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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Second Baptist Church is a three-story Gothic-type structure of red brick with a beige surface coating, and flat limestone trim around the windows and doors. In the main facade is a large recessed Gothic window with wooden tracery. Three rectangular openings with recessed Gothic windows are located in narrow, recessed sections to either side of the main section. Double Gothic doors separated by a pier, are in the center of the facade. The large wooden doors were replaced by contemporary glass doors. The gable roof is covered with rolled asphalt roofing material.

In 1880, the original one-story church was converted into a two-story building and an auditorium was added. In 1914, the church was almost destroyed by fire and a new structure was built around the old. In 1926, an activities building was constructed at the west of the church proper.

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In 1968 an office and educational building was constructed to the east of the church proper. (This addition is not to be included as part of the designation.)



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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Second Baptist Church was the first black congregation in Michigan and ignether oldest and most distinguished black historical site in the city of Detroit. Since its organization, it has proven to be a highly influential force in the social, political and educational development of the black community.

Second Baptist was first organized in 1836 when thirteen former slaves decided to withdraw from the First Baptist Church of Detroit because of discriminatory regulations practiced there. These members then formed the "Society of the Second Baptist Church," also known as the "Colored American Baptist Church," which held most of its meetings in a small hall on Fort Street, between Beaubien and St. Antoine. In February of 1857, the society purchased the First German Reformed Zion Church, located on Croghan (now Monroe) which is the site of the present church.

The church's political involvement began as far back as 1841 when Second Baptist, then a station for the underground railroad, took the lead in the formation of the Amherstburg Baptist Association through which Baptist churches in Detroit and Canada sought to aid both spiritually and materially the ever increasing number of fugitive slaves from the south. Under the wise and spiritual leadership of Reverend William C. Monroe, Second Baptist also proved instrumental in the development of the Canadian Anti-Slavery Baptist Association in 1850. Both associations were of unquestionable value to fugitive slaves and to the abolitionist movement.

In its struggle to help secure political equality for black people, Second Baptist held a "State Convention of Colored Citizens" in 1843. The purpose of this meeting, which was the first of its type to be held, was to petition for Negro suffrage. In January of 1865, another state convention was held at Second Baptist for this same purpose.

Second Baptist's involvement in the struggle for equality is also strongly evidenced by its association with such prominent historical figures as Sou journer Truth, Frederick Douglass, John Brown, William Lambert, George DeBaptiste, Dr. Joseph Ferguson and others. On the eve of March 12, 1859, Frederick Douglass, after having met with black

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Form 10-300a (July 1969) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

	FOR NPS USE ONLY
	Wayne
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8.2Significance (continued)

community leaders at the William Webb house to discuss plans for abolishing slavery, delivered a message at the Second Baptist Church and addressing the black citizens of Detroit. Years later, on January 6, 1863, blacks would gather at the Second Baptist Church for Detroit's first celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Located in the middle of Detroit's black community, Second Baptist has always contributed to its social and educational growth. It aided thousands of black migrants in securing homes and jobs. It also sponsored social affairs for the enjoyment of black citizens. From 1842 through 1846, Reverend William C. Monroe taught and directed a school for black children in the basement of the church.

The Second Baptist Church has always been a source of inspiration and encouragement for its members and for the black community. Among its distinguished adults have been Fannie. Richards, Detroit's first black public school teacher, who attended Second Baptist, and the late Dr. Ralph Bunche, former Under-Secretary General of the United Nations and Nobel Peace Prize Winner, who was baptized at Second Baptist in 1927. Recently in 1961, under the leadership of Dr. A. A. Banks, Second Baptist received local, state and national recognition for its distinguished history and achievements when a plaque, donated by the J. L. Hudson Company, was presented to the church by Ceerge Romney/and former Vice PresidentLyndon later governor of Michigan

9. Major Bibliographical References

Ontario History, Ontario Historical Society, Toronto, Ontario, Vol. LVIII, June 1966, pp. 121-124.

11. Form Prepared By

Amy Hecker Michigan History Division, Michigan Department of State 208 N. Capitol Lansing, Michigan 026

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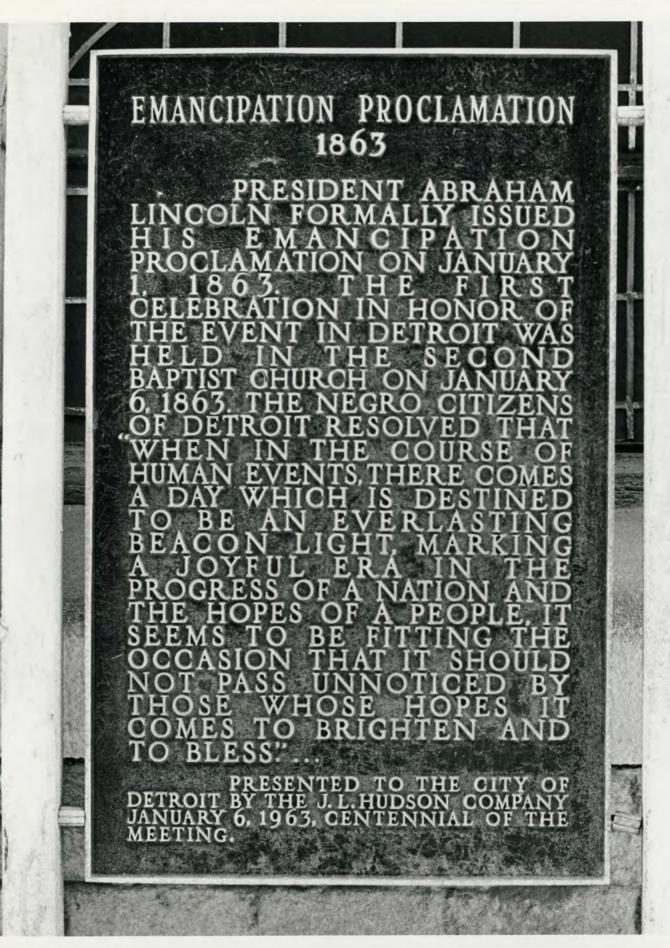


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# REPORT & INFORMATION





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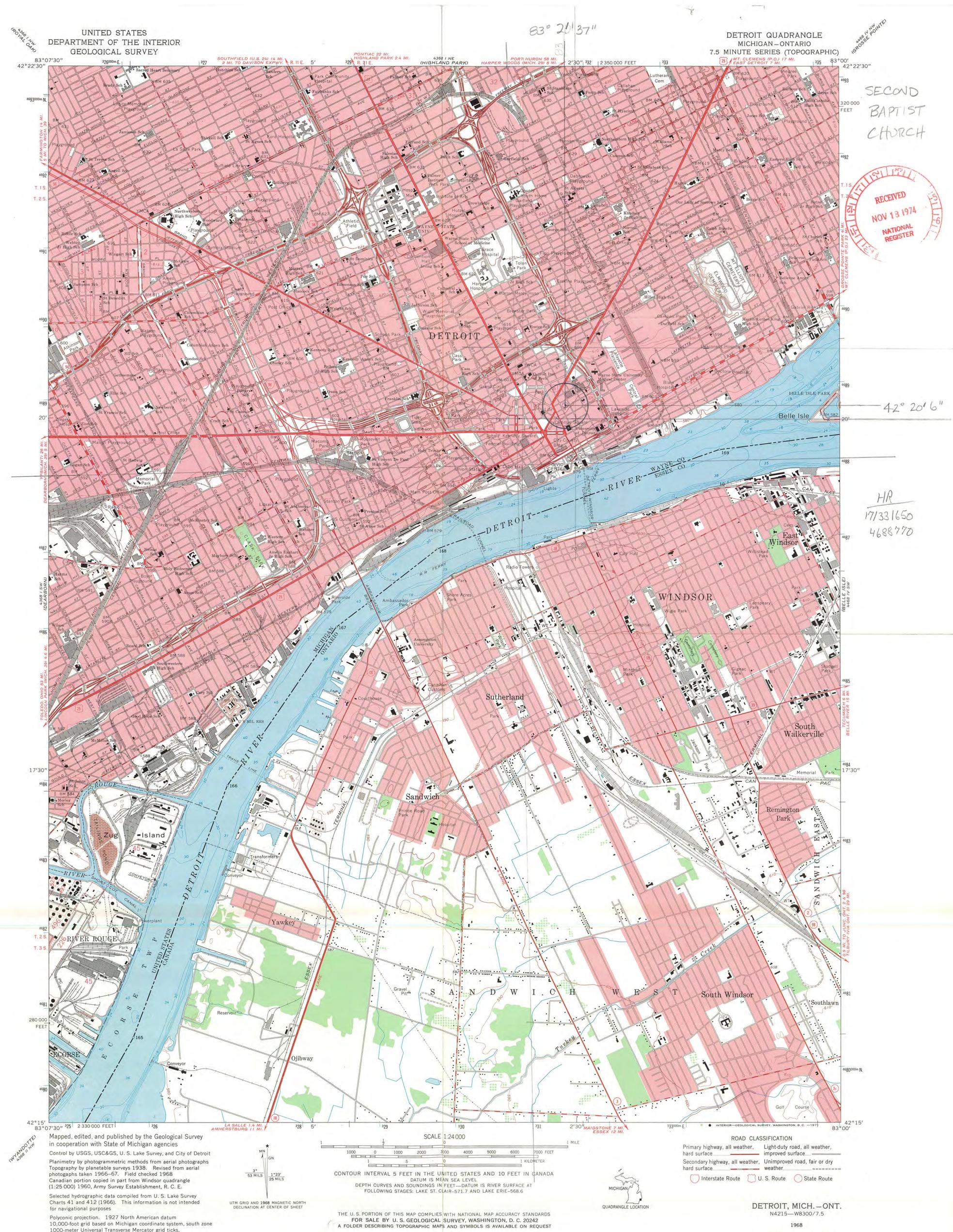
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Second Baptist Church 441 Monroe Detroit, MICHIGAN Wayne County

# National Register of Historic Places

Note to the record

Additional Documentation: 2023

#### 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: <u>Second Baptist Church of Detroit (Additional Documentation)</u> Other names/site number: <u>Second Baptist Church Society & Colored American Baptist</u> <u>Church</u>

Name of related multiple property listing:

<u>The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in the 20th Century</u> (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

# 2. Location

Street & number: <u>441 Monroe Street</u>

City or town: <u>Detroit</u>	State: Michigan	County: <u>Wayne</u>
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 <u>X</u> nomination <u>request for determination of eligibility meets</u> 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  $\underline{X}$  meets  $\underline{X}$  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

**\_\_\_\_\_national \_\_X** statewide **\_\_\_\_\_local** Applicable National Register Criteria:

<u>X</u> A	<u>X</u> B	C	D

marthe martan Deputy SHPO	June 14, 2023
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
Michigan State Historic Preservation Office	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

Second Baptist Church of Detroit (Additional Documentation)

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In my opinion, the property meets	does not meet the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

# 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
- X other (explain:) Accept Additional Documentation

James Gabbert Signature of the Keeper

7/6/2023

Date of Action

Second Baptist Church of Detroit (Additional

#### Documentation)

Name of Property

#### 5. Classification

#### **Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as Private:	s apply.)
Public – Local	
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

# **Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	x
District	
Site	
Structure	
Object	

#### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously list	ted resources in the count)	
Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
0	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register <u>1</u>

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### 6. Function or Use Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.) RELIGION/religious facility

**Current Functions** 

(Enter categories from instructions.) RELIGION/religious facility\_

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#### 7. Description

#### **Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.) <u>LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Tudor Revival</u> MODERN MOVEMENT: Brutalism

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.) Principal exterior materials of the property: <u>Brick, Precast Concrete, Asphalt (Rolled)</u>

#### **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 Second Baptist Church of Detroit is located at 441 Monroe Street just east of Detroit's downtown core. Set within the busy Greektown Historic District, the Second Baptist Church is located at the northwest corner of Monroe Street and Beaubien Boulevard. The site is bounded by an alley to the north, Beaubien Boulevard to the east, Monroe Street to the south, and a surface parking lot to the west. The building is home to Detroit's first African American congregation and sits upon a site long associated with religious worship. Constructed c.1851 by the First German Reformed Zion Church, the Second Baptist Church purchased the building in 1857. The building consists of four distinct sections built over the course of several decades: the central portion of the church containing the sanctuary and nave dating to 1851, c.1881-1890, and 1918, a 1912-1913 Tudor Revival addition to the south, a 1926 Tudor Revival addition to the west, and a 1968 Brutalist addition to the east. A significant fire occurred in 1918 that destroyed much of the church's interior. The building retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The church remains at its original location and the neighborhood around the church retains its urban character. Integrity of feeling and

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association are present because the building is still identifiable as a church. Moreover, the building has been used by the same congregation since 1857 and has therefore been home to the congregation's civil rights activities throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although additions and fires have occurred over the building's history, the integrity of design, materials, and workmanship remains. Structural elements from each phase of the building's history from c.1851 to 1968 are extant and stylistic elements from the 1912-1913, 1926, and 1968 additions have also been retained. The interior of the central section of the church dates to 1918, meaning the interior serves as a nexus between the building and mid-twentieth century civil rights history of the church.

# **Narrative Description**

## Setting and Environment

The Second Baptist Church of Detroit is located at 441 Monroe Street on a rectangular lot at the northwest corner of the Monroe Street and Beaubien Boulevard intersection, approximately a quarter of a mile northeast of Campus Martius. Set within a busy commercial section of Detroit, in the Greektown neighborhood, the church fills the site to the lot line. The church sits in a busy and dense urban neighborhood with businesses, restaurants, and offices mostly filling the surrounding lots.

Originally constructed c.1851 by the First German Reformed Zion Church, this corner has long held buildings used for religious services, but the setting and environment have evolved over time.<sup>1</sup> A map from 1835 shows that the area just three blocks east of the intersection of Croghan (renamed in the late-nineteenth century to Monroe) and Beaubien Streets was still a ribbon

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Silas Farmer, History of Detroit and Wayne County and Early Michigan, vol. 1 (Detroit, MI: S. Farmer and Co., 1890), 607; Silas Farmer's History of Detroit and Wayne County and Early Michigan notes that the year of construction of the First German Reformed Zion Church is 1851. However, other sources provide other dates for the church's construction. For instance, the 1884 Sanborn map conveys a construction date in 1856, which may reflect the "extensive repairs" noted in an August 4, 1951, article in the Detroit Tribune (see footnote No. 4), a 1940 text called History of Second Baptist Church which was developed by the Second Baptist Church book committee writes that a church was located on the lot since 1839 (this date also appears in the aforementioned Detroit Tribune article), and another 1976 text, One Hundred Fortieth Birthday Celebration Eyewitness History Second Baptist Church of Detroit, 1836-1976, also developed by Second Baptist Church writes the church was dedicated in 1852. The cornerstone on the building is 1838. Therefore, the construction date throughout the nomination will be written as c.1851 to acknowledge the inconsistencies in the date of construction.

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farm.<sup>2</sup> In the 1850s the immediate vicinity was likely populated with frame and brick houses and commercial buildings.

The Second Baptist Church congregation purchased the First German Reformed Zion Church in 1857 for \$3,800.<sup>3</sup> Beginning c.1881 and completed c.1890 the congregation altered the church's interior by constructing a second-floor nave that subsequently served as the sanctuary.<sup>4</sup> This is the sanctuary where services are held today. By the 1880s the surrounding area was largely residential with the 1884 Sanborn map showing the church set beside a row of dwellings to the west and a livery stable and dwellings to the east. The houses that surrounded the church in 1884 sat on narrow lots with small barns and sheds located at the rear of the lots.<sup>5</sup> In 1897 the neighborhood was comprised of a mix of residences and small shops as well as larger concerns including a blacksmith, a carpenter, a carriage shop, and two large D.M. Ferry & Co. seed warehouses located directly across the street.<sup>6</sup> The 1922 Sanborn maps show a significant change in the area, with every building seemingly housing commercial functions. No dwellings are located on this block of Monroe by 1922.<sup>7</sup> Aerial photographs illustrate that the blocks surrounding the church retained their commercial character through the 1940s.<sup>8</sup> In the 1950s nearby buildings to the west, north, and northeast were demolished and converted into surface parking lots.<sup>9</sup> The Detroit People Mover, an elevated rail system, was completed in 1987 and a portion of the track runs above the sidewalk along the east elevation of the education building addition.<sup>10</sup> Greektown Casino opened in 2000 on the block southeast of Second Baptist Church, east of Beaubien Boulevard and south of Monroe Street.<sup>11</sup> Buildings that survived demolition during the 1950s are presently home to restaurants, bars, and city and county government offices.

# General Characteristics

Second Baptist Church of Detroit comprises four distinct sections that were built over time as the congregation grew (Figure 1). The extant building contains numerous layers and remnants from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> John Farmer, Map of the City of Detroit in the State of Michigan (Detroit, MI: Farmer, 1835), Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/79691130/. <sup>3</sup> Farmer, History of Detroit and Wayne County, 607; "Oldest Race Church Marks 115th Year with City's 250th," Detroit Tribune (Detroit, Mich.), August 4, 1951. <sup>4</sup> "Second Baptist Church of Detroit, Michigan," National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Application, National Park Service, 2018.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan (New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, 1884).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan, vol. 4 (New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, 1897).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan, vol. 4 (New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, 1922).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> "DTE Aerial Photograph Collection," 1949, Wayne State University.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> "DTE Aerial Photograph Collection," 1956, Wayne State University; "DTE

Aerial Photograph Collection," 1961, Wayne State University. <sup>10</sup> "The Detroit People Mover," Detroit People Mover, accessed March 6, 2023, https://www.thepeoplemover.com/about-us.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Tina Lam and Maryanne George, "Greektown Aglow for Opening," Detroit Free Press, November 11, 2000.

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each alteration. The first section is the central portion of the church, which closely corresponds to the footprint of the original c.1851 church (exterior, Figure 2) and houses the sanctuary and second floor nave constructed between c.1881 and 1890.<sup>12</sup> The second, southern section built in 1912 or 1913 is comprised of the central portion of the façade, which extends from the plane of the original façade to the sidewalk and contains the main entrances to the church.<sup>13</sup> Photographs dating to 1915 and 1975—before and after the 1918 fire—indicate that the façade of the central section of the church was largely unchanged following reconstruction following the fire.<sup>14</sup> The third, western section relates to the 1926 addition built on the adjacent lot west of the central portion of the church.<sup>15</sup> Finally, the fourth, eastern section relates to the 1968 education building addition on the adjacent lot east of the church, at the northwest corner of Monroe Street and Beaubien Boulevard.<sup>16</sup>

# 1. Central Portion of the Church, c.1851-1918

Located between the 1926 and 1968 additions, the first section of the Second Baptist Church closely corresponds to the footprint of the original c.1851 church. The footprint of the c. 1851 iteration of the central portion of the church occupied most of the lot but did not extend to the sidewalk on the north side of Monroe Street. The c. 1851 church had a small area of grass that separated the church from the sidewalk. The church was constructed of brick and topped with a front gable roof. The original roofing material is unknown, but the roof is presently clad with a black membrane roofing system. The façade of the church was Tudor Revival in style with a small, one-story gable roof entrance portico centered on the primary façade within which were a set of double wood doors approached by a series of steps. There was one pointed arched window on either side of the main entrance at the first-floor level. At the second-floor level, directly above the main entrance, was a large, three-part pointed arched window. On the second floor, on either side of the main window, were two additional, smaller pointed arched windows. A triangular, pointed arched window was located in the apex of the gable above the three-part pointed arched window. Brick buttresses and pointed arched windows repeated along the west

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> "Second Baptist Church of Detroit," National Underground Railroad Network, 11; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Detroit, vol. 4 (1897); Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Detroit, vol. 4 (1922).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Permit index card no. 1221A, 437 Monroe, lot 137, September 27, 1912, City of Detroit Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department; "Second Baptist Church of Detroit," National Underground Railroad Network, 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Photograph of façade of Second Baptist Church, November 7, 1915, Second Baptist Church (Detroit, Mich.) Records 1911-1989, 1926-1988, roll 3, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI; Dolores Buckins, "Second Baptist Church of Detroit." National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, National Register #75000970, 1975.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Permit index card no. 5747-A, 431 Monroe, e ½ 136, September 16, 1926, City of Detroit Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department.
<sup>16</sup> Permit index card no. 88216, 441 Monroe, e ½ lot 136, lot 137, 138, July 25, 1966, City of Detroit Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department.

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and east elevations.<sup>17</sup> The north (rear) elevation is constructed of brick that has been painted red. A large brick chimney travels from grade up past the roof parapet. A large rose window covered with fixed storm windows is centered beneath the rear-facing gable and a large cross is affixed to the exterior west of the rose window. A rectangular louvered vent is in the apex of the gable. Previously infilled windows are visible on the rear elevation. A metal staircase is affixed to the brick and provides access to a second-floor window and door.

The interior of the central section of the church contains two floors. The first floor, at ground level, originally functioned as the nave and sanctuary before a second-floor sanctuary and nave was constructed beginning in c.1881 and completed in c.1888.<sup>18</sup> The interior of the second-floor sanctuary and nave is over two-stories tall. On the first floor in an enclosed space along the north wall is a staircase that accesses the basement where freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad were sheltered. According to a history pamphlet put together by the Second Baptist congregation, the one-story addition was constructed on the north side of the nave in 1856 or 1865 to house the church's Sunday School.<sup>19</sup> On the second floor, the nave is accessed by doors along the south wall and the sanctuary is located at the north end of the space. There is a large mural in the stairwell at the southern end of the floor. The mural, called "Christ Over Detroit," was painted by Elliot and David Skinner and dedicated in 1954.<sup>20</sup> A large, stained-glass skylight is set within the wood paneled ceiling. A large rose leaded glass window is located on the north wall above the sanctuary. Stained glass windows along the west wall provide light into the interior. Pointed arched stained-glass windows are arranged within blind Gothic arches on the east wall. Large light fixtures hang from the ceiling over the nave. The nave is filled with rows of wood pews. Additional seating is available on two second floor balconies. One is located at the south end of the nave and the other is located along the west side of the nave. Another balcony for the choir is located on the north wall above the sanctuary and below the rosette window.

A significant fire occurred in February 1918 that caused an estimated seventy-five thousand dollars' worth of damage. Visual evidence in the rafters of the church show that some of the burnt structure is encased within the ensuing additions although it is unclear how much of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Detroit (1884); "View of Second Baptist Church," Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, https://dig italcollections.detroitpubliclibrary.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A144628.
<sup>18</sup> "Second Baptist Church of Detroit," National Underground Railroad Network, 11; History of Second Baptist Church (Detroit, MI: Bolar Printing and Publishing Company, [1940?]), 4; Nathaniel Leach, "Second Baptist Church Corner Stone Laying Ceremony," pamphlet, 1984, Second Baptist Church of Detroit Archives, Detroit, MI.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> History of Second Baptist Church (Detroit, MI: Bolar Printing and Publishing Company, [1940?]), 4; Nathaniel Leach, "Second Baptist Church Corner Stone Laying Ceremony," pamphlet, 1984, Second Baptist Church of Detroit Archives, Detroit, MI.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> The Skinners were twin brothers who were painters active in Detroit until at least the 1960s. See "Central Church Bazar to Feature Art Work," *Detroit Free Press*, November 14, 1948; "The Look of a Happy Week," *Detroit Free Press*, October 29, 1967.

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original c.1851 structure and c.1881 second floor structure remain.<sup>21</sup> However, thick interior walls separate the central section of the church from the southern section containing the Monroe Street entrance in the approximate location of the c.1851 façade. Additionally, brick laid in a common bond pattern is visible beneath the northern interior wall of Reverend Robert L. Bradby's second floor office, suggesting the brick structure of the c.1851 church may be extant beneath interior finishes and the addition of the southern portion of the church. Interior fixtures and finishes such as flooring, lighting, or furniture dating to the c.1881-1890 construction of the second floor were likely lost. Following the 1918 fire, the congregation raised tens of thousands of dollars to rebuild the church, therefore the present interior materials described above likely dates to around 1918.<sup>22</sup> See Figure 1 for a diagram that shows the year of construction for each of the four main sections of the church on a c.1965 blueprint of the third floor. Blueprints for the church were drawn by Nathan Johnson, c.1965, and are housed in the Second Baptist Church Archives.

# 2. Southern Portion of the Church, 1912-1913 Addition

The façade of the central portion of the church, dating to c.1851, was altered in 1912 and 1913 when an addition containing a new façade was constructed at a cost of nine thousand dollars. The 1912-1913 rectangular, two-story addition topped with a front gable roof was appended to the church's primary façade, bridging the grassy gap between the original façade and the sidewalk along the north side of Monroe Street.<sup>23</sup> The interior of the 1912-1913 addition contains a large wood staircase that provide access to the second-floor sanctuary, nave, and balcony seating and circulation spaces. The large, leaded glass Tudor and Gothic-arched windows visible on the exterior of the façade are likewise visible on the interior. The addition also connects the central section of the church with the 1926 and 1968 additions. In 2004-2005 the exterior of the southern portion of the church was altered in preparation for the 2006 Super Bowl, which was held in Detroit.<sup>24</sup> The following description describes the original details of the 1912-1913 addition and notes areas where alterations were made in 2004-2005.

The exterior of the addition was clad in red brick with accents, lintels, and sills of cream-colored limestone or cast stone with four brick buttresses arranged on the façade. Sometime between the addition's construction and the 2004-2005 alterations the exterior brick and stone were covered in stucco. The 2004-2005 alteration consisted of concealing the stucco beneath a brick and limestone veneer system.<sup>25</sup> Inset brick panels are located above the third-floor windows and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> "The Church," The Crisis, 16, no. 5 (September 1918), 240; "The Church," The Crisis, 16, no. 1 (May 1918), 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> "The Church," The Crisis, 16, no. 5 (September 1918), 240.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Permit index card no. 1221A, 437 Monroe, lot 137, September 27, 1912, City of Detroit Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department; "Second Baptist Church of Detroit," National Underground Railroad Network, 11.

 $<sup>^{24}</sup>$  Ad Hoc New Face Committee, Minutes of Meeting, July 1, 2005, Second Baptist Church of Detroit Archives, Detroit, MI.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> "Second Baptist Church of Detroit," Ambrico, accessed March 6, 2023, https: //ambrico.com/365/ambrico-ez-wall-news/second-baptist-church-of-detroit/.

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beneath the parapet. The upper portion of the buttresses is clad in brick veneer laid in a herringbone pattern. The original material and other elements of the façade are beneath the stucco and 2004-2005 cladding.

The facade of the 1912-1913 addition is reminiscent of the Tudor Revival style, with a parapeted front gable centered on the primary (south) façade. A crenelated and stepped parapet wall is located above the doors at the second-floor level and, just below, are metal letters spelling out the name Second Baptist Church. At grade are two double sets of doors centered on the façade and set within a limestone or cast stone architrave with Tudor-arched, leaded glass transoms above. The doors are wood and stained a dark red color, with leaded glass panels set within the upper half of each door and framed with wood tracery. On either side of the doors are small, rectangular leaded glass windows.

Directly above the stepped parapet is a monumental Tudor-arched window which is set within limestone mullions and a limestone frame, with windows spanning from the second to the third floor. Semi-transparent exterior storm windows, likely dating to the 2005 alterations, are set within the large, Tudor-arched window and obscure the historic windows beneath. However, the historic windows are still visible from the exterior and interior. The historic windows are composed of multiple series of pointed arched, leaded glass panel windows. Wood tracery creates pointed arched leaded glass panels on the upper portions of each window. On the first floor, two square Tudor-arched leaded glass windows are arranged on either side of the parapeted entrance. On the second floor, two rectangular Tudor-arched leaded glass windows are likewise arranged on either side of the parapeted entrance. On the third floor, two rectangular Tudor-arched leaded glass windows are arranged on either side of the monumental Tudor-arched window. Plexiglass exterior storm windows were installed in 2005. Over time the plexiglass has become somewhat opaque which now obscures all of the aforementioned windows. In the apex of the gable is a louvered Gothic-arched opening. The original fenestration pattern of the east and west elevations of the addition is unclear as these elevations have been subsumed into the church following the 1926 and 1968 additions. However, a photograph dated to 1921 (Figure 3) illustrates the presence of two round-arched windows with leaded glass panels on the third floor of the west elevation.

# 3. Western Portion of the Church, 1926 Addition

The western portion of Second Baptist Church was constructed in 1926 as an addition to the central and southern portion of the church and is composed of three- and four- story sections.<sup>26</sup> The addition is rectangular in shape and has a rear-sloping roof covered in a light-colored membrane roofing system. There is substantial heating and cooling equipment on the roof of the 1926 addition. Sometime between 2004 and 2005 the primary (south) façade and the southern portion of the west elevation of the addition were altered in preparation for the 2006 Super

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Permit index card no. 5747-A, 431 Monroe, e ½ lot 136, September 16, 1926, City of Detroit Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department

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Bowl.<sup>27</sup> The following description describes the original details of the 1926 addition and notes areas where alterations were made in between 2004 and 2005.

The exterior of the primary (south) façade was clad in red brick with two buttresses arranged on the west and east corners of the façade. A stepped parapet is located at the roofline. Sometime between the construction of the addition and the alterations made between 2004 and 2005, the exterior brick and stone were covered in stucco. The c. 2005 alteration consisted of concealing the stucco beneath a brick and limestone veneer system.<sup>28</sup> Inset brick panels are located between the second and third floor windows and two limestone stringcourses are arranged below the first and second floor windows. The upper portion of the buttresses is clad in brick veneer laid in a herringbone pattern. The original material and other elements of the façade are beneath the stucco and c. 2005 cladding.

Intended to be an activities space for the church, the façade of the addition is two bays wide and features a double door of blonde wood with leaded glass panels in the upper half of each door. The doors are topped with a transom of leaded glass windows, which are covered with exterior storm windows. A six-panel leaded glass window is located just west of the double door on the first floor. Two series of three leaded glass windows located at the second, third, and fourth floors, all of which are set into limestone window surrounds and covered with exterior storm windows. The third-floor windows have wood tracery and a Tudor-arched head. All windows on this elevation have exterior storm windows.

The west elevation fronts onto an adjacent parking lot. The middle third of the elevation steps back behind the south third of the building closest to Monroe Street and the north third of the building closest to the rear alley. The south section of the elevation is clad in brick veneer dating to the 2004-2005 alteration. The middle and north thirds are clad in brick that has been painted red. The brick exterior of the first floor of the north third has been parged with stucco. A stepped parapet is present at the roofline. Window openings are arranged on the west elevation in the middle third of the building. At grade the window units are glass block while the openings on floors two through four are rectangular and square-shaped leaded glass windows covered with exterior storm windows.

The north (rear) elevation faces the alley. This elevation is also clad in brick that has been painted red. A large brick chimney that has been painted red is located at the east corner of the rear elevation. A gutter spans the façade at the roofline, and a large drainage gutter runs vertically in the east corner where the brick chimney meets the brick cladding. Metal double doors are located near the center of the elevation at grade. Rectangular leaded glass windows with exterior storm windows are arranged on the façade. The location of two windows that have been infilled with brick are visible on the first floor.

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 27}$  Ad Hoc New Face Committee, Minutes of Meeting, July 1, 2005, Second Baptist Church of Detroit Archives, Detroit, MI.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> "Second Baptist Church of Detroit," Ambrico, accessed March 6, 2023, https: //ambrico.com/365/ambrico-ez-wall-news/second-baptist-church-of-detroit/.

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The interior of the 1926 addition is comprised of office space, including Reverend Bradby's office and the Second Baptist Church Archives on the second floor, meeting rooms, and additional seating in the nave and balcony. The main doors on the 1926 addition lead into a hallway that includes a central staircase to provide access to the upper floors. The interior spaces have many of their original finishes including historic doors, trim, and some flooring.

# 4. Eastern Portion of the Church, 1968 Addition

The eastern portion of the church contains a three-story 1968 Brutalist style addition designed by Nathan Johnson. The south facade is the primary facade of the addition, and it faces Monroe Street. The south facade is dominated by concrete, except for the east three-quarters of the first floor which is clad in brick veneer dating to 2004-2005. The west half of the facade is clad in large concrete panels that are pierced by eight narrow slit windows arranged in two columns. A cross is affixed to the concrete cladding at the third floor. The east half of the façade contains the entrance which is centered on the facade and covered with a projecting copper clad canopy. The entrance doors are fully glazed aluminum and are surrounded by sidelights on either side and a transom overhead. East of the entrance is a large, fixed aluminum window that was incorporated into the façade during the 2004-2005 alteration. Two strips of large concrete butterfly-shaped spandrels separate the first and second and the second and third floor windows. Above each spandrel are ribbons of aluminum and glass curtain wall windows, some of which are inset with small awning windows. Above the ribbon windows of the third floor, a concrete spandrel and narrow, fixed openings separated by prominent and highly articulated concrete ribs distinguish the roof garden. The entrance into the 1968 addition is centered on the facade and is covered with a projecting copper clad canopy. The entrance doors are fully glazed aluminum and are surrounded by sidelights on either side and a transom overhead.

The east elevation of the addition fronts on Beaubien Boulevard and is topped with a heavy, overhanging slab eave that wraps around the corner between the façade and east elevation. The first floor is clad in large, battered concrete panels topped with narrow ribbon of windows that run above the concrete panels. A concrete curb that runs along elevation at grade and creates a designated planting space along the concrete expanse on the east elevation. Wrapping around the corner from the façade, two strips of large concrete butterfly-shaped spandrels separate the first and second and the second and third floor windows. Above each spandrel are ribbons of aluminum and glass curtain wall windows, some of which are inset with small awning windows. Above the ribbon windows of the third floor, a concrete ribs distinguish the roof garden. The People Mover elevated track runs along the east elevation at the second floor with large concrete columns set into the sidewalk.

The east fourth of the north (rear) elevation is composed of exterior elements that wrap around the corner from the east elevation including the battered concrete wall on the first floor and two strips of concrete butterfly-shaped spandrels that separate the first and second and the second and third floor windows. Above each spandrel are ribbons of aluminum and glass curtain wall windows, some of which are inset with small awning windows. Above the ribbon windows of

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the third floor, a concrete spandrel and narrow, fixed openings separated by prominent and highly articulated concrete ribs distinguish the roof garden. The remaining portion of the rear elevation is clad in brown brick in a running bond pattern. A metal door is located at grade on the west half of the elevation and metal louvered vents are arranged east of the door. Square aluminum windows pierce the center of the façade on floors two and three.

The interior contains the church's offices, educational rooms, a nursey, lounges, and a large gathering space referred to as Fellowship Hall. Interior walls are constructed of painted concrete block and fully glazed aluminum partitions. Vinyl floor tiles of assorted colors such as brown and green and acoustical tile ceilings exist throughout the addition. The building has a flat roof with a rooftop garden. Roof leaks and deferred maintenance in the 1968 addition have caused some damage on the third floor including missing and damaged ceiling tiles and floor tiles, corrosion on metal ceiling joists and framing members, and waterlogged insulation.

# Historic Integrity

The building retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The church has not been moved and thus integrity of location is retained. The setting has changed over time from an early residential district in the mid-1800s to a thriving urban neighborhood in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This thriving urban neighborhood is still extant today. Integrity of feeling and association exist because the building remains readily identifiable as a church and has been used by the same congregation since 1857.

The congregation's presence in the building since 1857 has facilitated a number of additions that enhance the church's integrity of feeling and association as the changes were made by the congregation in order to meet its religious and social needs. The 1926 addition provided office space and the 1968 addition provided educational rooms and a large gathering space. Both of these additions retain their historic design, materials, and workmanship. The interior fixtures of the central section of the church, such as the pews, wood paneling, and interior finishes, date to 1918 while the structure dates to the c.1881 second floor addition and the original c.1851 structure. The spatial arrangement is also still intact from the 1926 era as the entrance lobby, nave, balcony, and altar are all still present in their historic configuration from that time period. Moreover, the 1968 addition is also still arranged as designed with a large meeting room on the ground floor and offices and classrooms on the upper floors. Therefore, the interior serves as the nexus between the building and its history of action in the nineteenth and twentieth century Civil Rights movement.

The exterior of the church has undergone several alterations since its construction, with the most significant alterations occurring in 1912-1913, 1926, 1968, and 2004-2005. As with the interior, the exterior changes reflect the success and popularity of the church as it sought to provide additional space for worship and community activities. The materials and workmanship are extant beneath the modern 2004-2005 brick and stone veneer system and earlier stucco application. Although the historic materials are not visible on the façade the integrity of the early-twentieth century design is preserved. The large, Tudor-arched window and other façade

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 windows of the 1912-1913 addition read through the modern veneer system. The buttresses

 across the façade, stepped parapets, and inset brick panels are also represented in the veneer system.

## Archaeological Potential

Archeological information on file with the State Historic Preservation Office indicates that there are a number of archaeological sites and surveys in the immediate vicinity of Second Baptist Church. Archaeological site locations are protected in Michigan so specific information will not be discussed here. New archaeological investigations were not undertaken as part of this documentation project.

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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.



х

- 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.)

- x
- 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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(Enter categories from instructions.) <u>Ethnic Heritage: Black</u> <u>Social History: Civil Rights</u> <u>Religion</u> Wayne County, MI County and State

**Period of Significance** 

1851-1968

**Significant Dates** 

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.) Reverend Bradby, Robert L.

**Cultural Affiliation** 

Architect/Builder <u>Tudor Revival church: Unknown</u> Brutalist educational building addition: Nathan Johnson

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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.)

Second Baptist Church of Detroit is significant under National Register Criteria A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage: Black, Social History, and Religion at the state level of significance. Since its founding, Second Baptist Church has been an exceptionally important institution in African American social and religious life in both Detroit and across the state. The church has been both a place of worship and a place for Black community-building and advocacy. The church was an important station on the Underground Railroad in the nineteenth century and was an important location of civil rights activity in Detroit in the twentieth century. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Second Baptist Church was one of the most important Black churches in the state due to the long association between the church and Black life and activism in Detroit and southern Michigan. Church pastors, leaders, and the congregation, broadly, were instrumental in the Civil Rights movement.

Second Baptist Church of Detroit is also significant under National Register Criteria B at the state level of significance because of the importance of Reverend Robert L. Bradby. Under the leadership of Reverend Bradby Second Baptist Church grew in membership and importance. He created numerous groups within the church that provided needed services and social networks. Reverend Bradby also served in several important organizational leadership roles outside of, but related to, Second Baptist Church. Through all of his work inside and outside of Second Baptist Church, the church itself was where Bradby conducted many of his activities. The period of significance for the church is 1851 to 1968.

The period of significance starts with 1851 because the majority of archival records indicate the original church structure was built in 1851 – although it is unknown how much of that original structure remains beneath successive additions. The period of significance concludes in 1968, the year the addition designed by Nathan Johnson was constructed.

Second Baptist Church also meets Criteria Consideration A because it is a religious property that derives its primary significance from its secular historic significance and is directly associated with important historical events and trends in Detroit's African American community and as the primary location of the important activities of Reverend Bradby during the years of his significant contributions to the Civil Rights movement in Detroit and Michigan.

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

#### Introductory Note

The Second Baptist Church of Detroit was individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975 and, later, in 1982, was included as a contributing building in the National Register-listed Greektown Historic District. The 1975 individual National Register nomination did not provide a comprehensive discussion of the significance of the church in the Civil Rights movement, nor did that nomination provide information on architect Nathan Johnson, who designed the 1968 addition. Additionally, the 1975 nomination considered the 1968 Education Building addition as a noncontributing addition but lacked specific reasons for doing so. Similarly, the 1982 Greektown Historic District nomination, while providing context for the surrounding neighborhood, did not provide information on the 1968 Johnson addition. The 1975 individual nomination for Second Baptist Church indicated significance in four Areas of Significance: Education, Political, Religion/Philosophy, and Social/Humanitarian. Some of these areas of significance have been revised by the National Park Service since the listing of the church and some of the selected areas were misapplications of the specific theme. The themes of Education and Political should be removed from the listed areas of significance: Religion and Social History: Civil Rights, in addition to significance under Ethnic Heritage: Black. Second Baptist Church was listed at the state level of significance in 1975. This additional documentation affirms that level of significance.

This additional documentation addresses these deficiencies by adding significant context and history that thoroughly covers the early formation and history of the church, the history of the Underground Railroad activities at the church, the important Civil Rights activities that took place at the church, the civil rights activities undertaken by Reverend Robert L. Bradby and the congregation, and information about the 1968 addition and its designer Nathan Johnson. This additional documentation also associates the church property with the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) *The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit*, which was approved in 2021. The Second Baptist Church meets the registration requirements outlined in the MPDF due to the church's significant association with the theme, "The Role of Detroit's Black Churches in the Civil Rights Movement 1900-1976." Finally, this additional documentation also provides several technical clarifications including a specific period of significance, specific significant dates, current geographical references, a verbal boundary description, a boundary justification, current maps, current photographs, and clarifies the 1968 addition as a contributing addition.

The preparation of this nomination was funded by a 2020 National Park Service African American Civil Rights Grant Program grant to Greektown Neighborhood Partnership.

#### **Origins of the Second Baptist Church of Detroit**

#### Black Churches in the United States During the Mid-nineteenth Century

Religion and the Black church have formed the underpinnings of Black life since the era of slavery, continuing to the present.<sup>29</sup> It was multi-faceted in that it met the diverse needs of Black communities, from providing space for schooling, preaching, political action, and socialization.<sup>30</sup> It was usually the first institution developed by groups of free African Americans and often

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Herb Boyd, Black Detroit: A People's History of Self-Determination (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2017), 49; Cara L. Shelly, "Bradby's Baptists: Second Baptist Church of Detroit, 1910-1946," Michigan Historical Review 17, no. 1 (1991), 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Richard W. Thomas, Life for Us Is What We Make It: Building Black Community in Detroit, 1915-1945 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), 2-3.

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served as a meeting space to discuss civil rights issues.<sup>31</sup> In the era of slavery, religion on the plantation provided a means for enslaved people to cope with enslavement, form bonds and communal ties, and ultimately assert their freedom to worship as they wished.

Significant numbers of African Americans chose to convert to Christianity in earnest during the First Great Awakening as sermons full of singing, dancing, and fervent preaching, reminiscent of traditional African religious practices, became prevalent in Methodist and Baptist sermons.<sup>32</sup> The First Great Awakening took hold in colonial America in the mid-eighteenth century as Methodist and Baptist preachers developed engaging sermons that could be attended by free and enslaved Black people, extolling the possibility for redemption and salvation. Additionally, African Americans could convert to the Methodist or Baptist faiths with relative ease. They just had to hold, "inner communion with the Holy Spirit."<sup>33</sup> In the early-nineteenth century, the Methodist church extolled its opposition to slavery, increasing the popularity of the Methodist church with enslaved and free African Americans.<sup>34</sup> The Baptist church gained popularity among African Americans as each church was relatively independent of a central organization and could easily branch off from another, allowing for the establishment of Black churches, as demonstrated in the formation of Second Baptist Church of Detroit.<sup>35</sup>

Both prior to and after emancipation, when Black worshipers were part of majority-White churches, Black worshipers were often segregated, viewed as inferior, and had little say in the management of the church. The racist experiences of Black congregants were often the same throughout the country, further giving rise to the formation of independent Black churches.<sup>36</sup> At the close of the Civil War, the first task of newly emancipated African Americans often included joining or forming Black churches independent of White churches. These churches created the foundations of Black communities across the country.<sup>37</sup>

## Michigan's Black Churches of the Nineteenth Century

From its early days as part of the Northwest Territory and its entrance into the United States in 1837, Michigan was home to a small Black population. Black citizens were concentrated in Detroit and a handful of other, more remote, areas of the state such as Cass, Kalamazoo,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Henry Louis Gates, Jr., The Black Church: This is Our Story, This is Our Song (New York: Penguin Press, 2021), 43.

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 32}$  Gates, Jr., The Black Church, 40-42.

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 33}$  Gates, Jr., The Black Church, 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Gates, Jr., The Black Church, 46.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Carroll Van West, "Historic Rural African American Churches in Tennessee," National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, National Register #64500618, E20-E21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Gates, Jr., *The Black Church*, 47-48; Van West, "Historic Rural African American Churches in Tennessee," E3; Emily T. Cooperman and Matthew S. Hopper, "African American Churches in Philadelphia, 1787-1949," National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, National Register #64501108, E3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Gates, Jr., The Black Church, 76-78.

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Calhoun, and Washtenaw counties.<sup>38</sup> Within each of these Black communities, despite their geographical separation, the establishment of an independent church was often one of the first goals. The church served as the "sanctuary," shielding Black people from discrimination and racism. Michigan's history of Black churches begins with the establishment of Second Baptist Church of Detroit in 1836, the first Black church in the state.<sup>39</sup>

Similar to the broad experiences of Black communities at the national level, prior to the establishment of Second Baptist Church, Detroit's Black Baptist congregants worshipped at the White-majority First Baptist Church. Although the Black population in Detroit was small compared to other cities in the United States, the development of a Black community in Detroit facilitated the development of the first Black church in the state. Presumably, the nature of a dispersed population in rural areas meant that rural Black communities in Michigan did not have enough members to support an independent Black church. Therefore, following national trends, small, early- and mid-nineteenth century Black citizens of all denominations throughout southern Michigan likely worshipped at their local, majority-White church.

The popularity of the Baptist church with African Americans in Michigan also followed national trends. This likely led to the establishment of multiple "Second Baptist Churches" throughout Michigan, such as those in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Battle Creek, Benton Harbor, Niles, and Kalamazoo.<sup>40</sup> In these cities, the First Baptist Church likely served the White population and the separation of the Black congregation from the White church led to the formation of each city's Second Baptist Church. Black communities often sought the creation of their own churches due in part to discriminatory practices such as segregated seating and because Black congregants were often barred from participating in the management of church affairs.<sup>41</sup>

In addition to Detroit, an example of an early-nineteenth century Black community in Michigan can be found in Cass County, located on the southwest side of the state. Numerous Quaker families who were opposed to slavery settled in Cass County in the 1820s. The placement of an Underground Railroad route through the Quaker-dominated portion of the county and the confluence of Black residents is assuredly related to the clear anti-slavery sentiment expressed by Quakers in the county. The first freedom seeker to settle amongst the Quakers in Cass County

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Benjamin Calvin Wilson, Jr., "Michigan's Ante-bellum Black Haven - Cass County 1835-1870," (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1974), 3-4.
<sup>39</sup> Barbara Hughes Smith, "Worship Way Stations in Detroit," in A Fluid Frontier: Slavery, Resistance, and the Underground Railroad in the Detroit River Borderland, Karolyn Smardz Frost and Veta Smith Tucker, eds. (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2016), 103; Boyd, Black Detroit, 49; Dolores Buckins, "Second Baptist Church of Detroit," National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, National Register #75000970.
<sup>40</sup> R.L. Polk, Battle Creek City Directory (Detroit, MI: R.L. Polk, 1915), 28; R.L. Polk, Polk's Ypsilanti (Michigan) Directory (Detroit, MI: R.L. Polk, 1928), 14; R.L. Polk, Polk's Ann Arbor City Directory (Detroit, MI: R.L. Polk, 1915), 29; R.L. Polk, Polk's Benton Harbor, St. Joseph and Niles Directory (Detroit, MI: R.L. Polk, Polk's 1915), 23, 382; R.L. Polk, Polk's 1915 Kalamazoo City Directory (Detroit, MI: R.L. Polk, 1915), 33.
<sup>41</sup> Boyd, Black Detroit, 49-50.

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may be Lawson Howell, who arrived in 1836. Howell's decision to remain in the area appears to have inspired the settlement of at least fifty freedom seekers by 1847. Manumission of forty-one enslaved African Americans in 1849 by enslaver John Saunders, also referred to in historic texts as Sampson Saunders, and their settlement by Saunders in Cass County, further increased the number of Black residents. Throughout the nineteenth century, additional Black families settled in the area as they sought refuge from racism in other areas of the Midwest and United States. The growth of the Black community in Cass County in the mid-nineteenth century is documented in the United States census, which indicated that the Black population grew from five in 1840 to 1,368 in 1860.<sup>42</sup>

The first Black church established in Cass County was Chain Lake Missionary Baptist Church, organized in 1848. Between 1848 and 1856, a total of three Black churches were established in Cass County. In addition to Chain Lake Baptist, Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and Bethel AME Church were established during this time.<sup>43</sup> David Lett, pastor at Second Baptist Church of Detroit from December 1851 to December 1856, helped develop the Chain Lake Baptist Church prior to his arrival at Second Baptist Church in Detroit.<sup>44</sup>

A common thread amongst Black churches throughout Michigan is their association with state and regional associations, pooling their resources and wherewithal to advance the abolishment of slavery and the attainment of equal rights for African Americans. The organization, communication, and collaboration among Black churches in Michigan largely stemmed from the efforts of Second Baptist Church members. Second Baptist Church organized Black churches to fight for an end to slavery and the right to vote for Black men. Black churches created civil rights-oriented church organizations throughout the state in the nineteenth century, such as the Michigan Anti-Slavery Baptist Association, which communicated frequently with the Amherstburg Anti-Slavery Association of Canada, and the Union Anti-Slavery Association of Ohio.<sup>45</sup> In 1851 leaders and worshipers from Baptist churches throughout Michigan created the Michigan Anti-Slavery Baptist Association, with members of Second Baptist Church participating in the founding of the association. Churches in the association included those in Cass County and the cities of Battle Creek, Kalamazoo, and Niles.<sup>46</sup> In the 1850s under the leadership of Reverend Samuel H. Davis, Second Baptist Church joined the Baptist Association for Colored People and the Michigan Baptist Association.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Wilson, Jr., "Michigan's Ante-bellum Black Haven," 11-17, 20-25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Wilson, Jr., "Michigan's Ante-bellum Black Haven," 74-77.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> "Second Baptist Church of Detroit," National Underground Railroad Network.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Wilson, Jr., "Michigan's Ante-bellum Black Haven," 75-76.

 $<sup>^{46}</sup>$  "Chain Lake Missionary Baptist Church Records 00190," Michigan State University Archives and Historical Collections,

https://archive.lib.msu.edu/uahc/FindingAids/190.html.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Boyd, *Black Detroit*, 51; Norman McRae, "The History of Second Baptist Church, 1836-1986" in *Second Baptist* 

Church of Detroit, Michigan: 150 Years - Continuing in Service by Faith, 1836-1986 (Detroit, MI: Second Baptist Church, 1986), 61.

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 Atmosphere of Nineteenth Century Detroit and its Influence on Detroit's Black Residents

For a discussion on the early history of Black migration and population change in Detroit see the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) *The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit.* 

Detroit's population of Black residents slowly increased in the early 1800s, and eventually became large enough to support a Black church. By 1846, Detroit was home to three Black churches providing safe spaces for Black people to practice the Methodist and Baptist faiths.<sup>48</sup> These early churches were clustered in the Black residential area, which was generally restricted to the area north of Jefferson Avenue and east of Woodward Avenue. Housing and employment discrimination and the desire of Black people to live near each other in a largely hostile White environment influenced the settlement of Black people in this area of Detroit.<sup>49</sup>

Second Baptist Church's early services following its establishment in 1836 were held in George and Caroline French's home, and they donated the land that housed the church following its initial formation.<sup>50</sup> A building known as "Liberty Hall" was the second home of Second Baptist Church. Located between Beaubien and Saint Antoine Streets on the south side of Fort Street, Second Baptist Church occupied the space until it was destroyed by a fire in 1854 of unknown origin.<sup>51</sup> Prior to the purchase of the land on which Second Baptist Church now stands, the congregation worshipped in a schoolhouse on Fort Street, between Hastings and Rivard Streets.<sup>52</sup>

The Colored Methodist Church was organized in 1839, becoming the second Black church in Detroit and congregants successfully petitioned the City of Detroit to donate an unused public hall to the church for use.<sup>53</sup> In 1841 the Colored Methodist Church became the Bethel AME Church of Detroit. During the nineteenth century Bethel AME Church had the largest Black congregation in Detroit and still exists today.<sup>54</sup> The original church was located near Second Baptist Church on Lafayette Street, between Brush and Beaubien Streets.<sup>55</sup>

Saint Matthew's Protestant Episcopal Mission, located on the southeast corner of Congress and Saint Antoine Streets, became Detroit's third Black church when it was established in 1846 by Second Baptist Church's first pastor Reverend William Monroe and notable Second Baptist Church member William Lambert.<sup>56</sup> Saint Matthew's Protestant Episcopal Mission became the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Katzman, Before the Ghetto, 18; Boyd, Black Detroit, 52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Katzman, Before the Ghetto, 25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Hughes Smith, "Worship Way Stations," 103-104; Katzman, Before the Ghetto, 20; Boyd, Black Detroit, 49-50; McRae, "The History of the Second Baptist Church 1836-1986," 57.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Boyd, Black Detroit, 50-51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> "Second Baptist Church of Detroit," National Underground Railroad Network, 11; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Map (1884).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Katzman, Before the Ghetto, 20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Hughes Smith, "Worship Way Stations," 109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Katzman, Before the Ghetto, 25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> McRae, "Blacks in Detroit," 59; Katzman, Before the Ghetto, 26.

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most influential Black church in Detroit following its establishment and was home to the wealthiest Black Detroiters.<sup>57</sup> The size of Saint Matthew's congregation initially surpassed that of Second Baptist Church but dwindled upon passage of Fugitive Slave Act 1850 when members sought refuge in Canada.<sup>58</sup> Support for the church was found in a segment of the city's elite White community and the congregation slowly regrew following the 1850 Act. Until Saint Matthew's closure in 1864, its pastors advocated for abolition and emigration to Black strongholds such as Haiti and Liberia.<sup>59</sup> Saint Matthew's congregants largely remained in Canada and Reverend Monroe departed for Liberia in 1859. The church closed in 1864.

In the mid-nineteenth century, Second Baptist Church was a founding member of national and transnational groups fighting to end slavery, advance Black civil rights, and spread the teachings of the church.<sup>60</sup> Second Baptist Church and other Black churches in Detroit developed libraries, schools, and societies and clubs open to members.<sup>61</sup> These activities fostered the integration of Second Baptist Church and Detroit into the larger, national, and international fight to end slavery and secure Black civil rights. Second Baptist Church hosted meetings and speeches promoting the anti-slavery cause and members traveled across the United States and Canada attending speaking engagements to promote the church's ideals.<sup>62</sup>

In Detroit, Second Baptist Church helped form the foundation of the city's nineteenth century Black community. The church and its members developed educational programs for Black children, promoted temperance amongst adults, and performed baptisms, marriages, and funerals. It aided in the organization of citizens to protest slavery and racism and fight for civil rights.<sup>63</sup> The church also formed the cultural backbone of the community, as people with shared experiences of enslavement and racism found a space away from the discriminatory eyes of the White population. In the late 1830s and early 1840s, Reverend Monroe provided educational instruction for Black children in the basement of Second Baptist Church.<sup>64</sup> When Detroit's public schools were established in 1842, Black children were segregated and only allowed to attend one school located in the basement of one of Detroit's Black Methodist churches.<sup>65</sup>

As a precursor to their twentieth century activities, Black churches provided support for African American migrants to Detroit. As European immigrants came to Detroit, Black workers were relegated to increasingly menial tasks, as discriminatory employers favored European

<sup>59</sup> Hughes Smith, "Worship Way Stations," 111.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Katzman, Before the Ghetto, 21; Hughes Smith, "Worship Way Stations," 110.
 <sup>58</sup> Boyd, Black Detroit, 51; Hughes Smith, "Worship Way Stations," 110.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Adrienne Shadd, "Extending the Right Hand of Fellowship: Sandwich First Baptist Church, Amherstburg First Baptist, and the Amherstburg Baptist Association," in A Fluid Frontier: Slavery, Resistance, and the Underground Railroad in the Detroit River Borderland, Karolyn Smardz Frost and Veta Smith Tucker, eds. (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2016), 123. <sup>61</sup> Katzman, Before the Ghetto, 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Hughes Smith, "Worship Way Stations," 107.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Boyd, Black Detroit, 50-51; Buckins, "Second Baptist Church of Detroit."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> McRae, "Blacks in Detroit," 59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> Boyd, *Black Detroit*, 54; McRae, "History of the Second Baptist Church 1836-1986," 56-57.

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#### Formation of the Second Baptist Church of Detroit

It was within the aforementioned contexts that Second Baptist Church of Detroit was formed in 1836 by thirteen Black individuals who left the majority-White First Baptist Church of Detroit due to discriminatory practices such as segregated seating and exclusion of Black members from church management.<sup>67</sup> The group petitioned Michigan's territorial legislature to allow the formation of the church. In March 5, 1836, the petition was granted and the "Society of the Second Baptist Church" or the "Colored American Baptist Church" was officially formed.<sup>68</sup> The original thirteen petitioners were Madison J. Lightfoot, Tabitha Lightfoot, George W. French, Caroline French, Robert Allen, Jacob Brown, William Brown, Daniel Buckman, Richard Evans, William Nash, Benjamin Reed (also Read), Samuel Robinson, and Reverend William Charles Monroe.<sup>69</sup> Additionally, Cornelius Mitchell, William Scott, and Benjamin Willoughby also left First Baptist Church due to the discrimination they faced. However, they were not part of the petition to form Second Baptist Church. It is unclear if they were later members of Second Baptist Church or joined another one of Detroit's Black churches at a later time.<sup>70</sup>

At that first meeting, Reverend Monroe was elected pastor, Madison Lightfoot was selected to be the clerk, and George French was named deacon.<sup>71</sup> Their collective experiences of discrimination at the White Baptist church, the desire to form their own church, and their meetings in houses of congregants reflect national, state, and local trends of Black church organization in the United States, Black congregants were often discriminated against and forced to sit in certain pews at church, were made to stand at the rear of the church and were kept from preaching and taking part in management of the church. Rather than accept these discriminatory and racist practices, groups of African Americans formed their own churches where they could practice their faith freely and provide much-needed support to their community.

In Detroit, as in other Black communities throughout Michigan and the United States, the Black church generated a number of Black institutions and served as the core of the Black community.<sup>72</sup> Second Baptist Church and its dedicated members established schools for Black children when they were turned away from White schools and further uplifted Black people by

<sup>66</sup> Boyd, Black Detroit, 36, 54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Hughes Smith, "Worship Way Stations," 103; Katzman, *Before the Ghetto*, 20; Boyd, *Black Detroit*, 49-50; McRae, "History of the Second Baptist Church 1836-1986," 57.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> "Second Baptist Church," National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom. <sup>69</sup> One Hundred Fortieth Birthday Celebration Eyewitness History Second Baptist Church of Detroit, 1836-1976 (Detroit, MI, 1976), 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Boyd, Black Detroit, 49; Hughes Smith, "Worship Way Stations," 104.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Hughes Smith, "Worship Way Stations," 104; Boyd, Black Detroit, 50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Katzman, Before the Ghetto, 22.

#### United States Department of the Interior National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form NPS Form 10-900 OMB Control No. 1024-0018

Second Baptist Church of Detroit (Additional

Documentation) Name of Property Wayne County, MI

Name of Property County and State helping freedom seekers secure new lives via the Underground Railroad. Working from these early efforts, Second Baptist Church became an enduring and defining force in Black civil rights from the middle of the nineteenth century forward.

#### Second Baptist Church of Detroit and the Formation of Black Baptist Churches in Michigan

Second Baptist Church's significance as the first Black church in Michigan and the integral role it occupied in the Underground Railroad and the fight for Black civil rights is enhanced by its role in the formation of Black churches in Michigan and directly across the Detroit River in southern Ontario, Canada. Second Baptist Church helped drive the creation of Black churches through the activities of its members and the organizations it helped found. The influence of Second Baptist Church extended across the international boundary of the Detroit River, as described in more detail in the "Amherstburg Baptist Association: A Network of Black Church formation because they believed White churches did not advocate fiercely enough for Black civil rights and were complicit in slavery and racism.<sup>73</sup> It was part of organizations such as the Michigan Baptist Association.<sup>74</sup> The 1915 publication *Michigan Manual of Freedmen's Progress* describes Second Baptist Church as the "most important of the Baptist churches."<sup>75</sup> Additionally, the church's members led the development of an integral component of each Black community as described below.

As described in the "Atmosphere of Nineteenth Century Detroit and its Influence on Detroit's Black Residents" section of this nomination, Second Baptist Church's first pastor Reverend Monroe and his close friend William Lambert left Second Baptist Church to organize Saint Matthew's Protestant Episcopal Mission in 1846. The reason behind Reverend Monroe and Lambert's departure from Second Baptist Church is not clear, but it is speculated that the congregation wanted Reverend Monroe to place more focus on spiritual matters rather than activism, there may have been issues related to children's schooling, or the pair may have been drawn to the Episcopalian church by influential Episcopalian priests.<sup>76</sup>

Detroit's Society of Zion Baptist Church was founded in 1870 by one of the founding members of Second Baptist Church, George French, with help from Second Baptist Church pastor Reverend Supply Chase.<sup>77</sup> It was originally located on Macomb Street, between Riopelle and Orleans Streets in French's home, but relocated to Calhoun Street in what was known as the Kentucky district. The Kentucky district was located north of Gratiot Avenue near Kentucky

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> National Convention of Colored Citizens, *Minutes of the National Convention*, 1843, 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> "Chain Lake Missionary Baptist Church Records 00190," Michigan State University Archives; Boyd, Black Detroit, 51; McRae, "Blacks in Detroit," 61. <sup>75</sup> Francis H. Warren, Michigan Manual of Freedmen's Progress (Detroit, MI, 1915), 134.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> McRae, "Blacks in Detroit," 59; Katzman, Before the Ghetto, 26.
<sup>77</sup> Katzman, Before the Ghetto, 143-144; "Second Baptist Church: Meeting Challenges, Through Faith, in Three Centuries 1836-2001," 39-40.

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Street. It developed in the late 1860s as Detroit's Black population expanded northward from its original area south of Gratiot. The area became infamous, likely only among the White population, for its perceived association with vice. Throughout its existence, Zion Baptist Church struggled maintaining membership amongst the southern-born Black working class and eventually closed in the 1880s.<sup>78</sup>

Reverend John P. Wills served as pastor at Second Baptist Church beginning in May of 1876 but left to lead Shiloh Baptist Church in November of 1881, which he organized that same year.<sup>79</sup> Shiloh Baptist Church was situated in Detroit's growing Black, working-class neighborhood on the near eastside. The church was intended to serve as what may be called a satellite church of Second Baptist Church, serving the Black families living north of Gratiot.<sup>80</sup> The church appears to have been originally located in the basement of a building at the corner of Saint Antoine and High Streets.<sup>81</sup> It later assisted Black men in securing jobs at Ford Motor Company and instilled the importance of education in its congregants.<sup>82</sup>

While pastor at Second Baptist Church, Reverend Robert Bradby facilitated the organization of three churches in Michigan: Mount Olive Baptist Church dating to 1915, Hartford Avenue Baptist (now Hartford Memorial Baptist Church) dating to 1917, and Mount Beulah Baptist dating to 1922.<sup>83</sup> Hartford Avenue Baptist began as the Institutional Baptist Church, located in Detroit's Old Westside neighborhood at the corner of Hartford and Milford Streets. Early on, Hartford struggled with membership and officially changed its name to Hartford Avenue Baptist by 1920. However, under the leadership of Second Baptist Church-trained pastor Reverend Charles A. Hill, Hartford flourished. The church's association with Reverend Bradby and Second Baptist Church ensured its commitment to the Black community and the church was viewed as a "spiritual and political haven" during the mid-twentieth century.<sup>84</sup>

#### The Underground Railroad and the Second Baptist Church of Detroit

#### Brief National Context of Slavery

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, many northern states abolished slavery, but the domestic trade of enslaved peoples continued to flourish, particularly in southern states.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Katzman, Before the Ghetto, 28, 143-144.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> "Second Baptist Church: Meeting Challenges," 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Katzman, Before the Ghetto, 144.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> 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), 76-77.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> Moon, Untold Tales, Unsung Heroes, 121.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> "Second Baptist Church: Meeting Challenges," 41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Julia Marie Robinson, Race, Religion, and the Pulpit: Rev. Robert L. Bradby and the Making of Urban Detroit (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2015), 57-58; The Westsiders, Remembering Detroit's Old Westside, 1920-1950 (self pub., 1997), 161.

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Between 1800 and 1850 the enslaved population in the United States nearly tripled.<sup>85</sup> With many northern states transitioning to nominally free havens for enslaved peoples and free Black people, and anti-slavery northerners banding together to assist enslaved peoples in seeking freedom, migration of enslaved peoples north increased. As early as the 1780s the Underground Railroad was developing to assist freedom seekers on their journey north.

As more states and territories, including Canada, abolished slavery, pro-slavery politicians worked to instill a series of legislative acts, which allowed enslavers to recapture those who were escaping north to freedom. The Fugitive Slave Clause was ratified during the Constitutional Convention of 1787 as a part of Article IV of the Constitution. This clause allowed enslavers to recapture enslaved peoples who had crossed state lines.<sup>86</sup> The Fugitive Slave Clause was inconsistently enforced with many anti-slavery northerners refusing to assist in the capturing of escaped enslaved peoples in northern states. In fact, the Clause pushed many northerners to participate in the Underground Railroad and actively help enslaved people escape. To combat the lackluster enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Clause, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 was written, which ensured that no individual state laws, particularly the laws of northern states, interfered with the right of slaveholding Southerners to capture their perceived property. This was further confirmed with the Supreme Court ruling of Prigg v. Pennsylvania in 1842, in which the Court held that State legislatures had no power to disagree with Congressional acts and confirmed that individual State laws could not supersede the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 and the 1842 ruling of *Prigg v. Pennsylvania* gave more authority to slave hunters and stimulated the growth of the Underground Railroad network.<sup>87</sup>

#### Slavery in Michigan and Detroit and the Connection to Canada

Like many other northern states, Michigan saw an influx in Black migration during this period. Between 1787 and 1837, the territory of Michigan was governed by the Northwest Ordinance, which provided for the government of the Northwest Territory. The Northwest Ordinance prohibited slavery in the Northwest Territory and made this northern land a key location for freedom seekers to travel to. Prior to the Northwest Ordinance, slavery was commonplace in Michigan, but it began to diminish with the establishment of the Northwest Ordinance. Black migration north through Michigan increased through the nineteenth century. What started as a trickle with such legislation as the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 turned into a flood by the time the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was enacted.

In nearby Canada, slavery began to be abolished as early as 1793. In 1793, Upper Canada (also known as Canada West, and, later, as Ontario) passed an act to gradually end the practice of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> "Slavery in America," History.com, https://www.history.com/topics/blackhistory/slavery.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> Ariela Gross and David R. Upham, "Article IV, Section 2: Movement of Persons Throughout the Union," National Constitution Center, https://consti tutioncenter.org/the-constitution/articles/article-iv/clauses/37.
<sup>87</sup> C. W. A. David, "The Fugitive Slave Law of 1793 and its Antecedents," Journal of Negro History 9, no. 1 (1924), 23.

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slavery. This act made it illegal to bring enslaved peoples into Upper Canada and that children born to enslaved people would be freed at age twenty-five. In 1834 slavery was abolished everywhere in the British Empire, including all of Canada.<sup>88</sup> With the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, it was now fully legal to capture freedom seekers in northern states including, Michigan, which threatened many Black residents in Michigan. Correspondingly, between 1850 and 1860, the Black population of Canada increased from 40,000 to 60,000. Most of these refugees were residing in Ontario, bordering the Detroit River.<sup>89</sup>

The increasingly Southern-oriented and pro-slavery laws put increased pressure on participants of the Underground Railroad, as the need to move freedom seekers north became more dire. The goings on of the Underground Railroad were published in Henry Bibb's paper *The Voice of the Fugitive*. In the December 3, 1851, issue, Bibb reported seventeen arrivals in Sandwich, Ontario, directly across the river from Detroit.<sup>90</sup> It is likely these arrivals all came through Detroit, and it is presumed they encountered members of the Second Baptist Church who were instrumental in orchestrating the Underground Railroad in Detroit. Many members of Second Baptist Church themselves abandoned their properties in Detroit and moved to Canada seeking safer grounds. Eighty-four members left the Church for Canada in the years following the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.<sup>91</sup> It was during this time that Detroit was given the codename "Midnight" because it was the last stop before freedom dawned.<sup>92</sup>

### Second Baptist Church and the Underground Railroad

The formation and purpose of the Second Baptist Church of Detroit is intrinsically tied to the history of slavery in the United States. The Second Baptist Church was founded in 1836 during a time of migration of enslaved peoples to northern states and territories in search of freedom. And, even prior to the founding of the Second Baptist Church, future members of the church were involved in anti-slavery efforts in Michigan.

The founding of the Church is partially rooted in the founding member's participation in the Blackburn Riot of 1833.<sup>93</sup> Two enslaved people, Thornton Blackburn and a woman named Ruthy, made a declaration of independence from their enslavers and headed north to Detroit.<sup>94</sup> In

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> Matthew McRae, "The Story of Slavery in Canadian History," Canadian Museum for Human Rights, https://humanrights.ca/story/the-story-of-slavery-in-canadian-history.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Fred Landon, "The Negro Migration to Canada after the Passing of the Fugitive Slave Act," *The Journal of Negro History* 5, no. 1 (1920), 22.
<sup>90</sup> Landon, "The Negro Migration to Canada after the Passing of the Fugitive Slave Act," 23.

 $<sup>^{91}</sup>$  Landon, "The Negro Migration to Canada after the Passing of the Fugitive Slave Act," 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Karolyn Smardz Frost and Veta Smith Tucker, eds., A Fluid Frontier: Slavery, Resistance, and the Underground Railroad in the Detroit River Borderland (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2016), 13.
<sup>93</sup> McRae, "The History of Second Baptist Church 1836-1986," 53.
<sup>94</sup> There is ambiguity regarding Mrs. Blackburn's name. Some sources indicate

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Detroit, Thornton and Ruthy married and established themselves as members of the Black community. In July 1833, two slave catchers, Talbot Oldham and Benjamin Weir, were sent to Detroit to capture the couple. Oldham and Weir claimed authority under the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 and the Blackburns were placed in the local jail until they were to be taken back to Kentucky. Black members of the community stepped into action to save the Blackburns from being returned to slavery. Two of the future founders of the Second Baptist Church, Mrs. George French and Mrs. Tabitha Lightfoot, agreed to go to the jail and exchange clothing with Ruthy Blackburn so that she could impersonate Mrs. French and escape the jail. They were successful and Ruthy was immediately taken to safety in Canada. The slave catchers moved quickly to transport Thornton Blackburn to a steamship to take him back south, frustrated after having lost half of their bounty. When transporting Thornton from the prison, the slave catchers were met by a passionate crowd of Black Detroiters, determined to fight for Thornton's freedom. Many participants in the riot were punished with fines and exile from society. Many participants even self-exiled themselves to Canada. Following the escape, angry White rioters attacked members of the Black community and burned buildings. In addition to this violence and loss of property, Black residents were also forced to post a five-hundred-dollar bond to stay in Detroit.<sup>95</sup> Bonded by the shared experience of racial injustices, many Black citizens felt that following the Blackburn riot, the Black community in Detroit grew stronger after 1833. The collective of this newly formed Black community inspired the creation of a Black temperance society, a Black school, and, eventually, the creation of the Second Baptist Church.<sup>96</sup>

The backbone of the Underground Railroad in Detroit was formed by a network of people, groups, and institutions. Notable members in the Underground Railroad included Second Baptist Reverends Monroe, Newman, Davis, Lett, Troy, Anderson, and Chase. These pastors are believed to have participated in the activities of the Underground Railroad while presiding over the Church. Congregants George DeBaptiste, George and Caroline French, William Lambert, and Madison and Tabitha Lightfoot were all involved in Underground Railroad efforts.<sup>97</sup>

Housed in the basement, Second Baptist Church was one of the Underground Railroad sites where freedom seekers were harbored until being transported across the river to Canada. The Second Baptist stop was termed the "Croghan Street Station" and consisted of an unfinished and drafty space where freedom seekers huddled and waited to be ferried across the river. Monroe Street was originally known as Croghan Street before the name changed at some time between 1884 and 1893.<sup>98</sup> One of the key figures in transporting freedom seekers across the Detroit River was Second Baptist Church member George DeBaptiste. DeBaptiste managed the transportation of freedom seekers across the river, and often worked in collaboration with former Second Baptist Church member William Lambert, who managed travel through and to Detroit. DeBaptiste was born free in Virginia and had a long history of involvement in abolitionist efforts prior to settling in Detroit. He is said to have assisted in the escape of a freedom seeker in

<sup>95</sup> Boyd, Black Detroit, 31-32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> McRae, "The History of Second Baptist Church 1836-1986," 54.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> "Second Baptist Church of Detroit," National Underground Railroad Network.
 <sup>98</sup> William C. Sauer, Map of the City of Detroit Michigan (Detroit, MI: Wm. C. Sauer, 1893); Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Map (1884).

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Name of Property County and State Virginia as early as 1829.<sup>99</sup> DeBaptiste is thought to have settled in Detroit in 1846 and quickly became an intrinsic member of the church and of the Underground Railroad efforts. In 1859, DeBaptiste purchased a steamboat known as the *T. Whitney*. This aided in creating safer journeys across the river, as prior to the steamboat purchase freedom seekers were rowed across the river in skiffs kept hidden under city docks.<sup>100</sup>

### The Colored Vigilant Committee of the City of Detroit

Anti-slavery activists such as DeBaptiste and Lambert did not act in isolation. Groups and institutions made up the Underground Railroad network. The Colored Vigilant Committee of the City of Detroit (CVC) was one such group of abolitionists in Detroit. The CVC was established in 1842 to protect the Black community. CVC meetings were held at Second Baptist Church and members were primarily comprised of congregants from Second Baptist Church, Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Prince Hall Masons. CVC members worked in coordination to assist freedom seekers upon their arrival to Detroit, often hiding members at the Second Baptist Church or at the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge.<sup>101</sup>

Members of the Colored Vigilant Committee were clear in their notion that through knowledge, Black citizens could argue for equality under the United States government and education became their primary objective. Beyond acting as key agents in facilitating Underground Railroad efforts in Detroit, CVC members developed services for the Black community, many of which supported educational efforts for Black citizens. The 1843 annual report as published in the *Detroit Free Press* details that the CVC had nearly seventy members, had recently opened a day school for Black students taught by Black instructors, and had organized two Female Societies devoted to Black women's education.<sup>102</sup>

While anti-slavery efforts were not necessarily the core objective of the Colored Vigilant Committee upon its founding, the CVC's role in the Detroit Underground Railroad was unrivaled. Members of the CVC and the Second Baptist Church are said to have safely hidden and guided five thousand freedom seekers to Canada during the years of the Underground Railroad.<sup>103</sup> In 1854 it was documented that during a two-week period the CVC assisted 53 freedom seekers across the Detroit River.<sup>104</sup> The Colored Vigilant Committee is perhaps most known for their involvement in two highly publicized rescues of enslaved people in 1847: the rescues of Adam Crosswhite and Robert Cromwell. These incidents illustrate the reach of the Colored Vigilant Committee through Michigan and the group's importance to anti-slavery efforts of the mid-nineteenth century.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> "Second Baptist Church of Detroit," National Underground Railroad Network.
<sup>100</sup> Smardz Frost and Tucker, A Fluid Frontier, 158.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> Smardz Frost and Tucker, A Fluid Frontier, 157.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> "Annual Report of the Colored Vigilante Committee of the City of Detroit," Detroit Free Press, Jan. 23, 1843.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> "Freedom's Railway: Reminiscences of the Brave Old Days of the Famous Underground Line Historic Scenes Recalled Detroit the Center of Operations that Freed Thousands of Slaves," *Detroit Tribune*, January 17, 1886. <sup>104</sup> McRae, "The History of Second Baptist Church 1836-1986," 57.

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Adam and Sarah Crosswhite had fled slavery in Kentucky and settled in Marshall, Michigan, about one hundred miles to the west of Detroit. When the Crosswhite's former enslaver traveled north to capture them, anti-slavery activists shepherded the family across the river to Canada. The enslaver, Francis Giltner, brought charges against several people who had assisted in transporting the freedom seekers, as assisting the freedom seekers went against the Fugitive Slave Acts.<sup>105</sup> The lawsuit, *Giltner v. Gorham*, was a hit to the anti-slavery movement as the courts ruled that the claims of Giltner were legitimate and Crosswhite's rescuers had to pay Giltner large sums of money to cover the legal costs and the value of the Crosswhites.<sup>106</sup> Members of the Colored Vigilant Committee were involved in assisting the Crosswhite family in reaching Canada and, further, the Committee donated money for the legal defense of the rescuers being sued.

The second high profile rescue involved a man named Robert Cromwell. Cromwell had escaped slavery in 1840, leaving Saint Louis, Missouri, for Flint, Michigan. He left his daughter behind in his quest for freedom. In 1846, Cromwell wrote to his former enslaver requesting to buy his daughter's freedom. Instead, his enslaver traced the letter and, with accomplices, trapped Cromwell in the county courthouse. The Colored Vigilant Committee took action and various members, including DeBaptiste and Lambert, rescued Cromwell from the clutches of the slave catchers by forcing themselves into the courthouse. The CVC then shepherded Cromwell across the river to Canada.<sup>107</sup>

As organizations such as the Colored Vigilant Committee worked to shepherd freedom seekers across the Detroit River, there developed a need for religious institutions in the towns which Black freedom seekers were settling. The Second Baptist Church was instrumental in assisting with the establishment of churches in the towns of Sandwich and Amherstburg, the two towns in which most freedom seekers settled in after travelling through Detroit.

#### Second Baptist Church and Nineteenth Century Civil Rights Efforts

#### National Context of Nineteenth Century Civil Rights Efforts

Nationwide, Black activists and other abolitionists were diligently working for increased Civil Rights across the United States by establishing newspapers, holding debates and meetings, opening schools for Black children, and advocating for the end of slavery. In 1821 in Ohio, Benjamin Lundy established the first anti-slavery paper called *The Genius of Universal Emancipation* while freed slaves from the United States established Liberia in Africa in 1824. By

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> "Second Baptist Church of Detroit," National Underground Railroad Network.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> Smardz Frost and Tucker, A Fluid Frontier, 74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> Smardz Frost and Tucker, A Fluid Frontier, 159.

Second Baptist Church of Detroit (Additional Documentation) Name of Property 1827 the first African American newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*, was established<sup>108</sup> and in 1830 the first National Negro Convention was convened in Philadelphia.

The mid-1800s were a period of intense advocacy and lobbying on the part of nationally significant abolitionists. In 1845 Frederick Douglass published his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, which launched his career as one of the most important Black activists of the nineteenth century. Sojourner Truth went on a lecture tour in the early 1850s advocating both for women's rights and abolition. In 1859 radical abolitionist John Brown led his raid on the federal armory at Harper's Ferry with the hope of supplying enslaved men with weapons to revolt against their enslavers.

These advances in turning the tide toward nationwide abolition were not without their setbacks. As discussed above, the second Fugitive Slave Law was passed in 1850 required enslaved persons be returned to their enslavers and, in 1857, the Supreme Court of the United States decided the *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision, which held that enslaved people were not citizens of the United States and were therefore not afforded the rights and privileges that the Constitution conferred.<sup>109</sup> The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 and the Dred Scott decision further exacerbated tensions between abolitionist-leaning northern states and southern slaveholding states. In 1860, with the election of Abraham Lincoln, southern states began seceding from the union, thus starting the Civil War when Lincoln refused to recognize the Confederate States of America as an independent nation.

Even with the freeing of enslaved people in the Confederacy via the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 and the end of the Civil War in 1865, Black Americans did not achieve equality as segregation, exploitation, and discrimination continued. Major advances in Civil Rights such as the passing of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865, which abolished slavery throughout the nation, coincided with the adoption of the first Black Codes – laws passed to severely limit the rights of Black Americans – thus diluting the positive effect of these Civil Rights victories. Mississippi passed the first Black Code in 1865, which limited Black resident's ability to own certain property, testify in court, and castigated unemployed African Americans as "vagrants" required to pay a fine or risk being jailed.<sup>110</sup>

The post-Civil War era of Reconstruction in the United States saw some advances for Black Americans as Black men were elected to Congress, were appointed to local office, and, in many places, laws were passed that prohibited discrimination in public accommodations.<sup>111</sup> Perhaps

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> "The African American Odyssey," Library of Congress, accessed January 5, 2023, https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african-american-odyssey/free-blacks-in-the-antebellum-period.html.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> Dred Scott v. Sandford, 60 U.S. 393 (1857).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>110</sup> Peder Punsalan-Teigen, "Mississippi Black Codes, 1865-1866," BlackPast, accessed January 5, 2023, https://www.blackpast.org/african-americanhistory/events-african-american-history/mississippi-black-codes-1865-1866/.<sup>111</sup> Gregory P. Downs and Kate Masur, "The Era of Reconstruction, 1861-1900: A National Historic Landmarks Theme Study," National Historic Landmarks Program, National Park Service, 39-46, accessed January 10, 2023, http://w www.npshistory.com/publications/nhl/theme-studies/reconstruction-era.pdf.

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most importantly, it was during Reconstruction that the "Reconstruction Amendments" were ratified thus securing monumental legal victories for African Americans in the United States. These Reconstruction Amendments include the aforementioned Thirteenth Amendment adopted in 1865, the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868, and the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870. In addition to abolishing slavery via the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, the Fourteenth Amendment negated the Dred Scott decision by broadly defining citizenship and cementing equal protection under the law for all citizens, while the Fifteenth Amendment banned voting restrictions on the basis of race, thus guaranteeing (at least Constitutionally) the right to vote for Black men; however, exercising that right was fraught in the years that followed Reconstruction.

Following the ratification of these Constitutional Amendments, as political powers shifted, the gains seen during Reconstruction began to be dismantled by Southern Democrats who sought ways to hamper Black enfranchisement and political participation. New state and local laws were passed that restricted Black American's rights and cemented segregation in much of the southern United States. These segregationist laws were colloquially called "Jim Crow" laws and they were upheld by the United States Supreme Court in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) decision which enshrined the "separate but equal" legal doctrine in American society. Jim Crow laws ushered in an era spanning more than eighty years that institutionalized second class citizenship for African Americans in the United States.

Much like the efforts going on in other northern cities, Second Baptist Church, as a prominent Black Church, played a critical role in advocating for expanded Civil Rights for both its members and the wider African American population in Detroit. Second Baptist Church was intrinsically tied with the most prominent African American leaders. In one instance, Frederick Douglass met with Second Baptist Church leaders in 1859, accompanied by John Brown who spoke about his plan to emancipate the enslaved, foreshadowing his subsequent raid on Harper's Ferry a few months later.<sup>112</sup> From its founding through the end of the century, Second Baptist Church was one of the most prominent institutions in Michigan fighting for equality for Black citizens even in the face of significant opposition. From its earliest efforts, as detailed above, Second Baptist Church members sought to improve the conditions of life for its congregation and those seeking freedom from the south.

#### State Context of Nineteenth Century Civil Rights

Before gaining statehood, the Territory of Michigan passed a Black Code officially named "An Act to Regulate Blacks and Mulattoes, and to Punish the Kidnapping of Such Persons" in 1827. This act required Black citizens to register with the territorial clerk and deposit \$500 or leave the territory entirely. In 1835, two years before Michigan became a state, the Territory of Michigan held a convention to draft a state constitution which resulted in a document that limited voting rights to White men over the age of twenty-one.<sup>113</sup> The right to vote for Black residents was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>112</sup> Chuck Stokes, "Hallowed Halls: Detroit's Historic Second Baptist Church," Michigan History Magazine 105, no. 6 (2021).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> "Michigan's Constitutions," Michigan Manual 2017-2018, Chapter II, accessed January 10, 2023,

http://legislature.mi.gov/(S(lblu2iey4mtbobdrrsnzdhvf))/documents/2017-2018/michiganmanual/2017-MM-P0025-p0026.pdf.

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successfully put to a vote in 1850 when the Michigan African American Suffrage Amendment was on the ballot. Despite support from the Michigan State Anti-Slavery Society, the African American Suffrage Amendment was defeated that same year.

Perhaps in response to Black advocacy efforts, legislative patterns changed toward the end of the nineteenth century. Set within the context of the era, Michigan had a fairly robust set of civil rights protections passed in the later decades of the nineteenth century. In 1867 Michigan became one of the first states to ban segregation in schools with the adoption of the General Schools Law. Detroit took exception to this law and continued denying Black children an education in the city's public schools until a court case in 1869 ended the segregation.<sup>114</sup> Additionally, in 1869 "a statute prohibited life insurance companies from making any distinction or discrimination between white and colored persons."<sup>115</sup> By 1883 a ban on miscegenation in the state was removed as well. Finally in 1885 criminal penalties were passed for discrimination in public accommodations and in the selection of jurors. In Ferguson v. Gies (1890) the Michigan Supreme Court confirmed the earlier 1885 law by ruling against separation by race in public places by stating, "...in Michigan there must be and is an absolute, unconditional equality of white and colored man before the law. The white man can have no rights or privileges under the law that are denied to the black man."<sup>116</sup> This case was a landmark state decision for many reasons including that the lead attorney for the petition was D. Augustus Straker, the first African American to argue before the Michigan Supreme Court.<sup>117</sup> The petitioner in that case, prominent Black doctor and lawyer William Ferguson was later elected to the Michigan House of Representatives in 1893 and 1895.

#### Advocating for Black Civil Rights in Michigan

Second Baptist Church's significance at the state level also stems from its involvement in advocacy for Black Civil Rights and its intense focus on ending slavery. On October 16, 1843, William Lambert, a prominent member of Second Baptist Church, put out a call to Michigan's Black citizens to assemble at Second Baptist Church on October 26, 1843, to discuss the creation of a "State Convention of the Colored Citizens of the State of Michigan."<sup>118</sup> At a public meeting in Detroit on September 19, 1843, Lambert was appointed chairman of a committee to develop

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>114</sup> "Detroit Schools, 19<sup>th</sup> Century," Detroit Historical Society, accessed January 10, 2023, https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/detroit-schools-19th-century.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>115</sup> "Significant Michigan Civil Rights Case Decisions Through 2003," Michigan Civil Rights Commission, Michigan Department of Civil Rights (2003), accessed January 10, 2023, https://www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/mdcr/mcr c/significant-decisions.pdf?rev=7a6d60369b2640b0a3acfbc610df0236.
<sup>116</sup> William D. Fuller, *Michigan Reports 82* (Chicago: Callaghan & Co., 1890), 363.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> Frances Heldt, "D. Augustus Straker Debunks 'Separate But Equal'", Michiganology, Michigan History Center, accessed January 10, 2023, https:// michiganology.org/stories/d-augustus-straker-debunks-separate-but-equal/.
<sup>118</sup> William Lambert, "A Call for a State Convention, of the Colored Citizens, of the State of Michigan," Signal of Liberty, October 16, 1843, Ann Arbor District Library, https://aadl.org/signalofliberty/SL\_18431016-p3-09.

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the convention, which developed means to "speak out in our own defence [sic] upon the great cause of Human Liberty and Equal Rights," and "will exert our influence to the utmost, for the immediate abolition of American slavery, and the improvement of the condition of our colored people throughout the Union."<sup>119</sup>

The invitation to Michigan's Black citizens to meet at Second Baptist Church on October 26 was published in the Signal of Liberty (Ann Arbor, Mich.) and the Daily Advertiser (Detroit). Interestingly, the call for assembly did not mention Second Baptist Church or that it was chosen as the site of the convention, nor does it illustrate Lambert's or Reverend Monroe's association with Second Baptist Church. This suggests that the readers of the Signal of Liberty and the Daily Advertiser were familiar with Lambert and Monroe's association with Second Baptist Church, and that Second Baptist Church would undoubtedly be the location of the convention held in Detroit. People from Detroit, Jackson, Marshall, and Washtenaw County attended the convention, including Second Baptist Church founders Reverend Monroe, Madison Lightfoot, and Robert Allen. Noted abolitionist Henry Bibb was also in attendance. Lambert, Lightfoot, Allen, and Reverend Monroe were elected to various committees at the convention, showing their stature amongst the attendees, and Second Baptist Church's involvement in the convention highlights the significant role the church played in the fight for civil rights for Michigan's Black citizens. Moreover, it was at this meeting where it was decided that Lambert would address the State demanding the right to vote and an end to slavery. Lambert's speech is printed in the convention's minutes.<sup>120</sup> Attendees from Jackson, Marshall, and Washtenaw County undoubtedly reported the happenings of the convention back to their communities, thereby spreading Second Baptist Church's influence throughout southeastern Michigan.

Second Baptist Church members continued their attendance of the State Convention of Colored Citizens throughout the mid-nineteenth century. A result of the 1850 convention held in Marshall, Michigan, was the publishing of the findings of the convention in the *Detroit Free Press* during the State Constitutional Convention in June of 1850. Authored by Robert Allen, the findings highlight the civil rights issue of taxation without representation and the oppression faced by Michigan's Black citizens.<sup>121</sup> In September of 1865, Second Baptist Church hosted the Colored Men's Convention of the State of Michigan for a second time. Members assembled from communities across the state, including Hudson, Adrian, Hillsdale, Romeo, Kalamazoo, Ypsilanti, and Detroit.<sup>122</sup>

Prior to Michigan's first state convention, Reverend Monroe, Robert Allen, and three other individuals from Detroit's Black community attended the National Convention of Colored Citizens held in Buffalo, New York, in August of 1843. The convention sought to deliberate on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>119</sup> State Convention of the Colored Citizens, *Minutes of the State Convention*, 1843.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> State Convention of the Colored Citizens, Minutes of the State Convention, 1843.

 $<sup>^{121}</sup>$  Robert Allen, "Taxation and Representation," Detroit Free Press, June 10, 1850.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup> Colored Men's Convention of the State of Michigan, *Proceedings of the Colored Men's Convention*, 1865, 3-4.

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the how to end slavery, secure Black Civil Rights, and how to organize Black communities across the country in support of these goals.<sup>123</sup> In 1865, George DeBaptiste, presumably William Lambert, and other individuals from Michigan attended the First Annual Meeting of the National Equal Rights League in Cleveland, Ohio. As with other organizations of Black citizens, the National Equal Rights League sought to secure the right to vote for African American men following the "reconstruction of the Southern States."<sup>124</sup> William Lambert was elected vice-president of the delegation from Michigan.<sup>125</sup>

Second Baptist Church's intimate involvement with state conventions and leaders of Black communities throughout Michigan illustrates its significance in securing Black Civil Rights and advocating for an end to slavery. Members such as Reverend Monroe and William Lambert attended meetings across the state and country, and were often elected to committees at the conventions, suggesting the prominent role they played throughout Michigan's Black communities. Additionally, Second Baptist Church's members had direct involvement in the creation of Black churches throughout the state and across the Detroit River in Canada. These churches formed the foundation of the Black communities in which they were located.

## Local Context of Nineteenth Century Civil Rights

Locally, the Second Baptist Church and its early congregants were some of the most prominent civil rights activists in Detroit. A contributing factor in how and why Second Baptist Church became a powerhouse of social advocacy traces back to the 1833 Blackburn Affair, described in detail, above. After the Blackburns escaped, Black men were sought out for arrest and convicted. White citizens also attacked and harassed Black Detroiters in the aftermath of the Blackburn's escape. Second Baptist Church members Tabitha Lightfoot and Caroline French were instrumental players in the Blackburn affair. The camaraderie these experiences likely triggered amongst the founders of Second Baptist Church, and other Black Detroiters who lived through the resulting violent backlash, likely played a role in allying the founding members and the early congregants.<sup>126</sup> The foundation created by this activism and self-reliance on the part of Second Baptist Church and its members helped propel the church to the center of civil rights activities in Detroit during the early and mid-1800s.

Beyond the intense efforts to end slavery, obtaining the right to vote and establishing a school for Black children were two priorities for Black Detroiters in the 1830s and 1840s. In August 1839, Black Detroiters met to discuss the importance of gaining the right to vote and subsequent meetings continued to emphasize this point. Additionally, in 1842, in response to Black children being segregated into the District School Eight and the removal of William Monroe as teacher,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> National Convention of Colored Citizens, *Minutes of the National Convention*, 1843.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> National Equal Rights League, Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of the National Equal Rights League, Held in Cleveland, Ohio, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 1865 (Philadelphia: E.C. Markley & Son, 1865), 20.
<sup>125</sup> National Equal Rights League, Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting, 1865, 32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> McRae, "Blacks in Detroit," 171-172.

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Second Baptist Church and Colored Vigilant Committee members met to create a school for Black children.<sup>127</sup> Members of Second Baptist Church and CVC committed themselves to paying for instruction for their children, the efforts of which were to be led by Reverend William Monroe as the school's instructor.

Suffrage was also a priority for Second Baptist Church's advocacy efforts in the mid-1800s. In 1850 when the Michigan African American Suffrage Amendment was on the ballot, Second Baptist Church members held a meeting to plan continuing advocacy efforts. The *Detroit Free Press* opposed Black suffrage in racist articles prior to the 1850 state constitutional convention, where Black suffrage was to be discussed. As mentioned above, the Michigan African American Suffrage Amendment was defeated, 32,026 to 12,840. Because of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, the years immediately preceding the Civil War were busy ones for Second Baptist Church as it continued to aid freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad. Rising intolerance during this era increased and Black residents were harassed on their way to church.<sup>128</sup>

With the start of the Civil War, Detroit's status as a northern city and part of the Union did not quell the racist sentiments held by the majority of White Detroiters at that time. Black residents of Detroit faced discrimination in nearly all facets of their daily lives. Racial tensions were high in the city and in 1863 a riot occurred in Detroit. The precise origins are unknown, but one source indicates that both the accusation that William Faulkner, a Black man, had molested a White and Black girl, and frustration with the Union Draft Law that conscripted White men between the ages of twenty and forty-five into the Union Army, sparked a riotous group of White men to attack Black Detroiters. In the aftermath of the riot, Second Baptist Church petitioned the public for donations to aid the families affected by the riot.<sup>129</sup>

As discussed above, in February of 1867, Michigan banned *de jure* school segregation via the adoption of the General Schools Law, however the law was haphazardly enforced. Detroit in particular refused to integrate their schools. Detroit Black families, with the aid of members of Second Baptist Church, took the matter to Michigan's Supreme Court. The State Supreme Court ruled against separate schools, finally ending segregation in the city in 1869, two years after the law was passed.

Throughout the course of the nineteenth century, the Second Baptist Church was a consistent force in the slow march toward equality. Church leaders and congregants participated in the Underground Railroad, started schools, held meetings, advocated within their community, and hosted famous abolitionists all at great personal risk and cost. Second Baptist Church leaders foreshadowed the impact their actions would have when, at the 1843 Colored Citizens Convention, Second Baptist Church member William Lambert rose to speak, saying, "...for we are placed in a very responsible station, the future destiny of our people in this State for years yet

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>127</sup> McRae, "The History of Second Baptist Church 1836-1986," 56-57.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> McRae, "The History of Second Baptist Church 1836-1986," 60-61, 66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>129</sup> Poor White men were unhappy about the Union Draft Law as they saw it as a war to free African Americans which, they believed, would only cause more competition for their jobs.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form NPS Form 10-900 OMB Control No. 1024-0018

Second Baptist Church of Detroit (Additional Documentation) Name of Property to come, depends greatly upon our conduct here in convention assembled."<sup>130</sup> Those words presaged the struggle for civil rights that Second Baptist Church members would fight for in the ensuing century.

#### Second Baptist Church and Twentieth Century Civil Rights Efforts

#### National Context on Twentieth Century Civil Rights Efforts

For a discussion on the early history of Black migration and population change in Detroit see the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) *The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit.* At the beginning of the twentieth century, racial tensions escalated as the Great Migration intensified. With more Black Americans moving to northern urban centers, competition for jobs and housing played a role in this escalation. Due to the increased racial tensions and because significant victories at the federal level (the Reconstruction amendments for example) had not translated to equality "on the ground" for Black Americans, targeted efforts were needed to bring about change. Thus, national groups formed to advocate specifically for Black Americans. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was established in 1909, while the National Urban League (NUL) was founded a year later in 1910. The NAACP was formed partly in response to horrific violence perpetuated against Black Americans in 1908, including a racial riot in Springfield, Illinois, while the National Urban League was initially formed to assist Black Americans who had migrated to urban areas. Both organizations later became powerful multifocused organizations concentrating on a broad variety of civil rights goals.

In 1919 there was record violence perpetuated against Black Americans. Called "Red Summer," most of the violence was concentrated in the south but the north did not escape the terrorism. In Detroit, a rash of racial confrontations at several manufacturing facilities—caused by the postwar recession and competition for jobs—occurred in the spring of 1919.<sup>131</sup> Although a time of great terror and violence, Red Summer was also a turning point that fueled and buttressed the burgeoning Black equality movement, with the NAACP quickly solidifying its status as the nation's preeminent civil rights organization—during this time the NAACP grew its membership from 9,200 in 1918 to 51,000 in April of 1919.<sup>132</sup> At the helm of the NAACP were some of the most accomplished Black men in America: W. E. B. Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson, and Walter White. Similarly, the NUL greatly expanded in the boom years of the 1920s as thousands of incoming Black migrants sought job and housing assistance in northern cities.

Throughout the twentieth century, African Americans contended with numerous obstacles intentionally placed to limit expression of their civil rights. Although the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified in 1920, which gave women the right to vote, barriers were actively erected to block

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup> William Lambert, "A Call for a State Convention, of the Colored Citizens, of the State of Michigan," *Signal of Liberty*, October 16, 1843.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>131</sup> Olivier Zunz, *The Changing Face of Inequality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 373.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>132</sup> Cameron McWhirter, Red Summer (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2011), 26, 28.

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African American men and women from voting such as literacy tests and registration requirements. During World War I, despite segregation in military units, many Black men were eager to show their patriotism and many enlistees likely saw military service as an opportunity to gain equal footing in American society.<sup>133</sup> Despite these lofty goals, after the war Black Americans returned home to the same entrenched racism. During the 1920s President Herbert Hoover alienated Black voters by purging African Americans from leadership positions in the Republican Party and by nominating segregationist candidate John J. Parker to the Supreme Court. These actions, in part, drove Black Americans towards Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal programs and the Democratic party.<sup>134</sup>

With fewer assets and less savings than their White counterparts, and because they were often the first to be fired, the Great Depression was particularly hard on Black Americans. Groups like the NUL sought new ways to assist Black Americans during this difficult period by "helping black workers make gains through government programs and new legislation."<sup>135</sup> In the 1930s, the NAACP continued to advocate for a federal anti-lynching law, which it had done since its inception. Lynchings had increased partially due to the economic woes of that era and thus the NAACP renewed its efforts to pass an anti-lynching bill but after three failed attempts to pass the Costigan-Wagner bill (as it was called), the "NAACP had resigned itself to the legislative reality of the bill's inability to pass the Senate."<sup>136</sup>

Adept at using the court system to defend African Americans wrongly accused of crimes and simultaneously overturn prejudicial laws through a strategic approach, the NAACP had sketched out a plan in 1929 to build a legal campaign to overturn the egregious *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) ruling establishing the discriminatory "separate but equal" notion. The plan was masterminded by NAACP chief counsel Charles Hamilton Houston. Houston's strategy involved attacking the inadequacy of the "equal" part of the "separate but equal" doctrine by making it economically infeasible to maintain separate and truly equal facilities. The culmination of Houston's (and his protégé Thurgood Marshall's) work came in 1954 when Marshall successfully argued the *Brown* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> "African American Participation During World War I," Delaware Historical & Cultural Affairs, accessed January 26, 2023, https://history.delaware.gov/world-war-i/african-americans-ww1/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>134</sup> "African American Life During the Great Depression and New Deal," Britannica, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Afri can-American/African-American-life-during-the-Great-Depression-and-the-New-Deal; George F. Garcia, "Herbert Hoover and the Issue of Race," Annals of Iowa, 507.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>135</sup> Dona Hamilton, "Organizational Adaptation: The National Urban League During the Great Depression," *The Journal of Sociology & Welfare* 14, no. 2 (1987), 130.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>136</sup> "Lesson 2: NAACP's Anti-Lynching Campaign in the 1930s," National Endowment for the Humanities, accessed January 26, 2023, https://edsitement.neh.gov/ lesson-plans/lesson-2-naacps-anti-lynching-campaign-1930s#:~:text=By%20the %20time%20the%20Gavagan,work%20for%20the%20branches%2C%20the.

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*v. Board of Education* case before the United States Supreme Court on behalf of the NAACP, which banned segregation in public schools.<sup>137</sup>

Although overturning *Plessy* was a priority, the NAACP and other civil rights organizations also fought for the right to equal education, access to public accommodation, voting, fair housing, employment, and safety from criminal injustice.<sup>138</sup> To further these aims, the NAACP was also a leading advocate for economic justice for Black Americans by partnering with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). Additionally, Walter White, an NAACP board member, "met with President Franklin D. Roosevelt to outlaw job discrimination in the armed forced, defense industries, and the agencies created by the New Deal."<sup>139</sup>

Two major Civil Rights victories in the 1940s centered around military service. Much like in World War I, the Second World War provided an opportunity for Black Americans to advocate for equal treatment at a time when the country's leaders were attempting to unite *all* Americans around bedrock democratic principles—the hypocrisy of denying Black Americans equal rights at a time when every American was asked to sacrifice so much came into stark focus. Under pressure from the NAACP, NUL, labor activists, religious leaders, and many other advocates, Presidents Roosevelt and Truman were compelled to act. In 1941 President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8802, which prohibited discrimination based on race in the nation's defense industries. In 1948, President Truman issued Executive Order 9981 which desegregated America's armed forces. Both of these civil rights victories came about only through years of dedicated and concerted efforts made nationwide by tireless advocates.

The modern Civil Rights Movement spanned from 1954 to 1968, catalyzed by the decisive Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. This was a period of intense advocacy, the resulting gains of which radically altered the legal and cultural landscape for African American citizens. Several prominent individuals were instrumental in achieving these civil rights victories including Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Bayard Rustin, and A. Philip Randolph.

In 1955 Rosa Parks famously refused to give her seat to a White man on a Montgomery bus and was arrested as a result. This simple act incited a thirteen-month mass protest of the city's bus system as Black riders refused to use the city's buses due to the segregated seating policies. Led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. the protest ended with the Supreme Court ruling that segregation on public buses was unconstitutional. This is often regarded as the nation's first mass civil rights protest and it elevated King to national prominence. Whereas the NUL and NAACP tended to work within the system by primarily using legislative and judicial avenues, Dr. Martin Luther

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>137</sup> "A Period of Growth," NAACP Our History, accessed January 26, 2023, https://naacp.org/about/our-history.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>138</sup> National Historic Landmarks Program, Civil Rights in America: A Framework for Identifying Significant Sites (2008), 31-34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>139</sup> "A Period of Growth," NAACP Our History, January 26, 2023, https://naacp.org/about/our-history.

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King Jr. advocated for direct action allowing average citizens to participate in the changemaking process to create a more equitable society.

In 1963, in response to continued discrimination, national civil rights leaders A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin built a coalition of civic, religious, and labor leaders to organize the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was the keynote speaker and he delivered his historic "I Have a Dream" speech to a crowd estimated at 250,000. The March on Washington was a contributing factor in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson. The Civil Rights Act was one of the most sweeping civil rights laws ever passed in the United States:

[T]he act granted the federal government strong enforcement powers in the area of civil rights. It prohibited tactics to limit voting; guaranteed racial and religious minorities equal access to public accommodations; outlawed job discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; continued the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights; and established the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.<sup>140</sup>

In 1965 the Voting Rights Act was passed, which was designed to provide enforcement of the Fifteenth Amendment, which had been diluted via literacy tests, registration requirements, poll taxes, grandfather clauses, and outright violence and intimidation at the voting polls. The passage of the Voting Rights act resulted in the election of Black officials to governments and gave Black communities a political voice. The last of the major civil rights legislation passed in the 1960s was the Fair Housing Act of 1968. This act "…helped shift the center of the civil rights movement from the rural South to the urban North, where racial concentration in housing was more prevalent. The shift spawned a campaign for residential integration and equal housing there and across the nation."<sup>141</sup>

#### State-Level Context of the Civil Rights Movement

As the national NAACP was growing its membership in the early decades of the twentieth century, the formation of NAACP branches throughout Michigan also occurred. The first branch in Michigan was founded in Detroit in 1912. Ensuing branches followed with Grand Rapids in 1917, Flint in 1918, Saginaw in 1919, and Pontiac in 1920. These statewide branches came to the fore when the modern Civil Rights Movement began in earnest in the 1950s.

The Detroit branch of the Urban League was established in 1915. With funding from Henry G. Stevens, who was vice president of Detroit's Associated Charities, the Detroit Urban League (DUL) began as a social work agency for African Americans with a dedicated employment bureau.<sup>142</sup> Forrester B. Washington was the Detroit Urban League's first president, taking his post in 1916, however he left two years later to become a supervisor in the Division of Negro

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>140</sup> National Historic Landmarks Program, Civil Rights in America, 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>141</sup> National Historic Landmarks Program, Civil Rights in America, 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>142</sup> Zunz, Changing Face of Inequality, 319.

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Name of Property Economics at the United States Department of Labor.<sup>143</sup> After Washington's departure John C. Dancy took the helm and directed the DUL from 1918 to 1960. Unlike the NAACP, the Detroit National Urban League was the only Urban League branch in Michigan until 1948 when another branch was established in Flint.<sup>144</sup> The Detroit Urban League, while primarily operating in Detroit, was also advocating in areas in the greater Detroit metro area, as Dancy was involved in establishing housing developments in Royal Oak Township and, evidence suggests, in Inkster as well.

Throughout Michigan in the early 1900s, Black communities faced discrimination in housing and employment, and without state legislation addressing these inequality issues the burden for assisting the race fell to organizations in the local communities. Because the Urban League had no branches outside of Detroit in the first half of the twentieth century, it seems likely that social organizations, often primarily driven by Black churches, filled the void in providing housing and job assistance to Black residents outside of the city.

Statewide, Black churches were highly active in supporting and advocating for the betterment of their congregants. During the Great Depression, civil rights advocacy in some instances seemed more locally focused as Black churches attempted to meet the basic needs of their congregants. The Second Baptist Church of Ann Arbor, active in the 1930s under Reverend C.W. Carpenter, provided "extensive relief programs" for those in need, undoubtedly necessitated by the Great Depression.<sup>145</sup> Generally though, Black churches throughout the state were important loci of civil rights activity, providing space and support for meetings, rallies, and funding drives. The strong ties between Black churches and various civil rights groups are demonstrated by a series of newspaper accounts that detail Black churches hosting numerous activities: In 1937 the Lake County branch of the NAACP held its regular monthly meeting at the First Baptist Church in Baldwin, Michigan. Similar newspaper announcements in 1943 and 1945 seem to indicate that First Baptist Church was the regular meeting location of the local NAACP in this area.<sup>146</sup> In 1944 the First Baptist Church also hosted the Progressive Society of Lake County as they planned for a home for aged Black community members.<sup>147</sup> In 1949 the Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church in Benton Harbor hosted an event sponsored by the local NAACP branch in which municipal Judge Samuel Heller spoke on advocating for the rights of minority groups.<sup>148</sup> Mount Olive Baptist Church in Port Huron hosted a lecture by Hillary Bissell who was the NAACP's Michigan state treasurer and the state chair of the Human Relations Committee of the Michigan Council of Churches in 1953. In 1959 the Mount Zion AME Church in Battle Creek also hosted an NAACP rally to solicit monies for the Freedom Fund, which was set up to fund human rights

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>143</sup> Zunz, Changing Face of Inequality, 319.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>144</sup> University of Michigan-Flint Library.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>145</sup> "Second Baptist to Observe Pastor's Sixth Anniversary," Ann Arbor News, November 22, 1935.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>146</sup> "Heard in Idlewild," *Lake County Star*, August 6, 1937; "NAACP Meeting," *Lake County Star*, September 24, 1943; "Heard in Idlewild," *Lake County Star*, March 16, 1945.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>147</sup> "Heard in Idlewild," Lake County Star, January 21, 1944.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> "Chicago Jurist to Address NAACP Meeting Sunday," Herald Palladium (Benton Harbor, MI), February 24, 1949.

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activities across the United States.<sup>149</sup> The Second Baptist Church of Ypsilanti was successful in securing a federally insured mortgage on their new parsonage located at 315 Catherine Street, which may be the first FHA insured parsonage in the country.<sup>150</sup> These civil rights activities by Michigan's Black churches showcases the critical, supporting role the Black church played in the continued fight for decent housing, equal rights, and equal access to federal benefits statewide.

Important court cases in Michigan began to chip away at discriminatory practices. In 1925, Dr. Ossian Sweet was charged with murder for defending his home against an angry mob of White neighbors. The jury failed to convict Sweet establishing a principle that Black homeowners as well as White homeowners have a right to defend their property. That same year African American Emmett Bolden, a dentist in Grand Rapids, was denied a main floor seat at Keith's Theater as Black theatergoers were forced to sit in the balcony.<sup>151</sup> Bolden retained the first Black attorney elected to the Grand Rapids Bar Association, Oliver Meakins Green, to sue the theater. In 1927 the Michigan Supreme Court overturned the lower court's ruling and held that such discriminatory practices were unlawful. In 1944, Detroit residents Orsel and Minnie McGhee bought a house in a neighborhood that had a racially restrictive covenant that restricted occupancy to Whites only. The neighborhood association took the McGhees to court when they refused to move. The McGhee's case was consolidated into the landmark United States Supreme Court case *Shelley v. Kraemer* and in 1948 the Court held that using the court system to enforce racially restrictive covenants was a violation of the Equal Protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.<sup>152</sup>

Suits in court were patchwork but legislative action began occurring by the 1930s, which changed the legal landscape for Black residents in Michigan. Charles Diggs Sr. was the second African American elected to the Michigan State Senate and helped pass the "Diggs Law" formally titled the Equal Accommodations Act of 1938, which made discrimination in service and public accommodations a misdemeanor.<sup>153</sup> Later, in 1952, the Michigan legislature passed Public Act 101 prohibiting discrimination in public housing.<sup>154</sup>

After victory with the Diggs Law, civil rights advocates in Michigan prioritized fair employment laws as Black workers still struggled to obtain equal footing in the workplace. During World War II, the Detroit Branch of the NAACP joined with the UAW to "battle wartime hate strikes,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>149</sup> "Fight for Human Dignity Described at NAACP Rally," Battle Creek Enquirer, November 23, 1959.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>150</sup> "Dedication of Ypsilanti Second Baptist Church Parsonage, September 1954 Photographer: Attributed to Eck Stanger," Ann Arbor District Library, accessed January 26, 2023, https://aadl.org/taxonomy/term/63716?page=1.
<sup>151</sup> "Michigan Legal Milestones," State Bar of Michigan, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.michbar.org/programs/milestone/milestones\_endingjimcrow.
<sup>152</sup> Shelley v. Kraemer, 334 U.S. 1 (1948).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>153</sup> "1936: Charles Diggs Sr. Elected To Michigan Senate," Michigan Day by Day," accessed January 26, 2023, https://harris23.msu.domains/event/1936-charlesdiggs-sr-elected-to-michigan-senate/?instance\_id=19978.
<sup>154</sup> Sidney Fine, "Michigan and Housing Discrimination, 1949-1968," *Michigan* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>154</sup> Sidney Fine, "Michigan and Housing Discrimination, 1949–1968," *Michigan Historical Review* 23, no. 2 (1997), 85.

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enforce wartime Fair Employment Practices regulations, and work for the passage of antidiscriminatory legislation."<sup>155</sup> Thus when the Detroit branch of the NAACP spearheaded a campaign to pass a state fair employment law after World War II, it was aided by the UAW Fair Practices and Anti-Discrimination Department and several other advocacy groups including the Mayor's Interracial Committee and the ACLU.<sup>156</sup> The law was not passed due to "conflict among liberal and left-wing groups" and because a municipal fair employment law in Detroit distracted the broader statewide effort.<sup>157</sup> Finally, only after Democrats regained political control in Lansing, did the Fair Employment Practices Act pass. It was signed into law by Governor G. Mennen Williams in June 1955.<sup>158</sup>

In 1963 the people of Michigan approved a new state constitution.<sup>159</sup> Among the provisions of the 1963 constitution was the creation of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, which is tasked with safeguarding Michigan residents against discrimination. With this new constitution Michigan also became the first state in the country to enshrine civil rights protections in its constitution. In 1965 the Michigan Department of Civil Rights was established to investigate alleged racial, religious, or national origin discrimination in the state.

Further advances were made in the 1970s when Public Act 453 commonly known as the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act was passed by the Michigan legislature in 1976. The act "bolstered existing civil rights laws by extending the reach of its application and expanding the forms of discrimination prohibited."<sup>160</sup> The Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act prohibited discrimination based on age, sex, marital status, physical appearance, family status, pregnancy, or disability. These protections, which applied to a wide swath of Michiganders, were a direct outcome of the pioneering anti-discrimination work accomplished by Black advocates in the 1950s and 1960s in Michigan.

#### Local context of the Civil Rights Movement, 1900-1946

For a discussion of the twentieth century Civil Rights movement in Detroit see the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) *The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit.* The events and conditions described in the MPDF shaped the local context within which Second Baptist Church grew and developed throughout the first fifty years of the twentieth century. Set against this backdrop, Second Baptist Church grew to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>155</sup> Thomas J. Sugrue, Origins of the Urban Crisis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 170.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>156</sup> Anthony S. Chen, "The Passage of State Fair Employment Legislation, 1945-1964: An Event-History Analysis with Time-Varying and Time-Constant Covariates," IRLE Working Paper no. 79-01, https://irle.berkeley.edu/files

<sup>/2001/</sup>The-Passage-of-State-Fair-Employment-Legislation-1945-1964.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>157</sup> Chen, "The Passage of State Fair Employment Legislation."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>158</sup> Sugrue, Origins of the Urban Crisis, 173.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>159</sup> The Constitution of The State of Michigan of 1963 went into effect on January 1, 1964.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>160</sup> "Michigan Legal Milestones 37: The Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act," State Bar of Michigan, accessed January 26, 2023, https://www.michbar.org/programs /milestone/milestones\_elliott-larsencivilrightsact.

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Second Baptist Church of Detroit (Additional Documentation) Name of Property encompass a wide range of social and political activities, all designed to advocate and lift up the church's congregants.

#### Advocacy at Second Baptist Church 1900-1910

It is within this local context that Second Baptist Church came into its own as a powerhouse of social, political, and economic advocacy for its burgeoning flock. For the first ten years of the twentieth century, Second Baptist Church had had a series of pastors including Reverend W.S. Bradden from 1896 to 1901, Reverend Holland Powell from 1902 to 1905, and Reverend William Jones from 1906 to 1910. Reverend Robert L. Bradby assumed the pastorate in 1910.

It was under the pastorate of Reverend Powell that Sister Etta Taylor formed the Christian Industrial Club, which "moved to assist single Black women in finding decent housing, adjusting to an urban environment, and maintaining their Christian values. To do this, they founded the Frances Harper Inn."<sup>161</sup> The Frances Harper Inn was founded by Taylor in 1914 to provide a home for working Black women in the city. The Frances Harper Inn was located at 307 Horton Street in the North End neighborhood of Detroit. Early activities like this laid a blueprint for future work advancing the social causes Second Baptist Church later support. Preserving and promoting a "bourgeoisie respectability" was at the heart of these activities, which was an outworking of W. E. B. Du Bois philosophy that the "talented tenth" of the race must work toward uplifting the race as a whole by inspiring "working class blacks to respectability and equality."<sup>162</sup> This philosophy drove much of the advocacy work Second Baptist congregants were participating in during the first several decades of the twentieth century.

#### Early History: Reverend Robert L. Bradby

Second Baptist Church's significance in the context of twentieth century Civil Rights history is intrinsically tied to the leadership of Reverend Robert L. Bradby, who helped permanently cement Second Baptist Church as a locus of social and political advocacy while leading the church from 1910 to 1946. Upon arriving in Detroit in 1910 to take leadership of Second Baptist Church, Bradby took the helm of a church with approximately 250 members and a facility that needed repair.<sup>163</sup>

Robert L. Bradby's father, James Elridge Bradby, was originally from Charles City County, Virginia, and was racially defined by the laws of the time as a mulatto; he was required to register as such with local county officials. In the late 1850s James Elridge Bradby eventually left Virginia to escape tightening racial laws as "freeborn or established mulattos, Native Americans, and African Americans were under the constant threat of losing their free status and being forced back into slavery."<sup>164</sup> In order to leave, Bradby and his mother had to obtain "free papers" from the county because of their Native American heritage.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>161</sup> McRae, "The History of Second Baptist Church 1836-1986," 75.

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 162}$  Robinson, Race, Religion, and the Pulpit, 69.

 $<sup>^{163}</sup>$  McRae, "The History of Second Baptist Church 1836-1986," 79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>164</sup> Robinson, Race, Religion, and the Pulpit, 20.

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In 1870, James Elridge Bradby married Mary Catherine Rivers, a White woman. Robert L. Bradby was born to James and Mary in Canada on September 17, 1877. Bradby's mother died when he was five and from age seven to his early twenties Bradby traveled around southern Ontario with his father working a variety of incredibly demanding jobs. Father and son worked as loggers, butchers, bricklayers, cooks, and as farm laborers, living in poverty throughout these years. In his early twenties, Bradby had a transformative experience while tending a herd of cattle. Feeling an urge to seek the Spirit of God, Bradby abandoned his herd and arrived at a nearby African Canadian church. Bradby was later baptized at the First Baptist Church of Chatham at the age of twenty-two.

Bradby arrived in Detroit to lead Second Baptist Church in 1910 after having led the First Baptist Church of Chatham from 1902 to 1904, First Baptist Church of Windsor from 1904 to 1909, and Third Baptist Church of Toledo from 1909 to 1910.<sup>165</sup> These prior pastorates had prepared Bradby to take on the task of guiding Second Baptist Church through the tumultuous years that were to come. From 1910 to 1946, Reverend Bradby played a critical role in Detroit's Civil Rights Movement by working within established power structures to advance the civil rights goals of his congregation.

#### Social Advocacy Work at Second Baptist Church

After taking the helm at Second Baptist Church, some of Bradby's earliest advocacy work included setting up welcome committees at the Michigan Central Station to offer support to incoming Black migrants coming northward during the Great Migration.<sup>166</sup> Each of the three members of Second Baptist Church interviewed – Bobby Brown, Andromedia Bowden, and Priscilla Robinson – came to Detroit, or had family members that came to Detroit, during the Great Migration.<sup>167</sup> Bradby organized these welcome committees both because the newcomers needed the assistance but also because he saw it as his life's work to advance God's presence in the lives of these new Detroiters.<sup>168</sup> Soon after arriving in Detroit, Bradby also helped spearhead the new brick front for the church, which was completed in 1912. By 1915, five years into Bradby's tenure as pastor, Second Baptist Church had added nine hundred additional members.<sup>169</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>165</sup> "A History of The Amherstburg Regular Missionary Baptist Association," Second Baptist Church (Detroit, Mich.) Records 1911–1989, 1926–1988, roll 2, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI; Robinson, Race, Religion, and the Pulpit, 30–32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>166</sup> Robert (Bobby) G. Brown, interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, January 31, 2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>167</sup> Robert (Bobby) G. Brown, interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, January 31, 2023; Priscilla Robinson, interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, January 31, 2023; Andromedia Bowden, interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, February 7, 2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>168</sup> Robinson, Race, Religion, and the Pulpit, 38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>169</sup> "History of Second Baptist Church, 1836-1940," Second Baptist Church of Detroit Archives, Detroit, MI, 6.

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Early in his pastorate Bradby joined with other pastors to protest the showing of the racist film *The Birth of a Nation* which was set to show in Detroit in 1915.<sup>170</sup> Continuing this advocacy work, in 1918, Second Baptist Church founded a social services extension called the Baptist Christian Center. Based at Second Baptist Church, the Baptist Christian Center sought to teach incoming Black migrants the values of Christian respectability while seeing to their social needs. By way of these social services, Bradby and the leadership at Second Baptist Church mirrored the work that the Detroit Urban League was doing to aid newly arrived Black Detroiters but "while the Urban League sought to transform migrants based on the tenets of black uplift, Bradby's ordering of Second Baptist's ministries were more firmly grounded in the divine initiative" to bring religion into the life of migrants.<sup>171</sup> Training at the Baptist Christian Center focused on caring for the home, cooking, and rearing children for female attendees and theology and athletics for male participants.<sup>172</sup>

From the very outset, Reverend Bradby was responsible for setting up numerous auxiliaries and clubs within the Church which created closer contacts between the swelling membership. The Men's Bible Class No. 1 was organized in 1911 and the Men's Usher Board in 1916 are two early examples of these clubs. In 1929, Second Baptist Church's newsletter the *Second Baptist Herald* described a wide variety of meetings and activities held at the church, including a sunrise prayer meeting, Bible classes, Altar Circle, Big Sisters meeting, Senior Mission Circle, and the Young People's Missionary Society, among others.<sup>173</sup> A 1944 financial statement listed thirty two separate auxiliaries, including several choirs, a foreign mission society, a junior church club, men's usher board, women's usher board (both senior and junior), nurse's guild, sunrise prayer band, women's council, and serviceman's committee, among others.<sup>174</sup>

In addition to the social services Bradby had begun enacting at Second Baptist Church, he also quickly began building social networks with local Black leaders who could help advance his activism goals. The Detroit Urban League became an important early partner, "working with Forrester B. Washington, the Detroit Urban Leagues' first director... [Bradby] was one of the first ministers to open the doors of Second Baptist for the league's use of the church's auditorium for public meetings."<sup>175</sup> In 1919, Bradby helped hire an associate minister for Second Baptist Church, Charles A. Hill. Hill went on to lead the highly influential Hartford Memorial Baptist Church on Detroit's westside after leaving Second Baptist Church in 1920.<sup>176</sup> Bradby also

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>170</sup> "Pastors to Fight Big Film Play," Detroit Times, December 13, 1915.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>171</sup> Robinson, Race, Religion, and the Pulpit, 50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>172</sup> Robinson, Race, Religion, and the Pulpit, 50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>173</sup> Second Baptist Herald, January 13, 1929, Second Baptist Church of Detroit Archives, Detroit, MI.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>174</sup> Financial Statement of the Second Baptist Church, December 1, 1943 November 30, 1944, Second Baptist Church (Detroit, Mich.) Records 1911-1989,
1926-1988, roll 1, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.
<sup>175</sup> Robinson, Race, Religion, and the Pulpit, 44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>176</sup> "History of Second Baptist Church, 1836-1940," Second Baptist Church of Detroit Archives, Detroit, MI, 6.

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developed relationships with many other pastors in Detroit, all of whom, at various times, partnered with Bradby to advance particular causes.

Bradby was also active in the Advisory Council for Negro Work of Detroit Baptist Union, , a consortium of fifty-six Baptist churches across the city, both Black and White, to foster collaboration amongst members of the Baptist faith. Being so well connected and respected amongst his peers ensured that Bradby could gain an audience with other men and women who could help advance his church and congregants. These relationships were critical as Bradby sought employment and broader opportunities for his congregants.

In the same spirit as the founding of the Frances Harper Inn, in 1919 Reverend Bradby called together a group of women in the congregation to help plan ways to assist incoming Black migrant women. Second Baptist Church member Kate Johnson was among the group and became one of the founders of the Big Sisters Auxiliary at Second Baptist Church. The auxiliary helped address the social and religious needs of incoming Black women and to help steer them away from the many vices Bradby saw as detriments to his congregation and potential new members. The Big Sisters Auxiliary raised \$21,000 to purchase a house at 2141 Saint Aubin, which they called the Big Sisters Home. The house was both a boarding house for migrant women and a demonstration home for showcasing all the domestic activities the Big Sisters Auxiliary sought to teach, including "thrift, Christianity, and acceptable public behavior."<sup>177</sup>

Advocating for the rights of his constituents and all Black Detroiters, Bradby was also part of the founding group of Black leaders who organized the Detroit Memorial Park Cemetery and promoted the establishment of Idlewild. Led by prominent funeral home proprietor Charles Diggs Sr., the Detroit Memorial Park Association, Inc. was organized in 1925 to create the first Black-owned cemetery in the area.<sup>178</sup> Because Black families were discriminated against when they attempted to bury their loved ones in White cemeteries, eighty-five acres was purchased just outside the city in Warren that same year. It is still in operation today.<sup>179</sup> Idlewild is a resort town in northern Michigan that was established by and for African Americans who were prevented from vacationing in White resort areas. Bradby encouraged members of the church to purchase land in Idlewild (NRHP 1979) and vacation there, some of whom continue to own the property their family purchased so many years ago.<sup>180</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>177</sup> Robinson, Race, Religion, and the Pulpit, 73-74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>178</sup> Ruth E. Mills and Saundra Little, "The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Detroit: Survey Report Part 1," Michigan State Historic Preservation Office, 2021, 99.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>179</sup> "Memorial Park Cemetery is a Fine Example of Success," *Detroit Tribune*, September 1, 1934; "Detroit Memorial Park," accessed March 14, 2023, https://tbobdid.wordpress.com/dignity-in-burial/detroit-memorial-park/; "The History," Detroit Memorial Park, accessed March 14, 2023, https://detroitm emorialpark.org/the-history/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>180</sup> Robert (Bobby) G. Brown, interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, January 31, 2023.

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Bradby was closely tied to civil rights organizations like the Detroit Urban League and the NAACP as well as being well connected to Detroit Mayor Frank Murphy and other leaders in the city. In addition to these working relationships with city leaders, Bradby also had an asset that organizations like the NAACP needed: a large space to meet and a big congregation (Figure 4), from which donations and members could be found.<sup>181</sup>

Black churches were the central gathering place for Civil Rights related advocacy in the first several decades of the twentieth century and this was true at Second Baptist Church. As an example, in the first years of its existence, the Detroit branch of the NAACP was housed in Detroit churches, including Second Baptist Church and Saint Matthew's Episcopal. Second Baptist Church housed the organization from 1925 to 1927. The symbiotic relationship between Second Baptist Church and the NAACP helped feed both members and money to the fledging civil rights organization. Thus in 1925, when Reverend Bradby assumed the presidency of the local branch, it was partially because NAACP leaders realized he had a successful track record of growing both his congregation and funding drives to repair successive fires at Second Baptist Church in the late 1910s to early 1920s.<sup>182</sup> This organizational ability was sought by the NAACP as total membership and its coffers were low when Bradby took the helm.<sup>183</sup> Upon taking control of the NAACP, Bradby began a membership drive and held a baby photograph contest in the local Black newspapers to raise funds for the organization. A total of \$515 was sent to the national office as a result – the most since the Detroit branch had formed in 1912 – but even with this early success, tensions between Bradby and national NAACP leaders began almost immediately. Bradby primarily took issue with the allocation of funds raised from the local NAACP branch as well as the 7 percent fee the national branch took from the local branches.

It was during Bradby's brief leadership of the NAACP that Dr. Ossian Sweet was arrested and charged with murder. Despite the tensions between himself and the NAACP national office, Bradby worked tirelessly through the fall of 1925 to raise funds and support the NAACP in its defense efforts. However, Moses L. Walker, second in command at the Detroit NAACP branch, corresponded with NAACP leadership directly, without Bradby's knowledge, and the national NAACP leaders seemed to indicate their growing disillusionment with Bradby's leadership of the local branch mostly over Bradby's desire to have more control over the money he collected.<sup>184</sup> It is likely these tensions were a contributing factor in Bradby's brief tenure as leader of the local NAACP, a position he held only until 1926, when Walker succeeded him. During the midst of the Ossian Sweet trial in 1925, running on the tide of his NAACP leadership,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>181</sup> Robert (Bobby) G. Brown, interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, January 31, 2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>182</sup> Shelly, "Bradby's Baptists," 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>183</sup> Kathryn Lorraine Beard, "Higher Than Those of their Race of Less Fortunate Advantages: Race, Ethnicity, and West Indian Political Leadership in Detroit's African American Community, 1885–1940," (PhD diss., Wayne State University, 2011), 117.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>184</sup> Robinson, Race, Religion, and the Pulpit, 136-139.

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Bradby ran for a seat on the City's Common Council, however he was defeated in the primary.<sup>185</sup> This was Bradby's only foray into an election for public office.

Bradby was also active in efforts to raise money for other legal defense funds. Rallies in the early 1930s for the Scottsboro boys – nine Black teenagers accused of raping two White women in Alabama – were featured in the *Detroit Tribune* and the monies collected were intended for the NAACP fund set up for that purpose.<sup>186</sup> And, much like with earlier tensions about money raised by Second Baptist Church, similar tensions erupted between Bradby and the NAACP regarding monies collected for the defense fund.<sup>187</sup> Despite these issues, Second Baptist Church continued to work with the NAACP as an NAACP membership drive was kicked off at Second Baptist Church in 1930 before concluding at Bethel AME Church ten days later.<sup>188</sup>

#### Reverend Bradby, Second Baptist Church, and Housing and Employment Advocacy

Bradby's talent in preaching, advocating, and leading caused church attendance at Second Baptist Church to grow from 250 in 1910, the first year of his pastorate, to 3,800 by the mid-1920s.<sup>189</sup> To meet the needs of such a large congregation Bradby needed both housing and employment opportunities for his members. Efforts to house Black migrants at Second Baptist Church relied heavily on the women of the congregation. The aforementioned Frances Harper Inn, the Big Sister's Auxiliary, and the Big Sister's Home all worked toward securing lodging for new arrivals.

Bradby believed that finding employment for his congregants supported the idea that economic and social progress in the Black community aided their demand for equality. To this end, Reverend Bradby's most impactful work, at least in the lives of his congregants, may have been the effort he put into building a productive relationship with Henry Ford and the Ford Motor Company. Throughout the early and mid-1910s Ford Motor Company was "desperately seeking ways to alleviate the prevailing labor shortage caused by World War I and the cessation of European immigration."<sup>190</sup> Bradby first met with Henry Ford and the executive manager of the Ford Motor Company, Charles Sorenson, in 1919 because Ford and Sorenson sought ways to quell racial fights amongst the company's workforce.<sup>191</sup> One way they sought to prevent the problem in the future was by hiring preapproved candidates from a reliable source.

<sup>190</sup> Robinson, Race, Religion, and the Pulpit, 94.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>185</sup> "Only 7 Address League's Meet," *Detroit Free Press*, September 22, 1925; "Voters Facing Council Maze," *Detroit Free Press*, September 30, 1925; "Voter Recount May Be Asked," *Detroit Free Press*, October 9, 1925.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>186</sup> "Rev. Bradby Heads Defense Committee," *Detroit Tribune*, May 13, 1933. <sup>187</sup> Robinson, *Race, Religion, and the Pulpit*, 148.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>188</sup> "Negro Association Plans Drive Here," Detroit Free Press, October 19, 1930.
<sup>189</sup> Shelly, "Bradby's Baptists," 4-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>191</sup> Julia Robinson Harmon, "Reverend Robert L. Bradby: Establishing the Kingdom of God Among Migrants, Women and Workers, 1910–1946," (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 2002), ix; Robinson, Race, Religion, and the Pulpit, 96.

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After the initial meeting between the men, Bradby was found to be an ideal man to provide this conduit of Black labor as Bradby promised to send only the best candidates to Ford Motor Company.<sup>192</sup> Bradby screened prospective employees ensure that only the most upstanding applicants received a reference confirming their membership at Second Baptist Church. When applying for a position, prospective employees presented Bradby's letter which essentially guaranteed employment with the company.<sup>193</sup> Bradby became a regular visitor at Ford Motor Company plants during the 1920s and helped broker peace and ease tensions between men on the line.<sup>194</sup> The relationship between Bradby and the Ford Motor Company led to improved economic prospects of the congregants hired and the racial composition of Ford Motor Company itself.

Throughout the 1920s, Bradby continued funneling only the best Black candidates to Ford Motor Company for employment despite knowing the Black workers were discriminated against in terms of position and advancement opportunity. Black workers labored in the company's most difficult and dangerous departments, such as the foundry and rolling mill. The health outcomes associated with working in these departments were serious. Black workers suffered from pneumonia and tuberculosis at higher rates than other workers in different departments.<sup>195</sup> Additionally, these were unskilled positions that offered little or no opportunity for advancement, or the acquisition of skills that led to better pay or job prospects.<sup>196</sup>

Likely, Bradby viewed his complicated relationship with the Ford Motor Company as a necessary means to an end as employment at the company's factories, even in dangerous positions like the foundry, "was one of the few avenues presented to Black leaders in advancing the needs of Detroit's Black society and Bradby used what was afforded to him at the time."<sup>197</sup> Despite growing frictions between his congregants and Ford Motor Company leadership, Bradby continued to advance his alliance with the company.

Bradby's position as the head of Second Baptist Church meant that, throughout the 1930s, as the Great Depression weighed heavily on his congregants, he continued working with other prominent Detroiters to advance Black rights. Bradby was selected for Mayor Frank Murphy's committee on unemployment in 1930 and was prominently featured in many civil rights activities of the time including servicing as Vice President of the Fellowship of Faiths Committee in 1932 to promote tolerance amongst all races and cultures; serving on a committee to investigate conditions at the Eloise Infirmary in Wayne, Michigan; and speaking out against

 $^{\rm 196}$  Esch, The Color Line and the Assembly Line, 89.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>192</sup> Elizabeth D. Esch, The Color Line and the Assembly Line: Managing Race in the Ford Empire (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2018), 90. <sup>193</sup> Robert (Bobby) G. Brown, interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, January 31, 2023.

 $<sup>^{194}</sup>$  Esch, The Color Line and the Assembly Line, 91.

<sup>195</sup> Christopher C. Alston, "Henry Ford and the Negro People" ([Detroit, MI?]: [Michigan Negro Congress?], [1940?]), 5-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>197</sup> Robinson, *Race, Religion, and the Pulpit,* 108; Robert (Bobby) G. Brown, interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, January 31, 2023.

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home taxation during the Great Depression, among many other activities.<sup>198</sup> In 1939, Reverend Bradby, along with Reverend Horace White of Plymouth Congregational Church, served on a bipartisan committee formed to contest the dismissal of Black labor leader Joseph Alexander Craigen, who was the executive secretary of the Detroit Chapter of the Universal Negro Improvement Association.<sup>199</sup> Again and again, Bradby was sought out by his peers to lead committees, speak at rallies, and marshal his congregation behind activities to advance Black equality.

During the 1930s the Ford Motor Company laid off many Black workers and that, combined with the deplorable working conditions experienced by most Black laborers, had caused the beginnings of labor unionism agitation among both Black and White workers. This caused tension for Bradby in balancing the needs of his congregants with the desires of company leadership. Bradby was not the only religious leader who enjoyed this special relationship with Ford Motor Company. Father Everard W. Daniel, pastor of Saint Matthew's Episcopal Church from 1921 to 1939, was also aligned with the automaker, as Ford Motor Company's first Black personnel director Donald Marshall was a member of his congregation. Saint Matthew's church regularly sent their congregants to Ford Motor Company for employment as well.<sup>200</sup> Bradby and Marshall clashed over rumors Marshall allegedly spread about Bradby taking free coal from the company, insinuating, a quid pro quo relationship in which Bradby was under obligation to the company. In a letter from Bradby to Marshall, Bradby refuted the rumor and implored Marshall to work with him to advance the interests of members of both Saint Matthew's and Second Baptist Churches.<sup>201</sup> Bradby also clashed with Marshall over the 1931 election of Mayor Frank Murphy. Ford Motor Company and Marshall were both vehemently opposed to Murphy's candidacy given Murphy's progressive platform. Black workers at Ford Motor Company were threatened with firing if they supported Murphy in the election. Despite the risk to his relationship with Ford Motor Company, Bradby spoke out in favor of Murphy in the lead up to the election and met with company officials to ensure his congregants would not lose their job for voting their conscience.

During the 1930s divisions between Black church leaders of Detroit developed regarding employment and labor activism. Bradby continued to court the Ford Motor Company and continued working within White power structures to advance his causes, but "Henry Ford's partnership with Detroit's Black church leaders led to a growing rift in the African American community."<sup>202</sup> Newer church leaders like Reverend Horace A. White of Plymouth

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>198</sup> "His Newly Organized Committee," *Detroit Free Press*, September 17, 1930; "Creeds Will Join to Aid Tolerance," *Detroit Free Press*, May 21, 1932; "Indigent Men Balk at Work," *Detroit Free Press*, November 23, 1932; "Tax Relief Meeting Set," *Detroit Free Press*, May 20, 1932.

 $<sup>^{199}</sup>$  Lorraine Beard, "Higher Than Those of their Race of Less Fortunate Advantages."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>200</sup> Robinson, Race, Religion, and the Pulpit, 104.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>201</sup> Letter from Bradby to Marshall, November 20, 1931, Second Baptist Church (Detroit, Mich.) Records 1911-1989, 1926-1988, roll 3, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>202</sup> Mills and Little, "Civil Rights Movement Survey Report," 46.

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Congregational Church and Reverend William Peck of Bethel AME Church were wary of tying themselves to "white patronage and saw black reliance of white patronage as slowing the progress and advancement of their people."<sup>203</sup> White and Peck took issue with leaders, like Bradby and Daniel, who aligned themselves too closely to White business leaders, and the growing divergence over the question of unionism separated Bradby from the new guard of religious men.

Unionizing was particularly appealing to Black workers in Detroit because of unions like the UAW's stance on racial equality. In 1937, realizing the untapped power of Black workers at Ford, the UAW hired a Black union organizer and established a "Negro Department" to further court Black union members.<sup>204</sup> In 1938, A. Phillip Randolph, head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and a staunch union advocate, was invited to speak in Detroit. When Bradby supported A. Phillip Randolph's visit by opening Second Baptist Church's large sanctuary as the host site for his speech, Ford Motor Company retaliated by firing some Black workers. The relationship between Ford Motor Company and Bradby began to falter and, consequently, "by 1939, Bradby's recommendation power no longer held the same weight at Ford Motor Company."<sup>205</sup>

Due to the fallout from the visit by Randolph and the loss of work for some Black laborers, scholar Julia Marie Robinson posited that Bradby's reluctance to embrace more progressive liberal platforms like unionization began to change in the early 1940s. Despite this, Bradby entered the 1940s largely silent on the issue of unionization, attempting to walk a tight rope between two competing factions.<sup>206</sup> This was in direct contrast to other religious leaders like Charles A. Hill, first associate pastor of Second Baptist Church then pastor of Hartford Avenue Baptist Church. Reverend Hill was an outspoken supporter of unionization as he saw it as a way to advance Black equality. One area in which this was expressed was through union administration. Since leaders of major unions like the UAW were progressive in their ideology, Black union members were allowed to serve on all committees in the union.<sup>207</sup> Hill became a prominent leader in the Civil Rights Movement in Detroit, most notably by advocating for Black occupancy at the Sojourner Truth Homes in the early 1940s and by lobbying for labor unions in Detroit's automotive facilities. He thought that unionization would advance Black equality in the workplace.

Bradby was not a prominent figure in the fight for unionization partially because of his close ties with the Ford Motor Company. Because of this, Bradby's most compelling civil rights advocacy might be best summed up as social and economic advocacy, via day-to-day victories in securing housing and jobs for his flock and collecting money for worthy causes, rather than overt political demonstrations, legislative lobbying, or legal advocacy. One poignant letter from 1934

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>203</sup> Robinson, Race, Religion, and the Pulpit, 114.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>204</sup> Mills and Little, "Civil Rights Movement Survey Report," 51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>205</sup> Robinson, Race, Religion, and the Pulpit, 116.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>206</sup> Robinson, *Race, Religion, and the Pulpit*, 117; Robert (Bobby) G. Brown, interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, January 31, 2023.

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 207}$  Robinson, Race, Religion, and the Pulpit, 115.

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showcases the small gains Bradby sought on a daily basis for his congregants. In that letter Bradby implored Mayor Frank Murphy to help secure a job for a member of Second Baptist Church who had been recently widowed writing, "it is imperative now that she get something to do in order to save her home and be able to rear her two daughters. She is seeking employment as a maid in the J.L. Hudson Company. I am sure there will never be any cause for regret if she is employed, and I will consider it a personal favor if there is anything that you can do for me in this matter."<sup>208</sup> Bradby excelled at using his influence and his pulpit to garner money, jobs, and support for the causes he championed. Despite not being as progressive as some of his later peers, Bradby's legacy via this early advocacy "opened the door so that more progressive leaders like Reverend Charles A. Hill could continue to fight for black equality in the workplace."<sup>209</sup>

As World War II loomed, with the second wave of the Great Migration in full swing, the housing shortage and the condition of what housing was available was dire. Bradby continued his work advocating for Black Detroiters. In 1940, Bradby spoke at a Board of Health housing committee meeting to urge better inspection of slum dwellings in blighted areas—Bradby alleged the poor inspection standard was a product of racial prejudice.<sup>210</sup> Later, in 1943, Second Baptist Church was host to a four-day rally to address "hate strikes" that occurred at the Packard and Rolls Royce plants.<sup>211</sup> Walter White, Reverend Bradby, and Judge William H. Hastie were all speakers at the rally. On June 2, 1946, Reverend Bradby passed away in his office at Second Baptist Church.

The sheer depth and breadth of Bradby's advocacy work during his time at Second Baptist Church cannot be overstated. His tireless work advanced and uplifted Black Detroiters by providing spiritual and cultural counseling, employment, and, perhaps most importantly, by using his considerable powers of persuasion to unite his congregants behind a common goal. This was manifested in the relationship he cultivated with Ford Motor Company that benefited a whole generation of Black men, and in the money and volunteers he marshalled for the NAACP, the Detroit Urban League, and dozens of other groups he was involved with. In addition to the work profiled here Bradby was also active in leadership positions or on board of numerous other high profile institutions including Dunbar Hospital, Phyllis Wheatley Home for the Aged, the Saint Antoine branch of the YMCA, Wright Mutual Insurance Company, and Supreme Liberty Life Insurance Company, among others. All of these activities burnished Second Baptist Church's already bright reputation as one of the leading Black churches in the state and that is largely in part due to Reverend Bradby's leadership over the course of thirty-six years.

<sup>209</sup> Robinson, Race, Religion, and the Pulpit, 123.

<sup>210</sup> "Rev. Bradby Urges Court Action to Curtail Sub-Standard Dwelling Growth in Slum Area," *Detroit Tribune*, February 24, 1940.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>208</sup> Letter from Bradby to Murphy, June 4, 1934, Second Baptist Church (Detroit, Mich.) Records 1911-1989, 1926-1988, roll 3, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>211</sup> "Packard Strike Hit at Negro Rally," Detroit Free Press, June 4, 1943.

#### Second Baptist Church of Detroit (Additional Documentation) Wayne County, MI Name of Property County and State 1947-1968: Reverend Allen A. Banks and Second Baptist Church's Civil Rights Advocacy

After Reverend Bradby's sudden death in 1946, Reverend Allen Arthur Banks Jr. was hired as the next pastor of Second Baptist Church. Born in Texas, Reverend Banks was raised throughout the United States as his family followed his father to his various pastorates in Texas, Kansas, and Idaho. Educated at Bishop College in Texas and at Howard University, Banks arrived in Detroit in 1943 to lead Second Baptist Church's department of Christian Education. Reverend Banks led the congregation from 1946 to 1977. Upon taking control of Second Baptist Church, Banks built upon Bradby's earlier work and further delineated the congregation to include forty-eight separate groups within the church. Each group had no more than one hundred members and deacons were appointed to oversee each group.<sup>212</sup> This was instituted to provide a more family-like atmosphere to Second Baptist Church's congregation, which numbered nearly 5,000.

Banks continued the employment advocacy that Bradby had perpetuated throughout his pastorship. In 1947, Banks wrote a letter to a man named "Mr. Connor" who was a manager in the federal Civil Service office in Chicago. Connor was in charge of the Ordinance Department, a division of the War Department, and apparently had some degree of control over personnel matters at the Detroit Arsenal. Banks wrote to Connor concerning his congregant, Ruth Mason, asking for Connor's assistance in helping Mason retain her job at the Detroit arsenal as there were allegations that she might lose her job to a temporary employee. Ms. Mason was a full-time permanent employee. Banks appealed to the manager to intervene, stating that an "investigation of personnel practices at the arsenal by high officials without the knowledge of immediate supervisors or employees might be revealing."<sup>213</sup> Later, in 1949, Second Baptist Church hosted a "friendship tour" organized by the Mayor's Internacial Committee. The tour was organized as a response to the 1943 racial riots to increase interactions between different constituencies in the city. The tour included visiting Second Baptist Church, a Jewish family's house, and the International Institute, among other locations, all in an attempt to get people of different backgrounds to interact. These smaller more intimate actions to advance Civil Rights in Detroit characterize much of the work Banks did during his tenure at Second Baptist Church.

Because of his abilities and standing in the community, Banks served on the Detroit Urban League's board of directors beginning in 1953.<sup>214</sup> During Banks's tenure with DUL, the organization advocated for increased Black voter turnout, created a consumer advisory research council with the NAACP, secured jobs at General Motors for Black workers, and helped to develop the 12th Street Academy School.<sup>215</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>212</sup> McRae, "The History of Second Baptist Church 1836-1986," 88-89.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>213</sup> Letter from Banks to Connor, June 13, 1947, Second Baptist Church (Detroit, Mich.) Records 1911-1989, 1926-1988, roll 3, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>214</sup> A.A. Banks Dies, 2d Baptist Pastor," *Detroit Free Press*, February 25, 1977; Njeru Wa Murage, "Organizational History of the Detroit Urban League, 1916-1960," (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1993), 469.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>215</sup> "League Asks Volunteers to Get Out Vote," *Detroit Free Press*, October 16, 1964; "Wily Mom Fights Poverty," *Detroit Free Press*, July 18, 1967; "Good For

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In the height of the Civil Rights Movement in the late 1950s, Banks used his pulpit to help advocate and raise money for nationwide civil rights campaigns. Reverend Banks was friends with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s family and played an integral role in building support for King's causes. In 1956, Second Baptist Church contributed over \$2,600 to King's Montgomery Improvement Association, which organized and funded the Montgomery bus boycott.<sup>216</sup> Bobby Brown, a longtime member of the church, recalled the joy he and the congregation experienced when they received a letter of praise from Dr. King and the association because Second Baptist Church contributed more money than any other church to the boycott.<sup>217</sup> Priscilla Robinson, another longtime member of the church, remembered participating in other civil rights events like Dr. King's Walk to Freedom, which took place in Detroit in 1963.<sup>218</sup>

In the 1960s, Banks's reach and influence expanded with his appointment to the Michigan Civil Rights Commission. Banks served on the Michigan Civil Rights Commission from its founding in 1963 until his death in 1977, a testament to his stature within the Black community and his established relationships with political leaders in the state.<sup>219</sup> Banks was also active within the leadership of many religious associations, including serving as the president of the Wolverine State Missionary Baptist Convention from 1960 to 1964 and as a member and president of the Detroit Council of Churches.<sup>220</sup>

Despite Banks stature and activities within the community, some of the most prominent civil rights work going on in Detroit in the 1950s and 1960s was led by other church leaders. This was perhaps an outworking of Banks following in the work of Bradby, who was less progressive than some of the other pastors discussed in the section above. For instance, Reverend Albert B. Cleage Jr., pastor of the Central Congregational Church (and, later, founder of the prominent Shrine of the Black Madonna Church), was instrumental in the organization of the mass civil rights demonstration in Detroit known as the Walk to Freedom, which was the largest civil rights demonstration in the nation's history to that point.<sup>221</sup> Held on June 23, 1963, and organized by

General Motors!" Detroit Free Press, November 13, 1967; "School Goes to the Students," Detroit Free Press, August 5, 1969.

<sup>216</sup> "A. A. Banks, Jr. to Martin Luther King, Sr.," The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, Stanford University, accessed January 26, 2023, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/banks-jr-martin-luther-king-sr.

 $^{217}$  Robert (Bobby) G. Brown, interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, January 31, 2023.

<sup>218</sup> Priscilla Robinson, interview by Katie Cook, Kraemer Design Group, January 31, 2023; Mills and Little, "Civil Rights Movement Survey Report," 79. <sup>219</sup> Mills and Little, "Civil Rights Movement Survey Report," 179; "Romney; Our Rights Unit Will Be Nation's Strongest," *Detroit Free Press*, September 14, 1963.

<sup>220</sup> "Boys' Club to Celebrate Anniversary," Michigan Chronicle, October 12, 1963; "A.A. Banks Dies, 2d Baptist Pastor," Detroit Free Press, February 25, 1977; McRae, "The History of Second Baptist Church 1836-1986," 90.
<sup>221</sup> Saundra Little and Ruth Mills, "Shrine of the Black Madonna of the Pan African Orthodox Christian Church," National Register of Historic Places

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Cleage in conjunction with the Detroit Council for Human Rights and Reverend C. L. Franklin of New Bethel Baptist Church, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. led over 125,000 estimated participants down Woodward and Jefferson Avenues. The walk culminated in a rally at the Cobo Hall convention center, where King presented an initial version of his "I Have a Dream" speech. The rally and fundraising for this event were to benefit King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference with funds earmarked to continue advocacy for ending discrimination and segregation.

During the 1960s, Banks faced some pressure from other Black leaders that his brand of civil rights advocacy was too slow and too accommodationist. Perhaps slightly acknowledging that his form of advocacy was not as splashy as that performed by others, Banks said "although all of us can't be a Martin Luther King, most of us do our part by giving moral and material support to movements intended to advance our people. We encourage our people to register and vote, prepare for better jobs and to demand full citizenship."222 This kind of leadership is a direct holdover from Reverend Bradby and although not commandeering the headlines as boldly as the work done by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Reverend Charles A. Hill, and Reverend Cleage, it nonetheless has a place in the broader Civil Rights Movement. This is perhaps the legacy of Second Baptist Church in the twentieth century, doing incremental civil rights work, day in and day out, in ways that directly affected the men and women who sat in the pews. The accumulation of victories large and small over many years has resulted in marked improvements for both members of the congregation and the city at large. Second Baptist Church and its leaders have been an organization of direct action when it comes to civil rights, whether hiding freedom seekers, obtaining a job for a widowed woman, or writing letters to Detroit leaders to encourage them to "do better."

### Architecture of the Second Baptist Church of Detroit

The eastern addition to the Second Baptist Church of Detroit, completed in 1968, was designed by local Black architect Nathan Johnson and is referred to as the educational building. Johnson was a distinguished architect working throughout Detroit and its suburbs in the mid-twentieth century, completing numerous commissions throughout his extensive career. The plot of land where the educational building sits is directly adjacent to the east of the Tudor Revival portion of the church.

The Brutalist style addition houses Second Baptist Church's educational center, a large meeting room, church offices, a rooftop garden, the Underground Railroad Reading Station, and a bookstore specializing in Black history. Prior to the construction of the educational building, a large, brick commercial structure stood at the northwest corner of Beaubien and Monroe

Registration Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1978), Section 8 Page 18. 222 "Help Us, Don't Damn Us," *Michigan Chronicle*, October 6, 1962.

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Streets.<sup>223</sup> Through the establishment of a Real Estate Committee, the church purchased the property in June 1956 for one hundred and twenty thousand dollars.<sup>224</sup> In 1957 an expansion fund was created, presumably to provide funding for the educational building addition.<sup>225</sup> A church building committee was created c. 1962 to oversee the selection of an architect and manage the addition's construction and it was around this same time that Johnson was selected as the architect.<sup>226</sup> Initially the goal was to renovate the brick commercial building to include classrooms, offices, and ground floor rental space. Renovation did not fulfill the needs of the congregation, however, and it was decided that the existing building would be demolished and a new, "fully modern" structure would be constructed in its place.<sup>227</sup> The existing commercial building was demolished in 1963 or 1965.<sup>228</sup> The initial plans for the educational building called for four floors but due to high construction costs, the church had to modify plans.<sup>229</sup> These modifications resulted in nixing the addition's furnishings and moveable partitions, and the construction of the roof garden rather than a fully enclosed fourth floor.<sup>230</sup> Construction of the educational building finally began in July 1966, when building permit No. 88216 was recorded by the City of Detroit.<sup>231</sup> Second Baptist Church received the keys to the addition in 1968, although the addition was unfurnished.<sup>232</sup>

n.d., Second Baptist Church of Detroit Archives; Building Committee correspondence, November 6, 1963, Second Baptist Church of Detroit Archives, Detroit, MI.

<sup>227</sup> Dr. A. A. Banks, Jr., Pastor, "A New Day Dawns."

<sup>228</sup> Dr. A. A. Banks, Jr., Pastor, "A New Day Dawns."

<sup>229</sup> A. A. Banks Jr., Pastor to Hubert N. Jackson, Re: Thank You for Your Recent Check, May 26, 1966, Second Baptist Church (Detroit, Mich.) Records 1911–1989, 1926–1988, roll 4, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.
<sup>230</sup> A. A. Banks Jr., Pastor to Annie Catlin, Re: Educational Building, September 18, 1967, Second Baptist Church (Detroit, Mich.) Records 1911–1989, 1926–1988, roll 4, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.
<sup>231</sup> Permit index card no. 88216, 441 Monroe, e ½ lot 136, lot 137, 138, July 25, 1966, City of Detroit Buildings, Safety Engineering, and Environmental Department.
<sup>232</sup> Dr. A. A. Banks, Jr., Pastor, "The New Educational-Fellowship Building at

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>223</sup> Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan vol. 4 (Pelham, NY: Sanborn Map Company, 1922), updated to 1950, sheet 10.
<sup>224</sup> One Hundred Fortieth Birthday Celebration, 27; George E. Lee to Rev. A. A.
Banks, Jr., Re: Purchase of Real Property Situated at the Northwest Corner of Monroe and Beaubien, June 30, 1956, Second Baptist Church of Detroit
Archives, Detroit, MI; Dr. A. A. Banks, Jr., Pastor, "A New Day Dawns: Second's Building Program Advances," Second Baptist Advocate, vol. 16, April-June 1967, Second Baptist Church of Detroit Archives, Detroit, MI, 10.
<sup>225</sup> Francis A. Kornegay and Edward Davis, "Account of General Funds: Second Baptist Church," December 11, 1957, Second Baptist Church (Detroit, Mich.) Records 1911–1989, 1926–1988, roll 1, Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, MI.
<sup>226</sup> Nathan Johnson, "Church Organizational Program: Second Baptist Church,"

Second Baptist Directory, Definition and Use," Second Baptist Advocate, vol. 17, July-September 1968, Second Baptist Church of Detroit Archives, Detroit, MI, 11.

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Second Baptist Church of Detroit (Additional Documentation) Name of Property Brutalism and the Addition to the Second Baptist Church of Detroit

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Johnson's design for the educational building sits comfortably within his previous and later work in the Modern Movement but the building does have stylistic elements of the Brutalism style. Brutalism, or "The New Brutalism" as it was often referred to originally, gained traction in the architectural community in the early 1950s when esteemed art historian Reyner Banham published his seminal essay "The New Brutalism" in *Architectural Review*. Banham attempted to establish the relationship between the Brutalist style and the values the movement stood for. Brutalism grew in popularity as popular figures such as Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier began to build in the style. Le Corbusier's *Unite' d'habitation* in Marseille, France, is one of the most renowned examples of the style. Brutalism has noteworthy architectural traits, particularly the use of raw concrete—or *béton brut* from which the name "Brutalist" is derived— the expression of the interior plan and structure on the building's exterior, incorporation of monumental massing of geometric forms, and a clear separation of the building from surrounding space. Early advocates were concentrated in Europe and these practitioners of Brutalism designed buildings with unadorned structures that showcase the raw construction materials with little to no decorative elements.<sup>233</sup>

The extensive use of unpainted poured concrete and concrete aggregate panels on the educational building's exterior illustrates the Brutalist notion of using materials in their raw form. Sculptural elements are included throughout Johnson's designs and are present in the butterfly-shaped concrete aggregate panels affixed in bands to the exterior of the addition, the repetitive concrete-clad grating surrounding the roof garden, and the battered ground floor exterior walls. In typical Brutalist fashion, the interior plan of the addition is expressed on the exterior through the use of ribbon windows on the entire expanse of the east façade and on the eastern half of the south façade. The ribbon windows provide light and ventilation to the building's classrooms and church offices. On the west half of the south façade, the expanses of windowless concrete panels mark the location of the building's elevator and stairwell. The vertical concrete clad columns visible on the south and east façades demarcate the location of structural steel beams.<sup>234</sup> The cantilevered panels at the top of the exterior walls are similarly used in some of Johnson's other works such as the 1962 Stanley Hong residence at 961 West Boston Boulevard and the 1973 Bessie Whitman Memorial Center at 1881 East Grand Boulevard.<sup>235</sup>

Beyond an aesthetic choice Johnson's use of concrete on the exterior was likely intended to keep procurement and maintenance costs down. Johnson described how many of his clients had

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>233</sup> Kraemer Design Group, "Frank Murphy Hall of Justice" (unpublished historic report, March 2022); Reyner Banham, "The New Brutalism," Architectural Review 118 (December 1955), 355-361.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>234</sup> Dr. A. A. Banks, Jr., Pastor, "Second Baptist Expansion Nears Completion," Second Baptist Advocate, vol. 16, October-December 1967, Second Baptist Church of Detroit Archives, Detroit, MI, 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>235</sup> Lillian Jackson Braun, "New Life in an Old Neighborhood," *Detroit Free Press*, November 18, 1962; Betty DeRamus, "Drab Nursing Homes? Not Hers," *Detroit Free Press*, April 9, 1973; "Convalescent Home Begun," *Detroit Free Press*, March 25, 1972.

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limited budgets for their projects and he was cognizant of using materials that were easy to procure, affordable, and required little maintenance.<sup>236</sup> While the educational building was one of Johnson's larger commissions, the building's scale and embellishment was limited by the church's six hundred and fifty thousand dollar budget.<sup>237</sup> Interior finishes such as painted concrete block walls also signal an awareness of the church's budget while conforming to the aesthetics of Brutalism.

### Nathan Johnson and Nathan Johnson and Associates

Architect Nathan Johnson was born in 1925 in Herington, Kansas, a small town west of Kansas City and north of Wichita.<sup>238</sup> Johnson attended Kansas State University and graduated in 1950 with a bachelor's degree in architecture.<sup>239</sup> After meeting Donald White, the first Black architect licensed in Michigan, at a convention for their shared fraternity, Johnson moved to Detroit and began working at White and Griffin as a draftsman.<sup>240</sup> The firm of White and Griffin was established by two Black architects, Donald F. White and Francis E. Griffin, who made a point of employing and mentoring young Black architects.<sup>241</sup> After a short time at White and Griffin, Johnson worked for Victor Gruen and Associates to manage design and construction for the Eastland Shopping Center in Harper Woods, Michigan.<sup>242</sup> Gruen and his firm are popularly known for their pioneering work in the development of the American shopping mall.

In 1956 Johnson established his own firm and worked out of his home at 2041 Lawrence Street in Detroit.<sup>243</sup> Johnson's early work consisted of small jobs designing medical offices, church and building renovations, and additions. He was vocal about his struggle securing large commissions

<sup>239</sup> Green, "Nathan Johnson."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>236</sup> Hiley H. Ward, "His Ideas Add Sparkle to 'Sidewalk' Churches," *Detroit Free Press*, March 16, 1963; "Mercy General Hospital Goes Ultra Modern," *Michigan Chronicle*, November 7, 1959.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>237</sup> Dr. A. A. Banks, Jr., Pastor, "Second Baptist Expansion Nears Completion"; Dr. A. A. Banks, Jr., Pastor, "Second Baptist Plans Dedication-Corner Stone Laying," *Second Baptist Advocate*, vol. 17, April-June 1968, Second Baptist Church of Detroit Archives, Detroit, MI, 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>238</sup> Penelope Green, "Nathan Johnson, Modernist Architect of Black Churches, Dies at 96," *New York Times*, November 22, 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>240</sup> Hodges, "Saturday Tour"; Kate Connors, "Nathan Johnson's Space Age Style," Floyd, February 9, 2021, https://floydhome.com/blogs/livedin/nathan-johnsonspace-age-style; George S. Koyl, ed., American Architects Directory, 2nd ed. (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1962), 353. Donald F. White was also accepted into the American Institute of Architects in 1944. At that time, he was the second Black architect in the institute (Paul Williams of California was the first). <sup>241</sup> "The Trailblazers," Noir Design Parti, https://www.noirdesignparti.com/page s/the-trailblazers; Matthew Piper, "Designing the Future: The Legacy of Black Architects in Detroit," Curbed Detroit, July 15, 2019, https://detroit.curbe d.com/2019/7/15/20695147/black-architects-detroit-sims-varner-charles-wright. <sup>242</sup> Hodges, "Saturday Tour"; Green, "Nathan Johnson"; "Among the Works," Detroit Free Press, July 28, 1961.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>243</sup> Hodges, "Saturday Tour"; "The House of Diggs," advertisement, *Michigan Chronicle*, November 30, 1957.

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because of his race.<sup>244</sup> Jamon Jordan, Detroit's city historian, describes how Johnson "ran into the Midwest version of Jim Crow ... Blacks can vote and earn a good wage, but if a white firm or a wealthy white client is asking for an architect, what they don't want to see is a Black designer."<sup>245</sup> By 1959, Johnson purchased a two-family flat at 2512 West Grand Boulevard and remodeled the residence into his offices.<sup>246</sup> Later Johnson purchased the neighboring two-family flat at 2518 West Grand Boulevard and integrated both buildings into one large structure to serve as his firm's offices.<sup>247</sup>

In 1968 when Johnson incorporated Nathan Johnson and Associates and employed a staff of architects, planners, interior designers, and others.<sup>248</sup> The firm employed Black and White professionals including women who were employed in managerial and technical positions such as Director of Interior Design and a female specification writer.<sup>249</sup> Nathan Johnson and Associates attracted talented individuals like Donald White, who was Johnson's early mentor; Black architect Sidney Cobb; and Black interior designer and artist Carole Harris.<sup>250</sup> Following in the footsteps of his early mentors at White and Griffin, Johnson sought to mentor young Black architects and introduce young adults to architecture through the various organizations he was involved in.<sup>251</sup>

Johnson's commissions were wide-ranging in that they included small and large commissions for medical offices, churches, houses, and apartment buildings for clients throughout Detroit and nearby suburbs like Inkster and Ecorse.<sup>252</sup> Significant works by Johnson, besides the addition to Second Baptist Church of Detroit, include the 1963 renovation of the Oriole Theatre at 8430 Linwood Street into the New Bethel Baptist Church and the design and construction of Stanley's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>244</sup> June Brown, "Breaking Ground for a Career was a Black Architect's Biggest Job," Sunday News Magazine, November 8, 1970. 245 Green, "Nathan Johnson." <sup>246</sup> "Mercy General Hospital Goes Ultra Modern," Michigan Chronicle, November 7, 1959. <sup>247</sup> Historic Designation Advisory Board, "Preliminary Draft: Proposed West Grand Boulevard Historic African American Arts and Business District," City Council of the City of Detroit. <sup>248</sup> "\$3 1/2 Million Commission to Johnson Firm," Michigan Chronicle, June 15, 1968; Historic Designation Advisory Board, "Preliminary Draft." <sup>249</sup> "Johnson Group Top Architects," Michigan Chronicle, July 17, 1976; Dorothy Weddell, "Redhead In A Hard Hat: Spec Writer Has Big Job," Detroit Free Press, November 29, 1975. <sup>250</sup> "Named Vice Prexy," Michigan Chronicle, January 9, 1971; "Donald F. White Principal With Johnson Firm," Michigan Chronicle, December 14, 1968; "Architect Firm Design Director," Michigan Chronicle, November 16, 1974; "About," Carole Harris, accessed March 1, 2023, https://www.charris-design.c om/CHarris\_artist.html. <sup>251</sup> "Architect Speaks at Miller JHS," Michigan Chronicle, April 6, 1963; "Nathan Johnson...Up The Architect Ladder," Michigan Chronicle, March 6, 1971; Karl Laval Young, "Man About Town," Michigan Chronicle, May 13, 1967. <sup>252</sup> Ward, "His Ideas Add Sparkle"; "Nathan Johnson Scores in Creating Outstanding Designs for Churches," Michigan Chronicle, February 9, 1963; Green, "Nathan Johnson."

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Name of Property County and State Mannia Café at 265 East Baltimore Avenue in 1962.<sup>253</sup> Despite the use of an exterior insulation finishing system (EIFS) that has obscured Johnson's exterior renovations, New Bethel Baptist Church was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Stanley's Mannia Café, however, may not be eligible for listing as all interior features appear to have been removed and a new addition planned for the exterior will further alter the original design. Another significant commission for Johnson came in 1974 for the new Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and surrounding complex at 5050 Saint Antoine Street.<sup>254</sup>

Throughout his career Johnson supported Black Detroiters in numerous ways. He provided financial assistance to establish First Independence National Bank, Detroit's first Black-owned bank.<sup>255</sup> He also called attention to the discrimination faced by Black architects, builders, and contractors in securing municipal jobs in Detroit.<sup>256</sup>

Johnson received many commissions in Detroit and received local and national recognition for his work. The November 1958 edition of *Ebony* magazine highlighted Johnson among a field of Black architects throughout the United States.<sup>257</sup> The *Ebony* article was referenced in the December 1958 *Monthly Bulletin* of the Michigan Society of Architects,<sup>258</sup> which also called attention to Johnson. He also designed a small medical office at 12840 Linwood Street for the first Black doctor appointed to the active medical staff at Highland Park General Hospital.<sup>259</sup> Johnson's deep involvement with Detroit's Black community and his stature as a leading architect – Black or White – likely led to his selection as the architect for Second Baptist Church's educational building addition. Johnson also designed numerous Wright Mutual Insurance Company buildings throughout Detroit, of which Reverend Brady's son, Robert L. Bradby, was president.<sup>260</sup>

For work on his projects, he focused on hiring Black contractors like local contractor All Trades Construction and Inkster-based Black landscape architect Elon Mickels.<sup>261</sup> Mickels was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>253</sup> "Nathan Johnson," DOCOMOMO, accessed February 13, 2023, https://www.docom omo-us.org/designer/nathan-johnson; "New Glory for Old Theatre," Detroit Free Press, March 11, 1963; Hodges, "Saturday Tour." <sup>254</sup> Hodges, "Saturday Tour"; Historic Designation Advisory Board, "Preliminary Draft"; Historic Designation Advisory Board, "Nathan Johnson." <sup>255</sup> "Organizers Pledge Million in Stock," Michigan Chronicle, June 22, 1968. <sup>256</sup> Louis Cook, "The City Tries To Unlock Doors For Minorities," Detroit Free Press, March 4, 1983. <sup>257</sup> "18 Talented Negroes Signal New Day Of Opportunity In Field," Ebony, November 1958, vol. 14. <sup>258</sup> "Nathan Johnson, A.I.A.," Monthly Bulletin, December 1958, Michigan Society of Architects, 45. <sup>259</sup> "New Modern Medical and Dental Offices Open in Northwest Detroit," Michigan Chronicle, April 12, 1958. <sup>260</sup> Russ J. Cowans, "Rev. Robt. Bradby Dies; Funeral Set For Friday," Michigan Chronicle, June 8, 1946; "Construction Company Gets Contract," Michigan Chronicle, October 14, 1961; "Wright Mutual's Growth Aided Architect Nathan Johnson's Contributions," Michigan Chronicle, June 10, 1992. <sup>261</sup> Ray Davis, "An Architect's Rebuttal to Rev. Johnson," Michigan Chronicle, May 30, 1964; "Wright Mutual Gives Contract to 'All Trades'," Michigan

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responsible for the design of the roof garden atop the educational building addition. Mickels had worked on other projects with Johnson including the landscape design for the Wright Mutual Insurance Building at 2995 East Grand Boulevard.<sup>262</sup> Residing in the predominantly Black section of Inkster, Mickels previously worked as Director of Planning at the Inkster Village Planning Commission.<sup>263</sup> He was a member of the American Society of Landscape Architecture and held a bachelor's degree in horticulture design from Alabama A & M University and a professional degree in architectural design and urban planning from Michigan State University.<sup>264</sup>

The addition at Second Baptist Church was one of Nathan Johnson and Associate's first large commissions. Moreover, the addition to Second Baptist Church occurred at a pivotal moment in Johnson's career as he and his firm began the transition from small commissions to larger jobs. In 1970, just two years after the construction of the addition, Nathan Johnson and Associates received commissions that totaled some \$2 million.<sup>265</sup>

### Conclusion

Second Baptist Church is significant at the state level for its association with the development of a strong network of Black churches in Michigan and Canada and for the church bodies' dedication to civil rights advocacy. Second Baptist Church played an integral role in the social, economic, and political aspects of Black life in Detroit by supporting new arrivals socially, religiously and via assistance in housing and employment. Second Baptist Church was one of the most prominent Black churches in Detroit fighting to enhance the rights of its constituents. Unlike the Black churches profiled statewide in *State-Level Context of the Civil Rights Movement* section, which illustrated the supporting role Black churches across the state played by hosting meetings and funding drives, the Second Baptist Church of Detroit played a more primary role in civil rights advocacy efforts than Black churches in other cities. Additionally, Second Baptist Church is significant for the civil rights advocacy accomplished under the leadership of Reverend Bradby. Reverend Bradby's work was a catalyst for Black community, leadership, civil rights activism, and economic empowerment in Detroit in the early and mid-twentieth century.

Chronicle, October 14, 1961; "Hats Off!..." advertisement, Michigan Chronicle, September 22, 1962; A. A. Banks Jr., Pastor to Elon Mickels, Re: Roof Garden at Second Baptist Church; "Another Great Stride for Wright Mutual," Michigan Chronicle, October 28, 1961.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>262</sup> "Another Great Stride for Wright Mutual," Michigan Chronicle, October 28, 1961.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>263</sup> "Mickels Gets Inkster Post," Michigan Chronicle, May 4, 1957; A. A. Banks Jr., Pastor to Elon Mickels, Re: Roof Garden at Second Baptist Church.
 <sup>264</sup> "Mickels Gets Inkster Post," Michigan Chronicle, May 4, 1957.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>265</sup> Brown, "Breaking Ground for a Career was a Black Architect's Biggest Job."

Wayne County, MI County and State

#### 9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

#### **Books, Journals, and References**

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Wayne County, MI County and State

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Name of Property

Wayne County, MI County and State

- Smardz Frost, Karolyn, and Veta Smith Tucker, eds. *A Fluid Frontier: Slavery, Resistance, and the Underground Railroad in the Detroit River Borderland*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2016.
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Wilson, Jr., Benjamin Calvin. "Michigan's Ante-bellum Black Haven – Cass County 1835-1870." PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1974.

#### **Newspapers**

Detroit Free Press Michigan Chronicle Signal of Liberty

#### Websites and Blogs

"Chain Lake Missionary Baptist Church Records 00190." Michigan State University Archives and Historical Collections. https://archive.lib.msu.edu/uahc/Findi ngAids/190.html.

#### **Archives**

Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Burton Historical Collection at the Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan

Second Baptist Church of Detroit Archives, Detroit, Michigan

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form NPS Form 10-900 OMB Control No. 1024-0018

Second Baptist Church of Detroit (Additional Documentation) Name of Property

Wayne County, MI County and State

#### **Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- <u>X</u> previously listed in the National Register
- \_\_\_\_\_previously determined eligible by the National Register
- \_\_\_\_\_designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #\_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_\_

#### Primary location of additional data:

- X 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**

Acreage of Property Less than one (0.3343)

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)	
1. Latitude: 42.335014	Longitude: -83.042982
2. Latitude:	Longitude:
3. Latitude:	Longitude:
4. Latitude:	Longitude:

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form NPS Form 10-900 OMB Control No. 1024-0018

Second Baptist Church of Detroit (Additional Documentation) Name of Property

Wayne County, MI County and State

## Or UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or	NAD 1983	
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.)

Beginning at the northwest corner of the intersection of Beaubien Boulevard and Monroe Street, the boundary extends northward along the west side of Beaubien approximately 113 feet before turning west and travelling along the alley between Monroe and Macomb Street approximately 138 feet. The boundary then turns south and travels approximately 113 feet before turning east and travelling approximately 138 feet along the north side of Monroe to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary selected includes the entire Second Baptist Church of Detroit complex, including the church dating to 1918, a 1926 addition along the west side of the church, and the 1968 office and educational building addition attached to the east side of the church. The 1975 National Register nomination lists the 1968 addition as non-contributing and this nomination increases the boundary to include the addition.

Wayne County, MI County and State

#### **11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: <u>Katie Cook (Architectural Historian)</u> , Cassandra Talley (Architectural			
Historian), Lillian Candela (Project Architect & Architectural Historian)			
organization: Kraemer Design Group LLC			
street & number: 1420 Broadway			
city or town: <u>Detroit</u> state: <u>MI</u> zip code: <u>48226</u>			
e-mail: <u>katie.cook@thekraemeredge.com</u>			
telephone: <u>313-965-3399</u>			
date: _April 2023			

#### **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.)

#### 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**

Wayne County, MI County and State

Name of Property: Second Baptist Church of Detroit

City or Vicinity: Detroit

County: Wayne

State: Michigan

Photographer: Kraemer Design Group LLC

Date Photographed: 12/16/2022

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photograph 0001 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0001 View of Second Baptist Church looking northwest from the corner of Monroe Street and Beaubien Boulevard.

Photograph 0002 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0002 View of the 1968 Second Baptist Church addition looking west.

Photograph 0003 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0003 View of the northeast corner of Second Baptist Church looking southwest on Beaubien Boulevard.

Photograph 0004 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0004 View of the northwest corner of Second Baptist Church. View from the parking lot which sits behind the church.

Photograph 0005 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0005 View of the Second Baptist Church looking northeast on Monroe Street.

Photograph 0006 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0006 View of the roof of the 1968 addition looking northwest.

Photograph 0007 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0007 View of the pulpit of Second Baptist Church, looking northwest.

Photograph 0008 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0008 View of the first floor former worship hall, now a display of historical artifacts. Looking south.

Wayne County, MI County and State

Photograph 0009 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0009 View of the basement of Second Baptist Church and former Underground Railroad hiding location.

Photograph 0010 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0010 View of the nave. Looking northwest.

Photograph 0011 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0011 View of the stair to the upper gallery. Looking northwest.

Photograph 0012 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0012 View of administration offices. Looking east.

Photograph 0013 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0013 Roof of 1968 addition looking southwest.

Photograph 0014 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0014 View of typical classroom in 1968 addition looking west.

Photograph 0015 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0015 View of the narthex from the upper gallery looking north.

Photograph 0016 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0016 View of stairwell to the pastor's study. Looking east.

Photograph 0017 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0017 View of the aisle with nave in the background. Looking northeast.

Photograph 0018 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0018 View of the nave and gallery. Looking south.

Photograph 0019 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0019 View of primary stairwell. Looking down.

Photograph 0020 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0020 View of second floor in 1968 addition. Looking south.

Photograph 0021 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0021 View of third floor corridor in 1968 addition. Looking north.

Photograph 0022 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0022 View of ground floor Fellowship Hall in 1968 addition. Looking north.

Photograph 0023 of 0023: MI\_Wayne County\_Second Baptist Church\_0023

Name of Property

View of ground floor entrance lobby in 1968 addition. Looking west.

Wayne County, MI County and State

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 - 60-100 hours Tier 2 - 120 hours Tier 3 - 230 hours Tier 4 - 280 hours

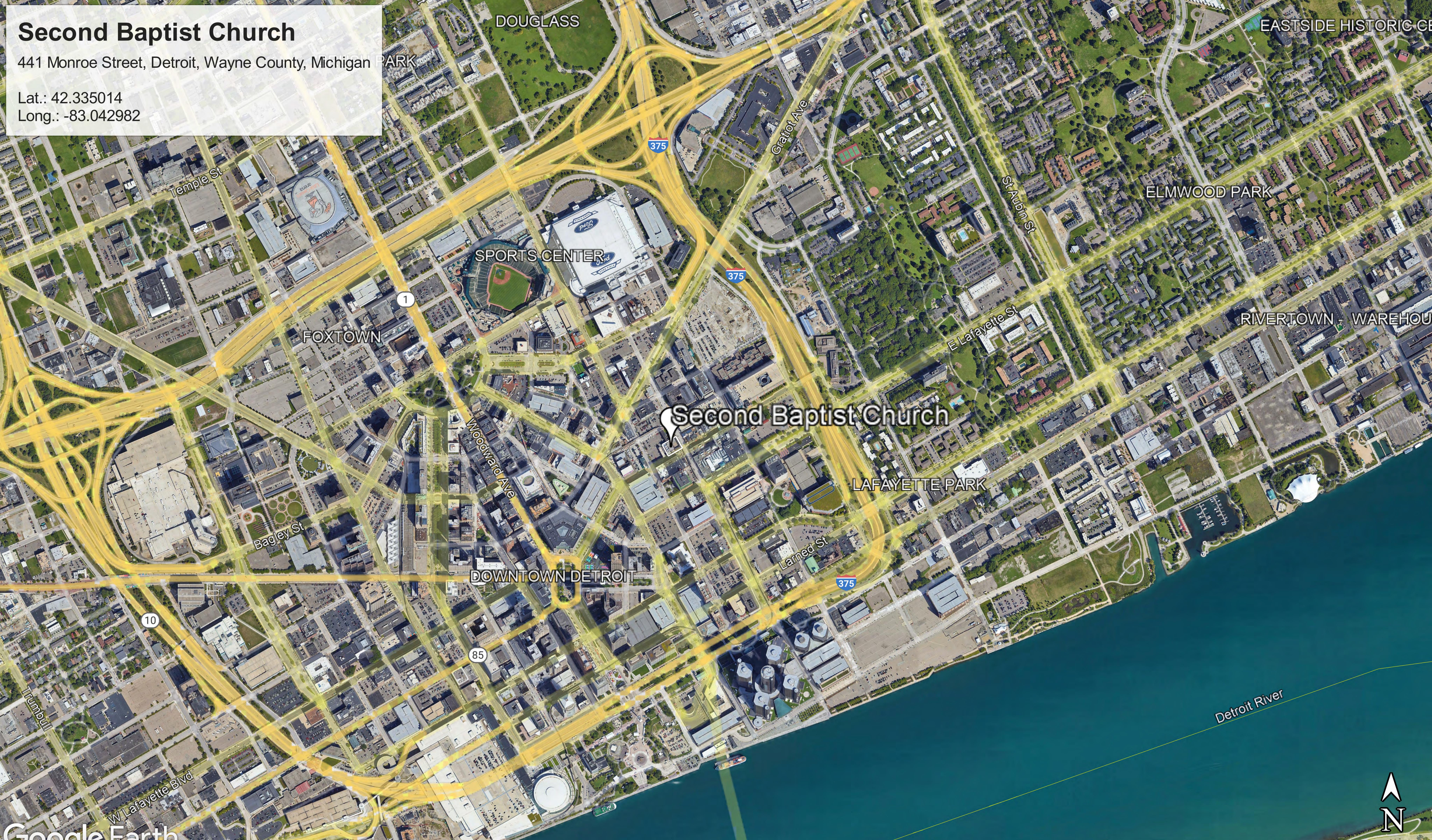
The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

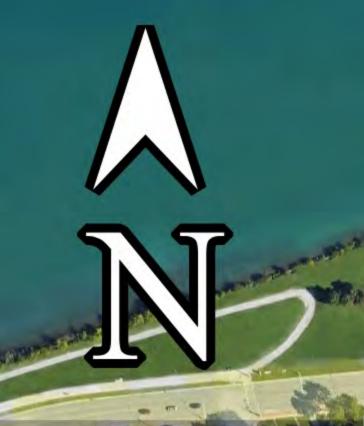
# Second Baptist Church

441 Monroe Street, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

Lat.: 42.335014 Long.: -83.042982

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




# **Second Baptist Church**

441 Monroe Street, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

Lat.: 42.335014 Long.: -83.042982



# Figure 1.

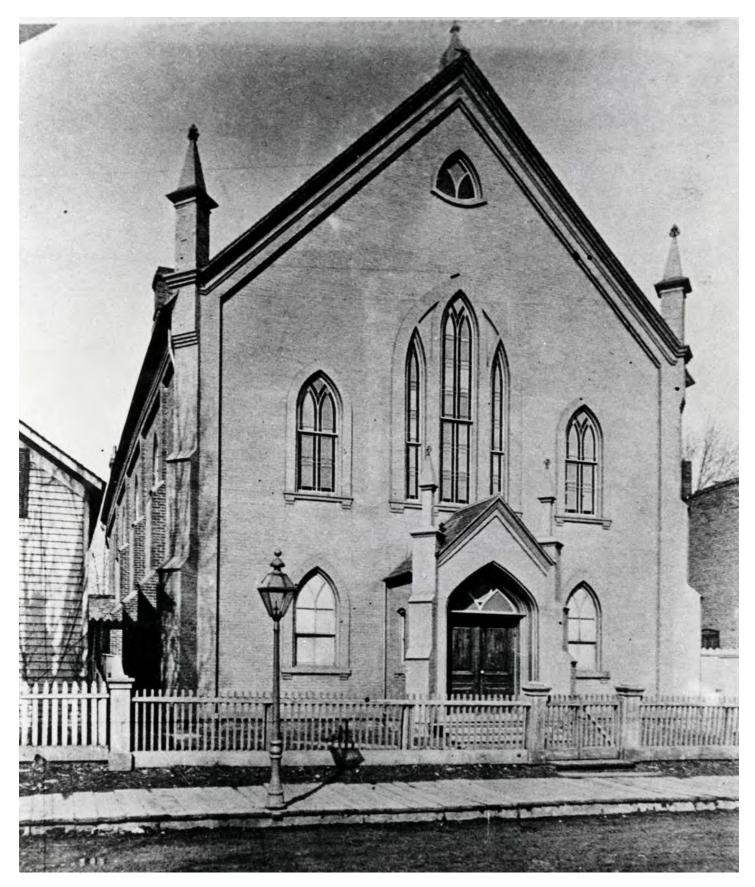


## **Second Baptist Church (Additional Documentation)**

441 Monroe Avenue, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

Plan of second floor showing the iterative additions and year constructed.

# Figure 2.



View of façade of Second Baptist Church prior to construction of c. 1912 façade addition. Courtesy of Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

# Figure 3.

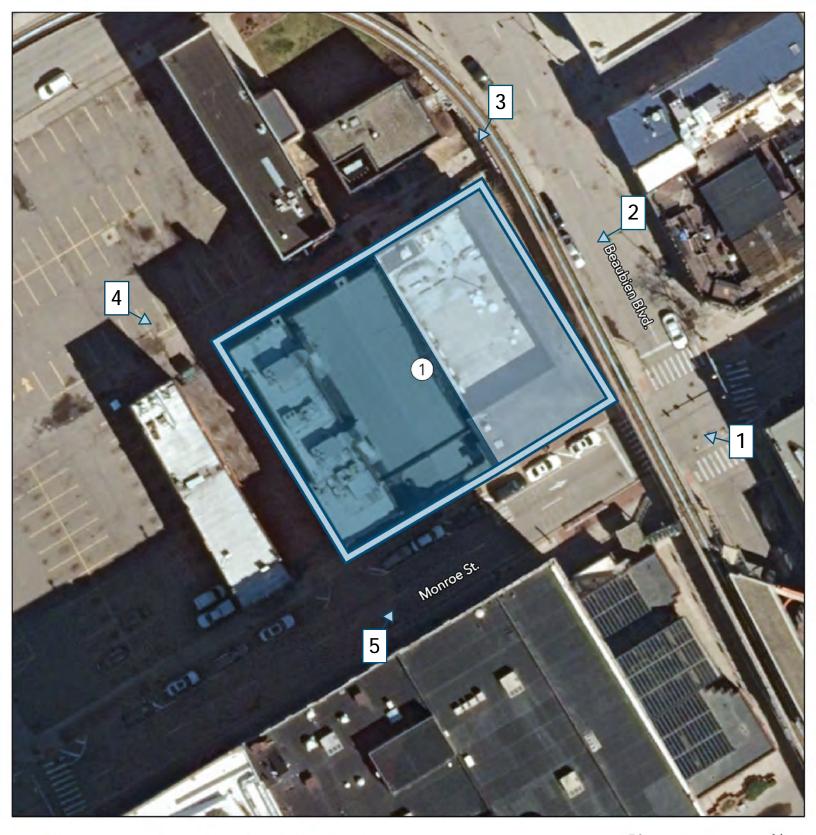


View of Second Baptist Church from Monroe Street, looking northeast, c. 1921. Courtesy of Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

## Figure 4.



Members of Second Baptist Church with overlaid portrait of Reverend Robert L. Bradby, looking southwest along Monroe Street, dated August 5, 1923. Courtesy of Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.



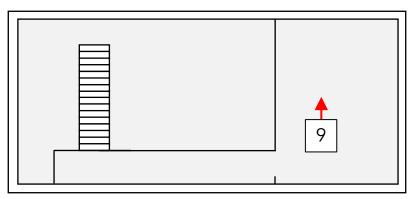
💻 Location of Second Baptist Church of Detroit

Acreage of Property Less than one, 0.3343 acres

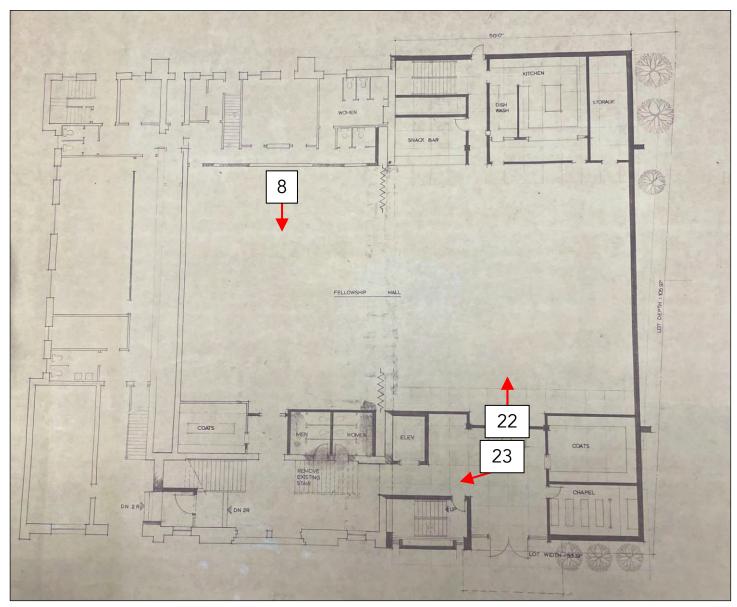
Latitude-Longitude Coordinates Datum WGS84 50 N Feet A

Second Baptist Church of Detroit National Register Nomination Wayne County, Michigan Kraemer Design Group, LLC 2022

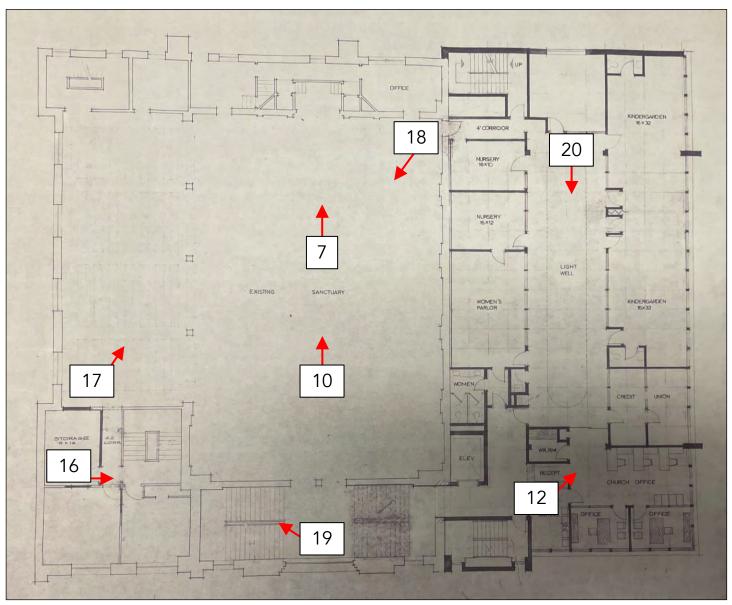
1. 42.335014, -83.042982



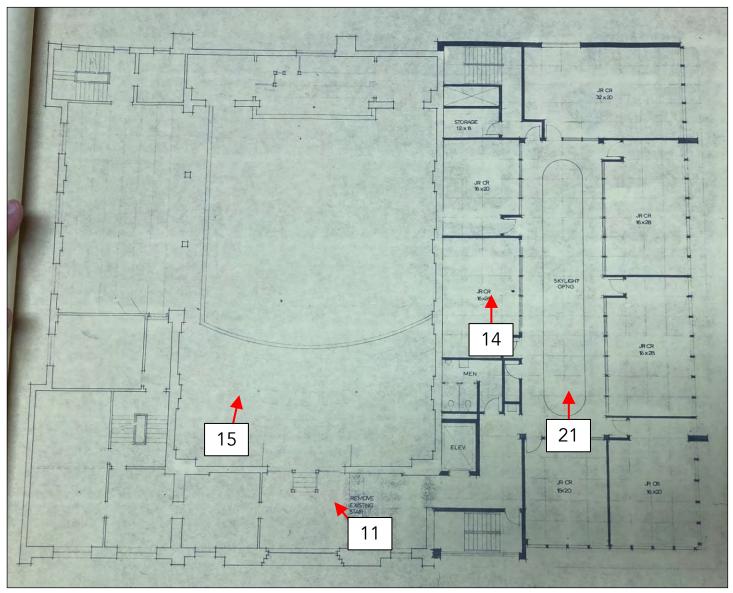
Basement of central portion of church



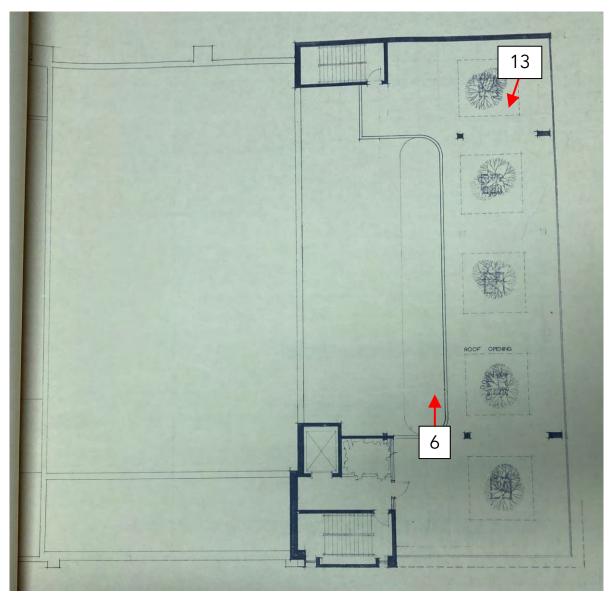
1<sup>st</sup> Floor Plan This is a proposed drawings for the 1968 Nathan Johnson addition; therefore, as-built interior floorplans are different.



2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Plan Note that these are proposed drawings for the 1968 Nathan Johnson addition. Therefore, as-built interior floorplans are different.



3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Plan Note that these are proposed drawings for the 1968 Nathan Johnson addition. Therefore, as-built interior floorplans are different.



Roof Plan Note that these are proposed drawings for the 1968 Nathan Johnson addition. Therefore, as-built interior floorplans are different.















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National Register of Historic Places Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

#### ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE MICHIGAN

Date Entered MAR 1 9 1975

Name

#### Location

Second Baptist Church of Detroit

Detroit Wayne County

## Also Notified

Hon. Philip A. Hart Hon. Robert P. Griffin Hon. Philip E. Ruppe

Regional Director, Mid West Region State Historic Preservation Officer Dr. Martha Bigelow, Director Michigan History Division Department of State Lansing, Michigan 48918

NAME	OF PROPERTY Second Baptist Church of Detroit STATE Michigan
The a clari	ttached National Register Inventory-Nomination form is being returned to your office for fication of the information indicated below. PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM WHEN THE NOMINATION SUBMITTED.
7	Description: In the last paragraph just indicate that the new (1968) office and educational building is included in the monipation.
	new (1968) office and educational building is included
	in the monipation.
8	Statement of Significance:
9	Bibliography:
10	Geographical Data Acreage:
	UTM Reference(s):
	Verbal Boundary Description:
12	Certification:
	Photographic Coverage:
	Map Coverage:
	Other:
Quest	tions concerning this nomination may be directed to <u>Edward A. Amith</u>
on tl	he National Register staff, telephone $523 - 5483$
Than	k you for your attention to the above items.
Chier	Date:
CILLE	IN 1.21032
	United States Department of the Interior National Park Service WASO No. 8

75000970 Property Second Baptist Church Working Number State TECH Photos\_ Maps We have the basic problem that only par of the building is being nominated. - I'm not sure on additions -HISTOR we Accert E. Smith 1-3075) -Important site. not nominated to architectural significance ARCHITECTURAL HISTOR Importance as site and building to plack history is uneffected by additions. Le bouch 12-17-74 ARCHEOLOGIST amy Hechen of the state staff says the local people will approve of the new section being included if we decide to do so here. **OTHER** Confe 2-14-94 HAER Inventory \_ Review **REVIEW UNIT CHIEF** Conference Accept 2-19-75 BRANCH CHIEF · 18-5 KEEPER Entered \_\_\_\_\_MAR 1 9 1975 National Register Write-up Send-back 5-6-75 Federal Register Entry Re-submit INT:2106-74 United States Department of the Interior National Park Service WASO No. 7

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## ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:

Acobethan Revival elements

architect/m.builder:

landscape/garden designer: interior decorator:

events

engineer: artist/artisan: builder/contractor:

ETHNIC GROUP: Black

NAMES:

(label role appropriate date)

personal Rev. Wm C. Monroe - Church leader, mid. 1945 C. Frederick Douglass - met of community leaders & spoke tere, 3/11/1857 Relph Bunche - member

Juse - 1914 institutional Original structure Drz. 1857 DATES: DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (Specific date or 1/4 of century): SILFO - converted to 2 stories DATE (S) OF "MAJOR" ALTERATIONS: 1880, 1926, 1968 Igip. Vebuilt after fine 1924 - west additions HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT DATE (S) : 1968 - east addition held "State Convention of Colored Citizens", 1843; Jan. 6, 1843 - celebration of Emancipation Proclaimation NOMINATION) PRIVATE (STATE) LOCAL GOV"T MUNICIPAL COUNTY SOURCE: (OF NOMINATION) OTHER FEDERAL 'AGENCY: ACREAGE: (to nearest tenth of an acre)

COMMENTS: (include architectural information here)

Brich, sandstone trim; I stories, modified Vetlangle, gatled vool with high pavapits, twin recerced Tudor and ed double door entrances surmounted by large to part Tudor Window with Joshie stone having interior with semicircular New alignment heavy wood paheling, and tope window. h west wing the 1924; that wing, 1968. Jacobe than original Lpre-1857) tructure Revival eliments. Houses Aris state's rebuilt after fire . SIGNIFICANCE: (maximum two sentences) oldest black congregation, argumized 1836 - P chesting practice elsewheres instrumental in formation of Amberstburg Baptist Association and development of Canadian Anti-Slovery Baphist Association for the parasa of aiding fugitive plaves and additionist more marchenet, and promoting the abolitionist morement.



GRETCHEN WHITMER GOVERNOR STATE OF MICHIGAN MICHIGAN STRATEGIC FUND State Historic Preservation Office

QUENTIN L. MESSER, JR. PRESIDENT

Wednesday, June 14, 2023

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 file contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for **Second Baptist Church of Detroit (Additional Documentation), Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan**. This property is being submitted for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This nomination is a \_\_\_\_\_ New Submission \_\_\_\_\_ Resubmission \_\_X\_Additional Documentation \_\_\_\_\_\_Removal.

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

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.
- This nomination has been funded by the following NPS grant: 2020 African American Civil
- X Rights Grant.
- Other:

Questions concerning this nomination should be addressed to Todd A. Walsh, National Register Coordinator, at (517) 331-8917 or walsht@michigan.gov.

Sincerely yours,

anth d. 18

Martha MacFarlane-Faes Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer



### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Additional Documentation					
Property Name:	Second Baptist Church of Detroit (Additional Documentation)					
Multiple Name:						
State & County:	MICHIGAN, Wayne					
Date Recei 6/15/202						
Reference number:	AD75000970					
Nominator:	SHPO					
Reason For Review:						
<b>X</b> Accept	Return Reject <b>7/6/2023</b> Date					
Abstract/Summary Comments:	This AD accomplishes a number of things. It evaluates the 1968 additon to the earlier church and finds that it is of local significance as an example of Modernist/Brutalist design. It discusses the church's role in the African American struggle for Civil Rights and ties the nomination to the MPS "20th century African American Experience in Detroit" and it calls out the Reverend Robert Bradby for his individual significance in local civil rights. Finally, the nomination provides a thorough description of the resource. Adds Criterion B; Adds Social History/Civil Rights new; POS ends in 1968.					
Recommendation/ Criteria	Accept Additional Documentation					
Reviewer Jim Ga	obert Discipline Historian					
Telephone (202)35	4-2275 Date					
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.