

CITY OF HIGH POINT AGENDA ITEM



Title: **Historic Marker Request**
(Rev. Daniel Brooks)

From: Sushil Nepal, Planning & Development
Director

Meeting Date: July 17, 2023

Public Hearing: No

Advertising Date: NA

Advertised By: NA

Attachments: A. Historic Preservation Commission Recommendation
B. Staff Report

PURPOSE:

A request by the Southwest Renewal Foundation of High Point for approval of a historic marker to recognize Reverend Daniel Brooks that is proposed to be located adjacent to the Southwest High Point Heritage Greenway, on the north side of Vail Avenue, two blocks west of where the Brooks Memorial Methodist Church once stood in the Southside Neighborhood.

BACKGROUND:

The Historic Preservation Commission is designated by the Historic Marker Policy to review and evaluate all proposed roadside historic markers prior to consideration by City Council. This roadside historic marker request is the eleventh request under the City's roadside Historic Marker Policy.

BUDGET IMPACT:

The Southwest Renewal Foundation of High Point is purchasing this marker.

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION REQUESTED:

- A. Staff recommended approval of this request as outlined in the attached staff report.
- B. On June 14, 2023, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended approval of this request by a vote of 7-0.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Historic Marker Request recognizing Reverend Daniel Brooks

At its June 14, 2023 meeting, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed a request for a historic marker recognizing Reverend Daniel Brooks. Seven members of the Commission were present. Mr. David Fencl, Senior Planner, presented the request and recommended approval of the request as outlined in the staff report.

The Historic Preservation Commission determined that the proposed marker met the minimum evaluation criteria of the Historic Marker Policy, which includes the individual's significance occurred at least 50 years before the request, no other public or private markers recognize Daniel Brooks, and the location of the proposed marker is within the corporate limits. The Historic Preservation Commission also determined that the proposed marker will be consistent in appearance with several existing City markers and recommended approval of the historic marker request, as recommended by staff, by a vote of 7-0.

To: Historic Preservation Commission Members

From: David Fencl, Senior Planner

Meeting Date: June 14, 2023

Subject: Rev. Daniel Brooks Historic Marker Request by the Southwest Renewal Foundation of High Point, Inc.

PURPOSE:

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is designated by the Historic Marker Policy to review all requests for historic markers to be located in public street rights-of-way. The HPC shall first determine whether the request meets the minimum evaluation criteria outlined in the policy, and if the request meets the minimum evaluation criteria, the HPC shall then evaluate the request based on relevant criteria as determined by the HPC.

The following criteria must be present and factually correct in order for the HPC to review any request for placement of a marker:

1. Any site or event requested to be recognized must be at least 50 years old and for any individual to be recognized with a marker, the individual's contribution that is the subject of the request must have occurred as least 50 years before the request.
2. There may not be any current markers, public or private, currently recognizing the site or event within the City of High Point.
3. The location requested to be recognized must be within the corporate limits of the City of High Point and within public view.

Requests for markers shall be evaluated based on relevant criteria as determined by the HPC, including the following:

1. Is each historical claim by the applicant presenting the request supported by documentation or other evidence of the claim's validity? Documentation should consist of primary sources that were created at the time of the event and may include tax records, deeds, newspaper articles, meeting minutes, photographs, etc. Secondary sources may be submitted to help provide context and justify the significance of the event, person, or location.
2. In an attempt to avoid repetition and promote diversity in the recognitions, is the requested site, event or individual closely related to a site, event or individual accomplishment that has already been recognized with a Marker?
3. Has the site, event, or individual contribution maintained its significance over time?

4. Is the site, event or individual recognized outside of High Point at state wide, national, or international levels?
5. Marker proposals will be rejected if the Commission cannot authenticate or verify the historical information to its satisfaction. The Commission shall make the deciding rule if there is conflicting evidence.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

According to the information supplied with this Historic Marker Request, Reverend Daniel Brooks was born during the era of slavery in 1837 and grew to prominence in early High Point as a local religious and civic leader throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries until his death in 1933 at 95 years of age.

Brooks was born in Rutherford County, NC and volunteered to join the Confederate Army in 1861 as a free man of color. Surviving the Civil War, Brooks moved to High Point in the late 19th century. He served multiple terms as a commissioner for public schools and helped the school board negotiate purchase of the land for William Penn School. Reverend Brooks started the Brooks Memorial Methodist Church in the early 20th century in the Southside Neighborhood. Brooks was known to have worked across racial lines to build community. The first public project to provide affordable housing for blacks in High Point in 1941 was named after Daniel Brooks. Brooks' name survived until 2019 when the public housing project bearing his name was demolished for the Legacy Ridge Apartments that are currently under construction. Brooks is buried in the "colored" section of the City's Oakwood Cemetery.

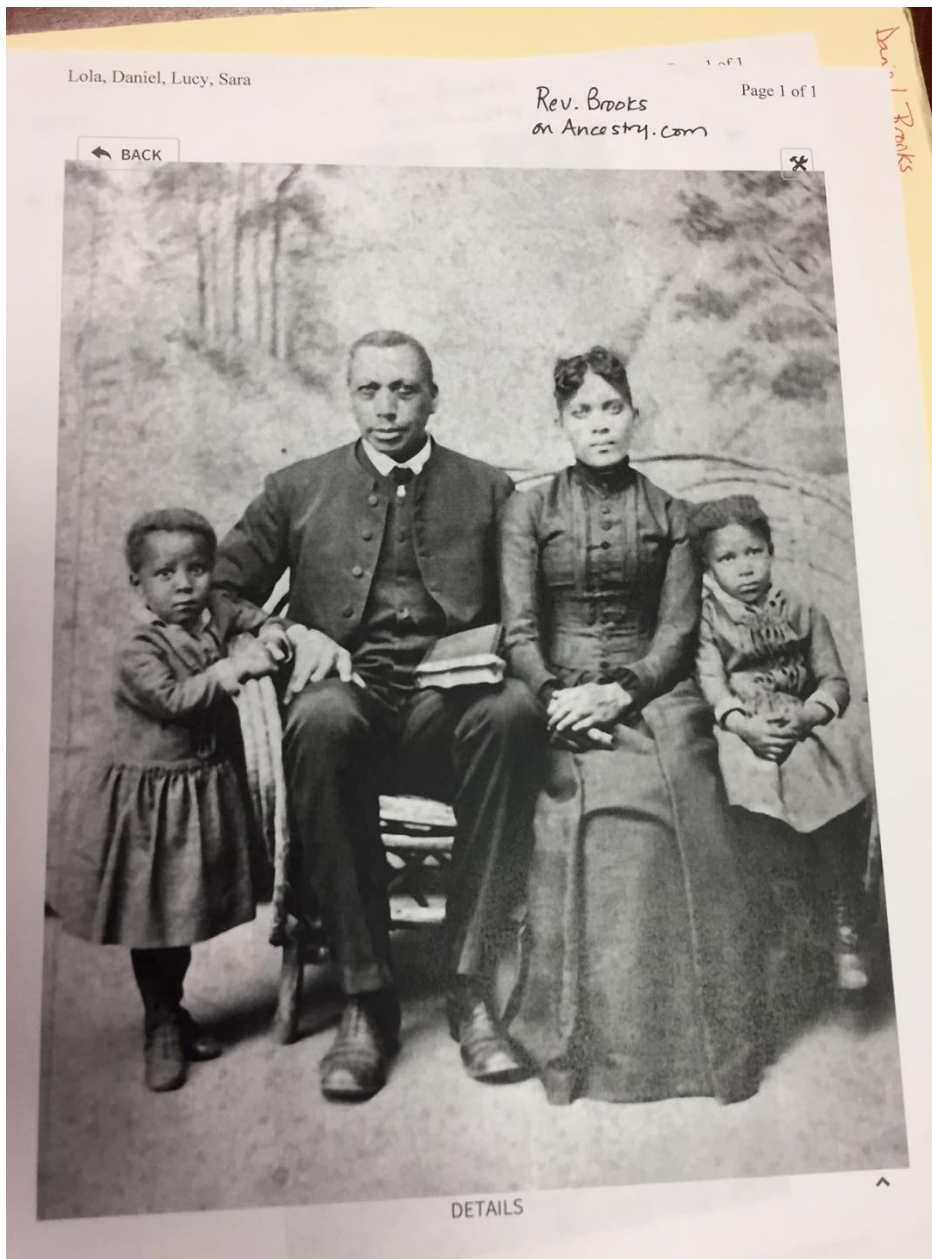
The historic marker commemorating Reverend Daniel Brooks is proposed to be erected adjacent to the Southwest High Point Heritage Greenway, on the north side of Vail Avenue, two blocks west of where the Brooks Memorial Methodist Church once stood in the Southside Neighborhood.

Staff believes that this historic marker request meets the minimum evaluation criteria due to the period of Rev. Daniel Brooks' activity in High Point being more than 50 years ago, there are no other historic markers recognizing Rev. Brooks in High Point and the marker's proposed location is within the City of High Point and within public view. The applicant has submitted information that documents Rev. Brooks' significance.

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION REQUESTED:

Staff recommends the Historic Preservation Commission recommend approval of the historic marker request recognizing Reverend Daniel Brooks. This historic marker request meets the minimum evaluation criteria, and with the documentation submitted, staff believes this request meets all of the relevant evaluation criteria of the Historic Marker Policy.

Attachments: Rev. Daniel Brooks Historic Marker Request and Documentation



HISTORIC MARKER REQUEST

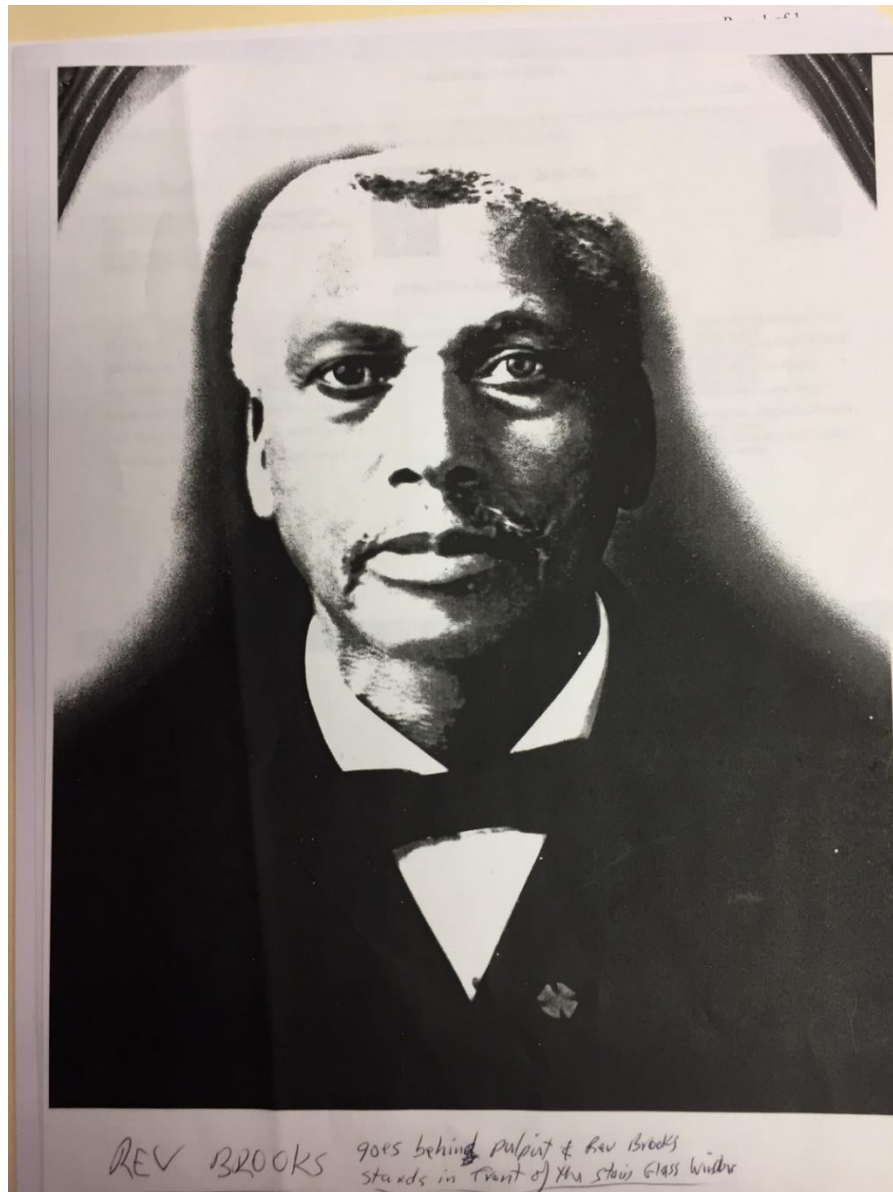
The REV. DANIEL BROOKS

ABSTRACT

Born during the era of slavery in 1837, the Rev. Daniel Brooks grew to prominence in early High Point as a local religious and civic leader throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries until his death at 95 years of age in 1933. Brooks worked across racial lines to build community. The first public project to provide affordable housing for blacks in High Point in 1941 was named after Daniel Brooks. His name survived until 2019 when this public housing project was demolished and renamed Legacy Ridge.

REQUEST: Southwest Renewal Foundation of High Point requests to design and fund a historic marker commemorating the Rev. Daniel Brooks for placement on the Southwest High Point Heritage Greenway, two blocks west of where the Brooks Memorial Methodist Church once stood at 707 Fairview Street in the historically black Southside Neighborhood.

SWRF MISSION: Raising Quality of Life, Fostering Public and Environmental Health, and Attracting Business to Create Jobs in historic inner-city southwest High Point.



Reverend Daniel Brooks

Born Sep 15, 1837 in Rutherford County, NC

Died May 12, 1933 in High Point, NC

Beloved Minister of Brooks Memorial Methodist Church (now gone)

Organized in 1907 and stood 2 blocks east at 707 Fairview Street

Civil War Veteran, Community Activist and City Leader

Gone but Not Forgotten



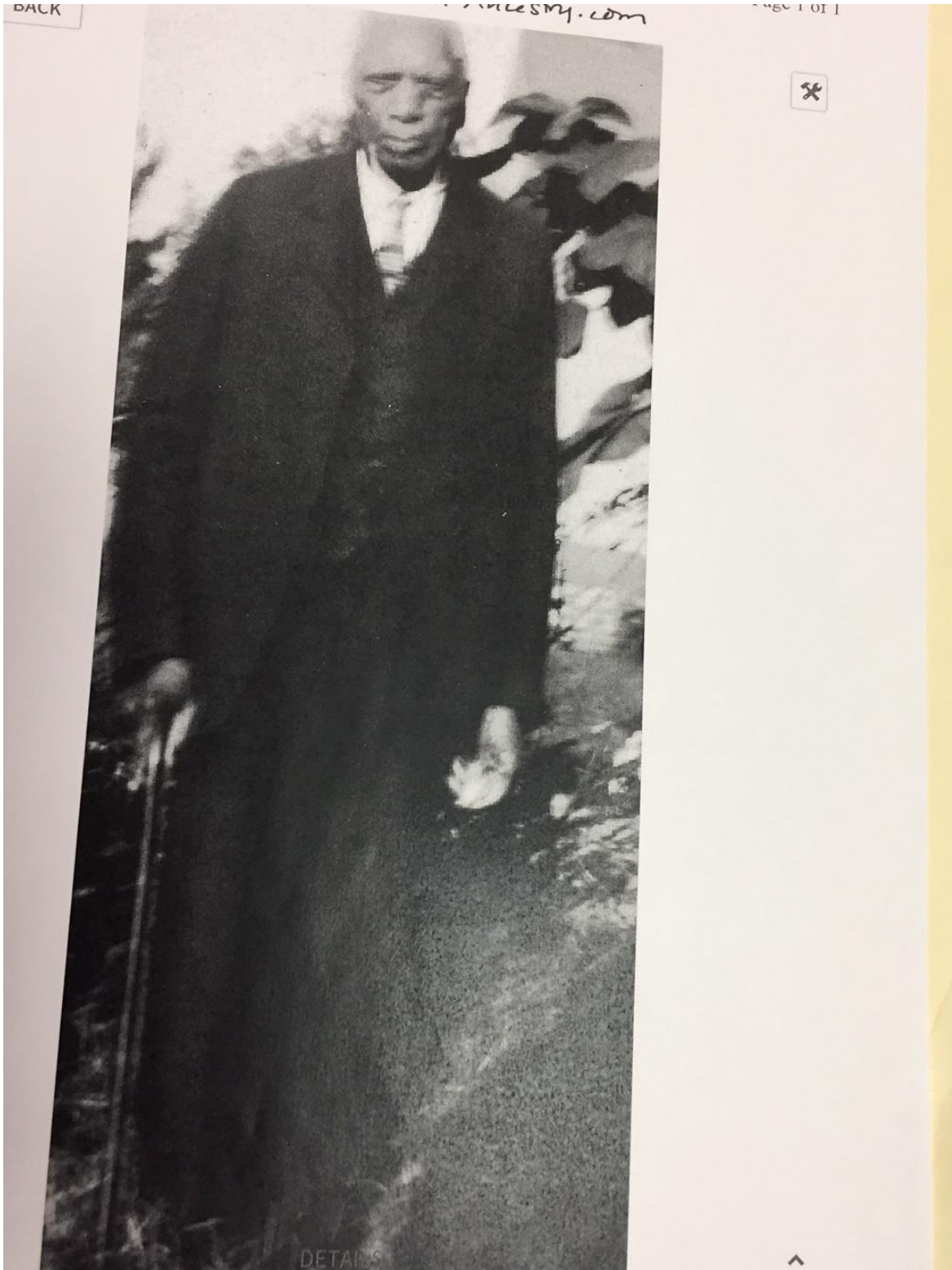
Brooks Memorial Methodist Church (built in 1907 -- demolished in 2012)

An excellent example of historic church vernacular architecture in the South

“The simple Gothic-inspired frame church stands as one of the oldest buildings associated with the traditionally African American Southside neighborhood. The temple form structure features a distinctive tower attached to the gabled main façade. Other details include pointed arch windows, clapboard siding and exposed eaves that relate the sanctuary to traditional rural churches of the South.”*

During the Federal Urban Renewal Program in High Point in the last 1960s through early 1970s, much of the historic fabric of the Southside Neighborhood was demolished in the name of “blight removal.” Brooks’ church building was a rare survivor until the early 21st Century.

****Benjamin Briggs, The Architecture of High Point, North Carolina, A History and Guide to the City’s Homes, Churches and Public Buildings (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2008) pp.143-144.***



Rev. Daniel Brooks in his later years

SWRF will commission SEWAH STUDIOS to create this historic marker. Sewah is the same foundry that produces North Carolina's Roadside Historic Markers. This will be the 4th historic marker sponsored by the **SWRF** produced by Sewah. The requested marker will be in the same model as the others according to the City of High Point Historic Marker Guidelines (Georgia-style marker; black background with silver lettering). **SWRF** would like to follow NC's guidelines of keeping the number of descriptive words on the marker 26-30 words, and recognizing **SWRF's** contributions in smaller font at the bottom of the marker. Please see images of **SWRF** -sponsored historic markers that follow:



Dedicated on Peace Day, September 19, 2019



Dedicated on Valentine's Day, February 14, 2019



Dedicated in 2016

DANIEL BROOKS BIOGRAPHY

Daniel Brooks was born in Rutherford County, NC, in 1837. In 1841 parts of Rutherford and Lincoln counties were combined to form Cleveland County. Daniel's early life is picked up again in primary records when, in his twenties, as a free man of color, he volunteered in Cleveland County to join the Confederate Army after the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861.

In a primary document captured by Earl Ijames, a curator at the NC Museum of History in Raleigh, who did extensive research at the NC Department of Archives, Ijames found Brooks is quoted as saying he would rather volunteer for the South than be conscripted into the Confederate Army. (See video clip on Brooks' early life as part of Ijames lecture entitled, *Confederates of Color Before and After the Emancipation Proclamation*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfGWEaF9PN8&feature=youtu.be> 7:25 – 10:85) See also [Whose legacy?: Opposition to renaming of historic homes dropped | News | yesweekly.com](#)

Daniel survived the war and in the late 19th century moved to High Point, NC, which before the 1890s was known foremost for its fruits and vegetables as a small rural southern town of less than 2000 population.

Daniel's life is picked up again in the early 20th century as the pastor of the Brooks Memorial Methodist Church in the Southside Neighborhood in High Point. Brooks' church started out at 610 Fairview at a congregant's home and moved into a new church building at 707 Fairview (now gone) in 1907.

Over time, the Rev. Daniel Brooks became known throughout High Point as a religious and civic leader who crossed racial lines to build community. According to the High Point Museum, Brooks served multiple terms as a commissioner for public schools and helped the school board in 1910 negotiate the land for William Penn High School. (Ibid)

Eight years after his death in 1933, the first black-only public housing built in High Point at 1410 West Avenue was christened the Daniel Brooks Homes in 1941. A portrait of Brooks hung in the High Point City Hall until 1985 when it was removed. Today, the portrait's whereabouts is now unknown. (Ibid)

The Daniel Brooks Homes (also known as Daniel Brooks Apartments) were demolished in 2019 to make way for a new housing development. A petition of over 400 names plead with the Housing Authority to keep Brooks' name on the new development, but when his Confederate participation became public, the petition was dropped. (Ibid)

Today, Brooks body rests in a grave in High Point's oldest cemetery, Oakwood (since 1859), in the "colored" section next to members of the Confederate Army who died at the Barbee Hotel in High Point during the Civil War (along with their nurse, Laura Wesson, also buried in Oakwood). At Brooks death in 1933, High Point had already joined Jim Crow culture by dedicating a separate cemetery in High Point for blacks in 1910—Green Hill. Brooks burial in Oakwood Cemetery is another sign of his stature and respect among whites and blacks in his adopted hometown of High Point.

PROPOSED MARKER LOCATION

510 VAIL AVENUE



Parcel Number	172886	Total Out Building Value	0
PIN	7800101428	Total Land Value	9000
Owner	CITY OF HIGH POINT	Total Deferred Value	0
Mail Address	PO BOX 230	Bldg Card	
Mail City	HIGH POINT	Appraisal Model Code	
Mail State	NC	Deed Data	1/1/1900
Mail Zip	27261	Neighborhood	7709B08
Property Address	510 VAIL AVE	Property Type	GOV OWNED
Legal Description	510 VAIL ST	Structure Size	
Deed	002848-00516	Lot Size	0.25
Plat		Year Built	
Condo		Bedrooms	
Total Assessed	9000	Bathrooms	
Total Building Value	0	Grade	



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Map Scale
1 inch = 63 feet
 5/22/2023

CONTACT INFORMATION



SOUTHWEST RENEWAL FOUNDATION



*Raising the Quality of Life in Inner-City Southwest High Point
Promoting Public and Environmental Health
Attracting Business to Create Jobs*

Our icon is an abstract of Richland Creek that runs throughout southwest High Point. Clean and plentiful water is golden, symbolizing spirit, health, and prosperity for all life.

*Dorothy Darr, Executive Director
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RECOMMENDED INSCRIPTION:

Reverend Daniel Brooks

(1837 – 1933)

Beloved Minister of Brooks Memorial Methodist Church which stood at 707 Fairview Street (now gone). Brooks served in the Civil War and as a Religious, Educational, and Civic Leader who worked across racial lines to build community.

Erected by the Southwest Renewal Foundation of High Point, Inc. in partnership with the High Point Historic Preservation Commission, Supporting Citizens, and the City of High Point.

Thanksgiving Day, November 23, 2023