

Settling the Grandview Suburbs

Perhaps the best-known African-American suburbs in Indianapolis were centered along Grandview Drive in the city's northwest side. In 1946 Henry Greer (1894-1996) and wife Della Wilson Greer (1890-1979) moved into a newly built home at [6309 Grandview Drive](#), an area that was then mostly in the midst of farm fields and undeveloped property. A few farmhouses were scattered throughout the area as well as a couple houses along Grandview Drive (for instance, the home at 6404 Grandview Drive appeared on the 1937 aerial view of the neighborhood, and the stables at 1005 West 64th had been built). The surrounding properties would eventually be the heart of a series of predominately African-American suburbs that went under a wide range of names, including Augusta Way, Grandview Estates, Grandview Terrace, Northshire Estates, and Greer-Dell Estate.

The Greers built their home on Grandview in 1946. Henry Greer opened [a liquor store on North West Street in December, 1935](#), and his wife Della Wilson Greer was an art teacher at Crispus Attucks High School, [where she taught for 20 years beginning in 1936](#). Dr. Edward Paul Thomas (1920-2001) and Ruby Leah Thomas (1921-2006) became their neighbors around 1952, settling in the home immediately south of the Greers at 6235 Grandview Drive. At around the same time the fields between Michigan Road and Coburn Avenue were densely built up with suburban homes, but to the east of Coburn the area remained open fields until about 1955. Those fields east of Coburn became part of the Augusta Way subdivision, which was among the city's earliest African-American suburbs. The homes west of Coburn Avenue remained nearly exclusively White through the 1950's, but [lots west of Coburn began to appear in the Indianapolis Recorder by 1960](#), which suggests the neighborhoods to the west of Augusta Way began to integrate in the 1960s.

The earliest subdivision name in the neighborhood was Augusta Way, perhaps invoking the little town of Augusta that lay north along Michigan Road. Augusta Way was [first advertised in December, 1955](#) by Hughes Realty, who offered up [88 lots for the construction of ranch homes](#). The developer of the subdivision, George W. Malter, [named W.T. Ray as a sales agent in February 1956](#). Ray almost instantly became the primary agent handling Augusta Way's sales, [offering up lots for \\$500 down](#). A 1956 aerial photograph appears to reveal construction in only one lot in the subdivision, which became 1605 Kenruth Drive and was the home of W.T. Ray. A block away and built at nearly the same time was Earl and Vanessa Seymour's home at West 64th Street, which was [advertised with a picture in November, 1957](#).

W.T. Ray had a profound influence on the African-American suburbs as one of Indianapolis' most active real estate professionals, but he was also among the most influential figures in Indianapolis' postwar African-American housing and civil rights movement. The Connecticut native spent much of his childhood in Caldwell, New Jersey, where his father William was the superintendent of an apartment house; the Rays were the sole African-American residents among 14 households including neighbors from Russia, Lithuania, Poland, and Germany. Ray studied business administration at Oberlin College and then Western Reserve University in Cleveland, and he was working in retail sales when he enlisted in the Army in 1941. Ray served in the South Pacific in World War II, where he was in the segregated [93rd Division](#)'s Chemical Warfare unit.

In September 1942 [Ray married Alice Brokenburr](#) in Arizona, where Ray was stationed at [Fort Huachuca](#) as a Chemical Warfare instructor. Alice was the daughter of lawyer [Robert Lee Brokenburr](#), who represented Madam CJ Walker and became Indiana's first African-American state Senator in 1940, serving four more terms before he retired in 1964. Alice Brokenburr attended Alabama State Teacher's College, where she trained as a music teacher, and taught at Florida A&M in the early 1940s. Ray became a real estate agent upon his return to Indiana after the war. [In 1947 Ray became President of the Indianapolis NAACP chapter](#)

Augusta Way homes began to be settled in 1959, but by that time homes on 64th Street, Grandview, and Greer-Dell had been completed. Henry Greer apparently divided acreage adjoining his home and created Greer-Dell Drive, which was advertised at least once as Greer-Dell Estates. In 1956, three homes were being completed on the south side of Greer-Dell Drive and two on Wood Knoll Drive. On West 64th Street, about 11 homes had been completed in 1956. For instance, long-time Madam Walker company Secretary Violet Reynolds and her husband David appeared in the city directory in 1957 at 1559 West 64th Street. Eventually as Augusta Way lots were purchased with homes still being built until about 1967, subdivisions were opened north along Grandview Drive and north of the newly constructed Grandview Elementary School. Some lots were advertised in October, 1962 as Grandview Estates; additional lots were sold as Grandview Terrace in July, 1965; and others were sold as Northshire Estates in April, 1966.

Most city directory entries in these neighborhoods do not begin until 1957, though a few appeared earlier. The earliest city directory entries in Augusta Way date to 1959, but by then some residents may have been in their home a year or two.

Original research in this post was conducted by Derek Blice (Kenruth Drive), Johanneson Cannon (Grandview Drive), Tarena Lofton (Greer-Dell Drive), Jared Meunier (65th Street), Kyle Huskins (Sanwela Drive), Andrew Townsend (63rd Street).

**Augusta Way
Sanwela Drive**

1962	1963	1964	1965	1966
1617	1617 Vacant	1617 Thomas Donald A	1617 Thomas Donald A	1617 Thomas Donald A.
1627	1627 Crawley Kirby S.	1627 Crawley Kirby S.	1627 Crawley Kirby S	1627 Crawley Kirby S.
1628	1628 Hudson Robt L.	1628 Hudson Robt. L.	1628 Hudson Robt L.	1628 Hudson Robt L.
1637	1637 Wells Payton R.	1637 Wells Payton R	1637 Wells Payton R.	1637 Wells Payton R.
1638 Harry Chas E. Jr.	1638 Harry Chas E Jr.	1638 Harry Chas E Jr.	1638 Harry Chas E. Jr.	1638 Harry Charles E. Jr,
1647	1647	1647	1647 Springfield Etts D.	1647 Springfield Etta D.
1648 Leggett Lawrence L.	1648 Leggett Lawrence L.	1648 Leggett Lawrence L.	1648 Leggett Lawrence L.	1648 Leggett Lawrence L.
1704 Oldham Donald L.	1704 Oldham Donald L.	1704 Oldham Donald L.	1704 Oldham Donald L.	1704 Oldham Donald L.
	1705 Cain Robt.	1705 Vacant	1705 Cain Robt. Jr.	1705 Cain Robt Jr.
	1706 Under Constrn	1706 Hudson Milton M.	1706 Hudson Tilton M	1706 Hudson Hilton M.
	1716 Under Constrn	1716 Vacant	1716 Carter Jas R.	1716 Carter James R.
	1726 Under Constrn	1726 Brown Thos H.	1726 Brown Thos H.	1726 Brown Thos M.
	1727 [sic] Cummings John	1729 Cummings John	1729 Cummings John	1729 Cummings John
	1736 Jones Roy A.	1736 Jones Roy A	1736 Jones Roy A.	1736 Jones Roy A.
	1737 Summers Lee I.	1737 Summers Lee I.	1737 Summers Lee I.	1737 Summers Lee I
	1739 Owens Clarence	1739 Owens Clarence	1739 Owens Clarence	1739 Owens Clarence
	1746 under construction	1746 McGordon Victor	1746 McGordon Victor	1746 McGordon Victor
				1757 Under Constn.

1976 Sanwela Drive

1617	Donald A. Thomas
1627	Merrill Smith
1628	Robert L. Hudson
1637	Payton R. Wells
1638	Charles E. Harry, Jr.
1647	Mrs. Etta D. Springfield
1648	[no listing]
1704	Donald L. Oldham
1705	Robert Cain, Jr.
1706	Hilton M. Hudson
1716	Joe L. Swanson
1726	Thomas H. Brown
1729	BJ Smith
1736	Roy A. Jones
1737	Lee I. Summers
1739	Clarence C. Owens
1746	Victor McGordon
1757	Edward Bobbitt
1850	Mrs. Yvonne Wharton

**Augusta Way
Kenruth Drive**

1959	1960	1961	1962	1963
1605 Ray Wm T 1620 Weeks Chas D	1605 Ray Wm T 1620 Weeks Chas D 1625 Dailey Anderson T	1605 Ray Wm T 1620 Weeks Chas D 1625 Dailey Anderson T	1605 Ray Wm T 1620 Weeks Chas D 1625 Daily Anderson T	1605 Ray Wm T 1620 Weeks Chas D 1625 Dailey Anderson
1630 Norris Curtis H	1630 Norris Curtis H 1635 South Willmott M	1630 Norris Curtis H 1635 South Willmott M	1630 Norris Curtis H	1630 Norris Curtis H 1635 South Willmott M
1640 Crowe Ray 1645 Clifton Morris W	1640 Crowe Ray 1645 Clifton Morris W 1650 Dungey James A 1705 Knox Thelma Mrs 1715 Mumford Roosevelt T jr	1640 Crowe Ray 1645 Clifton Morris W 1650 Dungey James A 1705 Knox Thelma Mrs 1715 Mumford Roosevelt T jr	1640 Crowe Ray 1645 Clifton Morris W 1650 Dungey Jas A 1705 Knox Thelma Mrs 1715 Mumford Roosevelt T jr	1640 Crowe Ray 1645 Clifton Morris 1650 Dungey Jas A 1705 Knox Thelma Mrs 1715 Mumford Roosevelt T jr
1716 Jones Ralph W	1716 Jones Ralph W 1725 Weir Odell A	1716 Jones Ralph W 1720 Under Constn 1725 Weir Odell A	1716 Jones Ralph W 1725 Weir Odell A 1726 Phillips Nathaniel M	1716 Jones Ralph W 1725 Weir Odell A 1726 Phillips Nathaniel M
1735 No Return	1735 Boyd Wm C 1745 Knox Harold H	1735 Boyd Wm C 1745 Knox Harold H	1735 Boyd Wm C 1745 Knox Harold H	1735 Boyd Wm C 1745 Knox Harold H
1746 Roberts Chas E Rev	1755 Plummer Walter L	1746 Roberts Chas E Rev 1755 Plummer Walter L	1746 Roberts Chas E Rev 1755 Plummer Walter L	1755 Plummer Walter L, Inpls Septic Tank Installers plmb 1756 Bentley Wm A
		1756 Under Constn	1756 Bentley Wm A	1756 Bentley Wm A

**Augusta Way
63rd Street**

1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
	1620 Teague Hubert L			1620 Teague Hubert L
	1626 Vacant			
1639 Meriweather Chester A	1629 Cork Lewis E 1639 Meriweather Chester A	1629 Cork Lewis E 1639 Meriweather Chester A	1629 Cork Lewis E 1639 Meriweather Chester A	1629 Cork Lewis E 1639 Meriweather Chester A
	1642 Forte Willie J	1642 Forte Willie J	1642 Forte Willie J	1642 Forte Willie J
	1649 Lacy N Jewett	1649 Lacy N Jewett	1649 Lacy N Jewett	1649 Lacy N Jewett
	1703 Braden Lonnie F		1701 Martin J 1703 Braden Lonnie F	1703 Braden Lonnie F
	1704 Chumley James H		1704 Chumley Jas H	1704 Chumley Jas H
	1714 Williams Robt			1714 Williams Robt
	1715 Payne Buford			1715 Payne Buford
	1723 Richardson Percy H	1723 Richardson Percy H	1723 Richardson Percy H	1723 Richardson Percy H
	1724 Greer Leavern	1724 Green Leavern	1724 Green Leavern	1724 Green Leavern
	1733 Coleman Raleigh L	1733 Coleman Raleigh L	1733 Coleman Raleigh L	1723 [sic] Coleman Raleigh L
	1734 Evans Arth C	1734 Evans Arth C	1734 Evans Arth C	1734 Evans Arth C
1740 Lowe Wm W	1736 Under Constn 1740 Lowe Wm W	1740 Lowe Wm W	1740 Lowe Wm W	1740 Lowe Wm W
	1743 Anderson Z Odell			1743 Anderson Z Odell C
1746 Anderson Alvin	1744 No Return	1746 Vacant	1746 Vacant	1744 Vacant

	1753 Chavis Patk E Jr 1754 Lockhart Frank		1753 Chavis Patk E jr	1753 Chavis Patk E jr 1754 Lockhart Frank
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**Augusta Way
Grandview Drive**

1957	1959	1960	1961	1962
6235 Thomas Edw P	6235 Thomas E Paul	6222 Bundles S Henry 6235 Thomas E Paul 6240 Defrantz Faburn E jr 6258 Ransom Willard B	6222 Bundles S Henry 6235 Thomas E Paul 6240 Defrantz Faburn E jr 6258 Ransom Willard B	6222 Bundles S Henry 6235 Thomas E. Paul 6240 Defrantz Faburn E jr 6258 Ransom Willard B
6307 Vacant 6309 Greer Henry L	6309 Greer Henry L	6309 Greer Henry L	6309 Greer Henry L	6309 Greer Henry L 6315 Bell Boyd

**Augusta Way
64th Street**

1957	1959	1960	1961	1962
1604 Mrs. Laretta L. Emmelman	1604 Central States Basketball Headquarters Mrs. Laretta L. Emmelman	1604 Robert L. Pinkard	1604 Robert L. Pinkard	1604 Robert L. Pinkard
	1609 [sic] E. Seymore	1605 Earl Seymore	1605 Earl Seymore	1605 Mrs. Vanessie Seymore
1606 George A. Taylor	1606 George A. Taylor	1606 George A. Taylor	1606 George A. Taylor	1606 George A. Taylor
1607 Vacant				
				1615 James Nickson
		1625 Vacant		
	1631 James E. Malone	1631 James E. Malone	1631 James E. Malone	1631 James E. Malone
		1651 Mrs. Cora Sheldon	1651 Mrs. Cora Sheldon	1651 Robert D. Watts
	1707 Mrs. Theodosia F. Barnett	1707 Mrs. Theodosia F. Barnett	1707 No return	1707 Willie R. Bellamy
		1717 James F. White	1717 James F. White	1717 James F. White
				1747 John Green
	1750 Grandview Elementary School	1750 Grandview Elementary School	1750 Grandview Elementary School	1750 Grandview Elementary School
		1757 William B. White	1757 William B. White	1757 William B. White
		1817 Charles H. Haniton cement contractor	1817 Charles H. Haniton cement contractor	1817 Charles H. Haniton cement contractor
		1827 Charles H. Smith	1827 Charles H. Smith	1827 Charles H. Smith

Thomas Wood Trail

1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
1520 Edward P. Thomas	1520 Edward P. Thomas	1520 Edward P. Thomas	1520 Edward P. Thomas	1520 Edward P. Thomas
1532 Robert E. Harden	1532 Robert E. Harden	1532 Robert E. Harden	1532 Robert E. Harden	1532 Robert E. Harden
1544 Eugene Taylor	1544 Eugene Taylor	1544 Eugene Taylor	1544 Eugene Taylor	1544 Eugene Taylor
1545 J. Frank Hanley	1545 J. Frank Hanley	1545 J. Frank Hanley	1545 J. Frank Hanley	1545 J. Frank Hanley
1555 Maurice E. Edelen	1555 Maurice E. Edelen	1555 Maurice E. Edelen	1555 Maurice E. Edelen	1555 Maurice E. Edelen
1619 Webster L. Brewer	1619 Webster L. Brewer	1619 Webster L. Brewer	1619 Webster L. Brewer	1619 Webster L. Brewer

**Greer-Dell Estates
Greer-Dell Drive**

1957	1962	1963	1964	1966
1500 construction	1436 Bolling Wilbur A	1436 Bolling Wilbur A	1536 [sic] Bolling Wilbur A	1436 Bolling Wilbur A 1443 Springfield Esther L 1448 Ervin Wm H
1537 Payne Brownell	1535 Courtney Lillian T	1448 McQueen Eug O	1532 Smith David	1532 Smith David
1543 Babb Jesse L	1537 Payne Brownell	1532 No return	1534 Clay Alfred M	1534 Clay Alf M
	1543 Babb Jesse L	1534 Clay Alfred M	1535 Courtney Lillian T	1535 Courtney Lillian T
	1544 Thomas Vern H	1535 Courtney Lillian	1537 Payne Brownell	1537 Payne Brownell
	1549 Lucas Clarence A	1537 Payne Brownell	1543 Babb Jesse L	1543 Babb Jesse L
	1554 Floyd Harley C	1543 Babb Jesse L	1544 Thomas Vern H	1544 Thomas Vern
	1560 Vacant	1544 Thomas Vern H	1549 Lucas Clarence A	1549 Lucas Clarence A JR 1551 Thompson O C
1565 McKinzie John J	1565 McKinzie John J	1549 Lucas Clarence	1554 Floyd Harley C	1554 Floyd Harley C
		1560 no return	1560 Watts Lucinda Mrs	1560 Watts Lucinda Mrs
		1662 [?] Frazier James	1562 Frazier James	1562 Frazier James
		1565 McKinzie John J	1565 McKinzie John J	1565 McKinzie John J

Greer Dell 1976

1436	Wilbur A. Bolling
1443	Horty B. Springfield
1448	William H. Ervin
1532	Mrs. Lucille F. Smith
1534	Alf M. Clay
1535	Mrs. Lillian T. Courtney
1537	Brownell Payne

1543	Jesse L. Babb
1544	Robert Bragg Jr.
1549	Clarence A. Lucas Jr.
1551	OC Thompson
1554	Beulah M. Williams
1558 [1560?]	Arth C. Rowley
1561	Robert Williams
1562	Mrs. Mattie B. Frazier
1565	John McKinzie

Northshire Estates
65th Street

1967	1968	1969	1970	1971
1702 Wood Ralph S	1702 Wood Ralph S	1702 Wood Ralph S	1702 Wood Ralph S	1702 Wood Ralph S
1703 Johnson Floyd	1703 Johnson Floyd M	1703 Johnson Floyd M	1703 Johnson Floyd M	1703 Johnson Floyd M
1712 Traughber Willie G	1712 Traughber Willie G	1712 Traughber Willie G	1712 Traughber Willie G	1712 Traughber Willie G
1713 Dozier James		1713 Dozier James P	1713 Dozier James P	1713 Dozier James P
	1720 Redman Ralph	1720 Redman Ralph	1720 Redman Ralph W	1720 Redman Ralph W
	1728 Smith James	1728 Smith James	1728 Smith James	1728 Duncan Joseph
	1731 Walker Henry F	1731 Walker Henry F	1731 Walker Henry F	1731 Walker Henry F
	1738 Byrdsong WM Rev	1738 Byrdsong Wm Rev	1738 Byrdsong Wm Rev	1738 Byrdsong Wm Rev
	1741 Mulligan Charles L	1741 Mulligan Charles L	1741 Mulligan Charles L	1741 Mulligan Charles L
1748 Kendrick WM H	1748 Kendrick WM H	1748 Kendrick Wm H	1748 Kendrick Wm H	1748 Kendrick Wm H
	1751 Williamson Thos L	1751 Williamson Thos L	1751 Williamson Thos L	1751 Williamson Thos L
1805 Thompson LA Salle	1805 Thompson LA Salle	1805 Thompson La Salle	1805 Thompson La Salle	1805 Thompson La Salle
	1814 Crawford J C	1814 Crawford J C	1814 Crawford J C	1814 Crawford J C
1815 Penner J	1815 Penner Norma Mrs	1815 Penner Norma Mrs	1815 Penner Norma Mrs	1815 Pinner [sic] Norma Mrs
		1822 Moore Edw K	1822 Moore Edw K	1822 Moore Edw K
	1825 Reese Isaac	1825 Reese Isaac	1825 Reese Isaac C	1825 Reese Isaac C
		1832 Butler A	1832 Butler A	1832 Butler A
1833 Sadler Albert C	1833 Sadler Albert C	1833 Sadler Albert C	1833 Sadler Albert C	1833 Sadler Albert C
1844 Hawkins WM H	1844 Hawkins WM M	1844 Hawkins Wm M	1844 Hawkins Wm M	1844 Hawkins Wm M
1854 Hyde Katie	1854 Hyde Katie	1854 Hyde Katie	1854 Hyde Katie Mrs	1854 Hyde Katie Mrs

1915 Whitley Earl	1910 Davis Charles E 1915 Whitley Earl	1901 Hampton J 1910 Davis Charles E 1915 Whitley Earl	1901 Hampton Bennie 1910 David Charles E 1915 Whitley Earl	1901 Hampton Bennie 1910 Davis Charles E 1915 Whitley Earl 1924 Long James 1925 Kurtz Luther
1925 Kurtz Luther	1925 Kurtz Luther	1925 Kurtz Luther	1925 Kurtz Luther	1925 Kurtz Luther
1936 Jones Forrest E	1936 Jones Forrest E	1936 Jones Forrest E	1936 Jones Forrest E	1936 Jones Forrest E
1939 Lemon Mozella Mrs	1939 Lemon Mozella Mrs	1939 Lemon Mozella Mrs	1939 Lemon Mozella Mrs	1939 Lemon Mozella Mrs