Know Our Heritage

The African-American Experience in Cleveland

Courtesy of Antioch Baptist Church.
Know Our Heritage:
The African-American Experience in Cleveland

Cleveland Restoration Society
Sarah Benedict House
3751 Prospect Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44115-2705
www.clevelandrestoration.org
(216) 426-1000

Kathleen H. Crowther, President
Michael Fleenor, Director of Preservation Services
Kerri Broome, Director of Development & Publications
Jessica Dawson, Membership & Communications Assistant
Dawn Ellis, Community Volunteer

© Cleveland Restoration Society, October 2014. All rights reserved.

The Cleveland Restoration Society’s 40th Anniversary Legacy Project was a survey of resources significant to Cleveland’s African-American history and culture followed by an educational component called “Know Our Heritage.” The survey was completed by Alexa McDonough, an Ohio History Service Corps, Ohio Historic Preservation Corps Surveyor stationed at CRS. The project was guided by a task force of community leaders: Natoya Walker-Minor and Bracy Lewis, co-chairs; Bishara Addison; Christopher Busta-Peck; Jennifer Coleman; Carla Dunton; Susan Hall; Shelley Stokes-Hammond; Cleveland City Councilman Jeff Johnson; Reverend Charles Lucas; Reverend Tony Minor; Carolyn Smith; Dr. Stephanie Ryberg Webster; Dr. Regennia Williams; and Jessica Wobig.

The Know Our Heritage Education Program was made possible in part by a grant from the Ohio History Connection’s History Fund. The History Fund is supported exclusively by voluntary donations of Ohio income tax refunds and designated gifts to the Ohio History Connection.

Cleveland Restoration Society is supported in part by the residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture.

The Ohio Arts Council helped fund the Cleveland Restoration Society with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans.

Thanks to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office Certified Local Government grant program, supported by the U.S. Dept. of the Interior's Historic Preservation Fund, and the Abington Foundation, for the generous support of this project.
The Great Migration
The Black Church, Part One
The Black Church, Part Two
The Black Church, Part Three
The Jewish - African American Connection
Blacks in Business
Arts & Culture
Civil Rights

Sources

Kempton Avenue, 1956. Photograph by Thomas James, Cleveland Press Collection, Michael Schwartz Library, Cleveland State University.
The Great Migration of African Americans out of the South began around the turn of the twentieth century and lasted through the 1960s. During that time, more than six million blacks moved from America's rural south to the North, Midwest, and West.

Cleveland became the destination for people from the southern Appalachians and Piedmont region seeking a better life than the South offered, including gainful employment. Starting before the Civil War, Cleveland had a strong abolitionist community, thus the climate here was more accepting of different races than in some other northern cities. The center of the African-American community in Cleveland in the mid-nineteenth century was the old Haymarket district on Central Avenue. Although blacks lived primarily in three east-side wards of the City, each of these wards was thoroughly integrated. Most lecture halls, schools, restaurants and other public facilities were integrated. It was as the Great Migration unfolded in Cleveland that racial prejudice and segregation became prevalent.

The newcomers to Cleveland included younger men, who were single, looking for employment. But also entire families came to Cleveland, groups of friends from the same town and entire religious congregations relocated here. Overall, Cleveland's population grew 60% between 1910 and 1930, rising to 900,429. The majority of African Americans coming into the city as part of the Great Migration chose to live in the Cedar-Central neighborhood (which included the area known today as Fairfax).
The boundaries of Cedar-Central are generally considered Euclid Avenue to the north, E. 71st Street to the east, Woodland Avenue to the south, and E. 22nd Street to the west. Central Avenue was a thriving retail street that bisected the neighborhood. Today, Central Avenue has completely changed and the dense building fabric is almost completely gone. But try to imagine what it was like by seeing the historic photograph of the Majestic Hotel, which was located at the northeast corner of East 55th and Central. The largest African-American owned and operated hotel in the city, the Majestic hosted many political, theatrical, and sport celebrities.

In our survey, we documented the Vera Apartment Building at 7808-7810 Cedar Avenue as a type of apartment housing where African-American newcomers from the South would live. The Vera was typical of the multi-family buildings that existed along Cleveland's streetcar lines. These apartment buildings housed many newcomers to Cleveland. Finding employment in Cleveland's many industries helped many to move up and out to single-family residences.

Some of the vintage housing stock remains in Cedar-Central. The best example we have is Judge Jean Murrell Capers' House at 2380 E. 40th Street. The home was purchased in 1933 by Edward Murrell, Capers' father, who contributed largely to the African-American community in Northeast Ohio. Edward Murrell was primarily involved with African American newspapers, The Post and The Call, which we now know as the Call and Post, the only African-American owned general circulation newspaper in Cleveland. Jean Murrell Capers was the first African American elected to Cleveland City Council.
Another very important figure in this history is Jane Edna Hunter. Mrs. Hunter came to Cleveland in 1905 after being trained in Virginia as a nurse. She became concerned about the young women who came north to Cleveland and were not eligible, because of their race, to stay at the YWCA. These young women were eager to learn a skill such as nursing in order to improve their station and become part of the working middle class. Yet they were ill-prepared for the big city and they were vulnerable. In 1911, Mrs. Hunter led an interracial effort to form the Working Girls Association in order to build a place where the women could live safely and learn a skill, thus setting them up for a stable life.

The name was changed to the **Phillis Wheatley Association** later in 1911 to honor the late eighteenth-century Boston slave considered the first African-American poet. After operating out of several locations in the neighborhood, the organization was able to raise the funds to build a new nine-story building at 4450 Cedar Avenue. Rehabilitated within the last ten years, today the building is known as **Emeritus House**.


Courtesy of the Phillis Wheatley Association.
In the mid-1930s, there was a recognition that more and decent housing was needed to be provided, as Cleveland's population had grown markedly. The Public Works Administration, a Depression-era program design to provide jobs for the unemployed, built Olde Cedar, Outhwaite Homes, and Lakeview Estates, the nation's first three public housing developments. These developments were heralded at the time as an important step forward in assisting families at the time that they really needed it. These early public housing developments are some of the best examples of International Style architecture in Cleveland, reflecting bright, stylized visions for the future and stressing horizontal lines and openness.

**Outhwaite** was the childhood home of two important figures in American political history, Carl and Louis Stokes. Carl was the first African-American mayor of a major American city when he was elected Cleveland Mayor in 1967. And Louis, still alive today, was the first African-American U.S. Congressman from Ohio, who served with distinction for fifteen consecutive terms.

The church is perhaps the strongest institution in the African-American community. In fact, entire congregations were known to move together to Cleveland during the Great Migration.
The importance of the church in the history of African Americans in the United States is undeniable. This institution historically has provided vital support and direction in the development and strengthening of African-American communities for centuries; from the time of the original thirteen colonies through desegregation and the Civil Rights struggle. The black church has played a key role in the political, social, and economic presence of African Americans within this country.

The spread of Christianity among blacks in America was inconsistent. In the South, it was feared that exposure to the religion would encourage slaves to press for individual literacy and liberty. The ability of black slaves to freely assemble for worship was prohibited and the religious education of slaves was often designed to reinforce black servitude as divinely ordained. In the North, free blacks were able to establish churches to provide education and job opportunities for African Americans and use these organizations for political and social action. These northern churches would provide a platform for the abolitionist movement leading towards the Civil War and Emancipation, as well as provide a supportive framework for blacks later during the years of the Great Migration, and invaluable power to the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s.

In Cleveland, The church became increasingly important as Cleveland's population swelled in the first half of the twentieth century. As the population of African Americans in Cleveland grew, churches provided crucial social services and became ever more important landmarks within their communities.
There are many sacred landmarks in the Central neighborhood that have played an important role in the history of the African American experience in Cleveland. The locally and nationally landmarked **St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church** can be found at 2261 E. 40th Street. Designed by Sidney Badgley and William Nicklas and completed in 1908, this church building houses the oldest African-American congregation in Cleveland. From its location in the heart of the Central neighborhood, St. John A. M. E. has hosted speakers such as Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois and singer Marian Anderson for her first Cleveland concert in 1919.

Originally built as First Church of Christ, Scientist, **Lane Metropolitan Christian Methodist Episcopal Church** is sited across the street from the Phillis Wheatley Association's Emeritus House, at 2131 E. 46th Street (at the corner of E. 46th Street and Cedar Avenue). This Neoclassical church, designed by George Hammond and built in 1900, features an exterior massing that is similar to the Pantheon in Rome. The congregation of Lane Metropolitan C. M. E. purchased the building in 1919, and remains there today. One of the church's former pastors was Rev. Anzo Montgomery, who, prior to coming to Cleveland, had joined with other clergy in Topeka, Kansas in challenging segregation in schools. This had eventually resulted in the 1954 landmark Supreme Court case **Brown v. Board of Education**. Lane Metropolitan C. M. E. has been designated a Cleveland Landmark.
The congregation of **St. Andrew's Episcopal Church** was founded in 1890 as a mission of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. The church's current home, located at 2171 E. 49th Street, is a Gothic Revival style building designed by architect Charles Schneider and completed in 1916. It has been designated a Cleveland Landmark. St. Andrew's was the first recognized African American Episcopal congregation in Cleveland, with a prosperous parish that included members such as inventor Garrett Morgan and politician John Patterson Green, the "Father of Labor Day". The parish has a long history of involvement in civil rights. In 1922, St. Andrew's was the host for the national convention of the Colored Workers of the Episcopal Church. In 1991, the pastor of St. Andrew's wrote legislation that created a scholarship program to address racism with the denomination nationwide.

**St. Philip's Christian Church.** 2303 E. 30th Street, was designed by architect Frederick S. Toguchi and completed in 1968. Toguchi, who won the Cleveland Arts Prize in 1965, was a Modernist architect. His other projects include Burke Lakefront Airport Terminal and Tower, the Frank J. Lausche State Office Building, Lakewood's Beck Center for the Performing Arts, and Lakeland Community College. Toguchi's design for St. Philip's, located near Cuyahoga Community College's Metro Campus and the Cedar Apartments public housing project, has created a church unlike any other in the city. St. Philip's, which has been designated a Cleveland Landmark, has little ornamentation because its small, poor congregation felt that their work was focused on the outside of the church, rather than inside its four walls. The building itself has been created using precast concrete panels.
Fairfax refers to a section of Cleveland that was previously part of the Central neighborhood. As in Central, Fairfax saw population growth during the first half of the twentieth century, as African Americans settled there with the influx of newcomers to Cleveland during the Great Migration. However, both neighborhoods experienced dramatic decreases in population during the second half of the century.

One religious denomination that found a home in Fairfax was the Baptists. Cleveland's second oldest congregation and first African-American Baptist church was Shiloh Baptist Church, founded in 1849. In 1893, part of Shiloh's congregation separated and formed Antioch Baptist Church, which was the second African-American Baptist church in Cleveland. Antioch grew to become the city's largest black church in the early twentieth century, having 1,200 members in 1923. The church, at 8869 Cedar Avenue, was completed in 1892 as Bolton Avenue Presbyterian Church. The Romanesque Revival style building, designed by architect William Warren Sabin, was purchased by the Baptist congregation in 1934. A very active church, Antioch has offered many programs to assist the community throughout the years, including the first faith-based AIDS program in Ohio. It has its own credit union and a twelve-story apartment building. Important speakers, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., have been in Antioch's pulpit. The church has been designated a Cleveland Landmark.
Construction on **Emmanuel Baptist Church**, built after a fire destroyed the first home of the congregation, began in 1940 and the church was dedicated in 1949. Located at 7901 Quincy Avenue, it was the first Baptist church in Cleveland to be built to completion by an African-American congregation. The church has had a steady and committed membership. For a span of forty years, from 1966 to 2006, the congregation was led by Rev. Sterling Glover. Emmanuel Baptist Church continues to provide services and programs to its Fairfax community.

The **Olivet Institutional Baptist Church**, 8712 Quincy Avenue, has roots in the Olivet Baptist Church of 1884 and has been recognized for its important role in Cleveland's African-American community. The church building, completed in 1954, is traditional but simple. Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. used Olivet as a base of operations for his work in Cleveland. The pulpit has also hosted Coretta Scott King, Jimmy Carter, Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, Tavis Smiley, Oprah Winfrey, Bill Clinton, Hilary Clinton, and Al Gore. The roots of the congregation can be traced to Cleveland's Triedstone Baptist Church. In 1931, members of that church decided to split from their church and formed what they called New Light Baptist Church (which met at the former Temple Tifereth Israel, now known as Friendship Baptist Church at 5600 Central Avenue). Eventually that church became Olivet Institutional Baptist Church and built its current home on Quincy. Under the leadership of Dr. Otis Moss Jr., who is known for his connection to both Martin Luther King, Sr. and Martin Luther King, Jr. and his work to advance civil rights, Olivet Institutional Baptist Church became the largest African-American church in the state of Ohio.
Serving a congregation founded in 1894, **St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church** at 8401 Cedar Avenue is one of Cleveland's leading black churches. In 1926, with a congregation of more than 500 individuals, St. James A. M. E. purchased the sacred landmark that had been known as Trinity Congregational Church. Despite fires in the 1930s and 1950s, the congregation has remained in this Richardsonian Romanesque building since 1926. The church is known for its activism in promoting civil rights and for its community involvement.

The parish of **St. Adalbert**, a rare Catholic African-American church, was originally established to serve Bohemian (Czech) Catholics. The Romanesque style church of St. Adalbert, located at 2345 E. 83rd Street, was designed by architect William P. Ginther and completed in 1911. Established in 1922, Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament, a neighboring parish to St. Adalbert, was the first African-American parish in the Diocese of Cleveland. Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament grew steadily and offered many services and activities for parishioners and the greater community, including a credit union, vocational training programs and youth programs. By the 1960s, St. Adalbert's membership had dwindled while concurrently the church of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament was in need of expensive rehabilitation. The decision was made to combine the two parishes at St. Adalbert and Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament's large African-American congregation moved to St. Adalbert in 1961. A Cleveland Landmark, the church was closed by Bishop Richard Lennon of the Diocese in 2009, however the Vatican ordered that the church be reopened in 2012.
The Black Church, Part Three

African Americans living in Cleveland could choose from a number of denominations in order to meet their spiritual needs. These churches provided critical services not only to their congregations, but also to the greater community by offering programs for all ages, including their own credit unions and housing development. Some churches have taken a more activist role in advancing civil and social justice agendas. All churches have a place in the heritage of the African-American experience in Cleveland.

The home of the congregation of Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church was originally built as Grace Lutheran Church in 1908. The brick and stone Gothic Revival building, at 1754 E. 55th Street, was designed by Cleveland architects Bohnard and Parsson. The congregation of Fellowship Missionary Baptist was the sixth to come out of Shiloh Baptist Church, the oldest African-American Baptist Church in Cleveland.
**Fidelity Baptist Church.** at 8402 Wade Park Avenue, is an impressive example of Gothic Revival in wood. The church is architect Sidney Badgley's only existing frame building in Cleveland. According to permits, the building was constructed in 1891. It is an Akron Plan church, with its sanctuary on an angle.

**East Mount Zion Baptist Church** is located at 9990 Euclid Avenue, the southwest corner of E. 100th Street and Euclid Avenue. The building, designed by George Kramer and completed in 1908, also follows the Akron Plan of church layout. The congregation of East Mount Zion Baptist Church purchased this building from Euclid Avenue Christian Church (a congregation of the Disciples of Christ) in 1955, and became the first African-American church to hold its services on Euclid Avenue. The exterior of East Mount Zion Baptist has a unique facing of green serpentinite stone, which comes from Chester County in southeastern Pennsylvania.

Although the building housing **Mt. Zion Congregational Church** is modern, the congregation itself is one of the oldest African-American congregations in Cleveland. In 1864, a small group from Shiloh Baptist Church organized the first African-American Congregational church east of the Mississippi River. The congregation met in various place until the 1950s, when a decision was made to construct a home at 10723 Magnolia Drive. Despite efforts to slow or stop construction, the church was completed in 1955. Mt. Zion Congregational Church has a long history of providing services and resources to the African-American community. For example, the congregation formed the Mt. Zion Congregational Church Lyceum to address community issues and the Christian Business League to promote the development of African-American business in the city. The church also hosted Cleveland's first African-American Girl Scout troop and programs of the Urban League of Greater Cleveland.
Greater Abyssinia Baptist Church. 1161 E 105th Street, has hosted important figures such Hubert Humphrey, vice president under Lyndon B. Johnson and primary author of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Reverends Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton. Cleveland Councilman Rev. E. Theophilus Caviness served as one-time pastor of the church and also held various public and civic positions, including a seat on the Ohio Civil Rights Commission. A former congregant of Greater Abyssinia was Edward Durden, a well-known civil rights activist. The church is the current home of the Cleveland chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Greater Friendship Baptist Church. 12305 Arlington Avenue, was designed by Corbusier, Lenski, and Foster as First Evangelical and Reformed Church. There are three large African-American-themed stained glass windows that illuminate the inside of the church.

The African American Experience in Cleveland is a proud, rich heritage. In the 1830s, six runaway slaves formed St. John A.M.E. - the first black church in the city. During the Great Migration, mainly the first half of the next century, the number of African Americans in Cleveland increased dramatically, and thus, the number of black churches did as well.
The Jewish—African American Connection

Nationally the relationship between Jews and Blacks is complex, nuanced and richly textured. Throughout the years, both groups have been able to find similarities in their history and to empathize with the other. When it comes to housing, both African Americans and Jews have faced discrimination and restriction, and have, consequently, found themselves sharing neighborhoods. The Great Migration of African Americans and the second wave of Jewish (Eastern European) immigration partially overlapped, resulting in large numbers of these two groups locating in prescribed areas of northern American cities, such as Chicago, Philadelphia and Cleveland.

The first Jews arrived in Cleveland from Germany in the 1830s, settling primarily in the Central area and gradually moving eastward towards the suburbs through the end of the nineteenth century and into the middle of the twentieth century. The subsequent wave of Eastern European Jews to move into Cleveland in the 1870s and 1880s entered into the areas already inhabited by the earlier Jewish immigrants.

Early in the twentieth century, African Americans also lived in other parts of the east side, but no area was predominantly African American. As other ethnic groups dispersed and restrictive covenants limited where the rising African-American middle class could buy property, the area around Central Avenue began to become exclusively African Americans. As Jews and other groups moved to the suburbs after the war, African Americans began to move to Hough, Mount Pleasant and Glenville. As Cleveland's Jews followed the national trend of moving from the urban neighborhoods to the suburbs, blacks were able to rent or buy property, including synagogues, in these areas. Several of Cleveland's synagogues were bought by African-American Christian congregations.
The oldest Jewish congregation in Cleveland was a German Orthodox group established in 1841 (chartered in February 1842) that came to be known as **Anshe Chesed**, now known as Fairmount Temple. This congregation built Cleveland's first synagogue, near the intersection of Eagle Street and Woodland Avenue. The site of now-demolished Eagle Street Synagogue is roughly center field of Progressive Field. As the Anshe Chesed congregation grew, the Eagle Street Synagogue became too small for their needs. A new, larger building was completed in 1887 at Scovill Avenue and Henry Street. The Scovill Avenue Synagogue, which would now be on the campus of Cuyahoga Community College near what is now called Community College Avenue and E. 25th Street, has been demolished.

Anshe Chesed continued to flourish, and in 1910 began construction on a third synagogue on Euclid Avenue at E. 82nd Street. Designed by architects Lehman and Schmitt, who also designed the Cuyahoga County Courthouse, the Euclid Avenue Temple was dedicated in 1912. The Neoclassical synagogue featured a symmetrical plan with a semicircular auditorium holding seating for 1,400 and stained glass windows designed by Louis Tiffany. As many of Anshe Chesed's members moved east, the congregation made the decision to move to Beachwood and build a new facility. A building permit was issued for the construction in the eastern suburb in 1954, with the name of the congregation changing to Fairmount Temple. With this move from the city, the Euclid Avenue building was sold to the members of **Liberty Hill Baptist Church**, which moved into the landmark in 1957. The congregation of Liberty Hill Baptist was formed in 1917 and moved several times before finding a home on Euclid Avenue.
Just a few years after Anshe Chesed was chartered in the 1840s, a group of members broke off to form a new congregation, which became **Tifereth Israel**, the city's second oldest Jewish congregation. This group built the Huron Road Temple, dedicated in December 1855, at Huron Road and Miami Street (now E. Sixth Street), now demolished. In 1894, as the Jewish community was moving eastward, Tifereth Israel relocated to a new synagogue on the corner of Willson Avenue (now E. 55th Street) and Central Avenue. This building, the Willson Avenue Temple, was designed by Lehman and Schmitt, the same architects of the Euclid Avenue Temple, and completed in 1894. In 1924, the congregation moved to University Circle, leaving the Willson Avenue Temple empty. From 1924 to the late 1930s, the Willson Avenue building was home to Mt. Zion Congregational Church. In 1940, the church was purchased by **Friendship Baptist Church**, one of the city's largest Baptist congregations.

Cleveland's third-oldest Jewish congregation is **B'nai Jeshurun**, established in 1866 by Hungarian immigrants. Following worship in several temporary homes, B'nai Jeshurun purchased the Eagle Street Synagogue from Anshe Chesed in 1886. In 1905 B'nai Jeshurun built Temple B'nai Jeshurun at 55th and Scovill. The neoclassical synagogue, dedicated in September 1906, was designed by architect Harry Cone. In the early 1920s, B'nai Jeshurun sold the Scovill Avenue building to **Shiloh Baptist Church**, which is the oldest congregation of African American Baptists in Cleveland. Despite steady growth of its congregation and support from John D. Rockefeller, Shiloh's previous attempt to secure a permanent home had not been successful. With the move to Scovill, the church was able to expand its programs. It created a quarterly magazine; started a credit union; began a food bank; assisted students in finding help for higher education; and created additional outreach programs. The congregation has been an excellent steward of the building, and in 2006 was given a preservation award by the Cleveland Restoration Society. Shiloh Baptist Church is a Cleveland Landmark.
In 1904, a group of congregants decided to split from B'nai Jeshurun, wanting to remain Orthodox. They formed the **Oheb Zedek** congregation and in 1905 opened the Oheb Zedek Hungarian Orthodox Synagogue, which was designed by Albert S. Janowitz and located at E. 38th Street and Scovill Avenue (now 3782 Community College Avenue), in the Central neighborhood. This congregation moved to a new home in the Glenville neighborhood in 1922, and **Triedstone Baptist Church** acquired the building at E. 38th Street and Scovill. Over the years, the Triedstone congregation has made changes so that the church can better accommodate its Christian worship. A large baptistry has been added inside the sanctuary, and an enclosed courtyard now connects the historic church building to a newer education building.

The church at the intersection of Parkwood Drive and Morison Avenue is where Oheb Zedek moved after it left the Hungarian Orthodox Synagogue in the 1920s. Designed by architect William Markowitz & Harry G. Vetter and completed in 1922, the Parkwood Drive church was sold by Oheb Zedek in 1949 to **Integrated Faith Assembly.**
Anshe Emeth was founded in 1857 by Cleveland's Polish population. This group met in rented halls until 1880, when it bought the Erie Street Methodist Church on E. Ninth Street. In 1904, Anshe Emeth built a synagogue at Scovill Avenue and E. 37th Street, then and moved to a larger building in Glenville in 1912. Through mergers, it became the largest Orthodox congregation in the city by the mid-1910s. By 1919, Anshe Emeth's rabbi led a push to create a center for Jews in Cleveland. This was built on land purchased from the Deming Land Company in the Glenville neighborhood, with the building located at 1117 E. 105th Street. The Cleveland Jewish Center, designed by architect Albert S. Janowitz, was dedicated in October 1922. It contained recreational facilities, classrooms, meeting spaces, and a large auditorium. In 1947 the congregation sold the Jewish Center building to the congregation of Cory United Methodist Church.

Anshe Emeth moved to a new synagogue in Cleveland Heights (Park Synagogue, designed by architect Eric Mendelsohn, dedicated in 1950). Cory was one of Cleveland's earliest African American congregations, having been founded in 1875 and first known as Union chapel. The congregation was renamed to honor a missionary who had reputedly founded multiple Methodist churches in Cleveland. Cory had met on Central Avenue and E. 37th Street beginning in 1890 and then moved to a larger church on Scovill Avenue in 1911. With the continued increase in congregation size, church leaders needed space to accommodate the worshippers, and by the mid-1940s, had raised the money needed to buy the Jewish Center.
Not all of the African-American churches with a connection to the Jewish community are grand sacred landmarks. After splitting off from B'nai Jeshurun in 1887, Knesseth Israel congregation built its synagogue at 934 East 105th Street in 1922. The congregation would eventually join Oheb Zedek and sell the building to Apostolic Faith Church in 1959.

The Morison Avenue Communal Baths, at 10606 Morison Avenue, was designed by Meyer Altschuld and built in 1925. Known as a mikvah, this building is now the home of the Morison Avenue Missionary Baptist Church.

While the current congregations have made changes to adapt the original Jewish synagogue design for their contemporary Christian worship, with many of these sacred landmarks, evidence of their origins as Jewish places of worship can be found. For example, there is often a Star of David detail incorporated into the façade, or the stained glass windows may still feature Jewish symbols. Through the legacy of a shared space, some of these congregations nurture their relationship and choose to stay connected through periodic gatherings and combined services.

Three former synagogues turned Christian churches were recently nominated as Cleveland landmarks as part of Councilman Jeff Johnson's work to designate historic buildings in the Glenville neighborhood: Chebath Jerusalem/Pentecostal Church of Christ, Oheb Zedek/Integrated Faith Assembly and Knesseth Israel/ Apostolic Faith. Chebeth Jerusalem at 887 Parkwood was bought in 1956 by the Pentecostal Church of Christ, which is the oldest Pentecostal congregation in Cleveland, established in 1935. Unfortunately, the building collapsed a short time after being nominated.
Summer 2014 marks the 50th anniversary of Freedom Summer, a key period of Jewish/African American partnership, and a time when this collaboration was most fruitful in accomplishing one its main goals - the end of discrimination in housing, education and employment, this examination of the relationship between Cleveland's Jews and Blacks is indeed timely. Nationally there are many examples of an African American/Jewish effort to address pressing civil rights issues. Several organizations dedicated to the strengthening of the African-American community with programs for employment or housing rights included Jewish individuals on their boards, such as Henry Moskowitz of the NAACP, Edwin R.A. Seligman of the National Urban League, and Will Maslow of the Core of Racial Equality (CORE).

Locally, the Cleveland NAACP and the Jewish Community Council were instrumental in the establishment of the City of Cleveland's Community Relations Board, which informed the Civil Rights Commission to work on the passage of the Fair Employment Practices Act, the Fair Accommodations Act and the Fair Housing Statute. Reuben Silver served as artistic director of Karamu House for decades and Rabbi Arthur J. Lelyveld of Fairmount Temple worked with the desegregation goals of the Freedom School movement. During Freedom Summer in 1964, he helped with voter registration efforts in Hattiesburg, Mississippi where he was physically attacked by segregationists. This survey is a powerful reminder of the long ties and the important historical space that is shared between the two communities.
Blacks in Business

Even in the city's early years, blacks were involved in business in Cleveland. **George Peake**, the inventor of a new hand mill for grinding grain, moved from the east coast to Cleveland in 1809 with his wife and two sons. Peake was the first African-American settler to this new city, little over a decade after its founding and about a century before the Great Migration. In her book Confronting the Odds: African American Entrepreneurship in Cleveland, Ohio, Bessie House-Soremekun relates that, during the 1820s and 1830s, "blacks served as horse breeders, seamstresses, blacksmiths, masons, bricklayers, farm owners, hair stylists, tailors and manufacturers."

**Madison Tilley**, born a slave in 1809, escaped and came to Cleveland. By 1840 he was one of only five black men in the city who owned taxable property. He became an excavation contractor and employed up to 100 men. Tilley became a leader in the black community. According to the Encyclopedia of Cleveland History, by 1860 there were nearly 800 African Americans living in Cleveland, mostly on the east side. While many black Clevelanders were unskilled laborers or domestic workers, almost one third were skilled workers.

Another African-American entrepreneur who came to Cleveland and found success was **Garrett Morgan**. Morgan first came to Cleveland in 1895 and worked with textile machinery. He started his own clothing manufacturing company as well as the Morgan Hair Refining Company. He is best known as the inventor of the gas mask (1912) and the traffic signal (1923). Morgan lived at 5202 Harlem Avenue, off of E. 55th Street. The house was demolished in 1989.
As the Great Migration rapidly increased the number of African Americans in the city, discrimination increased and conditions for black workers deteriorated. This dramatic swelling of the African American community also increased the number of buildings that could tell the story of the African-American experience in Cleveland. Many of these buildings are still standing while others are endangered or have already been lost, along with the stories they had to tell. The primary purpose of the survey conducted by the Cleveland Restoration Society for our 40th Anniversary Legacy Project was to find these buildings and begin to revive their stories.

One business well represented in the CRS survey of African-American landmarks is that of the funeral home. Serving an almost exclusively African-American clientele, funeral directors who established these businesses were among the most respected members of the community. Founded in 1905, the **E. F. Boyd & Son Funeral Home** is located in an Italianate style former residence at 2165 E. 89th Street. Originally located on Central Avenue, the business has been at the current location since 1938. Elmer Franklin Boyd, who also founded the Cleveland Funeral Directors Association, operated the business until his death in 1944. His son, William F. Boyd, took over and ran the business until 1991, when he passed it to his son William F. Boyd, II and his siblings, making three generations of community leaders to run this establishment.

The **House of Wills Funeral Home** was founded in 1905 by J. Walter Wills, Sr. Originally located at 2525 Central Avenue and called Gee & Wills, the funeral home moved several times to locations along E. 55th Street before settling at 2491 E. 55th Street in 1944. Designed by Frederic W. Striebinger, this imposing edifice was constructed in 1900 as the Cleveland Gesang Verein German singing society and social hall. Between 1921 and 1932, it housed the Cleveland Hebrew School and Institute, reflecting the changes in the neighborhood. The House of Wills operated from this location until 2005. The business closed in 2014.
The **Dunbar Mutual Insurance Society** was founded by M. C. Clarke in 1936 at 5708 Woodland Avenue and named after African-American poet and Ohio native Paul Laurence Dunbar. Clarke, an examiner from the state insurance department, had been sent to Cleveland in 1925 to examine several struggling insurance societies. Clarke consolidated the assets of those societies and in 1942 incorporated the Dunbar Life Insurance Company, what would become one of the largest African-American owned businesses in the city. In 1945, Dunbar built a new office at 7609 Euclid Avenue, on the front of the Luther Allen Mansion. In recent years, the addition was demolished. Dunbar merged with a Chicago-based company in 1960.

Another African-American owned business with a very long history in Cleveland is the **Crayton Sausage Company**, founded by Leroy Crayton in 1932. He opened a manufacturing and distribution center near Quincy and E. 90th Street in 1937. The current industrial-style building at 5299 Crayton Avenue was constructed in 1954. By this date, the company, valued at over a million dollars, distributed sausage to over fifty cities throughout the United States. Leroy Crayton died in 1963 and the street was renamed in his honor in 1971. This was the first street in Cleveland to be named for an African American.

Many of these businesses could not have formed had they not had financing. Herbert S. Chauncey received a charter in 1919 and opened **Empire Savings & Loan** on E. 55th Street. A second branch opened on Cedar Avenue in 1926. Empire catered to a mostly African-American clientele and made it possible for their members to purchase homes and build collateral to open businesses. Chauncey also established the Peoples Realty Company, which both sold and developed property for the African-American community.
A notable African-American contractor during the post-industrial period, Arthur Bussey of **Bussey Construction**, also catered to a mostly African-American clientele. Bussey built the homes on Myrtle Avenue and Highview Drive, including his own, to attract a higher-income buyer. The design of the homes included Cape Cods and ranches. In these homes, Bussey added higher-end features such as stone facing for the façade, projecting bays with picture windows, and gabled vestibules. Many homes also have decorative brickwork and multiple, oversized chimneys. These high-style features meant the homes could be priced near $35,000. Bussey Construction advertised the neighborhood solely in the *Call and Post*, an African-American newspaper.
The number of African Americans in Cleveland swelled during the first decades of the twentieth century, as blacks moved from the rural south to the industrial north seeking greater opportunities. One of the most well-known African Americans in Cleveland during this time period was Charles W. Chesnutt. Born in Cleveland on June 20, 1858, Chesnutt was the son of two free African Americans who had moved from Fayetteville, North Carolina. After the Civil War, his family moved back to Fayetteville, where his father opened a store. Chestnutt attended the Freedmen's Bureau School, then he taught in Charlotte and later at the State Colored Normal School in Fayetteville.

Discouraged by Reconstruction and increasing segregation in the south, Chesnutt returned to Cleveland in 1883 with his wife and family. In Cleveland, he passed the state bar examination and established a court reporting firm. Chesnutt also established himself as a writer. His first short story was published in the Atlantic Monthly in 1887, the first story by a black author to appear in that publication. After being published in other magazines, Chesnutt's collection of short stories, The Conjure Woman, was published by Houghton Mifflin in 1899. A second collection was followed by a novel, The House Behind the Cedars, in 1900. Chesnutt's grandmothers were of mixed race and his grandfathers were likely white. Chestnutt himself could have passed as white, but never did so. His writing presented a realistic depiction of the African-American experience and centered on themes of identity and racial inequality. Chesnutt gained great wealth from his stenography business, but was never able to write full time. He lived at 64 Brenton (later 2212 E. 73rd Street) from the 1880s until 1904, when he purchased a larger home at 9719 Lamont (later demolished for the Charles Orr School). He supported the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Although he was overshadowed by the work of the Harlem Renaissance, today he is seen as a major figure in African-American literature.
Another nationally known African-American writer from Cleveland was **Langston Hughes**. Hughes came to the city as a teenager with his stepfather, who worked in the steel mills, and his mother. When he was attending Central High, his mother and stepfather left for Chicago in search of work. Hughes lived alone in an attic apartment at 2266 East 86th Street. It was here that Hughes began to write, and it was during this time that he first met Rowena and Russell Jelliffe, the founders of Karamu House. In the 1930s, many of Hughes' plays premiered at Karamu House, right in his old neighborhood. In 2009, the house on East 86th Street was abandoned and might have been demolished had it not been for local historian Christopher Busta Peck, who write the blog *Cleveland Area History*. Peck made the City of Cleveland aware of the property, which was then acquired and rehabilitated by Fairfax Renaissance Development Corporation.

Founded by the Jelliffes in 1915, **Karamu House** is a settlement originally called the Neighborhood Association and located at 2239 E. 38th Street. It began producing plays with interracial casts and, in 1927, acquired a theater adjacent to the settlement which was named Karamu, Swahili for "a place of joyful meeting." A fire destroyed the theater in 1939 and Karamu was rebuilt ten years later with support from Leonard Hanna Jr. and the Rockefeller Foundation. In 1980, the Imani African American Dance Company, similar to the original Karamu Dancers, was founded. As a community-based nonprofit arts and education institution, Karamu has maintained its role of supporting African-American arts and culture.
Music has a strong legacy in the African-American community in Cleveland. The city's deep network of churches has provided a wonderful foundation for many groups, and the city has been nationally recognized as a center of Gospel music. The most renowned, **Wings Over Jordan Choir**, was founded in 1935 by Rev. Glenn T. Settle of Gethsemane Baptist Church, which was located at East 30th Street and Scovill Avenue. Rev. Settle believed in using spirituals to spread Christianity, and was able to arrange for broadcast of the choir nationally through CBS radio. Wings Over Jordan enjoyed immense popularity across the country, as well as internationally, through the 1940s. The choir toured during WWII for the USO and performed at the White House.

Many buildings associated with Jazz music, such as the Douglas Club on Cedar Avenue and the Hotel Bruce on Euclid, are no longer standing. A building related to the early history of Rock and Roll still exists, tucked away in a quiet residential neighborhood in southeast Cleveland. The **Boddie Recording Company**, at 12202 Union, was founded in 1959 by Thomas Boddie, who transformed an old dairy building behind his house into a studio. Boddie recorded gospel, soul, rhythm and blues, rock bluegrass and country in the studio. The studio's inexpensive prices for recording attracted acts from as far away as West Virginia and Detroit, Michigan. After Thomas married Louise Boddie, her connections with churches and gospel groups helped propel the studio to even greater success. Boddie would eventually record as many as 800 individual original records on seven different labels. The studio remained in operation until 1993.
Icabod Flewellen was born in 1916 in Williamson, West Virginia. When he was thirteen, he began to collect newspaper clippings dedicated to the history of African Americans. In 1949, when his home was firebombed by white supremacists and his collection destroyed, Flewellen migrated to Cleveland. In Cleveland, Flewellen again began collecting African-American historical artifacts. He founded the **Afro-American Historical and Cultural Society** in his home at 8716 Harkness Avenue in the Hough neighborhood in 1953. Flewellen collected much of this material by going from door to door and asking neighbors about their family histories. Eventually he purchased the Cuyahoga Telephone Exchange Building at 1839 E. 81st Street to hold his collection.

Flewellen later took the collection to the former Hough Branch Library at 1765 Crawford Road. This English Renaissance Revival style building was completed in 1907 and was a fully functioning branch of the library system until 1966, when it became Treasure House, a children's library. When the new Hough Library was built in 1984, Cleveland Public Library sold the building to the African American Museum and it was renamed the **Ichabod Flewellen Building**. At this time, the African American Museum has not been open for several years, although there have been attempts to restore the building and reopen the museum. The Flewellen Collection of artifacts is now housed at the East Cleveland Library.
The Civil Rights Movement in the United States encompassed a period of vigorous and coordinated national civil rights action designed to prompt the enactment of legislation that would guarantee equality on such issues as employment, housing, education, health and welfare and voting rights. This period of intense, and occasionally violent, political confrontation, from the early 1950s to the mid-1970s was characterized by demonstrations, boycotts, sit-ins, picketings, and large-scale civil disturbances.

In Cleveland, this time period brought about events such as the riot at Little Italy's Memorial Elementary School demonstration in 1964, the Hough Riots of 1966, and the "Glenville Shootout" of 1968. It would result also see the passage of equal opportunity legislation: Ohio's Civil Rights Act of 1959, Cleveland's Equal Opportunity Law of 1969, and the conclusion of the Reed v. Rhodes lawsuit in 1976, which led to the desegregation of Cleveland's public schools.

Across the nation, numerous groups emerged to tackle rampant discrimination, brutality and segregation. Organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Urban League, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) played pivotal roles in asserting the need for universal civil rights recognition in the United States.

In Cleveland, some of the city's earliest pioneers in civil rights were decades removed from the national movement, but their efforts to improve the economic, educational, and housing standards of African Americans in the city helped set the stage for later coordinated action. Thomas Fleming became Cleveland's first black city councilman in 1909, and helped African Americans obtain municipal jobs and secure housing in the Central neighborhood. John O. Holly founded the Future Outlook League in 1935 to help blacks in Cleveland find employment.
Several of the national civil rights organizations were present and active in Cleveland: NAACP (1912), the Urban League (1917), the National Negro Congress (1936), CORE (1963) and SCLC (1967). These bodies would work with local groups towards the passage of Ohio's Civil Rights Act, the election of Cleveland's first African American mayor, Carl Stokes, in 1967, and the desegregation of Cleveland's public schools.

A coalition of national and local religious organizations pushed for civil rights. The United Freedom Movement (UFM) was established in 1963 in Cleveland. It brought together civic, social, religious, and fraternal groups and leaders to address inequality primarily in housing, education, and employment. This group was very active in the struggle to desegregate the city's public schools and UFM led many boycotts and demonstrations to this end. It was during one UFM demonstration against the tactic of building new schools to avoid integrating existing ones, that Reverend Bruce Klunder was accidentally killed by a bulldozer at the construction site of what would become Howe Elementary School on Lakeview Road.
Local churches and their leaders were heavily invested in the civil rights movement; in terms of direct community action, providing spaces and resources for activities and planning, as well as hosting speakers, churches were an essential ingredient to the success of the struggle. Cory United Methodist Church in Glenville hosted Dr. King in 1963 (and it was where Dr. King would later give his last speech in Cleveland). In 1964, Malcolm X gave his well-known "The Ballot or the Bullet" speech at the church.

Reverend David Zuverik of Glenville United Presbyterian Church, now known as New Life at Calvary, served as co-chair of the United Freedom Movement's School Committee. During summer 1967, Dr. King and the SCLC personnel in Cleveland maintained offices at Glenville United Presbyterian Church.

Dr. King's presence in Cleveland was requested by local Pastor Theophilus Caviness, of Greater Abyssinia Baptist Church in Glenville after the Hough riots. Pastor Caviness hoped that the presence of Dr. King and the SCLC could help prevent future disturbances, and he also wanted their assistance in the campaign to elect Carl B. Stokes. Pastor Caviness was active in the NAACP, CORE, National Action Network and other organizations, and his Greater Abyssinia Church served as the headquarters for the UFM.
Fairfax's **St. Adalbert**, Cleveland's first African-American Catholic church and also the church of the first black pastor in the Diocese of Cleveland, Father Gene Wilson, worked with the community service programs of the **Black Panther Party** (BPP) in Cleveland. The group's official presence in Cleveland was short-lived, from approximately 1969 to 1971, but it was successful in establishing several community services in Cleveland: free health clinic, busing to prison program, and education programs in League Park Center. The BPP, or the Cleveland Branch of the National Committee to Combat Fascism (as BPP chapters were named after 1969) was active in Kinsman and Hough.

Local militant groups, such as Lewis Robinson's **Freedom Fighters**, Harllel Jones' **Afro Set** and Fred Evans' **Black Nationalists of the New Libya**, advocated a more uncompromising and community-based position in regard to civil rights legislation and empowerment, yet these groups collaborated with national and religious groups. They had a community-based presence in centers such as Lewis Robinson's **Jomo Freedom Kenyatta House** on Superior Avenue, Robinson's **Rifle Club** on East 120th Street, and Fred Evans' **Afro Culture Shop**. Fred Evans collaborated with Dr. King and Carl Stokes to try and stabilize communities between the Hough Riots and his own participation in the Glenville Shootout.

As the influx of African Americans into the city of Cleveland slowed toward the end of the Great Migration, fair housing programs and increased traction by community-based nonprofit service organizations helped to stabilize the housing conditions for many African American families across Greater Cleveland.
The **Ludlow Community Association** (LCA), founded in 1957 by Walter and Christine Branch, helped provide a model for integrated neighborhoods in Cleveland and Shaker Heights. Shelly Stokes-Hammond asserted in her 2011 Master of Arts thesis "Recognizing Ludlow - A National Treasure; A Community that Stood Firm for Equality" that the community of Ludlow was a pioneer for civil rights in its successful model of integrated neighborhood creation and stabilization. In the 1950s, housing in the Greater Cleveland suburbs was highly segregated and African Americans had few suburban housing options. As blacks tried to move into white neighborhoods, they were often met with hostility and, sometimes, violence. There was also the practice of whites selling en masse as blacks tried to move into a neighborhood. The LCA tried to counteract these trends.

In 1964, Carol and Burt Milter, a white couple who lived in Ludlow, bought a house on Townley Road in the nearby Sussex neighborhood for Ernest and Jackie Tinsley, a black couple. The Tinsleys had been prevented from buying the house on their own due to racist real estate practices. Carol Milter worked for **Operation Equality**, a Cleveland housing program established in 1967 by the National Urban League to provide better housing for minority families. This was the first so-called "straw buy" in the city. The organizations like Operational Equality and LCA helped not only African-American families move into Shaker Heights, but also worked to keep existing white families in the city’s neighborhoods. The LCA provided short-term loans to buyers, maintained an integrated community and helped stabilize the neighborhood for decades. The success of the LCA encouraged the formation of other groups such as the Lomond Association in 1963 and Heights Community Congress in 1972.
Beyond the physical impact in the city's neighborhoods, the racial unrest experienced during the mid-twentieth century had more long-reaching consequences for Cleveland and its suburbs. While the riots were a wake-up call for many to the economic and social disparities facing African-American households, affecting positive change was another matter. With decades of hard work, community organizing and improvement, learned through such civil rights organizations as the Future Outlook League, Cleveland Community Relations Board, and Ludlow Community Association, has created Cleveland's nationally recognized network of community development corporations.


**Useful Websites**

Anshe Emeth/Park Synagogue
www.parksyn.org

B’Nai Jeshurun
www.bnaijeshurun.org

Cleveland Jewish History
www.clevelandjewishhistory.net

Cleveland Memory Project
www.clevelandmemory.org

Encyclopedia of Cleveland History
ech.case.edu

Jewish Virtual Library
www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
www.naacp.org

Temple Tifereth
www.ttti.org

Urban League Cleveland
www.ulcleveland.com