

For Immediate Release

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New Book Explores History of the Black Bottom Community

Local author completes pictorial history

The newest addition to Arcadia Publishing's popular *Images of America* series is *Detroit: The Black Bottom Community*. Local historian Jeremy Williams combines careful research with archived photographs for an insightful look at Black Bottom's early beginnings, its racial transformation, the building of a socioeconomically solvent community through various processes of institution building and networking, and its ultimate demise and the dislocation of its residents.

Between 1914 and 1951, Black Bottom's black community emerged out of the need for black migrants to find a place for themselves. Because of the stringent racism and discrimination in housing, blacks migrating from the South seeking employment in Detroit's burgeoning industrial metropolis were forced to live in this former European immigrant community.

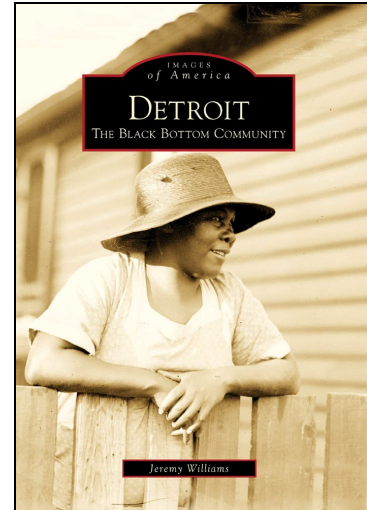
During World War I through World War II, Black Bottom became a social, cultural and economic center of struggle and triumph, as well as a testament to the tradition of black self-help and community-building strategies that have been the benchmark of black struggle. Black Bottom also had its troubles and woes. However, it would be these types of challenges confronting Black Bottom residents that would become part of the cohesive element that turned Black Bottom into a strong and viable community.

Highlights of *Detroit: The Black Bottom Community*:

- A portion of the profits from the book will be donated to the Charles H. Wright African American Museum and the Detroit Writers Guild.
- The book sheds light on Eleanor Roosevelt's involvement in the Executive Order 8802 and its impact on the lives of Black Bottom residents.
- The book highlights the Detroit Urban Leagues, which played a vital role in Detroit's early black community.

Available at area bookstores, independent retailers, and online retailers, or through Arcadia Publishing at www.arcadiapublishing.com or (888)-313-2665.

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Author Jeremy Williams hopes this book will “deflect negative perceptions and help us to reflect on the positives and the possibilities of what we can do as a community. I wanted to present evidence of real black achievement and greatness, of our great moment – our finest moment - as a black community in Detroit history. I think that's the basic intent of this book.”

Detroit: The Black Bottom Community

by Jeremy Williams
Images of America Series

Price: \$21.99

128/ pages/ softcover

Available: **October 26, 2009**

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About the Author of *Detroit: The Black Bottom Community*

Jeremy Williams, 41, is a native of Detroit. His parents migrated from the south and eventually settled in Detroit's Black Bottom community. Once, his mother spoke of the time his father had taken her to Black Bottom's famous Flame Bar to see Billie Holiday perform.

A graduate of Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI, Williams is currently pursuing a master's degree in African American history. While an undergraduate student he studied under noted Detroit historian, Dr. Richard W. Thomas whose Detroit history seminar class fostered Williams' interest in the history of Black Bottom. With very little resources and reading materials on Black Bottom history, Williams was determined to write one of the first exclusive books on Detroit's Black Bottom community.



Williams is an active member of the Detroit Writer's Guild and is planning to write a play about Black Bottom. He also writes book reviews for Push Nevahta Review, as well as for various book review websites.

When not doing historical research, Williams does freelance writing, records music, reads and enjoys cooking vegetarian cuisine. Williams is currently working on a second Detroit history book titled *The Detroit Urban League*.

Williams would like for readers to walk away feeling empowered and invigorated, he says, especially considering this great moment in black American history. Williams thinks "it's always a sense of great awakening, a feeling of encouragement, and a breath of fresh air when you read your history and can then compare it to today. It's amazing what the Black Bottom community was able to achieve back then, with little resources."

The older Detroit community that actually lived in Black Bottom and have vivid memories of life in Black Bottom, were especially excited to finally have that important aspect of their lives documented and told. Williams says, "I think some of them are able to rest easier knowing that their story has been told, at last."