

The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit, Michigan

Survey Report Part 1: Historic Context

Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

Prepared for

**Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Lansing, Michigan
April 2021**

Prepared by

**Quinn Evans
Detroit and Ann Arbor
Ruth E. Mills, Project Manager, Historian
Saundra Little, FAIA, Architect and Historian**

**Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Amy L. Arnold, Preservation Planner**



Section One

Acknowledgements/Funding Credit

This material was produced with assistance from the Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior.

This program receives Federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or age in its federally assisted programs. Michigan law prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, marital status, or disability. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to:

Chief, Office of Equal Opportunity Programs
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW, MS-2740
Washington, DC 20240

Executive Summary

This survey was commissioned by the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) after receiving an African American Civil Rights grant from the National Park Service in 2017. The purpose was to identify and document 20th Century African American Civil Rights sites in the city of Detroit 1900-1976. The deliverables for this project included a historic context statement of the Civil Rights Movement in the city of Detroit during the 20th Century, the survey and preparation of 48 reconnaissance-level inventory forms (approximately 13 acres), the preparation of intensive-level inventory forms for 30 sites identified during the reconnaissance survey; completion of a National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF); preparation of five individual National Register of Historic Places nomination forms (Birwood Wall, New Bethel Baptist Church, Rosa and Raymond Parks Flat, Shrine of the Black Madonna, and WGPR TV Station); and the development of a bike tour. The information gathered through this project can be found on the Michigan SHPO's Civil Rights webpage at: <https://www.miplace.org/historic-preservation/programs-and-services/detroit-civil-rights-project/>

This survey has determined that in addition to those resources registered during this project, a number of buildings and sites associated with the 20th Century history of civil rights in the city of Detroit appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and/or Criterion B, at the local, state, or national level.

Table of Contents

PART I

Section One

Project Objectives and Methodology	3
Data Location	5
Evaluation Results Summary	5
Planning Needs and Recommendations	8
Preservation Issues and Threats	10

Section Two

Detroit's Black Neighborhoods Descriptive Overview	13
Detroit's Black Neighborhoods Map	14
The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20 th Century Detroit Historic Context	39
Narrative Themes	90
Equal Opportunity in Employment	91
Black-Owned Businesses	96
The Demand for Fair Housing	107
Detroit and Equal Education	133
Equity in Health Care	145
Politics, the Law, and African American Representation	150
Criminal Injustice	163
Finding a Voice: Detroit's Black Population and the Media	169
The Role of Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement	179
Detroit's Black Social Clubs and Civil Rights Organizations	187
Entertainment and Recreation and Detroit's Black Population	193
Selected References	200

Section Three

Index List of Surveyed Properties	203
-----------------------------------	-----

PART II

Part II A: Intensive Level Inventory Forms	
Part II B: Reconnaissance Level Inventory Forms	
Part II C: Survey Maps	

Credits and Credentials

This report was prepared by:

Ruth E. Mills, Historian, Quinn Evans Architects
Saundra Little, AIA, Architect, Quinn Evans Architects
Amy Arnold, Preservation Planner, Michigan State Historic Preservation Office

The following individuals assisted with the implementation and administration of the grant project and the research and preparation of this report:

Janese Chapman, Deputy Director, Legislative Policy Division, Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board, City of Detroit
Jennifer Reinhardt, Historic Preservation Planner, Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board, City of Detroit
Katie Kolokithas, Survey Coordinator, Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Joelle Letts, Grants Administrator, Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Todd Walsh, National Register Coordinator, Michigan State Historic Preservation Office

Detroit Civil Rights Advisory Board
Marsha Battle Philpot, Writer & Historian
Carolyn Carter, Chief Development Officer, Wayne State Community College District
Kenneth Coleman, Senior Reporter, *Michigan Advance*
DeWitt Dykes Jr., Associate Professor, History, Oakland University
Karen Hudson Samuels, Executive Director, WGPR-TV Historical Society
Jamon Jordan, Educator & Historian, Black Scroll Network History & Tours

Note: Photographs included in the report with no assigned credit are the property of the SHPO.

Project Objectives and Methodology

This survey was commissioned by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), then in Michigan State Housing Development Authority, to identify and document sites related to the history of 20th Century African American civil rights in the city of Detroit between 1900 and 1976. In 2017 SHPO was awarded an African American Civil Rights grant from the National Park Service to fund this study, to be based on the NPS publication, *Civil Rights in America: A Framework for Identifying Significant Sites*. The purpose of this project is to establish a context within which to evaluate the various historic themes and events, and identify surviving sites associated with them. The project will result in a survey report and reconnaissance level survey of sites, intensive level survey of 30 selected sites, the preparation of a Multiple Property Documentation Form and five National Register of Historic Places nominations, and a bike tour of the 30 sites selected for intensive-level survey.

Though Detroit has a particularly rich and significant history of civil rights activism and achievements, and often influenced the struggle for Black equality in Michigan and the United States, it has been under-documented. No comprehensive survey of civil rights sites has been previously undertaken in the city of Detroit. A number of sites with civil rights associations have been documented for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the Michigan Register of Historic Places, and/or as local historic districts. Since existing databases do not collect information on civil rights sites specifically, this list is the best compilation available at this time.

Alpha House	State Marker
Arden Park-Boston Edison*	National Register
Bakers Keyboard Lounge	Local Historic District
Barlum (Cadillac) Tower*	National Register
Belle Isle Bridge*	National Register
Bethel AME Church	State Marker
Breitmeyer-Tobin Building	National Register
Brewster-Wheeler Center	State Marker, Local Historic District

Brewster Homes	State Marker
Central Woodward Christian Church	State Marker, National Register
Cole, James H. Funeral Home	Local Historic District
Conant Gardens	State Marker
Detroit Association of Women's Clubs	State Marker
Detroit Memorial Park Cemetery	State Marker
Detroit Plaindealer	State Marker
Detroit Urban League (Albert Kahn House)*	State Marker
Dunbar Hospital	State Marker, National Register
Ebenezer AME Church	Local Historic District
East Kirby Avenue District	Local Historic District
Ferguson, William	State Marker
Greater Shiloh Baptist Church	Local Historic District
Hartford Memorial Baptist Church	State Marker
King Solomon Baptist Church	National Register, Local Historic District
Lewis College of Business	State Marker
Levin, Thomas Courthouse	National Register
Masjid Wali Muhammed/Temple No. 1	Local Historic District
McCoy, Elijah Home site	State Marker
McGhee, Orsel McGhee House	State Marker
Miller, Sidney D. School	State Marker, National Register
Motown Hitsville USA	State Marker
Nacirema Club	National Register
North Woodward AME Church	State Marker
Omega Psi Phi	State Marker
Orchestra Hall (Paradise Theater)	National Register
Paradise Valley	State Marker
Prince Hall Grand Lodge	Local Historic District
Richards, Fannie Home site	State Marker
Russell Woods-Sullivan District	Local Historic District
Scott Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church (Tushiyah United Hebrew School)	National Register
Second Baptist Church	State Marker, National Register
Sidney D. Miller School	Local Historic District
St. Antoine YMCA Site	State Marker
St. Johns Presbyterian Church	State Marker
St. Joseph Episcopal Church*	National Register
Straker, David	State Marker
Sugar Hill Historic District	National Register
Sweet, Ossian House	State Marker, National Register, Local Historic District
United Sound Systems	State Marker, Local Historic District
Virginia Park Historic District	National Register
West Grand Boulevard African American Arts & Business District	Local Historic District
WGPR TV	State Marker

**Nomination contains little information on African American heritage*

The project began with a kickoff meeting on November 30, 2017. Approximately fifty stakeholders from local government, cultural and historical institutions, and organizations attended the meeting, which introduced the project and solicited input on important themes, people, events, and places. A form was also created to capture this information. This information, as well as preliminary research, resulted in a working list of historic sites that was used for the initial reconnaissance-level survey. Additional properties were added throughout the project as they were identified through research, survey, and information from the public. Although some properties were identified in Hamtramck, Highland Park, and the suburbs of Detroit, the project was limited to those within the city limits of Detroit.

A public information meeting, held on March 21, 2018, introduced the community to the project background, goals, products, and schedules, and provided another opportunity to gather information on important civil rights sites. From these meetings, a smaller stakeholder group was identified, and an advisory board formed. The advisory board met on October 24, 2018 to review the working list of sites and to choose thirty sites for intensive-level survey and four sites for National Register of Historic Places nominations. Two properties initially identified for a combined nomination were subsequently determined to require separate nominations. The consultant therefore prepared five nominations for this project, while SHPO issued requests for proposals to complete two additional nominations under separate contracts.

Primary and secondary research was employed to develop the historic context entitled *The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit, Michigan*. The research was used to determine settlement patterns and the process and consequences of segregation in Detroit and to identify important events, activities, themes, and people related to civil rights in Detroit, and provide significance statements for the project's National Register of Historic Places nominations and the reconnaissance and intensive-level survey forms.

Data Location

Major repositories containing relevant collections of materials related to African American Civil Rights in the 20th Century include:

Burton Historic Collection, Detroit Public Library
Walter Reuther Library, Wayne State University
The Charles Wright Museum of African American History
The Detroit Historical Museum
The Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board
Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Copies of the full set of survey materials, photographs, and copies of the report have been deposited with the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office and the City of Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board.

Evaluation Results Summary

Through research and input from stakeholders, approximately 99 districts, sites, and buildings were identified as potential survey locations. Of those, 15 were already individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places or listed as contributing resources in a National Register-listed district with documentation of their civil rights context (or listing was in progress). Consequently, those resources that were not surveyed included:

Arden Park/Boston Edison Historic Districts
Breitmeyer-Tobin Building
Cadillac (Barlum) Tower
Dubois School (Sidney Miller High School)
Dunbar Hospital
Great Lakes Manor
King Solomon Baptist Church
Nacirema Club
Omega Psi Phi
Ossian Sweet House
Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Second Baptist Church
Sugar Hill Historic District
Theodore Levin US Courthouse
Virginia Park Neighborhood Historic District

Note: A number of resources already individually listed in the National Register or listed as contributing resources within National Register districts lack historic context regarding their civil rights history. A number of these were selected for reconnaissance and intensive-level survey in order to document that context. These are indicated with an *asterisk in the below lists.

Reconnaissance surveys were completed for the remaining 84 resources. Of those surveyed, 10 were recommended as ineligible, either due to establishment at that location after the period of significance or lack of integrity. They are:

Cobo Hall (TCF Center)
Ed Davis Auto Dealership
Hartford Memorial Baptist Church (James Couzens Highway)
Home Federal Savings Bank (Woodward Avenue headquarters)
James H. Cole Home for Funerals
Lewis College of Business (Meyers Road)
Pure in Heart Missionary Baptist Church
Shaw College
Solomon's Temple Church
*Your Heritage House

Of the remaining resources surveyed only at the reconnaissance level, 39 were recommended as potentially eligible. They are:

*Belcrest Hotel
Black Star Printing/Publishing
Brewster-Wheeler Recreation Center
Clairpointe-Tennessee-Conner Neighborhood
Conant Gardens
Duffield Elementary School
Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church
Eight Mile-Wyoming Neighborhood
Friendship Baptist Church
*Fritz Funeral Home
*General Douglas MacArthur (Belle Isle) Bridge

Greater New Mt. Moriah Baptist Church
 Higginbotham School
 Home Federal Savings (West Seven Mile Road branch)
 House, William Stuart, House
 Keith, Damon, House
 Levi Barbour Intermediate School
 *Lewis College of Business (John R. Street)
 **Michigan Chronicle* Building
 Milford Court Apartments
 Motown Recording Studios
 Jobete Publishing Company
 Motown Recording Studio (Hitsville)
 Motown Administration Building
 Motown Finance Building
 Artist Development Building
 Motown Sales and Marketing Building
 International Talent Management Incorporated
 Nathan Johnson Associates Office
 Packard Motor Company
 Prince Hall Grand Lodge
 Plymouth United Church of Christ
 Russell Woods-Sullivan Neighborhood
 *St. John's Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
 St. John's Presbyterian Church
 St. Peter Claver
 United Auto Workers Solidarity House
 United Sound Systems Recording Studios
 Welch-Oakwood Hills Neighborhood
 West Side Neighborhood

The eligibility of 5 resources surveyed at the reconnaissance level could not be determined during the course of the survey project. These require more research and evaluation to determine their status. They are:

Jeffries Towers
 McNichols-MacKay Neighborhood
 Muhammad's Mosque No. 1
 Schaefer-South Fort Neighborhood (Home Federal Savings-Financed Housing)
 Waterman and Sons Printing

This survey project included survey of 30 resources at the intensive level. These resources were selected in consultation with project stakeholders, in particular the civil rights advisory board that was convened as part of the project. Of those resources, 28 were recommended as potentially eligible. They are:

*Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity
 Apex Bar
 Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
 Birwood Wall
 Boggs, James and Grace Lee, House
 *Detroit Association of (Colored) Women's Clubs
 *Detroit Urban League (Albert Kahn House)

Dudley Randall's Broadside Press
Engine Co. No. 34
Frances Harper Inn/Christian Industrial Club
Greater Shiloh Baptist Church
Hartford Avenue Baptist Church
International Afro American Museum
Liuzzo, Viola, House
McGhee, Orsel and Minnie, House
Nation of Islam Temple No. 1
New Bethel Baptist Church
Northern High School
Our Lady of Victory Church
*Paradise Theater (Orchestra Hall)
Parks, Rosa and Raymond, Flat
*Sacred Heart Major Seminary Black Jesus Grotto
Shabazz, Betty, House
Shrine of the Black Madonna
Sojourner Truth Homes
St. Cecilia Church and Gymnasium
Vaughn's Bookstore
WGPR TV
Wilson, Easby, House

Friends School was selected for intensive-level survey in order to document it prior to its impending demolition, which occurred in 2019.

Finally, the survey project also included the preparation of National Register of Historic Places nominations for five resources recommended as eligible by intensive-level survey. These five sites were also selected in consultation with the civil rights advisory board. They are:

Birwood Wall
New Bethel Baptist Church
Parks, Rosa and Raymond, Flat
Shrine of the Black Madonna
WGPR TV

A National Park Service Underrepresented Communities grant was awarded to the SHPO in 2020 to complete National Register of Historic Places nominations for:

Orsel and Minnie McGhee House
Sojourner Truth Homes Public Housing Complex

See the Descriptive Overview in Section 2, below, and the inventory forms in Part II of the survey for further details on the status and potential eligibility of each resource.

Planning Needs and Recommendations

Resources surveyed at the reconnaissance or intensive level should be further studied, as appropriate: at the intensive level, for designation as local historic districts, and/or for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. While all are worthy of further study, resources that are particularly vulnerable or that highlight relatively unknown stories of Black civil rights in the city include:

Neighborhood Districts

Clairpointe-Tennessee-Conner Neighborhood
Conant Gardens Neighborhood
Eight Mile-Wyoming Neighborhood
West Side Neighborhood

Individual Resources or Small Districts

Brewster-Wheeler Recreation Center
Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
Boggs, James and Grace Lee, House
Frances Harper Inn/Christian Industrial Club
Hartford Avenue Baptist Church
Higginbotham School
Motown Recording Studios
Nathan Johnson Associates Office
Prince Hall Grand Lodge
United Sound Systems Recording Studios
Vaughn's Bookstore

As previously noted, many of the existing National Register of Historic Places listings in the City of Detroit, particularly for historic districts, contain little to no information on the Black civil rights history of those places. In part, this is because the nominations focus on architectural significance and original property owners, who were in most cases White. For example, the East Ferry Street National Register district contains many high style mansions built by Detroit's wealthy White entrepreneurs in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. However, the nomination provides little to no information about the prominent Black professionals who purchased existing homes and converted them to institutional or business use, such as the Detroit Association of (Colored) Women's Clubs and the Lewis College of Business. Individual nominations also suffer from lack of civil rights context. For example, the Albert Kahn House at 208 Mack Avenue was designed by Kahn as his personal residence from 1906 until his death in 1942. Although it has been the headquarters of the Detroit Urban League for over 75 years, the 1972 nomination has only one sentence mentioning the League as the current owner. Similarly, older local historic district nominations often provide little context about civil rights history, although recent efforts by the Historic Designation Advisory Board have resulted in local district designations for significant civil rights sites such as the Nacirema Club, Ebenezer AME Church, and many more.

This report recommends that existing National Register of Historic Places and local historic district nominations within the city of Detroit be reviewed for missing or inadequate civil rights context and updated to document this important history. This report also recommends that new National Register or local historic district nominations be required to consider if there are Black and/or civil rights contexts that should be included.

One component of the 20th Century African American Civil Rights project was the placement of three State of Michigan Historical Markers. In consultation with the Civil Rights Advisory Board, the three places/events identified for markers are: 1) Birwood Wall; 2) Sojourner Truth Homes; and 3) 1963 Walk to Freedom. Many sites associated with the history of Black civil rights in the City of Detroit were subsequently demolished, either as part of urban renewal in the 1950s and 1960s, or due to deterioration of the resources. Because demolished resources are generally not eligible for National Register or local historic district designation, these important sites should be considered for alternative commemoration and education, such as through additional historical markers or other educational methods. Some of these sites might include the Black Bottom and Paradise Valley neighborhoods (especially Hastings Street), the

West Side neighborhood business district, jazz venues in Sugar Hill and Paradise Valley/North End, the Gotham Hotel, the Birdhurst School, and the *Detroit Tribune* office.

This project also included the development of a bike tour that features sites related to the theme of “Resistance” in the near northwest area, particularly the Northwest Goldberg and Twelfth Street neighborhoods. Additional tours should be considered that highlight other themes, resources, and areas, such as Black Bottom/Paradise Valley or Eight Mile-Wyoming.

This project was funded through an African American Civil Rights grant from the National Park Service. The City of Detroit and the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office, among others, have pursued additional grants to further document historic resources, such as the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood, or to preserve and restore significant resources, such as King Solomon Baptist Church and the Ossian Sweet House. Funding sources such as these should be pursued for documentation and restoration activities, especially for resources that are deteriorating or are threatened with demolition.

The City of Detroit is currently undertaking a multi-year project to develop planning frameworks for neighborhoods around the city. The plans are financed through the city’s Strategic Neighborhood Fund, a public-private partnership between the city, corporate donors, and charitable foundations. The project began in 2016 with three neighborhoods and has since expanded to fourteen, with more possible in the future. Each framework plan is different in its scope, responding to the particular history and needs of the neighborhoods. While the framework plans do not have a specific component related to the recognition and preservation of Black civil rights sites, some have included components for identifying and revitalizing historic resources within historically Black neighborhoods, such as the Clairpointe-Tennessee-Conner neighborhood in Jefferson-Chalmers, and the Russell Woods-Sullivan neighborhood. Because these framework documents often include plans to redevelop commercial and residential areas that include resources identified as potentially eligible for listing, this report recommends that the City of Detroit:

- 1) Include this survey report and relevant survey forms in the government-furnished documents for all future projects.
- 2) Include identification of other sites important to the civil rights history of the city as part of each framework plan process, particularly by working with neighborhood stakeholder groups to identify sites important to the community that may not have been documented in this report.
- 3) Strongly encourage preparers of framework plans to recommend the preservation and/or rehabilitation of sites identified in 1) and 2), and work with community stakeholders to determine the most appropriate use for these properties.

In February 2020, the City of Detroit announced a major plan to support local arts, culture, and music initiatives through the creation of a new a municipal office of Arts, Culture, and Entrepreneurship (ACE) to assist in the management and development of a creative culture within the city. The initiative includes the establishment of an Arts Fund, undertaking a census of Detroit artists, the development of neighborhood Art Houses, and the creation of a Detroit Black Theater festival. The Detroit Arts plan would use "arts and culture as catalysts for neighborhood growth" and focus on developing “convening space” for artists in historic buildings around Detroit in order to promote historic preservation initiatives. Among the first four historic buildings identified by the city for redevelopment into an Art House/Community Center is Vaughn’s Bookstore, a center of Black Nationalism and the Black Arts movement in the early 1960s. The rehabilitation of Vaughn's Bookstore would encourage further investment and development in the Twelfth Street neighborhood.

The history of African American civil rights in Detroit is significant and efforts to find financial and other incentives that will encourage their preservation and rehabilitation should be a priority in the city.

Preservation Issues and Threats

As a class, sites associated with the civil rights history of Detroit are highly threatened. Already, large numbers of sites where significant events occurred, significant organizations were headquartered, or significant persons lived or worked, have been lost, either through urban renewal in the 1950s and 1960s, the destruction associated with the 1967 Detroit Rebellion, or through neglect and demolition resulting from the city's need to address a decreasing population. Others are modest in appearance and over time their role in civil rights history has been forgotten or they remain unrecognized as the site of a significant event or association. Often resources have been altered over the years, and current historic resource assessment criteria have led to conclusions that do not fully reflect their importance in Detroit's civil rights and social history.

Since the 1990s the National Park Service has acknowledged under-representation of racial and ethnic minorities in its programs. Though steps are being taken to correct this omission, definitive criteria and guidelines for assessing minority resources have yet to be developed. In 2019, the Repairing National Register Nomination Working Group at the National Conference of Public History began to address the issue of integrity as it relates to the historic resources of underrepresented communities. Their discussions found,

It is also important to bear in mind that the terms “integrity” and “condition” do not mean the same thing. Whether a site is in “good” condition or not is of little consequence for a nomination. It does not matter if a resource is “attractive” or meets any standard of taste; its ability to convey its significance—to reveal its connection to history—determines primary importance. Even the most modest or neglected building may still convey its significance in relation to historical events or themes, and damaged properties in poor condition may retain enough integrity to tell their stories.

Evaluating physical integrity is a major part of any nomination. Too often, however, when considering a place with ties to an underrepresented community, compromised elements of design, materials, and workmanship are cited as evidence that it lacks sufficient integrity for National Register designation. Yet design, materials, and workmanship may not be the most important aspects of integrity for resources associated with historically marginalized communities. Stories related to location, setting, feeling, and association are usually more relevant.¹

As the preservation community works to develop more concrete evaluation standards, some suggestions to consider when identifying and documenting African American or civil rights sites include:

- Researching African American history and related sites often necessitates going beyond the use of standard reference materials and thus may require more research time. Primary and secondary sources directly related to the Black experience should be consulted. Examples includes African American newspapers like the *Michigan Chronicle*, *Detroit Tribune*, *Chicago Defender*, and *Pittsburgh Chronicle*; African American publications such as the NAACP's *The Crisis*; magazines like *Jet*, *Ebony*, and *Black World/Negro Digest*; as well as oral histories; local history collections; and repositories with archival records for Black organizations such as the Detroit NAACP, Detroit Urban League, Black churches, and Black neighborhood associations.
- Pre-1960 sites associated with African American history were most often repurposed buildings

¹ Kautz, Sarah, Rachel Leibowitz, and Joanna Doherty. “Repairing National Register nominations: underrepresented communities and integrity. *PH@Work*. National Council on Public History. July 21, 2020. <https://ncph.org/history-at-work/repairing-national-register-nominations-underrepresented-communities-and-integrity/>

originally built for a different use. Some were high style, but the majority were simple, vernacular buildings with little architectural design or workmanship. When assessing resources associated with African Americans the practice of cultural layering—the remodeling of an existing building to meet a new need—should be a consideration. For example, a high style building may have been subdivided or altered with little design aesthetic and the use of inexpensive finishes. Its integrity should not be dismissed out of hand. Such a resource should be reviewed within the framework of the larger context of the African American experience. Because African Americans were treated as second class citizens, even in the northern United States, many lived in neighborhoods subject to disinvestment. African Americans were denied participation in bank lending practices and insurance programs, and it was almost impossible for Blacks to qualify for new construction loans in the first half of the 20th Century. Housing segregation resulted in severe overcrowding in Northern cities where Black populations were forced to make do with the few resources available to them. Often, property ownership in Black neighborhoods was in the hands of White landlords, who spent little on upkeep. The impact of on-going, unfair practices such as these should be considered when assessing issues of integrity.

- Resources related to African American history are likely to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for their social history and associations under Criterion A: Event or Criterion B: Person, rather than under Criterion C: Architecture/Design.
- The City of Detroit has lost many of its African American civil rights-related sites due to urban renewal. It is important that the few representative resources that remain are thoughtfully examined within the context of the African American experience.

Section Two

Detroit's Black Neighborhoods

The survey was conducted in 2018-2019 and was restricted to the city limits of the City of Detroit. The city's earliest Black neighborhoods, Black Bottom and Paradise Valley, which served the city's Black community from the early 20th Century until the 1950s, were almost completely demolished as part of an aggressive urban renewal program undertaken in the 1960s and 1970s. Over time, new Black neighborhoods began to emerge. The descriptive overview below focuses on Detroit's Black neighborhoods from within the period of significance, 1900-1976. At the end of each neighborhood description, surveyed resources that are within, or near, that neighborhood are listed in table form. Survey forms were generally not prepared for sites already individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places or contributing to a National Register District, except in the case of several resources for which existing listings did not adequately document their civil rights context. However, these sites are listed in the tables.

Descriptive Overview: African American Housing Trends in Detroit

In 1820 the Black population in Detroit was recorded at just 67 residents and it remained relatively small until the end of the 19th Century. Professional and middle-class Black residents were able to integrate into established White neighborhoods throughout the city with little resistance. Working class Black families lived on Detroit's East side along with White working-class European immigrants.

The rapid growth of Detroit's automobile industry due to Henry Ford's introduction of the assembly line in 1914 brought the first large wave of Southern Blacks to Detroit. Between 1910 and 1920 Detroit's Black population increased by more than 14 percent. Most could be accommodated by the housing in the growing east side neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. As the influx of Southern Black migrants continued, resentment began to build among Detroit's urban White population. They increasingly showed an intolerance for what they views as the rural, uncultivated lifeways of Southern Blacks. Detroit's White property owners began refusing to sell or rent to Black families in an attempt to keep White neighborhoods homogeneous. White residents made no distinction between a Black person's education or socio-economic class—all Blacks were painted with the same broad brush. When Detroit's Black population rose again between 1920 and 1930, this time by almost 50 percent, housing color lines in Detroit hardened. Blacks were not welcome in the city's White neighborhoods. Housing segregation was established by hundreds of racially restrictive neighborhood covenants instituted by White homeowner's associations and enforced by mob violence. Thus Black Bottom/Paradise Valley provided almost the only housing available to African Americans and the simple, wood frame houses were subdivided to expand living space well beyond capacity. Extremely overcrowded conditions and lack of maintenance by absentee, typically White, landlords reduced the housing to what were pejoratively termed slums. Still, the neighborhood retained a vibrant sense of community. Paradise Valley, the energetic business district associated with the Black Bottom residential neighborhood, gained a national reputation as an entertainment and music destination.

On rare occasions, a Black developer found land within the city limits that had no restrictive racial covenants attached and created new neighborhoods built by and for Black people. Only two are known to have been developed prior to 1930. One was a working class neighborhood near Eight Mile-Wyoming, established in northwest Detroit in the 1920s with the aid of the Detroit Urban League who purchased and subdivided lots. The other was Conant Gardens, a small subdivision constructed in the 1920s that became home to Detroit's affluent Black families. The 1920s also saw Black residents beginning to purchase homes in a less populated area on Detroit's West side, south of Tireman Boulevard. Known as



The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit Michigan Survey Report Part I: Historic Context. Michigan State Historic Preservation Office. February 2021.

the West Side, it grew during the 1940s to become the largest middle class Black neighborhood in Detroit.

The 1930s saw the institutionalization of housing segregation in America when the newly established Federal Housing Authority (FHA) developed criteria for mortgage loans that were blatantly racist. Neighborhoods were considered “desirable” and eligible for loans if the resident populations were “homogenous,” defined as all-White. Mixed race and Black neighborhoods were labeled “undesirable” and did not qualify for loans. A notable and rare exception was the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood in Detroit whose homeowner’s association was able to strike a compromise with the federal government on a site for temporary defense housing was needed and obtain access to FHA loans on the grounds that the all-Black neighborhood met the homogenous neighborhood requirement.

World War II brought a third wave of Southern Black migrants to Detroit, this time seeking work in the city’s defense plants. By now the living conditions in Black Bottom had deteriorated to an unhealthy level and the housing shortage for African Americans was at a crisis point. Still, the city did little to find new housing options for its burgeoning Black population. Instead, it adopted urban renewal plans that would result in the demolition of Black Bottom/Paradise Valley, ensuring continued disinvestment in the neighborhood. Federal housing projects for African Americans, like the Sojourner Homes Public Housing complex at Nevada and Fenelon Streets, took on added significance for the city’s Black population when no housing for Black families was being built by the private sector.

After World War II, the improved economic conditions of American workers and the rise of a Black middle class enabled Detroit’s Black community to forcefully seek better housing opportunities. A common housing pattern was for Black families to purchase homes in Jewish neighborhoods where racially restrictive housing covenants did not exist. The Twelfth Street neighborhood, which became the center of Black Nationalism in Detroit in the 1960s, is one example. Another practice was for African Americans to purchase a home in an affluent White suburb when the owner chose to move a larger home and lot in the growing suburbs outside the city. An example of one such transitioning neighborhood was the Arden Park East/Boston-Edison area. When Black developers tried to build housing subdivisions for Blacks within Detroit’s city limits they were thwarted when permissions and permits were denied because of White protests. In the 1950s when working-class Blacks tried to purchase homes in traditionally all-White working-class neighborhoods, the residents formed neighborhood associations to stop them. These pioneering Black families were subject to months of physical threats and violence. Real estate agents contributed to racial tensions in the city by using the possibility of declining resale values as a scare tactic. It helped to accelerate massive White flight to the suburbs surrounding Detroit in the 1960s and by the 1970s Detroit’s Black population had become the majority population. In 2021, the population of the City of Detroit is approximately 76 percent Black. More information can be found under the thematic narrative entitled “The Demand for Fair Housing.”

Below is an overview of Detroit’s African American neighborhoods as they developed throughout the twentieth century, in approximate chronological order.

St. Antoine Street (1900-1920)

Located on Detroit’s East side, the neighborhood was home to both African Americans and a variety of immigrants including Italians, Germans, Poles, Greeks, and Russian Jews. Each group tended to form small enclaves that supported their cultural traditions. Examples include the “Little Berlin” area of Germans that formed along Gratiot Avenue and the Jewish district along Hastings Street. Until the outbreak of World War I, African Americans lived side by side with these immigrants, comprising one part of a larger ethnic mix. Detroit’s Black population was centered around St. Antoine and Adams Streets (later known as Paradise Valley) and to the south of Gratiot Avenue (later known as Black Bottom). World War

I caused the flow of foreign immigrants to the neighborhood to cease, while the northern migration of Southern Blacks to Detroit rapidly increased. As a result, by 1920 the St. Antoine Street area had grown to cover three square miles and had become predominately Black.² Demolished for urban renewal in the 1960s, this area is now occupied by the Chrysler Freeway (I-375) and Ford Field.

Black Bottom (1914-1951)

Gratiot Avenue, Brush Street, Jefferson Avenue (or to the Detroit River), and the Grand Trunk Railroad tracks (St. Aubin Street)

Black Bottom on the city's lower east side is considered Detroit's oldest historically Black residential neighborhood. Located south of Gratiot Avenue between Brush Street and the Grand Trunk Railroad tracks, it eventually extending all the way to the Detroit River on the south. The adjacent commercial and entertainment center was known as Paradise Valley. The two areas were linked by the major north-south commercial arteries of Hastings Street and St. Antoine Street. Paradise Valley, extended a few blocks on either side of the main corridors of Hastings and St. Antoine Streets from Gratiot to Mack, eventually expanding north toward Forest Avenue.

The Black Bottom neighborhood contained a variety of building types. The residential housing was chiefly constructed of modest one- and two-story frame, gable front houses with minimal decoration. The houses were densely packed, either built out to the sidewalk or had small front yards and front porches. Larger rear yards faced onto alleys and included outbuildings like garages and sheds. There was less division between business and residential properties than in other Detroit neighborhoods. Business owners often ran businesses out of the front of their houses or in converted residential properties, or in new buildings constructed mid-block on residential streets. Hastings and St. Antoine Streets, the main commercial thoroughfares, had more traditional commercial



Black Bottom Neighborhood, 1950. *Burton Historical Collection. Detroit Public Library.*

buildings, including low rise, one and two-story frame and brick buildings. Children in the neighborhood attended nearby schools included Duffield and Dubois Schools. Dubois School, was later renamed Sidney D. Miller School, and served as Detroit's segregated all-Black high school from 1931 to 1957. Designed by Malcolmson and Higginbotham in 1922, the three-story Collegiate Gothic style building, rendered in red brick with limestone entries is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and, after a city of \$13 million dollar renovation, now serves as a charter school.³ Duffield School constructed in a similar style in 1922 was attended by boxer Joe Louis. Churches were the center of African American social, economic, and political life during the period, and many were located in Black Bottom, including Second Baptist Church (441 Monroe Avenue, extant). Black congregations often took over previous religious buildings left behind by the earlier White Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish populations.

Following the widespread demolition of Black Bottom in the late 1950s, St. John's Presbyterian Church, the first Black Presbyterian congregation in Michigan, built a new church building at 1961 East Lafayette Street in 1966. Just to the north is the site of the Friends School, a Black Quaker school completed in

² Martin, Elizabeth Anne. *Detroit and the Great Migration 1916-1929*. Michigan Historical Collection, Bentley Historical Library. Bulletin 40. (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan January 1993): 25.

³ Al Hajai, Khalil. "Historic Detroit High School Building Redeveloped into Charter, New Home for Mosaic Youth Theater," *Detroit News*, May 1, 2013.

1971 at 1100 St. Aubin Street. It was demolished in 2019. At the eastern edge of Black Bottom is the former studio of WGPR-TV (3146 East Jefferson), the nation’s first Black-owned and operated television station.

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
Dubois School (Sidney Miller High School)	2232 Dubois Street	Eligible	National Register individual listing, 2011
Duffield Elementary School	2715 Macomb Street	Eligible	Public Schools of Detroit Multiple Property Submission
Friends School	1100 St. Aubin Street	Not eligible	Demolished (documented by survey prior to demolition)
St. John’s Presbyterian Church	1961 East Lafayette Street	Eligible	Michigan State Historical Marker
Second Baptist Church	441 Monroe Street	Eligible	National Register individual listing, 1975
WGPR-TV	3146 East Jefferson Avenue	Eligible	National Register nomination prepared for this survey

Paradise Valley (1920-1960)

Gratiot Avenue, John R. Street, Mack Avenue, and Hastings Street

Gratiot Avenue was the “dividing line” between the Black Bottom and Paradise Valley neighborhoods. In the 1920s, African Americans began moving north of Gratiot, and by 1930 there were 350 Black-owned businesses in the area known as Paradise Valley, ranging from barbershops and drugstores to restaurants and real estate agents. Professional services included physicians, lawyers, and dentists.⁴ Hastings Street from Gratiot Avenue to Mack Avenue (along the approximate alignment of present-day I-375 and I-75) was the center of the African American commercial area. One of the finest establishments was the Gotham Hotel, built in 1925 (demolished). An upscale hotel for Black travelers, it served politicians, entertainers, and sports stars until its closure in 1962. Paradise Valley in the 1920s and 1930s became the center of Detroit’s thriving Black entertainment district where music venues along Hastings Street like the Forest Club, the Bird Cage, the Flame Show Bar, and Club Zombie (all demolished) were just a few of the many venues that showcased Jazz musicians from Billie Holliday to Miles Davis to Dizzy Gillespie. Hastings Street was one of the few areas where the races mingled in Detroit, brought together by music in what were known as “Black & Tan” clubs. The Paradise Theater (now Orchestra Hall, extant) attracted the great Black performers on the Chitlin’ Circuit.

Most of the historically Black churches, businesses, and social and political organizations founded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were originally located in Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. Children in the neighborhood attended nearby schools including Lincoln (partially extant), Bishop, and Eastern High School (both demolished). From 1918 to 1928 the Dunbar Hospital for Blacks was located in an adapted house at 580 Frederick Street, which was later used as a residence by Charles Diggs, Jr. Paradise Valley was home to many of the city’s early Black churches. Bethel African Methodist Episcopal, located first at Napoleon and Hastings Streets, and then on Frederick Street at St. Antoine Street (both demolished), moved to its current location at 5050 St. Antoine Street at East Warren Avenue.

⁴ III HAA Exhibition Brief Chronology of Black Bottom.

Across the street is Plymouth United Church of Christ, 600 East Warren Avenue. Like Bethel AME, the congregation was displaced from its previous locations and this building was completed in 1974. Two of Plymouth United's pastors, Reverend Horace White and Reverend Nicholas Hood II, were civil rights activists in the city. Another historically Black congregation, Friendship Baptist, fought for a larger settlement as compensation for the demolition of their Mack Avenue church for construction of the Detroit Medical Center urban renewal project. The new church at 3900 Beaubien opened in 1964. Like Black Bottom, Black congregations often took over previous religious buildings left behind by the earlier White institutions. Detroit's first Black Roman Catholic parish, St. Peter Claver, moved into the former St. Mary's Episcopal Church at 461 Eliot Street in 1914, which became the church's community center when the congregation moved to Sacred Heart Catholic Church at 1000 Eliot Street (National Register individual listing, 1980) in 1938.

Detroit's Gamma Lambda chapter of the Black Greek fraternal organization, Alpha Phi Alpha, purchased a 1919 former residence at 293 Eliot Street in 1939 (Contributing to Brush Park National Register Historic District, listed 1975); many of Detroit's civic and civil rights leaders were members. Also nearby is the Detroit Urban League headquarters at 208 Mack Avenue (National Register individual listing, 1972). Originally built by Albert Kahn as his personal residence, the building has been the DUL's headquarters since 1944.

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity	293 Eliot Street	Eligible	Contributing to Brush Park National Register Historic District, listed 1975; Michigan State Historical Marker
Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church	5050 St. Antoine Street	Eligible	Michigan State Historical Marker
Detroit Urban League	208 Mack Avenue	Eligible	National Register individual listing as Albert Kahn house, 1972
Dunbar Hospital	580 Frederick Street	Eligible	National Register individual listing, 1979
Friendship Baptist Church	3900 Beaubien Avenue	Eligible	Not listed
Paradise Theater (Orchestra Hall)	3711 Woodward Avenue	Eligible	National Register individual listing, 1971
St. Peter Claver Parish	461 Eliot Street	Eligible	Not listed
Plymouth United Church of Christ	600 East Warren Avenue	Eligible	Not listed
Sacred Heart Catholic Church	1000 Eliot	Eligible	National Register individual listing, 1980

Unsurprisingly, urban renewal destroyed many sites associated with Detroit's early civil rights history. St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, home of the Detroit branch of the NAACP in its early years, was forced to merge with St. Joseph's Church in 1971, moving to the latter's building on Detroit's West side when the homes of its congregation were demolished. The Reverend C. L. Franklin's New Bethel Church at 4210 Hastings Street, built in 1951, was demolished only 10 years later for construction of the Chrysler

Freeway, along with the other buildings along Hastings Street. Black-owned businesses such as James H. Cole's original Home for Funerals, the office of the city's Black newspaper, the *Michigan Chronicle*, the Great Lakes Mutual Insurance Company, and the Gotham Hotel, one of the country's leading Black hotels, all fell victim to urban renewal, as did the first offices of the Detroit Urban League. It was a terrible loss for the history of Detroit's African American community.

The West Side (1920-1960)

West Grand Boulevard, Tireman Avenue, Epworth Street, and Warren Avenue

A few African American neighborhoods developed outside of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley in the 1920s. One of the earliest and largest of these was the West Side, also referred to as the Old West Side or the Black West Side. The area was far enough west of the city to still be sparsely populated in the early twentieth century; the 1910 Sanborn maps only covered the very eastern portion of the district. It is likely this lack of an established White residential population facilitated a relatively peaceful settlement by African Americans.

This was a more traditional residential neighborhood than Black Bottom or Paradise Valley, with tree-lined streets, larger front yards with sidewalks, and generous back yards and was typically occupied by middle class Black families. The single-family homes of the West Side were modest, two to two-and-a-half story frame or brick houses, with little decoration beyond simple window and corner trim and exposed rafter ends. Most were Foursquares with front gabled or hipped roofs, full-width porches, and dormers. The main commercial thoroughfare of the West Side was Milford Street, lined with businesses such as grocery stores, barber shops, shoe stores, and gas stations. Social clubs were popular in the West Side, with the most well-known being the Nacirema Club at 6118 30th Street (extant, National Register individual listing, 2011). The first Black social club established in Michigan, founded in 1922 and officially incorporated in 1932, it was a place for professional Black men to meet and relax. The West Side is also home to one of the few remaining buildings that once housed a prominent Detroit Jazz club, the Blue Bird Inn at 5021 Tireman, which was designated a local historic district in 2020. Children attended Fannie Wingert Elementary on West Grand Boulevard between Scovell Place and Moore Place (extant), while an African American Church active in civil rights, Hartford Memorial Baptist, was located nearby at 6300 Hartford Street (extant).



Tireman Avenue, the northern boundary of the West Side neighborhood, was the *de facto* color line between the African American neighborhood to the south and White neighborhoods to the north. In 1944 a Black couple, Orsel and Minnie McGhee, attempted to purchase a home at 4426 Seebaldt Street in the all-White Seebaldt's Subdivision just two blocks north of Tireman Avenue. Their case was part of a U.S. Supreme Court decision that ended the use of restrictive racial housing covenants in 1948. Just west of the neighborhood, at 6345 Livernois Avenue (extant) Engine Co. No. 34 became Detroit's first integrated fire station in 1938 when two Black firefighters were assigned there.

During World War II, the population of the West Side climbed to 72,000 and a former resident estimated that during the late 1940s there were around 300 Black-owned businesses operating in the 3.3-mile area of the neighborhood.⁵ The landlords and homeowners attempted to accommodate defense workers by

⁵ "West Side Story." *Detroit MetroTimes*. December 7, 2005.

subdividing houses for more occupants. Over time, the building stock suffered the same deterioration that occurred in Black Bottom and Paradise Valley due to overcrowding and lack of maintenance.

By 1950 the boundaries of the West Side Black community had pushed south to Buchanan Street, west to Central Avenue, and included a small triangle east of Grand River Road to Lawton Street and the neighborhood began to decline. The U.S. Supreme Court decision on restrictive housing covenants unconstitutional, made it easier for African Americans to move into less crowded, predominately White neighborhoods. In 1952 a Section 608-funded apartment building called Milford Court Apartments, the first built exclusively for Black residents, opened at 1737 West Grand Boulevard. This period also saw the demolition of homes in the West Side for the construction of two highways, I-96 and I-94, which destroyed the neighborhood's cohesion. Gradually, as the move toward desegregation took hold in the 1960s and 1970s, the concentration of Black residents in the West Side decreased and the Black-owned businesses along Milford Street began to close. Today, there are very few remaining commercial buildings left in the district.

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
Detroit Fire Department Engine Co. No. 34	6345 Livernois Street	Eligible	Not Listed
Hartford Avenue Baptist Church	6300 Hartford Avenue	Eligible	Not listed
International Afro American Museum	1549 West Grand Boulevard	Eligible	Not Listed
McGhee, Orsel and Minnie, House	4626 Seebaldt Street	Eligible	National Register listing to be pursued as part of this project
Milford Court Apartments	1737 Grand Boulevard West	Eligible	Not listed
Nacirema Club	6118 30 th Street	Eligible	National Register individual listing, 2011
West Side Neighborhood	West Grand Boulevard, Tireman Avenue, Epworth Street, and Warren Avenue	Eligible	Not listed

Conant Gardens (1920-1976)

Seven Mile Road, Conant Street, Nevada Avenue, and Ryan Road

North and east of the city is an early historically Black subdivision, Conant Gardens, established around 1928 on land that was far enough outside the city to not have a restrictive covenant. In the 1930s, because Conant Gardens was a segregated, all-Black community, federal home loan programs under the New Deal allowed African Americans wishing to build in the neighborhood to secure mortgages. Conant Gardens was regarded as Detroit's wealthiest African American neighborhood in the early to mid-twentieth century.⁶ Activist and Olympian Jesse Owens lived at 18561 Binder Street (extant) in Conant Gardens in 1944 when he was employed by the Ford Motor Company.⁷

⁶ Watson, Susan. "Conant Gardens: Built by Blacks and Love," *Detroit Free Press*, July 28, 1974:1.

⁷ Coleman, Ken. "Olympic Games Great Jesse Owens once lived in Detroit," *Michigan Chronicle*. Michiganchronicle.com

Conant Gardens in the 1920s and 1930s was more suburban than urban, surrounded by open fields. The houses are set on generous lots with wide front and back yards. The houses are a mix of styles popular from the 1920s through the 1960s such as Bungalows, Tudor Revival, Ranch, and Colonial style homes. Most are made of brick with some frame or mixed materials. Conant Street and Seven Mile Road are the main commercial streets, with Pershing High School at the northeast corner of the neighborhood. In the 1940s and 1950s, the African American population expanded to the west of Conant Gardens to the existing Grixdale neighborhood. The residents of Conant Gardens used restrictive covenants to enforce the single-family residential character of the district. They also briefly allied with White homeowners against the construction of the nearby Sojourner Truth Homes public housing project in the 1940s, which they thought would be temporary housing that would lower their neighborhood property values.⁸ Also nearby is Solomon’s Temple, a Black Pentecostal church founded in 1944, which was among the first in the city to broadcast its sermons and services via radio. Conant Gardens is highly intact with few empty lots and homes with generally good integrity.



Conant Gardens. Google Street View 2018

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
Conant Gardens	Roughly bounded by Conant Street, Seven Mile Road, Ryan Road, and Nevada Avenue	Eligible	Not listed

Eight Mile-Wyoming Neighborhood (1920-1976)

Pembroke Avenue, Santa Barbara Drive, Eight Mile Road, Mendota Street

By the 1920s, a small community of about 1000 working class Blacks settled on former farmland in the Eight Mile and Wyoming area in northwest Detroit.. Instead, the Detroit Urban League purchased the land and sold it on land-lease terms. Property owners scraped together the resources to slowly build very modest houses, sometimes in stages. The earliest houses were simple one or one-and-one-half story frame structures. While the lot sizes were not large, the amount of unused space in the area meant residents could use the adjoining empty lots to plant vegetable gardens. Although a 1938 real property survey showed this was one of the poorest areas in the city, over 90% of the homes were owner occupied.

Students in the neighborhood attended the Birdhurst School (demolished) and the William Higginbotham School (designed by N. C. Sorensen and built 1926-1927). In 1947 Black parents went on strike against the Detroit School District when the latter attempted to alleviate overcrowding by sending students to the vacant and deteriorated Birdhurst School rather than Post Intermediate School in a nearby White neighborhood. A Black Roman Catholic congregation established Our Lady of Victory Church in a storefront on Eight Mile Road at Cherrylawn Street (no longer extant) in 1943. The congregation moved a frame church building, previously belonging to the parish of St. Juliana at Chalmers and Longview, to 10113 West Eight Mile Road in 1946. The church ran a credit union in the building’s basement. In 1948 the first Black nuns to work in the Archdiocese of Detroit arrived at Our Lady of Victory.

⁸ Sugrue, Thomas. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009):41.

The neighborhood contains a visual reminder of the housing segregation that existed in Detroit, a six-foot-high concrete wall that extends from Eight Mile Road south to Pembroke Avenue between Birwood and Mendota Street. Known as the Birwood Wall it was built in 1941 as a barrier between a Black and a White neighborhood.

The neighborhood underwent a transformation in the 1940s when FHA housing mortgages became available to Black families. Modest homes were built most in the Minimal Traditional style.



Eight-Mile Wyoming Neighborhood. Google Street View 2019

Outside of, but nearby, the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood are located a 1970 branch of Home Federal Savings and Loan (13300 West Seven Mile Road), a Black-owned bank that served the neighborhood; Hartford Memorial Baptist Church (18700 James Couzens Freeway), where the Hartford Baptist congregation moved in 1977; and the home of Viola Gregg Liuzzo, (19375 Marlowe Street). Liuzzo was a White civil rights worker who was murdered in rural Lowndes County, Alabama, in the aftermath of the 1965 Selma to Montgomery civil rights march. Her murder was the only documented killing of a White woman during the civil rights movement and the national attention to her murder and funeral is credited with helping spur the passage of the 1965 Voting Right Act.

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
Birwood Wall	Along the alleyway between Birwood and Mendota Streets from Eight Mile Road to Pembroke Street	Eligible	National Register nomination prepared for this survey
Eight Mile-Wyoming Neighborhood	Eight Mile Road, Santa Barbara, Pembroke, and Mendota Avenues	Eligible	Not listed
Hartford Memorial Baptist Church	18700 James Couzens Freeway	Not eligible	Michigan State Historical Marker
Higginbotham School	20119 Wisconsin	Eligible	Public Schools of Detroit Multiple Property Submission
Home Federal Savings Branch	13300 West Seven Mile Road	Eligible	Not listed
Liuzzo, Viola Gregg, House	19375 Marlowe Street	Eligible	Not listed
Our Lady of Victory Church	10113 West Eight Mile Road	Eligible	Not listed

East Kirby and East Ferry Streets (1920-1976)

Both sides of East Kirby and East Ferry Streets between Beaubien and Brush Streets

This mixed neighborhood of residences, flats, and apartment buildings, constructed beginning in the late nineteenth century, was originally built for Detroit's White merchant class. Around 1910, Jewish residents began moving in as Detroit's upper class left to purchase homes in the developing Boston-Edison neighborhood. East Kirby Street's close proximity to Dunbar Hospital and Lewis College of Business, two historically Black institutions, made this area appealing to Detroit's Black professional and business classes. They began moving buying the Victorian homes located along East Kirby Street around

1920. A Prairie style apartment building at 457 East Kirby Street (extant), known as Great Lakes Manor, was purchased by the Great Lakes Mutual Insurance Company in 1935. The company, an early and very successful Black business, was founded in 1926 by Charles Roxborough and Bill Mosely, who owned the *Detroit Tribune*, a Black newspaper. Roxborough, who lived in Great Lakes Manor after his company purchased it, was elected Michigan’s first Black State Senator in 1932. The portion of East Kirby Street between Beaubien and Brush was designated a local historic district in 1992.⁹



Great Lakes Manor, c. 2019

The neighborhood is distinguished by its solid looking two-story red or yellow brick homes that are an eclectic mix of Victorian, Colonial Revival, and Prairie styles. Hipped and pyramid roofs are common as are six-over one double hung windows, full length front porches and bay windows. The lots are relatively small with little distance between the homes and a short setback from the sidewalk. Four-story brick apartment buildings with large square bays are integrated into the fabric of the street. At the corner of East Kirby and Brush Streets is Peck Park. The neighborhood has experienced some demolition but overall, it fairly intact. Infill housing, row houses of alternating red and yellow brick, is found on the east end near Chrysler Drive. East Kirby Street between Beaubien Boulevard and Brush Street was designated a local historic district in 1992.¹⁰ A number of stately residences along East Ferry Street just to the north were converted to Black-owned business and institutional use in the 1940s, including the Detroit Association of (Colored) Women’s Clubs (5461 Brush Street) and the Lewis College of Business (5450 John R. Street) in 1941, the Nu Omega chapter of Omega Psi Phi (235 East Ferry) in 1942, and the Fritz Funeral Home (246 East Ferry) in 1946. The large, single-family homes on East Ferry Street between Woodward and Brush were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.¹¹

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
Detroit Association of (Colored) Women’s Clubs	5461 Brush Street	Eligible	Contributes to East Ferry Avenue National Register District, listed 1980; Michigan State Historical Marker
Fritz Funeral Home	246 East Ferry Avenue	Eligible	Contributes to East Ferry Avenue National Register District, listed 1980
Great Lakes Manor	457 East Kirby Street	Eligible	National Register individual listing, 2020
Lewis College of Business	5450 John R. Street	Eligible	Contributes to East Ferry Avenue National Register District, listed 1980

⁹ “East Kirby Historic District.” City of Detroit Historic Designations. Detroit 1701 website. <http://detroit1701.org/EastKirby.htm>

¹⁰ “East Kirby Historic District.” City of Detroit Historic Designations. Detroit 1701 website. <http://detroit1701.org/EastKirby.htm>

¹¹ Vollmert, Leslie J. “East Ferry Avenue Historic District,” National Register of Historic Places nomination, listed 1980.

Omega Psi Phi	235 East Ferry Avenue	Eligible	Contributes to East Ferry Avenue National Register District, listed 1980
Your Heritage House	110 East Ferry Avenue	Not eligible	Contributes to East Ferry Avenue National Register District, listed 1980

Public Housing in the Depression and World War II

The onset of the Great Depression in the early 1930s brought the need for low-income housing to serve struggling families. Nationally, there was a major debate about how such housing should be provided—by private industry or the federal government. In the early days of President Roosevelt’s New Deal, the federal government saw the construction of public housing as a means of creating jobs for out of work construction workers and in 1937 the United States Housing Act was passed to address the nation’s growing housing shortage. However, fearful of continued federal competition after the Depression ended, America’s home building industry began organizing to promote a solution that relied on private builders. In 1942, Michigan-based developers Harry Durbin and Rodney Lockwood were instrumental in bringing together two existing builder’s associations to form the National Association of Home Builders, which became a powerful housing lobby. For Detroit’s African American population, public housing was especially important because so little federal funding was available to developers through the FHA and other programs for the construction of private housing for Blacks. The bitter conflict between private vs. public housing continued throughout the years of the war and for some time after.

Brewster Homes (1938-2013)

Chrysler Freeway, Mack Avenue, Beaubien Street

America’s first public housing development to be built for African Americans, Brewster Homes was a New Deal project completed through the Works Progress Administration (WPA). It was such a significant project that its 1935 groundbreaking was attended by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. The eighteen-acre complex was composed of brick mid-rise buildings and townhomes in the Colonial Revival style. In 1952, six fourteen-story brick apartment buildings known as the Frederick Douglass Towers, designed by Detroit architects Smith, Hinchman, and Grylls, were added to the complex which was renamed the Brewster-Douglass Homes. Many successful Black musicians once lived in Brewster Homes, including Motown artists Diana Ross, Mary Wilson, and Florence Ballard of the Supremes; Smokey Robinson; and Stevie Wonder. Comedian Lily Tomlin also resided there.¹² The entire complex was demolished in 2013.

The nearby Brewster-Wheeler Recreation Center, where the legendary African American prizefighter Joe Louis trained, escaped demolition. Originally built as a Detroit branch library in 1917, it was converted to a community center with a large addition in 1929 and open to all regardless of race or color. The Brewster Homes were built around the Center, which became the heart of the neighborhood.

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
Brewster-Wheeler Recreation Center	637 Brewster Street	Eligible	Michigan State Historical Marker; Brewster-Wheeler

¹² Clark, Anna. “The Demolition of Brewster-Douglass and our Abandonment of the Working Poor,” *Pacific Standard*, September 9, 2013.

			Recreation Center Local Historic District
Greater Shiloh Baptist Church	537 Benton Street	Eligible	Greater Shiloh Baptist Church Local Historic District

Sojourner Truth Homes (1941-1976)

Nevada Avenue, Fenelon Avenue, Stockton Avenue, and Justine Avenue

Built in 1941, the Sojourner Truth Homes public housing development was originally meant to house Black defense workers. Though the federal government chose a site in a sparsely built area not far from the African American Conant Gardens neighborhood, nearby White residents opposed a Black housing complex so near their own neighborhood's borders. They worked to convince the federal government to turn the complex into White housing. As a result, the federal government reversed its original decision and in 1942 announced the complex would house White workers. Strong pressure by Detroit's Black leaders caused Detroit's city officials to realize the desperate need for housing in the Black community and they convinced the federal government to again reverse its decision. Violent protests broke out and the Michigan National Guard was called in to protect Black families as they tried to move into the complex. The simple red brick, two-story side gable buildings in the Colonial Revival style eventually housed around 168 Black families. The housing units are placed around a central entrance drive and oval. Large lawns of green grass with mature trees give the complex a park like setting. Though some alterations to the buildings have occurred, and additional apartment buildings were added to the periphery of the complex in 1987, the original 1941 core of the development still remains intact.



Sojourner Truth Homes, 2019

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
Sojourner Truth Homes	Nevada Avenue, Fenelon Avenue, Stockton Avenue, and Justine Avenue	Eligible	National Register nomination planned as part of this survey

Post-World War II

The 1940s and 1950s were marked by increased racial tension between Blacks and Whites in Detroit. The influx of Black defense workers put pressure on the limited housing available to Blacks and they were forced to seek housing opportunities outside of traditionally Black enclaves. In the wake of the violence and unrest following the construction of the Sojourner Truth Homes, segregation continued to remain the city's official policy. White homeowners redoubled efforts to organize neighborhood associations and create regulations that would "defend" their neighborhoods against any African Americans who tried to move in. Even after racial covenants were abolished by a U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1948, homeowner's associations and real estate agents continued to use extra-legal means of discouraging settlement by Blacks in the White areas. Nevertheless, African Americans out of necessity began to move slowly outward from their early twentieth century neighborhoods. In most cases, this was accomplished incrementally, a few houses at a time. Unfortunately, a pioneering Black homeowner moving into a White neighborhood was often subject to harassment and hate crimes.

In other instances, Blacks were able to quietly move into areas that were being “vacated” by previous residents. Following the outlawing of restrictive housing covenants in 1948, many of Detroit’s wealthy White residents in the mansion districts of Arden Park and Boston-Edison chose to move to the suburbs. There, they could purchase larger lots and build bigger houses in neighborhoods where *de facto* segregation was still being practiced. Detroit’s most prominent and wealthy African American citizens were then able to move into the established upscale neighborhoods formerly occupied by Whites.

Only a few Black neighborhoods were constructed by Black realtors and/or developers. According to William Price of the Detroit Urban League, one of the biggest blocks to building homes for African Americans during this period was finding mortgage funding. During the postwar construction boom, as mortgage lending limits were reached, loans to minorities were the first to be eliminated.¹³

Sugar Hill Historic District (1940-1976)

John R Street, East Canfield Street, Woodward Avenue, East Forest Avenue

Sugar Hill was a northern extension of Paradise Valley, beginning in the 1940s. The large single-family homes and apartments in this area were originally built for the White upper class, many of whom were part of Detroit’s medical community. When the Depression hit in the 1930s, homes were divided up into boarding houses—a trend that continued throughout the war years to house defense workers. It was during this period that the neighborhood saw an increase in African American residents. Often called the “Street of Music” John R between Hancock and Watson was the center of Black music venues in the late 1940s. “In the ten years between 1940 and 1950, the fairly quiet residential district clustered around John R was transformed into the hottest new address for young African American men and women. . . seeking to live in a better-quality neighborhood that was close to the action of the growing music and entertainment district.”¹⁴ They were attracted to this location by Detroit’s rapidly emerging Jazz scene. Black musicians and entertainers stayed at the nearby Black-owned Gotham Hotel (demolished), operated by John Roxborough and recognized as one of the best hotels for African Americans, and played at the Paradise Theater (Orchestra Hall, extant) and Graystone Ballroom (demolished). The area included the Randora Hotel (demolished), a boarding house converted to a hotel in 1957 by Randolph Wallace to capitalize on the NAACP national convention that was held in Detroit that year. It also included the Carver Hotel, a hotel advertised in the *Negro Motorist Green Book* in the 1950s; the Mark Twain Hotel, operated by promoter Sunnie Wilson; and major clubs such as the Flame Show Bar, the Frolic and the Chesterfield Lounge. The Sugar Hill District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2003.

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
Sugar Hill	John R Street, East Canfield Street, Woodward Avenue, East Forest Avenue	Eligible	National Register District, listed 2003

Twelfth Street (1940-1970)

Hamilton Street, West Grand Boulevard, Chicago Boulevard, and Dexter Avenue

In the 1920s many of the Jewish residents on Hastings Street in the Black Bottom neighborhood began moving to the Twelfth Street area, which was characterized by apartments and duplexes. By the 1940s it was one of Detroit’s Jewish population centers. When Black defense workers flooded the city as war

¹³ Woerpel, John. “The Breezeway.” *Detroit Free Press*, June 26, 1956.

¹⁴ Sugar Hill Historic District, National Register of Historic Places nomination, 2003.

production amped up, they found housing in the Linwood-Hamilton area repeating a settlement pattern that was common in Detroit. Black and Jewish residents often lived side by side in neighborhoods where restrictive covenants had not been adopted since the city's Jewish population had encountered its own negative experiences with discrimination and segregation. However, as the economic status of Jewish families improved in the 1960s, the Twelfth Street neighborhood lost its battle against block busting and succumbed to White flight. The neighborhood's Jewish population moved to Detroit's suburbs such as Oak Park and Southfield.

The Twelfth Street neighborhood became the first of Detroit's neighborhoods to truly open to middle class Blacks in the post-World War II era. Many of Detroit's civil rights activities of the 1950s and 1960s occurred here, particularly as that movement became more militant in the face of continued White resistance to acknowledging African American civil rights. Forced out of the Black Bottom and Paradise Valley neighborhoods by urban renewal, two influential Black churches found new locations in the Twelfth neighborhood. The Black Christian Nationalist leader Reverend Albert Cleage moved his Central Congregational Church, which became the Shrine of the Black Madonna in 1968, to 7625 Linwood Street in the 1950s. Reverend C. L. Franklin moved New Bethel Baptist Church from Hastings Street to the former Oriole Theater at 8430 Linwood Street, in the early 1960s. The area also became the locus of Detroit's Black Consciousness Movement, with Vaughn's Bookstore at 12123 Dexter Avenue (extant) and the offices of the Republic of New Africa and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) nearby. Just to the north of the neighborhood was the Nation of Islam, the Black Muslim organization that converted a former Jewish community center at 11529 Linwood Street into its Temple No. 1 in 1959. It was here that Malcolm X transformed into a civil rights activist.



Shrine of the Black Madonna, 2019.



LaSalle Gardens Neighborhood, Google Street View 2019.

The area contains the LaSalle Gardens subdivision, where the Reverend C. L. Franklin moved to a house at 7415 LaSalle Boulevard (extant) in 1958, a home that his daughter Aretha remembered as “an estate home... (on) an exclusive residential street with enormous, lush trees and manicured lawns.”¹⁵ Reverend Franklin hosted parties at the house that were attended by nationally known Black entertainers such as Nat King Cole, Mahalia Jackson, and Sam Cooke.

It was in the Twelfth Street neighborhood that the events that touched off the 1967 Rebellions began, with a police raid of a party held at 12th Street and Clairmount Avenue in July 1967. The building also housed the United Community League for Civic Action, one of many Black political organizations active in the city at the time. Many of buildings in the neighborhood were destroyed in the fires that followed or were torn down by the city soon afterward, including the former law office of Carl Levin, who was appointed the first general counsel of Michigan's Civil Rights Commission in 1964.

¹⁵ Quoted in Nick Salvatore, *Singing in a Strange Land: C. L. Franklin, The Black Church, and The Transformation of America*, (New York: Little Brown and Company, 2005): 221.

According to the Kerner report, which was undertaken after the racial violence of the summer of 1967, the Twelfth Street neighborhood was where many Blacks had moved due to dislocation by the demolition of the Black Bottom neighborhood. In the late 1960s it had a homeownership rate of just 18 percent. Twenty-five percent of the neighborhood’s housing stock was considered substandard. Density in the Twelfth Street neighborhood was high, there were more than 21,000 people per square mile, double the average rate in the city. By the mid-1960s, over 93 percent of the residents polled wanted to move out of the neighborhood.¹⁶

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
Sacred Heart Major Seminary Black Jesus Grotto	2701 West Chicago Boulevard	Eligible	National Register individual listing, 1982
Nation of Islam Temple No. 1	11529 Linwood Street	Eligible	Local Historic District
New Bethel Baptist Church	8430 Linwood Street	Eligible	National Register nomination prepared for this survey
Parks, Rosa and Raymond, Flat	3201 Virginia Park Street	Eligible	National Register nomination prepared for this survey
Shrine of the Black Madonna	7625-35 Linwood Street	Eligible	National Register nomination prepared for this survey

Clairpointe-Tennessee-Conner Neighborhood, “The CTC” (1940-1976)
Clairpointe Street, Jefferson Avenue, Kitchener Street, and Detroit River

The CTC neighborhood is part of the larger Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood on the city’s extreme southeast side. The land south of Jefferson was historically marshland and began to be drained and platted in the 1920s. This western end of Jefferson-Chalmers was close to several industrial factories and the earliest houses were more modest, working-class homes as opposed to the more substantial brick homes common on the eastern end of the area. In the mid-1940s, following the overturning of restrictive covenants, a few Black families went to court to ensure their right to move into this neighborhood, at a time when Blacks were just beginning to break out of the segregated neighborhoods to which they had been confined prior to and during World War II. In the spring of 1946 a ten-acre tract at the foot of Tennessee Street (which the city had previously acquired for inclusion in a larger waterfront park) was designated for 228 temporary housing units for Black veterans. When the Algonquin Park Association opposed the plan, ostensibly because it would interfere with recreational use of the park, the Detroit Common Council attempted to rescind the plan. Five hundred Black veterans rallied at the Hotel Statler to protest the decision, leading Detroit Mayor Jeffries to veto the Council’s resolution. The Association was



Clairpointe-Tennessee-Conner Neighborhood, 2019.

¹⁶ *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders.* [Washington: United States, Kerner Commission] U.S. G.P.O., 1968.

unsuccessful in attempting to secure an injunction against the development, and Black families were living in the housing units by 1947 (the units were removed between 1956 and 1961 and are now part of Maheras-Gentry Park).¹⁷ Residents recall that Keating Elementary (Dickerson Avenue, no longer extant) was the *de facto* color line. During the 1940s to 1960s there were commercial businesses intermingled with residences since Black residents not being welcome at majority White businesses.

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
Clairpointe-Tennessee-Conner Neighborhood	Clairpointe Street, Jefferson Avenue, Kitchener Street, and Detroit River	Eligible	Maheras Park Local Historic District (located within the neighborhood)

Welch-Oakwood Hills Neighborhood (1944-1976)

Ethel and Bassett Streets between Visger Street and West Outer Drive

This southwest Detroit neighborhood was originally platted in 1919 by Thomas H. Welch as a White neighborhood. However, only about seventeen homes had been built by the early 1940s. In 1944, the Black-owned Watson Realty Company purchased the land and eliminated the restrictive covenants so the homes and lots could be purchased by Blacks. The FHA assisted in raising \$1.5 million in capital to purchase the existing homes and to build new ones in the neighborhood. Opposition by Whites to the project caused the Reverend Charles Hill to run for the Detroit Common Council to support the African American community.¹⁸

The homes in this residential area are typically wood frame, single-story, with a shallow gable front and no decoration in the Minimal Traditional style. The facades often have a picture window and a front door with a small stoop.

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
Welch-Oakwood Hills Neighborhood	Ethel and Bassett Streets between Visger Street and West Outer Drive	Eligible	Not listed

Arden Park East-Boston and Boston-Edison (1950-1976)

Boston Boulevard, Chicago Boulevard, Longfellow Street, Edison Street, and Arden Park Boulevard between Linwood Street and Oakland Street

Originally developed between 1900 and 1920 as a neighborhood for Detroit's *nouveau riche*, the homes are on large lots and are constructed in a variety of styles from Italian Renaissance to Tudor Revival to the Prairie style. Many were designed by Detroit's best known architects including Albert Kahn. It was the home to some of Detroit's most prominent White citizens including J.L. Hudson of the Hudson



Arden Park East-Boston. Google street View, 2019.

¹⁷ "Order Delivery of Vets Homes," *Detroit Tribune*, July 6, 1946, 3; "Vets Irate at Scrapping of Negro Housing Plan," *Detroit Free Press*, July 24, 1946, 13; "Vet Homes Saved by Jeffries' Veto," *Detroit Free Press*, July 31, 1946, 13; "Suit to Restrain Building Dismissed," *Detroit Free Press*, October 2, 1946, 15.

¹⁸ "Houses for Negroes," *Detroit Free Press*, September 30, 1944.

Department stores and John Dodge, a founder of the Dodge Brothers automobile company. In the 1950s, as the economic status of Detroit’s African American community increased, successful Blacks began moving into the neighborhood. Residents included Charles Diggs Sr., a prominent Black business man who owned the first Black funeral home established in Detroit and who was elected the first Black Michigan State senator; John Dancy Jr., Executive of the Detroit Urban League from 1918-1960; Berry Gordy, Jr. founder of Motown Records;¹⁹ and Dr. Haley Bell the first Black man in America to receive an FCC license to operate a radio station.²⁰

Homes in this neighborhood are large, two-story, homes of brick or stone. Many are side gabled and display a sense of symmetry with a centered front door flanked by single, double, or ribbon windows. Front doors are set off by small porticos or decorative surrounds and sidelights. Stately front walks lead straight to the front door, with no meandering curves. Traditional landscaping plants like low boxwoods are planted at the foundations.

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
Arden-Park/Boston Edison District	Boston Boulevard, Chicago Boulevard, Longfellow Street, Edison Street, and Arden Park Boulevard between Linwood and Oakland Streets	Eligible	National Register District listed 1975 (Boston-Edison) and 1982 (Arden Park-East Boston)

Grixdale, Courville, and Seven Mile-Fenelon (1950-1976)

Conant Street, Seven Mile Road, Dequindre Street, and Nevada Avenue

Until the end of World War II, Conant Gardens and the nearby Sojourner Truth Homes public housing complex remained Black enclaves in the larger northeast area, an all-White working-class area settled in the 1930s and 1940s. As more Black families became economically able to purchase lots and construct homes Conant Gardens reached its capacity. A group of Black community leaders founded Wayne County Better Homes to assist families acquire loans through the FHA to build homes in the Grixdale area. By 1944 the Hayes Construction Company had announced plans to build seventy homes for Black families at East McNichols and MacKay Streets, on the south side of Grixdale Park (although work had reportedly begun on thirty of the houses, the precise location and status of the houses could not be determined during this survey).

West of Grixdale Park was the Courville District, while to the north was the Seven Mile-Fenelon neighborhood. These all-White neighborhoods established homeowners’ associations, the Courville District Improvement Association and the Seven Mile-Fenelon Improvement Association, to combat what they pejoratively termed an “invasion.” The White associations set *de facto* color lines at Dequindre Road on the west, Seven Mile Road on the north, and Mound Road on the east. In 1950, the Courville Association called an “emergency” meeting when a Black family purchased a property at Orleans Street and Minnesota Avenue, just west of Dequindre Road. In 1955 the Easby Wilson family purchased a home at 18199 Riopelle Street (extant), also over the



Easby Wilson House, 2019

¹⁹ Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*:207.

²⁰ “Arden Park-East Boston Neighborhood.” *Encyclopedia of Detroit*. Detroit Historical Society.

color line, although they had been assured by their real estate agent that there would be no problem. Instead, they endured months of harassment and violence before finally moving out.²¹

Houses in the Grixdale neighborhood display the common characteristics of vernacular, working class homes. Small frame, one or one and a half-story homes in the Cape Cod style with clapboard siding and minimal decoration are intermingled with Craftsman Bungalows with wide porches and center gables, and small brick Ranch houses with picture windows. There is a rhythm to the unified setback of the homes on their small front yards.

Also nearby is Solomon’s Temple Church (2341 East Seven Mile Road), a Black Pentecostal church founded in 1944, which was among the first in the city to broadcast its sermons and services.

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
McNichols_MacKay Neighborhood	McNichols and Mackay	Undetermined	Not listed
Solomon’s Temple Church	2341 East Seven Mile Road	Not eligible	Not listed
Wilson, Easby, House	18199 Riopelle Street	Eligible	Not listed

North End (1950-1976)

I-75, Woodward Avenue, Webb Street, and East Grand Boulevard

Black residents began moving into the North End, originally a Jewish working-class neighborhood, in the late 1940s and 1950s. Called the North End because it was the “north end” of Paradise Valley, it became home to a thriving Soul and Rhythm & Blues scene in the 1950s and 1960s, particularly along the Oakland Avenue corridor. The neighborhood is home to the Apex Bar at 7649 Oakland Avenue (extant) where bluesman John Lee Hooker got his start. Another popular music venue was the Phelps Lounge (on Oakland Avenue near Josephine, now demolished) where artists Etta James, James Brown, and George Clinton and the Parliaments could be heard. In 1957 Home Federal Savings and Loan, the state’s first Black-owned banking institution, moved its headquarters to a building at 9108 Woodward Avenue (extant, but altered).



Apex Bar, 2019.

The neighborhood was considered a step up for younger African American families that were able to move out of the crowded conditions of Black Bottom. Well-known North End residents once included singers Jackie Wilson, the Four Tops, Smokey Robinson (531 Belmont), Diana Ross (633 Belmont) and Aretha Franklin (649 Boston).²² At 313 Hague Street (extant) is the house where Dr. Betty Shabazz, educator, civil rights activist, and wife of Malcolm X, grew up with her adoptive parents. Ruth Ellis, a Black LGBTQ activist, ran a printing press out of her home at Oakland and Caniff Streets in the 1960s (demolished). Other prominent citizens included local civil rights activist Beulah Whitby (Josephine Street); Sidney Barthwell (Josephine Street) who owned a local chain of pharmacies; John Roxborough co manager of boxer Joe Louis, who built a home at 235 Holbrook in 1940 (extant); and Harold Bledsoe a prominent lawyer, Democratic party member, and the first Black to cast an electoral college vote in

²¹ Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*: 230-239.

²²“ The North End of Paradise.” Presentation by Ken Coleman. 62nd Annual Michigan in Perspective Local History Virtual Conference. March 19-20, 2012.

Michigan.²³ While the North End developed into a majority Black neighborhood beginning in the 1950s, one Black institution predated that development. The Frances Harper Inn at 307 Horton Street (extant) was a residence purchased by the Christian Industrial Club in 1915 to house Black women newly arrived in the city.

Among the churches of the North End is Greater New Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church, 586 Owen (extant), originally built as the Beth Moses Synagogue. Its pastor from 1964-1992, Benjamin Hooks, served on the Southern Christian Leadership Conference with Martin Luther King, Jr., and was executive director of the NAACP from 1977 to 1992. Other churches include St. John’s Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (8715 Woodward Avenue, extant, National Register individual listing, 1982), whose congregation moved to the former North Woodward Congregational Church in 1955.

In April 1966, the increasingly frustrated Black students at Northern High School (9026 Woodward Avenue, extant) decided to stage a walkout to protest the inadequate curriculum and poor conditions at the school. After holding a “Freedom School” at nearby St. Joseph’s Episcopal Church, the Black students secured their list of demands from the school board. The previous year, 1965, Michigan Lutheran College had purchased a former industrial building at 7351 Woodward Avenue (extant but altered). In 1970 it was renamed Shaw College in affiliation with a Historically Black College in North Carolina and offered programs in the liberal arts and medical and dental technology.



North End. Google Street View 2019.

The housing stock in the North End is varied, but most residences are two-story brick structures built in the teens and twenties. A predominant housing style is the Foursquare with centered dormer and with a half or full porch. Some Foursquares have bay or oculus windows. Another popular style in the neighborhood is a simple gable front with a two-story bay window and a protruding front porch. While the houses on some streets are still intact, other streets have been subjected to demolitions that have left the rhythm of the streetscape punctured by large swaths of grassy lots.

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
Apex Bar	7649 Oakland Avenue	Eligible	Not listed
Frances Harper Inn/Christian Industrial Club	307 Horton Street	Eligible	Not listed
Greater New Mt. Moriah Baptist Church	586 Owen Street	Eligible	Not listed
Home Federal Savings Bank	9108 Woodward Avenue	Not eligible	Not listed
Northern High School	9026 Woodward Avenue	Eligible	Public Schools of Detroit Multiple Property Submission
St. John’s Christian Methodist Episcopal Church	8715 Woodward Avenue	Eligible	National Register Individual Listing, 1982 (Religious

²³ *Ibid.*

			Structures of Woodward Avenue MPS), Local Historic District
Shabazz, Betty, House	313 Hague Street	Eligible	Not listed
Shaw College	7351 Woodward Avenue	Not eligible	Not listed

Russell Woods-Sullivan Neighborhood (1940s-1976)

Livernois Avenue, Cortland Street, Dexter Avenue, and West Davison Avenue

The Russell Woods-Sullivan neighborhood consists of two subdivisions, Russell Woods, platted in 1916, and the Sullivan neighborhood, platted in 1925. The stately homes are representative of popular styles of the 1920s and 1930s, predominately two-story homes in the Tudor, Colonial Revival, and Mission styles. They also include homes in the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles. At least two homes were designed by Black architect Nathan Johnson in 1963 (12547 Broadstreet Avenue and 4098 Fullerton Avenue, both extant). Originally an all-White neighborhood of both Jewish and Christian residents, in the 1960s middle class Blacks began purchasing homes in the neighborhood. The Russell Woods-Sullivan residents were resistant to the “block busting” tactics used by realtors and launched a campaign to stop it. Many Black entertainment and sports figures purchased homes in the neighborhood for themselves or their families as their success increased, including Barry Gordy Jr., Diana Ross, and Dinah Washington and her husband, Detroit Lions football star Night Train Lane.²⁴



Former home of poet Dudley Randall and the Broadside Press., 2019

Along with the nearby Twelfth Street neighborhood, Russell Woods-Sullivan was the locus of the Black Consciousness Movement of the 1960s. Dudley Randall operated the Broadside Press, a significant promoter of Black poets and writers during the rise of Detroit’s Black Arts Movement in the 1960s and 1970s, out of his home at 12651 Old Mill Place (extant). At 12123 Dexter Avenue was Vaughn’s Bookstore (extant), Detroit’s first Black bookstore, founded by Edward Vaughn, which became the center of Black intellectual life in the city in the 1960s. Just north of Russell Woods-Sullivan was the home of William Stuart House (2127 Oakman Boulevard, extant), a civil rights activist who became the field

secretary of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in Hattiesburg, Mississippi during the Freedom Summer of 1964. At 11825 Dexter Avenue is the former Ed Davis Auto Dealership (extant but altered). The first Black-owned new car franchise of one of the Big Three automaker in the country, it opened in 1963.

Near this neighborhood are two important Black churches. In Nardin Park lies Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church at 5151 Chicago Avenue (extant), originally constructed for a White congregation in the 1920, which became the home of Ebenezer AME in 1963 when it moved from Black Bottom. The congregation and its pastors have historically been politically and socially active in the civil rights movement. Southwest of the neighborhood is St. Cecilia Church at 10400 Stoepel Street (extant). While many White churches closed when their congregations moved to the suburbs following World War II, St. Cecilia’s ministry embraced the neighborhood’s new residents, incorporating Black music and

²⁴ “Russell Woods-Sullivan Historic District Study Committee Report.” Historic Designation Advisory Board. City of Detroit, 1999.

cultural aspects into the church service. During the 1967 Rebellion, the church opened its gymnasium at 6340 Stearns Avenue to shelter local children. It later inaugurated a parish sports program that became a “hoops mecca” helping to train professional players including Dave Bing, Earvin “Magic” Johnson, and Chris Webber. In 1968 the church commissioned Black artist Devon Cunningham to paint a mural of a Black Christ in its dome and a Black Madonna statue for the north transept.

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
Dudley Randall’s Broadside Press	12651 Old Mill Place	Eligible	Not listed
Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church	5151 Chicago Avenue	Eligible	Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church Local Historic District
Ed Davis Auto Dealership	11825 Dexter Avenue	Not eligible	Not listed
House, William Stuart, House	2127 Oakman Boulevard	Eligible	Contributes to Oakman Boulevard Local Historic District.
Russell Woods-Sullivan Neighborhood	Davison, Dexter, Cortland, and Livernois Streets	Eligible	Russell Woods-Sullivan Local Historic District
St. Cecilia Gymnasium and Church	6340 Stearns and 10400 Stoepel	Eligible	Not listed
Vaughn’s Bookstore	12123 Dexter Avenue	Eligible	Not listed

Schaefer-South Fort (1953-1976)

Electric Street, South Liddesdale Street, South Beatrice Street, and Deacon Street.

In 1953, the first African American-financed low-cost homes in Detroit were built in the Schaefer-South Fort Street area by the Black-owned Home Federal Savings and Loan. The seventeen homes were priced at \$6,500.²⁵ The specific homes financed under this plan have not been identified.

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
Schaefer-South Fort Neighborhood Home Federal Savings-Financed Housing	Electric, Liddesdale, Beatrice, Deacon Streets	Further research needed	Not listed

²⁵ “Home Federal launches project,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 6, 1953:10.

Virginia Park Neighborhood (1955-1976)

Virginia Park Avenue between Woodward Avenue and the John C. Lodge Service Drive

Originally platted in 1893 as Virginia Avenue, the neighborhood consists of large brick or stone houses in the Neo-Georgian, Tudor, and Arts and Crafts styles built by businessmen and professionals and designed by well-respected Detroit architects like Malcolmson and Higginbotham and Smith, Hinchman, & Grylls. Architect George Pottle designed his own home in the neighborhood. In 1910 the Virginia Avenue Improvement Association was formed to counteract the commercialization of Woodward Avenue. Entryways to the residential neighborhood were built and landscaped to create a park-like setting and the neighborhood was renamed Virginia Park.²⁶ The Depression and World War II brought hard times to the neighborhood and the large homes were carved up into apartments. Black families began moving in after the demolition of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley in the 1960s. Located nearby was the infamous Algiers Motel that played a crucial role during the 1967 Rebellion. In the late 1970s, General Motors invested in the Virginia Park neighborhood as part of the revitalization of the New Center area of Detroit.



Damon Keith House, Virginia Park 2019.

Located on Virginia Park Street west of the National Register district is the home of Judge Damon Keith. He lived here in the 1950s and early 1960s at the beginning of his career when he was an attorney focusing on civil rights.

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
Keith, Damon, Home	1544 Virginia Park Street	Eligible	Not listed
Virginia Park Neighborhood	Virginia Park Avenue between Woodward Avenue and the John C. Lodge Service Drive	Eligible	National Register Historic District, 1982.

Northwest Goldberg (1955-1976)

West Grand Boulevard, John Lodge Freeway, the Edsel Ford Freeway, and Grand River Avenue

A formerly White, upper middle-class neighborhood built in the early 20th Century, the neighborhood includes Tudor Revivals, Bungalows, and Foursquare style homes. As nearby Henry Ford Hospital grew,



Motown Records Studio, West Grand Boulevard, 2019

small medical office buildings were constructed. The neighborhood includes a commercial strip along West Grand Boulevard between Wabash Street and Kipling Avenue that became the location of prominent Black businesses in the late 1950s. In 1957, the Lewis & Thompson Insurance Agency, a Black-owned business founded by Walton A. Lewis in 1941, moved its offices to 2617 West Grand Boulevard (they later moved next door to 2621, both extant). In 1959, Barry Gordy, Jr. purchased a two-story Foursquare at 2648 West Grand Boulevard and established Tamala Records. The name was soon changed to Motown Records and the house served as Motown’s headquarters

²⁶ Virginia Park Historic District National Register Nomination, National Park Service, Washington, DC. 1981.

from 1959-1968. Gordy eventually bought nine houses along the street and each served as a department of the Motown “assembly line” business model including administration, sales and marketing, international talent management, and artist development. Motown Records was very influential during the civil rights struggle and the popularity of its music bridged the gap between Black and White youth. Even more importantly, Motown served as a role model for a new generation of African Americans who were able to see other Blacks in positions of power, from the head of the company to its middle managers and creative talent.²⁷

The prominent Black architect Nathan Johnson moved his architectural practices to 2512 West Grand Boulevard in 1960 (extant). Other Black-owned businesses soon moved to the area as urban renewal took its toll on the Black Bottom neighborhood, including the James H. Cole Home for Funerals, which moved to 2624 West Grand Boulevard in 1962 (demolished), and Brazelton Florists who purchased 2686 West Grand Boulevard in 1968 (extant). The City of Detroit designated this area a local historic district in 2018. The Motown *Hitsville U.S.A.* museum is pursuing a National Register of Historic Places designation for Motown’s resources.



Auditorium, King Solomon Baptist Church. Photo: Michigan Chronicle

The Northwest Goldberg area is home to King Solomon Baptist Church at 6100 14th Street (extant), which moved to this location in 1955. The church’s 5,000 seat auditorium was one of the largest available to Detroit’s Black community and was used by notable leaders of the Civil Rights Movement who spoke here including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Thurgood Marshall. Malcolm X delivered his influential “Message to

the Grass Roots” speech here in 1963. The church was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2015.

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
James H. Cole Home for Funerals	2624 West Grand Boulevard	Not eligible	James H. Cole Home for Funerals Local Historic District; Contributes to West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District
King Solomon Baptist Church	6100 14 th Street	Eligible	National Register individual listing, 2015.
Jobete Publishing Company (Motown)	2644-46 West Grand Boulevard	Eligible	Contributes to West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District
Motown Recording Studio (Hitsville)	2648 West Grand Boulevard	Eligible	Contributes to West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District
Motown Administration Building	2652-54 West Grand Boulevard	Eligible	Contributes to West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District

²⁷ “Proposed West Grand Boulevard Historic African American Arts and Business District.” Preliminary Local Historic District Study Committee Report. Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board. February 2018.

Motown Finance Building	2656 West Grand Boulevard	Eligible	Contributes to West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District
Artist Development (Motown)	2657 West Grand Boulevard	Eligible	Contributes to West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District
Motown Sales and Marketing Building I	2662-64 West Grand Boulevard	Eligible	Contributes to West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District
International Talent Management Incorporated (Motown)	2670-72 West Grand Boulevard	Eligible	Contributes to West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District
Nathan Johnson Associates Office	2512 West Grand Boulevard	Eligible	Contributes to West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District
United Sound Systems Recording Studios	5840 Second Avenue	Eligible	State of Michigan Historical Marker; United Sound Systems Local Historic District

Bagley Neighborhood (1962-1976)

Wyoming Avenue, West McNichols Road, West Outer Drive, Livernois Avenue



Bagley Neighborhood. Google Street View 2019.

Between 1962 and 1964, twenty-one Black families moved into this established neighborhood, originally built in the mid-1930s. Located near two universities, Marygrove College and the University of Detroit, the neighborhood consists of two-story, red brick homes accented with a varied use of materials and features. It includes gable front and cross gable homes as well as Foursquares with pyramid or hipped roofs. Decorative features cover a wide range from Tudor Revival to Colonial Revival. The neighborhood is built on a grid and the houses are set back on their lots. Most have a distinctive curved concrete path from the driveway to the house. There are few street trees, and major vegetation is typically located in the back yard. In 1960,

Black realtor and activist James Del Rio used the Bagley neighborhood as an example of a good, integrated neighborhood as he worked in support of an open housing policy for the City of Detroit. Nearby associated sites include Lewis College of Business, a historically Black college that moved to nearby Meyers Road from its longtime location at 5450 John R Street in 1976 (extant), and the Black-owned printing business Waterman and Sons, which moved to Wyoming Road in 1968 (extant) from its original location in Black Bottom.

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
Lewis College of Business	17370 Meyers Road	Not Eligible	Not listed
Waterman and Sons Printing	17134 Wyoming Road	More research needed	Not listed

Sites Outside Listed Neighborhoods (1900-1976)

A number of surveyed or previously listed sites do not fall within or near the above, described neighborhoods. In some cases, these sites represent the efforts of Black Detroiters to combat segregation and discrimination. Others were established toward the end of the period of significance when segregation was ending in Detroit.

Site Name	Address	National Register Recommendation	Status
Belcrest Hotel	5440 Cass Avenue	Eligible	National Register individual listing, 1984
Black Star Printing	8824 Fenkell Street	Eligible	Not listed
Boggs, James and Grace Lee, House (Boggs Center)	3061 Field Street	Eligible	Grace Lee and James Boggs House Local Historic District
Breitmeyer-Tobin Building	1308 Broadway	Eligible	National Register individual listing, 1980
Cadillac (Barlum) Tower	65 Cadillac Square	Eligible	National Register individual listing, 2005
Cobo Hall (TCF Center)	1 Washington Boulevard	Not eligible	Not listed
General Douglas MacArthur (Belle Isle) Bridge	7200 East Jefferson Avenue	Eligible	Belle Isle Historic District, listed 1974
Jeffries Towers	Marvin Gaye Drive at the John C. Lodge Service Drive	More research needed	Not listed
Levi Barbour Intermediate School	4209 Seneca Street	Eligible	Public Schools of Detroit Multiple Property Submission
Michigan Chronicle	479 Ledyard Street	Eligible	Contributes to the Cass Park National Register District, listed 2005
Muhammad's Mosque No. 1	14880 Wyoming Street	More research needed	Not listed
Ossian Sweet House	2905 Garland Street	Eligible	National Register individual listing, 1985
Packard Motor Company	1580 East Grand Boulevard	Eligible	Not listed
Prince Hall Grand Lodge	3500 McDougall Street	Eligible	Prince Hall Grand Lodge Local Historic District
Pure in Heart Missionary Baptist Church	3411 Holcomb Street	Not eligible	Not listed
Theodore Levin U.S. Courthouse	231 West Lafayette Boulevard	Eligible	National Register individual listing, 2018
United Auto Workers Solidarity House	8000 East Jefferson Avenue	Eligible	Not listed

The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit, Michigan

Historic Context

Historic Context

As a state, Michigan has provided a strong legal framework for the civil rights of its citizens. African Americans have always had the right to own property in Michigan. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Michigan legislature passed civil rights laws addressing issues of racial equality: the prohibition of segregation in public education (1867); the elimination of racial discrimination by life insurance companies (1869); enabling inter-racial marriage (1883) and barring discrimination in public accommodations (1885). Through a Michigan Supreme Court ruling in 1890, the practice of separate but equal was ruled unconstitutional.²⁸

Unfortunately, laws on paper do not always equate to the reality of actions. African Americans in Michigan have long suffered discrimination and segregation, in many cases just as severe as that in the South. The practice of *de facto* segregation, segregation that is not formalized by law but is imposed by social agreement, created invisible barriers based on race that could not be crossed. In Detroit, Woodward Avenue was one such accepted color line and African Americans, the majority of whom lived to its east, were unable to purchase property, establish businesses, or eat in restaurants in downtown Detroit west of Woodward Avenue until the 1950s. *De jure* segregation, segregation by race imposed by formally adopted laws or policies, was also practiced in Detroit. One such example was the federal policy of “redlining” adopted by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) for mortgage loan and housing construction programs in the 1930 and 1940s. Excluded from participation because they were branded as “high-risk loans,” a decision based solely on race, African Americans were unable to take advantage of the same home buying opportunities as Whites. Thus, they were unable to fully participate in the growth of the middle class that defined Detroit in the years immediately following World War II. In the city of Detroit during that period, a strong adherence to housing segregation imposed by racially restrictive ordinances adopted by White neighborhood associations led to racial discrimination in other areas: education, employment, the use of public accommodations, and criminal justice for the city’s Black population. Thus, segregated housing is considered the primary civil rights issue that faced Detroit in the twentieth century.

African Americans in Detroit prior to 1900

African Americans, free and enslaved, have been citizens of Detroit from its period of settlement in the early eighteenth century. Both French and British settlers brought enslaved people to Detroit, a census carried out by the British in 1778 recorded 138 enslaved persons in the city. The newly formed federal government of the United States enacted the Northwest Ordinance in 1787 that outlawed slavery in the Northwest Territory, which included Michigan. The first African American known to own land in Detroit was Jacob Young, who purchased property from a French settler in 1793.²⁹

Britain abolished slavery throughout its empire in 1834 and Detroit’s nearness to Canada made it a natural point for escaped slaves to cross over the Detroit River to freedom. Those who reached Detroit were aided by a community of abolitionists, both Black and White. Some escaped slaves chose to stay in the city, a practice that led to Detroit’s first recorded incident of civil rights unrest. An enslaved couple, Thornton and Lucie Blackburn, had escaped to Detroit from Louisville, Kentucky, in 1831. Two years later, they were caught by slave hunters and held in the Detroit jail under the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 until they could be returned to their owners in the South. Detroit’s community of free Blacks strongly protested the arrest, stormed the jail, and helped the Blackburn’s cross over to Canada. White Detroiters angered by the

²⁸ *Michigan Civil Rights Commission: Forty Years and Beyond, 1964-2004*. Michigan Department of Civil Rights Lansing, Michigan. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/MCRC_history_book_77052_7.pdf

²⁹ “Early American Detroit (1787-1820). *Encyclopedia of Detroit*. Detroit Historical Society. [DetroitHistoricalSociety.org](http://detroithistoricalsociety.org)

escape attacked the city's Black community and burned over forty buildings belonging to African Americans. In the wake of this incident, Detroit city officials enacted harsh measures against its African American population, and many subsequently left the city for Canada.

After the Blackburn incident, the free Blacks who stayed in Detroit advocated for their civil rights and worked towards the abolition of slavery. One leader in this effort was Second Baptist Church (441 Monroe Street), the first African American congregation in Michigan. It organized in Detroit in 1836 when Black congregants objected to the racially segregated seating required in the White dominated First Baptist Church. Second Baptist Church served as an important safe house on the Underground Railroad. In 1843, the church hosted Michigan's first Convention of Colored Citizens, part of an early national movement to bring Black citizens together to strategize on how to achieve racial justice.³⁰ Second Baptist Church maintained its strong legacy of African American civil rights activism throughout the twentieth century.

During the Civil War, racial tension increased in Detroit resulting in a second incident of unrest. In 1863, after a White girl falsely accused a Black man of assault, a White mob attacked the city's African American community burning their homes and businesses. This incident prompted the city to establish its first police force, an all-White institution that would remain so for many decades. In 1865, the Colored Men's Convention was held at Second Baptist Church in Detroit with the purpose of establishing a Michigan branch of the National Equal Rights League, founded in 1864. The goal of the League was to "obtain . . . by legal process when possible, a recognition of the rights of the people of the State and to citizenship."³¹

Detroit's African American population grew steadily following the Civil War, from 2,235 in 1870 to 4,111 in 1900. Its percentage of the city's overall population, however, declined from three percent in 1860 to a low of a little over one percent in 1910 as Detroit's White population increased. The city's Black citizens lived mostly on Detroit's lower east side, in the neighborhoods along St. Antoine and Hastings Streets. They were joined there by successive waves of immigrants to the city, including Germans, Italians, Poles, and Russians. The 1890s saw an increase in the city's Jewish population, which also settled along Hastings Street.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century Detroit was transitioning from land-based wealth to an economy based on industry and trade, but its African American citizens remained mostly employed in the service industries as hotel waiters, porters, and barbers or as servants in private houses. There were a small number of successful Black entrepreneurs such as Robert and Benjamin Pelham, who established Detroit's first Black newspaper in 1883, the *Detroit Plaindealer*, which served as a model for the influential *Chicago Defender*. The Pelhams were also involved in the short-lived National Afro-American League, a precursor to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). During this period, Detroit's outstanding African American music heritage took root with the establishment of the first bands to feature syncopated music. Professional musicians such as Theodore Finney, Fred Stone, and Emma Azalia Hackley were also civil rights activists and promoted Black pride through their music.

As the twentieth century dawned, Detroit's African American population was relatively small and geographically isolated on the city's lower east side by *de facto* segregation. Despite the actions and

³⁰ *Minutes of the State Convention, of the Colored Citizens of the State of Michigan, Held in the City of Detroit on the 26th and 27th of October 1843, for the Purpose of Considering Their Moral & Political Condition, As Citizens of the State.* Colored Conventions Project. <https://coloredconventions.org/>

³¹ *Proceedings of the Colored Men's Convention of the State of Michigan.* State Equal Rights League of the State of Michigan. Adrian, Michigan: Adrian Times Office, 1865. Colored Conventions Project. <https://coloredconventions.org/>

achievements of Detroit's African American community in promoting the abolition of slavery and establishing equal rights, it still struggled against discrimination and segregation. Their work became even more difficult when the U. S. Supreme Court upheld the concept of "separate but equal" in its 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision.

1900-1941: Rekindling Civil Rights

The Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men. The problem of education then, among Negroes. . . is the problem of developing the Best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst, in their own and other races.

Booker T. Washington, *The Negro Problem*, 1903

Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question. . . How does it feel to be a problem?

W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folks*, 1903

After the Civil War, the period of Reconstruction (1860-1880) saw African Americans making significant gains in American society through election to public office, the creation of successful businesses, participation in advanced educational opportunities, and buying homes and developing a traditional family life. Their success led to strong backlash by some White Americans, especially in the South, who took action to stop this progress. One such action was the rise of sharecropping, or tenant farming, a practice that was especially hard on former slaves trying to establish economic independence by farming their own land. Instead, they became indebted to White land owners and caught in a cycle of poverty that was almost impossible to break. The implementation of taxes and tests to restrict voting rights for African Americans curbed any gains in political representation they had made. This period also saw the rise of White terrorist organizations like the Ku Klux Klan and advanced Jim Crow segregation in the South.

In the early twentieth century, two dominant philosophies emerged that influenced how African Americans approached the struggle to obtain equal rights. Booker T. Washington, the African American educator who developed the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, supported Black uplift, the belief that education and economic success would enable African Americans to integrate and gain acceptance in mainstream—White—society. Washington promoted education in the trades and the establishment of Black-owned business as the means of gaining economic success. Author and sociologist W.E.B. DuBois, founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), took a more radical approach advocating for Black Nationalism—unity among all Black people no matter their country of origin. DuBois believed that by organizing as a monolithic group, African Americans could achieve greater political and economic strength, which would better able them to challenge inequality and demand their rights.³² Both philosophies strongly influenced the civil rights activities of Detroit's African American community prior to World War II. In Detroit, much of the early work of the city's Black leaders during the period 1900 to 1917 was based on the ideology of "racial uplift," the idea that Black economic, material, and moral "progress" would work to diminish White racism. By the 1930s the jobs available to African Americans in Detroit's automobile industry, at the Ford Motor Company in particular, had increased their economic and social progress. Still, acceptance by White society was slow in coming. The city's African American community began to demand equal treatment under the law and, through the courts, worked to establish federal and state laws and policies that ensured their access to equal opportunity. It was during this era that the seeds of a strong Black Nationalist movement were planted in Detroit, which changed the direction of the Civil Rights Movement in the mid-1960s.

³² "Two Nations of Black America. The Debate between W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington." *Frontline*. February 1998. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/debate-w-e-b-du-bois-and-booker-t-washington/>

Detroit and the Great Migration

The early decades of the twentieth century saw the beginning of the Great Migration, the movement of African Americans from the agricultural south to seek better economic opportunities in rapidly industrializing northern cities, and to escape the oppressive racial caste system created by Jim Crow laws in the South that were frequently enforced by violence and lynching. Considered the largest and most rapid internal population movement in American history, the Great Migration came in two distinct waves: the first between World War I and the Great Depression (1916-1930)³³ and the second from World War II to 1970 (1940-1970).

The largest population increases of African Americans in Detroit came at the start of both world wars, when manufacturing jobs were plentiful. When Henry Ford introduced the concept of the assembly line at the Highland Park Ford Plant in 1914, the automobile industry in Detroit exploded making it a natural destination for many of the estimated 1.6 million Blacks moving north during the first Great Migration. Detroit's Black population stood at just under 6,000 in 1910; by 1920 it had increased over 611% to 40,828.³⁴ More than 100 African Americans were arriving in the city each day, and the Detroit Urban League estimated that in the early twentieth century, Detroit experienced "the largest relative growth in African-American population of all the large industrial cities" in America.³⁵

During this period Detroit's African American population, along with other ethnic and marginalized populations, were restricted to living in the Black Bottom/Paradise Valley area of East Detroit. According to a 1917 article in the *Detroit Free Press*,

*Detroit is facing a wartime problem . . . the housing question confronts this city today as it possibly never did before. . . It is more acute locally than in any other northern center of population, because Detroit's unexampled prosperity is the lodestone that is attracting thousands of Negroes, who are flocking here from southern points just as fast as they can accumulate carfare. . . This rush would not be so bad if some provision was made to properly care for the newcomers upon their arrival. The gravity of the situation lies in the fact that, having no other place to go, they are dumped down in a district already the most congested in the city, where they are left to shift for themselves . . . Negroes are not welcome in every neighborhood. A European, be he ever so ignorant can find localities where it is possible for him to rent or buy a home on easy terms. In the same district, a Negro would be turned away, however worthy he might be.*³⁶

The massive influx of rural Southern laborers that came to Detroit at the start of World War I resulted in a housing shortage for African Americans that only deepened over the next decades. In 1917, ten thousand African Americans were crowded into a mile long, half-mile wide section of the city bounded by Macomb, Division, Beaubien, and Hastings Street where "unscrupulous property owners" paid little attention to the upkeep of houses and charged rents that were "proportionately higher than other place in Detroit."³⁷ Newly arriving African Americans were forced to put up with unsanitary conditions in places "without proper light or ventilation, eating, living and sleeping in a single room perhaps, because they have no other place to go."³⁸

³³ Robinson, Julia. *Race, Religion, and the Pulpit*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2015:37.

³⁴ Tompkins Bates, Beth. *The Making of Black Detroit in the Age of Henry Ford*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012:16

³⁵ Martin, Elizabeth Anne. *Detroit and the Great Migration 1916-1929*. Michigan Historical Collection. Bentley Historical Library. Bulletin 40. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. January 1993: 4

³⁶ Shaw, Len. "Detroit's New Housing Problem." *Detroit Free Press*. June 3, 1917:8.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Uplift and Social Justice: Rural Black Migrants and Urban Life

When rural Southern Blacks arrived in Detroit, they were really refugees, directionless with no local contacts, no place to stay, and little money for food. There was a pressing need by “thousands of newcomers for employment, housing, religion, and health care.”³⁹

Second Baptist Church and the Detroit Urban League (DUL) initially took on the responsibility of welcoming newcomers to Detroit and assisting them with basic needs. As early as 1909, Second Baptist Church had established the Christian Industrial Club (CIC) to help rural Blacks assimilate to urban life. In 1915 the CIC purchased an existing farmhouse on 307 Horton Street (extant) and opened the Francis Harper Inn, a refuge for Black women that provided lodging and social welfare activities. By 1921 there were thirty Black churches in Detroit and the Detroit Baptist Union pledged to raise \$100,000 for the work of uplift among the Negroes.⁴⁰



Francis Harper Inn

The Detroit branch of the National Urban League, an early civil rights organization based in New York City, was founded in 1916 at the request of the Associated Charities of Detroit.⁴¹ According to the *Detroit Free Press*, the mission of the DUL was to “integrate the Negro into modern urban communities with mutual benefit for all” through an approach that was “largely sociological.”⁴² A member of the DUL tried to meet every train from the South that arrived at Detroit’s Michigan Central Depot, armed with information about the services they provided. The DUL opened a community center building at 553 East Columbia (demolished) in 1918 to provide temporary shelter for migrants. They created a list of the landlords that would rent to African Americans, kept information on potential job opportunities, and provided legal assistance when needed.⁴³ Over time, they operated a clinic for African American children, founded the Pen and Palette Club to encourage young Black artists, and opened the Green Pastures summer camp in Jackson County, Michigan. Though the DUL’s first locations at 449 (2509) St. Antoine Street and 606 East Vernor Highway have been demolished, in 1944 the organization purchased the former home of architect Albert Kahn (208 Mack Avenue), which remains its headquarters today.

In 1918 the Division of Negro Economics of the U.S. Department of Labor, surveyed the social conditions of African American migrants in Detroit. Its director George Haynes reported that the large

BROTHERHOOD AIDS NEGRO UPLIFT HERE

St. Mark's Society Provides Jobs and Legal Help.

Social service work of St. Mark's Brotherhood has resulted in general benefit to the Negro population of Detroit, according to Rev. Joseph Evans, pastor of Bethel A. M. E. church. The brotherhood is an auxiliary to Bethel church and has been active in the promotion of Negro welfare here for several years.

William E. Smith, president, has given over virtually his entire time to the organization. His reports the fiscal year, just ended, the most successful in the history of the brotherhood. Since September 1, 1914, 6,741 Negro men and 4,802 Negro women applied to the brotherhood for employment. Of this number thousands were given positions.

Statistics show the organization obtained work by the week for 2,271 men and 955 women and work by day for 1,822 women and 123 men. More than 3,000 Negroes were assisted in finding rooms and houses. Besides assistance given adults, hundreds of boys and girls were helped.

Donations amounting to \$116.53 were given for the maintenance of the brotherhood. Expenses were \$188.62, showing a deficit of \$72.09.

The brotherhood has outgrown its present quarters and is making plans for expansion during the year. Its aim is to give free information, free employment service, legal aid, housing service, public stenographic service and food saving instruction.

Officers are: Rev. Joseph M. Evans, pastor; William E. Smith, president; Frank Jenkins, secretary; Charles Garvin, treasurer; Henry M. Burrell, chaplain, and Albert P. Ross, research law clerk. Dorcas Sisterhood: Mrs. Elizabeth Lucas, president; Miss Bernetta Moise, secretary; Mrs. Katie Smythe, treasurer, and Mrs. Elizabeth Linger, chaplain.

³⁹ Martin, Elizabeth. *Detroit and the Great Migration 1916-1929*. Michigan Historical Collection. Bentley Historical Library. Bulletin 40. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. January 1993.

⁴⁰ “To Raise Million for Negro Uplift.” *Detroit Free Press*. January 17, 1921:4.

⁴¹ Chavis, John and William McNitt. *A Brief History of the Detroit Urban League*. Michigan Historical Collections. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. 1971.

⁴² George, Collins. “Three Groups Lead Fight for Negroes.” *Detroit Free Press*. June 21, 1957:3A.

⁴³ Martin, Elizabeth. *Detroit and the Great Migration 1916-1929*. Michigan Historical Collections. Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. 1993.

number of poor southern Blacks that had poured into the city between 1916 and 1918 had altered the existing relationship between Detroit's White and Black populations. According to the survey findings, prior to 1918 Detroit's African Americans had been able to gain a level of acceptance among the White middle class. However, the rough, rural ways and lack of education of Southern Black migrants led to the city's White middle class seeing all African Americans in a negative light. This in turn created a class rift between the city's middle- and lower-income Blacks. Haynes challenged Detroit's church leaders and congregations to help improve the conditions of Black migrants stating, "If directives for service and social responsibility could be nourished by religious imperatives, Black uplift efforts could possibly transcend petty class boundaries between migrants and Black bourgeoisie."⁴⁴ Black congregations took up Haynes's recommendations. According to historian Julia Robinson Moore, "Many African American pastors worked in tandem with local Black elites in creating programs and services, which would help transform the Black migrant's dress, demeanor, and behavior in the public forums of larger society."⁴⁵ For example, Second Baptist Church under Reverend Robert Bradby, who headed the congregation from 1910 to 1946, provided a welcome shelter for Black migrants and the church created "over thirty-five auxiliaries dealing with everything from employment, hygiene, proper dress, cooking, and education."⁴⁶

African Americans and the Ford Motor Company

During the period 1900-1941, Detroit's African American population directly competed for work with the waves of European immigrants that were also flooding the city. White immigrants were "preferred" for skilled jobs in Detroit's industries. When Detroit's employers did hire African Americans for factory work, it was typically for the most dangerous and unskilled labor, such as pouring hot metal in foundries, or for menial tasks such as janitorial maintenance. Among the few municipal jobs available to Blacks were street sweeper and trash collector. White European immigrants also vied with African Americans for good-paying service industry jobs. In hotels and retail stores, Blacks were relegated to "back of the house" operations such as janitors, maids, dishwashers, etc.

One atypical employment program for African Americans was introduced in 1916 by the Detroit Urban League, who worked with the owners of the A. Krolik Company to train African American woman to work in the company's garment factory. The League agreed to pay the rent for the company's manufacturing space and the company agreed to hire and train 75 Black women.⁴⁷ The successful program was copied by the Buhl Malleable Iron Company in 1917 where Black women were trained as coremakers.⁴⁸

What set Detroit apart from other American cities at the turn of the century was the explosion of manufacturing jobs related to the automobile industry. With the construction of the Highland Park Ford Plant in 1910, which enabled the use of an assembly line in the manufacturing process for the first time in world history, the workplace was changed forever. Ford's introduction in January 1914 of both a \$5 workday and a profit-sharing plan for laborers, revolutionized American life and ultimately was responsible for the creation of the middle class, though the company's original intent was simply to stem the loss of workers who could not endure the repetitive work. Participation in Ford's profit sharing plan did not come without strings, however. Henry Ford created a Sociological Department at the Ford Motor Company to monitor the morality of his employees to ensure they were living wholesome, clean

⁴⁴ Robinson, Julia:42.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 41.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 47.

⁴⁷ Martin, Elizabeth. *Detroit and the Great Migration 1916-1929*. Michigan Historical Collection. Bentley Historical Library. Bulletin 40. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. January 1993.

⁴⁸ Thomas, Richard. *Life for Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992:35.

lives—at home as well as at work. Ford utilized European immigrants for the bulk of the company’s workforce and the company’s efforts to assimilate them to American culture and society—it even established the Ford English School—were known as the “Americanization Plan.” When events leading up to World War I slowed the number of immigrants entering the United States, Ford needed to look elsewhere for a labor force. It was then that the Ford Motor Company turned to Detroit’s increasing African American population hiring its first Black worker, William Perry, as a janitor in February of 1914.⁴⁹ With the opening of the massive River Rouge Ford Plant in Dearborn, Michigan, in 1918, Ford’s need for laborers dramatically increased and in 1919 the company began hiring African Americans in large numbers and undertook recruiting efforts in the South. By 1920 there were 1,500 Black laborers employed at the River Rouge plant, increasing to 5,334 by 1922 after the plant’s blast furnaces became operational.⁵⁰

Overall, the Ford Motor Company had what was considered by Detroit’s Black community leaders to be a decent relationship with its African American workers. The groundwork had been laid by Henry Ford’s close working relationship with Booker T. Washington, who had worked with Ford to create new products for use in the auto industry. The Ford Trade School, founded in Dearborn in 1916, was open to young African Americans males who could participate in training and education programs that groomed them for higher level technical and management positions in the company. As a result, the Ford Motor company began to employ a limited number of African Americans in low level management and skilled labor positions. Even so, Ford practiced *de facto* segregation on the factory floor and the majority of African American workers were employed at the company’s River Rouge plant foundry in order to avoid conflict with White workers at its other plants.⁵¹ Henry Ford built worker housing in the nearby cities of Inkster, Ecorse, and Romulus to house Black Ford workers to improve their living conditions. African Americans felt it was to stop them from attempting to move to the city of Dearborn, where the company headquarters and Ford’s home were located. Throughout the 1920s, the Ford Motor Company was the largest employer of African Americans in the automobile industry—it took Chrysler and General Motors more than twenty years to hire African Americans in more than menial positions.

Working with local Black leaders, the Ford company’s “Americanization Plan” was adapted for African American laborers to ensure that only sober, upstanding Black men would be hired in Ford plants. In 1919, Ford developed a relationship with the Reverend Robert L. Bradby of Second Baptist Church, who acted as an employment agent for African Americans seeking jobs at Ford. He assessed potential candidates to ensure they would be the “right” type of employee for Ford. After the opening of the River Rouge Plant, the Ford Motor Company also established a relationship with Father Everard Daniels at St. Matthew’s Protestant Church to find the “right” men for Ford.⁵² The Detroit Urban League under John C. Dancy Jr. assisted African Americans in finding jobs with Detroit’s other automobile companies, which were not as open as Ford to hiring Black workers. In the 1920s Dodge/Chrysler became Detroit’s second largest employer of African American autoworkers.⁵³

Over time, Henry Ford’s partnership with Detroit’s Black church leaders led to a growing rift in the African American community. There were those that remained loyal to Ford for providing economic opportunities to Blacks at a time when few were available. Overall, African Americans employed at the Ford Motor Company earned a decent wage and as a result were able to “step up” from the working to the

⁴⁹Tompkins Bates, Beth. *The Making of Black Detroit in the Age of Henry Ford*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012:41.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 16.

⁵¹ Meier, August and Elliot Rudwick. *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979:15.

⁵² *Ibid*, 10.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 18.

middle class. But Ford's employment system often led to a sense of indebtedness for those that were "chosen" to work there. This was purposeful, as Ford wanted the company's Black laborers to spurn union organizers and remain loyal to Ford. By the mid-1930s as unions began to gain strength, Ford's African American workers were beginning to sense that the relationship as it existed was for the company's benefit and not their own.

Rise of the Ku Klux Klan in Detroit

The decade of the 1920s was a racially charged time throughout the United States. Anti-immigration and anti-Catholic sentiments fueled by the Prohibition Movement led to a rise in white nationalist groups, which saw a resurgence in membership.⁵⁴ According to famed attorney Clarence Darrow,

*The negroes were not the only people who came from the south to the north during the war. White workmen as well as colored ones came up to all our industrial centers. The whites brought with them their deep racial prejudices, and they also brought with them the Ku Klux Klan, which was very powerful for a time at least in every northern city. . . In Detroit, the Klan was strong. . .*⁵⁵

The sudden, rapid increase in Black migrants in Detroit at the start of World War I led White laborers to resent the competition for jobs. This resentment strengthened when the city's African American population doubled in just four years from 40,838 in 1921 to 81,831 in 1925. The perceived threat led to a rise in membership in the Detroit branch of the Ku Klux Klan, which increased from 3,000 in 1921 to 22,000 by 1924.⁵⁶ Established during Reconstruction, the Klan saw a national resurgence in the early 1920s with membership growing to almost 5 million by 1925. In addition to their "anti-Negro" rhetoric, they often used Prohibition to exploit fear against European immigrants, whom they associated with bootlegging and criminal activity.⁵⁷ In Detroit, their target was most often African Americans. The Detroit Ku Klux Klan chapter became so emboldened in 1923 that they burned a cross on the city hall lawn and in 1925 sponsored a write-in Detroit mayoral candidate, Charles Bowles. Though he lost due to more than 10,000 voters misspelling his name, Bowles ran again in 1929 and this time was elected, though he was recalled soon after.⁵⁸

A violent sub-group of the Klan called the Black Legion had formed in Ohio in the early 1920s and gained a stronghold in eastern Michigan by the 1930s, reaching a peak of almost 30,000 members statewide. They used acts of violence to terrorize Blacks, Jews, and others until eleven Black Legion members were convicted in the murder of a WPA organizer in Detroit in 1936.⁵⁹ Racism in Detroit was further inflamed in the 1930s by Father Charles Coughlin, a Catholic priest with a radio show who broadcast racist and anti-Semitic rants to millions of Americans. He was perceived as a fascist, and

⁵⁴ Little, Becky. How Prohibition Fueled the Rise of the Ku Klux Klan. *History Stories*. February 19, 2019. History.com.

⁵⁵ Darrow, Clarence. "Clarence Darrow on the Sweet Trials, Detroit 1925-1926." *The Story of My Life*. American Class. Becoming Modern America in the 1920s.

<http://americainclass.org/sources/becomingmodern/divisions/text2/darrowsweettrials.pdf>

⁵⁶ Tompkins Bates, Beth. *The Making of Black Detroit in the Age of Henry Ford*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012:82

⁵⁷ Little, Becky. "How Prohibition Fueled the Rise of the Ku Klux Klan." *History Stories*. History.com February 19, 2019.

⁵⁸ Pies, Timothy Mark. "The Parochial School Campaigns in Michigan, 1920-1924: The Lutheran and Catholic Involvement." *The Catholic Historical Review* 72, no. 2 (1986): 222-38. Accessed March 15, 2021.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25022269:235>.

⁵⁹ "The murder that brought down the Black Legion." *The Detroit News*. August 4, 1997.

Detroit's African American church leaders called upon the city's Black population to ignore the divide he tried to create between its Jewish and African American citizens.⁶⁰

The Great Depression 1930-1940

The decade of the Great Depression was a difficult one for the nation's Black population. The economic crash "erased the category known as 'Negro Jobs,'" domestic work, semi-skilled, and unskilled labor. African Americans were among the first to lose jobs and the last to be included in federal relief programs.⁶¹ Detroit's Black population was hit especially hard as automobile production dropped from 4.4 million in 1929 to 1.1 million in 1932. The job losses in Detroit's main industry rippled down and throughout the city's economy. By 1932 unemployment for Black men in Detroit was 40 percent and 55 percent for Black women.⁶²

One of the greatest achievements for African Americans during this period was the recognition of the political power of Black voters, by both the Black community and those outside of it. As one writer put it, "It is most significant that, recently, Negro papers suddenly began to advocate the necessity for unification of the colored race."⁶³ This power came from a growing association with the Democratic Party and through the efforts of Black laborers to gain a voice within the newly formed United Autoworkers union (UAW).

Rise of African American Political Power in Detroit

Since 1917, Detroit's auto industry had been drawing workers from outside the state and by 1930 Michigan's overall population had increased to two million. Most of that increase was in Wayne County whose population grew from 531,000 to 1.8 million during that period. As a result of these population increases, Michigan gained four new Congressional seats—three from the rapidly urbanizing area of metro Detroit.⁶⁴ This was also a time when Detroit's African American population rose from 40,838 in 1920 to 120,000 in 1930.

Politically, as a state, Michigan had voted Republican since the establishment of that party in 1854. However the deteriorating economic circumstances of the Depression and the state's devastating unemployment numbers made voters eager for change in policies and leadership. In the 1932 presidential election, Michigan's White voters changed allegiance shifting from the Republican to the Democratic Party in order to vote for Franklin D. Roosevelt. The Democrats also supported the repeal of Prohibition, which was popular among the electorate. While most Blacks still identified as Republican in 1932, a newly organized Black voting bloc was emerging that would realize its power in the second half of the decade.

The 1932 presidential candidacy of Democrat Franklin Roosevelt was met with mixed reaction by African Americans nationwide. Roosevelt had no record on civil rights and had shown little interest in civil rights issues during his tenures as a governor, senator, and Secretary of the Navy.

⁶⁰ "Blow is aimed at propaganda: Fascism is assailed at Negro session." *Detroit Free Press*. April 14, 1939:9

⁶¹ Sitkoff, Harvard. *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue: The Depression Decade*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Takahashi, S.K. "Development of our Own." *The Tribune Independent (Detroit)*. April 12, 1934:1.

⁶⁴ Grant Sr., Phillip A. "The Presidential Election of 1932." *Michigan Historical Review*. Vol 12, No.1. Spring 1986.

During his first presidential campaign, Roosevelt took a pragmatic view of his path to election. To win, he needed the support of a powerful group of Southern Congressmen who were strongly anti-Black. Roosevelt struck bargains with them, remaining silent on proposed anti-lynching legislation and on the elimination of a poll tax that would restrict Black votes. Even so, his campaign gained the support of Black leaders, from the NAACP to Black newspaper editors, who were angered by the anti-voting rights nominees Republicans had made to the U. S. Supreme Court. Robert L. Vann, editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, led a coalition of Black newspapers calling for the defection of Black voters from the Republican party stating, “My friends, go turn Lincoln’s picture to the wall. That debt has been paid in full.” The time had come for Black voters to concentrate on “present needs.”⁶⁵

In Detroit an astute group, consisting of Black attorneys Harold E. Bledsoe Jr. and Joseph A. Craigen Jr. and businessmen Charles Diggs Sr. and Joseph C. Coles, recognized the city’s African American community would fare better and see increased opportunity through an affiliation with the Democratic Party. In 1928 these men formed the Michigan Democratic League to convince Black voters to reject Republicanism. Bledsoe’s affiliation with the Democrats had begun even earlier, in 1926, when he launched “a one-man crusade to give Blacks a legitimate role in Michigan party politics” and to ensure that state and county patronage appointment promises to African Americans were honored.⁶⁶ Realizing the political significance the unification of Detroit’s African American voters would have on the Democratic Party nationally, the Party appointed a special committee to investigate how such a turnover could be accomplished. Headed by Harold Bledsoe, the work of this committee led to the formation of the Michigan Federated Democratic Club (MFDC) in 1932. Headquartered at 43 E. Garfield Street (demolished), it was the first all-Black Democratic organization in the nation. Over time it grew to become an influential national organization, housing 31 branches and 8,000 members.⁶⁷ But in 1932 only Detroit and Manhattan had been successful in turning the majority of their African American voters from Republicans to Democrats.⁶⁸ It marked the beginning of new era and for the first time in history the Democratic political machine acknowledged how important the Black vote was within the party’s balance of power. Harold Bledsoe was named Assistant State Attorney General in 1934. Over the next two years, approximately 40 African Americans obtained positions within Michigan state government. An article in the *Tribune Independent* noted,

*Negros now hold jobs of importance in the state that were never held before by members of the race and that is something for the Republicans to shoot at. Comes this thought: If the Republican party returns to power in the next election, as it more likely will, what will become of these forty odd jobs that Negroes now hold under the Democrats?*⁶⁹

The New Deal’s progressive social programs should have been of great benefit to African Americans but during Roosevelt’s first term as president they gained little from them. Once

⁶⁵ Sitkoff:87.

⁶⁶ “Black Professionals Honor Michigan’s Harold Bledsoe.” *Jet*. July 27, 1972:48.

⁶⁷ Mitchell, Clifford. “Progressiveness of Democratic Leaders in Michigan Lauded by Ex-Prisoner.” *Pittsburgh Courier*. September 2, 1933:5.

⁶⁸ Sitkoff:89

⁶⁹ Crump, Robert. “The Political Horizon.” *The Tribune Independent* (Detroit). July 28, 1934:8.

elected, Roosevelt continued to make deals with Southern Democrats to get New Deal legislation passed. According to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) publication *The Crisis*, the situation for Blacks actually worsened in the earliest years of the New Deal. In 1933 there were just over 2 million African Americans on relief, by 1935 there were 3.5 million.⁷⁰ To appease Southern legislators, early New Deal programs either barred African Americans from participating in benefits directly or, if they could participate, the conditions and requirements were extremely unfavorable. For example, the National Recovery Act (NRA) did not disallow discrimination in employment or wages; Jim Crow laws remained in place in the Armed Forces, which allowed African Americans to only serve in menial jobs such as kitchen workers in the U.S. Navy; and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) formed segregated Black units whose operations were overseen by White supervisors. The establishment of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and its subsequent adoption of the policy of excluding Blacks from home mortgage loans through a redlining system was among the worst policies of the New Deal, leaving a legacy that continues to negatively affect Black housing, employment, and educational opportunities today.

Detroit did gain a strong connection to New Deal program implementation when Forrester B. Washington, the first director of the Detroit Urban League (1916-1918), was appointed as an assistant to Harry Hopkins the National Director of the Civil Works Administration (CWA) in 1934. As head of the Negro Work of the Federal Emergency Relief and Civil Works Administrations, Washington oversaw “all phases of relief and civil works as they affect Negroes in all parts of the country.”⁷¹ Following Washington’s appointment things began to improve for African Americans during Roosevelt’s second term in office. It was then that the legislative framework for the modern civil rights movement was laid. While President Roosevelt had not been an early champion of Black civil rights for practical political reasons, many in his inner circle were. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt leant her strong voice, guided by her friendship with Black activist Mary McLeod Bethune, while Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes was a supporter of integrated schools and voting rights enforcement. As Roosevelt geared up for the 1936 reelection campaign, he put an emphasis on attracting groups such as “organized labor, farmers, Black Americans, young people, women and independents all of whom had a stake in New Deal policies.”⁷²

⁷⁰ Davis, John P. “A Black Inventory of the New Deal.” *The Crisis*. May 1935:141.

⁷¹ “Receives Post at Capitol.” *The Tribune Independent* (Detroit). February 10, 1934:1.

⁷² Spencer, Thomas T. “Old Democrats and New Deal Policies.” Bloomington: *Indiana Magazine of History*. Vol. 92, No. 1 (March 1996), pp. 26-45. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27791892>.

Detroit's African Americans and the Labor Unions

In 1926 the Ford Motor Company was the largest employer of African Americans in Detroit's auto industry with 10,000 Black laborers. The second largest was Dodge Brothers, whose Black labor force in 1926 totaled only 850. Automobile manufacturing suppliers Bohn Aluminum, Midland Steel, and Briggs Manufacturing also had a high percentage of Black workers in their labor force.⁷³

As unemployment rose during the Great Depression, labor unions began to gain prominence among factory workers. One of the nation's earliest organized labor unions was the American Federation of Labor (AFL), an association of trade unions established in 1886. The AFL was not supportive of Black workers. However, the political clout they had attained by the early 1930s enabled them to participate in the negotiations that established New Deal programs. The national Urban League and NAACP leaders took notice and began encouraging the development of a stronger partnership between local Black leaders and organized labor leaders in communities across the nation. In Detroit, the idea was not well received. The pastors of some of the city's most prominent Black churches, such as Robert Bradby at Second Baptist, Everard Daniel at St. Matthew's, and William Beck at Bethel AME, had developed strong ties to Ford's personnel department that they were unwilling to relinquish. The AFL's poor track record on African American issues provided no incentive for Black leaders to work with them. It was not until the establishment of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) by John L. Lewis in 1935 and the rise of the United Auto Workers in that organization in 1936, thanks to the work of Walter Reuther, that Detroit's African American workers began to see any real potential in aligning with an organized labor group. The advantages of unionization were further championed in Detroit by Louis Martin, editor of the newly established *Michigan Chronicle* newspaper and Horace A. White, a young clergyman who had accepted the ministry at Plymouth Congregational Church. According to historians Meier and Rudwick, ". . . by the opening of 1937, amid the social ferment of the Depression and the New Deal, the seeds of future change had been planted."⁷⁴

The period 1937 to 1941 was one of contention between Detroit's Black workers and organized labor. While Black union representatives tried to get union leadership to address initiatives that would improve working conditions and provide more management opportunities for Blacks, they were repeatedly told the time was not yet right and they should be patient and wait. Thus, when the unions held major strikes such as the Flint Sit-Down Strike in 1937, Black workers were more likely to be among the strikebreakers than the strikers, as they had little respect for or allegiance to the UAW. Though both General Motors and Chrysler were unionized as result of the 1937 strikes, leaders of the UAW realized they would need Black worker support if the Ford Motor Company were to be unionized. To gain it, they hired a salaried African American union organizer named Paul Kirk in 1937. Shortly thereafter they brought on another African American named Tim Hardin and established the Committee in Charge of Organization Work Among Negroes, more commonly known as the UAW's "Negro Department."

⁷³ Meier, August and Elliott Rudwick. *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979:6-7.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*:33.

In 1937, the 28th annual convention of the national NAACP was held at Cass Technical High School in Detroit June 29-July 4. On July 3, 1937, the banner headline of the *Detroit Tribune*, read “CIO Issue Rocks NAACP Meet.” CIO vice president Homer Martin had been placed on the agenda to speak about the benefits of organized labor for Black workers.⁷⁵ The uproar that followed exposed the growing rift between the old guard Black leaders like Reverend Everard Daniel of St. Matthews Church, a long-time supporter of the Ford Motor Company, and newcomers like UAW supporter, Reverend Horace White of Plymouth Congregational Church. In an editorial in the *Detroit Tribune*, White criticized Ford Motor Company’s treatment of its Black workers noting, “[Black] Men who work at the Ford plant have no seniority rights.”⁷⁶ This was based on his observation that Black men that had worked at the Ford Motor Company for years that had been laid off at the beginning of the Depression and were not rehired. Instead, they were replaced when the economy improved. As the realities of Ford’s relationship with Black workers were exposed, more Black leaders saw that the benefits for Black workers might be greater under the UAW. The Reverend William Peck of Bethel AME Church, began allowing union organizers to meet at the church until Henry Bennett, the notoriously violent head of the Ford Service Department, initiated a campaign of threats to stop Black organizations from allowing the UAW the use of their facilities for meetings and speeches. Initially, the pressure caused a political splintering within the UAW over tactics and leadership and led to a decline in Black UAW members. The relationship began to mend, however, in 1939 when the UAW supported Black labor leaders when White workers went on strike at a Chrysler plant to protest placing African Americans on assembly lines. This forged a bond that continued to grow over the next two years.⁷⁷

Birth of the Civil Rights Movement 1941-1954

*This is a crucial period in the history of the American-colored people. For the first time there seems to be a concerted national drive on the part of public and private agencies to freeze us into a status of second-class citizenship while we are being lulled to sleep with professions of affection of our ‘friends’ who want to do away with discrimination while condoning segregation.*⁷⁸

Judge Herman T. Moore, District Court of the Virgin Islands

Not long after German troops invaded Poland in September 1939 and with the possibility of the United States entering the European war looming on the horizon, Detroit’s African American community began to push for more opportunities to serve the country. According to an article in the *Detroit Free Press*, “Early in the development of national defense the Negro people began to express resentment over what they felt was discrimination in the enlistment and assignment of Negroes in the military services.”⁷⁹ In June 1940, Michigan State Senator Charles C. Diggs Sr. sent a telegram to the annual meeting of the Conference of Governors being held in Duluth, Minnesota. In it he stated, “The War and Navy Department including the National Guard have. . . denied participation of the Negro in the several branches of the defense service. We resent and protest this policy.”⁸⁰ He then asked for the Conference to

⁷⁵ “CIO Issue Rocks NAACP Meet.” *Detroit Tribune*. July 3, 1937.

⁷⁶ White, Horace A. “Up the Wrong Tree.” *Detroit Tribune*. August 28, 1927:6.

⁷⁷ Meier, August and Elliott Rudwick. *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979:61-71.

⁷⁸ “Two Conferences and the Future.” *Pittsburgh Courier*. May 8, 1943:1.

⁷⁹ Weeks, Jack. “Detroiters Protest.” *Detroit Free Press*. June 16, 1941:1.

⁸⁰ “Protest Meetings May Call Attention to Army Jim-Crow Ban.” *Pittsburgh Courier*. June 22, 1940:4.

adopt a policy that supported full integration of the Armed Services. If they did not, he threatened that African Americans would hold protest rallies in every state in the union on the Fourth of July.⁸¹ At that time, Black men were barred completely from serving in the Marine Corps and were only allowed to serve as cooks and waiters in the Navy's Mess Corp. At the national level the NAACP, a number of editors of Black newspapers, and other civil rights groups began pressing President Roosevelt to create ways for Black men to serve in the Armed Forces. In response, Roosevelt included historically Black colleges, such as the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, in the roster of schools participating in the first Civilian Pilot Training Program (CPTP). In 1941 the U.S. Army announced the formation of a Negro Air Squadron at the Tuskegee Institute after 400 enlisted men, a large number of which were from Detroit, had completed their training.⁸² In 1943 the Tuskegee Airmen trained at Selfridge Air Base in Southeast Michigan. When the United States Air Force was formed in 1947, the outstanding performance of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II led President Truman to sign an Executive Order that started the process of desegregating the United States military.⁸³ Today, the Tuskegee Airmen National Museum is located at 6325 West Jefferson at Fort Wayne in Detroit.

Discrimination and the Red Cross

Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the American Red Cross announced a nationwide blood drive to assist wounded soldiers. In Detroit, a group of African American members of the Detroit Teacher's Union attempted to participate in the drive by giving blood at the Red Cross blood bank located at 4105 Cass Street, but their contributions were denied.⁸⁴ They were informed it was a policy of the Secretary Generals of the Army and the Navy to only accept blood from White donors. The Red Cross admitted that the policy was based in "psychology" not science, as some people opposed the "mixing" of Black and White blood. Science had shown that all blood was the same. Sylvia Tucker, one of the rejected Detroit Teacher's Union donors, was the first person to protest this policy writing an appeal directly to Eleanor Roosevelt stating, "This is not a letter of hate, despite the disappointment and bitterness and humiliation I suffered at the Red Cross on last Thursday—rather, it is an appeal for immediate mutual understanding . . . The American Red Cross holds the destiny of thousands of Americans—white and black. Make them understand that we are Americans too."⁸⁵ After weeks of protest, the Red Cross implemented a segregated blood donation program, which they continued until 1952.

African Americans Demand Equal Participation in Defense Work

The defense work available in northern cities during World War II led to the second phase of the Great Migration as some five million African Americans moved from the South to northern manufacturing centers like Chicago, Detroit, and New York. Detroit's Black population nearly doubled during this period rising from 149,119 in 1940 to 300,506 by 1950. By the end of 1944, while Detroit's White population decreased by more than 32,000, the city's African American population had increased by more than 62,555 or 47 percent.⁸⁶

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² "U.S. Army to Form Negro Air Squadron." *Detroit Free Press*. January 17, 1941:1.

⁸³ "Who Were They?" Tuskegee Airmen National Historical Museum website. <https://www.tuskegeemuseum.org/who-were-they/>

⁸⁴ Cassey, Alfred. "Red Cross Says Refusal of Negro Blood is U.S. Order." *Detroit Tribune*. December 20, 1941:1.

⁸⁵ Love, Spencie. *One Blood: The Death and Resurrection of Charles R. Drew*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 2000:188.

⁸⁶ "Detroit Area Population Rises Jumps 201,000 in 4 years." *Detroit Free Press*. September 7, 1944:3.

According to historian Sidney Fine, “Between 1941 and 1945 fair employment occupied the central place in the national struggle for civil rights” and “was the driving force behind the Negro protest movement.”⁸⁷ In 1940 Detroit’s Black citizens were already unhappy with the lack of employment of African Americans in the skilled trades in Michigan’s major automobile factories. Unlike in other cities in Michigan, Black men in Detroit had little trouble participating in the federal government’s defense vocational education programs. However, once they completed them they still were not hired for skilled jobs in Detroit’s defense plants.

In preparation for the war, the federal government established the Office of Production Management (OPM) in January 1941 to handle war related procurement and production. In April, the OPM sent a notice to all defense manufacturers that discrimination against African Americans in defense work was a national problem and asked companies to stop engaging in the practice.⁸⁸ The notice had little effect. The warning was reiterated in June by President Franklin Roosevelt when he issued a statement that he had received numerous complaints from Black workers across the country about how they were being barred from participating in defense work. He asked the OPM to investigate and resolve the issue.⁸⁹ In Detroit, a team of Black leaders, headed by Dr. James McClendon, president of the NAACP; John Dancy, Executive Director of the DUL; and Ernest Marshall, Executive Director of the Board of Education and Coordinator of Vocational Training Programs for the National Defense Program, lodged complaints with Governor Murray Van Wagoner and Detroit Mayor Edward Jeffries about the level of discrimination still occurring in Detroit factories that held defense contracts. In response, a committee was appointed to work jointly with the Detroit Chamber of Commerce to assess the situation. To expedite data collection, the NAACP undertook a survey of Detroit’s major manufacturers to determine their employment practices as related to African Americans. The Ford Motor Company was exempted from the survey because it was “the only large employer in the auto industry whom the colored spokesmen exonerate of discrimination. . . . Ford is the only factory in Wayne County that has colored people integrated throughout the plant—in personnel departments, as foremen, and as star men. Ford is the only employer who accepts Negro boys in a trade school.”⁹⁰ In contrast, the NAACP survey found that General Motors (GM) employed only 1,000 African American workers in its 140,000-person workforce. While GM employed some African American workers at its Cadillac plant, none were employed at its Fischer Body facilities. The Chrysler Corporation employed 2,500 African American, all in menial labor positions. Out of the 384 Detroit-based manufacturers surveyed, 272 said they employed no African Americans at all and 71 of those stated they had no intention of ever employing them. As defense work geared up in Detroit’s factories, frustration grew among the city’s Black population who saw defense-related jobs going almost exclusively to White workers.⁹¹ The unions had been of very little help in reversing this trend, though the UAW did pledge to provide more assistance to Black workers.

Unable to get a satisfactory resolution from the OPM, Black labor activist A. Philip Randolph threatened to hold a massive march on Washington, D.C. if discrimination in defense hiring did not end. To diffuse the situation, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8802 on June 25, 1941 prohibiting discrimination in wartime industries and creating the Fair Employment Practice Committee to review cases related to any such discrimination. Randolph’s proposed march on Washington was called off, but it led to the formation of a national March on Washington Movement (MOWM), the first grassroots-based tool to be used by civil rights advocates.⁹² The MOWM was established to use “the technique of militant

⁸⁷ Fine, Sidney. *Expanding the Frontiers of Civil Rights: Michigan, 1948-1968*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017.

⁸⁸ “Roosevelt Decries Ban on Negro Arms Workers.” *Detroit Free Press*. June 16, 1941:1.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Weeks, Jack. “Detroiters Protest.” *Detroit Free Press*. June 16, 1941:1.

⁹² “March on Washington Movement.” *BlackPast*. Blackpast.org.

mass pressure in the field of minority problems where other techniques have broken down.”⁹³ The policy and structure for the MOWM were formulated in Detroit in October 1942 where 60 delegates from Midwestern cities met with Randolph at the Lucy Thurman YWCA. There it was decided that individual cities would each establish an MOWM chapter. A national Policy and Strategy Board would be created to direct a “national pressure campaign”⁹⁴ to end discrimination in the Armed Forces and to stop segregation in public accommodations. MOMW would use boycotts, mass meetings, and street protests to accomplish their goals. One of the first tactics would be targeted, organized protests at city halls in the nation’s most populous cities. If a civil rights issue was not resolved and further action was needed, then each chapter would vote on whether a united march on Washington, D.C. should be undertaken. The MOWM was active between 1941-1947 and though it never organized a march on Washington during that time, its work served as the model for the march on Washington that was held in 1963.

To raise awareness and increase support for ending hiring discrimination in Detroit’s defense plants, the Detroit NAACP and the Negro Committee of the CIO held a number of events and conferences in late summer and fall of 1941. On August 3, a “Negro Patriotic Celebration” was held on Belle Isle.⁹⁵ Attended by 20,000 people, the keynote speaker was Mary McLeod Bethune, director of the Division of Negro Affairs for the National Youth Administration, a trusted advisor of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and a member of President Roosevelt’s “Negro Cabinet.” Her well-received speech given from the Belle Isle band shelter was part of a “This is Our America Too” program directed to African Americans⁹⁶ In it she noted, “the Negro has been challenged: he must be prepared to defend America with the best he has, and to defend his own race.”⁹⁷ This was the predominant civil rights theme just prior to the outbreak of World War II. If America was going to fight for freedom and equality abroad, then it must address its own civil rights failings at home and work to ensure the equal rights of Black Americans.

On August 28, 1941, the federal OPM expanded its call to end “discrimination against Negroes in the hiring of Government workers.”⁹⁸ With a strong federal policy now in place, African American workers in Detroit’s manufacturing plants began a push to increase African American representation within the unions, especially the UAW-CIO, by serving on committees, running candidates for union offices, and introducing policy resolutions against discriminatory practices. One such resolution adopted by the CIO pledged to support an African American candidate for a seat on the Detroit Common Council.⁹⁹

In October, the Detroit NAACP sponsored a statewide conference for African American defense workers from across Michigan. Held at the Lucy Thurman YWCA and Ebenezer AME Baptist Church, over 1,000 people attended. The purpose of the conference was “to discuss training, apprenticeship and employment of Negroes in defense industries.”¹⁰⁰ That meeting was followed in November by a meeting of the Negro Committee of the UAW-CIO, which also held a conference at the Lucy Thurman YWCA to discuss discrimination in Detroit’s defense plants. Attended by representatives of the OPM, UAW, CIO, and the NAACP, a significant outcome was to schedule a meeting with Chrysler

⁹³ Boykin, Ulysses W. “Midwesterners Meet in Detroit, Plan March on Washington.” *Detroit Tribune*. October 3, 1942:1.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*

⁹⁵ “Negro Patriotic Celebration Draws 20,00 to Belle Isle.” *Detroit Free Press*. August 4, 1941:2.

⁹⁶ “Fight for the Right to Fight” *Detroit Tribune*. August 9, 1941:1.

⁹⁷ “Beyond Race.” *Detroit Free Press*. August 5, 1941:6.

⁹⁸ “OPM Unit Asks a Ban on Race Discrimination.” *Detroit Free Press*. August 28, 1941:2

⁹⁹ “Negro Activity in Labor Unions.” *Detroit Tribune*. June 28, 1941:14.

¹⁰⁰ “Two-Day Labor Conference will be held at St. Antoine Y.” *Detroit Tribune*. October 4, 1941:1.

Motor Company officials “for the purpose of eliminating the present discriminatory policies against Negro labor.”¹⁰¹

Black Laborers, the UAW, and the Unionization Ford

On April 2, 1941 5,000 Ford workers walked off the job in support of a UAW sit-down strike after eight Ford workers were fired for promoting the union on Ford property. It was the first major strike in the Ford Motor Company’s history. When it ended ten days later, the Ford River Rouge plant was unionized—a significant victory for the UAW.¹⁰² The strike also marked a turning point in the relationship between Black laborers and the UAW.

Since its beginning, the UAW had offered tenuous support for Black workers, asking for their continued patience as the fledgling union worked to gain strength and political power. Repeatedly, Black workers found their interests subjugated to those of White union members. Disillusioned, many Black workers had not even shown support for the UAW during the Ford strike and instead remained on the job. On April 6, 1941, over 250 Black leaders met at Detroit’s Plymouth Congregational Church to discuss the direction Black Ford workers should take—should they remain aligned with the Ford Motor Company or side with the UAW. At the meeting, even the radical activist Reverend Albert Cleage Jr. contended that Ford had long been a friend to Black workers and that relationship should be honored.¹⁰³ But the newfound strength of the UAW was undeniable after the Ford strike and “the eventual embrace of the United Autoworkers by African American workers in Detroit would change both the city and the labor movement.”¹⁰⁴ For their part the UAW, realizing the political stakes were high, undertook a major campaign to attract Black laborers.

In the fall of 1941, Detroit’s autoworkers faced the prospect that 45,000 workers might be laid off as the city’s auto factories began to switch from domestic to military production. In the months before the United States officially entered the war, it was estimated that only 7,000 of those 45,000 jobs would be reinstated for defense work. For example, the Ford Motor Company had been hiring African Americans to work in its River Rouge plant foundries but refused to hire African American workers in its aircraft plants fearing racial conflicts if Black and White laborers worked next to each other on the assembly lines. Angered, Ford’s African American employees turned to the UAW for help. They wanted Ford to adopt a seniority system that would ensure African Americans would not lose their jobs during the transition. They also demanded an educational program on race relations be put into place with the purpose of alleviating racial tensions as more Blacks moved into formerly White dominated jobs.¹⁰⁵

The bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 and America’s entry into the war created an immediate need for defense work. Almost overnight, Detroit’s automobile factories were converted to wartime production to meet President Roosevelt’s declaration that America would become the “Arsenal of Democracy.” As the nation’s White male population were absorbed into the armed services and the pace of production in Detroit’s factories increased, the need for more defense workers became critical. To fill the labor void, Detroit’s wartime industries turned to women, African Americans and, to a lesser degree, Hispanic workers. There was hope in Detroit’s Black community that this would finally lead to

¹⁰¹ “Confab with Chrysler Set for This Week.” *Detroit Tribune*. November 8, 1941:2.

¹⁰² “Ford Plant Opens to Prepare for Work After Picket Lines Dissolve and Troopers Depart.” *Detroit Free Press*. April 12, 1941:1.

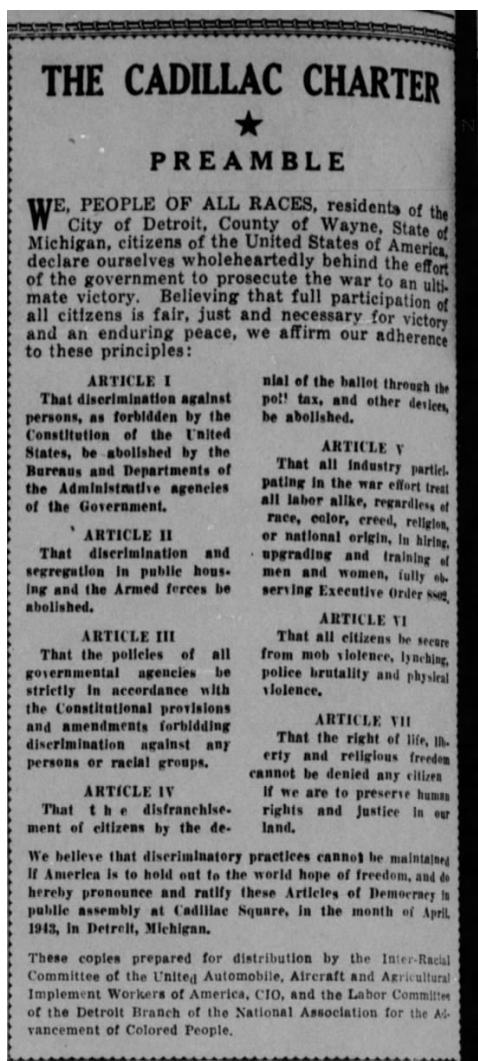
¹⁰³ “Negroes Study the Ford Strike.” *Detroit Free Press*. April 7, 1941:8.

¹⁰⁴ Sands, David. “African American UAW Organizing Played Key Role in Labor, Civil Rights Movement.” *Huffington Post*. March 1, 2013. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/african-american-uaw_n_2763344.

¹⁰⁵ Cayton, Horace. “Serious Situation Confronts Detroit-Negro Auto Workers.” *Pittsburgh Courier*. October 19, 1941:1.

economic and social equality in the city. Two organizations were formed to ensure that federal fair labor practices were upheld in Detroit, the Interracial Metropolitan Detroit Council on Fair Employment Practices (MDFEPC) and the all-Black Citizens Council for Jobs in War Industry, which was organized by Black UAW leaders and headed by the Reverend Charles Hill of Hartford Memorial Baptist Church. Though the Citizens Council for Jobs was not long-lived, it did initiate marches and protests and was instrumental in getting the Ford Motor Company to hire Black women.¹⁰⁶

To further the hiring of Black women as defense workers, activist Rosa Gragg, president of the Detroit Association of Women's Clubs prepared a "Victory Plan," which was sent to President Roosevelt in October 1942. In it she outlined ten points that needed to be addressed in order to get 10,000 Black women prepared for work in the defense industry. A key point was the implementation of the "Institute on the Training and Hiring of Negro Women in War Work" so that Black women could "work in every department on every machine where other women workers are employed."¹⁰⁷ Even after defense work



Detroit Tribune, April 17, 1943.

training was established, Black women had difficulty taking advantage of it, especially if it was offered by private industries where they were denied entry into training programs due to the color of their skin. For example, a young Detroit Black woman named Thelma Johnson was awaiting special training at the Briggs Manufacturing Company after passing a civil service exam. At first she was told training classes were full. When that statement was challenged on her behalf by Senator Charles Diggins Sr., the plant foreman indicated that Ms. Johnson would need to restart the program application process over from the beginning. When pressed, the foreman finally revealed that the reason she would not be included in the training class was that there were no segregated restrooms in the plant and "the American Way of Life" could not be upset by allowing a Black woman to use the same facilities White female employees.¹⁰⁸

In October 1942 following up on its promise to support African American workers, the UAW-CIO Inter-Racial Committee held a conference in Detroit where it condemned most existing anti-discrimination organizations and committees—from federal government agencies to the March on Washington Movement—for failing to desegregate defense employment. At the Detroit conference it was decided that the national convention of the CIO scheduled in Boston in November 1942, would become "the battleground for demanding a show-down from the War Labor Board on the employment of Negroes throughout the defense industries." At a meeting at Detroit's Scott Methodist Church Victor Reuther, the UAW's assistant coordinator for War Policy, supported the plan.

In April 1943, the Detroit NAACP and the UAW-CIO Inter-Racial Committee jointly sponsored a rally to persuade Detroit's auto companies to hire local Black workers rather than importing

¹⁰⁶ Fine Sidney. *Expanding the Frontiers of Civil Rights: Michigan, 1948-1968*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017.

¹⁰⁷ "Mrs. Gragg Offers Victory Plan on Employment to FDR." *Detroit Tribune*. October 2, 1942:5.

¹⁰⁸ "Denied Work as Whites Want Separate Toilets." *Detroit Tribune*. October 31, 1942:1.

White workers from outside Detroit. One purpose of the rally was to “focus attention on the large number of Negro women who are available for employment in Detroit’s war plants.” Over 5,000 rally participants gathered at the Detroit Institute of Arts and marched down John R to Cadillac Square.”¹⁰⁹ In preparation for the rally the NAACP introduced the “Cadillac Charter,” which called for an end to poll taxes, segregation in war housing, and discriminatory practices in employment and the armed forces.¹¹⁰

Throughout the years of war production, though the relationship between the UAW and Detroit’s African American workers was solidifying, it was still fraught with problems. Black laborers were often subject to open acts of employment discrimination, such as being kept from work by being told there were no skilled or higher paying jobs available, only to discover that a White person applying for such a job had been hired. According to Black labor activist Charles Denby in Spring 1943, “Every Negro in Detroit was talking about the discrimination in hiring.”¹¹¹ Black workers believed they were not getting full representation in the UAW and feared that any gains they were making under the Fair Employment Practices Committee would be lost when the war ended.

Detroit Race Riot of 1943

Throughout 1941 the families of Black defense workers had been antagonized by political flip flopping on a decision regarding the racial occupancy of a much need federal defense housing complex originally designated for African Americans, Sojourner Truth Homes. After almost a year of verbal battling, physical violence erupted when Black families attempted to move into the complex in February 1942. The Michigan National Guard was called in and a moratorium was placed on occupation of the complex by Mayor Edward Jeffries until Detroit’s Black leaders gained the attention of President Roosevelt. Black residents were finally able to move into the public housing complex late in March 1942. (see Fair Housing).

Resentment continued to mount between Detroit’s White and Black communities throughout 1942. White Detroiters felt threatened by the large influx of Blacks that continued to arrive from the South and were seen as competition for jobs. African Americans still encountered segregation and discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations despite federal policies and patriotic rhetoric. A sense of deflation began to set in among Black Detroiters when the gains in equality they had hoped for from the passage of the federal Fair Employment Act in 1941 had not fully materialized. Incidents of injustice against Blacks began to build. For example, labor activist Charles Denby recalled that tensions were very high in early June 1943 when an incident occurred at the Eastwood Amusement Park at Gratiot and Eight Mile in Detroit. Though they could use the park, African Americans were banned from swimming in its pool. Denby claimed a small group of young Black men, who had been drafted and were soon to be sent overseas, decided that if they were able to die for their country, they certainly had the right to swim in a community pool.¹¹² When they attempted to do so, a fight broke out between Whites and Black at the park. The years of enduring many such frustrations finally came to a head a week later, resulting in an event that became a defining moment in the history of race relations in Detroit.

In 1943 two significant civil rights events occurred simultaneously in Detroit: a strike at the Packard Motor Company and an emergency meeting of the NAACP. Pressed by federal authorities to meet federal requirements for fair employment in defense work, Packard’s management finally agreed to hire more Black workers in higher paying positions. On June 3rd, three qualified Black men were “elevated” to work on the assembly line in the plant’s tear-down department. This was the first time Blacks and Whites

¹⁰⁹ “5,000 at Rally Ask Jobs for City’s Negro Women.” *Detroit Free Press*. April 12, 1943:19.

¹¹⁰ “Parade Rally will Protest Discrimination.” *Detroit Free Press*. April 8, 1943:3.

¹¹¹ Denby, Charles. *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker’s Journal*. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1979.

¹¹² *Ibid*,110.

would work next to each other on an assembly line at Packard. Immediately, a wildcat strike was called at the plant and, 25,000 outraged White workers walked out. UAW president R. J. Thomas responded with this statement, “The question has arisen as to whether Negroes should be upgraded. Good God—where is our organization when people have to ask that question?”¹¹³ Thomas later blamed the walkout on interference from the Ku Klux Klan.¹¹⁴ The three Black workers were soon laid off to appease the 300 White workers who refused to return work if they remained on the line. In response, more than 2,000 Black workers walked out of the Packard plant and met at the Slavish Labor Temple to discuss how to rally support for their action.¹¹⁵ After negotiations with the Packard plant’s administration, the three Black workers retained their new positions and the majority of the White workers agreed to return to work.

The second event was an emergency conference called by the national NAACP to address the treatment of African Americans in the war effort. Held in Detroit on June 3-4, 1943 more than 23,000 people attended meetings held at Second Baptist Church, Olympia Stadium (demolished), and the bandshell on Belle Isle. During the conference, the NAACP voted to protest the continued discrimination in the armed forces as well as the “recurrence of brutality and murder by civilian and military police” and “the lack of employment of Blacks in defense work.” Thurgood Marshall delivered an address that “highlighted racial discrimination in the United States even as Black Americans fought against fascism in Europe.”¹¹⁶ Journalist George Schuyler spoke on the negative portrayal of African Americans in the press and on the radio.¹¹⁷ According to the *Detroit Tribune* the conference was held because, “NAACP members were appalled at the wide discrepancy between the professed aims of democracy and freedom and the treatment meted out to Negroes in nearly every part of national life.”¹¹⁸ The outcome of the NAACP’s emergency conference was the adoption of a strong statement against segregation and discrimination. It saw some immediate success when on June 6, 1943 the National War Labor Board issued a unanimous opinion that “ordered the abolition of pay differentials between white and Negro workers performing equal work.”¹¹⁹

Two weeks later, on June 20, 1943 an incident on the Belle Isle bridge led to a brawl between Black and White teenagers. Rumors and misinformation spread, leading to more violent encounters. When the windows of White-owned stores in the predominately Black Paradise Valley neighborhood were broken, a mob of over 10,000 Whites attacked the Black residents. Violent encounters between the races broke out across the city. The incident known as the Detroit Race Riot of 1943 lasted two days and required 6,000 national guardsmen to suppress. The Black community bore the brunt of the damage—25 of the 34 people killed were Black, 17 of which were shot by the police,¹²⁰ and most of the property damage was to Black-owned businesses. According to the *Detroit Free Press*, there were obvious signs of trouble prior to the incident,

“It did not take a prophet to know that riot was coming. Loose talk, blowing on hot prejudice, may have fanned it, but even the unemotional analyst could see the cumulative evidence—the housing troubles, the protest against racial discrimination in industry, the sporadic violence in high schools, and only a few days ago the Packard strike, rooted in racial antagonism. Detroit has been building steadily for three years toward a race riot.”¹²¹

¹¹³ “Strike Probe at Packard is Pledged.” *Detroit Free Press*. June 6, 1943:2

¹¹⁴ “Union Chief blames Klan for Stoppage.” *Detroit Free Press*. June 7, 1943:1

¹¹⁵ “When Packard Workers Went on Strike.” *Michigan Chronicle*. June 5, 1943:24.

¹¹⁶ Williams, Juan. “Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary.” New York: Crown/Archetype, 2011.

¹¹⁷ “Nation Eyes War Confab.” *Detroit Tribune*. May 29, 1943:1

¹¹⁸ Robinson, Harriet. “NAACP Delegates from 39 States Blast U.S. Government Policy on Treatment of Negroes.” *Detroit Tribune*, June 12, 1943:1.

¹¹⁹ “WLB Ruling Gives Praise to Negroes.” *Detroit Free Press*. June 7, 1943:3.

¹²⁰ “The 1943 Race Riot.” June 12, 2012. Walther Reuther Library. <http://reuther.wayne.edu/node/8738>.

¹²¹ Pooler, James. “3 Years of Strife Behind Disorders.” *Detroit Free Press*. June 22, 1943:1.

In the aftermath of the riot, Mayor Edward Jeffries established the Interracial Committee of the City of Detroit. The twelve-member committee include six Black and six White civic leaders and was initially headed by William Norton, head of the Community Fund. The purpose of the committee was to determine the actual causes of the riot and recommend specific actions that should be taken to end discrimination in the city.¹²² However an editorial in the *Detroit Tribune* revealed skepticism and claimed the Committee was equivalent to placing a band-aid over a deep wound.¹²³ By 1947 little change had actually been accomplished and the Interracial Committee released a finding that “unemployment, housing, and restaurant discrimination” were still the “major sources of tension in the city.”¹²⁴

NAACP and the Detroit Restaurant Boycotts

In February 1949, the Detroit Chapter of the Michigan Committee on Civil Rights announced it wanted to aggressively pursue civil rights violations of the Diggs Accommodations Act of 1938. Segregation in hotels and restaurants had long been common practice in the United States and in 1936 a New York City mailman named Victor Hugo established the *Negro Motorist Green Book*, which listed hotels and restaurants across the country that African Americans could patronize without insult and discomfort. In Michigan, the state-level Committee on Civil Rights enlisted the cooperation of the Mayors Interracial Committee who prepared a pamphlet entitled “Outside the Home,” which stated,

*Restaurants, resorts, and hotels . . . are public places and are expected to serve all law-abiding persons able and willing to pay. Men and women who are denied services in such places solely on racial or religious basis suffer inconvenience and at times genuine hardship. In every instance they experience humiliation and vexation which may embitter them for years, an experience to which no person in a democracy should be subjected.*¹²⁵

The brochure then laid out the steps that should be taken by the victims of discrimination when a denial of service was encountered.

To press for integration in public accommodations, the NAACP established the Discrimination Action Committee (DAC) headed by Ernest Dillard, a UAW member employed at General Motors, in October 1949. After holding planning meetings at the St. Antoine YMCA, the DAC launched a campaign to expose discriminatory practices in Detroit’s restaurants. For example, restaurant owners often heavily oversalted food served to African Americans to deter them from returning. The DAC first targeted the restaurants on Woodward Avenue that refused to serve Black patrons. A pair or a small group of African Americans would enter a restaurant and ask for service. If denied, they would contact the Detroit police. Initially, complaints to the police were met with indifference and/or filing delays until the head of the NAACP, Reverend Raymond Bradby, filed a complaint with the Detroit Police Department stating the department was operating under a “separate set of laws” for Blacks and was not enforcing Michigan’s Civil Rights law.¹²⁶ Police cooperation was finally secured and by March 1950 the NAACP was reporting that the restaurant boycott campaign had been successful. It was now possible for Blacks to be served in most of the restaurants located between the Maccabee Building on Woodward and the intersection of Adams and Woodward.¹²⁷ In October 1950, the NAACP announced that legal action for civil rights violations was being taken against five restaurants who continued to participate in discriminatory

¹²² “Mayor Names Committee to Form Program for Racial Peace.” *Detroit Free Press*. June 26, 1943:3

¹²³ “The Mayor’s Committee.” *Detroit Tribune*. November 18, 1944:6

¹²⁴ Drob, Judah. “Ottley Writes About Detroit in NY Times.” *Detroit Tribune*. April 26, 1947:9.

¹²⁵ “Outside the Home.” *Detroit Tribune*. May 21, 1949:4.

¹²⁶ “Cite Laxity in Enforcement of Diggs Law.” *Detroit Tribune*. February 26, 1949:1.

¹²⁷ “NAACP Committee Reports Success in Café Discrimination Battle.” *Detroit Tribune*. March 4, 1950:1.

practices: the Verdi Bar in the Hoffman Building, Smith's BBQ at Woodward and Rosedale, LaSalle Restaurant (4209 Woodward), the Four Aces Café (11404 Warren), and the Transportation Sandwich Shop.¹²⁸ In November the boycott campaign was expanded to include restaurants located around the Briggs Manufacturing Plant. The boycott was later expanded to include bowling alleys, bars, roller rinks, and hotels.¹²⁹ Among the participants in the DAC's teams of protestors were James Boggs, who later gained recognition as a noted revolutionary, author, and Black labor activist; Ken and Delores Bowman; and Ernest Dillard Sr.¹³⁰ Dillard was the first African American elected to a UAW leadership role and a strong civil rights advocate. Beyond its significance in obtaining civil rights for Black Detroiters, the NAACP boycott campaign marked "the overlap and exchange between civil rights agitation and the labor movement."¹³¹ This close relationship was fundamental to the rise of the Black Power Movement in the 1960s. According to Arthur Johnson who became the NAACP Executive Director in 1950, "the use of sit-ins as a protest tool was experimental, and our committee was one of the first in the country to try this tactic."¹³² Overall, it took two years of boycotts for Detroit's major restaurants to finally agree to serve Blacks.

By the end of the World War II, the Detroit chapter of the NAACP had grown to become the largest in the nation. According to Arthur Johnson, "the economic vitality of the city was a major reason why it boasted the largest NAACP Branch. The Ford Motor Company employed a relatively high percentage of Blacks helping to create a Black middle class that supported Black business and professionals, the people most likely to become activists."¹³³ In 1953 the Detroit NAACP adopted a ten-year program with the goal of ending racial discrimination by 1963. In reaction to the murder of Thomas Brewer, a physician that was killed in a racially motivated incident in Columbus, Georgia, the Detroit Medical Society established the "Fight for Freedom" fundraising dinner in 1956 to finance the activities of the national NAACP to fight injustice.¹³⁴ The Detroit NAACP took over the dinner soon after and it continues to raise millions of dollars for civil rights activism.

Election of Mayor Albert Cobo

Outrage had been simmering among Detroit's Black leaders during this period over the actions of mayoral candidate Albert Cobo, whose 1950 campaign was based on race-baiting. Cobo supported housing segregation through the adoption of restrictive racial covenants and pitted Whites against Blacks through his campaign rhetoric. He was also against the construction of public housing for African Americans, believing it should be left to the private sector. Cobo was a strong supporter of slum clearance and urban renewal and targeting Detroit's African American community Black Bottom/Paradise Valley for demolition. To the city's African American residents, who were offered no solutions to an already crippling housing shortage, urban renewal was simply another name for "Black Removal." Cobo's election marked the beginning of a deterioration in racial relations in the city of Detroit that continued over the next decade.

¹²⁸ "Restaurant Discrimination Swells as Target in Detroit." *Detroit Tribune*. October 28, 1950:1.

¹²⁹ Ward, Stephen, ed. *Pages from a Black Radical's Notebook: A James Boggs Reader*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011.

¹³⁰ "Racial Bar Backfires." *Detroit Tribune*. October 14, 1950.

¹³¹ Ward, Stephen:13.

¹³² *Ibid*:48.

¹³³ Johnson, Arthur L. *Race and Remembrance: A Memoir*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008:67.

¹³⁴ Higgins Sr., Chester, "Dynamic Detroit NAACP Branch Sets Most Lavish Life Membership Table in US." *The Crisis*. April 1983:160.

Modern Civil Rights Movement 1954-1964

*Something has happened to the Negro. Circumstances made it possible and necessary for him to travel more: the coming of the automobile, the upheavals of two world wars, the Great Depression. And so his rural, plantation background gradually gave way to urban, industrial life. And even his economic life was rising through the growth of industry, the influence of organized labor, expanded education opportunities. And even his cultural life was rising through the steady decline of crippling illiteracy. And all of these forces conjoined to cause the Negro to take a new look at himself. Negro masses, Negro masses all over began to re-evaluate themselves, and the Negro came to feel that he was somebody.*¹³⁵

Martin Luther King Jr. "Address to the Freedom Rally in Cobo Hall,"
Detroit, Michigan. June 23, 1963.

If the modern civil rights movement was born in the labor and housing struggles of World War II and the immediate post war period, it came of age in the ten years between 1954 and 1964. Civil rights activists in Detroit—and the United States as a whole—became increasingly impatient with the opposition they encountered from White Americans to African Americans gaining full equality in housing, employment, and public accommodations. This decade saw two strands of activism emerge. In the early part of the decade, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. rose as the civil rights leader that would challenge Jim Crow laws in the South, especially in relation to voting rights, education, and public services. Though King's philosophy was one of non-violence, his supporters were often met with violence and hatred as they peacefully tried to exercise their constitutional rights. In the tradition of Booker T. Washington, King was pushing for the integration of Blacks into traditional White society, but by the end of the decade a much more radical response to racism was developing. It was fueled by the Black Nationalist philosophies of W.E.B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, as well as the Nation of Islam, which came to the forefront of in the early 1960s through the words of its effective, though short lived, leader Malcolm X. Fed up with waiting for access to the rights that African Americans had continuously been promised and denied for decades, patience had finally worn out. The nation's young Black population began to demand political action. Both civil rights philosophies and approaches —non-violence and Black Nationalist revolution—were well represented in the city during this period, but it was in the latter that Detroit played its most significant role.

In Support of Southern Protests

When the U.S. Supreme Court issued its landmark *Brown v. the Board of Education* decision in 1954 requiring the desegregation of America's public schools, it again brought new hope to the Black community. They felt that swift and real progress would now be made toward ending racial discrimination. However, two significant events occurred in 1955 that brought the cruel realization that change would not happen of its own accord: the death of Emmett Till and the organization of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. In August, a fourteen-year-old African American boy named Emmet Till, visiting Mississippi from Chicago, was lynched and the sham trial that exonerated his assailants on September 23, 1955—held in a county with no registered Black voters—outraged African Americans across the country.¹³⁶ The Detroit NAACP immediately organized a rally for September 25th to protest the "reign of terror" occurring in Mississippi and invited Southern civil rights activist Medgar Evers to speak. Over 6,000 people attended, filling the entire block between Bethel AME Church (585 Frederick) and

¹³⁵ King Jr., Martin Luther. "Address to the Freedom Rally in Cobo Hall." Detroit, Michigan, June 23, 1963. <http://www.stephenhicks.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/KingML-Address-Freedom-Cobo-Hall.pdf>

¹³⁶ Diggs, Charles Coles Jr. "U.S. House of Representatives." *History, Art & Archives*. <https://history.house.gov/>

Scott Methodist Church (609 E. Kirby).¹³⁷ It was the largest mass demonstration in Detroit, to date.¹³⁸ On September 28th Emmett Till's mother, Mamie Bradley, came to Detroit and spoke at the Greater St. Peter AME Zion Church (4400 Mt. Elliot Street). The 1,000 people that crammed into the church heard her say, "This ceased to be the burden of one woman the moment my boy was killed." Even in her grief she pointed out that, "no one is seeking violence or to overthrow the government . . . every time we speak for freedom."¹³⁹ Later that evening Mrs. Bradley spoke at "Operation Justice," a 24-hour rally held at King Solomon Baptist Church (6125 14th Street). Responding to the hypocrisy of the Till trial, Representative Charles R. Diggs Jr., Michigan's recently elected first African American U.S. Congressman, called for a special Congressional session to address the issue of civil rights. It was denied, causing even more disgust with the federal government within Detroit's Black community.¹⁴⁰

Rosa Parks in Detroit

Civil rights activist Rosa Parks has said it was the injustice of the Emmet Till trial that stirred her to refuse to give up her seat to a White man on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus on December 1, 1955. Parks' courage sparked a year-long Montgomery bus boycott led by the young Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. and a new era of civil rights activism was ushered in. To escape the publicity and harassment she endured over her actions, in 1957 Rosa Parks left Montgomery and moved to Detroit where family members were living. She worked as a seamstress, her husband Raymond was a barber, and through a period of ill health they struggled financially and were aided by fund drives sponsored by the Detroit's Black churches. One such benefit entitled "The Forgotten Woman" was held on June 12, 1960 at King Solomon Baptist Church. At that time Parks was living in a home at 1930 W. Grand Boulevard that had been furnished by the Progressive Civic League.¹⁴¹ Upon recovery of her health, she and her husband moved to a flat at 3201 Virginia Park Avenue and where they lived from 1961 to 1988.

Parks renewed her civil rights activism while living in Detroit. She was involved with the NAACP boycott of the River Rouge Savings Bank in 1959, in which they demanded more Black workers be hired and that the mortgage loan process be opened to African Americans. Raymond Parks was also an activist, and the Virginia Park flat became something of a civil rights salon where they hosted discussions, held meetings, planned activities, and participated in national and local civil right events. In 1964, she joined in the NAACP national picket of the General Motors Corporation to protest its hiring practices. Shortly thereafter, Parks began working for U.S. Representative John Conyers Jr. in his Detroit office, helping Detroit's citizens with local civil rights issues. By then, her outlook on civil rights had shifted and her ideology became more closely aligned with those of Black Nationalists like Albert Cleage Jr., Milton and Richard Henry, Malcolm X, and Stokely Carmichael. She participated in Black Power discussions and Forums 65, 66, and 67 held at Vaughn's Bookstore in the mid-1960s,¹⁴² and was a juror on the People's Tribunal held in response to the unfair verdict reached in conjunction with the Algiers Hotel murders in 1967. At the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago, she was part of a militant group of Blacks that refused to endorse a presidential candidate.¹⁴³ She campaigned for Shirley Chisolm, the first Black

¹³⁷ "6,000 at Detroit Rally Protest Mississippi Verdict." *Detroit Free Press*. September 26, 1955:3.

¹³⁸ Johnson, Arthur L. *Race and Remembrance: A Memoir*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008:62

¹³⁹ "1,000 Hear Racial Slaying Figure." *Detroit Free Press*. September 29, 1955:9.

¹⁴⁰ Charles C. Diggs, Jr. *King Encyclopedia*. Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute, Stanford, University, Palo Alto, California.

¹⁴¹ "Negro Churches to Hail Heroine of Bus Boycott." *Detroit Free Press*. June 11, 1960:10.

¹⁴² Umoja, Akinyele, et al. *Black Power Encyclopedia: Movements of the American Mosaic*. Volume 1. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2018:88.

¹⁴³ Theoharis, Jeanne. *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks*. <https://rosaparksbiography.org/bio/mrs-parks-and-black-power/>

candidate for president, and for Coleman Young, Detroit's first Black mayor and, along with Aretha Franklin, raised funds for the Angela Davis Defense Fund.¹⁴⁴

Increasing Racial Tension under Mayor Cobo

In 1953 Mayor Cobo announced the reorganization of the Mayor's Interracial Committee, originally formed in response to the Race Riot of 1943 to open a channel of communication between Detroit's African American community and city government. The committee's director George Schermer had resigned to take a position in Philadelphia saying he felt the committee had been operating as a "lame duck" ever since Mayor Cobo's election. Schermer felt the committee was being used as a means to "keep tensions down" rather than working for any real reform. He noted that while some progress had been made—incidents of police brutality were down—there were still serious, underlying race-related issues that needed to be addressed, including the city's discriminatory practices in municipal hiring and the continued lack of adequate housing for African Americans. Though "restrictions on older homes in quite good neighborhoods were breaking down" there was no new housing, or financing for new housing construction, available to Black Detroiters.¹⁴⁵ A group of concerned citizens, fearing a decade of work might be lost when Schermer left, petitioned the Detroit city council to adopt an ordinance making the Mayor's Interracial Committee a permanent municipal body.¹⁴⁶ Cobo denied he had any intention of disbanding the committee. Instead, he renamed it the Commission on Community Relations and instituted a search for a new director, rejecting the possibility of promoting the committee's African American deputy director, Beulah Whitby, as its director. Whitby, the first African American hired in the city's Department of Public Welfare, had been with the Mayor's Interracial Committee since its inception. Cobo appointed John Laub, a White man and former head of the Northwest Civic Association, a group that opposed the idea of an open occupancy ordinance that would make Detroit's neighborhoods accessible to all.¹⁴⁷ In protest, the Detroit NAACP members voted to strip the two African Americans then serving on the commission, James McFall and Edward Davis, of their NAACP memberships if they did not resign. As justification, NAACP president Edward Turner stated, "no self-respecting Negro could accept appointment to the commission, because of Mayor Cobo's policies on racial problems."¹⁴⁸ Davis decided to remain on the commission but within months was calling for the replacement of Laub, whom he felt did not have the skills necessary to engage in negotiations between the two racial groups. In the end, an impasse had been reached between the Black community and the city. Detroit's Black citizens felt the Commission on Community Relations was no longer an effective tool through which to voice their needs and instead returned to Black organizations like the NAACP and the DUL, which had served them well in the past.

Charles Diggs Jr. and the Civil Rights Act of 1957

The Presidential election of 1956 saw the Democrat and Republican parties trying to placate both the nation's African American citizens and White Southern politicians. Michigan Representative Charles Diggs Jr., one of only three African Americans then in the U.S. Congress, was a strong voting rights advocate. He was part of a coalition that requested Congress hold a special session to discuss civil rights. They pressed President Dwight Eisenhower to include a strong statement of support for civil rights in his State of the Union address, to stop the on-going suppression of voting rights in the South, and to give the

¹⁴⁴ Jordan, Jamon. "I'm shouting from the rooftops about Detroit's Black history." *Detroit Free Press*. February 20, 2021.

¹⁴⁵ Tyler, Harold. "Interracial Chief Quits with Blast at Policy." *Detroit Free Press*. January 1, 1953:1.

¹⁴⁶ Strohm, Jack. "Try to Save City Racial Program." *Detroit Free Press*. January 13, 1953:3.

¹⁴⁷ "Racial Unit Picks New Director." *Detroit Free Press*. February 20, 1954:2.

¹⁴⁸ "Fr Coogan Hits NAACP Again." *Detroit Free Press*. October 30, 1955:2A.

Department of Justice the ability to prosecute individuals participating in voting rights violations.¹⁴⁹ At a rally held at Detroit's St. John's Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (8715 Woodward Avenue) to solicit donations to the Montgomery Fund in support of the leaders of the Montgomery bus boycott, Diggs threatened to quit the Democratic party if a strong civil rights statement was not made.¹⁵⁰ Unfortunately, Eisenhower took a moderate stance on civil rights in his State of the Union speech, only noting that acts of suppression were occurring.¹⁵¹ Diggs did not quit the party and eventually Eisenhower did put forth a three-point civil rights program that would establish a federal civil rights commission, a civil rights division in the Justice Department, and allow voting rights cases to be heard by federal courts. The legislation passed both houses of Congress but its "stringent voting protections" were removed.¹⁵² When the bill was signed by President Eisenhower, the Civil Rights Act of 1957 was celebrated as the first civil rights legislation passed in the United States since Reconstruction. However, many African American leaders were disappointed with the watered-down legislation believing it did not go far enough.

NAACP and National Urban League Detroit Conventions - 1957

Amid the rising resentment in the Black community over the violence African Americans were enduring in the South and the weak civil rights platform that was adopted by the Democratic Party during the 1956 presidential election, two major national civil rights conventions scheduled to be held in Detroit in 1957 by the NAACP and the National Urban League took on new significance.

The *Detroit Free Press* noted that the NAACP's 48th annual convention in June would bring "worldwide attention" to Detroit and that it was "viewed as the most crucial convention in NAACP history."¹⁵³ Over 25,000 people attended the six-day convention held in June at Detroit's Olympia Stadium (demolished). Speeches were given by Thurgood Marshall, Jackie Robinson, Walter Reuther, and Roy Wilkins, who demanded that President Harry Truman take a strong stand for civil rights. The successful, new civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr. received the Spingarn Medal at the conference for his work leading the Montgomery bus boycott.¹⁵⁴ In his acceptance speech, King stated:

*The eyes of the world are on this nation. Millions of colored people are deeply concerned about what is happening to the Negro citizens of this country. The enactment of civil rights legislation would be a partial answer to this question. The 'new Negro' is no longer afraid and is prepared to defend his gains, whatever the cause may be.*¹⁵⁵

While the *Detroit Free Press* coverage of the convention was sedate, the Black-owned *Pittsburgh Courier* saw it differently. They characterized the aggressive six-point plan adopted by the NAACP in Detroit as an "all-out rights war."¹⁵⁶ The plan included applying pressure to secure Negro voting rights, especially in the South; establishing civil rights legislation at all levels of government; expanding its "Fight for Freedom" campaign fundraising goal to over \$1 million; and establishing a youth readiness program to train young African Americans for jobs in industry. During the Detroit convention, the national NAACP adopted voting rights for Southern Blacks as its top action priority for the year 1958, with the goal of doubling the number of registered African American voters, which at that time was only

¹⁴⁹ "Diggs Presses President on Civil Rights." *Detroit Free Press*. November 13, 1955:3.

¹⁵⁰ "Prayer Rally Nets \$3,500." *Detroit Tribune*. March 10, 1956:1.

¹⁵¹ "Eisenhower, Congress, and Negro Rights." *CQ Researcher*. CQ Press. <http://library.cqpress.com/>

¹⁵² "The Civil Rights Act of 1957." *Historical Highlights*. United States House of Representatives. History, Arts & Archives. June 18, 1957. history.house.gov.

¹⁵³ George, Collins. "Three Groups Lead Fight for Negroes." *Detroit Free Press*. June 21, 1957:3A.

¹⁵⁴ "26,000 to attend NAACP meeting here." *Detroit Free Press*. June 17, 1957.

¹⁵⁵ "Local NAACP Hears Report on Convention." *Newport (Rhode Island) Daily News*. July 30, 1957:2.

¹⁵⁶ Higgins, Chester. "NAACPers Pledge All-Out Rights War." *Pittsburgh Courier*. July 6, 1957:3.

one of every four people.¹⁵⁷ But voting rights not really a priority for Detroit's African American community, who could and did vote. This was recognized by the NAACP's legal counsel, Thurgood Marshall in a speech given on February 10, 1958 at Detroit's Temple Beth El (8801 Woodward Avenue). Marshall declared the most significant issue for African Americans living in the city of Detroit was the lack of adequate housing going so far as to say there was "greater residential segregation in Detroit than in most Southern cities."¹⁵⁸

The second conference that was held in Detroit was that of the National Urban League, which occurred on September 1, 1957 at Detroit's Sheraton-Cadillac Hotel (1114 Washington Boulevard) and Ford Auditorium (demolished). The meeting occurred under the shadow of the events that were unfolding in the South in response to efforts to desegregate schools under the *Brown v. the Board of Education* Supreme Court decision. The 600 delegates attending the Detroit meeting sent an official statement to National Urban League Executive Director Lester Granger declaring,

*The issues emerging from the defiance of the Federal Court by the Governor of Arkansas have become far larger than one of school desegregation, important as that is. What is involved is the question of whether a state's chief executive can use its armed forces to defy the Federal government and laws protecting the security and freedom of the American people.*¹⁵⁹

On September 4th, Arkansas Governor Orvil Faubus used the Arkansas National Guard to stop nine Black students from entering the all-White Central High School in Little Rock. In an immediate response to the violence that erupted, President Eisenhower signed the Civil Rights Act of 1957 into law on September 9th, which "authorized the U.S. Attorney General to seek federal court injunctions to protect voting rights."¹⁶⁰

At the Detroit convention, Lester Granger noted that the National Urban League's role had changed since its creation. Once an organization whose focus was to assist migrating Southern Blacks to adjust to city life in the north, it was now addressing issues of "community planning, organization and interpretation of racial problems and providing solutions."¹⁶¹

Boycotts and Sit-ins

In December 1957, the Detroit Chapter of the American Jewish Committee released its findings on a civil rights survey it had conducted in the state of Michigan. According to its president Martin Butzel, between 1947 and 1957 Michigan had seen "momentous" advancement at the state level in its efforts to end discrimination. As examples he cited the integration of the Michigan National Guard; the barring of segregation in public housing; extending the state's civil rights law to stop discrimination by motels; and the cooperation of fraternities at Wayne State University and the University of Michigan to end segregation.¹⁶² However, at the local level, Detroit's African Americans continued to encounter discrimination daily. Inspired by the growing protests led by students in the Southern United States, civil rights groups in Detroit embarked on a number of anti-discrimination campaigns:

¹⁵⁷ Oberdorfer, Don. "South Negroes Run into Snags in Vote Drive." *Detroit Free Press*. April 18, 1958:8.

¹⁵⁸ "NAACP hits Detroit segregation." *Detroit Free Press*. February 11, 1958:13.

¹⁵⁹ George, Collins. "League Asks Ike to Act in Dixie." *Detroit Free Press*. September 6, 1957:16.

¹⁶⁰ "The Civil Rights Act of 1957." *Historical Highlights*. United States House of Representatives. History, Arts & Archives. June 18, 1957. [History.house.gov](http://history.house.gov).

¹⁶¹ "Urban League Exec. Sec. Sees Progress Ahead." *Detroit Tribune*. September 7, 1957:1.

¹⁶² "Civil Rights Make Gain in Michigan." *Detroit Free Press*. December 8, 1957:16.

- In 1959 the Tri-City NAACP, that covered Southwest Detroit, Ecorse and River Rouge, called for the boycott of the River Rouge Savings Bank at Schaefer and Fraser Roads because of their refusal to employ African Americans. Rosa Parks was an active participant in the protest.
- In 1960 the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) launched the first lunch counter sit down strikes in Greensboro, North Carolina. In solidarity, the Detroit NAACP called for boycotts of chain businesses in Detroit, such as Woolworth's, that were denying service to African Americans in the South. The NAACP declared that "nothing will give the Southern student a greater moral lift than the knowledge that they know throughout America the people; both Black and white are behind them."¹⁶³
- The Detroit NAACP organized a mass demonstration on the steps of the Michigan State Capitol in March 1960. Their purpose was two-fold. They wanted to show support for the lunch counter strikers as well as to "encourage state legislators to take favorable action on civil rights."¹⁶⁴ Michigan State Representative George Edwards, who served from 1955-1978, had recently introduced a state Bill of Rights to the Michigan legislature. Enthusiasm was dashed when on the day of the protest, conservative law makers killed the bill after hearing exaggerated claims by real estate brokers and property rights advocates who favored the retention of segregated housing.

Detroit and the Freedom Riders

The events occurring in the South in 1961 marked a pivotal shift in the civil rights movement nationally. After the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Boynton v. Virginia* that interstate commercial transportation could not be segregated, James Farmer, the new president of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), organized a protest to test the decision. Eleven volunteers agreed to participate in the first integrated, interstate bus rides, which became known as the Freedom Rides. Their intent was to integrate buses from two major transportation companies, Trailways and Greyhound. The bus routes would take them through Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama to the final destination in New Orleans, Louisiana. When the buses left Washington D.C. on May 4, 1961 among the volunteers were two long standing, White civil rights activists from Detroit, Walter and Frances Bergman. Walter Bergman, a Wayne State University professor and former president of the Michigan Federation of Teachers, was the oldest participating volunteer at sixty-one years of age. His wife Frances, a former school teacher, was fifty-seven.¹⁶⁵ By the time the buses reached South Carolina, the Freedom Riders had already endured name-calling, acts of violence, and arrests. The situation rapidly deteriorated when the integrated buses crossed the Alabama state line. There they were met by an organized, militaristic assault by the Ku Klux Klan to stop the buses and make an example of the Freedom Riders. At a rest stop in Anniston, Alabama, one bus was fire bombed. On the other bus, the protestors were badly beaten. Walter Bergman was so badly injured he was left partially paralyzed.¹⁶⁶ According to Frances Bergman,

*This thing made me realize what it is to be scorned, humiliated and made to feel like dirt. . . it left me filled with admiration for the colored people who have to live with this all their lives. . . Somehow you feel there is a new urgency at this time. You see the courage all about you.*¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ "Local Picketing Will Continue NAACP Declares." *Michigan Chronicle*. March 26, 1960.

¹⁶⁴ "Mass Demonstration Capital Steps Slated Wednesday." *Michigan Chronicle*. March 12, 1960.

¹⁶⁵ Arsenault, Raymond. *The Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice*. Oxford University Press. 2006:105.

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a25a6b5d55b416614dc2a09/t/5c814e1cb208fc530a514ca5/1551978026142/Arsenault_Freedom_Riders.pdf

¹⁶⁶ Magnusson, Paul. "FBI Sued by Freedom Rider Crippled in '61 KKK Beating." *Washington Post*. January 1, 1977.

¹⁶⁷ Arsenault: 128.

Rather than deterring civil rights activists, the Ku Klux Klan's attacks only deepened the resolve to continue the Freedom Ride protests as the stakes became much higher.

Formation of GOAL & UHURU

The Group on Advanced Leadership (GOAL) was formed in 1961 by the Reverend Albert Cleage Jr. and activists Henry and Richard Milton at 11605 Linwood Street (extant). Dedicated to the betterment of Detroit's Black Community, its purpose was to serve as a radical counterpoint to the NAACP. For example, in 1962 the NAACP and GOAL clashed over a proposed strike against the Detroit School Board to protest the use of "textbooks disparaging toward Negroes." The action-oriented GOAL wanted to bring thousands of protestors to a school board meeting, while the NAACP preferred to rely on its on-going negotiations with school board members.¹⁶⁸ In the end, the school board agreed to write to the publishers of the textbook "Our United States" and demand they do a better job of portraying Black history. They also agreed to create a separate in-house publication on Black history.¹⁶⁹

GOAL was active between 1961 and 1965. At its peak in the spring of 1963, GOAL met at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church (13500 Dexter Avenue) to adopt an aggressive campaign of civil rights protests in order to call attention to its goals of "making jobs for Negroes, improving education, increasing the Negro's economic power through collective investments, and halting urban renewal injustices."¹⁷⁰ GOAL's protest activities included:

- An organized protest targeting Detroit's A & P Food Stores in July 1963. Ministers from Detroit's Black churches joined GOAL in demanding that the company provide equal employment to African Americans and that products made by Black-owned businesses be carried in the stores. Seven A & P stores located in Detroit's African American neighborhoods were picketed for eight days beginning on June 27. In the end, A & P agreed to hire and train five Black managers and to promote twenty-one Black workers. The protest demonstrated the economic power of Detroit's Black community or as the *Detroit Tribune* put it, "The awesome power of the organized Negro in Detroit has been felt."¹⁷¹
- Following the death of a Black woman, Cynthia Scott, who was shot in the back at close range by a Detroit policeman in July 1963, GOAL held protest demonstrations at Police Headquarters (13000 Beaubien)¹⁷² and the City-County Building.¹⁷³ The 700-person demonstrations resulted in police chief George Edwards proposing changes to the Police manual regarding the investigation of firearm fatalities.¹⁷⁴
- Milton Henry, who served as legal counsel for GOAL, defended six protestors who had disturbed the playing of the national anthem during an Olympic Torch ceremony held in Detroit to call attention to the "lack of open housing" available to the city's Black residents.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁸ "NAACP Balks at Picketing." *Detroit Free Press*. December 8, 1962:3.

¹⁶⁹ Mackey, Roberta. "Warning on Textbooks." *Detroit Free Press*. December 12, 1962:3.

¹⁷⁰ Hoyer, Walter. "GOAL Sets Program for '63-64.'" *Detroit Tribune*. April 20, 1963:1.

¹⁷¹ "A&P Settles." *Detroit Tribune*. July 13, 1963:1.

¹⁷² "Negroes Protest at Police Headquarters." *Detroit Free Press*. July 14, 1963:1.

¹⁷³ "Group Set to Protest Scott Death." *Detroit Tribune*. July 20, 1963:19.

¹⁷⁴ "Officer Clear in Scott Case—Edwards." *Detroit Free Press*. August 8, 1963:1.

¹⁷⁵ "Judge Sets Test Trial in Olympic Torch Pickets Booming of Anthem." *Detroit Tribune*. October 19, 1963:1.

- To expose the double standard in law enforcement and the criminal justice system, GOAL challenged the Wayne County Prosecutor’s Office, the Detroit Police Department, and the Traffic and Recorder’s Court. It sent letters to Michigan’s attorney general and to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission asking for a racial audit of police and court records to determine why Black citizens were arrested and sent to jail more often than Whites.¹⁷⁶ Just days before the Walk to Freedom was to occur in Detroit on June 23, 1963, GOAL’s president Richard Henry declared “total war” against the justice system in Detroit and Wayne County. According to Henry it was not enough for Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights activists to “walk with us one day of the year. They must end their silence, inaction, and reaction in Detroit.”¹⁷⁷

In addition to its protest activities, GOAL:

- encouraged African American candidates to run for municipal office and were heavily involved in a “get out the vote” effort to defeat Mayor Albert Cobo who openly supported housing segregation.
- supported lawsuits against the Detroit Board of Education to stop them from gerrymandering school district boundaries to keep Black children out of white schools.
- encouraged Detroit’s Black citizens to stop voting for school millage increases since they received no benefit from them; and
- challenged urban renewal plans in the city, notably one along Eight Mile Road that would have devastated a Black business district, and the demolition of a Black neighborhood for the Detroit Medical Center.

GOAL was instrumental in the formation of the radical student group UHURU that formed at Wayne State University in 1963 and used the campus as a “mobilization point” for demonstrations and protests around the city.¹⁷⁸ UHURU’s founding members included activists John Watson, General Baker, Kenneth Cockrel Jr., and Luke Tripp, who later became leaders in Black labor activism and the formation of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers.

Black Voters Elect Mayor Jerome Cavanaugh

Detroit’s Mayor Albert Cobo died of a heart attack in 1957 while in office. Throughout his tenure as mayor, his relationship with Detroit’s Black community was antagonistic. The situation worsened during the administration of his replacement, Louis Miriani, who continued to oppose the construction of public housing for African Americans, even in the face of urban renewal and the destruction of the Black Bottom/Paradise Valley neighborhood. He also instigated racial profiling and sanctioned the increasingly brutal tactics used against African Americans by the Detroit Police Department. The relationship between the Detroit Police and the city’s Black residents was so poor that the Detroit NAACP served as “the office of record” for incidents of police brutality against Blacks, recording 149 incidents between 1956 and 1960. In 1960 in response to the murders of two White women, Miriani implemented a program to cut down on “Black crime” in the city. Within forty-eight hours of the program’s announcement, 600 African Americans had been arrested. By the end of the week over 1,500 people had been questioned and detained—the vast majority African American males.¹⁷⁹ Under Miriani, the Detroit Police Department

¹⁷⁶ “GOAL Broadens Attack on ‘Biased’ Law Agencies.” *Detroit Tribune*. June 29, 1963:3.

¹⁷⁷ “GOAL Blasts Detroit Mayor and the Police Commissioner.” *Detroit Tribune*. June 15, 1963.

¹⁷⁸ “Transformers: Wayne State Students and the Black Activist Tradition.” February 12, 2019. Today@Wayne. Wayne State University, Detroit.

¹⁷⁹ Turrini, Joseph. “Phooie on Louie: African American Detroit and the Election of Jerry Cavanaugh.” *Michigan History Magazine*. November/December 1999:12.

created four-man teams of elite officer, known as the “Big Four,” who were infamous in the Black community for their verbal abuse and violent physical harassment tactics. The “crackdown” program resulted in excessive harassment and disrespect to African Americans at all societal levels—even the head of the NAACP was randomly stopped and searched by police without cause. In protest, the Detroit NAACP called for the creation of an independent police board to review police actions and for the city’s Commission on Community Relations to be given greater power of investigation into complaints against the police. When neither request came to fruition, the NAACP made ending police brutality a key issue in the 1961 Detroit mayoral race. Black community leaders organized a strong “get out the vote” campaign to oust Mirani throwing their support behind a young, untested candidate, a liberal Democrat named Jerome Cavanagh. Under the direction of Horace Sheffield of the Trade Union Leadership Council (TULC), the African American arm of the UAW, used its power to reach African Americans and encourage them to vote in the mayoral election. Eighty-five percent of Detroit’s Black voters turned out to vote for Cavanagh. It was Cavanagh’s first political campaign and his surprise victory—directly attributed to Black voter turnout—caught the attention of the national media.

After Cavanagh’s election in 1962, Detroit’s Black community was optimistic. Cavanagh ordered “a survey of Civil Service jobs in City Government to determine if Negroes are being discriminated against.”¹⁸⁰ He also prohibited the awarding of city contracts to companies that practiced segregation and worked to increase the number of Blacks employed in the building trades.¹⁸¹ One of his biggest achievements was the appointment of a new police commissioner, George Edwards Jr., a former union organizer and national director of the UAW welfare department. Edwards was a strong liberal and had served as director of the Detroit Housing Commission during the Sojourner Truth Homes protests where he gained the respect of Black leaders.¹⁸² Edwards’s appointment caused internal tension within the police department and in the end he was unable to maintain the support of the Black community. In November 1962, the Detroit Police Department raided the Gotham Hotel, a luxury Black-owned hotel in the Black Bottom neighborhood to stop an illicit gambling operation. The unnecessary destruction that was undertaken during the police raid dismayed many and caused increased turbulence in Black/White relations in Detroit. Edwards resigned in 1963 to serve on the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.¹⁸³

Over the next six years, Mayor Cavanagh tried to keep his promises to Black voters for their assistance in his successful election. He instituted a city-wide fair employment policy and “appointed more African Americans to city positions than any previous mayor.”¹⁸⁴ Cavanagh, the youngest mayor ever elected in Detroit, became the darling of the national Democratic party. In 1966, he was able to secure \$100 million for the city through the Model Cities Program, a newly created HUD program associated with President Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty. The target of the program was a ten-mile square area roughly bounded by East Jefferson Avenue, Adams Avenue, and Bagley Street to the south; Grand River Avenue to the west; the NYC railroad tracks and Hamtramck city limits to the north; and Mt. Elliot Street on the east. It reportedly contained 100,000 people and “30% of all blighted structures in the city.”¹⁸⁵ The program was to go beyond demolition and work to address social and physical problems in the area, focusing on rehabilitating aging homes and building low to moderate income housing. Detroit’s Model Cities program generated much controversy, was plagued by charges of corruption, and never realized its potential.

¹⁸⁰ Sawyer, Tom. “Top Negroes Retain Faith in Mayor.” *Detroit Free Press*. August 12, 1962:32.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² “The Old Guard.” <http://www.detroits-great-rebellion.com/The-Old-Guard.html>

¹⁸³ “George C. Edwards Jr. Dies.” *The Washington Post*. April 9, 1995.

¹⁸⁴ Smith, Mike. “The Meteoric Mayor.” *Michigan Historical Center Magazine*. November/December 1999.

¹⁸⁵ “Cavanagh to Outline Model City.” *Detroit Free Press*. December 18, 1966:1.

Daisy Elliott and the Michigan Civil Rights Commission

Daisy Elliott, an African American real estate agent from Detroit and president of the Michigan Federal Democratic Club, was elected a delegate to the Michigan Constitutional Convention in 1961. Elliott introduced the idea of including a Civil Rights Commission in the new constitution and giving it the power to investigate charges of discrimination across the state.¹⁸⁶ The inclusion of such a commission was approved in 1962¹⁸⁷ and ratified by Michigan's voters. Thus, Michigan's Civil Rights Commission was the "first constitutionally-established agency of its kind in the United States, with the broadest of powers" and bipartisan by law.¹⁸⁸ Approved in January 1963 under Governor George Romney, the new state constitution banned racial discrimination and provided minorities with equal protection under the law. According to Romney, at the time it was "the strongest, clearest, most direct statement of civil rights principles in the nation."¹⁸⁹ The Michigan Civil Rights Commission was headed by Burton Gordin of Detroit and Detroit residents held six of the seven Civil Rights Commission seats. The Commission included two African Americans: Damon Keith, then an attorney who had served as chair of the Detroit Housing Commission, and Reverend A. A. Banks Jr. of Second Baptist Church and the Vice President of the Detroit NAACP. The Civil Rights Commission's White Detroit members, John Feikens, Reverend Richard E. Cross, and Sidney M. Shevitz, had all long been active in Detroit's civil rights movement.¹⁹⁰ In May 1964 Arthur L. Johnson, Executive Secretary of the Detroit NAACP, was appointed deputy director of the Commission. In its first five months of operation, the Commission received 161 complaints of civil rights violations across the state and opened an investigation into developers that were accused of not renting apartments to Blacks.¹⁹¹ In 1964 the state attorney general issued a critical opinion that the new Michigan Civil Rights Commission had sole authority to establish civil rights laws in the state. This effectively voided any racially restrictive local ordinances such as the hundreds that had been adopted by Detroit's discriminatory homeowners' associations.¹⁹²

Daisy Elliott also co-authored the Elliot-Larson Civil Rights Act in 1966. This comprehensive state legislation banning discrimination in employment, housing, education, and public accommodations was finally passed a decade later, in 1976.¹⁹³

Detroit Law Firm Aids Southern Civil Rights Protestors

In 1962, after listening to the stories of two Southern Black protesters, Detroit lawyer Ernest Goodman realized that people being arrested during the civil rights protests in the South, who were mostly young and/or Black, needed free or inexpensive legal assistance. He voiced his concern to the American Bar Association who responded that they preferred representation for protesters to remain a local issue, even though local laws and ordinances in states like Mississippi and Alabama made it almost impossible for African Americans to retain legal aid. Finding this unfair, Goodman appealed to the National Lawyers Guild and asked them to make representation for civil rights protesters a priority for the organization. At the Guild's 1962 National Convention held at the Sheraton-Cadillac Hotel in Detroit, its members agreed

¹⁸⁶ "Daisy Elliott." *Michigan Women Forward*. Michigan Women's Hall of Fame. www.michiganwomenshalloffame.org.

¹⁸⁷ "Civil Rights Board OK'd by Con-Con." *Detroit Free Press*. March 30, 1962:1.

¹⁸⁸ Beck, Don. "Rights Leader Views State's Racial Climate." *Detroit Free Press*. April 19, 1964:18.

¹⁸⁹ Green, John. "Breakthrough Near for Rights-Romney." *Lansing State Journal*. July 26, 1963:2.

¹⁹⁰ Shawver, Tom. "7 Commissioners Are Veterans of Anti-Bias Struggle." *Detroit Free Press*. August 21, 1963:10.

¹⁹¹ "Hearing Set on State Bias Rules." *Detroit Free Press*. June 8, 1964:22.

¹⁹² Cohen, Hal. "Rights Aide Challenges City Laws." *Detroit Free Press*. May 31, 1964:3A.

¹⁹³ Baldas, Tresa and Kat Stafford. "Daisy Elliott, Michigan Civil Rights Activist Dies." *Detroit Free Press*. December 23, 2015.

to form the Committee to Assist Southern Lawyers (CASL), which Goodman headed.¹⁹⁴ Ernest Goodman was a White partner in the Detroit law firm of Goodman, Crockett, Eden and Robb, the first integrated law firm established in the United States. The firm had hired well-known Black civil rights attorney George W. Crockett II in 1949. The firm's office in Detroit's Cadillac Tower (65 Cadillac Square) served as the base for CASL. Dean Robb of the firm put together a network of volunteer lawyers from across the country willing to provide legal services to civil rights protestors.¹⁹⁵ That fall, the Guild sponsored a workshop in Atlanta, Georgia, on "Civil Rights and Negligence Law" at which Martin Luther King Jr. spoke on the importance of combining litigation with non-violent action in order to achieve policy change.

In April 1963 Martin Luther King Jr. initiated a major civil rights campaign in Birmingham, Alabama. In June, a civil rights protest in Danville, Virginia, resulted in the arrest of over three hundred students and activists. Ernest Goodman and the National Lawyers Guild stepped in to provide free legal aid. However, the state of Virginia had enacted a law to stop third party groups, like the NAACP's legal defense fund or the Guild, from litigating on behalf of potential clients. The NAACP sued the state of Virginia and the case *NAACP v. Button*, was heard by the U.S. Supreme Court who decided in the NAACP's favor. The case is considered an influential first amendment rights decision.¹⁹⁶ The work of the Guild and the NAACP in defending the protestors in Virginia led U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy to realize that the struggle for civil rights needed to advance from street protests into the court of law. The Guild's initiatives under Goodman also helped to change the American Bar Association stance on the Civil Rights Movement and was instrumental in convincing President John F. Kennedy that political inaction on civil rights was no longer acceptable.

In February 1964 Ernest Goodman was elected president of the National Lawyers Guild and the organization moved its headquarters to Detroit. At that time there were only three lawyers—all African American—handling civil rights cases for the entire state of Mississippi. As Guild president, Goodman established the Legal Assistance Program in which law students volunteered to serve as law clerks on civil rights cases in Mississippi, where George Crockett set up a temporary legal office in Jackson. According to author Steven Babson, "the Guild's pivotal role in the Freedom Summer . . . put the issue of voting rights before the public and helped pave the way for the Voting Rights Act of 1965."¹⁹⁷

A Turning Point - 1963

The year 1963, the one hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, was a pivotal year for the Civil Rights Movement. According to the *Detroit Free Press*, civil rights "wasn't even thought to be an issue when Congress opened in January [1963] . . . then came Birmingham and the nationwide rash of Negro protests for equal rights."¹⁹⁸ The Birmingham, Alabama, lunch counter sit-ins, the Children's Crusade to integrate the city's schools, the vicious violence against Blacks and use of the National Guard to restore order in the city, and the deadly bombing of the Sixteenth Street Church all played out on American television sets and brought national attention to the extreme level of oppression

¹⁹⁴ "Lawyers Press for Civil Rights." *Detroit Free Press*. February 25, 1962:9.

¹⁹⁵ Pursglove, Sheila. "Freedom Rings: Civil Rights Attorney Hands Torch to Younger Generation." *LegalNews.com*. *Detroit Legal News*. October 21, 2013. <http://legalnews.com/detroit/1381789>

¹⁹⁶ *NAACP v. Button* (1963) *The First Amendment Encyclopedia*. The Free Speech Center. <https://mtsu.edu/first-amendment/>

¹⁹⁷ Babson, Steven, et al. *The Color of Law: Ernie Goodman, Detroit, and the Struggle for Labor and Civil Rights*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010: 364.

Edmunds, Emma C. "Danville Civil Rights Demonstrations of 1963." *Encyclopedia of Virginia*. Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, 7 December 2016. Web. March 16, 2008.

¹⁹⁸ "Why Congress is Stalled on Kennedy's Key Bills." *Detroit Free Press*. July 28, 1963.

Blacks were experiencing in the South. The murder of civil rights activist Medgar Evers at his home in Jackson, Mississippi, on June 12, 1963, deeply affected African Americans across the nation.

In Michigan, Detroit's African American delegates to the state house of representatives, warned that militancy was on the rise among the nation's Black population. Representative David Holmes stated, "The mood is very strong. . . Basic rights for Negroes have been too long forthcoming." State representative Daisy Elliott cautioned that young African Americans "are prepared to fight—and even die—for their rights. They're very impatient, and they have no intention of waiting another hundred years."¹⁹⁹

The Walk to Freedom

In spring 1963 Reverend C. L. Franklin of New Bethel Baptist Church had the idea of organizing a civil rights march in Detroit. According to his daughter Aretha Franklin, "many pastors whom he invited to our home to discuss it were not on board."²⁰⁰ But through the intervention of two of Reverend Franklin's friends, singers Henry Belafonte and Mahalia Jackson, the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. offered his support for the march.²⁰¹ Another of Detroit's outspoken Black ministers, the Reverend Albert Cleage Jr. of Central Congregational Church joined with Franklin to organize what became the first major civil rights march in United States history. The original purpose of the march was to show solidarity with Southern Blacks facing violence in the South. However Reverend Cleage demanded that the march highlight the civil rights issues facing Blacks living in the industrial north as well: the need for better jobs, housing, and schools. Local activist, attorney, and real estate broker James Del Rio, served as the planning director for the march, known as the Walk to Freedom.²⁰² Financing was secured from the United Autoworkers (UAW) through Walter Reuther as well as through former Michigan governor John Swainson who raised funds from donors. James Del Rio traveled across Michigan recruiting participants to the campaign so that the march would have broad, statewide support.²⁰³

On June 23, the marchers met at the corner of Woodward Avenue and Adelaide Streets and walked down Woodward Avenue toward Jefferson Avenue. The number of protestors is contested, with estimates ranging between 125,000 to 250,000—some believed the discrepancy was based on the racial bias of certain media. As thousands of people streamed down Woodward Avenue, commentators remarked on the surreal, subdued quiet of the marchers. The Walk ended at Cobo Hall where Martin Luther King Jr. gave his "I Have a Dream" speech for the first time. A variation of it was repeated two months later at the Lincoln Memorial during the March on Washington. King's Detroit speech was recorded by Barry Gordy and released by Motown Records as a spoken word album in August 1963. Gordy later said he recorded the speech because "in years to come the Negro revolt of 1963 will take its place historically with the American Revolution and the Hungarian uprising."²⁰⁴ The activist newspaper *The Militant*, stated that the June march in Detroit, "set the tone for the summer by involving a quarter million in a mass protest against Jim Crow."²⁰⁵ In his account of the march, the Executive Secretary of the Detroit NAACP chapter Arthur Johnson said, "Tears of joy welled up in my eyes. I believe that every person who marched that day felt that they were making strides toward the African American hope and determination to be

¹⁹⁹ "Detroiters: Negro Mood is Spreading North." *The News-Palladium* [Benton Harbor]. June 7, 1963:13.

²⁰⁰ Riley, Rochelle. "Aretha Franklin Reflects on Dad's Role in Freedom Walk." *USA Today*. June 21, 2013.

²⁰¹ *Ibid*.

²⁰² Stokes, Chuck. "James Del Rio & Joyce Wells: Two Generations Commemorate Detroit's Great Walk to Freedom!" Scripps Media, Detroit WXYZ. June 22, 2013.

²⁰³ "Organizer Recalls Detroit 'Walk to Freedom'." *Ebony*. July 1993:122.

²⁰⁴ Smith, Suzanne. *Dancing in the Street: Motown and the Cultural Politics of Detroit*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009:22.

²⁰⁵ Sell, Evelyn. "Freedom Now Party on Michigan Ballot." *The Militant*. Vol. 29, No. 23. June 8, 1964.

free. Up to this time, the march “was the most powerful statement of civil rights in the nation, and indeed the world.”²⁰⁶ According to the *Detroit Free Press*,

*This was more than just another big story in Detroit’s history. For after all, that impressively, quiet, massive march of 125,000 clean-cut, well dressed, determined people down Woodward Avenue must also be seen as a giant economic and political force. It’s a force that many have said was there. Sunday it became dramatically visible.*²⁰⁷

That same sentiment was echoed in the African American newspaper the *Detroit Tribune* whose front page declared “NEW DAY HERE.” The accompanying article recounted what Blacks in Detroit would no longer have to put up with: “racial apologists” serving as civic leaders, the pretense of integration of municipal jobs, and sit-ins demanding fair employment being ignored. The *Detroit Tribune* claimed that because of the March, “the status quo is altered. Detroit will never be the same. An altogether new situation must be reckoned with.”²⁰⁸

A Message to the Grassroots - Divergence in Detroit

As uplifting and successful as the final event was, the planning process for the Walk to Freedom exposed developing cracks between Detroit’s civil rights factions. Reverend Franklin supported Martin Luther King Jr.’s philosophy of non-violence and working toward the integration of African Americans into traditional society. Reverend Cleage believed in a more militant approach to activism based on the ideologies of Black Nationalism and Black Separatism that demanded the creation of a new Black power structure. One example of the division, Cleage had wanted to limit the Walk to Freedom to Blacks only while Franklin wanted to include all supporters. Another example is the snubbing of the NAACP in the pre-planning for the march. According to Arthur Johnson, the Detroit NAACP as an organization was not even invited to participate. Individual NAACP members did march holding signs reading “NAACP” to ensure the organization would forever be affiliated with it in photographs.²⁰⁹ The Detroit NAACP, which had once been the largest local branch in the country, saw its membership dwindle in the 1950s after it expelled some of its more militant, left leaning members. In 1963 its effectiveness was being questioned due to its on-going moderate stance to the growing protests in the South, causing a younger generation of African Americans to align with more radical, action-oriented organizations like CORE and SNCC. According to the *Detroit Free Press*, the “dispute among Detroit’s Negro leadership broke into the open” on July 5, 1963 at the national conference of the NAACP in Chicago. Seventy-five members of the Detroit delegation walked out of the conference at the request of Detroit NAACP Chapter president Edward Turner, when he learned that James Del Rio, who had reportedly said the Walk to Freedom was a repudiation of the NAACP, had been invited to speak.²¹⁰

In the aftermath of the Walk to Freedom, the Reverend C.L. Franklin and the Detroit Council for Human Rights (DCHR) organized a Black Summit of national civil rights leaders to be held in Detroit in the fall of 1963. Franklin’s intention was to create a Northern Negro Leadership Conference, a new national civil rights organization that would serve as the northern counterpart to Martin Luther King Jr.’s Southern Christian Leadership Conference.²¹¹ Franklin excluded Detroit’s NAACP representatives as well as controversial Black leaders like the Reverend Albert Cleage Jr., whom Franklin felt was becoming too radical, from participating in planning activities for the Summit. In response, Cleage quit the DCHR and

²⁰⁶ Johnson, Arthur L. *Race and Remembrance: A Memoir*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008.

²⁰⁷ Angelo, Frank. “Freedom March: A Giant Political, Economic Force.” *Detroit Free Press*. June 25, 1963.

²⁰⁸ “New Day Here.” *Detroit Tribune*. June 29, 1963:1.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*.

²¹⁰ “Walkout Bares City Negro Split.” *Detroit Free Press*. July 5, 1963:6.

²¹¹ “Detroit Slates ‘Black Summit’ for Northern Leaders.” *Jet*. November 14, 1964.

joined forces with other increasingly militant leaders such as Milton Henry and Grace Lee Boggs to form a new alliance called the Grassroots Leadership Conference (GRLC). According to Boggs, a Black revolutionary movement had been growing in the Northern states throughout the summer of 1963. While Southern Blacks were fighting for the basic right to vote, emerging Northern groups like the GRLC planned to fight for political representation. In the North, Blacks could exercise their right to vote—but there were no Black candidates to vote for on any ballots. The GRLC wanted to understand if and how African Americans voted and to gain a better understanding of the economic situation of Northern Blacks.²¹²

In October 1963, the GRLC began holding workshops and planning for a November conference in Detroit purposefully to be held on the very day as Reverend Franklin's Black Summit. They were forcing a showdown, a direct challenge to status quo civil rights ideology as represented by Franklin and King. The GRLC booked the King Solomon Baptist Church auditorium and invited Malcolm X to speak. When he learned of Malcolm X's participation in the event, King Solomon's Reverend Thomas Boone took legal action to stop the GRLC from using the church, but the courts upheld the contract and ruled in favor of the GRLC. On November 10, 1963 both events were held. Franklin's Black Summit held at Cobo Hall attracted 3,000 people, but over 6,000 turned out to hear Malcolm X give his fiery, revolutionary "Message to the Grassroots" speech. In it he stated,

*Revolution is bloody, revolution is hostile, revolution knows no compromise and destroys everything that gets in its way. And you, sitting around here like a knot on the way, saying, "I'm going to love these folks no matter how much they hate me." No, you need a revolution. Whoever heard of a revolution where they lock arms...singing 'We shall overcome?' You don't do that in a revolution. You don't do any singing, you're too busy swinging. It's based on land. A Revolutionary wants land so he can set up his own nation, an independent nation. These Negroes aren't asking for any nation—they're trying to crawl back on the plantation. . . A revolutionary (today) is a Black nationalist. He wants a nation. . . If you're afraid of Black nationalism, you're afraid of revolution. And if you love revolution, you love Black nationalism.*²¹³

This speech heralded a critical turning point in the Civil Rights Movement nationally. The radical rhetoric in Malcolm X's speech and its strong criticism of Martin Luther King Jr.'s non-violent approach had tremendous appeal to a younger generation of African Americans who had tired of waiting for the day their civil rights would be handed to them by the existing White power structure. There was to be no more waiting, they intended to take their rights through any means possible.

In conjunction with GRLC Conference, a Civil Rights Confab sponsored by GOAL was held in Detroit at Mr. Kelly's Lounge at 4466 Chene Street (demolished) to discuss "the Negro Revolt."²¹⁴ The meeting of 120 delegates was for Black participants only; Whites and interracial couples were turned away at the door. To the Confab organizers, it did not make sense for Whites to be involved in planning and leading a Black revolution. According to *Jet* magazine, the Confab reflected "the taut civil rights string which is threatening to snap and change the direction of America's entire Freedom movement."²¹⁵ The *Jet* article noted that the violence in Birmingham had forced the Civil Rights Movement to a crossroads. Should it

²¹² Boggs, Grace Lee. "Revisiting the November 1963 Grassroots Leadership Conference." The Boggs Blog. In *Living for Change*. November 10, 2013. <https://conversationsthatyouwillneverfinish.wordpress.com/2013/11/10/revisiting-the-november-1963-grassroots-leadership-conference-by-grace-lee-boggs/>

²¹³ "Message to the Grassroots." Speech by Malcolm King Solomon Baptist Church. Detroit, Michigan. November 10, 1963. Department of American Studies. University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia. <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~public/civilrights/a0147.html>

²¹⁴ Still, Larry. "Talk is of Revolution." *Jet*. November 28, 1963:14

²¹⁵ *ibid*.

continue to follow Martin Luther King Jr.'s non-violent path to integration or should it follow a new course of action—demanding change through revolution and Black Nationalism? The growing radical movement in Detroit, spearheaded by Reverend Albert Cleage Jr. and buoyed by the endorsement of Malcolm X, was a catalyst for the growth of the Black Power Movement in America.

In the fall of 1963, two significant events showcasing the increased radicalization of the Civil Rights Movement emerged in Detroit: the formation of an all-Black political party and the introduction of a program of sit-ins by the Detroit NAACP targeting White businesses for their discriminatory hiring practices.

The Freedom Now Party

The idea of an all-Black political party was first floated among Black activists during the March on Washington in August 1963. It was viewed as a means of punishing the Democratic Party for not fulfilling its commitment to Black voters by putting its support behind a weak Civil Rights Bill.²¹⁶ Conceived by journalist William Worthly, the idea gained foothold in Detroit where the city's civil rights activists were still energized by the success of the Walk to Freedom. In October, Reverend Albert Cleage Jr., Milton Henry, and Grace Lee Boggs began fleshing out the details for the formation of a new political party. Cleage explained why an all-Black party was necessary:

*We must build an independent Negro political party. We must make it a national party. It must be centrally controlled so that we can mobilize the entire Negro political strength for united political action . . . We have tried everything else, and it has failed. Now we must try independent Black political action.*²¹⁷

The advent of the all-Black Freedom Now Party was seen as a “new stage in the Negro struggle . . . a sharp rejection of gradualism.”²¹⁸ After receiving the endorsement of the Grassroots Leadership Conference, the Party began planning to run candidates in Michigan's November 1964 election. Their first public rally was held at Cleage's Central Congregational Church in Detroit. Though the Freedom Now Party hoped to run candidates in other states, Michigan was the only one in which they were able to successfully get on the ballot.²¹⁹ The Freedom Now ticket included Albert Cleage Jr. as candidate for Michigan governor, James Jackson as Lieutenant Governor, and Milton Henry for U.S. House of Representatives. A Freedom Now Party handbill demanded, “Why don't Negroes Unite Politically? There is Political Strength in Unity. Look what we did for John F. Kennedy in 1960.”²²⁰ The Freedom Now Party's bid was unsuccessful and none of their candidates were elected. Cleage attributed the loss to the belief by a majority of African Americans that their continued support of the Democratic Party would eventually lead to change.²²¹ In addition, the formation of the Freedom Now Party had been met with little enthusiasm from Martin Luther King Jr., who believed an “all-Negro political party” went against his philosophy of integration within accepted norms.²²²

²¹⁶ “Demonstrations Have Failed, Says Negro Party Organizer.” *The Record* [Hackensack, New Jersey]. February 12, 1964:3.

²¹⁷ Sell, Evelyn. “Freedom Now Party on Michigan Ballot.” *The Militant*. Vol 28, No. 23. June 8, 1964.

²¹⁸ “Freedom Now” *Internationalist Socialist Review*. Vol 24, No. 4. Fall 1963:103-113.

²¹⁹ “Our Stories. Freedom Party Now, 1963-1964. Interview—Henry Cleage.” *Ruff Draft*. Spring/Summer 1996. Kristin Cleage. Finding Eliza Blog. <http://findingeliza.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/FNPinterview.jpg>

²²⁰ Cleage, Kristin. “The Freedom Now Party.” *Finding Eliza* Blog. March 15, 2013. <http://findingeliza.com/archives/10001>.

²²¹ “New Freedom Now Party Blanked But Not Broken.” *Detroit Free Press*. November 5, 1964:3.

²²² “King Rips Negro Party.” *Detroit Free Press*. October 31, 1964:3.

Protests, Sit-Ins, and Walk Outs

One day after the Walk to Freedom in June 1963 the *Illustrated News* published an editorial by Reverend Albert Cleage Jr., which was a testament to the success of militant action saying,

*If the pressure of Negro protest is removed, our movement towards first class citizenship will stop! This is the essential fact the Negro must understand. The walls of segregation and discrimination are crumbling because of the increasing pressure of the Negro protest. . . It works!*²²³

In a united front in July 1963, the Preachers of Detroit and Vicinity, Detroit CORE, and the Group on Advance Leadership (GOAL) targeted two major grocery chains operating in Detroit, A & P and Kroger, for their discriminatory hiring practices. Each Saturday they organized weekly picket lines outside of the stores.

Mindful of the criticism they had received during the planning for the Walk to Freedom, the Detroit NAACP also began to increase its protest activity. The NAACP organized a sit-in at the First Federal Savings and Loan building (751 Griswold) in downtown Detroit to call attention to unfair lending practices. First Federal was targeted for two reasons: they would not provide mortgages to African Americans trying to purchase a home in a White neighborhood and no African Americans had been hired for managerial positions within the company. On October 4th, an integrated group of fifteen protestors sat down in the bank building and had to be removed by police. In what the *Detroit Free Press* called a precedent setting move, all fifteen were convicted on a charge of disturbing the peace.²²⁴ The convictions did not deter the NAACP's efforts. Every day between October 1963 and March 1964, a group of integrated protestors would wait on-line at First Federal and, when their turn at the window arrived, drop to the ground to sit until physically removed by security or the police.²²⁵ According to James Wadsworth, then head of the Detroit NAACP, the stakes were high. Granting "mortgage money to a person without regard to the racial characteristics of the neighborhood is most important—it enables the Negro to break out of the ghetto."²²⁶ The NAACP's persistence paid off and in March 1964 First Federal Savings and Loan agreed to change its lending and hiring practices.

James Bevel of the Southern Christian Leadership Council introduced the idea of having school children in Birmingham, Alabama, participate in a major protest, known as the Children's Crusade. On May 2, 1963 over 900 Birmingham students walked out of schools and marched to the town square. Inspired by the event, students at Detroit's Barbour Junior High School, organized and began participating in protests around the city. This included the NAACP protest at Detroit Federal Savings and Loan, where nine students were arrested, as well as a protest of Jet's Gratiot Street Market over hiring practices.²²⁷ The student's courage, led to the national branch of the NAACP undertaking a nationwide drive to end school segregation. Arthur Johnson, the former Executive Secretary of the Detroit NAACP branch, was a leader in that effort. In Detroit, the school segregation protest efforts were actually centered on housing, because the city's adherence to housing restrictions in its neighborhoods were in large part responsible for the segregation of Detroit's schools. The NAACP demanded that one Negro teacher be placed in every Detroit school and that "open schools," those not currently filled to capacity, be marketed to African Americans and that Black students be bussed to those schools should they choose to attend them.²²⁸

²²³ Cleage Jr., Albert. "We Shall Overcome." *The Illustrated News*. June 24, 1963:3-4.

²²⁴ "15 Guilty in Sit-In." *Detroit Free Press*. December 13, 1963:1.

²²⁵ "Will Resume Detroit Sit-in." *Racine Journal Times Sunday Bulletin*. October 6, 1963:11

²²⁶ "James E. Wadsworth New NAACP Boss." *Detroit Free Press*. February 23, 1964.

²²⁷ Putnam, Stanley. "The Barbour Kids: A Discussion Group Acts." *Detroit Free Press*. February 16, 1964:3A.

²²⁸ Mackey, Roberta. "School Integration Drive Planned." *Detroit Free Press*. May 21, 1963.

In March 1964, the NAACP began to target the General Motors Corporation (GM) for discrimination in its hiring practices. At that time, very few African Americans held salaried or managerial positions in the company. Local NAACP chapters held demonstrations at twenty-two GM facilities around the country. In Detroit, over 800 protestors, including Rosa Parks, joined a picket line at the General Motors Building on Woodward Avenue. In April, the national NAACP reported they would increase their pressure and organize demonstrations at fifty GM plants across the country. The first protest was to be held on May 4th in Detroit.²²⁹ Hundreds of protestors picketed outside GM Headquarters for six hours.²³⁰ Soon after, the NAACP announced they had made significant progress with General Motors administration who had agreed to changes in its hiring practices.²³¹

Freedom Summer 1964

In 1960 the Southern Christian Leadership Council brought together a group of student protest leaders in Raleigh, North Carolina. One hundred and twenty-six delegates from Southern universities and communities attended the “Call to Youth Meeting.” The result was the establishment of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which took on the role of organizing and coordinating sit-ins and protests throughout the South. In 1961, “The Kennedy Administration made clear that it believed and was willing to support the idea that the vote, and not the lunch counter, must be the ultimate focus of the integration movement.”²³² In response, SNCC leader Robert Moses began working on a plan to register Black voters in rural Mississippi. First, a mock vote dubbed the “Freedom Ballot” was held to determine if there was interest in the project from Mississippi’s Black community—over 90,000 people participated. By 1963, there were 42 SNCC field secretaries based around the country “all of them have been repeatedly jailed on a wide variety of charges, and many have been beaten in an out of jail.”²³³

In the winter of 1963 SNCC and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) recruited over one thousand, mostly White, student volunteers from Northern colleges to come to Mississippi and to assist with a voter registration drive that would be held during the Summer of 1964. Known as Freedom Summer it was considered one of the most “ambitious extended campaigns of the entire Civil Rights Movement.”²³⁴ Organized by Robert Moses, its intent was to register enough African Americans to vote to initiate a challenge Mississippi’s all White delegation to the Democratic National Convention that fall. While in Mississippi, SNCC’s student volunteers established “Freedom Schools” to teach Black children about African American history and opened community centers to provide services to the local population. Freedom Summer took a chilling turn on June 21, its first day of operation, when three student volunteers were murdered by White supremacists.

Many volunteers from Detroit participated in the Freedom Summer initiative. Eric Morton, who joined SNCC in 1962, served as the materials coordinator for the Mississippi voter registration project.²³⁵ In coordination with the National Lawyers Guild, the integrated Detroit law firm of Goodman, Crockett,

²²⁹ “Job Policy Protest to Begin May 4.” *The Courier-Journal* [Louisville, KY] April 13, 1964:4.

²³⁰ Myers, Don. “GM to Dramatize Charges of Bias.” *Detroit Free Press*. May 5, 1964:1.

²³¹ “Massive Protests at General Motors Headquarters.” *Detroit Free Press*. April 12, 1964.

²³² Hayden, Tom. “Revolution in Mississippi: Special Report.” Students for a Democratic Society. January 1962.

²³³ “The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee-What Is It?” Chicago Area Friends of SNCC. Founding of SNCC. Freedom Summer Digital Collection. Wisconsin Historical Society.

<https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/p15932coll2>

²³⁴ Starkey, William. “The 1964 Mississippi Freedom Schools.” *History Now*.

<http://www.mshistorynow.mdah.ms.gov/articles/403/The-1964-Mississippi-Freedom-Schools>

²³⁵ McCartney, David. “Old Gold: Papers shed light on civil rights struggle.” *IowaNow*. January 1, 2018.

Eden, and Robb sent representatives to Mississippi to provide legal assistance to the volunteers. The firm's African American partner George W. Crockett went to Jackson, Mississippi, and set up a temporary law office that included Detroit lawyers Richard Goodman and Alan Zemmol. It was later run by Claudia Morcom, the first female African American to work in an integrated law firm in the United States²³⁶ When the three volunteers went missing on the first day of the project, it was George Crockett who organized the first search party to look for them after local police refused to act. William Stuart House (127 Oakman Boulevard) served as the Detroit Field Secretary for SNCC (11536 LaSalle Avenue) in 1965. In a talk at a 2010 SNCC Reunion, House recalled participating in sit-ins at roller rinks and swimming pools around Detroit and licking envelopes with Stevie Wonder before being recruited to SNCC by student activists Tom Hayden and Bob Moses. House was arrested in Selma, Alabama, trying to register voters.²³⁷

Violence against Mississippi's Black citizens and the volunteers that were working to register them continued throughout the summer of 1964. According to Tom Hayden, an anti-Viet Nam War student activist from the University of Michigan,

*In Mississippi that summer, there were thirty bombings, thirty-five church burnings, thirty-five people shot and eighty beaten up. But the Freedom Democrats continued moving toward the goal of sending an alternative, legal, racially open delegation to challenge the official Dixiecrats at the convention. It was the most significant model of participatory democracy built in the 1960s.*²³⁸

The courage shown by Southern protestors and the volunteers that assisted the Civil Rights Movement during the Freedom Summer of 1964 greatly contributed to Congress passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Impact of the Murder of Viola Liuzzo

On March 25, 1965, Detroit housewife and civil rights volunteer Viola Liuzzo was murdered by the Ku Klux Klan in Alabama. A Tennessee native, Viola Liuzzo had moved to Detroit in the 1950s where she became active in the NAACP. In 1965, she volunteered to assist the Southern Christian Leadership Council in its efforts to register African American voters. On her way back to Selma, Alabama, from participating in a march in Montgomery, she provided a ride to a fellow protestor who was Black. Ku Klux Klan members followed the car and fired dozens of shots into it. Liuzzo was shot in the temple and died instantly. The mother of five children, Liuzzo was the only White woman known to have been killed during Civil Rights Movement protests. Shocked, the nation and public opinion turned even further against the Ku Klux Klan. Her murder trial resulted in "the first convictions of Ku Klux Klan members by an all-White jury in a civil rights case"²³⁹ and led to a Congressional investigation into the Ku Klux Klan by the House Un-American Activities Committee.

²³⁶ "Answering a historic call." *Detroit Legal News*. May 26, 2011.

²³⁷ House, Stu. "Inciting to Riot in Selma AL." 2010. Veterans of the Civil Rights Movement. Wisconsin Historical Society. https://www.crmvet.org/nars/stor/s_house.htm

²³⁸ Hayden, Tom. "Bob Moses." *The Nation*. July 2, 2003.

²³⁹ "The Murder of Viola Liuzzo: A Turning Point in Ku Klux Klan History." Roosevelt Institute for American Studies. <https://www.roosevelt.nl/murder-viola-liuzzo-turning-point-ku-klux-klan-history>.

1964-1976: The Second Revolution

*In the last fifteen years, before the eyes of the entire world, the black movement in the United States has moved steadily, and apparently irresistibly, from a struggle for rights to a struggle for power, from hope in reform to a realization of the need for revolution.*²⁴⁰

James Boggs, Detroit, 1969

The decade of the 1960s in Detroit had begun with another major increase in the city's African American population. Southern Blacks were once again moving North—this time in the face of the violence taking place in Alabama, Mississippi, and Virginia as demands for social change increased. Detroit's overall population growth peaked in the 1950s, but its African American population continued to rise over the next several decades, though not at the fantastic rates seen earlier in the century. The difference to Detroit's population this time was the significant change in percentage of African Americans in the city's overall population. In 1960, Blacks were about 25 percent of Detroit's total population; by 1970 that number had risen to 43 percent. Between 1970 and 1980, Detroit became a majority Black city with an African American population of 63 percent. Today in 2021, the city's African American population is at 79 percent. This rise in percentage was due not only to the influx of Southern Blacks coming into the city, but also to the mass exit of Detroit's White population—White flight—to the city's surrounding suburbs. This exit began in the 1950s and was accelerated by the traumatic events of the 1967 Rebellion.

The passage of the national Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965, resulted in a significant shift in focus for the Civil Rights Movement. In Detroit, civil rights activism changed, from demanding that civil rights be recognized to the pursuit of enforcement of the newly established laws that provided them. While African Americans in Detroit could point to some measurable gains over the past twenty years, in 1964 there were still deep divisions between the races.

The Detroit NAACP moved to new offices in the Great Lakes Building (8401 Woodward) in Detroit in 1965. At the opening ceremony, John Feikens of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission stated, "The NAACP faces a tougher fight in Detroit . . . The position of the Negro is more blurred . . . as the Negro comes close to the realization of his goals, it becomes more difficult to close the gap in the quality of treatment." According to Feikens, local civil rights issues like those faced in the North did not seem as heroic as those faced by African Americans in the South. There was the danger that the White community in Michigan believed that local Negroes had already attained their goals.²⁴¹

The year 1965 saw younger civil rights activists grow even more disillusioned with the current direction of the movement. Shocked by the assassination of Malcolm X on February 21, 1965, just two weeks after he had given a speech at Detroit's Ford Auditorium on the day his home in New York was bombed; disturbed by the violence protestors encountered on Bloody Sunday as they tried to cross the Edmund Pettis Bridge in Selma, Alabama, on March 7th; and seeing the African American neighborhood of Watts in Los Angeles go up in flames on August 11th, caused them to further question the non-violent methods of Martin Luther King Jr. and his plea for patience. In Detroit, discrimination in housing, inequality in education, and an unjust criminal justice system still existed and were even getting worse, leading to increased tensions that finally exploded in rebellion in 1967, a defining moment for the city. This period in Detroit's civil rights history is most strongly characterized by its contributions to the resurgence of Black Nationalism and the growth of the Black Power movement.

²⁴⁰ Ward, Stephen. "Manifesto for a Black Revolutionary Party." *Pages from a Black Radical's Notebook: A James Boggs Reader*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011:200.

²⁴¹ "NAACP is told of challenge greater in the North." *Detroit Free Press*. February 8, 1965:3

Vaughn's Bookstore and Black Pride

American Black radical movements of the late 1960s, inspired in part by the grassroots movement developing in South Africa to end apartheid, focused on Black Pride and self-determination as a way to reverse the negative effects years of oppression and social injustice had on the Black conscious. In 1964 Edward Vaughn opened Vaughn's Bookstore at 16525 Livernois (extant), which sold books on Black history, art, and culture. It was the second Black-owned and oriented bookstore established in America. Over the next three years Vaughn was a strong advocate for Black Pride holding national forums that included a wide range of Black artists, businessmen, politicians, educators, and activists to discuss topics of meaning to the Black community. Vaughn's Bookstore was significant in promoting the work of Black writers and poets, especially those published by Detroit's Broadside Press. Vaughn's patrons were among the first in Detroit to sport natural hairstyles and dashikis, a statement of acceptance and pride in their African heritage. On-going discussion groups at Vaughn's brought together Detroit Black activists like Rosa Parks, Milton Henry, and Albert Cleage Jr.

CORE Protests in Detroit

In 1964 the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) announced they would be placing "more emphasis on political and legal aspects" of the civil rights battle and soon after sponsored a series of protest activities in Detroit.²⁴² CORE had been founded in 1942 by James Farmer to promote a non-violent approach to civil rights based on the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. Active in the South, especially during the voting rights struggle from 1961 to 1964, CORE began to address civil rights issues of the urban North in the late 1960s. Between May and June 1965, CORE initiated the following protests in Detroit:

- James Farmer, the national chairman of CORE, spoke in Detroit in May 1965 telling the crowd they were as much a part of the Civil Rights Movement as the Selma-Montgomery marchers. He encouraged a crowd of 200 "to march, picket, and be willing to go to jail" to call attention to the housing conditions of African Americans in Detroit declaring, "Let us no longer be the invisible men, let our voices be heard."²⁴³ CORE focused on the conditions of an apartment complex at the corner of Twelfth Street and Seward Avenue owned by the Goodman Brothers Real Estate Company. To gain the public's attention, six CORE members chained themselves to a fence surrounding the construction site of the St. Regis Hotel at W. Grand Boulevard and Second Avenue that under construction by the Goodman Brothers. The protestors charged that the builders should not receive "federal assistance to build luxury hotel rooms for transient executives," while doing little to maintain the rental property they owned on Twelfth Street.²⁴⁴ Five tenants of the Twelfth Street apartment house who had participated in meetings with CORE prior to the chain-in, were evicted. They then sued Goodman Brothers for what they claimed was retaliatory action.
- CORE representatives went before the Detroit Board of Education to "demand better accounting of integration and building contractors." They cited discrimination in apprentice training programs in Detroit schools, in which just 106 of 2,815 trainees were Black and demanded that at least 100 new Black apprentices be recruited. They also demanded reduced class sizes and more schools to end overcrowding.²⁴⁵
- In June CORE was among a number of local civil rights groups and 600 individuals that submitted a complaint to the Michigan Civil Rights Commission declaring Wayne County

²⁴² "Rights Movement Shifts to Courts." *Detroit Free Press*. January 28, 1965:6.

²⁴³ Sauter, Van G. "Rights Unit Calls Slum Top Issue." *Detroit Free Press*. May 17, 1965:3.

²⁴⁴ Sauter, Van G. "Human Chain Arrested." *Detroit Free Press*. May 28, 1965:3.

²⁴⁵ Mackey, Roberta. "Rights Groups List School Demands." *Detroit Free Press*. May 26, 1965:3.

Prosecutor Samuel Olsen discriminated against African Americans in the handling of his cases. The complaint was filed by civil rights attorney George Crockett.²⁴⁶

- In an effort to obtain equality in employment, CORE picketed two Detroit grocery stores, Mayfair Market (9433 Grand River Avenue) and Food Farm Market (1150 Dexter Avenue), demanding higher wages for African American employees. The store owners then sued CORE for acting as a labor union in trying to oversee employee wages.²⁴⁷ CORE was able to reach a settlement with store management by working through the Retail Employers Union Local 876.

Defining Black Power

On June 7, 1966 civil rights activist James Meredith attempted to walk from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi, to call attention to voter suppression in the South. Known as the March Against Fear, on its second day Meredith was shot in the leg by the Ku Klux Klan and could not continue. In a show of unity, Martin Luther King Jr., Floyd McKissick, the new director of CORE, and Stokely Carmichael, the director of SNCC, vowed to complete the march on Meredith's behalf. During the three weeks of the march, participants were able to discuss the current state of civil rights activism, which some found it unsustainable. Constantly confronted with violence, they began to turn away from King's non-violent approach and began turning toward a more militant form of advocacy. On June 16, 1966 Stokely Carmichael was arrested for trespassing in Greenwood, Mississippi. Upon his release a few hours later, the speech he gave to the attending crowd changed the direction of the Civil Rights Movement would take over the next decade. It was the first time the term "Black Power" was publicly used in association with the movement. Carmichael declared,

This is the twenty-seventh time I've been arrested and I ain't going to jail no more! The only way we gonna stop them white men from whupping us is to take over. We have been saying freedom for six years and we ain't got nothin.' What we got to start saying now is Black Power. We want Black Power."²⁴⁸

The radical and potentially violent connotations of the term 'Black Power' immediately caught the attention of the national press. Soon presidential candidate Hubert Humphrey was denouncing Black Power as a form of reverse racism leading Floyd McKissick to attempt to clarify its meaning. According to McKissick Black Power meant,

*Aggressive political and economic power. . . a unified Black voice reflecting racial pride in the tradition of a heterogenous nation . . . an understanding of African history, an awareness of Negro culture and history within American Heritage and a dedication to help create a new society rather than welcome Negroes into first class citizenship in the old.*²⁴⁹

The March Against Fear, considered the last major march of the Civil Rights Movement, ended on June 22, 1966 in Jackson, Mississippi, with 15,000 marchers in attendance. One month later, Stokely Carmichael was brought to Detroit sponsored by two local Black religious groups, the Baptist Ministers and the Negro Preachers of Detroit and Vicinity, as a speaker at a "Get Out the Vote Rally."²⁵⁰ After a full day of activities in support of local Black political candidates, on the evening of July 30, 1966 Carmichael spoke to a crowd of 500 African Americans at Cobo Hall. During the speech he broke with accepted

²⁴⁶ "Aide Calls Charge Hogwash." *Detroit Free Press*. June 2, 1965.

²⁴⁷ "2 Stores Sue Rights Group in Turnabout Race Battle." *Detroit Free Press*. May 28, 1965:3.

²⁴⁸ Stewart, Charles. "The Evolution of Revolution: Stokely Carmichael and the Rhetoric of Black Power." *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 83 (1997):429-446.

²⁴⁹ "CORE Boss hurls Racism Charges back at Humphrey." *Detroit Free Press*. July 8, 1966.

²⁵⁰ "Carmichael to Attend Vote Rally." *Detroit Free Press*. July 22, 1966:8.

tradition and began criticizing the UAW for exploiting Black workers. He also denounced the U.S. military for recruiting poor Blacks who, denied the opportunity of an equal education, joined the armed forces and were sent to Viet Nam. The speech was broadcast by WKNR as part of its *Project Detroit* programming.²⁵¹

At the African American Methodist Church's Michigan Conference held at St. Stephen AME Church (6000 Stanford Street) in Detroit on September 10, 1966, 1,000 delegates representing 150 churches voted to denounce the radicalism of Black Power in support of Martin Luther King Jr.'s non-violent approach.²⁵² Just two weeks later, on September 27th, Stokely Carmichael returned to Detroit to give a speech entitled "Who's Afraid of Black Power?" at Reverend Albert Cleage's Central Congregational Church. Over 1,000 people attended the rally, with the enthusiastic crowd standing in the aisles, on tables, wherever they could cram into the church. Albert Cleage's brother Henry Cleage and activist Milton Henry had recently announced the formation of what the *Detroit Free Press* labeled "a militant vanguard of Black Power." Known as the Metropolitan Defense Committee, the group of seventeen Black and three White lawyers was organized to defend Black protestors arrested in riots, protesting the draft, and/or were victims of illegal police tactics.²⁵³ When Carmichael approached the microphone he introduced Rosa Parks to a standing ovation.²⁵⁴ In the late 1960s, Parks had begun to align herself with the principles of the more radical Black Power Movement. Carmichael's speech was very well received in Detroit where he declared, "The problem is not in the word power...it's when you put Black in front of it. America has never been able to stand an arrogant Black man."²⁵⁵ On September 27, he also spoke to a crowd of 3,000 at Hill Auditorium at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor where he stated, "Black power is simply the right of self-determination" and that the racial question of the day was not integration but "how to deliver good schools, jobs and roofs to Black people."²⁵⁶

The speeches on Black Power that Carmichael made in Detroit occurred during a critical period—May 1966 to January 1967—when he was defining the meaning of the term in the face of national backlash.²⁵⁷

Centerism in the Midst of Radical Change

By 1965, the protests and sit-ins held by the NAACP and other Black activist organizations had enabled African Americans to obtain better jobs in local government, education, business, and retail sectors. The *Detroit Free Press* ran an article entitled "Their Talent and Training Open Doors," which showcased the lives of five Black business and professional women. While the article included insensitive subheadings like "It's Popular to Hire Negroes," the sentiments voiced by the young women interviewed were positive, upbeat, and strong. As one put it, "I plan to raise my children to be persons, not Negroes in white society, but people of certain capabilities that should be developed to the fullest."²⁵⁸

Encouraged by the passage of the national Civil Rights Act and believing that a new era of equality was beginning, in 1965 the National NAACP announced the implementation of a "program of 'citizenship clinics' designed to strengthen the Negro Community from within." It planned to focus attention on "delinquency, vandalism, crime, group moral standings" to "help stabilize family life in the Negro

²⁵¹ "Stokely Carmichael Speaks on Black Power in Detroit, July 30, 1966." *Pan-African News Wire*. June 15, 2006.

²⁵² "AME Urges Positive Rights Moves." *Detroit Free Press*. September 10, 1966:6.

²⁵³ Ward, Hiley. "17 Lawyers vow aid to Negro Extremists." *Detroit Free Press*. September 26, 1966:14.

²⁵⁴ Sinclair, John. "Who's Afraid of Black Power." *The Fifth Estate*. October 16, 1966. Vol 1:16.

²⁵⁵ "1,000 Cheer Carmichael in Detroit." *Detroit Free Press*. September 28, 1966:30.

²⁵⁶ "Negro Leader Tells Concept of Black Power." *News Palladium* (Benton Harbor, Michigan) September 28, 1966.

²⁵⁷ McCormack, Donald J. "Stokely Carmichael and Pan-Africanism: Back to Black Power." *The Journal of Politics*. Vol. 35, No. 2. May 1973:386-409.

²⁵⁸ Damme, Mary Ann. "Their Talent and Training Open Doors." *Detroit Free Press*. January 31, 1965:17.

community.” It was intended to mark an end of the era of “demonstrations” and a movement “toward the broad field of political action.”²⁵⁹ It was not well received. NAACP membership dropped by 45,000 members.

The National Council of Churches Commission on Religion and Race also announced a change in its tactics. Instead of “training volunteers to aid in voter registration in Mississippi,” it would now send student volunteers to Northern cities. The first such programs were established after President Lyndon Johnson signed Executive Order 11246 in September 1965, which established anti-discrimination practices in government contracts and the affirmative action program. Among the first was Project Equality, a cooperative program between interfaith religions and America’s business community. Headed at the national level by Reverend Robert Hoppe, the program’s test project was to be launched in Detroit, where it would focus on developing better lines of communication between Detroit’s inner city Black population and businesses in the White-dominated suburbs.²⁶⁰ Launbural Spriggs served as program director in Detroit from an office in the Gabriel Richard Building. Project Equality was an early affirmative action program meant to stop discrimination in places of employment. More than 2,000 companies registered to participate in the 38 step anti-discrimination program following the announcement of its inception.

Kercheval Street Incident

Though helpful, programs like Project Equality did little to address the big issues the facing Detroit’s Black population during this period, under-employment, lack of representation in local government, and on-going police brutality. Deep-rooted inequity still existed between Detroit’s Black and White populations. Though job opportunities had increased for African Americans in Detroit’s automobile factories, they still were significantly underrepresented in management positions at the city’s Big Three auto companies. There were also few Blacks filling leadership positions in the UAW. Overall, there was more unemployment in the city among Blacks than Whites and Black workers were still the first employees to be laid off when the economy declined. Detroit city government was remiss in providing equal opportunity for Blacks in municipal jobs. Detroit’s overwhelmingly White police department still subjected the city’s Black population to racial profiling and was slow to respond to complaints in Black neighborhoods.

A confrontation between the Detroit police and Black residents that occurred on Kercheval Street on August 9, 1966 illustrated the mounting racial tension that was growing in the city. Seven Black men were talking, some lounging against a car, when a Detroit police car passed by. The officers stopped and ordered the men to move on or be ticketed for loitering. Four of the men were members of two civil rights groups, the African American Youth Movement (AAYM) and the Adult Community Movement for Equality (ACME), formed in 1965 to address the poverty and inadequate conditions of Detroit’s eastside Black neighborhoods. The men insisted they had the right to stand in front of their offices, located in a storefront at 9211 Kercheval, and would not comply. Words escalated as the crowd grew. Violence broke out leading to four days of violence and unrest in the city.²⁶¹

Black Iconography in Detroit

²⁵⁹ “NAACP Aim: Better Negro Citizenship.” *Detroit Free Press*. January 5, 1965:12-A.

²⁶⁰ Ward, Hiley. “Rights Push Shifting North.” *Detroit Free Press*. January 25, 1965:3

²⁶¹ *Detroit Under Fire: Police Violence, Crime Politics, and the Struggle for Racial Justice in the Civil Rights Era*.

HistoryLab, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

<https://policing.umhistorylabs.lsa.umich.edu/s/detroitunderfire/page/home><https://policing.umhistorylabs.lsa.umich.edu/s/detroitunderfire/page/home>

Symbolism took on an important role in the growing Black Pride movement. In March 1967, just months before the outbreak of the Detroit Rebellion, Reverend Albert Cleage Jr. sent a shock wave through Black communities nationwide when he unveiled a new painting at his church on 7625 Linwood Street of a Black Madonna and Child and announced that the church would now be known as the Shrine of the Black Madonna. The painting by Detroit artist Glanton Dowell challenged conventional thinking and opened up new avenues of thought about long accepted norms based in the White experience. Another iconic symbol was created on July 23, 1967, the first day of the Rebellion, when the hands and face of a statue of Jesus, located in a prominent corner grotto at the Sacred Heart Major Seminary (2701 West Chicago Boulevard) were painted Black. Though the statue was repainted white in September by a small group of White protestors, the Seminary decided that the symbolism of the Black Jesus was too strong to erase. It was repainted Black and continues to remain a reminder of Detroit's civil rights struggles. A mural featuring a Black Jesus was painted in the apse of St. Cecelia's Catholic Church (10400 Stoepel Street) in 1968 by the Detroit artist Devon Cunningham. In the mural, Jesus is surrounded by a host of angels of different ethnic backgrounds. According to Father Raymond Ellis, through the mural the church was acknowledging its place in a changed neighborhood, once one of White European immigrants now administering a majority Black population. Father Ellis admired Malcolm X and supported the Black Power Movement saying, "A man has the duty to demand and to claim his rights as marks of his dignity."²⁶² St. Cecelia's gym became noted for its basketball programs that aided many Black athletes, including Magic Johnson, that went on to professional success.

Rebellion 1967

By 1967, Black residents in cities across America had reached a boiling point. As Robert Shellow observed in *The Harvest of American Racism*, "over 164 American cities experienced some level of civil disorder throughout 1967."²⁶³ Starting in March, serious "disturbances" broke out, first in an African American neighborhood in Omaha, Nebraska. Disturbances continued to erupt throughout the summer in Cincinnati, Buffalo, Boston, Atlanta, Tampa, and Newark before violence exploded in Detroit in August 1967.

Much has been written about the 1967 Rebellion that occurred in Detroit on July 23-28. The incident that touched it off was a police raid on a party held for a returning war veteran at Twelfth and Clairmount Streets. A bottle was thrown and as the violence spread, the Michigan State Police and National Guard were summoned to the city. Tanks rolled in and snipers took rooftop positions to deter looters. Over the next five days the city looked like a war zone. It was reported that the city, "was saturated with fear. The National Guardsmen were afraid, the residents were afraid, the police were afraid. Numerous persons, the majority of them Negroes, were being injured by gunshots of undetermined origin."²⁶⁴ In all, 43 people were killed—33 of them Black. A "carefree spirit of nihilism was taking hold" and looting and destruction was rampant, especially in the Twelfth Street neighborhood. In the end, over 400 buildings were destroyed by fire. The demolition that took place in the neighborhood afterwards eliminated the locations of important Black businesses and events, including Joe Von Battle's Record Store and the law

²⁶² *St. Cecilia Parish, Detroit, Michigan*. Hackensack, New Jersey: Custombook Inc., 1972:14.

²⁶³ Shellow, Robert, Ed. *The Harvest of American Racism: The Political Meaning of Violence in the Summer of 1967*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018:1.

²⁶⁴ *1968 Kerner Commission Report. A Summary*. Othering & Belonging Institute. University of California Berkeley. <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/1968-kenner-commission-report>.

office from which Carl Levin, the first general counsel for the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, had practiced law.

After the summer of violence subsided that fall, President Lyndon Johnson established the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, commonly referred to as the Kerner Commission, to look at the causes of the unrest and to recommend solutions. The commission of eleven men came to a one basic conclusion, America had become polarized into two separate and unequal societies, Black and White. The lack of resources afforded to Black Americans resulted in anger and frustration. The Kerner Commission reported,

Segregation and poverty have created in the racial ghetto a destructive environment totally unknown to most white Americans.

What white Americans have never fully understood but what the Negro can never forget--is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it.

It is time now to turn with all the purpose at our command to the major unfinished business of this nation. It is time to adopt strategies for action that will produce quick and visible progress. It is time to make good the promises of American democracy to all citizens--urban and rural, white and black, Spanish-surname, American Indian, and every minority group.

Causes of Racial Unrest in America, 1967

Twelve deeply held grievances held by Black communities were identified and ranked into three levels of relative intensity:

First Level of Intensity

1. Police practices
2. Unemployment and underemployment
3. Inadequate housing

Second Level of Intensity

4. Inadequate education
5. Poor recreation facilities and programs
6. Ineffectiveness of the political structure and grievance mechanisms

Third Level of Intensity

7. Disrespectful white attitudes
8. Discriminatory administration of justice
9. Inadequacy of federal programs
10. Inadequacy of municipal services
11. Discriminatory consumer and credit practices
12. Inadequate welfare programs

From the *Kerner Commission Report*, 1968

The Kerner Report recommended that the United States immediately undertake large scale programs at “unprecedented levels of funding” to “close the gap between promise and performance.”

In Detroit, the 1967 Rebellion confirmed the growing feeling that the Black community should work to become self-sufficient and create its own economic and political power structures. This led to a “fresh surge of positive revolutionary energy”²⁶⁵ and “an attempt to organize the power of the Great Rebellion of July 1967 into a political force capable of restructuring American society.”²⁶⁶ In the aftermath of the Rebellion, left-leaning Black activists gained popular support in Detroit as did their efforts to bring about social and political change, so much so that Detroit was considered “an epicenter of Black freedom, radical labor, and student movements.”²⁶⁷

Revolutionary Union Movement

A massive wildcat strike at Chrysler’s Hamtramck Assembly Plant that occurred on May 2, 1968, just nine months after the Rebellion, was an impetus for the rise of one radical labor movement. Four thousand workers walked out after line production was sped up from 4 to 58 units an hour within one week.²⁶⁸ Following the strike the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) was formed by Black activists John Watson, General Baker, Mike Hamlin, and Ken Cockrel. Their aim was to “combine the

²⁶⁵ Georgakas, Dan and Marvin Surkin. *Detroit, I Do Mind Dying*. Boston: South End Press, 1998:1.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ Camp, Jordan T. “Finally Got the News: Urban Insurgency, Counterinsurgency, and the Crisis of Hegemony in Detroit” from *Incarcerating the Crisis: Freedom Struggles and the Rise of the Neoliberal State*. Berkley: University of California Press, 2016. https://lsa.umich.edu/content/dam/sid-assets/SID%20Docs/Camp,%20_Finally%20Got%20the%20News%20.pdf

²⁶⁸ “Wildcat STRIKE.” *drum*. Vol. 1. No 1. Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement. Detroit. May 1968.

power of 1930s labor upsurge with the explosiveness of the 1960s Black rebellion.”²⁶⁹ They were suspicious of Walter Reuther and the UAW, whom they felt put on a show of supporting civil rights but did little to actually help the Black worker. DRUM leaders couched the civil rights struggle in Marxian terms, equating the issues of socio-economic class with race. As the first volume of their publication *drum* succinctly put it, “While Chrysler is going into the ghetto for common labor, they go to the suburbs for supervision and skilled workers.”²⁷⁰ The DRUM movement was at its peak between 1967 and 1971 encouraging a series of wildcat strikes that demonstrated the power of the worker, especially Black workers, which were beginning to dominate the labor force as the city’s demographics changed. Other RUMS began forming at automotive plants around the city and in 1968 were brought together under the umbrella organization known as the League of Revolutionary Black Workers.

New Detroit

Following the 1967 Rebellion, a number of committees and groups were formed within the city to address the underlying conditions leading to the unrest. The New Detroit committee was an integrated group of non-government business and civic leaders established by Detroit’s Mayor Jerome Cavanagh and headed by businessman Joseph L. Hudson Jr. The 37-member committee included just nine African Americans.²⁷¹ The Committee’s purpose was to investigate the causes of the Rebellion and implement change. Two African American run groups were formed separately to address the underlying conditions that contributed to the revolt. The Citywide Citizens Action Committee (CCAC) was founded by Reverend Albert Cleage Jr. and Glanton Dowdell in 1967. Though it was considered a militant Black Nationalist group,²⁷² the CCAC received funding from an inter-faith council because “it is in contact with citizens who are not being reached by any other organization.”²⁷³ A more moderate group was the Detroit Council of Organizations (DCO) under the direction of James Garrett, then president of the Cotillion Club. The DCO drafted fifteen objectives it believed needed to be accomplished in order to begin reuniting the city, starting with adequate housing for Blacks, quality education, and equality in employment at all levels.²⁷⁴ By December 1967, both the CCAC and DCO had become critical of the New Detroit committee and the actions of the Mayor and UAW president Walter Reuther, believing they were trying to divide Detroit’s Black community for political gain.²⁷⁵ Many Blacks saw New Detroit as more of the same—established wealth and power recreating the city in its own White image.

The Black Manifesto

In April 1969, a three-day conference on Black self-determination, held in Detroit by the National Black Economic Development Conference, turned into a demand for Black Power. The meeting of over 500 people held at the McGregor Memorial Center on Wayne State University’s campus, was sponsored by the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization, the Episcopal Church, and the National Churches and was meant to be a discussion of how to move Blacks forward in business. Instead, the conference was commandeered by former SNCC Executive Director James Forman, whose speech entitled “Take Control of Black Communities—the Only Solution to Black Economic Development,”²⁷⁶

²⁶⁹ Petersen-Smith, Khury. “DRUM and the Revolt of the Black Working Class.” February 8, 2019. SocialistWorker.org.

²⁷⁰ “Racism in Hiring.” *drum*. Vol. 1. No 1. Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement. Detroit, Michigan. May 1968.

²⁷¹ Mudge, James. “Detroit Rebuilding Panel Asks Help of Community.” *Detroit Free Press*. August 2, 1967.

²⁷² Shellow, Robert, ed. *The Harvest of American Racism: The Political Meaning of Violence in the Summer of 1967*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018.

²⁷³ Blonston, Gary. “Interfaith Council Allots \$93,500 to Fight Social Ills.” *Detroit Free Press*. September 20, 1967:16.

²⁷⁴ “New Group to Contribute to the Dialogue in Detroit.” *Detroit Free Press*. August 25, 1967:8.

²⁷⁵ “Anti-Hudson move Joined by Militants.” *Detroit Free Press*. December 21, 1967:3.

²⁷⁶ Lovelace John, “Black Manifesto Explodes on Churches.” *Vermont Freeman*. September 13-15, 1969.

turned the discussion into eleven radical demands known as the Black Manifesto.²⁷⁷ Forman also demanded \$5 million in reparations from churches and synagogues.²⁷⁸ It was determined that Forman would read the Manifesto at churches across the country in order to spark national debate. The first reading of the Black Manifesto was at Riverside Church in New York City on May 4, 1969.²⁷⁹ According to the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the Black Manifesto's shock value "has pricked the conscience of the American Church like nothing else has this century. Almost every major denomination has set up a department of specialists, including blacks, whose specific duty is to investigate and administer to the needs of minorities."²⁸⁰

Conclusion

Detroit's African Americans have fought steadily and continuously for civil rights since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Already subjected to *de facto* segregation that limited housing opportunities for African Americans to the Black Bottom neighborhood, World War I hardened Detroit's color lines. As thousands of Southern Blacks moved North during the Great Migration to take jobs at the Ford Motor Company, Detroit's African American population increased 611% and segregation and discriminatory practices in the city expanded and became more entrenched. In response, the work of the city's African American community during the period 1900 to 1940 was characterized by Black uplift, based on the philosophy of Booker T. Washington, that education and economic opportunity would lead to acceptance of Blacks into traditional White society. To that end, Detroit's urban Blacks, especially through the city's Black churches, aided the newly arriving rural Southern Blacks to find housing and jobs. The Detroit chapters of the Urban League and the NAACP were established to provide social and legal aid. Since discrimination limited their access to White-owned services and institutions, Detroit's African Americans started their own. The early 20th Century in Detroit saw a proliferation of Black-owned businesses, the establishment of Black hospitals, and other means to provide for themselves. As Detroit's Black professional and middle-classes grew, they attempted to move past the limits set by segregation in housing, education, and employment, but were often thwarted by White antagonism. In the 1920s Detroit saw a rise in Ku Klux Klan membership, the increased use of restrictive racial housing covenants, and on-going discriminatory employment practices. The 1930s saw the first segregation of Detroit's schools when Sidney Miller School, the city's first all-Black high school was opened. It also saw Detroit's Black population working toward establishing political power by switching allegiance to the Democratic Party to support President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs and forming a unified voting bloc.

The World War II years (1941-1945) marked a significant change in the Black community's approach to civil rights. The war was an opportunity for African Americans to demand that they be treated like any other American. They fought for opportunities to participate equally in the armed forces, which had denied their inclusion outright or had limited them to the most menial tasks. It was difficult for any American to justify fighting for freedom abroad when at home segregation and discrimination were still common practices. Pressuring the federal government for the right to participate equally in defense work during the war resulted in the adoption of federal laws and regulations that ensured Detroit's defense plants provided equal employment opportunities to African Americans. This success revealed how important political representation was to build the legal framework that would ensure the civil rights of African Americans were honored. In Detroit, it also resulted in the demand for more representation within the UAW so that the concerns of Black workers were addressed. During this period inadequate housing remained the most critical issue for Black Detroiters and anger and resentment over continued segregation

²⁷⁷ "Negro Demands." *The Leader-Post* (Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada). May 17, 1968:2.

²⁷⁸ Smolar, Boris. "Between You and Me. The Black Manifesto." *Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle*. May 30, 1939.

²⁷⁹ "May 1969: Jim Forman Delivers Black Manifesto at Riverside Church." SNCC Digital Gateway. <https://snccdigital.org/>

²⁸⁰ Rice, Willa Mae. "From this Pew." *Pittsburgh Courier*. September 20, 1969.

led to the protests over the Sojourner Truth Public Housing Complex, the Detroit Race Riot of 1943, and a U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1948 that declared restrictive racial housing covenants unconstitutional.

The landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. the Board of Education* in 1954, which ended school segregation, led to expectations that change really would occur and the law would require that everyone's civil rights be respected. But the violent turn of events that played out in South following the decision shocked the nation's Black communities. It was a wake-up call for Blacks in Northern cities like Detroit. An African American man who had lived in the north for a decade told *Life* magazine in 1957, "I tell myself all the time it's better than Mississippi. . . but I'm not always sure."²⁸¹ Activism among Detroit's Black community grew. Throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s, boycotts, demonstrations, protests and sit-ins were held in Detroit to call for equal access to public accommodations, better educational opportunities and facilities, and the hiring of African Americans in skilled labor or managerial positions in the automobile industry, banks, grocery stores, schools, etc. This period culminated with the Walk to Freedom, held in Detroit on June 23, 1963. The nation's largest civil rights march to date, overshadowed by the March on Washington that occurred two months later, it marked the end of an era in Detroit's civil rights struggle.

By the end of 1963, young African Americans were losing patience with Martin Luther King Jr.'s passive approach to civil rights activism. They had been beaten and bloodied but saw few real gains. They began to turn away from the concept of Black Uplift and working non-violently to achieve integration into White society. Instead they embraced the philosophy of Black Nationalism, a concept supported throughout the years by national Black leaders like W.E.B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Emmanuel Fard, and in Detroit, the Reverend Albert Cleage Jr. The activism of Detroit's young, Black population became a catalyst for the radicalization of the national Civil Rights Movement and the rise of the Black Power Movement at the end of the 1960s. "Uplift" changed to "Stand Up" and the ideal of non-violence was replaced with talk of revolution. Detroit was where the Freedom Now! Party, the first political party to run a slate of all Black candidates in an election, was organized. It was the place where activist Stokely Carmichael was invited to publicly define the meaning of Black Power. Malcolm X, whose Black Nationalism ideologies had been shaped at Detroit's National of Islam church, gave his revolutionary "Message to the Grassroots" speech at King Solomon Baptist Church in Detroit, signaling the start of a militant vanguard. In Detroit, the movement's heart was centered around Vaughn's Bookstore, which supported the promotion of Black Arts, literature and history. In 1967 when Reverend Albert Cleage introduced a painting of a Black Madonna and child and changed the name of his church to the Shrine of the Black Madonna, he was asking the Black community to drop accepted White-centric world vision and challenging them to think anew and create their own.

The resentment and anger that grew from the continuation of the status quo —segregated housing and schools, job discrimination, and police brutality— erupted into Rebellion in July 1967, a defining moment in Detroit's civil rights history. The five days of violence that rocked the city were a turning point. In the aftermath Detroit saw a "fresh surge of positive revolutionary energy" led by labor leaders who equated socio-economic standing with power. As Detroit's population became predominately Black in the 1970s, there was a resurgence in Black Nationalism and emphasis was placed on Black Detroiters' finding their own solutions to the community's problems expressed in the establishment of the first Black-owned bank and the demand that housing for Blacks be built in urban renewal areas. The acceptance that politics was the means for the city's African Americans to wield power culminated with the election of former labor leader Coleman Young as Detroit's first Black mayor in 1974.

²⁸¹ "The Negro and the North." *Life*. March 11, 1957:151.

The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit

Historic Context

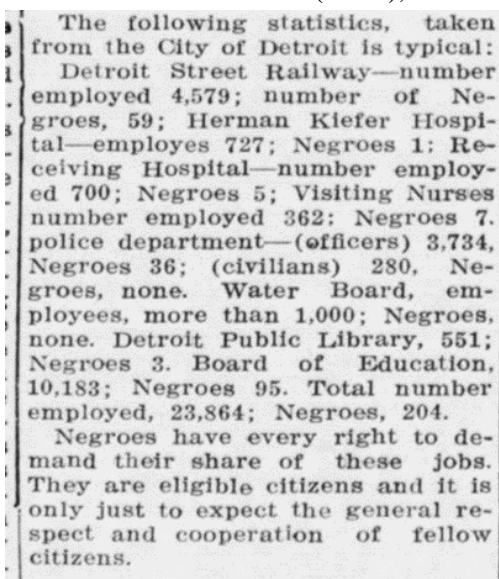
Narrative Themes

Equal Opportunity in Employment

In the early 20th Century, the employment of African Americans in Detroit was closely aligned with the emergence of the city's new automobile industry. Beginning in 1919, the Ford Motor Company became the first auto company to actively recruit and employ Black workers. Initially the company worked with Black religious leaders on recruitment. With the opening of the River Rouge plant and the sharp increase in laborers needed, a Black police officer named Donald Marshall was hired by Ford in 1932 to oversee the personnel issues related to Black workers for the company. Marshall had hiring and firing power and was able to intervene when racial issues surfaced.²⁸² The relationship between Black workers and the Ford Motor Company was one of mutual appreciation, though certainly not without its difficulties, until the challenging years of the Great Depression caused a reassessment by Black leaders.

The 1930s

The Great Depression was devastating for the average American family as unemployment rose into the millions. However at the beginning of the New Deal, Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes insisted that federal relief programs be administered equitably and that the Public Works Administration (PWA), a significant building program, hire skilled and unskilled Black workers at the same pay rate as White workers. President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 7046 in May 1935 which proclaimed that another New Deal program, the Works Progress Administration (WPA), would not discriminate on any grounds.²⁸³ According to Detroit businessman Fred Allen, New Deal programs made it possible for unskilled Black laborers, especially those that had been laid off from Detroit's auto industry, to "support themselves and their families, and by so doing, the money they made as wages . . . flowed into the pockets of small [Black] businessmen, which enabled them to carry on successfully."²⁸⁴ He went on to state that employment through programs like the WPA work "was the only source of revenue open to them." Black workers were employed by the WPA on a wide range of projects from highway and public housing construction to serving as teachers for adult education classes. Overall, inclusion in federal relief programs did much more for Black workers than simply providing a living wage, it led to an increased awareness that they were entitled to the same government benefits as Whites thus laying the foundation for future political activism.



The following statistics, taken from the City of Detroit is typical:

Department	Total Employees	Negroes
Detroit Street Railway	4,579	59
Herman Kiefer Hospital	727	1
Receiving Hospital	700	5
Visiting Nurses	362	7
Police Department (officers)	3,734	36
Police Department (civilians)	280	none
Water Board	more than 1,000	none
Detroit Public Library	551	3
Board of Education	10,183	95
Total	23,864	204

Negroes have every right to demand their share of these jobs. They are eligible citizens and it is only just to expect the general respect and cooperation of fellow citizens.

Howard, Dave. "The Call to Action" *Detroit Tribune*. April 4, 1936.

Snow Flake Grigsby

The economic crisis of the 1930s revealed the hiring discrimination that existed in Detroit's job market and a new activism in support of equal opportunity in municipal employment emerged led by Snow Flake Grigsby. Though Grigsby had degrees in pharmacy and chemistry he was unable to find work in his field and took a job as a postal clerk in the Detroit Post Office in 1927. Grigsby spent the next decade

²⁸² Meier, August and Elliott Rudwick. *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979:19.

²⁸³ Sitkoff, Harvard. *A New Deal for Blacks*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978:69-70.

²⁸⁴ "Negro Business Men in Michigan Support Roosevelt and Van Wagoner." *Detroit Tribune*. October 26, 1940:1.

championing the employment of Black workers. Among his first successes was challenging a Detroit Post Office rule banning Blacks from working the counters where stamps were sold to White patrons. He followed this by training Black postal workers in the use of adding machines so they could advance to higher paying positions within the postal system's finance office. Grigsby formed the Detroit Civic Rights Committee whose mission was to challenge the discriminatory hiring practices of Detroit businesses citywide. He worked tirelessly as its chair to expose discrimination in both private industry and municipal organizations. Grigsby led campaigns to demand equal employment at the Detroit Board of Education, Detroit Receiving Hospital, the Detroit Fire Department, and other organizations.²⁸⁵

In 1933, all of Detroit's 1,700 firefighters were White. Grigsby and the Detroit Civic Rights Committee pressured the city to open the fire department to Black applicants. In 1938, the first African Americans firefighters, Marcellus Taylor and Marvin White, were hired and assigned to Engine House No. 34, located on the edge of the West Side, a fast-growing African American neighborhood. On their first day on the job hundreds of White protestors blocked their entry and police protection was needed. In their early years in the department, Taylor and White were treated as second-class citizens, forced to sleep in a different room from White firefighters, to eat after White firefighters were finished and segregate their utensils, and to use a separate restroom. Both men stayed on in the department, were promoted, and enjoyed long careers. Taylor was named the first Black Battalion Chief in 1969.



Engine House No. 34, 6345 Livernois

In 1938, a major controversy arose over the staffing of the all-Black Brewster Homes federal public housing complex in Detroit. The United States Housing Authority (USHA) had asked that the project be staffed with Black employees, much as the all-White Parkside housing project being constructed across town would be staffed with White workers. The Detroit Housing Commission claimed that the Detroit Civil Service Commission was unable to supply enough qualified Black employees to fulfill the staffing needs and announced they would put a White man in charge of the complex.²⁸⁶ In response, the Afro-American Institute and Federated Fireside group headed by William L. Sherrill, a follower of Marcus Garvey, picketed the complex demanding that the commitment to an all-Black staff be fulfilled.²⁸⁷ Suspecting that discriminatory practices were in play, Snow Grigsby wrote directly to President Roosevelt asking that the requirement of including photographs in civil service employment applications be stopped so that applicants would be judged on their merits not their race.²⁸⁸ The matter was referred to the United Government Employees Association who brought it to the U.S. Congress. A bill was passed abolishing the use of photographs in Civil Service applications in November 1939 thanks to Grigsby's efforts.²⁸⁹ This is just one example of the many significant civil rights campaigns Grigsby undertook for the advancement of Detroit's African American community.

One of the reasons for Grigsby's success as a civil rights activist was his use of statistics. Grigsby wrote a controversial publication entitled *White Hypocrisy and Black Lethargy* in 1937, which the *Detroit Tribune* noted caused both Blacks and Whites "to do some sober thinking. . . Many of the facts he states are so self-evident that they cannot be denied, and he quotes numerous statistics which can be verified by

²⁸⁵ "A warrior in the fight against racism." *Detroit Free Press*. February 11, 1981.

²⁸⁶ "Negroes Picket Brewster Unit." *Detroit Free Press*. August 24, 1938:11.

²⁸⁷ "Pockets Surround the Brewster Housing Project." *Detroit Tribune*. August 27, 1938:1.

²⁸⁸ "Petition President Roosevelt to Use Executive Power to Displace Photographs by Civil Service." *Detroit Tribune*. September 30, 1939:1.

²⁸⁹ "Civil Service Photographs." *Detroit Tribune*. November 30, 1940.

public records.”²⁹⁰ One example of his use of statistics occurred in 1939 when Grigsby and the Civic Rights Committee held a meeting at Ebenezer AME Church to kick off a campaign to increase the number of jobs held by African Americans in Detroit’s public utilities. When it was agreed that the first target would be the Detroit Edison Company, Grigsby determined how many Black customers the utility served and how much they paid in fees to the company. He used these figures to argue for equity in the company’s employment practices.²⁹¹ Snow F. Grigsby was among the first African American civil rights activists to recognize and use the economic power of the Black community to accomplish change.

Michigan’s Fair Employment Practice Legislation

In March 1943 at the height of World War II and in the wake of the equal employment requirements adopted for federal defense contracts, a bill to stop discrimination in employment was introduced in the Michigan State Legislature. The bi-partisan bill, put forth by Representatives Charles Diggs Sr. of Detroit and Murl DeFoe of Lansing, called for the prohibition of discrimination by race, creed, sex, color, or national origin in hiring, firing, and training in employment practices and established an enforcement process and fines. Though the bill did not pass, according to author David Engstrom,

*This was a watershed moment in the history of American law. Diggs-DeFoe was the first fully enforceable law prohibiting job discrimination in any legislature in the United States. Indeed, the measure went well beyond President Roosevelt’s wartime Committee on Fair Employment Practice. . . .*²⁹²

What made the bill stand out was its focus on discriminatory practices in private industry and its reliance on the law and courts for enforcement, rather than following the federal plan of creating an independent fair employment commission that would hear grievances and mediate disputes rather than enable litigation.

Many of the advances that Black workers had gained working in defense plants during World War II, were lost in the immediate post war period as White veterans returned home and resumed their jobs. Unions, which had advocated for civil rights protections for African Americans during the war, were uneven in their support after the war ended, a situation that varied depending on the industry, corporation, and even sometimes from plant to plant within an automaker. African Americans began to fear that the employment gains they made during the war would be permanently lost as conditions returned to normal. Thus, as sociologist Albert Chen notes, “The battle over state fair employment practice (FEP) legislation was perhaps the most politically significant . . . the ‘storm center of the fight’ over civil rights in the early postwar years.”²⁹³

In the years following World War II, it was the states that took up the fight for fair employment for Black workers, not the federal government. It was in a state’s best interest to create stable conditions in their employment markets to ensure postwar economic growth. The first of the state fair employment acts were passed in the Northeast, beginning with New York in 1946 followed closely by Massachusetts, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. A second wave of states adopted fair employment legislation in

²⁹⁰ “We need more Grigsby’s.” *Detroit Tribune*. July 3, 1937:5.

²⁹¹ “Civic Rights Committee Begins Campaign for Jobs with Public Utility Companies. *Detroit Tribune*. April 15, 1939:1.

²⁹² Engstrom, David Freeman. “The Lost Origins of American Fair Employment Law: Regulatory Choice and the Making of Modern Civil Rights, 1943-1972.” *Stanford Law Review* 63, no. 5 (2011): 1071-143. Accessed October 29, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23060318>.

²⁹³ Chen, Anthony. *The Passage of State Fair Employment Legislation 1945-1964*. University of California-Berkley. Institute for Research on Labor and Employment. Working Paper Series #79-1. November 2001:2.

1955 starting with Pennsylvania, followed by Michigan and Minnesota, the first of the Midwestern states to do so.

Overall, Michigan was the eleventh state in the union to pass a state fair employment act and the Detroit NAACP was instrumental in its passage. A new fair employment bill had been introduced in the Michigan legislature in 1949 by Leo Doyle and Martha Griffiths, a White state representative from Wayne County who went on to champion women's rights at the national level. Like the Diggs-DeFoe bill, it too failed to pass. It was proposed again in 1952, by Representative Louis Cramton of Lapeer who was distressed when his fellow Republicans walked out of the chamber to protest its introduction. On February 19, 1953 Governor G. Mennen Williams declared Equal Opportunities Day in Michigan and the Detroit NAACP, in conjunction with the CIO, sponsored a mobilization rally in Lansing headed by Bishop George W. Barber to support the establishment of a fair employment practices commission.²⁹⁴ The bill was defeated in the House along party lines 58 to 35.²⁹⁵

Following this failure, Governor Williams declared that any fair employment legislation would have to begin at the local level in order to be successful. This pushed the UAW to hold a three-day conference at the Masonic Temple in Detroit to discuss the implementation of state-level fair employment legislation and the future of civil rights for Black workers. During the conference, the Secretary-Treasurer of the UAW announced that for the Union, "the next task is to break down discrimination."²⁹⁶ With the support of the UAW in hand, Representative Cramton reintroduced the state fair employment bill in 1955. This time it passed and was signed into law on June 29, 1955.²⁹⁷ Originally known as the Cramton Act, it was later recognized as the Michigan Fair Employment Act. The law made discriminating in hiring based on race, color, religion, or origin illegal. It applied to governments as well as to religious and private businesses with eight or more employees. A six-member, state-level Michigan Fair Employment Commission was established to hear and investigate charges of work discrimination.²⁹⁸

Trade Union Leadership Council (TULC)

In 1957 a group of African American UAW staff members formed the Trade Union Leadership Council (TULC) to ensure the needs of Black automotive workers were being met by the UAW. Located at 8670 Grand River Avenue (extant) and headed by Horace Sheffield Jr., the organization had over 7,000 members by 1962 and became a dominant political force in the city of Detroit helping to elect Black candidates such as U.S. Representative John Conyers Jr., Recorder's Court Judge George Crockett, and Mayor Coleman Young.²⁹⁹ A 1962 *Detroit Free Press* article pointed out that the disagreements arising between Black and White leaders in the UAW were more than small quarrels, they marked the beginning of a sea change within Detroit's Black community. The *Detroit Free Press* called it "a symptom of the growing Negro impatience and disenchantment with white 'liberal' leadership in the fight for equal rights."³⁰⁰ The NAACP's lawyer confirmed that "Negroes are tired of the 'poppa knows best' attitude" of white leaders.³⁰¹ The TULC helped to lay the groundwork for a more radical approach to the civil rights struggle in Detroit.

²⁹⁴ "Governor Names Equal Opportunity Day." *Detroit Tribune*. February 14, 1953:1.

²⁹⁵ "FEPC Bills Kept off Floor of House." *Detroit Free Press*. April 18, 1953:4.

²⁹⁶ "Mazey Assails Council on FEP." *Detroit Free Press*. October 15, 1953:38.

²⁹⁷ Perrin, Robert. "Fair Employment Practices Now Law." *Detroit Free Press*. October 14, 1955:3.

²⁹⁸ George, Collins. "FEPC Law in Effect Soon; Forbids Job Discrimination." *Detroit Free Press*. July 17, 1955:3A.

²⁹⁹ Birnbaum, Jonathan ed., *Civil Rights Since 1787: A Reader on the Black Struggle*. New York: New York University Press, 2000:380.

³⁰⁰ Boyd, Robert. "Negro-Labor Rift Growing on Union 'Lag' on Rights." *Detroit Free Press*. November 25, 1962:1.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

An issue that had long been one contention was discrimination in the building trades in Detroit. Blacks were excluded by the trade unions from participating in apprenticeships and thus were unable to qualify for jobs as electricians, masons, plumbers, etc. Unable to move Detroit's Building Trades Unions after on the issue after years of negotiations, in 1963 Detroit's Black business leaders formed a committee called Operation Negro Equality (ONE) headed by Horace Sheffield of the TULC. Its purpose was to end segregation in the building trades and to create job opportunities for young African Americans. ONE developed a plan for a community pilot program that provided access to building trades training and sent it to local, state, and national leaders. On June 28, 1963, ONE issued an "integration ultimatum" to the local trade unions, declaring that if integration did not occur within thirty days mass protests would be held.³⁰² Fortunately Detroit's trades unions agreed to co-operate, and the protests were not held—similar protests that had occurred in Philadelphia had become violent. Goaded to action, the Detroit Building Trades Council (DBTC) held two meetings in July to discuss potential solutions and Mayor Cavanagh sponsored a meeting that brought the DBTC and ONE together.³⁰³ Little progress was made and in August 1963 ONE contacted the Building Trades Council's national organization and demanded immediate action in the creation of more opportunities for Blacks to participate in training and journeyman programs.³⁰⁴ In response, national building trades union and construction management leaders adopted a three point program to stop discrimination in building trades apprentice training. The program included creating an appeals board at the local level to oversee applicant approvals and to ensure that applications to training programs relied solely on the applicant's qualifications with no consideration being given to race.³⁰⁵ Still, in Detroit over the next five years only a few African Americans were able to cross the color bar and participate in building trades apprenticeships. Finally, in June 1967 the Detroit Building Trades Council and the TULC signed an agreement, which according to the *Detroit Free Press* was "believed to be the first of its kind in the nation" to "eliminate racial discrimination in building trades apprenticeship programs."³⁰⁶

³⁰² "Building Unions Told: Integrate in 30 days." *Detroit Free Press*. July 1, 1963: 3.

³⁰³ "Unionists, Negroes Will Meet on Hiring." *Detroit Free Press*. July 3, 1963:8-B.

³⁰⁴ "Negro Group Asks 'Crash' Training for Jobs." *Detroit Free Press*. August 18, 1963:6.

³⁰⁵ "Act to Integrate Building Trades." *Detroit Free Press*. August 10, 1963:18.

³⁰⁶ "Unionists to Battle Race Bias." *Detroit Free Press*. June 17, 1967:4-B.

Black-Owned Businesses

Though African Americans had been operating businesses in America since before the Civil War, the founding of the National Negro Business League (NNBL) by Booker T. Washington in 1900 dramatically increased the number of Black-owned businesses nationally thus increasing the employment opportunities for African Americans as well. The original mission of the NNBL was to encourage Southern Black entrepreneurs to start businesses to break the “agriculturally based economic system” of “sharecropping and tenant farming,” which forced Blacks “to deal with white business owners in the repressive Jim Crow South.”³⁰⁷ In the north, Black-owned businesses grew out of need, a result of the strict racial segregation of neighborhoods in northern urban cities. The NNBL established more than 300 chapters across the country and received donations from Andrew Carnegie and Julius Rosenwald to provide loans to both Black men and women wanting to start a business. One of Booker T. Washington’s reasons for encouraging Black-owned business establishment was the concept of Black uplift, that economic success would lead to the acceptance by Blacks into mainstream White society. Booker T. Washington also encouraged the establishment of vocational and trade schools to train African Americans in technical skills to help them obtain better jobs.

Owning a business offered African Americans one of the few chances available to them for economic advancement. It was an alternative to low paying, unskilled or menial labor jobs, which were typically the only jobs available to Blacks under the discriminatory hiring practices then in place. In the early 19th Century Black-owned businesses were most likely to be neighborhood service industries like restaurants, barber and beauty shops, grocery stores, and funeral parlors. They provided a place where Blacks would be treated with dignity and respect without the prejudice or harassment often encountered in White establishments. In the late 1920s Black-owned business offerings expanded as banking, insurance, real estate, and newspaper publication services were established.

Marcus Garvey and the UNIA

In 1916 a charismatic Black organizer from Jamaica named Marcus Garvey established an American arm of his Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). By 1920 the organization had 1,100 chapters in 40 countries. Garvey supported the idea of uniting Blacks from all nations to create economic and political power blocs. The UNIA adopted a red, green, and black striped flag as a symbol of Black Nationalism in 1920. Garvey established the newspaper *Negro World* in 1918 (in existence until 1933), which reached a circulation of 500,000. In it he promoted Booker T. Washington’s self-help philosophy as well as advocating for the establishment and patronage of Black-owned businesses “to strengthen the financial standing of the Race” and to help Blacks gain respect, become economically independent, and provide employment opportunities to Black workers.³⁰⁸ In contrast to Booker T. Washington’s goal of integrating Blacks into mainstream White society, Garvey supported Black Separatism, developing economic and cultural assets by and for Blacks. Garvey himself owned many businesses, the most ambitious was the Black Star Line shipping company, which eventually went bankrupt.

The Detroit Chapter of the UNIA was established in 1920 with the encouragement of Reverend A. D. Williams after he attended the First International Convention of Negro People of the World held in New York City’s Harlem that August. The UNIA’s message of racial pride and economic empowerment greatly appealed to Detroit’s Black middle class, and membership in the Detroit Chapter quickly grew

³⁰⁷ Morton, Patricia Hoskins. “National Negro Business League.” *Encyclopedia of Alabama*. Updated June 28, 2013. <http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-2131>

³⁰⁸ “The History of Marcus Garvey.” The Buy Black Movement. <https://www.buyblackmovement.com/MarcusGarvey/>

from 300 in 1920 to 7,000 by 1924.³⁰⁹ The Detroit UNIA purchased property at 1516 Russell Street in Detroit where it established its headquarters, Liberty Hall. According to historian Ronald Stephens, Detroit was “the site of one of the largest UNIA divisions in the world . . . Moreover several Detroit officers doubled as regional, national and international UNIA leaders.”³¹⁰ This included Attorney Joseph Craigen, Executive Secretary of the Detroit Chapter who became the regional district leader for Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Michigan became a “Garveyite stronghold” with branches across the state. The Detroit Chapter was instrumental in establishing a UNIA chapter in Idlewild, an African American resort in Michigan’s Lake County. A schism occurred in the UNIA after Garvey faced charges of mail fraud in the 1933. One of his deputies, William A. Sherrill, moved to Detroit and renewed the city’s UNIA chapter in 1940 and it continued to be a strong advocate for civil rights through business success. Sherrill also served as associate editor of the *Michigan Chronicle*.

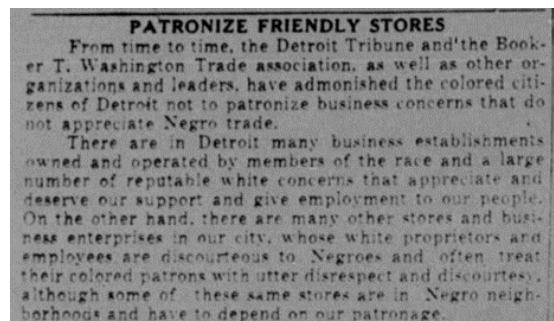
At a time when building trades unions discriminated against Blacks, the Detroit UNIA established an ancillary unit called the Universal African Royal Engineer Corps that “offered lessons in bricklaying, carpentry, mechanical and civil engineering, ‘electricity,’ and ‘radioing.’”³¹¹

Detroit’s Black-Owned Businesses

In Detroit, in 1880 just forty Black-owned businesses were listed in the city’s business directories but by 1926 that number had increased to 750.³¹² The two blocks of St. Aubin Street, between Gratiot Avenue and Adams Street in Detroit’s Black Bottom neighborhood, became the corridor on which many of the earliest Black-owned businesses—restaurants, bars, grocers, cigar vendors, billiards parlors, launderers, tailors, shoemakers, locksmiths, barbers, and drug stores—were first established. During the 1930s “a commercial center emerged in the area roughly bounded by Adams, Brush, Alexandrine and Hasting Street known as Paradise Valley.”³¹³ When the city’s Black population increased as defense workers moved to Detroit in the 1940s, Hastings Street was transformed. It became a major center of Black-owned businesses and social institutions. Its nightclubs housed a nationally recognized music scene, which attracted top jazz and blues performers. When demolition for urban renewal began in the 1950s, businesses in Black Bottom/Paradise were forced to move, many went to the Twelfth Street neighborhood or to West Grand Boulevard.

1900-1940

Though Black-owned businesses in Detroit steadily increased at the beginning of the 20th Century, it was the establishment of a Detroit branch of the National Negro Business League in 1926 that made a significant impact in their rise. Instituted and headed by the Reverend William Peck of Bethel AME Church, it was named the Booker T. Washington Business Association (BTWBA) and has been located at 2885 East Grand Boulevard (extant) since 1930.³¹⁴ To encourage and educate Detroit’s Black



Detroit Tribune. August 27, 1938.

³⁰⁹ Stephens, Ronald J. "Garveyism in Idlewild, 1927 to 1936." *Journal of Black Studies* 34, no. 4 (2004): 462-88. Accessed February 25, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3180891>.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹¹ Summers, Martin. *Manliness and its Discontents: The Black Middle Class and the Transformation of Masculinity 1900-1930*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015:95.

³¹² George, Collins. "Detroit Tops Nation in Black-Owned Businesses." *Detroit Free Press*. March 3, 1953:20.

³¹³ "Paradise Valley." Michigan State Historical Marker. 2003.

³¹⁴ Smith, Jessie. *Encyclopedia of African American Business*. ABC-CLIO. November 27, 2017:122.

community, the organization held weekly meetings, sponsored talks on best business practices, published a trade magazine, and held annual business-related exhibits. Between 1926 and 1941 their efforts took a different focus as they helped to increase the number of African Americans working in Detroit’s manufacturing industries. After World War II, the organization’s attention was directed to marketing—statistics showed that African Americans spent between \$8 to \$10 million a year and the BTWBA encouraged Black business owners to attract that audience.³¹⁵ Today, the BTWBA serves as a chamber of commerce for Detroit’s Black-owned businesses.³¹⁶

In 1930, Fannie B. Peck, the wife of William Peck, founded the Housewives League in Detroit after a National Negro Business League spokesman came to Bethel AME church to speak. The Housewives League not only organized Black domestic servants, but it also advocated for the Black community to patronize Black businesses for goods and services and “encouraged self-reliance and economic growth and independence.”³¹⁷ The Housewives League grew to become a national organization and Fannie Peck served as its first president. Under her direction boycotts and protests on issues, such as white businesses overcharging African Americans for goods and services, were conducted in communities across the country. According to a researcher for the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan, “The Housewives’ League of Detroit, as the original chapter of the organization and a source for many of the organization’s national leaders, remained an extremely powerful political and social presence in Detroit throughout the twentieth century.”³¹⁸ In 1936 Fannie Peck founded the “first Black credit union in America to secure state chartered status.”³¹⁹ At the time there were only five Black credit unions in the United States. Peck’s credit union operated out of the Bethel AME Church and by 1941 had 3,000 members.³²⁰

Housewives League Declaration of Principles, Preamble in Part

The housewives of America control and spend the largest percentage of the family budget, because of it the aim is to protect and develop the interests of the whole household to the advantage of all concerned by promoting business owned and operated by Negroes in our community, and by encouraging and supporting Negroes engaged in business, trades, and the professions.

We recognize the economic power which the housewife possesses, and we believe that through the constructive efforts, we hold the key to the doors of opportunity that will make it possible to:

- a. Establish a loyalty to and the support of Negro individuals and groups.
- b. Develop opportunity for our youth in avenues hitherto not open to them
- c. Stabilize our economic status and be instrumental in placing us in a position where, by virtue of efficiency the Negro Race will be within and **not** without this great American Business World

We emphasize and declare it to be most desirable to own our own business and manage it ourselves, while we recognize as an act of fairness the employment of Negroes in business owned and operated by other racial groups, yet we feel that the solution of our economic problem is the ownership of business, and to this end we shall confine our efforts.

The Housewives’ League of Detroit 25th Anniversary Banquet Program.
June 10, 1955. Detroit, Michigan

³¹⁵ Booker T. Washington Trade Association Business Exhibit 1948 Brochure. Digital Collections. Detroit Public Library. <https://digitalcollections.detroitpubliclibrary.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A230591>

³¹⁶“Booker T. Washington Business Association Records.” Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

³¹⁷ Boyd, Herb. “Mrs. Fannie B. Peck, Founder of the National Housewives’ League.” *Amsterdam News* (New York). June 29, 2017.

³¹⁸ “National Housewives’ League of America Records: circa 1918-1996. History.” Bentley Historical Library. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

³¹⁹ Coleman, Ken. “Detroit’s Lost Heroes.” *Blac Detroit*. February 5, 2016.

³²⁰ Smith, Jessie. *Encyclopedia of African American Businesses*. 2nd Edition. ABC-CLIO. 2017:229.

A sampling of some of the significant Detroit Black-owned businesses from the 1900-1940 period includes:

Greenridge Pharmacies. Dr. Robert Greenridge, an African American radiologist, founded a chain of drugstores in 1911 and opened an X-ray laboratory for use by Black physicians. Greenridge's early success was inspirational to other African Americans who wanted to open their own businesses.³²¹ In 1935 Greenridge built an office building for the use of Black-owned businesses at the corner of East Warren and Beaubien Streets known as the Walgreen's Building (demolished).

Barthwell Drugstores. In the 1920s, Sidney Barthwell opened a chain of local pharmacies, with locations throughout Detroit. He also operated Barthwell's Ice Cream Company, sold the ice cream at his drugstore fountains, and opened two ice cream stores.³²² By 1953, Barthwell's was operating at ten locations in the city, grossed approximately \$2 million annually, and employed 100 African Americans. It was the largest Black-owned drugstore chain in the United States.

James H. Cole Home for Funerals. An early and successful Black-owned business, the James H. Cole Home for Funerals opened in Black Bottom in 1919. The company moved to 446 East Warren (demolished) in the 1930s and operated there until 1962, when it moved to its current location at 2624 West Grand Boulevard.³²³ The Cole family had been in business in the city of Detroit since the Civil War, first operating a grain store and livery stable, then shifting into real estate investments and the funerary business.

House of Diggs Funeral Home. Another successful African American funeral home was established by Charles Diggs Sr. in 1922. Known as the House of Diggs Funeral Home at 689 Mack Avenue (demolished), by 1924 it had become the state's largest Black-owned funeral home.³²⁴ Diggs, then a follower of Marcus Garvey and the UNIA, also founded Michigan's first African American cemetery, Detroit Memorial Park, in 1925.³²⁵ The cemetery is located at 4280 East Thirteen Mile Road (extant) in Warren, Michigan, outside the Detroit city limits. Charles Diggs Sr. was the first African American Democrat elected to the Michigan State Senate and was an influential civil rights leader. While in the Michigan legislature he helped to establish civil rights laws related to public accommodations and fair employment in Michigan.

Great Lakes Mutual Insurance Company. In 1928, the Black-owned Great Lakes Mutual Insurance Company, began offering insurance policies to African American homeowners. One of the company founders, and its president from 1928 to 1959, Charles Mahoney, once said, "When we started, it was almost impossible for a Negro here to get money for mortgages." Great Lakes Mutual soon became one of the largest insurance companies in the state.³²⁶ The company opened its first office in 1928 at 484 Beacon (demolished) and moved several times before landing at 8400 Woodward (demolished) in 1945, where it remained until 1962. In 1934 the company

³²¹ Thomas, Richard W. *Life for Us is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit 1915-1945*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1992:2004.

³²² Barthwell, Akosua. "Distinguished Detroiters." The Barthwell Family History. 1World1Family.me <http://1world1family.me/dr-akosua-barthwell-evans/>

³²³ "Our History: Celebrating 100 Years." James H. Coles Home for Funerals Website. <http://www.cole100.com/>

³²⁴ Thomas:203.

³²⁵ Coleman, Kenneth. "Charles Diggs, Sr. Black Bottom and Paradise Valley Business Mogul." *Michigan Chronicle*. <https://theundertakersparlor.wordpress.com/2017/10/24/the-house-of-diggs-funeral-home-detroit-mi/>

³²⁶ Brand-Williams, Oralandar and Dale Rich. "Insurance Company had Gold Standard in Training." *The Detroit News*. February 24, 2011.

purchased an existing apartment building at 457 East Kirby Street (extant), renamed it Great Lakes Manor, and opened it to African Americans.³²⁷

1940-1960

During the war years African Americans fought for equal employment opportunities in defense manufacturing plants. The period following World War II was one of the most significant in terms of the growth of Black-owned businesses in the city of Detroit despite the discrimination they encountered. By 1953, the Booker T. Washington Trade Association was claiming that “Detroit has more Negro-owned and operated businesses than any other city in the nation,” though it produced no statistics to support that claim.³²⁸ According to the *Detroit Free Press*, “A Black businessman faced the difficulty of “buying, renting or leasing any property outside of the Negro Districts, thus having his business pretty much restricted to the Negro customer and denying him the chance of direct competition with other businesses in the mainstream of Detroit traffic.”³²⁹ This was in addition to an inability to obtain loans from banks to start businesses and the inability to participate in professional organizations such as the Detroit Chamber of Commerce.³³⁰ Still, Black businesses were able to flourish in Detroit. For example, by 1953 there were 150 Black-owned gas stations, 20 florists, 150 restaurants, 15 hospitals, and 5 cab companies.³³¹

Our people are restricted from renting business in many localities. Even in purely Negro neighborhoods, white landlords often refuse to rent business property to Negroes, especially if white competitors are operating in the same neighborhoods. A case of this kind occurred a few days ago on the West side. A colored citizen rented a building in which to operate a store and spent about \$1,500 making necessary repairs and decorations. Meanwhile, the landlord learned that there was a white merchant operating in the neighborhood, and promptly notified the colored tenant that he could not go through with the lease.

“The Negro Housing Problem.” *Detroit Tribune*. November 1, 1941

A sampling of some of the Black-owned businesses operating in Detroit between 1940 – 1960 include:

- **The Forest Club** (demolished). Sunnie Wilson opened the Forest Club on the corner of Hastings and Forest in 1941 and for the next decade offered black patrons an extraordinary entertainment experience. “Larger than Madison Square Garden,” the club housed “a 107-foot bar, a banquet hall, a roller rink, and a bowling alley.” Wilson also owned the 50-room Mark Twain Hotel on Garfield Avenue.³³²
- **The Gotham Hotel** (demolished). An existing hotel at the corner of John R Street and Orchestra Place was purchased by African Americans John White and Irving Roane in 1943. After extensive remodeling, it opened as The Gotham, a luxury hotel for the Black community at a time when discrimination excluded them from White establishments. It provided upscale accommodations for the Black elite including Billie Holiday, Langston Hughes, Jackie Robinson, and Count Basie.
- **Joe’s Record Shop** (3530 Hastings Street, demolished) Joe Von Battle operated this record shop from 1945 to 1967. In addition to selling records Von Battle found talent, Blues artists John Lee Hooker and Sonny Boy Williamson were among his discoveries, recorded and connected them

³²⁷ Kidorf, Kristine. *Great Lakes Manor National Register of Historic Places Nomination*. Michigan State Historic Preservation Office. Lansing, Michigan. 2017.

³²⁸ George, Collins. “Detroit Tops Nation in Negro-Owned Businesses.” *Detroit Free Press*. March 3, 1953:20.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³¹ *Ibid.*

³³² “William Nathaniel ‘Sunnie’ Wilson.” Historic Elmwood Cemetery & Foundation.

with larger publishing and recording houses. He recorded the sermons of the Reverend C.L. Franklin and the gospel music of his daughter Aretha Franklin. One of Detroit's pioneering Black record producers, Von Battle was instrumental in creating what became the Detroit Sound.³³³

- **Carlton Plaza Hotel** (2915 John R Street). Designed in 1924 by Detroit architect Louis Kamper, the hotel at was purchased in 1949 by Edward Swan, the former head of the Detroit NAACP. Swan refurbished the Carlton Plaza as a luxury hotel for African Americans. According to *Ebony* magazine it established “new standards for Negro hostelrys all over the U.S.”³³⁴ Swan hired interior designer Paul Colbrooke to create a modern home like atmosphere throughout the hotel, which also attracted permanent residents such as writer Collins George, the first African American reporter for the *Detroit Free Press*.
- **Ed Davis Auto Dealership**. A growing sector for Black business after World War II was in the automobile sales and service industry. In 1938, an African American named Edward Davis opened a used car lot and gasoline station on East Vernor Highway in Detroit. On the strength of his success, Studebaker offered him a franchise in 1940, which was located at 421 E. Vernor Highway (demolished). When Studebaker's sales began to fall in 1955, Davis looked for other alternatives. In 1963 Davis broke a *de facto* color barrier to become the first African American in the United States to be awarded a Big Three auto dealership franchise when he opened a Chrysler dealership at 11825 Dexter Avenue (extant).
- **Home Federal Savings and Loan**. Founded in 1947 by a group of Black businessmen that included Ellis Hamler, Lowell Baker, M. Stewart Thompson, Arthur M. Simmons, and Dr. Robert Greenridge, who owned a successful chain of local drug stores. It was founded because it was “impossible” for Blacks to secure mortgages to buy or improve their homes and neighborhoods. The original location of Home Federal Savings and Loan was in Craftsman Hall at 275 East Ferry Street.³³⁵ In 1947 it opened an office at 305 East Warren Street and by 1953 had tripled its investments. In February 1957 Home Federal Savings and Loan opened an office at 9108 Woodward Avenue. Richard H. Austin, Michigan's first certified African American public accountant and the first African American auditor for Wayne County, also opened a new office nearby at 9460 Woodward Avenue (demolished). According to the *Michigan Chronicle*,

The locations of the new offices of these firms would not necessarily be significant. However, anyone familiar with the pattern of occupancy in housing and commercial locations in Detroit must recognize the significance of the fact that these two firms now occupy buildings on Woodward. The Woodward Avenue locations are both actual and symbolic and could represent the progress that Negro-owned and operated businesses are making toward the mainstream of business in our community.³³⁶

- **Griffin & White Architects**. Donald F. White was the first African American to graduate from the University of Michigan architecture school and the first registered Black architect in Michigan.³³⁷ He opened an architectural office in Detroit in 1946 with another African American, his University of Michigan classmate, Francis E. Griffin. The firm later hired two young, Black

³³³ “Joe Von Battle-Requiem for a Record Shop Man.” Marsha Music-The Detroitist.

<https://marshamusic.wordpress.com/page-joe-von-battle-requiem-for-a-record-shop-man/>

³³⁴ “Finest Negro Hotel.” *Ebony*. Volume 5, No. 1. November 1949:81.

³³⁵ Kornegay, Francis. “Necessity Prompts Birth, Growth of Home Federal.” *Michigan Chronicle*. February 2, 1957.

³³⁶ “Congratulations, Home Federal, Richard H. Austin.” *Michigan Chronicle*. February 2, 1957.

³³⁷ Fitzgerald, Linda. “Portrait of a Pioneer: Donald F. White.” *Portico* 2004/1. University of Michigan School of Architecture. Ann Arbor:19.

architects that went on to have their own success, Howard Sims and Nathan Johnson. In the 1950s Griffin & White were members of a team that developed the master plan for the Booker T. Washington Institute in Harbel, Liberia.

- **Associate Brokers Investment Company.** James Del Rio opened a real estate company in 1953 and quickly expanded to include the Metropolitan Mortgage Company and the Del Rio Home Company. In 1958 Del Rio became the first African American on the Detroit real estate board and the first to receive the designation of realtor. By 1962 the company was worth over a quarter million dollars and employed 43 people.³³⁸

West Grand Boulevard Business District

When demolition for urban renewal projects started on the Black Bottom/Paradise Valley neighborhood in the 1950s, the center of Black social and cultural life in Detroit shifted to the Northwest neighborhoods near Linwood and Dexter as more and more African Americans moved into the area. Black business owners and churches began to follow their patrons to the area around 1957, converting residential houses along West Grand Boulevard—mostly brick Foursquares—to commercial use. Early businesses along the West Grand Boulevard corridor included:

- **Lewis & Thompson Insurance Agency, Inc.** This was the first Black-owned business to move to West Grand Boulevard in 1957. Founded in 1941 by Walton Lee Lewis, who had been working as a janitor at Ford Motor Company, after receiving his bachelor's degree in Iowa. Originally located at 2617 West Grand Boulevard, the company later moved next door to its current location at 2621 West Grand Boulevard (extant).³³⁹
- **James H. Cole Home for Funerals** (2624 W. Grand Boulevard). The city's oldest Black-owned funeral home moved to this location in 1962.
- **Brazelton Florists** (2686 West Grand Boulevard). Established in 1941, it was owned by Ed Brazelton a former president of the Booker T. Washington Association.
- **Nathan Johnson & Associates.** An African American architect, Nathan Johnson purchased property at 2512 West Grand Boulevard and remodeled it for the office of his architectural firm. Johnson completed a number of small churches in the Detroit area at the beginning of his career. His later work includes the Bethel AME Church at 505 St. Antoine (extant), a modern addition to Second Baptist Church, and the home of restaurateur Stanley Hong (961 East Boston, extant) and his popular Chinese restaurant, Stanley's Mannia Café (265 E. Baltimore Street, extant), which is reminiscent of the organic architecture of Eero Saarinen.
- **Motown Records.** In 1959 Barry Gordy Jr., then an autoworker at the Ford Motor Company, founded the Tamala Records label. Gordy had been spending time at United Sound Studios (5849 2nd Avenue, extant) writing songs and learning the recording industry. In 1959 he bought a Foursquare house at 2648 West Grand Boulevard (extant) and converted it into a recording studio

³³⁸ "From Ashcan Baby to Successful Real Estate Broker, Mortgage Banker at Age 36." James Del Rio. <http://jamesdelrio.net/2017/04/14/from-ashcan-baby-to-successful-real-estate-broker-mortgage-banker-at-age-36/>

³³⁹ *West Grand Boulevard Arts and Business District*. Local Historic District Study Committee Report. Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board, City of Detroit. 2018.

patterned after United Sound. The story of Motown Records is well documented. Gordy attributed his business model to Ford's assembly line, and he created a department for each aspect of his music business that took a novice singer through a preset process turning raw talent into a polished star. Each Motown Records department was located in a different house on West Grand Bo Administration (2652/54) Finance (2656), Sales and Marketing (2662/4 & 2662/8), Artist Development (2657), and International Talent Management (2670/2).³⁴⁰ In 1963 Gordy purchased the Graystone Ballroom on 4237 Woodward Avenue (demolished) as a venue to showcase Motown performers. By 1968 the company had 450 employees and had moved to the former Donovan Building on 2457 Woodward Avenue (demolished).

Motown's contributions to the civil rights movement occurred on multiple levels. First as a highly successful Black-owned and operated business that utilized Black talent, it served as a role model for other Black entrepreneurs. It generated an excitement among other Black artists that led them to start their own enterprises like the Concept East Theater in Detroit. Gordy had hopes of Motown Records becoming the vehicle that would document the sound of the Civil Rights Movement. To that end, he recorded Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech at the Walk of Freedom Rally in Detroit in 1963 and worked with Black poet Langston Hughes to record an album of his poems. By the end of the 1960s, Motown Records was the largest Black-owned business in America.³⁴¹ Gordy moved the company to Los Angeles in 1972 to pursue other avenues, such as film. Today, the original Motown Records studio in Detroit has been preserved as the Hitsville U.S.A. Museum.

The music produced at Motown Records became the sound of the Civil Rights era. Because of its universal appeal, Motown played a key role in promoting racial integration the 1960s and 1970s when its fans questioned the discriminatory treatment of their favorite Black singers at White-owned hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues across America. The lives of Motown stars like Smokey Robinson and Diana Ross exemplified the racial changes occurring in Detroit's physical geography at the time. Ross and Robinson had grown up near each other in the segregated Black neighborhood known as the North End, with Ross' family later relocating to the Brewster-Douglass housing projects. After passing through Motown's "hit factory," Ross and her fellow Supremes were able to buy houses in the Russell Woods neighborhood where other Black celebrities like Dinah Washington and her husband Detroit Lions quarterback Night Train Lane resided. Smokey Robinson eventually purchased a home in Southfield, an integrated suburban neighborhood outside of Detroit. Berry Gordy was able to purchase a home (918 West Boston) on "Millionaires Row" in Detroit's historic Boston-Edison neighborhood, home to Detroit's leading White citizens in the 1920s.

1960-1970s

By the mid-1960s the growth of the Southern Civil Rights Movement, the organized sit-ins and protests occurring in northern cities, the U.S. Supreme Court rulings abolishing Jim Crow laws, and on-going societal change led to a loosening of restrictions and the blurring of color lines. With the demise of segregation came a wider range of purchasing opportunities for African Americans. This put an end to many smaller Black-owned businesses, like those on Milford Street in the Old West Side neighborhood, that were now seen as outdated by the younger Black population. Buildings that once housed Black commercial centers were gradually abandoned and demolished. For example, the northern reaches of Paradise Valley, which had survived the city's first urban renewal efforts, finally fell victim to Detroit's Medical Center urban renewal project in the early 1960s. However, as interest in the Black Nationalist

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁴¹ Light, Alan. "Motown's Link to Civil Rights Movement on Display." *New York Times*. March 19, 2014.

movement grew in the late 1960s there was a resurgence of interest in Black-owned businesses. They became symbols of self-reliance and economic power and a source of racial pride.

The 1967 Rebellion led to a number of renewed efforts to create employment opportunities for Detroit's Black community. These included:

- **Inner City Business Improvement Forum (ICBIF).** Just two weeks after the 1967 Rebellion, Congressman Charles Diggs called a meeting to determine how Detroit's Black community would move forward. A wide range of participants from Esther Gordy Edwards to John Conyers Jr. participated and it was decided there was a need to "demonstrate economic empowerment" in the Black community. In spring 1968, the ICBIF headed by Lawrence Doss, was formed to "further the development of Black business groups in the core of Detroit."
 - **First Independence Bank.** ICBIF worked to establish a bank owned and operated by African Americans to serve Detroit's Black community and aid in the development and survival of the city's Black businesses. Karl D. Gregory, an economics professor at Wayne State University, was responsible for the technical organization of the bank and the Chrysler Corporation was a major financial supporter of the initiative.³⁴² Known as First Independence Bank, it opened in downtown Detroit in May 1970 at 234 State Street (extant). The bank was purchased in 1980 by Don Davis, then owner of the United Sound Recording Studio and a popular music producer who had once worked for Motown Records. The bank moved to 7310 Woodward in 2016 and today is one of twenty-eight Black-owned banks in America.³⁴³
 - **Our Supermarket.** The ICBIF, along with the all-Black run Our Enterprises, Inc., began work on a project to establish a Black-owned and operated market in 1968. Two hundred Black Detroiters contributed more than \$200,000 to the project and it was hoped that it would be the first in a chain of markets.³⁴⁴ "Our Supermarket" opened on May 30, 1970 at 3765 Joy Road, in a building that had been burned during the 1967 Rebellion³⁴⁵ under the management of M. Stuart Thompson.³⁴⁶ Our Supermarket showed its commitment to Detroit's Black community by hosting the African American Mobile Museum in its parking lot in August 1971.³⁴⁷ The supermarket was not been sustainable and closed by 1972.

Between its founding in 1968 and its closing in 1987, the ICBIF loaned \$60 million to minority-owned businesses.³⁴⁸ The *Detroit Free Press* noted in 1970 that discrimination still existed in Detroit regarding access to capital for black businessmen. According to Walter McCurdy Jr., Executive Director of the ICBIF, the programs put in place after the 1967 Rebellion to aid Black businesses had not come to fruition due to continued prejudice by the White business community. Banks still considered loaning to Black businesses high risk. They did not consider business start-up loan requests from African Americans because Black-owned businesses were perceived as

³⁴² "Chrysler in Negro-Ad Effort." *Detroit Free Press*. December 5, 1968:54.

³⁴³ Spruill, Larry. "The history behind one of Detroit's first African-American controlled banks." *Click-on Detroit*. February 15, 2019. <https://www.clickondetroit.com/>

³⁴⁴ McCann, Hugh. "Squabbles with Agency Delay Store Opening." *Detroit Free Press*. May 31, 1970:12

³⁴⁵ "Negro Group Gets Loan." *Detroit Free Press*. August 14, 1968:16.

³⁴⁶ "Detroit's New Business: Black Supermarket Opens." *Detroit Free Press*. May 30, 1970:10.

³⁴⁷ "Weekend Calendar." *Detroit Free Press*. August 6, 1971.

³⁴⁸ "Minority business group closing up shop." *Detroit Free Press*. August 13, 1987.

being too small. They also operated under the misconceptions that Blacks were not good business managers or that Black businesses were subject to a high bankruptcy rate.³⁴⁹

- **Auto Dealers Ownership Training Programs.** In 1967 the Big Three automakers (Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors) finally introduced training programs to increase the number of Black-owned auto dealership franchises. Among the first enrolled in the Chrysler Corporation program was Detroit Pistons basketball star Dave Bing, who later served as mayor of Detroit.³⁵⁰ In 1969 Nathan Conyers took over Hettchie Motor Sales, the oldest Ford dealership in Detroit it had opened at the corner of Fourteenth Street and West Grand River Boulevard in 1925. In doing so he became the second African American to own a Big Three car dealership in the United States and the only Black Ford dealership owner in Michigan.³⁵¹ He purchased the dealership in partnership with his father and brother, U.S. Representative John Conyers Jr.³⁵² In 1969, the only other Black-owned Big Three car dealership was owned by Ed Davis.
- **Black Co-Operative Services** was formed in 1968 by Reverend Albert Cleage Jr. “to stimulate Negro-owned business in the Inner City, provide employment and job training for Negroes and, if possible, lower the prices its customers have to pay.” An advocate of Black Power, Cleage turned down a \$100,000 Ford Foundation grant from New Detroit Inc. for the project saying, “the days of the plantation are over.”³⁵³ He was unhappy with the strings he felt were attached to the grant award that kept control of the project within the White power structure. According to *The Mercury*, “Detroit’s case is believed to be the first time a civil rights group has turned down such a sizable amount of money.” The grant was significant because it was “the first attempt of the white power structure to deal directly, instead of through intermediaries, with black militants.”³⁵⁴ Cleage saw the action of turning down the grant money as a means of uniting the Black community and empowering them. He raised \$132,000 on his own through church and charity organizations. Black Co-operative Services supported a number of businesses including: Black Star Co-Op Market (7011 Gratiot Avenue), the Black Star Shell Gas Station at Clairmount Avenue and Linwood Street, and the Black Star Clothing Company at 4808-10 Whitfield Street, which made Afro-style clothing. The Co-Op also planned to open a daycare center in a two-story building at 13535 Livernois Avenue (today the site of the Shrine of the Black Madonna Cultural Center and Bookstore).³⁵⁵
- **Whitlow’s Barber Lounge** (8034 Wildemere Street). Vonzie Whitlow trained as a barber under Raymond Parks, the husband of Rosa Parks, and established this shop in 1963.³⁵⁶

In 1972, 35 percent of Black-owned businesses nationally were still found in just four industry sectors: food stores, restaurants and bars, personal services (barbers, beauty shops, etc.), and auto repair garages. However, a new trend was emerging as minority-owned businesses in the financial, insurance, and real estate businesses increased by over 185%; business services by 175%, and wholesale services by

³⁴⁹ “Black Business Still Needs Capital.” *Detroit Free Press*. January 18, 1970:49.

³⁵⁰ Kleene, Tom. “Brock Becomes Dodge Charger.” *Detroit Free Press*, June 8, 1969:14-C.

³⁵¹ Holmes, Susan. “Conyers Family Closes Deal to Take Over Ford Agency.” *Detroit Free Press*. October 20, 1969:3.

³⁵² “First Blacks to Obtain Ford Agency.” *News-Palladium* (Benton Harbor, MI). October 20, 1969:10.

³⁵³ “‘Black Power’ Engenders New Dynamism as Minority Add \$Millions to Holdings.” *Pittsburgh Courier*. February 15, 1969:12.

³⁵⁴ “Detroit Black Power Group Might Set Pattern for Others.” *The Mercury* (Pottstown, PA). January 11, 1968.

³⁵⁵ “Black Co-op to Offer Stock Seeks \$100,000 in Capital.” *Detroit Free Press*. January 25, 1969:4.

³⁵⁶ Carlisle, John. “At Detroit’s oldest barbershop, one man has kept people coming back for decades.” *Detroit Free Press*. September 23, 2020.

112%.³⁵⁷ The change was attributed to the ending of exclusionary practices and breaks in traditional social factor such as:

- Increased opportunities in business education and more access to managerial experience, which enabled black businessmen and women to strike out and form companies of their own.
- The establishment of programs such as affirmative action in contracting and procurement, which allowed black businesses to access markets from which they had previously been systematically excluded.
- An increased availability of capital and credit that had previously been withheld or unavailable to minority businesses.
- Increased access to traditional white networking platforms, like golf courses and country clubs.

³⁵⁷ Boston, Thomas. "Trend in Minority-owned Business." *America Becoming: Racial Trends and Their Consequences: Volume III*. National Research Council. Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. The National Academies Press:190.

The Demand for Fair Housing in Detroit

Lack of equity in housing has been identified by historians, activists, journalists, sociologists, and many others to be the most significant civil rights issue facing African Americans in the city of Detroit throughout 20th Century. Segregation in housing was the foundation for widespread discrimination in education, employment, public accommodations, and criminal justice and has left a legacy of inequality that the Detroit metro area is still confronting today.

1900-1940

Historically, Detroit's oldest African American community occupied a small area on the city's lower east side, centered at St. Antoine and Adams Streets. Known as Black Bottom for the rich soil deposited in the nearby marsh lands of the Detroit River, by the late 19th Century European immigrants were settling there as well. In 1914 the opening of the Highland Park Ford Plant and Henry Ford's willingness to hire African American workers brought the first large wave of Southern Blacks to Detroit. The city's African American population increased from 5,741 in 1910 to 40,836 in 1920.

With the onset of World War I, the housing situation for African Americans in Detroit dramatically deteriorated. Thousands of Southern Blacks were arriving in the city each week to capitalize on increased production and hiring in Detroit's factories. Detroit's plentiful factory jobs also attracted Southern Whites, many of whom brought with them the same prejudices that had resulted in the Jim Crow laws that existed throughout the South. According to the *Detroit Free Press*, racism directly contributed to the housing shortage experienced by African Americans in Detroit in the early 20th Century,

Detroit is facing a wartime problem . . . the housing question confronts this city today as it possibly never did before. . . It's more acute locally than in any other northern center of population, because Detroit's unexampled prosperity is the lodestone that is attracting thousands of Negroes, who are flocking here from southern points just as fast as they can accumulate carfare, or secure transportation through some of the numerous employment agencies that have been established south of the Mason and Dixon Line for the purpose of stimulating migration to the mining and manufacturing districts north. . . Negroes are not welcome in every neighborhood. A European, be he ever so ignorant, can find localities where it is possible for him to rent or buy a home on easy terms. In the same district, a Negro would be turned away, however worthy he might be.³⁵⁸

Though over 100,000 African Americans arrived in Detroit between 1910 and 1930, the housing situation for Blacks remained almost unchanged. As the Black Bottom neighborhood became increasingly overcrowded, non-Black immigrant groups were able to move out of the area and more easily assimilate into White neighborhoods. These immigrant groups formed their own enclaves in other areas of the city, Germans moved out along Gratiot Avenue toward Macomb County and to Michigan Avenue on the west side; Poles moved north into what would later be known as Poletown, just south of Hamtramck; and the Jewish population moved north and west along Dexter and Linwood Streets north of West Grand Boulevard. African Americans, however, were forced to remain in Black Bottom as *de facto* segregation—segregation that exists without sanction by law—in Detroit became more restrictive.

By the end of the 1920s Detroit's lower East side had become almost exclusively Black. As more and more African Americans continued to arrive in Detroit, first homes and then rooms in the Black Bottom

³⁵⁸ Shaw, Len G. "Detroit's New Housing Problem." *Detroit Free Press*. June 3, 1917.

neighborhood were divided, subdivided, and divided again until overcrowding was acute and living conditions deteriorated.

When African Americans did attempt to move away from the declining conditions in Black Bottom into the city's growing White neighborhoods, they were met with harassment and violence. For example, in 1917 when a Black family attempted to move into an apartment house at 202 Harper Avenue a White mob of 200 people brought trucks and forcibly removed their belongings to the corner of Riopelle Street and Woodward Avenue. These actions were conducted under the protection of the Detroit police.³⁵⁹ Though segregation may not have been codified in a law or a city policy, it was actively enforced by the police department and incidents such as this were not uncommon. For example, Dr. Charles Green received a threatening note left by the Ku Klux Klan on his front porch shortly after he moved into a home at 146 King Street in 1918³⁶⁰ and in 1922 a Ford Motor Company employee named William Reed tried to move into a home at 3625 Hunt Street and was threatened by forty of his neighbors.³⁶¹

Ossian Sweet Trial

One of the most significant incidents related to *de facto* housing segregation occurred in 1925 when Black physician Ossian Sweet purchased a house at 2905 Garland Street in a white working-class neighborhood on the city's east side. When the Sweets tried to move into the home, a large crowd of white protestors formed and threw rocks at the house, breaking windows. Shots were fired from inside the house and a protestor was killed. The Sweet family was arrested, and Ossian Sweet's brother Henry was charged with murder. The national NAACP's leadership asked attorney Clarence Darrow to defend the Sweet's. Darrow had just won two high profile cases, the Leopold & Loeb murder trial in 1924 and the Scopes "Monkey" Trial in 1925, and he agreed to take the case. According to Darrow,

The facts were simple. Up to the beginning of the war, Detroit had some twelve thousand negroes. There, as everywhere, they were packed into the lowliest and the dirtiest quarters. When the war in Europe broke out, the people of America saw their opportunity to serve humanity and get rich. Detroit enjoyed an unprecedented demand for automobiles. So, the manufacturers sent south for negro labor. Most of these men and their families remained in Detroit after the World War was over and we were freed from Germany. At the time that my clients were arrested, the negro population in Detroit had increased from twelve thousand to sixty-four thousand; it was attempted to pack these into a space that had been overpopulated by its former lesser number. The negro workmen could stay in the automobile factories in the daytime, but they had no place to stay at night, so they expanded the negro section, and some of them moved out to what was called the white districts. . . Doctor Sweet had been living in congested quarters with his wife's family, and for some time had been looking for a place that he could buy. Finally he selected one in a middle-class neighborhood at the corner of two streets, Charlevoix and Garland. . . Between the time he bought the house and the time he moved into it, several negroes had been driven from their homes, so the doctor waited, hoping that the feeling would subside. But as soon as the neighborhood found out that Doctor Sweet, the owner, was a colored man, they proceeded to band together into what they called an "Improvement Association," of which practically everyone in that locality became a member, and a meeting was held in a schoolhouse, at which the speakers made dire threats as to what would happen if a negro should settle in their street. . . Soon after that public meeting, Doctor Sweet notified the police department that he would move in on a certain day. . . In the early evening people came out and sat on the porches of all the houses in the neighborhood, and toward eleven o'clock the crowd grew boisterous. Some eight to ten policemen were stationed around the place, but it seemed that they were mainly ornamental. . . The colored men were standing watch at the various windows with guns in hand, as the mob came swarming toward the place. A volley of stones was thrown toward the house, and two of the windows were broken. Thereupon shots were fired from inside the windows, and the crowd moved back; at once the policemen entered the house and took all the inmates to the police station. It soon transpired that one man had been killed and another wounded by the fusillade. As might be expected, the feeling in Detroit was strong against the accused. Few colored men in America charged with killing white persons have ever lived to tell the tale. . . My long sympathy for the colored people conspired to help me make one of the strongest and most satisfactory arguments that I ever delivered. The jury was not long in returning a verdict of

³⁵⁹ "Force 50 Negroes from Apartments," *Detroit Free Press*, August 23, 1917:11.

³⁶⁰ "Negro Physician Gets 'Black Hand' Warning." *Detroit Free Press*. October 29, 1918:5.

³⁶¹ "Battle Looms Over Eviction." *Detroit Free Press*. February 9, 1922:2.

*acquittal. The verdict meant simply that the doctrine that a man's house is his castle applied to the Black man as well as to the white man. If not the first time that a white jury had vindicated this principle, it was the first that ever came to my notice.*³⁶²

The Sweet trial is considered a pivotal case in United States civil rights history, although it did little to ease the reality of racial segregation in the city of Detroit. According to the *Michigan Chronicle*, the Sweet incident resulted in a “rash of racial restrictive covenants, which were rigidly enforced from 1924 to 1948 when the Supreme Court outlawed” them.³⁶³



Ossian Sweet House, 2905 Garland Street

Early Expansion of African American Neighborhoods

One of the consequences of segregation in Detroit was that the different socio-economic classes in the city's African American community lived together in close proximity. In the 1920s middle-class Blacks, like their White counterparts, aspired to home ownership. In some cases, as White residents began to move to the newly developing automobile suburbs opening up outside Detroit's central city, they were able to move out of Black Bottom and purchase homes in established White neighborhoods. Two neighborhoods were built by and for Africans Americans during this period, one for upper-middle class residents and the other for members of the Black working-class.

The West Side

The first major African American neighborhood to develop outside of the Black Bottom neighborhood was known as the West Side (often referred to as the Old West Side). The neighborhood was bounded by Tireman Avenue, Epworth Street, Warren Avenue, and Grand River Avenue. Tireman Avenue served as a *de facto* color line and African Americans could not purchase homes to the north of it. The West Side developed its own thriving commercial corridor of Black-owned businesses along Milford Street.

In the 1920s over a third of the homes in the West Side were owner-occupied, compared to only ten percent in Black Bottom/Paradise Valley. This middle-class neighborhood “featured higher literacy rates than any of the five wards with larger Black populations” and was “financially stable enough” to allow residents “to participate in numerous civil and political organizations.”³⁶⁴ Social clubs were popular in the

³⁶² “Clarence Darrow on the Sweet Murder Trials Detroit, 1925-16.” From *The Story of My Life*. America in Class. Becoming Modern: America in the 1920s.

<http://americainclass.org/sources/becomingmodern/divisions/text2/darrowsweettrials.pdf>

³⁶³ “Mobility Restraints in Housing Boost Local Bia Patterns.” *Michigan Chronicle*. January 23, 1960.

³⁶⁴ Davis, Nancy. “Finding Voice: Revisiting Race and American Catholicism in Detroit.” *American Catholic Studies*. Vol. 114, No. 3 (2003):42.

West Side, with one of the most well-known being the Nacirema Club (6118 30th Street (extant)—the club's name is American spelled backwards. The first African American social club established in Michigan, the Nacirema Club was a place for professional men to meet and relax. The club, which was founded in 1922 and officially incorporated in 1932, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2011.

East Kirby Street

This center city neighborhood located between Beaubien Boulevard and Brush Street was built in the late 19th Century and its mix of Victorian homes and apartments was popular with White business owners. With the construction of the Boston-Edison neighborhood in 1905, many of East Kirby Street's White residents chose to move into the newer, larger homes on bigger, landscaped lots. By 1920, East Kirby Street had become popular with Detroit's African American professional class, especially doctors, due to its close proximity to one of Detroit's first Black hospital, Dunbar Hospital. A Prairie style apartment building at 457 East Kirby Street (extant), known as Great Lakes Manor, was purchased by the Great Lakes Mutual Insurance Company in 1935. The company, an early and very successful Black-owned business, was founded in 1926 by Charles Roxborough and Bill Mosely, who owned the African American newspaper, the *Detroit Tribune*. Roxborough, who lived in Great Lakes Manor after his company purchased it, was elected Michigan's first Black State Senator in 1932.

Watson Realty Company

Everett Irving Watson came to Detroit in 1910 and found work as a waiter. A colorful character who had many run-ins with law enforcement, he made his money operating numbers and policy games in Detroit, Flint, and other Michigan cities. A percentage of his profits were put into legitimate businesses that aided the African American community. In 1927 Watson was able to make his first real estate purchase, an interest in the Waiters and Bellman's Club, and by 1930 had amassed real estate assets worth over \$1 million dollars. Watson purchased the Detroit Stars Negro League baseball team in 1931 and managed the boxer Roscoe Toles. He established the Watson Realty Company in 1935 and partnered with Albert Chennault Sr. to establish the Watson Investment Company in 1937, one of the largest in the state of Michigan. The firm was also operated the Watson Insurance Company. Everett Watson was a founding member of the Great Lakes Insurance Company, which enabled many of Detroit's African Americans to obtain mortgages and loans.

In 1939 the Watson Realty Company assisted civil rights activist Snow F. Grigsby to buy a house at 268 E. Euclid Street. The company attempted to obtain financing for the purchase through the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC). The HOLC was the organization that established the redlining maps used by New Deal home mortgage programs to deny home loans to African Americans. Because the Euclid Street property was located in a White, racially restricted subdivision that did not allow African Americans Grigsby's loan application was denied.³⁶⁵ A committee including Reverend Charles Hill of Hartford Baptist Church, Louis Martin, editor of the *Michigan Chronicle*, and Dr. James McClendon president of the NAACP was formed to determine if a restraining injunction should be sought to stop sale of the property while Grigsby took the case to court.³⁶⁶

In 1942, Watson built the Paradise Bowl (660 E. Adams, demolished) a popular entertainment venue in Detroit's Paradise Valley that took up an entire city block. He purchased over 600 acres of land near Jackson, Michigan in the 1930s and established an African American summer resort.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁵ "May Start Mandamus Proceedings to Compel Sale of Euclid Property." *Detroit Tribune*. December 9, 1939:1.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid*.

³⁶⁷ "'Valley' Pioneer Succumbs." *Michigan Chronicle*. January 23, 1960.

Albert Chennault Sr., a partner in Watson Improvement Company, had been the manager of the Black-owned, Chicago-based Victory Mutual Life Insurance Company when it established a Detroit branch in 1928. A life-long Republican, he served as George Romney's campaign Secretary in 1962.³⁶⁸ Chennault received national attention when he "led a walkout at the 1964 Republican National Convention protesting Barry Goldwater's nomination."³⁶⁹

Rent Strikes

In the fall of 1937 the Renters and Consumers League launched rent strikes against the Feidman Realty Company for overcharging for rent at an apartment complex at 281 East Vernor Avenue. Forty-two families participated in the strike for two weeks until the realty company agreed to reduce its rent. The League undertook a second strike just two weeks later. This strike involved more than sixty tenants at two apartment complexes, one at 5742 St. Antoine Street and owned by the Feidman Realty Company again for overcharging on rent and the other owned by Nathan Goldman and located at 447 Benton for its poor conditions and high rent.³⁷⁰

Neighborhoods Built by and For African Americans

In the 1920s Detroit's African Americans were unable to obtain mortgage loans from White lenders or White-owned banks and were restricted from purchasing building lots in subdivisions with racially restrictive covenants in place. Therefore, it was almost impossible for African Americans to engage in new home construction within the city. Two Detroit neighborhoods stand out for having been constructed by African Americans for African Americans.

Conant Gardens

A small neighborhood bounded by Seven Mile Road, Conant Street, and Nevada Avenue, known as Conant Gardens, became Detroit's most exclusive African American neighborhood in the late 1920s. It was surrounded by open fields, in a setting that was at the time more suburban than urban. The neighborhood was developed on land that had once been owned by a well-known Detroit abolitionist, Shubael Conant. As Detroit's automobile industry boomed, a plan to develop a subdivision on the land for White skilled workers employed at the Ford Motor Company failed to materialize.³⁷¹ The establishment of the Black-owned Great Lakes Insurance Company in 1928 made it possible for African Americans to purchase lots and finance the building of new homes in the area, which had no restrictive covenants attached to it. The building of Conant Gardens was significant, it was one of the first times that African Americans in Detroit did not have to take over a home once occupied by someone else. The neighborhood expanded in 1934 when the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) felt comfortable approving loans to African American families wanting to build there because Conant Gardens was a fully segregated neighborhood in an isolated location some distance from existing White neighborhoods. A number of Detroit's prominent Black citizens lived in Conant Gardens including Olympic Gold Medal winner Jessie

³⁶⁸ "Reception for Rocky." *The Record* (Hackensack, New Jersey.) April 17, 1962:17.

³⁶⁹ "Albert Chennault." *The Courier-News* (Bridgewater, New Jersey). September 28, 1979:14.

³⁷⁰ "Rent Strikes Staged As Protest Against Increases by Landlords." *Detroit Tribune*. November 6, 1937:1.

³⁷¹ "Conant Gardens Historic District." *Detroit Historical Society Encyclopedia*.

<https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/conant-gardens-historic-district>

Owens and Judge Elvin Davenport, the first African American judge elected to the Detroit Recorder's Court.³⁷²

Eight Mile-Wyoming

While middle-class Blacks were able to move to the West Side or Conant Gardens, for the majority of the city's Black inhabitants—the working class and those with lower incomes—the story was different and most remained living in the over-crowded conditions in Black Bottom. However, in the 1920s a small group of about 1,000 working-class African Americans were able to settle on former farmland in the Eight Mile Road and Wyoming Avenue area in Northwest Detroit. There were no restrictive covenants on the land due to its remoteness from the more settled parts of the city. The prospective residents did not have the financial means to purchase land or to build houses. Instead, the land was purchased by the president of the Detroit Urban League (DUL), Henry G. Stevens.³⁷³ The DUL encouraged African American families to scrape together enough resources to purchase a lot on land contract and to build a small frame home. Houses were often built a room at a time when materials could be afforded. The land was far enough away from the core of the city to not attract protest, while still being accessible by streetcar. Although the 1930s city property surveys considered this one of Detroit's poorest areas, two-thirds of the homes—higher than the city average— were owner-occupied. In 1941 the Eight Mile-Wyoming area was under consideration for a massive temporary housing project for defense workers. The neighborhood's Black residents feared it would be shoddily constructed and have the potential of becoming a future slum that would then be demolished for urban renewal. To counteract the temporary housing proposal, two community groups were formed, the Carver Progressive Association and the Eight Mile Road Civic Improvement Association. Detroit builder M.M. Robinson, a former president of the Builders Association of Metropolitan Detroit and Nash Russ, the president of Detroit Aircraft Products,³⁷⁴ worked with the Association to find a means to improve existing homes and enable the construction of new private housing. They lobbied Michigan's Federal Housing Administration (FHA) director Raymond Foley to help African Americans secure FHA loans to construct permanent homes in the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood. Since it was to be a homogenous, Black neighborhood it would meet FHA requirements. A compromise was reached. A smaller development of temporary federal defense housing was still constructed, but Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood was qualified to participate in the FHA mortgage loan program that helped to build the American middle class. According to historian Thomas Sugrue, "the Eight-Mile community groups acting out of aspirations for homeownership and a sense of entitlement from the federal government—changed the course of FHA policy. Their neighborhood became a bastion of Black homeownership,"³⁷⁵ a rarity for African Americans during this period. Over the next ten years, 1,500 single family homes were built by African Americans in the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood.³⁷⁶

³⁷² *Ibid.*

³⁷³ Van Dusen, Gerald. *Detroit's Birwood Wall: Hatred & Healing in the West Eight Mile Community*.

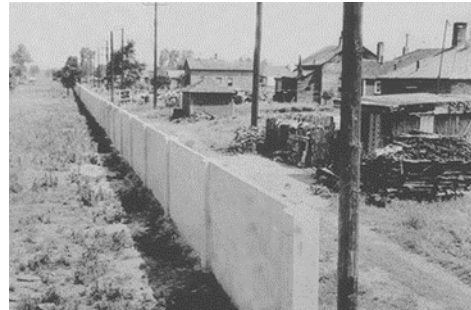
³⁷⁴ *Michigan Manufacturer and Financial Record*. Vol. 72, 1943:164

³⁷⁵ Sugrue, Thomas. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. Princeton University Press, 2014:70.

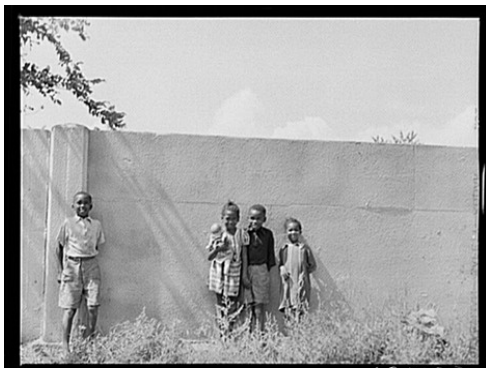
³⁷⁶ Peterson, Sarah Jo. *Planning the Home Front: Building Bombers and Communities at Willow Run*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2013. pp. 259-261

Birwood Wall

The Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood contains one of the civil rights era's most egregious symbols of housing segregation, a physical wall built to divide a White neighborhood from a Black one. Known as the Birwood Wall, the six-foot-high, one-foot-thick concrete barrier extends about half a mile along the rear property lines of the houses on the east side of Mendota Street running south from Eight Mile Road to Pembroke Avenue between Birwood and Mendota Streets. Constructed in 1941, the wall is the legacy of the system of coding neighborhoods to facilitate financing under FHA mortgage loan programs. African American neighborhoods were invariably colored red and designated as the least desirable neighborhoods under the federal system giving rise to the term "red-lining." When a Detroit developer proposed building a new White subdivision called Blackstone Park No.6 in the area just west of the existing Eight Mile-Wyoming African American neighborhood, his loan applications were at denied due the locations proximity to the Black neighborhood. He then suggested building the wall. FHA segregation requirements were based on the determination that racially mixed neighborhoods had the potential for violent confrontations between residents. Because of that supposed risk, they were considered an unsound financial investment. The FHA found the developer's suggestion of a physical barrier between the two neighborhoods an acceptable solution.



Birwood Wall c. 1941, Library of Congress



Birwood Wall, 1941, Library of Congress

When construction of the Birwood Wall began in 1941, the African American residents of the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood led by Reverend Horace A. White, then a state representative and the only Black member of the Detroit Housing Commission, denounced its construction as a blatant act of racial segregation. White stated, "the wall is a 'sociologically disgrace in these times of strain [World War II] to unify the people. . . there is nothing like it even in the South'"³⁷⁷ The wall was completed anyway, and the White developer was able to secure the FHA loans needed to continue the development of the Blackstone Park No. 6 subdivision. In 1953 when another developer, Harry Slatkin, tried to extend the concrete wall to "protect" property he planned to build on, his request was denied by the city.³⁷⁸

Slatkin instead built a six-foot high, solid wood fence that spanned six blocks from Cherrylawn Street to Wyoming Avenue along Pembroke Avenue.³⁷⁹

By 1965, Detroit's African American middle-class had crossed over the segregating boundary of Birwood Avenue and were purchasing homes in the Blackstone Park No. 6 subdivision to the east. The Birwood Wall was viewed by the new residents as just a backyard fence. As *Detroit Free Press* reporter Saul

³⁷⁷ "8-foot Wall of Segregation Draws Censure of Residents." *Detroit Tribune*. July 5, 1941:1.

³⁷⁸ Schwarz, Robin. "Built to Separate Black and White Neighborhoods, the Concrete Wall Still Stands Today." *The Jewish News*. January 25, 2017.

³⁷⁹ Van Dusen, Gerald. *Detroit's Birwood Wall*. Charleston, SC: The History Press. 2019:40.

Friedman observed in 1965 about the relationship between the neighborhood's Black residents and the Birwood Wall, "It was not breached, it was ignored."³⁸⁰



Birwood Wall, 2020

The Birwood Wall still stands and today borders the Alfonso Wells Memorial Playground. It is a powerful reminder of the institutionalized discrimination in housing that African Americans endured well into the latter part of the twentieth century. The Birwood Wall was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2021 as part of this grant project.

Federal Public Housing 1930-1945

The West Side, Conant Gardens, and the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood were the exception rather than the rule for African American housing in Detroit in the decades prior to World War II. The majority still resided in Black Bottom where residents were housed in overcrowded rental properties, subdivided many times to accommodate the increased numbers of Blacks streaming into the city, and owned by absentee landlords who refused to upgrade the deteriorating nineteenth century building stock. Thus, the housing quality in Black Bottom was in steady decline. Still, many former neighborhood residents have fond memories of living in Black Bottom with its strong sense of independence and community. The outstanding music heritage that grew and thrived in the Black-owned clubs and businesses along Hastings Street has gained international respect. The Black Bottom neighborhood was marked for slum clearance and urban renewal as early as the 1940s and was completely demolished by the end of the 1960s for the Chrysler Freeway and Lafayette Park housing developments.

Brewster Homes

Housing conditions for Detroit's African American population worsened in the 1930s due the Great Depression since they were often "last hired, first fired" and suffered disproportionately from unemployment. In 1933, to address the nation's housing shortage and to assist the economic recovery of the construction industry, the federal government announced that it was allocating \$35 million for a national program to build low-income housing in cities across America. The city of Detroit was awarded \$6 million for slum clearance that would result in the construction of two low-income housing projects, on the city's east and west sides. The west side development was to be built in the Chandler Park neighborhood to provide "for accommodation of white-collar workers at extremely low cost."³⁸¹ The East side development would be built on the western edge of Paradise Valley, on a site that already housed a densely packed African American population, south of Mack Avenue between Brush and Hastings Streets. The \$5.5 million allocated for the west side project would include slum clearance and the construction of homes for African American residents.³⁸² Detroit was to be "the first city in the country to obtain support for municipal housing on a wide scale"³⁸³ and was to serve "as a model . . . an example for

³⁸⁰ Friedman, Saul. "How One Neighborhood is Meeting the Test of Integration." *Detroit Free Press*. January 20, 1965:5.

³⁸¹ "Detroit, A Conquered City." *Lansing State Journal*. November 15, 1935:8

³⁸² "U.S. Will Start Chandler Park Housing Work." *Detroit Free Press*. November 14, 1935:1

³⁸³ "Slum Clearing Assured as U.S. Paves Way to Grant City \$6,000,000." *Detroit Free Press*. November 18, 1933:1

other cities in the country.”³⁸⁴ With the announcement of the award, the city appointed a housing commission to oversee the projects.

Things quickly fell apart. Detroit’s business leaders opposed the construction of the public housing projects and the Detroit Common Council voted to rescind its approval.³⁸⁵ Federal agencies became irate over land acquisition problems and a court case that questioned the federal government’s right to invoke eminent domain. In 1935, Colonel Horatio Hackett, head of the Federal Housing Division, stated that “while the Detroit project was the first for which funds were appropriated, identical projects in 23 other cities already have been started.”³⁸⁶ In March 1935 Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes announced that groundbreaking on Detroit’s east side project would finally begin and in April that it would house over 1,000 African American families.³⁸⁷ Known as Brewster Homes (demolished), construction on the original complex was to be completed under the Public Works Administration (PWA). Although the project encountered significant opposition from the Black families in the area who did not want to lose their homes to urban renewal, clearance and construction proceeded. Detroit’s Mayor Frank Couzens invited First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt to be on hand to break ground on the fifteen-acre site in 1935.³⁸⁸ The first units opened in 1938, with additional row houses and apartment buildings constructed in the following decades. One building from the original African American neighborhood survived, Shiloh Baptist Church at 557 Benton, when its Pastor Solomon David Ross, successfully argued that the church would serve as a continued anchor for the neighborhood.

When it was completed, the Brewster Homes project did little to alleviate the extreme housing shortage that Black Detroiters had been experiencing. More than 1,500 African American families had been displaced by the project, which only provided 1,000 new living units. The housing situation for African Americans was expected to get even worse if America became involved in the European war. It was predicted that thousands more Southern Blacks would move north to work in defense plants and yet the city did little pre-planning to accommodate the massive influx. It was expected that the majority would be absorbed into the already dangerously overcrowded Black Bottom/Paradise Valley area. By now, the available housing resources in that neighborhood simply could not support such a significant increase in population. African Americans represented nearly two-thirds of the city’s population growth in 1940, but virtually no new privately funded housing for African Americans had been built. Efforts by African Americans to move into White neighbors continued to raise controversy. For example, in 1937 an African American named Charles Bradley purchased a house at 531 East Euclid that contained two apartments. He was sold the property by an African American real estate agency and received mortgage financing from the Detroit Trust Company. When the Bradley’s were threatened by their white neighbors when they moved into the lower flat, they called the NAACP and were provided with police protection.³⁸⁹

At the state level, the Neighborhood Improvement Act (House Bill 319) was introduced in the Michigan legislature in 1939. The bill was promoted as “protecting the stability and integrity of family life” by “maintaining the general character of the municipality as a whole.” It proposed to allow the planning commission of any municipality to create homogeneous neighborhoods within their jurisdiction. Seen as a thinly veiled attempt to allow municipalities to “create segregated neighborhood areas, in which colored citizens would be forced to reside” the bill was defeated thanks to the work of Senator Charles Diggs Sr.

³⁸⁴ “Housing Sites Choice Studied.” *Detroit Free Press*. November 19, 1933:9.

³⁸⁵ “U.S. Will Start Chandler Park Housing Work.” *Detroit Free Press*. November 14, 1935:1

³⁸⁶ “Housing Delay Denied by Ickes.” *Detroit Free Press*. March 27, 1935:14.

³⁸⁷ “Slum Project Takes a Step.” *Detroit Free Press*. April 18, 1935:1.

³⁸⁸ “First Lady Invited to City by Mayor.” *Detroit Free Press*. July 6, 1935:3

³⁸⁹ “Whites Threaten to Evict Home Owner and Family From Newly Purchased Property.” *Detroit Tribune*. July 10, 1937:1.

and the NAACP.³⁹⁰ Thus, see within this context, the controversy that arose around the construction of the Sojourner Truth Homes public housing complex in 1941 was especially bitter for Detroit's African American population.

Sojourner Truth Homes

In June 1940 as the United States prepared to enter the war, President Roosevelt established the federal Defense Homes Corporation to address the nation's housing shortage. He realized that finding existing, adequate housing for thousands of families near factories that were to be retooled for defense work would be almost impossible since little home construction had been undertaken during the Depression. The federal government was prepared to provide public housing for defense workers, but there was strong and immediate outcry from the private construction industry. Few communities wanted temporary, government-built defense housing, which they equated with shoddy construction and a host of social problems. The construction industry believed, that with the right federal tools in place, private industry could alleviate the housing shortage by quickly and efficiently building low-cost, single-family homes. The federal government eventually compromised and in 1942 changed its focus to improving home mortgage loan funding through the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) that would allow for increased construction of private homes. However, federal programs like these rarely benefited African Americans who were excluded from participation based solely on their race.

As war loomed, the National Urban League began to link African American's access to defense housing directly to their ability to participate in defense work. The federal defense housing coordinator assured the Urban League that the housing rights of Blacks would be protected.³⁹¹ In June 1941, after being pressured by Black leaders, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order #8802 prohibiting discrimination in defense industry employment and ensuring that Black workers would be treated equally in factories that had contracts with the federal government for defense work. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, a strong civil rights supporter, hoped to use the defense housing crisis to address the long-term housing needs of African Americans. According to historian Doris Kearns Goodwin,

*Eleanor repeatedly urged Franklin to use the defense emergency as a lever for replacing slums of the city with permanent new housing that could still be used after the war ended. There was a chance, she believed, if new neighborhoods could be properly planned and designed, that Blacks and whites could live together in peace.*³⁹²

In February 1941 Charles Palmer, director of the FHA, estimated that Detroit would require 160,000 defense workers to fulfill its defense plant needs—more than 100,000 defense workers were expected to come to the city from outside the Detroit metropolitan area. Eleanor Roosevelt tried to pressure Palmer to appropriate money for permanent housing for African American defense workers, but he objected to her interference believing his mission was solely to provide temporary war housing. Unable to get the FHA director's support, Eleanor Roosevelt now turned to a friend and long-time civil rights advocate from Georgia, the director of the Federal Works Agency Defense Housing program, Clark Foreman. Foreman had recently served as the first advisor on the economic status of Negroes to Department of Interior Secretary Harold Ickes.³⁹³ Foreman had oversight of a proposed project to build defense housing for

³⁹⁰ "A Vicious Bill Defeated." *Detroit Tribune*. June 3, 1939:12

³⁹¹ "Housing Coordinator Bans Discrimination." *Pittsburgh Courier*. March 20, 1941.

³⁹² Kearns Goodwin, Doris. *No Ordinary Time: Franklin & Eleanor Roosevelt: the Home Front in World War II*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013.326

³⁹³ *Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life*. Vol 17. National Urban League, 1939.

Black workers in Detroit.³⁹⁴ Mrs. Roosevelt managed to convince him that it should be permanent housing that would last beyond the war.

In May 1941, Congress passed the Lanham Act, which appropriated \$300,000,000 in federal funding for the construction of schools, day care centers, and defense housing. Michigan received \$35,000,000 to construct properties in Detroit and thirty-one designated war production areas across the state. Metro Detroit was to receive 1,000 new defense housing units built by the federal government.³⁹⁵ This included the Eliel and Eero Saarinen designed Kramer Homes, a 500-unit complex for White defense workers in Centerline, Michigan, to accommodate Warren Tank Plant workers. It also included 200-unit housing complex for African Americans to be built on a parcel of land at Nevada and Fenelon Streets, not far from the Ford Highland Park plant.³⁹⁶

The placing of an African American public housing complex at Nevada-Fenelon quickly became controversial. First, there was confusion about the site choice. The United States Housing Authority (USHA) was typically responsible for determining the sites for defense housing construction. One of their main criteria was the nearness of the location to a defense plant. If a local housing authority was in place, then that authority was responsible for reviewing the proposed site against the federal requirements. According to an oral interview with Clark Foreman, “in Detroit, for instance . . . it was almost an exception. . . There was a great demand for houses for Negroes in the defense plants there. I don’t know why they didn’t want to go through the [Detroit] housing authority, then through USHA, but they came to us [Federal Works Agency (FWA)]. As I remember it, we got the [Detroit] housing authority and the mayor to recommend a number of sites from which we chose.” It was the FWA that made the final decision to locate African American defense housing on the Nevada and Fenelon Streets site. In testimony in the *Congressional Record*, the Detroit Housing Authority claims that it recommended a different site at Dequindre and Modern Streets as its first choice for African American housing complex but was overridden by the FWA.

The first opposition to African American defense housing at the Nevada-Fenelon site came in June 1941 from nearby homeowners in the Conant Gardens Community Association. As the only Black neighborhood in Detroit authorized to receive FHA construction loans, Conant Gardens homeowners were mainly concerned with the quality of construction of the proposed complex.³⁹⁷ They felt a temporary housing complex would reflect poorly on the neighborhood and result in lower property values. This was not an unreasonable concern for Black residents who had fought hard to obtain access to federal FHA mortgages and construction loans. However, their concerns were quickly overshadowed by complaints from nearby residents in White neighborhoods, especially the Ryan-Fenelon neighborhood, who were against the project solely based on race; it would allow Blacks to cross one of Detroit’s many *de facto* color lines, this one at Ryan Street. The White neighborhoods in the Nevada-Fenelon vicinity organized as the Seven-Mile Neighborhood Association.

The neighborhood to the northeast of the Nevada-Fenelon site was a Polish Catholic parish situated around St. Louis the King Church, overseen by Father Constantine Djiuk. During the late 1930s, Detroit was home to a few Catholic priests that were openly racist and anti-Semitic in their views and language. The most well-known was Father Coughlin who hosted a national radio program with 3.5 million

³⁹⁴ *Facing History and Ourselves*. www.facinghistory.org

³⁹⁵ “Defense Housing Funds Approved.” *Detroit Free Press*. May 27, 1941.

³⁹⁶ “Registration for Housing On.” *Detroit Free Press*. November 14, 1941:4

³⁹⁷ *United States Congressional Record*. Vol 88. Part 2. U.S. Government Publishing Office. Washington, DC, February 27, 1942: 1763. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-CRECB-1942-pt2/pdf/GPO-CRECB-1942-pt2-5.pdf>

listeners.³⁹⁸ Coughlin's radio program was finally shut down by the Catholic diocese after the federal government threatened to charge him with sedition for his Fascist rhetoric after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Father Djiuk of St. Louis the King parish was also known for promoting racist ideologies. A strong sense of unity existed within the parish, which was not uncommon for European immigrant neighborhoods in the 1930s. According to historian Nick Salvatore,

*In Chicago and Detroit, the most heavily defended neighborhoods tended to be those occupied by foreign-born working-class whites, particularly Catholics of Irish, Italian, and Polish heritage . . . for Catholic immigrants, homeownership, church, and community came together as a package. Catholic parishes were drawn along ethnic lines, with residents urged to purchase homes in proximity to their mother church.*³⁹⁹

Unfortunately, Father Djiuk exploited the neighborhood's cohesion and used his pulpit to incite opposition against Blacks and Jews through vitriolic speech and acts of prejudice.⁴⁰⁰ The opposition he generated over Detroit's proposed Black public housing project was labeled by the U.S. Office of War information, "A Polish-Negro conflict, or a European vs. Negro Conflict more than a Black-white conflict."⁴⁰¹

In late June 1941, an integrated committee of representatives from both the Black and White neighborhoods went to Washington D.C. and met with U.S. Representative Randolph Tenerowicz, who had once served as a doctor in St. Louis the King parish. The outcome of that meeting was that USHA would send a representative to Detroit to look at alternate sites. In November, it was publicly announced, without warning, that construction of the African American public housing project was underway and that it would be named in honor of Sojourner Truth,⁴⁰² the abolitionist from Battle Creek, Michigan. This decision had been made at a joint meeting of FHA and FWA representatives in Washington, D.C. on August 18, 1941. Despite the protests and complaints from White residents, the two agencies agreed that the original Nevada-Fenelon location was the only site within the city of Detroit that met federal defense housing requirements. Thus the construction of public housing for African American defense workers was to move forward. Upon hearing of the decision, the outraged White communities redoubled their efforts, this time working to change the occupancy of the housing project from Black to White.



Sign located across the street from Sojourner Truth Homes. Credit: Library of Congress

The Seven Mile-Fenelon Improvement Association launched an aggressive campaign sending over 1,000 protests letters in one day to the United States Congress.⁴⁰³ Tenerowicz, with the help of Michigan Senator Prentiss Brown, was able to form a coalition with Southern Congressmen who placed a rider on the FWA's appropriations bill that stated no money could be released until Clark Foreman was fired and

³⁹⁸ "Charles E. Coughlin." Jewish Virtual Library. A Project of AICE. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/father-charles-coughlin>

³⁹⁹ Herman, Max Arthur. *Fighting in the Streets: Ethnic Succession and Urban Unrest in Twentieth Century America*. Peter Land, 2005:50.

⁴⁰⁰ Salvatore, Nick. *Singing in a Strange Land: C.L. Franklin, the Black Church and the Transformation of America*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2007:141.

⁴⁰¹ McGreevy, John. *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth Century Urban North*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998:74.

⁴⁰² "Registration for Housing On." *Detroit Free Press*. November 14, 1941:4.

⁴⁰³ Pratis, P. L. "The Horizon." *Pittsburgh Courier*. January 1, 1942:13.

the housing project was converted to White occupancy.⁴⁰⁴ As the African American newspaper the *Pittsburgh Courier* reported, “Clark Foreman was crucified on the cross of defense housing in Detroit.” On January 15, 1942, the FWA rescinded its previous announcement, this time stating that Sojourner Truth Homes would be occupied by Whites only.⁴⁰⁵

In March, a representative of President Roosevelt came to Detroit to ask Black leaders to give up the occupancy fight and give Sojourner Truth over to White occupancy out of “patriotism.” The compromise was soundly rejected. Detroit’s Black community realized that retaining the Sojourner Truth Homes project for Black workers was imperative. According to the NAACP publication *The Crisis*, “The Negroes of the City of Detroit responded as one to the stunning blow from Capitol Hill.”⁴⁰⁶ A coalition of Detroit’s Black leaders headed by Reverend Charles Hill, Chair of the Detroit Citizens Committee; State Senator Charles Diggs Sr.; and Horace A. White of the Detroit Housing Commission, worked to keep the Sojourner Truth Homes for Black workers. A letter writing campaign to the U.S. Congress was undertaken by Detroit’s African American community and picket lines were installed around the Detroit Housing Commission and Detroit City Hall.⁴⁰⁷ The Wayne County CIO Industrial Union Council, whose membership topped 300,000, voted to support the city’s Black workers in the Sojourner Truth Homes case. Because of the situation’s national impact, the National Urban League “pointed out that what is happening in Detroit is only a sample more or less of open opposition being carried out where defense housing has been proposed for Negro Workers.”⁴⁰⁸ Defense worker housing projects for African Americans in New York, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia were also meeting with resistance and proposed occupancy changes.

In early 1942 events occurred that caused the federal government to abruptly reverse its decision on Sojourner Truth Homes occupancy once again. Short wave radio operators began picking up propaganda recordings from Nazi Germany and Japan. The *Detroit Free Press* noted, “It is perhaps not generally understood that the Nazi’s seized upon the [Sojourner Truth] incident . . . and broadcast . . . that white Americans were discriminating against Negro Americans. This development seriously embarrassed the American foreign propagandists and led to insistence that the Nazis be proved liars.”⁴⁰⁹ Detroit’s Mayor Edward Jeffries was called to Washington D.C. to confer with FHA and FWA leaders who informed him that Sojourner Truth Homes would remain for Black residents.

The *Detroit Free Press* reported that John Blanford, Director of the FHA, made one last patriotic appeal this time to White residents stating, “We are at war. This is a war housing project. I am sure the patriotism of these citizens of Detroit will assert themselves.”⁴¹⁰ Unfortunately, patriotism did not prevail and when Mayor Jeffries read the FWA telegram confirming that Sojourner Truth Homes would house African Americans at a city council, White protestors greeted the news with shouts of “tear him limb from limb” and the threat of recall.⁴¹¹ However, the Detroit City Council had already agreed, before Mayor Jeffries attended the Washington D.C. meeting with federal officials, to abide by the final decision of the federal agencies.⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁴ Kearns Goodwin, Doris. *No Ordinary Time: Franklin & Eleanor Roosevelt: the Home Front in World War II*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013:327.

⁴⁰⁵ Sullivan, Patricia. *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina: 2014.

⁴⁰⁶ Martin, Louis E. “The Truth About Sojourner Truth.” *The Crisis*. April 1942:112.

⁴⁰⁷ “Negro Pickets to Protest.” *Detroit Free Press*. January 18, 1942.

⁴⁰⁸ Prattis, P.L. “The Horizon.” *Pittsburgh Courier*. January 1, 1942:13.

⁴⁰⁹ “Bitter Campaign Rages in Tenerowicz District.” *Detroit Free Press*. August 8, 1942.

⁴¹⁰ Prevorst, Clifford. “Negroes get Housing Site, U.S. Decides.” *Detroit Free Press*. March 7, 1942.

⁴¹¹ “Irate Whites Threaten Detroit’s Mayor.” *Pittsburgh Courier*. February 28, 1942.

⁴¹² “Reassignment of Project to Negroes Likely.” *Detroit Free Press*. January 30, 1942:16.

Twenty-four African American families attempted to move into the Sojourner Truth Homes on February 28, 1942. More than 700 White protestors assembled at the site and stopped the entry of moving trucks into the complex by throwing rocks. Two hundred African Americans from the surrounding neighborhood defended those trying to move in. As the violence increased, hundreds of mounted Detroit policemen began using tear gas and making arrests.⁴¹³ In the end, 130 African Americans and only 3 White protestors were arrested. Mayor Jeffries issued a moratorium that stopped anyone from moving into the complex.⁴¹⁴ On March 7, a meeting was held at the Plymouth Congregational Church and the more than 300 attendees authorized Reverend Charles Hill and Horace A. White to contact President Roosevelt directly and ask for



*National Guard at Sojourner Truth Homes, 1943.
Credit: Library of Congress*



*Family moving into Sojourner Truth Homes, 1943.
Credit: Library of Congress*

for federal assistance to occupy the complex.”⁴¹⁵

On March 24, U.S. Attorney General George Biddle announced the U.S. Department of Justice would start an “immediate investigation to see if civil rights of Negroes have been violated in Detroit.”⁴¹⁶ Seven men were accused of seditious conspiracy to stop the implementation of federal law due their actions to stop African American families from moving into Sojourner Truth Homes. However, a federal grand jury issued indictment charges against only three of the men: Parker Sage and Garland Alderman, officers of the National Workers League and Virgil Chandler, an officer of the Seven Mile-Fenelon Association.⁴¹⁷ They were charged with organizing a picket line around Sojourner Truth Homes. Participants were summoned by honking

automobile horns to form a “tight picket line at the project that any effort to get through it would and did result in bloodshed and rioting.”⁴¹⁸ On April 4, the *Detroit Tribune* reported that “definite proof that the Detroit Real Estate Board is lending aid to the efforts of the Ku Klux Klan and fascist groups to prevent Negro occupancy of the Sojourner Truth Defense Homes” had been disclosed.⁴¹⁹ A group of five University of Chicago students had uncovered a resolution that the Detroit Real Estate Board has sent to the National Real Estate Board “to exert all power to prevent Negro tenants moving into the Homes.”⁴²⁰

According to the *Pittsburgh Courier*, in the end President Roosevelt used the weight of his office to settle the Sojourner Truth Homes controversy noting that, “The present action of the President is said to have been spurred by shortwave broadcasts of Tokio and Berlin. If Michigan’s Governor requested them federal troops could be used.”⁴²¹ The Michigan National Guard was called in to protect African American residents as they moved into Sojourner Truth Homes on April 29, 1942. The Sojourner Truth Homes

⁴¹³ “Whites Block Negro Occupancy.” *Lansing State Journal*. March 1, 1942:4.

⁴¹⁴ “Colored Fail to Get Homes: Detroit Pickets.” *Windsor Star*. February 28, 1942:5

⁴¹⁵ “Detroit Leaders Call for Troop Protection.” *Pittsburgh Courier*. March 7, 1942:1

⁴¹⁶ “Detroit Project will remain Negro, Says U.S.” *New York Age*. March 14, 1942:1.

⁴¹⁷ “Return Indictment in Detroit Dispute.” *Knoxville News-Sentinel*. April 17, 1942:7.

⁴¹⁸ “7 Accused in U.S. Housing Plot.” *Detroit Free Press*. April 17, 1942:1

⁴¹⁹ “Realtors Back Klan on U.S. Project Issue.” *Detroit Tribune*. April 4, 1942:1.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴²¹ “FDR Enters into Housing Fight.” *Pittsburgh Courier*. March 14, 1942:1.

incident inflamed racial tensions in the city of Detroit. Over the next year, animosity between Blacks and Whites continued to grow until erupting into the Race Riot of 1943.

Wayne County Better Homes, Inc.

By 1943 it was apparent that finding more housing for Detroit's African American defense workers was still a dire necessity. In April, the NAACP, the UAW Ford Local 600, and representatives of the Michigan Council of Churches testified before the Detroit Housing Commission demanding that all future public defense housing be integrated—not segregated by race. Instead, the Detroit Housing Commission voted to keep in place its policy of basing public housing occupancy on the retention of neighborhood homogeneity. This policy remained in effect until the state of Michigan passed a fair housing law in 1952.⁴²²

In 1944 according to the *Detroit Free Press*, “the solution for the Negro housing problem in Detroit appeared to be even more remote. . . The disclosure was made that approximately 600 Negro families a month are moving to Detroit despite a backlog of at least 5,100 unfilled applications for Negro war housing.”⁴²³ Fear that another race riot might occur if nothing was done to alleviate the housing crisis for the city's African American population, in 1944 a number of projects to build private homes for Black defense workers were announced in Detroit. The FHA had expanded its mortgage insurance program to include African Americans in 1942 and released priority vouchers for the construction of 500 African American homes in the Detroit area in 1943. To take advantage of the FHA opportunity, a group of African Americans formed Wayne County Better Homes, Inc. (1727 St. Antoine Street, demolished) under the direction of Michigan Senator Charles C. Diggs Sr.⁴²⁴ The organization purchased land in northwest Detroit and in October 1943, construction began on 4 two-bedroom brick homes designed by architect Donald White.⁴²⁵ The builder was William L. Maynard whose family “have been builders for 3 generations.”⁴²⁶ They eventually completed 25 houses near Binder and Grixdale Streets adjacent to Conant Gardens, an African American subdivision that had been established in the 1920s.⁴²⁷ The expansion in Conant Gardens was considered “Detroit's first private all-Negro war housing project built by and for exclusive Negro occupancy.”⁴²⁸ Olympian Jesse Owens purchased one of the first homes built under the program.⁴²⁹ Wayne County Better Homes, Inc. also planned a larger African American development of 475 houses to be constructed between Pembroke Avenue and Eight Mile Road along Cherrylawn, Northlawn, and Greenlawn Streets.⁴³⁰ A third development was announced by the Hayes Construction Company, who had seventy homes under construction at E. McNichols and MacKay Streets that they would open to purchase by African Americans.

Wayne County Better Homes, Inc.

Charles C. Diggs Sr., President
Mark Ivey, President
Everett I. Watson, First Vice President
Edward A. Simmons, Vice President and General Counsel
Forrest I Young, Vice President
Construction
Fred A. Allen, Director
Louis C. Blount, Director
Dr. J.W. Edwards, Director
William B. Thompson, Secretary
Richard H. Austin, Auditor
Robert M. Walker, Coordinator
William L. Sherril, Stock Sales Manager
James L. Singleton, Real Estate Manager
Donald White, Architect
William L. Maynard, Builder

Detroit Tribune. October 30, 1943

⁴²²Fine, Sidney. "Michigan and Housing Discrimination, 1949-1968." *Michigan Historical Review* 23, no. 2 (1997): 81-114. Accessed January 26, 2021. doi:10.2307/20173676.

⁴²³ Donovan, Leo. "War Housing Issue is Growing Serious." *Detroit Free Press*. November 23, 1944:1.

⁴²⁴ "Wayne County Better Homes, Inc." *The Detroit News*. February 10, 2011.

⁴²⁵ "Construction of Four FHA Units Started." *Michigan Chronicle*. October 23, 1943:5.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid*.

⁴²⁷ Peterson, Sarah Jo. *Planning the Home Front: Building Bombers and Communities at Willow Run*. Chicago University of Chicago Press, 2013:261.

⁴²⁸ "Start Negro Housing." *Detroit Free Press*. November 21, 1943:11.

⁴²⁹ Nichols, Darren and Dale Rich. "Firm was Housing Pioneer." *The Detroit News*. February 10, 2011.

⁴³⁰ "Start Negro Housing: First All-Negro Built and Financed Project." *Detroit Free Press*. November 21, 1943:11.

In 1944, Wayne County Better Homes, Inc. worked with Henry Johnson, head of the Detroit Builder's Association, to garner support for a large private defense housing project of 326 homes for African Americans in the Welch-Oakwood subdivision located in the far southwest corner of the city (bounded by Visger, Ethel, and Bassett Streets) near the Ford River Rouge plant.⁴³¹ The neighborhood's racial make-up was already in transition and it seemed a logical choice for the expansion of African American housing. The site was approved by the Detroit Common Council and the FHA provided \$1.5 million to purchase the land. To start the project, the Detroit Builder's Association contacted Everett Watson, the African American owner of the Watson Realty Company, and asked him to purchase seventeen existing houses in the area and make them available to African Americans. The project soon met with strong opposition from White residents living in and around the Welch-Oakwood neighborhood. This caused the Detroit Common Council to rescind its approval and instead vote to uphold the policy of neighborhood segregation practiced by the Detroit Housing Commission. This reversal caused the Reverend Charles Hill of Hartford Baptist Church to run for Detroit city council. A strong civil rights activist, Hill was serving as president of the Detroit NAACP and had been a leader in the Sojourner Truth Homes public housing debate. Though his candidacy was endorsed by the UAW, Hill was unsuccessful in his bid. In the end, the development of African American housing in the Welch-Oakwood neighborhood fell through.

African American Housing Postwar 1945-1960

In the final years of World War II, new construction of public and/or private housing for African Americans remained almost non-existent in the city of Detroit. African Americans moved to adjacent communities such as Royal Oak Township, Inkster, and Ecorse where some public housing for African Americans was being built. In Detroit, the only option for African Americans was to move into established White neighborhoods. However, since the 1920s White neighborhood associations had been adopting restrictive covenants to keep African Americans out of their neighborhoods. During the Depression, the federal government's racially restrictive housing and mortgage loan practices had led to the development of "controlled communities," suburbs that were racially homogenous—almost 99% of which were White. The *Detroit Free Press* noted in 1945, "Nobody knows how many hundreds of restrictive covenants and neighborhood agreements there are in Detroit binding property owners not to permit Negro occupancy. The number increased greatly in response to the Negro search for new residence areas. There are said to be 150 associations of property owners promoting these agreements."⁴³²

In 1946 the City of Detroit released a master plan that put a priority on clearing out the city's African American Black Bottom/Paradise Valley neighborhood, long considered a blighted slum by Detroit's White leadership. The Black community dubbed the urban renewal projects "Black Removal." The availability of federal urban renewal funds provided the opportunity to begin demolition. Though complete destruction of the city's first historically Black neighborhood was not completed until the early 1960s, by 1950 the stage had been set and Black Bottom/Paradise Valley suffered from continued disinvestment over the next decade. Black churches and businesses began to move out of the neighborhood and their congregations and patrons followed them to other areas of the city.

During this same period, Michigan's automobile companies began building new plants on less expensive green space outside the Detroit city limits. One such example is the General Motors Hydra Matic transmission plant constructed in Livonia in 1948. Builders and real estate developers began buying up land in the rural communities north of Detroit, platting new subdivisions, and building modern housing and soon a ring of predominately White suburban communities encircled the city. This was the beginning of what was known as "White Flight." As White Detroiters moved out of the city to the suburbs to be

⁴³¹ Burdick, Colonel Henry. "500 Homes for Negroes." *Detroit Free Press*. September 30, 1944:5

⁴³² Haswell, James. "Numerous Pacts Bar Negro Residents." *Detroit Free Press*. March 17, 1945:7

closer to their jobs, Black Detroiters began to move into vacated housing in historically White neighborhoods. They were often met with strong resistance resulting in harassment, protest, and violence.

The Orsel and Minnie McGhee U.S. Supreme Court Case

In 1948 an African American couple, Orsel and Minnie McGhee, purchased a house at 4626 Seebaldt Street two blocks north of the *de facto* “color line” of Tireman Avenue, a boundary of the African American West Side neighborhood. Orsel McGhee, a press operator for the *Detroit Free Press*, and his wife Minnie, a mail sorter for the U.S. Post Office, wanted better living conditions for their family. They had been renting the Foursquare house at 4626 Seebaldt Street during much of the Depression, when White landlords desperate for income were willing to look the other way when it came to race. The McGhee’s had lived in the all-White neighborhood for ten years without protest. However, when they purchased the house in 1948 the neighborhood association convinced the McGhee’s neighbor to sue them for violation of the racially restrictive neighborhood covenant. The McGhee’s case was taken up by the NAACP, grouped with two other cases protesting restrictive racial covenants under the title *Shelley v. Kramer*, and eventually argued before the U.S. Supreme Court by NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall. In a landmark decision the Supreme Court sided with the McGhee’s and struck down the use of restrictive racial housing covenants declaring them unconstitutional.

Michigan’s First Black Realtor

Despite the legal victory of the U.S. Supreme Court decision on restrictive covenants, in practice African Americans still found it difficult— if not impossible—to purchase homes. Lending institutions refused to grant mortgages to African Americans attempting to buy homes in White neighborhoods, fearing backlash from White consumers and loss of business. Black real estate brokers were hampered because they had to go through White brokers when working with a mortgage lender, they could not communicate with the lenders directly. White brokers charged them extra fees that increased the cost of homes for African Americans. In addition, when mortgage markets began to tighten, funding for minority mortgages was always the first to be cut.⁴³³ Between 1946 and 1956 of the 10,000 new homes built in Detroit, only 2,000 were available to African Americans.⁴³⁴ In response to these unfair practices, a young Black Detroitier named James Del Rio became the first licensed African American mortgage banker in the United States in 1953 and organized the first minority-owned mortgage company in the United States approved by the FHA, Associate Brokers Investment Company, in 1954. According to *Life* magazine in 1957, “James Del Rio is a hugely successful Detroit real estate man with an annual gross of \$ 5 million. He has applied several times for membership in the Detroit branch of the National Association of Real Estate Boards, whose members are the only ones permitted to call themselves ‘realtors.’ He has always been turned down.”⁴³⁵ Unable to break through the discriminatory practices of Detroit’s Real Estate Board, in 1958 Del Rio opened an office in New York City and qualified as a realtor in that state. Thus, he became a member of the National Association of Real Estate Boards and able to utilize the title of realtor in Michigan.⁴³⁶ In the 1960s, Del Rio served as the chairman of the planning committee for Detroit’s Walk to Freedom. He was later appointed a financial consultant to the Trade Commission and U.S. Department of Commerce and was elected to four terms in the Michigan House of Representatives (1964-1972) and served as a Judge on the Detroit Recorder’s Court.⁴³⁷

⁴³³ Woerpel, John. “The Breezeway.” *Detroit Free Press*. June 26, 1955:37.

⁴³⁴ “Panel Topic is Negro Housing.” *Detroit Free Press*. March 18, 1957:16.

⁴³⁵ “The Negro and the North. *Life*. March 11, 1957:155.

⁴³⁶ “Young Man in a Hurry.” *Ebony*. April 1960:48.

⁴³⁷ “Accomplishments.” *The Blog of James Del Rio*. <https://jamesdelrio.wordpress.com/accomplishment>

Detroit's Transitioning White Neighborhoods

Resistance to integration was more vocal and violent in Detroit's working-class neighborhoods, and more easily attainable in neighborhoods of higher socio-economic status. In part because homeowners were already looking to purchase new homes outside the city on larger suburban lots. Still, there were challenges. One of the first of Detroit's all-White neighborhoods in which Black middle-class families began purchasing homes was Arden Park. The Reverend A. C. Williams of Metropolitan Baptist Church was the first when he purchased a home in the 500 block of Arden Park Boulevard in August 1942. He was followed by F.T. Stevenson, who purchased a \$20,000 home on Arden Park Boulevard between Oakland and Brush Streets in October.⁴³⁸ A White neighbor then filed a legal complaint against the two men claiming that the purchases violated a neighborhood ordinance restricting African Americans from living there. Backed by the NAACP, Detroit attorneys Francis Dent and Lloyd Loomis argued the case in court and won. Once it was open to Black residents, Arden Park became "Detroit's finest residential section for Negroes."⁴³⁹ Over the next ten years, Francis Dent prosecuted sixteen similar housing cases in Detroit, including the *Sipes vs. McGhee* case which resulted in the U.S. Supreme Court decision ending restrictive racial covenants.

Other neighborhoods that transitioned from White residents to Black in the 1940s and 1950s included: (See Section Two, Description, pp. 8-19):

- Boston Edison, home to Detroit's Nouveau Riche at the turn of the twentieth century. The neighborhood became the headquarters for the Detroit Urban League, who purchased architect Albert Kahn's former home.
- The North End. Oakland Avenue became the home of a Rhythm & Blues music scene that made the neighborhood popular with younger Black residents.
- Russell Wood-Sullivan neighborhood was once home to Motown founder Berry Gordy Jr., singers Diana Ross and Dinah Washington, Detroit Lions defensive back Dick "Night Train" Lane, and poet and publisher Dudley Randall.
- Northwest Goldberg, where W. Grand Boulevard became a center for Black businesses in the late 1950s. Most notably the headquarters of Motown Records, the office of architect Nathan Johnson, and the James H. Cole Home for Funerals. It also houses King Solomon Baptist Church where Malcolm X gave his revolutionary "Message to the Grassroots" speech in 1963.

In 1960, the *Michigan Chronicle* noted that one of the problems African Americans were encountering when they purchased homes in White neighborhoods was that "Negro families that have worked and saved for many years to buy homes in better neighborhoods" where schools and public services were better and "where property uses are enforced" soon discovered that "restrictions which had been carefully guarded prior to their coming are now being allowed to erode by the granting of multiplicity of exemptions and in some instances outright land use violations."⁴⁴⁰

Twelfth Street Neighborhood

A common settlement pattern in Detroit saw African Americans moving into historically Jewish neighborhoods because they had not adopted restrictive racial covenants due to their own struggles with discrimination. One example is the transition of the Twelfth Street neighborhood from Jewish to African American.

⁴³⁸ "Whites get Injunction to Bar Occupancy of \$20,000 Home." *Detroit Tribune*. November 7, 1942:1

⁴³⁹ "Detroit NAACP: "Rights" Vanguard for 40 Years." *Detroit Tribune*. September 8, 1951.

⁴⁴⁰ Wartman, Charles. "'Ascribed Status' A major problem for Local Negroes." *Michigan Chronicle*. January 16, 1960.

In the late 1940s, a historically Jewish neighborhood centered on Twelfth Street and Dexter Avenue north of Grand Boulevard became a popular place for African Americans to purchase homes during the wartime housing shortage. They began moving to the area near Linwood and Hamilton Avenues but were soon purchasing homes throughout the neighborhood. The Jewish Community Council working with the NAACP together tried to slow the pace of the change in order to keep the neighborhood integrated. Despite their efforts, the block busting tactics of Detroit's realtors eventually won out. In the 1960s, the neighborhood's Jewish residents were moving en masse to the suburbs of Oak Park and Southfield.

The Twelfth Street neighborhood is significant for the many civil rights-related activities that occurred there in the 1950s and 1960s, particularly as the movement became more militant in the face of continued White resistance to the acknowledgment of African American rights. Forced out of the Black Bottom neighborhood by urban renewal, leading Black churches began to relocate to the Twelfth Street neighborhood. The Black Nationalist Reverend Albert Cleage moved the Central Congregation Church at 7625 Linwood Avenue in 1953, renaming it the Shrine of the Black Madonna in 1967. The Nation of Islam founded on Hastings Street in Black Bottom by Elijah Muhammad in the 1930s, moved to a former Jewish Community Center at 11529 Linwood Avenue in 1954. It was here that a young Black man named Malcolm Little became a follower of the Muslim faith and transformed into the revolutionary civil rights leader, Malcolm X. Reverend C. L. Franklin moved his New Bethel Baptist Church from Hastings Street in Black Bottom to the former Oriole Theater at 8430 Linwood Street, in 1963. That year, Franklin and Cleage helped to organize Detroit's Walk to Freedom, the city's largest civil rights protest whose keynote speaker was Martin Luther King Jr. It was also where Franklin's daughter Aretha, a future recording giant, sang in the church choir. The area near Linwood and Dexter was the locus of Detroit's Black Consciousness Movement, with Vaughn's Bookstore at 12123 Dexter Avenue and the offices of the Republic of New Africa and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee located nearby. It was in the Twelfth Street neighborhood that the events that touched off the 1967 Rebellion began, with the raiding of a club at 12th Street and Clairmount Avenue in July 1967. The building also housed the United Community League for Civic Action, one of many Black political organizations active in the city at the time. Many of buildings in the neighborhood were destroyed in the fires that followed the Rebellion or were torn down by the city soon afterward, including the former law office of Carl Levin, who was appointed the first general counsel of Michigan's Civil Rights Commission in 1964.

Integration of Public Housing

In 1952 Michigan passed Public Act 101 that required the integration of all public housing built in the state. The Detroit Housing Commission did little to comply with the new law and the Detroit NAACP filed a lawsuit against the commission when twenty-one African Americans were denied access to available apartments in the city's existing all-White public housing units based on their race. Detroit's Mayor Albert Cobo, however, believed "his administration had the right to say whether a family does or does not fit into an area and will or will not create friction in public housing."⁴⁴¹ The case was heard by Judge Arthur Lederle of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan who ruled in favor of the NAACP and the complainants. Though the Detroit Housing Commission lawyer asked for more time to prepare for the case, Judge Lederle rejected the request saying, "I am trying to make the record so final that the order may be and will be enforced."⁴⁴² The stance of the Detroit Housing Commission was a clear violation of federal civil rights law. The city filed an appeal but on January 22, 1954, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cleveland ordered the Detroit Housing Commission to "end segregation 'forthwith'."⁴⁴³ At the time of the decision, Detroit had eight public housing complexes; two were

⁴⁴¹ "Housing Tiff Mars Whitby Session." *Detroit Free Press*. January 23, 1954:9.

⁴⁴² Griffith, John. "City Told to Drop Housing Race Bar." *Detroit Free Press*. June 23, 1954:4.

⁴⁴³ George, Collins. "Court's Ban on Segregation in City Housing is Upheld." *Detroit Free Press*. October 6, 1955:3.

integrated but six were still racially segregated—three White and three Black.⁴⁴⁴ It took over a year for the integration of the first complex, Charles Terrace at Buffalo and Charles Streets (demolished), to occur.⁴⁴⁵ Finally in April 1955 three African American families, “carefully screened” by the Detroit Housing Commission, were admitted to the complex. The same year, new apartment towers opened in two of Detroit’s existing public housing complexes. The Jeffries Homes housing project (demolished), which opened in 1953, had been planned to be racially integrated from its inception. Built on a 56-acre site adjacent to the Lodge Freeway it was Detroit’s first high-rise public housing and consisted of eight fourteen-story residential towers each containing 112 apartments.⁴⁴⁶ Five more towers were added in 1955. The Brewster Homes public housing project added six, fourteen-story towers housing 1,300 residential units to its periphery. Named for abolitionist Frederick Douglass, (demolished) it was considered a bright, modern alternative to the aging housing stock of Black Bottom. Future Motown stars Stevie Wonder and Diana Ross were early residents. The six towers added at the twenty-six-acre Frederick Douglass complex were integrated based on the 1955 court ruling.⁴⁴⁷ Despite the efforts to integrate Detroit’s public housing, by 1964 only five of the city’s public housing complex had been integrated, two were still solely African American occupancy.

Breaking the Housing Color Line

In the realm of private housing, the resolve to keep African Americans out of Detroit’s White neighborhoods hardened among some residents after Orsel and Minnie McGhee won their court case against racial covenants in 1948. Harassment of African Americans who purchased homes—and White homeowners that sold them property in White neighborhoods—intensified. For example, 1950 Detroit saw the following racial incidents:

- The windows of the flat of a Black woman, Lilia Rhyes at 9022 American were broken three times by vandals throwing bottles.
- An arsonist burned the home of Dr. Wendell Cox, which was under construction in the Seven Mile-Ryan Neighborhood.⁴⁴⁸
- A seven-foot cross was burned in the backyard of the home of Mr. and Mrs. James Waterman at 15781 Princeton two days after they moved in. They were provided 24-hour protection by the Detroit Police.⁴⁴⁹

The cross-burning spurred the NAACP to send an undercover representative to a meeting of the Greater Detroit Neighbors Association No.5 at Sportsman Hall (4120 Fenkell). The meeting revealed that neighborhood associations were organizing a national movement to threaten realtors who helped White homeowners sell a home to an African American. According to the *Detroit Tribune*,

*Unit No. 5 was just one of many groups now organized in the city of Detroit and throughout the rest of the country. . . Unit No. 5 was working on a plan with real estate dealers to have all white homeowners in the area register their properties with real estate dealers who will cooperate.*⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁵ George, Collins. “Housing Project Admits Negroes.” *Detroit Free Press*. April 19, 1955.

⁴⁴⁶ “First Public ‘High-Rise’ Housing Units Awaiting Detroit Occupants.” *Detroit Free Press*. April 4, 1955:18.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁸ “Vandals Beer-Bottle Race Home 3 Times.” *Detroit Tribune*. May 13, 1950.

⁴⁴⁹ “Probe Cross Burning at Princeton St. Home.” *Detroit Tribune*. February 18, 1950:1.

⁴⁵⁰ “Expose Home Owners’ Plot to Push Segregated Housing.” *Detroit Tribune*. February 25, 1950.:4.

In reference to the McGhee case, a speaker at the meeting noted, “We can’t win in the courts now, so we have to use other means.”⁴⁵¹

Racial covenants were still in play in Detroit in March 1955 when a Black autoworker named Easby Wilson purchased a home at 18199 Riopelle Street in the Courville District. The property was a few blocks west of Dequindre Street, which served as a *de facto* color line separating the White Courville neighborhood from Grixdale Park, a rapidly evolving Black neighborhood. To stop the potential of an “invasion” of Black homeowners, the Courville residents had established a home owner’s association in 1950, two years after the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed racial covenants. The Wilson family was subjected to harassment for months—broken windows, spray painted slurs on the side of their home, and anonymous threatening calls. It culminated in a 400-person protest by Whites in front of their home.⁴⁵² The Easby’s finally left the neighborhood when the continued tension took a toll on Mr. Easby’s health.

In September 1955, the National Urban League at its convention held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, adopted “discrimination in the financing of private homes” as its top priority. It would be the “next major fight” the organization would undertake because it affected “90 per cent of present real estate developments.”⁴⁵³ In 1956 alone there were fourteen more incidents in Detroit similar to that of the Easby’s, Black families moving into a White neighborhood and subjected with protests—seven of the families had given up and moved out, while seven chose to remain.⁴⁵⁴ In June 1957 the *Detroit Free Press*, in advance of the Urban League and NAACP national conventions that were both scheduled to be held in the Detroit that fall, undertook a series of articles that looked at different aspects of the life of the city’s African Americans, including housing. Reporter Emily Stewart noted, that while the 1948 U.S. Supreme Court decision on racial covenants had made a substantial difference for African Americans in opening up neighborhoods, inequality in housing continued to be the most significant civil rights issue in Detroit during this period.

Grosse Pointe Brokers Association Point System and Rule 9

The extent to which housing discrimination existed in the Metro Detroit area is exemplified by a screening system employed by the Grosse Pointe Brokers Association (GPBA) to ensure property values remained high in the five Grosse Pointe communities just outside the city. In 1955 the GPBA developed a system of scoring potential home buyers in two categories. The first category, known as a “way of living,” scored people on their ethnicity and the ethnicity of their friends. The second category was “general standing,” which related to appearance, education levels, social circles, etc. A maximum of fifty points could be awarded in each category. The GPBA hired private detectives who made the initial determinations of worthiness and provided final reports to a GPBA committee that then made the final determinations on a person’s standing. Certain groups had to achieve a maximum point level before they would even be considered for home purchase in the Grosse Pointes. For example, out of a hundred points Polish Americans needed 50 total points, southern Europeans 75 points, and Jews 85 points. African Americans were not even included in the point system—they were rejected outright. The screening system was in place and operational for five years until it was publicly revealed during a court case in 1960. Once it became known, Michigan’s Attorney General launched an investigation since it was a civil rights violation.⁴⁵⁵ In response to the GPBA point system Lawrence Gubow, then head of the Michigan Corporate and Securities Commission, introduced an anti-bias rule known as Rule 9, which stated that a state-licensed real estate agent could lose their license if they implemented any restrictions regarding the

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid*:1.

⁴⁵² “Police Disperse 400 to Avert Disorder.” *Detroit Free Press*. April 30, 1955:3.

⁴⁵³ George, Collins. “Slate Fight on Housing Race Bias.” *Detroit Free Press*. September 10, 1955:3.

⁴⁵⁴ Stewart, Emily. “Negroes’ No. 1 Problem in Detroit is Still Housing.” *Detroit Free Press*. June 17, 1953:33.

⁴⁵⁵ Fine, Sidney. “Michigan and Housing Discrimination 1949-1968.” *Michigan Historical Review*. Vol 23, No 2. Fall 1997:88.

showing of property that was for sale. To challenge the rule a homeowner's property rights group was formed and in May 1960 a petition with over 4,000 signatures "all from Northwest Detroit" was delivered to Governor John Swainson asking for the repeal of Rule 9.⁴⁵⁶ The governor made it clear he supported Rule 9 and when Republican legislators introduced a bill to end it in 1962, Swainson vetoed the bill.⁴⁵⁷

The Cherrylawn Incident

Harassment of African Americans trying to purchase homes in White neighborhoods continued. One such incident occurred in 1957 when a seamstress named Ethel Watkins, a thirty-year old, divorced mother, purchased a house at 12356 Cherrylawn Street from a White woman, Eugenia Nowak.⁴⁵⁸ Watkins was the first African American to buy a home in the White working-class neighborhood. After moving in on February 4th, she began to experience small incidents of harassment—a stone thrown through a window, snowballs pelting the house, etc. The intimidation culminated on February 9th when she returned home from work to find a crowd of over 200 White people protesting in the street in front of her home.⁴⁵⁹ The nightly protests continued on for 10 days, at one point drawing a crowd of 1,500. Ms. Watkins received a bomb threat and police protection was required.⁴⁶⁰ Known as the "Cherrylawn Incident" it received national attention when her story appeared in the March 11, 1957 edition of *Life* magazine in an article focusing on discrimination in the north.. Though Ms. Watson's initial reaction was to put the house up for sale, after discussion with African American realtor James Del Rio, she changed her mind and decided to stand her ground. In response to her decision, on February 23rd a group of over 700 neighborhood residents met at nearby Temple Baptist Church to draft a restrictive homeowner's covenant to ensure no other African Americans moved into the neighborhood.⁴⁶¹ Since this went against the 1948 U.S. Supreme Court decision, they crafted language to state that to live in the neighborhood you had to be a member of the association. It was implied that association membership would never be approved for African Americans. Angered, William Price of the Detroit Urban League issued a statement that "there is no such thing as a white neighborhood or a Black neighborhood" and that families have the "democratic right" to "select for themselves the neighborhood in which they desire to live."⁴⁶² With the assistance of Black attorney William Patrick, Ethel Watkins filed an injunction against the restrictive housing covenant which the *Michigan Chronicle* believed "to be the beginning of the most significant legal action taken by Negroes in the fight against housing discrimination."⁴⁶³ Unfortunately, the harassment of Ethel Watkins continued for more than two years. She finally put the house on Cherrylawn up for sale in 1959.⁴⁶⁴

As Detroit's African American community began to legally challenge the unconstitutional and racially motivated discriminatory restrictive neighborhood covenants that existed in the city, the end of the 1950s were marked by a rise of White umbrella organizations that worked to find a means to continue the racial segregation of Detroit's neighborhoods. The Michigan Council of Civic Associations and the Federated Civic Associations of Northwest Detroit were two such individual neighborhood associations that united in order to gain greater political clout.⁴⁶⁵ Another was the Greater Detroit Homeowners Association that

⁴⁵⁶ "Swainson Hears Beef on Rule 9." *Detroit Free Press*. May 27, 1961:3.

⁴⁵⁷ "Bills to Nullify Rule 9 Defeated by Coalition." *Lansing State Journal*. March 22, 1962:18.

⁴⁵⁸ "Detroit Unit Head Assails Racial Strife." *Daily Press* (Newport News, VA). February 22, 1957:20.

⁴⁵⁹ "Mob Forces Negro Family from Home." *Michigan Chronicle*. February 9, 1957.

⁴⁶⁰ "An Alabamian Residing at 12339 Cherrylawn, Detroit." *The Montgomery Advertiser*. February 23, 1957:4.

⁴⁶¹ Matney, William. "Woman to Fight Bias." *Michigan Chronicle*. February 23, 1957.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁴ "Vandalized Detroit Woman Sells Home in White Area." *Jet*. June 4, 1959:8.

⁴⁶⁵ Sugrue, Thomas. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014:227.

gained political clout in the early 1960s when they ran candidates that campaigned against the integration of the city's neighborhoods and won.

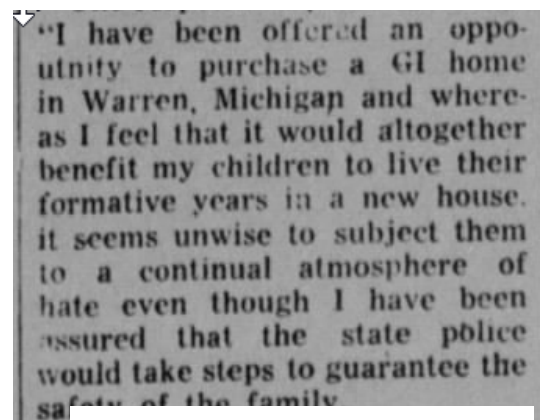
Block Busting

The phenomenon known as “block-busting” was rampant throughout Detroit’s real estate industry during the 1950s. In block busting, if a Black family purchased a house in a White neighborhood, real estate agents would hand out flyers and start whisper campaigns in order to incite fear that property values in the neighborhood would drop substantially. A real estate agent would then buy houses in the neighborhood “outright, at a low panic price, then resell to a Negro buyer at a premium price. He can get a premium price because Negroes in Detroit are forced to pay more than whites for comparable housing.”⁴⁶⁶ In February 1960 Governor G. Mennen Williams, the keynote speaker at a joint meeting of the United Northwestern Realty Association and the Western Wayne County Board of Realtors, shocked attendees when he blamed and lambasted realtors for their “unscrupulous and hypocritical behavior” stating that in terms of civil rights “housing is to the North what voting and education are to the South.”⁴⁶⁷ According to the *Michigan Chronicle*, the Governor’s words were “like a clap of thunder” as the crowd sat stony faced. African American realtor James Del Rio later noted that Governor Mennen was the first public official in Michigan to take a public stand against housing discrimination.

A few neighborhood associations, such as Detroit’s Russell Woods neighborhood, worked to educate residents about the practice of block busting and to encourage White homeowners to remain in the neighborhood and work to integrate it. In 1966, property owners in the integrated Fitzgerald neighborhood formed the Fitzgerald Community Council to stop realtor blockbusting tactics that steered Whites away from purchasing homes there.⁴⁶⁸ These actions were exceptions. Overall, the practice of block busting helped to accelerate “White Flight,” not only in Detroit but in other cities across America, as a dramatic exodus of White populations from center cities to the suburbs occurred. The federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 finally put in place laws that helped to stop the practice of block busting.

A Proposed Open-Occupancy Ordinance

In 1962 President John F. Kennedy by Executive Order banned racial discrimination in housing built with federally assisted financing. However, “It was up to state and local housing authorities and funding agencies to police themselves.”⁴⁶⁹ In an attempt to do the same in private housing in Detroit, on September 12, 1962 Councilman James H. Brickley introduced a Fair Neighborhood Practices Ordinance that “bans real-estate men from inducing sales by referring to changes in neighborhoods, racial, religious, or ethnic composition.”⁴⁷⁰ The ordinance was opposed by the Detroit Real Estate Brokers Association who represented 43 African American realtors, believing it would undermine the role of Michigan Corporation and Securities Commission and the implementation of its administrative Rule 9 adopted in 1960.⁴⁷¹ Amendments to Brickley’s proposed ordinance were introduced by



Respondent to a National Homemakers Guild Survey. 1963. *Detroit Tribune*. June 29, 1963.

⁴⁶⁶ “Everybody gets Hurt by the Block Busters.” *Detroit Free Press*. September 13, 1962:6A.

⁴⁶⁷ “Governor’s Blast Leaves Biased Realtors Stunned.” *Michigan Chronicle*. February 27, 1963.”

⁴⁶⁸ Stanton, Barbara. “Goal: Bust Block Busting.” *Detroit Daily Press*. November 16, 1964.

⁴⁶⁹ Glass, Andrew. “Kennedy order bars housing bias, Nov. 20, 1962.” *Politico*. November 20, 1962.

⁴⁷⁰ Sharley, Jean. “Sees Brickley Act Failure as Result.” *Detroit Free Press*. February 3, 1963:3A.

⁴⁷¹ “Negro Realty Men Hit Brickley Plan.” *Detroit Free Press*. September 20, 1962:10.

Detroit Common Council members Mel Ravitz and William Patrick, the first African American elected to Detroit's city council in the 20th Century. Passed as the Brickley Fair Neighborhood Act on November 20, 1962,⁴⁷² the NAACP, who found it was a toothless compromise, began to press for a full-fledged open occupancy law for Detroit.⁴⁷³ They believed any person should be able to purchase a home in any neighborhood they could afford.

On January 2-3, 1963, the Metropolitan Conference on Open Occupancy held a forum at the Rackham Building in Detroit. Organized by the American Jewish Congress, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Detroit and the Jewish Community Council of Detroit and backed by the DUL, NAACP, TULC, and others, it was to be a "potent assault" on racial discrimination.⁴⁷⁴ At the conference, in his first speech as Governor, George Romney declared that discrimination was Michigan's "most urgent domestic problem. Ten percent of our citizens are not free to choose where they will work, where they will live, where they will vacation, and often, where they will go to school. This is a continuation of injustice—in the sight of God and of man."⁴⁷⁵ He stated with strong conviction that Michigan's upcoming Constitutional Convention would adopt the proposed new state constitution that included a Civil Rights Commission. This would enable him as governor to use the power of the state to enforce civil rights.

Despite the governor's support for ending segregation, controversy was brewing in the city of Detroit regarding housing and the proposed open occupancy law. In July, a group called the Greater Detroit Homeowners Council headed by a White attorney named Thomas L. Poindexter submitted a proposed "free choice" Homeowner's Rights Ordinance to the Detroit Common Council to counter the open occupancy ordinance.⁴⁷⁶ The Homeowner's Rights Ordinance was modeled after the National Association of Real Estate Brokers Bill of Rights⁴⁷⁷ and, according to the *New York Times*, "The ordinance gave the Detroit resident 'the right to choose his own friends and associates' and the freedom to sell or rent property to anyone 'for his own reasons.'"⁴⁷⁸ At a public hearing held in Ford Auditorium, the citizens of Detroit debated the two proposed ordinances—free choice or open occupancy. The debate lasted six hours and at its peak was attended by more than 2,100 people. In August Thomas Poindexter had a confrontation with Michigan Senator Philp Hart during which Poindexter noted that "if Michigan had not had so sweeping a public accommodations law in the past perhaps fewer Negroes would have come to Detroit."⁴⁷⁹ Michigan's Attorney General Frank Kelley then entered the fray saying the issue of open occupancy should be resolved at the state level by the new Civil Rights Commission, which would develop state regulations that would render city ordinance regarding race moot.⁴⁸⁰ However, in a referendum vote on September 1, 1964, Detroit's residents voted in favor of the potentially restrictive free choice ordinance and in October 1964 the Detroit Common Council adopted it in a 7-2 vote.⁴⁸¹ The defeat of the open occupancy ordinance was a heavy blow to Detroit's African American community. The NAACP quickly filed suit with Wayne County Circuit Court asking that the free choice ordinance be declared unconstitutional. Following the fight against racism during Freedom Summer in the South, this was a low point in the Detroit's race relations—but an even lower point was reached in November 1964 when Thomas Poindexter ran for and was elected to the Detroit Common Council. Within months he was

⁴⁷² McPhail, Tom. "Council Approves Measure to Curb Panic Home Sales." *Detroit Free Press*. November 21, 1962:1

⁴⁷³ McPhail, Tom. "City Ban Asked on Housing Bias." *Detroit Free Press*. June 12, 1963:3.

⁴⁷⁴ "Bias Foes to Hear Next Governor." *Detroit Free Press*. September 9, 1962:1.

⁴⁷⁵ Sharley, Jean. "Romney vows Fight on Housing Bias." *Detroit Free Press*. January 4, 1963:3.

⁴⁷⁶ "Detroit Housing: Which Law Should Control It?" *Detroit Free Press*. July 28, 1963:3

⁴⁷⁷ McPhail, Tom. "43,000 Demand City Vote to Block 'Open Housing.'" *Detroit Free Press*. July 13, 1963:3A.

⁴⁷⁸ "NAACP Joins Attack on Detroit Housing Law; Court Action Seeks to Upset Statute as Restrictive of Negroes; Right to Buy." *New York Times*. December 22, 1964.

⁴⁷⁹ "Rights Law needed for city?" *Detroit Free Press*. August 2, 1963:2.

⁴⁸⁰ "Kelly's Way is Best in Open Housing Issue." *Detroit Free Press*. October 5, 1963:6.

⁴⁸¹ Cohen, Hal. "Law to Ban Housing Bias Rejected by Council, 7-2." *Detroit Free Press*. October 9, 1963:3A.

calling for a crackdown on “crime,” which meant Black crime, and would have a disproportionate and negative effect on African Americans. Fortunately, the controversial, free choice Homeowner’s Rights Ordinance was never enacted in Detroit as it was declared unconstitutional by the Wayne County District Court in 1965.⁴⁸²

White Flight

The 1967 Rebellion is often cited as the catalyst for White resident abandoning Detroit, but the city’s White population had been declining steadily, in both real numbers and as a percentage of the population, since 1950. Detroit’s auto companies were building new automobile plants in rural areas outside the city. Livonia, which had seen a General Motors transmission plant completed in 1948, was chosen for the construction of a Ford Motor Company parts depot and technical laboratory, which opened in 1952. More than 1,400 new homes in Livonia were constructed for these workers. The Eero Saarinen designed General Motors Technical Center campus, which opened in Warren, Michigan, in 1956, brought national attention to the concept of the suburban corporate campus and this became the development pattern for corporations in the 1960s. This pattern is clearly seen in the development of the inner ring suburban communities surrounding Detroit. The prospect of a modern home with a yard in a new development was appealing, affordable, and available—to White workers. Most new housing developments were “restricted” and excluded Blacks.

The racial unrest that occurred in Detroit in 1967 did nothing to slow the bleeding of Detroit’s White population to the suburbs. However, other relevant factors had been contributing to White Flight prior to the Rebellion. Most significant was the abolition of the use of restrictive housing covenants by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1948 that eventually, after many legal battles, led to increased desegregation in the city’s neighborhoods. As Whites left the center city and Blacks moved into formerly all-White neighborhoods from which they had previously been banned, the racial population in Detroit shifted. By the end of the 1960s instead of integrated neighborhoods, the sheer numbers of Blacks seeking better housing opportunities and of Whites leaving the city for the suburbs led to even further segregation of Detroit’s neighborhoods and they became predominately Black in the 1970s. According to the 1980 U.S. Census, Detroit’s population was 34% White and 63% Black in 1980. An article in NAACP’s *The Crisis* stated, “Detroit’s system of residential segregation was typically northern—Black at the core and white on the outer ring. There was a unique rigidity to the pattern of racial separation in this giant automobile center that made it more like Johannesburg than New York.”⁴⁸³

As White Flight made it easier for Black families to move into established formerly all-White neighborhoods, Detroit’s Black middle class found it easier to physically distance themselves from the Black working class and the poor. Increasingly, Detroit’s urban Black poor found themselves crowded into low-income high-rise towers or living in the small, aging houses in “ghettoes” originally built for Detroit’s defense workers during World War II. In June 1968, the formation of a new profit-making organization called Accord, Inc. was announced. Its purpose was to “analyze, purchase, and rehabilitate residential properties” for low-income African Americans in Detroit. Headed by Karl D. Gregory, an Economics professor at Wayne State University, Accord, Inc. was based on “self-determination for Blacks” to give them “the ability to make and implement decisions in all matters that affect the lives of Black people.” It was seen as a unique attempt to involve Black people “particularly at the grassroots level, in planning and implementation.”⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸² Sugrue, Thomas. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*: 227.

⁴⁸³ Watson, Denton. “The Detroit School Challenge.” *The Crisis*. June-July 1974:189.

⁴⁸⁴ “Inner City Gets Self-Help Plan” *Detroit American*. June 12, 1968:1.

The passing of the federal Housing Act of 1968 called for the construction of more than 2.6 million housing units in the United States. George Romney, then secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), announced the formation of a new program called “Operation Breakthrough” to mass produce small homes.⁴⁸⁵ In Detroit, the Metropolitan Detroit Citizen Development Authority (MDCDA), was established in partnership with Walter Reuther, the UAW and local businessmen to push for the application of “moving assembly line and mass production technology” for the creation of low-income housing.⁴⁸⁶ With MDCDA support, African American LeBon Walker founded the LeBon Home Corporation to produce prefabricated homes for Detroit’s inner -city dwellers. However, the costs of setting up a factory made it more expensive than hoped and the program stalled.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁵ “Assembly line may prove key to lower-cost housing.” *Daily Tribune* (Wisconsin Rapids, WI) August 30, 1969.

⁴⁸⁶ Flint, Jerry. “Assembly Line Homes.” *Independent* (Long Beach, CA) August 4, 1969:26

⁴⁸⁷ Revenaugh, R. L. “Factory-Built Homes Prove Too Costly.” *San Francisco Examiner*. December 28, 1969:A.

Detroit and Equal Education

Segregation in Michigan schools was outlawed by the Michigan Supreme Court in 1870.⁴⁸⁸ Throughout the early twentieth century Detroit schools were integrated and in 1922 only two of the city's 141 elementary schools had a majority (60%) Black population. However, the number of Black teachers in Detroit's schools overall was small—in 1926 only 40 of the school systems 5,880 teachers were Black and all of those were elementary teachers.⁴⁸⁹ This disparity led to sustained clashes between Black students and their parents and the Detroit school board.

Segregation in Detroit's public schools did not begin until the late 1920s and its expansion over the next fifty years can be tied directly to the discriminatory housing practices that shaped the city after World War I. Because the Detroit public school district utilized a system of neighborhood schools, when the city's Black population increased drastically during the Great Migration, schools adjacent to the small number of residential neighborhoods available to African American families became predominately Black. The Detroit Board of Education denied having any formal policies in place that encouraged discriminatory practices. However, segregation in Detroit's schools evolved over the years due to the city's discriminatory housing practices and, with the school board putting no policies put in place to end it, by the 1960s segregation in Detroit's schools had become entrenched.

The Segregation of Detroit's Schools

In the early 1920s, African American students from the newly establishing Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood northwest of the city attended a one room schoolhouse known as Lockport School. As the neighborhood's Black population grew, overflow students were sent to the integrated Birdhurst School (20445 Woodingham Drive, demolished), which had been constructed by Greenfield Township before it was annexed by the City of Detroit in 1923.⁴⁹⁰ In 1927, the Detroit school district constructed Higginbotham Elementary School (8730 Chippewa Street) to accommodate the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood's K-8 students. This was the first of the city's schools to be dedicated to a majority African American population.

A 1933 report by the Detroit Civic Rights Commission under the direction of activist Snow Grigsby, identified the following problems for African American children in Detroit's schools: few Black teachers, segregated attendance boundaries, and overcrowding. That same year, the Detroit Board of Education announced that Sidney D. Miller School (2322 DuBois Street), an intermediate school built in 1921, would become a high school. According to the oral history of Helen Nuttal Brown, Miller School "was converted all the way through the twelfth grade so that blacks wouldn't transfer to Eastern [High School]. We knew the pattern."⁴⁹¹ Detroit's Black civic leaders, recognizing the announcement as an attempt to officially segregate Detroit's school system, organized a protest. Though unable to stop the segregation, the protestors were effective in increasing the number of African American high school teachers in Detroit's schools. The first hired was Lloyd Doter in 1934, followed by Alvin Loving, Edward Benjamin, and Harold Harrison, all hired by 1936. According to historian Jefferey Mirel, Miller High School became a "symbol of inequality" for Detroit's Black community. Opposition to the creation of a segregated high school led to the formation of a coalition between Detroit's labor organizers headed by a

⁴⁸⁸ "Proposed Sidney D. Miller School Historic District Final Report." Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board. City of Detroit. August 2018.

⁴⁸⁹ Mirel, Jeffrey. *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999.

⁴⁹⁰ Van Dusen, Gerald. *Detroit's Birwood Wall*. Charleston, S.C.: The History Press. 2019.

⁴⁹¹ Lutzman Moon, Elaine. *Untold Tales, Unsung Heroes: An Oral History of Detroit's African American Community, 1918-1967*. Detroit Urban League, Inc. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994:37.

UAW leader named Coleman Young; Black civic organizations such as the NAACP and DUL; and the Detroit Federated Teacher's Union. Over time, this coalition became a strong political force in the city.⁴⁹² They continuously demanded improvements be made to Miller High School in both teaching and facilities. By 1947 Miller School had an outstanding academic reputation with a high percentage of its graduates entering college. It was also respected for its exceptional sports program developed under Athletic Director Leroy Dues. Its music program headed by Mexican American Louis Cabrera, produced nationally recognized jazz musicians such as Kenny Burrell and Yusef Latif. In the 1930s, the advanced music program had a vibraphone, an instrument that had just been invented in the 1920s, which was mastered by Milt Jackson, who became one of the leading jazz artists of the 1950s.⁴⁹³ Cabrera combined music theory with practical experience by inviting musicians from some of the era's best jazz ensembles to visit the school and talk with students and letting his students play with his own band.⁴⁹⁴ Sidney D. Miller School was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2011.

In 1938 Snow Grigsby and the Detroit Civic Commission filed a petition with the Detroit Board of Education requesting "a larger percentage of Negro teachers be hired as out of 11,311 teachers in the school system only 185 were Black."⁴⁹⁵

Protesting School Segregation

In February 1940, Detroit's Northwestern High School (2200 W. Grand Boulevard) was the scene of student racial violence that lasted for two days. The Detroit Police Department report indicated that the fighting began when White students, upset over a perceived influx of new Black students to the school, began harassing them. In reality, the school's ratio of 750 Black students to 4,000 White students, had been the same for four years.⁴⁹⁶ Under the leadership of a Black student named Ward McCreedy, over 500 Black and White students at the school came together to work on a plan to improve race relations at the high school.

Racial tensions in Detroit's schools again resurfaced following the Sojourner Truth Homes public housing controversy in 1942. It was a conflict between Black and White students on Belle Isle that led to the start of the Detroit Race Riot of 1943. In the aftermath of the Riot, an Interracial Education Committee was established. It found that one of the biggest complaints of Black students and parents was the low number of Black teachers, counselors, and/or administrators in Detroit schools, which meant there was a poor understanding of the Black student experience within the classroom. Black students felt they were met with resistance, even antagonism, by teachers and counselors and were discouraged from seeking opportunities to better themselves, like enrolling in college prep courses. The Interracial Education Committee was able to increase the number of Black teachers in Detroit's schools by 130, from 156 to 286, while the Detroit Federation of Teachers developed a Black History curriculum in 1944 that was utilized in Detroit's schools during Black history month.⁴⁹⁷

Throughout the war years (1940-1945), Detroit's Black population continued to rise and by 1946 four of the city's high schools were more than 40 percent Black: Miller, Northern, Northwestern, and

⁴⁹² Mirel, Jeffrey. *The Rise and Fall of an Urban School System*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999.

⁴⁹³ "Jazz from Detroit." Presentation by Mark Stryker. 62nd Michigan in Perspective: Local History Conference. March 19-20, 2021.

⁴⁹⁴ Anthony Macías. "'DETROIT WAS HEAVY': MODERN JAZZ, BEBOP, AND AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPRESSIVE CULTURE." *The Journal of African American History* 95, no. 1 (2010): 44-70. Accessed November 2, 2020. doi:10.5323/jafriamerhist.95.1.0044.

⁴⁹⁵ "Negroes Protest School Job Plan." *Detroit Free Press*. April 13, 1938:3.

⁴⁹⁶ "Seven Injured as Youth Riot at High School." *Detroit Free Press*. February 29, 1904:1.

⁴⁹⁷ Lynch, Katherine. "Northwest Students Work for Race Unity." *Detroit Free Press*. October 5, 1941:16.

Northeastern High Schools. The 1940s also saw the establishment of the first Black Catholic Schools, many in the center city area, as African American parents sought alternatives to public education for their children.

A blatant attempt to further segregate the Detroit public school system was made by the school board in 1947 when it announced it was moving African American seventh and eighth grade students attending the integrated Post Intermediate School (8200 Midland Street) to the already overcrowded, all-Black Higginbotham Middle School in the Eight Mile-Wyoming Neighborhood. To accommodate the Black elementary students that would be displaced at Higginbotham, the school board announced it would reopen Birdhurst School, a nineteenth century school that had been closed for seventeen years and was in poor physical condition. Infuriated Black parents noted that the school board was “making Birdhurst a Negro school in a white neighborhood.”⁴⁹⁸ Berneice Avery, spokesperson for the protesters said, “To us, this looks like an attempt to keep Negroes at Higginbotham and Birdhurst and away from Post.”⁴⁹⁹ At the direction of school superintendent Arthur Dondineau, the school board refused to rescind its decision and Black parents organized a school strike. Partnering with the NAACP and the Carver Progressive Club, a local neighborhood association, they formed a picket line around Higginbotham School and kept their children at home for two weeks; only 5 of the school’s 1,000 students crossed the picket line. When a meeting with Superintendent Dondineau produced no change, the picket line and student walkout were resumed for a third week. This time, protestors’ demands were met, and the school board agreed to not reopen Birdhurst School. The protest was the “first major test of district policy over the issue of school segregation” within the Detroit public school system.⁵⁰⁰

Aftermath of *Brown v. Board of Education* 1954 -1962

In 1954 the U. S. Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that “state law requiring separate but equal schools violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.” The ruling did not *technically* affect Michigan since segregation had already been outlawed in the late nineteenth century, but Black parents and social justice groups in Detroit were well aware that school segregation in the city was a reality. The Supreme Court decision provided the legal foundation and a new opportunity to finally address it. To gain a voice for the city’s Black community within Detroit’s education system, surgeon Remus Robinson ran for a seat on the Detroit Board of Education. Elected in 1955, he was the first African American to serve as a member of the Detroit school board, a position he held until 1970. Robinson was an active and effective representative for African American civil rights in Detroit’s schools throughout his tenure.

Detroit hired a new school superintendent, Samuel Brownell, in 1956. Brownell had been serving as the United States Commissioner of Education under President Eisenhower but resigned that position to participate in the hands-on implementation of the principles behind *Brown v. Board of Education*. According to his *New York Times* obituary, when he arrived in Detroit he was met with “staggering” problems in the school system: inadequate classrooms, a high dropout rate, and racial segregation and antagonism. Brownell had the political will to push for reform and over the next four years a series of investigations into the state of Detroit’s schools provided him with the data he needed to begin implementing it. Though he was met with skepticism from Black parents, during his ten years as Detroit public school superintendent, Brownell was instrumental in increasing the number of Black teachers hired and establishing a promotion system that put more Blacks in school administration positions. He also supervised a \$100 million dollar building program that resulted in the construction of 53 new schools.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁸ Parents Plan to continue school picket. *Detroit Free press*. September 6, 1947.10.

⁴⁹⁹ “Meeting set as strike hits school.” *Detroit Free Press*. September 5, 1947.

⁵⁰⁰ Van Dusen, Gerald. *Detroit’s Birwood Wall*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2019:103.

⁵⁰¹ McFadden, Robert. “Samuel Brownell, 90, Ex-Educator Dies.” *New York Times*. October 14, 1990.

In March 1957, the City of Detroit appointed a Citizens Advisory Committee on School Needs (CAC) headed by George Romney, then president of American Motors. The comprehensive report released by the CAC in 1958 did not specifically address school segregation, but it did recognize that it existed. It also noted complaints by Black parents that the Detroit school board was gerrymandering school district boundary lines to keep schools segregated, a claim that was denied by the school board. The report also acknowledged complaints that Black children “were carried long distances by bus to avoid placing them in schools of predominately white neighborhoods.”⁵⁰²

A long-standing grievance that had been levied by Black parents against the Detroit School Board was that Detroit’s Black schools did not offer complete academic programs. This forced Black students to take vocational classes because college preparatory courses were not available to them.⁵⁰³ According to education historians Angus and Mirel, the approach taken to the education of Black students in Detroit’s public schools in the 1950s was problematic. The city’s high schools offered two main course tracks, the general track, which consisted of classes like childcare, hygiene, etc. to prepare students for the “real world” and a college preparatory track that focused on higher education in science, math, and the liberal arts. The general track was a holdover from the Depression-era when “Life Adjustment” programs had been established in schools with the goal of helping both Black and White children of unskilled laborers, especially rural immigrants from the South, prepare for urban life and work after graduation. The Detroit school systems predominately White counselors directed a disproportionate number of Black students to the general track. In 1946, 51 percent of general track students were Black, compared to 26 percent of White students. In addition, two times as many Black students as White were identified for special education programs.⁵⁰⁴ According to Angus and Mirel, White school administrators claimed that by directing Black students to the general track they were helping them to succeed, not setting them up failure since there were few white-collar jobs available to African Americans at the time. The 1958 CAC report supported the use of the general track for Black students because, “providing identical education does not provide equal education.” Black students and parents strongly opposed the use of the general track believing it was based in racism rather than altruism. By not being able to participate in the college preparatory track, they felt Black students were treated as second class citizens and were being denied the same opportunities as White students. Remus Robinson, the lone Black member of the school board, also pointed out that the college preparatory curriculum was typically based on standardized test scores, which were unfair to African American students who were receiving a different type and level of education. Because there were few Black teachers or counselors in the Detroit school system at the time, Black students—no matter how qualified—were consistently directed to the general track. Thus, increasing the number of Black high school teachers and counselors became a point of contention between Black parents and the school board throughout the decade of the 1960s.

In addition to a lack of administrative support for their futures, Black students complained that some White teachers treated them with disrespect often making Black students sit together at the back of the classroom. In some schools, Black students were even barred from participating in general school activities and events. These actions supported the belief that racism was an unwritten school policy.

A “Changing Situation” In Detroit’s Schools

Under the Civil Rights Act of 1957, President Eisenhower established a Civil Rights Commission headed by John Hannah, former president of Michigan State University. In November 1958, the Commission

⁵⁰² “Race Bias in Schools is Denied.” *Detroit Free Press*. August 15, 1962:3.

⁵⁰³ “Discrimination Reports Studied.” *Detroit Free Press*. November 16, 1958.

⁵⁰⁴ Angus, David and Jeffrey Mirel. “Equality, Curriculum, and the Detroit Academic Identity.” *History of Education Quarterly*. Vol. 33, No.1. Spring 2001.

undertook a national study on discriminatory practices in the states. In Michigan, the civil rights investigative team was headed by Charles Wilson, former head of General Motors. After seven months of work, Eisenhower's Civil Rights Commission released its findings in April 1959. According to the report, discriminatory practices in Michigan were especially prominent in the areas of housing and education. Though Michigan school districts claimed they had no official segregation policies, the study showed a severe lack of African American teachers in Michigan schools. The state had a large pool of available African American teachers, but they were not being hired, especially in all White schools. Fear of public repercussion was the typical reason given for not hiring Black teachers.⁵⁰⁵ The Michigan Civil Rights Commission later identified seven grievances that were behind the dissatisfaction of the Black community with Michigan's schools:

- Exclusion of Black students from extracurricular activities such as athletics, cheerleading and clubs
- Curriculums that neglected Black History or used materials that were insulting to African Americans
- Verbal abuse of Black students by teachers and administrators
- Unequal disciplinary treatment
- Inadequate counseling and guidance of Black students toward the general track rather than college prep
- Use of instruction techniques that did not fulfill the needs of Black students or relate to their life experiences
- Complaints by Black students and parents were addressed at a minimal level simply to stop protests, not to implement change

Almost one year after the release of the CAC report, and just a few months after the release of the Eisenhower Civil Rights Commission report, the Detroit Board of Education announced it was establishing a 38-member Citizen's Advisory Committee on Equal Education to address the claims that Detroit's schools were racially segregated as well as the charge by the Board's only African American member Remus Robinson that the Detroit school system was operating under a double standard. Judge Nathan Kaufman was named to head the advisory committee. According to the *Detroit Free Press*, "Detroit has one of the largest Negro enrollments of any public school district in the U.S."⁵⁰⁶ It was estimated that 70,000 of the city's total student population of 285,000 were African American. However, the Detroit school district had not conducted a race census since the 1920s and could provide no statistics to support its claim that Detroit's schools were not segregated. One of the charges of the Citizen's Advisory Committee was to conduct such a census.

Under Superintendent Brownell numerous committees were formed and many studies were undertaken, but inside Detroit's classrooms it was business as usual. This inaction led educational historians Angus and Birell to declare "School officials continued to believe that "low student achievement could be met with continued low expectations, a simplified curriculum, and easy grading and promotion practices."⁵⁰⁷ However, the volatile events occurring in Southern states while they were attempting to implement the *Brown v the Board of Education* decision created a sense of urgency in the North as well and Detroit's Black parents became even more vocal in their demand for change. Some of the significant protests that occurred in Detroit's public schools included:

⁵⁰⁵ Nelson, Ralph. "School, Court Biases Aired." *Detroit Free Press*. April 27, 1959:1.

⁵⁰⁶ "Plan School Bias Probe." *Detroit Free Press*. December 29, 1959:1.

⁵⁰⁷ Angus, David and Jeffrey Mirel. "Equality, Curriculum, and the Detroit Academic Identity." *History of Education Quarterly*. Vol. 33, No.1. Spring 2001:199.

- In February 1958, the Parents Club at McMichael Junior High School (6060 Linwood Street) protested the poor conditions of the school's facilities, the low standards for schoolwork, inadequate supplies, and the lack of a discipline policy at the predominately Black school. They were concerned with the lack of science and English textbooks and that students would not be adequately prepared to enter the college preparatory track when they reached high school.⁵⁰⁸
- To alleviate overcrowding in the predominately African American Pattengill Elementary School (8411 Northfield Street) in 1959, the Detroit School Board planned to bus 79 students to another Black school, Houghton School (1330 Abbott Street), about five miles away. Though both were considered to be Black schools, the Pattengill School parents objected because they felt the quality of education at Houghton School was poor. As one Black parent put it, "We worked hard to move out of those neighborhoods, and we don't feel it right for them to try to send our kids back."⁵⁰⁹ The Pattengill School's Black parents believed there were better equipped, White schools closer to their homes that could accommodate their children. In a parent organized protest, over eleven hundred Pattengill School students—almost half the school enrollment—were kept at home. Upon further investigation of the school board's actions in this incident, School Superintendent Brownell confirmed that the choice to bus students to another Black school was "not completely in line with the School Board's no-bias policy."⁵¹⁰

In May 1959 Arthur Johnson, President of the Detroit NAACP voiced concern that a new school redistricting plan and a stricter transfer policy being floated by the Detroit school board "would force most Negro students in this [Russell Woods] area to go to Central." The school board, however, claimed the new district boundaries were based solely on geography and were not an attempt to segregate Black students.⁵¹¹ This finally brought recognition that Detroit's segregated housing was the underlying problem causing its segregated school system. The Michigan Civil Rights Advisory Committee later noted,

*If minority groups are compressed into ghettos by "gentleman's agreements," Grosse Pointe 'Point systems,' unwillingness of banks and realtors to break a neighborhood pattern, and the belief of whites that the entrance of a single Negro family will ruin property values in a white neighborhood, gerrymandering isn't necessary. Segregated schools will result as a matter of course.*⁵¹²

In January 1960, a thirty-six member, bi-racial Citizens Advisory Committee on Equal Educational Opportunities was appointed by the Detroit Board of Education to "bring charges of racial bias into the open" and recommend changes within the school system, as necessary.⁵¹³ The Committee was expected to investigate low graduation rates in Black schools, two Detroit schools with no Black students or teachers, Black substitute teachers not be used at certain schools, lower achievement test scores at Black schools, and the on-going college prep versus vocational curriculums offered in Black high schools.⁵¹⁴

By October 1960 it became apparent that the Pattengill Elementary School issue that had erupted in protest in 1959 was only the tip of the iceberg and that Detroit had "a major school problem" on its

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid*:199.

⁵⁰⁹ "Parent Rebels keep 1,176 Children out of school." *Detroit Free Press*. October 30, 1959.

⁵¹⁰ "Pattengill Shift Errors Admitted." *Detroit Free Press*. November 25, 1959:1.

⁵¹¹ "NAACP Hits School Boundaries." *Detroit Free Press*. May 22, 1955:65.

⁵¹² Haswell James. "State Rights Group Urges Antibias Law in Housing." *Detroit Free Press*. September 10, 1961:3A.

⁵¹³ "Appoint Citizens Group to Probe School Bias." *Detroit Tribune*. January 16, 1960.

⁵¹⁴ Beck, Don. "Segregation: A School Issue." *Detroit Free Press*. February 28, 1960:3.

hands.⁵¹⁵ Overcrowding of the schools in the Center district of Detroit (defined as the area north of West Grand Boulevard, west of Woodward Avenue, east of Livernois Avenue, and south of 6 Mile Road) was rampant. The problem had started around 1953, when the urban renewal demolition for the redevelopment projects that created Lafayette Park and the Chrysler Expressway uprooted hundreds of Black families living on the city's lower East side. As displaced Black families sought housing in center city neighborhoods, the white families in those neighborhoods moved out to the suburbs as part of Detroit's infamous "white flight." Though center city Catholic churches were accepting Black students (see page 138), by 1960 the twenty-eight elementary, five junior high, and three public high schools in Detroit's city center were estimated to be 4,000 children over capacity.⁵¹⁶ The City of Detroit and the Detroit Board of Education seemed taken by surprise by the sheer number of children displaced by the urban renewal projects and the resulting massive racial change in population that had occurred in the city center. To address the problem Superintendent Brownell initiated "a firm nonracial policy" that students would be moved from overcrowded schools to underfilled schools based solely on availability—not location or race. White parents, however, were antagonistic to the policy. Over 2,000 White parents held protests at three center city, White elementary schools (Guest, Monnier and Noble) when it was apparent that over 300 African American students from two overcrowded Black schools (Brady and McKerrow), would be transferred to the White schools. The White parents demanded that the Black children be segregated into different classrooms and be denied participation in school-sponsored activities.⁵¹⁷ Though this major protest lasted only a few days, over the next year a series of smaller parent protests occurred in a number of individual schools throughout the city center district.

Anger again erupted over school overcrowding in January 1962. Black parents charged that students were being transferred from a predominately Black school, Sherrill Elementary School (7300 Garden Street), to the predominately White Clippert Elementary School (4725 Martin Street), which was over one and half miles away when there were closer White schools. They felt Black children were being bussed such a distance only to keep them from eventually being fed into MacKenzie High School, which was predominately White.⁵¹⁸ Over 200 parents led by Sherrill Elementary School's PTA president Agnes Miller, met with NAACP representatives at the Berea Lutheran Church. Complaining that the facilities at Clippert School were inferior, they threatened to keep their children at home.⁵¹⁹ Their anger had been festering since 1960 when the Detroit Board of Education had removed Sherrill Elementary School from the Western School District and placed it in the predominately Black Southwest School District. Black parents declared this was a blatant attempt at gerrymandering the school district boundaries when the school was "redistricted from a predominantly white district to one with a larger Negro population."⁵²⁰ They referred to the gerrymandered area as the "Brownell Panhandle" after the new school superintendent. Black parents organized as the Northwest Parent Action Committee and sued the Detroit Board of Education. The Detroit NAACP provided legal support through attorneys Ernest Goodman and George Crockett Jr. and the gerrymandering case went before the Federal Court in Detroit.⁵²¹ The *Detroit Free Press* compared it to a similar case then in the courts regarding school segregation in New Rochelle, New York. The school boards in both cities were charged "with maintaining separate school districts."⁵²² The move of Sherrill's students was temporarily halted.

⁵¹⁵ Beck, Don. "Schools Tackle 'Segregation' Crisis." *Detroit Free Press*. June 27, 1960:3.

⁵¹⁶ "Center District Schools Face Overcrowding Crisis." *Michigan Chronicle*. May 14, 1960.

⁵¹⁷ Beck, Don. "Schools Tackle 'Segregation' Crisis." *Detroit Free Press*. June 27, 1960:3.

⁵¹⁸ "School Board Offers Plan in Sherrill Racial Dispute." *Detroit Free Press*. June 19, 1962:22.

⁵¹⁹ "NAACP Eyes Suit on School." *Detroit Free Press*. January 15, 1962:3.

⁵²⁰ Deatrick, Owen. "Attorneys Describe Bias Fight." *Detroit Free Press*. February 24, 1962:6.

⁵²¹ Weber, Charles. "Detroit, New Rochelle School Cases Linked." *Detroit Free Press*. January 24, 1962:9.

⁵²² "Bias Study Delay irks NAACP." *Detroit Free Press*. February 17, 1962:1.

The lack of a Black history curriculum in the Detroit school system was also a point of contention among Black parents and students. The NAACP took the Detroit School Board to task in 1962 condemning the use of a textbook entitled “Our United States,” which the NAACP felt was “an insult to every Negro in Detroit because it paints the Negro as servile and irresponsible.”⁵²³ School administrators began to reassess the curriculum and provide more inclusive materials.

In February 1962 six Democratic members of the State House of Representatives asked that a legislative committee be created to investigate racial bias in the Detroit public school system, especially bias in district boundaries and the use of inexperienced, probationary teachers.⁵²⁴ The School Board undertook a study, but its findings were delayed for so long that the Detroit Chapter of the NAACP set up its own committee to look into the issue.

In March 1962, a subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives Education and Labor Committee held hearings to investigate segregation in public schools that received federal funding. Among those that testified was Will Maslow, Executive Director and General Counsel of the American Jewish Congress on School Segregation, Northern Style. He noted that Northern schools had two choices following the 1954 *Brown v the Board of Education* decision. They could remain “color blind” and “refuse any responsibility for school segregation arising from residential patterns” or become “color conscious” and recognize that “such segregated schools are ‘educationally undesirable.’”⁵²⁵ He also outlined the common devices that Northern school boards had been using to ensure that schools remained segregated: gerrymandering, site selection for new schools, transfer policies, deliberately over or under utilizing certain schools, and arbitrarily assigning grades to certain schools.⁵²⁶ The Detroit Public School Board had been accused of all these practices throughout the 1950s. Detroit’s School Superintendent Brownell was asked to testify before the Congressional subcommittee. He admitted that there was *de facto* segregation in Detroit’s schools, noting it was a result of housing practices and not school board policies. He noted that out of 278 schools in the city of Detroit in 1962, 202 were integrated, 66 were all White and 10 were all Black. When asked if the level of educational achievement in the all-White and all-Black schools were equal, he surprisingly answered he did not have that information by race. When asked about accusations the Committee had received that there was a “clear cut pattern of racial discrimination in the assignment of teachers and principals in schools throughout the city,” he responded that it had been a problem in the past. Before his tenure as superintendent began, teachers were assigned to schools near their place of their residence, which had resulted in segregated assignments. Brownwell had instituted a new system based on a waiting list. When an opening occurred at a school the first person in line, regardless of race, could accept or decline the position. This had reduced the number of schools with an all-White staff from 96 to 83.

In July 1962 at its 53rd annual convention in Atlanta, the national NAACP announced it was embarking on a militant program targeting civil rights in three areas: housing, employment, and schools.⁵²⁷ It would unite its local chapters to work together as one to make these three issues a priority. It was to be a striking departure from the legal program the NAACP had been pursuing since 1954. Now the NAACP would sponsor marches, protests, and sit-ins as it worked to stop federal and state funding going to programs that supported segregation. The NAACP’s new campaign, known as “Free by ’63,” concentrated on ending *de*

⁵²³ Taylor, Harvey. “Do It Yourself Texts?” *Detroit Free Press*. January 13, 1963:3.

⁵²⁴ “Ask School Bias Probe in Detroit.” *Detroit Free Press*. February 2, 1962:7.

⁵²⁵ *Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Integration in Federally Assisted Education Programs*. U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Economic and Labor. 87th Congress. Government Printing Office. Washington, D.C. 1962:445.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid*:446

⁵²⁷ Briton, John. “Direct Action on Segregation.” *Alabama Tribune*. July 6, 1962:1.

facto segregation in five Northern cities: Detroit, New York, San Francisco, Washington, and Chicago.⁵²⁸ The campaign got a huge boost in May 1963 when a judge in Orange, New Jersey, ruled that school boards were required to end segregation in schools—even if the segregation was not caused by school board policies. In Orange, one solution had been to merge two adjacent school zones into one. This idea was put forward on a larger scale in Detroit in the early 1970s. But in July 1963, as the Detroit NAACP was beginning its efforts to start a major school integration drive, they were immediately met with skepticism by Michigan’s Superintendent of Public Instruction Lynn Bartlett who declared that segregation in Michigan’s schools was an opinion some held but it did not actually exist.⁵²⁹ However just two months later, after further investigation Bartlett admitted, “there is no question *de facto* segregation exists” and called for its end.⁵³⁰

In April 1964, in its continuing campaign for education equality, the Detroit NAACP demanded that minimum achievement standards be established for students and that the school board commit to ending racial segregation in Detroit’s public schools. To achieve that goal, the Detroit NAACP proposed an eight-point program that included adopting an open enrollment plan that would enable students to easily transfer between schools, redrawing school district boundaries, and instituting bussing to ensure school integration.⁵³¹ The U. S. Senate passed the Civil Rights Act in June 1964, which gave “the federal government vast powers unequalled since Reconstruction to help erase discrimination in voting, schools, employment, federal aid programs and access to public facilities and many private businesses open to the public.”⁵³²

Around 1966, yet another investigation into the segregation of Detroit’s school system was undertaken this time by the National Education Association. It found that in the Detroit metro area of Wayne, Macomb, and Oakland County there were 93 independent school districts, with Wayne County alone containing 43 districts.

*The root of the problem lay in the structure and substance of the urban society itself. Since the 1950s, there has been a rapid movement of middle and upper-middle class Whites to the suburbs and a large immigration of low-income Negroes to the center city. Businesses have moved to the suburbs, and the lowered tax base and property value have resulted in a lack of tax funds for the financing of center city education. In consequence, there is an insufficiency of classroom space and qualified teachers, excessively high teacher turnover, communication failure between administration and teaching staff and between school system and poor communities, de facto segregation, and an achievement gap between low-income area schools and middle- and upper-income area schools.*⁵³³

One area the report noted as a major problem was that “urban renewal and school construction programming appear to have taken shape with little reference to each other. Except in words, civic and educational officials have not shown recognition of the value that vastly improved educational facilities could have in transforming downtown Detroit. . . .”⁵³⁴

⁵²⁸ “City named top target by NAACP.” *Detroit Free Press*. July 5, 1962:5.

⁵²⁹ “School Integration Drive Planned.” *Detroit Free Press*. May 21, 1963:3.

⁵³⁰ “Bartlett Calls for Equality in Schools.” *Detroit Free Press*. July 13, 1963:2

⁵³¹ Mackey, Roberta. “Demand for New School Standards.” *Detroit Free Press*. April 22, 1964:3.

⁵³² “Rights Bill Passes.” *Detroit Free Press*. June 20, 1964:1.

⁵³³ *Detroit, Michigan: A Study of Barriers to Equal Education Opportunity in a Large City*. Report of an Investigation. National Commission on Professional Rights and Responsibilities of the National Education Association of the United States. Washington, D.C. March 1967.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*

In April 1966, a group of students at Northern High School (9026 Woodward Avenue) walked out in protest after the school's principal refused to let the student newspaper print an editorial about poor conditions in the school. When over 1,000 students boycotted the school the next day, the nearby St. Joseph's Episcopal Church (8850 Woodward Avenue)⁵³⁵ offered space to set up a "Freedom School."⁵³⁶ The Freedom School concept had originated in the South with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) during the Freedom Summer of 1964. SNCC opened free schools that taught an alternative curriculum that included Black history as well as protest and resistance strategies. A group of Wayne State University professors under the direction of Dr. Karl D. Gregory offered to assist in setting up a Freedom School so that the students' education could continue while their demands were assessed.⁵³⁷ Though the boycott lasted just four days, but it was instrumental in calling attention to the poor conditions in Detroit's Black schools and the need for a new approach in educating African American children.

In 1969 a bussing program was proposed to send children from the predominantly Black Fitzgerald Elementary School (8145 Puritan Avenue) to two White schools, Yost and Lodge Elementary Schools in Redford Township. Fitzgerald School was 600 students over capacity. African American parents organized a protest, taking their children to school bus stops but refusing to allow them to enter the bus. Instead, they walked them back to their classrooms at Fitzgerald School. As one parent declared, "white schools may be better but that's not the point, we want our children to get quality education right here. Fitzgerald is not and will not become a slum school."⁵³⁸

By 1970 Detroit's African American population had grown to 44.5% of the total population. As a result, only one child of every three enrolled in a Detroit public school was White.⁵³⁹ There was concern among residents that the city's majority Black schools would not receive equal investment in education compared to the majority White schools in the suburbs. To stop the separate and unequal conditions in Detroit's schools, the School Board sought to adjust school boundary lines within the city limits, but things became so heated that the State Board of Education stepped in and stopped the effort. The NAACP filed a lawsuit against the State of Michigan on August 18, 1970 that was meant to address segregation within the larger metropolitan area of Southeast Michigan. Since segregated public schools in the city were a result of housing discrimination instituted by government policies, the court was asked to rule on a plan developed between the City of Detroit and its three adjacent counties (Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb) that would enable bussing across county school board lines. Though local courts upheld the plan, the case was appealed. *Milliken vs. Bradley* was heard by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1974 and struck down on a 5 to 4 vote on the grounds that school districts were not obligated to cross their district lines to integrate schools. In the case of the Detroit metro area, bussing efforts would have included fifty-three different school districts and the financial and administrative burden was considered by the court to be excessive.⁵⁴⁰

Detroit's African American Schools

Lincoln School. Originally an integrated middle school, it became a predominately African American school at the beginning of the Great Migration as the Paradise Valley population became African American in the 1920s. Most of the original school was demolished in the 1960s following the loss of

⁵³⁵ Serrin, William. "'Freedom School' Opens with 1,000." *Detroit Free Press*. April 22, 1966:1.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁷ "Pupils End School Boycott; Principal's Status is Unclear." *Detroit Free Press*. April 27, 1966:1

⁵³⁸ Holmes, Susan. "Kids Won't Board Bussing Program." *Detroit Free Press*. January 28, 1969:5.

⁵³⁹ Graham, Lester. "A moment in history that sealed the Detroit school's fate." *Michigan Radio*. September 13, 2016.

⁵⁴⁰ *Milliken v. Bradley*. CASEbriefs. <https://www.casebriefs.com/blog/law/constitutional-law/constitutional-law-keyed-to-chemerinsky/equal-protection/milliken-v-bradley/>.

population due to urban renewal, however a 1916 annex building remains encircled by newer school buildings that were constructed in 1963.⁵⁴¹

Fanny E. Wingert Elementary School (1851 W. Grand Boulevard). Built in 1907 and designed by the architectural firm Malcolmsen & Higginbotham in the Mission Revival style, Wingert School became predominately Black in the 1920s as African American families began moving into the neighborhood known as the Old West Side.

Higginbotham School (8730 Chippewa Street). Built in 1926 it served African American middle school children from the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood.

Sidney D. Miller School (2322 Dubois). In 1933 the Sidney D. Miller School was reorganized from a middle school to a high school. Originally built in 1918, the Jacobean Revival style building was designed by the architectural firm of Malcolmsen, Higginbotham, and Palmer. Due to the city's *de facto* segregation policies, as well as the city's discriminatory housing practices, in 1935 it became Detroit's dedicated African American high school and remained so for twenty-two years when it was reconverted to a middle school in 1957.⁵⁴²

Friends School (110 St Aubin Street). Friends School was conceived in the early 1960s when the daughter of African American Judge Wade McCree Jr. was denied enrollment at a suburban private school. McCree, along with a group of other Detroiters, developed the idea for a private K-12 school that would be open to all races, religious backgrounds and socio-economic statuses. The group approached the Quaker organization the Detroit Society of Friends to sponsor the school. The first five grades opened in a storefront at the Lafayette Park shopping center in December 1965, then moved to portable classrooms on the site purchased on urban renewal land just east of Lafayette Park, an integrated neighborhood. The permanent building for the school opened 1971. The school was attended by the children of some of Detroit's politically and socially important families, including Wayne State University president George E. Gullen, Kenneth Cockerel Sr., and Senator Carl Levin. Although the school was integrated from its beginnings, it was not immune to racial issues. In 1973, even though forty-two percent of the schools four hundred and twenty students were Black, a group of African American students charged the school board with racism, demanding more Black teachers (at the time, there were only four) and a Black studies program. The following year, tensions eased as more Black teachers had been hired. The school is currently slated for demolition and redevelopment.

Vocational Schools

African American were often barred from admittance to White dominated academic colleges and universities. Black public schools lacked the college preparatory courses offered in White schools. It was common for White teachers to discourage Black students from even aspiring to obtain a higher education degree. Vocational or technical training that offered special skills that required training was one way to ensure that African Americans could at least obtain better paying jobs. Booker T. Washington had been a strong proponent of that philosophy. A small number of vocational schools organized by African Americans were established in Detroit including:

Household Arts Guild. From 1932-1935 the Guild advertised itself as the only licensed Negro Training School in Michigan. The school's motto was "Better Service, Better Homes" and they offered training in laundry, housekeeping, how to be a butler, etc. The Guild had a number of

⁵⁴¹ Batterman, Joel. "Forgotten School's Story Holds Key to DPS Woes." *Detroit Democrat*. May 21, 2016.

⁵⁴² Boscarino, Timothy. *Sidney D. Miller Junior High and High School National Register of Historic Places Nomination*. 2009.

locations: 544 Frederick Street (demolished) in 1932 and in 1936 at 5829 Madison Street (demolished).

Lewis College of Business. In 1939 Dr. Violet Lewis, who had founded a Black business college in Indianapolis in 1929,⁵⁴³ founded the Lewis College of Business on West Warren Avenue in Detroit to train African American women in secretarial and business administrative skills. The college moved into a converted residence at 5450 John R Street on the corner of East Ferry Avenue in 1941. Nearby White residents promptly sued to shut the college down, ostensibly on the grounds that it was a business use in a residential neighborhood. Dr. Lewis changed the college to non-profit status, and the case was dismissed. In 1976, the school moved its campus to 17370 Meyers Road. Lewis College of Business was Michigan's first Historically Black College or University (HBCU). Though it closed in 2013, both the original and later campuses are still extant.

The Detroit Institute of Commerce. Opened in 1941 in the Breitmeyer-Tobin Building (1308 Broadway) by Louisa Grooms, an administrator that was instrumental in the organization of the Great Lakes Mutual Life Insurance Company, an early Black business. When her organizing assistance was requested by other start-up Black businesses, she saw an opportunity to open a school to train African Americans in business education. The school became a non-profit in 1970 and moved to 4829 Woodward Avenue (demolished) in 1971. According to Grooms, "when we started, even the public schools discouraged Blacks from taking business courses on the theory there was no point to it."⁵⁴⁴

Slade-Gragg Academy of Practical Arts. Founded in 1947 by activist Rosa Slade Gragg the school had two locations at 455 East Ferry Street and 3735 Woodward Avenue. In an homage to Booker T. Washington and his ideologies, the school was marketed as "The Northern Tuskegee Institute rising on the city's east side." Open to all, it offered classes in tailoring, sign painting, upholstering and shoe repair.⁵⁴⁵ The school closed in 1952.

In addition, Ford Motor Company's **Henry Ford Trade School** was open to African American males. Founded in 1916 at the Highland Park Ford Plant, it moved to the River Rouge Plant in 1927, where it operated until 1952.⁵⁴⁶ Its purpose was to assist underprivileged teen boys to obtain the education and technical skills (drafting, metallurgy and machining) that would make them employable by the Ford Motor Company and related automotive industries. The school began admitting African American boys in 1926, and graduates were able to obtain some skilled technical positions at the company.

⁵⁴³ Thomas, Richard. *Life for Us is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992:222.

⁵⁴⁴ Angelo, Frank. "School's Founder Still Aiming High." *Detroit Free Press*. June 7, 1971:7.

⁵⁴⁵ Advertisement. Slade-Gragg Academy of Practical Arts. *Detroit Free Press*. January 28, 1951:15.

⁵⁴⁶ Gaft, Samuel. "The History of the Henry Ford Trade School 1916-1952." Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1998. 9840488.

Equity in Health Care

1900-1940

Since the introduction of slavery to the United States, Black Americans have been denied access to adequate medical care. According to the *Journal of the National Medical Association*, there have only been two periods where major medical reform was undertaken to benefit America's Black communities: the decade following the Civil War and in the 1960s during the Civil Rights Movement, though many of the federal reform promises made at that time never fully materialized.⁵⁴⁷

Freedmen's Hospital, the nation's first Black hospital, was constructed in Washington D.C. in 1862 with the financial support of the Freedmen's Bureau on land provided by Howard University.⁵⁴⁸ When death rates for African Americans began to soar after the Civil War, Congress passed legislation enabling the establishment of Black medical schools. The first was at Howard University in Washington D.C. in 1868. Others soon followed in Tennessee, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Louisiana until there were ten by 1910. It was during this period that a movement to establish more Black hospitals began. This period also saw the establishment of Black national medical societies since Black physicians were barred from membership in the American Medical Association (AMA), a condition that continued until 1968. The National Medical Association, a professional association of Black physicians and health professionals, was founded in 1895.⁵⁴⁹ Until 1970, the practice of "separate and unequal" was the accepted operating norm within the medical profession.

Segregation in Detroit's health care system posed a serious risk for the city's African American population. White hospitals allocated only a small number of beds for Black patient use. In 1910 Detroit's 6,000 African American citizens were typically cared for by Jewish or German doctors. The seven Black physicians then practicing in the city had almost no hospital privileges and were restricted in the types of medical services they could perform for their patients. Often, they were forced to suffer the indignity of not being able to continue to treat their own patients once they had been admitted to a White hospital. The sharp rise in Detroit's African American population that occurred during the Great Migration 1917 caused further stress in the health of the city's Black community. During the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918, cases of influenza rose dramatically among the city's Black population due to the overcrowded housing conditions in which African Americans were forced to live. To address the disparity, the lack of available medical care, and the racism that African Americans encountered in Detroit's health care system, Detroit's Black physicians worked to organize Black hospitals and treatment facilities.

Black Physicians in Detroit 1910

Dr. James W. Ames
Dr. Albert Johnson
Dr. George Bundy
Dr. H. Peyton Johnson
Dr. Walter Beck
Dr. Albert Turner
Dr. Charles Green

Henderson A.B. and L.F. Swan. Negro Physicians in Michigan. *Journal of National Medicine Association* Vol 6 (5). September 1969.

The first African American hospital in Detroit was Mercy General Hospital (688 Winder Street, demolished) founded in 1917 by Drs. David and Daisy Norcross.⁵⁵⁰ The Norcrosses came to Detroit from the south as part of the Great Migration. They founded the hospital after David Norcross was told he

⁵⁴⁷ Byrd, William and L.A. Clayton. "An American Health Dilemma: A History of Blacks in the Health System." *Journal of the National Medical Association*. February 1991. 84(2):189-200.

⁵⁴⁸ "Black History Month: A Medical Perspective." Duke University Medical Center Library and Archives. Durham, North Carolina. February-Marc. 2006.

⁵⁴⁹ "History." National Medical Association. <https://www.nmanet.org/page/History>

⁵⁵⁰ Boyd, Herb. "The medical Northcross family of Detroit." *New York Amsterdam News*. June 22, 2017.

could only see his patient, who had been admitted to the all-White Harper Hospital, during visiting hours.⁵⁵¹ That same year, thirty Detroit African American physicians headed by Dr. James W. Ames came together to establish the Allied Medical Society (Detroit Medical Society) and fund a hospital for African Americans. They purchased a Romanesque Revival residence built in 1892 and converted it for use as Dunbar Hospital for African Americans (580 Frederick Street, extant). The hospital had 27 beds and an operating room. Michigan's first nurses training program for African American women was established there by Francis Elliott in 1919. In 1928 the hospital expanded and moved to a location near Brush and Illinois Streets where it was renamed Parkside Hospital (demolished).⁵⁵² Good Samaritan Hospital (503 E. Palmer, demolished), which opened in February 1929, was organized by Dr. Ossian Sweet and a nurse Bertha McKenzie.⁵⁵³

According to the *American Journal of Public Health*, in the 1920s hospital care for African Americans was typically delivered in one of three ways,

Throughout the North and South there were 3 architectural patterns of hospitals where Blacks found admission. One was the "all-Black" hospital built solely for the care of minority persons living in a community. The "mixed-race" hospital segregated Black patients onto a separate floor such as a basement or attic ward, a wing, or a building connected to the main hospital often via an exposed corridor. The fully integrated hospital, while rare even in the North, admitted Blacks to any available hospital bed, including beds in semiprivate and private rooms. If Blacks were admitted to a ward located on one end of a long corridor and Whites to a ward on the other end, one could not assume that these patient areas were mirror images. Instead, new beds, air conditioning, and fresh paint added comfort to the quarters where Whites recuperated. In White sections, nurse staffing also was better and visiting hours for family members longer. While White physicians could care for patients in any bed—ward or private, Black or White—African American physicians, if granted admitting privileges, were restricted to the Black wards.⁵⁵⁴

Tuberculosis was a significant health crisis for all Americans at the turn of the twentieth century. An active public campaign was enacted to stop the spread of the disease and though progress was made among the middle classes, it continued to plague Detroit's lower income residents. In 1930 Dr. H.R.M. Landis, head of an anti-tuberculosis society in Philadelphia, spoke to the Wayne County Medical Society on the "Negro Tuberculosis Problems" noting that, "Low wages and high rents had resulted in poor housing conditions, poor food, and a higher degree of exposure to disease."⁵⁵⁵ Between 1928 and 1933, the average annual tuberculosis death rate for African Americans in Detroit was 350; for whites it was 55.⁵⁵⁶ Landis pointed out that "white populations of northern cities must recognize the fact that the condition of the Negro population's health is of vital importance to their own and take immediate steps to better it if the fight against disease is to succeed."⁵⁵⁷ In response, the Tuberculosis and Health Society of Wayne County undertook a program in 1930 to test African American school children in six schools within the city of Detroit in an area bounded by Brady, Congress, Rush and St. Aubin Streets. By September that year over 6,000 children had been tested for tuberculosis.⁵⁵⁸ To contend with the tuberculosis epidemic, the Black medical community founded numerous Black hospitals throughout the

⁵⁵¹ Henderson A.B. and L.F. Swan. "Negro Physicians in Michigan." *Journal of National Medicine Association* Vol 6 (5). September 1969.

⁵⁵² Vollmert, Leslie. "Dunbar Hospital National Register Nomination." National Park Service, Washington DC. 1979.

⁵⁵³ "Open Good Samaritan Hospital on Sunday." *Detroit Free Press*. February 3, 1929:10.

⁵⁵⁴ Reynolds, P. Preston. "Professional Hospital DISCRIMINATION and the US Court of Appeals Fourth Circuit Court 1956-1967." *American Journal of Public Health*. American Public Health Association. May 2004 94(5):710.

⁵⁵⁵ "Negro Disease Menace Seen." *Detroit Free Press*. April 2, 1930:13.

⁵⁵⁶ Roberts Jr., Samuel Kelton. *Infectious Fear: Politics, Disease and the Health Effects of Segregation*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009:36.

⁵⁵⁷ "Negro Disease Menace Seen". *Detroit Free Press*. April 2, 1930:13

⁵⁵⁸ "Children Receive Tubercular Test." *Detroit Free Press*. September 28, 1930.

city of Detroit in the 1930s. These included the Fairview Sanatorium (441 East Ferry Street) established in 1931; Bethesda Hospital (544 East Garfield Street, 1931); St. Aubin General Hospital (St. Aubin and Maple Streets, 1931); Trinity Hospital (681 E. Vernor Highway, 1934);⁵⁵⁹ and Edyth K. Thomas Memorial Hospital (566 East Garfield Street, 1935), which became the largest Black hospital in the country in 1937.⁵⁶⁰

Kirwood General Hospital (301 East Kirby Street, demolished) was founded by Dr. Guy Saulsberry in 1943. He was assisted in his efforts by a Los Angeles attorney Martha Louis, the wife of boxer Joe Louis, who having done legal work for the Teamsters Union was able to secure a \$2 million dollar loan from them for the Kirwood Hospital construction. Saulsberry purchased a large residence and later purchased two adjacent homes in order to connect them to create a 50-bed hospital and a convalescent center. It became a non-profit hospital in 1958.⁵⁶¹ A 1969 article in the *Journal of the National Medical Association* noted that beyond the excellent medical care provided, “the greatest value of the Kirkwood General Hospital is perhaps its image in the Black community. As the largest employer of Blacks by Blacks in Detroit, it has been a source of immense pride.”⁵⁶²

The first interracial medical practice in Detroit was opened in 1947 by physicians Marjorie Peebles-Meyers and Eugene Schafarman. In 1943 Peebles-Meyers was the first African American woman to graduate from the Detroit Medical College at Wayne State University. She was also the first Black intern and resident at Detroit Receiving Hospital. When she was named chief resident at Detroit Receiving, she became the first Black woman to be named a chief resident at any of Detroit’s hospitals.⁵⁶³ In 1950 she was granted full attending status at Hutzel Hospital, the first African American physician to do so.⁵⁶⁴ During her career she was barred from admitting patients to private White hospitals, but her White male colleagues admitted them in their names and then turned their treatment over to her.⁵⁶⁵ In 1977 she became the chief physician at Ford World Headquarters in Dearborn, a position she held until 1986.

After World War II there was a general push to increase hospital facilities to meet the needs of the expanding populations in American communities. The federal Hospital Survey and Construction Act of 1946 was enacted making available \$75 million each year for five years for the construction of new hospitals. States were given a lump sum and communities accessed the money through a grant program. To encourage the construction of interracial hospitals, the NAACP reported that the life expectancy of African Americans “showed a constant 10-year lag” behind Whites, Blacks lived an average of only 54 years compared to 64 years for White Americans. Infant mortality rates and cases of infectious diseases were also much higher within the Black community. While there was one physician for every 750 white persons, for Blacks the ratio was much more disproportionate—one Black physician for every 3,377 Black persons.⁵⁶⁶ Unfortunately, Southern congressmen were able to lobby against the inclusion of “non-

⁵⁵⁹ “Jim Crow Hospitals.” *A Detroit Architect’s Journal*. October 9, 2012.

<http://detroitarchitectjournal.blogspot.com/2012/10/jim-crow-hospitals.html>

<http://detroitarchitectjournal.blogspot.com/2012/10/jim-crow-hospitals.html>

⁵⁶⁰ Finkelman, Paul. *Encyclopedia of African American History, 1896 to Present*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009:57.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶² “Kirwood General Hospital. Detroit, Michigan.” *The Journal of the National Medical Association* Vol 61(5). September 1969.

⁵⁶³ “Blacks who Overcame the Odds.” *Ebony*. December 1986:70-73.

⁵⁶⁴ “Pioneering Members. Marjorie Peebles-Meyers.” Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. <http://akapioneers.aka1908.com/>

⁵⁶⁵ *Notable Alums: Marjorie Peebles-Meyers*. School of Medicine. Development and Alumni Affairs. Wayne State University. Detroit, Michigan.

⁵⁶⁶ Cobb, W. Montague. “Medical Care and the Plight of the Negro.” *The Crisis*. July 1947.

segregated” as a qualification for the funds and instead the law only required “equitable distribution of hospital beds for each population group”—a continuation of Jim Crow policies.⁵⁶⁷

As early as 1944 a Black physician working in Detroit, Dr. Remus Robinson, began floating plans for the establishment of an interracial hospital that would jointly serve the City of Detroit and Wayne County, but it never came to fruition.⁵⁶⁸ The Mayor’s Interracial Committee, a city agency established after the Race Riot of 1943, undertook a survey of the city’s hospitals in 1952. They appointed a subcommittee known as the Medical and Hospital Committee to study racial bias in Detroit’s medical facilities. After four years of investigation, the 35-member committee led by Reverend Richard Emerich released its findings, which concluded that Detroit’s hospitals did discriminate against African Americans. Its findings published in 1956, noted “the problem of servicing the needs of the community’s Negro population, which had doubled in one decade, was acute.”⁵⁶⁹ Though all of the city’s 47 hospitals said they had open occupancy policies, the data did not support their claims. For example, of the 17 Detroit hospitals that had American Medical Association (AMA) intern training programs, only 4 had ever admitted one or more African Americans as interns. Of the 20 hospitals with an AMA approved residency program, only 7 had ever admitted one or more African Americans to a residency. Of the nine hospitals with nurse training schools, one openly admittedly they excluded African Americans and the other 8 had no Black nursing students. Less than half of Detroit’s 47 hospitals had an African American physician on staff. The committee found that the pattern of discrimination was “deliberate, wasteful, and unnecessary” and that the system created two levels of care for Black and White residents.⁵⁷⁰ The committee recommended full integration of Detroit’s hospitals and training programs. Detroit’s Mayor Cobo disagreed with the committee’s findings stating that in the operation of the city’s hospitals, “everyone knows there is no segregation.”⁵⁷¹ The national NAACP launched a legal initiative to challenge institutionalized racism in America’s hospitals in 1956 and by 1960 had 35 anti-discrimination cases pending in the courts.

A plan to create a medical center campus on land cleared for urban renewal was presented to the Detroit city council in 1956. Four white hospitals (Harper, Women’s, Children’s and Grace Hospitals) would come together to inhabit the new facilities that would be constructed on the campus. The Detroit Urban League (DUL) stepped forward to promote the needs of the residents in the Black community that would be displaced by the construction. The DUL’s goals included assurance that the new hospitals would not engage in discriminatory hiring practices at any level and that residency opportunities would be made available to Black medical students. To investigate how the medical center plan would impact the Black community, the DUL established the Medical-Hospital Committee chaired by Dr. Thomas Batchelor. He was the first African American physician to be hired by a non-Black hospital, Sinai-Grace, and a faculty member at Wayne State University. The committee surveyed practices at the four hospitals and found discrimination and segregation present in all of them to varying degrees. They recommended integrating the advisory boards of the four hospitals to ensure input from Detroit’s Black citizens was incorporated into the hospitals’ operations. In response, city council adopted the “Ordinance on Hospital Discrimination,” which provided for integrated medical services, but it did not address the hospitals hiring practices, a chief concern of the DUL.

⁵⁶⁷ Reynolds, P. Preston. “Professional Hospital *DISCRIMINATION* and the US Court of Appeals Fourth Circuit Court 1956-1967.” *American Journal of Public Health*. American Public Health Association. May 2004 94(5):710.

⁵⁶⁸ “City and County Agencies Plan Inter-Racial Hospital.” *Detroit Free Press*. December 24, 1944:2.

⁵⁶⁹ *Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the United States Congress*, Volume 109, Part 6. Washington, D.C.: U.S Government Printing Office, May 1, 1963:7522.

⁵⁷⁰ Stewart, Evelyn Seely. “Report Says City Hospitals Discriminate.” *Detroit Free Press*. June 19, 1956.

⁵⁷¹ “Race Group Member Rips Chief.” *Detroit Free Press*. June 19, 1956:1.

Another Advisory Committee on Hospitals was formed in 1957 to create a list of the problems in Negro health care that needed to be addressed. One outcome of their work was that the State of Michigan adopted rules in 1958 stating that any community receiving federal hospital construction funds would be required to provide “a declaration and guarantee of nondiscrimination.” A second outcome was the formation of an advisory committee called the Detroit Area Hospital Council. After reviewing the practices of the 47 Detroit hospitals, the Council issued six reports related to discrimination that identified the following issues: a lack of African Americans in nurse and medical training programs in the city’s major university medical programs; no hospital internships available to Black medical students; discrimination in physician and medical staff appointments in Detroit’s hospitals—Black doctors had to rely on a “good ol’ boy” system of knowing or working with a White doctor that would vouch for them; and disparity in bed utilization and assignments for African American patients. Through the leadership of the Detroit Medical Society, the Detroit Area Hospital Council used the construction of the four new hospitals in the proposed Medical Center urban renewal project to ensure compliance with federal non-discrimination policies. According to a report in the *Congressional Record*, “Detroit’s redevelopment project applications for the new medical center area provided a situation for accelerating our community goal of equal opportunity in medicine.”⁵⁷² The attempts to desegregate the city’s hospitals and medical profession met with repeated studies, slow implementation, and continued resistance. It was not until the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its guidelines associated with federal Title VI Medicare requirements, that segregation in America’s hospitals began to end in the mid-1960s.⁵⁷³

The lack of access to medical education opportunities was a long-standing issue for African Americans, who were barred from medical schools due to inequalities in educational opportunities that often resulted in lower standardized test scores. In the late 1950s the Detroit Medical Society began a drive to increase the number of Black students accepted into Wayne State University medical programs. In 1960, Detroit physician Dr. Charles Wright established the national African Medical Education Fund to assist Black students to obtain a medical education.

The University of Michigan documented the oral histories of many of the people associated with Detroit’s Black hospitals through their 1997 Kellogg African American Health Care Project. In 2000, the project was expanded to document Black hospitals in southeast Michigan. According to a project coordinator Norman Foster, the project revealed that “Detroit was among the cities with the highest number of Black hospitals. In addition, most were Black proprietary hospitals, meaning they were owned and operated by African Americans. . . There was a tremendous investment that individuals made in trying to deliver the best health care to their own people who were being denied access to care by others.”⁵⁷⁴ The Kellogg African American Health Care Project Records: 1918-2008 can be found at the Bentley Historical Library at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

⁵⁷²“Race Group Member Rips Chief.” *Detroit Free Press*. June 19, 1956:1.

⁵⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁴ Gliem, Valerie. “History of Detroit’s Black Hospitals Detailed in Project.” *The University Record*. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. November 6, 2000.

Politics, the Law, and African American Representation

By the end of the nineteenth century, recently freed African American slaves had made begun to make some headway in participating in American political and social life. As they became successful, they faced repercussions from Whites especially in the South, who instituted programs to stop their progress. Laws limiting voting rights for Black citizens were introduced and Jim Crow segregation took hold. In the 1920s there was a resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan and its associated racist activity, especially in the South and Midwest. Years of continued exclusion from educational opportunities, limited the ability of African Americans to participate in the voting process and to achieve political representation.

While Blacks in Detroit did not encounter voting restrictions per se, prejudice and *de facto* segregation policies did keep them from nearly all elected offices in the city. An African American named Ben Pelham was able to reach a substantial level of political power in Wayne County government in the early 20th Century. He served as the accountant for the Wayne County Account Board of Auditors and as Committee Clerk for the County Board of Supervisors from 1908 to 1942.

In 1918 shortly after the first major waves of Black migrants arrived in Detroit from the South, the city abolished its existing Ward system and moved to a general election system. This reduced the number of city council representatives from 42 to 9, making it almost impossible for an African American to be elected to as a city council member in Detroit. This revision to Detroit's city charter had "far reaching effects" for the city's Black population⁵⁷⁵ as it came at a time when the Ku Klux Klan began its rise in political prominence in the city the 1920s. A Klan member named Charles Bowles ran unsuccessfully as a candidate for mayor in 1925 but was subsequently appointed to the Recorder's Court and finally won election of as mayor in 1930. Without local representation, the needs of Detroit's African American community were rarely addressed.

At the state level, the first African American to serve in the Michigan state legislature was Detroiter William W. Ferguson, a lawyer and real estate broker who was elected to the Michigan House of Representatives in 1892.⁵⁷⁶ Ferguson had been the first Black student to enter the Detroit Public School system. He was also part of a major civil rights court case in 1890 when he sued a Detroit restaurant that would not serve him if he did not sit in their "colored section." The case went to the Michigan Supreme Court, which ruled that it was illegal to separate public accommodations by race.⁵⁷⁷ It took forty years for the next African American to be elected to the Michigan state legislature. Again it was a Detroiter, Republican Charles A. Roxborough, who became Michigan's first Black state senator in 1930. A graduate of the Detroit College of Law, Roxborough practiced out of an office in the Breitmeyer-Tobin Building at 1308 Broadway Avenue, one of the first downtown buildings to rent office space to Black tenants.⁵⁷⁸ He later served on the Detroit city planning commission.

A Change of Party

Since the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, African Americans had aligned themselves with the Republican Party, which was known as the party of Abraham Lincoln. That began to change in Detroit in the 1920s. According to Judge Wade McCree Jr., the year 1928 marked the beginning of the defection of

⁵⁷⁵ Toddle, Aaron. "The Negro in Michigan Politics." *The Crisis*. 1934.

⁵⁷⁶ "William Webb Ferguson." *Legislator Details*. Michigan Legislative Biography. Library of Michigan. <https://mdoe.state.mi.us/legislators/Legislator/LegislatorDetail/1204>.

⁵⁷⁷ "William Ferguson." Historic Elmwood Cemetery & Foundation. <https://www.elmwoodhistoriccemetery.org/biographies/william-ferguson/>

⁵⁷⁸ "Breitmeyer-Tobin Building." *Historic Detroit*. City of Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board. <http://historicdetroit.org/building/breitmeyer-tobin-building/>

Michigan's African Americans from the Republican Party. Believing African Americans would gain more opportunity under Democratic leadership, Black attorneys Harold E. Bledsoe and Joseph A. Craigen and businessmen Joseph C. Coles and Charles C. Diggs Sr. broke with tradition⁵⁷⁹ to form the Michigan Democratic League, Inc. (632 Livingstone Street). Seeing this as an opportunity to cultivate the Black vote in Detroit, the Michigan Democratic Party appointed a special Black recruitment committee headed by Harold Bledsoe. His affiliation with the Democrats had begun in 1926 when he launched "a one-man crusade to give Blacks a legitimate role in Michigan party politics" with the purpose of ensuring that state and county political patronage appointments promised to Blacks were honored.⁵⁸⁰ He was aided in his efforts by the data collected by Black activist Snow Grigsby showing that African Americans were underrepresented in municipal employment in Detroit. For example, of Detroit's 3,734 police officers only 35 were Black and of the 7,333 teachers in the Detroit public school system just 50 were Black.⁵⁸¹ National Gamma Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity established its *a Voteless People is a Hopeless People* in 1932 and internationally known Alpha men, such as Paul Robeson and Martin Luther King Jr. frequently came to Detroit and the Alpha House to lend their support and assistance.⁵⁸² The Michigan Democratic League worked to obtain the appointment of African Americans to local and state government positions. Among the first were Charles Diggs Sr. as the state's first Black deputy parole commissioner; Loretta Manning as Wayne County's first Black drain commissioner; eleven Black Wayne County deputy sheriffs; and two Black staff members in the governor's office, Edward Swan as a messenger and Helen Bryant as a stenographer. The organization was renamed the Michigan Federated Democratic Club (MFDC) around 1932 and moved its headquarters to 43 E. Garfield Street (demolished). It was the first all-Black Democratic organization in the nation and eventually had 31 branches and 8,000 members.⁵⁸³ Through his work with the MFDC, Diggs is credited with "shaping and nurturing Negro politicians" throughout Michigan.⁵⁸⁴ In 1932, even though two-thirds of Detroit's Black population still identified as Republican,⁵⁸⁵ the MFDC threw its support behind the New Deal and worked to elect Franklin Roosevelt as president. The MFDC was at the forefront of the New Deal Coalition, a national, united voting bloc of progressives, union workers, and African Americans that worked together to elect Roosevelt.

The work of the MFDC began to pay off as African American Democrats began to be elected to office in state government. In 1934, Detroit Attorney Harold Bledsoe was elected Michigan's first Black assistant attorney general. In 1936, Charles Diggs Sr. of Detroit became the second African American to be elected as a state senator in Michigan. After being refused service at the Olds Hotel in Lansing, Michigan, he immediately introduced legislation making it a misdemeanor to discriminate by race in public accommodations in Michigan. The bill passed as the Equal Accommodations Act of 1937 (Act 117). In 1941 Horace A. White of Detroit, a leader in the labor movement, was elected to the Michigan House of Representatives. For the first time in Michigan's history two African Americans, Charles Diggs Sr. and Horace White, were serving in the state legislature, one in each branch—both from Detroit. I

⁵⁷⁹ McCree Jr., Wade H. "The Negro Renaissance in Michigan Politics." *The Negro Bulletin*. Vol.26, No.1 Special Issue by Detroit Writers (October 1962):7-9 Published by: [Association for the Study of African American Life and History](https://www.jstor.org/stable/44176102) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44176102>

⁵⁸⁰ "Black Professionals Honor Michigan's Harold Bledsoe." *Jet*. July 27, 1972:48.

⁵⁸¹ Toddle, Aaron. "The Negro in Michigan Politics." *The Crisis*, 1934.

⁵⁸² Alpha House. National Register of Historic Places Draft Nomination 2020. Michigan State Historic Preservation Office, Lansing, Michigan.

⁵⁸³ Mitchell, Clifford. "Progressiveness of Democratic Leaders in Michigan Lauded by Ex-Prisoner." *Pittsburgh Courier*. September 2, 1933:5.

⁵⁸⁴ Higgins, Chester. "What's Behind the Suicide of Charles Diggs, Sr. Kin's Troubles, Illness, Business." *Jet*. May 11, 1967.

⁵⁸⁵ Sitkoff, Harvard. *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue: The Depression Decade*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1978.

Another key African American supporter aligning with the Democratic Party and the New Deal Coalition was Louis Martin, a journalist with the *Chicago Defender* who was sent to Detroit in 1937 to start a new Black newspaper, the *Michigan Chronicle*. He served as its editor until 1947 and under his direction the *Michigan Chronicle* became an active political voice for African American civil rights. In 1944 Martin wrote an insightful article in *The Crisis*, dissecting the 1943 Detroit mayoral election, which had been a test for the power of Blacks in the Democratic Party. According to Martin, the New Deal Coalition had tried to stop the re-election of Mayor Edward Jeffries, but it fell apart under what Martin labeled “race-baiting” by Jeffries who blamed the violence associated with the occupation of the Sojourner Truth Homes public housing complex in 1942 on Blacks. Jeffries appealed to white homeowners during his mayoral campaign by saying his administration “has said ‘no’ to a demand that Negroes be allowed to move into every white housing project in this city.”⁵⁸⁶ Martin concluded, “The Negro-labor vote can easily tip the scales in a local northern or national election, but without progressive leadership unscrupulous politicians easily keep the two groups divided by the bogey of racism.”⁵⁸⁷

The presidential election of 1948 showed just how important the Black vote had become. Without the support of Blacks in northern cities, it was unlikely that Harry S. Truman could win the election. Democratic Party members urged the adoption of a strong civil rights plank in the party platform to secure African American support. In preparation for the election, Truman had appointed a presidential commission called the Civil Rights Committee in 1946 to assess the status of civil rights in America. The committee issued a report entitled *To Secure These Rights* and called for bold action to stop discrimination and segregation in America. This was the foundation for the proposed Civil Rights Act of 1948 which included ending the use of the poll tax and anti-lynching legislation.⁵⁸⁸ Though it was not adopted due to Southern politician opposition, Truman upheld many of his promises made to Black voters. For example, impressed with the quality of service of African Americans in the Armed Forces during World War II, Truman issued an executive order ending segregation in the military. He also asked that the Fair Employment Practices Committee that had been put in place during World War II be made permanent. Though that request was also blocked by Southern Democrats and a federal fair employment act would not be passed for twenty years, doors did begin to slowly open.

The year 1948 was a turning point in Black participation in Michigan politics. With the election of Governor G. Mennen “Soapy” Williams in 1948, the state became a stronghold for Democrats.⁵⁸⁹ His election was a boon for civil rights in Michigan as he was a liberal reformer that made civil rights a top priority for his administration. Williams announced at his inaugural address that his administration would work for the adoption of a state-level fair employment act. The bill was sponsored by Michigan’s sole Black state senator Charles Diggs Jr., who had won a special election in 1950 to replace his father Charles Diggs Sr who had been accused of fraud. It took six years, but the Michigan State Fair Employment Practices Act was finally adopted in 1955 and included the establishment of a State Fair Employment Practices Commission to monitor civil rights violations in the public and private job sector.⁵⁹⁰ In 1953 Charles Diggs Jr. ran for the United States House of Representatives becoming Michigan’s first Black U.S. Congressman, a position he held for over thirty years.⁵⁹¹

⁵⁸⁶ Martin, Louis. “Detroit—Still Dynamite.” *The Crisis*. January 1944:8.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁸ Wormser, Richard. “Harry S. Truman Supports Civil Rights (1947-1948).” Jim Crow Stories. *Thirteenth*. https://www.thirteenth.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_events_truman.html

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid*:8.

⁵⁹⁰ Fine, Stanley. *Expanding the Frontiers of Civil Rights: Michigan 1948-1966*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017:xxv.

⁵⁹¹ “Congressman Charles Diggs Jr.: A leader in the Struggle for Justice.” Remark by John Conyers Jr. Congressional Record. 105th Congress, 2nd Session. Vol 44, No.147 Daily Edition. October 15, 1998. Congress.gov.

An organized Black voting bloc helped to elect Albert Cobo as mayor of Detroit in 1949.⁵⁹² During his campaign, Cobo had been non-committal but open to discussions on civil rights. However, after his election he left promises unfulfilled and did little to support the concerns of Black residents. Through massive urban renewal projects he destroyed Detroit's Black neighborhoods, demolishing them to eliminate "blight," yet his administration did nothing to provide alternative housing for the thousands of Black residents that urban renewal displaced. Cobo vocally opposed the adoption of an open housing ordinance during his re-election campaign. Cobo's deception and lack of loyalty to the group of voters that were so vital to his election as mayor increased racial tensions in the city. It became clear to Detroit's Black community that more representation was needed in local government if the needs of African Americans were to be heard.

A Decade of Firsts 1950–1960

At the federal level, the gains African Americans had made due to the fair employment laws established during World War II were continued. Blacks began to be appointed to leadership posts within the Eisenhower Administration when it took office in 1952. Of the forty-five African Americans appointed to federal government positions during this period, four were from Detroit:

- **Charles Mahoney**, then president of the Great Lakes Mutual Insurance Company, was made a delegate to the United Nations.
- **John Roxborough II** was named a consultant to the State Department.
- **Willis Ward** was appointed as an assistant attorney to the United States.
- **W.W. Morrison** was named small business field advisor.⁵⁹³

President Eisenhower continued the federal employment practices policies established during the war, signing Executive Order 10479 in 1953 that created the President's Committee on Government Contracts, which "worked quietly but diligently to eliminate the evil of segregation and discrimination in hiring."⁵⁹⁴ This meant companies with federal contracts, like Bell Telephone or the Big Three auto companies, were to begin hiring African Americans at all levels.

Michigan's Governor G. Mennen Williams made several significant appointments of African Americans to important positions in Wayne County. These appointments "electrified" Detroit's Black community who, for the first time, saw the possibilities afforded to them. According to the *Detroit Tribune*, "because of the dignity of their positions which were seen as being most instrumental in giving respect for the Negro race"⁵⁹⁵ these appointments inspired other African Americans who then began to seek public office in Detroit. Governor Williams's appointments "broke up the all-white law enforcement system and gave blacks an understanding of the real political power as an important voting bloc in the Democratic party."⁵⁹⁶ Early African American appointments by Governor Williams included:

- **Charles Wesley Jones** became the first African American judge "in Michigan's judicial history" when he was appointed to the position of Wayne County Recorder's Judge in July 1950.⁵⁹⁷

⁵⁹² "Race workers help place Al Cobo into city hall." *Detroit Tribune*. November 13, 1948.

⁵⁹³ "Ferguson Cites Civil Rights Action." *Detroit Free Press*. October 3, 1954:D-14.

⁵⁹⁴ "GOP Keeps '52 Promises." *Detroit Tribune*. August 6, 1955:1.

⁵⁹⁵ "Group Seeks to Retain; Place Race Candidates." *Detroit Tribune*. November 4, 1950:3.

⁵⁹⁶ Lutzman Moon, Elaine. *Untold Tales, Unsung Heroes: An Oral History of Detroit's African Americans*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994:179.

⁵⁹⁷ "Judge Jones Admits Ownership of Bar." *Detroit Free Press*. November 2, 1950.

- **Wade H. McCree Jr.** was the first Black appointed to the State of Michigan Workmen's Compensation Committee in 1955. At the time McCree was living at a home at 1060 Ethel Street (extant) in Detroit. It was the beginning of a long and prestigious career for McCree. A graduate of Harvard Law School, he moved to Detroit in 1948 and took a job with the Black law firm of Bledsoe and Taylor. McCree broke the color barrier many times throughout his career. In 1955 he was appointed as the first African American judge on the Circuit Court for Wayne County. He was appointed by President John F. Kennedy as the first African American judge for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan in 1961 and President Lyndon Johnson appointed him the first African American judge to the U.S. Court of Appeals in 1966. McCree was appointed as U.S. Solicitor General in 1977 and argued the Nixon tapes case associated with the Watergate cover-up before the U.S. Supreme Court.⁵⁹⁸
- **Elvin L. Davenport** was appointed to the Wayne County Common Pleas Court in 1956 and then to the city of Detroit Recorder's Court in 1957, a position he held for 20 years. A graduate of Temple University and Howard University Law School, Davenport moved to Detroit in 1931 and became an attorney for the Black law firm Stowers, Bledsoe, & Dent. He served as counsel to the NAACP during the Sojourner Truth Homes public housing controversy in 1943.⁵⁹⁹

In the late 1950s, a coalition of African Americans, the UAW, and liberal Democrats helped to get African Americans elected or appointed to key political positions in Detroit and Wayne County for the first time. These included:

- **Dr. H. Jerome Harrison** the first African American to hold a high administrative post in the Detroit public school system when he was named assistant principal of the city's all Black Stanley D. Miller High School in 1952.
- **Dr. Remus Robinson** was the first African American elected to the Detroit Board of Education. A surgeon who had long worked to improve health care for Blacks and to integrate Detroit's hospitals, Robinson first ran for the Board in 1953, but was defeated. He was elected in 1955 and held the position until his death in 1970.
- **George H. Edwards** was elected to the Michigan House of Representatives in 1955 and served until 1978. Edwards had moved to Detroit in 1936 and worked at the Kelsey-Hayes Wheel Company where he served as a UAW-CIO Representative. He was named director of the Detroit Housing Commission in 1940 and was instrumental in the construction of the Herman Gardens public housing project. Upon his death in 1979, *Jet* magazine stated he was "the most effective representative of Detroit Blacks for most of his career."⁶⁰⁰ Edwards received his law degree in 1944 and ran unsuccessfully for mayor in 1949. He became a Wayne County Circuit Court Judge in 1954, and a member of the Michigan Supreme Court from 1956-1962. He was named as Detroit's Police Commissioner in 1962 but left after one year accepting an appointment to the Sixth Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals. Edwards was married to Esther Gordy, senior vice president of Motown Records and Barry Gordy's sister.⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹⁸ "Solicitor General: Wade Hampton McCree Jr." The United States Department of Justice. October 31, 2004. <https://www.justice.gov/osg/bio/wade-h-mccree-jr>

⁵⁹⁹ *Abstract. Elvin Davenport Papers Finding Aid.* Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. <https://reuther.wayne.edu/files/UP002362.pdf>.

⁶⁰⁰ "Former Mich. Rep. Edwards Dies of Cancer." *Jet*. November 27, 1970.

⁶⁰¹ *George C. Edwards, Jr. Papers, Parts I-III. Finding Aid.* Walther P. Reuther Library Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

- **Samuel Milton** elected as Wayne County's first African American Coroner in 1959 was, "the first Black to win a major county office since 1892."⁶⁰² Milton founded the Sidney A. Sumbly Hospital for Blacks in River Rouge in 1938.⁶⁰³
- **William Patrick Jr.** was the first African American elected to the Detroit Common Council. At the annual convention of the NAACP held in Detroit in 1957, Walter Reuther touted the UAW's support in electing African American candidates like Charles Diggs Jr., Wade McCree, Remus Robinson, and Elvin Davenport. He also pledged that the UAW's support would continue until a Black member was elected to Detroit's Common Council. The first Black candidate to run in the 1953 city-wide at-large election had been Charles Diggs Jr., then a second term state senator, who was defeated.⁶⁰⁴ However, "his unprecedented showing is widely credited for generating the momentum which four years later contributed substantially to the successful election of Atty. William T. Patrick Jr." in 1957.⁶⁰⁵ The 37-year old Patrick, a graduate of Detroit's Northwestern High School and the University of Michigan Law School, became the first Black member elected to the Detroit Common Council where he served for two terms.⁶⁰⁶ He later was elected to the Wayne County Board of Supervisors where he served as chair. Patrick was an attorney for Michigan Bell Telephone and in 1964 he was asked by R. Sargent Shiver to serve as an advisor to President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty campaign.⁶⁰⁷

In 1960 the Detroit NAACP partnered with the Detroit Council for Political Education and the Trade Union Leadership Council (TULC) on a massive voter registration drive. Activities included radio appeals by the pastors of Black Churches and distribution of over 150,000 pamphlets. Forrest Green of the NAACP headed the coordinating committee, which was headquartered at the TULC (8670 Grand River). The drive was undertaken to elect a liberal, Democratic mayor Jerome Cavanagh who pledged support civil rights.⁶⁰⁸

Radicalization of Black Politics 1964-1974

The election of John F. Kennedy as president was met with skepticism by many African Americans. They had openly opposed Kennedy's choice of Lyndon Johnson as vice president. Johnson was perceived as part of the strong, all-White Southern coalition known as Dixiecrats. Kennedy's support of a federal civil rights bill introduced in June 1963 was tepid. It was not until national outrage over the violent events of Freedom Summer in 1964 that the direction of his administration on civil rights dramatically changed at the urging of Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Following John F. Kennedy's assassination in November 1963, Lyndon Johnson made the passage of the Civil Rights Act his mission in order to honor Kennedy's legacy. After the bill was approved by Congress in July 1964, the focus of the national Civil Rights Movement shifted from concentrating on the voting rights of Southern Blacks to include the needs of African Americans living in the industrial cities in the urban north as well.

In the north, housing, economic opportunity, and police brutality were the overriding civil rights issues. As the mood of the Civil Rights Movement changed from optimism to frustration, especially among

⁶⁰² Morse, Susan. "Samuel Milton, black physician and pioneer." *Detroit Free Press*. March 21, 1980:6.

⁶⁰³ Thomson, W. Arthur and Robert Greenridge. "The Negro in Medicine in Detroit." *The Journal of the National Medical Association*. Vol. 55, No 6. November 1963:477.

⁶⁰⁴ George, Collins. "Negro in Council." *Detroit Free Press*. June 27, 1957:1.

⁶⁰⁵ "Congressman Charles Diggs Jr.: A leader in the Struggle for Justice." Remarks by John Conyers Jr. Congressional Record. 105th Congress, 2nd Session. Vol 44, No.147 Daily Edition. October 15, 1998. Congress.gov.

⁶⁰⁶ George, Collins. "Patrick Election Boost for Negroes." *Detroit Free Press*. November 6, 1957.

⁶⁰⁷ University Honors: William Patrick Jr. University of Detroit Mercy Library.

https://libraries.udmercy.edu/archives/special-collections/index.php?record_id=235&collectionCode=honors_hon

⁶⁰⁸ "NAACP, Labor: To Push Voter Registration." *Detroit Tribune*. October 1, 1960:1.

younger generation African Americans, there was renewed interest in Black separatism and, if it came to it, the use of violence to secure civil rights for Blacks. The term “Black Power” first became synonymous with this developing ideology when Stokely Carmichael, chair of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) invoked it during the March Against Fear in Mississippi in 1966.⁶⁰⁹ In large part because of its long standing involvement with unionization, “A much more radical current of Black working-class activism developed in the late 1960s in Detroit.”⁶¹⁰ As a result, the city of Detroit became “ground zero for young radicals who would play key roles in Black Power organizations by the end of the decade.”⁶¹¹ According to historian Jeffrey Hening:

*Detroit’s transition to Black political control owes as much to the influence of industrial unionism as the massive demographic changes that occurred after World War II. In the 1940s and 1950s, Black Detroiters forged an alliance with the leaders of the United Autoworkers (UAW). The UAW emerged as the one influential force in the Motor City willing to support Black leaders’ positions on such issues as housing and public education. The labor movement had a profound influence on Black Detroiters. It became an important political socializer and training ground for Black civic and political leaders in the Motor City. . . A number of scholars attributed the ‘radical activity’ of Detroit’s Black leaders that began in the late 1950s to their growing involvement in the labor movement. . . By the 1950s Black labor organizers began to operate much more independently of the UAW. . . In Detroit, Black participation in the labor movement allowed the Black working class more of a role in local politics than in Atlanta or Washington, D.C.*⁶¹²

Detroit was also the home of the Nation of Islam (NOI), founded by Wallace D. Fard in 1930. Under the leadership of Elijah Muhammed, who took control in 1934, the NOI supported economic self-sufficiency for Blacks and the physical creation of a Black state in the southern United States. Economic power meant political control, a concept that was tremendously appealing to young Blacks who had seen their elders peacefully demanding their rights and get physically beaten for it. Of note was the rise in the NOI of a young man from Lansing, Michigan named Malcolm Little. While serving time in prison, he was introduced to NOI ideology by family members. Upon his release in 1952, Malcolm came to the Detroit area and stayed with his brother Wilfred at his home in Inkster where he saw the values of the NOI in practice within his own family. Malcolm Little became an active member of the NOI and quickly rose with the church administration. Over the next decade, he transformed into the charismatic Black Muslim leader, Malcolm X. In 1963 Malcolm X gave a groundbreaking speech at Detroit’s King Solomon Baptist Church (6100 14th Street). Known as the “Message to the Grass Roots” it was a call to revolutionary action that changed the course of the national Civil Rights Movement.

According the author Betty DeRamus, “For several years, Detroit had been considered the center of black nationalism, overshadowing even New York, but the ferment of its fiery activists had drawn little public note. Now it is inescapable.”⁶¹³ Some of Detroit’s most influential, revolutionary Black activists included:

⁶⁰⁹ “Black Power.” The Martin Luther King Jr. Research and Education Institute. Stanford University. Palo Alto, California. <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/Black-power>

⁶¹⁰ Georgakas, Dan and Marvin Surkin. *Detroit, I Do Mind Dying*. Boston: South End Press, 1998.

⁶¹¹ Joseph, Peniel, Ed. *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil-Rights Black Power Era*. New York: Routledge, 2013:263.

⁶¹² Hening, Jeffrey R., et al. *The Color of School Reform: Race, Politics and the Challenger of Urban Education*. Cambridge, MA: Princeton University Press. 2001:37.

⁶¹³ DeRamus, Betty. “Black Power, Black Rebellion.” Reprinted in Stone, Joel. *Detroit 1967*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017.

Albert Cleage Jr. Detroit's most outspoken and influential civil rights leader, Cleage was the pastor of the Central Congregational Church (76255 Linwood), which he later renamed the Shrine of the Black Madonna. A graduate of Wayne State University in sociology, Cleage earned his theology degree from Oberlin College and served as Interim Co-Pastor at the All Peoples Church in San Francisco before entering the University of California film school in 1945. He returned to Detroit in 1951 to serve as the pastor of St. Mark's United Presbyterian Church but found its congregation did not share his passion for political activism. He left to start his own community-based congregation in 1954. Active in the Civil Rights Movement, Cleage soon found it too dream-oriented and out of touch with the everyday needs of African Americans in the industrial cities of the north. He realized that political organization was the means to initiate change. In 1961 he and his brother Henry Cleage founded *The Illustrated News* (5305 Lovett Street). In operation until 1965, the bi-monthly newspaper gave voice to their radical ideas. Cleage's views were not mainstream. For example, in the early 1960s, he turned his attention to the desegregation of the Detroit school system disagreeing with the NAACP on its approach. Cleage worked against the NAACP to convince the Black community to vote against a proposed school millage because the money would not go to improve Black schools. According to Cleage, the year 1963 "was the beginning of the 'Black Revolt' in places such as Detroit."⁶¹⁴ Following the Detroit Walk to Freedom in 1963, tired of the non-violent rhetoric of Martin Luther King Jr., Cleage aligned with Black Nationalists declaring they "didn't merely talk Black, they began to act Black."⁶¹⁵ He believed Black community's main problem was its powerlessness and worked to end that. He participated in the formation of Freedom Now, an all-Black political party under which he ran for governor; formed the Group for Advanced Leadership (GOAL), which staged boycotts and strikes for equal employment; and supported the revolutionary ideas of Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael. One of his most significant contributions was the unveiling of the painting of a Black Jesus and Mary at his church, which he renamed the Shrine of the Black Madonna in 1967. It enabled the Black community to reimagine accepted world views based on the experiences of traditional White society. In 1973 Cleage was instrumental in the formation of Black Slate, Inc., a political lobbying organization that helped to elect Detroit's first Black mayor, Coleman Young, and other Black political candidates to office.⁶¹⁶ In his obituary, the *New York Times* quoted *Life Magazine*, which in 1968 had called Cleage "one of 'the men who are speaking for Black America'."⁶¹⁷ Cleage was the author of numerous books including *The Black Messiah* (1968) and *Black Christian Nationalism* (1972).

General Gordon Baker Jr. As a student at Wayne State University in 1962, Marxist activist General Gordon Baker Jr. co-founded UHURU, a radical student group that held Black studies sessions and organized protests against police brutality. Radicalism came to Detroit's factory floors when Baker formed the first Revolutionary Union Movement (RUM) at the Dodge Main Plant (1900 Hamtramck Drive). Known as DRUM, the organization pressured both UAW leadership and the automotive companies for concessions. Soon other RUMs were established, including FRUM at the Ford Rouge Plant and ELRUM at Chrysler's Eldon Avenue Plant. In 1969, Baker united the various RUMs under an umbrella organization known as the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW).⁶¹⁸ As well as advocating for the concerns of Black

⁶¹⁴ Theoharis Jeanne and Kozomoi Woodward. *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South 1940-1980*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁶ Clark, Jawanza Eric. *Albert Cleage Jr. and the Black Madonna and Child*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016:106.

⁶¹⁷ "Albert Cleage is Dead at 88; Led Black Nationalist Church." *New York Times*. February 27, 2000.

⁶¹⁸ "General Gordon Baker Jr.: A Detroit Revolutionary to the Core." Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. Website <https://reuther.wayne.edu/node/12263>.

workers, the League sought to develop political consciousness and build ties to the Black community outside of the automotive plants. In April 1969, the LRBW sponsored a Black Economic Development Conference (BEDC). The major product of the conference was the Black Manifesto, which called for white religious institutions to pay up to \$500 million in reparations, to be used by the BEDC to promote economic self-sufficiency among Blacks. The BEDC planned to establish cooperative farms in the South, training centers for industrial skills, and to fund welfare organizations.

James and Grace Lee Boggs. James Boggs came to Detroit in 1937 and went to work for the Chrysler Corporation, where he remained for the next twenty-eight years. A Marxist, Boggs worked to strengthen the inclusion of African Americans in positions of power within the UAW and encouraged Walter Reuther to support the integration efforts occurring in Southern states in 1961. According to Boggs, “the revolutionary initiative the labor movement claimed during its heyday of the 1930s had now passed to the Black struggle,” which had “usurped the American working class as the agents of revolution.” In 1963 James Boggs wrote a nationally influential book entitled *The American Revolution: Pages from a Negro Workers Notebook*.

Chinese American Grace Lee Boggs graduated from Barnard College and Bryn Mawr College and was a philosopher and socialist activist collaborating with C. L. R James before moving to Detroit in 1953. There she married James Boggs and took up the causes of civil rights and racial justice. Grace Lee Boggs was an advocate for Black Power and was a founding member of the Grassroots Leadership Conference and the Freedom Now party and helped to organize the Black Summit in Detroit in 1963.⁶¹⁹ The Boggs’s home at 3601 Field Street (extant) was a meeting place for Black Power activists in the 1950s and 1960s.

Kenneth Cockrel Sr. A graduate of Wayne State University Law School in 1967, Cockrel was a member of a law office that provided legal counsel to those involved in the Civil Right Movement. A champion of Black economic power, he was one of the founders of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. In 1971 he helped to establish the Labor Defense Coalition that was successful in ending the Detroit police’s STRESS program that had caused trauma to young Black men in Detroit in the late 1960s. He served as defense lawyer for the men charged with shooting two police officers when a meeting of the Republic of New Africa held at New Bethel Baptist Church was attacked by the police in 1969.

John Conyers Jr. After obtaining a law degree from Wayne State University, Conyers served three years as a legal assistant in the office of U.S. Representative John Dingell. In 1964, at the age of thirty-five, he was elected to the House of Representatives, in a stunning victory—winning by just 45 votes to become the sixth African American from Michigan to serve in the U.S. Congress. Ironically, he won over the favored candidate another African American, Richard Austin, who had been backed by the UAW.⁶²⁰ Conyers was the son of a UAW organizer and had grown up immersed in Detroit politics. His campaign manager, attorney Robert Millender Sr., later assisted a number of Detroit’s Black politicians achieve election victories including George Crockett Jr, Erma Henderson, and Coleman Young.⁶²¹ In 1967 Conyers hired Rosa Parks to work in his Detroit office as a legislative assistant. In 1969 Conyers was a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus. He was a champion of civil rights throughout his career and a

⁶¹⁹ McFadden, Robert. “Grace Lee Boggs, Human Rights Advocate for 7 Decades, Dies at 100.” *The New York Times*. October 5, 2015.

⁶²⁰ Booker, Simeon. “He will not be a ‘figurehead’” *Jet*. November 19, 1964:18-23.

⁶²¹ “Robert S. Millender Sr.” Historic Elmwood Cemetery Foundation.
<https://www.elmwoodhistoriccemetery.org/biographies/robert-millender-sr/>

strong supporter of voting rights legislation. He introduced legislation to establish the Martin Luther King Jr. national holiday in 1969 and continued to introduce until it finally passed twenty years later in 1989.⁶²² Each year since 1989, Conyers has introduced a slavery reparations bill in Congress.

Glanton Dowell. Born in Detroit, Dowdell was serving a sentence in Jackson State Prison when he discovered his artistic talent and began art studies with the Society of Arts and Crafts in Detroit.⁶²³ In 1967 bookstore owner Edward Vaughn recommended him to Reverend Albert Cleage Jr. to paint a Black Madonna and child at what became the Shrine of the Black Madonna. Dowell was a political activist and was one of founders of Citywide Citizens Council, the Federation of Self-Determination and the Detroit chapter of the Black Panther Party in 1967.⁶²⁴

Mike Hamlin. A native of Mississippi, Hamlin came to Detroit in 1947. Following a stint in the Army, Hamlin took a job with the *Detroit News* in 1960 where he met Ken Cockrell and John Watson. Hamlin became a militant labor activist whose views were influenced by the writings of Karl Marx. According to Hamlin, what drove the Black Power Movement was anger, “The urban black, you know—the working-class black reached a point where he could not take it anymore.”⁶²⁵ A founding member of the Dodge Revolutionary Movement and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, Hamlin’s labor activities included organizing Wayne State University secretaries. In 1967, he was co-founder of the radical newspaper, *Inner City Voice*. With the assistance of the Black Economic Development Conference, Hamlin purchased a building on Fenkell Street and established Black Star Publishing.⁶²⁶ It produced a number of newsletters and pamphlets, as well as one book, before it closed.

Milton and Richard Henry. Brothers Milton and Richard Henry were raised on the teachings of Black Nationalist Marcus Garvey. Milton Henry had been a member of the Tuskegee Airmen and graduated from Yale Law School before moving to Pontiac, Michigan, opening a law practice, and serving on the city council. Richard Henry worked for the *Michigan Chronicle* and helped to establish a number of radical Black newspapers in Detroit including the *Metro Newsweekly* in 1955.⁶²⁷ In 1961 they, along with Reverend Albert Cleage, established the Group for Advance Leadership (GOAL), for which Richard Henry served as president. GOAL focused on four issues: equalizing Detroit’s schools and bringing African American history to the curriculum, criminal justice, equality in employment opportunities, and economic self-help through the establishment of a Black-owned bank.⁶²⁸ Milton Henry was an organizer of the Grassroots Leadership Conference in Detroit in 1963 and traveled with Malcolm X to Egypt in April 1964.⁶²⁹ In 1965 the Henrys founded the Afro-American Broadcasting Company at 7625 Linwood (demolished)⁶³⁰

⁶²² Gray, Kathleen. U.S. Rep John Conyers leaves behind legacy of civil rights, racial justice. *Detroit Free Press* December 5, 2017.

⁶²³ “Art as Resistance II: Glanton Dowdell.” *States of Incarceration: Michigan*. <http://projects.leadr.msu.edu/statesofincarcerationmi/exhibits/show/resistance/arts1>

⁶²⁴ Williams, Rhonda. *Concrete Demands: The Search for Black Power in the 20th Century*. The World Cries Freedom. New York: Routledge, 2015:215.

⁶²⁵ “Mike Hamlin. Interview with William Winkel.” Detroit Historical Society. December 22, 2015. <https://detroit1967.detroithistorical.org/items/show/238>

⁶²⁶ Georgakas, Dan and Marvin Surkin. *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press. 1998.

⁶²⁷ Davenport, Christian. *How Social Movements Die: Repression and Demobilization of the Republic of New Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 2015:118.

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶²⁹ Wilkinson, Francis. “Segregationist Dreamer.” *New York Times*. December 31, 2006.

⁶³⁰ “Centers of Black Nationalist Information and Activity.” *Black America*. RAM. Fall 1964:24.

from which they hosted a radio show on Saturday nights that covered civil rights protests and speeches in Detroit.⁶³¹

The Henry brothers were leaders in the Black Reparations Movement, which demanded \$400 billion for slave descendants. In 1967 they founded the Malcolm X Society, which encouraged the establishment of sovereign Black nations within the United States.⁶³² On March 28, 1968, the Henry brothers founded the Republic of New Africa (RNA) in Detroit with Robert F. Williams and Betty Shabazz, the widow of Malcolm X.⁶³³ The RNA called for the establishment of a Black nation in the southern states of South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama.⁶³⁴ In 1969, a violent incident at an RNA meeting at New Bethel Baptist Church, resulted in the death of a police officer. Milton Henry chose to leave the organization and it soon collapsed.

Damon Keith. A native of Detroit, after graduating from Northwestern High School, Keith attended Howard University where he was encouraged to take on the defense of civil rights cases by Thurgood Marshall, then the attorney for the NAACP. Keith returned to Detroit and received his law degree from Wayne State University. He established a law firm in Detroit in the late 1950s and over the next few years served as a member of the Wayne County Board of Commissioners and the Detroit Housing Commission, before being appointed as co-chair of the newly established Michigan Civil Rights Commission in 1964. Keith was appointed as a district judge for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District by President Lyndon Johnson in 1967. He was the second African American to hold that position. Keith was named as judge to the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth District by President Jimmy Carter in 1977.

Over the course of his career, Keith ruled on numerous civil rights cases involving housing and employment discrimination in which he “established the historical institutionalization of racism in the facts of the cases” and “summoned the full power of the court to ameliorate the substantive and material conditions of inequality.”⁶³⁵ Keith gained national attention as the first Northern judge to order desegregation by busing in the case *Davis v. School District* of the City of Pontiac in 1970.⁶³⁶

Max Stanford. Philadelphian Max Stanford became one of Malcolm X’s closest associates after meeting him in 1963. Active in radical student movements, in Detroit he was a founder of the underground Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM) and spent time in the home of James and Grace Lee Boggs, discussing the creation of a Black Power organization. According to Grace Lee Boggs, in 1964 RAM members spent a week in her basement putting together the illustrated magazine *Black America*.⁶³⁷ RAM’s radical philosophy was born from the violence that civil rights protestors encountered in Mississippi and Alabama. Forsaking Martin Luther King Jr.’s philosophy of integration and non-violence, RAM promoted both Black Nationalism and self-defense. RAM asked Afro-Americans to consider themselves members of a Black nation within a White nation. They believed that African Americans must think like “guerilla fighters” and

⁶³¹ Theoharis, Jeanne. *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2015:240.

⁶³² Palmer, Colin. *Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History*. Thomson Gale, 2006. *Encyclopedia.com*.

⁶³³ Davenport, Christian. *How Social Movements Die*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014:91.

⁶³⁴ Palmer, Colin. *Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History*. Thomson Gale, 2006. *Encyclopedia.com*.

⁶³⁵ Bong Cook, Blanche. *A Paradigm for Equality: The Honorable Damon J. Keith*, 47 Wayne L. Rev. 1161 (2001). <http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/lawfrp/66>

⁶³⁶ *The Nomination of the Honorable Damon J. Keith for the Sarah T. Hughes Civil Rights Award*. Federal Bar Association, Eastern District of Michigan Chapter. https://fbamich.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Tribute_to_Judge_Damon_J._Keith.pdf

⁶³⁷ Boggs, Grace Lee. *Living for Change: An Autobiography*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998:134.

considered the Black “struggle as a national liberation,” not as a class issue.⁶³⁸ RAM operated underground cells in major Northern cities including Detroit. Due to heavy federal surveillance, they worked secretly with Malcolm X, who was a spokesperson for their philosophy. James and Grace Lee Boggs left the RAM organization in January 1965, one month before Malcolm X was assassinated. Max Stanford and RAM’s philosophy served as a model for the organization of the Black Panthers.⁶³⁹

Luke Tripp. The son of a Detroit autoworker, Tripp attended Wayne State University where he was one of the organizers of the Detroit Chapter of the Friends of the Student Non-Violent Committee (SNCC) and the radical Black student organization UHURU. Following the 1967 Rebellion, Tripp helped found the *Inner City Voice*, a monthly Black radical newspaper.⁶⁴⁰ Tripp’s main interest was in the organization of the Black worker and he, along with General Baker, was a founder of DRUM. Tripp served as the Minister of Information for the Detroit Black Panther Party, which formed in Detroit in 1968 and operated under ground there until about April 1969.

Edward Vaughn. According to Detroit activist Grace Lee Boggs, “In the 1960s that quarter mile of Linwood, from Grand Boulevard to Davison, generated most of the religious leadership of the Black Power movement in Detroit.”⁶⁴¹ It also included the legendary Vaughn’s Bookstore, the second Black-owned bookstore opened in the United States. Writer Eric Thomas Campbell has said, “no single location was more vital to the emergence of Black consciousness politics in Detroit than Vaughn’s Bookstore”⁶⁴² because it provided not only material for thought but offered a place for discussion and camaraderie. Edward Vaughn began selling books on Afro-centric topics from the trunk of his car while serving as a Detroit postal worker. The demand was so great that he decided to purchase a building and opened Vaughn’s Bookstore at 12123 Dexter (extant) in 1959. In addition to books of general African American interest, the bookstore sold locally produced papers such as *The Illustrated News* published by Reverend Albert Cleage and edited by his brother Henry Cleage. Vaughn’s Bookstore sponsored a series of national forums (1965-1967) that brought speakers on Black Nationalism and Black history and culture to Detroit. It was also the site of the Black Star Cooperative meetings.⁶⁴³ Bookstores like Vaughn’s provided African Americans with information about their history and culture when traditional schools and publishers would not.

Coleman Young - Detroit’s First Black Mayor

A call to political action within the Black community took place in the early 1960s and led to the election of the America’s first Black mayors by the end of the decade. In Michigan, the first Black mayor was Floyd McCree of Flint elected in 1966.⁶⁴⁴ Following the violent summer of 1967, Black mayors were elected in Gary, Indiana, and Cleveland, Ohio.⁶⁴⁵

⁶³⁸Stanford, Max. “We Can Win.” *Black America*. RAM, Black Liberation Front of the USA. Fall 1964.

⁶³⁹ “History of RAM-Revolutionary Action Movement.” *Freedom Archives*. www.freedomarchives.org.

⁶⁴⁰ Tripp, Luke. “Black Working-Class Radicalism in Detroit, 1960-1970.” (1994) *Ethnic and Women’s Studies Working Papers*.7. https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/ews_wps/7.

⁶⁴¹ Boggs, Grace Lee. *Living for Change*. November 10, 2013.

⁶⁴² Campbell, Eric Thomas. “Vaughn’s Bookstore: Axis of Black Consciousness.” *Negro Digest*. June 1967.

⁶⁴³ *Negro Digest*:19.

⁶⁴⁴ Mabbitt, Bob. Was Flint’s Floyd McCree the First Black Mayor in the United States? U-Flint History Department Brings Clarity to the Question.” M-Flint NOW News & Happenings. February 18, 2015.

⁶⁴⁵ Rothman, Lily. “50 Years Ago this Week: Cleveland’s Carl Stokes Becomes a New Mayor for a New Era.” *Time*. November 17, 2017.

Detroit elected its first Black mayor, Coleman A. Young, in 1973. Young grew up in Detroit and after high school worked at the Ford River Rouge plant, where he was fired for working as a union organizer. He joined the army during World War II and was a member of the Tuskegee Airmen. He continued his activism while in the army participating in a sit-in at an all-White officer's club. After the war, he worked for the U.S. Postal Service before becoming a full-time union organizer in 1948 for the Wayne County Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). Young organized the National Negro Council of Labor, which was labeled a Communist organization by Senator Joseph McCarthy. Though Young's popularity within Detroit's African Americans increased when he stood up to questioning by the House Un-American Activities Committee, he was blacklisted by the Committee. When McCarthy's political influence began to wane, Young was able to rebuild his role as a political leader and was elected to Michigan's Constitutional Convention. According to historian Wilbur Rich,

The influence of the labor movement, particularly the UAW, grew in Democratic Party affairs. By coopting the formal structure of the Wayne County Democratic organization, the unions, with their full-time organizers, money, and communication capacity, helped strengthen and liberalize local Democrats weak party structure. . . The union/party alliance was critical to the development of Black politics for it assisted the creation of a new Black leadership group . . . The emergence of this Black labor leadership distinguished Detroit's politics from those of other northern cities that were without a strong Black/labor coalition”⁶⁴⁶

Coleman Young's rise in national politics was meteoric. By December 1979, Young was serving as the Vice Chair of the Democratic Party and working with President Carter to save the struggling Chrysler Corporation. The *New York Times* called Coleman Young “one of the most influential Blacks in the United States,” stating that “When Coleman Young speaks, the White House listens.”⁶⁴⁷ The *Times* went on to say,

In Detroit, Blacks say it is he who has rescued them from their traditional position at the wrong end of a policeman's night stick and has given them more political power than members of their race have in any major American city. At the same time, whites say it is he who has restored law and order to the city, has eased racial tensions, and made Detroit a far better, less fearful place in which to live.”⁶⁴⁸

Young served as mayor of Detroit until 1994. He was instrumental in ending STRESS, a racist anti-crime program operated by the Detroit Police Department that resulted in the death of 22 African Americans in just over two years. Young also increased the number of Black police officers serving on the force by 50 percent. As mayor, Young appointed Arthur Jefferson as Detroit's first Black superintendent of schools in 1975.

⁶⁴⁶ Rich, Wilbur C. *Coleman Young and Detroit Politics: From Social Activist to Power Broker*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999:54-55.

⁶⁴⁷ Stuart, Reginald. “The New Black Power of Coleman Young.” *New York Times*. December 16, 1979.

⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid*.

Criminal Injustice

Although the first African American police officer in Detroit was appointed in 1890, segregation in the city's police department remained an issue until the 1970s when Detroit elected its first Black mayor, Coleman Young. With an increasing Black population and a static, all-white police force, conflict was inevitable.

The Klan, Red Squads, and the Race Riot of 1943

According to David Wolcott in the book *Cops and Kids*, progressive reform movements in major cities at the turn of the 20th Century resulted in “crack downs” by police on vice and crimes such as gambling, drinking, and other illicit activities.⁶⁴⁹ Typically, it was the African American populations that were targeted, and brutal enforcement tactics were common. In Detroit, conservatives controlled the city government in 1918 at a time when the city's African American population was rapidly growing due to the Great Migration. They restructured the Recorder's Court, Detroit's criminal court, to make it tougher on crime by increasing the number of judges from four to seven and packing the court with hardline conservatives.⁶⁵⁰ Sentences for infractions committed by the poor and immigrant and African American populations were more stringent than those for White residents. Another factor that contributed to injustices in Detroit's legal systems during this period was the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the city. By 1923 there were 22,000 Klan members in Detroit.⁶⁵¹ When the Klan ran a candidate for mayor in 1925 there was “no better way to fuel savage anger than to raise the specter of the Negro masses pouring across the color line. . .”⁶⁵² The increasing anti-Black sentiment heard in Detroit's political debates helped to fuel discriminatory behavior in the city's police department— 55 African Americans were shot to death by police officers in Detroit in 1925. Resentment against the police grew among the city's Black population who resented the unnecessary harassment and abuse. In 1926, the Mayor's Committee on Race Relations “identified racist practices of the police as the chief cause of poor race relations in Detroit.”⁶⁵³

As the Depression deepened in the 1930s, the relationship between Detroit's African American community and the police deteriorated even more. A new layer of police abuse was added when a federal Congressional committee encouraged the establishment of “Red Squads,” special forces embedded in local police departments ostensibly to root out communists and labor organizers and to stop strikers.⁶⁵⁴ Fear of the growing power of the UAW and the rise of Marxism among automobile workers made the Detroit police department a prime candidate for the establishment of Red Squads. According to historian Frank Donner, “In Detroit, the Black Legion [a radical arm of the Ku Klux Klan] acquired a powerful following which included numerous supporters and sympathizers among the Detroit police.”⁶⁵⁵ In 1933 the newly appointed Detroit police commissioner Heinrich Pickert, a conservative and anti-Communist,

⁶⁴⁹ Wolcott, David. *Cops and Kids: Policing Juvenile Delinquency in Urban America 1890-1940*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005.

⁶⁵⁰ Boyle, Kevin. *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2007:138.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵² Stateside Staff. “How the roots of Detroit's police department helped spawn 1967 rebellion.” *Michigan Radio*. July 20, 2017.

⁶⁵³ Dillard, Angela. *Faith in the City: Preaching Radical Social Change in Detroit*:91

⁶⁵⁴ Donner, Frank. *Protectors of Privilege: Red Squads and Police Repression in Urban America*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992:55.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

was rumored to have ties to the Black Legion. Under his direction the city's police force became more militaristic. In conjunction with the city's automakers, Pickert created a secret "Red Squad," a group of undercover officers that infiltrated the city's unions and labor organizations and spied on and harassed leftists, socialists, protestors, and political activists.⁶⁵⁶ Henry Bennett at the Ford Motor Company was already using strongarm tactics like beatings to dissuade strikes and fend off unionization. According to one labor leader, "Under the commissionership of Pickert, warfare was carried on against all labor organizations."⁶⁵⁷

Until 1940 only one percent of Detroit's police force was African American.⁶⁵⁸ According to Arthur Johnson, Executive Secretary of the Detroit NAACP,

*Of all the issues of racial oppression in Detroit, the most volatile was police behavior and brutality toward the city's Black citizens. The virtually all-white police force acted like an army of occupation, bent on harassing, intimidating, and abusing Blacks. The problem was so pervasive that almost every Black adult in the city had a personal experience or observation involving racially motivated police misconduct.*⁶⁵⁹

The excessive abuse and intimidation of Detroit's Black citizens by the police was an underlying cause of a race riot that erupted in the city in 1943. Calls for a grand jury investigation as to the origins of the riot were put forward by George Edwards of the Detroit Common Council and the Detroit NAACP, who accused Mayor Jeffries of "timidity, irresolution, bewilderment and helplessness."⁶⁶⁰ Edwards also called for the addition of 200 Black policemen to the Detroit police force to patrol Black neighborhoods.

Era of Good Will, 1944-1950

Following the riot the Mayor's Interracial Committee was created in 1944, with the City of Detroit's first full-time staffed position with the purpose of addressing Detroit's racial problems. George Schermer was named as its director and Beulah Whitby, a social worker and the first African American hired in Detroit's Department of Public Welfare, was assigned as the Committee's assistant director.⁶⁶¹ The Mayor's Interracial Committee was considered "a new development in municipal operations, not only in Detroit but in the nation as well."⁶⁶² Organized on June 25, 1943 the committee was meant to serve as a "peace committee" with the purpose of putting into action the recommendations set forth in numerous studies and reports that had already been undertaken regarding racial inequality in the city. Thus, the decade between 1944 and 1954 was viewed as a "good will period" in race relations in Detroit when a wide range of diverse groups, from the YMCA to the UAW to churches, sought to strengthen and unify the community overall.⁶⁶³ On January 1, 1944, a new police commissioner John Ballenger took office. He held a conference with Negro leaders and "a committee of three distinguished Negroes was formed so that

⁶⁵⁶ Rosenbaum, David. "Auto Companies and Police Share Data on Activists." *Ann Arbor News*. March 11, 1976.

⁶⁵⁷ "Naming of Pickert Stirs Protest." *Detroit Free Press*. November 30, 1940:19.

⁶⁵⁸ Dulaney, W. Marvin. *Black Police in America*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999:117.

⁶⁵⁹ Johnson, Arthur L. *Race and Remembrance: A Memoir*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008:55.

⁶⁶⁰ George, Hub H. "Grand Jury Riot Probe Demanded by Edwards." *Detroit Free Press*. June 29, 1943.

⁶⁶¹ "Ruling in Whitby Case Due Today." *Detroit Free Press*. August 30, 1955:3.

⁶⁶² Buss, Lloyd D. *The Church and the City: Detroit's Open Housing Movement*. Dissertation. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan. 2008:68.

⁶⁶³ Hall, Helen, Interviewer. "A Transcript of a Tape-Recorded Interview with Richard Marks, Director, Commission on Community Relations for Detroit, Michigan. *The Civil Rights Documentation Project*. Washington, DC. September 5, 1969 in Detroit.

that complaints of discrimination filtering into the Department could be checked.”⁶⁶⁴ In 1950 the Mayor’s Inter-Racial Committee submitted a report that the “over-all racial situation in Detroit appears to be relatively good at this time and that wholesome progress had been made in the operations of the police department.” Schermer blamed continuing racial tensions on segregated housing and lack of communication with the Black community about the city’s housing policies.⁶⁶⁵

Deteriorating Relationship

However much goodwill was actually generated in the years immediately following the riot, and however whitewashed were the reports regarding improvements in police tactics, little actual institutionalized change was accomplished. In law enforcement, for example, the number of African Americans on the Detroit police force increased to only 3 percent. The relationship between the police and the Black community remained one of distrust and by 1950 complaints of police brutality began to rise. It was noted that in 1949, more than 20,000 arrests had been made by the police but less than “14 percent were found to be guilty of a misdemeanor or felony.”⁶⁶⁶ An incident in November in which two police officers were shot by the father of a seventeen year-old Black man they were attempting to arrest caused the Civil Rights Congress of Michigan to state “the calculated policy of illegal arrests, police terror and brutality carried out against the Negro people for years is directly responsible for the tragedy.”⁶⁶⁷ Detroit’s Black citizens reported being beaten without cause and arrested and searched without warrants. A 1950 editorial in the *Detroit Tribune* declared, “There is no question that ‘whites’ are given better treatment by the police than Negroes. For ALL Negroes are judged by a RUBBER STAMP. That rubber stamp says that ALL Negroes are criminally-inclined, dangerous and scornful of the law to the extent that forceful methods must be employed.”⁶⁶⁸ In 1951 the Detroit Baptist Ministers’ Alliance representing over 200 churches reported that “Police brutality is at an all-time high . . . tension in the Negro community, at this time, is very near the point that it was in 1943, when that shameful spirit of lawlessness reigned in our city.”⁶⁶⁹ Two weeks later, the NAACP lodged an official complaint with Mayor Albert Cobo about brutality in the arrest of a Black teenage boy.⁶⁷⁰

A police brutality incident in 1954 involving an entire Black family resulted in Police Commissioner Edward Piggins promising to investigate on-going brutality claims. The police had responded to call regarding a minor rear end collision. They then attempted to arrest the Black driver of one of the cars, William Jefferson, for three unpaid parking tickets. Tensions mounted and words were exchanged between the police and the man’s family who were in the car at the time: his wife, six children, and their grandmother. After they were ordered out of the car, the confrontation escalated. The wife’s arm was twisted, one of the sons was slammed up against the car, and the grandmother was slapped across the face. All three were arrested for interfering with a police officer.⁶⁷¹ In November, the NAACP confronted Commissioner Piggins with 103 complaints of police brutality they had received. Piggins promised that Michigan’s state civil rights laws would be followed by the department and agreed to consider the NAACP’s proposal to create a citizen’s committee to assist in the investigations of police brutality complaints, though he was not certain he had the authority to do so.⁶⁷² Little progress was made over the

⁶⁶⁴ McDougall, Patrick S. Police Head Says Charts Prove Racial Tension Gone.” *Detroit Free Press*. November 26, 1944.

⁶⁶⁵ “Race Tension Easing, City Official Reports” *Detroit Free Press*, June 22, 1950:3.

⁶⁶⁶ “Indiscriminating Arrests.” *Detroit Tribune*. December 20, 1950.:7.

⁶⁶⁷ “CRC sees slaying result of local police brutality.” *Detroit Tribune*. November 25, 1950:1.

⁶⁶⁸ “Rubber Stamp Methods.” *Detroit Tribune*. December 9, 1950:9.

⁶⁶⁹ “Police Brutality Seen as Highest.” *Detroit Tribune*. January 20, 1951:1.

⁶⁷⁰ “NAACP Again Rips Detroit Police.” *Detroit Tribune*. February 3, 1952:1.

⁶⁷¹ “Pledges Probe of Police-Brutality.” *Detroit Tribune*. September 11, 1954:1.

⁶⁷² “NAACP gets Pledge by Piggins.” *Detroit Tribune*. November 23, 1954:19.

next five years. The Detroit NAACP, which had become “the office of record” for incidents of police brutality against Blacks, recorded 149 incidents during that period and in 1959 began to put pressure on the police department for the establishment of a citizens committee.⁶⁷³

The United Negro Leadership Council (UNLC), a group of Black community leaders, was formed under the direction of Dr. DeWitt Burton in 1959 to address recently released police statistics, which showed, “a disproportionate amount of the crime in Detroit is committed by Negroes” as well as the allegations by Detroit’s Black citizens of increasing incidents of police brutality. Arthur Johnson, executive director of the NAACP questioned the validity of the police’s statistics and urged caution that they might be used to justify a new “get tough” campaign against Blacks.⁶⁷⁴ The UNLC met with Mayor Miriani and expressed their concerns regarding police brutality and segregation in the police department.⁶⁷⁵ The ACLU reviewed the statistics collected by the NAACP and scheduled a public meeting to discuss how they could be addressed.⁶⁷⁶

In April 1959 Detroit began implementing a new policy to integrate police patrol cars, which the *Detroit Free Press* declared to be “the first real move. . . toward erasing color lines in the assignment of police officers.”⁶⁷⁷ While the traffic patrol division itself had already been integrated, patrol cars were still segregated by race and would “sit idle” rather than go out on patrol if only a mixed race of officers was available. The new order called for officers to be assigned to patrol cars based solely on seniority. Hunt Street Station (2200 Hunt Street) was chosen as the first station where the policy would be put into effect. The station already had a long history of integration, as it was where the Detroit Police Department placed its first Black officer, Henderson Turpin, in 1927. Hunt Street Station’s commander, John Carneghie was known to support integration and had hired more Black officers than other stations in the city.⁶⁷⁸ In protest of the new policy, White officers associated with the Detroit Police Officers Association initiated a slowdown strike on March 1, greatly reducing the number of traffic violations issued. The slowdown lasted only a few days and led to calls by William Patrick, the city’s only Black Common Council member, to integrate the entire police department.⁶⁷⁹

Mayor Miriani, Big Four Squads, and the Black Vote

Events took a dramatic turn for the worse in 1960 when in a response to the murders of two white women, Detroit’s Mayor Louis Miriani instituted a program to cut down on “Black crime” in the city. Within forty-eight hours of the program’s announcement, 600 people were arrested. By the end of the week 1,500 had been questioned and detained—the majority African American males.⁶⁸⁰ Four-man units of elite undercover officers were created under Miriani’s anti-crime program. Known as the “Big Four,” they were infamous within the Black community for their verbal abuse and violent physical harassment tactics. In response to the injustice, Detroit’s outraged Black citizens organized to defeat Mayor Miriani in the 1962 election putting their support behind a liberal newcomer, Jerome Cavanagh. Cavanagh promised to improve relations between the Black community and the Detroit police force and following his election did so by appointing a new police commissioner, George Edwards Jr. A former union organizer and national director of the UAW welfare department, Edwards was a strong liberal and had served as director

⁶⁷³ Johnson, Arthur. *Race and Remembrance: A Memoir*. Detroit: Wayne State University, 2008:55.

⁶⁷⁴ “Negro Leaders Called to Parley on City’s Crime.” *Detroit Free Press*. September 20, 1959:3.

⁶⁷⁵ “Mayor, Police Head Hear Charges of Police Brutality, Discrimination.” *Detroit Tribune*. February 14, 1959:1

⁶⁷⁶ “ACLU to Probe Police Brutality.” *Detroit Tribune*. April 18, 1959.

⁶⁷⁷ “Police Ease Slowdown Under Fire.” *Detroit Free Press*. March 1, 1959:1.

⁶⁷⁸ Pearson, Robert. “Police Integration Problem Boiling Over.” *Detroit Free Press*. March 3, 1959:1.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁰ Turrini, Joseph. “Phooie on Louie: African American Detroit and the Election of Jerry Cavanagh.” *Michigan History Magazine*. November/December 1999:12.

of the Detroit Housing Commission during the Sojourner Truth Homes protests where he gained the respect of Black leaders.⁶⁸¹ Edwards was able to finally set up a Citizens Complaint Bureau to enable Detroit's residents to report police incidents against Black citizens, but it became mired in bureaucracy and was not successful.⁶⁸² Edwards appointment caused internal tension within the police department and he was unable to maintain the support of the Black community during the turbulent year of 1963. He left the department to serve on the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.⁶⁸³

Road to Rebellion

In July 1963, a twenty-four-year-old Black woman named Cynthia Scott was killed, shot twice in the back by a Detroit police officer. The officer claimed she had slashed his arm with a knife, but witnesses said she was walking away when shot. When the officer was not indicted, outrage filled Detroit's Black community. Demonstrations protesting police brutality, sponsored by the radical student group UHURU and the Group on Advanced Leadership (GOAL), were held in front of Detroit police headquarters.⁶⁸⁴ One protest flyer read:

*The first 100 years of the Detroit Police Department has been characterized by unnecessary killing, excessive and illegal harassment . . . We don't think such police action is a substitute for good schools, good housing, and full employment.*⁶⁸⁵

In 1965 there was a push to gain more "civilian" control of the Detroit police to address police brutality. Ten organizations appealed to Mayor Cavanagh to establish a "Citizen's Review Board to investigate racial incidents." The idea was never implemented because the action would have required "a charter amendment and a vote of the people."⁶⁸⁶

Efforts to integrate the Detroit Police Department moved slowly. Even though Mayor Cavanagh had pledged integration by the beginning of 1965, in January there had been no new hires and the percentage of African Americans on the force still sat at 3.6 percent. Only three of the city's thirteen patrol cars had been integrated. One Black police officer had been named to the staff of the Police Academy, one Black police officer was assigned to the 100-member city's Accident Prevention Bureau, and one Black patrolman had been named to the Traffic Safety Bureau.⁶⁸⁷

According to the Kerner Commission report, a series of incidents occurred between August 1966 and June 1967 that intensified the anger of Detroit's Black's community and increased their distrust of the Detroit police. First, a group of civil rights activists casually talking on the sidewalk in front of their office were harassed and threatened with arrest for loitering. Known as the "Kercheval Incident" it was symptomatic of the treatment the Black community was receiving at the hands of the Detroit police. Two shootings of African Americans by the police, the first the killing Cynthia Scott and the second the killing of a man trying to protect his wife from harassment by a gang of young, White men, had increased the tension. Finally on July 25, 1967, when police raided an afterhours party for a Black war veteran, the

⁶⁸¹ "The Old Guard." <http://www.detroits-great-rebellion.com/The-Old-Guard.html>

⁶⁸² 1968 Kerner Commission Report. Othering & Belonging Institute. University of California-Berkley. p.46

<https://belonging.berkeley.edu/1968-kerner-commission-report>

⁶⁸³ "George C. Edwards Jr. Dies." *The Washington Post*. April 9, 1995.

⁶⁸⁴ "Rules State Law OK's Housing Bias Picketing." *Detroit Free Press*. July 12, 1963:10-B.

⁶⁸⁵ Flyer. Police Brutality Demonstration, 1965. Detroit Commission on Community relations/Human rights Department Records. Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶⁸⁶ Golden, Harry. "Prosecutor Hits Hard at Police-Curb Plans." *Detroit Free Press*. January 25, 1965:3.

⁶⁸⁷ Golden, Harry. "3 Divisions Integrated by Police." *Detroit Free Press*. January 19, 1965:16-A.

long pent-up anger and frustration came to a head erupting into five days of violence now known as the 1967 Rebellion. The National Guard armed with rifles and tanks entered the city to quell the violence. One of the most infamous events of the Rebellion was the Algiers Motel murders in which three Black teenagers, labeled as snipers though no proof was presented, were beaten and then shot to death at close range by the police. The police officers were later acquitted by an all-White jury. After attending the pre-trial hearing and realizing what the outcome of the trial was likely to be, civil rights activists Dan Aldridge and Lonnie Peek were inspired by H. Rap Brown, then the national chair of SNCC, to hold a mock trial. Known as the People's Tribunal it occurred on August 30, 1967 at the Shrine of the Black Madonna and attracted a crowd of more than 3,000 people. Jurors included civil rights activist Rosa Parks and bookstore owner Ed Vaughan.⁶⁸⁸ The Tribunal jurors "convicted" three police officers and a security guard for their actions during the Algiers Motel incident. By exposing the hypocrisy of the all-White jury trial, the Tribunal helped to unite Detroit's Black community following the Rebellion.

STRESS

In 1971, the City of Detroit was facing economic decline as the automobile industry was hit by rising gas prices and a flood of foreign car imports with high gas mileage ratings. Much of Detroit's White middle-class population had already left the city for the suburbs, lessening the city's tax base. A 67 percent rise in street robberies led Detroit police commissioner John Nichols to create an elite unit of 80 undercover, plain clothes officers whose purpose was to reduce street crime by making criminals "fear the victim." The program was named "Stop the Robberies and Enjoy Safe Streets," more commonly known as STRESS. Within its first year of existence thirteen men were killed by STRESS officers—twelve of them Black. According to *The Crisis*, "During the first year of STRESS, the Detroit Police Department had the highest number of civilian killings, 33 percent committed by 1 percent of the force" of any American police force.⁶⁸⁹ The heavy-handed actions of STRESS officers and their harassment of Detroit's Black citizens worsened the high racial tension already existing in the city. Radical Black lawyer Kenneth Cockrel Sr. defended many of the Black men arrested by STRESS officers. He was instrumental in forming the "State of Emergency Committee" in September 1971 that called for the dismantling of the STRESS unit. Over 5,000 people participated in an anti-STRESS demonstration in Detroit on September 23, 1971. The violence and antagonism under STRESS continued throughout 1972 and 1973, until once again, the city's Black voting bloc united to elect a new mayor—Coleman Young, Detroit's first Black mayor. He closed the program in 1974⁶⁹⁰ after making "integration of the police force one of his top priorities."⁶⁹¹ True to his promise, Young appointed Detroit's first Black police chief, William Hart, in 1976.

⁶⁸⁸ "The People's Tribunal." *Rise Up North - Detroit*. <https://riseupdetroit.org/chapters/chapter-3/part-3/the-peoples-tribunal/>

⁶⁸⁹ Williams, Margo. "What happens when the police department goes from white to Black: The changing face of the Detroit Police Department." *The Crisis*. December 1991. Vol. 90. No.10:15.

⁶⁹⁰ Binelli, Mark. "The Fire Last Time." *The New Republic*. April 6, 2017.

⁶⁹¹ Dulaney, W. Marvin. *Black Police in America*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996:99.

Finding a Voice: Detroit's Black Population and the Media

Throughout the 20th Century, African Americans in the United States faced significant challenges regarding the representation of Black culture in the traditional White-owned media. Reporting on news events commonly represented only one point of view—that of White society. When Blacks did appear in White media, it was for criminal activity or as the cause of racial unrest. Births, deaths, weddings, and other societal events of the average Black citizen were ignored in White newspapers and Black business advertisements were not accepted. In entertainment programming, the roles for Blacks were restricted to servants or comical, buffoon-like characters. As late as 1943, many radio stations implemented policies that denied the use of titles like Mr., Mrs., or Miss when referring to African Americans in a broadcast, a form of respect that was readily given to Whites.⁶⁹² Until about 1970, standard textbooks used in K-12 education ignored or twisted the contribution of Blacks to American history. Creating media platforms for the Black community meant much more than offering a means of communication for the celebration of African American culture, it provided a vehicle for a basic American right—freedom of speech—that had been denied Black citizens for much too long.

Negro Progress Expositions

In 1915 the National Half Century Anniversary of Negro Freedom and Lincoln Jubilee was held in Chicago, Illinois, to commemorate Abraham Lincoln and celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. The Michigan legislature approved the establishment of the Freedmen's Progress Commission whose purpose was to create an exhibition for the Jubilee that showcased the accomplishments of African Americans in Michigan. According to its organizers, the exhibition was designed to counteract the negative image assigned to Blacks by newspapers that only reported on the "criminal negro" element. Such coverage had "produced an apparent growth of hostility to the Freeman in recent years."⁶⁹³ A quick study conducted by the Commission's chair, Francis Warren of Detroit, showed that out of 232 articles mentioning Blacks published in Detroit's four White-owned newspapers, half were negative or referred to criminal activity. According to Warren, the exhibition would,

*Present to the world the other side of the story of the Black man, to note his progress during the fifty years of freedom he has enjoyed, from total ignorance to an educated race, from abject poverty to a condition of healthful self-sustenance, and from vicious ignorance to a wholesome Christian civilization, doggedly and determinedly working out his destiny with the means at hand.*⁶⁹⁴

Following the exhibition, a 370-page report entitled *The Michigan Manual of Freedmen's Progress* was released that highlighted the contributions of Michigan's African Americans to American society.

In May 1940 Detroit's Convention Hall (demolished) was the site of the *Seventy-Five Years of Negro Progress Exposition*. Sponsored by the Detroit Urban League it was chaired by Dr. George Barber, pastor of the African American Methodist Church.⁶⁹⁵ The Exposition was a precursor to the American Negro Exposition held in Chicago in July 1940. The Detroit Exposition showcased African American

⁶⁹² Ivy Planning Group, LLC, "Historical Study of Market Entry Barriers, Discrimination, and Changes in Broadcast and Wireless Licensing," Report prepared for the Office of General Counsel, Federal Communications Commission, December 2000.

⁶⁹³ Warren, Francis H. *Michigan Manual of the Freedmen's Progress*. Freedmen's Progress Commission. Detroit: 1915: 23.

⁶⁹⁴ Warren, Francis. *Michigan Manual of Freedmen's Progress*. Freedman's Progress Commission. Detroit, Michigan, 1915.

⁶⁹⁵ "1940 Event to Review Accomplishments in 14 fields." *Detroit Free Press*. November 12, 1939:8.

achievements in order to “increase the knowledge of ‘white America’ on the achievement and progress of the Negro race.”⁶⁹⁶ Exhibits included works by African American authors; art works; industrial and consumer products; displays by historically Black colleges; exhibits from Black cultures in foreign countries such as Cuba, Haiti and the African Gold Coast; and a tribute to scientist George Washington Carver. This exhibition occurred at a time when African Americans were making a case for equal opportunity in the Armed Forces and defense employment.

Black Newspapers

Detroit’s first African American newspaper, and reportedly the first in the nation, was *The Plaindealer*, which operated from 1883 to 1894.⁶⁹⁷ Over the years, a number of Black-owned or oriented newspapers were established in Detroit to serve the needs of the city’s Black community. 20th Century newspapers included: *The Detroit Informer, 1897-1900; The Detroit Independent, 1907; The Detroit Herald, 1916; The Detroit People’s News, 1925; The Paradise Valley News, 1937; and The Detroit Sun, 1944.* Among the most long-lasting and influential were:

The Michigan Chronicle. In 1936 John Sengstacke, the owner of the *Chicago Defender*, a successful African American newspaper based in Chicago that served as the national newspaper for the Black community, founded the *Detroit Chronicle*. The name was soon changed to the *Michigan Chronicle*. The *Michigan Chronicle* first operated from an office at 1727 St Antoine Street (demolished) and under its first editor Louis Martin, the newspaper became known for its radicalism and support of unionization. Throughout the next four decades, the *Michigan Chronicle* continued to provide a platform for civil rights promotion and activism, working closely with the Detroit NAACP. Longworth Quinn joined the paper as publisher in 1944 and strengthened its associations with Black business owners and church leaders.⁶⁹⁸ The newspaper office moved to 479 Ledyard Street (extant) in Detroit where it was located during the height of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s. Still active today, the newspaper recently moved to a new location at 1452 Randolph Street.

The Detroit Tribune. In 1933 two Black newspapers, the *Detroit Tribune* and the *Tribune Independent*, whose masthead once read “On Guard for Negro Rights,” merged under the title the *Detroit Tribune* (4330 Woodward, demolished). Due to financial difficulties, the paper was sold to a White owner, Andrew Fruehauf, in 1952. Fruehauf, a Fraser, Michigan, native and pioneer in the development of refrigerated and platform trucks, dreamed of turning it into a Black *Christian Science Monitor* and retained J. Edward McCall as editor.⁶⁹⁹ Fruehauf was dedicated to retaining the paper as a voice for African Americans, but financial instability caused the newspaper to close shortly after his death in 1965. In 1966, a change in editorial direction was announced, the paper was to be dedicated to covering the issues of human rights accurately, by encompassing both the Black and White perspectives. One of its editors was Hubert G. Locke, a former minister at the Church of Christ in Conant Gardens and Executive Director of the Citizen’s Committee for Equal Opportunity. Locke wrote a definitive book on the 1967 Rebellion.⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁶ “Industry Aids Negro Exhibit.” *Detroit Free Press*. April 28, 1940:18.

⁶⁹⁷ Sands, David. “Detroit’s *Plaindealer* blazed trail for Today’s African American Press.” *Huffington Post*. December 6, 2017. (update)

⁶⁹⁸ “About Us.” *Michigan Chronicle* website, December 3, 2013. <https://michronicleonline.com/about-us/>

⁶⁹⁹ Thomas, Richard W. *Life for Us is What We Make It*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.1992.

⁷⁰⁰ Witsil, Frank. “Hubert Locke, author of 1967 Riot book and academic, dies at 84.” *Detroit Free Press*. September 20, 2018.

The *Detroit Free Press* hired its first African American journalist in 1953 becoming the “first of the city’s daily papers to place a Negro on its editorial staff.”⁷⁰¹ Collins C. George had been serving as the managing editor for the Detroit edition of an African American newspaper, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, when he was hired.⁷⁰² During World War II, George had spent a year as a conscientious objector in a prison camp with the noted author Christopher Isherwood. He later served as a news correspondent in Italy. Collins George covered Black-related issues and also served as the *Detroit Free Press* music critic from 1953 to 1980. He lived in Lafayette Park.⁷⁰³

In the 1950s and early 1960s, a number of small, radical papers were established in Detroit. Though most were short-lived, they provided a strong voice for the politicization of Detroit’s Black community through Black Nationalism and Black Power.

- *Correspondence* was a Marxist based newspaper established in Detroit in the early 1950s. It became a vehicle for activists James and Grace Lee Boggs to promote ideas of labor reform and Black Power. By 1957 Grace Boggs served as editor. James was a senior contributor and wrote a column for the paper’s “Special Negro News” page. The paper spotlighted the failings of the UAW and the civil rights struggle in Detroit, including the sit-ins and demonstrations that occurred in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and the rise of the Black Power Movement.⁷⁰⁴
- *The Illustrated News* (5385 Lovett Street) was a bi-monthly paper published by Reverend Albert Cleage Jr., his brothers Hugh and Henry, and photographer William Smith. Founded in 1960, the newspaper was dedicated to politically organizing Detroit’s Black community into a powerful voting bloc known as the Black Slate.⁷⁰⁵ They were instrumental in electing Detroit’s first Black mayor, Coleman Young and gave voice to Black issues until 1964 when it ceased publication.⁷⁰⁶
- *The South End* was the Wayne State University student newspaper established in 1967. It came under the editorship of Black student radical John Watson in 1968. A strong supporter of the rights of Black workers, Watson was one of the founders of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. He used the school paper to advance his cause—the paper’s masthead read “One Class conscious worker is worth 100 students!”⁷⁰⁷ For over a year, Watson was able to use the *South End* as a voice for “impoverished, oppressed, exploited and powerless victims of the white state. . . .”⁷⁰⁸ His intent was to reach not only students, but autoworkers and other union members.
- *Inner City Voice* was a Black revolutionary paper founded in 1967 shortly after the Rebellion. Edited by John Watson, it had a strong association with the League of

⁷⁰¹“*Detroit Free Press* Hires Former Courier Editor.” *Jet*. February 19, 1953:20.

⁷⁰² Austin, Dan. “Fun First Facts about the Freep on its 185th Birthday.” *Detroit Free Press*. May 5, 2015.

⁷⁰³ Alexander, Charles. “Parting Glances: Remembering Mr. George.” *PrideSource*. February 19, 2015.

⁷⁰⁴ Ward, Stephen, ed. *Pages from a Black Radical’s Notebook: A James Boggs Reader*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011.

⁷⁰⁵ Kucharski, Chris. “Hugh C. Cleage: Printer active in Detroit politics.” *Detroit Free Press*. September 28, 2005.

⁷⁰⁶ DuPree, Sherry Sherrod. *African American Holiness Pentecostal Movement: An Annotated Bibliography*. New York: Garland Publishing. 1996:319.

⁷⁰⁷ Boyd, Herb. “John Watson and Tommy Flanagan, Special Detroiters.” *Solidarity*. ATC-99 July-August 2002.

⁷⁰⁸ Georgakas, Dan and Surkin, Marvin. *Detroit, I Do Mind Dying*. Boston: South End Press:1968:46.

Revolutionary Black Workers. Its thirty core contributors included activists James Boggs and General Baker.⁷⁰⁹

Other Black newspapers established in Detroit during this time included *The Detroit Journal*, 1967; *Detroit Epic News*, 1968; *The Oakland*, 1969; and *Judgment*, 1970.

Black Radio

It was not until the late 1940s that African Americans began to make gains in radio broadcasting. In 1947, WDIA-AM in Memphis, Tennessee, became the first radio station to devote all its airtime to Black programming. Two years later, WERD in Atlanta went on air as the first African American-owned radio station in the United States.

Only a few White-owned radio stations in Detroit offered programming for African Americans. Among the first was Detroit radio station WJLB-AM, purchased by John L. Booth in 1940. Realizing the city's 300,000 Black residents provided an untapped market, in 1941 the station broadcast its first Black-oriented program, the *Interracial Goodwill Hour*, hosted by a Black announcer named Edward Baker.⁷¹⁰ The station hired Black disc jockey Van Douglas in 1941. Six years later Douglas was identified as one of only 16 Black disc jockeys in the United States.⁷¹¹ WJLB moved to Broderick Tower (10 Witherell Street) in 1941 and broadcast from there until the 1970s. Over time, the station increased its Black programming and Detroit's Black community felt strongly connected to the WJLB station. During the 1967 Rebellion one of the station's most popular radio personalities, Martha Jean "the Queen" Steinberg, broadcast for 48 hours straight, updating listeners with information.⁷¹² In December 1970, WJLB's Black radio personalities went on strike to protest the firing of the station's Black program manager, Al Perkins, by a newly hired White general manager. According to the *Detroit Free Press*, the protestors felt the new general manager "did not understand the Black community." They demanded Perkins be reinstated, that a Black sales manager be hired, and that "the station deposit its money in the Black-operated First Independence Bank."⁷¹³ To dramatically call attention to the strikers demands, Mary Jean Steinberg let out a strong scream on the air, which was followed by dead air time. The scream symbolized the frustration long felt by Blacks in finding a voice. Steinberg later said "We're supposed to be the voice of the Black community and if we don't stand up for our rights, what kind of an example will we be setting for Black kids of the community?"⁷¹⁴

Two African American dentists, Dr. Hayley Bell from Hamtramck and his brother-in-law Wendell Cox, were the first African Americans in Michigan to own and operate a radio station. In 1955 they purchased property on Henry Ruff Road in Inkster just south of Detroit and built a new station and tower with the call letters WCHB-AM 1440.⁷¹⁵ According to historian Ken Coleman, it was the first radio station to be built from the ground up by African Americans in the United States.⁷¹⁶ The station's first broadcast occurred in 1956. Known as "Soul Radio," it quickly became the voice for African Americans in the city

⁷⁰⁹ ⁷⁰⁹ Georgakas, Dan and Surkin, Marvin. *Detroit, I Do Mind Dying*. Boston: South End Press:1968:13

⁷¹⁰ Purcell, R. Randall. *21st Century Perspectives on Music, Technology, and Culture: Listening Spaces*. Springer, 2016:13.

⁷¹¹ Coleman, Kevin. "Detroit's first Black radio star before Martha Jean, Mojo and Mason there was Van Douglas." *Michigan Chronicle*. February 26, 2016.

⁷¹² "Martha Jean "the Queen" Steinberg. *Encyclopedia of Detroit*. Detroit Historical Society. <https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit>

⁷¹³ "Court Curbs WJLD Pickets." *Detroit Free Press*. December 18, 1970:6.

⁷¹⁴ "Blacks Seek Top Jobs; Strike Detroit Station." *Jet*. December 31, 1970:18.

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁶ *Ibid.*

of Detroit and surrounding area. Cox and Bell formed the Bell Broadcasting Company and purchased another station in 1960, which was renamed WJZZ, making it the first all jazz station in the United States. Over time Bell Broadcasting expanded to include a station in St. Louis.⁷¹⁷

In 1964, William F. Banks, a lawyer and founder of an African American fraternal organization the International Free and Accepted Masons (IFAMM), convinced that organization to invest in Black broadcasting. Banks once noted, “I have always believed that Black-owned broadcasting stations are important to the community and to Black people. Without them, there can be distortion and lack of vital information to both minority and majority communities.”⁷¹⁸ IFAMM purchased WGPR-FM, a White-owned radio station founded in 1961, and began broadcasting gospel, soul, and rhythm and blues music.

Black Television

“We’re not there.” This was the recollection of a teenage boy watching a dance show on NBC’s WLBT television station in Mississippi. It was symptomatic of the “Blackout” that African Americans were experiencing on television stations across the South where the protests and speeches associated with the Civil Rights Movement were not being broadcast.⁷¹⁹ Because WLBT was licensed by the federal government, an interracial group sued the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) demanding more inclusion of minorities in the station’s broadcasts. Following a 1965 ruling by the United States Court of Appeals in the case *The Office of Communications vs the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)*, members of the general public were able to challenge the renewal or transfer of television station licenses. It was a ground-breaking decision for minority groups who then used the ruling to target stations that did not offer minority programming or that refused to hire minority workers. The first petitions were filed against stations in San Francisco, California, by the group Community Coalition for Media Change for the poor quality and inaccessible airtime of the station’s minority programming.⁷²⁰

When examining the causes of the unrest that broke out in Black communities across America in the Summer of 1967, the Kerner Commission reaffirmed that the news media had “not communicated to the majority of their audience—which is white—a sense of the degradation, misery, and hopelessness of life in the ghetto.” The Commission recommended “the news media recruit and train African-American journalists in print and television media, and that the media should provide better coverage of African Americans and issues in their communities.”⁷²¹ In response, African American groups confronted the FCC and demanded they require stations across the country to comply with the 1964 Civil Rights Act. In Detroit, in direct response to the findings of the Kerner Commission,⁷²² the city’s public television station WTVS introduced the first African American news/entertainment show in 1968. Created by its host Tony Brown, it was called *Colored People’s Time*.⁷²³ The name was changed to *Detroit Black*

⁷¹⁷ Rabey, Lisa. *Finding Aid for Mary and Haley Bell Collection* (MSS170/PH309), Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit, Michigan.

⁷¹⁸ Sheila T. Gregory, ed., *A Legacy of Dreams: The Life and Contributions of Dr. William Venoid Banks* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1999):135.

⁷¹⁹ Mills, Kay. *Changing Channels: The Civil Rights Case that Transformed Television*. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2004:3-4/

⁷²⁰ “Minority Groups Demand.” *Jet*. December 16, 1971.

⁷²¹ “A History and Overview of Black-Identity Public Affairs.” *Thirteen Media with Impact*. WNET New York. February 28, 2009. www.thirteen.org.

⁷²² Hodges, Michael. “Pioneering Detroit black-affairs TV show turns 50.” *The Detroit News*. February 2, 2018.

⁷²³ “A History and Overview of Black-Identity Public Affairs.” *Thirteen Media with Impact*. WNET New York. February 28, 2009. www.thirteen.org.

Journal in 1969 and later became *American Black Journal*. The shows original intent was to “present the African-American experience unfiltered, without any need to interpret for a white audience.”⁷²⁴

In 1970, writer David Rambeau, an early participant in the Black Arts Movement and former director of Detroit’s Concept East Theater, became the executive producer of an Afro-centric television program called *For My People*, “the longest-running program dedicated to the news and public affairs information needs of African Americans in Detroit.”⁷²⁵ The program was part of a larger Black Nationalist project called Black Awareness in Television (BAIT) that provided community news from an Afro-centric viewpoint.

The first Black owned and operated television station in America, WGPR-TV, was established in Detroit in 1974 by William V. Banks after receiving approval from the FCC.⁷²⁶ The new station, which was constructed in two 1920s commercial buildings on Jefferson Avenue for \$1 million, gained national attention with articles in *New York Times* and *Newsweek*. Its schedule “provided in-depth penetration into the problems, goals, aspirations, and achievements of Blacks and related ethnic groups. Ninety percent of the programming on Channel 62 was produced in Detroit.”⁷²⁷ A popular afternoon teen dance show called “The Scene,” which ran from 1976 to 1987 brought in advertisers and revenue.

The Black Arts Movement

The Black Arts Movement embodied the concept of revolution through culture. Black artists, writers, and musicians gave new voice to the Black experience introducing radical politics into artistic expression in order to raise awareness of what it meant to be Black. The founding of the movement is attributed to Imamu Amiri Baraka who established Harlem’s Black Arts Repertory Theater in 1965, though an enclave of radical artists in Detroit is recognized as playing a “catalyzing role” in its birth.⁷²⁸

The awakening of Black Arts in Detroit began around 1958 when Wayne State University and the Cass Corridor “anchored an interracial bohemia” of Beat Generation poets and Black National political activists influenced by the Nation of Islam. The student center at Wayne State University and the nearby Burns and Decanter bars (both demolished), along with the integrated Unstabled Coffeeshouse (demolished) became the central meeting places for political discussion and artist performances. The Minor Key jazz club on Dexter Street (demolished) served as a showcase for avant-garde jazz musicians from Thelonious Monk to John Coltrane in the late 1950s and early 1960s.⁷²⁹ In 1964 a group of poets, artists, and musicians formed the Detroit Artists Workshop. According to John Sinclair, it was built on “the D.I.Y.” ethic and the artists were responsible for most everything, organizing concerts, publicity, design and printing their own books, and managing a gallery space.⁷³⁰

Detroit’s first Black-owned and operated theater, Concept East located at 401 E. Adams (demolished), was opened in 1960 by Woodie King Jr., actor Cliff Frazier, and writer David Rambeau.⁷³¹ The theater

⁷²⁴ Hodges, Michael.

⁷²⁵ Miller, Toby, ed. “Television: Critical Concepts in Median and Cultural Studies” Volume 5. *Ethnic Voices: Afrocentric public affairs television programming*. Alice. A. Tait. Taylor & Francis. 2003:35-37/

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁷ “FCC approved Black TV station for Detroit.” *Jet*. June 14, 1973.

⁷²⁸ Smelhurst, James. *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006:200.

⁷²⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁰ Sinclair, John. STRATA: A Detroit Movement Defined by John Sinclair.”

<http://www.detroitartistsworkshop.com/strata-a-detroit-movement-defined-by-john-sinclair/>

⁷³¹ Frazier, Cliff. “In the Beginning: Concept East.” *Black Masks*. www.Blackmasks.com

stood out not only for showcasing the work of African American playwrights but for being the first to employ Black actors in lead roles, management positions, and as directors and financial officers. According to historian James Smelhurst, “What distinguished Concept East was that African Americans made nearly all the executive decisions. . . Concept East changed the dynamic in Detroit.”⁷³² One of the theaters founders, Cliff Frazier, once said:

*We were never discouraged. We felt the creative juices evidenced by the phenomenal success of Motown. The Detroit creative talents endowed us with the ability to do anything. Those were magic moments. This was our theater. We made it. We controlled it. This had never happened before.*⁷³³

In 1964 Woodie King Jr. and Cliff Frazier moved to New York City where King had founded the New Federal Theater on the Lower East Side. David Rambeau took over as executive director of Concept East, a position he held until 1969. The theater closed in 1978.

One of the centers of Detroit’s Black Arts Movement was established when the Chicago-based African American poet Margaret Danner moved to Detroit in 1959 and was named poet-in-residence at Wayne State University in 1961. Danner approached Theodore Boone, the pastor of King Solomon Baptist Church in Detroit, and asked to use the abandoned parish house known as Boone House (6126 Fourteenth Street, demolished) for an African American cultural center. Boone House filled a void at a time when federal funding for community projects was not available to Black artists. Boone House offered workshops to both children and adults in music, writing, and the arts.⁷³⁴ In operation from 1961 to 1964, Boone House became a gathering place for Detroit’s Black artists, poets, and writers that included Woodie King Jr., Hoyt Fuller, and Dudley Randall. In 1964 the poet Langston Hughes spent time at Boone House when he came to Detroit to record an album of his poems for Barry Gordy Jr. at Motown Records.

Black Nationalism and the Music Industry

Strata Corporation was founded in 1968 by pianist Kenny Cox and trumpeter Charles Moore and operated until 1976. Based on Black Nationalist principles its purpose was to give Black musicians control of both the art and business of their music. Strata intended to counteract the “enormous machine which is seeking to monopolize, cheapen, and standardized Black Culture so as to exploit it.”⁷³⁵ According to Jazz historian Mark Stryker,

*They created a corporate model, believing a for-profit structure was the best way to support their artistic goals. They issued stock to raise capital and formed a company with three divisions to produce concerts and recordings, publish music and manage, book and market artists; there were plans to develop satellites across the country.*⁷³⁶

The corporation operated Strata Productions, Strata Records, and the Strata Gallery (46 Selden, extant), which provided performance space and was “the epicenter of the scene for Detroit’s most progressive

⁷³² Smelhurst, 203.

⁷³³ Frazier, *Black Masks*.

⁷³⁴ Thompson, Julius E. *Dudley Randall, Broadside Press, and the Black Arts Movement in Detroit*. Jefferson, NC: MacFarland & Company, 2005. October 25, 2019.

⁷³⁵ “Strata: Artist-Controlled Music” Clipping. Ann Arbor District Library. 1974. <https://aadl.org/node/197277>

⁷³⁶ Stryker, Mark. “‘Mingus: Jazz In Detroit’ Catches a Giant at a Moment Full of Possibility.” NPR/WKAR. November 9, 2018. <https://www.npr.org/2018/11/09/666123401/mingus-jazz-in-detroit-catches-a-giant-at-a-moment-full-of-possibility>

musicians and audience.”⁷³⁷ Musicians associated with the Strata included Rob Brooks, Ron English, and Bud Spangler. The gallery offered performance from modern jazz greats like Charles Mingus, Herbie Hancock, Weather Report, and Ornette Coleman.

The Tribe was an artist collective established in 1971 by tenor saxophonist Wendell Harrison, trombonist Phil Ranelin, trumpeter Marcus Belgrave, and pianist Harold McKinney. The “home base” for the Collective was the kitchen table at Harrison’s home on Chandler Street in the North End.⁷³⁸ The Tribe encouraged Black consciousness and self-determination in part through the publication of the *Tribe* magazine between 1972-1977. It was politically active in the campaign to elect Coleman Young as mayor of Detroit.⁷³⁹

Participants in Detroit’s Black Arts Movement included:

Hoyt Fuller. After graduating from Wayne State University in 1950, writer Hoyt Fuller worked as a journalist for Detroit’s African American newspapers, the *Detroit Tribune* and *Michigan Chronicle*, before becoming associate editor of *Ebony* magazine in 1954. Disenchanted with the treatment of African Americans in America, Fuller left the country in 1957 to tour Europe and West Africa. When he returned in 1960, he became editor of *The Negro Digest (Black World)* based in Chicago using the magazine to promote the Black Arts Movement.⁷⁴⁰

Dudley Randall. Poet Dudley Randall established the Broadside Press in 1965 in his Detroit home at 12651 Old Mill Street (extant) to publish his own works and to promote those of other African American poets. A graduate of Wayne State University, he earned a master’s degree in library science at the University of Michigan. His poem “The Ballad of Birmingham” written in 1963 memorialized the four Black girls murdered in the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. The poem became so popular with the nation’s Black community that Dudley published it as a broadside. He initially established the Broadside Press to retain his publishing rights for the poem, but Broadside Press “quickly became the most productive and influential publishing house for Black poetry” in the United States.⁷⁴¹ Randall viewed the Broadside Press “as an active participant both in the Black Arts Movement and in the on-going struggles of the Civil Rights Movement.”⁷⁴²

Herb Boyd. Author Herb Boyd was a graduate of Wayne State University in philosophy. He was instrumental in establishing the African American Studies program at Wayne State in 1968 and served as an instructor in the program until 1977.⁷⁴³ In the early 1970s, Boyd was the editor of *Tribe* magazine published by the artist collective of the same name.

⁷³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁸ Russonello, Giovanni. “The Enduring Power of the Detroit Jazz Collective Tribe.” *New York Times*. November 26, 2019. Stryker, Mark. “‘Mingus: Jazz in Detroit’ Catches A Giant at a Moment of Full Possibility.” *NPR, WKAR*. November 9, 2018. <https://www.npr.org/2018/11/09/666123401/mingus-jazz-in-detroit-catches-a-giant-at-a-moment-full-of-possibility>

⁷³⁹ Orlov, Piotr. “Tribe: Hometown: Detroit Sessions 1990-2014.” *Pitchfork*. October 25, 2019. <https://pitchfork.com/reviews/albums/tribe-hometown-detroit-sessions-1990-2014/>

⁷⁴⁰ Granshaw, Michelle. “Hoyt W. Fuller 1923-1981.” *Black Past*. www.Blackpast.org

⁷⁴¹ “Dudley Randall: 1914-2000. Biography.” *Academia Directory*. Hayden Randall 100. Wayne State University College of Liberal Arts & Studies.

⁷⁴²Thompson, Julius E. *Dudley Randall, Broadside Press, and the Black Arts Movement in Detroit*. Jefferson, NC: MacFarland & Company, 2005. October 25, 2019:32.

⁷⁴³ Herb Boyd. *The History Makers*. www.thehistorymakers.org/biography/herb-boyd

Woodie King Jr. a Detroit native since the age of five, King graduated from Cass Technical High School and worked as a Ford arc welder from 1955-1959. King studied at the Will-O-Way Apprentice and Repertory Theatre in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, where only a small number of parts were available to Black actors. This caused him to investigate the history of Blacks in the theater becoming a leading authority. While studying theater at Wayne State University in 1959, he founded the Concept East Theater, which operated until 1963. King moved to New York in 1964 where he founded the New Federal Theater, that has long nurtured Black playwrights and actors, and the National Black Touring circuit.⁷⁴⁴

Black Studies

Wayne State University hosted the city's first African Art Festival in 1960. Its significance was articulated by a staff writer for the *Michigan Chronicle* who stated, "never has there been any such program" and that the show "refresh[ed] the spirit of every [Black] person" who "experienced a new surge in pride at our limited glimpse into the African culture and tradition."⁷⁴⁵

Attempts to establish Black studies programs in colleges and universities around the nation began in the early 1960s, but those attempts were sometimes met with protests from both sides. Roy Wilcox, head of the National NAACP, opposed Afro-centric courses on the grounds that they promoted segregation. Black students, however, felt differently. By 1968 black students at high schools, colleges, and universities around the nation began demanding that courses on Afro-American Studies be offered. The administration at Harvard University was among the first to institute an organized program that offered a concentration in Afro-American studies as a degree. The University of Michigan began an Afro-American Studies program in 1969, which was patterned after Harvard's.

At Wayne State University (WSU) in Detroit the approach was different. The Association of Black Students (ABS) organized in April 1967 under the leadership of Lonnie Peek and Ozell Bonds and began to press for a Black Studies curriculum. Several Black students visited universities around the country to learn about their curriculums and develop a model for a program at Wayne State.⁷⁴⁶ Strongly influenced by Black Nationalism ideology, the student's demanded that the Institute be under the control of Black faculty and administrators. When negotiations with university administration faltered, the ABS decided to open an independent college called the Institute of Black Studies and Economic Development under the direction of James T. Daniels, a lawyer and graduate of Harvard. Public funding would not be used in order to keep the program autonomous. Instead it would rely on private sources.⁷⁴⁷ One of the first funders to contribute was the Catholic Archdiocese, which gave \$34,000.⁷⁴⁸ The Institute would not only teach Afro American history and African Culture it would also focus on community development, economics, and radical political thought relating to Black Americans.⁷⁴⁹ The Center for African Studies was launched in 1970 headed by Perry Hill. It became a department at Wayne State University in 1989.

Ed Vaughan, then a postal worker, began by selling books on Black history or by Black writers out of the trunk of his car. Recognizing there was an increasing interest, he purchased property at 12123 Dexter (extant) in Detroit in 1959 and opened a bookstore. Vaughn's Bookstore became a center for discussion

⁷⁴⁴"Woodie King, Jr." *The History Makers*. Oral History. April 18, 2003. www.thehistorymakers.org

⁷⁴⁵ "First African Art Festival A Smashing Success." *Michigan Chronicle*. February 27, 1960.

⁷⁴⁶ "Transformers: Wayne State students and the Black activist tradition." *Today@Wayne*. Wayne State University. Detroit, Michigan.

⁷⁴⁷ Meyer, Philip. "What's Behind Black Studies Fight." *Detroit Free Press*. April 4, 1969.

⁷⁴⁸ Bolnston, Gary, "Wayne Negroes Press for College of Black Studies." *Detroit Free Press*. September 20, 1968:12.

⁷⁴⁹ Blonston, Gary. "Blacks Setting up College in Detroit." *Detroit Free Press*. January 10, 1969.

on radical politics, Black Power, and Black Art. According to Vaughan, “by the mid-sixties the Black cultural revolution was on, and we were the centerpiece in Detroit—there was no other place to go.”⁷⁵⁰

International Afro-American Museum

Dr. Charles Wright moved from Dothan, Alabama, to Detroit in 1946 where he opened his own medical practice and was active in working for equality in health care and education. An interest in Black history caused him to open a small museum known as the International Afro-American Museum in the same apartment building where his office was located at 1549 West Grand (extant) in 1966. The museum celebrated Black achievements and even operated a mobile exhibit that toured the state. In the late 1970s, Wright began to push for the establishment of a purpose-built African American museum, which was finally realized in 1987. The Charles H. Wright Museum at 315 Warren was the largest Black history museum in the world, until the opening of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History opened in 2017.

⁷⁵⁰ Campbell, Eric Thomas. “Vaughn’s Bookstore: Axis of Black Consciousness.” *Negro Digest*. June 1967.

The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement

The importance of the church in African American spiritual, social, and political life in the 20th century can hardly be overstated. Detroit's Black churches remained, as they had since the 19th Century, the physical locus and main driver in securing civil rights for all Black Detroiters. Arthur Johnson, Executive Director of Detroit's NAACP once said, "The church was crucial not only because it was the most powerful institution in the Black community but because it did not have to answer to the white-controlled power structure."⁷⁵¹

Detroit's Black churches have a strong history of supporting civil rights and had no difficulty in serving as a platform to continuously push for equality. They held civil rights protest rallies, sponsored lectures often bringing in national civil rights leaders, raised money for out of state civil rights activities, provided educational opportunities, worked to improve the economic status of the city's African American population, led initiatives to improve housing opportunities and much more. One example that shows the breadth of their involvement occurred in 1934 in response to the murder of a Black newspaper editor in Atlanta. On February 11, the Detroit Pastors Brotherhood joined together to give one unified message from the pulpits of more than 40 of Detroit's leading black churches to "make a strong plea for the righteous application of justice. . . in its economic, industrial and political rights."⁷⁵² African Americans were encouraged to attend the event at the church of their choice. On the following Monday, a mass rally in support of civil rights was held at Shiloh Baptist Church (553 Benton, extant).

A small sampling of the many contributions Detroit's Black churches made to the Civil Rights Movement includes:

Second Baptist Church (441 Monroe Street). Detroit's oldest Black congregation played a leading role in the Underground Railroad and continued its civil rights tradition in the 20th Century. It was one of the most influential religious organizations in the city in its work to uplift the city's African American population during the Great Migration. Of note, Second Baptist Church played a key role in obtaining employment opportunities for African Americans at the Ford Motor Company. From 1919 until the 1930s, Ford worked closely with Reverend Robert Bradby to hire Black workers. Second Baptist Church has always been at the forefront of civil rights activism and worked closely with the Detroit chapters of the NAACP and Urban League. The Reverend Dr. A. A. Banks Jr., who became pastor of Second Baptist in 1946, was appointed to Michigan's newly established Civil Rights Commission in 1964 and remained a member until 1977.⁷⁵³ A modern addition designed by Black architect Nathan Johnson was added to the Gothic style church in 1968.

Bethel A.M.E. Church (5050 Richard Allen Boulevard). Organized in 1841, the church established a social service department in 1911 to assist African Americans coming to Detroit during the Great Migration. In 1928, William H. Peck became Reverend at Bethel A.M.E. He and his wife Fannie Peck were instrumental in promoting a successful economy in Detroit's African American neighborhoods. Reverend Peck was behind the establishment of the Booker T. Washington Trade Association that supported Black-owned business. In 1930 a group of Black women under the guidance of Fannie Peck formed the Housewives League of Detroit, which encouraged Black families to patronize African American businesses. The Housewives League also pressured White businesses to hire Black workers, using their buying power as leverage. The success of the Detroit Housewives League led to the founding of the National Housewives

⁷⁵¹ Johnson, Arthur L. *Race and Remembrance: A Memoir*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press. 2008:43.

⁷⁵² "Sermons Have been Formed on this Line." *The Tribune Independent* (Detroit). February 10, 1934:1.

⁷⁵³ "Rev. Dr. A. A. Banks, Jr." Boston-Edison Historic District. www.historicbostonedison.org.

League of America several years later, for which Fannie Peck served as President. In 1936 Fannie Peck organized the first state licensed Black credit union in America, which operated out of the basement at Bethel A.M.E. church.⁷⁵⁴ The church was located at 5050 St. Antoine Street (demolished) from 1925 to 1974 when it moved into its current building, a Modern church designed by the Detroit-based African American architect, Nathan Johnson.

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church (St. Antoine and Elizabeth Streets, demolished). Formed in 1846, St. Matthew's civil rights history began when its congregation assisted escaped slaves as part of the Underground Railroad. Richard Bagnall was named rector of the church in 1911. He was one of the founders of the Detroit Chapter of the NAACP and that organization met at St. Matthews for many years. It was also where NAACP lawyers prepared for the Ossian Sweet trial in 1925. The church's Reverend Everard Daniel was the second of Detroit's Black religious leaders to work with Henry Ford to find African American workers for Ford's factories in the 1920s. In 1971 the church merged with St. Joseph's Church. Today the merged congregation is known as St. Matthew's and St. Joseph's Episcopal Church and is located at 5930 Woodward Avenue in Midtown Detroit.⁷⁵⁵

Shiloh Baptist Church (537 Benton Street). The second oldest African American congregation in Detroit, it organized in 1881 and met at Eastern Market. Its original church building was designed by a Black draftsman, Carlos N. Stokes in 1920 and constructed in 1926 by a White architect based on Stokes's plans.⁷⁵⁶ The Reverend Solomon Ross took over the church in 1929, establishing a soup kitchen and employment center for jobless Black men during the Depression. Ross also exposed a scheme in which the White Detroit Baptist Union, who acted as a middleman for Black churches seeking mortgages from White banks, charged Black congregations excessively high interest rates.⁷⁵⁷ He was instrumental in saving the church building when it was slated for demolition for the construction Brewster Homes public housing project in 1935. Instead, it was incorporated into the project. In 1949 singer/actor and civil rights activist Paul Robeson spoke at Shiloh Baptist Church to a crowd of 2,000.⁷⁵⁸ Robeson spoke on the "Negro people's fight for economic security, civil rights and full equality how that fight is directly linked with the struggle for world peace and liberation of Africa."⁷⁵⁹ It was a bold move since Robeson, a reported Communist, had recently been vilified for a speech given in Peekskill, New York.

Hartford Baptist Church (First Institutional Baptist Church (6300 Hartford 1924-1977; 8700 James Couzens Freeway 1977 to present). This was the first African American church established west of Woodward Avenue after Detroit's African American population began to move from Black Bottom to the West Side in 1917. Established by the Reverend E. D. Edwards, who was soon succeeded by Reverend Charles A. Hill. The church's name was changed to Hartford Baptist Church in 1921. Hill had been an assistant of Reverend Robert Bradby's at

⁷⁵⁴ "Bethel A.M.E. Church Summary Information." Bentley Historical Library. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

⁷⁵⁵ McCaughan, Pat. "Detroit's historically Black St. Matthew's added to 'Freedom Network.'" *The Episcopal Church*. February 24, 2016.

⁷⁵⁶ "Greater Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church." Summary Information. Bentley Historical Library. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

⁷⁵⁷ "Proposed Greater Shiloh Baptist Church Historic District. Final Report." Historic Designation Advisory Board, City of Detroit:3.

⁷⁵⁸ "Peace Reigns as 5,000 Hear Paul Robeson." *Detroit Free Press*. October 1949:22.

⁷⁵⁹ "Paul Robeson Scheduled to Sing and Speak Here." *Detroit Tribune*. September 24, 1949:1.

Second Baptist Church, but disagreed with the hiring methods and stipulations the Ford Motor Company required for Black employees.⁷⁶⁰ According to the church history,

*Rev. Hill was also a political liberal and radical. He was one of the early fighters for minority rights in the city's new housing projects . . . he fought vigorously . . . in the struggle to form labor unions. UAW Ford Local 600 was organized in Hartford Church. Rev. Hill again put his life on the line during the race riots of 1943, protesting police brutality against Black citizens.*⁷⁶¹

Hartford Baptist Church often opened its doors to national speakers promoting civil rights, such as W.E.B. DuBois and singer Paul Robeson who performed there after being blacklisted as a Communist in the 1950s. After the Detroit Race Riot of 1943, Hill ran unsuccessfully for the Detroit Common Council in 1945. Upon his retirement in 1968, Hill was succeeded by Reverend Charles G. Adams “who wanted to continue Hartford’s historic interest in politics” and organized the Civic Affairs Committee to keep the church “politically and civically abreast.”⁷⁶² The church erected a one-story building at 6300 Hartford in 1924 and added a second story in 1945. A recreation/education wing was constructed in 1958. The church’s original location is still extant, but it was sold to New Ebenezer Church when Hartford’s congregation moved to its current site at 18700 James Couzens Freeway in 1977.

Plymouth Congregational Church (600 East Warren). Organized in 1919 by nine Congregationalists from Alabama, Plymouth Congregational became the first Black Congregational church in Michigan.⁷⁶³ The church purchased a former synagogue at 514 Garfield Street (demolished), which remained its home until 1947. It was a small congregation when Horace A. White, a recent graduate of Oberlin College, took over as pastor in 1936. White was a significant civil rights leader in Detroit throughout the 1940s and 1950s. He “turned Plymouth Church into a meeting place for aspiring Black unionists” working to unionize the Ford Motor Company.⁷⁶⁴ White was elected to the Michigan state senate in 1940 serving two terms. He was president of the Detroit Housing Commission at the time of the Sojourner Truth Homes public housing incident and was active in resolving the issue in favor of the city’s Black defense workers. White led the protest against the construction of the Birwood Wall in 1941.

In 1958 Reverend Nicholas Hood Sr. took over leadership of the church. In 1963 Hood was named the national chairman of the Committee for Racial Justice Now for the Congregational Church. In 1965 Hood ran for the Detroit Common Council in an attempt to unseat conservative council member Thomas Poindexter, who supported the use of restrictive housing ordinances.⁷⁶⁵ Hood won the election and retained his seat for 28 years. During that time housing was his chief interest and he stood up against the destruction of a Black neighborhood scheduled for urban renewal to create the Detroit Medical Center. To alleviate the displacement of hundreds of Black families, Hood was successful in having a housing component introduced into the new Medical Center site plan. The Medical Center Court apartments, constructed in 1963 were designed by Robert P. Madison, the first Black architect licensed in Ohio. Hood and other religious leaders

⁷⁶⁰ “Charles A. Hill Family Papers: 1917-1981. Biography. “Bentley Historical Library. The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

⁷⁶¹ “The Story of Hartford Church.” Hartford Memorial Baptist Church Members Orientation Class Session IV. September 1977:4 <http://hmbcdetroit.org/wp-content/uploads/Session-IV-The-History-of-Hartford.pdf>

⁷⁶² *Ibid*:5.

⁷⁶³ “History of Plymouth United Church of Christ.” Plymouth United Church of Christ. www.puccdetroit.org.

⁷⁶⁴ Pehl, Matthew. *The Making of Working-Class Religion*. Champagne-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2016.

⁷⁶⁵ Locke, Hubert G. *The Detroit Riot of 1967*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017.

were also able to have land in the new Medical Center campus set aside for the building of new Black churches and Plymouth Congregational Church was one of those churches. Constructed in 1973, it was also designed by Robert P. Madison. Hood was also instrumental in forcing the Building Trades Council to accept Black members.⁷⁶⁶

St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church (6114 28th Street). Established in 1919 at a time when the Episcopalian church practiced segregation, the church did not have a permanent home until Reverend Malcolm Dade took over its leadership in 1936. He convinced the Bishop to provide funding for a church in the growing African American neighborhood off of Tireman Boulevard known as the West Side.⁷⁶⁷ Constructed in 1938, St. Cyprian Church became a center of support for Black members of the UAW in their efforts to unionize the River Rouge plant. Dade opposed the paternalism of Henry Ford and disliked the sense of indebtedness that Black workers felt to the Ford Motor Company for their jobs. Horace Sheffield, a significant Black labor union organizer for the UAW, was also involved with the church.⁷⁶⁸

Calvary Baptist Church (1000 Robert Bradby Drive). Organized in 1919, the church assisted rural African Americans arriving in Detroit at the height of the Great Migration. Calvary Baptist was the church boxer Joe Louis attended in his youth. Days after Louis was victorious over Max Baer and captured the world heavyweight championship, the church honored the future civil rights activist with "Joe Louis Day" on September 29, 1935. More than 2,500 people crowded into the church and an estimated 5,000 lined the surrounding streets.⁷⁶⁹ The original church building on Joseph Campau Street was demolished in the 1970s. Calvary Baptist built a new church within the urban renewal area of the former Black Bottom neighborhood in 1977. Designed by Modern architect Gunnar Birkerts, the vibrant orange rib cladding of the small, sculptural, triangular church stands out in its surroundings.

The Nation of Islam (NOI) (11529 Linwood). Founded on Hastings Street in Detroit in 1930 by Wallace D. Fard, his assistant Elijah Muhammed succeeded him in leadership in 1934. The NOI combined traditional Islamic teachings with the concept of Black Nationalism. Its creator favored the establishment of a separate Black nation within the Southern United States. The NOI supported economic independence for African Americans and the establishment of Black businesses. Its followers were encouraged to drop their slave names and instead adopt "X" as a symbol of their independence. The NOI moved to its Linwood location in 1959 and it was here that the church gained significance in the 1950s with the rise of Malcom X an orator and leader in the Black Power Movement in the early 1960s.

Ebenezer African American Methodist Church (5151 W. Chicago). Established by members of the Detroit Colored Society in 1871, the church building on Erskine Street, which had been its home since 1874 was demolished for a federal public housing/slum clearance project in 1935. At that time, the congregation purchased the former Shaarey Zedek Temple on West Chicago Avenue, which burned in 1960 and was replaced with its current structure. Church founder Reverend Richard Allen was an early investor in the Ford Motor Company and enjoyed a close relationship with Henry Ford in the early 20th Century. The church served as a platform for civil rights activism and hosted many civil rights speakers including national leaders such as Mary

⁷⁶⁶ "History of Plymouth United Methodist Church." Plymouth United Church of Christ. www.pucc.detroit.org.

⁷⁶⁷ "St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church." *Detroit 1701*. www.detroit1701.org.

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid*.

⁷⁶⁹ Pooler, James S. "The Congregation Cheers when Joe Goes to Church." *Detroit Free Press*. September 30, 1935:1

McLeod Bethune, Walter White, Ralph Bunche, Adam Clayton Powell and Eleanor Roosevelt as well as local civil rights activists such as Rosa Gragg and Daisy Bates.⁷⁷⁰

King Solomon Baptist Church (6100 14th Street). Originally built in 1917 by a white congregation and known as Temple Baptist Church, the building was purchased in 1951 by an African American congregation led by Reverend Theodore S. Boone, a writer and historian, who renamed the church King Solomon Baptist Church. The church is located in the Northwest Goldberg neighborhood of Detroit. King Solomon Baptist Church has long supported civil rights activities, in part because the church's 5,000-seat auditorium was one of the largest spaces available to the city's Black population at a time when they were barred from using meeting space in hotels and venues around the city. Thurgood Marshall spoke here, as a representative of the NAACP shortly after the U.S. Supreme Court decision on *Brown v. the Board of Education*. In 1955 the church was the site of "Operation Justice," a two-day marathon of song and speech that featured Mamie Bradley, the mother of Emmet Till who had been brutally murdered in Mississippi. In November 1963 Malcolm X gave his "Message to the Grassroots" speech here, which changed the course of the civil rights movement signaling the rise of the Black Power Movement.

New Bethel Baptist (8430 Linwood Street). Reverend Clarence LaVaughan "C. L." Franklin, a native of Mississippi, came to Detroit in 1946 from a ministry in Buffalo, New York. Franklin hosted a popular Sunday night radio program and his oratory style earned him a national reputation as the "Million Dollar Voice." He recorded seventy-six albums featuring sermons and gospel songs, collaborating with singers Mahalia Jackson and Clara Ward.⁷⁷¹ Artists like B.B. King, Sam Cooke, Nat King Cole, and Sarah Vaughn often visited the Franklin home on LaSalle Street (7145 LaSalle) and were a strong influence on his daughter, singer Aretha Franklin.⁷⁷² New Bethel Baptist Church moved in 1961 to the former Oriole Theater and Franklin worked with African American architect Nathan Johnston to modernize the building as a church. It remains in this location today. Politically active, C.L. Franklin was a leader in Detroit's civil rights activities and served as the chair of the Detroit Council on Human Rights hosting its first meeting at New Bethel Baptist Church in 1963.⁷⁷³ He was the principal organizer of the Detroit Walk to Freedom in June 1963, the largest civil rights march in America, until it was overshadowed by the March on Washington just a few months later.

Shrine of the Black Madonna (7625 Linwood Street). The son of physician Albert Cleage Sr., one of the founders of Dunbar Hospital, Albert Cleage Jr. was a highly educated theologian earning his undergraduate degree from Wayne State University and a doctorate from Oberlin College before undertaking postdoctoral work at the University of California.⁷⁷⁴ In 1951 he returned to Detroit to become pastor at St. Mark's Presbyterian Church. As his radicalism and interest in social justice mounted, a split in the congregation developed and Cleage and his followers left in 1953 to form a new church, St. Mark's Congregational, renamed Central Congregational Church in 1954. After meeting for three years at Cleage's home at 2254 Chicago Boulevard, Central Congregational purchased the former Brewster-Pilgrim Church at 7625 Linwood Street in 1957. It was here that Cleage's civil rights activism began to take root.

⁷⁷⁰ "Ebenezer AME Church Local Historic District Study Committee Report." Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board. City of Detroit. March 5, 2003.

⁷⁷¹ "C.L. Franklin." *New World Encyclopedia*. https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/C._L._Franklin

⁷⁷² "The Enlightening Story of C.L. Franklin." WJR. August 30, 2018. Wjr.com

⁷⁷³ Galster, George. *Driving Detroit: The Quest for Respect in the Motor City*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014:26.

⁷⁷⁴ Biography. Albert B. Cleage Jr. Papers. Bentley Historical Library. University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, Michigan.

According to his *New York Times* obituary, Cleage once said “The basic problem facing Black people is their powerlessness. You can’t integrate power and powerlessness.”⁷⁷⁵ By the 1960s Cleage was aligning with supporters of Black Nationalism and producing a small but influential paper called the *Illustrated News* that promoted Black Power. On Easter Sunday 1967 at his church on Linwood Street, the Reverend Albert Cleage revealed a striking image, painted by Black artist Glanton Dowdell, that was inspirational to many in the Black community, a portrait portraying Jesus and Mary as Black. Its unveiling marked the formation of the Pan African Orthodox Church, better known as the Shrine of the Black Madonna. His obituary in the *New York Times* states that Cleage, “built his Detroit church, the Shrine of the Black Madonna, into an important center for Black theology and political Power . . . one of the biggest and most influential in the nation.”⁷⁷⁶ It provided the foundation for the formation of the Black Christian Nationalist Movement in Detroit in 1971. The church was the location of many civil rights activities and events. For example, Stokely Carmichael spoke in the 1960s to define what was meant by Black Power and the church was the location for the People’s Tribunal following the Algiers Motel murders.

Black Catholic Churches and Schools

Historically, the association between Detroit’s Catholic churches and the African American community has been uneven. Some White priests harbored racist beliefs and used their pulpits to promote segregation and racial discord. Others were strongly progressive in their views and worked to end discrimination. In the early 20th Century, Detroit’s Catholic churches practiced Jim Crow segregation that isolated African American parishioners from the church’s White population. African Americans could use church facilities only during designated times and they were relegated to the balcony during traditional church services. No African American priests were ordained. Rarely were African Americans able to hold church offices or participate in any fraternal organizations associated with the church.

The first African American Catholic mission in Detroit, was founded in 1911 in the basement of St. Mary’s Catholic Church by Norman Dukette and was named St. Peter Claver in 1914, Dukette became Detroit’s first ordained African American priest in 1926. Angered by the prejudicial treatment African Americans continued to receive from the Archdiocese, Dukette lobbied to establish a new parish for Black Catholics. St. Peter Claver Parish became “the first full parish in Detroit dedicated to Black Catholics.”⁷⁷⁷

Over the next decades African Americans continued to work of racial equality within the Catholic church. A Detroit chapter of the Federated Colored Catholics was formed in 1928 with the assistance of A. R. Feliciano, then head of the Detroit NAACP. In 1942 Detroit’s Black Catholic churches took on a stronger role in civil rights activism with the founding of the Catholic Interracial Council. In the 1950s the Detroit Diocese began to end the practice of racially segregated parishes and work toward integration. Among the leaders in this effort was a White priest, Father Hubert Roberge of St. Leo’s Catholic Church, who became the head of that church in 1953. During the 1967 Rebellion, one of Detroit’s most iconic civil rights symbols was created when a statue of Jesus, which stands in the grotto of the Sacred Heart Major Seminary (2701 Chicago Boulevard), had its face and hands painted black by protestors and retained as a show of solidarity with the city’s Black community.

⁷⁷⁵ “Albert Cleage is Dead at 88; Led Black Nationalist Church.” *New York Times*. February 27, 2000.

⁷⁷⁶ *Ibid*.

⁷⁷⁷ “Black Catholic History.” History of the Archdiocese in Detroit. Archdiocese of Detroit.
<https://www.aod.org/ministries/Black-catholic-ministry/Black-catholic-history/>

One way in which Detroit's Black Catholic churches played a significant role in the Civil Rights Movement was by providing educational opportunities to African American children through parochial schools. Until 1940, the majority of Detroit's Catholic parochial schools did not admit Blacks; the first to do so was St. Leo's High School, which began admitting a small number of African American students in the late 1930s.⁷⁷⁸ Black Catholic schools operated in Detroit's overcrowded central city until the mid-1960s when Black parents demanded that the school integration required by the 1954 ruling in *Brown vs. the Board Education* finally be implemented in Detroit and opportunities in public education increased for African American children.

According to historian Leslie Woodcock Tentler, the following schools operated by Detroit's Catholic churches were open to African Americans:

- **Saint Peter Claver (13305 Grove Street).** Detroit's first African American parish, established in 1929, opened a school in a former four-family flat at Beaubien and Elliot Streets in 1936.⁷⁷⁹ In 1938 the parish was gifted the buildings of the former Sacred Heart Parish and St. Peter Claver School moved there in 1938.⁷⁸⁰
- **Saint Benedict the Moor (1740 Mount Elliot Street).** The church was founded in 1927 by Father Norman Dukette, Detroit's first ordained African American priest and served the West Side neighborhood, a middle class African American population. Saint Benedict operated a school from 1952 to 1969.
- **Holy Ghost Church.** Established in 1939, Holy Ghost was located in the Conant Gardens neighborhood and also served parishioners from the Sojourner Truth Homes public housing project. From 1951 to 1961 Holy Ghost was led by Father Leonard Cunningham, the first African American priest to be ordained in Charleston, South Carolina. Holy Ghost opened its school in 1949.
- **Our Lady of Victory (10113 Eight Mile Road).** Founded in 1943 through the efforts of laywoman Anna Bates, a West Indian Catholic that lived in the historically Black Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood in northwest Detroit. She petitioned the Archdiocese for ten years before receiving approval to start a church for the neighborhood. Just blocks from the Birwood Wall, the church first met at a community center before a structure was built on land donated by Thomas Watson, an African American tavern owner. The church operated a school from 1954-1970.
- **Sacred Heart Church (1000 Eliot Street).** As the congregation of St. Peter Claver, Detroit's first African American parish, grew it moved to a former German Catholic church on Mt. Elliot Street and was renamed Sacred Heart Church where it served the African American Brewster Homes public housing project. Sacred Heart was the "premier" Black catholic church in the city from 1936 to 1948. The church opened a school in 1936.
- **St. George Catholic Church.** Located in north central Detroit, the former Lithuanian parish whose school had refused to accept Black students, was re-established in 1949 as an African

⁷⁷⁸ Woodcock Tentler, Leslie. *Seasons of Grace: A History of the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990.

⁷⁷⁹ "Pastors' Wish Now Realized." *Detroit Free Press*. August 22, 1936:4.

⁷⁸⁰ Woodcock Tentler, Leslie. *Seasons of Grace: A History of the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990.

American parish. When the school reopened in 1950 its student population was almost all Black. With active community involvement, St. George operated one of the most successful Black Catholic schools in Detroit from 1950 to 1965. It was closed in 1965 and demolished as part of the Chrysler Freeway urban renewal project.⁷⁸¹

- **St. Leo's Catholic Church (4860 15th Street).** The first integrated Catholic high school in Detroit, it began admitting African American students around 1930.

In 1968 the Michigan Catholic School Superintendent's Committee announced they would teach African American history in all of Michigan's 675 Catholic schools. The history was to be interwoven into general American history on all levels. Some Catholic Schools also offered a semester of a specialized Black history class.⁷⁸²

⁷⁸¹ Davis, Nancy M. "Finding Voice: Revisiting Race and American Catholicism in Detroit." *American Catholic Studies*. Vol. 114, No. 3 (2003); 39-58.

⁷⁸² Michigan Catholic Conference. "Negro History to be Taught." *Times Herald* (Port Huron, MI). June 17, 1968:4.

Detroit's Black Social Clubs and Civil Rights Organizations

In addition to Detroit's African American, churches who provided charitable work and social uplift programs that also benefited civil rights, a number of organizations were established to directly engage in legal and political action to secure civil rights. Social clubs were also supportive of civil rights holding fundraisers, providing a variety of education programs, promoting Black history and literature, and working toward integration.

Alpha House (293 Eliot Street (extant)). Gamma Lambda is the alumni chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha, the first African American fraternity in the United States founded at Cornell University in 1906. The Detroit Gamma Lambda Chapter was established in 1919 and purchased the house on Eliot Street in Detroit in 1939. The organization operated a number of significant programs including *Go-to-High-School*, *Go-to-College*, which began in 1925, and *A Voteless People is a Hopeless People* established in 1932. During the 1950s, "the Alpha House ultimately served as a think tank and staging area for many initiatives of the Civil Rights Movement."⁷⁸³

The Detroit Civic Rights Commission (CRC) formed in 1933 was headed by civil rights activist, Snow F. Grigsby. The Commission's focus was to expand Black employment and to "break down the barriers of gross discrimination in municipal departments and the securing of city jobs for Negroes which they are justly entitled as tax payers."⁷⁸⁴ Under Grigsby's direction, "Between 1933 and 1945, the CRC developed into the most effective protest organization in the community."⁷⁸⁵ They made significant headway in integrating the Detroit Fire Department, fought for equal treatment for domestic employees, provided economic education programs and fought to increase the number of Black teachers in Detroit's schools.⁷⁸⁶ In 1939 the CRC demanded that the Detroit Edison Company hire more Black workers—of the 8,500 employed by company only 40 were Black and those held low skill positions such as janitor.⁷⁸⁷

Detroit Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The Detroit Branch of the NAACP was founded in 1912, shortly after the national organization formed in New York City in 1906. The Detroit chapter was first headed by William Osby and initially met at St. Matthew's Episcopal Church (8850 Woodward, extant). One of its founders, Robert Bagnall, the rector of St. Mathews, was named district organizer of the Great Lakes Region. Under his direction, between 1918 and 1931 the Detroit branch brought in more funding than any other NAACP branch in the country and became the flagship of the national organization. During his time with the NAACP, Bagnall "led successful campaigns against school segregation, police brutality, and discrimination at Ford Motor Company."⁷⁸⁸ In 1925 with the election of Reverend Robert Bradby Sr. as president, the NAACP began meeting at Second Baptist Church (441 Monroe, extant).⁷⁸⁹ The Detroit NAACP gained national attention when it took up the housing case of Dr. Ossian Sweet in 1925 and hired the acclaimed lawyer Chares

⁷⁸³ Alpha House. National Register of Historic Places Draft Nomination 2020. State Historic Preservation Office. Lansing, Michigan.

⁷⁸⁴ "Civic Group to Fight for Domestics." *Pittsburgh Courier*. May 12, 1934:19.

⁷⁸⁵ Mjagkij, Nina, ed. *Organizing Black America*. New York: Routledge, 2013:188.

⁷⁸⁶ "Out of Town News and Other Personal Items. *The New York Age*. May 16, 1936:10.

⁷⁸⁷ "Seek Utilities Jobs in Detroit." *Pittsburgh Courier*. January 21, 1939:1.

⁷⁸⁸ Lanset, Andy. "One of the County's Earliest African-American Radio Programs on WNYC 1929-1930." *NYPR Archives & Preservation*. February 18, 2019.

⁷⁸⁹ Detroit NAACP website. <http://detroitnaacp.org/about/branch-history/>

Darrow to defend him. Between 1920 and 1943 membership rose from 2,000 to 25,000⁷⁹⁰ and the Detroit Chapter became the largest NAACP Chapter in the nation. In 1948 NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall included a lawsuit filed by Detroit couple Orsel and Minnie McGhee in a U.S. Supreme Court case that declared the use of racially restrictive housing covenants unconstitutional. A decision in the 1950s to expel members that had reported ties to the Communist party, caused a rift and the chapter's membership declined. The Black community questioned the NAACP's continued usefulness in light of the growing radicalism of the Civil Rights Movement. In the mid-1960s the Detroit NAACP regained its effectiveness by sponsoring a series of prominent protests and boycotts. For example, in July 1963 it held demonstrations at more than 20 apartment buildings across Detroit to protest discrimination in rental policies.⁷⁹¹ Since its formation, the NAACP has been one of the leading civil rights organizations in the city of Detroit. It has been devoted to providing legal assistance in order to gain equality in housing, employment, education, and criminal justice for Detroit's African American residents.

Detroit Urban League (208 Mack Avenue, extant). The Detroit branch of the National Urban League, an early civil rights organization based in New York City, was founded in 1916 at the request of the Associated Charities of Detroit.⁷⁹² It was first headed by Forrester B. Washington (1916-1918), followed by John C. Dancy Jr. (1918-1960) who served as its head for forty-two years. According to the *Detroit Free Press*, the mission of the Detroit Urban League (DUL) was to "integrate the Negro into modern urban communities with mutual benefit for all" through an approach that was "largely sociological."⁷⁹³ The DUL used negotiation, meditation, and integrated teamwork to accomplish its mission, as opposed to the NAACP which used legal action. In the 1920s the DUL concentrated on acclimatizing rural Southern Blacks to northern urban life. They established a community center at 553 E Columbia (demolished) that became an "intellectual and cultural center for Negroes;" developed the Brewster Center, a recreation center where boxer Joe Louis trained; advanced hiring of African Americans in federal, state, and city government including Detroit's Welfare and Recreation Department and the Recorder's Court; and assisted African Americans in obtaining unskilled labor jobs in Detroit's auto plants. The DUL was instrumental in the development of the Eight Mile-Wyoming Neighborhood as the president of their board purchased the land and opened it to development to African Americans to construct homes.⁷⁹⁴ In 1931 they established the Green Pastures, a summer camp for Detroit's Black inner city children, near Jackson, Michigan. The camp provided insight into African American history and significant contributions by African Americans, as well as vocational training and "deportment and good manners."⁷⁹⁵ During World War II, they worked with organized labor, especially the CIO, to increase the number of Blacks in skilled labor jobs. In 1944, the DUL purchased the home of architect Albert Kahn at 208 Mack Avenue, with funding from the Kresge and McGregor Foundations, to use as their headquarters.⁷⁹⁶

Prince Hall Lodge (3500 McDougall, extant). Prince Hall Lodge, an African American equivalent to the Freemasons, was founded in Boston by Prince Hall during the period of the American Revolutionary War. A Michigan chapter was established in Detroit in 1859. Prince Hall Lodge became a leading social justice and Black welfare organization, seeking to redress discrimination in schooling, voting, and other civil rights issues. By 1872 there were three Prince Hall Lodges in Detroit. In 1915, after the Michigan

⁷⁹⁰ *Finding Aid: NAACP Detroit Branch Records UR000244*. Walter Reuther Library. Wayne State University. Detroit, Michigan. January 6, 2020.

⁷⁹¹ "NAACP Set to Picket Apartments." *Detroit Free Press*. July 13, 1963:13.

⁷⁹² Chavis, John and William McNitt. *A Brief History of the Detroit Urban League*. Michigan Historical Collections. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. 1971.

⁷⁹³ George, Collins. "Three Groups Lead Fight for Negroes." *Detroit Free Press*. June 21, 1957:3A.

⁷⁹⁴ "League Boasts Record Achievements." *Michigan Chronicle*. April 23, 1960.

⁷⁹⁵ Wolcott, Victoria. *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. 2001.

⁷⁹⁶ "League Boasts Record Achievements." *Michigan Chronicle*. April 23, 1960.

state legislature proposed a law that would criminalize interracial marriage, the Prince Hall Grand Lodge organized a delegation to protest the measure in Lansing. During the Great Migration, Prince Hall lodges in Detroit provided crucial aid and comfort to recent African American arrivals and were proud centers of Black prosperity and culture.⁷⁹⁷ In 1951 the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Michigan purchased the former Amaranth Temple on McDougall Street in Detroit for their new fraternal headquarters.

Lawyers representing Prince Hall lodges, especially in the South, relied on national membership resources to fund prolonged legal battles in local, state, and federal courts. These legal battles established national leadership networks and legal strategies that strongly influenced future civil rights-related work.⁷⁹⁸ In 1958 Thurgood Marshall, a Prince Hall member, declared that many of the NAACP's civil rights cases that were argued and won before the U.S. Supreme Court could not have been undertaken without the financial support of the nation's Prince Hall Lodges.⁷⁹⁹

Detroit Association of Colored Women's Clubs (DAWC) (5461 Brush Street). The DACWC was formed in 1921 by Veronica Lewis, bringing together seven smaller social and church-related clubs. Their purpose was to “promote charitable, educational, religious, social activities, and community uplift, and to aid in the solution of racial problems.”⁸⁰⁰ One of its members, Dr. Rosa Gragg, had worked at the national level with Eleanor Roosevelt and Mary McLeod Bethune on ways to improve race relations during the Roosevelt Administration. Gragg spearheaded the purchase of the former William Lennane estate at 326 Ferry Street in Detroit in 1941 to create a place for recreation and education. The clubhouse building itself became a physical example of the racism that African Americans encountered in Detroit. Though unverified, tradition states that the original façade of the building faced onto Ferry Street but because African Americans could not own property west of Brush Street, the entrance had to be moved to a secondary entrance on Brush Street.

Dr. Gragg was elected DACWC president in 1958 and served until 1962. During her tenure, the club adopted an aggressive civil rights agenda, and her mission was to have “representation from this Association on every board, committee, or commission in the city of Detroit.” The club offered young Black women workshops to train them to become civic leaders. On the national level, Dr. Gragg was instrumental in designating the Frederick Douglass house in Virginia a National Historic Site. She served as president of the National Association of Colored Women from 1958-1964 and throughout her career was highly influential in promoting African American equality in health, education, business and more.

Some examples of the many African American women's clubs that were active in civil rights activities in Detroit include:

- **Entre Nous Club** formed in 1923 with the motto “to create community spirit, to stimulate race pride.” The club operated the West Side Community Center out of Hartford Avenue Baptist

⁷⁹⁷ Taken from the “Prince Hall Grand Lodge Historic District Study Committee Report.” 2018. Historic Designation Advisory Board. City of Detroit:5.

⁷⁹⁸ Liazos, Ariane and Ganz, Marshall. “Duty to the Race: African American Fraternal Orders and the Legal Defense of the Right to Organize.” Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.

⁷⁹⁹ Muraskin, William. “Middle-Class Blacks in a White Society: Prince Hall Freemasonry in America.” Oakland: University of California Press, 1975.

⁸⁰⁰ Notes from the “History of the Michigan State Association of Colored Women, 1955.” Holcomb, Johnson, and Macklin. State of Michigan Archives 60-14, Box 1. MUS84-500-11. Resource Planning Protection Process for Context of Black Women's Philanthropic Organizations. 1983 (Black Sites 1). Michigan State Historic Preservation Office, Lansing, MI.

Church. They often sponsored civil rights speakers like Snow F. Grigsby who spoke on topics like the “The Status of the Negro in Industry in Detroit” in 1936.⁸⁰¹

- **New Era Study Club** founded in 1926, to promote the study of Black history and culture and raise awareness of the contributions of Black musicians and artists. One of the club members, Betty Lackey, became the first woman president of the Detroit NAACP chapter.
- **Progressive Women’s Civic Association.** Established in 1925, it later “successfully campaigned for Black clerk positions in Kroger’s stores in Black neighborhoods on the West Side.”⁸⁰²

Nacirema Club (6118 30th Street). Organized in 1922 in Detroit’s West Side neighborhood, it was one of the few social clubs that was open to African Americans. Its name is “American” spelled backwards. Open to all walks of life—doctors, teachers, business professionals and factory workers—the club provided a place for African Americans to hold banquets and weddings when segregation excluded them from using most venues in the city. The club also opened its doors to organizations working for civil rights. For example, in 1934 the Detroit Branch of the National Alliance of Postal Employees held regular meetings at the club as they worked to “safeguard the rights of Negro postal workers” and address “unsettled working conditions among postal employees.”⁸⁰³

St. Antoine YMCA (1930 St. Antoine Street, demolished). Between 1916 and 1924 six neighborhood branches of the YMCA were built in Detroit to accommodate the city’s growing population.⁸⁰⁴ The St. Antoine branch constructed in 1924 was dedicated for use by African Americans. The St. Antoine YMCA was built with funding assistance from the Jewish philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, noted for constructing Black schools across the South. Rosenwald had developed a partnership with the YMCA in 1911 to construct facilities for African Americans. By the time Detroit was ready to build its YMCA building, Rosenwald required that communities raise \$125,000 in order to receive \$25,000 in support. Detroit’s YMCA was one of twenty-four YMCAs for African Americans built in the United States between 1912 and 1933 with funding from Rosenwald.⁸⁰⁵ The construction of St. Antoine’s was at first met with strong opposition from the city’s African American community who viewed a separate facility as continued segregation, but the dissent was eventually overcome. When it was completed, the St. Antoine YMCA offered modern facilities, such as a gymnasium and swimming pool, that few African Americans had had access to in the past. It also offered rooms for African American travelers when most hotels excluded Blacks. St. Antoine’s YMCA hosted classes and lectures and served as a meeting place for Black organizations like the Booker T. Washington Business Association.

Lucy Thurman YWCA (demolished). In 1932 the Lucy Thurman YWCA was opened at 568 East Elizabeth Street. It was a center for civil rights discussion, sponsoring speakers and offering classes. Its dining hall “was the only place in Detroit where Blacks and whites could meet and dine together in dignity.”⁸⁰⁶

The Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) (demolished). Founded in Jamaica by Marcus Garvey in 1914 the UNIA was a radical self-help group for African Americans. Garvey moved to New York City in 1916 and began developing a network of UNIA branches across America and by 1921 the

⁸⁰¹ “Entre Nous Club.” *Detroit Tribune*. January 18, 1936:2.

⁸⁰² Thomas, Richard W. *Life for Us is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992:222.

⁸⁰³ “Local Postal Workers Hold Vital Confab.” *The Tribune Independent* (Detroit). April 21, 1934:5.

⁸⁰⁴ YMCA of Metropolitan Detroit, Metropolitan Offices Records: 1877-2012 Finding Aid. Bentley Historical Archives, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

⁸⁰⁵ Mjagkij, Nina. “A Peculiar Alliance: Julius Rosenwald, the YMCA, and African Americans 1910-1933.” American Jewish Archives. http://americanjewisharchives.org/publications/journal/PDF/1992_44_02_00_mjagkij.pdf

⁸⁰⁶ “YWCA USA-Historically at the Forefront.” *YWCA Metropolitan Detroit*. ywcadetroit.org.

national organization had three million members. The Detroit branch was founded in 1920 by the Reverend A. D. Hill and F. Levi Lord. The organization soon purchased a building at 1516 Russell Street (extant), which they named Liberty Hall.⁸⁰⁷ It housed its own restaurant at a time when access to public accommodations for Detroit's African Americans were limited.⁸⁰⁸ Garvey advocated for Black unity and self-help in part through the establishment and patronage of Black businesses. The national UNIA produced its own publication *Negro World* and started its own business, the Black Star steamship line, which never achieved financial success. Garvey also supported a Back to Africa movement, advocating for the creation of a new state controlled by Blacks. Financial irregularities and charges of mail fraud eventually resulted in Garvey's deportation in 1927. The UNIA began to splinter and its Second Vice President William Sherrill, a Detroit former columnist for the *Michigan Chronicle*, stepped into a leadership role for the UNIA. In 1945 the Detroit Chapter become one of the most successful branches of the UNIA. Sherrill was long a supporter of Black Nationalism and Back to Africa movements supporting colonization in Liberia.⁸⁰⁹

Negro Nationalist Society of America. Founded in 1933 in Detroit by attorney Ramon A. Martinez, the group developed a "Back to Africa" plan to create a new Black nation in Liberia. Known as the Greater Liberian Plan, it promoted the idea that reparations be paid to African Americans to enable them to create a new a homeland where they could thrive without prejudice. In the 1930s the United States and European countries were grappling with the issue of war debt settlement with numerous African nations. Martinez suggested that as part of that solution, land in Western Liberia be nationalized and new infrastructure be built so that American Blacks could colonize a new nation.⁸¹⁰ In 1938 it was revealed that a bill introduced in the U.S. Congress by Mississippi Senator Bilbo, to pay the expenses of 2 million African Americans to return to Africa had, ironically, been proposed by the Negro Nationalist Society of America.⁸¹¹



Detroit Free Press, February 19, 1933

Cotillion Club. Founded in 1948 as a service organization for professional men, the Cotillion Club became the most prestigious African American club in Detroit. Their goal was to increase the social mobility of African Americans within the city and break traditional color barriers. To that end, they were involved in "employment inequities, business development, greater voter registration and voter participation, expanded insurance coverage for automobile owners, improved relations between the Negro community and the Detroit Police Department."⁸¹² Club members worked in support of the establishment of Michigan's Fair Employment Practices Commission and were active in politics supporting the campaigns of Black politicians such as Charles Diggs Jr. who ran for the Michigan State Senate in 1950. The Club sponsored fund drives to support NAACP activities. In 1956 Damon Keith served as its president. In 1961 Black attorney George Crockett was president and under his direction the Club became

⁸⁰⁷ Dillard, Angela. *Faith in the City*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010.

⁸⁰⁸ Stein, Judith. *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991:47.

⁸⁰⁹ "William Sherrill to Speak Here." *Detroit Tribune*. April 20, 1957:7.

⁸¹⁰ "Detroit Negro Leaders Vision Ethiopian Utopia on Western Shores of Africa." *Detroit Free Press*. February 19, 1933:4.

⁸¹¹ "Reveal Negro Supplied Senator Bilbo with 'Back to Africa' Plans." *Pittsburgh Courier*. July 30, 1938:5.

⁸¹² "Cotillion Club." *Detroit Tribune*. December 1, 1956:3.

a significant factor in establishing the bloc of Black voters that overwhelmingly elected Democrat Jerome Cavanagh as Mayor of Detroit in 1961 in order to stop police brutality against Blacks.⁸¹³ In addition to its activism, the Cotillion Club hosted an annual debutante ball.

Association for the Study of Negro Life and History-Detroit Chapter. The parent organization was founded by Carter G. Woodson in Chicago in 1916 to promote African American history. His work led to the establishment of Black History Month. The Detroit Chapter was founded in 1924 and the first president was Louis C. Blount. The organization gained momentum through the work of Sylvia Tucker who established a Negro History Week in Detroit. After merging with the Inkster branch in the 1940s, the metro Detroit branch became one of the largest and most influential in the nation. The organization sponsored study groups and held scholarly lectures and organized conventions on Black history. Detroit public schools were encouraged by the organization to provide information on Black history in their libraries. One school that stood out in this regard was Garfield Junior High under the leadership of principal Charles Daly.⁸¹⁴ In the 1960s the organization saw a resurgence under the leadership of Arthur D. Coar and a new emphasis on Afro American Studies curriculums.

⁸¹³ Rich, Wilbur. *Coleman Young: From Social Activist to Power Broker*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999:56.

⁸¹⁴ Jackson, Harvey C. "Summary history of the Detroit branch of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History." *Negro History Bulletin* 26, no. 1 (1962). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44176134>.

Entertainment and Recreation and Detroit's Black Population

Recreation and community centers offered a place to meet, swim, play basketball, box, engage in art courses and undertake other recreation without harassment and with dignity. While segregation in public accommodations in the South was well known, established by Jim Crow laws and blatantly advertised by signs reading "For Colored Only," few realize segregation in public accommodations was just as pervasive in the Northern states even though it had officially been outlawed for years. In Detroit, housing segregation and *de facto* color lines meant that African Americans could not use many public facilities. At the beginning of the Great Migration in 1917 the *Detroit Free Press* was already noting, "One of the crying needs of Detroit Negroes is more social centers where wholesome entertainment is provided, and where the men particularly can have a meeting place."⁸¹⁵ The Detroit Urban League (DUL) tried to meet the need by operating a temporary center at its headquarters at 297 St. Antoine, but the available space was inadequate for the city's more than 38,000 African American residents. Under the direction of its Executive Director John Dancy, the DUL opened Detroit's first dedicated community center for African Americans on June 15, 1919 in a 14-room house at 167 Columbia Street.⁸¹⁶ The DUL planned "to inaugurate a music school. . . where children may be taught free of charge" as well as to provide a reading room, recreation facilities and a space for veterans.⁸¹⁷ By 1924, through the generosity of DUL President Henry Stevens, Dancy was able to establish a DUL community center on Chestnut Street (1534 Chestnut Street).⁸¹⁸

A spotlight was shined on racial segregation in Detroit's recreation centers in 1936, when complaints were received about African Americans being denied entry into the swimming pool at Rogue Park. Attorney Henry Busch wrote a letter to Detroit's Commissioner of Parks and Boulevards expressing shock, "It was not thought possible that a thing of this type was being committed in a public park, especially in view of the fact that it was not being committed in other large public parks in the City like Belle Isle."⁸¹⁹ But in 1938 a letter published in the *Detroit Tribune* regarding the hiring of African American workers at the Brewster Wheeler Recreation Center, exposed that, though there may have been no official policy of segregation of recreation facilities, there were clearly two distinct systems at play,

Everyone knows that in the Recreation Department no Negro is sent to a playground where the residents are predominately white, and no white person is sent to a playground where the residents are Negroes. The Civil Service does this on the theory of practicality. . .⁸²⁰

Practicality meaning the fear of an outbreak of violence should the races be allowed to interact. This mirrored the views of organizations like the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) who adopted its neighborhood redlining policies for the same reason.

African American Recreation Centers and Gyms in Detroit

According to Reverend W. J. McLin of Detroit's St. James Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, "The direction the course of society shall take is determined largely by how we direct the youth. Since this is

⁸¹⁵ "Detroit's New Housing Problem." *Detroit Free Press*. June 2, 1917.

⁸¹⁶ "Negroes to have Settlement Home." *Detroit Free Press*. May 16, 1919:5.

⁸¹⁷ *Ibid*.

⁸¹⁸ "Congratulations, John Dancy!" *Detroit Tribune*. January 18, 1936:4.

⁸¹⁹ "Protest Discrimination at Rouge Swimming Pool." *Detroit Tribune*. July 25, 1936:8.

⁸²⁰ "Joseph Coles Defends Ed Jeffries, Randall Asks Mayor to Aid Renters." *Detroit Tribune*. October 15, 1938:1.

such an important question, I feel certain that more attention should be given to the cause of youth in our group.”⁸²¹

The establishment of community centers was seen as a way to educate and provide healthful exercise for children in the Black community. Historically, African American recreation and community centers in Detroit included:

Birdhurst School (20445 Woodingham Street). The school was converted into a recreation center in 1928. It was staffed by volunteers who worked under its director Shelton Johnson. Birdhurst brought together the Black residents of Royal Oak Township, just north of Eight Mile, with the newly established African American neighborhood that became Eight Mile-Wyoming.⁸²² In conjunction with Wayne State University the center offered music, art, and dance classes as well as physical activities such as weightlifting. In 1943 Marygrove College operated a summer school at Birdhurst that enrolled 300 students.⁸²³

Detroit Urban League Community Center (20435 Northlawn Street). The DUL opened its northwestern community center in Spring 1937 to provide educational and community services to the growing Eight Mile-Wyoming Neighborhood. Overseen by Eleanor Shamwell, the center had a music school, clinics, “home and garden clubs, events, and visits to Detroit’s cultural institutions.”⁸²⁴

Brewster-Wheeler Recreation Center (637 Brewster Street). The Brewster Wheeler Recreation Center was originally a Carnegie Library building constructed in 1917, the last of eight built in Detroit. In 1929 it was adapted for use as a community and recreation center with a two-story addition of classrooms, gymnasium, and swimming pool to serve the African American community. In 1937, Brewster Homes, a housing development built primarily for low-income African Americans under the newly established United States Housing Authority (USHA) was constructed as part of a New Deal slum clearance project. The project housed about 10,000 African American residents. The existing Brewster Wheeler center was retained to serve the new residential population in the Brewster Homes complex.

The recreation center is named for Leon “Toy” Wheeler the first African American to be employed by the Detroit Parks and Recreation Department. Hired in 1918 as the playground director for the integrated Lincoln School, he was named as the Brewster Center’s director in 1929 and remained so until 1945.⁸²⁵ The Center established a boxing program led by Alter “Kid” Ellis and in 1930 a young man named Joe Louis enrolled in the program. Louis became the World Heavy Weight Champion in 1937. Another notable boxer, Sugar Ray Robinson, also trained at the Brewster Center in his youth.⁸²⁶

In the 1950s Brewster Center became the place where Black basketball players would go to practice. According to the *Detroit Free Press*,

⁸²¹ McLin, W. J. “Our Common Cause.” *Detroit Tribune*. June 12, 1937:7.

⁸²² *8 Mile Road Old Timers’ Club*. <http://8milerdoldtimersclub.org/history>

⁸²³ “Johnson Recreation Center and Joe Louis Playfield Historic District Preliminary Study Committee Report.” Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board. City of Detroit. 2020.

⁸²⁴ *Ibid*:4.

⁸²⁵ Beltaire, Mark. “‘Toy’ Wheeler Gone but Remembered.” *Detroit Free Press*. November 23, 1953:48.

⁸²⁶ Braynon, Kemba. “Brewster-Wheeler Recreation Center.” Draft National Register of Historic Places Nomination. Michigan State Historic Preservation Office. Lansing, Michigan. 2015.

Before Black athletes were being accepted into professional basketball on a more equal plane with white, Detroit produced a great number of [Harlem] Globetrotters who got their start at the Brewster Center and who returned to play. . . On a good Sunday, the tiny gym at Brewster could be packed with 1,000 people watching basketball games that would never reach the newspapers.”⁸²⁷

King Solomon Gym (6100 14th Street). Founded in the basement of King Solomon Baptist Church by boxer Charlie Johnson, Reverend T. S. Boone, and Taylor Smith in 1958. The three men “built the benches and tables that still surround the secondhand ring Joe Louis used to train in.”⁸²⁸ Tommy Hearns first entered the King Solomon boxing ring at the age of 9 and trained there until his trainer Frank Hill retired. The gym was in operation until around 1980 and still exists almost untouched.

St. Cecilia Gym (6340 Stearns). In the 1960’s St. Cecilia Catholic Church’s population evolved from middle class Irish to African American. To meet the needs of its new parishioners Father Raymond Ellis, who came to St. Cecilia in 1965, had a painting of a Black Christ painted on the ceiling of the church apse in 1968. During this time, “The church sought to appeal across racial and political boundaries. On one side of the street, basketball games in a gym built in 1920. On the other, Black Panthers met in the church basement.”⁸²⁹ Ellis sympathized with the Black Power Movement and was “convinced that no individual Black man can confront the white power system.”⁸³⁰ In the aftermath of the 1967 Rebellion, former pro-football player Sam Washington started a year-round basketball training program in the gym of St. Cecilia Catholic Church. Since 1971, the gym has been known as a basketball mecca producing some of the Midwest’s best basketball players including Magic Johnson, Chris Webber, George Gervin, and Dave Bing, the former member of the Detroit Pistons who became mayor of Detroit.

Johnson Recreation Center and Joe Louis Playfield (8550 Chippewa Street). In 1945 the city of Detroit used eminent domain to clear a fifteen-acre tract of land for the establishment of a recreation area in northwest Detroit to serve the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood. Opposed by the homeowners and the Carver Progressive Club, the transaction still moved forward, and a new park was established in 1946. The drowning of a young African American boy in a nearby sandpit in 1948 underscored the need for supervised swimming facilities in the area. African Americans could travel to Belle Isle or the Brewster-Wheeler Center to swim, but it was a long distance most children in northwest Detroit. Nearby public swimming pools like the Crystal Pool at Eight Mile and Greenfield Roads were restricted to Whites only. Unfortunately, no action was taken on the construction of a pool for African Americans at that time. In 1954, the city finally developed the Norfolk-Wisconsin Playfield on the site that included a pool and field house, a one-story concrete block building designed by architects Giffels and Vallet of Detroit. Named the Chippewa-Cherrylawn Recreation Center (8640 Chippewa Street) it included baseball diamonds and basketball courts. The City of Detroit Parks and Recreation department determined that an expansion of the facilities was needed in 1963. However no action was taken. Following the 1967 Rebellion, the Kerner Commission determined that the lack of recreation facilities available to African American youth was one of the reasons for resentment and anger that flared up across the nation that summer. Still, funding for a new recreation center to serve the Eight Mile-Wyoming

⁸²⁷ Temple, Rone. “St. Cecilia’s Gym. A Spawning Ground for Basketball in Detroit.” *Detroit Free Press*. December 1, 1974:49.

⁸²⁸ “Last outpost of boxing is losing battle.” *Detroit Free Press*. January 10, 1975.

⁸²⁹ Loprersti, Mike. “Where real basketball is played.” *The Spokesman-Review* (Spokane, WA). April 02, 2009:16.

⁸³⁰ “St. Cecilia Parish, Detroit, Michigan.” Hackensack, NJ: Custombook, Inc. 1972.

neighborhood was not secured until 1976. The contemporary Johnson Recreation Center building was completed in 1979.⁸³¹

Sarah Elizabeth Ray vs. Bob-Lo Island

Throughout the 20th Century, Detroit's African American community has been demanding that the laws, which guaranteed them the right to freely utilize public accommodations throughout the state of Michigan be enforced in Detroit. An incident of note involved a young African American woman named Sarah Elizabeth Ray who planned to visit Bob-Lo Island, a popular amusement park on an island in the Detroit River, along with a group of White classmates. After paying her fare and boarding one of the Bob-Lo boats, she was told by the conductor she could not continue on the trip because she was "colored." Bob-Lo company policy limited access to the amusement park by Black patrons to just a few days a year. After being escorted off the boat, Ms. Ray filed a complaint with the Detroit NAACP regarding the violation of her rights. The NAACP attorney took the case to court and won on the grounds that the access limitation on African Americans imposed violated Michigan civil rights law. The company appealed and the case *Bob-Lo Excursion Co. v. Michigan* was argued by Thurgood Marshall before the U. S. Supreme Court.⁸³² In February 1948, the Supreme Court found in favor of Ms. Ray that the Bob-Lo Excursion Company had committed a civil rights violation. Sarah Elizabeth Ray's case against discrimination helped lay the groundwork for other legal challenges to equal opportunity violations in America.

Desegregation of the Detroit Tigers

Baseball was a segregated sport in the early 20th Century. African Americans played in the Negro National League, which started in 1920 and ended when Jackie Robinson was signed to the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. Detroit's Negro League team, the Detroit Stars, were unable to play baseball at the segregated Briggs Stadium in Detroit, and instead played at the Hamtramck Stadium (extant).

The Detroit Tigers professional baseball team was founded in 1894 and remained an all-White team until the 1950s. In May 1957, Tiger's owner Walter O. "Spike" Briggs Jr., was forced to sell the team.⁸³³ He had inherited it from his father Walter Briggs Sr., founder of the Briggs Manufacturing Company, who had been the sole owner for the team since 1935. According to the *Michigan Chronicle*, even "as the color line began to melt in Big League Baseball it never showed any signs of defrosting at Briggs Stadium. It seemed to be understood that Negro players were not acceptable."⁸³⁴ Thus the sale of the Tigers in 1957 was heralded by Detroit's Black community as an opportunity to not only desegregate the team but to open up jobs at the stadium for African Americans.

While Briggs Sr. had refused to hire any African American baseball players. Under Briggs Jr., a few Black players were hired—but only for the farm team. The first was Claude Agee, who was signed to the club's Jamestown, New York, farm team in 1953.⁸³⁵ Larry Doby is considered to be the first African American baseball player hired by the Tiger's franchise in 1959.⁸³⁶ After an outstanding career with the Cleveland Indians, Doby was past his prime by the time he got to Detroit and remained only one season. It was Tigers player Jake Wood who is credited for his role in truly integrating the team in 1959 after

⁸³¹ "Johnson Recreation Center and Joe Louis Playfield Historic District Preliminary Study Committee Report." Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board. City of Detroit. 2020:8-9.

⁸³² Dick, John. "Detroit's Sarah Elizabeth Ray: The Rosa Parks of the Bob-Lo Boat." *People's World*. March 13, 2018.

⁸³³ "Fans Feel Briggs Exit May End Tiger Racism." *Michigan Chronicle*. May 4, 1957.

⁸³⁴ "Still Unfinished Business at Briggs Stadium." *Michigan Chronicle*. May 4, 1957.

⁸³⁵ "First Negro: Detroit Signs Agee." *Pittsburgh Courier*. September 5, 1953:15.

⁸³⁶ Markusen, Bruce. "Doby was the first Negro league to play for the Tigers." *Detroit Tigers Online Encyclopedia*. January 28, 2015.

standing up against Jim Crow segregation he encountered at the Tigers' spring training camp in Lakeland, Florida.⁸³⁷ In 1963 the Tigers announced they were abolishing segregated housing at the training camp as "the final step in our efforts to end all racial barriers for the Tigers."⁸³⁸

Joe Louis and Integration of the PGA

Known as the "Brown Bomber," Joe Louis was the World Heavyweight Champion from 1937 to 1949 and held that title longer than any boxer in history. From his defeat of James Braddock in 1937, he became a role model for young African Americans. Malcolm X once stated, "Everyone Negro boy who could walk wanted to be the next Brown Bomber."⁸³⁹

Louis moved to Detroit at the age of two and began boxing at the Brewster-Wheeler Recreation Center in his teens. In 1934, at a time when White managers were known for taking financial advantage of Black boxers, Joe Louis signed with an African American, John Roxborough of Detroit. According to Louis, Mr. Roxborough was "talking about Black Power before it became popular."⁸⁴⁰ At first, rampant racial prejudice limited the venues where Louis could box. Early on, Madison Square Gardens rejected him because they didn't think a Black fighter could sell tickets.⁸⁴¹ His skill eventually surmounted racism and he became a popular sports figure with all races. Louis's 1938 iconic fight with German boxer Max Schmeling on the brink of World War II became more than a boxing match, it was viewed as a conflict between Nazi totalitarianism and American democracy. When he beat Schmeling, Joe Louis became an American hero. His "victories in the ring were often symbolic achievements for all blacks and stimulated immeasurable pride."⁸⁴²

Joe Louis played a significant role in desegregating another professional sport—the last to be desegregated—golf. Louis was invited by the Chevrolet Dealers of San Diego, California, to participate in a PGA Tournament there in 1952. Though African Americans were excluded from PGA tournament play, the organizers thought that, because of their direct invitation and Louis's celebrity, the rule would be overridden. It was not and Louis was denied entry into the tournament. Louis decided to use the rejection to call attention to discrimination in sports. As noted in the *New York Times* Lewis stated, "I want people to know what the PGA is...we've got another Hitler to get by."⁸⁴³ Public outcry, support from celebrity golfers like Bing Crosby, and condemnation from sports professionals forced the PGA to reconsider its decision and let Louis play. Thus Joe Louis became the first Black golfer to compete in a PGA sponsored tournament. But that was not enough for Louis. According to the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, Louis "used his entry as a tool to continue to fight for others. The pressure then shifted to changing the organization by-laws and rules."⁸⁴⁴ In just a matter of weeks, the efforts were successful. The first Black golfer to compete after the formal change in the PGA's by-laws was Bill Spiller in a tournament in Arizona.

⁸³⁷ Markusen, Bruce. "Wood was the first African-American star for the Tigers." *Detroit Tigers Online Encyclopedia*. October 21, 2015.

⁸³⁸ "Tigers Abolish Segregation." *Hawaii Tribune-Herald*. April 29, 1962:8

⁸³⁹ "Joe Louis." *Our American Story*. National Museum of African American History & Culture. Smithsonian Institute. <https://nmaahc.si.edu/blog-post/joe-louis>

⁸⁴⁰ "John Roxborough and Julian Black." *American Experience*.

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/fight-john-roxborough-and-julian-black/>

⁸⁴¹ *Ibid*.

⁸⁴² Sammons, Jeffrey T. *Beyond the Ring: The Role of Boxing in American Society*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990.

⁸⁴³ Walker, Rhiannon. "The day Joe Louis became the first black golfer to play a PGA-sponsored tourney. *Black History Always*. <https://theundefeated.com/features/the-day-joe-louis-became-the-first-black-golfer-to-play-a-pga-sponsored-tourney/>

⁸⁴⁴ "First Black golfers Compete in a PGA Tournament." *Los Angeles Sentinel*. January 17, 1952.

Joe Louis owned the home at 1683 Edison in Detroit's Boston Edison neighborhood. His manager John Roxborough lived in a home designed in 1940 by architect Lyle Zisler located at 235 Holbrook (extant) in Detroit's North End.

Integration of Detroit's Bowling Alleys and National Bowling Tournaments

Though bowling has long been a popular pastime in America, it was a segregated sport. When the American Bowling Congress (ABC) formed in 1885 to facilitate competitive bowling tournaments it barred both women and non-whites from participation. Bowling saw a sharp increase in popularity around 1938 when the United States military adopted it as a form of recreation for the men and women being admitted to the armed forces in preparation for World War II. Between 1941 and 1945, the military constructed more than 4,500 bowling alleys, which helped to popularize the sport with civilian masses in America after the war.

In the early 20th Century, at a time when African Americans in Detroit "weren't allowed to cross Woodward Avenue,"⁸⁴⁵ bowling alleys were segregated and did not allow "mixed" open (recreational) play. Black bowling leagues, however, were sometimes allowed to play against White teams at White bowling alleys. Detroit's first Black bowling lanes were founded at a bar called Fat Sam's located on the corner of Chene and Mullet in Black Bottom. The lanes opened in 1937 and Black bowling leagues that had originally formed at Joe Louis's Springhill Farms in Shelby Township where he had built his own bowling lanes, competed there.⁸⁴⁶ As the bowling craze skyrocketed in America, the National Negro Bowling Association (NNBA) was formed in 1939 to enable Black league competitions.⁸⁴⁷ Black entrepreneur Sunnie Wilson purchased the massive Forest Club (demolished) on Hastings Street and Forest Avenue in Detroit's Paradise Valley and added 24 bowling lanes to its recreation center. That same year, the National Negro Bowling Tournament was held in Detroit. In October 1942, the Paradise Bowl (600 E. Adams Street, demolished) opened with backing from boxer Joe Louis, who had become a bowling fan and competitor. Paradise Bowl was a state-of-the-art facility. The Black-owned business employed 80 people and was one of the largest African American bowling alleys in the country.⁸⁴⁸ It remained the center of Detroit's African American bowling community until 1960 when the roof collapsed under heavy snow.

In 1946 a Catholic priest heading the Catholic Youth Organization petitioned the ABC to drop its discrimination clause and allow African Americans to participate, which it declined to do. The United Auto Workers (UAW) then began an organized desegregation campaign, spurred by Black members of the UAW Local 600 and supported by Walter Reuther. The UAW banned its members from participating in any ABC activities and competition until it agreed to end its racially discriminatory practices. Reuther then instructed William H. Oliver, co-director of the UAW Fair Practices Department, to form a national committee to pressure ABC to desegregate. The committee was named the National Committee for Fair Play in Bowling (NCFPB) and Hubert Humphrey, then mayor of Minneapolis, agreed to serve as the chair. Reuther gave Olga Madar, the director of the UAW Recreation Department who would later become the UAW's first female vice president, the task of eliminating racial bias in organized UAW bowling. It was a difficult undertaking since many White, Blue-collar UAW members still held strong prejudices against Blacks. The Recreation Department took the campaign to UAW locals across the

⁸⁴⁵ Fiorito, Matt. "Black Bowlers Remember Breaking the Color Line." *Detroit Free Press*. February 24, 1990.

⁸⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴⁷ Dooley, Patricia. "Jim Crow Strikes Again." *The Journal of African American History*. V. 97. No. 3. Summer 2012:270-290.

⁸⁴⁸ "Paradise Bowling Alley." *Detroit Tribune*. October 17, 1942:16.

country to get reluctant White bowlers to break with both the ABC and the Women's International Bowling Congress (WIBC).⁸⁴⁹

The national Fair Play committee decided to organize "separate All-American Bowling Tournaments in major cities to put pressure on the ABC. The first was held in Detroit at the Eastern Market Recreation Center."⁸⁵⁰ The UAW also "organized the UAW International Bowling Championships and held the first one in January 1948 at Herbert Fenton's Dexter Recreation Center."⁸⁵¹ In December, the UAW worked with numerous states including New Jersey and Illinois to sue the ABC for civil rights violations. After two years of legal battles, the ABC finally rescinded its "Whites-only clause" in 1950. To test the sincerity of the ABC decision Bill Rhodman from Detroit, considered to be the nation's greatest African American bowler, was included on an integrated team that competed during the 1951 ABC Tournament held in Minneapolis thus breaking the long-held color bar in competitive bowling.⁸⁵²

Clubs

Club Juana (2725 Woodward Avenue, demolished). Club Juana is considered the first integrated jazz club to operate on Woodward Avenue in Detroit. When it opened in 1948 at 2725 Woodward (demolished), the club featured Black performers like Dizzy Gillespie but still practiced *de facto* segregation that was accepted in Detroit's downtown. However, in 1950 the club's new owners Abe Rahaim and Cliff Gouton stopped segregation and opened the venue to all.⁸⁵³

Graystone Ballroom (4237 Woodward Avenue, demolished). Opened in 1922, the ballroom was originally operated by White band leader Jean Goldkette. Though he employed African American jazz performers, African Americans could only access the ballroom one night a week. In 1963 Barry Gordy Jr. purchased the property as a venue to promote his Motown Record stars. The Graystone Ballroom closed in 1972 when the Motown offices moved to Los Angeles, California.

Paradise Theater (3711 Woodward Avenue.) Opened in 1919 as Orchestra Hall and the home to the Detroit Symphony, it closed in 1939. In 1941, it was purchased by Ben and Lou Cohen and opened as a major jazz venue hosting national talent like Duke Ellington and Count Basie and was open to African Americans.

⁸⁴⁹ "The UAW was a key player in knocking down racial barriers in bowling." *Solidarity*. March 23, 2016.

⁸⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵² Fiorito, Matt. "Bill Rhodman was a quiet pioneer." *Detroit Free Press*. March 20, 1986:6E.

⁸⁵³ Bjorn, Lars and Jim Gallett. *Before Motown: A History of Jazz in Detroit 1920-1960*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001:71.

Selected References

- Babson, Steve, Dave Riddle, and David Elsila. *The Color of Law: Ernie Goodman, Detroit, and the Struggle for Labor and Civil Rights*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010.
- Boggs, Grace Lee. *Living for Change: An Autobiography*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- Boyd, Herb. *Black Detroit: A People's History of Self-Determination*. New York: Harper Collins Press, 2017.
- Boyd, Melba Joyce. *Wrestling with the Muse: Dudley Randall and the Broadside Press*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.
- Boyle, Kevin. *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2004.
- Buss, Lloyd D. *The Church and the City: Detroit's Open Housing Movement* (Ph.D. Dissertation). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 2008.
- Clark, Jawanza. *Albert Cleage Jr. and the Black Madonna and Child*. New York: Plagrave MacMillan, 2016.
- Cleage Jr., Albert. *Black Christian Nationalism: New Directions for the Black Church*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1972.
- Cleage, Kristin. *Finding Eliza*. <https://findingeliza.com/>
- Coleman, Ken. *Million Dollars Worth of Nerve: Twenty-One People Who Helped to Power Black Bottom, Paradise Valley, and Detroit's East Side*. Self-Published (Amazon Digital Services), 2014.
- Denby, Charles. *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*. Montreal: Black Rose Press, 1979.
- Detroit Historical Society. "Timeline of Detroit." <https://detroithistorical.org/learn/timeline-detroit/british-detroit-1760-1787>.
- Detroit Under Fire: Police Violence, Crime Politics, and the Struggle for Racial Justice in the Civil Rights Era*. Public History Exhibit. Policing and Social Justice HistoryLab. Department of History, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
<https://policing.umhistorylabs.lsa.umich.edu/s/detroitunderfire/page/home>
- Dillard, Angela. *Faith in the City*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010.
- Fine, Sidney. *Expanding the Frontiers of Civil Rights: Michigan, 1948-1968*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017.
- Finkelman, Paul. *Encyclopedia of African American History, 1896 to Present*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

- Georgakas, Dan and Marvin Surkin. *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1998.
- Henrickson (ed.), Wilma Wood. *Detroit Perspectives: Crossroads and Turning Points*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1991.
- Johnson, Arthur L. *Race and Remembrance: A Memoir*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999.
- Joseph, Peniel E. *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Latzman Moon, Elaine. *Untold Tales, Unsung Heroes: An Oral History of Detroit's African American Community, 1918-1967*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994.
- Martin, Elizabeth Anne. *Detroit and the Great Migration*. Ann Arbor: The Bentley Historical Library, 1993.
- Meier, August and Elliot Rudwick. *Black Detroit and the Rise of the UAW*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- Mirel, Jeffrey. *The Rise of an Urban School System*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999.
- Mjagkij, Nina, ed. *Organizing Black America*. Oxfordshire, England: Routledge, 2013.
- Mjagkij, Nina. *Light in the Darkness: African Americans and the YMCA, 1852-1946*. Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press. 1994. African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund. October 2020.
- National Trust for Historic Preservation. Preserving African American Places: Growing Preservation's Potential as a Path for Equity. <https://forum.savingplaces.org/viewdocument/preserving-african-american-places>
- RiseUp North-Detroit. <https://riseupdetroit.org/>
- Rich, Wilbur. *Coleman Young and Detroit Politics: From Social Activist to Power Broker*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999.
- Robinson, Julia. *Race, Religion, and the Pulpit*. Detroit: Wayne State University, 2015.
- Rothstein, Richard. *The Color of Law*. New York: Liveright Publishing, 2017.
- Shaw, Todd C. *Now is the Time! Detroit Black Politics and Grassroots Activism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.
- Sitkoff, Harvard. *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue: The Depression Decade*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1978.
- Smith, Gene Allen. "The Underground Railroad of 1812: Paths to Freedom along the Canadian Border." Series: Fighting for Freedom: African Americans and the War of 1812. National Park Service: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/the-underground-railroad-changes-course.htm>.
- Smith, Suzanne. *Dancing in the Street: Motown and the Cultural Politics of Detroit*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009:22.

- Stein, Judith. *The World of Marcus Garvey: Race and Class in Modern Society*. Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1991.
- Stone, Joel. *Detroit 1967: Origins, Impacts, Legacies*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2017.
- Sugrue, Thomas. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009.
- The Kerner Report 1968*. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016.
- Theoharis, Jeanne. *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2015.
- Theoharis, Jeanne and Komozoi Woodard, eds. *Freedom North: Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003.
- Thomas, June Manning. *Redevelopment and Race: Planning a Finer City in Postwar Detroit*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1997.
- Thomas, Richard W. *Life for Us is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992.
- Thompson, Julius. *Dudley Randall, Broadside Press, and the Black Arts Movement in Detroit*. Jefferson, NC: MacFarland & Company, 2005.
- Tompkins Bates, Beth. *The Making of Black Detroit in the Age of Henry Ford*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012.
- Triece, Mary. *Urban Renewal and Resistance: Race, Space, and the City in the Late Twentieth to Early Twenty-First Century*. Latham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016.
- United States Congressional Record*. Vol. 88, Part 2. U.S. Government Publishing Office, Washington, D.C. February 27, 1942:1763. (Sojourner Truth Homes)
- Van Dusen, Gerald. *Detroit's Birwood Wall: Hatred & Healing in the West Eight Mile Community*. Charleston: History Press, 2019.
- Ward, Stephen. *In Love and Struggle: The Revolutionary Lives of James and Grace Lee Boggs*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016.
- Ward, Stephen. *Pages From a Black Radical's Notebook: A James Boggs Reader*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2011.
- Williams, Jeremy. *Detroit: The Black Bottom Community*. Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2009.

Section Three

Index List of Surveyed Properties

Map Number	Site Name	Address	Survey Level
22	Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity	293 Eliot Street	Intensive
1	Apex Bar	7649 Oakland Avenue	Intensive
2	Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church	5050 St. Antoine Street	Intensive
70	Birwood Wall	Along the alleyway between Birwood and Mendota Streets from Eight Mile Road to Pembroke Street	Intensive
10	Boggs, James and Grace Lee, House (Boggs Center)	3061 Field Street	Intensive
23	Detroit Association of (Colored) Women's Clubs	5461 Brush Street	Intensive
24	Detroit Urban League (Albert Kahn House)	208 Mack Avenue	Intensive
4	Dudley Randall's Broadside Press	12651 Old Mill Place	Intensive
5	Detroit Fire Department Engine Co. No. 34	6345 Livernois Street	Intensive
7	Frances Harper Inn/Christian Industrial Club	307 Horton Street	Intensive
8	Friends School in Detroit	1100 St. Aubin Street	Intensive
15	Greater Shiloh Baptist Church	537 Benton Street	Intensive
9	Hartford Avenue Baptist Church	6300 Hartford Avenue	Intensive
6	International Afro American Museum	1549 West Grand Boulevard	Intensive
20	Liuzzo, Viola Gregg, House	19375 Marlowe Street	Intensive
13	McGhee, Orsel and Minnie, House	4626 Seebaldt Street	Intensive
11	Nation of Islam Temple No. 1	11529 Linwood Street	Intensive
28	New Bethel Baptist Church	8430 Linwood Street	Intensive
12	Northern High School	9026 Woodward Avenue	Intensive
14	Our Lady of Victory Church	10113 West Eight Mile Road	Intensive

25	Paradise Theater (Orchestra Hall)	3711 Woodward Avenue	Intensive
29	Parks, Rosa (McCauley) and Raymond, Flat	3201 Virginia Park Street	Intensive
26	Sacred Heart Major Seminary Black Jesus Grotto	2701 West Chicago Boulevard	Intensive
3	Shabazz, Betty, House	313 Hague Street	Intensive
30	Shrine of the Black Madonna of the Pan African Orthodox Church	7625-35 Linwood Street	Intensive
17	Sojourner Truth Homes	Nevada Avenue, Fenelon Avenue, Stockton Avenue, and Justine Avenue	Intensive
18	St. Cecilia Gymnasium and Church	6340 Stearns and 10400 Stoepel	Intensive
19	Vaughn's Bookstore	12123 Dexter Avenue	Intensive
27	WGPR-TV	3146 East Jefferson Avenue	Intensive
21	Wilson, Easby, House	18199 Riopelle Street	Intensive
32	Belcrest Hotel	5440 Cass Avenue	Reconnaissance
33	Black Star Printing (Publishing/Press)	8824 Fenkell Street	Reconnaissance
34	Brewster-Wheeler Recreation Center	637 Brewster Street	Reconnaissance
73	Clairpointe-Tennessee-Conner Neighborhood	Clairpointe Street, Jefferson Avenue, Kitchener Street, and Detroit River	Reconnaissance
35	Cobo Hall (TCF Center)	1 Washington Boulevard	Reconnaissance
37	Conant Gardens	Roughly bounded by Conant Street, Seven Mile Road, Ryan Road, and Nevada Avenue	Reconnaissance
36	D. Bethune Duffield Elementary School	2715 Macomb Street	Reconnaissance
38	Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church	5151 Chicago Avenue	Reconnaissance
39	Ed Davis Auto Dealership	11825 Dexter Avenue	Reconnaissance
40	Eight Mile-Wyoming Neighborhood	Eight Mile Road, Santa Barbara, Pembroke, and Mendota Avenues	Reconnaissance
75	Friendship Baptist Church	3900 Beaubien Avenue	Reconnaissance
76	Fritz Funeral Home	246 East Ferry Avenue	Reconnaissance

79	General Douglas MacArthur (Belle Isle) Bridge	7200 East Jefferson Avenue	Reconnaissance
41	Greater New Mount Moriah Baptist Church	586 Owen Street	Reconnaissance
42	Hartford Memorial Baptist Church	18700 James Couzens Freeway	Reconnaissance
44	Home Federal Savings and Loan	9108 Woodward Avenue	Reconnaissance
45	Home Federal Savings and Loan Branch	13300 West Seven Mile Road	Reconnaissance
47	House, William Stuart, House	2127 Oakman Boulevard	Reconnaissance
48	James H. Cole Home for Funerals	2624 West Grand Boulevard	Reconnaissance
71	Jeffries Towers	Marvin Gaye Drive at the John C. Lodge Service Drive	Reconnaissance
46	Keith, Damon, Flat	1544 Virginia Park Street	Reconnaissance
31	Levi Barbour Intermediate School	4209 Seneca Street	Reconnaissance
77	Lewis College of Business	5450 John R. Street	Reconnaissance
49	Lewis College of Business	17370 Meyers Road	Reconnaissance
NA	McNichols-MacKay Neighborhood	McNichols and Mackay	Reconnaissance
78	Michigan Chronicle	479 Ledyard Street	Reconnaissance
50	Milford Court Apartments	1737 Grand Boulevard West	Reconnaissance
51	(Motown) Jobete Publishing Company	2644-46 West Grand Boulevard	Reconnaissance
51	Motown Recording Studio (Hitsville)	2648 West Grand Boulevard	Reconnaissance
84	Motown Administration Building	2652-54 West Grand Boulevard	Reconnaissance
83	Motown Finance Building	2656 West Grand Boulevard	Reconnaissance
82	(Motown) Artist Development	2657 West Grand Boulevard	Reconnaissance
81	Motown Sales and Marketing Building I	2662-64 West Grand Boulevard	Reconnaissance
80	(Motown) International Talent Management Incorporated	2670-72 West Grand Boulevard	Reconnaissance
52	Muhammad's Mosque No. 1	14880 Wyoming Street	Reconnaissance
53	Nathan Johnson Associates Office	2512 West Grand Boulevard	Reconnaissance

55	Packard Motor Car Company	1580 East Grand Boulevard	Reconnaissance
56	Plymouth United Church of Christ	600 East Warren Avenue	Reconnaissance
57	Prince Hall Grand Lodge	3500 McDougall Street	Reconnaissance
58	Pure in Heart Missionary Baptist Church	3411 Holcomb Street	Reconnaissance
59	Russell Woods-Sullivan Neighborhood	Davison, Dexter, Cortland, and Livernois Streets	Reconnaissance
NA	Schaefer-South Fort Neighborhood Home Federal Savings-Financed Housing	Electric, Liddesdale, Beatrice, Deacon Streets	Reconnaissance
72	Shaw College	7351 Woodward Avenue	Reconnaissance
60	Solomon's Temple Church	2341 East Seven Mile Road	Reconnaissance
54	St. John's Christian Methodist Episcopal Church	8715 Woodward Avenue	Reconnaissance
61	St. John's Presbyterian Church	1961 East Lafayette Street	Reconnaissance
62	St. Peter Claver Parish	461 Eliot Street	Reconnaissance
63	United Auto Workers Solidarity House	8000 East Jefferson Avenue	Reconnaissance
64	United Sound Systems Recording Studios	5840 Second Avenue	Reconnaissance
65	Waterman and Sons Printing	17134 Wyoming Road	Reconnaissance
(See Black Neighborhoods Map)	Welch-Oakwood Hills Subdivision	Ethel and Bassett Streets between Visger Street and West Outer Drive	Reconnaissance
74	West Side Neighborhood	West Grand Boulevard, Tireman Avenue, Epworth Street, and Warren Avenue	Reconnaissance
43	William E. Higginbotham School	20119 Wisconsin	Reconnaissance
67	Your Heritage House	110 East Ferry Avenue	Reconnaissance

Inventory Forms with Photographs

See separate documents entitled *The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit, Michigan Survey Report*:

- *Part II A: Intensive Level Inventory Forms*
- *Part II B: Reconnaissance Level Inventory Forms*
- *Part II C: Maps*

The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit, Michigan

Survey Report Part II A: Intensive Level Inventory Forms

Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

**Prepared for
Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Lansing, Michigan
February 2021**

Prepared by

**Quinn Evans
Detroit and Ann Arbor
Ruth E. Mills, Project Manager, Historian
Saundra Little, FAIA, Architect and Historian**

The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit, Michigan

Survey Report Part II B: Reconnaissance Level Inventory Forms

Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

**Prepared For
Michigan State Historic Preservation Office
Lansing, Michigan
February 2021**

**Prepared by
Quinn Evans
Detroit and Ann Arbor
Ruth E. Mills, Project Manager, Historian
Saundra Little, FAIA, Architect and Historian**

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name
Belcrest Hotel

Street Address
5440 Cass Avenue

Municipal Unit, County
Detroit, Wayne County

District Name
Belcrest Hotel (single resource listing)

Year Built
1926

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century
Revivals
Renaissance Revival



Plan
T

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composition

Other Materials
Terra cotta

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Charles N. Agree

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling:
Apartment

Current Use
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling:
Apartment

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Narrative Description

The Belcrest Hotel is a twelve story, T-shaped building constructed of brown brick with terra cotta trim. It has a flat, composition roof. It is divided vertically into a base, shaft, and capital. It has three projecting bays, one facing Cass Avenue and one on each side of the leg of the T, rising from the top of the base through the roofline. The base, which includes the first two floors, features paired, tripled, and quadrupled windows in two-story bays trimmed with stone and terra cotta. The capital at the twelfth floor features round-arched windows, square attic windows, and elaborate detailing at the projecting bays of alternating bands of brick and terra cotta.

History

The Belcrest Hotel was built in 1926 as a luxury apartment hotel, designed by Detroit architect Charles N. Agree. It is located with Detroit’s Cultural Center, which was forming as something of a second downtown for Detroit in the 1920s, and included significant buildings such as the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Detroit Public Library. In 1938 Nancy Pate filed suit against the hotel under Michigan’s civil rights law, after she was forced out of the hotel for attempting to use the main elevator. According to Pate, she went to the hotel in the company of a White woman to visit another White friend. When she attempted to enter the passenger elevator, she was told by the Black attendant that, at the order of the hotel manager, Black people had to use the freight elevator. When she refused and used the main elevator, she was physically forced out of the hotel through a servants’ entrance by a White manager. [The outcome of the suit was not found during research].

Statement of Significance

The Belcrest Hotel was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 under Criterion A, as an important example of apartment hotel development in Detroit in the 1920s, and Criterion C, as an important example of the work of Charles N. Agree. The nomination does not document this incident.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Listed	A, C	None

Sources

“Matron Sues Belcrest Hotel for \$500 on Discrimination Charge,” *The Detroit [Weekly] Tribune*, February 12, 1938, 1.

Gregory Piazza and Brian Conway, “Belcrest Hotel” National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1983.

Richard W. Thomas, *Life for Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit 1915-1945* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), 132-133.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Black Star Printing (Publishing/Press)	Street Address 8824 Fenkell Avenue	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
--	--	--

District Names
NA

Year Built
Unknown

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American
Movements
Commercial Style



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composite

Other Materials
Wood

Condition
Poor

Integrity
Altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
COMMERCE/TRADE/Business
: Office

Current Use
Vacant

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Communications

Narrative Description

Two-story rectangular brick commercial building with a flat roof. The building storefront has brick lower walls, glass and aluminum windows, and horizontal wood siding over the frieze. A flush door is set on the center west side of the storefront, while the east door is set back with an angled wall. On the second floor is a double window with a six-over-six wood double-hung window paired with a fixed pane on one side, and a single one-over-one double hung vinyl

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

window on the other side. Wood sign panels are fixed to the east elevation and the west elevation is concealed by an adjoining building.

History

Mike Hamlin (owner) and Helen Jones (operations) of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers (LRBW) established Black Star Publishing (also called Printing or Press) with funds raised through the Black Economic Development Conference in 1970. The press produced newsletters and periodicals and at least one book, "The Political Thought of James Forman" and Jones also established a training program in printing skills. Possibly went defunct after the demise of the LRBW, as its equipment was auctioned off in October 1972.

Statement of Significance

The Black Star Publishing Building is potentially eligible under Criterion A as the location where leaders of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers established a publishing house to produce materials to advocate for civil rights and economic self-sufficiency among Blacks.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A	None

Sources

Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1998), 81-82.

Hiley H. Ward, "Black City Press Runs First Book," *Detroit Free Press*, March 15, 1971, 28.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name
Brewster-Wheeler Recreation
Center

Street Address
637 Brewster Street

Municipal Unit, County
Detroit, Wayne County

District Names
Brewster-Wheeler Recreation
Center Local Historic District

Year Built
1917, 1929

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement
Art Deco



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Concrete

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Hipped
Flat

Roof
Asphalt shingle
Composition

Other Materials
Wood

Condition
Fair

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Mildner & Eisen (1917)
George W. Graves (1929)

Historic Use
EDUCATION/Library: Library
RECREATION AND
CULTURE/Sports Facility

Current Use
VACANT

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Recreation

Narrative Description

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

The Brewster Wheeler Recreation Center is a one-story building with a two-story addition. The first floor is located four feet above grade, and both the original building and the addition have an occupiable basement below. The original one-story rectangular building was constructed as a Detroit Public Library branch and retains the formal, symmetrical features of civic architecture in the early to mid 1900s. Its exterior is characterized by brick with stone trim, a prominent centralized entrance, large windows with fan lites, and a hip roof. The two-story rectangular addition sits to the east of the original building. Its exterior is characterized by brick with stone trim, pilasters framing large window openings, and a flat roof.

History

The original 1917 structure was one of many libraries commissioned throughout the U.S. during the early to mid 1900s as a result of the philanthropic efforts of Andrew Carnegie. The Bernard Ginsburg Branch Library was the last of eight Carnegie libraries built in the city of Detroit.

In 1929 the library was remodeled and an addition built to turn it into a community and recreation center which provided services to the residents of the surrounding Brewster Homes development. The boxer Joe Louis trained here. Leon Wheeler, the center’s first director from 1929 until 1945, established numerous social and recreational programs which made one of the cornerstones of the community. In 1969, the center was renamed ‘Brewster Wheeler Recreation Center’ in honor of Leon Wheeler.

Statement of Significance

The Brewster Wheeler Recreation Center is recommended eligible under Criterion A as an early community and recreation center which provided services to the residents of the surrounding Brewster Homes, the first federally funded public housing development for Blacks. It is also significant under Criterion B for its association with Leon Wheeler, the city’s first Black recreation department employee, who served as the center’s first director, and under Criterion C as an important example of library and recreation center architecture in Detroit.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, B, C	None

Sources

Quinn Evans Architects, Draft National Register of Historic Places nomination.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Clairpointe-Tennessee-Conner Neighborhood (also known as "The CTC")	Street Address Roughly bounded by Clairpointe Street, Jefferson Avenue, Kitchener Street, and Detroit River	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
--	--	--

District Names
NA

Year Built
1920s-1950s

Resource Type
District

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American Movements
Bungalow



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Weatherboard
Brick

Roof Form
Front gable
Side gable
Hipped

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Wood

Condition
Fair

Integrity
Moderately altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Current Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
Garages
Sheds

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Community Planning and Development

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Narrative Description

The neighborhood is centered on the streets of Clairpointe, Tennessee, and Conner and extends from Jefferson Avenue south to Avondale Street. It consists largely of one to one-and-one-half story frame residences of modest size. Most have a rectangular footprint with the short side to the street, with small front and rear yards. The oldest houses (ca. 1920s) have no driveway, while houses from the 1940s on have side driveways with carports or rear yard garages. They are generally constructed of wood clapboard with some scattered brick residences. Some have been altered with vinyl, aluminum, or asphalt siding. Rooflines range from front gabled to side gabled to hipped; all have asphalt shingles. There are a few modest commercial buildings within the neighborhood, mostly one-story brick buildings with boarded up storefronts.

History

The CTC neighborhood is part of the larger Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood on the city's extreme southeast side. The land south of Jefferson was historically marshland and began to be drained and platted in the 1920s. This western end of Jefferson-Chalmers was close to several industrial factories and the earliest houses were more modest, working-class homes as opposed to the more substantial brick homes common on the eastern end of the area. In the mid 1940s, following the overturn of restrictive covenants, a few Black families went to court to ensure their right to move into this neighborhood, at a time when Blacks were just beginning to break out of the segregated neighborhoods to which they had been confined prior to and during World War II. In the spring of 1946 a ten acre tract at the foot of Tennessee Street (which the city had previously acquired for inclusion in a larger waterfront park) was designated for 228 temporary housing units for Black veterans. When the Algonquin Park Association opposed the plan, ostensibly because it would interfere with recreational use of the park, the Detroit Common Council attempted to rescind the plan. Five hundred Black veterans rallied at the Hotel Statler to protest the decision, leading Detroit Mayor Jeffries to veto the Council's resolution. The Association's unsuccessfully attempted to secure an injunction against the development, and families were living in the housing units by 1947 (the units were removed between 1956 and 1961). Residents recall that Keating Elementary (Dickerson Avenue, no longer extant) was the defacto color line. During the 1940s to 1960s there were commercial businesses intermingled with houses due to Black residents not being welcome at majority White businesses. Residents dubbed the neighborhood "The CTC" and still hold a picnic every year to which old residents return.

Statement of Significance

The CTC neighborhood is recommended eligible under Criterion A as an important Black residential neighborhood settled by Blacks who were challenging segregation barriers during the middle years of the 20th century.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A	None

Sources

"Order Delivery of Vets Homes," *Detroit Tribune*, July 6, 1946, 3.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

"Vets Irate at Scrapping of Negro Housing Plan," *Detroit Free Press*, July 24, 1946, 13.
"Vet Homes Saved by Jeffries' Veto," *Detroit Free Press*, July 31, 1946, 13.
"Suit to Restrain Building Dismissed," *Detroit Free Press*, October 2, 1946, 15.
"A Report on the Algonquin Housing Project," *Michigan Black History Bibliography*, accessed July 2018, <http://mbhb.reuther.wayne.edu/items/show/190>.
Oral interviews with residents recorded by the City of Detroit for the Jefferson-Chalmers Neighborhood Framework Plan, completed April 2019.
Jefferson Chalmers Neighborhood Framework Plan, April 2019,
https://detroitmi.gov/sites/detroitmi.localhost/files/2019-05/Jefferson%20Chalmers_Final%20Book.pdf

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Cobo Hall Cobo Center TCF Center	Street Address 1 Washington Boulevard	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	---	--

District Names
NA

Year Built
1960

Resource Type
Complex

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement
International



Plan
Rectangular/circular

Foundation
Not Visible

Walls
Concrete

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composite

Other Materials
Glass

Condition
Good

Integrity
Altered

Architect
Louis Rossetti (Giffels and Vallet)

Historic Use
RECREATION/CULTURE/Auditorium
: Exhibit and Convention Center

Current Use
RECREATION/CULTURE/Auditorium
: Exhibit and Convention Center

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History

Narrative Description

Cobo Center is a 2.4m sf complex with exhibit halls, a ballroom and event space, parking garage, and People Mover station. The main Center is rectangular with the attached circular former Cobo Arena, remodeled in 2015 to house the main ballroom. Cobo Hall originally featured white marble to tie it in with the other white marble buildings of the Civic Center. It was extensively remodeled in 2015.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

History

Completed in 1960, Cobo Hall was the city’s main events and exhibition space from the time of its opening. It was designed as part of the larger civic center, which included the City-County Building (Coleman A. Young Municipal Center), Ford Auditorium, Veteran’s Memorial Building, and Hart Plaza. Cobo Hall was the site of a number of civil rights events, most notably Martin Luther King, Jr.’s speech during the June 23, 1963 Walk to Freedom, which was an early version of his “I Have a Dream” speech, most famously delivered during the March on Washington later in 1963. The Cotillion Club, a social club for Black male businessmen and professionals that became a major force in local politics, sponsored debutante balls for young Black women; when Cobo Hall opened, the Club moved the balls from the segregated Gotham Hotel to Cobo Hall. Cobo Hall was originally named for former Detroit Mayor Albert Cobo and later renamed Cobo Center. When Mayor Cobo’s racist actions against Black Detroiters were reassessed in the late 2010s, the naming rights to Cobo Center were sold to TCF Financial Corporation and the facility renamed the TCF Center in 2019.

Statement of Significance

Because TCF Center has been significantly altered since the historic events with which it is associated, it is not recommended as eligible due to loss of integrity.

Eligibility Recommendation

Not Eligible

NR Criteria

NA

NR Exceptions

NA

Sources

“Cobo Center,” *Encyclopedia of Detroit*, <https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/cobo-center>.

“27 Debs to Bow at Cotillion Club,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 13, 1961, 22.

“Kermit G. Bailer,” (interview), in Elaine Latzman Moon, *Untold Tales, Unsung Heroes: An Oral History of Detroit’s African American Community, 1918-1967* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1994), 175-181.

Surveyor

Sandra Little, Ruth Mills

Date Surveyed

July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Conant Gardens	Street Address Roughly bounded by Conant Street, Seven Mile Road, Ryan Road, and Nevada Avenue	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
-------------------------------	--	--

District Names
None

Year Built
1920s-1950s

Resource Type
District

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements
Bungalow
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals
Tudor Revival



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick
Weatherboard

Roof Form
Front gable
Side gable
Hipped

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Wood
Stone

Condition
Fair

Integrity
Slightly Altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Current Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
Garages
Sheds

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Community Planning and Development

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Narrative Description

The neighborhood is bounded by Conant Street, Seven Mile Road, Ryan Road and Nevada Avenue. It consists largely of one, one-and-one-half, and two-story frame residences of modest size. Most have a rectangular footprint with the short side to the street, with small front and rear yards. Older houses from the 1920s have no driveway, with detached garages accessed from the alley, while houses from the 1940s on have side driveways with carports or rear yard garages. They are generally constructed of brick with some scattered clapboard residences. Some have been altered with vinyl or aluminum siding. Rooflines range from front gabled to side gabled to hipped; all have asphalt shingles.

History

Conant Gardens sits on land originally owned by abolitionist Shubael Conant, who had founded the Detroit Anti-Slavery Society in 1837. In the mid to late 1920s, Conant's land was relatively far from white settled neighborhoods and carried no restrictive covenants, meaning that Black residents could purchase property there. Conant Gardens was settled largely by middle-class Blacks who built comfortable brick houses on generous lots in an almost suburban setting. Prospective Black homeowners were able to secure Federal Housing Administration-backed loans in the 1930s and 1940s because the FHA considered the area to be segregated. In 1943 twenty-five homes at Grixdale and Binder were built as the first private war housing financed, built, and occupied by Blacks. One of the houses was reported built for track star Jesse Owns, who was working at Ford Motor Company.

Statement of Significance

Conant Gardens is recommended as eligible under Criterion A one of the earliest Black neighborhoods outside the confines of segregated Black Bottom/Paradise Valley. In addition, it is also recommended eligible under Criterion C for its architectural character as an intact and cohesive neighborhood of middle-class housing from the 1920s through 1950s.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, C	None

Sources

Michigan State Historical Marker
"Start Negro Housing," *Detroit Free Press*, November 21, 1943, 11.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name D. Bethune Duffield Elementary School	Street Address 2715 Macomb Street	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	---	--

District Names
NA

Year Built
1927

Resource Type
Complex

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century
Revivals
Collegiate Gothic



Plan E-shaped	Foundation Not visible	Walls Brick
Roof Form Flat	Roof Composite	Other Materials Stone
Condition Good	Integrity Slightly altered	Architect Malcolmson and Higginbotham
Historic Use EDUCATION/School: Primary School	Current Use EDUCATION/School: Primary School	Builder Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Education

Narrative Description

Two- to three-story E-shaped brick school in the Collegiate Gothic style. The central portion of the main spine of the building is three stories, while the adjoining sections of the spine and the two outer ellis are two stories. A two-story wing extends from the center of the spine with a small courtyard between. Decorative features of the building include stone quoining and window trim, segmental-arch windows, lancet-arch doors, and stone shields and medallions. The multi-light windows appear to be original. A Michigan Historical Marker for the First Colored Regiment is also present on the property.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

History

D. Bethune Duffield Elementary was built in 1923 and designed by the Detroit architectural firm of Malcomson and Higginbotham. D. Bethune Duffield (1821-1891), for whom it was named, was a lawyer who helped establish the Detroit school system and served as president of the Board of Education. The elementary school was close to the historically Black segregated neighborhood of Black Bottom, and many students came from that neighborhood. Boxer Joe Louis was a student here. The school now sits in the middle of Elmwood Park, a neighborhood that replaced portions of Black Bottom during urban renewal. The school is now the Bunche Academy.

Statement of Significance

D. Bethune Duffield Elementary is recommended eligible under Criterion A is one of the few remaining schools that served the historically Black neighborhood of Black Bottom. It was previously determined eligible under Criteria A and C under the Public Schools of Detroit MPS.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, C	None

Sources

Deborah Goldstein, "Public Schools of Detroit" National Register Multiple Property Submission, 2011.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church	Street Address 5151 West Chicago Avenue	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	---	--

District Name
Ebenezer African Methodist
Episcopal Historic District
(Local Historic District)

Year Built
1927-1943

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century
Revivals
Neo-Gothic



Plan
Irregular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Stone

Roof Form
Gable

Roof
Slate

Other Materials
Copper

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Edwin F. Jasson and Frank L.
Venning
Andrew R. Morrison

Historic Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Current Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History

Narrative Description

The building is composed of two sections: the church (sanctuary) (built 1941-42) and a chapel/education building (built 1927), which are connected. Both are Neo-Gothic in style and are stone faced with slate roofs and copper flashing. The church is oriented north-south and has a side-gabled roof. It features buttresses, Gothic arched windows with stone tracery and stained

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

glass, and a square tower at the northwest corner. The east elevation is brick and there are several one to two-story wings attached to this elevation. The chapel/education building has a square footprint and a mansard roof. It has several two-story projecting bays. The windows are multi-light units with stone mullions and stone tracery in several bays. The east elevation is faced with brick.

History

Ebenezer AME Church was built in two phases from 1927 to 1943 as Nardin Park Methodist Church, which had been formed from the merger of two Northwest Detroit churches, Grand River Avenue Church and New Ninde Church. The building was designed by the Chicago firm of Edwin F. Jasson and Frank L. Venning, in association with Detroit architect Andrew R. Morrison. The first phase was the chapel and education building, completed in 1928. Construction on the sanctuary was halted during the Depression, and completed from 1941-1943. Nardin Park Methodist sold the building to Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1963. Ebenezer AME was formed in 1871 and occupied several buildings in the Black neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley before being displaced during the urban renewal of the 1950s and 1960s. The congregation has historically been politically and socially active in the civil rights movement. Reverend G. W. Barber, pastor of Ebenezer AME, served on the National Negro Congress, a civil rights organization, and a number of nationally prominent speakers were hosted at the church, including Ralph Bunche, A. Clayton Powell, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Mary Bethune.

Statement of Significance

Ebenezer AME Church is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C. It is significant in the context of Black civil rights for its association with the civil rights activities of its congregation and of Reverend G. W. Barber, and for the civil rights-related events/speeches that were held there. Additionally, it is significant as a representative example of Neo-Gothic church architecture in the city of Detroit.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, C	A

Sources

Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board, "Proposed Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church Final Report," 2003.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

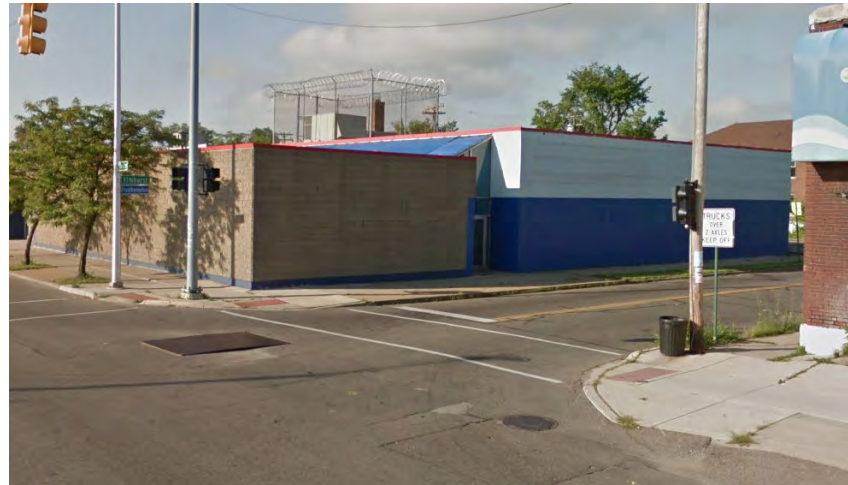
Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
Ed Davis Auto Dealership	11825 Dexter Avenue	Detroit, Wayne County

District Names
NA

Year Built
Unknown

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American
Movements
Commercial Style



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composite

Other Materials
Concrete

Condition
Fair

Integrity
Altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
COMMERCE AND
TRADE/Specialty Store: Auto
Dealership

Current Use
Vacant

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Business

Narrative Description

One-story rectangular brick building with a flat roof. No visible openings in the original building. A rectangular addition has been constructed between the original building and the street. This is faced with fractured fin (ribbed) concrete finish and has recessed glass and aluminum storefront entries. The space between the buildings is bridged by a glass atrium.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

History

Ed Davis was the first Black person to own a new-car dealership in the United States. He began selling cars at a Chrysler dealership in Highland Park, and then opened his own used car dealership in 1937. In 1940 he was the first Black man in the country to obtain a new car dealership, for Studebaker, in a building located at 421 E. Vernor at Brush (no longer extant). Davis was also the first to own a Big Three franchise, this Chrysler-Plymouth Imperial Dealership on Dexter at Elmhurst, which opened in 1963 in an existing building that was later expanded to encompass an entire city block. Davis was cited as a pioneer Black auto dealership owner and the dealership became one of the biggest of the new franchises. *Jet* magazine at one time termed Davis “the Jackie Robinson of the Automobile Dealers.” Competition and other economic led Davis to close his dealership in 1971.

Statement of Significance

This property is not recommended as eligible due to extensive alterations after the end of the Civil Rights context period.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Not eligible	NA	NA

Sources

Untitled photo feature, *Detroit Free Press*, November 12, 1963, 5B.
“First Black Car Dealer will Close,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 27, 1971, 9A.
“Chrysler Dealer Ed Davis Closes Agency in Detroit,” *Jet*, March 18, 1971, 14.
“Society World,” *Jet*, July 12, 1979, 32.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Eight Mile-Wyoming Neighborhood	Street Address Roughly bounded by Eight Mile Road, Santa Barbara, Pembroke, and Mendota Avenue	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	--	--

District Names
None

Year Built
1920s-1950s

Resource Type
District

**Architectural
Classification**
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American
Movements
Bungalow



Plan
Rectangular
Square

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Weatherboard
Brick

Roof Form
Front gable
Side gable
Hipped

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Wood
Asphalt

Condition
Varies

Integrity
Varies

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single
Dwelling: Residence

Current Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
Garages
Sheds

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Community Planning and Development

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Narrative Description

This neighborhood extends approximately one mile east to west from Santa Barbara to Mendota Avenue, and half a mile north to south, from Eight Mile Road to Pembroke Avenue. It consists largely of one story frame residences with a few one-and-one-half or two story houses. Generally, the houses are rectangular with the short side to the street, with small front and rear yards. Most have driveways along the side of the house extending into the rear yard, some with detached garages. They are generally constructed of a brick, frequently with an accent wall of horizontal siding in the front gable. Some have been altered with vinyl or aluminum siding. Rooflines are typically front gabled or hipped. While the majority of the houses date from the 1940s and 1950s, there are a few 1920s-era bungalows scattered throughout the neighborhood.

History

A small community of about 1000 Blacks settled on former farmland in the Eight Mile and Wyoming area in the 1920s. While, like the Old West Side and Conant Gardens, there were no restrictive covenants in this area due to its remoteness from the more settled parts of the city, the prospective residents, unlike their wealthier counterparts, did not have the means to purchase their land or build houses. Instead, they bought on land contracts from a friendly land speculator and scraped together the resources to slowly build very modest houses, sometimes in stages. While the lot sizes were not large, the amount of unused space in the area meant that residents could use the adjoining empty lots to raise food. Although a 1938 real property survey showed this was one of the poorest areas in the city, over 90% of the residents were living in single-family detached homes, with two-thirds of them owner-occupied, higher than the city average. Later, the neighborhood filled in with modest one-story frame and brick homes in vernacular mid-century styles, many of them built by the Wayne County Better Homes organization which built over 1500 houses in the neighborhood between 1944 and 1950. This neighborhood is today perhaps best known for the Birwood Wall, also known as the Eight Mile Road Wall or Wailing Wall. The six-foot concrete wall extends from Eight Mile Road south to Pembroke Avenue between Birwood and Mendota. Built in 1941, the wall is the legacy of the practice of redlining, a system of coding areas for financing under the Federal Housing Authority (FHA). Black neighborhoods were invariably the least desirable, or red, neighborhoods. A developer who proposed White housing in the area west of the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood could only secure FHA approval if he built a wall between his development and the established Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood. The wall, which still stands, remains as a reminder of discrimination in housing that extended into the latter part of the twentieth century.

Statement of Significance

The Eight-Mile Wyoming neighborhood is recommended as eligible under Criterion A as the earliest Black working class neighborhood outside the confines of segregated Black Bottom/Paradise Valley. In addition, it is also recommended eligible under Criterion C for its architectural character as an intact and cohesive neighborhood of middle-class housing from the 1920s through 1950s.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, C	None

Sources

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Burniece Avery, "The Eight Mile Road...Its Growth from 1920...1952," Burniece Avery Papers, Box 1, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 40.

Marvel Daines, "Be It Ever So Tumbled: The Story of a Suburban Slum," Citizens' Housing and Planning Council of Detroit, March 1940.

"Oppose Plan to Establish Negro Ghetto," *Michigan Chronicle*, July 5, 1941.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
Friendship Baptist Church	3900 Beaubien Avenue	Detroit, Wayne County

District Name
NA

Year Built
1963-64

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement
International style



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composition

Other Materials
Concrete

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Wallace K. Kagawa

Historic Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Current Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History

Narrative Description

Friendship Baptist Church is located on Beaubien Street, also sometimes designated as St. Antoine Street, in the Detroit Medical Center. Beaubien/St. Antoine curves to the northeast as it travels north between Mack Avenue and E. Canfield Street. Friendship Baptist is located on the east side of the street on an irregularly shaped lot that is truncated by the curve. The rectangular building is constructed of tan brick. The basement level is raised above grade with continuous recessed ribbon windows. The first floor wall above the recessed basement has a concrete watertable carried on square concrete posts. Five sets of narrow vertical stained glass windows on the north and south elevations are connected through the building by steep gabled roofs. The remainder of the roof is flat composition material. The west elevation has three centered narrow vertical windows while the east elevation has narrow vertical window bays on either end. Two one-story

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Reconnaissance Level Survey

wings extend from the east and west ends of the south elevation; each has narrow vertical window bays. The main entrance of the church is located on the west elevation of the west wing and consists of four glass and aluminum doors. There are also paired steel entry doors on the south end of this wing and on the south and east elevations of the east wing. The east and west wings are connected at their south ends by a walkway covered by a flat roof carried on square brick posts, which creates an open courtyard between the walkway, the wings, and the south wall of the main building. A concrete wall pierced by narrow vertical extends along the north side of the covered walkway with two openings into the courtyard.

History

Friendship Baptist Church is a historically Black congregation that was founded in 1916 in Detroit's Paradise Valley neighborhood. The growing congregation moved to 623 Mack Avenue (no longer extant) in 1935. Along with many other Black (but not White) churches in the area, Friendship Baptist's building was slated for demolition for the Medical Center urban renewal project in the late 1950s. The church, led by Reverend Louis Johnson, fought for three years to be allowed to purchase land for a new church in the Medical Center area. Friendship Baptist was one of the few out of 25 churches previously in the area to be able to afford to rebuild under the parking and building code restrictions established by the city. Friendship Baptist was the first to obtain approval for a new building, a decision that Pastor Johnson hailed as a corrective to what Blacks widely accepted was the city's attempt to move them out of the area. The church received \$137,000 compensation for its old property after going to court to contest the city's original offer of \$96,000. The new church, designed by Wallace Kagawa, who had worked for Minoru Yamasaki and Associates, cost around \$500,00 and opened in 1964.

Friendship Baptist Church was led by Pastor Louis Johnson, who worked actively to end racial injustice and foster integration. The congregation held an interfaith service following the 1967 rebellion. Reverend Johnson worked to address discrimination in education and housing, and the church built a nursing home and a low-to-moderate income housing development to provide housing for Blacks.

Statement of Significance

Friendship Baptist Church is eligible under Criteria A, for its significance as a historic Paradise Valley congregation that successfully combatted discrimination in the Medical Center urban renewal project to rebuild in the neighborhood, and Criterion C, as an important example of a Black church of mid-century Modern design by Japanese-American Architect Wallace K. Kagawa.

Eligibility Recommendation

Eligible

NR Criteria

A, C

NR Exceptions

A

Sources

"Friendship Baptist First to Plan Big Comeback," *Detroit Free Press*, July 23, 1960, 4.

Hiley H. Ward, "Does it Pay to Leave Church Out of Housing?" *Detroit Free Press*, February 17, 1962, 6.

Hiley H. Ward, "Sale of Medic Center Plot to Negro Church Approved," *Detroit Free Press*, December 28, 1962, 8.

"Negro Baptists Start Med Center Church," *Detroit Free Press*, April 8, 1963, 3.

"Friendship Baptist Church," Michigan Historical Marker, 3900 Beaubien Avenue, 2018.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Deborah Goldstein, Historic Designation Advisory Board, "Friendship Baptist Church Summary,"
May 29, 2019.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Fritz Funeral Home	Street Address 246 East Ferry Avenue	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
-----------------------------------	--	--

District Names
East Ferry Avenue Historic District

Year Built
1914

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals
Mediterranean Revival



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Hipped

Roof
Tile

Other Materials
Wood

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Alvin E. Harley

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence
FUNERARY/Mortuary: Funeral Home

Current Use
Unknown

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
Garage

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Commercial

Narrative Description
Asymmetrical two and a half story, hipped roof building clad in buff brick with Spanish tile roofing. The building features stone window trim with projecting molded caps, barrel-roofed dormers, and an arcaded loggia on the east elevation, now enclosed. There is a brick and concrete block one-story garage at the south alley.

History

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

M. Kelly Fritz founded a funeral home in Black Bottom serving Blacks in the early 1920s, one of the earliest such businesses in the city. In 1946 Fritz moved his business to the house at 246 East Ferry, in what was then a practically all White neighborhood. The house, built in 1914 for a Jewish family, had been previously owned for a few years by Prophet James F. Jones, a nationally known Black religious leader. The Fritz Funeral Home remained in business at this location for decades.

Statement of Significance

The Fritz Funeral Home at 246 East Ferry is a contributing structure in the East Ferry Avenue Historic District, a National Register of Historic Places listed district. There is very little information on the Fritz Funeral Home in that nomination document which relies solely on the building's architecture, Criterion C. Based on the importance of the Fritz Funeral Home as a very early Black business in Detroit, and the loss of its original Black Bottom location, it is recommended as eligible under Criterion A as well. The nomination document should be expanded in the future to capture that important history.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Contributing to a district	A, C	None

Sources

Nancy Curtis, *Black Heritage Sites: An African American Odyssey and Finder's Guide*, 443-44.
East Ferry Avenue Historic American Building Survey Report

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
General Douglas MacArthur Bridge	7200 East Jefferson Avenue	Detroit, Wayne County

District Names
Belle Isle Historic District

Year Built
1923
Resource Type
Structure

**Architectural
Classification**
NA



Plan NA	Foundation Concrete	Walls NA
Roof Form NA	Roof NA	Other Materials Metal - Steel
Condition NA	Integrity NA	Architect NA
Historic Use TRANSPORTATION/ Road-Related: Bridge	Current Use TRANSPORTATION/ Road-Related: Bridge	Builder NA

Outbuildings
NA

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History

Narrative Description

The General MacArthur Bridge was constructed in 1923 to replace a temporary bridge built after the original timber trestle bridge was destroyed by fire in 1915. The bridge is concrete with 19 open spandrel arch spans. The bridge features single light standards topped with an acorn globe light fixture at the top and two smaller globes below along its entire length. The lighting and the aluminum railing date to a 1980s rehabilitation.

History

An incident on Belle Isle was the precipitating event for a one-day racial conflict in Detroit in 1943. Tensions had been building for several years due to Whites feeling threatened by an influx of Black

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

migrants arriving in the city to work in the defense industry. Earlier events had included a conflict over the opening of the Sojourner Truth Homes to Black residents in 1942, and the desegregation of the Packard Plant automobile line in early June 1943. On a hot summer day, June 20, 1943, following rumors that a Black baby had been thrown off the Belle Isle Bridge into the river, brawls broke out between young people of both races, eventually sparking further rumors of a race war. After some Blacks broke into White-owned stores in Paradise Valley, a mob of over 10,000 Whites attacked Paradise Valley, aided by the police. President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered in the National Guard to quell the violence. As they had in previous racial conflicts, the Black community bore the brunt of the damage, with 25 of the 34 people killed and most of the property damage.

Statement of Significance

Belle Isle, including the bridge, is already listed under Criteria A and C as Detroit’s premiere public park. Based on the bridge’s role as the location where the precipitating event of an important racial conflict in Detroit’s history began, it is recommended as eligible under Criterion A for that history.

Eligibility	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Recommendation	A, C	None
Listed		

Sources

Belle Isle National Register Nomination, 1973
Belle Isle National Register Draft Update Nomination, 2013.
“Three Years of Strife Behind Disorders,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 22, 1943, 1, 7.
Charles Wartman, ed. “Detroit: Ten Years After,” (pamphlet of feature articles from the *Michigan Chronicle*), March 1953.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name
Greater New Mount Moriah
Baptist Church

Street Address
586 Owen Street

Municipal Unit, County
Detroit, Wayne County

District Name
NA

Year Built
Ca. 1964

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement
International Style



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick
Stucco
Stone

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composition

Other Materials
Aluminum

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
O'Dell Hewlett & Luckenbach
Associates

Historic Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Current Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Builder
Jacob Strobl & Sons, Inc.

Outbuildings
Garage

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage, Social History

Narrative Description

Located on the south side of Owen Street between Brush Street and Oakland Avenue, the church property encompasses almost the entire north half of the block except for a few lots at the east end. The sanctuary is a two-story brick building with rectangular multi-colored windows on the east and west elevations. Attached to the north side is a two-story stucco wing with narrow vertical full-height windows and a utilitarian double door. The main entry is through a one-story brick and glass-curtain-wall structure set within the ell; it has a cantilevered canopy over a small porch. Brick half walls are located on either side of the steps. The church hall on the south side of the sanctuary is a one-story building covered in stone panels with aluminum framed vertical fixed

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

windows. A storefront entry is located on the west side. A brick gabled-roofed garage is set on the south end of the property.

History

Greater New Mt. Moriah Church was founded around 1926, and by the late 1930s was located at 1169 Hague Street, in the North End neighborhood of Detroit, a formerly working-class Jewish neighborhood that became a destination neighborhood for middle-class Blacks looking to move out of the crowded confines of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. The church had moved to a building at 586 Owen by 1943. The present building was constructed beginning around 1964. A photograph of the congregation in front of the building site, ca. 1965, shows a construction sign citing the Detroit firm of O'Dell, Hewlett, & Luckenbach as architects and Jacob Strobl and Sons as contractors. The pastor of Greater New Mount Moriah Baptist from 1964 to 1972 was Benjamin Hooks. Reverend Hooks was a native of Memphis, TN who graduated from DePaul University College of Law in Chicago in 1948. He was ordained as a Baptist minister in 1956 in Memphis and became involved in the civil rights movement. He became the pastor for Greater New Mount Moriah in 1964, although he continued his civil rights work around the country and continued preaching at his Memphis church for eight years. Hooks served as the President of the NAACP (national organization) from 1976 to 1992.

Statement of Significance

Greater New Mount Moriah Baptist Church is eligible under Criterion B, for its association with Reverend Benjamin Hooks, a national leader in the civil rights movement.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	B	A

Sources

- "Celebrate Anniversary at New Mt. Moriah," *Detroit Tribune*, June 3, 1939, 6.
- "Greater New Mt. Moriah History," *Detroit Tribune*, November 26, 1955, 6.
- "The Congregation of the Greater new Mount Moriah Baptist Church," Photograph at the digital archives of Memphis Public Libraries, <https://memphislibrary.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16108coll15/id/599/>
- "Benjamin Hooks," in Nathan Aasang, *African American Religious Leaders* (New York, NY: Facts on File, 2003,) 105-107.
- Benjamin Hooks and Jerry Guess, *The March for Civil Rights: The Benjamin Hooks Story* (Chicago, American Bar Association, 2003).

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name William E. Higginbotham School	Street Address 20119 Wisconsin Street	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
--	---	--

District Name
Public Schools of Detroit
Multiple Property Submission

Year Built
1926-27

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American Movements
Mission



Plan U	Foundation Not visible	Walls Brick
Roof Form Hip	Roof Tile	Other Materials Stone Terra cotta
Condition Fair	Integrity Slightly altered	Architect N. C. Sorensen
Historic Use EDUCATION/School: Primary School	Current Use VACANT	Builder Sibbard Construction Company

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History

Narrative Description
This is a two-story school constructed of brick with stone and terra cotta trim. It is roughly U-shaped, with a one-story rectangular block projecting from the south elevation. The mansard roof is covered with tile on the slopes and composition roofing on the flat portions. The building is faced with buff brick. The building features Mission style detailing, including concentric tile squares, gabled towers, and arched entries with square tile trim.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

History

The William Higginbotham School, designed by N.C. Sorensen, was built in 1926-27. It is located in the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood, a historically working-class Black neighborhood settled in the early 1920s. Students in this area originally went to school in a brick one-room school. Following the area's annexation into Detroit, the Birdhurst School on Woodingham Drive (no longer extant) was built to accommodate both Black and White children. When White parents objected, Birdhurst was closed and Black students were forced back to the one room school. After another attempt to build an integrated school south of Pembroke, the *de facto* segregation line, Higginbotham School was built in 1926-27, within the segregated neighborhood, to serve the Black residents of the area. By the late 1940s, the school was heavily overcrowded. Seventh and eighth grade students were reassigned to Post Intermediate School, but after White parents objected, the school board announced it would send the Black students to Birdhurst School, which by that time was in poor condition due to being closed for over fifteen years. Black parents went on strike for three weeks in September 1947, leading to the formation of a liberal-labor-Black alliance, Save our Schools, in 1948.

Statement of Significance

Higginbotham School was determined eligible under Criteria A and C under the Public Schools of Detroit Multiple Property Submission in 2011. At that time, the civil rights related context of the school's history was not documented. It is significant under Criterion A for its association with the segregation history of the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, C	NA

Sources

"Citizens Charge Discrimination at Higginbotham," *Detroit Tribune*, September 13, 1947, 1.
Deborah Goldstein, "Public Schools of Detroit" National Register Multiple Property Submission, 2011.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
Home Federal Savings and Loan	9108 Woodward Avenue	Detroit, Wayne County

District Names
NA

Year Built
Unknown

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American
Movements
Commercial Style



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Exterior Insulation Finishing System

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composite

Other Materials
Concrete

Condition
Good

Integrity
Altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
COMMERCE/TRADE:
Financial Institution: Bank

Current Use
COMMERCE/TRADE: Financial
Institution: Bank

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Business

Narrative Description

One-story rectangular brick building with a flat roof. The original exterior has been covered with a skin consisting at the lower level of concrete columns with stucco and aluminum-framed glass at the lower level and an exterior insulation finishing system frieze above. This skin was built out from the original storefront, and areas of the original glass and aluminum storefront remain visible through the windows of the newer curtain wall.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

History

Home Federal Savings and Loan opened in the fall of 1947 at 301 East Warren (no longer extant) in Detroit; it was the first Black-owned banking institution in the state and specialized in serving Black Detroiters when few would lend them money. Capital for the new bank was raised by Black business and professional men and women. The bank was the first all-Black organization in Michigan to qualify as a lender under the Federal Housing Administration insured mortgage financing program, in 1948, and also qualified as a lender under the Veterans mortgage program. In 1953 the bank launched the first Black-financed low cost housing in the city, comprising 17 homes on Electric, Liddesdale, Beatrice, and Deacon in the Schaefer-S. Fort area. The bank moved its offices to 7723 Oakland Avenue (no longer extant) in 1952, and then in 1957, the bank moved to this existing building at 9108 Woodward, in the Black North End neighborhood. In 1985, the savings and loan association converted to a federal savings bank and renamed itself Home Federal Savings Bank. It then became the state's only Black-owned savings bank. The bank closed and went into receivership in 2009; its assets were transferred to Liberty Bank and Trust Company, which is still operational.

Statement of Significance

This building does not appear to be currently eligible due to the non-historic skin built over the original exterior. Should enough of the original storefront remain intact underneath and be restored in the future, this building may become eligible.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Not eligible	NA	NA

Sources

Multiple Property Documentation Form, Branch Banks in the City of Detroit, 1889-1970.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
Home Federal Savings and Loan Branch	13300 West Seven Mile Road	Detroit, Wayne County

District Names
NA

Year Built
1970

Resource Type
Building

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Architectural Classification

Modern Movement
International Style



Plan Rectangular	Foundation Not visible	Walls Brick
Roof Form Flat	Roof Composition	Other Materials Aluminum
Condition Good	Integrity Slightly altered	Architect Unknown
Historic Use COMMERCE/TRADE: Financial Institution: Bank	Current Use COMMERCE/TRADE: Financial Institution: Bank	Builder Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Business

Narrative Description

This one-story bank is located on the northwest corner of West Seven Mile Road and Littlefield Street. It is rectangular in shape with a covered drive-through on the west elevation. The building is built out to the sidewalk on West Seven Mile and Littlefield, with small strips of grass in the easements. There is a paved parking area on the north side and the entire site is fenced. The building is clad in yellow brick and has a mansard roof clad in asphalt pseudo-shakes. The main (south) elevation has a center glass and aluminum storefront entry flanked by full-height windows. At either end of the façade are tall, narrow divided light windows. Five similar windows are spaced evenly along the east elevation. The north elevation has two similar windows flanking a service entry door. The west elevation has a drive-up window and two remote teller stations on concrete curbs.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

History

Home Federal Savings and Loan opened in the fall of 1947 at 301 East Warren (no longer extant) in Detroit; it was the first Black-owned bank in the state and specialized in serving Black Detroiters when few would lend them money. Capital for the new bank was raised by Black business and professional men and women. The bank was the first all-Black organization in Michigan to qualify as a lender under the Federal Housing Administration insured mortgage financing program, in 1948, and also qualified as a lender under the Veterans mortgage program. In 1953 the bank launched the first Black-financed low cost housing in the city, comprising 17 homes on Electric, Liddesdale, Beatrice, and Deacon in the Schaefer-S. Fort area. The bank moved its offices to 7723 Oakland Avenue (no longer extant) in 1952, and then in 1957, the bank moved to 9108 Woodward, north of the New Center. In 1985, the savings and loan association converted to a federal savings bank and renamed itself Home Federal Savings Bank. It then became the state's only Black-owned savings bank. The bank closed and went into receivership in 2009; its assets were transferred to Liberty Bank and Trust Company, which is still operational.

Home Federal Savings and Loan filed an intent to open its branch at Seven Mile and Littlefield Roads in February, 1970; the branch opened in a brand new building later that year. While the bank's employees and customers were primarily Black, the bank was open to all customers in the branch's community, defined as stretching from McNichols to Eight Mile Road and Woodward to Southfield, which included the historically black neighborhood of Eight Mile-Wyoming. The building remains an active branch of Liberty Bank.

Statement of Significance

The Home Federal Savings and Loan Branch is potentially eligible under Criterion A as the first branch bank opened by a black-owned banking institution in Detroit.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A	None

Sources

Multiple Property Documentation Form, Branch Banks in the City of Detroit, 1889-1970.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name House, William Stuart, House	Street Address 2127 Oakman Boulevard	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	--	--

District Name
Oakman Boulevard Local
Historic District

Year Built
c. 1925

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century
Revivals
Neo-Tudor



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick
Stucco

Roof Form
Cross-gable

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Wood
Stone

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Current Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
Garage

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History

Narrative Description

This building is a two-story, rectangular Neo-Tudor style house. It is constructed of brick with stone window sills. At the front elevation is a one-story porch with brick cheek walls and brick piers that support a steeply pitched gable roof. Projecting from the roof at the west end of the front elevation is a steeply pitched gable dormer with stucco half timbering in the gable end. One side of the gable extends down to the first floor of the house. In the rear yard is a detached garage.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

History

Oakman Boulevard was developed as a fashionable White residential district in the 1920s, and many of the houses were built for Detroit's leading business and political citizens. In the 1940s and 1950s Detroit's Jewish community began to migrate to the near northwest around Oakman Boulevard and Dexter Avenue. By the 1950s and 1960s the homes were being purchased by Black Detroiters who could afford to move out of traditional Black neighborhoods, including Michigan Secretary of State Richard Austin. The house at 2127 Oakman Boulevard was built around 1925. By the 1960s it was the home of Dr. Walter W. House and his son, William Stuart. Stu, as he was known, became involved in the civil rights movement when he was 13, around 1959. He participated in demonstrations in Detroit to desegregate public facilities, and he later remembered working in the grassroots movement alongside Stevie Wonder. He was recruited into the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and became its field secretary in Hattiesburg, Mississippi during Freedom Summer in 1964, when he was only 17. He later moved back to Detroit and worked for John Conyers and the Michigan Senate.

Statement of Significance

The William Stuart House is a contributing resource in the Oakman Boulevard Local Historic District under Criteria A and C. The district nomination does not include information about the house at 2127 Oakman Boulevard or about its specific civil rights history, although it does mention the migration of Blacks to the district in the 1950s and 1960s. 2127 Oakman is recommended eligible under Criterion B for its association with William Stuart House, a significant civil rights activist and leader in Detroit and nationwide during the 1960s and 1970s.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, B, C	NA

Sources

Stuart House, "Inciting To Riot in Selma, AL," speech given in San Francisco, CA, March 27, 2010, https://www.crmvet.org/nars/stor/s_house.htm
Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board, "Proposed Oakman Boulevard Historic District," 1989.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
James H. Cole Home for Funerals	2624 West Grand Boulevard	Detroit, Wayne County

District Names

James H. Cole Home for Funerals
Local Historic District; West
Grand Boulevard Local Historic
District

Year Built

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

1957

Resource Type

Building

Architectural Classification

Modern Movement

Moderne



Plan

Irregular

Foundation

Not visible

Walls

Brick

Roof Form

Flat

Roof

Composition

Other Materials

Granite

Condition

Good

Integrity

Slightly altered

Architect

Unknown

Historic Use

COMMERCE/TRADE/Professional:
Insurance Agency

Current Use

FUNERARY/Mortuary: Funeral
Home

Builder

Unknown

FUNERARY/Mortuary: Funeral
Home

Outbuildings

Garage

Areas of Significance

Ethnic Heritage

Commercial

Narrative Description

Two-story brick commercial building built around an earlier square brick and frame converted residence on a triangular lot at the corner of West Grand Boulevard and Holden Street. The original building was a two-story building faced with brick on the lower level and horizontal siding on the upper level, covered by a hipped roof with a dormer. In 1957, a two-story beige brick building was added, wrapping around the original building along West Grand Boulevard and part of Holden Street, with a portion of the original building still visible on Holden Street. Aluminum framed multi-light ribbon windows extend across both floors of the West Grand Boulevard and Holden Street elevations. At the center of the West Grand Boulevard elevation is a recessed entry with a granite panel façade and angled glass and aluminum entry. At the east end of the building is one-story brick and granite addition with an added porte cochere carried on paired columns.

History

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

James H. Cole II founded a funeral home business in Black Bottom in 1919, which remains the oldest Black-owned funeral home business in the city. The business moved to 446 East Warren (no longer extant) and then 275 East Warren (no longer extant), before moving to a converted house at 2640 West Grand Boulevard in 1962. It remained in that location until 1981-82, when it moved to the building next door at 2624 West Grand Boulevard. That building consists of a former residential building, to which an extensive commercial addition was added in 1957. The 1957 addition was built for the Dorr W. Frisbee Insurance Agency, which specialized in automobile insurance. The Frisbee Agency closed in 1971 after Dorr W. Frisbee died. The Cole Funeral Home remains in the Cole family and has been a vital part of Detroit's Black community.

Statement of Significance

The James H. Cole Home for Funerals is both an individually listed local historic district and a contributing resource to the West Grand Boulevard African American Arts and Business local historic district. However, because the funeral home did not move here until 1982, after the context period for the Civil Rights project, it is not recommended for National Register eligibility.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Not eligible	NA	NA

Sources

James H. Cole Home for Funerals Local Historic District Study Report.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
Jeffries Towers	Marvin Gaye Drive at the John C. Lodge Service Drive	Detroit, Wayne County

District Names
None

Year Built
1953-55

Resource Type
Complex

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement
International Style



Plan
Cruciform

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Mansard/Flat

Roof
Metal/composition

Other Materials
None

Condition
Good

Integrity
Altered

Architect
Harley, Ellington, and Day

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling:
Apartment

Current Use
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling:
Apartment

Builder
Hayes Construction

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Community Planning and Development

Narrative Description
Three fifteen-story high rise residential apartment towers. Each are in cruciform plan with brick walls and a flat roof behind metal-clad mansard walls. The windows are simple punched openings with sliding aluminum windows. One of the towers has had a clock tower added to the roof.

History
The Jeffries Homes were a public housing development constructed from 1953-1955. Originally consisting of eight high-rise towers, five more towers and a low-rise apartment complex were added in 1955. The development was originally planned for White families while the Frederick Douglass

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

apartments on the east side was targeted for Blacks. By 1945 a fourth of the planned units were earmarked for Black residents. However, the long waiting list for Black families prompted the Detroit Housing Commission in 1952 to make all the apartments open regardless of color. It was the first public housing in the city to open on an integrated basis, with equal numbers of Black and White residents moving in during its early years. Conditions later deteriorated and the complex became known for its high crime rate and substandard housing. All but three of the towers were demolished in the early 2000s and replaced with a mix of owner-occupied and rental single family and apartment housing.

Statement of Significance

Of the original complex, only three of the high-rise towers remain; low-rise development similar to that historically present has replaced the other buildings in the complex. The historic importance of the remaining towers may be enough to qualify them for listing under Criterion A but further study is needed.

Eligibility Recommendation

More Research Needed/No
Determination Made

NR Criteria

A

NR Exceptions

None

Sources

“Project Opened to All Races.” *Detroit Free Press*, September 27, 1952, 21.

Surveyor

Sandra Little, Ruth Mills

Date Surveyed

July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name
Keith, Damon, Flat

Street Address
1544 Virginia Park Street

Municipal Unit, County
Detroit, Wayne County

District Name
NA

Year Built
Ca. 1915

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and early 20th
Century Modern Movements
Craftsman



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Hip

Roof
Asphalt shingles

Other Materials
Wood

Condition
Fair

Integrity
Slightly Altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling:
Duplex

Current Use
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling:
Duplex

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
Garage

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage, Social History, Law

Narrative Description

This two-and-one-half story two family flat is located on the north side of Virginia Park Street east of Woodrow Wilson Street. The rectangular building has a hipped roof covered in asphalt shingles. A two-story porch is located on the front (south) elevation; it has brick piers and tapered columns at the second floor. At the east end are the paired entry doors (first floor) and balcony door (second floor) while both floors have a rectangular four-light bay window. A hipped dormer with four windows tops the elevation. A brick chimney rises from the west elevation. The secondary elevations are stucco, with a two-story rectangular bay window with horizontal siding on the west elevation. A one-story gable roofed garage is visible in the rear yard.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

History

This house was once home to Judge Damon Keith (1922-2019). Judge Keith is a native of Detroit who graduated from Northwestern High School in 1939 and the law schools at Howard University and Wayne State University. While still in private practice, Keith became involved in Black community work, including volunteering for the NAACP and the United Negro College Fund. His civil rights work as a lawyer included working for equality in labor unions, meeting with President John F. Kennedy to discuss the civil rights movement, facing down protestors during the 1967 uprising, and serving as co-chair of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission. Keith served as a judge on the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan and the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit.

Keith was living in this home in the late 1950s and early 1960s, during his early career in private practice focusing on civil rights. Among his accomplishments during the time he lived here were his appointments to the Wayne County Board of Supervisors, the Detroit Housing Commission, and Michigan’s Civil Rights Commission. In 1963, President John F. Kennedy invited Keith to the White House to discuss the role of lawyers in the civil rights struggle.

Statement of Significance

The house at 1544 Virginia Park is eligible under Criteria B for its association with significant civil rights activist, lawyer, and judge Damon Keith, in particular its connection to his early career as a civil rights lawyer and activist at the height of the civil rights movement.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	B	None

Sources

Herb Boyd, *Black Detroit* (New York: Harper Collins Press, 2017).
Detroit Free Press, October 23, 1958, 2.
“The Priceless 10-Cent Wheel,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 19, 1963, 18.
Damon J. Keith Collection, Walter Reuther Library, Wayne State University.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Levi Barbour Intermediate School	Street Address 4209 Seneca Street	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	---	--

District Name
Public Schools of Detroit
Multiple Property Submission

Year Built
1922

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals
Collegiate Gothic



Plan E	Foundation Not visible	Walls Brick Stone
Roof Form Cross-gable	Roof Asphalt shingle	Other Materials Metal
Condition Fair	Integrity Slightly altered	Architect Malcolmson and Higginbotham
Historic Use EDUCATION/School: Primary School	Current Use Vacant	Builder Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Education

Narrative Description
The Levi Barbour Intermediate School is a three-story, E-shaped building constructed of brown brick with limestone trim. The asphalt shingled roof has a basic hip form with gables at the ends of some sections. Along the long east elevation of the building is a projecting central section and

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

the entry bays on the north and south elevations also project slightly. The window bays have four sets of windows on each level separated by decorative metal spandrels. At the projecting central section, the first floor has segmental arch windows and each bay is flanked by graduated pilasters. A copper finial is located atop the roof of this section.

History

The city of Detroit first began establishing junior high schools (grades seven through nine) in the 1910s. In 1919 the school board regrouped grades into six years of elementary, three of intermediate, and three of high school. The intermediate schools replaced the junior high with a more specialized school environment. Barbour School, built in 1922 and designed by the Detroit architectural firm of Malcolmson and Higginbotham, was a model for the new intermediate school type. Barbour Intermediate School was integrated in the early 1940s, as Black Detroiters began moving out of the segregated neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley to the west. Following the integration of the school, there were reports of Black students being attacked by crowds of White students. In May 1963 Black students walked out of the school and held a protest in solidarity with the Children’s March in Birmingham, Alabama.

Statement of Significance

Barbour Intermediate School was determined eligible under Criteria A and C under the Public Schools of Detroit Multiple Property Submission in 2011. At that time, the civil rights related context of the school’s history was not documented.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, C	None

Sources

Deborah Goldstein, “Public Schools of Detroit” National Register Multiple Property Submission, 2011.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Lewis College of Business	Street Address 5450 John R.	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
--	---------------------------------------	--

District Names
East Ferry Avenue Historic District

Year Built
1910

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals
Colonial Revival



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Main: Side-Gabled
Additions: Hipped

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Wood

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
F. E. Carleton

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence
EDUCATION/College: Business
School

Current Use
Unknown

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Education

Narrative Description

Two-and-a-half story rectangular brick building with side gabled asphalt-shingled roof. A two story side porch on the north elevation has been enclosed with brick and multi-light windows. Five-bay front with eight-over-one double hung windows. Center front entry with one-story porch carried on fluted columns and a tripartite window on the second floor. Decorative features include stone keystones above the windows, lunette windows in the end gables, and barrel-roofed dormers.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

History

This house was originally built in 1910 for James F. Murphy. It was purchased in 1941 by the Lewis College of Business, established by Violet Lewis in Indianapolis in 1929 to train Black women for careers in business. When Violet Lewis purchased the house on Ferry for the college's use, nearby White residents sued to shut the college down, ostensibly on the grounds that it was a business use in a residential neighborhood. Violet Lewis converted the college to non-profit status and the case was dismissed. The college remained here until 1976 when it moved to 17370 Meyers. In 1987 Lewis College of Business was designated as the state's first Historically Black College and University.

Statement of Significance

The Lewis College of Business building at 5450 John R is a contributing resource in the East Ferry Avenue Historic District, a National Register of Historic Places listed district. There is little to no history on Lewis College of Business in that nomination document which relies solely on the building's architecture, Criterion C. Based on the role of Lewis College of Business in the early Civil Rights movement and the importance of its founder, Violet Lewis, it is recommended as eligible under Criteria A and B as well. The nomination document should be expanded in the future to capture that important history.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Contributing to a district	A, B, C	None

Sources

Michigan Register of Historic Sites
East Ferry Avenue Historic American Building Survey Report

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Lewis College of Business	Street Address 17370 Meyers Road	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	--	--

District Names
NA

Year Built
1950-1963

Resource Type
Complex

**Architectural
Classification**
Modern Movement
Moderne



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composition

Other Materials
Stone

Condition
Poor

Integrity
Altered

Architect
Morris Webster (Library and
Activities Building, 1957)

Historic Use
EDUCATION/College:
Business School

Current Use
VACANT

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Education

Narrative Description

Two building complex. Both buildings are two-story brick buildings with flat roofs. The south building (the original main building built ca. 1950) has two-story window bays with the first and second floor windows separated with brick spandrel panels and trimmed with stone. The windows are boarded. At the center of the west elevation is a two-story projecting stone portico with angled stone muntins. The doors are likewise boarded. The building has stone bands at the cornice. The north building (the

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Library and Activities Building, built ca. 1957 and designed by Morris Webster) has tall windows at the lower level and smaller windows above a stone stringcourse at the upper level; the windows are boarded. The entry is set in the third bay from the north and has a projecting square canopy with tapered brackets. The window above the entry has projecting stone trim that is tapered from top to bottom. South of the entry bay are two narrow window bays with stacked rectangular windows at the lower level and one at the upper level. Another door is set on the south elevation.

History

This complex was originally built for the Detroit Bible Institute from 1950 to 1963 (a third building in the complex was recently demolished). In 1976 the Institute sold the campus to the Lewis College of Business. Lewis College of Business had been established in 1929 to train Black women for careers in business. The college was located at 5450 John R from 1941 until it moved to 17370 Meyers. In 1987 Lewis College of Business was designated as the state's first Historically Black College and University. The College closed sometime between 2008 and 2013.

Statement of Significance

Because the Lewis College of Business did not move to this campus until 1976, at the end of the Civil Rights context period, and because the College's prior building on Ferry Street remains extant, these buildings are recommended as not eligible. Future research of these structures should be undertaken to determine whether they are significant based on their association with the Detroit Bible Institute.

Eligibility	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Recommendation Not Eligible	NA	NA

Sources

"Lewis College of Business" <http://www.detroiturbex.com/content/schools/lewis/index.html>

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name McNichols-Mackay Neighborhood Historic District	Street Address Intersection of McNichols and Mackay	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
--	--	--

District Names
None

Year Built
1940s

Resource Type
District

**Architectural
Classification**
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American
Movements
Bungalow



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Weatherboard
Brick

Roof Form
Side gable
Front gable

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Wood

Condition
Unknown

Integrity
Unknown

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single
Dwelling: Residence

Current Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Builder
Hayes Construction

Outbuildings
Garages
Sheds

Areas of Significance
NA

Narrative Description

The potential district consists of thirty to seventy houses in the area around the intersection of McNichols and Mackay. Specific houses have not been identified, but the general character of houses

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

of this era in the neighborhood are one to one-and-one-half story, rectangular, side- or front-gabled houses with a combination of brick and wood siding, asphalt-shingled roofs, and porches.

History

In September 1944, the Hayes Construction Company, managed by Milton Ratner, announced plans to build seventy homes for Black families at East McNichols and MacKay Street on the East Side. At the time, work had begun on thirty of the houses.

Statement of Significance

A recommendation for eligibility is not possible as the specific buildings have not been identified under the scope of this project. Future study of this area is recommended to determine whether these buildings remain and their potential eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

Eligibility	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Recommendation	NA	None
More Information Needed		

Sources

Henry Burdick, "500 Homes for Negroes," *Detroit Free Press*, September 30, 1944, 5.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Michigan Chronicle	Street Address 479 Ledyard Street	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
-----------------------------------	---	--

District Names
Cass Park Historic District

Year Built
1936

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement
Moderne



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick
Stone

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composite

Other Materials
None

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING
/ EXTRACTION:
Communications
Facility: Film Studio
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING
/ EXTRACTION:
Communications
Facility: Newspaper

Current Use
Vacant

Builder
H. G Winter

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Communications
Social History

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Narrative Description

Two-story, three bay brick office building with a limestone Moderne façade. The front façade is composed of horizontal stone bands and large metal framed windows separated by ridged vertical cast stone piers or pilasters which also flank the entrance doorway on the east end of the building. The name MICHIGAN CHRONICLE appears in raised letters between the first and second floors.

History

The *Michigan Chronicle* was a Black owned and operated newspaper founded in 1936 (as the *Detroit Chronicle*) in offices at 1727 St. Antoine (no longer extant) in Black Bottom. Its founder was John H. Sengstacke, who owned the *Chicago Defender*. The paper was notable for its advocacy of political and labor causes and supported the civil rights movement in the city, covering violence against Blacks. The paper moved to 612 East Vernor Highway (no longer extant) and then 268 Elliot Street (no longer extant) in the 1940s, and then to this building in 1960. The building had been constructed in 1936 as a film exchange building, occupied for many years by Paramount Pictures, and included a small theater.

Statement of Significance

The *Michigan Chronicle* building is listed as a contributing resource to the Cass Park National Register and Local Historic Districts. Both nominations include some information about the building as the home of the *Chronicle*.

Eligibility	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Recommendation	A, C	None
Contributing to a district		

Sources

Cass Park Local Historic District Final Report, City of Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board.
Keith Owens, "Michigan Chronicle Turns 80: A Look Back," *Michigan Chronicle*, April 16, 2016.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
Milford Court Apartments	1740 Grand Boulevard West	Detroit, Wayne County

District Names
NA

Year Built
1952

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement
Moderne



Plan
Irregular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composite

Other Materials
Stone

Condition
Poor

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Beneicke and Lorenz

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Multiple
Dwelling: Apartment

Current Use
VACANT

Builder
Ettenheimer, Green, and Alper

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Community Planning and Development

Narrative Description

Five-story irregularly-shaped brick apartment building with a flat roof. A strong horizontal emphasis is represented by thin stone string courses above the basement and first floor levels, and wide horizontal multi-paned steel windows (now boarded up). The center entry bay presents vertical contrast with a vertical ribbon of windows separated by stone spandrel panels. The entry door is offset with a series of square openings to the side, covered by a projecting metal canopy.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

History

The Federal Housing Administration’s Section 608 program provided government-insured mortgages for building apartment houses aimed at the middle class. Milford Court, completed in 1952, was the first Section 608 development exclusively for Black residents in the city of Detroit, and “one of the finest” in the country, it was claimed at the time. Features of the 52-unit development by builders Abe Green and Louis Alper included large kitchens and bedrooms, television outlets, Youngstown steel kitchens, and Murphy beds, as well as parking and a playground.

Statement of Significance

The Milford Court Apartment building is recommended as eligible under Criterion A as one of the earliest, if not the earliest, apartment building constructed for Black residents in the city of Detroit. In addition, it is also potentially eligible under Criterion C as a representative example of Moderne apartment architecture in Detroit, based on the registration requirements established in the 20th Century African American Civil Rights Sites MPDF and the Apartment Buildings in Detroit MPDF.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, C	None

Sources

Quinn Evans Architects, “Apartment Buildings in Detroit, 1892-1970,” Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2017.

“608 Project OKed,” *Detroit Tribune*, April 29, 1950, 1.

“Apartment of 65 Units Set to Rent,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 13, 1952, 12B.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name
Jobete Publishing Company
(Motown)

Street Address
2644-46 West Grand Boulevard

Municipal Unit, County
Detroit, Wayne County

District Names
West Grand Boulevard Local
Historic District

Year Built
1912

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American
Movements
Craftsman



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick
Concrete

Roof Form
Hipped

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Wood

Condition
Good

Integrity
Altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/
EXTRACTION/Communication
s Facility: Recording Studio

Current Use
RECREATION AND
CULTURE/Museum: Museum

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Entertainment

Narrative Description

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Reconnaissance Level Survey

This is a two-story, rectangular residential building with a raised basement and is covered by a hipped roof covered with asphalt shingles. There are hipped dormers on the north and east elevations. A one-story brick sided porch extends across the full width of the front elevation and has four brick piers supporting a shallow hipped roof. A concrete switchback ramp with a metal railing provides barrier-free access to the west end of the front porch, while concrete steps with brick cheek walls lead to the porch deck on the east end. The building's front (north) elevation has a three-sided bay window with openings on each side that have been infilled with glass block. A single-leaf metal entry door is set on the west end. The second floor has single-leaf door and a three-sided bay window with wood panels and single unit windows on each side. The dormer has three nine-pane casement windows that have been painted. There are no openings on the west elevation. The east elevation is largely obscured by the connection to the building next door, but there is a square window opening on the second floor. There is a two-story painted concrete block addition on the south side of the original house. There are several square fixed window openings on the first and second stories of the addition's south elevation.

History

Grand Boulevard was completed in 1913 as the City of Detroit's grand thoroughfare stretching from the Detroit River on the east side of downtown to the north, west, and then south to meet the river again on the west side of downtown. "The Boulevard," as it was known to Detroiters, was thus one of the grandest of the city's streets. This area of West Grand Boulevard west of the John C. Lodge Freeway was developed in the early 20th century and populated by largely White, middle-class residents, many of them Jewish. From the 1940s to 1950s, the neighborhood transitioned to predominately Black residents as Black people began to move out of the historically segregated neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley due to urban renewal. Because Blacks continued to face discrimination, however, the homes here were subdivided into duplexes to accommodate more families, and residents often operated businesses out of the homes as well.

Berry Gordy founded Motown Records in 1959. Over the next dozen or so years, Gordy built a highly successful record label and launched the careers of dozens of Black artists from this and several other nearby homes that were purchased and incorporated into the business in the 1960s. Artists who recorded at Motown later remembered that the complex was more than merely a business, serving also as a social gathering place for both stars and newly recruited artists. Motown was influential in disseminating Black culture beyond the Black community and breaking racial barriers in the music and entertainment industry. During its years at this location, Motown Records had over 110 Top 10 hits, and its artists included the Supremes, the Four Tops, Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, the Temptations, and many more. Berry Gordy moved the label's operations to Los Angeles in 1972.

2644-46 West Grand Boulevard was purchased in 1961 by Berry Gordy as the headquarters of Jobete Publishing, a company he formed to ensure that he would receive royalties from his published songs (the company was named from the first two letters of his children's names (Joy, Berry, and Terry). It was the second building on West Grand Boulevard occupied by Gordy's recording company. The building has been physically connected to the main "Hitsville USA" building to the east (2648 West Grand Boulevard). Following Motown's departure to Los Angeles. Berry's sister, Esther Gordy Edwards, retained control of this building and the one next door and opened the "Hitsville USA"

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

museum in 1985. An addition was placed on the rear (south) side and a barrier-free ramp added on the north elevation in 1994. This building serves as the main entrance to the Motown Museum.

Additional history of the Motown buildings can be found in the West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District Study Committee Report on file with the City of Detroit and the State Historic Preservation Office.

Statement of Significance

Motown’s 2644-46 West Grand Boulevard is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A. It is significant as one of the complex of buildings that housed the recording and business operations of the Motown Record label, a ground-breaking Black-owned and operated recording studio during its formative years and the height of the studio’s reputation as a “hit factory.”

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A	None

Sources

Historic Designation Advisory Board, “West Grand Boulevard Historic African American Arts and Business District,” 2018.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Motown Recording Studio (Hitsville)	Street Address 2648 West Grand Boulevard	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	--	--

District Names
West Grand Boulevard Local
Historic District

Year Built
1913

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American
Movements
Craftsman



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Stucco
Brick

Roof Form
Hipped

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Wood

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly Altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/
EXTRACTION/Communication
s Facility: Recording Studio

Current Use
RECREATION AND
CULTURE/Museum: Museum

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Entertainment

Narrative Description

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Reconnaissance Level Survey

This is the original Motown studio and office building. It is a two-story white stucco two-flat rectangular residential building on a raised basement. It has a hipped roof with a hipped dormer on the north side. A roofless concrete porch extends across the full width of the building, with concrete steps in the center and metal railings. The first floor of the front (north) elevation has an angled aluminum and glass storefront window on a glass block base flanked by single door entrances with bracketed gabled window hoods. A large sign above the storefront reads "Hitsville USA" and a smaller sign above the west door reads "Motown Studio A." The second floor has a single one-over-one double-hung window on the east end and tripled one-over-one double hung windows on the west end. The dormer has three nine-pane casement windows that are painted. The west elevation is largely covered by the connector to the adjacent building at 2644-46. The connector itself has a recessed glass and aluminum storefront door with transom and sidelights at the first floor and no openings on the second floor. The first and second floor openings on the east elevation have been boarded over. The rear (south) elevation has two painted concrete block additions.

History

Grand Boulevard was completed in 1913 as the City of Detroit's grand thoroughfare stretching from the Detroit River on the east side of downtown to the north, west, and then south to meet the river again on the west side of downtown. "The Boulevard," as it was known to Detroiters, was thus one of the grandest of the city's streets. This area of West Grand Boulevard west of the John C. Lodge Freeway was developed in the early 20th century and populated by largely White, middle-class residents, many of them Jewish. From the 1940s to 1950s, the neighborhood transitioned to predominately Black residents as Blacks began to move out of the historically segregated neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley due to urban renewal. Because Blacks continued to face discrimination, however, the homes here were subdivided into duplexes to accommodate more families, and residents often operated businesses out of the homes as well.

Berry Gordy founded Motown Records in 1959. Over the next dozen or so years, Gordy built a highly successful record label and launched the careers of dozens of Black artists from this and several other nearby homes that were purchased and incorporated into the business in the 1960s. Artists who recorded at Motown later remembered that the complex was more than merely a business, serving also as a social gathering place for both stars and newly recruited artists. Motown was influential in disseminating Black culture beyond the Black community and breaking racial barriers in the music and entertainment industry. During its years at this location, Motown Records had over 110 Top 10 hits, and its artists included the Supremes, the Four Tops, Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, the Temptations, and many more. Berry Gordy moved the label's operations to Los Angeles in 1972.

2648 West Grand Boulevard was purchased in 1959 by Berry Gordy to house both his family and his newly formed record company, Tamla Records, which was incorporated the following year under its more familiar name, Motown Records. The ca. 1913 two-family flat already had a concrete block addition, built ca. 1948 when the building housed a photography studio. This became the original recording studio, while the first floor was converted to offices and Gordy's family lived on the second floor. A connector was built to the building next door at 2644-46 in 1963, and a second rear addition was added in 1964. Over the dozen or so years that Motown was headquartered here, Gordy built a highly successful record label and launched the careers of dozens of Black artists from this and several other nearby homes that were purchased and incorporated into the business in the 1960s. Artists who recorded at Motown later remembered that the complex was more than merely a business,

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

...serving also as a social gathering place for both stars and newly recruited artists. Motown was influential in disseminating Black culture beyond the Black community and breaking racial barriers in the music and entertainment industry. During its years at this location, Motown Records had over 110 Top 10 hits, and its artists included the Supremes, the Four Tops, Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, the Temptations, and many more. Berry Gordy moved the label’s operations to Los Angeles in 1972, although the studio continued to be used on a limited basis for two years after that. Berry’s sister, Esther Gordy Edwards, retained control of the building and opened the “Hitsville USA” museum in 1985.

Additional history of the Motown buildings can be found in the West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District Study Committee Report on file with the City of Detroit and the State Historic Preservation Office.

Statement of Significance

Motown’s 2648 West Grand Boulevard is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and B. It is significant as the headquarters of the Motown Record label, a ground-breaking Black-owned and operated recording studio during its formative years and the height of the studio’s reputation as a “hit factory.” It is also important for its association with significant individual Berry Gordy, who created and ran Motown Records during the entire period it was housed in this building.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, B	None

Sources

Historic Designation Advisory Board, “West Grand Boulevard Historic African American Arts and Business District,” 2018.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Motown Administration Building	Street Address 2652-54 West Grand Boulevard	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
--	---	--

District Names
West Grand Boulevard Local
Historic District

Year Built
1912

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American
Movements
Craftsman



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Cross-Gable

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Wood

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly Altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/
EXTRACTION/Communication
s Facility: Recording Studio
Offices

Current Use
Unknown

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Entertainment

Narrative Description

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Reconnaissance Level Survey

This is a two-story, rectangular two-family flat with a raised basement clad in red brick. The roof is side gabled at the front with a transverse gable at the rear, covered in asphalt shingles. The roof has a gabled dormer centered on the north elevation that features battered wood shingle walls and inwardly curving bargeboards. A one-story porch spans across the width of the front elevation and has concrete steps on the west end, brick walls, and three brick piers supporting a flat roof. On the east end of the front (north) elevation is a two-story, three-sided bay with one-over-one, double-hung windows on each side. To the west of the bay on the first floor are two single-leaf, side-by-side entrance doors. The second floor has a door and square window opening, both of which are boarded over. The dormer has four one-over-one double-hung windows. The east and west elevations have a series of one-over-one, double-hung windows on the first and second floor, while the east elevation also has a two-story, wood sided bay. The rear (south) elevation has two doors on the first floor and one-over-one, double-hung windows on the first and second floors and in the gable end. The east, west, and south elevations have wood shingled gable ends with curved bargeboards.

History

Grand Boulevard was completed in 1913 as the City of Detroit's grand thoroughfare stretching from the Detroit River on the east side of downtown to the north, west, and then south to meet the river again on the west side of downtown. "The Boulevard," as it was known to Detroiters, was thus one of the grandest of the city's streets. This area of West Grand Boulevard west of the John C. Lodge Freeway was developed in the early 20th century and populated by largely White, middle-class residents, many of them Jewish. From the 1940s to 1950s, the neighborhood transitioned to predominately Black residents as Blacks began to move out of the historically segregated neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley due to urban renewal. Because Blacks continued to face discrimination, however, the homes here were subdivided into duplexes to accommodate more families, and residents often operated businesses out of the homes as well.

Berry Gordy founded Motown Records in 1959. Over the next dozen or so years, Gordy built a highly successful record label and launched the careers of dozens of Black artists from this and several other nearby homes that were purchased and incorporated into the business in the 1960s. Artists who recorded at Motown later remembered that the complex was more than merely a business, serving also as a social gathering place for both stars and newly recruited artists. Motown was influential in disseminating Black culture beyond the Black community and breaking racial barriers in the music and entertainment industry. During its years at this location, Motown Records had over 110 Top 10 hits, and its artists included the Supremes, the Four Tops, Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, the Temptations, and many more. Berry Gordy moved the label's operations to Los Angeles in 1972.

2652-54 West Grand Boulevard was purchased in 1961 by Berry Gordy and served as the label's administrative building.

Additional history of the Motown buildings can be found in the West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District Study Committee Report on file with the City of Detroit and the State Historic Preservation Office.

Statement of Significance

Motown's 2652-54 West Grand Boulevard is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A. It is significant as one of the complex of buildings that housed the recording and business operations of

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

the Motown Record label, a ground-breaking Black-owned and operated recording studio during its formative years and the height of the studio's reputation as a "hit factory."

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A	None

Sources

Historic Designation Advisory Board, "West Grand Boulevard Historic African American Arts and Business District," 2018.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
Motown Finance Building	2656 West Grand Boulevard	Detroit, Wayne County

District Names
West Grand Boulevard Local
Historic District

Year Built
1912

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century
Revivals
Tudor Revival



Plan
Square

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Cross-Gable

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Wood
Stucco

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly Altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/
EXTRACTION/Communicatio
ns Facility: Recording Studio
Offices

Current Use
Unknown

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Entertainment

Narrative Description

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Reconnaissance Level Survey

This two-story, square, single-family residence has a raised basement and is clad in painted brick. The roof is side gabled with a cross gable at the front, covered in asphalt shingles, with wide eaves and rafter tails. The front (north) elevation has a small raised concrete stoop at the main entry with brick walls and metal railings. The elevation is dominated by shallow projecting two-story bay topped by a half-timbered gable dormer on the west end. The bay has paired windows on the front side and single units on the angled sides. To the east of the bay on the first floor is the single-leaf entry door. Offset above that on the second floor is a single window. There are paired windows in the half-timbered dormer. The east and west elevations are partially obscured by the close-set houses to either side but there are several window openings on each floor. A chimney is located toward the north end of the west elevation and projects through the roof. There is a door at ground level of the east elevation, with a bay window above it. The gable ends are clad in wood shingles and have centered windows. At the rear (south) elevation, there is a first floor single-leaf entry door with a brick-sided stoop. To the east of the door is single window while a set of tripled windows is located west of the door. On the second floor are two single window openings. The windows are all double-hung, one-over-one units and most are covered with security grilles.

History

Grand Boulevard was completed in 1913 as the City of Detroit's grand thoroughfare stretching from the Detroit River on the east side of downtown to the north, west, and then south to meet the river again on the west side of downtown. "The Boulevard," as it was known to Detroiters, was thus one of the grandest of the city's streets. This area of West Grand Boulevard west of the John C. Lodge Freeway was developed in the early 20th century and populated by largely White, middle-class residents, many of them Jewish. From the 1940s to 1950s, the neighborhood transitioned to predominately Black residents as Blacks began to move out of the historically segregated neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley due to urban renewal. Because Blacks continued to face discrimination, however, the homes here were subdivided into duplexes to accommodate more families, and residents often operated businesses out of the homes as well.

Berry Gordy founded Motown Records in 1959. Over the next dozen or so years, Gordy built a highly successful record label and launched the careers of dozens of Black artists from this and several other nearby homes that were purchased and incorporated into the business in the 1960s. Artists who recorded at Motown later remembered that the complex was more than merely a business, serving also as a social gathering place for both stars and newly recruited artists. Motown was influential in disseminating Black culture beyond the Black community and breaking racial barriers in the music and entertainment industry. During its years at this location, Motown Records had over 110 Top 10 hits, and its artists included the Supremes, the Four Tops, Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, the Temptations, and many more. Berry Gordy moved the label's operations to Los Angeles in 1972.

2656 West Grand Boulevard was purchased in 1965 by Berry Gordy and served as the label's finance building.

Additional history of the Motown buildings can be found in the West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District Study Committee Report on file with the City of Detroit and the State Historic Preservation Office.

Statement of Significance

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Motown’s 2656 West Grand Boulevard is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A. It is significant as one of the complex of buildings that housed the recording and business operations of the Motown Record label, a ground-breaking Black-owned and operated recording studio during its formative years and the height of the studio’s reputation as a “hit factory.”

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A	None

Sources

Historic Designation Advisory Board, “West Grand Boulevard Historic African American Arts and Business District,” 2018.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Artist Development (Motown)	Street Address 2657 West Grand Boulevard	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	--	--

District Names
West Grand Boulevard Local
Historic District

Year Built
1912

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American
Movements
Craftsman



Plan
L

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick
Concrete

Roof Form
Hipped

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Wood

Condition
Good

Integrity
Altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/
EXTRACTION/Communication
s Facility: Recording Studio

Current Use
SOCIAL/Clubhouse: Sorority

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Entertainment

Narrative Description

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Reconnaissance Level Survey

This is a two-story, foursquare building clad in red-brown brick with a one-story concrete block addition attached to the north side. The former residential building has asymmetrical facades under a hipped roof with overhanging eaves. A hipped roof dormer is centered over the front elevation. The front (south) elevation features a two-story bowed bay on the west side. Each level has a set of tripled windows flanked by single windows. The east side of the elevation has a single-leaf entry door with sidelights on the first floor and a tripled window above on the second floor. A concrete porch with brick walls extends across the majority of the elevation. The front entry is covered by a hipped porch roof supported on square brick piers. The west elevation has a two-story brick box bay on the north side containing two sets of paired windows on each floor of the west elevation, while the return walls have single windows. A brick chimney on the south side of this elevation extends above the roofline and is flanked by single-pane fixed windows on the first floor. A narrow asphalt driveway runs along the east side of the building, ending at a hipped roof carport attached to the east elevation. A doorway with a hipped roof hood opens onto the roof of the carport from the second floor. The remainder of the façade has windows at both floors and is topped by a hipped roof dormer. A secondary brick chimney rises from the northeast corner of the building. All roofs are covered with asphalt shingles and have deep eaves and rafter tails, and the windows are double-hung, one-over-one units. A flat-roofed, rectangular, concrete-block addition is attached to the north end of the main building extending to the rear property line. This was reportedly constructed as a recording studio for Motown Records. The narrow wall section that faces south toward West Grand Boulevard is clad in red brick to match the main residence. The remainder is painted white. A single-leaf entry door with a metal awning on the west elevation faces the fenced parking lot that occupies the remainder of the lot on the west side.

History

Grand Boulevard was completed in 1913 as the City of Detroit's grand thoroughfare stretching from the Detroit River on the east side of downtown to the north, west, and then south to meet the river again on the west side of downtown. "The Boulevard," as it was known to Detroiters, was thus one of the grandest of the city's streets. This area of West Grand Boulevard west of the John C. Lodge Freeway was developed in the early 20th century and populated by largely White, middle-class residents, many of them Jewish. From the 1940s to 1950s, the neighborhood transitioned to predominately Black residents as Blacks began to move out of the historically segregated neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley due to urban renewal. Because Blacks continued to face discrimination, however, the homes here were subdivided into duplexes to accommodate more families, and residents often operated businesses out of the homes as well.

Berry Gordy founded Motown Records in 1959. Over the next dozen or so years, Gordy built a highly successful record label and launched the careers of dozens of Black artists from this and several other nearby homes that were purchased and incorporated into the business in the 1960s. Artists who recorded at Motown later remembered that the complex was more than merely a business, serving also as a social gathering place for both stars and newly recruited artists. Motown was influential in disseminating Black culture beyond the Black community and breaking racial barriers in the music and entertainment industry. During its years at this location, Motown Records had over 110 Top 10 hits, and its artists included the Supremes, the Four Tops, Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, the Temptations, and many more. Berry Gordy moved the label's operations to Los Angeles in 1972.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

2657 West Grand Boulevard was purchased in 1966 by Berry Gordy as the Artist Development building, where Motown artists rehearsed and learned music and social techniques to increase their marketability. The main building was constructed around 1912 as a residence, while the concrete block addition was built during the Motown era to house a recording studio. This building was eventually sold and now is home to Gamma Phi Delta Sorority.

Additional history of the Motown buildings can be found in the West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District Study Committee Report on file with the City of Detroit and the State Historic Preservation Office.

Statement of Significance

Motown’s 2657 West Grand Boulevard is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A. It is significant as one of the complex of buildings that housed the recording and business operations of the Motown Record label, a ground-breaking Black-owned and operated recording studio during its formative years and the height of the studio’s reputation as a “hit factory.”

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A	None

Sources

Historic Designation Advisory Board, “West Grand Boulevard Historic African American Arts and Business District,” 2018.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
Motown Sales and Marketing Building I	2662-64 West Grand Boulevard	Detroit, Wayne County

District Names
West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District

Year Built
1912

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements
Craftsman



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Stone
Brick

Roof Form
Hipped

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Wood

Condition
Fair

Integrity
Altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/
EXTRACTION/Communication
s Facility: Recording Studio
Office

Current Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Entertainment

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Reconnaissance Level Survey

Narrative Description

This two-story, rectangular residence has a raised basement and is covered by a hipped roof with hipped dormers at the north and south ends. The front elevation and the square porch piers have been faced with Permastone, while the original brick on the sides and rear has been painted. The front elevation features a two-story, three-sided bay on the east side with paired double-hung windows on the north side and single double-hung windows on the angled sides. The west side of the elevation is sheltered under a two-story porch with concrete steps at the lower level and metal porch railings. The porch's first floor flat roof serves as a balcony for the second floor, which is sheltered under a metal awning on metal posts. At the first floor is a single-leaf replacement door flanked by sidelights, while at the second floor is a single-leaf door flanked by windows. The dormer has original double-hung three-over-one wood windows. The building's east elevation has a centered brick-clad, three-sided bay with double-hung, one-over-one windows on both levels of each side. A small hipped dormer with paired three-over-one windows is centered above the bay. To the north of the bay is a brick chimney that extends above the roof line, flanked by single-unit windows on each level. To the south of the bay are paired double-hung, one-over-one windows on both floors. The west elevation has a slightly projecting two-story, three-sided bay with one-over-one double hung windows on each side at both floors. Paired one-over-one double-hung windows are on each floor to the north of this bay. The rear elevation has a small wood porch at the southeast corner leading to a single-leaf entry door. The door opening on the second floor above has been boarded over. At the west end of the elevation on each floor are sets of tripled, double-hung, one-over-one windows with small single one-over-one double hung windows flanking them on the east. The dormer has original double-hung three-over-one wood windows.

History

Grand Boulevard was completed in 1913 as the City of Detroit's grand thoroughfare stretching from the Detroit River on the east side of downtown to the north, west, and then south to meet the river again on the west side of downtown. "The Boulevard," as it was known to Detroiters, was thus one of the grandest of the city's streets. This area of West Grand Boulevard west of the John C. Lodge Freeway was developed in the early 20th century and populated by largely White, middle-class residents, many of them Jewish. From the 1940s to 1950s, the neighborhood transitioned to predominately Black residents as Blacks began to move out of the historically segregated neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley due to urban renewal. Because Blacks continued to face discrimination, however, the homes here were subdivided into duplexes to accommodate more families, and residents often operated businesses out of the homes as well.

Berry Gordy founded Motown Records in 1959. Over the next dozen or so years, Gordy built a highly successful record label and launched the careers of dozens of Black artists from this and several other nearby homes that were purchased and incorporated into the business in the 1960s. Artists who recorded at Motown later remembered that the complex was more than merely a business, serving also as a social gathering place for both stars and newly recruited artists. Motown was influential in disseminating Black culture beyond the Black community and breaking racial barriers in the music and entertainment industry. During its years at this location, Motown Records had over 110 Top 10 hits, and its artists included the Supremes, the Four Tops, Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, the Temptations, and many more. Berry Gordy moved the label's operations to Los Angeles in 1972.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

2662-64 West Grand Boulevard was built around 1912. In the 1960s, it was a funeral home. The building was purchased in 1966 by Berry Gordy and served as one of the label's sales and marketing buildings. Following the departure of Motown Records to Los Angeles, the building was an adult foster care home in the 1970s.

Additional history of the Motown buildings can be found in the West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District Study Committee Report on file with the City of Detroit and the State Historic Preservation Office.

Statement of Significance

Motown's 2662-64 West Grand Boulevard is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A. It is significant as one of the complex of buildings that housed the recording and business operations of the Motown Record label, a ground-breaking Black-owned and operated recording studio during its formative years and the height of the studio's reputation as a "hit factory."

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A	None

Sources

Historic Designation Advisory Board, "West Grand Boulevard Historic African American Arts and Business District," 2018.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name International Talent Management Incorporated (Motown)	Street Address 2670-72 West Grand Boulevard	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
--	---	--

District Names
West Grand Boulevard Local
Historic District

Year Built
1912

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American
Movements
Craftsman



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Hipped

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Wood

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly Altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/
EXTRACTION/Communication
s Facility: Recording Studio
Offices

Current Use
Unknown

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Entertainment

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Reconnaissance Level Survey

Narrative Description

This is a two-story, two-family flat with a rectangular footprint and a raised basement level. It is clad in red brick and covered by an asphalt-shingle hipped roof with wide eaves supported on triangular brackets. The roof has hipped roof dormers on the north, south, and east elevations. The one-story front porch spans the width of the north elevation and has brick wing walls, centered concrete steps, brick piers, and a flat roof enclosed by a metal railing. The west third of the elevation has a two-story bay window consisting of a single large sash topped by a five-paned transom in the center flanked by three-over-one units in the angled walls. The remainder of the first floor has two single-leaf entry doors separated by a three-over-one window. The second floor has a single-leaf entry door at the east end next to a three-over-one window. The building's west elevation has a centered two-story flat window bay containing tripled one-over-one double hung windows separated by a spandrel panel. To the north of this bay are four single unit windows, two on each floor. The remaining two bays have one set of single windows and one set of paired windows on each level, all double-hung units. A brick chimney extends from the northwest corner of the roof. The rear elevation has doors at the basement, first, and second floors, with a metal stair providing access to the second floor door. The elevation also has one-over-one double-hung windows on the first and second floors. The east elevation is partially obscured by its close proximity to an adjoining building and appears to have double-hung windows on both floors.

History

Grand Boulevard was completed in 1913 as the City of Detroit's grand thoroughfare stretching from the Detroit River on the east side of downtown to the north, west, and then south to meet the river again on the west side of downtown. "The Boulevard," as it was known to Detroiters, was thus one of the grandest of the city's streets. This area of West Grand Boulevard west of the John C. Lodge Freeway was developed in the early 20th century and populated by largely White, middle-class residents, many of them Jewish. From the 1940s to 1950s, the neighborhood transitioned to predominately Black residents as Blacks began to move out of the historically segregated neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley due to urban renewal. Because Blacks continued to face discrimination, however, the homes here were subdivided into duplexes to accommodate more families, and residents often operated businesses out of the homes as well.

Berry Gordy founded Motown Records in 1959. Over the next dozen or so years, Gordy built a highly successful record label and launched the careers of dozens of Black artists from this and several other nearby homes that were purchased and incorporated into the business in the 1960s. Artists who recorded at Motown later remembered that the complex was more than merely a business, serving also as a social gathering place for both stars and newly recruited artists. Motown was influential in disseminating Black culture beyond the Black community and breaking racial barriers in the music and entertainment industry. During its years at this location, Motown Records had over 110 Top 10 hits, and its artists included the Supremes, the Four Tops, Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, the Temptations, and many more. Berry Gordy moved the label's operations to Los Angeles in 1972.

2670-72 West Grand Boulevard was constructed around 1912 as a residence. It was purchased in 1966 by Berry Gordy to house International Talent Management Incorporated, a segment of the business that oversaw the development of artists new to Motown into music stars. Following the

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

departure of Motown Records to Los Angeles, this building was eventually sold and converted to a beauty shop.

Additional history of the Motown buildings can be found in the West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District Study Committee Report on file with the City of Detroit and the State Historic Preservation Office.

Statement of Significance

Motown’s 2670-72 West Grand Boulevard is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A. It is significant as one of the complex of buildings that housed the recording and business operations of the Motown Record label, a ground-breaking Black-owned and operated recording studio during its formative years and the height of the studio’s reputation as a “hit factory.”

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A	None

Sources

Historic Designation Advisory Board, “West Grand Boulevard Historic African American Arts and Business District,” 2018.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Muhammad's Mosque No. 1 **Street Address** 14880 Wyoming Avenue **Municipal Unit, County** Detroit, Wayne County

District Names
NA

Year Built
Unknown

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement
Modern



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composition

Other Materials
Glass block

Condition
Fair

Integrity
Altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
COMMERCE/TRADE/ Specialty Store
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Mosque

Current Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Mosque

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Religion
Social History

Narrative Description

One-story rectangular yellow brick building with a flat roof. Stacked brick wall at the south end with three rectangular vertical windows. Long horizontal window on main façade infilled with glass block. Recessed corner entry with glass block wall. A cantilevered aluminum canopy extends from the northwest corner of the building.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

History

This is a formerly commercial storefront converted to a mosque. It appears that it was occupied by a branch of the Nation of Islam after the original Nation of Islam transitioned to a more mainstream Sunni focus beginning in 1975. It is unclear when it became a mosque.

Statement of Significance

Very little information was found on this building but it has the potential to be eligible under Criterion A if further research is conducted on its ties to the Nation of Islam. Additional research on this property was outside of the scope of this project as this was not selected for intensive level survey at this time. Future research would need to be conducted to determine whether this site is eligible.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
More research needed	NA	None

Sources

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
Nathan Johnson Associates Office	2512 West Grand Boulevard	Detroit, Wayne County

District Name
West Grand Boulevard African
American Arts and Business
Local Historic District

Year Built
Unknown

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement
International Style



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Hip

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Glass block

Condition
Fair

Integrity
Altered

Architect
Nathan Johnson

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence;
COMMERCE/TRADE/
Professional: Architect's Studio

Current Use
COMMERCE/TRADE/
Professional: Office

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage, Social History, Architecture

Narrative Description

This building is located on the southeast corner of West Grand Boulevard and Wabash Street. It consists of two residential buildings connected and remodeled into an office. The two-story building has a rectangular footprint and an asphalt-shingled hip roof. The walls are painted brick. At the front (north) elevation are two-story window bays that have been infilled with glass block. A narrow entry bay contains a single-leaf door with more glass block above. Rectangular window openings on the west elevation have also been infilled with glass block. On the east elevation is a

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

two-story bay with infilled glass block windows. At the south elevation are two utilitarian doors, a roll-up garage door, and several glass-block infilled openings.

History

The Nathan Johnson architectural office is located within the Northwest Goldberg neighborhood of Detroit. A formerly White, upper middle class neighborhood built in the early twentieth century, its small commercial buildings and large residences became the location of prominent Black businesses in the late 1950s, including the nine houses that formed Barry Gordy’s Motown studios.

The prominent Black architect Nathan Johnson moved his architectural practice to 2512 West Grand Boulevard in 1960. Johnson, a native of Kansas, moved to Detroit in 1950. He worked for the pioneering Black architectural firm of White and Griffin, Harold H. Fisher, and Victor Gruen and Associates before opening his own practice in 1956. Johnson worked primarily in the Modernist style and had something of a niche in church architecture, designing a number of Black churches in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. For his offices on West Grand Boulevard, Johnson purchased two residences, connected them, and remodeled both to serve as his office.

Statement of Significance

The Nathan Johnson architectural office is eligible under Criteria B, for its association with the career of Johnson. This was the first office Johnson designed for himself, and it is associated with the majority of his working career. The building is not significant under Criteria C at this time, as the window openings have been altered enough to negatively impact its integrity.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	B	None

Sources

West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District Study Report.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
Packard Motor Car Company	1580 East Grand Boulevard	Detroit, Wayne County

District Names
None

Year Built
1903-1940s

Resource Type
Complex

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American
Movements
Commercial Style



Plan
Irregular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composition

Other Materials
Concrete
Glass

Condition
Poor

Integrity
Altered

Architect
Albert Kahn

Historic Use
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/
EXTRACTION/Manufacturing
Facility: Automobile Factory

Current Use
Vacant/Under Redevelopment

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
Garage

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Industry

Narrative Description

The Packard Motor Car Company Plant is a sprawling complex of interconnected buildings centered at West Grand Boulevard and Concord Streets on Detroit's East Side. The typically three-to-four-story buildings are of concrete construction with brick exterior walls pierced by large expanses of glass windows. The buildings have been deteriorating for many years and, while they have been recently cleaned out in preparation for redevelopment, are largely concrete shells at the interior.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

History

The Packard Motor Car Company was founded in 1902 and began operating at this location in 1903. In 1905 Albert Kahn constructed the first modern automotive plant using reinforced concrete. The company continued to build out the plant into the 1940s. In June 1943, the Packard Plant promoted three Black workers to the assembly line to work alongside Whites, as required by an executive order issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt mandating non-discrimination in wartime industries. This led to a "wildcat" strike involving over 25,000 White workers, and a reported physical altercation at Edgewood Park. It was one of several precipitating incidents that led to a racial conflict later that month.

Statement of Significance

The Packard Motor Car Company is recommended eligible under Criterion A as the location of an important event in the history of integration in the automotive industry in Detroit, which in part precipitated a significant racial conflict in the city.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A	None

Sources

- "Packard Walkout Halts Production," *Lansing State Journal*, June 3, 1943, 4.
- "Packard Strike Hit at Negro Rally," *Detroit Free Press*, June 4, 1943.
- "When Packard Workers Went on Strike," *Michigan Chronicle*, June 5, 1943.
- "UAW Asks Ouster of Packard Aides," *Detroit Tribune*, June 5, 1943, 1.
- "Three Years of Strife Behind Disorders," *Detroit Free Press*, June 22, 1943, 1, 7.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Plymouth United Church of Christ	Street Address 600 East Warren Avenue	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	---	--

District Name
NA

Year Built
1974

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement
International Style



Plan Diamond	Foundation Not visible	Walls Concrete
Roof Form Gabled	Roof Standing Seam Metal	Other Materials Metal
Condition Good	Integrity Slightly altered	Architect Madison and Madison
Historic Use RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Current Use RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Builder Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage, Social History

Narrative Description
This church is located on the southeast corner of East Warren Avenue and St. Antoine Street. The two-story building has a diamond-shaped footprint, concrete walls, and a gabled roof covered with standing seam metal. It is slightly raised above grade with the basement level exposed and walkways to the north and south entrances. The recessed double entry is centered on Warren Avenue. On the first floor, the window openings are deeply recessed with the walls narrowing toward the sash. The upper level is setback from the first level and has flush windows whose tops along to follow the roof line. At the basement elevations are either large windows or concrete walls with bands of concrete block windows.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

History

Plymouth United Church of Christ was founded as Plymouth Congregational Church in 1920. Initially housed in a building at St. Aubin and Antietam Streets, the church soon moved into a former synagogue at Garfield and Beaubian, where it would remain until the 1970s. For nearly fifty years, Plymouth was led by two civil rights activists. The first, Reverend Horace White, was a graduate of Oberlin Divinity School who became pastor at Plymouth in 1936. White was particularly interested in labor issues and campaigned for equal opportunity for Black workers in labor unions. He also chaired the NAACP's Legal Redress Committee, served on the Detroit Housing Commission and was a Michigan state representative. White was succeeded in 1958 by Reverend Nicholas Hood II. Hood, who served on the Detroit City Council for twenty-eight years, was also a founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. When the city planned to raze Black churches in Paradise Valley as part of the Detroit Medical Center urban renewal plan, Hood led a campaign with other ministers to halt the demolition. While he was not successful in halting the demolition of his church, or nearby Bethel AME's, he was able to secure land in the new district to reconstruct Plymouth UCC. Ground was broken in 1972 and the church completed in 1974.

Statement of Significance

Plymouth United Church of Christ is eligible under Criterion B, for its association with two civil rights leaders, Reverends Horace White and Nicholas Hood II. It is also eligible under Criterion C as an exceptional example of Late Modern church architecture in Detroit.

Eligibility Recommendation

Eligible

NR Criteria

B, C

NR Exceptions

A, G

Sources

Angela Dillard, *Faith in the City: Preaching Radical Social Change in Detroit* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2017).

Surveyor

Saundra Little, Ruth Mills

Date Surveyed

April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
Prince Hall Grand Lodge	3500 McDougall Street 3100 Gratiot Avenue	Detroit, Wayne County

District Name
Prince Hall Grand Lodge Local
Historic District

Year Built
1924

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century
Revivals
Neoclassical



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Hip

Roof
Standing seam metal

Other Materials
Stone

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Bernard C. Wetzel

Historic Use
SOCIAL/Meeting Hall:
Fraternal Organization

Current Use
SOCIAL/Meeting Hall:
Fraternal Organization

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History

Narrative Description

The building is a three-story brick structure that is rectangular but with an acutely angled façade on the northwest corner where it abuts an adjoining retail and office building. It has a smooth coursed ashlar raised basement and water table, brick elevations, and a low-pitched flat deck hip roof covered with standing seam metal. The south and west elevations are covered in buff colored brick. A stone cornice separates the first and second floors and runs under the roofline. The building also features brick quoining and round-arched windows on the second floor.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

History

The Prince Hall Grand Lodge was built in 1924 as the Amaranth Temple and is the oldest extant fraternal headquarters for Masonic lodges in Detroit. It was designed in the Neoclassical style by Detroit architect Bernard C. Wetzel. The building was purchased in 1951 by the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Michigan, Free and Accepted Masons, a Black fraternal organization dedicated in part to combating racism. The Prince Hall Lodge led social justice and Black welfare efforts throughout its history. At the time the organization moved into the building at 3500 McDougall, the neighborhood was not yet integrated.

Statement of Significance

The Prince Hall Grand Lodge is eligible under Criterion A for its association with the Prince Hall Grand Lodge, which participated in significant civil rights activity in Detroit. In addition, it is also eligible under Criterion C as an important work of Neoclassical architecture in the city designed by Detroit architect Bernard C. Wetzel.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, C	None

Sources

Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board, "Proposed Prince Hall Grand Lodge Historic District," Final Report, 2018.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Pure in Heart Missionary Baptist Church	Street Address 3411 Holcomb Street	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	--	--

District Name
NA

Year Built
Ca. 1957

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement
International



Plan L	Foundation Not visible	Walls Concrete block
Roof Form Flat	Roof Composition	Other Materials Glass block
Condition Fair	Integrity Altered	Architect Nathan Johnson
Historic Use RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Current Use RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Builder Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
None

Narrative Description

This building is an L-shaped one-story structure built largely of concrete block that has been painted white. The main entry is on the east elevation and consists of paired glass and aluminum doors with a glass block panel above. Additional doors are located on the east elevation of the L, and at the west corner of the south elevation. The rectangular window openings have been infilled with glass block.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

History

The *Detroit Free Press* included mention of this building in a 1963 article on the church architecture of Black architect Nathan Johnson. It described it as “a small ‘box’ (his first job on his own) with a big glass front, for \$20,000.”

Statement of Significance

While Nathan Johnson is a significant Black architect who designed a number of important buildings in Detroit in the mid twentieth century, this building has apparently been significantly altered since its construction. There is no longer any trace of the “big glass front” described in 1963. Therefore, it is not recommended as eligible.

Eligibility Recommendation

Not eligible

NR Criteria

NA

NR Exceptions

NA

Sources

Hiley Ward, “His Ideas Add Sparkle to ‘Sidewalk’ Churches,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 16, 1963, 4.

Surveyor

Sandra Little, Ruth Mills

Date Surveyed

April 2019

Name

Russell Woods-Sullivan
Neighborhood

Street Address

Roughly bounded by Davison,
Dexter, Cortland, and Livernois

Municipal Unit, County

Detroit, Wayne County

District Names

Russell Woods-Sullivan Local
Historic District

Year Built

1920s-1950s

Resource Type

District

Architectural Classification

Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American
Movements
Bungalow
Late 19th and 20th Century
Revivals
Tudor Revival



Plan

Rectangular

Foundation

Not visible

Walls

Brick
Weatherboard

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Roof Form Front gable Side gable Hipped	Roof Asphalt shingle	Other Materials Wood Stone
Condition Fair	Integrity Slightly altered	Architect Unknown
Historic Use DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence	Current Use DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence	Builder Unknown

Outbuildings

Garages
Sheds

Areas of Significance

Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Community Planning and Development

Narrative Description

The neighborhood is bounded by Davison, Dexter, Cortland, and Livernois. It consists largely of two-story brick residences. The houses have a rectangular footprint with the short side to the street, with small front and rear yards. Most have narrow driveways leading between adjacent houses to a detached garage located along the alley. They are generally constructed of brick with some scattered clapboard residences. Some have been altered with vinyl or aluminum siding. Rooflines range from front gabled to side gabled to hipped; all have asphalt shingles. They feature decorative elements such as patterned brickwork, shake siding, stone trim, steep rooflines, and roof dormers.

History

What would become the Russell Woods neighborhood was platted in 1916 and then sold to the Russell Woods Company, founded by Henry Russell and Charles H. L'Hommedieu. Russell was a prominent corporate attorney in Detroit. Russell Woods was developed in the early 1920s and 1930s as a middle-class residential neighborhood with many White and Jewish families purchasing homes in the neighborhood. Because the neighborhood had many Jewish homeowners and residents, it never had restrictive covenants, and by the 1950s middle class Black families were moving in. Many of Detroit's Motown stars, like Dinah Washington and the Supremes, moved into houses in Russell Woods in the 1950s and 1960s as well as poet and publisher Dudley Randall.

Statement of Significance

The Russell Woods Neighborhood Historic District is recommended as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C. The neighborhood served as an important place for middle class Black families to live during the 1950s and 1960s. The residential buildings are also among the best examples of middle class, builder-designed residential structures built in the City of Detroit between 1920 and 1949.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Eligibility Recommendation Eligible	NR Criteria A, C	NR Exceptions None
---	----------------------------	------------------------------

Sources

Russell Woods-Sullivan Local Historic District Study Committee Report.

Surveyor Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	Date Surveyed July 2018
---	-----------------------------------

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name
Schaefer-South Fort Street
Neighborhood Home Federal
Savings-Financed Housing

Street Address
Electric, Liddesdale, Beatrice,
Deacon Streets

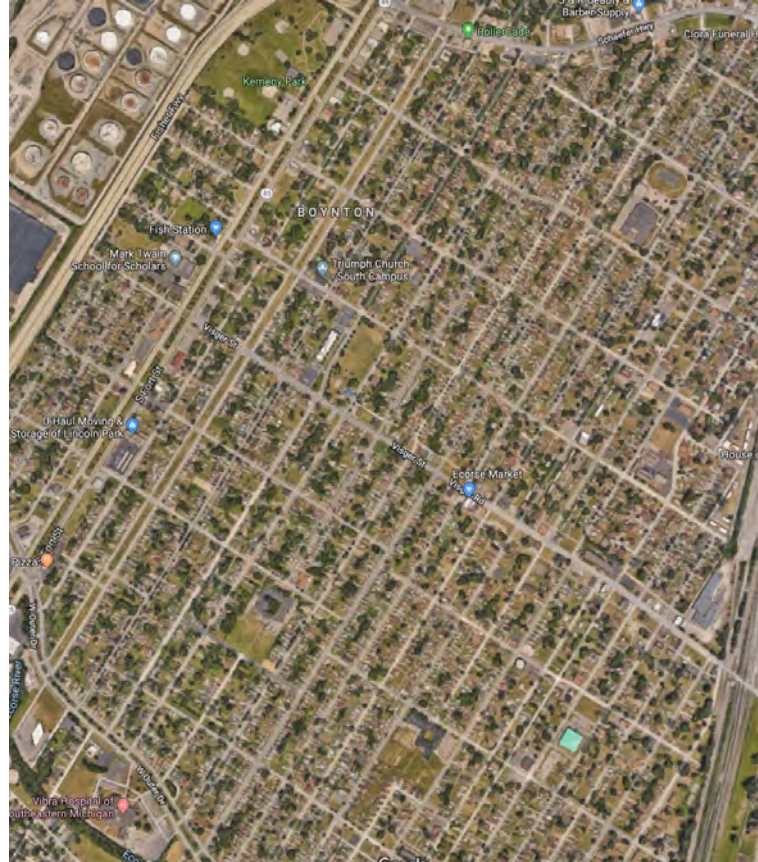
Municipal Unit, County
Detroit, Wayne County

District Names
None

Year Built
1950s

Resource Type
District

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American Movements
Bungalow



Plan Rectangular	Foundation Not visible	Walls Weatherboard Brick
Roof Form Side gable	Roof Asphalt shingle	Other Materials Wood
Condition Varies	Integrity Varies	Architect Unknown
Historic Use DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence	Current Use DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence	Builder Unknown
Outbuildings Garages Sheds		

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Areas of Significance

Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Community Planning and Development

Narrative Description

Seventeen houses on Electric, Liddesdale, Beatrice, and Deacon Streets. Specific houses have not been identified, but the general character of houses of this era in this general neighborhood are one to one-and-one-half story, rectangular, side-gabled houses with a combination of brick and wood siding, asphalt-shingled roofs, and porches.

History

Home Federal Savings and Loan, founded in 1947, was the first Black-owned banking institution in the State of Michigan and specialized in serving Black Detroiters in an era when few would lend them money. In 1953 the bank launched the first Black-financed low cost housing in the city, comprising 17 homes on Electric, Liddesdale, Beatrice, and Deacon in the Schaefer-S. Fort area. Houses were planned to sell for \$6,500. The homes were near an already established Black neighborhood in southwest Detroit, the Welch Oakwood Hills subdivision.

Statement of Significance

Based on the limited nature of the scope of this project, the specific houses built under this plan have not been identified. It is recommended that future research be conducted in the area to determine whether these houses remain and if they retain sufficient integrity to warrant eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
More Information Needed		None

Sources

Multiple Property Documentation Form, Branch Banks in the City of Detroit, 1889-1970.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Shaw College
Street Address 7351 Woodward Avenue
Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County

District Names
NA

Year Built
Unknown

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Other



Plan Rectangular
Foundation Not visible
Walls Metal

Roof Form Flat
Roof Composition
Other Materials Other

Condition Fair
Integrity Altered
Architect Unknown

Historic Use EDUCATION/College:
Vocational School
Current Use Unknown
Builder Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Education

Narrative Description

One-story rectangular building clad in corrugated metal siding. A series of narrow rectangular fixed pane windows are located on the lower part of the east elevation. There are no other window openings. There is an entry door at the rear. It is now connected to the building immediately to the north.

History

This building was the second location of the Michigan Lutheran College, originally founded in 1936 with its other building at Woodward near Seven Mile Road. The College purchased this building, previously a training facility for the Burroughs Adding Machine Company, in 1965. In 1970, after

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

the College threatened to close due to bankruptcy, it was taken over as an affiliate of Shaw University, a Historically Black College or University in Raleigh, North Carolina, and shifted its focus to vocational offerings for Black students. It followed Shaw University's policy of flexible admissions in order to offer the opportunity of college to students who might not be as prepared as those taken by traditional colleges. In addition to a liberal arts degree, the school offered programs in medical and dental technology. After years of financial difficulties, Shaw College closed in 1986.

Statement of Significance

Although Shaw College was at this location during the context period (which ends in 1976), it is not certain what the building looked like during this period. It appears to have undergone considerable alteration in recent years, and is unlikely to meet the criteria for exceptional significance.

Eligibility	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Recommendation	NA	None
Not Eligible		

Sources

"Lutheran College to Expand," *Detroit Free Press*, October 9, 1965, 14.

William Grant, "College Adjusts to Needs of Blacks," *Detroit Free Press*, September 8, 1970, 14.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
Solomon's Temple Church	2341 East Seven Mile Road	Detroit, Wayne County

District Names
NA

Year Built
1981

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement
Post-Modern



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Cast stone
Brick

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composition

Other Materials
Aluminum

Condition
Good

Integrity
Unaltered

Architect
William Lee Bonner (presumed)

Historic Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Current Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
None

Narrative Description

Three-story rectangular building with a composition flat roof. Wrapping around the south and most of the east and west elevations are nearly full height walls of cast stone with inset scalloped panels. The lower portions of the south wall and the rear portions of the east and west elevations are brick. At the northern end of the west brick wall is a vertical window bay with aluminum windows on each level separated by aluminum spandrel panels. The main entry is on the west side and consists of two sets of paired doors covered by a star-shaped roof carried on fluted columns.

History

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Solomon’s Temple Church was founded by William Lee Bonner in the late 1940s as the Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ on Orleans Street in Black Bottom. The church later moved to Halleck and Dequindre and finally its present location in 1981, when it was renamed Solomon’s Temple Church. Bonner was a self-taught builder and architect who very likely provided the design for the new temple on Seven Mile Road. The cast stone exterior came from crushed and recast stone taken from the Solomon’s mine in Jerusalem, and Bonner trained and employed members of the congregation in the trades needed to build the church. Bonner became the national leader of the Pentecostal congregation in 1961. It was among the first churches in the city to broadcast sermons and services.

Statement of Significance

Because this building was constructed outside the context period (1900-1976), it is not recommended as eligible.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Not Eligible	NA	None

Sources

Harry Cook, “Solomon’s Temple Grows Fast,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 9, 1982, 3.
Oralandar Brand-Williams, “Family Battles over Megachurch Founder’s Estate,” *Detroit News*, January 26, 2016.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name St. John's Christian Methodist Episcopal Church	Street Address 8715 Woodward Avenue	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	---	--

District Name
North Woodward
Congregational Church
(National Register)
St. John's Christian Methodist
Episcopal Church (Local
Historic District)



Year Built
1902-1929

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century
Revivals
Neo-Gothic

Plan
Irregular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick
Stone

Roof Form
Cross-gable

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
None

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly Altered

Architect
Malcolmson and
Higginbotham (chapel)
Hugh B. Clement (sanctuary)
A. R. Morison (parish house)

Historic Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Current Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Narrative Description

St. John’s CME consists of three connected buildings, a chapel built from 1902-1907, the main sanctuary building, constructed in 1911, and the parish house, built 1929. All three are constructed of red brick with limestone trim. The dominant element, the sanctuary, is cruciform in shape and has a cross-gabled roof covered with asphalt shingles. It features brick and stone buttresses, lancet windows with stone tracery, and a one-story aisle wing in a blind Gothic arcade form. The two-story parish house is Collegiate Gothic in style and has a full-height, three sided bay at the north end of the east elevation. The chapel building is faced in brick and has a hip roof. It is largely hidden from view by the sanctuary and parish house.

History

This complex of buildings was built in stages from 1902 to 1929 for the North Congregational Church, which formed from First Congregational Church in 1902 and was later renamed North Woodward Congregational Church when it merged with Woodward Avenue Congregational Church in 1908. The congregation of North Woodward Congregational moved to a new building in Southfield in 1955 and sold this property to St. John’s Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. St. John’s CME (which originally stood for Colored Methodist Episcopal) was founded around 1917 and held services in several buildings in Black Bottom/Paradise Valley, including the former St. Mark’s English Evangelical Lutheran Church at St. Aubin and Maple. When it moved into the present building, it was the first Black congregation to be established in the “Piety Hill” section of North Woodward (called so because of the numerous churches in the area).

Statement of Significance

St. John’s CME was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 under the Multiple Property Submission “Religious Structures of Woodward Avenue.” The nomination does not cite criteria, but was presumably significant under Criterion C for its architecture and potentially Criterion A as one of the “Piety Hill” churches in this area. While the nomination mentions the purchase of the building by St. John’s CME, it does not document the history of that congregation. St. John’s CME is also listed as a local historic district; that document does include a history of St. John’s CME congregation.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Listed	A, C	A

Sources

“North Woodward Congregational Church,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination form under “Religious Structures of Woodward Avenue” Multiple Property Submission, 1982.
Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board, “Proposed St. John C.M.E. Church Historic District,” 1988.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
St. John's Presbyterian Church	1961 East Lafayette Avenue	Detroit, Wayne County

District Name
NA

Year Built
1966

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement
International style



Plan
T

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Gable
Flat

Roof
Composition

Other Materials
Concrete

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Madison and Madison

Historic Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Current Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History

Narrative Description

St. John's Presbyterian Church is located on the north side of E. Lafayette Avenue between St. Aubin Street and Stafford Place. It occupies the southern half of a block on which the Quaker Friends School of Detroit is on the north half. The T-shaped building is built of red brick and consists of two parts: the asymmetrical diamond-shaped sanctuary on the west, and a rectangular church hall on the east. Both buildings are faced in brick. The sanctuary has an asymmetrical gabled roof consisting of sections that step down to the east and west. The north and south elevations have narrow vertical bands of windows flanked by full-height brick piers. The east and west elevation of the sanctuary step in and down in three sections flanked by wide brick walls that are a continuation of the piers on the north and south elevations. The church hall is a

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

rectangular building with flat roofs that are angled slightly in four sections to provide clerestory windows toward the center of the roof. Recessed entry doors are on the north south elevations and the main entry is centered on the east elevation. On the east and west elevations are window bays recessed between brick piers. Each bay has a vertical window with horizontal windows under the eaves.

History

St. John’s Presbyterian Church, organized in 1919, was the first Black Presbyterian Congregation in Michigan. Like many Black churches in Detroit, it was housed in several locations around Black Bottom/Paradise Valley in its early years, including Madison and Dubois Streets and Clinton and Joseph Campau Streets. The latter church fell victim to urban renewal in the 1960s. St. John’s Presbyterian was able to rebuild near their old Black Bottom home at this location in 1966.

Statement of Significance

St. John’s Presbyterian Church is eligible under Criteria A, as the first Black Presbyterian Church in Michigan, and Criterion C, as an important example of a Black church of mid-century Modern design.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, C	A

Sources

Michigan Historical Marker
“Church to Serve Poor, Rich,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 22, 1966, 7.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
St. Peter Claver Parish	461 Eliot Street	Detroit, Wayne County

District Names
Brush Park Local
Historic District

Year Built
Ca. 1897

Resource Type
Building

**Architectural
Classification**
Late 19th and 20th
Century Revivals
Late Gothic Revival



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Front gabled

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Stone

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
RELIGION/Religious
Facility: Church

Current Use
EDUCATION/School: Primary School

Builder
George D. Duncan

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Religion
Social History

Narrative Description

Two-story rectangular building with an asphalt-shingled front gabled roof. The building's long elevations (north and south) are six bays long with tapered buttresses between each bay. Lower level windows are rectangular while the second floor windows are lancet-arched. The east (main) façade has a central tripartite bay with rectangular windows on the lower half and lancet arched windows on the upper level. It has stone window lintels and sills. The main entry on the easternmost bay of the south elevation has a portico with a gabled roof set on tripled posts on brick cheek walls.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

History

St. Peter Claver was the first Roman Catholic parish founded specifically for Black Catholics. It was founded in 1911 in the old St. Mary's (Greektown) school. In 1914, the parish purchased this building, the former St. Mary's Episcopal Church at the corner of Eliot and Beaubien. It had been constructed around 1897 by a mason, George Duncan. The first service by St. Peter Claver in the building was held on Thanksgiving Day 1914. In 1936, the church established a Catholic school at St. Peter Claver, which was criticized by the local Black newspaper, the *Detroit Tribune*, for setting a precedent for segregated schools in the otherwise integrated Detroit school system. Following St. Peter Claver's move to Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church in 1938, this building became a community center for the parish.

Statement of Significance

This building is listed as a contributing resource in the Brush Park Local Historic District under Criteria A and C. The local district nomination includes discussion of the building's history as St. Peter Claver. It is recommended as eligible under Criterion A as the home from 1914 to 1938 of St. Peter Claver, the first and oldest Black Catholic parish in Detroit. In addition, it is recommended as eligible under Criterion C as an important example of a brick Gothic Revival church in Detroit from the late 1800s.

Eligibility	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Recommendation Eligible	A, C	A

Sources

"Detroit's Negro Catholic School," *Detroit Tribune*, September 5, 1936, 4.
J. May, "St. Peter Claver Community House Opened by Catholics," *Detroit Tribune*, May 20, 1939, 6.
Nancy Curtis, *Black Heritage Sites: An African American Odyssey and Finder's Guide*, 448-449.
Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board. "Brush Park" Local Historic District Nomination, 1980.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name United Auto Workers Solidarity House	Street Address 8000 East Jefferson Avenue	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
--	---	--

District Names
NA

Year Built
1951

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement
International



Plan
H-shaped

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick
Metal

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composition

Other Materials
Aluminum

Condition
Good

Integrity
Altered

Architect
Hugh T. Millar
Oscar Stonorov

Historic Use
COMMERCE/TRADE/
Organizational: Labor Union

Current Use
COMMERCE/TRADE/
Organizational: Labor Union

Builder
John Cooley Company

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History

Narrative Description

Two part building. Closest to the Detroit River is a three-story rectangular brick building with a flat roof and steel ribbon windows on all four elevations. A roof level additional story has a projecting metal canopy. This section appears to be similar to historic images. Attached to this by a hyphen is a larger, five-story rectangular building clad in a metal curtain wall with glass ribbon windows and brick accent walls. On the north elevation is a one-story entry block constructed of brick with a recessed center section. Based on historic photographs, this section appears to have been reskinned. [Note:

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

the surveyors could not gain access to the property during the reconnaissance survey due to security.]

History

The United Auto Workers (UAW) labor union was founded in 1935. Solidarity House, on a prime piece of real estate along the Detroit River, was built in 1951 in the wake of the union’s landmark 1948 agreement with the Big Three automobile companies, Ford, Chrysler, and General Motors, in which the latter agreed to many of the union’s demands regarding labor conditions and benefits. In the 1950s and 1960s the UAW played a crucial role in the Civil Rights movement, supporting the full integration of Black workers in the automobile industry and accepting Blacks into high levels of leadership. The UAW helped to finance the Detroit Walk to Freedom and the March on Washington in 1963, and provided bail money for civil rights activists in Birmingham, AL.

Statement of Significance

The UAW Solidarity House is potential eligible under Criterion A, as the location where the United Auto Workers developed and enacted its policies and strategies that supported the integration of Blacks into the automobile industry and other civil rights activities.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A	None

Sources

Walter Reuther Library, Wayne State University, “African Americans and the UAW.”

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name United Sound System Recording Studios	Street Address 5840 Second Avenue	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	---	--

District Names
United Sound System
Recording Studios Local
Historic District

Year Built
1916

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American
Movements
Craftsman



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Hipped

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Wood

Condition
Fair

Integrity
Slightly Altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/
EXTRACTION/Communicatio
ns Facility: Recording Studio

Current Use
Vacant

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Entertainment

Narrative Description

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Two story brick rectangular building with a hipped asphalt roof. Decorative features include a double arched dormer with wood pilasters, decorative brackets at the corners of open eaves, stepped chimneys, limestone string courses, and a rectangular brick spandrel between the first and second story windows on the west façade. Rectangular wood bay windows project from the north and south elevations. A windowless concrete block addition was constructed to the north in 1956. A Michigan Historical Marker is present on the property.

History

This building was constructed in 1916 as a private residence. In 1939 United Sound Systems Recording Studios (USS) founder Jim Siracuse moved his recording studio to the building. USS had been founded in the early 1930s in a studio somewhere in the Cass Corridor, although the exact location has not been established by local historians. Immediately prior to moving to this building, it was at 5051 Cass Avenue (no longer extant). Siracuse leased the building for ten years and then purchased it in 1949. An addition was constructed in 1956.

Siracuse and his brother, Tony, were skilled in adapting residential buildings for recording purposes to create a unique sound. USS originally produced advertising jingles for radio and television, but expanded to accommodate music artists in the early 1940s. Among the nationally-known artists who recorded here in the 1940s-60s were John Lee Hooker, Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, and Del Shannon. Motown Records founder Berry Gordy, Jr., learned the recording business by observing operations at USS. The studio was purchased by Don Davis in 1971. Under Davis, artists such as Aretha Franklin, The Staple Singers, and George Clinton’s Parliament-Funkadelic recorded here.

Additional history of the United Sounds Studios can be found in the Local Historic District Study Committee Report on file with the City of Detroit and the State Historic Preservation Office.

Statement of Significance

The Local Historic District Study Committee Report states that the United Sound Systems Recording Studio is significant “for the musical contributions made there by some of the country’s most prominent artists of many genres in American music, primarily by the influential African American artists of the jazz and ‘Rhythm and Blues’ eras.” It is eligible under National Register Criterion A, as the city’s first major recording studio, known for its innovation in sound production, and Criterion B, for its association with James Siracuse, the founder of USS and a pioneer in sound recording.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, B	None

Sources

United Sound System Recording Studios Local Historic District Study Report, City of Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board, 2014.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Waterman and Sons Printing	Street Address 17134 Wyoming Avenue	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	---	--

District Names
NA

Year Built
Unknown

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American
Movements
Commercial Style



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Concrete panel

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composition

Other Materials
Aluminum

Condition
Fair

Integrity
Altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/
EXTRACTION/Communication
s Facility: Printing Plant

Current Use
COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Commerce

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Narrative Description

One-story rectangular commercial building. Constructed of concrete block faced with rough concrete panels separated by aluminum strips. At the north end is a storefront with multi-paned aluminum framed windows and an aluminum door with glass transom. Most of the windows have been covered with aluminum panels.

History

William Waterman moved to Detroit from Nashville in 1916, part of the first wave of the Great Migration, and opened a printing shop. He was later joined by his son Homer Waterman, Sr., and then Homer's sons William and Homer Jr. The business was originally on Russell Street in the Black Bottom/Paradise Valley neighborhood and moved to the Wyoming Street location around 1968. Homer Waterman, Sr. served as the president of the Booker T. Washington Business Association, where he coined the slogan "Make American business a two-way street," encouraging Whites to shop from Blacks as well as the opposite, which led to him receiving contracts from Ford Motor Company, General Motors, and leading Detroit banks.

Statement of Significance

While Waterman and Sons was a long-time Black-owned printing business, it is unclear if activities significant to the civil rights movement occurred in this location, which has had some impacts to its integrity. Further investigation would be needed to document its eligibility.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
More research needed	NA	None

Sources

"Black Firms Still Struggle," *Detroit Free Press*, December 5, 1980, 1A, 14A.
"The Entrepreneur Tradition," *Detroit Free Press*, February 18, 1985, 1B, 7B.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

Name Welch-Oakwood Hills Subdivision	Street Address Ethel and Bassett Streets between Visger and Outer Drive	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	--	--

District Names
None

Year Built
1919-1940s

Resource Type
District

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American Movements
Bungalow



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Weatherboard
Brick

Roof Form
Side gable

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Wood

Condition
Varies

Integrity
Varies

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Current Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
Garages
Sheds

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Community Planning and Development

Narrative Description
This neighborhood encompasses two streets, Bassett and Ethel, from Visger south to Outer Drive. It consists mostly of one-and-one-half story frame residences. Generally, the houses are rectangular with the long side to the street, with small front and rear yards. Most have driveways along the side

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Reconnaissance Level Survey**

of the house extending into the rear yard, some with detached garages. They are typically constructed of a clapboard, with some having brick or stone accent walls. Some have been altered with vinyl or aluminum siding. Rooflines are typically side gabled with a cross-gabled porch. They are relatively simple in style with some decorative features such as dormers, iron porch supports, and bay windows.

History

Thomas H. Welch platted the Oakwood Hill subdivision (then in the village of Oakwood prior to its annexation by Detroit) in 1919, but by the early 1940s only seventeen houses had been built. In 1944, the Black-owned Watson Realty Company, using Federal Housing Administration-backed loans and sponsored by the Builders Association of Metropolitan Detroit, purchased the existing homes from their White owners (due to restrictive covenants in place) and acquired the remaining vacant land in the subdivision plat. The existing houses were resold to Black owners, and over 300 more homes were built to provide housing for Black war workers. Although the first resold home was burned by Whites, the neighborhood quickly became majority Black.

Statement of Significance

The Welch-Oakwood Hills subdivision is potentially eligible under Criterion A, as an important residential neighborhood of single-family homes built by and for Black Detroiters in response to lack of adequate housing during World War II. In addition, is also potentially eligible under Criterion C as an intact neighborhood of largely 1940s working and middle class houses.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, C	None

Sources

Burdick, Col. Henry. "500 Homes for Negroes." *Detroit Free Press*, September 30, 1944, 5.
Sarah Jo Peterson, *Planning the Home Front: Building Bombers and Communities at Willow Run*, 262.
Subdivision Plat, Welch's Oakwood Hills, 1919.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity	Street Address 293 Eliot Street	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	---	--

District Names
Brush Park Local Historic District

Year Built
1919

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals
Neoclassical



Plan Square	Foundation Not visible	Walls Brick
-----------------------	----------------------------------	-----------------------

Roof Form Hipped	Roof Asphalt shingle	Other Materials Wood
----------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------------------------

Condition Good	Integrity Slightly altered	Architect Unknown
--------------------------	--------------------------------------	-----------------------------

Historic Use DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence SOCIAL/Clubhouse: Fraternity	Current Use SOCIAL/Clubhouse: Fraternity	Builder Unknown
---	--	---------------------------

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage - Black
Social History

Period of Significance: 1919-1969
Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity is located on the north side of Eliot Street west of Brush Street in Detroit's Brush Park neighborhood. Set towards the front of a narrow rectangular residential lot,

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

it has a small yard in front with domestic plantings, and a back yard partially screened with arborvitae. It is a two-and-one-half story square building faced with red-brown brick with a hipped, asphalt-shingled roof. A brick chimney rises from the west elevation.

The primary (south) elevation has a one-story, partial width porch with brick walls, stone coping, and a hipped roof with exposed rafter tails supported on Doric columns. On the west end of the elevation is a two-story, three-sided bay window. A single-leaf entry door is centered on the first floor, with a window opening to the east. On the second floor above the porch is a rectangular projecting bay. The windows are all double-hung wood sash, one-over-one units; the second floor windows have diamond panes in the upper sash. Projecting from the roof is a hipped dormer with shingled walls and tripled diamond-pane casement windows. A concrete sill course runs under the second floor windows and wraps around to the first bay on the east and west elevations.

The west elevation has two small leaded glass windows to either side of the chimney on the first floor. At the north end of the elevation is a two-story three-sided bay. It has single sash windows in the center flanked by double-hung one-over-one units on the sides. Projecting from the roof is a hipped dormer with shingled walls and tripled diamond-pane casement windows. The north elevation is sided with painted brick. A two-story porch with brick walls and Doric columns supporting the first story roof extends off the back of the house. The second floor columns and railings have been replaced with newer wood. There are doors on both first and second floors, and three arched window openings with double-hung, one-over-one windows. The east elevation has a two-story rectangular oriole window over a first floor utilitarian door. This has a paired window with a fan light on the second floor and paired double-hung leaded four-over-four window on the attic level. South of the oriole is a window on the first floor, while to the north is a half-story window and windows on each level at the north end. The windows are all double-hung one-over-one units. A smaller chimney rises from the northeast corner of the house. A Michigan Historical Marker is present in front of the house.

History

Alpha Phi Alpha is the oldest Greek fraternal organization for Black students. It was founded in 1906 at Cornell University, and Detroit's Gamma Lambda chapter was the fraternity's third, chartered in 1919. The chapter's original meeting place was at 1721 St. Antoine (demolished). The chapter moved to several other locations, including the Knights of Pythias Hall on Adams and Brush (demolished), before this building was purchased by the membership in 1939.

The fraternity was not merely a social organization. As a fraternity, they initiated a program in 1926 in conjunction with the Detroit Urban League to encourage Black children to go to college. The chapter supported the national organization's program to benefit and sustain progress in civil rights introduced at the 1948 convention in Tulsa, Oklahoma. In 1968, during the height of the Black Power movement, the fraternity issued a statement supporting "legitimate" (i.e. nonviolent) means of Black people gaining control of their own destinies, and calling on the Congress to address the "unjust and unnecessary" poverty among Black people. In 1971, the organization formed a non-profit corporation to purchase Parkside Village in Inkster, a low to moderate income development, to help address the problem of affordable housing for Black families. Members also engaged in community efforts such as voter registration drives and educational programs. Alumni in Detroit include John Dancy, former director of the Detroit Urban

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

League, Reverend Malcolm Dade, Dr. Haley Bell, founder of the radio station WCHB, M. Kelly Fritz, owner of the Fritz Funeral Home, former Mayor Dennis Archer, and Judge Damon Keith.

Statement of Significance

Alpha Phi Alpha is a contributing resources to the Brush Park Local Historic District. However, that nomination does not discuss the history of this building or of its connection to Alpha Phi Alpha. The building is recommended as eligible under Criterion A, for its association with Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity as a significant social welfare organization whose members have undertaken civil rights related work and have in many cases become leaders in the civil rights movement.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, C	None

Sources

Nancy Curtis, *Black Heritage Sites: An African American Odyssey and Finder's Guide*, 440.
Leslie D. McCoy and Richard T. James Jr., "A Brief History of the Gamma Lambda Chapter," 2008, <https://www.detroitalphas.org/chapter/>.
"Fraternity Maps Three-Point, Militant Program," *Detroit Tribune*, January 3, 1948, 1.
"Inkster Housing Units Sold," *Detroit Free Press*, August 7, 1971, 12-A.
Charles K. Dodson, Jr. "Learning from the Past, Building on the Future: A Century of Service and Impact," *Michigan Chronicle*, October 2, 2019.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name
Apex Bar

Street Address
7649 Oakland Avenue

Municipal Unit, County
Detroit, Wayne County

District Name
NA

Year Built
Ca. 1910

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th Century
American Movements
Commercial Style



Plan
Square

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composition

Other Materials
Concrete

Condition
Fair

Integrity
Altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
COMMERCE/TRADE/Restaurant:
Bar

Current Use
VACANT

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage, Social History, Entertainment/Recreation, Performing Arts

Period of Significance: 1910-1962
Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

The Apex Bar is located at the southwest corner of Oakland Avenue and Smith Street in the North End neighborhood. The building is a two-story, square structure faced with a combination of red and yellow brick on the primary elevations (east and north) and common brick on the secondary elevations (south and west). It has a flat composition roof. All the window openings have been boarded up with wood or concrete block. At the east elevation, the original first floor storefront has been infilled with yellow brick that wraps around the curved corner to the first bay of the north elevation. The brick pattern is stacked on the corner. Within the altered storefront on the north elevation is a utilitarian steel entry door and three rectangular window openings. At the second

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

floor of this elevation are two rectangular openings and a three-sided, hipped-roof oriole window. A sign with "Apex Bar" and a lighted element projects from the upper floor. At the second floor of the curved corner are three window openings, with the center opening slightly larger than the flanking windows. The corner is topped by a Dutch gable. The first floor of the north elevation has three window openings and a secondary metal entry door. The second floor has three openings, one large one at the center and two smaller openings. A concrete sill course runs under the second floor windows across both north and east elevations.

The west elevation has a utilitarian entry door and two window openings at the first floor, and five irregularly placed window openings of varying sizes on the second floor. The south elevation has two rectangular openings on the first floor and a single round-arch window on the second floor.

History

Originally a Jewish working class neighborhood, this area was later called the North End because it was the north side of Paradise Valley. Beginning in the 1920s, as Black Southerners flooded in the city during the Great Migration, they steadily moved north from the original lower East side neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. While Black Bottom was primarily a residential neighborhood, Paradise Valley was the nucleus of what would become a thriving Black business and entertainment district. Throughout the middle decades of the twentieth century, the Paradise Valley entertainment district continued to creep north, first into the Sugar Hill district, and then into the North End, north of East Grand Boulevard.

The North End neighborhood was considered a step up for younger Black families who were able to move out of the crowded conditions of Black Bottom. It became home to a thriving soul and rhythm & blues scene in the 1950s and 1960s, particularly along the Oakland Avenue corridor. Many well-known Motown and other artists came out of the North End, including Jackie Wilson, the Four Tops, Smokey Robinson, and Aretha Franklin. Among the most famous music venues in the North End were the Phelps Lounge (on Oakland Avenue near Josephine, now demolished), and the Apex Bar, at 7649 Oakland Avenue, where artists John Lee Hooker, Etta James, Little Sonny, James Brown, and George Clinton and the Parliaments could be heard.

The building at 7649 Oakland Avenue was constructed around 1910, as the first listing for the address (at the time 265 Oakland Avenue, changed to 7649 when all Detroit addresses were renumbered in 1920-21) appears in city directories on that date. Constructed as a retail building, it housed Hill's Corner Shoe Store from 1910 to 1920, when owner J. William Hill retired and sold the business to L. Thompson. A variety of businesses were in the building in the 1920s and 1930s, including L. Thompson Shoes, George Hewstone's Auto Supply, and National Food Stores. Around 1934, Achille (Archie) Caron opened a restaurant in the building which remained there until around 1940. The Apex Bar opened in the building sometime between 1940, when the last directory listing for the Archie Caron restaurant occurs, and 1943, when John Lee Hooker played the bar.

Hooker (1917-2001) was born in Mississippi to a sharecropping family. Among his early influences was his stepfather, William Moore, a blues singer who taught Hooker to play the guitar. In 1943, Hooker moved to Detroit to work at Ford Motor Company. In his free time, he spent time playing guitar and singing in the blues clubs of Paradise Valley and the North End. Hooker developed his unique sound and many of his early hits in these clubs, particularly the Apex Bar. It was at the Apex Bar that the Modern Brothers, who ran the Modern Records label, went on the advice of local

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

record producer Bernie Besman to hear Hooker play a song called “Boogie Chillen.” Hooker recorded Boogie Chillen at Detroit’s United Sound Systems Studios and Modern released it in 1948. It was immediately popular and reached number one on Billboard’s “Race Records” (later Rhythm & Blues) chart in early 1949. Boogie Chillen is considered one of the forerunners of rock and roll and was influential for many early rock and roll and rhythm and blues artists. Another of Hooker’s classic hits, “Boom Boom” (1962) was written in and inspired by the Apex Bar. According to Hooker, “I would never be on time [for the gig]; I always would be late comin’ in. And she [the bartender Willa] kept saying, ‘Boom boom – you late again’. Every night: ‘Boom, boom – you late again’. I said ‘Hmm, that’s a song!’ ... I got it together, the lyrics, rehearsed it, and I played it at the place, and the people went wild.” Hooker became known as “The Godfather of the Blues” and was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1991. The Apex Bar remained open into the early 2010s but is currently vacant.

Statement of Significance

The Apex Bar is eligible for National Register listing under Criterion A, as an important musical venue in the North End neighborhood of Detroit, an extension of the Paradise Valley entertainment district, where a number of significant Black jazz and blues artists played or got their start. Because so many similar venues in Detroit were lost to urban renewal and neglect, its survival is particularly significant. It is also important under Criterion B, for its association with John Lee Hooker, known as “The Godfather of the Blues,” as the Detroit venue most closely associated with his early career and having a direct connection to a number of his most important songs, including Boogie Chillen and Boom Boom.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, B	None

Sources

Detroit City Directories, 1910-1953.
“Business Change,” *Boot and Shoe Recorder*, February 14, 1920, 135.
Don Waller, “Hooker on History,” *Billboard* September 5, 1998, 78.
“John Lee Hooker: The Billboard Interview,” *Billboard*, September 5, 1998, 77, 79.
Charles Shaar Murray, *Boogie Man: The Adventures of John Lee Hooker in the American Twentieth Century* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000).
Jas Obrecht, *Rollin’ and Tumblin’: The Postwar Blues Guitarists* (San Francisco: Backbeat Books, 2000), 426.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church	Street Address 5050 St. Antoine Street	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	--	--

District Names
NA

Year Built
1974

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement
Modern



Plan
Irregular

Foundation
Concrete

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Conical
Flat

Roof
Composite

Other Materials
Aluminum

Condition
Good

Integrity
Unaltered

Architect
Nathan Johnson & Associates

Historic Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Current Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage, Social History, Architecture

Period of Significance: 1974

Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

Bethel AME Church is located on the northeast corner of East Warren Avenue and St. Antoine Streets, in Detroit's Midtown neighborhood. It sits on a large rectangular parcel that includes a large asphalt parking lot and expanses of lawn with a bank of trees lining St. Antoine Street. The complex consists of the polygonal sanctuary at the south end of the lot and a rectangular church hall at the north end, connected by a short rectangular section.

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

The sanctuary is a one-story, ten-sided building faced with orange-red brick. At the apex of each wall intersection a narrow angled wing wall extends perpendicular to the building. A narrow band of stained glass runs underneath the frieze around the building and extends in narrow triangles down the façade on either side of the wing wall extensions. The roof edge has a plain fascia and has deep overhangs. The conical roof rises in graduated levels to a curved, offset steeple topped by a ten-sided concrete finial. A one-story brick entry extends off the southwest side. It has angled side walls and a wide overhang. The glass and aluminum storefront entry has paired doors and side windows. A stone dedication plaque is set on the lower wall to the east of the entry.

The east wall of the connector and church hall has sets of narrow paired windows outlined with narrow brick piers. This pattern continues along the north wall of the church hall, with a paired entry door on this elevation as well. The east elevation of has a projecting entry with paired aluminum and glass door, and several utilitarian doors at the north end.

History

Bethel AME is one of the oldest Black congregations in the city of Detroit, formed in 1839 as the Colored Methodist Society. Bethel AME was active in developing Detroit's Black social welfare institutions in the nineteenth century, particularly in the field of education. In 1928, Dr. William Peck became the pastor of Bethel AME. Not long after taking up his position, Peck continued the social welfare work for which Bethel was known by forming the Booker T. Washington Trade Association to encourage the patronage of Black businesses. A similar women's organization, the Housewives' League, was founded by Peck's wife, Fannie. Both were designed to support the economic freedom and stability of Black Detroiters by developing their own business institutions. It was particularly important during the Depression, which hit the Black community especially hard. Fannie Peck also organized the Fannie B. Peck Credit Union, the first Black credit union in America to become state chartered.

From its founding until the 1970s, Bethel AME was anchored in the Black Bottom and Paradise Valley neighborhoods of Detroit with churches built on Lafayette Street in 1847, at Napoleon and Hastings in 1889, and Frederick and St. Antoine in 1925. Like many churches in the area, Bethel AME fell victim to urban renewal, in this case the Medical Center urban renewal plan of the 1960s. The plan, however, proposed the demolition of most of the Black churches in the area, but not the White churches. Sustained protest by the city's Black civil rights community resulted in those churches being permitted to buy land in the same area and rebuild.

The present church was built in 1974 and was the design of Black architect Nathan Johnson. Johnson, a native of Kansas, moved to Detroit in 1950. He worked for the pioneering Black architectural firm of White and Griffin, Harold H. Fisher, and Victor Gruen and Associates before opening his own practice in 1956. Johnson worked primarily in the Modernist style. Johnson was among the first generation of Black architects in Detroit and influenced the careers of many of his successors. Johnson designed a number of church buildings for primarily Black congregations across the Detroit Metropolitan area. Bethel AME is among the most prominent of these commissions, designed at the height of his career and influence.

Statement of Significance

Bethel AME church is recommended eligible under Criterion A, for its association with the congregation that developed and sustained social welfare institutions for Black Americans during

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Bethel AME church is also representative of the impacts of Urban Renewal efforts on Black residents of Detroit during the mid-century period. It is also eligible under Criterion C as an important design by Nathan Johnson a significant Black architect of the mid twentieth century. It meets Criteria Consideration A, as a religious property, because its significant activities and people were related to the social and political aspects of civil rights. It also meets Criteria Consideration G, for properties less than 50 years old, because of its exceptional architectural quality.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, C	A, G (Architecture)

Sources

Bethel AME Church Records, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.
Angela Dillard, *Faith in the City: Preaching Radical Social Change in Detroit* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2017)

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name Birwood Wall	Street Address Along the alleyway between Birwood and Mendota streets between Eight Mile Road and Pembroke Street	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
-----------------------------	--	--

District Names
NA

Year Built
1941

Resource Type
Structure

Architectural Classification
NA



Plan
NA

Foundation
NA

Walls
Concrete

Roof Form
NA

Roof
NA

Other Materials
NA

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
NA

Historic Use
LANDSCAPE/Street
Furniture/Object: Wall

Current Use
LANDSCAPE/Street
Furniture/Object: Wall

Builder
NA

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage - Black
Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance: 1941-1950

Level of Significance: National

Narrative Description

The Birwood Wall is a concrete wall in the residential neighborhood of Eight Mile-Wyoming, in the northwest part of the city of Detroit, Michigan. The wall is located along the alleyway between Mendota Street and Birwood Avenue, running approximately 2,200 feet in length in a north-south

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

direction across three city blocks between Eight Mile Road on the north side and Pembroke Avenue on the south side. The wall is constructed of concrete panels one-foot-wide by six feet high and twenty feet long set between three foot by three-foot H-shaped posts. Finishes on the wall range from exposed concrete to white paint to a mural featuring scenes of African American history. The wall remains largely intact. A small section of the wall at the Alfonso Wells Memorial Playground steps out of plane with the rest of the wall, and is built of concrete block rather than precast panels but it is unclear when this alteration occurred.

History

The Birwood Wall is located in the historically Black neighborhood of Eight Mile-Wyoming, which was settled in the 1920s by working class blacks seeking an escape from the segregated Black Bottom and Paradise Valley neighborhoods. Over the next twenty years, the surrounding area gradually filled with White residents as the City of Detroit expanded rapidly during the period, creating a *de facto* segregated neighborhood.

During the Great Depression in the 1930s, President Franklin Roosevelt's administration created mortgage programs to assist homeowners and first time home buyers. However, they were generally open only to Whites, and mandated through their policies the maintenance of segregation in American cities and suburbs, particularly the practice of "redlining" or assessing Black neighborhoods as high risk no matter their actual condition. In 1939 the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) designated the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood in the "D-Hazardous" (red) category.

In 1941 White developer James T. McMillan proposed placing a White subdivision just to the west of the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood, in the previously platted Blackstone No. 6 subdivision. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) would only guarantee mortgages for houses in the new development if a barrier was placed between it and the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood. In the summer of 1941 the developer built a concrete wall, six feet high and one foot thick along the alleyway between Mendota and Birwood Streets, stretching for half a mile between Eight Mile Road on the north and Pembroke Street on the south, the *de facto* southern border of the segregated neighborhood. The development was then approved by the FHA. While the developer claimed that the wall was only meant to give the subdivision a "fixed border and trim," the *Michigan Chronicle* expressed the opinion of many in the Black community that "an actual wall of concrete represents the measure of...racial bigotry." Despite establishing the physical barrier required by FHA policy, no FHA funding was made available for Black homebuyers on the east side of the wall. When the City of Detroit proposed building temporary war worker housing on the east side of the wall later in the 1940s, the neighborhood organized against what it saw as the first step in an urban renewal plan to clear them out of the neighborhood to make way for White homeowners. Neighborhood leaders eventually agreed to the temporary housing in return for FHA subsidies for Black single-family homes.

The wall remained a segregation barrier for almost a decade, until Black residents from the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood began moving into the neighborhood to the west around 1950. Eight Mile-Wyoming was a "conservation district" (a form of urban renewal, although less devastating than that which had occurred in Black Bottom/Paradise Valley) in the 1960s, and as part of that process, a small neighborhood park was created along a portion of the wall between Norfolk and Chippewa Streets. It was partially painted with murals highlighting African American history in 2006.

Statement of Significance

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

The Birwood Wall (also called variously the Eight Mile Wall, the Detroit Wall, or the Wailing Wall), is significant under National Register Criterion A, at the national level, for its association with the history of segregation, and particularly the practice of redlining, during the mid-twentieth century. The Birwood Wall is a physical embodiment of the practice of *de jure* and *de facto* segregation in the United States during the middle years of the twentieth century, in which federal and local government policies and private real estate and banking institutions conspired to enforce Black segregation. While most of redlining played out at a macro scale—the placement of subdivisions, the legacy of disinvestment and discrimination in majority Black cities—the Birwood Wall is a rare surviving, tangible, human-scale example of the lengths to which federal and local governments, the real estate profession, private developers, and White residents were willing to go to preserve racial segregation in the mid twentieth century and deny Black Americans the economic benefits of homeownership available to Whites. The wall is largely unchanged from its original construction, with the exception of a small replaced section and painting where it adjoins Alfonso Wells Memorial Playground. The period of significance for the wall is from 1941, when it was constructed to 1950, when the first Black families began moving west of the wall.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A	None

Sources

Burniece Avery, "The Eight Mile Road...Its Growth from 1920...1952," Burniece Avery Papers, Box 1, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

"Oppose Plan to Establish Negro Ghetto." *Michigan Chronicle*, July 5, 1941, 1.

"8-Foot Wall of Segregation Draws Censure of Residents," *Detroit Tribune*, July 5, 1941, 1.

"Move to Evict Refugees Hit by Neighbors." *Detroit Free Press*, April 7, 1944, 13.

Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2017).

Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

"Mapping Inequality." Online collection of HOLC Residential Security Maps, at <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/>.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name Boggs, James and Grace Lee, House	Street Address 3061 Field Street	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	--	--

District Names
Grace Lee and James Boggs
House Local Historic District

Year Built
circa 1921

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American Movements
Craftsman



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Cross-gabled

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Wood
Stone

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Current Use
EDUCATION/Education-related

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
Garage

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage - Black
Social History
Politics/Government

Period of Significance: 1962-1969

Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

This house is located on the southwest corner of Field and Goethe Streets. It is set on a rectangular residential lot with typical domestic vegetation including lawn, trees, and ornamental

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

plantings. The house faces Field Street, and a detached garage opens onto Goethe Street. The house is a two-and-one-half story rectangular brick building with a side gabled asphalt-shingled roof along the front section and a cross gabled roof extending to the rear. Unless noted, all windows are double-hung.

The asymmetrical front façade has a two story window bay at the south end. On each floor are quadripartite windows with nine-over-one sash on the first floor and twelve-over-one sash on the top, divided by a stacked brick spandrel panel outlined in stone quoining. A separated sloped shed roof extends over this bay with decorative wood brackets below. At the north end is the entry bay. It has a one-story porch with brick cheek and knee walls and brick piers carrying the flat roof which also serves as a second floor balcony. The brick piers have stone coping and stone inset shields at the top. Within the porch is the single leaf entry door flanked by wood and glass panel sidelights, while another single-leaf door opens onto the balcony. Both are outlined with stone quoining. A brick pier extends above the roofline at the northeast corner of the house.

The north elevation is divided into the side gabled section at the east and the cross gabled section at the west. In the side gabled section, four narrow single-pane leaded glass windows are set in a staggered pattern between the first and second floor indicating an interior stair location. To the west of that is a two-story window bay consisting of tripled leaded windows on each level separated by a spandrel panel with header course bricks outlined with stone trim. In the gable are a pair of nine-over-nine windows. At the junction of the two wall sections is projecting two-story bay with tripled, nine-over-one windows divided by a header course brick spandrel panel and topped by a Dutch gable. The west end of this elevation has two window bays, one with paired windows on each level and one with single windows, all of which are one-over-one units.

At the west elevation is a one-story enclosed porch with vertical wood siding and ribbon windows. On the second and attic floors are a door leading to the porch roof and sets of single, paired, and tripled windows. The south elevation has a brick chimney rising from the east end; it has stone panels on each side at the top, and a stone cap. To the east of the chimney are single nine-over-nine windows on each floor, and paired nine-over-nine windows in the gable. The remainder of the windows are one-over-one sash. At the junction of the two building sections is a two-story, three-sided bay windows with paired units in the middle and single units to each side. At the west end of the elevation the two floors have identical fenestration patterns consisting of a mix of single and paired windows of different sizes.

At the west end of the lot is a two-story, rectangular garage. It is sided with brick on the lower level and horizontal vinyl siding on the upper level. The north elevation has two garage doors on the lower level and a sliding picture window on the upper. The west elevation has a rectangular window opening infilled with glass block on the first floor, and two sets of paired windows on the second. The east elevation has two doors and a glass block infilled opening on the first floor, and three single and paired windows on the second floor.

History

This house was built in the early 1920s for Thomas F. and Josephine Comerford. The area was originally a majority White neighborhood occupied by middle-class professionals and business owners. James and Grace Lee Boggs, two leaders of the civil rights movement in Detroit, moved

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

into the house in 1962. James Boggs was a Black man born in Alabama who moved to Detroit in the 1930s to work for the Works Progress Administration before securing a job on the assembly line at Chrysler’s Jefferson Avenue plant. Grace Lee was a second-generation Chinese American woman from Rhode Island, whose social and political activism was inspired in part by her experience as an ethnic Chinese woman. She moved to Detroit in the early 1950s, where she and James Boggs were brought together by their involvement in Marxist politics in the 1940s and early 1950s. They married in 1953 and eventually settled on the east side of Detroit to be close to their friends and colleagues.

By the early 1960s this section of the Islandview neighborhood had transitioned to an integrated community populated largely by working class residents employed by the many factories in the east side area. In her autobiography Grace Lee Boggs noted that when they moved into the house in 1962, the neighborhood, which had once been home to German and Italian Americans, was somewhat integrated. However, after the 1967 rebellion, virtually all of the remaining White residents moved.

The work of James and Grace Lee Boggs in Detroit formed the philosophical foundation of the Black Power movement. As the labor and civil rights movements unfolded, the Boggs home served as an informal community center and a sounding board for workshops, study groups, and organizations focused on movement struggles and community activism. As Grace Lee later remembered it, “Practically anyone who has been involved in movement politics in Detroit, even some that I don’t remember, can recall sitting on the couch in our living room discussing issues and strategies.” (*Living for Change*, 91). The couple worked with Reverend Albert Cleage, Jr., to organize the Northern Grassroots Leadership Conference in November 1963 (James was the conference chair), at which Malcolm X delivered his influential “Message to the Grassroots.” In 1978 they co-founded the National Organization for An American Revolution (NOAR) to unify the civil rights, Black Power, anti-Vietnam war, and women’s rights movements, and developed a number of grassroots initiatives for social and political reform. The Boggs Center to Nurture Community Leadership was founded on the second floor of the Field Street house, which expanded to encompass the entire home after James and Grace Lee passed away (in 1993 and 2015, respectively). The Boggs Center remains a nonprofit community organization that supports grassroots activists and builds community. (More information on the accomplishments of James and Grace Lee Boggs can be found in “The Proposed Grace Lee and James Boggs House,” Local Historic District Study Committee Report).

Statement of Significance

The James and Grace Lee Boggs House is significant under Criterion B, for its association with James and Grace Lee Boggs, two significant leaders of the civil rights movement, specifically in the area of the Black Power and Black consciousness movements. The house is the resource most closely associated with their significant activities, as it served as both their home and as a center for their activism and writings.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	B	None

Sources

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board, "The Proposed Grace Lee and James Boggs House,"
Local Historic District Study Committee Report, 2018.

James and Grace Lee Boggs Papers, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit,
MI.

Grace Lee Boggs, *Living For Change: An Autobiography* (Minneapolis, MN: University of
Minnesota Press, 1998).

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name

Detroit Association of
(Colored) Women's Clubs

Street Address

5461 Brush Street

Municipal Unit, County

Detroit, Wayne County

District Names

East Ferry Historic District

Year Built

1913

Resource Type

Building

Architectural Classification

Late 19th and 20th Century
Revivals
Colonial Revival



Plan

Rectangular

Foundation

Not visible

Walls

Brick

Roof Form

Side-Gabled

Roof

Asphalt shingle

Other Materials

Wood

Condition

Good

Integrity

Slightly altered

Architect

Smith, Hinchman, and Grylls

Historic Use

DOMESTIC/Single
Dwelling: Residence
SOCIAL/Clubhouse

Current Use

SOCIAL/Clubhouse

Builder

Unknown

Outbuildings

None

Areas of Significance

Ethnic Heritage
Social History

Period of Significance: 1913-1969

Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

This building is located on the southwest corner of Brush Street and East Ferry Avenue. It is a two-and-a-half story rectangular brick building with a side-gabled asphalt-shingled roof. Unless otherwise

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

noted, the windows are all double-hung, six-over-one units with flat brick arches. The main façade (east) faces onto Brush Street. Concrete steps flanked by brick cheek walls lead to the main entry which is centered on the elevation. It consists of a single-leaf door with a Classical surround with pilasters and a dentilled cornice. Immediately north of the entry is a paired casement window with six lights on each half, while to either side of the entry bay are tripled windows. The second floor has three sets of paired windows, as well as another paired six-light casement to the north of the central windows. A dentilled cornice runs under the eaves, and projecting from the roof are three gabled dormers with single round-arched one-over-one windows.

The south elevation has a projecting gabled wing with a metal fire escape on its south side. There are paired windows and an attic level door on the south elevation of the wing, and a single window on the first floor of its east elevation. The south elevation of the main house has a small paired window at the lower level and a single window above. Both gables have dentilled cornice returns.

A one-story porch extends across a portion of the north elevation. The base is brick-sided with stone coping, and it has a balustraded railing and paired Doric columns supporting an entablature and flat roof. Centered on the elevation is a brick chimney. To either side of this on the second floor are single windows; above that, in the attic story, are single round-arched one-over-one windows. West of the porch on the first floor is a horizontal paired window with six lights in each sash. Partially visible on the south elevation are single, paired, and tripled windows, as well as a large nine-light window. At the first floor level in the center is a projecting clapboard-sided bay, while a two-story wood enclosed porch is on the southwest corner. This elevation also has a dentilled cornice, as well as four irregularly-spaced gabled dormers.

History

This house was designed by the Detroit architectural firm of Smith, Hinchman, and Grylls in 1913 and originally built for William Lennane, a paving, sewer, and concrete contractor. Following his death in 1941, it was acquired by the Detroit Association of Colored Women's Clubs. Black women had a long history in Michigan of organizing to address social welfare issues in the Black community, particularly among women, children, and the needy. In 1921 a group of eight such Detroit clubs formed the Detroit Association of Colored Women's Clubs (DACWC) under the leadership of Veronica Lucas. The member clubs of the DACWC were a variety educational, philanthropic, and social organizations that worked as part of the Black uplift movement of the early twentieth century.

The club's president in 1941, Rosa Gragg (1903-1989), began working to find a headquarters building for the association. She eventually had to mortgage her home, furnishings, car, and her husband's business to afford the house at what was then 326 East Ferry Avenue, about a block away from her home at Beaubian and Ferry. At the time, restrictive covenants were still in place west of Brush Street, and Blacks were not permitted to own property, so the address was changed from 326 East Ferry to 5461 Brush. Some sources suggest that the entry door at the porch on the Ferry Avenue elevation was bricked up at this time so that Blacks could not enter and leave from Ferry Avenue. However, the Ferry Avenue Local Historic District nomination records that the entry was bricked up after a fire in 1976.

Beginning with eight clubs, membership peaked in 1945 with 75 clubs and 3,000 members, and it was able to pay off the mortgage on the Brush Street property that year. During Mrs. Gragg's leadership, she became president of the National Association of Women's Clubs and was instrumental in the

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

effort to designate Frederick Douglass' Cedar Hill property in the Anacostia neighborhood of Washington, DC, as a National Historic Site. In Detroit she was appointed as an advisor on race relations by Governor Murray Van Wagoner in 1943, and she worked with Martin Luther King, Jr., during the civil rights movement. In December 1963 Mrs. Gragg met with President Lyndon Johnson to urge him to appoint Black women to government posts and to pledge their assistance in improving voting rights and conditions for all Blacks, particularly women. The organization still exists at this site as the Detroit Association of Women's Clubs.

Statement of Significance

The Detroit Association of Women's Clubs at 5461 Brush is listed as a contributing building to the East Ferry Avenue National Register of Historic Places District, listed in 1980. The nomination focuses on architectural significance and does not mention the history of this building or its connection to the Detroit Association of Women's Clubs. The local historic district nomination for East Ferry Avenue does document the significance of the organization and Rosa Gragg in connection to the building. This survey recommends additional eligibility under Criterion A for the building's association with the DAWC, a significant civil rights organization in the city of Detroit, and potentially under Criterion B for its association with Rosa Gragg, who was significant to the civil rights movement in Detroit.

Eligibility	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Recommendation Contributing to a district	A, B, C	None

Sources

Richard W. Thomas, *Life For Us is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 221-222.

Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board, "East Ferry Avenue Historic District Final Report," 1981.

Sandra Davis, "Local Women Mingled with Presidents, Became Judges," *Detroit Free Press*, February 10, 1989, 69.

Peter Gavrilovich, "Women's Clubs Deserve Honors," *Detroit Free Press*, October 26, 1986, 3.

"Women Ask LBJ to Get Female White House Aides," *Jet*, December 26, 1963, 4.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name Detroit Urban League	Street Address 208 Mack Avenue	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
-------------------------------------	--	--

District Name
Albert Kahn House (Individual National Register listing)
Brush Park Local Historic District



Year Built
1906-1928

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals
English Renaissance

Plan
U

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick
Stucco

Roof Form
Hip

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Stone

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Albert Kahn

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Current Use
SOCIAL/Civic: Public Service
Organization

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage – Black, Social History, Architecture

Period of Significance: 1906-1969
Level of Significance: State

Narrative Description

This two-and-one-half story, U-shaped building is located at the southeast corner of Mack Avenue and John R Street. A low brick wall with stone coping separates the narrow front and side yards from the sidewalk. The building is constructed of brick on the lower level and stucco on the second

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

floor. It has a hipped roof covered in asphalt shingles. The Mack Avenue (north) façade has a centered entry with a carved wood single-leaf door with glass paned arched transom above. The entry is accessed by three curved concrete steps and has a stone surround with an arched top. To either side of the entry are rows of narrow, double-hung windows (four to the east and three to the west) set in stone surrounds with quoining at the edges. At the west end of the elevation is a two-story, three-sided bay window with paired windows in the center flanked by single units. They are double-hung windows, four-over-one on the first floor and six-over-one on the second floor. The second floor wall has irregularly set double-hung windows in a variety of configurations from a small single four-over-one unit to paired six-over-one units. Projecting from the roofline are two gabled dormers sided with wood shingles and paired eight-light casement windows.

The west elevation has three main sections. The north section has two windows each on the first and second floor, all of which are double-hung six-over-one units. The lower level windows have quoined surrounds. A chimney rises between the windows. It has stone trim, including a round arch with shield beneath, at the transition between the brick and stucco. The central section of the elevation projects from the main plane of the house. At the north end is a five-unit ribbon window with diamond-pane glass on the first floor, while above that are a paired and tripled set of eight-light casement windows. Above is a jerkinhead gable that extends down to the first floor. At the south end of the projecting section is another five-unit ribbon window with diamond pane glass, while a small shed-roof dormer with paired six-light casement windows projects from the roof. At the south end of the elevation is a garage wing with a single person door at ell with the adjoining section and a centered double door. A shed-roofed dormer with tripled six-light casement windows projects from the roof. A wide brick chimney rises from the chimney where the garage wing adjoins the rest of the house.

The south elevation of the garage wing has two horizontal sliding windows under the eaves and two multi-light rectangular windows, all covered with screening, and a utilitarian entry door. The main house's south and east elevations are partially visible from the alley; they are similar to the other elevations in having a variety of paired and tripled windows, most with six-over-six sash, and gabled and shed dormers. An enclosed porch is visible on the southeast corner of the house. A secondary entry with a projecting canopy is centered on the east elevation.

History

This house was designed by Albert Kahn (1869-1942) as his personal residence in 1906. Kahn designed the house relatively early in his career, before some of his most well-known commissions such as the Highland Park Ford Plant and the Fisher Building. Over the years, as his practice expanded, Kahn added onto the house, including an additional bathroom in 1921, and a gallery at the southwest corner of the first floor and a garage beyond it in 1928. Following Kahn's death in 1942, it was sold to the Detroit Urban League for use as its headquarters.

The Detroit Urban League (DUL) had been founded 1916 as the city's branch of the National Urban League, a New York City-based social welfare organization. The League's work in the first decades of the twentieth century was focused on assisting Black Southerners who were arriving in large numbers as part of the Great Migration, including potential employment opportunities, accommodations, and general orientation to the city. Among the programs offered by the DUL were a community center (opened in 1918 at 553 East Columbia) that provided temporary shelter for newly arrived migrants, a children's medical clinic, and a summer camp. The DUL was headed

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

briefly by Forrester B. Washington from 1916 to 1918, but its longest serving director was John C. Dancy Jr, who headed the organization from 1918 to 1960.

The DUL took a special interest in the small working-class community of Eight Mile-Wyoming on the city’s northwest side, encouraging its early settlement and advocating for the community when it encountered racism. The DUL, especially in its early years, worked to varying degrees with other Black and civil rights organizations in the city, including churches, the NAACP, the Detroit Federation of Settlements, and the state Negro Welfare Bureau. In the 1950s, the League worked toward equity in housing, and brought the national conference of its parent organization, the National Urban League, to the city in 1957. In the 1950s and 1960s, the DUL was one of the more conservative of the established civil rights organizations. Its emphasis on integration and working with Whites often clashed with the more militant and radical civil rights activists in the city, such as Reverend Albert B. Cleage Jr.

The League was headquartered in several buildings in its first decades, most in the segregated neighborhoods of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. These include 2509 St. Antoine (occupied 1916-1919, demolished for the Fisher Freeway), 27 St. Antoine (occupied 1919-1930, now the site of Ford Field), and 606 East Vernor Highway (occupied 1930-1944, also demolished for the Fisher Freeway). It has been at 208 Mack since 1944.

Statement of Significance

The Detroit Urban League building at 208 Mack Avenue was individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. Although the National Register nominations of the period did not list criteria, it does have an area of significance of architecture. Presumably it would significant under Criterion C for its design, and perhaps Criterion B for its association with Albert Kahn. This survey recommends additional eligibility under Criterion A as the headquarters since 1944 of the Detroit Urban League, a significant civil rights organization in the city of Detroit.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Listed	A, B, C	None

Sources

Detroit Urban League Records: 1916-1992, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.
 John Chavis and William McNitt, *A Brief History of the Detroit Urban League*, Michigan Historical Collections. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. 1971.
 Carmen L. Contreras, “Albert Kahn House,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1972.
 Angela Dillard, *Faith in the City: Preaching Radical Social Change in Detroit* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2017).

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
	12651 Old Mill Place	Detroit, Wayne County

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Dudley Randall's Broadside
Press

District Names

Russell Woods-Sullivan Local
Historic District

Year Built

Ca. 1963

Resource Type

Building

Architectural Classification

Modern Movement
International



Plan

Rectangular

Foundation

Not visible

Walls

Brick

Roof Form

Hipped

Roof

Asphalt shingle

Other Materials

Wood

Condition

Fair

Integrity

Slightly altered

Architect

Unknown

Historic Use

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence
COMMERCE/TRADE:
Professional: Publisher

Current Use

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Builder

Unknown

Outbuildings

None

Areas of Significance

Ethnic Heritage - Black, Social History, Literature

Period of Significance: 1965-1977

Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

This building is located on the southwest corner of Old Mill Place and Leslie Street, just east of Livernois Avenue in the Russell Woods-Sullivan neighborhood. The house sits toward the rear of the corner lot, with a small back and side yard and a larger front lawn with small domestic plantings of bushes. The house is a two-story, rectangular split-level building sided with brick and

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

topped by shallow hipped asphalt roofs. The original aluminum windows have all recently been replaced with vinyl.

At the primary (east) elevation, both levels have two-story window bays with vertical wood spandrel panels. The two-story bay has a three-light picture window and the lower level and a four-light sliding window, while the one-story and basement bay has paired sliding windows on each level. The single-leaf entry door is centered on the elevation where the split levels meet. It has a low brick-sided porch with metal railings and a flat roof. The lower level roof laps onto the two story section.

A wide brick chimney rises from the north elevation. To the east of the chimney is a narrow horizontal sliding window. To the west is a narrow three-light sliding window at the basement and a two-light sliding window on the upper level. The west elevation is partially visible. It has two sliding windows on the lower level. The two-story level has a wide overhanging roof carried on narrow vertical posts. There appears to be a one-story shed-roofed addition or wing extending from this part of the elevation. The south elevation is not visible due to dense coniferous vegetation.

History

In 1965, this Russell Woods house became the first home of poet and publisher Dudley Randall. A native of Washington, DC, born in 1914, Randall moved to Detroit with his family in 1920, where his father worked at Ford Motor Company. Following his graduation from Eastern High School in 1930, Randall worked for Ford and the postal service before being drafted into the army during World War II. He graduated from Wayne State University with a BA in English in 1949 and earned an MA in library science from the University of Michigan in 1951.

Randall had always been a serious writer of poetry, publishing his first piece in the Detroit Free Press at age 13. Following the church bombing in Alabama that killed three little girls in 1963, Randall wrote "the Ballad of Birmingham," but feared that he would lose his rights to the piece, so he founded his own publishing company, Broadside Press, in 1965. The press became a leading publisher of Black poetry and literature at a time when traditional publishing houses did not take Black literary talent seriously. It had an international impact, publishing over eighty-one books between 1966 and 1975, including the work of Robert Hayden, later named the United States' first Black Poet Laureate, as well as Gwendolyn Brooks, Louise Clifton, and Nikki Giovanni. Randall and his Broadside Press were also instrumental in the Black consciousness movement that developed in the Russell Woods-Sullivan neighborhood during the mid to late 1960s. Randall himself was named the first Black poet laureate of Detroit by Mayor Coleman Young in 1981. Randall sold the Broadside Press to the Alexander Crummell Memorial Center in 1977. He died in 2000.

Statement of Significance

Dudley Randall's Broadside Press is eligible under Criterion A, as an important Black publishing house that had an international impact and carried many poets and authors who would not otherwise have had an outlet for their work, and as a contributor to the Black consciousness movement that developed in this area of the city in the 1960s. It is also eligible under Criterion B for its association with Dudley Randall, an internationally known Black poet who was named the Poet Laureate of Detroit.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, B	None

Sources

Melba Joyce Boyd, *Wrestling with the Muse: Dudley Randall and the Broadside Press* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2004).
Julius Thompson, *Dudley Randall, Broadside Press, and the Black Arts Movement in Detroit* (Jefferson, NC: MacFarland, 2005).
Herb Boyd, *Black Detroit* (New York: Harper Collins Press, 2017).

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name
Detroit Fire Department
Engine Company No 34

Street Address
6345 Livernois Avenue

Municipal Unit, County
Detroit, Wayne County

District Name
NA

Year Built
1918

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century
Revivals
Neoclassical



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Hip

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Stone

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Charles Kotting

Historic Use
GOVERNMENT/Fire Station:
Firehouse

Current Use
GOVERNMENT/Fire Station:
Firehouse

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage, Social History, Architecture

Period of Significance: 1918-1969

Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

Detroit Fire Department Engine Company No. 34 is located on Livernois Avenue just north of West Warren Avenue. It is a two-story, rectangular building faced in variegated red brick with a hipped roof covered in asphalt shingles. A brick chimney with stone banding rises from the south elevation. At the northwest corner of the building is a rectangular brick tower that rises one story above the roof. It has stone banding at the corner piers and a small rectangular window with stone trim and pediment on each elevation. The entire building features extensive use of stone

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

trim, including a watertable, quoining at the corners, window surrounds, a stringcourse between the first and second floors, and a frieze and cornice under the eaves.

The building's primary (east) elevation faces Livernois Avenue. It is five bays wide. The three northern bays project slightly from the plane of the building. In this section is centered the large garage door opening for fire engines. It has a stone surround topped by a broken pediment with a shield and the number "34." Flanking the door are two small windows with segmental arches. At the second floor are three window openings; flanking the center window are two shields with the numbers "19" and "18" denoting the building's construction date. Above the center window, the cornice line is broken, with a pedimented dormer rising above the roof line. It has a roundel window. In the south two bays of this elevation, the first floor windows have segmental arch windows with stone keystones and arched soldier course bricks above. These windows also have three-light arched transoms. On the second floor are two rectangular windows.

The south elevation has window bays to either side of the chimney. The first floor windows have segmental soldier course brick arches and three-light arched transoms. On the second floor are two rectangular windows. At the north elevation is a central secondary entry door in a brick arched opening. To either side are windows with segmental soldier course brick arches and three-light arched transoms. The second floor has a large rectangular window, and three smaller rectangular windows. At the roofline is a hipped dormer with paired windows. All visible windows are replacement one-over-one, double-hung sash. The rear (west) elevation was not visible.

History

The Detroit Fire Department's Engine Company No. 34 was designed by Detroit architect Charles Kotting and built in 1918. At the time, it was located just a few blocks west of a developing Black middle-class neighborhood, the West Side, which was open to Black residents because this area of the city was still relatively sparsely populated. Over time, Blacks continued to push the boundary of the neighborhood to the west, eventually reaching Central Avenue (to the west of this building) by the 1950s. In 1944, a couple who attempted to break the northern boundary (color line) of the neighborhood, Tireman Avenue, filed a lawsuit that would eventually lead to the 1948 Shelley v Kraemer decision that outlawed racial covenants.

In the 1930s the Detroit Fire Department, which numbered over 1,700 members, was still an all-White force. In 1933, Snow Grigsby, a postal worker, founded the Detroit Civil Rights Committee to combat discrimination in hiring Black workers. Over the next several years, Grigsby pressured the Detroit Fire Department, Board of Education, and other organizations to hire Blacks. When the Fire Department opened the application process to Black applicants, Marcellus (also called Marcena in some sources) Taylor and Marvin White were among the top applicants. In April 1938 Detroit Mayor Richard W. Reading ordered the Civil Service Commission to appoint the top ten applicants, regardless of their race, to positions in the fire department. Hired by the department and assigned to Company 34, Taylor and White's first day of work was July 30, 1938. The White firefighters' union had spread the word that two Black firefighters had been hired, and by the time they arrived for work, a crowd of hundreds had gathered in front of the station to block them. A force of thirty police officers was required to permit Taylor and White to enter. Even after the mobs dispersed, Taylor and White were treated as second-class citizens, forced to sleep in a different room from the White firefighters, eat after them using different utensils, and use a different restroom. Taylor and White persisted and eventually other Blacks joined the Fire

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Department. Both remained with the department for the rest of their careers. White was promoted to senior assistant architectural engineer - fire prevention and died in 1968. Taylor became the first Black sergeant in 1952, the first Black captain in 1963, and the first Black battalion chief in 1969. He died in 1994.

Statement of Significance

Detroit Fire Department Engine Company No 34 is significant under Criterion A as the location where two Black firefighters broke the color barrier in the Detroit Fire Department in 1938. In addition, it may also be eligible under Criterion C for its architectural character.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, C	None

Sources

"Mayor Orders Ten Eligibles Be Appointed," *Detroit Tribune*, April 16, 1938, 1.
Keith Owens, "Drawn to the Flame: Detroit's First Black Firefighters," *Michigan Chronicle*, February 3, 2016.
Eric Kinkopf, "Bigotry Didn't Kill Firefighter's Spark," *Detroit Free Press*, January 29, 1984, 1.
"Marcena W. Taylor," in Elaine Latzman Moon, *Untold Tales, Unsung Heroes: An Oral History of Detroit's African American Community, 1918-1967* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994).

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name Frances Harper Inn (Christian Industrial Club)	Street Address 307 Horton Street	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	--	--

District Name
NA

Year Built
1897

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late Victorian
Queen Anne



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Stone

Walls
Wood

Roof Form
Cross gable

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Vinyl

Condition
Fair

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling:
Boarding House

Current Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History

Period of Significance: 1915-1960
Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

This building is located on the north side of Horton Street west of Brush Street. It is located on a narrow rectangular residential lot with a small front yard and larger back yard. The building is a two-and-one-half story rectangular structure covered in wood clapboard siding and with a cross-gabled asphalt-shingled roof and parged stone foundation. Three brick chimneys rise from the roof. The windows have all been replaced with double-hung, one-over-one vinyl units except where otherwise noted.

The gabled front of the primary (south) elevation projects from the main plane of the building. It has a single window on the first floor, a paired window on the second floor, and paired single-pane units on the attic level. The gable end has fishscale wood shingles. A full-width, one-story porch wraps around the projecting section and back to the side gabled wing. It is set on concrete blocks and has a wood floor, plain wood posts, and an asphalt-shingled hipped roof. The single-leaf replacement entry door is on the north wall of the porch. Above it on the second floor is a single window. The west elevation has six irregularly placed windows of varying sizes, four on the first floor and two on the second. The north elevation has five irregularly placed windows of varying sizes, two each on the first and second floors and one on the half story. At the east elevation, the cross gabled section steps out slightly from the wall plane. It has three centered windows, one each on the first, second, and half story. A narrow window is set at the intersection of the wall planes on the second floor north of the projecting section while there are two more windows, one on each floor, on the south return wall.

History

As Black migrants flooded into Detroit as part of the Great Migration in the early decades of the twentieth century looking for work and better opportunities, many arrived without any family or friends to assist them in settling into the city, or indeed any knowledge of the city at all. To address the need, a number of social welfare organizations like the Detroit Urban League and Second Baptist Church met new arrivals at the train station and provided them with materials and advice. Some programs helped newcomers find employment or places to live. One such organization was the Christian Industrial Club. The CIC was founded in 1904 or 1909 (sources differ) under the leadership of Etta Foster Taylor with a mission to provide accommodations for young Black women who were newly arrived in the city or did not have family to house them. According to the *Freedman's Progress*, Detroit was ideal for a facility of this kind because it was where "most of the uplift club among the colored people will be found, because in that city the preponderance of Afro-American population is found. A commodious home for this organization is being purchased at 117 Horton Avenue in that city on the land contract easy payment plan."

The house at 117 Horton (renumbered 307 Horton in 1920), had been constructed at the end of the nineteenth century by businessman H. J. Leonard. At the time, Horton Street was at the far northern end of the city, in an area that was still more rural than urban, and the house indeed looks more farmhouse than the urban houses now surrounding it. The Christian Industrial Club, which had been established by Second Baptist Church as part of the key role it played in the assimilation of migrants, purchased the house around 1915. It is unknown when it was named the Frances Harper Inn, but it was likely in honor of Frances Watkins Harper, a Black abolitionist who had helped found the National Association of Colored Women. One young woman who lived at the house had recounted that one night she missed her train and tried to get a room at the

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

YWCA, but when she was refused, she had to sit on a park bench for two nights until she was directed to the Frances Harper Inn, where she lived until she married.

It is unclear how long the Frances Harper Inn remained in business and in this location. In June 1933 readers of the *Detroit Tribune* were invited to visit the Frances Harper Inn to see the improvements; the article noted that the Inn was “owned by colored women of Detroit and should be valued by all as a cherished possession.” In 1935, the Inn opened a training school for Black women. In 1939 the Christian Industrial Club celebrated the 15th anniversary of the Inn. It may be that, as housing opportunities began opening up for Black Detroiters in the 1940s and 1950s, the Inn’s purpose had waned.

Statement of Significance

The Frances Harper Inn is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A. The Inn was part of the important social welfare activities provided by Black women during the “social uplift” period in civil rights history. It is also an extremely rare survival of this type of resource. Most were located in Black Bottom and Paradise Valley, and were lost to urban renewal. Aside from window replacement, the building exhibits a very high degree of integrity, which is highly unusual for a vernacular building of this type in the city.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A	None

Sources

Francis H. Warren, *Freedmen’s Progress* (Detroit, Michigan, 1915), 141.
“Lansing Awarded Practice House,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 17, 1935, 15.
“Frances Harper Inn Doing Good Work,” *Detroit Tribune*, June 3, 1933, 2.
“Frances Harper Inn Celebrates its Twenty-Fifth Anniversary,” *Detroit Tribune*, July 29, 1939, 4.
Victoria Wolcott, *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2001).

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name Friends School in Detroit	Street Address 1100 St. Aubin Street	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
--	--	--

District Name
NA

Year Built
1971

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement
International



Plan T	Foundation Not visible	Walls Brick Aluminum
------------------	----------------------------------	-----------------------------------

Roof Form Flat	Roof Composition	Other Materials None
--------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------------

Condition Demolished	Integrity NA	Architect Unknown
--------------------------------	------------------------	-----------------------------

Historic Use EDUCATION/School: K-12 School	Current Use DEMOLISHED	Builder Unknown
---	----------------------------------	---------------------------

Outbuildings
Incinerator

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage, Social History, Education

Period of Significance: 1965-1973
Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description
The Friends School in Detroit is located at the northeast corner of St. Aubin and East Lafayette Streets in the Lafayette Park/Elmwood Park neighborhood. The T-shaped building occupies the northern part of a city block, surrounded on the east and west by large open expanses of grass and athletic fields. A parking lot extends from the south leg of the T, while St. John’s Presbyterian Church is on the south half of the block.

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

The school is one-story with a partially raised basement. It has a flat roof with triangular raised sections on the main block. The main block is a narrow, rectangular section oriented east-west. The north elevation is brick with projecting ridged aluminum bays. Each projecting bay has large multi-light aluminum windows. At the lower level are rectangular sliding windows and several sets of paired and single utilitarian doors. The short north and west elevations also have projecting ridged aluminum sections that angle out from the wall toward the north side. The west elevation has three sliding windows beneath this while a window opening on the east elevation has been bricked in. The south wall of the main block is brick. It has regularly spaced bays with large sliding windows at the basement level, and narrow fixed pane vertical windows centered above each basement window. The east and west ends of this elevation are blank walls. There also two utilitarian metal doors on this elevation.

Projecting from the south wall of the main block is a rectangular mass. It has brick lower walls with ridged aluminum panels at the upper level; the walls angle out at the base. On the south elevation of this mass, which is the main building entry, are two sets of paired metal doors, flanked by narrow brick piers that extend through the roofline. Between the doors are storefront windows carried on brick kneewalls. On the east and west walls of the mass, the southeast and southwest corners are recessed with the upper level carried on wide metal piers. North of the recessed areas are four windows on the lower level separated by brick piers. Above these on the east wall are four pierced window openings, while the west wall has a single opening with a four-light window.

On the east end of the main block of the school is a one-story, rectangular brick and concrete block building with a high chimney, likely an incinerator.

History

Friends School was conceived of when Black Judge Wade McCree Jr.'s daughter was denied enrollment at a suburban private school. McCree, along with a group of other Detroiters, developed the idea for a private K-12 school that would be open to all races, religious backgrounds and socio-economic statuses in the early 1960s. The group approached the Detroit Society of Friends, a Quaker organization, to sponsor the school. The first five grades of the school opened in a storefront at the Lafayette Park shopping center in December 1965, then moved to portable classrooms on the site chosen for the permanent school, on urban renewal land just east of Lafayette Park, which was an integrated neighborhood.

Although the permanent building was originally scheduled for completion in 1968, it didn't actually open until 1971. Over the years, the school was attended by the children of some of Detroit's politically and socially important families, including Wayne State University president George E. Gullen, Kenneth Cockerel Sr., and Senator Carl Levin. Although the school was integrated from the first, it was not immune to racial issues. In 1973, even though forty-two percent of the schools four hundred and twenty students were Black, a group of Black students charged the school board with racism, demanding more Black teachers (at the time, there were only four) and a Black studies program. The following year, tensions eased as more Black teachers had been hired.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

During the 1980s and 1990s, enrollment at Friends School dropped dramatically; from the high of four hundred and twenty in 1973, there were only one hundred and twenty-one students in 1987. The school nearly closed in 1992, but managed to remain open until 2015, when it closed permanently. The school was demolished in 2019.

Statement of Significance

Friends School was potentially eligible under Criterion A as an early integrated private school that was opened in response to a lack of opportunities in private education for Black students due to discrimination in suburban private schools. Due to its demolition, it is no longer eligible.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Not eligible	None	None

Sources

"First Quaker School Gets OK to Open, *Detroit Free Press*, September 13, 1965, 2.
"Principal Giessler Runs a School with Big Ideas," *Detroit Free Press*, April 9, 1967, 18.
Julie Morris, "Quaker School is Criticized," *Detroit Free Press*, May 9, 1973, 12D.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	November 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name Greater Shiloh Baptist Church	Street Address 537 Benton Street	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
--	--	--

District Names
Greater Shiloh Baptist Church
Local Historic District

Year Built
1923, 1978

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century
Revivals
Late Gothic Revival



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Front gabled

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Stone

Condition
Good

Integrity
Altered

Architect
Original: W. W. Ahlschlager
with Carlos N. Stokes
1978 Addition: Architects
International

Historic Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Current Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage - Black
Social History
Architecture

Period of Significance: 1914-1978
Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

Greater Shiloh Baptist Church is located on the northeast corner of Benton and West Streets in the Brush Park neighborhood. It is surrounded by a residential development that replaced the Brewster Homes. The church is built out to the lot lines on the west and south and surrounded by driveways and parking on the north and east. The building is a three story rectangular structure constructed of red and brown brick. It consists of two halves, the original church on the east, with a narrow later addition attached to the front, and an education and community center on the west. Both halves of the building have front-gabled, asphalt shingled roofs.

The original church is visible on the east elevation. The main body is six bays long. Each bay has a set of paired double-hung windows at the basement level, with the exception of the northernmost window which has been infilled with brick. Above the basement windows are recessed window bays divided by brick piers and with brick corbelling at the top. Within the bays are round arched brick window openings. The original window openings have been infilled with brick in which are set narrow vertical three-light stained glass windows. A brick chimney rises from the northeast corner. At the south end of the elevation the east elevation of the tower is visible. It has an ashlar limestone base with an infilled opening and brown brick above with piers at each corner. Vertically centered on the tower is a two-story window bay with a round-arched window with stone keystone and narrow paired windows below. Between the windows is basketweave brickwork. The tower extends above the roofline and has paired windows with brickwork gables above.

Attached to the south end of the original church is a narrow addition. On its east elevation are paired entry doors at the first floor and narrow rectangular windows with colored glass. A cross-shaped sign reading Shiloh Baptist Church hangs from the second floor. The south elevation of the addition has three central bays and two side bays with unadorned brick walls between. The central bays have soldier course brick panels with narrow rectangular multi-light colored glass windows at each level. The side bays have one window each.

The south elevation of the education and community center building has vinyl horizontal siding in the gable end. The elevation is unadorned brick except for a window/entry bay at the east end. This has paired aluminum and glass doors on the first floor, and three sets of double-hung, one-over-one windows on the second and third floors. The west elevation has regularly spaced sets of paired one-over-one double-hung windows. The north elevation is blank except for a single-leaf utilitarian entry door at the east end. The north elevation of the original church is sided with common brick and has five irregularly placed window openings, with double-hung one-over-one windows, and two utilitarian doors.

History

Shiloh Baptist is the second-oldest Black Baptist congregation in Detroit, after Second Baptist Church. The congregation was organized in 1881 and began worshipping in a private house on Hastings Street on the lower East side of Detroit. The congregation moved to several subsequent locations in the same general area between 1882 and 1911, each time outgrowing the previous building. Construction began on this building in 1914; because the congregation had very little money, it was built in stages, beginning with the basement. The original church structure was completed in 1923. Although the design of this building is nominally attributed to (White) architect Walter Ahlschlager, he had in fact redrawn the plans of a Black draftsman, Carlos N. Stokes. Stokes pulled a permit for the construction of Shiloh Baptist in 1920, which was approved by the Detroit

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Building Department. It is unclear why Ahlschlager took over and adapted Stokes' design; the design was essentially the same, with some simplifications. The *Contender*, a Black Detroit newspaper, in 1920 listed a number of Black contractors working on the project, including general contractor H. H. Madison, and masons W.C. Johnson and Brothers.

The neighborhood in which Shiloh Baptist is located was identified for clearance in 1935 to make way for the Brewster Homes public housing development. Shiloh Baptist was also threatened with demolition, but Reverend Solomon Ross successfully fought to save the church. Shiloh Baptist hosted baritone Paul Robeson at a concert in 1949. In 1978, an addition was built over the south (primary) elevation of the church, designed by Aubrey Agee of Architects International, and a two-story parish hall was later added to the west elevation.

Statement of Significance

Shiloh Baptist Church is eligible under Criterion A, as an important Black congregation that successfully prevented the demolition of the church during the construction of the Brewster Homes, a public housing development. It is also eligible under Criterion C, for the design of the original (1923) church. Although Stokes' original design has been obscured by the 1978 addition, the extreme rarity of a surviving building of this scale, executed by a Black designer during this period, merits its consideration under Criterion C. It also meets Criteria Consideration A, as a religious property, because its significant activities and people were related to the social and political aspects of civil rights.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, C	A

Sources

Michigan Register of Historic Sites
City of Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board, "Proposed Shiloh Baptist Church Local Historic District," Final Report, 1990.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name Hartford Avenue Baptist Church	Street Address 6300 Hartford Street	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	---	--

District Name
NA

Year Built
1924-1945

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals
Neo-Gothic



Modern Movement
International

Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composition

Other Materials
Stone

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Current Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage - Black
Social History

Period of Significance: 1924-1977

Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

This church is located at the northeast corner of Milford and Hartford Streets in the historically Black Community of the (Old) West Side. The rectangular structure is built out to the lot lines and

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

consists of the sanctuary on the south side and an attached parish hall on the north. The two-story building faces Hartford Street and is faced in brick with stone trim. It has a flat composition roof.

The main (west) elevation of the sanctuary building is three bays wide. The bays are flanked by brick buttresses with stone coping. The center bay contains the three paired entry doors on the first floor, trimmed with stone and topped with fanlights. Above that is a stone trim band with blank arches. Springing from this is a massive lancet arched window, with four vertical windows with stained glass set within a stone surround and a stone panel with applied tracery in the transom. Topping this bay is a gabled roofline. To the south of the entry bay is the tower bay. It has lancet arched openings on each floor; the first floor has two windows topped by a stone panel with applied tracery, while the second floor window has paired sash with arched transoms. At the top of the wall is the bell tower, with tripartite arched openings. The north bay is similar to the south bay. The windows are all double-hung, one-over-one units except for the central stained glass window.

To the south of the sanctuary on the west wall is the entry bay of the parish hall. It has a two-story high glass curtain wall with a brick spandrel panel between the floors. Paired entry doors are on the first floor. Stepped back from the entry bay is five bay elevation. It has bands of three-light horizontal sliding and double-hung windows on four of the bays. The northernmost bay has a utilitarian entry door flanked by an infilled glass block opening on the first floor, and a vertical double-hung two-over-two window on the upper level. There are no openings on the north wall of the parish house. The east wall of the parish hall abuts the alley and has small rectangular window openings at regular intervals on the first and second floors.

The east elevation of the sanctuary has a centered round window. To either side are irregularly placed double-hung windows and the first and second floors. There are eight bays along the south elevation, separated by brick buttresses with stone coping. The six central bays have similar fenestration patterns, consisting of two sets of paired multi-light double-hung windows separated vertically by a sill, and topped with paired transoms with wood tracery in lancet arches. The westernmost bay is similar, except the lower window is a single unit rather than paired; the easternmost bay has a single leaf entry door flanked by a single window, and a paired window above. Many of the windows retain their stained glass with lancet arched details, but a few have been replaced with plain windows.

History

Hartford Avenue Baptist Church was founded in 1917 an outpost of Second Baptist Church, the oldest Black congregation in the city. Originally named First Institutional Baptist Church of Detroit, it was one of the first Black churches on the west side of Detroit. In 1920, Reverend Charles A. Hill (1893-1970) became pastor and renamed the church Hartford Avenue Baptist, for the church's location at the corner of Hartford Avenue and Milford Streets. The church, which originally met in a wood "shack," had grown to over twelve hundred members by the mid 1920s. This was in part due to the growth of the neighborhood around the church. Known as the West Side, the area around Milford Street was settled by middle-class Blacks in the 1920s as an alternative to the increasingly crowded conditions in the segregated lower East side neighborhood of Black Bottom. In 1924, a new church building opened on the corner of Hartford and Milford. Although planned to be much bigger, the first phase was the construction of the first floor of the present church.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Charles Hill had strong ties to the labor and civil rights movements and was particularly active in the provision of fair housing and employment opportunities. He was appointed to the Mayor's Race Relations Committee following the 1943 racial conflict and became the president of the Detroit chapter of the NAACP in 1942. In 1945, the remainder of the church on the corner of Hartford and Milford was completed; by this time, Hartford Avenue was the largest Black Baptist congregation on the west side of the city. Over the years, Hartford Avenue also became known for its music. For Paul Robeson, in particular, Hartford Avenue Baptist was a home in Detroit, where he could give a concert and earn money to sustain him. Hill also gave space to civil rights activists and organizations such as W. E. B. Dubois and the National Negro Labor Council.

Charles Hill resigned from the leadership of Hartford Avenue Baptist in 1968 and was succeeded by Charles Gilchrest Adams. Like Hill, Adams was active in the civil rights movement, also serving as president of the NAACP and leading a boycott of Dearborn when that community passed an ordinance prohibiting nonresidents (i.e. Blacks) in its parks. In order to support the community, Gilchrest also purchased properties in the neighborhood of the church to rent or lease to businesses in order to increase employment in the area. The church also established a credit union and tutorial services for Black residents. Due to a growing congregation, Hartford Avenue Baptist moved to the former Covenant Baptist Church at 18700 Couzens Highway in 1977, when the congregation was renamed Hartford Memorial Baptist. The church at 6300 Hartford Avenue is now home to New Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Statement of Significance

Hartford Avenue Baptist Church is eligible for National Register listing under Criterion A, as the location where significant events related to the civil rights movement occurred, including speeches by W. E. B. Dubois, concerts by Paul Robeson, and meetings of the National Negro Labor Council. It is also eligible under Criterion B, for its association with Reverend Charles A. Hill, a significant person in the civil rights movement in Detroit, including his leadership in fighting for fair housing and employment and as a leader of the NAACP branch in Detroit. It also meets Criteria Consideration A, as a religious property, because its significant activities and people were related to the social and political aspects of civil rights.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, B, C	A

Sources

Hartford Memorial Baptist Church Records, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Angela Dillard, *Faith in the City: Preaching Radical Social Change in Detroit* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2017).

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
International Afro-American Museum	1549 West Grand Boulevard	Detroit, Wayne County

District Name
NA

Year Built
1930

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American Movements
Commercial Style



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composition

Other Materials
Concrete

Condition
Fair

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling:
Terrace
RECREATION AND
CULTURE/Museum: Museum

Current Use
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling:
Terrace

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage – Black, Social History

Period of Significance: 1966-1987
Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

This building is located at the northwest corner of West Grand Boulevard and West Warren Avenue, on a triangular lot with a narrow front yard and wedge-shaped rear yard. It is a two-story building with three flats, constructed of brown brick with a flat composition roof. It is generally

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

rectangular, with a three-sided tower on the southeast corner, and a one-story addition on the north end of the west elevation.

The primary (east) elevation has three entry doors, one at the south end and two side-by-side toward the north end. The south flat has its own porch, which the two north flats share a porch. Both are brick sided with brick piers supported asphalt-shingled shed roofs. The entry doors are single-leaf. At the north end of the elevation is a slightly projecting section with a single-pane picture window on the first floor and tripled double-hung one-over-one windows at the second floor. A tripled set of double-hung one-over-one windows are located on the first floor between the two porches. There are also single-pane square windows flanking the entry doors. At the second floor are alternating double-hung and single-pane windows. The corner tower has double-hung one-over-one windows at each level. At the south elevation is a three-sided wood bay window with a hipped roof on the first floor and above that a double-hung window flanked by two single-pane windows. The east and south elevations feature concrete window sills and trim, and decorative brickwork at the cornice and the top of the tower.

The west elevation is clad in painted common brick and has three door openings and irregularly spaced windows in a variety of types, including a tripled window. They are all double hung, one-over-one units. This elevation also has short brick wings with basement access. There are no openings on the north elevation.

History

Dr. Charles H. Wright, a native of Dothan, Alabama, was born in 1918. He attended Alabama State College and Meharry Medical School before moving to Detroit in 1946 to open his own practice. In addition to his medical career, Wright was also active in the civil rights movement, helping to fund medical education for Blacks, participating in civil rights marches, and joining the Detroit branch of the NAACP.

In January 1966, Dr. Wright opened a small museum devoted to Black history at 1549 West Grand Boulevard, the end flat of a three-unit apartment building on the city's west side which also contained his office. Wright and his collaborators on the establishment of the museum believed that a museum was needed to tell the story of Black Americans beyond slavery, and to celebrate their history and achievements. The museum also developed a mobile exhibit of African history and art that visited area schools and traveled around the state.

The new museum was immediately popular and just a few years after it opened, Wright and the other founders began making the case that it should have its own purpose-built building. After several years of lobbying, the City of Detroit leased land in the Cultural Center for a new building in 1978. This building, at 301 Frederick Street (no longer extant), opened in 1987. However, the museum soon outgrew this facility and a new building was planned at 315 East Warren Avenue, this time funded by a voter-approved bond issue. When the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History opened in 1997, it was the largest Black history museum in the world, a title not eclipsed until the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History opened in 2017 (the International Afro-American Museum is featured in the exhibits at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History).

Statement of Significance

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

The International Afro-American Museum is eligible under National Register Criterion A as the first museum in Detroit devoted to documenting and commemorate the people, events and activities associated with the history of Black Americans.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A	None

Sources

- "Wright, Charles H.," *Encyclopedia of Detroit*, Detroit Historical Society, <https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/wright-charles-h>
- "Detroit Group Pushes Negro History Museum," *Detroit Free Press*, January 6, 1966, 4-B.
- Judd Arnett, "Negro Museum Sought," *Detroit Free Press*, January 19, 1966, 8D.
- "Drive launched to Build Black Culture Museum," *Michigan Chronicle*, June 16, 1971.
- "Display Exhibit on Paul Robeson at Black Museum," *Jet*, June 17, 1971, 20.
- "Detroit Museum Pioneer Succumbs," *Jet*, March 25, 2002, 17.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name
Liuzza, Viola Gregg, House

Street Address
19375 Marlowe Street

Municipal Unit, County
Detroit, Wayne County

District Name
NA

Year Built
Ca. 1949

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement
Ranch



Plan
T

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick
Stone

Roof Form
Cross-gable

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Wood

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Current Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
Garage

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History

Period of Significance: 1963-1965
Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

The Viola Gregg Liuzza House is a one-and-one-half-story, rectangular building on the corner of Marlowe Street and Vassar Drive, just west of the John C. Lodge Freeway. It sits on a corner lot with the house facing Marlowe Street and the detached garage facing Vassar Drive. The house is faced with red brick with quoining on the corners and has a side-gabled roof covered with asphalt shingles. The main (east) elevation has a projecting centered entry bay under a front-gabled roof

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

with gable returns and faced with irregularly coursed stone. The front entry is offset in the bay and is reached from a brick-sided stoop. Its original single-leaf entry door has a surround with fluted pilasters. In the entry bay to the south of the door is a double-hung one-over-one vinyl window. To the south of the entry bay are two double-hung, one-over-one vinyl windows flanked by shutters, while to the north of the bay is a projecting wood bay with a vinyl picture window. The south elevation has one original multi-light casement window on the lower level and three double-hung, one-over-one vinyl windows, two on the lower level and one on the half story. A brick chimney rises from the east end of the north elevation. West of the chimney on the first floor is a multi-light casement window and a wood and glass panel secondary entry door. The door is sheltered under a hip roof that extends over a projecting brick section with a picture window at the west end of the elevation. The half story has a double-hung, one-over-one vinyl window. Visible on the west elevation is a picture window and a sliding vinyl window. A rectangular wing with a hipped roof projects from the west elevation. On its north elevation is a glass and aluminum enclosed porch.

The detached garage is rectangular and has an asphalt-shingled hipped roof. A privacy fence extends from the northwest corner of the house's west wing to the southeast corner of the garage. The lot consists of manicured lawn with deciduous trees, large bushes, and other domestic plantings. A low brick wall encloses the side yard between the house and garage.

History

Viola Fauver Gregg Liuzzo was born in 1925 in Pennsylvania but grew up in the segregated South. She moved to Detroit during World War II and married twice, the second time to Anthony Liuzzo, an official with the Teamsters Union. While in Detroit, Liuzzo, a White woman, joined the Detroit branch of the NAACP and became active in the civil rights movement. In 1963, she, her husband, and several of her five children (including two from a previous marriage), moved into this house at 19375 Marlowe Street, which had been built around 1949. Two years later, in the wake of the aborted first Selma to Montgomery march, Liuzzo joined the protests in Detroit at Detroit Federal Building. When a new march was planned for March 21, 1965, Liuzzo traveled to Selma with a number of fellow Wayne State University students, where she helped at a reception desk and volunteered to use her car to transport other marchers.

After the march was over, Liuzzo drove several demonstrators from Montgomery back to Selma, then picked up Leroy Moton, a Black marcher, for the trip back to Montgomery to pick up more marchers who needed transportation. Along the way, in rural Lowndes County, Liuzzo was shot and killed, and Moton injured, by three Ku Klux Klansmen. Vice President Hubert Humphrey visited the Liuzzo family after the murder, and her funeral was attended by Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, NAACP national director Roy Wilkins, Teamsters Union President James Hoffa, United Auto Workers President Walter Reuther, and Lieutenant Governor William G. Millikin. In the wake of the murder, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover attempted to discredit Liuzzo, but President Lyndon Johnson ordered an investigation into the Klan. Some historians argue that Liuzzo's death, the only documented killing of a White woman during the civil rights movement, helped spur the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. In July 2019 a statue of Liuzzo was erected in a park that was named for her not far from this house.

Statement of Significance

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

The Viola Gregg Liuzzo House is recommended eligible under Criterion B, for its association with Viola Gregg Liuzzo, a nationally significant figure in the civil rights movement, whose murder in the aftermath of the Selma to Montgomery march in 1965 shocked the nation (in a way that the murder of a Black person would not have) and in part led to the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	B	NA

Sources

“LBJ Declares War on Klan, 4 Accused of Killing Detroit Mother,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 27, 1965, 1.

“Courageous Mother Leaves a Legacy of Happy Years,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 27, 1965, 1.

“Humphrey Visits Liuzzos,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 29, 1965, 1.

Robbie McCoy and James Cleaver, “Nation Mourns Mrs. Viola Liuzzo,” *Michigan Chronicle*, April 3, 1965, 1.

Larry Still, “Gunmen After Youth’s Blonde,” *Jet*, April 8, 1965, 44.

“‘America Hurts,’ Says Priest at Liuzzo Funeral,” *Jet*, April 15, 1965, 28.

“Viola Fauver Gregg Liuzzo,” Law Library – American Law and Legal Information.

<https://law.jrank.org/pages/8327/Liuzzo-Viola-Fauver-Gregg.html>

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name McGhee, Orsel and Minnie, House	Street Address 4626 Seebaldt Street	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	---	--

District Names
NA

Year Built
Ca. 1912

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American Movements
Craftsman



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Asphalt shingle

Roof Form
Hipped

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Wood

Condition
Fair

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Current Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
Garage

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage - Black, Social History, Law

Period of Significance: 1944-1949
Level of Significance: National

Narrative Description

This house is located on the north side of Seebaldt Street between Firwood and Beechwood streets, just to the north of the historically Black neighborhood of the Old West Side. It sits on a rectangular residential lot with small front and back yards. The house is a two-story, rectangular building with a hipped, asphalt shingled-roof. The exterior is sheathed in asphalt shingle designed to mimic brick. The windows are all double-hung, one-over-one sash unless otherwise noted.

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

At the primary (south) elevation, a one-story hipped roof porch carried on asphalt-clad piers spans across the front façade. Within the porch is a centered, single-leaf entry door. To the east of it is a single window, while to the west is a three-sided bay window with one window on each side. The center window has a fixed pane lower unit and a leaded glass transom above. The second floor has two windows. At the attic level is a hipped dormer with three single-pane windows. The west elevation has a single window on the first floor and three windows, the center smaller than the others, on the second floor. The east elevation has two windows each on the first and second floor. Between them, in the center bay, is a secondary entry partially below grade, while above that is a projecting rectangular bay with paired windows. The north elevation was not visible.

A one-story gable roof garage is partially visible in the rear yard. There is a Michigan Historical Marker in front of the property.

History

In the early 1920s, middle-class Blacks began moving out of the segregated areas of Black Bottom and Paradise Valley. One of the earliest and largest of these was the West Side, also referred to as the Old West Side or the Black West Side. The area was far enough west of the city to still be very sparsely occupied by Whites in the early decades of the twentieth century. It is likely this lack of an established White residential population, as well as its relative distance from any such neighborhood, that facilitated a relatively peaceful settlement by Blacks, who built modest brick and frame houses and developed a commercial district along Milford Street.

Tireman Avenue, the north boundary of the West Side neighborhood, was the *de facto* color line between the Black neighborhood and White neighborhoods to the north. As the West Side became increasingly crowded in the 1940s, a few Blacks began trying to purchase homes in the city's all White neighborhoods. These pioneers were often met with violent protests. In 1944 a Black couple, Orsel and Minnie McGhee, purchased a house at 4626 Seebaldt Avenue just north of Tireman Avenue. A neighbor was convinced to sue to enforce a restrictive neighborhood covenant that was in place, and the Detroit branch of the NAACP saw the McGhee's case as a potential test of the constitutionality of restrictive covenants. The McGhee's case, *McGhee v Sipes*, was eventually grouped with three others protesting restrictive racial covenants and argued before the United States Supreme Court by NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall. In its landmark decision in *Shelley v. Kraemer*, the Supreme Court struck down the legality of restrictive racial housing covenants. Shortly thereafter, in 1949, the Michigan Committee on Civil Rights determined that segregated housing was an issue of state level importance.

Statement of Significance

The Orsel and Minnie McGhee House is eligible under Criteria A. The purchase of this house led directly to a landmark civil rights case in which the United States Supreme Court struck down racial covenants, which until the case was decided in 1948 had legally restricted Blacks (and some other groups like Jewish people) from purchasing land in neighborhoods covered by the covenants.

Eligibility Recommendation
Eligible

NR Criteria
A

NR Exceptions
None

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Sources

"Top Court Takes Covenant Case," *Detroit Tribune*, June 28, 1947, 1.

"The Great Decision," *Michigan Chronicle*, May 15, 1948.

Charles Wartman and Bill Matney, "High Court Curbs Restrictive Covenants," *Michigan Chronicle*, May 8, 1948, 1.

Michigan State Historical Marker

Sidney Fine, "Michigan and Housing Discrimination 1949-1968," *Michigan Historical Review*, Vol 23, No.2, Fall 1997, 81.

Surveyor

Sandra Little, Ruth Mills

Date Surveyed

July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name Nation of Islam Temple No. 1
Street Address 11529 Linwood Street
Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County

District Names
NA

Year Built
1940

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement
Moderne



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composite

Other Materials
Stone

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
J. Wexler

Historic Use
SOCIAL/Meeting Hall:
Community Center
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Temple

Current Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Temple

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History

Period of Significance: 1959-1975
Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

This building is located on the west side of Linwood Street between Burlingame and Lawrence Streets. It is the only building remaining on a commercial block oriented toward Linwood Street and divided by the residential block to the west by an alley. It is a two-story rectangular red brick building with a flat roof. The asymmetrical main (east) façade has a recessed entry bay with a curved corner, stone-clad first level and canopy carried on metal posts. Above the double entry

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

door are three horizontal window openings infilled with glass block. The main wall of this elevation has bands of five sliding windows on each floor set within a stone quoined surround. A painted stone sill course runs beneath the first floor window band, and a painted stone watertable is at the base of the wall. Between the two bands of windows in the center of the wall is a square block with a circular medallion that has the stylized letters "A R" within.

The north, south, and west walls have irregularly spaced rectangular window openings that have been infilled with glass block. Secondary entries with utilitarian doors are located at the east end of the north elevation, at the north end of the west elevation, and in the center of the south elevation. A brick chimney rises from the roof at the rear of the building. The northwest corner of the building is inset and has doors on the first and second floors with metal stairs leading from the upper door.

History

This building was constructed around 1940 to house a community center of the Workmen's Circle, a Jewish labor fraternity, when this area of the city was a majority Jewish neighborhood. The organization outgrew the space and the community center was adapted to fit the needs of the Nation of Islam which designated the building as Temple No. 1 in 1959. By this time, the Twelfth Street neighborhood of which this is a part was transitioning to a majority Black neighborhood. It became home to a number of intellectuals and political activists and eventually grew into a locus of the Black consciousness movement.

The Nation of Islam was founded in Black Bottom in Detroit in the 1930s. It was initially founded as a Muslim mission to Black Americans by Wallace D. Fard (Muhammad), a man whose origins and subsequent fate are the subject of debate. Fard recruited Elijah Poole, a Black man originally from Georgia who had moved to Detroit in the 1920s, during the Great Migration. Fard changed Poole's name to Elijah Muhammad and then disappeared in 1934, leaving the latter in control of the new Nation of Islam. In the 1930s, the organization established an independent school for Black children on Hastings Street. The organization gradually evolved into a political and religious movement advocating for the establishment of a separate nation for Black Americans, and by the late 1940s members were establishing a variety of businesses in the city.

In 1952 following his parole from prison Malcolm Little, who had converted to Islam and renamed himself "Malcolm X," was appointed as the minister of the Nation of Islam's Temple No. 1 in Detroit. During his time in Detroit Malcolm X met and married Betty Sanders (Shabazz), who grew up in Detroit's North End neighborhood. From the 1950s into the early 1960s, Malcolm X was one of the most influential leaders of the Nation of Islam, and became a nationally known leader of the civil rights movement, advocating Black self-determination and separatism. During this period, the Detroit Temple No. 1 moved to this building at 11529 Linwood. This was likely due in part to the growth of the organization in the late 1950s, and in part because much of Black Bottom/Paradise Valley was being destroyed through urban renewal.

Although Malcolm X left the Nation of Islam in 1963, the organization remained a significant supporter of Black nationalism and self-determination. Following the death of leader Elijah Muhammad in 1975, his successor changed the direction of this branch of the Nation of Islam to Orthodox Islam, while Minister Louis Farrakhan led another group more closely aligned to the original teachings of Wallace D. Fard and Elijah Muhammad. The Temple No. 1 building was then

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

rededicated as the Masjid Wali Muhammad mosque. (Additional history can be found in the Masjid Wali Muhammad/Temple No. 1 Historic District final study committee report on file with the City of Detroit and the State Historic Preservation Office.)

Statement of Significance

Nation of Islam Temple No. 1 is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A and B. Temple No. 1 was the headquarters of the Nation of Islam from 1959 to 1975, an organization that was significant for advocating for Black self-determination and Black nationalism while it was in this building. It is also significant for its association with Malcolm X, a national leader in the Black civil rights movement who was the minister of Temple No. 1 in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It also meets Criteria Consideration A, as a religious property, because its significant activities and people were related to the social and political aspects of civil rights.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, B	A

Sources

Masjid Wali Muhammad/Temple No. 1, City of Detroit Historic District Survey Report, 2013.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
New Bethel Baptist Church	8430 Linwood Street	Detroit, Wayne County

District Names
NA

Year Built
1927

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Modern Movement
Art Moderne



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick
Stucco

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composite

Other Materials
Stone

Condition
Good

Integrity
Altered

Architect
George D. Mason
Nathan Johnson

Historic Use
RECREATION AND
CULTURE/Theater: Cinema
RELIGION/Religious
Facility: Church

Current Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage, Politics/Government, Social History

Period of Significance: 1963-1969
Level of Significance: National

Narrative Description

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

New Bethel Baptist Church was built in 1927 as the Orient Theater (renamed the Oriole Theater). It is located at the southeast corner of Linwood and Philadelphia Streets in the city of Detroit, Michigan. Spatially, the building consists of two volumes that speak to its history as a theater and evolution as a church. On the west side, next to Linwood Street, is a two-story former commercial block with a taller section on the north side adjacent to Philadelphia Street surmounted by a bell tower/spire. East of that is a four-story volume that contains the theater/sanctuary with the taller fly loft at the south elevation. It has a flat roof. The north and west elevations are painted brick on the first floor and stucco painted tan and brown with stucco applied trim on the upper levels. The main entry is on the north elevation (Philadelphia Street) and consists of four sets of double stained wood-paneled doors with leaded glass inset panels and flat transom panels above. A shallow-arched canopy extends over the entrance and above the canopy are three rectangular stained-glass windows. The west elevation has three glass and aluminum single-leaf entry doors, one on the north end and two on the south end surrounded by stucco panels. Along the transition between the first and second floors are five sets of four-light horizontal window bands. The south and east elevations are faced with painted common brick. There are no openings on the south elevation. The east elevation has several openings on the upper levels, including a six-light-window, a single-leaf steel entry door, and a four-paneled utility door. These are accessed by a metal fire escape. A painted brick chimney is located on the northwest corner of the fly loft. Rising from the roof above the northwest corner of the two-story section is the bell tower. It consists of two graduated rectangular metal boxes with corner finials, surmounted by a narrow metal spire with an attached cross.

The building interior is dominated by the two-story high sanctuary with balcony. It has carpeted floors and flat plaster walls and ceilings with shallow plain pilasters spaced equidistant along the east and west walls. The tiered balcony is at the north end of the sanctuary, while at the south end is the raised alter set within a large square niche with partially wood paneled walls. To the north of the sanctuary is a rectangular lobby with a curved rear wall, ceramic tile floors, plaster walls with wood panel wainscot, and a textures plaster ceiling. To the west of the lobby and sanctuary, in the former commercial spaces, are a series of rooms include the church's history room, offices, and a multi-purpose/dining room. They have linoleum tile or carpeted floors and flat plaster walls and ceilings. The building's design integrity has been diminished by the installation of a non-compatible exterior covering, but retains sufficient integrity to qualify under Criterion A.

History

This building was constructed in 1927 as the Orient Theater, shortly after renamed the Oriole Theater due to a copyright dispute with another local theater by that name. The theater closed in 1951, and the building was purchased by a colorful and well-known preacher, Prophet James Jones, and his Church of the Universal Triumph, Dominion of God. After Jones became embroiled in legal and financial troubles, he sold the building to New Bethel Baptist Church in 1961. New Bethel had been founded in 1932 in the segregated Paradise Valley/Black Bottom neighborhood. In 1946 the Reverend Clarence LaVaughn (C. L.) Franklin became the pastor. Franklin, a native of the Mississippi Delta, was born in 1915 and had been the pastor of churches in Mississippi, Memphis, Tennessee, and Buffalo New York before coming to Detroit. Franklin quickly became famous for his powerful sermons and charismatic voice, preaching to a national audience through widely broadcast radio programs, the over seventy-six live albums that were recorded by Detroit Joe Von Battle, and national gospel tours, accompanied by his young daughter, Aretha.

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

Franklin used the opportunity of the dedication of the newly built New Bethel Baptist Church building on Hastings and Willis Streets in 1951 to challenge his congregation to “free themselves,” the first significant instance of his growing political activism. Over the next ten years he became an active civil rights campaigner, often challenging the established civil rights organizations in Detroit such as the NAACP for not working aggressively enough to achieve racial justice.

When the ten-year-old New Bethel Baptist church in Paradise Valley fell victim to urban renewal, Franklin and the congregation engaged Black architect Nathan Johnson to remodel the building. Johnson transformed the theater into a Modern masterpiece through the use of large expanses of glass curtain wall and geometric metal panels, and created a “vast expanse of whiteness” in the interior. A few months after the new church opened in March 1963, Reverend Franklin became a national leader in the civil rights movement through his organization of the June 1963 Detroit Walk to Freedom, featuring his friend, Martin Luther King Jr. The march drew nearly 200,000 participants and was the largest civil rights gathering in United States history until the March on Washington a few months later, of which the Detroit march was a precursor.

The Walk to Freedom brought Franklin to national prominence. He was a leader of the National Baptist Convention, where he aligned himself with the progressive wing that supported civil disobedience as a means to achieve civil rights for Black Americans. Franklin continued to collaborate with and support Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in the national civil rights struggle, holding fundraisers for the SCLC and the national voting rights campaign in Alabama in 1965, and speaking at the SCLC’s Solidarity Day in Washington, DC in 1968. In Detroit, Franklin hosted civil rights events and speakers at New Bethel Baptist Church, including Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King, as well as politicians such as John Conyers, Jr. At the same time, Aretha Franklin, who, while she no longer lived in Detroit, still considered New Bethel as her home church, also actively participated in the national civil rights struggle, headlining political rallies and benefits and providing economic support to civil rights activists and organizations.

After an infamous incident in 1969 in which police shot into the church during a meeting by the radical Republic of New Afrika organization, which resulted in the death of a police officer, Reverend Franklin gradually reduced his activity, further affected by legal and health troubles. Franklin was shot in his home by robbers in 1979 and died five years later in 1984. New Bethel Baptist Church remains in the building, which was remodeled on the exterior in 2007.

Statement of Significance

New Bethel Baptist Church at 8430 Linwood Street is significant under National Register Criteria A, at the national level, as the location where significant 20th century Black civil rights activities took place in the 1960s. It is also significant under National Register Criteria B, at the national level, for its association with the Reverend Clarence LaVaughn (CL) Franklin, a nationally significant Black civil rights leader who was a national leader in the civil rights movement during the 1960s. Detroit’s Black church leaders were at the forefront of the civil rights movement in the city, and a number of them became well known on a national level. Reverend Franklin leveraged his national fame as a preacher and his friendship with Martin Luther King, Jr. to bring attention to the cause of civil rights in Detroit and across the nation, supported by his daughter, Aretha, who used her voice and her stature as an internationally famous recording star to further the cause of civil rights. The period of significance for these two criteria is from 1963, when the building was remodeled and occupied by New Bethel Baptist Church, to 1969. The building meets Criteria Consideration A, as a building owned by a

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

religious institution and used for religious purposes, because its significance is directly connected to the history of political, social, and cultural activities of the civil rights movement.

Eligibility	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Recommendation	A, B	A
Eligible		

Sources

Angela Dillard, *Faith in the City: Preaching Radical Social Change in Detroit* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2017).

C. L. Franklin Papers, 1957-1991, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Detroit Commission on Community Relations/Human Rights Department Collection. Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

"Informants May Have Seen All." *Michigan Chronicle*. April 19, 1969.

"New Northwest Theater to be Ready Next Week," *Detroit Free Press*, March 6, 1927, 43.

"New Theater Opens Doors," *Detroit Free Press*, March 22, 1927, 7.

"The Preacher with the Golden Voice." *Color*, 11:14 (January 1957).

"Prophet Jones Buys Theater," *Detroit Free Press*, November 11, 1952, 10.

Ritz, David. *Respect: The Life of Aretha Franklin*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2014.

Nicholas Salvatore, *Singing in a Strange Land: C. L. Franklin, the Black Church, and the Transformation of America* (New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company, 2005).

Titon, Jeff Todd. "Reverend C. L. Franklin: Black American Preacher-Poet." *Folklife Annual 1987*, American Folklife Center, 1988.

"The Troubles Down the Rev. Franklin's Road." *Detroit Free Press*. June 15, 1969, 1A, 4A.

Hiley Ward, "His Ideas Add Sparkle to 'Sidewalk' Churches," *Detroit Free Press*, March 16, 1963, 4.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name
Northern High School

Street Address
9026 Woodward Avenue

Municipal Unit, County
Detroit, Wayne County

District Name
NA

Year Built
1916

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century
Revivals
Neoclassical



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Hipped

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Stone
Terra cotta

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Malcolmson and
Higginbotham

Historic Use
EDUCATION/School:
Secondary School

Current Use
EDUCATION/School:
Secondary School

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage – Black
Social History

Period of Significance: 1916-1966

Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

Northern High School, now the Detroit International Academy, is located on the southeast corner of Woodward Avenue and Owen Street in Detroit’s North End neighborhood. It has a wide concrete terrace facing Woodward Avenue. The building is three stories high with a hipped, asphalt-shingled roof. It is constructed of brick with stone and terracotta accents. The building has

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

a stone water table, a stone stringcourse between the first and second floors, and a decorative band of terracotta under the cornice. A brick chimney rises from the southeast corner.

The primary (west) elevation is in three section, a projecting central section with seven bays, flanked by two three-bay recessed sections. The center section has three centered entries consisting of paired replacement doors with diamond pattern transoms above, outlined in terracotta surrounds. To either side are double-hung, six-over-six windows. The second and third floors have two-story window bays separated by stone columns. Each bay is filled with multi-light double-hung windows separated by decorative metal spandrel panels. The seven window bays are outlined with a highly carved band of terra cotta. The flanking three-bay sections have three sets of multi-light windows on each floor, separated by brick spandrels.

The north and south elevations elevation each have two projecting sections with three two-story multi-light window bays on the second and third floors separated by metal spandrel panels. The remainder of the windows on the first, second, and third floors are sets of single, paired, and tripled windows in a six-over-four pattern. A secondary entry is centered on each elevation. The east elevation is covered with a later brick addition with no openings aside from a door at the first floor.

History

Detroit's Northern High School, designed by Detroit architects Malcolmson and Higginbotham, opened in late 1916. It was at the time the city's second largest high school, and was designed to relieve crowding in other schools, particularly the Central High School in Midtown. While the school originally served a White student population, during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, the school transitioned to majority Black as middle-class Blacks migrated into the North End neighborhood. Among the alumni of Northern High School were the musicians Aretha Franklin and Smokey Robinson and civil rights activist Betty Shabazz. However, as the school transitioned to majority Black, it was also increasingly neglected by the school system. The mostly White faculty taught very little Black history and both faculty and staff steered students toward service or industrial work rather than encouraging or supporting their college and career goals.

In April 1966 the increasingly frustrated students at Northern High School decided to stage a walkout protest. The immediate cause was the censoring by principal Arthur Carty of an editorial criticizing the poor curriculum and conditions in the school by honor student Chuck Colding. The students drew up a list of demands, including the removal of Carty and the school's White on-campus police officer, hiring of qualified teachers, and higher curriculum standards. When the school temporarily reassigned Carty to the central office, students returned after the Easter recess. However, when the school board refused to permanently remove Carty, all but one hundred eighty of the school's two thousand, three hundred students walked out. The day after the walkout, students met at St. Joseph's Episcopal Church a few doors down on Woodward Avenue to attend a "Freedom School" under the direction of economist Karl Gregory. Students from Eastern High School joined the boycott, which drew daily media coverage, and a citywide boycott was being planned when the school board met and agreed to meet all the demands of the Northern students, including the removal of Carty. Students returned to Northern High School at the end of the month.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Statement of Significance

Northern High School is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A. The school was the site of a significant civil rights protest in April 1966, when students staged a boycott to protest poor standards, a lack of educational opportunities, and the racist behavior of school officials. The boycott resulted in the Detroit School board meeting all of the students' demands.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A	None

Sources

- "Cornerstone Laid for Northern High School," *Detroit Free Press*, July 1, 1915, 7.
- "Board Considers Ouster Demands 'Unrealistic'," *Michigan Chronicle*, April 16, 1966, 1.
- Betty De Ramus, "Discontent Goes Deep at Northern," *Michigan Chronicle*, April 23, 1966, 1.
- "1,000 Join Return to Northern," *Michigan Chronicle*, April 30, 1966, 1.
- "Chicago, Detroit Pupils Boycott," *Jet*, May 5, 1966, 44.
- "Detroit Principal Ousted After Students' Boycott," *Jet*, May 19, 1966, 51.
- Herb Boyd, *Black Detroit* (New York: Harper Collins Press, 2017), 199-200.
- Allie Gross, "Detroit '67: 1966 Student Walkout at Northern a Sign of Things to Come," *Detroit Free Press*, July 16, 2017.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name Our Lady of Victory Church	Street Address 10113 West Eight Mile Road	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	---	--

District Name
NA

Year Built
1932

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century
Revivals
Neoclassical



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Front gabled

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Stone

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Current Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage, Social History, Religion

Period of Significance: 1946-1982
Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

This building is located on the south side of Eight Mile Road just west of Washburn Street, in the historically Black neighborhood of Eight Mile-Wyoming. A parking lot is located on the vacant lot between the building and Washburn Street.

The church is a rectangular, one-story building constructed of brick with a front-gabled, asphalt-shingled roof. An octagonal wood and copper belfry rises from the center front of the roof. The building's primary (north) elevation has a centered front entry accessed from a concrete porch

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

with steps an accessible ramp. The entry is recessed and has paired wood and glass entry doors with a transom above. The entry portal has simple stone surround with a plain frieze and entablature with a small cross medallion in the center. To either side of the door are multi-colored rectangular windows with operable lower sash. In the gable is a round window. A metal cross is affixed to the front elevation.

Along the west elevation are nine multi-colored rectangular windows with operable lower sash. At the southwest corner of the building is a small shed-roofed brick addition with a secondary entry door on the north side. The east elevation has eight multi-colored rectangular windows with operable lower sash. At the north end of the elevation is a similar window but it is between the basement and first floor, suggesting an internal stair to the basement. At the south end of the elevation is a utilitarian metal door. On the south elevation is a brick chimney with two double-hung one-over-one windows to either side, and a utilitarian metal door the west corner.

History

Our Lady of Victory was founded in a storefront on Eight Mile Road at Cherrylawn Street in 1943. It served Black Catholics in Royal Oak Township, across the northern border of Detroit, as well as those in the Eight Mile-Wyoming neighborhood to the south. That neighborhood had been established as a working-class Black neighborhood in the 1920s. There were no restrictive covenants in this area due to its remoteness from the more settled parts of the city. The prospective residents, unlike their wealthier counterparts in Conant Gardens and the West Side, did not have the means to purchase their land or to build houses. Instead, they bought land on contract from a friendly land speculator and scraped together the resources to slowly build very modest houses, sometimes in stages. The earliest houses were simple one or one-and-one-half story frame structures. While the lot sizes were not large, the amount of unused space in the area meant that residents could use the adjoining empty lots to raise food. Although a 1938 real property survey showed this was one of the poorest areas in the city, over 90% of the residents were living in single-family detached homes, with two-thirds of them owner-occupied—higher than the city average. In the 1940s and 1950s, the neighborhood filled in with modest one-story frame and brick ranch homes in vernacular Mid-century styles.

The storefront quickly became overcrowded and the church leadership began looking for land on which to build a church. The parish originally intended to build a new church in Royal Oak Township, on the north side of Eight Mile Road. However, rising land prices forced the archdiocese to instead acquire a site in Detroit, on the southwest corner of Eight Mile Road and Washburn Street. Rather than build new, the church was able to acquire a frame church building that had originally served the parish of St. Juliana on the corner of Chalmers and Longview on the city's east side. That parish, established in 1932, had built the frame building not long after its founding. The St. Juliana congregation was planning to build a new sanctuary, and turned the old frame building over to Our Lady of Victory in 1946, moving temporarily into their school building across the street. The frame building was moved in pieces to the new site at Eight Mile and Washburn in April 1946. At some point after it was moved, the building was refaced with brick.

Over the next several years, the parish acquired adjacent land south of the church in order to build a school, which opened in 1954. An addition to the school was built in 1959 (the school closed in 1970 and was demolished sometime in the late 2000s). In September 1948, four Oblate

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Sisters of Providence arrived in the parish; they were the first Black nuns to work in the Archdiocese of Detroit. The church opened a credit union in the basement of the church in 1951 to provide financial services that the Black community could not obtain from white-owned and run financial institutions. The Our Lady of Victory parish merged with Presentation parish in 1975. For a time, services were held at both churches, but in 1982 the church on Eight Mile Road closed and the parishioners moved to Presentation's campus at Meyers and Pembroke Avenue.

Statement of Significance

A

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Recommended Eligible	A	A, B

Sources

Shirley Harris-Slaughter, *Our Lady of Victory: The Saga of an African American Catholic Community* (Lincoln, NE: iUniversity, 2004).

St. Juliana Church, *Silver Anniversary, 1932-1957, 1957*, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

"Founders Society Settles New Room at Detroit Art Institute, *Detroit Free Press*, November 3, 1948, 16.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name Paradise Theater (Orchestra Hall)	Street Address 3711 Woodward Avenue	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	---	--

District Name
Orchestra Hall (Individually Listed)

Year Built
1919

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals
Italian Renaissance



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick
Stone

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composition

Other Materials
Terra cotta

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
C. Howard Crane

Historic Use
RECREATION AND CULTURE/Music Facility:
Concert Hall

Current Use
RECREATION AND CULTURE/Music Facility:
Concert Hall

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage – Black , Social History, Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance: 1919-1951

Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

This building is located at the northwest corner of Woodward Avenue and Parsons Street in Detroit’s Midtown neighborhood. It is built out to the lot lines on the east, west, and south and is

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

attached to an adjoining building on the north. It is a rectangular, three-story structure with a taller fly loft on the west elevation and flat composition roof.

The primary (east) elevation is ashlar stone on the first floor and brick up the upper floors. At the first floor, the primary entry is through five sets of double doors separated by Doric pilasters and surmounted by a flat metal marquee. To either side are two storefronts each, consisting of single-leaf doors recessed between glass display windows and topped with multi-light glass transoms. A Greek key and starburst band runs across the top of the first floor wall. The upper wall is faced with pale beige brick. On the second and third floors are five bays of tripartite windows separated by terra cotta carved spandrel panels. Above each window bay is a carved stone panel. The bays are separated by Corinthian pilasters and surmounted with a dentilled entablature with wreath motifs. To either side of the main windows are paired windows with stone surrounds. The entire elevation is topped by a carved frieze with swags and Greek key banding, with a cartouche in the center.

The ashlar stone, glass storefront and transom, Greek key banding, and cornice of the east elevation wrap around to the first bay of the south elevation. Above that are two sets of paired windows in stone surrounds. The remainder of the elevation is brick. At the first floor it has recessed courses to create a banding effect. At either end are four (east) and three (west) door openings set within stone surrounds. The upper floors have blank panels outlined in brick. A metal fire escape is attached to the elevation. The brick of the south elevation wraps around to the first bay of the west elevation. It is otherwise covered in stucco panels. Several utilitarian doors are located on the first floor.

History

The Paradise Theater (Orchestra Hall) was built in 1919 as the home of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. During its twenty years as Orchestra Hall, the auditorium hosted many concerts during the golden age of symphonic music in Detroit. In 1939, due to increasing attendance at concerts and the perceived poor location of the venue (neither downtown nor in the cultural center), the Detroit Symphony Orchestra moved to the Masonic Temple.

In late 1940, Orchestra Hall was renovated, including the remodeling of the front and installation of a new sign and canopy, and reopened as the Town Theater, a movie and vaudeville venue. Among the acts playing the Town Theater during early 1941 was "Buck and Bubbles," a Black vaudeville partnership of John William "Bubbles" Sublett and Ford L. "Buck" Washington, who had been the first Black artists to perform at Radio City Music Hall in New York City.

The Town Theater was short-lived, closing in spring 1941 when the city foreclosed on the building due to unpaid taxes and threatened to demolish the building. A group of Black businessmen, including Andrew Sneed, Everett Watson, John Roxborough, Irving Roane, and John White, sought to reopen the building as a venue for Black performers and audiences, but were unsuccessful due to *de facto* segregation practices that prevented Blacks from owning property on Woodward Avenue. However, they were able to arrange with Jewish brothers Ben and Lou Cohen, who owned and operated several theaters in the city, to purchase the building and lease it to them. The new theater was christened the Paradise Theater, after Paradise Valley, the Black business and entertainment district to the east of Woodward Avenue. In the 1920s, Black Detroiters had begun moving north of Gratiot, and by 1930 there were 350 Black-owned businesses in Paradise

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Valley, ranging from barbershops and drugstores to restaurants and real estate agents. Paradise Valley also became a Black entertainment and hospitality district. Among the establishments near Orchestra Hall was the Gotham Hotel, built in 1925 (demolished). An upscale hotel for Black travelers, it served politicians, entertainers, sports stars and more until its closure in 1962. The Flame Show Bar, the Bird Cage, and Club Zombie (all demolished) were just a few of the venues that showcased Jazz musicians from Billie Holliday to Dizzy Gillespie. By this period, Paradise Valley was pushing farther north into what is known as Sugar Hill, where John R Street was called the "Street of Music." Paradise Valley and Sugar Hill were also one of the few socially integrated areas of Detroit, where black and white patrons could enjoy music and entertainment together before returning to their segregated residential districts. The opening of the Paradise Theater on Woodward Avenue itself was a major achievement in an era when music and dance venues were still segregated (the nearby Graystone Ballroom, a few blocks up Woodward Avenue, was open to Black patrons on Monday nights only).

The Paradise Theater opened in late 1941 with a performance by Louis Armstrong; the *Michigan Chronicle* wrote a few months later that the "ambitious enterprise gave the race one of the finest theaters in the country not excepting the Apollo in New York City and the Regal in Chicago..." In early 1942, performers such as Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, and Jimmy Lunceford drew audiences of up to 40,000 people, and the *Detroit Tribune* reported people waiting in long lines to get into the theater. Over the ten years it was open, the Paradise Theater hosted many of the greatest Black jazz performers of the twentieth century, including Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, Lena Horne, and Billie Holiday. However, by the early 1950s the jazz and big band eras had begun to wane, and Paradise Valley was beginning to fall victim to urban renewal. The Paradise Theater closed in 1951. After serving a church for a short time, the Paradise was eventually slated for demolition. However, it was saved and restored, with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra moving back to the venue in 1989.

Statement of Significance

The Paradise Theater was listed (as Orchestra Hall) in the National Register of Historic Places in 1971. While nominations of this era do not cite criteria, it was noted as significant in the area of music (although, curiously, not architecture). The nomination only briefly mentions its history as the Paradise Theater and provides little context for its significance as an important Black jazz venue during the 1940s along the previously segregated Woodward Avenue. Its importance is all the greater because most of the music venues of Paradise Valley are long gone due to urban renewal.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Listed	A	None

Sources

- Constance Henslee, "Orchestra Hall," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1971.
- "Orchestra Hall Will Reopen November 8," *Detroit Free Press*, November 3, 1940, 3-20.
- "Remodeling Begun by Town Theater," *Detroit Free Press*, November 28, 1940, 21.
- "City is Asked to Help Save Orchestra Hall," *Detroit Free Press*, May 1, 1941, 13.
- "Book Name Bands for New Theatre," *Detroit Tribune*, December 20, 1941, 6.
- "Paradise Opens Next Friday," *Detroit Free Press*, December 22, 1941, 21.
- Ulysses Boykin, "Jumping Jive," *Detroit Tribune*, January 17, 1942, 9.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Michigan Chronicle, April 25, 1942.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name Parks, Rosa (McCauley) and Raymond, Flat	Street Address 3201-03 Virginia Park Street	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
--	---	--

District Name
NA

Year Built
Ca. 1917

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century
American Movements
Bungalow/Craftsman



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Hip

Roof
Asphalt shingles

Other Materials
Wood, concrete

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling:
Duplex

Current Use
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling:
Duplex

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
Garage

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage – Black, Politics/Government, Social History

Period of Significance: 1961-1988
Level of Significance: National

Narrative Description

The house is a two-and-one-half story Craftsman style building with a partially raised basement. It is of brick masonry construction with the north (front) and east elevations of dark red brick, while the south and west faces are common orange brick. The roof is of wood-framed construction and covered with asphalt shingles. The roof is hipped at the front and front-gabled at the back. A hipped dormer with fishscale shingles projects from the roof on the north side. A square brick chimney rises from the middle of the roof on the east side. At the front façade, concrete steps

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

with decorative iron railings and flanked by stepped brick cheek walls topped with stone coping lead up on either side to the full length front porch. The porch has a concrete slab floor and a flat roof carried on four brick piers which extend through the roof of the porch to form a second story open porch with decorative iron. The first floor has single-leaf flat panel wood entry doors at either side. Between the doors is a three-sided bay window. The second floor has a similar arrangement with only one wood door and a window in place of a door on the west end. All of the windows on the front façade are wood framed with double-hung, one-over-one wood sash covered by aluminum single-pane storm windows.

The east and west elevations have spaced square basement windows with nine-light panes. The east elevation has identical fenestration patterns at the first and second floors, including, from north to south, small horizontal two-light windows at the north end, tripled windows with the center units slightly larger than the flanking sash, single rectangular windows, and paired windows of equal size. At the west elevation, the first and second floors each have three symmetrically spaced single rectangular windows. At the north end of the second floor is a slightly offset window denoting an interior stair. With the exception of the basement and the horizontal windows, all are double-hung, one-over-one wood sash with stone sills and lintels except for second floor windows whose heads touch the narrow wood fascia that runs under the eaves.

The south elevation has a full-length two-story porch with a concrete top carried on brick piers and enclosed by concrete block on the east side and wood lattice on the other sides. Concrete steps are set on the south side and flanked by a metal railing. A metal railing encloses the porch on both levels, and the upper porch is supported by three decorative metal railings. At the first floor of the house there are two single-leaf wood flat panel and glass pane entry doors. At the second floor is another single-leaf door, this time an original four-paneled wood door with an upper glass panel, and a rectangular window opening with double-hung, one-over-one sash. The gable end on the half story is sided with asphalt fishscale shingles. It has paired rectangular windows with double-hung, one-over-one sash.

The interior is divided into two self-contained flats, one on each floor. Rosa and Raymond Parks occupied the first floor flat. The east door on the north elevation enters into a foyer, with a living room to the west and the dining room to the south. A hallway connects the dining room to the kitchen at the back (south) end of the house. Two bedrooms are located on the west side of the house while the bathroom is between the dining room and kitchen on the east side. The foyer, dining room, and two bedrooms all have original hardwood floors, plaster walls and ceilings, and wood base and window trim. Many of the original five-panel wood doors also remain. The bathroom has white porcelain mosaic floor tile and white subway tile halfway up the wall with plaster above. The kitchen has linoleum flooring, and plaster walls with a wood chair rail.

The detached garage at the rear (south) end of the property is a one-story, rectangular building. It has a hipped roof covered with asphalt shingles. All elevations are sided in wood clapboard painted yellow with flat trim boards on the corners and around the openings. The aluminum garage door is located on the east elevation facing Wildemere Avenue. Two window openings on the north elevation have been boarded up, while a single-leaf entry door is located on the west elevation.

History

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

Often called the “mother of the civil rights movement,” Rosa Louise McCauley was born in Tuskegee, Alabama, on February 4, 1913. After meeting Raymond Parks, who was already a civil rights activist, Rosa married him in 1932, and over the next two decades the couple worked for the NAACP in Alabama. On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to white passenger, sparking the Montgomery bus boycott and propelling the civil rights movement to national attention. Following the boycott, Parks and her husband moved to Detroit due to harassment. They lived in several different locations before moving in 1961 to the ground floor flat at 3201 Virginia Park Street, which had been built around 1917 in the Wildemere Park subdivision. Initially a White neighborhood, by the 1960s it was a majority Black area.

During her years in the Virginia Park flat, Rosa Parks was a leading figure in the civil rights movement in Detroit and nationwide. On a national level, she was one of six women honored for her civil rights work during the 1963 March on Washington, spoke out for voting rights during the Selma to Montgomery march in 1965, and traveled around the country to advocate for civil rights, particularly voting rights, equal employment, and fair housing. In Detroit, the Parks Flat in Virginia Park became a “bit of a salon” for civil rights activists, who gathered there to discuss civil rights issues and strategies. Parks participated in the 1963 Walk to Freedom in Detroit, an important precursor to the Washington march a few months later, and she spoke to local audiences on the theme of racial justice. From 1965 to 1988 she worked for Congressman John Conyers, serving as an informal legislative aide and talking to constituents and community members about civil rights topics. Through this position, Parks was able to secure more humane treatment for several Republic of New Afrika members who had been arrested in Mississippi in 1971. In the later 1960s and 1970s, Parks expressed sympathy and support for the Black nationalist movement, calling Malcolm X a hero and attending events at Reverend Albert Cleage Jr.’s Central Congregational Church (Shrine of the Black Madonna). Following the 1967 uprising, Parks was a juror on the “People’s Tribunal” that convicted police officers who had killed three young Black men at the Algiers Motel.

The intersection of racism and sexism remained a focus of interest for Parks into the late 1960s and 1970s. She was active in the Women’s Public Affairs Committee of 1000 (WPAC), an integrated women’s community and political action group, in the early 1960s, and in 1969 Parks introduced Shirley Chisholm, the first Black Congresswoman, at a WPAC event in Detroit. Parks worked on the legal defense for both Angela Davis, a militant civil rights activist, and Joan Little, a Black woman who had been arrested for murder after killing a white prison guard who attempted to rape her, in 1975.

Parks retired from Congressman Conyers’ office in 1988 and moved to another flat at 9336 Wildemere Avenue. She remained active in the civil rights movement throughout the remainder of her life. In 1994, following a robbery and assault at the Wildemere Avenue flat, she moved into the Riverfront Towers in downtown Detroit, where she remained until she passed away in 2005 at age 92. She was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1996.

Statement of Significance

The Rosa (McCauley) and Raymond Parks Flat is significant under National Register Criterion B, at the national level, for its association with Rosa McCauley Parks, a nationally significant Black civil rights leader from the 1950s until her death in 2005. While she lived in this flat, she used her reputation and presence to support nationally significant civil rights efforts both north

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

and south, and worked both visibly and behind the scenes to combat inequality in employment, housing, and public accommodations both in Detroit and across the nation. The period of significance for the property is 1961 to 1988, the years during which Parks occupied the flat. Because its period of significance extends to less than fifty years ago, it must meet National Register Criteria Consideration G. It meets the requirements because Rosa McCauley Parks was an exceptionally significant individual, and because her civil rights activities at both the national and the local level continued throughout her occupation of the property.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	B	G

Sources

"Alabama Boycott Heroine Can't Find a Job!" *Michigan Chronicle*. May 23, 1959.
Douglas Brinkley, *Rosa Parks: A Life* (New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2000).
Parks Rosa L. Papers, 1955-1976. Accession Number 775, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University.
Parks, Rosa L. Papers, Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/collections/rosa-parks-papers/>
"Parks, Rosa," *Encyclopedia of Detroit*, Detroit Historical Society.
<https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/parks-rosa>.
"She Started the Revolt." *Michigan Chronicle*. June 29, 1963.
Jeanne Theoharis, *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013).

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name Black Jesus Grotto at Sacred Heart Major Seminary	Street Address 2701 Chicago Boulevard	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	---	--

District Name
Sacred Heart Seminary
(Individual Listing)

Year Built
1957

Resource Type
Object

Architectural Classification
NA



Plan NA	Foundation NA	Walls NA
-------------------	-------------------------	--------------------

Roof Form NA	Roof NA	Other Materials Stone
------------------------	-------------------	---------------------------------

Condition Good	Integrity Unaltered	Architect NA
--------------------------	-------------------------------	------------------------

Historic Use RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Current Use RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Builder NA
---	--	----------------------

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage – Black
Social History

Period of Significance: 1923-1969
Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

The Black Jesus Grotto is located on the grounds of the Sacred Heart Seminary. Sacred Heart Major Seminary occupies several blocks bounded by Chicago Boulevard, Linwood Street, Joy Road, and Lawton Street. The complex includes the seminary building, constructed 1923-25 and the former Cardinal Mooney Latin High School, built in 1960. The Jesus Grotto is located on the extreme northwest corner of the site, where Linwood Street intersects with Chicago Boulevard. It faces the

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

intersection diagonally so it is visible from both streets. The grotto is surrounded by maintained lawn with several trees behind it. A curved slate paver walk runs in front of the statue from the public sidewalks on each street, but because of the iron fence surrounding the property, it is not currently accessible from the public sidewalks.

The piece consists of a Jesus figure on a pedestal, with a grotto behind. The grotto is constructed of irregularly coursed stone blocks that form an arched niche with a projecting keystone at the peak. At the base is a low stone plinth. The Jesus statue stands atop a square stone pedestal placed on the plinth. The statue itself is made from cast stone. It depicts Jesus clad in flowing white robes with his arms outstretched. At his feet are a crown of thorns, nails, a whipping cord, and a tilted chalice. The figure's heart is exposed and painted red with gold rays radiating from it. The figure's hands, feet, and face are painted black.

History

Sacred Heart Major Seminary was established in 1919. The seminary complex, designed by Detroit architects Donaldson and Meier, was built from 1923 to 1925. In 1960 Cardinal Mooney Latin High School was added to the complex. The Jesus statue and grotto at Sacred Heart was erected in 1957 and dedicated in June of that year. Constructed of cast stone, the statue was the idea of Monsignor Francis X. Canfield.

Sacred Heart Major Seminary was just blocks away from the corner of Twelfth and Clairmount, where the uprising of July 1967 broke out, and remained at the heart of the chaos that continued for several days afterward. On July 23, Msgr. Canfield recorded in his notes "Negro men paint statue brown. Observed by seminary faculty and a lady living nearby." Although several people later claimed credit for painting the Jesus statue black, the identity of the painter was never confirmed. Opinions also differed as to why the statue was painted; most interpreted it as a symbol of racial pride and a form of protest against a White-dominated Catholic Church, while at least one priest felt it was a signal to protestors to leave the seminary alone (and indeed, the seminary did remain untouched throughout the uprising). Opinion was also divided among the community and the parishioners, some who supported the painting and others who saw it as vandalism, with Blacks and Whites on both sides of the issue.

On September 14 the statue was repainted white. Again it was never determined who did it, although the *Michigan Chronicle* speculated that it was members of Breakthrough, a militant white organization who had held a rally that night. Canfield reported that after the statue was painted white, a truck with a loudspeaker drove through the area blaming it on the seminarians, who had returned after the summer break. After consultation within the community, Msgr. Canfield and his fellow priests repainted the statue black, with Canfield stating that "(i)f our Negro brothers in the Seminary area want Him represented in a way that makes His message of universal brotherhood more meaningful to them, it would be unChristian to deny them their desire."

The painting of the Sacred Heart Jesus statue black was not the only instance of the re-conception of religious iconography at the time. Just a few months before, Reverend Albert Cleage of Central Congregational Church has unveiled a mural of the Black Madonna at his church several blocks south on Linwood Street; it was followed in 1969 by a painting of the Black Christ on the dome of

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

St. Cecilia’s Roman Catholic Church. Today, the Black Jesus at Sacred Heart Seminary is seen as one of the few positive symbols of the 1967 uprising.

The statue was restored in 2006 by sculptor Frank Varga, and the grotto repaired in 2012 by a group of seminarians.

Statement of Significance

The Sacred Heart Major Seminary was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. Although nominations of this era do not cite criteria, the areas of significance of architecture, art, and religion are listed, suggesting that the applicable criteria are A and C. The Black Jesus statue is mentioned briefly in the nomination but not included within the areas of significance.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Listed	A, C	A

Sources

- Gary Blonston, “Blackened Christ Causes a Dispute,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 24, 1967, 1, 4.
- Angela Dillard, *Faith in the City: Preaching Radical Social Change in Detroit* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2017), 292.
- Daniel Gallio, “An Enduring Icon,” *Mosaic*, December 15, 2017.
- Deborah Goldstein and Margaret Slater, “Sacred Heart Seminary,” National Register of Historic Places nomination, July 1982.
- Michigan Chronicle*, September 30, 1967.
- Niraj Warikoo, “Prayers in Black and White,” *Detroit Free Press*, July 21, 2017, 1A.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name Shabazz, Dr. Betty (Sanders),
House

Street Address 313 Hague Street

Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County

District Name
NA

Year Built
1912

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Other



Plan
T

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Wood

Roof Form
Cross Gable

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
None

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Current Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage - Black, Social History

Period of Significance: 1944-1958

Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

The Dr. Betty Shabazz House is located on the north side of Hague Street, near its intersection with Brush Street. The house is set in the center of a narrow rectangular residential lot. It is a typical domestic yard with maintained lawn, domestic vegetation including deciduous and coniferous trees, and bushes. The house is a simple vernacular, two-story, T-shaped building with wood clapboard siding painted yellow and a cross-gabled roof covered with asphalt shingles. A brick chimney rises from the west elevation of the house. The front-gabled section has a projecting bay window on the first floor. It has a six-light picture window and is covered by an asphalt-shingled shed roof. Above it on the second floor are paired windows with nine-over-one

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey

double hung sash. The front entrance is set on the south wall of the side gabled section and is accessed from a low concrete porch with two steps. The replacement front door consists of a single-leaf entry door flanked by two narrow sidelights; it is sheltered under a small canopy roof. The east elevation has four window openings; three are boarded up and the fourth has a double-hung window. At the west elevation are five window openings of varying sizes and configurations, from a single double-hung window to a tripartite window at the north end. The north elevation is partially visible from the side street. At the east end is a shed-roofed wing with a single entry door and a boarded up window opening. On the west end are paired windows at the first floor and a single window at the upper level. Both appear to be multi-light double-hung units.

History

Betty Dean Sanders was born May 28, 1934, either in Detroit or in Pinehurst, Georgia (she had no birth certificate and other records differ, but Shabazz identified her birthplace as Detroit). At age 11, she was informally adopted by Lorenzo and Helen Malloy, who had moved into the house at 313 Hague Street sometime after their marriage in 1932. It was located in the North End, a historically Jewish working class neighborhood that during the middle decades of the twentieth century gradually converted to a Black neighborhood as the segregated Paradise Valley area expanded to the north. While Shabazz was growing up in the North End in the 1940s and 1950s, the neighborhood became home to a thriving soul and rhythm and blues scene, particularly along the Oakland Avenue corridor a few blocks east of the Malloy house. It was seen as a “tony” neighborhood that was a step up for middle class Blacks escaping the crowded, substandard housing in Black Bottom. Shabazz later wrote that her father had “bragged about being a good family man and how he worked hard and saved his money and bought a house at the height of the Depression.”

Shabazz cited two incidents of racial conflict, at the Sojourner Truth Homes development in 1942 and Belle Isle in 1943, as formative in the development of her civil rights activism. She was also steeped in the civil rights movement through her mother, Helen Malloy, who was a member of the NAACP, the National Council of Negro Women, and a founding member of the Housewives League of Detroit. The Malloys and Shabazz were also members of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. A stint at the Tuskegee Institute in the segregated South and her marriage to Malcolm X in 1958 further developed her consciousness. Shabazz was active in the civil rights movement throughout her life, giving lectures and supporting civil rights organizations. Following Malcolm X’s assassination in 1965, Shabazz raised their six children alone, while pursuing a doctorate in education. In 1968, she was named as the second Vice President of the Republic of New Afrika, a nationalist organization. She also was active in the NAACP and the National Urban League. She became, along with Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King, one of the elder stateswomen of the civil rights movement. Betty Shabazz passed away in 1997.

Statement of Significance

The Betty Shabazz House at 313 Hague is recommended as eligible under Criterion B, for its association with Betty Shabazz, a leader of the civil rights movement in Detroit. Shabazz spent her formative years in the civil rights movement in the house, and it remains in Shabazz’s family.

Eligibility Recommendation
Eligible

NR Criteria
B

NR Exceptions
None

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Sources

Russell John Rickford, *Betty Shabazz, Surviving Malcolm X* (Naperville, Illinois, 2003).

Dr. Betty Shabazz, "From the Detroit Riot to the Malcolm Summit," *Ebony*, November 1995, 62-64.

Jeanne Theoharis, *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013).

Surveyor

Saundra Little, Ruth Mills

Date Surveyed

April 2019

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name Shrine of the Black Madonna of the Pan African Orthodox Christian Church	Street Address 7625-35 Linwood Street	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	---	--

District Names
NA

Year Built
1925-1930

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century
Revivals
Classical Revival



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Front gabled

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Stone

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
George D. Mason

Historic Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Current Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage - Black, Social History, Politics/Government

Period of Significance: 1958-1970
Level of Significance: National

Narrative Description

The Shrine of the Black Madonna is located at the northwest corner of Linwood and Hogarth Streets in the city of Detroit. The building is divided into three attached but functionally separate areas, the sanctuary on the south and church hall on the north connected by a kitchen/stair hall. The sanctuary building is constructed of red brick with stone trim including a stone water table and quoining on its east and south elevations. The east elevation has a two-story portico with

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

stone Doric columns and engaged pilasters and a Classical entablature, and within the portico is a double-door entry surrounded by stone trim and entablature. Above the front-gabled roof, a square bell tower rises from the center front (east) topped by an octagonal wood belfry. The symmetrical south elevation has slightly projecting bays at each end with a stone base, quoining, and entablature. Within the center four bays are regularly spaced round-arched stained glass windows. The north elevation is mostly obscured by the adjoining church hall, but has four round-arched windows similar to those on the south elevation. The west elevation is common brick with utilitarian entries. A large round-arched opening at the center of the elevation has been infilled with wood panels. Aside from the round-arched units, the windows are the original double-hung, four-over-four sash. The interior is dominated by the two-story sanctuary with balcony. It has carpeted floors and plaster walls and ceilings and features Classical detailing such as high paneled wainscoting with fluted pilaster, dentilled cornice trim, and floating Corinthian capitals. At the east end is the tiered balcony and at the west is the alter niche centered on the eponymous Black Madonna mural. At the east end of the building is a lobby with carpeted floors and flat plaster walls and ceilings, and a small dressing room on the second floor. Beneath the sanctuary is a concrete gymnasium.

The kitchen/stair hall is a one-story structure with a two-story entry hall at the east end and a slanted skylight roof. The end walls are brick and at the east end is a wood entry porch with Doric columns and pilasters and a Classical entablature. Within is a small stair hall and the narrow rectangular kitchen with an original cast iron wood-fired stove. It opens on the north side into the church hall through double-hung windows. The church hall is a two-story building with a one-story wing at the rear. It is also constructed of red brick with stone trim including a water table, quoining, cartouches, and entablature. The east elevation has symmetrically arranged paired windows with double hung six-over-six sash at the first floor and double-hung, four-over-four sash at the upper level. The north and west elevations are of common brick and have utilitarian openings, including six sets of paired multi-light steel windows on the north elevation. The interior has a small hallway opening from the stair/entry hall. At the east end is a rectangular space that can be connected to or separated from the main space by large openings; at the north end of this space is a wood raised alter. The remainder of the first floor is occupied by the large multipurpose room with a raised stage with proscenium arch at the west end. It has terrazzo floors, flat plaster walls, and beamed ceilings. On the second floor is a central corridor with classrooms, finished with linoleum floors, textured plaster walls and ceilings, and wood chair railings. The Shrine of the Black Madonna retains a very high degree of integrity. Both exterior and interior are virtually unchanged from their appearance either at the date of its original construction from 1925 to 1930, or during the Civil Rights context period.

History

The Shrine of the Black Madonna was constructed from 1925 to 1930 as Pilgrim Congregational Church, later Brewster-Pilgrim Congregational Church. Founded around 1915, Pilgrim Congregation hired architect George D. Mason to design a new church in 1925. Following a fire that destroyed the church's original building/parish house, the congregation replaced it with the present church hall in 1930. Brewster-Pilgrim Church sold the building to Central Congregational Church in 1957. Central Congregational was headed by Reverend Albert B. Cleage Jr., an Indianapolis, IN native born in 1911 who moved with his family to Detroit when he was a young boy. Cleage became a civil rights activist in the early 1950s, leading him to break with the

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

Presbyterian Church, in which he had started his religious career, and form Central Congregational.

Under Cleage, the church building at 7625-35 Linwood Street became the geographical and ideological center of Detroit's Black consciousness movement, with Cleage increasingly embracing the ideals of Black nationalism. Cleage joined with Reverend C. L. Franklin of New Bethel Baptist Church, then recently moved into a building a few blocks north, to plan the 1963 Detroit Walk to Freedom, headlined by Martin Luther King Jr. The march drew nearly 200,000 participants and was the largest civil rights gathering in United States history until the March on Washington a few months later, of which the Detroit march was a precursor. At the same time, Cleage was one of the founders of the Freedom Now Party, an all-Black national political party. Central Congregational Church hosted the party's first national convention in 1964 and Cleage was the party's nominee for governor of Michigan the same year.

Cleage was a nationally significant civil rights campaigner throughout the 1960s, organizing protests, speaking at events, and serving on civil rights organizations such as the Committee for Racial Justice. In late 1963 Cleage organized the Northern Negro Grassroots Leadership Conference in Detroit in 1963, where Malcolm X delivered his seminal "Message to the Grassroots." On Easter Sunday 1967 Cleage unveiled a mural of the Black Madonna, designed and painted by Glanton Dowdell, which created controversy within the congregation but also led to the renaming of the church as "Shrine of the Black Madonna" and drew many young people to the church who had resonated with its message. In the wake of the July 1967 rebellion in Detroit, Cleage hosted the People's Tribunal at Shrine of the Black Madonna following the murder of three young Black men by police during the 1967 uprising in Detroit. Cleage was featured in a *Life* magazine article in December 1968 on militant Black leaders. Cleage was one of nine Black national leaders who were "speaking to black America" as the civil rights movement evolved following the "great" decade of 1955-1965. Cleage's activism in this period increasingly focused on his idealism of Black Christian nationalism, in which Jesus was a revolutionary Black leader and the role of the Black church was to strengthen Black people in their fight for civil rights. During the late 1960s, Cleage was one of the most visible faces of Black nationalism across the country.

Around 1970, Cleage gradually began withdrawing from high profile political activities to concentrate on Black nationalism within the context of expanding the Shrine of the Black Madonna organization and its social programs. Reverend Cleage passed away in 2000, but the Shrine of the Black Madonna remains in the building.

Statement of Significance

The Shrine of the Black Madonna at 7625-35 Linwood Street is significant under National Register Criteria A, at the national level, as the location where many significant 20th Black civil rights activities took place in the late 1950s and 1960s. It is also significant under National Register Criteria B, at the national level, for its association with the Reverend Albert B. Cleage Jr. (Jaramogi Abebe Agyeman), a nationally significant Black civil rights leader who was a national leader in the civil rights movement during the 1950s and 1960s. Reverend Cleage was among the leaders of the Black nationalism movement nationally and was highly visible for his militant stance on equality and self-determination for Black Americans. The Shrine hosted speeches by national civil rights figures and was the site of the People's Tribunal in 1967 following the Detroit rebellion. The period of significance for the building is from 1958, when the building was purchased by Central

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Congregational Church (renamed Shrine of the Black Madonna in 1967) to 1970. The building meets Criteria Consideration A, as a building owned by a religious institution and used for religious purposes, because its significance is directly connected to the history of political, social, and cultural activities of the civil rights movement.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, B	A

Sources

“Albert Cleage is Dead at 88; Led Black Nationalist Church.” *New York Times*, February 27, 2000.

“A Separate Path to Equality: The Shift from Moderates to Militants.” *Life*, December 13, 1968, 82-89.

Bishop Mbiyu Chui, Interview with Sandra Little and Ruth Mills, April 13, 2019, at Shrine of the Black Madonna, 7635 Linwood Street, Detroit, Michigan.

Clark, Jawanza Eric, ed. *Albert Cleage Jr. and the Black Madonna and Child*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016.

Cleage, Albert B. Jr. *Black Christian Nationalism*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1972.

Cleage, Albert B. Jr. *Black Messiah*. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969.

Cleage, Albert B. Jr. “The Next Step.” *Illustrated News*, November 1963.

Cleage Rev. Albert B. “Self-Determination and Accountability.” *Michigan Chronicle*. January 13, 1968.

Cleage, Albert B. Jr. “We Must Control Our Community.” *The Michigan Chronicle*. August 12, 1967.

Angela Dillard, *Faith in the City: Preaching Radical Social Change in Detroit* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2017).

“Pilgrim Stone Laid,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 14, 1925, 1.

“Reverend A. B. Cleage Condemns Evils.” *Michigan Chronicle*. February 23, 1952.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

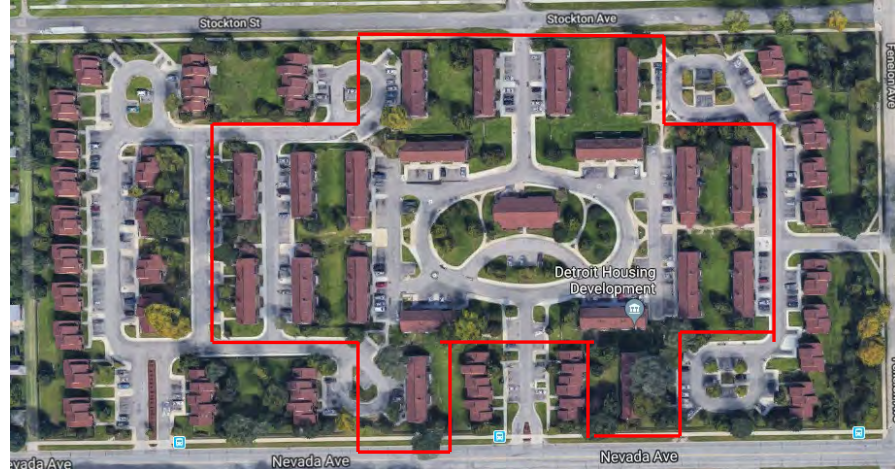
Name	Street Address	Municipal Unit, County
Sojourner Truth Homes	Bounded by Stockton Street, Fenelon Avenue, Nevada Avenue, and Justine Avenue	Detroit, Wayne County

District Names
None

Year Built
1941 and 1987

Resource Type
Complex

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th
Century Revivals
Classical Revival



Plan
Rectangular
Irregular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Weatherboard
Brick

Roof Form
Side gable

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Wood

Condition
Good

Integrity
Altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Multiple
Dwelling: Duplex
DOMESTIC/Multiple
Dwelling: Apartment

Current Use
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling:
Duplex
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling:
Apartment

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage
Social History
Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance: 1941-1943
Level of Significance: State or National

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

Narrative Description

The Sojourner Truth Homes is a complex of 20 two-story apartment buildings and 29 two-story duplex/terrace homes arranged in a garden-style arrangement with winding streets, cul-de-sacs and common green spaces. They are sited on their original street plan and location in the northern, central area of Detroit. There are four entrances to the development: two from East Nevada Street, one from Stockton Avenue, and one from Fenelon Street. There are twenty of the original buildings remaining and these retain a high degree of integrity. These original structures are dark red brick, side-gabled, two story row houses with a beige-colored brick string course. The red brick is laid in a running-bond pattern. Each building has six bays and contains six individual units. There is no eave overhang on the side gables of the buildings. The first-floor windows have cast stone or concrete sills. The first-floor windows are aluminum replacement windows. There are newer replacement white vinyl double-hung windows on the second floor. A projecting awning over the front entry porch of each unit was added (at an unknown date) with asphalt shingles and vinyl siding. Front entry doors are wood, grouped in pairs and have a brown metal screen door and dark red aluminum door surround. Each entry has a porch light, address and cast iron mail box. The rear of the rowhouses have enclosed mechanical additions with vinyl siding and dark red asphalt shingled roof. On the roof of each unit is a PVC vent pipe, and units share a brick chimney. There are brown aluminum gutters and downspouts on each building. Some of the town houses' side facades have beige stucco and trim replicating a half-timbered appearance in the gable. A variation among the rowhouses is newer-construction one-story Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant addition on some buildings.

Twenty-nine (29) new building were added to the site in 1986/87 that comprise sixty-six apartment units. Because the new buildings match the 1941 buildings in massing and scale the integrity of the original buildings is not jeopardized. At the center of the complex is a large Community Building that includes offices, meeting rooms and a large assembly space. The contemporary townhouse apartment buildings are clad in dark red brick laid in a running-bond pattern. The townhouses are characterized by multi-level gables, 2nd floor wood panel siding and projecting bays. The wood panel siding has been painted a light peach color. The main entrance to each unit is entered at a concrete slab in the short alcove sided with wood panels. A porch light, address numbers and mail slot are found on the wood siding. The entry door to each unit is the original brown aluminum screen door and brown entry door with a horizontal casement window at the top. The first floor window at the front entrance is also of brown aluminum with a divided two-part casement window. A sill of header bricks is at the first-story windows. The second-story windows have been replaced with white vinyl two-part casement windows. A water-table of header bricks is at the second story window level. The roofs are covered in grey asphalt shingles. Brown aluminum gutters and downspouts are on the buildings and an exhaust vent projects from each roof. There is a brown aluminum ridge vent at each roof peak. The units are grouped in identical pairs, cited as opposite reflecting plans. The rear of the units have a similar alcove entrance, and the windows and doors are also brown aluminum. The utility boxes are on the exterior of the end units, and the side facades are faced in brick, include a brown casement aluminum window, and the gable is sided with wood panels, also painted a light peach color. There are two, three and four bedroom townhouses on the Sojourner Truth Homes site.

Each block is surrounded by a black wrought-iron fence. There are honey locust trees in the rear yards of the new town homes. There is minimal landscaping at the entrances to the complex, as well as on traffic islands within the complex. Some properties have shrubbery surrounding the foundation, but most do not. There are large trees scattered throughout the site.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

History

In June of 1940, Congress extended the 1937 Housing Act to assist local housing agencies in building housing for those engaged in national defense. The Detroit Housing Commission used this act to authorize the construction of two new apartment developments, one designated for Whites, one for Blacks. For the Black development, the city’s housing commission chose a location already close to a segregated Black area, at the northwest corner of Dequindre and Modern streets. Shortly thereafter, federal housing officials overrode local officials and designated a location at the intersection of Nevada and Fenelon, closer to an industrial site and not far from a small Black enclave at Conant Gardens, but still in what the city considered a “White” area. In September of 1941 the project was named the Sojourner Truth Homes, but throughout the fall, while construction proceeded, Whites in the area protested strongly, backed by the city’s housing commission, which had adopted a policy not to “change the racial characteristics of any neighborhood through...housing projects under its jurisdiction.” In January of 1942 the Federal Housing Administration changed its mind and determined that the Sojourner Truth project would instead be for Whites, promising Blacks another development. But when a coalition of Detroit’s civil rights activists, backed by a telegram from Mayor Edward Jeffries, themselves protested, the FHA relented and allowed Black residents to begin moving into the apartments in early 1942. This touched off physical confrontations and fighting between Black residents determined to defend their homes and Whites determined to make them leave. Eventually, a show of force by city and state police officers and the Michigan National Guard enabled the Black residents to move into their new homes. The development was remodeled around 1970.

Statement of Significance

The Sojourner Truth Homes are eligible for listing in the National Register under National Register Criteria A and C. Sojourner Truth is a representative example of a standard planned federal public housing development that followed Federal Housing Administration guidelines for layout and design. It is also significant as the place where a significant incident of racial unrest occurred as a result of White residents objecting to the settlement of Blacks in the development.

Eligibility Recommendation Eligible	NR Criteria A, C	NR Exceptions None
---	----------------------------	------------------------------

Sources

Apartment Housing in the City of Detroit, 1892-1970, Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2017.
Historical Context and Intensive Level Survey for Multi-Family Public Housing, Detroit, Michigan, 2018

Surveyor Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	Date Surveyed July 2018
---	-----------------------------------

Name St. Cecilia Gymnasium and Church	Street Address 6340 Stearns Avenue (Gymnasium), 10400 Stoepel Street (Church)	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
---	---	--

District Names

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

NA

Year Built
1922 (Gymnasium), 1929
(Church)

Resource Type
Buildings

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and 20th Century
Revivals
Romanesque



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick, Stone

Roof Form
Front gabled

Roof
Asphalt shingle

Other Materials
Stone

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Dalton R. Wells (Gymnasium)
Antonio DiNardo (Church)

Historic Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church
RECREATION AND
CULTURE/Sports Facility:
Gymnasium

Current Use
RELIGION/Religious Facility:
Church
RECREATION AND
CULTURE/Sports Facility:
Gymnasium

Builder
John Finn & Sons (Gymnasium)
W. E. Wood Company (Church)

Outbuildings
Rectory

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage, Social History, Recreation

Period of Significance: 1922-1968
Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

St. Cecilia's Church and Gymnasium is located at Stearns and Livernois Avenues, south and west of the Russell Woods-Sullivan neighborhood. St. Cecilia's Church occupies the north half of a block bounded by Livernois Avenue, Stearns Avenue, Stoepel Street, and Annland Street. The building is a one-story rectangular structure with a front-gabled roof covered with asphalt shingles. It is clad in limestone blocks with a limestone watertable.

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

The principal façade faces Livernois Avenue. Polygonal buttresses frame the ornamented elevation. At street level, shallow stone steps lead up to the main entry, which consists of paired coffered wood doors set within a recessed tripartite arch with engaged Corinthian columns and carved banding. Above the arch is a colonnaded frieze, surmounted by a large circular window with carved ornamentation. At the top of the elevation is a pediment with a statue of St. Cecilia set in a niche. The north and south elevations are similar; they feature arched stained glass windows at the upper level separated by stone buttresses, and paired coffered wood doors with arched stone transoms. At the four westernmost bays on each elevation, a one-story projecting section has arched windows separated by buttresses. The west elevation has a projecting rounded apse. The lower level of the apse has arched windows separated by buttresses, while a smaller level above has blank walls. A small round window is set on the main wall above the upper apse.

At the northeast corner of the building is a bell tower that rises several levels above the main building. The lower levels have stone belt courses. There is a five sided balcony at the east side projecting from an arched opening. At the ground level on the north side are paired arched windows divided by a column. At ground level on the west side is a paired coffered wood door flanked by Corinthian columns with a stone round arch above. A ramp has been constructed to provide an accessible entrance here. The rectory building, which was built at the same time in a similar style and materials, is connected to the southwest corner of the building.

The gymnasium faces Stearns Avenue and is surrounded by parking and basketball courts to the north and west. The building is a one-story rectangular structure with a raised basement delineated by a stone watertable and a front-gabled roof covered with asphalt shingles; two small gabled dormers are on each side. Structurally, the building has a steel truss system and is clad in red brick with stone trim.

The front façade (facing Stearns) is divided into three sections. The larger center section has monumental stairs leading to a Palladian-style entry with a larger center opening flanked by two smaller openings separated by Ionic columns and topped with stone half-round arched transoms. Above that is a circular rose window. The flanking bays have single-leaf entry doors to either side of the stairs at the basement level. Above the doors, the water table extends into an arch with basketweave brickwork in the center. At the main level above the doors are narrow round-arched double-hung windows with stone sills. The bays are divided by full height brick piers. The cornice line has dentils and large brick corbels terminating in stone blocks. At the summit of the gable is a stone cross.

The east elevation has eight bays divided by brick buttresses with stone capitals. The extreme north and south bays have single window openings at the basement level and single round-arched opening above, while the central six bays are similar but with paired openings rather than single ones. The openings are all infilled with glass block. Brick corbelling runs underneath the cornice. The north elevation has a brick chimney. A set of five graduated arched openings, a round opening, and two other round arched openings have been infilled with brick. A utilitarian door is located at the northwest corner.

A simple brick structure has been added to the west elevation. It is also clad in brick and has a flat roof. The south elevation had two openings on the lower level and three on the upper level. They are in a variety of configurations and most have been covered with wire screening. The west

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

elevation has rows of rectangular openings with hopper windows at the basement and just below the roofline. Two rectangular openings with vents are also on this elevation.

The church complex also includes a school (built 1925) north of the gymnasium, and a convent (built in the 1950s) west of the school across Stoepel Street.

History

St. Cecilia parish was founded in 1921 in a converted tavern at Grand River Avenue and Livernois Street. The following year (1922) the parish's first purpose-built church opened in the building that currently serves as the gymnasium. The quickly growing parish opened a school in 1925, converted a residence into a rectory the same year, and converted a small apartment building into a convent for the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, who were engaged as teachers. The original church was replaced by a larger building in 1929, when this building was converted into a community hall and gymnasium for the school. A high school was opened in 1930.

When it was founded, St. Cecilia's congregation was White, but by the mid-1960s, the neighborhood was transitioning to predominantly African American. While many churches closed as their White population moved away, St. Cecilia's embraced ministry to the new residents. Reverend Raymond Ellis, who had been installed as pastor in 1965, reached out to other religious groups in the area, including Baptists, Protestants, Jewish, and Muslims. He supported the Black Power movement and Malcolm X, and worked with members of the Republic of New Afrika. Ellis also incorporated Black music and cultural aspects into Sunday services. When the rebellion broke out in July 1967, St. Cecilia Church was not directly affected, but parish athletic director Samuel Washington opened the school's gymnasium to his children and their friends to play basketball as a sanctuary during and after the violence. This inaugurated a parish sports program that became known city-wide in the following decades, and became a "hoops mecca" – with well-known professional players Dave Bing, George Gervin, Magic Johnson, Chris Webber, and Jalen Rose all playing in the program. The program was hosted in the former school gymnasium (the 1922 church), which was renovated by the students.

In the aftermath of the rebellion, Father Ellis commissioned Black artist DeVon Cunningham to create two works of art for the church: a Black Christ mural in the dome, and a Black Madonna statue for the north transept. The Black Christ mural was unveiled in November 1968, with Black militant Milton Henry as a featured speaker, and drew national attention and a feature in *Ebony* magazine. The school also inaugurated a school holiday for Malcolm X in the late 1960s. Despite Ellis' efforts, the transition was not always painless. The unveiling of the Black Christ mural drew hate mail from across the country, and exposed divisions within the parish related to the racial transition.

Statement of Significance

St. Cecilia Church and Gymnasium is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C. St. Cecilia Church is significant for its Black Christ mural and Black Madonna statue, both created by a Black artist in response to the 1967 rebellion to support racial inclusiveness and equality in the church. It is also significant as the location of an important integrated sports program that grew

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

out of a need to provide a safe place for young people during and after the rebellion. The church and gymnasium may also be locally significant under Criterion C for their architectural character. It meets Criteria Consideration A, as a religious property, because its significant activities and people were related to the social and political aspects of civil rights.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A, C	A

Sources

Leslie Woodcock Tentler, "Through the Prism of Race: The Archdiocese of Detroit," in Kathleen Sprows Cummings, Timothy Matovina, and Robert Orsi (eds.), *Catholics in the Vatican II Era: Local Histories of a Global Event* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 86-109.
St. Cecilia Parish (Hackensack, N.J: Custombook, Inc., 1972).
Alex Poinsett, "The Quest for a Black Christ," *Ebony*, March 1969, 170-178.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name Vaughn's Bookstore	Street Address 12123 Dexter Avenue	Municipal Unit, County Detroit, Wayne County
-----------------------------------	--	--

District Names
NA

Year Built
Unknown

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century American Movements
Commercial Style



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composite

Other Materials
Wood

Condition
Poor

Integrity
Altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty
Store: Bookstore

Current Use
Vacant

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage, Social History

Period of Significance: 1959-1967

Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

This building is on the west side of Dexter Avenue between Monterey and Duane Streets. It occupies one of the middle lots on a commercial block oriented toward Dexter Avenue that is divided from the residential block behind it by an alley. There is a wide paved sidewalk in front of the building.

The building is a one-story rectangular brick structure with a flat roof. On the primary (east) elevation, the storefronts have been boarded up, with one single-leaf entry door with transom

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

still visible at the north end of the building. The upper portions of the front façade have vertical wood siding, and above that a dentilled stone cornice is still visible. The north elevation is common brick with no openings. The west elevation is not visible due to heavy vegetation, and the south elevation is concealed behind an adjoining building.

History

Edward Vaughn, a native of Alabama, was born on July 30, 1934. After graduating from Fisk University in 1955 and serving in the US Army from 1957-1959, Vaughn settled in Detroit, where he worked at the Department of Public Welfare. Sources differ as to when he opened his bookstore; some record it as 1959, others as 1965. No mention of it in contemporary sources was found until 1965, supporting the latter date, although he may have purchased the storefront before that date. The bookstore was located in Detroit's Russell Woods-Sullivan neighborhood, a middle-class neighborhood that by the 1950s was being populated by Black Detroiters escaping or displaced from Black Bottom/Paradise Valley.

Vaughn's bookstore was the first Black bookstore in the city, and it specialized in African American history, literature, and other materials. As such, it became a center of Black intellectual life in the city because, as Eric Campbell stated, "It provided both the venue in which to gather and the content to consume." Among the many patrons at Vaughn's was Rosa Parks, who not only bought books but also came for the discussion. It became a locus of Black consciousness at the height of the Black liberation and nationalism movements. Vaughn held weekly meetings to discuss Black history and books, parlaying these into a national Black Arts movement that focused on younger, more militant artists as opposed to the black arts establishment. The nearby Twelfth Street neighborhood was the center of Black nationalism, with Albert Cleage's Shrine of the Black Madonna, the offices of the Republic of New Afrika, and the Friends of SNCC all in the neighborhood.

Although Vaughn's store was initially spared from the fires of the July 1967 uprising, despite being near the epicenter of the destruction, it was set on fire, reportedly by Detroit police officers, during the curfew that followed, although Vaughn was never able to prove it. It is unclear from the sources how much of the building was destroyed, and how much of the original bookstore remains. Vaughn was active in other ways in the civil rights and Black empowerment movement, serving as chair of the Housing and Redevelopment Committee of the Citywide Citizens Action Committee and as the head of the Black Star Co-op. He served several terms in the Michigan State House and was executive assistant for Detroit Mayor Coleman Young.

Statement of Significance

Vaughn's Bookstore is potentially eligible under National Register Criterion A, as the location of Detroit's first Black bookstore and as the place where significant events related to the Black nationalist and civil rights movements took place. It is also potentially significant under Criterion B, for its association with Edward Vaughn, who was a significant leader of the civil rights movement in Detroit, fostering much of the intellectual discussion that fueled the movement in the mid 1960s. He also participated in a number of important civil rights activities. The bookstore's eligibility is possibly impacted by its very poor condition and the potential loss of portions of the store when it was set on fire in 1967. Further research may be necessary to determine its integrity and eligibility.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Further research recommended	A, B	None

Sources

Michigan Chronicle, July 27, 1967.

Eric Thomas Campbell, "Vaughn's Bookstore: Axis of Black Consciousness."

<https://riverwisedetroit.org/article/vaughns-bookstore-axis-of-black-consciousness/>

Jeanne Theoharis, *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013).

"Guide to the Edward Vaughn Papers," Finding Aid, Wayne State University, Reuther Library, 2018.

James Smethurst, *The Black Arts Movement: Literary Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 226.

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Sandra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name
WGPR TV
(William V. Banks Broadcast Center
and Museum)

Street Address
3146 East Jefferson Avenue

**Municipal Unit,
County**
Detroit, Wayne
County

District Names
NA

Year Built
Ca. early 1900s

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th Century
American Movements
Commercial Style



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Brick

Roof Form
Flat

Roof
Composite

Other Materials
Glass block

Condition
Fair

Integrity
Altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTIO
N/ Communications Facility: Radio
and Television Studio

Current Use
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION
/ Communications Facility: Radio
Studio
RECREATION/CULTURE/Museum

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
None

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage, Social History, Communications

Period of Significance: 1975-1995
Level of Significance: National

Narrative Description
WGPR TV consists of two ca. 1900s commercial buildings in the middle of a block on East Jefferson Avenue between McDougall Avenue and Walker Street in the city of Detroit, Michigan. A State of Michigan Historical Marker spans across the two buildings at the first floor level and contains text on

20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit Intensive Level Survey

the history and significance of WGPR TV. The east building is one story high with a shorter area towards Jefferson Avenue and a taller volume at the rear. Both have flat, composition roofs. The front (north) elevation is faced with buff brick with raised brick courses at the corners. A painted boxed canopy extends the length of the façade over the storefronts, with the brick façade rising several feet above the canopy, topped by stone coping. The storefront stretches across nearly the entire length of the façade. It has been infilled with glass block. In the center is a paired aluminum and glass entry with a clear glass transom above. The higher volume towards the rear of the building has seven clerestory windows across the front where it extends above the adjoining roof. The east and west elevations of this building are covered by the adjoining buildings. The south elevation is also sided with buff brick, without any raised courses. At the east end is a single-leaf steel entry door with a small metal canopy. At the west end is a steel garage door. Two window openings between the doors have been infilled with lighter colored brick.

The west building is two stories high with a taller volume at Jefferson Avenue and a shorter section at the rear. Both have flat, composition roofs. The front (north) elevation is faced with buff brick with raised brick courses at the corner and across the upper façade above the second floor windows. A painted boxed canopy extends the length of the façade over the storefront. The storefront stretches across nearly the entire length of the façade. It has been infilled with glass block. In the center is a paired aluminum and glass entry with a clear glass transom above. The second story has a rectangular horizontal window bay with two tripled and two paired windows separated by stone panels. The tripled windows are at the outer edges while the paired windows are in the middle. All are single-light fixed wood units. The east elevation is covered by the adjoining building. The west elevation is faced with common red brick. Toward the south end is a steel entry door with a corrugated metal canopy. A concrete accessible ramp leads to the door. The south elevation is sided with brick painted dark red. There is a rollup garage door at the west end with a single-leaf steel entry door to the east of the garage door. Paired aluminum windows are located on the first and second floors, two sets on the first floor and four sets on the second. At the east end on both floors are single rectangular windows. All the windows are single-light fixed aluminum units. These appear to be more recent additions.

The building's interior is divided into two main spaces. At the north end, adjacent to Jefferson Avenue, is the WGPR-FM radio studios. The main entry lobby and waiting area is on the east side of the building; it has a tiled floor, plaster walls, and acoustic tile lay-in ceiling. South of the waiting area is an office area with carpeted floors, plaster and wood panel walls, and acoustic tile ceiling. Partial height panel and glass partitions create separate offices. Behind (south) of the office area is a kitchenette with linoleum flooring, wood panel walls and an acoustic tile ceiling. On the west side of the building's north end are the recording/broadcasting studios. These have carpeted floors and walls and acoustic tile ceilings. At the rear (south) of the building is the former television studio, now a broadcasting museum. This is generally one large open space with wood laminate floors, brick/concrete walls covered with wood panels, and an exposed ceiling. Museum exhibits are affixed to the walls and to freestanding exhibit walls. Broadcasting rigging and equipment remains affixed to the ceiling, including lighting and curtain tracks, lighting fixtures, and other pieces of rigging.

History

WGPR TV began broadcasting at noon on September 28, 1975. It was the culmination of several years of planning by William A. Banks, a Detroit lawyer, minister, and activist, but also was part of a decades-long struggle by Detroit's Black community to gain control of media narratives that too often portrayed them as caricatures, or sensationalized events to facilitate polarization. That effort began

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

with print media, particularly, during the civil rights context period, with two weekly Black newspapers, the *Michigan Chronicle* and the *Detroit Tribune*. While the Detroit radio market carried some Black programming, particularly popular music by Black artists, it was not until 1956 that WCHB, Detroit's first Black-owned and operated radio station, began broadcasting. It was followed in 1964 by WGPR-FM, an existing station which changed ownership and format when it was purchased by Dr. William V. Banks, a native of Kentucky who had practice law in the city for twenty years before being ordained a minister.

Following the civil disturbances across the United States in 1967, the Kerner Commission, formed by President Lyndon Johnson, laid part of the blame for poor relations between the races on the media, which generally portrayed Black Americans in the context of sensationalized disorder. Black activists began to push for better representation in the media and more control over its own narrative. To further that end, Dr. Banks applied for and received a license from the Federal Communications Commission in 1973 to open the first Black-owned television station, WGPR TV, in Detroit. He secured two commercial buildings at 3134-3148 East Jefferson Avenue. The buildings, which were constructed in the early 1900s, had previously held a succession of automotive businesses, and more recently had housed an appliance dealer from the late 1950s to around 1971. When the station went on air, it included a significant block of local programming, including a half hour news program, a live dance show, public service programs, and a soap opera. It also provided important opportunities for Blacks to learn skills in the behind-the-camera trades. The inauguration of the country's first Black-owned and operated television station drew national attention, and President Gerald Ford taped a congratulatory message.

Although the station started strongly, it fell victim to a number of problems in later years, including the loss of its founder, Dr. Banks, in 1985, a weak transmission signal, and competition from other stations and cable television. The station was sold in 1995 to CBS, who changed its call sign to WWJ-TV and moved it away from its Black focus.

Statement of Significance

WGPR-TV is significant under National Register Criterion A, at the national level, as the first Black-owned and operated television station in the United States. WGPR-TV was the first television station to be owned and operated by Black people, and it satisfied a demand for programming that portrayed Black Americans as more than stereotypes or tokens. It was also an important source of Black perspectives on news and current affairs, and afforded career and training opportunities behind the camera for Blacks, many of whom went on to careers at other stations in Detroit and nationwide. The period of significance for the station is 1975 to 1995, the period during which it operated. Because its period of significance extends to less than fifty years ago, it must meet National Register Criteria Consideration G. It meets the requirements because WGPR-TV was exceptionally significant as a pioneering broadcasting station that provided Black centered programming at a time when White-dominated media controlled broadcast television.

Eligibility Recommendation
Eligible

NR Criteria
A

NR Exceptions
G

Sources

"Battle Lines Drawn in WGPR Labor Dispute." *Michigan Chronicle*, December 2, 1992, A1.
"Ethnic Waivers Granted for WGPR-TV Carriage," *Broadcasting*, February 21, 1977, 77.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Federal Communications Commission. "In re Application of WGPR, Inc. (Assignor) and CBS, Inc. (Assignee) for Assignment of License of WGPR-TV, Detroit, Michigan." FCC Record, Volume 10, No. 16, July 24 - August 4, 1995, Pages 8140 to 1849, book, August 1995; Washington D.C.. (<https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc2074/>: accessed June 30, 2019), University of North Texas Libraries, Digital Library, <https://digital.library.unt.edu>; crediting UNT Libraries Government Documents Department.

"First Black TV Has High Hopes," *The Herald-Palladium* (Benton Harbor-St. Joseph, Michigan), June 16, 1975, 28.

"First Black TV Station to Broadcast in Full Color." *Jet*, June 28, 1973, 29.

Graham, Theodore C. "Ethnic Broadcasting in the United States." American Folklife Center, 1980.

Gregory, Sheila T., ed. *A Legacy of Dreams: The Life and Contributions of Dr. William Venoid Banks*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1999.

"Historic Black TV Debut Here." *Michigan Chronicle*, October 4, 1975, 1.

"Historic Timeline." (exhibit). William V. Banks Broadcast Museum.

Ivy Planning Group, LLC. "Historical Study of Market Entry Barriers, Discrimination, and Changes in Broadcast and Wireless Licensing." Report prepared for the Office of General Counsel, Federal Communications Commission, December 2000.

Jeter, James Phillip. "WGPR-TV, 1975-1995: Rest In Peace." *Proceedings of the History Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Annual Convention*, Anaheim, California, August 12, 1996.

Stevens, William K. "Black TV Station Opens in Detroit." *New York Times*, September 30, 1975, 75.

Sullivan, Annie Laurie. "WGPR-TV Detroit: Building Black Media Infrastructure in the Postrebellion City." *The Velvet Light Trap*, Number 84 (Spring 2019), 32-45.

Alice A. Tait and Robert L. Perry, "African Americans in Television: An Afrocentric Analysis," In Janice D. Hamlet, ed. *Afrocentric Visions: Studies in Culture and Communication* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 1998).

Surveyor

Sandra Little, Ruth Mills

Date Surveyed

July 2018

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Name
Wilson, Easby, House

Street Address
18199 Riopelle Street

Municipal Unit, County
Detroit, Wayne County

District Name
NA

Year Built
1949

Resource Type
Building

Architectural Classification
Late 19th and Early 20th
Century Revivals
Bungalow



Plan
Rectangular

Foundation
Not visible

Walls
Wood

Roof Form
Side Gable

Roof
Asphalt Shingle

Other Materials
Metal

Condition
Good

Integrity
Slightly altered

Architect
Unknown

Historic Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Current Use
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling:
Residence

Builder
Unknown

Outbuildings
Garage

Areas of Significance
Ethnic Heritage. Social History

Period of Significance: 1955
Level of Significance: Local

Narrative Description

This house is located on Riopelle Street just south of Grixdale Avenue. It is a one-and-one-half story rectangular building with wood clapboard siding and a side-gabled roof covered with asphalt shingles. A front gable section projects over half the front (east) elevation. The east elevation has a partial width porch with brick sides and a concrete slab top, sheltered under an aluminum canopy carried on decorative metal posts. The single-leaf entry door is centered on the front elevation, and flanked by rectangular sliding windows. The north elevation has four double-hung one-over-one windows of varying sizes, three on the first floor and one on the half story. A

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

small rectangular opening has been added to hold a portable air conditioning unit. At the west elevation are two double-hung, one-over-one windows. A narrow driveway is located along the south side of the house. A secondary entry door with metal canopy is centered on the elevation and flanked by two double-hung one-over-one windows. A similar window is located on the half story. In rear yard is a square, concrete block garage with a hipped, asphalt-shingled roof and a metal shed roof extending over the east elevations.

History

The Easby Wilson house is located just west of a historically middle-class Black neighborhood, Conant Gardens. First settled in the 1920s, Conant Gardens was far enough away from established White neighborhoods that the residents could purchase lots and build homes here without harassment. As Detroit expanded around the neighborhood in the 1930s and 1940s, it became an enclave in an otherwise all-White working class area. Black families began to push west into the still relatively open area of Grixdale Park in the 1950s, but soon ran up against the Courville District on the other side of the *de facto* color line, Dequindre Road. In response, White residents formed a homeowners' association, the Courville District Improvement Association, to combat what they pejoratively termed an "invasion." In 1950, the Courville association called an "emergency" meeting when a Black family purchased a property at Orleans Street and Minnesota Avenue, just west of Dequindre Road.

In March 1955 Easby Wilson, an auto worker at the Dodge Main plant, purchased a home at 18199 Riopelle Street from a White homeowner, Mrs. Walter Hertzberg. Riopelle Street was over the Dequindre color line but Wilson had been assured by his real estate agent that, although it was a White district, there would be no problem with him moving in. The Wilson family moved from their previous home in Paradise Valley to the house on Riopelle Street on a Tuesday in late April. By Friday, a crowd of over 400 White residents had gathered in protest. Windows were repeatedly broken and the house was defaced with black and red paint. Anonymous callers threatened to blow up the new house of Mrs. Hertzberg in the suburb of Centerline because she had sold to a Black family. Although police dispersed the original mob, the harassment continued for months, despite police stationing a patrol car outside, and some of Wilson's fellow UAW members guarding the house. Members of the homeowners' association demanded that they sell the house. Eventually, the constant violence took its toll on the family, and a psychologist recommended that the family move due to the strain it was having on Wilson's health.

Statement of Significance

The Easby Wilson House is recommended eligible under National Register Criterion A as the location where a significant incident in the history of Black *de facto* segregation took place. While the Wilson family did not succeed in breaking the color line in this neighborhood, the incident is illustrative of the social barriers facing Black Detroiters who attempted to move into majority White neighborhoods well after restrictive covenants were outlawed in 1948.

Eligibility Recommendation	NR Criteria	NR Exceptions
Eligible	A	None

Sources

"Police Disperse 400 to Avert Disorder," *Detroit Free Press*, April 30, 1955, 3.

**20th Century African American Civil Rights in Detroit
Intensive Level Survey**

Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

Surveyor	Date Surveyed
Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019

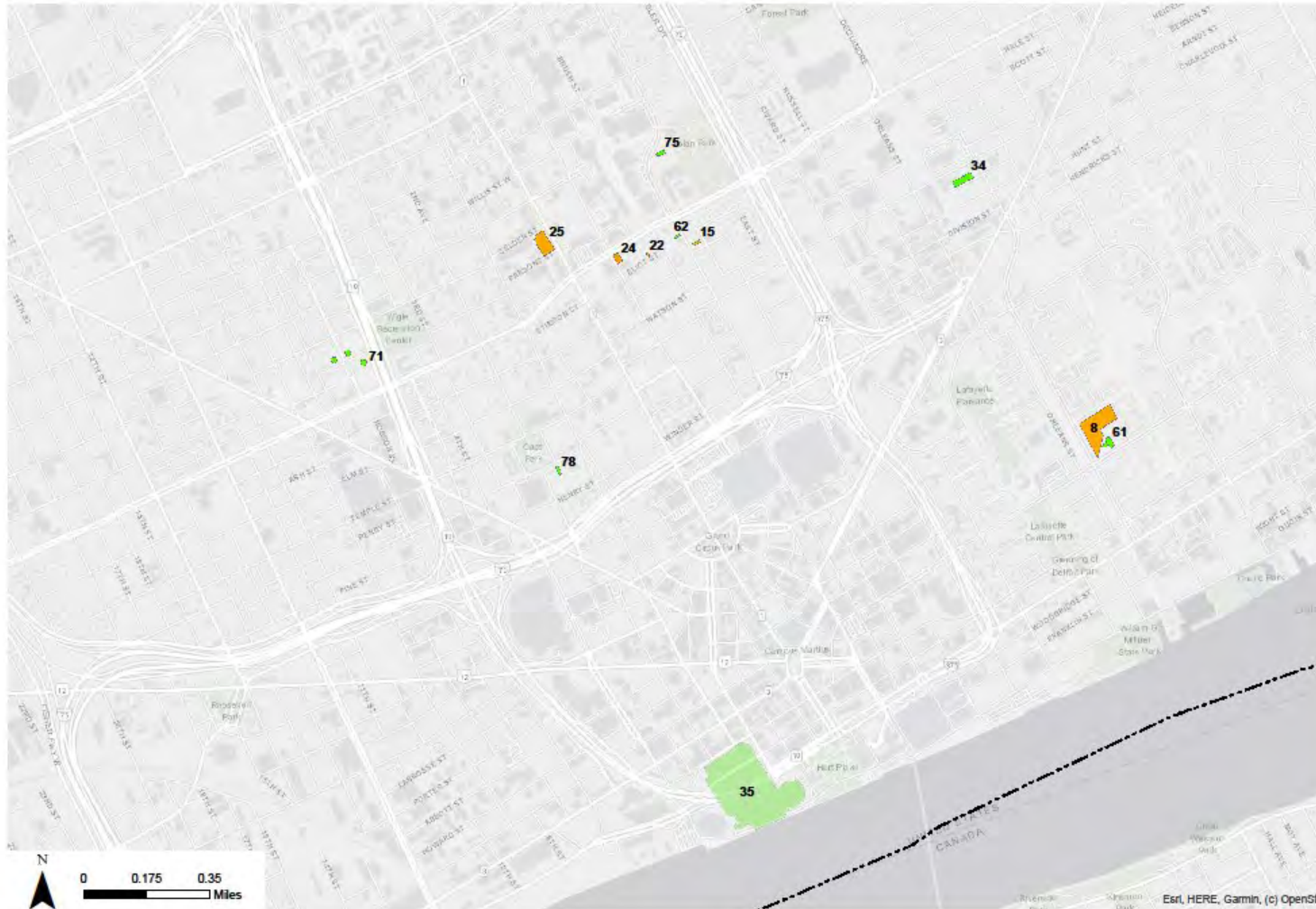
The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit, Michigan

SURVEY REPORT MAPS

)

20th Century African American Civil Rights Sites Reconnaissance and Intensive Level Survey
 Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

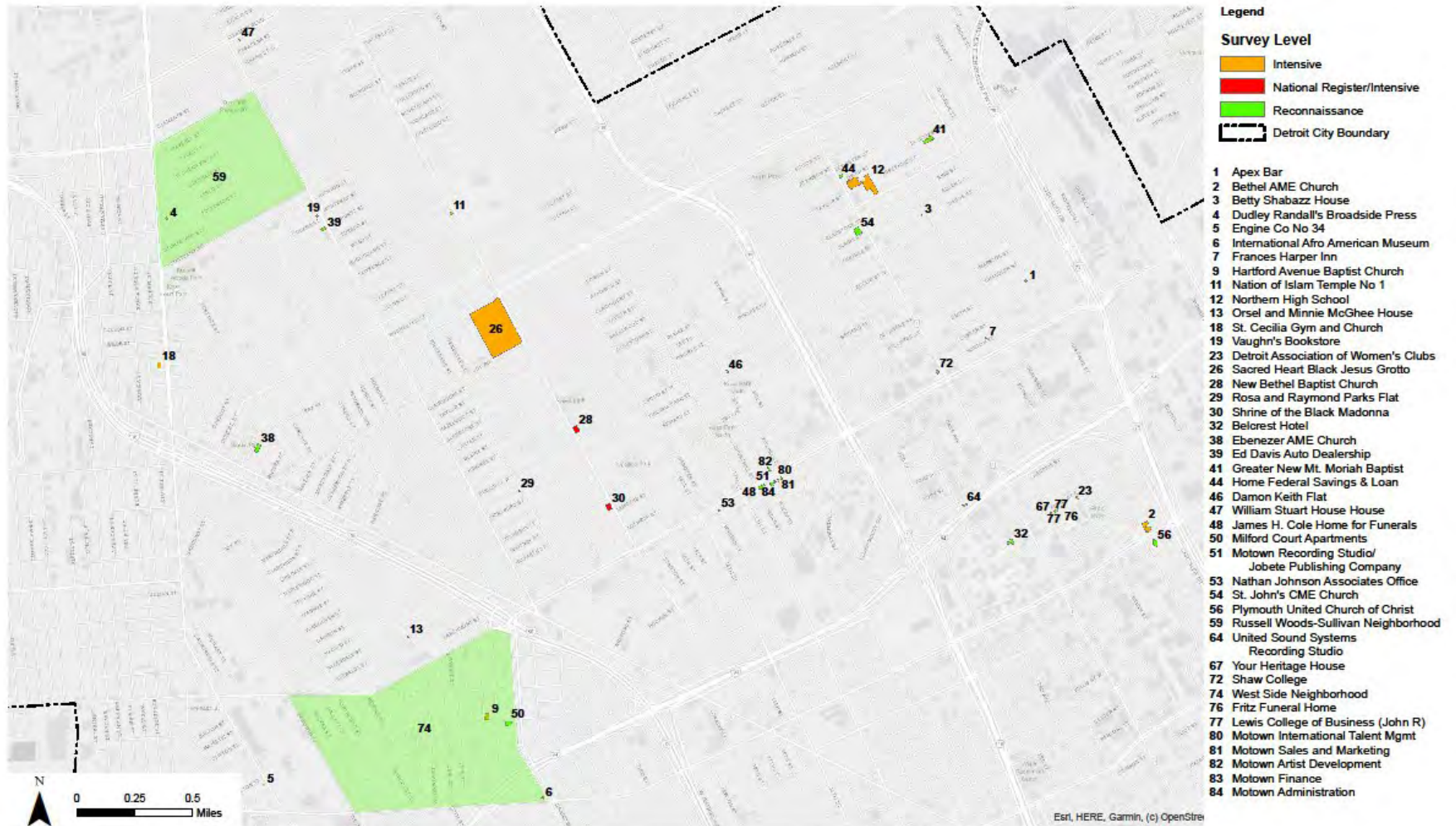
Key Map
 Downtown/Midtown



- Legend**
- Survey Level**
- Intensive
 - Reconnaissance
 - Detroit City Boundary
- 8 Friends School in Detroit
 - 15 Greater Shiloh Baptist Church
 - 22 Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity
 - 24 Detroit Urban League (Albert Kahn House)
 - 25 Paradise Theater (Orchestra Hall)
 - 34 Brewster-Wheeler Recreation Center
 - 35 Cobo Hall (TCF Center)
 - 61 St. John's Presbyterian Church
 - 62 St. Peter Claver Parish
 - 71 Jeffries Towers
 - 75 Friendship Baptist Church
 - 78 Michigan Chronicle

20th Century African American Civil Rights Sites Reconnaissance and Intensive Level Survey
 Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

Key Map
North End/Near Northwest



20th Century African American Civil Rights Sites Reconnaissance and Intensive Level Survey
 Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

Key Map
 Northwest



- Legend**
- Survey Level**
- Intensive
 - National Register/Intensive
 - Reconnaissance
 - Detroit City Boundary
- 14 Our Lady of Victory Church
 - 20 Viola Liuzzo House
 - 33 Black Star Publishing
 - 40 Eight Mile-Wyoming Neighborhood
 - 42 Hartford Memorial Baptist Church
 - 43 Higginbotham School
 - 45 Home Federal Savings Branch
 - 49 Lewis College of Business (Meyers)
 - 52 Muhammad's Mosque No. 1
 - 65 Waterman and Sons Printing
 - 70 Birwood Wall

20th Century African American Civil Rights Sites Reconnaissance and Intensive Level Survey
 Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

Key Map
 Northeast



Legend

Survey Level

- Intensive
- Reconnaissance
- Detroit City Boundary

- 17** Sojourner Truth Homes
- 21** Easby Wilson House
- 37** Conant Gardens Neighborhood
- 60** Solomon's Temple Church

20th Century African American Civil Rights Sites Reconnaissance and Intensive Level Survey
 Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

**Key Map
 Southeast**



- Legend**
- Survey Level**
- Intensive
 - National Register/Intensive
 - Reconnaissance
 - Detroit City Boundary
- 8 Friends School in Detroit
 - 10 James and Grace Lee Boggs House
 - 27 WGPR-TV
 - 31 Levi Barbour Intermediate School
 - 34 Brewster-Wheeler Recreation Center
 - 36 D. Bethune Duffield Elementary School
 - 55 Packard Motor Car Company
 - 57 Prince Hall Grand Lodge
 - 58 Pure in Heart Missionary Baptist Church
 - 61 St. John's Presbyterian Church
 - 63 United Auto Workers Solidarity House
 - 73 Clairpointe-Tennessee-Conner Neighborhood
 - 79 General Douglas MacArthur (Belle Isle) Bridge



OBJECTID	Parcel_ID	Ownership_Classification	Survey_L
1	8015014	Private	Intensive
2	8015045	Private	Intensive
3	8001605	Private	Intensive
4	8098807	Private	Intensive
5	8168908	Public	Intensive
6	8094458	Private	Intensive
7	8000994	Private	Intensive
8	9004424	Public	Intensive
9	8097212	Private	Intensive
10	8104703	Private	Intensive
11	8054689	Private	Intensive
12	8003522	Private	Intensive
13	8088909	Private	Intensive
14	16039479	Private	Intensive
15	8015051	Private	Intensive
17	13007933	Public	Intensive
18	8124969	Private	Intensive
19	8092681	Private	Intensive
20	8300601	Private	Intensive
21	8043598	Private	Intensive
22	8000448	Private	Intensive
23	8000566	Private	Intensive
24	01000882	Private	Intensive
25	8009619	Private	Intensive
26	10007670	Private	Intensive
27	8068600	Private	National Register/Intensive
28	8054573	Private	National Register/Intensive
29	8059240	Private	National Register/Intensive
30	8054743	Private	National Register/Intensive
31	8155323	Public	Reconnaissance
32	8009836	Private	Reconnaissance
33	16007174	Private	Reconnaissance
34	8031448	Public	Reconnaissance
35	8008177	Public	Reconnaissance
36	1100041843	Public	Reconnaissance
37		Multiple	Reconnaissance
38	8090371	Private	Reconnaissance
39	140062368	Private	Reconnaissance
40		Multiple	Reconnaissance
41	8014523	Private	Reconnaissance
42	8281783	Private	Reconnaissance
43	8140031	Public	Reconnaissance
44	8003523	Private	Reconnaissance
45	8280322	Private	Reconnaissance
46	8019680	Private	Reconnaissance
47	8062015	Private	Reconnaissance
48	8023818	Private	Reconnaissance
49	8148816	Private	Reconnaissance
50	8094426	Private	Reconnaissance
51	8023817	Private	Reconnaissance
52	8141486	Private	Reconnaissance
53	8023825	Private	Reconnaissance
54	8009467	Private	Reconnaissance
55	8108282	Private	Reconnaissance
56	8013678	Private	Reconnaissance
57	8069750	Private	Reconnaissance
58	8186802	Private	Reconnaissance
59		Multiple	Reconnaissance
60	8035253	Private	Reconnaissance
61	8031341	Private	Reconnaissance
62	8002579	Private	Reconnaissance

Historic_Name

Apex Bar
Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
Shabazz, Betty, House
Dudley Randall's Broadside Press
Detroit Fire Department Engine Company No 34
International Afro American Museum
Frances Harper Inn (Christian Industrial Club)
Friends School in Detroit
Hartford Avenue Baptist Church
Boggs, James and Grace Lee, House
Nation of Islam Temple No. 1
Northern High School
McGhee, Orsel and Minnie, House
Our Lady of Victory Church
Greater Shiloh Baptist Church
Sojourner Truth Homes
St. Cecilia Gymnasium and Church
Vaughn's Bookstore
Liuzzo, Viola Gregg, House
Wilson, Easby, House
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity
Detroit Association of (Colored) Woman's Clubs
Detroit Urban League (Albert Kahn House)
Paradise Theater (Orchestra Hall)
Sacred Heart Major Seminary Black Jesus Grotto
WGPR-TV
New Bethel Baptist Church
Parks, Rosa (McCauley) and Raymond, Flat
Shrine of the Black Madonna of the Pan African Orthodox Christian Church
Levi Barbour Intermediate School
Belcrest Hotel
Black Star Printing (Publishing/Press)
Brewster-Wheeler Recreation Center
Cobo Hall (TCF Center)
D. Bethune Duffield Elementary School
Conant Gardens
Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church
Ed Davis Auto Dealership
Eight Mile-Wyoming Neighborhood
Greater New Mount Moriah Baptist Church
Hartford Memorial Baptist Church
William E. Higginbotham School
Home Federal Savings and Loan
Home Federal Savings and Loan Branch
Keith, Damon, Flat
House, William Stuart, House
James H. Cole Home for Funerals
Lewis College of Business (Meyers)
Milford Court Apartments
Motown Recording Studio/Jobete Publishing Company
Muhammad's Mosque No. 1
Nathan Johnson Associates Office
St. John's Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Packard Motor Car Company
Plymouth United Church of Christ
Prince Hall Grand Lodge
Pure in Heart Missionary Baptist Church
Russell Woods-Sullivan Neighborhood
Solomon's Temple Church
St John's Presbyterian Church
St. Peter Claver Parish

Other_Name	Address
None	7649
None	5050
None	313
None	12651
None	6345
None	1549
Leonard, H. J., House	307
None	1100
New Ebenezer Baptist Church	6300
James and Grace Lee Boggs Center	3061
Workmen's Circle Community Center	11529
Detroit International Academy	9026
None	4626
St. Juliana Church	10113
None	537
None	
None	6340
None	12123
None	19375
None	18199
None	293
Lennane, William, House	5461
Kahn, Albert, House	208
Orchestra Hall	3711
None	2701
William V. Banks Broadcast Center	3146
Oriole Theater	8430
None	3201-03
Pilgrim Congregational Church	7625-35
None	4209
None	5440
None	8824
Bernard Ginsburg Branch Library	637
Cobo Center, TCF Center	1
Ralph Bunche Academy	2715
None	
Nardin Park Methodist Church	5151
None	11825
None	
None	586
Covenant Baptist Church	18700
None	20119
None	9108
None	13300
None	1544
None	2127
Dorr W. Frisbee Insurance Agency	2624
Detroit Bible Institute	17370
None	1740
Motown Hitsville Museum	2644-48
None	14880
None	2512
North Woodward Congregational Church	8715
None	1580
None	600
Amaranth Temple	3500
None	3411
None	
None	2341
	1961
St. Mary's Episcopal Church	461

Street	Municipality	County
Oakland Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
St. Antoine Street	Detroit	Wayne
Hague Street	Detroit	Wayne
Old Mill Place	Detroit	Wayne
Livernois Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
West Grand Boulevard	Detroit	Wayne
Horton Street	Detroit	Wayne
St. Aubin Street	Detroit	Wayne
Hartford Street	Detroit	Wayne
Field Street	Detroit	Wayne
Linwood Street	Detroit	Wayne
Woodward Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
Seebaldt Street	Detroit	Wayne
West Eight Mile Road	Detroit	Wayne
Benton Street	Detroit	Wayne
Stockton Street, Fenelon Avenue, Nevada Avenue, and Justine Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
Stearns Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
Dexter Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
Marlowe Street	Detroit	Wayne
Riopelle Street	Detroit	Wayne
Eliot Street	Detroit	Wayne
Brush Street	Detroit	Wayne
Mack Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
Woodward Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
Chicago Boulevard	Detroit	Wayne
East Jefferson Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
Linwood Street	Detroit	Wayne
Virginia Park Street	Detroit	Wayne
Linwood Street	Detroit	Wayne
Seneca Street	Detroit	Wayne
Cass Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
Fenkell Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
Brewster Street	Detroit	Wayne
Washington Boulevard	Detroit	Wayne
Macomb Street	Detroit	Wayne
Conant Street, Seven Mile Road, Ryan Road, and Nevada Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
West Chicago Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
Dexter Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
Pembroke, Santa Barbara, 8 Mile, Mendota	Detroit	Wayne
Owen Street	Detroit	Wayne
James Couzens Freeway	Detroit	Wayne
Wisconsin Street	Detroit	Wayne
Woodward Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
West Seven Mile Road	Detroit	Wayne
Virginia Park Street	Detroit	Wayne
Oakman Boulevard	Detroit	Wayne
West Grand Boulevard	Detroit	Wayne
Meyers Road	Detroit	Wayne
West Grand Boulevard	Detroit	Wayne
West Grand Boulevard	Detroit	Wayne
Wyoming Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
West Grand Boulevard	Detroit	Wayne
Woodward Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
East Grand Boulevard	Detroit	Wayne
East Warren Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
McDougall Street	Detroit	Wayne
Holcomb Street	Detroit	Wayne
Davison, Dexter, Cortland, and Livernois Street	Detroit	Wayne
Seven Mile East	Detroit	Wayne
East Lafayette Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
Eliot Street	Detroit	Wayne

District_Name	Year	Resource_Type
NA	ca. 1910	Building
NA	1974	Building
NA	1912	Building
Russell Woods-Sullivan Local Historic District	ca. 1963	Building
NA	1918	Building
NA	1930	Building
NA	1897	Building
NA	1971	Building
NA	1924-1945	Building
Grace Lee and James Boggs House Local Historic District	ca. 1921	Building
NA	1940	Building
NA	1916	Building
NA	ca. 1912	Building
NA	1932	Building
Greater Shiloh Baptist Church Local Historic District	1923, 1978	Building
None	1941, 1987	Building
NA	1922, 1929	Building
NA	Unknown	Building
NA	ca. 1949	Building
NA	1949	Building
Brush Park Local Historic District	1919	Building
East Ferry Historic District	1913	Building
Brush Park Local Historic District	1906-1928	Building
Orchestra Hall (Individual Listing)	1919	Building
Sacred Heart Major Seminary (Individual Listing)	1957	Building
NA	ca. early 1900s	Building
NA	1927, 1963	Building
NA	ca. 1917	Building
NA	1956	Building
NA	1922	Building
Belcrest Hotel (individual listing)	1926	Building
NA	Unknown	Building
Brewster-Wheeler Recreation Center Local Historic District	1917, 1929	Building
NA	1960	Building
NA	1927	Building
NA	1920s-1950s	District
Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Local Historic District	1927-1943	Building
NA	Unknown	Building
NA	1920s-1950s	District
NA	1964	Building
NA	1942	Building
NA	1926-27	Building
NA	Unknown	Building
NA	1970	Building
NA	ca. 1915	Building
Oakman Boulevard Local Historic District	ca. 1925	Building
James H. Cole Home for Funerals Local Historic District	1957	Building
NA	1950-1953	Building
NA	1952	Building
West Grand Boulevard African American Arts and Business Lc	1912-13	Building
NA	Unknown	Building
West Grand Boulevard African American Arts and Business Lc	Unknown	Building
St. John's Christian Methodist Episcopal Church Local Historic	1902-1929	Building
NA	1903-1940s	Building
NA	1974	Building
Prince Hall Grand Lodge Local Historic District	1924	Building
NA	ca. 1957	Building
Russell Woods-Sullivan Local Historic District	1920s-1950s	District
NA	1981	Building
NA	1966	Building
Brush Park Local Historic District	ca. 1897	Building

Architectural Classification	Style	Plan
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Commercial	Rectangular
Modern Movement	Modern	Irregular
Other	Other	T
Modern Movement	International	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Neoclassical	Rectangular
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Commercial	Rectangular
Late Victorian	Queen Anne	Rectangular
Modern Movement	International	T
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Neo-Gothic	Rectangular
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Craftsman	Rectangular
Modern Movement	Moderne	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Neoclassical	Rectangular
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Craftsman	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Neoclassical	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Late Gothic Revival	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Classical Revival	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Romanesque	Rectangular
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Commercial	Rectangular
Modern Movement	Ranch	T
Late 19th and Early 20th Century Revivals	Bungalow	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Neoclassical	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Colonial Revival	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	English Renaissance	U
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Italian Renaissance	Rectangular
NA	NA	
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Commercial	Rectangular
Modern Movement	Art Moderne	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century American Movements	Bungalow/Craftsman	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Classical Revival	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Collegiate Gothic	Polygonal
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Renaissance Revival	T
Late 19th and early 20th Century American Movements	Commercial	Rectangular
Modern Movement	Art Deco	Rectangular
Modern Movement	International	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Collegiate Gothic	Polygonal
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements; Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Bungalow, Tudor Revival	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Neo-Gothic	Irregular
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Commercial	Rectangular
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Bungalow	Rectangular
Modern Movement	International Style	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Late Gothic Revival	Irregular
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Mission	U
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Commercial	Rectangular
Modern Movement	International	Rectangular
Late 19th and early 20th Century Modern Movements	Craftsman	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Neo-Tudor	Rectangular
Modern Movement	Moderne	Irregular
Modern Movement	Moderne	Rectangular
Modern Movement	Moderne	Irregular
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Craftsman	Rectangular
Modern Movement	Modern	Rectangular
Modern Movement	International	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Neo-Gothic	Irregular
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Commercial	Irregular
Modern Movement	International	Polygonal
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Neoclassical	Rectangular
Modern Movement	International	L
Late 19th and 20th Century American Movements; Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Bungalow; Tudor Revival	Rectangular
Modern Movement	Post-Modern	Rectangular
Modern Movement	International	T
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Late Gothic Revival	Rectangular

Materials_Foundation	Materials_Walls	Roof_Form	Materials_Roof	Materials_Other
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Concrete
Concrete	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Aluminum
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Cross-Gable	Shingle - asphalt	None
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Hip	Shingle - asphalt	Wood
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Hip	Shingle - asphalt	Stone
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Concrete
Stone	Wood - clapboard	Cross-Gable	Shingle - asphalt	Vinyl
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Aluminum
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Stone
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Cross-Gable	Shingle - asphalt	Wood, stone
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Stone
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Hip	Shingle - asphalt	Stone, Terra Cotta
Not Visible	Other	Hip	Shingle - asphalt	Asphalt shingle, wood
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Front Gable	Shingle - asphalt	Stone
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Front Gable	Shingle - asphalt	Stone
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Side Gable	Shingle - asphalt	Weatherboard, Wood
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Front Gable	Shingle - asphalt	Stone
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Wood
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Cross-Gable	Shingle - asphalt	Stone, Wood
Not Visible	Wood - clapboard	Side Gable	Shingle - asphalt	Metal
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Hip	Shingle - asphalt	Wood
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Side Gable	Shingle - asphalt	Wood
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Hip	Shingle - asphalt	Stucco, Stone
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Stone, Terra cotta
				Stone
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Glass block
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Stucco, Stone
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Hip	Shingle - asphalt	Wood, concrete
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Front Gable	Shingle - asphalt	Stone
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Cross-Gable	Shingle - asphalt	Stone, Metal
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Terra cotta
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Wood
Concrete	Masonry - brick	Hip	Shingle - asphalt	Wood
Not Visible	Masonry - concrete	Flat	Flat - all types	Glass
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Stone
Not Visible	Masonry - brick		Shingle - asphalt	Weatherboard, Wood, Stone
Not Visible	Masonry - stone	Cross-Gable	Slate	Copper
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Concrete
Not Visible	Wood - clapboard		Shingle - asphalt	Brick, Weatherboard, asphalt
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Stucco, stone, aluminum
Not Visible	Masonry - stone	Cross-Gable	Shingle - asphalt	
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Hip	Tile	Stone, terra cotta
Not Visible	EIFS or similar	Flat	Flat - all types	Concrete
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Aluminum
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Hip	Shingle - asphalt	Wood
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Cross-Gable	Shingle - asphalt	Stucco, wood, stone
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Granite
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Stone
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Stone
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Hip	Shingle - asphalt	Wood, stucco
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Glass block
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Hip	Shingle - asphalt	Glass block
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Cross-Gable	Shingle - asphalt	Stone
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Concrete, Glass
Not Visible	Masonry - concrete	Cross-Gable	Metal	Metal
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Hip	Metal	Stone
Not Visible	Masonry - concrete	Flat	Flat - all types	Glass block
Not Visible	Masonry - brick		Shingle - asphalt	Weatherboard, Wood, Stone
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Cast stone, aluminum
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Concrete
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Front Gable	Shingle - asphalt	Stone

Condition	Integrity	Architect_
Fair	Moderately Altered	Unknown
Good	Unaltered	Nathan Johnson and Associates
Good	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	Charles Kotting
Fair	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Fair	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Demolished		Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	J. Wexler
Good	Slightly Altered	Malcolmson and Higginbotham
Fair	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Good	Altered	1923: W. W. Ahlschlager with Carlos N. Stokes; 1978 Addition
Good	Altered	Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	Dalton R. Wells (Gymnasium); Antonio DiNardo (Church)
Poor	Altered	Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	Smith, Hinchman, and Grylls
Good	Slightly Altered	Albert Kahn
Good	Slightly Altered	C. Howard Crane
Good	Unaltered	NA
Fair	Moderately Altered	Unknown
Good	Altered	1927: George D. Mason; 1963: Nathan Johnson Associates
Good	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	George D. Mason
Fair	Slightly Altered	Malcolmson and Higginbotham
Good	Slightly Altered	Charles N. Agree
Poor	Altered	Unknown
Fair	Slightly Altered	Mildner & Eisen (1917); George W. Graves (1929)
Good	Altered	Louis Rossetti (Giffels and Vallet)
Good	Slightly Altered	Malcolmson and Higginbotham
Fair	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	Edwin F. Jasson and Frank L. Venning; Andrew R. Morrison
Fair	Altered	Unknown
	Moderately Altered	Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	O'Dell, Hewlett & Luckenbach Associates
Good	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Fair	Slightly Altered	N. C. Sorensen
Good	Altered	Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Fair	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Poor	Altered	Morris Webster (Library and Activities Building, 1957)
Poor	Slightly Altered	Beneicke and Lorenz
Good	Altered	Unknown
Fair	Altered	Unknown
Fair	Altered	Nathan Johnson
Good	Slightly Altered	Malcolmson and Higginbotham (Chapel); Hugh B. Clement (sa
Poor	Altered	Albert Kahn
Good	Slightly Altered	Madison and Madison
Good	Slightly Altered	Bernard C. Wetzel
Fair	Altered	Nathan Johnson
Fair	Slightly Altered	Various
Good	Unaltered	William Lee Bonner
Good	Slightly Altered	Madison and Madison
Good	Slightly Altered	Unknown

Historic_Use

COMMERCE/TRADE/Restaurant: Bar
 RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence; COMMERCE/TRADE
 GOVERNMENT/Fire Station: Firehouse
 DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling: Terrace; RECREATION AND C
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence; DOMESTIC/Multiple [

EDUCATION/School: K-12 School
 RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence
 SOCIAL/Meeting Hall: Community Center; RELIGION/Religiou:

EDUCATION/School: Secondary School
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence
 RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church
 RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church
 DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling: Duplex; DOMESTIC/Multiple Dw

RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church; RECREATION AND CUI
 COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store: Bookstore
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence
 DOMESTIC:/Single Dwelling: Residence; SOCIAL/Clubhouse:

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence; SOCIAL/Clubhouse
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence; SOCIAL/Civic: Public
 RECREATION AND CULTURE/Music Facility: Concert Hall
 RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church
 COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store; INDUSTRY/PROCESSI

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Theater: Cinemar; RELIGION/
 DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling: Duplex
 RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church
 EDUCATION/School: Primary School
 DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling: Apartment
 COMMERCE/TRADE/Business: Office
 EDUCATION/Library: Library; RECREATION AND CULTURE/S

RECREATION/CULTURE/Auditorium: Exhibit and Convention
 EDUCATION/School: Primary School
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence
 RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church
 COMMERCE AND TRADE/Specialty Store: Auto Dealership
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence
 RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church
 RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church
 EDUCATION/School: Primary School
 COMMERCE/TRADE: Financial Institution: Bank
 COMMERCE/TRADE: Financial Institution: Bank
 DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling: Duplex
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence
 COMMERCE/TRADE/Professional: Insurance Agency; FUNER

EDUCATION/College: Business School
 DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling: Apartment
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence; INDUSTRY/PROCES

COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store; RELIGION/Religious Fa
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence; COMMERCE/TRADE
 RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church
 INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/Manufacturing Facil

RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church
 SOCIAL/Meeting Hall: Fraternal Organization
 RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence
 RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church
 RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church
 RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church

Current_Use	Builder_	Outbuildings
VACANT	Unknown	
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Unknown	
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence	Unknown	
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence	Unknown	
GOVERNMENT/Fire Station: Firehouse	Unknown	
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling: Terrace	Unknown	
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence	Unknown	
DEMOLISHED	Unknown	
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Unknown	
EDUCATION/Education-related	Unknown	Garage
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Temple	Unknown	
EDUCATION/School: Secondary School	Unknown	
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence	Unknown	Garage
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Unknown	
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Unknown	
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling: Duplex; DOMESTIC/Multiple Dw	Unknown	
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church; RECREATION AND CULTURE/Music Facility: Concert Hall	John Finn & Sons (Gymnasium); W. E. Other	
VACANT	Unknown	
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence	Unknown	Garage
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence	Unknown	Garage
SOCIAL/Clubhouse: Fraternity	Unknown	
SOCIAL/Clubhouse	Unknown	
SOCIAL/Civic: Public Service Organization	Unknown	
RECREATION AND CULTURE/Music Facility: Concert Hall	Unknown	
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Unknown	
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/ Communications F	Unknown	
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Unknown	
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling: Duplex	Unknown	Garage
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Unknown	
VACANT	Unknown	
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling: Apartment	Unknown	
VACANT	Unknown	
VACANT	Unknown	
RECREATION/CULTURE/Auditorium: Exhibit and Convention	Unknown	
EDUCATION/School: Primary School	Unknown	
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence	Unknown	
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Unknown	
VACANT	Unknown	
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence	Unknown	
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Jacob Strobl & Sons, Inc.	Garage
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Unknown	
VACANT	Sibbard Construction Company	
COMMERCE/TRADE: Financial Institution: Bank	Unknown	
COMMERCE/TRADE: Financial Institution: Bank	Unknown	
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling: Duplex	Unknown	Garage
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence	Unknown	Garage
FUNERARY/Mortuary: Funeral Home	Unknown	Garage
VACANT	Unknown	
VACANT	Ettenheimer, Green, and Alper	
RECREATION AND CULTURE/Museum: Museum	Unknown	
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Mosque	Unknown	
COMMERCE/TRADE/Professional	Unknown	
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Unknown	
VACANT	Unknown	
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Unknown	
SOCIAL/Meeting Hall: Fraternal Organization	Unknown	
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Unknown	
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence	Various	
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Unknown	
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Unknown	
EDUCATION/School: Primary School	George D. Duncan	

Area_Significance_2

Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Entertainment/Recreation
 Ethnic Heritage- Black; Social History; Architecture
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Literature
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Architecture
 Ethnic Heritage – Black; Social History
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History□
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Education
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Politics/Government
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Law
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Religion
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Architecture□
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Community Planning and Development
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Recreation
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History□
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History□
 Ethnic Heritage – Black; Social History; Architecture
 Ethnic Heritage – Black; Social History; Entertainment/Recreation
 Ethnic Heritage – Black; Social History
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Communications
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Politics/Government
 Ethnic Heritage – Black; Politics/Government; Social History
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Politics/Government
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Education
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Communications
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Recreation
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Education
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Community Planning and Development
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Business
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Community Planning and Development
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Commerce
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Commerce
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Law
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Commerce
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Education
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Community Planning and Development
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Entertainment/Recreation
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Religion
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Architecture
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Industry
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History

 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Community Planning and Development

 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
 Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Religion

Narrative Description

The Apex Bar is located at the southwest corner of Oakland Av
 Bethel AME Church is located on the northeast corner of East \

The Dr. Betty Shabazz House is located on the north side of H
 This building is located on the southwest corner of Old Mill Plac
 Detroit Fire Department Engine Company No. 34 is located on
 This building is located at the northwest corner of West Grand
 This building is located on the north side of Horton Street west
 The Friends School in Detroit is located at the northeast corner
 This church is located at the northeast corner of Milford and H
 This house is located on the southwest corner of Field and Go
 This building is located on the west side of Linwood Street betw
 Northern High School, now the Detroit International Academy, i
 This house is located on the north side of Seebaldt Street betw
 This building is located on the south side of Eight Mile Road jus
 Greater Shiloh Baptist Church is located on the northeast corn
 The Sojourner Truth Homes is a complex of 20 two-story apart
 St. Cecilia's Church and Gymnasium is located at Stearns and
 This building is on the west side of Dexter Avenue between Mo
 The Viola Gregg Liuzzo House is a one-and-one-half-story, rec
 This house is located on Riopelle Street just south of Grixdale ,
 Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity is located on the north side of Eliot S
 This building is located on the southwest corner of Brush Stree
 This two-and-one-half story, U-shaped building is located at the
 This building is located at the northwest corner of Woodward A
 The Black Jesus Grotto is located on the grounds of the Sacre
 WGPR TV consists of two ca. 1900s commercial buildings in th
 New Bethel Baptist Church was built in 1927 as the Orient The
 The house is a two-and-one-half story Craftsman style building
 The Shrine of the Black Madonna is located at the northwest c
 The Levi Barbour Intermediate School is a three-story, E-shape
 The Belcrest Hotel is a twelve story, T-shaped building constru
 Two-story rectangular brick commercial building with a flat roof
 The Brewster Wheeler Recreation Center is a one-story buildin
 Cobo Center is a 2.4m sf complex with exhibit halls, a ballroom
 Two- to three-story E-shaped brick school in the Collegiate Got
 The neighborhood is bounded by Conant Street, Seven Mile R
 The building is composed of two sections: the church (sanctua
 One-story rectangular brick building with a flat roof. No visible c
 This neighborhood extends approximately one mile east to wes
 Located on the south side of Owen Street between Brush Stree
 Irregularly shaped two-story Gothic church with cross-gabled r
 This is a two-story school constructed of brick with stone and te
 One-story rectangular brick building with a flat roof. The origin
 This one-story bank is located on the northwest corner of West
 This two-and-one-half story two family flat is located on the nor
 This building is a two-story, rectangular Neo-Tudor style house
 Two-story brick commercial building built around an earlier squ
 Two building complex. Both buildings are two-story brick buildir
 Five-story irregularly-shaped brick apartment building with a fla
 2644: This is a two-story, rectangular residential building with a
 One-story rectangular yellow brick building with a flat roof. Stac
 This building is located on the southeast corner of West Grand
 St. John's CME consists of three connected buildings, a chape
 The Packard Motor Car Company Plant is a sprawling complex
 This church is located on the southeast corner of East Warren
 The building is a three-story brick structure that is rectangular k
 This building is an L-shaped one-story structure built largely of
 The neighborhood is bounded by Davison, Dexter, Cortland, ar
 Three-story rectangular building with a composition flat roof. W
 St. John's Presbyterian Church is located on the north side of E
 Two-story rectangular building with an asphalt-shingled front g

History

Originally a Jewish working class neighborhood, this area was Bethel AME is one of the oldest African American congregation Betty Dean Sanders was born May 28, 1934, either in Detroit o In 1965, this Russell Woods house became the first home of p The Detroit Fire Department's Engine Company No. 34 was de Dr. Charles H. Wright, a native of Dothan, Alabama, was born i As African American migrants flooded into Detroit as part of the Friends School was conceived of when African American Judge Hartford Avenue Baptist Church was founded in 1917 an outpo This house was built in the early 1920s for Thomas F. and Jose This building was constructed around 1940 to house a commu Detroit's Northern High School, designed by Detroit architects I In the early 1920s, middle-class African Americans began mov Our Lady of Victory was founded in in a storefront on Eight Mile Shiloh Baptist is the second-oldest African American Baptist cc In June of 1940, Congress extended the 1937 Housing Act to a St. Cecilia parish was founded in 1921 in a converted tavern at Edward Vaughn, a native of Alabama, was born on July 30, 19 Viola Fauver Gregg Liuzzo was born in 1925 in Pennsylvania b The Easby Wilson house is located just west of a historically m Alpha Phi Alpha is the oldest Greek fraternal organization for A This house was designed by the Detroit architectural firm of Sn This house was designed by Albert Kahn (1869-1942) as his p The Paradise Theater (Orchestra Hall) was built in 1919 as the Sacred Heart Major Seminary was established in 1919. The se WGPR TV began broadcasting at noon on September 28, 197 This building was constructed in 1927 as the Orient Theater, sh Often called the "mother of the civil rights movement," Rosa Lo The Shrine of the Black Madonna was constructed from 1925 t The city of Detroit first began establishing junior high schools (The Belcrest Hotel was built in 1926 as a luxury apartment hote Mike Hamlin (owner) and Helen Jones (operations) of the Lea The original 1917 structure was one of many libraries commiss Completed in 1960, Cobo Hall was the city's main events and e D. Bethune Duffield Elementary was built in 1923 and designe Conant Gardens sits on land originally owned by abolitionist St Ebenezer AME Church was built in two phases from 1927 to 19 Ed Davis was the first African American to own a new-car deal A small community of about 1000 African Americans settled on Greater New Mt. Moriah Church was founded around 1926, an This building was constructed around 1942 for Covenant Bapti The William Higginbotham School, designed by N.C. Sorensen Home Federal Savings and Loan opened in the fall of 1947 at Home Federal Savings and Loan opened in the fall of 1947 at This house was once home to Judge Damon Keith (1922-2019 Oakman Boulevard was developed as a fashionable white resi James H. Cole II founded a funeral home business in Black Bo This complex was originally built for the Detroit Bible Institute fr The Federal Housing Administration's Section 608 program pr Grand Boulevard was completed in 1913 as the City of Detroit This is a formerly commercial storefront converted to a mosque The Nathan Johnson architectural office is located within the N This complex of buildings was built in stages from 1902 to 192 The Packard Motor Car Company was founded in 1902 and be Plymouth United Church of Christ was founded as Plymouth C The Prince Hall Grand Lodge was built in 1924 as the Amarant The Detroit Free Press included mention of this building in a 19 What would become the Russell Woods neighborhood was pla Solomon's Temple Church was founded by William Lee Bonne St. John's Presbyterian Church, organized in 1919, was the first St. Peter Claver was the first Roman Catholic parish founded s

Significance_Statement	Significance_Period	Eligibility_
The Apex Bar is eligible for National Register listing under Criterion A, as an important historic resource in the city of Detroit.	1910-1962	Individually eligible
Bethel AME church is recommended eligible under Criterion A, 1974		Individually eligible
The Betty Shabazz House at 313 Hague is recommended as eligible under Criterion A, 1944-1958		Individually eligible
Dudley Randall's Broadside Press is eligible under Criterion A, 1965-1977		Individually eligible
Detroit Fire Department Engine Company No 34 is significant under Criterion A, 1918-1969		Individually eligible
The International Afro-American Museum is eligible under National Register Criterion A, 1966-1987		Individually eligible
The Frances Harper Inn is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, 1915-1960		Individually eligible
Friends School was potentially eligible under Criterion A as an important historic resource in the city of Detroit.	1965-1973	Not eligible
Hartford Avenue Baptist Church is eligible for National Register listing under Criterion A, 1924-1977		Individually eligible
The James and Grace Lee Boggs House is significant under Criterion A, 1962-1969		Individually eligible
Nation of Islam Temple No. 1 is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, 1959-1975		Individually eligible
Northern High School is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, 1916-1966		Individually eligible
The Orsel and Minnie McGhee House is eligible under Criteria A and C, 1944-1949		Individually eligible
Our Lady of Victory is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A, 1946-1982		Individually eligible
Shiloh Baptist Church is eligible under Criterion A, as an important historic resource in the city of Detroit.	1914-1978	Individually eligible
The Sojourner Truth Homes are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, 1941-1943		Contributing to district
St. Cecilia Church and Gymnasium is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, 1922-1968		Individually eligible
Vaughn's Bookstore is potentially eligible under National Register Criterion A, 1959-1967		More research needed
The Viola Gregg Liuzzo House is recommended eligible under Criterion A, 1963-1965		Individually eligible
The Easby Wilson House is recommended eligible under National Register Criterion A, 1955		Individually eligible
Alpha Phi Alpha is a contributing resources to the Brush Park Local Historic District, 1919-1969		Individually eligible
The Detroit Association of Women's Clubs at 5461 Brush is listed in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, 1913-1969		Contributing to district
The Detroit Urban League building at 208 Mack Avenue was in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, 1906-1969		Previously listed
The Paradise Theater was listed (as Orchestra Hall) in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, 1919-1951		Previously listed
The Sacred Heart Major Seminary was listed in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, 1923-1969		Previously listed
WGPR-TV is significant under National Register Criterion A, at 1975-1995		Individually eligible
New Bethel Baptist Church at 8430 Linwood Street is significant under Criterion A, 1963-1969		Individually eligible
The Rosa (McCauley) and Raymond Parks Flat is significant under Criterion A, 1961-1988		Individually eligible
The Shrine of the Black Madonna at 7625-35 Linwood Street is significant under Criterion A, 1958-1970		Individually eligible
Barbour Intermediate School was determined eligible under Criteria A and C under the National Register of Historic Places, 1919-1969		Individually eligible
The Belcrest Hotel was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 under Criterion A, 1919-1969		Previously listed
The Black Star Publishing Building is potentially eligible under Criterion A as the location of the first African American newspaper in Detroit.		Individually eligible
The Brewster Wheeler Recreation Center is recommended eligible under Criterion A as an important historic resource in the city of Detroit.		Individually eligible
Because Cobo Center has been significantly altered since the historic events with which it is associated.		Not eligible
D. Bethune Duffield Elementary is recommended eligible under Criterion A as an important historic resource in the city of Detroit.		Individually eligible
Conant Gardens is recommended as eligible under Criterion A one of the earliest African American residential developments in Detroit.		Contributing to district
Ebenezer AME Church is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C. It is significant for its association with the early African American church in Detroit.		Individually eligible
This property is not recommended as eligible due to extensive alterations after the end of the historic period.		Not eligible
The Eight-Mile Wyoming neighborhood is recommended as eligible under Criterion A as an important historic resource in the city of Detroit.		Contributing to district
Greater New Mount Moriah Baptist Church is eligible under Criterion B, for its association with the early African American church in Detroit.		Individually eligible
Because Hartford Memorial Baptist Church did not move to this location until 1977, after the historic period.		Not eligible
Higginbotham School was determined eligible under Criteria A and C under the National Register of Historic Places, 1919-1969		Individually eligible
This building does not appear to be currently eligible due to the non-historic skin built over the historic structure.		Not eligible
The Home Federal Savings and Loan Branch is potentially eligible under Criterion A as an important historic resource in the city of Detroit.		Individually eligible
The house at 1544 Virginia Park is eligible under Criteria B for its association with significant African American figures in Detroit.		Individually eligible
The William Stuart House House is a contributing resource in the Oakman Boulevard Local Historic District, 1919-1969		Individually eligible
The James H. Cole Home for Funerals is both an individually listed local historic district and a contributing resource in the city of Detroit.		Not eligible
Because the Lewis College of Business did not move to this campus until 1976, after the historic period.		Not eligible
The Milford Court Apartment building is recommended as eligible under Criterion A as an important historic resource in the city of Detroit.		Individually eligible
Motown's 2644-2648 West Grand Boulevard is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A, 1963-1969		Contributing to district
Very little information was found on this building but it has the potential to be eligible under Criterion A.		More research needed
The Nathan Johnson architectural office is eligible under Criteria B, for its association with the early African American architect in Detroit.		Individually eligible
St. John's CME was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 under the National Register of Historic Places, 1919-1969		Previously listed
The Packard Motor Car Company is recommended eligible under Criterion A as the location of the first African American-owned automobile company in Detroit.		Individually eligible
Plymouth United Church of Christ is eligible under Criterion B, for its association with the early African American church in Detroit.		Individually eligible
The Prince Hall Grand Lodge is eligible under Criterion A for its association with the early African American fraternal organization in Detroit.		Individually eligible
While Nathan Johnson is a significant African American architect, who designed a number of important buildings in Detroit.		Not eligible
The Russell Woods Neighborhood Historic District is recommended as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, 1919-1969		Contributing to district
Because this building was constructed outside the context period (1900-1976), it is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.		Not eligible
St. John's Presbyterian Church is eligible under Criteria A, as the first African American Presbyterian church in Detroit.		Individually eligible
This building is listed as a contributing resource in the Brush Park Local Historic District, 1919-1969		Individually eligible

CR_Context_Theme	NR_Criteria_2	NR_Exceptions_2
1941-1954 Birth of Civil Rights Movement	A, B	
1964-1976 Second Revolution	A, C	A, G (Architecture)
1954-1964 Modern Civil Rights Movement	B	
1964-1976 Second Revolution	A, B	
1900-1941 Rekindling Civil Rights	A, C	
1964-1976 Second Revolution	A	
1900-1941 Rekindling Civil Rights	A	
1964-1976 Second Revolution	NA	
1900-1941 Rekindling Civil Rights	A, B, C	A
1964-1976 Second Revolution	B	
1954-1964 Modern Civil Rights Movement	A, B	A
1964-1976 Second Revolution	A	
1941-1954 Birth of Civil Rights Movement	A	
1941-1954 Birth of Civil Rights Movement	A	A, B
1900-1941 Rekindling Civil Rights	A, C	A
1941-1954 Birth of Civil Rights Movement	A, C	
1964 - 1976 Second Revolution	A, C	A
1964 - 1976 Second Revolution	A, B	
1964 - 1976 Second Revolution	B	
1954-1964 Modern Civil Rights Movement	A	
1900-1941 Rekindling Civil Rights	A, C	
1941-1954 Birth of Civil Rights Movement	A, B, C	
1941-1954 Birth of Civil Rights Movement	A, B, C	
1941-1954 Birth of Civil Rights Movement	A	
1964 - 1976 Second Revolution	A, C	A
1964 - 1976 Second Revolution	A	G
1954-1964 Modern Civil Rights Movement	A, B	A
1964 - 1976 Second Revolution	B	G
1945-1964 1964 - 1976 Second Revolution Modern Civil Rights	A, B	A
1954-1964 Modern Civil Rights Movement	A, C	
1900-1941 Rekindling Civil Rights	A, C	
1964 - 1976 Second Revolution	A	
1900-1941 Rekindling Civil Rights	A, B, C	
1945-1964 Modern Civil Rights Movement	NA	
1900-1941 Rekindling Civil Rights	A, C	
1900-1941 Rekindling Civil Rights	A, C	
1954-1964 Modern Civil Rights Movement	A, C	A
1964 - 1976 Second Revolution	NA	
1900-1941 Rekindling Civil Rights	A, C	
1964 - 1976 Second Revolution	B	A
1900-1941 Rekindling Civil Rights	NA	
1941-1954 Birth of Civil Rights Movement	A, C	
1941-1954 Birth of Civil Rights Movement	NA	
1945-1976 Second Revolution	A	
1954-1964 Modern Civil Rights Movement	B	
1945-1976 Second Revolution	A, B, C	
NA	NA	
NA	NA	
1941-1954 Birth of Civil Rights Movement	A, C	
1945-1964 Modern Civil Rights Movement	A	
1964 - 1976 Second Revolution	NA	
1954-1964 Modern Civil Rights Movement	B	
1954-1964 Modern Civil Rights Movement	A, C	A
1941-1954 Birth of Civil Rights Movement	A	
1964 - 1976 Second Revolution	B, C	A, G
1941-1954 Birth of Civil Rights Movement	A, C	
NA	NA	
1941-1954 Birth of Civil Rights Movement	A, C	
NA	NA	
1964 - 1976 Second Revolution	A, C	A
1900-1941 Rekindling Civil Rights	A, C	A

Associated Context Theme

Music & Civil Rights in Detroit 1900-1976
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement
Politics, Law, and African American Representation in Detroit 1
Finding a Voice: Detroit's African American Community and the
Politics, Law, and African American Representation in Detroit 1
Detroit's Black-Owned Businesses 1900-1976
The Demand for Fair Housing in Detroit 1918-1976
Equal Education in Detroit 1900-1976
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement
Politics, Law, and African American Representation in Detroit 1
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement
Equal Education in Detroit 1900-1976
The Demand for Fair Housing in Detroit 1918-1976
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement
The Demand for Fair Housing in Detroit 1918-1976
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement
Finding a Voice: Detroit's African American Community and the
Politics, Law, and African American Representation in Detroit 1
The Demand for Fair Housing in Detroit 1918-1976
African American Social Clubs and Civil Rights Organizations 1
African American Social Clubs and Civil Rights Organizations 1
African American Social Clubs and Civil Rights Organizations 1
Music & Civil Rights in Detroit 1900-1976
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement
Finding a Voice: Detroit's African American Community and the
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement
Politics, Law, and African American Representation in Detroit 1
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement
Equal Education in Detroit 1900-1976
The Demand for Fair Housing in Detroit 1918-1976
Finding a Voice: Detroit's African American Community and the
African American Social Clubs and Civil Rights Organizations 1
Politics, Law, and African American Representation in Detroit 1
Equal Education in Detroit 1900-1976
The Demand for Fair Housing in Detroit 1918-1976
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement
Detroit's Black-Owned Businesses 1900-1976
The Demand for Fair Housing in Detroit 1918-1976
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement
Equal Education in Detroit 1900-1976
Detroit's Black-Owned Businesses 1900-1976
Detroit's Black-Owned Businesses 1900-1976
Politics, Law, and African American Representation in Detroit 1
Politics, Law, and African American Representation in Detroit 1
Detroit's Black-Owned Businesses 1900-1976
Equal Education in Detroit 1900-1976
The Demand for Fair Housing in Detroit 1918-1976
Music & Civil Rights in Detroit 1900-1976
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement
Detroit's Black-Owned Businesses 1900-1976
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement
African Americans and Detroit's Automobile Industry 1914-197
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement
African American Social Clubs and Civil Rights Organizations 1
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement
The Demand for Fair Housing in Detroit 1918-1976
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement

Sources	Surveyor	Survey_Date
Detroit City Directories, 1910-1953.“Business Change,” Boot at	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
Bethel AME Church Records, Bentley Historical Library, Univer	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Russell John Rickford, Betty Shabazz, Surviving Malcolm X (N-	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
Melba Joyce Boyd, Wrestling with the Muse: Dudley Randall ar	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
“Mayor Orders Ten Eligibles Be Appointed,” Detroit Tribune, Ap	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
“Wright, Charles H.,” Encyclopedia of Detroit, Detroit Historical	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
Francis H. Warren, Freedmen’s Progress (Detroit, Michigan, 1	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
“First Quaker School Gets OK to Open, Detroit Free Press, Sej	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	November 2018
Hartford Memorial Baptist Church Records, Bentley Historical l	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board, “The Proposed Gr	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Masjid Wali Muhammad/Temple No. 1, City of Detroit Historic l	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
“Cornerstone Laid for Northern High School,” Detroit Free Pres	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
“Top Court Takes Covenant Case,” Detroit Tribune, June 28, 1	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Shirley Harris-Slaughter, Our Lady of Victory: The Saga of an A	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Michigan Register of Historic SitesCity of Detroit Historic Desig	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Apartment Housing in the City of Detroit, 1892-1970, Multiple F	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Leslie Woodcock Tentler, “Through the Prism of Race: The Arc	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Michigan Chronicle, July 27, 1967.Eric Thomas Campbell, “Va	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
“LBJ Declares War on Klan, 4 Accused of Killing Detroit Mothe	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
“Police Disperse 400 to Avert Disorder,” Detroit Free Press, Ap	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
Nancy Curtis, Black Heritage Sites: An African American Odys	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Richard W. Thomas, Life For Us is What We Make It: Building	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Detroit Urban League Records: 1916-1992, Bentley Historical l	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
Constance Henslee, “Orchestra Hall,” National Register of Hist	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
Gary Blonston, “Blackened Christ Causes a Dispute,” Detroit F	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
“Battle Lines Drawn in WGPR Labor Dispute.” Michigan Chron	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Angela Dillard, Faith in the City: Preaching Radical Social Char	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
“Alabama Boycott Heroine Can’t Find a Job!” Michigan Chronic	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
“Albert Cleage is Dead at 88; Led Black Nationalist Church.” N-	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Deborah Goldstein, “Public Schools of Detroit” National Regist	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
“Matron Sues Belcrest Hotel for \$500 on Discrimination Charge	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin, Detroit: I Do Mind Dying (C	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Quinn Evans Architects, Draft National Register of Historic Pla	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
“Cobo Center,” Encyclopedia of Detroit, https://detroithistorical .	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Deborah Goldstein, “Public Schools of Detroit” National Regist	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Michigan State Historical Marker“Start Negro Housing,” Detroit	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board, “Proposed Ebene:	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
Untitled photo feature, Detroit Free Press, November 12, 1963	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Burniece Avery, “The Eight Mile Road...Its Growth from 1920..	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
“Celebrate Anniversary at New Mt. Moriah,” Detroit Tribune, Ju	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
Hartford Memorial Baptist Church Records, Bentley Historical l	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
“Citizens Charge Discrimination at Higginbotham,” Detroit Trib	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
Multiple Property Documentation Form, Branch Banks in the C	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Multiple Property Documentation Form, Branch Banks in the C	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Herb Boyd, Black Detroit (New York: Harper Collins Press, 201	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
Stuart House, “Inciting To Riot in Selma, AL,” speech given in	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
James H. Cole Home for Funerals Local Historic District Study	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
“Lewis College of Business” http://www.detroiturbex.com/conte	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Quinn Evans Architects, “Apartment Buildings in Detroit, 1892-	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Historic Designation Advisory Board, “West Grand Boulevard f	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
ent 1900-1976	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District Study Report.	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
“North Woodward Congregational Church,” National Register c	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
“Packard Walkout Halts Production,” Lansing State Journal, Ju	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Angela Dillard, Faith in the City: Preaching Radical Social Char	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board, “Proposed Prince	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
Hiley Ward, “His Ideas Add Sparkle to ‘Sidewalk’ Churches,” D	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
Russell Woods-Sullivan Local Historic District Study Committe	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Harry Cook, “Solomon’s Temple Grows Fast,” Detroit Free Pre:	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Michigan Historical Marker; “Church to Serve Poor, Rich,” Detr	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
“Detroit’s Negro Catholic School,” Detroit Tribune, September	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

Survey_Number	X_Coord	Y_Coord	SHAPE_Length	SHAPE_Area	Transparency	Zone
SHPO17-56	-83° 3' 58.835"	42° 22' 34.440"	174.8937249	1959.681583		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 3' 24.868"	42° 21' 38.247"	1020.515344	27418.541		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 4' 29.712"	42° 22' 50.034"	134.1067165	1050.236327		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 8' 18.956"	42° 22' 55.124"	190.2176251	1945.165685		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 7' 55.379"	42° 20' 47.245"	186.1003054	1869.442014		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 6' 30.875"	42° 20' 42.062"	272.7131935	2548.684562		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 4' 11.570"	42° 22' 21.873"	158.1414729	1242.279758		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 1' 46.991"	42° 20' 26.345"	2088.362236	173986.2018		4
SHPO17-56	-83° 6' 46.909"	42° 21' 0.726"	491.2678533	13963.42601		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 0' 38.161"	42° 21' 45.660"	207.3850531	2161.33792		4
SHPO17-56	-83° 6' 52.565"	42° 22' 54.079"	281.7820883	4500.839169		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 4' 47.265"	42° 22' 57.490"	2711.280414	127493.3018		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 7' 10.015"	42° 21' 19.256"	113.5084941	799.7950608		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 9' 46.830"	42° 26' 42.477"	927.6170251	37602.77649		
SHPO17-56	-83° 3' 4.127"	42° 20' 55.075"	305.5454641	4047.883303		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 3' 14.726"	42° 25' 37.153"	2221.869489	306821.8109		
SHPO17-56	-83° 8' 22.745"	42° 22' 22.173"	428.3566414	10343.34983		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 7' 33.257"	42° 22' 54.588"	214.3466731	2844.998893		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 11' 29.800"	42° 26' 2.755"	207.3520917	1984.511715		
SHPO17-56	-83° 5' 11.742"	42° 25' 40.595"	124.3248912	898.1301108		
SHPO17-56	-83° 3' 13.719"	42° 20' 53.630"	196.8082095	2085.867132		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 3' 45.657"	42° 21' 45.234"	226.266228	2250.438493		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 3' 19.555"	42° 20' 53.263"	448.4392767	11775.30405		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 3' 33.940"	42° 20' 55.744"	1040.081083	59391.26089		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 6' 40.158"	42° 22' 27.987"	3842.978012	864848.8082		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 1' 0.661"	42° 20' 24.670"	706.5289695	24918.55107		4
SHPO17-56	-83° 6' 16.900"	42° 22' 4.614"	502.3199894	15220.97725		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 6' 34.796"	42° 21' 51.171"	157.5607295	1380.462467		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 6' 7.766"	42° 21' 46.930"	521.3865642	14285.37262		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 0' 17.115"	42° 22' 22.676"	1731.252978	55935.78325		4
SHPO17-56	-83° 4' 6.187"	42° 21' 35.875"	629.1780527	12351.89738		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 9' 28.255"	42° 24' 9.940"	439.3460318	11964.76428		
SHPO17-56	-83° 2' 11.626"	42° 21' 2.849"	807.6069447	27204.64074		4
SHPO17-56	-83° 2' 57.285"	42° 19' 35.695"	5106.402944	1044278.533	70	
SHPO17-56	-83° 1' 26.663"	42° 20' 39.120"	1629.685257	130996.3034		4
SHPO17-56	-83° 4' 1.663"	42° 25' 47.231"	9986.648119	5811842.261	70	
SHPO17-56	-83° 7' 53.715"	42° 22' 2.813"	692.4797758	18170.3517		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 7' 31.505"	42° 22' 51.557"	367.9843263	7676.410865		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 9' 28.650"	42° 26' 31.767"	14720.8798	12395666.12	70	
SHPO17-56	-83° 4' 26.969"	42° 23' 6.924"	727.7390081	19947.76847		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 11' 0.095"	42° 25' 43.415"	1011.59142	21389.4973		
SHPO17-56	-83° 9' 31.068"	42° 26' 29.186"	882.5585549	32087.3799		
SHPO17-56	-83° 4' 53.871"	42° 22' 59.399"	263.2626731	4259.111692		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 10' 38.942"	42° 25' 52.973"	269.5814645	3235.564471		
SHPO17-56	-83° 5' 30.470"	42° 22' 16.437"	237.3350948	2492.187803		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 7' 54.861"	42° 23' 34.764"	136.4385488	1145.783312		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 5' 21.262"	42° 21' 50.235"	471.0095563	9322.169206		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 10' 11.472"	42° 25' 10.236"	351.90941	6902.166411		
SHPO17-56	-83° 6' 40.537"	42° 20' 59.082"	478.9351015	13381.33709		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 5' 18.180"	42° 21' 50.755"	312.9624947	5193.374559		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 9' 33.105"	42° 23' 56.868"	312.0595294	5462.055519		
SHPO17-56	-83° 5' 34.287"	42° 21' 45.212"	165.1466494	1666.043819		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 4' 49.378"	42° 22' 46.902"	745.5352952	21233.22256		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 1' 42.582"	42° 22' 48.472"	9542.395694	332368.5004	70	4
SHPO17-56	-83° 3' 22.406"	42° 21' 34.501"	469.1196608	13392.47789		2
SHPO17-56	-83° 1' 42.840"	42° 21' 25.581"	490.0678363	9249.401092		4
SHPO17-56	-82° 59' 42.080"	42° 22' 8.070"	323.1234393	4780.501056		4
SHPO17-56	-83° 8' 2.464"	42° 23' 4.117"	11722.56	8110954.197	70	2
SHPO17-56	-83° 4' 42.346"	42° 25' 59.453"	499.4371718	15547.19678		
SHPO17-56	-83° 1' 44.951"	42° 20' 23.967"	699.8330236	15200.98323		4
SHPO17-56	-83° 3' 7.865"	42° 20' 56.138"	244.7713827	2812.995859		2

X_Coord_Decimal	Y_Coord_Decimal
-83.066343071388	42.376233416719
-83.0569077996081	42.3606240376337
-83.0749200368341	42.3805648923334
-83.1385988155012	42.3819790186126
-83.1320495846369	42.3464568404707
-83.1085765203205	42.3450172059979
-83.0698805688523	42.3727424245193
-83.0297196184442	42.3406513929772
-83.1130302547668	42.350201624065
-83.0106002935616	42.3626832040578
-83.1146012882573	42.381688657618
-83.0797958968581	42.3826362495715
-83.1194485073671	42.3553489513945
-83.1630083272656	42.4451326003976
-83.0511462669845	42.3486320124857
-83.054090637813	42.4269869041399
-83.1396512897742	42.372825784136
-83.125904730549	42.3818300481257
-83.191611026347	42.4340985848728
-83.086594982446	42.4279430970571
-83.0538108383054	42.3482306399368
-83.062682554029	42.3625650925008
-83.0554318640091	42.3481287196383
-83.0594276970571	42.3488178901668
-83.111154865608	42.3744407524496
-83.0168503484962	42.3401859834171
-83.1046943297665	42.367948422039
-83.1096655717214	42.3642142465423
-83.1021571193496	42.363036158083
-83.004754149533	42.3729656601612
-83.0683852126105	42.3599652268605
-83.1578485996128	42.4027612392776
-83.0365628053257	42.3507914842717
-83.0492457063576	42.3265818124621
-83.024073117138	42.3442000485917
-83.0671285469361	42.4297862989076
-83.1315874087933	42.3674480703871
-83.1254181192908	42.3809881521381
-83.1579583212266	42.4421576107247
-83.0741581002928	42.38525673464
-83.1833596284215	42.428726425212
-83.1586300417697	42.441440499654
-83.0816307629266	42.3831663512205
-83.1774840233712	42.4313813435174
-83.0917972793675	42.371232463341
-83.1319058202148	42.3929899355193
-83.0892395258386	42.3639541322731
-83.1698532662838	42.4195099566082
-83.1112602935701	42.3497450677895
-83.0883832614576	42.3640987277182
-83.1591958782905	42.3991298701818
-83.0928573742125	42.3625590165088
-83.0803828155949	42.37969499137
-83.0284949500326	42.3801310712913
-83.0562238455773	42.359583702211
-83.0285667234442	42.3571058238931
-82.9950223040733	42.3689082865613
-83.1340178566203	42.3844770358205
-83.0784293397307	42.4331813443965
-83.0291530582028	42.3399908714813
-83.0521845855832	42.3489271316411

63	8149312	Private	Reconnaissance
64	8010016	Private	Reconnaissance
65	8141562	Private	Reconnaissance
66		Private	Reconnaissance
67	8000574	Private	Reconnaissance
70		Public	National Register/Intensive
71	8019412	Public	Reconnaissance
72	02001736-40	Private	Reconnaissance
73		Multiple	Reconnaissance
74		Multiple	Reconnaissance
75	03003501-17	Private	Reconnaissance
76	01001489	Private	Reconnaissance
77	01001491-2	Private	Reconnaissance
78	02000620-1	Private	Reconnaissance
79	15000001	Public	Reconnaissance
80	08001637	Private	Reconnaissance
81	08001639	Private	Reconnaissance
82	08001690	Private	Reconnaissance
83	08001641	Private	Reconnaissance
84	08001642	Private	Reconnaissance

United Auto Workers Solidarity House
United Sound Systems Recording Studios
Waterman and Sons Printing
Welch Oakwood Hills Subdivision
Your Heritage House
Birwood Wall
Jeffries Towers
Shaw College
Clairpointe-Tennessee-Conner Neighborhood
West Side Neighborhood
Friendship Baptist Church
Fritz Funeral Home
Lewis College of Business (John R.)
Michigan Chronicle
General Douglas MacArthur (Belle Isle) Bridge
(Motown) International Talent Management Incorporated
Motown Sales and Marketing Building I
(Motwon) Artist Development Building
Motown Finance Building
Motown Administration Building

None	8000
None	5840
None	17134
None	
Jackson, William, House	110
Eight Mile Wall, Detroit Wall, Wailing Wall	
None	
Michigan Lutheran College	7351
Informally, "The CTC"	
Old West Side, Tireman-Grand Boulevard Neighborhood	
None	3900
College for Creative Studies	246
Murphy, James F., House	5450
Paramount Pictures Film Exchange	479
Belle Isle Bridge	7200
Motown Studios	2670
Motown Studios	2662-2664
Gamma Phi Delta Sorority	2657
Motown Studios	2656
Motown Studios	2652-54

East Jefferson Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
Second Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
Wyoming Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
Ethel and Bassett streets between Visger and Outer Drive	Detroit	Wayne
East Ferry Street	Detroit	Wayne
Alley between Birwood and Mendota streets between Eight Mile and Pembroke Road	Detroit	Wayne
Marvin Gaye Drive at the John C. Lodge Service Drive	Detroit	Wayne
Woodward Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
Bounded by Jefferson, Kitchener, Clairpoint, and Avondale	Detroit	Wayne
Bounded by Tireman Road, Lawton Road, Buchanan Street, and Central Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
Beaubien Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
East Ferry Street	Detroit	Wayne
John R. Street	Detroit	Wayne
Ledyard Street	Detroit	Wayne
East Jefferson Avenue	Detroit	Wayne
West Grand Boulevard	Detroit	Wayne
West Grand Boulevard	Detroit	Wayne
West Grand Boulevard	Detroit	Wayne
West Grand Boulevard	Detroit	Wayne
West Grand Boulevard	Detroit	Wayne

NA	1951	Building
United Sound Systems Recording Studio Local Historic District	1916	Building
NA	Unknown	Building
NA	1919-1940s	District
East Ferry Avenue Historic District	1887	Building
NA	1941	Structure
NA	1953-55	Building
NA	Unknown	Building
NA	1920s-1950s	District
NA	1920s-1950s	District
NA	1963-64	Building
East Ferry Avenue Historic District	1914	Building
East Ferry Avenue Historic District	1910	Building
Cass Park Historic District	1936	Building
Belle Isle Historic District	1923	Structure
West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District	1912	Building
West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District	1912	Building
West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District	1912	Building
West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District	1912	Building
West Grand Boulevard Local Historic District	1912	Building

Modern Movement	International	Irregular
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Craftsman	Rectangular
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Commercial	Rectangular
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Bungalow	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Queen Anne	Irregular
NA	NA	
Modern Movement	International	Polygonal
Other	Other	Rectangular
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Bungalow	Rectangular
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Bungalow; Craftsman	Rectangular
Modern Movement	International	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Mediterranean Revival	Rectangular
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Colonial Revival	Rectangular
Modern Movement	Moderne	Rectangular
NA	NA	
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Craftsman	Rectangular
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Craftsman	Rectangular
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Craftsman	L
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Tudor Revival	Rectangular
Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements	Craftsman	Rectangular

Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Aluminum
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Hip	Shingle - asphalt	Wood
Not Visible	Masonry - concrete	Flat	Flat - all types	Aluminum
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Side Gable	Shingle - asphalt	Wood, Weatherboard
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Cross-Gable	Shingle - asphalt	Wood, stone
	Masonry - concrete			
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Mansard	Metal	
Not Visible	Other	Flat	Flat - all types	Metal
Not Visible	Masonry - brick		Shingle - asphalt	Weatherboard, wood
Not Visible	Masonry - brick		Shingle - asphalt	Weatherboard, Wood, Asphalt
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Flat	Flat - all types	Concrete
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Hip	Shingle - asphalt	Wood
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Side Gable	Shingle - asphalt	Wood
Not Visible		Flat	Flat - all types	Stone
Concrete				Steel
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Hip	Shingle - asphalt	Wood
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Hip	Shingle - asphalt	Stone, Wood
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Hip	Shingle - asphalt	Wood, Concrete
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Cross-Gable	Shingle - asphalt	Wood, Stucco
Not Visible	Masonry - brick	Cross-Gable	Shingle - asphalt	Wood

Good	Altered	Hugh T. Millar, Oscar Stonorov
Fair	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Fair	Altered	Unknown
		Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	John Scott and Co
Good	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Good	Altered	Harley, Ellington, and Day
Fair	Altered	Unknown
Fair	Moderately Altered	Unknown
	Moderately Altered	Varies
Good	Slightly Altered	Wallace K. Kagawa
Good	Slightly Altered	Alvin E. Harley
Good	Slightly Altered	F. E. Carleton
Good	Slightly Altered	Unknown
	Slightly Altered	
Good	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Fair	Moderately Altered	Unknown
Good	Moderately Altered	Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	Unknown
Good	Slightly Altered	Unknown

COMMERCE/TRADE/Organizational: Labor Union
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence; INDUSTRY/PROCES
 INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/Communications Fa
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence; RECREATION AND (C
 LANDSCAPE/Street Furniture/Object: Wall
 DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling: Apartment
 EDUCATION/College: Vocational School
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence; DOMESTIC/Multiple I
 RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence; FUNERARY/Mortuary
 EDUCATION/College: Business School
 INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/ EXTRACTION: Communications F
 TRANSPORTATION/ Road-Related: Bridge
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence; INDUSTRY/PROCES
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence; INDUSTRY/PROCES
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence; INDUSTRY/PROCES
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence; INDUSTRY/PROCES
 DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence; INDUSTRY/PROCES

COMMERCE/TRADE/Organizational: Labor Union	John Cooley Company	
VACANT	Unknown	
COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store	Unknown	
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence	Unknown	
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence	Unknown	Carriage House
LANDSCAPE/Street Furniture/Object: Wall	Unknown	
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling: Apartment	Hayes Construction	
UNKOWN	Unknown	
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence	Unknown	Garage
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence; DOMESTIC/Multiple [Unknown	
RELIGION/Religious Facility: Church	Unknown	
UNKOWN	Unknown	Garage
UNKOWN	Unknown	
UNKOWN	H. G. Winter	
TRANSPORTATION/ Road-Related: Bridge		
UNKOWN	Unknown	
DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling: Residence	Unknown	
SOCIAL/Clubhouse: Sorority	Unknown	
UNKOWN	Unknown	
UNKOWN	Unknown	

Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Entertainment/Recreati
Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Commerce
Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Community Planning ar
Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
Ethnic Heritage - Black; Community Planning and Developmen
Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Community Planning ar
Ethnic Heritage - Black; Education
Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Community Planning ar
Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Community Planning ar
Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
Ethnic Heritage - Black; Commerce
Ethnic Heritage - Black; Education
Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Communications
Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History
Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Entertainment/Recreati
Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Entertainment/Recreati
Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Entertainment/Recreati
Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Entertainment/Recreati
Ethnic Heritage - Black; Social History; Entertainment/Recreati

Two part building. Closest to the Detroit River is a three-story r
 Two story brick rectangular building with a hipped asphalt roof.
 One-story rectangular commercial building. Constructed of con
 This neighborhood encompasses two streets, Bassett and Ethe
 Two-and-a-half story irregularly-shaped brick residence with m
 The Birwood Wall is a concrete wall in the residential neighbor
 Three fifteen-story high rise residential apartment towers. Each
 One-story rectangular building clad in corrugated metal siding.
 The neighborhood is centered on the streets of Clairpointe, Ter
 The neighborhood was originally bounded by Tireman, Grand F
 Friendship Baptist Church is located on Beaubien Street, also s
 Asymmetrical two and a half story, hipped roof building clad in
 Two-and-a-half story rectangular brick building with side gable
 Two-story, three bay brick office building with a limestone Mod
 The General MacArthur Bridge was constructed in 1923 to repl
 This is a two-story, two-family flat with a rectangular footprint a
 This two-story, rectangular residence has a raised basement a
 This is a two-story, foursquare building clad in red-brown brick
 This two-story, square, single-family residence has a raised ba
 This is a two-story, rectangular two-family flat with a raised bas

The United Auto Workers (UAW) labor union was founded in 1936. This building was constructed in 1916 as a private residence. In 1916, William Waterman moved to Detroit from Nashville in 1916, and Thomas H. Welch platted the Oakwood Hill subdivision (then in the city of Grand Rapids). The house was built for William Jackson, president of the Michigan State Teachers' Association. The Birwood Wall is located in the historically African American neighborhood of Black Bottom. The Jeffries Homes were a public housing development constructed in 1936. This building was the second location of the Michigan Lutheran Synod. The CTC neighborhood is part of the larger Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood. This neighborhood was known for years as the "West Side," or "Black Bottom." Friendship Baptist Church is a historically black congregation founded in 1887. M. Kelly Fritz founded a funeral home in Black Bottom serving the community. This house was originally built in 1910 for James F. Murphy. It was later used as a school. The Michigan Chronicle was a black owned and operated newspaper. An incident on Belle Isle was the precipitating event for a one-day strike. Grand Boulevard was completed in 1913 as the City of Detroit's main thoroughfare. Grand Boulevard was completed in 1913 as the City of Detroit's main thoroughfare. Grand Boulevard was completed in 1913 as the City of Detroit's main thoroughfare. Grand Boulevard was completed in 1913 as the City of Detroit's main thoroughfare. Grand Boulevard was completed in 1913 as the City of Detroit's main thoroughfare.

The UAW Solidarity House is potential eligible under Criterion A, as the location where t Individually eligible
 The Local Historic District Study Committee Report states that the United Sound System Individually eligible
 While Waterman and Sons was a long-time printing business owned by an African Ame More research needed
 The Welch-Oakwood Hills subdivision is potentially eligible under Criterion A, as an imp Contributing to district
 The house is a contributing resource in the East Ferry Avenue Historic District which is l Contributing to district
 The Birwood Wall (also called variously the Eight Mile Wall, the 1941-1950 Individually eligible
 Of the original complex, only three of the high rise towers remain; low-rise development More research needed
 Although Shaw College was at this location during the context period (which ends in 19 Not eligible
 The CTC neighborhood is recommended eligible under Criterion A as an important Afric Contributing to district
 The West Side neighborhood is potentially eligible under Criterion A, as one of the earli Contributing to district
 Friendship Baptist Church is eligible under Criteria A, for its significance as a historic Pa Individually eligible
 The Fritz Funeral Home at 246 East Ferry is a contributing structure in the East Ferry A Contributing to district
 The Lewis College of Business building at 5450 John R is a contributing structure in the Contributing to district
 The Michigan Chronicle building is listed as a contributing resource to the Cass Park Ne Contributing to district
 Belle Isle, including the bridge, is already listed under Criteria A and C as Detroit's prem Previously listed
 Motown's 2670-72 West Grand Boulevard is eligible for the National Register under Crii Contributing to district
 Motown's 2662-64 West Grand Boulevard is eligible for the National Register under Crii Contributing to district
 Motown's 2657 West Grand Boulevard is eligible for the National Register under Criteri Contributing to district
 Motown's 2656 West Grand Boulevard is eligible for the National Register under Criteri Contributing to district
 Motown's 2652-54 West Grand Boulevard is eligible for the National Register under Crii Contributing to district

1954-1964 Modern Civil Rights Movement	A	
1900-1941 Rekindling Civil Rights	A, B	
1964 - 1976 Second Revolution	NA	
1941-1954 Birth of Civil Rights Movement	A, C	
1964-1976 Second Revolution	C	
1900-1941 Rekindling Civil Rights	A	
1954-1964 Modern Civil Rights Movement	A	
NA	NA	
1941-1954 Birth of Civil Rights Movement	A	
1900-1941 Rekindling Civil Rights	A, C	
1964 - 1976 Second Revolution	A, C	A
1941-1954 Birth of Civil Rights Movement	A, C	
1941-1954 Birth of Civil Rights Movement	A, B, C	
1954-1964 Modern Civil Rights Movement	A, C	
1941-1954 Birth of Civil Rights Movement	A, C	
1964 - 1976 Second Revolution	A	
1964 - 1976 Second Revolution	A	
1964 - 1976 Second Revolution	A	
1964 - 1976 Second Revolution	A	
1964 - 1976 Second Revolution	A	

African Americans and Detroit's Automobile Industry 1914-1976
Music & Civil Rights in Detroit 1900-1976
Finding a Voice: Detroit's African American Community and the
The Demand for Fair Housing in Detroit 1918-1976
African American Social Clubs and Civil Rights Organizations 1
The Demand for Fair Housing in Detroit 1918-1976
The Demand for Fair Housing in Detroit 1918-1976
Equal Education in Detroit 1900-1976
The Demand for Fair Housing in Detroit 1918-1976
The Demand for Fair Housing in Detroit 1918-1976
The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement
Detroit's Black-Owned Businesses 1900-1976
Equal Education in Detroit 1900-1976
Finding a Voice: Detroit's African American Community and the
Politics, Law, and African American Representation in Detroit 1
Music & Civil Rights in Detroit 1900-1976
Music & Civil Rights in Detroit 1900-1976
Music & Civil Rights in Detroit 1900-1976
Music & Civil Rights in Detroit 1900-1976
Music & Civil Rights in Detroit 1900-1976
Music & Civil Rights in Detroit 1900-1976

Walter Reuther Library, Wayne State University, "African Amer	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
United Sound System Recording Studios Local Historic District	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
"Black Firms Still Struggle," Detroit Free Press, December 5, 19	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Burdick, Col. Henry. "500 Homes for Negroes." Detroit Free Pr	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
East Ferry Avenue Historic District National Register Nominati	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Burniece Avery, "The Eight Mile Road...Its Growth from 1920..	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
"Project Opened to All Races." Detroit Free Press, September	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
"Lutheran College to Expand," Detroit Free Press, October 9, 19	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Oral interviews with residents recorded by the City of Detroit fo	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board, "The Nacirema Cl	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
"Friendship Baptist First to Plan Big Comeback," Detroit Free P	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	April 2019
Nancy Curtis, Black Heritage Sites: An African American Odysse	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Michigan Register of Historic SitesEast Ferry Avenue Historic A	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Cass Park Local Historic District Final Report, City of Detroit Hi	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Belle Isle National Register Nomination, 1973Belle Isle Nation	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Historic Designation Advisory Board, "West Grand Boulevard I	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Historic Designation Advisory Board, "West Grand Boulevard I	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Historic Designation Advisory Board, "West Grand Boulevard I	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Historic Designation Advisory Board, "West Grand Boulevard I	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018
Historic Designation Advisory Board, "West Grand Boulevard I	Saundra Little, Ruth Mills	July 2018

SHPO17-56	-82° 59' 37.586"	42° 21' 0.729"	986.5852985	36291.73873	4
SHPO17-56	-83° 4' 19.720"	42° 21' 44.554"	345.3685736	5357.445848	2
SHPO17-56	-83° 9' 36.360"	42° 25' 3.169"	253.7707369	4011.661871	
SHPO17-56	-83° 9' 27.963"	42° 15' 37.138"	8433.917581	1203984.701	70
SHPO17-56	-83° 3' 53.658"	42° 21' 41.908"	227.7220276	2722.821052	2
SHPO17-56	-83° 9' 58.535"	42° 26' 31.191"	4528.486076	13211.62106	
SHPO17-56	-83° 4' 12.834"	42° 20' 40.095"	1150.564758	18088.01249	2
SHPO17-56	-83° 4' 26.686"	42° 22' 14.763"	289.5378463	4894.842708	2
SHPO17-56	-82° 57' 13.532"	42° 21' 54.835"	11881.89659	8112931.22	70
SHPO17-56	-83° 7' 4.861"	42° 20' 57.059"	16958.61093	14723229.83	70 2
SHPO17-56	-83° 3' 10.506"	42° 21' 8.248"	361.1375079	6645.113075	
SHPO17-56	-83° 3' 50.190"	42° 21' 43.392"	174.4720641	1886.565502	
SHPO17-56	-83° 3' 52.111"	42° 21' 42.572"	312.1122667	5300.528645	
SHPO17-56	-83° 3' 32.611"	42° 20' 22.792"	351.5547943	5637.216693	
SHPO17-56	-82° 59' 54.586"	42° 20' 33.090"	4408.659153	187429.0394	
SHPO17-56	-83° 5' 15.173"	42° 21' 52.036"	180.159166	1761.880187	
SHPO17-56	-83° 5' 16.113"	42° 21' 51.630"	174.7156978	1683.181222	
SHPO17-56	-83° 5' 18.811"	42° 21' 54.092"	304.6613371	3817.682596	
SHPO17-56	-83° 5' 16.998"	42° 21' 51.420"	138.1177041	1148.179641	
SHPO17-56	-83° 5' 17.354"	42° 21' 51.207"	182.9039607	1746.088961	

-82.9937738128944	42.3502025895333
-83.0721443790098	42.3623760834343
-83.160099916247	42.4175469910814
-83.1577675763404	42.2603162378118
-83.0649048752803	42.3616411337124
-83.1662597968759	42.441997375198
-83.0702315808248	42.3444708123733
-83.0740794074551	42.3707674047573
-82.9537588235055	42.3652319641167
-83.1180168178251	42.3491829979381
-83.0529184206062	42.3522910082964
-83.0639416589952	42.3620532070018
-83.0644754048297	42.3618255639074
-83.0590587136964	42.339664383476
-82.998496224712	42.3425250773453
-83.08754810968	42.3644545824075
-83.0878092708482	42.3643415596244
-83.0885584756035	42.3650254353356
-83.0880551249366	42.3642833837401
-83.0881539331648	42.3642240898338