

Blacks and Indiana History Timeline

1746		1746	Five black slaves belonging to French settlers in Vincennes are first documented African-Americans living in what is now Indiana.
1787	1787	U.S. Congress passes Northwest Ordinance prohibiting slavery in the Northwest Territory; Territorial Governor St. Clair interprets Article VI to prevent further introduction of slaves and does not free those slaves already present.	
1805	Indiana Territorial Legislature enacts a measure which allows white settlers to bring blacks into Indiana and indenture them into service.		
1816		1816	First Indiana Constitution prohibits slavery.
1820	1820	In a test case, <i>Polly v. Lasselle</i> , the Indiana Supreme Court abolishes slavery in Indiana, but illegal indentures still existed.	
1831	Indiana General Assembly enacts a law requiring all blacks in Indiana to post a bond of \$500 as a guarantee against becoming public charges.		
1832		1832	Lost Creek, in Vigo County, is site of large land purchases by free blacks from North Carolina.
1843	1843	Indiana General Assembly restricts public schools, previously open to all, to white children only.	
1850	U.S. Congress passes Fugitive Slave Act which denies jury trial to alleged fugitives and compels northerners to help enforce the return of blacks to the South.		
1851		1851	Article XIII of the 1851 Indiana Constitution prohibits free blacks from immigrating into Indiana, and provides money to send current black residents to colonize in Liberia in Africa.
1863	Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation freeing slaves in seceded states; the 28th Indiana Regiment, U.S. Colored Troops organizes to fight for the North.		
1866	1866	Indiana Supreme Court invalidates Article XIII of the 1851 Constitution.	
1869		1869	In special session, the Indiana General Assembly passes an act requiring school trustees to organize separate schools for black children where sufficient black population exists.
1870	1870	States ratify 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution giving the right to vote to black men.	
1875	U.S. Congress passes Civil Rights Act prohibiting discrimination in public accommodations, amusements, and conveyances.		
1877		1877	Indiana General Assembly amends school law permitting black students to attend white schools where no black schools exist, thereby opening public high schools to blacks.
1883	1883	U.S. Supreme Court declares portions of Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional.	
1885	Indiana General Assembly passes Civil Rights Law prohibiting discrimination in public accommodations, amusements, and conveyances, but the law is generally ignored by many white residents.		
1896		1896	In <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> , the U.S. Supreme Court declares that "separate but equal" facilities do not violate the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment.
1902	1902	Young black men in Indianapolis form group which is admitted as a branch of Indiana Young Men's Christian Association which becomes the Senate Avenue YMCA.	
1915	Indiana Branch of NAACP, with membership of 200, is 10th largest in country; other branches are in Terre Haute, Evansville, Gary, Vincennes.		

The Walker Legacy

Madam Walker had never been a person who would accept injustice quietly. When she attempted to attend a movie at a downtown Indianapolis theater, she was told that the price was higher for colored people. She refused to pay more than white people attending the same movie. She sued the company that operated the movie theater and then decided to build her own movie theater. She died before she could reach that goal.

The Madam C. J. Walker building was built in 1927, eight years after her death, and served as a center for the black community of Indianapolis. Social, cultural, and educational events took place at the Walker

building. The four story building included a theater, a casino, a beauty shop, a drug store, and a restaurant. There were also offices for black doctors, lawyers, and other professional businessmen who had difficulty locating office space in white owned buildings. The

fore the great depression. There were not many places where black people were allowed to go for entertainment, and the Walker building on Indiana Avenue was one of the few places available for blacks in segregated¹ Indianapolis. For fifty years the Walker building

to those who toil; to those who think; to those who strive readily; to those who love good music, good pictures, high class entertainment . . . to all classes; to all races. Freeman B. Ransom, attorney and general manager of the Walker Manufacturing Company, building dedication.

Walker Manufacturing Company was also headquartered in the building.

The Walker building offered black people a place of their own for films, jazz, and vaudeville during the years be-

featured music, dance interpretation, comedy, and dramatic readings. The Walker Theatre was one of the first establishments to highlight jazz. The jazz clubs on Indiana Avenue have become legendary, and now there is a revival of music and performances at the Walker Theatre.

Today the building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and features African, Egyptian, and Moorish² designs. This style of architecture was very popular during the 1920s, and movie theaters often used Egyptian designs. The Walker building is so interesting because it combines three different styles.

The building is *flatiron* shaped; in other words, it has the triangular shape of an iron. Many buildings in large cities have this shape because the diagonal streets cut the property lots into triangular shapes, and a triangular building fits better on a triangular lot.



The Walker Building, c. 1950. Courtesy: Indiana Historical Society, Bass Photo Collection.

The major doorways of the building have molded African designs and masks in bright colors. These designs are made of terra cotta, a clay that is fired or baked. In order to make these designs, an artist made a soft clay model. Then a mold was made of gelatin³ (a substance firmer than Jell-O). Local clay was then poured into the gelatin mold, and the hardware needed to fasten the designs to the wall was placed in the clay. Next the pieces were placed in a special oven to bake. These fired pieces were sometimes glazed with a clear or colored solution, and then attached to the building.

African and Egyptian designs were used inside the building, too. These designs were made using the same basic process described previously except plaster was used instead of local clay. The plaster had to dry but was not fired. The plaster could then be painted and attached to an inside wall or ceiling.

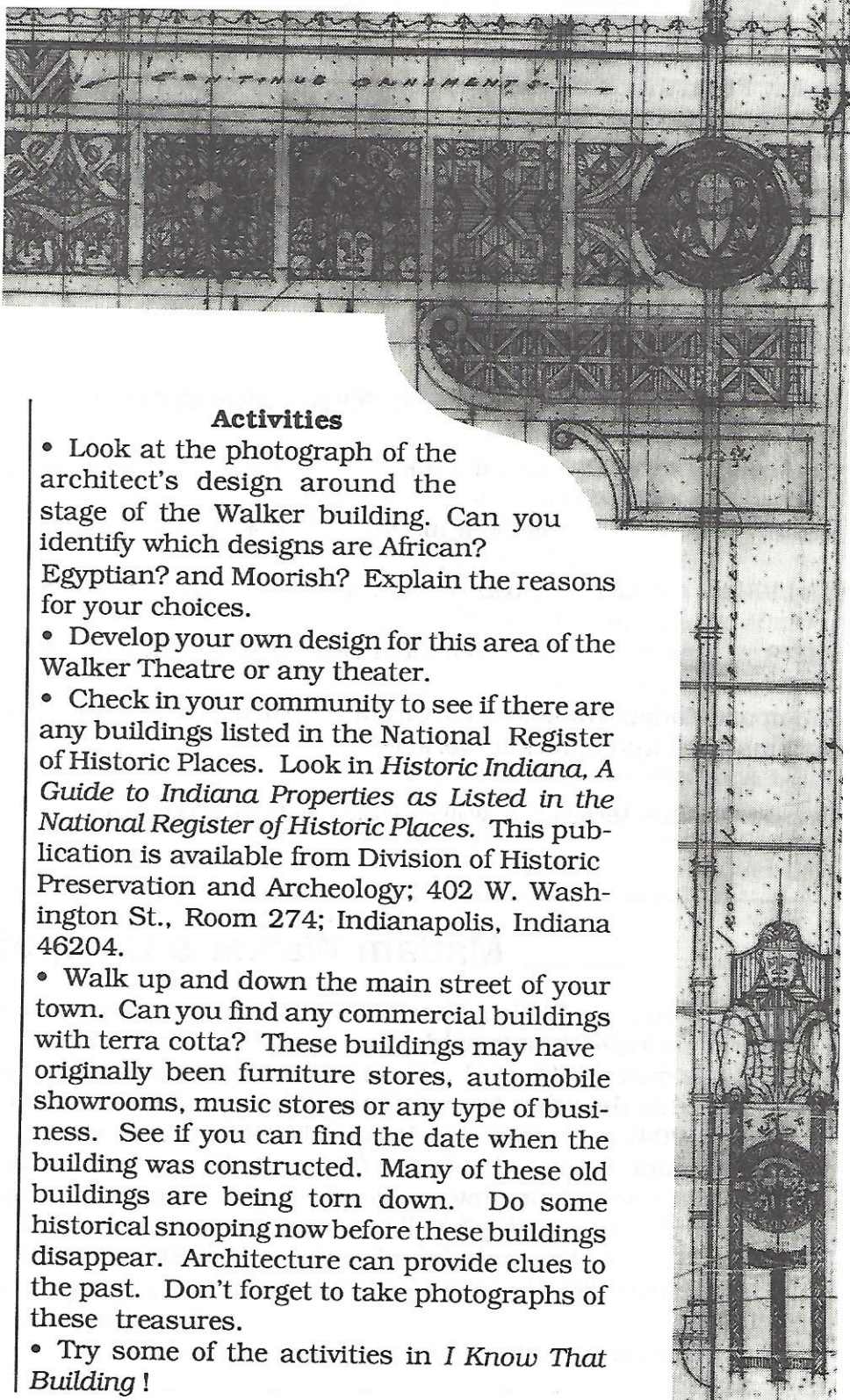
The Walker building was restored in the late 1980s. The Walker Manufacturing Company is no longer located there. The Walker Theatre still presents entertainment for everyone, regardless of skin color.

¹Segregated means to separate a race or a class from the group. The opposite of segregate is integrate.

²Moorish designs are geometrical and balanced. The Moors were people of Arab decent living in Northern Africa.

³Today, a liquid latex is used to make the mold.

Original Walker Theatre architectural drawings.
Courtesy: Indiana Historical Society, C 4091.



Activities

- Look at the photograph of the architect's design around the stage of the Walker building. Can you identify which designs are African? Egyptian? and Moorish? Explain the reasons for your choices.
- Develop your own design for this area of the Walker Theatre or any theater.
- Check in your community to see if there are any buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Look in *Historic Indiana, A Guide to Indiana Properties as Listed in the National Register of Historic Places*. This publication is available from Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology; 402 W. Washington St., Room 274; Indianapolis, Indiana 46204.
- Walk up and down the main street of your town. Can you find any commercial buildings with terra cotta? These buildings may have originally been furniture stores, automobile showrooms, music stores or any type of business. See if you can find the date when the building was constructed. Many of these old buildings are being torn down. Do some historical snooping now before these buildings disappear. Architecture can provide clues to the past. Don't forget to take photographs of these treasures.
- Try some of the activities in *I Know That Building!*

Activity

Madam's Bookkeeper

You are Madam C. J. Walker's accountant and are responsible for keeping her financial records in order. Fill in the blanks below. Use the hours per day (10) and days per week (6) that follow to arrive at your answers. The income listed below is accurate. We don't know how much time Madam Walker spent working to improve her life. During this time period, however, most people worked 10 hours per day, 6 days per week. Wages for unskilled male workers were \$1.00 to \$1.50 per day; women doing domestic work averaged \$2.64 per week.

Year	Occupation	Salary				
1890	Laundress	\$1.50 a week	= \$ ____ a day	\$ ____ a month	\$ ____ a year	
1905	INVENTS HAIR PRODUCT, FORMS NEW COMPANY					
1906		\$35 a week	= \$ ____ a day	\$ ____ a month	\$ ____ a year	
1908		\$400 a month	= \$ ____ a day	\$ ____ a week	\$ ____ a year	
1911		\$1000 a month	= \$ ____ a day	\$ ____ a week	\$ ____ a year	
1918		\$1,000,000 a year	= \$ ____ a day	\$ ____ a week	\$ ____ a month	

Compare Madam Walker's salary from 1890 to that of 1918. Compare her wages to the average wages for unskilled and domestic workers.

Sources: *Bundles*, Madam C. J. Walker; *Phillips*, *Indiana in Transition*.

Madam Walker's Competition

Madam C. J. Walker wasn't the only one experimenting with hair products.

Four major hair care breakthroughs took place during the years from 1904 to 1909.

In 1904, a fireman was losing his hair. Like Madam Walker, he too experimented, hoping to find a hair grower. He developed many products, and people still use his shampoo today. His name was John Breck.

Madam Walker discovered her hair grower in 1905.

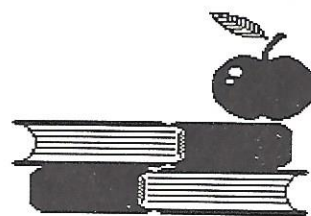
The following year, 1906, a London hair-

dresser invented the first permanent. The hair was dipped in ammonia, wrapped around safety pins, and heated with an iron! Charles Nestle was the man who changed hair fashion forever.

In 1909, Eugene Schueller, a French chemist, created the first commercial hair dye. His company is still in business today under the name of L'Oréal!

Source: *Gail B. Stewart*, *Timelines 1900s*, New York: Crestwood House, 1989.

An Apple for Everyone



Selected resources pertaining to Madam Walker and black History in Indiana

- *Black History News & Notes*. August 1991. Number 45.

This issue lists some of the Indiana African-American history collections at the Indiana Historical Society.

- Crenshaw, Gwendolyn J. *"Bury Me in a Free Land": The Abolitionist Movement in Indiana, 1816-1865*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau. 1986.

This exhibit catalog provides excellent background information regarding blacks in Indiana. Adult readers.

- Bundles, A'Lelia Perry. *Madam C. J. Walker: Entrepreneur*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers. 1991.

This is an excellent source on the life of Madam Walker written by her great, great-granddaughter. The book includes wonderful photographs and fascinating information. Written for intermediate and advanced elementary school readers; fast and easy reading for secondary school students and adults. There currently is not an adult book written about Madam Walker although Alex Haley has researched one with the help of Ms. Bundles.

- Driskell, David, *et al.* *Harlem Renaissance: Art of Black America*. New York: The Studio

Museum in Harlem & Harry N. Abrams, Inc. 1987.

- Gibson-Hudson, Gloria J. "To all classes; to all races; this house is dedicated' The Walker Theatre Revisited." *Black History News & Notes*. February 1989. Number 35. pp. 4-6.

This is a good article about the Walker Theatre. The entire issue provides interesting information about the building and the Madame Walker Urban Life Center.

- Latham, Charles, Jr. "Madam C. J. Walker & Company." *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History*. Summer 1989. Vol. 1, No. 3. pp. 29-40.
- Phillips, Clifton J. *Indiana in Transition, 1880-1920*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau and Indiana Historical Society. 1968.

Volume IV of the History of Indiana series is the standard reference for the turn of the century in Indiana.

- Thornbrough, Emma Lou. *The Negro in Indiana: A Study of a Minority*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau. 1957.

This is a standard, classic work on the subject. For adult readers.

- Thornbrough, Emma Lou. *Since Emancipation: A Short History of Indiana Negroes, 1863-1963*. Indianapolis: Indiana Division American Negro

Emancipation Centennial Authority [1964].

Other Sources of Interest

- *Two Dollars and a Dream*.

This excellent 56 minute video is available free of charge (you must provide return postage, however) from the Indiana Humanities Council, 317-638-1500.

- D'Alelio, Jane. *I Know That Building!: Discovering Architecture with Activities and Games*. Washington D.C. The Preservation Press. 1989.

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• **Special thanks to A'Lelia Perry Bundles** for allowing the *Indiana Junior Historian* to use photographs in the Walker Collection.

Note to Teachers

The next issue of *The Indiana Junior Historian* will highlight Women's History Month and continue to focus on Madam Walker. Topics will include Madam Walker's entrepreneurship; transportation and marketing at the turn of the century; and Madam Walker's political activism.

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The Indiana Historical Bureau was created in 1915 to celebrate the centennial of statehood. It is the duty of the Historical Bureau to edit and publish documentary and other material relating to the history of the state of Indiana, to promote the study of Indiana history, and to work with others engaged in such pursuits. The Historical Bureau provides books, educational resources, and programs for students and teachers. Several are listed below. The Bureau also directs the Historical Marker Program and the care of the Governors' Portraits Collection.

- **BROADSIDES** produces supplemental educational materials based on primary sources for teaching Indiana history. Student packets encourage active participation and skills development with possible integration in various grades and subjects. An extensive teacher guide provides ready information and teaching resources.
- **Indiana Close Up** is a high school local government program affiliated with the national Close Up Foundation. This participatory annual event encourages study and discussion through the Jefferson Meeting on the Indiana Constitution.
- **Indiana History Day** encourages students grades 4 - 12 to research and prepare papers, exhibits, performances and media presentations on an annual historical theme. An emphasis on original research and interpretation allows students to experience the excitement of discovering or developing skills and interests that enrich their education and their lives. It is part of the National History Day network.
- **REACH**— Resources Educating in the Arts, Culture, and History— is a dynamic program that utilizes art and objects to stimulate dialogue and provide hands-on experiences, exploring not only the arts but also the culture and history of Indiana. Its arts-in-education basis encourages on-going planning for involving community resources in the school.

The Indiana Junior Historical Society is a network of history clubs for students in grades 4 - 12. Locally sponsored clubs initiate and participate in activities which encourage the study of Indiana history, often outside the classroom. The Indiana Junior Historical Society program is administered by the Indiana Historical Society, 315 West Ohio Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202; 317-232-1882.

The Indiana Junior Historian is published nine times each school year by the Indiana Historical Bureau, State of Indiana. It is distributed to members and sponsors of the affiliated clubs of the Indiana Junior Historical Society of which the Indiana Historical Bureau is a co-sponsor.

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The publication is provided free to school media centers and public libraries throughout the state. Individual subscriptions are available for \$7.50.

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