

# History

Imagine a different time in the days so long ago... before air conditioning... before easy travel by air or even road... before Juneteenth, and way before the civil rights movement.

Winter Park was the first planned community in Central Florida, strategically built around the railroad which served commerce and travel.

Hannibal Square—the “west side”—was officially founded in 1881, only 40 years after Florida became the 27th state, and 14 years after the state re-entered the Union after seceding and co-founding the Confederate States in 1861.

The free black families who lived here provided a ready source of labor for building a town to serve wealthy white winter residents and visitors. Although Florida and Winter Park were to stay deeply segregated into the 1960s, the non-agricultural railroad jobs and domestic service positions with Winter Park’s wealthy white families resulted in educational opportunities and comparative prosperity and privilege for Winter Park’s black residents.

On October 12, 1887, young Republican Gus Henderson violated curfew to lead a march of black registered voters across the railroad tracks to Ergood’s Drugstore. This established the quorum which then voted to incorporate the town of Winter Park which included Hannibal Square in its boundaries. In addition, two black men from Hannibal Square, Walter B. Simpson and Frank R. Israel, were elected Aldermen and served from 1887 to 1893.

From its beginnings, Hannibal Square was rooted in faith, family, and community. The west side was characterized by high levels of education, business and home ownership, and professional standing among its black residents.

Today, the City of Winter Park, known worldwide for its wealth and quality of life, is one of the most desirable addresses in Florida. This prime location has fueled development and gentrification of Hannibal Square, with significant loss of cultural landmarks and native residents.

Members of the community have rallied to preserve what is left of its heritage—and that is where *the Heritage Center* story begins.

Below: A detail from the *Celebrating Pride in Hannibal Square* mosaic mural, completed in partnership with the Golden Rule Foundation depicting the famous march across the railroad tracks (located across the street at the Winter Park Community Center).



Left: Otto Cobb, W.D. Davis, Chester (surname unknown), Alphonzo Cobb, Rufus Key, Reverend Williams, and James Robinson circa 1950 with their gospel band at an Orlando radio studio. Photograph contributed by Juanita Rountree; oral history by Reverend Alfonzo Cobb.



Above: Hannibal Elementary School third grade class in 1933, led by Mrs. Gertrude Stewart. Photograph contributed by Mrs. Annie Burns, retired kindergarten teacher.



Above: Brothers Clyde Willis and Richard with the Hall Family Chevrolet which the family drove to the 1939 World’s Fair in New York. Photograph contributed by Richard Robert Hall, Jr.



Right: Mr. Herbert and Alma Roberts in Ruby Ball’s front yard at 773 New England Avenue, circa 1950. Photograph contributed by Linda Walker.

“Every community, every family, has a history and a heritage, it simply does not matter if you are a fifth generation Central Floridian or if your family moved here last year from Puerto Rico. The more diverse and multi-cultural our American society gets, the more important it is for us to know our own history and to appreciate each other’s culture and heritage.”

—Peter Schreyer, founder of the Heritage Center and Crealdé Executive Director, during the dedication of the new facility on April 28, 2007



Above: Pearl T. Reed, Principal of Hannibal Elementary School, circa 1964. Photograph contributed by Pearl Ings.



Since its inception in 1975, Crealdé School of Art, a community based, non-profit art school in Winter Park, has been led by a mission to “provide extensive outreach, foster cultural diversity and understanding of pluralism and preservation of our cultural heritage.”

## Crealdé in West Winter Park

After a decade-long presence at the Winter Park Community Center serving the city’s historic African American community through free art classes for children and seniors, and after four years of persistence, research, dialogue and planning with community and civic leaders, Crealdé School of Art opened the new Hannibal Square Heritage Center in April of 2007. The Heritage Center, operated in partnership with the City of Winter Park, enables Crealdé to expand its outreach to the west Winter Park community and to strengthen the organization’s mission to use the arts as a vehicle to connect and celebrate individuals, neighborhoods, and cultural diversity.

## What is the Heritage Collection?

The cornerstone of the center is *The Heritage Collection: Photographs and Oral Histories of West Winter Park*, which speaks about the hardships and the triumphs of Winter Park’s African American community from 1900 to the present. These personal accounts of community life make history come alive and engage visitors young and old. In the adjoining gallery, a wall-size timeline exhibit juxtaposes significant events within west Winter Park with national events pertaining to African Americans, giving a broader context for understanding, from reconstruction to civil rights.

## Community Pride

No one really knew how many stories were being lost until they were gathered into one place. From the beginning, the residents loved *The Heritage Collection* and their contributions over the last five years have expanded the exhibition to over 80 archival, museum quality pieces. In a climate of intense development throughout their home community, *The Heritage Collection* touched a chord and brought together the African American residents in an unprecedented way. Residents and the city of Winter Park started paying attention. What was once a whisper became a full chorus tuned to preservation and celebration. The neighborhood continues to be developed—but with an eye on the history and heritage of this special place.

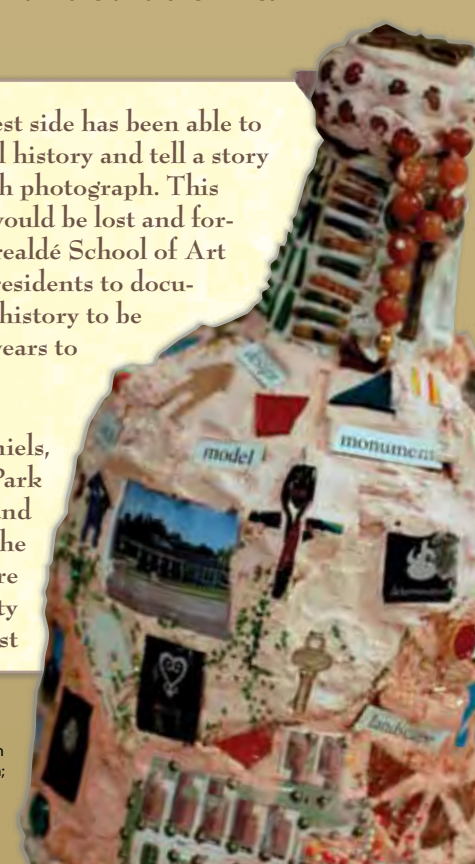
## The Hannibal Square Heritage Center

The Heritage Center provides free art classes to seniors and youth from the community, and offers programming from Crealdé’s curriculum as well as from partnerships

with the area’s public schools, the University of Central Florida Cultural Heritage Alliance, the Orange County Regional History Center, the Winter Park Historical Museum, the Winter Park Public Library, the Golden Rule Foundation, and other not-for-profit organizations. The center also houses visiting exhibitions, cultural events and programs that explore local history, cultural preservation, southern folklore and the African American experience.

“Winter Park’s west side has been able to capture a pictorial history and tell a story as it relates to each photograph. This valuable history would be lost and forgotten had not Crealdé School of Art worked with the residents to document this unique history to be shared for many years to come!”

—Mary R. Daniels,  
West Winter Park  
Resident and  
President of the  
Hannibal Square  
Community  
Land Trust



A program of Crealdé School of Art—a community based non-profit organization founded in 1975

642 West New England Avenue  
Winter Park, Florida 32789  
www.hannibalsquareheritagecenter.org  
407-539-2680

“A great opportunity to bring the rich history of west Winter Park into the hearts and minds of people worldwide. Generations to come will see the actual makings of this proud community.”  
—Carol A. Anderson,  
west Winter Park native



Winter Park, Florida

# HANNIBAL SQUARE Heritage Center

**CREALDÉ  
SCHOOL OF ART**  
A Non-Profit Organization Established in 1975  
600 St. Andrews Blvd.  
Winter Park, FL 32792  
407-671-1886  
www.crealde.org



- Staffed by west Winter Park resident docents.
- The Heritage Collection: Photographs and Oral Histories from west Winter Park, a unique exhibition of history told by the residents who have lived it with regularly scheduled Collection Days for residents to add to the collection (call for upcoming dates).
- The Heritage Timeline, detailing significant local and national events as they relate to African American history since 1860.
- Visiting exhibitions, cultural events and programs for all ages that explore local history, cultural preservation, southern folklore, and the African American experience.
- Visual arts classes and workshops for adults and children from Crealdé's curriculum of over 90 courses in painting and drawing, ceramics, sculpture, and photography.
- Family History Research Library genealogy program from the City of Winter Park's Unity Heritage Festival.
- Outreach programs including "What Heritage Means to Me" field trips for school and tour groups.
- Scholarships and free art classes for youth and seniors from the west Winter Park community.
- Available for tours and family reunions outside of regular hours. Please call 407-539-2680.

## The Hannibal Square Heritage Center

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit 93068  
Mid-FL, FL

# Welcome

The Hannibal Square Heritage Center is a unique experience where the history of a community is told by its members. The exhibitions and programs held at the Center weave the stories of this proud neighborhood together with African American history in general, as well as related topics in art, family history, and community experience.

Visitors to the Heritage Center are moved by the immediate, personal stories of the people of west Winter Park and by the beautiful and accessible presentation of historical information and artwork. Adults as well as children can digest the first-person accounts and pictures collected from shoe boxes stored for generations under the beds of the people who share their stories.

Ever-expanding, the Heritage Collection and its permanent home at the Hannibal Square Heritage Center inspire a sense of shared experience and a new passion for what is possible through the blending of historic preservation with the visual arts.



Located in the heart of Winter Park's historic African American west side across the street from a children's splash park, great restaurants, and boutique shopping on Hannibal Square. Minutes from over a dozen Black Heritage Trail sites including Eatonville (home of Zora Neale Hurston), Wells' Built Museum, historic Sanford, and: Orlando Museum of Art, Mennello Museum of American Art, REP Theater, Orlando Science Center, UCF-Orlando Shakespeare Theater, and Harry P. Leu Gardens.

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|---|--|
| 1 Hannibal Square Heritage Center             | 9 Hannibal Square (former African American business district) restaurants and shopping       |
| 2 Crealdé School of Art and Sculpture Garden  | 10 Winter Park Historical Museum & Farmer's Market   |
| 3 Historic Winter Park Public Golf Course     | 11 Winter Park Welcome Center & Chamber of Commerce  |
| 4 Casa Feliz Historic Home and Museum         | 12 Winter Park Public Library  |
| 5 Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art | 13 The Albin Polasek Museum and Sculpture Garden   |
| 6 Park Avenue restaurants and shopping        | 14 Rollins College: Annie Russell Theater, Knowles Memorial Chapel, Cornell Fine Arts Museum |
| 7 Historic Central Park and Amtrak Station    |  |
| 8 Winter Park Scenic Boat Tour                |  |

Located in the heart of downtown Winter Park, just minutes from Orlando's attractions and steps away from many top rated restaurants and boutiques.

Open Monday–Thursday 12–4,  
Friday 12–5, Saturday 10–2.

Free admission!  
Call 407.539.2680

**CREALDÉ  
SCHOOL OF ART**  
A Non-Profit Organization Established in 1975

Crealdé School of Art is a non-profit art organization supported in part by memberships, the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs; the Florida Arts Council; United Arts of Central Florida; the City of Winter Park; Orange County Government, and various private foundations.

