Liberty-Booker T Washington District Timeline of Major Sites and Leaders

Catherine Lovin
Meredith Duke
Joyce Wade
Rafael Torres
Robert Williams
1858

Porterdale Cemetery

- African American Cemetery in Columbus
Holsey Chapel CME Church

• Held a significant role in the Civil Rights Movement as a meeting place
• During the 1960s Reverend Edward D. Bryson fought to desegregate the public bus system
• During the second half of the 20th century, began broadcasting worship services on the radio and providing food for those in need
1897

Friendship Baptist Church

• Ma Rainey was a parishioner in the Church and sang in the choir until her death in 1939
• Hosted various events in the promotion of Civil Rights
1907

Colored YMCA

- Predominately funded by George Foster Peabody
- Booker T. Washington spoke at the dedication in 1907
- A significant portion of funds were raised by Black residents in Columbus
- Provided lodging during World War II for Black Soldiers
Fifth Avenue School

• Located at 627 Fifth Avenue
• Served as a secondary education for Blacks in the district until Spencer High was built in 1930 and was converted into an elementary school
• Closed in 1978 by the Muscogee County School District following desegregation
First African Baptist Church

- Held carnivals, fish fries, and sold ice cream during the Great Depression
- Susie Sconiers, a prominent member of the community, was a parishioner of the church
- During the 1940s, began the first Boy and Girl Scout troops for African American children in Muscogee County
- Held funeral of Thomas Brewer, a civil rights activist who was assassinated in 1956
- Sponsor a Women’s Day program annually
Liberty Theater

• Erected by Roy Martin, local white movie theater owner in 1924
• Housed a 600 seat auditorium with attached concession stand
• Severed as a movie, music and vaudeville theater for the tri-city area
Ma Rainey House Museum

• Ma Rainey purchased this home in 1935 where she lived until her death in 1939
• Attended Friendship Baptist Church where she sang in the Choir
• The City of Columbus purchased the house in 1995 and began a 10 year renovation project
• Several fundraising projects were hosted to raise money for the renovation including a concert where legendary B.B. King performed
Sconiers Buiding

- Located on the corner of Ninth Street and Fifth Avenue, the “Magic Corner” in East Commons
- Office building for Black professionals such as doctors, lawyers and insurance agents with offices on the first two floors of the building developed by John L. Sconiers, Sr.
- Third floor consisted of an auditorium and served as a meeting place for fraternal organizations and other social functions
1937

Fourth Street Missionary Baptist Church

• Had significant growth in the 1960s and 1970s as its budget increased from around $20,000 in 1963 to about $180,000 in 1980
• During the 1980s, began a radio ministry and lawn care and maid services
• Currently involved in a prison reform ministry, a recovery program for addicts, and an affordable housing program
Gertrude ‘Ma’ Rainey

• Gertrude ‘Ma’ Rainey is buried between her two sisters in Porterdale Cemetery
1940

Booker T. Washington Apartments

• 1, 2, & 3 Bedroom with 1 Bath units including water, electric, and gas utilities
• 392 Units ranging from $10.56 to $11.80 per month when minimum wage was $0.43 per hour
• Scheduled for demolition beginning in 2014
Fifth Avenue USO

• The first USO for Black soldiers in the United States
• Elizabeth Lunsford provided more than three quarters of the necessary funding for the project
• The Army provided bus transportation for Black soldiers from Fort Benning to the USO
• Jackie Robinson visited the USO
Mildred Lane Terry

• First school trained librarian in Muscogee County
• Librarian at Spencer High School
• First Librarian at Forth Avenue Public Library in 1953
1942

Black Soldiers

- Black Military Police served as Courtesy Patrols in Black Columbus
- Black Military Police were first assigned to Fort Benning in 1942
1944

Black Soldiers

• Black Soldiers from Fort Benning enjoyed Columbus’ sights
Fourth Avenue Public Library

• Opened in 1953 with Mildred L. Terry as the first librarian
• Renamed Mildred L. Terry Public Library in her honor following her retirement in 1981
Dr. Thomas Hency Brewer, Sr.

- Opened his medical practice in Columbus in 1920
- Instrumental in establishing the Columbus Chapter of the N.A.A.C.P. in 1939
- Assassinated in February 1956
1956

E. Edward Farley

• Prominent Real Estate Developer including Carver Heights Subdivision in 1948
• Assumed leadership of the local chapter of the N.A.A.C.P. upon Brewer’s assassination in February 1956
• Died four months later of a heart attack
The Liberty Theater Cultural Center

- The Liberty Theater was closed in 1974
- Theater was reopened in 1997 following a $1.6 million dollar renovation
- Provides recreational services and fitness activities for the tri-city community
Reverend Jesse Jackson

- Spoke in Columbus at an event held at Holsey Chapel CME Church in April 2001 with 350 people present
- He is the founder of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, which promotes civil rights and social change