

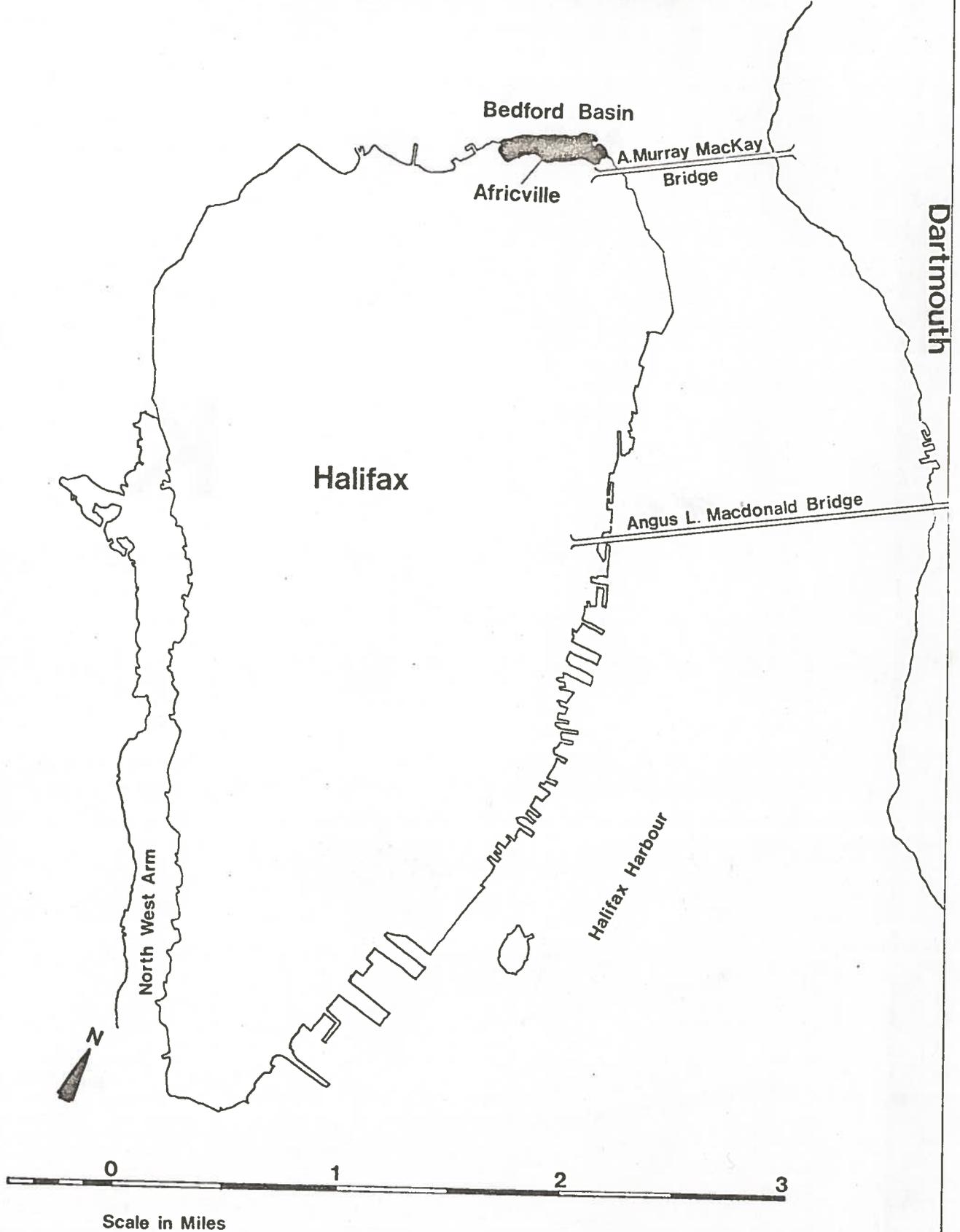
C A S E   S T U D Y

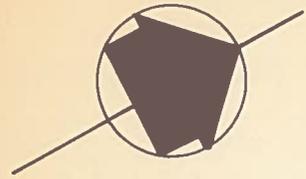
AFRICVILLE

GARY PORTER

DECEMBER 4, 1975

PENINSULA OF HALIFAX SHOWING THE AFRICVILLE SITE





BEDFO

THOMAS  
WILLIAM JAMES  
18  
17

JOHN WOODMAN  
16

JOHN BURBIDGE  
15

JOHN TWINHOE  
14

ANTHONY CASTEEL  
13

CHARLES MASON  
12

MICHAEL O'BRIELS  
11

WILLIAM BEST  
10

JOHN WAITE  
9



JOSEPH GERRISH  
8

RICHARD CATHERWOOD  
7

THOMAS GREEN

RICHARD JACOBS  
LOTS 1 & 3 TO 16 INCLUSIVE

JOSEPH FAIRBANKS  
9

THOMAS TREACY  
8

JOSEPH FAIRBANKS  
10

MICHAEL VAUGHAN  
7

HENRY SCOMBERG  
9

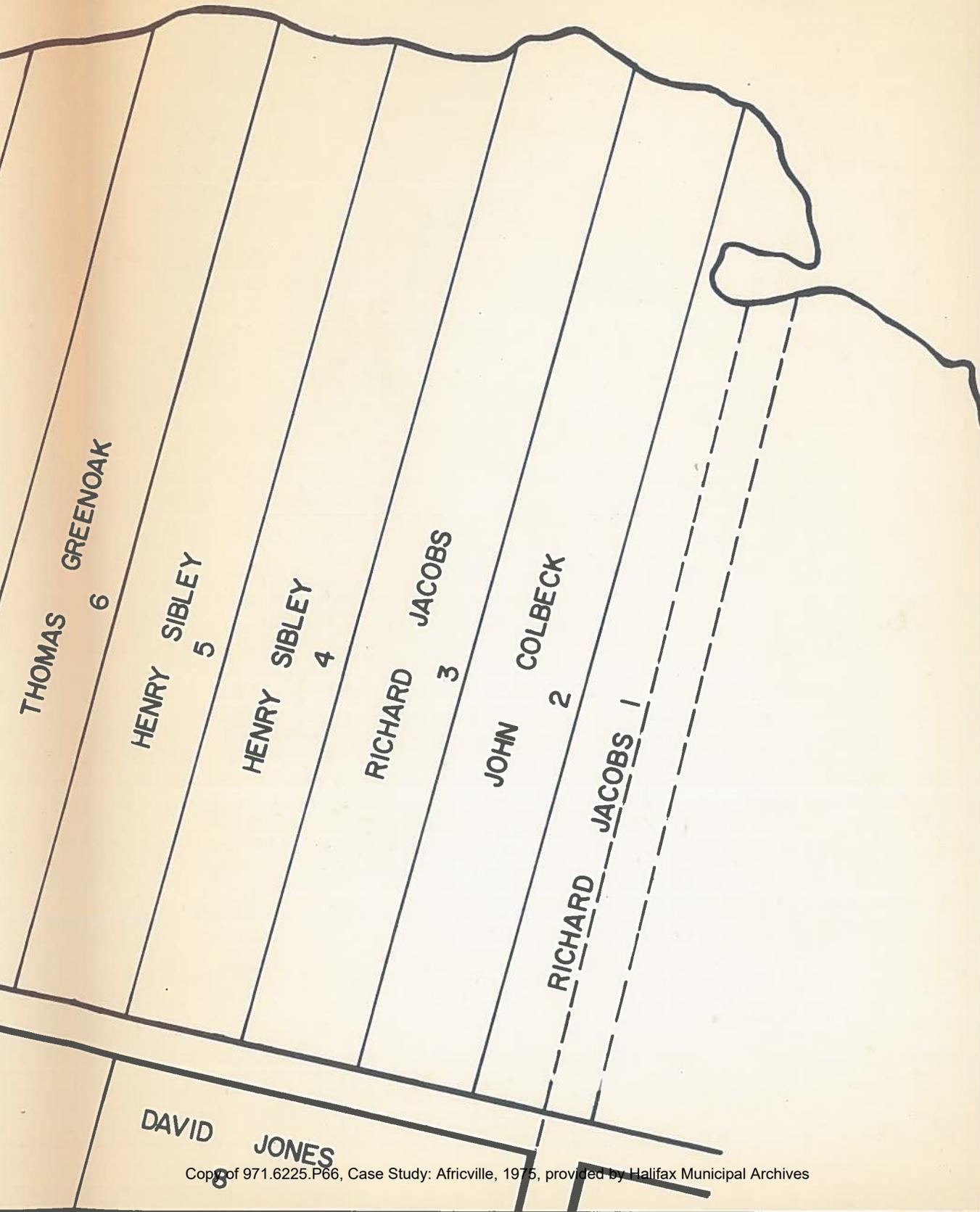
JOSEPH FORD

RICHARD J. UNIACKE

ORIGINAL GRANTS  
CIRCA 1749

BEDFORD

BASIN



A former home for approximately eighty families, "Africville" was a Negro enclave situated on the shores of Bedford Basin at the north end of Halifax Peninsula. For over a century, the people of this community lived together within but not as a part of the City of Halifax, being physically cut off from the remainder of the City by railways and the City Dump and not being provided with the amenities normally found within a City; such as, sewer and water, paved roads, sidewalks, street lights, garbage collection, and adequate police and fire protection.

The community centered around Barrington Street, formerly called Campbell Road, the name by which this settlement was originally called. Early deed transfers described lands in this area as being at Richmond or Campbell Town in the north suburbs of the City of Halifax. The term "Africville" probably was derived from the descriptive term "African" which was in common use in the nineteenth century to describe Blacks. The area was often referred to as an African village from its original settlement until the late 1850's when it became known as Africville.

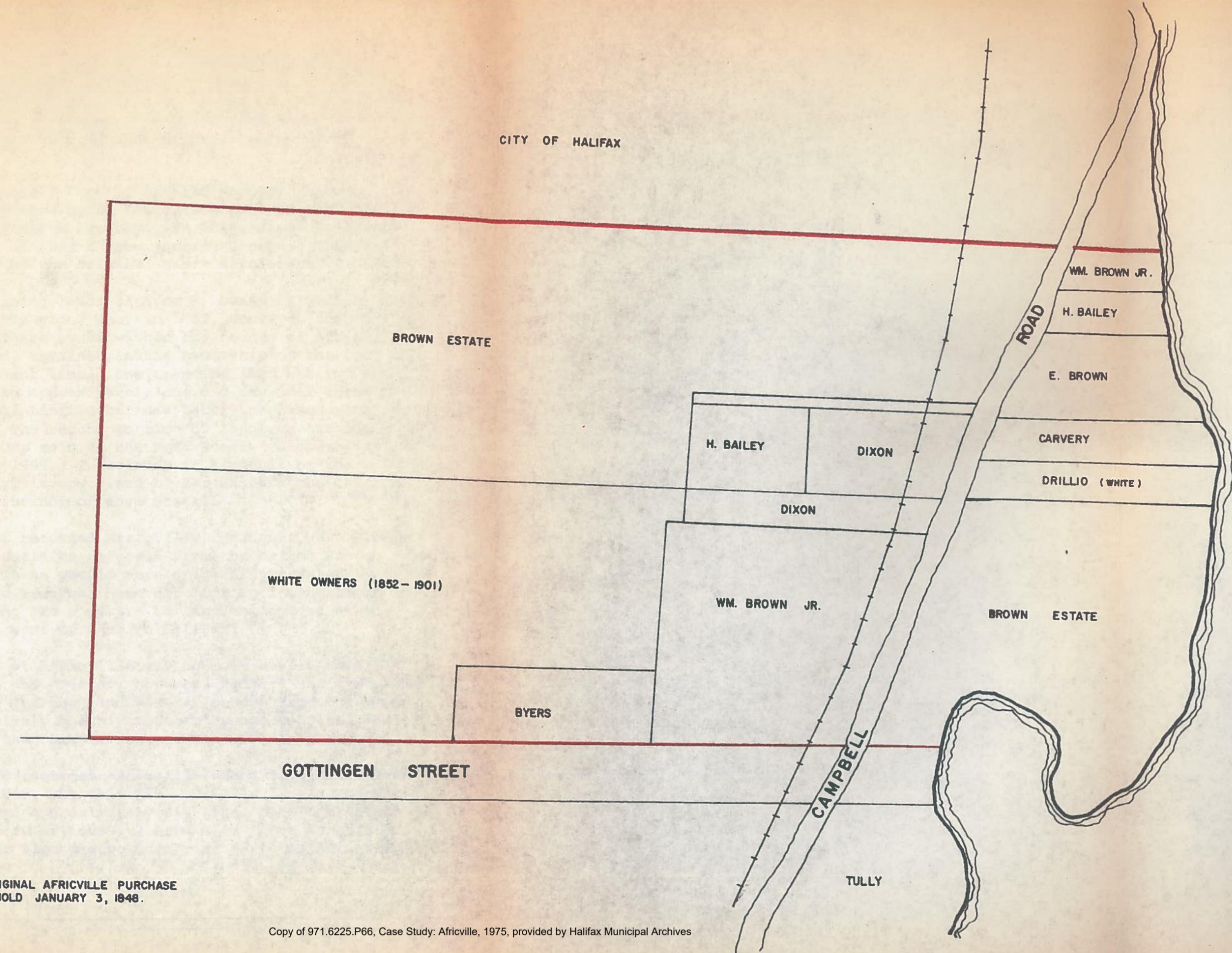
For the most part, the people of Africville were poorly educated, had low incomes, and there was a great deal of unemployment. Africville in later years became looked upon by government and much of the population of the City of Halifax as a blighted area which required social change and some type of redevelopment. Eventually, as a result of these pressures, Africville as a residential community was physically eliminated.

There have been a number of theories put forth regarding the evolution of Africville. However, the following account is based on facts which have been documented and is, therefore, believed to be correct.

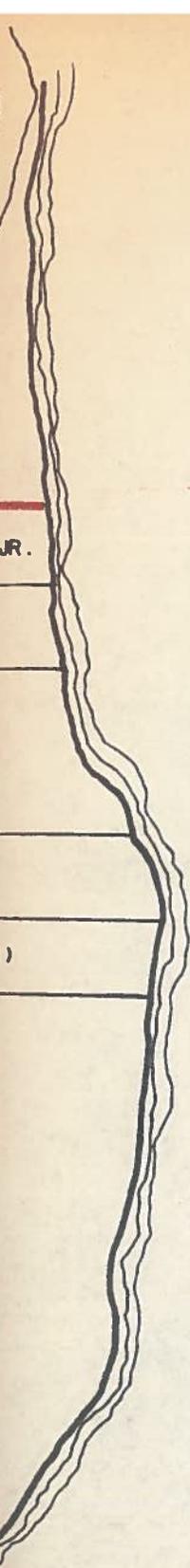
Following the founding of Halifax in 1749, a granting of land took place which saw the extreme northern part of the peninsula lying between what is now known as MacIntosh Street to the west, Gottingen Street to the east, Bedford Basin to the north, and a lane servicing the former Basinview Home being designated as Area K. Area K was comprised of sixteen 5-acre lots, all of which were initially owned by whites, although they did not occupy same. The largest landholder in this area was

AFRICVILLE 1878

CITY OF HALIFAX



— BOUNDARY OF ORIGINAL AFRICVILLE PURCHASE BY BROWN & ARNOLD JANUARY 3, 1848.



***BEDFORD***

***BASIN***

Richard Jacobs, who by 1793, through purchase and crown assignment, owned Lots 1, 3, and 9-16 of this division. At least one landowner in this area, Joseph Gerrish, owner of Lot 8, which is east of Robie Street extension, possessed slaves. Subsequent white landowners in this area, Joseph Fairbanks and Joshua Mauger, are also reported to have owned and dealt in slaves. Therefore, there may have been some Blacks living in this area at this time, at least on a temporary basis.

Godfrey Jacobs, son of Richard Jacobs, through inheritance and purchase owned the entire sixteen lots of Area K by the early nineteenth century. In 1818, James Fullerton purchased Lots 1-3 of Area K from Godfrey Jacobs. This was to become the site of the original Black settlement of Africville.

The remaining lands of Area K, owned by Godfrey Jacobs, were passed on to his widow who, in 1863, conveyed them to the City of Halifax. These lands within the bounds of Africville, with two exceptions, remained in the ownership of the City of Halifax to the present time. One tract of land west of the City Dump containing approximately one and one-half acres was sold to Imperial Oil Limited but was later purchased back by the City in 1955. The second portion of land was the lot to the west of the City Dump sold to the Nova Scotia Co-operative Abatoir Limited in 1959. This land, as a result of the Abatoir failing financially, is now owned by Her Majesty the Queen in the right of the Province of Nova Scotia.

The first recorded Africville residents were Blacks who came to Nova Scotia as refugees from the United States following the War of 1812. These people were originally granted lands at Hammonds Plains and Preston; however, poor soil conditions not conducive to farming and a desire to find employment at the Waterfront brought some of them to Halifax.

The land at Africville was no more arable than that at Hammonds Plains and Preston; however, Bedford Basin was there to provide fishing and the land was far enough from the town itself to be relatively cheap yet close enough to permit daily travel to work at the docks along the Waterfront in town.

The first recorded Africville deeds to Blacks were dated January 3, 1848. At this time, William Arnold and William Brown each purchased approximately six acres from the estate of James Fullerton (part of Lots 1-3 Area K). There is evidence, however, that other Blacks were occupying parts of Africville

prior to this date. Campbell Road, now Barrington Street, was constructed in 1836 by mostly Black labour through what was to become known as Africville. It has been suggested that these laborers settled in this area during the construction to be close to their work. It has also been documented that a Reverend Burton baptised many Blacks in the waters of Bedford Basin. As Reverend Burton passed away in 1838, the indication is made that this area was known and used by Blacks prior to 1848.

In 1849 the first church was organized at Africville and from the list of the church's first officers and early Africville deeds, the names Brown, Carvery, Dixon, Arnold, Hill, Fletcher, Bailey, and Grant have been identified as the original families. These families can all be traced to Hammonds Plains or Preston. Of these eight families, the Browns, Carverys, and Dixons remained the major families throughout Africville's history.

William Brown, Sr., is regarded in Africville lore as the founder of the community. His original purchase along with that of William Arnold marked the establishment of the settlement. The Browns, for years, were the principal land holders in Africville. Brown's father, Perry, came from Chesapeake Bay to Hammonds Plains following the War of 1812. The name William Brown appears on the 1835 census as occupying a lot owned by another Black at Hammonds Plains. A later census taken in 1838 does not indicate either Perry or William Brown at Hammonds Plains but rather in Halifax. Unfortunately, the survey was not explicit as to the exact place of residence. However, it could be assumed as being Africville as it is within the boundaries of Halifax.

William Brown, with the exception of lands sold to Allen Dixon during the 1840's and Bailey in 1862, kept his purchase intact until his death when he willed his property to his six children. He specified in his will how the property was to be divided; therefore, the heirs had the land surveyed and the boundaries defined.

The property inherited by Thomas Brown was sold in part to two migrants who married into the community, of which one section was later sold to the City. The remainder of his inheritance was passed through his wife's niece to an immigrant from Hammonds Plains who also married into the community. Another son, John, eventually sold his inheritance to migrants who married into the community. Record has it that in 1959, a portion of this land was sold to a Carvery. The property inherited by Georgina Brown, who married a Mantley migrating from Hammonds Plains,

eventually was passed on to a daughter who married a migrant from Amherst. Property inherited by James Brown and Nancy Brown eventually passed into the hands of Mrs. Jessie MacDonald, who was the only child and sole heir of Nancy Brown. In 1912, Mrs. MacDonald purchased the property of James Brown which had been inherited by his step children. Mrs. MacDonald, in turn, sold two portions of her property to migrants in the period between the two World Wars. William Brown, Jr's, inheritance was passed on to a daughter who had married a migrant from Preston. Their children subsequently obtained the property.

The second of the Africville original settlers, William Arnold, also came from Hammonds Plains. Shortly after his purchase, one acre was sold to Eppy Carvery, Henry Hill, and Bennett Fletcher in common; and in 1850, another small parcel was sold to a John Dickson (possibly Dixon). In 1852, Arnold died a widower leaving the remainder of his land to his son, Charles, who, being a mariner, did not have a great deal of interest in the land and promptly sold it to two white persons. The Basin side portion of this land was conveyed a year later to two brothers named Drillio, who were white. In 1866, some of the Drillio land was sold to a member of the Brown family. The remainder was later sold to the Fletcher family, who eventually moved to the United States. Eppy Carvery then occupied the land. During the following years, there were numerous disputes between the Carverys and the Fletchers as to the ownership of the lands. Eventually, in 1901, some of these lands were deeded from Fletcher to Carvery.

Also in 1901, a West Indian who settled in Africville and married a granddaughter of William Brown purchased the remainder of the Charles Arnold lot not sold to Drillio. Later, this family moved to Boston, and these lands were acquired by the City either through tax arrears or purchase. The former City-operated Basinview Home for the Aged occupied a portion of these lands until 1971.

Isaac Grant and Henry Bailey occupied neighbouring lots at Hammonds Plains. During 1849 they both migrated to Africville. There is no record of purchase or sale of land in which Isaac Grant was involved, although he was listed as a resident of Africville in the 1851 and 1861 census. The latter documents him as a very old man living alone. With his death, the name Grant disappeared from Africville.

Bailey owned two parcels of land at Africville. There is conflicting evidence as to what actually happened to the Bailey family. According to former Africville residents, the

**AFRICVILLE**

OCT. 25, 1916

CITY OF HALIFAX

SCHOOLHOUSE

ROAD

WM. BROWN

HENRY BAILEY

ELIZABETH MANTLEY

GEORGE CARVERY

JOHN THOMAS BROWN

JAMES BROWN

JOHN BROWN

THOMAS BROWN

BEDFORD  
BASIN

WM. JOHNSON

W. MANTLEY

MANTLEY

DIXON

J. DIXON

WM. BROWN

CHURCH

TOM BROWN

ANN BROWN

DAVID BROWN

CAMPBELL

GOTTINGEN  
STREET

Bailey family migrated to the United States late in the nineteenth century. However, a map acquired from the City of Halifax indicates that in 1916, a Henry Bailey was occupying one of the original two Bailey lots.

Eppy Carvery, Henry Hill, and Bennett Fletcher moved together from Preston to Africville in 1848 when they purchased an acre in common from William Arnold. In 1858, Carvery bought out Hill and Fletcher, and soon their names disappeared from the community. Fletcher later moved to the United States; however, he still held title to lands at Africville. The Carverys squatted on these lands and were deeded same. Shortly following Carvery buying out Hill and Fletcher, he sold the land to a son of William Brown. This left the Carvery family landless, yet they became the largest family in Africville. The Carverys eventually acquired further lands in this area through inheritance, purchase, gift, marriage, and squatting!

The eighth original family was that of Allen Dixon who came to Africville from the United States via Preston around 1849. Dixon purchased land from William Brown at this time. The Dixon purchase remained in their family until expropriation in 1964-69.

Following these initial purchases, lands changed hands in Africville within families without deeds being recorded and without adherence to most regulations resulting in titles to property being very unclear, especially in the latter days of Africville. As a result, when the decision was made to acquire the lands at Africville by the City, special legislation was passed by the Provincial Government in 1964 empowering the City to expropriate lands within this area from persons having interest in the lands less than fee simple. During the period 1964-69, the lands at Africville were acquired by the City and remained in their ownership to the present time.

However, the actual decision to acquire the lands at Africville was not made over night. City Council passed a resolution on January 11, 1907, that "the property within the Africville community be expropriated." An appraiser was appointed and the lands at Africville were valued at \$8,895 at that time. This expropriation never took place, although by this time the City now owned all the lands surrounding the original Brown-Arnold purchase. This section of waterfront was very attractive as an industrial site.

On September 9, 1915, City Council confirmed the use of the Africville area as an industrial site by adopting the

SETTLEMENTS WITH AFRICVILLE RELOCATEES

Settlement Category	Property-less N = 28	Renters with Claims N = 10	Homeowners N = 19	Home and Land Owners N = 32	Homeowners with Multiple Claims N = 9	Total N = 98
Financial compensation	-	\$20,825.55	\$41,636.66	\$269,896.80	\$66,758.32	\$399,117.33
Welfare payments	\$21,271.04	5,984.12	20,337.33	13,452.76	6,171.14	67,216.39
Furniture allowance	18,360.35	5,573.95	10,658.54	19,337.01	5,471.96	59,401.81
Sundry costs	4,750.00	-	175.00	748.00	239.50	5,908.50
Hospital bills waived	44,381.39	32,383.62	72,807.53	303,434.57	78,640.92	531,644.03
Tax bills waived	-	1,506.63	2,543.83	9,395.22	313.95	13,759.63
Total	\$44,381.39	\$34,201.36	\$75,535.25	\$317,093.57	\$79,178.29	\$550,385.86

recommendation of the City Engineer who stated, "The Africville portion of Campbell Road will always be an industrial district, and it is desirable that industrial operations should be assisted in any way that is not prejudicial to the interests of the public; in fact, we may be obliged in the future to consider the interest of industry first."

Later in 1915, Imperial Oil sought to build a refinery in this area. The City welcomed the idea and plans were made for expropriation. However, Imperial Oil decided to locate elsewhere "owing to difficulties in connection with the Africville site."

In April, 1916, the Pastor of the Africville church approached the City to use a portion of City-owned land in the Africville area to construct a church. To this request, the City Engineer recommended, "It is not desirable that the City should part with any of its property in Africville for any such purpose, as it is probable that in the near future all property in this district will be required for industrial purposes; and it will be abandoned as a residential district." Council did lease a portion of land for the church but with the provision that the building was to be removed promptly should the City need the land.

Again, in 1938 Council was requested to sell land in Africville and once again, the City Engineer recommended against and told Council that the land should be developed for industry.

In 1945, however, a proposal was made by the Civic Planning Commission that the area be developed as a residential area with a small shopping centre. The report stated, "The residents of Africville must, as soon as reasonably possible, be provided with decent minimum standard housing elsewhere."

During 1948, the conditions at Africville were discussed at public meetings. As a result, the citizens of Africville clearly came out as not wanting to relocate and only wanted to improve their living conditions. City Council authorized borrowing of \$20,000 in provide a water line to Africville. However, the plan was never implemented.

In 1950, the City of Halifax adopted zoning. The official plan saw Africville zoned Industrial with Barrington Street to be relocated and the filling of a portion of the Basin to increase available land to take place.

The Africville problem was still in the forefront in 1954 when a proposal was made to acquire fifteen acres of land near

Forester Street, just west of the Africville site. The move was estimated to cost approximately \$80,700; however, a prime industrial site would be obtained at the same time. City Council approved the scheme on September 17, 1954. However, once again, the idea was not carried through.

In January of 1955, City Council still seeing the value of this land as an industrial site invited the National Harbours Board, Port of Halifax Commission, Canadian National Railways, and any other persons so invited by the Mayor to meet and discuss industrial development of the Africville area.

In 1956, the City engaged Doctor Gordon Stephenson of Toronto to investigate housing conditions in Halifax. His report published in 1957 identified Africville as prime industrial land presently occupied with worthless shacks and proposed that the area be developed as the "industrial mile." City Council on July 11, 1957, adopted a motion that all the land for the industrial mile be expropriated.

In 1962, Council considered and approved engineering and cost studies for this area as per the North Shore Development Plan.

This marked the final step which made the decision that it was more feasible and less costly to relocate the Africville residents where amenities were available rather than providing the community with these services.

Between this time and 1964, the mechanics of expropriation and the placement of the people were organized.

Finally, during the period 1964-69, the acquisition of the land took place. From then to present, with the exception of the rail lines, Abatoir lands, and the Bridge Commission lands, the entire Africville area is controlled under the ownership of the City of Halifax.

Over the years, development of this area has been sought, with the latest being the second metro container pier. However, the land remains undeveloped to its maximum use under C-3 zoning.

Several interim land uses have occupied the site, including land leased for open storage and the City Dump.

As for the future of this land, it is my feeling that it should be developed as a Harbour oriented industrial area. Notwithstanding a recent decision to locate the second metro

container facility at Wright's Cove in Dartmouth, the Africville site lends itself to this type of development. The land beneath the water quickly falls away from the shoreline to provide an excellent deep water facility with little or no dredging to be done. In addition, the closest residential development in this area is a fair distance away and is buffered by roadways and rail lines, as well as being at a much higher elevation than the Africville land.

Further, these major roads and rail lines close at hand also enhance the viability of this land for industrial use.

The present C-3 Zone classification on the Africville lands is at the top of the cumulative scale of the City of Halifax Zoning Bylaw. Therefore, the land carries almost no restriction as to use or standards. This is also a favorable point to a potential developer of this land as he would not have to go through the rezoning process which, in many cases, is a deterrent to development.

To summarize, then, it is my opinion that the highest and best use of this land is industrial and the conditions, regulations, and controls relating to this site are conducive to industrial development.

The original bound Case Study includes a large-format map attached on the final page, which is a copy of TT-1-15899, available at the Halifax Municipal Archives