

2017-18
UMS LEARNING GUIDE

Immersion: Exploring African-American History In Ypsilanti

Saturday, March 3, 2018
8:00 am – 6:00 pm
Various locations in and around Ypsilanti

2017—18



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Foreword: Framing Your Day

TERRI PARK
UMS EDUCATION COORDINATOR



Why is it important to study history? Studying history can help us understand the past. Studying history can help us understand the present. Studying history can help us connect to our own culture. Studying history can provide insight to cultures with which we are less familiar, even though they may be close to home.

This is where I found myself when I began my research for this season's K-12 cultural

immersion. I was amazed to discover the rich history of African-American heritage right next door in Ypsilanti. Like many of us, as a young child I learned about slavery, the Civil War, and the heroic acts of Harriet Tubman in school. But I did not really connect with African-American history in a significant, meaningful, and impactful way.

Thus my educational journey began. I looked at old maps of Ypsilanti farmland. Black and white photos of the Second Baptist Church and Depot Town. Photos of African-American soldiers who fought in the Civil War and the dozens of unnamed Black Americans that worked hard to establish businesses, churches, and a community where they could live and thrive.

I read news articles about slaves who escaped to Canada traveling through Ypsilanti. I read clippings on Ypsilanti's rich social life and music scene. I read numerous articles about local political activism during Jim Crow. This history had faces and landmarks and seemed not so distant and disconnected. Though I will never truly know the suffering and hardship that African Americans endured — and still endure today — I hope to be a better ally as I now more fully appreciate that learning about Black history is learning about American history — and local history.

People have come to our nation and our community from many countries in the world, and to have a complete account of American history we must include all of their stories. Our shared history is inherently multi-cultural — a tapestry of tales, stories of the strong, of the powerless, of Blacks, whites, and immigrants. While we may not always share the same viewpoints, I believe that with a deeper understanding of one another's stories, we can more effectively move forward as one family.

Photo: 1868 Bird's-eye map of Ypsilanti-Ypsilanti Historical Society.

Overview

This day-long immersion explores the rich African-American history of Ypsilanti, Michigan. UMS is partnering with community artists, scholars, and long-time residents to guide participants through a series of immersive historic, cultural, and artistic experiences.

Participants will visit important historical sites, including places that served as safe houses on the Underground Railroad, the resting places of Ypsilanti's African-American Civil War veterans from the 102nd Troop (an African-American infantry unit of the Union Army), neighborhoods that were important sites during the civil rights era, as well as many other landmarks representing the rich, longstanding history and culture of African Americans in Michigan. Workshops will feature artistic demonstrations and resources that can be brought back into the classroom.

Immersion is a day-long, intensive workshop that focus on a specific culture, community, or art form. They are designed in partnership with local and national experts and are connected to UMS season programming.



Presenters

LYNNE SETTLES



Lynne is a veteran art teacher in her fourth year with Ypsilanti Community High School. In her short time in Ypsilanti she has been awarded the Exemplary Education Endeavors Award by the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Regional Chamber Foundation, the Mercedes Wauddy Humanitarian Award by the Ypsilanti Community Schools Student Council, a City of Ypsilanti Proclamation for the partnership she developed between

YCS and the Ypsilanti Community, and, most recently, the DTE Energy Foundation Educator of the year in 2017. She is one of the founding members of the African American Mural project with Matt Siegfried, which guided her students in the completion of four community murals related to history. Her students have been committed to community art events such as ArtPrize and YpsiGlow for two years. In 2017 her students organized a Peace March honoring Fredrick Douglass and Martin Luther King, Jr. Her students have made several presentations on their community place-based art projects.

MAXIMILIAN HARPER



Max is a junior at Ypsilanti Community High School. He has led many projects in the classrooms such as the African American Mural Project and the silent peace march. He has also given speeches at places such as Eastern Michigan University's Ecojustice and Activism conference and two peace marches. Max recently did a TedX talk and was nominated as 2017 Young Citizen of the Year. Along with his co-president, Bennie Williams, he is one

of the founding members of the Ypsilanti chapter of the NSBE Jr. (National Society of Black Engineers). In addition, Max finds has time to juggle varsity sports such as baseball and soccer.

Presenters

CONTINUED

MATT SIEGFRIED



Matt is a historian, writer, and researcher with a focus on race, class, gender, and power in our social landscape. A graduate of Eastern Michigan University with degrees in History and Historic Preservation who is based in Ypsilanti, he has focused his work on connecting local history to broad historical moments. His projects include researching and writing historical markers for the State of Michigan, ongoing collaborations with the Ypsilanti Public

Library and the Ann Arbor Public Library, the Ypsilanti African-American mural project, and guest lectures and tours for Eastern Michigan University. Matt currently works for the Southeast Michigan Stewardship Coalition, collaborating with regional teachers to create local place-based history curriculum. He specializes in African-American history, serving on the board of the African-American Cultural Historical Museum of Washtenaw County, and has done extensive research on Ypsilanti's historic community, creating a website, [South Adams Street @ 1900](#).

The Immersion Agenda

MORNING

Welcome and Introductions — Arrival at parking lot of Pioneer High School (601 W. Stadium Blvd, Ann Arbor)

Bus trip to Ypsilanti

- Breakfast at Beezy's Café
- Tour of Underground Railroad sites with Matt Siegfried
- Tour of landmark Ypsilanti neighborhoods
- Visit Brown African Methodist Episcopal Church
- Tour of Ypsilanti African American Mural Project with Maximilian Harper

AFTERNOON

Visit Riverside Arts Center

- Lunch — Catered by Cuppy's
- Meeting the community, sharing personal histories
- Hands-on Art-Making Activity with Lynne Settles

Bus back to Ann Arbor (Pioneer High School)

- Reflection and Wrap Up

A SPECIAL THANKS TO

The development of this Immersion's rich content received tremendous support from:

- **Lynne Settles**, visual arts teacher at Ypsilanti Community High School
- **Matt Siegfried**, local historian for sharing the content of his website
- **Janice Thompson** and **Nelson Freeman**, long-time Ypsilanti residents
- **Kayla Coughlin** from the Ann Arbor District Library in providing additional resources
- **Sean Meyers** and **Allie Taylor**, who are part of the UMS Education and Community Engagement Department, for researching and helping to write content for the learning guide.
- UMS Ambassadors **Joan Grissing** and **Elena Synder** for their help with the day's events.

History of Ypsilanti Michigan

BY MATT SIEGFRIED



STREET SCHOOL, FEBRUARY 1878. Left row: Helen Davis, Wally, George (Shall) Hubert Wright, Thurstell Bayliss, Susan Robb, Eliza J. J. Sears, Thelma Myrtle Burt, Johnson, Velma Chester Lee, Lawrence Davis, Kenneth Keweenaw. 2d row: Jackson Morgan, Lucile Freeman, Margaret George Robb, Robert Wright, Calmore Harris, James Gaylin, Theodore Bayliss, John Williams, Grant Robinson. 3d row: Harold W. Orville Keweenaw, Delmore Derrick, Earl Seaver, Schreiner Thomas, unknown, unknown, Melvin Stigleman, Arva Harris Parker, Joseph Light. 4th row: Susanna Huxtable, Mose Ross, Miss Bernice K. Huxtable. Identifications supplied by Habel Freeman.

Ypsilanti was founded in the mid-1820s on or near the site of a former Potawatomi village and settled in the following decades largely by people from upstate New York and New England. Many early migrants from those areas to Ypsilanti brought the attitude of moral intervention into

society with them. Central to this movement were Methodist and Baptist churches. The first churches organized by Ypsilanti blacks were originally connected with local, white-led Baptist and Methodist churches before striking out with their own congregations of those denominations.

Ypsilanti, while not a stronghold of abolitionism, did contain strong anti-slavery attitudes and a number of prominent abolitionists. While few Ypsilanti blacks played open roles in the local abolitionist movement, they, quite literally, were the Underground Railroad. It was Ypsilanti blacks that provided much of the organization, help, and guidance to their fellows in need; almost all of those accounts are lost to us now. The years of the 1850s were tumultuous and saw a dramatic increase



in the numbers fleeing slavery in the South and racism in the North. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 pushed many free blacks into Canada and greatly developed the activities of the Underground Railroad. Many of those on their way to Canada came through Ypsilanti, on an important rail line on their way to Detroit and Canada some 45 miles to the east.

Some stayed and by the 1860s the black population of Ypsilanti had tripled, to over 220.

In the years during the Civil War and the decade that followed, Ypsilanti was seen by many as tolerant, if not welcoming, for black citizens. *The Ypsilanti Commercial*, one of the leading papers of the city, was relatively consistent in defending the new rights of blacks.

History of Ypsilanti Michigan

CONTINUED



In the period after the Civil War, black Ypsilantians lived in family clusters in several parts of town, including the area around Emmet and Ballard, Depot Town, and the corner of Buffalo and South Adams. Here stood the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the First Ward School, and, eventually, the Good Samaritan Lodge Hall.

Generations of Ypsilanti blacks were married, mourned, educated, and initiated. This historic street was home to Sunday School teachers and Lodge Elders, Civil War veterans, and civil rights activists.

Blacks, while marginalized, were not completely segregated. Blacks owned a few businesses, grocery stores, barber shops, and construction contractors, many with white patrons. In this period, there were many who returned to the United States from settlements in Canada. By 1880, Ypsilanti's black population had risen to 440, about 10% of the city's total population.

However, Ypsilanti was not immune to the white supremacist reaction to black liberties won in the Civil War and Reconstruction. Tolerance receded and hostility increased in the 1880s and 90s. In a few short years, segregation became so complete that even the service work blacks did for whites as barbers, domestics, and laundresses were no longer available. Blacks were increasingly shut out of both institutions and public discourse.

The community responded to this by building their own institutions in the form of fraternal and benevolent organizations, religious institutions, and increasingly political groups like the Afro-American Protective League of the early 1890s.

As Jim Crow separation became codified in the latter 19th-century, north as well as south, Ypsilanti's scattered clusters of African-American residents coalesced into segregated neighborhoods south of Michigan Avenue and west of Washington Street. South Adams Street, with its school, church, and abundance of empty lots, became a central avenue of African-American life in Ypsilanti.

The years of the Great Migration (1916-1970) brought many more African Americans to Ypsilanti. They came from the South looking for work and a little more freedom. The community that existed in Ypsilanti would become a part of a larger new community. The common thread that united them was defined by the struggle for emancipation. While similar to those that came later, Ypsilanti's black community would develop a new identity in the post-war years.

Historian A.P. Marshall



Albert Prince (A.P.) Marshall, son of Early and Mary Bland Marshall, was born September 5, 1914 in Texarkana, Texas and raised in Oklahoma. He graduated from Missouri's Lincoln University in 1939 with a bachelor's degree in library science and earned a master's degree from the University of Illinois in 1950. A.P. worked at Lincoln University, becoming director of the Inman E. Page Library. A leading librarian, he was President of the Missouri Library Association and Vice President of the American Library Association. During the 1950s, he was President of the Missouri state NAACP.

A.P. came to Eastern Michigan University in 1969 and retired in 1980. In that time he taught library science and served as the director of Eastern Michigan University's library as well as the Dean of Academic Services. He was involved in the Ypsilanti Rotary Club, Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, Ypsilanti-Willow Run Branch of the NAACP, and Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, for which he wrote a history.

While in Ypsilanti, Marshall began to research the city's historic African-American community. His pioneering work brought to life figures like Elijah McCoy and helped transform Ypsilanti's sense of itself. A.P. wrote many articles and several books about Black Ypsilanti, including *Unconquered Souls*, available at the Ypsilanti Library. In the process of his research, Marshall conducted dozens of interviews and collected hundreds of documents.

Albert Prince Marshall died on March 9, 2001 at the age of 86.

Riverside Arts Center



Founded in 1994, the Riverside Arts Center (RAC) offers, promotes, and nurtures dynamic arts and cultural programs through arts education, performing arts, and visual and fine arts activities that serve and engage the community in Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County, and the surrounding area.

Since its construction in 1909 as a Masonic Temple, the RAC building has undergone extensive renovations and changed ownership twice. The interior was renovated twice following fires in 1924 and 1970, and in 1987, the building was sold to Materials Unlimited, an antique and architectural supplies dealer.

In 1994, the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority (DDA) purchased the building for \$290,000 with the plan to renovate it into an arts center, providing rental space for performing arts groups and run by a non-profit arts council, the Riverside Arts Center Foundation. Over the following 15 years, the RAC has played a major part in boosting Ypsilanti's economic and cultural growth. In 1996, the Washtenaw



Council for the Arts moved to RAC from its previous location in Ann Arbor, and the RAC was awarded hundreds of thousands of dollars for renovations and building upgrades. Funding was awarded for a project linking RAC to the nearby Riverside Park, and in 2008 the RAC completed the installation of an elevator between the RAC and adjacent DTE building, providing access to the previously unused upper floors of the RAC. In 2016, the RAC hosted over 15,000 people at 94 performances, contributing over \$600,000 in total industry impact in Ypsilanti. The art center's \$230,000 annual budget is realized through grants, charitable contributions, and space rentals, and the RAC currently partners with over 20 community organizations, individual artists, and community leaders.

Landmark Ypsilanti Tour Highlights

WILLOW/WEST WILLOW

A look at the neighborhoods that grew up around the massive Willow Run and other auto plants that dominated Ypsilanti's post-World War II history, as well as the site of important civil rights efforts to desegregate war housing and industry in the volatile World War II years. Recently, the Willow Run and Ypsilanti school systems have merged, highlighting the joint history and common future of the two communities.

DOWNTOWN YPSILANTI

Ypsilanti developed segregated business districts by 1920 with downtown's Michigan Avenue becoming a largely "no-go" area for Black Ypsilantians. However, before the rise of Jim Crow, downtown was home to a number of Black businesses and social halls. This area saw numerous activities including celebrations on Emancipation Day and three visits by Frederick Douglass.

SOUTH ADAMS NEIGHBORHOOD

Among the oldest African-American neighborhoods in Michigan, the South Adams neighborhood is home to several important buildings in Michigan history, including a school, churches, social hall, and numerous homes built or lived in by the generation that escaped slavery, made homes in Canada, and fought in the Civil War. The genuine home of Underground Railroad history in Ypsilanti is in these houses and buildings, some built by the very hands that escaped bondage. The neighborhood is now facing increasing threats of gentrification.

PARKRIDGE

The site of a historic community center and federal housing development, Parkridge is in the heart of Ypsilanti's south side and helps to tell the story of the Great Migration, which saw thousands of African Americans journey from the South to join an already existing neighborhood, born in the mid 19th-century with the hopes of creating a new community. We will also look at the historic Parkridge Community Center and discuss the ongoing housing crises, then and now.

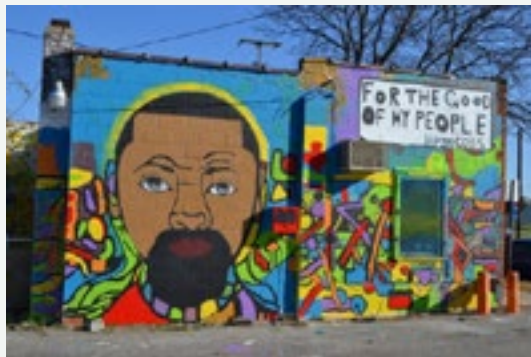
HARRIET/MONROE

The area of Harriet/Monroe was once the home to Ypsilanti's African-American business district and housed two dozen shops and restaurants. Razed after a contentious fight in the period of Urban Renewal, this area has seen the most change of any Ypsilanti neighborhood as the highway and multi-family homes have altered the historic landscape. Like Detroit's Black Bottom, Ypsilanti has also seen the effects of the interstate system destroying historic Black neighborhoods. In addition, this area was the site of the city dump; the long-term consequences include the recent attempt to move people from contaminated properties.

HIGHLAND CEMETERY AND DEPOT TOWN

A visit to Ypsilanti's scenic Highland Cemetery to visit graves, some in a segregated plot and many unmarked, of historic Black Ypsilantians, telling their stories. Additionally, this part of the tour includes a visit to the impressive Civil War monument that stands over the graves of both Black and white veterans and the opportunity to hear the incredible story of Ypsilanti's Black Civil War experience. We will also hear of Ypsilanti's important association with the Dredd Scott case and see potential sites of Underground Railroad activity and homes of leading abolitionists

Ypsilanti African-American Mural Project



The African-American History Mural Project of Ypsilanti was founded by Ypsilanti High School art educator Lynne Settles and her students. The project's mission is to raise awareness of the rich history of Ypsilanti's African-American heritage,

providing a source of inspiration for today's community. The series of three murals depict the stories of Dr. H.P. Jacobs, the Underground Railroad, and the amazing women of historic Ypsilanti that worked in health care, education, community leadership, sports, and civil rights.

The first mural is a depiction of H.P. Jacobs, a co-founder of Jackson State University in Mississippi. He was born in bondage and lived in Mississippi until forging free papers for his family and moving them to Ypsilanti. Jacobs found work as a janitor at the Normal School, then became a prominent minister before enrolling in medical school and establishing himself as a well-respected doctor. Throughout his life, Jacobs worked as a political activist, serving in the Constitutional Convention of Mississippi and as president of the Missionary Baptist Convention of Mississippi. He was elected to the Mississippi State Senate for three terms.



The second mural depicts the Underground Railroad, a network of both African American and white people who offered shelter and aid to escaped slaves from the South. It developed as a convergence of several different clandestine efforts. The exact dates of its existence are unknown, but it operated from the late 18th century to the Civil War, at which point its efforts continued to undermine the Confederacy in a less-secretive fashion.



The third mural, according to Lynne Settles, depicts

“only a very few of some of the most amazing women that called Ypsilanti home. We have women by name but it's more about the work they did in the areas of health care, education, leadership, social issues, community, sports, and civil rights. [And] the groups of women that we don't know by name that held up the ones we do know by name.”

Historic Landmark

Brown Chapel AME Church



The Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church was one of only two churches to serve African Americans who lived in Ypsilanti for 75 years, starting in the middle of the 19th century. The congregation first began in 1843 — 22 years before slaves were freed — and was recognized in 1848, making it one of the inaugural African American

congregations in the state of Michigan. Meetings were held in the private homes of Flora Thompson and Syllas Jones until 1856, when two members of the congregation, Jesse and Isa Stewart, donated two lots of land on Adams Street for expansion of houses of worship. Around 1870, further renovation and development in construction were made, and by 1904, the church that stands today was fully built — by members of the community with construction experience.

These acts of personal contribution, and the sense of collaboration and community, are what made the Brown Chapel AME Church integral to the lives of those who were involved, and what makes it continually successful today, 170 years later. If you visit Brown Chapel AME Church today, you will

see the stained glass windows that represent and commemorate the early members of the congregation.

In 2014, Brown AME started congregating about a mile away from the Adams Street location — on Michigan Avenue — but the original, historic building remains, and continues to be used as a church.

Currently, Brown AME is led by Pastor Jerry Hatter, who is the congregation's 42nd pastor and has served in the role for 27 years. There are regular services on Wednesdays and Fridays, as well as Bible Study meetings and Sunday school.

The mission of Brown Chapel is to minister to the spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, and environmental needs of all people by spreading the liberating gospel through word and deed, as we seek to save the lost, reclaim the saved, and serve the needy.



Resources



Organizations and Information

SOUTH ADAMS STREET @1900

SouthAdamStreet1900.wordpress.com

RIVERSIDE ARTS CENTER

www.RiversideArts.org

**BROWN CHAPEL AFRICAN METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

G025540.wixsite.com/Bchapel

PARKRIDGE COMMUNITY CENTER

CityofYpsilanti.com

YPSILANTI FARMERS MARKET/DEPOT TOWN

GrowingHope.net/Farmers-Markets/Ypsilanti

YPSILANTI DISTRICT LIBRARY

YpsiLibrary.org

A.P. MARSHALL

history.YpsiLibrary.org/A-P-Marshall

YPSILANTI HISTORICAL SOCIETY

www.YpsilantiHistoricalSociety.org

YPSILANTI' HISTORIC FREIGHTHOUSE

www.YpsilantiFreighthouse.org

BEEZYS CAFÉ

BeezysCafe.com

CUPPY'S

www.CuppysBestSoulFood.com

Ann Arbor District Library

The following listing of literature for educators was developed by the Ann Arbor District Library to connect to the 2017-18 UMS Immersion: Exploring African-American History in Ypsilanti. All titles are in circulation at the library. For more information about the Ann Arbor District Library and their programs for youth, teens, teachers, and schools, visit www.aadl.org.

BOOKS

UNCONQUERED SOULS:

The History Of The African American In Ypsilanti
by Albert P Marshall

STANDING TALL: PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

Twenty African American Women Whose Inspiring Lives, Challenged, and Changed a Community
by Jan Collins-Eaglin

THE "REAL MCCOY" OF YPSILANTI:

About the inventor Elijah McCoy

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD IN MICHIGAN

by Carol Mull

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN MICHIGAN

by Lewis Walker

BLACK EXPERIENCE IN MICHIGAN

by Reginald Larrie

FROM MIDNIGHT TO DAWN:

The Last Tracks of the Underground Railroad
by Jacqueline Tobin: Michigan's role in the Civil War pbs.org

DVD

NORTH TO FREEDOM:

Michigan's Underground Railroad

OLD NEWS ARTICLES AND PHOTOS

MICHIGAN CITIES

that were stations on the Underground Railroad

BROWN CHAPEL

in Ypsilanti was once part of the Underground Railroad

ORAL HISTORY

of African Americans in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti

About UMS



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UMS was selected as one of the 2014 recipients of the National Medal of Arts, the nation's highest public artistic honor, awarded annually by the president of the United States at the White House to those who have "demonstrated a lifetime of creative excellence." The National Endowment for the Arts oversees the selection process.

One of the leading performing arts presenters in the country, UMS is committed to connecting audiences with performing artists from around the world in uncommon and engaging experiences. With a program steeped in music, dance, and theater, UMS presents approximately 60-75 performances and over 100 free educational activities each season.

At UMS, diversity is embraced as both a powerful educational resource and a guiding value for all our work. Our educational philosophy is dedicated to multidisciplinary artistic and educational experiences that represent a range of cultural traditions and viewpoints. Understanding our similarities and differences informs our culture, our values, and helps us navigate the world. By learning together, we can discover something new and extraordinary about each other. Throughout our K-12 Education Season, we invite educators and students to celebrate diversity in order to inform, strengthen, and unite us as community.

Thank You!

RESEARCHED & WRITTEN BY

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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
PROVIDED BY**

Matt Siegfried, Lynne Settles, and
Kayla Coughlin (Ann Arbor District Library)



EXTRAORDINARY GIFTS. EXTRAORDINARY LEARNING THROUGH THE ARTS.

UMS is grateful to the following donors for establishing permanent endowment funds or providing annual support of \$5,000 more to support UMS Youth Education Programs.



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Michael Allemang and Janis Bobrin
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Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan
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