ Teenarama Incorporated web site.

¹³⁴ Austen, Jake. (Short Title) *TV-a go-go*, 109.

play of their records.¹³⁵ This practice continues on music shows today. Finally, *Teenarama's* lasting impact is that the show has become synonymous with WOOK-TV such that one is rarely mentioned without the other including the plaque affixed to the building marking the site as a stop on the District's African American Heritage Trail (Figure 27).¹³⁶

EVALUATION OF POTENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

The small industrial park in which the WOOK-TV building is located is also known as the Chillum Castle Manor subdivision. The subdivision occupies a small area, sandwiched between railroad tracks, Riggs Road and parkland. There are currently six buildings within the park: the WOOK-TV building, three buildings that were extant when WOOK was an operational television facility and two recent buildings (less than 50 years old). The WOOK-TV building and two adjacent buildings were all constructed circa 1962 and all three share similar concrete block veneer, however, the WOOK-TV building is smaller than the other two buildings, has more ornamentation, and is set further back on its lot to allow for parking in front of the building.

The subdivision has undergone significant changes since WOOK-TV was broadcasting from 5321 1st Place and no longer retains the same appearance as it did from 1963-1972. No building in Chillum Castle Manor has survived untouched: several buildings have been demolished, the remaining buildings now have additions and two buildings have been constructed since 1972. Due to these alterations to the fabric of the subdivision and given that none of the buildings are functionally related and the buildings do not share a unifying sense of place or form a cohesive visual unit, the subdivision is ineligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Washington D.C. Cultural Tourism, African American Heritage Trail.

EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE AND INTEGRITY

Being the forerunner of African American television stations, WOOK-TV had 100 percent of its programming devoted to an African American audience, with program content directed by African Americans, and an integrated production staff. Being the first African American television station, WOOK-TV had no contemporaries to provide context. WOOK-TV was evaluated contextually for its place in the history of radio and television in Washington, D.C. and the African American community, in National television history; and the National teen culture that developed in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s.

Criterion A, Association with Significant Events

The WOOK-TV building is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as nationally and locally significant under Criterion A in the areas of communication, entertainment, ethnic (black) history and social history and the intersection thereof. The period of significance for the WOOK-TV building is from 1963 to 1972, the years that WOOK-TV was broadcast.

Communication and Entertainment

Communication and entertainment are cultural expressions shaped by events and people in a causal relationship that is best understood by examining them together. The WOOK-TV building was the location for the first African American television station in the United States. In 1963 when WOOK-TV aired, television was still a relatively new communications media and form of entertainment. Television as a medium had been dominated by white Americans with other ethnicities underrepresented. When non-whites did appear on television, they were portrayed most often as stereotyped caricatures. Programming directed toward minorities was

generally developed by whites and with segregation still extant throughout the country, African Americans had yet to fully realize employment opportunities in television. WOOK-TV broke the color barrier by providing programming developed by and for African Americans. Further, station personnel were integrated with many of the African American radio personalities and staff also working the television side of WOOK. Although WOOK-TV aired contemporaneously to corporate America's realization that there was a "Negro market" in television and radio that had yet to be fully exploited, WOOK AM had been involved with the "Negro market" since 1947, well before mainstream America identified the existence of African Americans as a potential target demographic.

Over the course of the nine years WOOK-TV was broadcast, programming encompassed music, fashion, news, a teen dance show, a show for younger children, religion, public affairs, and education. WOOK-TV had a somewhat tumultuous relationship with the District's black community's leaders. Across the Nation, African Americans sought to end racial discrimination on television, but feared that the industry's focus on "the Negro market" would further divide blacks and whites or worse, would perpetuate stereotypical portrayals of blacks on television. The District's black community leaders saw WOOK's initial music-laden programming as contributing to the latter of their two fears despite that WOOK's programs were developed by African Americans. For its role in changing communication and entertainment in the Washington, D.C. market, and influencing elsewhere, WOOK was historically significant in these two areas.

Ethnic (Black) and Social History

Leaders of the Black Power Movement realized that television was a powerful new medium for communication. Rather than leave representation of black images and messages to white station owners attempting to appeal to the “Negro market,” the leaders of the movement engaged in series of maneuvers to take over these stations. WOOK-TV was one of the stations targeted despite its programming having been developed by African Americans. Ultimately, it was the competing claim filed for WOOK’s license by the Washington Community Broadcasting Company that was a major factor in WOOK’s going off the air. Music-oriented programming may have seemed frivolous, but these shows were instrumental in promoting black musical artists and creating a market for those artists.¹³⁷ Washington, D.C.’s Howard Theatre was one of the stops on the “chitlin circuit.” The chitlin circuit was comprised of the black owned and operated music venues across the United States: the Cotton Club and the Apollo Theater in New York City, the Royal Theatre in Baltimore and the Uptown Theatre in Philadelphia. For musicians working the circuit, shows like *Teenarama Dance Party* were instrumental in promoting music to their fan base and connecting with the disk jockeys, like Bob King, who hosted the show. A visit to the *Teenarama* set helped advertise an artist’s music through television, as well as radio, and connect more directly with their audience. Local and national shows like *Teenarama* created a new chitlin circuit via television.¹³⁸

Teen dance shows first appeared in the 1950s as televised “sock hops” on local television stations. The vast majority of these shows were segregated, featuring mainly white teens with limited participation of African American teens or one day a month where African American

¹³⁷ Austen, Jake. (Short Title) *TV-a go-go*, 109.

¹³⁸ Austen, Jake. (Short Title) *TV-a go-go*, 109.

teens were featured on the show. The widespread success of *American Bandstand* created a national youth culture, but the effect of the show's segregation was to alienate and marginalize African American teens. *Teenarama Dance Party* served to include African American teens in this national culture, albeit on a local level. The show also presented a positive portrayal of African American teens and helped build self-esteem, as well as providing a safe space for teens to interact with one another. The year *Teenarama* went off the air, a local African American dance show premiered in Chicago: *Soul Train*. Quickly picked up by a network affiliate, *Soul Train* rivaled *American Bandstand's* popularity and provided an alternative national culture. Whether or not *Teenarama* had any influence on *Soul Train* or other local dance shows that featured African Americans requires further research.

WOOK-TV and other white-owned television stations broadcasting to the "Negro market" in the 1960s are the first step towards full-on African American participation in the medium of television. The Black Entertainment Television (BET) network premiered 8 years after WOOK-TV went dark. Ironically, BET's programming is comprised of music, movies, and television series. Further research is needed to examine the development of black television history and the role WOOK may have played in that history.

Criterion B, Association with Significant Persons

Several nationally and locally important individuals are associated with the WOOK-TV building: Richard Eaton, Lionel Hampton, Precola DeVore, and Joseph "Tex" Gathings. However, none of them draw their importance solely from WOOK-TV, nor was their time at WOOK spent during the period these people achieved their significance.

Richard Eaton was the founder of the United Broadcasting Company, owner of WOOK-TV and a pioneer in ethnic radio and television. Eaton started WOOK AM in 1947 and later WOOK-TV in 1963 to “provide meaningful service to the then neglected audience in Washington – the Black Community.”¹³⁹ It was this same spirit of giving voice to the marginalized that compelled Eaton to launch the first Spanish-language radio station in Washington, D.C.; the first Cuban-oriented radio station in Miami and the first Japanese-language television station in Hawaii. Not only did Eaton believe in providing a voice for the silent minority, his belief in equality was also reflected by the integration of his staff and his hiring of African Americans for key positions. Eaton’s impact on ethnic inclusion in radio and television media has yet to be fully studied: while Eaton is locally known in the District as a radio/television pioneer, his impact on the national history of television is not known.

Lionel Hampton was a nationally celebrated jazz musician whose skill at playing the vibraphone elevated the importance of the instrument in jazz music. Hampton’s jazz career began in the 1930s when Louis Armstrong suggested he play the vibraphone. Hampton played with Armstrong’s band and later joined the Benny Goodman Quartet, the first integrated jazz band that was nationally renowned.¹⁴⁰ In the 1960s, Hampton was WOOK-TV’s music director and produced and starred in a music show for WOOK. It is likely that Hampton was recruited by WOOK for name recognition. The few short years Hampton was associated with WOOK-TV are overshadowed by his more than 60 years of playing jazz and his importance in the development of and breaking down racial barriers in jazz. In light of his storied career, Hampton’s primary significance in African American history is not drawn from his association with WOOK-TV.

¹³⁹ Eaton, Richard. (Short Title) “In memorandum,” *Broadcasting* (February 28, 1972): 27.

¹⁴⁰ Trescott, Jacqueline. (Short Title) “Good vibrations,” *The Washington Post* (January 31, 2001): C1.

Precola DeVore, “the First Lady of Charm,” was best known for breaking down racial barriers in the field of modeling. When DeVore opened the Precola Devore School of Charm in 1953 she was one of the first African American women in Washington, D.C., to own a business. DeVore was known both locally and nationally as a “pioneer in the field of modeling education and self-improvement for women of color.”¹⁴¹ DeVore was a member of the Modeling Association of American and the International Fashion Models Association and over the course of her 30-year membership held various executive positions in each organization. Throughout her long career in fashion, Ms. DeVore served as a judge for beauty contests in the United States, Europe, Africa and the Caribbean.¹⁴² DeVore hosted *The Precola DeVore Show* for three years on WOOK-TV, dispensing beauty and fashion tips for women of color as well as providing coverage of women’s issues. In sum, DeVore’s significance lay in her charm school and fashion activities and not in the three years she hosted her show on WOOK-TV.

Joseph “Tex” Gathings got his start in communications working as a disk jockey for WOOK AM. Gathings was a well-known radio personality and had even produced a couple of records. When Eaton began WOOK-TV, he tapped Gathings to be the Programming Director. Gathings stayed at WOOK-TV until shortly before the station went dark. By the late 1970s, Gathings had joined the University of the District of Columbia as a professor and was the chairman of the Department of Communicative and Performing Arts. Gathings continued to work in the communications field, albeit as an educator. In 2007, Gathings was inducted into the Gold Circle of the National Capital Chesapeake Bay Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, an award that honors those who have made significant contributions over the space of at least 50 years to the broadcast or cable industries in the

¹⁴¹ (Short Title) “Miss Precola Devore dies,” *Columbus Times*, Columbus, Georgia (February 25, 1997): A6.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

region.¹⁴³ While Gathings is a locally recognized personality, more research is needed to determine the impact Gathings had on the history of television.

While individually the persons evaluated under Criterion B do not define the significance of WOOK-TV, and the significance of their participation was in the whole enterprise that was WOOK-TV which is expressed in Criterion A.

Criterion C, Architectural Significance

The WOOK-TV building is ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. While the building is a modest example of a mid-century modern commercial building, it does not fully embody the mid-century modern aesthetic nor does it possess high artistic value. The building's architect is as yet undetermined, though it is more likely to be a designer working for a construction company than a "master" craftsman. While the building was obviously built to have a modest presence in the development, its significance is based on what occurred within the building, rather than the architecture of the building itself.

Criterion D, Information Important in History or Prehistory

Because the WOOK-TV building itself has little to no potential to yield information important to the understanding of human history, the property is ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D.

¹⁴³ National Capital Chesapeake Bay Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences web site.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The building maintains its location and setting, and retains the majority of its historic exterior features that are expressive of the building's design and function as the WOOK-TV studio and therefore the WOOK-TV building has good integrity.

The WOOK-TV production facility exhibited the clean lines, minimalist design elements, and massing of a modest Mid-Century Modern commercial building (Figure 21). Decorative elements of the building are grouped into vertical (windows, fixed panels of front entry; diamond pattern panels) horizontal (concrete rustication framing panel-length groups of concrete blocks; stack block pattern, the cantilevered concrete canopy; the main entry area, and the building itself) and geometric (the diamond patterning across the vertical panels of the upper story). Building features such as a flat roof surrounded by a parapet, the use of vertically-oriented fixed sash aluminum windows and aluminum glass panels and doors of the front entry, concrete block in a stack bond are all typical features of buildings of the period (Figure 22). The majority of these features are still present on the building and therefore it has integrity of materials and design; workmanship was not a significant component of the building's construction.

Though the building was remodeled in 2007 for a new use, a project that included the construction of several modest extensions, the 2007 additions were made to the original radio transmitter building, and do not affect the WOOK-TV production facility portion of the building. Further, the additions, including the panels added below the original windows, were executed in a style evocative of Mid-Century Modern, but clearly set apart from the original building as not to be confused with original features. The panels beneath the windows are surface-mounted and

can be removed with minimal damage or alteration to the original concrete block veneer. While not an original feature of the building, the panels do provide extra length, elongating the window area, in a manner that is not entirely obtrusive. Changes to the original front entry removed the fixed glass panel entries, but retained the original opening and left the concrete clad cantilevered overhang untouched. Comparing Figures 21 and 22, it is evident that the building retains its character-defining features after the 2007 project, especially as it is unknown whether or not call numbers were affixed to the building's exterior.

While the building has changed, the building's setting and relation to its transmission tower are still intact. The feeling and association of the building is good, especially as viewed from the sidewalk along 1st Place looking northwest, at an oblique angle where the 2007 addition is not visible and with its transmission tower looming behind it, the building looks much as it did when it was a functional television production facility in 1963. The building is able to convey the appearance, feeling and association of the television station during its period of significance while retaining a high degree of integrity. The WOOK-TV building is recommended for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, as an early expression of African American communication and entertainment in the medium of television, and an inclusive purveyor of teen culture.

FIGURES



Figure 1. 5321 1st Place, NE, location outlined in yellow (Source: USGS “Washington West quadrangle, District of Columbia-Maryland-Virginia” 1:24:000)



Figure 2. Location of 5321 1st Place, NE outlined in yellow (Source: Baist's real estate atlas of surveys of Washington, District of Columbia: complete in four volumes, 1936)



Figure 3. 5321 1st Place, NE, Front and south façades, view east, note transmission tower behind building (Source: Jennifer Sparenberg, 2013)



Figure 4. 5201 1st Place, NE, view north (Source: Jennifer Sparenberg, 2013)



Figure 5. 120 Ingraham Street, NE, view south (Source: Jennifer Sparenberg, 2013)

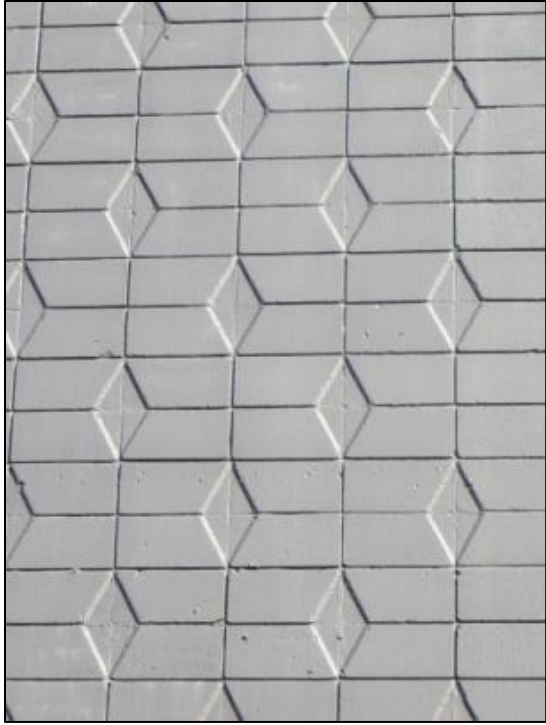


Figure 6. Diamond pattern of 5321 1st Place, NE. (Source: Jennifer Sparenberg, 2013)

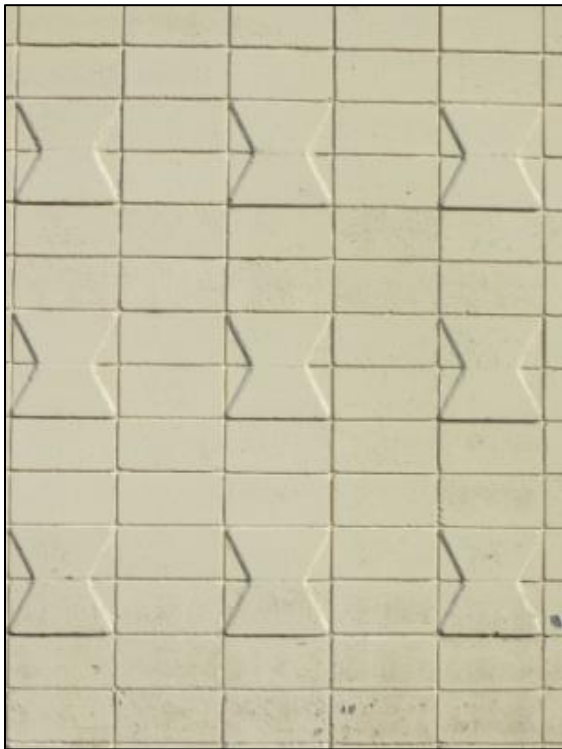


Figure 7. Hourglass pattern of 5201 1st Place, NE and 120 Ingraham Street, NE (Source: Jennifer Sparenberg, 2013)



Figure 8. Location of 5321 1st Place, NE, outlined in red (Source: "Washington, D.C." 1974. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1867-1970, Ohio)



Figure 9. 1st Place, NE, view north (Source: Jennifer Sparenberg, 2013)



Figure 10. 1st Place, NE, view south. Note: Brown building on left is 5321st Place, NE and yellow building at center is 5201 1st Place, NE (Source: Jennifer Sparenberg, 2013)

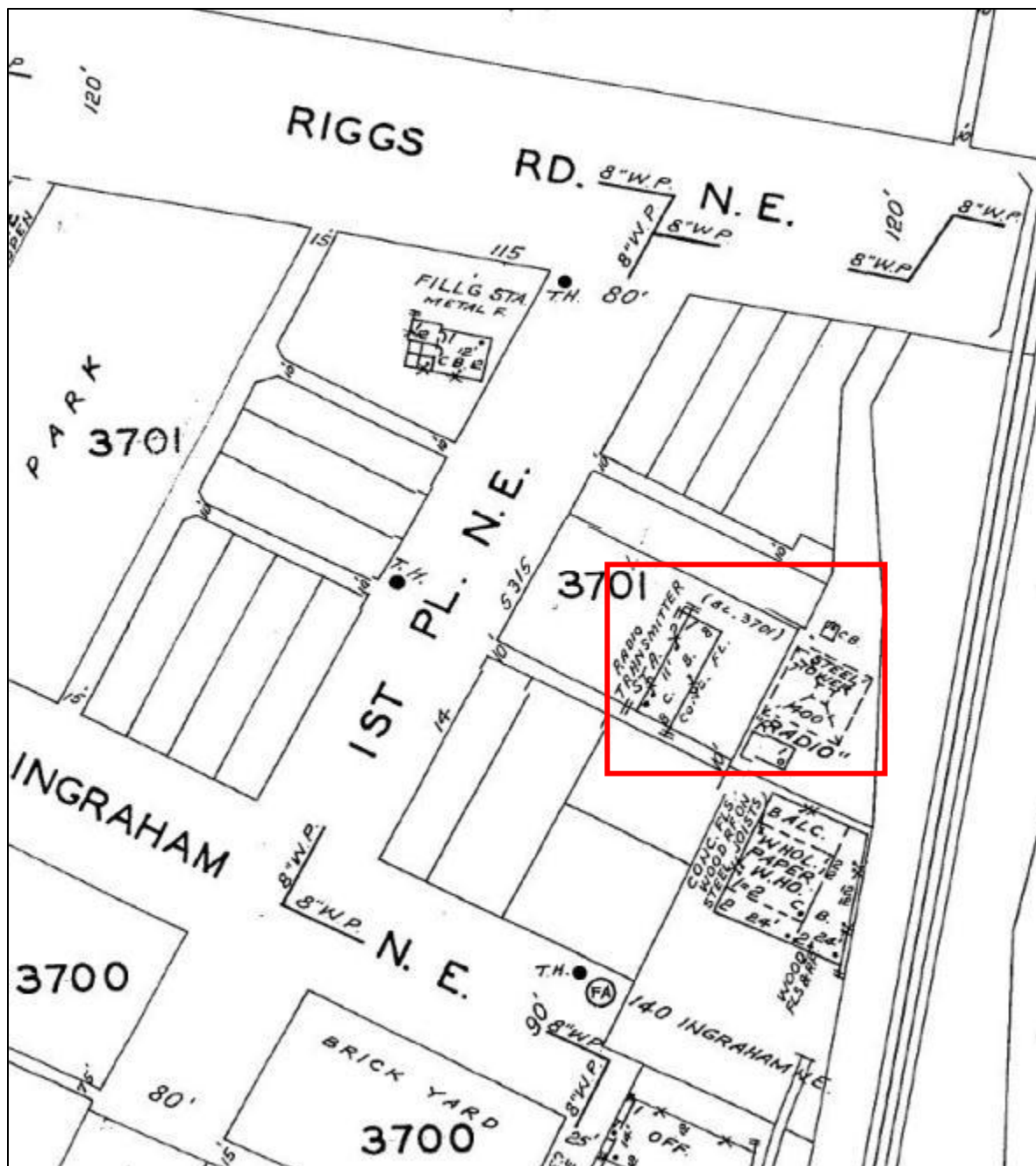


Figure 11. Location of 5321 1st Place, NE outlined in red (Source: "Washington, D.C." 1960. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1867-1970, Ohio)



Figure 12. 5321 1st Place, NE, south wall, radio transmission station (center), encapsulated by WOOK-TV (foreground); a later addition (rear), and a second story addition, view north (Source: Jennifer Sparenberg, 2013)



Figure 13. 5321 1st Place, NE, north exterior wall of radio transmission station (Source: Jennifer Sparenberg, 2013)



Figure 14. 5321 1st Place, NE, front façade, view east. Note: 2007 additions not visible. (Source: Jennifer Sparenberg, 2013)



Figure 15. 5321 1st Place, NE, fasteners on second story (circled in yellow) of front façade that may have held call letters or a sign (Source: Jennifer Sparenberg, 2013)



Figure 16. 5321 1st Place, NE, concrete cantilevered overhang above original main entry (Source: Jennifer Sparenberg, 2013)



Figure 17. 5321 1st Place, NE, side entry door on north wall, 2007 addition visible on left, view south (Source: Jennifer Sparenberg, 2013)



Figure 18. 5321 1st Place, NE, addition (left) constructed circa 1963-1974, two story addition constructed in 2007 (right), north wall, view south (Source: Jennifer Sparenberg, 2013)



Figure 19. 5321 1st Place, NE, two-story addition (left) constructed in 2007 front façade, view east (Source: Jennifer Sparenberg, 2013)



Figure 20. 5321 1st Place, 2007 additions identified by red arrows, view west (Source: Jennifer Sparenberg, 2013)



Figure 21. Artist rendering of 5321 1st Place, NE, WOOK-TV (Source: *Broadcasting Yearbook*, 1965: A10).



Figure 22. 5321 1st Place, NE as it appeared in February 2013. Note: 2007 additions not visible in photograph (Source: Jennifer Sparenberg, 2013)

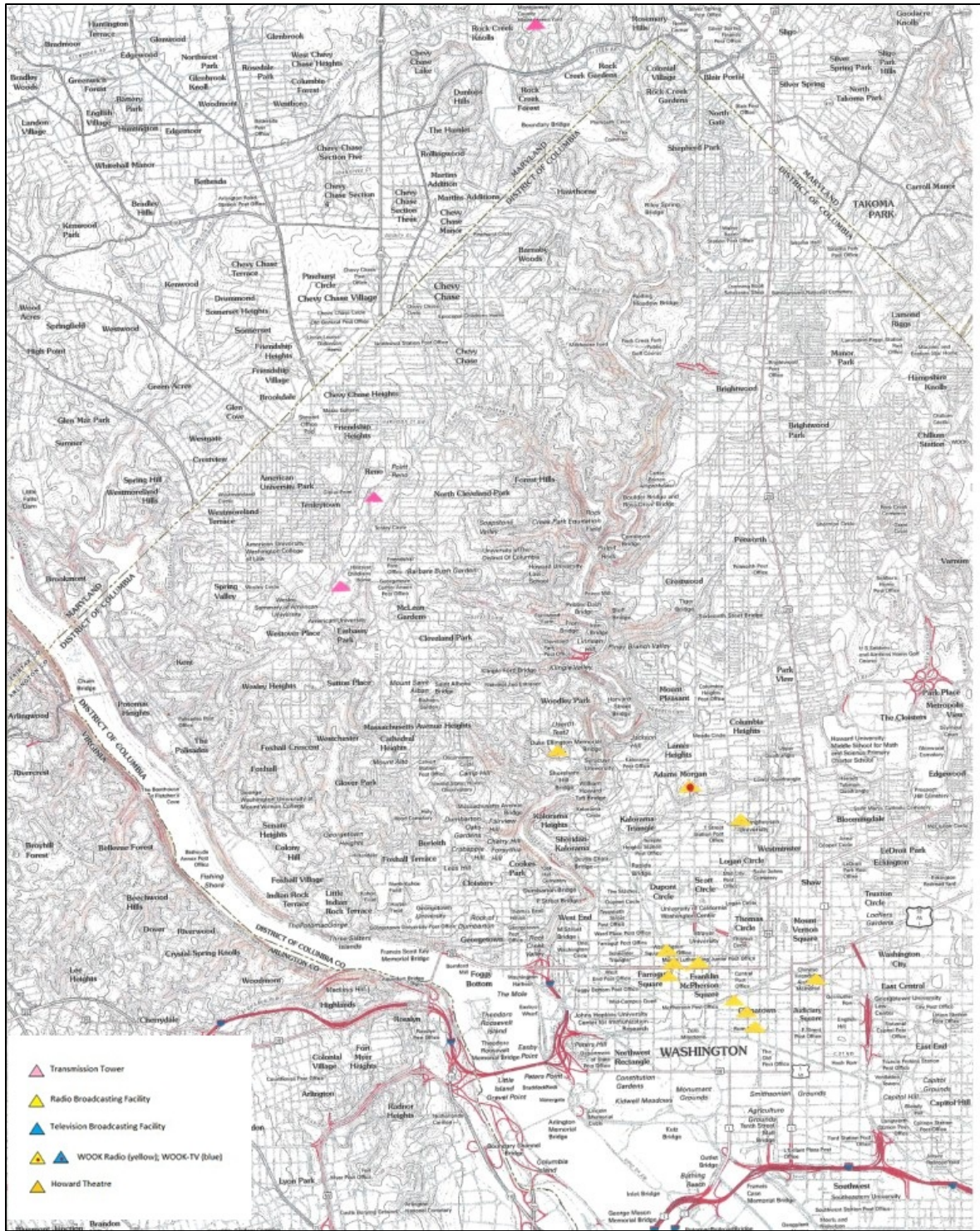


Figure 23. Location of radio broadcasting stations and transmission towers in the 1940s (Source: USGS “Washington West quadrangle, District of Columbia-Maryland-Virginia” 1:24:000)



Figure 24. Location of radio and television broadcasting stations and transmission towers in the 1950s (Source: USGS “Washington West quadrangle, District of Columbia-Maryland-Virginia” 1:24:000)

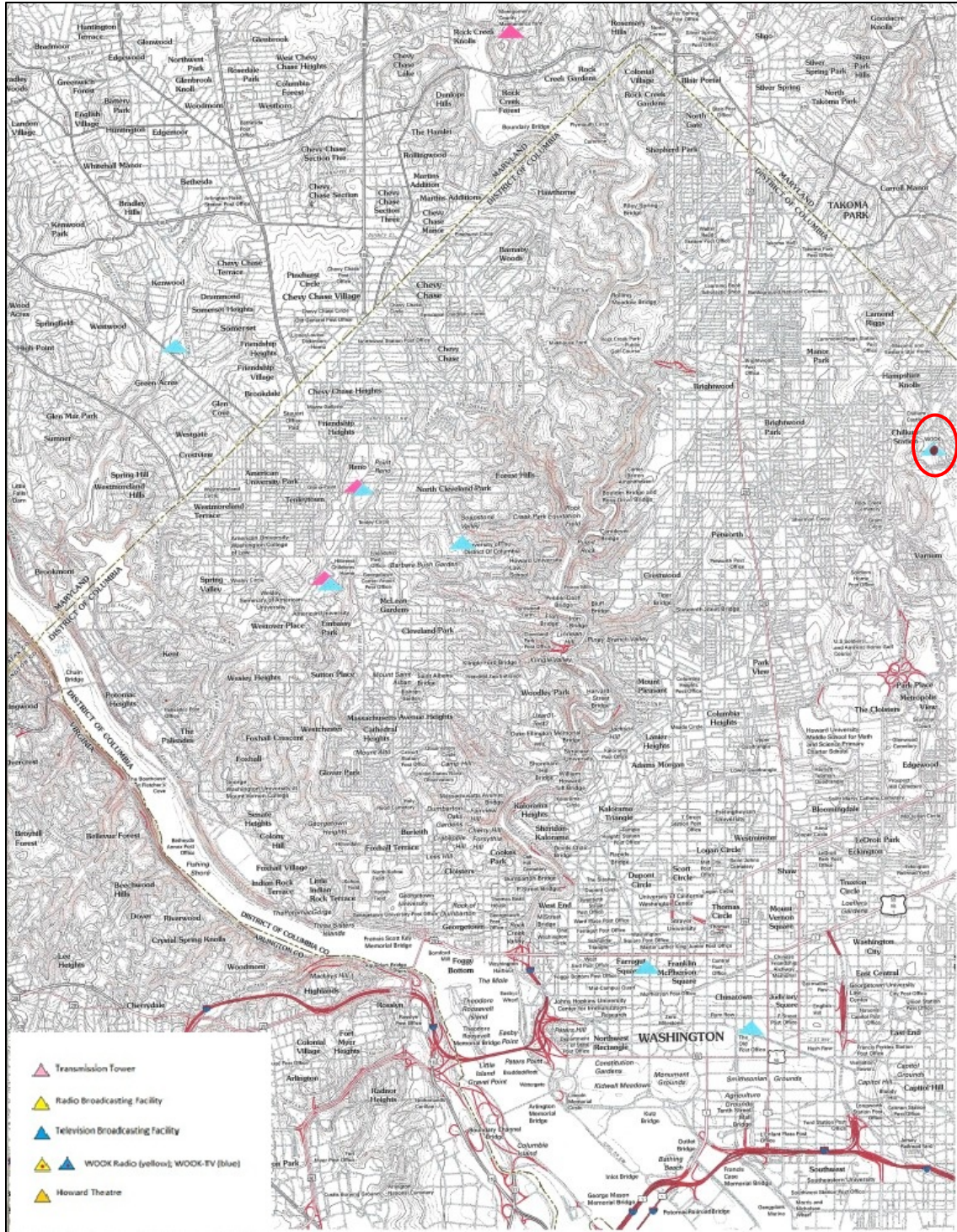


Figure 25. Location of television broadcasting stations and transmission towers in the 1960s
 Note: WOOK-TV circled at top right (Source: USGS “Washington West quadrangle, District of Columbia-Maryland-Virginia” 1:24:000)

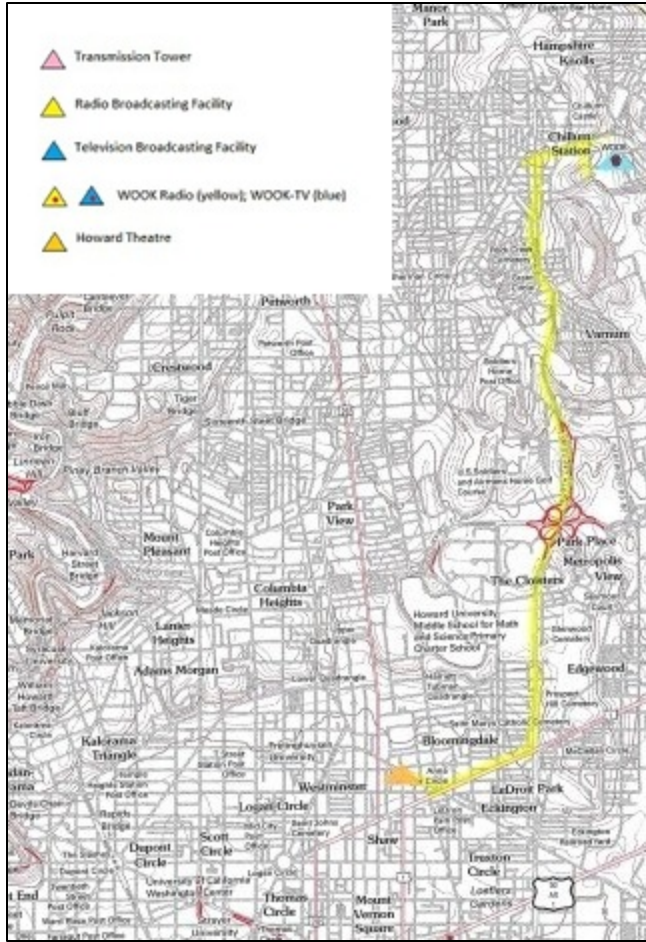


Figure 26. Location of WOOK-TV and route to the Howard Theatre (Source: USGS “Washington West quadrangle, District of Columbia-Maryland-Virginia” 1:24:000)

AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE TRAIL, WASHINGTON, DC

WOOK-TV Building

5321 First Place, NE

WOOK-TV, on the air from 1963 to 1972, was the first “all-Negro” television station in the nation. White founder Richard Eaton also started its predecessor, WOOK-Radio, in 1947 as the nation’s first “Negro-oriented” radio station. Viewers fondly remember *Teenarama Dance Party*, DC’s first black teen dance show. Hosted by Bob King, *Teenarama* aired from 5 to 6 pm Monday through Saturday, from 1963 to 1971 (and before that on WOOK-Radio). It featured hand dancing, DC’s unique form of swing. The Temptations, Marvelettes, Martha Reeves and the Vandellas, Marvin Gaye, James Brown, and many other performers often dropped by *Teenarama* while in town to appear at the Howard Theatre.



Teenarama Dance Party, 1963.
Collection of Beverly Lindsay-Johnson

Cultural Tourism DC

Funded by the DC Historic Preservation Office

Figure 27. Plaque marking 5321 1st Place, NE as a site on the African American Heritage Trail in Washington, D.C. (Source: Jennifer Sparenberg, 2013).

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