

**Dallas Landmark Commission
Landmark Nomination Form**

1. Name

historic: Bluit's Sanitarium/R.F. Aspley Building
and/or common: Bluit Building/Aspley Building
date: 1904/1902

2. Location

address: 2034/2038 Commerce Street
location/neighborhood: Dallas Central Business District
block: 31/127 **lot(s):** 17,18 **land survey:** Railroad Addition **tract size:** .077 acres

3. Current Zoning

current zoning: PD 357

4. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	<u> </u> Museum
<u> </u> <i>district</i>	<u> </u> <i>Public</i>	<u> </u> <i>occupied</i>	<u> </u> <i>agricultural</i>	<u> </u> <i>Park</i>
<u> </u> <i>building(s)</i>	<u> </u> <i>private</i>	<u> </u> <i>unoccupied</i>	<u> </u> <i>commercial</i>	<u> </u> <i>Residence</i>
<u> </u> <i>structure</i>	<u> </u> <i>Both</i>	<u> </u> <i>work in progress</i>	<u> </u> <i>educational</i>	<u> </u> <i>Religious</i>
<u> </u> <i>site</i>	Public	Accessibility	<u> </u> <i>entertainment</i>	<u> </u> <i>Scientific</i>
<u> </u> <i>object</i>	Acquisition	<u> </u> <i>yes:restricted</i>	<u> </u> <i>government</i>	<u> </u> <i>transportation</i>
	<u> </u> <i>in progress</i>	<u> </u> <i>yes:unrestricted</i>	<u> </u> <i>industrial</i>	<u> </u> <i>other, specify</i>
	<u> </u> <i>being considered</i>	<u> </u> <i>no</i>	<u> </u> <i>military</i>	<u> </u> <i>abandoned</i>

5. Ownership

Current Owner: Pearl-Commerce Downtown Lofts, L.P.
Contact: Mr. Roger Gault **Phone:** 214.341.9267
Address: 10406 Koko Head Circle **City:** Dallas **State:** Texas **Zip:** 75218

6. Form Preparation

Date: August 2, 2000
Name & Title: Stan Solamillo, Preservation Planner and Research Consultant
Organization: for AAE Architects
Contact: John Garrison, Principal **Phone:** 214.824.7411

7. Representation on Existing Surveys

Alexander Survey (citywide) local state national National Register
H.P.L. Survey (CBD) A B C D Recorded TX Historic Ldmk
Oak Cliff TX Archaeological Ldmk
Victorian Survey
Dallas Historic Resources Survey, Phase ___ high ___ medium ___ low

For Office Use Only

Date Rec'd: ___ Survey Verified: Y N by: ___ Field Check by: ___ Petitions Needed: Y N
Nomination: Archaeological Site Structure(s) Structure & Site District

8. Historic Ownership

original owner: B.R. Bluit, M.D./R.F. Aspley
significant later owner(s): N/A

9. Construction Dates

original: 1904/1902
alterations/additions: ca. 1920, ca. 1960, ca. 1970

10. Architect

original construction: Unidentified
alterations/additions: Unidentified

11. Site Features

natural: N/A
urban design: N/A

12. Physical Description

Condition, check one: Check one:
___ Excellent ___ deteriorated ___ Unaltered ___ original site
___ Good ___ Ruins ___ Altered ___ moved(date ___)
X fair ___ Unexposed

Describe present and original (if known) physical appearance. Include style(s) of architecture, current condition and relationship to surrounding fabric (structures, objects, etc.). Elaborate on pertinent materials used and style(s) of architectural detailing, embellishments and site details

Bluit's Sanitarium, also known as the Bluit Building, is a vernacular two-part commercial masonry building that shares a party wall with the vernacular two-part commercial R.F. Aspley Building. Both buildings have been built on a site that is at grade and located at the southwest corner of the Dallas Central Business

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District (CBD) in the vicinity of Deep Ellum. There is a 10'-0" wide concrete sidewalk that fronts along the north (front) façades of both buildings, asphalt-paved parking lots adjacent to the Bluitt building's west (side) and south (rear) facades, a 20-foot alley that is located next to and parallel to the both buildings' south (rear) façades, and another 10'-0" wide concrete sidewalk that fronts the Aspley Building's east (side) facade. The site slopes gently north-south, from Commerce to Jackson Streets.

Bluitt's Sanitarium is oriented north-south with the principle (front) façade facing north (Figure 1). The building is 24'-11 1/2" in width and 89'-7 1/2" in length, two-and-one-half stories in height at the north (front) façade, and because of the site's grade change, is three stories in height at the south (rear) façade. The front façade is faced with variegated tan brick that has been laid in running bond. It is three bays in width and features a stepped parapet with a raised center section. A ground floor storefront has been boarded up and along with the adjacent brickwork, has been painted black. The front façade is also framed by two two-and-one-half story brick piers. They are detailed with rusticated limestone bases and vernacularly-rendered, Romanesque-styled limestone capitals. The piers are trimmed with finished limestone coping and are surmounted by limestone finials.

The front façade was originally fenestrated with one pair of single-hung wood sash of possibly one-over-one light configuration, flanked on either side by one, single-hung wood sash, also of one-over-one lights. The wood sash have been removed, the window openings have been boarded up and painted white. The window openings are detailed with a continuous limestone sill, supported by a single dentil course of variegated tan brick. The window heads are detailed with variegated tan brick voussoires, laid in jack or straight arches. The brickwork separating the windows is corbelled above the second-story ceiling line to form two additional piers and support a raised center section of the parapet. They are detailed with smooth-finished limestone coping and rusticated limestone finials. There is a blank frieze that is framed by a single course of projecting brickwork. The parapet and piers are broken horizontally by a string course with small corbelled brick modillions.

The west (side) façade is eight bays in length and is faced with variegated red brick that is laid in eight-course American bond (Figures 2 and 3). Assymmetrically fenestrated, the façade has three window openings that are located on the first floor and four windows on the second floor. They originally featured two-over-two light wood sash. The wood sash have been removed with the exception of two sash on the upper floor, and the window openings have been boarded up and painted white. The window openings on the upper floor are detailed with rusticated limestone sills and segmented arches laid in double rowlock courses. The windows on the first floor are similarly detailed at the heads but their limestone sills have been removed. All of the windows on the west facade are fitted with heavy cast iron hinge plates for storm shutters. The hinge plates are hollow and are dimensioned equal to that of a single brick, so that they could be installed by masons during construction.

There is a painted sign that is badly faded and located near the northwest corner that reads: BLUITT'S SANITARIUM." The "R-I-U-M" of "SANITARIUM" is the most visible portion of the sign and is located directly above the first second-story window (Figures 3 and 12). A large sign has been painted beneath Bluitt's sign but is illegible. The brick flues of four chimneys for wood burning stoves project above the parapet.

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The south (rear) façade is two bays in width, is faced with variegated red brick laid in seven-course American bond, and is fenestrated with four windows at the second and third floors, and a door at the first floor (Figures 4 and 5). The window openings originally featured single-hung, two-over-two light wood sash.

The wood sash have been removed except for two on the third floor, and the window openings have been boarded up and painted white. Like the windows on the west (side) façade, the window openings on the south (rear) façade feature segmented arches that have been laid in double rowlock courses. There is a projecting brick cornice that is two courses in height and two cast iron grates for ventilation located above the third floor ceiling line. Six of the windows are detailed with rusticated limestone sills while two have sills of rowlock brick. A painted sign is located beneath the parapet. It has faded and is illegible. The first floor was infilled with brick at an indeterminate date.

The north (front) and west (side) facades were etched by an unidentified artist in a lithograph that was produced in 1909 (Figure 14; Worley's City Directory 1909: 83; McKnight et al 1990: 23). The drawing accompanied a photograph of Dr. Bluitt and both appeared as part of an advertisement that was printed in the local city directory of that year. The rendering depicted a storefront that was different from that currently extant. Modeled on an eastern brownstone plan, it had two entries, one with stairs going up to a mezzanine floor on the east side and the other, with stairs going down to a basement. A projecting middle bay was located between the two entries and featured single-hung, one-over-one light wood window sash over a paneled storefront with additional windows providing light for the basement. A horizontal signage band above the storefront carried the owner's name, "B.R. BLUITT, M.D." and a panel on the raised parapet section bore the physician's surname, "BLUITT."

The interior of Bluitt's Sanitarium has been gutted to grade with the exception of part of the third floor, whose floor joists remain intact in the front and rear sections of the building (Figures 9 and 10). The bottoms of the floor joists are finished in 3/8" x 3 1/2" beaded ceiling board that has been painted light blue and green on the north and south sections, respectively (Figures 9 and 10). There are rudimentary trusses that were added to strengthen the north and south ends of the third floor framing system at an indeterminate date (Figure 10).

Entry is made from the rear door onto a raised brick and concrete platform that is 3'-0" in height above grade (Figure 10). There is a brick lined well that is located approximately 10'-0" north of the platform edge. A brick and concrete-lined channel is located on the south side of the well and runs south beneath the platform. There is a brick flue that projects from the face of the east (side) wall. There is also a deposition of brick rubble on the east side of the building floor that is composed of red brick with "TEXAS" molded into the mortar (underside) face of the bricks.

Although all of the second-story floor joists have been removed, pockets for the joist ends are located in the east and west (side) walls (Figure 11). Several of the upper-story windows on the west (side) and south (rear) walls retain the original window casings, crown molding, stools, and wood trim. The north (front) interior wall features three eighteen-light, Craftsman- inspired transoms that appear to have been used to replace the original transoms and storefront of Bluitt's Sanitarium that was illustrated in the physician's advertisement of 1909 (Figures 13 and 14). Their heads are located beneath a lintel that

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spans the distance between two vernacular-rendered, Romanesque style limestone capitals that have been painted blue. The replacement storefront beneath the transoms has been removed and infilled with wood studs to support an exterior board covering. There are also eleven stanchions that supported light fixtures and/or fans that have also been painted light blue in the front section of the building. They appear to date from the early twentieth century.

R.F. Aspley Building

The R.F. Aspley Building is oriented north-south with the principle (front) facade facing north (Figures 1, 2, and 8). It is 25'-1" in width and 89'-7 1/2" in length and is two stories in height at the north (front) and south (rear) facades. The front facade is faced with variegated red brick that has been laid in running bond. It is three bays in width and features a stepped and raked parapet. A ground floor storefront has been partially boarded up and there is folding metal security fence that appears to have been installed (ca. 1960). There are intact eight-light transoms, whose glazing has been over painted that remain intact.

The front facade is framed by two, two-story piers. They are detailed with concrete bases. It was originally fenestrated with three single-hung, six-over-one light wood windows that have been removed. They are stored on the second floor. The window openings have been boarded up from the second floor interior and have been painted red. The window heads are detailed with soldier courses and there is a continuous concrete sill that runs from corner to corner. The building features a simple frieze that is defined by a concrete cornice and is supported by decorative concrete brackets. The frieze is simply detailed with a rotated concrete square that is centrally located.

The east (side) facade is six bays in length and is faced with variegated red brick that is laid in running bond (Figures 6, 7, and 8). The ground floor storefront wraps around the corner, fills two bays, and is surmounted by six, six-light wood transoms. The façade is assymmetrically fenestrated with three operable six-light wood sash at transom height, one large window of indeterminate configuration that has been boarded up and painted red, and a side door. The second floor is fenestrated with six single-hung, six-over-one light wood windows that have been removed, boarded up, and painted red. Like the windows at the front elevation, they are stored on the second floor. The second story windows have a continuous concrete sill that runs from corner to corner. There is a concrete cornice that is supported by decorative concrete brackets. The side façade also features the side wall of an elevator penthouse that is located at the southeast corner of the building. There was a wood window of indeterminate configuration that has been removed, boarded up, and painted red.

The south (rear) façade is two bays in width, two stories in height with an elevator penthouse (Figures 5 and 6). It is fenestrated with a metal roll up door and a second doorway that has been boarded up and painted red. Two windows are located at the second floor. They originally contained single-hung, two-over-two wood sash and feature segmented arches and rowlock sills. One window is intact, while the other has been removed. Both have been boarded up from the second floor interior. A faded painted signage band on the upper facade reads "INDIA TIRES."

13. Historical Significance

Statement of historical and cultural significance. Include: cultural influences, special events and important persons, influences on neighborhood, on the city, etc.

Bluitt's Sanitarium was the first medical clinic for African Americans to be built in Dallas, Texas and provided offices for Dr. Benjamin R. (B.R.) Bluitt, as well as a small group of black professionals who later became very prominent members of the City's black community. Erected in 1904, the vernacular commercial masonry building was designed by an unidentified architect and occupied by Dr. Bluitt and his new tenants upon completion. Opening in 1905 as the Bluitt Building, Bluitt's Sanitarium was first listed as such in the city directory of 1907 and was operational through 1913 (Worley's City Directory 1907: 1028; *Ibid.*: 1912-1913: 1182). In addition, the Bluitt Building is the only known building to have been erected, owned, and operated by African American professionals west of a "color line" in the Dallas Central Business District (CBD).

Evidence for a "color line" cannot be found in the City of Dallas ordinances that were codified during Segregation, however, its existence nonetheless, has been suggested by the work of several researchers during the late twentieth century (Slate 2000: personal communication). Its location appears to have been associated with the westernmost boundary of Dallas' famous black shopping district that developed from the seventh decade of the nineteenth century through the fourth decade of the twentieth century -- Deep Ellum. Entering into the realm of myth because of its colorful and sometimes sordid history as well as its almost total destruction in the 1960s, the district's actual location and limits became almost completely forgotten by the end of the century. Consequently, Deep Ellum was referred to by most historians as an area "east of town along Elm Street and Central Avenue" (Payton 1994: 125).

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) Writers Project conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Dallas from 1936-1939. The project produced a written description of Deep Ellum that stated that the district included "both sides of Elm Street between Preston and Good Streets ... [as well as] the section about it for two or three city blocks to the north and south" (Holmes and Saxon 1992: 294). In addition, the WPA writers indicated that Deep Ellum was located on the "eastern fringe of Dallas' theater district" (*Ibid.*; Emrich and Payton 1986: n.p.). They also noted, however, that even during the early twentieth century, there was some disparity about the actual boundaries of the district. During the 1930s the Dallas Police Department only regarded Deep Ellum as, "the area between Central Avenue ... and Hawkins Street" (Holmes and Saxon 1992: 294).

Preston Road, designated the western boundary of the district by the WPA writers later in the 1930s, was located one block west of the Houston & Texas Central (H&TC) Railroad trackway. Preston was shown in H.A. Spencer's *Street Guide* of 1929 as extending north from Pocahontas through an H&TC spur line on Marilla Street to Swiss Avenue (Spencer 1929: n.p.). His *Street Guide* of 1934 showed Preston Road terminating into Live Oak (Spencer 1934: 21). Preston Road was abandoned in 1968, which caused further confusion as to the district's actual location and westernmost boundary.

The eastern boundary of Deep Ellum was described by the WPA writers as being Good Street. This was supported by photojournalist, R.C. Hickman, when he said that he remembered black-owned businesses being only located in the blocks west of Good Street (Hickman 1995: personal communication). Two years earlier, author and local historian Robert Prince described Deep Ellum as "Elm Street east of Harwood" and indicated that the area's principle venues were found in the 2200-2500 blocks of Elm Street. He further noted that a "curfew" was imposed on Elm Street west of Harwood at dusk, which established the westernmost limit of the district and the location of the color line in the Dallas CBD

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(Prince 1993: 68). Bluitt's Sanitarium was located one block west of Harwood, at the intersection of Commerce and Pearl Streets.

By the time that Bluitt's Sanitarium was erected in Dallas, its owner had lived through the turbulent years of the Post-Emancipation Era. Despite that fact, however, he was among the first small group of black physicians, dentists, and pharmacists who entered the state in the 1880s to practice their professions in cities with large African American populations. In Dallas, they formed an elite class, started fraternal organizations and financial institutions, furthered the growth of churches and social institutions, conducted business among themselves and with members of the majority community, and invested heavily in real estate. Dr. Bluitt appears to have been the more flamboyant of the Dallas black elite. He was the first African American to advertise in the Anglo city directories and regularly conducted business with whites during his thirty year career in the city. Like those of his colleagues, his achievements provide a glimpse at how certain individuals of color attained positions of relative privilege after the tough ascent from slavery and the abject poverty and hostility that followed emancipation.

Little is known about the early years of Benjamin R. Bluitt, except that he was born on November 15, 1864 in Limestone County. One source indicated that he was born in (or in the vicinity of) the rural Central Texas town of Mexia, which is the seat of Limestone County (Prather & Lee 1996: n.p.). Another source stated that he was born in Freestone County and raised in Limestone County (Maxwell 1996: 611). His father and mother are said to have been Jarriet and Mariah Bonner Bluitt (Prather & Lee 1996: n.p.) and he had two brothers and a sister (U.S. Census, Limestone County, Texas 1870: 239). Both were former slaves who like all of the Texas slaves, received news of their freedom two years and an indeterminate number of months (depending on their former owners) after the Emancipation Proclamation had been issued by President Abraham Lincoln.

Emancipation for the Texas slaves occurred when U.S. Army General Gordon Granger disembarked at the Port of Galveston on June 19, 1865 and gave notice to the state's white and black population (Crouch 1992: 13). Granger's announcement, promulgated as General Order No. 3 of 5, stated that "All slaves are free" and that "[t]his involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes [the same as] that between [an] employer and hired labor" (Ibid.; *Dallas Times Herald*, 1 July 1865: 2).

The length of time that it took for Granger's Galveston orders to reach the interior of the state remains unknown, however, it took twelve days for the news to arrive and be printed in the July 1 edition of the *Dallas Times Herald*. The last part of Granger's General Order No. 3 instructed Freedmen "to remain at their present homes and work for wages" (Ibid.). Presumably neither content to remain on his former owner's land nor remain in his service, Jarriet Bluitt moved his family to an unknown location in the same county at an indeterminate date and that is where Benjamin is thought to have grown up.

There is an oral tradition that indicates that there was a Bluittville located between Mexia and Corsicana in Navarro County and suggests that there was some relationship between Benjamin's family and that settlement. However, there is no information available at this time to substantiate whether Benjamin was raised there nor whether his father's former owner, his father, or another relative was responsible for the community's establishment (Payton 2000: personal communication).

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Benjamin completed at least a primary education in a rural Texas county and that in itself was no small endeavor, given the fact that education for black children during the period was a difficult, if not improbable achievement. In addition, the school that Benjamin probably attended was established during Reconstruction and initially operated at some risk under the mandate of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands.

Known in the vernacular as the Freedmen's Bureau and established by an Act of Congress on March 3, 1865 to operate from that date until the end of the war and "for one year thereafter," the Bureau was charged with "control of all subjects relating to refugees and freedmen in the rebel states" (Crouch 1992: 3). However, it was virtually non-existent in Texas following the surrender and did not have an effective state-wide presence until 1867. The delay placed the state's Freedmen, women, and children in great peril. Describing the aftermath of the war, historian Barry Crouch wrote that, "if the fighting [of the Civil War] had not bloodied Texas soil, the peace brought a new type of conflict into the Lone Star State (Ibid.: 13).

In June 1865 a Bureau Assistant Commissioner in nearby Louisiana, Thomas W. Conway, described the situation in correspondence to then Commissioner, General Oliver Otis Howard, when he stated that "[the Freedmen] are terribly persecuted by the return[ing] rebel soldiers" (Ibid.). The following month he telegraphed Howard, informing him that, "Matters in Texas are bad. . . My assistant in Shreveport is taking charge of several counties but in the state generally there is a bad condition of affairs." In desperation, Conway asked Howard, "Has any Assistant Commissioner been appointed in that state?" (Ibid.).

Howard finally announced the official appointment of an Assistant Commissioners for Texas, as well as for Georgia and Alabama in September of that year (Ibid.: 15). Two years later, however, the administration of the Texas Freedmen's Bureau was only effective 150 miles inland from the Texas coast. It took the succession of three administrators, Edward M. Gregory, Joseph B. Kiddoo, and Charles Griffin, before the Federal mandate was finally extended and implemented throughout the entire state. Griffin finally achieved this when he ordered all U.S. Army post commanders to assume the duties of Bureau agents and by June 1, 1867, he had established seven sub-districts, staffed with sixty-nine agents (Ibid.: 28).

The establishment of schools in Texas for Freedmen, women, and their children was initiated by the Bureau, beginning with the first Assistant Commissioner, Edward M. Gregory. Crouch described the results of the first year of education efforts by the agency:

By the Spring of 1866, ninety schools came under Bureau supervision including forty-two day, twenty-nine night, and nineteen Sunday schools, with an additional eighteen to twenty private schools [that were] taught by blacks. They comprised 4,590 students (2,830 children and 1,760 adults) with forty-three teachers: sixteen white males, thirteen white females, and fourteen blacks (who were not categorized by gender) (Ibid. 19).

Congress extended the life of the Freedmen's Bureau by two years in July 1866, when it authorized funding for the agency, over a veto by then President Andrew Johnson, and enacted the 1866 Civil Rights

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Bill (Ibid.: 3). Under the second Assistant Commissioner in Texas, Joseph B. Kidoo, and a specific Federal mandate to further black education, the betterment of black schools became a major focus. He worked closely with the American Missionary Association and other religious organizations that supplied teachers for the Texas schools, aided black communities in acquiring land to build schools and religious institutions, funneled the proceeds from leases and sales of confiscated property to pay teachers' salaries and build schools, and attempted to better protect teachers from violence. The latter proved impossible, given that there were only in excess of 3,400 federal troops at the Bureau's disposal (Ibid.: 30).

The third and most successful Assistant Commissioner was Charles Griffin, under whose administration, the educational system for Texas Freedmen and their families was reformed and expanded. All of his agents became as a matter of fact, superintendents of education, who were required to regularly visit the schools (both public and private) each month in their jurisdictions, use "every means" to obtain land for school construction, and enter into contracts with individuals for the construction and furnishing of new school buildings (Ibid.: 31). As a result of his efforts, by 1867 there were "self-sustaining schools" and "day, night, and Sunday schools" that registered nearly 6,000 students (Ibid.). Unfortunately, his work ended prematurely with his death in September, 1867 from Yellow Fever during an epidemic that ravaged the Gulf Coast (Ibid.).

The fourth Assistant Commissioner, Joseph P. Reynolds, is reputed to have concentrated more on Army business than on education in advance of the Bureau's phase out in 1869. Throughout the Bureau's tenure, however, were the countless incidences of intimidation and violence that were directed against Freedmen, women, and children as well as against the teachers who were sent to Texas to educate them. Griffin wrote that the teachers labored for their students with "a zeal and devotion," that he had "never seen surpassed" (Ibid.: 31). Kiddoo noted the "virulent abuse of female teachers" by white Texans and he attempted to protect those women who he described as exhibiting "so true a missionary spirit as to expose themselves to such barbarity in order to educate the negro children of the South" (Ibid.: 25). Crouch later summarized the teachers' treatment by writing that "Texas was a brutal and cruel place for a teacher [of Freedmen], whether white or black, male or female (Ibid.: 34).

Hostility toward black students was summarily vented by whites in Tyler in 1868 when black children attending the local school were "attacked," "beaten with clubs, and stoned. The assault [justly] alarmed the black community, frightened the children, who refused to attend school, and forced its temporary suspension." Then the local whites even "planned to burn [down] the schoolhouse" (Ibid.: 62). The general pattern of violence that began with the 1865 surrender continued unabated throughout the Bureau's period in Texas. All of the Assistant Commissioners in Texas wrote about it. Even Reynolds wrote in 1868 that "hundreds of Freedmen ha[ve] been murdered" and "thousands mutilated" since the war's close and the "perpetrators of these deeds go unpunished" (Ibid.: 35).

Against this backdrop of terror, African American initiative proved to be probably the greatest asset in furthering black education in Texas. Many communities simply started their own schools, often in advance of the Bureau's arrival, and many were only Sabbath or Sunday schools (Ibid.: 84; Montgomery 2000: 15). The present discrepancy about the actual community in which Benjamin Bluitt was raised prevents identification of the category of school that he attended and received his early education. We do know, however, that "many race-related murders" occurred in Limestone County during the 1870s

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and that for a time the governor placed the entire county under martial law (Maschino 1996: 199). Despite the severity of the local conditions, it may be conjectured that at the conclusion of that period, Benjamin somehow had decided on medicine as a career and was admitted to Wiley College in Marshall, Texas (Prather and Lee 1996: n.p.).

Wiley College had been established in 1873. It was the first college for African Americans to be located west of the Mississippi and was founded by the Freedman's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) (Lentz and Allen 1996: 972; Montgomery 2000: 16). Staffed by white missionaries during the years that Benjamin was in attendance, the school offered high school as well as college level courses from its inception until the 1920s (Lentz and Allen 1996: 972). This suggests that whatever subjects may have been lacking in Benjamin Bluitt's rural county schooling were acquired there, preparing him for the rigorous training of medical school. Benjamin appears to have graduated from the institution with the class of 1882.

He was then admitted to Meharry Medical Department of Central Tennessee College in Nashville, Tennessee. The school had originated as Clark Chapel, a Freedman school organized in Nashville in 1865 by the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church (Summerville 1983: 4-5). It was incorporated by the Tennessee legislature as Central Tennessee Methodist Episcopal College in 1866. Begun as the Medical Department of Central Tennessee College in 1876, the name was changed to "Meharry" at the suggestion of faculty in the following year (Ibid.: 18). Named after the Meharry brothers, five Methodist sons of Scottish immigrant parents who made significant donations to start and maintain the institution, it was finally incorporated as Meharry Medical College later in 1915 (Ibid.: 57).

At the time when Benjamin Bluitt attended Meharry, the course of study was three years in length and had been so since 1879, with students encouraged to be in residence for all three sessions. The curriculum included "anatomy, physiology, chemistry, botany, dissection, and chemical analysis as well as surgery, gynecology, obstetrics, surgical anatomy, [Medical] theory and practice, histology, microscopy, and medical chemistry. Medical jurisprudence and Bible history and doctrine were also required" (Ibid.: 25-26). Classes included "lectures, recitations, and frequent exams, supplemented by practical exercises" (Ibid.: 26). In addition, during the period that Benjamin was at the school, the following was incorporated as part of the standard course of study:

Students were doing laboratory work in chemistry that included qualitative analysis, urinalysis, and toxicology. In obstetrics and gynecology, they learned the use of instruments by means of a manikin. Surgical classes gave particular attention to venereal diseases, bandaging, and minor operations. Students also dissected cadavers and had access to the Medical Department's microscopy collection that contained hundreds of slides (Ibid.).

The course work was rigorous as were the requirements for entry into the program and the standards were increased with each successive school year. Bluitt appears to have graduated from Meharry with the class of 1885 and probably received a commencement address similar in tone to that delivered seven years earlier by one of the institution's founders, Dr. John Braden:

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I congratulate you tonight, first, because you are recognized as men. You were born slaves, the recognized property of others. . . Tonight you are your own; no fetters bind your limbs, no human law manacles your intellect, no earthly master has the keeping of your conscience. . . I hail you as *men*.

Your position here tonight is the trumpet voice of encouragement to the poor young men who have the desire to secure a thorough education. Your example tells them that they need not wait for others if they will use the powers God has given. . .

Your school days are about to end, but not your student life. . . Know what is in your books; as soon as possible, get the best and dated works on medicine; read the best medical journals you can find. Be married to your books and dare allow to think for yourselves. Study your patients, notice carefully the various forms of disease, the effects of every prescription, the surroundings of the sick . . . Remember that internal remedies will not remove dirt on the skin, [n]or tonics overcome the destructive influences of bad ventilation, dampness, and filthiness. Get your mind[s] filled with the idea of healthy surroundings for your patients, and labor to secure everywhere observance of the laws that will prevent disease as well as heal the sick. . .

You cannot go to Africa as a people and it is doubtful if that would be best. Your home is here, and you are no[t] carpetbagger[s]. Generations in the future will find your people here. Cultivate for these generations the friendliest relations with your professional brethren. . . and by your diligence in study, modesty in deportment, fidelity, and kindness to your patients, and your earnest efforts to promote the highest welfare of your people, demand the respect of the entire community (Ibid.: 23-24).

As was customary for all Maherry graduates during the period, Dr. Bluitt was licensed to practice medicine in several states and prior to arriving in Dallas, he is reputed to have done clinical work in Chicago, Illinois; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and New York City (*New Handbook of Texas* 1996: 611).

He came to Dallas on April 8, 1888 and started his practice in that year (*Dallas Express* 1938: 4; Barr 1996: 95; Prather and Lee 1996: n.p; Maxwell 1996: 61). The city's African American population had swelled from 2,109 in 1870 to 4,947 in 1880 (U.S. Census Office 1891: 508). Lured by the employment opportunities that existed with the growth in industry, the city's black population was relegated to several neighborhoods that had grown from settlements that occurred during Reconstruction. Ringing the northern and eastern fringes of the Central Business District, they included communities that later became known as Short North Dallas, Hall & Thomas, Stringtown, and Deep Ellum.

Dr. Bluitt was not the first African American physician to arrive in the city. He had been preceded by Dr. George F. Smith, who like all of his later colleagues, was listed in the city directory with a "(c)" next to his name, denoting "colored." Arriving as early as 1885, Dr. Smith was published in the business listings of the local city directory of 1886-1887 and had an office at 944 1/2 Main Street (Morrison & Fourmy 1886-1887: 280, 351). For unknown reasons, his tenure was short-lived and his name did not appear in successive years. There is an oral tradition that suggests that another black physician, Dr. Majors, was also an early practitioner in Dallas (McKnight et al 1990: 23), however, he did not receive

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mention in the city directories of the period. There were no African American physicians listed in Dallas prior to 1886, nor from 1888-1889. Another Meharry graduate of the Class of 1885, Dr. J.W. Anderson was also included in the city directory in the same year that Dr. Bluitt first appeared in publication.

The first mention of Dr. Bluitt was in the business listing of the Dallas city directory of 1889-1890, where he was described as a "physician" with an office "over 621 Elm" Street and "r[oo]ms [at the] same address" (Morrison & Fourmy 1889-1890: 110; Boykin 1975: 1). The following year he moved his lodgings into a house at 351 Flora and his office to "over 527 Elm" Street (Ibid. 1891-1892: 110; Ibid.). In 1890 Dr. Bluitt began his involvement with Dallas real estate. This appears to have increasingly occupied his time in successive years. Dallas County deed records indicate that he began by purchasing property on the east side of the H&TC right-of-way in the M.H. Hughes Addition. This eventually became part of the Hall & Thomas Neighborhood. His first acquisition was a residential lot for \$850 (*Dallas County Deed Records*, Vol. 135: 251). The Census of 1890 indicated that there were in that year 11,177 African Americans residing in the City (U.S. Census Office 1891: 508).

In the city directory of 1893-1894, B.R. Bluitt was assisted by Dr. Lyman B. Bluitt, possibly a nephew (Payton 2000: personal communication), and they advertised their practice as "Bluitt & Bluitt. Physicians [&] Surgeons." Their offices were moved to another location at 497 Main Street in 1893 (Ibid. 1893-1894: 110; Ibid.). There appears to have been a serious disagreement between the two physicians, however, because Lyman (L.B.) Bluitt left the practice before the printing and distribution of the next city directory in 1894. The nature of the dispute is unknown, however, its severity is attested to the fact that he was listed in the city directories for the following fifteen years as a "waiter" at the Oriental Hotel.

There appears to have been some resolution of their conflict by 1909, and L.B., after finally opening up his own office at 596 Elm Street, was once again listed as a "Physician." He had moved from B.R.'s house in 1894 and had lived at various locations including 232 Marilla and 438 Jackson Street. Further evidence of a change in their relationship is suggested by the fact that in the city directory of 1910, he was listed once more as living at the same address as B.R. Bluitt and his wife---at 345 Flora Street. In the following year, however, he was not listed and never appeared in the city directories again.

Despite the unfortunate demise of Bluitt & Bluitt in 1894, B.R. continued his practice at 497 Main Street (Ibid. 1894-1895: 79). In 1894-1895 there were three additional African American physicians and surgeons listed in the local city directory. They included Dr. Samuel W. Armstrong, J.W. Anderson, and Charles V. Roman. Their offices were located at 323 1/2 Elm, 410 Jackson, and 139 Boll Streets, respectively (Ibid.: 370). A black-owned pharmacy---White & Britton---was in operation in 1894 at 368 San Jacinto Street (Ibid.: 320). Run by pharmacists James P. White and William H. Britton for at least two years, the business appears to have failed in 1895 and was not listed in successive years.

The initial success of White & Britton, possibly prompted Dr. Bluitt to open the Star Pharmacy at 497 Main Street in 1894 (Morrison & Fourmy 1895-1896: 507). He ordered the manufacture of pressed glass medicine bottles in three sizes and had them embossed with the drug store's name and logo. Whether there was a connection between the success and failure of White & Britton and Star Pharmacy is unknown, but like his competitors, Dr. Bluitt's new business was not as successful as expected, and only received mention in the city directory of 1895-1896. One late twentieth century archaeologist later noted

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that "Star Pharmacy" medicine bottles were later found in significant numbers near the Texas & Pacific (T&P) railyard, as well as on sites located on Bryan and Live Oak Streets. Their distribution suggests that Dr. Bluitt may have continued dispensing medication under his own brand name from his offices (Troup 2000: personal communication).

The failure of Star Pharmacy as well as Bluitt & Bluitt probably caused B.R. to realize that he could do better by investing in land and this prompted him to enter even more heavily into real estate speculation. Consequently, he bought and sold several properties in that year. They were located on Pearl, Peak, and Cochran Streets (*Dallas County Deed Records*, Vol. 168: 275; Vol. 208: 258).

In 1897 Dr. Bluitt and Drs. Anderson and Roman maintained practices in the city but Dr. Armstrong was no longer listed in the city directory (Morrison & Fourmy 1897-1898: 514-515). The following year, they were joined by Drs. D.W. Dunn, and John K. Nickins. They officed at 119 Burford and 302 N. Hawkins Streets, respectively. James Williams was listed in the city directories as a "Specialist" at 252 North Hawkins Street and pharmacist Alfred D. Simington opened the San Jacinto Drug Store at the corner of San Jacinto and Boll Streets (Worley's City Directory 1898-1899: 488).

By 1900 the African American population in Dallas had increased to 13,646 persons (U.S. Census Office 1901: 602). Drs. Bluitt, Anderson, Nickens, and Roman still maintained practices in the city and were joined by Dr. F.M. Brooks who took over the 252 North Hawkins Street office of Dr. James Williams. Dr. Charles V. Roman described himself in that year as a "Specialist" in "eye, ear, nose, throat" ailments and related "surger[ies]" (Ibid. 1900: 505-506). Pharmacist A.D. Simington had ceased operations and there were no black-owned drug stores listed in the city directory. Dentist Marcellus C. Cooper joined Dr. Bluitt at 361 Commerce Street. Dr. Cooper had been one of two African American dentists in the city and had first opened up an office at 323 1/2 Elm Street in 1893 (Morrison & Fourmy 1894 -1895: 351). The other dentist, Dr. J.H. Holsey was listed as officing at 495 Main in the same year (Ibid.: 173). The business relationship between Drs. Bluitt and Cooper, based more than likely on mutual referrals, was maintained for at least twenty years.

One of Dr. Bluitt's larger transactions occurred in 1902 when he attempted to purchase a building from the Dallas Electric Light & Power Company (DEL&PC) for \$4,000. His intention may have been to open a clinic at that location. The seller was a subsidiary of the Boston-based Stone & Webster Engineering Company, and the DEL&PC property was located in the Dallas CBD, in Block 78 1/2 on Jackson Street. For unknown reasons, the transaction did not go through and Dr. Bluitt continued his search for a site for a clinic.

The listing of the city's African American physicians and dentists remained unchanged through 1902. In that year they were joined by black physicians A.J. Burns, R.T. Hamilton, and Banks S. Reese. Their offices were opened at 322 North Central Avenue, 155 Main Street, and 370 North Central Avenue, respectively (Worley's City Directory 1902: 695). Unfortunately, the only new office that remained in the following year was that of R.T. Hamilton and there were still no black-owned pharmacies listed. Drs. Frank M. Brooks and George Lytle opened for business at 252 North Hawkins and 260 Wood Street while Drs. Bluitt and Cooper remained at their 361 Commerce Street address (Ibid. 1903-1904: 679-680).

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Perhaps to minimize the impact of his real estate activities on his medical practice, Dr. Bluitt vested the Anglo firm of J.W. Lindsley & Company with the Power of Attorney to collect rents from several properties in that same year. They included 416 and 418 Pearl as well as 178 and 180 Allen Streets (*Dallas County Deed Records*: Vol. 276: 549). He also purchased property on Jackson Street in 1902 as well (*Ibid.*: Vol. 292: 111).

On December 11, 1903, Dr. Bluitt and his wife Cornelia purchased Lot 17 in Block 31/127 of the Houston & Texas Central Railroad Addition as the site for a clinic from C.L. Moss and his wife (*Dallas County Deed Records*, Vol. 310: 429). The amount of the transaction is unknown because the County's record of the deed is illegible. In addition, since building permit records were not maintained by the City until 1905, no record of or value for the edifice that was to be erected there is available. The property was a vacant lot located next to the R.F. Aspley Building that had been built two years earlier.

Seventeen days after their purchase, Dr. Bluitt and his wife claimed the new site as a "business homestead" and declared the following in front of Notary Public, A.S. Wells:

Being the same land conveyed to me by C.L. Moss and his wife. . .by deed of date 11 day of December 1903. . .that the aforesaid land was purchased with the desire and intention that the same should be the future business homestead of myself. That the above described premises constitute my business homestead and is hereby so designated. That the same is so constituted, declared and designated my business homestead for the sole purpose of having an office and sanitarium for the propagation of my vocation in life as a physician and surgeon. That there is no other place [that] I intend [to] establish my office and sanitarium for the purpose indicated above [and t]hat the original purpose in the purchase of said property was [for] the establishment of a business homestead (*Dallas County Deed Records*, Vol. 342: 101).

Presumably early in 1904, the physician hired an unidentified Anglo architect to design the building because the city's first African American architect, William Sidney Pittman, arrived later in 1912 (*Solamillo* 2000: 8). A contractor was procured to excavate a basement and dig a well to supply water for both his office and that of Dr. Cooper, and erect the facility at 504 Commerce Street. A plumbing system was probably also installed to transport water from the well in the basement to the second and third floors.

The building was built with brick supplied by the Texas Brick Company of Ferris to be of "fireproof construction" and its north (front) storefront was modeled after an eastern brownstone. It had two recessed entries, one with stairs going up to a mezzanine (second) floor on the east side and the other, with stairs going down to a basement. A projecting middle bay was located between the two entries. It had windows installed above a paneled storefront that provided light to the mezzanine floor and additional windows below the storefront that provided light for the basement. Obviously proud of the new facility, Dr. Bluitt ordered two signs for the front façade. One was a signage band that carried the physician's name and degree, "B.R. BLUITT, M.D." and the other, installed within a brick panel at the top of the façade's parapet and presumably molded in plaster, read, "BLUITT." Consequently, the facility was also referred to in the vernacular as the "Bluitt Building" after its opening.

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Moving from the offices at 361 Commerce late in 1904, Drs. Bluitt and Cooper were joined by another African American professional, attorney D.M. Mason, in time for the printing and distribution of the 1905 city directories. Daniel M. Mason was the first African American attorney in Dallas. He had arrived in the city at least by 1895 and was first listed in the business listing of the city directory of 1900. He had also first purchased property from Dr. Bluitt in 1895, and had been involved with him in several real estate transactions since then (*Dallas County Deed Records*, Vol. 167: 611). M.C. Cooper experienced more competition in that year when another African American dentist, O.L. Bryan, listed his office as being at 115 Boll Street. In addition, there was also a black pharmacist, D.V. Hooper, whose drug store at 495 Elm Street proved to be the first African American pharmacy to have longevity through successive years (*Worley's City Directory 1905*: 375).

Dr. Bluitt's real estate activities continued. In 1904 he sold St. Mary's Temple No. 5 to Drs. R.T. Hamilton and M.P. Penn, representing St. Clair's Temple No. 86, for \$12,000. Dr. Bluitt had purchased the building from W.H. Lewis in 1891, along with O.A. Harris and W.H. Hunter. From 1903-1906 he bought and sold residential lots on Pearl, Allen, and Cochran Streets (*Dallas County Deed Records*, Vol. 358: 367, 424; Vol. 393: 515; Vol. 326: 294; Vol. 355: 542; Vol. 370: 517).

By 1906 the number of black physicians and surgeons in Dallas had increased to a total of eleven. They included Drs. Bluitt, Anderson, Brooks, and Hamilton, along with F.A. Bryan at 304 North Central Avenue; C.A. Harris at 422 North Pearl; W.L. Harris at 407 Flora; M.H. Leach at 158 Commerce; M.P. Penn at 109 South Hawkins; T.M. Reagor at 167 North Central Avenue; and D.W. Shields at 582 Elm (*Ibid.* 1906: 865-866).

Refused membership in the state and local white medical organizations, the Texas Medical Association and the Dallas County Medical Association, the city's black physicians and surgeons joined their colleagues as members of the Lone Star State Medical Association (LSSMA) (Prather and Lee 1996: n.p.; Chatman and Barr 1996: 271). Organized by two Meharry alumni, Drs. J.H. and L.M. Wilkins who were practicing medicine in Galveston, along with San Antonio pharmacist J.S. Cameron and twelve other physicians from nine towns in Texas, the LSSMA was formed in Galveston on August 25, 1886 (Barr 1996: 94). It was the second organization of black medical professionals to be formed in the country. Its membership was expanded when the organization changed its name to the Lone Star State Medical, Dental, and Pharmaceutical Association in 1901.

Presumably as early as 1905, Dr. Bluitt petitioned the State to license his facility as a clinic. He received his license under the name "Bluitt's Sanitarium" in 1906 and advertised as such in the city directories from 1907 onward. To mark the occasion, Dr. Bluitt hired a sign painter to add a third sign to the building's west (side) façade and it stated upon completion, "BLUITT'S SANITARIUM."

He filed death certificates for two African American patients at the county in 1906. They included Mr. William Wilson, an eighty-year-old who died of "Pneumonia" and Addie Pearson, a teenager who succumbed at age fifteen to "Perferal Fever" (*Dallas County Death Index*, 1904-1910, Nos. 3331, 3380). In the following two years, there were five more deaths that occurred at the clinic. Four were African American and one was Hispanic. Ms. Mary Wood, aged 37, and Alaliva Milanez, aged 55, died in

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November 1907, of "Consumption" and "Bright Disease," respectively. In 1908 forty-eight-year-old Rachel Parker died of "General Weakness," an infant named Ransom Brown expired from "Cholera," and fifty-year-old Lavia Walker died from "Malaria fever" (Ibid.: Nos. 5027, 5023, 6754, 6755, 6818).

Dr. Bluitt paid the John F. Worley Publishing Company an undisclosed amount to print the name of his clinic, along with his address and telephone number in the margins of both the 1907 and 1908 issues of the Dallas City Directory. Unfortunately, the pages referenced by the company for the listings of advertisers as well as "Bluitt's Sanitarium," "B.R. Bluitt," and "Hospitals" were incorrect. Consequently, in 1909 the physician purchased a "quarter page ad" and it was finally run and correctly referenced (Figure 13).

The notice that he had printed in that year showed a lithograph of Bluitt's Sanitarium along with his portrait in profile (as was customary for the period) and the following copy:

I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT MY SANITARIUM is now open for the benefit of the general public where all of the most scientific operations are being successfully made, at reasonable prices. For further information, call on or address Bluitt's Sanitarium[,] 504 COMMERCE ST. PHONE MAIN 2775[,] DALLAS, TEXAS[,] (Worley's City Directory 1909: 80).

In that same year, however, Dr Bluitt and his wife quietly sold the building to an S.P. Jones for \$9,400 (*Dallas County Deed Records*, Vol. 455: 91), then moved the doctor's office to 595 Elm Street and reopened the clinic at 123 Florence (Boykin n.d.: n.p.; Ibid. 1975: 2). Whether the sale was forced by his being over-extended in real estate can only be conjectured, however, he had used the property as collateral for a loan in 1905 and had filed the following affidavit with his wife before Attorney and Notary Public, D.M. Mason:

That their homestead which they own and occupy is No. 349 Flora Street, City of Dallas, Texas, and that [a] certain lot on [the] south side of Commerce Street. . .fully described in deed from C.L. Moss to B.R. Bluitt is not and has never been used by them as a homestead. That this statement is made for the purpose of securing a loan of \$2,200 from said C.L. Moss. . .That said lot was vacant at the time of its purchase. . .(*Dallas County Deed Records*, Vol. 328: 434).

Some of his other real estate transactions of 1909 included the purchase of residential property from the Chicago-based Women's American Baptist Missionary Society and the sale of three lots in Hutchins, Texas (*Dallas County Deed Records*, Vol. 469: 159; Vol. 436: 206).

In 1910 Dr. Bluitt ran the same ad as he had in the city directory of 1909 *sans* the lithograph with the change in address and telephone number (Worley's City Directory 1910: 80; Figure 15). In that year, death certificates were filed at the county for five African American patients. One "Premature birth" occurred at the clinic and the infant did not survive. Mrs. G. Cooksee died from an "Appendicitis," Ona Packer and Robert Winn succumbed to "Peritonitis," and Geneovia Cooper expired from "General Debility" (*Dallas County Death Index*, 1904-1910, Nos. 7084, 7284, 7285, 7287).

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Both Dr. Cooper and attorney Mason remained at the 504 Commerce Street location, however, and were joined by another African American-owned company, Rowen & Son (Worley's City Directory 1910: 39). D. "Dock" Rowen and his son, Roy Rowen, also paid John F. Worley Publishing Company to run an advertisement in the local city directory of 1910. It stated:

**ROWEN & SON
DEALERS IN
Real Estate, Land Titles, Etc.
DISCOUNT NOTES**

**Will build and improve property where persons
making application own the land. Collect
rents in any part of State
(Worley's City Directory 1910: 77; Figure 16)**

Dock Rowen was a merchant who operated dry goods stores in what later became the Thomas and Hall, Short North Dallas, and Deep Ellum neighborhoods (Figure 17). Presumably using the profits from his grocery business to invest in real estate, he gained sizable holdings in Dallas in the late nineteenth through early twentieth centuries. Although the nature of the relationship between Dock Rowen and B.R. Bluitt is unknown, Mr. Rowen did pay Dr. Bluitt \$600 in that year for the Penny Savings Bank Building with D.M. Mason acting as attorney (Ibid.: Vol. 508: 5). However, Mr. Rowen and his son were only in the Bluitt Building for one printing of the Dallas City Directory.

Penny Savings Bank of Dallas was the city's first African American-owned financial institution. It appears to have opened in 1909 at 595 Elm Street and operated through 1913 (Worley's City Directory 1910-1911: 691, 514; 1912-1913: 651). Both Drs. Bluitt and Cooper are reputed to have been involved in its founding (Adams 1987: 23A), however, the bank only appeared in the Dallas City directory of 1910-1911 (Ibid.: 1910-1911: 691). Rev. Governor I. Jackson, Pastor of Evening Chapel A.M.E. Church, was listed as President, Dr. Cooper was Vice President, and C.R. Boswell was the cashier (Ibid.). Although the bank did not appear in successive printings of the local directories, in the 1912-1913 publication, Rev. Jackson was still listed as "President" of "Penny Savings Bank." In the following year, however, his occupation had changed to only that of "Rev." (Ibid. 1914-1915: 571). Reasons for the bank's closure remain unknown but deed records indicate that Dr. Bluitt was involved with the institution in several real estate transactions of the period (*Dallas County Deed Records*, Vol. 508: 5; Vol. 542: 600; Vol. 543: 596).

Dr. Bluitt's move to 123 Florence Street was short-lived and sometime in 1910, he returned his sanitarium to 504 Commerce Street. The Dallas addressing system was changed in 1911 and the building was renumbered as 2034 Commerce Street. Dr. Bluitt ran an ad with the same copy in the city directory as he had in the two previous years, only changing the emphasis of the lead line with capitalization:

I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT MY SANITARJUM IS NOW OPEN for the benefit of
the general public where all of the most scientific operations are being successfully made at

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reasonable prices. For further information, call on or address Bluit's Sanitarium[.] Or Phone Main 518[.] 2034 Commerce St. DALLAS, TEXAS (Worley's City Directory 1911: 67)

In 1910 Dr. Bluit hired another Anglo firm, Murphy & Bolanz, to collect rents from several more of his properties. They included 349 Floyd, 503 Cochran, 234 Juliette, and 123 Florence Streets (*Dallas County Deed Records*, Vol. 481: 295).

In the following year Dr. Bluit and his clinic were described in a local black business directory:

[In Dallas,] we have 14 physicians, 4 dentists and [6] lawyers. It is the concensus of opinion that our physicians enjoy fully 90 per cent of the practice of our people. In Dr. B.R. Bluit we have one of the best known and one of the most successful surgeons of the South. . .The Bluit Sanitarium has been in operation for about five years. The Sanitarium is owned and operated by Dr. B.R. Bluit, a surgeon of national reputation. He is ably assisted by the leading physicians of the city. The sanitarium is open to all regularly practicing physicians. It has had remarkable success (*Dallas Negro Business League* 1911: G).

In 1912 he was again listed in the city directory along with his sanitarium and he ran the same "quarter page ad" as he had done previously. The only change was to the date in the upper right hand corner (Figure 18). No death certificates were filed by Dr. Bluit from 1910-1912, suggesting that he may have stopped taking in emergency patients. Dr. Cooper and Mr. Mason still conducted business from the building. They were joined in that year by two additional African American tenants --- Dr. J.C. Wade and the Franklin Brothers, William M. and Walter J., who operated a cleaners in the building (*Worley's City Directory* 1912-1913: 147). In that same year, agents of the Sanborn Insurance Company recorded the Bluit Building as having "Colored Offices" (*Sanborn Insurance Company of New York* 1913: 560; Figure 19).

The Franklin brothers are reputed in the oral tradition to have been cousins of Dr. Bluit. The daughter of M.C. Cooper, Marzelle Cooper-Hill, stated in 1988 that:

[My father's] office was. . .located in the Bluit Building. Dr. Bluit had a sanitarium down on the corner of Commerce and South Pearl. He had a cleaning establishment in the basement that his nephew ran. On the next floor was Dr. Bluit's office, Lawyer Mason's office and my father's dental office. On the upper floor was Dr. Bluit's Sanitarium where his patients were. Dr. Bluit's Sanitarium was the only one where black doctors could practice (McKnight et al 1990: 137).

The 1912 city directory listed fourteen African American physicians and surgeons. They included Drs. Bluit, Anderson, Brooks, Bryan, Hamilton, Penn, and Shields. They were joined by Drs. J.M. Dodd at 2604 Williams; W.M. Hames at 112 Cliff; A.J. Johnson at 2211 Elm; M.H. Leach at 2710 San Jacinto; A.L. Runyan at 1800 Jackson; as well as P.M. Sunday and J.T. Welch at 2415 1/2 Elm (*Worley's City Directory* 1912-1913: 1182). Dentists M.C. Cooper and O.L. Bryan were joined by two more physicians --- A.H. Tyson at 2415 1/2 Elm and G.W. White at 2606 1/2 Elm --- and D.V. Hooper's drug store remained open at 2418 Elm Street (*Ibid.*: 1143-1144; 1145-1146).

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In that same year, Dr. Bluit again gave Power of Attorney to J.W. Lindsley & Company to "make contracts of rentals. . .and to collect said rent" from various properties. They included 2508 Juliette Street, 2907 and 2909 Flora Street, 2512 and 2519 Florence Street, 707 Good Street, 3715, 3709, and 3717 Munger Avenue (*Dallas County Deed Records*, Vol. 546: 199). By the Fall he had clear title to all of them.

In the following year, the number of African American doctors grew to twenty and Dallas was witnessing what writers later described as a Black Renaissance in Deep Ellum. There was a movement of physicians to Elm Street. They included R.T. Hamilton, A.Q. Shirley, P.M. Sunday and J.T. Welch who officed at 2415 1/2 Elm and M.P. Penn and G.W. White at 2606 1/2 Elm (*Ibid.* 1914-1915: 992-993) Hooper's Drug Store provided an anchor for the burgeoning business district at 2418 Elm Street. B.R. Bluit closed his sanitarium and moved his office to 2411 1/2 Main Street. He had operated the first and only African American clinic in the city for six years. M.C. Cooper moved to 2209 1/2 Elm Street (*Ibid.*).

By 1914 the Hall & Thomas neighborhood, located north and east of the H&TC trackway, had its own group of neighborhood physicians. Drs. B.L. Boswell, O.R. Busch, and C.L. Morgan were located at 1027 1/2 Boll Street and F.M. Brooks maintained an office at 1105 Boll Street (*Ibid.*). Other physicians listed in the city directory included J.W. Anderson, W.M. Haines, J.H. Dodd, and M.H. Leach who maintained the addresses of the year before as well as W.H. Anderson at 1713 S. Preston, B.E. Howell at 2524 Bryan, and J.C. Wade at 829 N. Central. W.R. McMillan had arrived at least one year earlier and his office was indicated as being at 614 1/2 Commerce Street (*Ibid.*).

Dallas' first African American architect, William Sidney Pittman arrived in the city in 1912 to supervise the construction of Allen A.M.E. Church in Fort Worth and he was commissioned to design and prepare the plans for the Knights of Pythias Temple in Dallas from late 1914 through early 1915. Construction of the temple began late in 1915 and was completed in the following year. It was Deep Ellum's most impressive addition. Rising up above a sea of rooftops from the surrounding one and two-story structures, it was the shopping district's only multi-story office building.

Although Pittman's Knights of Pythias Temple had not even been dedicated yet, Dr. Bluit was listed in the city directory of 1916 as having an office at "214 Pythian Temple." No other physician in the city claimed that fashionable address until the following year (*Worley's City Directory 1916: 898-898*). In April of that same year, the City Charter was amended with the addition of its first segregation ordinance of record. Subsection 36-A was added to Section 3 of Article II. It stated that:

The City of Dallas shall have the power by ordinance duly passed to provide for the use of separate blocks for residences, places of abode, places of public amusement, churches, schools, and places of public assembly by members of the white and colored races. The term "colored race" as used herein, shall include all persons of African descent and the term "white race" as used herein shall include all persons not of the colored race as colored race is defined herein (*City of Dallas 1916: n.p.*).

In August, 1916, a second ordinance (Ordinance No. 195) was approved by the City Aldermen for the following stated purpose:

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An ordinance for preserving peace, preventing conflict and ill feeling between the white and colored races by providing for the use of separate blocks by white and colored people for residences and for other purposes (City of Dallas 1916: n.p.).

In the following year, Dr. Bluitt's colleagues finally began to assume their places in the city's first African American-designed, built, owned, and managed office building. The new tenants included all of the known African American dentists in Dallas in that year. J.B. Burnett was listed in an unidentified "Pythian Temple" office, M.C. Cooper was in suite 100; F.J. Hawkins was in suite 208; and G.W. White occupied suite 216 (Ibid. 1917-1918: 1135). The physicians and surgeons included B.R. Bluitt in room 214; M.P. Penn in room 211; and P.M. Sunday in room 210. The remaining seventeen physicians in the city, however, remained at their respective neighborhood offices (Ibid.).

Sometime in 1918, however, Dr. Bluitt moved out of his office at the Knight's of Pythias Temple to another that was located at 2667 Elm Street. He is reputed to have moved to Chicago in the same year but was listed in the city directory of 1919. One researcher even suggested that he died there in 1918 (Maxwell 1996: 611). However, he stayed in that city no longer than a few months and instead, returned to Dallas in 1919. He printed an advertisement in the January 18 and January 25 issues of the *Dallas Express* that stated beneath a frontal portrait:

NOTICE!

Dr. Bluitt has returned to the City
and resumed practice

(*Dallas Express*, 18 January 1919: 2; 25 January 1919: 6; Figure 20).

Unfortunately, the advertisement provided neither an address nor a telephone number and he was never listed in the city directories again. He appears to have left once more for Chicago in 1920, where he is said to have settled, continued his medical practice, and lived until his death in 1946.

The reason why Dr. Bluitt left Dallas is not completely known, however, it appears to have been related to some thirty years of real estate speculation in the city. In 1918 and 1919 he was liquidating assets including two automobiles, a late model Willys Knight touring car and a Chevrolet (*Dallas County Deed Records*, Vol. 749: 345; Vol. 768: 482). In addition, by 1920 there had been a successful lawsuit by a former associate named Dock Rowen and several of Dr. Bluitt's remaining properties were ordered sold in a sheriff's sale to the plaintiff for one hundred dollars (*Dallas County Deed Records*, Vol. 852: 628). When Dr. Bluitt moved from the city, he is reputed to have left some of his records in the possession of relatives, but unfortunately, their disposition is unknown (Payton 2000: personal communication).

In the year that Dr. Bluitt left the city, the City Code was again amended by the City Aldermen. Title X, Chapter 4 and Title XXX, Chapter 9 were added, containing sections addressing "separate dances" as well as seating arrangements on "streetcars and other public conveyances" (City of Dallas 1920: n.p.). In 1922, under the Ku Klux Klan-dominated administration of Mayor Louis Blaylock, there were no less

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than five ordinances adopted and or/amended by the City Aldermen. They included Ordinances 1106, 1106 (amended), 1109, 1179, and 1201. Passed between 1922 and 1924, almost all of them dealt with residential occupancy along specific Dallas Streets and most included the following preamble:

An ordinance providing for the segregation of the white and colored races in accordance with an agreement entered into by representatives of such races. . .(City of Dallas, Ordinance 1106, 1924: n.p.).

It may be conjectured that sometime during this period, if not before, the owner of the Bluitt Building had Dr. Bluitt's name removed from the front of the building, and altered the storefront to appear more like those of the surrounding low-rise commercial buildings. The only indication of the structure's African American origin and use remained in a painted sign on the building's west facade that still read, "Bluitt's Sanitarium." For some unknown reason, the sign was never over-painted to erase the former owner's name and despite time and weather, it remained there for ninety-four years (Figure 13).

By the time that Dr. Bluitt moved out of the building for his second and last time, Commerce Street had begun to change from a street of mixed retail businesses to that of an "automobile row." The Bluitt building's next tenant was Davis Turney Auto Company. The municipal building, designed by local architect C.D. Hill, had been constructed in 1913, on a site one block east and across the street from the first black clinic in Dallas. By 1916 another dealership, Dallas Chalmers Motor Car Company was officing in the building. Similar tenants leased the building until 1930 when most of the area's automobile-related businesses moved from Commerce Street to other locations in the city.

The R.F. Aspley Building had always had different tenants from the year that it opened. None spent more than three years at that location. Its first tenant was James Danelly, who was listed in the city directory as a "pat. med." Three years later, a new tenant, Collum Commerce Company leased the building for one year. That company was replaced by Patrick C. Donovan and the Donovan Company from 1909-1911. In the following year the building had two new tenants, McCreary-Horner Undertaking Company and KC Multigraphing Company. Peavy Rubber Company and other tire companies rounded out the listings of Commerce Street's automobile businesses from 1915-1930. The building's owner, R.F Aspley, was involved in at least one real estate transaction with Dr. Bluitt (*Dallas County Deed Records*, Vol. 358: 367).

Dr. Bluitt is reputed in the oral tradition to have been married twice. His first wife was Cornelia but his second wife's name is unknown. His marriages did not produce any children (Bluitt 2000: personal communication). In addition, Dr. Bluitt is purported to have been a Mason as well as a member of several black fraternal organizations, a member of the Negro Chamber of Commerce, and a Trustee of St. James A.M.E. Temple (Ibid.). His having been a trustee of the church during this period suggests that he probably voted to hire William Sidney Pittman, the city's first African American architect, to design and supervise the construction of a new edifice at 624 Good Street. It was dedicated in January, 1921, the year after Dr. Bluitt's final move to Chicago. In 1990 a clinic was opened by Dallas County's Parkland Hospital and named after him as well as another early physician, and the Bluitt-Flowers Clinic continues its service to communities of color in the twenty-first century.

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Dr. Bluitt returned to Dallas for a brief visit in 1938 and he attended a banquet that was held in his honor to celebrate fifty years in the medical profession. The occasion was recorded by a reporter for the *Dallas Express* under the headline, "Bluitt Banquet Rare Feast of Experiences":

[On] Friday night. . .60 or more well wishers sat in banquet order at the Moorland Branch W.M.C.A. and paid tribute to Dr. [B.R.] Bluitt on the occasion of his fiftieth anniversary in the practice of medicine. Dr. J.W. Anderson and the Honorable William "Goosneck Bill" McDonald literally stole the show as they carried their hearers back to the early days of the beginning of Dr. Bluitt's medical career. Dr. Bluitt came to Dallas, April 8, 1888 and began his practice in the Slaughter Building on Commerce Street, downtown. Dr. Bluitt was the first negro physician to practice medicine in Dallas. His practice grew large and the territory he covered was wide. He established the first hospital for the care of Negro patients in Dallas, and he became a pioneer and leader in the field of business. Dr. R.T. Hamilton was toastmaster at the banquet and the following other speakers appeared on the program: Bonze Mayor E.E. Ward, Dr. A.H. Dyson, Grand Master William Coleman, Dr. Frank R. Jordan, Professor J.B. Richey, Dr. R.E.L. Holland, Mr. Chas. T. Brackins and [Dr.]P.M. Sunday.

Dr. Bluitt left Dallas 19 years ago and is now a practicing physician and surgeon in Chicago. He returned to Dallas recently, to celebrate his fiftieth anniversary, and this banquet was given by his friends and former associates (*Dallas Express*, 16 April 1938: 4).

Unfortunately, his closest business associate, Dr. M.C. Cooper was not present at the event. He had died in Dallas in 1929. Also a graduate of Meharry Medical Department, Class of 1894, Dr. Cooper had been born in the White Rock Community and worked for the Sanger Brothers for eleven years before going to Dental school. He became a board member of the Negro Chamber of Commerce and a member of Bethel A.M.E. Church. In addition to Penny Savings Bank, he is reputed to have invested in Lewis Dry Goods Store, the first African American-owned downtown department store at 2115 Elm Street (Adams 1987: 23A; Dallas County Historical Society 1983: 37). Deed records indicate that Dr. Cooper also invested in real estate in the Tenth Street Community (Troup 2000: personal communication). In 1954, he became the namesake for an African American professional organization, the M.C. Cooper Dental Society (Dallas County Historical Society 1983: 37). In addition, a South Dallas arterial, Cooper Street, was named after him at an indeterminate date (Adams 1987: 23A).

Bluitt's Sanitarium was the first African American clinic in the city. Its closure left the local black population without medical facilities for five years until 1918, when Drs. O.R. Busch and C.L. Morgan opened the Morgan-Busch Sanitarium at 1027 1/2 Boll Street (Worley's City Directory 1919: 821). In 1920 the name was changed to the Morgan-Busch-Trotter Sanitarium. The clinic appears to have closed after 1920, however, Drs. C.L. Morgan and O.R. Busch maintained an office under the name of "Morgan-Trotter" at the same location (Worley's City Directory 1921: 1148). McMillan Sanitarium at 2322 Hall Street was the next clinic that was opened for the city's African American population at least by 1921, if not earlier (Worley's City Directory 1921: 1845; Figure 22). Started by another Meharry graduate, Class of 1909, Dr. Walter Ree McMillan, it was listed in the *Negro Year Book* of 1931-1932 as being the only facility in Dallas that had a nurse training school for black women (Work 1931-1932: n.p.). McMillan Sanitarium was followed by the Pinkston Clinic which was opened by Dr. Lee Gresham

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Pinkston, also a Meharry graduate, at 3305 Thomas Avenue in 1927 (McKnight et al 1990: 109; Figure 23). Medical facilities remained segregated in Dallas until 1954, when St. Paul Hospital hired its first local black doctors. The Dallas County Medical Association finally integrated its membership in December of the following year, but the Dallas segregation ordinances remained in effect until 1968.

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Lithograph of Bluit's Sanitarium, looking southeast. In *Worley's City Directory of Greater Dallas*, 1909: 89.

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**LANDMARK DESIGNATION FORM
CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY**

History, heritage and culture: Represents the historical development, ethnic heritage or cultural characteristics of the city, state, or country.

Historic event: Location of or association with the site of a significant historic event.

Significant persons: Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city, state, or country.

Architecture: Embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, landscape design, method of construction, exceptional craftsmanship, architectural innovation, or contains details which represent folk or ethnic art.

Architect or master builder: Represents the work of an architect, designer or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city, state or country.

Historic context: Relationship to other distinctive buildings, sites, or areas which are eligible for preservation based on historic, cultural, or architectural characteristics.

Unique visual feature: Unique location of singular physical characteristics representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the city that is a source of pride or cultural significance.

Archeological: Archeological or paleontological value in that it has produced or can be expected to produce data affecting theories of historic or prehistoric interest.

National and state recognition: Eligible of or designated as a National Historic Landmark, Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, State Archeological Landmark, American Civil Engineering Landmark, or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Historic education: Represents as era of architectural, social, or economic history that allows an understanding of how the place or area was used by past generations.



Figure 1. Bluit's Sanitarium and R.F. Aspley Building, camera facing south.

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Figure 2. Bluit's Sanitarium and R.F. Aspley Building, camera facing southeast.

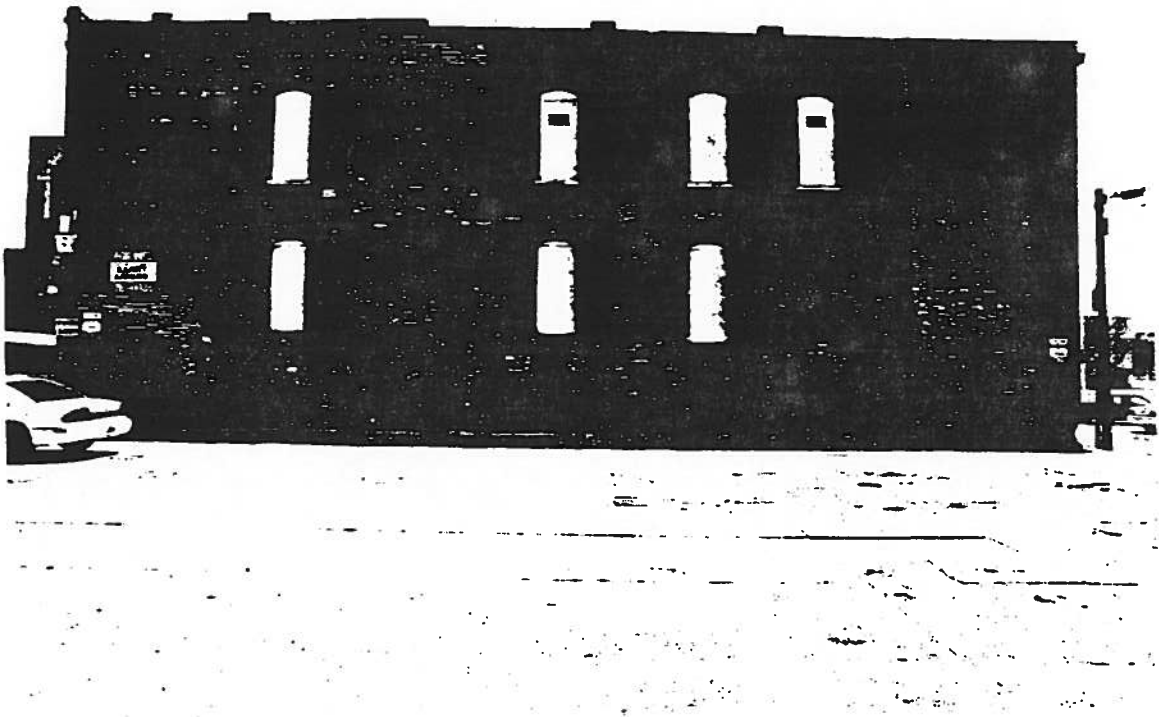


Figure 3. Bluit's Sanitarium/Bluit Building, camera facing east.

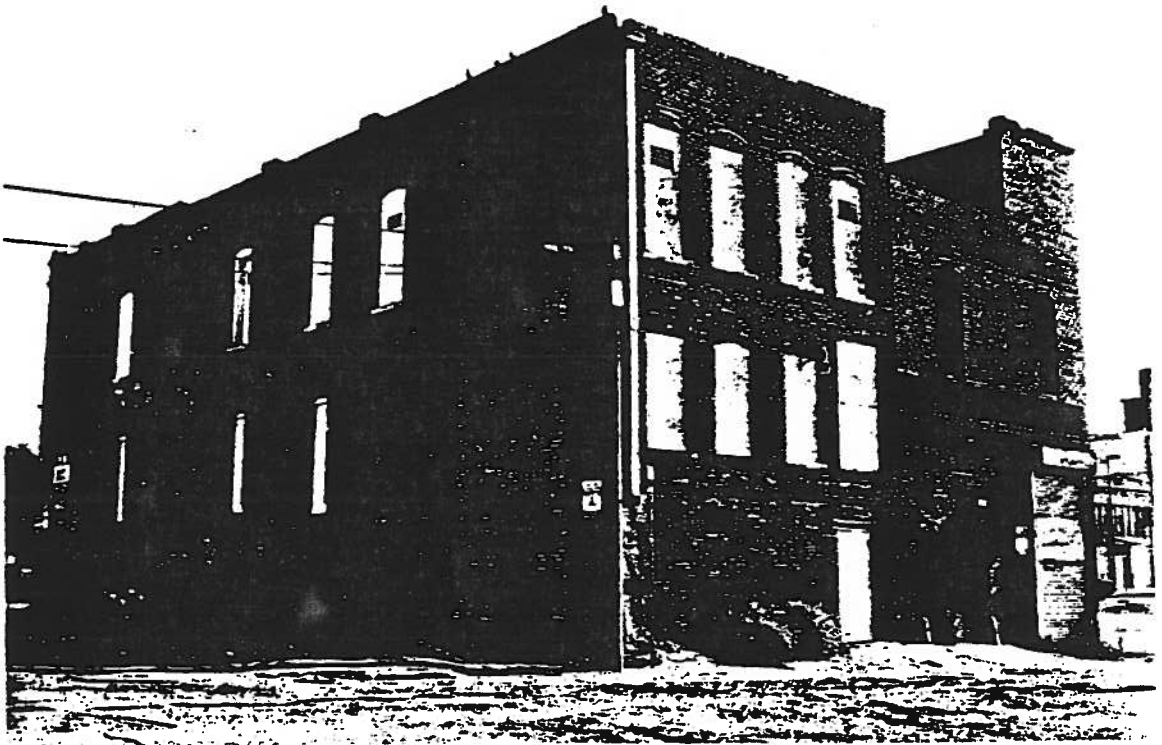


Figure 4. Bluit's Sanitarium/R.F. Aspley Building, camera facing northeast.



Figure 5. Bluit's Sanitarium/R.F. Aspley Building, camera facing north.

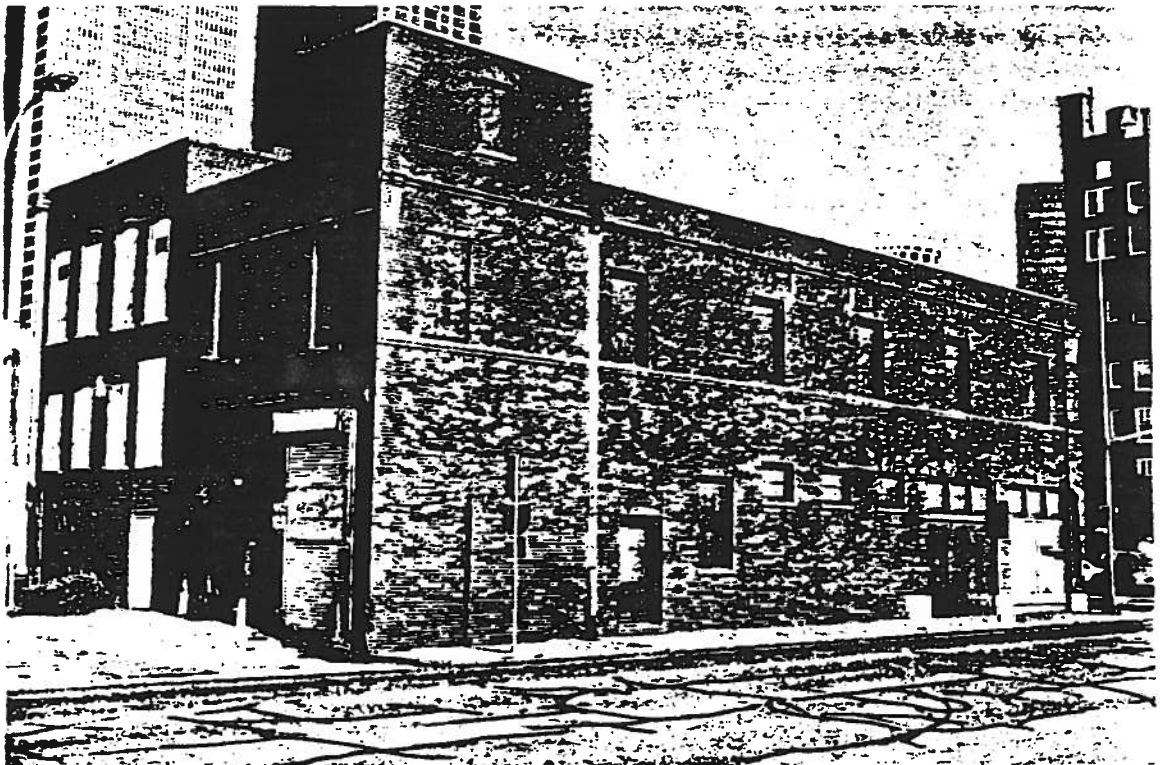


Figure 6. R.F. Aspley Building/Bluitt's Sanitarium, camera facing northwest.

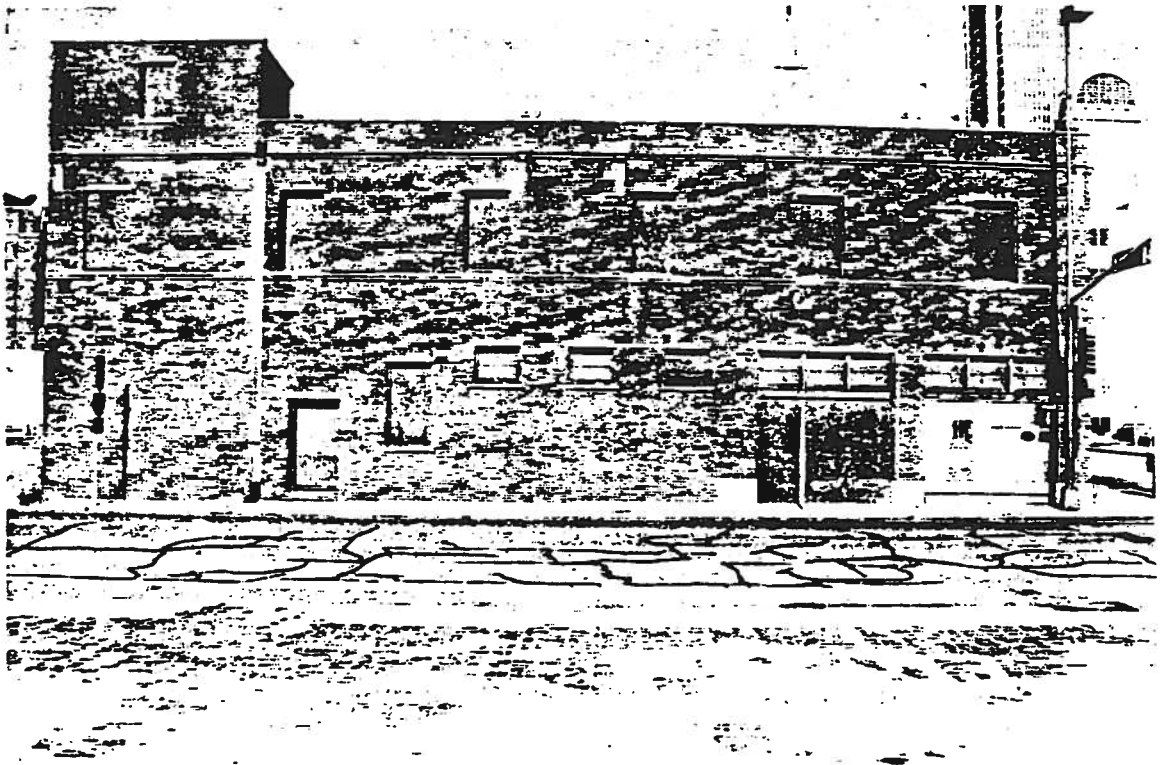


Figure 7. R.F. Aspley Building, camera facing east.

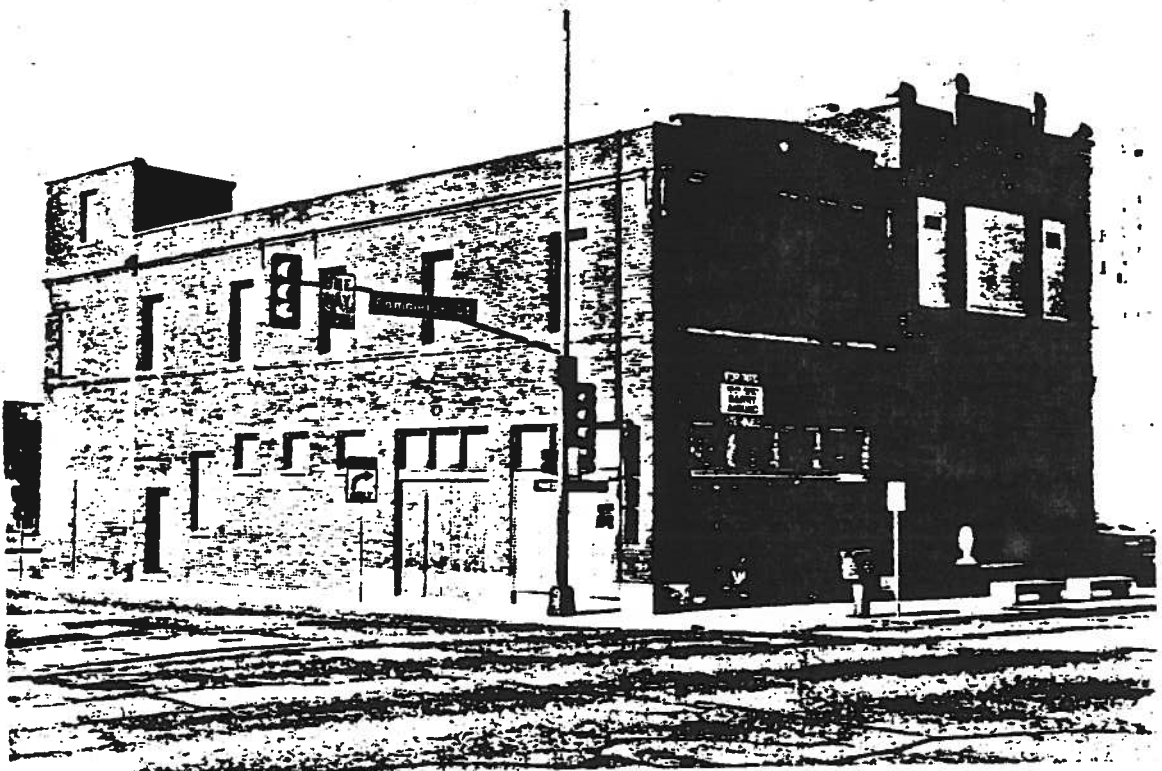


Figure 8. R.F. Aspley/Bluitt's Sanitarium, camera facing southwest.

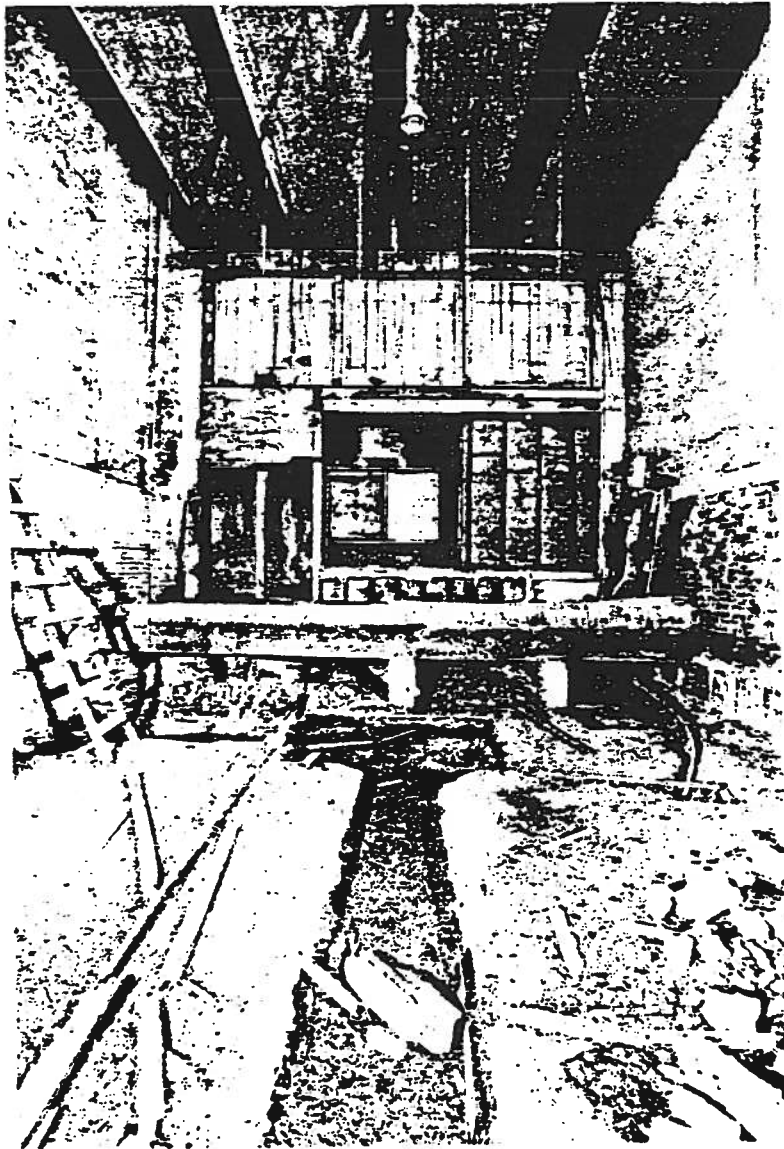


Figure 9. Bluit's Sanitarium, interior, camera facing north, showing basement trench, intact transom and light stanchions (ca. 1920).

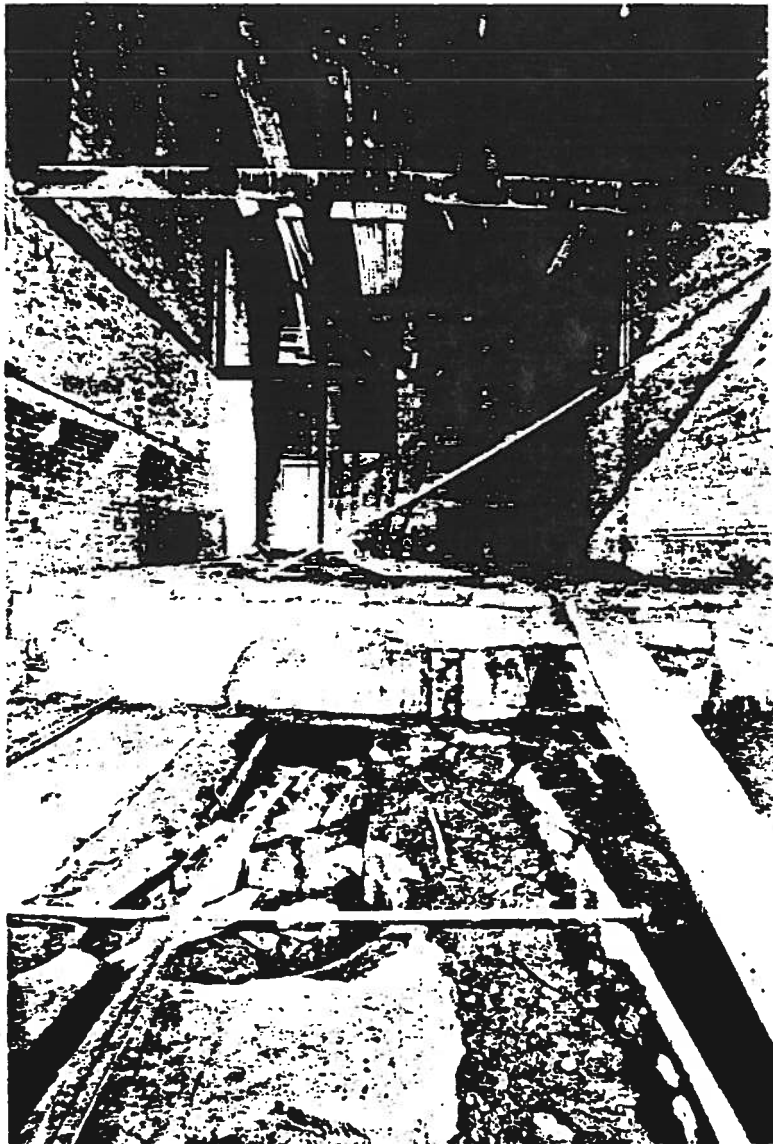


Figure 10. Bluit's Sanitarium, interior, camera facing south, showing brick-lined well and trench beneath brick and concrete platform (1904).

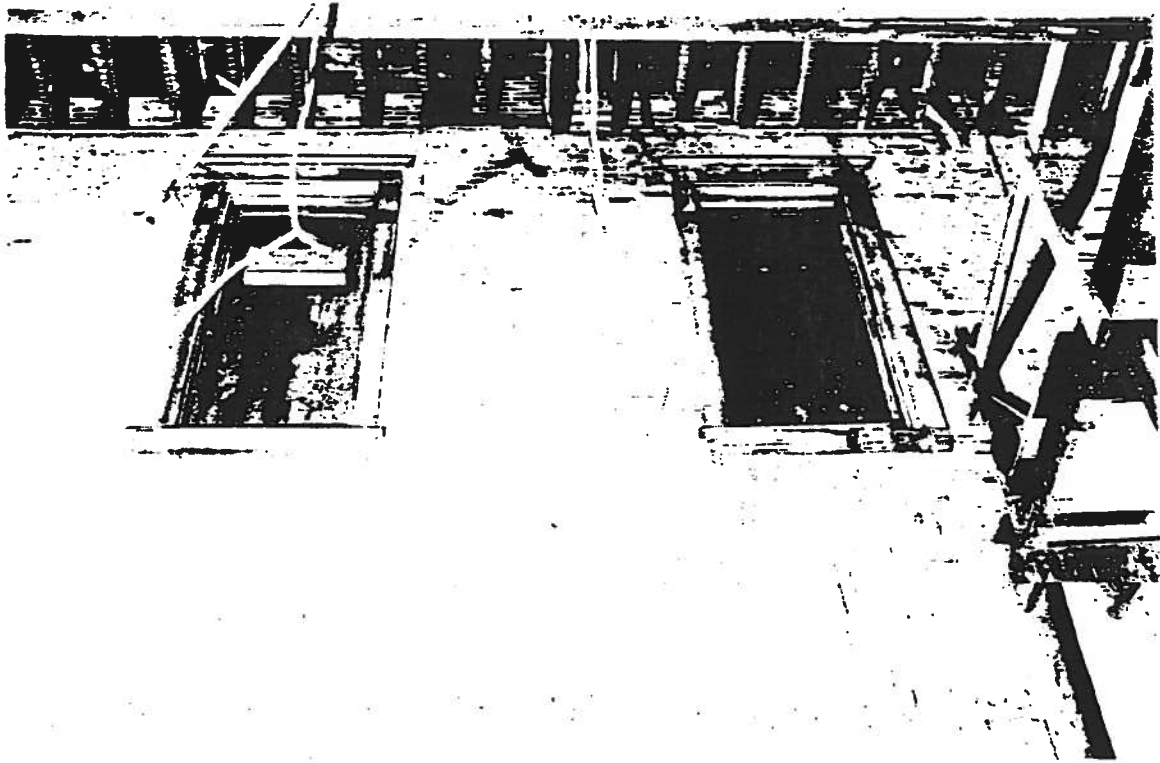


Figure 11. Bluit's Sanitarium, interior, showing intact window casings with wood crown molding, and trim (1904).

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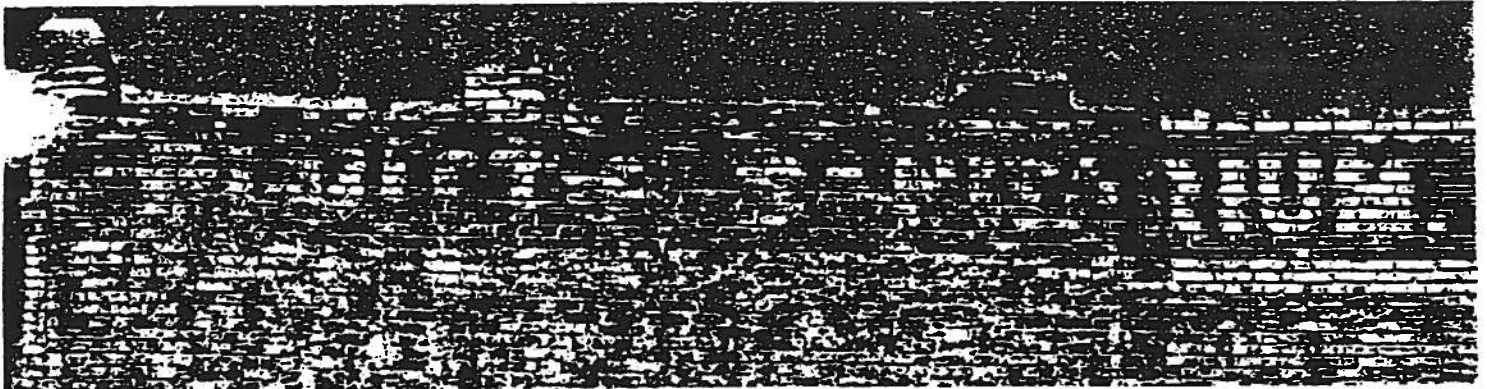


Figure 12. Weathered painted sign advertising Bluitt's Sanitarium on west (side) façade (1906).

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Official Chemist City of Dallas

301-303 THURMOND BUILDING, DALLAS, TEXAS

SPECIALTIES: - COTTON SEED AND FOOD PRODUCTS, WATER AND ASSAY WORK

PRICE LIST SUBMITTED ON APPLICATION

PHONES: OFFICE, M. 1564
RES. Y. M. C. A. M. 140
PRIVATE M. 2245

HOURS: 9 to 12
2 to 5
SUNDAYS 10 to 11

DR. SAMUEL SCOTHORN

— OSTEOPATHIC PHYSICIAN

GRADUATE OF AMERICAN SCHOOL OF OSTEOPATHY, KIRKSVILLE, MISSOURI

626 Wilson Building

DALLAS



1888

I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT MY

1910

SANITARIUM

is now open for the benefit of the general public where all of the most scientific operations are being successfully made at reasonable prices. For further information, call on or address

BLUITT'S SANITARIUM

OR PHONE MAIN 518

123 Florence, Cor. Good DALLAS, TEXAS

Figure 15. Quarter page advertisement for B.R. Bluit and Bluit's Sanitarium with address change, printed in Worley's City Directory of Greater Dallas (1910).



Figure 14. Detail of lithograph from the 1909 advertisement.

OF GREATER DALLAS		89
HELLO MAIN 788	R. J. ROTH, Proprietor	
	Show Cards AND CLOTH SIGNS	
304 MAIN STREET	DALLAS, TEXAS	
	FRANK P. DORSA	ANTONIO A. DORSA
DORSA BROTHERS Wholesale and Retail FISH, OYSTERS AND VEGETABLES Specialties: Crabs, Shrimp, Lobsters Game and Dressed Poultry		
404 ELM STREET	PHONES MAIN 4650-4651	
Phone Main 3991-1r	315 Main Street, Dallas, Texas	
EVERY MODERN CONVENIENCE		
SOUTHERN HOTEL JONES & BURLESON, Proprietors EUROPEAN PLAN		
RATES: 50c, 75c and \$1.00 Per Day.		Special Rates by the Week or Month
1888	I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT MY	1909
	SANITARIUM is now open for the benefit of the general public where all of the most scientific operations are being successfully made, at reasonable prices. For further information, call on or address	
504 COMMERCE ST.	Bluit's Sanitarium PHONE MAIN 2775	DALLAS, TEXAS

Figure 13. Quarter page advertisement for B.R. Bluit and Bluit's Sanitarium, printed in Worley's City Directory of Greater Dallas (1909).

PHONE MAIN 4578

297 1-2 MAIN STREET

JOHN MYERS

C. T. BAILEY

SOUTHWESTERN REAL ESTATE AND MERCHANDISE EXCHANGE

WE SELL OR EXCHANGE ON COMMISSION ALL KINDS OF

REAL ESTATE, FARMS AND RANCHES, GIN PLANTS, ELECTRIC PLANTS, MILLS
AND ELEVATORS, MERCHANDISE STOCKS, ETC.

LARGE TRACTS FOR COLONIZATION PURPOSES A SPECIALTY

PHONE MAIN 180

314 MAIN STREET

D. ROWEN

ROY ROWEN

ROWEN & SON

DEALERS IN

Real Estate, Land Titles, Etc.

DISCOUNT NOTES

Will build and improve property where persons
making application own the land. Collect
rents in any part of State

PHONE MAIN 4224

504 COMMERCE STREET

Figure 16. Half-page advertisement for Rowen & Son, printed in Worley's City Directory of Greater Dallas (1910).



Figure 17. Doc Rowen in 1890. *Courtesy Black Dallas Remembered, Inc. and Rowen/Prince Family Collection.*



Jackson and Prather
Streets
One Block East of Ervay

"You've tried the rest, now try the BEST"

J. F. Zimmerman & Son

PHONE MAIN 6257 FOR

SIGNS OF ANY KIND

705½ Main St.

Dallas, Texas



1888 I am pleased to announce that my 1912

SANITARIUM

IS NOW OPEN for the benefit of the general public where all of the most scientific operations are being successfully made at reasonable prices.

For further information, call on, address or phone

BLUTT'S SANITARIUM

Bell Phone Main 518

Auto Phone M. 1099

2034 COMMERCE ST. DALLAS, TEXAS

Figure 18. Quarter page advertisement for B.R. Blutt and Blutt's Sanitarium after moving back to Commerce Street, printed in Worley's City Directory of Greater Dallas (1912).



Figure 19. The Bluit Building in 1913 (Sanborn Insurance Map, 1913, Vol. 1: 560).



NOTICE!

Dr. Bluit has returned to the City
and resumed practice.

Figure 20. One of two advertisements for Dr. Bluit's practice, printed in the *Dallas Express* (1919).

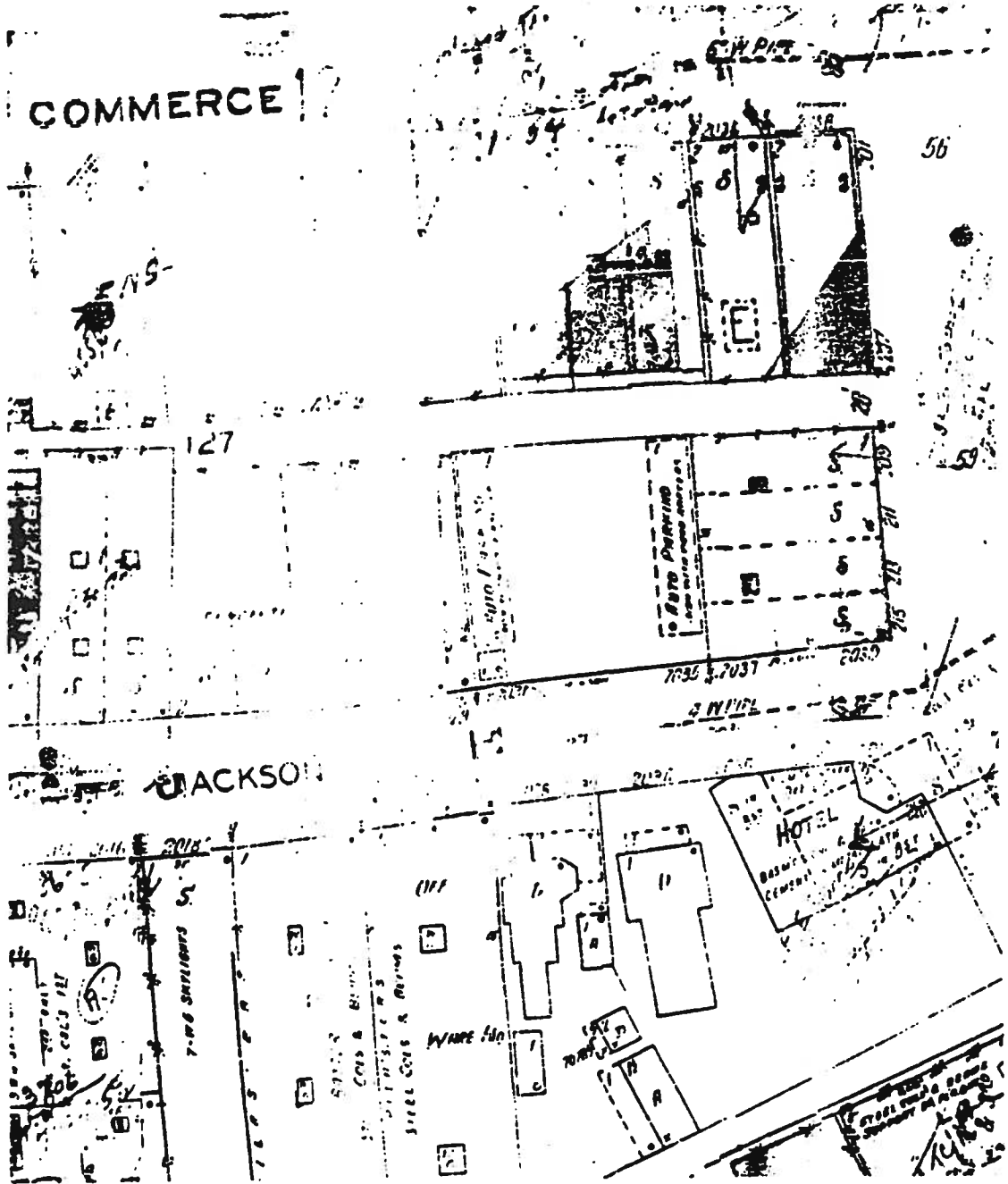


Figure 21. The Bluit Building after alterations in 1921 (Sanborn Insurance Map, 1921, Vol. 1: 14).



Figure 22. McMillan Sanitarium at 2322 Hall Street (ca. 1925). *Courtesy Black Dallas Remembered, Inc.*



Figure 23. Pinkston Clinic at 3305 Thomas Avenue (ca. 1925). *Courtesy Black Dallas Remembered, Inc.*