OMB Control No. 1024-0018
expiration date 03/31/2022

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: _Sojourner Truth Homes_____
Other names/site number: _____
Name of related multiple property listing**:**
The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: _4525 and 4801 East Nevada Street_____
City or town: Detroit_____ State: _Detroit_____ County: __Wayne_____
Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

_X_national ___statewide ___local
Applicable National Register Criteria:

_X_A ___B ___C ___D

Deputy SHPO	**August 3, 2022**
Signature of certifying official/Title:	**Date**
_Michigan State Historic Preservation Office_____	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

Sojourner Truth Homes | Wayne County, MI
Name of Property | County and State

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:

_X_ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

James Gabbert 9.15.2022

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	
Public – Local	X
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	
District	X

Sojourner Truth Homes
Name of Property

Wayne County, MI
County and State

Site ☐

Structure ☐

Object ☐

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
20	3	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
20	3	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
_Colonial Revival____
_Moderne_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: _Concrete, Brick, Synthetics: Vinyl, Asphalt__

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 Sojourner Truth Public Housing complex is a collection of forty-nine buildings situated on a rectangular site at 4525 and 4801 East Nevada Street in Detroit, Michigan. The complex is located in northeast Detroit within the Krainz Woods neighborhood and is bounded by Nevada Avenue to the south, Fenelon Avenue to the east, Stockton Avenue to the north, and the alley which runs behind the single-family houses on Justine Avenue to the east. The housing complex consists of twenty original buildings constructed in 1942 and twenty-nine non-historic buildings which were constructed in 1986 and 1987. There were originally forty-six building but twenty-six of the original buildings were demolished in 1981.[1] The twenty original buildings are concentrated in the center of the site while most of the non-historic buildings line the east and west perimeter of the site with a few exceptions including two non-historic buildings which flank the primary entrance drive off of Nevada Avenue. Although the site design is altered from its original configuration, the twenty original masonry buildings are in excellent condition and retain a high degree of integrity. The boundary of the historic district incorporates the twenty original masonry buildings which sit at the core of the complex and also includes three non-contributing buildings – two housing buildings and the central administration building – which are also in the center of the housing complex.

[1] "Tenants Council Thanks Mayor," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 7, 1981.

Narrative Description

Setting and Environment

The Sojourner Truth Public Housing complex is a collection of forty-nine buildings situated on a rectangular site at 4525 and 4801 East Nevada Street in Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan. The complex is located in northeast Detroit and situated in the predominantly residential Krainz Woods neighborhood. Directly to the east and west of the complex are residential streets lined with single-family houses. Most of these nearby houses are Minimal Traditional style homes, built in the 1940s although there are some 1910s and 1920s era Craftsman bungalow homes in the neighborhood as well.

The Sanborn map from 1933 shows this area was quite sparsely populated with just eight houses on Justine Avenue (from Nevada to Stockton) and no houses on Fenelon Street (from Nevada to Stockton).[2] Likewise, in 1933, the area directly south of the future Sojourner Truth Homes site was an asphalt plant, a contractor's site, and a distributing plant, both located adjacent to the railroad lines that ran in this area directly south of Nevada Avenue. In 1933 the area directly north of the future Sojourner Truth Homes site was undeveloped residential parcels along with the school yard grounds for the Edmund Atkinson Elementary School, which was constructed in in two phases in 1927 and in 1931. The 1933 Sanborn also shows denser residential development to the north and east of the Edmund Atkinson Elementary School (primarily north of Hildale Street).

Later, the undeveloped area to the north of the Sojourner Truth Homes became Krainz Park while the area to the south was used as the Detroit Terminal Railroad (DTRR) Davison yard. The Davison yard was the main classification yard of the DTRR and was active when the Sojourner Truth Homes were originally constructed. After use as the DTRR yard, the property was owned by Stellantis N.V. to store new cars.[3] Later, this property was utilized for the Detroit Detention and Re-entry Centers. Today, the Detroit Detention and Re-entry Centers is still extant and this complex spans along Nevada Avenue between Mound Road and Ryan Road and breaks up the residential street grid of the neighborhood. Additionally, Krainz Park is still extant today while the old Edmund Atkinson Elementary has been repurposed to house the Legacy Charter Academy school.

The Detroit Detention and Re-entry Centers, Krainz Park, and the Legacy Charter Academy are the primary significant views visible from the Sojourner Truth Homes complex. Prior to 1980 when the Davison rail yard was still active in the current location of the Detroit Detention and

[2] Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Detroit Public Library, Michigan, Detroit 1910-1950, 1933, vol. 22, sheet 2222 and sheet 2221.
[3] "Mound Correctional Facility Closed January 8, 2012", Michigan Department of Corrections, www.michigan.gov/corrections/0,4551,7-119--5352--,00.html (Accessed 11/17/21).

Reentry Centers it is likely that this lively and expansive rail yard was a primary vista for residents of the housing complex. At the time when the Sojourner Truth Homes were built, the undeveloped residential parcels to the north of the housing complex was a heavily wooded and hilly area which former complex residents recall playing in as children. Kenneth G. Booker, a former resident, recalled the nearby farm structures. He stated that "they had an old, abandoned farm building over where the park is now. That was when they first built. The farm building was on the edge of the project. We used to play in the building when it was abandoned."[4] These farm structures, wooded areas, and small hills were likely the memorable structures and landscape features for early residents of the Sojourner Truth Homes.

Narrative Description

The current configuration of the Sojourner Truth Homes, including streetscape and landscape, is altered from its original construction. When constructed in 1941 the complex consisted of forty-six buildings which were a mix of wood clad and brick veneer buildings. Currently, only twenty of the original buildings remain. These twenty extant masonry buildings are the contributing resources within the proposed district. At present, the historic masonry buildings are concentrated near the center of the site while the majority of the non-historic, 1980s townhouses tend to line the perimeter of the site, particularly lining the east and west sides of the site.

Historically, the buildings were arranged in a grid with a large open yard termed a "park" in original plan drawings and an administration building in the center.[5] Directly to the west, along the alley which runs behind the houses on Justine Avenue, was another large grassy field. This grassy field is not shown on original drawings or plot plans, so it is unclear if the land was set aside for potential future expansion or not. The buildings directly to the north and south of the central open yard, including the one administration building, were oriented east-west while the remaining buildings were all oriented north-south. The composition was almost symmetrical with four rows of buildings on either side of the central yard as well as the buildings to the north and south of the yard. There were eight surface parking lots, four on either side of the central yard situated between buildings. There were fourteen entrances to the complex, six located off of Nevada Avenue, two located off of Fenelon Street, and six located off of Stockton Avenue. The primary entrance was located at the midpoint of the complex off of Nevada Avenue and led directly to the community building. There were many pedestrian walkways as well. The pedestrian paths are all oriented north-south or east-west except for one semi-circular pedestrian path leading from Nevada Avenue to the community center building.

The major alteration to the site design occurred in 1980 as a part of the Detroit Housing Commission's Sojourner Truth Homes Modernization Program. This program involved site development, replacement sash and security screens, roofing of brick veneer buildings, installation of new entrance canopies, rehabilitation of sheds and rear of brick, interior

[4] 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), 199.
[5] D. Haig, "Plot Plan of Sojourners Truth Project," Archives of Michigan, Sept 1942.

rehabilitation, demolition of wood frame building and community building, and new construction of community building and housing units.[6] During the implementation of the modernization program in the 1980s 26 of the original buildings were demolished, including the wood frame buildings and the administration building. Historic photographs show that the wood frame buildings were long, rectangular-plan, one-story buildings with side gabled roofs and centrally placed brick chimneys. The buildings were clad in wood siding and had a combination of six-over-six and four-over-four double hung windows. The entrances on these buildings were covered by a flat roof canopy supported by skinny, rectangular columns. The wood frame buildings were devoid of architectural detail and were simple in design. There is limited documentation of the former administration building although historic aerial imagery indicates it was a T-plan building with a cross gabled roof consisting of a long, rectangular side gabled component and a front facing gabled portion centered on the primary façade, likely where the entrance was located.[7] The administration was initially constructed as a one-story frame building and a second story addition was added later in 1956.[8]

The twenty original masonry buildings are still extant today. These buildings are significantly larger and have more architectural detail than the non-extant wood clad buildings. These buildings are two-story rowhouses with long, rectangular plans and side gabled roofs. The buildings are built of a dark red brick in a running bond pattern with a beige-colored string course running continuously on all elevations beneath the second-floor window sills. The gable peaks on the side elevations of some of the buildings are clad in vinyl siding as well as stucco and wood trim mimicking half-timbering although this does not occur on every building. Those without this vinyl siding are clad in red brick in this location, consistent with the rest of the building. Each building contains six individual units and is, thus, composed of six bays. The first floor has aluminum replacement windows while the second floor has newer, vinyl replacement windows. The windows are a combination of slider and double hung units. Each building contains six entrances clustered in groups of two. Each of the three entrance groupings is covered by a projecting awning clad in asphalt shingles and vinyl siding. The doors are wood with a brown metal screen door and a dark red aluminum door surround. Each of the six doors has a porch light, address number, and cast iron mailbox mounted on the wall adjacent. The rear elevation of the buildings feature enclosed mechanical additions clad in vinyl siding and with dark red asphalt shingled roofs. Each building features four red brick chimneys equally spaced on the roof of the building. There are PVC vent pipes located equidistant between the chimneys.

The housing complex consisted of two hundred units consisting of thirty-one bedroom units, 120 two-bedroom units, and fifty three-bedroom units.[9] The no longer extant wood frame buildings were a combination of one- and three-bedroom units while the masonry buildings contained the two-bedroom units. Each of the twenty masonry buildings contain six two-bedroom units. The

[6] Detroit Housing Department, "Invitation for Bids", *Michigan Chronicle*, September 13, 1980.
[7] DTE Aerial Imagery, 1949.
[8] "City of Detroit – Board of Assessors Card," Administration Building, September 1942, Archives of Michigan and "City of Detroit – Building Permit No. 54649," June 13, 1956, Archives of Michigan.
[9] Sojourner Truth Site Plan, December 30, 1948, Archives of Michigan.

units are a townhouse style, each narrow in plan and two stories. The first floor contains a living room at the front of the unit and a kitchen in the rear of the unit. The interior stair leads to a landing on the second floor from which one can access the bathroom and the two bedrooms. The apartments have had minor alterations, possibly during the 1980s modernization program, including replacement of kitchen appliances and cabinets and replacement of bathroom fixtures, as well as the addition of vinyl tile flooring throughout the units. The layout of the units are intact with original painted plaster and lath walls throughout.

Historic images indicate that the exterior of these masonry buildings are largely unchanged from their original design. The original windows were a combination of six-over-six and four-over-four double hung units. As stated above these were replaced, likely during the 1980s modernization program, with one-over-one double hung units and slider units. Historic images also make clear that the shingled awnings over the entrance doors as well as the enclosed mechanical rooms on the rear facades are all not original. Six of the twenty masonry buildings have small one-story additions to make the end units in the building wheelchair accessible. The additions are rectangular in form and consist of a single bedroom, thus adding a wheelchair accessible ground floor bedroom to the units. The additions are clad in a dark red brick which closely matches the existing masonry and has matching asphalt shingle roofing.

Twenty-nine buildings were added to the site replacing the original wood frame buildings between 1986 and 1987. These buildings have a smaller footprint than the masonry buildings, each containing two units. The buildings are two-stories and have side gabled roofs with staggered roof heights and are clad in a red brick on the first floor and clad in beige vinyl siding on the second floor. Each unit has two entrances. The entrance doors are recessed. The community building was also built in 1986 and 1987 and is located in the center of the site, in the location of the former grassy lawn. This building is one-story with a side gabled roof. It is clad in red brick and aluminum frame ribbon windows run directly beneath the roofline. These non-historic buildings look significantly different from the extant historic buildings on site today. Many of the 1980s buildings have a significantly smaller footprint and have varied rooflines versus the simple gabled roofs and long, rectangular footprints of the extant masonry buildings. Further differentiating the building types, the 1980s buildings have recessed entryways accessed via a series of steps whereas the historic buildings are entered at grade level. Despite sharing some cladding elements such as the red-brown brick, beige vinyl siding, and asphalt shingles, it is evident that the 1980s buildings and the 1940s brick buildings are distinct in their histories and construction dates.

The site is no longer configured in a rectilinear, symmetrical fashion as it was originally designed and built. The complex has a slightly expanded footprint – filling the grassy field area which historically existed on the west side of the property. The complex now backs up to the alley behind Justine Ave. The streets within the complex feature more curves and are wider than the original streets. There are also a series of cul-de-sacs with landscaped traffic islands throughout the complex. There are no longer centralized surface parking lots but instead there are parking spots in front of the individual buildings as well as incorporated into the traffic islands. The community building sits at the center of the site within an oval shaped landscaped boulevard. There are currently four entrances to the complex: two off East Nevada Avenue, one

off Stockton Avenue, and one off of Fenelon Street. The two entrances off of East Nevada Avenue are two-way streets divided by landscaped medians. There is shrubbery in front of some of the buildings as well as large trees throughout the site and smaller trees planted on the traffic islands. Historic aerial imagery from 1981 shows that most of the large, deciduous trees on the site had been removed during the modernization program.[10] Thus, it is likely that most of the trees on the site today were planted in the mid-1980s.

Methodology for Designation and Historic Integrity

The boundary of the proposed district encompasses the twenty historic masonry buildings which are concentrated at the core of the complex. The contributing resources within this boundary are the twenty original masonry buildings. The masonry buildings retain a high degree of integrity with very few alterations since their original construction. Given the significant alterations to the site in the 1980s - including new street patterns and the loss of the grassy recreation fields and pedestrian pathways – the site has lost much of its historic integrity and there are no site or landscape features which could be considered contributing resources. The boundary does not include most of the residential buildings constructed in 1986 and 1987 which are less than fifty years old, were not present during the period of significance, and do not meet the age requirement for listing on the National Register. There are three non-contributing resources included within the boundary of the proposed district. These include the administration building at the center of the complex as well as two of the non-historic residential buildings. These three non-contributing resources are located near the center of the complex and thus were included within the boundary of the proposed district.

Overall, the complex retains integrity in the aspects of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The high level of integrity of the design, workmanship, and materials of the original masonry buildings provide great insight into the construction and design methods of the United States Housing Authority in the 1940s. The high level of integrity of location, feeling, and association mean the complex retains a direct link to the significant events which occurred in 1942 at the site. Following the 1980s modernization program the complex lost integrity of setting. The layout of the site including automobile and pedestrian circulation paths as well as landscaping and site features have all been significantly altered from their original design. While the landscape surrounding the site, outside of the bounds of the proposed district, remains largely the same, the significant changes to the complex itself have resulted in the loss of integrity of setting.

Archaeological Potential

Historic documentation evidence to date indicates no archaeological material exists in the Sojourner Truth Public Housing Complex.

Documentation suggests no structures formerly stood within the bounds of the housing complex prior to the 1941 construction of the Sojourner Truth Homes. The nearest recorded

[10] DTE Aerial Photo Collection, Wayne State University, 1981.

archaeological sites lie between three-quarters of a mile and one mile away. These sites include a Woodland period (ca. 500 BCE to 1600 CE) Native American site of undetermined function as well as a Native American cemetery, likely from the Woodland period, along Mound Road. The area around the Sojourner Truth Homes was originally wet prairie land. The land was purchased by Conant Shubael in 1837 but remained undeveloped. The land was platted as part of the City of Detroit between 1915 and 1918 and documentation indicates that nothing was constructed on the site until the housing complex's construction in 1941. The full archaeological research report is provided in Appendix A.

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.)

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

Criteria Considerations

(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply.)

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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Social History
Ethnic Heritage: Black
Politics/Government

Period of Significance
1941-1943

Significant Dates
1942

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
United States Housing Authority (USHA)
Harman, Aloys Frank (Architect)
Christman Company (Contractor)

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

The Sojourner Truth Homes are nominated under the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) *The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit*. The Sojourner Truth Homes meet the Registration Requirements outlined in the MPDF form as an example of the Public Housing Historic District sub-type. The Sojourner Truth Homes are significant at the national level under Criterion A for Social History and for Ethnic History. The housing complex was designated for Black tenants sparking protest from the surrounding White neighborhood residents and igniting a passionate demand for equity in housing from the Black community.

Permanent public housing was rarely allocated to Black war workers, who were often confined to subpar temporary units or left to find their own housing in overcrowded racial enclaves. The allocation of the Sojourner Truth Homes to Black workers represented a significant step forward in the quest for fair housing, fair employment, and equal treatment. Without reliable housing Black migrants could not participate in the war industry, for which many had aggressively campaigned to be able to do prior to the signing of Executive Order 8802. Securing housing represented something larger to the Black community – being denied housing also signified a denial of human rights and led many to question whether America was a democracy for all or just for some. As Mayor Edward Jeffries stated prior to the opening of the housing complex, "'this is no longer a question of housing'…'this is a question of whether government can publicly discriminate against the Negro."[11] The government's eventual decision to allocate the Sojourner Truth Homes to Black workers despite outrage from White neighbors represented a victory to many and provided a precedent for fighting discrimination within defense worker housing and in public housing in general nationwide. When Black tenants did attempt to move in, the housing complex was the site of a violent clash between White residents in adjacent neighborhoods and the Black tenants. The violent events which occurred at the site and the site's significance in the fight for equity in housing highlight the significant role the Sojourner Truth Homes played in the course of national Civil Rights history.

The Sojourner Truth Homes public housing complex is also significant under Criterion A for Politics/Government for its significance in relation to the federal government's shaping of public housing policy in the nascent years of the public housing movement.

[11] "City to Open Truth Homes Next Week," *Detroit Free Press*, February 20, 1942.

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

Note: The Sojourner Truth Homes project was not officially named until September 1941 although for clarity and continuity this nomination refers to the project as the Sojourner Truth Homes regardless of date.

Associated Multiple Property Listing: The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit

The Sojourner Truth Homes are nominated under the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) *The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit*. The significant events which occurred at the Sojourner Truth Homes between 1941 and 1943 fit within the identified period of significance in the MPDF titled "Birth of Civil Rights 1941-1954". The Sojourner Truth Homes are featured prominently in the existing MPDF and fits within the identified historic context in the MPDF titled "The Demand for Fair Housing in Detroit 1918-1976".

As stated in the MPDF, the Sojourner Truth Homes are significant under Criterion A as the fight for fair public housing for Black Detroiters which occurred at the Sojourner Truth Homes made an important contribution to broad patterns of African American civil rights history. The Sojourner Truth Homes are further eligible for listing under this MPDF because the housing complex is located within the city of Detroit, attained its significance between 1900 and 1976, and retains physical integrity of the twenty remaining extant housing buildings. While the complex has lost integrity of setting due to the extensive modifications to the site design in the 1980s, the complex retains integrity in the aspects of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Despite the loss of integrity of setting, the twenty historic housing buildings exist in the same spatial arrangement to each other that they did upon construction in 1941 and further, the housing complex exists on the same superblock upon which it was first constructed. Because of this, the Sojourner Truth Homes retain the requisite integrity to merit listing under the MPDF *The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit*.

Setting the Scene: The United States and World War II

On December 7, 1941, the day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the United States declared war on Japan and officially entered the Second World War. A massive mobilization effort occurred with millions of Americans soon fighting overseas and millions more participating in civilian defense efforts. Large urban industrial centers such as Detroit rapidly turned over their factories as they readied them to produce war materiel. Still recovering from the ravaging effects of the Great Depression, war materiel production provided a welcome surge in job openings. Workers were needed to match production demands. World War II created over seventeen million new jobs across the country through the duration of the war.

The Second World War and the accompanying wartime labor needs partially fueled the second wave of the Great Migration as Black southerners relocated hoping to fill the surplus of defense worker jobs. The Great Migration is the term used for the internal migration of Black Americans moving from rural areas to urban areas and from south to north which dramatically altered the demographic composition of the nation. The migration is often considered in two halves: the first migration bounded by 1910 to 1940 and the second migration bounded by 1940 to 1970. During the first wave of the Great Migration southern migrants moved to the Northeast and Midwest causing enormous growth in Black populations in cities such as Detroit as well as Chicago, New York and Philadelphia.[12] The pace of the migration picked up after the bombing of Pearl Harbor as "the three and a half years following United States entry into the war, an estimated 700,000 African Americans joined the stream of civil migrants."[13] Moving from rural areas to urban centers in both the north and the west—the defense industry expanded along the west coast during World War II leading to job openings in large west coast cities—the migrants sought greater freedoms away from the Jim Crow south and greater employment and educational opportunities in their destination cities. Migration patterns often followed transportation routes, specifically interstate highways and railroad lines, but southern migrants also determined their destination based on cities which had an infrastructure of support for the Black community. Cities with a National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) chapter, African American churches, and African American newspapers were desirable locations for migrants but waned in importance as migration streams gained momentum.[14]

Those who migrated north to seek opportunity were often met with racist-fueled resistance. Many employers, including war materiel manufacturers, refused to hire minorities, including Black migrants. This practice of discrimination caused outrage within the Black community nationwide and there were significant lobbying efforts to both desegregate the military and prohibit racial discrimination in the defense industry. Many of these early lobbying efforts did not persuade President Roosevelt to take action. On January 25, 1941, prominent Black leader A. Philip Randolph, the president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters union, proposed a national, Black-led march on Washington in protest of racial discrimination in defense plants and the exclusion of Black men from the armed services.[15] The march was scheduled for July 1, 1941 and multiple March on Washington Committee chapters were formed to organize the effort. Committee chapters formed in railroad centers such as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Detroit.[16] Local chapters worked to organize transportation to the march as well as recruiting

[12] Stewart E. Tolnay, "The African American 'Great Migration' and Beyond," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 29, 2003.
[13] Stephen Grant Meyer, *As Long as They Don't Move Next Door* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 65.
[14] Tolnay, "The African American 'Great Migration' and Beyond," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 29, 2003.
[15] Jessie Kindig, "March on Washington Movement (1941-1947)," BlackPast, December 6, 2007, www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/march-washington-movement-1941-1947/
[16] "African Americans threaten march on Washington, 1941," Global Nonviolent Action Database, nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/african-americans-threaten-march-washington-1941

potential marchers. In April 1941, Randolph estimated there would be ten thousand attendees at the march and in May the NAACP contributed money to the cause and advised its branches to assist the local march committees.[17] On June 18, as the date of the march loomed, Randolph along with Walter White, the then head of the NAACP, were summoned to Washington to meet with President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Roosevelt urged the leaders to cancel the march, but Randolph refused to agree unless Roosevelt issued an executive order banning racial discrimination in industries that received federal contracts.[18] Roosevelt conceded and signed Executive Order 8802 which banned employment discrimination in the defense industry and in the federal government. The order was signed on June 25 and the march was then cancelled.

While the order marked a significant effort to address employment discrimination at the federal level, the order lacked enforcement power. Following the signing of Executive Order 8802, the NAACP issued complaints to the federal government citing examples of job advertisements in direct violation of the order. One such advertisement specifically requested a "Man (white) for stock room…".[19] Some employers proceeded with outright employment discrimination while others created a segregated hierarchy within their workforce. Large industrial firms, such as those in the business of defense work divided employees into skilled, semiskilled, and unskilled laborers.[20]Those jobs categorized as unskilled were often saved for Black applicants. Detroit was no exception to this racially motivated division of labor. Twice in August 1941 a group of Black workers at the Dodge foundry within Chrysler Corporation's Dodge Main Plant in Hamtramck stopped work to protest the transfer of only White foundry workers to the less labor-intensive production jobs at the Detroit Arsenal Tank Plant, operated by Chrysler.[21]

Multiple institutions continued to fight for fair employment practices, both in Detroit and nationally, throughout the war and afterwards. The United Automobile Workers (UAW) was founded in 1936 as a part of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and grew tremendously thereafter. By the early 1940s UAW membership exceeded one million, organized into many local unions representing the interests of the employees of various auto factories, most of which had converted to defense work during the war.[22] The UAW was headed by R.J. Thomas through the war years from 1938-1946.

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[17] "African Americans threaten march on Washington, 1941," Global Nonviolent Action Database, nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/african-americans-threaten-march-washington-1941.
[18] Lindsay Peterson, "Building the Home Front: The Lanham Act and the Modernization of American Housing, 1940-145," diss., New York University, 2017, www.proquest.com/docview/1880197502?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true.
[19] "Anti Negro Ad Violates 8802," *The Plaindealer*, April 23, 1943.
[20] Thomas A. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 92.
[21] Herb Boyd, *Black Detroit: A People's History of Self-Determination*, (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2017), 142.
[22] Ibid., 110.

Many Black defense workers joined their local UAW union and used the union as a platform for working-class Black activism, chiefly organizing and addressing racial discrimination.[23] The UAW had a progressive stance on national civil rights issues and opposed wildcat hate strikes over the promotion of Black workers.[24] Following World War II the UAW even established a Fair Practices Department and continued to fight to eradicate employment discrimination. Despite this progressive track record, the UAW locals were not consistently progressive and varied widely in their commitment to employment inequality.[25] Local union leadership was disproportionately White and local White officials often ignored charges of racial discrimination by Black workers. Contract negotiations between local UAW's and corporations often focused on wages and benefit packages neglecting antidiscrimination clauses.[26] UAW leaders encouraged a focus on the betterment of all workers rather than on improving the lives of Black workers specifically.[27] While Black workers within the UAW and certain UAW locals utilized the organizational power of the union to combat discriminatory practices, it was this top down mindset which prevented the UAW from making much progress toward combating discriminatory hiring.

While the UAW waffled in its commitment to the fight for fair employment practices, the NAACP consistently fought for fair hiring practices in the National Defense Program. The national office of the NAACP not only fought for the fair hiring of Black defense workers but also argued for equal treatment across the Defense Program. In January and February 1942 alone the office reached out to the American Red Cross to accept blood donations from Black Americans, proposed an integrated division of the United States Army to the Army Chief of Staff, and distributed leaflets at the Joe Louis fight at Madison Square Garden in protest of the United States Navy's discriminatory hiring practices.[28] The NAACP argued that segregation in the armed forces and in defense work limited the nation's effectiveness at war and caused distrust in non-White nations which the United States needed the support of for victory.[29]

As the NAACP was acutely aware, Black Americans were a critical component of the National Defense Program and yet were often met with discrimination stemming from Jim Crow philosophy. Many Black Americans struggled with joining the fight for democracy overseas when they faced discrimination in their own country – often excluded from civilian defense worker jobs or from participation in the armed forces. By 1942 thousands of African Americans had enrolled in pre-employment courses at historically Black colleges and universities. Over 80 percent of these colleges had altered their curricula to include defense-related courses and

[23] Herb Boyd, *Black Detroit*, 147.
[24] Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 101.
[25] Ibid., 101.
[26] Ibid., 102.
[27] Ibid., 102.
[28] "Report of the Secretary (For the February Meeting of the Board)," National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, February 5, 1942; Lauren Rebecca Sklaroff, "Constructing G.I. Joe Louis: Cultural Solutions to the 'Negro Problem' during World War II," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 89, No. 3 (Dec. 2002), 958.
[29] "Tentative Outline of the N.A.A.C.P. Program," National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, October 7, 1942.

training.[30] While thousands of Black Americans jumped at the opportunity to contribute to the war effort by participating in these defense-related courses or by migrating north to cities such as Detroit rich in wartime industry they were often met with a chronic housing shortage, discriminatory hiring practices, and second-class citizen treatment. Many Black Americans felt that they were fighting a double battle – for equal treatment at home and for victory abroad.

With a burgeoning Black population and with the infrastructure of the UAW and local NAACP chapter as well as the support of local prominent Black leaders, Detroit transformed into a center for Black activism in the 1940s. The city was alive with protests and spirited campaigns to end the employment discrimination and housing segregation rampant in Detroit and the nation at large. In 1941, Black employees at Chrysler's Dodge Division walked out three times in protest of racial discrimination. In 1942, the NAACP organized busloads of Black women jobseekers to occupy the office of Ford's Willow Run factory. In 1943, three thousand Black foundrymen stopped work for multiple days in protest of job discrimination at Ford's River Rouge factory complex. That same year, the UAW and NAACP co-sponsored a "March to End Jim Crow" ending in Detroit's Cadillac Square.[31] The march protested the hiring discrimination and housing segregation rampant in the city and the nation at large.

A National Housing Shortage

Homeownership was already a difficult accomplishment for many Americans before and during the Depression. Now that northern cities were seeing tremendous population growth as people relocated to fill the surplus of defense worker jobs, the housing shortage was becoming more pronounced. While White Southern migrants were finding it difficult to find housing stock in northern cities, Black migrants faced even more obstacles in securing housing. Not only were Black families confined to less desirable neighborhoods, but they also faced a myriad of racially discriminatory housing policies. Without housing one could not expect to find stable employment as a defense worker – which was the main impetus for many people migrating north and west at this time – so securing housing was of the utmost importance.

After racial zoning within municipalities was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in *Buchanan v. Warley* in 1917, people turned to racially restrictive covenants to ensure White neighborhoods remained White. These covenants proliferated in sales between individual homeowners but also were used in large-scale residential developments. By 1948 it is estimated that over 50 percent of all residential deeds in the United States had racially restrictive covenants.[32] It was that same year in 1948 that the United States Supreme Court, in *Shelley v. Kraemer,* which included the Detroit case *McGhee v. Sipes*, ruled that racially restrictive covenants were unenforceable by judicial action.

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[30] "African Americans on the Home Front during World War II," The National WWII Museum, www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/double-v-victory

[31] "1943: Detroit March to End Jim Crow in Michigan," Michigan Day by Day, April 11, 2021, harris23.msu.domains/event/1943-detroit-march-to-end-jim-crow-in-michigan/?instance_id=16105

[32] Gerald Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942: Prelude to the Race Riot of 1943*, (Cheltenham, UK: The History Press, 2020), 20.

In addition to racially restrictive covenants, it was extremely difficult for prospective Black homebuyers to secure a mortgage. The Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) was established by President Roosevelt in 1933 as a part of the New Deal. It was initially created to assist homeowners with their existing mortgages. The HOLC would purchase mortgages of homeowners threatened by foreclosure and would reissue the mortgage with both lower interest rates and longer payment schedules. This process prevented many foreclosures during the Depression.

In 1935 the HOLC embarked on a city survey program to assess risk levels for real estate investment to ensure they were not backing risky mortgages.[33] HOLC agents collaborated with local real estate agents to create what are now known as redlining maps that graded neighborhoods as Best, Still Desirable, Declining, or Hazardous.[34] Predominantly Black neighborhoods were often graded lowest, earning Declining or Hazardous ratings, and thus newcomers faced an almost impossible task of securing a mortgage to settle in those few neighborhoods in which Black families were welcome

Plagued by the racist underpinnings of the HOLC and the popularization of racially restrictive covenants, Black migrants locating to cities like Detroit faced an almost insurmountable battle in securing fair housing. Many defense workers, especially Black defense workers, lived in cramped, overcrowded, or dilapidated housing often lacking basic plumbing infrastructure. The poor state of housing impacted a worker's ability to perform on the job and often led to missing shifts or losing the opportunity to participate in the defense industry all together. Absenteeism in defense industry jobs grew from eight to twenty percent by 1943 and much of these missed shifts were attributed to a lack of housing. One *Michigan Chronicle* article detailed the increase in absenteeism and claimed that what one does in their leisure time greatly impacts their ability on to perform on the job. The article elaborated that "Negro workers are especially neglected when it comes to making their lives fairly comfortable in off hours. There are literally no houses for Negro workers. Negro workers find themselves sleeping five and six in a room, for which they are paying eight and ten dollars a week. This is not an unusual situation among hundreds of in-migrant Negro workers."[35] With such an obvious connection between housing and the opportunity to participate in defense work, the fight for fair housing and for more defense worker housing was of critical importance in cities such as Detroit seeing tremendous population growth during the war.

Detroit: The Arsenal of Democracy

In the early decades of the twentieth-century Detroit had developed into a bustling industrial landscape. Not only was it the heart of automobile production for the nation, Detroit was also host to many other industrial enterprises including stove making, aircraft part fabricators,

[33] Saundra Little and Ruth Mills, Birwood Wall, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2019.
[34] Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 22.
[35] Horace A. White, "The Facts in Our News…: Absenteeism Among Negro Defense Workers," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 13, 1943.

pharmaceutical manufacturers, adding machine producers, and more. In fact, over forty percent of Detroit's industrial jobs were non-automobile related.[36] The proliferation of industry in the city proved the perfect environment to produce war materials during World War II and many of the large manufacturing facilities in the city, including the major automobile factories, pivoted to producing war material including airplanes, tanks, and military hardware. From 1940 to 1947 manufacturing employment increased forty percent in Detroit topped only by Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.[37] Between 1940 and 1943 the number of unemployed workers fell from 135,000 to four thousand.[38]

As the center of the "Arsenal of Democracy," Detroit was a beacon to those in search of employment in the defense industry. It is estimated that nearly ten thousand job seekers moved to Detroit each month in the early years of the war.[39] Detroit's Black population grew in great numbers more than doubling between 1940 and 1950 from 149,119 in 1940 to 300,506 in 1950.[40] In 1950 Blacks consisted of 16.25 percent of the total population of Detroit, up from 9.19 percent in 1940.[41] The second wave of the Great Migration was making what was already a dire housing situation even more critical. Mirroring a situation seen nationwide, the housing shortage for Black migrants in Detroit was particularly acute. The *Detroit Free Press* summarized it as "a three-fold problem, involving high rents, slum houses and prejudicial restriction."[42] The United States Census Bureau found that 45.7 percent of houses in the United States were substandard, defined as being dilapidated or lacking plumbing facilities.[43] As one of the most segregated cities in the nation, the few predominantly Black neighborhoods in Detroit also tended to have the highest proportion of substandard housing. Only 47,000 of the 545,000 housing units available in Detroit in 1947 were available to Blacks.[44] This meant that many Black families were living in older, ill maintained nineteenth-century houses or in makeshift housing in garages, attics, or storefronts.

There were six Black enclaves within Detroit at the start of World War II, the largest being Black Bottom and the associated commercial area of Paradise Valley. There was also the North End, the West Side, the area around Eight Mile and Wyoming, and Conant Gardens. Housing conditions in these neighborhoods varied, each enclave being distinct. The housing stock in Black Bottom was old and in poor condition with landlords charging high rents for properties with failing electricity and lacking basic plumbing amenities.[45] The neighborhood was also severely overcrowded with many households taking in boarders. The Eight Mile and Wyoming neighborhood was initially settled in the 1910s when the newly founded Detroit Urban League purchased a large piece of land and offered it to prospective Black buyers. As the neighborhood grew, prospective homebuyers could not secure loans because of the FHA and HOLC's racially

[36] Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 18.
[37] Ibid., 18.
[38] Ibid., 19.
[39] Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 23.
[40] Ibid., 21.
[41] Ibid., 21.
[42] "The Negro Housing Problem," *Detroit Free Press*, July 2, 1941.
[43] Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 23.
[44] Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 43.
[45] Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 38.

prejudiced lending system and were unable to afford professional builders. Due to these constraints, many people took it upon themselves to build houses meaning the housing stock was not up to code.[46] Houses in the area were made with whatever materials could be found and lacked running water or electricity. Conant Gardens was the one neighborhood in which prospective Black homeowners could purchase FHA-approved loans and families built a collection of modest, frame and brick dwellings. The neighborhood was settled by middle-class Black families who had, against all odds, escaped the cramped, overcrowded, and often dangerous living situations seen in the other Black enclaves in the city.

There were efforts to alleviate the housing shortage for Black Detroiters. One of the early efforts to provide additional housing was the Brewster-Douglass project. The project was one of the early Public Works Administration public housing projects solely for Black occupancy and constructed between 1935 and 1951. The first phase of the project, known as the Brewster Homes, consisted of 701 units but expanded in the next few years until there were 941 units by 1941. The project continued to expand in postwar years and in 1951 additional row homes and multiple towers were constructed, known as the Frederick Douglass Homes.[47] In addition, housing was constructed for Black workers outside of the city limits – often in a continued effort to ensure segregated housing conditions. In Inkster, Michigan, located near Ford Motor Company's sprawling Rouge River Factory, Black workers were housed because the virulent racism of nearby Dearborn prevented Blacks from settling there.

The racial divide was growing, and reports of racial clashes increased in the early 1940s as the influx of African American's attempted to find housing in the city.[48] Hate and racial violence was omnipresent for Black families who attempted to move into White neighborhoods. And, in 1941 in Detroit's northwest side, a concrete wall, known as the Birwood Wall, was erected in between a White residential area and the Black residential enclave of Eight Mile-Wyoming so the White development would qualify for federally insured mortgages.

Defense Worker Housing and the Inception of the Sojourner Truth Homes

Detroit's dire need for defense worker housing mirrored the needs of other urban cities in the early 1940s. Large urban centers transitioned their industrial facilities to producing war material and workers moved in droves seeking out these jobs. President Franklin D. Roosevelt was committed to providing improved housing conditions for these defense workers learning from the experiences of World War I. The 1940 Federal Works Agency Annual Report stated:

> Among the lessons which the last World War taught … was the necessity of providing decent accommodation for the workers engaged in war industries. Impairment of health resulting from overcrowding, inefficiency in work due to deplorable living conditions, increase in costs due to high labor turn-over

[46] Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 53.
[47] Dan Austin, "Brewster-Douglass Projects," Historic Detroit, historicdetroit.org/buildings/brewster-douglass-projects
[48] Steve Babson, Dave Riddle, David Elsila, *The Color of Law*, (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2010), 117.

> attributable to inadequate shelter, maladjustments in living programs due to the high proportion of income going to rents skyrocketed by housing shortages – all combined to [cause] serious bottlenecks in the war plans.[49]

Roosevelt was better equipped to provide defense housing as he could rely on the policies developed via the relatively newly established federal public housing agencies and programs. Federal public housing initially came to fruition through Roosevelt's New Deal initiative beginning in 1933. That year, the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works (PWA) was formed through the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA).[50] The PWA was placed within the Department of the Interior and Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes was named administrator. The Housing Division established within PWA, was responsible for the creation of low-income public housing from 1933 to 1937 when that role transferred to the newly created United States Housing Authority (USHA). Early PWA public housing projects were innovative in their design and inspired by European Modernism and the Garden City movement. There were less budgetary restrictions than during the USHA era and more freedom for creativity. PWA projects shared common characteristics including "a rejection of the rehabilitation of existing slum housing, the use of the superblock to reorganize neighborhoods, minimal ground coverage by buildings, compact building interiors without corridors, on-site community centers, and a public art component."[51]

In 1934 the Plans and Specifications Branch within PWA published *Unit Plans: Typical Room Arrangements, Site Plans and Details for Low Rent Housing*. This illustrated publication depicts ideal unit configurations as well as site plans which emphasize the need for open space and landscaped areas for the health of tenants. The book concludes with architectural and structural details to assist local architects in the construction of federally funded low-income housing.[52] Early PWA projects, although intended to provide housing for people living in "slums." or other impoverished housing conditions, often ended up being cost prohibitive for these families. Many of the early PWA projects were inhabited by low-middle class or middle-class families as the rents charged were out of reach of those truly in need. Further, projects were mostly segregated and only one third of PWA's housing projects were for Black tenants. Between 1933 and 1937 PWA constructed fifty-one projects, twenty-four of which were for White tenants only, twenty-one for Black tenants only, and six contained integrated housing in the complex overall but were internally segregated by building.[53]

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[49] Jason E. Taylor, *The New Deal Goes to War: The Role of the Alphabet Agencies in World War II Mobilization*, Central Michigan University. Quoting 1940 FWA Annual Report.
[50] National Park Service, *Public Housing in the United States, 1933-1949*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2004, 17.
[51] Ibid., 19.
[52] Public Works Administration, *Unit Plans: Typical Room Arrangements, Site Plans and Details for Low-Rent Housing*, archive.org/details/unitplanstypical00unit/mode/2up
[53] National Park Service, *Public Housing in the United States, 1933-1949*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2004, 24.

Unlike later public housing projects administered by USHA, which were often built on vacant land, PWA projects also acted as a method of "slum clearance." Slum clearance was the reasoning behind the Brewster Homes in Detroit as a section of an established Black business and residential district was cleared to make way for the homes.[54] Built for low-income Black tenants with 701 units in the first iteration, Eleanor Roosevelt visited Detroit to break ground for the project in 1935—it was completed in 1938.[55] Parkside Homes for White residents was built on the eastside of Detroit at the same time.

Many PWA projects replaced housing deemed in poor condition, and nearly as often occupied by Blacks and other minorities. These houses were acquired and demolished via eminent domain. Because many PWA projects were cost prohibitive for these existing residents, it was up to the residents to determine where to relocate. Often, due to restrictive covenants and exclusionary zoning, options were quite limited. The Brewster Homes project was delayed because existing Black residents in the "slum clearance" area could find no other place to go.[56] In the case of Smithfield Court, a PWA project designated for Black tenants in Birmingham, Alabama, existing Black "slum" residents successfully challenged the city's "Zoning Law of 1926 for Negroes" and the City of Birmingham expanded the housing zone for Black residents by moving the racial dividing line 150 feet west to provide more housing stock options for those who needed to relocate.[57] Further controversy occurred when members of the Birmingham branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) learned that Smithfield Court would be designed without a community center, with coal stoves instead of gas ranges, and without refrigerators. This substandard furnishing did not match the furnishings provided in PWA projects for White residents. The NAACP Birmingham branch complained to the PWA who then responded and remediated these concerns, furnishing the units appropriately to match those in White only PWA projects.[58]

Another PWA housing project designated for Black tenants was University Homes in Atlanta, Georgia. University Homes, which was completed in 1937, replaced the former "Beaver's Slide" area of Atlanta, a "slum" housing settlement of dilapidated wood shanties often with no sanitation or utilities. University Homes was a collection of two-story brick buildings in the International Style designed by Atlanta architectural firm, Edwards and Sayward. University

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[54] "Slums Project to Memorialize Pilgrim Father," *Detroit Free Press*, December 8, 1935.
[55] Dan Austin, "Brewster-Douglass Projects," HistoricDetroit.org, Accessed 1/21/22, historicdetroit.org/buildings/brewster-douglass-projects.
[56] "Slums Project to Memorialize Pilgrim Father," *Detroit Free Press*, December 8, 1935.
[57] Charles E. Connerly, *The Most Segregated City in America: City Planning and Civil Rights in Birmingham, 1920-1980*, (University of Virginia Press, 2005), Accessed 1/21/22, books.google.com/books?id=IG3W_cD_UIgC&pg=PT52&lpg=PT52&dq=birmingham+smithfield+court+pwa+black&source=bl&ots=KNpMMXV5Kd&sig=ACfU3U3PN40laIZtfdmd0Hz2JImv95wRAw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwifibWloaX0AhUpkWoFHVe1AI0Q6AF6BAgeEAM#v=onepage&q=birmingham%20smithfield%20court%20pwa%20black&f=false
[58] Ibid.

Homes was constructed at the same time as Atlanta's Techwood Homes, an all-White public housing complex that replaced the Techwood Flats "slums." While University Homes was proposed by Dr. John Hope, the first Black president of Morehouse College, Techwood Homes was pioneered by Charles F. Palmer, at the time an Atlanta real estate developer.[59] The success of the all-White Techwood Homes is one of the many reasons Palmer, a few years later, was elevated to the position of Defense Housing Coordinator.

The United States Housing Act of 1937 passed in November of 1937 and with it the United States Housing Authority (USHA) was formed. USHA initially sat within the Department of the Interior, just as PWA did. Nathan Straus was chosen as the USHA administrator. In 1939 the five main New Deal agencies (Public Works Administration, United States Housing Authority, Works Progress Administration, Public Buildings Administration, and Public Roads Administration) were consolidated through the Reorganization Act of 1939. At this point, the agencies were consolidated into the Federal Works Agency (FWA). USHA was under FWA supervision from 1939 to 1942. During this period Clark Foreman was the Director of the FWA. It was during this three-year period of USHA operating under FWA supervision that the Sojourner Truth Homes Public Housing Complex was constructed. USHA retained less control than PWA had over public housing projects. USHA could not directly build or manage public housing; local public housing authorities (PHA) were given this responsibility.

USHA also was held to much more stringent cost guidelines than PWA had been. With these cost guidelines, public housing projects post-1937 tended to be much simpler in design and much more standardized than PWA projects had been. One such early USHA project was Rosewood Courts in East Austin, Texas. Rosewood Courts was constructed in 1938, shortly after the transition of public housing responsibilities to USHA and was designated for all-Black tenants. Similar to University Homes, the buildings were also simple, two-story brick buildings with minimal architectural detailing. Rosewood Courts was one of three public housing complexes constructed in Austin in the 1930s – alongside Santa Rita Courts designated for tenants of Mexican descent and Chalmers Courts for all-White tenants.[60] In an egregious act, the Austin City Council chose the site of Emancipation Park to construct Rosewood Courts. Emancipation Park was land which had been purchased by formerly enslaved peoples and their descendants as a place to celebrate emancipation. Members of the Travis County Emancipation Organization protested and petitioned this site selection but were not successful and the City of Austin acquired the park via eminent domain.[61]

At the onset of World War II, the nation turned its attention to the need for defense worker housing as millions of war workers migrated to industrial centers. On June 28, 1940, President Roosevelt signed "Amendments to the 1937 Act," Public Act 671, which essentially converted

[59] "Early Public Housing Program in Atlanta," Atlanta Housing, https://www.atlantahousing.org/about-us/ah-history/
[60] Michael Schrantz, "The Fight for Rosewood Courts," *Curbed*, December 7, 2016.
[61] National Park Service, *Public Housing in the United States, 1933-1949*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2004.

USHA from a civilian to a defense housing program.[62] Public Act 671 allowed the use of funds for low-income public housing to be used for the creation of defense worker housing. No additional funds were appropriated at this time for defense worker housing. Soon after, in July 1940, Charles F. Palmer was named the Defense Housing Coordinator and on January 11, 1941, President Roosevelt created the Division of Defense Housing Coordination (DDHC). The DDHC empowered Palmer to act as a representative with local housing authorities and to determine standards and processes for defense worker housing.[63] On October 14, 1940, the National Housing for Defense Act, otherwise known as the Lanham Act, was passed by Congress.[64] The Lanham Act authorized $140 million for defense housing and later, in April and June of 1941, authorized an additional $450 million for the same purpose. The money was allocated to the FWA and the FWA created the Division of Defense Housing (DDH) appointing Clark Foreman as its head.[65] Clark Foreman and the DDH worked with USHA staff to execute defense worker housing projects using the Lanham Act funding.

This was the organization of agencies in place when the Sojourner Truth Homes were created, although the Sojourner Truth Homes was not the first defense worker housing complex to be constructed. The Sojourner Truth Homes development was proposed during a tremendous effort to construct war housing nationwide, specifically in industrial centers and cities which had converted their manufacturing facilities to war production. By the close of 1942, 561,748 housing units had been constructed.[66] These units were a mixture of permanent and temporary housing, depending on if the housing supply was expected to be high in the given area post-war.[67] Often temporary wood frame housing was constructed when speed was of the utmost interest and low cost was desired. Temporary frame dwellings were lower cost than their masonry counterparts and could be erected in a short time frame. In an oral history given by William Divers, the USHA Director for Region V, he recalled how a five-hundred-unit defense worker housing project in Illinois was built using frame construction in under six months for an average cost of twenty-five hundred dollars per unit.[68] Workers in industries such as ammunitions which were feeling the effects of war first needed the fastest, cheapest frame dwellings because their housing needs were the most immediate. Additionally, in some developments prefabricated units were used to provide inexpensive housing that could be constructed quickly.[69] Kramer Homes in Centerline, Michigan, which was constructed simultaneously with the Sojourner Truth Homes. Though it was designed by noted architects

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[62] Lindsay Peterson, *Building the Home Front: The Lanham Act and the Modernization of American Housing*, 1940-1945, New York University, January 2017, 24.
[63] Ibid.
[64] United States Congress, Public Law 849, 76th Congress, 3rd Session, Accessed 1/21/22, https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/ll/llsl//llsl-c76s2-s3/llsl-c76s2-s3.pdf.
[65] Peterson, *Building the Home Front,* 34.
[66] Herbert Emmerich, *Public Housing in 1942*, (Chicago, Ill: National Association of Housing Officials, 1943), 2.
[67] Ibid., 9.
[68] Jerry N. Hess, "William K. Divers Oral History Interview," February 12, 1970, www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/oral-histories/diversw2
[69] "One Year of Growth at Oakdale Gardens," *Michigan Chronicle*, January 19, 1946.

Eero and Eliel Saarinen, it was constructed entirely with wood-frame, and faced in board-and-batten cladding. The decision to build strictly with wood rather than masonry was to minimize cost and portions of the building were constructed in prefabricated modular sections to further minimize cost and speed up construction time.[70]

There is indication that Charles Palmer was aware that a greater emphasis should be made on constructing permanent public housing given the national housing shortage, particularly for Black Americans, but the fast-paced nature of the war often forced the government to erect quick, temporary shelters. At the National Public Housing Conference in February 1942 Charles Palmer stated that:

> "Most of our direct provision for future planning has to consist of the use of demountable houses which gives an element of flexibility. War is war, and if there is some cleaning up to be done after we have won the war none of us need to apologize, provided we win. Despite all the distortions of wartime construction, we can at least recognize that the practice of public housing is spreading to places that had not previously seen it. The theory, of what we would like to do, if we were not forced by war to do something else, is developing steadily under the surface of our daily work."[71]

It can be assumed that when cost and time constraints allowed that USHA would construct permanent housing in locations with a significant lack of housing for its population in the hopes that the housing would continue to operate as public housing in the postwar years. The tremendous population growth seen in Detroit in the early war years and the subpar condition of housing stock, particularly for Black defense workers, may have inspired the permanent construction qualities of the Sojourner Truth Homes including the addition of brick veneer to some of the buildings. Given the cost and time benefits of temporary construction, as detailed by Palmer above, significantly more temporary construction tended to be built in cities than permanent projects. In Washington, D.C., for example, where Black workers were living in alleys without running water or plumbing, four hundred thousand units of temporary housing were built but only eighteen thousand units of permanent housing were built.[72] Permanent housing would undoubtedly be highly coveted as those housed in temporary trailers or dormitories would have to secure new housing following the war or potentially continue living in housing conditions not meant for long-term occupation.

Local housing authorities were often plagued by discriminatory philosophies and tended to allocate permanent housing projects to White workers leaving the temporary projects for Black

[70] Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen and Donald Albrecht, *Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 139.
[71] Charles F. Palmer, "Defense Housing," Presentation at the National Public Housing Conference, Washington, DC, February 1942, https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/programs/housing/defense-housing-1942/
[72] Claudia Swain, "Standing Room Only: DC's WWII Housing Crunch," Boundary Stones: Weta's Local History Website, April 8, 2014, https://boundarystones.weta.org/2014/04/08/standing-room-only-dcs-wwii-housing-crunch

workers – despite Black families often being in the direst need for permanent housing. In Hartford, Connecticut, a wave of migrant workers settled in the area during the early war years to work at the Pratt & Whitney Machine Tool plant and the Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Company. In response to the population influx a combination of permanent and temporary housing was rapidly erected. A 1943 *Hartford Courant* article stated that "400 housing units for white in-migrant families" were under construction and that "in the case of Negroes" it was thought that "temporary dormitories" could be constructed if additional governmental funds could be acquired.[73] Berkley Cox, the then chairman of the Hartford Housing Authority deemed this allocation of housing "satisfactory" further emphasizing the racist underpinnings of many local housing authorities responsible for allocating defense worker housing during the war.[74]

Metropolitan Detroit was no exception to the trend of assigning predominantly temporary housing to Black workers. The Parkridge public housing complex in Ypsilanti was constructed as temporary housing for Black workers at the Willow Run Bomber Assembly Plant. Despite its temporary nature, residents had no other housing options following the war and the housing complex continued to be occupied up until its demolition in 2016.[75] The project was extremely blighted by this point, an inevitability after almost eighty years of continuous occupancy in a complex not built to last. Oakdale Gardens in Royal Oak Township, another complex built for Black war workers, was also composed almost entirely of temporary housing units. The trend of assigning temporary housing to Black residents did not end in postwar years as evidenced by the Algonquin Homes, a complex of temporary homes for Black war veterans built in Algonquin Park in Detroit in 1947 despite outcry from the surrounding neighborhood.[76]

From the onset, race was a highly contested issue in the realm of public housing and, specifically, war housing. Even prior to the war, in 1937, the NAACP had vowed to protest racial discrimination in public housing projects that were publicly funded.[77] Open occupancy of public housing projects was never achieved, however, and the decisions regarding the location and racial makeup of public housing projects were left to local governments.

In the realm of defense worker housing, local jurisdictions often avoided total integration by providing equal numbers of housing units for Black and White defense workers in almost entirely segregated usually separate complexes. Further, public housing projects for defense workers tended to follow the "neighborhood composition rule" authorized by Secretary of the

[73] Emily Meehan, "The Debate Over Who Could Occupy World War II Public Housing in West Hartford," Connecticut History, January 15, 2020, https://connecticuthistory.org/the-debate-over-who-could-occupy-world-war-ii-public-housing-in-west-hartford/
[74] Ibid.
[75] Tom Perkins, "Ypsilanti to begin demolition of aging Parkridge Homes public housing," *MLive*, April 2, 2019.
[76] Rebecca Savage, Norwayne Historic District, National Register Nomination.
[77] Matthew D. Lassiter and Susan Cianci Salvatore, *Civil Rights in America: A National Historic Landmarks Theme Study*, The National Historic Landmarks Program, 2021.

Interior Harold Ickes for PWA projects in the late 1930s.[78] The Sojourner Truth Homes is a notable exception as is the Colonel Hamtramck Homes in Hamtramck, Michigan, although the latter project went through an extended legal battle before Black families could move in. This rule stipulated that no public housing project could alter the racial composition of the neighborhood where it was built. Thus, Black defense worker housing was constructed in Black neighborhoods or on the outskirts of towns while White defense worker housing was typically constructed in White neighborhoods.

One such city which saw tremendous population growth during World War II and, thus, had a great housing demand was Buffalo, New York. At one point in the war, Buffalo held over $5 billion in war supply contracts – more than all but four cities in the country.[79] Seven public housing complexes were constructed in Buffalo between 1936 and 1942.[80] Each of these projects were segregated. Buffalo's first public housing project, Kenfield Homes, was constructed in 1938. Kenfield Homes was built on the far East side of Buffalo in a predominately White neighborhood. It was originally thought the project would be integrated and twenty-four Black families had been registered for housing units at Kenfield by the Buffalo Urban League. These families ended up being denied units though based on their race. Later, the Buffalo Urban League learned that representatives within the PWA had recommended "no Negroes be admitted to the project" and the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority acquiesced to this request.[81] In 1939, the Willert Park Courts housing project was constructed – Buffalo's first public housing project designated for all-Black tenants. Unlike Kenfield, Willert Park Courts was built on the East side of Buffalo in an already predominantly Black neighborhood. Attempts to build integrated or all-Black defense worker housing in any other neighborhood was met with great resistance. There was an attempt to build racially integrated public housing in 1941 but it was met with protests by Polish and Irish settlers in the neighborhood where the integrated project was proposed.[82] Similarly, Lester Granger, the then Assistant Executive Secretary of the National Urban League, argued that an all-Black defense worker housing project in Buffalo was delayed many months due to protests and mass meetings held in Polish neighborhoods adjacent to the site proposed for the housing complex. Granger advised the FWA not to give in to the requests of neighborhood protests and stated that "retreat from an established position because of political intrigue and racial prejudice [was] worthy of Hitler's Germany."[83] It is unclear whether the housing project in question was re-designated as all-White following the protests, but the

[78] Betsey Martens, with Elizabeth Glenn and Tiffany Magnum, "Race, Equity and Housing: The Early Years," *Journal of Housing & Community development*, October 9, 2020. www.nahro.org/journal_article/race-equity-and-housing-the-early-years/

[79] "The History of Buffalo: A Chronology," History of Buffalo, buffaloah.com/h/1945.html

[80] National Park Service, *Public Housing in the United States, 1933-1949*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2004, Appendix IV page 12.

[81] Dominique Griffin, *They Were Never Silent, You Just Weren't Listening: Buffalo's Black Activists in the Age of Urban Renewal*, Trinity College, 2017, 41.

[82] Ibid., 42.

[83] "Granger Protests Defense Housing Delays," *Pittsburgh Courier*, November 1, 1941.

FWA did not heed Granger's advice and would go on to re-designate the Sojourner Truth complex as all-White following protests in Detroit. It became commonplace for federal officials to reverse the racial designation of war housing projects following White backlash. So much so that in 1942 the *Chicago Defender* wrote that John Blandford, then administrator of the National Housing Agency, "had the backbone of a jellyfish."[84]

Very few cities attempted to create integrated public housing. Seattle is one of the few cities that successfully constructed integrated public housing. Jesse Epstein, director of the Seattle Housing Authority, implemented an unrestricted occupancy policy for all public housing. Yesler Terrace was constructed as an integrated housing project in 1940 albeit the complex was limited to only 20 percent Black occupancy. At a Seattle Housing Authority staff meeting in 1940 one member inquired how to prevent the housing project from "becoming a ghetto." To which Epstein replied "we must limit the number of Negroes if we are to achieve integration. Keep in mind that we are determined on that. Coloreds and whites will live side by side; this in itself is revolutionary."[85] Both White and Black residents of Yesler Terrace as well as white residents in the surrounding neighborhood criticized Epstein's decision to make Yesler Terrace integrated. White people feared an influx of southern Black's settling in their neighborhood while Black people argued that the 20 percent limit on Black occupancy limited housing units which were desperately needed.[86] Despite the criticisms, Epstein held firm, and Yesler Terrace remained integrated.

Racially motivated protests also occurred in Portland, Oregon, regarding war housing projects. In September 1942 the Central East Portland Community Club held a meeting to protest a proposed war housing dormitory for Black defense workers to be built on Flint Street – a predominately White neighborhood. Members of the club voiced opposition at the next city council session and went so far as to wire letters of objection to state congressional members. City council members assured the White protesters the new housing efforts would focus on the needs of White workers and "made it clear that they hoped Black workers were not in Portland to stay."[87] White protestors also circulated a petition against the housing project at the nearby Albina Engine & Machine Works, a shipyard which had pivoted to producing vessels for the war. Reverend J.J. Clow, president of the local NAACP branch and pastor of the Mount Olivet Baptist Church, argued for an integrated housing project and the implementation of a "no segregation" policy. Clow argued that Whites weaponized the segregated housing issue to distance themselves from the Black population. Clow furthered that all people, regardless of race, should work – and live - together to win the war.[88] In the end, city officials gave in to the demands of Flint Street residents and located Black defense worker housing far from White neighborhoods. Black war

[84] Stephen Grant Meyer, *As Long as They Don't Move Next Door*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 67.
[85] Quintard Taylor, "Swing the Door Wide: World War II Wrought a Profound Transformation in Seattle's Black Community," (Columbia Magazine, Summer 1995: Vol 9, No 2), 6. https://www.washingtonhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/swing-door-wide.pdf
[86] Ibid.
[87] Rudy Pearson, *"A Menace to the Neighborhood": Housing and African Americans in Portland, 1941-1945*, Oregon Historical Quarterly, Summer 2001, Vol. 102, No. 2 (Summer, 2001), 173.
[88] Ibid., 172.

workers were housed in the integrated Vanport City project, the nation's largest wartime housing project, in Guilds Lake located outside the Portland city limits, or across the Columbia River in Vancouver, Washington. Other housing projects located within the Portland city limits were designated for White tenants only. The Vanport City project was the only integrated project and, with less than 20 percent of tenants being Black, was the subject of much negative critique. The Portland Chamber of Commerce suggested that White workers were leaving Portland due to the fear of having to cohabitate with Black workers and the project became known as the "Negro project" despite the small population of Black tenants.[89]

This pattern of White backlash to Black designated war housing projects, or even to integrated projects, proliferated nationwide. In the Midwest, in Cleveland, Ohio, the construction of Seville Homes, a temporary war housing project designated for local Black foundry workers, was held up for multiple months due to White protests.[90] The project was announced in November 1943 but did not open until late 1944. The Cleveland Real Estate Board as well as members of City Council voiced their opposition to the project, stating that the project would ruin the value of nearby houses. These White protestors thinly veiled the racist roots of their opposition by stating the loss in value would be due to the temporary nature of the housing project. William O. Walker, a Black councilman, wrote about the protests stating "the fly in the milk of course, is Negro occupancy. If these synthetic patriots could be assured no Negroes would be housed in these temporary structures, these protests would cease as suddenly as the March wind."[91] In a rare result, federal officials did not redesignate the project and it remained housing for Black workers only. Racial conflict did not cease once residents moved into the Seville Homes though. The Cleveland Community Relations Board, formed shortly after tenants moved into the Seville Homes, intervened in disputes between the White neighbors and the Black tenants.[92]

A substantial amount of war housing was constructed in the state of Michigan due to Detroit's status as the "Arsenal of Democracy" as coined by President Roosevelt. In May 1941, thirty-five million dollars of Lanham Act funds were appropriated to Michigan which equated to over one thousand new dwelling units in Detroit.[93] This influx of federal funding allowed for a substantial amount of war housing to be constructed in the early 1940s, among them the Sojourner Truth Homes public housing complex. At the time of this announcement, many Black defense workers were settling in Hamtramck, Highland Park, Inkster, River Rouge, and Ecorse – all cities close to their place of employment but far from the predominately White Detroit neighborhoods and the established, overly crowded Black neighborhoods such as Black Bottom. Black defense workers had few places to seek housing as many neighborhoods and cities explicitly expressed their objection to living with Black workers. The City of Dearborn vehemently opposed allowing Black residents to settle within their city boundaries and in 1942 Dearborn mayor Orville Liscus

[89] Pearson, *"A Menace to the Neighborhood,"* 172.
[90] "Seville Homes," Cleveland Restoration Society, https://www.clevelandrestoration.org/projects/lee-harvard-suburb-in-the-city/seville-homes
[91] Todd M. Michney, "Constrained Communities: Black Cleveland's Experience with World War II Public Housing," *Journal of Social History*, Summer, 2007, Vol. 40, No. 4 (Summer 2007), 945.
[92] Ibid.
[93] "Defense Housing Funds Approved," *Detroit Free Press*, May 27, 1941.

Hubbard ran for re-election on the campaign "Keep Dearborn Clean," a slogan referring to keeping Dearborn White.[94] Many Black workers, primarily workers at the Ford Rouge complex, settled in Inkster in a neighborhood specifically developed to provide housing for Ford's Black workers isolated from White Detroiters.[95]

The limited areas in which Black workers could settle were growing increasingly overcrowded with few places for newcomers to find housing. In 1940 when the Lanham Act was passed there was a dire need for more defense worker housing and specifically for housing where Black defense workers would be welcome. In later years, many cities developed additional public housing projects which addressed this need. In Detroit, Willow Run Housing, Park Ridge, Norwayne Homes, Oak Gardens, the Colonel Hamtramck Homes, and of course the Sojourner Truth Homes were all developed to alleviate the lack of housing for Black defense workers.

Two projects to emerge from this appropriation of Lanham Act funds were Kramer Homes and the Sojourner Truth Homes, both of which were announced shortly after the Lanham Act funding in May. Kramer Homes was proposed as a five-hundred-unit complex devoted to White workers whereas the Sojourner Truth Homes project would be two hundred units devoted to Black workers. The Sojourner Truth Homes project was initially proposed by FWA Director Clark Foreman at the urging of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. Eleanor Roosevelt was an advocate of equal allocation of funds to both White and Black residents and had long been a proponent of public housing, having even attended the groundbreaking ceremony for Detroit's Brewster Project housing complex years earlier in 1935.[96]

Both projects kicked off shortly after the appropriation of Lanham Funds. Project planning began in May 1941 and in these early phases the projects lacked official names. Early newspaper articles refer to Kramer Homes as "the 500-dwelling defense-housing project" and the Sojourner Truth Homes project was referred to as "the Lanham defense housing project" in Congressional testimony.[97] Initial planning discussions centered on two important considerations: site selection and the selection of an architect for each of the projects.

Site selection for public housing was typically guided by the United States Housing Authority via the USHA document *Bulletin No. 18 on Policy and Procedure: Site Selection* published in August 1939. As the bulletin states, "because deciding factors will be different in each locality, it is not possible to lay down definite rules to govern this procedure; only general suggestions which may be helpful to the local authority in approaching this very difficult and highly important part of its work may be set forth in this bulletin."[98] The bulletin further asserts that the

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[94] Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 76.
[95] Ibid.
[96] "A Place I Called HOME: Brewster-Douglass Projects," History Engine, https://historyengine.richmond.edu/episodes/view/5999
[97] "Board Bows to Necessity on Contract," *Detroit Free Press*, June 20, 1941; United States Congressional Record. Vol 88. Part 2. U.S. Government Publishing Office. Washington, DC, February 27, 1942: 1763.
[98] "Bulletin No. 18 on Policy and Procedure: Site Selection," United States Housing Authority, August 31, 1939. Accessed via: https://books.google.com/books?id=N89GAQAAIAAJ&pg=RA6-PA1&lpg=RA6-

local housing authorities will have to assume the responsibility for selecting sites for public housing projects with the advice from their regional USHA advisor. The bulletin outlines a litany of considerations for the local housing authority to consider when selecting a public housing site including the existing density of the city, relationship to existing nodes of employment and transit lines, and the existing racial makeup of the city. The document makes clear it is up to the local housing authority to determine its own racial policy but discourages developing public housing projects for White occupancy in areas occupied by Black or other minority peoples.[99] It should be noted that the document does not make suggestions for the opposite scenario: constructing a housing project for Black occupancy in a predominately White neighborhood. The document encourages the local housing authority to consider both "slum clearance" sites and vacant sites, weighing the pros and cons of each. Relationship to existing schools, transit, and employment should be considered as well as existing zoning and if any site improvements such as street paving or the addition of water mains would be necessary.

Site selection for both Kramer Homes and Sojourner Truth Homes were atypical from the onset with the initial sites selected by the Detroit Housing Commission (DHC) being declined by USHA. Kramer Homes was initially to be constructed in Detroit at Mound Road and Outer Drive but was relocated to the nearby city of Centerline by USHA due to the DHC's lack of project planning efforts. This relocation of the project to Centerline was announced to the Detroit Housing Commission in June of 1941 by William Divers the USHA Director for Region V.[100] Kramer Homes was located near the Detroit Arsenal Tank Plant and designed by esteemed local architects Eliel and Eero Saarinen along with J. Robert F. Swanson, who were all associated with the Cranbrook Academy of Art in nearby Bloomfield Hills. Meanwhile, DHC had selected a site at Dequindre and Modern Avenues for the construction of the Sojourner Truth Homes project. Earl Von Storch, the USHA construction advisor, declined the Dequindre and Modern Avenue site stating that it was "inhospitable." The site was located within an industrial site and a railroad spur existed in the center of the site which would be expensive to reroute. On June 19, 1941, William Divers confirmed DHC's second choice site, the area bounded by Nevada, Fenelon, Stockton, and Eureka and confirmed DHC's second choice architect Aloys F. Herman as the architect.[101] DHC's original choice for architect of the Sojourner Truth Homes was J. Robert F. Swanson. Instead, J. Robert F. Swanson worked alongside Eliel and Eero Saarinen on the design and construction of the Kramer Homes. The site may have been chosen due to its proximity to Macomb County where the defense workers for this project were employed.[102]

Aloys Frank Herman was a local Detroit architect who first appeared in the City of Detroit directory in 1919 listed as a draftsman. In 1921, Herman was listed with his partner Howard

PA1&dq=USHA+policy+and+procedure+bulletin+18&source=bl&ots=4CmVsqRqYL&sig=ACfU3U1P5Fs_0IQg2mBLLJf1rOvkToj1yA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjbrK3z6dL1AhVQlYkEHSYYB9kQ6AF6BAgDEAM#v=onepage&q=USHA%20policy%20and%20procedure%20bulletin%2018&f=false

[99] Ibid.

[100] "Board Bows to Necessity on Contract," *Detroit Free Press*, June 20, 1941

[101] Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 81.

[102] "Detroit Folk Rap Jim Crow 'Ghetto' Wall," *Chicago Defender*, July 5, 1941.

Thomas Simons.[103] Simons had been a draftsman at the large Detroit firm of Smith, Hinchman & Grylls prior to his partnership with Herman. Through the 1920s and 1930s the partnership was known as Herman & Simons although the 1929 directory lists the firm as "Aloys Frank Herman Jr., Architects" with Simons as a member.[104] By 1940 the two architects are listed separately, which suggests the partnership had dissolved. There is no indication that Simons was involved in the design of the Sojourner Truth Homes, thus the project was likely completed independently by Herman.

Herman and Simons designed a variety of building types from single-family homes in Detroit and the surrounding inner ring suburbs, to churches, schools, and community buildings. The firm also designed many Catholic churches, the earliest being the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary completed in 1929. Other churches completed by Herman and Simons include St. Michael's Church in Toledo, Ohio, St. Joseph's Church in Tiffin, Ohio, and the Recreation Center for Nativity of Our Lord Church, St. David's Church and Rectory, St. Augustine Church, the Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Immaculate Conception, and St. Gregory the Great Church, all in Detroit.[105]

Herman and Simons also designed several houses in Detroit's Indian Village subdivision as well as houses in suburban Detroit communities of Birmingham, Grosse Pointe, and Ferndale.[106] While the firm predominately designed churches and houses, Herman is also attributed with the design of the Ferndale Community Building at Woodward Avenue and Nine Mile Road, the Clara Barton School in Detroit, and a four-story office building on East Congress Street in Detroit.[107] The Sojourner Truth Homes appear to be the only large public housing complex designed by A.F. Herman, although Herman and Simons bid on the Willow Run Homes defense housing site in 1942.[108] Herman continued practicing into the 1960s primarily designing churches, including the Grosse Pointe Memorial Church in 1962.[109]

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[103] Robert O. Christenson, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church Complex, July 05, 1991.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid. and "New Church to Be Started by Ukrainians," *Detroit Free Press*, May 10, 1941.
[106] "New Birmingham Home," *Detroit Free Press*, May 8, 1927, and "New Type of Home to Be Built on Woodward," *Detroit Free Press*, April 26, 1928, and "A.F. Herman Awarded Contracts," *Detroit Free Press*, July 22, 1923.
[107] "A.F. Herman Awarded General Contract," *Detroit Free Press*, September 30, 1923; "School Architects," *Detroit News*, June 8, 1947, and "The Architect's Conception of Ferndale's New Community Building," *Detroit Free Press*, July 13, 1929.
[108] "Sites Picked for Homes at Willow Run," *Detroit Free Press*, April 17, 1942. According to "Willow Run Housing," PCAD, http://pcad.lib.washington.edu/building/17925/, Maynard Lyndon won the bid and was hired to design the Willow Run Homes, likely due to his relationship with Albert Kahn, the architect of the associated Willow Run Bomber Plant.
[109] "Grosse Pointe Memorial Dedicates New Building," *Detroit Free Press*, April 2, 1962.

The site selected for the Sojourner Truth Homes was an undeveloped, twenty-acre parcel located in northeast Detroit. The 1933 Sanborn map for this area indicates the site had been platted for single-family homes, but none had been constructed.[110] The area was sparsely populated, with few streets fully built out in the early 1940s. While the area immediately surrounding the proposed site was predominately White, the Black neighborhood of Conant Gardens was directly to the northwest just a few blocks away, roughly bounded by Ryan Road, Nevada Avenue, Conant Avenue, and Seven Mile Road. Due to the lack of restrictive covenants on parcels in this area, Conant Gardens developed into a middle-class Black enclave starting in the 1920s and was still growing in the 1940s.[111] The land upon which Conant Gardens developed was originally owned by Shubael Conant, an Englishman who first immigrated to Salem, Massachusetts, and later moved to Detroit due to the fur trade. Conant was an abolitionist and has been credited with the founding of the Detroit Anti-Slavery Society.[112] He ensured there were no racially restrictive covenants in his land deeds which allowed many Black families to build houses and settle in what is now Conant Gardens. Conant Gardens was unique in that Black families were able to build new houses in this area rather than purchase or rent old housing stock.

Conant Gardens sat adjacent to a large Polish community, centered around the St. Louis the King Roman Catholic Church located near Seven Mile and Mound Roads.[113] While the area surrounding the proposed Sojourner Truth Homes site was sparsely populated in 1941, the Polish community was actively growing. Many Polish settlers were attracted to Detroit for the same wartime jobs which had attracted many of Black Southerners. There were three schools in the vicinity – Atkinson Elementary, Cleveland Intermediate School, and Pershing High School – all of which were integrated. Atkinson Elementary was located directly north of the proposed Sojourner Truth Homes site, just across Stockton Avenue. While integrated in theory, one former student recalls that "African-American students comprised only one-fourth of the student population – all of whom lived west of Ryan Road, in Conant Gardens. White students were a first generation of White immigrants from countries such as Russia, Poland, Syria, and Lebanon. They lived in the neighborhood east of Ryan, which was not Conant Gardens."[114] It was between these areas of White Eastern Europeans and middle-class Black families that the Sojourner Truth Homes was proposed.

Given that the neighborhood was predominately White, the site selection went against Harold Icke's "neighborhood composition rule." Given that this site was the second choice of the DHC and not conceived by USHA, perhaps the DHC did not abide by Icke's rule. Nonetheless, USHA's agreement to this proposed site was abnormal as USHA typically followed the rule. Despite this unusual site selection, planning for the housing project moved forward. In August 1941 the DHC received bids by two construction companies for the building of the Sojourner

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[110] Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan, 1910-1951, 1933.
[111] The Conant Gardeners, *Conant Gardens: A Black Urban Community 1925-1950*, (Detroit, MI: The Conant Gardeners, 2001), 15.
[112] The Conant Gardeners, *Conant Gardens,* 20.
[113] "History of St. Louis the King Parish," https://liturgicalcenter.org/media/parish-files/det-26.1.pdf
[114] The Conant Gardeners, *Conant Gardens*, 59.

Truth Homes. The lowest bid was made by the O.W. Burke Co. for $875,000.[115] The DHC briefly extended the bidding period to allow time for USHA to comment on the bids and provide input. The $875,000 bid was too high given USHA's strict $3,950-per-unit maximum cost limit and so a meeting between USHA, O.W. Burke, and J.L. Cousins, a Housing Commission engineer, was held in Washington in August.[116] O.W. Burke apparently was not able to lower their bid enough to secure the contract and at the end of September the Christman Company of Lansing, Michigan, was awarded the contract for a price of $849,900.[117] The contract was executed with USHA and the DHC acted as agent to approve the final contract.[118]

With a site, contractor, and architect selected, the DHC moved forward with selecting the name for the housing project. The DHC commissioners allowed Horace A. White, the sole Black commissioner, to name the project. White chose to name it after abolitionist and civil rights activist Sojourner Truth. The other commissioners voted unanimously to accept this name and informed USHA of the naming on September 29, 1941.[119] The project name, Sojourner Truth Homes, was announced to the public in newspapers on September 30.[120] Forging ahead, by mid-October the foundations had begun to be poured and construction continued into the winter.

The design of the Sojourner Truth Homes was heavily dictated by USHA guidelines. USHA provided local housing jurisdictions, such as the DHC, with an abundance of regulations and guidelines to ensure standardization in the cost, construction, and design of war housing projects. Defense housing projects initially were guided by the same USHA guidelines which presided over public housing projects, including the *Design of Low Rent Housing Projects: Architectural Planning and Design Checking List*, but in 1940 USHA released the *USHA Standard Specifications for Defense Housing Projects* and in 1942 the *Temporary Local Authority Management Manual for War Housing Projects* was released.[121] These documents, among the many others that USHA released to local housing jurisdictions, dictated much of how the Sojourner Truth Homes were designed – from the arrangement of buildings on the site to the minimum bedroom dimensions and use of wood millwork in the units. Unlike the nearby Kramer Homes, the Sojourner Truth Homes included some brick veneer buildings rather than entirely wood frame. The complex was constructed within a superblock and consisted of one-story wood frame dwellings and two-story masonry buildings with a vaguely Colonial Revival style. The use of masonry on twenty of the buildings in the complex exuded an air of permanence that many of the wood frame projects lacked. The addition of permanent public housing units was of utmost

[115] "$875,000 Low Bid on Housing Job," *Detroit Free Press*, August 2, 1941.
[116] "Parley Held as Housing Low Bid Tops Minimum," *Detroit News*, August 5, 1941.
[117] "Housing Gets Name of Escaped Slave," *Detroit News*, September 30, 1941.
[118] Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 92.
[119] Ibid.
[120] "Housing Gets Name of Escaped Slave," *Detroit News*, September 30, 1941.
[121] United States Housing Authority, *USHA Standard Specifications for Defense Housing Projects*, www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/STANDARD-SPECIFICATION-FOR-USHA-AIDED-DEFENSE-HOUSING-PROJECTS.pdf; United States Federal Public Housing Authority, *Temporary Local Authority Management Manual for War Housing*, www.huduser.gov/portal//portal/sites/default/files/pdf/US-Federal-Public-Housing-Authority.pdf

importance to Detroit's Black community which was still facing a chronic housing shortage unlikely to resolve in postwar years. It is not clear whether the wood frame buildings, primarily located on the perimeter of the site, were meant to be temporary or if a variety of building materials were used for cost cutting and expediency purposes. Former resident Gerald V. Blakely stated in an oral history that the frame buildings were indeed intended to be permanent. He asserted the frame buildings had three-bedroom units while the masonry buildings contained two-bedroom units.[122] The repetition of unit plans, the long rectangular block buildings, and the central recreational yard and community center building were all staples of USHA regulated public housing projects. As the planning and construction for the Sojourner Truth Homes was underway, protests to the Black defense worker housing project were escalating.

Local Reception of the Sojourner Truth Homes

In the early 1940s the nationwide housing shortage combined with the influx of southern migrants increased demand for the already overloaded housing stock, especially in booming industrial centers like Detroit. Called the Great Migration the exodus of Black Americans from the south to the north ran from 1910 to 1970 and this internal mass movement reshaped the demographics of most major American cities. The second wave of the Great Migration, spanning from roughly 1940 to 1970, brought more than 1.5 million African Americans north in the 1940s alone—150,000 settled in Detroit specifically.[123]

Blacks struggled to find adequate housing as the options in most cities, and in Detroit specifically, were few and far between. The housing that was available was generally overcrowded and poorly maintained by absentee landlords.[124] There was hope within the Black community that the prohibition on discrimination enshrined in Executive Order 8802 and the passage of the Lanham Act, with the money and the building program it afforded, would create gains in equality for Black Americans struggling to find good work and decent housing.[125] Equality and integration did not come easily, however, as a share of Detroit's White population, many of whom were themselves recent transplants from the south, were inflamed by the rhetoric of J. Frank Norris, Father Charles Coughlin, and Gerald L.K. Smith.[126] Norris, Coughlin, and Smith were all religious men with Michigan connections who all espoused racial and religious intolerance in various forms. Norris was a Southern Baptist preacher who took the helm of the

[122] Gerald V. Blakely, interview by Cassandra Talley, February 3, 2022, in Detroit, Michigan.
[123] Carla J. Dubose-Simons, "The 'Silent Arrival': The Second Wave of the Great Migration and Its Affects on Black New York," CUNY Academic Works, 2013, 26.
[124] "Blast Landlord in Probe of Detroit's Slum Areas," *Chicago Defender*, January 18, 1941; "Rentors, Renters Clash at Detroit Hearing," *Chicago Defender*, January 11, 1941 and "Tenants Threaten Rent Strike in Detroit," *Chicago Defender*, June 21, 1941.
[125] "Foresee Integration in Defense Program," *Chicago Defender*, June 28, 1941; "Alderman Earl Dickerson, Negro History Speaker," *Michigan Chronicle*, February 7, 1942.
[126] "Kerner Commission Report on the Causes, Events, and Aftermaths of the Civil Disorders of 1967," National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders United States, 1967, 104.

Temple Baptist Church in Detroit in 1934—he often espoused anti-Catholic rhetoric in his sermons and his church newsletter *The Fundamentalist*.[127] Coughlin was the priest of the National Shrine of the Little Flower in Royal Oak, Michigan who used his platform to support fascism and denigrate Jews.[128] Finally, Smith, who had moved to Detroit in 1939, was a minister and a Nazi sympathizer who founded the political party called the America First Party in 1943, which espoused isolationist views along with virulent antisemitic rhetoric.[129]

Detroit, with Norris, Coughlin, and Smith whipping up racial animus, was "an epicenter of reactionary and antimodernist religion" as they preached a type of evangelism that focused on fostering identity around race and religion.[130] These divisions along religious lines and "racial ideology had emerged as perhaps the most crucial element in the discourse surrounding working-class religion."[131] Because of this, African Americans who sought housing outside of the few designated Black neighborhoods in Detroit were often trying to move into working class White neighborhoods and were, predictably, met with bitterness, resistance, and, often, violence. This violent reaction to Black settlement in the city is best illustrated by the significant events that occurred at the Sojourner Truth Homes in 1941 and 1942. In fact, the proselytizing from religious purveyors of hate like Norris, Coughlin, and Smith may have been one of the main contributing factors in the violent reaction experienced by Blacks as they attempted to move into the predominately Polish neighborhood that surrounded the Sojourner Truth Homes.[132]

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[127] C. Allyn Russell, "J. Frank Norris: Violent Fundamentalist," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 75, 3 (January, 1972) 288.
[128] James P. Shenton, "Fascism and Father Coughlin," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 44, 1 (Autumn, 1960) 6-11.
[129] Glen Jeansonne, "Preacher, Populist, Propagandist: The Early Career of Gerald L.K. Smith," *Biography* 2, 4 (Fall 1979), 321; David Edwin Harrell, Jr., book review for Glen Jeansonne's book *Gerald L.K. Smith: Minister of Hate* published in *The Journal of Southern History* 56, 2 (May 1990) 375-377.
[130] Matthew Pehl, "Apostles of Fascism," "Communist Clergy," and the UAW: Political Ideology and Working-Class Religion in Detroit, 1919-1945, *Journal of American History*, Vol. 99, Issue 2, September 2012, 440-465.
[131] Ibid.
[132] The violent and tumultuous race relationships seen in Detroit and other northern cities in the 1940s is often attributed to an influx of White Southerners who with themselves brought violent racist ideologies, but in fact the race relationships were more complex than this and cannot just be attributed to southern newcomers. For additional context on the complicated race relationships in Detroit and America at large in the 1940s, please see Dominic Capeci's *Race Relations in Wartime Detroit: The Sojourner Truth Housing Controversy of 1942*, John Hartigan's *Racial Situations: Class Predicaments of Whiteness in Detroit*, and Thomas Sugrue's *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*. While the conflict at the Sojourner Truth Homes represented a unique and seminal moment in Civil Rights history, it also existed within this larger climate of national race relations which the aforementioned books provide additional context on.

1941: Planning and Mobilization

It was announced in May 1941 that Detroit would receive one thousand units of defense worker housing.[133] The DHC had been in discussions with USHA as to the proposed locations (see section above) and the *Detroit Free Press* reported on June 19, 1941, that the DHC's proposed site for African American housing at Dequindre and Moderne had been changed to Ryan Road and Nevada Avenue over protests from the DHC commissioners.[134] It is likely from this reporting that residents in the vicinity of Nevada Avenue and Ryan Road first learned that a defense worker housing project for Blacks was planned in their neighborhood.

The intersection of Nevada Avenue and Ryan Road was in a section of the city that had some racial mixing with Black school children attending the local (predominately White) schools. Nearby Conant Gardens was one of the wealthiest Black residential enclaves in Detroit with a high concentration of well-educated and well-paid residents.[135] Soon after the May announcement, a *Chicago Defender* article on June 28, 1941, revealed that the project in Detroit was slated for African American residency.[136] The proposed project caused backlash almost immediately especially since the acreage at Nevada Avenue and Fenelon Street was the DHC's second choice site with the Commission's first choice being a parcel at Dequindre and Modern Streets. After deciding to locate the complex at Nevada Avenue and Fenelon Street, "The Reverend Horace A. Wright, [Detroit Housing] commission member, blasted the USHA proposal and was joined by Commissioner Ed Thal who intimated that there was no use having a commission if the USHA would be permitted to make their own decisions independent of the commission."[137] Reverend White was the pastor of Plymouth Congregational Church and was the only Black member of the DHC.

Residents of Conant Gardens were alarmed upon hearing that the housing project was proposed for an area so near their subdivision.[138] Initially believing the development would consist of sub-standard temporary housing, the Conant Gardens Community Association (CGCA) wrote a letter to Congressman Rudolph Tenerowicz protesting the development as a threat to property values in their neighborhood, in one of the few spaces in the city where Blacks could actually build new homes.[139] Congressman Tenerowicz was the former mayor of Hamtramck and became a champion of the effort to relocate the development. The letter from CGCA was reportedly how Tenerowicz discovered the project was intended for his district.[140]

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133 "Defense Housing Funds Approved," *Detroit Free Press*, May 27, 1941.
134 Owen C. Deatrick, "City's Loss of Housing Job Bared," *Detroit Free Press*, June 19, 1941.
135 Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 41.
136 "Foresee Integration in Defense Program," *Chicago Defender*, June 28, 1941.
137 "USHA Refuses Plea of Local Housing Group," *Michigan Chronicle*, June 28, 1941.
138 The Conant Gardeners, *Conant Gardens*, 149 and "USHA Refuses Plea of Local Housing Group," *Michigan Chronicle*, June 28, 1941.
139 The Conant Gardeners, *Conant Gardens*, 149 and Congressional Record, 77th Congress, Vol. 88 Part 2, 1942, 1763.
140 Congressional Record 1942, 1763.

Dated June 23, 1941, the CGCA letter explained to Tenerowicz that Conant Gardens was the only section of the city where the FHA would approve construction loans for African Americans and further stated, "we feel that the building of the proposed defense homes projects in such close proximity to the Conant Gardens section will cause a deterioration in the existing housing values and discourage future building in the section which promises to be a model district and distinct advantage in a socioeconomic way to the city of Detroit."[141] The next day, concerned Conant Gardens residents handed out fliers in the surrounding area to inform people they intended to hold a meeting at Pershing High School on the subject. CGCA members also approached nearby White residents and hoped to form a biracial coalition to defeat the siting of what they believe to be a temporary defense housing project at Nevada Avenue and Fenelon Street. With Whites and Blacks both in attendance, the meeting at Pershing High School "slowly degenerated into name-calling…[as] the White property owners had a different, more virulent reaction to the news of the day. Hostilities between a few Blacks and Whites in attendance sent others into classrooms to try to restore calm…"[142] Even amidst the turmoil at the Pershing High School meeting it was decided that a delegation should be sent to Washington, D.C., to speak with Congressman Tenerowicz.[143] Thus, in late June 1941 two White homeowners and Conant Gardens resident and attorney Percival Piper arrived in Washington, D.C., to meet with Tenerowicz and F. Charles Starr, Regional Director of USHA. The delegation continued to advocate that a new location be found.[144]

The move to include White neighbors to create a united front caused great consternation to CGCA members. In fact, the meeting at Pershing High School had done nothing more than exacerbate racial tensions in the area and had propelled White residents to action. Further, the meeting with Congressman Tenerowicz greatly changed the calculus for the Conant Gardeners as it was discovered at that meeting that the proposed houses were intended to be permanent, not temporary:

> Once Conant Garden residents learned from UHSA that the defense project was to be permanent housing, their immediate fears dissipated, but deeper regrets surfaced as it became obvious that the meeting to create a biracial coalition had, in fact, driven a deeper wedge between the communities. Property owners in Conant Gardens now saw white resistance to the housing project in a new light; what they thought would be a shared socioeconomic concern was now deeply racial.[145]

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[141] Congressional Record 1942, 1763 and Rudolph G. Tenerowicz, "A Factual Expose of the Nevada-Fenelon Defense Housing Project Controversy," House of Representatives, found in NAACP papers "Press Coverage" file, New York Public Library.
[142] Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 82.
[143] "Oppose Plan to Establish Negro Ghetto," ***Michigan Chronicle***, July 5, 1941.
[144] Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 82 and U.S. Census Bureau, Population Schedule, April 16, 1940, 84-742 Sheet No. 3 B, Ancestry.com
[145] Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 84.

Fully understanding the racial animus of their White neighbors and armed with the knowledge that the development would be permanent housing the CGCA ended their protest of the project and distanced themselves from the White protestors.[146] In fact, later, so fully did the CGCA have a change of heart regarding the project, that the CGCA Vice President Percy Jones petitioned Detroit Common Council in December 1941 stating, "we are depending on you and the Detroit Housing Commission to carry out the original plan of having Negro people occupy the project."[147] Once the CGCA had realized their mistake in trying to align themselves with their White neighbors they tried to make amends by vocally supporting Black residency at the development.

Shortly after the initial meeting at Pershing High School, the Seven Mile-Fenelon Homeowners Improvement Association (SMFHIA) was organized by White residents in the area who opposed the development.[148] The SMFHIA was headed by Joseph Buffa, a local real estate agent with significant land holdings in the area, and another realtor John Dalzell.[149] Protests were spurred partially because the project would allow African Americans to cross Ryan Street one of the acknowledged "color lines" in Detroit. As discussed in more detail below, the SMFHIA coordinated with both the Ku Klux Klan (KKK)and the National Workers League (a racist, pro-Nazi organization) in their fight to keep Blacks from occupying the Sojourner Truth Homes.

The SMFHIA met at the Polish congregation at St. Louis the King Catholic Church—located several blocks northeast of the Nevada-Fenelon site at 18891 St. Louis Street—which was led by Father Constantine Dzink. The tenor of the protests planned by SMFHIA was likely influenced by the sermons of Father Constantine Dzink, who often preached racist sentiments to his congregation during and after the events of 1941 and 1942.[150] Foreshadowing the violence that was to come, Dzink played into White residents racist views and deep seated fears in a letter he wrote to Charles Palmer in Washington, D.C., in which he wrote, "this [housing development], Mr. Palmer would mean utter ruin for many people who have mortgaged their homes to the F.H.A. and not only that, but it would jeopardize the safety of many of our white girls, as no colored people live closely by."[151]

Through the summer of 1941 the SMFHIA ratcheted up the pressure on local and national leaders to relocate the housing project by demanding that the housing development be utilized for White residents. These demands were backed up by Detroit Common Council and the FHA. A letter writing campaign was initiated and detractors of the plan attempted to influence the Detroit Housing Commission and other local leaders.[152] The site at Dequindre and Modern

[146] The Conant Gardeners, *Conant Gardens*, 150.
[147] "Negroes Fight Housing Protest," *Detroit News*, December 17, 1941.
[148] Gerald Van Dusen notes the formation of the group was "spontaneous" but the exact circumstances under which the organization was formed are unclear.
[149] Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 87, 94.
[150] Angela Dillard, *Faith in the City: Preaching Radical Social Change in Detroit*, (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 137.
[151] Herman H. Long and Charles S. Johnson, *People vs. Property: Race Restrictive Covenants in Housing* (Nashville, TN: Fisk University Press, 1947), 53.
[152] Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 94.

Streets was again proposed as the better site, but the site was surrounded by industry and a railroad spur ran through the plot.[153] By July the Detroit Common Council had aligned itself with the protesters and requested that the project be built at the Dequindre and Modern site instead of at Nevada Avenue and Fenelon Street.[154] Meanwhile the Detroit Housing Commission director George Edwards claimed the project was under control of the federal government arguing that the City had no control over site selection. Detroit Mayor Edward Jeffries had amassed such a poor reputation after the failures with previous housing projects such as Herman Gardens that USHA and the federal government at large were hesitant to put trust in the City at this point. The perceived failures of previous public housing projects in Detroit had colored the relationship between Detroit and the federal government and was directly affecting the development of the Sojourner Truth Homes. Despite the protests, the DDH forged ahead with the site on Nevada as no other parcel in Detroit complied with the standards set by the federal defense housing guidelines.[155]

By early fall construction of the housing complex was underway. In October 1941 the *Detroit Free Press* reported that although the foundations had been poured at the site, "more than 300 community residents met at St. Louis the King Parish Thursday night to protest the project."[156] By one account, these protests were exceedingly hateful, filled with racially derogatory language and veiled threats of violence.[157] Two *Catholic Worker* journalists came away from the protest feeling they had seen "hate personified" by the picketing parishioners.[158] Later, 250 White protestors stormed the Detroit Common Council meeting on December 10, 1941, to protest Black occupancy at the project.[159] Council members retreated from the main chamber while the protestors loudly protested, not dispersing until several hours later.[160] Meanwhile, housing officials in Washington, D.C., fielded calls, letters, and telegrams from officials in Michigan. Tenerowicz was adamant that the project be moved, and he found allies in the FHA. With Tenerowicz's urging, the FHA informed Clark Foreman of the DDH "that if blacks were to occupy the Sojourner Truth Homes, federally insured loans in the area would be suspended…"[161] Clark Foreman was recognized as one of the more liberal housing officials in Washington, D.C., having served as an advisor on race problems to Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes and with the Julius Rosenwald Fund to promote public schools for African American children.[162]

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153 "Council Backs Up Housing Objectors," *Detroit Free Press*, July 2, 1941.
154 "Council Backs Up Housing Objects," *Detroit Free Press*, July 2, 1941.
155 Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 90.
156 "Neighbors Protest Housing Project," *Detroit Free Press*, October 10, 1941.
157 Matthew Pehl, "Apostles of fascism," *The Journal of American History*, 463.
158 Ibid.
159 "250 North Enders Seek to Prevent Negro Occupancy of Housing Project," *Detroit Tribune*, December 13, 1941.
160 "250 North Enders Seek to Prevent Negro Occupancy of Housing Project," *Detroit Tribune*, December 13, 1941.
161 Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 95.
162 "Clark H. Foreman, 75," *New York Times*, June 16, 1977; Virginia Durr, "Remembering Clark Foreman," *The Bill of Rights Journal* 10 (December 1977), 1.

SMFHIA members regularly visited Detroit Common Council and DHC meetings to continue their vehement protest.[163] Although the outspoken White residents in the SMFHIA fervently opposed the project, some residents called for Black residential occupancy at the Sojourner Truth Homes. The *Michigan Chronicle* quoted a letter from a resident who wrote, "at this time when we are all waging a war of self-defense against fascist violence and greed, we Americans must see to it that no false issues of race or religion are permitted to disrupt our effort."[164]

While hateful in tone and venomous in rhetoric all the White protest campaigns waged in 1941 against the Sojourner Truth Homes amounted to a war of words and political gesturing. No physical violence had erupted. All of that was to change in 1942.

1942: Occupancy Changes & Violent Protests

In early 1942 there were further maneuverings by Tenerowicz to scuttle Black residency at the Sojourner Truth Homes. Tenerowicz joined with Congressman Frank Boykin—a Democratic Senator from Alabama and staunch support of segregation—who was chairman of the Committee on Public Buildings which processed appropriations bills for the Division of Defense Housing. During the 1940s Southern Democrats wielded great power in Congress and deference was often given to their demands. Called the "Solid South" the bloc of Congressmen, including Boykin, were united in their support of conservative policies including Jim Crow thus making them a powerful faction within the Congress.

Boykin united with two Southern Democrats from Georgia, Senator Walter F. George and Congressman Robert C. Ramspeck and others to help oust Clark Foreman.[165] After assembling his allies Boykin informed the PWA that funds would not be appropriated for the DDH until Clark Foreman was fired. Rather than stand firm, the PWA asked for Foreman's resignation. In an oral history conducted years later Foreman recalled, "the Congressman joined up with my enemies from the South…He called over the representative of the head of the Federal Works Agency and told him that there wouldn't be any money for defense housing as long as Clark Foreman was the chairman of the division."[166] With the money now stymied, and when a local meeting with Tenerowicz, Charles Palmer, FWA administrator Baird Synder, and two DHC members (Charles Edgecomb and Reverend White) ended with Tenerowicz and White both raising the specter of violence if their opposing sides were to lose the housing project, the federal officials decided to reassign the Sojourner Truth Homes for White residency in January 1942.[167]

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[163] Charles Williams, "The Racial Politics of Progressive Americanism: New Deal Liberalism and the Subordination of Black Workers in the UAW, Studies in American Political Development, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Spring 2005), 84.
[164] "White Rally to Support Negroes in Housing Fight," *Michigan Chronicle*, February 14, 1942.
[165] Oral History Interview with Clark Foreman, November 16, 1974. Interview B-0003. Southern Oral History Program Collection (#4007) in the Southern Oral History Program Collection, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 97 and "Housing Battle Settled by US," *Detroit Free Press*, January 16, 1942.

In response to this action, local African American leaders led by Michigan State Senator Charles Diggs Sr. formed the Sojourner Truth Citizens Committee (STCC) in January 1942 to organize a concerted effort to reverse this decision.[168] The STCC was comprised of some of the most influential Black leaders in Detroit including Louis Martin editor of the *Michigan Chronicle*, the president of the Detroit branch of the NAACP Dr. James J. McClendon, Lebron Simmons an attorney with the National Negro Congress, among others. All were tapped for their ability to get things done.[169]

With Charles Hill at the helm of the STCC, "the coalition rapidly became a multiracial alliance involving significant trade union support."[170] Charles Hill was the pastor of the Hartford Avenue Baptist Church and was a powerful ally in the fight for Black occupancy at the Sojourner Truth Homes. Hartford Avenue Baptist Church had been an important meeting place and source of support for the formation of the United Autoworkers CIO Local 600. The UAW CIO Local 600 was, in turn, a key supporter of Black residency at the Sojourner Truth Homes. In the late 1930s the Local 600 branch was formed to and initiated a strike at the Ford Motor Company's Rouge Plant, an action that later resulted in unionization at Ford, the last of the big three to unionize.[171] Local 600 was progressive to the point of militancy and it became an important proving ground for Black activists and Black activism.[172]

Black churches in the city were crucial partners with the Sojourner Truth Citizens Committee as pastors spread the word about the importance of Black residency at the complex, collected money for the efforts, and distributed fliers urging congregants to attend protest rallies and participate in letter writing campaigns. In February 1942, more than two hundred Black ministers rallied together at Detroit city hall under the slogan, "We Shall Not Be Moved." [173] Additionally, Reverend White (Plymouth Congregational Church) and Reverend Hill (Hartford Avenue Baptist), who were both intimately involved with the effort to ensure Black defense workers would reside at Sojourner Truth Homes, depended upon their congregants to support the cause both spiritually and via direct action. Other churches and spiritual groups also participated. There was a mass meeting at the Mt. Olivet Methodist Church in Dearborn sponsored by the Women's Auxiliary No. 233 of Ford Local 600 UAW CIO.

Meanwhile, the City was grappling with where to locate the Black housing project if the Nevada Avenue and Fenelon Street site was no longer viable. The DHC's first choice site at Dequindre and Modern Streets was again touted as the intended location for Black housing but USHA officials reported that that site had just been purchased by Ford Motor Company for a new factory.[174] After a survey of the entire city, DHC member Edgecomb reported they "could not

[168] Williams, "The Racial Politics of Progressive Americanism," 85.
[169] Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 100.
[170] Williams, "The Racial Politics of Progressive Americanism," 85.
[171] "UAW Local 600," Motor Cities National Heritage Area, http://www.motorcities.org/locations/ford-and-uaw
[172] Dillard, *Faith in the City*, 108-109.
[173] "NAACP Reports on Sojourner Truth Housing Fight," *Michigan Chronicle*, February 7, 1942.
[174] Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 99.

find one more suitable for a housing project…and even if we had found another site, it would have been the same thing over again—restrictions against Negroes."[175] Thus, there was a growing sense among city officials that any site selected for an African American housing development would provoke the same response.

While the housing authorities continued weighing the options, a pro-Black occupancy protest meeting was held at the Calvary Baptist Church on Clinton Street on January 18, 1942. As a result of that meeting a vote to picket the DHC meeting to call attention to "discrimination against Negro tenants" was called and succeeded.[176] On January 26 the protests arrived at the DHC headquarters and demanded the housing project be given to Blacks as originally intended. Local resident Erma Henderson later recalled, "public rallies were called. Speakers from across the country came in support of African American factory workers who sorely needed housing."[177] Many powerful Detroit residents attended these rallies including Honorable Hopson R. Reynolds, head of the Civil Rights Department of the International Brotherhood Improved Benevolent Protective Order Elks of the World (IBPOEW) and artist and activist Paul Robeson, among others.

The Sojourner Truth Citizens Committee was prepared to send a delegation to Washington, D.C., to gain an audience with President Franklin Roosevelt. As preparations were made, the STCC had a meeting with Mayor Edward Jeffries on January 29 to urge his assistance. A Republican and former Common Council member Jeffries had been elected to the mayoralty in 1939 and his track record on race relations is best described as ambivalent as, on the whole, he failed to side firmly with or against his Black constituents and Black colleagues in Detroit government.[178] That being said, Jeffries publicly supported Black occupancy at the Sojourner Truth Homes consistently throughout the controversy. In fact, in February 1942 the *Detroit Free Press* ran an article that quoted Mayor Jeffries as saying, "this is no longer a question of housing…This is a question of whether Government can publicly discriminate against the Negro,"[179] which struck at the heart of the matter for Black Detroiters. At the outset perhaps this was a fight for equality in housing, but it became something much bigger: America was failing to live up to its ideals of equality and Black residents in Detroit and further afield came together to demand the rights guaranteed to them in the Constitution.

After hearing from the STCC and before acting, Jeffries, in turn, demanded a resolution from the Detroit Housing Commission stating their support for Black residency. A resolution declaring as much was passed by the DHC unanimously on January 30.[180] With local government now mostly

[175] "Send Two Man Committee to Washington," *Michigan Chronicle*, January 31, 1942.
[176] "Negro Pickets to Protest," *Detroit Free Press*, Jan 18, 1942.
[177] Moon, *Untold Tales, Unsung Heroes*, 196-197.
[178] "End Comes to Ex-Mayor in Florida," *Detroit Free Press*, April 3, 1950; Walter White and Thurgood Marshall, "What caused the Detroit Riot?" National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (July 1943), 15.
[179] "City to Open Truth Homes Next Week," *Detroit Free Press*, February 20, 1942.
[180] "NAACP Reports on Sojourner Truth Housing Fight," *Michigan Chronicle*, February 7, 1942.

in support of Black residency, Mayor Jeffries wrote a letter to Charles Palmer advocating that the project be reinstated for Black occupancy.[181] One of the reasons Mayor Jeffries supported Black residency[182] was because, with no other location in the City that would meet the rules stipulated by the federal government, Detroit was at risk of losing the development entirely.[183]

On February 3, 1942, Charles Palmer and Baird Snyder (acting head of the Federal Works Administration) announced that the project would again be slated for African American families.[184] Even after this announcement, advocacy continued. On February 5 the Director of the UAW-CIO Ford Local 600 wrote a letter to Detroit Common Councilman George Edwards throwing their eighty-six thousand members behind Black occupancy.[185]

Countering this, the Seven Mile Fenelon Homeowners Improvement Association (SMFHIA) swung into action again as did the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). Joseph Buffa, John Dalzell, and 150 protestors from the SMFHIA stormed the mayor's office immediately after the decision and demanded that Jeffries rescind the decision.[186] Jeffries refused. The *Detroit Free Press* and the *Michigan Chronicle* reported that the KKK encouraged the protestors and burned a cross near the site just before Black tenants were scheduled to move in.[187]

The leaders of the SMFHIA including Joseph Buffa, John Dalzell, and Virgil Chandler (executive vice president of SMFHIA) were closely aligned with both the KKK and the National Workers League. Joseph Buffa and John Dalzell were both realtors and the Detroit Real Estate Board worked in conjunction with the KKK to keep Blacks from occupying the Sojourner Truth Homes.[188]The activities of the SMFHIA were buoyed by the National Workers League (NWL)

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[181] "Tenants Win Fight for Detroit Project," *Chicago Defender*, February 14, 1942; "NAACP Reports on Sojourner Truth Housing Fight," *Michigan Chronicle*, February 7, 1942.

[182] See Mayor Jeffries letter to Charles Palmer reprinted in "N.A.A.C.P. Reports on Sojourner Truth House Fight," *Michigan Chronicle*, February 7, 1942; "Board Bows to Necessity on Contract," *Detroit Free Press*, June 20, 1941.

[183] There was a precedent in Detroit for losing money for housing projects as the City came close to losing the money allocated for the Parkside Homes project in 1935 due to opposition by area residents and delay by Common Council. Jeffries, as a Common Council member, voted for the Parkside Homes project in early 1936. See: "Chandler Park Project Passed by New Council," *Detroit Free Press*, January 8, 1936; "Low Cost Housing Project Killed by Council's Refusal to Close Six Streets in Chandler Park District," *Detroit Free Press*, December 11, 1935; and "Chandler Park Funds May Go to Other Cities," *Detroit Free Press*, December 1, 1935.

[184] "Housing Head Tells of New Race Project," *Michigan Chronicle*, February 7, 1942.

[185] "86,000 Ford Men Approve Homes Stand," *Michigan Chronicle*, February 14, 1942.

[186] John Wood, "Negroes Win Project as 'Nazis' Mob Mayor," *Michigan Chronicle*, February 7, 1942.

[187] "US to Probe Charges of Housing Plot," *Detroit Free Press*, March 10, 1942; "Blame Police for Riot; KKK, Nazis Defy U.S.," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 7, 1942.

[188] "Realtors Back Klan on U.S. Project Issue," *Detroit Tribune*, April 4, 1942.

as the "pro-Nazi outfit"[189] helped organize the White picket lines at Sojourner Truth.[190] Founded in Detroit, the NWL was an organized hate group described in contemporaneous accounts as having members who were "crackpots" including "ex-Klansmen, ex-Bundists, ex-Black Legionnaires, ex-convicts, and ex-strikebreakers. Everybody who hates anything or anybody, so long as it isn't fascism or fascists, is welcome to its ranks."[191] Among other racists views NWL agitated for "clean racial standards" and for the "legal reduction of Jewish influence to the minority position to which they are entitled."[192] One of the reasons cited for the inception of the NWL in Detroit was that the city was already a hub of nationalist rhetoric because of Father Charles Coughlin.[193]

White protest continued as move-in day approached. The SMFHIA issued a newsletter on February 14 that predicted violence if African Americans were allowed to move into the Sojourner Truth homes and urged White residents to attend a meeting at Cass Technical High School.[194] A large sign that declared the demands of the White protesters was placed across from the Sojourner Truth Homes. The sign was captured in a photograph by Arthur S. Siegel and featured dark, capital letters on a white background that read "We Want White Tenants in Our White Community." The sign was adorned by American flags in the upper corners. Fliers handed out by the SMFHIA further inflamed area residents, urging White residents to help "keep this district WHITE" by showing up at a protest rally at Nevada Avenue and Fenelon Street to "keep our lines solid."[195]

At City Hall there was, again, last minute, desperate wrangling by several Common Council members to move the Black residents somewhere besides Nevada and Fenelon. Several Common Council members tried to persuade Jeffries—and through Jeffries the applicable federal officials—to again relocate Black residents to the Dequindre and Modern Streets site as Ford Motor Company, who owned the site, seemed willing to relocate their intended project for the site.[196] It was all for naught. In response to a telegram from Jeffries communicating the sudden availability of the Dequindre and Modern Streets site, the federal officials remained firm: Black residents were to be moved into the Sojourner Truth homes at Nevada Avenue and Fenelon Streets.[197] In a last-ditch effort Tenerowicz tried "one last trick…and petitioned the Federal government to convert the Sojourner Truth Homes into a soldier's barracks."[198] This effort was promptly rebuffed by federal officials.

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189 "Voices of Defeat," *Life*, April 13, 1942, 94.
190 Babson, Riddle, Elsila, *The Color of Law*, 119.
191 Victor H. Bernstein, "The Antilabor Front," *The Antioch Review* 3, 3 (Autumn, 1943), 337 and "Anti-Semite Meeting is Quiet Recruits All Called to Work," *Detroit Free Press*, September 13, 1940.
192 "Anti-Semite Meeting is Quiet Recruits All Called to Work," *Detroit Free Press*, September 13, 1940.
193 Ibid.
194 Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 111.
195 Flier in collection of Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.
196 Van Dusen, *Detroit's Sojourner Truth Housing Riot of 1942*, 111.
197 "Riot Fear Fades; Tenants Ready to Move Saturday," *Michigan Chronicle*, February 28, 1942.
198 Ibid.

A mob of angry White protesters formed at the Sojourner Truth Homes on Friday, February 27 anticipating the arrival of the Black residents. In the hours before the move in was to occur, Black truck drivers, carrying coal for the apartments slated to be rented, were hauled out of their trucks, and beaten by the mob.[199] It was into this simmering atmosphere, that twenty-four African American families attempted to move in on Saturday, February 28, 1942. They were met with swift and organized violence with an estimated crowd of several hundred White protesters entrenched on the site in an attempt to physically halt the move in. White protestors set up a blockade around the complex to prevent the moving trucks from entering.[200] Black counter-protestors also arrived and fought back to ensure the Black families could move in. White protestors attacked moving trucks and threw rocks, bricks, and other debris at Black counter-protestors. Black tenants and Black counter-protestors were charged by mounted police.[201] To quell the crowd, two hundred policeman pummeled the mob with tear gas and night sticks. One can presume based on newspaper coverage of the events that the police violence was predominately directed at the Black tenants and counter-protestors rather than the White protestors.

The police response was not aimed at facilitating the move-in. One observer of the chaos, *Michigan Chronicle* reporter John Wood, said, "I saw police disarm Negroes in the crowd while the White mobbists remained armed with clubs behind police protection. When I crossed the line with a photographer one of the mobbists threatened me with an iron pipe."[202] The Sojourner Truth Citizens Committee had asked Conant Gardens residents to go to the housing project on the appointed day to ensure the incoming tenants could move in and, if rioting occurred, to call the authorities. One Conant Gardener, Mrs. Harris Honored, stated, "we went and found the whites in large numbers picketing the project armed with sticks, clubs, etc…Our so called democracy is a "farce." We understand the moving has been deferred. All Negro America is watching the outcome of this fight."[203] The families who had been slated to move in had nowhere to go as their previous homes had already been rented to others. One Black man left homeless by the riot questioned the police on the scene, "'But what about our furniture and our children that will have no place to sleep tonight?" the man asked. The officer turned and walked away.'"[204] In summarizing what he saw that day the *Michigan Chronicle* reporter John Wood said, "I saw police brutality at its worst. I have seen police brutality before, but never have I seen police officers protecting a mob committing an act of treason against the government."[205] The scene looked a little different through the eyes of a child: Orlin Jones, a resident of nearby Conant Gardens and the son of CGCA Vice President Percy Jones, remembers the first move in

[199] "Blame Police for Riot; KKK, Nazis Defy U.S.," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 7, 1942.
[200] "Whites Block Negro Occupancy of Detroit Housing Project," *Lansing State Journal*, March 1, 1942.
[201] John Wood, "Eye Witness Account of 'Race Riot," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 7, 1942.
[202] Ibid.
[203] "Conant Gardens," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 7, 1942.
[204] "25 Families Left Homeless by Mob," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 7, 1942.
[205] John Wood, "Eye Witness Account of 'Race Riot'," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 7, 1942.

day on February 28, 1942. Jones recalled that he when he saw the crowds and the mounted police at the corner of Nevada and Ryan Road, he thought there was a parade.[206]

There were accounts that the KKK and Nazi sympathizers had organized the riots at the Sojourner Truth Homes.[207]According to citizens on the scene, the mob seemed orchestrated as one *Chicago Defender* article detailed: "from the scene Saturday, however neutral observers could readily have seen that if it were not for the hostile acts of Detroit police, Negroes would have occupied the project. The mob was very definitely a bluff mob for the whites ran whenever it appeared that the Negroes might break through the police lines and the mounted patrols."[208] This observation would prove prescient as E.J. Parker Sage and Garland L. Alderman (treasurer and secretary, respectively, of the National Workers League) along with Virgil Chandler (one of the leaders of the SMFHIA) were later charged with sedition and conspiracy for their work in spreading propaganda and inciting the riots of February 28, 1942.[209] Joseph Buffa and John Dalzell were listed as co-conspirators, but they were not indicted.[210] Although the charges against Sage and Alderman were later dropped due to extreme delays in the case and a lack of evidence, their fervent fascism is evidenced in their prominent feature in the January 17, 1944, Life magazine story on fascism in the United States. Alderman was shown in the magazine giving the Nazi salute, which was his response when asked to pose for the photograph.

In the aftermath of the riot, reports varied on the number of injuries and arrests, but one report estimated more than thirty people were injured with twenty-five Blacks hospitalized.[211] Predictably, Black protestors bore the brunt of the police's wrath as 217 African Americans were arrested compared with only three White people. Black residents were prosecuted but Ernest Goodman, an attorney at the liberal National Lawyers Guild, quickly signed on to represent the arrestees, and was able to secure the release of all but nineteen of the protestors with only two African American protestors seeing jail time.[212] Goodman went on to have an illustrious career as an attorney, championing civil rights and organized labor.

Days after the riot, Mayor Jeffries flew to Washington, D.C., to discuss the volatile situation with the federal housing authorities. Jeffries told National Housing Administration officials he doubted the Detroit police could control the situation. Behind the scenes the NAACP and the

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206 Phone call with Orlin Jones, 12/10/21.
207 "Blame Police for Riot as KKK and Nazis Defy U.S., City Housing Order," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 7, 1942; "Hitler's Helpers," *Michigan Chronicle*, April 29, 1944.
208 Louis E. Martin, "Races Riot for Control of U.S. Housing Project," *Chicago Defender*, March 7, 1942.
209 "Drop Indictments in Sojourner Truth Riot," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 4, 1944; "Grand Jury Indicts Three in Riot Case," *Michigan Chronicle*, April 25, 1942.
210 "Grand Jury Indicts Three in Riot Case," *Michigan Chronicle*, April 25, 1942.
211 Babson, Riddle, Elsila, *The Color of Law*, 118; "Eye Witness Account of 'Race Riot," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 7, 1942.
212 Babson, Riddle, Elsila, *The Color of Law*, 118.

National Urban League were having conversations with federal housing authorities on how best to move forward.

Because of the violence that occurred on February 28 the move-in was postponed without a new, definitive date set. Rumors circulated that a second move-in attempt would be conducted on April 6.[213] But this date passed as authorities tried to plan how to effectuate the move without a repeat of the earlier violence. While planning was underway, Detroit activists including the NAACP, the Urban League, the STCC, and local leaders continued to meet and press for Black residency. The NAACP was instrumental in the continued fight for Black occupancy at Sojourner Truth as the local Detroit branch was managing the money while the NAACP national organization was providing guidance to the efforts and organizing press releases.[214] Reverend White rallied his church, Hartford Avenue Baptist Church, with a meeting attended by an interracial group of two hundred young people.[215] Although a large number of the protestors surrounding the Nevada Fenelon site were Polish, Thomas Dombrowski a prominent local Polish American leader spoke out in radio address on WJBK to support Black occupancy.[216] In late March three hundred citizens rallied in Hamtramck to listen to Charles Hill, chairman of the STCC, discuss the importance of continuing to fight for Black residency at the Sojourner Truth Homes.[217] Further, local leaders including the members of the National Lawyers Guild and the *Catholic Worker* both threw their support behind Black occupancy.[218]

At this point national NAACP leaders began vocally advocating that Black Detroiters needed to be moved into the houses at once. Gloster B. Current, the leader of branch activities at the NAACP, urged Mayor Jeffries to "effect the occupancy of the homes immediately."[219] Current further urged the director of the National Housing Agency, John Blandford, to "act at once by placing the people for whom the Sojourner Truth project was intended, in the project."[220] Walter White, executive secretary of the NAACP, wrote letters to the *Detroit News*, the *Detroit Times*, and the *Detroit Free Press* rebuking them for failing to speak out in support of Black occupancy and for their editorial silence on the mob rule witnessed in Detroit on February 28.[221] White wrote that:

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213 "May Move in Housing Project on April 6th," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 28, 1942.
214 "NAACP Issues A Report on the Truth Fight," *Michigan Chronicle*, April 4, 1942; "NAACP Defense Worker Housing and Violence and Intimidation in Detroit April 1, 1942 to June 30, 1942," New York Public Library.
215 "Youth Holds Mass Meet for Project," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 21, 1942.
216 "Polish Leader Speaks for Race," *Michigan Chronicle*, April 11, 1942.
217 "Hamtramck Mass Meet Hears Hill," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 28, 1942.
218 "Catholic Worker, Lawyers Guild Back Housing Fight," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 14, 1942.
219 "Urge Jeffries to Let Negroes Have Project," *Michigan Chronicle*, April 18, 1942.
220 Urge Jeffries to Let Negroes Have Project," *Michigan Chronicle*, April 18, 1942.
221 "NAACP Head Wires Papers to Take Stand," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 28, 1942.

> "Japanese propagandists already using Detroit rioting in shortwave broadcasts to India, China, Africa, and Philippines as proof that yellow and brown people of Far East should cast in their lot with Japan since Detroit rioting is characteristic of American attitudes towards darker races. Editorial silence of Detroit dailies causes many erroneously to believe that newspapers favor mob. May we urge editorial expression by *Detroit Times*."[222]

By mid-April the *Michigan Chronicle* carried stories of divisions within the movement for Black occupancy.[223] Dueling meetings were held, one held at Plymouth Hall and one at St. John Presbyterian church, and there were allegations that some advocates within the group were trying to sow division.[224] Organized by the STCC, a parade and large rally with thousands of attendees was held in Cadillac Square on April 12, 1942, which may have ameliorated some of these divisions within the movement. Nevertheless, on April 15, 1942, Blanford sent a telegram to the Detroit Housing Commission that stated, "please proceed as soon as feasible with the established program for the occupancy of the Sojourner Truth Project."[225] Blandford then sent a telegram to the Detroit Housing Commission in which he appealed to American citizens' sense of patriotism stating, "we are at war. Men of all races and creeds are marching in our armed forces, and are at work in our vast war industries. That is the spirit of American democracy."[226]

Blandford's communication to the DHC also indicated that the City of Detroit would be responsible for effectuating the move-in. Jeffries had already told Blandford that Detroit police would not be sufficient for the task. Thus, Jeffries met with Michigan Governor Murray Delos Van Wagoner and it was decided that Michigan State Troops Home Guard would be utilized alongside Detroit and State police forces. The Michigan State Troops Home Guard was a unit of troops organized in 1917—and deployed during World War I and World War II as a replacement unit—to allow for the active-duty deployment of the Michigan National Guard.[227] On April 29, 1942, Home Guard troops stationed themselves around the perimeter of the Sojourner Truth Homes awaiting the new tenants.

The second move-in day arrived. Over a thousand troops patrolled the area as the first fourteen African American families began the move-in process. The first occupant to move into the Sojourner Truth Homes was Walter Jackson and his family. Jackson worked at Bohn Aluminum

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[222] "NAACP Head Wires Papers to Take Stand," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 28, 1942.
[223] Horace A. White, "The Facts in our News: Are we Bungling the Sojourner Truth Effort?" *Michigan Chronicle*, April 11, 1942.
[224] "Expect 10,000 in 'Truth' Parade," *Michigan Chronicle*, April 11, 1942.
[225] NAACP Papers at the New York Public Library, file "NAACP Defense Worker Housing and Violence and Intimidation in Detroit, April 1, 1942 to June 30, 1942."
[226] Ibid.
[227] "Governor Seeks Cut in Home Guard Unit," *Detroit Free Press*, March 12, 1941; "Michigan Emergency Defense Force," House Bill 6032, Michigan House of Representatives, 2004, Accessed 1/28/22, https://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2003-2004/billanalysis/House/htm/2003-HLA-6032-4.htm.

Company and his family moved into unit 175. Over the course of the next week, sixty-eight families were moved in. The Home Guard forces were heavily armed, and they escorted the Black families into the complex and stood guard around the perimeter of the surveillance area with bayonets drawn. Although no violence occurred at the Sojourner Truth Homes some skirmishes were reported in the wider area. Black motorists reported that bricks were thrown at their cars in the vicinity by Whites who still protested Black residency at the project.[228] Gradually, the number of Home Guard troops were reduced as organized violence failed to materialize.[229]

Black state troopers were not allowed to patrol the move-in process as they were, "mysteriously stripped of power two days before a second attempt to house the tenants was made."[230] This was a demoralizing event that was, apparently, done to prevent having a mixed-race guard at the move-in. The 80 Black members of Company 118 of the Michigan State Troop had their weapons taken from them and turned over to White troops. This was likely to ensure that White troops were in a position of power during the move-in. The battle for the housing units had been won, but still, the war for equality raged on.

The events that occurred in Detroit in 1942 at the Sojourner Truth Homes were of national concern—even at the time local papers acknowledged the significance of the events.[231] But this was not just local news, in fact, papers across the United States were carrying stories about the riot.[232] In the immediate aftermath of the first riot in February it was clear the situation at the Sojourner Truth Homes had evolved into a national issue with consequences that could reverberate in cities across the United States. Housing officials in Washington anxiously watched the situation in Detroit fearing more violence there could affect housing efforts across the country. A sustained campaign of pressure, bargaining, and negotiation finally paid dividends when the first families moved in on April 29, 1942.

The Sojourner Truth Homes are significant at the national level due to the coordinated response spearheaded by the Sojourner's Truth Citizens Committee and backed by the NAACP and the National Urban League. Conversations about the Sojourner Truth Homes were had at the highest levels of government. The arguments in favor of Black occupancy (and the counterarguments by Tenerowicz and his ilk) echoed within halls of the United States House of Representatives, Senate offices, and in the White House as both President Roosevelt and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt had fielded calls and telegrams about the issue. Eleanor Roosevelt specifically, known as a champion of civil rights, was applied to by Reverend Hill and by many others seeking her assistance when the project had been switched from Black occupancy to White. The fight to house Black defense workers in the Sojourner Truth Homes occurred at a strategic point in

[228] "68 Families Moved into Truth Homes," *Michigan Chronicle*, May 9, 1942.
[229] "167 Families Moved into Truth Project," *Michigan Chronicle*, May 16, 1942.
[230] "Insult Negro Troops as Tenant Move in Project," *Michigan Chronicle*, May 2, 1942.
[231] "Eaman Resignation Brings No Regrets," *Michigan Chronicle*, April 25, 1942.
[232] Frank B. Woodford, "Storm Over New Housing in Detroit," *New York Times*, March 15, 1942; "State Troops Stand Guard as Negroes Move into Project," *The Evening Star* [Washington, D.C.], April 29, 1942; "Housing Fight Flares Anew; No Group to Use Detroit Homes Now," *Phoenix Index*, February 21, 1942.

history, at the origins of the modern Civil Rights movement. The organization and pressure campaign coordinated by the NAACP, the Civil Rights Federation, and the National Urban League, who all worked in tandem with local branches and advocacy groups, would serve as blueprint for future campaigns.

The federal housing authorities often conceded to pressure from White residents and changed housing originally intended for Black residents to White occupancy, but the Sojourner Truth Homes is one of the only (if not *the* only) instances where the decision was made to revert to Black occupancy. Time after time federal authorities and local housing jurisdictions acquiesced to the demands of protesters and reverted Black defense worker housing back to White. This pattern transpired nationwide including with the Kenfield project in Buffalo in 1938, with the relocation of the proposed Flint Street project in Portland in 1942, and with the Philadelphia Housing Authority re-designating the Arch Homes project to be all-White following protests over the project being integrated in 1952.[233] Following the events at the Sojourner Truth Homes, the federal authorities would further entrench segregation by hewing more closely to the neighborhood composition rule by only building Black housing in areas already dominated by Black residents. Thus, the Sojourner Truth Homes is significant both for the success advocates had in reinstating Black residents in the complex and one of the sobering, sole instances of Black housing built in a White residential area.

The victory for Black Americans—epitomized by these twenty modest brick homes—was national in scale and everyone involved seemed to understand it at the time. Writing to Jack Raskin, Executive Secretary of the Civil Rights Federation, Milton Kemnitz of the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties urged Raskin to photograph the first families moving into the Sojourner Truth Homes and concluded by observing that "we must not overlook the national significance of the victory won at Sojourner Truth. The problem exists in Philadelphia, Buffalo, Baltimore and elsewhere. The splendid conduct of your campaign in Detroit has laid the basis for a national fictory [sic] over discrimination against Negro defense workers in housing."[234]

Aftermath and Impact

The housing situation in Detroit was still dire for African Americans as the 200 units built at Sojourner Truth Homes did not begin to satisfy the demand. In December of 1944 Charles Edgecomb of the Detroit Housing Commission reported to Mayor Jeffries that no additional housing for African Americans could be built in the City under the neighborhood composition

[233] National Park Service, *Civil Rights in America: Racial Discrimination in Housing*, National Historic Landmarks Theme Study, 2021 and Rudy Pearson, *"A Menace to the Neighborhood": Housing and African Americans in Portland, 1941-1945*, *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Summer 2001, Vol. 102, No. 2 (Summer, 2001), 172, and Griffin, *They Were Never Silent, You Just Weren't Listening*, 41.

[234] Letter in the collection of the Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

rule—there simply wasn't a location in Detroit that could satisfy the rule.[235] Paradoxically, as a direct result of the violence that occurred at Sojourner Truth, the Detroit Housing Commission mandated racial segregation in all future housing projects and would not "change the racial patterns of a neighborhood"[236] Thus, the lack of housing for Black Detroiters was only further exacerbated in the aftermath of the fight for the Sojourner Truth Homes.

Life at the Sojourner Truth Homes

After the move-in residents tried to settle into their new homes. The relief experienced by the new occupants is expressed by one family, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Battle, who wrote to the *Michigan Chronicle* thanking the NAACP and others for their work, "by your continuous effort, you made it possible for us and 199 other families to have adequate housing and the proper home facilities and surroundings so that we, too, might bring our children up to know and believe in the democratic way of life."[237] Although there was great relief, in reality, the surrounding neighborhood remained threatening. Some Sojourner Truth residents described the project as an island or a city-within-a-city and recounted their habit of traveling to the neighborhood store in pairs or groups for safety.[238]

Despite the ongoing tensions outside the complex, within the Sojourner Truth Homes itself, there was a vibrant social life. In 1944 a preschool was opened in the center of the Sojourner Truth Homes complex and local auditoriums were slated to be used for recreational programs.[239] The Sojourner Cooperative was organized in March 1944 and initially operated their grocery market out of the Sojourner Truth Administration building in the center of the housing development.[240] Later, a storefront at Nevada and Conant was bought for $10,000.[241] The Cooperative sold shares to local families and offered small loans at four percent interest. Even with the patronage and support of residents of the Sojourner Truth Homes, the Co-op faced increased competition from nearby stores and closed before 1956.[242] In later years, Duke of Earl and His Black Knights, a youth drill team, was "the pride and joy of residents in the Sojourner Truth housing development area."[243] Racism in Detroit did not end once Blacks were able to move into the Sojourner Truth Homes. The SMFHIA remained in existence and continued to picket Blacks who moved into the

[235] Dominic J. Capeci ed., *Detroit and the "Good War": The World War II Letters of Mayor Edward Jeffries and Friends* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1996), 213.
[236] Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 73-75.
[237] "Family Lauds N.A.A.C.P and Committee," *Michigan Chronicle*, July 4, 1942.
[238] Ibid.
[239] "Nursery Opens in Sojourner Truth Housing Area," *Michigan Chronicle*, December 30, 1944.
[240] Charles Wartman, "New Consumer Co-op At Sojourner Truth," *Michigan Chronicle*, Mary 20, 1944; Conant Gardens, pg. 100-102.
[241] The Conant Gardeners, *Conant Gardens*, 102.
[242] Ibid., 100-102.
[243] "Bright Future Looms for High Stepping Youthful Drill Team," *Michigan Chronicle*, August 1, 1970.

area including Cleaster Lewis, who moved into 19081 Shields just two blocks from the Sojourner Truth Homes, in 1949.[244]

Despite the support the Conant Gardens Community Association had voiced for Black residency at the Sojourner Truth Homes after their initial protest, when Black residents began moving into the development, there was still an impression by incoming tenants that Conant Garden residents did not want them there. Early Sojourner Truth resident Gerald V. Blakely remembered, "It was the idea that it was a project and would take property values down. The only thing that disturbed me was that…it seemed like they were siding with the Whites to keep us out. Basically, nobody knew what the real reason was. This didn't come out for many years."[245] Blakely is alluding to the fact that the Conant Garden residents were more concerned with the property values of their hard-won homes and their middle-class status being threatened by the working-class nature of the housing project than the race of the incoming tenants. This sense of being unwelcome and not belonging to the wider neighborhood may have intensified the sense of insular community discussed by many early Sojourner Truth residents.

In oral history of Gerald V. Blakely conducted in early 2022, Bakely spoke to the strong sense of community within the housing project stating the sense of community was "very strong" as "we were the only people of color to move across Ryan Road at the time."[246] Blakely recalled how almost everyone in the complex had children and the children often played handball together behind the administration building.[247] It appears the strong camaraderie amongst residents, specifically children in the complex, remained strong into the latter half of the twentieth century. Former resident Jacquenetta Singleton who lived in the complex from 1966 until 1976 recalled how all of the neighborhood children played together, often in Krainz Wood Park but sometimes in the play area in the center of the complex itself. She recalled a vibrant social life for children in the complex stating "we had a community center and the community center had pool tables and ping pong tables. So we'd spend a lot of time in that community center. And we did social activities for the boys and the girls. Like charm school for the girls, which was really good."[248] Former resident Darnell Hall, who grew up in the complex in the 1970s recalled the swimmobile which parked outside the complex for children in the complex to use on hot summer days. He stated in an oral history conducted in early 2022 that "it was like a big semi-truck that had a pool" and "they would turn on the fire hydrant to fill it up and we would all play in the water."[249]

Oral histories documented by Elaine Latzman Moon corroborate that, initially, the residents within the Sojourner Truth Homes were bound together by a shared sense of camaraderie.

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[244] "Whites Picket Home Near Sojourner, But Police Quickly Halt Disturbance," *Michigan Chronicle*, October 1, 1949.
[245] Moon, *Untold Tales, Unsung Heroes*, 199.
[246] Gerald V. Blakely, interview by Cassandra Talley, February 3, 2022, in Detroit, Michigan.
[247] Gerald V. Blakely, interview by Cassandra Talley, February 3, 2022, in Detroit, Michigan.
[248] Jacquenetta Singleton, interview by Cassandra Talley, February 3, 2022, in Detroit, Michigan.
[249] Darnell Hall, interview by Cassandra Talley, March 5, 2022, in Detroit, Michigan.

However, divisions within the community developed in ensuing years as, "there developed a division even within the Sojourner Truth project from those who had lived in the project on Eight Mile Road and then moved to Sojourner Truth. The administration building was the dividing line. On one side of the project were the thugs, and on the other side were the nonthreatening folk."[250] Blakely even stated that those residents who lived on the east side of the housing complex referred to themselves as living in Grosse Pointe, a nearby wealthy suburb of Detroit, to differentiate themselves from the people who lived on the western half of the complex. Blakely recalled "all the people of color who lived in the projects, who lived on this side of the project, included themselves and said 'we were from Grosse Pointe'. Ya'll still down there [unintelligible] and they just live don [sic] the other side! It was funny."[251] Despite the division which formed within the complex in later years, the strong sense of community seems to be a defining memory for former residents of the Sojourner Truth Homes and even still for some residents who resided in the complex in the 1970s and later. Former resident Darnell Hall stated that "it wasn't your typical stereotype housing projects, it was family" when he grew up in the complex in the 1970s.[252]

Impact in Detroit: 1943 Riots

During the height of tensions in the fight for the Sojourner Truth Homes, Beulah Whitby, the supervisor of the Welfare Department of Detroit was quoted by the *Michigan Chronicle* as saying, "ideas are powerful weapons. The other side used the idea that the neighborhood would be defiled by Negro occupancy."[253] Indeed, "the other side" took this idea and used it to further catalyze many in the city toward even more destructive violence in 1943. The fight for the Sojourner Truth Homes dredged up a simmering hatred that would spill over the next summer when widescale riots ripped through Detroit in the summer of 1943.

Partially because of the incidents at the Sojourner Truth Homes in the spring of 1942, racial tensions were high in Detroit in 1942 and 1943. In August of 1942, just a few months after the riots at the Sojourner Truth Homes, *Life* magazine published a large expose on the conditions in Detroit including the lack of housing and racial tensions between ethnic, religious, and political factions.[254] Crowded conditions in the city, increased contacts between Whites and Blacks in wartime production factories, and underlying racial tensions simmered in the aftermath of the Sojourner Truth Homes riot. Between March 1, 1943, and May 31, 1943, it was estimated that 101,955 man-days were lost to work stoppages predicated on White worker's objections to the promotion or hiring of Black workers.[255] Inequality at work and dire housing conditions are two

[250] Moon, *Untold Tales, Unsung Heroes*, 200.
[251] Gerald V. Blakely, interview by Cassandra Talley, February 3, 2022, in Detroit, Michigan.
[252] Darnell Hall, interview by Cassandra Talley, March 5, 2022, in Detroit, Michigan.

[253] "Whitby, Others Address Body at Mass Meet," *Michigan Chronicle*, January 31, 1942.
[254] "Detroit is Dynamite," *Life*, August 17, 1942.
[255] Walter White and Thurgood Marshall, "What caused the Detroit Riot?" National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (July 1943), 8.

of the most important factors that contributed to the 1943 riot. Detroit Housing Commission member Horace A. White stated, "unbearable slum surroundings in which our people must live…contributed greatly to the bitterness which helped bring on this disgraceful happening."[256] Things came to a head in June 1943 when Detroit experienced one of the worst racial riots in twentieth-century America."[257] Black and White residents flocked to Belle Isle Park on a hot Sunday and one fight between Black and White youths soon escalated to fights throughout the park. Rumors swirled and separate Black and White gangs assembled and began roaming the city, inflamed by stories of violence perpetrated by the opposing side. Businesses were looted and hundreds of citizens suffered injuries as the riots roiled through the entire city. Predictably, police overwhelming arrested Black agitators in lieu of White agitators—Thurgood Marshall and Walter White of the NAACP estimate 85 percent of those arrested were Black.[258] The violence continued for two days before federal troops were able to quell the fighting. On June 22 armed federal troops in armed cars rolled into Detroit to restore calm.[259] The result was thirty-four people dead, 675 injured, and 1,893 arrested.[260] Black citizens were overwhelmingly the victims of this violence with twenty-nine of the thirty-four dead being Black.[261]

Impact on Other Housing Projects

Fights to integrate area housing developments continued. The Colonel Hamtramck Housing complex, located on Dequindre Street in Hamtramck, had three hundred units upon its completion in 1942. Reverend Charles Hill along with LeRoy G. White, chairman of the Hamtramck Negro Taxpayers League, were active in the fight to integrate the Colonel Hamtramck Housing complex.[262] In the aftermath of the Sojourner Truth Homes incident, there was a protracted legal dispute as to whether the project would be allocated to White or Black tenants and in what percentages. Initially, Hamtramck City Council had planned to house both Whites and Blacks at the development, however, "[f]ollowing the Sojourner Truth housing case, which resulted in a riot, the City of Hamtramck about faced and ruled that no Negroes—note even the 17% that had been agreed upon—should occupy a single unit in the new project."[263] This was the start of a legal battle as LeRoy White filed an injunction to halt the all-White occupancy—Judge Guy A. Miller issued a restraining injunction to halt the all-White occupancy in June of 1942.[264] Later, the NAACP stepped in to continue the legal fight in federal court. Twenty-two units remained unoccupied due to these legal fights and the case was not settled

256 "Slums Cause of Riot Topic at Housing Parley," *Detroit Times*, June 26, 1943.
257 Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 29.
258 White, Marshall, "What Caused the Detroit Riot," 13.
259 "23 Dead, 700 Hurt as Troops Take Over in Riot-Stricken Detroit," *Adrian Daily Telegram*, June 22, 1943.
260 Sugrue, *Origins of the Urban Crisis*, 29.
261 White, Marshall, "What Caused the Detroit Riot," 12.
262 "Second Fight Over Housing Faces Negroes," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 28, 1942.
263 "Hamtramck Housing Case is Dropped—In Lap of Judge," *Michigan Chronicle*, August 21, 1943.
264 "Race Bias Rides Again as Colonel Hamtramck Homes Figure in Housing Row," *Michigan Chronicle*, June 20, 1942.

until 1954 when Federal Judge Thomas P. Thornton issued a ruling that barred segregation in the complex.[265]

Outside of Detroit, other defense housing projects were also affected by the events at the Sojourner Truth Homes. One of the largest war housing complexes to be constructed in Michigan was Willow Run Housing development in Ypsilanti built for workers at Henry Ford's Willow Run Bomber Plant. The Willow Run Bomber Plant was the largest war manufacturing facility in the nation at the time and required an enormous worker population.[266] Willow Run Housing was composed of multiple sections – including Willow Run Lodge, a dormitory complex for single workers, and Willow Run Village, a housing complex composed of twenty-five hundred family housing units.[267] From its inception the complex was restricted to all-White residents despite the large Black population working at the Willow Run Bomber Plant. The housing complex was constructed only a year after the racial conflict and violence at the nearby Sojourner Truth Homes and the spirited protests for interracial occupancy was largely inspired by the events at the Sojourner Truth Homes.

The Detroit branch of the NAACP actively protested for interracial occupancy of the Willow Run housing complex, going so far as to state that the opposition to interracial war housing rests with the federal government as there "has been no organized opposition from either the union workers at the Willow Run plant or the Ford Motor company against Negro war worker's occupancy."[268] A *Michigan Chronicle* article featured photos of the housing complex under construction underneath the title "These Are the Lily-White Houses at Willow Run" and the NAACP published a pamphlet titled "Brotherhood and Willow Run" arguing for interracial occupancy. [269] The pamphlet argues that "the change in program as suggested by liberal groups re-enacts the errors of Sojourner Truth."[270] The NAACP went so far as to file suit on behalf of the Black war workers being denied housing units at Willow Run Housing despite there being 3,500 vacant public housing units.[271] Eventually, the Clay Hill neighborhood was constructed in Willow Run Housing. Clay Hill was poorly constructed temporary housing devoted exclusively to Black workers and existed on the fringe of the housing development, separating the White and Black tenants. The Clay Hill neighborhood was small and could not host the many Black

[265] "NAACP Wins Case Against Hamtramck Housing Comm.," *Michigan Chronicle*, January 16, 1954; "Homes Kept Vacant in Tenancy Dispute," *Detroit Free Press*, September 30, 1944.
[266] "Willow Run Village," Accessed 1/18/22, https://sites.google.com/site/willowrunvillage/history.
[267] "Willow Run Lodge," Digital Collections, The Henry Ford, https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/artifact/371837/
[268] "Demand All Detroit Projects Be Opened to All War Workers," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 20, 1943.
[269] "These are the Lilly-White Houses at Willow Run," *Michigan Chronicle*, April 10, 1943; "Urges Sharing of Willow Run Project Here," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 6, 1943.
[270] "Urges Sharing of Willow Run Project Here," *Michigan Chronicle*, March 6, 1943.
[271] "Project Units Denied Worker at Willow Run," *Michigan Chronicle*, Feb 26, 1944.

workers at the Willow Run Bombing Plant. A separate housing project, Parkridge Homes, was constructed in 1943 exclusively for Black workers at the plant. The poor nature of Clay Hill and the construction of a separate complex for Black workers is a testament to the continued and perpetuated racism in public housing despite increased demands and protests following the Sojourner Truth housing events.

Another development directly impacted by the continued segregation of defense housing that resulted from the fight for the Sojourner Truth Homes was the Norwayne Homes begun in 1942 in Westland, Michigan. The Norwayne Homes was a very large development of defense worker housing—containing nineteen hundred housing units with five thousand families in residence at its peak—built to house families of workers primarily employed at the Willow Run Bomber Plant.[272] Black families who inquired about open units at the Norwayne project were directed to the George Washington Carver Homes, an African American-only community in Inkster, Michigan.[273]

Similarly, temporary housing units for Black World War II veterans were proposed for Algonquin Park on the Detroit Riverfront in 1946. This project was vehemently protested by residents even though the surrounding neighborhood was relatively integrated.[274] Despite the threat of violence and a lawsuit, the temporary houses were in place by 1947. The issues at the Algonquin Homes made clear that, "the thinking which caused the difficulties in the case of Sojourner Truth and subsequently blocked further decent efforts to do something about the problem in Detroit were still present."[275] Based on aerial photos, the Algonquin houses were removed from the site by 1961.

Housing for African Americans was frequently shifted outside the city limits into areas with few services, including Royal Oak Township and Inkster (as mentioned above), among others. Called Oakdale Gardens, the development in Royal Oak Township opened in 1945 with 1,464 units total. In addition to being pushed outside the city limits, the housing units at Oakdale Gardens were not built for long term use as all units were "temporary demountable war time units which can be readily removed after the war…"[276] While the *Detroit Free Press* reported all units were demountable, the *Michigan Chronicle* reported that some units were permanent structures, built on site, while others were temporary units brought from nearby cities.[277] Where to place Black

[272] Rebecca Savage, Norwayne Historic District, National Register Nomination
[273] Ibid.
[274] "Algonquin Site Draws a Protest," *Michigan Chronicle*, August 31, 1946; "Violence and Riots Threatened by Residents of Algonquin Area," *Michigan Chronicle*, September 14, 1946 and "Court Orders Amended Bill in Algonquin Row," *Michigan Chronicle*, October 12, 1946.
[275] "Rental Housing Shortage Detroit's Unsolved Need," *Michigan Chronicle*, April 1, 1950.
[276] "New Housing Project Open," *Detroit Free Press*, January 7, 1945.
[277] "One Year of Growth at Oakdale Gardens," *Michigan Chronicle*, January 19, 1946.

housing was a topic constantly discussed by the *Michigan Chronicle* and the *Detroit Free Press* in the years after the violence at the Sojourner Truth Homes.[278]

Efforts to begin housing projects, developed by Blacks for Blacks, were fraught with issues due to similar racist reactions from neighbors. Everett Watson, a prominent Black businessman who owned Watson Realty Company bought 340 lots in the Welch-Oakwood Hill Subdivision in 1944 in southwest Detroit.[279] Houses in the Welch-Oakwood subdivision were set ablaze by locals when they learned Black residents were moving in.[280] The Welch-Oakwood subdivision development would later fail to materialize due to sustained White protest and the Detroit Common Council voting against it.[281]

The Political Impact

One of the outworking of the violence that occurred at the Sojourner Truth Homes and the 1943 riots was the "establishment of the Detroit Interracial Committee (IRC) 'to address the grievances of black city residents and to ameliorate racial tensions.'"[282] Reverend Charles A. Hill was named as a member of the IRC to help facilitate the process of analyzing the causes of the riot and recommending solutions. Later, the IRC would evolve into the Detroit Commission on Community Relations (DCCR) and was later known as the Human Rights Department.[283] Today, the DCCR has further evolved into the Civil Rights, Inclusion and Opportunity (CRIO) Department seated within the City of Detroit's government and working with the eleven-member Civil Rights Commission, whose members are appointed by the Mayor of Detroit. The CRIO Department continues this important work today by ensuring Detroiters' civil rights are protected by enforcing civil rights laws and ordinances and investigating allegations of misconduct. Additionally, the Detroit Council of Churches subcommittee on interracial problems was formed

[278] Charles Wartman, "Officials Tackle Housing Issue," *Michigan Chronicle*, January 20, 1945; Charles Wartman, "Edgecombe Sees More Housing for Detroit Negroes," *Michigan Chronicle*, May 19, 1945; Charles Wartman, "1936-1946: Ten Toughest Years in Detroit Housing," *Michigan Chronicle*, April 13, 1946; Hal Curtis, "Negroes Face Housing Crisis," *Detroit Free Press*, January 14, 1945; A.E. Stouffer, "Work Cutbacks Fail to Ease Housing Pinch," *Detroit Free Press*, July 8, 1945; Col. Henry H. Burdick, "Negro Housing Task is a Big Headache," *Detroit Free Press*, January 25, 1948; "Negroes' No. 1 Problem in Detroit is Still Housing," *Detroit Free Press*, June 17, 1957.

[279] "Waston Realty Co. Buys $1,500,000 Subdivision," *Michigan Chronicle*, October 7, 1944.

[280] "The Work of Firebugs," *Michigan Chronicle*, October 14, 1944; "Police Garage Shooting is Shrouded in Mystery," *Detroit Free Press*, October 6, 1944.

[281] "Negro Homes Inside City Voted Down, Oakwood Site Denied," *Detroit Free Press*, March 21, 1945.

[282] Sean Henry, "Racial Pragmatism and the Conditions of Racial Contact: The Detroit Interracial Committee, Public Schools, and Measuring Racial Tension, 1944-1950," *Michigan Historical Review* 46, 1 (Spring 2020), 69.

[283] "The 1943 Detroit Race Riot," Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Accessed 1/18/22, http://reuther.wayne.edu/node/8738 and "About CRIO," City of Detroit, Accessed 1/18/22, https://detroitmi.gov/departments/civil-rights-inclusion-opportunity-department/about-crio.

by Black and White ministers to deal with racial problems in the city. Formed in May of 1942, Reverend Charles A. Hill was named as chairman of the subcommittee.[284]

There were also political effects predicated on the events at the Sojourner Truth Homes and the 1943 race riots. In 1945 Mayor Edward Jeffries ran for reelection and "openly admitted that he rejected proposals by Negro leaders that housing projects be set up in currently white neighborhoods in the city."[285] In a lengthy article in *The Crisis* magazine in November 1945, author Gloster B. Current outlines the events which led from Jeffries having heavy Black support prior to 1943 to losing the Black vote afterwards. Jeffries' policy of not altering the racial characteristics of neighborhoods with future housing projects further exacerbated the shortage of housing for Black Detroiters – something which surely lost him much of the Black vote. The Crisis article stated that "by December, 1944, the [Detroit] Housing Commission wrote the mayor that under the policy of not changing the racial characteristics, they had reached their limit of war housing for Negroes. There were no additional sites available for the 14,000 bonafide applicants seeking housing. The FPHA had programmed 1400 units of housing for the Detroit area but there were no acceptable sites available under the Mayor's policy."[286] After the violence at the Sojourner Truth Homes in 1942 and the riot in 1943, Jeffries supporters weaponized White's fears of Black citizens moving into their neighborhoods by distributing handbills to help defeat Jeffries more progressive opponent Richard Frankensteen—at least one piece of campaign literature supporting Jeffries, which circulated widely in White neighborhoods stated, "Mayor Jeffries is Against Mixed Housing."[287] Later, in 1949 Albert Cobo won the mayoral election on a platform of stopping the "Negro Invasions" and by vetoing all public housing projects located in or near White neighborhoods in Detroit.[288]

Impact on World War II

The fight for the Sojourner Truth Homes and the overall impact on World War II was felt most acutely as it was used as a propaganda tool against the United States. An editorial in *The Crisis* provides context in that "[t]he Japanese radio propagandists have used the Sojourner Truth incident as an example to colored people of the Far East of the type of democracy they can expect from white America."[289] These propagandist messages that weaponized the racial hate and prejudice in the United States likely had an impact on Blacks being afforded greater access

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[284] "Detroit Council of Churches Appoints 4 Sub-Committees," *Michigan Chronicle*, May 16, 1942.
[285] Alfred McClung Lee, Norman Daymond Humphrey, "The Interracial Committee of the City of Detroit," The Journal of Educational Sociology 19, 5 (Jan. 1946), 281 and "Jeffries 'Denies' Race Baiting," *Michigan Chronicle*, November 10, 1945; Horace White, "The Facts in Our News," *Michigan Chronicle*, November 10, 1945.
[286] Gloster B. Current, "The Detroit Elections: Problem in Reconversion," *The Crisis*, November 1945, 319.
[287] Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law* (New York, NY: Liveright Publishing, 2017) 27.
[288] Rothstein, *The Color of Law*, 27.
[289] "Sojourner Truth Homes," *The Crisis*, April 1942 and "Axis Utilizing Housing Dispute," *Detroit Free Press*, March 7, 1942.

to some federal programs as it became increasingly untenable for the federal government to deny Black Americans inclusion in their programs. Executive Order 8802, as discussed above, was a direct result of advocacy by Black Americans who sought equality in the defense industries while institutions like the Federal Employment Practices Committee, which held hearings on racial discrimination in employment, were established to further advance equality efforts.[290] After the war several commissions and studies were done including the President's Committee on Civil Rights which released the landmark report *To Secure These Rights* in 1947.[291] The legacy of the war is complicated though, even with the recognition that World War II was a primary catalyst for the modern Civil Rights movement because "the impact and legacy of war were decidedly ambiguous, at times empowering black activists, at times constraining them, at times emboldening those seeking to preserve racial hierarchies, and at times making surprisingly little difference at all. For the most part though, the upheaval of wartime did indeed reshape the battleground and tactics of the black freedom struggle."[292]

During and after the war, African American citizens participated in the "Double V" campaign—launched by a man named James G. Johnson in a letter to prominent Black newspaper *The Pittsburgh Courier*—promising to fight for victory in the war but also to fight for victory and equality at home. The Double V campaign was significant as "[m]any historians see the Double V campaign as the opening salvo in the Civil Rights Movement and continued protest for racial justice."[293] The Double V campaign and its advocates, "embraced the idea that with the sacrifices of over one million black men and women in various branches of the military during World War II and six million more working in defense plants, they would not allow Jim Crow to remain unchallenged either during or after the war."[294]

Conclusion

The Sojourner Truth Homes are nationally significant for the role Black advocates played in the battle to retain these homes for Black residents. More than a fight for just housing, by insisting that they had the right to live in the Sojourner Truth Homes, Blacks were demanding that the United States live up to its democratic principles and grant them the same rights as Whites, not only in housing but in military service, fair employment, equal education, access to public accommodations, equal medical care—even the right to donate blood to help servicemen.[295] As expressed in many Black newspapers at the time, if America failed to provide equality for Blacks

[290] "Fair Employment Practices Committee," *Britannica*, Accessed 1/20/22, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Fair-Employment-Practices-Committee.
[291] "Executive Order 9981," *Britannica*, Accessed 1/20/22, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Executive-Order-9981.
[292] Kevin M. Kruse, Stephen Tuck, ed., *Fog of War: The Second World War and the Civil Rights Movement* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), 6-7.
[293] Euell A. Nielsen, "The Double V Campaign," *BlackPast*, Accessed 1/19/22, www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/events-african-american-history/the-double-v-campaign-1942-1945/.
[294] Ibid.
[295] "Red Cross Says Refusal of Negro Blood is U.S. Order," *Detroit Tribune*, December 20, 1941.

than democracy was a just a sham, used when convenient for wartime patriotism but abandoned during situations of real import.

Perhaps most importantly, the fight for the Sojourner Truth Homes and all the inequities that Blacks faced during World War II exposed more clearly the serious issues and appalling double standards in America. Black soldiers were disgusted that they were told to fight and die overseas, yet when they came home, they were expected to fall right back into second class citizenship. They were unwilling. And, because of this long history of inequality, the violence, the frustration, and the intractable, entrenched racism, Black residents in Detroit responded urgently when the Sojourner Truth Homes—one tiny glimmer of hope in a truly dire situation—were nearly taken away. In all of this, laid bare, was the excruciating dichotomy between what was expected of them and what was given. It became clear that was given would always be meager and inadequate and thus it would have to be demanded.

In addition to Black activists in Detroit on the front lines of the fight, national leaders in the NAACP, the Roosevelt administration, and prominent Michigan politicians and civic and religious leaders were instrumental in ensuring these homes remained available to Black residents. The violence that played out in 1942 highlighted to the entire nation how brutal racism affected Black Detroiters who were simply trying to move into decent housing. The ordinary citizens who moved into these homes made history by unloading their moving trucks, uncowed by racist neighbors. These residents forged a dynamic community at the Sojourner Truth Homes that many residents still fondly remember.

Today, the Sojourner Truth Homes possess historic integrity and hundreds of Detroiters still call this historic complex home. Owned by the Detroit Housing Commission and operated by Legacy PMC Management the homes are utilized as low-income housing for Detroiters who meet certain income requirements. The historic brick clad buildings are still instantly recognizable, and they are now interspersed with newer, circa 1986-1987 townhouses.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ___10.93_____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 42.427758 Longitude: -83.056819

2. Latitude: 42.426095 Longitude: -83.056819

3. Latitude: 42.426095 Longitude: -83.053084

4. Latitude: 42.427758 Longitude: -83.053084

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 approximately 330 feet west of the intersection of East Nevada Avenue and Fenelon Avenue the boundary extends north into the complex approximately 120 feet and then turns east and travels approximately 170 feet before turning north and travelling 280 feet. The boundary then turns west and travels approximately 170 feet before turning north and travelling approximately 130 feet until reaching Stockton Avenue. The boundary turns west at Stockton Avenue and travels approximately 360 feet before turning south and travelling 130 feet. The boundary then turns west and travels 220 feet before turning south and travelling 280 feet before travelling east 260 feet. The boundary then travels south approximately 120 feet until reaching East Nevada Avenue. The boundary then travels east until reaching the starting point along East Nevada Avenue.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary selected includes the 20 still extant historic masonry buildings which are concentrated at the center of the public housing complex. Because the complex was heavily altered int eh 1980s including demolishing 29 of the original wood frame buildings and redesigning the landscape and street design, the boundary does not include the entire rectangular complex and instead focuses on the historic masonry buildings. The proposed boundary does include three non-contributing resources which sit at the center of the complex between the historic masonry buildings.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: _Lillian Candela (Project Architect & Architectural Historian) and Cassandra Talley (Architectural Historian)_____
organization: _Kraemer Design Group, LLC_____
street & number: _1420 Broadway Street_____
city or town: _Detroit_____ state: ___MI_____ zip code: __48226____
e-mail_Lillian.Candela@thekraemeredge.com_____
telephone: _313 965 3399_____
date:_____2022_____

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

Name of Property: Sojourner Truth Homes Public Housing Complex

City or Vicinity: Detroit

County: Wayne State: Michigan

Photographer: Kraemer Design Group, LLC

Date Photographed: March 4, 2022

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

Photograph 0001 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0001
View from central administration building looking southwest at complex.

Photograph 0002 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0002
View of central administration building. Looking northeast.

Photograph 0003 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0003
View of front of typical housing building. Looking north.

Photograph 0004 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0004
View of typical housing building with ground floor accessible bedroom addition. Looking northwest.

Photograph 0005 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0005
View between two typical housing buildings. Looking north.

Photograph 0006 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0006
View of 1980s modernization program townhouses directly outside the proposed National Register boundary. Looking southwest.

Photograph 0007 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0007
View of typical housing building. Looking northeast.

Photograph 0008 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0008
View looking north down road in complex looking between two typical housing buildings. Krainz Woods Park and Atkinson Elementary in the background.

Photograph 0009 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0009
View of rear of typical housing building. Looking northeast.

Photograph 0010 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0010
View of typical housing buildings. Looking north. Atkinson Elementary in the background.

Photograph 0011 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0011
View of typical parking lot and typical housing building with ground floor accessible bedroom addition. Looking northeast.

Photograph 0012 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0012
Looking north at side elevation of typical housing building.

Photograph 0013 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0013
Looking northwest at typical housing building.

Photograph 0014 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0014
Typical front entry door to Unit 4718. Looking west.

Photograph 0015 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0015
Interior of Unit 4718. Standing in entryway looking at interior stair.

Photograph 0016 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0016
Interior of Unit 4718. View of first floor living area from the kitchen.

Photograph 0017 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0017
Interior of Unit 4718. View of first floor kitchen.

Photograph 0018 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0018
Interior of Unit 4718. View of second floor bathroom.

Photograph 0019 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0019
Interior of Unit 4718. View of typical second floor bedroom.

Photograph 0020 of 0020: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0020
Interior of Unit 4718. View of typical second floor bedroom.

Photograph 0021 of 0021: MI_Wayne County_Sojourner Truth Homes_0021
Interior of Unit 4718. View from second floor landing looking down interior stair and into typical front bedroom.

Sojourner Truth Homes Historic District

Polygon Boundary

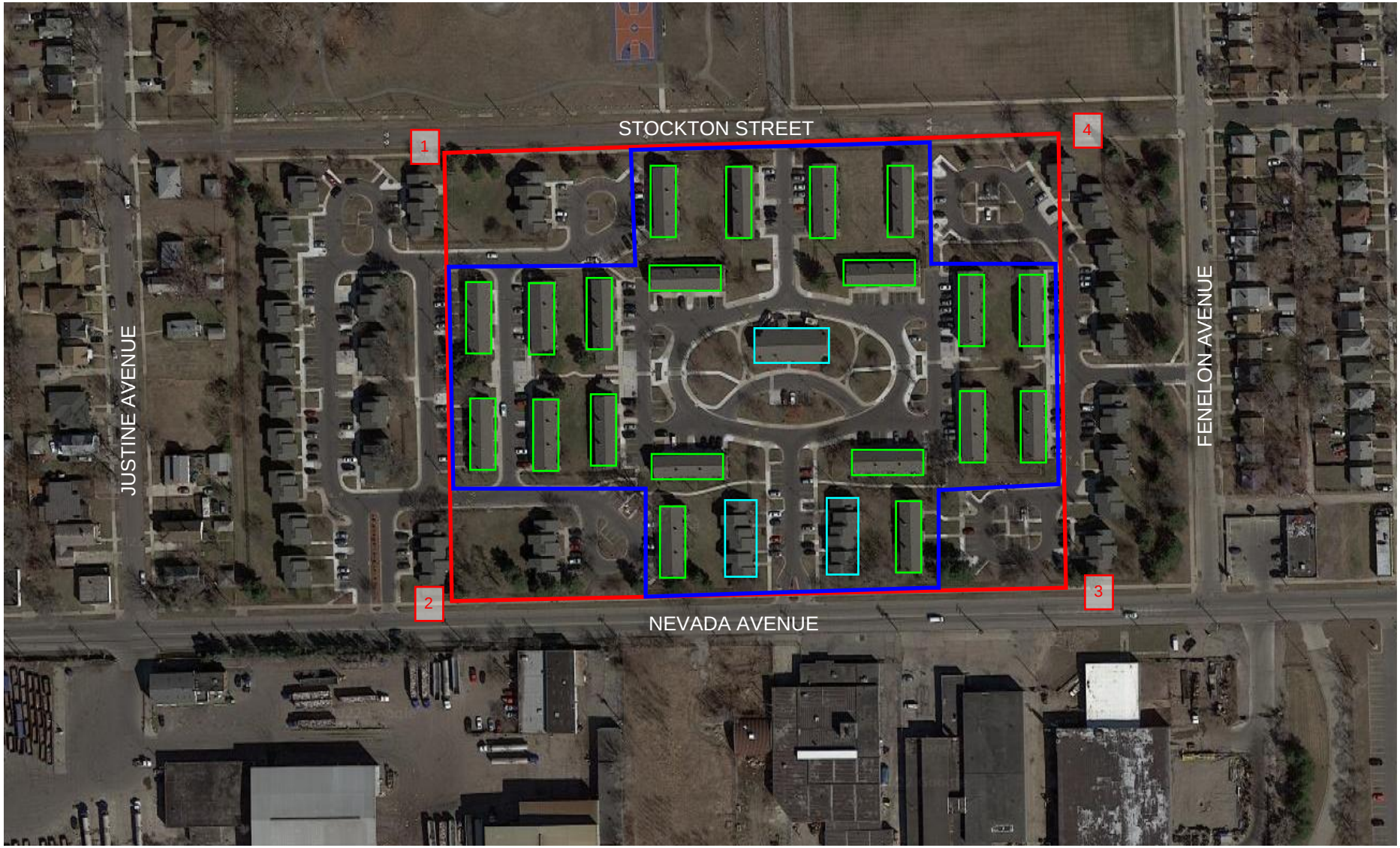
1 **Coordinates**

Latitude/Longitude Polygon Coordinates

1. 42.427758, -83.056819
2. 42.426095, -83.056819
3. 42.426095, -83.053084
4. 42.427758, -83.053084

N

500 ft



N

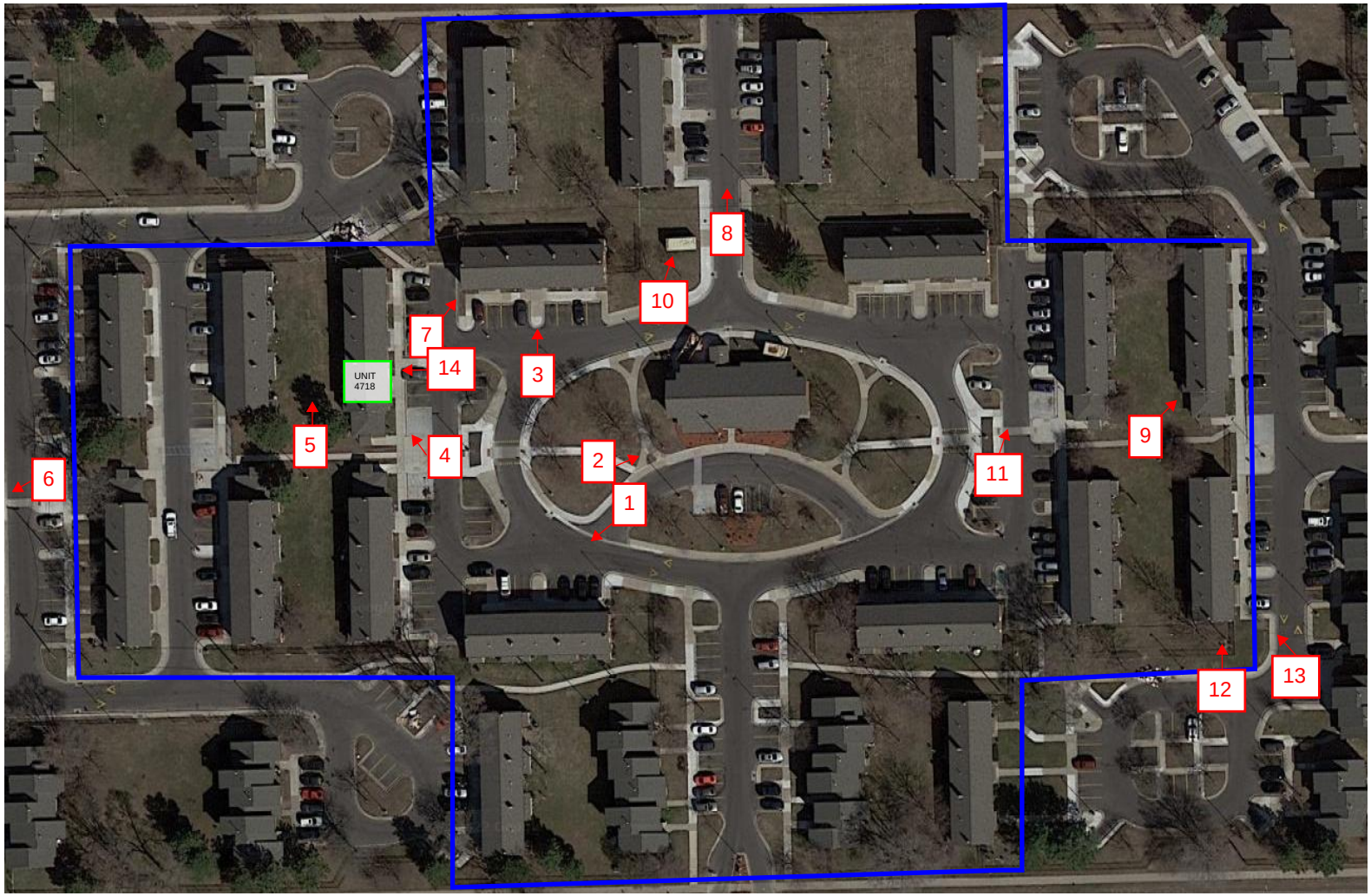
100 ft

Sojourner Truth Homes Historic District

- Polygon Boundary
- National Register Boundary
- 1 Coordinates
- Contributing Building Footprint
- Non-Contributing Building Footprint

Latitude/Longitude Polygon Coordinates

1. 42.427758, -83.056819
2. 42.426095, -83.056819
3. 42.426095, -83.053084
4. 42.427758, -83.053084



Sojourner Truth Homes Historic District
Photo Map

National Register Boundary

1 **Exterior Photo**

UNIT 4718 **Photos 0015-0021 taken inside typical unit 4718**

N

50 ft


RESERVED
PARKING


4605


DIRECTV
DIRECTV
DIRECTV


DIRECTV


DIRECTV


4718

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Nomination
Property Name:	Sojourner Truth Homes
Multiple Name:	The Civil Rights Movement and the African American Experience in 20th Century Detroit MPS
State & County:	MICHIGAN, Wayne

Date Received:	Date of Pending List:	Date of 16th Day:	Date of 45th Day:	Date of Weekly List:
8/3/2022	8/17/2022	9/1/2022	9/19/2022	

Reference number:	MP100008140
Nominator:	SHPO

Reason For Review:

X Accept _____ Return _____ Reject **9/15/2022** Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Sojourner Truth Homes is a small district consisting of the core of a Defense Housing project in Detroit constructed between 1941 and 1942. Due to policies at the Federal and local levels, the decision to allow Black or White residents for the project went back and forth, with the eventual outcome being that the project was designated for Black residents. The surrounding white neighborhood erupted in violent protest and the decision teetered on reversal. In the end, Black families were moved in, but no policy changes were forthcoming. Subsequent projects were once again assigned to areas where the color balance would not be altered. But, the final result was viewed as a victory by the national organizations involved - the NAACP and the National Urban League - as well as African Americans across the county who followed the news. Nationally significant in Politics/Government, Ethnic Heritage: Black, and Social History. POS 1941-43

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept / A

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 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.

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
MICHIGAN STRATEGIC FUND
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

QUENTIN L. MESSER, JR.
PRESIDENT

Wednesday, August 3, 2022

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 the **Sojourner Truth Homes, 4525 and 4801 East Nevada Street, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan**. This property is being submitted for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This nomination is a __X__ New Submission ____Resubmission ____Additional Documentation ____Removal.

__1__ Signed National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
__2__ Locational maps (incl. with nomination file)
__1__ Sketch map(s) / figures(s) / exhibits(s) (incl. with nomination file)
__1__ Pieces of correspondence (incl. with nomination file)
__21__ Digital photographs (incl. with nomination file)
____ 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.
__X__ This nomination has been funded by the following NPS grant:
Underrepresented Communities Grant (2019)
____ 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,

Martha MacFarlane-Faes
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

MICHIGAN SHPO STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

300 NORTH WASHINGTON SQUARE • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48913
michigan.gov/**shpo** • (517) 335-9840