

JEWISH MUSEUM MILWAUKEE
CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY BUS TOUR

March 11, 2018

Welcome to the Jewish Museum Milwaukee's Civil Rights History bus tour, in conjunction with their exhibit *Allied in the Fight: Jews, Blacks, & the Struggle for Human Rights*. My name is Dominic Inouye and I'm going to be your guide today. I'm here in three capacities:

- as the director of ZIP MKE (a community engagement project that uses photography to celebrate, engage, and connect communities in the city),
- more importantly, as someone who recognizes my various privileges and advantages and seeks to put those to work in the community and for the community, and
- as a life-long learner who is here, humbly, to share what he has learned about the civil rights movement in Milwaukee and how the Jewish and Black communities worked together. I don't have all the answers, let alone direct experiences or stories, so please be patient as I use my humble script. If you do have questions, please ask them, and if I don't know the answer, I'll make sure to get back to you.

So, why are we taking this tour? Let's go back to 1963 . . .

August 28: Rabbi **Joachim Prinz** (the then president of the American Jewish Congress) addressed the crowd right before Martin Luther King Jr. at the March on Washington. He noted that as a rabbi of the Jewish community in Berlin under Hitler's regime, he experienced Nazi oppression first-hand:

“Bigotry and hatred are not the most urgent problem. The most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful and the most tragic problem is silence.”

September 7: Melvin S. **Zaret** (then executive director of Milwaukee Jewish Welfare Fund) spoke to Board of Directors:

“It is noted that the several hundreds of people are members of the board of directors of all of the agencies of this community are . . . the employers of others and the owners and operators of real estate agencies. Such people are in a position, because of their own identification with welfare agencies, and human values, to take the lead in demonstrating concern for others. It is recommended that means be found to encourage such people to employ people indiscriminately and to sell housing indiscriminately, all of this in recognition of the fact that the Negroes' struggle is for freedom, education, housing, and jobs.

“Jews who are all together familiar with the humiliation of being unable to sleep where they want to sleep, who were quarantined in ghettos for so many years and still are in many places, Jews who were denied opportunities in all sorts of employment and still are in some places in our country, who were unable until the end of WWII to practice medicine in many hospitals and still cannot, who entered many universities on a quota system and still do, who cannot join many social clubs, including some within our own city, who have met hate and murder, can hardly be onlookers when one of the great battles for freedom goes on before their eyes.

“We cannot pretend that the insult to us in this country anywhere approaches the humiliation and the indignities to which the Negro is subjected. We must not pretend that we do not see the badge of inferiority placed upon the Negro. Gradually, the eternal quest for human dignity, like the Jewish struggle, is speeded up. Our history, our collective experience, our tragedies and our glories as a people dictate that we have a special stake and responsibility in all of this. In the face of oppression and brutality--let us not be silent.”

1963 is the same year that the Milwaukee chapter of CORE (Congress for Racial Equality) was established, inspired by Gandhi’s nonviolent resistance. Jewish indivs/orgs members.

That year, former Freedom Rider and head of CORE James Farmer addressed the Women’s Division of the Milwaukee Jewish Welfare Fund:

“You know the meaning of suffering. You have suffered for thousands of years. We know that suffering for only two hundred years. In that suffering, in the seeking for freedom and tolerance, we--Jews and Negroes--have a great kinship. I can imagine no greater alliance than between Jews and Negroes in the current civil rights crisis.”

1963 is the same year that the Milwaukee Jewish Council voted to make “the current struggle of the American Negro” a “priority concern.”

The Sisterhood of **Emanu-El B’ne Jeshurun** heard Vel Phillips tackle “What would YOU do if a Negro moved into YOUR neighborhood?”

The local chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women sponsored an “inner city bus tour” that ended with soul food at the Urban League headquarters.

Prominent real estate agent Jack Lee urged his fellow Jews to sell their homes to Black families as a *mitzvah*--both a righteous deed and a commandment.

Associate Rabbi Clyde Sills of Emanu-El B'Ne Jeshurun became 1 of 17 rabbis arrested during a demonstration in St. Augustine, Florida.

And 1963 is the year that a Fr. James Groppi was transferred from the south side's St. Veronica's Parish to the north side's St. Boniface, bridging the gap in his own mind and heart between the two areas and opening up for him the dire need for equality and equity in his city.

We are first going to travel west to Sherman Park, then head east again, then south until we cross the James E. Groppi Unity Bridge. In traveling west, we will be echoing the migration of Jewish residents from the Haymarket neighborhood to the Sherman Park neighborhood, which, even today, is a diverse neighborhood shared by black and mainly Orthodox Jewish residents.

In traveling east and south from there, we will be echoing the Open Housing Marches that took place 50 years ago. Along the way and at our various stops, which include Wisconsin Black Historical Society & Museum and the Milwaukee Youth Arts Center, I will share Milwaukee history that I've learned through my research (remember, I'm no expert, I'm still learning) and highlight the moments and places of intersection between the black and Jewish communities, especially as it concerned their shared struggle for human and civil rights.

Leave Jewish Museum Milwaukee (7 minutes to Haymarket)

- North on Prospect Ave.
- Left on Albion St.
- Left on Farwell Ave.
- Right on Juneau Ave.
- Right on Water St.

In a few minutes we will be making our first pass today through the old Haymarket neighborhood, just northeast of where the new Bucks Arena is being built.

1850s

- German-Jewish immigrants settle in the Haymarket neighborhood (**Walnut to Juneau, 8th to 3rd**)
 - haymarket was at **5th & Vliet** (fuel for hungry urban horses)
 - between the Schlitz brewery to east and Pabst brewery to west
 - small frame homes, tenements, commercial buildings, worn-out mansions, factories (caskets, corks, church furniture, barrels, boots, shoes, ice cream)

by 1890s

- The Haymarket mainly inhabited by Russian Jews
 - A group of primarily Jewish women volunteers, led by Lizzie Kander, worked to improve life in "the Jewish ghetto" as it was known in the late 1800s.
 - They educated immigrants and their children in sewing, cooking, cleaning and English lessons at local synagogues.
 - In 1901 they opened a house on 5th Street (**near Galena St.**) called The Settlement, where anyone could go to learn and practice those skills.
 - Using favorite community recipes, they published The Settlement Cook Book in 1903, which became a staple in American kitchens through most of the 1900s.

- The Settlement House was an early predecessor to Milwaukee's Jewish Community Center, now located in Whitefish Bay.

by 1915

- The Haymarket already considered an “urban slum” by many (especially public health and housing officials), an “urban village” by others (for its compact cohesiveness)

between 1920-40

- Jewish residents began moving in large numbers to the new Sherman Park, with its bungalows, duplexes, lawns, setbacks, and trees. There were numerous intersecting factors:
 - decreased Jewish immigration from Europe
 - Blacks from the South settle in the neighborhood, seeking higher-paying industrial jobs and escape from Jim Crow segregation (1st Great Migration)
 - Black population in Milwaukee County quadruples (2,300 in 1920→ 9,000 in 1940)
 - Milwaukee Real Estate Board steers Blacks to Haymarket
 - Racially restrictive covenants in effect from 1920s to 1948
 - contractual agreements that prohibited the purchase, lease, or occupation of property by a particular group of people (especially Blacks and Jews)
 - enforced through real estate boards and neighborhood associations, too
 - old, worn-down orthodox synagogues abandoned, with plans to build more modern, up-to-date buildings
 - those that weren't razed became Christian churches

between 1940-60

- Black residents grew from 46% to 85% of the old Jewish quarter's population
 - By 1950, population is over 20,000
- Sherman Park's Burleigh Street (between 43rd and 60th) became “synagogue row”
 - Synagogues moved from the Haymarket and took up new residences:
 - Congregation Beth Israel

- Beth Jehudah (which we'll see soon)
- Ansha Lebowitz
- Anshay Sfar
- Temple Menorah
- Beth El Ner Tamid
- Businesses sprang up:
 - Kosher Meat Klub
 - Miller's Bakery (famous for its rye)
 - Kohl's flagship grocery store

But by late 1950s, Black residents also began moving to Sherman Park and Jewish residents began moving to outlying suburbs (Shorewood, Whitefish Bay, Glendale, Fox Point), while a 2nd Great Migration of southern Blacks moves into North Side. Sherman Park synagogues began to be abandoned.

En route to WBHS/M

- Left on Knapp St. → Mckinley → Fond Du Lac Ave.
- Left on Roosevelt Dr.
- Left on 52nd St.
- Left on Burleigh St.
- Right on Fond Du Lac Ave.
- Left on Center St. → 2620 W. Center St.

As we approach Sherman Park and the WBHS/M, I want you to think about how Black Americans--Black Milwaukeeans--built up their defense and offense during the first part of the last century, until this struggle reached its tipping point in the 1960s. They formed organizations that addressed the intellectual, the practical, and the social:

1909

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) founded in New York City by a group of Black and [Jewish intellectuals](#)

- In 1908, a deadly race riot rocked the city of Springfield, Illinois--the final tipping point that led to the creation of the NAACP. Appalled at this rampant violence, a group of white liberals that included Mary White Ovington and Oswald Garrison Villard (both the descendants of famous abolitionists), William English Walling and [Dr. Henry Moscowitz](#) issued a call for a meeting to discuss racial justice. Some 60 people, seven of whom were African American (including W. E. B. Du Bois), signed the call, which was released on the centennial of Lincoln's birth

1910

National Urban League founded in NYC

- To assist African Americans in their transition to urban life and employment

1919

Milwaukee branch of NAACP founded

Milwaukee Urban league founded

- The MUL originally taught basic skills such as social courtesies, proper dress and grooming, sanitation, health, and homemaking.
- To aid in the development of healthy lifestyles, it also sponsored a community center for holiday

gatherings, youth recreation and crafts, boxing skills development, and by the 1920's, a medical clinic.

1930s

NAACP chapter closed

- Chairman James Dorsey thought that the black population was too destitute to support both an NAACP and a MUL

1947

NAACP chapter re-emerges with almost 900 new members

1948

NAACP Youth Council formed

- Ardie and Wilbur Halyard called together a group of young people, talked about NAACP, race relations, etc.
- In 1.5 years, the membership had risen to 186
- YC held dances, picnics, etc. to attract local youth
- However, conservative NAACP elders discouraged young members from direct action, seeing them as *future* political actors, not present ones
- YC activities were closely monitored by the NAACP (considering the YC subordinate)
- However, most of the YC members were working class and would never get the chance to study law, and the NAACP didn't expose them to alternative ways of effecting change.

I see these organizations as building up the hope and resilience and self-sufficiency of the Black community.

However, the reality of redlining looms in the background (and **targets Jews too**):

1938

- President Roosevelt's New Deal Home Owners Loan Corporation releases **Redlining Map** ("Residential Security Map"), created by real estate appraisers and mortgage lenders to determine credit worthiness and level of risk
 - areas colored red were deemed risky for mortgage lending due to the condition of houses and personal finances of residents
 - this codified and reinforced existing loan practices and class, ethnic, and racial segregation
 - **both Jews and Black experience effects of redlining**
 - **by 1950s, Black community is primary target**
- This was so socially acceptable that in 1937, *Good Housekeeping* awarded 10 communities a "shield of honor" for umbrella restrictions against the "wrong kind of people"

1948

- The Supreme Court ruled in *Shelley v. Kraemer* that courts could not enforce racial covenants on real estate BUT restrictive language phrases and clauses *remained* on various property deeds.
 - In Milwaukee, these contracts abided (officially and unofficially) into the 60s and even beyond

1950

- Milwaukee named the "third most livable city" in the country (but only for white residents)
 - 67% of Black citizens lived in rented housing considered unfit for use
 - If a Black family tried to move out of the "Inner Core," it was often harassed or its home burned.
 - In late 1950s, only 1 Black family lived north of Capital Drive (the family of then-Milwaukee Braves baseball star Hank Aaron)

- While there were some businesses and organizations within the Jewish and greater Milwaukee communities that contributed to inequitable housing practices, there were also local organizations that challenged it:
 - For instance, Rabbi Dudley Weinberg (Congregation Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun) delivered sermon referencing civil rights for blacks at their centennial celebration

In the 1950s, a complementary struggle for civil rights emerges across the nation-- and in Milwaukee: school desegregation.

1954

- *Brown v. Board of Education* (overturns *Plessy vs. Ferguson*'s "separate but equal" doctrine) after 60 years

In the next two years, two important figures emerge on the scene:

1955

- Lloyd Barbee elected president of Madison NAACP
- Next year, he receives law degree from UW Law School
- Two years later, he completes a study outlining discriminatory housing practices in Madison, preparing him for his
- **1961:** Lloyd Barbee conducts his first demonstration in support of open housing at the Wisconsin State Capitol
- **1961:** Barbee elected president of the *Wisconsin* NAACP
- **1962:** Barbee moves to Milwaukee to confront the de facto segregation in MPS

1956

- **April:** Alderwoman Vel Phillips elected to Common Council
- **1962:** Phillips introduces fair housing ordinance (4 times, 18-1)

But then, in February 1958:

- **Daniel Bell** (22 y.o.) murdered by a white policeman
 - Driving home 2 motorcycle officers noticed he had a broken taillight--pursued him
 - Bell parked and fled (not sure why--no license?)
 - Thomas Grady caught up with him and shot him in the back--died instantly
 - Grady planted a knife in Bell's hand--both officers told public that Grady has lunged with the knife
 - Bell's family requests full investigation, but denied (he "acted justifiably")
 - NAACP avoided immediate involvement
 - So: former YC member Eddie Walker wrote to the national NAACP, saying that black Milwaukeeans regarded the local chapter as a "social club" too afraid to fight for civil rights
 - Loss of NAACP membership

Even with the rise of YC and university student sit-ins (e.g. Woolworths), the national NAACP still didn't see youth as equals

Wisconsin Black Historical Society/Museum

- 2620 W. Center St. (Park bus in lot on 27th St.)

I am pleased to introduce Clayborn Benson, the founder of the museum.

- He produced the documentary called *Black Communities*, a three-part documentary that was the inspiration for establishing the museum in 1987.
- In 1988, the Museum became an affiliated member of The State Historical Society.
- The building, constructed in 1898, was the Engine No. 2 Fire Station. It was converted into the Center Street Library in 1928.

1964

- Wisconsin NAACP president and attorney Lloyd Barbee demands that the state officially acknowledge that Milwaukee schools were segregated, but the school board majority refused to accept responsibility for its role in causing segregation or their obligation to correct it.
 - Many white families flee to suburbs or transfer children from schools with growing Black populations
- **March:** Lloyd Barbee forms MUSIC (Milwaukee United School Integration Committee)
 - eliminating segregation through direct action
 - Phillips and Groppi members
 - [Jewish associations and individuals belonged as well](#)
- **May 18:** 1st “Freedom Day”
 - Freedom Schools established by MUSIC
 - 14,000 children leave schools
 - alternative schools were run by teachers, clergy, and parents
 - curriculum emphasized Black heritage and activism
 - North Division High School is one of them
- **August 27:** Milwaukee Committee for CORE sit-in at County Courthouse
 - Chapter members picketed and staged sit-ins at the Milwaukee courthouse, demanding the removal of the president of a sausage manufacturing company, Fred E. Lins, from the Social Development Commission. Lins had made insensitive and derogatory racial remarks about African Americans that CORE members found offensive. Lins stated in an interview that a way should be found to keep the ignorant poor, particularly blacks, out of Milwaukee. He also stated that most blacks have “an I.Q. of nothing.” When the demonstrations against Lins began, only 18 people participated. After a few more days, the picketing gained more attention and over 100 people joined the protest. Brown and other CORE members trained people in nonviolent techniques. The sit-ins lasted for close to a month.

1965

- Lloyd Barbee elected to Wisconsin State Assembly (until 1977)
- **May:** MUSIC/CORE direct action protests (“chain ins” at public schools)

- **June:** Barbee files federal lawsuit against the school board
- **October:** 2nd MUSIC walk-out
 - 7,300 skip school on first day
 - 4,000 on next 2 days
 - Groppi march to school board president's home
 - protests outside Mayor's office

1966

- **March 28:** 1-day boycott at North Division
 - 99.6% black enrollment
 - 492 absent
 - final boycott

Leave WBHS/M and travel down Center St.

- Continue east on Center St. to 11th St.

As we travel down Center St. now, we'll explore the genesis of the events in the early 1960s that led to the tipping point of the Open Housing Marches.

1960s

- By this time, nearly all black residents (90%+) live on the city's north side
- NAACP Youth Council is mostly working class Black youth, but also has a sizable number of white members
 - Many synagogues were forming "social action" or "human concerns" committees in response to the civil rights movement.

The civil rights movement in Milwaukee began a shift from

- legal action → direct action
- adult action → youth action

1962

- About this time, the NAACP starts to change its tune regarding the youth
 - “coordinate” not “subordinate”
 - encouragement of direct action through creation of special task forces
 - organize demonstrations
 - handle tense situations
 - forbidden to provoke violence
- Calvin Sherard’s group investigating Daniel Bell’s 1958 murder becomes local chapter of Negro American Labor Council (NALC)
 - Pickets 3 north side grocery stores, including A&P Grocery **5th & North (at the Patchwork mural where we’ll stop fairly soon)**
 -

Stop at North Division High School

- Park bus at 1000 block of Center St. (between 12th and 10th in front of North Division High School)
- Continue east on Center St.
- Right on 5th Ave.

As we stop here in front of North Division High School, the site of some of the 1964-66 school segregation boycotts, I can't help remember last May's rally by Youth Rising Up protesting the high lead levels that exceeded EPA standards (15 parts per billion) in 15 drinking fountains and 92 faucets. North Division was among many schools (including Pulaski, Barack Obama School of Career and Technical Education, and Milwaukee High School of the Arts--all with a high Black student population). How much of the school system's inequities has really changed?

1963

- Fr. James Groppi transferred to St. Boniface from south side's St. Veronica's Parish **(on 11th & North, where we'll also be fairly soon)**
- **March 27:** Youth Council's first direct action campaigning Marc's Big Boy Restaurant (for discriminatory hiring practices)
 - After 3 days of protests, the owner of the restaurant, Ben Marcus, claimed that there were no discriminatory practices and hired the young man who had been looked over for a white employee
 - Adult NAACP was displeased about this direct action
 - Even founder Ardie Halyard

1964

- **The year of the Civil Rights Act of 1964** (vs. segregation, unfair voter registration, employment, fair trials, etc.)
 - Despite this,
 - **Freedom Summer of 1964:** young activists travel to Mississippi to register as many Black voters as possible.
 - Jews account for almost $\frac{2}{3}$ of white volunteers

- 3 civil rights activists in Mississippi abducted and murdered, including James Chaney (Black) and Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner (Jewish)
- Nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the money raised by civil rights organizations at the height of the movement came from Jewish contributors (at a time when Jews made up less than 3% of the population)

1965

- Fr. Groppi becomes YC advisor
- **March:** Milwaukee rallies and marches for Selma, where MLK and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (from NYC) lead the charge
- MLK speaks at UWM
- Heschel will speak in Milwaukee as well during the 1960s:
 - “You cannot worship God and then look at a human being, created by God in God’s own image, as if he or she were an animal.”
 - “For many of us, the march from Selma to Montgomery was about protest and prayer. Legs are not lips and walking is not kneeling. And yet our legs uttered songs. Even without words, our march was worship. I felt my legs were praying.”

1966

- Fr. Groppi (who had been traveling south for protests), accelerated the YC’s direct actions
 - **February:** Youth Council pickets Fraternal Order of Eagles Club, whose membership was closed to both Blacks and Jews
 - **August:** Youth Council demands that Eagles Club members/judges resign
- **Aug:** NAACP office (**4th & Center**) bombed by members of Ku Klux Klan
- **Aug (2 days later):** NAACP Youth Council est. HQ: Freedom House I (**2026 N. 5th St.**)
 - Eventually condemned and razed
 - Move to **1316 N. 15th St.** in Kilbourntown III Urban Renewal Project, which dislocated many Black families

- **October:** Youth Commandos formed (originally 10 YC members)
 - YC captain Dwight Benning (19 y.o.): “We decided we should take it upon ourselves to defend these people. You know, we asked them to march;; now we had to protect their lives against people that we feared were biased toward us.”
 - Benning announced exclusively male membership qualifications:
 - follow orders
 - neatly dressed
 - available
 - militant
 - brotherhood
 - present image of strong Black male leadership (army fatigues, black berets, black boots)
 - Attempt by Mary Arms to create “Commandoettes” was shot down by the YC

1967

- YC and Commandos become separate but coordinated units
- Many whites and Blacks (esp. NAACP) concerned about Commando’s image
 - politicians described them as extremists, “Hitler-like”
- **July 25:** Vel Phillips gets Fr. Groppi to speak to Common Council on central city issues
 - he warns of the likelihood of rioting

Stop at Patchwork mural

- Stop at 5th and North (park bus at Patchwork mural)
- Left on North Ave.
- Right on Martin Luther King Dr.

The Patchwork Mural was created by Ammar, as well.

- 1991: O.C. White Soul Club hired Ammar to paint a mural depicting Black leaders and figures in Milwaukee
- Patchwork quilt idea = traditions of passing stories from generation to generation, held up by elders
- Ammar: “there was an elder who sat on her porch from across the street each day and watched as [he] painted the mural. [He] used her likeness as a model for the female elder holding up the quilt. She joined [them] for the mural dedication and was introduced along with some of the other dignitaries [...] featured in the mural.”
- Included:
 - Howard Fuller (civil rights activist, education reformer, academic)
 - Director, Institute for the Transformation of Learning (ITL), Marquette University
 - Superintendent, Milwaukee Public Schools, June 1991—June 1995
 - Director, Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services, 1988—1991
 - Dean of General Education, Milwaukee Area Technical College, 1986—1988
 - Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Employment Relations, 1983—1986
 - Associate Director, the Educational Opportunity Program, Marquette University, 1979—1983
 - Vel Phillips
 - first black woman to graduate from UW-Madison law School
 - she and husband first couple to be admitted to Wisconsin Bar
 - 1956: first woman and first black member of Common Council (and tireless defender of the Open Housing Marches)
 - 1978: first woman and first non-white elected Secretary of State in Wisconsin

This is also the site of the old A&P Grocery, one of 3 north side grocery stores picketed by Calvin Sherard's group investigating the 1958 murder of Daniel Bell (his group became the local chapter of the Negro American Labor Council)

This area, namely the 3rd St. Corridor we're about to drive down, also became one of the sites of a "Civil Disturbance" (what the Mayor then called a "riot") the summer of 1967:

- Sniper on 2nd & Center from a house (4 officers shot)
 - Milton Nelson drove by house, with Black residents outside talking, and yelled a racial slur
 - Someone thought he was reaching for a gun and people scattered
 - Shots came from inside house and Nelson is hit in face, as well as a neighbor
- Police tried breaking up a crowd of Black teenagers after they left a dance, but situation escalated
- Store looted along 3rd St.
- Police set up a command post at Gimbels Schuster's Department Store on 4th & Garfield
- Police chief persuaded Vel Phillips to ride around in a police car and try to calm rioters
 - car was pelted with rocks
 - Phillips: "By this time it was too late. It was many hours, many days, many months too late."
 - 1 police, 3 civilians dead
 - 100 injured
 - 1,740 arrested
 - Mayor announces:
 - National Guard
 - roadblocks
 - mandatory curfew
 - Maier: "There will be no coddling of criminals." After being criticized on the front pages for "still

ignoring the need for communication with the negro community,” he called for dialogue to get to the root of the unrest: “It is obvious that guns and nightsticks aren’t going to solve the problems of the central city.”

- It was during this disturbance that 18-year-old Clifford McKissick was shot
- **August 4:** NYT publishes Mayor’s “Statement of Concern About the Crisis of Our Cities”
- **Oct:** Commandos box in police by sealing off four corners of an intersection during a march at **20th & North**
 - Police started swinging fists and clubs and Commandos fought back
 - 11 arrested / 6 officers injured
 - newfound cooperation by police officers, who knew that they were dealing now with a formidable force

Despite this bloody history, you’ll see on the left and right of North Ave. some of Bronzeville’s history and some of its renaissance.

Drive down MLK Dr.

We’re in the east end of the historic Bronzeville neighborhood now, which used to be the Haymarket district.

For now: on your right . . . on your left . . . Efforts of Historic King Drive BID No. 8 and the City of Milwaukee’s redevelopment initiative to transform this neighborhood into the Bronzeville Cultural and Entertainment District.

Stop at Martin Luther King statue

- Park bus on 1700 block of MLK Dr. (between Vine and Walnut) by statue
- Continue on MLK Dr.
- Right into parking lot at Milwaukee Youth Arts Center
- Park bus

This Erik Blome statue was dedicated on Jan. 15, 1998 on Dr. King's birthday.

- Commissioned by YWCA of Greater Milwaukee
- In front of King Heights apartments
- Standing on classic books (Aristotle, Plato, St. Augustine)
- Quote: "I have the audacity to believe that people everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and justice for their spirits."
- Other works include scientist/inventor George Washington Carver (Arizona), late Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall (Chicago), Duke Ellington (Northern Illinois University), Rosa Parks (Montgomery)

Between the 1940s and 1960s, the Black community in Milwaukee prospered in what came to be known as Bronzeville (on a similar footprint as the Haymarket):

- higher incomes → realistic path to the middle class
- Bronzeville became a good destination and a tight-knit community of family, faith, work, education
- The term Bronzeville gave residents of the Black Metropolis a much-needed lift. They did not wish to be looked down upon as the "black neighborhood."
- Heart = Walnut St.
 - restaurants, barbershops, beauty parlors, jewelers, tailors, record stores, hotels, law firms, Regal Theater
 - ~180 black-owned businesses!

- Most popular attraction? Jazz clubs
 - The Metropole was the first Bronzeville club to attain popularity in the 1920s; the Flame and Moon Glow lasted the longest. Other clubs included the Blue Room, the Chateau, the Celebrity Club, the Gold Coast Tavern, the Intrigue, the Milwaukee Club, Mr. Jimmy's Place, Morri's, the Pelican Club, the Polk A-Dot, Ranchos, Savoy, the 711 Club, T Joes, Thelma's Back Door, Trocadero, and the White House.
 - Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holliday, Bessie Smith (finish gigs downtown, then come to Walnut St.)
 - one of the few points of racial integration in Milwaukee
 - "black and tan clubs"

However, problems arose:

- **Great Depression (1930s)**
 - By 1940, 51% of Black men were unemployed
- **WWII:** many Black men in the armed forces / Black women in defense jobs at Allis Chalmers, etc. (making machinery for naval ships such as turbines, generators, motors, etc.)
 - But after the war, Black women were replaced by white workers in the plants
 - forced to take domestic service jobs
 - wages cut in half!
- **Highways**
 - 1963: I-43 (north/south)
 - 100s of buildings and houses demolished
- **Deindustrialization**
 - 1970s: products once made in Milw. being produced in suburbs or around the world

- Job loss!
- Blacks hit hard, since 43% of men worked in industry at the time

By 2001, Milw. had lost over 82,000 jobs (almost 70% of its industrial jobs)

Arrive at First Stage - Milwaukee Youth Arts Center

“First Flight” sculpture:

- commissioned to commemorate 25th anniversary (2012)
- served 2.5 million people in Bronzeville for 25 years
- 25 feet tall
- inspirational words at base

It’s here where I want to spend a few moments talking about the Open Housing Marches 50 years ago:

1967

- **August 28: 1st Open Housing March**
 - Crossing “Milwaukee’s Mason-Dixon Line” between North Side (Black) and South Side (Polish)
 - “The Longest Bridge in the World” because it connected “Africa and Poland”
 - 200 marched, led by Groppi, Youth Council, Commandos
 - 125 police
 - 5,000 counter-protesters met them at south end with signs (Crazy Jim’s Auto Sales 930 S. 16th St.)
 - Follow them to Koszciuszko Park
 - On way back, they

- threw “bottles, eggs, beer cans, bricks, stones, cherry bombs, and pieces of wood”
 - “We want a slave!”
 - “Kill, kill, kill”
 - (white teenagers and children as young as 7...one 3 y.o. had a white sweatshirt with spraypainted “Go Home, Nigger.”)
- 2.5 hours / 45 arrests / 22 injured
- Groppi: “A white riot”
 - phoned governor and mayor to demand more protection (both refused)
- Dr. Jay Larkey established a walk-in clinic in the basement of St. Boniface’s Church for demonstrators
 - *“By the time the marchers reached the safety of the viaduct, they looked like refugees from a battle. They were dazed and bewildered; some were suffering from the effects of tear gas that hung in the air. Some could not walk and had to be carried by other marchers. Blood streamed down the face of a young, white seminarian who had been hit by a bottle.”*
- **August 29:**
 - Counter-protesters = 13,000 (spat, jeered, threw bricks, bottles, etc.)
 - Police shoot tear gas and bullets into Freedom House II (**1316 N. 15th St.**), setting it on fire (police say they were responding to reports of a sniper)
- **August 30:**
 - Mayor Maier’s curfew
 - Prohibited night marches for 30 days (4pm-9am)
 - Marchers rally instead in front of Freedom House ruins
 - Police say the gathering is illegal and arrest 50+
 - “Might as well march”
- As summer progressed

- Groppi/YC = press conferences
- Commandos = more vocal
- Fr. G: “It raises problems in the sense that I am white, and that we are trying to develop indigenous black leadership...you can’t give yourself to the point where you will overshadow and stifle...”
- End of summer:
 - YC members return to school, leaving older (18-30 y.o.) Commandos in charge.
 - Many Jews march, including
 - Saul Sorrin (Milwaukee Jewish Council)
 - Ben Barkin (publicist)
 - Rabbi Weinberg
- **September 4:** Martin Luther King sends a supportive telegram to Fr. Groppi, which you can see at the JMM
- **September 7:** 75 Youth Council and Commandos occupy and vandalize Mayor’s office
 - Mayor refused to meet with them
 - press covered protest and destruction
 - YC censured in local and national press
- **October 6:** Milwaukee section of National Council of Jewish Women declared support for marches:
 - “As part of the National Resolutions, we believe that the freedom and dignity and security of the individual are basic to American democracy and that discrimination because of color, creed, national origin, age, or sex undermine that democracy.”
- **October 11:** Milwaukee Jewish Council and Wisconsin Council of Rabbis take out ad in Milwaukee Journal and the Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle. MJC president Bernard Solochek:
 - “We hope this advertisement will contribute to public understanding of the importance of open housing legislation at this moment in Milwaukee’s history. The heritage of commitment to justice shared by all the great faiths is the foundation of law governing human rights.”

1968

- **February 29:**
 - Kerner Commission (appointed by Pres. Lyndon Johnson to investigate the causes of the 1967 riots, including in Milwaukee) concludes that the riots resulted from African American frustration over economic inequality and lack of opportunity.
- **March 14: 200th march**
 - Open housing laws had been passed in 17 communities already, but not in Milwaukee
- **April 4: MLK assassinated**
 - **April 8:** MLK march led by Youth Council and Commandos down **3rd St. and downtown** (15,000 people, the largest in Milwaukee's history and the nation's largest memorial demonstration for MLK)
 - Milwaukee Sentinel: "biggest rights march" in the city's history
- **April 11:** Pres. Lyndon Johnson signs Civil Rights Act of 1968 (or the Fair Housing Act)
 - equal housing opportunities regardless of race, religion, or national origin
 - federal crime to prevent this from happening
 - Johnson: "*Fair housing for all--all human beings who live in this country--is now a part of the American way of life.*"
- **April 30:** Common Council passes fair housing ordinance (15-4) that is stronger than the national Fair Housing Act, covering more multifamily housing developments
- **May 8:** Mayor signs Open Housing Ordinance
- **May 10:** Open Housing Ordinance takes effect

1969

- **April 4:** 1-year anniversary of MLK's assassination
 - Freedom Seder
 - 800 people (black and white, Christians and Jews)

Rabbi Arthur Waskow's **Haggadah** wove together the story of the Jewish exodus from Egypt with the liberation struggle of Blacks, emphasizing their shared history of oppression

16th St. Bridge

- Continue south on MLK Dr.
- Right on McKinley Ave.
- Left on 6th St.
- Right on Wells St.
- Right on Wisconsin Ave.
- Left on 17th St. (if under construction, turn left on 18th St.)
- Left on Clybourn St.
- Right on 16th St.
- Cross 16th St. bridge
- Right on Pierce St.
- Park bus on 1600 block of Pierce St. (stay on bus)

Introduce Margaret "Peggy" Rozga:

- born and raised on the South Side
- studied at Alverno College
- joined the NAACP Youth Council in the 1960s
- joined a group of Milwaukee volunteers to work on a Southern Christian Leadership Conference summer voter registration project in rural Alabama
- protested against the Eagles Club in 1966 and the Open Housing Marches in 67-68
- married James Groppi in 1976 (had 3 children)

- 2007 led efforts to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the marches
- has written a multitude of articles, plus a book of poems (*200 Nights & One Day*) and a play about the marches (*March on Milwaukee: A Memoir of the Open Housing Protests*)
- Emerita professor of English at UW-Waukesha where she taught creative writing and multicultural literature

End of 16th St. Bridge on Pierce St.

We had originally thought that we would take the bus all the way down Cesar Chavez Dr. (see XYZ), which becomes 16th St. again, to Lincoln Ave. and then to Kosciuszko (Kosh-choose-ko) Park by the Basilica of St. Josaphat--to give you an idea of how far the marchers marched every night for 200 nights.

But that would have added another 30-45 minutes to the tour! So we're stopping here before we return to the museum. A little bit about how things changed (or didn't change) after the marches. Even before the marches ended, the Commandos were starting to move in a different, broader direction:

- Commando: "We've got to keep the marches going. But I agree that we ought to be looking into other ways to extend the protest. Open housing is just one of the issues. Negroes need a lot more than that."
 - Commandos met at St. Boniface to discuss plan with Marquette University to work with needy youth, especially those being released from the Wales youth correctional facility
 - Fr. G angry: "This is a sell out!" He didn't want to receive any government money because he thought that then they could control you.
 - During this time, federal and state governments began allocating public funds for inner-city programs (Wisconsin = \$1 million)
 - So the Commandos applied for funds

- work project for 268 youth in Summer 1968
 - \$/hr to clean streets → less criminal activity
 - “Commandos Project I” continued annually
- Commandos break from YC
 - Commandos Project I (social service)
 - Commandos Incorporated (civil rights issues and direct action)
- By 1980s, major inner-city social agency:
 - adult and youth counseling
 - full-time employment for ex-offenders
 - group foster homes/halfway houses
 - youth employment during school year and summer
 - year-round recreation
 - annual summer camp
 - Commando Academy
 - alternative high school
 - and, of course, improving housing:
 - rehousing evicted
 - repairing homes
 - prepping for elderly and disables
- 1981-1990s: Pres. Reagan cuts social service program funding
 - Commandos defunct

Barbee continued his work and became known among his fellow assemblyman as “the outrageous Mr. Barbee” because of his progressive legislation:

- open housing
- fair employment
- gay rights

- women's rights
- prison reform
- legalization of drugs
- legalization of prostitution
- disarming of police
- taxation of churches

In 1976, federal judge John Reynolds finally rules that the school board was guilty of creating and maintaining segregation, and issues a court order to desegregate MPS.

- Receives national recognition for creating several city-wide specialty schools (magnet schools) designed to attract Black and white students from different neighborhoods.
- Chapter 220 Program permitted city-suburban student transfers

And the following year, Milwaukee Metropolitan Fair Housing Council established to help families find suitable and affordable housing.

Skip ahead to the 21st century--where the future is bright for Black residents of Milwaukee. Right? Well...

Black population has grown, but still concentrated in city. In 2015:

- White families = 69% of home ownership
- Black families - 28% of home ownership
- Black residents pay a greater share of their income on rent
- 27% Black applicants denied a home loan vs. 13% white

- 54% denied home refinancing vs. 30% white
- Reggie Jackson: "If you look at the 19 cities of Milwaukee County, there are only three outside the city of Milwaukee that have an African-American population above five percent."

However, the Director Elana Kahn of the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC)--that works in partnership with the NAACP, YWCA, and other organizations regarding voting rights, hate crimes, criminal justice reform, and so on--recently said this:

- "We are committed to stop resting on images from the 1960s and to create new opportunities to understand each other . . . learning from each other, leaning on each other, and defending each other."

The questions, then, for all of us are these:

- Now that we've learned/re-learned all of this history, so what? Now what? What will we do to create new opportunities to understand each other, learn from each other, lean on each other, defend each other?

Return to Jewish Museum Milwaukee

- Continue on Pierce St.
- Right on Reynolds Pl. (almost a U-turn) → Bruce St.
- Left on Virginia St. (under freeway and by 9th)
- Left on 6th St.
- Right on Kilbourn Ave.
- Left on Prospect Ave.
- Park bus at 1360 N. Prospect Ave.