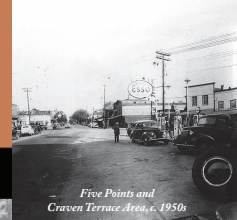
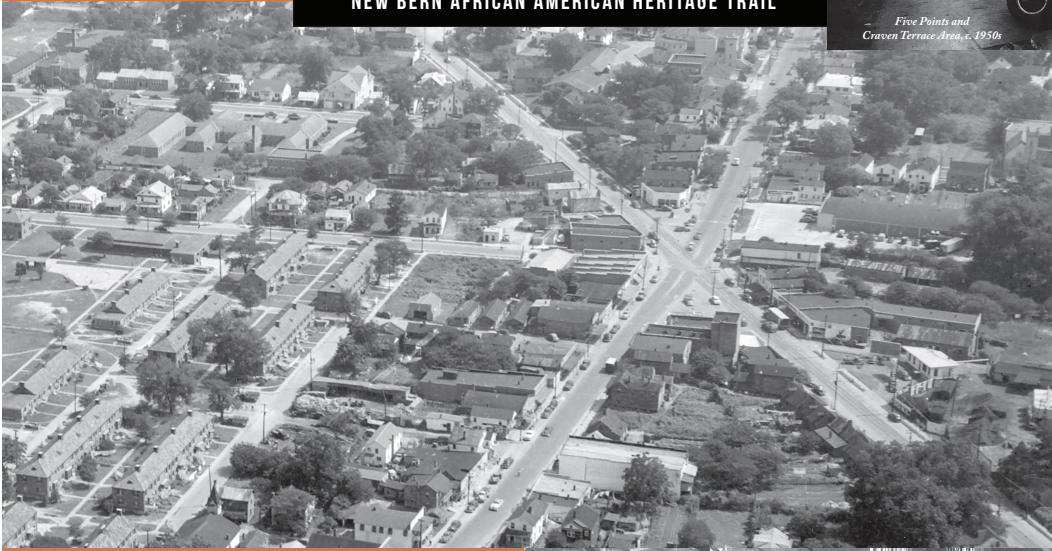


Five Points

NEW BERN AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE TRAIL



Five Points and Craven Terrace Area, c. 1950s

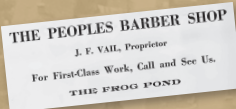


The barbershop was on Broad Street—there were about five chairs. And in the window at the front there was a shoeshine stand. It was more of a meeting place. People spoke of their accomplishments, bragged on their children, and talked about how hard times were.

*Harriet Vail Wade
August 1993, Life in the Jim Crow South*

Vail's Barber Shop

During the twentieth century, barbershops and hair salons were public spaces where African Americans could safely gossip, talk about politics, and discuss local affairs. Vail's Barber Shop, located at the corner of Broad and Roundtree streets, was an important gathering place in Five Points from the 1920s through the 1950s. The proprietor, Seth Vail, known as "Bub," was a second-generation barber. His father, Seth Allen Vail, Sr., moved to New Bern from James City in 1881. Soon after, he opened a barbershop on South Front Street where he trained four sons—Thomas, John, Bub, and James in the family business.



A 1920s advertisement for The Peoples Barber Shop in the local Business Directory.

A World War I veteran, John Vail returned to New Bern in 1919 and opened Peoples Barber Shop at 98 Queen Street. Vail employed two of his younger brothers, James and Bub, the latter also a veteran of the Great War. John's unexpected death in 1922 must have seemed like a bad omen, because a few months later the shop burned during the Great Fire. Undeterred, James and Bub established their own Vail's Barber Shop in Five Points.

The Great Depression forced the brothers to close the business and move to New York where they worked in Harlem as barbers. During their time in New York, Alberta Vail, Bub's wife, attended beautician school. They returned to New Bern in the mid-1930s where Bub reopened his shop at 198 Broad Street. In the early 1950s, he relocated to 914 Queen Street, behind Alberta's beauty salon.



Isaac H. Smith

I. H. Smith

Isaac Hughes Smith was one of New Bern's most prominent Black businessmen around the turn of the 20th century. He operated a realty and rental business as well as a money lending and insurance agency. Smith's office was located at 130 Middle Street until 1914 when he relocated to 84 1/2 Queen Street near the Five Points intersection. His son, Isaac H. Smith, Jr., was also a successful businessman. In 1926, he worked to establish the Negro Business League in New Bern. The group met here, at Five Points, in Smith's office located at 94 Queen Street.

Images: Library of Congress, National Archives, State Archives of North Carolina, North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources



After 1941, Craven Terrace residents frequented the stores at Five Points, helping businesses thrive following World War II.



Frank Pollock served on the USCGC Pamlico. The ship was docked in New Bern.

Pollock's Grocery

Not long after the 1953 completion of the second phase of Craven Terrace, Pollock's Grocery Store opened on Cedar Street. The owner, Frank Pollock, was born in New Bern around 1907. His father died when Frank was just an infant, and his widowed mother, Julia, a laundress at the time, sought refuge in a local boarding house. In the 1920s, Frank joined the Coast Guard and was stationed in New Bern on the USCGC *Pamlico*. After he left the service in the early 1930s, he and his wife, Altha, opened The Sugar Bowl, a confectionary shop on Main Street.

By 1941, the couple moved the business to a larger building at 256 Main Street and expanded to include a full grocery. Following World War II, Pollock relocated his business once more, to 1014 Broad Street in the heart of Five Points, where he owned both the grocery store and Midway Soda Shop. Because of the expansion of Craven Terrace in 1953 and the widening of Broad Street, Pollock moved to new locations in the mid-1950s where he operated two stores simultaneously, one at 1028 Cedar Street and the other at 602 Roundtree Street.