

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Parks, Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond, Flat

Other names/site number: None

Name of related multiple property listing:

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

Detroit

2. Location

Street & number: 3201-3203 Virginia Park Street

City or town: Detroit State: Michigan County: Wayne

Not For Publication: ☐

Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,


I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 A X B C D

	
Deputy SHPO	December 22, 2020
Signature of certifying official/Title:	
Date	
<u>Michigan State Historic Preservation Office</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	
<p>In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
Signature of commenting official:	
Date	
Title :	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ Entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

James Gabbert
Signature of the Keeper

2/5/2021
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☒
Public – Local ☐
Public – State ☐
Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
District ☐
Site ☐
Structure ☐
Object ☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling: Duplex

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling: Duplex

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond Parks Flat, built around 1917, is a two-family flat in an early twentieth century residential neighborhood in the city of Detroit, Michigan. It is located at the southwest corner of Virginia Park Street and Wildemere Avenue, on a rectangular lot. The property consists of two resources: a duplex and a garage. The two-and-one-half story, red brick duplex faces Virginia Park Street and is built in a modest Craftsman style. The front and back elevations have full-length, one-story porches whose roofs serve as open porches for the second story. The front elevation features bay windows on the first and second floors and a hipped dormer at the roof. The first-floor interior, the flat occupied by the Parks, contains a foyer, living room, dining room, two bedrooms, one bathroom, and a kitchen. It retains the original hardwood floors, plaster walls, and wood trim and doors. A detached, one-story garage is located at the rear (south) lot line. The garage has a hipped roof and wood clapboard siding and its garage door faces Wildemere Avenue. The Parks Flat retains a high degree of integrity. It appears relatively unchanged from the period in which it achieved significance as the home of iconic civil rights activist, Rosa Parks.

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Narrative Description

Site

The Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond Parks Flat, built around 1917, is a two-family flat located in a residential neighborhood in the city of Detroit, Michigan. It is located at the southwest corner of Virginia Park Street and Wildemere Avenue in what is currently known as the Wildemere Park (sometimes known historically as Virginia Park) neighborhood. This area of Detroit, north of the Grand Boulevard and west of Woodward Avenue, was annexed as part of the early twentieth century expansion of Detroit. The land on which this property sits was annexed in 1907. To the east is the commercial corridor of Linwood Street, while to the west is one of the city's major radial streets, Grand River Avenue, and the Jeffries Freeway (I-96).

In terms of the geography of historically African American areas of the city, the Parks Flat is within the Twelfth Street neighborhood, one of the first of Detroit's neighborhoods to widely open to middle class Blacks in the post-World War II era. Two blocks east on Linwood Street is the Shrine of the Black Madonna, where Reverend Albert B. Cleage, Jr. led the militant Black Nationalist movement. New Bethel Baptist Church, where Reverend C. L. Franklin preached and his daughter Aretha Franklin sang, is several blocks north of the Shrine, also on Linwood Street. To the south is the Northwest Goldberg neighborhood, where a number of prominent Black businesses, including Motown Records, relocated in the 1950s and 1960s as Black Bottom and Paradise Valley were razed for urban renewal. Southwest is one of the original Black neighborhoods of the city, the West Side, settled by middle-class Blacks in the 1920s.

The neighborhood is arranged in a typical city grid pattern (in this area of the city, the grid is angled off true north, such that north-south streets actually angle slightly northwest-southeast, while east-west blocks angle slightly northeast-southwest. For simplicity of description, cardinal directions are used throughout this nomination). The blocks are rectangular and longer east to west than north to south. Although there are some vacant lots, particularly to the north and east of the Parks Flat, the neighborhood is still relatively dense. Houses are oriented chiefly along the east/west streets and have uniform setbacks. They sit on narrow but deep rectangular lots, with small front and rear yards and very little space between the houses. Driveways are present but not common; where present, they typically lead between the houses to a detached garage at the rear of the property. The blocks have center alleys and sidewalks. The topography of the area is relatively flat. Vegetation includes residential lawns, mown vacant lots, and street trees and domestic plants.

The houses were largely built in the 1910s and 1920s. Single-family homes predominate, but there are a number of two-family flats like the Parks Flat scattered throughout. Most are one-and-one-half to two-and-one-half stories of frame construction sided with brick or clapboard. A

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variety of styles are present from Bungalow to Craftsman to American Foursquare. Front porches and dormers are nearly universal.

Construction History

The Parks Flat was built in the late 1910s in the Wildermere (sic) Park subdivision. Platted in 1893, it consisted of the eight blocks bounded by Wildemere Avenue, Dexter Avenue, Virginia Park Street, and Lothrop Street. At the time, this was still part of Greenfield Township; it was annexed into the city of Detroit in 1907.¹ The neighborhood was first depicted on a Sanborn Fire Insurance Map in 1915, when Virginia Park Street was called Maidstone Avenue. The neighborhood was still in development at the time, with residences concentrated to the south and west, closer to the intersection of Dexter Avenue and West Grand Boulevard. There were fewer houses in the immediate area of 3201 Virginia Park Street, and no house on the lot it would eventually occupy.

The first concrete evidence of the house is in the 1919-1920 Detroit City Directory, where 3201 Virginia Park Street (the ground-floor unit; the second-floor unit is 3203) was occupied by Frank A. Miller. The Detroit city assessor's records list it as built in 1917, but city directories did not extend this far out on Virginia Park Street until 1919. According to the 1920 Federal Census, Miller was a patternmaker, born in Michigan but of German immigrant parents, and the household included his wife Mabel, her mother Margaret Viney, and his son Raymond. At this time the neighborhood was composed of White people born in Michigan, Canada, and several other states; many of them had parents from Germany, the United Kingdom, and Canada. Economically, the neighborhood was dominated by blue-collar and lower-middle-class workers, including clerks, deliverymen, salesmen, teachers, and a pharmacist. Miller remained in the flat until the early 1930s. It was occupied in the late 1930s and early 1940s by James Mondes, a Greek immigrant who worked as a counter clerk in a general store. The neighborhood composition had not changed much since the 1920s.

The first documentation of the house in a Sanborn Fire Insurance map came in 1950. It appears as a rectangular two-story flat of frame construction with brick veneer. It had a one-story full-length porch across the front with a flat composition roof and a one-story, partial-length porch across the rear with a shingle roof. At the rear (southeast corner) of the lot was a shingle-roofed one-story frame garage. City directories are inconclusive during and after World War II, but it appears for part of this period the occupant was Hiram Gibbs. During the post-World War II era, the neighborhood gradually transitioned to majority African American. As urban renewal in historically segregated African American neighborhoods like Black Bottom and Paradise Valley displaced Black residents, they began moving into White neighborhoods like this one, which was not far from the historically Black middle-class Old West Side neighborhood to the southwest.

¹ Wildermere (sic) Subdivision Plat, 1893.

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Exterior

The Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond Parks Flat sits on a rectangular residential lot, a corner property at the intersection of Virginia Park Street and Wildemere Avenue. Its front (north) façade faces Virginia Park Street. There is a small front yard with manicured lawn in the right of way between the sidewalk and the street and between the sidewalk and the house, with small hedges to either side and in front of the porch. A small tree is located in the right of way. The east elevation abuts the sidewalk while there is a narrow strip of grass between the west elevation and the chain link fence enclosing the vacant lot to the west. At the rear (south) of the house is a small backyard. A two-car garage is located at the rear line of the lot adjacent to the alley and facing Wildemere Avenue. Chain link fences enclose the yard between the house and garage. The east fence, abutting the sidewalk, sits on a low concrete knee wall.

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 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 flanked by stepped brick cheek walls topped with stone coping lead up on either side to the full-length front porch. Each set of steps has decorative iron railings to each side. The porch has a concrete slab floor and a flat roof carried on four brick piers. A brick wall with stone coping spans the space between the two center piers. The brick piers extend through the roof of the porch to form a second story open porch with decorative iron railings between the piers. The first floor of the front elevation has single-leaf entry doors at either side. They are flat panel wood doors with aluminum storms. Between the doors is a three-sided bay window.

The second floor has a similar arrangement. Here, there is only one wood door, on the east end, and it has an inset full-height glass panel. At the west end is a window in place of a door. The hipped dormer has three windows on the north side and is sided with fishscale asphalt shingles. 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 doors and windows have stone lintels and sills, with the exception of the dormer windows and the second-floor bay window and west end window, whose heads are covered by a wood fascia that runs under the eaves.

At the east elevation, there are five symmetrically spaced square basement windows with nine-light panes covered by wood-framed storms. The first and second floors have identical fenestration patterns. At the north end are small horizontal two-light windows; the lower window is covered by wood, but the upper window has single panes. Proceeding south, the next set of windows are tripled with the center units slightly larger than the flanking sash. South of this, each floor has single rectangular windows. At the south end are paired windows of equal size.

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Except for the basement and the horizontal windows, all are double-hung, one-over-one wood sash with aluminum single-pane storm windows. All windows on this elevation have stone sills and lintels except for the 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. The porch has 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 entry doors. They are wood flat panel doors with small windows in the upper half. Both have stone lintels and aluminum storm doors. At the second floor is another single-leaf door and a rectangular window opening. Here, the door appears to be an original four-paneled wood door with an upper glass panel. It also has a stone lintel and aluminum storm door. The window is double-hung, one-over-one with an aluminum storm, and it has a stone sill but its head abuts the narrow wood fascia that runs across the top of the wall. 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.

At the west elevation, there are three symmetrically spaced square basement windows with nine-light panes covered by wood-framed storms. 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. The first and second floor windows are double-hung, one-over-one units with aluminum storms. Most have stone lintels and sills with the exception of the three upper windows on the second floor whose heads touch the narrow wood fascia that runs under the eaves.

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.

Interior (First Floor Flat)

The flat historically occupied by Rosa and Raymond Parks covers the entire first floor except for the stairs to the second-floor flat which are entered from the west door on the north elevation. The first-floor flat is entered from the east door on the north elevation and leads immediately into a small foyer with a single leaf door straight ahead (south) to the dining room. West of the foyer is the living room, which contains the three-sided bay window with double-hung sash. Paired wood French doors with beveled glass panes lead from the living room into the dining room to the south. A door on the west wall of the dining room opens into the front bedroom on the west side, while the east wall of the dining room has a tripled window with double-hung sash. The front bedroom has one double-hung window at the northwest corner along with a small closet on

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the north wall. A short hallway connects the dining room to the kitchen at the back (south) end of the house. The hallway contains an original wood built-in shelving unit with two drawers on the west wall. A door on the west side of the hallway leads to the second bedroom. In this room, there is another single double-hung window located on the west wall along with a closet on the south wall. 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.

A door on the east side of the hallway accesses the bathroom. The bathroom has white porcelain mosaic floor tile and white subway tile halfway up the wall with plaster above. The bathroom contains the original white porcelain-clawed bathtub and wood and mirror wall cabinet. The toilet and vanity sink are modern. The bathroom has one double-hung window on the east wall. At the rear of the house is the kitchen. It has linoleum flooring, plaster walls with wood chair rail, and paired east-facing double-hung windows. A porcelain sink is located on the east wall of the kitchen. There is also an exit doorway on the rear south wall leading to the first floor porch on the south side of the house. The exterior door is a modern replacement.

Integrity

The Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond Parks Flat retains a high degree of integrity. Aside from non-complementary replacement doors, the exterior appears virtually unchanged from its appearance during its occupation by Rosa and Raymond Parks. The interior of the flat occupied by the Parks is also highly intact. The flat retains its original floor plan and most of the original interior finishes.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☒ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Social History: Civil Rights

Period of Significance

1961-1988

Significant Dates

1961

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Parks, Rosa L. (McCauley)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond Parks Flat at 3201 Virginia Park Street is significant under National Register Criterion B, at the local level, for its association with Rosa L. (McCauley) Parks, a nationally significant African American civil rights leader from the 1950s until her death in 2005. Rosa Parks is most well known for her refusal to give up her bus seat to a White man in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955. That moment forever fixed Parks as the “mother of the civil rights movement” and as a powerful symbol of resistance, strength, and freedom. Parks’ actions launched the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which ultimately ended in the desegregation of public buses. Since that day, Parks’ symbolism has often overshadowed her work, both in Detroit and nationally. Parks was well aware of her status as a symbol, and was often a part of significant events, yet often did not have a prominent role. Rather than a reflection of her significance, she identified the cause of this as the result of a patriarchal system. It was a time, she observed, when “women’s rights hadn’t become a popular cause yet.”² At the same time, Parks did not seek a prominent role and did not care to be a public figure.³ She sought to change the world through her work with civil rights organizations, through her work with United States Representative John Conyers, and through her work with youths. The significance of Rosa Parks cannot be limited to one day, nor one action. Her work for equality began well before December 1955 and continued well beyond. Her determination and strength have inspired a countless many. The flat at 3201 Virginia Park Street reflects is the property best able to illustrate the importance and contributions of Rosa Parks during her time in Detroit. Much like Parks herself, the seeming modesty of the building belies its what it holds inside. 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 L. (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. The Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond Parks Flat is nominated under the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) for *The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit*. The property meets the registration requirements of that MPDF for residential buildings under Criterion B.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond Parks Flat is significant under National Register Criterion B under the themes of Ethnic Heritage: Black and Social History at the local level of significance. The period of significance for this property begins in 1961 when Rosa and Raymond Parks move into the first-floor flat until 1988 when Rosa Parks moves from the flat. The flat is significant as the last remaining home of civil rights icon, Rosa Parks.

² Rosa Parks, *My Story* (New York: Dial Books, 1992), 166.

³ *Ibid.*, 185

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The Parks Flat is nominated under the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) for *The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit*. The property meets the registration requirements described under Criterion B for the property type of Buildings, subtype Residential Dwelling. The MPDF is organized according to four periods of significance identified in the National Park Service's (NPS) *Civil Rights in America: A Framework for Identifying Significant Sites*. The significance of the Parks Flats falls under the final two period covered in that document, "Modern Civil Rights, 1954-1964," and "Second Revolution, 1964-1976." These two periods were characterized, nationally and in Detroit, by the maturation of the modern civil rights movement and the efforts of African Americans to capitalize on the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in enforcing and expanding gains made earlier in the century. Despite modest advances in employment and housing equality, African Americans still faced significant discrimination and barriers to equal access in all areas of their life and work. Two strands of activism developed during the period, one that focused on non-violent civil disobedience, modeled after the movement led nationally by Martin Luther King, Jr., and a more militant approach which, in the late 1960s and 1970s, gave rise to the Black Power Movement and Black Nationalism, in which African Americans demanded self-determination, control over Black institutions, and pride in their race, heritage, and achievements. Although Rosa Parks was best known for her 1955 refusal to give up her bus seat to a White man in Montgomery, Alabama, an event that led to the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Parks, in fact, remained a key and active figure in the national civil rights movement throughout the 1960s and into 1980s, the period in which she lived in the flat at 3201 Virginia Park Street. During this time, she used her reputation and presence to support nationally significant civil rights efforts both north 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. Parks understood that part of her significance was as an icon and symbol of the civil rights movement.⁴ She has been widely recognized as the mother of the civil rights, perhaps most notably by President Barack H. Obama in 2013 during the dedication of a statue honoring Parks erected in the United States Capitol, during that speech President Obama observed that the national understanding of Rosa Parks fastens "on that single moment on the bus -- Ms. Parks alone in that seat, clutching her purse, staring out a window, waiting to be arrested."⁵ Yet, President Obama noted:

Her quiet leadership would continue long after she became an icon of the civil rights movement, working with Congressman Conyers to find homes for the homeless, preparing disadvantaged youth for a path to success, striving each day to right some wrong somewhere in this world.⁶

⁴ Rosa Parks, *My Story* (New York: Dial Books, 1992), 185.

⁵ President Barack H. Obama, "President Obama Dedicates a Statue Honoring Rosa Parks." The Obama White House, YouTube.com, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iL7oF6jQudA>.

⁶ Ibid.

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Civil Rights Activism in Alabama, and Early Struggles in Detroit

Rosa Louise McCauley was born in Tuskegee, Alabama, on February 4, 1913. In an undated, handwritten document in her papers at the Library of Congress, Parks described parts of her childhood, when she was about six or seven years old:

Where we lived the KKK moved through the country burning negro churches, schools, flogging and killing. Grandfather stayed up to wait for them to come to our house. He kept his shot gun within hand reach at all times... We could not [unclear] and go to bed at night. The doors and windows were boarded and nailed tight from the inside. I stayed awake many nights, keeping vigil with Grandpa.⁷

In contrast to the fear of the Klan, Parks also wrote of her fondness for her family:

As grandpa... became more feeble, I stayed near him more than ever... I washed his feet at night, soaking his rheumatism twisted toes and stiff legs and ankles... he taught me to plant corn, chop and plow cotton, milk cows, etc. I learned to cook by observing my grandmother... I learned to sew by piecing quilts. Made the first one when I was six... I adored my brother and never wanted him to get a whipping...

After meeting Raymond Parks, who was already a civil rights activist, Rosa married him in 1932, and began working for the Montgomery, Alabama, chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Rosa Parks was active in the NAACP for over a decade before the incident that would make her famous, traveling throughout Alabama working on voter registration drives and documenting instances of racism and persecution.⁸

On December 1, 1955, Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a White passenger because she was, in her own words, "tired of giving in." Her arrest and subsequent trial prompted local civil rights activists to initiate a boycott of Montgomery busses, propelling the civil rights movement and a young Martin Luther King, Jr. to national attention. Nearly two years later, the Supreme Court declared bus segregation unconstitutional, "with that victory, the entire edifice of segregation, like the ancient walls of Jericho, began to slowly come tumbling down."⁹ For Parks and her husband, however, the resolution did nothing to mitigate the hate and harassment to which they were continually subjected.¹⁰ Yet, over the next year, Rosa Parks went on a ten-stop speaking tour sponsored by the NAACP.¹¹ One of her speeches was held at United Autoworkers

⁷ Rosa Parks, *Rosa Parks Papers: Writings, Notes, and Statements, 1956 to 1998; Drafts of early writings; Autobiographical, undated*. 1956. Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss859430227/>.

⁸ "Parks, Rosa," *Encyclopedia of Detroit*, Detroit Historical Society. <https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/parks-rosa>.

⁹ President Barack H. Obama, "Remarks by the President at Dedication of Statue Honoring Rosa Parks -- US Capitol." The Obama White House, YouTube.com, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IL7oF6jQudA>.

¹⁰ "Parks, Rosa," *Encyclopedia of Detroit*, Detroit Historical Society. <https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/parks-rosa>.

¹¹ "Mrs. Parks Ends Speaking Tour," *Detroit Tribune*, December 1, 1956.

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Local 600 Hall at Dix Avenue and Wyoming Avenue in Dearborn, Michigan, several miles to the west of Detroit.¹²

In August 1957, Rosa and Raymond Parks moved to Detroit, where Rosa's brother, Sylvester, was living. The first years they were in Detroit, the couple experienced economic and health struggles. The couple lived in an apartment at 449 E. Euclid Street (no longer extant).¹³

Raymond was initially unable to work in his profession as a barber because he was not licensed in Michigan, Parks was ill and, as she told the *Michigan Chronicle* in May 1959, "work is hard to find."¹⁴ Rosa Parks left Detroit in October 1957 to take a position as the hostess of the Holy Tree Inn on the campus of Virginia University in Hampton, Virginia. Raymond Parks remained in Detroit with Rosa's mother. Rosa Parks returned to Detroit for good in late 1958. A letter to Raymond Parks from the Michigan Consolidated Gas Company in August 1959 suggests the Parks were still living at the Euclid Street apartment.

Rosa and Raymond Parks, for a time, lodged with her brother in his house on Deacon Street, but it is not clear how long their stay was.¹⁵ In October 1959 the Progressive Civic League, a Black professional group based in the west side of Detroit, offered them both work and lodging in their meeting hall at 1930 West Grand Boulevard (no longer extant), where Rosa worked as the manager and treasurer of the organization and Raymond as caretaker. Curiously, Parks was generally disregarded by both the Black and White civil rights community in Detroit in these early years. Even organizations like the NAACP, for whom both Parks had worked so hard in the years leading up to the Montgomery bus boycott, did little to help the couple, and the local chapter did not ask her to speak for almost two years.¹⁶ Their plight eventually began to draw the attention of the national press. A headline in the *Pittsburgh Courier* in July 1960 read "Montgomery Heroine in 'Great Need'."¹⁷ In 1960 the League organized a benefit, held at King Solomon Baptist Church, for the Parks in which twenty-some local churches participated. That same year, correspondence between the national NAACP and the River Rouge-Ecorse branch

¹² Charles Manos, "A Mild Seamstress Starts Dixie Revolt," *Detroit Free Press*, March 18, 1956.

¹³ The Rosa Parks Papers at the Library of Congress contain a bill of lading that indicates the Parks belongings were moved from Montgomery, Alabama, to 449 East Euclid Street in August 1957. Mr. R. A. Parks, as noted in the bill, paid \$267.92 for the move.

¹⁴ "Alabama Boycott Heroine Can't Find a Job!" *Michigan Chronicle*, May 23, 1959.

¹⁵ When the Deacon Street house was facing demolition, it was purchased by Parks' niece, Rhea McCauley, in 2014 and donated to American artist Ryan Mendoza, who disassembled it and transported it to Germany where it was rebuilt. It was later dismantled again and shipped to Rhode Island, where it appears to remain in storage after it failed to sell at an auction in August 2018. The so-called Rosa Parks House received worldwide attention when it was disassembled and sent to Berlin, Germany. However, as this text demonstrates, this was not Parks' only house in Detroit, and while the house possessed some significance as an early residence in Detroit for the Parks, their time there was short-lived and the house does not retain historic integrity. On September 16, 2020, the BBC reported that the house was on display at the Royal Palace in Naples, Italy, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54176956>.

¹⁶ Jeanne Theoharis, *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013), 151-152.

¹⁷ "Montgomery Heroine in 'Great Need'," *Pittsburgh Courier*, July 2, 1960, 3; Jeanne Theoharis, *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013), 154-55; "Negro Churches to Hail Heroine of Bus Boycott," *Detroit Free Press*, June 11, 1960, 10.

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indicated the Parks were living at 898 Webb Street (extant). The home was owned by an out-of-town owner who rented the house to the Parks. It is not known how long the couple remained at that house.

Their situation had improved by the spring of 1961. Raymond Parks found employment at a barber shop on Wildemere Avenue in the Twelfth Street neighborhood, and Rosa began a job at the Stockton Sewing Company, albeit working ten-hour days for little pay. It enabled them to move to the ground floor of a two-flat house at 3201 Virginia Park Street, on the corner of Wildemere Avenue near Raymond's barber shop.¹⁸ It was while living here that Parks would accomplish her most significant civil rights work during her time in Detroit.

Civil Rights Activism in the early to mid-1960s

Rosa Parks' post-Montgomery civil rights work is, as her biographer Jeanne Theoharis has noted, often overlooked. In addition to the slowness of the Detroit civil rights community to recognize her value immediately after she arrived, the national press generally seemed more interested in her as a symbol of the Southern civil rights movement, and treated her time in Detroit as a postscript, much as they characterized her refusal to give up her seat on that Montgomery bus as a spur of the moment decision, rather than the result of over a decade of civil rights activism. However, as Theoharis put it, "(f)rom the time in 1957 that Rosa Parks and her husband arrived in Detroit, the civil rights icon worked tirelessly...Parks' commitment to fight Jim Crow—North or South—was unrelenting."¹⁹

In Detroit, Parks found "(t)he northern promised land that wasn't," where racism "was almost as widespread as Montgomery."²⁰ It may not have been as overt as the segregated busses and schools of the South, but in Detroit Blacks were definitely second class, and the excuse that "this is not the South" was used to dismiss charges of discrimination. She almost immediately encountered the inequalities faced by African Americans in securing equal employment and housing, as evidenced by her difficulties in finding a job and a permanent place to live. When she and her husband moved into 3201 Virginia Park Street, she observed that it was almost entirely populated by African Americans. While at the time Blacks were increasingly able to move into formerly White neighborhoods like this, their housing options were still limited, leading to overcrowding and the subdivision of single-family homes in the neighborhood. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Parks' early activism in Detroit was often related to the struggle for equal housing. In July 1963 she was a featured guest at a demonstration organized by the Detroit branch of the NAACP against housing discrimination in Oak Park, a suburb of Detroit, alongside Myrlie Evers, widow of slain civil rights activist Medgar Evers. Remembering her time in public housing in Alabama, Parks also worked to secure funding for public housing for African Americans in Detroit.

¹⁸ Jeanne Theoharis, *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013), 158.

¹⁹ Herb Boyd, *Black Detroit* (New York: Harper Collins Press, 2017), 196.

²⁰ Douglas Brinkley, *Rosa Parks: A Life* (New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2000), 67.

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Parks appeared at several high profile national civil rights events in the summer of 1963. On June 23, two months prior to the March on Washington, Parks was front and center at the Walk to Freedom, the Detroit civil rights march that preceded its national cousin. Organized by a coalition of civil rights leaders in Detroit, including Reverend C. L. Franklin of New Bethel Baptist Church and Reverend Albert B. Cleage, Jr. of Central Congregational Church, both a few blocks from Parks' flat, the Walk to Freedom drew around 200,000 participants and featured a speech by King that presaged his "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington. However, Parks' participation was barely mentioned (although she was pictured with King and parade marshal David Boston on the stage at Cobo Hall), even in the *Michigan Chronicle*. The *Chronicle* did cover Parks' appearance at a luncheon later that week, when she made a pointed comparison between housing segregation in Detroit and bus segregation in Montgomery, suggesting that Detroiters were as tired of the former as she had been of the latter when she made her famous protest.²¹

In August, Parks traveled to Washington D.C. to participate in the March on Washington. Although she was prominently featured on the dais at the Lincoln Memorial and was among the six women honored in the "Tribute to Women" at the event, Parks and her fellow women activists were shunted into a different march route, and it was not lost on her or the other women that they were being marginalized despite their prominent role in the movement.²² Later that fall, Parks attended two civil rights conferences in Detroit, the Northern Negro Leadership Conference, organized by Reverend Franklin, and its rival conference, the Northern Negro Grassroots Leadership Conference organized by Reverend Cleage. It may have been at the latter conference that she first met Malcolm X, who presented his famous "Address to the Grassroots" there.

After nearly twenty years in the civil rights movement, Parks secured her first paid political position when newly elected Congressman John Conyers hired Parks to work in his office in March 1965. Conyers, a native of Highland Park, Michigan (an independent city within the boundaries of Detroit), was a thirty-six-year-old civil rights lawyer who had worked as a legal observer during Selma, Alabama's voter registration campaign in 1963. Relatively well-known in the state for this and for his work as a legislative aide to Congressman John Dingell, Conyers ran in 1964 for a newly redrawn US congressional district on the west side of Detroit, which had created an opportunity to send a second Black person in Detroit's congressional designation (Congressman Charles Diggs, Jr. represented a district on the city's east side). Parks, who had met Conyers through their mutual work to expand voting rights in the south, volunteered to work on his campaign in 1964. Although there were other Black men in the primary race, most notably Richard Austin, who would later become Michigan's longtime Secretary of State, Conyers' more progressive and independent political views aligned better with Parks' philosophy. Although most of her work was behind the scenes, she proved a powerful advocate for Conyers with her friend Martin Luther King, Jr., and it was Parks who persuaded King to come to Detroit and endorse Conyers. It was very rare for King to make a political endorsement, and Conyers later noted that it "quadrupled my visibility in the black community... Therefore, if it wasn't for Rosa

²¹ "She Started the Revolt," *Michigan Chronicle*, June 29, 1963.

²² Jeanne Theoharis, *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013), 160-162.

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Parks, I never would have gotten elected.” Conyers won the primary and the general election, becoming the sixth African American in the House of Representatives.²³

Conyers later said that Rosa Parks was the first person he wanted to hire for his congressional staff, considering her the most important civil rights activist in the state.²⁴ While Parks was officially an administrative assistant, and she did perform tasks like filing and answering the telephone (greatly surprising some constituents), she also served as an informal legislative aide, traveling around the city to visit constituents, gather information, and represent Conyers at meetings. As a Black Congressman, Conyers often received communications from constituents reporting discrimination in housing and employment, and his office was reported to be a “hotbed of local and national black political organizing,” an atmosphere that may have appealed to Parks from her days working for the NAACP in Alabama. She also traveled with Conyers to national events, although Conyers’ aides later stressed that she followed her own political agenda at these, not Conyers’.²⁵ This relatively high-profile job brought her back into public attention, and she received both fan mail and hate mail.

The same month she began working for Conyers, Rosa Parks journeyed back to Alabama to participate in the Selma to Montgomery march, part of a high-profile voting rights campaign organized by Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Parks was a featured speaker at the post-march rally, but she first had to get there; she later recalled that, because she was not wearing a special jacket to identify her as a marcher, she kept being pulled out of the march. “Whenever they would put me out, I would just stand on the sidelines until somebody would pass by and say, ‘Mrs. Parks, come on and get in the march.’ I would say, ‘I *was* in it, but they put me out.’”²⁶ At the rally, which was broadcast nationally, Parks was introduced as “the first lady of the movement,” and her speech reportedly drew the most enthusiastic response of any that day.²⁷ Parks was also horrified by the murder of Viola Liuzzo, a White activist from Detroit who was killed by the Ku Klux Klan in the aftermath of the Selma to Montgomery march, and was among the mourners at Liuzzo’s funeral in Detroit. The following August, Parks was among those invited to the White House to watch President Lyndon Johnson sign the voting rights act into law.²⁸

Parks had joined the Friends of SNCC in Detroit, a northern chapter of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, one of the leading national organizations of the civil rights movement, in the early 1960s. By 1966 she was a co-leader of the Detroit chapter, along with fellow civil rights campaigner Dorothy Dewberry. The Detroit chapter at that time supported a voting rights campaign in Lowndes County, Alabama, which had over five thousand Black people eligible to

²³ Ibid., 180-182.

²⁴ Ibid., 164.

²⁵ Jeanne Theoharis, *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013), 170, 182-183.

²⁶ Unattributed newspaper clipping preserved in the Rosa Parks Papers, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/mss85943.001808/?sp=4&r=0.206,0.623,1.319,0.746,0>.

²⁷ Jeanne Theoharis, *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013), 170, 188.

²⁸ “Johnson Signs Voting Rights Bill Into Law,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 7, 1965, 2.

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vote, but not a single one registered. Parks helped to organize a fundraiser, and spoke at a mass meeting in Lowndes in March 1966.²⁹

Black Radicalism in the late 1960s and 1970s

In the latter part of the 1960s, Parks became increasingly more visible and radical in her civil rights activism. While she is usually associated with Martin Luther King, Jr. and the nonviolent movement advocated by him and by SNCC, she also supported more militant approaches. Parks had never been afraid of being associated with politically risky activism; in the early 1960s she supported the Highlander Folk School in Tennessee, even as she and King were being pictured together there as attending a “Communist Training School.” Like her Detroit compatriots Reverends Cleage and Franklin, she saw the value in working across the spectrum of the civil rights movement, and felt no conflict between working on behalf of the SCLC and the NAACP while also criticizing the latter organization for being too conservative. She was a supporter of the Black Power and Black Nationalist movements, both of which advocated for self-pride and self-determination for African Americans. Like Reverend Cleage, Parks saw militancy as a natural and necessary answer to the illegal and violent activities of white supremacists. She called Malcolm X, not King, her “hero,” and attended his last speech at Ford Auditorium in Detroit in 1965, a week before he was assassinated.

The flat on Virginia Park Street was geographically at the heart of the growing radical Black movement in Detroit. According to biographer Douglas Brinkley, “The Parks’ flat functioned as a bit of a salon in Virginia Park, filled with robust discussion and debate. Many of the young men who came by greatly admired Malcolm X, like the Parks did, and shared their feelings about the importance of the continued struggle.”³⁰ The flat was just a few blocks from Reverend Cleage’s Central Congregational Church, where in October 1966 she attended Stokely Carmichael’s speech on Black Power; during that speech, Carmichael singled her out as his hero.³¹ Edward Vaughn, a leader of the radical Black Consciousness movement, later remembered that Parks was highly active in the movement. “Honest to God, almost every meeting I went to, she was always there,” he said. Vaughn had opened the first African American bookstore in Detroit not far from the Parks flat, and it became the intellectual center of the movement. Parks and her husband supported the bookstore and often participated in the intellectual and political discussions held there.³²

Parks and her husband were eyewitnesses to the 1967 rebellion in Detroit, which was sparked by an incident about a mile from their flat. They could see the flames and smell the smoke of burning buildings from the flat, and Raymond Parks’ barbershop was looted and his tools stolen, while their car was vandalized. During the height of the rebellion, Parks fielded calls in Conyers’ office, which acted as a clearinghouse for information.³³ During the rebellion, three young Black

²⁹ Jeanne Theoharis, *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013), 170, 190.

³⁰ Douglas Brinkley, *Rosa Parks: A Life* (New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2000), 191-192.

³¹ Jeanne Theoharis, *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013), 191.

³² Quoted in Jeanne Theoharis, *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013), 222.

³³ Jeanne Theoharis, *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013), 195.

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men were killed by police at the Algiers Motel, at the Woodward Avenue end of Virginia Park Street. After the officers involved were cleared in the incident, the Citizens City-wide Action Committee, a grassroots organization of Black militants and nationalists chaired by Reverend Cleage, held a “people’s tribunal” to hear the case. Over two thousand people attended, and it was covered in the national and international press. Rosa Parks sat on the jury, which found the officers guilty of murder. Although the verdict was in no way legally enforceable, it did give the community a chance to grieve and express its outrage.³⁴

Parks’ work on behalf of the radical wing of the movement did not diminish her connection to King and his successors. She was on the platform at King’s funeral in April 1968, and joined the rally at the SCLC’s Solidarity Day in Washington DC the following June, an event to lobby for more equitable access to housing, employment, and welfare programs. At the end of August, she was part of a “militant group” of Blacks at the Democratic Convention who refused to back any presidential candidate in protest of the party’s insufficient prioritization of Black issues.³⁵ A few days later, she was in Philadelphia for the National Conference on Black Power, while in early 1969 the SCLC asked her to lend support to the Mother’s Day march in Charleston, South Carolina, to back striking hospital workers.

The intersection of racism and sexism remained a focus of interest for Parks into the late 1960s and 1970s. She had joined the Women’s Public Affairs Committee of 1000 (WPAC), an integrated women’s community and political action group, in the early 1960s, and this group sponsored a tribute and fundraising dinner for Parks at Cobo Hall in 1965, which drew Coretta Scott King, wife of Martin Luther King, Jr. and an activist in her own right, and Reverend Ralph Abernathy, another civil rights leader and friend of King, as speakers. In 1969, Parks introduced Shirley Chisholm, the first Black Congresswoman, at a WPAC event in Detroit. When Angela Davis, militant civil rights activist, spoke to a crowd of twelve thousand people at the State Fairgrounds Detroit in June 1972, Rosa Parks (who had worked to free Davis following her arrest in 1970) introduced her, and praised Davis as a “dear sister who has suffered so much persecution.” Parks recognized that Davis was among her successors in the civil rights movement.³⁶ Parks was a co-founder of a defense fund for Joan Little, an African American woman who had been arrested for murder after killing a White prison guard who attempted to rape her, in 1975.³⁷ Little was the first woman to successfully use self-defense against sexual assault as an argument for acquittal.

The 1970s represented a difficult time for Parks. She, her husband, and her mother all experienced health issues that also strained the family’s finances, despite her job with Congressman Conyers. An effort in 1976 to raise money to build and maintain a house for Parks (with the intention that it would eventually become a shrine), was never realized. Raymond Parks

³⁴ Jeanne Theoharis, *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013), 198-199.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 179, 221.

³⁶ John Oppedahl, “12,000 Hail Angela Davis,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 19, 1972, 3A, 8A.

³⁷ “Joan Little Defense Committee Minutes and Membership List,” Box 3, Folder 1, Rosa L. Parks Collection Papers, 1955-1976, Accession Number 775, Walter Reuther Library, Wayne State University. Little was eventually acquitted.

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died in 1977, and her brother Sylvester McCauley passed away a few months later. Her mother followed two years later.

Despite her economic and health troubles, Parks continued her civil rights work in Detroit and nationwide. She attended and gave an introduction at the National Black Political Convention in Gary, Indiana in 1972, spoke at the national commemorative event in Montgomery, Alabama to mark the twentieth anniversary of the bus boycott, and participated in labor pickets and anti-Vietnam War rallies. She served as a trustee for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Social Change, and supported Jesse Jackson's Operation PUSH (she was honored by PUSH for her achievement in the field of civics in April 1975).³⁸ Following a confrontation between police and Republic of New Afrika members in Mississippi in 1971, Parks, through her role in Conyers' office, intervened to obtain assurances from the Justice Department that the people in custody would be treated humanely, an action that was only later recognized as hers. She also supported a number of groundbreaking Black candidates in Detroit throughout the 1960s and 1970s, including Coleman Young, George Crockett, Richard Austin, and Erma Henderson.³⁹

Continued Activism, 1980s to 2005

Parks maintained her quest for racial justice into the 1980s. She also spoke out against South Africa's apartheid regime, speaking at a protest in front of the South African Embassy in Washington, D.C., in 1984 and flew to other anti-apartheid events around the country. She helped in 1985 to organize a boycott of a Dearborn ordinance designed to keep non-residents (i.e. African Americans) out of city parks; Dearborn rescinded the ordinance on the eve of the boycott. That same year, Parks ran unsuccessfully for the vice president of the Detroit chapter of the NAACP. In 1987 she again organized a boycott, this time of a local retail chain that discriminated against Black employees.⁴⁰ In 1987 as well, Parks founded the Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute for Self-Development to educate Black youth on Black history and encourage the development of leadership skills. The Institute harkens back to her establishment of the youth wing of the Montgomery NAACP in the 1940s, and reflects her understanding that the civil rights struggle would outlive her.⁴¹

Parks retired from John Conyers' office in 1988, and finally moved from the ground floor flat at 3201 Virginia Park, where she had lived for over twenty-seven years. For the next six years, Rosa Parks lived a few dozen blocks north of the Flat at 9336 Wildemere (extant), until 1994 when she was assaulted in her home by a young man who also robbed her. A group of Detroiters, including Judge Damon Keith, former mayor Coleman Young, Conyers, and Martha Jean "The Queen" Steinberg arranged for her to move to the Riverfront Towers apartment building in downtown Detroit (250 Riverfront Drive, extant), where she resided for the rest of her life. Rosa

³⁸ "Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Social Change," Folder 4, Box 3; "PUSH Foundation," Folder 15, Box 3, both in Rosa L. Parks Collection Papers, 1955-1976, Accession Number 775, Walter Reuther Library, Wayne State University.

³⁹ Jeanne Theoharis, *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013), 225, 186-187.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 230-231.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 234-235.

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Parks passed away on October 24, 2005 at the age of ninety-two. Her funeral was held at Greater Grace Temple in Detroit, one of the largest churches in the city and therefore the host of many high-profile funerals (most recently for Aretha Franklin). It was attended by more than four thousand in the church, and hundreds more who stood outside.⁴²

Awards and Recognition

Since the mid-1970s, Rosa L. Parks has received an incredible number of awards, honors, and other recognition for her invaluable contributions to the Civil Rights Movement. Among her honors are the 1979 NAACP Spingarn Medal, the organization's highest honor, "in recognition of her personal dedication since that time to the cause of civil rights and particularly, to the youth of the Detroit area."⁴³ In 1983 Parks was inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame. A bronze bust of Parks, created by sculptor Artis Lane, was placed in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., in 1991. Parks was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in 1993. In 1999, Parks received a Congressional Gold Medal and the presidential Medal of Freedom. That same year she was named by Time as one of the "Heroes and Icons of the 20th Century." Upon her passing in 2005, President George W. Bush issued a proclamation directing flags at the White House, at all United States government buildings, at all military posts, and on all naval ships to be flown at half-staff. Notably, Rosa Parks was the first woman to lie in honor in the Rotunda of the United States Capitol.⁴⁴ Her contributions and achievements to the nation and to the civil rights movement were recognized with a statue at the United States Capitol in 2013. The bronze statue was designed by Daub and Firmin Studios. She has received numerous honorary degrees from universities around the world and numerous streets and highways, parks, schools, and other buildings are named for Rosa Parks.

Conclusion

The role of Rosa Parks in the civil rights movement before and after the Montgomery bus boycott has often been overshadowed by that event. Her image has, in the collective conscious, been fixed by that moment and solidified by the fact that those who interviewed her or wrote about her in the decades between the boycott and her death focused almost exclusively on her experience and the legacy of that event. Yet, as her biographers have pointed out, Parks spent more than half her life in Detroit, not Alabama, and she used the fame she had acquired following the boycott to bring attention to racial inequality in Detroit and across the country. Congressman John Conyers, for whom she worked for over twenty years, recognized the power her mere attendance could bring to an event, noting that "she spoke with her presence."⁴⁵ From the March on Washington in 1963 to boycotts in the 1980s, from the NAACP to the Black Power

⁴² Herb Boyd, *Black Detroit* (New York: Harper Collins Press, 2017), 307-309.

⁴³ National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Citation for Rosa L. Parks, Sixty-fourth Spingarn Medalist, June 26, 1979. Rosa Parks Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/exhibitions/rosa-parks-in-her-own-words/about-this-exhibition/a-life-of-global-impact/naACP-spigarn-medal/>

⁴⁴ "Rosa Parks: A Life of Global Impact," Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/exhibitions/rosa-parks-in-her-own-words/about-this-exhibition/a-life-of-global-impact/.

⁴⁵ Jeanne Theoharis, *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013), 207.

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movement to anti-apartheid, Parks made her presence felt as a leader of the civil rights movement. Throughout those years, she lived at 3201 Virginia Park Street. It was the residence she had occupied for the longest of any in her time in Detroit, and it is the location most closely related to her contributions to civil rights during this period.

Period of Significance

The period of significance for the property is 1961 to 1988, the period 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.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Detroit, 1915, volume 9, sheet 24
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Detroit, 1950, volume 9, sheet 73.
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Theoharis, Jeanne. *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013.
Wildermere (sic) Subdivision Plat, 1893.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

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_____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
_____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

_____ State Historic Preservation Office
_____ Other State agency
_____ Federal agency
_____ Local government
_____ University
_____ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 42.364245 | Longitude: -83.109667 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

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1. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Virginia Park Lot 432 and the east 15 feet of Lot 431 of the Wildemere Park Subdivision, City of Detroit, Michigan.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the entire residential parcel on which the house and garage sit.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Saundra Little, Architect, and Ruth Mills, Senior Historian
organization: Quinn Evans Architects
street & number: 4219 Woodward Avenue, Suite 301
city or town: Detroit state: Michigan zip code: 48201
e-mail: rmills@quinnevans.com
telephone: (313) 462-2550
date: December 22, 2020

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Rosa and Raymond Parks Flat
Detroit
Wayne County, MI
Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects
Date Photographed: April-May 2019

North and west elevations looking southeast
0001 of 0012

North elevation looking south
0002 of 0012

North and east elevations looking west
0003 of 0012

South and east elevations looking north
0004 of 0012

West and south elevations and west elevation of garage, looking north
0005 of 0012

Garage looking west
0006 of 0012

First floor interior, dining room, living room, foyer looking north
0007 of 0012

First floor interior, dining room, hall, and kitchen looking south
0008 of 0012

First floor interior, north bedroom looking northwest
0009 of 0012

First floor interior, south bedroom looking south

Parks, Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond, Flat
Name of Property

Wayne County, MI
County and State

0010 of 012

First floor interior, kitchen looking southeast

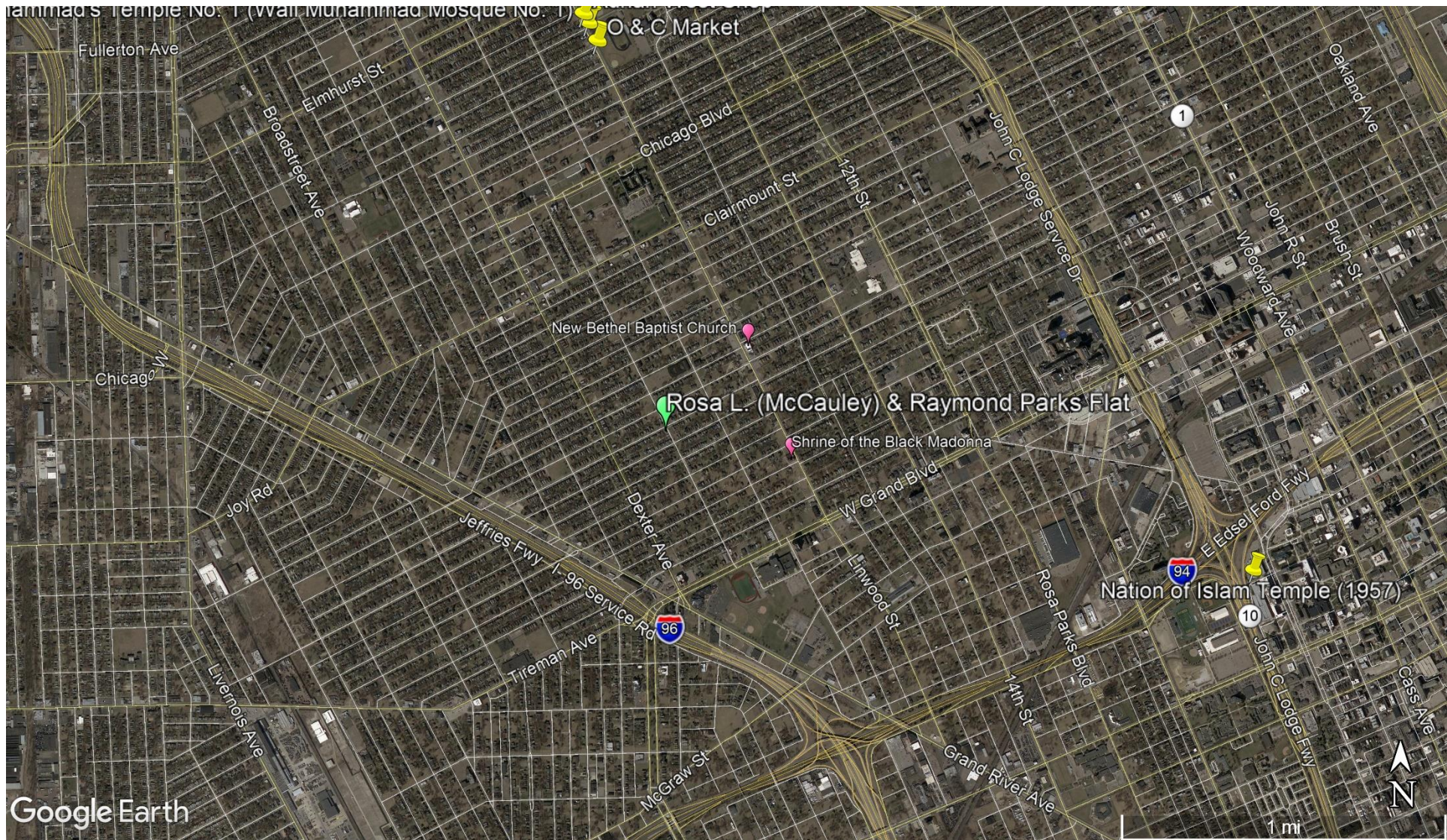
0011 of 0012

First floor interior, bathroom looking east

0012 of 0012

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond Parks Flat

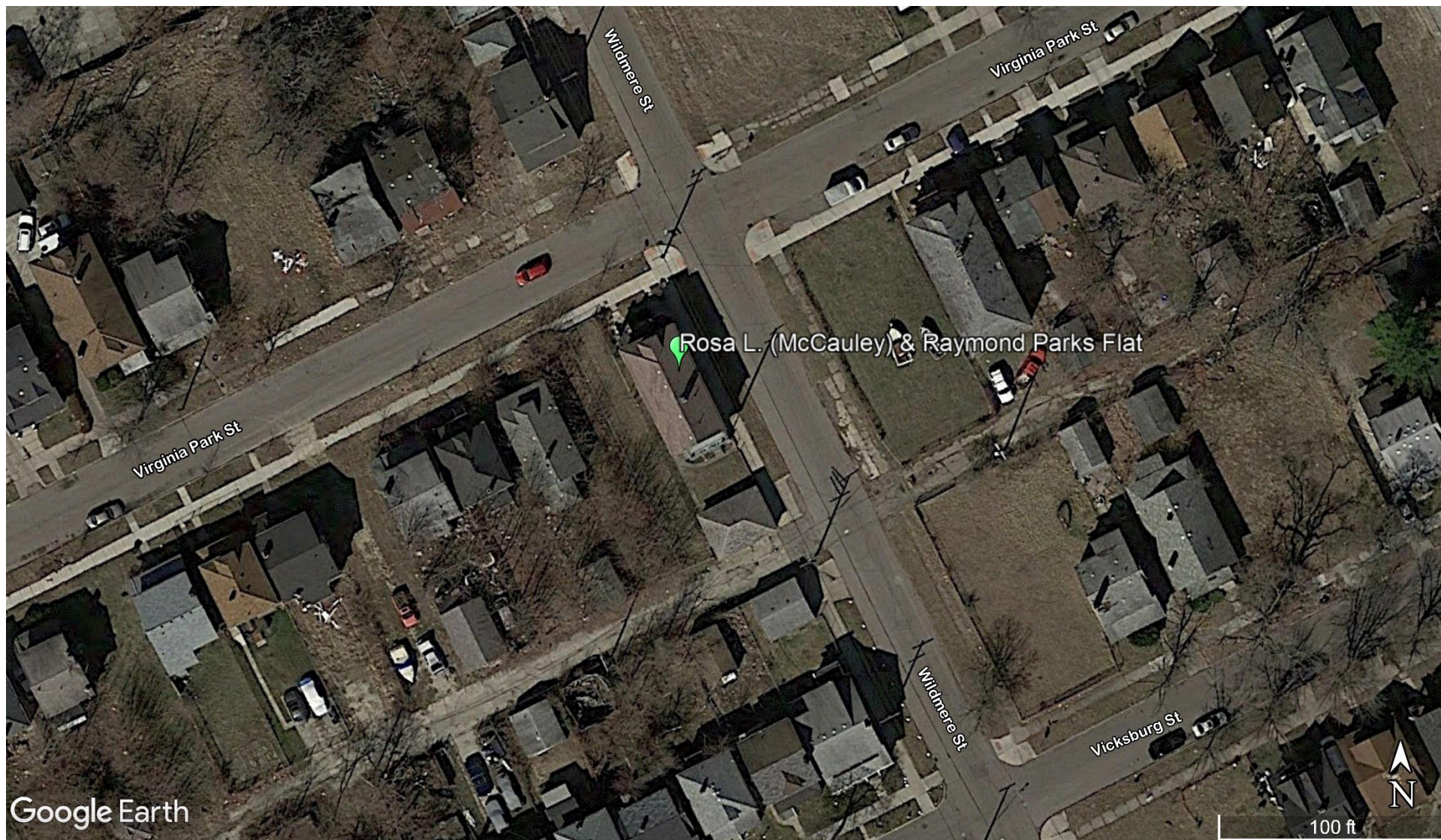
3201-3203 Virginia Park Street, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

Latitude: 42.364245

Longitude: -83.109667

Map Note: map depicts two properties (fuchsia markers) related under the *Civil Rights Movement in Detroit, Michigan, 1900-1976*, MPDF to illustrate geographic relationship





Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond Parks Flat
3201-3203 Virginia Park Street, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

Latitude: 42.364245

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Map Note: map depicts two properties (fuchsia markers) related under the *Civil Rights Movement in Detroit, Michigan, 1900-1976*, MPDF to illustrate geographic relationship





MI_Wayne County_Parks, Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond, Flat_0001



MI_Wayne County_Parks, Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond, Flat_0002



MI_Wayne County_Parks, Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond, Flat_0003



MI_Wayne County_Parks, Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond, Flat_0004



MI_Wayne County_Parks, Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond, Flat_0005



MI_Wayne County_Parks, Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond, Flat_0006



MI_Wayne County_Parks, Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond, Flat_0007



MI_Wayne County_Parks, Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond, Flat_0008



MI_Wayne County_Parks, Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond, Flat_0009



MI_Wayne County_Parks, Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond, Flat_0010



MI_Wayne County_Parks, Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond, Flat_0011



MI_Wayne County_Parks, Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond, Flat_0012

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Nomination	
Property Name:	Parks, Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond, Flat	
Multiple Name:	The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit MPS	
State & County:	MICHIGAN, Wayne	

Date Received: 12/28/2020 Date of Pending List: 1/21/2021 Date of 16th Day: 2/5/2021 Date of 45th Day: 2/11/2021 Date of Weekly List: 2/5/2021

Reference number:	MP100006131
Nominator:	SHPO
Reason For Review:	

 X Accept Return Reject 2/5/2021 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:	Home of Rosa Parks from 1961 to 1988. Park, who gained notoriety in 1955 for her refusal to surrender her seat to a white bus passenger, moved to Detroit to escape the backlash. While in Detroit, she continued to work for justice in civil rights for African Americans in particular and women in general. Often at the forefront of events, she was literally and physically shunted aside by the patriarchal nature of the times. Parks worked to get John Conyers elected to Congress and then went to work for him. She continued her activism on a national scale and on a local scale, aligning herself all factions of the civil rights movement. Parks' reputation grew in her later years, and she was honored for her body of work by President Obama. She lived and remained active while occupying this residence from 1961-1981, and it remains the best place associated with her and her important activities.
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Recommendation/ Criteria	Accept / B
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Reviewer	<u> Jim Gabbert </u>	Discipline	<u> Historian </u>
Telephone	<u> (202)354-2275 </u>	Date	<u> </u>

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN STRATEGIC FUND
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

MARK A. BURTON
PRESIDENT

Monday, December 22, 2020

Ms. Joy Beasley, Keeper
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Beasley:

The enclosed files contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the **Parks, Rosa L. (McCauley) and Raymond, Flat, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan**. This property is being submitted for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This nomination is a X New Submission Resubmission Additional Documentation Removal.

- 1 Signed National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
- 2 Locational maps (incl. with nomination file)
- 0 Sketch map(s) / figures(s) / exhibits(s) (incl. with nomination file)
- 1 Pieces of correspondence (incl. with nomination file)
- 12 Digital photographs (incl. with nomination file)
- Other:

COMMENTS:

- Please ensure that this nomination is reviewed.
- This property has been approved under 36 CFR 67.
- The enclosed owner objections constitute a majority of property owners.
- X Other: This property is nominated under the *Civil Rights Movement in Detroit, Michigan, 1900-1976*, Multiple Property Documentation Form submitted concurrently with this nomination.

Questions concerning this nomination should be addressed to Todd A. Walsh, National Register Coordinator, at (517) 335-9854 or walsht@michigan.gov.

Sincerely yours,

Martha MacFarlane-Faes
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

