The Geography of Black History
The Other Side of Magic City:

Muncie Black History Based on the Book *A History of Negroes in Muncie* by Hurley Goodall
1844 was the first record of African Americans living in Salem Township. In 1857 Samuel Bundy had to appear before the Delaware County Circuit Court to prove that he had been a resident of Indiana before November 1851, the date after which the Constitution forbade the entry of Blacks.
Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment storming Fort Wagner, South Carolina (Library of Congress)
Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1868
Frederick Douglass visited Muncie in September 1880: “So many people turned out at the court house to hear Mr. Douglass that the gathering had to move to the (Wysor) Opera House....An overflow crowd of 5,000 turned out...The audience broke into such rapturous applause and cheers that ‘they endangered the roof of the Opera House.’ Douglass was so overwhelmed that he lost his speaking voice.”
1880 Census: Muncie had 187 Blacks, 3.6% of the total population. Addie Knight was the first African-American student to graduate from the high school. Knight delivered a commencement speech that was “received with great applause.”
“Scattered pieces of information provide fleeting glimpses of Blacks in Muncie during the 1880’s and 1890’s. Muncie Daily News mentions the death of Charlie, a fireman who was accorded a fireman’s funeral with equipment.”
The Black “population of Muncie held an Emancipation Day celebration on September 21, 1887, which marked the 25th anniversary of President Lincoln’s Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. A parade, athletic events, dancing, and cycling marked the gala occasion.” The event was attended by the mayor and mentioned in the diary of city founder, Thomas Neely, in his personal diary.
Glass Boom: The Ball Brothers Factory

Sunborn Fire Insurance Maps from the Ball State University Libraries' Archives and Special Collections show the growth of the Ball Brothers Factory in Muncie from its early beginnings in 1887 to 1954.
1892: “Baseball provided recreation and entertainment for small-town Americans during the 1880’s, and Muncie certainly fit the pattern. Evidence that Muncie’s Black community participated in baseball games exists in the form of a published lineup of players who took to the diamond in 1894.”
“In October 1898, both the Kirby House and the Southern Hotel refused accommodations to Mr. Gurley Brewer, a Black attorney from Indianapolis. Brewer, who was in Muncie for a speaking engagement, threatened to sue the managers.”
“In March 1899, at Ball Brothers plant #2, 75 white men quit because the firm refused to fire several Black boys who worked with them. The newspaper, pointing out that the Blacks had been working there for two years, asked why the white men were complaining at this time. In any case, Ball Brothers agreed to fire some or all of the Black workers if the protesting whites would come back, ...and the white workers returned.”
• 1896: Wick Adams was the first Black fireman (near the area of South Madison Street)
• 1897: Henry Burnham appointed clerk at the post office
• November 30, 1899: W. T. Stokes of Hackley Street was appointed the first police officer to patrol in Industry
• 1900: Mr. Peele was the first Black to drive a car in Muncie—for the Muncie Oil Company
An average of 100 Blacks were killed every year between 1890 and 1910 in the South.
1915 Muncie glass workers
1917 Muncie High School debate team
200,000 Blacks served in Europe.
World War I volunteers, Muncie
To bring attention to escalating violence against African Americans after World War I, the NAACP flew this flag outside of its headquarters office in New York (National Archives)
An African-American moviegoer arriving at a segregated theater (National Archives)
Muncie rally, c. 1922: The June 23, 1922, Klan meeting at Kuhner’s Slaughter House was attended by police, sheriff deputies, attorneys, and other city officials. A downtown parade was held in August of 1922. Voting rights were challenged in the 1922 elections—factories were run late so that workers would not have time to vote. When membership declined in 1925, Klan members tried to recruit Blacks for a “colored division of the Klan.”
Newspaper publisher George Dale fought against the Klan in Muncie
Carl Burnam, Local 499 leader of the United Auto Workers, Muncie, 1925
1925 Bennington Photography Cart
1926 Magic City Council: Ice cream, skating rink, Campbell’s Auditorium, tailors, Benson’s Barber Shop served whites, R&J Restaurant, Pekin Hotel, Melrose Grocery, Hag’s Chili Parlor, Cora Taylor’s Hair Parlor
Jesse Nixon, Ball State University, 1925
1. Founded in 1809 as the Free Baptist Church of New York City, the Abyssinian Baptist Church became a center of civil rights activism when a young preacher named Adam Clayton Powell Sr. took over the pulpit a century later. The church building, dedicated in 1923, was a cavernous Gothic structure, featuring an Italian marble pulpit and imported stained glass windows. The congregation numbered more than 7,000.

2. Opened in 1922, the Cotton Club became the premier showcase in America for black musicians. The elegant interior, featuring primitivist decor, helped to inspire the “jungle sound” of Duke Ellington, who opened there in 1927. Other jazz greats who played there included Cab Calloway, Louis Armstrong, and singer Lena Horne. Sadly, during the 1920s, black audiences could not listen to these musicians since the club was for whites only.

3. The Harlem YWCA, completed in 1919, offered some of the finest athletic facilities in New York City at the time. It also sponsored a host of conferences on subjects like women’s suffrage, antilynching legislation, and civil rights activism. Among the figures who spoke there were Ida Wells, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Booker T. Washington.

4. The Dunbar Apartments, located at W. 149th and 150th Streets between Seventh and Eighth Avenues and financed by John D. Rockefeller Jr., were the first large cooperative built for African Americans. Among the prominent African Americans who lived at the Dunbar Apartments were W. E. B. DuBois, actor and singer Paul Robeson, labor leader A. Philip Randolph, and Arctic explorer Matthew A. Henson.
Indiana Steel and Wire Company Band, 1924
Ball Brothers Factory Band, 1925
Muncie Central High School Band, 1926
Black Diamonds: Negro League Baseball Teams, 1920-1949
On August 7, 1930, two African-American men were lynched by a mob in Marion after being arrested for the robbery and rape of a white woman. Reverend J. E. Johnson, who operated a Whitely funeral home, drove to Marion in order to provide a decent burial. Scores of Blacks armed themselves and gathered at the Shaffer Chapel AME Church to fight a rumored white mob. Sheriff Puckett armed and supported the Blacks. Sheriff Puckett led the delegation back to Marion after the bodies had been prepared for burial.
Indiana High School Boys Basketball Champions, 1911-1997

Jack Mann, 1931
Ollie Shoecraft, the only African American worker in the Works Progress Administration crew, Muncie, 1934
Life magazine article featured Muncie as Middletown
UNITED WE WIN
The Tuskegee Airmen, 1943–1945

Darie Miller, a messman in the U.S. Navy, was awarded the Navy Cross for his heroism at Pearl Harbor. This poster, issued by the federal government, commemorates his actions.
Mrs. Eugene Williams and sons, Muncie, 1945
African American branch of the Muncie YMCA, 1948
(segregated until 1960)
1948 Monarchs, State Champions
April 1949: Patricia Bragg, Muncie Central High School French Club, was refused service while attending a field trip teaching table manners at the Varsity Café in the Village.
Integrated American troops in Korea (National Archives)

Ray Armstrong, 1951 City Council
Geraldine Evans Findley, 1954
Orval Faubus reaps political benefits of ardent segregation
Democratic first primary elections for governor, 1954-60

Percentage vote for Faubus:
- Over 50% black
- 60
- 50
- 45
- 0
May 4 Seven blacks and six whites leave Washington, D.C., on one Greyhound bus and one Trailways bus.

May 4-7 The buses travel through Richmond, Petersburg, and Lynchburg, Virginia. At each stop both black and white riders use “whites only” lunch counters and bathrooms without incident.

May 7 Freedom rider Charles Perkins, an African American, attempts to get a shoe shine in a whites-only barbershop at a Charlotte, North Carolina, bus station. Although he is refused service, he remains in the shop until police place him under arrest.

May 9 In Rock Hill, South Carolina, a band of whites beat John Lewis after he attempts to enter the bus station waiting room. Albert Bigelow is also beaten. Although the police make no arrests, they allow riders to enter the waiting room.

May 11 In Winnsboro, South Carolina, freedom riders James Peck and Henry Thomas are arrested for attempting to integrate a bus station lunch counter.

May 11-13 The buses travel through Sumter and Camden, South Carolina, and Augusta and Athens, Georgia, without incident before arriving in Atlanta, where the riders regroup in preparation for the next leg of the journey—into Alabama and Mississippi.

May 14 Outside Anniston, Alabama, the Greyhound is surrounded by a mob, who break windows and slash the bus tires. One member of the mob tosses a torch through a window, filling the bus with smoke. As riders try to flee the bus, the crowd attempts to hold the doors shut, before beating passengers as they escape. The local hospital refuses to treat the injured riders. An hour later, the Trailways bus arrives in Anniston, where its passengers are also beaten before the bus leaves for Birmingham. There, whites board and attempt to force all blacks to the back of the bus. When two white riders attempt to intervene, they too are beaten. One, a 61-year-old retired teacher named Walter Bergman, is left close to death, with permanent brain damage. The other needs 56 stitches in the head.

May 15-17 Despite the attack, the riders vow to continue on to Montgomery, Alabama. When no driver will take them, the group abandons its plans. The Justice Department arranges for the freedom riders to fly to New Orleans, Louisiana. Although a bomb threat delays takeoff, the group flies to New Orleans.

May 17 Convinced that ending the freedom rides would reward their violence, Diane Nash, head of SNCC's Nashville chapter, organizes a new group of freedom riders. Bus leaves Nashville, bound for Birmingham, Alabama.

May 18 The freedom riders arrive in Birmingham. They are met and begin a prison hunger strike. Police respond by sending riders 150 miles north to the Tennessee border, where they are led off the state line. Diane Nash sends them up and brings them back to Birmingham where they are arrested for the first time in two days and held for four days.

May 19 The state of Alabama issues an injunction against the into and travel within the State of Alabama. The so-called 'freedom ride' and other acts of resistance to provoke breaches of the peace.

May 20 The freedom riders wait in the Birmingham jail. They areega to come to Montgomery by an angry crowd of several hundred people with clubs. One passenger, who smokes on and his clothes are set on fire. The crowd of several hundred people, led by John Segershaler, are sent by the lawyer, is kept in the cell. He is to assist one of the riders in resisting the arrest of the arrested riders, who are arrested.

May 21 U.S. marshals begin to arrive when the first crowd flies into Montgomery. The crowd threatens to arrest the marshals. The crowd, white mob forms outside the Baptist Church, trying to meet there.

May 22 King, Abernathy, and Nash Lewis of CORE announce that the Montgomery Freedom Riders have been arrested and are being held in jail.

May 24 Excerpts by Alabama National Guardsmen and the KKK--the riders leave Alabama for Jackson, Mississippi. When they arrive, Jackson police arrest them. Two days later, they are convicted and given suspended sentences. The riders elect to remain in jail, at notorious Parchman Penitentiary, where they remain for almost a month before they are released.
African-American Voter Registration, 1964

The map above reflects the percentages of African Americans registered to vote in 1964.
The map above reflects the percentages of African Americans registered to vote in the South in 1970.
Four years of violence, 1965–1968
riot that resulted in injuries or deaths:

- orange: 1965
- blue: 1967
- purple: 1966
- green: 1968
Hurley Goodall, first Black elected to the Muncie School Board in 1971
Tensions at Southside High School and the construction of Northside High school
Hurley Goodall, Indiana State House of Representatives, 1978
Barack Obama in Muncie