

Brush Creek Cultural Heritage Corridor Trail

Node History Themes

10-24-2023

As the Brush Creek Cultural Heritage Trail Steering Committee selects individuals, groups, and events to spotlight in this project, its intent is to be as inclusive as possible and to showcase the diversity of the people who shaped Black Kansas City. The committee is looking to be inclusive of the community by assuring the presence of women, the LGBTQIA+ community, differently abled and neurodivergent people, as the stories of some of them may not have been told.

History Theme Selection Criteria

1. Include stories that have been lesser or not recognized elsewhere
2. Focus on Black Kansas City
3. Highlight contributions by African Americans
4. Feature, with few exceptions, those persons who are deceased

History Theme Selection Criteria

Site #15 - Site Entrance

- **Name** – Social Justice, Modern Civil Rights Movement, Black Lives Matter Movement.
- **Research Direction:** focus is the Modern Civil Rights period from 1950 through the early 1970s. This movement was kicked off by the lynching of Emmett Till in Money, Mississippi, and the Montgomery, Alabama Bus Boycott, both in 1955. The protests, were designed to be peaceful. Well-known leaders such as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were in the forefront. These protests took place all over the country with local leaders in charge. Kansas City was no exception. Segregation was fully entrenched in Kansas City and many organized protests occurred, some led to the de-segregation of public accommodations. Swope Park Pool, Fairyland Park, department stores, restaurants, hospitals, and cemeteries, as well as schools were de-segregated as a result of local and national protests.
- **Summary** - Kansas City, Missouri is proud to showcase the rich history of its Black Community. As you travel through this corridor, the stories of the people, the events and the culture that built a strong African American community will share the stories of those people who invested physically, emotionally, economically, politically, and socially in Kansas City.
- **Theme Ideas**
 - Kansas City as a Music Mecca spotlighting Jazz and the Blues genres
 - The Black Political Machines, including Freedom, Inc., and Black Freedom parties. Bruce R. Watkins and Leon Jordan are the usual faces of Black Politics in Kansas City.
 - Contributions by African Americans in Kansas City in a wide variety of areas socially, politically, economically, and culturally.

- Purpose of this project
 - History must be learned, acknowledged, and appreciated or else we, as a people, are doomed to repeat it. This trail provides the lessons needed to be informed of our histories.
- Kansas City Civil Rights movement
 - The struggle for Civil and Human Rights has been hard fought in Kansas City. The political, social, and religious communities came together to form the core and provide the strength of the Movements. Together they marched, chanted, published, preached, and asserted the absolute requirement that all people in this City have complete and total equity.
- Acknowledging this is Osage land.
 - The area along this trail was occupied by Indigenous people long before Europeans migrated here. Tribal land treaties guaranteed the Osage Nation that this land would be tribal lands “as long as grass grows and water flows.” That commitment was not kept. Along this land remains remnants of the watercourse, and the flora and fauna that grew here.
- Ruth Kerferd - Civil Rights activists protesting segregated venues in Kansas City
- Betty Lou Donaldson - Civil Rights activist protesting segregated venues in Kansas City. She is the mother of Dianne Cleaver, Congressman Emanuel Cleaver II’s wife and grandmother of Emiel Cleaver.
- Alvin Brooks, a local, African American Civil Rights leader is an exception to the criteria that not all people represented on this trail must be deceased. Much has been already documented about Mr. Brooks, including Rockhurst university establishing the Alvin Brooks Center for Faith – Justice, but he is a mainstay in the fight for Black equity and must be include.
- Bernard Powell, Community activist, founder of the Social Action Committee of 20 (SAC 20), Jerry Williams and other founding members of SAC 20 should be included.
- Fredericka Douglass Sprague Perry (1872-1943) - The granddaughter of the Great Black Abolitionist Frederick Douglass, Fredericka and her husband Dr. James E. Perry enhanced health care for African American children in the Greater Kansas City area. Mrs. Perry worked as a juvenile court worker and was concerned about the lack of foster homes for Black children. These children, many of whom were victims and not criminals, were routinely sent to juvenile detention centers. In 1934 she and other African American club women and other prominent Blacks founded the Colored Big Sister Home for Girls, which existed until 1943, the year she died. States at this time began providing child welfare services that finally included African American children.
- Mary L. Kelly, with a master’s degree in nursing, was the first African American nurse at the VA Hospital in Marlin, Texas. She served at the Kansas City MO Veteran’s Administration Medical Center for over 30 years. Her activism in the Town Fork Creek Neighborhood Community led to the naming of the Mary Kelly Center in her honor. The Center is now the Bishop Hogan School. As part of her community activism, she served on the Swope Corridor/Upper Room board, as well as other boards. She passed away in 2021 at the age of 96 years old.

- Inez Kaiser, an educator, and entrepreneur was the first African American woman to run a public a public relations firm with national clients.
- Curtis McClinton, professional football player with the Kansas City Chiefs was founder of the Black Economic Union (circa 1970s)
- Alvin Lee Sykes, Community activist was self-taught in law. He investigated unsolved crimes against African Americans and was the catalyst for obtaining a verdict against the murderers of Kansas Citian Steven Harvey, who was murdered at Liberty Memorial while playing his horn. Because of Sykes efforts, Harvey’s murderers were convicted of violating his civil rights. Sykes was also instrumental in getting the National Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act passed. This lead to Till’s murderers being charged and convicted.
- Removed Items
 - Florynce Kennedy Women and Gay rights activist. Kennedy graduated from Lincoln High school and left immediately for NYC, where she made an impact in the LGBTQ+ community.
- **Art** – Existing Spirit of Freedom Fountain. This 5,000 lb. metallic free form sculpture sitting on a pedestal in the middle of a retaining pool was designed by the sculptor Richard Hunt, a Black Chicago artist. The fountain was created to keep the improvisational aspects of Kansas City jazz. Inspired by civic and community leader, City Councilman, and a candidate for mayor of the city, Bruce R. Watkins (1924-1980) organized the Spirit of Freedom Foundation to develop a monument to the contributions of African Americans in Kansas City. The fountain was dedicated in 1981 exactly one year after Watkins’ death.
 - No new art, including statues, will be commissioned for the entry.
- **Signage** – Sign placement adjacent to the Spirit of Freedom Fountain.
- **Site** – NA
 - Improvements – NA

Site #1

- **Name** – Social and Political Activism
 - African American Social Clubs, Political Organizations, Activist Groups
- **Summary** - Many Black social clubs, sewing circles, book clubs and other community collectives burgeoned in Kansas City. These organizations thrived due to segregation which did not allow the enrollment of African Americans in the majority community organizations. Consequently, it became necessary for the African American community to organize their own social clubs, political organizations, and activist groups through grass roots movements.
- **Theme Ideas**
 - NAACP
 - James Dallas Bowser who taught and was principal of Lincoln School (1868), was active in NAACP and attended their national convention in 1921.
 - Mamie Hughes, after arriving in Kansas City in the 1950's, became deeply involved throughout the community and was a leading member of the local NAACP chapter, She belonged to other social and political organizations that sought to improve conditions in Kansas City for the African American

community. A bridge is named in her honor of Highways 71-Interstate 49. She is still alive but deserves to be recognized.

- National Association of Colored Women
 - Josephine Silone Yates, Educator (Lincoln U-1900 to 1904); 2nd president of the National Association of Colored Women; and 1st president of the KC Colored Women's League; helped with the YWCA at 19th and Vine; wife of W.W. Yates, principal at Wendall Phillips School
- Twin Citians
- Booklovers
- Freedom, Inc (Alberta Lowe)
- Black Panthers
 - Felix Lindsey "Pete" O'Neal, Community activist, Black Panther Party, Felix Lindsey "Pete" O'Neal was chairman and founder of the Kansas City Black Panther Party Chapter, which was officially recognized by the national Black Panther Party in 1969, with 3 charter members. White Kansas Citians unfairly painted the work of The Black Panther Party with negative images, although they were provided free breakfast and clothes for local school children, a community garden program and other social and racial safety and uplift programs. Pete O'Neal self-exiled to Tanzania Africa to avoid imprisonment for Federal gun changes. Bill Whitfield was co-founder and charter member.
- The Enshriners already represented with benches.
- Ladies of the Spirit of Freedom Fountain
- The Links, Inc., is one of the nation's oldest and largest volunteer service and social organizations. The organization is committed to enriching and ensuring the culture and economic survival of African Americans and others of African ancestry. *The Greater Kansas City (MO) chapter* celebrated its 75 year anniversary in 2022.
- Removed Items
 - Bernard Powell and the Social Action Committee of 20 are listed under theme ideas. A park is named in his honor.
 - National Pan-Hellenic Council (Divine Nine) Not sure how these fits into the modern civil rights movement
- **Art** – New Public Art piece
- **Signage** – Located adjacent to the sculpture location.
- **Site** -
 - Improvements - Plaza

Site #2

- **Name** – Events
- **Summary** – The Black population in Kansas City continued to grow and thrive as new emigrants came and the ones here forged a strong community. Political organizations emerged as the need to obtain agency over their lives and the futures of their families and communities. Obtaining the vote was a prime goal for all as a means of having some power over their lives. Economic sufficiency and self-containment were goals during the segregationist days that divided the city. Black folks became entrepreneurs opening stores, restaurants, nightclubs, shoe

shine parlors and every needed supply venture for their communities. Black Kansas City emerged strong and grew.

- **Theme Ideas**
 - Legislative events
 - Right to vote legislation
 - Civil events
 - Riots on Troost, Prospect, and other locations throughout the city post MLK assassination
 - Natural events
 - Women March on Kansas City
 - 1950, Twin Citizens
 - Brush Creek Floods 1977, 1998
 - Commemorate the people who died in the flood, such as Leroy Adams.
 - Mr. Southerlan, Died in flood in Brush Creek.
 - List of other that died.
 - Murder at the Liberty Memorial
 - Steve Harvey, home for a few days from a musical tour, was bludgeoned to death while playing his horn at the Liberty Memorial by several white men who bragged about it while wearing shirts containing Harvey's blood. They were acquitted of his murder. Alvin Sykes started a Justice Campaign, and his efforts got those people convicted of violating Steve Harvey's civil rights. Sykes also worked with Mamie Till, mother of Emmett Till and was successful in the creation of the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Act, which opened the Till Case and got convictions for most of his murderers.
- **Art** – New Public Art piece
- **Signage** – Located adjacent to the sculpture location.
- **Site** -
 - Improvements - Plaza

Site #3

- **Name** – Businesses
- **Summary** - Black folks loved owning their personal businesses and serving their own communities. We know, through the WPA narratives, that the common thread in the oral histories is that formerly enslaved people wanted literacy so that they couldn't be beaten out of their property and money, and they wanted to own their own land. Opening businesses in urban areas was a workable aspect of "owning their own." Communities like the 12-18th and Vine districts were completely self-sufficient. Businesses including barber and beauty shops, restaurants, clothing and shoe stores, doctors, dentists, and lawyers filled the area. Other communities of color also had their own businesses. Although Public Accommodations laws and desegregation laws opened doors for equal access to businesses, they served to stop the growth, in many cases, and restrict the expansion of other businesses of color.
- **Theme Ideas**
 - Clubs
 - 12th – 18th Street had an incredible number of nightclubs in that area. Burlesque shows, raucous music and incredible musicians defined the music scene in the

Jazz District. Known as “the center of society from tailcoats to tarts” and “a playground, social stage and the fairyland,” of politicians, peddlers, pimps, sex workers and speakeasy bartenders selling bootleg hooch” (Flatlands) Twelfth Street was always known for its music. Jazz bands included major names such as the Coon-Sanders Nighthawks Orchestra, Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, Mary Lou Williams, Duke Ellington, and Charlie Parker among so many others. Musicians worked hard to earn a gig in the district. Music lovers from around the world would find their way to the district to hear those talented artists.

- The Mutual Musician’s Foundation, on 18th and Highland, was home to the Black Musicians Union Local 627. Founded in 1917, it is the longest running jazz venue in the world.
- Night clubs
 - Billion’s Hotel
 - Moochies
 - Inferno
 - OGs was founded by KC Barbecue giant Ollie Gates
 - Flanker’s Lounge was opened by several Kansas City Chiefs players.
- Restaurants
 - Ms. Maxine’s Restaurant
 - Vivian’s Restaurant, owned by Vivian Taylor and her husband on 12th and Paseo, was an up-scale venue for locals and visitors alike.
 - The Hitching Post restaurant was a favorite meeting place for local politicians.
 - Bar B Que Movement
 - Gates Not yet deceased His father is, and his father started the restaurant.
 - George W. Gates opened “Gates Ol’Kentucky” restaurant at 19th and Vine in 1946, the beginning of a successful chain of restaurants. In 1956, the business name was changed to “Gates & Son’s Bar-B-Q,” when operation for the restaurants continued under the successful leadership of his son, Ollie Gates.
 - Arthur Bryant barbecue began as Charlie Bryant, brother of Arthur learned the business under renown barbecue master smoker, Henry Perry. Upon Charlie’s death, Arthur took over the business and renamed it after himself. He established the restaurant at 18th and Brooklyn, where it remains.
 - Henry Perry who arrived in KCMO from Memphis Tennessee, was the self-proclaimed BBQ King. He was the first person in the city to open a barbecue restaurant and to make a living from selling his food. Others who are famous for their restaurants, Gates and Bryant, experienced tutelage directly or indirectly from learning Perry’s methods.
 - Harry Webb First McDonalds franchises in Kansas City
- Bank
 - Douglass Bank in Kansas City, KS Henry W. Sewing was the founder.
 - Swope Park National Bank, KCMO

- Liberty Bank, KC KS and KCMO
 - Hotels
 - the Street Hotel on 18th and Vine
 - Leon Stapleton Owner of black grocery store at 7 Oaks, community activist Recently closed, not deceased.
 - Removed Items
 - Mr. Brown - owner of Seven Oak's Barber Shop
 - what is the significance?
- **Art** – New Public Art piece
- **Signage** – Located adjacent to the sculpture location.
- **Site** -
 - Improvements - Plaza

Site #4

- **Name** – Worker’s Rights
 - Manufacturing - Most are rather recent as our inclusion is rather recent.
 - Manlove manufacturing – sheet metal folks made major strides but are alive.
- **Summary** - When emancipated people walked away from enslavement and the neo-slavery enveloping them in the South through share-cropping and the penal system, they traded those rigid forms of enslavement for paychecks. This allowed them to free themselves from economic bondage, but the system did not welcome them with open arms. Trade unions excluded them from membership and lending institutions refused to help finance any of their ventures. But they persisted.
- **Theme Ideas**
 - Ford Motor Company- historical documents show that the Ford Motor Company was willing to hire Blacks when other companies would not. The company had a “wage-equity constraint” that assured all workers, regardless of race, received equal compensation. Ford however, did place many of the Black workers in hot, dangerous foundry jobs where quit rates were generally high.
 - Sheffield Steel which later was named Armco Steel hired Black men, in particular, although one Black woman worked in the office. The jobs were hot and dangerous, but the pay was good and allowed many who worked there to live middle-class lives.
 - Black women breaking into the factory work and getting worker’s rights. Black women, like white women, entered into factory work in 1941 when the World War caused a shortage of men to populate the factories. Executive Order 8802 said that government contractors could not discriminate on the basis of race.
 - Unions – African Americans are known to have participated in labor unions since before the Civil War. The Black Economic Union was responsible for leading Kansas City’s urban core redevelopment efforts in housing and commercial development.
 - Homer B Roberts – Nation’s first Black car dealer
 - Roy Younge Sr owned a car dealership in KC, KS but Mr. Younge is still alive and active at 92.
 - Fletcher David Daniels lead a distinguished life of public service as a postal worker, civil rights leader, school board member, and legislator.
 - **Art** – New Public Art piece

- **Signage** – Located adjacent to the sculpture location.
- **Site** -
 - Improvements - Plaza

Site #5

- **Name** – Built Environment
 - How were the neighborhood developed, shaped, and who was key.
- **Summary** - xxxxxxxx
- **Theme Ideas**
 - Policy
 -
 - Designers & Developers
 -
 - Real Estate
 - Newsome Family, Newsome Realty
 - Contractors & Consultants
 - Wesley Elders, Built Watkins Brothers Funeral Home
 - Howard Carney, Sr, C & C Excavating and Construction Co., celebrated by the city for his general contracting work. He was the first Black general contractor on several large projects.
 - Neighborhoods, organizers
 - 54th Street Neighborhood
 - Steptoe Neighborhood
 - Leed's Neighborhood
 - Evolution of the Brush Creek Neighborhoods
 - Incorporate Homer Roberts and the first black car dealership and 1st shopping center in the area.
 - Green Impact Zone
 - Charles Hazley, Councilman, by his action at a meeting attended, made presenters of the project rethink the design so the black community would be protected from the flooding of Brush Creek
 - Homer B. Roberts - First black dealership in the United States, civic leader who work fundraising efforts for the Paseo YMCA, served as the inspector for the first Negro Bath House in Kansas City, Roberts also became the first of Negro to be commissioned in the United States Signal Corps in WWI. When he reenlisted in the Army during WWII, he served in the Office of Negro Press (working on the controversial film the Negro Soldier (1944)).
 - Blue Hills Neighborhood Association
 - One of the longest-standing neighborhood associations, with no break-ups or breakdowns
 - Parade Park as note of the oldest coops started by HUD in the 1960s that is still in existence today.
 - YMCA, Negro Leagues; community fund raised to have built.
 - YWCA does not receive much recognition; Josephine Silone Yates involved in this venture.

- Steptoe
- Wayne Miner Housing Projects Wayne Miner Housing Projects
- Neighborhood near 30th and Jarboe; 3-4 blocks heading west; died out in the 1970s.
- Troost Area
 - Isis Theater
 - Bars and Clubs along Troost
 - MO-KAN
 - Tiger Lilly (dancer who danced with Tigers at 32nd and Troost)
 - Mini mall
 - Troost as a mecca for blacks
 - Rhythm Lights Skating Rink at 27th and Troost.
- 12th Street
 - Pawn shops
 - Pool Halls
 - Night clubs
 - Grocery store (where Gates Rib Tech is located)
 - PapaPappa Lew's
 - Ms. Ruby's (Brooklyn & Prospect)
- Satchel Paige house
- **Art** – New Public Art piece
- **Signage** – Located adjacent to the sculpture location.
- **Site** -
 - Improvements – Plaza

Site #6

- **Name** – Innovation & Inspiration
- **Dr Carma Thoughts** - Not sure about this. Inspiration would, of course, be the multitude of religious organizations and social clubs but there are too many of them (especially churches) to discuss. We would need to define significance.
- **Summary** - Churches in segregated areas served many purposes. Primarily, of course, they were responsible for religious teaching and traditions. However, they served a larger role for their communities. Black people were restricted, if not forbade, to learn literacy from the times of enslavement. Post-emancipation, in particular, churches served as schools where those who knew taught others. "Each One – Teach One" is a rather new mantra, but the idea of sharing what one knows with others has been inherent in Black communities since those first steps on diasporic soil. Churches also served as community centers where folks would congregate for social events and to discuss current political policies and actions. Coalitions for the advancement of the conditions of Black people were made in churches.
- **Theme Ideas**
 - Design
 -
 - Inventions
 -
 - Madam C.J. Walker – born Sarah Breedlove, she renamed herself Madam C. J. Walker taking on a version of third husband's name – Charles Joseph Walker) and became

possibly the first self-made African American millionaire (others like Mary Ellen Pleasant and others' stories are not as well documented) by creating her own cosmetics and hair care products. Born in Louisiana, she spent her adult life and died in Washington, D. C.

- I know of no connection to Kansas City. So should be removed
- Cloteele Raspberry, Clothing Designer was born in Texarkana, Texas but later claimed KCMO, where she attended Lincoln High School as her home. A trained and inspired fashion designer and creator.
- Ed Dwight his path to be an astronaut to an artist - Not deceased – The Kansas City, KS sculptor, author and former test pilot was the first African American to enter the Airforce training program from which NASA selects astronauts.
- Sarah Rector, the first Black female millionaire to live in Kansas City. In 1911 Sarah, just 12 years old at the time was granted land as a result of the Dawes Allotment Act of 1887 in Glenpool, Oklahoma. Burdened by paying taxes on land thought to be inferior soil and not suitable for farming, leased out a parcel of her Muscogee Indian land to Standard Oil Company. Standard Oil struck oil and Sarah, receiving royalties of \$11,000 per day became the richest Black girl in the United States. By the age of 18, her net worth was already over One Million dollars. Sarah and her family moved to Kansas City and lived in The Rector Mansion at 2000 East 12th Street in the Historic Twelfth Street District. At 20 Sarah married Kansas City businessman Kenneth Campbell and had three sons. Rector lost a majority of her wealth during the Great Depression and moved out of the mansion to a house at 2440 Brooklyn Avenue. Sarah Rector died in 1967 from a stroke at the age of 65.
- Removed items.
 - Remote car unlock inventor – documents say it was invented by Paul Lipschultz, which doesn't sound like a "Black name" to me, but I could find no pictures of him.
- **Art** – New Public Art piece
- **Signage** – Located adjacent to the sculpture location.
- **Site** -
 - Improvements - Plaza

Site #7

- **Name** – Art & Entertainment
- **Summary** - Entertainment was a special asset in the building of Black Kansas City. The Theater Owners Booking Association (TOBA) would book entertainers to local clubs and bars. Entertainers quipped that TOBA stood for "Tough on Black Asses." For some it would be their last stop before deep winter hit, and they would be forced to stay in town. This created a large, vibrant musical community that persists to this day. Names such as hometown great Charlie Parker center the movement.
- **Theme Ideas**
 - QR code to the American Jazz Museum
 - Aaron Douglass, Artist for Crisis & Opportunity; educator at Lincoln H.S., 1920s left for Harlem – Born and educated in Topeka, Kansas, Douglass was a key asset to the Harlem Renaissance of Black Artists creating their own art not "White art painted over, but rich earthy art," as he described it in a letter to his friend Langston Hughes. Douglass created

angular, stark black figures that graced museums, galleries and even magazine covers as the short-lived artist magazine "Fire."

- James Weldon Johnson, The Jacksonville, Florida native was known during the Harlem Renaissance as a writer and civil rights activist. Among his works was "Lift Every Voice and Sing," written with his brother J. Rosemond Johnson. This work became known as the "Negro National Anthem." He was inspired on a visit to Kansas City to write "God's Trombones."
- William Fambrough, Photography, worked for over 30 years as photographer for the *KC Call*. Many of his photographs were published uncredited in the *Kansas City Star*. He was known as "One-Shot Fambrough" for taking photos in just one shot. Fambrough graduated from Lincoln High School in Kansas City, MO and Lincoln University in Jefferson City, MO. Before completing his college degree, Fambrough served with the 829th Aviation Engineers of the U. S. Army during World War II. Fambrough has been inducted into the Missouri Photo Journalism Hall of Fame,
- James Columbus "Jay" McShann was born in Muskogee, Oklahoma but spent most of his life in Kansas City, Mo. The self-taught Jazz pianist was influenced by listening to Earl "Fatha" Hines on the radio when he was a young boy. The vocalist, swing, blues, and jump blues composer and performer, McShann used his incredible musical talents to lead bands and worked with other gifted musicians such as Charlie Parker, Claude "Fiddler" Williams, Bernard Anderson, Walter Brown, Harold "Doc" West, Earl Coleman, and Ben Webster among so many others. McShann's 1949 hit, "Ain't Nobody's Business," became a theme song for Langston Hughes.
- Ada Franklin, who was born in Atlanta, Georgia in 1886, moved to Kansas City where she wrote for her husband's paper, *The Kansas City Call*. Franklin was a successful playwright, community activist supporter of Wheatley Provident Hospital Auxiliary. Franklin was a successful playwright penning such plays as "Revel of the Seasons," and "Milestones of a Race."
- Aaron Douglas, born in Topeka, KS, taught at Lincoln High School in Kansas City, Mo before moving east to be an integral part of the Harlem Renaissance Movement of African American artists who created new artistic expressions, instead of emulating the art of whites. He was an internationally known illustrator for the *Crisis* and *Opportunity* magazines. His stark, black, angular creations graced many covers, especially the one edition of *Fire* magazine, a product of the young Black Renaissance artists.
- Percy C. Meyers, Photographer and artist
- Charles W. Williams, was born in Texas in January 1893, but relocated to Kansas City, MO. The renowned photographer and owner of Williams Photo Studio in Kansas City, MO located on Vine Street, took iconic photographs of community leaders, Lincoln High School yearbooks and photos of R. T. Coles Vocational High School as well as other photos around the community.
- GEM Theater, originally named the "Star Theater," was built in 1912, by the Shriner and Powellson Amusement Company as a silent movie Palace. Renamed the GEM theater in 1913, by which time talking movies were popular. Located in the Historic 18th and Vine Jazz District, the GEM is one of the theaters in the Kansas City, Black community that catered to the Black population during the Jim Crow era of segregation. The building was renovated and reactivated during the time that then Mayor Richard Berkley and

then councilman, now Congressman, Emanuel Cleaver advanced the “Cleaver Plan,” to revitalize the area. The GEM was restored to an amazingly beautiful 500 seat theater.

- Alvin Ailey, internationally known American dancer and founder of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater did not take residence in Kansas City, MO. He did, however, have a profound effect on dance in this City that mirrors his international influence. Early on, Ailey brought his amazing performances to the city. On one of these visits, he established a relationship with Kansas Citian Allan Gray. Through this friendship, Ailey established an American Dance theater here in Kansas City. This collaboration resulted in the still strong Kansas City Friends of Alvin Ailey organization. Upon his death, Ailey willed his estate to Gray. His papers are housed at the Black Archives of Mid-America.
- Langston Hughes, the self-named Poet Low-Rate, is one of the most influential Black Writers in America. Although born in Joplin, Missouri and raised in Lawrence, Kansas, Hughes spent a significant amount of time with relatives who lived in Kansas City. His mother’s brother had a barber shop in the 18th and Vine District. Hughes loved visiting with the folk and spent time in local bars, churches and nightclubs. Some of those visits were influential with his creating thought-provoking poems.
- Removed items.
 -
- **Art** – New Public Art piece
- **Signage** – Located adjacent to the sculpture location.
- **Site** -
 - Improvements - Plaza

Site #8

- **Name** – (de) Segregation
- **Summary** - Kansas City was largely segregated with red-lining and other systemic racist systems in place. Stores in the Central Business District were picketed with sit-ins and other community actions largely by Black club women. In 1938, the public golf courses were de-segregated due to a suit brought about by the Heart of America Golf Club. They were allowed to play golf on Mondays and Tuesdays in Swope Park. In 1950 “the Foursome” Reuben Benton, then owner of the Kansas City Call newspaper, George Johnson, Leroy Doty and Sylvester “Pat” Johnson defied laws, dropped their money for green fees on the clubhouse counter, and played nine holes of golf at Swope Park. In the 1920s Alice Berry Graham and her sister Katherine Berry Richardson declared Children’s Mercy Hospital to be for all children everywhere and desegregated. The Missouri Human Rights Act made it illegal for places of public accommodation to deny access to or treat someone unequally because of an individual’s race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex or disability. Defacto conditions made unilateral enactment or enforcement difficult.
- **Theme Ideas**
 - Parks & Rec
 - Swope Park Pool - Esther Williams, Joseph Moore, Lena Rivers Smith: Three plaintiffs were denied admission to the Swope Park pool resulting in a lawsuit.
 - Golf Courses – see de-segregation section about golf courses A discrimination lawsuit against Swope Park was filed in 1936 and they prevailed. Winning meant

Blacks were allowed to play the course with restrictions – Mondays and Tuesdays until noon when a bell rang signaling, they had to leave.

- School - the Brown vs Board of Education Supreme court decisions of 1954 and 1955 called for desegregation of public schools with “all deliberate speed.” The vagueness of the time reference caused lapses in enforcement. This decision also led to massive “White Flight” from central city neighborhoods, eroding the tax base that supported schools.
- Work
 - Worker’s Unions were notorious for excluding Blacks from membership. As they were instrumental in informing the hiring practices for most factory and development companies, like construction, Black people were largely excluded from productive positions.
- Business
 - Black people recognized the power and value in building their own, so almost every Black neighborhood had its own Black owned stores. The Fisher, Alma Steamer, and Dorothy Henderson stores on 54th St., Memon’s, Ms. T’s, Gates’, and Arthur Bryant barbecues. Thomas’s grocery store on 55th and Jackson. Blakely’s Shoe repair shop on 53rd and Prospect, Blanche Waters’ barber shop at 2700 E 55th St, millinery shops. Mr. Brown owned Seven Oak’s Barber Shop on 39th and Kensington. Other Black folks owned businesses in the 18th and Vine Historic Jazz District.
 - what is the significance? Black people understood the importance and value of taking care of their own needs. Having been maligned, cheated, and castigated by the majority community, they embraced personal and racial agency.
 - Fairyland Park remained segregated until passage of the Public Accommodations Act at which time the largely dilapidated facility closed. Fairyland only allowed Black people access one day per year.
- City/Neighborhoods
 - Redlining – This method of restricting Black access to housing and businesses was developed by J. C. Nichols of Kansas City, MO who shared his ideas with other white funders across the country. This allowed them to easily identify and racially restrict access to property and businesses by Black people, and to control property values by inserting redlining, a physical line on maps separating Black and white areas. There was also a “yellow line” for determining funding for less than stellar white communities and a “green line” for white folks that they would fund.
 - Block Busting was a process of underselling property values conducted by unscrupulous real estate agents contacting property owners and encouraging them to sell immediately as property values were dropping. This occurred primarily when People of Color moved into neighborhoods.
- Show the ugliness of segregation.
- **Art** – New Public Art piece
- **Signage** – Located adjacent to the sculpture location.
- **Site** -

- Improvements - Plaza

Site #9

- **Name** – Public Service
- **Summary** - Public service is an important category and goes hand-in-hand with the civil rights movement as well. Many of these themes listed below became the first of the race to do so such as Charles Calloway, founding member of the National Bar Association or Rosie Mason, the first black KC police officer. As the first of the race to be in these positions would be a place of honor, but also a certain amount of resolve would be necessary to continue to work in a position, where it is obvious one is not wanted.
- **Theme Ideas**
 - Federal
 - Postal Workers
 - State
 - Local
 - Kansas City Police Department
 - Rosie Mason, First Black female KC police officer
 - Lafayette A Tillman was one of Kansas City's first African American Police Officers.
 - Alvin Brooks, A Kansas City Police officer served the city as beat officer and detective. Became City Councilman and Mayor Pro Tem of the City.
 - City council & Committee members many earlier ones. Bruce R. Watkins, who's already included and Alvin Brooks.
 - Lawyers
 - Charles Calloway, Lawyer – one of the founders of the National Bar Association represented Sarah Rector to emancipate her so she could control her own millions.
 - Ester Williams, Lena Rivers Smith, and Joseph Moore - Integration of Swope Park pool
 - Leona Pouncil Thurman – the first African American woman to be licensed to practice law in KCMO.
 - Judges
 - Mr. Isaac Franklin Bradley, Sr (1862-1938) was the first African American to graduate from the University of Kansas School of Law in 1887. In 1889 he became the first elected African judge in Kansas City, Kansas.
 - Activism around voting and participating in politics.
 - Freedom Inc. is a Democratic political organization that addresses the needs, issues, and concerns of the African American community. The organization was founded by Bruce R Watkins, Leon Jordan, Alberta Lowe. I think it's alright to include them, but the problem is other leaders like Attorney Mark Bryant, who is also alive.
 - Is that still in our jurisdiction?
 - J McKinley Neal, Politics

- Rev. Dr. Emanuel Cleaver II, Politics, former Mayor and now U. S. 5th District Congressman. Born in Texas, Congressman Cleaver has been a public servant to his constituents in the Greater Kansas City area.
- Removed items.
 - William Tecumseh Vernon, President Western U; register of Treasurer (signature on U.S. Money; circa 1909) Western U is located in Quindaro.
- **Art** – New Public Art piece
- **Signage** – Located adjacent to the sculpture location.
- **Site** -
 - Improvements - Plaza

Site #10

- **Name** – Government
- **Summary** - African Americans had long-known that political, social and economic equity could only be achieved through the vote, so they formed political organizations such as Freedom, Inc. and ran for political offices. They served the Black community at all levels following the old adage “To Life as We Climb.”
- **Theme Ideas**
 - Bruce R Watkins – first Black man to run for mayor of KCMO, did not win the election. Was one of the prime founders of Freedom, Inc., the Democratic machine that helped elect Blacks to positions. Move to earlier section that spoke about Bruce and Freedom. He doesn’t need multiple entries.
 - Alvin Brooks – was a Kansas City, MO police officer, city councilman, and the first Black Mayor Pro Tem. Brooks’s work for the Kansas City community is well-recognized and deserved. Rockhurst University, to which he was once denied admission, is constructing the Alvin Brooks Center for Faith-Justice.
 - Kansas City has elected three Black Mayors, Rev. Dr. Emanuel Cleaver II, Sylvester (Sly) James and Quinton Lucas, all of whom served the community well.
 - Military
 - Black Americans often saw the path to social, political and economic equity to be the military. From Crispus Attucks, the first person to die in the Revolutionary War, through all of America’s wars including the Civil War, World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, Operation Desert Storm, and others, Blacks have served valiantly.
 - Tuskegee Airmen – March 1942, completed the Army Air Corps Pilot training program, earning their silver wings, and becoming the nation’s first Black military pilots. Black Airmen during WWII attended Tuskegee University. The Tuskegee Airmen “Experience” includes all individuals, men and women, Blacks and Whites who supported aircraft in the air and on the ground as bombardiers, maintenance and support staff, instructors and all other personnel until deactivation in 1949. After the tails of their P-47s and P-51s red, they earned the nickname “Red Tails Angels.” Local airmen included Brigadier General Charles McGee (born in Cleveland, Ohio but made KCMO his home) flew multiple missions and was the first Black commander of the Richards-Gebaur Air Reserve Base. He was later manager of the Kansas City Downtown Airport. Local

businessman Bruce R Watkins and John Wilburn Davis were also local airmen. There is a Heart of America chapter.

- LGBTQ+ Service members Not sure how these are connected but homosexuality was banned in the military at first, assumed a “don’t ask – don’t tell” status under the Clinton administration. Is acceptable now.
 - Since “coming out” is a rather recent phenomenon, there are few historical figures to include.
- Airforce base – Richards-Gebaur Air Force Base in Grandview, MO and Whiteman Air Force Base in Warrensburg, MO have no noted Black programs, inclusion situations, etc.
- **Art** – New Public Art piece
- **Signage** – Located adjacent to the sculpture location.
- **Site** -
 - Improvements - Plaza

Site #11

- **Name** – Faith-based Organizations
- **Summary** – This category should be included close to the civil rights section, as that movement was developed in many of the faith-based institutions. During segregation, African Americans congregated at churches to socialize and consequently organize protests. One of the reasons most were peaceful demonstrations. Not only were ministers and preachers’ leaders of the church, but also the larger Black community which included local jobs and unions.
- **Theme Ideas**
 - Religions
 - AME
 - Baptist
 - Samuel W Bacote become paster of Second Baptist Church, one of Kansas City’s oldest and largest African American Congregations.
 - The Nation of Islam
 - Barker Temple (COGIC and Bishop Daniel Jordan)
 - Bishop Sammy Watkins (church near 13 and Garfield)
 - Bethel A.M.E. Church (23 & Flora)
 - Muslim Mosque, Now located on Troost, Malcolm X spoke here.
 - SCLC of Greater Kansas City
 - Rev. Nelson "Fuzzy" Thompson
 - Movements
- **Art** – New Public Art piece
- **Signage** – Located adjacent to the sculpture location.
- **Site** -
 - Improvements - Plaza

Site #12

- **Name** – Education and Institutions
- **Summary** - - Education was perhaps the most important of the themes during segregation. It was illegal to teach enslaved people how to read and write so when Freedom came, nearly 95%

of the 4 million freed persons were unable to read or write. Separate institutions were established which were significantly inferior; however, Black people saw the need for learning and took control of how they were educated. These schools eventually lead to quality education in the segregated system. Each one Teach One was more than a motto. The teachers in the “colored” schools were educated, pre-Brown, the graduation rates for African American children were higher, more Black people earned college and advanced degrees. Though the law called for “separate but equal” with the Plessy vs Ferguson Supreme Court decision, with the first *Brown v Board of Education of Topeka, KS* in 1954, the schools were still unequal. Through advocacy, public outrage, and community involvement, education standards still struggle to improve from post Brown conditions.

- **Theme Ideas**

- Significant schools
 - Penn School
 - Lincoln High School
 - R. T. Cole Vocational School
 - Phillis Wheatley School
- Significant educators
 -
- Pre-K-8
 - Attucks Elementary School, Premier African American elementary school
 - R.T. Coles vocational and Junior High School,
 - Phillis Wheatley Elementary School at 5332 South Benton, in Kansas City, MO was the “Colored” school for the 54th Street Neighborhood. Principals and teachers included Dr. Edward E. Fields and Dr. LeRoy Young.
- High School
 - Daniel Lavelle Britton, former principal of Central High School, Southeast High School; (Still living)
 - Lucinda Barnes Britton, educator, counselor (RT Coles and East High School)
 - John A. Hodge, Principal Sumner H.S. (KCK) (not in KCMO)
 - Anna Jones, Educator (Lincoln H.S.)
 - Gerald Dunn, Band director of Sumner High School who took the band to Paris and other places.
 - Sumner H.S. Black high school in KCK (Not in KCMO)
- College
 - Hazel Browne Williams, first black professor at UMKC
 - Dr. Girard Bryant, Educator was the first African American to serve as President of Penn Valley Community College. Dr Bryant began his teaching career at Western Bible College, joined the faculty at Lincoln High School, and was Dean of Lincoln Junior College. He edited the Journal of the State Association of Negro Teachers.
 - Dr. Jeremiah Cameron (1919-2008) had a long, distinguished career as an educator and social critic and was known as the “Dean of Kansas City’s Black intellectuals.” He earned his Ph. D. at Michigan State University. Dr. Cameron

taught at Lincoln High School, University of Missouri-Kansas City and the Metropolitan Community Colleges.

- Western Baptist Bible College, One of the premier black bible colleges in the Midwest
- Professors and Administration
 - Dwayne A. Crompton, after serving as a preschool teacher, elementary school teacher, and public-school administrator, he was selected in 1977 as the second Executive Director of KCMC Child Development Corporation, which he transformed over a 30-year tenure.
- President of Educators' (?) Union
 -
- Bruce Watkins and his walk with Kids from Central High to Downtown should be in the section where Bruce is mentioned above.
- Maxine supporting kids feeding, clothing and putting through school.
- Operation Breakthrough although founded and operated by two white nuns, it was important to many in the Black community.
- N. Clark Smith, Music Educator
- W.W. Yates, Educator
- Corinthian Clay Nutter, Kansas Educator
- Joe Louis Mattox, Community historian
- Elvis "Sonny" Gibson, Community historian
- Linda Brown, Plaintiff in Brown v. Board Education Topeka - daughter of Oliver and Leola Brown, plaintiffs. The Brown Foundation should be mentioned in this section
- Melvin Tolson, Lincoln H.S. teacher who taught English and Debate at Wiley College in Texas, leading his debate team to a win against an all-white college.
- Gaines Lloyd, attempted to integrate University of Missouri Law School in 1935 already recognized. Move to his earlier mention
- Nora Douglas Holt, Graduate of Western University was the first black woman to receive a master's degree in music. She is from Quindaro.
- Removed Items
- **Art** – New Public Art piece
- **Signage** – Located adjacent to the sculpture location.
- **Site** -
 - Improvements - Plaza

Site #13

- **Name** – Healthcare
- **Summary** - Segregation fueled the need to have separate facilities such as hospitals. Kansas City had a plethora of medical professions from technicians, doctors, nurses, therapists, and dentists, most of who were trained here. The two hospitals, Wheatley Provident and General Hospital No. 2 became a "movement" and health care professionals trained and remained here because of the number of jobs available to them.

- **Theme Ideas**

- Hospitals Not in chronological order but should be: Wheatley-Provident (1902-1972), General Hospital #2 (1914-1970); Martin Luther King, Jr (1971-2007); Queen of the World (1955-1965); Perry Sanitarium (1902-1918)
 - Martin Luther King, Jr., Hospital was a 100 bed hospital developed under the initiative of an organization named the Greater Kansas City Baptist and Community Hospital Association, which was lead by Black doctors, like Dr. J. E. Perry and others, and clergy to take the place of the older Wheatley-Provident hospital.
 - General Hospital #2, Owned by the City of Kansas City, MO General Hospital #2, in which Black patients were treated, was connected to the new hospital General Hospital Number 1, where white patients were treated, by a tunnel. Physicians treating patients were separated by race. Black physicians, in particular, were allowed to only treat Black patients. .
 - Wheatley Provident Hospital, which stood at 1826 Forest, Kansas City, MO was established in 1902 and operated by the African American community. Wheatley-Provident was the first hospital for Black people west of the Mississippi.
 - Queen of the World Hospital (1955-1965) at the insistence of Archbishop Edwin V O'Hara, who appealed for St. Vincent's Maternity Hospital to be the first non-segregated facility where physicians and nurses of all races worked together to provide health care. opened and operated by the Catholic Diocese. It served patients of all races as part of their attempt to bridge the equality gap between Black and White patients.
 - Perry Sanitarium – (1902-1918) Founded by Dr. John Edward Perry. The building was closed with the opening of Wheatley-Provident Hospital.
 - University Health Link
- Doctors
 - Truman Med doctors
 - Dr. J.E. Perry
 - Dr Bryant
 - Dr. Thompson
 - Dr. Jones
 - Virginia Alexander, medical doctor who was one of the first black female interns at Wheatley Provident Hospital circa 1922-1924
 - Dr Loretta Britton – A Central High School graduate, Dr. Britton was the first Black President of BCBS, VP Medical director at BCBSKC (first African American Female to hold this position—still living in Kansas City)
 - Minnie Lee Croswaithe, Social Worker at Wheatley Provident Hospital
 - Dr. Carl M. Peterson, Physician
 - Dr. W. R. Petersen, Physician

- Dr. Bruce P McDonald, Sr, M. D. (1914-1966) was one of the last physicians to make house calls. He served the Black Kansas City community until his death in 1966 when he succumbed to lung cancer.
- Dr Thomas C Unthank rose to prominence as a physician and the “Father of Kansas City’s Negro Hospitals.” Unthank joined other African American doctors in establishing Douglass Hospital, Lange Hospital, and the Jackson County Home for the Aged. He also served as superintendent of General Hospital No 2.
- Dr John Edward Perry campaigned with Dr. Unthank to establish General Hospital No. 2 in 1908. Fed up with the disparities in health care between white and Black mental health patients, he converted his home into Perry Sanitarium and Training School for Nurses. That institution was renamed Wheatley-Provident Hospital and expanded to a larger facility at 18th Street and Forest Avenue. Perry is also well-known for his social activities in the Black community.
 - Dr. Sere Myers. Sr. (dentist) Sere S. Myers, Sr., graduated from Lincoln High School in Kansas City, MO in 1946. Earned a bachelor’s degree from Morehouse College and served in the U.S. Military before earning his D. D. S. from Howard University. Dr. Myers served as Chief of Dental Surgery at Forbes Air Force Base in Topeka, KS and in private practice in Kansas City, MO first at 4134 Prospect and later at 5240 Prospect. He practiced dentistry for fifty years before retiring. He succumbed to complications from pneumonia. Two of his five children, Dr. Serese Myers Cannon and Dr. Sere S. Myers Jr., followed in his footsteps and also became dentists.
 - Dr. Tillmon (son of Lafayette Tillmon)
 - Dr. Taft
- **Art** – New Public Art piece
- **Signage** – Located adjacent to the sculpture location.
- **Site** –
 - Improvements – Plaza

Site #14

- **Name** – Sports and Athletics
- **Summary** - Sports and Athletics that are synonymous with the growth of Black Kansas City has to include some of those who are not recognized through the Kansas City Chiefs, Kansas City Royals or the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum. This walking trail is independent of those other organizations, focuses on an audience that may or may not visited the museums of those places. We also need to include those that have been top notch players, coaches, and others whose stories have not been widely circulated.
- **Theme Ideas**
 - Women’s Basketball Association – Spring and Summer League formed in KC by Lighting Mitchell. There is a WBA Hall of Fame at the Black Archives of Mid-America, but this trail should also speak to this organization which began in Kansas City.
 - Jabali, “Warren” Armstrong, Jabali, played for Central High School in Kansas City, MO, became a professional basketball player, coach, and mentor. He was also a community improvement advocate.
 - Tom Bass – legendary horse trainer was the founder of the American Royal.

- Professional level
 - Bobby Bell, Hall of Fame Professional Football Player – Still alive
 - Otis Taylor, Professional Football Player – Kansas City Chiefs
 - Jim Kearney, football player with KC Chiefs, on the Super Bowl team and teammate of Otis Taylor
 - Wilber “Bullet” Rogan, a pitcher with the Kansas City Monarchs, and a National Baseball Hall of Famer
 - Chiefs used to practice at Swope Park
 - It may be complicated to single out only football players We should not do that. Frank White played baseball in Kansas City with the KC A’s and the Royals and is not Jackson County Executive.
 - Baseball could have a QR code linked to the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum’s website.
 - Royals – QR Code
 - Chiefs – QR Code
 - Kansas City Athletics (A’s)
 - Kansas City Kings
- Collegiate Level – This list should be expanded.
 -
- High school level – This list should be expanded as well. Perhaps we should also know what happened when they did not play at college or even go to the professional leagues.
- Satchel Paige
- Buck O’Neil
- Removed Items
- **Art** – New Public Art piece
- **Signage** – Located adjacent to the sculpture location.
- **Site** -
 - Improvements - Plaza

Additional History Theme

- Youth
 - Sarah Rector she is included above.
 - Banned children’s books. Unless they’re by Black Authors we don’t need to include them.
 - Student march after the schools were not closed for Martin Luther King Jr assassination.
- Women
 -
- Journalism, Tv, Radio, Newspaper
 - Andrew & Mildred Carter, Carter Broadcasting
 - Freddie Bell, Former on-air personality with Carter Broadcast Group on KPRT. Retired after 38 years of service.

- Roy Wilkins, Kansas City Call
- Lena Rivers Smith, worked for TV station in KC as one of the first black women to do so.