

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY



Metropolitan Historical Commission
Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission
Sunnyside in Sevier Park
3000 Granny White Pike
Nashville, Tennessee 37204
Telephone: (615) 862-7970

To: Metropolitan Council
From: Metropolitan Historical Commission, Staff
Date: February 12, 2021
Re: Bill No. BL2021-622

An ordinance to amend the Geographical Information Systems Map for The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, by changing the name of Carney Street from 4th Avenue South to Ensley Boulevard to “Bianca Paige Way”. (Proposal Number 2021M-002SR-001).

The subject road, Carney Street, was previously known as “Cass Street.” Although the original date of construction is not known, the mapped route appears by 1857, when it was shown as “Cass Street,” a road measuring 40 feet wide and 32.8 poles long, on the exhibit plat filed with Chancery Court case *Felix R. Rains et als vs Enoch Ensley Jr et als* (Fig. 1).¹ The court case addressed the subdivision of two lots of the estate of John Rains.

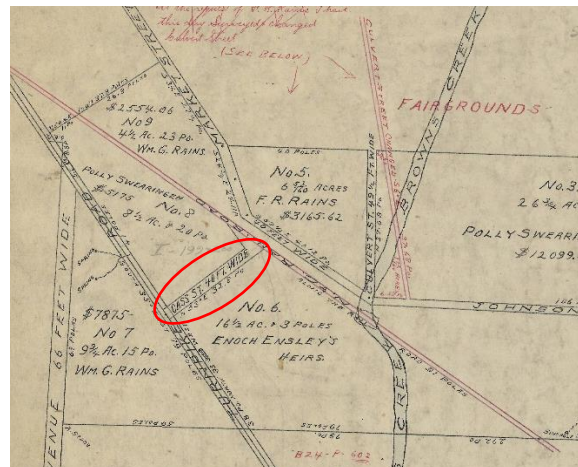


Figure 1: *Felix R. Rains et als vs Enoch Ensley Jr et als* (1857). Source: Metropolitan Government Archives.

¹ Felix R. Rains et als vs Enoch Ensley Jr et als, Chancery Court of Davidson County Minute Book E, page 357, Misc. Plat Book 1, page 116. Notations indicate updates to the plat were recorded March 25, 1857 (shown). 32.8 poles = 541.2 feet. These are the approximate dimensions of the current Carney Street.

Nine years later, Lot No. 8 of the subdivision, which had been assigned to Polly Swearinger in 1857, was subdivided through the County Court. Recorded in December 1866, the exhibit plat showed the road, but did not identify the street by name (Fig. 2).²

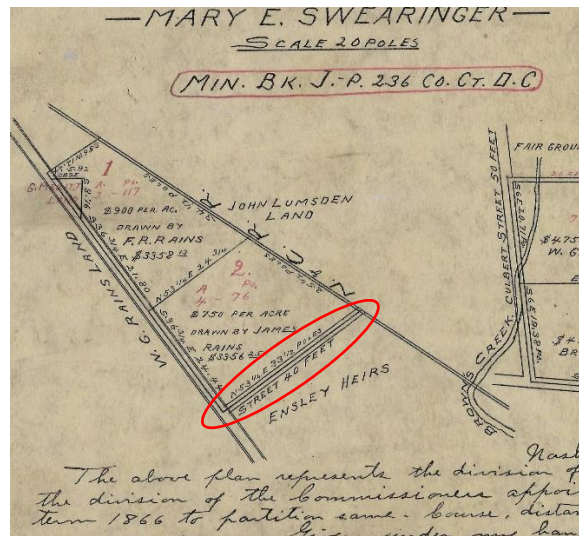


Figure 2: Plan of the Division of the Lands of Mary E. Swearinger (1866). Source: Metropolitan Government Archives.

In 1875, Lot 2 of the Swearinger Lands, drawn by and assigned to James Rains in 1866, was subdivided into two lots. Once again, the road was shown as Cass Street (Fig 3).³

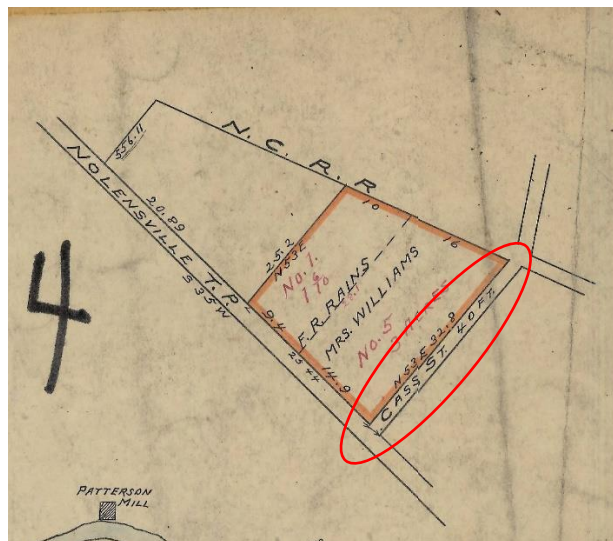


Figure 3: Plans of James Rains, Rains v Rains (1875). Source: Metropolitan Government Archives.

² Plan of Division of Lands, Mary E. Swearinger, Case of Felix R. Rains and others in regard to the Swearinger Lands, County Court of Davidson County, Minute Book J, page 236, Misc. Plat Book 1, page 155, December 13, 1866.

³ Plans of James Rains, deceased, Lands Divided, Case of Felix R. Rains et al vs W.G. Rains, County Court of Davidson County, Minute Book O, page 174, Misc. Plat Book II, page 4, February 6, 1875.

Meanwhile, lots southeast of Cass Street, assigned to Enoch Ensley and heirs in 1857, were subsequently divided through Chancery Court case *J.C. Provine vs E. Ensley and others* with plats recorded on August 27, 1868 and June 3, 1874 (Fig. 4).⁴ Again, the street name was not noted.



Figure 4: *J.C. Provine vs E. Ensley and others* (1868, 1874). Source: Metropolitan Government Archives.

Carney Street first appears in the 1896 Nashville city directory as “ ‘Carney,’ ” running from Nolensville Pike east to N.C.& St. L. railway. In the directory, the name of the street is in quotation marks, unlike other streets, which suggests that it was not an official street, was an alley, or perhaps the name was relatively new.⁵ Regardless of its status, Carney appears on the street map included with the 1896 city directory (Fig. 5). At the time, it was located outside of the corporation limits. The following year, the name Carney was not printed in quotations and the street was noted as being in District 9 (of Davidson County). In 1907, the City of Nashville annexed the area surrounding Carney Street into Nashville’s corporation limits.

⁴ *J.C. Provine vs E. Ensley and Others*, Chancery County Plat Book 1, page 37, August 27, 1868 and June 3, 1874. Ensley Boulevard will be constructed across this property in the early 1900s.

⁵ City Directory, 1896, page 11. Byrum, a street near Rains Avenue and Wingrove Street, also appeared in quotations.



Figure 5: Map of Nashville, 1896. Source: Metropolitan Historical Commission.

Both Carney Street and Cass Avenue/Street appear on maps from 1907 and 1908 (Fig. 6).⁶ The “new” Cass was probably constructed around this time. A road named “Cass” located in South Nashville does not appear in the city directory until 1908, and the 1909 city directory reflects an almost immediate name change. Cass Street, from 4th Avenue South to N&C Railroad, was renamed “Gray Street” in 1908, for continuity with a portion of Gray Street located east of the railroad (now 3rd Avenue South, per Ordinance No. BL2019-112).⁷ This name change would also alleviate any confusion with the Cass Street located in North Nashville, which had appeared in city directories as early as 1877. Metro Government closed the renamed portion of Gray Street, located northwest of Carney Street, in 1981.⁸

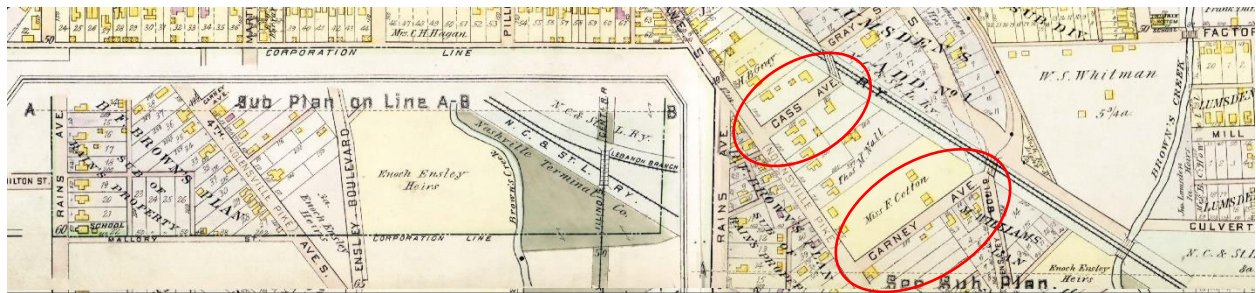


Figure 6: Atlas of the City of Nashville, G.M. Hopkins, 1908. Source: Metropolitan Historical Commission.

Despite the use of the name Carney on maps and in city directories, plats drawn after 1896 continued to show the name “Cass” when first recorded, including the “Map of Melville Williams Subdivision” recorded in 1904 and “Survey of Property, Ensley Blvd and Nolensville Pike” recorded in 1926. The Melville Williams plat shows the street labeled as “Carney or Cass

⁶ G.M. Hopkins, Atlas of the city of Nashville, Tennessee: from official records, private plans and actual surveys. Philadelphia: Hopkins, 1908. “Atlas of the City of Nashville 1908.” Also available through <https://digital.library.nashville.org/digital/collection/nr/id/1007/rec/48> (accessed 12 February 2021).

⁷ Name change approved by Ordinance 063, May 14, 1908, Minute Book 12, page 244.

⁸ Closed per Ordinance 081-497, April 7, 1981, Council Minute Book M47, page 225.

Street” with “Cass” scratched out (Fig. 7).⁹ Likewise on the “Survey of Property,” pencil notations state “now Carney Street” alongside the Cass Ave label (Fig. 8).¹⁰

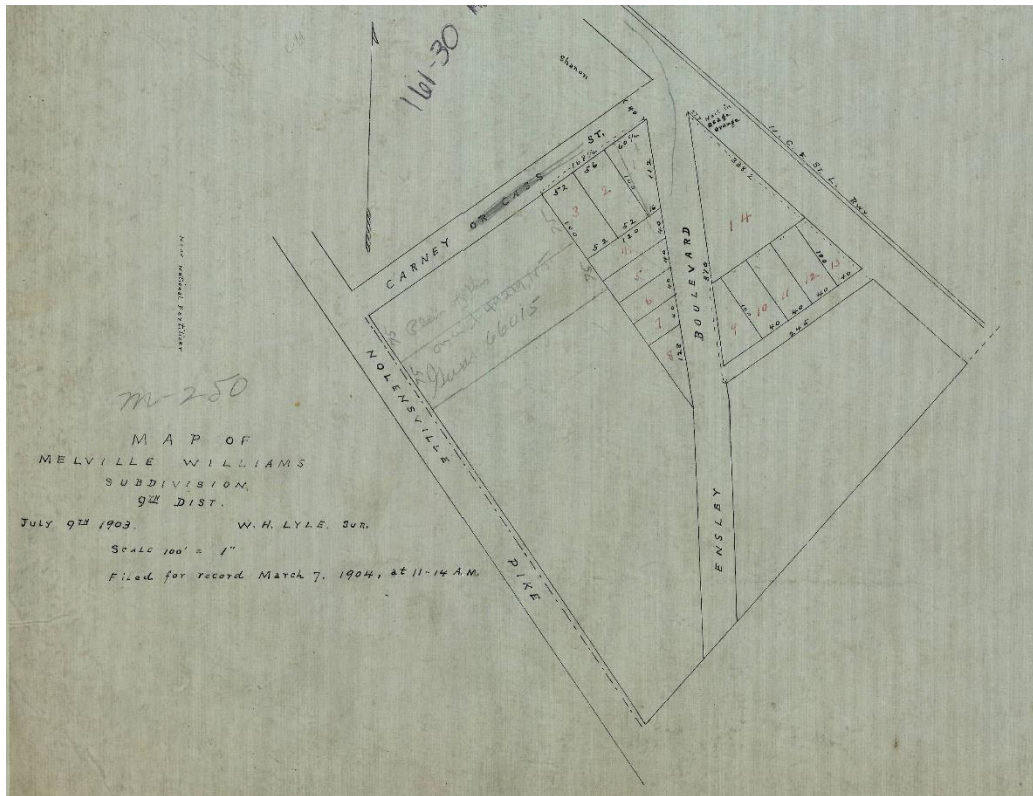


Figure 7: Map of Melville Williams Subdivision (1904). Source: Metropolitan Government Archives.

⁹ Map of Melville Williams Subdivision, Plat Book 161, page 30, recorded March 7, 1904.

¹⁰ Survey of Property, Ensley Blvd and Nolensville Pike, Misc. Plat Book 2, page 122, recorded December 17, 1926. Records from Metro Public Works from 1929 and 1930 show separate files for Carney Street and Cass Street (Gray Street), confirming that these streets are not the one and the same.

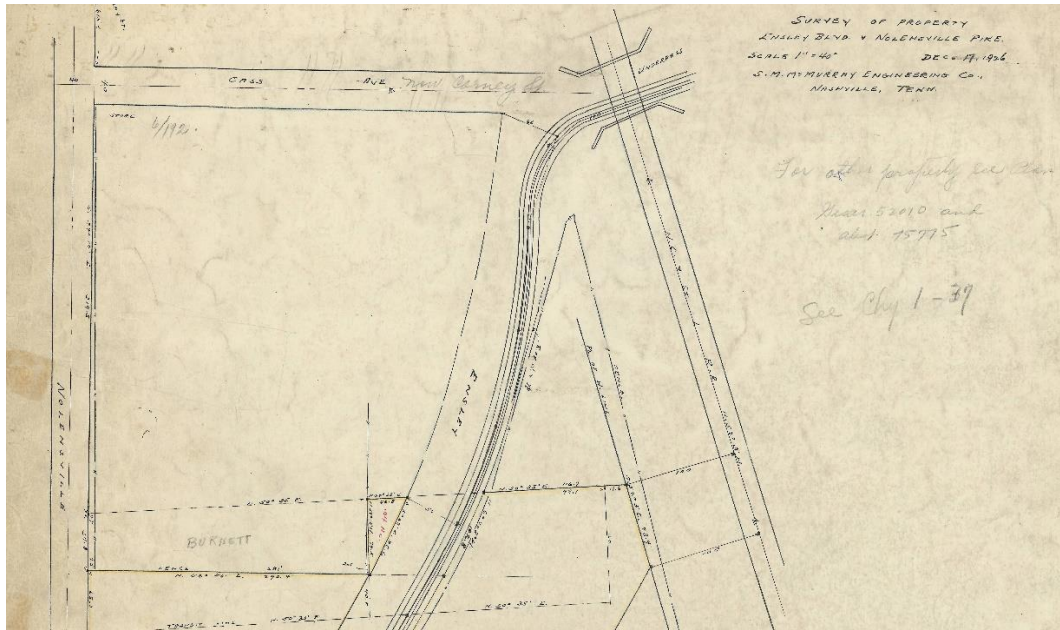


Figure 8: Survey of Property, Ensley Blvd and Nolensville Pike (1926). Source: Metropolitan Government Archives.

Carney Street was likely named for Michael and Mary (Loftus or Loftis) Carney who first purchased land here from H.M. “Melville” Williams in 1867.¹¹ The property was part of that which was assigned to H.M. Williams in the *Provine v Ensley* plats shown in Figure 4. The road, which served as a boundary for this property, was called “Market Street extended” in the associated deeds. According to Nashville city directories, Michael Carney was a grocer. Michael and Mary were born in Ireland.¹² He was born around 1814, and she was born around 1830. The date of their arrival(s) in Nashville is not known, but he may have appeared in the Nashville city directory by 1866 as “Mike” who was employed at a provision store on the east side of South Cherry Street. In 1867, the city directory lists Michael Carney, employed as a grocer on South Cherry. According to the census, Michael could not read or write, and deeds show he used his mark for a signature. By 1870, he reported real estate holdings of \$500. Like many of Nashville’s Irish immigrants, he was a member of an Irish voluntary association. When he died in 1891, the Hibernian Benevolent Society announced a called meeting to arrange attending the funeral of Carney, “a deceased brother member.”¹³

Michael and Mary had four children: Sarah Teresa Carney Lehi, Maggie Carney, John W. Carney, and Mary Elizabeth “Mamie” Carney Burke. After Michael’s death, Mary was listed in the 1898 Nashville city directory as the widow of Michael, residing on South Cherry at the corner with Carney’s Alley. At the time of her death on March 13, 1907, Mrs. Carney lived at

¹¹ H.M. Williams to Michael Carney, Deed Book 38, page 314, recorded August 14, 1867. Carney purchased additional land from Williams in 1872. City directory entries for Michael Carney show his residence at Nolensville Pike or South Cherry Street, depending on the year of publication. South Cherry Street is the former name of Fourth Avenue South, which becomes Nolensville Pike just south of this location.

¹² 1870 and 1880 United States Census.

¹³ “Locals: Called Meeting of Hibernian Society,” *Nashville Banner*, Saturday, Sept 5, 1891, 5.

1342 Fourth Avenue South (formerly Cherry Street).¹⁴ Today, this address appears to be a part of the larger parcel located at 1414 Fourth Avenue South, at the corner with Carney Street.

Michael Carney died intestate, but Mary's will provides insight into what family property she retained after his death. In her will, Mary left the "Home Place" to her daughter Mamie, wife of M.J. Burke, the home place "being a northerly part of the lot purchased by my husband Michael Carney from H.M. Williams in August 1867 and conveyed to me by my said husband by deed dated August 29, 1867."¹⁵ Mary left the remaining portion of this property to her daughter Sarah. To her daughter Maggie, she left property she acquired from Mrs. Ann Byrd in 1892.¹⁶ For her son John, she made arrangements to take the 3/4 interest that the three daughters collectively held in property on the west side of Nolensville, each having received 1/4 interest upon their father's death, and transferred it to her son, so he would have the full interest in the property.¹⁷

In summary, the route for Carney Street was established by 1857 and the name Carney was in use by 1896.

¹⁴ Mary Carney obituary, *Nashville Banner*, Thursday, March 14, 1907, 8. Mrs. Carney's funeral mass was held at St. Patrick's Church. She is buried at Calvary Cemetery (aka Mt. Calvary). It is presumed that Michael is buried there as well.

¹⁵ Will of Mary Carney probated in Davidson County on March 25, 1907, Minute Book 10, page 43. Wills, Vol. 36, 1902-1908. Ancestry.com. Tennessee, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1779-2008 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015. Original data: Tennessee County, District and Probate Courts. Michael Carney to Mary Carney, Deed Book 38, page 359, recorded August 30, 1867.

¹⁶ Ann Byrd to Mary Carney, Deed Book 162, page 625, recorded April 22, 1892.

¹⁷ BF Brown to M Carney, Deed Book 132, page 396, recorded October 30, 1889. Lots 38 and 37 of BF Brown's Plan of the Rains Spring property.