

Brownsville Architectural Survey and Historic District Evaluation

City of Pensacola and Escambia County, Florida

Prepared for
Escambia County Community Redevelopment Agency
Neighborhood & Environmental Services Department
1190 W Leonard Street
Pensacola Florida 32501

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GAI Project No, 2002-105-10

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ABSTRACT

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| Consultant: | GAI Consultants, Inc. Southeast 618 E. South Street Orlando, Florida 32801 407 423-8398 |
| Client: | Escambia County Community Redevelopment Agency-Neighborhood & Environmental Services Department 1190 W Leonard Street Pensacola Florida 32501 805 595-3217 |
| Scope of Services: | Conduct an Historic Architectural Survey and Historic District Evaluation of the Brownsville neighborhood in Pensacola and Escambia County |
| Principal Investigators: | Geoffrey B. Henry, Lead Architectural Historian; Jared N. Tuk, Architectural Historian; and Nina P. Winkler, Historian |
| Purpose: | To identify and document the architectural resources in the Brownsville survey area in the City of Pensacola and Escambia County, and to evaluate the identified resources for inclusion in a National Register and/or local historic district. |
| Date(s) Conducted: | February-June 2003 |
| Project Name: City/County/State: | Brownsville Architectural Survey City of Pensacola and Escambia County, Florida |
| Survey Area: | 55 whole or partial city blocks located within both Pensacola and Escambia County. Bounded on west by W Street, on north by Blount Street, on east by P Street, and on south by Jackson Street. Acreage surveyed is 36.2 acres |
| # of Surveyed Resources: | 321 newly surveyed architectural resources and 0 survey updates. |
| Recommended Actions: | Nominate Brownsville Historic District to the NRHP under Criterion A (Community Planning). Designate Brownsville Historic District as a local historic district following adoption of a county historic preservation ordinance. |

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SECTION II INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT LOCATION

INTRODUCTION

In 2002, Escambia County received a Historic Preservation Grant from the Florida Department of State-Division of Historical Resources to conduct an historic architectural survey of the Brownsville neighborhood, located within portions of the City of Pensacola and Escambia County. This survey is intended to provide recommendations leading to possible designation of a portion of the Brownsville neighborhood as a national and/or local historic landmark. The County issued a Request for Qualifications and thereafter awarded the contract for the Brownsville Architectural Survey project in January 2003 to GAI Consultants, Inc.-Southeast, an architectural/engineering firm headquartered in Orlando, Florida.

PROJECT LOCATION

The Brownsville architectural survey area is located within portions of the City of Pensacola and Escambia County, Florida (Figure 1). Pensacola and Escambia County are located in northwest Florida. Escambia County is bounded on the south by the Gulf of Mexico, on the east by Santa Rosa County, and on the north and west by Alabama. In addition to rail passenger and freight service and the Pensacola Airport, several major highways, including Interstates 10 and 110, and US Routes 29 and 90, serve Pensacola and Escambia County.

The Brownsville Architectural Survey Area consists of 55 whole or partial city blocks located within the greater Brownsville Redevelopment Area. The survey area is bounded on the west by W Street, on the north by Blount Street, on the east by P Street, and on the south by Jackson Street (Figure 2).



Figure 1
 Location of Pensacola and Escambia County, Florida
 Source: 1999 Microsoft Corporation

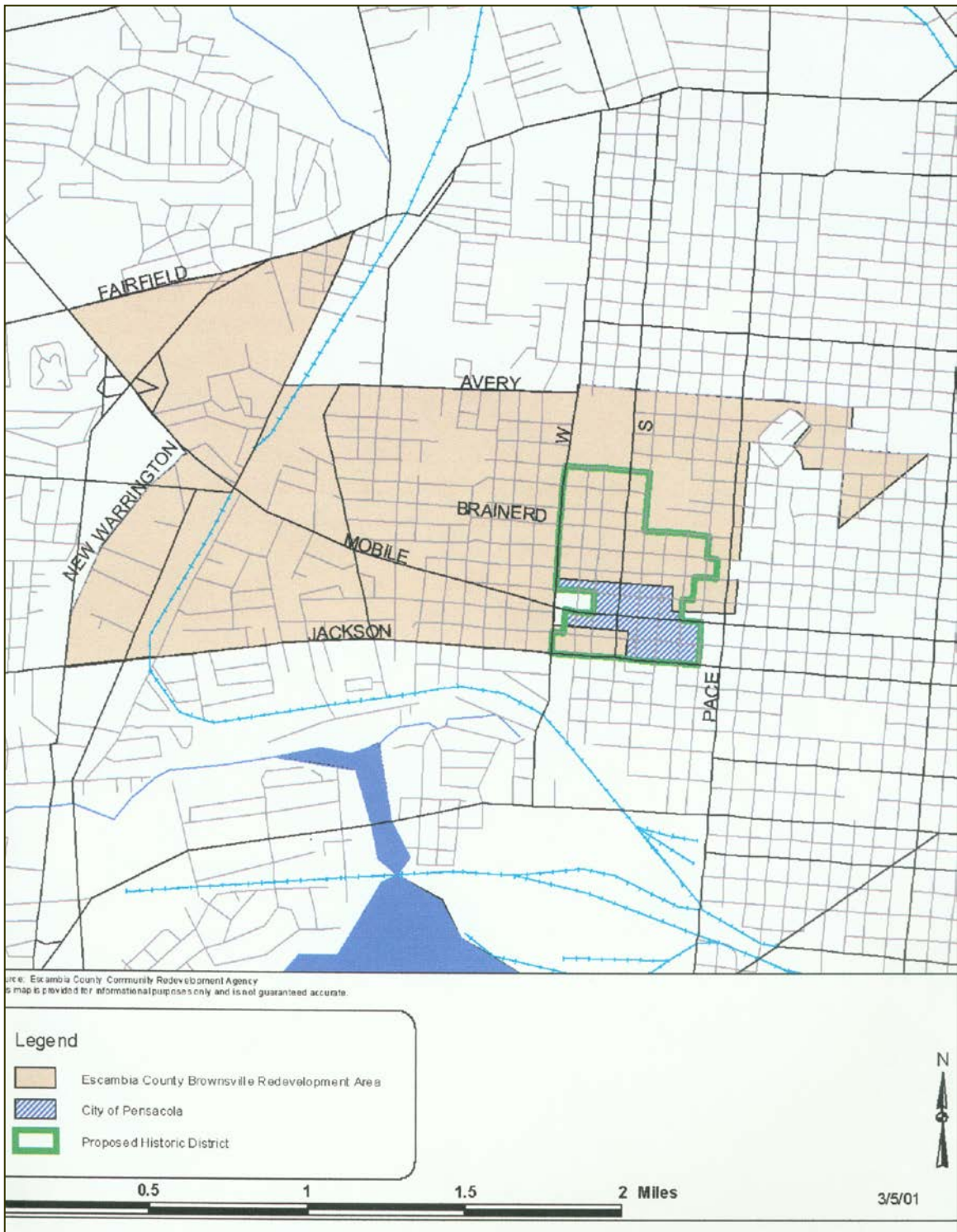


Figure 2

The Brownsville Architectural Survey Boundaries (Outlined in Green) are within a portion of the Escambia County Brownsville Redevelopment Area (Shown in Brown), Located in both the City of Pensacola and Escambia County.

Source: Escambia County Community Redevelopment Agency (2003).

SECTION III METHODOLOGY

The Brownsville Architectural Survey was conducted between February and May 2003 by GAI Lead Architectural Historian Geoffrey Henry and GAI Architectural Historian Jared N. Tuk, with technical assistance from Cultural Resource Specialist Andrea R. Sobota, and GAI Editor Lynda M. Shirley. Pensacola historian Nina P. Winkler conducted historic research on the founding and development of the Brownsville neighborhood. The survey consisted of four phases: 1) meetings, 2) background research, 3) field survey and data entry, and 4) evaluation of resources within the study area for their eligibility for national and local landmark status.

MEETING

A kick-off meeting attended by the GAI project team and Jodie Manale and Marcie Whitaker of the Escambia County Community Redevelopment Agency was held in Pensacola on February 19, 2003.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

GAI conducted a search of the Florida Master Site (FMSF) data base and determined that there have been no previous comprehensive surveys conducted within the Brownsville Survey Project study area. There are no resources with FMSF numbers located in the study area.

Historian Nina Winkler conducted research on the general history and development of Brownsville from the early 1900s to the present. This research included a review of previous surveys of the Brownsville neighborhood, published and unpublished works on Pensacola and Escambia County, local City Directories from the early to mid-twentieth century, historic maps, and interviews with former and present residents of Brownsville. Research was conducted at the Pensacola Historical Society's Historical Resource Center and the John C Case Library-Special Collections of the University of West Florida, both in Pensacola. GAI Architectural Historian Geoffrey B. Henry conducted historic map research at the Geography & Map Division of the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.

Originals of the historic photographs located during this project, as well as notes of the oral interviews, are kept at the Pensacola Historical Society-Historical Resource Center, 117 East Government Street, Pensacola, Fl 32501 (850) 434-5455.

FIELD SURVEY AND DATA ENTRY

The boundaries of the Brownsville Survey Project study area (Figure 2) were established by the Escambia County Redevelopment Agency. GAI examined areas adjacent to the study area and determined that they are made up of post-1953 construction and/or vacant lots and did not warrant further study at this time.

GAI conducted the field survey phase of this project between February 19 and 29, 2003. This phase involved the documentation of 321 architectural resources in the 55-block survey area. No survey updates were completed, as there were no previously surveyed resources in the study area. The 321 resources, including the primary buildings and any contributing outbuildings, were photographed and recorded on Florida Master Site File (MSF) Forms and entered into the *SmartForm* database program. The architectural styles and features of these historic resources were recorded, and any major changes or alterations to the resources were noted and photographed. All photographs were processed according to Division of Historical Resources standards.

EVALUATION

An important project goal was to evaluate the historic resources in the Brownsville Survey Area for eligibility in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), either individually, or as part of an historic district. This evaluation was based on the information collected during the GAI survey, the NRHP Criteria (Appendix A), and *National Register Bulletin 15-How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* and *National Register Bulletin 21-Defining Boundaries for National Register Properties*. The National Register Criteria and their applicability to the Brownsville Survey Area are more fully explained in Section VII. Although Escambia County does not yet possess an historic preservation ordinance establishing historic districts, the Brownsville Survey Area was also evaluated for possible future designation as a local historic district.

SECTION IV PREVIOUS SURVEYS IN THE BROWNSVILLE SURVEY AREA

PREVIOUS CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEYS IN THE SURVEY AREA

There has been only one previous cultural resource survey conducted within a portion of the Brownsville Survey Area. In 1999, Dr. Patrick K. Moore, Professor of History at the University of West Florida in Pensacola, directed students in an historical survey of a portion of the Brownsville neighborhood, specifically the commercial district along Cervantes Street as part of a class project. The survey team conducted limited historic research on individual properties and interviewed long-time residents. The survey also included photographing selected individual buildings, but the buildings were not documented on FMSF forms. The results of this survey project are contained in a short report *Historical Survey of the West Pensacola Neighborhood, Brownsville, Pensacola, Florida* (Moore 1999) on file with the Escambia County Community Redevelopment Agency.

As part of the background research phase, GAI conducted a search of the FMSF data base and determined that there are no previously surveyed architectural resources within the boundaries of the Brownsville Survey Area.

NATIONAL REGISTER-LISTED RESOURCES IN THE BROWNSVILLE SURVEY AREA.

There are no architectural resources in the Brownsville Survey Area in Pensacola or Escambia County listed in the National Register, either individually or as part of an historic district.

SECTION V SURVEY FINDINGS

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES IN THE BROWNSVILLE SURVEY AREA

Frame Vernacular architecture constitutes the majority of buildings (82%) surveyed in the Brownsville Survey Area. Features of this building type include hip or gable roofs, a gable-end façade, open or screened front porches with a hipped or gable roof, and a central entrance. Craftsman-inspired architectural details include exposed rafter tails and knee braces at the house corners or below porch roofs. Frame vernacular houses were originally sided with weatherboard or German siding, although many have since been covered with aluminum or vinyl siding, asbestos shingles, or vertical board siding. Frame Vernacular houses were built in Brownsville beginning in the 1910s and continued in popularity until the 1950s.



Masonry Vernacular

Masonry Vernacular architecture constitutes 16% of buildings surveyed in Brownsville. Beginning in the 1920s Masonry Vernacular houses were constructed of rough- or smooth-faced concrete block. After World War II, cinder block was used most frequently. Masonry Vernacular houses were finished with a variety of building materials, including stucco, tile, brick veneer, and stone veneer. Houses after 1940 often feature a cutout vent with decorative ship or palm design on the gable end. Masonry Vernacular commercial buildings often have decorative brickwork below the cornice.

Bungalows constitute 1% of buildings surveyed in Brownsville. Features of this style include frame construction with weatherboard or German siding; a low-pitched roof, usually extending on the front to shelter a porch; an exposed gable-end chimney; multi-pane upper sash; and an off-center entrance.

Bungalow Style
2708 W. Gadsden Street



exist style

Single examples (1% of total buildings surveyed) also in Brownsville of the nationally popular Tudor Revival (ES-3142-Pensacola Motor Lodge), the Mission Style (ES-3109-2820 Jackson Street), the Minimal Traditional Style (ES-3075-1021 U Street), and the Colonial Revival Style (ES-3177-Brownsville Elementary School). The former Brownsville Elementary School (currently the Yniestra School)) is an excellent example of the Colonial Revival Style in Pensacola and was built in 1938.



ARCHITECTURAL TYPES IN THE BROWNSVILLE SURVEY AREA

Brownsville contains a limited range of architectural types, reflective of its history as a primarily residential area of Pensacola and Escambia County. *Single-family residences* with uniform setbacks from the early 1900s to the 1950s are set on a grid street plan and make up the overwhelming majority of the neighborhood’s building stock. Most are built in the Frame Vernacular mode, although some Masonry Vernacular houses were also built within the neighborhood. *Commercial buildings* in Brownsville are concentrated along Cervantes Street, the principal business thoroughfare in the neighborhood, which also once served as the main road between Mobile and Pensacola. These commercial buildings consist mostly of two-story Masonry Vernacular buildings with glass storefronts on the first story. Isolated examples of other building types found in Brownsville include *churches, schools, apartment buildings, and motels.*

NEWLY SURVEYED RESOURCES IN THE BROWNSVILLE SURVEY AREA

There were no previously surveyed historic resources in the Brownsville Architectural Survey Area and thus GAI did not prepare any survey updates for this project. GAI surveyed 321 previously unrecorded architectural resources in the Brownsville Architectural Survey project area. These resources are depicted on the Survey Map in Appendix B. Table 1 lists the 321 newly surveyed historic resources. Each entry below includes the FMSF number, address/current name, architectural style, and date of construction for the individual resource. Architectural style abbreviations include FV (Frame Vernacular), MV (Masonry Vernacular), B (Bungalow), MI (Mission), IN (International), and MT (Minimal Traditional). All buildings surveyed are considered contributing in the potential Brownsville Historic District (See Section VII for an evaluation of the Brownsville Historic District).

Table 1- Historic Resources Surveyed by GAI in the Brownsville Architectural Survey, City of Pensacola and Escambia County

| MSF NUMBER | NAME/ADDRESS | STYLE | DATE |
|------------|----------------|-------|------|
| ES-3001 | 2808 Blount St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3002 | 2806 Blount St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3003 | 2800 Blount St | B | 1920 |
| ES-3004 | 2720 Blount St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3005 | 2710 Blount St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3006 | 2706 Blount St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3007 | 2704 Blount St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3008 | 2700 Blount St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3009 | 2705 Blount St | FV | 1915 |
| ES-2710 | 2709 Blount St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3011 | 2721 Blount St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3012 | 1418 W St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3013 | 1410 W St | FV | 1935 |
| ES-3014 | 2806 Lee St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3015 | 2804 Lee St | FV | 1920 |
| ES-3016 | 2800 Lee St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3017 | 2708 Lee St | FV | 1925 |

| MSF NUMBER | NAME/ADDRESS | STYLE | DATE |
|------------|------------------|-------|------|
| ES-3018 | 2704 Lee St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3019 | 2702 Lee St | MV | 1940 |
| ES-3020 | 2700 Lee St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3021 | 2703 Lee St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3022 | 2705 Lee St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3023 | 2707 Lee St | FV | 1920 |
| ES-3024 | 2807 Lee St | FV | 1920 |
| ES-3025 | 2816 Lloyd St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3026 | 2814 Lloyd St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3027 | 21712 Lloyd St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3028 | 2712 ½ Lloyd St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3029 | 2706 Lloyd St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3030 | 2704 Lloyd St | FV | 1940 |
| ES-3031 | 2703 Lloyd St | FV | 1920 |
| ES-3032 | 2705 Lloyd St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3033 | 2707 Lloyd St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3034 | 2717 Lloyd St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3035 | 1206 W St | MV | 1945 |
| ES-3036 | 1200 W St | B | 1920 |
| ES-3037 | 2814 Brainerd St | FV | 1920 |
| ES-3038 | 1201 V St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3039 | 1203 V St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3040 | 1215 V St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3041 | 1301 V St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3042 | 1307 V St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3043 | 1309 V St | MV | 1950 |
| ES-3044 | 1311 V St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3045 | 1403 V St | MV | 1930 |
| ES-3046 | 1425 V St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3047 | 1306 V St | FV | 1950 |
| ES-3048 | 1304 V St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3049 | 1220 V St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3050 | 2720 Brainerd St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3051 | 2712 Brainerd St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3052 | 1201 U St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3053 | 1203 U St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3054 | 1213 U St | FV | 1920 |
| ES-3055 | 1219 U St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3056 | 1301 U St | FV | 1920 |
| ES-3057 | 1307 U St | FV | 1920 |
| ES-3058 | 1321 U St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3059 | 1403 U St | FV | 1920 |
| ES-3060 | 1421 U St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3061 | 2815 Brainerd St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3062 | 2813 Brainerd St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3063 | 2703 Brainerd St | IN | 1950 |
| ES-3064 | 2701 Brainerd St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3065 | 1115 V St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3066 | 1111 V St | MT | 1930 |
| ES-3067 | 1107 V St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3068 | 2700 Gonzales St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3069 | 2720 Gonzales St | FV | 1955 |

| MSF NUMBER | NAME/ADDRESS | STYLE | DATE |
|------------|---------------------|-------|------|
| ES-3070 | 2808 Gonzales St | MV | 1940 |
| ES-3071 | 2824 Gonzales St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3072 | 2828 Gonzales St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3073 | 2805 Gonzales St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3074 | 2801 Gonzales St | MV | 1940 |
| ES-3075 | 1021 U St | MT | 1940 |
| ES-3076 | 1011 U St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3077 | 1009 U St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3078 | 1005 U St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3079 | 1001 U St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3080 | 2815 DeSoto St | FV | 1940 |
| ES-3081 | 2703 DeSoto St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3082 | 915 U St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3083 | 913 U St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3084 | 911 U St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3085 | 2700-2710 Strong St | MV | 1950 |
| ES-3086 | 900 V St | B | 1918 |
| ES-3087 | 904 V St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3088 | 908 V St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3089 | 916 V St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3090 | 920 V St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3091 | 1010 V St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3092 | 1018 V St | FV | 1935 |
| ES-3093 | 1104 V St | FV | 1935 |
| ES-3094 | 1116 V St | MV | 1950 |
| ES-3095 | 1118 V St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3096 | 1120 V St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3097 | 1119 V St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3098 | 1107 V St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3099 | 1021 V St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3100 | 1007 V St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3101 | 923 V St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3102 | 911 V St | B | 1925 |
| ES-3103 | 907 V St | B | 1925 |
| ES-3104 | 901 V St | FV | 1906 |
| ES-3105 | 2818 Strong St | MV | 1955 |
| ES-3106 | 2820 Strong St | FV | 1938 |
| ES-3107 | 618 W St | FV | 1945 |
| ES-3108 | 614 W St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3109 | 2820 Jackson St | MI | 1925 |
| ES-3110 | 2818 Jackson St | MV | 1955 |
| ES-3111 | 2806 Jackson St | MV | 1940 |
| ES-3112 | 2804 Jackson St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3113 | 2800 Jackson St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3114 | 2720 Jackson St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3115 | 2708 Jackson St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3116 | 2706 Jackson St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3117 | 2704 Jackson St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3118 | 607 U St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3119 | 2703 Gadsden St | FV | 1928 |
| ES-3120 | 2705 Gadsden St | B | 1925 |
| ES-3121 | 2708 Gadsden St | B | 1938 |

| MSF NUMBER | NAME/ADDRESS | STYLE | DATE |
|------------|--|---------------|------|
| ES-3122 | 2707 Gadsden St | FV | 1938 |
| ES-3123 | 2711 Gadsden St | FV | 1950 |
| ES-3124 | 2716 Gadsden St | FV | 1908 |
| ES-3125 | 2805 Gadsden St | FV | 1943 |
| ES-3126 | 617 V St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3128 | 612 V St | FV | 1945 |
| ES-3129 | 614 V St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3130 | 716 V St | MV | 1925 |
| ES-3131 | Oscar's Restaurant, 2805 Cervantes St | MV | 1956 |
| ES-3132 | 2723-2727 Cervantes St | MV | 1950 |
| ES-3133 | 2701-2713 Cervantes St | MV | 1952 |
| ES-3134 | 2621-2625 Cervantes St | MV | 1955 |
| ES-3135 | 2609 Cervantes St | MV | 1945 |
| ES-3136 | 2601-2605 Cervantes St | MV | 1938 |
| ES-3137 | 2513-2517 Cervantes St | MV | 1950 |
| ES-3138 | Pfeiffer Drugs, 2501 Cervantes St | MV | 1956 |
| ES-3139 | 2421 Cervantes St | MV | 1955 |
| ES-3140 | 2403-2413 Cervantes St | MV | 1943 |
| ES-3141 | 2325 Cervantes St | MV | 1936 |
| ES-3142 | Pensacola Motor Lodge, 2305 Cervantes St | Tudor revival | 1932 |
| ES-3143 | Backseat Go-Go Lounge, 3143 Cervantes St | MV | 1933 |
| ES-3144 | 721 P St | FV | 1933 |
| ES-3145 | 701 P St | FV | 1902 |
| ES-3146 | 2210 Gadsden St | FV | 1940 |
| ES-3147 | 2219 Gadsden St | FV | 1938 |
| ES-3148 | 2307 Gadsden St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3149 | 2309 Gadsden St | FV | 1931 |
| ES-3150 | 1400 Gadsden St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3151 | 2404 Gadsden St | MV | 1933 |
| ES-3152 | 2406 Gadsden St | FV | 1938 |
| ES-3153 | 2408 Gadsden St | FV | 1943 |
| ES-3154 | 2420 Gadsden St | MV | 1940 |
| ES-3155 | 2421 Gadsden St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3156 | 2501 Gadsden St | MV | 1940 |
| ES-3157 | 2515 Gadsden St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3158 | 2516 Gadsden St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3159 | 2517 Gadsden St | FV | 1933 |
| ES-3160 | 2518 Gadsden St | FV | 1928 |
| ES-3161 | 2605 Gadsden St | FV | 1934 |
| ES-3162 | 2607 Gadsden St | FV | 1938 |
| ES-3163 | 2609 Gadsden St. | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3164 | 2623 Gadsden St | FV | 1938 |
| ES-3165 | 610 U St | CR | 1940 |
| ES-3166 | 2612 Jackson St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3167 | 2610 Jackson St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3168 | 2608 Jackson St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3169 | 2600 Jackson St | MV | 1940 |
| ES-3170 | 600 T St | MV | 1940 |
| ES-3171 | 2519 Jackson St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3172 | 2510 Jackson St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3173 | 2506 Jackson St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3174 | 2500 Jackson St | FV | 1925 |

| MSF NUMBER | NAME/ADDRESS | STYLE | DATE |
|------------|--|-------|------|
| ES-3175 | 2420 Jackson St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3176 | 2308 Jackson St | FV | 1925 |
| ES 3177 | Brownsville School | CR | 1938 |
| ES-3178 | 2304 Jackson St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3179 | 2302 Jackson St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3180 | 2300 Jackson St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3181 | 2212 Jackson St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3182 | 615 P St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3183 | 621 P St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3184 | 710 Q St | FV | 1906 |
| ES-3185 | 702 Q St | FV | 1937 |
| ES-3186 | 620 Q St | FV | 1938 |
| ES-3187 | 612 Q St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3188 | 610 Q St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3189 | 615 R St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3190 | 613 R St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3191 | 611 R St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3192 | 608 R St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3193 | 710 S St | MV | 1950 |
| ES-3194 | 701 S St | MV | 1950 |
| ES-3195 | 721 T St | MV | 1950 |
| ES-3196 | 612 T St | MV | 1930 |
| ES-3197 | 601 T St | MV | 1925 |
| ES-3198 | Brownsville Shoe Shop, 2608 Cervantes St | MV | 1948 |
| ES-3199 | 2508-2514 Cervantes St | MV | 1940 |
| ES-3200 | Modern Cleaners, 2500-2502 Cervantes St | MV | 1938 |
| ES-3201 | 813 R St | MV | 1947 |
| ES-3202 | 2423 Strong St | MV | 1933 |
| ES-3203 | 2500 Strong St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3204 | 2508 Strong St | FV | 1933 |
| ES-3205 | 2511 Strong St | FV | 1928 |
| ES-3206 | 2512 Strong St | FV | 1928 |
| ES-3207 | Richards Memorial U.M. Church | CR | 1947 |
| ES-3208 | 2624 DeSoto St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3209 | 2519 DeSoto St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3210 | 2511 DeSoto St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3211 | 2514 DeSoto St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3212 | 2500 DeSoto St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3213 | 2440 DeSoto St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3214 | 2416 DeSoto St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3215 | 2321 DeSoto St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3216 | 2319 Desoto St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3217 | 2315 DeSoto St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3218 | 2300-2304 DeSoto St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3219 | 2200 Desoto St | FV | 1935 |
| ES-3220 | 2120 DeSoto St | QA | 1900 |
| ES-3221 | 1011 P St | MV | 1940 |
| ES-3222 | 1020 P St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3223 | 2201 Gonzales St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3224 | 2200 Gonzales St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3225 | 2203 Gonzales St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3226 | 2206 Gonzales St | FV | 1925 |

| MSF NUMBER | NAME/ADDRESS | STYLE | DATE |
|------------|------------------|-------|------|
| ES-3227 | 2215 Gonzales St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3228 | 2214 Gonzales St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3229 | 2216 Gonzales St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3230 | 2220 Gonzales St | FV | 1935 |
| ES-3231 | 2315 Gonzales St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3232 | 2408 Gonzales St | FV | 1920 |
| ES-3233 | 2420 Gonzales St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3234 | 2500 Gonzales St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3235 | 2518 Gonzales St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3236 | 1019 T St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3237 | 2606 Gonzales St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3238 | 2603 Gonzales St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3239 | 2607 Gonzales St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3240 | 1008 U St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3241 | 1004 U St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3242 | 1101 U St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3243 | 1110 U St | MV | 1930 |
| ES-3244 | 1112 U St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3245 | 1120 T St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3246 | 1110 T St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3247 | 1106 T St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3248 | 1103 T St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3249 | 1101 T St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3250 | 1100 T St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3251 | 815 S St | FV | 1933 |
| ES-3252 | 907 S St | FV | 1940 |
| ES-3253 | 1010 S St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3254 | 1104 S St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3255 | 1105 S St | FV | 1940 |
| ES-3256 | 1106 S St | FV | 1938 |
| ES-3257 | 1107 S St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3258 | 1109 S St | FV | 1920 |
| ES-3259 | 1111 S St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3260 | 1120 S St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3261 | 1115 S St | MV | 1925 |
| ES-3262 | 1107 R St | MV | 1940 |
| ES-3263 | 1116 R St | MV | 1925 |
| ES-3264 | 1103 R St | MV | 1950 |
| ES-3265 | 1101 R St | FV | 1940 |
| ES-3266 | 1100 R St | FV | 1950 |
| ES-3267 | 1021 R St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3268 | 920 R St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3269 | 900 R St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3270 | 2216 Strong St | FV | 1933 |
| ES-3271 | 920 Q St | FV | 1945 |
| ES-3272 | 922 Q St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3273 | 924 Q St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3274 | 926 Q St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3275 | 1006 Q St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3276 | 1008 Q St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3277 | 1010 Q St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3278 | 1021 Q St | FV | 1930 |

| MSF NUMBER | NAME/ADDRESS | STYLE | DATE |
|------------|-------------------------------|-------|------|
| ES-3279 | 1020 Q St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3280 | 1101 Q St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3281 | 1114 Q St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3282 | 1116 Q St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3283 | 1115 Q St | MV | 1925 |
| ES-3284 | 1119 Q St | FV | 1920 |
| ES-3285 | 2317 Brainerd St | FV | 1920 |
| ES-3286 | 2215 Brainerd St | FV | 1920 |
| ES-3287 | 1123 P St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3288 | 1115 P St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3289 | 2630 Brainerd St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3290 | 2622 Brainerd St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3291 | 2620 Brainerd St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3292 | 1618 Brainerd St | MV | 1930 |
| ES-3293 | 2506 Brainerd St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3294 | 2504 Brainerd St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3295 | 2505 Lloyd St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3296 | 2620 Lloyd St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3297 | 2621 Lee St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3298 | 2620 Lee St | MV | 1940 |
| ES-3299 | 2603 Lee St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3300 | 2525 Lee St, Smart Look Salon | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3301 | 2526 Lee St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3302 | 2522 Lee St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3303 | 2523 Lee St | FV | 1940 |
| ES-3304 | 2505 Lee St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3305 | 2501 Lee St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3306 | 2501 Godfrey St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3307 | 2504 Godfrey St | FV | 1935 |
| ES-3308 | 2520 Godfrey St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3309 | 2600 Blount St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3310 | 2604 Blount St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3311 | 2612 Blount St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3312 | 2620 Blount St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3313 | 2621 Blount St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3314 | 1418 U St | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3315 | 1210 T St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3316 | 1201 T St | FV | 1940 |
| ES-3317 | 1304 T St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3318 | 1317 T St | FV | 1925 |
| ES-3319 | 1415 T Street | FV | 1930 |
| ES-3320 | Beth-el Cemetery | N/A | |
| ES-3321 | B'nai Israel Cemetery | NA | |

SECTION VI HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF BROWNSVILLE

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INTRODUCTION

The West Pensacola neighborhood of Brownsville served as the home and place of business for several generations of Pensacolians. Opened in 1908, Brownsville was a place for working class families to own their own homes and raise their families, away from the cramped boarding houses and deteriorating rental property available to them in established Pensacola. The neighborhood was located in the newly developed western area of Pensacola with room for each small home to have yard and relative privacy. Its proximity to the stylish Englewood subdivision, streetcar transportation, and Kupfrian Park gave the modest neighborhood additional appeal.

As Pensacola grew, so did the size of Brownsville. As Pensacola prospered, so did the residents of the neighborhood. By the mid-1950's, Brownsville had a thriving commercial corridor on West Cervantes Street with retail shops, grocers, movie theaters, and restaurants. Two junior high schools and two elementary schools served the area, along with numerous churches. The incomes of Brownsville residents had grown with the area economy, and by 1950, Brownsville was decidedly middle-class.

The same growth that brought prosperity to Brownsville was also its undoing. New shopping areas opened up in surrounding areas, drawing customers away from Brownsville's business district. The loss of street front parking on Cervantes Street and the completion of Interstate 10 to Mobile damaged businesses further. Newer subdivisions offering larger, modern homes at affordable prices attracted young people away from Brownsville's older, more modest homes. As younger residents failed to return and older residents passed away, many of the residences in Brownsville became rental property. Poorly maintained, Brownsville's residential areas began to decay. With fewer customers, Brownsville's businesses closed.

By the 1980s, the neighborhood was known by local police for its drug traffic and prostitution. In the 1990's, a few long-time residents, former residents with affection for their old neighborhood and business owners, began to organize with the aim of revitalizing the area. Their goals are simple, but daunting: To bring back prosperity and the sense of community that was once a hallmark of Brownsville; to empower residents, both old and new, to say with pride, "I live in Brownsville."

EARLY HISTORY OF PENSACOLA (1559-1865)

Pensacola, Florida is located on the central Gulf Coast and surrounds the best natural deep-water harbor along the Gulf of Mexico. The availability of seafood from the Gulf and fertile soil a few miles inland have encouraged human settlement in Pensacola for several thousand years. The native people of the area called themselves "Panzacola," and eventually, the Indian word would become Pensacola. The Spanish had claimed all of Pascua de la Florida when Ponce de Leon landed near St. Augustine in 1513. The Spanish claim for La Florida reached as far north as present day Virginia and as far west as Texas. The Spanish continued to explore the Southeast looking for riches, always seeking to repeat the acts of plunder by their countrymen in Mexico and Peru. After finding little gold and silver among the native people, Spain began to lose interest in La Florida. However, the Spanish would discover that the British and French were

colonizing the vast Spanish claim and realized that they would soon lose their North American territory if a Spanish colony was not established immediately.

Pensacola was chosen as the site for the first Spanish colony because of its excellent harbor, relatively friendly Indians and central location along the Gulf of Mexico. In 1559 (five years before the founding of St. Augustine), Tristan de Luna set sail for Pensacola with 14 ships loaded with soldiers, families, craftsmen, and supplies. His expedition landed at Pensacola and began to unload some of the ships, choosing to leave most of the supplies and colonists on board until shelter could be built. Within a few days, a catastrophic hurricane struck the area, destroying much of the equipment and supplies, crippling the new colony before it even started. The colony limped along for two more years, but was eventually abandoned. Within three years, St. Augustine would be established on the Atlantic coast, becoming the first permanent European city in North America.

The Spanish returned to Pensacola in 1698, racing to the site just ahead of the French to re-establish their claim to the area. The Spanish built a fort and Pensacola became a military outpost. The fort was maintained to protect the treasure ships following the Gulf Stream back to Spain and to keep other Europeans from encroaching further east. The Spanish began to have problems with their neighbors, both native and French. Pensacola was occupied by the French from 1719-1721. It was then returned to Spain. In 1763, Spain lost Florida in peace negotiations with the British. The British continued to use Pensacola as a military outpost and they made many improvements and additions to local fortifications. They also created a city plan still visible in Pensacola today.

When the Spanish officially regained control of Florida in 1783, they hoped to attract more settlers to the area. Spain no longer required all residents to be Roman Catholic, only requiring they swear allegiance to the King of Spain. Because of this, several British families decided to stay in Pensacola. With the Spanish, also came less rigid laws regarding the status of African and mixed race residents. Small numbers of Africans were enslaved in Pensacola, but other free people of color began to move into the city, forming a distinct social group called Creoles. When the United States purchased Louisiana from the French in 1803, many French Louisianans refused to live under American rule. Preferring the Spanish, Louisianans began moving into Spanish Pensacola, adding their customs and language to the city's culture. Florida became part of the United States in 1821, and Americans began to move into the city as well. Pensacola remained a culturally mixed city even as the old Spanish and French families married their children to prosperous Anglo-Americans. When Florida became a state in 1845, the local newspaper was still printed in English and Spanish.

Conditions for Creoles worsened as more whites from the interior South moved into Pensacola. These Southerners believed any person with African blood was inferior and eventually passed laws forcing even free people of color to place themselves under control of white Guardians. When Florida joined the Confederacy in 1861, Pensacola was the largest city in the State, with an active port and modern military facilities. Pensacola fell to Union forces in 1862 and rejoined the Union under a Reconstruction government.

POST-CIVIL WAR YEARS (1865-1906)

The years following the Civil War were boom years for Pensacola. The United States Navy and Army expanded operations at the old Navy Yard and at Fort Barrancas. New railroads connecting the city to points all over the country enabled the area's vast expanse of pine forests to be exploited for lumber and naval stores. Railroad lines ran from the interior directly onto large wharves where ships from all over the world crowded into Pensacola harbor, waiting to be

loaded with lumber. The red snapper industry also boomed, with manufactured ice as the key to success. When refrigerated railroad cars were developed, fish could be shipped all over the eastern United States. In 1885, three million tons of fish were shipped from Pensacola, making Pensacola the "Red Snapper Capital of the World."

Immigrants from all over Europe moved to Pensacola, some arriving in the city as indentured sailors. These new arrivals tended to group together in the same neighborhoods and Pensacola developed ethnic enclaves such as "Little Italy" and "Little Norway." Greeks formed a sizeable community and eventually built a Greek Orthodox Church. Even though the status of Creoles continued to deteriorate, they remained middle-class, keeping themselves separate from the black population and living near their church, St. Joseph's Catholic Church. Although Jews had lived in Pensacola since 1821, larger numbers of German Jews immigrated to the city, opening retail shops and founding the first Jewish congregation in Florida.

For a new Jewish immigrant, the first things to look for were an organized religious community and a cemetery. In 1875, a Jewish cemetery was opened west of Pensacola in what would become the Brownsville neighborhood. The cemetery, located in the block of Cervantes and Q Streets, expanding over the years to include space for Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform believers. Two Jewish cemeteries are presently located in Brownsville, facing each other on Strong Street: the Beth-el Cemetery and the B'nai Israel Cemetery.

BROWNSVILLE BEGINS (1906-1914)

In 1906, Pensacola was a city experiencing rapid growth. The previous year, a devastating fire damaged the business district on Palafox Street. A building boom was in progress as new buildings were constructed. The railroads and port were busy and the local economy was strong. Various new businesses such as insurance, real estate, and banking were developing in support of established industries and the downtown business climate was becoming increasingly complex. New residents were moving into the city, and new subdivisions were opening to accommodate their needs. Electricity, sewer, and water lines were being extended to the more affluent areas and local town boosters pushed for better roads within the city and beyond. Streetcar lines were extended to points east, west, and north of the city center, providing transportation to the new suburbs.

Lucius Screven Brown (Photo 1) arrived in Pensacola in 1906, working as a bookkeeper for a naval stores company. Lucius Brown was a charming man and soon married Elma Gertrude Wright, daughter of an influential lumber merchant. It is not known where Brown acquired the money for his new development, but the likely source would be from his wealthy father-in-law. Brown entered into a partnership with Haakon Paulsen, a Norwegian contractor who learned his trade through a correspondence course. Brown bought seven blocks of land, north of Cervantes Street and two blocks west of present day Pace Boulevard. The men planned to build modest, shotgun-style houses to sell to working class families. The development did not have a name, but according to Brown, who died in 1963, "the streets were nothing but sand. But, Paulsen kept on calling it Brownsville until everybody else took up the name."



Photograph 1

Lucius Screven Brown, Founder of Brownsville

Source: Pensacola Historical Society

Brownsville was marketed to Pensacola residents who wished to move away from the cramped boarding houses and deteriorating rental property available to them in downtown Pensacola (Photo 2). Brownsville homes were advertised as cottages built on 100' x 50' lots, among good neighbors, with a water faucet in the kitchen. Fifty dollars down was required, with fifty dollars a month due for the next seventeen months. Potential buyers were encouraged to "Be Independent, Start Owning Your Own Home Today!" To add to the appeal of the new Brownsville development, a streetcar line ran along E Street, taking riders to Kupfrian Park, or into town and points beyond. Brownsville was close to the new upscale neighborhood of Englewood Heights, promoted as the newest portion of exclusive North Hill. Brownsville residents could not afford homes in Englewood Heights (at an average cost of \$5,000 in 1911), but they could be assured that their neighbors would indeed be good ones.

Photograph 2

*Boarders at the Magnolia Hotel
at the corner of Palafox and
Gregory Streets in downtown
Pensacola, ca. 1910.*

Source: Pensacola Historical
Society



By 1908, working class whites were following their more prosperous counterparts and leaving the racially mixed neighborhoods of downtown Pensacola. Many new residents were whites from the interior South who believed in strict segregation of the races. Advertisements for nearby Englewood Heights boasted of restrictions against "nuisances and Negroes." Brownsville was promoted only to white buyers and thus, became an almost exclusively white neighborhood as well.

However, a few families on Jackson Street were listed as "colored." In the 1921-22 City Directory, three Jackson Street addresses were listed as the homes or businesses of black families: Henry Buggs at 2208 West Jackson, a soft-drink producer; Joseph Marvary, a fireman, at 2215 West Jackson; and George Brown, a driver, at 2700 West Jackson. It is possible that these "colored" families were light-skinned or even Creoles, thus their presence would not have overly disturbed their white neighbors. It is also possible that City Directory employees were not sure how to list these families, since only two categories were allowed for listing race, either white or colored. The Henry Buggs Family is an example. Mr. Buggs is listed as colored in one section of the directory and white in another.

Ruth Maygarden McDonald, a white Brownsville resident whose family owned Maygarden Grocery for many years, does remember a few black families living in the neighborhood and shopping in her father's store. Mrs. McDonald does not remember if the families were Creoles, and she does not remember that their presence in her father's store and on neighborhood streets caused any negative reaction from whites. However, the Ku Klux Klan did hold outdoor meetings occasionally in Brownsville and the rallies must have alarmed these black families.

As residents moved into Brownsville, Pensacola continued to grow. Neither the devastating hurricane of September 26, 1906, nor the national financial panic of 1907 had an appreciable effect on the local economy. Pensacola's population of 17,747 in 1900 had grown to 22,982 in 1910, a thirty percent gain. By 1912, Pensacola residents owned 400 automobiles and 2,262 telephones. In 1910, the seven-story San Carlos Hotel opened on the corner of Garden and Palafox Streets. Partially funded by public bonds, the San Carlos was built to give visitors and potential investors a luxurious place to stay while visiting Pensacola.

New economic sources were replacing the old businesses of lumber and fishing, and Brownsville residents were located close to these new employers. An ad for a privately sold home in Brownsville during 1910, offered pleasant surroundings for these workers. A home with three rooms, plus a kitchen with water was for sale. The house was fully screened, with pear and pecan trees on a 150' x 150' lot.

By 1910, the red snapper catch had dwindled from over-fishing, while the costs of shipping and labor were increasing. However, the Red Snapper Sauce Company planned to build a factory for its popular product on the north side of town in 1910. The Goulding Fertilizer Works, north of Pensacola, employed over 300 men. By 1910, the great pine woods had been clear-cut and few trees remained. The Newport Company opened in 1916 on the west side of Pensacola and employed over 200 workers. Newport was a manufacturer of naval stores, using a new technique for extracting turpentine and resins from the thousands of previously useless pine stumps left from the lumber boom.

THE GREAT WAR AND AFTER (1914-1929)

World War I and the disruption of Europe's economy hurt Pensacola's growth. The crash of Pensacola's First National Bank in 1914 caused residents to lose confidence in the local economy. The Navy Yard closed after 1911. Tourism was seen as a new way to infuse local businesses with money and a new program of road and bridge building began. Several of the projects were in west Escambia County, providing employment for Brownsville and other Pensacola residents.

Soon the local economy would begin to improve after the opening of the Naval Aeronautic Station in 1914 and the Pensacola Shipyard. The Naval Air Station, as the station was designated in 1918, grew at a rapid rate. Designed for 1,500 men, it housed 2,200 in April 1918, and 5,000 in October 1918. The Naval Air Station provided many new jobs for the area, and as early as 1915, the government at the station employed nearly 1,000 civilians.

The Pensacola Shipbuilding Company also located west of downtown Pensacola, employed 1,500 workers by 1918, and hoped to employ 5,000 more within the year. The federal government, through the Naval Air Station and the Shipyard, probably added ten thousand people to Pensacola's population in two years. A housing shortage resulted, and homes convenient to west side employers continued to be in demand, with Brownsville an affordable choice.

A sample of Brownsville residents in 1919 reveals the work, but not always the employer, of the men listed. In 1920, Mr. A.S. Hand of 2206 West Cervantes Street was a carpenter; next door at 2208, W. Sinclair was a painter; Mr. D.M. Maxwell of 2214 West Cervantes was an electrician; L.A. Maygarden of 2601 West Cervantes was a laborer; Mr. Henry Kierce, of 2621 West Cervantes was a gardener.

Pensacola's economy began to falter again as the entire country experienced a post-war depression in 1919-1921. The economy bounced back in 1925 and Pensacola experienced a land boom along with the rest of the state, with new subdivisions growing quickly and older developments expanding. In 1926, a fierce hurricane ended the boom for the entire state and property sales slowed. Brownsville continued to grow at a modest pace, adding workers from the Navy's newly opened Corry Field to the neighborhood in 1927.



In 1927, Brownsville and West Pensacola had a population of 3,500, eight percent of the total greater Pensacola population of 41,634. Residential lots in Brownsville sold for \$5.00 to \$10.00 per foot of front. The average weekly wage paid to a white, male and skilled worker was \$27.00 per week. The average weekly wage for unskilled, male, white workers was \$16.00. Laborers received .25 to .40 an hour. Carpenters earned .50 to .75 an hour. Most women did not work outside of the home, partly because of tradition and partly because of lack of opportunity. A 1927 Industrial and Economic survey of Pensacola noted that only four percent of Pensacola's workers were women, compared with the national average of twenty-one percent. The authors of the survey concluded that any industry needing female workers would find a large number in Pensacola who would be glad to secure employment (Photo 3).

Photograph 3

Female employees of the Bell Telephone Company, Pensacola ca. 1905

Source: Pensacola Historical Society

A sample of Brownsville residents living on West Jackson Street in 1927 finds the following: Henry Buggs, a grocer, still resided at 2208 West Jackson St.; Al Nix of 2216 West Jackson worked as a laborer; George Bonifay of 2302 West Jackson was a carpenter and John Stanton of 2420 West Jackson worked as a grinding foreman for the Newport Company.

Ruth Maygarden McDonald grew up in Brownsville. She was born at 2601 West Cervantes Street to Louis and Myrtle Maygarden. Her parents were founding members of Richards Memorial Methodist Church in Brownsville where she continues to attend. Her father operated a grocery store at 2200 West Cervantes Street between 1931 and 1953. Ruth's childhood spanned the 1920's and 30's. She remembers the dirt streets of Brownsville, and her home, along with her neighbors, having an outhouse. She remembers a few homes in her neighborhood being without electricity, the families using oil or gas lamps. Ruth's home did have electricity, but it was in the form of drop lights, meaning one light bulb hanging from the ceiling. Electric lamps were rare since most houses did not have electric outlets.

In the 1920's, the streetcar ran along E street. Ruth's father worked as a conductor before he opened his store, and sometimes she and her friends got a free ride into town. Usually, Ruth walked the two miles to downtown Pensacola and thought nothing of the four mile round trip. Even though the streetcar ran as far as Kupfrian Park by the 1920's, the park was no longer fashionable. In fact, Mrs. Maygarden would not allow her children to play in the park because gypsies and vagrants occasionally camped on the site.

Social life in Brownsville revolved around church and school. Ruth McDonald attended J.B. Lockey School on Palafox Street and later, Pensacola High School. Any public gathering in the neighborhood was always of interest for curious children and adults in Brownsville. Religious revivals held under outdoor tents would often go on for hours or days. The Ku Klux Klan held outdoor rallies, but the children knew to watch only from a distance. The Pensacola Fairgrounds opened at P and Cervantes Streets in the late 1920's. The week of the Pensacola Fair was an exciting time for Ruth since her family received free passes in exchange for the use of their parking area. Brownsville was very busy during Fair week, as people from all over the County came to the neighborhood for the rides, games and displays.

When the Naval Air Station expanded in 1931, many military and civilian workers commuted through Brownsville to work, stopping at Maygarden's Grocery to shop. During World War II, buses of military personnel and defense workers would stop at Maygarden's for potted meat, sardines, crackers, etc. Another favorite Brownsville store that endured until the 1980s was the Brownsville Bakery located at 2515 West Cervantes Street. The bakery was known for its devil dogs, and Ruth claims the store introduced the chocolate treats to Pensacola.

DEPRESSION AND RECOVERY (1929-1941)

Pensacolians were no more ready for the Great Depression following the stock market crash of 1929 than other Americans (Photo 3). Pensacola did not experience the massive dislocation and unemployment of major industrial cities. The city felt only peripheral effects at first, and local charities tried to take care of the city's unemployed, but soon Pensacola would need the assistance of the Federal Government to bring relief to its citizens. Pensacola was ready for the New Deal by 1933. Pensacola did have circumstances specific to the local economy that saved many jobs. The road and bridge building projects started in the 1920s continued into the next



decade, keeping highway workers employed. The continued presence and upgrading of the Naval Air Station ensured civilian workers a pay envelope.

Brownsville residents were certainly affected by the Great Depression, many living on the economic edge even during the best of times. A 1939 WPA study of lower class housing and income in Pensacola revealed that one in three Pensacolians was living on less than \$1,000 per year. A 1940 study revealed that fewer than fifty percent of Pensacola's homes had private bathrooms and flush toilets. Fewer than ten percent of Pensacola homes had electricity for cooking and only thirty-eight percent for refrigeration. Only about seventy percent of homes in 1940 had radios.

Photograph 4
Brownsville Businessman's Club, 1930s
 Source: Pensacola Historical Society

Even though the neighborhood was poor, Brownsville was growing (Photo 5). A new elementary school was opened on Jackson Street on September 1, 1938 (Photo 6). The Brownsville (now Yniestra Elementary) School building had five rooms, each equipped with coal burning stoves for heat. The school had 180 students and four teachers, plus a principal. By the following year, enrollment had risen to 204 students and two more teachers were hired. The Brownsville School PTA (Photo 7) was very active from the beginning, producing posters with slogans such as "Music Helps Develop Character," "Thrift: A Good Habit," and "Read More Books." The PTA sponsored a "summer round-up," to give parents the opportunity to have their children checked by a nurse. Often, the school check-ups were the only medical care Brownsville children received, and the nurse found almost all of the children attending in 1940 needed dental work, many needed vaccinations, and one child showed evidence of an old case of rickets.

Photograph 5
Cervantes Street, Brownsville's main commercial corridor, mid-late 1930s

Source: Pensacola Historical Society





Photograph 6

Brownsville Elementary School (now Yniestra Elementary School), Jackson Street, Pensacola, built in 1938
Source: GAI Consultants, Inc.-Southeast (2003)



Photograph 7

Brownsville School PTA, late 1930s.
Source: Pensacola Historical Society

WORLD WAR II AND BEYOND (1941-1958)

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, Pensacolians reacted patriotically and with determination. A military town for generations, many young men enlisted. The Pensacola City Council declared that "The entire city is immediately placed on an emergency basis for the duration." During the war years, Pensacola grew enormously through the expansion of the military and its civilian employees and secondarily, through industries directly associated with the war effort. Though the city's population only grew from 37,449 in 1940 to 43,304 in 1945, Pensacola and its vicinity housed at least an additional one hundred thousand people during those years. The Naval Air Station graduated 4,500 aviators per year during the war and civilian pay rolls climbed to fifty million dollars. Housing shortages were constant as defense workers and military personnel poured into Escambia County.

Betty Carrick Long was a Brownsville resident from 1945-1959. In 1944, her father was sent to Pensacola from Mobile, Alabama, to be Superintendent of the new Gulf Power Plant under construction on the Escambia River. Housing was in short supply and priority was given to the military. Betty and her mother remained in Mobile for many months until her father was finally able to qualify for a home in Pensacola. He moved his family to Brownsville in 1945, where Betty enjoyed life as a youngster and a teen-ager, attending Richards Memorial Methodist Church and local schools.

The post-war years were a prosperous time for Brownsville. The commercial area on Cervantes Street boasted numerous gas stations, restaurants, retail shops, auto repair shops, an excellent bakery, beauty shops, shoe stores, and a movie theater (Photo 8).

Photograph 8

Brownsville Beauty Shop, 2518 Cervantes Street, ca. 1946

Source: Pensacola Historical Society



In 1946, a Brownsville lot could be purchased for five hundred dollars down and five dollars a month. Brownsville school had so many students that double sessions were held during 1946 and 1947, until an expansion was completed in 1948. The standard of living for Brownsville residents had risen with the rest of the city and most homes had indoor plumbing, electricity and other amenities such as wall outlets, ceiling fans, and hot water heaters. James Cain, a Brownsville resident from 1936-1954, remembers when an indoor bathroom was finally installed in his home at 3012 West Blount Street in 1946.

By 1950, Brownsville was booming. During the week of March 10, 1952, the social pages of *The West Florida Press* reported that seven new families were moving to Brownsville: All Navy officers, their wives and children. Social life continued to revolve around school and the many churches in the area. The Gulf Movie Theater and Denny's Drive-In were popular spots for teenagers. A new school was needed to accommodate the growing student population. In 1955, Brownsville Junior High opened to relieve crowding at Blount Junior High and Pensacola High School (Photo 9). The PTA remained very active, with primary concerns during the 1954-55

school year being the polio immunization program and the connection between the reading of comic books and juvenile delinquency.



Photograph 9

Brownsville Junior High School under Construction in 1955

Source: Pensacola Historical Society

In 1956, local residents voted upon the issue of Brownsville becoming part of the City of Pensacola. Annexation would have extended sewer lines to the neighborhood, streetlights, city fire and police protection, street maintenance, garbage collection and improved gas and water lines. In exchange for these services, residents would pay higher taxes. Voters within the fifty-five block area of West Pensacola voted to remain outside of the city limits. The Progressive Annexation Committee of the West Pensacola Chamber of Commerce led the campaign for incorporation, while the Escambia Freeholders Association organized the opposition. A portion of Brownsville along Cervantes was incorporated into the City of Pensacola and new mercury vapor lights were installed along the street in 1958.

The issue of widening Cervantes Street and providing new roads continued to surface during the 1950s. Businessmen wanted the extra customers, but worried that the wrong project would have the opposite effect. The first widening of Cervantes Street took place in 1953. Mr. Maygarden of Maygarden Grocery was paid \$137.00 for a portion of his street front parking. In 1953, an editorial in *The West Florida Press* criticized the routing of a five-year road expansion plan proposed by the County. The author stated that the roads were needed immediately and a north/south road expansion should be located further west to accommodate those commuting to the St. Regis and Chemstrand companies, and to open the area to farmers and new residential areas. In 1956, Town and Country Plaza opened. Conveniently located at Pace Boulevard and Fairfield Avenue, the new shopping center began drawing customers away from Brownsville.

BROWNSVILLE IN DECLINE (1958-PRESENT)

By the early 1960s, Brownsville's boom days were ending. Pensacola was growing and subdivisions were opening that offered new, modern homes at affordable prices. Young people were leaving Brownsville for these new homes and raising their families in other parts of the city. People living in Brownsville had not given up on the neighborhood. The PTA conducted several self-studies to find where improvements could be made in local schools. In 1965, the PTA recommended the hiring of a certified Spanish teacher, citing the need for foreign language instruction. Spanish was deemed the most important, considering Pensacola's history and proximity of Spanish speaking countries to the United States.

The following decades brought decline and decay for Brownsville. In 1971, Cordova Mall opened and lured even more customers away from Brownsville's business district. In 1978, Interstate 10 was completed to Mobile, eliminating the need for travelers to use U.S. 90 or Cervantes Street as a route west. In 1979, the State Department of Transportation expanded Cervantes Street/U.S. 90 to four lanes, destroying storefront parking for businesses on Cervantes Street. As young people moved out of the neighborhood and older residents died, many homes were converted to low-priced rentals. The homes were not maintained as before and failed to attract buyers or high quality renters. The neighborhood became transient and crime increased. Even some local churches closed or moved. After forty-six years in Brownsville, Calvary Baptist Church moved to Pine Forest Road in 1989. Drug dealers and prostitutes moved into Brownsville and the neighborhood's once respectable name became associated with vice and blight.

HOPE FOR BROWNSVILLE

In the 1990s, residents began reclaiming their neighborhood. In 1992, residents and Brownsville Churches Community Organization searched the neighborhood for "eyesores" in the community and reported them to County Administrator Bob Koncar. Articles began to appear in the *Pensacola News Journal* about the residents of Brownsville and other west side neighborhoods and their revitalization efforts. In 1997, the *Pensacola News Journal* even investigated the two-and-a-half-year revival at the Brownsville Assembly of God. The revival attracted worshipers from all over the world, and hundreds attended every church service. The articles revealed that the revival was actually having adverse effects on the Brownsville neighborhood and that improvements to the neighborhood were due to community committees, law enforcement and Escambia County officials.

In 1997, Jim Kehoe became president of the Brownsville Revitalization Committee. Jim was born at 809 North P Street and lived in Brownsville from 1932-1973. Jim currently owns a business at 2200 West Cervantes Street, the former location of Maygarden's Grocery. Jim sees the Cervantes Street business corridor becoming a new multi-ethnic market place, similar to the popular International Market of Atlanta. The business owners could move their families into the residential areas and Brownsville could become a cohesive neighborhood again. The committee

also sees the need for a community center offering GED classes, computer access, and job counseling. An even more ambitious idea is the development of a business incubator, similar to the incubator in Mobile, Alabama. Mobile has a twenty-acre site where new business owners are given subsidized rent and guidance until they are profitable enough to survive. Jim and his fellow committee members, see great potential for their neighborhood. The residents do not want to try to recreate the past. They want Brownsville to have new life in whatever form will make it a thriving community again--productive and full of hope for the future.

SECTION VII
EVALUATION OF SURVEYED SITES FOR NATIONAL REGISTER LISTING AND AS AN ESCAMBIA COUNTY
HISTORIC DISTRICT

INTRODUCTION

GAI evaluated the 321 newly surveyed historic resources in the Brownsville Survey Area for their eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and as a possible Escambia County historic district. GAI utilized the *National Register Bulletin 15-How to Apply the National Register Criteria* and *National Register Bulletin-Defining Boundaries for National Register Properties*.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES (NRHP)

The NRHP provides recognition for individual buildings and historic districts significant on the national, state, and local levels. One important function of the NRHP is to identify significant properties that federal, state, and local planners should carefully consider when developing projects. Specifically, any project involving federal or state funding, permitting, licensing, or assistance must avoid adverse impacts to the NRHP-listed or –eligible property.

Listing in the NRHP, either individually or as part of an historic district, may make a property eligible for a Federal Income Tax Credit. The property must be income producing and may qualify for up to a 20% income tax credit. In Florida, counties and cities can grant *ad valorem* tax relief for owners of historic properties. NRHP-listed properties also may be eligible for some American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and building safety code adjustments.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE AND THE NRHP CRITERIA

The NRHP lists individual landmarks and historic districts that satisfy specific criteria for significance and standards for architectural integrity (Appendix A). The significance of an individual landmark or an historic district is assessed against the historic context established for the surrounding city, county, region, or state. The historic context written for the Brownsville architectural survey area established important historical themes and time periods against which the area's historic resources can be evaluated.

GAI evaluated the integrity of individual resources in Brownsville, as well as the integrity of the Brownsville neighborhood as a whole. The integrity of an individual historic resource or an historic district carries equal weight with its historic significance in assessing eligibility for listing in the NRHP. Alterations and additions to historic resources affect the integrity of individual resources. Generally, most buildings in Brownsville had been altered or added to in some degree over the years, affecting their individual integrity. However, the Brownsville district as a whole retains a high level of integrity, due to its retention of street plan, few examples of modern infill construction or demolitions, uniformity of scale, and homogeneous architectural style.

APPLYING THE NRHP CRITERIA TO THE BROWNSVILLE SURVEY AREA

The three NRHP Criteria (Criteria A, B, and C) relating to historic structures were applied to the Brownsville Survey Area.

- **Criterion A** relates to significance in the broad patterns of history on the national, state, or local level, as well as association with important historical events.
- **Criterion B** relates to an individual resource's association with a person or persons significant on the local, state, or national level. An historic district may also be significant under Criterion B for buildings that are associated with significant individuals.
- **Criterion C** relates to buildings or historic districts that embody one or more distinctive architectural styles or types, or can be attributed to known architects or master craftsmen.

HISTORIC RESOURCES ELIGIBLE FOR INDIVIDUAL LISTING IN THE NRHP

The Brownsville School (West Jackson Street Elementary School)(ES-3177), located on the south side of Jackson Street along the south border of the survey area, is eligible for individual listing in the National Register under Criterion A in the area of Education for its association with the history of education in Escambia County, with the period of significance being 1938-1953. The Brownsville School also is eligible for individual listing in the National Register under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as the work of architect W.D. Willis and for embodying the distinctive characteristics of the Georgian Revival style of architecture.

HISTORIC DISTRICTS IN THE BROWNSVILLE ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY AREA

GAI evaluated all 321 historic resources in the Brownsville Survey Area as possible contributing resources in a Brownsville Historic District. Establishing boundaries for the historic district took into consideration such factors as distribution of historic resources; natural boundaries such as waterways; man-made boundaries such as streets and roads; and most importantly, the ability of a district to convey the feeling of a coherent historic area, undiluted by the intrusion of significant numbers of non-contributing buildings or features. The boundaries of the recommended Brownsville Historic District are shown in Appendix C and are congruent with the original survey area boundaries (Appendix B). The proposed Brownsville Historic District boundaries also include 76 non-contributing resources (resources that either post-date 1953 or do not retain integrity) and 43 vacant lots.

The Brownsville Historic District is eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning, for its association with the residential development of West Pensacola in the early to mid-twentieth century. Founded and developed in 1908 by Lucius Screven Brown, Brownsville was marketed to working class Pensacola residents desiring affordable housing. The neighborhood grew in the 1910s and 1920s with the expansion of military facilities and industrial enterprises in West Pensacola. A commercial district including a wide variety of stores and businesses, developed along Cervantes Street beginning in the mid 1920s. World War II brought even more residents to Brownsville as the military build-up provided steady employment for its residents. Although it has experienced a gradual decline since the late 1950s, the Brownsville neighborhood has retained its distinct identity to this day. The district maintains a good level of integrity, with few demolished buildings, and only a few post-1953 non-contributing resources. The Brownsville Historic District retains integrity of materials, design, workmanship, location, association, and feeling.

Although Escambia County does not yet possess an historic preservation ordinance and the mechanism for evaluating and designating historic landmarks or districts, the Brownsville Survey Area would certainly qualify for local designation as an historic district.

SECTION VIII CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Between February and May 2003, GAI Consultants-Southeast (GAI) conducted the Brownsville Architectural Survey for the Escambia County Community Redevelopment Agency. The Brownsville Survey area is bounded by W Street on the west, Blount Street on the north, P Street on the east, and Jackson Street on the south and consists of 55 whole or partial city blocks. GAI Historian Nina Winkler conducted background research on the founding and development of Brownsville to identify important historical themes in the neighborhood's history. The Brownsville Architectural Survey resulted in the completion of FMSF forms and photographs for 321 newly surveyed properties. GAI evaluated the Brownsville Survey Area for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a Brownsville Historic District and as a locally designated historic district.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Integrate the 321 MSF forms and photographs of the Brownsville Survey with existing information on Brownsville held at the Escambia County Community Redevelopment Agency and the Pensacola Historical Society-Historical Resource Center.
2. Pursue nomination of the Brownsville Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning.
3. Pursue designation of the Brownsville Historic District as an Escambia County Historic District upon enacting an historic preservation ordinance for Escambia County.
4. Develop and adopt historical architectural design guidelines for use by property owners in the Brownsville historic district. These guidelines should be tailored to the specific architectural styles and characteristics of the Brownsville neighborhood and should be developed with input from Brownsville residents and property owners.
5. Adopt a city/county *ad valorem* tax exemption for historic properties.
6. Continue historic preservation education efforts, including the development of an historic walking tour brochure that highlights the history and significant architectural resources of Brownsville.

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NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

- Criterion A: Properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- Criterion B: Properties that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- Criterion C: Properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- Criterion D: Properties that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)

Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, or graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years *shall not be considered eligible* for the National Register. However, such properties *will qualify* if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria or if they fall within the following categories:

- A. a religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
- B. a building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or
- C. a birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life; or
- D. a cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or
- E. a reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived; or
- F. a property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historical significance; or
- G. a property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.

APPENDIX B
BROWNSVILLE ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY AREA,
CITY OF PENSACOLA AND ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA-2003

APPENDIX C
BROWNSVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARIES,
CITY OF PENSACOLA AND ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA-2003