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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information.

__x_____ New Submission _____ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

African American Resources in Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

I. From Free State Capital to the Promised Land – Early Migration to Topeka (1854-1880)
II. Settlement Patterns of Black Topekans (1865-1975)
III. Topeka's African American Community (1865 – 1975)
IV. Civil Rights in Topeka (1880-1975)

C. Form Prepared by:

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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

Deputy SHPO, Cultural Resources Division Director October 5, 2024
Signature of certifying official Title Date

Kansas State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

_____ _____
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Create a Table of Contents and list the page numbers for each of these sections in the space below.
Provide narrative explanations for each of these sections on continuation sheets. In the header of each section, cite the letter, page number, and name of the multiple property listing. Refer to *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* for additional guidance.

Page Numbers

F. Associated Property Types F-82
(Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)

African American Districts
African American Residences
Religious Buildings
Educational Buildings
Commercial and Professional Buildings
Community Buildings and Resources
Burial Grounds
Sites (Non-Archaeological)
Sites (Archaeological)

G. Geographical Data G-109

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods H-110
(Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)

I. Major Bibliographical References I-112
(List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)

Primary location of additional data:
[ ] State Historic Preservation Office
[ ] Other State Agency
[ ] Federal Agency
[X] Local Government
[X] University
[X] Other
Name of repository:
Topeka-Shawnee County Public Library: Topeka Room

Additional Documentation
Appendix A: Redlining Classification System of Topeka

INTRODUCTION/STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS

This Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF), *African American Resources in Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas,* is organized around properties associated with the African American experience in Topeka from 1854, which marks the formation of the Kansas Territory, through 1975, the approximate year when Urban Renewal projects came to an end and the relocation of those displaced was complete. This year also serves as the approximate year of transition into a new phase of the Civil Rights Movement.[1] This MPDF provides a context for understanding the conditions that encouraged, hindered, or were associated with African Americans in Topeka, as well as a basis for evaluating historic resources that are intricately tied to specific themes in the Black experience in Topeka. It covers resources dating from 1854 through 1975 that are located within the current incorporated city limits of Topeka, and is based, in part, on a citywide survey conducted by the author in January through March of 2023. Some historic contexts that follow may not be fully explored, either because too few resources remain, or the associated resources have yet to be surveyed. The historic contexts are by no means a full account of the history of African Americans in Topeka but provide a baseline for which to explore further study and introduce new properties.

The historic contexts prepared for the MPDF cover four (4) major themes of African American heritage in Topeka. "*From Free State Capital to the Promise Land: Early Black Migration to Topeka (1854-1880)"* covers topics including the formation of the Kansas Territory and the national slavery debate, the Topeka Movement and years as the Free State Capital, and the Great Exodus in 1879-1880. This period of significance steered the ideals of Topeka and Kansas and is marked by the arrival of the earliest African Americans into Topeka via the Underground Railroad, and later, the Great Exodus. Although life was far from the "promised land" that many of the emigrants had envisioned, this period set the framework for the forging of a vibrant, cohesive African American community in Topeka. Resources associated with this context are the earliest known African American properties in Topeka and document the first migrations of African Americans to the City.

Context II: Settlement Patterns of Black Topekans (1865-1975) begins at the close of the Civil War when settlement patterns of established Black Topekans and those arriving following emancipation begin to take shape as racially homogenous enclaves steered largely by racial discrimination. This context extends to 1975 marking the approximate year that relocation of those displaced by Urban Renewal programs was complete.

Context III: Topeka's African American Community (1865-1975) covers numerous aspects of the Black community, including the institutions vital to forging cohesive communities during a period marked by racial oppression and discrimination. This context focuses on the significant role of the church to the Black community, educational inequality, commerce, culture and recreation, and civic and benevolent organizations. Such institutions and social history are closely tied to the settlement patterns documented in the previous context; thus, this period of significance extends to 1975.

[1] For the purposes of this document, the terms "African American" and "Black" are used largely interchangeably. The term "person of color" is used broadly to describe non-White individuals and populations. Dated and derogatory terminology appears only sparingly, in the names of historic period businesses and organizations, as well as quotations from period newspapers, court cases, or other relevant primary source material.

Finally, *Context IV: Civil Rights in Topeka* (1880-1975) documents the local, statewide and national role Topeka played in the fight for Civil Rights for African Americans. This context begins in 1880 when the Great Exodus ended and Black Topekans began coordinating initiatives in the struggle for equality. Early Civil Rights activities largely focused on securing accommodations to endure the realities of a "separate but equal" doctrine. Under the stewardship of the NAACP, which established a local branch in Topeka in 1914, focus shifted toward an attack on discrimination in public accommodations based on race. Largely unsuccessful, the most significant redirection occurred by the close of the 1940s when Civil Rights lawsuits challenged the constitutionality of segregated public schools. This decisive strategy of the NAACP led to the milestone Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*, which set in motion the disintegration of local, state and federal laws that upheld "separate but equal" practice. The lawsuit that led to this ruling, made in 1954, has become known as the "case that changed America," and Topeka was at the epicenter of the lawsuit. Locally, Civil Rights protests and initiatives continued through the 1960s, largely focusing on equal employment opportunities and housing. By 1975, nationwide, the Civil Rights movement transitioned to a new phase that focused on ensuring that the freedoms achieved in previous decades were not only instituted but also upheld. Thus, the period of significance for Context IV extends to 1975.

Much of the context presented in this MPDF draws upon Thomas Cox' book, *Blacks in Topeka, Kansas: 1865-1915*. Cox, a longtime Topekan, used Topeka's historic Black newspaper publications as a primary means of documenting the Black experience in Topeka, focusing particularly on the social history of the city's African American community. Other invaluable resources contributing to this MPDF include Sherrita Camp's *African American Topeka*, published in 2013; and Robert G. Athearn's *In Search of Canaan Black Migration to Kansas, 1879-1880.*

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: AFRICAN AMERICANS IN KANSAS

Kansas Territory and the Slavery Debate (1854-1861)

The vast prairie that would become the Kansas Territory was initially the home of Indian peoples including the Plains tribes, Kanzas, Pawnees, and Osages. From 1830 to the 1850s, numerous additional tribes from east of the Mississippi River, resettled west of Missouri under the federal government's Indian removal policy.[2] The United States' desire for further westward expansion led to the federal government moving forward with yet another Indian removal in 1853. On May 30, 1854, the United States incorporated the Kansas Territory through the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. The Act organized the area west of Missouri into two territories and granted each the power of popular sovereignty on the issue of slavery. An influx of Euro-American settlement into eastern Kansas Territory ensued, quickly displacing the native population who was ultimately forced to relocate to the remaining Indian country in present-day Oklahoma.[3]

The slavery debate that penetrated the United States in the years leading up to the Civil War played a

[2] Kansas Historical Society, "Kansas Territory," *Kansapedia*, April 2010. Kansas Territory - Kansapedia - Kansas Historical Society (kshs.org) accessed December 2022.

[3] *Ibid*.

pivotal role in the settlement and political atmosphere of the Kansas Territory. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 allowed for residents of each territory to vote on the slavery issue and whether to permit the practice. This act repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which prohibited slavery in the former Louisiana Territory north of the parallel 36°30' north. Consequently, the power struggle for Congress between the northern and southern states was in the hands of the settlers on the western frontier of the United States.[4] The resolution of the "slave question" ultimately became the "Kansas question" and the center of national debate. Two years of violence erupted in 1855 as the two sides of the debate, free-staters and slavery proponents, faced off in Kansas with militant bands on each side. In May of 1856, the Pottawatomie Massacre, led by abolitionist John Brown, led to the territory earning the moniker of "Bleeding Kansas."[5] Eventually, in the late-1850s, free-state sympathizers secured political dominance. In January of 1861, the territory was officially admitted into the Union as a Free State. Subsequently, the secession of the Southern states marked the beginning of the Civil War on a national level. Though there were only 600 African Americans residing in the territory in the 1850s, "Bleeding Kansas" became a "symbol of the greater struggle within the country over the future of the Negro race."[6]

The political struggle concerning the question of slavery dominated the Territorial Era of Kansas. However, this period played a vital role in the Black experience and their movements across the state. Prior to the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, the few Black settlers in Kansas were slaves brought by missionaries and Indian traders. Following 1854, the number of enslaved peoples in Kansas increased considerably as many were brought by an influx of Southerners moving to the new territory. However, by the close of the 1850s, this trend reversed as the Free-staters gained control, replacing the enslaved Black population with the new concept of the "free Negro."[7]

Another significant group included in Kansas' Black population in the years leading up to the Civil War was the fugitive slaves fleeing the South. Many were aided in their escape by the Underground Railroad - a route made of various locations where Blacks were hidden and kept safe throughout their northward journey. Kansas was very active in the Underground Railroad due not only to its anti-slavery leanings but also its close proximity to the slave-state of Missouri. There were two principal routes through Kansas. The first crossed the Kansas River at Lawrence, proceeding north and west by way of Oskaloosa to Holton. The second route went north through Topeka to Holton.[8]

The census of 1855 reveals that free Black residents numbered 151, whereas 192 were enslaved. As the Free-staters gained political control of the Kansas Territory, by 1860, the number of freedmen increased to 625 with only the number of enslaved reduced to a mere two. The early freedmen were employed primarily as domestic servants, laborers and farmers.[9] Just a few months after Kansas was admitted into the Union as a free state, the nation entered into the Civil War. Kansas was the first northern state to enroll

[4] Deon Wolfenbarger, "African Americans in Manhattan, Kansas Multiple Property Documentation Form," National Park Service, 2011; Section E Page 2.
[5] *Ibid*.
[6] Kansas State Historical Society, Kansas Historic Sites Survey, *Historic Preservation in Kansas, Black Historic Sites: A Beginning Point*, Topeka: Kansas State Division of Printing 1977; p.6-7.
[7] Kansas State Historical Society, 1977; p.6-7.
[8] Kansas State Historical Society, 1977; p.6-7.
[9] Kansas State Historical Society, 1977; p7-8.

African Americans in the military. Its First Kansas Colored Infantry was also the first African American regiment to see action. In 1866, Congress established African American regiments in the West, some being assigned to Kansas. The U.S. Tenth Calvary Regiment formed at Fort Leavenworth was the first to be monikered "Buffalo Soldiers," a name given by Native Americans.[10]

A Federal census taken in 1870 revealed a dramatic increase in the Black population since the previous decade. From 1860 to 1870, the Black population in Kansas reached 17,108, over 27 times the 1860 numbers. Shawnee County was among the leading counties in the state in terms of numbers of Black residents, with a total of 729 in 1870. Leavenworth County boasted the highest number with 4,284 African American residences.[11]

Statehood, Black Migration and the Great Exodus (1861-1880)

The decade following the Civil War was a unique period of Black history in Kansas. Droves of the formerly enslaved fled the Southern states, migrating to Kansas. Because of the state's position as a battleground for Black freedom prior to the war, Kansas "became a spiritual and political haven in the eyes of Blacks."[12] Kansas also became a leading destination of Black colonization groups in the early-1870s. The establishment of African American colonies was spearheaded by Benjamin "Pap" Singleton, the founder and president of the Tennessee Real Estate and Homestead Association formed in 1869 to encourage Blacks to purchase farmland in Tennessee. Opposition by White Tennessee landowners prevented the initiative in that state. Thus, Singleton shifted his attention away from the Southern states, focusing his on Kansas. In 1874, he organized a group of 300, establishing the Singleton colony on 1,000 acres of land in Cherokee County, Kansas. The initial success of the colony influenced the formation of others throughout the state, including Dunlap Colony just southwest of Topeka.[13]

Despite the apparent success of these colonies, they did not increase in the number of new residents. The most substantial growth of the state's African American population occurred during the Kansas Exodus of 1879. Reconstruction in the Southern states came to an end when the Democratic party returned to power, reversing the advancements made for the Black population. The repressive laws reduced most African Americans in the South to poverty and landlessness. Not only did stringent laws ensure the disenfranchisement of the Black populations, but the sharecropping and crop lien system of agriculture, which supplanted the former slave-based system, trapped Black farmers in a cycle of indebtedness. A number of other significant factors led to the mass exodus of Black populations from the Southern states into Kansas.[14]

Large numbers of African Americans arrived in Kansas between 1879 and 1880. Known as Exodusters, most arrived by steamboats landing in the river cities of Wyandotte, Atchison and Kansas City. The cities were overwhelmed with the large number of impoverished persons. On May 8, 1879, Kansas Governor

[10] Wolfenbarger, 2011; Section E Page 2.
[11] Kansas State Historical Society 1977; p.9.
[12] *Ibid*.
[13] Kansas State Historical Society 1977; p.9-11.
[14] Kansas State Historical Society 1977; p.16-19.

St. John formed the Freedman's Relief Association to help care for the people. The association was spearheaded by Quaker social workers. Among them was John M. Brown, a prominent Black resident of Topeka, who served as general superintendent. The relief association was very successful in alleviating the suffering of the newly arrived and helped to establish colonies for the Blacks including one in Wabaunsee to the west of Topeka. Another organization was formed in Topeka to aid the Exodusters – the Kansas State Colored Immigration Bureau. It was formed in May 1879 with John Brown serving as president. The Freedman's Relief Association was dissolved in April of 1881, at which time the massive migration into Kansas was slowing. As the Exodusters were disbursed throughout the state, many settled in cities like Topeka and Kansas City, where they formed Black communities. The names of these communities that emerged, such as Tennessee Town, Mudtown, and Rattlebone Hollow reflect a growing prejudice against the newcomers.[15] It is believed that between 6,000 to 9,000 African Americans moved to Kansas during the Exodus (1879-1881). Following the Exodus, most of the growth of the state's Black population was a natural increase, rather than continued migration. Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, an out-migration to Nebraska and Oklahoma.

Racial Discrimination and Civil Rights in 20th Century Kansas

Because of its history as a free state, African Americans in Kansas enjoyed less discrimination and more prosperity than the oppressed Black populations in the Southern states. Yet, the prospects for true equality remained largely unattainable through the first half of the 20th century. During the 1920s and 1930s, a second wave of Black migration into Kansas occurred. As with the earlier Exodusters, most of the incoming Black population came from Southern states where mechanization of the cotton industry and an economic downturn forced them from their homes. A third migration resulted from the growth of the aviation industry in the 1940s and 1950s. Not all Kansans welcomed the new arrivals. Some businesses refused to serve Black customers, and, in some instances, racially restrictive neighborhood covenants were enforced.[16]

In response to the racial discrimination, Black women throughout the state took a stand to protect their families. A network of women's clubs was established, "some in conjunction with the National Association of Colored People, that provided advocacy, legal, social, and enrichment initiatives, including a junior girls program that became a national model."[17]

State policy has at times, been ambivalent with regards to racial equality. By law, state universities have always admitted African American students. In fact, in 1870, the first Black student enrolled at the University of Kansas. Despite this equal opportunity in higher education, incidents of discrimination existed. For example, the public school system in larger cities were permitted to enforce school segregation. In the 1950s, the state, and its capitol at Topeka, would be at the forefront of the national

[15] Kansas Historical Society, "Exodusters," Kansapedia, June 2011. Exodusters - Kansapedia - Kansas Historical Society (kshs.org) accessed May 2023.
[16] Kansas Historical Society, "African American Residents in Kansas," *Kansapedia*, August 2012. African American Residents in Kansas - Kansapedia - Kansas Historical Society (kshs.org) accessed May 2023.
[17] Kansas Historical Society, "African American Residents in Kansas," *Kansapedia*, August 2012. African American Residents in Kansas - Kansapedia - Kansas Historical Society (kshs.org) accessed May 2023.

Civil Rights movement. The momentous 1954 Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* set in motion the nationwide desegregation of public schools.[18]

CONTEXT I: FROM FREE STATE CAPITAL TO THE PROMISED LAND - EARLY BLACK MIGRATION TO TOPEKA (1854-1880)

The Black experience and patterns of migration of early Topeka are largely tied to its initial settlement by free-staters and subsequent establishment as the capitol of the Free State of Kansas. The passing of the Topeka Constitution in 1855 prohibiting enslavement of any person attracted a small migration of freedmen into the city with the hopes of equal opportunity. The location of Topeka along an important crossing of the Kansas River further attracted the migration of African Americans escaping the shackles of slavery in the South; many of those traveled here via the Underground Railroad. In 1861, when Kansas officially joined the Union as a free state, Topeka was selected as the new state capital. During the Civil War, the first colored regiments in Kansas encouraged a slight migration of African American men to the state, including the capital city. Following emancipation and throughout the years of Reconstruction, many newly freed African American families in the Southern states who came to Kansas ultimately settled in Topeka. This was followed in 1879 to 1880 by the Great Exodus, where Topeka was a primary relief center for the newly arrived Exodusters, many of whom remained in the capital, establishing distinct Black settlements throughout the city. Thus, the period from 1854 to 1880 marked the establishment of Topeka as a safe haven city for African Americans, both prior to and following the Civil War. Considered a Canaan, or Promised Land, among southern African Americans, the appeal of the Free State Capital attracted thousands of migrants and subsequently played a pivotal role in the settlement patterns of Black Topekans and the establishment of distinct communities with shared ideals, experiences and the vision of equality.[19]

Half-Breed Reservation and Pappan's Ferry: The Settlement of Topeka

Long before the passing of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, settlement was well underway within the region that would eventually become the city of Topeka and Shawnee County, Kansas. An 1825 treaty with the Kansa Indians established what was known as the Half-Breed Reservation. The treaty reserved 23 square miles of land to Kansa Indians of mixed-blood heritage. The arrangement aimed to encourage the relinquishing of a far larger territory to the United States. The tracts were located on the north bank of the Kansas River from present-day Topeka to Williamstown. Four of the tracts of land were granted to the grand-daughters of White Plume, Chief of the Kansa Nation. The four tracts would ultimately play an important role in the settlement patterns of the city. Most notably, Half-Breed Tract #3, which was granted to White Plume's grand-daughter, Julia Gonvil, became the site of Pappan's Ferry.[20]

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[18] Wolfenbarger, 2011; Section E Page 4.

[19] The following historic context by no means presents a full account of the Black experience in Topeka. Though several notable individuals are referenced, hundreds of other leading African American Topekans have contributed to the social, economic, religious, civic and/or political facets of the city since the 1850s.

[20] North Topeka West Neighborhood Improvement Association, "North Topeka West Neighborhood Plan," an element of the *Topeka Comprehensive Plan*, adopted February 16, 2016; p.4-5.

Following the death of her first husband, Julia wed French trader, Louis Pappan, in 1840. By this time, pioneers traveling westward along the Oregon Trail, required a means of crossing the Kansas River. Thus, in 1842, Louis Pappan and his brother, who also wed a granddaughter of White Plume, began operations of a ferry crossing the Kansas River. The ferry was washed away in a flood in 1844, and Julia and Louis Pappan moved to Kansas City where they stayed until returning in 1849.[21] Upon their return, the couple discovered that a ferry service was resumed across the river, operated by two half-breed men. Louis Pappan and his brother quickly purchased the ferry service, continuing its operation near present-day SW Harrison Avenue. A small village subsequently emerged surrounding the ferry crossing. Pappan's Ferry continued operations until 1857. Two travelers along the Oregon Trail decided to remain, William and Permilia Curtis, establishing another new village, this one on the north side of the Kansas River named Eugene. Topeka and Eugene (present North Topeka) quickly flourished as important ferry stops along the river.[22]

The first documented African American in the Topeka area was Ann Davis Shatteo. Though she was born free, she was kidnapped as a child and enslaved in Missouri. At the age of 30, she was hired out at Fort Scott, and later at a trading post in Uniontown. At some point, Ann began living with the Pottawatomie Indians where she married Claymore Shatteo, a French trader. Legends say that they purchased her freedom on March 14, 1849, and settled in the Topeka area, along Shunganunga Creek.[23]

On December 5, 1854, the town of Topeka was founded on the south side of the Kansas River by Cyrus K. Holliday, Charles Robinson, Fry W. Giles, Daniel H. Home, Enoch Chase, Jacob B. Chase, George Davis, Milton C. Dickey and Loring J. Cleveland. All were opponents of slavery who came to the area from Lawrence in hopes to establish a "free state' community. The nine founders formed the Topeka Town Association. Holliday was elected the group's chairman and would later serve as Topeka's mayor and the first president of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway. The founders surveyed and laid out the town, erecting the first stone building in 1855. The establishment of Topeka along the Oregon Trail and its advantageous location along the Kansas River quickly led to it becoming a commercial and trading hub in the Kansas Territory. The city was incorporated in 1857, and shortly following Statehood in 1861, Topeka was selected to serve as the state capital.

Transportation played an integral part in the early success of Kansas. When Cyrus K. Holliday helped to found the town of Topeka, he not only envisioned a "free" community but also a transportation hub in the Territory. In 1859, he helped to charter the Atchison & Topeka Railroad Company. In 1863, the company was renamed Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad. The Civil War delayed construction of the line, and it wasn't until 1868 that Holliday finally broke ground. The first stretch of line from Topeka to the Colorado state line opened in December of 1873. The railroad is most recognized as the Santa Fe Railway. A second railroad arrived in Topeka in 1866 – the Union Pacific Eastern Division Railroad (Union Pacific). The Union Pacific constructed its yards, shops and depot on the north side of the river in the town of Eugene. The following year, Eugene was annexed into Topeka, and a permanent iron bridge was

[21] North Topeka West Neighborhood Improvement Association, "North Topeka West Neighborhood Plan," an element of the *Topeka Comprehensive Plan*, adopted February 16, 2016; p.4-5.
[22] *Ibid*.
[23] Sherrita Camp, *Images of America: African American Topeka*, Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2013; p. 9.

constructed in 1869, connecting Kansas Avenue on both sides of the river.[24]

The Topeka Movement and Free State Capital

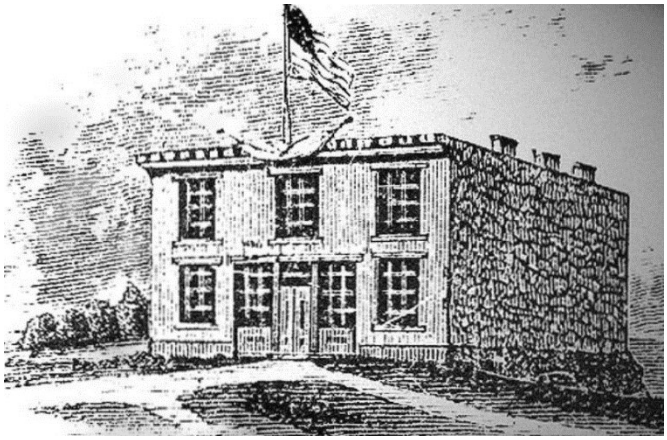

Figure 1. Lithograph of Constitution Hall, 1856

From the creation of the territory in 1854, thousands of pro-slavery "border ruffians" swarmed into the new territory at the Shawnee Indian Mission near Kansas City. Through intimidation and ballot stuffing in pro-slavery towns, they managed to push aside Kansas settlers who were largely opposed to the practice of slavery. Congress subsequently recognized the Shawnee legislature as a legitimate government. In response, "a de facto constitutional convention was held by the Free State people of Kansas in the fall of 1855 at the town of Topeka, located 65 miles west of the Shawnee Indian Mission."[25] The convention was composed of Kansas settlers, many of whom would have been legislators had it not been for the border ruffians preventing the election in 1855. A nationally recognized antislavery leader, Charles Robinson, was the head of the Free State movement, and James Lane from Indiana was selected as convention president. Lane was recognized as a "dramatic orator with an energetic presence."[26]

The efforts of the free-staters became known as the Free State "Topeka Movement." The first convention was held in Topeka from October 23 until November 11, 1855. The convention met in the town's first stone building, thereafter, named Constitution Hall (KHRI 177-5400-00100; NR-listed 2008). During the convention, the free-staters drafted a constitution that prohibited slavery and limited suffrage to White males and 'civilized" male Indians who had adopted the habits of the White man. The constitution was approved on December 15 of that year. The document was sent to Congress with a request for admission into the Union.[27] At Constitution Hall, official "State" business began with Charles Robinson elected governor. However, Congress rejected the constitution and request for admission. In an attempt to block a legislative meeting of the free-staters at Constitution Hall on July 4, 1856, the President of the U.S. sent four hundred dragoons to Topeka. The dragoons arranged in the streets surrounding Constitution Hall. Over the course of the next five years, controversy ensued as the free-staters and pro-slavery Kansans fought to gain political control of the Territory. "Bloody Kansas" finally came to an end when Kansas

[24] Rosin Preservation, LLC. "Downtown Topeka Historic Resources Survey," 2012; p.25-36.
[25] Friends of the State Capitol, "Constitution Hall National Register of Historic Places Nomination," National Park Service, 2006; Section 8 Page 3.
[26] Friends of the State Capitol, "Constitution Hall National Register of Historic Places Nomination," National Park Service, 2006; Section 8 Page 3.
[27] Kansas Historical Society, "Kansas Constitutions," *Kansapedia*, February 2011. https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/kansas-constitutions/16532

entered the Union as a free state in 1861.[28] From 1855 to 1861, Constitution Hall served as the hub of the Topeka Movement and was a symbol of the Free State Capital. The building, recently restored, remains a national symbol of the events of Bloody Kansas and the monumental efforts taken to ensure the future of Kansas as a Free State.

Underground Railroad

Despite the anti-slavery political climate attributed to Topeka during the Territorial years, African Americans were not substantial in numbers prior to statehood. In reality, racial prejudice among Topekans was pervasive, with many residents endorsing "anti-Negro referenda."[29] However, this would soon change in the wake of the Dred Scott case, which, in 1857 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that living in a free state and territory did not entitle a man to his freedom because, as an enslaved man, he was not a citizen, but essentially another person's property. The decision ultimately incensed abolitionists, fueling the anti-slavery movement nationwide.[30]

Topeka was along one of two known routes of the Underground Railroad crossing through Kansas. Believed to be the first station in Topeka of the Underground Railroad stations was the home of Mrs. William Scale's, a stone house at 427 Quincy Street (not extant). The house was erected in 1856 by John Armstrong.[31] John Ritchie, formerly of Ohio, was also an early conductor of the Underground Railroad.[32] John Ritchie, and wife, Mary, were longtime antislavery activists. It is reported on two occasions in late-1857, federal lawmen banged on the door of the residence of the Ritchie's (KHRI 177-5400-00563; NR-listed 2015) in search of fugitive slaves. There is no evidence that the house was a station along the railroad; however, substantive documentation confirms that the Ritchie's provided a temporary safe haven on the property for fugitive slaves.[33] Family tradition also suggests that fugitive slaves were hidden in a cave on the Ritchie property. The cave contained a spring that served as a water source for the Ritchie family. Thus, it was a site where Mary Ritchie could regularly visit to bring food and provisions to those hidden there without raising suspicion. A family of five reportedly hid in a sod cabin owned by the Ritchie's in 1858. Another fugitive worked a quarry owned by Ritchie as he awaited relocation to the north.[34]

Local legend holds that David Sheridan established a station in 1855 from his residence at 2303 S.E. Pennsylvania (not extant) in the Highland Park area. Reportedly, a 100-yard tunnel led from an open pasture to the cellar of the residence. The house was destroyed by fire in 1950. In 2010, an archaeological

[28] Friends of the State Capitol, "Constitution Hall National Register of Historic Places Nomination," National Park Service, 2006; Section 8 Page 4-7.
[29] Thomas C. Cox, *Blacks in Topeka Kansas: 1865-1915*, Louisiana State University Press, 1982; p.15.
[30] History.com Editors, "Dred Scott Case," *History*, April 25, 2023. https://www.history.com/topics/Black-history/dred-scott-case accessed May 2023.
[31] Unfortunately, the house was razed in the 1920s.
[32] Cox 1982; p.15.
[33] Thomas Rosenblum, "John and Mary Ritchie House National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," National Park Service, 2015; Section 8 p.13.
[34] Rosenblum 2015; Section 8, Page 13.

survey was conducted on the property to identify any evidence of the former residence or tunnel.[35] Though the investigation did not yield sufficient data to confirm the property was associated with the Underground Railroad, further investigation may yield important information.

Prominent Topekan and abolitionist, John Brown, was also active in the Underground Railroad in Kansas from 1857 to 1859. He reportedly established his headquarters in Topeka at the home of Daniel Sheridan.[36] In January of 1859, John Brown, along with a group of fugitive slaves, were surrounded just north of Topeka, having been sheltered there for several days. Fellow abolitionist, John Ritchie, quickly pulled together a small force, "routing the posse in what has become known as the Battle of the Spurs, allowing Brown to continue in his journey."[37] Other notable Topekans involved in the railroad included Rev. Lewis Bodwell and Avery Washburn.[38]

The Great Exodus (1879-1880)

Few, if any, fugitives passing through Topeka via the Underground Railroad chose to remain in the town. In 1860, records indicate only 8 Black residents of Shawnee County – the wife and children of Clement Shattio. During the years of the Civil War (1861-1865), recorded Black residents in the city increased to 83.[39] This increase is partially attributed to the organization of the 1st Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry and an eagerness to join the fight towards abolition. The first contingent of troops included 27 men from Shawnee County, three of whom were from Topeka. David Ware, born a slave in 1839 in Missouri, served in the Infantry. He would later become a highly respected leader in the Black community. Following the Civil War, most Black Topekans arrived from Missouri, with a smaller number from Tennessee and other Deep South states. By 1870, the Black population in Topeka reached 473 of a total population of 5,790. In 1875, Black Topekans accounted for 724 of the 7,272 total population.[40]

The Great Exodus in 1879 to 1880 not only brought an influx of Black Southern refugees to Topeka, but heightened race discrimination and set the framework for a social structure among the city's African American community. The Exodus further contributed to the establishment of distinct Black settlements and enclaves in Topeka. Three communities are recognized as Exoduster settlements - Redmonsville (aka Up in the Sands) in North Topeka (Ward 1), Ritchie Addition (Ward 3) to the south of downtown, and Tennessee Town, in Ward 3 (see Context II: Settlement Patterns).

Throughout 1879, emigrating Exodusters arrived in Topeka at a rate of 250 to 300 per month, more than any other city in Kansas. However, population figures from 1880 to 1885 are largely skewed. Topeka was the center for the activity of the Kansas Freedmen's Relief Association (KFRA), a system to provide social welfare and philanthropy to the emigrating Exodusters. The KFRA established the Barracks to provide room and board. The Barracks was not a permanent residence, rather a halfway house for those unable to settle within the community or beyond. According to the 1880 Federal census, the Barracks

[35] Ann Marie Bush, "Duo Digs for Sheridan House Relics," *Topeka Capital-Journal*, October 5, 2010.
[36] Kansas State Historical Society 1977; p.7.; AND *Topeka Daily Capitol* October 30, 1935.
[37] Rosenblum 2015; Section 8, Page 13.
[38] Kansas State Historical Society 1977; p.7.
[39] Cox 1982, p.16.
[40] Cox 1982 ; p.33.

housed 127 residents. Thus, a precise population count of permanent African American residents after the Exodus is unclear.[41] Between 1875 and 1880, it is estimated that Topeka's Black population increased an approximate 80% from 724 residents to more than 3,600 (Figure 2).

Census Year	Black Topekans	Total Population of Topeka
1860	8	759
1870	473	5,790
1875	724	7,273
1880	3,648	15,528

Figure 2. Topeka Population From 1860 to 1880

Contrasts between the newly arrived migrants and the established Black community in Topeka were quickly recognized. The Exodusters were largely destitute and uneducated, and there existed a prevailing sense among established Topekans, both White and Black, that the migrants lacked self-reliance and expected free food and shelter upon their arrival in the city. The Exodusters were largely unwelcomed by Topeka residents, and it was the shared notion that municipal monies and facilities should not be used to assist the migrants. Thus, philanthropical initiatives were paramount to their survival. Relief programs established by local churches were largely ineffective. The most influential relief program was the Kansas Freedmen's Relief Association (KFRA).[42]

The KFRA "enjoyed neither support nor acceptance in Topeka; in fact, it received particular censure."[43] Topeka was the only city in the state with an organized social welfare and resettlement program for the Exodusters. Though Governor John St. John formed the KFRA in May of 1879, government aid was scant, and the organization operated on private donations.[44] The general superintendent was John M. Brown, a Black Topekan who emigrated from Mississippi in 1877. Brown reportedly owned property in North Topeka where the KFRA facilities were located. Brown was also responsible for the management of the Barracks and resettlement of the migrants. He was very well-respected in the Black community and served as a member of the Colored State Emigration Board, which was formed by Topeka's Black residents.[45]

Among the most pressing form of relief for the Exodusters was the need for shelter. Initially, the Exodusters were quartered at the Topeka Fair Grounds; however, the board of county commissioners ordered the fairgrounds to be vacated. It was recommended that the migrants be housed in North Topeka near the Kansas Pacific Railroad where many Exodusters arrived on. In June of 1879, the KFRA erected the temporary shelter known as the Barracks near the junction of railroad tracks along the north bank of the Kansas River. Residents of North Topeka, White and Black, greatly opposed the Barracks, forcing its dismantling and relocation ¾-mile north of the city on the land owned by John Brown.[46] The relocated

[41] Cox 1982 ; p.42-43.
[42] Cox 1982; 46-51.
[43] Cox 1982; p.56.
[44] Michelle Stottlemire, "Exodusters in Topeka," Topeka Public Library, April 22, 2015; https://tscpl.org/history/exodusters-in-topeka
[45] Cox 1982 ; p.56-57.
[46] Cox 1982 ; p.56-60.

Barracks contained all relief facilities, including dormitories designed to accommodate between 200 and 500 persons. Near the dorms were a hospital, a commissary and a two-story structure housing the offices and warehouse. Migrant skilled laborers were often paid by the association for their labor to build and maintain these facilities.[47]

High numbers of the Exodusters resettled throughout Topeka. The largest proportion of those staying in Topeka were from Tennessee and Mississippi and settled in the King's Addition. The KHRA purchased several lots here, specifically for the resettlement of refugees. The neighborhood was soon renamed Tennessee Town. Other neighborhoods in Topeka tied to the resettlement of the Exodusters include Redmonsville in North Topeka, also known as Up in the Sands, and Ritchie's Addition in southeast Topeka.

Decreasing numbers of arriving migrants, coupled with increased public censure and internal dispute over the direction of the relief effort ultimately led to the KHRA ceasing operations in May of 1881. By this time, the attitude toward the Exodusters was generally negative among both Black and White citizens of Topeka. There existed a shared opinion that the migrants were not only poor and uneducated but brought with them increased crime. An institutional and social structure was inevitably established among the Black community in Topeka. In 1879, St. John A.M.E, one of the oldest Black churches in the city, relocated to a new building at the corner of Madison and Second Streets where few Exodusters settled. Similarly, the Second Baptist Church, originally located on 1st Avenue, relocated to Second and Jefferson streets following a fire in 1879. According to historian Thomas C. Cox, "the shift in the location of two institutional pillars of the Black community strongly suggests that geographical distance, however slight, connoted social distance from the Exodusters."[48] The years to follow, however, saw the Exodusters acclimate to their new lives in Topeka and gradually integrate into the Black community. By 1895, literacy rates among Topeka's African American citizens rose to 80 percent. The occupational structure became more varied to include a higher number of professionals and service entrepreneurs. Though, most of the Black population remained day laborers. [49]

From its role in the slavery debate in the years leading up to the Civil War, through the Great Exodus, Topeka has played a pivotal role in the migration of African Americans to the State. Often envisioned as Promised Land, these significant events in the 19th century attracted thousands of Black migrants to the capital city and ultimately steered settlement patterns throughout the city.

CONTEXT II: SETTLEMENT PATTERNS OF BLACK TOPEKANS (1864-1975)

Following the Civil War, evolving social and political trends played significant roles in steering settlement patterns of African Americans in Topeka. Enforced residential segregation was not the norm in Topeka. However, throughout its history, racial and socio-economic ideology greatly influenced the establishment and evolution of predominantly African American neighborhoods and residential enclaves. As early as 1865, "kinship and informal relations in the enclave or the neighborhood largely defined associational

[47] Cox 1982 ; 60-64.
[48] Cox 1982 ; p.79-81.
[49] Cox 1982 ; p.82.

behavior" among the newly arriving African Americans to Topeka.[50] In some instances, neighborhoods developed solely as African American communities, while others were ethnically and racially diverse, settled largely based on social or economic condition.

The earliest African American settlements and enclaves in Topeka were distinguishable by the 1880s. A rare article by M.W. Overton in the *Topeka Plaindealer* in 1925 documents the early foundation of the city's Black settlements. According to the article, in 1882, the city's Black population was approximately 6,000, one-third of the total population. The southern refugees, or Exodusters, were quickly becoming self-sustaining, "no longer the wards of the relief society and began to build homes for themselves."[51] The 1925 article refers to the migrants as "clandish," frequently settling in one group. Redmonsville in North Topeka was reportedly the first to be established. Other referenced early Exoduster settlements were Tennessee Town and Ritchie's Addition.[52]

While some of the African American enclaves were settled primarily as Exoduster colonies, others evolved concurrently with demographic shifts and increased population growth. Some were initially settled within rural settings and later annexed into the city. The mid-20th century saw the rapid suburbanization of Topeka and the establishment of planned subdivisions, some intended to accommodate those displaced by Urban Renewal projects. This context strives to document the historical settlement patterns and development of various neighborhoods or residential enclaves known to have strong association with Topeka's African American population since the Civil War.

Through the Reconstruction years (1865-1875), the heaviest concentration of Black Topekans lived along the southern bank of the Kansas River, adjacent to the A.T. & SF railroad complex in the city's 2nd Ward. This area would later earn the moniker the "Bottoms." Approximately one-third of the population in 1870 resided in the 3rd Ward, in the southwestern part of the city. In both wards, Black and White populations lived in racially homogenous clusters within otherwise integrated neighborhoods. However, there was little distinguishing differences in social, occupational, or economic patterns.[53]

By 1880, Black Topekans were evenly distributed throughout the city, with exception to the 4th Ward, which remained sparsely settled in the westernmost fridges of the city. Fifteen percent (15%) of the total African American population in 1880 resided in all-Black neighborhoods, a phenomenon not evident in 1875. Furthermore, Exodusters tended to live in more dense, racial concentration. Distinct African American enclaves became more discernible during the 1880s. Among those were Redmonsville, also known as Up in The Sands, in the 1st Ward, and Tennessee Town in the 3rd Ward.[54] By the close of the 19th century, African American settlements were distributed across all five wards of the city, though the greatest concentration resided in Wards 1 and 3.

[50] Cox 1982 ; .19.
[51] M.W .Overton, "From Where and Whence Cometh We," *Topeka Plaindealer*, October 30, 1925.
[52] M.W .Overton, "From Where and Whence Cometh We," *Topeka Plaindealer*, October 30, 1925.
[53] Cox 1982 ; p.33.
[54] Cox 1982; p.43.

The following table reflects patterns in the percentage of the Black population in Topeka from 1890 through 1990. The percentage of African Americans in Topeka peaked in 1880 during the Great Exodus with 23.6 percent of the total population. Over the next forty years, the percentage of Black Topekans gradually decreased, reaching a low of only 8.5 percent in 1920. This decline is undoubtedly tied to continued western expansion and the gradual disbursement of the great number of Exodusters leaving Topeka for opportunities elsewhere. Despite the city's overall population increasing continuously through the present, the percentage of Black Topekans has remained relatively consistent between 7.7 and 9.5. In 1990, the percentage reached 10.6. Despite a relatively low percentage of Black Topekans since the Exodus, it did not hinder the establishment of cohesive, oftentimes homogenous, neighborhoods throughout the city.

Figure 3. Black Population in Topeka 1890-1990

Census Year	Total Population	Black Population	Percent of Black Population
1890	31,007	5,024	16.2
1900	33,608	4,807	14.3
1910	43,684	4,538	10.4
1920	50,022	4,272	8.5
1930	64,120	5,756	9.0
1940	67,833	5,679	8.4
1950	78,791	6,228	7.9
1960	119,484	9,145	7.7
1970	125,011	10,444	8.4
1980	115,266	10,965	9.5
1990	119,883	12,761	10.6

African American Neighborhoods in Topeka

Defining precise boundaries of distinct African American enclaves throughout the five wards of the city is complex. Significant inconsistencies are evident across a variety of both primary and secondary resources. The city is comprised of five wards that were incorporated into the city limits over time. Within these wards are planned subdivisions, or additions, that were surveyed and laid out. Within those additions, various enclaves emerged either along racial lines, economic or social standing. In some instances, local monikers were given to specific enclaves, though the precise boundary of these neighborhoods are ambiguous. This is particularly the case in reference to "Mud Town." Research indicates that several areas throughout the city were referred to as Mud Town due to the lack of paved streets and the muddy conditions. The following documents some of the more distinct, traditionally African American neighborhoods, or residential enclaves, established in Topeka from Reconstruction through the mid-20th century. In most cases, the boundaries are loosely defined, drawing upon multiple sources and word of mouth. Figure 4 shows several traditionally African American enclaves and neighborhoods in Topeka. A brief developmental history of each follow.

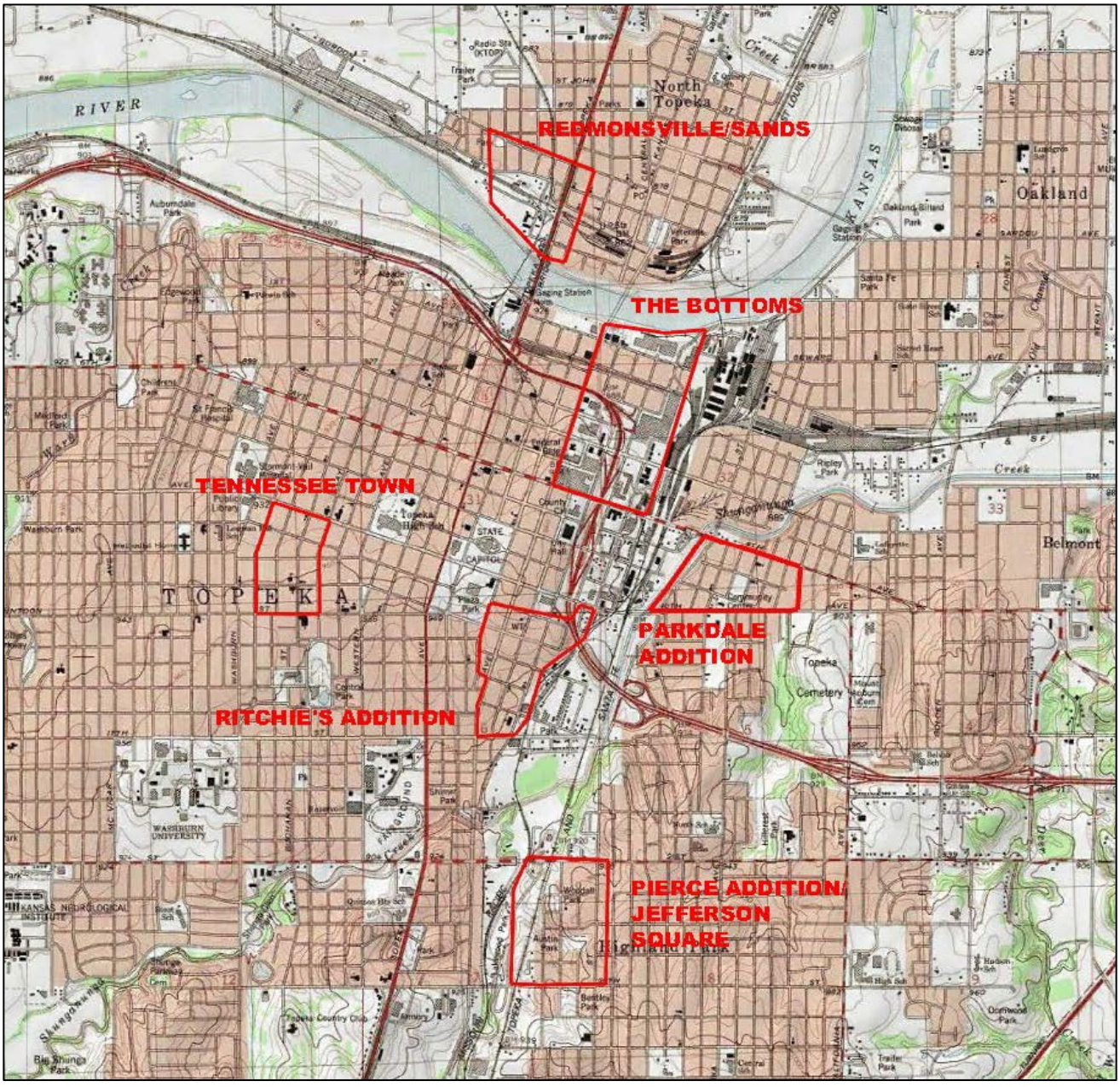

Figure 4. USGS Topographic Map Showing Distinct African American Neighborhoods in Topeka

The Bottoms (est.1850s)

The earliest residential development of Topeka occurred within close proximity to the Kansas River near Pappan's Ferry and the future site of the Kansas Avenue Bridge on the south bank of the river. Following the Civil War, African Americans in Topeka tended to reside within a "racially homogenous neighborhood" along 1st Avenue and the southern bank of the River.[55] The railroad would become a leading employer for Black Topekans. Later referred to as "the Bottoms," this area became one of the first fully developed neighborhoods in the city.

Unlike other neighborhoods in Topeka, the Bottoms boasted a vibrant Black business district along five blocks of 4th Street.[56] The Fourth Street District was the hub of the Black community's social and business life (*see* Context III, Business and Professionals). Here, a corporate structure emerged among the Black professionals and business owners. The railroad shops and yards and agricultural processing plants adjoining the Bottoms provided other avenues for employment to the residents of the Bottoms.[57] By the mid-20th century, the Bottoms comprised 20 blocks, loosely bounded by the Kansas River to the north, 6th Avenue to the south, and to the west by Kansas Avenue, east to Adams Street and the shops of the A.T. & SF Railroad.

What makes the Bottoms so unique in Topeka is that it emerged in the early-20th century as a neighborhood populated by a mix of African Americans, Mexicans, Germans, Russians, American Indians and poor Whites.[58] Longtime former resident of the Bottoms, Thomas Rodriguez, published a book entitled *The Bottoms: A Place We Once Called Home*, that documents the diversity of the community and the way of life of its residents. As a Latinx from an immigrant family, he lived and worked closely with his ethnically diverse neighbors, who together forged a vibrant and close-knit community. Rodriguez commemorates the many residents of the Bottoms:

> In spite of the pervasive poverty and severe ethnic and race discrimination that existed in Topeka, Kansas during the first half of the 20th century, the multi-ethnic, multi-racial people who lived in the Bottoms persevered through poverty of the Great Depression, the dark days of World War II, and the Great Flood of 1951.[59]

In July of 1951, after months of unprecedented rain, the Kansas River crested at 40+ feet, inundating two million acres of land. In Topeka, more than 7,000 buildings were damaged or destroyed. The areas along the banks of the river received the worst damage, particularly in the lower income neighborhoods of Redmonsville in North Topeka and the Bottoms. Known as the Great Flood, the event was the first of a series of significant events that would forever change the Bottoms and the vibrant community that resided there. The damage caused by the flood led to further financial strain on residents of the Bottoms. Many of the residences that were not destroyed, were abandoned, while others took months to clean and repair. The disastrous event contributed greatly to the further decline of the Bottoms. In the years to follow, the

[55] Cox 1982; p.19.
[56] Rodriguez 2013; p.92.
[57] Cox 1982; p.82-83.
[58] Rodriguez 2013; p.5.
[59] Thomas Rodriguez: *The Bottoms: A Place We Once Called Home,* Jack Cobos Publisher, 2012; p.vii.

Bottoms would be nearly wiped in the 1960s as a result of Urban Renewal, with thousands of its residents displaced from their homes.

Tennessee Town (est.1879)

The Exoduster Movement had a lasting impact on the built environment of Topeka, particularly the establishment of the African American settlement of Tennessee Town. In 1879, the KFRA purchased numerous tracts of land in King's Addition at the southwestern fringe of the city in the 3rd Ward. The lots were sold at a very low cost, subdivided into small residential lots, and sold at cost to the refugees.[60] Named Tennessee Town in recognition of the state in which many of the Exodusters fled, a distinct colony was established. The settlement quickly expanded northward from King's Addition to Tenth Street. Those Exodusters who settled Tennessee Town remained eligible for services from the KFRA for a brief period.[61]

At the time of its settlement, Tennessee Town was largely dry prairie land. Among the first endeavors of the settlers was providing shelter for their families. With limited finances and resources, residents of Tennessee Town began constructing modest, one and two-room dwellings to face the cold Kansas winters.[62] Many of these houses were intended as temporary shelters to be replaced with larger residences as personal finances improved and families grew larger.[63] The narrow dimension of the lots (20-25' wide and 150' deep) laid out in Tennessee Town tended to steer the design of early residences and their subsequent incremental growth. [64] Throughout the 1880s, residents of Tennessee Town strived to improve their living standards and adapt to their new lives. They began to garden and trade produce for clothes and other necessities.[65]

Dr. Charles Monroe Sheldon, pastor of the Central Congregational Church between 1898 and 1920, surveyed Tennessee Town's residents and living conditions for three weeks in 1898. According to his community survey, Tennessee Town boasted 146 families. It was a "young community with 371 residents less than 25 years of age, 118 in the 25-40 category, and 146 older than 40."[66] Among the residents of Tennessee Town in 1898, 167 were born into slavery. Seventy-eight (78) families were homeowners. Rev. Sheldon's survey notes that the majority of the early houses were frame, averaging 3 ½ rooms. Most of the residents kept a small garden and many kept horses, cow, or pigs. Economic standing varied considerably throughout the neighborhood in 1898. Annual incomes ranged from as low as $50 per year

[60] Dina Bennett and Duke Palmer, "Shiloh Baptist Church, "National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior.; AND Jaime Destefano, "Tennessee Town Historic Resources Survey: Phase I," prepared for City of Topeka, 2019.
[61] Cox 1982; p.62.
[62] Tennessee Town Neighborhood Improvement Association, "Tennessee Town History: From Freedom to the Future," 2014 https://tenntownnia.weebly.com/history.html accessed 10 October 2018.
[63] Dina Bennett and Duke Palmer, "Shiloh Baptist Church, "National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior.
[64] *Ibid*.
[65] Tennessee Town Neighborhood Improvement Association, "Tennessee Town History: From Freedom to the Future," 2014 https://tenntownnia.weebly.com/history.html accessed 10 October 2018
[66] Martin Hawver, "1898 Tennessee Town Survey," newspaper clipping in Vertical File (Topeka Room).

to upwards of $1,000. Those earning the most tended to be employed as minters or policemen.[67] Women were mostly employed as domestics – washing or sewing. Men tended to be day laborers, teamsters, janitors, porters, etc. A handful of men worked for the city fire or police department.

Figure 5. Tennessee Town Early Photograph, nd
Courtesy of Kansas Historical Society Collection

Tennessee Town saw its "heyday" between the 1940s and 1960s. It was a well-kept neighborhood with little crime. The close-knit community took great pride in its neighborhood.[68] According to long-time resident, Michael Bell, jobs were limited for African American residents during this time. As such, neighbors tended to be "on the lower end socio-economically."[69] The neighborhood quickly declined when older homeowners passed away, and their homes subsequently became rental properties. Increased crime is indirectly tied to this trend. Despite efforts of the Tennessee Town Neighborhood Improvement Association, established in 1976, a declining population continued. Tennessee Town has seen a clear shift in demographics since the 1990s. Census records of 1990 indicate that African Americans accounted for

[67] Douglass W. Wallace & Roy D. Bird, Witness of the Times: A History of Shawnee County, (Topeka: Shawnee County Historical Society, 1976), xx.
[68] Jan Biles, "Residents see hope for historic area," *The Capital-Journal*, March 2, 2003.
[69] Jan Biles, "Residents see hope for historic area," *The Capital-Journal*, March 2, 2003.

approximately 68% of the neighborhood residents. By 2010, White residents accounted for nearly 66% of the neighborhood's population, including a higher number of middle-class homeowners.[70]

Redmonsville-Up in the Sands (est.1880)

Located in North Topeka along the banks of the Kansas River, the area encompassing Redmonsville was part of the "Half-Breed Reservation" tract inherited by the Pappan-Curtis family. Among the children of Julia and Louis Pappan was a daughter, Ellen, who married Orrin Curtis, son of William Curtis. The couple gave birth to a son, Charles Curtis, who would later become the Vice President of the United States (1929-1933). Charles Curtis inherited his mother's land that was part of the Half-Breed Reservation. As a young child, in 1880, he donated a portion of that tract, known as the Curtis Addition, to African American Exodusters. The land was set aside for the refugees as a settlement community, soon adopting the name, the Sands, or Up in The Sands. This nickname is undoubtedly attributed to the sandy soil along the northern banks of the river. By 1882, the settlement acquired the name, Redmonsville, in honor of one of its early residents, George Redmond, an Exoduster from Tennessee.[71] The earliest known reference to Redmonsville occurs in the *Daily Commonwealth* in 1882. The newspaper announced the arrest of *John* Redmond, who, according to the paper, was the namesake of the district, for drunkenness and fighting.[72] The true namesake of Redmonsville remains unclear.

A precise boundary of the Sands-Redmonsville community is not well-documented. According to the *North Topeka West Neighborhood Plan*, an element of the *Topeka Comprehensive Plan*, adopted in 2016, the area formerly known as the Sands surrounded the location of Pappan's Ferry, extending both east and west a distance of approximately ¼-mile.[73] The eastern boundary of the Curtis Addition is formed by NW Harrison Street. It is probable that the Sands-Redmonsville occupied land south of the railroad corridor in portions Curtis Addition. The settlement initially extended northward to Gordon Street, as attested by several notable buildings associated with the African American community, including several churches. In 1900, the city limits extended as far west as Tyler Street. Thus, the community of the Sands-Redmonsville likely extended beyond the city limits during the early years of the 20th century.

Development and growth of Topeka slowed during the early years of the 20th century. It is during this period when many of the African American settlers of Redmonsville relocated to other more prominent communities such as Tennessee Town. This was likely attributed to encroaching industrial development built along the corridor of the Kansas Pacific Railroad. Another impetus for the relocation of residents of the Sands was a major flood in 1903 that destroyed many of the residences. Despite the apparent decline of Redmonsville, the 1913 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (Sanborn) depicts several modest, 1- to 2-story, vernacular frame dwellings, with a scattering of brick residences and churches. Industrial growth was generally confined to the area south of the railroad corridor to the Kansas River. Between 1936 and 1938,

[70] The Tennessee Town Neighborhood Improvement Association & Topeka Planning Department, "Tennessee Town Neighborhood Plan, 2017;" p.22.
[71] M.W .Overton, "From Where and Whence Cometh We," *Topeka Plaindealer*, October 30, 1925.
[72] *Daily Commonwealth*, December 2, 1882.
[73] North Topeka West Neighborhood Improvement Association, "North Topeka West Neighborhood Plan," an element of the *Topeka Comprehensive Plan*, adopted February 16, 2016; p.4-5.

construction of the Topeka Avenue Bridge greatly impacted the built environment of Redmonsville. The bridge connected Topeka Avenue to the north and south sides of the Kansas River. Completed under the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the bridge not only served city traffic but was part of US-75 highway.[74] The bridge was elevated through much of North Topeka, replacing the original path of Topeka Boulevard. Thus, its construction separated the district, and buildings along Topeka Boulevard were obstructed by the viaduct. Only a small number of those buildings survive, including the Second Missionary Baptist Church (KHRI 177-5400-01532).

Ritchie's Addition (est.1864, recorded 1884)

Situated southeast of downtown Topeka in the 3rd Ward, Ritchie's Addition has long been considered an African American settlement. The land historically belonged to John Ritchie, active free-stater and participant in Underground Railroad operations. John Ritchie secured a position with the Topeka Town Association, the core group that allocated lots held by shareholders to make improvements for the town.[75] As Topeka's Black population began to increase during the Civil War, Ritchie created an addition to the city on his land, which adjoined the city to the southeast, in June of 1864. The addition welcomed people of all races. Ritchie's Addition was created to support the "free-soil principle," following the precepts of the Free-Soil Party, "free soil, free speech, free labor, and free men."[76] Within his town addition, John Ritchie intentionally gave away the majority of the lots to African Americans, making it difficult for the acquisition of the lots by White residents. He further allowed the sale of only one lot to a single person in an effort to prevent land speculators from purchasing large tracts in the addition.[77]

Despite attempts by the city of Topeka to annex Ritchie's Addition, John Ritchie refused. By 1869, the small community was sometimes referred to as "Ritchie Town," a distinct entity southeast of Topeka. Improvements for the citizens included walkways, streets and a school for Black students.[78] By 1870, approximately one-third of the Black population resided in the Third Ward, which encompassed Ritchie's Addition. The ward was the location for the settlement of many of the Exodusters in 1879.

In 1884, John Ritchie officially platted the Ritchie Addition. Shortly thereafter, in 1886, the Ritchie Addition joined with the Keith and Walnut Grove additions to incorporate as the City of South Topeka, a city of the second class. A government was formed, and infrastructure improvements ensued.[79] John Ritchie was elected mayor but was soon ousted from the city council for his extreme policing of morality. He sued South Topeka, and the following year, it was annexed into Topeka, further expanding the city

[74] Kansas Memory, "Topeka Avenue Bridge," https://www.kshs.org/index.php?url=km/items/view/215553#:~:text=It%20was%20completed%20under%20the,bridge%20opened%20August%204%2C%202008.
[75] James L. King, *History of Shawnee County, Kansas and Representative Citizens*. Richmond and Arnold, Chicago, IL., 1904; p.127.
[76] Wendi M. Bevitt, "Ritchie Cemetery National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," National Park Service, 2022; p.9.
[77] Bevitt 2022; p.9.
[78] "The City of South Topeka," *Topeka Daily Capital*, May 30, 1885; p.4.; Bevitt 2022; p.9
[79] Bevitt 2022; p.9.

limits.[80]

Ritchie Addition was largely residential but contained a scattering of commercial businesses. Among those was Laura's Coffee Shop (not extant) at the northwest corner of the intersection of SW 16th and Monroe Streets. The coffee shop and restaurant were a popular spot for the Black community. The 1950 Sanborn map reflects a growing middle-class of residents with primarily 2-story, vernacular frame construction. The residence of John Ritchie (KHRI 177-5400-00563/NR-listed) is located at the northeast corner of the neighborhood. Ritchie Addition was home to several leading Black citizens of Topeka. Among those was Mamie Williams who resided at 1503 SE Quincy Street (KRHI 177-2646). Dink Mothell, who resided at 1503 SE Quincy Street (KHRI 177-2649), and was a longtime player in the Negro Baseball League. William Eagleson, publisher of the *Colored Citizen i*n the late-19th century, also resided on Quincy Street. Two segregated Black schools were located in Ritchie Addition. Garfield School (not extant) began in the late-19th century but closed prior to the 1920s when it was used for other purposes. Monroe School (designated NHL in 1992) was completed in 1927 and was one of four segregated Black elementary schools in Topeka in 1951 when the groundbreaking *Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka* lawsuit was filed.

By the mid-20th century, Ritchie's Addition was in decline. Historic aerial photography shows that the neighborhood was nearly fully developed by 1948. However, Topeka's Urban Renewal projects greatly fueled the further decline of the neighborhood with the construction of I-70 through the northeastern section of the neighborhood. Subsequent aerial photographs reveal a gradual decline in the number of buildings, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s. The majority of the residences are razed, and several modern, large-scale industrial and public buildings constructed.

Pierce Addition-Jefferson Square (est. 1885)

The Pierce Addition initially covered a 12-block area extending south from the city limits at SE 21st to SE 25th, and from SE Monroe to SE Adams. The area southeast of the city limits of Topeka was surveyed and laid out for General H.A. Pierce, a prominent Topeka businessman, in 1885.[81] The planned subdivision included plans for a large park between Pierce and Dana Streets (present-day 23rd and 24th Streets). The park was named Groveland Square (Figure 6).

Newspaper clippings in 1885 advertise the Pierce Addition as a "splendid chance to get a cheap home."[82] The following year, the *Topeka Daily Press* advertised Pierce's Addition as a development for "Homes for the People. Every man under his own 'Vine and Fig Tree.'"[83] One would postulate that Pierce Addition was thus intended as a lower-income suburban neighborhood beyond city limits. However, another advertisement that year reads:

[80] Bevitt 2022; p.10.
[81] Shawnee County Subdivision Plats, Pierce Addition, 1885.
[82] *Topeka State Journal*, October 20, 1885.
[83] *Topeka Daily Press*, September 21, 1886.

> These lots command a beautiful view of Topeka. The soil is good and water is easily obtained. The view from the addition is simply unsurpassed. Numerous residences have already been constructed and are now occupied by families whose chiefs are engaged in business in the city. General Pierce has the plans perfected for a handsome five-thousand-dollar residence to be constructed in the central portion of the addition known as "Groveland Square." The owners of the lots sold in the addition comprise many of our best citizens.[84]

Such a narrative suggests that Pierce's Addition, or at least a portion of the addition surrounding Groveland Square, initially developed as a middle-class White enclave. Despite this trend, much of the neighborhood emerged early on as a predominantly African American, working-class community attracted by the prospect of owning their own home at an affordable cost. In 1888, only three years after the addition was laid out, residency within the suburb had reached a point that warranted the establishment of a local, segregated school for Black students. The Pierce School opened in 1892 at 2235 SE Jefferson Street (not extant).[85] The siting of the school was in close proximity to Groveland Square, suggesting that this area quickly emerged as a predominantly African American community.

Throughout the early-20th century, Pierce Addition remained relatively rural with dirt streets and residential properties where kitchen gardens, orchards and livestock were common. An article in the *Topeka Daily Capital* in 1920 describes "one of the most enthusiastic Republic rallies of the present campaign" was held at the Pierce Addition school building that year.[86] A 1921 advertisement in the *Plaindealer* announced the opening of Mr. Frank Beach's Domestic Finish Laundry at 23rd and Monroe Street.[87] Subsequent clippings indicate he became head janitor at the Memorial Building and served as chairman of the Pierce precinct. In 1923, another *Plaindealer* announcement indicates that at least one grocery (not extant) was operating within Pierce Addition on Adams Street, owned by W.M. Austin.[88] By 1925, residents of Pierce Addition were petitioning the City of Topeka to extend the bus route of the Topeka Railway Company to the suburb,

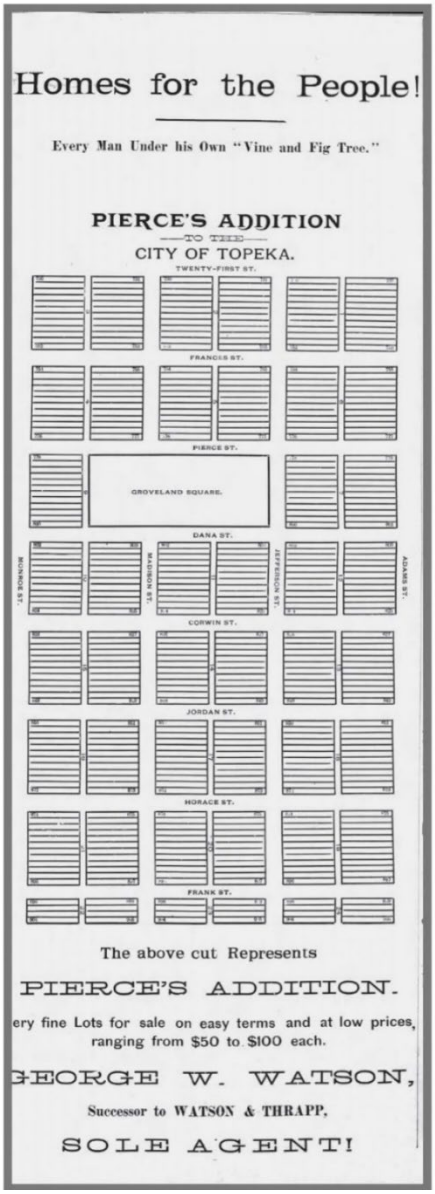

Figure 6. "Homes for the People," Pierce Addition
Source: *Topeka Daily Press*, 9/21/1886

[84] Topeka State Journal, November 30, 1886.
[85] *Topeka Mail*, April 14, 1893.
[86] *Topeka Daily Capital*, October 30, 1920, Page 14.
[87] *Topeka Plain Dealer*, July 15, 1921.
[88] *Topeka Plain Dealer*, May 11, 1923

which remained beyond city limits.[89]

Many men residing in Pierce Addition reportedly were employed with the Santa Fe Railroad. Charles Henri, who graduated from Pierce School in 1949, confirms this as he recalls the neighborhood as a "low-income community marked by dirt roads, juke joints and countryside."[90] In 1957, Pierce Addition, along with the predominantly White neighborhood of Highland Park adjacent to the east, were annexed into the City of Topeka.

Urban Renewal greatly impacted the built environment of Pierce Addition. To accommodate those displaced from blighted areas of the City, particularly the Bottoms, city representatives met with residents of Pierce Addition to consider strategies for housing development. Historic aerial photographs from the late-1940s through the 1970s show how the community quickly transformed from a relatively rural landscape of aging frame houses to one lined by modest, ranch-type dwellings and small cul-de-sacs. Ultimately, the area emerged as a traditional suburban neighborhood characteristic of post-World War II suburbs. Since the transformation of the neighborhood, it is commonly referred to as Jefferson Square.

Parkdale Addition (est. 1878)

In 1878, a new suburb named "Parkdale" was platted east of the city limits. It occupied land between 6th and 10th Avenues and Shunganunga Creek and Lafayette Street. In 1883, businessman George W. Veale established his own suburb, Veale's Addition. Together, the neighborhoods consisted of 6th through 10th Street, Banner, Chandler, and eight streets all beginning with "L": From the west there was: Lake, Lime, Lawrence, Locust, Lafaytette, Leland, Liberty and Lamar. Early maps of the neighborhood show Lamar as Lancaster. In 1887, the land of John Wilson Farnsworth expanded Parkdale to the west from Chandler to the Shunganunga Creek. Parkdale was annexed to the city of Topeka around the turn-of-the 20th century. Work then began on a church for the neighborhood.

A wood-framed school was built in 1880, which served the suburb well into the 20th century. It was located at 8th and Lake on the south side of the intersection where the community center now sits. A 1902 study found that nearly all public schools in Topeka were overcrowded. Parkdale subsequently demanded that they have the first new school building since, when annexed to the city, the city acquired a free schoolhouse and nearly $1000 for upkeep. The Lafayette School, located at 6th and Locust, opened for the 1903 school year and Parkdale was closed. The following year, Parkdale reopened to help overcrowding at Washington School, the all-Black school southwest of Parkdale. The Board of Education refused to reopen the school for Black students.[91] An article in the *Daily Capitol* on July 4, 1905, noted "the fact that racial prejudice exists in Parkdale is well known. In fact, anti-negro sentiment is stronger in that section than any other part of the city."[92]

[89] *Topeka Plaindealer*, February 27, 1925.
[90] Sherman Smith, "Pierce Addition School Overlooked in Topeka's Desegregation Struggle," *Topeka Capital Journal*, May 5, 2019.
[91] Brian Hall, "Parkdale," Tauy Creek, July 8, 2019, http://www.tauycreek.com/2019/07/parkdale.html accessed May 2, 2023
[92] *Daily Capitol*, July 4, 1905.

By 1919, the area surrounding the triangle in Parkdale had become a "squalid, miserable eye-sore known as 'Hells Half Acre'."[93] Between 1919 and 1921, a civic project was initiated to convert the triangle (Lots 353 and 387) into a community park. Owners of property fronting "Hell's Half Acre" assisted in raising funds. The cemetery association donated $500 toward the cost for the park, as the Topeka Cemetery and Mount Auburn Cemetery were located along the route to the cemeteries. The material from the demolished old buildings was sold by the city. The transformation of the blighted triangle in Parkdale Addition was completed in the spring of 1921. The 1921 article reads: "Children play in the park now. Before it was built, they played in the streets or in the filthy yards and shacks that constituted Hell's Half Acre…restful shade (trees) greet the eyes now, in contrast to the dilapidation and trash of former years."[94] In May of 1921, the park received the name Eastlawn Park (KHRI# 177-5111).[95] It continues to serve residents of Parkdale.

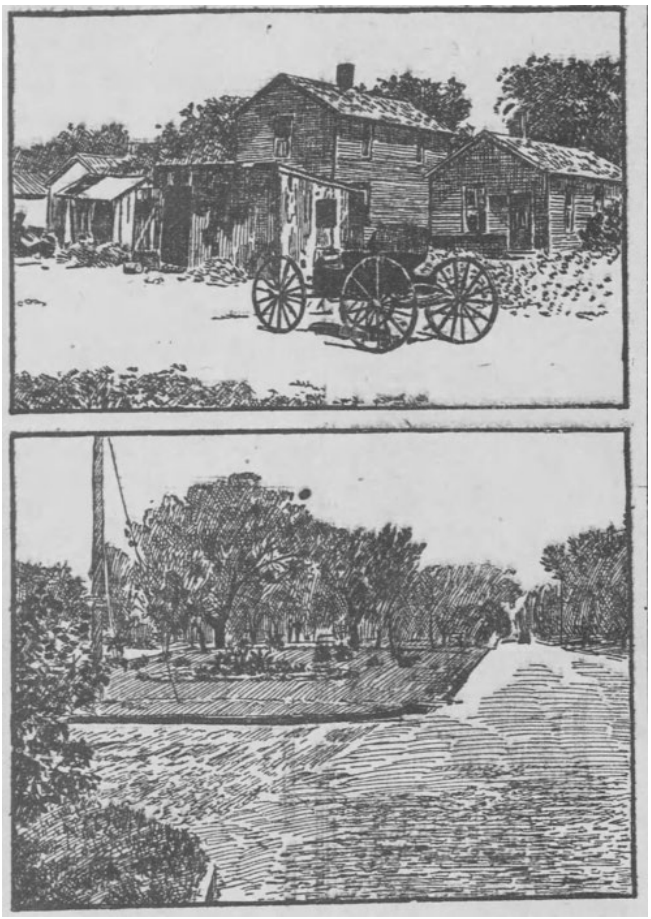

Figure 7. Before and After Renderings of Hell's Half Acre and Eastlawn Park
Source: *Topeka State Journal*, October 15, 1921

[93] "Unsightly Spot Converted Into Beautiful Playground," *Topeka State Journal*, October 15, 1921.
[94] "Unsightly Spot Converted Into Beautiful Playground," *Topeka State Journal*, October 15, 1921.
[95] "Name New City Park," *Topeka State Journal*, May 31, 1921.

The Parkdale School reopened in 1908 as a kindergarten, continuing until 1922 when it closed and was subsequently razed for a new school and athletic center dubbed "the Alamo." The new school was built on the southeast corner of 10th and Chandler (not extant) and included a large athletic field. Physically, the new school and athletic field were located within the Jewell Addition, south of 10th Street. However, they are more commonly associated with the Parkland suburb.[96] Following the Brown v. Board of Education ruling in 1954, Parkdale Elementary School integrated. An addition to the school was erected in 1962, but the school later closed in 1978. It then became a preschool until closing once more in 2011 and was demolished the following year.

The demographics of Parkdale evolved considerably during the 20th century. Parkdale was initially a predominantly middle-class, White suburb of Topeka. During the early-20th-century, the socioeconomic status of Parkdale residents seems to have declined, as evidenced by the state of what was known as Hell's Half Acre. The presence of the White-only Parkdale School here suggests that there was a sufficient White population here to warrant the school. It is postulated that Parkdale was transitioning from a middle-class White suburb to a community comprised of predominantly working-class African Americans and immigrants – a demographic similar to that of the Bottoms. This is further emphasized by the construction of the imposing East Topeka High School in 1936. The school was integrated when it first opened, and yearbook images confirm that a high percentage of African American and immigrant students attended the school. Constructed with help from the Public Works Administration, the school served the diverse community until closing in 1980. In 1969, ground was broken on the Eastlawn Park Community Center (present Boys and Girls Club), adjacent to the historic Eastlawn Park. The original, triangular Eastlawn Park, was later renamed Samuel C. Jackson Park after the famed Civil Rights leader. The former athletic field of Parkdale Elementary School continues to serve the community.

In addition to the historic neighborhoods presented in this context, other enclaves associated with settlement patterns of Black Topekans include an area known as "Neutral," which was bounded to the north and west by the Santa Fe line, to the east by Branner Street and the south by 4th Street.[97] As its name implies, it was considered a "neutral" zone by residents of all ethnic backgrounds. "Mud Town" was reportedly located in the Shunganunga Bottoms where 15th and Adams Streets intersected, adjacent to the Highland Park – Pierce area. Its name derives from the muddy, unpaved roads that characterized the area for much of its history.[98] The Norton Addition, west of Tennessee Town, is often recognized as a predominantly Black neighborhood in Topeka. Though, historic newspaper announcements suggest it initially developed as a middle-class White neighborhood, later transitioning to an ethnically diverse residential enclave. With the closing of Forbes Air Force Base, many of the neighborhoods once populated by servicemen and their families in South Topeka transitioned to more ethnically diverse enclaves. Many of the families relocating to these neighborhoods were among those displaced as a result of Urban Renewal in the 1950s and 1960s. The Highland Crest (Hi-Crest) Neighborhood is one such example where affordable housing attracted homeowners. Today, Hi-Crest is an ethnically diverse community. In East

[96] Brian Hall, "Parkdale," Tauy Creek, July 8, 2019, http://www.tauycreek.com/2019/07/parkdale.html accessed May 2, 2023
[97] Rodriguez 2013; p.5
[98] Donna Rae Pearson, "Redlining" presentation prepared for the League of Women Voters, date unknown. PowerPoint shared with the author by Donna Rae Pearson, local Black historian and member of the Local Landmarks Commission.

Topeka, two planned subdivisions in the late-1950s, Eastboro and Eastgate, are often recognized as traditionally African American neighborhoods, though records suggest a more diverse demographic makeup.

Redlining and Urban Renewal

Begun under the New Deal in the 1930s, the federal government created programs to offer government-insured mortgages to home buyers in an effort to prevent foreclosures after the Depression.[99] The Federal Housing Administration (FHA), established in 1934, enacted a policy known as "redlining" that created color-coded maps to rank the "loan worthiness" of neighborhoods. Between 1935 and 1940, agents of the federal government's Homeowners' Loan Corporation (HOLC), in consultation with the FHA, created color-coded maps for cities throughout the nation. The worst-ranked neighborhoods, identified as "hazardous," were primarily low-income, African American communities. The FHA's *Underwriting Manual* details this ranking system, stating that "the presence of socially or racially inharmonious groups in a neighborhood tends to lessen or destroy owner-occupancy appeal" and "incompatible racial groups should not be permitted to live in the same communities."[100] The color-coded maps were designed to indicate where it was safe to insure mortgages. Anywhere where African Americans lived, or even lived nearby, were colored red to indicate to appraisers that these neighborhoods were too risky. Subsequently, the Veterans Administration and banks adopted the maps, refusing mortgages to Black home buyers.[101] Not only were African Americans largely refused mortgages to purchase homes and secure a future for their families, but the Underwriting Manual also further recommended that highways be a good way to separate African American from White neighborhoods.[102] The effects of redlining were detrimental and long-lasting. The policy 1) further fueled racial segregation; 2) ensured investment in White neighborhoods and disinvestment of Black and immigrant communities; 3) ensured the continuity of wealth inequalities; and 4) in many instances, led to the demolition of the neighborhood and communities therein as part of Urban Renewal projects from the late-1950s through the 1970s.

Topeka was among the many cities across the country that the HOLC redlined, and its impact on the further disenfranchisement of Black Topekans was unmistakable. As illustrated by Topeka's redlining map, also referred to as "Realty Map of Topeka" (Figure 6), all of the neighborhoods with a predominantly African American and/or mixed minority population are coded "hazardous." According to *Mapping Inequality, Redlining in New Deal America*, 53% of the entire city was rated as hazardous, and nearly all of East Topeka and North Topeka fell into this category. An additional 21% was classified as "definitely declining."[103] The classification system guide that accompanies the "Realty Map" describes each

[99] Katie Deutsch, "Redlining: The Race-Based Exclusion of Services and the DOJ's Initiative to Combat It," *Kansas Law Review*, Kansas University Law School, February 28, 2022. https://kansaslawreview.ku.edu/forum/redlining-the-race-based-exclusion-of-services-and-the-dojs-initiative-to-combat-it%EF%BF%BC/

[100] *Ibid*. ; and Federal Housing Administration, "Underwriting Manual," Federal Housing Administration, February 1938, https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Federal-Housing-Administration-Underwriting-Manual.pdf.

[101] Terry Gross, "A 'Forgotten History' Of How the U.S. Government Segregated America," *National Public Radio*, May 3, 2017 https://www.npr.org/2017/05/03/526655831/a-forgotten-history-of-how-the-u-s-government-segregated-america

[102] Gross 2017; and FHA *Underwriting Manual*.

[103] Robert K. Nelson, LaDale Winling, Richard Marciano, Nathan Connolly, et al., "Mapping Inequality," *American Panorama*, ed. Robert K. Nelson and Edward L. Ayers, accessed June 8, 2023,

neighborhood, including the physical condition and racial makeup (Appendix A):

Pierce Addition (D6 on the map) is described as a "suburban section of small, cheap houses…living therein are negroes in addition to the low-income class of Whites."[104]

Ritchie's Addition (D8) is described as an area containing large houses, industrial development, and a large percentage of African Americans.

North Topeka, including Redmonsville (D11) - "Industrial plans and the large railroad trackage help to make it undesirable from a residential standpoint. A flood 35 years ago blighted the area, and, although dykes have been built to protect the residents therein, the danger of a recurrence of a flood continues to exist. Industrial workers predominate in this district, including many negroes."

Tennessee Town (D9) – "this is a 100% negro concentration. Houses therein are the old, cheap type, typical of a negro section."[105]

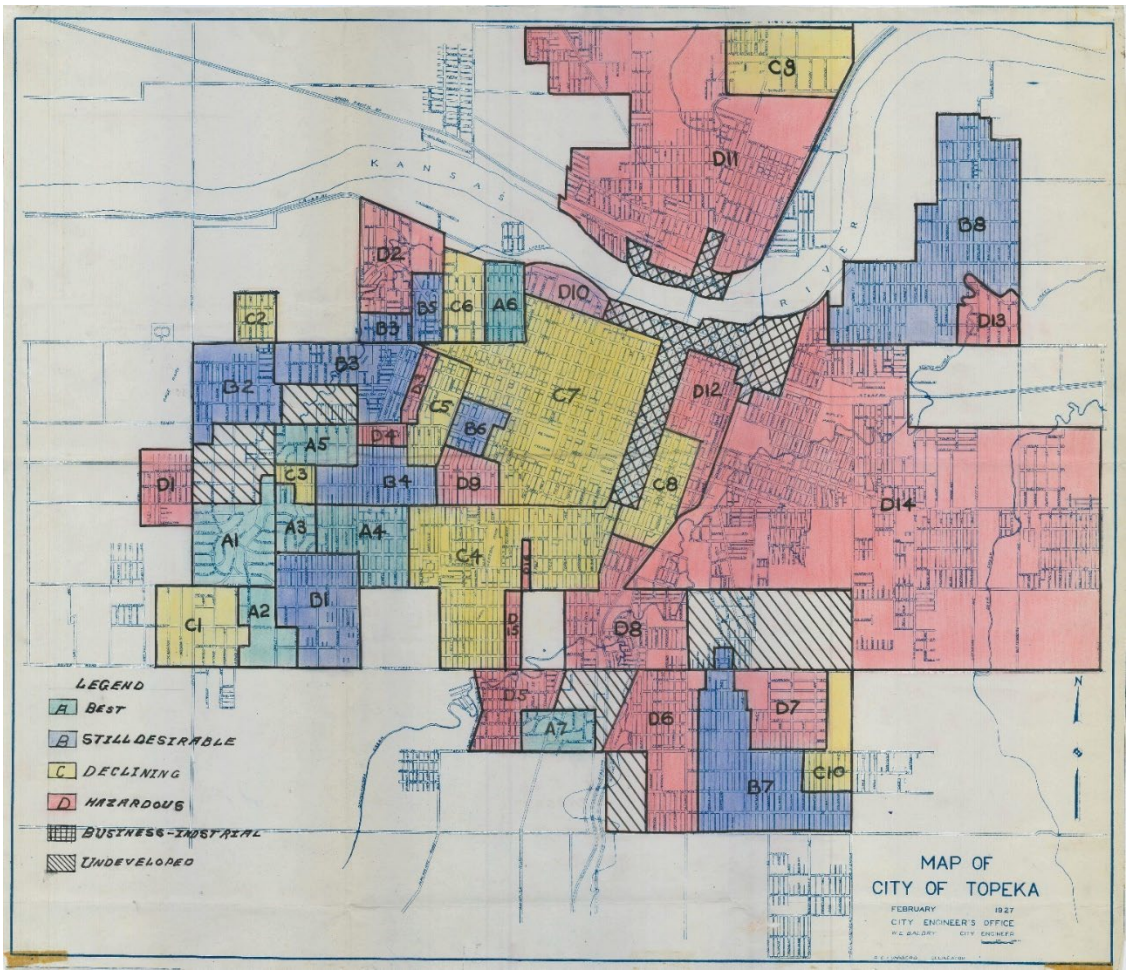

Figure 8. Redlining Map of Topeka, c.1935

https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/ <accessed January 2023>

[104] "Realty Map of Topeka, Kansas," Description of Areas.

[105] *Ibid*.

Source: *Mapping Inequality*[106]

Redlining continued until the passing of the Fair Housing Act of 1968. However, the impacts of the policy were long-lasting. Rather than investing in the areas classified as "hazardous," local governments largely disregarded these areas and the residents therein. Ultimately, most of these neighborhoods, many of which were once vibrant, self-sustaining communities, fell into further decline. When interviewed by the *Topeka Capital-Journal*, Jack Alexander, Topeka's first Black city commission member, recalls growing up in East Topeka during a time when the community was robust and contained a number of Black-owned grocery stores, businesses and other public goods. After serving in the Navy, he returned to Topeka in 1956 to find a large number of the Black-owned institutions were closed and boarded over.[107] Redlining ultimately contributed to the further decline of predominantly Black and low-income neighborhoods in Topeka and was used as a tool for future redevelopment projects that would nearly wipe out many of the areas. For the areas that survive, the long-lasting inequities remain evident.

Following World War II, and continuing into the early-1970s, a federal program drew upon redlining and forever changed the built environment of Topeka's historic Black neighborhoods and communities. Nationwide, planning efforts focused on the revitalization of aged and decaying inner cities. Referred to as Urban Renewal, it has its roots in the Housing Act of 1949, which established federal financing for slum clearance (title I), expanded the FHA mortgage insurance program (i.e. redlining), and set aside federal funds to expand the public housing to 800,000 units over a six-year period (Title III). By 1954, only ¼ of the units were erected.[108]

As amended in 1954, the Housing Act mandated that municipalities submit a "workable program" for redevelopment while de-emphasizing public housing goals for those displaced by slum-clearance programs.[109] Ultimately, the Federal Housing Act passed in 1954, allowing state entities to design redevelopment programs to accomplish the federal "mission of preventing the physical deterioration of good neighborhoods in urban areas as well as addressing blighted neighborhoods through rehabilitation where possible or clearance and redevelopment of areas designated as slums."[110] The primary objective of the Urban Renewal program was to use both federal and municipal funding to acquire deteriorating urban areas and encourage private redevelopment. "Densely built and highly centralized, and declining downtown business districts and neighborhoods became ready targets for clearance and redevelopment."[111] To the majority White, elected officials of the city and developers, Urban Renewal was seen as a way to eliminate blighted and dilapidated areas of the city, and an opportunity to create new

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[106] Robert K. Nelson, LaDale Winling, Richard Marciano, Nathan Connolly, et al., "Mapping Inequality," *American Panorama*, ed. Robert K. Nelson and Edward L. Ayers, accessed June 8, 2023, https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/ <accessed January 2023>

[107] Henry Wolgast, "Government Redlining of Topeka Reverberates 100 Years Later Through Food Deserts, Health Outcomes," *Topeka Capital-Journal*, January 28, 2022.

[108] Digital Scholarship Lab, "Renewing Inequality," *American Panorama*, ed. Robert K. Nelson and Edward L. Ayers, https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/renewal/#view=0/0/1&vix=cartogram&text=about accessed June 1, 2020.

[109] *Ibid*.

[110] Rachel Nugent, "South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic District National register of Historic Places Nomination Form," National Park Service, 2015.

[111] Longstreth, *Buildings of Main Street*; p.7-8.

businesses. Lacking in economic or political influence, residents of the "blighted" neighborhoods were dispossessed of their homes and forced to relocate. Harkening back to redlining, the areas classified as "hazardous" were the primary target for redevelopment projects.

Shortly following the passing of the amended Housing Act in 1954, the City of Topeka and local business leaders embarked on a study of the urban core to ascertain whether Urban Renewal would be beneficial to the City.[112] In early March of 1956, a landmark Urban Renewal program was initiated by the City of Topeka, at which time the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) was formed. The URA was charged with the development of an urban Renewal plan required for the application for federal funding, which would support two-thirds of project costs.[113] The URA identified 38 blocks in the northeast corner of downtown in need of redevelopment and Urban Renewal funding. This area extended from Crane Street south to 8th Avenue and Kansas Avenue east to Adams Street. Named the Keyway Urban Renewal Area, it encompassed portions of the downtown and industrial areas, as well as some residential enclaves, including the majority, if not all, of the Bottoms. The anticipated project cost was estimated at 20 million dollars. Due to much opposition from business owners and residents, the majority of whom were minority and low-income groups, the project area was reduced to include blocks north of 6th Avenue, specifically the Bottoms.[114] The URA approved the program in 1958 at a cost of $16.2 million for appraisal and acquisition of property. The URA further identified 26 businesses within the project area that would not be required to relocate because their function conformed to the redevelopment objectives.[115]

The redevelopment program further took advantage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act, enacted in 1956. The law authorized the construction of 41,000 miles of interstate highways spanning the nation. The federal government would pay 90 percent of the cost of construction. The first segment of Interstate highway in the United States was a segment of I-70 that opened west of Topeka on November 14, 1956. Local planning for the route of the interstate to pass through Topeka and continue to the southeast drew upon redlining and the FHA's *Underwriting Manual* that recommended highways be a good way to separate African Americans from White neighborhoods.[116] Again, the redlining map, or inequality map, was a tool used by planners to route the interstate directly through the Bottoms and Ritchie's Addition. The interstate essentially cut-off the predominantly African American and immigrant population of East Topeka from "White" Topeka.

The city's oldest and most ethnically diverse neighborhood, the Bottoms, was most impacted by Urban Renewal. For decades, the neighborhood was in a declining condition, a reality that was only further fueled by redlining and the Great Flood of 1951. As the impending displacement of families and businesses within the Keyway Project area, the Citizen's Relocation Committee (CRC) was formed. It was composed

[112] Gene Byer, "Savings and Loan Leader Urges Slum Action," *Topeka State Journal*, 15 March 1956, City Planning-Urban Renewal 1956-1959, Vertical File, Topeka Room, Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library.
[113] Rachel Nugent, "South Kansas Avenue Commercial Historic district National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," National Park Service, 2015.
[114] "Committee Hears a Report on Topeka Urban Renewal," *Emporia Gazette*, 25 March 1966.
[115] Community Resources Council, "CRC History," https://crecnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/crc-timeline.pdf accessed March 2020.
[116] Gross 2017; and FHA *Underwriting Manual*.

of nine (9) representative citizens of the city and was charged with investigating and suggesting possible alternative methods of meeting the relocation needs of those forced from their homes. A sociologist was employed to assist in the relocation efforts. Interviews were conducted with residents of the Keyway area to determine the relocation needs, wishes, and resources of the residents. Residents were asked what difficulties they might encounter in finding housing that would meet their needs. The staff of the Relocation Committee inspected permanent dwellings, which they recommended for relocation. Physical relocation standards were established, including necessities such as sanitation, heating, ingress/egress, structural condition, etc. The City also established standards to determine the "displacee's" ability to pay. For example, to purchase a dwelling, the total price should not exceed 2 ½ times the gross annual income. If leasing a home, the total monthly rent should not exceed 25%. All recommended relocation housing was to be within areas of employment.[117]

The CRC interviews further revealed the problems that would affect the residents of the Keyway. The most significant concern of residents was not necessarily finding suitable housing, but the loss of the sense of shared community:

> Residents must leave ties developed in the present neighborhood and gain acceptance in the neighborhood into which they move. This includes giving up and re-establishing friendships, many of which were formed because of particular needs of the individual. In all probability it will mean moving some distance from work, church, familiar meeting places and familiar business establishments where they are known and where their credit may already be established.[118]

Prior to the construction of Interstate 70, which began March of 1961 directly through the neighborhood, three thousand (3,000) residents of the Bottoms were displaced and their homes demolished. The displaced families were not immediately relocated nor offered any worthwhile assistance after being forced from their homes. The Bottoms "was completely demolished and relegated to history and to the memories of the people who once lived there."[119] George Thompson, former African American resident of the Bottoms, recalls the impacts of Urban Renewal to the community:

> The day that Urban Renewal began was a sad day. We would miss our friends, our neighborhood, but mostly we missed our house where the Thompson family had resided for nearly sixty years. Urban Renewal was the beginning of changes to come and we had to be part of that change by moving on.[120]

For those individuals lucky enough to own property in the Keyway Area, the URA paid compensation. However, a high percentage of residents in the Keyway Area rented the house in which they lived, and an even higher percent were African American or immigrant families. The enduring consequence of redlining in the 1930s made it near impossible for these families to secure a home loan after their forced removal. Then, where did the displaced residents of the Bottoms relocate? In many instances, families shared households in other neighborhoods throughout the city. One source indicates that his family relocated to

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[117] Eugene Thomas McGraw, *Relocation as It Is Related to the Keyway Urban Renewal Project, Topeka, Kansas,* Master's Thesis Oklahoma State University, 1963.; p.75-82.
[118] McGraw 1963; p.88.
[119] Rodriguez 2013; p. IX.
[120] Rodriguez 2013; p.89-91.

the 800 block of Branner Street in East Topeka, next door to another family forced to relocate.[121] Many of the "lucky" families who received compensation for their owned residence in the Keyway Area were able to find homes in the Oakland and Highland Park neighborhoods.[122] A major relocation project began in 1958 on Arter Street in Oakland, where 221 low-cost houses were planned for "persons displaced by urban renewal and other government projects."[123]

In 1961, the Community Resources Council (CRC) joined the newly formed Topeka Housing Authority in planning for a public housing project. Following accusations from the community of wide-scale discrimination regarding the Urban Renewal Project, the CRC facilitated a series of community conversations concerning Urban Renewal and minority housing in Topeka. The following year, construction of the city's first public housing project began. The Pine Ridge Manor, located east of Mount Auburn Cemetery in East Topeka, would not open until 1965, several years following the initial displacement of thousands of residents within the Keyway Urban Renewal Project Area.[124]

In addition to Oakland and the Pine Ridge Manor, the Highland Park-Pierce Project was an Urban Renewal initiative to rehabilitate old homes, build new properties and relocate residents. In 1973, more than one decade after thousands of residents of the Bottoms were displaced, the federal government provided a 1.4 million dollar HUD grant to the Urban Renewal Agency in Topeka to be used "for the Highland Park, Pierce Project for clearing and rehabilitation of residential properties, combined with installation of streets, sewers and parks to serve the area."[125] By 1975, the area transformed from a relatively rural landscape to one typical of suburban residential planning with streets lined by affordable, modest ranch houses to accommodate those displaced by Urban Renewal several years earlier. Despite the eventual relocation of many of those who lost their homes due to Urban Renewal, the overall shared sense of community among Topeka's Black population and other minority groups was forever changed. Today, much of Topeka's neighborhoods enjoy greater ethnic diversity. However, several remain predominantly African American residential enclaves, and the physical disparities between wealthier, White neighborhoods, to some degree, endure.

Despite its promising start as a free state and Promised Land, the evolving settlement patterns among Topeka's Black population was largely steered by racial discrimination and segregationist policies. The earliest Black Topekans generally settled alongside White residents of similar economic standing in the Bottoms. The large number of Exodusters arriving in the late-1870s were largely destitute and uneducated. These individuals were relegated to sectors throughout the city intended specifically to accommodate the migrants and to offer affordable lot prices. While separation of neighborhoods along racial lines was not enforced in Topeka, discriminatory and socio-economic trends played vital roles in the establishment of

[121] Rodriguez 2013; p.92
[122] Rodriguez 2013; p.92
[123] "First Model Home will Be Here," *Topeka State Journal*, May 2, 1958.
[124] Community Resources Council, "CRC History," https://crecnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/crc-timeline.pdf accessed March 2020.
[125] Press Release, "News from U.S. Senator Bob Dole," June 5, 1973. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://dolearchivecollections.ku.edu/collections/press_releases/730605hud.pdf

both homogenous African American enclaves and ethnically diverse neighborhoods where residents largely shared a lower economic status. The two monumental planning policies in the 20th century, Redlining and Urban Renewal, dramatically impacted the settlement patterns of Topeka's African American population. Such policies ensured that a high percentage of minority groups and low-income residents be forced from downtown into redeveloped or newly established neighborhoods on the outskirts of the city, further from employment opportunities. Despite numerous obstacles such as racial discrimination, oppressive policies, and forced relocation in the mid-20th century, Black Topekans forged a fierce and cohesive community that carries on today.

CONTEXT III: TOPEKA'S AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY (1865-1975)

Since the beginning of time, human survival relied, in large part, on the formation of community. For the formerly enslaved, community was vital to subsiding in an unchartered realm of freedom that was consistently fraught with obstacles and disenfranchisement. Though Kansas was believed to be a Land of Canaan, or Promised Land, for African Americans following the Civil War, the realities experienced by the Black population in Topeka seldom lived up to their ideal. Black migrants experienced similar forms of Jim Crow that they fled from the South, such as economic depression and segregation. Despite evident discrimination, African Americans in Topeka shaped a viable community to cope with the realities of Jim Crow.

A "community" is defined not only by a physical geographic area, or neighborhood, but also by the shared experiences, beliefs, institutions and, in many cases, shared struggles of its members. Religion and education became the cornerstone of the Black community in Topeka. The establishment of commercial businesses and civic organizations furthered the shared sense of community. As the Black migration into the city continued to increase throughout the 19th century and well into the 20th century, numerous enclaves of predominantly African American residents emerged, each establishing new institutions, solidarity and a viable sense of community. From 1865 through the remainder of the century, the status among Black Topekans was achieved through numerous influences such as education, steady employment, moral behavior, and membership in community institutions. As the Exodusters settled in Topeka and gained employment and education, they quickly integrated into the Black community. By 1900, the tenure in the city was no longer a determinant of social standing. Income and occupation, education, locale of residence, possessions and associational behavior emerged as leading determinants of class among Black Topeka.[126] This context focuses on the institutions and people that played vital roles in shaping Topeka's African American community and experiences from the close of the Civil War through the mid-1970s.

African American Religion and Spirituality in Topeka

Religion has long since been the most significant pillar of the African American community. Black churches gave spiritual and religious nourishment during and after slavery.[127] The formation of church

[126] Cox 1982; p.94-95.
[127] Peniel E. Joseph, "Why the Black Church has always mattered," *The Root: Black News, opinions, Politics and Culture*, 19 June 2015 https://www.theroot.com/why-the-Black-church-has-always-mattered-1790860217

congregations was among the first endeavors toward the establishment of an African American community. Churches not only provided spiritual sustenance but offered a place for social gatherings and philanthropic undertakings. Black churches often published newspapers; raised money to build schools; and helped in anti-poverty efforts – all aimed to forge a shared sense of place and community. Ultimately, Black churches helped sustain communities against racial discrimination and disenfranchisement that often contoured African American life.[128] In his book, *The Black Church*, Henry Louis Gates Jr. documents the vital role of the "Black Church" among African American populations since the years of slavery:

> For a people systematically brutalized and debased by the inhumane system of human slavery, followed by a century of Jim Crow racism, the church provided a refuge, a place of racial and individual self-affirmation, of teaching and learning, of psychological and spiritual sustenance, of prophetic faith; a symbolic space where Black people, enslaved and free, could nurture the hope for a better today and a much better tomorrow.[129]

The churches established by Black Topekans served as institutional pillars to the community beyond just the neighborhoods and sites of Black settlement. The churches "provided channels for social interaction, social control and mutual support."[130] Throughout the struggle for Civil Rights, these institutions offered sanctuary to organized protests and debate (*see* Context IV: Civil Rights).

Little is known of the Black experience in Topeka prior to the Civil War. Few African Americans resided in the city. Records indicate that the first Black congregation established in Topeka occurred in the early-1860s when Rev. John Freeman, a free African American from Indiana began the missionary church at the corner of Second and Jackson Streets.[131] The Freedmen's Church was reportedly organized in 1863 as a mission of the White First Congregational Church to serve Topeka's Black population.[132] In 1864, the Calvary Baptist Church became the third Black congregation in Topeka. Initially called the First Colored Baptist Church of Topeka, the church (not extant) was located on the north side of First Avenue, between Madison and Jefferson Street in the predominantly Black enclave known as the Bottoms. Though the original church is no longer extant, and a later church forced to relocate during Urban Renewal, the congregation continues to serve Topeka's African American community.[133]

Another prominent church established shortly following the end of the Civil War was St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church. The African Methodist Episcopal Church is the oldest Black organized religious institution in America. Richard Allen founded the religion in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1787.

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accessed January 2020.

[128] Peniel E. Joseph, "Why the Black Church has always mattered," *The Root: Black News, opinions, Politics and Culture*, 19 June 2015 https://www.theroot.com/why-the-Black-church-has-always-mattered-1790860217 accessed January 2020.

[129] Henry Louis Gates, Jr. *The Black Church: This is Our Story, This is Our Song*, New York: Penguin Press, 2021; p.1-2.

[130] Cox 1982; p.31.

[131] Camp 2013; p.19.

[132] Cox 1982; p. 19-20.

[133] Camp 2013; p.20; The present Calvary Baptist Church (KHRI 177-5400-01885) is located at 433 SW Harrison Street and was erected in 1992.

Allen was committed to providing opportunities to members of the African American race. When St. John AME in Topeka was organized, it was initially recognized as the Methodist Church Mission, and it first met in an alley barn. The church was chartered as St. John AME in 1877 under the pastorship of Rev. John Wilkerson. Many of its congregants were members of the Kansas Freedmen's Association. Construction of the present stone church (KHRI 177-5400-01775) began in 1902 and continued for several years. The church was completed in 1926 in the Gothic Revival style. Since the establishment of the church in 1868, the congregation has played a major role in Topeka's Black community.[134]

The 1870s saw the continued establishment of numerous African American churches throughout the growing city, with Methodist and Baptists being the most prevalent. According to historian Thomas C. Cox, by 1875, these churches "helped to mold the nascent community into a cohesive unit."[135] As the Black population spread into the expanding wards of the city after 1875, new religious congregations were founded. Among those included the Wesleyan A.M.E. Church and the Second Colored Presbyterian Church in the Third Ward.[136]

Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, the rapid increase in the Black population in North Topeka is reflected in the establishment of African American congregations within the Redmonsville neighborhood, or Up in the Sands. In 1878, B Street Baptist Church (presently Second Missionary Baptist Church) was formed in the Redmonsville area of North Topeka. The original church building was located at the corner of NW Railroad and North Tyler Streets. During its early years, it was known as the "B" Street Church. During the flood of 1903, the church became a place of refuge for those displaced from their homes. The church relocated in 1905 to its present location at 424 NW Laurent Street, also within Redmonsville. It was later rebuilt in 1924 (KHRI 177-5400-01532). Despite near total inundation during the Great Flood of 1951, the church survives and continues to serve Black Topekans. Also, in Redmonsville is the former Asbury M.E. Chapel (KHRI 177-5400-01737) believed to have formed shortly following the Civil War. The church hosted meetings of the Colonizing Emigration Committee during the Exodus and the Southern Kansas Colony group. Its stone church was erected in 1896.

Another early church formed in Redmonsville is St. Mark's AME Church, organized in 1880 by a group of Exodusters. The original church was located in Redmonsville near Harrison and Railroad streets. In 1900, the present church site at 801 NW Harrison Street was purchased.[137] A new church was erected between 1915 and 1920 (NRHP-Listed 2019). [138]

In Tennessee Town, religion was the heart of the community, assisting the Exodusters in prospering in their new lives. Churches were instrumental in teaching new skills to the people and organizing schools. Among the first African American churches in Tennessee Town is the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church (NR-listed 6/29/2018), founded in 1879. The church received a loan from the American Baptist Home

[134] William W. Marshall, "St. John AME Church National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," National Park Service, 2008.
[135] Cos 1982; p. 31.
[136] Cox 1982; p.31.
[137] Kelsey Lui, "St. Mark's African Methodist Church National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, National Park Service, 2017; Section 8 Page 20.
[138] Cox 1982; p.31.

Mission Society in order to erect its first sanctuary. Membership quickly grew, resulting in an addition to the church in 1885. The current church facility began construction in 1926, undergoing multiple construction phases until completed in 1954.[139] Shiloh Baptist Church (NRHP-listed 2018) remains one of the largest African American congregations in Topeka. Also in Tennessee Town, and established in 1885, is Mount Olive M.E.

By 1890, dozens of churches were established in Topeka, including 15 African American congregations - five (5) Baptist, one (1) Episcopal, six (6) Methodist, and three (3) Presbyterian. Among those included:[140]

- Second Baptist (*later Calvary Baptist*), located on First Avenue near Madison Street (not extant); Rev. Peter Johnson, pastor; residence in College Hill Addition – *This congregation remains active*
- Shiloh Baptist, 1201 Buchanan Street; Rev. J.A. Steward pastor; residence 1201 W. 12th Street – *the present church was built 1926 to 1954 and is listed on the NRHP*
- Mount Olive Baptist, located in South Topeka. No regular pastor – *unknown location, most records suggest Mr. Olive Baptist Church was located in Tennessee Town*
- North Topeka Baptist (*also B Street Church, present Second Missionary Baptist Church*), located on corner of B and Taylor Streets; Rev. Peter Barker, pastor; residence, Polk Street, near D Street. – *This congregation remains active. Present building erected in 1924.*
- Third Baptist, located on E. 12th Street (*not extant*); Rev. M. Banks, pastor – *unclear if the congregation survives*
- Saint Simon the Cyrenian Mission (Episcopal), northwest corner of 7th Street and Western Avenue; Rev. W.A. Green, pastor; residence, 908 West 7th Street. – *extant building (KHRI 177-5093), congregation relocated or dissolved*
- Colored M.E., corner of 14th and Van Buren Street; Rev. J.M. Rivers, pastor; residence, corner 14th and Jackson streets – *church not extant*
- Mount Olive M.E., Buchanan Street, between 11th and 12 streets; Rev. S.W. Hawkins, pastor; residence, rear of church – *merged with North Topeka's Asbury ME in 1970, present church (Asbury Mount Olive United Methodist) erected 1974*
- Asbury M.E., 85 Van Buren Street, North Topeka; Rev. David Bruce, pastor; residence, adjoining church – *original church extant (KHRI 177-5400-01737)- congregation merged with Mount Olive ME in Tennessee Town in 1970, present church (Asbury Mount Olive United Methodist) erected 1974*
- African M.E. Church (*presently St. John's AME*), corner Topeka Avenue and 7th Street; Rev. H.B. Parks, pastor; residence, adjoining church – *the church is listed on the NRHP*
- African M.E., North Topeka, Rev. Merritt, pastor – *possibly St. Mark's A.M.E. Church*
- African M.E., corner 12th and Washington; Rev. H.H. Lucas, pastor; residence, 405 North Topeka Avenue – *this is possibly the congregation for Brown Chapel AME Church*

[139] Dr. Dina Bennett and Duke Palmer, "Shiloh Baptist Church National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," National Park Service, 2017; Section 8.
[140] *Radges Directory of Topeka and Shawnee County*, 1890-1891.

- Colored Presbyterian, located on east side of Madison Street, between Second and Third Streets – *not extant*
- Mount Olive Cumberland, organized in 1883, located on 13th Street, between Quincy and Monroe Streets; Rev. Burr Williams, residence, corner of Adams and 14th Streets – *not extant*
- First Cumberland Presbyterian, organized in 1880, located on Western Avenue in North Topeka; Rev. Pinkney Price; residence 130 Van Buren Street – *not extant*

Since the turn-of-the-20th century and as the city expanded outward, additional African American congregations were formed and new churches erected in all wards. The earlier churches often remodeled existing facilities, relocated, or built new edifices to accommodate growing membership. The city's Black churches have long played a vital role in philanthropy, politics, social reform, and racial progress. Many churches organized speeches of politicians and Civil Rights leaders, hosted musical events, and sponsored athletic teams, youth organizations, and various civic clubs. Calvary Baptist hosted Boy and Girl Scout troops. St. John's AME Church hosted literary and social societies. In 1914, the church hosted the National Negro Business League (NNBL). Many of St. John's congregants were actively involved in the Civil Rights Movement and the groundbreaking *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court case. Shiloh Baptist Church in Tennessee Town is recognized for establishing reading clubs, music and youth ministries, sewing circles and leadership training.[141] Antioch Missionary Baptist Church at 1100 SE Washington Avenue has sponsored the Spot, a teenage program, as well as a community food drive.[142] In one fashion or another, every predominantly African American church established in Topeka since the Civil War has guided racial progress, encouraged social reform and welfare, and provided spirituality and leadership to the city's Black community. Religion remains the primary institutional pillar of society, and several of the historic African American churches and congregations survive.

The majority of the extant historic churches are within the traditionally Black neighborhoods. Due to Urban Renewal and Highway projects, churches formerly located within the Bottoms and Ritchie's Addition are no longer extant. Several of the most recent churches erected during the 1960s and 1970s are located within East and South Topeka neighborhoods. The siting of the churches are attributed, in part, to an increased Black population in these areas resulting from Urban Renewal displacement and relocation.

Burial Practices
The custom of burying the dead has long been a spiritual practice and is most often tied to a particular religion. In modern times, a traditional burial is in the ground, topped by a stone marker, though cremation is becoming more common. Though ethnicity rarely plays a role in the act of burying the dead, discriminatory practices often determined the place of burial.

In 1859, the Topeka Cemetery was created east of Shunganunga Creek under the Topeka Cemetery Association to serve as the primary city cemetery. The land for the cemetery was provided by Franklin L. Crane. The Topeka Cemetery permitted interments of all races; however, burials required payment, which

[141] Dr. Dina Bennett and Duke Palmer, "Shiloh Baptist Church National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form," National Park Service, 2017; Section 8.
[142] Camp 2013; p.26.

was often too costly for many citizens. Crane maintained the cemetery until his later years in life, at which time the grounds became overgrown and unkept. Discussions were underway for a new cemetery association to purchase Topeka Cemetery or establish additional burial grounds further from the city.[143]

The earliest known burial location for African Americans in present-day Topeka following the arrival of the Exodusters was the Ritchie Cemetery (NRHP-listed 2023) in south Topeka. More than 90% of the 300 known burials are African American. The earliest interments are those of the Garrison and Ritchie families (White) in the 1850s. During this time, the land was owned by Orrin Nichols of Pennsylvania, who came to Kansas in 1855. He had familial ties to radical abolitionist John Brown. The daughters of John and Mary Ritchie, staunch free-staters and participants in the Underground Railroad, are believed to have been interred in the cemetery in 1859 and 1861.[144] In 1862, a deed transferred the land to the South Topeka Cemetery trustees, and all accounts suggest that the cemetery remained a White burial ground. Records suggest, however, that John Ritchie acquired the cemetery by the 1880s, allocating the parcel for the benefit of the Black community. Interestingly, the deed for the cemetery was not filed until 1883 with the Recorder of Deeds. Shortly thereafter, in 1886, John Ritchie successfully established the City of South Topeka, serving as mayor. It was around this time when the South Topeka Cemetery adopted the name Ritchie Cemetery.

Ritchie designated the cemetery as "a last resting place free to all desiring to avail themselves of its benefits."[145] The cemetery was favorable for its location on the outskirts of town, away from the segregation of the inner city, providing ease of access to the Black community. Unlike the Topeka Cemetery, burial in Ritchie Cemetery came at no cost. Most of the burials occurred after the dissolution of the city of South Topeka and the death of John Ritchie in 1887. Ritchie was buried in the Topeka Cemetery, and his wife and two daughters reinterred from the Ritchie Cemetery to the Topeka Cemetery the following year.[146]

Due to the distance from Ritchie Cemetery, lack of upkeep, a growing population and increasing lack of space, the need arose for alternative burial grounds. Topeka Cemetery was often too costly for the city's working-class population, particularly African American and immigrant citizens. A more affordable cemetery, Mount Auburn (KHRI 177-5097), was thus established across from Topeka Cemetery in East Topeka. It is reported that the land for Mount Auburn was donated by John Ritchie to the Black community in 1881.[147] However, the Mount Auburn Cemetery was not formally established until August 12, 1909. The earliest known burial in Mount Auburn dates to 1888. It subsequently became the burial place for lower income residents, regardless of race, though the majority interred here are African American. There are reportedly 8,000 burials in Mount Auburn Cemetery, though only approximately 3,500 are identified by extant burial markers. A massive initiative to clean and document the cemetery was undertaken in 2011-2012 through a grant from Keep America Beautiful. Mount Auburn survives as one of only two known African American burial grounds in the City.

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[143] Bevitt 2022; p. 12.
[144] Jeff Hansen and Jan Johnson, "Ritchie Cemetery Project." www.ritchiecemetery.com
[145] Hanson and Johnson 2021; Bevitt 2022; p.13.
[146] Hansen and Johnson 2021
[147] Cox 1982; p.91.

African American Education in Topeka

Second to religion, education has been a vital institution among the African American community in Topeka. For the formerly enslaved, education was paramount to their advancement. Before Emancipation, African Americans were largely restricted access to education. Following the Civil War, learning to read became a symbol of freedom for African Americans. Many hoped that education would advance them in society by improving economic circumstances, offering protection from exploitation, and preparing them for participation in civic life. Education ultimately provided a means in which to improve the overall quality of life and advancement of the Black community. Similar to philanthropic initiatives of local churches, education inspired members of the community to establish libraries, literary societies and civic organizations. Community schools often served as a venue for meetings, cultural entertainment, recreation, and philanthropy; thus, further strengthening the Black community.

Until the milestone Supreme Court ruling in 1954 signaling the end of separating children in public schools on the basis of race, the quality of education and the educational facilities for Black Topekans were largely steered by racial discrimination, segregationist laws, and the struggle for Civil Rights. School legislation during the Reconstruction years was fraught with a shift back and forth between integration and segregation.

The first known school for Topeka's Black children opened in 1864. The school was located in the Bottoms on Sixth Street, between Kansas Avenue and Quincy Street (not extant). One year later, it was determined that White children required the use of these quarters, and the Black students were forced into the attic.[148] Overcrowding led the board of education to rent a church to accommodate an additional 60 students.[149] Though no law was in place to enforce segregation, the establishment of this school for Topeka's African American children in the Bottoms confirms that a homogenous enclave of Black Topekans was well enough populated that it necessitated a schoolhouse. Over the next decade, Topeka's public school system struggled with the rapidly increasing population, funding, and segregationist practices.

Segregation of Topeka's Public School System (1876-1954)

As the African American population continued to increase, so too did the opposition toward integration. Although the Kansas legislature, in 1876, enacted a Civil Rights law prohibiting racial discrimination in state universities, colleges, and other public schools, during the Great Exodus, the legislature gave cities of more than 15,000 residents the authority to establish segregated elementary schools. In Topeka, segregation of public schools was thus enforced at the elementary level. White students in Topeka attended junior high school for grades 7 through 9; however, Black students remained in elementary school through

[148] Topeka Public School System, *A Centennial History of the Topeka Schools*, compiled by teachers of the school system, 1954; p.2.
[149] Camp 2013; p.43; AND Topeka Public School System 1954; p.4.

the 8th grade, only attending the integrated junior high school for the 9th grade.[150] From the late-19th century through the groundbreaking *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling in 1954, the fight for equality and integration of Topeka's public education system faced numerous challenges. Ultimately, the education of Black Topekans and the school buildings in which they were taught were closely tied to segregationist laws, racial discrimination, and the fight for educational equality.

The earliest known public elementary school for Black students was the **Monroe School**, established in 1868, segregated in practice rather than by law. The school was sited within Ritchie's Addition. Classes were first held in an existing building until 1874, when the schoolhouse was erected. The school legally became a segregated school for African American pupils following the 1876 state law permitting a dual system of public education. From the late-19th century through the early-20th century, the long-serving principal of the Monroe School was educator and local politician, Frederick Roundtree. Born in Tennessee in 1867, Roundtree moved to Topeka in 1879 with his family as part of the Exoduster movement. He began his career as a teacher at the Buchanan School in 1887.[151] In 1891, Roundtree became principal of the Monroe School, a position he held until his death in 1927. In 1885, he ran for City Councilman of the 5th ward and won his seat, thereby becoming the first African American to serve on the city council as well as the youngest to serve.[152] Roundtree served as a city councilman until around 1902.[153]

During Roundtree's lengthy time as Principal, the Monroe School was remodeled in 1911. Upon his retirement in 1927, the school was demolished to make way for a new school building to accommodate a growing attendance. The two-story, brick school building was one of the four segregated Black schools in Topeka when the *Brown v. Board of Education* lawsuit was filed in 1951.[154] In 1992, the school (KHRI # 177-5400-00566) was designated a National Historic Landmark for its association with the lawsuit and Supreme Court ruling. In 2004, it became a National Site under the National Park Service.

Another early segregated school in Ritchie's Addition was the **Garfield School** (not extant), located at the northeast corner of the intersection of 13th Street and Quincy, just a short distance from the Monroe School. By 1918, the Garfield School had closed, serving a variety of uses including a venue for meetings, a community center, and an emergency hospital during the Spanish Influenza.[155] Among the graduates of the Garfield School was Mamie Luella Williams (b.1894-d.1986). Williams went on to graduate from Topeka High School at the age of 16 when she was one of only three African American girls who graduated that year. She then graduated from Washburn College. In 1918, she was hired by the Topeka Public School System. She taught for 25 years at the Buchanan School before serving as the assistant principal at Washington and Monroe Schools. Following her retirement in 1960, she was appointed to the Kansas Commission on the Status of Women and served as a delegate to the 1971 White House

[150] Camp 2013; p.47.
[151] Fred Roundtree Obituary, "School Teacher Dead *", Topeka State Journal*, Dec. 5, 1927, Find A Grave.com, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/243666230/frederick-roundtree <accessed May 9, 2023>
[152] "There will be a colored councilman for the first time in Topeka's History", *The Topeka State Journal,* Mar 30, 1895.
[153] Fred Roundtree Obituary, "School Teacher Dead *", Topeka State Journal*, Dec. 5, 1927, Find A Grave.com, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/243666230/frederick-roundtree <accessed May 9, 2023>
[154] "Monroe Elementary School," Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Park, National Park Service https://www.nps.gov/brvb/learn/historyculture/monroe.htm
[155] *Topeka Plaindealer*, February 21, 1919.

Conference on Aging. Mamie died in 1986 and in 1996, the TPS Board of Education named Williams Science and Fine Arts Magnet School after her.[156] Throughout her career and until her death in 1986, she remained very active in the community and was a well-respected educator.[157] She resided in a two-story residence in Ritchie's Addition (KHRI 177-2646).

In the Bottoms, **Madison Elementary School** was erected at 2nd and Madison Streets to serve the Black students of the neighborhood. The school opened in the fall of 1880 and the following year boasted an enrollment of 217.[158] By 1886, the Madison School had the highest enrollment of all of the segregated Black schools in Topeka, with enrollment reaching 346 students.[159] By October of 1915, however, attendance reportedly dwindled to only 29 students. The city permanently closed the school "because the attendance did not justify the maintenance costs."[160] Students of the Madison School were transferred to other segregated Black schools in the city. The closure of the Madison School was not well-received by the Black community, as the city's decision only further fueled contention over segregation and educational equality. A letter written by Dr. J.L. Ransom and published in the *Topeka State Journal* not only expresses concern regarding the closure of the Madison School but emphasizes the vital role educational institutions play among the Black community, a role that extends far beyond simply education to social welfare and advancement of its pupils:

> Madison School is one of the historic institutions of Topeka, and it has been a vital factor in the moral, social and educational uplift of that community which is commonly known as the Bottoms. The teachers visited the homes of their pupils and studied to know and help them in their social needs. Often the parents and teachers visited the homes of their pupils of Madison met for the purpose of advancing the social and domestic welfare of the children. To close the school means to rob the community of an active agency at work, not only for education but for fashioning the character of the children, inspiring their young lives and encouraging their parents along those lines that trains for better citizenship.[161]

In the predominantly Black Redmonsville neighborhood in North Topeka was a small one-room schoolhouse begun in 1879 to serve Exodusters who settled the neighborhood. The school's early attendance was about 30 students. However, by 1882, the growing population in the neighborhood necessitated the need for a larger facility. Three wings were added, and the school given the name **Lane School**. The school initially held classes through the 6th grade when students would transfer to nearby Grant or Quincy Schools. Following a petition from students and parents for a larger, more accommodating school facility, a new school was erected at 915 NW Western Avenue (KHRI 177-3162), opening for classes in 1908 and adopting the name **McKinley School**. The two-story brick school boasted nine classrooms, 175 students and five teachers. By 1914, it was brought to the attention of the school board that two of the classrooms were never floored and the school lacked sewers. Modern toilets were

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[156] Topeka Public Schools https://tl.topekapublicschools.net/directory/bishop/about_us/rooms#:~:text=Garfield%20was%20a%20school%20in,when%20regular%20hospitals%20were%20overwhelmed.

[157] Kansas Historical Society, "Mamie Williams," Kansapedia, April 2010 https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/mamie-l-williams/14263

[158] *Topeka Daily Capital*, August 20, 1880; and September 30, 1881.

[159] Camp 2013; p.50.

[160] Topeka State Journal, October 2, 1915.

[161] Dr. J.L. Ransom, "On School Question," *Topeka State Journal*, October 9, 1915.

subsequently installed, and a few years later, a sewer system from the school was finally installed. The school was one of the four segregated elementary schools in Topeka when the *Brown vs. Board of Education* lawsuit was filed. It closed in 1954.

Two elementary schools were established within the Old Town neighborhood of Topeka, just west of downtown. This area is not recognized as a homogenous African American neighborhood, though a small enclave was established within Old Town by the 1880s. In c.1875, a one-story brick schoolhouse was built to educate Black children. The **Sumner Elementary School** (KHRI 177-5400-00296) became an all-White school in 1885, at which time the Black students were transferred to a new schoolhouse two blocks to the east. The segregated **Douglas Elementary School** (not extant) was located on Polk Street, between 3rd and 4th Streets. It was named in honor of Frederick Douglas. When the Lowman Hill school was destroyed by fire in 1900, its Black students were sent to Douglas School while the White students enjoyed a new, up-to-date facility.[162] By the turn-of-the-20th century, disparities between the White and Black school facilities were quite evident. The Douglas School was a small, two-room frame schoolhouse in contrast to the grand, brick Sumner School.

In the Exoduster settlement of Tennessee Town, the **Buchanan Elementary School** (KHRI 177-3173) was erected in 1885 at 12th and Buchanan Streets. Frederick Roundtree was hired as Principal. The former two-story brick building was publicly funded to serve the neighborhood's African American students. The school quickly became a cornerstone of Tennessee Town. By 1902, it had an enrollment of 155 students. In 1915, students from Madison Elementary School, which closed that year, were bussed across town to Buchanan School. In 1920, a kindergarten in Tennessee Town was moved to Buchanan School. To accommodate the influx of students, in 1921, the school was enlarged and remodeled. When the 1954 Supreme Court ruled the unconstitutionality of racial segregation in schools, Buchanan School was one of four segregated schools in Topeka. Following integration, the school closed in 1959.

Just south of the Parkdale Suburb in East Topeka, **Washington Elementary School** was erected at 10th Avenue and Washington Street (not extant) as a segregated public school. Reference to the school in local newspapers confirm that it was serving the community by the early-1880s. In 1904, the old Nickel Plate School building (located at Second and Buchanan Streets) was relocated to the Washington School grounds for manual training.[163] In 1910, a new two-story brick school building was erected, and in 1926, it was remodeled.[164] The school enrolled both African American and Mexican students. It was one of the four segregated elementary schools when *Brown v. Board of Education* was filed. The school closed in 1962, eight years following integration. The school was demolished between 1975 and 1982 to make way for the Southeast Branner Trafficway (SE Adams Street).

An interesting story surrounding Washington School involved renowned author and poet Langston Hughes, an African American with brief ties to Topeka. At the age of six, in 1907, Hughes and his mother moved to Topeka, residing in a house at 419 SW Taylor Street (KHRI 177-5400-01100). His mother tried to enroll him in the all-White Harrison Street School near their home. However, she was told that all

[162] Topeka Public Schools https://tl.topekapublicschools.net/directory/bishop/about_us/rooms
[163] *Topeka Daily Capital*, March 24, 1904.
[164] Camp 2013, p.51.

African American children attended Washington School, which was considerably farther away. After much argument, young Langston was eventually admitted to Harrison School. Shortly thereafter, he moved to live with his grandmother in Lawrence, Kansas.[165]

Southeast of the city limits in the Pierce Addition, the **Pierce School** opened in 1892 at 2235 SE Jefferson Street (not extant). The two-room schoolhouse instructed grades 1 through 8 and had an enrollment of 33 pupils as of March 24, 1893.[166] Though the suburban community of Pierce Addition did not meet population requirements to enforce school segregation, the school's enrollment was African American. Following World War II, the Pierce School continued to serve the African American students of Pierce Addition. A former student of Pierce School, Charles Henrie, recalled one White family who attended the school. The family, who resided in Highland Park to the east, was so poor that their district would not accept the children.[167] By 1949, the schoolhouse was in such disrepair that a bond was issued for the installation of indoor restrooms, a fire alarm, and an additional classroom for kindergarten students, among other amenities. The landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling did not impact the Pierce School. Pierce Addition was not annexed into the City. Thus, it was not part of Topeka's Unified School District 501.[168] The Pierce School supported 83 students in 1957, and the low-income community struggled to fund operating costs. The school remained opened until 1959, at which time it was recognized as Shawnee County's last segregated schoolhouse. The school closed on May 29, 1959, and students were divided between Highland Park Central and Quinton Heights schools. Two months later, the small schoolhouse was razed.[169]

Another elementary school established beyond city limits was the **Lowman Hill School**. In 1885, west of Tennessee Town and beyond city limits, the Stilson and Bartholomew Addition was surveyed and laid out and named Lowman Hill. The cornerstone for Lowman M.E. Chapel was laid that year at Morris Avenue and 11th Street.[170] The Topeka streetcar was extended to Lowman Hill, and developer Bartholomew & Co., quickly sold residential lots. By the end of November 1885, the district "on the hill" was emerging as a middle-class White suburb of "only the very best citizens of Topeka," including clergymen, lawyers, merchants, clerks, etc.[171] In 1886, the Lowman Hill School was constructed at the corner of Jewell and Munson Streets. Because the Lowman Hill district lacked sufficient population numbers to meet the state requirements permitting school segregation, the Lowman Hill School was integrated. However, it is unclear the number of African American pupils who attended the school as the neighborhood was predominantly, White, middle-class suburb. In 1890, Lowman Hill was officially annexed into the City of Topeka. The school remained integrated until it was destroyed by fire in 1900, at which time the district

[165] Kansas Historical Society, "Langston Hughes," *Kansapedia*, August 2018; https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/langston-hughes/15506 <accessed June 2023>
[166] *Topeka Mail*, April 14, 1893.
[167] Sherman Smith, "Pierce Addition School Overlooked in Topeka's Desegregation Struggle," *Topeka Capital Journal*, May 5, 2019.
[168] Sherman Smith, "Pierce Addition School Overlooked in Topeka's Desegregation Struggle," *Topeka Capital Journal*, May 5, 2019.
[169] Sherman Smith, "Pierce Addition School Overlooked in Topeka's Desegregation Struggle," *Topeka Capital Journal*, May 5, 2019.
[170] *The Citizen*, October 15, 1885.
[171] "Lowman Hill," *The Kansas Methodist*, November 18, 1885.

then implemented segregation, forcing the 50 African American children living in the area to attend classes in an "old building that had been moved to the original site of the burnt-out school and outfitted with second-hand furniture. The district then built a new school for the 130 White children opposite the Lowman M.E. Chapel on Morris Avenue."[172] This decision ultimately led to Topeka's first lawsuit on racial segregation of schools in 1902 when William Reynolds attempted to enroll his 8-year-old son in the new school reserved for Whites (see Civil Rights context).

By 1950, the Topeka school system had 22 elementary schools (9.6 percent Black), six junior high schools (9.9 percent Black), and one senior high school (7.6 percent Black). Between 1931 and 1958, Topeka had one integrated senior high school – Topeka Senior High School. Racial segregation of students at the elementary level, however, was strictly adhered to. In 1951, only four schools were maintained for Black students – Buchanan, McKinley, Monroe, and Washington. Each of the schools were in predominantly Black neighborhoods, with many students being brought in from throughout the system. Among the 18 White elementary schools, only five were located in predominantly White areas, "while the remaining thirteen schools, though reserved exclusively for Whites, were located in racially mixed neighborhoods."[173] In 1950, the all-White schools were much more crowded, yet Topeka did not utilize the available classroom space in the Black schools to relieve the overcrowding. In 1951, the monumental *Brown v. Board of Education* lawsuit was filed, which paved the way for the integration of public schools nationwide.

Segregated School Activities and Sports

Though segregation was enforced at the elementary level, the practice extended to the junior and high schools where the classrooms were integrated but extracurricular activities were often separated. This included separate sports teams, clubs, and even separate proms. Excluded from the school's social and academic clubs, African American students at Topeka High School formed their own clubs. Among those was the Booker T Boys Club, which was a social club for young Black men. The Phyllis Wheatley Girls' Reserves began in 1923 as the Colored Girls' Reserves Club. Its members learned homemaking skills such as cooking and sewing.[174] African American students were permitted to join the Topeka High School Trojan football and track and field teams, but basketball and cheerleading were segregated. In 1929, Topeka High's Black students formed their own basketball team. Initially named the Cardinals, the team was renamed the Ramblers in 1935. The school provided the Ramblers with bussing and uniforms; however, the team was not permitted to play in the school's gym, instead holding practice and games across town at the East Topeka Junior High. The team was only provided two basketballs, one for practice and the other for games. An all-Black cheerleading squad was formed to support the Ramblers. From 1929 to 1949, the Ramblers provided young Black athletes the opportunity to play high school basketball during Jim Crow segregation. The Ramblers played other Black teams from Kansas City, St. Joseph, Fort Scott, Leavenworth and Independence; a league sometimes referred to as the "Chitlin' Circuit." The Ramblers were a significant asset among Topeka's Black community, with game night being a popular social event. Nationwide, the integration of professional sports was underway by the close of the 1940s. The Ramblers'

[172] Jean Van Delinder, "Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Part 2," *Prologue Magazine*, Spring 2004, Vol. 36, No. 1
[173] *Ibid*.
[174] Camp 2013, p.55-56.

final season was 1949.[175]

Sheldon's Kindergarten

In addition to the public sector of education, private organizations often sponsored schools within underserved communities. Such is the case with the establishment of Sheldon's Kindergarten. By the close of the 1890s, the African American residents of Tennessee Town had access to a unique educational program organized by the Central Congregational Church under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Charles M. Sheldon. Sheldon drew upon the philosophies of the Social Gospel Movement, which encouraged congregations to focus activities on improving their own communities. Tennessee Town was adjacent to Central Congregational Church and contained some of the poorest families in the city. Sheldon and the African American residents of Tennessee Town understood that education was a vital tool for improving quality of life. Together, they encouraged various educational activities in Tennessee Town. Among those was the establishment of a kindergarten in 1893.[176]

Kindergarten classes were initially held at Union Hall; however, by 1895, they were held in the church. Attendance averaged 28 students. By 1900, 287 students had attended the school. Activities taught included learning the alphabet and numbers, reading, and hygiene. The kindergarten movement was in its infancy when first established. Sheldon's Kindergarten was the first of its kind west of the Mississippi River. It was the first kindergarten established in Topeka, even among the city's White population. In 1910, the kindergarten was incorporated into the Topeka school system.[177] Shortly thereafter, in 1913, the school was moved to Buchanan Elementary School, the segregated Black public school also sited within Tennessee Town. Among the notable graduates of Tennessee Town kindergarten was attorney Elisha Scott, a resident of Tennessee Town on Lane Street, and Scott's two sons, John and Charles. Both sons became prominent attorneys and argued the Kansas side of the landmark *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka* case.[178]

The Topeka Industrial and Educational Institute was organized in 1895 in Tennessee Town by Black educators, Dr. Edward Stevens and Izie Beddick. The school was an African American institution initially established as a kindergarten, sewing school and reading room. Its vocational program expanded rapidly, earning financial support from the state legislature by 1899. The following year, Booker T. Washington became president of the school's Board of Trustees and appointed William R. Carter, a graduate of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, to serve as the principal. The school changed names multiple times throughout its history but is most recognized as the Kansas Technical Institute (KTI).[179] KTI served Black

[175] Pearson, Donna Rae, David J. Trowbridge, and Elizabeth Winkelman. "Topeka High School: Separation of Sports." Clio: Your Guide to History. May 8, 2023. Accessed July 18, 2023. https://www.theclio.com/entry/3546; AND Hummer Sports Park. Topeka Rambers - Black Pioneers Slam-Dunk During Segregation!, *Hummer Sports Park*. 2023. Accessed July 18, 2023. https://www.hummersportspark.com/9-uncategorised/96-famous-topeka-athletes?start=7.

[176] Kansas Historical Society, "Sheldon Kindergarten," *Kansapedia*, April 2013 https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/sheldon-kindergarten/12202

[177] *Ibid*.

[178] *Ibid*.

[179] Kansas Black History Facts, "Kansas Technical Institute: Tuskegee of the West," *The Voice*, February 6, 2016

students from across the state of Kansas and the United States.

In 1903, KTI relocated to a 110-acre lot purchased in East Topeka. By 1925, the Institute had progressed, and the campus grew to include seven large stone buildings. Some of the buildings were built of stone quarried near the campus by students. That same year, the school was renamed to the Kansas Vocational School.[180] Tourists frequently visited the sprawling campus of the institute. A buffalo, named Old Buff, served as the school mascot. Throughout its history, the Institute provided vocational, technical, and commercial curricula to both men and women in the 11th and 12th grades, and the first and second years of college. A boy's trade center offered courses in agriculture, carpentry, tailoring, printing, auto mechanics, Blacksmithing, military service and ROTC. The female trade center offered nursing, music, domestic arts and sciences, and millinery. During the summer months, the Institute provided training in Bible classes for Baptist churches. The Institute also provided an opportunity for students to participate in athletics, band, and glee club. The Kansas Technical Institute Hospital (Nellie Johns Hospital) on the campus was a modern facility built to provide space for 30 patients while offering hands-on training for nurses.[181] The hospital not only provided healthcare to students but also served the city's African American residents.

Following World War II, KTI began accepting non-Black students. By 1955, the student population was fully integrated with White and Mexican students enrolled. KTI closed at the end of the 1955 term after the State of Kansas stopped funding it following the *Brown* decision.[182] By 1977, the campus was serving as the site of the Kansas Reception and Diagnostic Center, at which time only five (5) of the buildings survived – Nellie Johns hospital, the J.B. Larimer girls' dormitory, the Boys' Trades Building, the gymnasium, and the Girls' Trade building. The president's house and two teachers' cottages were still standing in 1977 on the highway near the entrance to the campus.[183] The mascot, Old Buff, was moved to Cushinberry Park at Fifteenth and Jefferson Streets. In recent years, the remaining buildings on the KTI campus have become part of a correction facility.

Located southwest of downtown Topeka, *Washburn University* was founded as Lincoln College in 1865. The college was considered quite progressive when it was formed as it permitted women and minorities to attend the institution. As early as 1866, records confirm that one African American was enrolled. The school's name was changed to Washburn College in 1878. In the early-1900s, African American and star athlete Walter Caldwell attended Washburn, leading the college to become champions of the Missouri Valley in 1903. Caldwell graduated from medical school in 1906 and practiced medicine in Kansas City, Missouri. Another Washburn alumni was Loren Miller, a law school graduate of 1928. Miller was a Civil Rights activist who argued cases against illegal discrimination. In 1954, Miller wrote two appellate briefs for the *Brown v. Board of Education* case. Three other African American lawyers who graduated from Washburn were responsible for preparing the filing of the Brown v. Board of Education lawsuit - Charles

https://www.communityvoiceks.com/2016/02/06/kansas-technical-institute-the-tuskegee-of-the-west/ accessed July 2023.

[180] Kansas State Historical Society 1977; p.40.
[181] Camp 013; p.58-62.
[182] Camp 2013; p.58-59.
[183] Kansas State Historical Society 1977; p.40.

Scott, John Scott and Charles Bledsoe.[184] Another distinguished African American graduate of Washburn was Arthur Fletcher. Fletcher graduated with a degree in sociology in 1950, later becoming a well-respected politician. In 1990, he was appointed by the White House as chairman of the Civil Rights Commission having previously served as the Assistant Secretary of Labor under Nixon and Deputy Presidential Assistant for Urban Affairs during the Gerald Ford administration. Fletcher was later recognized as the Father of Affirmative Action and a leader in raising awareness to race issues.[185]

Lt. General Frank Petersen, a native of Topeka, Kansas, attended the local public schools and briefly attended Washburn College. He would go on to become a highly decorated Marine. In 1952, he became the first African American to become a Marine Aviator and was commissioned as Second lieutenant. Throughout the course of the Korean War, Petersen completed approximately 250 flight missions. In 1968, he was appointed Commander of the Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (Black Knights) and was the first African American to hold such a position. He later received a Purple Heart for his services in the Vietnam War. Petersen became the first African American General appointed in the Marine Corps and the first appointed Commander of the Quantico Marine Base in Virginia. Peterson died in 2015.[186] Lt. General Frank Petersen is one of a myriad of distinguished African Americans to have received an education at Washburn College/University.

Employment and Black-Owned Businesses

Employment has long played a vital role in achieving social status within the Black community. Early on, racism extended into the labor market, and Black settlers were relegated to menial, low-paying service positions. The economic impact of discrimination was more severe for Black laborers than for Black professionals or businessmen. Through Reconstruction, the overwhelming majority of African Americans in Topeka were common laborers, with less than 5 percent employed in a skilled trade or service-related business.[187] Unskilled labor continued to be the primary means of employment among the African American population in the 1880s. The established Black residents of Topeka were more literate than the Exodusters and enjoyed a higher social and economic standing.[188] One such individual was James Stuart. James H. Stuart was Topeka's first Black lawyer. From Tennessee, Stuart set up residence and a practice in Topeka in 1878. He successfully defended a Black Topeka merchant in 1879. Stuart enjoyed a prominent social standing among Topeka's Black community, frequently on the invitation list of Topeka's Black elite.[189]

By 1895, common laborers accounted for approximately 45 percent of the Black labor force, and the

[184] ReAnne Utemark, "Remembering Progressive History of Washburn Important," *Washburn Review*, February 23, 2009.
[185] Utemark 2009.
[186] "LT. GEN. FRANK E. PETERSEN, JR. Interview", *TheHistoryMakers*, https://www.thehistorymakers.org/biography/lt-gen-frank-e-petersen-jr <accessed May 4, 2023> and Anderson, M. (2009, March 29). Frank E. Petersen Jr. (1932-2015). BlackPast.org. https://www.Blackpast.org/african-american-history/peterson-jr-lieutenant-general-frank-e-1932/ <accessed May 4, 2023>
[187] Cox 1982; p.34.
[188] Cox 1982; p.43-45.
[189] Cox 1982; p.87

greatest density of common laborer households was in the industrial area near the Kansas River in the Second Ward (Bottoms area) and in Tennessee Town.[190] According to the *Kansas State Ledger*, in 1898, skilled Black laborers in Topeka included nine (9) carpenters, three (3) painters, seven (7) stone masons, two (2) brick masons, a stone-cutter, plumber, mattress maker and two (2) carriage builders.[191] Employment within a government facility, however menial, was well-respected among Topeka's Black community. Formerly enslaved, David Ware first came to Topeka to serve in the 1st Kansas Colored Infantry. Following the Civil War, he obtained a position at the state capital as a janitor. Upon his death in 1888, the state flag was lowered in his honor. He was a longtime member of the Second Baptist Church.[192] Shortly following the Civil War, African Americans worked for the city's police department. Among those was John R. Lytle, who was also a well-respected businessman, owning and operating a successful barbershop at 326 Kansas Avenue. In 1882, Fire Station No. 3 became the first all-Black fire station in Topeka, and likely in Kansas. It was located at 318 Jefferson Street but was torn down in 1963 to make way for a more modern facility.[193]

Perhaps the greatest improvement for Black laborers was a shift in discriminatory practices through employment with the Santa Fe Railroad. Reports indicate that between 1894 and 1898, the hiring policy of the railroad became more liberal at several occupational levels. Not only was the pay much greater than the average rate for African Americans, but the Santa Fe Railroad also offered greater diversity in types of employment. In addition to common laborers and those in service, the company hired African American carpenters, even retaining Black Topekan Dr. J.M. Jamison as a company physician. Many of those employed with the Santa Fe Railroad owned their houses and enjoyed a higher social standing among the city's Black community.[194]

In some instances, skilled laborers established businesses to serve both White and Black residents of the city. One such business was Freeman's cobbler shop, which was established in the 1870s by John Freeman. Freeman was born into slavery in 1807 in Virginia. He later became the friend of Beecher's sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and it is often suggested that he was the inspiration for the character in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In 1852, he was arrested as being a runaway slave. A lengthy court battle ensued, garnering national attention for the importance of the fugitive slave law. Freeman was exonerated and proceeded to accompany Beecher on antislavery tours as a symbol of the fugitive slave act. Following the death of Lincoln, Freeman fled to Canada before migrating to Topeka in 1869. Here, he operated a shoe repair shop on Kansas Avenue (not extant) until his death in 1902.[195]

Another early African American businessman in Topeka was Scott Smith - a barber, entrepreneur, real estate investor and inventor in Topeka. He is known to have patented an adjustable wash-bowl for use in barber shops in 1879.[196] By 1884, Smith's barber shop was recognized as "the largest and most elegantly

[190] Cox 1982; p.93-94.
[191] *Kansas State Ledger*, April 2, 1898.
[192] Camp 2013; p.11.
[193] Camp 2014; p.72-75.
[194] Cox 1982; p. 94
[195] Kansas State Historical Society 1977; p.31.
[196] Hanson and Johnson 2021; U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, "Adjustable Wash-Bowl," J. Lee Knight and Scott Smith, No.220, 156, Patent 220, 156, 1879; Bevitt 2022; p. 13.

and conveniently furnished barber shop between St. Louis and the Rockies."[197] Scott Smith was married to Ogeal, the daughter of Ann Davis Shattio, the first person of color in Shawnee County. Scott Smith is interred in Ritchie Cemetery in southwest Topeka.[198]

By the turn-of-the-20th century, racial discrimination continued to permeate most of the labor market, with the majority of Black Topekans primarily relegated to the service industry. In 1900, Booker T. Washington founded the National Negro Business League (NNBL) to battle nationwide systemic discrimination against the economic development of African Americans. The NNBL was extremely active in Topeka, with prominent attorney, James Guy, serving as president of its local organization. James H. Guy was the first African American to practice law under the Ohio Supreme Court when he was admitted in 1882.[199] He moved to Topeka in the mid-1880s, where he practiced law until his death in 1931. Throughout his career, James Guy served the community of Topeka not only through his law practice but also by devoting his time engaging in politics and leading the NNBL chapter in Topeka. Shortly after moving to Topeka, he was appointed as deputy county attorney for Shawnee County, becoming the first African American to serve in this position.[200]

Despite continued discriminatory practices, the literacy rates among Black Topekans, and particularly the Exodusters, improved considerably. Such an advancement fueled a considerable increase in Black-owned businesses and African American professionals in Topeka. Women were largely employed in domestic services. However, many accomplished more glamorous forms of employment, including stenographers, retail sales, millinery and dress shops, and beauty parlors. A marked increase in home ownership, as well as home and business improvements throughout the African American community, conveyed economic progress by the turn-of-the-20th century.

Through the 1960s, Jim Crow practices limited businesses where Black Topekans could patron. Though such practice was not as severe in Topeka as in the southern states, the segregationist and discriminatory practices only further strengthened the city's Black community. As African Americans in Topeka made social, educational and economic progress through the last quarter of the 19th century, many Black-owned businesses emerged to serve the Black community. Businesses established within the city's predominantly Black enclaves included grocery stores, barber and beauty shops, car repair shops and filling stations, among a variety of others. Together, Black Topekans forged a viable and self-sufficient community whose goods and services came from within. By the turn-of-the-20th century, a Black commercial hub was established in the Bottoms, which became known as the Fourth Street District. An article in the *Plaindealer* in 1907 speaks toward the steady economic advancement of Topeka's Black citizens:

> The amount of capital invested in negro enterprises and the number and variety of negro business concerns is increasing steadily from year to year. There are 31 negro banks now in active operation and some four, possibly six, others are in process of organization. Eight years ago, there were but two. Much of this progress is due to the enthusiasm which the meetings of the National Negro Business League has generated and to the

[197] "Central Barber Shop," *Topeka Daily Capital*, January 1, 1884; page 15.
[198] Bevitt 2022; p.13.
[199] Emily Cowan, "St. Simon's Episcopal Church," *Abandoned Kansas*, February 21, 2021 https://abandonedks.com/simons-church/#:~:text=James%20H.,up%20his%20own%20law%20practice. Accessed July 2023.
[200] Guy Family Genealogy, *Genealogy.com,* "A Notable Guy" by Eric McHenry, *The Capital-Journal*; (1906 Article).

> encouragement which indirectly has been given to business enterprises….We would emphasize the value of beginning now the establishment of businesses on no matter how modest a scale. It is not impossible at the very beginning for us to have business enterprises to compare with those which have been started years ago in humbler beginnings.[201]

The most successful Black-owned businesses were usually those that offered services denied to Blacks by White business owners such as undertakers, barbers and beauticians. Most Topeka restaurants refused to serve African Americans, while others required Black patrons to take their food to-go. Thus, many Black-owned businesses offered services and goods to patrons where they would not have to endure the demeaning, discriminatory practices and social injustices often encountered at the White-owned businesses. Three (3) known undertakers and/or funeral providers historically served Topeka's Black community. The Stonestreet & Sons Mortuary was started by Fred Stonestreet, the city's first Black fireman. In 1903, he purchased the established undertaking company from F.W. Knight and partnered with G.W. Hamilton to form the Stonestreet & Hamilton Undertakers and Embalmers. By 1909, the partnership dissolved, and he formed Stonestreet & Sons at 636 Quincy Street with his son, Wilbur. Another successful funerary business was the Gaines & Sons Funeral Home, established in the 1920s at 1821 Buchanan Street.[202] In 1930, S. Newton Bowser opened his first funeral home in Topeka in a former residence at 1812 SW VanBuren Street (KHRI 177-5096). He operated the Bowser Funeral Home here until 1961. His wife, Pearl Bowser, continued operations of the funeral home until her death. In 1972, Larry D. Johnson began working for Bowser Mortuary along with J.W. Jones Funeral Homes of Kansas City. Four years later, he and wife, Harriett purchased the business, changing the name to Bowser-Johnson Funeral Chapel. In 1997, the funeral home relocated to its current location at 723 SW 6th Street.[203]

A *Directory of Afro-Americans* in Topeka, published in 1907 by the Topeka Business League, lists numerous Black-owned businesses operating throughout Topeka. Among those included on the list are bakeries, barber shops, Blacksmiths, cafes, carpenters, coal and feed stores, dressmakers, drug stores, grocers, hairdressers, hotels, laundries, milliners, tailors, pool halls, photographers, painters, and upholsterers, among numerous other occupations.[204]

The Lytle's Drug Store was a long-serving, Black-owned business in Topeka's Black business district on 4th Street in the Bottoms. It was owned by Charles Lytle for many years, acting not only as a drug store but as a place to shop and socialize. The store included a soda fountain counter. [205] The Lytle's were long-time business owners in Topeka and well-respected among both the Black and White communities. Lytle's daughter, Lutie, worked with several of Topeka's African American newspapers before pursuing a career in law. She became the first African American woman to pass the bar exam in the states of Tennessee and Kansas. Lutie Lytle briefly practiced law in Topeka before accepting a position in 1898 at her alma mater, Central Tennessee College, where she became the first woman in the United States to teach in a chartered law school.[206] She remained in the position for one year before moving to New York. In 1925, she returned

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[201] "Resolutions of the National Negro Business League," *Topeka Plaindealer*, August 23, 1907.
[202] Camp 2013; p.68-69.
[203] Bowser-Johnson Funeral Home https://www.bowserjohnsonfuneralchapel.com/about-us/history accessed January 2023.
[204] Ira Guy, *Directory of Afro-Americans in Topeka, Kansas*, Topeka Colored Business League, 1907; p.22-27.
[205] Camp 2013; p.72.
[206] Kansas Historical Society, "Lytle, Lutie.", K*ansapedia*, https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/lutie-lytle/12136. January 2020

to Topeka to address a large audience at St. John's A.M.E. Church, which she attended in her youth. Lutie remained involved in local politics until her death in 1955.

A 1928 "colored directory" includes several advertisements for Black-owned businesses. The directory recognizes the Blue Lantern Café, located at 1812 Van Buren Street, as one of Topeka's most popular cafés, with Mrs. Beatrice King as proprietor.[207]This is the same address as the former residence where Bowser Funeral Home began operations in 1930. It is plausible that the house briefly served as the Blue Lantern Café prior to a funeral home. Other businesses noted in the 1928 directory include the People's Café at 320 Kansas Avenue and the Apex Theater at 302 Kansas Avenue.[208] These were forced to close and were subsequently demolished in the 1960s as part of the Urban Renewal Keyway Project. A myriad of other Black-owned businesses shared a similar fate, most of which were unable to relocate their business.

The 1941 *Negro Traveler's Green Book* identifies several businesses serving African American travelers to Topeka. The *Green Book* was published between 1936 and 1966 to inform African American travelers where they could find amenities such as food and lodging in select cities across the county. Among those include the Dunbar Hotel (not extant) at 400 Quincy Street; the tourist home of Ellen Slaughter at 1407 Monroe Street (not extant); Mack's Tavern at the Dunbar Hotel on Quincy Street; and Power's Café at 116 E. 4th Street (not extant).[209] By 1949, fourteen (14) businesses were listed in the *Green Book,* the majority of which are within the Black commercial district in the Bottoms. Four of the listings were restaurants including the Horseshoe Grill at 114 S. Kansas Avenue; Jenkins at 112 SE 4th Street; Blue Heaven at 301 SE 1st Street; and Joe Andy's at 1000 SE Washington. The book identifies two Topeka barber shops – Lytle's and Power's, both in the Bottoms; two taverns – Mack's and Power's Café; and two beauty parlors – Newtons at 1316 SW Van Buren (not extant), and Avalla's at 1800 SW Van Buren Street (extant).[210]

An article in 2005 in the *Capital-Journal* remembering the Fourth Street Commercial, the hub of Topeka's commercial and social activities, reads that the district in 1955 "would have seemed like a small but vibrant explosion of Black culture in the midst of the American Heartland.[211] From the late-1940s through its eradication resulting from Urban Renewal, the Fourth Street District was concentrated at SE 4th and Quincy Streets, between S. Kansas Avenue and SE Jefferson Street. In this relatively small area, a full spectrum of businesses served a community that could not get its goods and services elsewhere. Restaurants, pool halls, clubs, hotels and doctors' offices are among the businesses that lined the street. The Fourth Street District emerged in direct response to the restrictions created by segregation, and "the wealth of services provided in the area helped keep the Black community's dollars in the pockets of its own members."[212] The forced closure of the businesses for Urban Renewal made it near impossible for most of the business owners to relocate elsewhere. The displacement of hundreds of families from the

<accessed April 27, 2023>

[207] Terry Hermon, Colored Directory, April 1928. On file at Topeka-Shawnee County Library, Topeka Room; p.112.
[208] Terry Hermon, Colored Directory, April 1928. On file at Topeka-Shawnee County Library, Topeka Room
[209] *Negro Traveler's Green Book*, 1941.
[210] Tim Hrenchir, "1949 Green Book Listed 14 Topeka Businesses," *Topeka Capital-Journal*, March 6, 2019
[211] Darran Canady, "Remember 4th Street," *Topeka Capital-Journal*, August 21, 2005.
[212] Canaday 2005.

area, and their subsequent relocation throughout the city, left little opportunity for the establishment of a cohesive commercial hub for the Black community. This was further fueled by the fact that African Americans in the 1960s could now purchase from White businesses, thereby drawing patronage away from the few remaining Black-owned businesses.[213]

A small collection of surviving commercial businesses emerged along SE 6th Street, adjacent to the north of the Parkdale Addition. Among those is Styles Barbershop Building (KHRI 177-3960) at 1204 SE 6th Avenue. The building was built c.1900, housing retail shops and cafes through the 1960s. Begun by the Redmond family, Styles Barbershop started operating on the first floor of the building in c.1970. Since opening its doors, Styles has served a diverse clientele and has long been an important social gathering place for the community. Styles Barbershop is recognized as one of Topeka's longest-running, Black-owned business still in operation.

Journalism

Nationwide, it was not uncommon for White-owned newspapers to under-report, or dismiss activities of the Black community, and quite frequently, misrepresent African American individuals and institutions. The emergence of a Black press in Topeka helped to counterbalance this trend by portraying African Americans on their own terms. By the late-19th century, Black-owned newspapers in Topeka helped to forge a sense of community through the publishing of Civil Rights activities, cultural and recreational events, philanthropic initiatives, and societal announcements, among other important topics. In doing so, these newspapers also played an important role in recognizing social and economic standings, community leaders, and the realities of civic inequalities faced by Black Topekans and beyond.

Among the earliest African American journalists in Topeka was William L. Eagleson, born into slavery in Mississippi in 1835. In 1877, he moved to Fort Scott, Kansas, where he first established the *Colored Citizen.*[214] One year later, he relocated to Topeka, where the newspaper began to prosper as the first of its kind. Eagleson used his paper as a voice for racial justice and equality. He proclaimed that the paper promoted Republican principles and race progress. Thomas Henderson served as assistant editor and was an A.M.E. minister and activist.[215] The *Colored Citizen* is often pointed to as the predecessor to many other African American Newspapers and paved the way for future generations. In 1880, the paper was renamed the *Kansas Herald*, at which time it changed management. Later that year, Eagleson retired as a newspaper man.[216] However, retirement did not keep Eagleson from working for social equality. He helped organize the Colored Man's State Convention in 1882. He served on a committee in Washington to discuss the immigration of African Americans to Kansas.[217] When Oklahoma was opened for settlement, Eagleson formed the Oklahoma Immigration Association in Topeka, which aimed to

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[213] Canaday 2005.

[214] C. Hinger, (2014, January 13). *William Lewis Eagleson (1835-1899)*. BlackPast.org. https://www.Blackpast.org/african-american-history/eagleson-william-lewis-1835-1899/ <accessed April 27, 2023>

[215] Cox 1982; p.84.

[216] Mark E. Eberle, "William Lewis Eagleson and the Origins of African American Newspapers in Kansas" (2022). Monographs. 31. https://scholars.fhsu.edu/all_monographs/31 <accessed April 27, 2023>

[217] Dickson D. Bruce, Jr. "William Lewis Eagleson." In *American National Biography*. Vol. 7. Ed. John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

encourage Southern Blacks to migrate to the new territory. Records indicate that Eagleson resided at 1425 Quincy Street in the Ritchie Addition from 1892 until his death in 1899. [218]

By the close of the 1800s, a small collection of other notable newspapers emerged to complement the *Colored Citizen. The Tribune*, founded by E.H. White in 1880, focused on the advancement of Topeka's Black population while also providing insight into the social structure among the Black community, particularly during and immediately following the Great Exodus. The *Kansas State Ledger*, a weekly publication, was founded by Col. Fred L. Jeltz in 1892. Jeltz was recognized as an able journalist, albeit controversial at times. Not only did he employ both men and women, but he also hired White employees, which often received criticism. He defended this decision by declaring, "we draw no color line. It will not do; it tends to excite controversies between the two races. We employ White help at this office as well as colored. In fact, we divide up the employment."[219] Jeltz ran the *Kansas State Ledger* until 1906, though he remained active in journalism throughout his life. Between 1910 and 1917, Col. Jeltz reportedly resided at 612 Lane Street (not extant) in northwest Topeka.[220] Col. Jeltz died in 1937 and is interred in Mount Auburn Cemetery (KHRI 177-5097).[221]

Among the most notable and prolific Topeka editors, Nick Chiles (b.1876-d.1929) emerged in the early-20th century as a political and social leader in the state and beyond. Chiles arrived in Topeka in 1899 and quickly became a leading businessman. A native of South Carolina, he owned a hotel, saloon and considerable real estate in Topeka. The Chiles Hotel, the first in the city to cater to Black tourists, was located at 116 East 7th Street (KHRI 177-5400-00095). In 1899, Chiles established the *Plaindealer*, which soon became the most successful Black-owned newspaper in the state and one of the strongest in the country. Nick Chiles' *Plaindealer* was "very outspoken and militant in its approach to the race problem," advocating against discrimination, segregation and racial violence.[222] By 1905, the paper's circulation spread to 11 states and holds the record for the largest number of subscribers to a Kansas Black paper. The *Plaindealer*, which operated from one of Chiles' buildings on 7th street, set new standards for the Black press. Chiles raised the quality of content and presentation. Chiles operated the *Plaindealer* for thirty years until his death in 1929. However, the publication of the paper continued until 1958, obtaining the status as the longest running Black newspaper in Kansas history.[223] The publication was a significant source for research for Thomas Cox' *Blacks in Topeka, Kansas: 1865-1915*. The "Chiles block" of three commercial buildings on 7th Street (KHRI 177-5400-00095 and 00096) survives as one of the most intact groupings of buildings associated with Black Topekans' significant contributions to commerce and journalism. Nick Chiles resided in a large frame house at 914 Buchanan Street (KHRI 177-5400-00147).

Another prominent journalist in Topeka was Paul Jones, who first came to Topeka during the Exodus in 1879. He came not as a refugee but as an individual interested in assisting with relief efforts. He took a position in Chicago with an organization for the relief of the Black Kansas refugees. He joined E. P.

[218] Kansas State Historical Society 1977; p.22.
[219] Eberle, Mark E., "William Lewis Eagleson and the Origins of African American Newspapers in Kansas" (2022). Monographs. 31. https://scholars.fhsu.edu/all_monographs/31 <accessed April 27th, 2023>
[220] Kansas State Historical Society 1977; p.31.
[221] "Grandfather of local Urban League Secretary dies". *California Eagle.* Los Angeles, California, Friday, April 02, 1937.
[222] Kansas State Historical Society 1977; p.32.
[223] Kansas State Historical Society 1977; p.31-32.

McCabe to bring funds and supplies to Topeka. Jones was the first Black man to enter Northwestern University, where he studied law and was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1880. After practicing law in Kansas City, Missouri for 15 years, he relocated to Topeka in 1899, where he later served as an investigator in the attorney general's office. In 1907, he began the publication of the *Paul Jones Monthly*, a 40-page magazine with wide circulation among both races. The publication dealt with both political and social issues. Jones continued to publish the magazine until 1936. He died in 1952. During his life in Topeka, Jones resided at 1407 SE Monroe Street (not extant) in Ritchie Addition.[224]

Benevolent, Fraternal and Charitable Organizations

Benevolent, philanthropic, fraternal societies and clubs have long existed to benefit respective memberships, through financial support, social and business networking, leadership and political backing.[225] A benevolent society is recognized as a voluntary association of individuals "formed to further a social cause, creating a sense of shared commitment among members, while a fraternal society is a self-selecting institution providing mutual aid to members based on shared values and identities."[226] African American benevolent societies existed as early as the seventeenth century in New England, though they remained largely unrecognized and unchartered. It was not until Emancipation when African American benevolent and fraternal societies expanded nationally. Such organizations particularly focused on racial inequality and the advancement of Black populations.[227]

In Topeka, African American benevolent, fraternal organizations and women's' clubs first emerged shortly following Emancipation, increasing in numbers and range of philanthropies through the 19th and early-20th century. Such organizations were vital community-building institutions. Many members participated in multiple organizations, and membership often included local leaders in commerce and professional business, newspaper, entertainment, and religion. These African American organizations helped to unify the city's Black community, and often participated in politics and Civil Rights activities.

Little is known of the full spectrum of African American benevolent organizations established in the city during the 19th century. Among the early known fraternal orders included the Great Western Lodge, the

[224] Kansas State Historical Society 1977; p.32-33.

[225] Peter Feuerherd, "The Strange History of Masons in America," *JSTOR Daily*, August 3, 2017, https://daily.jstor.org/thestrange-history-of-masons-in-america/; Bayliss J. Camp and Orit Kent, "'What a Mighty Power We Can Be:' Individual and Collective Identity in African American and White Fraternal Initiation Rituals," *Social Science History* 28, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 440.

[226] Catherine Galbraith, et al. "African American Resources in Portland, Oregon, from 1851 to 1973," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, National Park Service, 2020; Section E Page 97; Robert L. Harris, Jr. "Early Black Benevolent Societies, 1780-1830," The *Massachusetts Review* 20, no.3 (Autumn 1979): 613.

[227] Galbraith 2020; Section E Page 97.

Good Samaritans, the Occidental Lodge and the Euclid Masonic Lodge. By the close of the 1880s, affiliation with a civic organization, political club, or protest group was a leading determinant of social class within the African American community. Thus, many of the members of these organizations emerged alongside religious leaders as prominent and influential citizens in the community.[228]

According to the Radge's directory, in 1890, at least eight (8) African American civic organizations were active in Topeka. Among those included the Lincoln Chapter No. 2 (Masonic), Commandery, Prince Hall Free Mason's Euclid Lodge No.2, Mount Moriah Lodge No.5 (A.F. & A.M.), Shawnee Lodge No. 1923 (G.U.O.O. F.), F.G.I.B. Society No. 3, Independent Order of Immaculate, and Good Samaritans Great Western Lodge No. 3.[229] Other notable organizations established by the 20th century were the Pleasant Hour Literary Circle, under the sponsorship of St. John A.M.E.; and the Colored Civil War Veterans Club. The Interstate Literary Association, founded in 1892 and was active through the turn-of-the-century, was popular among Black Topekans with academic and intellectual leanings.[230]

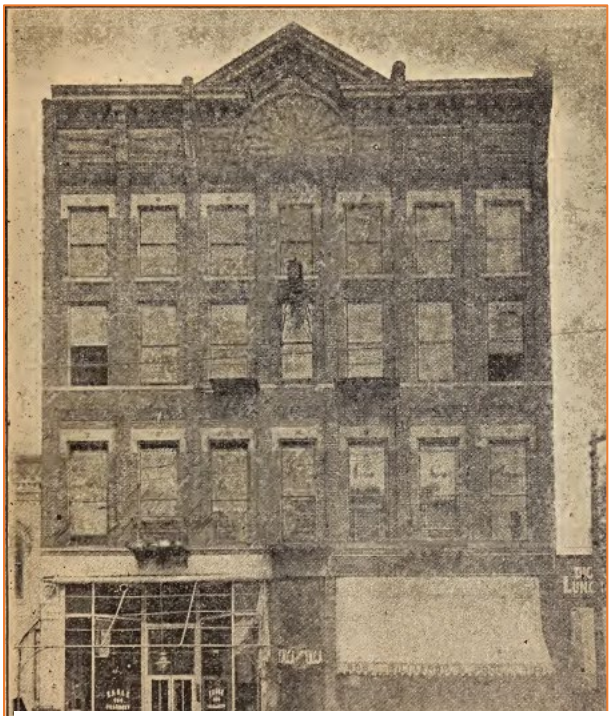

Figure 9. Masonic Lodge, c.1900, 404 Kansas Avenue (not extant)
Source: 1907 *Directory of Afro-Americans in Topeka*

Among the leading Black fraternal organizations in Topeka is the African Free Masons Euclid Lodge No. 2. The Lodge was initially established in the 1860s at Euclid Lodge #39 under the Jurisdiction of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Ohio. Black Freemasonry began in New England in the late-18th century as Prince Hall Grand Lodge, spreading to Kansas in 1865. The first Lodge in the state was Lodge #34 in Lawrence, followed shortly by Euclid Lodge #39 in Topeka and Mount Olive Lodge #19 in Leavenworth. It was not until 1875 when the three Lodges convened to establish the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Kansas. Subsequently, as the second Lodge established in Kansas, Euclid Lodge #39 received the new designation of Euclid Lodge #2.[231] Since its establishment in the years following the Civil War to the present, the Lodge has remained a strong presence in the Black community, supporting the community by helping those less fortunate. Around the turn-of-the-20th century, the Masonic Lodge purchased a four-story building at 402-404 Kansas Avenue (not extant) in the Fourth Street business district, the social and commercial hub of Topeka's Black community. The organization leased

[228] Cox 1982; p.32.
[229] *Radges Directory of Topeka and Shawnee County*, 1890-1891.
[230] Cox 1982; p. 98.
[231] Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Kansas, "Kansas History," https://mwphglks.com/kansas-history/ <accessed June 2023>

space in the building to other benevolent and fraternal organizations that pursued the advancement of Black Topekans.

During the 1920s, the Shriners Oasis Temple No. 29 was formed as a benevolent society of men to benefit the community. The organization met at the Masonic Lodge building at 404 Kansas Avenue (not extant) in the Fourth Street business district.[232] The 1928 *Colored Directory* lists nearly 20 Lodges in Topeka. Among those is the Elk's Improved B.P.O.E. of the World Central Lodge No.55. The Elk's Club met on the third floor of a building at 420 Kansas Avenue (not extant). With a membership of 235, it was the strongest Elk's Club in the state of Kansas that year.[233] The *Colored Directory* of 1928 further recognizes the Elk's Community Center located at 1504 Adams Street (not extant) as the "only one in the southwest owned and operated by colored Elks."[234] The continuity of the Elk's Club in Topeka is unclear. The present Black Elk's Club in Topeka, named the Midwest Elk's Lodge #1441, was reportedly formed in the mid-20th century and met in a building located at Third and Jackson Streets.[235] The Lodge relocated to its present location at 1316 SE Madison Street (KHRI 177-2620) in 1959. The organization offers various non-profit services for the community. As with many other fraternal organizations nationwide, membership has declined considerably in recent years.[236]

Women's Clubs

Men's clubs were not the only philanthropic and benevolent organizations established among Topeka's Black community. Women played pivotal roles in fostering cultural ideals through the establishment of a wide variety of clubs. African American women began organizing in the 1880s during a time of escalating discrimination and segregation. Such female organizations paid particular attention to morality issues and often participated in political activism. In 1887, the Colored Women's Suffrage Association was organized to promote social reform within the community. The Women's Benevolent Society, Lodge No. 3 fused social reform and community service. The Colored Juvenile Benevolent Society was formed to address the causes of crime.[237] Other known female organizations among Topeka's African American community included the Golden Sheaf Temple No. 7 and the Sisters of the Mysterious Ten. The latter was a Black women's benevolent society whose members supported one another and dedicated themselves to racial progress. The organization often bridged class barriers, focusing on issues important to poor and working women.[238] Organized in 1899 by Cassie Fox, the Ne Plus Ultra Colored Women's Club strived to "develop a spirit of unity and goodwill among African American women of Topeka so that various human needs and problems could be met intelligently."[239]

In 1916, the Topeka Council of Colored Women's Clubs was established, merging three existing clubs that were founded in 1898. The Council was part of the Kansas Association of Colored Women's Club,

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[232] Camp 2013; p.103.
[233] *Topeka Colored Directory*, 1928; p.106.
[234] *Ibid*, p. 113
[235] Camp 2013; p.105.
[236] Discussion between Lodge members and the author.
[237] Cox 1982; p.108-110.
[238] "The Sisters of the Mysterious Ten," *The Filson Historical Society*, https://filsonhistorical.omeka.net/exhibits/show/women-at-work/voices-for-reform/smt <accessed August 7 2023>
[239] Camp 2013; p.37.

which was established in 1896. The Council served Topeka's African American community by supporting their race through self-improvement, art, and literacy. For the first 30 years of the Council, members met in homes and churches. In 1931, Emma Gaines loaned funds to purchase the Warren home in Tennessee Town for a clubhouse (NR-listed 2009). Proceeds from numerous fundraisers spearheaded by the Council and held in the clubhouse helped to provide college scholarships to Black students. By the 1970s, the Council included members of five clubs: Ne Plus Ultra Art and Literary Club, Ornamental Art and Literary Club, Oak Leaf Art and Charity Club, Stella Puella Literary and Art Club, and Elite Art and Literary Club. In recent years, as membership declined, the Council transferred the clubhouse property to Living the Dream, Inc., a Topeka-based organization dedicated to spreading the message of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The clubhouse was designated to the National Register of Historic Places in 2009.[240]

In c.1925, the Wheatley House Bureau began operations at the corner of 18th and VanBuren. The Wheatley House was a "colored branch" of the Provident Association, a White organization established in 1904 to provide support services to victims of the devastating flood of 1903. The Wheatley House provided social services for working mothers and those in need. The institution provided childcare and a soup kitchen at its Community Center.[241]

The Colored Y.M.C.A.

A leading national organization to play an important role in Topeka's Black community was the Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.). The Y.M.C.A. was a charitable not-for-profit health and human service organization focusing on youth. The organization first began programs in Topeka in the 1880s; however, these were restricted to White Topekans. The 1907 *Directory of Afro-Americans of Topeka, Kansas,* provides a detailed account of the establishment of the Y.M.C.A for African Americans. Efforts leading toward a "colored" YMCA began around the turn-of-the-20th century when Rev. G.W. Guy began holding meetings at 429 Kansas Avenue (not extant) to attract young men and "help to check the wave of criminality which was, at that time increasing at an alarming rate."[242] Participation in the meetings quickly grew and were soon transferred to the Kansas Industrial Institute, which was then located in the southern part of the city. When the Institute relocated to its present site three miles east of the city, the meetings were temporarily suspended. That same year, W.C. Evans and Mr. Mitchell of the Y.M.C.A. visited the numerous African American churches in Topeka, encouraging young men to meet and organize a Bible study. Attendance at the study flourished, and by 1904, a "colored" department of the Y.M.C.A. was organized by J.E. Moreland of Washington D.C., national secretary of the organization. The branch first leased half of the second floor of the Euclid Lodge #2 at 404 Kansas Avenue (not extant).[243] It eventually adopted the name Carver YMCA in honor of George Washington Carver. The organization not only offered Bible classes but also provided night classes for those who were unable to attend school. In 1906, it was decided that a Physical Education department should be added to the programming at Carver YMCA. According to the 1906 directory narrative of the YMCA, a gymnasium opened that year to

[240] Christy Davis, "Topeka Council of Colored Women's Club National Register Nomination Form," National Park Service, 2009.
[241] *Topeka Colored Directory*, 1928; p.112.
[242] Ira Guy, *Directory of the Afro-Americans in Topeka, Kansas*, Topeka Business League, 1907; p.9
[243] *Ibid.*, p.10.

members.[244] The location of the gymnasium is unclear. Later reports indicate that the Carver YMCA eventually acquired a building near 1st and Kansas Avenue that offered a place for community recreation. Many of the young residents of the Bottoms frequented the Carver YMCA (not extant). Not only did it serve both boys and girls, but the facility was also a meeting place for various African American organizations throughout the 20th century.[245]

Culture and Recreation

Racial discrimination played a significant role in the social lives of Black Topekans. African Americans were largely excluded from White society's cultural and entertainment venues. When permitted attendance, Blacks were frequently relegated to segregated areas. Special "colored" days were often set aside at larger venues and public spaces. The establishment of city-owned parks within the predominantly Black neighborhoods helped to provide an open space for entertainment and athletics; however, this practice might be seen as an attempt by the local government to encourage racial separation. In 19th-century Topeka, Black-owned gathering spaces were few. The earliest venues for entertainment and social gatherings among the Black community were homes, fraternal lodges, and churches. As the Black population grew throughout the late-19th and early-20th century, more establishments emerged that were created for the African American community. Music and baseball were also highly popular forms of entertainment and culture among the community, which spawned many successful musicians and athletes. A unique form of entertainment that was popular during the mid-20th century among the African Americans came in the form of radio broadcasting. From 1952 to 1962, the Calvary Baptist Church ran a radio program called the *Big Broadcast.* The program "featured local musical talent, fashion reviews, hairstyling tips, dramas, and a variety of other programming."[246] The following context focuses on some of the unique spaces, both public and private, within Topeka's built environment that historically provided the African American community during Jim Crow with venues for culture, entertainment, and recreation. The context further documents the significant role that music and athletics played in the cultural and social lives of Black Topekans, helping to forge and maintain a cohesive sense of community.

Parks and Recreation, Sports and Athletics

Public parks have long been important community resources that promote physical and mental health and social and cultural cohesion. Parks were vital to the Black community in Topeka. They not only provided an outdoor venue for recreation but also served as spaces for social gatherings, music and theater, and often a meeting place for politics and Civil Rights activities. Several parks emerged throughout the City to meet the needs of the growing African American community. Most were established within the predominantly Black neighborhoods, such as Eastlawn Park in the Parkdale Addition, which transformed the "Hell's Acre" triangle into a children-friendly public park in 1921. Other notable parks with ties to the African American community include but are not limited to, the old City Park and Cushinberry Park.

City Park (Not Extant)

The old City Park was established shortly following the Civil War between the south bank of the Kansas

[244] *Ibid.*, p.10.
[245] Rodriguez 2013; p.91-92.
[246] Camp 2013; p.20.

River and First Street. City Park served both White and Black populations. However, due to its proximity to the Bottoms, it eventually became a social hub for Black Topekans. Black churches from across the city would regularly hold services in the City Park, as well as revivals, picnics, concerts, and conventions. Sporting events, particularly baseball, were popular forms of recreation and entertainment in the park. By 1886, an open, wood frame band stand with elevated seating was erected in the park.[247] Throughout the first decade of the 20th century, City Park grew in popularity, and plans were underway for expansion and improvements.

In 1912, the Topeka City Park Amusement company was tasked with transforming the City Park into one of the most beautiful and equipped amusement parks in the state. By May of 1912, the company was operating various amusements in the park, including horse and chariot rides, a shooting gallery, and an Airdome. The Airdome measured 40 by 110 feet and contained a stage measuring 20 by 28 feet. It was used for moving pictures and vaudeville shows it had a seating capacity of 1,100 people.[248] By 1913, the park boasted a large wood-frame pavilion used as a roller-skating rink and dancehall. The use of these amusements was undoubtedly segregated, with events for Black and White citizens likely scheduled for different dates. Newspapers through the mid-20th century generally lack reference to racially segregated events and activities within the park.

Figure 10. City Park, nd
Courtesy of Kansas State Historical Society

During the early years of the 1920s, a new, sprawling park was underway in the western section of the city known as Gage Park. Here, a massive, White-only swimming pool opened, drawing White citizens

[247] Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1886, Sheet 2.
[248] "City Park is Booming," *Topeka Daily Capital*, May 23, 1912.

away from City Park. The swimming pool at Gage Park allowed for African Americans to enjoy the facility one day each year. Sanborn Maps in 1955 confirm that City Park's status as the city's premier park and amusement center was waning. All previous structures built in 1912, including the Airdome and skating rink, were demolished. A baseball park with wood bleachers was built, as well as an oval-shaped concrete swimming pool with frame bath house. The construction of the swimming pool is likely attributed to Equalization efforts to provide a public pool for use by Black Topekans. By the mid-20th century, the City Park also provided an outdoor venue for many of the city's immigrant groups. According to Thomas Rodriguez, "the Bottom boys used to play baseball there during hot summer days and on summer nights would go there to watch the Negro and Mexican softball teams play under the lights."[249] Flooding concerns eventually led to the closure of the park. Its closure coincides with Urban Renewal programs and the near total eradication of the Bottoms in the late-1950s and 1960s.

Cushinberry Park

Cushinberry Park has its origins as a playground for the adjacent Monroe School (present *Brown v. Board of Education* National Historical Park). In 1934, seeking additional playground space, the Board of Education of Topeka purchased the vacant triangular parcel on the east side of Monroe Street. The park not only served as a playground for students of the Monroe School but was a popular gathering space for residents of Ritchie's Addition. Following the closure of the school in 1975, the park adopted the name Cushinberry Park, named in honor of Grant Cushinberry. Cushinberry was a WWII combat medic and well-known philanthropist who established God's Little 1/2-acre, a garden and donations clearinghouse to serve the needy. For three decades, Cushinberry ran Topeka's Community Thanksgiving Dinner. He was known for taking underprivileged children to fairs, ball games and circuses. Cushinberry was known for his ability to reach across racial lines and was active in the community until his death in 2008.[250] One of Cushinberry Park's most well-recognized features is its buffalo sculpture. "Old Buff" was the mascot of the Kansas Technical Institute which served Blacks from Kansas and around the nation from 1895-1955. Since its establishment, the park has served Topeka's African American residents as a popular space for recreation and entertainment. Social gatherings frequently occurred here, and until recently, it was not uncommon to witness the town's older generations enjoying a game of chess in the park. Due to a declining population among the Black community in Ritchie's Addition, activity in the park has declined substantially. The park is mostly enjoyed by visitors to the Monroe School site.

City Park and Cushinberry Park are only two of the many small community parks and playgrounds established within the predominantly Black neighborhoods. Eastlawn Park in the Parkdale Addition is one such example. As with Cushinberry Park, school playgrounds frequently offered an outdoor venue to residents for social gatherings and events. During the mid-20th century, community centers provided additional space for recreation and youth and welfare initiatives. Most were established in lower income

[249] Rodriguez 213; p.32-33.

[250] "Grant Cushinberry Obituary", CJOnline.com, Jul. 6, 2008, https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/cjonline/name/grant-cushinberry-obituary?id=24976527 <accessed April 27, 2023> and Lisa Loewen, "A Lifetime of Service: Grant Cushinberry", TKBusinessOnline, March 10, 2022, https://tkmagazine.com/blog/2022/3/6/a-lifetime-of-service-grant-cushinberry <accessed April 27, 2023> and "The History Guy: Grant Cushinberry", CJOnline.com, February 10, 2021, https://www.cjonline.com/videos/news/local/2021/02/11/history-guy-grant-cushinberry/6715849002/ <accessed April 27, 2023>

areas of the City. The 26-acre Hillcrest Community Center (KHRI 177-5100) in southeast Topeka was initially occupied by the Hillcrest Sanitorium between 1915 and 1959. The facility comprised multiple buildings within a parklike setting with mature shade trees and expansive lawns. From 1945 until the late-1950s, the hospital fell under the control of the state as a Tuberculosis Sanatorium. The hospital closed in 1959, and by 1970, most of the buildings were demolished and the grounds became a public park for the Hillcrest neighborhood. A public swimming pool was installed between 1960 and 1970. The present community center was erected between 1975 and 1982. Hillcrest Park and swimming pool, though not a segregated facility, became a very popular place for recreation, education and social gatherings among East Topeka's diverse ethnic groups since it was established in the 1960s.

Another prominent center established in the 1960s is the Eastlawn Park Community Center (KHRI 177-5111) in the Parkdale Addition. Built in 1969 adjacent to Eastlawn Park, the community center has provided a variety of programs for youth. South of the community center is the sprawling athletic fields of the former Parkdale School. The Community Center was later acquired by the Boys and Girls Club for Teens and is presently named the Juan "Poppy" Abbot Center. The athletic fields are presently used by Topeka High School.

Sports and athletics were also important institutions that united the African American community in Topeka. Not only are these beneficial to physical health, but sporting events were also extremely popular to the social lives of Black Topekans. Among the most popular sports were basketball, baseball and football. Churches frequently established baseball leagues within the community, hosting games in community parks. Athletics in public schools was also a popular pastime. At the elementary level, the segregated Black schools would often compete in athletics. Though African Americans attending Topeka High School were permitted to join the football team, basketball remained segregated. The Topeka High School Ramblers, the Black basketball team, was an extremely popular draw for Topeka's Black community. From 1929 to 1949, the Ramblers provided young Black athletes the opportunity to play high school basketball during Jim Crow segregation. The Ramblers played other Black teams from Kansas City, St. Joseph, Fort Scott, Leavenworth, and Independence. These basketball games were well-attended and created a great sense of community pride.

African Americans began playing baseball in the late-1800s on military, college or company teams. The first Black professional baseball player in the county was John "bud" Fowler who got his start playing for a White team in New Castle, Pa., in 1872. He joined Topeka's Western League team as the only Black player in 1886. Through the latter years of the 19th century, the nation was regressing in regards to the color-line as racial prejudices grew. Fowler was a rare exception to Black players on White baseball teams. Thus, Black Topekans were forced to establish their own clubs, and during the early-1900s, Topeka became a center for Black baseball in the Midwest. John Thomas Johnson, shortstop and outfielder, was a leader in advancing the popularity of a baseball league for African American players in Topeka. Johnson was also a noted heavy weight boxer. He was given the nickname "Topeka Jack" when he started boxing to differentiate him from established boxer Jack Johnson.[251] Topeka Jack's baseball career started when he attended local Washburn College where he was one of the first African Americans allowed on the school's baseball team. During the early years of his career, he strived to organize African American

[251] Gary Ashwell, "Topeka Jack Johnson, Part I", *Agate Type,* February 21, 2016.

baseball clubs in Topeka, establishing the Topeka Giants in 1906. An announcement in the *Topeka Sate Journal* in January of that year suggests the overall excitement of Topekans, both Black and White, of the prospects of the Black club:

> TOPEKA NEGRO BALL TEAM. It Will be Composed of Best Colored Players in the West. Topeka is to have real genuine semi-professional baseball club this summer composed entirely of colored players. Jack Johnson, noted as a pugilist, is the manager and organizer. Two years ago he was captain and manager of the Chicago Union Giants, the crack colored team of the county…Johnson has collected a number of stars who ought not to take anything from any semi-professional team throughout this part of the county. He himself is a crack performer on the ball field.[252]

The Topeka Giants were hugely popular in the city, attracting both Black and White spectators. Several prominent Black baseball players of that time got their start on the Topeka Giants, the city's professional Black team. Early newspaper announcements in White-owned papers reflect the popularity of the club among all Topekans. The announcements further indicate that the Topeka Giants not only played against other Black, semi-professional Midwest teams but also the White team of Washburn College and even the Black Broncho Colored Bloomer Girls from St. Louis, Missouri.[253] Long before the formation of the All-American Girl's Professional Baseball League, women often joined traveling baseball teams, nicknamed Bloomer Girls. From 1910 to 1911, the Black Bronchos of St. Louis were the only Black women's baseball team in the country. The team was very competitive, often playing men's teams throughout the country, including the Topeka Giants. Newspaper clippings from the early-20th century indicate that games hosted by the Topeka Giants took place at the "Association Park" and the "Colored" League Park located at the corner of 20th and Western Avenue.[254] It is believed that the two ball fields were located within the State Fair Grounds. The 1913 Sanborn map refers to the Kansas State Fair Association Grounds, which spawned the name of Association Park where ball games were held. By 1910, the "Colored" League Park was located at this intersection and was likely within the fairgrounds, though the Sanborn map of 1913 does not depict a designated ball field.

[252] "Topeka Negro Ball Team," *Topeka State Capital*, January 7, 1906.
[253] *Topeka Daily Capital*, April 20, 1906; *Topeka State Journal*, August 31, 1910.
[254] Topeka Daily Capital, September 1, 1910.

Figure 11. Baseball Announcement at League Park
Source: *Topeka Daily Capital*, September 1, 1910

The heyday of Topeka "Jack" Johnson's baseball career occurred during the 1910s when he played several seasons for franchises in Kansas City and Chicago. It was during this period that he fiercely advocated for the creation of a Negro National League.[255] He survived to see his vision for a professional Black baseball league come to fruition. In 1920, a few Midwestern leagues joined to form the Negro National League in Kansas City. Soon, rival leagues formed in the Eastern and Southern states. The leagues maintained a high level of professional skill and often contributed to the economic development in many Black communities.[256] Topeka Jack was not only an avid sportsman, but he was also very active in Topeka's Black community, working as a policeman and fireman. He was an active member of Shiloh Baptist Church and supported youth activities. He passed away in 1940 and is interred in Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Topeka.[257]

Following World War II, calls for racial integration extended into the baseball world. In 1947, Jackie Robinson became the first Black player to sign with the Major League, joining the Brooklyn Dodgers. This monumental event paved the way to break the color barrier. After integration, the quality of the Negro League clubs deteriorated as the stronger players accepted contracts in the Major Leagues. The year 1951 unofficially marks the final season of segregated professional baseball.

During the heyday of the Topeka Giants, the league spawned several notable African American baseball players, many of whom would go on to prominent professional leagues. Native-born Topekan, "Bingo" DeMoss started as a shortstop with the Topeka Giants in 1906, later making his name with the Chicago American Giants in the 1920s. He was recognized as the premier second baseman and one of the best Black baseball players of the time. Following World War I, DeMoss captained the Chicago Giants for six

[255] Gary Ashwell, "Topeka Jack Johnson, Part I", *Agate Type,* February 21, 2016.
[256] "Negro Leagues History," Negro League Baseball Museum https://www.nlbm.com/negro-leagues-history/ <accessed June 2023>
[257] Tori Mason, "Family and fans remember "Topeka Jack" Johnson", WIBW, https://www.wibw.com/content/news/Family-and-fans-remember-Topeka-Jack-Johnson--399158861.html. Oct. 29, 2016. <accessed April 27, 2023>; The burial of Topeka Jack Johnson remained unmarked until 2016 when a marker was provided by the Negro Leagues Baseball Grave Marker Project, a partner of the Society of American Baseball Research.

years, winning three Negro National League pennants. Carroll Ray "Dink" Monthell was also born in Topeka, Kansas. More widely known by his nickname Dink, sometimes Deke, he was a well-known baseball player. He played in the Negro League for over fifteen years. Dink was known as the "Super Substitute" for his ability to play any position needed. Dink got his start in the Topeka Giants. By 1920 he was playing with the Kansas City Monarchs. While with the Monarchs, he helped win four Negro League Nationals and won the 1924 Colored World Series. He retired from baseball in 1935, returning to Topeka where he lived a relatively quiet life in Topeka until his death in 1980. In 2011, the Society for American Baseball Research Negro Leagues Committee purchased a tombstone for his burial plot in Mount Hope Cemetery. After his death, a relative donated a jersey of Monthell's to the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. Dink Monthell was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 2012. Other notable players with ties to Topeka included Tullie McAdoo and Arthur Hardy.[258]

Music

Nationwide, music has long played a key role in African American culture and religion. African Americans living in Topeka during the 19th century had few options to host musical and theatrical entertainment. Established churches were the principal venue to host such cultural events. Schools also emerged as important venues for music and culture as they offered spaces to host school choir concerts, performances, and theater productions. Despite the limited access to White-owned theaters, music halls and opera houses in Topeka, newspaper announcements from the late-19th century indicate that some venues hosted Black performers. An article in 1881 reads: "Topeka is rapidly assuming metropolitan airs. A negro concert company will give entertainments at Crawford's Opera House."[259] As the number of established Black Topekans increased by the close of the 19th century, Black-owned businesses often provided space for entertainment. This trend continued through the mid-20th century, particularly within the Fourth Street Commercial District in the Bottoms. Here, saloons and pool halls were popular venues for music. Small, neighborhood juke joints reportedly emerged in Topeka's Black communities, though the precise location of these important cultural venues is unclear and would certainly warrant further study.

From the late-19th century through the mid-20th century, traditional Gospel music was among the most popular African American genres. Traditional gospel has its roots in the slave song and spirituals and has long been one of the strongest forms of expression among Black Americans in the United States. By 1895, traditional gospel music was performed in churches and at camp meetings in a traveling format. By the 1920s, Baptist churches adopted gospel music as part of their worship experience. During the 1920s through the 1940s, gospel music continued to spread, songs were written and recorded, and tours to Black communities across the United States helped to make these songs popular. Gospel is a combination of many experiences and represents "the essence of Black America's need to communicate both with each other and with the world."[260]

Throughout the first half of the 20th century in Topeka, gospel music was the most prevalent form of

[258] Mark Schremmer, "Negro Leagues Greats Started in Topeka," *Topeka Capital-Journal*, August 6, 2011.
[259] *Topeka Daily Press*, March 4, 1881.
[260] Kansas Historical Society, "Gospel in Kansas," Kanas Historical Society *Kansapedia*, June 2013 https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/gospel-in-kansas/17879 <accessed June 2023>

musical expression. While some comprised members of a single church, others had membership in a variety of denominations. The All-City Gospel Choir also performed throughout Kansas and Missouri beginning in the 1930s. A variety of congregations were represented in the All-City Gospel Choir. The Gospel Four was a Black male quartet that was popular during the 1920s and 1930s. Members of the Gospel Four included Leo Anderson, Fred Redmon, Oscar Lewis, and Sheldon Sudduth. The Negro Festival Choir was another popular African American music group in Topeka. It was organized and led by Ben and Emma Gaines of the Gaines & Sons Mortuary. The group was popular during the mid-20th century.[261] Formed in 1948 and managed by Oliver Brown, the Keys of Zion Girls' Sextet was one of many gospel singing groups in Topeka. The majority of its singers were members of St. John AME Church. Another gospel choir in the 1940s was the Union Gospel Choir. The choir performed for a variety of audiences throughout Topeka, Kansas and Missouri.

Another genre of music largely associated with the African American culture and popular in Topeka throughout the early- to mid-20th century was American jazz. Jazz developed in the United States in the early years of the 20th century in New Orleans. Here, African American traditions converged with many other cultures. Jazz emerged from a blend of ragtime, marches, blues and other kinds of music. Recordings of jazz music were first made in 1917 and quickly spread nationwide. Over time, a variety of sub-styles of jazz emerged. Today, it remains a very popular musical genre, enjoyed worldwide by people of all ethnicities, though it is most closely recognized as an African-American musical tradition.[262] Topeka has born a myriad of successful jazz performers, both Black and White. Among the notable African American jazz musician is Eddie Wakes who grew up singing, and later directing, the church choir at True Vine Missionary Baptist Church. His father, Rev. Melvin Wakes, was the pastor. Eddie Wakes and his eight musical brothers became a popular group in the community. Wakes went on to have a successful musical career, traveling and performing worldwide. In 2022, he returned to his hometown to perform at the Jayhawk Theater.[263]

Another successful jazz musician with ties to Topeka was Coleman Hawkins, born in 1904 in St. Joseph, Missouri. Hawkins began playing music at a very early age. On his 9th birthday, his parents gave him his first saxophone. In his teens, Hawkins and his family moved to Topeka where he attended the Kansas Industrial and Educational Institute. As a teenager, Hawkins played the saxophone with local musical groups that toured across Kansas. At age 16, he was noticed by Mamie Smith, a Jazz Singer, who invited him to tour with her group, the Jazz Hounds. Throughout the 1920's, Hawkins toured across the country, playing with the Jazz Hounds and other popular jazz groups. At this time, the saxophone was not specifically considered a jazz instrument and Hawkins' ability with the tenor saxophone created a unique sound for the genre. For this reason, Hawkins is known as the "father of the tenor saxophone". In the 1930s he toured Europe with Fletcher Henderson. Upon returning to the United States in 1939, he recorded his most prolific cover of the song "Body and Soul." Hawkins continued to tour and play Jazz music until

[261] Camp 2013; p.30-35.
[262] National Museum of American History, "Smithsonian Jazz," Behring Center, nd. https://americanhistory.si.edu/smithsonian-jazz/education/what-jazz <accessed June 2023>
[263] Phil Anderson, "Topeka Native Eddie Wakes Returns to Capital City for Concert," *13WIBW*, May 11, 2022.; Catheryn Hrenchir, "Native Topekan Eddie Wakes Brings His Sultry Sounds to the Jayhawk Theater for Saturday Concert," *Topeka Capital-Journal*, May 26, 2022.

his death in 1969.[264]

Blues is another notable musical genre of the 20th century attributed to the African American culture. Blues originated on southern plantations in the 19th century. It is generally accepted that the music evolved from African spirituals. The blues grew up in the Mississippi Delta just upriver from New Orleans, the birthplace of jazz. The two genres have always influenced each other. Unlike jazz, blues did not spread out significantly from the South to the Midwest until the 1930s and 1940s, emerging in urban centers. It quickly evolved into electrified Chicago blues with regional styles and jazz-blues hybrids. During the mid-20th century, blues gave birth to rhythm 'n blues and rock 'n roll.[265] Little is known about blues performers and venues in Topeka. Typically, intimate affairs, blues performances likely took place at local Black-owned businesses such as the popular pool halls, saloons and juke joints. One successful native-Topekan blues performer was Arnold Dwight "Gatemouth" Moore. He was born in 1913 in Topeka, attending Topeka Public Schools throughout his youth. At a young age, Arnold Dwight showed an interest in singing, entering various amateur contests. Nicknamed "Gatemouth," he went on to become a popular blues singer. He played venues throughout the country and was the first blues singer to perform at Carnegie Hall. His popularity soared during the 1940s when he recorded on the Black Swan Records label. Topeka-born Arnold Dwight "Gatemouth" had a long and distinguished career. He was honored in 1996 on the Beale Street Walk of Fame in Memphis, Tennessee.[266]

Theater

Like most White-owned restaurants in Topeka that excluded African Americans, most theaters practiced the same racial discrimination. Before segregation came to an end in the 1950s, African American Topekans could attend only two White-owned theaters, the Grand and the Jayhawk. However, they were restricted to segregated sections of the balcony. The Grand opened in 1882 as an opera house, later transitioning to a movie theater before its demolition in the 1980s.[267] The Jayhawk opened in 1926 in the heart of downtown Topeka and closed in 1976. It was named the "State Theater of Kansas" in the 1990s and lovingly restored and now hosts events open to all, regardless of race and ethnicity. As late as the 1940s of the six (6) movie theaters in Topeka, only one admitted African Americans to its balcony. The Apex was Black-owned and located in the Bottoms. The Apex opened in 1914 at 302 S. Kansas Avenue, relocating to 122 SE 4th Street in 1931 in the heart of the African American Fourth Street District. The new theater had a seating capacity of 500. In 1940, it was renamed Ritz Theater, operating as an African American theater through at least 1955. The theater also admitted immigrant groups, many of whom were neighbors in the Bottoms. Another theater frequented by African Americans was the Kaw Movie Theater located at 418 S. Kansas Avenue. Both theaters ultimately fell victim to Urban Renewal when the Fourth Street District was razed.

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[264] "Profile: Coleman Hawkins (1904-1969)", *Black Art Story*. https://Blackartstory.org/2020/05/29/profile-coleman-hawkins-1904-1969/ <accessed May 4, 2023> and Kansas Historical Society, "Hawkins, Coleman.", *Kansapedia*, May 2016. https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/coleman-hawkins/12083 <accessed May 4, 2023>

[265] Ed Kopp. "A Brief History of the Blues," allaboutjazz.com August 16, 2005. https://www.allaboutjazz.com/a-brief-history-of-the-blues-by-ed-kopp <accessed June 2023>

[266] Camp 2013; p. 112-113.

[267] Tim Hrenchir, "Top City What? Revisiting Closed Movie Theaters," *Topeka Capital Journal*, August 8, 2018.

Figure 12. Apex Theater, nd
Source: Kansas Memory

CONTEXT IV: CIVIL RIGHTS IN TOPEKA (1880-1975)

In the 1870s, Kansas was one of three states in the country that had passed legislation on Civil Rights. When the Kansas Legislature enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1874, it prohibited "any distinction on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Violation of this was a misdemeanor and would result in a substantial fine (State of Kansas 1913, 82). Although this established a guarantee to legal freedom, actions of the state, or lack thereof, reflected an ambiguous stance towards the commitment to political and social equality for Blacks. Such ambivalence extended to the capital city of Topeka.

During Reconstruction years, racial discrimination in Topeka endured. Subsequent years saw legislation, at both federal and state levels, that fostered racial discriminatory practices to varying degrees. However, Black Topekans refused to be "passive victims of discrimination."[268] Under the auspices of the church, they engaged in lively debates on the issues at hand, formulated strategies for race progress and combating discrimination. In February of 1873 at St. John A.M.E. Church, Black Topekans "asserted that segregation in education, in public accommodations, and in common carriers clearly belied the reputation of Kansas and of the Republican party" for the earlier battles to ensure liberty and equality.[269] Engagement in such discussions among Topeka's Black residents continued throughout Reconstruction and the years of the Great Exodus. However, during the 1880s, discrimination in education, public accommodations and in political affairs became increasingly apparent, and these discussions gained momentum and concerted, organized Civil Rights efforts began to take shape. The following context is by no means a complete history of the Civil Rights initiatives in Topeka, but rather focuses on organizations, people, and activities, and/or events that are among the most notable.

Early Struggle for Equality

Topeka is nationally recognized for the groundbreaking Supreme Court ruling in the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* lawsuit in 1954 that ended the segregation of public schools in the United States.

[268] Cox 1982; p.30.
[269] Cox 1982; p.30.

Though monumental, this lawsuit, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this context, was the culmination of generations of Civil Rights initiatives by Black Topekans toward securing just equality. From 1880 through the years leading up to the 1896 Supreme Court ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that upheld "separate but equal" discriminatory practices, "the battle lines in the campaign against Jim Crow were drawn."[270] According to Thomas Cox, this period of confrontation "set the tone for Black life; it was the cornerstone of political activity, of protest and community organization, and of associational behavior."[271] While education was deemed essential for race progress, discrimination in employment, public office, accommodations and general services were leading components of the mosaic of race prejudice. Hiring policies in municipal civil service "did not measure up to the aspirations of Negroes for more equitable representations."[272] For example, from 1878 to 1885, municipal authorities refused to employ a Black policeman.[273] In an attempt to campaign against discrimination practices, early newspapers in the 1880s endorsed economic boycotting of private businesses that discriminated against Black Topekans in both employment and service. Evidently, such boycotting campaigns went largely unheeded.[274]

In the face of mounting race prejudice, Black Topekans joined national protest organizations. Formed in the 1860s, the Negro Convention movement was a respected institution that remained active in Topeka through the 1880s. At its meetings, Black Topekans exchanged views at conventions with affiliated chapters throughout the State and region – "A network of communications and organized protest augmented by the Negro press, moreover, created a semblance of nationwide Black community."[275] The inherent desire for more equitable representation in politics and public office was a leading cause of the convention. While the state convention aimed to elect African American representatives at the state level, locally, important decisions affecting the local Black community were made at the municipal level. Thus, the Topeka chapter campaigned for municipal elective and appointive office. In 1879, the *Colored Citizen* announced John Carter, J.H. Brashears, and A. Kuykendall as three Black men aspiring to positions under the city government.[276] Only Kuykendall was successful when elected as constable, a position he held through 1887. Despite increased discrimination through the latter years of the 19th century, organized efforts among Black Topekans to appoint representatives to public office were generally successful. In 1897, five policemen, ten firemen and one postman were Black. Fred Stonestreet, employed as a janitor, was elected constable. Fred Roundtree, a teacher at the Monroe School, was elected as councilman for the 5th Ward; and John L. Guy secured the Republican nomination for justice of the peace.[277]

Despite apparent successes in securing civic employment and public office during the 1880s and 1890s, a decline in the representation of Black Topekans on the city work force was increasingly evident. By 1889, even the most menial jobs were no longer safe employment opportunities for Black Topekans. Blacks once employed at the State House for years as janitors, messengers and firemen were dismissed

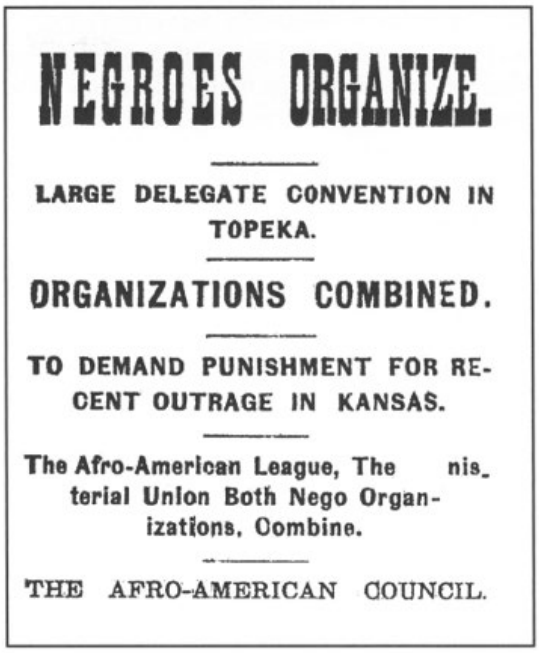
[270] Cox 1982; 111.
[271] *Ibid*.; 111
[272] Cox 1982; p.115.
[273] *Colored Citizen*, September 20, 1879; AND *Kansas Herald*, August 8, 1885.
[274] Cox 1982; p.116.
[275] Cox 1982; p.119.
[276] *Colored Citizen*, January 11, March 22 and September 20, 1879.
[277] Cox 1982; p.123-124.

and their positions given to White men.[278] This decline coincides with a shift of the Republican party away from its earlier patronage toward African American advancement. Thus, throughout the latter years of the 19th century, Black Topekans were actively engaged in promoting, or endorsing, a variety of political groups believed to support the Black cause. Such initiatives were intricately entwined with the struggle for Civil Rights. Throughout this period, unity of the Black community to endorse a single party or political movement was generally lacking. It wasn't until the turn-of-the-century when organizations were formed to promote specific causes towards the advancement of the race rather than relying on political groups for support.

As Black Topeka politics developed in the late-1890s, concurrent with the virulent increase in racial discrimination, Black Topekans established a variety of new organizations in protest. Among those was the Colored League, established in 1887 in Topeka to provide an outlet for beneficial political interests of its members. The principal foundation of the Colored League was the vigorous opposition to discrimination of any form, including ending race violence and ensuring Black Civil Rights. In 1898, the national Afro-American League was formed in New York by T. Thomas Fortune. Following the decision of *Plessy v. Ferguson* that upheld Jim Crow and "separate but equal" doctrine, initiatives to address integration notably increased. Well into the new century, the organizations established firm foundations for organized protest and political action.[279]

By 1900, increasing racism posed an imminent threat to Black Americans nationwide regardless of region. Discrimination in Topeka forced the Black community to combat the problem. In 1901, in response to the vicious lynching of Fred Alexander in Leavenworth, Civil Rights groups joined forces to hold a large delegate convention in Topeka. Following the convention, the Afro-American Council, led by James Guy of Topeka, moved quickly to ensure that Black Kansans receive equal treatment as other races and to bring justice to Fred Alexander.[280] This is one of many organized campaigns in the early-20th century that revealed a unification within the Black community toward an explicit Civil Rights initiative.

[278] *American Citizen*, February 22, 1889.
[279] Cox 1982; p.133-135.
[280] Shawn Leigh Alexander, "Vengeance Without Justice, Injustice Without Retribution: The Afro-American Council's Struggle Against Racial Violence," *Great Plains Quarterly*, Spring 2007, Vol. 27, No. 2, p.117-133.



NEGROES ORGANIZE.

LARGE DELEGATE CONVENTION IN TOPEKA.

ORGANIZATIONS COMBINED.

TO DEMAND PUNISHMENT FOR RECENT OUTRAGE IN KANSAS.

The Afro-American League, The nisterial Union Both Nego Organizations, Combine.

THE AFRO-AMERICAN COUNCIL.

Figure 13. Headline about the Afro-American Council Meeting in Topeka[281]

Protests and campaigns of the early-20th century extended beyond racial violence. In November of 1906, Black Topekans protested against President Roosevelt's dismissal of 170 soldiers from the 25th US infantry for their alleged participation in mob action while stationed in Brownville, Texas. According to Nick Chiles, the army's reviewing officer exhibited racial prejudice in reviewing the case.[282] In 1913, the Colored Association in Topeka protested against efforts to keep African Americans off city election boards.[283] In 1920, without provocation, Arthur E. Charles was assaulted by William Anderson, a candidate at the time for election to the office of clerk of the district court of Shawnee County. In protest, 400 Black Topekans met at the Calvary Baptist Church to pass a resolution condemning Anderson.[284] Such unified efforts to campaign against the injustices of Jim Crow discrimination and segregation, racial prejudices and violence ensued throughout the first half of the 20th century. Organizations spearheaded to unite the Black community locally and nationally were established, playing a vital role in the protests.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Negro Business League (NNBL) became leading outlets for debate over the direction of organized protest. The NNBL was the leading organization for economic accommodation and expanding Black Topeka's commercial interests otherwise stunted by Jim Crow."[285] The NAACP was established in 1909 in New York and incorporated in 1911. In 1914, Topeka organized its own chapter of the NAACP. The chief

[281] *Topeka Plaindealer*, March 1, 1901.
[282] "Topeka Colored People Protest: Ask the President to Withold Expected Order Dismissing Regulars at Fort Reno," *The Topeka Daily Capital*, November 10, 1906; p.6.
[283] *Topeka Daily Capital*, March 15, 1913; p.10.
[284] *Topeka Daily Capital*, October 19, 1920; p.2
[285] Cox 1982; p.171-179.

administrative officers of the Topeka chapter were initially White, although the rank and file were African American. Membership in both organizations was common. The momentum for radical protest against discrimination continued to grow throughout the early-20th century. Through 1916, the NAACP held regular meetings at the segregated White YMCA. During the early years of the chapter in Topeka, Black members of the NAACP included prominent Topekans. Among those were Julia D. Roundtree, teacher at Douglas Elementary School, secretary of the NAACP and member of the board of directors; Nathaniel Sawyer, an educator who frequently contributed articles to the Black press expressing views on the state of the race; James Guy, prominent attorney and active member of numerous social, protest and political organizations; and William McKnight, custodian of the Kansas State House.[286]

Unity was vital for organized protest in Topeka in the early-20th century, and education and employment remained at the forefront of race progress and community development. By the 1940s, Black Topekans had forged a unified front in the struggle for Civil Rights. Prior to World War II, Civil Rights activities tended to focus on obtaining certain accommodations in the face of segregation. However, throughout the 1940s, a shift towards directly challenging the legality of segregation was underway. The decade would see momentous steps toward integration and the reversal of "separate of equal," eventually leading to the nationally significant *Brown v. Board* of Education ruling.

Following World War II, returning Black veterans were emboldened and sought to enjoy the very freedoms for which they fought. However, Topeka's color line practices persisted and Black Topekans continued to be discriminated against in public accommodations such as hotels, restaurants, pools and theaters, among others. The American Veterans Committee (AVC) was organized and sought to address race issues. The organization attracted members employed at the Menninger Foundation, many of whom were Jewish. The AVC was involved in efforts to desegregate public facilities in Topeka throughout the 1940s. In 1944, the city was set to repeal a municipal licensure requirement that prohibited state colleges, inns, hotels, and public transportation from discriminating on the basis of race.[287] R.J. Reynolds, president of Topeka's local chapter of the NAACP challenged the repeal. The action stalled the repeal for three years. Shortly after the NAACP lawsuit, Phillip Burton sued a movie theater after being denied admission due to his race. The theater manager was found guilty and fined a mere $10. In 1947, Topeka repealed the licensure that the NAACP sought to challenge three years earlier. Movie theaters, as well as any other public facility in Topeka could segregate as they wish. The reinforcement of the legality of discrimination based on race was certainly a major setback for Civil Rights in Topeka. Thus, the NAACP shifted its focus from public accommodation to public schools in 1948, thereby embarking on another phase of Civil Rights activism in Topeka that would culminate in the groundbreaking *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* Supreme Court ruling.[288]

Educational Equality

Topeka is most notably recognized for its role in the desegregation of schools nationwide through the landmark Supreme Court ruling of the *Brown v. Board of Education* case in 1954. However, the fight for educational equity for Black Topekans began much earlier. Black Topekans were historically, and

[286] Cox 1982; p.182-183.
[287] *Kansas General Statutes*, sec.21-2424 (1935)
[288] Delinder 2004; p.55.

continue to be, "unstinting in their support and concern for education as a vehicle for race advancement."[289] Education was long considered a fundamental element of race progress. As early as 1879, educational disparities between the races were evident. The Board of Education of Topeka refused to appoint Black principals, teachers or custodians in the city's segregated Black elementary schools. Rather than attending a public school closest to them, many Black students in Topeka were forced to travel much further to attend school. Another notable disparity was the condition of the Black schools compared to those of the White schools. Early public-school facilities for Topeka's African American students were largely inadequate, often lacking essential necessities. Disparities also often extended to the quality of education. As early as 1879, a conditions assessment of the segregated Monroe School (NR-listed) revealed an inherent inequality between the Black and White elementary schools. An article in the *Topeka Colored Citizen* that year expressed the opinion that the school was so mismanaged that children were purposely held back in an attempt to forestall them from entering the integrated junior high schools.[290] Such a condition was largely made possible by a high percentage of White teachers employed in the segregated schools. Despite twenty-two Black teachers in Topeka holding state certificates in 1893, only eleven were employed.

In 1894, Topeka's Black community, spearheaded by James Guy, fought the Board of Education for the right to have Black teachers for their children. The campaign was successful when the Board of Education agreed to appoint only Black teachers to the segregated Black schools. Despite this apparent success, the decision inadvertently reinforced segregation.[291] Guy's actions might be interpreted as accommodation and submission to the color line, which was a common means of activism during the late-19th century.

The first court case in Topeka challenging the constitutionality of the state's segregation law in education occurred in 1902. The basis for the case began earlier, in 1890, when the Lowman Hill district, west of Tennessee Town, was annexed by the city. The annexation brought the local school, which was racially integrated, under the authority of the Topeka school board. In 1900, the school was destroyed by fire, and the school board was faced with the dilemma of finding a temporary facility for 175 White students and 35 African American students. The board enforced the segregation of the school's student body by temporarily transferring the African American students to the all-Black Buchanan School and the White students to the all-White Clay Elementary school. A new modern, brick schoolhouse was erected for the White students in Lowman Hill; however, Black pupils were forced to attend a small, unsanitary wood schoolhouse on the ruins of the former school building. William Reynolds, a Black resident of Topeka, attempted to enroll his son in the newly constructed Lowman Hill Elementary School, only to be turned away. In turn, Reynolds filed a lawsuit claiming that the "separation of the children by race in the classroom violated the provision in the state constitution requiring the establishment of a uniform system of schools and that the segregation law violated the rights of children under the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. constitution."[292] Reynolds complaint further stated:

> Because of race and color, and for no other reason whatever, his child has been and is excluded from

[289] Cox 1982; p.111.
[290] *Topeka Colored Citizen*, September 20, 1879
[291] Cox 1982; p.113.
[292] Rosenblum https://www.nps.gov/brvb/learn/historyculture/topekasegregation.htm

> attending school in said new building by the express order and direction of said board…thus putting publicly upon the plaintiff and his child the badge of a servile race, and holds them up to public gaze as unfit to associate, even in a public institution of the state, with other races and nationalities, in violation of the thirteenth and fourteenth amendments to the constitution of the United States[293]

The Reynolds lawsuit in 1902 further brought attention to the obvious disparities in the conditions of school buildings, an indication that public funding for Black education and school facilities was unequal to that of the all-White schools. A photograph of the Douglas School (not extant) illustrating its substandard condition was used as Exhibit A in the *Williams Reynolds v. Board of Education of the City of Topeka* lawsuit. Reynolds lost his case, and his son was forced to attend the segregated school. The school board reportedly argued that the all-White "new school building was larger and more centrally located in order to accommodate the White children, who outnumbered the African American children living in the area."[294] The lawsuit was not only the first to challenge school segregation in Topeka, but it brought attention to the inherent racial disparities in the condition of educational facilities at the turn-of-the-20th century.

Education inequality was further apparent when the City closed the Madison Elementary School in the Bottoms in 1915 to the dismay of the African American community. The Board of Education that year claimed that the school lacked sufficient enrollment to justify maintenance costs. While no lawsuit against the closure was filed, protests ensued for several months leading up to and following the closure of the school. An article in the *Plaindealer* attests to the exasperation among Black Topekans:

> It is an outrage to have these children carted over the town like a cage of monkeys…the prejudiced White people of this town segregated the colored children in some of the grades in this town and set aside a few colored schools, and now because they claim there are not enough children to maintain this school, there is no reason why it should not be kept open for those that live in that district and the full corps of teachers should be kept to receive all children in that community, for the reason that it was not the choice of the colored people to have these separate buildings in Topeka.[295]

The Board of Education of Topeka struggled to maintain a dual system of education during the first two decades of the 20th century which would meet the needs of African American students. New buildings were equipped with plumbing, restrooms and electric lights, and existing classrooms were refitted and expanded. Nurses were employed to serve African American students, and more Black teachers were hired. However, the school board found it difficult to accommodate a rapidly growing number of Black students. Between 1908 and 1924, the Black student population doubled from 6,216 to 13,811.[296]

While new schools were established specifically to accommodate Black pupils, the Lincoln and Garfield

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[293] Court record statement taken from Delinder 2004.
[294] Delinder 2004.
[295] "The Closing of Madison School: Board of Education Throws Stone in Path of Blacks," *Topeka Plaindealer*, October 8, 1915.
[296] National Park Service, *The Segregation of Topeka's Public School System, 1879-1951,* Brown v. Board of Education, National Historical Park.

Schools remained integrated through the turn-of-the-20th century. The solidification of a dual public school system based on race was gradual, though Black Topekans were increasingly involved in the struggle for educational equality. Challenge to the racial color line in education was further fueled as the city limits of Topeka expanded to incorporate rural communities. Such communities had already established their own informal, yet distinctive, patterns of integration and segregation. In her article "Early Civil Rights Activism in Topeka, Kansas, Prior to the 1954 *Brown* Case," Jean Van Delinder attests that "each annexation created new fault lines along the color line as its practices were renegotiated as part of the confrontations between real estate developers, city government officials, the board of education, and parents of school-aged children."[297] Such was the impetus of the Reynolds lawsuit in 1902.

In 1918, the State of Kansas sought to expand upon the 1879 law permitting cities of the first class (15,000+ residents) to create a dual elementary school system. In response, local chapters of the NAACP organized themselves in opposition to the proposed law. Nathaniel Sawyer, a Topekan and member of Topeka's NAACP, expressed concerns to Governor Henry Allen, stating "separation and segregation tends to lower the segregated class both in its own estimation and that of its fellows" and inevitably the "American colored man is robbed treatment in schools and public places which accentuates complexion differences and masses all into a single body worth of character."[298] The bill ultimately failed, but Sawyer's claim would set the framework for the momentous *Brown v. Board of Education* lawsuit.[299]

Throughout the early-20th century, efforts by the school board strived to justify and meet requirements of the "separate but equal" doctrine established in the 1896 U.S. Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The Topeka school board struggled to not only create and maintain a dual education system but an equal system where the quality of education and facilities were comparable. The struggle was made further difficult by the rapid increase in population growth and numerous annexations. In some instances, the school board found it impossible to meet requirements set forth in the *Plessy* decision. Funding for the establishment of new, segregated schools to parallel the quality of the all-White schools was often limited. Thus, the few integrated schools practiced segregation by moving the African American students to the basement.[300] During this period, the city funded the construction of modern, up-to-date school buildings for elementary-level Black students. The new facilities, such as the Monroe School, built in 1927, were designed to parallel those of the White-only schools while maintaining racial segregation. This practice, oftentimes referred to as Equalization, was commonplace in the Southern states.

Three challenges to segregated schools in Topeka occurred in the 1920s. Similar to the Reynolds case, these three cases all involved plaintiffs who lived in outlying areas that were annexed into the city of Topeka. At the same time, the board of education was making decisions that inherently increased segregation. The *Rich* (1928) and the *Wright* (1929) cases both involved African Americans petitioning

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[297] Jean Van Delinder, "Early Civil Rights Activism in Topeka, Kansas, Prior to the 1954 Brown Case," *Great Plains Quarterly*, Winter 2001; p.45-46.

[298] Nathaniel Sawyer to Governor Henry Allen, January 11, 1918, Governor Henry Allen Papers, Box 18, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.

[299] Thom Rosenblum, "The Segregation of Topeka's Public School System, 1879-1951," Brown v. Board of Education, National Historical Park, National Park Service

[300] Thom Rosenblum, "The Segregation of Topeka's Public School System, 1879-1951," Brown v. Board of Education, National Historical Park, National Park Service

to attend Randolph Elementary School. In 1928, Mrs. Maude Rich tried to enroll her three children in the school which was only five blocks from her home. The School Superintendent, A.J. Stout, ordered the children to attend the segregated Buchanan School that was 20 blocks away. In this case, Mrs. Rich pointed out that some Black students were permitted to attend Randolph, declaring that the board's ruling arbitrary. Superintendent Stout acknowledged that two African American families were attending Randolph because both had lived in the area prior to its annexations into the city. Ultimately, the case recognized the limited flexibility of the board of education, modifying the color line on a case-by-case basis. The result was uniformity in the enforcement of segregation. The following year, in 1929, Wilhemina Wright was transferred to Buchanan School after having attended Randolph School. A court case was filed to prevent her transfer but proved unsuccessful. The court's defense claimed that there is no indication that the Buchanan School was not equal to the Randolph School, and the city provided transportation at no cost.[301]

Also in 1929, Howard K. Foster tried enrolling his children into the new Gage School. His children previously attended an integrated school; however, Foster was told that because of their race, they would have to be bussed to the segregated Buchanan School. Foster filed a lawsuit against the Board of Education of Topeka. The court determined that the school board had no authority to hire buses in order to segregate children living in outlying districts. The Fosters resided in the mission Township, an outlying district from Topeka. Thus, they were permitted to attend the new Gage School. This case, along with the Rich and Wright cases demonstrate the complications with enforcing a dual system of public education as the city annexed the outlying districts. As long as the Fosters remained outside the boundary of the city, they could attend the Gage School. With annexation, the children would be subject to segregation. In October 1929, more than 300 people attended a mass meeting held at Calvary Baptist Church to discuss the lawsuit and the actions of the school board toward segregation.[302]

In March of 1925, the junior high system was adopted in Topeka. While school districts could lawfully segregate at the elementary level, state law did not specify whether junior highs were elementary schools. The practice in Topeka was that African American children were to remain in the segregated elementary schools through the eighth grade, choosing then to either enter an integrated ninth grade at Boswell or to remain in a segregated class by attending Roosevelt Junior High.[303] This practice persisted until the Graham Case (1940-1941) desegregated the junior high schools in Topeka. On January 26, 1940, Oaland Graham Jr., accompanied by his uncle, Ulysses Graham, attempted to enroll in 7th grade at Boswell Junior High. Refused admittance, Graham filed a lawsuit that challenged the ambiguity regarding whether junior high was recognized as an elementary-level public school. Graham's lawsuit further argued that the course of instruction at segregated Buchanan Elementary School was equal to that of the White Boswell Junior High. The case was successfully argued, and the integration of Topeka's junior high schools ensued.[304]

Brown v. Board of Education – The Case That Changed America

Often referred to as the "case that changed America," *Brown v. Board of Education* was the name given

[301] Delinder 2001; p. 50-52.
[302] *Ibid*, p.52.
[303] Delinder 2001; p.52-53.
[304] Delinder 2001; p.52-53.

to five (5) separated cases challenging segregation in public schools. The cases were a coordinated group of lawsuits against school districts in Kansas, South Carolina, Delaware, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.[305] While the facts of each lawsuit varied, each challenged the constitutionality of state-sponsored segregation in public schools. When the cases came before the Supreme Court in 1952, the Court consolidated all five cases under the name *Brown v. Board of Education* as the Topeka lawsuit was the first to be filed in 1951. Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund handled the cases at the federal level. Marshall personally argued the case, raising a variety of legal issues. The most significant issues were that a dual public school system based on race was inherently unequal and violated the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. In addition, the case relied on sociological tests and data suggesting that the segregated school systems "had a tendency to make Black children feel inferior to White children, and thus such a system should not be legally permissible."[306] Psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark's now-famous doll experiments were central to the success of *Brown v. Board of Education*. The experiments demonstrated the psychological impact of segregation on Black children.

Before the Brown case reached the United States Supreme Court, the Topeka class-action lawsuit was filed by plaintiff, Oliver Brown, in 1951 after his daughter, Linda Brown, was denied entrance to Topeka's all-White elementary schools. The lawsuit claimed that schools for Black children were not equal to the White schools, and that segregation violated the "equal protection clause" of the Fourteenth Amendment. The case went before the U.S. District Court in Kansas, which agreed that public school segregation had a "detrimental effect upon the colored children," and contributed to "a sense of inferiority," but still upheld the "separate but equal" doctrine. The lawsuit included twelve other plaintiffs besides Oliver Brown. Among those was Lucinda Todd, longtime educator and secretary of the Topeka chapter of the NAACP.

The initial *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* lawsuit was prepared by three African American lawyers and graduates of Washburn University – Charles and John Scott and Charles Bledsoe. The three were attorneys with the Topeka chapter of the NAACP and filed the case in the U.S. District Court of Kansas in February of 1951. According to the Spring/Summer issue of The Washburn Lawyer in 2004, the three worked diligently to recruit psychologists and social scientists to testify as to the psychological harm of segregation on children in school. The Lawyer wrote, "This testimony would play an important role in the Supreme Court's 1954 decision because the Kansas case was the only case to focus on the psychological harm on segregation to school children." [307]

Charles Bledsoe, a native of Topeka, was born in 1891. He received a law degree from Washburn University in 1937. Throughout his career practicing law, the was actively involved in Civil Rights activities. He served on the Topeka chapter of the NAACP legal team and worked alongside other notable

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[305] *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, *Briggs v. Elliot, Davis v. Board of Education of Prince Edward County (VA.)*, *Bolling v. Sharpe,* and *Gebhart v. Ethel*.

[306] United States Courts, "Brown v. Board of Education Re-Enactment," United States Courts, https://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/history-brown-v-board-education-re-enactment <accessed May 2023>; and Patterson, James T. , *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy.* Oxford University Press; New York, 2001.

[307] ReAnne Utemark, "Remembering Progressive History of Washburn Important," *Washburn Review*, February 23, 2009.

Black professionalism in the struggle for an integrated public school system.[308] Brothers, John and Charles Scott, were the sons of Elisha Scott, Sr. During the late-1930's, Elisha Scott served as President of the Topeka chapter of the NAACP. Elisha Scott represented families throughout Kansas, including several school segregations cases.[309] Charles and John Scott joined their father's firm in the 1940s.

In addition to the attorneys representing the NAACP and plaintiffs in the lawsuit, three community activists are recognized for their contributions to the *Brown* case. Lucinda Todd, also a plaintiff, helped to operate the Citizens Committee on Civil Rights outside of her home and was influential in bringing the NAACP Legal Defense Fund to Topeka. In 1950, she tried to enroll her daughter in an all-White school. The following year, she joined the *Brown* case as a plaintiff. [310] McKinley Burnett was a longtime community activist and president of the Topeka NCAAP from 1948 to 1963. It was his vision and perseverance that led to the landmark Supreme Court decision. Burnett joined the group of NAACP attorneys as they began to develop a strategy for the challenge. He was successful in persuading the 13 families/plaintiffs to try to enroll their children in the White elementary schools. Daniel Sawyer, member of the NAACP, was unstinting in his support for Civil Rights initiatives. He was active in the NAACP in Topeka since its formation in 1913. In 1940, he helped to organize the Graham case. Sawyer played a vital role in the formulation of the NAACP's plan to challenge segregation in public schools.

The U.S. District Court ruled in favor of the school board. After the lawsuit was defeated, attorneys filed an appeal with the U.S. Supreme Court. There, it was combined with NAACP cases from three other states and Washington, D.C., where it became known as *Oliver L. Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka*. Bledsoe and the Scotts joined a team of other Civil Rights attorneys on the landmark case. The U.S. Supreme Court's unanimous decision on May 14, 1954, ruled that the doctrine of "separate but equal" had no place in the field of education. Separate educational facilities were inherently unequal. The milestone decision signaled the end of legalized racial segregation in public schools in the United States. The decision ultimately overruled the "separate but equal" principle set forth in the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case.

The *Brown* decision was undeniably one of the most pivotal achievements of the national Civil Rights movement. However, the court ruling did not set forth a plan for the implementation of school desegregation. In fact, racial segregation was largely sustained over the next thirty years as district boundaries were continuously shifting. In 1955, three former all-Black elementary schools remained 100 percent Black, with only one percent attending formerly all-White schools. As city boundaries expanded to the south and west, two additional high schools were added: Highland Park Senior High School, which was acquired through annexation in 1959, and Topeka West Senior High School, which opened in 1961. According to the 1960 census, the largest concentration of Topeka's Black population resided midway between Topeka High and Highland Park. A simple modification to the school district boundary would

[308] Kansas Historical Society, "Bledsoe, Charles E.", *Kansapedia*, January 2017. https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/charles-e-bledsoe/19913 <accessed April 27, 2023>

[309] Elish Scott Sr. died in 1963 and is buried at Mount Auburn Cemetery.

[310] Kansas Historical Society, "Todd, Lucinda.", *Kansapedia*, October 2022. https://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/lucinda-todd/16897 <accessed May 9, 2023> and Rogers, B. (2009, March 08). Lucinda "Cindy" Wilson Todd (1903-1996). BlackPast.org. https://www.Blackpast.org/african-american-history/todd-lucinda-cindy-wilson-1903-1996/ accessed May 9, 2023>

have brought the Black enrollment at Highland Park to 50 percent, while also alleviating overcrowding at Topeka High. Instead of reorganizing and redistricting, the Topeka School Board chose to build a third high school (Topeka West) at the western fringe of the growing city, assigning to it only 2 Black and 702 White students.[311]

In 1974, twenty years after *Brown v. Board of Education,* the Topeka school system (USD #501) continued to underutilize its predominantly Black schools while the White schools remained overcrowded. Two schools, McClure and Potwin, remained all-White. On September 10, 1973, a class action (*Johnson v. Whittier*) was filed "on behalf of all Black children who were then or had during the past ten years been students of elementary and junior high schools in East Topeka and North Topeka." The complaint focused more so on the equality of facilities rather than the distribution of students. The case claimed that the predominantly White children in West and South Topeka received "vastly superior educational facilities and opportunities, including buildings, equipment, libraries and faculties, then could be obtained by students in the areas of East Topeka and North Topeka, which contained higher percentages of minority students." *Johnson* failed to qualify as a class action suit, yet it led to an investigation by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) into racial disparities of the Topeka public schools.

After the HEW investigation, the organization prepared to withhold federal funding to Topeka schools for noncompliance with desegregation. HEW brought further attention to the ways in which the Board of Education of Topeka "sought to circumvent desegregation."[312] The decision ultimately led to the reopening of the *Brown* case in 1979 in an attempt to prove re-segregation of Topeka's schools was a result of deliberate actions of the USD #501 to separate its more affluent citizens (predominantly White) in the western suburbs from the less affluent (predominantly Black) residents in East Topeka. The school board designed and built schools to limit access to its new facilities to those residing in the western suburbs, leaving most of the city's African Americans relegated to East Topeka's aging and inferior schools.[313] Ultimately, African Americans were both geographically bound to inferior schools and economically limited. Most lacked the financial resources to purchase houses in areas that would provide them access to newer and better schools. Lawsuits and efforts to resolve the racial disparities of the city's school system continue. In recent years, consolidation and re-districting have resulted in the closure of some of Topeka's schools, including Avondale East, which closed its doors in 2013. The resolution to close the school states that USD 501 "has found and determined that the closing of Avondale East School building would improve the school system of the unified school district by allowing the district to operate more efficiently, lessening disparities in class size among elementary schools and enhancing educational offerings for all students."[314]

Civil Rights in Topeka Post-Brown v. Board of Education to 1974

While the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision was certainly groundbreaking to the national struggle

[311] *Ibid*.
[312] Jean Van Delinder, "Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka: A Landmark Case Unresolved Fifty Years Later," *Prologue Magazine*, Spring 2004, Vol. 36, No.1.
[313] *Ibid*.
[314] Ann Marie Bush, "USD 501 Votes to Close Avondale East School," *Topeka Capital-Journal*, 16 February 2012.

for Civil Rights, economic disparities in Topeka endured for years to come. A leading concern among Topeka's African American community was the lack of opportunity for "Blacks to measure up to their abilities."[315] In addition, House restrictions barred Blacks from building or buying houses wherever they wanted – an enduring impact of Redlining.

In June of 1963, upwards of 400 persons marched in downtown Topeka in a demonstration by the local chapter of the NAACP. The march aimed to end local discriminatory practices in employment and was also a march in memory of the assassination of Civil Rights leader, Medgar Evers, Field Secretary of the NAACP in Jackson, Mississippi. The demonstrators marched down one side of Kansas Avenue to 6th Street, and then back on the other side to the Capitol. The marchers gathered on the east Statehouse steps in prayer for Evers.[316] Samuel C. Jackson, then president of the Topeka NAACP chapter, told demonstrators that the Topeka chapter's main objectives were in regard to employment, education and housing. Jackson said the chapter was investigating hiring by the Topeka Transportation Company, Kansas Power and Light, contractors building and the new county Courthouse, and promotions in the Topeka Fire Department. Jackson ensured that picketing and boycotting would ensue should the investigations reveal that discrimination was evident and no action is taken. With regards to continued discriminatory practices in education, Jackson declared that the members of the NAACP would appear before the Board of Education to discuss hiring of Black teachers, and the "chapter's assertion of resegregation of schools because of district assignments."[317]

Later that year, picketing ensued to draw attention to continued discriminatory practices in the Topeka public school system. Samuel Jackson declared that among 13 newly hired athletic coaches, none were African American. Only one of the 45 school principals was Black, and among the 83 janitors, only two were Black. The demonstration further noted that districting boundaries indirectly segregated Black children.[318]

Less than one year after the March when Congress passed the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited racial discrimination in public places and called equal opportunity in employment and education. Ultimately, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 hastened the end of legal Jim Crow, securing African Americans equal access to restaurants, transportation, and other public facilities. It broke down barriers in the workplace and made access to equal education a reality. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Civil Rights Acts of 1968 expanded these protections to voting and housing, as well as racially motivated violence.[319] That same year, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated and, it seemed to many, that the fight for Civil Rights would come to an end. In Topeka, despite the momentous advancements in Civil Rights during the 1950s and 1960s, discrimination and inequality lingered.

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[315] Zula Bennington Greene, "Topeka's Own Racial Pioneers," *Topeka Capital-Journal*, January 20, 1986.
[316] "Negroes Cite Employment Bias in March," *Topeka Daily Capital*, June 17, 1963, p.2.
[317] "Negroes Cite Employment Bias in March," *Topeka Daily Capital*, June 17, 1963, p.2.
[318] "Daily Picketing Planned Here," *Topeka State Journal*, September 20, 1963.
[319] Library of Congress, "The Civil Rights Act of 1964," Library of Congress Exhibits https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/civil-rights-act/epilogue.html <accessed May 2023>

Following the death of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, Topeka citizens marched south on Kansas Avenue to the Kansas State Capitol. The march protested the lingering discriminatory practices in education and employment that endured despite the monumental strides made in previous years. The march aimed to make a statement against discrimination and senseless violence, and to promote racial tolerance.[320]

In 1968, the Office of the Coordinating Committee for the Black Community (CCBC) was founded. The organization was founded by Charles Scott, representatives from Topeka churches, and other members of the Black community. The CBBC was created "as a means of developing meaningful solidarity of all segments of the Black community of Topeka" and to "reach the goal of self-determination."[321] It was considered the headquarters for Civil Rights work in Topeka in the late-1960s.

The CCBC addressed Civil Rights violations, unfair hiring practices, and other economic issues that required advocacy. The office was located at 1009 E. Sixth Street and was headed by Charles Scott.[322] The CCBC worked to provide information, consultation, and referrals for legal, employment, and discrimination issues. The CCBC strived to support literacy and worked with the Chamber of Commerce to improve employment for disadvantaged minorities. The CCBS further "sought to unify all segments of the Black community so that a consensus could be voiced on any issue relating to the general welfare of racial minorities in Topeka."[323]

In 1969, the CCBC sponsored a Black Awareness Weekend for the community at East Topeka Junior High School. The event featured national speaker, Hayward Henry, and a celebration of African American culture, art and music. The Black Awareness Weekend also addressed topics such as Black womanhood, history, religion, education, and food.[324] The CCBC remained active in ensuring civil liberties for Black Topekans until 1974 when the office closed. Reasons for its closure are unclear; however, it coincides with national trends in the Civil Rights movement. Nationally, Richard Nixon began eliminating the War on Poverty Programs, which had accomplished much in the areas of employment for African Americans in the 1960s and early 1970s. It was a different era in Civil Rights, both in Topeka and across the country, as attention shifted away from legislation for basic rights towards enforcing those rights.

[320] Campe 2013; p. 82-83.
[321] Coordinating Committee of the Black Community, Inc; Vertical File, Topeka Room, Shawnee County Public Library.
[322] Camp 2013; p.82.
[323] Camp 2013; p.84-85.
[324] *Topeka Messenger*, June 21, 1969.

WORKING INVENTORY – EXTANT RESOURCES ASSOCIATED WITH TOPEKA'S AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE

Properties Surveyed and/or Resurveyed During the 2022-2023 *African American Resources in Topeka Survey Project*

Religious:

- St. Mark's AME Church (KHRI 177-5400-01491), 801 NW Harrison Street
- St. John's AME Church (KHRI 177-5400-01491), 701 SW Topeka Boulevard
- Lane Chapel CME Church (KHRI 177-4782), 1200 SW Lane Street
- Second Missionary Baptist Church (formerly B Street Church) (KHRI 177-5400-01532), 416 NW Laurent Street
- Asbury Mt. Olive UMC (KHRI 177-4812), 1196 SW Buchanan Street
- Asbury Chapel/ME Church of Topeka (KHRI 177-5400-01737), 835 NW Van Buren Street
- Calvary Baptist Church (KHRI 177-5400-01885), 433 SW Harrison Street
- Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church (KHRI 177-5400-01585), 320 NW Laurent Street
- Mt. Caramel Missionary Baptist Church (KHRI 177-5090), 610 Lime Street
- Antioch Missionary Baptist Church (KHRI 177-5091), 813 SE 11th Street
- New Jerusalem Baptist Church (KHRI 177-5092), 1018 SE 8th Street
- St. Simon's Episcopal Church (KHRI 177-5093), 908 SW 7th Street
- Brown Chapel AME Church (KHRI 177-5094), 1235 SE Washington Street
- East Side Baptist Church (KHRI 177-5098), 614 SE California Avenue
- True Vine Missionary Baptist Church (KHRI 177-5104), 307 SE Tefft Street
- Highland Park Assembly of God (KHRI 177-5105), 2801 SE Indiana Avenue

Education-Related:

- Buchanan Elementary School (KHRI 177-3173), 1195 SW Buchanan Street
- McKinley Elementary School (KHRI 177-3162), 915 NW Western Avenue
- Monroe Elementary School (KHRI 177-5400-00566), 1515 SE Monroe Street
- Sumner Elementary School (KHRI 177-5400-00296), 330 SW Western Street
- East Topeka Junior High School (KHRI 177-5400-01281), 1210 SE 8th Avenue

Commerce-Related:

- Bowser-Johnson Funeral Home (formerly Wall-Diffenderfer Mortuary; KHRI 177-2138), 723 SW 6th Street
- (former) Bowser Funeral Home (KHRI 177-5096), 1812 SW Van Buren Street
- Nick Chiles Plaindealer Buildings (KHRI 177-5400-00094 to 00096), 112-118 (even) SE 11th Street
- Hughes Conoco (KHRI 177-5400-00765), 400 SW Taylor Street
- Styles Barber Shop (KHRI 177-3960), 1204 SE 6th Avenue
- Douglas Shoe Repair (KHRI 177-2138), 510 10th Avenue

- Cameron's Fish Market (KHRI 177-5101), 400 SE Lake Street
- Brook's Grocery Store (KHRI 177-5102), 1475 SE Washington Street
- Laura's Coffee Shop (KHRI 177-5103), 1435 SE Monroe Street

Residential Buildings

- Lucinda Todd Residence (KHRI 177-5055), 1007 SW Jewell Street
- Langston Hughes Residence/Nelson House (KHRI 177-5400-01100), 419 SW Taylor Street
- Charles Bledsoe Residence (KHRI 177-4554), 1121 Lane Street
- Mamie Williams House (KHRI 177-2646), 1503 SE Quincy Street
- Dink Mothell House (KHRI 177-2649), 1506 SE Quincy Street

Public Buildings

- United States Post Office (KHRI 177-5400-00044), 424 S. Kansas Avenue
- Constitution Hall (KHRI 177-5400-00100), 427-429 S. Kansas Avenue
- Fire Station #3 (KHRI 177-4841), 324 SE Jefferson Street

Culture/Recreation

- Hillcrest Park and Swimming Pool (KHRI 177-5100), 1800 SE 21st Street
- Cushinberry Park (KHRI 177-2789), 400 SE 17th Street
- Eastlawn Park and Community Center (KHRI 177-5111), 1112 SE 10th Avenue

Other

- Mt. Auburn Cemetery (KHRI 177-5097), 916 SE California Avenue
- Midwest Elks Lodge (KHRI 177-2620), 1316 SE Madison Street
- Office of Coordinating Committee for the Black Community (KHRI 177-5099), 1009 SE 6th Street

Residential Neighborhoods and/or Districts Identified Through Research and Discussions at Public Meeting in January of 2023[325]

- Tennessee Town, Surveyed 2019 and 2020
- The Bottoms
- Redmonsville (Up in the Sands)
- Parkdale
- Ritchie's Addition
- Pierce Addition/Jefferson Square
- Pine Ridge Manor

[325] With exception to Tennessee Town, which was surveyed in 2019 and 2020, none of the neighborhoods have been formally surveyed as of the date of this nomination.

Additional Notable African American-Related Properties Identified through Research and Previous Survey

- Sheldon's Kindergarten/Union Hall (KRHI 177-4722), 1177 SW Lincoln Street
- Topeka High School (KHRI 177-5400-00047), 800 SW 10th Street
- Ritchie Cemetery (KHRI 177-5400-00095), 27th Street
- Topeka Cemetery Historic District (KHRI 177-3963), 1601 SE 10th Avenue
- Shiloh Baptist Church (KHRI 177-4203), 1201 SW Buchanan Street
- Faith Temple Church of God in Christ (KHRI 177-4763), 1162 SW Lincoln Street
- Topeka Council of Colored Women's Club (KHRI 177-5400-01246), 1149 SW Lincoln Street
- Nick Chiles Residence (KHRI 177-5400-00147), 914 SW Buchanan Street
- Kansas Technical Institute (KHRI 177-3110), 815 SE Rice Road
- James Lane House (KHRI 177-4353), 209 SE Jewell Avenue
- Lutie Lytle House (KHRI 177-5400-00150), 1435 Monroe Street

F. Associated Property Types
(Provide description, significance, and registration requirements)

GENERAL REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS – ALL PROPERTY TYPES
All properties nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places must demonstrate historical significance and integrity. A property that has historical significance, but lacks sufficient integrity to convey that historical significance, is not eligible for the National Register. Similarly, a property that demonstrates high integrity, but cannot be found to be historically significant, is not eligible for the National Register. The four National Register Criteria for Evaluation, the seven aspects of integrity, and the interplay between them are discussed below.

Significance
All properties nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places must demonstrate historical significance under one or more of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.

Criteria Considerations[326]
The National Register program identifies several categories of properties that under ordinary circumstances are generally considered to be ineligible for listing. However, the National Register acknowledges through Criteria Considerations (A through G) that under certain narrow circumstances, properties belonging to these seven categories can be eligible for listing. While any of the Criteria Considerations may pertain, those most likely to be of relevance to properties nominated through this MPDF include those concerning religious properties, moved properties, birthplaces or graves, and properties that have achieved significance within the last fifty years.

Areas of Significance
All properties nominated for listing in the National Register must identify an area of significance from among the categories established by the National Park Service.[327] All properties nominated under this MPDF will have significance under Criterion A in the area of ***Ethnic Heritage*** through their association with the African American experience in Topeka, Kansas. A property nominated for listing in the National Register under this MPDF may relate solely to the area of significance of Ethnic Heritage to establish eligibility but may also draw significance through one or more additional areas of significance.

Level of Significance
All properties nominated to the National Register must also be assigned a level of significance proportionate to their prominence and descriptive of their ability to reflect historical themes within local, state, or national history. A property's level of significance is determined by its significance within its historic context, not by the geographical limits of its physical location. The majority of properties nominated under this MPDF will have significance at the local level. However, given the scale of certain

[326] For more detailed guidance on the application of Criteria Considerations, see *National Register Bulleting #15, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 25-43.
[327] See *National Register Bulletin #16A, How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, 40-41 (available at https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb16a/) or *National Register Bulletin #15, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,* 7-8 (available at https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/Index.htm).

historical themes (e.g. redlining and Urban Renewal, Civil Rights movements), some properties may have significance at the state or national level.

Historic Period 1854-1975

The historic period covered by this MPDF is 1854-1975, which marks the establishment of the Kansas Territory, through 1975, the conclusion of Urban Renewal programs in Topeka. The period of significance for a property nomination to the National Register under this MPDF will be based on the period of significant association with the African American experience in Topeka. It is common for the beginning of the period of significance for properties considered under this MPDF to postdate the original construction of the property, sometimes by decades due to their association with Criterion A. It is also common for properties to have been altered during the historic period, oftentimes in ways that depart from the original design, materials, and workmanship of the property. In such cases, the integrity standards identified in this document should be applied with regard to the property as it was during the period of significance, and not at the time of construction. Therefore, establishing a period of significance that includes the year(s) in which a property was significantly associated with one or more historic contexts is important not just for evaluation of historic significance, but also for integrity.

An example of a property with a period of significance that postdates the property's date of original construction is the Topeka Council of Colored Women's Club Building (KHRI 177-5400-01246) at 1149 SW Lincoln Street, which was listed in the National Register in 2009 for its association with Ethnic Heritage and Social History. The building was initially erected as a residence in 1901; however, its period of significance spans 1931 to 1959 when it served as the meeting place for the organization.

Integrity

In addition to possessing historical significance, the property must further retain a good degree of its historic integrity. Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. The evaluation of integrity is oftentimes subjective but should always be based upon an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance. The National Register recognizes seven aspects, or qualities, to be considered when evaluating integrity. A property must possess several, and usually most, of the aspects, and it is necessary to determine which of these aspects is paramount for a property to convey its significance. For instance, the importance of each aspect may shift, meaning a property eligible under Criterion C will weigh design, materials, and workmanship more highly than the others. Whereas a property eligible under Criterion A as a meeting place may weigh feeling, association, location, and setting more highly.

Characteristics

Because integrity is based on a property's significance within a specific historic context, an evaluation of a property's integrity can only occur after historic significance has been established. Section E of this MPDF provides four contexts within which a property associated with the African American experience in Topeka during the 1854-1975 historic period may be evaluated for historic significance.

Assessing integrity necessitates an understanding of a property's *character-defining features*. A character-

defining feature is a physical feature that comprises an important aspect of the appearance of a property as exhibited during the property's period of significance. Character-defining elements typically include the overall shape of the building, its materials, craftsmanship, design details, spatial relationships, interior spaces and features, as well as various aspects of a property site and environment. Within this framework, assessing integrity can be understood as evaluating whether or not the character-defining features retained by a given property are sufficient to convey the property's historic significance.

Rarity

Consideration of the rarity of the property type and area of significance in question is also an important aspect of evaluating integrity. As noted in National Register guidelines:

> Comparative information is particularly important to consider when evaluating the integrity of a property that is a rare surviving example of its type. The property must have the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historic character or information. The rarity and poor condition, however, of other extant examples of the type may justify accepting a greater degree of alteration or fewer features, provided that enough of the property survives for it to be a resource.

As detailed in *Context II: Settlement Patterns of Black Topekans*, the African American community was subjected to redlining and Urban Renewal programs during the period of significance that resulted in extensive demolition of properties, particularly the eradication of the Fourth Street District, the social and commercial hub of Topeka's Black community. As a result, extant examples of various property types that were associated with the African American community during the period of significance may be rare. In general, the rarer the resource, the greater allowed for diminished integrity.

Association, Location, Feeling, Setting:

- **Association** – the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. Association is the most important aspect of integrity for properties included under this MPDF.
- **Location** – the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event took place. Because so much of the African American history in Topeka is tied to specific neighborhoods, enclaves, or events integrity of location is essential to historic properties associated with this MPDF.
- **Feeling** – a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. Considering a number of properties associated with the historic contexts in this MPDF are tied to a population that was often discriminated against, these locations would have been targeted Urban Renewal areas, leading to a diminished integrity of feeling tied to the setting. This should be taken into consideration when evaluating this aspect.

- **Setting** – the physical environment of a historic property that illustrates the character of the place. Much like the rarity of the resource, the setting is likely to be diminished or not extant depending on the impacts of redevelopment programs that altered the physical surroundings of the properties. Missing, or diminished integrity of setting should be expected when evaluating properties under this MPDF.

Design, Materials, Workmanship:

Specific to resources considered under this MPDF, properties may exhibit physical changes made during the period of significance that reflect the African American community's socio-economic status resulting largely in part due to racial discrimination and oppression. Such changes might include alterations to the design, materials and workmanship of the building in order to allow for the continued use of buildings by African American occupants over time. When a property nominated under this MPDF reflects changes in integrity that occurred during the period of significance, those changes should not immediately be considered a loss of integrity but should be measured as to how it conveys the property's significant association with one or more historic contexts described in Section E.

A good example of an eligible property that has experienced physical alteration during its period of significance is the Second Missionary Baptist Church (KHRI 177-5400-01532) at 424 NW Laurent Street in the Redmonsville neighborhood of North Topeka. Built in 1924, the church was inundated during the Great Flood of 1951. Following the flood, and during the period of significance, the interior of the building underwent a renovation that included the replacement of material damaged by the flood and the installation of new knotty pine panels funded by the Booster Club. The adjacent parsonage was demolished in the flood and replaced by the present parsonage. Such changes to the church property occurred during the period of significance and reflect the fortitude of the church to maintain its property following the devastation of the flood.

- **Design** – the composition of elements that constitute the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. Overall, the form, scale, and massing of a property are important if the property is eligible under this MPDF. The building should be recognizable as its form/type, but socio-economic impacts should be considered when evaluating integrity of design.
- **Materials** – the physical elements combined during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. Remodels, additions, and general maintenance are to be expected and may affect original materials. Though historic fabric is important in order to retain integrity, less emphasis is placed on this aspect because properties listed under this MPDF will be associated with Criterion A. A loss of materials should be considered when evaluating properties.

Workmanship – the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. Loss of workmanship, due to previously mentioned considerations is to be expected. The property should still be able to convey its historic significance based on the other aspects of integrity. However, some properties will retain better workmanship, especially if considered under

Criterion C.

Comparative Analysis

Comparative analysis is an important element of most National Register nominations. Comparative analysis can only be employed after a property's associated historic context/s and property type have been identified, as the analysis should evaluate the property in question against other properties that share a similar association and/or property type. Comparative analysis may be useful in evaluating the relative significance of a property's association with one or more historic contexts, and in evaluating the relative integrity of a property as compared to other properties of the same type or associated with the same historic context. In cases where no comparable property exists, perhaps based on the rarity of the resource, this should be stated explicitly in the National Register nomination.

Eligibility through this Multiple Property Documentation Form

To establish significance through this MPDF, a property must demonstrate a close relationship with one or more of the historic contexts identified in Section E and assert the significance of that relationship with one or more of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. Demonstrating association with the African American experience in Topeka is not, in and of itself, sufficient to establish a property as significant under this MPDF. One must also consider association during the period of significance and the scarcity of comparable resources. Eligible properties may possess significance under multiple contexts presented in Section E. In particular, *Context IV: Civil Rights in Topeka*, is likely to overlap with one or more other contexts. In some cases, a property may be significant under one or more contexts in Section E of this MPDF and under one or more criteria unrelated to this MPDF. For example, a property nominated under Criterion A for its association with a significant event in African American history could also be eligible Under Criterion C for its architectural merit. Finally, eligible properties must also be assigned a defined area, level of significance, and period of significance that falls within the 1854-1975 period of significance outlined by this MPDF. Sufficient integrity from the period of significance must also be present to convey the property's significance.

Criterion A

All property types nominated through this MPDF must demonstrate significance at least through Criterion A in the area of ***ethnic heritage*** for their association with the historic African American experience in Topeka. These resources may have been built for or by African Americans, or they may have originally been built for another ethnic group. If African Americans leased or owned the property during the historic period of the context, the property has the potential to be eligible. The property types may represent some aspect of racial discrimination, such as segregation in housing or education, or an achievement of an individual African American, such as in the establishment of a successful business. They may be associated with community or social organizations where the welfare of the African American community was provided for in the absence of opportunities found in other parts of Topeka. In some instances, there are very few extant or intact representatives of these property types left in Topeka. The relative scarcity of a particular property type should be taken into account when evaluating its significance in ethnic heritage, particularly if the scarcity itself is a result of racial barriers.

Topeka's African American resources may also be significant in other areas under Criterion A, such as ***exploration/settlement***, ***community planning and development***, ***commerce***, ***education***, or ***social history/social history: Civil Rights***. Many of these latter associations will generally require evaluation on an individual basis, although some of these are discussed in the individual property types.

Under Criterion A, integrity of association, location and feeling are of comparatively higher importance than design, setting, materials and workmanship, though most must be sufficiently present to convey the contextual association for which the property is being nominated. As discussed above, alterations may have occurred during the period of significance for the specific property and therefore must be evaluated in their own right based on the scarcity of the resource and its significance.

Criterion B
African American resources may also be eligible under Criterion B if closely associated with ***a person of historical significance***. In these instances, the resource must be associated with African Americans who provided leadership within the community or in the Civil Rights movement, or excelled in some area such as education, sports, commerce, politics or entertainment. The accomplishments of these individuals should have occurred during the historic period of the context, as well as be associated with the property being considered, which may vary from residences, commercial buildings or churches, depending upon the area of significance. If there are no other extant properties associated with a significant individual, their childhood home may be eligible. Properties of citizens of other races may also be eligible if they were associated with African Americans, such as those who were involved in Civil Rights activities or the Underground Railroad. The property should retain integrity from the period when the significant individual either lived or worked there.

As with Criterion A, integrity of association, location, and feeling are of comparatively higher importance under Criterion B than are integrity of design, setting, materials and workmanship, though most must be sufficiently present to convey the contextual association for which they are nominated. That said, the integrity of design of one or more interior spaces may be an important consideration for eligibility under Criterion B, if such spaces are directly associated with how the significant person(s) used the building.

Criterion C
Properties may also be eligible under Criterion C in the area of ***architecture***. In the area of ***architecture***, African American resources may be significant for a distinctive design, form, or construction characteristics that are associated with the building's original use. The resources may possess high artistic value or may be good examples of typical types or styles of popular architecture of the period. The resources, craftsmanship, materials, and construction methods may reflect the ethnic background or socio-economic status of the owners, designers, or craftsman who were African American. Therefore, more simplistic or minimal expressions of styles or vernacular design and/or construction can be eligible for this association and representation of salvaged or other resources available to the owner.

Under Criterion C, aspects of integrity that are embodied in the physical nature of the property itself are of primary importance, including design, materials and workmanship. While still relevant, location, setting, feeling and association are of less relative importance unless an aspect of the property suggests a

heightened relevance, such as a building whose design responds directly and intentionally to the setting within which it was built.

Criterion D
A few properties may be eligible under Criterion D and will generally be archaeological in nature but may also include other resource types such as buildings. Archaeological properties eligible under Criterion D will be those that can be clearly associated with one or more historic contexts identified in Section E of this document and that either have, or are demonstrably likely to yield, important information on some aspect of the African American experience that is poorly or not well-understood. For example, an archaeological site related to the residence of an early African American settler in Topeka could be eligible under Criterion D if it has, or is likely to yield information regarding Black migration, settlement patterns, or other related reasons. Other areas of association under Criterion D might be ***education***, ***architecture***, ***commerce***, ***ethnic heritage***, or ***social history/social history: Civil Rights***.

Certain aspects of integrity are of particular importance when applied to archaeological sites. Location, materials, and association, especially as they relate to deposition, disturbance, and the ability to distinguish artifacts associated with one or more historic contexts identified in Section E, are critical for eligibility under Criterion D.

MINIMUM REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS
Properties listed under this MPDF **must** meet the following general registration requirements:

1. The property must be located within the 2023 City of Topeka city limits as described in Section G.
2. The period of significance for the eligible property must be within the 1854-1975 historic period as defined by this MPDF
3. The property must demonstrate a close relationship to one or more of the historic contexts in Section E and convey the significance of that relationship directly through one or more of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation
4. The property must be eligible at least under Criterion A, in the Area of Significance ***Ethnic Heritag***e
5. The property must retain sufficient integrity from the period of significance to convey the property's significance

In addition to meeting these general requirements, eligible properties must meet property specific registration criteria set forth under the following discussion of property types. In many instances, nomination addendums, or updates, to existing National Register-designated properties in Topeka might be beneficial to consider the inclusion of ***ethnic heritage*** as an area of significance. Topeka High School is one such example. Though the school was not segregated, it might possess significance for its association with Topeka's Black history, such as the Rambler's basketball and cheerleading teams.

PROPERTY TYPES
The property types related to the historic contexts covered in *African American Resources in Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas* include buildings, structures, objects, sites or districts associated with African Americans in Topeka from 1854 through 1975. The historic period extends from the establishment of the Kansas Territory through 1975 when Urban Renewal relocation projects were largely complete. This MPDF is based in part on previous historic and architectural surveys, as well as windshield surveys of areas not yet inventoried in order to determine the types of resources that one might expect to find in future surveys. As such, information about some property types not yet inventoried was limited. Future surveys in Topeka may add to or alter what is known about the property types that follow or may reveal information about new property types.

The property types are primarily based on the historic function of the individual resource, although the first property type includes districts, which comprise numerous resources that may have varied functions. When evaluating African American resources in Topeka, it is preferable to first determine if there is a potential historic district. As Topeka's history includes a long period of racial discrimination, the potential for districts within areas historically settled by African Americans is good. No matter the original function – residential, commercial, social or religious – all buildings and structures within the entire district worked together as a whole to produce the cohesive, distinct African American neighborhoods. Thus, a historic district may comprise a variety of property types, or each building may have served the same function, as in a small residential district. Although the buildings within the district may not possess individual

significance, they may contribute to a larger concentration of resources that convey significant aspects of Topeka's African American history.

The historic district property type is followed by property types defining specific buildings classified by the historic use of the resource, even if that use has changed throughout the years. While representatives of each separate property type will vary in physical appearance from another property type, all of the resources share at least a few common attributes, particularly in the areas of significance and, in some instances, registration requirements. In the interest of preventing repetition, the common attributes are discussed first.

Nine (9) predominant property types associated with the historic contexts in Section E are:

I. African American Districts
II. African American Residences
III. Religious Buildings
IV. Educational Buildings
V. Commercial and Professional Buildings
VI. Community Buildings and Resources
VII. Cemeteries and Burial Grounds
VIII. Sites (Non-Archaeological)
IX. Sites (Archaeological)

Property Type I: African American Districts

Description
An African American district includes a grouping of historic resources, which may contain buildings, structures, objects, as well as associated cultural landscape features. National Register-eligible historic districts associated with the African American community likely exist in Topeka. Several known historic neighborhoods, districts and/or residential enclaves are detailed in Section E. The oldest known neighborhood associated with African American settlement was closest to downtown Topeka in the area known as the Bottoms. The Bottoms also contained the social and commercial hub of Topeka's African American community known as the Fourth Street District. Unfortunately, the Bottoms and the Fourth Street District were nearly totally demolished as part of Urban Renewal and highway projects in the 1950s and 1960s. Few, if any, resources associated with the African American experience in the Bottoms survive. Mid-20th century Urban Renewal and highway projects also impacted many other neighborhoods including the Redmonsville neighborhood and Ritchie Addition, also established as Exoduster settlements. However, these neighborhoods were not entirely demolished and may contain clusters of residences or other property types associated with the African American community in Topeka that share historical or architectural significance.

African American districts should reflect the period of time in which they were settled and occupied by African Americans. They may be exclusively residential buildings, or they may also include other property

types such as churches, schools, club buildings and commercial buildings, among other community-building properties. In some instances, historic districts may possess archaeological significance. A potential historic district associated with Black Topekans and not traditionally identified as a historic neighborhood is the Pine Ridge Manor public housing project, built in 1965 during Urban Renewal. The project provided housing to those displaced by Urban Renewal. Pine Ridge Manor has not been formally surveyed but may be significant under Criterion A in the areas of *Ethnic Heritage, Social History* and *Community Planning & Development*. To date, only Tennessee Town, established as an Exoduster settlement, has been formally surveyed and determined eligible under Criterion A in the areas of *Ethnic Heritage*, *Social History*, and *Community Planning/Development*. It is also eligible under Criterion C in the area of *Architecture*. While *Context II: Settlement Patterns of Black Topekans* is the most likely context under which a historic district may be evaluated, other contexts presented in Section E may yield the identification of other possible eligible districts. For example, The Nick Chiles' Block, comprised of three intact commercial buildings on the 100 block of SE 7th Street, may be eligible as a rare collection of Black-owned commercial buildings, including those that housed the *Topeka Plaindealer*.

Registration Requirements: Historic Districts

As noted in the general registration requirements, integrity of location, setting, feeling and association are especially necessary for African American districts. However, the loss of individual buildings is common, particularly along the fringes of the original historic neighborhood or collection of related property types. Nonetheless, the district must still be able to convey the area of significance ***-ethnic heritage*** – as well as the historic period. According to National Register guidelines, a district is defined as a "significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development."[328] Though district contributors may lack individual distinction, together, the group achieves significance as a whole within its historic context. Thus, the evaluation of the integrity of a potential district should focus on the overall characteristics of the neighborhood, not the individual properties (buildings, structures, sites, objects).

A district's significance derives from the shared history of its contributory features; those features can include a wide variety of property types. A district boundary can include both contributing and noncontributing properties. Typically, a majority of properties within the boundary are classified as contributing. However, the district should be defined in a way that includes the appropriate context to support listing. Each district should be evaluated on its ability to convey its historic significance and integrity. Therefore, it is critical to understand the integrity of the overall district and identify character-defining features as they relate to the context of the MPDF, to determine the district's potential eligibility. Such features might include the boundaries of the district, circulation patterns of streets and sidewalks, setback, and massing as reflected in the size of the lots and buildings/residences. Oftentimes, due to deterioration resulting from abandonment, some historic buildings or structures may have been subsequently demolished, leaving behind vacant lots. However, enough other buildings and structures must be extant so that the district continues to convey its function – whether residential, commercial or a combination of multiple uses. The presence of non-historic resources will not make a district ineligible as long as the district as a whole retains its historic sense of time and place. The amount of demolition and infill that a district can withstand before losing integrity will depend on the scale and size of the infill and

[328] National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 5.

the importance of documenting the district. Finally, the resources located within a district will most likely have been built over a number of years. It is, therefore, necessary to clearly define a period of significance so that contributing properties reflect this historic period.

Criterion A – A historic district nominated under the auspices of this MPDF will be eligible under Criterion A for its association with patterns of events that have made a significant contribution to the African American experience in Topeka. In the area of ethnic heritage, African American districts represent the conditions and places where Black Topekans lived and worked during the period of significance. These districts provide important information of the settlement patterns of the African American population, and where they were, and were not, able to move to as their population grew. Thus, the district may also be significant in the areas of ***exploration/settlement*** and ***community planning and development***. Urban Renewal played a tremendous role on settlement patterns by eradicating the Bottoms, and redeveloping neighborhoods for the relocation of those displaced. The historic neighborhoods and/or districts are also noted for their vibrant sense of community and cohesion. Such districts may represent the wide variety of activities associated with African Americans in Topeka, and therefore may be significant in the areas of ***social history*** and ***commerce***. ***Integrity of Contributing Resource****:* For an individual contributing property to a district that is significant under Criterion A, integrity of association, location and feeling are of a comparatively higher importance than design, setting, material and workmanship. Alterations that have been made to an individual contributing will be less likely to render it ineligible as long as association, location and feeling are retained.

Criterion B – A historic district may be eligible under Criterion B if its contributing elements are each directly associated with a person of historical significance within one or more of the historic contexts established in Section E of this document. For example, there may be a cemetery, or a portion of a cemetery, which contains the burial places of several prominent African Americans who had a significant impact within the community. ***Integrity of Contributing Resource:*** For an individual contributing property to a district that is significant under Criterion B, integrity of association, location and feeling are of a comparatively higher importance than design, setting, material and workmanship. Alterations that have been made to an individual contributing will be less likely to render it ineligible as long as association, location and feeling are retained.

Criterion C – A historic district may also be eligible under Criterion C if district contributors, through their design or physical character, demonstrate significant aspects of the African American experience. For example, the socio-economic limitations resulting from racial discrimination may be reflected in the size of African American residences, their incremental growth patterns, use of materials and stylistic design features. Additionally, a district may be eligible if it represents the work of a prominent African American architect, designer, or builder. ***Integrity of Contributing Resource:*** For an individual contributing property to a district that is significant under Criterion C, aspects of integrity that are embodied in the physical nature of the object itself, including design, materials, and workmanship, are of primary importance.

Alterations should be reviewed very carefully to assess the extent to which they obscure the design characteristics via which the property contributes to the significance of the district.

Criterion D – A district may be eligible under Criterion D if it either has or is demonstrably likely to yield important information not otherwise readily available regarding some aspect of the experience of African Americans in Topeka during the period of significance. ***Integrity of Contributing Resource:*** For an individual contributing property to a district that is significant under Criterion D, it should possess aspects of integrity include location, materials, and association, especially as they relate to deposition, disturbance, and the ability to distinguish artifacts that are associated with one or more historic contexts identified in Section E.

Property Type II: Residences

Description
Residential properties are by far the category with the most numerous extant buildings associated with Topeka's African American community between 1854-1975. The vast majority of these are detached, single-family residences, along with a small collection of multiplexes and apartment buildings. Residential properties are most likely to be significant for their association with the Settlement Patterns context in Section E, but they may also be significant under other contexts such as *Civil Rights* or *Architecture.*

Residences associated with African Americans in Topeka resemble other houses built in the city during the historic period. This property type served as the residence of either African American owners or renters. In addition to serving as dwellings, these buildings may also have functioned as places of work for those employed as laundress or restaurant cook, among others. They may have been built for African Americans or purchased from White residents. A few represent rental properties owned by successful African American men and women and may have been either single- or multi-family residences. Some of the residences do not necessarily possess stylistic elements or even quality workmanship or materials. They were instead simply built and minimally decorated, with function dictating the form.

One-story frame construction is the most prevalent form of this property type. Most reflect vernacular trends of the period in which they were constructed. Those constructed in the late nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century were generally examples of *National Folk* forms as defined Virginia McAlester in *A Field Guide to American Houses*. National Folk forms occur in high numbers throughout Tennessee Town, Redmonsville, Ritchie Addition, and Parkdale. The most frequently occurring Folk form is the two-story, front-gabled variant. A good illustration of this form is the Charles Bledsoe House (KHRI 177-4554), built c.1900 at 1121 SW Lane Street.

African American residences built in the early to mid-twentieth century were typical of those constructed from popular plan or pattern books and were examples of American movements such as the Craftsman style and revival styles. The latter includes variants of the Tudor Revival and Colonial Revival. Built in 1928, the Lucinda Todd House (KHRI 177-5055) at 1007 Jewell Street is a fine representation of a middle-class Tudor Revival residence. These styles are typically applied to middle-class housing and are primarily found in Tennessee Town. Housing for laborers was generally less substantial in terms of quality of

materials and workmanship. They are generally smaller and lack stylistic enhancement. These modest residences primarily occur in the Redmonsville and Parkdale neighborhoods, though a few occurrences are within the Ritchie Addition.

The post-World War II era residences are dominated by *Minimal Traditional* and simple *Ranch house* forms. *Minimal Traditional* dwellings are an economical house form. They are typically one-story houses with low-pitched roofs and wide facades. As its name implies, *Minimal Traditional* houses typically lack stylistic adornment; however, Colonial Revival is sometimes applied to the form. Minimal Traditional and ranch houses occur in smaller numbers as infill construction in the older neighborhoods. The Pierce Addition/Jefferson Square, which was redeveloped during Urban Renewal, is dominated by modest ranch houses dating from the late-1960s to c.1975. The Pine Ridge Manor housing project contains a good collection of duplexes adopting a ranch house form. While most of the residences rented or owned by African Americans occur in one of the traditionally Black neighborhoods of the city, others can be found in other residential enclaves of the city.

Significance and Registration Requirements: Residences
As noted in the general requirements, a residence nominated under this MPDF must be significant under Criterion A in ***ethnic heritage***. A residential property may be eligible under Criterion A for a variety of reasons. For example, a residence may be significant for its association with a notable African American residential enclave, such as Tennessee Town or Pierce Addition. Residences may also be eligible under Criterion B for their association with historically significant African Americans. The residence of those individuals significant to the *Brown v. Board of Education* lawsuit is one such example. The residence may have housed a leading educator among the African American community such as Mamie Williams who taught in the Topeka school system for 42 years. She resided at 1503 SE Quincy Street (KHRI 177-2646) from c.1920 until her retirement in 1960. Residences of African Americans who achieved "firsts" might be significant. For example, the house at 1435 Monroe Street (KHRI 177-5400-00150) might be significant as the residence of Lutie Lytle, the woman and African American to pass the bar in Kansas and Tennessee. Some of the individuals whose residences may be eligible under Criterion B may be better recognized for their service within the African American community rather than through city-wide accomplishments. Finally, a residence may also be significant under Criterion C in the area of ***architecture*** if it is a typical or good representation of a particular house type or architectural style.

> ***Criterion A*** – A residential property may be eligible under Criterion A for a variety of reasons as mentioned above. Because African Americans in Topeka were largely restricted to where they could rent and buy homes. It was far easier for people to improve and update their homes over time than to purchase a new dwelling elsewhere. Consequently, alterations of single-family homes during the period of significance are prevalent. Common alterations include window replacement; door replacement; porch enclosures; replacement siding; and interior remodels. Some residences have been converted to commercial space. The degree to which such alterations compromise a property's ability to convey its significance depends on the nature of that significance. For residential properties that are significant under Criterion A, integrity of association, location and feeling are of comparatively higher importance than design, setting, materials and workmanship, so alterations will be less likely to render a property ineligible as

long as association, location and feeling are retained. That said, the integrity of design of one or more interior spaces may be an important consideration for eligibility under Criterion A, if such spaces are directly associated with significant events (or patterns of events).

Criterion B – A residential property may be significant under Criterion B if it is the property most closely associated with a person of historical significance. In evaluating an individual's eligibility under this MPDF, one must place their significance within one or more of the historic contexts established in Section E of this document and demonstrate the individual's significance amongst their peers. Establishing the importance of the individual associated with a given property is essential to demonstrating eligibility under Criterion B. As noted in the National Register guidelines:

> A property is not eligible if its only justification for significance is that it was owned or used by a person who is a member of an identifiable profession, class, or social or ethnic group. It must be shown that the person gained importance within his or her profession or group.[329]

In addition, the figure in question will need to have lived in the associated residential property during the historic period of 1854-1975. In cases where multiple residences are associated with an important figure, the property, or properties, that are most directly associated with the time period of the individual's life during which they achieved significance are most likely to be considered significant. A residence, for example, that was only associated with an important figure before they achieved significance would generally not be deemed significant under Criterion B, unless it was the only remaining property associated with the individual.

For residential properties that are significant under Criterion B, integrity of association, location and feeling are of comparatively higher importance than design, setting, materials and workmanship, so alterations will be less likely to render a property ineligible as long as association, location and feeling are retained. That said, the integrity of design of one or more interior spaces may be an important consideration for eligibility under Criterion B, if such spaces are directly associated with how the significant person(s) used the building.

Criterion C – A residential property may be significant under Criterion C if it demonstrates significant aspects of the African American experience or represent the work of a prominent African American architect, designer, or builder. The residential property may be eligible under Criterion C if it is recognized for a distinguishing house form and/or architectural style. In these instances, the building must retain integrity in the areas of design, materials and often workmanship. For those originally modest buildings, façade alterations or loss of key character-defining features would have a negative impact on integrity. The historic floor plan should be evident, although small additions to the rear do not seriously lessen integrity, especially if the additions occurred during the period of significance.

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[329] National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 15.

Criterion D – A residential property may be significant under Criterion D if it maintains a significant association with one or more historic contexts in Section E and either has or is likely to yield important information not otherwise readily available regarding some aspect of the experience of African Americans in Topeka during the period of significance. Although Criterion D is most often applied to below-ground archaeological resources, it may also be appropriate for standing buildings if they have the potential to illustrate a particular method of construction, the peculiarities, skills, or markers of a builder, or other architectural elements about which little is known. For example, because the written record is sparse regarding Topeka's African American building trades professionals, if a residential building yielded information regarding the peculiarities, skills or markers indicative of a prominent or significant African American builder, then Criterion D may potentially apply to that residential property. Aspects of integrity of particular importance to properties significant under Criterion D include location, materials and association, especially as they relate to deposition, disturbance and the ability to distinguish artifacts associated with one or more historic contexts identified in Section E.

Property Type III: Religious Facilities

Topeka includes many extant churches associated with the African American community during the period of significance. Churches regularly provided services that extended well beyond their core function as a religious institution, serving as a center of the African American community for moral, spiritual, and social support. The majority of the extant African American churches in Topeka were built for and by Black congregations, with exception to the former Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church (177-5400-01585) in North Topeka. This church was initially built by the all-White congregation of the North Topeka Baptist Church before it was sold to an African American congregation in 1921.

Most of Topeka's extant African American churches are referenced in Section E and were constructed during the period of significance and range in date from 1871 through 1975. The distribution of the African American churches is citywide, with the majority located within one of the traditionally African American neighborhoods and enclaves. Most of the churches are one-story masonry or brick construction, oftentimes with an interior sanctuary balcony. Only three African American churches built in the late-19th century are known to survive in Topeka. Only one of those, the former Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church building in North Topeka, is distinguished by an architectural style. The church is a rare surviving example of Ozark Giraffe design. A late-20th century example of Ozark Giraffe is located within Tennessee Town – Faith Temple Church of God in Christ (KHRI 177-4763) built in 1951. The minimal number of surviving churches from the late-19th century is indicative of the trend of many Black congregations replacing their early church buildings with larger edifices to accommodate increased membership. A small number of churches date to the first quarter of the 20th century and reflect a variety of architectural styles. The former Church of God/Lane Chapel (KHRI 177-4782) at 1200 SW Lane Street was constructed in 1925 employing the Mission Style in its design. St. Mark's AME Church at 801 NW Harrison Street (177-5400-01491) is a fine illustration of Richardsonian Romanesque. Elements of the Gothic Revival style are evident in the design of the Second Missionary Baptist Church (177-5400-01532) in North Topeka and St. John AME Church (KHRI 177-5400-01775) at 701 SW Topeka Boulevard. Later interpretations of Gothic Revival churches include Mt. Caramel Missionary Baptist (KHRI 177-5090) built in 1940 at 610

SE Lime Street; and the New Jerusalem Baptist Church (KHRI 177-5092), built in 1954 at 1018 SE 8th Street.

Other places of worship associated with Topeka's African American community likely survive within the city and may be identified through future survey.

Registration Requirements: Religious Facilities
According to federal guidelines, properties owned by religious institutions are not typically considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places based on "the merits of a religious doctrine."[330] However, a religious property may be eligible under ***Criteria Consideration A*** "if it derives its primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance."[331] Therefore, a religious property can be eligible if it is directly associated with either a specific event or a broad pattern in the history of religion, such as education of the local population667.

Common alterations to religious properties discussed in this document include the application of vinyl siding to all or a portion of the building exterior; entry modifications to expand accessibility; addition or removal of stairs; the replacement of sanctuary furniture; and the addition of elevators or fire sprinkler systems, among others. The degree to which such alterations compromise a property's ability to convey its significance depends on the nature of that significance.

> ***Criterion A*** – Each religious facility nominated under the auspices of this MPDF will possess significance under Criterion A for its association with an aspect of the broad history of the African American experience in Topeka. In light of Criteria Consideration A, that association should extend beyond a purely religious one. For example, a church may be nominated for a significant association with the rapid growth of the African American community during the late-19th century and the establishment of institutions vital to the forging of a cohesive African American community. In many cases, African American religious properties served as important gathering places for those involved in the fight for Civil Rights or other social justice initiatives. Religious properties also frequently served as gathering space for various clubs, benevolent societies, and other social organizations.
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> For religious properties that are significant under Criterion A, integrity of association, location and feeling are of a comparatively higher importance than design, setting, materials, and workmanship, so alterations will be less likely to render a property ineligible as long as the association, location, and feeling are retained. That said, the integrity of design of one or more interior spaces may be an important consideration for eligibility under Criterion A, where those spaces are directly related to the building's significance.
>
> ***Criterion B*** – A religious property bay be significant under Criterion B if it is associated with an important figure in the African American community whose importance extended beyond a

[330] National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 26.
[331] *Ibid*.

purely religious one. For example, a religious property might be eligible for its association with a long-term Reverend who served as leader of the church and a leader of Topeka's Black community. The property's association with the figure in question will need to fall within or overlap the period (1854-1975). Establishing the importance of the individual associated with a given property is essential to demonstrating eligibility under Criterion B.

Criterion C – Criteria Consideration A does not affect how the architectural significance of religious properties are evaluated. As with other property types, religious properties can be significant under Criterion C if they embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values. For religious properties that are significant under Criterion C, aspects of integrity that are embodied in the physical nature of the property itself, including design, materials, and workmanship, are of primary importance. Alterations should be reviewed very carefully to assess whether they fall within the period of significance and, if not, the extent to which they obscure the design characteristics that make the property significant.

Criterion D – A religious property may be significant under Criterion D if it maintains a significant association with one or more historic contexts in Section E and either has, or is likely to yield, important information not otherwise readily available regarding some aspect of the experience of African Americans in Topeka during the period of significance. Although Criterion D is most often applied to below-ground archaeological resources, it may also be appropriate for standing buildings if they have the potential to illustrate a particular method of construction, the peculiarities, skills, or markers of a builder, or other architectural elements about which little is known. For example, because the written record is sparse regarding Topeka's African American building trades professionals, if a residential building yielded information regarding the peculiarities, skills or markers indicative of a prominent or significant African American builder, then Criterion D may potentially apply to that residential property. Aspects of integrity of particular importance to properties significant under Criterion D include location, materials and association, especially as they relate to deposition, disturbance and the ability to distinguish artifacts associated with one or more historic contexts identified in Section E.

Property Type IV: Educational Buildings

Extant public school buildings – elementary or secondary - associated with ***ethnic heritage*** are generally rare in Topeka, and only a handful of the historically Black elementary schools remain. The Garfield School, Madison Elementary School, Lane School, Douglas Elementary School, Washington Elementary School, the Pierce School, and the segregated Lowman Hill School building are no longer extant. Surviving segregation, African American public schools in Topeka include the Monroe School, McKinley School, and Buchanan Elementary School. Although few in number, these surviving schools played a key role in the struggle against segregation in Topeka – a fight that placed Topeka in the national spotlight. The extant elementary schools were three of the four segregated Black public schools in Topeka when the

monumental *Brown v. Board of Education* lawsuit was filed. Also extant is the formerly White-only Sumner Elementary and possesses significance in social history for its ties to the lawsuit. East Topeka Junior High School (KHRI 177-5400-01281) was not racially segregated; however, due to settlement patterns largely steered by racial discrimination, the junior high served primarily African American and immigrant groups, with a small number of lower income White students. Surviving public schools that were built for or used by African Americans resembled the city's other public schools - generally two to three-story, brick edifices with flat roofs.

Topeka High School, though not historically segregated, might possess significance in ethnic heritage for the many African American students who graduated from the school during the period of significance, the segregated social clubs, for the school's segregated Black basketball and cheerleading teams, the Ramblers. The Ramblers were very popular among the African American community. The campus of the former Kansas Technical Institute in East Topeka survives as the only school of higher education for African Americans in Topeka, though Washburn University is recognized for admitting students regardless of race.

Registration Requirements: Educational Buildings
To be individually eligible, this property type must have been constructed during the period of significance and retain integrity as noted in the general registration requirements. Educational buildings nominated under this MPDF are significant in the area of ***ethnic heritage*** and may likely also be significant in the area of ***education***. Not only do the public elementary schools serve as physical reminders of decades of racial discrimination and educational inequality, but they also demonstrate the determination of African Americans in Topeka to obtain an education as a means of advancement. Similarly, all public schools and higher educational institutions to admit African American students during the context of the MPDF reflect the significance of education to Black Topekans.

Schools, particularly among the African American community, were often one of only a few venues available for recreational and cultural events. They often provided meeting space for the numerous civic, fraternal and benevolent societies/clubs. Therefore, schools may also be significant under Criterion A for ***social history*** or activities involved in Civil Rights initiatives.

When the construction of educational buildings was tied to the historic locations of Topeka's African American neighborhoods, examples of this property type may also be significant in the context of ***community planning and development***. Public schools in Topeka were often indirectly segregated as a result of geography, such as East Topeka Junior High. Educational building may be eligible under Criterion C in the area of ***architecture*** if they feature distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or because they possess high artistic values.

> ***Criterion A*** – Each educational building nominated under the auspices of this MPDF will possess significance under Criterion A for its association with an aspect of the broad history of the African American experience in Topeka. The educational building may also possess significance under Criterion A for social history or community planning and development as noted above.

For educational properties that are significant under Criterion A, integrity of association, location and feeling are of a comparatively higher importance than design, setting, materials, and workmanship, so alterations will be less likely to render a property ineligible as long as the association, location, and feeling are retained. That said, the integrity of design of one or more interior spaces may be an important consideration for eligibility under Criterion A, where those spaces are directly related to the building's significance.

Criterion B – An educational property may be significant under Criterion B if it is associated with an important figure in the African American community whose importance extended beyond a purely educational one. For example, a school might be eligible for its association with a long-term educator who not only served the school and its students but was a leader in Topeka's Black community. The property's association with the figure in question will need to fall within or overlap the historic period of 1854-1975. Establishing the importance of the individual associated with a given property is essential to demonstrating eligibility under Criterion B.

For educational properties that are significant under Criterion B, integrity of association, location and feeling are of a comparatively higher importance than design, setting, materials, and workmanship, so alterations will be less likely to render a property ineligible as long as the association, location, and feeling are retained. That said, the integrity of design of one or more interior spaces may be an important consideration for eligibility under Criterion A, where those spaces are directly related to the building's significance.

Criterion C –As with other property types, educational properties can be significant under Criterion C if they embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values. For religious properties that are significant under Criterion C, aspects of integrity that are embodied in the physical nature of the property itself, including design, materials, and workmanship, are of primary importance. Alterations should be reviewed very carefully to assess whether they fall within the period of significance and, if not, the extent to which they obscure the design characteristics that make the property significant.

Criterion D – An educational property may be significant under Criterion D if it maintains a significant association with one or more historic contexts in Section E and either has, or is likely to yield, important information not otherwise readily available regarding some aspect of the experience of African Americans in Topeka during the period of significance. Although Criterion D is most often applied to below-ground archaeological resources, it may also be appropriate for standing buildings if they have the potential to illustrate a particular method of construction, the peculiarities, skills, or markers of a builder, or other architectural elements about which little is known. For example, because the written record is sparse regarding Topeka's African American building trades professionals, if a residential building yielded information regarding the peculiarities, skills or markers indicative of a prominent or significant

African American builder, then Criterion D may potentially apply to that residential property. Aspects of integrity of particular importance to properties significant under Criterion D include location, materials and association, especially as they relate to deposition, disturbance and the ability to distinguish artifacts associated with one or more historic contexts identified in Section E.

Property Type V: Commercial and Professional Buildings

Extant commercial and professional buildings associated with Topeka's African American community during the period of significance consists of storefront buildings, mixed use buildings, hotels among others. Surviving commercial and professional buildings are most likely to be significant for their association with *Context III: Topeka's African American Community (1865-1975)* in Section E. Subsets of the buildings may be significant for their association with journalism, Black-owned business, fraternal organizations and/or *Context IV, Civil Rights*.

Most of the commercial and professional buildings associated with African Americans during the period of significance were destroyed as a result of Urban Renewal initiatives, including all that once comprised the Fourth Street District. A scattering of small, free-standing commercial buildings dot the landscape within the predominantly African American neighborhoods presented in Section E. Style's Barber Shop (KHRI 177-3960) at 1204 SE 6th Avenue is among the city's longest-running Black-owned businesses. The Bowser-Johnson Funeral Home has a long history of operations in Topeka with two extant buildings associated with the business – the former residence at 1812 SW Van Buren Street (KHRI 177-5096) and its current home at 723 SW 6th Street (KHRI 177-2138). The Nick Chiles Block of commercial buildings that housed is hotel and the *Plaindealer* are of exceptional significance to the African American heritage of Topeka.

Registration Requirements: Commercial and Professional Buildings
To be individually eligible, this property type must have been constructed during the period of significance and retain integrity as noted in the general registration requirements. Commercial and Professional buildings nominated under this MPDF must be significant in the area of ***ethnic heritage*** and may likely also be significant in the areas of ***social history, industry,*** and/or ***commerce***.

Criterion A – Each building nominated under the auspices of this MPDF may be significant under Criterion A for its association with a longstanding business or group of businesses that were important to the African American community during the period of significance. While these would typically be businesses that were owned by African American, they could also include businesses that were important for employing large numbers of African Americans.

Commercial and professional buildings may be significant under Criterion A for a wide variety of other reasons, as well. Areas might include commerce for its contribution to the commercial growth and prosperity of the city; a significant association African American employment; a significant association with the emergence of an African American middle class in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century; or a significant association with an organization devoted

to promoting African American business interests, such as the Negro Business League.

For commercial or professional buildings that are significant under Criterion A, integrity of association, location and feeling are of a comparatively higher importance than design, setting, materials, and workmanship, so alterations will be less likely to render a property ineligible as long as the association, location, and feeling are retained. That said, the integrity of design of one or more interior spaces may be an important consideration for eligibility under Criterion A, where those spaces are directly related to the building's significance.

Criterion B – A commercial property may be significant under Criterion B if it is associated with a person of historical significance within one or more of the historic contexts established in Section E of this MPDF. Within the context of commercial buildings, persons of historical significance will likely be an important business owner or otherwise influential business leader. Establishing the importance of the individual associated with a given property is essential to demonstrating eligibility under Criterion B.

In addition, the property's association with the figure in question will need to fall within or overlap the historic period of 1854-1975.

For commercial/professional properties that are significant under Criterion B, integrity of association, location and feeling are of a comparatively higher importance than design, setting, materials, and workmanship, so alterations will be less likely to render a property ineligible as long as the association, location, and feeling are retained. That said, the integrity of design of one or more interior spaces may be an important consideration for eligibility under Criterion B, where those spaces are directly related to the building's significance.

Criterion C –A commercial building that maintains a significant association with an African American architect or building may be eligible under Criterion C. Commercial and professional buildings built by White architects and contractors for White owners and later used by African Americans would generally not be eligible under the auspices of this MPDF. An exception is a property that, following its initial construction, was modified in some substantial way specifically to accommodate its use as a commercial building for the African American community. A residence, for example, that was converted to partial use as a hair salon, may have significance under the criterion if the changes made to the building to accommodate the commercial use are intact and considered character-defining. As with other property types, commercial properties can be significant under Criterion C if they embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values.

For commercial properties that are significant under Criterion C, aspects of integrity that are embodied in the physical nature of the property itself, including design, materials, and workmanship, are of primary importance. Alterations should be reviewed very carefully to assess whether they fall within the period of significance and, if not, the extent to which they

obscure the design characteristics that make the property significant.

Criterion D – A commercial property may be significant under Criterion D if it maintains a significant association with one or more historic contexts in Section E and either has, or is likely to yield, important information not otherwise readily available regarding some aspect of the experience of African Americans in Topeka during the period of significance. Although Criterion D is most often applied to below-ground archaeological resources, it may also be appropriate for standing buildings if they have the potential to illustrate a particular method of construction, the peculiarities, skills, or markers of a builder, or other architectural elements about which little is known. For example, because the written record is sparse regarding Topeka's African American building trades professionals, if a residential building yielded information regarding the peculiarities, skills or markers indicative of a prominent or significant African American builder, then Criterion D may potentially apply to that residential property. Aspects of integrity of particular importance to properties significant under Criterion D include location, materials and association, especially as they relate to deposition, disturbance and the ability to distinguish artifacts associated with one or more historic contexts identified in Section E.

Property Type VI: Community Buildings and Resources

In addition to religious, educational and commercial buildings, community buildings represent a broad property type. Community buildings and resources are those that provided a space for social, cultural, recreational or political function within Topeka's African American community. They may be buildings, entertainment venues, or sites, such as parks, that provided either public or private meeting places for a variety of reasons. Community buildings and resources nominated under this MPDF will be significant under Criterion A in the area of ethnic heritage as physical reminders of the determination of Topeka's African Americans to build a supportive community environment and the face of racial discrimination. They were the buildings and sites where African Americans could safely associate with friends, celebrate milestones, develop business contracts, and plan for civic engagement or the mutual aid of their community. Their relationship to Topeka's African American society as a whole, by providing meeting places free from intimidation and oppression, was critical to the development of a cohesive and vibrant community of shared ideals. These buildings and resources allowed African Americans to work within their own society and thus have some measure of control over their lives. These buildings and sites were important training grounds for future leaders in the Black community and the city at large.

In the area of ***community and planning development***, community buildings and resources often represent the segregated development patterns of Topeka. Most are located within historically Black neighborhoods. Others may have been built in White residential enclaves and are tangible representations of population shifts and changing residential patterns of Topeka's African American neighborhoods. Social halls, clubs, and community welfare buildings are also included in this property type. Those associated with an important African American club or organization are eligible if they played a key role in the social, welfare, cultural or political history of Topeka's African American community. Some may have been

organized for purely social reasons, while others worked to improve the lives of local residents through political or charitable work. Buildings associated with these groups would also be eligible in the area of ***social history***.

Community buildings and resources may also be eligible under Criterion C in the areas of architecture or landscape architecture if they feature distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or because they possess high artistic values.

Registration Requirements: Commercial and Professional Buildings
To be individually eligible, these resources must have been used by or built for African Americans in Topeka during the context of this MPDF and retain integrity as noted in the general registration requirements.

> ***Criterion A*** – In addition to its significance in ***ethnic heritage***, resources nominated under the auspices of this MPDF may be significant under Criterion A in the areas of ***community planning and development*** or ***social history***. For resources that are significant under Criterion A, integrity of association, setting, location, design and feeling are of a comparatively higher importance than materials and workmanship, so alterations will be less likely to render a property ineligible. Additions should be expected as the needs of the groups changed over the years, but they should not overwhelm the resource's original design. For the larger community buildings, their primary interior spaces that provided meeting space should be retained.
>
> ***Criterion B*** – A community building or resource may be significant under Criterion B if it is associated with a person of historical significance within one or more of the historic contexts established in Section E of this MPDF. Persons of historical significance will likely be an important community leader, politician, or Civil Rights activist. Establishing the importance of the individual associated with a given property is essential to demonstrating eligibility under Criterion B.
>
> In addition, the property's association with the figure in question will need to fall within or overlap the historic period of 1854-1975.
>
> For properties that are significant under Criterion B, integrity of association, location and feeling are of a comparatively higher importance than design, setting, materials, and workmanship, so alterations will be less likely to render a property ineligible as long as the association, location, and feeling are retained. That said, the integrity of design of one or more interior spaces may be an important consideration for eligibility under Criterion B, where those spaces are directly related to the building's significance.
>
> ***Criterion C*** –A community building or resource that maintains a significant association with an African American architect or landscape architect may be eligible under Criterion C. As with other property types, community properties can be significant under Criterion C if they embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represent the work

of a master, or possess high artistic values.

For properties that are significant under Criterion C, aspects of integrity that are embodied in the physical nature of the property itself, including design, materials, and workmanship, are of primary importance. Alterations should be reviewed very carefully to assess whether they fall within the period of significance and, if not, the extent to which they obscure the design characteristics that make the property significant.

Criterion D – A community resource may be significant under Criterion D if it maintains a significant association with one or more historic contexts in Section E and either has, or is likely to yield, important information not otherwise readily available regarding some aspect of the experience of African Americans in Topeka during the period of significance. Although Criterion D is most often applied to below-ground archaeological resources, it may also be appropriate for standing buildings if they have the potential to illustrate a particular method of construction, the peculiarities, skills, or markers of a builder, or other architectural elements about which little is known. For example, because the written record is sparse regarding Topeka's African American building trades professionals, if a residential building yielded information regarding the peculiarities, skills or markers indicative of a prominent or significant African American builder, then Criterion D may potentially apply to that residential property. Aspects of integrity of particular importance to properties significant under Criterion D include location, materials and association, especially as they relate to deposition, disturbance and the ability to distinguish artifacts associated with one or more historic contexts identified in Section E.

Property Type VII: Cemeteries and Burial Places

A cemetery is a collection of graves that is marked by stones or other artifacts or that is unmarked but recognizable by features such as fencing or depressions, or through maps, or by means of testing. Cemeteries serve as a primary means of an individual's recognition of family history and as expressions of collective religious and/or ethnic identity.

As a general rule, cemeteries do not qualify for the National Register. Because cemeteries may embody values beyond personal or family-specific emotions, the National Register criteria allow for listing of cemeteries under certain conditions. National Register Criteria Consideration D states that a cemetery may qualify if is derives its primary importance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events. Evaluation of cemeteries relies heavily on an understanding of the cemetery's overall context. National Register Bulleting 41 states, "Decisions about the relative significance of cemeteries and burial places can be made only with knowledge of the events, trends, and technologies that influenced practices of caring for and commemorating the dead, and with some concept of the quality and quantity of similar resources in the

community, region, State or nation." It is essential that the evaluative process take these specific elements of human culture into account.

A cemetery or burial ground nominated under the auspices of this MPDF will date to the historic period of 1854-1975 and will be significant under Criteria A in the area of ***ethnic heritage.*** The cemetery must derive its significance from its association with Topeka's African American community. Two known cemeteries in Topeka are significant under Criteria A. The earliest cemetery is Ritchie Cemetery, which was given over to use by the Black community during a period when the high cost of burial plots in the City Cemetery made it unaffordable to low-income families, primarily African American. The cemetery was used as the primary burial place for African Americans until the late-1880s when Mt. Auburn Cemetery (KHRI 177-5097) was established opposite City Cemetery in East Topeka. Mt. Auburn Cemetery offered affordable burial plots to all ethnicities. Thus, the cemetery was established along a socio-economic framework. The majority of the burials here are African American and immigrant groups. Under Criteria A, a cemetery such as Mt. Auburn Cemetery, might be significant under ***community planning and development*** as a distinctive burial ground established in East Topeka, opposite the earlier City Cemetery, and within an area that was transitioning to a predominantly African American and immigrant neighborhood. A cemetery might also be significant under Criteria A in ***social history*** if an important event occurred within its grounds.

Registration Requirements: Cemeteries and Burial Grounds
To be eligible, cemeteries or burial grounds nominated under this MPDF must have been established for African Americans in Topeka during the period of significance and retain integrity as noted in the general registration requirements. The cemetery or burial ground must also meet requirements of Criterion Consideration D, unless the nominated property is eligible under Criterion D.

> ***Criterion A*** – In addition to its significance in ***ethnic heritage***, resources nominated under the auspices of this MPDF may be significant under Criterion A in the areas of ***community planning and development*** or ***social history***. For resources that are significant under Criterion A, integrity of association, setting, location, and feeling are of a comparatively higher importance than design, materials and workmanship, so alterations will be less likely to render a property ineligible. A cemetery nominated under this MPDF should possess a high percentage of burials dating to the period of significance. Documented burial removals and/or significant alterations to the overall setting of the cemetery that occur after the period of significance should be taken into consideration.
>
> ***Criterion B*** – A cemetery or burial ground may be significant under Criterion B if it is associated with a person of transcendent importance. To be of transcendent importance the persons must have been of great eminence in their fields of endeavor or had a great impact upon the history of their community, State, or nation. Note, a single grave that is the burial place of an important person and is located in a larger cemetery that does not qualify under Criterion Consideration D should be treated under Criteria Consideration C: Birthplaces and Graves. Persons of historical significance will likely be an important community leader, politician, or Civil Rights activist. Establishing the importance of the individual associated with a given

property is essential to demonstrating eligibility under Criterion B.

In addition, the property's association with the figure in question will need to fall within or overlap the context of this MPDF (1854-1975). For properties that are significant under Criterion B, the same qualities of integrity required for Criterion A are required.

Criterion C –A cemetery can qualify for the National Register on the basis of distinctive design values. These values can include aesthetic or technological achievement in the fields of city planning, architecture, landscape architecture, engineering, mortuary art, and sculpture. The cemetery must clearly express its design values and be able to convey its historic appearance. For a cemetery to be significance under Criterion C, it should possess most, if not all, of the seven qualities of integrity.

Criterion D – A cemetery may be significant under Criterion D if it maintains a significant association with one or more historic contexts in Section E and either has, or is likely to yield, important information not otherwise readily available regarding some aspect of the experience of African Americans in Topeka during the period of significance. Although Criterion D is most often applied to below-ground archaeological resources. For example, ground-penetrating radar may yield evidence of areas within a cemetery with unmarked graves associated with the African American culture in Topeka. Aspects of integrity of particular importance to properties significant under Criterion D include location, materials and association, especially as they relate to deposition, disturbance and the ability to distinguish artifacts associated with one or more historic contexts identified in Section E.

Property Type VIII: Sites (Non-Archaeological)

While most of the discussion in Section E is focused on extant buildings that possess one or more important associations with Topeka's African American community during the period of significance, non-archaeological sites may also exist that retain similar associations. Potential examples include streets or other public spaces that were the locations of important events or are associated with important individuals. For example, a section of Kansas Avenue leading to the steps of the Federal Courthouse (KHRI 177-5400-00044) could be evaluated for potential significance as the site of a protest or march by African Americans against racial oppression during the Civil Rights Movement.

Registration Requirements: Sites (Non-Archaeological)
According to National Register guidelines, a site "is the location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archaeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure."[332]

Integrity of location is of paramount importance in assessing the integrity of a non-archaeological historic site. Integrity of setting, feeling, and association are also important because they directly inform the extent to which a historical contemporary would recognize the property as it exists today. An eligible property will retain these four aspects. Integrity of materials, design, and workmanship are less relevant when evaluating the integrity of a site.

> ***Criterion A*** – A non-archaeological historic site nominated under the auspices of this MPDF will be eligible under Criterion A for its significant association with patterns of events that have made a significant contributing to the African American experience in Topeka. For example, a significant non-archaeological site associated with a significant and impactful protest or march that led to a significant change in policy may be eligible.
>
> ***Criterion B*** – A non-archaeological historic site may also be eligible under Criterion B if it, among all extant associated properties, best illustrates a significant individual's important achievements. For example, due to the many properties lost over the years associated with Topeka's African American history, the last remaining place associated with a prominent individual's productive life might be a gravesite.[333] In that case, a nomination must meet the requirements for Criterion Consideration C.
>
> ***Criterion C*** – A non-archaeological historic site may be eligible under Criterion C if it is representative of a particular design or is associated with African Americans in Topeka. Types of historic sites that might be eligible are planned or landscaped parks or gathering spaces without buildings.

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[332] National Park Service, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 5.
[333] In that case, the nomination should justify the decision to nominate a gravesite through Criterion Consideration C. Additionally, a preparer should refer to see *National Register Bulletin #41*, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places* (available at https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB41-Complete.pdf)

Criterion D – A non-archaeological historic site may be eligible under Criterion D if there is potential to yield information about a particular design, building methods, or various uses associated with African Americans in Topeka. Based on the research and results of the survey, there is a low probability of nominating non-archaeological sites under Criterion D.

Property Type IX: Sites (Archaeological)

Archaeological sites are the remains of human activity, as represented by the artifacts and features that comprise them. They are by nature associated with the individuals and communities that left them behind, and may be historically significant under one or more of the National Register Criteria for Significance.

An archaeological site associated with some significant aspect of the life or lives of African Americans in Topeka, as related to one or more of the contexts in this MPDF, will be significant under Criterion A. An archaeological site associated with the productive life of a historically significant African American will also be significant under Criterion B. An archaeological site that demonstrates an important method of construction, design, or art will also be significant under Criterion C. An archaeological site that has or is likely to provide important information that expands the understanding of a significant aspect of the life or lives of African Americans in Portland will also be significant under Criterion D.

Topeka's African American population before and during the early years of the period of significance were underrepresented in the written historical record. As a result, significant gaps might exist in the historical understanding of the lives of Black Topekans. Archaeological sites and the features and artifacts that comprise them, when carefully identified, analyzed, and understood within their historical and cultural context, can add substantially to the understanding of the lives of people in the past. When archaeological sites are identified that are related to communities that are historically underrepresented in the existing academic literature, they can provide invaluable information previously unknown and reveal important insights into their experience, both individually and collectively. For example, legend has it that underground tunnels associated with the Ritchie property were utilized as part of the Underground Railroad. Archaeological investigations might yield important information related to the African American experience prior to emancipation. Archaeological sites may be eligible under both Criterion A and Criterion D, and possibly in combination with one or two additional significant criteria. An example is the Monroe School and today, NPS National Historical Park for Brown v. Board of Education. The Kansas Anthropological Association and KS-State Historic Preservation Office conducted an investigation and excavated the grounds around the school, thus learning more about the people who lived near, worked at, or attended school at the property.

G. Geographical Data

The geographical area covered by this MPDF encompasses all of the incorporated city of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas.

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

The Multiple Property Documentation Form for African American Resources in Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas was developed to provide a broad context for evaluating the extant cultural landscape and built resources associated with African American activities in Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas. The geographic area covers the 2023 incorporated city limits.

The project began with archival research about African Americans in Topeka and Kansas. This information, used to develop the historic contexts and property types, was based on a study of both primary and secondary sources. These sources include census records, Sanborn maps, previous surveys and nominations, city and county histories, historic newspapers, city government records, private publications and resources and historic photographs. These resources were found at various online sources such as the Kansas Historical Society "Kansas Memory." The Topeka-Shawnee County Public Library, Topeka Room, provided the most substantial sources used for this MPDF. Three books were particularly helpful in the development of the context presented in Section E: Thomas Cox, *Blacks in Topeka, Kansas: 1865-1915*; Robert G. Athearn's *In Search of Canaan Black Migration to Kansas, 1879-1880*; and Sherrita Camp's *African American Topeka*, published in 2013. The latter was particularly valuable in the identification and documentation of many resources and individuals significant to Topeka's Black heritage and experience.

At the onset of this MPDF initiative, the City Planning Department, in collaboration with local historians and the Kansas Historical Society (KHS), gathered a preliminary list of individual properties, districts, and persons with known association to the African American experience in Topeka. Locations of many of those properties were undetermined through fieldwork and further research. Others were confirmed no longer extant. Participants at a public meeting hosted by the City at the Topeka-Shawnee County Library in January of 2023 identified further properties associated with the Black experience in Topeka. The properties identified in the Working Inventory include the full list of properties surveyed by the author, as well as additional properties that were previously surveyed in recent years and did not warrant re-survey.

Based on the background information gathered through both archival and field research, the historic contexts represent the major themes of African American development in Topeka that were also likely to have extant resources. Thus, there were several thematic areas that are worthy of additional research, but for purposes of this project, would not likely be associated with many extant properties. This thematic-based approach for preparing historic contexts in the MPDF is predicated on the forces which shaped the African American community in Topeka. Property types are based on categories of resources sharing similar original functions, utilizing existing surveys and the survey conducted during this project to not only develop the property types but the registration requirements as well. As more examples of these property types are surveyed in the future, it is possible that additional information may be revealed, which in turn may warrant amendments to this document.

The MPDF was partially funded by Federal funds form the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior and for the Kansas State Historical Society.

Jaime Destefano, Senior Architectural Historian of Impact7G, conducted the survey and prepared this document. The Topeka Historic Preservation Commission and former Historic Preservation Planner, Tim Paris, compiled the preliminary inventory of resources. Tim Paris was invaluable to the survey, assisting in fieldwork and arranging meetings with members of the African American community. Similarly, Donna Rae Pearson, KSHS historian and museum specialist, provided considerable assistance in research, arranging of the public meeting, and interacting with the community.

This National Register multiple property document can be utilized by interested citizens or groups to propose or prepare a range of National or Kansas Register nominations. Two individual National Register nominations for surveyed properties will be individually nominated as part of the MPDF – Mt. Auburn Cemetery (KHRI 177-5097), a planned cemetery established as an affordable place of burial for lower-income populations, particularly African American and immigrant groups; and Second Missionary Baptist Church (formerly "B" Street Baptist; KHRI 177-5400-01532), erected in 1924 in the Redmonsville neighborhood of North Topeka, is among the oldest African American congregations in Topeka and has been a vital institution to the Black community.

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APPENDIX A – REDLINING CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

REALTY MAP OF TOPEKA, KANSAS

Designations of grades of security shown upon the attached map represent the composite judgment of the following authorities on Topeka real estate:

Z. E. Wyant, Assistant Secretary
Davis-Wellcome Mortgage Company, real estate firm; loan correspondent, Prudential Insurance Company.

W. L. Hamilton, Secretary
Capitol Building and Loan Association.

J. L. Hersh, President
Postal Building and Loan Association; real estate broker.

David N. Neiswanger, President
Neiswanger Investment Company; real estate and management firm.

Kenneth Brown, Chief Valuator
Federal Housing Administration.

Jesse C. Underwood, Appraiser.

DESCRIPTION OF AREAS

A-1. This is Westboro Addition, the most exclusive residential section in Topeka. The district has been created in the last ten years. Houses therein range in price from $7,000 to $25,000. The district is highly restricted. The leading business and professional men occupy the area.

A-2. This is the new Westwood Addition which has been created within the last year. The district has a comparatively small development up to this time but is potentially a very fine residential section. Houses therein will cost from $4,500 up.

A-3. This is Holland-Washburn Addition, resembling A-1 in nearly every respect as to type of construction and the class of occupants. However, the restrictions in A-3 are not as strict as in A-1. This area is at least 75% built up.

A-4. This area lies north of Washburn College, which is a favorable influence. The district was created about 25 years ago and contains some of the finest homes in the city, ranging in price from $4,500 up to $20,000. Although the security is older than that of A-3, it

continues to be a popular and desirable section.

A-5. This is Washburn Park Addition, laid out in 1923. Houses therein will sell for from $3,500 to $7,000. The district is occupied by a good class of people, including some of the moderate income class. The district is restricted against encroachment of negroes.

A-6. This is Kenwood Addition, laid out about 25 years ago. Houses therein will sell on the present day's market for $3,500 to $7,500. The district is probably 90% built up and occupied by a variety of good citizens of the moderate income class. Bungalows predominate in the area.

A-7. This is Country Club Addition, with a suburban atmosphere of the adjoining country club. It is an exclusive section, houses on the west being restricted to a minimum of $7,500 and in other portions of the addition the minimum is $4,500. The addition was laid out in 1925. Houses are of a distinctive type, mostly occupied by business and professional men.

B-1. The northern portion of this area lies north of Euclid, being probably 40 years old. There is some new development in this particular part of the area, about 20 new houses being now under construction. South of Euclid the development is very sparse, most of it being acreage. This area is occupied largely by persons who settled therein 20 and 30 years ago.

B-2. Most of this area is undeveloped. There are, however, scattered houses of a better type. Anderson Terrace adjacent Gage Park on the western part of this area has some very fine houses which could possibly rate an "A" classification.

B-3. This area includes several small additions, much of it, however, being undeveloped. The houses range in price on the current market from $2,000 to $7,000 with the cheaper bungalows and cottages predominating. The district is occupied by the moderate income class of working people.

B-4. This area was created before the War and is almost entirely built up, houses ranging in price from $3,000 to $8,000. Old two-story houses predominate in the southeast part of the area, while bungalows have been built in the northern and western part of it.

B-5. This is a moderately priced bungalow section which was begun 20 to 25 years ago with considerable building within the last 10 or 12 years. Salaried people for the most part occupy the area.

B-6. This is a section of old two-story houses, well built, however, and well preserved. The area was the best in the city about 25 years ago and is occupied at the present time by a large proportion of prominent citizens.

B-7. This is Highland Park, lying outside the city limits. It is a suburban development, having all public utilities except sewer. A golf course south of 29th Street is a favorable influence and opposite the golf course is a number of better class houses built within the last six years. Houses in the area would average about $4,000 on the present market. There has been some new development in the area within the last few years. It is about 50% built up.

B-8. This is known as Oakland, occupied by industrial workers of the thrifty and home loving type, although the houses are modest, being cottages ranging in price from $2,000 up. This area is considered a choice lending district because of the integrity of its people toward their obligations. A large number of retired farmers also live in this section.

C-1. This area is an intermediate grade rather than a declining section -- third-grade property in the city. Its development had never attained the point from which it could decline to any great extent. Gage Boulevard, running through the area, is lined with business houses. Houses in the area are of the suburban variety, moderate in price.

C-2. This is an old development outside the city limits wherein the construction is a variety of different types of houses. The attraction to this area is the lower type. The district is occupied by working people entirely.

C-3. This small area among the best sections of the city is blighted because of the presence of negroes. Most of it is undeveloped. There is a ten-acre undeveloped tract owned by negroes within this district.

C-4. This is an old part of the city, much of the security west of Central Park being built in a building boom some 35 years ago. In the east part of the area are many rooming houses. The area is typical of an older section near the business district. The district has a great deal of rented property occupied by the salaried class of people.

C-5. This is an old section of town, much of which is turned into rooming houses. Some of the security is as old as 40 years. West of it is an area occupied by negroes.

C-6. This is Potwin, the oldest exclusive residential development in Topeka. Some of the houses therein are as old as 50 years. Although definitely declining, the area has retained some of its traditions and exclusiveness. The houses are large and many of them are now being modernized.

C-7. This is the old part of the city which includes a large variety of houses that have been turned into rooming houses, apartments, etc. It is occupied, however, by a substantial class of people, and the presence therein of the state Capitol building and a fine new high school helps to stabilize values.

C-8. Security in this area resembles the eastern portion of C-4, being old and without possibility of future development. The district is separated by the railroad tracks and the business district.

C-9. This is a scattered suburban development in North Topeka wherein the houses are inexpensive bungalows. It is largely a truck gardening section.

D-1. Most of this area is undeveloped, there being, however, scattered sections which are occupied by a variety of negroes and whites.

D-2. This is a scattered development of old two-story houses and small, cheap bungalows occupied by a very low income class of working people.

D-3. College Avenue in the center of this area has a large number of business houses. Most of the occupants of the area are negroes. There are, however, some reasonably good houses therein, most of them built and occupied by negroes.

D-4. This area resembles D-3 in nearly every respect. There is a large proportion of negroes in the area.

D-5. This is a scattered suburban development, lying on low ground and therefore distinguished from the adjoining A-7. Houses therein are old and cheap. A sewer system is being extended into the district.

D-6. This is another suburban section of small, cheap houses. The area is only partially developed. Living therein are negroes in addition to the low income class of whites.

D-7. Except for a few nice bungalows this district consists entirely of cheap shacks occupied by a very low income laboring group.

D-8. This is an old section of large houses which is largely industrial. There is a large number of negroes living in the district.

D-9. This is a 100% negro concentration, known as "Tennessee Town." Houses therein are the old cheap type, typical of a negro section.

D-10. This is an old section, bordering on the business and industrial area. There are not many houses in this section. There is a number of negroes and lower class whites in the area.

D-11. This is North Topeka. Industrial plants and the large railroad trackage help to make it undesirable from a residential standpoint. A flood 35 years ago blighted the area, and, although dykes have been built to protect the residents therein, the danger of a recurrence of a flood continues to exist. Industrial workers predominate in this district, including many negroes.

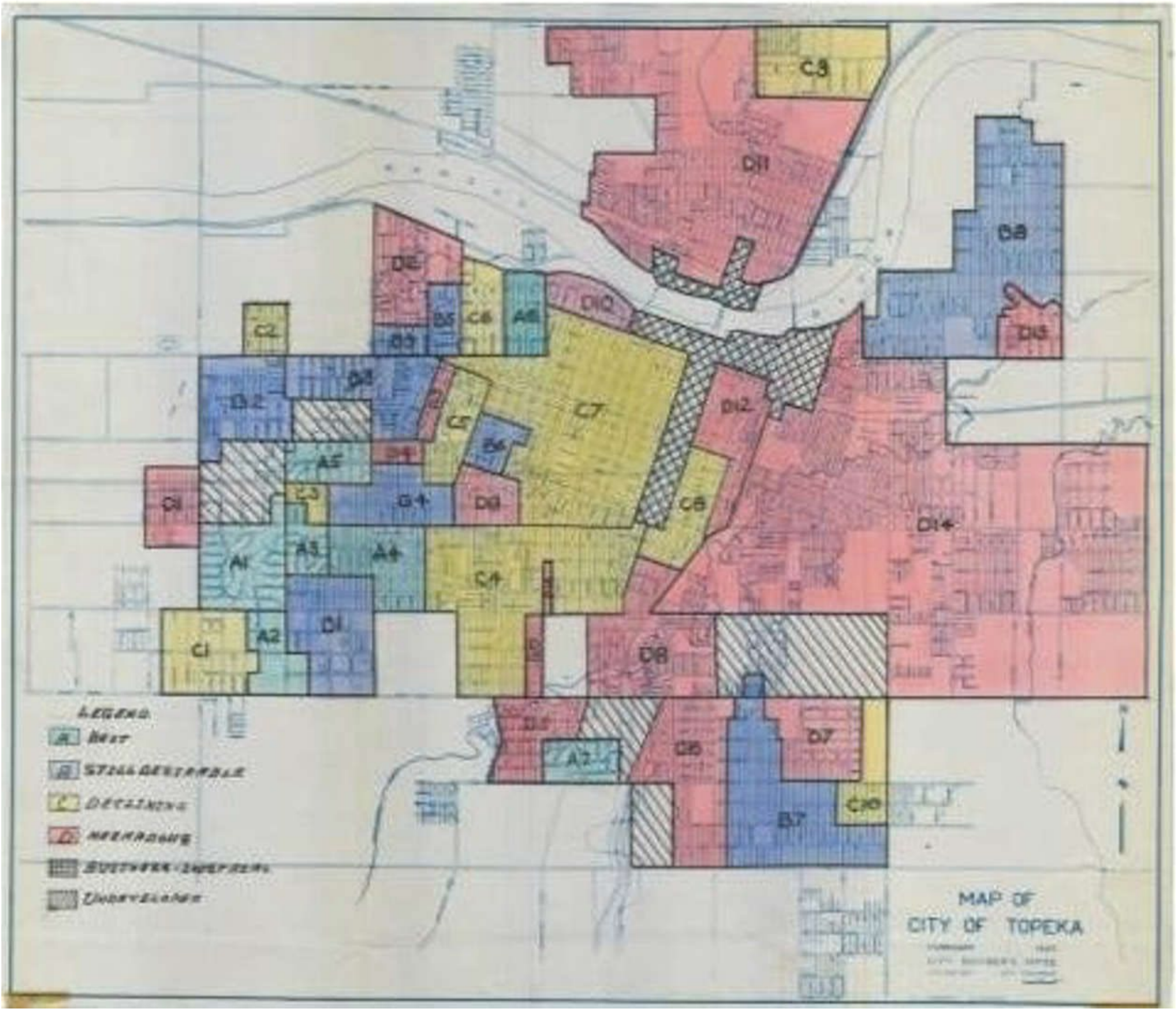
D-12. This is an old section bordering the business district and the railroad tracks, occupied by a variety of foreigners and negroes and the lower type of white working people.

D-13. This is a small scattered development wherein the houses are small. Location of the area makes it very undesirable from a residential standpoint.

D-14. The western portion of this large area consists of a variety of foreigners and negroes. Much of the area is undeveloped, but throughout is a variety of old houses of different styles and types. There is a number of small business centers in this section. Some of the salaried people from the business district live in the area, but most of the occupants are laborers.

D-15. This is a small scattered section west of the fairgrounds, wherein the houses are old, small and cheap.

D-16. This is another small negro concentration with a number of business houses.


MAP OF
CITY OF TOPEKA