

NEW

YORK

WINTER 2024

archives Jr!



CONTENTS:

2 Gnaw on This | 2 Community Connections | 3 Take a Closer Look | 4 Learning Activity



New York Archives magazine is a donor funded educational product published quarterly by the NYS Archives Partnership Trust. For subscription information, visit nysarchivestrust.org.

Jr!

Additional Resources and Activities can be found at:



ConsidertheSourceNY.org

Coming Together to Thrive

By Barbara A. Seals Nevergold



In 1827, New York officially ended slavery. But Black New Yorkers still had to deal with racism and other challenges that made their lives hard. They were excluded from jobs, education, and other private and public places to which White people belonged. Because of this, Black communities across the state created organizations and spaces for themselves.

Churches became an important way for Black people to build community and support each other. In their churches, Black people could be leaders. They could also build their own traditions. They could help each other through difficult times.

In 1830, Buffalo had about 330 Black people living in it. By 1850, there were 678 people. In this time, Black residents started two churches, Michigan Street Baptist and Vine Street African Methodist Episcopal. They became important centers of community life and were important places in the Underground Railroad. The Michigan Street Baptist Church hid freedom seekers in Buffalo until they could get them to safety in Canada.

A third Black church was started in Buffalo in 1850. It was called the East Presbyterian Church. They built a new church building, but this cost a lot of money. They

had a hard time paying their bills. But they were committed to helping Buffalo's Black community. They invited abolitionist speakers like Frederick Douglass. They held conferences, social events, worship services, and other community activities. To stay open, they partnered with another church. They became St. Philip's Episcopal Church in 1866. The church still exists in Buffalo. The founders stayed strong in their goal to start their own church and to chart their own course for their community.

Members of the Black community started other organizations to fill in some needed gaps, like the Phillis Wheatly women's club, named for the famous poet of that name. Some of their work included helping Black women get the vote and raising money for a home for senior citizens. The Colored Musicians Club, which was founded in Buffalo in 1917 to encourage unity and provide opportunities among Black musicians in Erie County, still exists today. There was even a newspaper, The Buffalo American, printed weekly for the Black community.

These churches, clubs and organizations are examples of how the Black community thrived—while they worked to end discrimination, they did not let it stop them.

Gnaw on This



- Black churches in northern communities started as religious societies in the early 1800s. Buffalo had a Methodist society and a Baptist society for the Black community.
- Black residents have lived in Buffalo since the beginning of its European settlement.
- Many Black residents in the 18th and early 19th century made Buffalo their home due to its close location to the security of Canada. The Fugitive Slave Acts made life in the United States very dangerous for Black residents.

Community Connections



- **Michigan Street Baptist Church**, Buffalo. See photos and learn more about this historic church. <https://www.michiganstreetbaptistchurch.org/>
- **Discovering Buffalo, One Street at a Time**, Buffalo. Information about St. Paul's Episcopal Church in this Blog. <https://buffalostreets.com/tag/st-philips>
- **The Colored Musicians Club and Jazz Museum**, Buffalo. Check out all the great jazz music they sponsor. <https://www.thecoloredmusiciansclub.com/event>






Take a Closer Look

Student Name _____

The Phyllis Wheatley Club of Buffalo

The Phyllis Wheatley Club, Buffalo, NY (Library of Congress) Photo shows, seated (left to right): Mrs. Powell, unknown, Mrs. Saunders, Penolia McAden. Standing (left to right): unknown, Bette S. Anderson, Amelia Grace Anderson, Mary B. Talbert, Frances Nash, unknown, unknown, Theresa G. Anderson, Beatrice Chase, and Mrs. Chase.



 I Observe:	 I Infer:	 I Wonder:



At their October 29, 1899 meeting, the women of the Buffalo Phillis Wheatly Club were addressed by the National Association of Colored Women. This banner has their motto, Lifting as We Climb.

Using information from this issue, write about what you think this motto means.

Learning Activity

The text below is from the Colored Musicians Club Constitution:

"[To] foster the principles of unity and cooperation among the colored musicians of Erie County, N.Y.; to develop and promote the civic, social, recreational and physical well-being of its members; to improve and enhance the professional and economic status of its members; to stimulate its members to greater musical expression; to encourage and develop a fuller appreciation of music on the part of its members and the public; and generally to unite its members in the bonds of friendship, good fellowship and mutual understanding." (McRae)

Directions: Go back to the text and highlight or underline the text:



Having to do with music



Having to do with things other than music



Al Tinny

Below is a quote from a famous jazz pianist who was part of the colored Musicians Club

"There was never a place like the Musician's club when I was in New York. To play and socialize. What you called a jam session was all great players. They came out to cut each other. 'I can do this better than you.' The Club is like a workshop. The more you play with better people, the better you get. I figure one day they'll grow up and become better, and I've seen them in the minor leagues. And one day they'll be in the major leagues. I go as a supporter of this thing, because I'm in it. We're all in it together. There's a nice camaraderie up here." -Al Tinny

The Colored Musicians Club wasn't just a place to play music. From their constitution and from Mr. Tinny's quote, what else was important to them? Write about it below, using evidence from these two texts.
