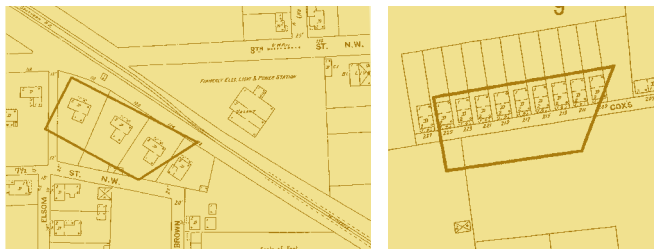


4 | AN AMERICAN DREAM: HOME OWNERSHIP

Poverty and prejudice shaped the lives of African Americans in Charlottesville. In the 1920s African Americans made up 28 percent of the town's population but owned only 6.5 percent of its real estate. Many lived crowded together in very small houses or in subdivided single-family houses. Charles B. Holt would be an exception. In 1917 Holt bought this large building lot in the area called "the western suburbs of Charlottesville." Moving away from cramped neighborhoods, Holt built a house surrounded by grass and trees. With his wife, Mary Spinner Holt (1885–1953), he lived on nearly a half-acre of land in a 3,400-square-foot house.

In the neighborhood of 116 8th Street, N.W., where Holt had lived in 1900, the same size parcel included three houses with nine families and thirty residents. Nearby, on Cox's Row, nine houses accommodated 37 people in nine families. At 223 Cox's Row, three generations of the Roberts family, nine people in all, lived in a 600-square-foot house.

(Left) Map of Holt's 8th Street house and (Right) Cox's Row. The overlaid figure is the size and shape of Holt's property on Preston Avenue. (Below) Photograph of Cox's Row.



5 | WASHINGTON PARK: SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL

After the abolition of slavery, African Americans still confronted racial prejudice. Schools, churches, transportation, parks, and other public places became segregated by practice and by law. In 1919 Paul Goodloe McIntire (1860–1952), a merchant and philanthropist, built Charlottesville's first public library, open only to white residents. In 1926 he generously donated land for public parks. Across the street from Holt's house, McIntire established the 9.2-acre Washington Park for "colored" citizens. A mile north, McIntire Park, with 92 acres, served "whites." Charlottesville's parks and schools were not integrated until 1959.

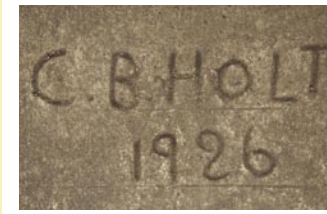


(Above, left) The 1926 *Daily Progress* park announcement and (Below) a 1932 map showing the different size of Washington and McIntire Parks—with Washington Park labeled "colored." (Above, middle) The 1945 Jefferson School Homecoming in Washington Park and (Above, right) Washington Park tennis tournament.



6 | HOLT'S ARCHITECTURE

Holt built his bungalow in the Arts and Crafts style. This popular style connected the house with its natural site. The stone walls of the house and at the edges of the property united house and garden harmoniously. A covered porch strengthened the connection. Large windows let light and air into the living room, dining room, and bedrooms. Nine years after Holt purchased his land, he completed his house. He inscribed the dates "1925" and "1926" in two places—one on the house, the other outside. Look for the dates.



7 | ASALIE MINOR PRESTON: TEACHER & PHILANTHROPIST

The legacy of the Holt House endures beyond the lifetime of Charles B. Holt. Asalie Minor Preston (c. 1904-1982), a schoolteacher in Albemarle County's "colored" schools, married Holt's stepson and lived here after Charles B. Holt died in 1950. In 1877 Asalie Preston's grandfather had purchased land north of Charlottesville for \$300. Her father, a farmer and schoolteacher, worked the land and slowly accumulated over 66 acres. In the 1970s, suburban expansion along Route 29 North made the land valuable. Asalie Preston and her siblings sold the land for over \$500,000 and later established a scholarship fund. By 2006, the Rives C. Minor and Asalie M. Preston Educational Fund was providing between \$150,000 and \$200,000 a year in scholarships for Charlottesville area children.



8 | CHANGES IN HOLT'S NEIGHBORHOOD

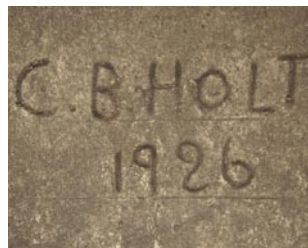
Though he owned his home, Holt still had to contend with society's prejudice and unfairness. In 1929 Charlottesville adopted its first zoning ordinance. The city forbade business and industry from encroaching on residential neighborhoods, but did not give Holt's neighborhood the same zoning protection that many white neighborhoods received. Instead, the ordinance allowed commercial development in Holt's neighborhood. The City Laundry, Triangle Service Station, and Monticello Dairy soon moved next to Holt's property. In 1941 the Columbia Baking Company built an industrial bakery next door to Holt. Later, Bruton & Company took over the building for its beauty supply business. In 2003 the Legal Aid Justice Center renovated the structure as a new home for its civil legal services program.

(Below) Images of the City Laundry, Triangle Service Station, Monticello Dairy, and Columbia Baking Company building and (Above) a map of the commercial development in Holt's neighborhood.





LEGAL AID JUSTICE CENTER
 1000 Preston Avenue, Suite A
 Charlottesville, VA 22903
 (434) 977-0553
 (800) 578-8111
 www.justice4all.org



CHARLES B. HOLT AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE PATH

The Legal Aid Justice Center thanks Daniel Bluestone, historian and author of the text of this brochure, and Mary Ann Elwood, Virginia Germino, Barbara Clark Smith and Jennifer Walkowski for research and editing.

LEGAL AID JUSTICE CENTER



1 | LEGAL AID JUSTICE CENTER AND THE HOLT HOUSE

The Holt House is an inspiration to people facing social prejudice and legal inequity. Charles B. Holt (1872–1950), born to former slaves in North Carolina, triumphed against the odds and achieved an American dream: home ownership. Holt's house is a fitting home for the Legal Aid Justice Center, which seeks justice for poor and low-income people, who are often at a disadvantage in our legal system. In 2002, when Legal Aid opened offices in the building next door, the Holt House stood abandoned and deteriorating. Legal Aid restored Holt's house to honor the Holt family and all families struggling to overcome injustice.

(Below) Alex Gulotta, Renee and John Grisham, and (Above) Julian Bond celebrate the Holt House dedication, April 2006.



2 | CHARLES B. HOLT: BORN INTO FREEDOM

Charles B. Holt, the man who built this "Rock House", was born in 1872 in Alamance County, North Carolina. Holt's father and mother, Charles and Arena; his brother, George; and his sisters Rachel, Jane, and Margaret had all lived as slaves. In 1863, in the third year of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring, "All persons held as slaves . . . are, and henceforward shall be free." Unlike the older members of his family, Charles and his sisters Rabena, Peggy, and Polly were born into freedom.

Age	Name	Sex	Age	Relationship	Occupation
42	Holt, Charles	B	M 55		work farming
	Arena	B	F 45	wife	Keeping house
	George	B	M 27	Son	work for wages
	Rachael	B	F 24	Daughter	
	Jane	B	F 24	Daughter	
	Marganett	B	F 20	Daughter	
	Rabena	B	F 17	Daughter	
	Peggy M.	B	F 9	Daughter	
	Charley E.	B	M 7	son	
	Polly	B	F 2	Daughter	

CHAIRS RECANED
 Chairs recaned and repaired with rattan or white oak split work. Closely woven seats put in all work brought to shop in rear of Model Steam Laundry, 115 Fourth St. N. W. Phone 350-J

Carpenter and Job Work
 A lot of wire cable size 5-8 in.
C. B. HOLT

CARPENTER AND JOB WORK
 Chair caning, Repairing and Umbrella mending. Rattan and white oak split work. Glass put in and general repair work. Phone 350-J.

C. B. HOLT
 Rear Model Laundry

Carpenter and Job Work
 Chair caning and repairing rattan and white oak split work. Close woven seats put in. All work sent to the Umbrella Hospital. Have them repaired and recovered.

C. B. HOLT
 Phone 350-J.
 In Rear of Model Laundry.

UMBRELLA HOSPITAL
 Just received new samples of umbrella and parasol coverings. Repair and recovering at moderate prices. Chairs recaned in rattan and split, also Carpenter job work.
C. B. HOLT, 115 N. Fourth.
 April 16-18. Phone 350-J.

3 | HOLT IN CHARLOTTESVILLE: WORK AND SUCCESS

By 1900 the young Charles B. Holt had left his father's farm and moved to Charlottesville. Holt's skills and determination as a carpenter, builder, and entrepreneur helped him save enough money to buy land and build his own home.

(Above) 1880 Census of the United States listing Holt's family. Family members in the shaded area were born into slavery, those in the unshaded area were born into freedom. (Left) 1920s advertisements from the *Daily Progress* promoting Holt's carpentry and repair shop in Vinegar Hill.

"In Charles Holt's day, most southern Blacks could not vote.... Most worked as farmers, or semi-skilled laborers. Few owned the land they farmed, or even the homes in which they lived. When Holt completed this house, African-Americans were one-third of Charlottesville's population, but owned only about 6.5% of the local real estate...."

In dedicating the Rock House, we honor Charles Holt and countless others, black women and men who prevailed against a system designed to crush them....

Charles Holt would not be crushed; he was rock solid....

And now both the story of his house and the house itself have been preserved. It could have been sold. It could have been torn down. Or it just could have been allowed to continue to deteriorate....

But the Legal Aid Justice Center decided to restore it....

Like its builder, Rock House is once again rock solid."

—Julian Bond
 April 18th, 2006
 C.B. Holt Rock House Dedication