

# Three Centuries of African- American History in Trenton:

## A Preliminary Inventory of Historic Sites

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for the Trenton Historical Society

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*Three Centuries of African-American History in Trenton: A Preliminary Inventory of Historic Sites*  
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*Cover: Spring Street, 2011 (Photo by author)*

*Three Centuries of African-American History in Trenton: A Preliminary Inventory of Historic Sites* presents the results of a survey of Black historic sites in the City of Trenton. The project was completed by the Trenton Historical Society with assistance from Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc. Funding was generously provided through a project grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State. The goal of the project was to identify sites with historical significance to Trenton's African-American community through historical research and community input. The 34 sites identified herein represent a preliminary inventory of the city's Black historic sites, and the results suggest areas for further research and documentation. The report serves as an important step toward identifying and recognizing the significance of the African-American community's contributions to Trenton's history and heritage.



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# INTRODUCTION

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This report presents the results of a survey of African-American historic sites in the City of Trenton, Mercer County, New Jersey. The survey was conducted by Richard Grubb & Associates (RGA) of Cranbury, New Jersey, for the Trenton Historical Society (THS). The project was funded by a project grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State. The purpose of the project was to create a preliminary inventory of historic sites in Trenton of significance to the African-American community.

## Project Background

African-Americans have been integral to Trenton's history since the colonial period, when William Trent, Mahlon Stacy, and other early residents brought slaves to work their land and serve in their homes (Trenton Historical Society 1929). During the early nineteenth century, Black residents comprised as much as 15 percent of the local population (Trenton Historical Society 1929). Institutions such as Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church were formed during this early period by African-American residents to serve the religious and social needs of the community. As the century progressed, the city built schools for its African-American children, including two buildings that survive on Bellevue Avenue: the Higbee Street (John T. Nixon) School, built in 1857, and the Bellevue Avenue (Old Lincoln) School, built in 1883. Social clubs and service

organizations, as well as additional churches of all denominations, appeared during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to serve the small but thriving Black community.

The Great Migration of the post-World War I period resulted in significant gains to the city's African-American population: While Black residents numbered only 2,500 in 1910, by 1920, there were more than 4,000, and by 1930, more than 8,000. Although this population was spread across the city, the section of Spring Street between Calhoun and Willow Streets emerged during the 1930s as a center for African-American businesses and the city's Black middle class residents. Population growth throughout Trenton continued through the mid-twentieth century, with the Black population numbering nearly 14,500 in 1950 and more than 25,500 in 1960 (Nigh 2011; see Appendix A).

Despite this long history, acknowledgement of the contributions of African-Americans has been slow to occur, as most published histories of Trenton have ignored or underrepresented the roles of Black Trentonians in the city's history. Historian Jack Washington's books, *In Search of a Community's Past: The Black Community in Trenton, New Jersey, 1860-1900* (1990) and *The Quest for Equality: Trenton's Black Community, 1890-1965* (1993), have addressed some of these omissions, providing needed historic context



**Figure 1.** Cast of the Lincoln School's 1941 production of *The Mikado* (Courtesy of Trentonian Collection, Trenton Public Library).

for understanding the city's African-American history.

The recognition and preservation of historic sites of significance to the African-American community has likewise proceeded slowly in Trenton. The New Jersey Historical Commission's *Black Historic Sites in New Jersey* (1984) identified a small number of sites in Trenton, as did Dennis Bertland Associates' historic sites survey of the North Ward (1981), where the city's African-American population was historically concentrated. During the 1990s, two Black historic sites were listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Bellevue Avenue Colored School (81 Bellevue Avenue) and the Higbee Street School (20 Bellevue Avenue). The Trenton Landmarks Commission has also acknowledged the significance of the Higbee School (also known as John T. Nixon School) with a designation as a Trenton Historic Landmark; other Trenton Historic Landmarks primarily associated with the city's Black history include Mount Zion A.M.E. Church (135-137 Perry Street) and the Carver Center (40 Fowler Street). Although the National Register and Trenton Landmark designations suggest progress in the acknowledgement of Black historic sites, they nevertheless represent only a small proportion of identified historic sites in the City of Trenton. They also fail to reflect many aspects of the African-American experience in Trenton from the colonial period to the present.

In an effort to address these deficiencies, the THS applied for and received a project grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission to

develop a preliminary inventory of African-American historic sites in Trenton. The purpose of the preliminary inventory was to identify buildings and other sites and resources historically and culturally important to the African-American community through secondary source research and community input. The inventory was intended to enhance the THS's awareness and understanding of significant Black historic sites, identify sites and themes for intensive research, and assist in future planning for interpretive and heritage tourism programming focused around the city's African-American history. A secondary goal of the project was to build bridges between the THS and the African-American community in Trenton, which is underrepresented in the THS's membership.

### **Scope of Work**

The scope of work for the inventory of Black historic sites included background research and community outreach to solicit input into the identification of sites. The latter task included development of a publicity plan and online survey, as well as coordination with THS volunteers conducting interviews with members of the Black community. The scope additionally included the development of inventory forms to document each site, and site visits to document current conditions. Due to budgetary constraints, the scope of work did not include development of a historic context for the African-American experience in Trenton.



**Figure 2.** Civil rights workers leaving the Carver Center (Courtesy of Trentoniana Collection, Trenton Public Library).

## RESEARCH DESIGN

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This survey of African-American historic sites in Trenton was conducted between March and August 2011. The intent and scope of the survey was to identify resources with significance to the African-American community in Trenton, compiling a preliminary inventory of Black historic sites. The survey was intended as an initial step toward identifying African-American historic sites in the city, and the inventory focused on identification of sites rather than evaluation of their significance. Additional research is necessary to understand fully the significance of these resources.

### Methodology

The methodology for the project utilized two approaches: 1) secondary source research to identify known African-American historic sites; and 2) community outreach to solicit public input regarding sites of historic or cultural significance. The first phase included an examination of the statewide survey of Black historic sites (New Jersey Historical Commission 1984) and files at the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office (HPO) to identify properties previously identified as historically significant. Published histories of Trenton, in particular the histories of the African-American community by Dr. Jack Washington, provided background for the identification of historic contexts, themes, and individual sites.

A committee of the THS was established to identify contacts to provide entry into the African-American community. Because of the uniquely interpersonal nature of the community in Trenton, key individuals were interviewed, not only to provide their knowledge and perspective of the history of Trenton's African-American community, but also to identify other potential informants in the community. By developing a networked strategy of community contacts, the committee hoped to access both individuals with the most knowledge about Trenton's African-American history and individuals with diverse perspectives and areas of interest. A list of interview participants is included in Appendix B.

In addition to interviewing leaders within the African-American community, the project also sought to solicit input from past residents and current community members who might not be identified through personal contacts. Toward that end, a survey form was developed and made available electronically through the THS website. The survey form was also printed and made available in the Trentoniana Room of the Trenton Public Library for members of the community lacking access to the internet. The survey was publicized through press releases distributed to local media outlets and announcements via community email lists and social media (see Appendix C). News items and



**Figure 3.** Newspaper publisher R. Henri Herbert (from *New York Age*).

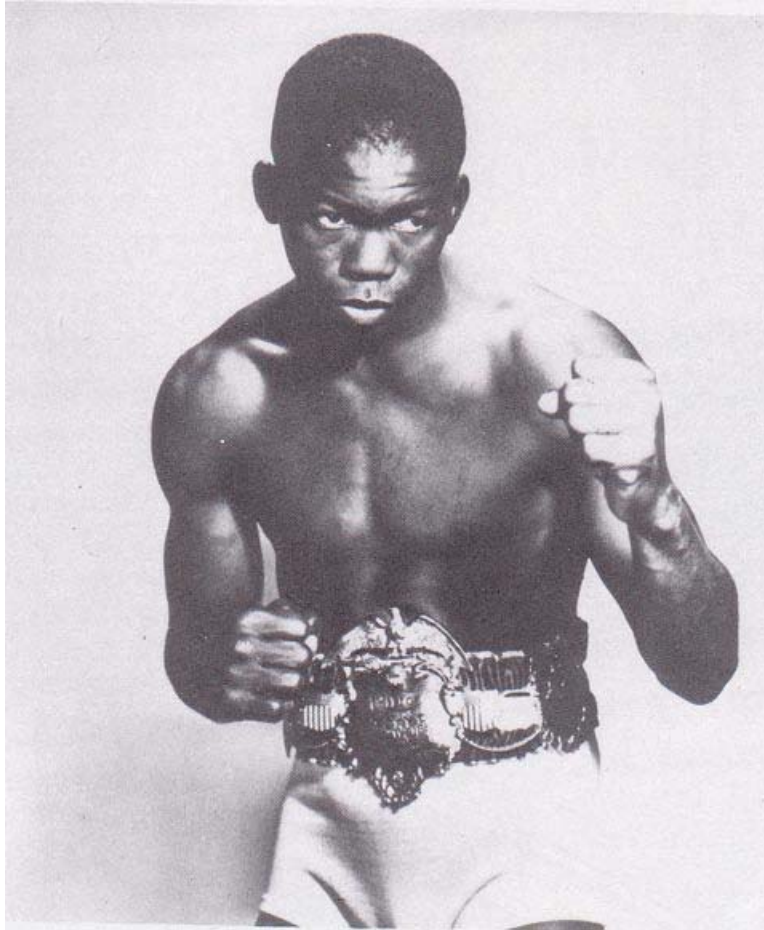
articles appeared in the *Trenton Times*, *Trenton Downtowner*, and *U.S. 1*, and television station WZBN broadcast an interview with THS President Helen Shannon about the project. Numerous telephone calls and emails were received in response to the publicity, and the information provided by respondents was incorporated into the survey report. Appendix D contains a sample survey form and a summary of responses received online.

Sites identified by interview participants and in survey responses were researched and evaluated to determine whether the historical data offered in support of these sites was factual and if they possessed a notable measure of historic significance. The phrase “historic significance” was defined broadly to permit a wide range of properties to be included in the survey. From the outset, the THS determined not to limit the inventory to only those sites eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

This decision reflected the desire not to exclude buildings from recognition because of diminished physical integrity, because buildings associated with important historic events were no longer extant, or because the identified resources were less than 50 years in age. The survey focused instead on historical significance only. The inventory was limited to sites located within the City of Trenton; therefore, properties like the Bordentown Manual Training and Industrial School were omitted, despite the impact that the institution had on the many African-American Trenton residents who studied there. The list of sites included in the

inventory was developed in concert with a committee of the THS.

Sites selected for inclusion in the inventory were documented on inventory forms developed for the project. Site visits were conducted to document current conditions through written descriptions and digital photographs.



**Figure 4.** Boxing champion Ike Williams (Courtesy of Trentoniana Collection, Trenton Public Library).

## SURVEY RESULTS

The survey identified a total of 34 African-American historic sites in the City of Trenton. These sites include 2 districts; 22 individual buildings; 1 cemetery; and 9 sites that are no longer extant. The sites represent many aspects of the Black community's experience in Trenton, including religious, social, and institutional. The sites also represent multiple historical eras and contexts, from slavery of the colonial period to the Civil Rights movement of the mid-twentieth century.

Nearly half of the extant resources, in particular the churches, schools and Carver Center, were constructed specifically by or for the use of the African-American community. Others were

adapted for use by the community or were sites where important relevant historical events took place. Some of these buildings, like the Mount Zion A.M.E. Church, Bellevue Avenue Colored School, and Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd Church, have served as Black institutions for generations and thus are notable for the longevity of their significance to the history of Trenton. Other resources were significant for only a limited period of time; for example, the YWCA Montgomery Street Branch operated for just over two decades at 336-338 Montgomery Street, from 1927-1950. Table 3.1 summarizes the results of the survey; inventory forms are located in Appendix E.

**Table 3.1.** African-American Historic Sites in Trenton.

Survey #	Name	Address
01	Spring Street District	Spring Street between Calhoun and Willow Streets
02	YMCA Community Branch	105 Spring Street
03	St. Monica's Episcopal Church	93 Spring Street
04	Tuxedo Club	Bank Street; New Rose Street
05	Shiloh Baptist Church	340 Calhoun Street
06	Union Baptist Church [Former]	42 Belvidere Street
07	Carver Center	40 Fowler Street
08	Dr. Henry J. Austin House	96 Bellevue Avenue
09	Bellevue Avenue Colored School	81 Bellevue Avenue
10	Union Republican Club	31 Bellevue Avenue
11	Higbee Street School	20 Bellevue Avenue
12	St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church	306 Willow Street
13	Union Baptist Church	301 Pennington Avenue
14	Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd Church	44 Pennington Avenue

**Table 3.1.** Continued.

<b>Survey #</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>
15	Ringold Street School	Ringold Street
16	Needham Roberts Childhood Home	Wilson Street
17	P.A.L. Gym	Reservoir Street at Calhoun Street
18	<i>The Sentinel</i> Office	4 North Broad Street
19	Eclectic Club	4-6 North Broad Street
20	Jackson Hall	Hanover Street
21	East Hanover Street Cemetery	East Hanover Street
22	Mount Zion A.M.E. Church	135 Perry Street
23	YWCA Montgomery Branch	336-338 North Montgomery Street
24	Lincoln School	400 North Montgomery Street
25	Lincoln Homes District	Bounded by Meyer Street, Old Rose Street, Holland Avenue, and Violet Street
26	Dunn Field	Brunswick Circle
27	Locust Hill Cemetery	Hart Avenue
28	Tom Malloy Studio	101 Garfield Avenue
29	Junior High School #2	301 Gladstone Avenue
30	Trenton Central High School	400 Chambers Street
31	Cuban Giants Field	Chambersburg Grounds; East State Street Grounds
32	William Trent House	15 Market Street
33	Herbert Homestead	25 Lamberton Street
34	Sampson Peters House and Cooper Shop	340 South Warren Street; 27 Lamberton Street

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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The goal of this project was to develop a preliminary inventory of historic sites with significance to the African-American community of Trenton. Toward that end, 34 sites were identified, including two historic districts and 22 extant buildings. A secondary goal of the project was to engage the African-American community in the study of its history, in an effort to increase understanding and to establish relationships with individuals and organizations. Interviews with community leaders were integral to the identification of sites and expansion of the network of participants in the survey. Respondents to the newspaper articles and other publicity likewise provided useful information about individual sites and provided access to archival collections, including those at Shiloh Baptist Church and Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd Church (now Church of the Blessed Sacrament-Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd Parish). The information gathered from personal interviews was supplemented by the online survey, which was intended to garner responses from community members who might not be reached by other efforts. Although a more robust response was hoped for, the replies nevertheless supplemented the knowledge gained through research and interviews.

The inventory developed through this project represents an initial effort to gather information about Trenton's African-American historic sites. In general, recommendations for future work

include: expanding the inventory through additional research and community outreach; evaluation and refinement of the list of historic sites; and recognition of historic sites through National Register listing and/or designation as Trenton Historic Landmarks.

Although evaluation of National Register eligibility was beyond the scope of the current project, a small number of sites appear to have potential as National Register sites and are thus deserving of additional research. Perhaps the most significant among these is the Spring Street neighborhood (Survey #01), which was a center of African-American businesses and middle class residences during the mid-twentieth century. A number of notable Black Trentonians lived on Spring Street, including Civil Rights attorney Robert Queen and New York City's first African-American mayor, David N. Dinkins. Two individual sites, the YMCA Community Branch (Survey #02) and St. Monica's Episcopal Church (Survey #03), are also located on Spring Street. The historical significance of the area is sufficient to warrant evaluation of its National Register potential.

The Lincoln Homes (Survey #25) comprise another neighborhood of historical interest. Constructed in 1939 as Trenton's first housing project for Black residents, the Lincoln Homes retains the physical layout and landscaped setting of its original design. The development predated the negative connotations that later

came to be associated with housing projects and urban renewal; at the time of its construction, the Black community embraced the construction of quality housing, which was in short supply in Trenton. Residents took pride in their homes, and the original occupants occasionally gather at reunions to celebrate the community that formed at the Lincoln Homes. In 2005, the Lincoln Homes complex was renovated and modernized. Although these improvements resulted in the loss of some historic architectural features, the overall character and historic identity of the housing complex remains intact.

Among the individual sites, those constructed by or for the African-American community, and/or used for extended periods of time by Black residents, stand out as having particular significance. The Bellevue Avenue Colored School (Survey #09) and Carver Center (Survey #07) are examples of sites that meet both of these criteria, as are many of the historic churches. Conversely, sites like Junior High School #2 (Hedgepeth-Williams School; Survey #29) and Trenton Central High School (Survey #30) are notable for events associated with the struggle for desegregation in the city; as such, their period of significance is limited, but their impact on the community, profound.

Historical research revealed a number of political, social, and civic organizations that may have potential as historic sites and are thus deserving of additional research. Historian Jack Washington identified many such groups in his two publications on Trenton's African-

American community; however, in most cases, information about the group's influence, longevity, and/or location was not readily available. The extensive newspaper and/or archival research required to document these resources was beyond the scope of the current project; however, it might offer useful insights into the history of the Black community. Table 4.1 provides a summary of potential sites that might be identified with additional research.

The inventory contains a small number of sites associated with significant individuals in the African-American community; however, these represent only a fraction of the historic sites associated with Black residents of potential or known significance identified through interviews and historical research. In some cases, the body of information developed to date has not been sufficient to evaluate their historic significance; in others, the locations of sites associated with the lives or achievements of these persons have not been concretely identified. Properties were not included in the inventory of 34 historic sites unless they could be firmly identified with regard to location. Table 4.2 provides a preliminary list of individuals in the African-American community for whom sites might be identified and added to the inventory with additional research; undoubtedly, other individuals might also be added to this list.

**Table 4.1.** Potential Sites Requiring Additional Research.

Potential Site	Explanation
Republican clubs	The Union Republican Club (Survey #10) was included in the inventory, but many others were referenced in Washington (1990, 1993). Primarily dating to the Reconstruction period, the influence, longevity, and location of these clubs is unknown.
Democratic clubs	During the early twentieth century, African-American voters became disillusioned with the Republican party, and Black Democratic Clubs began to emerge in the city. The influence, longevity and location of these clubs is undocumented.
Fraternal organizations and clubs	The inventory includes two Masonic lodges (Survey #09, 14), but other fraternal organizations and social clubs were formed in the city in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although some names are known (e.g., Fort Pillow Lodge of the Odd Fellows, Capital Club), documentation is lacking regarding their longevity and meeting places.
Civil War veterans' groups	At least three such groups existed in the decades following the Civil War. Additional documentary research is necessary to determine the groups' longevity and meeting locations.
Early twentieth-century churches	During the early twentieth century, a number of new Black churches emerged in Trenton. St. Monica's Episcopal (Survey #03) and Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd (Survey #14) were included in the inventory because they represented new denominations; however, the significance of the new Baptist and A.M.E. churches that emerged during this period has not been explored.
Black-owned businesses	Efforts to identify Black-owned businesses were largely unsuccessful. Many businesses that were identified in interviews were short-lived. Additional research might identify commercial buildings that served the community for extended periods of time, even if the businesses within changed frequently.
New Jersey School for Colored Deaf and Blind	Research revealed an 1867 publication by this school in the Harvard University library, but no additional information regarding the school or its location was found.

**Table 4.2.** Preliminary List of Individuals in the African-American Community Requiring Additional Research.

Name	Explanation
Augustus Washington	A Trenton native, Washington (1820-1875) founded a school in the city in 1836. He left Trenton a few years later and established a career as a noted daguerreotypist. An abolitionist, Washington relocated to Liberia in 1853, where he became a successful businessman and political leader.
Revered Irving W.L. Roundtree	Roundtree (1855-1948) became the first African-American to earn a degree from Princeton University in 1895. He was a pastor of Mount Zion A.M.E. Church and a leader in the A.M.E. church in New Jersey. Additional research is needed to determine whether Roundtree was a Trenton resident during his productive life; from at least 1900-1920, he lived in Hamilton Township.
Reverend John A. White	White (1870-1952) was the pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church for more than 40 years and founded the city's first NAACP chapter in 1913.
Robert Queen	One of Trenton's first African-American attorneys, Queen (1884-1960) is best known for arguing the Hedgepeth-Williams school desegregation case.
Reverend S. Howard Woodson, Jr.	Woodson (1916-1999) was an important religious and political leader in the African-American community, serving as pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church for more than 50 years. He became Trenton's first Black city councilman in 1962 and was elected to the New Jersey General Assembly the following year; Woodson later became the Assembly's first African-American Speaker.
Ike Williams	A boxer, Williams (1923-1994) was the National Boxing Association world lightweight champion from 1945-1951. He was inducted into the New Jersey Boxing Hall of Fame in 1971 and the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1990.

The future expansion of this inventory is anticipated, as additional research on individuals, organizations, and businesses in the Black community results in the identification of new sites. Additional outreach into the community to publicize the survey results and solicit additional input is essential; possible avenues for this outreach include public programs, perhaps through churches and civic organizations, and/or a popular document highlighting selected sites.

The evaluation and refinement of the inventory is also needed, in particular additional research to establish criteria for identifying significant individuals and associated historic sites. The National Register Criteria are generally useful, with the areas of significance particularly helpful in defining historic themes (e.g., commerce, education, entertainment/recreation, ethnic heritage, and religion) for research and evaluation. The development of historic contexts for areas of Trenton's Black history that are underrepresented or poorly understood would be particularly useful in identifying additional sites in the future.

The results of the inventory indicate that recognition and preservation of Black historic sites in Trenton is needed. Although a small number of properties were previously listed on the National Register and/or designated as Trenton Historic Landmarks, additional sites should also be considered, in particular the Spring Street and Lincoln Homes districts; 4-6 North Broad Street, offices of the *The Sentinel*

and headquarters of the Eclectic Club; Lincoln School; and Junior High School #2.



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## **APPENDIX A**

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# **STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF TRENTON'S AFRICAN- AMERICAN POPULATION, 1790-1970**



Statistical Analysis of Trenton's African-American Population, 1790-1970

	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970
Total Population	3,002	3,942	3,925	4,035	6,461	17,228	22,874	29,910	57,458	73,307	96,815	119,289	123,356	124,697	128,009	114,167	104,638
Colored/Negro/African-American	435	600	612	441	526	675	805	1,376	1,732	2,158	2,581	4,315	8,057	9,308	14,479	25,638	39,671
Percent of population	14.5%	15.2%	15.6%	10.9%	8.1%	3.9%	3.5%	4.6%	3.0%	2.9%	2.7%	3.6%	6.5%	7.5%	11.3%	22.5%	37.9%

Excerpted from data compiled by Gary Nigh. Data for 1790 and 1800 was omitted because race was not indicated.



## APPENDIX B

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### INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Cullen Banks  
Robin Johnson Beard  
Marge Berkeyheiser  
Charlotte Burke  
Betty Campbell  
James Downing  
Windom Green  
Lorraine Hall  
Nathanial Hampton  
Dr. Leslie Hayling, Sr.  
Wayne Hedgepeth  
Ethel Jones  
Elizabeth Lacy  
Barbara Lee  
Alice R. Lyons  
Rose Richardson  
Mary Sailor  
Mae Saunders  
Patsy Warlock  
Mary Elaine Washington  
Barry Wilcox



**APPENDIX C**

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**PUBLIC OUTREACH**



# Press Release

Contact: Jennifer Leynes  
Phone: (609) 655-0692 x.314

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 18, 2011

## **TRENTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY SEEKS INPUT FOR SURVEY OF CITY'S AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES**

TRENTON, NJ, MAY 18, 2011: The Trenton Historical Society (THS) is soliciting input from African-American civic organizations and community leaders for a survey of historic sites associated with Trenton's African-American community. The purpose of the survey is to expand knowledge of the city's African-American history through identification of related buildings and sites. Historical research and consultation with past and present African-American residents of Trenton will be used to identify historic sites. The survey project is funded by a project grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State.

Previously identified African-American historic sites in the city include the Bellevue Avenue Colored School and the Higbee Street School, which are both listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The survey will include these and other previously identified historic sites, but the primary goal of the survey is to identify places significant in the history of the city's African-American community that have not been previously recognized. Examples include sites associated with important individuals; churches, clubs, and other civic and social organizations; and businesses within and with strong ties to the African-American community. The sites may represent any historical era, from the colonial period through the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s.

THS has contracted with Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc., (RGA) of Cranbury, to complete the survey, which will begin immediately. Representatives of THS and RGA will seek input for the project from African-American civic organizations and members of the Black community. Survey

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forms will be distributed at informational meetings and will be available in the Trentoniana Room of the Trenton Public Library and on the THS website, <http://www.trentonhistory.org/AfriAmerSurvey.htm>.

Information gathered during the survey will be compiled into an inventory, and the final report will be made available at local public and university libraries and on the THS website. The completed inventory will provide THS with a list of African-American historic sites in the City of Trenton, which will be used to direct future research and preservation efforts in the city.

For additional information regarding the survey, please contact Jennifer Leynes, Senior Architectural Historian at RGA, 609-655-0692 x.314 or [jleynes@richardgrubb.com](mailto:jleynes@richardgrubb.com).

-End-

# Press Release

Contact: Jennifer Leynes  
Phone: (609) 655-0692 x.314

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 15, 2011

## **DEADLINE APPROACHING TO PARTICIPATE IN SURVEY OF TRENTON'S AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES**

TRENTON, NJ, July 15, 2011: The Trenton Historical Society (THS) is soliciting input from current and former African-American residents for a survey of historic sites associated with Trenton's African-American community. The purpose of the survey is to expand knowledge of the city's African-American history through identification of related buildings and sites. Historical research and personal interviews will be used to identify historic sites.

Previously identified African-American historic sites in the city include the Bellevue Avenue Colored School and the Higbee Street (John T. Nixon) School, which are both listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The survey will include these and other previously identified historic sites, but the primary goal of the survey is to identify places significant in the history of the city's African-American community that have not been previously recognized. Examples include sites associated with important individuals; churches, clubs, and other civic and social organizations; and businesses within and with strong ties to the African-American community. The sites may represent any historical era, from the colonial period through the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s.

THS has contracted with Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc., (RGA) of Cranbury, to complete the survey, which began in May. Representatives of THS and RGA are seeking input for the project from African-American civic organizations and members of the Black community. Survey forms are available in the Trentoniana Room of the Trenton Public Library and on the THS website,

~ MORE ~

<http://www.trentonhistory.org/AfriAmerSurvey.htm>. The deadline for participating in the survey is August 8, 2011.

Information gathered during the survey will be compiled into an inventory, and the final report will be made available at local public and university libraries and on the THS website. The completed inventory will provide THS with a list of African-American historic sites in the City of Trenton, which will be used to direct future research and preservation efforts in the city. The survey is funded by a project grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State.

For additional information regarding the survey or to set up an interview, please contact Jennifer Leynes, Senior Architectural Historian at RGA, 609-655-0692 x.314 or [jleynes@richardgrubb.com](mailto:jleynes@richardgrubb.com).

-End-

TRENTON

## Info sought for black history survey

The Trenton Historical Society (THS) is seeking input from African-American civic organizations and community leaders and members for a survey of historic sites associated with Trenton's black community. The survey aims to expand knowledge of the city's African-American history through identification of related buildings and sites. Historical research and consultation with past and present African-American residents of Trenton will be used to identify historic sites. The survey project is funded by a project grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission. Previously identified African-American historic sites in the city include the Bellevue Avenue Colored School and the Higbee Street School, which are both listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This survey will include these and other previously identified historic sites, but will focus on identifying places significant in Trenton's black history that have not previously been recognized. Examples include sites associated with important individuals; churches, clubs and other civic and social organizations; and businesses within and with strong ties to the African-American community. The sites may represent any historical era.

THS has contracted with Richard Grubb & Associates (RGA) of Cranbury to complete the survey. Representatives of THS and RGA will seek information from African-American civic organizations and members of the black community. Survey forms will be distributed at informational meetings and will be available in the Trentonian Room of the Trenton Public Library and on the THS website, [trentonhistory.org/AfriAmerSurvey.htm](http://trentonhistory.org/AfriAmerSurvey.htm). Information gathered will be compiled into an inventory, and the final report will be made available at area public and university libraries and on the THS website. The information will help THS direct future research and preservation efforts in the city. For more information, contact Jennifer Leynes, senior architectural historian, at (609) 655-0692, ext.314 or [jleynes@richardgrubb.com](mailto:jleynes@richardgrubb.com).

## Input sought for historic site survey

The City of Trenton is home to a diverse array of historic sites. From colonial-era landmarks like the Old Barracks and Trent House to examples of its industrial past like the Roebling complex, Trenton's landmark sites span centuries and tell a diversity of stories about the city's past.

Less well known, but equally important, are historic sites that tell the story of Trenton's African-American residents. The significance of a small number of sites has been documented through listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

They include two schools erected for the free public education of African-American children in the city: the Higbee Street School (1857) and the Bellevue Avenue Colored School (1883). The Carver Center YMCA on Fowler Avenue is a Trenton City Landmark, its significance tied to its long usage as a community center for the African-American community.

Despite those examples, much of Trenton's African-American history remains undocumented. Questions abound from every historical era and from all areas of community life:

- Where did African Americans live in the 18th and 19th centuries?
- What part did African Americans play during the Civil War?
- Where did African-American jazz musicians play during the 1920s?
- What prominent local businesses have served the black community for generations?
- Where did Willie Mays board while playing for the Trenton Giants in 1950?
- What sites are associated with the Civil Rights Movement in the city?

The Trenton Historical Society seeks answers to those and other questions about the history of Trenton's African-American community. Last spring, THS initiated a project to expand knowledge of Trenton's black historic sites through historical research and a survey of the city's current and past African-American residents.

The project, which is funded by a project grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State, seeks to identify places that matter to the black community, with a focus on identifying previously unrecognized or underappreciated sites. Examples include sites associated with important individuals: churches, clubs, and other civic and social organizations; and businesses within and with strong ties to the African-American community. Sites may represent any historical era, from the colonial period through the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s.

THS trustees and volunteers have been conducting interviews with local residents over the past few months in an effort to identify places that matter to the community. Some interesting facts have already emerged that beg for more information. Why was Wilow Street referred to as Burma Road in the early 20th century? When did Spring Street become home to the city's African-American professionals and other prominent citizens?

Input from past and present Trenton residents is being sought to identify additional places that matter to the African-American community. People who would like to share their memories are invited to participate in one of two ways: through oral interviews with THS volunteers, or by completing a survey form describing a site with importance



The Carver Center YMCA on Fowler Avenue is a Trenton landmark, its significance tied to its history as a community center for the African-American community. (Photo courtesy of the Trenton Historical Society.)

to the city's African-American residents. Survey forms are available in the Trentoniana Room of the Trenton Public Library or online through the THS website, [trentonhistory.org/AfriAmerSurvey.htm](http://trentonhistory.org/AfriAmerSurvey.htm).

Volunteers are also available to meet with individuals or with civic organizations, churches, or fraternal groups.

The staff of Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc., a cultural resource consulting firm in Cranbury, is working with THS to complete the survey. Individuals or groups desiring to schedule an interview may contact Jennifer Leynes, Senior Architectural Historian at RGA, at (609) 655-0692, Ext. 314 or [jleynes@richardgrubb.com](mailto:jleynes@richardgrubb.com).

[richardgrubb.com](mailto:richardgrubb.com).

Leynes is also available to answer questions about the project.

THS and RGA will collect survey responses until the end of July. RGA will compile information gathered during the survey into an inventory of historic sites, and the final report will be made available at local public and university libraries and on the THS website.

The completed inventory will provide THS and the Trenton community with a list of African-American historic sites in the City of Trenton, which will be used to direct future research and preservation efforts in the city.



The Bellevue Avenue Colored School was established in 1883. The Trenton Historical Society is looking for volunteers who can help it document the city's African-American history. (Staff photo by Jim Carlucci.)

TRENTON

## Deadline near in history survey

Current and former community members are encouraged to share their knowledge of Trenton's African-American sites for a survey being compiled by the Trenton Historical Society. The purpose of the survey is to expand knowledge of the city's African-American history through identification of related buildings and sites. Historical research and personal interviews will be used to identify historic sites. Previously identified African-American historic sites in the city include the Bellevue Avenue Colored School and the Higbee Street (John T. Nixon) School, which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The survey will include these and other previously identified historic sites, but the primary goal of the survey is to identify places significant in the history of the city's African-American community that have not been previously recognized. Examples include sites associated with important individuals; churches, clubs, and other civic and social organizations; and businesses within and with strong ties to the African-American community. The sites may represent any historical era, from the colonial period through the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. THS has contracted with Richard Grubb

& Associates Inc. (RGA) of Cranbury to complete the survey, which began in May. Representatives of THS and RGA are seeking details for the project from African-American civic organizations and members of the black community. Survey forms are available in the Trentonian Room of the Trenton Public Library and on the THS website, [trentonhistory.org/AfriAmerSurvey.htm](http://trentonhistory.org/AfriAmerSurvey.htm). The deadline for participating in the survey is Aug. 8. Information gathered during the survey will be compiled into an inventory, and the final report will be made available at local public and university libraries and on the THS website. The completed inventory will provide THS with a list of African-American historic sites in Trenton, which will be

### **Help historical society map out Trenton's black history**

The Trenton Historical Society (THS) is conducting a survey to identify African-American historic sites, the goal of which is to expand the public's knowledge of the city's black history from the colonial period through the civil rights era.

African-Americans have been integral to Trenton's history since the colonial period, when slaves lived here. During the 19th century, a small but vital population lived in the vicinity of Perry Street, where the first black church, Mount Zion AME, was founded in 1811. Later, churches, schools, businesses, social and entertainment clubs, fraternities and sororities served the religious, educational, social and civic needs of the community. After World War I, the Great Migration brought increasing numbers of African-Americans from Virginia and the Carolinas to Trenton, with many settling in the area roughly bounded by Spring Street, Willow Street, Bellevue Avenue and Prospect Street.

Some sites have been identified — the Higbee Street (John T. Nixon) and Bellevue Avenue Colored (Old Lincoln) schools, for example. (Both are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.) However, many others remain unrecognized. By identifying additional sites, THS hopes to promote the preservation of the city's African-American history.

Those living in Trenton and surrounding areas who have information about sites that have meaning for the African-American community can complete a survey online at [trentonhistory.org](http://trentonhistory.org), or contact project historian Jennifer Leynes at (609) 655-0692, ext. 314, or [jleynes@trentonhistory.org](mailto:jleynes@trentonhistory.org). The survey is funded through a project grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State.

*Helen M. Shannon,  
Trenton*

*The writer is president of the Trenton Historical Society.*

# OPINION

Trenton, New Jersey

The Times

## EDITORIALS

### Taking pride

Until the dawning of the civil rights movement, Trenton perpetuated de facto segregation of its black and white citizens. Even with that division, however, the city's African-American residents have played an equal part in the shaping of Trenton since its earliest Colonial days.

That role is about to be recognized and celebrated with an African-American Pride Festival Saturday in Cadwalader Park.

Organizers say the festival continues the legacy of the African-American culture's Juneteenth celebration. The goal, they say, is to inspire an appreciation for the diversity in Trenton's community and honor the contributions of African-American residents.

This celebration of African culture, featuring music, food and arts, is a good step toward reviving the stories of Africa and Africans in America, affirming the traditions of a heritage that was so cruelly torn away. Having survived centuries in spite of all the cruel efforts to erase it, that culture is in danger again.

Talking about the past, and the present, with Times reporter Matt Fair last week, former city Police Chief Ernie Williams lamented the lack of opportunity for Trenton's young black residents as the structure of

community has weakened.

The community's links to history — the history of Africa and the more recent history of Trenton — have weakened along with it.

Stories of the past, and pride in those stories, are essential guides for the future. The stories are part of the narrative of life, making up a fabric that strengthens with each individual strand. Left on their own, loose threads quickly fray.

While festival organizers look forward to joining the whole community in the celebration they hope will become an annual event, the Trenton Historical Society is endeavoring to identify city sites that have figured in African-American history. Recognizing those places is part of the historical society's effort to preserve that history and render a more complete picture of the contributions and influence of the African-American community.

Taken together, the festival and history project represent important steps in defining Trenton. Despite a history of institutional segregation, the story of Trenton is thoroughly integrated with the achievements and contributions of its African-American residents.

It's about time for a better appreciation — and celebration — of that.



**APPENDIX D**

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**SURVEY RESULTS**





## **SURVEY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON**

The Trenton Historical Society invites members of Trenton's African-American community, past and present, to submit information regarding historic sites - places that matter - for inclusion in this survey. Please answer all questions as completely as possible to assist in the identification and documentation of the historic site.

### **Part I. Information about your Historic Site.**

\*Name of Historic Site:

\*Describe the Site and its importance to Trenton's African-American community.

For example, was it the site of an important event? Is it associated with a significant individual, business, or community organization?

\*Address or location of the Site:

Neighborhood and/or Ward (if known):

Ownership of Site (if known):

Other sources of information (individual, group, written sources, oral history, etc.) about the Site:

Is the Site in danger of being lost due to development, neglect, or other reasons? Please explain.

\*Required information.

# **SURVEY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON**

## **Part II. Information about you.**

All information gathered through this survey will be published anonymously. Please provide your contact information if you are willing to discuss your Historic Site further.

\*Name:

Address:

Address 2:

City/Town:

State:

ZIP:

Country:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

What is your age?

- ☐ Under 25 years
- ☐ 25 40 years
- ☐ Over 40 years

Thank you for your participation. This survey is funded by a project grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State. Surveys may also be completed online at <http://www.trentonhistory.org/AfriAmerSurvey.htm>. If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact Jennifer Leynes of Richard Grubb & Associates, [jleynes@richardgrubb.com](mailto:jleynes@richardgrubb.com) or (609) 655-0692 x314.

Please return all surveys to the Trentoniana Room of the Trenton Public Library, 120 Academy Street, Trenton, or mail to:

Jennifer Leynes  
Richard Grubb & Associates  
P.O. Box 434  
Cranbury, New Jersey 08512

## Summary of Results of Online Survey

This table contains verbatim responses to the online survey, which was conducted through SurveyMonkey.com from May to July 2011. Some responses contain typographical and/or factual errors.

<b>Name of Historic Site (Address):</b>	<b>Describe the Site and its importance to Trenton's African-American community.</b>	<b>Other sources of information about the Site:</b>
Trenton Pottery (Clinton Avenue)	They made plates; cups	It torn down
Rivera School (Montgomery Street)	This school, called Lincoln School, served colored students exclusively in the 1940's. And Patton J. Hill served there as our nation's first African American, middle school principal of an integrated school.	No response.
First Presbyterian Church of Trenton (120 East State Street)	Old First Church accepted African as members of the church during the colonial period. Documentation of these members can be found in the church archives.	John Allen is currently the pastor of the church and records of the information.
Trenton Barracks (John Fitch Way)	Do Not Know	
46 Colonial Avenue	this location is in reference to the underground railroad	George Washington stayed overnight after crossing the Delaware River
Hedgepeth Williams Middle School (301 Gladstone Avenue)	Hedgepeth Williams v Board of Education Trenton NJ 1944. This case was /is a New Jersey Supreme Court bench mark. The state upheld the New Jersey School law of 1881 which stated local school districts could not establish seperate schools based on race, color, or creed. This infamous case happened and played out right here in this great city.	School Libray, web, and Oral history
Carver Center (Fowler Street)	Headquarters for Civil Rights Groups	No response.
St. Monica's Episcopal Church (93 Spring Street)	St. Monica's was an Episcopal church in the city of Trenton with an African-American congregation.	Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey, West State St., Trenton, NJ, has historical information about this church.

## Summary of Results of Online Survey (continued)

Spring Street	<p>Spring between Willow and Prospect was the home of many Black professionals and entrepreneurs. The street was a complete community. You didn't have to leave for services or to buy groceries or to get your dry cleaning done. You could eat at a family restaurant with linen napkins and tablecloths (Bert and Vern Carnegie), get your hair done, get a haircut at Dinkin's barber shop, buy women's clothing at Jeanette Holmes' Dress Shop, get an ice cream cone at Alec Gas' Spot. My teachers lived there (From Jr. High School #5). Dentists, doctors, lawyers lived there: Dr. Granger, Dr. Broadus, Dr. Hayling, Dr. Sullivan. Doug Palmer's father did my family's tax preparation. The grocery stores were not Black businesses but they made the neighborhood self sufficient: Walton's was a grocery and butcher. Nicholson's had groceries. Duffield's sold some groceries but mostly candy and snacks - I wasn't allowed to go there. Mamie's Beauty Salon - and others I don't remember. Willie Mitchell, whose restaurant was on Barnes Street still lives at 126 Spring St. and would be a wonderful and probably willing source of information. There was an undertaker at 131 Spring St. - Newsome's, and a Pharmacy (not Black owned) around the corner - corner of Passaic and Calhoun Sts. All this made the neighborhood complete. We shopped for food at the A&amp;P on Prospect St. but if we needed something quickly, Spring St. had it. I almost forgot the Shoemaker, Mr. DeSanctis. Those 2 long blocks were a complete community. Florence Dobyns, who lived at 236 Spring was the first Black supervising RN at Trenton Psychiatric Hospital. I was born at Mercer Hospital in 1946 so my experiences are not as old as some. My parents who would have been able to tell you who Willie Mays stayed with are gone. I know it was a boarding house in my block - the 100 block. I'm going to find out the family last name of the dry cleaner, someone is still alive. One of the first Black police officers in Trenton also lived on Spring St. - last name Holmes, lived at 124. John Mack, an electrician, lived at 122. St. Monica's Episcopal Church (Black) was on Spring st. Rose Richardson knows that history - I was a child when I attended.</p>	<p>Dr. Leslie Hayling, Willie Mitchell, my contemporaries: Theresa Bowman Downing, Pat Young - ?, Cynthia Taylor, Brenda Dobyns I'm glad to know there is interest and I'm available to give as much info as I can remember...</p>
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**APPENDIX E**

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**INVENTORY FORMS**



## Inventory Form Key

<b>Resource Name:</b>	Name of site or district	<b>Survey #:</b>
<b>Alternate Name(s):</b>	Alternate names	
<b>Location:</b>	Street address (if known)	
<b>Ownership:</b>	Public/Private/Unknown No response for properties no longer extant	
<b>Description:</b>	Architectural description of property, if extant	
<b>Date of Construction:</b>	Date building was erected, if known No response for properties no longer extant	
<b>Period of Significance:</b>	Period during which activities associated with African-American historic events or individuals occurred at the site. In cases where an institution (e.g. church, social organization) has a period of significance longer than its association with the subject building, two periods of significance are indicated, one for the building and one for the institution. For example, the existing Shiloh Baptist Church building was constructed in 1972, but the congregation dates to circa 1880; therefore, it has two periods of significance: 1972-present (building) and c. 1880-present (organization).	
<b>Brief Statement of Significance:</b>	Brief history of the site and its significance to the African-American community in Trenton.	
<b>Previous Identification:</b>	NR: National Register of Historic Places SR: New Jersey Register of Historic Places SHPO Opinion: State Historic Preservation Officer Opinion of Eligibility TLC: Trenton Landmarks Commission BHSNJ: Black Historic Sites in New Jersey NJHSI: New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory (North Ward Survey)	
<b>Source(s):</b>	Sources used to develop statement of significance. Refer to report text for complete bibliographic information.	
<b>Photo:</b>	Current photo, if available	



# INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**District Name:** Spring Street

**Survey #:** 01

**Location:** Spring Street between Calhoun and Willow Streets

**Description:** The section of Spring Street extending from Calhoun Street to Willow Street is comprised of two- to three-story frame and brick dwellings. With the exception of some infill located near Willow Street, the houses in the eastern section of the district were erected before 1870 and include a number of Italianate-style dwellings. The western section contains buildings constructed primarily between 1870 and 1890; these include a number of Second Empire-style dwellings. The individual buildings are in varying states of preservation; original bracketed cornices survive on many houses, but replacement windows and siding are commonplace. Despite the changes, the street has largely retained its continuity and character.

**Period of Significance:** c. 1925-c.1970

**Brief Statement of Significance:** Spring Street was the center of Trenton's middle class African-American community during the mid-twentieth century. Census records indicate that the district rapidly transformed during the 1920s: in 1920, only one family on Spring Street was identified as non-white, but by 1930, the residents were predominantly identified as "colored" or "mulatto." In 1938, the Community Branch YMCA, which served the city's Black residents, moved from Willow Street to 105 Spring Street (Survey #02), where it remained until the former Sunlight Elks Lodge on Fowler Street (Survey #07) was purchased in 1944.

Spring Street remained a vital center for the community during the 1940s and 1950s. *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, a publication that assisted African-American travelers to find accommodations during the era of segregation, included among its listings in the 1949 edition two tourist homes, one restaurant, a beauty parlor, and a barber shop on Spring Street. The Sanborn insurance map published the following year illustrated one drugstore, two restaurants, two auto repair shops, a day nursery, funeral home, and twelve stores on Spring Street. A printing shop was also located at the rear of 34 Spring Street during this period. The map also shows St. Monica's Episcopal Church (Survey #03), which was constructed around 1930.

Residents' recollections about Spring Street reflect the importance of the neighborhood to the African-American community through the 1950s. One former resident's response to the online survey captured its character well:

Spring between Willow and Prospect was the home of many Black professionals and entrepreneurs. The street was a complete community. You didn't have to leave for services or to buy groceries or to get your dry cleaning done. You could eat at a family restaurant with linen napkins and tablecloths (Bert and Vern Carnegie), get your hair done, get a haircut at Dinkin's barber shop, buy women's clothing at Jeanette Holmes' Dress Shop, get an ice cream cone at Alec Gas' Spot. My teachers lived there (from Jr. High School #5 [Lincoln School, Survey #24]). Dentists, doctors, lawyers lived there: Dr. Granger, Dr. Broadus, Dr. Hayling, Dr. Sullivan (Beard, personal communication, 20 July 2011).

## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**District Name:** Spring Street

**Survey #:** 01

Notable residents of Spring Street included NAACP attorney Robert Queen, who argued the Hedgpeeth-Williams desegregation case before the New Jersey Supreme Court, and David Dinkins, who grew up in Trenton and became the first Black mayor of New York City. In 1950, Willie Mays boarded on Spring Street while playing for Trenton's minor league baseball team, the Trenton Giants (see Survey #26).

**Previous  
Identification:**

**Source(s):** Beard, personal communication (2011)  
Beers, Map of the City of Trenton (1870)  
Campbell, personal communication (2011)  
Green, *The Negro Motorist Green Book* (1949)  
Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Maps of Trenton, New Jersey* (1890, 1950)  
Trentoniana Collection, Vertical File: YMCA Community Branch (Colored)  
United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules (1920, 1930)

**Photo:**



# INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

District Name: Spring Street

Survey #: 01



# INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

District Name: Spring Street

Survey #: 01



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** YMCA Community Branch

**Survey #:** 02

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** 105 Spring Street

**Ownership:** Private

**Description:** This three-story, three-bay, Italianate-style brick dwelling has a prominent bracketed cornice. The building has a side gable roof. The recessed entry is offset and features a paneled door with rectangular transom set beneath a flat stone lintel. The windows have stone lintels and sills.

**Date of Construction:** c. 1880

**Period of Significance:** 1938-1944

**Brief Statement of Significance:** The building at 105 Spring Street served as the Trenton YMCA's first facility for African-Americans. As early as 1922, local Black residents had begun lobbying the YMCA to establish a branch to serve their community. A group led by lawyer Robert Queen formed a Committee of 100 to raise \$1000 for the project. In 1927, the Trenton YMCA began "community work" for Black residents, and during the early 1930s the YMCA utilized space in the Grand Masonic Temple (Survey #14) and the Sunlight Elks Lodge (Survey #07). In 1938, the YMCA programs for African-Americans were moved to this building on Spring Street, an area that then served as the center of Trenton's African-American community (see Survey #01). The building functioned as the YMCA Community Branch until 1944, when the Sunlight Elks Lodge was purchased and renamed the Carver Center. By 1950, the former YMCA on Spring Street was being used as a store; today, it appears to have reverted to its original use as a private home.

**Previous Identification:**

**Source(s):** Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Maps of Trenton, New Jersey* (1950)  
Trentoniana Collection, Vertical File: YMCA Community Branch (Colored)

# INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** YMCA Community Branch

**Survey #:** 02

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** St. Monica's Episcopal Church      **Survey #:** 03

**Alternate Name(s):** St. Monica's Mission for Colored People

**Location:** 93 Spring Street

**Ownership:** Private

**Description:** This one-story, gable front church is constructed of concrete block and has a stuccoed façade. The central doorway contains paired wood doors surmounted by a gabled hood with knee brackets. Pointed arch window openings flank the doorway, and a circular opening is located in the gable end. The windows have been enclosed.

**Date of Construction:** 1935

**Period of** 1935-c. 1960 (building)

**Significance:** 1919-c. 1960 (organization)

**Brief Statement of Significance:** St. Monica's Mission for Colored People was established in 1919 as a mission congregation of the Trinity Cathedral. In 1920, the church purchased property on Spring Street, worshipping in an existing building on the site. An adjacent parcel was purchased in 1925. By 1929, the congregation numbered about 150 members. In 1935, a three-story dwelling located on the church property was removed and the existing one-story church constructed. St. Monica's was the first Black Episcopal congregation in Trenton. The congregation was merged with that of St. Michael's Episcopal on Warren Street around 1960.

**Previous Identification:**

**Source(s):** Dennis Bertland Associates, North Ward Historic Resource Survey (1981)  
Trenton Historical Society, *A History of Trenton, 1679-1929* (1929)

## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** St. Monica's Episcopal Church

**Survey #:** 03

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Tuxedo Club

**Survey #:** 04

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** Bank Street; New Rose Street

**Ownership:**

**Description:** No longer extant

**Date of  
Construction:**

**Period of  
Significance:** 1936-c.1995

**Brief Statement of  
Significance:** The Tuxedo Club was founded in 1936 and incorporated a year later. In 1943, the club purchased a three-story building at 63 Bank Street, at the corner of Willow Street, where the club had a lounge and meeting rooms. The Tuxedo Club served as a meeting place for social and political purposes, and many of the city's respected Black citizens were members. The club was not only a social organization, but it also participated in community service projects in Trenton. An associated ladies' group, the Tuxedorettes, was also formed. In 1960, a road project forced the Tuxedo Club to move, and new headquarters were constructed on Old Rose Street. The club operated into the 1990s at the new location. In 2006, the City of Trenton purchased the building and razed it as part of the New Rose Street redevelopment area.

**Previous  
Identification:**

**Source(s):** Washington, *The Quest for Equality* (1993)

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Shiloh Baptist Church

**Survey #:** 05

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** 340 Calhoun Street

**Ownership:** Private

**Description:** The two-story, modern church has a full basement and an asymmetrical façade featuring an enframed window wall and three pairs of plate glass doors. A 65-foot steeple with a colored glass window wall is located on the south side of the building. The exterior is clad in brick, and the roof is flat. A monumental staircase is located on the façade.

**Date of Construction:** 1972

**Period of Significance:** 1972-present (building)  
c. 1880-present (church)

**Brief Statement of Significance:** Shiloh Baptist Church is the city's oldest African-American Baptist congregation. The first groups of Black Baptists were formed in the city around 1880, with Shiloh formally organized in 1896. The congregation did not have a church building until 1902, when a one-story building was constructed on Belvidere Street, at the rear of the present church lot. In 1918, a new stone edifice was constructed on Calhoun Street. Four years later, an adjacent house was purchased and converted for use as the Trenton Colored Day Nursery, which in 1929 reportedly provided childcare services to approximately 350 children monthly. The program was one of only five in the state in 1932. Shiloh Baptist has had only three pastors since 1904. Reverend John A. White (1870-1952) became pastor of Shiloh in 1904; he was a founding member and the first president of the Trenton branch of the NAACP, formed in 1913. After White retired in 1946, Reverend S. Howard Woodson, Jr. (1916-1999) became pastor. Woodson was a leader in the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, serving as president of both the Trenton and State chapters of the NAACP. In 1962, he became the first African-American elected to Trenton City Council. Two years later, he was elected to the New Jersey General Assembly, where he served as Minority Leader in the 1968-69 session and was elected Speaker in the 1974-75 session. When chosen as Speaker in 1974, he was the first African-American to head a state legislative body anywhere in the nation. Shiloh Baptist Church has a museum and archival collection that chronicles the history of both the church and the larger African-American community in Trenton.

**Previous Identification:** NJHSI: 1111-216

**Source(s):** *The Crisis*, "A Page of Branch History, 1912-1919" (1919)  
Griffiths, *A History of Baptists in New Jersey* (1904)  
Lacy, personal communication (2011)  
New Jersey Legislature, Assembly Resolution No. 197 (1999)  
New Jersey Conference of Social Work, *The Negro in New Jersey* (1932)  
Trenton Historical Society, *A History of Trenton, 1679-1929* (1929)

## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Shiloh Baptist Church

**Survey #:** 05

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Union Baptist Church [Former] **Survey #:** 06

**Alternate Name(s):** Trenton Church of Christ of the Apostolic Faith

**Location:** 42 Belvidere Street

**Ownership:** Unknown

**Description:** This one-story, gable front masonry building has a central arched entry containing paired doors set beneath a fanlight. The door is flanked by tall arched window openings. The façade has been covered with simulated masonry, and the side elevations are parged. The building has a raised basement.

**Date of Construction:** c. 1870

**Period of** c. 1890-1925 (building)

**Significance:** c. 1887-present (church)

**Brief Statement of Significance:** The Union Baptist Church was founded around 1887, when a group of African-American residents began meeting in rented rooms on Academy Street. The congregation was formally organized as the Union Baptist Church in the following year. For a number of years, the church occupied this building on Belvidere Street, which was reportedly a former one-room schoolhouse. In 1925, the congregation laid the cornerstone for a new, stone building on Pennington Avenue (Survey #13). By 1950, the Trenton Church of Christ of the Apostolic Faith had acquired this church building; the Church of Christ is also an African-American religious organization.

**Previous Identification:**

**Source(s):** Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Map of Trenton, New Jersey* (1908, 1927, 1950)  
Trentoniana Collection, Vertical File: Churches – Union Baptist  
Union Baptist Church, *History of Union Baptist Church* (1987)

## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Union Baptist Church [Former]

**Survey #:** 06

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Carver Center

**Survey #:** 07

**Alternate Name(s):** Sunlight Elks Lodge; Carver Branch YMCA

**Location:** 40 Fowler Street

**Ownership:** Private

**Description:** This two-story, seven-bay, Colonial Revival-style brick building has a central recessed entry with paired doors set beneath a fanlight. The symmetrical façade has 6/6 double-hung sash windows with wood surrounds and stone sills. The building has a cast stone cornice with dentils below the parapet, which has a stone cap. J. Osborne Hunt, a prominent Trenton architect, designed the building. The rear section of the building, which is also constructed of brick, predates the main block.

**Date of Construction:** Main section, 1927; gymnasium, c. 1915

**Period of Significance:** 1915-present

**Brief Statement of Significance:** The Carver Center has served as a meeting place for a variety of social and community organizations since its construction. The oldest section of the building was constructed circa 1915 by the Sunlight Elks Lodge at the rear of an existing dwelling that had been used as a clubhouse. That building was removed in 1927, and the existing, two-story building erected on Fowler Street. In 1944, the property was acquired by the Y.M.C.A. to serve the Black community, replacing its facility on Spring Street (Survey #02). The building served as a social center for the community, hosting nationally known acts like Cab Calloway and Fats Waller, as well as a meeting place for organizations including the State Conference of the NAACP and the New Jersey Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. The latter organization, founded in Trenton in 1915, acquired the property in 1975.

**Previous Identification:** SHPO Opinion: 9/13/1993  
TLC: 1980  
NJHSI: 1111-217  
BHSNJ 1111-BS-2

**Source(s):** New Jersey Historical Commission, *Black Historic Sites in New Jersey* (1984)  
New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc. (n.d.)  
Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Maps of Trenton, New Jersey* (1908, 1927)  
Trentoniana Collection, Vertical File: YMCA Carver Center

## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Carver Center

**Survey #:** 07

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Dr. Henry J. Austin House

**Survey #:** 08

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** 96 Bellevue Avenue

**Ownership:** Private

**Description:** This three-story, three-bay brick rowhouse has a prominent pressed metal cornice. The offset doorway has been partially enclosed, the original paired doors and transom replaced by a modern door and vertical wood siding. The door and window openings have brick segmental arches with terra cotta detail.

**Date of Construction:** c. 1880

**Period of Significance:** c. 1922-1959

**Brief Statement of Significance:** Dr. Henry J. Austin was significant as a Black physician and community leader during the mid-twentieth century. Born in 1888 in Rahway, New Jersey Austin was raised in Princeton and graduated from Lincoln University in 1908. Austin earned his M.D. from Howard University in 1919 and returned to Trenton to practice medicine in 1922. In addition to his successful career as a physician in the African-American community, Austin served as a leader in a number of local organizations. In 1941, the Trenton chapter of the NAACP was reorganized with Austin as its president; Austin was serving as the chapter's president in 1944 when the landmark Hedgepeth-Williams school desegregation case was decided.

**Previous Identification:**

**Source(s):** Henry J. Austin Health Center, "About Us" (2011)  
Washington, *The Quest for Equality* (1993)

# INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Dr. Henry J. Austin House

**Survey #:** 08

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Bellevue Avenue Colored School

**Survey #:** 09

**Alternate Name(s):** Old Lincoln School; Public School #14; King David Lodge #15 F&AM

**Location:** 81 Bellevue Avenue

**Ownership:** Private

**Description:** The two-story, Italianate-style school building has two gable front sections with widely overhanging eaves; the original brackets have been removed. The building is constructed of brick but has been faced with simulated masonry. Tall, narrow window openings have stone drip moldings and sills. The offset door has a gabled hood with Italianate brackets encased in siding; the transom over the paired replacement doors has been covered. The building was designed by Trenton architect William B. Thines.

**Date of Construction:** 1883

**Period of Significance:** 1883-present

**Brief Statement of Significance:** This school was constructed in 1883 by the Trenton Board of Education for the city's African-American children, replacing the 1872 Ringold Street school. The Bellevue Avenue Colored School was erected after the New Jersey Legislature passed the School Desegregation Act of 1881, which gave Black parents the option of enrolling their children in previously white-only schools. The construction of the two-room Bellevue Avenue school only two years after passage of the act reflected the reality of a segregated school system for African-American children in Trenton. The school was expanded in 1888 and renamed Lincoln School in 1891. In 1923, the building was replaced by the "new" Lincoln School at Brunswick Avenue and Montgomery Street. By 1928, the population of the Lincoln School was overflowing, and some students were moved back into the Old Lincoln School. The school continued in use as a facility for Black children until the public schools were desegregated in 1946. The building was acquired by the King David Lodge in 1949. The Lodge, which is affiliated with the Prince Hall Freemasons, was formed in 1875 and met during the early twentieth century at the first Shiloh Baptist Church building on Belvidere Avenue. Thus, the building continues to serve the African-American community as a Masonic lodge.

**Previous Identification:** NR: 1/2/1997  
SR: 4/26/1996  
BHSNJ: 1111-BS-1

**Source(s):** Cooper, *Footprints of Prince Hall Masonry in New Jersey* (1957)  
Hunter, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Bellevue Avenue Colored School (1996)  
New Jersey Historical Commission, *Black Historic Sites in New Jersey* (1984)  
Washington, *In Search of a Community's Past: The Black Community in Trenton, New Jersey, 1860-1900* (1990)

## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Bellevue Avenue Colored School

**Survey #:** 09

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Union Republican Club

**Survey #:** 10

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** 31 Bellevue Avenue

**Ownership:** Private

**Description:** This two-story, three-bay vernacular rowhouse has an offset door with enclosed transom. The exterior has been covered with aluminum siding, and windows are modern replacements.

**Date of Construction:** c. 1870

**Period of Significance:** c. 1870-?

**Brief Statement of Significance:** During the Reconstruction period following the Civil War, Republican clubs were established by African-American communities throughout the nation. In Trenton, at least three such clubs existed during this period. The Union Republican Club was established around 1870 and met at 31 Bellevue Avenue; in addition to engaging in political discussions and advocating for the community's interests, the club participated in parades, picnics, and rallies. It is unclear how long the Union Republican Club was active in the community; it is also not presently known whether this building was owned by the club or whether it was a private home that was used for meetings.

**Previous Identification:**

**Source(s):** Washington, *In Search of a Community's Past* (1990)

## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Union Republican Club

**Survey #:** 10

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Higbee Street School

**Survey #:** 11

**Alternate Name(s):** Bellevue Avenue School; John T. Nixon School; School #3

**Location:** 20 Bellevue Avenue

**Ownership:** Public (City of Trenton)

**Description:** This is a two-story, gable front Greek Revival-style brick school. The gable end is pedimented, and a band of trim continues around the building under the eaves. Entrances are located in the outer bays; the western doorway has been enclosed with brick. Three tall, narrow windows are located on the first and second floor façade. The window and door openings have all been covered with plywood. The building was designed by the architectural firm of Evernham and Hill.

**Date of Construction:** 1857

**Period of Significance:** 1857-1872

**Brief Statement of Significance:** The Higbee Street School was the first educational institution specifically constructed for the free public education of African-American students in Trenton and among the earliest such schools built in New Jersey. The Trenton School Board built five Greek Revival-style schools in 1856, employing design concepts promoted by contemporary education reformers. As such, the Higbee Street School is distinguished among the state's few surviving schools for Black children because of its progressive design. In 1872, the student population outgrew the facility and moved into temporary quarters while the new Bellevue Avenue Colored School (Survey #09) was under construction.

**Previous Identification:** NR: 4/14/1995  
SR: 3/3/1995  
TLC: 1/6/1977  
NJHSI: 1111-223

**Source(s):** Grumet, National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Higbee Street School (1994)

## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Higbee Street School

**Survey #:** 11

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church

**Survey #:** 12

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** 306 Willow Street

**Ownership:** Private

**Description:** This stone, gable front church has a central projecting tower with crenellation. The door and window openings are arched with prominent drip moldings. The doors are paired plate glass replacements set beneath an enclosed semicircular fanlight; the windows are stained glass.

**Date of Construction:** 1923

**Period of** 1923-c. 2010 (building)

**Significance:** 1840-present (church)

**Brief Statement of Significance:** St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church was founded in 1840 by a group of African-American Methodists. The church's first edifice on Allen Street was built with the financial support of the United Daughters of the Conference of the A.M.E. Church. In 1867, the church moved to North Willow Street, and in 1880 the cornerstone for a new brick church was laid. The existing stone building was erected in 1923. The church was instrumental in the organization of a local chapter of the Afro-American Council in 1900 and the New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs in 1915. St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church recently relocated to Ewing Township.

**Previous Identification:**

**Source(s):** St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church, "History" (2004)

**Photo:**





## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Union Baptist Church

**Survey #:** 13

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** 301 Pennington Avenue

**Ownership:** Private

**Description:** This two-story, three-bay, gable front stone church has a central projecting bay that extends above the parapet to form a tower. All door and window openings are arched, and the windows are stained glass. The paired vertical board doors have small rectangular windows and strap hinges, and are set beneath a stained glass fanlight featuring a central medallion with the words "Union Baptist Church." A side gable addition was constructed on the building's north elevation circa 1985; the original front staircase was replaced at the same time.

**Date of Construction:** 1925

**Period of** c. 1925-present (building)

**Significance:** c. 1887-present (church)

**Brief Statement of Significance:** The Union Baptist Church was founded around 1887, when a group of African-American residents began meeting in rented rooms on Academy Street. The congregation was formally organized as the Union Baptist Church in the following year. For a number of years, the church occupied a former one-room schoolhouse on Belvidere Street (Survey #06), just a few doors down from Shiloh Baptist Church. In 1925, the congregation laid the cornerstone for a new, stone building on Pennington Avenue. The stained glass windows were installed circa 1950.

**Previous Identification:**

**Source(s):** Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Map of Trenton, New Jersey* (1908)  
Trentoniana Collection, Vertical File: Churches – Union Baptist  
Union Baptist Church, *History of Union Baptist Church* (1987)

## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Union Baptist Church

**Survey #:** 13

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd Church    **Survey #:** 14

**Alternate Name(s):** Grand Lodge Masonic Temple

**Location:** 44 Pennington Avenue

**Ownership:** Private

**Description:** The three-story, temple front Neoclassical-style building has a stone exterior. The upper floors are stepped back from the first floor façade and feature colossal Corinthian columns supporting an entablature and pediment with dentils and modillions. Second floor windows have pedimented surrounds, and third floor windows are arched. The first floor has been modified but retains the central pedimented entry. A large parish center/gymnasium was added to the building's west elevation in 1980. The building was designed by architect Oscar Smith of Atlantic City.

**Date of Construction:** 1928

**Period of Significance:** 1928-present (building)  
1928-1941 (lodge)  
1941-2008 (church)

**Brief Statement of Significance:** The building at 44 Pennington Avenue was constructed in 1928 as the state headquarters of the United Grand Lodge, Free and Accepted Masons, Prince Hall Affiliation, a Black Masonic organization. In 1941, the building was sold to the Catholic Diocese of Trenton, which had formed an all-Black congregation in the same year at the request of its African-American members. Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd was one of two all-Black congregations in the Diocese, the other located at Asbury Park. Two years later, Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd School opened, operating as the city's only Black Catholic parish school until 1997, when it merged with the school at St. Mary's Cathedral. In 2005, the Diocese consolidated the Catholic parishes in Trenton, and Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd was merged with the Church of the Blessed Sacrament. In 2008, the merged congregation moved all services to Blessed Sacrament. Mount Zion A.M.E. Church, one of the city's oldest Black churches, has purchased the property, continuing its long association with the African-American community.

**Previous Identification:** BHSNJ: 1111-BS-3

**Source(s):** Hall and Lee, "Church of Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd" (2008)  
New Jersey Historical Commission, *Black Historic Sites in New Jersey* (1984)  
Trentoniana Collection, Vertical File: African-Americans-Fraternal Orders

## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Our Lady of the Divine Shepherd Church    **Survey #:** 14

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Ringold Street School

**Survey #:** 15

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** Ringold Street

**Ownership:**

**Description:** No longer extant.

**Date of  
Construction:** 1872

**Period of  
Significance:** 1872-1883

**Brief Statement of  
Significance:** The Ringold Street School was constructed in 1872 by the Trenton School Board to replace the overcrowded Higbee Street School. The two-story, two-room brick school served the city's African-American children until 1883, when the Bellevue Avenue Colored School was erected.

**Previous  
Identification:**

**Source(s):** Grumet, National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Higbee Street School (1994)  
Stave, *Achieving Racial Balance: Case Studies of Contemporary School Desegregation* (1995)  
Trenton Historical Society, *A History of Trenton, 1679-1929* (1929)  
Washington, *In Search of a Community's Past: The Black Community in Trenton, New Jersey, 1860-1900* (1990)

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Needham Roberts Childhood Home

**Survey #:** 16

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** 48 Wilson Street

**Ownership:**

**Description:** No longer extant

**Date of  
Construction:**

**Period of** 1901-1919

**Significance:**

**Brief Statement of  
Significance:** The dwelling formerly located at 48 Wilson Street was the boyhood home of Needham Roberts (1901-1949), a hero of World War I. Roberts was the son of Norman and Emma Roberts, North Carolina natives who relocated to New Jersey c. 1890. By 1900, the Roberts family was living on Wilson Street in Trenton. Roberts reportedly enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1917 and was assigned to the 369<sup>th</sup> Infantry. Known as the Harlem Hellfighters, the all-Black regiment was among the first to arrive in France when the United States entered the war. In May 1918, while defending an isolated outpost in the Argonne Forest, Roberts and another African-American soldier, Corporal Henry Johnson, were attacked by a German unit of 20 men. Despite being badly outnumbered and wounded, the two men fought valiantly and repelled the attack. Both men were awarded the Croix de Guerre medal by the French government, becoming the first Americans to receive the honor. Roberts and Johnson returned to the United States as heroes, with a celebration held in Trenton in Roberts' honor upon his return. Despite the initial fanfare, Roberts' contributions were largely unrecognized by the United States government, which posthumously awarded him the Purple Heart in 1996. Little is known of Roberts' life after his return from the war. He married Margaret Burrell of Princeton around 1919, and the couple had a daughter, Juanita, in the same year. Roberts was self-employed as a lecturer in 1920 and completed a speaking tour in Ohio sponsored by the YMCA. He struggled with the lingering effects of his wounds in the years that followed, however, and in 1949 Roberts and his wife committed suicide in Newark, where they then lived. He is buried in Newark. The existing house at 48 Wilson Street was constructed around 1980, replacing the childhood home of Needham Roberts.

**Previous  
Identification:**

**Source(s):** Nelson, *A More Unbending Battle* (2009)  
Trentoniana Collection, Vertical File-Bio: Needham Roberts  
United States Bureau of the Census, Population Schedule (1900, 1910, 1920)

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** P.A.L. Gym

**Survey #:** 17

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** Calhoun Street at Reservoir Street

**Ownership:** Public (City of Trenton)

**Description:** This two-story, brick building has a low-pitched hip roof clad in slate shingles. The building faces south onto Reservoir Street; the seven-bay façade has an offset door, and the door and window openings have stone lintels and sills. All door and window openings are covered with plywood. A two-story, two-bay addition is located at the rear of the building. All window and door openings are covered with plywood.

**Date of Construction:** c. 1915

**Period of Significance:** 1968-c.1975

**Brief Statement of Significance:** The Police Athletic League (P.A.L.) Gym was established around 1968 and gained significance in the African-American community for its boxing program. The program continued at this city-owned site until c. 1975, when it moved to Ewing Street. In the late 1980s, the P.A.L. constructed a community center on Farragut Avenue; boxing continued at this location until the mid-1990s. Historic maps indicate that the Reservoir Street gym was originally constructed by the Trenton Water Works around 1915 as a meter house. It is unclear whether the building was used for recreational purposes prior to 1968; however, the adjacent property to the north was developed as a swimming pool and athletic fields after the City of Trenton constructed a new reservoir on Prospect Street in 1908. Four years later, Washington Roebling donated funds to build a two-story clubhouse at the park, which was then known as Stadium Playground. During the Great Depression, the Works Progress Administration ran recreational programs at the site. In 1937, the Boys Club of Trenton began its first programs serving Black and white school-age boys at the Stadium Playground, which continued until 1954. The Boys Club pool became a point of controversy in the African-American community during the 1930s due to a policy that limited Black youths' access to the facility. The Stadium Playground and swimming pool were removed around 1975.

**Previous Identification:**

**Source(s):** Boys & Girls Club of Trenton and Mercer County, "History" (2011)  
Donnelly Publishing Company, *Donnelly's Yellow Book* (1952, 1954, 1956)  
Donnelly Publishing Company, *Hill-Donnelly Criss-Cross Telephone Directory* (1968, 1970, 1971)  
Howell, personal communication (2011)  
R.L. Polk & Co., *Trenton City Directory* (1952, 1954, 1955, 1957)  
Sanborn Map Company, *Insurance Maps of Trenton* (1927, 1950, 1955)  
*Trenton Evening Times*, "To See Plans of Playground Building" (1912)  
Trentoniana Collection, Vertical File: Clubs – Athletic Leagues  
Trentoniana Collection, Vertical File: Clubs – Boys Club  
Trentoniana Collection, Vertical File: Police Athletic League

## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

Resource Name: P.A.L. Gym

Survey #: 17

Photo:



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** *The Sentinel* Office

**Survey #:** 18

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** 4 North Broad Street

**Ownership:** Private

**Description:** The offices of *The Sentinel* were located on the second floor of this four-story, six-bay, Italianate-style brick commercial building. The building features a prominent cornice with paired brackets and corbelled brickwork. The second floor window openings are arched, and those on the upper floors have segmental arches. The building has three storefronts set beneath a paneled cornice supported on fluted columns. The building entrance is recessed beneath an arched opening and features paired glazed doors with a fanlight.

**Date of Construction:** 1856

**Period of Significance:** 1880-1883

**Brief Statement of Significance:** *The Sentinel* was Trenton's first – and one of the state's earliest – Black newspapers. Founded by Trenton native R. Henri Herbert (1857-1909; see Survey #33), the newspaper was staunchly Republican. Herbert became an influential spokesperson through *The Sentinel* and articles in contemporary publications including the *A.M.E. Church Review* (1884) and *Colored American Magazine* (1907). Herbert's fealty to the Republican party was rewarded with appointments as doorkeeper of the New Jersey Senate (1881-1883) and as commissioner to the New Orleans Cotton Centennial in 1884 and the Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo in 1901. Publication of *The Sentinel* ceased in 1883, when the paper was merged with the *Trenton Herald*. Herbert later operated a cigar business in Trenton. Herbert was a member of the Eclectic Club (Survey #19), which had its club rooms in the upper floors of the same building from 1877-1915.

**Previous Identification:** BHSNJ: 1111-BS-5

**Source(s):** Edwards, *Industries of New Jersey, Part I* (1882)  
New Jersey Historical Commission, *Black Historic Sites in New Jersey* (1984)  
*New York Age*, "R. Henri Herbert Wins Position" (1909)  
Trentoniana Collection, Vertical File: Robert Henri Herbert

## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

Resource Name: *The Sentinel* Office

Survey #: 18

Photo:



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Eclectic Club

**Survey #:** 19

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** 4-6 North Broad Street

**Ownership:** Private

**Description:** The Eclectic Club was located in the upper floors of this four-story, six-bay Italianate-style brick commercial building. The building features a prominent cornice with paired brackets and corbelled brickwork. The second floor window openings are arched, and those on the upper floors have segmental arches. The building has three storefronts set beneath a paneled cornice supported on fluted columns. The building entrance is recessed beneath an arched opening and features paired glazed doors with a fanlight

**Date of Construction:** 1856

**Period of Significance:** 1877-1915

**Brief Statement of Significance:** The Eclectic Club was founded by prominent African-American residents in 1877. Incorporated the following year, the club was notable as an early social organization for the Black elite. From circa 1877 to 1891, the clubhouse was located in rented space at 4 North Broad Street, above G.W. Grant & Son dry goods store. In 1891, the Eclectic Club moved to the third floor of 6 North Broad Street, where it remained until closing in 1915. At the time of its closure, the Eclectic Club was reportedly the oldest organization of its type in the United States in continuous existence and the oldest club in the city. Notable club members included R. Henri Herbert and his brother John, both of whom served as the organization's president. From 1880-1883, the offices of *The Sentinel* (Survey #18), a Black newspaper published by R. Henri Herbert, were also located in this building.

**Previous Identification:**

**Source(s):** Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920* (1990)  
*Trenton Times*, "Eclectic Club, Once Famous, Oldest of All in Trenton, Ends Its Honorable Career" (1915)

## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Eclectic Club

**Survey #:** 19

**Photo file name:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Jackson Hall

**Survey #:** 20

**Alternate Name(s):** African School House; Nightmare Hall

**Location:** Hanover Street

**Ownership:**

**Description:** No longer extant

**Date of  
Construction:**

**Period of  
Significance:** c. 1832-1855

**Brief Statement of  
Significance:** Jackson Hall was the first school established by the Trenton Board of Education for the city's African-American children. Prior to its usage as a schoolhouse, the building had served as a meeting hall for the city's Black residents. By the 1850s, the student population numbered around 60 children, and the building's condition had deteriorated to the point that it was commonly known as "Nightmare Hall." In 1855, this early schoolhouse was razed, and the new Higbee Street School (Survey #11) opened on present-day Bellevue Avenue two years later.

**Previous  
Identification:**

**Source(s):** Grumet, National Register of Historic Places Nomination: Higbee Street School (1994)  
Trenton Historical Society, *A History of Trenton, 1679-1929* (1929)

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** East Hanover Street Cemetery

**Survey #:** 21

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** East Hanover Street

**Ownership:**

**Description:** No longer extant

**Date of Construction:** c. 1775

**Period of** c. 1775-1860

**Significance:**

**Brief Statement of Significance:** The East Hanover Street Cemetery was the earliest known burial place in the City of Trenton for African-American residents. Located adjacent to the Friends' Meeting House, the earliest mention of this burial ground is in a 1779 deed for the property. The Religious Society of Free Africans (later Mount Zion A.M.E. Church; Survey #22) assumed responsibility for the graveyard soon after its inception in 1811, and its members were buried here and in the churchyard until around 1860. In that year, the graveyard was sold and a new African-American burial ground, known as Locust Hill Cemetery, was established on Hart Avenue (Survey #27). When the YWCA was constructed on East Hanover Street in 1925, news stories referred to the existence of a slave cemetery on the site.

**Previous Identification:**

**Source(s):** Tvaryanas, A Historical Survey of the Locust Hill Cemetery (1998)

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Mount Zion A.M.E. Church

**Survey #:** 22

**Alternate Name(s):** Religious Society of Free Africans of the City of Trenton

**Location:** 135 Perry Street

**Ownership:** Private

**Description:** The two-story brick church has a central gable front section flanked by narrow bays containing stairways. The façade is dominated by three pointed arch, stained glass windows with a continuous stone sill in the gable end. The central doorway contains paired replacement doors and is flanked by single doors; all have large transom windows. The stair bays have small windows on the first floor and pointed arch, stained glass windows between the first and second floors.

**Date of Construction:** 1876

**Period of** 1876-2010 (building)

**Significance:** 1811-present (church)

**Brief Statement of Significance:** The Religious Society of Free Africans of the City of Trenton was founded in 1811 as the city's first African-American religious organization. In 1817, the church was reorganized by Bishop Richard Allen and joined the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.), becoming one of the state's earliest A.M.E. congregations. After worshipping in the cooper shop of Sampson Peters (Survey #34) for several years, the congregation purchased the current lot on Perry Street in 1818 and erected a church building a year later. The name was changed in 1834 to Mount Zion. In 1849, the church hosted a statewide convention for Black voting rights. The first church building was enlarged in 1858 and replaced by the existing building in 1876. The new church was referred to in one source as "the cathedral of the New Jersey Conference" of the A.M.E. church (Morgan 1887). The Mount Zion A.M.E. congregation recently moved from this location; the building is now used by the Ebenezer Full Gospel Community Church.

**Previous Identification:** TLC  
BHSNJ: 1111-BS-4

**Source(s):** Morgan, *Morgan's History of the New Jersey Conference of the A.M.E. Church* (1887)  
New Jersey Historical Commission, *Black Historic Sites in New Jersey* (1984)  
Raum, *History of the City of Trenton, New Jersey* (1871)  
Trenton Historical Society, *A History of Trenton, 1679-1929* (1929)  
Wright, *Afro-Americans in New Jersey* (1988)

## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Mount Zion A.M.E. Church

**Survey #:** 22

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** YWCA Montgomery Street Branch

**Survey #:** 23

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** 336-338 North Montgomery Street

**Ownership:** Private

**Description:** This two-story, four-bay patterned brick building has a prominent metal cornice featuring dentils, brackets, and modillions. The outer bays contain arched entries with keystones and imposts; the doors are recessed and set beneath transoms. The second floor window openings in the outer bays are arched; all other windows have stone lintels and sills. The façade has brick corbels above the central second floor windows, and a stone beltcourse extends between the first and second floors.

**Date of Construction:** c. 1900

**Period of Significance:** 1927-1950

**Brief Statement of Significance:** The Montgomery Street Branch of the YWCA opened in 1927 to serve the African-American community. The property was given to the YWCA by the Bible Readers' Aid Society, which had operated the Montgomery Street Mission in the building during the early twentieth century. The YWCA branch was immediately successful, attracting 170 members in the years after its opening. During World War II, the Montgomery Street Branch hosted special events for Black servicemen and sent groups of young women to dances at Fort Dix on a regular basis. In 1944, the YWCA opened its main branch to all women, regardless of race, and in 1950 the Montgomery Street Branch closed and the property was sold.

**Previous Identification:**

**Source(s):** Trenton Historical Society, *A History of Trenton, 1679-1929* (1929)  
YWCA of Trenton, "The Young Women's Christian Association of Trenton, 1904-2004" (2004)

## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** YWCA Montgomery Street Branch

**Survey #:** 23

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Lincoln School

**Survey #:** 24

**Alternate Name(s):** Junior High #5; Luis Munoz-Rivera School

**Location:** 400 North Montgomery Street

**Ownership:** Public (Trenton Board of Education)

**Description:** This two-story, brick school building with Romanesque Revival stylistic elements has gable-front entry pavilions at both ends of the building. The entry pavilions have arched window and door openings and arched corbels at the eaves. A square belltower near the south entrance features triple arch openings on all sides, patterned brickwork, and an octagonal cupola. A rear addition was built in 1939.

**Date of Construction:** 1923

**Period of Significance:** 1923-1958

**Brief Statement of Significance:** The Lincoln School was erected in 1923, the fourth and final school building constructed exclusively for the education of African-American children in Trenton. The school initially served both elementary and middle school students; those who continued their education beyond ninth grade attended Trenton High School. By 1928, the school could no longer accommodate the city's population of Black school-aged children, and the elementary students were moved back to the old Lincoln School (Bellevue Avenue Colored School; Survey #09). The Lincoln School continued as a segregated facility until 1946, when the first white students were admitted. Lincoln School principal Patton J. Hill, an African-American, remained at the integrated school until his retirement in 1958, thus becoming one of the nation's first Black principals to serve a school with white students.

**Previous Identification:** NJHSI: 1111-107

**Source(s):** Hunter, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Bellevue Avenue Colored School (1996)  
Trenton Board of Education, "Luis Munoz-Rivera Elementary School: School History and Description" (2011)

## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Lincoln School

**Survey #:** 24

**Photo:**



# INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**District Name:** Lincoln Homes

**Survey #:** 25

**Location:** Bounded by Meyer Street, Old Rose Street, Holland Avenue, and Violet Street

**Description:** The Lincoln Homes are comprised of eight, two- and three-story brick buildings with flat roofs containing a total of 118 single-family homes and apartments on a four-acre site. The buildings are arranged in three blocks separated by driveways with landscaped courtyards at the center of each block. The four buildings at the north end of the development each contain six or seven dwelling units; the two buildings at the center of the complex have an L-shaped plan and contain apartments, and the two buildings at the south end contain 11 and 12 single-family dwellings, respectively. The buildings are largely utilitarian in appearance, with architectural detail limited to brick belt courses and corbels. The original casement windows have been replaced with double-hung sash, and the flat canopies over the doors have been replaced with sheds. The Lincoln Homes housing project was designed by architecture firm R.L. Fowler Company.

**Period of Significance:** 1939-present

**Brief Statement of Significance:** The Lincoln Homes were one of two housing projects built by the United States Housing Authority (USHA) in Trenton in 1939. Lincoln Homes was built for African-American residents, while Donnelly Homes was constructed for white residents. In both cases, existing slums were razed and replaced with new buildings in park-like settings. The Trenton Housing Authority solicited the aid of attorney Robert Queen and Louise Hayling, both residents of Spring Street, to assist the 30 families living in the existing tenements to find new homes. The construction of separate complexes for different races was common for housing projects of the era, both because of the social attitudes of the period and the segregated character of the neighborhoods in which they were built. The Lincoln Homes were completed in 1940 and two years later had 425 occupants. A sense of community developed at the Lincoln Homes that continues to the present, as former residents gather occasionally for reunions. The Lincoln Homes are also notable as the residence of Helen Jackson Lee, a college-educated African-American woman who wrote of her experiences with racial discrimination in Trenton during the 1940s and 1950s in her memoir, *Nigger in the Window* (1978). The complex was rehabilitated in 2003 by the Trenton Housing Authority.

**Previous Identification:**

**Source(s):** Cumbler, *A Social History of Economic Decline* (1989)  
John Milner Associates, Inc., Public Housing in New Jersey Historic Context Study (2001)  
Lacy, personal communication (2011)  
Lee, personal communication (2011)  
*Trenton Evening Times*, "Sites Named for Lincoln and Donnelly" (1939)

# INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**District Name:** Lincoln Homes

**Survey #:** 25

**Photos:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Dunn Field

**Survey #:** 26

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** Brunswick Circle

**Ownership:**

**Description:** No longer extant

**Date of  
Construction:**

**Period of  
Significance:** 1950

**Brief Statement of  
Significance:** Dunn Field was the home of the Trenton Giants minor league baseball team from 1939-1951. The team was acquired by the San Francisco Giants in 1945, and in 1950 San Francisco sent 19-year-old minor league prospect Willie Mays to play in Trenton. Mays played in 81 games with the Trenton Giants, batting .353. Mays was promoted to San Francisco's AAA team in 1951 and made his major league debut the same year. Widely regarded as one of baseball's greatest all-around players, Mays was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1979.

**Previous  
Identification:**

**Source(s):** Martin and Martin, *The Negro Leagues in New Jersey* (2008)  
McCarthy, *Baseball in Trenton* (2003)  
Washington, *The Quest for Equality* (1993)

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Locust Hill Cemetery

**Survey #:** 27

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** Hart Avenue

**Ownership:** Public (City of Trenton)

**Description:** The Locust Hill Cemetery is a grassy plot of land surrounded by a chain link fence. No evidence of headstones or landscaping survives.

**Date of Construction:** 1861

**Period of Significance:** 1861-c. 1910

**Brief Statement of Significance:** The Locust Hill Cemetery was established in 1861 by the Mount Zion A.M.E. Church to replace the East Hanover Street Cemetery (Survey #21), which the community had outgrown. Burials from the earlier cemetery were reportedly disinterred and reburied at Locust Hill. In 1873, the Locust Hill Cemetery Company was incorporated to administer the graveyard. When the Mount Zion A.M.E. Church expanded its sanctuary in 1876, the remains of those buried in the churchyard were moved to Locust Hill Cemetery. The cemetery appears on late nineteenth century maps of Trenton, but by 1910 it appears to have fallen into disuse. A large portion of the property was sold in 1911, and by 1937 the remainder of the cemetery had also been sold.

**Previous Identification:** BHSNJ  
Tvaryanas, A Historical Survey of the Locust Hill Cemetery (1998)

**Source(s):** New Jersey Historical Commission, *Black Historic Sites in New Jersey* (1984)

**Photo:**





## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Tom Malloy Studio

**Survey #:** 28

**Alternate Name(s):** Studio 101

**Location:** 101 Garfield Avenue

**Ownership:** Private

**Description:** This building is a two-and-one-half story, brick semi-detached dwelling with a first floor corner storefront. The building has Queen Anne stylistic elements, including a hipped roof dormer, bracketed cornice, and second floor bay window with shingle siding. The first floor is covered with plywood, leaving only the transom windows exposed. The corner entry contains paired wood doors with glazing, and a fluted column supports the cornice at the corner, sheltering the cutaway entry.

**Date of Construction:** c. 1910

**Period of Significance:** c. 1970-2002

**Brief Statement of Significance:** Tom Malloy (1912-2008) was a leader in Trenton's artistic community and was named Trenton's artist laureate in 2001. A watercolorist, Malloy depicted the City of Trenton in his works, including both views of well-known sites like the Battle Monument and Ellarslie and urban streetscapes. Malloy was born in Dillon, S.C., and moved to Trenton in 1923, where he was educated in the Trenton Public Schools. He began painting in the mid-1950s and established a studio in his home in the 1970s. In addition to his work as an artist, Malloy was a founding member of the Trenton Artist's Workshop and a leader in establishing the Trenton City Museum at Ellarslie. Malloy utilized this building on Garfield Avenue as his studio from around 1970 to 2002.

**Previous Identification:**

**Source(s):** Hagen, "Tom Malloy, Painter, Trenton Chronicler, Dies at 95" (2008)  
Smith, *Blending Color from Life: Trenton's Own Watercolorist, Tom Malloy* (2007)  
Trentoniana Collection, Vertical File: Artists – Thomas Malloy

## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Tom Malloy Studio

**Survey #:** 28

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Junior High School #2

**Survey #:** 29

**Alternate Name(s):** Hedgepeth-Williams School

**Location:** 301 Gladstone Avenue

**Ownership:** Public (Trenton Board of Education)

**Description:** This two-story, brick-faced school building has Art Deco stylistic features and a flat roof. The entry bays near the center and south ends of the façade form curved, streamlined towers featuring bas relief panels above the doors. The ribbons of windows are set in steel frames.

**Date of Construction:** 1939

**Period of Significance:** 1943-1944

**Brief Statement of Significance:** In 1943, Junior High School #2 was a white school within the Trenton Public Schools' segregated system, and the Lincoln School served the community's African-American children. In that year, two African-American mothers, Gladys Hedgepeth and Berline Williams, attempted to enroll their children in their neighborhood school, Junior High #2. The Trenton School Board denied the request, and the women filed suit, with local NAACP attorney Robert Queen litigating the case. In January 1944, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that the public schools could not deny enrollment based on race. The decision served as a legal precedent for the United States Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Hedgepeth and Williams were subsequently admitted to Junior High School #2, and about 200 other African-American students also transferred from the Lincoln School to formerly white middle schools around the city. In 1946, white students began enrolling in the Lincoln School.

**Previous Identification:**

**Source(s):** Blackwell, "1943: School Spirit" (1999)  
Smith, "The Importance of *Hedgepeth and Williams v. Board of Education, Trenton, NJ* (1944)" (2009)

## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Junior High School #2

**Survey #:** 29

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Trenton Central High School

**Survey #:** 30

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** 400 Chambers Street

**Ownership:** Public (Trenton Board of Education)

**Description:** The Georgian Revival style brick school building is monumental in scale, with a central colonnaded portico and bell tower. Located in the basement level of the building, the swimming pool is divided into two, five-lane pools surrounded by tiles on the floor and walls. The ceiling over the pool is arched and the original skylights have been covered. Concrete bleachers extend along one side of the pool.

**Date of Construction:** 1932

**Period of Significance:** 1932-1933

**Brief Statement of Significance:** When the new Trenton Central High School opened in 1932, the school accepted both white and Black students, as had its predecessor. Problems arose quickly around the segregated swimming pool, however, as the school policy limited the accessibility of the pool for African-American students. In 1933, Black leaders filed a lawsuit to gain equal access to the pool, with Robert Queen as the attorney. The New Jersey Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Black students. The case was a first step toward desegregating Trenton's schools; Queen would later argue the landmark *Hedgepeth-Williams* case.

**Previous Identification:** SHPO Opinion: 5/23/1988

**Source(s):** Washington, *The Quest for Equality* (1993)

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Cuban Giants' Fields

**Survey #:** 31

**Alternate Name(s):** Chambersburg Grounds; East State Street Grounds

**Location:** Chambersburg; East State Street at Chambers Street

**Ownership:**

**Description:** No longer extant

**Date of  
Construction:**

**Period of  
Significance:** 1886-1899

**Brief Statement of  
Significance:** The Cuban Giants were the first African-American professional baseball team. Organized in 1885 in Babylon, New York, the Cuban Giants called Trenton home from 1886 to 1889. During 1886, the team played its games at the Chambersburg Grounds; in later years they played at the East State Street Grounds and at Hetzel's Grove. The team was crowned the Colored Champions in 1887 and 1888. In 1889, the Cuban Giants played in the Middle States League. The following year, the team left Trenton, playing at various locations around the country; however, it occasionally returned to play games, including a July 1899 match against the local YMCA team. The 1899 season was the team's last. Other African-American baseball teams played in Trenton during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but the Cuban Giants were the best-known and most successful.

**Previous  
Identification:**

**Source(s):** Martin and Martin, *The Negro Leagues in New Jersey* (2008)  
McCarthy, *Baseball in Trenton* (2003)  
Washington, *The Quest for Equality* (1993)

**Photo:**

## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** William Trent House

**Survey #:** 32

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** 15 Market Street

**Ownership:** Public (City of Trenton)

**Description:** The Trent House is a two-story, brick Georgian-style residence with a center hall plan. The restored mansion features a low-pitched hip roof with cupola and a cornice with modillions. The first floor windows and door have brick relieving arches; windows are 12/12 double-hung sash, and the paired doors have a five-light transom.

**Date of Construction:** 1719

**Period of Significance:** 1719-1726

**Brief Statement of Significance:** The William Trent House has significance to the city's African-American history as a surviving eighteenth-century residence known to have a slave population. The inventory of Trent's estate at the time of his death included nine slaves, seven male and two female. Although the locations of slave quarters are not known, the household servants are believed to have lived in the main house. The William Trent House Museum interprets the lives of the Trent's slaves as part of its interpretation of the site.

**Previous Identification):** NR: 4/15/1970  
SR: 5/27/1971  
TLC  
HABS: NJ 200

**Source(s):** Pernot, personal communication (2011)

**Photo:**





## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Herbert Homestead

**Survey #:** 33

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** 25-29 Lamberton Street

**Ownership:**

**Description:** No longer extant

**Date of  
Construction:**

**Period of  
Significance:** c. 1840-1925

**Brief Statement of  
Significance:** The Herberts were a well-known and respected African-American family in Trenton during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Mansfield Herbert (c. 1806-c.1890) was born in Maryland and moved to South Trenton by 1840. Herbert was a successful cabinetmaker: a picture frame and a combined meat safe and refrigerator built by Herbert won awards at the New Jersey State Fair in 1858, and John Roebling was reportedly a frequent customer. Herbert owned his home on Lamberton Street, where he also ran his business. It is unclear whether Herbert and his first wife, Alice, had children; however, his family with his second wife, Ellen, included sons John M., R. Henri, and Gustavus, and daughters Ida, Susan (Eliza), and Agnes. The children were educated in the German Catholic and colored schools. John was in the flooring business and a founding member and president of the Eclectic Club (Survey #19). Henri was a journalist and publisher of the city's Black newspaper, *The Sentinel* (Survey #18); he was active in the Republican party and served several state political appointments. Ida was a teacher in the Trenton Public Schools for 30 years, and Gustavus reportedly ran the first Black-owned hotel in Trenton. The family continued to live on Lamberton Street until around 1925.

**Previous  
Identification:**

**Source(s):** *The New Jersey Farmer*, "Official List of Premiums" (1858)  
*New York Age*, "R. Henri Herbert Wins Position" (1909)  
Trentonian Collection, Vertical File-Bio: R. Henri Herbert  
Washington, *In Search of a Community's Past* (1990)

**Photo:**



## INVENTORY OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORIC SITES IN TRENTON

**Resource Name:** Sampson Peters Residence and Cooper Shop      **Survey #:** 34

**Alternate Name(s):**

**Location:** 340 South Warren Street; 27 Lamberton Street

**Ownership:**

**Description:** No longer extant

**Date of Construction:**

**Period of Significance:** c. 1802-1819

**Brief Statement of Significance:** Sampson Peters (c.1771-1845) was a significant figure in Trenton's African-American community of the early nineteenth century for his role as a founding member and minister of the Religious Society of Free Africans of the City of Trenton, predecessor to Mount Zion A.M.E. Church. Born into slavery in East Windsor Township, Peters was exposed to Methodism through his owner, Joseph Hutchinson. Peters was manumitted in 1802 and moved to Trenton, where he established a cooper shop. His shop served as the first meeting place of the Society until around 1819, when the first church building was erected on Perry Street. Peters was a member of the Philadelphia Conference of the A.M.E. church and traveled widely on the church circuit, helping to organize Mount Pisgah A.M.E. Church in Princeton in 1832. Peters was an abolitionist and was outspoken against the American Colonization Society, which sought to return free Blacks and slaves to Africa; in 1830, he attended the first Convention of the American Society of Free Persons of Colour, held in Philadelphia. Sources alternately place Peters' cooper shop at 340 South Warren Street and at 27 Lamberton Street; both addresses were then part of Nottingham Township. Tax records indicate that in 1809 he was living in Nottingham Township.

**Previous Identification:** BHSNJ

**Source(s):** Ancestry.com, *U.S. Census Reconstructed Records, 1660-1820* (2011)  
New Jersey Historical Commission, *Black Historic Sites in New Jersey* (1984)  
Peters et al., "A Voice from Trenton" (1832)  
*Trenton Times*, "Mt. Zion Church History Outlined" (1929)  
Wayman, *Cyclopaedia of African Methodism* (1882)

**Photo:**

