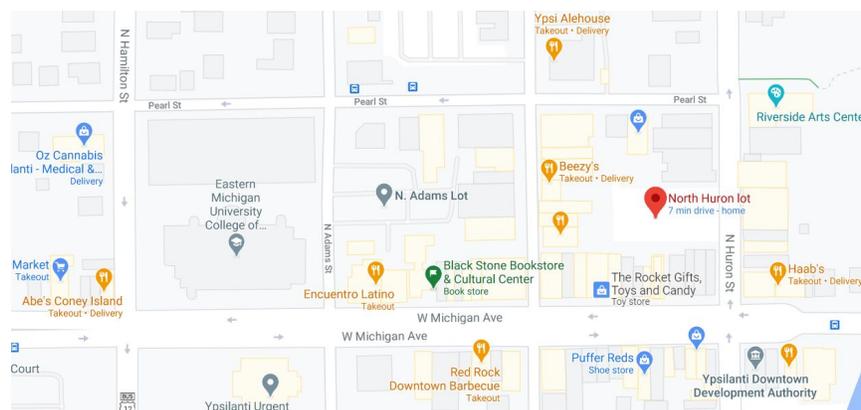




UUAA Historical Black Neighborhood Walks and Talks Feb 2021

Ypsilanti Walk Routes and Resources

- This month of walks and talks involves reading about and then visiting a number of sites in Ypsilanti. To begin, we suggest you read this packet all the way through, so that you have a sense of what to expect and can complete the exercises in whatever way/format works best for you
- For the Ypsilanti walk, our suggested route begins at Black Stone Bookstore & Cultural Center (214 W Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti, MI 48197).
- Parking near the start of the Ypsilanti walk is available at metered spaces in downtown Ypsilanti, near Michigan Avenue
 - There is also a free lot accessible off of northbound Huron Street (which is one way), just north of Michigan Ave:
North Huron lot
29 N Huron St, Ypsilanti, MI 48197
<https://goo.gl/maps/39QaXBuXp8ePftA97>



- You may wish to print this packet and/or the linked maps before setting out.

Commitments

Finally, for Black History Month Walks and Talks, we ask that you make the following commitments:

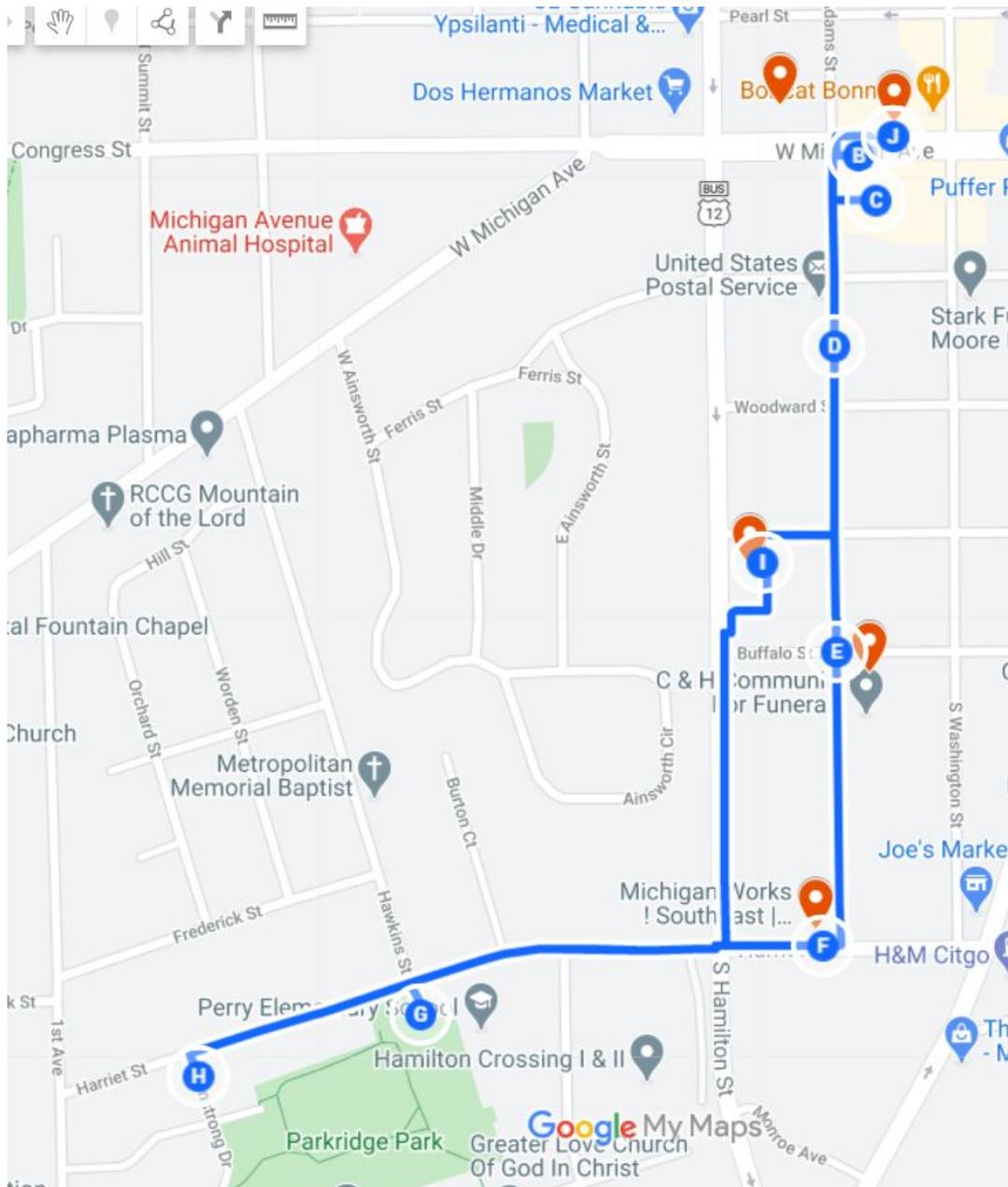
- **Commit** to making space for narratives that have been made invisible, and to honoring the lived experiences of our storytellers.
- **Commit** to listening deeply, and to making every effort not to 'gaze' and 'gawk' at communities.
- **Commit** to setting aside your cameras, and to being fully present in this experience.

Resources

- Order a book online from [Black Stone Bookstore & Cultural Center](#), or walk in before or after your walk to shop their selection.
 - For online orders, place an order at least 2 weeks in advance to pick up after your small group walk on Saturday Feb 6th.
 - For instance: [Caste by Isabel Wilkerson](#), topic of upcoming discussion.
- Read about the Households, Society and Social life on South Adams Street @ 1900 (<https://southadamstreet1900.wordpress.com/>). Interactive maps of the residents in the South Adams and nearby neighborhoods are available on this site, reflecting 1873, 1910, and 1927.
- Ypsilanti District Library: African American Interest: <https://www.ypsilibrary.org/interest/african-american-interest/>
- A.P Marshall African American Oral History Archive: <http://history.ypsilibrary.org/>
- See more photographs and find information on additional historical sites at AACHM Living Oral History Digital Collection (https://aadl.org/aachm_loh_digitalcollection).
- Elijah McCoy on Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elijah_McCoy
- Harriet Tubman on Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harriet_Tubman
- Perry Preschool Project: <https://highscope.org/perry-preschool-project/>
- Be curious! We hope this brings you some energy to research the questions you have after your experiences.

A Journey Through some sites of Black History in Ypsilanti

[Route Map](#) (The route is 2 miles with stop G and H):



Note: With only brief stops because of the cold, a group walked this entire 2-mile route in about 1 hour in January 2021. If there is anyone in the group who cannot walk that far, a good alternative is to skip G and H, returning to downtown via Hamilton street and Second Baptist Church.

Sites of note along the route:

- A. [Black Stone Bookstore & Cultural Center](#)
([214 W Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti, MI 48197](#))
- B. Elijah McCoy historical marker
[Library Park](#) (213 W Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti, MI 48197)
 - 1. From Wikipedia: **Elijah J. McCoy** (May 2, 1844 [2] – October 10, 1929) was a Canadian-born inventor and engineer of African American descent who was notable for his 57 US patents, most having to do with the lubrication of steam engines. Born free in Canada, he came to the United States as a young child when his family returned in 1847, becoming a U.S. resident and citizen. Elijah McCoy was educated in black schools of Colchester Township due to the 1850 Common Schools act which segregated the Upper Canadian schools in 1850. At age 15, in 1859, Elijah McCoy was sent to Edinburgh, Scotland for an apprenticeship and study. After some years, he was certified in Scotland as a mechanical engineer. By the time he returned, the George McCoy family had established themselves on the farm of John and Maryann Starkweather in Ypsilanti. George used his skills as a tobacconist to establish a tobacco and cigar business. Read more at:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elijah_McCoy
- C. Statue of Harriet Tubman
[213 W Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti, MI 48197](#)
Harriet Tubman (born Araminta Ross, c. March 1822[1] – March 10, 1913) was an American abolitionist and political activist. Born into slavery, Tubman escaped and subsequently made some 13 missions to rescue approximately 70 enslaved people, including family and friends,[2] using the network of antislavery activists and safe houses known as the Underground Railroad. During the American Civil War, she served as an armed scout and spy for the Union Army. In her later years, Tubman was an activist in the movement for women's suffrage.

D. Households on South Adams (see

<https://southadamstreet1900.wordpress.com/>)

1. The household with, perhaps, the most notable historic connections is at [111 South Adams](#), the house closest to Ypsilanti's downtown along Michigan Avenue. For many years it was the home of the Robert Allen De Hazen and Anna Louise Jacobs family. Read more at: <https://southadamstreet1900.wordpress.com/111-de-hazen-jacobs/>
2. Many households along Adams are documented on South Adams Street @ 1900 (<https://southadamstreet1900.wordpress.com/>) at three different time points: 1873, 1910 and 1927
3. The southernmost household we will pass on South Adams is [430 South Adams](#). We know that James and Margaret (Mary) Mulder rented the home at 430 South Adams in 1899. They lived here until at least 1920, the last Census they are found in. James was listed as a 'day laborer' in the 1891 Canada Census. Margaret was James's second wife, after his first wife, Ida, died prior to 1895. Read more at: <https://southadamstreet1900.wordpress.com/430-mulder/>.

E. The corner of Buffalo and South Adams holds three significant buildings; the First Ward School, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Good Samaritan Hall.

1. [Good Samaritan Hall](#)

([327 S Adams St, Ypsilanti, MI, 48197](#))

The building was rebuilt in 1893 after a devastating tornado that destroyed much of downtown Ypsilanti in April, 1893. The Samaritans in Ypsilanti were organized as the Love and Union Lodge, which held many of the social events of Ypsilanti's black community as well as lending the hall out for all manner of civic, social, religious and neighborhood activities. It is hard to imagine a member of the community not coming to the hall at some point during the year around the turn of the last century. It was for many years the center of social life for Ypsilanti African Americans and, now owned by the St. Andrews Lodge of the Prince Hall Masons, continues to hold events.

3. [Brown AME Church](#)

[\(401 S Adams St, Ypsilanti, MI 48197\)](#)

Along with the nearby Second Baptist Church, Ypsilanti's African Methodist Episcopal Church was, and remains, a center of religious life and so much more for generations Ypsilantians. These two churches were the only to serve Ypsilanti African Americans in the first seventy-five years of black history in the City.

The story of Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church goes back to the earliest days of black settlement in Ypsilanti (an archive of newspaper articles covers the years 1865-1920). Meeting first at the homes of Flora Thompson and Syllas Jones homes in 1843, the congregation was recognized in 1848, one of the earliest African American congregations in Michigan. In 1856, Jesse and Isa Stewart donated two lots on the corner of Buffalo and Adams Street to the congregation. Here several houses of worship were built, around which a community grew.

4. [First Ward School](#)

[\(405 S Adams St, Ypsilanti, MI, 48197\)](#)

In 1860, Ypsilanti made use of the old Presbyterian Church on Pearson (where Owen Business College now stands) for the education of the City's black children. The old building was being used by the congregation of the Second Baptist Church, then led by H.P. Jacobs. The Adams Street building was constructed during the Civil War, in 1864, specifically to educate Ypsilanti's black children. Generations of children were taught there, mostly by black teachers. The first teacher, John Hall, was a black man who also had a trade as a barrel maker.

F. Harriet Street Black Business District

1. Anna McCoy Hairdressing
(315 Harriet St)

This is reported as a black owned business in 1910, after Elijah had already moved to Detroit. It is possible Anna is one of Elijah's 11 siblings.

2. Allen's Market is pictured in 1968 in the AACHM Living Oral History Digital Collection
(https://aadl.org/aachm_loh_digitalcollection).

3. According to a 1996 Ann Arbor News article
(https://aadl.org/aa_news_19960728_pc1-bulldozers_flattened_a_close_community), the area between Harriet and Monroe and Hamilton and Huron in 1961 home to both households and businesses. The neighborhood was later bulldozed by a controversial urban renewal program. Lost locations include:

- i. 310 Bar (310 Harriet)
- ii. Washington Bros. Grocery (319 Harriet)
- iii. Cooper's Pool Room (315 Harriet)
- iv. Harry's Sports Center (309 Harriet)
- v. Faygo Bottling and Distribution (512 S Washington)
- vi. Hermanson Grocery (510 S Huron)
- vii. Tom Hall's Gas Station (Huron and Monroe)
- viii. Gordon Day, Piano tuner (340 Monroe)
- ix. Ramsey Billiards (404 Monroe)
- x. Several households

Note: For a shorter tour, walk west on Harriet to Hamilton, and then north towards Second Baptist Church, skipping the stops at Perry School and Parkridge Community Center.

G. Perry School

([550 Perry Ave, Ypsilanti, MI 48197](#))

An early [photo](#) of the front entrance of Perry School is part of the AACHM Living Oral History Digital Collection (https://aadl.org/aachm_loh_digitalcollection), from the Ann Arbor News in 1956. It said “Seven new classrooms at Perry School were used for the first time today. The classrooms are part of a \$300,000 addition to the front of the former Harriet School. Besides the classrooms, the addition has a gymnasium-auditorium, kitchen and office. The top view [this photo] shows Perry School's "new face." One of the seven new classrooms is shown in the lower picture. Among members of Ruth P. Samson's first grade class are fifth graders who helped in this morning's moving operation.” It was dedicated in 1956 and named for a dentist and school board member, Dr. Lawrence C Perry. The Perry Project began as a research study seeking the answer to whether access to high-quality education could have a positive impact on preschool children and the communities where they live. Under the visionary research guidance of psychologist David Weikart, and with the extraordinary dedication of Perry Elementary School principal Charles Eugene Beatty, 123 preschool children with risk factors of failing in school were randomly divided into two groups. One group entered a high-quality preschool program based on HighScope’s active learning approach, and a comparison group who received no preschool education.

The Perry Project was conducted from 1962–1967, but led to a longitudinal documentary as we continue to follow the Perry Preschool participants throughout their lives in this landmark study that forever changed the trajectory of early education. The Perry Preschool Project established the lasting human and financial value of early childhood education and led to the establishment of the HighScope Education Research Foundation and one of the first early childhood programs in the United States intentionally designed to increase school success for preschool children living in poverty.

H. [Parkridge Community Center](#)

([591 Armstrong St, Ypsilanti, MI 48197](#))

The Parkridge Community Center has been operating since 1945 and is pictured in 1956 in the AACHM archive in this [photo](#). Situated in the northwest corner of Parkridge Park, offers recreational and educational programs to Ypsilanti youth, with a focus on after-school and summer activities. A broad variety of community organizations provide programming at Parkridge, including Growing Hope and MSU Extension. Operated by Washtenaw Community College, the community center currently offers free after school and weekend programs for children. There is a weekly meeting of community organizers and there is also a close partnership with Parkridge Community Garden, run by local organizers.

Note that the neighborhood north of Harriet Street was an orchard around 1910 according to

<https://southadamstreet1900.wordpress.com/ypsilantis-african-american-community-1910/> and a new neighborhood of black Ypsilantians was growing on First and Second street, just past Parkridge Community Center.

Note: walking back to downtown, it is best to be on the east side of Harriet in order to have legal crosswalks at every cross-street.

I. [Second Baptist Church of Ypsilanti](#)

([301 S Hamilton St, Ypsilanti, MI 48197](#))

Second Baptist Church began in the year of 1860 and is the second oldest black church in Ypsilanti. Black Ypsilanti Baptists first worshiped at the City's First Baptist Church. Second Baptist was founded by, among others, William Casey and HP Jacobs, both having escaped from slavery and early pastors. In 1900, the pastor for Second Baptist was George Martin, then living at 419 South Adams. For decades there were just two churches serving the religious needs of black Ypsilantians, Brown AME and the Second Baptist. Second Baptist played a strong social, as well as religious, role in the life of Ypsilanti, including giving support to the early NAACP and continuing struggle for civil rights. Read more here:

<https://southadamstreet1900.wordpress.com/second-baptist-church/>